

There is no longer an inside or an outside, the revolution is everywhere.

—Christa Wolf, “Der Sinn einer neuen Sache: Vera Inber” (1967)

Our misrecognition constitutes a closed system, nothing can refute it.

—Christa Wolf, *Medea: Stimmen* (1996)

Critical Orthodoxies:

Toward a New Reading of East German Literature

The field of East German scholarship is still adjusting to the dramatic collapse of the German Democratic Republic in the autumn of 1989. Some GDR scholars have reacted with a form of melancholic paralysis, indulging in memories of a lost country in which their dreams of a better society had been so heavily invested—often at the expense of a clear perception of the realities of “real existing socialism.” But most of my colleagues still cannot believe their luck: that this fortress opened up during our lifetime, overflowing with materials, with original versions of manuscripts, banned films, Party documents, and so on. This wealth of new material has been accompanied by an outpouring of voices, a veritable flood of post-1989 autobiographies, essays, memoirs, interviews, and documentaries, not the least interesting of which are the new “post-Wall” novels, breathless narratives about a quickly disappearing country and the ways people lived in it. Obviously, both the GDR itself and East German cultural studies need to be reconceptualized.

Where should we begin? What are the core issues that need to be addressed in this effort to rethink the GDR’s cultural landscape? At a postunification conference on GDR literature, Frank Hörnigk, one of the leading literary scholars from the former East Germany, polemically drew attention to the fact that an author like Gert Neumann, with his fiercely experimental prose, was not only omitted from the GDR’s official literary histories, but was also never “discovered” by Western critics. This seemingly simple observation has wide-ranging implications. First, there are many East German texts which literary scholarship still ignores. Second, the fact that authors like Neumann have been writing since the early 1960s, drawing on Kafka and Joyce (a literature which was anathema to official East German

Kulturpolitik), unsettles the established literary-historical narratives about the East, with their guiding dichotomy of realism versus modernism. Third, Neumann's early decision to write for *a time after socialism* highlights once again the questions raised after 1989: What was the canonical author's relationship to the East German State? Was the oeuvre of Christa Wolf, Heiner Müller, Volker Braun, Christoph Hein, Kerstin Hensel, and others complicitous with this State or critical of it? Does it even make sense to try to understand their texts in terms of complicity versus critique? We have known for some time that the answer to the first question involves the authors' attraction to a Communist Party that claimed to uphold a specific ideal, antifascism; we also know that these authors saw their literary production as part of this antifascist tradition. What lies at the very core of these questions, then, is the relationship of literature to ideology as that site where stories about a collective history become entangled with the history of the subject.

At stake are questions of periodization, of the realism/modernism dichotomy, of literature's complicitous or critical role, and of the role of (un)conscious fantasies in a given ideological formation. And we are confronted once again with the legacy of the German past, the ways in which it is remembered and the ways in which it is repressed. This particular angle, the legacy of fascism in the literature of the GDR, will serve as a starting point in the effort to answer some of the questions raised above. This book has a dual focus: first, it explores a literary tradition centrally involved in the Communist Party's effort to legitimize its power through the discourse of antifascism; second, it traces the ways in which the work of Christa Wolf, East Germany's most prominent author, has interacted with this tradition. The Communists' effort to build hegemony within the power vacuum left by the collapse of Nazi Germany was based on a discourse of antifascism. More specifically, the GDR claimed the legacy of antifascism by presenting the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and its leaders as the sole heirs of the resistance movement. This founding discourse retained its power until the State imploded in 1989. At the center of the Communists' symbolic politics of power was the figure of the (Communist) father as antifascist hero. This book aims to understand from a psychoanalytic perspective the ways in which Wolf's writing is engaged in this reconstruction of symbolic power, focusing on the (un)conscious fantasies about the post-fascist body and the post-fascist voice that suffuse her texts. The book's dual focus thus allows

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us to trace the production of cultural fantasies across East Germany's entire history.

What is involved in this particular way of looking back at East German literature? First and foremost, by reading literature as part of a culture's production of fantasies, we shed new light on East Germany's dominant ideological narrative, on the ways in which it works on the political and psychic levels, the ways in which stories about the past are woven into the foundations of a post-fascist German state and into the foundations of that state's post-fascist subjects. Second, concerning more properly literary issues, this approach unsettles our firmly established orthodoxies of realism and modernism. To start with, this study includes what many critics consider that literature's most negligible texts, its socialist realist classics. These texts are essential, indeed indispensable, if we want to understand the cultural fantasies at work. Moreover, we will discover that the usual description of these texts as closed and monolithic needs to be revised. Conversely, our understanding of what we are used to thinking of as East Germany's most modernist works will also be transformed. With respect to Wolf, this means, first, that the realism/modernism split allegedly defining Wolf's oeuvre will be fundamentally reconceptualized. And, second, notions of feminine writing, and of feminism in general, that we have come to associate with Wolf's concept of "subjective authenticity" (this concept which for Wolf defines modernist prose tout court) will be thoroughly problematized. Since this approach represents a radical reframing of the prevailing terms of debate, it is necessary to set out in some detail the categories which have hitherto informed and structured scholarly discussions of GDR literature, culture, and politics.

"The GDR never existed," proclaimed East Germany's most prominent playwright, Heiner Müller, after the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989. Is there any truth to this provocative remark? However pompous and cryptic, Müller's statement does convey a fundamental insight: from its beginnings to its sudden demise, this failed experiment in socialism was characterized by a gaping chasm between utopian expectations and German reality and by an utter lack of autonomy, first from the Soviet occupying power and later from the West. Founded in October 1949 on the territory of the Soviet Occupied Zone, the German Democratic Republic had little opportunity to chart an independent "German path" toward social-

ism.¹ Nevertheless, many communists and noncommunists returning from the concentration camps, from exile, or from the seclusion forced upon them after 1933 were drawn to a social order that announced its beginnings as “antifascist-democratic.” They were joined by a younger generation, many of whose members had as adolescents enthusiastically participated in the rituals of National Socialism. Müller belonged to that generation, as did Christa Wolf, Irmtraud Morgner, Brigitte Reimann, Franz Fühmann, Willi Sitte, and many other prominent East German artists and intellectuals. The antifascist-democratic sentiment was supported by a sizable minority and had a strong anticapitalist component.² Yet the SED soon instrumentalized this sentiment in the service of a Soviet-style social order, one in which democracy became democratic centralism and antifascism a discourse that legitimated the power of a single party and its state. Thus the German Democratic Republic, this democratic and socialist alternative to West Germany for which many had hoped, never materialized. Such hopes turned out to be “heroic illusions.”³

Nor did this “other GDR” emerge from the tumultuous events in the fall of 1989, despite the hopes of many leading East German intellectuals, members of the citizen movements, and sympathizers outside the country.⁴ Let me briefly review these events. In East Germany, the late 1980s were characterized by stagnation and the widespread feeling that nothing would ever change, given the SED’s open resistance to Gorbachev’s reforms.⁵ Then, in the summer of 1989, Hungary opened its border to Austria and thousands of refugees began to stream out of the country. Beginning in the early fall, East Germans assembled for peaceful marches in Leipzig and other major cities, declaring their intention to stay (“We’re staying here”) and demanding democratic reforms (“We are the people”). Meanwhile, preparations were being made for the fortieth anniversary celebrations on October 9. Expecting the government to resort to the “Chinese solution,” most observers were surprised when the heavily deployed security forces withdrew from the massive counterdemonstration held in Leipzig on October 7.⁶ Nearly a million people gathered in Berlin on November 4 to hear speakers drawn from the citizen movements, the country’s most prominent writers and artists (Christoph Hein, Steffi Spira, Christa Wolf, Stephan Heym, Heiner Müller), and the Communist Party. Under pressure from the continuing mass emigration and increasing protests throughout the country, Erich Honecker, Head of State and General Secretary of the Party, resigned in the first week of November, followed by the resignation of the government

and then the entire Politburo.⁷ On November 9, a “colossal misunderstanding” occurred when a rather bewildered functionary accidentally read an announcement that “the borders are now open” at a nationally televised late-night press conference—and the Wall was opened.⁸

The ensuing period is best described by the title of one of the numerous monographs chronicling this process: “History Is Wide Open.”⁹ When a new Communist government was formed on November 17, the main citizen movements and new political parties formed a “roundtable” in order to negotiate the citizens’ demands with the government. The outcome was an agreement to hold elections in March, with the participation of parties and groups other than the SED, for a “government of national responsibility.” During this time a euphoric sense of radical democracy prevailed, notably, in a series of town meetings and open debates. Many expected the roundtable, which emerged as the most important site of continuous discussion during this interregnum, to remain a key institution in the future political order. But the elections on March 18, 1990, yielded a surprise victory for the Christian Democrats. This result unequivocally confirmed the majority’s desire to merge with the West as quickly as possible, a desire loudly proclaimed in the new slogan “We are *one* people” heard more and more frequently at demonstrations. A second, reformed GDR thus never became a real possibility. The West was too attractive, the East in its post-perestroika paralysis too discouraging, the experience of forty years of state socialism too powerful a deterrent. Instead, East Germany’s ruling elite “surrendered the fortress,”¹⁰ and in the fall of 1990 the GDR was absorbed by the Federal Republic. Dependent on the Soviet Union from its Stalinist inception to its corroded state under perestroika and facing the possibility of unification, the GDR as a “third path,” a democratic-socialist Germany, had never really existed.

