

Re-reading the GDR, ed. K. J. Leeder

ABSTRACTS

Wolfgang Emmerich (University of Bremen, Germany)

‘GDR Literature’: An Overview

The notion of ‘GDR Literature’ is a curious one. Derived from the existence of a state and a discrete period of political history it is reminiscent of labels like ‘Literature of the Weimar Republic’, ‘Literature of the Third Reich’, ‘Literature of the Federal Republic’ and thus carries no aesthetic connotations. But, at the same time, it serves to define a territory like the ‘Literature of Austria’, for example, or the ‘German-language Literature of Switzerland’. But there are also good reasons for preserving the idea of a discrete body of ‘GDR literature’. For during the 40 years of its existence a quite separate and authoritarian literary system with very different conditions of literary production and reception existed in East Germany with – at least in the early years – restrictive aesthetic and ideological principles. Naturally one must recognise that many authors approved of this system, believing it a corollary of the widely accepted founding myths of ‘Anti-fascism’ and ‘Socialism’. A new literary field came into being (to speak with Pierre Bourdieu), in which questions of orthodoxy and heresy, but also the accumulation of cultural capital, were answered in ways diametrically opposed to the ways in which they were answered in the Federal Republic. Gradually a relationship of ‘disculturality’ (‘Diskulturalität’ – Jürgen Link) arose between the two German states, which in turn led to the development of two distinct German literatures – quite apart from the intrusive policies of the SED. The basic model of GDR literature was the kind of text promoted by the programme of socialist realism: written for the people, and modelled on a pre-modern aesthetic, although this was also challenged from the beginning by heretics like Bertolt Brecht or Peter Huchel, and later also younger writers like Heiner Müller, Günter Kunert, Uwe Johnson, Christa Wolf or Volker Braun who looked in part to modernist models. After 1970 a truly modernist literature developed in all genres – perhaps most visibly in poetry – which sought to catch up with developments in the West and, driven by a number of younger authors, also managed to establish itself as a second normative centre of GDR literature. The situation became more complex after this on account of the large number of important authors who were expelled from the GDR or given permission for long term stays in the West (from Biermann and Kunze to Kunert or Becker), allowing as it were a ‘third German literature’ to develop, which challenged and undermined the distinctive field of GDR literature even further. A further significant development was existence of an ‘alternative’ literary and artistic ‘scene’ in East Berlin and many of the larger GDR cities.

After the *Wende* of 1989/90 the GDR literary system collapsed very quickly. The literary voices from the former GDR are in part at least still audible – particularly a few of the older GDR authors, or a number of younger writers who did not really establish themselves in the GDR itself (like Durs Grünbein, Ingo Schulze or Uwe Tellkamp). But GDR Literature as a phenomenon no longer exists. Since the mid-1990s this process has been increasingly overlaid by all kinds of hybrid literary phenomena, which are the result of globalisation and increased migration to Germany on the one hand, but also the influence of the new digital media on the literary field and especially the internet on the other.

This overview will (1) characterise the literary system of the GDR; (2) sketch the historical development during the 40 (45) years of its existence; (3) examine the post-*Wende* situation; and (4) attempt to introduce and discuss the various theories and paradigms attached to this area during the last 20 years of research (for example categories like the literary field, discourses of modernism, and generational paradigms).

Stephen Brockmann (Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh)
Resurrected from the Ruins: The Emergence of GDR Culture

