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Christa T. – Tonio K. in Disguise? – Autobiography and Intertextuality in Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kröger* and Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.*

by

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Abstract

My thesis examines the intertextual relationship between Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kröger* (*TK*) and Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (*NT*). *TK* is a product of early 20th century German philosophy and literary trends with a strong influence of Nietzsche's aesthetics and ideas. *NT*, a novel with substantial political inferences, is a modernist work about a non-conformist and disillusioned protagonist in the GDR.

The scope of my thesis covers the common themes, similarities and intertextuality linking the two works even though they are vastly different in style and content. The feelings of alienation of the protagonists with their internal struggles as artists and the autobiographical writing styles are the shared features of these two texts. These commonalities provide a framework which leads to the examination of the intertextual connection between *NT* and *TK* and the different interpretations of *NT* in the context of theories of intertextuality.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Christa Wolf is one of the most prominent women German writers of the 20th century. Her life and work reflected the history of Germany from the Third Reich to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and then the reunified Germany. Owing to the circumstances of her life, she received much unwanted attention but also prominence, fame and notoriety, first in the GDR and then after the reunification. Controversies dogged her for two decades, from the limited publication of *Nachdenken über Christa T.* in 1968 to the eventual 1990 release of *Was bleibt*, a novel she had written in 1979. While well respected in the GDR, she was also censored and spied on by the Stasi for her independent works that realistically portrayed the difficulties faced by the citizens of the GDR. Initially perceived and celebrated as a dissident author, she enjoyed special status in the Federal Republic Germany (FRG, West Germany), until she set off the so-called “Literaturstreit” – quarrel about literature – after the publication of *Was bleibt*. Some West German writers attacked her for holding off the release of a novel that showed her as a victim of the Stasi secret service when she also enjoyed a privileged status as a writer in the GDR.

Nachdenken über Christa T. (NT) is one of her best known, though most controversial and enigmatic works; it was considered provocative and harmful to the image of socialist society by the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands) administration and thus had a difficult start from the beginning. Even though the novel was ready for publication in 1967, only a few hundred copies were allowed to be printed one whole year later. West German literary circles,

and to some extent the GDR population, waited with bated breath for the wider circulation because of its alleged criticism of life in the East. In March 1969 the novel was made available only to selected individuals. The extensive debate about the propriety of the book did not die down until 1971 after Erich Honecker, the general secretary of SED, allowed a broader interpretation of the code of socialist realism and more relaxed control of writers' rights to express themselves (Resch 55).

In 1969 F. J. Raddatz, one of the most influential West German literary critics in the 1960s, published an article in the June 2 edition of *Der Spiegel* on Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* Raddatz had followed the development of the review of Wolf's infamous novel by the SED and was aware of the furor it had caused in the GDR. Despite all the deliberation on the novel's dogmatic appropriateness in the GDR and the delay in the publication, the title of his article carried no political undertone – it simply read “Mein Name sei Tonio K.,” effectively linking Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kröger* (*TK*) to Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* Raddatz saw the many parallels between *TK* and *NT*, the latter of which also contained recognizable intertextual references to *TK*. He was one of the first critics to perceive the significance of Mann's novella in *NT* and therefore expressed his emphasis in the title of his article to clearly highlight this connection for the readers.

Wolf invoked many direct quotes from *TK* but they were by no means the only intertextual citations in the work. There were other references to Johannes R. Becher, Shakespeare, Anna Seghers and Bertolt Brecht, among others. However, the intertextual references to *TK* appear more frequently in the book and the quotations suggest that the author intended a close association.

In my thesis I will analyze and compare these two works; the focus of my analysis will be the common themes and similarities linking the two works even though they were written more than half a century apart. I will underscore the literary affinity between Thomas Mann's *TK* and Christa Wolf's *NT*. Wolf's writings have been prominently linked to many writers, but not in the case of Thomas Mann. *NT* reveals a special affiliation between the two authors which warrants detailed examination. I will argue that there are substantial thematic correlations as well as intertextual connections between the two works that have not yet been addressed in the extensive scholarship about these two authors.

Thomas Mann (1875-1955) was one of the most well-known and influential authors of the 20th century, and the 1929 Nobel laureate in Literature. Although not known for scholastic achievement in his youth, Mann was familiar with the works of all major European writers. An autodidact, he acquired this vast knowledge because of his insatiable interest in literature. Despite his familiarity with many literary styles, he was not open to the more radical approaches of his time such as expressionism, the avant-garde, or surrealism. All his life he remained a conservative author in his writing style, continuing the literary tradition established by the German masters of the 18th and 19th centuries, namely Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

At the turn of the 20th century, the literary period was known as the fin-de-siècle with its characteristic emphasis on aestheticism and decadence which made a profound impact on many authors (Woodward 158). The trend was a reaction to the increasing complexity of the rapid changes brought about by the industrial revolution, along with political and social upheavals. Thomas Mann was very much aware of the aesthetics of this literary fashion and the

works of Oscar Wilde, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and the reactions of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to this movement. In his early works including *Buddenbrooks* (1901) which depicts the decline of a bourgeois family, it was evident that Mann was cognizant of the pace of social change and questioned the values of the rigid bourgeois social orders and the stability of the existing bourgeois society. *Tonio Kröger* (1903) continued with the theme of bourgeois society and how it affected the protagonist as an artist. Influenced by Nietzsche, Thomas Mann was grappling with the antithesis of the artist and bourgeois society which also became the theme of *TK*. This novella was representative of his works in the period between 1902 and 1904, all of them based on the theme of the melancholic young artist and society.

The beginning of the First World War and the subsequent events in Europe compelled Mann to undergo a metamorphosis, over a span of three decades, from an “apolitical” writer to one with a strong political conscience. His opposition to National Socialism, his exile and subsequent acquisition of U. S. citizenship and cooperation with the U. S. government were inconceivable to him at the time when *Tonio Kröger* was written at the turn of the century. And later in life, as the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929, he attained fame and respectability in exile. Some of his later writings, e. g. *Der Zauberberg*, *Joseph und seine Brüder*, and *Doktor Faustus* are better known and considered more mature works. And yet for Mann, *TK* remained one of his significant works as he looked back a few years before his death and expressed his satisfaction about it: “Eine Novelle, deren jugendlich lyrischer Schmelz sich merkwürdigerweise durch ein halbes Jahrhundert frisch erhalten und in Wechsel der Generationen immer aufs neue die Sympathie junger Herzen gewonnen hat” (GW XI: 708).

Christa Wolf, recipient of many literary awards both in the GDR and FRG, including the Thomas Mann Prize in 2010, was one of the best known German writers of the 20th century. She was born in 1929 in Landsberg/Warthe, a region east of the Oder-Neiße-line which now belongs to Poland but was then part of Germany. In the final days of World War II, millions of German refugees fled from this area to Eastern Germany (*Das Große Tabu*). Wolf experienced first-hand the devastating effects of the war and the subsequent displacement of citizens in the war zones. These occurrences left some indelible marks on her. Unsurprisingly, Wolf's life was inextricably intertwined with the past of Germany and the destiny of the GDR. Believing that the evils of the war should not occur again, Christa Wolf joined the SED in 1949 out of protest against National Socialism and its aftermath as well as to show solidarity with the SED for a new beginning (Buehler 66). Wolf studied Germanistik and Education at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena in 1949 and in 1951 transferred to Karl Marx University in Leipzig where she became a student of Hans Mayer, a scholar of Thomas Mann, who was also the author of *Thomas Mann – Werk und Entwicklung*, published in 1950 (Reich-Ranicki 201). In his role as the director of the Institute of Literary History in Leipzig for over a decade, he influenced generations of Germanists and made a strong impact on the development of Wolf's aesthetic judgment, as she acknowledged in *Der geteilte Himmel* (Hilzinger 21).

The six decades between the publication of Mann's *Tonio Kröger* and Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* belong to the most tumultuous times of the German history. The country went through the First World War, the abdication of the Kaiser, the Weimar Republic, the emergence of National Socialism, the reign of the most repressive and brutal government and the defeat as a nation. Following the division into the Eastern and Western zones, the literary developments

in the two German regions diverged. Many authors in the immediate post-war period attempted to find a way of describing the trauma of the citizens, the devastation of the country, and the guilt for the crimes committed and at the same time the helpless feelings of victimization by the Nazi regime. Representative of this trend were the works of Wolfgang Borchert, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Paul Celan and other members of "Gruppe 47," an informal association of writers formed in 1947. Many of them did not resort to realistic depiction of historical events but employed symbolism and imagery to express the challenges facing the whole nation. A few authors even went a step further, denouncing West German writers for the inadequacy of the actions they undertook in order to "come to terms" with fascism. For example, Theodor Adorno stated in his essay "Prismen, ohne Leitbild," part of *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, that: "Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch" (30).

In the territories occupied by the Russians immediately after the war and later in the GDR, a different cultural phenomenon appeared. When it came to assigning responsibility for the war crimes, the East German state asserted that Hitler and his associates were solely responsible for the tragedy. Many of the leaders of the GDR regime such as Walter Ulbricht, the head of the Central Committee of the SED, Johannes R. Becher and Wilhelm Pieck were staunch antifascists against Hitler and were forced into exile in the Soviet Union. As a result, for the leadership of the GDR, "coming to terms with the Nazi past" was considered unnecessary. Instead, the German authors of the Soviet Occupied Zone were expected to dissociate themselves from Nazism and at the same time to embrace a literary direction named "socialist realism," which was alien to their training and background. A few years before the official founding of the GDR

on October 7, 1949, a fundamental social, economic, cultural and political transformation had gradually taken shape in the Soviet Occupied Zone. The system to be introduced and implemented in the GDR was to be modeled after the socialist system in the USSR. Literature, according to Lenin, was to be subordinate to the political process in order to further the success of the socialist order, and the artists or authors were to prepare the masses for a new way of life. Following the model of the Soviet Union, a German writers' association was allegedly founded for the purposes of setting the direction of GDR literature. However, the Writers' Union was only a façade with no authority for setting the guidelines; the de facto decision-making entity was the SED (Buehler 41). The main purpose of socialist realism was to eradicate negativity – alienation, despair, pessimism – in literature and to replace these characteristics with forward-looking and positive attitudes. The preferred themes were the glorification of the workers and a unified mindset in the pursuit of a stronger and better society (Buehler 35). More importantly, socialist realism was perceived by SED as a tool of education to change the value and the perspective of the people in general.

Literature became a tool of the government to achieve the goals of a socialist society. The authors in disagreement with this approach left for the FRG and other Western countries while others embraced the new role of literature and artists enthusiastically. One of the prominent authors, Anna Seghers, justified her support for the new regime, arguing that as writers they must help to awaken political consciousness and encourage strength in the masses to build a new and peaceful existence. Other writers, e. g., Günter Kunert, Volker Braun, Reiner Kunze and Günter de Bruyn, also saw socialism as a viable alternative for Germany's restoration and recovery; to that end some sacrifices were considered inevitable in the grand scheme of

Germany's future. Socialist realist literature was charged with changing the thinking of the public from a capitalist to a socialist orientation, as advocated by Anna Seghers: "Wir wünschen uns Bücher... die den Menschen verständlich machen, in welcher Richtung, durch alle Konflikte hindurch, die Lösung liegt" (qtd. in Buehler 14).

Wolf's first novella, *Moskauer Novelle* (1961), was considered a model of socialist realist literature. It extols the virtues of socialism, portrays realistic and near ideal interaction between GDR and the Soviet Union in a clear and concise style. Wolf's second work was *Der Geteilte Himmel* (1963), a novel that realistically depicts many aspects of life in the divided Germany. Soon after the publication, it received enthusiastic accolades from the general public as well as from the literary critics in both GDR and the West, and Wolf was awarded the Heinrich Mann Prize by the East German Academy of Arts in 1963. To the authorities exercising censorship, this novel was considered acceptable because of its more balanced presentation of the positive and negative aspects of socialist society, even though the portrayals of the flight of GDR citizens to the West and the hardships in the GDR embodied deviations from the socialist realist tenet. To Wolf, it also represented a sensational success as the novel was translated into many languages and made into a film by the GDR DEFA film company in 1964 (Buehler 102). Wolf's third novel *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, a novel about a young woman's struggles to find her place, her identity in a society where individual needs and actualization are superseded by group interests, was a complete shift from the typical optimistic social realist literature; it is a portrayal of the selfish, pretentious and corrupt way of life in the GDR (Buehler 134). Negative repercussions soon followed. Wolf became the target of constant surveillance by the Stasi

(Resch 4) and eventually resigned from the managing committee of Deutscher Schriftstellerverband in 1977 (Hilzinger 138).

Thomas Mann and Christa Wolf had markedly dissimilar concerns associated with their respective eras. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the protagonist in *Tonio Kröger* is able to remain apolitical because of the relatively stable political environment. After two world wars and the hardship of the post-war era, to Christa T., the main character of *NT*, politics is a central factor, a dominant aspect of the lives of the GDR citizens at the time.

Thomas Mann was revered by many GDR writers and literary critics. Officially the traditional aesthetics of Mann's writing was considered desirable and he was held in high regard (Bathrick 88). As Kurzke stated in Mann's biography, Mann was awarded the Goethe Prize in 1949 and visited Weimar in 1949 and 1955 at J.R. Becher's invitation (510). Becher was the cultural minister of the GDR from 1954 to 1958.

In contrast to Mann's apolitical, traditional and realistic narration of *TK*, *NT*, written in 1967, was characterized by aesthetic features associated with modernism through the use of interior monologue, the shifting of personal pronouns from the third to the first person, perplexing narrative, and the intense, profound inner conflicts that became the hallmarks of Wolf's writing (Fries 31). This complicated modernist approach was in complete violation of the principles of socialist realism, which had simplicity and appeals to the common people as its basic tenets (Resch 20, 54).

With such dissimilar backgrounds and divergent literary styles, it is remarkable that there is an indisputable link connecting *Tonio Kröger* and *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, as identified by Raddatz in 1969. Despite the differences, there are many thematic similarities in these two

works. Both protagonists are outsiders who have difficulties fitting into their respective societies; they experience alienation and isolation from their early teens into adulthood. The dichotomy between the artist and society is a shared impediment for them to overcome.

Theodor Storm was mentioned in Mann's *Essay on Theodor Storm* as one of the spiritual fathers of *Tonio Kröger* (Laage 99). In *NT*, Christa T. vacillates between Thomas Mann and Storm as her favorite writers before selecting Storm as the subject of her dissertation. Both Mann and Wolf attested to the existence of autobiographical elements in their works, albeit with distinctly different approaches. The autobiographical dimension of the two novels is of special significance because of the aspect of self-revelation as well as the connection to the intertextual interpretation.

Wolf was aware of these aforementioned common themes in writing *NT* and the similarities are not coincidental. The references to *TK* in *NT* demonstrate her consciousness of sustaining the continuity of the German literary tradition. At the same time, the different treatments of these common themes accentuate the necessity and the importance of examining Mann's *TK* and Wolf's *NT* in the context of their times, and their respective political and social environments. The first part of the following study will include the common themes related to the artist in *TK* and *NT* – artists as outsiders, artists versus the dominant forces of society, Theodor Storm's influences and the autobiographical elements.

While discussion of the common themes forms the first part of my thesis, the second part of my study focuses on intertextuality. Intertextuality is a term often used in contemporary critical analyses with many different definitions. Granted, similarities do not equate intertextuality, but all theorists appear to agree on the notion that relationality and

interconnectedness are key elements of intertextuality (Allen 5). The commonalities provide a backdrop for further explorations of the two works.

Wolf used intertextual references extensively in her works, and *NT* is not an exception. Her distinct style of writing is marked by intensity and post-modernist influences, combined with strong autobiographical elements and the use of intertextual references to the works of many authors. In fact, intertextuality is an integral part of Wolf's writing and significant for the interpretation of her work. For the strategically placed intertextual references to *TK*, there is an indication of Wolf's intention that *TK* be taken into consideration as part of the text. For this study, the focus is limited to the evocations of Thomas Mann's *TK*. Certainly the knowledge of Thomas Mann's novella will serve to enrich the reading experience of *NT*. Scholarship to date has, with the exception of the occasional brief acknowledgement, almost entirely overlooked the strong intertextual connections between *TK* and *NT*.

Chapter 2, 3 and 4 of this study will examine the common themes of the two works in detail. The fifth chapter will focus on the intertextual relationship between these two texts and discuss different interpretations of *NT* in the context of theories of intertextuality. Finally, a conclusion will summarize the key issues addressed in this study.

Chapter Two: The Artists

2.1 The artist as Outsider – Tonio Kröger

In his “Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,” part of the *Gesammelte Werke (GW)*, Thomas Mann acknowledged that the three icons of the post-Romantic period – Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Wagner – had a profound effect on his earlier life as a writer (*GW XII:72*). Of the three, Nietzsche had the most impact on his artistic and intellectual development, while Schopenhauer’s influence was more spiritual and Wagner’s music had a sensual and emotional impact on him (*GW XI: 111*). Published in 1903, *Tonio Kröger (TK)* belongs to Mann’s early work, two years after the much celebrated *Buddenbrooks*. This publication was to become the symbol of Mann’s novellas of the early period of his career because of the artist theme. *TK* also reflects the attitude of the artists of Mann’s generation; the brooding, melancholic Tonio is trapped between his desire to be part of the sunny and normal world and his passion for his calling as an artist. The dichotomy of art and life weighs heavily on his mind. While the epic-pessimistic influence of Schopenhauer and the epic-musical influence of Wagner were palpable in *Buddenbrooks*, Nietzsche’s influence became more dominant in *TK*. Numerous references to Nietzsche’s work can be found in *TK*. G. Keyssner, a literary critic, wrote in the August 5, 1903 edition of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* that if Thomas Mann had been Nietzsche’s disciple, he would have been one of Nietzsche’s most brilliant students for the germane description of the antinomy of the creative artist, a central Nietzschean theme, in *Tonio Kröger* (Bellmann 66).

In the fourth chapter, Tonio's conversation with his friend Lisaweta, a Russian painter, is teeming with a Nietzschean mode of thinking. For the purposes of comparison, I will limit my discussion to the aspects which are comparable with *Nachdenken über Christa T*, namely the artist as outsider.

In *TK*, Tonio declares that the artist must be a bystander, observing life on the sidelines with no participation in the life of the normal, healthy "philistines." Art demands from him exclusive dedication, and knowledge can only be attained through pain and suffering. Mann expresses this idea in *TK*: "Aber in dem Maße, wie seine Gesundheit geschwächt ward, verschärfte sich seine Künstlerschaft, ward wählerisch, erlesen, kostbar, fein ..." (291).

Mann's earlier work, *Der Wille zum Glück* (1896), already bears witness to Nietzsche's influence. In it is a direct quote from Nietzsche: "Es war das 'Pathos der Distanz' dem größten Teile unserer Mitschüler gegenüber, das jeder kennet, der mit fünfzehn Jahren heimlich Heine liest und in Tertia das Urteil über Welt und Menschen entschlossen fällt." Mann's use of "Pathos der Distanz," in the context of *Der Wille zum Glück* may not align entirely with the meaning Nietzsche assigned to this phrase. The feeling of distance, Nietzsche states in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, is the prerequisite for every elevation of man:

Jede Erhöhung des Typus "Mensch" war bisher das Werk einer aristokratischen Gesellschaft – und so wird es immer wieder sein: als einer Gesellschaft, welche an eine lange Leiter der Rangordnung und Werthverschiedenheit von Mensch und Mensch glaubt und Sklaverei in irgend einem Sinne nötig hat. Ohne *das Pathos der Distanz* [emphasis added], wie es aus dem eingefleischten Unterschied der Stände, aus dem beständigen Ausblick und Herabblick der herrschenden Kaste auf Unterthänige und Werkzeuge und

aus ihrer ebenso beständigen Übung im Gehorchen und Befehlen, Nieder – und Fernhalten erwächst, könnte auch jenes andre geheimnisvollere Pathos gar nicht erwachsen (*Sämtliche Werke* V: 205).