Should we then view the GDR retrospectively as two utopian moments in which the hope for an alternative society flared up briefly—an alternative to the Nazi past, to the Soviet model, and to the consumer society of the Federal Republic—and, between these two moments, the dark night of Stalinism?¹¹ Such an understanding of forty years of East German history is as simplistic and reductionist as the currently fashionable equation of the Nazi regime and the East German *Unrechtsstaat* (criminal state).¹² The other concept which quickly gained wide acceptance as a way of characterizing this state was, predictably, totalitarianism. Besides the inflationary and often oversimplifying use of that concept in the German press, the

most influential version was developed by Sigrid Meuschel in her work on East Germany as a society penetrated by the state, a form of blocked modernization.¹³ Meuschel maintains that the process of differentiation into various subsystems, which she views as characteristic of modern industrial societies, was reversed in the GDR: instead of reaching ever greater autonomy from one another, the economic, cultural, and social processes were blocked by the all-encompassing political regulation of East Germany's ruling party, which led to a "withering away of society,"¹⁴ to a society suspended and immobilized.

Such an analysis is problematic because, in constructing a unilateral relationship of dependence between state and society, it underestimates the autonomy of the social in the GDR. Furthermore, it collapses transformational *project* and reality, a program and its partially contingent effects. In its emphasis on state repression and control, it cannot account for individual agency, for the intricate pattern of conformity and resistance which characterized the GDR. As Ralph Jessen observes: "The reality of 'real existing socialism' was a highly complex mixture of the ideologically driven dictatorial attempt at social construction, on the one hand, and the countervailing weight of inherited and emergent social structures and processes, on the other."¹⁵ The totalitarianism perspective remains bound to a Cold War mirror logic, figuring socialist state societies as the opposite of modern Western ones without being able to determine the specific forms of domination and resistance in that system. And by positing a teleological development from Eastern "premodernity" to Western "modernity," this model is ultimately unable to recognize the specificity of the GDR. To grasp this specificity, we need to abandon the simplistic dichotomy of premodernity versus modernity. This reductionist analysis, which accompanies the current revival of modernization theory in Germany, owes more to a political rhetoric intent on portraying West Germany as the more advanced part than to a genuine effort to theorize the complexities of the East German state.¹⁶

One version of totalitarianism theory, however, does capture part of the GDR's discursive and nondiscursive reality: Claude Lefort's rethinking of totalitarianism precisely as a political-ideological *project*. In Lefort's view, totalitarianism is characterized by the propagation of one-party rule and by a fantasy of social homogeneity, that is, a conception of society as essentially unified. This fantasy is metaphorically embodied in the notion of the People-as-One *and* in the image of the leader's body. Lefort's understanding of totalitarianism thus restricts the term to a specific usage: totalitari-

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anism as an ideological project, a project concerning the realm of symbolic and cultural politics.¹⁷ It does *not* aim at an exhaustive description of the nondiscursive reality of state socialism.¹⁸ And it is certainly not an exhaustive description of this discursive reality *at all times*. The move away from a monocausal explanation also entails a more complex model of understanding the forty years of GDR history, one which comprehends the social as a psychically *and* socially organized formation.¹⁹ Lefort allows us to understand totalitarian mass politics as a highly *modern* form of symbolic politics, relying on elaborate strategies to make the fantasy of the social cohere around the figure of the leader.

Similar issues—the question of the “two dictatorships,” that is, of the comparability of the Nazi and SED regime, of conformity versus complicity, of the GDR’s relationship to Western modernity—were at stake in the controversies about East German literature and culture that arose after 1989 and have accompanied the process of unification since then, representing one of the sites on which a new German identity is being negotiated. For, as one of the participants in the first, most strident debate averred: “He who determines what was, also determines what will be.”²⁰ By now, the list of these cultural debates is rather formidable. Since they have been well documented, I shall limit myself to a brief overview.²¹ In the summer of 1990, an initial controversy developed around the publication of Christa Wolf’s *Was bleibt* (*What Remains and Other Stories*). Wolf’s short text chronicles one day in the life of a female author living in East Berlin who becomes aware that she is being kept under surveillance by the Stasi, East Germany’s secret police. This surveillance causes her to reflect on her writing, the role of self-censorship, and her desire for *another* language, one free of the official discourse. When Wolf published the text, she indicated that it had been written from June/July 1979 to November 1989.²² It was this piece of information upon which critics seized, accusing her of trying to assume the role of victim. Calling Wolf the GDR’s *Staatsdichterin* (state poet), Ulrich Greiner, writing in the weekly *Die Zeit*, argued that Wolf should have published the story in 1979.²³ In a later piece, Greiner elaborated on his revisionist reading of Wolf, arguing that what was at stake in the debate was her “joint responsibility for the second German catastrophe.”²⁴ Others, such as the editor of the influential cultural journal *Merkur*, Karl-Heinz Bohrer, called Wolf’s story *Gesinnungskitsch* (kitsch of conviction), arguing that with unification the time had finally come for postwar German literature to separate

art from *Gesinnung*, aesthetics from political metaphysics.²⁵ For Bohrer, any aesthetic linked to a political project, or what he terms *Gesinnungs-ästhetik* (aesthetic of conviction), remains caught in premodern modes of thought. Similar arguments with respect to both Wolf and her West German colleagues from the so-called Group 47, such as Günther Grass and Heinrich Böll,²⁶ were made by Frank Schirrmacher, editor-in-chief of the literary supplement to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

In the fall of 1990, a brief debate flared up around the East German author Anna Seghers (1900–1983) and her role in the trial of Walter Janka, a veteran of the International Brigades in Spain, a member of the SED, and, at the time of his trial for sedition (1957), head of the prestigious publishing house Aufbau-Verlag.²⁷ In the fall of 1991 another “literary scandal” pulled Wolf and the so-called *Literaturstreit* (literary controversy) out of the cultural pages and onto the front page: in his acceptance speech for the prestigious Büchner-Preis, Wolf Biermann, the dissident East German *chansonnier* forced into exile in 1976, accused the poet Sascha Anderson of having worked for the Stasi as an unofficial informant even after he had left the GDR for West Berlin in 1986.²⁸ Anderson was part of the so-called Prenzlauer Berg scene, a group of young poets attempting to lead a subcultural existence outside of official East German cultural institutions.²⁹ What previously looked like a “clandestine” literary scene inspired by the writings of Foucault, Lacan, and Deleuze now suddenly appeared to be Stasi-supported: Anderson admitted, for instance, that he had received money from the Stasi for the “clandestine” journal *Schaden*.³⁰ While Anderson continued to deny any official affiliation with the Stasi, Rainer Schödlinski, another poet and theoretician of the Prenzlauer Berg scene, admitted his collaboration publicly.³¹ By this time, public attention had come to be focused exclusively on the topic of the Stasi, and in January 1993 Christa Wolf publicized the fact that she had met several times with Stasi officers between 1959 and 1962.³² And, in the fall of 1995, Monika Maron, an author who had left the GDR in the 1980s, was forced to admit that she had consented to routine conversations with members of the state security.³³ The most recent controversy concerned the refusal of the West German chapter of PEN to merge with its East German equivalent.³⁴

In these cultural debates, a paradox emerged ever more clearly with each successive contribution: on the one hand, authors such as Wolf were reproached for not having been more politically engaged; on the other hand, they were accused of mixing politics and literature. Moreover, their critics

tended to focus increasingly on the issue of Stasi collaboration, treating such important issues as complicity and critique, modes of accommodation and dissent, in sensationalist terms.³⁵ Fritz J. Raddatz's response to the revelations about Wolf's and Müller's meetings with Stasi officers provides a good example of the impasse reached at this stage. Repeating the accusations of collaboration—"You turned yourselves into helpers in the construction of a system of persecution"—the former head of the *ZEIT* feuilleton exclaimed, rather melodramatically, "It seems to me that both of them [Wolf and Müller] harmed not only their biographies; they damaged their own work. They betrayed us."³⁶ Raddatz went on to equate the actions of the GDR's most prominent authors with Knut Hamsun's "betrayal" (his support for the Nazis) and reduced the complex question of aesthetics and politics to a somewhat facile pronouncement: "Every work of art [shelters] at its core a bit of innocence, a grain of purity."³⁷ Raddatz urged his readers to conclude that both the writers and their works had now lost this "innocence."

Following the lead of Bohrer and Schirrmacher, however, literary critics began to discuss the issue on a different level, recasting the question raised in the debate among historians—whether the GDR had ever attained the same degree of modernization as its Western counterpart—in aesthetic, or rather literary-historical, terms. This discussion was advanced most forcefully by the literary scholar Bernd Hüppauf. Just as Wolfgang J. Mommsen, a West German historian, argued that the GDR ultimately resulted from the infamous German *Sonderweg* (peculiarities), the long-term effects of which had produced a state less Westernized, less modern than the Federal Republic, Hüppauf defined East German literature as an example of "aesthetic nonsynchronicity" (*ästhetische Ungleichzeitigkeit*). This is a literature, Hüppauf argues, whose lack of wordplay, of negativity, and of destructiveness radically distinguished it from the literature of the West.³⁸ In Hüppauf's view, the GDR was a world "in which power continued to be exercised not through anonymous structures but in unmediated form, personally." To this "nineteenth-century" political universe corresponded, according to Hüppauf, a form of aesthetics also inherited from the nineteenth century, one which demanded the primacy of ethics and politics over "the aesthetic." Hüppauf argues that in the GDR premodern society and premodern aesthetics were thus inextricably linked. The campaigns which the SED's cultural functionaries continually waged against "formalism," designed to banish modernism from the East, were just so many attempts to preserve the hierarchical relationship between ethics and aesthetics. According to Hüppauf,

these campaigns also represented a ritual defense against the “life forms of modern society.”³⁹ While aware of the “broken” identification of most authors with the East German state, Hüppauf perceives them as tied into this nineteenth-century universe on multiple levels:

“Declarations of loyalty,” “engagement,” and “worldview” not only assured that writers were *morally* entangled in the system and behaved like members of an extended *family* (Biermann); they also produced an aesthetic “entanglement” in the politically determined system of this extended family. Literature’s place was always already defined in advance, and its position vis-à-vis the *Übervater* determined the rules of the game. From the early formulations—Otto Grotewohl flattered the writers at the Second Writers’ Congress with the statement that they were the “government’s comrades-in-arms”—to the somewhat subtler formulations of later years, literature in the GDR had come a long way without ever having been able to abolish these rules. The authorities’ positions remained intact and the patricide did not take place, not even in symbolic disguise. The revolt of the aesthetic never occurred.⁴⁰

Hüppauf essentially refined Bohrer’s story, the story of an “epochally outmoded civilization” and its “metaphysical” literature.⁴¹ He did not hesitate to dismiss the GDR’s entire literature as “anachronistic” and “eccentric,” adding that this verdict was *especially* valid for the GDR’s *critical* literature.⁴² “The literature of the GDR never existed” would seem to be a fitting summary of Hüppauf’s view.