This chapter will focus on the emergence of the German Democratic Republic and of its culture four years after the end of the Second World War. It will place particular emphasis on the desperate situation of Germany in 1945 and the way that German intellectuals sought to respond to it. While the division of Germany into two separate states – one capitalist and one socialist – that occurred in 1949 may have seemed inevitable after the fact, it was by no means a foregone conclusion in 1945. The GDR emerged over four years after the end of the Second World War, and half a year after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in May of 1949. The article will touch on the political and military situation from 1945-1949, on the creation of the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheits Partei or SED), and on the primary importance that the SED placed on culture in its planned anti-fascist democratic transformation of Germany. One of the chief cultural institutions of the immediate postwar years was Johannes R. Becher's Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands (Cultural Federation for the Democratic Renewal of Germany), founded as early as June, 1945, only a month after the end of the war. The foundation and program of the Kulturbund demonstrate the great importance attached to culture by the SED, both as a way of overcoming the legacy of Nazism and as a way of gaining support from non-socialist bourgeois elements within the population of the Soviet zone of occupation. The emphasis on culture exhibited in the work of the Kulturbund can also be seen in the German writers' conference held in Berlin in 1947, at which, for the first time the cold war began to play an important public role in German cultural life; and it carries through to the foundation of the GDR in 1949 and to the first years after the GDR's founding. 1950, for instance, saw another writers' conference in East Berlin, while at the same time, in West Berlin, the anti-Communist Congress for Cultural Freedom was taking place. The cultural origins of the GDR need to be seen with reference to all of these factors: 1) the desire to overcome Nazism; 2) the growing cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States; and 3) the desire on the part of communist elites to enlist bourgeois intellectuals in their cause. All of these factors led to a reaffirmation of traditional German culture, and therefore it is not surprising that some of the first major cultural battles in the early GDR, such as the battle over Hanns Eisler's *Doktor Faustus* in 1953 were fought over the status of traditional German culture.

Seán Allan (University of Warwick)

DEFA's Anti-fascist Myths and the Construction of National Identity in East German Cinema

Throughout the existence of the GDR, myths of anti-fascism have played a key role in defining a unique sense of East German national identity. Although the topos of anti-fascism informs many aspects of GDR culture, it plays a particularly important role – both thematically and aesthetically – in East German Cinema. Entrusted by the Soviet cultural officers Dymshitz and Tulpanov with the task of cultural re-education and the eradication of the legacy of fascism, DEFA sought to create a new film aesthetic in the early 1940s and 1950s. Yet as a closer analysis of films such as Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us, 1946) and Maetzig's monumentalist Thälmann project of the 1950s reveals, breaking with the past proved much more difficult than the studio rhetoric would suggest. Nonetheless, Falk Harnack's *Das Beil von Wandsbek* (The Axe of Wandsbek, 1951) – the first DEFA production ever to be banned – stands out as an early work in which the complexities of fascist collaboration and anti-fascist resistance were explored to the full.

Although it has been suggested that 'East German Cinema provides a relatively one-dimensional commentary on the fascist past that reflects the GDR's official historiography'

(Daniela Berghahn) this is a view that will be challenged in the course of this chapter. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a new generation of film makers (one that included such major figures as Gerhard Klein, Konrad Wolf, Frank Beyer, and Heiner Carow) would exploit the potential of the anti-fascist genre to unravel some of the more contradictory aspects of the state's relationship to the fascist past and thereby to question its self-understanding as the locus of anti-fascist traditions in the present. The most important films made by this generation can be grouped into three thematic clusters: films about the Holocaust; films about the Spanish Civil war; and films dealing with German-Soviet relationships. Accordingly, while Frank Beyer's *Nackt unter Wölfen* (Naked Among Wolves, 1963) was instrumental in promoting the founding myth of the Buchenwald child, the much later *Jakob der Lügner* (Jacob the Liar, 1975) highlights both the contradictions of, and subsequent shifts in, the GDR's attitude to the Holocaust. DEFA's desire to internationalise the scope of the anti-fascist genre – and thereby enhance the international standing of the GDR – by depicting conflicts outside Germany is evident in both Karl Paryla's *Mich Dürstet* (I'm Thirsty, 1956) and Frank Beyer's *Fünf Patronenhülsen* (Five Cartridges, 1960). Finally, the uneasy relationship between Soviets and Germans both in wartime and in the post-war period – one of the most contentious subjects for East German filmmakers to tackle – is the subject of Konrad Wolf's *Sonnensucher* (Sun Seekers, 1958) and his masterpiece *Ich war 19* (I was 19, 1968).

The last part of the chapter will focus more closely on some of the key aesthetic debates surrounding the anti-fascist genre that started to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s. While Gerhard Klein's *Der Fall Gleiwitz* (The Gleiwitz Affair, 1961) represents a key moment in the evolution of cinematic modernism in the GDR, it is not until the release of Konrad Wolf's *Der nackte Mann auf dem Sportplatz* (The Naked Man on the Playing Field, 1974) that we encounter a sustained discussion on the relationship between modernist aesthetics, gender, and the representation of the fascist past. The impact of these discussion for the future development of the anti-fascist genre will be considered in the context of Ulli Weiß's reworking of the anti-fascist genre, *Dein unbekannter Bruder* (Your Unknown Brother, 1982), a film in which the anti-fascist genre is used to launch a critique of totalitarian regimes generally.

