

Screening the East

Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Post-
Unification Film

Nick Hodgkin

Department of Germanic Studies
University of Sheffield

December 2006



IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

**PAGE NUMBERING AS
ORIGINAL**

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a close study of a wide range of films made between 1989 and 2005, which offer an insight into life in eastern Germany since unification. The principal focus is on the emergence of an east German identity, which, sixteen years since unification, continues to stimulate academic interest but which has seldom been explored in terms of contemporary film. East German identity is considered in its historical and cultural contexts, and with reference to three related issues - *Heimat*, memory and nostalgia.

Having assessed the GDR's attempt to forge an identity and the debate surrounding a separate post-GDR identity, I move on to discuss the films, which are organised and analysed thematically. Drawing on social and political studies, cultural theory and archival material, I consider the representation of provincial communities in the popular sentimental *Heimat* narratives of the early nineties and the period's sober social-critical films, which offer a corrective to the nostalgic impulses of the former. In the chapter that follows, I address the effects of unification on the urban population (principally that of Berlin), and turn to the east Germans' controversial celebration of the GDR past in the final chapter.

The analysis of the films concludes that a new east German identity has emerged, one that involves an awkwardly articulated movement, whereby the east Germans face the future whilst simultaneously looking backwards. In some films, this leads to the resurgence of a localised community that celebrates the values of an imagined past, whether of a romanticised, ahistorical vision of Germany, or of an idealised GDR. In others, a yearning for the past hinders individuals' arrival in the present. The films, I conclude, ultimately demonstrate the continuation of an east German particularism that resists and problematises true integration between east and west.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One Mapping Identity	21
Chapter Two <i>Heimat</i> Stories	63
Chapter Three Lost Landscapes	114
Chapter Four <i>Heimat</i> as 'Arsch der Welt'	160
Chapter Five Berlin: Disorientation/Reorientation	181
Chapter Six Good Bye, <i>Ostalgie</i> ?	213
Conclusion	249
Filmography	258
Bibliography	263

Acknowledgements

One of the most arduous aspects of this project was getting hold of the films that are central to my study of contemporary German cinema. While scholars researching much older films can often rely on well-run archives, few of the titles that are of relevance to my research are held in archives; fewer still have been transferred to video or DVD. I therefore spent a lot of time checking a well-known online auction site, rooting through Berlin film libraries, and writing to people in the hope that they would lend, send or record copies of their films.

I would therefore like to offer my sincere thanks to a number of people who were kind enough to provide me with copies of films. Tony Coulson furnished me with several films, as did Dave Robb and Dina Iordanova. A number of filmmakers, producers and distributors were also very generous and sent me copies of films that were equally difficult to come by. I am grateful to Basis Film, Credo Film, Entertainment Kombinat, Olaf Jacobs, and the production team at Ostwind for responding so generously. Clara Brucker at Basis Film-Verleih, in particular, was as enthusiastic about my project as she was generous in supplying me with press-packs and films during my stay in Berlin. While in Berlin, I was happily sequestered all day, every day, for a number of months in the new, hi-tech surroundings of the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen Konrad Wolf in Potsdam (a far cry from the old premises where I had previously viewed East German films in a converted toilet). The school granted me access to their film library, and newspaper archives, without which this project would have been impossible. I am especially grateful to Frau Illing there, who was most accommodating and who put me in touch with several filmmakers. A number of directors were ready to meet or correspond at length with me about filmmaking in Germany. Kurt Ralske provided some useful insights into the industry and supplied me with materials and films. Andreas Dresen, too, was kind enough to take time from his busy schedule and to meet me in Potsdam. Others, such as Klaus Gietinger and Andreas Höntsch, returned emails and indicated where I might find more useful information.

I should also like to extend thanks to other scholars in the field for providing me with helpful information, clues as to the whereabouts of certain films and, in some case, for forwarding me copies of articles or books that were either hard to locate or not yet published. Sean Allan, Daniela Berghahn, Joshua Feinstein, Beate Mitscherlich, Moray McGowan and James Schwoch were among those to respond positively.

This research began with the encouragement of the Germanic Studies Department at the University of Sheffield, and I have appreciated the support and the welcome atmosphere that I received there. Not the least of this support was the generous funding in the form of a three year bursary and a travel stipend for one of my extended research trips to Berlin. The Conference of University Teachers of German was also generous in providing me with a research grant. My thanks go to Michael Perraudin, Peter Thompson, and Jonathan Woolley at the Department. A number of people at the university have provided support throughout my time there, among them, Jaspal Singh, who proved ever reliable when it came to recording dozens of films broadcast in the wee hours on obscure German television channels.

Friends in Germany were supportive of my project, and I am grateful to Dieter Aichele, Kurt Gardella and Falk Krentzlin for sending me books, newspaper cuttings and videos that they thought might be relevant to my project. Above all, I am grateful to my family. My parents were not only ready to search out books at short notice but

were also prepared to read sections of the thesis (with the proviso that they were not expected to watch any of the films). Finally, I am indebted to the support offered by Lucy, who not only tolerated extension deadlines and my seemingly permanent relocation to the attic over the past few years, but who also offered encouragement and advice throughout the period in which I was involved in this project.

Abbreviations

ABV	Abschnittsbevollmächtigter
BpB	Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DFP	Deutsche Fernsehfunk
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DEFA	DEFA-Spielfilm GmbH i.A
DSF	Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft
FBB	Filmbetriebe Berlin Brandenburg GmbH
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IM	Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter
JFU	Junge Film Union
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KZ	Konzentrationslager
MDR	Mittleldeutscher Rundfunk
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NS	National Socialist
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee
ORB	Ostdeutscher Rundfunk Brandenburg
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus
RAF	Rote-Armee-Fraktion
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SMAD	Sowjetische Militäradministration
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SU	Soviet Union
UFA	Universum-Film Agf
UFI	Ufa-Film GmbH
VEB	Volkseigene Betriebe
VoPo	Volkspolizei
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen
ZV	Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung

Introduction

Kein Mensch will mehr einen deutschen Film von einem Deutschen sehen, es sei denn, es ist eine Klamotte.¹

Der deutsche Film hat einen neuen Anlauf genommen. Die Zeit der Beziehungskomödien ist vorbei, der Autorenfilm hat endlich abgedankt. Eine neue Generation von Schauspielern, Regisseuren und Drehbuchautoren hat mit Mut und Leidenschaft, Respektlosigkeit und Phantasie dem Kino einen kreativen Schub verpaßt.²

In the final decade of the last century, German cinema, once regarded as a serious challenger to Hollywood and later associated with exciting, oppositional filmmaking, had, as the quotation from Werner Herzog indicates, been reduced to banality. Herzog's reputation as Germany's 'visionary' director seemed justified: the decade that followed saw the release of a series of trite, formulaic comedies, whose success suggested that the audiences no longer tolerated the innovative and provocative filmmaking associated with filmmakers such as Herzog. For Eric Rentschler, these popular mainstream films were part of the 'cinema of consensus', which shuns the perceived obscurantism of the New German Cinema and, instead, 'cultivates familiar genres and caters to public tastes'.³ The satisfaction derived through recognition and anticipation, familiarity breeding contentment, as it were, was one that Adorno and Horkheimer had previously described:

Das Vergnügen erstarrt zur Langweile, weil es, um Vergnügen zu bleiben, nicht wieder Anstrengung kosten soll und daher streng in den ausgefahrenen Assoziationsgleisen sich bewegt. Der Zuschauer soll keiner eigenen Gedanken bedürfen: das Produkt zeichnet jede Reaktion vor: nicht durch seinen sachlichen Zusammenhang -- dieser zerfällt, soweit er Denken beansprucht -- sondern durch Signale. Jede logische Verbindung, die geistigen Atem voraussetzt, wird peinlich vermieden.⁴

This is not to say that German filmmakers have avoided making films requiring mental effort. In terms of box-office success, the nineties may be associated with hackneyed

¹ Werner Herzog, cited in Gundolf S. Freyermuth, *Der Übernehmer. Volker Schlöndorff in Babelsberg* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1993), p. 27.

² Michael Töteberg, 'Vorwort', in *Szenenwechsel. Momentaufnahmen des jungen deutschen Films*, ed. by Michael Töteberg (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 1999), 7-8, p. 7.

³ Eric Rentschler, 'From New German Cinema to the Post-Wall Cinema of Consensus', in *Cinema & Nation*, ed. by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (Routledge: London; New York, 2002), 260-277, p. 264.

⁴ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), p. 145.

genre filmmaking, but the decade produced some critical and inventive works, even if the public was seldom swayed by the films' success at international film festivals or by enthusiastic reviews.

However, not everyone is as discouraged by contemporary German cinema culture as Herzog, as the second of the above quotations indicates. Some commentators have even spoken optimistically of a 'third golden age' (after the cinema of the Weimar period and the New German cinema of the late sixties and seventies). This optimism which led to talk of German cinema's renaissance, is based largely on the surprising success, at home and abroad, of two films (both produced by the Berlin film collective, X-Filme Creative Pool), Tom Tykwer's *Lola Rennt* (1998) and Wolfgang Becker's *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003).⁵ Not for the first time has such optimism been heard. When the German Democratic Republic (GDR) collapsed in 1989, its state-owned enterprises were sold off, including its film industry, Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA), which was bought by the French company, *Compagnie Immobilière Phénix*. The acclaimed West German filmmaker, Volker Schlöndorff, who was made one of the studio's co-directors, was similarly prone to making such bold statements, especially those concerning the former GDR site, which he imagined as a super-studio of the future: 'in der einen Halle drehen Wim Wenders oder Werner Herzog, in der daneben Louis Malle oder Claude Chabrol, da kommen Engländer wie Peter Greenaway oder Amerikaner wie Martin Scorsese. Und in der Kantine treffen sich alle'.⁶ Neither Schlöndorff's vision of transforming the mighty Babelsberg studios into a viable, if internationally constructed, challenger to Hollywood, nor his declared intention of consolidating and applying the talent at DEFA has come to fruition. A dozen years after their purchase of the legendary Babelsberg studios, the French conglomerate (later renamed *Vivendi*), finally decided to part company with the studios, which had been running at a loss for a decade, and sold Babelsberg in July 2004 to the investment company *Filmbetriebe Berlin Brandenburg GmbH* (FBB) headed by the west Germans, Carl Wobcken and Christoph Fisser, for the symbolic price of €1 - and a debt of €18 M.

While the success of Becker's film may belie the studio's financial implications, the significance of *Good Bye, Lenin!* lay in its boost to morale. The bold confidence in

⁵ The production company was established in 1994 by directors Wolfgang Becker, Dani Levy, Tom Tykwer and the producer Stefan Arndt.

⁶ Ralf Schenk, 'Zerissene Seelen und gefundene Fressen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 20.05.1996. Online at: <http://www.berlinonline.de/wissen/berlinerzeitung/archiv/1996/0520/kultur/0004/index.html> [Accessed 4.3.2002]. See also Freyermuth.

German film's potential is partly attributable to the film's financial success - at home as well as abroad. With domestic audiences exceeding six million, Becker's film counted as a major accomplishment for a film industry that had long accustomed itself to the dominance of Hollywood. *Good Bye, Lenin!* was not the biggest German film of the recent times.⁷ That title still goes to Michael Herbig's *Der Schuh des Manitou* (2001), a parody of the Karl May westerns (but undoubtedly the 'Klamotte' that Herzog identifies), which attracted almost double the number of people.⁸ Yet it was Becker's film and not Herbig's which seemed to restore German cinema's reputation. This was principally due to the perceived cultural significance of Becker's film, which, unlike the majority of other recent (successful) German films, reflected contemporary issues that related to German history and society, or, to be accurate, societies - that of the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).⁹ The ways in which *Good Bye, Lenin!* addresses the most important event in recent German history was considered of such importance that a gala screening was even held for the *Bundestag* and the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (BpB) was quick to publish an accompanying booklet designed for educational purposes.¹⁰ It hardly needs to be said that such high-level endorsement is not a common occurrence, even in a country that values the arts as highly as does Germany. What distinguishes Becker's film from the cinema's other high-earners, however, is that it is prepared to consider relevant contemporary issues. It reflects present concerns about the recent German past(s) and is unafraid to explore issues central to (German) identity - memory, nostalgia and the communities on either side of the former wall. Rentschler included Becker's film in his summary of contemporary German films, noting that 'contemporary

⁷ Statistics in *Filmförderungsanstalt. FFA-info*, 17.8.2004, No. 2, p.8. Online at: http://www.filmfoerderungsanstalt.de/downloads/publikationen/ffa_intern/FFA_info_2_2004.pdf, p.8 [Accessed 30.12.2005].

⁸ Statistics in *Filmförderungsanstalt. FFA-info*, 19.8.2003, No. 2, p. 6. Online at: http://www.filmfoerderungsanstalt.de/downloads/publikationen/ffa_intern/FFA_info_2_2003.pdf [Accessed 30.12.2005].

⁹ Of course, Herbig's film is of cultural significance, even if it has received little, if any scholarly attention. One possible analysis might consider the film's nostalgic value, since it engages with the popular Karl May films of the sixties. Similar might be said of Herbig's other huge hit, *(T)Raumschiff Surprise - Periode 1* (2004), which parodies cherished sci-fi films.

¹⁰ See Cristina Moles Kaupp, *Good Bye, Lenin! Film-Heft* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2003).

German films at long last once again manifest an ability to take risks, to dare to be spontaneous and tentative'.¹¹

Good Bye, Lenin! is by no means the only film to address unification; and it is certainly not the most penetrating or ambitious account of that time, though its success marks a significant point in the representation of the east, as the final chapter demonstrates. Filmmakers began addressing the dissolution of the GDR and the effects of unification on the (predominantly eastern) population almost as soon as the wall was breached. Some have surveyed the new republic from a critical position that recalls the kind of social critical filmmaking for which west Germany had once been renowned, though these are, by and large, low-budget films that made little impression on audiences. Others have seen the coming together of the two populations as material for lighthearted comedies and have revived old genres in order to represent the encounters between east and west. Despite the divergent approaches to unification and its related issues, one thing is clear: unification as a national issue has been a focus for many German filmmakers, providing us with an intriguing audiovisual index of recent German history and contemporary society.

Films and Identity: Reflecting the Nation

Conventional wisdom has it that identity is not a fixed, immutable concept. The contribution made to identity discourse by Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith has offered a theoretical starting point for many scholars seeking to trace the developments of national identity in film. These texts have stressed the 'constructedness' and mutability of identity. If one accepts that identity is created -- that it is the product of what Hobsbawm refers to as 'invented tradition' -- then one can begin to investigate the means by which culture (and that includes film) participates in its construction.¹²

This is not to allege an agenda among filmmakers to fashion their films as the building blocks of identity, though countless films have intentionally served hegemonic

¹¹ Eric Rentschler, 'Post-Wall Prospects: An Introduction', *New German Critique*, No. 87 (Special Issue on Post-Wall Cinema), August 2002, 3-5, p. 5.

¹² See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983, 10th edition, 2003).

interests: modern wars have harnessed the medium in order to vector the audience to a particular way of thinking. In times of war or in those states run by regimes which paranoically seek to shape the way its citizens/audiences think, the films' ideological outline is not difficult to discern, though their success in shaping the audiences' opinions is less easy to distinguish.¹³ The Cold War gave rise to scores of films that reflected or were intended to promote the ideological standpoints of either side of the iron curtain. This often involved a process of 'othering', that is of imbuing certain figures with carefully inscribed details that would identify them as a potential threat to the audiences' values. Just as the vague East European accent once codified the villain in Hollywood action thrillers (later supplanted by a vague Middle Eastern one), fulfilling a narrative device that requires little, if any, additional information, so it is possible that specific east/west German attributes have been constructed and have become codified within German cinema.¹⁴

Film has the advantage over other medial forms in that it is an instant and effective transmitter of ideas to a (potentially) much larger audience than is the case with other media, whether print journalism or literature (though the internet may in due course change this). Films by their very nature comprise a complex matrix of references that can quickly stimulate or register with certain preconceived ideas. The visual codes that they immediately transmit can conjure up 'mental infrastructures', recognisable environments and social beings, familiar sounds, dialects, and behaviour, which offer strong identificatory potential for the viewer.¹⁵ The response may not necessarily be benign. Instead of stimulating the 'deep, horizontal comradeship', which Anderson considers a fundamental component of national consciousness, there is equally the possibility for films to problematise relationships between different communities or to rupture existing comradeship through oppositional narratives and negative stereotypes.¹⁶ For many audiences this is an assumed and entirely expected feature of most films. People often

¹³ See Tony Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War. The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), p. 196.

¹⁴ I follow the convention whereby any reference to the pre-unification population/state/region is referred to by using upper case spelling (East /West) and use lower case (east /west) when referring to the period since unification.

¹⁵ The phrase comes from Orlando Figes's 'Birth of a Nation', *The Guardian* (Review), 14.9.2002, p. 35.

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; revised 1991), p. 16.

watch a film expecting to have certain values confirmed, to see their own ideas fixed and reinforced by the narrative.

Film as spectacle is clearly a seductive one and its usefulness in manipulating audiences has seen governments of different political persuasions exploiting the medium at various times.¹⁷ At other times, a film may not be intended as a conduit of any particular ideology or political message but the ideas inherent in its narrative may broadly correspond with the values of the society in which it is produced. The medium may tacitly promote national culture without intending to do so; certainly, the anodyne heritage films in Britain play an important role in promoting a desirable national culture, one that mediates the nation's preferred appearance. However unrepresentative of the nation or unrealistic their stance on a particular historical period, the heritage film 'persuades by emotional force and immediacy, implanting truths more through the heart than the mind'.¹⁸ These narratives narcissistically preserve and perpetuate national myths. The historical film, meanwhile, may be employed as a means of rallying the nation. The historical film has often been used in an attempt to boost patriotic feeling, usually in times of crisis, by drawing parallels between the past and present (as in Veit Harlan's *Der Große König* (1942), or Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* (1944)) or in an effort to legitimise a ruling elite by association (Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), for example).