A similar logic sustained Peter Geist’s discussion of East German lyric poetry. Less radical than Hüppauf, Geist nevertheless dismisses all but the lyric poetry of the Prenzlauer Berg—again in the name of modernity. In 1991, Geist described the poetry of Papenfuss-Gorek, Anderson, Kolbe, and others as a “land of thought and language beyond authoritarian logics of surveillance,” concluding: “They thus represent the only proper ‘modernism’ within GDR poetry.”⁴³ Like Bohrer and Schirmacher, Hüppauf and Geist participate in the wholesale dismissal of East German literature as the literary expression of a premodern society. By arguing for this dismissal from the perspective of Western modernism, they contribute to a particular postunification version of what Fredric Jameson has called the “ideology of modernism.”⁴⁴ As in the debates over the nature of East Germany in the field of history, the nature of East German literature in the realm of literary criticism is defined in accordance with a teleological model of German modernity in which the GDR figures as the premodern society that has

to be raised to the level of its fully modernized Western counterpart. The model—and the telos—of this narrative was, and is, Western capitalism and Western modernism. This postunification ideology of modernism is nothing new, even if its triumphalism is: throughout the entire Cold War period, a dichotomy prevailed between Lukácsian realism and Western modernism.⁴⁵ Its Cold War logic functioned like a mirror: what was valued on one side of the Iron Curtain was devalorized on the other; what counted as a “good,” “realist,” affirmative text in the GDR became a “bad” text outside the GDR, and vice versa.⁴⁶ This Cold War imaginary certainly did not allow for a differentiated reading of the texts produced *on the other side of the Iron Curtain*, its crude categories being all too often unable to account for the intricacies of a particular work.⁴⁷ This approach is especially unable to account for the *formal* intricacies of GDR literature, an inability which led in most cases and on both sides to a concentration on the novel’s content and explicit political discourse, and to the often rather desperate effort to establish the text’s “political message.”⁴⁸ It would be easy to dismiss Hüppauf’s story on the grounds that he, too, is unable to account for the complexities of individual literary works. We could even enlist Hüppauf himself in doing so, since he does concede the questionability of speaking of a monolithic GDR literature.⁴⁹ Moreover, his rejection of all politically engaged literature in the name of modernism is blatantly ideological.⁵⁰ But I hesitate to dismiss Hüppauf’s argument for two reasons: First, his premise that, *in the case of GDR literature*, ethics and aesthetics are inseparable is important.⁵¹ And, second, Hüppauf’s narrative shares its categories and teleology with the most influential accounts of forty years of East German literature: Wolfgang Emmerich’s seminal 1988 article “Gleichzeitigkeit” (Synchronicity), which conceptualizes GDR literature as a sequence leading from realism through modernism to postmodernism, and Genia Schulz’s critical, feminist appropriation of this account.⁵² Both accounts cast the problematic aspects of the realism/modernism dichotomy into even stronger relief.

Emmerich divides East German literature into three distinct periods: that of 1950s socialist realism, which he terms “premodern” literature; that of “modernism,” starting in the early 1960s and reaching its apogee in the mid-1970s; and, finally, that of postmodern literature, represented by the poets of the Prenzlauer Berg. Emmerich’s story is basically one of convergence theory in literary guise, informed by Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectics of Enlightenment*. For Emmerich traces the East German authors’ in-

creasing awareness of the destructive potential of instrumental rationality — an awareness, Emmerich believes, that they share with their colleagues in the West.⁵³

Emmerich characterizes the first period as one in which the GDR was still a “premodern land, whose life–world is much less thoroughly rationalized than ours,” and he defines its literature (the novels of Willi Bredel and Anna Seghers, Eduard Claudius and Marianne Langer; the plays of Friedrich Wolf and Helmut Baierl) as follows: “Almost without exception, the narration is characterized by the authors’ belief in progress; they narrate optimistically, all-around positively with the help of conventional, formerly realistic models.”⁵⁴ In this description, Emmerich is operating with the opposition between closed and open forms, equating them with “premodern” and “modernist” modes of writing, respectively. Sometime between 1963 and 1965, Emmerich maintains, a qualitative change occurred: with the industrial modernization of the GDR, a new literature emerged, one which borrowed its forms from classical modernism and which began to question the modernization process, without, however, abandoning the utopia of a nonalienated society. The text singled out by Emmerich—and by the majority of critics after him—as instantiating the emergence of modernism in the East was Christa Wolf’s 1968 *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (*The Quest for Christa T.*). Emmerich thus makes literature’s relation to the utopia of (a different) socialism the cornerstone of his periodization, arguing that with the literature of the 1960s the relation to utopia becomes self-reflective, while the fiction and poetry of the Prenzlauer Berg finally abandoned this utopia entirely.

Emmerich’s narrative is sustained by a single, yet twofold, teleology: the move from “premodernism” to postmodernism was accompanied by an increasing gap between official ideology and literature, a process that would eventually result in the complete separation of the “best” authors/texts from the GDR’s official discourse. At this point, Emmerich clearly privileges the literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s, reading these works as self-conscious reflections on the dialectic of enlightenment, painfully aware of the “collapse of enlightenment modernism” but nevertheless clinging to what he, along with Wolf, calls a “remainder of utopia.”⁵⁵ It is this particular body of literature which, in his eyes, meets the standards of High Modernism.⁵⁶ Emmerich then conceptualizes forty years of East German literature as a moment of “modernism,” whose critical potential emerged in the early 1960s and peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This mod-

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ernist moment is wedged in, on one side, by a negligible period of “pre-modernism” and, on the other, by a more ambivalently theorized period of postmodernism.

Emmerich’s reading of GDR literature and literary-historical categories he constructed broke new ground and paved the way for further research. In the late 1980s, several feminist scholars started to rethink the realism/modernism dichotomy in terms of the emergence of an East German *feminist modernism*. Genia Schulz, for instance, argued that the “disputes with the aesthetic norms of reflection-realism” and the concomitant “emergence of deviant, de-ranged modes of writing” represented the rise of a new form of “feminine writing.”⁵⁷ Looking back at East Germany’s “women’s literature” in 1990, Dorothea Böck reaffirmed this reading, arguing that from the 1960s on, literature’s “detachment” from the directives of GDR cultural politics, from the prescribed lines of tradition and heritage, *and* from the officially sanctioned topics and genres was intricately linked to a critique of the dominant patriarchal structures and thought patterns.⁵⁸ Myra Love, among others, suggested abandoning the realism/modernism dichotomy altogether in favor of a model of “feminine writing” fundamentally different from either category.⁵⁹ Despite these attempts to retheorize this founding divide between realism and modernism, the predominant view of East German literature—other than its wholesale dismissal—remains that of the slow emergence of a (feminist) modernism.⁶⁰

This feminist story shares several fundamental elements with Emmerich’s account: first, the privileging of modernism and the concomitant investment in the period from the 1960s to the mid-1980s as the Golden Age of East German literature; second, the focus on one specific author, Christa Wolf, and her work as successively marking the important turning points of this literary-historical narrative; third, the overt rejection or simple neglect of the GDR’s early literature, the “dark” (and embarrassing) age of socialist realism; and, fourth, the underlying teleology: whereas Emmerich saw the emancipation of the author’s voice from the GDR’s official political and aesthetic discourse in the increasing mastery of modernist techniques and growing awareness of the dialectic of enlightenment, these feminist critics anticipated and proclaimed a liberation from the official patriarchal ideology in the emergence of a feminist consciousness and its autonomous feminine aesthetic. The core notion of *both* stories is modernism’s “authentic voice,” a voice that succeeded in establishing a critical distance from the GDR’s dominant ideology. And in both accounts, this voice is derived from

Christa Wolf's concept of "subjective authenticity," theorized in the late 1960s. With this notion, Wolf postulated the "truth" of the author's *subjective experience* against the objective knowledge of (socialist) realism's third-person narrator, making the author's/narrator's "presence" in his/her writing the precondition of what she called "modern prose."⁶¹