Holger Teschke (Berlin / Hollyoke College Massachussets)
From 'Faust Part 3' to 'Germania 3': Drama in the GDR

This chapter will describe the development of GDR Drama under the influence of playwrights returning from exile in the USA, like Bertolt Brecht, and from the USSR, like Friedrich Wolf, in the late forties and fifties. It will also discuss the cultural politics of the SED after 17 June 1953, the 'Formalism'-debate and the quest for Socialist Realism on the stage in the early sixties. Furthermore, Ulbricht's demand for a *Faust Part Three* will be explored in comparison to the dramaturgy in Peter Hacks' and Heiner Müller's plays after 1961. The 'forgotten generation' such as Alfred Matusche, Erich Köhler and Heinar Kipphardt will be remembered as well as the influence by theatre directors like Benno Besson and Manfred Wekwerth on playwriting in the seventies and early eighties. The plays by Volker Braun and Christoph Hein will be discussed as examples of a new dramaturgy and the influence of Soviet drama before and after Gorbachev's *Glasnost and Perestrojka*. Finally, the chapter will close with a view on the work of young playwrights in the first independent dramatists organization *Autoren-Kollektiv* and the last plays of Heiner Müller, Peter Hacks and others, that reflect on the GDR after German unification.

Dennis Tate (University of Bath)
Autobiographical Writing in the GDR Era

This chapter will focus on the emergence of autobiographical writing as a central feature of East German prose in the late 1960s and on its development over the following two decades in the work of two generations of authors (roughly speaking, Christa Wolf and her contemporaries, then Christoph Hein and his). It will challenge the widespread assumption that the period before Wolf's breakthrough with *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (1969) was one of slavish adherence to Socialist Realist doctrine, showing how the way was paved for her 'subjective authenticity' by a combination of belatedly published exile autobiographies, the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and the conversion stories of 'Hitler's children'. The SED regime attempted to control and instrumentalise this material for its ideological purposes, but initially compliant authors repeatedly found themselves impelled thereafter to reframe their life stories in the light of subsequent experience.

The analysis of key works by Christa Wolf, Brigitte Reimann, Franz Fühmann, Volker Braun, Helga Königsdorf, Christoph Hein, Angela Krauß, etc., will underpin this account of autobiographical writing as a lifelong process (following James Olney's definition in his *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*). I will argue that the location of most East German autobiographical writing in the ambiguous narrative territory between first-person fiction and explicit autobiography arose from both aesthetic and political considerations and was fundamental to the international breakthrough of GDR literature in the 1970s and 1980s. This chapter will take the collapse of the GDR as its historical cut-off point, allowing scope for further discussion of autobiographical writing in the post-unification context in a later chapter.

Georgina Paul (St Hilda's College, Oxford)
Gender in GDR Literature

Taking as its starting-point the author's preface to Maxie Wander's 1977 volume of interviews with women, *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* (1977), this chapter explores the way in which GDR literature engaged with and challenged traditional gender roles in a manner distinct from the contemporaneous feminist literature of the new women's movement in the West. In her preface, Wander indicates that the socially critical tenor of her book is to be seen as an expression of the degree of emancipation already achieved by women through the state's efforts and proclaims, in an implied contrast with radical Western feminism, that emancipation from traditional gender roles is a matter for the entire society, not for women working in opposition to men.

Wander's preface thus paves the way for a discussion of the promotion of women's participation in public life as part of the socialist vision of the 1950s, as reflected in the works of authors such as Friedrich Wolf, Ludwig Turek, Elfriede Brüning, and Marianne Bruns. This provides a context for understanding the emergence of more radical female figures in the literature of the 1960s and early 1970s, such as Christa Wolf's Christa T. or Brigitte Reimann's Franziska Linkerhand, until by the mid-1970s, in part under the influence of Western feminism, women writers start to question the terms of the emancipation promoted by the socialist state and, in an explosion of innovative fictions (by Morgner, Königsdorf, Schubert, Wolter, among others), give vent to the wish for a reconceptualisation of gender relations. Some male writers, notably de Bruyn and Christoph Hein, also contribute to the critique of gender roles or write of the exhaustion of traditionally conceived masculinity (Heiner Müller).