Nietzsche finds that the elevation comes from the sense of separation. For him, this is the feeling associated with a person who considers himself superior to his peers. Furthermore, Nietzsche elaborated in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* that:

die Vornehmen, Mächtigen, Höhergestellten und Hochgesinnten, welche sich selbst und ihr Thun als gut, nämlich als ersten Ranges empfanden und ansetzten, im Gegensatz zu allem Niedrig-Gesinnten, Gemeinen und Pöbelhaften. Aus diesem Pathos der Distanz heraus haben sie sich das Recht, Werthe zu schaffen, Namen der Werthe auszuprägen (*SW* V: 259).

Nietzsche advocates the separation of the higher class of individuals who are noble, powerful and intelligent from the lower class of plebeians. Thomas Mann uses the term “Pathos der Distanz” to describe the two main characters in *Der Wille zum Glück* as outsiders because of their sensitivity and awkwardness, not necessarily because of their innate superiority (Reed, *Use of Tradition* 17-18). However, in *Tonio Kröger*, the protagonist has difficulty fitting in not only because of his sensitiveness and different disposition. There is at least a hint of the “Überlegenheit” which is evident in the discourse of *TK*. There are two classes of individuals in *TK* – Hans Hansen and Ingeborg Holm, whose background is similar to Tonio’s but who lack his intellectual capability. Nevertheless he envies their vitality and liveliness. There is another group of people, the plebeians whom Tonio looks upon with some contempt. His repeated use of “kein Zigeuner im grünen Wagen, sondern der Sohn

Konsul Krögers "(TK 275) – not a Bohemian type of person, nor a homeless drifter – is a leitmotif with reference to Tonio's pedigree, his noble ancestry and the fact that he is the son of Consul Kröger. The obvious inference is that Tonio is proud of his standing in society. At the same time, Tonio also takes pride in his artistic achievement. His derision of the amateur writer is indicative of his disdain for the dilettante writer who is sincere but banal. The "writer" utters phrases which are unimaginative, naïve and commonplace when he feels overwhelmed by the beauty of the sunset, and Tonio dismisses him with the notion that he has no literature in his system. Likewise, the pompous and self-important dance master François Knaak is described with sarcasm and ridicule for his pretentiousness and pseudo upper-class upbringing. In all these cases, the mockery is delivered with a good dose of humour to lessen the appearance of contempt, but the condescension comes through between the lines. Tonio is an outsider not only because of his inability to fit in but also because of his desire to be different and his sense of superiority. It would appear that Tonio fits the interpretation of Nietzsche's "Pathos der Distanz" more aptly than the interpretation in *Der Wille zum Glück*. Nietzsche's view of artists and his high standard for the artist as delineated in *der Fall Wagner* is another example of segregation between artists and common people.

As with all artists in Mann's works, Tonio is exceedingly sensitive. His favorite activity is reading literary works and meticulously writing down his thoughts and reflections in a notebook. The fact that he has this notebook becomes a source of ridicule for his classmates and teachers. Tonio says in desperation:

Warum bin ich doch so sonderlich und in Widerstreit mit allem, zerfallen mit den Lehrern und fremd unter den anderen Jungen? Sie finden die Lehrer nicht komisch, sie machen keine Verse und denken nur Dinge, die man eben denkt und die man laut aussprechen kann Was ist aber mit mir ... (275)?

From an early age Tonio is conscious that he is peculiar in the eyes of his peers and that he does not belong to their world. Even his name, Tonio, certainly not Germanic, has an outlandish ring and is almost a barrier between him and his classmates. The name also alludes to the different origin of his mother who came from the other hemisphere and is dark and exotic-looking. Tonio is named after his mother's brother from a faraway country. Hans Hansen, the object of his first "love," calls him "Tonio" only in private and switches to "Kröger" in front of other classmates. Tonio notices this tendency and is deeply hurt. Hans Hansen, blond and blue-eyed, good-looking, athletic, a good student and popular with other students and teachers, is the exact opposite of Tonio, who is dark, withdrawn and academically inferior. Even though Hans Hansen clearly recognizes Tonio's ability in articulating complicated ideas and admires him for his talent, he does not understand Tonio nor share his interest in poetry and artistic pursuits. Tonio's interest in *Don Carlos* by Schiller is incomprehensible to Hans, who prefers books on horses. The reason why *Don Carlos* is so important to Tonio is because of the affinity Tonio feels with King Philip, who is so lonely because of his prominent position, and this isolation mirrors Tonio's own position as an outsider (Neubauer 33). Hans' ignorance and obliviousness to art is a source of frustration as well as exhilaration to Tonio, precisely because Hans' vitality, wholesomeness and his world

of the health, ordinariness and straightforwardness are all the exact opposite of Tonio's disposition.

Ingeborg Holm, his love at the age of sixteen, the blond and light-hearted girl who has no appreciation for his poems, represents the female version of Hans, the ordinary people. She pays no attention to Tonio who stands at a distance, worshipping her, but making no serious attempt to get close to her. He observes her enthrallment with the dance master, François Knaak, who mesmerizes her with his acrobatic moves and affected speech. Tonio feels the pain: "Er sah sie an, sah ihre schmalgeschnittenen, blauen Augen, die voll Glück und Spott waren, und eine neidische Sehnsucht, ein herber, drängender Schmerz, von ihr ausgeschlossen und ihr ewig fremd zu sein, saß in seiner Brust und brannte" (284). It is the same agony he felt about Hans Hansen two years ago. To Tonio, Hans, Inge and Herr Knaak are cut from the same cloth: "Sie sahen nicht in die Dinge hinein, bis dorthin, wo sie kompliziert und traurig werden" (284). Tonio, the outsider, looks into the depth of things, probes and pores over matters that are convoluted and painful. Precisely for this reason, he possesses insight whereas the burghers, individuals such as Hans Hansen, Inge Holm and Herr Knaak, are content with the superficial and the obvious.

Engrossed by Inge's presence and his feelings of desperation, Tonio half-heartedly participates in the dance lesson and only perfunctorily follows Herr Knaak's instruction. Suddenly, without any warning, he makes a fatal mistake by inadvertently getting mixed up in the ladies group. Herr Knaak makes the most of Tonio's faux pas and turns the incident into an outright comedy to the amusement of all. Tonio is mercilessly ridiculed by Herr Knaak as Inge looks on, ostensibly without any sympathy or concern for his plight. Tonio, the butt of their

jokes, becomes the entertainment for the people he looks down on. Quickly he retreats to the corridor, away from the crowd and the laughter at his expense. There he stands alone, overcome by his grief, anguish and sorrow. Embarrassment, humiliation and shame engulf him in the darkness of the corridor as the bourgeois world carries on with laughter and merriment. It is especially painful because he considers himself superior to the blond and blue-eyed ordinary people and yet he wishes he could be like them. It is an aloofness mixed with envy and longing.

Thirteen years later, on a trip to his home town incognito, Tonio is not recognized by anyone in the city and is mistakenly suspected to be a criminal on the run. The feelings of being an outsider in his own town grow more intense through this unpleasant experience. He could have disclosed his identity, naming his respectable family and highly regarded father and thus clarified the misunderstanding, but he chooses to remain unrecognized despite the difficulties in proving his status as a writer. The misunderstanding is eventually resolved after considerable time and effort. As he continues with his trip to the north, the memory of his youth returns when he reaches Aalsgaard. In the hall of the hotel he thinks he recognizes Hans and Inge, the two sunny, healthy and ordinary people of the past. He is also aware of the presence of the thin girl with the earnest look; she reminds him of Magdalena Vermehren in his youth who fell to the ground during a dance. Every scene unfolds uncannily like the scenes at the other dance so many years ago. Again he is overwhelmed by longing, the sense of hopeless isolation, and the gulf between him and the bourgeoisie. "Auch war es ja wie immer: sie würden ihn nicht verstehen, würden befremdet auf das horchen, was er zu sagen vermöchte. Denn ihre Sprache war nicht seine Sprache"(333). Only the awkward and earnest girl Magdalena Vermehren

admires Tonio and asks to read his poems. She understands and accepts him; like Tonio, she is also an outsider in the well-adjusted world of blond people.

Ever since Mann's diaries became public in 1975, there is ample evidence that the outsider theme in *TK* may have also reflected his suppressed homosexual inclination in a society where such orientation was spurned. This aspect will be discussed in Chapter Three on autobiography.

2.2 Tonio Kröger versus Bourgeois Society

Tonio Kröger stands between two worlds from the very beginning. His name represents his predicament. It is an advantage as well as a disadvantage, a composition of the artistic and of propriety. Tonio, the Southern first name, comes from his mother's family with the exotic origin, and Kröger is a typical Northern German last name. His mother, dark, exotic and temperamental, represents the artistic side of the family. His father epitomizes the solid down-to-earth Northern German businessman from a long line of respectable merchants, the bourgeois side, even though the wildflower in his buttonhole betrays his latent nonconformist streak. The antithesis is between the world of the blond and blue-eyed, healthy, happy and ordinary versus the world of the dark-haired, exotic and artistic. Tonio does not identify with his father but he is in agreement with his father's values and standards. His artistic mother who plays the piano and mandolin, has traits of the "Zigeuner im grünen Wagen." She accepts Tonio's poor scholastic performance and seldom admonishes him for his failings.

Tonio, the melancholic, dreamy youth who reads Schiller, represents the arts; the healthy, popular, blond and blue-eyed Hansen who loves horse books is the representative of bourgeois

society. Mann's idea of the artist was strongly influenced by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Both these philosophers hold elevated views on the subject of art. For Nietzsche, life is only bearable as an aesthetic phenomenon; art is not merely the imitation of nature, but a means which can transcend nature (Young 31). It is also the highest form of human activity, the most sublime and metaphysical activity of man. Schopenhauer considered art an escape from the suffering of the will, albeit only temporarily (Del Caro 195).

Nietzsche singled out the artist as the force to resist the perceived rampant progress of industrial society and the destructive effects brought about by rapid growth. The artists in his view were to provide new visions to overcome the evils and devastation. *Tonio Kröger* is structured in an antithetical manner to encompass the artistic and the bourgeois: "Ein vollkommener und ganzer Künstler ist in alle Ewigkeit von dem "Realen," dem Wirklichen abgetrennt," Nietzsche wrote in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (SW V: 344). An artist is different from the ordinary bourgeois in many ways. The bourgeois see themselves as part of the community and generally have the same values as others in the same community. They also feel fulfilled in doing mundane day-to-day activities and do not crave aesthetic and intellectual gratification. By contrast, Tonio does not have a sense of belonging in the bourgeois community. Internally, he is always at odds with himself because there are two forces – symbolized by his name, the human and the artistic – within him working against each other.

Tonio as a young and upcoming artist cannot expect to be part of the "real" world and has to feel cut off from reality and remain an outsider (Neubauer 38). Nietzsche's influence is further confirmed in the portrayals of the dilettante artists such as Herr Knaak, or the banker/writer he meets on his trip to Denmark. Mann was very much aware of Nietzsche's

criticism of Wagner, the decadent and pseudo artist in Nietzsche's view, and the high standard Nietzsche set for artists, including Thomas Mann, as affirmed in *Der Fall Wagner* (SW VI: 13-53).

Tonio declares that the artist can only observe from the sidelines of life and cannot participate in the normal life of the blonde and blue-eyed. The artist cannot expect anything but sacrifice, suffering and pain. There is also clearly Schopenhauer's influence, as in: "Daß gute Werke nur unter dem Druck eines schlimmen Lebens entstehen, daß, wer lebt, nicht arbeitet, und daß man gestorben sein muß, um ganz ein Schaffender zu sein" (TK 291-292). This pessimistic view is typical of Schopenhauer, but Tonio is not prepared to live such an ascetic life; he longs to be part of normal life, and it is that longing that produces great art.

Tonio is a daydreamer who can only watch the merry bourgeois dance from a distance and cannot be part of their warm, happy and healthy world. Moreover, the artist is to use his insights and the knowledge to search for the truth, and yet this knowledge brings disgust and suffering. In *TK*, the term "Erkenntnisekel" is used to describe the disgust associated with the knowledge of other human beings, their motives and selfish intentions. Along with the knowledge and the insight of the abyss of existence, he cannot eradicate the feelings of disgust. "Ekel" is very much a Nietzschean term. In his *Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche speaks of *Hamlet*: "In diesem Sinne hat der dionysische Mensch Ähnlichkeit mit Hamlet: beide haben einmal einen wahren Blick in das Wesen der Dinge getan, sie haben erkannt, und es ekelt sie zu handeln; denn ihre Handlung kann nichts am ewigen Wesen der Dinge ändern" (SW I:56). Furthermore, Nietzsche goes on to say that:

In der Bewußtheit der einmal geschauten Wahrheit sieht jetzt der Mensch überall nur das Entsetzliche oder Absurde des Seins, jetzt versteht er das Symbolische im Schicksal der Ophelia, jetzt erkennt er die Weisheit des Waldgottes Silen: es ekelt ihn (SW I:57).

Both Tonio and Nietzsche, the Dionysian men, have insight into knowledge but the knowledge only brings more disappointment in and disgust for human nature. Nietzsche goes on to elaborate that art functions as an alternative for healing. Art alone can turn these "ekelhaft" thoughts into ideas with which a person can live. However, this idea is no consolation to Tonio at the time when he discusses his struggle as an artist with Lisaweta. His development as an artist is not compatible with his desire to be a happy human being. In his discourse with Lisaweta, Tonio expresses his exasperation with his fate as a writer:

Ich sage Ihnen, daß ich oft sterbensmüde bin, das Menschliche darzustellen, ohne am Menschlichen teilzuhaben" (296). "Aber bislang habe ich nur unter Dämonen, Kobolden, tiefen Unholden und erkenntnisstummen Genspenstern, das heißt: unter Literaten Freunde gehabt (303).

That is the dilemma of the artist versus the bourgeois. After his in-depth conversation on the topic of the dilemma as an artist with his painter friend Lisaweta, Tonio goes on a trip to the North, to his own home town, to the land of the blond and blue-eyed, and then to Denmark to find himself. In Aalsgaard, Tonio has a vision of seeing Hans and Inge again, the two people he loved in his youth. They belong to the sunny world, to which he cannot gain access. He has to relive the painful memories of loneliness, isolation and pain. The paragraph describes Tonio's state of mind:

Er war berauscht von dem Feste, an dem er nicht Teil gehabt, und müde von

Eifersucht. Wie früher, ganz wie früher war es gewesen! Mit erhitztem Gesicht hatte er an dunkler Stelle gestanden, in Schmerzen um euch, ihr Blonden, Lebendigen, Glücklichen, und war dann einsam hinweggegangen (335).

And later, as he looks back, he finds himself:

sah sich zerfressen von Ironie und Geist, verödet und gelähmt von Erkenntnis, halb aufgerieben von den Fiebern und Frösten des Schaffens,... raffiniert, verarmt, erschöpft von kalten und künstlich erlesenen Exaltationen, erirrt, verwüstet, zermartet, krank – und schluchzte vor Reue und Heimweh (336).

This experience has almost a cathartic effect on Tonio and through the process he eventually learns to bridge the two spheres and reconcile the dichotomy to some extent. He knows that he will always be an outsider to ordinary society but he reconciles himself to this through his love for the human world. Through this “Bürgerliebe,” the kind of bourgeois love of the human, he will be able to live in both worlds, although he may never simply belong to the blond, the living and ordinary. Again this goal is achieved through the influence of Nietzsche, who stated in *Ecce homo*, in the chapter on *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Das Jasagen zum Leben selbst noch in seinen fremdesten und härtesten Problemen; der Wille zum Leben im Opfer seiner höchsten Typen dereignen Unerschöpflichkeit frohwerdend — das nannte ich dionysisch, das verstand ich als Brücke zur Psychologie des tragischen Dichters. Nicht um von Schrecken und Mitleiden (SW VI: 312).

Nietzsche’s idea of life-affirmation is to rise above suffering, to accept life with all its sorrows and pain. *Tonio Kröger*’s ending, “Sehnsucht ist darin und schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganze keusche Seligkeit” (338), is a confirmation of Tonio’s longing

for and envy of the bourgeoisie and his own desire to be a part of the sunny world, albeit with slight contempt and at the same time a feeling of bliss. The novella ends on a positive note with Tonio's acceptance of his fate as an artist and the experience of working through the problem which has troubled him all his young life. *Tonio Kröger* recaptures Thomas Mann's own passage from his sensitive youth to adulthood as a successful author with a determination to dedicate his life to the craft of creative art.

2.3 Christa T. as Outsider

The theme of the artist as an outsider in society has existed since the period of "Sturm und Drang." The protagonists in Goethe's *Werther*, or Eichendorff's *Taugenichts* are examples of sensitive, lonely figures who have difficulties integrating into the society of ordinary people. Christa Wolf was well familiar with German Romanticism, even though she downplayed its influence on her work (Nunan 32). The outsider theme in *Nachdenken über Christa T.* may not have been due to Nietzsche's direct influence but it is nevertheless a common element with *Tonio Kröger*.

In *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, the protagonist is an outsider. On the first day Christa T. appears at the school of the narrator, she is detached and never shows any eagerness to get to know her classmates. She talks to the teachers as if she were their equal. When asked to name her favorite topic, her answer is to take a walk in the woods by herself. Christa T. is different from the very beginning and is not interested in being accepted. As the narrator claims: "Die Wahrheit war, sie brauchte uns nicht" (17). Then on one school outing, she holds a rolled newspaper to her mouth and lets out a strange shout, as if she were blowing a trumpet,

completely oblivious to the bewilderment of the bystanders. This bizarre behavior is an indication that she does not care what other people think of her. The independent trait has something to do with her aloofness. She is always an outsider, deliberately detaches herself from the group and goes her own way. Later on as a university student, she is an unreliable team player. Her disregard of the deadline for the team project almost brings down the grade for the whole team. Some may call her behavior irresponsible and self-centred; in any case, she lives by her own rules; conformity is simply not one of her character traits. This detachment from her peers can be attributed to her disposition and perhaps her artistic inclination. After her death, the narrator finds among her possessions a small book bound in light flowered silk and on the cover in her childish writing: "Ich möchte gern dichten und liebe auch Geschichten" (26). This little book with the declaration at age ten accompanies her during the war as she moves from city to city, fleeing from the advancing enemy troops. She is consoled and comforted by the lines she wrote as a girl. Her experiences during the war and its aftermath cause her to be even more attuned to her inner tumult and thoughts and she declares: "ICH bin anders" (32). The capitalized ICH emphasizes her conviction that "she" is different.

Behind the façade of aloofness, Christa T. is a very sensitive person. It is revealed in her diary that she is the one who has placed flowers on the desk of a very unpopular teacher because she is the only one with authority who does not make Christa T. unhappy (21). She is haunted for years by the memories of the cruel acts committed maliciously by other people. Her old black cat is senselessly hurled against a stone wall and killed; eggs about to hatch are smashed; the head of a turtle is bitten off. These acts of cruelty unnerve her to the point that she is almost paralyzed. Other people criticize her for being weak and hypersensitive. The

reality is that she is more susceptible to pain and suffering than ordinary people. Christa T., unlike her fellow students, is not conscientious in her studies. She is different from the “Hopp-Hopp-Menschen” who follow all the rules, are bland and lack imagination. Her supersensitivity, and her strange and unconventional behaviors contribute to her status as an outsider in almost every environment.

After her marriage to Justus, Christa T.’s extraordinariness is noted by the wives of the school director and the dentist in the rural district. They cannot explain why they find Christa T. “unheimlich”(158), but she seems to build a wall around herself so that her true feelings are only known to the people she lets in. To make herself unapproachable, Christa T. also acts in a controlling way in order to discourage intimacy with others. This tendency is evident in the relationship between her and the young school principal from the next village. At the time of their encounter, Christa T. has already made up her mind to leave the village to attend university, and yet she flirts with him knowing that the relationship will not and cannot develop into something meaningful. During their conversation, she teases him mercilessly on the one hand, and at the same time pays him compliments, ostensibly to endear herself to him: “Aus uns wird nichts, es soll nicht sein” (49). Only when she is sure that the relationship cannot blossom because of her relocation to another city, she is able to be herself (Ackrill 49).