Not all films serve some state-supported ideological purpose. There is also a tradition of oppositional filmmaking in many countries which is counter-hegemonic, though how far such oppositional filmmaking is tolerated depends on the level of deviance and from state to state. The form of opposition may take different guises. It may advance political ideas that challenge those of the establishment by offering narratives that propose ways of thinking and behaving that run contrary to the moral standards of the society in which they are made. These films challenge the notion of a fixed, homogenised culture and it is a measure of their perceived threat to the distinctiveness of the governing culture that such alternative narratives may come to be placed 'under some sort of illusionist

¹⁷ Film's long association with propaganda has been well covered. On propaganda and National Socialism, for instance, see David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). A broader account of film and propaganda is to be found in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring, eds., *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

¹⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; First published by Viking, 1997), p. 149.

rainbow coalition', subsumed within the hegemonic culture as a way of blunting their edge, or they may be prohibited altogether.¹⁹

The cultural narratives that films offer play a vital role in the discussion, and even in the shaping of identities (whether regional/national, ethnic, or gender). Regardless of the universality of their themes -- love, death, betrayal, duty, fate -- the manner in which they engage with these ideas often reveals something of the society in which the films are produced. Though talking specifically about filmmaking in Afghanistan, the Iranian director Samira Makhmalbaf's comment that 'cinema acts like a mirror for society to look at its spirit and correct its faults', stresses the socially purposive role the medium can fulfil in providing an image of the nation that is invaluable to its self-understanding, but it also hints at the way in which cinema can provide a portal through which others come to view a particular society.²⁰ Since no society remains impervious to change but undergoes a 'continuous process of cultural reproduction', one should add that films enable us to view a particular society at a particular time.²¹

Thus, for film scholars (and the discipline extends to include, amongst others, art historians, philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and social anthropologists), film is an important means of examining different nations' cultural individuality. Recent years have seen an increase in publications which address the twin subject of national cinema and national identity, resulting in some illuminating studies of countries as diverse as China and Iran.²² Until now, the interest in German cinema and national identity had tended to focus on Germany's pasts, whether on the Weimar period, the National Socialist (NS) past or the FRG during the sixties and seventies. The collapse of the East German state arguably precipitated an identity crisis within Germany as the two populations, which had been separated for four decades, struggled to adjust to their newly defined profile.²³ This has resulted in the ceaseless enquiry into German identity since the collapse of Communism, as scholars search for evidence of east German distinctiveness, a regional

¹⁹ Susan Hayward, 'Framing National Cinemas', in Hjort and Mackenzie, 88-102, p. 94.

²⁰ In Dave Calhoun, 'Afghan Aftermath', *Sight and Sound*, February 2004, 20-22, p. 222.

²¹ George Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power. The New Politics of Europe* (London: Hurst, 2000), p. 15.

²² See Richard Tapper, ed, *The New Iranian Cinema. Politics, Representation and Identity* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), and Yingjin Zhang, *Chinese National Cinema* (New York; London: Routledge, 2004).

²³ On the Germans' post-unification crisis, see Andrei S. Markovits, 'Germany: Power and the Left', in, *When the Wall Came Down. Reactions to German Unification*, ed. by Harold James and Marla Stone (New York: Routledge, 1992) 209-217. See also Hermann Glaser, *Deutsche Kultur, 1945-2000* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), p. 428.

particularism that denies or at least problematises any notion of a homogenous German identity. While literature and poetry have proved fertile grounds of enquiry -- anthologies and monographs on the period's poetry and fiction abound -- post-unification film has rarely been subjected to the same kind of critical examination.²⁴ The discussion of post-unification cinema has largely been eclipsed by the discourse surrounding the role played by film in the GDR. The interest in East German film is understandable. The state film industry, DEFA, was largely unknown in the west and the sudden fascination with all things east German extended also to its cinematic output, resulting in a large number of historical accounts and individual studies.²⁵

Contemporary German cinema, however, has received much less attention, despite its obvious relevance to identity discourse. At least 80 films exploring issues relating to unification have been made since 1989. Many of these remain unknown, having received limited distribution even within Germany, and are accessible only to those able to attend international film festivals (though the sheer number of festivals that are now in operation provides these films with a far bigger audience than was once the case).²⁶ Subsequent television broadcasts allow some films an afterlife of sorts; nevertheless, the films rarely enjoy prime time slots and tend to be shown in the small hours and often only on regional stations. This is not true of those films that had enjoyed considerable success at the box-office such as *Go, Trabi Go* (Peter Timm, 1990) and *Sonnenallee* (Leander Haußmann, 1999), which are regularly screened on television and usually at peak time. Though some films have been individually commented on in film magazines and academic journals, the large majority simply vanish from view. The publication of Leonie Naughton's 'That Was the Wild East. Film Culture, Unification and the "New" Germany' in 2002, went some

²⁴ Dozens of books address this issue. Among the most useful are Jan-Werner Müller, *Another Country. German Intellectuals, Unification and National Identity* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), Ruth J. Owen, *The Poet's Role. Lyric Responses to German Unification by Poets from the GDR* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2001), Martin Kane, ed. *Legacies and Identity. Literary Responses to Unification* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002), and Frank Thomas Grub, 'Wende' und 'Einheit' im Spiegel der deutschsprachigen Literatur. Band 1: Untersuchungen (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003).

²⁵ There are a growing number of titles that address DEFA. An indispensable guide is provided by Ralf Schenk, ed., *Das Zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg DEFA-Spielfilme 1946-1992* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1994). Other useful histories include a collected volume of essays in *DEFA. East German Cinema, 1946-1992*, ed. by Seán Allan and John Sandford (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 1999), and Daniela Berghahn's *Hollywood behind the Wall. The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

²⁶ Thomas Elsaesser suggests that the multitude of festivals has given rise to a new genre, the 'festival film'. See *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), p. 88.

way to rescuing many films from obscurity and the volume counts as the first comprehensive study of the developments in filmmakers' responses to unification.²⁷ Naughton's study, which is weighted towards western productions, concludes that 'the western takeover of the studios had devastating cultural implications for the filmmaking community in the former GDR as well as for East German culture'.²⁸ Naughton's assertion correctly describes the situation for many of DEFA's established directors. Following the collapse of their indigenous industry, which came under the control of the *Treuhand*, the trust fund that was responsible for supervising the transferral of the GDR's state businesses into joint-stock operations -- or, the 'world's busiest asset-stripper', according to one observer -- many careers were lost to the new market conditions. However, Naughton's study does not acknowledge the new generation of filmmakers from the east who have made a significant contribution to contemporary German film culture.²⁹ Despite the problems experienced at Babelsberg and the decline of many DEFA directors, filmmaking in eastern Germany has not dried up.³⁰ The film school in Potsdam, where many East German filmmakers learnt their craft, is now open to students from all over Germany, and provides a stimulating environment for young filmmakers keen to develop their talents. A number of the films discussed in the following chapters were made by its graduates. In general, it has fallen to the young directors to chart Germany's progress since the two states were sutured, and to see how the east has recovered from this operation and what kind of scars it may have left.

The subject of German unification has spawned a vast number of books and articles across a broad range of disciplines, from economics to gender studies. From the beginning of the

²⁷ Leonie Naughton, *That Was The Wild. East Film Culture, Unification, and the 'New' Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

²⁹ The situation at DEFA had allowed many directors to wither on the vine; the state's collapse came at a time when several promising directors were too old to be considered fresh talent and not nearly experienced enough to command any kind of attention. Not that the older DEFA directors were necessarily in demand. Only the biggest names in the East German film industry successfully completed the transition from nationalised industry to the highly competitive privatised industry in the west, and even their presence is difficult to detect. In 1994, the respected (east German) film journal, *Film und Fernsehen*, sent questionnaires to various former DEFA directors, in order to assess their experiences since unification. Few of the responses suggested that the directors had mastered the new market. The journal folded after 27 years in 1999. See 'Lebenszeichen aus dem Osten. Antworten auf eine Umfrage', *Film und Fernsehen*, 3/1994, pp. 22-27, (no author).

³⁰ Much criticism was made of the *Treuhand's* supervision of the East German industries, and their handling of DEFA during the transition period was no exception. See, *inter alia*, Bärbel Dalichow, 'Das Letzte Kapitel, 1989 bis 1993', in Schenk (1994), 328-356, p. 343.

GDR's end, the debate surrounding German identity was one of the defining issues. The subject aroused passions as a wide range of people entered the fray, from politicians to filmmakers, footballers to intellectuals. Despite the images of jubilation and of cheerful defiance that for many came to define the autumn revolution, many articles tended towards gloomy prediction and remained unconvinced by Helmut Kohl's prediction that the grey east would transform into 'blühende Landschaften' (a vision that he later recanted, explaining that he too had been caught up by the general optimism of the times).³¹ This tendency continued to be a feature throughout the nineties, but the *a posteriori* consideration resulted in a more thoughtful, less emotional consideration of the situation. The tenth anniversary of unification inevitably aroused media attention but, with spirits tempered by the experiences since 1989, the celebrations were muted, and the failures and disappointments of unification received as much attention as its achievements. More than a decade and half since unification, the questions surrounding Germany's post-Cold War identity continue to provoke debate and receive enthusiastic media coverage.

The ongoing economic problems that are most evident in the *Neue Bundesländer* (the area comprising the former GDR) and the financial burden placed on the states that previously comprised the Federal Republic are well documented.³² In 2004, the east Germans showed themselves capable of mass demonstrations once again, as thousands took to the streets in order to protest against 'Hartz IV', the name given to a controversial package of economic reforms that appeared to encumber still further a region already suffering from high unemployment. The disillusionment with unification has manifested itself in other ways too, a fact arguably revealed in the electoral support for the Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (PDS) in the east.³³ What is more, an increasing number of commentators have offered evidence suggesting that, rather than overcoming the differences between east and west, which was the ardent hope of unification's architects, the opposite may in fact be the case:

³¹ See Otto Köhler, 'Kohl und Köhler', *Freitag* 40, 24.9.2004. Online at: <http://www.freitag.de/2004/40/04400502.php> [Accessed 23.11.2004].

³² See, for example, Michael Münter and Roland Sturm, 'Economic Consequences of German Unification', *German Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2002, 179-194. A measure of the costs involved for west Germans is given by Ulrich Heilemann and Wolfgang Reinicke, *Welcome to Hard Times: The Fiscal Consequences of German Unity* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), p. 48. Prompted by the so-called Harz IV demonstrations, *Der Spiegel* offered a largely unsympathetic and pessimistic survey of the situation in the east in a special issue under the provocative title 'Jammertal Ost'. See *Der Spiegel*, 39/2004.

³³ See A.B. Gunlicks, 'The Future of Federalism in the United Germany', in *Domestic Politics of German Unification*, ed. by C. Anderson *et al* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 1993), 155-174.

zahlreiche [...] Untersuchungen belegen, daß noch fast 10 Jahre nach der deutschen Vereinigung die zahlreichen Unterschiede in der politischen, sozialen und kulturellen Orientierung von West- und Ostdeutschen mehr sind als nur landschaftliche Besonderheiten, wie sie stets auch innerhalb der Bundesrepublik aufzufinden waren.³⁴

Thesis: Aims and Objectives

The following study sets out to investigate how these differences have come to be represented in the films made between 1989 and 2005 and, in so doing, assesses their contribution to, and reflection of, the debate surrounding east German identity. The basic premise of this thesis is that, for all the rhetoric of integration and the (contested) notion of cultural commonality inherent in the idea of the *Kulturnation* (an idea of German exceptionalism that was promulgated by various sides in both German states), the populations of the east and west did not naturally coalesce once the barrier that had divided the nation was removed and geographical and political union restored. The following study reveals how the east Germans' post-unification frustrations have, in some films, led to a regrouping of their local/regional community and the emergence of a post-GDR eastern identity. This reconstructed identity has not resulted in a single, unambiguous sense of belonging observable throughout the films. It is possible to single out two clearly definable east German identities at play in post-unification discourse and both are ultimately regressive. One involves the return of a *Heimat* identity, an identity that largely ignores the features of modern life and celebrates instead the traditions of an imagined, ostensibly apolitical, all-German past. The other also celebrates aspects of the past, specifically of the GDR. Other films offer narratives that focus not on any revitalised identity but on the decline of the east German community and its repercussions. Unable to escape their stultifying eastern environment, or hindered by the memories of the GDR or by other markers of their easternness, the protagonists of these films can neither separate themselves from the east nor are they able to find an alternative home within the so-called Berlin Republic.

³⁴ Max Kaase, 'Innere Einheit', in *Handbuch zur deutschen Einheit, 1949-1989-1999*, ed. by Werner Weidenfeld and Karl-Rudolf Korte (Frankfurt am Main: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1999), 454-465, pp. 464-465.

Certain questions arise from this investigation into the representation of east German identity: how, and to what end, is the east encoded (visually represented)? What are the perceived effects of unification on the territory and its population? Do clear, discernible differences emerge in the characterisation of the east and west Germans in the films and, if so, do these differences preclude the notion of a homogenised national identity or do they broaden it? A number of themes that have emerged in the films made since 1989 are germane to the construction of identity. Three concepts in particular have come to preoccupy filmmakers interested in screening the east: *Heimat*, memory and nostalgia.

Heimat has always involved a dialectic of difference and identity. It is, as Hermann Bausinger notes, 'ein bildschwangeres Wort, das schon hier vielfach für Identität steht, auf Identität zuführt – Identität als Übereinstimmung des Menschen mit sich und seiner Umgebung, Identität als Gegenbegriff zu Entfremdung'.³⁵ It may serve to distinguish *them* from *us*, though the manner in which this opposition is expressed changes according to context. *Heimat* is, after all, a polysemic notion: it may refer to the sentimental celebration of the folkloric tradition and be tied up with ideas of rurality and local culture; but it has proved a malleable concept to politicians of different hues, whether they are addressing the wider theme of nation and a sense of national belonging or focussing on narrower issues as part of a regional particularism. Indeed the left's recent appropriation of a concept traditionally championed by the right has been met with some incredulity.³⁶ In a period in which the Germans' notion of home has (once again) been destabilised by political and historical events, *Heimat* surfaces as one of the key themes in post-unification film, frequently providing a context for the conflict between east and west, a clash of cultures in which the *Heimat* that is defended represents 'something more elementary, more contingent, and thus more real than life seen in a larger scale perspective'.³⁷ *Heimat* is not just a confrontation between the global and the local, however. It can also be a site of contested space within established neighbourhoods. No

³⁵ Hermann Bausinger, cited in Manuela Fiedler, *Heimat im deutschen Film. Ein Mythos zwischen Regression und Utopie* (Coppengrave: Coppi Verlag, 1995), p. 42. See also David Morley, *Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 34; and Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 27.

³⁶ See Christian von Ditfurth, cited in Peter Thompson, *The Crisis of the German Left. The PDS, Stalinism and the Global Economy* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 98.

³⁷ Arjun Appadurai, cited in Morley, p. 11.

longer held together by the ideological glue that appeared to bind communities in East German film, the post-GDR *Heimat* is for some filmmakers a location beset by prejudice and characterised by friction.

Memory, too, plays an important role as a point of orientation for the east German community. How communities see, or imagine themselves, is defined as much by the present as by the past.³⁸ A fundamental component of identity, memory is likewise a protean concept, subject to change and manipulation. Memory of the GDR past has been crucial to preserving some cultural specificity. But while memory is crucial to identity, enabling communities to coalesce through shared experiences and reminiscences, which are assembled in order to construct some collective framework for identity, it can also be divisive, serving to exclude those without a legitimate claim to the collective memory bank. The east German past has been subjected to conflicting accounts, which either reify or vilify the GDR. Memories are often fiercely contested, especially during times of upheaval when a community's unsteadiness prompts it to cling to the security of the past. The past is then reinvoked through significant symbols and rituals, which may continue to offer a point of orientation for the community and perpetuate identity.³⁹ This is not to suggest that memories of the past go unchallenged within a community, that it is only those outside its boundaries who doubt its authority; as some of the films show, there are competing memories of the past even for those whose life stories intertwine.

Nostalgia, the third recurring theme, is closely related to memory and offers a further inroad into identity. Nostalgia's focal point, however, is less precise than that of memory which often narrows in on particular points on the past. Indeed, the tendency towards nostalgia is interpreted by others who do not participate in its sentimental yearning as a provocation, for 'disparagement of the present' is, as Christopher Lasch has noted, 'the hallmark of nostalgia'.⁴⁰ The evocation of a vague past is central to its appeal and this retrospective desire is exploited by everyone, from politicians to tourist boards to television producers who contribute to the 'aesthetic colonization' of favoured periods.⁴¹ In recreating a vision of the past, films often prompt nostalgia, even -- and this is where

³⁸ See Jeffrey Weeks, 'Rediscovering Values', in *Principled Positions. Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. by Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), 189-211, p. 199.

³⁹ See Schöpflin, pp. 260-261.

⁴⁰ Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven. Progress and Its Critics* (New York; London: E.E. Norton, 1991), p. 82.

⁴¹ Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, July/August, 1984, 53-92, p. 67.

nostalgia and memory differ -- among those who have no recollection of the past that is being played out before them. Nostalgia, then, may describe a regretful yearning for something one never had, for something that did not exist in the first place. Like memory, nostalgia is often at the centre of disagreement; 'a utopian diversion from the real tasks ahead', the retrospective realisation of what has been lost can -- and has -- further exacerbated dissatisfaction with the present.⁴²

Methodology

This study considers these interrelated factors as represented in film in relational terms and places them in the context of, among others things, socio-economic issues and political developments which have all influenced the post-unification experience.

The films have been arranged thematically, though there is naturally some overlap; memory of the East German past for example runs through many of the narratives. Within the chapters, the films are discussed chronologically. I have opted to present an exegetic account of numerous films that I believe pertinent to the themes outlined above. A few of these have received some critical attention, many have gone unnoticed. Not all the films made since unification are easily categorised. Though many of the films that situate their narratives in the east do conform to certain generic conventions, a fact that may, in part, be explained by their reliance on funding from television stations, there are also several idiosyncratic productions, which are experimental in both narrative and form, and which resist classification. The thesis does not distinguish between art films and those popular, mainstream films that are reluctant to deviate from 'existing spectator expectations'.⁴³ While these distinctions do arise in the discussions of the films, it is important to stress that the study considers films regardless of their generic character or the merits of their representation. The categories, 'popular film' and its standard antonym, the 'art film', are, as others have pointed out, problematic concepts when it comes to considering a nation's self-representation, with the critical weight often falling on those films which do not

⁴² Anthony D. Smith, 'The "Golden Age" and National Renewal', in *Myth and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst & Co., 1997) 36-60, p. 38.