The chapter concludes by looking at the legacy of the gender critique of the 1970s and early 1980s in the work of the youngest generation of GDR writers, those working in the

‘unofficial scene’ of the GDR’s last decade: the extent to which gender continued to be a significant category in their work (as with Köhler and Hensel) and the pursuit by those with a feminist agenda of a separatist path (such as Stötzer-Kachold).

Jill Twark (East Carolina University, North Carolina, USA)

Negotiating the Politics of Satire: Satirical Novels in the GDR and Beyond

Close scrutiny of prose literature and other types of texts such as films, cabaret, and political songs produced in the GDR reveals a restricted but strong tradition of satirical socio-political criticism in East Germany. The fact that many such works were written in satirical, humorous, and/or ironic modes is partly a result of the authors’ individual, creative approaches to writing, but also of specific GDR government cultural policies. From its beginnings in the Soviet Occupied Zone, East German satire, along with all other cultural artefacts, was seen by socialist leaders (as well as many authors and artists) as a tool for changing values and attitudes that would assist in developing a new socialist society. The function of literature was to contribute to this socialist ‘enlightenment’; accordingly, from the perspective of cultural officials, humour and satire in GDR literature, as well as in cabaret and in the mass media, were to serve unambiguous, pro-socialist functions. Therefore, while these officials promoted the production of humorous and satirical texts and performances, they also controlled authors, artists, and performers specializing in humour and satire tightly through censorship. Texts and performances produced in these modes were to serve multiple purposes: 1) as a state-supported and condoned means of entertainment; 2) as an educational tool to root out an ‘antiquated’ capitalist, imperialist, ideological consciousness and all behaviour not conducive to the furthering of socialism; and 3) as an outlet for readers and spectators to let off steam’, diverting frustration and discontent with the system. Despite official dictates, however, a handful of GDR authors like Erwin Strittmatter, Peter Hacks, Heiner Müller, Volker Braun, Ulrich Plenzdorf, and Irmtraud Morgner bucked the system on several occasions, composing surprisingly candid criticisms of real existing socialism cloaked in satirical masks, and consistently standing on the front line of cultural policy battles.

In this essay I will begin by summarizing the history of literary critical and political discussions of satire in the GDR, focusing on the tensions between politics, theory, and actual literary texts. Beginning in the late 1950s with Georgina Baum’s Marxist treatise *Humor und Satire in der bürgerlichen Ästhetik* (1959), various scholars have documented, theorized about, and analyzed GDR satire. Much has also been written about the controversies authors like Strittmatter, Braun, and Morgner provoked. Along the way, I will introduce readers to several of these authors’ seminal GDR satirical novels and the specific critiques they received from GDR editors (*Verlagslektoren*), literary critics, and the media. Finally, I will conclude by assessing a few substantial differences between writing satire in the GDR and after unification, taking into consideration why many Eastern German authors such as Thomas Brussig and Ingo Schulze responded to the *Wende* and subsequent unification with humorous and satirical novels. Examining the reasons behind the controversies and censorship debates provoked by GDR satires, both before and after publication, provides insights into the ways repressive dictatorships can assert power over the production of art.

Peter Thompson (University of Sheffield)

Culture, Opposition and the Honecker years

When we discuss the phenomenon of *Ostalgie* and the positive image that remains in many East German minds of life in the socialist state, the period at issue is inevitably that of the Honecker years from 1971-1989. In this chapter I shall analyse the fundamental structural changes which came about with Erich Honecker’s accession to power. Under discussion will