The episode of her unfortunate love for Kostja after the encounter with the young principal confirms her tendency to avoid a true connection with another person. With Kostja she follows the same pattern. Perhaps she does love him but her overpowering behavior perplexes him. Subconsciously she pulls herself away from him. She admires his beauty and yet orders him: “Wenn ich dich liebe, was geht’s dich an. Halt du nur still, sitz du nur neben mir, laß

dich nur anschauen, dreh du nur den Kopf nicht weg, dann knurr ich. Zwingen will ich dich nicht ” (73). Kostja recognizes her inner tumult and inconsistency and he says to her one day: “Nun hab ich dich durchschaut, welche Komödie spielst du mir vor.” But she counters: “Wenn ich spiele – was kümmert’s dich” (74). The relationship breaks down with the appearance of the blonde Inge. Inge is weak and not overpowering, in contrast to Christa T. who appears to be strong but is in reality helpless and fragile. As they part company, Kostja talks about their love: “schreib das auf, schreib alles auf, das willst du doch?” (81). He recognizes her artistic propensity and in his opinion, he has never been as important to Christa T. as her writing (Ackrill 49).

Similar to Tonio, Christa T. feels superior to ordinary people, and at the same time, in her darkest moment, she feels an inexplicable sense of inferiority. She wishes she could be like them: find a job, and lead a mundane and commonplace life. Eventually, she does settle for a very domesticated life in the country with a husband, three children and endless housework. But even in this traditional role, she is unconventional. She designs her house down to the minute details in a remote and secluded place, and has an affair which almost destroys her marriage. While Christa T. has only written one complete text, her dissertation on Storm, when she dies, she leaves behind numerous poems, diaries and sketches. Most importantly, her brooding, melancholic disposition fits the temperament of an artist.

2. 4 Christa T. versus Socialism

Wolf’s personal story, the development of her career as a critic and writer, and the evolution of her work are closely related to the history of the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic. She became a member of the SED in 1949. Shortly after her graduation from the University of Jena, she accepted a position with the German Writers’ Union and

promotions followed in quick succession. In 1959, she became the editor of the reputable GDR journal “Neue deutsche Literatur” (Buehler 66).

The citizens of East Germany were largely booklovers and the sales volume of books in the GDR was the highest per capita in the world in the 1960s (Resch 17). To them, books were not for entertainment only but also served as tools for education and information. They looked to authors for inspiration and guidance. As a result, writers occupied an elevated status in the GDR and enjoyed privileges not accorded to the general public. In return for the preferential treatment, GDR writers were expected to observe the restrictive cultural policies of the regime as they were considered servants of the state (Resch 17). Their writings were to portray reality only if the presentation extolled positive aspects of society and were in agreement with party doctrines.

Prior to the induction of socialist realism, writers generally identified with the better educated, more literate class of people. They did not view the general public as their target audience. Literary works were mostly written for the consumption of the educated, learned and sophisticated of society (Resch 19). In the new socialist society, literary works were required foremost to speak to all people, therefore writing was supposed to be simple and unadorned so that it could be easily understood and appreciated by all members of the new society. The preferred content was to be based on stories of workers who were optimistic, forward-looking, and focused on the common goal of building a new and strong country, in keeping with the ideals that people work selflessly for the development of the new society. Socialist literature was to fall in line with political doctrines and principles, contrary to the Western authors who often wrote against their political system and could be pessimistic about the future or question

political authority (Resch 19). The corollary of “Volkstümlichkeit” referred to a simple style so that ordinary people can understand the texts. At the same time, a utopian version of “paradise on earth” should ensure that the masses are happy, content and devoid of conflicts. This concept was to be reflected in the literary works of the GDR authors (Resch 19-21).

Unsurprisingly, the guidelines proved to be unacceptable fetters to many GDR writers who with time felt the need for greater freedom in their choice of subjects and did not want to be bound by the overly simplistic and restrictive perspective of socialist doctrine. As a writer with a keen sense of observation, Wolf was disappointed with the repressive government and the policies that deviated from the original ideals of socialism. Despite their criticism, many authors did not make a complete break with socialism. In the late 1960s, authors such as Stephan Hermlin and Hermann Kant attempted to make subtle changes in their writing with much more emphasis on an individualistic standpoint despite their dedication to socialism. Their work represented a quasi-reform within the system. Wolf was one of these authors who remained in the GDR with the intention of bringing changes to the literary scene (Resch 21). Her decision to remain in the GDR was perhaps not entirely out of loyalty to the state but also out of a sense of obligation to her readers (Resch 21).

Wolf’s dissatisfaction with the system grew gradually. Her first prose work, *Moskauer Novelle*, was still a model of socialist realist writing. But her second novel, *Der geteilte Himmel*, a realistic depiction of GDR life in the early 60s, did not follow the strict guidelines set out by the authorities. This deviation from the party directives was to some extent tolerated. With the appearance of *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, the boundary was crossed. Wolf’s writing of *NT* was precipitated by the events of December, 1965 at the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee of

SED which started as an economic plenum, but evolved into a plenum on cultural politics. At the meeting, many films were considered corrupt and banned. Werner Bräunig, a GDR writer, was severely criticized and the GDR Schriftsteller-verband (Writers' Union) was called counterrevolutionary by Paul Fröhlich, a SED functionary. As a candidate of the SED Central Committee, Wolf was entitled to give a speech and she spoke against these accusations despite her trepidation about the reaction. As a result of this experience and the realization that socialism was heading in the wrong direction, Wolf suffered a mental breakdown and had to be admitted to the hospital for six weeks. During the hospital stay, she started to work on *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (Simon 123-133).

NT is unconventional in every sense of the word. Wolf was keenly aware that her novel violated socialist realism in content as well as in style by promoting self-realization and adopting a complicated style and modernist approach. The epitaph by J. R. Becher summarizes the essence of this book: "Was ist das: Dieses Zu-sich-selber Kommen des Menschen?" For Wolf, the effort to realize a person's individuality in a society of conformity was the key to her novel. Christa T.'s aloofness, independent personality and introspectiveness characterize her effort to find herself in the world of conformists (Resch 54).

Wolf employed a non-linear narrative style in *NT*. Its structure is also chronologically unorthodox, starting with Christa T.'s death and then immediately moving to her school days (Nunan 73), and there are sections interwoven with Christa T.'s experience and the narrator's own recollection. Wolf considered the plot as a dated concept and preferred an open-ended form which she called "epic prose" (Nunan 83-84). Furthermore, one of the characteristics of modern prose is the constant shift from the third person to the first (Pilkington xi), this method

is employed in *NT*. Wolf's complicated style and modernist approach were in direct conflict with the SED directive and she was strongly conscious of the difficulties of her novel. Her text is also at times ambiguous, unconventional, intensely emotional and self-reflective, far from the "Volkstümlichkeit" the SED advocated. Furthermore, the protagonist Christa T. as an outsider, with her otherness in a conformist society, has no place in socialist literature (Dueck 39). The "unorthodox" style of writing was indeed a protest against the oppression and the controlling policies of GDR.

Western critics such as Marcel Reich-Ranicki, Fritz Raddatz and Rolf Michaelis, who had access to the book and followed the development of the "Nachdenken über Christa T. affair," all emphasized the critical content against socialism in this book (Tang 96), much to the chagrin of the GDR authorities.

Christa T. is an outsider in more sense than one. She has misgivings about the new society, about people who are pragmatic and down-to-earth, unlike she herself, who fritters time away daydreaming. As the narrator states:

Sie hat, jetzt spreche ich von Christa T., nichts inniger herbeigewünscht als unsere Welt, und sie hat genau die Art Phantasie gehabt, die man braucht, sie wirklich zu erfassen – denn was man auch sagen mag, mir graut vor der neuen Welt der Phantasielosen. Der Tatsachenmenschen. Der Hopp-Hopp-Menschen, so hat sie sie genannt. Und sich ihnen, in ihren finsternen Stunden, tief unterlegen gefühlt. Auch wohl versucht, sich ihnen anzugleichen, einen Beruf angestrebt, der sie in die Öffentlichkeit geführt hätte: Sie hatte sich mit diesem Ziel selbst überrascht und überlistet (*NT* 63).

Christa T. also has issues with the obligatory participation in group activities; the need to show support for policies has become a bone of contention for her. The feigned enthusiasm, the pretense, the hypocrisies are all schemes to ingratiate oneself to the governing party in order to survive or in exchange for favors. She cannot agree with the uniformity which is forced upon the citizens of the GDR with no room for the expression of individuality. To an author, it is especially detrimental to have no voice or to become the mouthpiece of the government involuntarily as described in the following paragraph:

Aber auch die Fähigkeit, in einem Rausch zu leben ist ihr abgegangen. Die heftigen, sich überschlagenden Worte, die geschwungenen Fahnen, die überlauten Lieder, die hoch über unseren Köpfen im Takt klatschenden Hände. Sie hat gefühlt, wie die Worte sich zu verwandeln beginnen, wenn nicht mehr guter Glaube und Ungeschick und Übereifer sie hervorschleudern, sondern Berechnung, Schläue, Anpassungstrieb (67).

Christa T. starts to have doubts early on in her life, questioning the changes in society and the value of the improvements made in materialistic aspects. She is also critical of a society in which human beings have become elements of the big apparatus. The overall machinery may move forward in a purposeful manner, but no sacrifice is considered too much for individuals; they are completely ignored. This criticism is the crux of Christa T.'s dissatisfaction with GDR policies and is representative of Wolf's own perception:

Christa T., sehr früh, wenn man es heute bedenkt, fing an, sich zu fragen, was denn das heißt: Veränderung. Die neuen Worte? Das neue Haus? Maschinen, größere Felder? Der neue Mensch, hörte sie sagen und begann, in sich hineinzublicken. Der

Mechanismus, nach dem sich das alles bewegte, die Zahnräder, Schnüre und Stangen waren ins Dunkel getaucht, man erfreute sich an der absoluten Perfektion und Zweckmässigkeit des Apparats, den reibungslos in Gang zu halten kein Opfer zu groß schien – selbst nicht das: sich auslöschen. Schraubchen sein (67- 68).

Surprisingly, at the very point when Christa T. becomes acutely aware of the shortcomings of the new society, the narrator finds sketches and papers about Christa T.'s childhood from the same period. Why did Christa T. turn inward, revisit the long buried childhood memory exactly at the same time as she becomes disillusioned with the GDR? Deliberately she relives the pain, the loneliness and abandonment, and at the end makes the declaration: "Ich bin anders" a second time (69) with less conviction than the first time. The narrator claims that: "So direkt darf man sich Wirkung und Gegenwirkung nicht vorstellen" (68). Nevertheless, the connection between the negative thoughts about the GDR and the traumatic past is strongly inferred, and only writing can provide the outlet for her inner struggle and perplexity.

Christa T. is not only disheartened by the socialist system, she is also disturbed by the changes occurring in the attitude of ordinary citizens. As a teacher Christa T. is deeply disappointed with the lies students present in their essays on the topic "Am I too young to make a contribution to the development of socialist society?" When confronted with the falsehood in their essays, they proceed to teach Christa T. the rules of the game in practical life. They have learned long ago, at their young age, the lesson of paying lip service to the doctrines of the GDR at the expense of integrity and truthfulness (115). They are astounded at the naivety of their young teacher who is still full of idealism and clings to the dated way of thinking. Christa T. is disappointed in their lack of integrity and that they have learned early on to play

games. In desperation, she takes this matter up with the school principal, hoping to get some guidance and to clear her own bewilderment. The principal, an old man and a survivor, never utters one word about the issue of the essay. He has seen too many young idealistic teachers with the same attitude toward life to see it as a matter of right or wrong. Eventually they all change. His advice to her is to keep her thoughts to herself and that is what makes life livable in this situation.

After her marriage to Justus, she comes in contact with his circle of friends and the people in the country, the wives of the school principal and the dentist. Again, she feels that she is alone and holds different views from these people. Christa T. cannot agree with their friend Blasing's pragmatic view that: "Es lohnt sich nicht, jedesmal wieder mit sich zu bezahlen. Er kann nur jedem raten, Falschgeld in Umlauf zu geben" (166). Blasing has seen through all the deception. He thinks that at times fake feelings can appear to be more genuine because the doses can be regulated.

In a similar vein, the remarks made by one of her former students, who has later studied to be a medical doctor, show that he has mastered the art of survival in a socialist society. To him: "Überleben, ist ihm klargeworden, sei das Ziel der Menschheit immer gewesen und werde es bleiben. Das heißt, ihr Mittel zu jeder Zeit: Anpassung. Anpassung um jeden Preis" (126). After the breakup with Kostja, Christa T. finds herself in deep depression, and the doctor writes that she suffers from "Neurose als mangelnde Anpassungsfähigkeit an gegebene Umstände" (81). Christa T. does not have the ability to conform and adapt, whereas most of the citizens of GDR consider adaptation an essential prerequisite for survival.

To adapt in order to survive is crucial in this new society that purported to be paradise on earth. In a matter of little more than a decade, people in GDR learned that in order to subsist one must conform, to accept one's lot. Socialism has changed the values and the ethical standards of the citizens in an environment where conformity is valued above other virtues.

In all fairness, the narrator's criticism does not stop with the GDR regime. She also directs criticism against the capitalist society of the FRG. Justus's cousin in West Germany says of her own society: "Wir hier, weißt du, sind eigentlich schrecklich materiell" (142).

Despite the disparaging descriptions of GDR life, Wolf was indeed committed to the idea and ideal of socialism. To label *NT* as a subversive work may be an exaggeration and incongruent with Wolf's intention. This view is supported by the assertion in *NT* on Christa T.'s life: "Nichts könnte unpassender sein als Mitleid, Bedauern" (194). Wolf has reiterated in *Selbstinterview* that Christa T., despite all the limitations placed on individuals, lived a full life through her introspective quest for self-actualization in a conformist society; her only regret was that she was born too soon.

Wolf was also true to her conviction that the position of an author came with privileges as well as the responsibility to identify the deficiencies of the system. She had a strong desire to strike a balance between her conscience and the goal and ideal of socialism (Buehler 141-142).

In summary, both Tonio and Christa T. are outsiders in their respective societies. Even though Tonio longs to be like ordinary people, he considers himself better than his classmates and teachers and he despises them for their lack of discernment and sophistication. As a matter of fact, his longing is mixed with envy and contempt. Tonio's main dilemma is that the demands of his art conflict with his desire to participate in the world of the ordinary people. At the end,

Tonio is able to resolve his conflict through “die Bürgerliebe” – the love of the ordinary people, and the novella ends on a positive note.

Christa T. is a loner by choice as she appears to be comfortable being different and conspicuous. She is an aspiring writer, but her only literary achievement is the dissertation on Theodor Storm. As a student at the university, she becomes disillusioned with socialist society for its disregard of individual freedom. She eventually gets married and devotes herself to her family. Christa T.’s story continues with a focus on inner development, on “Zu-sich-kommen.” Despite her untimely death at the age of thirty-five, her life is not a failure because through the efforts of the narrator, her story has been told and preserved.

The similarity between Tonio and Christa T. is the strong sense of being different because of their artistic disposition which sets them apart from the ordinary citizens of their respective societies. Tonio is an outsider because of his innate sense of superiority, his feeling that he possesses more insights and knowledge than the Philistines. Christa T.’s outsider status stems from her non-conformist attitude in a society where individuality is denounced. While Christa T. is doubtless an outsider of her society, Wolf was an insider in GDR literary circles, an achiever and a successful literary critic at a young age who, was nevertheless in danger of becoming an outsider due to her criticism of the political system. In this case, it is an insider, Wolf, writing a story about an outsider, Christa T., whose boldness and uncompromising stands are considered to be particularly inspiring to Wolf.

Chapter Three: Autobiographical Elements

Saint Augustine's *Confessions* (c. AD 398-400) is often considered the pioneer of modern Western autobiography. Its main characteristic is the construction of a history of selfhood, the process for the author to know who he is (Nunan 17). Autobiography is an established literary genre; it is an account of a person's own life by the person himself. In addition to Saint Augustine's work, J. J. Rousseau's *Confessions* is another example of this category. St. Augustine's *Confessions* was written to depict a religious experience as a prototype for others, whereas Rousseau's work of the same name, placing its emphasis on the unique individual and complete transparency to his readers, was a model of secular autobiography in the 18th and 19th centuries (Nunan 28). A new type of writing in the form of autobiography or fictional memoir gained prominence in the second half of the 18th century. This new genre was referred to as "the literature of self" by Georges Gusdorf (Stelzig 1). In the German-speaking realm, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, with his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthes*, an autobiography and autobiographical novel respectively, was the well-known author of this genre who also had a significant influence on Thomas Mann.

In the 20th century, Georges Gusdorf and another theorist, Philippe Lejeune, attempted to define the genre more precisely and became famous for their discussions and definitions of autobiography in the 1970s (Nunan 17). According to Gusdorf, autobiography requires a certain level of consciousness of one's self which is unique to Western culture (Nunan 18).

Philippe Lejeune's famous "Autobiographical pact," though limiting as some critics claimed, provides some concrete criteria and a definition of autobiography as "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality" (Nunan 39).

Tonio Kröger was written before the development of the modern theories of autobiography. In it, Mann depicts a largely autobiographical story of Tonio Kröger's life and his struggle between art and life. As a matter of fact, *TK* is not an autobiography in the strict sense of the word; it can be more appropriately categorized as autobiographic fiction. In contrast with autobiography, an autobiographical novel is a semi-fictional account based on the author's own life experience. Names and locations are often changed for various reasons, but the story contains self-reflection and introspection and there is a close resemblance between the storyline and the life of the author. *Tonio Kröger* is not an autobiography in accordance with the definition of the genre because the narrator and the principal character are not identical. So it is best characterized as an autobiographical fiction or novel (Cohn 30).

3.1 Autobiographical Fiction – *Tonio Kröger*

In his *Lebensabriß* written in 1930, Mann referred to *Tonio Kröger* as the work closest to his heart and the most personal (GW XI: 115). Indeed Mann himself encouraged the idea that the work should be considered, to some extent, autobiographical. Some critics were skeptical of its simplistic storyline, the tiresome repetitions of the theme and characters. As an example, the second chapter is similar to the first, with Ingeborg Holm replacing Hans Hansen as Tonio's love interest. These two figures reappear in the later chapter as flashbacks to Tonio's unhappy

youth (Reich-Ranicki 71). *Tonio Kröger* may not have the sophisticated plot of Mann's other writings as seen in *der Zauberberg* or *Der Tod in Venedig*, and Mann was aware of the obvious weaknesses (Koopmann, *TM Handbook* 564), but it remained one of his favorite works. In spite of its weakness, there are themes in this novella that resonated with the artists of the time. A number of writers including Kafka, Schnitzler and Hesse were impressed with the treatment of the theme "artist versus bourgeois" (Reich-Ranicki 72-74); others found the portrayal of the protagonist as an outsider looking in especially poignant when they recalled their own experiences as creative artists. *Tonio Kröger* especially appealed to the younger authors of Mann's era because of the emotional allure. Marcel Reich-Ranicki affirmed that *TK* made a strong impression on him and he recognized himself as the tormented young author in reading the novel. This view was shared by many authors (75).

The fact that Mann had a strong attachment to *Tonio Kröger* may have something to do with the revelation of Mann's soul in this text. It was reported that Mann on occasion light-heartedly signed letters as "Tonio K." Tonio's love for Hans Hansen indeed parallels Mann's infatuation with Armin Martens, a classmate in his youth. On May 24, 1931, in answering a questionnaire entitled "My First Love," Mann wrote that *Tonio Kröger* contained all the tales about such "sweet pangs" (Kurzke 35). In Mann's later years, he unveiled the identity of this first love in a letter to Hermann Lange: In reference to Armin Martens, he wrote that "For I loved him – he was really my first love I set up a memorial for him in *Tonio Kröger*..." (Kurzke 35). Armin Martens was not the only object of homoerotic love in Mann's youth. In the early 1900s, Mann was deeply in love with another male friend, Paul Ehrenberg. In his seventh notebook he wrote that "P. is my first and only human friend. Up to now all my friends have

been demons, hobgoblins, unfathomable fiends In other words, literary men” (Kurzke 118-119).