⁴³ Thomas Elsaesser, 'Introduction: German Cinema in the 1990s', in *The BFI Companion to German Cinema*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel (London: BFI Publishing, 1999), 3-16, p. 6.

accurately reflect the national taste.⁴⁴ The popular, mainstream films may be critically derided, dismissed as flummeries because they fail either to engage with social issues or reveal anything about the society that produced them, but this is a prejudice borne of the high art preferences that have long dominated film studies and working within such narrow confines risks a limited and limiting understanding of national film production.⁴⁵

The number of films offering insight into issues of contemporary east German identity is far larger than the few articles on post-unification film might suggest, and no single study could offer a detailed account of each film. I have therefore chosen to concentrate on feature films, rather than television or documentary films (though the funding practices in Germany which see some films part-financed by television companies and given a short release at cinemas mean that some films are both television and feature films). To include the many television films that have in some way or other engaged with unification issues would have burdened the research unnecessarily. This is more a logistical question than a matter of taste; put simply, there is not enough room within this study to offer a satisfactory account of the large number of relevant television productions made since 1989, though I occasionally refer to some television dramas and series where this enhances my discussion of a particular film or films. Equally, the many documentary films made since unification have been omitted from the research. While these films often provide invaluable accounts and insights into individual reactions to the historic changes that have taken place in east Germany, this study is specifically interested in feature films. These may not be guided by the putative objectivity that generally governs the documentaries, but the films' contribution to the identity debate is not diminished by their subjectivity. As with other modes of representation, they 'creatively interpret and refract [...] complex worlds of significance and actively contribute to the construction of new forms of self-understanding'.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau, 'Introduction', in *Popular European Cinema*, ed. by Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (Routledge: London; New York, 1992), 1-14, p. 1.

⁴⁵ See Ginette Vincendeau, 'Issues in European Cinema', in *World Cinema. Critical Approaches*, ed. by John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 56-64, p. 58.

⁴⁶ Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales, 'Introduction: representation in literature and history', in *Representing the German Nation. History and Identity in twentieth century Germany*, ed. by Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1-19, p. 10.

Thesis Outline

The first chapter looks at the East German regime's attempts to forge a separate east German identity, one that was intended to consolidate its socialist ideology but also acknowledge its cultural traditions, to which both German states naturally laid claim. It outlines the strategies that were employed in order to achieve this, and highlights in particular the role that the media was expected to play, with the focus on East German film and television.

According to many observers, the measures employed by the SED-state in order to establish a separate national consciousness ultimately failed.⁴⁷ Moreover, the mandate given to the CDU in 1990 and the support for subsequent monetary union appeared to offer conclusive proof that its population had no problem in identifying with the west and had happily abandoned any GDR distinctiveness. The east Germans' enthusiasm for the west was more likely prompted by their desire to enjoy the material benefits associated with the neighbours across the former border than proof of any profound bond. Certainly, the euphoria of the early days was short-lived, and the assertion of solidarity soon disappeared. The regeneration of the east has proved far more of a challenge than was initially expected and the anxieties and disappointments associated with life in a free market society have been central to the emergence of a post-GDR identity, which (in the early days at least) was unafraid to hoist the tattered banner of the left.⁴⁸

Chapter 1 looks at the factors that are involved in the development of this separate identity and, having introduced an outline of theoretical approach to identity, establishes the social and political context against which the films that are considered in subsequent chapters may be analysed. The chapter closes with a brief account of the privatisation of the DEFA studios, which decision drew east German filmmaking tradition to an end and, in the process, finished the careers of many involved in the industry.

⁴⁷According to Konrad Jarausch *et al*, assessing the success of the state's attempt to create a GDR identity is difficult, given the paucity of empirical data and relevant surveys before 1989. In Konrad H. Jarausch, Heinrich C. Seeba and David P. Conradt, 'The Presence of the Past. Culture, Opinion, and Identity in Germany', in *After Unity.Reconfiguring German Identities* ed. by K. H. Jarausch (Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), 25- 60, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁸See also Thomas Gensicke, who claims that 'DDR-Identität ist eng mit dem Glauben verknüpft, daß in der DDR die gute Idee des Sozialismus schlecht ausgeführt wurde'. In 'Vom Staatsbewußtsein zur Oppositions-Ideologie: DDR-Identität im vereinten Deutschland', in *Auf dem Weg zu einer gesamtdeutschen Identität*, ed. by Axel Knoblich *et al* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992), 49-66, p. 54.

Taking as a given Gerald Mast's conclusion that 'even the most lighthearted, escapist piece of fun inevitably implies serious values', Chapter 2 addresses a number of comedies that focus on the encounters between east and west.⁴⁹ Ostensibly humorous accounts, which make use of cabaret performers, the films reflect substantial divisions between the two peoples and should not be discounted as 'das gesellschaftlich schlechte Gewissen der ernsten'.⁵⁰ It has been argued that these films revive the postwar (West German) genre, the *Heimatfilm*. Though the most successful genre of the fifties and sixties and, according to Elsaesser, the country's only indigenous genre, the traditional *Heimatfilm* has received little academic attention, with film scholars subscribing to the long-held view that it was a reactionary genre, which substituted real life concerns for 'idyllic images of rural simplicity'.⁵¹ This chapter offers a history of the *Heimatfilm* and includes recent reappraisals of the genre, which argue that they did acknowledge post-war tensions, albeit in a subtle fashion. Progress and the development of a forward-looking socialist culture were some of the guiding principles in the GDR, and the film industry was expected to support these notions. The celebration of the local and the traditional that was central to the idea of *Heimat* did not correspond with the ideologues' vision, though they recognised its importance for the population, and the chapter examines the efforts made to redefine it according to a socialist perspective. DEFA was inevitably expected to play a part in portraying this new version of *Heimat*. Having established the *Heimatfilm*'s genealogy, the second half of the chapter then considers its revival in some of the comedies of the period. Claims that the *Wende* comedies simply recycle themes associated with traditional *Heimatfilme* can be misleading. I therefore assess the appeal of the genre and question its purpose, looking particularly at its use in the articulation of a collective identity mustered in defence of an east German *Heimat* that is firmly set in the provinces.

Chapter 3 continues the enquiry into the *Heimat* theme though not the *Heimatfilm*. The provinces are still the focus of the films discussed here but these narratives share none of the cheer found in the comedies. The chapter focuses on rural communities no longer characterised by solidarity or a group identity but portrayed as either irreversibly divided or on the verge of extinction. Memories of the GDR past figure strongly in these

⁴⁹ Gerald Mast, *The Comic Mind. Comedy and the Movies* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1973; 1979 2nd edition), p.17.

⁵⁰ Adorno and Horkheimer, p. 143.

⁵¹ See Elsaesser (1989), p. 141. Robert Phillip Kolker and Peter Beicken, *The Films of Wim Wenders. Cinema as Vision and Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 64.

narratives which, as I demonstrate, repeatedly use the landscape as a way of reflecting the east Germans' sense of loss since unification, a loss that reflects the GDR's unrealised potential rather than nostalgia for the halcyon days of life behind the wall.

The discussion of *Heimat* is drawn to a close in Chapter 4, after looking at a number of films that have received very little attention in the literature on the subject. These meld the gloomy vision of the east that informs the narratives of the previous chapter with a comedic take on unification and on the stereotypes that have come to dominate in post-wall discourse. These black comedies highlight the continuing social and economic problems in the east but do not champion the local population in their struggle against the west.

In Chapter 5, the attention shifts from the community to the individual and from the provinces to the city; in post-unification cinema this is shorthand for one city alone: Berlin. The chapter begins by considering Berlin as a traditional location for German filmmaking and, specifically, looks at the influence that GDR policy had on the city's architecture and on its cinematic representation. Though the city has long been portrayed as an alienating place, an *unheimlich* location, the anxieties that are articulated in these films reflect a general unease and restlessness associated with the loss of guidance once provided by the state. The architectural makeup of the city plays an important role in these narratives, serving to alienate and estrange the inhabitants, who, in the films of the nineties, are often seen struggling to find their way in the new capital. Like the protagonists of the films examined in the Chapter 3, these urban protagonists are caught between the past and the future, between memories of life in the GDR and their present lives in the Berlin Republic. Negotiating these two temporal coordinates is, as we shall see, seldom straightforward and even perilous.

The focus of Chapter 6 is on nostalgia, specifically *Ostalgie*, the east Germans' nostalgia for their pre-wall past. The nostalgic turn has been a central factor in post-unification identity discourse; reconstituting an idealised, inauthentically authentic past has naturally impacted on attempts to structure a dominant cultural hegemony and this final chapter explores some of the controversies surrounding the east German community's attachment to their past and considers its implications. Having traced the evolution of *Ostalgie* and examined it in its social and economic context, I then turn to those films frequently invoked as *Ostalgie* films. Employing Svetlana Boym's analysis,

which has identified two (conflicting) impulses within nostalgia, the desire to restore and the desire to reflect, I question the appropriateness of the label and assess whether these retro narratives really do indulge such longing.⁵²

The east German experience of life in a democratic state has gone through different phases that have had consequences for their understanding of their past and their status in the present. The success of *Good Bye Lenin!* has alerted critics and scholars to the relevance of film in unification discourse. The film may turn out to be an anomaly and not represent a sea change in the (critical) fortunes of the German film industry. Nevertheless, a large number of films that have been produced in the years since unification by directors from both the east and the west offer intriguing accounts of contemporary German culture, a select number of which are considered in some depth. Some films receive less discussion than they warrant (and some no more than they deserve); this is only to be expected with a study of this size. Filmmakers who have closely observed east German society but not in a way that adds to the discussion of identity, have been sidelined, excellent though there films often are (I am thinking of Andreas Dresen, who, by his own admission, is not interested in east German identity *per se*, and Christoph Schlingensief, whose splenic satires, though set in the east, are less about post-unification identity than a frenzied assault on the establishment and German *Spießigkeit*).⁵³ Unification is typically viewed through a male lens; few women directors have investigated the east. Rarer still are films which consider the effect that unification may have had on the region's ethnic minorities, though recent years have witnessed an increase in narratives focussing on eastern Europeans' experiences in the new Germany. It is no surprise therefore, that members of ethnic minorities or foreign nationals are seldom represented in post-unification film; where they do feature, their inclusion is invariably as a means of illustrating some deep-seated (east) German prejudice.

By undertaking research, which draws on numerous disciplines (from social anthropology to political science, film theory to cultural studies) and makes use of a wide variety of sources, from newspaper reviews to psephological studies, film press releases to

⁵² Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 41.

⁵³ Author's interview with Andreas Dresen, conducted at the Potsdam Filmmuseum Café, Summer 2004.

online accounts, it is hoped that the following account of post-unification film might furnish the reader with the tools necessary to unravel the east Germans' skein of identity.

Chapter One

Mapping Identity

Angela Merkel's accession to Chancellor of Germany in October 2005, which counted as a double triumph since she was both the first woman and first east German to head the German government, appears to disprove any suspicion that the east Germans have been denied the opportunities for advancement in the New Germany or sidelined from positions of power. But what has been interesting in judging Merkel's rise through the CDU is quite how much her eastern background has been a point of reference. Although she has emphatically criticised the former GDR regime, something that was necessary if she was to convince diehard CDU voters of her candidature, she has repeatedly been described in terms of reductive eastern stereotypes. Evelyn Finger, writing in *Die Zeit*, noted how journalists focussed on what were considered to be distinctive (and mostly negative) east German qualities: 'ihr Anpassungsvermögen und ihre Skrupellosigkeit, das Hinterhältige, Misstrauische und vor allem Undankbarkeit'.¹ Not long after Merkel's pyrrhic victory, *Der Spiegel* ran a lead article on the new chancellor and her fellow east German politician (albeit for the SPD), Matthias Platzeck, in an issue whose cover page also invoked the GDR past by parodying an East German propaganda poster from 1952 celebrating 1st May celebrations.² Of course politicians are rarely able to dodge their past. Biographical details have a habit of surfacing at awkward moments in their political careers, compromising their present commitments and undermining their reputation in the process. But in eastern Germany the past is ever present in the lives of ordinary east Germans, too, and the limiting reference points and stereotypes that accompany many discussions of the head of the German government are a continuation of the attitudes with which the population of the former GDR has often had to contend since 1989.

This chapter reviews the concept of a separate east German identity, both before 1989 and after. It considers the measures adopted by the SED regime to shape a distinct national identity before assessing the issues that appear to have given rise to a separate

¹ Evelyn Finger, 'Der Ossi als Wessi', *Die Zeit*, 25.8.2005, p. 35.

² *Der Spiegel*, 'Aufbruch Ost', 47/2005.

identity in the east, which forms the starting point of the subsequent inquiry into contemporary German film.

Issues of German identity have long been a subject of scrutiny for historians, social scientists, political scientists, and cultural commentators alike. Konrad Jarausch claims that ‘Germans keep searching for a collective sense of themselves, while outside commentators continue trying to define what these perplexing people might really be like’, while Mary Fulbrook describes the quest to discover national identity as a ‘remarkably dogged search for a remarkably elusive holy grail’.³

There are, however, a number of useful theoretical guides to mapping identity. Anthony D. Smith’s influential work on national identity signposts routes one might take in order to arrive at a convincing account of identity and his research might usefully be applied to the Germans’ post-unification situation.⁴ ‘Unity’, he suggests, ‘has a plain and a more esoteric nationalist meaning. At the simplest level, it refers to unification of the national territory or the homeland, if it is divided, and the gathering together within the homeland of all nationals’.⁵ Those who remain beyond these boundaries are, according to Smith’s thesis, considered lost by the remaining population. This was, to some extent, evident in German post-war history, where it was the population of the GDR who were considered absent from the ‘real’ Germany. Over the years, the FRG began to show signs of having accepted the division and the East Germans, stranded on the other side of the German/German border, were given up as victims lost to the realities of world politics. With little hope or belief in unification, an idea that strengthened rather than weakened as time went on, the FRG appeared to have accustomed itself to the post-war arrangement.⁶ Certainly, it seemed as if the FRG had more or less come to terms with the East German irredenta: a survey conducted in the very month in which the East Germans finally took to the streets revealed the extent to which the West German population had come to accept

³ Konrad H. Jarausch, ‘Reshaping German Identities: Reflections on the Post-Unification Debate’, in Jarausch (1997), 1-25, p. 2. Mary Fulbrook, ‘Heroes, Victims, and Villains in the History of the GDR’, in *Rewriting the German Past. History and Identity in the New Germany*, ed. by Rheinhard Alter and Peter Monteath (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997), 175-197, p. 194.

⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁶ Klaus Jürgen Scherer, ‘Gab es eine DDR-Identität?’, in *Das Ende eines Experiments. Umbruch in der DDR und deutsche Einheit*, ed. by Rolf Reißig and Gert Joachim Glaebner (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991), 296-317, p. 296.

division, with only 24% of respondents expressing a belief that reunification might one day be possible.⁷ But unification ceased being a 'nostalgic phantasm' after 1989.⁸ Finally a reality, it created something of a predicament for the west German population. To be suddenly confronted with 16 million new compatriots was almost certain to provoke some hostility and to problematise the position of abstract sympathy (or indifference) that had typified the West German attitude.⁹ Previously, the sympathy directed at the East Germans had been aroused by a vague understanding of their plight. This centred mostly on the East Germans as victims of political repression, geographical restrictions, and, above all, of the Staatssicherheitsdienst (Stasi - though the actual extent of the Stasi's dealings had been underestimated, and post-GDR revelations came as a shock to many). By the following spring, a survey commissioned by Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) gave some indication of the disparate reactions to recent events. Where 41% of those in the east were 'very pleased' with unification, less than half that figure were as enthusiastic in the west, leading some commentators to conclude that 'West Germans were quite sympathetic to the East Germans as a people and quite hostile to East Germany as a state'.¹⁰ Unification ultimately affected this sympathy when those previously given up as lost became the newly arrived and only briefly welcomed.

Theories of national identity tend towards individual self-perception based on a shared sense of who we are - the 'imagined communities' to employ Benedict Anderson's influential phrase. Anderson's seminal study holds that a collective identity evolves from shared historical, cultural and linguistic experience, and is maintained via the media of communication. For Anderson, this is the printed word, but his analysis has gained vital theoretical cachet among film scholars keen to stress film's role in producing and shaping a national consciousness.¹¹ This culturalist perspective could, if applied to the two post-war Germanys, suggest the inter-German borders did not inhibit a pan-German national

⁷ See Peter H. Merkel, 'A New German Identity', in *Developments in German Politics*, ed. by Gordon Smith *et al* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 327-344, p. 332.

⁸ The phrase is Andreas Huyssen's. In his *Twilight Memories. Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (Routledge: London, 1995), p. 74.

⁹ See Hans-Georg Benz, 'Perplexed Normalcy: German Identity after Unification', in Alter and Monteath, 40-64, p. 50.

¹⁰ Benz, p. 48. See also Erik Natter, 'Wie sehen sich die Deutschen selbst? Empirisches Material aus Ost- und Westdeutschland', in Knoblich *et al*, 9-19.

¹¹ Anderson, p. 37. See Hjort and Mackenzie, whose edited volume of essays reveals Anderson's relevance for film studies and theories of national cinema.

identity. The idea that the two states had always in a sense been one, the forty years of separation notwithstanding, was indeed one of the attitudes expressed at the time of unification. It signalled the desire by some former GDR citizens to participate in the economic success of the FRG, but it also signalled a degree of political triumphalism among commentators on the right who were keen to discredit the communist state and deny the existence of a separate socialist German identity - an argument that appeared to be vindicated by Kohl's first resounding electoral triumph in the east. These were early days, however, and it soon became apparent that the two states' historical, cultural and linguistic experiences -- those precepts that determine national identity -- had left their imprint on the two populations, and it was in these areas that one might identify factors that distinguished the two nations. Forty years of separation had seen to it, for example, that the populations of both states viewed their past through different ideological prisms, which the simple removal of communist heroes from street names and the renaming of certain public holidays could not undo at a stroke.¹² Unlike the more substantial reminders of the previous regime such as the state statuary, street names were easily changed, making them 'tempting targets for politicians eager to make a symbolic gesture'.¹³ However, the new nomenclature was often understood by east Germans as a further attempt to wipe clean the GDR past.