A more recent attempt at a synthetic cultural history of the GDR has once again reconfirmed this literary–historical paradigm. The chapter treating the GDR in *German Cultural Studies: An Introduction* firmly locates the story of East German literature in a teleology of convergence: the stark differences between the cultures of East and West Germany gradually faded, the authors assert, as both literatures became more concerned with questions of women's emancipation, peace, and ecology. Again, this convergence, and its obvious redemptive role, is celebrated as the result of a long-term process, the modernization of East German literature. Modernism's corrosive effect, the authors argue, forced the SED to "admit" that its rejection of modernism as Western "decadence" was "ill-advised": "A major factor in this volte-face was undoubtedly the fact that, from the late 1960s, the GDR's leading writers simply began to learn from and use the literary strategies of modernism." The ensuing period is one in which a genuine "cultural identity" materialized. This golden age, with its "distinctive GDR culture," no longer suffers from the lack that characterized the earlier era, namely, the "authentic narrative voice of female authors."⁶²

In 1991 Emmerich revised his assessment of what he had theorized as the *critical modernism* of the 1960s. He now calls this literature East Germany's *Sinngesellschaftsliteratur*—"the beautiful era of utopian models from the 1960s and 1970s."⁶³ Emmerich's new reading culminates in the following thesis:

The ever-increasing stagnation and deformation of "actual socialism" (and the recognition of its criminal prehistory in Stalinism) did not induce the majority of writers to renounce socialism *tout court*. They remained . . . partially trapped in the dominant discourse and its rules, paradoxically even when they extensively negated it. . . . Only a few of those born before 1930 were able to accomplish a genuine withdrawal from this value system. But even the authors of Volker Braun's generation, ten years younger . . . only took this step in a few cases. . . . No, the authors of both generations followed a different path. Although they knew that their God no longer existed, they retained the "epochal illusion" of "true socialism" by enclosing its image in the shrine of utopia, that is, what nowhere exists but still should

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be. . . . This insulation of utopia, precisely, allowed it to shine ever more brilliantly as a promise, while at the same time removing it further and further from real problems and relationships. It became more than ever a metanarrative . . . with hidden repressive and totalitarian traits.⁶⁴

Here, the literary products of the GDR's Golden Age of Modernism thus turn into the Golden Cage of Utopia or, more appropriately, the Iron Cage. Suddenly, modernism loses its critical potential. Emmerich still emphasizes the growing distance of the East German authors' texts from the SED's official political and aesthetic discourse. And he also emphasizes that this distance expressed itself in an aesthetic counter-discourse, in modes of writing that met the "standards of modern prose."⁶⁵ But his guiding question has changed: Emmerich is now concerned with explaining why the East German authors "tied themselves to the system of actual 'real socialism' " and its "antifascist-socialist state program" *despite* their critical distance.

Emmerich's essay is the result of a shock, one that he was not the only critic to register. Having read the texts of Christa Wolf—and Heiner Müller, Stephan Heym, Volker Braun, Helga Königsdorf, and Christoph Hein—as testimony to a gradual "emancipation" from East Germany's dominant ideology, many Western critics were stunned when suddenly confronted with the statements and actions of these authors in the fall of 1989, with their support for a "third way," a "democratic," "socialist," and "antifascist" alternative to the Federal Republic,⁶⁶ and other signs of an attachment to the East German project that went far beyond Western constructions of these exemplary "critical modernists." The same shock was felt by those who had read Christa Wolf as *Germany's* foremost feminist author—one who had made the slow but definitive progression *from Marxism to Feminism*.⁶⁷ Surprised by Wolf's strong attachment to the GDR's socialist project and her commitment to a reformed East Germany, many critics were forced to rethink their own investment in the utopian promise of an imagined East German feminist modernism.

What conclusions can be drawn from these debates? Surely, we cannot be satisfied with the widespread move to discard previously canonized East German authors in favor of a newly discovered "genuine" (feminist) modernist, whether a Uwe Johnson or Irmtraud Morgner.⁶⁸ Instead, I propose that we abandon several traditional assumptions about GDR literature. First and foremost, we must move beyond the ahistorical realism/modernism dichotomy. Even socialist realism, if there is such a thing, is part of twentieth-

century modernism.⁶⁹ All the critical narratives discussed above, from Hüppauf to Emmerich to Schulz, demonstrate the problems involved in imposing a specific literary-historical paradigm on the GDR's cultural landscape, either by compressing the transition from nineteenth-century realism to twentieth-century modernism into forty years of East German culture or by topographically dividing it into Eastern realism and Western modernism. Let me first point out several inconsistencies with respect to the formal aspects of this paradigm: Hüppauf, for example, is forced to include works which employ techniques conventionally defined as modernist in his category of East German pre- or nonmodernism. The close reading of any socialist realist classic would have to acknowledge its formal "modernism." For instance, the montagelike structure of Anna Seghers's 1949 historical novel *Die Toten bleiben jung* (*The Dead Stay Young*) is clearly modeled on Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer*.⁷⁰ The rigorous, almost rigid metaphorical structure of Christa Wolf's early (1963) novel *Der geteilte Himmel* (*The Divided Heaven*) clearly owes as much to Russian Constructivism as it does to any nineteenth-century model.⁷¹ Nor is the "content" side of this argument any less problematic. It is imperative to resist all interpretive stances that read these authors' political consciousness in their literary fiction (or their essays on aesthetics, their poetics, or simply their political statements) and then respond by agreeing or disagreeing with their politics.

A rethinking of GDR culture that hopes to contribute to an understanding of the vitally important issue of critique versus complicity, which arose in 1989, should strive to determine the specificity of this literature, should attempt to historicize it thoroughly.⁷² To do so would mean working against the grain of two teleologies. The first is the idea of a self-emancipating voice associated with some "Westernized" form of modernism. As we have seen, this imaginary trajectory has been halted once and for all by the events of 1989. Second, this rethinking must problematize the privileging of a golden age associated with the trajectory from realism to modernism. Hüppauf does both, yet at the price of simplification and reduction: the literary production of forty years becomes a "premodern" monolith, and what we learn beyond that is something we already know: that most of East Germany's prominent authors were both "inside" and "outside," that is, socialists who were critical of the SED's politics. To find an answer to the question raised by the events of 1989 (not for the first time, of course, but certainly with more urgency) — why the GDR authors "tied themselves to the system" — it is necessary to move from the level of conscious political philosophy to that

of *unconscious fantasy*. This is, after all, the other level on which ideology works. I propose to start with a basic question: What was the GDR's dominant official discourse? For I do not believe that the answer to this question is as self-evident as the scholarly literature tends to assume.

The most powerful ideological discourse in the GDR was that of anti-fascism. This certainly is and was common knowledge among those working in the field of GDR studies. The various statements made by authors and oppositional politicians after 1989 have merely reconfirmed that knowledge. What we do *not* know is how that discourse was “made,” what its precise contours were, its central images, its stories. The specificity of GDR literature cannot be assessed in comparison with “Western” modernism, or what some critics tend to think of as the “most advanced” aesthetic positions. It lies elsewhere—in this literature's particular implication in and contribution to the GDR's dominant discourse, that of antifascism, in the conscious and unconscious fantasies it developed in its engagement with this discourse. Further, a truly historical account of East German literature cannot afford to exclude the early period, since this is the period of East Germany's *foundational narratives of antifascism*.⁷³ It is from this perspective that I will approach the author most thoroughly implicated in the writing of this discourse, Christa Wolf.

This book is organized in three parts, each of which covers a specific historical period. In Part I, I analyze the ways in which a particular group of novels written between the early 1930s and the late 1950s contributed to this hegemonic project: Willi Bredel's trilogy (1941–53), *Verwandte und Bekannte* (Relatives and Acquaintances), Anna Seghers's *Die Toten bleiben jung/The Dead Stay Young* (1949), and Otto Gotsche's 1959 *Die Fahne von Kriwoj Rog* (The Flag from Kriwoj Rog). These were novels by Communist authors who were either in exile during the Nazi period or active in the German resistance movement. The first two volumes of Bredel's trilogy, *Die Väter* (The Fathers) and *Die Söhne* (The Sons), as well as Seghers's novel, were written in exile, revised upon the authors' return to Germany, and published first in the Soviet Occupied Zone, then, after 1949, in the GDR. The third volume of Bredel's trilogy, *Die Enkel* (The Grandsons), was written in East Germany, as was Gotsche's novel. What these texts have in common is the following: structured as family sagas, they each narrate the “pre-history” of the German Democratic Republic by focusing on a single working-class family. Moreover, they center on the father and set up an unbroken male lineage of Communist fathers and sons.⁷⁴ In this re-

spect, they represent an integral part of the Communists' symbolic politics of power.⁷⁵ These novels are foundational narratives in a double sense: first, they were consecrated by the SED and its cultural functionaries; and, second, they were promoted with the goal of providing a framework within which to think not only the new order's past but also its present. Neither of these goals was sufficiently appreciated by Eastern or Western critics. Indeed, this literature was far more influential than these critics have allowed.

The second set of novels, written in the early 1960s by a younger generation of GDR authors such as Brigitte Reimann and Dieter Noll, were canonized in East Germany as a new GDR-specific genre, the so-called *Ankunftsroman*, or novel of arrival. The designation derives from the title of Reimann's 1961 novel *Ankunft im Alltag* (Arrival in Everyday Life), which narrates the "arrival" of its three young protagonists in the world of "real existing socialism." This literature has generally been discussed with respect to its immediate context, the beginning of the GDR's socialist era, which Walter Ulbricht, then president of the GDR, announced in 1952. However, I will argue that these novels also participate in the discourse of antifascism, since their protagonists are positioned as sons and daughters vis-à-vis the idealized parental figures of the antifascist family narratives.