Thomas Mann claimed in the foreword to his collection *Altes und Neues* that all of his writing was to some extent autobiographical (GW XI: 695). Indeed he frequently incorporated his life experiences in his novels and other works and many facts are clearly recognizable. *Tonio Kröger* is no exception. To Mann, writing is a process of cleansing and justification; there is an urge for him to confess, to expose his inner feelings, and to allow his readers to get to know the authenticity of his being. Yet he did so in an indirect manner through the introduction of fictitious people and occurrences to camouflage the facts. In a sense, he was using a veil to write autobiographically (Lehnert 148). In his literary works, as in the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a poet he greatly admired, are fragments of confessions. Mann was a master of restraint and maintained a firm control over the artist impulse to make a clean breast of his feelings. There are indeed many aspects of Mann in *Tonio Kröger*, but it is preposterous to assume that the fictional character Tonio represents Mann in every aspect. Mann believed that other authors adopted the same strategy and was of the opinion that autobiographies were a mixture of confession and deception (Winston xiii). Because of the fact that *Tonio Kröger* is not an autobiography but an autobiographical “fiction” (Cohn 30), there is even more latitude in presenting reality in the work.

In order to understand *TK*, a foreword written by Mann for an autobiographical essay by Erich von Mendelssohn would be helpful: “Love of oneself is always the beginning of a fictionalized existence. Love of oneself, one may add, is also the beginning of all autobiography” (Lehnert 149). Through this passage we gain a glimpse of Mann’s opinion on autobiography and

the reason for his many autobiographical narratives, and the many depictions of himself and his emotions as well as factual events in his works. Some well-known examples include the unmistakable inference to the city of Lübeck, Mann's hometown, the similarities between Tonio's parents and his own, and his less than stellar academic achievements. Even Tonio's physical appearance and disposition bear strong resemblances to his own. Mann's ability as a writer is reflected in the young Tonio, who has a way with words and is able to express his thoughts and observations better than his peers. Tonio also gains fame as a writer at a young age. Tonio's favorite writer Schiller provides another autobiographic detail. Three months before Mann's death, he reminisced about his love of Schiller's *Don Carlos* at the age of fifteen (Neubauer 33); Tonio was fourteen when he is so impressed with Schiller's *Don Carlos*. Likewise Theodor Storm, who plays a not insignificant role in *Tonio Kröger*, was also one of Mann's favorite authors from his youth and he even modeled Tonio's father after Storm. The novella includes references to Shakespeare (*Hamlet*) and Nietzsche who influenced Mann in his youth as well. Most importantly, this novella contains the dichotomy of art and life and the plight of the literary man which was an issue Mann grappled with during this period of his life. It contains the dreams and aspiration of his youth as well as the painful memories of a suffering bisexual writer in an era of intolerance (Neubauer 37); such tendencies were socially unacceptable and condemned. Mann preferred to use a third person approach for his autobiographical revelations, as he was somewhat uncomfortable in the first person account. He also included differences from his own background in *TK* as intentional distortions: in real life, his mother never remarried as opposed to Tonio's mother who married a musician one year after the death of Consul Kröger and moved away to a faraway country. This distancing

strategy allowed him to explore his own vulnerability and sexual orientation as well as to provide a discreet means to gauge the reactions of his readers. His writings evince a strong desire to express his inner feelings but at the same time they show his reluctance to expose his innermost thoughts, considering that his reputation and future as a respectable writer were at stake in the reserved and conservative society of the early 20th century.

There is no overt description of a homosexual relationship between Tonio and Hans, but the hopeless yearning full of passion is vividly painted by Mann: “So war Hans Hansen, und seit Tonio Kröger ihn kannte, empfand er Sehnsucht, sobald er ihn erblickte, eine neidische Sehnsucht, die oberhalb der Brust saß und brannte” (TK 276). His love does not stop at that; he also fervently wishes to be loved by Hans as described in the next paragraph: “Aber er begehrte schmerzlich, so, wie er war, von ihm geliebt zu werden, und er warb um seine Liebe auf seine Art, eine langsame und innige, hingebungsvolle, leidende und wehmütige Art...” (TK 276). To Mann, the description was so transparent that in a letter to a friend he maintained that he had put into *Tonio Kröger* a confession of a love so clear and direct as to verge on the inartistic (Ranicki 71). The homoerotic tension in him propelled works such as *Der Tod in Venedig*, *Joseph und seine Brüder* and *Mario und der Zauberer*, all of which have homosexual inferences. As a parallel to Hans Hansen, Mann included in the novel the episode of Ingeborg Holm, Tonio’s heterosexual infatuation after the “friendship” with Hans Hansen has cooled. In comparison with the intensity of his love for Hans Hansen, Tonio displays more maturity and a measured reservation in his feelings toward Inge. The description of his feeling for her indicates that this is a new stage in Tonio’s life: “Ein Entzücken ergriff sein Herz, weit stärker als jenes, das er früher zuweilen empfunden hatte, wenn er Hans Hansen betrachtete, als er noch ein kleiner,

dummer Junge war" (TK 282). To refer to Tonio as a small and silly boy might have been just the tactic to conceal, to explain away Tonio's homoerotic tendencies. At the end of this episode Tonio also recognizes the fickleness of his own devotion; his passion will one day cool and he foresees that Ingeborg too will be forgotten. The bisexuality is also a real life phenomenon. At the time when *TK* was written, Mann was courting Katia Pringsheim, whom he married in 1905. However, even in this chapter of heterosexual love, there is the reference to Tonio as Fräulein Kröger by the dance instructor François Knaak, and it can be construed as a clue to Tonio's fantasy of his suppressed homoerotic identity (Detering 292).

3.2 Biography or Autobiographical Novel? – *Nachdenken über Christa T.*

According to Christa Wolf's granddaughter Jana Simon, a German journalist, Wolf seldom talked about her past and Simon had little knowledge of her grandparents' life stories. When Simon begged her grandmother to reminisce about her youth, Wolf told her to read her works (Geissler 23). Wolf always avoided revealing her youth and past in a direct manner, but her novels and writings divulged much about her life and thinking. In general, the protagonists of her novels, as in *Nachdenken über Christa T.* and *Kindheitmuster*, personify her own disposition and personality.

To understand *NT*, the relationship between Wolf the author, the narrator and Christa T. must be looked at carefully. Most literary scholars, including Therese Hörnigk, Heinrich Mohr and Andreas Huyssen, agreed that Wolf and Christa T. are two different identities (Dröscher 78). In the preface of *Nachdenken über Christa T.* Wolf explained that: "Christa T. ist eine 'literarische Figur.' Authentisch sind manche Zitate aus Tagebüchern, Skizzen und Briefen. Zu

äußerlicher Detailtreue sah ich mich nicht verpflichtet.“ On the other hand, in Wolf’s *Selbstinterview* (*Werke* IV:139), she confirmed that the novel is about a friend, a real person. Furthermore, Hans Mayer, Wolf’s professor at the Karl Marx Universität in Leipzig, believed that he recalled a student named Christa Tabbert in his classes around the same time as Wolf (Dröscher 79).

Initially Wolf likely intended to write a biography of her friend Christa Tabbert who passed away at the age of thirty-five. She had gathered diaries, poems, sketches and drawings of her friend. In her attempt to recapture the images of Christa T. and Wolf’s own relationship to her, she became aware that the focus had changed from documenting the life of Christa T. to their relationship and her own role in the dissemination of the views and visions of her friend. As she stated in *Selbstinterview*:

Frage: So schreiben Sie also eine Art von posthumem Lebenslauf.

Antwort: Das dachte ich zuerst. Später merkte ich, daß das Objekt meiner Erzählung gar nicht so eindeutig sie, Christa T., war oder blieb. Ich stand auf einmal mir selbst gegenüber, das hatte ich nicht vorhergesehen. Die Beziehungen zwischen “uns” – der Christa T. und dem Ich-Erzähler – rückten ganz von selbst in den Mittelpunkt: die Verschiedenheit der Charaktere und ihre Berührungspunkte, die Spannungen zwischen “uns” und ihre Auflösung, oder das Ausbleiben der Auflösung.

Frage: Immerhin haben Sie nun zugegeben, daß zwei authentische Figuren auftreten: Christa T. und ein Ich.

Antwort: Habe ich das zugegeben? Sie hätten recht, wenn nicht beide Figuren letzten Endes doch erfunden wären (*Werke* IV: 140).

From the first part of the above paragraph, the reader can almost come to the conclusion that the narrator and the author could be identical. However, Wolf stopped short of identifying the narrator with the author; it appears that the narrator at the end could be a fictional figure after all. Wolf's ambiguous claim of authenticity and fictionality was meant to blur the distinction between the two and to make the point that the "authentic" is inevitably "fictionalized" in a narrative text (Nunan 85-87) and vice versa.

NT is a multi-layered novel. The life story of Christa T. forms the first layer, and the story is not told in a chronological manner but as a montage of occurrences spanning the years from 1937 to her death in 1963. The second layer is Christa T.'s relationship to the narrator and its development over the years. The third layer deals with the effect of Stalinism in the fifties and the criticism directed at the political situation of the time. The fourth layer builds on the foundation of self-reflexive narration in connection with the narrator's "Zu-sich-selbst-Kommen" and the effect on her writings. Finally, all this is still eclipsed by thoughts about the problem of writing as an act of individual productivity, in which self-actualization and intense, conscious and moral existence is attained (Dröscher 77).

As Wolf progresses with writing the story of Christa T., she is confronted with herself, or the narrator as the agent for Wolf. The change of narrative position within the text and the importance of this story to the narrator mean that it can be construed as autobiographical (Nunan 68). The probing of her own emotion, searching for latent thoughts and memories of experiences, took on unparalleled significance in her writing. This exercise resembled a form of self-discovery, delving into her deep, long-forgotten past for new insights. To some, Wolf's approach was also akin to a retreat or an escape into the author's inner self, a highly emotional

experience reminiscent of the “Empfindsamkeit” – as opposed to reason, based on personal experience and self-examination – style of writing (Nunan 75). There is a close relationship between pietism, the associated Empfindsamkeit and autobiography which can be traced back to the writings of medieval mystics (Kontje 19). In her defense, Wolf maintained that the style was uniquely suitable for personal writing and autobiography without the religious overtone. However, the ambiguous relationship between the author, the narrator and Christa T. makes it difficult to consider this work a straightforward autobiography.

Roland Barthes’ autobiography, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, takes a deconstructive approach by attempting to “write an autobiography against itself.” It discards the first-person singular and switches between first and second and third person. There is some resemblance to non-traditional autobiographical works such as *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (Nunan 49). This approach is not groundbreaking, as autobiography and biography are often intertwined in the same text (Nunan 88). *NT* is of course a story about the narrator’s friend, but at the same time, Wolf admitted that the process of writing *NT* helped her to gain a better understanding of her own identity (Tate 201).

Wolf began her work on *NT* in 1965. She and Christa Tabbert went to the same schools in the 1940s, in the final days of the Third Reich, and then lost contact with each other during the period of “Vertreibung” as families moved around to seek suitable places to settle down. They reconnected when both of them studied German literature in Leipzig. This reunion is reflected in the third chapter of *NT*.

Despite the similarities in background, Christa T. is quite different from the narrator, for she stands out in her non-conforming way. She sits at the back of the class and does not seem

at all eager to get to know anyone. To the narrator she appears not to need her classmates. And one day as they are walking in the city, she lets go a shout of HOOHAHOO in front of all the strangers. In a society where conformity is the key to survival, Christa T. acts differently and is daring and self-assured. Gradually the narrator begins to admire her independent personality traits. In contrast to the narrator, a conformist in her school years, Christa T. is bold and unconcerned about the opinions of her peers (Tate 202).

Christa T. has many life experiences similar to Christa Wolf's; both their formative years were spent first under National Socialism and then Socialism. Christa T. also shares the same memories of the war, the suffering and the feelings of hopelessness towards the end of the Nazi regime. The horror of the war experience was etched deeply in Wolf's memories and is mirrored in the diaries of Christa T. Her account of the war is especially pertinent to Wolf because it describes the most tumultuous periods of Germany, the Third Reich and the difficult life in GDR. The second chapter of *NT* depicts the scenes of the burning cities and towns, the approach of the Russian army with people scrambling to escape the advancing enemy troops, and the endless moving, searching for a safe refuge. The weariness and the numbing feelings are all too familiar to the narrator. The description is based on Christa T.'s writing and is also a part of Wolf's memory. According to Sonja Hilzinger, the author of Christa Wolf's biography, as was expected of young female students in the last days of the war, Wolf interrupted her schooling to attend to the needs of the evacuees in 1945. On a winter day, she was given a bundle with a baby to be reunited with the baby's mother later on. However, when she finally handed over the baby to the mother, there was a heart-wrenching cry because the baby was frozen dead. Wolf was so traumatized by the incident that she almost had a nervous

breakdown (Hilzinger 14). She later relayed this shock in *NT* as the protagonist's experience (32-33). The overlap of Christa T.'s and Wolf's own experiences creates a blurry interplay between the stories of these two figures.

Wolf intentionally left the figure of the narrator with few personal details. What the readers get to know about her is in connection with Christa T. Purportedly she is two years younger than Christa T., also studied in Leipzig and is a Germanist and an author. Wolf deliberately moves back and forth between Christa T. and the narrator with no set boundary and structure to allow herself the freedom of personal writing which is a key element of autobiography. However, there are numerous differences between Christa T.'s and Wolf's life stories. *NT* is not a novel merely about remembering the life events of the narrator's friend. Through the writing, the narrator strives to relive the life of Christa T. to understand the meaning and the significance of her life within the political and social context of her time. The narrator's reconstruction of the memory of Christa T. is the "depth," namely the aspect of "subjective authenticity" in the work (Pilkington xii). To phrase this concept in a different way, the emergence of the author in the text is the fourth dimension which opens up possibilities for the pursuit of other interpretations (Dueck 44).

To Wolf, autobiographical writing is closely associated with subjective authenticity; initially Wolf used the term "innere Authentizität" to describe her new aesthetic (Tate 39) because of its emphasis on the author's personal experience and probing of her self. Around 1966 when Wolf wrote *NT*, she already subscribed to the concept of subjective authenticity which was then developed and articulated in a more concise manner in the essay *Subjektive Authentizität - Gespräch mit Hans Kaufmann* (1973):

Dies ist durchaus "eingreifende" Schreibweise, nicht "subjektivistische". Allerdings setzt sie ein hohes Maß an Subjektivität voraus, ein Subjekt, das bereit ist, sich seinem Stoff rückhaltlos zu stellen, das Spannungsverhältnis auf sich zu nehmen, das dann unvermeidlich wird, auf die Verwandlungen neugierig zu sein, die Stoff und Autor dann erfahren. Man sieht eine andere Realität als zuvor. Plötzlich hängt alles mit allem zusammen und ist in Bewegung; für "gegeben" angenommene Objekte werden auflösbar und offenbaren die in ihnen vergegenständlichte Beziehung: es wird viel schwerer, "ich" zu sagen, und doch zugleich oft unerlässlich. Die Suche nach einer Methode, dieser Realität schreibend gerecht zu werden möchte ich vorläufig "subjektive Authentizität" nennen- und ich kann nur hoffen, deutlich gemacht zu haben, dass sie ihre Existenz der objektiven Realität nur nicht bestreitet, sondern gerade eine Bemühung darstellt, sich mit ihr produktiv auseinanderzusetzen (*Werke IV*: 409).

Wolf's immersion in the work through the involvement of the self, and her unreserved straightforward presentation of reality is based on the unavoidable subjectivity of the author. The process of writing is in itself the goal rather than the finished product. Wolf first used the term "authentic" in *Selbstinterview*, which does not mean objective factual reality, but a subjective experience. It can be more accurately described as a kind of "verifiable truth through the author's creative imagination" (Pilkington xii).

"Subjective authenticity" focuses on the author's authentic experience and this new way of writing distances itself far from socialist realism where literature only idealistically depicts the achievements of the new society. The author now plays an important part in the text as one

of the characters whereas the traditional approach demands the strict separation between the narrator and the author (Nunan 85).

The self-awareness brought about the notion of coming-to-oneself, “das Zu-sich-selber-Kommen des Menschen,” a quote by Johannes Becher, is also the epitaph of *NT*. Becher served as culture minister of the GDR until his death in 1958 and was one of the most important supporters of socialist realism. The main idea of *NT* is self-actualization, to find oneself and to confront oneself. Both Christa T. and the narrator wrestle with internal conflicts in terms of their roles in society as individuals rather than as faceless objects in a group.

The extended quotation of Becher is:

Was ist das, dieses Zu-sich-selber Kommen des Menschen? Es ist die Erfüllung aller der Möglichkeiten, wie sie dem Menschen gegeben sind. Unlust und Unbehagen schafft Traurigkeit, und die Traurigkeit steigert sich zur Angst, zur Schwermut und Verzweiflung, da wir das Leben nicht leben, das uns zu leben gegeben wäre” (Hilzinger, *Samm.* 33).

Even the then culture minister, a staunch proponent of socialist realism, recognized the importance of the role of self actualization in a conformist society and he was alarmed by the erosion of individual rights in the GDR (Bueher 135). Wolf was cognizant that *NT* was in violation of the principles of socialist realism; invoking Becher’s “das Zu-sich-selbst Kommen” as the epitaph of *NT* was a strategically calculated move to defend the theme of self-realization in *NT*. Wolf saw self actualization as the common goal of literature and socialist society. She justified her stance in *Selbstinterview* that:

Es ist ein großer Gedanke, daß der Mensch nicht zur Ruhe kommt, ehe er zu sich selber gefunden hat. Die tiefe Wurzel der Übereinstimmung zwischen echter Literatur und der sozialistischen Gesellschaft sehe ich eben darin : Beide haben das Ziel, dem Menschen zu seiner Selbstverwirklichung zu verhelfen (*Werke* IV:141).

In this regard, whether *NT* is an autobiography of Wolf or a biography of Christa T. does not seem to be of great importance as both Wolf and the protagonist of the work share the same life-long goal: "Dieser lange, nicht enden wollende Weg zu sich selbst" (*NT* 194).

Chapter Four: Theodor Storm

Theodor Storm was one of the most important writers of 19th century German realism. He was also an exceptional lyric poet and well known as a master of the descriptive realistic novellas, a genre he refined and improved. Storm was known for his poetic and bourgeois realistic portrayal of life of the nineteenth century German middle class. His novellas are often about the struggles and aspirations of the ordinary citizens of his native province of Schleswig-Holstein. The nostalgic poems with the longing of lost love earned him the nickname “der Dichter der Sehnsucht” (Von Haradraab). The windswept, rugged North Sea coastal landscapes of Schleswig-Holstein that serve as a backdrop for his many novellas are also the emblem of his works. Although he became relatively well-known in the latter part of his life, many of his peers considered his work provincial and strictly regional as well as excessively sentimental. An upsurge of interest emerged in 1930 after the publication of Thomas Mann’s *Essay über Storm* depicting Storm’s influence on Mann’s youth and his contribution to Mann’s understanding of German literature. The popularity of Storm’s work has since remained unabated. As a result, much attention has been directed to analysing his writings from different literary perspectives (Cengage).

Though Storm’s work has been criticized as ordinary and unoriginal (Artiss 6), partly because of the sentimental protagonists, Thomas Mann came to recognize Storm’s greatness as a skillful poet and expert descriptive novelist, and that Storm’s personal experiences provided much depth and complexity unique to his works. While the characters in his novellas may be sentimental and commonplace, his writing is anything but ordinary or banal, and he is

successful in creating poetic works that are lyrical, creative and imaginative. On the other hand, one should not overestimate Storm's influence on Mann's writing. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Wagner and Goethe remain the predominant forces in his literary development and in the shaping of Mann's world view.

Mann singled out Storm as one of the influential poets in *Tonio Kröger*, written in 1903. Again in 1918 Mann mentioned Storm in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, followed by the *Essay über Storm* in 1930. According to Karl Laage, Thomas Mann admitted in a letter to E.O. Wooley, a renowned Storm researcher, that he had a lifelong fascination with Storm's poetry (15-19). Throughout his life Mann never lost interest in Storm's works. Apart from Storm's poetry, Mann was impressed by the dynamic narrative style in his novellas. Mostly, Mann admired his professionalism, shared by other 19th century writers such as Gottfried Keller and Eduard Mörike. These poetic realists represented the skilled German writers of the period, and Mann felt closest to Storm.