The culture and language of each state had also been shaped by their respective political, economic and social environments, and the many differences were perhaps even more apparent after 1989. Language, a key element in collective national consciousness, had developed many distinguishing features. These were not just distinctions of dialect characterising regional linguistic differences, but informed by cultural distinctions. The everyday socialist rhetoric that made little sense to those from the West was, according to one observer, part of a strategy of using 'language that set the GDR apart from the Federal

¹² It should be noted that renaming East Germany's street names had been an ongoing process since 1949. See Maoz Azaryahu, 'Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 21, 1986, 581-604. Berlin's local government might have exercised the kind of caution that has, according to Daniel Milo, guided civic authorities in France. When naming new streets, they have opted for names associated with nature, not politics or history, which he suggests is 'the advent of a post-history and an anti-memory'. In 'Street Names', in *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past. Volume II: Traditions*, ed. by Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 363-389, p. 389.

¹³ Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting the German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 208.

Republic and created its identity'.¹⁴ That the two Germanys did share a common history and past culture was a fact recognised by each and, unless supervised appropriately, had serious implications for their individually assumed identity and sovereignty. The West preferred to think of itself in terms of the real Germany, continuing the cultural tradition that had been briefly hijacked by the National Socialists (NS), and of the GDR as the renegade state, the SED as Soviet lackeys. The GDR on the other hand, never made any claim upon the other Germany, seeing itself as the breakaway state. Yet, paradoxically, it also saw itself as the legatee of a carefully historically defined Germany, as the final link in a concatenation of historical revolutionary thought, action and revolution. Thus, the GDR simultaneously sought to balance these two ideas, that of a new Germany which could look eastwards, towards Moscow, for inspiration and support, and as a Germany that could continue to draw upon the (state sanctioned) traditions of the German past.¹⁵

The differences between the two states were not as easily dismantled as the wall, and were still manifest after 1989. Fashion, commodities, and language came to serve as cultural signifiers distinguishing east from west, and lent themselves to stereotyping, be it the east German in his snow-wash jeans and Trabant or the well-attired west German in his Mercedes — symbols that have proved especially popular in post-unification film.

References to the east German's post-unification unease have not been uncommon. This appears to have been confirmed by the data collected in social surveys and questionnaires, in voting behaviour and in artistic self-expression. It is reflected, too, in a number of issues associated with unification: enormous unemployment (a fact more acute in the east than the west), the political marginalisation of the east, the related social problems and *Ostalgie*. This significant nineties neologism sought to describe the east Germans' post-unification nostalgia for their GDR past and, in time, came to express also an attitude that reinvigorated and celebrated a problematic east German identity whilst simultaneously rejecting many of the less appealing features associated with unification and with the west.

¹⁴ Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth. Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 26.

¹⁵ Douglas Peifer offers an interesting account of the two states' reassessment of historical events. In 'Commemoration of Mutiny, Rebellion, and Resistance in Postwar Germany: Public Memory, History, and the Formation of "Memory Beacons"', *Journal of Military History* 65, October 2001, 1013-1052.

GDR identity, 1949-1989

Like the FRG, the GDR's self-definition would, from its foundation in 1949 until its collapse forty years later, regularly invoke the 'other' Germany.¹⁶ In its claim to be *the* antifascist state, the inference was that the FRG was not. Complete fealty was expected from its population. While any hesitancy among the GDR population risked accusations of collusion with the class enemy in the West, western intellectuals' identification with the GDR was regarded as a betrayal of the FRG's post-war democratic principles. By carefully tracing a cultural and political lineage, the SED declared itself the natural result of German socialism and the rightful legatee of a selectively chosen cultural tradition, thus conveniently side-stepping the problematic issue of the NS period and the support which Hitler's regime had also enjoyed in the provinces that constituted GDR territory (a policy dubbed 'Our Goethe, Your Mengele').¹⁷ Such historical spin was, as Fulbrook has noted, not entirely convincing, for 'even among those who had borne little or no part in sustaining Nazism, there was a degree of uncomfortable duplicity involved in swallowing the official myth'.¹⁸ In the film industry, the demand for skilled employees, including directors, camera operatives, lighting technicians and actors, whose presence was imperative if a credible industry was to be established in the Sowjetische Besatzungszone (SBZ), often meant that some individuals' previous allegiances could be overlooked. More than 500 former employees of Universum-Film Agf (Ufa) subsequently joined the DEFA pay roll.¹⁹

Lip service was initially paid to unification during the post-war period; in reality, the politics of the Cold War meant that no convincing attempts were made to set in motion a cross-border dialogue that might have led to such an event, and diplomatic relations were characterised by a (justified) mutual suspicion. During the period of rebuilding and recovery, the relationship between the two led to a degree of ideological one-upmanship:

¹⁶ According to Andreas Huyssen, the East and West Germans could blame their local difficulties on the other Germany, which represented the 'thief of one's potential identity' (1999), p. 81.

¹⁷ The phrase is cited in Marc Howard, 'An East German Ethnicity? Understanding the New Division of Unified Germany', in *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 1995, 49-70, p. 55.

¹⁸ Mary Fulbrook, 'Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR', in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst & Co., 1997), 72-87, p. 78.

¹⁹ Werner Mühl-Benninghaus, 'Vom antifaschistischen Aufbruch zum sozialistischen Realismus', in *Der Deutsche Film. Aspekte seiner Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Uli Jung (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1993), 215-231, p. 230.

the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) set the GDR the target of ‘overtaking West Germany in the per capita consumption of all-important food and consumer products by 1961’, a challenge that the CPSU had similarly set itself with the US as its chosen contender.²⁰ The early economic successes in the GDR and the USSR were, however, soon overshadowed by the growing strength of the US and the West German economies.

Across the border, the West German government displayed a similarly uncompromising attitude towards its neighbour, a fact that was made clear in the Moscow Treaty of 1955. The West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer habitually referred to the eastern state as the ‘sogenannte’ GDR in an attempt to deny it any legitimacy (a policy of non-recognition that was adopted by some West German journalists, particularly those employed by the conservative newspaper magnate, Axel Springer):

Die Regierung der sogenannten ‘DDR’ ist nicht auf Grund wirklich freier Wahlen gebildet worden, sie verfügt daher über kein echtes Mandat des Volkes, ja, sie wird von der überwältigenden Mehrheit der Bevölkerung abgelehnt; es herrschen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Rechtsunsicherheit und Unfreiheit, und die Verfassung steht nur auf dem Papier.²¹

The FRG simultaneously restated its claim to represent the true German state: ‘Die Bundesregierung ist daher nach wie vor die einzige frei und rechtmäßig gebildete deutsche Regierung, die allein befugt ist, für das ganze Deutschland zu sprechen.’²² This strategy led to the Hallstein Doctrine later that year, according to which West Germany threatened to break diplomatic relations with any state that recognised the GDR. The wider geopolitical realities naturally effected the two German states and just as the GDR orientated itself around Soviet policy, so the FRG gravitated westwards, with the United States as its special mentor, a relationship that would have a profound effect on the West German economy and culture.

Potential unification put the FRG in an uncomfortable position: if unification were too keenly pursued it might imply a faltering loyalty to western Europe, and compromise its commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO); yet domestic pressure to achieve unification meant that the issue could not be neglected, despite Adenauer’s

²⁰ David Childs, *The Fall of the GDR. Themes in Modern German History Series* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), p. 24.

²¹ Konrad Adenauer (20.9.1955), cited in *Die deutsche Vereinigung*, ed. by Konrad H. Jarausch and Volker Gransow (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1991), p. 35.

²² Ibid.

unequivocal position: 'lieber ein halbes Deutschland als das ganze halb'.²³ The relationship between the two states waxed and waned during the 1950s and 1960s, strongly influenced as it was by the political climate beyond its borders.²⁴ Germany's situation was unique in European terms (further afield there were parallels of course with Vietnam and Korea).²⁵ It had to accustom itself to its bi-polar status, each side becoming an important and relevant state in their respective geopolitical nexus. The varied strategies employed by both sides at times saw some rapport between the two, at others hostility (albeit on a rhetorical and occasionally diplomatic level only).

In 1961, the Berlin Wall became the avatar of the GDR's policy to distinguish itself still further from its neighbour, a symbol which was always there, in the rhetoric of the GDR, as an antifascist defence, keeping *them* (the West) out, rather than *us* (the threatened East) in. The truth was that the wall was built in order to stem the continual flow of GDR citizens heading westwards.²⁶ The respite in the two Germanys' relationship that was a result of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* during the 1970s did not last long (the revelation in 1974 that one of Brandt's aides was an East German spy did not help matters), and in the wake of this deteriorating relationship the GDR sought to reinforce its distinguishing features: 'die stärkere Konzentration des Nation-Begriffs auf den Sozialismus seit Ende der 60er Jahre hatte seine politisch-strategische Ergänzung in der Abgrenzungspolitik gegenüber dem Klassenfeind in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland gefunden, der eine kapitalistische Nation formierte.'²⁷ Any future possibility for unification was seemingly dispelled by Honecker's reference to the FRG as a 'foreign country'. The GDR further distanced itself from even the concept of 'Germany' and attempted instead to emphasise its socialist identity with constitutional reference to itself as the *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat*.²⁸

²³ Cited in Daniel Dagan, *Die über uns: Deutschland und das Fremde* (Berlin Verlag Volk und Welt, 1993), p. 92.

²⁴ A good account of the period, including the involvement of the USSR and the USA in the discussions focusing on German (re-)unification is provided in Eleanor Lansing Dulles, *One Germany or Two. The Struggle at the Heart of Europe* (Stanford: Hoover Institutions Press, 1970), 100-124.

²⁵ See for instance, *United We Stand Divided We Are. Comparative Views on Germany and Korea in the 1990s*, ed. by Werner Pfennig (Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1998).

²⁶ According to Kattago, the number of Germans who had left the East German state had reached almost three million by the time the wall had been constructed, p. 88.

²⁷ Rüdiger Thomas and Werner Weidenfeld, 'Identität', in Weidenfeld and Korte, 430-442, p. 433.

²⁸ See Harold James, *A German Identity, 1770 to the present day* (London: Phoenix Press, 1989; 1994), p.172.

The GDR's *Kulturpolitik*: strategies for identity

The new self-description was just one of many strategies that the GDR implemented in order to emphasise its distinctiveness. National identity was always intended to be defined in unambiguous political terms. The official, ideologically sanctioned concept of national identity was itself not immutable but subject to changes in the GDR's domestic and foreign policies, which were often influenced by decisions made in Moscow. For SED ideologues, the need for legitimacy could not rest on rhetoric alone. In order to engender a commitment to the socialist vision the present needed to be incorporated into a socialist narrative begun in the past. This was to be achieved primarily through key institutions and organisations: the school; youth groups such as the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ); the *Kulturbund*; and the *Gesellschaft für Deutsche-Sowjetische Freundschaft* (DSF).²⁹ Resisting membership of the many organisations that existed was both impossible and, in terms of practicality, unwise. The vast membership of the FDJ was therefore not necessarily indicative of widespread devotion to the socialist cause but rather an acknowledgement that non-participation could seriously impede social advancement. The Party provided such organisations in every sphere of life, be it educational, social or professional. For many East Germans, the realisation that meritocratic advancement independent of political participation was limited resulted in 'Eigen-Sinn', a 'retreat into Biedermeier-like depoliticized private niches and a quietist mentality.'³⁰ Though difficult, it was possible, then, to avoid, if not openly reject, the state even within some work places by steering clear of active involvement with the Party or its myriad organisations. Many sought to preserve some degree of autonomy within these spheres of activity, behaviour which, according to Charles S. Maier, 'facilitated not a socialist industrial utopia, but a

²⁹ Nothnagle, p. 13. The relevance of German history to the process of legitimisation is made clear by Alfred Losedau, who quotes from the 'Programme of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany', which states that "Historically, the socialist nation in the German Democratic Republic is rooted in the people's centuries-old struggle for social progress, especially the struggle of the revolutionary German working class for liberation from capitalist exploitation", in 'German History and National Identity in the GDR', in *Studies in Culture and Society 7. Selected Papers from the Twelfth New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic*, ed. by Margy Gerber (Lanham; New York; London: University Press of America, 1985), 213-220, p. 213.

³⁰ Gerhard Lehmbuch, 'The Process of Regime Change in East Germany', in *The Domestic Politics of German Unification*, ed. by C. Anderson *et al* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 17-36, p. 19.

group bonding that kept its own independence from the regime's agenda'.³¹ This resistance was limited, of course, for no direct challenge to the state's authority would have been tolerated. Maier says as much, and warns against overemphasising the *Eigen-Sinn* concept; it does, nevertheless, offer some insight into the innocuous, private opposition that existed and that is of some relevance to the later discussion of the post-unification *Heimatfilm*.

Consolidating socialist identification in an international context was considered an important goal by the East German ideologues, prompting the GDR to develop a close relationship with other socialist Republics and especially with the USSR. However, the attempts to weave a distinctly socialist identity within the fabric of international socialism were not entirely successful and the SED recognised that an individual, national identity also needed to be promoted.³² Typical of this incentive was the Politbüro's decision in 1952, whereby 'local history was to return to the syllabus to encourage young people to identify with the GDR.'³³ But the continued attachment to the regional identities competed with SED design, providing the population with a kind of 'Fluchtidentität'.³⁴

The culture industry in the service of the state

The arts also offered the GDR regime a valuable means by which to communicate certain ideas. The large-scale public events, parades and shows that regularly took place were intended to demonstrate and consolidate an East German identity, which, through its incorporation of specific icons and symbols, was inseparable from a socialist identity. The representatives of literature and art were strongly encouraged to participate in the socialist project, and especially to offer positive role models whose actions and character should inspire the reader or viewer. Film, famously described as 'the most important art' by Lenin, had long been recognised by the German Communists as providing an important function in the dissemination of ideology. Its significance to the socialist instruction of the

³¹ C.S. Maier, *Dissolution. The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 4th print, 1999), p. 35. For Mary Fulbrook, this 'mutual complicity in outward conformity was an essential ingredient in [...] an unofficial GDR identity' (1997), p. 84.

³² For more on this issue, see Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945-1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 288-291.

³³ Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture, 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 131.

³⁴ Gerd Heinrich, 'Es gibt keine "sozialistische Identität" der Deutschen in der DDR. Landschaften und Nischen', *FAZ*, 12.1.1990', in, *Dagewesen und Aufgeschrieben. Reportagen über eine Deutsche Revolution*, ed. by Dieter Golombeck, and Dietrich Ratzke (Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Medienentwicklung und Kommunikation GmbH, 1990), 337-340, p. 339.

GDR population was, according to Mira and Antonin J. Liehm, ‘unparalleled throughout Eastern Europe.’³⁵ Accordingly, some films were made with the intention of enhancing the spirit of socialism and of locating the GDR in a natural and logical development within the revolutionary process. Films such as Kurt Maetzig’s *Thälmann* series, *Ernst Thälmann - Sohn seiner Klasse* (1954) and *Ernst Thälmann - Führer seiner Klasse* (1955), and Bernhard Stephan’s *Aus meiner Kindheit* (1975) complemented other strategies to mythologise the communist martyr who was to figure as one of the key icons for the GDR, while Karl Liebknecht was also the subject of two bio-pics by Günther Reisch, *Solange Leben in mir ist* (1965) and *Trotz Alledem!* (1972).

Marx and Lenin naturally loomed large in GDR iconography and, following the Soviet example, towns were renamed after communist role models, Chemnitz being renamed Karl-Marx-Stadt, Guben becoming Wilhelm-Pieck-Stadt, and the developing new town that was the location of the GDR’s new iron industry near the Polish border for a briefer period receiving the dubious appellation of Stalinstadt (later Eisenhüttenstadt).³⁶ But the need to incorporate other German historical figures was desirable too. During the seventies and eighties, the GDR underwent a new stage of self-definition and, in an effort to deepen its *German* as well as its *socialist* identity, historical figures were rescued and rehabilitated. Historical reinterpretation allowed for such luminaries as Goethe, Bach and Luther -- the latter becoming a ‘trailblazer of the early bourgeois revolution’ -- to be reworked into the socialist tradition.³⁷ Historical films and *Literaturverfilmungen*, or *Erbefilme*, became established genres in GDR cinema and films such as *Wahlverwandtschaften* (Siegfried Kühn, 1974) and *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Egon Günther, 1976) drew on Germany’s classical heritage as a means of providing some cultural legitimacy for the state. Occasionally, directors exploited the authorities’ vogue for *Erbefilme* by infusing the bio-pics with references to their compromised status as artists in the GDR. In his film *Johannes Kepler* (1974), Frank Vogel, whose *Denk bloß*

³⁵ *The Most Important Art. Soviet and Eastern European Film after 1945* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1977), p. 270.

³⁶ Ruth May’s article on Stalinstadt offers an interesting overview of architectural and town-planning practices in the GDR and reveals the state’s ideologically inconsistent approach to German heritage - with Bauhaus architecture dismissed as an extension of American imperialism, while traditional bourgeois architecture was rehabilitated. In ‘Planned city Stalinstadt: a manifesto of the early German Democratic Republic’, *Planning Perspectives*, 18, 2003, 47-78, pp. 54-55.

³⁷ Alfred Losedau, ‘German history and National Identity in the GDR’, in *Studies in Culture and Society 7 Selected Papers from the Twelfth New Hampshire Symposium in the German Democratic Republic* Gerber, ed. by Margy Gerber (Lanham; New York; London: University Press of America, 1985), 213-220, p. 217.

nicht, ich heule (1965) was among those films to fall victim to the infamous 11. Plenum in 1965, was able to draw parallels between the oppression facing the sixteenth century mathematician from the counter-Reformation, and his own problems with the SED.³⁸ While key historical figures and events were rehabilitated and able to serve as significant reference points in the East German self-understanding, the past's significance for the present did not involve inquiry into Germany's more problematic history. Siobhan Kattago notes that 'the National Socialist past was not examined; rather it remained universalised and pushed both into the past and onto the Federal Republic.'³⁹ Apart from the antifascist films, which routinely reminded audiences of the communist opposition to Hitler's regime, few films examined the period in any great depth.