be the shift in economic policy away from Ulbricht/Khrushchev's various attempts to catch up with, or even overtake, the West to the Honecker/Brezhnev policies which emphasised social stability and subsidised quietism above all else. One of the key effects of this policy was to deepen the split between workers and intellectuals in the GDR and this led to the increasing isolation of a largely cultural opposition from the wider public (something also reflected in many works of the time). I shall also discuss the change in policy on the national question, with the goal of a united socialist Germany abandoned in favour of an attempted consolidation of the GDR as a separate state with its own quasi-national identity. This shift also took place within the context of the general crisis of modernity and *Zivilisationskritik* in the culture and society of the GDR during the 1980s (at the height of fears about ecological destruction and nuclear threat). These changes ran alongside a consolidation of SED power but a simultaneous decline in ideological conviction. Cultural policy became central to this dynamic as the dialectic of flexibility and control constantly switched back and forward between apparent liberalism and cultural crackdown in which the Stasi were increasingly used to control and observe the cultural field. The Biermann affair of 1976 and reactions to it will thus be investigated in its full social, economic, political and intellectual context in its East-West dimension.

What draws together the various points made in this chapter, however, will be the ways in which the failure of the SED to address any of the areas under its control in a progressive direction meant that the utopian challenge of socialism was transferred from the Party to the cultural opposition and taken up in different forms by writers like Monika Maron, Wolfgang Hilbig, etc.

Gerrit-Jan Berendse (Cardiff University)

The Power of the Word: Poetry and Politics in the GDR

This chapter will have a dual focus. I would like to sketch a brief history of GDR poetry – from the work of those writers who returned from emigration after 1945 up to the poetry/art of the so-called Prenzlauer Berg scene in the late 1980s. But I will also examine some of the tensions and scandals which have been caused by key texts, actions and public statements of poets. One of the main events which had a lasting effect on lyrical writing in the GDR and its assessment in literary scholarship was the expatriation of Wolf Biermann in 1976. In this chapter, I will present this iconic year as a point-of-no-return, at the same time it will feature as the start of the end of GDR culture, possibly as that of the GDR as a whole.

From the grounding myth as formulated by Johannes R. Becher's national Anthem, via the powerful articulations of utopian thought, until the collapse of the GDR, poetry played a fundamental role and had a huge impact on East Germans, or any recipient of the written word. Hence, the emphasis of this chapter is put on the power poetry had in the GDR and on the consequences for the birth, existence and the death of its cultural life. This power, however, is not simply the result of a body of poetry which features 'dissident' topics at a thematic level. Instead the focus will also be on aesthetic responses to the power structures. Firstly I will analyse literary 'correspondence' between various (dead or living) poets in contrast to a culture and cultural politics in the GDR (from the 1960s until the end of the 1970s) which favoured a monologue. The dialogue enabled the poets and their readers to challenge power structures in the GDR. In this period, it was Wolf Biermann's poem 'An die alten Genossen' from *Die Drahtarfe* that articulated this deviance in an unambiguous way. Volker Braun's 'Anspruch' from *Provokation für mich* had a similar impact on the power discourse. Also significant are two major poetry debates in 1966 (*Forum-Debatte*) and 1972 (*Sinn-und-Form-Lyrikdebatte*) which discuss political matters. Finally, an attitude of disengagement in the 1980s and a focus on surreal and DADA-like poetry signalled a further response. Bert Papenfuß [-Gorek] is presented as an example of a new avenue of lyric output

aiming at ridiculing, hence contradicting the GDR's power structures, for example with his poem 'rasend schmerzt weiterlachen' from the volume *SoJa*.

Birgt Dahlke (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Underground Literature? The Unofficial Culture of the GDR and its development after the *Wende*

With the discovery in 1991 that some of the key players in the unofficial literary scene were involved with the 'Staatssicherheit' (secret police) the myth of the celebrated samizdat culture of Prenzlauer Berg was spectacularly destroyed. Two decades after the fall of the wall the literary texts published as part of that scene, which have now often disappeared into museum holdings and private collections, are overdue for reappraisal. Judged from today's perspective what is the aesthetic and political potential of the experimental works by writers like Leonhard Lorek, Bert Papenfuß, Jan Faktor, Andreas Koziol, Gabriele Stötzer-Kachold, Elke Erb, Ulrich Zieger, Stefan Döring, Uwe Kolbe and others which strove to deconstruct language and break genre boundaries?

An exhibition held in 2009 at the Water Tower in Prenzlauer Berg (curated by a student group led by me) documented the extent and variety of the original magazines, artists' books, posters, photographs artworks, film and music of the unofficial East Berlin scene of the last years of the GDR. It also offered an opportunity to examine the pathways and fates of the c. 80 authors and artists involved in it after unification. Why did so many of the small independent publishing houses and magazines founded at that time fold in the new Germany? Which authors and texts have become part of the accepted canon of the new Germany and which others have failed in that bid and why?