In his *Essay über Theodor Storm*, Thomas Mann describes that as a young author he wrote a lyrical tale with the subject of the bourgeois against the icy-aesthetic world of art and intellect. In this work the protagonist's father is described as tall, melancholic, with thoughtful eyes and always with a wild flower in his buttonhole. Mann was referring to *Tonio Kröger* and the portrait of the father figure is a composite of Theodor Storm and Ivan Turgenev (GW IX: 247) whom he also greatly admired. As a matter of fact, he credited these two authors as the spiritual fathers of *Tonio Kröger*. He maintained that through these two authors the nineteenth century novella form reached its peak (GW IX: 247).

Storm's poem "Hyazinthen" is a "wunderschönes Gedicht" as acclaimed by Tonio in *TK* (285), an enigmatic poem with its problematic relationship between realism and fantasy (Cambridge 12). In his *Essay über Storm*, Mann speaks about: "Zu dieser Rangordnung [Gedichte wie "Meerestrand," "Im Walde"] gehört "Hyazinthen" mit seiner vornehmen Zärtlichkeit, seiner cellomäßig gezogenen Fülle von Empfindung, Schwermut, Liebesmüdigkeit, dem unendlich gefühlssymbolischen Refrain " (GW IX: 250). In this novella, Mann invoked the refrain of "Hyazinthen," the verse "Ich möchte schlafen, aber du mußt tanzen." This idea appears like a leitmotif in the novella, the first time at the dance lesson where Tonio is so enthralled with the blonde Inge and the second time in Aalsgard, at the illusory reunion with his childhood friends. A hyacinth is a flower with a strong fragrance which has an intoxicating effect on people. Aptly, there is a mystic quality about the poem, the elusive girl dancing amidst the sound of violin and merriment and yet appearing to be pale and fragile. The delicate and ethereal dancing girl in the poem contrasts directly with the healthy and earthy blond Inge, the object of Tonio's infatuation at age sixteen. The girl "Hyazinthen" might have been merely an ideal and an unattainable illusion for Tonio. His love for Inge who is incapable of sharing the richness of his world is the cause of his melancholy.

When the same refrain appears a second time in the novella, Tonio is now a young writer with a good reputation. As a matured individual, his feelings are quite different after thirteen years. To him, the emphasis of the poem has shifted to the gravity of his profession; the obligation of an artist weighs heavily on him. Tonio reflects on his own situation:

Ich möchte schlafen, aber du mußt tanzen. Er kannte sie so gut, die melancholisch-nordische, innig-ungeschickte Schwerfälligkeit der Empfindung, die daraus sprach....

- und dennoch tanzen, behend und geistesgegenwärtig den schweren, schweren und gefährlichen Messertanz der Kunst vollführen zu müssen, ohne je ganz des demütigenden Widersinnes zu vergessen, der darin lag, tanzen zu müssen indes man liebte ... (TK 334-335).

The dancing is no longer about Inge, but the reflection is on Tonio. He is struck by the recollection of the past humiliation which accentuates his present emotional state about his destiny as a writer. It seems that he is trapped by the unending dancing in circles, the obligation to be constantly in motion and to perform the dangerous knife dance of art.

Another reference to Storm's work, the "Sommergeschichte" *Immensee* appears immediately after Tonio's humiliating experience during the dance lesson, and he questions his reason for attending the dance:

Warum, warum war er hier? Warum saß er nicht in seiner Stube am Fenster und las in Storms "Immensee" und blickte hie und da in den abendlichen Garten hinaus, wo der alte Walnußbaum schwerfällig knarrte? Das wäre sein Platz gewesen. Mochten die anderen tanzen und frisch und geschickt bei der Sache sein! Nein, nein, sein Platz war dennoch hier, wo er sich in Inges Nähe wußte, wenn er auch nur einsam von ferne stand und versuchte, in dem Summen, Klirren und Lachen dort drinnen ihre Stimme zu unterscheiden, in welcher es klang von warmem Leben (TK 286).

This reference also highlights the chasm between Tonio and the warmth of the bourgeois world which cannot be easily bridged. *Immensee* is a richly symbolic novella based on a love story divided into ten scenes as framed by the remembrances of the protagonist Reinhard as an old man thinking back to his youth with regret and sorrow. There are parallels between Reinhard of

Immensee by Storm and Tonio Kröger. Both of them are awkward outsiders who yearn to be loved. Tonio is aware that his love for Inge is one-sided and he feels an affinity to Reinhard, as both of them have experienced unrequited and unfulfilled love. *Tonio Kröger* could be considered a transformation of *Immensee* with the infusion of more intellectual elements into the work by Thomas Mann. To illustrate the importance of Storm's influence, Mann himself summarized *Tonio Kröger* as "Das Produkt, eine Mischung aus scheinbar heterogenen Elementen: aus Wehmut und Kritik, Innigkeit und Skepsis, Storm und Nietzsche, Stimmung und Intellektualismus ... (GW XII: 92).

Storm occupies an important position in *NT*, considering that Wolf devoted a whole chapter to him based on the materials she found in Christa T.'s writings. The protagonist Christa T. has gone through a period of severe depression after her relationship with Kostja came to an abrupt end because of the blonde Inge. As Christa T. recovers from her breakup with Kostja and directs her attention to her studies and the more ordinary things in life, she reads the works of Raabe, Keller and Theodor Storm, the German realists. Their writings have "sichere scharf abgegrenzte Vorgänge, überschaubar bis in die Verästelung der Gefühle, die doch immer einfach bleiben" (*NT* 103). The works of the realists with the down-to-earth approaches suit her better in this phase of her life when she is severely depressed.

Realism was generally accepted as a literary form in the GDR. Theodor Storm however, had not been held in high esteem in the 1950s when György Lukács, the Hungarian literary critic enjoyed an elevated status in the literary circles of the GDR. Lukács was critical of Storm's provincialism and narrowness; he also called Storm's works "Poesie des Verzichts." He was of the opinion that even though some of the poetry might be fascinating, it should not be

accorded any status in a socialist society. After the Hungarian revolution in 1956, Lukács' influence diminished significantly in the GDR, and Storm was rehabilitated in a sense in East Germany (qtd. in Seiler 10). Wolf was aware of the negative assessment of Storm as a writer, but she was convinced that his work would live on: "Manche der Gedichte und Novellen dieses Dichters werden nicht vergehen. Nur werden sie von den späteren glücklicheren Menschen anders verstanden werden. Weniger einsame Trauer wird aus ihnen rinnen" (NT 112).

Christa T. chooses Theodor Storm as the topic of her dissertation and she gives the following justification:

Weil sein Weltverhältnis 'vorwiegend lyrisch' ist und weil eine solche Natur, in eine von Niedergangstendenzen und Epigonentum gezeichnete Zeit gestellt, besondere Anstrengungen nötig hat, um dennoch ihr Werk hervorzubringen.... Aber er hat, was er immerhin besitzt, wirklich erobert, und unter welchen Bedingungen (NT 109)!

Storm was compelled to leave Husum during the conflict with Denmark regarding Schleswig-Holstein because he refused to recognize the Danish dominion. He continued openly to proclaim his anti-Danish sentiments and as a result was forced to live in exile for over ten years.

Christa T. admires Storm's tenacity to overcome the adversarial circumstances and to eventually achieve his goal. She expresses her respect for his persistence that:

"Der Widerspruch, in dem er lebte, hätte ihn zerreißen sollen. Er aber, der letzter geistiger Konsequenz aus dem Wege geht, bleibt vergleichsweise heil, klagt aus, was sein empfindsames Gemüt verletzt, ehe die Konflikte ihre volle Höhe und Schärfe gewinnen können" (NT 111).

Her admiration also extends to his preserving his integrity as a writer and retaining his humanity during less than ideal times. She even credits him for the rescue of poetry from destruction as she notes: “Das ungebrochene Künstlertum das sich als volles Menschentum auffaßt. Manches kreidet sie ihm an: die Rettung der Poesie vor der drohenden Zerstörung der menschlichen Persönlichkeit an den Rand des Geschehens” (NT 110).

In Storm, Christa T. also finds the answer to her own question which has been troubling her: “Wie man denn – und ob überhaupt und unter welchen Umständen – in der Kunst sich selbst verwirklichen könne” (109). Christa T. as an aspiring writer, full of self-doubt and disappointment, is forced to seek consolation through writing as the only recourse. Storm’s experience in overcoming his hardship and finding self-fulfilment in art served as an example to Christa T. Even though the evolving socialist society is at times in disarray and appears to have lost its original ideals and direction, self-actualization as a goal is still attainable for Christa T. She is, however, less complimentary about Storm’s “Empfindlichkeit der Nerven” and is critical of the limitation of Storm’s themes, predominantly on love and family. She believes that:

[Er] läßt sich auch gerne hineinziehen in die begrenzte Welt seiner Gestalten, liebenswert, reich an Gefühlen, vermerkt aber doch schon, wie sie als Persönlichkeiten eingeschränkt werden durch die hartnäckige Einkreisung in die Themen Liebe, Familie: Bei so spärlichen menschlichen Beziehungen sinkt die Flamme bald in sich zusammen ... (NT 110).

This view represents some of the criticism Storm received from his contemporary critics. In *Tonio Kröger*, the contrast between realism and intellect is represented by Storm and Nietzsche. In *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, these two aspects are exemplified by Storm and Thomas Mann. Christa T. describes Storm’s writing as “Sichere, scharf abgegrenzte Vorgänge”

and in regard to characteristics of Mann's work "die Kompliziertheit, Vieldeutigkeit, Verfeinerung, die Endzeitgefühle" (NT 107). To Christa T. there are two aspects, Storm and Mann, realism and the complicated intellect of Mann. She chooses Storm when her life needs a solid grounding and Storm's work provides the link to life, but she returns to Mann at the time when she becomes ill.

The phrase "die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen" is a leitmotif-like utterance in *NT* with numerous appearances throughout the novella; it has also generated much scholarly debate and is a subject with different interpretations by literary critics. In this chapter on Storm, Christa T. provides a clue about the reason for the difficulty of saying "I".

Initially, Christa T. cannot bring herself to say "I" and instead use the impersonal "we" or "one" (NT 110), and she goes on to say that she can only cope with her life through writing. Just when it is least expected, Christa T. gradually overcomes the uncertainty of saying "I" in an autobiographical sense when she compares her childhood with that of the writer Storm (NT 111). Christa T. discovers that she has something in common with Storm. The quiet place, the stalking red deer, the bee house and the tree nursery mentioned in Storm's novella are also scenes from her own childhood.

One of the interpretations of "die Schwierigkeit ich zu sagen" may be related to the theme "das Zu-sich-Kommen," self-actualization. Earlier in the novel, Christa T. as a child, was able to say "Ich bin anders" (NT 32) with conviction. As a grown-up university student, and after witnessing the contradictions and inconsistencies of the "new society," she has lost the ability to articulate her thoughts. The incongruence between her faith in the socialist system and harsh reality creates a conflict which she cannot resolve. In this chapter about Storm she

realizes her dilemma: "Sie kann niemanden täuschen, der zu lesen versteht, vielleicht hat sie dieses eine Mal auch nicht täuschen wollen über die Unruhe, die hinter den strengen und gerechten Urteilen steht. Kein Ich kommt auf, natürlich nicht. Jetzt noch nicht. Ein "Wir", ein "Man" (NT 110). Only when she is least expecting it, Christa T. describes the change: "Und dann, wenn man es schon nicht mehr erwartet, tritt sie doch noch selbst hervor unverhüllt, "ich". Man glaubt, nicht recht zu hören; was kann sie dazu gebracht haben, ihre eigene Kindheit der des Dichters gegenüberzustellen? Zwang zur Selbstbehauptung, nach soviel Selbstkritik?" (NT 111).

Only when she is reminded of her childhood, the innocence of the child and the idyllic surroundings of her youth, is she able to break out of the shackle of self-doubt, anxiety and paranoia and is ready to say "I". Christa T.'s life is not sequential; it consists of stages and moments. What is important is that meaning, not chronology, governs the writing of this novel (Mohr 198). The significant moment in which she can say "I" is fleeting and elusive.

There are also critics who hold more gender-specific views and consider the difficulty for Christa T. to speak decisively as a basic experience of women under patriarchy (Love 32) and (Clausen 319). According to Hilzinger, there is another dimension to "die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen." Female writers in Wolf's generation felt that they were marginalized, and they existed in the shadow of all the male writers. In fact, the literary field was dominated by male authors up to the 20th century (NT 217). However, Hilzinger affirmed that the female issues only became pronounced in Christa Wolf's works after the Wolf Biermann incident in 1976 (CW 66). Christa Wolf supported Biermann defiantly as he was unfairly stripped of his citizenship and she had to suffer the consequence for her stand. Annette Firsching was also of the opinion that

there was no perceptible debate of gender-specific issues in *NT* (192). Because of the inherent ambiguities in *NT*, the diversity in interpretations of this novel is not surprising.

Yet another interpretation of the “die Schwierigkeit ich zu sagen” could possibly refer to Wolf’s own inability to say “I”. Wolf had been a conformist in her earlier years. As she was wading through Christa T.’s diaries and other writings, she became acutely aware of her own shortcomings in comparison to Christa T.’s boldness. Christa T. is unconcerned about the opinions of other people and her independent trait is apparent in *NT*, whereas Wolf lacked the outspokenness and was more of a dutiful socialist writer in the early 1960s, despite her misgivings about the new society. Her attempt to break out from socialist realism started with *Der geteilte Himmel*, but the criticisms of the GDR in the subsequent novella *NT* are nevertheless subdued and ambiguous.

Regardless of the many possibilities of interpreting “die Schwierigkeit ich zu sagen,” one of the key reasons for Christa T. to say “I” is contained in this chapter. When Christa T. is reminded of the innocence of her childhood, she is then able to say “I”.

In summary, Mann admired Theodor Storm as a skillful poet and expert novelist of German realism and often quoted from Storm in his own works, as in *Tonio Kröger*. Wolf, through Christa T. echoes the same sentiment about Storm despite some minor criticisms on the narrow range of his topics. Both Mann and Wolf recognized and valued Storm’s poetic and lyrical writings that served as an antithesis to the abstract intellectualism and came to be an integral part of their literary texts.

Chapter Five: Intertextuality

5.1 Introduction

While the theoretical concept of intertextuality stemmed from the early to mid-20th century and is often considered to have a close association with post-modernism in the late 20th century, the practice of quoting, referencing and borrowing from other texts is by no means a unique phenomenon to this literary era. The New Testament quotes from the Old Testament, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) is a retelling of Homer's *Odyssey*. Thomas Mann invoked other texts in his works extensively, as in *Tonio Kröger*, *Tristan*, *Doktor Faustus* and many others. Likewise, intertextuality is also a significant aspect of Wolf's writings.

Wolf was predominantly a writer of prose fiction. In all her works, the main topic was the individual's quest for the self and self-actualization. Her works are notable for their "subjective authenticity," and for their use of intertextual references. Her writing style is also marked by intensity, profound inner conflicts, and perplexing, fragmented narrative, meshed with strong autobiographical elements, and these are the characteristics of post-modern literature as well (Fries 31). These attributes contributed to the complexity and polysemous quality of her works. The practice of delving into multiple layers of individual and collective memories combined with the exploration of ever deeper layers and latent recollections and occurrences in an individual's subconscious are hallmarks of her writings.

In *Lesen und Schreiben*, Wolf set out the criteria of modern prose and the critical role literature played in the maturing process of authors and she maintained that : "Denn ich, ohne Bücher, bin ich nicht" (Werke IV: 254). The importance of the memories of books was brought

to the forefront through the illustration in the “Medaillons”, one of the essays in *Lesen und Schreiben*. Each writer has, figuratively speaking, a collection of colored medallions (texts) and she expressed the idea that: “Diese Medaillons sind für die Erinnerung.... Manches besonders wertvolle Stück hat die Arbeit von Jahren gekostet, denn man muß viel vergessen und viel umdenken und umdeuten, ehe man sich immer und überall ins rechte Licht gerückt hat: das ist es, wozu wir sie brauchten, die Medaillons. Man wird wissen, was ich meine” (Werke IV: 255). She continued this train of thought in the paragraph: “Prosa schafft Menschen Prosa kann die Grenzen unseres Wissens über uns selbst weiter hinausschieben” (Werke IV: 282). The knowledge of other texts is refined and then disseminated to the readers through the writers’ works. This insight represented Wolf’s perception of intertextuality and she employed a considerable number of intertextual references in her works e.g. *Kassandra*, *Medea* (both are based on characters of Greek mythology), *Störfall* and *Stadt der Engel*. *Nachdenken über Christa T.* is no exception.

In fact, intertextuality is an integral part of Wolf’s writing and crucial to the interpretation of her work. Naturally there is an indication of her affinity to the writers of other eras and her desire to continue their literary heritage. Occasionally she employed the intertextual reference for strategic purposes as in the case of Becher’s epitaph. Similarly her intertextual evocation of Mann’s *Tonio Kröger* was also a tactic to lend more credence to the emphasis on the individual needs as portrayed in *TK*. Before embarking upon the specific discussion of the intertextual references in *NT*, a general overview of various approaches of the theorists regarding intertextuality is beneficial to clarify the method that will be used in this chapter.

Generally speaking, reading is understood to be the process of extracting meaning from a literary text. In the early 20th century, this conventional and intuitive interpretation of reading was challenged by modern theorists, such as Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, and the Russian literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin. After all, literary works are influenced by previous literature, other art forms as well as tradition, and therefore cannot be considered as independent texts. Recognizing the connection of the literary works to system, codes, tradition and culture, modern theorists consider texts devoid of any “independent meaning.” In this sense, the act of reading can be interpreted as finding meaning by tracing the network of textual relations. The process of reading, or the interpretation of a text, now means the discovery of relationships; it becomes a process of moving between texts (Allen 1).

Saussure’s study of semiotics, the philosophical theory of signs and symbols, focuses on how signs derive meaning within the structure of a text, and also in relationship to other signs. He places an emphasis on the systematic characteristics of language and the relational nature of the meaning of texts (Allen 2). Bakhtin’s basic idea hinges on the notion that an utterance or a work cannot be considered independent, or unconnected to previous or future utterances or works (Allen 19). He differentiates between the “dialogic” (examination of multiple meaning) and the “monologic” (possessing singular meaning and logic) work of literature. The dialogic work is continually influenced and affected by the works of other authors; it allows various viewpoints to engage in dialogue with each other. The dialogic work carries on a continual dialogue with other literary works and is in communication with multiple works. As a result, all literary utterances are dialogic (Allen 19).

Julia Kristeva sought to combine the theories of Saussure and Bakhtin and coined the term “Intertextuality” in 1966. In her writing *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980), Kristeva discusses “texts as compromising a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another”(36). All texts are made up of pre-existing works. For the poststructuralists, among them Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, modern authors do not produce texts in an original sense, they simply collect and rearrange pre-existing texts (Mishra 210). Kristeva also views text as a composition of two axes: “a horizontal axis connecting the author and the reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts. Uniting these two axes are shared codes: every text and every reading depends on prior codes” (69).

In subsequent years, intertextuality has become one of the most commonly used and yet most ambiguous terms in contemporary literary theory. The term “intertextuality” was originally used by the poststructuralists to unsettle the stable meaning of the texts (Allen 3). Roland Barthes, one of the most famous proponents of poststructuralist theory, challenged the traditional role of the author and the conventional understanding of literary meaning. For Barthes, the meaning of a text can never be fully “stabilized” by the reader, because the intertextual nature of the work constantly directs the reader to other textual relations. Authors are not and cannot be held responsible for the meanings readers may derive from the texts, because of the possibilities of interpretations from the perceived relationship with other texts (Allen 3). Barthes advocates the concept that texts cannot be considered in isolation without taking into account any other texts. All texts contain elements of other texts previously uttered.

In his famous essay *The Death of the Author*, Barthes argues that a text is made up of multiple writings; it is a product of a multiplicity of sources. The author merely collects, blends and rearranges the texts. As a result, authors are not the creators of the texts, as all texts must be understood in relation to other texts (*Image-Music* 142-148).

Poststructuralists use the term intertextuality to disrupt the notions of meaning, while the structuralists use the same term to locate and fix literary meaning (Allen 4). Theorists who adopted the structuralist approach related to intertextuality are French critics Gérard Genette and Michael Riffaterre. This approach shows that intertextuality can be used to present an entirely opposite position to that of the poststructuralists – Kristeva and Barthes. Both Genette and Riffaterre maintain that literary texts can be definite, stable and concrete (Allen 4). To the structuralists, the definition of intertextuality must be concise and have well-delineated limitations to be workable for the critics and readers. This view is supported in the discussion of hypertextuality in Genette's theory. Furthermore, greater importance must be placed on the author's intention as the author does play an important role in the creation of literary texts. In the structuralists' view, the intertextual references selected are often clearly marked by the authors and their intention should be respected (Panagiotidou 173).