Part 3 focuses on Christa Wolf, concentrating first on her earliest texts, *Moskauer Novelle* (1961) and *Der geteilte Himmel/The Divided Heaven* (1963), and tracing the ways in which they contribute to the paternal narrative of antifascism. I then turn to *Kindheitsmuster/Patterns of Childhood* (1976) and *Kassandra/Cassandra* (1983), showing how they can be read as self-conscious reflections upon this antifascist narrative, in which Wolf is the most centrally implicated East German author. In her literary texts that focus on the figure of the daughter, Wolf both accepts the antifascist narrative as her framework and contributes to its elaboration. I will show that this author, celebrated for having broken most radically with socialist realism, paradoxically continued to write its main story and that, indeed, the very formal innovation taken to signal this break—her concept of subjective authenticity—originated in that story.

When I say that I want to trace this discourse of legitimation in a number of literary works, it may sound as if I am primarily interested in tracing the development of a political theme in a particular narrative form, the family narrative. This is certainly not the case. Nor am I interested in whether the texts' more or less explicit level of political discourse is critical of "real existing socialism."⁷⁶ As I argued above, this approach, which reduces

complex literary texts—and even the “cultural corpses”⁷⁷ of East German socialist realism are literary texts, after all—to their political “message,” has informed the field of GDR studies for too long. My approach to this literature combines a critical reading of its explicit political discourse (much like traditional ideology critique) with a psychoanalytic reading. I am interested in these texts because they narrate the—conscious and unconscious—fantasies involved in an ideological formation based on the family. They are *ideological fantasies*: texts that narrate the work of the unconscious and its fantasies in ideology. This study thus represents a contribution to the conceptualization of ideology as a bridge between the level of the social and the level of the individual, between history and the psyche.⁷⁸ Ideology cannot be reduced to a (more or less coherent) system of ideas. For any hegemonic formation to be even partially successful—and the East German discourse of antifascism did “work,” at least for a “morally inclined minority”—it has to “work at the most rudimentary levels of psychic identity and the drives.”⁷⁹ Any nonreductionist form of ideology critique thus needs to investigate the psychic force of ideological processes, the work of fantasy in ideology. Indeed, if we do not take into account what Freud termed “psychical reality,” the core of which is constituted by unconscious wishes and their fantasies,⁸⁰ we not only fall into the trap of a positivist conception of reality, but, more importantly, we will continue to think the unmediated dichotomy of public and private, social-political and psychic, life and will remain unable to account for the transactions between the two. It is in the “area” of the unconscious that these transactions take place, and they concern, above all, the operations of fantasy.⁸¹ In the case of a literature concerned with the theme of the family, a psychoanalytic reading is particularly imperative.

In both the exile literature and the later literature, these unconscious fantasies revolve around an identification with the father’s body. Or, to recall Lefort’s analysis of the totalitarian project, it is around the leader’s body that the social is made to cohere. Employing a concept from Slavoj Žižek, I will call this body the *sublime body* of the Communist hero of antifascism.⁸² The Oedipal narratives underlying the novel of arrival construct not only new parents but also new bodies. The identification with the father’s body results in the fantasy of the *post-fascist body*: in these novels, sexuality is defined as that part of subjectivity which links the subject to its fascist past, and the new subject comes about as a result of the erasure of its material body, its sexual body.⁸³ Wolf is the writer who links this fantasy of the “pure” post-fascist body to another fantasy of purity—the “pure” *post-fascist voice*.

This connection determines the narrative voice and, ultimately, Wolf's concept of subjective authenticity, a speaking position developed in relation to the maternal one adopted by Anna Seghers after 1945. The psychoanalytic perspective also informs my approach to the texts' formal level, since I read them *symptomatically*, that is, with a view to their formal incoherencies and sudden failures, which relate to unresolved and often unresolvable contradictions. This project thus integrates three critical perspectives: (1) an analysis of political-historical discourse; (2) an exploration of the textual levels that deal with psychic structures and unconscious fantasies; and (3) a formal analysis, in particular of narrative voice. This approach uncovers an ideological inscription of the psychic that a reading confined to the level of political discourse is bound to miss. By linking the reading of unconscious fantasies to a specific discourse on history, it historicizes psychoanalysis. This approach demonstrates the inexorably historical character of these fantasies, their links to both the subject's private history and to the history of his/her country (a merely heuristic distinction, since as this book will demonstrate, it ultimately proves untenable).

This study thus argues against the grain of much recent GDR criticism, which, as I outlined above, celebrates the 1970s and 1980s as the Golden Age of GDR Literature, with Christa Wolf celebrated as its central representative—"golden" because these years are seen as the period during which East German authors increasingly "liberated" themselves thematically and formally from the official literary-aesthetic system. This construction, as we have seen, remained very much in place even after the *Literaturstreit*.⁸⁴ Let me reiterate my critique of this implicitly teleological view of East German literature with an eye to the specific novels I analyze here. First, the privileging of the later literature led to a dismissal of the earlier literature. At best, Western critics have treated these family narratives as Communist historiography in epic form, of interest only to scholars concerned with the immediate postwar period.⁸⁵ Similarly, the novel of arrival has been seen as nothing but a "necessary aberration" on the path to the GDR's more "acceptable" (i.e., critical) literature. This view misunderstands not only the importance of this foundational literature but also its very nature. More significantly, this teleological paradigm deprives itself of the means to adequately understand the literature of the later period which it privileges: as I shall argue in the case of Wolf, the conception of a "voice" that gradually frees itself from the official discourse is untenable. There is no one pure voice—indeed, the concept itself is a fantasy—but that does not

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make Wolf's work any less compelling. And this genealogy of voice does not deny the significance of the "event" *Christa T.*—it simply retheorizes it.

Although this study covers a period ranging from the immediate postwar years to the early 1980s, I have selected a limited number of texts for analysis because understanding how ideology works in these texts *on the level of fantasy* requires extremely close, detailed readings. I have thus opted for a series of exemplary readings of representative texts—representative in the sense that they were canonized either by SED cultural functionaries or by Western critics. This book is a contribution to a cultural history of the GDR, one that also elucidates and debates central issues in psychoanalytic feminism. It deals with the role of literature in the symbolic reconstruction of power in East Germany, and it proposes new ways of approaching what Emmerich calls *Selbstbindung* by rethinking the notion of an "oppositional" voice from a psychoanalytic perspective.⁸⁶ This approach forces us to abandon the neat divisions between *affirmative realism*, on the one hand, and *critical modernism*, on the other; between a space *inside* ideology and a space *outside* of it; between *critical* and *conformist* authors, *critical* and *conformist* texts. Focusing on the most celebrated—and recently the most criticized—author of the golden age, it instead lays bare an immensely complex, conflicted, and, ultimately, alienated insertion into the GDR's family narrative.

Notes

Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German and French in this volume are mine. TA at the end of a quote indicates that I modified an existing translation.

Critical Orthodoxies

- 1 Anton Ackermann, "Gibt es einen besonderen deutschen Weg zum Sozialismus?" *Einheit* 1 (1946): 22–32. Ackermann's theses were briefly advocated by the Socialist Unity Party in 1948; see Dietrich Staritz, "Ein 'besonderer deutscher Weg' zum Sozialismus?" in his *Was war: Historische Studien zu Geschichte und Politik der DDR* (Berlin: Metropol, 1994), 55–84. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) was founded in 1946, uniting the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Communist Party (KPD). This party conference is known as the *Einheitsparteitag* (unity conference). The most recent research reconfirms the tensions between voluntary unification and *Zwangsvereinigung* (forced unification) experienced by most founding members, both Social Democrats and Communists.
- 2 This was part of a widespread popular consensus that found expression even in the so-called Ahlener Programm of the new Christian Democratic Party, which advocated such measures as the nationalization of core industries; see Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft: Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945–1989* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1992), 32ff.
- 3 See Wolfgang Fritz Haug, "The Surrender of the Fortress: Did the East German People Vote for the Restoration?" *Rethinking Marxism* 4 (1991): 26.
- 4 See, for instance, Robert Darnton's account of his euphoric investment in a third way in his *Berlin Journal 1989–1990* (New York and London: Norton, 1991), 15; cf. "Aufruf für eine eigenständige DDR" (November 26, 1989), in "*Wir sind das Volk*", ed. Charles Schüddekopf (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag,

- 1990), 240ff. A collection which foregrounds the hopes for an alternative German Democratic Republic is Dirk Philippsen, *We Were the People* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).
- 5 The protagonist of Irina Liebmann's autobiographical novel expresses this very feeling: "Out of here" (*Raus hier*) is the phrase she keeps repeating; *In Berlin* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1994), 27. The best-known case of the SED's resistance to Gorbachev's reform politics was its suppression of the Soviet magazine *Sputnik*; see *Der Spiegel*, No. 48 (1988): 26ff. However, the late 1980s was also when oppositional groups started to form around the issues of disarmament and ecology, finding a semipublic sphere in the churches. The government reacted with what one might call repressive tolerance, that is, a mixture of surveillance and overt repression. For instance, the so-called Umweltbibliothek (a library collecting data on environmental pollution) was raided; dissidents were allowed to participate in the annual demonstration commemorating Rosa Luxemburg in January 1988, but then several participants were expelled from the country (among them the film director Freya Klier). See Mary Fulbrook, "The Growth of Political Activism," in her *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 201–42. On the concept of the public sphere in the GDR, see David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).
 - 6 A few months earlier, Egon Krenz, a high-level functionary, had congratulated the Chinese government for Tiananmen Square.
 - 7 And probably also because the leadership realized that, unlike in 1953, they would not have the support of the Soviet army.
 - 8 Darnton's account of the "accidental" opening of the wall (*Berlin Journal*, 11–12) is still valid.
 - 9 *Die Geschichte ist offen: DDR 1990—Hoffnung auf eine neue Republik*, ed. Michael Naumann (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990). Another telling title was *Aufbruch in eine andere DDR* (Awakening of/Departure to Another GDR), ed. Hubertus Knabe (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1990).
 - 10 Haug, "The Surrender of the Fortress," 26.
 - 11 At both historical conjunctures, women's organizations were the first casualties in the ensuing rollback of the radical democratic structures that had developed throughout the transformation. For a discussion of the fate of the autonomous women's organizations after 1989, see Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender, and the Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (London: Verso, 1993).
 - 12 For a critique of this approach and its relationship to the "Historians' Debate" of the 1980s, see Jürgen Habermas, "Bemerkungen zu einer verworrenen Diskussion: Was bedeutet 'Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit' heute?" *Die Zeit*, No. 15 (April 10, 1992): 17–19.
 - 13 The term "verstaatlichte Gesellschaft" translates literally as "governmentalized" or "nationalized" society; see Sigrid Meuschel, "Überlegungen zu einer