Alison Lewis (University of Melbourne, Australia)

Tinker, Tailor, Writer, Spy: Literature and the Stasi

This chapter will focus on the troubled relationship between literature and the Stasi or the 'Ministry for State Security' (MfS) both before and after 1989. It will start with an overview of the Stasi's investment in the arts and, more specifically, in the production of literature. It will examine the impact of secret policing on writers and publishing in diachronic and synchronic fashion. By taking a couple of case studies such as Reiner Kunze, Jürgen Fuchs and Wolf Biermann it will demonstrate the extraordinary lengths that the Stasi went to in order to police intellectuals so as to gain maximum control over their artist expression. My aim is to provide readers with insights into the workings of the Stasi from the perspective of the writers who were its victims (such as Christa Wolf) and its 'perpetrators' or collaborators (such as Sascha Anderson) and attempt to break down a strict dichotomy of villains and victims. The second half of this chapter will be devoted to the Stasi as theme or figure in writing. Little has been written about the tracks that the Stasi left on the surface or texture of texts, that is, at the level of content, narrative and character. In many ways the Stasi was the 'elephant in the room' that everyone knew was there but no one dared to mention. The Stasi, it will be postulated, was indeed a presence in many texts, albeit a suppressed and marginal presence, a ghostly or phantom-like presence in a number of works such as Uwe Johnson's *Mutmaßungen über Jakob*, Stefan Heym's *Collin*, Irmtraud Morgner's *Amanda: ein Hexenroman*, Stefan Heym's *Ahasver*, the poetry of Sascha Anderson and Rainer Schedlinski and even in a few works by Christa Wolf (such as in *Kassandra*).

The final part of this chapter will be devoted to the idea that the Stasi is ironically enjoying an 'afterlife' after 1989 in the very worlds of fiction and film that were previously its targets. This 'life after death', is rather surprisingly, given its phantom-like existence prior to 1989, proving to be astonishingly vivid and rich in detail. Here it will be argued that there

are two main forms of this 'life after death': an autobiographical, testimonial literature and a fictional literature. The impetus of the first literature is demystificatory and its function largely therapeutic. The testimonial writing is in the main autobiographical and makes elaborate use of archival material from the Stasi files after they were opened in 1992. Important exceptions will be examined such as the autobiographies of writers who have come into contact with the Stasi, who make no use of the archives (Monika Maron and Sascha Anderson). In these examples of literature about the Stasi, the Stasi is anything but a detailed, concrete, easily locatable presence, remaining instead the shadowy, highly mystified presence it was prior to 1989. The story of the Stasi's emergence as a theme in fiction is rather different. A number of texts will be examined (Hans Joachim Schädlich's Stasi novel *Tallhover*, Thomas Brussig's *Helden wie wir* and Wolfgang Hilbig's *Ich*) that attempt to write the Stasi into literary history. The focus will be on analysing how they tackle the genre question by experimenting with the *Bildungsroman* and the spy novel as well as with the traditions of existentialism and the absurd that were suppressed in the GDR. Other treatments of the Stasi will be analysed like Uwe Saeger's *Die Nacht danach und der Morgen* and Brigitte Burmeister's *Unter dem Namen Norma*, both of which offer novel perspectives on the Stasi in terms of its deformation of identity and destruction of trust and community. This chapter will conclude by examining more recent novels like Ingo Schulze's *Adam und Eva* and some West German writers' reflections on the Stasi, such as Günter Grass' *Ein weites Feld* and Ralf Rothmann's *Feuer brennt nicht*.

Carol Anne Costabile-Heming (Northern Kentucky University)

Intellectuals and the Wende: Missed Opportunities and Dashed Hopes

Because the *Wende* was primarily a grass roots effort, the intellectuals in the GDR, who normally occupied a place of prominence in the public sphere, were to a large extent not participants in this peaceful revolutionary process. Conceived as a survey of the intellectuals' engagement in the *Wende*, this chapter will focus on the years 1988-1993 and examine three distinct trends: the relative silence of the intellectuals in the months leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989; the intellectuals' steadfast adherence to a socialist utopian ideal, manifest particularly in the months following the fall of the wall; and the evaporation of the intellectuals' special privileges and the resultant loss of their function as alternative public sphere.