According to Pfister, Genette followed the most systematic approach to intertextuality and introduced new terms to define the concept (Panatitidou 173). Genette also constructed his work solidly based on the writings of Greek and Roman thinkers as well as Bakhtin's and Kristeva's concepts of intertextuality (Worton 22). He took it a step further and developed the idea of "transtextuality" in place of intertextuality in his work *Palimpsests*. In his trilogy: *The Architext: An Introduction* (1979); *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982); and

Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (1997), Genette redefined the term Intertextuality and added new categories to differentiate the nuanced meanings of the term. In these works, Genette produced a coherent theory and map of transtextuality – intertextuality from the structuralist point of view (Allen 95). For these reasons, I will adopt the typology outlined in Genette's *Palimpsests* to distinguish between different types of intertextual references in this study.

Structuralists view literary works as particular articulations of an enclosed system. For their works, the authors extract elements from this enclosed system and place them into the works, and the relationship between the elements and the system is no longer easily noticeable. The critic reverses the process by returning the work to the system and re-establishing the relationship between the work and the system which was suppressed by the author (Allen 93) whereas poststructuralists deny the possibility of such rearranging of the text's elements back into their significant relations. For the structuralist theorists, such as Genette, "placing a text back into its presumed system produces a form of knowledge and of stable reading which is unavailable in poststructuralist theories of intertextuality and the text" (*Struct.* 18-19).

Genette identifies five categories of "transtextuality" in *Palimpsests* (1-7): intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality. He takes the original idea of intertextuality coined by Kristeva and reduces it, in a more restrictive sense, to a relationship of "copresence between two texts or among several texts." Intertextuality (not the same concept as Kristeva's term) consists of the traditional practice of quoting (with quotation marks, with or

without specific references), the practice of plagiarism and literary allusion that assumes new meanings when an alluded text is put into a new text.

The second type of transtextuality is the paratext with a more pragmatic role; it helps the readers to understand the context of the text, the publishing date, any pertinent information related to the text. The paratext includes titles, chapter titles, dedications, inscriptions, epigraphs, prefaces, photographs, acknowledgements, footnotes, illustrations and other notes. The paratext elements help to establish the intentions of the author. They guide the readers.

The third type of textual transcendence is called metatextuality, which is the relationship most often referred to as commentary. It is the relation between a text and its commentaries, and the text which is commented upon can be clearly cited or referenced. It unites a given text with another. In some cases, the text which is commented upon can be linked to another (by implication or inference) without it being named or cited. Though extensive studies have been conducted in regard to metatext, the importance of metatextuality has not yet been fully recognized.

The fourth type is transtextuality renamed hypertextuality by Genette. It is “the relationship which unites a text B (the hypertext) to an earlier text A (the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary”(5). In the foreword of *Palimpsests*, Gerald Prince states that all literary texts are hypertextual, though some are more strongly hypertextual than others. What Genette calls hypertext is any text derived from a previous text either through simple “transformation” with its subtypes parody, travesty and transposition or through indirect transformation which he labels “imitation” with its subtypes pastiche, caricature and forgery. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, the term “Palimpsests”

means a very old document on which the original writing has been erased and replaced with new writing, or something that has changed over time and shows evidence of that change. Genette used the term to suggest the layers of writing, the aspects that exist beneath the surface, the tiers of meaning in a text. The different layers provide nuances of meanings from different perspectives and varying degree of profundity. He argues that the unlocking of the meaning of a hypertextual text is dependent on the reader's knowledge of the hypotext which the hypertext either satirically transforms or imitates (Allen 105). Genette agrees with Prince that even though all works are hypertextual, some works are more so than others. In his *Palimpsests*, he argues that "I can also trace in just about any work the local, fugitive, and partial echoes of any other work, be it anterior or ulterior. The effect of such an attitude would be to subsume the whole of universal literature under the field of hypertextuality, which would make the study of it somewhat unmanageable"(9). This argument is to counter the views of the poststructuralists that the nature of the texts cannot be stable because the readers are constantly directed to other textual relations.

The fifth type is the most abstract and most implicit of all, architextuality. It involves a relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention. Genette defines architextuality as the "entire set of general or transcendent categories – type of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres – from which emerges each singular text" (*Palimpsests* 1 & 4). One aspect of architextuality is the generic relationship as one text relates to any other text in the same genre. However, architext can be considered the basic, unchanging building blocks, the underpinning of the whole literary system (Allen 96).

Genette cautions that the five types of transtextuality should not be taken as separate and absolute categories without any reciprocal contact or overlapping (*Palimpsests* 7). There are indeed grey areas between the five categories as Haines acknowledged (159).

The concept of intertextuality is a useful tool in literature. Since all texts are the transformations of the earlier texts, transtextuality can be seen as a technique to further eclecticism and to enrich and enhance interpretation of texts. The authors may draw on their literary heritages to introduce ideas, stories and concepts into their own texts, and the quoted text then takes on a subordinated role in the host text, injecting new meanings into the text. At the same time, the interpretation of the texts is affected by the reader's knowledge of literature or culture. For the reader, intertextuality imposes the requirement of knowledge of the texts quoted in order to derive significance from the host text as intended by the authors. The readers are required to draw their own knowledge of the texts quoted and compare and contrast how the references are being used in the host text.

In the previous chapters of this study, the background and common themes of Mann's *TK* and Wolf's *NT* have been addressed. The common themes of artist as outsider, autobiographical elements and the influence of Theodor Storm are also the major themes of the two respective novellas. This chapter will focus on the individual intertextual invocations in *NT* of texts contained in *TK*. Gérard Genette's typology as outlined in *Palimpsests* proves to be a coherent theory and a workable method and it will be employed to categorize and differentiate the types of transtextuality, Genette's term for intertextuality.

Wolf's evocation of other texts is her attempt to gain more diverse meanings, to broaden the scope of the interpretation of her work and to enrich the texture of her writing. A study of

this aspect will open up new vistas on Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* as it undergoes a transformation in the context of a more traditional literary style, vastly different socio-political environment and the diverse viewpoints of an insightful author noted for his complicated intellect.

5.2 Intertextual Allusions

Christa Wolf and Thomas Mann are both icons of German literature and a large amount of research exists on their works individually as well as in comparisons to works of other authors. Shortly before the official publication of Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, F. J. Raddatz noticed the intertextual use of phrases and names from Mann's *Tonio Kröger* in Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* and wrote an article on Wolf's *NT* with the title "Mein Name sei Tonio K." (1968), but his observation on this topic consists of the following short paragraph:

Natürlich hat jemand, der 1969 der Hauptfigur eines Romans den Namen Christa T. gibt, den Name Franz Kafka genannt. Das bedarf keines Kommentars. Zu beobachten aber ist, und auffällig spätestens da, wo von einer "blonden Inge" die Rede geht, daß die "Merseburger Zaubersprüche" Chiffre sind für die Pferdebücher jenes Hans Hansen, dem Tonio Kröger, der nun nicht Dostojewski, aber Schiller liest, vom Don Carlos und dem König vorschwärmt: "Er ist immer so ganz allein und ohne Liebe, und nun glaubt er einen Menschen gefunden zu haben, und der verrät ihn". Christa T. hat zwar kein "Heft mit selbstgeschriebenen Versen", aber was die Chronistin findet, sind zahlreiche Prosaskizzen und literarische Versuche, die keine Redaktion wollte. Und jenes "Ich bin erledigt" als Konsequenz des Gespräches mit Lisaweta Iwanowna sagt

sich Christa T. in ihren Tagebüchern, als Konsequenz der Begegnung mit einer Wissenschaft, die schließlich keine Antwort gibt.

A few other writers also took note of the *Tonio Kröger* elements in *Nachdenken über Christa T.* and incorporated analyses in their writings, but there are few, if any articles which include discussions of the association of *NT* and *TK* from an intertextual perspective.

The first group of intertextual quotations from *TK* which appear in Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* belong to the subgroup of allusion using Genette's term. The expression "Zigeuner im grünen Wagen" – "Gypsies in a green wagon" is a familiar phrase in *TK*.

The history of Gypsies has been recorded in Germany since the Middle Ages. The largest group of Gypsies are the Sinti, who arrived in the German region from North India in the fifteenth century. In the late 19th century, other Gypsy groups relocated to Germany from other European countries but they belonged to the same ethnic Roma group as the Sinti (Margalit 1). Before settling in the poor neighborhoods of major German cities in the second half of the 19th century due to the impact of industrial revolution, Gypsies maintained a vagrant existence and led a nomadic way of life. They lived in extreme poverty, and the hardship of eking out a bare subsistence led them to become beggars and thieves. This prevalent image of the Gypsies as aimless vagrants and petty criminals has been etched into the memories of the German people while other more positive characteristics have often been overlooked (Margalit 6).

As a matter of fact, there are two opposing views of Gypsies that have existed in German society for generations, although the negative image has always been the dominant one. In the 17th century, the depiction of Gypsies as living a free and content life first appeared in the *Schelmenroman*. One example is Johann Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's *Courasche*

(Margalit 11). Gypsy figures have also been featured in the German classical literature as free, authentic and close to nature. Goethe employed this romantic motif of Gypsies in his works, as in his novel *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre* and in his play *Götz von Berlichingen*. Goethe is presumed to have introduced the concept of "Zigeunerromantik," fascination with the Gypsy culture in literature (Margalit 11). The portrayal of musical and artistic Gypsies in Clemens Brentano's *Die mehreren Wehmüller und ungarische Nationalgeschichten* is another example of the positive image of Gypsies in German literature (Donovan 105). However, the more entrenched negative view of the Gypsies reappeared in literature after the romantic period in the mid-19th century. This duality of the Gypsies' image existed side-by-side for the last few centuries with the negative representation occupying the centre stage in the collective memory of the German people (Margalit 22).

The term "Zigeuner im grünen Wagen" in *TK* is easily recognizable, because it appears many times in the novella as a leitmotif and the readers become very familiar with this expression. The most apparent aspect of "Zigeuner im grünen Wagen" speaks of Tonio's perceived superiority that he is the son of Consul Kröger and that by birth, that he belongs solidly to the society of the bourgeois. In *TK*, Tonio always uses this expression in the context of needing to justify and remind others of his ancestry; it is always used as a reminder that he looks down on people who do not have the same noble lineage. After Tonio has spent his years in the south and given himself over to the pleasures of the flesh, he thinks: "Wie war es nur möglich, daß ich in alle diese excentrischen Abenteuer geriet? Ich bin doch kein Zigeuner im grünem Wagen, von Hause aus ..." (291). Later when he is on the trip to the North to revisit his home town, he is mistakenly taken as a fugitive on the run and pursued by the police. His

thoughts again reveal that: "Sollte er der Sache ein Ende Machen, indem er sich zu erkennen gab ... daß er kein Hochstapler von unbestimmter Zuständigkeit sei, von Geburt kein Zigeuner im grünen Wagen, sondern der Sohn Konsul Krögers, aus der Familie der Kröger?" (317).

On the other hand, Tonio ironically is an outsider just like the Gypsies. He is not accepted by the bourgeois because of his artistic inclination, though he longs to be one of them. His otherness is an attribute he has in common with the Gypsies whom he instinctively rejects but in the end he reluctantly acquiesces to this connection with them. Mann employed this leitmotif to represent the dichotomy between Künstlertum und Bürgertum. Even though Tonio Kröger repeatedly claims that he is no "Zigeuner im grünen Wagen," that he is no drifter or vagabond, he cannot disregard a certain closeness with the free-spirited and artistic nature of the Gypsies.

Tonio's predicament is best illustrated by the statement expressed by Thomas Mann in his *Betrachtung eines Unpolitischen*: "Jeder Künstler ist und bleibt Zigeuner, gesetzt auch, es handelte sich um einen deutschen Künstler von bürgerlicher Natur" (GW XII:403). Tonio Kröger is an artist and his affinity to the Gypsies is inescapable. In this novella, although he vehemently denies that he is a Gypsy, at heart he knows that he is his mother's son. His mother, dark and from a foreign land, is temperamental and artistic; his father, a successful businessman, always behaves properly and seriously. Tonio is caught between the two worlds, his mother's artistic nature and the stable bourgeois life of his father.

Though the reference "Zigeuner" is somewhat derogatory, it is not meant to be a clear-cut putdown as far as Tonio is concerned. He recognizes that the gypsy-like artistic inclination will always stay with him.

In *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, Wolf borrowed from *TK*: “Heute muß man statt dessen ans Tor gehen muß mit ansehen, wie die Zigeuner das Dorf verlassen Da hat sich der grüne Wagen schon im Dunkel verloren.” (31-32). According to Genette, this is the practice of allusion (*Palimpsests* 2). Even though there is no quotation mark, it is still reasonably explicit that there is a reference to *Tonio Kröger*. The term “die Zigeuner” alone may not be clear enough in its relationship to *TK*. However, looking at the two sentences together, there is an unmistakable association with *TK*. It also indicates Wolf’s desire to connect her *NT* to Thomas Mann’s *TK*.

Christa T. identifies with the Gypsies who lead a nomadic life and are shunned by ordinary people. She has always been an outsider; even as a child she is not concerned about what other people think of her. She writes poems and is a loner, very much a free spirit in keeping with Thomas Mann’s view of the artistic Gypsies. In contrast to Tonio Kröger’s more negative view of the Gypsies’ social standing, Christa T. has a different outlook. She has a special relationship with the Gypsy boy: “Aber als einziger sieht der Zigeunerjunge das Kind [Christa T.]; schneidet er der Zurückbleibenden eine Grimasse? Er der frei ist, zu tun, was ihm beliebt” (*NT* 32). Christa T. befriends the Gypsies to the extent that she even receives a farewell gift from Kalle, the Gypsy child. Christa T.’s more egalitarian attitude sets her apart from her peers as well as from the staid position of Tonio. She is a friend of the Gypsies, a group of people considered to live on the fringe of mainstream society; they are excluded from the normality of the ordinary citizen. She is friendly with the Gypsies because she sees herself as an outsider and she can identify and relate to the people who are not accepted by society.

Christa T.’s childhood coincided with the time of the Third Reich. During the late 1930s, it became the official Nazi policy that Gypsies were considered a foreign race in Germany, and

racist concepts about Gypsies were introduced in the educational system and in government publications (Margalit 18). In 1942, the Reich Minister of Labour ordered that the special stipulations with regard to Jews in the field of welfare legislation should be applied correspondingly to the Gypsies (Burleigh 126). As a result, Gypsies were persecuted and experienced the same fate as the Jews, homosexuals and handicapped people (Burleigh 151). Christa T. sympathizes with the Gypsies who are mistreated by the Nazis during her childhood. She can only watch them as a bystander and helplessly mull over their fate.

Indeed the different attitude towards the Gypsies is one aspect where the two works differ. The GDR was founded on the equality of all citizens, even though the latent prejudice of the citizens towards the Gypsies was difficult to eradicate. The official dictum of GDR upheld egalitarianism and the policies extended protection to people of different racial backgrounds (*Germany Overview*). By evoking Mann's *Zigeuner*, perhaps Wolf also attempted to bring attention to the two different societies, the dissimilarity between the socialist society and the feudal German society of the early 1900s. Wolf believed in the socialist principles and up to the stage when *NT* was written, her doubts were more about the execution of the ideology than about the basic tenet of socialism.

"The blonde Inge" is another intertextual allusion to *TK* in *NT*. However, Mann also employed intertextual references in his novella *Tonio Kröger*. In the episode with the blonde Inge, he invoked two works from Theodor Storm. The blonde Inge is the object of his love at age sixteen. She and Hans Hansen, the other blonde, blue-eyed, sunny individual from Tonio's youth, have many features in common. Unlike Tonio, these individuals are full of life, healthy and happy, but also superficial and insensitive and do not understand Tonio or his art.

In *TK*, Mann invoked: “Ich möchte schlafen, aber du mußt tanzen” from Theodor Storm’s poem “Hyanzinthe,” a direct quotation in connection with the blonde Inge (Inge Holm). The dancing girl in the poem is described by Storm as “blaß,” “leicht” and “zärtlich,” as opposed to the blonde Inge who is “übermutig, lachend, lustig, schön, heiter.” By introducing Storm’s poem, Mann imparted an aura of enigma and elusiveness in the scene associated with the blonde Inge. The character of the intricate dancer is almost the opposite of the straightforward personality of Inge. Tonio’s image of the blonde Inge takes on the complexity of an ethereal and spiritual quality which is distinctly lacking in Inge Holm. The concept of “Geist” versus “Leben” as described in *TK* (302) is well represented through the intertextual use of Storm’s work.

The quotation of Storm’s *Immensee* (1849) belongs to what Genette would call paratext, which helps the author to establish the intent of the author. *Immensee* is a novella of unrequited love and the invocation of this work seals the inevitability of Tonio’s doomed love. Tonio’s feelings of estrangement, isolation, anguish, but also joy, culminate in his expression that: “Das Glück ist, zu lieben und vielleicht kleine, trügerische Annäherungen an den geliebten Gegenstand zu erhaschen. Und er schrieb diesen Gedanken innerlich auf, dachte ihn völlig aus und empfand ihn bis auf den Grund ” (*TK* 288).

In *NT*, Kostja’s friend, the blonde Inge is described by the narrator as:

Nun ja, das Mädchen, das in seinem Brief auftritt, als seine Frau, hat es gegeben, kleine Schwester, blond, schutzbedürftig, Schutz vor allem gegen sie, Christa T. Auch darin hat sie ihn von Anfang an durchschaut. Inge mußte sie heißen, die blonde Inge, beziehungsreicher Name. So stellte er sie ihr vor, mit beziehungsreichem Lächeln, und sie verstand (76).

There is a strong allusion to the namesake in *Tonio Kröger*, the blonde Inge, the name rich in association, in this case, the association with *TK*. Naturally, she would have to be named Inge, in respect to the blonde Inge in *TK*. To Tonio, Inge Holm is the person out of his reach. To Christa T., Inge becomes the reason why Kostja is unattainable.

The blonde Inge in *NT* is weak, needs protection and is sick as Kostja describes her in his letter to Christa T.: “Inge, meine Frau, ist jahrelang krank gewesen. Mir ist deshalb nicht alles so gegangen, wie es sollte. – Doch aus dem Ton des Briefes spricht, daß ihm nichts leid tut” (81). The image of the blonde Inge in *NT*, weak and sickly, is in stark contrast to Inge Holm of *TK*, sunny, happy and superficial. The fact that the personality of Inge in *NT* is so dissimilar to that of Inge in *TK* appears to be a form of defamiliarization, a technique used by authors to compel the readers to look at a familiar concept in a new light. Wolf’s intention might be to induce the readers to search for new meanings from an unusual perspective. At first glance, the intertextual use of the blonde Inge in *NT* not only conjures up the picture of the simple and happy Inge Holm in *TK* versus the weak, sickly and more artistic Inge of *NT*, but also the inevitability of the pain associated with the rejection of love through the reference to Storm’s *Immensee*. A closer reading of the text suggests that perhaps the real intention of the author may not necessarily relate to the two persons named Inge. Even though Inge appears a number of times in *NT*, she adopts a rather passive role in the novel. The character of Inge has never been developed in *NT*, whereas Christa T.’s reactions to Inge’s presence and inner tumult appear to be the focal point of the narrative.

The blonde Inge in *NT* is the love object of a love triangle, Kostja, Inge and Christa T. Kostja breaks up with Christa T. when Inge appears on the scene. Christa T. suffers a nervous

breakdown and severe depression, all because of the failed relationship. The profound sadness almost pushes her over the cliff; the description of her anguish and grief is intensely emotional. The break-up with Kostja is presumably the greatest crisis in Christa T.'s life. She writes to her sister in a letter that is never mailed that: "Mir steht alles fremd wie eine Mauer entgegen. Ich taste die Steine ab, keine Lücke für mich" (NT 83). For a number of months, she simply cannot pull herself out of the snare of despondency and she wishes to end her life. In this context, the narrator unexpectedly introduces the view expressed by one of the students that: "Unglückliche Liebe sei, in der neuen Gesellschaft, kein Grund mehr, sich umzubringen" (NT 80). Sentimentality does not have a place in the new society, and the narrative takes on a political inference. Following this statement, there is nevertheless no discussion in NT on this topic. Whether personal feelings should take a backseat in the interest of the collective good has not been addressed specifically in NT.