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- Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19 (1993): 5–14.
- 14 Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft*, 10.
- 15 Ralph Jessen, "Die Gesellschaft im Staatssozialismus," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 21 (1995): 100. For another excellent discussion of Meuschel's analysis and a first attempt to adumbrate the limits of *Durchherrschung* (a term denoting the total penetration of society by state power) in a modern dictatorship, see Thomas Lindenberger, "Projektvorstellung: Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur—Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte in Berlin-Brandenburg 1945–1990," *Potsdamer Bulletin für zeithistorische Studien*, No. 5 (December 1995): 37–52. Much of the research on the Third Reich has moved away from totalitarianism as successful penetration of the entire society and toward approaches which inquire into its peculiar mixture of ordinary life and terror, foregrounding the often chaotic organization of Nazi Germany and its various modes of nonconformity and resistance to domination. For a recent theoretical discussion, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (London: Arnold, 1993).
- 16 The actual core of this argument, that East Germany was economically and technologically less developed, does not necessarily translate into the view that it was a premodern, undifferentiated system. On the contrary, Meuschel's model—and the more popularized versions of totalitarianism theory—underestimate the degree of social differentiation in the East, where, one could argue, the different spheres were not less differentiated but differently articulated. For an alternative discussion of the GDR in terms of regulation theory, see George Steinmetz, "Die (un-)moralische Ökonomie rechtsextremer Gewalt im Übergang zum Postfordismus," *Das Argument* 203 (Jan./Feb. 1994): 23–40. Like the somewhat older discussion on Germany's *Sonderweg*, Meuschel's analysis is also flawed by its contrasting the East to an idealized model of the West. On this problematic, see George Steinmetz, "German Exceptionalism and the Origins of Nazism: The Career of a Concept," in *Dictators Unleashed: Historical Approaches to Nazism and Stalinism*, ed. Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
- 17 Claude Lefort, "The Logic of Totalitarianism," in his *Political Forms of Modern Society*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 286–87. (In chapter 1, I shall discuss Lefort's theory in more detail.)
- 18 State repression was, of course, a reality in the GDR, as was the Wall, the frequent Party purges, etc. By insisting that the concept cannot explain the actual complexity of the GDR, I do not intend to blur the boundaries between democracy and what Haug calls Soviet-style "barracks socialism" ("Surrender of the Fortress," 26). Lefort himself is not clear on whether he intends his theory as the description of an ideal type or of an actually existing system. I will use it in the former sense.
- 19 See Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 15. I will deal in more detail with one of the periods characterized by significant intra-party dissent, the early 1960s, in a later chapter.

- 20 Ulrich Greiner, "Die deutsche Gesinnungsästhetik," *Die Zeit* 45 (Nov. 2, 1990): 15.
- 21 See, for instance, Andreas Hyussen, "After the Wall: The Failure of German Intellectuals," *New German Critique* 52 (Winter 1991): 109–43; and in *Twilight Memories* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 37–66; see also *Der deutsch-deutsche Literaturstreit oder "Freunde, es spricht sich schlecht mit gebundener Zunge"*, ed. Karl Deiritz and Hannes Krauss (Hamburg: Luchterhand Literatur Verlag, 1991); *"Es geht nicht um Christa Wolf": Der Literaturstreit im vereinten Deutschland*, ed. Thomas Anz (Munich: Spangenberg, 1991); Stephen Brockmann, "Introduction: The Unification Debate," *New German Critique* 52 (Winter 1991): 3–30 (special issue on German unification). For a reading of the debates in terms of their gendered politics, see Anna S. Kuhn, "'Eine Königin köpfen ist effektiver als einen König köpfen': The Gender Politics of the Christa Wolf Controversy," in *Women and the Wende: Social Effects and Cultural Reflections of the German Unification Process*, ed. Elizabeth Boa and Janet Wharton (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Rodopi, 1994), 200–215. For a reading of the controversy which questions its guiding categories and argues for a proper historicizing approach to the concept of socialist realism, see Julia Hell, Loren Kruger, and Katie Trumpener, "Dossier: Socialist Realism and East German Modernism—Another Historians' Debate," in *Rethinking Marxism*, 7 (Fall 1994): 36–44, as well as my discussion of Christa Wolf's *Divided Heaven* in the same issue: "Christa Wolf's 'Divided Heaven' and the Collapse of (Socialist) Realism," 62–74.
- 22 In the wake of singer Wolf Biermann's expulsion in 1976, many authors who had supported his return and protested his expatriation were put under surveillance. In 1979, several of them were expelled from the writers' union and subsequently decided to leave for the West.
- 23 Ulrich Greiner, "Mangel an Feingefühl," *Die Zeit*, June 1, 1990; repr. in Anz, ed., *"Es geht nicht um Christa Wolf"*, 66.
- 24 Ulrich Greiner, "Keiner ist frei von Schuld," *Die Zeit*, July 27, 1990; repr. in Anz, *"Es geht nicht um Christa Wolf"*, 179.
- 25 Karl-Heinz Bohrer, "Kulturschutzgebiet DDR?" *Merkur* 500 (Oct./Nov. 1990): 1015–18. This argument was directed as much against Wolf as against the entire postwar generation of East and West German authors whose main focus has been the Nazi past. Bohrer, Greiner, and Frank Schirrmacher all pursued this topic in articles on postwar West German literature; see, for instance, Frank Schirrmacher, "Abschied von der Literatur der Bundesrepublik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Oct. 2, 1990, L1–2.
- 26 The name refers to a group of young authors under the leadership of Hans Werner Richter who began meeting in 1947. At times, the group also included Ingeborg Bachmann, Alfred Andersch, Paul Celan, and Peter Weiss, among many other West German, Austrian, and Swiss authors.
- 27 I will return to this controversy in chapter 2.
- 28 On the background of this controversy, see Klaus Michael, "Feindbild Literatur:

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Die Biermann-Affäre, Staatssicherheit und die Herausbildung einer literarischen Alternativkultur in der DDR,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschehen*, May 28, 1993, 23–31.

- 29 Prenzlauer Berg, a one-time working-class district in East Berlin, evolved into an alternative lifestyle area in the 1980s, the site of semipublic poetry readings, exhibits, performances, and punk rock played in private apartments. For a detailed discussion of whether it really had any oppositional potential, see *Macht-Spiele: Literatur und Staatssicherheit im Fokus Prenzlauer Berg*, ed. Peter Böthig and Klaus Michael (Leipzig: Reclam Verlag, 1993).
- 30 The term *Klandestinität* was first introduced by the writer Gerd Neumann to characterize the production of this new group outside the official channels of the GDR’s cultural institutions. Gert Neumann, *Die Klandestinität der Kesselreiner* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1989). On *Klandestinität*, see Antonia Grunenberg, “In den Räumen der Sprache: Gedankenbilder zur Literatur Gert Neumanns,” in *Die andere Sprache*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Text und Kritik, 1990), 210. For discussions among its members, see the collection of essays from the underground magazine *Ariadnefabrik*, in *Abriss der Ariadnefabrik*, ed. Andreas Koziol and Rainer Schedlinski (Berlin: Galrev, 1990).

The Stasi now appeared in an entirely new light, namely, as the sponsor of a subculture, argued Lutz Rathenow, in “‘Schreiben Sie doch für uns’: Was sich die Staatssicherheit einfallen liess, um die Literatur zu bändigen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 27, 1991, 36. Although intriguing, this thesis seems less convincing than its alternative, that the Stasi’s cultural officers tried to keep abreast of what from their perspective (the established categories of “avant-garde elitism”) seemed a rather circumscribed, and therefore ultimately harmless, phenomenon. In my view, the term “repressive tolerance” would be highly appropriate here. Brockmann points to another rather curious angle of the entire Stasi activity: after having read his own Stasi file, the East German author Klaus Schlesinger observed, “I added that the structure of this novel was borrowed from European modernism, where the characters take shape through the gaze of the other characters”; quoted in Stephen Brockmann, “Preservation and Change in Christa Wolf’s *Was bleibt*,” *The German Quarterly* 67 (Winter 1994): 81.