Filmmakers were equally restricted in how they might approach contemporary issues. Few directors dared raise issues that might hint at governmental negligence or poorly planned social policies. Those that did make it to production were invariably withdrawn upon release. The GDR's *Kulturpolitik* was not consistently severe however, and concessions were sporadically made. For a brief period in the seventies (and again in the eighties), directors did, for example, enjoy greater freedom to explore the 'Schattenseiten des Lebens in der DDR' as the government relaxed its doctrine of socialist realism, though rigid ideological instruction was reimposed following the expatriation of the singer and dissident Wolf Biermann in 1976.⁴⁰ Ultimately, the state's *real existierender Sozialismus* by no means constituted an invitation to investigate and report on the real conditions of the GDR, though, as Hans Joachim Meurer has observed, some directors' preoccupation 'with images of torture and disease, as well as loneliness and

³⁸ Klaus Wischnewski, 'Träumer und Gewöhnliche Leute 1966 bis 1979', in Schenk, 212-263, p. 232. See also Daniela Berghahn, 'The Re-Evaluation of Goethe and the Classical Tradition in the Films of Egon Günther and Siegfried Kühn', in Seán Allan and John Sandford, 222-245. The infamous 1965 conference occasioned a new hard-line approach to the state's artists, writers and filmmakers, who were accused of bourgeois formalism. Several films were deemed unsuitable and withdrawn (most of which were recovered after 1989). The films have been discussed at some length by numerous scholars. The most detailed account of the conference is provided by Günther Agde, ed. *Kahlschlag. Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965. Studien und Dokumente* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991; 2nd edition, 2000).

³⁹ Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory. The Nazi past and German national identity* (London; Westport: Praeger, 2001), p. 100. Kattago notes also that it was not until 1984, in a speech made by Honecker on the GDR's 35th foundation celebrations, that the East Germans' guilt was finally acknowledged. Kattago argues that the East Germans' acknowledgement of the past, especially the new focus on the 9th November as the date commemorating *Kristallnacht* rather than the 1918 revolution, did not amount to a sincere act of contrition or official *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, but can be seen as a political tactic intended to promote its international reputation. 108-110.

⁴⁰ Harry Blunk, 'Heimat und Vaterland im DEFA-Spielfilm', in *Deutsche Studien*, Vol. 26, 103, 1988, 226-238, p. 232.

isolation, reflected their own position in the GDR'.⁴¹ Aside from those few films which made such metaphorical allusions, the East German audiences, on the whole, had little experience of seeing their own concerns reflected on screen, with the result that, 'DEFA war für DDR-Bürger oft genug Synonym für altbackene, aber gut gemeinte Filme, die das Leben simplifizierten und dadurch Mißbehagen erzeugten'.⁴² The authorities were not so blinkered that they did not realise this to be the case and some leeway was granted, resulting in the so-called *Gegenwartsfilme*, which were intended to acknowledge contemporary issues, often focussing on problems that could lead to a positive resolution and which ultimately reflected well on East German society. Joshua Feinstein has argued that, in contrast to the *Gegenwartsfilme*, the *Alltagsfilme*, films made from the late sixties through to the eighties, and which lacked their predecessors' implicit moralising, 'found a genuine and lasting popular resonance' and that these films even 'helped to articulate an alternative East German self-understanding which functioned as a means of resistance to, and of accommodation with, the conformist pressures of the socialist system.'⁴³ But, for all the putative realism of the East German lives depicted on screen, these films seldom revealed much about the actual experience of living in the GDR and all its attendant frustrations. Some films, however, did manage to portray the GDR in ways that were far removed from the kind of self-image that the regime had originally expected of its films. Films such as Heiner Carow's perennially popular *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (1973), for example, succeeded in reflecting issues that would undoubtedly have displeased dogmatic Party members, but which resonated with audiences. Despite the willingness of some DEFA directors to represent and engage with a socialist society that was apparently more mundane than heroic, the *Alltagsfilme* were still subject to rigorous

⁴¹ Hans Joachim Meurer, *The Split Screen. Cinema and National Identity in Divided Germany, 1979-1989* (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), p. 37.

⁴² Bärbel Dalichow, 'Heimat-Filme der DEFA?', in *Film und Fernsehen*, 6/92 + 1/93, 55-6, p. 56. The years since unification have witnessed the east Germans' interest in 'their' DEFA films, which are routinely broadcast on regional stations in the east. The biggest of these stations, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR), conducted a poll of their audience's top fifty films in 1995. The results showed that 22% of those films chosen were DEFA productions. See *MDR-retrospektive. Die 50 besten deutschen Filme* (Berlin: Vistas, 1995). For Thomas Knauf, a former DEFA screenwriter, the post-GDR media was so poor that 'heute ist es so, daß ich anfangs, mich für DEFA-Filme zu interessieren'. Cited in Joachim Kürten, 'Ein Filmland wird "abgewickelt"', *Film Dienst*, 45/1992, 4-8, p. 6.

⁴³ Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary. Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill; London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 196. Written in 1976, Erika Richter's published thesis offers a useful contemporary insight into East German filmmaking (and film scholarship in the GDR). See *Alltag und Geschichte in DEFA Gegenwartsfilmen der siebziger Jahre* (Berlin: Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen der DDR, 1976).

inspection by studio bosses. The quotidian frustrations of life in the GDR were permissible but only up to a point. Films that offered too critical or negative a picture were seldom tolerated and efforts were taken to ensure that the impact of such films was minimised - usually by restricting distribution or by supervising negative press reports either in the form of poor film reviews or critical newspaper letters.

The (Tele)visual Imaginary

One of the major impediments to the SED's earnest and systematic attempts to proselytise was that West German television, whose broadcasting range reached far into the GDR.⁴⁴ The airwaves had been contested since the re-introduction of television; the incipient Cold War meant that 'the politicization of German broadcasting along east-west lines had already emerged', as James Schworsch has noted.⁴⁵ More influential than any other media, it was television that enabled the East Germans to imagine the community of the West. Although both populations would have been confronted with certain dramatised and fictionalised accounts of the other side, the situation was rather more asymmetrical, since the GDR's broadcasting hardly made the same impression on West German viewers that West German programmes did on the audiences in the East. The SED remained anxious about the influence of West German television though ultimately powerless in preventing GDR viewers from tuning in. Ironically, filmmakers were later to benefit from the authorities' focus on the problems posed by western television, since their cinematic output was no longer subject to the same level of scrutiny, allowing DEFA feature films to inquire into issues that remained taboo subjects for television productions, even if viewing figures for domestic television products were ever dwindling.⁴⁶

Because of the travel restrictions between the two countries, it was the media, and particularly television, that provided the Germans with a window to life on the other side. Recognising that the 'totale Ideologisierung' of East German television had alienated the domestic audience, who correctly doubted the information it presented, the authorities set

⁴⁴ See Thomas and Weidenfeld, p. 435.

⁴⁵ James Schworsch, *They're Working on Global TV. Cold War Television, Psychological Warfare, Information Diplomacy, and the Global Image of America from 1946-1969*, book manuscript, forthcoming 2006, [manuscript provided by Schworsch], p. 79.

⁴⁶ See Dieter Wiedemann, 'Fluchtpunkt DEFA-Filme?', in *Weiterbildung und Medien* 4, 1991, 49-51, p. 50. Mira and Antonin J. Liehm suggest that West German television had already begun to distract East German viewers from their domestic cinema. p. 95.

about improving its range of programmes, which it hoped would redress the diminishing interest in East German media and distract from those being offered on the western channels.⁴⁷ Thus, by 1983, programmes imported from non-socialist countries accounted for 58% of prime time viewing on the East German stations.⁴⁸ Despite the domestic scheduling of foreign television, the original western broadcasts continued to be popular to those who could receive it in the GDR; those who lived beyond the range of reception went to great lengths to remedy this.⁴⁹ This televisual contact with the west provided eastern audiences with the opportunity of regularly absconding from their republic, if only mentally.⁵⁰ Western audiences, however, would have been less inclined to tune into the ideologically prescriptive programmes of the Deutscher Fernsehfunk (DFF). Consequently, their televisual understanding of the GDR was based on their own, western interpretation. The East Germans' relationship with West German media not only undermined the SED's depiction of the West as morally and ideologically dissolute -- a point that was routinely made by the infamous Karl Eduard von Schnitzler and his long-running series, *Der Schwarze Kanal* -- it also challenged the GDR's proposed independent identity.⁵¹ Ironically, the desire for a better way of life later proved for many GDR emigrants to be nothing more than a dream with little founding in reality:

This Germany bore little resemblance to the consumers' paradise east Germans had constructed in their imaginations from occasional visits to the west, their resentment of the persistent shortages in their everyday lives and, above all, the

⁴⁷ See Monika Lindgrens and Susanne Mahlke, 'Vom Medienboom zur Medienbarriere', in *Mauershow. Das Ende der DDR, die deutsche Einheit und die Medien*, ed. by Rainer Bohn et al (Berlin: Sigma Medienwissenschaft, 1992), 95-112, p. 9. See also Andreas Staab, *National Identity in Eastern Germany. Inner Unification or Continued Separation?* (Westport; London: Praeger, 1998), p.108. According to Hans-Jörg Stiehler and Michael Meyen, 'in den 80er Jahren verloren die DDR-Medien - allen voran das Fernsehen, und hier besonders in der politischen Berichterstattung - weitgehend den Kontakt mit der Realität und damit bei großen Teilen der Bevölkerung endgültig ihre Glaubwürdigkeit'. In "'Ich glotz TV". Die audiovisuellen Medien der Bundesrepublik als kulturelle Informationsquelle für die DDR', in *Klopfzeichen. Kunst und Kultur der 80er Jahre in Deutschland. Begleitbuch zur Doppelausstellung Mauersprünge und Wahnzimmer*, ed. by Eckhart Gillen and Gerd Lindner (Leipzig: Verlag Faber & Faber, 2003), 134-143, p. 135.

⁴⁸ See Lothar Bisky and Dieter Wiedemann, *Der Spielfilm. Rezeption und Wirkung* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1985), p. 143.

⁴⁹ See Stiehler and Meyen, p. 135.

⁵⁰ See Lothar de Maizière, 'Some Critical Reflections on German Unity', in *United We Stand Divided We Are. Comparative Views on Germany and Korea in the 1990s*, ed. by Werner Pfennig (Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1998), 37-54, p. 38.

⁵¹ See Klaus Larres, 'Germany in 1989: Development of a Revolution', in *Germany since Unification. The Developments of the Berlin Republic*, ed. by Klaus Larres (London: Palgrave, 2001), 33-59.

images of western lifestyles beamed into their living rooms by west German television advertising.⁵²

If neither population had much actual contact with their neighbours, whether for reasons of restricted movement and access, or because of limited interest, there was at least a familiarity within a dramatised context. As previously discussed, the sense of the 'other' Germany was a constant, an impartible presence that aided, indeed was crucial to self-definition. Reference to the 'other' Germany thus became a necessary, if sometimes politically expedient, ingredient in the process of self-legitimation. It was not just a concept that was manipulated by politicians; the polarity of the two political systems lent itself particularly well to dramatic interpretation and was frequently alluded to in the arts - in drama, television, and in film. Of the different genres that situated their narrative within the context of division, it was the (television) thriller that most frequently used such standard tropes as espionage, betrayal, ideological conflict and other sinister goings-on set against the backdrop of the Cold War.⁵³

It is difficult to assess the impact such television dramas might have had on their audiences, who may well have been watching in Leipzig and Hanover simultaneously. No research is available to tell us whether the West German television producers pursued an active ideological agenda, but certain typologies have been detected. According to Birgit Peulings, there was a tendency to depict East Germans as provincial and complacent, adjectives that arguably hint towards passive complicity and all the negative associations with the NS past that connotes. Such a tendency would have countered the GDR strategy of apportioning blame for the rise of the National Socialists on the kind of qualities endemic to western society. Moreover, Peulings adds, 'ebenso haftete ihnen im Film und im Fernsehspiel meist ein negatives Image an, das um so ausgeprägter ist, je länger sich ihre Eingebundenheit in dem SED-Staat darstellt.'⁵⁴ Thus, it was common for western

⁵² Chris Flockton and Eva Kolinsky, 'Recasting East Germany: An Introduction', in *Recasting East Germany. Social Transformation after the GDR*, ed. by Chris Flockton and Eva Kolinsky (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1999), 1-14, p. 4. Schwach notes that by 1960, 36% of the FRG's viewers were able to tune into von Schnitzler's regular diatribes. No statistics are available that might reveal how many of these did so, p. 82.

⁵³ See Knut Hickethier, 'Deutsche Verhältnisse im Fernsehfilm. Die Herstellung der Einheit als Aufgabe im Fernsehfilm – und ihre Analyse als Aufgabe eines Projektes', in *Deutsche Verhältnisse Beiträge zum Fernsehspiel in Ost und West*, ed. by Knut Hickethier (Siegen: Arbeitshefte Bildschirmmedien, No. 41, 1993), 7-33, 16-20.

⁵⁴ Birgit Peulings, 'Die Ost-West-Geschichte im bundesrepublikanischen Fernsehspiel - Inhalte und Entwicklung eines Genres', in Hickethier, 113-141, p.115.

productions to fall back on a stock of familiar images and figures when it came to thematising the GDR. Of these, it was the inclusion of the Stasi, in particular, which came to typify the West Germans' profile of the East. This served to reinforce the West's view of the neighbouring socialist state as one defined in terms only of its repressive tendencies. As Peulings has noted, 'die Angst vor der Allgegenwärtigkeit der Staatssicherheit, wie die einfachen Wohnverhältnisse sollen die Lebensumstände innerhalb der DDR illustrieren.'⁵⁵ These mostly one-dimensional representations may also have been the result of inadequate research: few West German filmmakers had much opportunity to study GDR society at first-hand, making an accurate impression of GDR society unlikely. Visitors to the GDR were restricted by paranoid bureaucratic measures and their movements often monitored. Their impression of life on the other side of the wall would generally have been gleaned from media sources, rather than direct experience. Published social reports and surveys were not common in the GDR. They were even rarer in the West, and though GDR émigrés such as Thomas Brasch, Rainer Kunze and Eric Loest (who were among many artists to leave after Biermann's expatriation) could provide impressions of life in the East, these were dissident voices more concerned with criticising the SED regime than in reporting on the GDR's particularities.⁵⁶

West German television films tended also to be schematic in their treatment of the other side. A film such as *Der Boss aus dem Westen* (Vivian Naefe, 1988) was not untypical in its portrayal of the GDR and is worth outlining here since its representation of east and west is not far removed from many of the films that were made after unification. Naefe's narrative follows the impossible (and frankly unlikely) romance between a visiting West German businessman and an attractive young crane operator. Despite the strong performances from the lead characters, the film lacks subtlety in its representation of either East or West and is burdened with symbolic imagery. This largely consists of crude visual comparisons between the GDR and the FRG, of which the sleek, new Mercedes juxtaposed with the sputtering Trabant is one example. The east is represented by its material failures and hollow ideology: crumbling buildings, walls festooned with banners trumpeting communist slogans, menacing border guards and forlorn discos; the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵⁶ The decision of some of DEFA's leading actors (Angelika Domröse, Winifried Glatzeder and Manfred Krug among them) to leave the GDR came as a great shock to both the SED and the GDR audiences. The latter at least had the pleasure of tracing the stars' new careers in the West German film industry.

west, by contrast, is defined by its material wealth as represented by extravagant hotels, opulent shopping centres and superficial citizens. These features cannot be dismissed as inventions of the filmmaker, but the arrangement and the frequency of these props and locations invariably seem contrived and ultimately compromise any authenticity.

Despite these shortcomings, *Der Boss aus dem Westen* is able to avoid the hackneyed plot conventions that it initially invokes. The relationship falters once the pair has met in the West, with the businessman ultimately revealed as unsympathetic and selfish. Disenchanted by what she has experienced there, again mostly the extremes of bourgeois living, she in turn leaves Cologne. Finally, she succeeds in fulfilling her dream of visiting Venice before -- and this is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the film -- returning to East Berlin, where she continues to work on the building site, operating a crane whilst remembering the views from the bell tower of St. Mark's.

The film does not shy from incorporating the negative features of the GDR, from the physical condition of the city on the other side of the wall to its sentinels, the cold and unsympathetic border guards and Stasi officers. However, the female protagonist, who has been critical of the State, is presented as a spirited and proud individual who, despite the luxuries offered by the oleaginous western lover, does not finally succumb to the comforts of a western lifestyle. This is all the more surprising since her environment is portrayed as physically drab and socially dysfunctional. From a post-unification viewpoint, the film makes for interesting analysis. In hindsight, it seems remarkably prescient, and not only because its title could have been used for any number of later films: their initial dalliance, which ends with mutual disappointment and acrimony, can similarly be understood as a metaphor for the early stages of unification.

DEFA's depiction of the West was more ideologically weighted. Representations of the West conformed to the official line and numerous propagandistic accounts of the FRG were provided by both the film and television industries over the years. The synopsis for one of DEFA's early films *Familie Benthin* (1950), scripted by Johannes R. Becher (then the Minister for Culture) and made by a directors' collective under the helm of the politically reliable Slatan Dudow, demonstrates the kind of message that films were expected to convey:

Kalter Krieg gegen die aufbauwillige Ostzone Deutschlands. Die Geschäftsleute Gebrüder Benthin versuchen auf jede erdenkliche Art und Weise die wirtschaftliche Kraft der Ostzone zu untergraben. Sie stoßen dabei viele Menschen ins Unglück. Ihre verbrecherische Tätigkeit wird von der Volkspolizei aufgedeckt. Die Menschen in der Ostzone aber bauen das Land auf. Die DDR wird gegründet.⁵⁷

Later films lacked the overt propaganda of such a film but the politics of the Cold War meant the sporadic release of films that were intended to cast doubt on the west's moral legitimacy, including *Lebende Waren* (Wolfgang Luderer, 1966) and *Verspielte Heimat* (Claus Dobberke, 1971). In so far as the co-existence of the two states was a subject for filmmaking in the GDR at all, it was only as a meditation on the failures of the West and the merits of living in a socialist society. The subject was certainly not suitable material for comic or satiric interpretation, nor was it appropriate to ridicule any features of life in the East; one thing was clear: 'über die Mauer war nicht zu lachen'.⁵⁸ This was not the case in the West, where directors were more than happy to mock such features and parody GDR officialdom as in Reinhard Hauff's *Der Mann auf der Mauer* (1982), and Peter Timm's *Meier* (1987).