However, Wolf made her view very clear in her *Selbstinterview*, completed in 1966. This essay was written specifically in connection with and in anticipation of the soon-to-be-published NT. She defended her new approach to writing against potential criticism regarding her novel. In the essay she dispelled the presumed notion of the rigidity of socialist realism and stated that: "Die absurde Meinung, die sozialistische Literatur könne sich nicht mit den feinen Nuancen des Gefühlslebens, mit den individuellen Unterschieden der Charaktere befassen..." (Werke IV: 143). Furthermore, Wolf also stated in the same essay that "Empfindsamkeit ist nicht Rührseligkeit. Neben anderen Wirkungen hat die Literatur seit altersher versucht, die Sensibilität des Menschen zu steigern"(143). Wolf believed that genuine literature and socialist society were not mutually exclusive; their objectives were the same, namely to help people

arrive at self-realization. She was merely advocating a type of writing which had existed in literature for centuries, a style which did not preclude the importance of sensitivity, the ability to describe shades of feelings in literary works. The years of devoting all the efforts towards socialism and productivity at the expense of individual concerns had long passed (*Werke* IV: 141). *NT* represents a turning point in Wolf's writing from depicting pragmatic socialist reality to portraying internal conflicts, personal isolation and alienation, a style of writing with emphasis on sensitivity, "die feine Nuances des Gefühlslebens." To Wolf, Christa T.'s love crisis caused by the blonde Inge presents the opportunity to demonstrate that emotional nuances do have a role to play in socialist literature.

There is indeed a link from Tonio's Inge to Christa T.'s Inge, though not on an individual basis. The close relationship is more about the two protagonists Tonio and Christa T. (both spurned by their respective lovers) and the way their stories are told. In this sense, Wolf felt a special affinity for Mann's *Tonio Kröger* for its highly nuanced narrative. Wolf's invocation of the blonde Inge from *TK* signaled a new approach and direction in her own writing.

5.3 Hypertextuality-Imitation

Tonio Kröger and *Nachdenken über Christa T.* are two very different works. Each author has his/her distinct style and aesthetics, and yet there seems to be an undercurrent of familiarity between the two works, apart from the easily recognizable intertextual phrases. In close reading this kinship appears to originate from the existence of refrain-like leitmotifs in both works. One of the prominent marks of *Tonio Kröger* is precisely the use of leitmotifs which permeate much of the novella. Likewise, Wolf employed leitmotifs extensively in *NT*. The

repetition of key words and phrases imparts an unmistakable and explicit character to the works. The characteristics of the leitmotifs readily provide correlations within the text and yet at the same time the opportunity to introduce variations and deviations. Wolf allegedly “learned” composition skills from Mann (Fries 32) from reading his works. It is plausible that Wolf adopted the technique from Mann’s work.

According to Genette, “hypertextuality is the relationship which unites a text B (the hypertext) to an earlier text A (the hypotext) upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (*Palimpsests* 7). Even though all texts are hypertextual to some degree, some are more strongly hypertextual than others. This hypertextual relationship can be termed either as direct transformation or indirect transformation – imitation (7). Both works are noted for the presence of the leitmotifs and both conclude with a leitmotif phrase. In much the same way as Mann, Wolf also recognized the value of employing leitmotif, and the profuse use of this device in *NT* attested to her preference. In *Palimpsests*, Genette expressed his views on imitation as: “And if some day an author were to borrow from another author (in order to imitate his style)... ‘a figure of speech’ or a ‘figure of thought’ or even a characteristic trope, these borrowings too would constitute imitations” (75). The leitmotifs in *NT* bear a strong resemblance to the construction of the leitmotifs in *TK*. Though (except for one) most of them are not of the direct transformation type, the remainder are through indirect transformation as “imitations,” using Genette’s term.

Leitmotif first appeared in the 19th century in connection with Wagnerian musical dramas, where a motif was used to describe a recurring melodic passage or phrase to be associated with

a particular character, thing, situation or mood. In literary works, the term was applied to the repetition of key words, phrases or themes.

Thomas Mann saw himself as a musician among the writers and often referred to his work as composition. He was much influenced by the great romantic composer Richard Wagner and emulated the structures and forms of Wagner's compositions (Koopmann, *TM Handbook* 829). In *Tonio Kröger*, Mann refined his technique in employing leitmotifs, a composition technique closely associated with Wagner, which Mann first attempted to use more extensively in *Buddenbrooks*. He acknowledged in his *Lebensabriß* that in *TK* he had succeeded in transforming the leitmotifs from mere mechanical elements to musical and aesthetic devices (GW XI: 116). He explained that one of the reasons it took so long to write *TK* was because of the fine-tuning of the leitmotifs. In *TK*, he painstakingly contemplated and selected each leitmotif so that it exerted the desired effects on the interpretation and style of the novella. These music devices become far more than what he calls the "physiognomic or mimic elements" which merely signal the recurring appearances of an event, a person or a situation. In Mann's works, leitmotifs influence the style and characterization, or serve as a structural reminder. The leitmotif used repeatedly can acquire an ideological or symbolic depth (Koopmann, *TM Handbook* 830). Mann has elevated the device to heighten dramatic effects, to add nuances, hues and a poetic profoundness to his writing. Each leitmotif has the function to submerge in the reader's subconscious and erupt with far greater effect when it reappears. Likewise, Wolf did not use leitmotifs in a mechanical manner; her approach was similar to Mann's.

For this study, I have identified three categories of leitmotifs in both *TK* and *NT*.

Leitmotifs associated specifically with a place

“Der Springbrunnen, der alte Walnußbaum, seine Geige und in der Ferne das Meer” (*TK* 274) first appear in *TK* as the things Tonio loves and they are the centre of his inner life. The first three are associated with his childhood home, and they represent tranquility, feelings of security and his attachment to his family. “Das Meer,” the Baltic Sea, reminds him the dreamy and meditative summer holidays in his youth. The meaning and effectiveness of the leitmotif may not be apparent from the beginning, as the usefulness of this device becomes more obvious through the repetitive appearances in the context of the work.

In Chapter Three of *TK*, after the deaths of his grandmother and father, the family has disintegrated and the home is sold. Tonio leaves for the large cities in the south. “Und er verließ die winklige Heimatstadt ... verließ den Springbrunnen und den alten Walnußbaum im Garten, die Vertrauten seiner Jugend, verließ auch das Meer, das er so sehr liebte, und empfand keinen Schmerz dabei, denn er war groß geworden”(289). Because Tonio is now grown up, he feels ready to set out on his own. The bond to his past signified by the leitmotif is now overtaken by his exuberance, but the hint of his attachment to the past is suggested through the mention of these items.

In *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, Wolf also employed a leitmotif which resembles the Springbrunnen and Walnußbaum in *TK* that are specifically connected with a location.

“Die siebzehn Pappeln” in her parents’ home are a leitmotif which acts as the “Nußbaum” in *TK*. In the description of the tenacity of the trees, Christa T. writes that: “Die Pappeln, hinter denen jeden Tag die Sonne sinkt, ob ich es sehe oder nicht, ob es mich freut oder quält” (*NT* 87). The trees represent dependability, familiarity and firmness. When Christa T. moves to a

new city, she knows that the “Pappeln” will not be there: “Christa T. in der neuen Stadt, sah sich Zimmer an, Wirtinnen. Sie begriff, daß sie nach siebzehn Pappeln nicht suchen durfte, da ging sie lieber gar nicht ans Fenster” (NT 53). In this case, there is a sense of resignation from displacement. After Christa T. returns to her home and notes: “Sie fuhr in das Dorf zurück sie kontrollierte, ob die Aussicht dieselbe geblieben war, siebzehn Pappeln, eine Handbreit höher als vor vier Jahren” (NT 86). The poplar trees symbolize the passage of time.

Leitmotifs associated with a certain experience and feelings

In *TK*, the dance forms Quadrille and Moulinet are associated with Tonio’s disastrous encounter in the dance class with the blond Inge. This leitmotif reminds Tonio about the humiliating experience he suffers as he inadvertently lands in a ladies group while the Quadrille switches to the dance of Moulinet. In contrast to Inge’s agility as a dancer, Tonio is clumsy and confused. The second time when the leitmotif appears in the sentence: “Was war es doch? Sehnsucht? Zärtlichkeit? Neid? Selbstverachtung? ... Moulinet des dames! Lachtest du, blonde Inge, lachtest du mich aus...” (TK 334). It reinforces the feelings of inadequacy as an outsider which Tonio has harboured all his life and his sense that he can never be part of the sunny and healthy world of the bourgeois.

In *NT*, leitmotifs used in similar manner include “Der Kater,” “Junge im Schnee,” and “Das Elsternest und die Eier.”

“Der Kater,” Christa T.’s own black cat, is senselessly killed by a drunken farmer one night and she is awakened by the noise and has to witness the killing of the black cat. This incident relates to Christa T.’s childhood during the Nazi period.

“Junge im Schnee” is a leitmotif from not long after the war when Christa T. travels from city to city looking for a safe refuge, and she is given a baby to care for. Christa T. falls asleep from exhaustion and the baby is frozen to death in a small bundle covered with snow.

“Das Elsternnest und die Eier” is a phrase about a boy dragging down a magpie’s nest and flinging the eggs, almost ready for hatching, one after another against the wall. This occurred a few years after the death of the baby. All three traumatic occurrences have left indelible impressions on Christa T.’s young life which surface as flashbacks whenever she is troubled or depressed. The recurring themes of these incidents are all associated with the war; they serve not only as a reminder of the atrocities she has witnessed, but also create a suggestion of grief and sorrow in the novel and the implication of coming to terms with the Nazi past. The leitmotif references to the three incidents indicate that for Christa T. the process of “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” is ongoing.

In connection to another horrific incident involving one of her students who bites the head off a toad, the narrator incorporates all three of the above elements in the sentence: “Da knallt der schwarze Kater noch einmal an die Stallwand. Da zerschellen noch einmal die Elsterneier am Stein. Da wird noch einmal der Schnee von einem steifen kleinen Gesicht gewischt. Noch einmal schnappen die Zähne zu. Das hört nicht auf” (NT 123). The use of the leitmotifs strengthens the gruesome nature of the senseless act.

Leitmotifs associated with the themes of the novellas

In *Tonio Kröger*, the main theme is the conflict between art and life, as discussed previously. Tonio’s father embodies the bourgeoisie way of life and his mother represents the artistic inclination. The opposing attributes are characterized by the two leitmotifs throughout

the novella. The dichotomy of the two opposites surfaces every time the father or the mother leitmotif is mentioned.

Tonio's father is described as "Sein Vater, ein langer, *sorgfältig* [emphasis added] gekleideter Herr mit sinnenden blauen Augen, der immer eine Feldblume im Knopfloch trug" (TK 274). Mann portrayed Tonio's father as a solid successful northern businessman from an established and respectful family, who frowns upon Tonio's poor academic performance. This description of his father fits the persona of a "Bürger." His dark-haired artistic mother from a foreign country is unconcerned about Tonio's academic standing.

The same leitmotif about his father appears in the novella five times, each time with some minor variations to suit the situation. For example, after Tonio's visit to his family home which has become a library, he remembers the death of his father. In this context he describes his father as "der lange, korrekte, ein wenig wehmütige und nachdenkliche Herr mit der Feldblume im Knopfloch" (TK 313). The image of the melancholic man in fact reflects Tonio's own mood in that particular situation. The leitmotif is changed to more closely match Tonio's pensive and nostalgic mood and the strange atmosphere of his old home which has been converted to a public library. Tonio is overcome by the changes made to the house and the memories of his childhood, reinforced by the walnut tree which stood "an seinem Platze, schwerfällig knarrend und rauschend im Winde" (TK 314).

"Seine Sprache war nicht ihre Sprache" appears in the context with the blonde Inge, another representative of the bourgeoisie: "saß er auch neben ihr, ihm fern und fremd und befremdet erschien, denn *seine* [emphasis added] Sprache war nicht *ihre* [emphasis added] Sprache" (TK 288). Inge is distant and appears to be incomprehensible, because his language is

not her language. The emphasis in this case is on Inge's reaction. When the same phrase appears a second time after Tonio has become a successful writer and more self-assured, the similar phrase becomes: "sie würden ihn nicht verstehen, würden befremdet auf das horchen, was er zu sagen vermöchte. Denn *ihre* [emphasis added] Sprache war nicht *seine* [emphasis added] Sprache" (TK 333). Now they – Inge and Hans –still would not understand him, even though they would try to listen to him, because their language is not his language. The subtlety of the reversed order infers Tonio's self-assuredness at a mature age.

Similar leitmotif examples related to the themes of *Nachdenken über Christa T.* include: "Daß ich nur schreibend über die Dinge komme," "Warum schreibst du nicht?" "Wann, wenn nicht jetzt?" and "Die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen." At age ten, Christa keeps a small book bound in light flowered silk and on the cover in her childish writing: "Ich möchte gern dichten und liebe auch Geschichten" (NT 26). She is consoled and comforted by the line she wrote as a girl (NT 30). Most of all, writing provides her the outlet to be herself; it is also a form of therapy to counteract the chaos and incomprehensibility in life. "Daß ich nur schreibend über die Dinge komme!" (NT 44). Through the written words she attempts to exorcise the darkness from her inner world. "Die Sprache hilft" (NT 26). Christa T. has keen observation and the ability to see things as they really are. She does not see her children through rose-coloured glasses and she relays to the narrator the unkind words spoken by her daughter with no alteration or embellishment. The leitmotif question "Warum schreibst du nicht?" illustrates the seemingly contradictory ideas. There is the desire to write and yet she cannot function as a writer. To this question her answer is always an evasive "Ja, Ja." The narrator finds among Christa T.'s papers fragments and a list of titles of works and an unfulfilled work plan. Apparently, she is able to

write her diaries, poems and random thoughts, but unable to do the literary work of a writer. According to the narrator, Christa T.'s reason for putting off writing could be: "Sie muß frühzeitig Kenntnis bekommen haben von unserer Unfähigkeit, die Dinge so zu sagen, wie sie sind. Ich frage mich sogar, ob man zu früh davon erfahren und für immer entmutigt werden, ob man zu früh klarsichtig, zu früh der Selbsttäuschung beraubt sein kann" (NT 44). Perhaps it is the fear not only of mediocrity but also of the inability to articulate ideas correctly that is holding her back. This assumption is confirmed later in the novel: "Sie hatte Angst vor den ungenauen, unzutreffenden Wörtern Sie hielt das Leben für verletzbar durch Worte" (NT 191). Christa T. is concerned about the impact, or the consequences her work will have. In contrast to Christa T., Wolf was able to function as a writer, but she was intensely aware of her responsibility to depict reality as she saw it. She searched for ways to reconcile the discrepancy between the reality and the decree of socialist realism and came to the painful conclusion that her inner self was split into two in the process (NT Nachwort 213).

"Wann, wenn nicht jetzt?" is the leitmotif phrase which appears numerous times in the novel and is also the concluding phrase of the novel. In an unsent letter to her sister after the breakup with Kostja, Christa T. writes: "Gewiß, Du erinnerst Dich unserer Losung, wenn einer von uns mal den Kopf hängenließ: Wann – wenn nicht jetzt? Wann soll man leben, wenn nicht in der Zeit, die einem gegeben ist? Damit brachten wir uns immer wieder hoch"(NT 83). This is the motto Christa T. and her sister use to encourage each other and to pull themselves up again, but this time she is incapable of doing it. Christa T. seems to have doubts about the effectiveness of this slogan and she questions the validity by asking: "Lebst du jetzt, wirklich? In diesem Augenblick, ganz und gar? Wann, wenn nicht jetzt?" (NT 114). As a skillful writer, Wolf

would have placed the phrase at the end of the novel for maximum effect. The choice of the concluding sentence “Wann, wenn nicht jetzt?” (NT 205) sets the tone for the overall impression of the work. As the case with many of Wolf’s writings, the ambiguous phrase lends itself to numerous interpretations. The paragraph preceding this phrase reads: “Einmal wird man wissen wollen, wer sie war, wen man da vergißt.” Christa T.’s life is not a failure (NT 194); the narrator claims that there is no resignation or regret in her life. The conclusion seems to be a compromise to appease her critics in the GDR. It is open-ended and vague. It could represent an encouragement and guarded optimism in the sense of “forget the past and think about the present,” or at the same time a reproach for procrastination (Sevin 75).

“Die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen” — is a leitmotif with numerous appearances in *NT* which has generated many comments over the decades. There have been rampant speculations about the meaning of this phrase. As previously discussed in Chapter 4, one of the interpretations of this leitmotif is that it relates to the theme “Zu-sich-Kommen,” self-actualization, to find meaning and fulfillment in life. This phrase must be taken into account together with “subjektive Authentizität.” As Wolf states in her *Lesen und Schreiben*: “Wahrheitsgetreu zu erfinden auf Grund eigener Erfahrung” (*Werke* IV: 26). The author’s experience plays an important role in the text. This is a new standard for the writers. As a result, the thematic leitmotif “die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen” takes on a new meaning in the context of this approach. “Zu-sich-Kommen,” “Subjektive Authentizität,” and “Die Schwierigkeit, ich zu sagen” are intertwined (NT Nachwort 214).

Both Mann and Wolf used leitmotifs to signify the recurrence of location, feelings and themes. Both also used slight variations to describe the nuance these devices create in the

context of the narratives. The similarities are not coincidental, but an intentional design by Wolf. The use of this device gives the text a unique characteristic of phrasing and structural division, and Wolf's non-chronological narrative approach is especially suited to the use of the leitmotifs.

5.4 Hypertextuality - Transformation

Hypertextuality refers to the relationship between two texts as previously discussed. While paratexts or metatexts explicitly mention the hypotext(s) around which they orient themselves, in the case of hypertextuality, a text B may not "speak" at all about text A and yet still not be able to exist, as such, without A. Thus hypertexts derive from hypotexts through a process that Genette calls *transformation*, whereby text B "evokes" text A more or less perceptibly but does not necessarily mention it or cite it (*Palimpsests* 5).

In *NT*, Wolf included the following phrase "Sehnsucht, ein bißchen Angst, Schmerz und etwas, was einer Geburt ähnelt" (33) which bears a close resemblance to a phrase in *TK*: "Sehnsucht *war* [emphasis added] darin and schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganze keusche Seligkeit" (281). It is noticeable that Wolf evoked *TK*'s phrase in style and construction without citing the source. In *TK*, the phrase appears a second time as a leitmotif which is also the concluding sentence of the novella: "Sehnsucht *ist* [emphasis added] darin and schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganze keusche Seligkeit" (338). Likewise, there is a corresponding leitmotif phrase in *NT*: "Schmerz empfinden, Sehnsucht, etwas wie eine *zweite Geburt* [emphasis added] ähnelt" (65). In *TK*, Mann changed the tense from *war* [emphasis added] to *ist* [emphasis added]" in his

second leitmotif sentence, whereas in *NT*, Wolf rearranged the order of the second leitmotif and added “zweite” to the phrase.

“Sehnsucht war [emphasis added] darin und schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganz keusche Seligkeit” in *TK*.

It is worthy of note that this leitmotif is an evocation of a phrase in Ivan Turgenev’s Novel *Faust*: “Nachdenklichkeit ist darin und Aufmerksamkeit und eine gewisse Strenge” (Reed, *TM Frühe Erzähl. Kommentar* 145). This Russian writer had a significant influence on Mann in the early days of his career (Reed, *Mann und Turgenev* 313). In the first chapter, Tonio is fourteen and a student. “Sehnsucht” refers mainly to Tonio’s longing for Hans Hansen’s affection as the leitmotif appears after a long paragraph on Hans and their friendship. Tonio is envious of the happy life of the bourgeois. Yet at the same time he despises his classmates as he considers himself superior to them, but they also ridicule him for writing poems. Furthermore, Tonio experiences the longing and joy to be with Hans. The “Sehnsucht” is presented in the past tense to indicate that the feelings associated with Hans Hansen are no longer a matter of concern to the mature Tonio.