Writers such as Christoph Hein forcefully demanded reforms and an end to censorship at the X. *Schriftstellerkongreß* in 1988. This auspicious provocation was followed by relative silence during the tumultuous summer and fall of 1989. By the time renowned writers like Hein, Christa Wolf, Stephan Heym and Heiner Müller spoke at the Alexanderplatz demonstration in Berlin on 4 November, the demise of the GDR was imminent. Indeed, four days later, Christa Wolf appeared on television imploring her fellow citizens to stay and help to build a democratic society. Following the fall of the Wall, these same intellectuals continued to hold fast to their belief in the socialist utopia, an ideal far removed from the very real consumption driven desires of the general populace. The resolution, 'Für unser Land' underscores the extent to which the split between many of the writers and their public had grown. While many intellectuals remained active in the grass roots political parties that emerged immediately following the fall of the wall, it was obvious by the parliamentary elections in March 1990 that the majority of the GDR populace was no longer interested in the utopian ideals espoused by the writers.

The publication of Christa Wolf's *Was bleibt* in 1990 unleashed harsh criticism in the feuilleton and made it abundantly clear that readers and critics in both East and West had little tolerance for the lamenting of the formerly highly acclaimed author. The ensuing literary debate changed the literary landscape in Germany for good, and it called into question whether it was even possible for writers to have been critical of the system while

simultaneously supporting the system. By 1993, revelations that Wolf, Müller and others had also cooperated with the Stasi was the final blow.

This chapter will proceed chronologically, analyzing key speeches, political texts, and newspaper articles by the most prominent GDR writers in the period leading up to the fall of the wall and immediately thereafter. In addition to these non-fiction pieces, I will examine some key literary texts of the time, especially poems (Volker Braun, 'Das Eigentum'), short stories and diary pieces that reflected and shaped events and debates, including Wolf's much maligned narrative *Was bleibt*.

Karen Leeder (New College, Oxford)

Spectres of the GDR: Remembering the GDR Twenty Years On.

Two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a wide variety of memories, representations and re-imaginings of life in the GDR have emerged. Twenty years is the halfway point in the 'forty years' that Günter de Bruyn and others claimed would be needed to come to terms with the forty years of the socialist state. It also means that a generation has come to adulthood with the GDR only as an inherited memory. On 18 March 1990, the day of the parliamentary elections which put an end to hopes of a reformed socialism in an independent German state, Stefan Heym famously claimed: 'There will be no more GDR. It will be nothing but a footnote in world history'. Two decades on, however, the controversy surrounding the socialist state shows no signs of abating. This chapter will examine how the GDR has been represented in the twenty years since its demise: focussing on the boom in autobiographical reminiscence, the revelations from the Stasi archives, the key authors and texts of the 1990s and beyond (Ingo Schulze, Thomas Brussig, Durs Grünbein, Brigitte Burmeister etc.) as well as the films that have sought to define the GDR experience (from East and West): *Goodbye, Lenin!*, *Sonnenallee*, *The Lives of Others*. A key concern of the chapter will be to examine the aesthetic shifts from the 'short story sound' identified by Schulze and others as the sound of the 1990s to the epic, though ironic, *Bildungsroman*, such as Uwe Tellkamp's garlanded *Der Turm* (The Tower) of 2008. It will also balance the thirst for memory (witnessed in the iteration of the real (cf. the splicing of documentary material into many genres or the many GDR museums) and the dangers of 'Ostaglie' (the nostalgia for the East); but will also interrogate the melancholy 'late work' of many of the older authors (Volker Braun, Heiner Müller, Christa Wolf) alongside the new voices of the so-called 'Zonenkinder' (Jana Hensel et al.): that is young authors, children at the time of the fall of the wall, who identify themselves as the last generation of GDR writers after the fact. Taking up Wolfgang Emmerich's introductory chapter, I will then conclude by addressing the question of the end of 'GDR literature' as a phenomenon and whether a new and influential form of GDR cultural awareness has been created *après la lettre* – as a kind of spectral afterlife.