After Unity: stereotypes and dissent

The GDR was, as I have indicated, a more abstract land to West Germans than were its western neighbours, France, Britain and especially the US, which had, as one of the characters in Wim Wenders's *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976) memorably observed, colonised their consciousness. As for actual experiences of life in the GDR, only 10% of West Germans could reasonably claim to have witnessed it first-hand, and then only temporarily.⁵⁹ Looking back, Rita Süßmuth, CDU politician and President of the Bundestag at the time, acknowledged that 'Wir im Westen wussten zu wenig von ihrer Vergangenheit, ihren Empfindungen, ihren Beziehungen zu uns. Wir waren tatsächlich nicht vorbereitet auf die Wiedervereinigung und waren in vieler Hinsicht Unwissende.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Dr. W. Hortschanski, 'Die DEFA-Spielfilme', in *Auf Neuen Wegen. 5 Jahre Fortschrittlicher Film* (Berlin: Deutscher Filmverlag, 1951), 151-206, p. 195.

⁵⁸ Hickethier, p.19.

⁵⁹ See Thomas and Weidenfeld, p. 436.

⁶⁰ Rita Süßmuth. Quoted in *Deutschland Zeitschrift für Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft Und Wissenschaft*. No. 4, August/September, 2000. 42-43.

For some commentators, the rush to unification constituted a threat to the west's post-national republic. The political triumphalism that followed the GDR's implosion risked a return to a national patriotism rather than the *Verfassungspatriotismus* (and its implicit commitment to European integration) that had been proposed and supported by intellectuals like Habermas.⁶¹ The left perceived the collapse of the East German state as a critical blow to utopian ideals. Ill-prepared for dealing with the events that had taken place, their situation has been described as one in which 'mourning utopia replaced an engagement with the new realities.'⁶² Nevertheless, the *coup de théâtre* that was the success of the demonstrations in the East came initially as a happy surprise for those in the FRG, a large percentage of whom had given up expecting to see unification in their lifetime, though their interest in coming together was less enthusiastic than that of the east Germans.⁶³ One commentator's wry observation revealed the asymmetry of interest: "wir sind ein Volk!" heißt es, fast ein wenig verzweifelt, an manchem Trabant-Heck. Allerdings scheint dieser Umstand allein den DDR-Bürger zu beschäftigen. An keinem Opel, Mercedes oder Volkswagen sah ich ähnliche Sticker'.⁶⁴ A further indication of the imbalance in the Germans' interest in one another was confirmed by the west Germans' singular lack of interest in visiting the eastern *Länder*, with less than 3% choosing to go east even after the borders had opened.⁶⁵ Traffic continued to be a one-way affair.

As memorable as the sight of sputtering Trabis crossing into west was the image of determined east Germans storming once dreaded Stasi headquarters and the flurry of documents and dossiers fluttering above Mielke's centre of operations at

⁶¹ See Jürgen Habermas, *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 151-152.

⁶² Jan Werner Müller provides an excellent account of the intellectual responses to unification (including an examination of Habermas's position) in *Another Country. German Intellectuals, Unification and National Identity* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 134. A typically sceptical response to unification is to be found in Günther Grass's article, 'What Am I Talking For? Is Anybody Still Listening?', *New German Critique*, No. 52, Special Issue on German Unification, Winter 1991, 66-72, and in his speeches, *Ein Schnäppchen namens DDR. Letzte Rede vorm Glockengeläut* (Frankfurt am Main: Luchterhand Verlag, 1990). Rolf Hochhuth, meanwhile, highlights the exploitation of the east in his *Wessis in Weimar. Szenen aus einem besetzten Land* (Berlin Verlag Volk und Welt, 1993). See also Helmut Dubiel, 'Linke Trauerarbeit', *Merkur*, 496, 1990, 482-491.

⁶³ See Benz, pp. 48-50. Habermas summed the mood thus: 'Wer hätte, bei aller Rhetorik, noch mit so etwas wie der Wiedervereinigung gerechnet – und wer hatte sie überhaupt noch gewollt?', p. 206.

⁶⁴ Andreas Püschel, 'Grenzenloses Grenzgebiet Der 'Zonenrand' außer Rand und Band', in *Facetten der Wende. Reportagen über eine deutsche Revolution Band II* (Frankfurt: Institut für Medienentwicklung und Kommunikation GmbH in der Verlassungsgruppe Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, 1991), 40-46, p.42.

⁶⁵ Staab, p. 121.

Normannenstrasse. A population so long kept in check by the invidious activities of the Stasi was naturally eager to have access to their files, to expose the Ministry's employees and the thousands of *inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* (IMs). Allegations, recriminations and revelations were commonplace, and those that involved some of the high-profile cultural figures, notably Christa Wolf, aroused frenzied media interest, that was inevitably disproportionate to the actual facts.⁶⁶ This (mostly west German) media focus on the apparent moral and ideological transgressions of such a key cultural figure not only served to undermine her position, it also put the FRG's intellectual left into an uncomfortable position of continuing to support their old GDR colleagues amid a flurry of problematic accusations and highlighted the extent of the east Germans' collusion with the regime.⁶⁷ The dissolution of the GDR had already precipitated a crisis for the left, whose intellectual credibility had been undermined by their support for East Germany, a state whose population had just overwhelmingly voted for Kohl's centre-right party. These gleeful accusations of hypocrisy have in turn been criticised. John Milful, for one, has suggested that, 'It will be a tragic irony if those writers who were once stylised in the West into dissidents [...] are now condemned as quislings who failed to lead their people to the barricades.'⁶⁸

It was ironic that those aspects of East German society, which earlier had aroused sympathy, were later incorporated into a complex web of suspicion that was cast over the population of the New Federal States. Previously victims, they were to be variously upbraided as potential Stasi informers, idle workers, or as a society of meek individuals, whose refusal actively to challenge their state could be interpreted as passive support. Key dissidents, who before 1989 had been fêted in the west for their criticism of the regime, were, following revelations of their apparent duplicity, condemned as hypocritical collaborators, who had duped good-natured liberals in the FRG. Daily disclosures ensured that the GDR was regarded as a 'Land von Stasiagenten, Stalinisten, Privilegierten,

⁶⁶ The attempt to brand Wolf an SED quisling had political motives. Evidence that exposed the collaboration of other cultural figures, such as the poet Sascha Anderson, appeared to strengthen the right's suspicion.

⁶⁷ Their discomfort was exploited by intellectuals on the right. Karl Heinz Bohrer was quick to criticise the 'chiliasm slumbering away in the leftist intellectual consciousness' and to compare their silence during the GDR with the quiescence of the left during Stalin's show trials. See 'Why we are not a nation - and why we should become one', in James and Stone, 60-70, p. 60.

⁶⁸ John Milful, 'Who Owns GDR Culture? Against Analogy', *Debatte*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1997, 194-201, p.130.

Mitläufern', leading many west Germans to view their eastern compatriots with an increasing amount of suspicion.⁶⁹

There are mitigating factors in the emergence of this attitude, of course, not least the fact that the GDR's relative stability was largely due to its tightly structured and controlled nature. It was also a society controlled by a regime that knew how to punish and reward. Scholars have seen the socialist regime as a corrupt and corrupting force, which sought 'to govern by concluding bargains with each citizen, or potential dissenter'.⁷⁰ This 'informal, tacit "social contract" between [...] state and society' was, it has been argued, instrumental to the GDR's relative longevity.⁷¹ The actual number of Stasi agents and IMs exposed contracts of a more insidious nature, and the subsequent disclosure of Stasi files revealed just how widespread their activities were. The DEFA studios too, had been home to a diligent network of spies. With roughly two informers for every hundred employees (as opposed to the usual ratio of one per hundred throughout the wider GDR population), the potential subversion at Babelsberg was clearly a matter of some concern for the SED, and many screenwriters and directors were monitored by the Stasi.⁷² Nevertheless, it was, and continues to be, a source of frustration to east Germans to be judged according to such a narrow frame of reference (mirroring in some way the West Germans' indignation at the British tendency to incorporate the War into their attitude towards them), and could only harm plans for social integration.

The West Germans had before 1989 achieved some stasis in their attitude to the 'other' Germans who lived beyond the wall. This attitude involved certain stereotypes and vague assumptions about the GDR but did not preclude a level of passive sympathy since these assumptions were often incorporated within a position of neutral pity. The GDR was codified by a series of negative features, which stemmed from the view of the east as a totalitarian regime. The focus, therefore, was on the political and social restrictions: human rights abuses, brutal physical repression, the most infamous example of which -- the suppressed uprisings in June 1953 -- prompted the West Berlin authorities to rename

⁶⁹ Thomas Koch, 'Deutsch-deutsche Einigung als Kulturproblem: Wird die Bundesrepublik in Deutschland aufgehen?', in *Das Ende eines Experiments. Umbruch in der DDR und deutsche Einheit*, ed. by Rolf Reißig and Gert Joachim Glaebner (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991), 317-339, pp. 329-330.

⁷⁰ Maier, p. 40.

⁷¹ Christoph Kleßmann, 'Workers in the Workers' State: German Traditions, the Soviet Model and the Magnetic Attraction of West Germany', in *The Divided Past. Rewriting Post-War German History*, ed. by Christoph Kleßmann (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001), 11-43, pp.13-14.

⁷² Volker Baer, 'Das andere Gesicht der DEFA', in *Film Dienst*, 8/1998, 12-14.

‘Charlottenburger Chaussee’ ‘Strasse des 17. Juni’. There was also the droning rhetoric of the SED, memorably delivered in Ulbricht’s unappealing and jarring accent, which would later typify, however inaccurately, a generic East German accent. A superficial, though no less significant, distinguishing feature was the evident lack of material goods, manifest in the inelegant clothes worn in the GDR, and which appeared even more poignant when compared with the sartorial elegance of the west and with other symbols of the FRG’s booming consumer culture.

The West Germans’ abstract solidarity with those in the GDR, which had required very little in the way of active support, was ruptured by unification. The reasons for the ensuing change in attitude are manifold: the disclosure of Stasi repression and the assumed culpability of the GDR population (as either participants or passive onlookers); the revelations of environmental damage caused by irresponsible heavy industrial practices; the huge cost of restructuring; and, above all, the sheer lack of gratitude, even hostility expressed by the east Germans. Suddenly, the codified features offered a stick with which to beat those they previously pitied. Political repression and the violation of human rights in the GDR were recognised as a feature of the SED dictatorship but the Stasi revelations implicated the population as potential IMs. A growing mistrust of the eastern population’s biographies was evident early on. Their maintained innocence *vis-à-vis* their ideological convictions was often doubted.⁷³ Suspicions such as these effectively robbed the east Germans of their revolution, which threatened to be overshadowed by allegations of collusion and of lack of personal responsibility. The focus switched from the state’s repressive character and its mismanagement of the economy, to collective responsibility in perpetuating an unjust system.

After 1989, the east Germans’ commitment to pluralism and to other modern democratic values was found wanting. The violent attacks on refugees and on members of the ethnic minorities, which received widespread coverage in the early nineties confirming the suspicion that the east Germans were as unmodern in their opinions as their industries were obsolete. The validity of some of the surveys and opinion polls investigating the

⁷³ The writer, Peter Schneider, ridiculed such omniscience, suggesting that ‘aus heutiger Sicht stellt es sich dar, daß kaum jemand in der DDR mit Herz oder wenigstens mit Faust Kommunist gewesen ist. Die ganze DDR muß eine Tagesstätte für ideologisch mißbrauchte Erwachsene gewesen sein [...] Das gilt bis ganz hoch hinauf. Glaubt man den Aussagen Erich Honeckers vor dem DDR-Staatsanwalt, so hat sogar der höchste Mann im SED-Staat die letzten Jahre seines Lebens im Widerstand gegen sich selbst verbracht.’ See “‘Man kann sogar ein Erdbeben verpassen”, *Die Zeit*, 27.4.1990’, in Golombeck and Ratzke (1991), 37-47, p.38.

difference in attitudes between east and west has been questioned by several social and political scientists who point to methodological problems, particularly in the wording of the questionnaires.⁷⁴ Much has been made, for example, of the east Germans' apparent shibboleth, 'Bürger zweiter Klasse'. This is a phrase repeatedly heard in contemporary identity discourse, yet the self-description is seldom analysed and its origins rarely considered. Rudolf Woderich states that it first gained currency in an early survey compiled by the ENMID Institut, which allowed respondents only two choices of description ('gleichberechtigte Bürger' being the other).⁷⁵ Repeatedly employing a new post-unification vocabulary that emphasises stereotypes, such surveys and questionnaires have, he argues, themselves been a contributing factor in the construction of an east German identity.

Yet the negative reception of such terms does not diminish their accuracy. Though their use is often derogatory and their effect divisive, generalisations and stereotyping are not necessarily without foundation. Moreover, the use of stereotypes is not always an attempt to 'lock a category irrevocably into its place, in an apparently settled hierarchy of relations.'⁷⁶ The ownership of the caricature problematises the use of stereotyping. By this, I mean not just the target of the caricature, but its agent. It is not uncommon for the same kind of images and characteristics ascribed to the typical *Ossi* -- the unglamorous garb, the nasal Sächsisch, the comic-provincial outlook -- to be used by *both* west and east Germans.⁷⁷ What differentiates them is, of course, the purpose of the caricature. While east Germans can hardly be said to be lacking in their capacity for humour, they clearly object to such depictions, regardless of how close these may be to their own comic self-representation. The reasons for this are linked to the complex process of transition from

⁷⁴ See Hans Steußloff, *Zur Identität der Ostdeutschen. Merkmale und Tendenzen eines Phänomens. Hefte zur ddr-geschichte* 66 (Berlin: Forscher- und Diskussionskreis DDR Geschichte, 2000), p. 23.

⁷⁵ Rudolf Woderich, 'Ostdeutsche Identität zwischen symbolischer Konstruktion und lebensweltlichem Eigensinn' (Schriftfassung des Referats auf der Konferenz 'The German Road from Socialism to Capitalism', Harvard University, Centre for European Studies, June 18-20, 1999). Online at: http://www.biss-Online.de/download/ostdeutsche_identitaeten.pdf [Accessed 21.01.2003], p. 12.

⁷⁶ Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping. The Politics of Representation* (Basingstoke: New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 4.

⁷⁷ The *Ossi* has its antonym - the *Wessi*. Variations of these types have evolved over the years, from *Jammerossi* (whinging east Germans) and *Besserwessi* (know-it-all West Germans), to *Wossi* (west Germans living in the east who are sympathetic to the locals). See Michael Jürgs and Anke Elis, *Typisch Ossi, Typisch Wessi. Die längst fällige Abrechnung unter Brüdern und Schwestern* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 2005).

socially and economically disadvantaged underlings to fully accepted and respected members of the Federal Republic, an evolution that, arguably, has not yet been realised.

The east German depiction of the west Germans as the arrogant exponents of a shallow, consumerist culture abound, but such generalisations have less of an impact upon their targets. Partly this impact is minimised by the fact that it was precisely to this culture that the GDR citizens had aspired, as evidenced by their frenzied accumulation of western consumer goods during the early stages of the *Wende* and the blanket support for Kohl (modes of behaviour and expression that dismayed those on the left). The image of the provincial dim easterner even functions as a vent for self-mockery in the east; as Wolfgang Thierse, President of the *Bundestag*, conceded: ‘Über die Ostdeutschen muss man ja gelegentlich auch ein paar Gemeinheiten sagen, nicht? Ich darf das, weil ich selbst einer bin’.⁷⁸ There is undoubtedly an element of truth to Thierse’s comment; nevertheless, such rational self-reflexivity is less likely when a community feels threatened by particular categorisation.

The problem in the two populations’ relationship by no means post-dates unification. As Steußloff has pointed out, tensions were in evidence at ‘neutral’ locations long before the *Wende*, with East Germans often feeling that they were treated as second-class citizens at the favoured international camping grounds in Hungary, because of the attention paid to the West Germans or, more accurately, western currencies.⁷⁹ Hungarians at modern day campsites might find it more difficult to differentiate between Germans from east or west, and the Germans too, can no longer rely on the old signals of regional identity – a Mercedes is no longer a rare sight on the streets of Dresden, and the shopping malls that have sprung up around the old east provide the latest fashions. Still, a degree of unfamiliarity, a lack of direct experience of one another persists, and the contrasts between the two are frequently amplified and sustained in the filmic representation of the east and west.

In May 2002, *Stern* magazine felt that the title, ‘Der Ossi. Was er will, was er kann, was er hasst’, merited a front cover and leading article. Interestingly, the cover, depicting six caricatured representatives of the east, among them the politicians Gregor

⁷⁸ Wolfgang Thierse, “‘Vom Westen ist hier nicht mehr viel zu lernen’”. Interview with Thierse conducted by Florian Gless and Holger Witzel, *Stern*, 18/2002, 54-58, p. 58.

⁷⁹ Steußloff, p. 17.

Gysi (clutching a PDS flag) and Angelika Merkel, an anonymous porcine skinhead clutching a swastika-labelled beer and footballer Michael Ballack, all squeezed into a Trabant. The use of these figures as archetypal *Ossis* suggested that, a dozen years on from unification, the preconceptions of the east have not diminished, and that the stereotypes have had a longer shelf life than one might have initially expected. Strangely, the accompanying article, by the Leipzig based journalist, Holger Witzel, countered precisely the kind of imagery used on the magazine's front cover. As he wearily notes, '[the editors] meinen es gut, wollen nicht nur die Auflage erhöhen, sondern verstehen – und knallen dann doch wieder einen Trabi, eine Nackte und Gysi auf das Titelbild – fertig ist euer Ossi.'⁸⁰ The article contains several thumb profiles of a cross section of east Germans, from the handball star (and youth icon) Stefan Kretzschmar, to Cornelia Pieper, General-Secretary of the FDP. The articulation of an eastern identity is consistent throughout these brief profiles. Some express this through an appeal to take pride in certain achievements in the New Federal States but avoid any direct comparison with the west; others demonstrate a critical attitude to the prevailing negative images of east Germans. Of these, the ironic comments made by the writer and broadcaster Else Buschheuer are the most acidic:

Ich will das nicht unnötig dramatisieren, aber wir Broiler sind ja sonst ziemlich unreflektiert. Deswegen klatschen wir ja nach Feierabend gerne Neger auf. Man erkennt uns an unseren Minipli-Frisuren, unseren falschen Zähnen und daran, dass wir scheiße angezogen sind – Sie wissen schon – der Hang zu Deoderon-Schürze und marmorierten 'Jeanshosen' sowie zu Socken – mit Motiv – kombiniert mit Sandalette – mit Plastiksohle. Wir benützen gern ätzende Chemikalien wie Haarspray, Florena-Creme und Formvorderfleisch. Wir essen gern Fett und trinken dazu ein, zwei Gläschen Hochprozentiges – in Ehren. Ansonsten machen wir FKK, wo immer es geht, dann sind wir ganz nackich, bis auf den Schnäuzer. Es war nämlich nicht alles schlecht in der DDR.⁸¹

Buschheuer's statement encapsulates a series of associations that have become integral to the east/west stereotypology. These images and generalisations, which appear frequently in post-unification film, connote a provincialism apparently prevalent in the east. Since the attitudes and kind of behaviour mentioned by Buschheuer are deemed to be symptomatic of the east (again further problematised by the fact that they are in use among east Germans, too), the implication is that the west is all those things which the east is not.