The second time when the leitmotif appears at the end of the novella, the circumstances have changed dramatically. The leitmotif at the conclusion of the novella represents a summary of the major themes presented in *TK*.

“Sehnsucht”, a term used countless times in *TK*, is closely associated with Theodor Storm as discussed in Chapter 4; “Heimweh und Sehnsucht” is the main theme of Storm’s writings. Mann was also impressed with Storm’s numerous “sehnsüchtig” poems. Sehnsucht speaks of Tonio’s longing for the blond and blue-eyed Hans and Inge. When Tonio looks inward, he only

finds “Gram und Sehnsucht” — grief and longing (*TK* 286). He longs for the normal, the commonplace life of the bourgeois. His love for the “Bürger” is substantiated in the statement that: “Die Bürger sind dumm; ihr Anbeter der Schönheit aber, die ihr mich phlegmatisch und ohne Sehnsucht heißt, solltet bedenken, daß es ein Künstlertum gibt, so tief, so von Anbeginn und Schicksals wegen, daß keine Sehnsucht süßer und empfindenswerter erscheint als die nach den Wonnen der Gewöhnlichkeit (*TK* 337).... Denn wenn irgend etwas imstande ist, aus einem Literaten einen Dichter zu machen, so ist es diese meine Bürgerliebe zum Menschlichen, Lebendigen und Gewöhnlichen”(*TK* 338). Mann connects the longing for the normal life of the bourgeois to “life” and humanity and to the idea that the love of the ordinary people is the key of the “Künstlertum.”

“Neid” – envy – almost always appears in the same breath as “Sehnsucht” in *TK*. As an outsider, the melancholic Tonio is envious of the happy and uncomplicated life of the bourgeois. Furthermore, the envious feelings remind him of his own inadequacy. The dichotomy of Art and Life precludes him from being a member of the normal world.

“Verachtung” — Tonio despises his fellow students and teachers for their ill-bred behavior and personal weaknesses (*TK* 274). As mentioned in the previous section, Tonio repeatedly claims that he is no “Zigeuner im grünen Wagen” and that he is from a respectable family. On the other hand, he is aware that his classmates and Inge, the object of his love at age sixteen, despise him because he writes poetry (*TK* 284) and is clumsy. Their contempt for each other illustrates the gulf between Tonio, the artist, and the ordinary people. In *TK*, “Verachtung” – contempt – stems from Nietzsche’s “Pathos der Distanz,” the idea that the artists occupy a higher rank in life. Yet at the same time, there is also a hint of “Selbstverachtung” – self-

contempt (TK 334). To Tonio, the artistic standards are set by Nietzsche in *Der Fall Wagner* and he feels that he falls short of the expectation. There is another interpretation of “Verachtung” which is directed at Tonio himself. Ever since the diaries of Thomas Mann were made public in 1975, his tendency towards homosexuality has needed to be taken into account in the interpretation of his works. *TK* is an autobiographical novella, and as such it contains thinly veiled confessions of Mann’s life and thoughts. As a matter of fact, the homoerotic tendency caused great tumult in his emotional life and the pent-up frustration would have found its expression in his works. Heinrich Detering wrote in his *Das offene Geheimnis* that “nicht jene Liebe steht da in Rede, in der “Sehnsucht” ist und schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganze keusche Seligkeit. Sondern das furchtbare Beieinander von Sehnsucht, Neid, Liebe, und Selbstverachtung, das man Eifersucht nennt”(314). The self-loathing and agony caused by his sexual orientation broadened the perspective and added another dimension to the feeling of contempt, including feelings Mann had about himself.

“Seligkeit” — After Tonio’s trip to the north and the vision of reuniting with Hans and Inge, he manages to work through his doubt, insecurity, feelings of inadequacy and desolation. From a melancholic youth Tonio has evolved into a mature artist with newfound insight about life and art. He writes to Lisaweta about the balance of artist and the bourgeois, and that the secret for achieving this equilibrium is the love of life, the love of the ordinary, the love of humanness. Tonio has learned to accept and acknowledge his love of life, thereby finding his self in the process. He promises that he will do better. Not in any other chapter of the novella except in Chapter Nine is the topic of love so prominently discussed. Tonio has been able to reconcile art and life through the love of life, through humanness. As Mann was not religiously

inclined, quoting the well-known passage on love in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 of the Bible to express the significance of “love” to him as an author, was bordering on the extraordinary. Tonio’s transformation from a disturbed “Literat” to a “Dichter” has evolved through his cognizance of the importance of “love” (Lehnert 68). Taken from Nietzsche’s life affirmation, the novella ends on a positive confirmation of Tonio’s acceptance of the unbridgeable difference between art and life.

Thomas Mann is known for his intellect and perspicacity, and the general image of him is that he was cool, reserved and proper. A reviewer once wrote that he had not seen cooler eyes than those of Thomas Mann, eyes that did not belie any self-revelation. For that matter he had never seen Mann’s eyes directly, meaning that the evasiveness of his nature, the coolness of his demeanor and an appearance devoid of emotion made it impossible to see his eyes (Reed 120). Similarly, Marcel Reich-Ranicki claimed in his work *Thomas Mann and his Family* that Mann’s literary “supremacy” was the rational kind and Mann himself identified with the hard-working, intelligent protagonists in his earlier novellas (204). The comments about his aloofness were directed at him after the appearance of his works in this period. Mann took the criticism seriously, as he was intensely aware of his tendency to be unapproachable and reserved. In *Tonio Kröger*, Mann portrayed the protagonist as a frustrated writer who feels trapped by the sacrifices art demands and his desire to live a normal life. The highly emotional discussion between Tonio and Lisaweta on the “Erkenntnis-ekel,” the disgust associated with too much insight and knowledge, bears witness to the artistic temperament. In a sense, Mann made an effort to portray the humanness of his protagonist in order to counteract the perception that he himself was cool and detached. It was his attempt to impart “Menschlichkeit” to his novella

through the concluding argument that the love of the ordinary people was the goal of a writer.

Tonio Kröger remains one of the more emotionally charged of Mann's works.

"Sehnsucht, ein bißchen Angst, Schmerz und etwas, was einer Geburt ähnelt" in *NT*

In *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, Wolf followed the general pattern of the previous leitmotif clause in *Tonio Kröger* and transformed it to suit her own purposes. *NT* is structured in an unchronological manner and the narratives do not follow any particular order. From the context the first leitmotif clause appears to be associated with Christa T.'s teens. The second leitmotif clause is written in her twenties, after she has witnessed many discrepancies between reality and socialist ideals.

To Wolf, "Sehnsucht" is multileveled and has different meanings in *NT*. In the chapter on Storm, Christa T. describes the "quiet places," the idyllic sanctuary in her childhood, a memory she shares with the poet Storm, which she calls "Sehnsuchtslandschaft" (112) and later on as "Sehnsuchtsbild menschlicher Schönheit" (112).

Wolf also evoked Anna Seghers' novel *Das wirkliche Blau*, a book about a Mexican potter's search for the true blue colour as the theme of his artistic subjectivity (Stephan 84). In this case, the potter is a progressive worker whose odyssey across Mexico eventually enables him to find the true blue for his art, but his political involvement in the adventure is a compromise Christa T. wishes she could, but is not willing, to make. The phrase, "diese unerträgliche Sehnsucht nach dem wirklichen Blau" (*NT* 40) is a reference to Christa T.'s independent thinking.

According to Anna Kuhn, Maxim Gorki and Anton Makarenko, humanist writers who promoted democratic ideas had a strong influence on Christa Wolf (137). As Christa T. discovers these writers, Gorki and Makarenko (*NT* 41), she believes that literature and writing can be

means to fulfil socialist goals. So she declares that this is the way to one's self. "Dies ist der Weg zu uns selber. So wäre die Sehnsucht nicht lächerlich und abwegig, so wäre sie brauchbar und nützlich" (*NT* 41). Because of the humanistic and democratic elements in the works of these two writers, Christa T. believes the new literature is the way to oneself.

Christa T also speaks of the reality of Sehnsucht that: "Sie hat zu ahnen begonnen, daß man sie selbst erzeugen muß und daß sie das Mittel dazu hatte. Da Sehnsucht von sehen kommt: die Sucht, zu sehen, hat sie zu sehen angefangen und gefunden, daß ihre Sehnsucht, wenn sie nur ruhig und gründlich genug hinsah, mit den wirklichen Dingen auf einfache, aber unleugbare Art übereinstimmte" (*NT* 102). Christa T. has the ability to find the longing and searching in herself. "Das Zu-sich-Kommen," "der Versuch man selbst zu sein" (*NT* 11), and "man selbst, ganz stark man selbst zu werden" (*NT* 166) are expressions of the "self" as an individual. Her longing and goal is to gain a deeper understanding of her "self." This desire is so powerful that Wolf felt obligated to preserve it for posterity. Quoting J. R. Becher, Wolf believes that the deep unrest of the human soul is nothing but the faculty to sense that one has not come to one's self (*Werke* IV: 141). One of the central themes of *NT* is to help those who experience the deep unrest to find their "self." This is also the vision of Christa T. : to be a writer, to express all her thoughts, her innermost feelings on paper (Sevin 80).

"Schmerz" is something Christa T. has experienced in her childhood and youth in association with the cruelty of the war. To Christa T., socialism means a new birth, a new start. Granted, there is at the same time the feeling of uncertainty and fear about the future. The second time around, "Schmerz empfinden" is mentioned first; the pain has become the more dominant feeling, followed by "Sehnsucht" for a second birth. Christa T. relives not only the

pain in her childhood but also the pain from watching the development of the new society contradicting socialist ideals. Nevertheless she never ceases to believe in the new world. It pains her to see that people are valued for the sole purpose of being productive. The progress of the new society occurs at the expense of humanness and the freedom of the individual. Even when she fully recognizes the shortcomings of the system, she still has faith in socialism and hopes for a rebirth. However, the pain she experiences in trying to reconcile the reality to the utopian vision of the new society is tearing her apart. What is the hope for the future? Only a second birth of the system can restore the trust of GDR citizens and set the development on the right course. This leitmotif summarizes Christa T.'s longing to gain a better understanding of her "self," to express herself, and her hope for the regeneration of the socialist system in the GDR.

There is yet another aspect of this longing. Christa T. is asked "Was willst du werden?" The answer is "ein Mensch" (NT 46). Christa T. expresses her views on life: "Leben, erleben, freies großes Leben. O herrliches Lebensgefühl, daß du mich nie verläßt! Nichts weiter als ein Mensch sein" (NT 46). Gertrud Born, Christa T.'s friend, believes that she has only one interest which is "Menschen" (NT 59), "Mensch" in the sense of individual, as opposed to being a member of the group. Christa T. strives to remove herself from the group mentality and be an individual unfettered by the shackles of being part of the collective "we" entity.

Being a "Mensch" can also mean a "human being" or humanness. This interpretation is more in line with Tonio Kröger's view of "Menschlich": "Sehnsucht nach dem Harmlosen, Einfachen und Lebendigen, nach ein wenig Freundschaft.... Ein menschlicher Freund" (TK 303), in other words, longing for the ordinary and the banal.

Wolf not only transformed the “Sehnsucht” leitmotif in *Tonio Kröger* to express her own ideas; another viewpoint comes to light through the intertextual reference. In her acceptance speech as the recipient of the Thomas Mann Award in 2010, Wolf mentioned that to her, “Gesittung” and “Humanität” were words with negative connotations in her early teens, when she was growing up under the Nazis (Wolf, Dankesrede 2). Civilized behavior and humanity did not belong to the vocabulary of the Third Reich. In retrospect, Wolf was horrified to imagine what might have happened to German civilization if the Nazi regime had not come to an end in 1945. Even during the time of the GDR, individual freedom took a backseat to the goals of the group. The concept of the individual versus the group in a political context is just one aspect of humanity. At the same time, Wolf was also cognizant of “Menschlichkeit,” the human aspect she described in her acceptance speech of the Thomas Mann award in 2010. In it she specifically mentioned *Tonio Kröger* and cited: “das Menschliche darzustellen, ohne am Menschlichen teilzuhaben”(4). In this case, she was referring to the love of the human, of the ordinary people, human compassion and humanness. It was not only individuality, but also humanness that Wolf was in accord with in *Tonio Kröger*. Moreover, in the same paragraph as the above-mentioned quotation, Wolf affirmed that: “Das Thema ‘Liebe’ kann man als eine der wichtigsten, vielleicht die wichtigste Erzählachse in Thomas Manns Werk sehen: Es rührt an die innerste Wesensebene dieses Autors...” Wolf’s comment is an extraordinary and perceptive insight into the essence of Thomas Mann’s art. To Mann, love encompasses the sensual, homoerotic, “die Bürgerliebe” – the neighborly love, the love of human and the sublime love. In the novella, Tonio eventually comes to recognize the importance of being human and embraces the humanness of bourgeois society. After the disappointment with her teaching career, Christa

T. gets married and raises a family. Her immersion in the routines of the family life is an indication that, just like Tonio, she embraces the ordinary, the banal life and tries to be “menschlich,” but the desire to “come to her self” remains as strong as ever.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

For generations, literature in Germany was dominated by male writers up to the 20th century. Christa Wolf exemplified the first generation of female intellectuals to embark on a career as writers and attained prominence in the GDR. Wolf was very much aware of the patriarchy mindset which lingered on as the remnant from fascism to socialism, despite GDR's pledge of equal rights for women in the socialist society. She managed to articulate both gendered and non-gendered issues forcefully and was highly respected in the GDR as well as in the west for her efforts to raise consciousness of political issues and be truthful to herself and the readers.

Tonio Kröger is a product of the era around the turn of the 20th century Germany, in which Nietzsche's thoughts and influences were most prevalent and dominant in the literary circles of Europe and Germany. Nietzsche's aesthetics and his ideas on the topic of the artist culminated in Thomas Mann's novella about the story of Tonio, whose main concern is the reconciliation of art and life. Christa Wolf did not share Mann's view of the ascetic creative artist influenced by Nietzsche. Though she had a solid grounding in German literature, Wolf's world view was largely shaped by socialism and socialist realism. *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, a piece of "Epic Prose," using Wolf's term, is a work about a non-conformist individual in the GDR and her disillusionment. The role of the artist has shifted from the private domain as portrayed in *TK* to the public in *NT*. Wolf's fixation with the edifying aspect of Christa T.'s life - the pursuit of individuality in a group-oriented society demonstrates Wolf's earnest wish for change to occur

in the society. Wolf's saw herself, the author as an agent of change and she took her responsibility seriously.

The style of *TK* is more indebted to 19th century realism with its linear and clearly delineated plot. In contrast, *NT* is non-linear, non-chronological, with a contemporary and complicated style. It is a work which offers many possible interpretations and yet "it cannot be explained in an interpretation" (Mohr 196). On the surface, these two novels are vastly different with respect to historical content, and political and socio-economic environments. As presented in this study, there are nevertheless many similarities and common threads that connect the two, not to mention the intentional intertextual references included in Wolf's *NT*. However, within the common themes, subtle differences of the protagonists' personalities manifest themselves upon close examination. Tonio, an established artist and Christa T., an aspiring artist, are highly sensitive and looked upon as outsiders in their respective societies, but for different reasons. Tonio is convinced that he can never belong to the world of the "Philisters" as an artist, whereas Christa T. chooses to be different and is oblivious to the reaction of the people around her who find her eccentricity unnerving. The otherness is a quality which enables her to resist the pressure of society to conform and to integrate herself into the socialist system. Despite his poor academic performance, Tonio feels superior to his classmates and teachers. His longing to be part of the bourgeois world is mixed with an equal measure of contempt. As is often the case with artists, Tonio is self-conscious and insecure about his inadequacies, and these character traits are not completely shared by Christa T. who is self-assured, independent, and bold and daring in appearance. However, Christa T. is not without self-doubt and anxiety; her character is a composition of many contradictions.

Despite Christa T.'s death at a young age, *NT* is not a tragedy. In presenting her life story, Wolf hoped to have elicited the "essence of Christa T.'s life" (Mohr 198) and that the story of her life would have an effect. *NT* is not only about the memory of Christa T., a seemingly ordinary protagonist. More importantly, Wolf's intent was to present the core of Christa T.'s struggle, her defiant spirit in an oppressive society, to GDR readers, the intended audience of this work. *NT* is forward-looking and points toward the future. Tonio, a successful author in a completely different society, is troubled by the conflict between art and life. Nevertheless, he is able to work through his agony and dilemma and finds resolution in life. Both works depict the "aesthetic minds in the creative progress" (Mohr 200), the process of probing, searching and coming to terms with the obstacles in life.

Both Tonio Kröger and Christa T. feel a special closeness to Theodor Storm. They share the same admiration for Storm's tenacity, his ability as a skillful and lyric poet, and as an expert novelist. As shown in Chapter Four of this study, Mann characterized *TK* as a product of "Wehmut und Kritik . . . Storm und Nietzsche, Stimmung und Intellektualismus." This notion of poetic sentimentality versus intellect was also replicated by Wolf in *NT*. Before deciding on the topic for her thesis, Christa T. is indecisive and for a period of time, she vacillates between Storm and Mann, who represents intellectualism, before settling on Storm as the subject of her dissertation. Just as *TK* encompasses both qualities, *NT* also displays a balance of emotion and intellect.

Tonio Kröger is an autobiographical fiction with a traditional style of writing, and *NT* contains many autographical elements with a modernist approach. Owing to the autobiographical aspects, the narrators in both cases are able to penetrate the psyche of the

protagonists and portray their deep-seated and innermost emotions and thoughts in the works. Wolf's writing is based on her "subjective authenticity" and a blurry distinction between biography and autobiography. The storylines of both *TK* and *NT* are undramatic; therefore it is all the more important to present the inner experience of the protagonists and the drama which unfolds inwardly through their thoughts, poems and the narrators' reflections and contemplations.

Writers are also readers of texts. Both Mann and Wolf were voracious readers with an insatiable desire for literary works, and the texts they absorbed as readers remained with them consciously or in their subconscious. Especially in Wolf's writings, the introspective exploration of layers and latent recollections in association with autobiographical work, combined with the texts retained as a reader, served as a natural pathway to intertextual writing. The dormant memories functioned as a seamless connection to the works of other authors and emerged as part of Wolf's literary identity, in the form of quotations, allusions, imitations and references.

Intertextual references in *NT* to *TK* are Wolf's indication that she is connecting these two works. *NT* includes, applying Genette's definition, intertextual allusions, hypertextual imitation (the use of leitmotifs) and hypertextual transformation phrases. The use of intertextual references appears to propagate the possibilities of interpretation; it also creates a gateway between the two texts for ideas to flow from one to the other. Both *TK* and *NT* are noted for the extensive use of leitmotifs expressing nearly all the main themes which resonate throughout the texts. These leitmotifs generate a subtle yet close interrelationship between the two works without being ostentatious. Even though the main themes are different in the two works, the two sets of themes converge on the point of "Menschlichkeit." In *TK*, Tonio

concludes that if there is anything that can turn a “Literat” into a “Dichter,” then it is his love for the human, the living and the ordinary (337). Christa T. wants nothing more than to be simply a “Mensch” (NT 46) and her main interest is “Menschen” (NT 59).

The leitmotif “Sehnsucht ist darin and schwermütiger Neid und ein klein wenig Verachtung und eine ganze keusche Seligkeit” generally sums up the core ideas of *TK*. The protagonist Tonio is an achiever despite his feelings of alienation and he becomes a successful writer in the end, whereas Christa T. remains unknown and an outsider until her death. Christa T. represents the generation of GDR authors seeking self-fulfilment, turning inward upon grave disappointment and searching for “das Zu-sich-selbst-Kommen.” The lack of success in her career is symbolic of the struggles she and other GDR writers experience through the repeated outcries of “Warum schreibst du nicht?“, “Die Schwierigkeit ich zu sagen,” and “Wann, wenn nicht jetzt?”

Through the analyses, examples and illustrations presented in this study, I believe that I have addressed a specific intertextual connection which has not been dealt with previously in the literature on the relationship between *Tonio Kröger* and *Nachdenken über Christa T.*

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