- 31 Rainer Schedlinski, “Dem Druck, immer mehr sagen zu sollen, hielt ich nicht stand,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 14, 1992, 25. Another East German author, Wolfgang Hilbig, explores the psyche of a Stasi informer-turned-writer in his recent novel *Ich* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Verlag, 1993).
- 32 Her decision was prompted, she wrote, by the accusations against Heiner Müller for his routine conversations with Stasi officers; see Christa Wolf, “Eine Auskunft,” *Berliner Zeitung*, January 21, 1993; repr. in *Akteneinsicht Christa Wolf: Zerrspiegel und Dialog*, ed. Hermann Vinke (Hamburg: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1993), 143–44.
- 33 This was after she had posed for years as the GDR’s only genuine dissident, attacking—rather viciously—other East German intellectuals, in particular Wolf

- and Müller. Maron's conversations with the Stasi concerned her Western acquaintances; see her interview by Frank Schirrmacher, " 'Meine Mutter hat für Mielke Schmalzstullen geschmiert': Ein Gespräch mit Monika Maron über ihre Kontakte zur 'Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung' des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der DDR," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 7, 1995.
- 34 Some members of the West German PEN who had emigrated from the GDR in the late 1970s and early 1980s opposed this unification, arguing that the Eastern PEN chapter had not sufficiently "purged" its ranks of authors affiliated with the Stasi or the SED; see Gunter Hofmann, "Schmerzen einer deutschen Familie: Die neue Unversöhnlichkeit unter den Schriftstellern ist eine Chiffre für den Zustand der Republik," *Die Zeit*, Oct. 6, 1995, 3.
- 35 But this criticism did not constitute a form of witch hunt, as some East German critics argued. This misunderstanding resulted from the East Germans' familiarity with a different context in which rebuttals were only rarely published.
- 36 Fritz J. Raddatz, "Von der Beschädigung der Literatur durch ihre Urheber," *Die Zeit*, February 5, 1993, 17.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 38 Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Die DDR in der deutschen Geschichte," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschehen*, July 16, 1993, 23, 29; Bernd Hüppauf, "Moral oder Sprache: DDR-Literatur vor der Moderne," in *Literatur in der DDR: Rückblicke*, special issue of *Text + Kritik* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1991), 223.
- 39 Hüppauf, "Moral oder Sprache," 223, 222, 223.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 225.
- 41 Bohrer, "Kulturschutzgebiet DDR," 1015, 1016.
- 42 Hüppauf, "Moral oder Sprache," 228; his emphasis.
- 43 Peter Geist, "Nachwort," in *Ein Molotowcocktail auf fremder Bettkante* (Leipzig: Reclam-Verlag, 1991), 76ff.
- 44 Fredric Jameson, "Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism," in *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 2: 115-32.
- 45 As Jonathan Arac observed, "Since Lukács was identified with representation, with realism, with humanism, and also with Stalinism . . . antirepresentationism became not only a defense of modernism, but also a declaration of anti-Stalinism"; see his "Introduction" to *Postmodernism and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Arac (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xxii.
- 46 As Patricia Herminhouse points out, another consequence of this binary logic was to classify successful authors such as Wolf and Müller as "German" or even "European" writers; see "Whose German Literature? GDR Literature, German Literature, and the Question of National Identity," *GDR Bulletin* 16 (Fall 1990): 9.
- 47 For a thorough critique of such unhistorical transfers of the literary-historical categories of nineteenth-century realism/twentieth-century modernism, see Sibylle Maria Fischer, "Representation and the Ends of Realism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1995).

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- 48 For a critique of this type of criticism, see Bernhard Greiner's review article "DDR-Literatur als Problem der Literaturwissenschaft," *Jahrbuch zur Literatur der DDR* 3 (1983): 233–54. Greiner correctly points out that much of the literary criticism written outside the GDR reproduced the latter's basic paradigm, namely, literature conceptualized in terms of reflection theory. This often led to a simplified model of literary works as reflecting social reality in a one-to-one relation. (See also Herminhouse, "Whose German Literature?" 8.) Greiner's argument leads to two conclusions: first, that literature itself is implicated in the construction of social reality; and second, that because of the polyvalent and often contradictory nature of the literary text, literature cannot be reduced to a single, unambiguous political text, a "message." Although banal, this is still worth arguing in the context of GDR studies. Peter V. Zima offered a similar argument in "Der Mythos der Monosemie: Parteilichkeit und künstlerischer Standpunkt," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften 6: Einführung in Theorie, Geschichte und Funktion der DDR-Literatur*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Schmitt (Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag, 1975), 77–108: reflection theory operates with a concept of the literary text which denies the polysemic value of literature itself. The problem with Zima's argument is that he himself conceives of socialist realism in those terms, yet the socialist realist text is just as unstable and conflicted as any other literary work (a point to which I shall return). For a more detailed discussion of the issue of form in the reading of GDR literature, see my "Crisis Strategies: Family, Gender, and German History" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1989). My current work differs from the paradigm developed in my dissertation, however, in that I no longer conceive of socialist realism as an aesthetic system that succeeds in formally organizing a coherent, nonconflictual text (an issue to which I shall also return).
- 49 Hüppauf, "Moral oder Sprache," 228.
- 50 For a reading of Schirrmacher's, Greiner's, and Bohrer's interventions as a "preventive" marginalization of a new oppositional literature in the postunification period that could become a version of the GDR's engaged literature, potentially replacing the critical but now historically obsolete *Nachkriegsliteratur* (postwar literature) of the Gruppe 47, see Jochen Vogt, "Langer Abschied von der Nachkriegsliteratur? Ein Kommentar zur letzten westdeutschen Literaturdebatte," in Deiritz and Krauss, eds., *Der deutsch-deutsche Literaturstreit*, 61–62. This view makes sense, given the dogmatic exclusion of this kind of political literature from the realm of the "aesthetic."
- 51 This premise might seem paradoxical because Hüppauf himself advocates exactly that division. But what he means in this context is that since GDR aesthetics were based on this connection, to deny it now in discussing this literature would make no sense. Hüppauf directs his critique against those who defended Christa Wolf by underlining her courage and outspokenness outside of her writing. I agree with Hüppauf that this defense is problematic, as is the other strategy often used to "defend" a GDR author, namely, foregrounding the "aesthetic quality" of the work, with the implicit or explicit intention of separating art

- from politics; see, for example, Ute Brandes, *Anna Seghers* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1992).
- 52 Wolfgang Emmerich, "Gleichzeitigkeit: Vormoderne, Moderne und Postmoderne in der Literatur aus der DDR," in his *Die andere deutsche Literatur: Aufsätze zur Literatur aus der DDR* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 129–50; Genia Schulz, "Kein Chorgesang: Neue Schreibweisen bei Autorinnen (aus) der DDR," in *Text & Kritik*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Text & Kritik, 1988), 212–25.
- 53 Of course, Emmerich focuses on such authors as Christa Wolf, Volker Braun, Heiner Müller, Irmtraud Morgner, and Franz Fühmann, that is, those canonized by Emmerich himself and by his Western colleagues, leaving "party writers," such as Helmut Baierl, Helmut Sakowski, Harry Thürk, Hedda Zinner, and Eva Strittmatter, out of his story.
- 54 Emmerich, "Gleichzeitigkeit," 136, 138. He discusses Brecht as an exception, the playwright who does not fit into the cultural landscape, with Uwe Johnson similarly exceptional among fiction writers (137, 138).
- 55 *Ibid.*, 145, quoting Wolf's tribute to the East German author Thomas Brasch on the occasion of his receiving the prestigious West German Kleist-Preis in 1987, after he left the GDR.
- 56 "Aesthetic modernity is . . . the appropriation of modernity with artistic means *at a moment of crisis*, in the phase of its consciousness of its immanent pathology" (*ibid.*, 132). Nevertheless, Emmerich argues, this particular form of aesthetic modernism maintains its hold on a concept of utopia (133). For a discussion of the concept of modernism by East Germany's leading critics, see Jost Hermand, "Das Gute-Neue und das Schlechte-Neue: Wandlungen der Modernismus-Debatte in der DDR seit 1956," in *Literatur und Literaturtheorie in der DDR*, ed. Patricia Herminhouse and Peter Uwe Hohendahl (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1981), 73–99.
- 57 Schulz, "Kein Chorgesang," 214. In contrast to many other critics, Schulz thought that a theory of this feminine writing still remained to be formulated (*ebenda*). For a discussion of the relationship between GDR literature and American feminism, see Angelika Bammer, "The American Feminist Reception of GDR Literature (with a Glance at West Germany)," *GDR Bulletin* 16 (Fall 1990): 18–24.
- 58 Dorothea Böck, "'Ich schreibe, um herauszufinden, warum ich schreiben muss': Frauenliteratur in der DDR zwischen Selbsterfahrung und ästhetischem Experiment," *Feministische Studien* 1 (1990): 64.
- 59 Love argued that realism and modernism are both modes of writing in which "an essentially patriarchal quality of authorship" is figured "as authority"; see her "Christa Wolf and Feminism: Breaking the Patriarchal Connection," *New German Critique* 16 (Winter 1979): 44. See also Sara Lennox's discussion of the relationship between Wolf's critique of the traditional novel and Silvia Boven-schen's concept of a feminine aesthetic in "'Der Versuch, man selbst zu sein':