⁸⁰ Holger Witzel, 'So sind wir, wir Ossis', *Stern*, 18/2002, 40-52, p. 45.

⁸¹ Cited in Witzel, p. 43.

Right-wing extremism, previously seen as a blight on the FRG's otherwise healthy liberal democracy, suddenly became more of an east German problem. The attacks on asylum seekers in the east have been well documented, as have the underlying reasons for such antagonism.⁸² The dire economic situation and the dismal social conditions that typify most of the environments where the attacks and killings have taken place are usually brought into the analysis. Invariably, the explanation of right wing extremism in the east focuses on the unfortunate combination of poor socio-economic circumstances in a region that has not had contact with foreigners. This is not quite accurate. Foreign workers and asylum seekers were not an unknown entity in the GDR; nor, indeed, was right wing extremism. But, the media focus on racist incidents in the New Federal States provoked fundamental anxieties in the west about their eastern neighbours' commitment to a pluralist, democratic society and consequently underlined apparent fundamental differences between the two.

Buschheuer's indignation is interesting, too, since it does not seek to challenge the described modes of behaviour. Instead, it redeploys these different codes into a single homogenised composite. As a whole, and lacking any context, they are revealed as nothing more than laughably exaggerated qualities, which have little relevance or actuality for east Germans such as Buschheuer. Nevertheless, the markers of otherness continue to occupy east/west discourse. This is no great surprise; similarities are axiomatic and require little in the way of challenge or disputation; differences, meanwhile, are frequently and heatedly debated. They are also, in a sense, malleable quantities, which can be rearranged and reconfigured within competing discourses. Journalists, politicians, comedians, and academics thrive on such differences, which allow endless interpretation and analysis. The usefulness of the assumed differences for writers and filmmakers should not be underestimated, since they usher in a potential for conflict and division that does not always require further explication. Often the differences between east and west are givens, with the assumption being that the audience or the readers are aware of an underlying tension, or at least the potential for such tension. Clear, distinguishing features have developed that help announce these differences; they have evolved within the public

⁸² See Gerhard Braunthal, 'The Rise of Right-wing Extremism in the New Germany', in *The Domestic Politics of German Unification*, ed. by Christopher Anderson *et al* (London; Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 97-113. See also Max Thomas Mehr and Regine Sylvester, 'The Stone Thrower From Eisenhüttenstadt' [sic], *Granta* 42 (Krauts!), Winter 1992, 133-143.

imagination to become recognisable indicators of east and west, frequently conforming to crude partisan positions. They are so often repeated and employed that they become almost unavoidable. Obstinance and recidivism are considered characteristic of those in the New Federal States, while west Germans are linked to such unappealing tendencies as egotism and superciliousness.⁸³ These unattractive characteristics correlate with other semiotic signifiers to convey a whole set of ideas and to confirm certain preconceptions. Cars provide such an example, with the unfortunate Trabi -- 'Symbol des langsam wachsenden Wohlstands' -- confirming the GDR's lack of choice in such an important material possession, and simultaneously offering evidence of the GDR's lack of style, efficiency, and individualism.⁸⁴ Zooming along the well-maintained *Autobahn* of the west by contrast, is the *Mercedes*, emblem of the FRG's prosperous economy writ large. Efficient and desirable, the brand functions as a symbol of a long (if sometimes dubious) heritage.⁸⁵ Where the Trabi is abandoned to the scrap heap of history (the final insult being the difficulties it posed even after death, with its cotton fibre 'Duroplast' frame making it impossible to crush effectively, let alone recycle), the *Mercedes* continues to enjoy national and international respect. Representing the mechanised superiority and technical innovation of the FRG, it is able to draw upon a grander, illustrious tradition of German manufacturing whilst also demonstrating cutting-edge technology. The Trabi, then, remains the sputtering symbol of the GDR, the product of resourceful, if limited technology, and of a market that was never able to satisfy its consumer demands. The two-stroke engines could never compete with the roaring engines across the border and, as with the general attitudes to the GDR itself, east Germans display a fondness for it that does not quite extend to wishing its return.

A post-GDR identity?

The discourse surrounding east German identity has not resulted in any universally accepted and conclusive answers, and, rather than waning, the debates look set to

⁸³ The qualities that have been attributed to east and west Germans are described in countless books. In *Das Buch der Unterschiede. Warum die Einheit keine ist*, ed. by Jana Simon, Frank Rothe and Wiete Andrasch (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2000), young Germans give some sense of the ubiquity of these stereotypes.

⁸⁴ Dieter Dose, "'Mit blauem Qualm rollt der Trabi auch ins 4. Jahrzehnt'", *Die Welt*, 15.12.1987', in Golombeck and Ratzke (1990), 57-60, p. 58.

⁸⁵ See, *inter alia*, Bernard P. Bellon, *Mercedes in Peace and War: German Automobile Workers, 1903-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

continue. Some commentators maintain that there was never any specific GDR identity despite, and possibly because of, the SED's best efforts. For Gerd Heinrich, there was never anything substantial or convincing about the supposed East German identity, which he terms a 'Nolens-volens-Identität', a consequence of being both 'Deutscher' und 'DDR-Bürger'.⁸⁶ The simple article switch chanted by the demonstrators in 1989, substituting 'Wir sind *das* Volk' with 'Wir sind *ein* Volk', is often invoked as evidence of some self-perceived essential German 'oneness' that, not recognising any border, or ideological polarity, persisted over the forty years of separation. Detlef Kannapin, meanwhile, rejects the concept of identity altogether and advances instead 'the concept of consciousness, which insists on the fact that the GDR had an existence and that the citizens living in this state had in some way a conscious opinion about it or attitude towards it.'⁸⁷ These epistemological issues aside, questionnaires and social surveys do appear to document a shift in attitudes that bears out the existence of a post-wall identity. Steußloff even goes so far as to claim that an east German identity is now so frequently referred to that it no longer requires justification as a subject for research.⁸⁸ Others argue that, although the intended socialist identity that the Party endeavoured to promote was never successfully forged, an east German identity nevertheless developed.

The emergent identity was considered by some to be a lingering symptom of indoctrination and met with suspicion in the west. Such suspicion is perfectly expressed in *TAZ* reporter Anna Jonas's unrestrained invective:

What East German identity is supposed to be saved if identity is simply a synonym for nationalism? The identity of a cringing society condemned to unquestioning obedience? The identity built up around 'people's own business' and 'agricultural production co-operatives', which deprived the country and its citizens of their rights, exploited and literally poisoned them? The identity based on a niche society? On the contrary, one can only hope that as little as possible or even nothing remains, since this would be the only chance for a shared and better society.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Gerd Heinrich, 'Es gibt keine "sozialistische Identität" der Deutschen in der DDR', *FAZ*, 12.1.1990, in Golombeck, and Ratzke (1990), 337-340, p. 338.

⁸⁷ Detlef Kannapin, "'GDR identity" in DEFA Feature Films', *Debatte*, Vol. 13, No. 2, August 2005, 185-200, p. 189.

⁸⁸ Steußloff, p.5.

⁸⁹ Cited (in English) in Gernot Facius, 'Integration of the East German Media into an All-German Structure', *Aussenpolitik*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 1990, 388-399, p. 393.

These signposts of identity, as Jonas sees them, were undoubtedly fixed features within GDR life, yet such blanket rejection of these features ignores the complex attitudes that existed towards them, and simultaneously reduces east German identity to nothing more than a by-product of SED policy (one can only imagine an east German's reaction to such reductionist classification).

Other, competing issues persist and further confuse the debate over an east German identity. Among these is the complex and contentious process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. A bitter intellectual debate concerning the FRG's connection to the NS past has already taken place in the west during the eighties. The *Historikerstreit*, as it came to be known, saw intellectuals divided between those who believed that the (west) Germans could begin to unburden themselves of the NS past and reconstitute a positive and normalised identity, and those who did not agree that the modern West German state could separate politics from history.⁹⁰ East German culpability was never worked through in the same way that it was (forced to) in the west.

The initial discussion of the East Germans' guilt quickly faded; self-inquiry and contrition were surrendered to ideological expediency as the east concentrated on promoting its antifascist profile, a mythology of resistance that exonerated the GDR's citizens of any blame.⁹¹ If coming to terms with the past had been a process delayed by more than two decades in the west (when the so-called '68er finally challenged the previous generation's reticence), it was overdue by some forty-five years in the east. When the GDR collapsed, so too did antifascism as an article of faith. The ensuing full-scale economic restructuring and the democratic overhaul of the political system drew comparisons between the post-war and post-wall periods. Inverting the SED's rhetoric which had previously linked the FRG to Hitler's Germany, some commentators sought to equate the SED regime with that of the NS, a view that found some support among those who had been victims of the East German system. Milful has warned of the dangers of treating GDR history in the same condemnatory fashion with which NS history was often portrayed, because of the east Germans' visceral attachment to their past.⁹² Certain

⁹⁰ See Stephen Brockmann, who discusses the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* debate which emerged in literary discourse after unification in *Literature and German Reunification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 76-77.

⁹¹ See Kattago, p. 85. An excellent overview of the debates in GDR historiography is provided by Catherine Epstein in 'East Germany and Its History since 1989', *Journal of Modern History*, 75, No. 3, 2003, 634-661.

⁹² See Milful, p.197.

calendrical coincidences indirectly link the GDR to NS history. The most obvious of these is the anniversary of unification, which coincides with the anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. In recent years, the latter has even come to overshadow the former in media coverage of events. Furthermore,

any joyful celebration of the bringing down of the Wall and any celebration of unity between east and west has been superseded by grim and divisive memories of the GDR, a struggle to find new (political) roles in a united Germany, and a continuing unease about the legacy of the Third Reich.⁹³

The historian Jürgen Kocka agrees that there were certain structural similarities in both regimes, similarities that are characteristic of all modern dictatorships.⁹⁴ According to Kocka, both dictatorships confirmed the German *Sonderweg*, even if their ideologies were diametrically opposed. But he acknowledges that the regimes were also very different, not least in their domestic and foreign policies, which in the case of the radical nationalism of the NS regime had resulted in the worst human suffering of the twentieth century. Most commentators therefore avoid direct comparisons and acknowledge German unification as a historically unprecedented event, and have applied themselves to the task of examining it according to their discipline or particular field of interest.

The iniquities of the GDR and the secrecy that had defined the state's control of its population could not remain a closed subject to be filed away and forgotten. The reassessment of the GDR was a necessary, if awkward and painful task, with many issues requiring examination and reconciliation. A problem for many east Germans was that the GDR past was investigated within a narrow context. As a result, such GDR inventions as the Stasi continue to exist as reference points in most western considerations of eastern Germany. The GDR's sinister side has lent itself to dramatic interpretation, and writers and filmmakers have engaged with these aspects of East German life, producing numerous books, films and plays that chart their narratives according to these co-ordinates.

⁹³ Ulrike Hanna Meinhof, 'The New Germany on the Screen: Conflicting Discourses on German Television', in *Relocating Germanness. Discursive Unity in Unified Germany*, ed. by Patrick Stevenson and John Theobald (London: Macmillan, 2000), 23-43, p. 32.

⁹⁴ See Jürgen Kocka, *Vereinigungskrise. Zur Geschichte der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), 91-102, pp. 93-95. See also Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, *Diktaturen im Vergleich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), 83-87. Ludwig Elm, too, criticises those assessments that compare the two regimes. In *Nach Hitler. Nach Honecker* (Dietz Verlag: Berlin, 1991). It should be noted that Elm is an east German academic and was for several years a politician with the SED's successor party, the PDS, and would therefore be expected to deny the Third Reich/GDR parallels.

Interestingly, these accounts now compete with other, less sensationalist versions of the GDR. Recent years have seen a steady publication and release of personal accounts of life in the East German state. These are not limited to attempts to address any apparently unresolved issues of the past. Bringing some balance to the more sober memoirs of life in the GDR (for example, Günter de Bruyn's 'Vierzig Jahre') are the factual and fictional comic recollections offered by numerous autobiographies and memoirs of the period, particularly by a younger generation of authors, of which Jakob Hein and Falko Henning are just two examples.⁹⁵

These subjective accounts are significant in shoring up an east German identity, for they mark an important shift in the east Germans' view of their past, which balances the top-down, historical accounts of the GDR.⁹⁶ The novels frequently organise their narrative around childhood experiences in the GDR, and in so doing contribute to what Rolf Reißig has referred to as a 'Wir-Gefühl' and a 'Wir-Bewußtsein', which, he adds, 'wird im Mainstream eher belächelt und als nostalgische Reminiszenzen abgetan'.⁹⁷ Reminiscences that often focus on adolescent and family life, these often irreverent biographies serve as counter-narratives of the state, and mark a departure from the paradigms established in earlier examples of the genre, which as Fulbrook has noted, 'might best be summarized as contributing to a tale of heroes, villains, victims – and Trabi drivers'.⁹⁸

The narrow frame of the familial environment serves to wrest the GDR past from contemporary medial analysis. Partly this involves an emphasis of the ordinary - these are the kind of stories one might read anywhere in western literature, with recognisable figures and familiar dramas. The state is not absent from these narratives, but has assumed a cameo role that oscillates between the absurd and the sinister. The GDR's failings frequently operate as a springboard for comedy rather than as a source of frustration. The books' relatively good sales suggest that they have connected with a public that is keen to

⁹⁵ Günther de Bruyn, *Vierzig Jahre* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1998); Jakob Hein, *Mein erstes T-Shirt* (München: Piper Verlag, 2001); Falko Henning, *Alles nur geklaut* (München: btb Verlag, 1999).

⁹⁶ Corey Ross suggests that 'identities are constructed and sustained largely independent of 'official' representations'. In 'Staging the East German 'working-class': representation and class identity in the 'workers' state', in *Representing the German Nation*, ed. by Mary Fulbrook and Martin Swales (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 155-192, p. 169.

⁹⁷ 'Die Ostdeutschen – zehn Jahre nach der Wende. Einstellungen, Wertemuster, Identitätsbildungen', 1999. Online at: http://www.biss-online.de/download/Die_Ostdeutschen_zehn_Jahre_nach_der_Wende.PDF [Accessed 21.2.2003].

⁹⁸ Mary Fulbrook, 'Heroes, Victims, and Villains in the History of the GDR', in Alter and Monteath, 175-197, p.180.

partake in the bittersweet reminiscences that they offer. These developments within contemporary east German fiction correspond with new directions in German cinema. Films such as *Sonnenallee*, *Helden wie Wir* (Sebastian Peterson, 2000), and more recently, *Goodbye Lenin!*, have demonstrated that this kind of engagement with the GDR past is able to perform well at the box office, too.

The developments in fiction and in film are not simply a question of experimentation or economic opportunism (though these motives cannot be wholly discounted), but mirror shifts in the east-west relationship and in post-unification discourse. It is now generally accepted that unification has not proved to be the success that its architects predicted, though the prognoses for its future are less uniform. Tensions between the populations of east and west continue to exist, exacerbated by the still fragile economic situation in the east and the west's post-unification slump. The strain in relationship between east and west has given rise to stereotypes and prejudices, usually with the easterners accused of lacking sincere commitment to the project of integration and the west accused of exploitative business practices and a colonial mentality.⁹⁹

The grounds for a separate post-GDR identity lay not, it seemed, in the desire to replicate the GDR but in reaction to the east Germans' increasing ineffectuality. East Germany's institutions were remodelled or closed down, and many employees found themselves declared superfluous to the new demands of a free market economy. Subsequent circumstances demanded that many accustom themselves to that relatively novel (for East Germany) experience of redundancy. Angela Merkel's election success belies the fact that most of her compatriots were, in effect, excluded from the elite positions in supervising reintegration, with few east Germans figuring in any of the top positions in the new federal states.¹⁰⁰ With the west effectively assuming responsibility for stage-managing the changes begun on the streets of the GDR's towns and cities, the east Germans were largely obliged to accept the role of spectators, exacerbating the already widespread inferiority complex - the sense of being second class citizens. Those who held on to their jobs in any case found their work affected by the changes taking place in the nature of the work itself, which for many was suddenly subject to new regulations and

⁹⁹ See Wolfgang Dümcke and Fritz Vilmar, eds, *Kolonisierung der DDR. Kritische Analyse und Alternativen des Einigungsprozesses* (Münster: Agenda, 1995).

¹⁰⁰ The east Germans' lack of representation in elite positions is discussed by Astrid Segert, 'Problematic normalisation - eastern German workers eight years after unification', *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1998, 105-24.

conditions, and within the actual work environment. The once familiar was rendered unfamiliar, and immediate adjustment was expected. To some extent, the workplace itself became the battleground of failed expectations and unrealised potential. Equally, where west German managers had been invited and encouraged to the east, replacing the ideologically undesirable and, in terms of the free market economy, professionally inexperienced, these new incumbents also found themselves having to adjust to rather testing, even testy, environments. The tensions that inevitably arose between the new managers and original employees could easily be played out according to wider tensions between east and west. Statistics, such as those offered by Ahbe, provide some explanation for the kinds of grievances that have arisen amongst the east German working population.¹⁰¹ That the collective east German wage levels were 60% of those in the west (rising to 89.5% in 1997) neither improved their self-esteem nor lessened the feeling of discrimination – though some of these figures should be considered in conjunction with other factors, such as the cost of living and taxation.¹⁰² Though freed from the yoke of a planned economy, businesses continued to be subject to close scrutiny, not by Party members and institutions, but by western-based parent companies. According to one observer, these companies exerted greater management control in their eastern business ventures than was ordinarily the case with their other subsidiaries.¹⁰³ These practices may not have been widespread, and there is some question as to the interpretation of statistical data and the methodological principles used, but what is clear is that the workplace and the conflicts that have developed there since 1989 have, to some extent, consolidated stereotypes and perpetuated certain prejudices vis-à-vis east and west.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Thomas Ahbe, “‘Hammer, Zirkel, Kaffeekranz’”. Ostalgie als Methode. Wie sich die Ostdeutschen stabilisieren und integrieren’, *Berliner Zeitung*, 5.2.2000. Online at: http://www.kulturinitiative-89.de/Texte/Ahbe_Thomas.html [Accessed 08/05/2002].