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- Christa Wolf und der Feminismus,” in *Die Frau als Heldin und Autorin*, ed. Wolfgang Paulsen (Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag, 1979), 217–22.
- 60 See also, more recently, Allison Lewis on the “bourgeoning of women’s literature” in the 1970s: “These writers [Christa Wolf and Irmtraud Morgner] provide instructive examples of the ways women’s literature is able to subvert the dominant aesthetic paradigm; their works experiment with numerous ways of resisting the normative effects of socialist realism, its containment of female desire, and its neutralization of feminine difference”; see her “‘Foiling the Censor’: Reading and Transference as Feminist Strategies in the Works of Christa Wolf, Irmtraud Morgner, and Christa Moog,” *The German Quarterly* 66 (Summer 1993): 372.
- 61 As developed in Christa Wolf, “Reading and Writing” (1968), in *The Author’s Dimension: Selected Essays*, ed. Alexander Stephen, trans. Grace Paley (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 20–48; and in “Subjective Authenticity: A Conversation with Hans Kaufmann” (1973), in *The Fourth Dimension: Interviews with Christa Wolf*, trans. Hilary Pilkington (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 17–38. I will discuss this notion in more detail in chapters 4 and 5.
- 62 Axel Goodbody, Dennis Tate, and Ian Wallace, “The Failed Socialist Experiment: Culture in the GDR,” in *German Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Rob Burns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 200, 167, 164. For a similar account, see Ursula Heukenkamp, “Soll das Vergessen verabredet werden? Eigenständigkeit und Eigenart der DDR-Literatur,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, October 4, 1991, 3–12. Arguing against the subsumption of forty years of GDR literature under the heading of “regional literature, child of the provinces, in the middle of modernity,” Heukenkamp concludes her discussion with a celebration of East Germany’s women’s literature. She dismisses the early GDR literature as responding exclusively to the expectations of East Germany’s cultural politics. Pragmatic, moralizing, and didactic, it is, she writes, rightfully forgotten. But she wants to rescue the literature of the 1960s from the accusation of conformism, arguing that it sketched a new democratic model of communication. Its fundamental flaw was its utopian impetus, which women’s literature, developing in the 1970s, overcame by being *pragmatic*.
- 63 Wolfgang Emmerich, “Affirmation–Utopie–Melancholie: Versuch einer Bilanz von vierzig Jahren DDR-Literatur,” *German Studies Review* 14 (May 1991): 339. “Sinngesungsliteratur” denotes literature that provides a totalizing meaning.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 335–36. In this essay, Emmerich alludes to Lyotard, Gorz, and Enzensberger and their postmodernist critique of “totalitarian utopias” (336ff.).
- 65 *Ibid.*, 181, 180.
- 66 The terms are from a petition which was signed by many members of East Germany’s intelligentsia.
- 67 This is the subtitle of Anna S. Kuhn’s influential study, *Christa Wolf’s Utopian Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), which is also informed by the narrative of the progression from socialist realism to modernism. In this

- respect, Kuhn's study is similar to the standard East German work on Wolf, Therese Hörnigk's *Christa Wolf* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1989).
- 68 That Morgner was one of the few prominent authors who wholeheartedly supported the SED's decision to prevent Wolf Biermann from returning to East Germany in 1979 should give us pause.
- 69 In contrast to the established view of socialist realism as a traditional, closed literary system, Antoine Baudin, Leonid Heller, and Thomas Lahusen understand it as an "open" system, consisting of works continually rewritten, continually revised; see their "Le réalisme socialiste soviétique de l'ère Jdanov: Compte rendu d'une enquête en cours," *Etudes de Lettres* 10 (1988): 69–103. As Leonid Heller argues, socialist realism was not a system characterized by "stability and stasis" but by "shock therapy and chronic destabilization." Socialist realist works, continually being revised, could never attain the rigidity that both Soviet theorists and Western critics claimed to be the essential characteristic of that system; see Leonid Heller, "A World of Prettiness: Socialist Realism and Its Aesthetic Categories," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94 (1995): 687–714. These works were the result, I would add, of particular *modern* pressures. For a discussion of the rewriting of so-called socialist realist classics such as Fyodor Gladkov's *Cement* and Gorky's *The Mother*, see Thomas Lahusen, "Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores: Some Historical Remarks on the 'Historically Open Aesthetic System of the Truthful Representation of Life,'" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94 (1995): 673ff.
- 70 As we shall see in chapter 2, Seghers herself defended modernist techniques in her correspondence with Lukács.
- 71 Including Georg Büchner's *Lenz*, which Wolf herself identified as her model, a point to which I will return in chapter 4.
- 72 The important contribution of Emmerich's "Gleichzeitigkeit" *at the time* lay precisely in his project of historicizing East German literature "internally" instead of ignoring it as an "un-German" literature or forcing it into the strait-jacket of an "all-German literature" (129).
- 73 See Julia Hell, "At the Center an Absence: Foundationalist Narratives of the GDR and the Legitimatory Discourse of Antifascism," *Monatshefte* 84 (Spring 1992): 23–45.
- 74 In chapter 2, I will trace the ways in which Seghers's novel diverges from this structure and point out the reasons for this divergence.
- 75 Ironically, the characterization of East Germany as an essentially transparent social order (Hüppauf) thus corresponds more to the SED's presentation of its own rule than to the actual complexities of the GDR's social system.
- 76 Adopted by the SED in the early 1960s to counter a growing tendency to compare actual socialism with its ideals, "real existing socialism" was a term purporting to orient politics away from "utopian," idealist thinking that did not take into account the material conditions under which East German socialism had to develop. Part of that discussion instantiated an opposition between the contradictions said to stem from the capitalist past, holdovers that were expected to

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disappear with time, versus those contradictions that were inherent to the new order.

- 77 Thomas Lahusen, "Thousand and One Nights in Stalinist Culture: *Far from Moscow*," *Discourse* 17 (Spring 1995): 58.
- 78 In its focus on the body, this book also partakes in the project outlined by Leslie Adelson, namely, to "rethink the role played by bodies in the constitution of social subjects"; see *Making Bodies. Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 3. However, in contrast to Adelson's approach, my framework is psychoanalytic, one that enables us to understand the precise mechanisms through which we think and fantasize—in short, live our bodies. But my book is decidedly *not* a contribution to the currently fashionable psychohistory of "the East German," in which wildly speculative generalizations are made about the psychological structures of East Germans, with psychoanalytic categories applied not only to an entire population but to an entire state. See, for instance, Hans-Joachim Maaz, *Der Gefühlsstau: Ein Psychogramm der DDR* (Munich: Knaur, 1992): "In the language of psychotherapy (we could argue that) the development of the GDR was arrested at the oral stage" (86). Maaz's book also fights on another ideological front since it ultimately blames East German *women* for what he calls a *Mangelsyndrom* (syndrome of lack) afflicting East Germans, the consequence of a majority of East German women working outside the home. This pathologizing move, I would argue, is part of a crude attempt to "subordinate" the new Eastern states and their populations to the West German way of life as the only alternative.
- 79 Quoting from Ruth Rehmann, *Unterwegs in fremden Träumen* (Munich: Hauser, 1993), 30; and Jacqueline Rose, "Introduction: Feminism and the Psychic," in her *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 5.
- 80 See Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), 8.
- 81 My approach here also intends to break finally with the tendency among critics—both Eastern and Western—to observe the Communist Party's taboo on psychoanalysis. The first text by Freud, *Trauer und Melancholie: Essays*, appeared only as recently as 1982; see Antal Borbely and John Erpenbeck, "Vorschläge zu Freud," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 35 (1987): 1021. By 1989, his complete works had still not been published.
- 82 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 1991), 255. I will discuss this notion in more detail in chapter 1.
- 83 These novels of arrival are better understood within the framework of popular literature. The introduction of the topic of sexuality and desire has to do with the fact that these authors were called upon to write popular literature, literature capable of replacing the love stories that were still widely read. And popular literature, as we know from studies such as Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), draws precisely upon

the domain of desire. On this topic, see my “Soft-Porn, Kitsch, and Post-Fascist Bodies: The East German Novel of Arrival,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94 (Summer 1995): 747–72.

- 84 The argument is often made specifically with respect to the GDR’s emerging women’s literature; see, for instance, Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market*, 236ff. I will deal with this controversy in more detail in the chapters devoted to Wolf.
- 85 See, for instance, Wolfgang Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR*, rev. ed. (Frankfurt a.M.: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1989), 62ff.
- 86 Emmerich’s term is difficult to translate. It oscillates between the denotation of the author’s commitment to socialism and a voluntary, self-imposed bondage.

1 Specters of Stalin, or Constructing Communist Fathers

- 1 Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci’s Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 24.
- 2 “Ulbricht group” refers to one of the three groups of high-ranking Party members brought in by the Soviets to administer the Soviet Occupied Zone. While Ulbricht headed the group assigned to the Berlin region, Anton Ackermann was assigned to Saxony and Gustav Sobottka to Mecklenburg–Pommern. The structural changes initiated under the program of “antifascist-democratic transformation” (Hermann Weber, *Die DDR 1945–1986* [Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988], 2), an attempt to belatedly realize the failed popular front of the 1930s, slowly laid the foundations for a Soviet-style system, with the SED (Socialist Unity Party) as the “leading party.” Wolfgang Leonhard attributes this transformation to the dominance of the Moscow exiles over the so-called Western exiles. Many members of the latter group advocated a reconstruction based on democratic consensus. Equally crucial, of course, was the presence of the Soviets. Leonhard’s *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Cologne and Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1955) is still one of the most reliable accounts of this period. In its founding manifesto (June 11, 1945), the KPD declared that its goal was not a “Soviet Germany.” Instead, the authors of the new program argued that Germany’s situation demanded the completion of the failed democratic revolution of 1848. Their goal was the “establishment of an antifascist-democratic regime, a parliamentary-democratic republic with all the rights and freedoms for the people” (Weber, *Die DDR*, 4). In January 1949 (the GDR was founded on October 7), the SED’s first Party conference introduced democratic centralism, Party discipline, and the nomenclatura. During the previous year, the Party had purged most of its dissenting Social Democratic members and abolished the principle of parity of Social Democratic and Communist representation on Party committees. In the context of Stalin’s conflict with Tito, the idea of a special German path to socialism, formulated by Anton Ackermann in the Party press in 1946, was abandoned, and, at the second SED Party confer-