¹⁰² See Chris Flockton, ‘Employment, Welfare Support and Income Distribution in East Germany’, in Flockton and Kolinsky, 33-51, p. 38.

¹⁰³ See Wendy Carlin, ‘The New East German Economy: Problems of Transition, Unification and Institutional Mismatch’, in Taberner and Finlay eds. *Recasting German Identity. Culture, Politics and Literature in the Berlin Republik* (Rochester, N.Y.; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2002), 14-32, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ Reißig and Steußloff, for example, have each disagreed with the results drawn by their contemporaries’ research.

Ostalgie – recharging the batteries of identity

The past, as Maurice Halbwachs observed in his influential treatise on memory, ‘is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present.’¹⁰⁵ Given the east Germans’ (perceived and actual) discrimination, it was perhaps to be expected that, far from embracing a collective national German identity, they would cling to vestiges of their past and even begin reviewing the GDR with some affection. In recalling their former lives, many east Germans focus on the stability and comfort offered by the state’s programme of socialism rather than its tyranny, its abuse of basic human rights. They indignantly defend, for example, such features as the GDR’s low crime rates, free health care, crèches, benefits which explain the reasoning behind Jarausch’s description of the SED’s style of governance not as a dictatorship, but as a ‘welfare dictatorship’.¹⁰⁶ Just as the GDR may be remembered by its opponents according to its failures and injustices, some east Germans’ private memories of the past inevitably result in an idealisation of life in the GDR.¹⁰⁷ This, together the continuing problems of adjustment since unification, explains the rehabilitation of an east German identity. An example of this paradox is described in Musman’s and Warnecker’s discussion of east Germans’ renewed attachment to the symbols of the past when they note that a typical explanation of this recourse was, “‘Durch die Wende bin ich erst DDR-Bürgerin geworden’”.¹⁰⁸ Others have acknowledged ambivalent feelings towards the GDR. When he mutters ‘als ich mein Land krepieren sah, spürte ich, daß ich sie liebte’, the author Christoph Hein, who appears in an cameo appearance in *Letztes aus der DaDaeR* (Jörg Foth, 1990), neatly encapsulates the mixed emotions that east Germans often felt as they watched their state implode.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser (London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 39-40.

¹⁰⁶ K. H. Jarausch, ‘Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship’, in *Dictatorship as Experience. Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. by K. H. Jarausch (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), 47-72. Dahn however, favours the rather less snappy ‘post-Stalinist authoritarian oligarchy of the party leadership’ (1998).

¹⁰⁷ See Beth Linklater, ‘Narratives of the GDR: What Parents Tell Their Children’, in Stevenson and Theobald, 150-167, p. 164.

¹⁰⁸ Ulrike Musmann and Bernd Jürgen Warnecker, ‘Embleme und Parolen’, in *Wendemarken. Zum Symbolbruch in Ostdeutschland. Eine Ausstellung des Ludwig-Uhland-Instituts der Universität Tübingen im Haspelturm des Tübinger Schlosses vom 15. November bis 22. Dezember 1991*, ed. by Marion Hamm (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e. V.), 5-27, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Such rueful observations are not uncommon in east Germans’ reassessment of their relationship with the GDR. Volker Braun’s ‘Das Eigentum’ expresses a similar ambivalence: ‘Was ich niemals besaß, wird mir

attachment to GDR iconography is therefore not a belated indication of SED loyalty or uncritical GDR patriotism. Rather, it can be seen as a means of countering the elision of an east German identity and of being able to embrace aspects of GDR culture that are finally severed from the party.

A further reason for the emergence of a pronounced east German identity (or 'mentality' as Daniela Dahn would have it) may be, as Lyn Williams has proposed, because 'the more vigorous the policy of assimilation the stronger will normally be the resistance it meets'.¹¹⁰ The policy of integration has been subject to harsher analogies; other commentators have variously observed that the GDR was effectively 'raped', 'colonised', 'annexed' (though John Theobald refers to a 'discursiver Anschluss'), or in Mark Blacksell's less emotive term, 'absorbed' by the FRG (descriptions which echo the USSR's post-war influence in Eastern Europe).¹¹¹ Each give some measure of the negative light in which unification has been considered, and although there is a degree of academic one-upmanship here, the phrases describe the neglect and exploitation that many east Germans associate with unification. The idea of colonisation has proved particularly appealing, not least because of the current academic vogue for (post-)colonial theory. While reference to post-colonial theory may risk, as Terry Eagleton warns, 'a romantic idealization of the "other", with a simplistic politics which regards the reduction of the "other" to the "same" as the root of all political evil', such reductionism has been a mainstay of post-unification discourse and reflects the east Germans' perceived subjugation.¹¹² A number of films indulge in the 'simplistic politics' that Eagleton fears, offering plots that establish the west as the faceless threat, employing all its administrative might against seemingly defenceless east Germans, an essentialising process that may give some impression of the kind of conflict between east and west but which hardly allows for

entrissen./Was ich nicht lebte, werd ich ewig missen.' In *Von einem Land und vom anderen. Gedichte zur deutschen Wende*, ed. by Karl Otto Conrady (Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 51.

¹¹⁰ Daniela Dahn, 'East German Identity' (unpublished paper given at 'Regional Identities in Europe' Conference. Centre for European Studies, University of Sunderland, 12.10.1998). Online at: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/~us0cma/europe/dahn.htm> [Accessed 22.05.2001]. Lyn Williams, 'National Identity and the Nation State: Construction, Reconstruction and Contradiction', in *National Identity*, ed. by Keith Cameron (Exeter: Intellect Books, 1999), 1-17, p. 14.

¹¹¹ John Theobald, 'Disgraceland GDR: Locating the Admirable amongst the Abject', in Stevenson and Theobald, 131-150, p. 131. Mark Blacksell, 'State and nation: Germany since reunification', *Europa*, No. 3, 1997. Online at: <http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/number3/blacksel.htm> [Accessed 23/05/02].

¹¹² Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory. An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 2002), p. 205.

any diversity within those two communities, and which addresses the politics of unification as a simplified dialectics of coloniser and colonised.

Some commentators had, from the start, warned that unification might not be the smooth process that so many wanted to imagine. Struggling to be heard above the noisy celebration of contemporary accounts of the *Wende*, a few editorials and articles did urge greater sensitivity towards the process of unification. In a leader in the provincial *Badische Zeitung*, Leopold Glasner, for one, was moved to warn against triumphalism: 'wir dürfen nicht hurrapatriotisch und selbstgefällig auftrumpfen und das andere deutsche Land kulturell und materiell, geistig und ökonomisch okkupieren'.¹¹³ Caveats like this had little impact on the swiftly implemented strategies for unification that followed.

Though difficult, the project of structural and institutional integration proved a not insurmountable challenge. Certainly, it was more easily accomplished, albeit at enormous cost, than was the project of social integration, which was not eased by the mass redundancies and the feeling amongst many east Germans that their home -- their *Heimat* - - had become a destination for west German prospectors. Recognising numerous lucrative business opportunities, these 'westdeutsche Glücksritter' duly ventured into the eastern states, no doubt encountering many of their compatriots heading in the opposite direction for the same reasons.¹¹⁴ Seen in this context, a program of resistance, further qualified by the profound disappointments following unification, was inevitable. How far the disillusion with unification has engendered a programme of actual, conscious resistance to the dominance of western values and codes since 1989/1990 is hard to gauge. The east Germans' developing preoccupation with all things East German, as it was routinely represented in the media, did mark a 180⁰ shift in their attentions from west to east and, perhaps more significantly, from the present to the past, a fascination with their own past that was quickly branded *Ostalgie*. Much used in the media, *Ostalgie* initially described the east Germans' blithe nostalgia. Newspapers reported GDR-themed events at night-clubs where Honecker look-a-likes served east German beer paid for in *Ostmarks*, whilst

¹¹³ "Eine deutsche Revolution". Leitartikel von Leopold Glasner in der Badischen Zeitung vom 11. November, 1989', in Golombek and Ratzke (1991), 155-159, p. 156.

¹¹⁴ Rolf Reißig, 'Die Ostdeutschen – zehn Jahre nach der Wende. Einstellungen, Wertemuster, Identitätsbildungen', 1999. Online at: http://www.bissonline.de/download/Die_Ostdeutschen_zehn_Jahre_nach_der_Wende.PDF [Accessed 18.4.2003]. See also Wendy Carlin, 'The New East German Economy: Problems of Transition, Unification and Institutional Mismatch', in Taberner and Finlay, 14 -32.

revellers danced to old *Citty* tunes.¹¹⁵ This celebration of the past aroused hostility and amusement in equal measure. To its critics, *Ostalgie* was a sign of a risibly selective memory; those who indulged their memories of the past demonstrated a lack of interest and commitment in overcoming the present problems brought about by unification and jeopardised the future of the Berliner Republic. Other commentators initially underestimated its significance, dismissing it as nothing more than a quirk in fashion, albeit one that existed only in the New Federal States.

The media focus on the rise of a few GDR brands, such as *Rotkäppchen Sekt*, *Rondo* coffee, and *F6* cigarettes, only distracted from more pressing concerns -- racism, unemployment, suicide, economic paralysis -- that were linked to the east Germans' post-unification disenchantment.¹¹⁶ The success of these old brands was initially derided, apparently owing more to nostalgic familiarity than to any obvious differences in quality. But the goods came to assume a new level of semiotic significance that transcended the actual product.¹¹⁷ Whether *Rondo* actually tasted better than *Melitta* was to miss the point. What these products offered the consumer was a rejection of the west and a celebration of the east that ran counter to the dominant consumer values. The specifically political images that *Ostalgie* frequently employed were seen simply as examples of ironic decontextualisation and little more. In any case, the sudden interest and enthusiasm for a 'retro' GDR hardly extended to actually wishing the former state to be resurrected. Although some scholars doubt its impact -- Maier is of the opinion that, 'nostalgia is very easy to indulge in when it is deprived of consequences' -- to reject *Ostalgie* as a mere trifle of fashion, as nothing more than superficial posturing in yesterday's clothes, also belies the trend's impact and its significance to the east Germans' evaluation of their past, and their adjustment to the present.¹¹⁸ For Woderich, *Ostalgie* has had a significant role in rescuing the population in the east from their 'strukturelle Unterlegenheit' and conferring

¹¹⁵ It should be noted that the term was generally associated with an irreverent attitude towards the past and was not used to describe the east Germans' nostalgia *per se*. An article that appeared in *Der Spiegel*, for example, reported on the inhabitants of Eisenhüttenstadt who by 1992 were already voicing regret that the security and comforts they had known no longer existed. Not once does the word *Ostalgie* appear in the text. In Jan Fleischhauer, "‘Ick will meine Ruhe wieder’", *Der Spiegel*, 19/1990, 117-124.

¹¹⁶ See Staab, pp. 120-121.

¹¹⁷ Rainer Gries offers a useful account of the significance of GDR consumer goods to a post-GDR identity. See "‘Hurrah, I’m Still Alive!’ East German Products Demonstrating East German Identities", in *Over the Wall/After the Fall. Post-communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze*, ed. by Sibelan Forrester, Magdalena J. Zabrowski and Elena Gapova (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 181-199.

¹¹⁸ Maier, p.xx.

on them a 'virtuelle Überlegenheit'.¹¹⁹ His analysis points to *Ostalgie*'s psychological influence, in terms of identity, but also its relative impotence, for although persuasive in its articulation of identity, he claims it barely registers at any political level. Jarausch, by contrast, argues that *Ostalgie*'s influence can be traced within politics, where it has 'fuelled the electoral rise of the PDS'.¹²⁰ For Milful, it demands more serious consideration than it was typically given, being

less a nostalgia than a neuralgia, an ache where something has forcibly been removed, not so much a desire to return to the past as a sense of a gap in the present, a gap which dare not speak its name.¹²¹

Moreover, *Ostalgie* threatened to exacerbate divisions between east and west, being by its very nature a club with a membership limited to those who had grown up in the east. In providing a resort of camaraderie based on certain shared experiences and memories, it constituted a trend that necessarily excluded the population of the *alte Bundesländer*. Despite its resonance, one should, however, resist the urge to imagine the whole of the east German population rushing to iron their *FDJ* shirts and polish their Party lapel badges, since the more demonstrative aspects of the trend were manifest among the younger generation alone. Nevertheless, *Ostalgie* is not simply a matter of late night revelry and bad taste parties. Nor is it an attempt either to relive the past or to restore it; the past is certainly invoked and recalled, sometimes even yearned for but, other than a few feckless internet users who claim otherwise, no one seriously seeks to reinstate the GDR.¹²² It was, and continues to be, an analogue of fundamental anxieties among the population of the east.

¹¹⁹ Woderich.

¹²⁰ Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Reshaping German Identities Reflections on the Post-Unification Debate', in Jarausch (1997), 1-25, p. 12. See also Jens Bastian, 'The Enfant Terrible of German Politics: The PDS Between GDR Nostalgia and Democratic Socialism', *German Politics*, Volume 4, Number 2, 1995, 95-110.

¹²¹ Milful, p. 197.

¹²² It is worth mentioning that a sub-genre of satirical novels imagining an alternative reality has emerged, in which the GDR continues to exist or has even become the dominant German state. Among them, Reinhold Andert, *Rote Wende. Wie die Osis die Wessis besiegten* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1994), Thorsten Becker, *Schönes Deutschland* (Berlin: Volk + Welt, 1996), Christian von Ditfurth, *Die Mauer steht am Rhein. Deutschland nach dem Sieg des Sozialismus* (München: Droemer Knauer, 2000).

Conclusion

It was the intention of the East German administration that a separate GDR identity would develop as the result of a pervasive ideology, informing East German society in all areas, from history text books to newspaper coverage of the cosmonaut space flight. Obsessed with proving the legitimacy of an east German identity, ideologues repeatedly sought to link the past to the present, while also looking forward to the future.¹²³ To what extent the SED was successful in actively engendering a distinct GDR identity predicated on socialist principles is hard to measure accurately. Open resistance was essentially futile and, given the kind of control exerted by the Stasi and the lengths to which the Party was willing to go in order to assert its authority, not recommended. The events of June 1953, which saw the Red Army deployed in order to subdue the demonstrations and strikes taking place throughout the country, demonstrated how seriously threatened the Party felt by such actions and how ruthless they could be in quashing them. For many East Germans, the only means by which to express their dissatisfaction with the system was through 'inner exile' or actual emigration, with over four million of its citizens leaving the GDR for the west over the forty years of its existence.

That so many people took the opportunity to leave the GDR as soon as was possible indicates a profound sense of dissatisfaction with the state. Although it was rather late in the day for the GDR authorities to begin examining the causes of the exodus, a Stasi document on 'Motives for Emigration', produced in 1989, did report on the reasons given by those wishing to leave the country. These included such unsurprising observations as 'dissatisfaction with the supply of consumer goods' and 'annoyance at bureaucratic behaviour'. Significantly, it also identified what it considered to be the apparent "illusions" about Western lifestyle, especially expectations of a life with "better" material security and "better" earnings, more "freedom" enabling one to attain a lifestyle based on selfish striving for consumption and ownership'.¹²⁴ The tone may be incredulous, yet the impact that those western images had on eastern viewers, prompting many of them to believe in a better life 'over there', is a fact that cannot be

¹²³ Consider Sigmund Jähn's preface to the *Armeemuseum der DDR* catalogue, in which the popular cosmonaut asserts that the successful missions 'sind ein Triumph der Theorien von Marx, Engels und Lenin und belegen sie in der Praxis'. In *Gemeinsam im Kosmos. Museale Zeugnisse zum ersten gemeinsamen Weltraumflug UdSSR-DDR*, ed. by Günter Stephan (Dresden: Armeemuseum der DDR, 1983), p. 4.

¹²⁴ Mitter and Wolle, cited in Jarausch and Gransow, 1994, p. 37.

underestimated. For many east Germans, life in the west did not meet with their expectations. Disappointed by their experiences since unification, many have discovered an emotional attachment to their region and local culture, resulting in an identity that is linked to a coinciding rejection of certain western values and a renegotiation and reordering of past memories.¹²⁵ Reißig claims that this issue was neglected or marginalised by social researchers, and that only in the tenth year after unification did it acquire 'Konjunktur'.¹²⁶ Woderich goes further, arguing that it was not uncommon to discredit social surveys which appeared to corroborate the emergence of an east German identity (since it went against the project of integration), though this is less usual now.¹²⁷ *Ostalgie* effectively fostered what Reißig terms an 'Erinnerungskultur', which sought to counterbalance outsiders' constant scrutiny of GDR history, and the calls to do away with all vestiges of its society.¹²⁸ For Reißig, the recourse to the familiar (however risible it may seem to outsiders) amid such momentous changes is entirely natural: 'es geht dabei um positive Rückgriffe auf die eigene Biographie, Restabilisierung tradierter Lebensmuster, um lebensweltliche Kontinuitäten also, die auch und gerade in Zeiten radikaler Systemumbrüche fortbestehen'.¹²⁹ He considers this as an understandable development. In times of tremendous upheaval, it is natural that those affected should at least seek to protect their memories, their own biographies.¹³⁰ The issue of personal biography is particularly important, since a great deal of the GDR past is traduced through its association with the SED regime, so much so, that 'die spezifischen Erfahrungen vieler Ostdeutscher mit der DDR und die aus ihrem eigenen Leben kommen im offiziellen Diskurs nicht vor bzw. viele Ostdeutsche sehen darin wenig positive Anknüpfungen ihrer Selbstanerkennung und Selbstnarration'. In addition, 'eine Mehrheit ist im Offizielldiskurs eher aufgefordert zur Selbstrevision und zur Neudefinition der eigenen Biographie nach westdeutschem Muster'.¹³¹

¹²⁵ See for example, Thomas Ahbe's article, 'Ostalgie als Selbstermächtigung: Zur produktiven Stabilisierung ostdeutscher Identität', *Deutschland Archiv*, 4/1997, 614-619.

¹²⁶ Reißig.

¹²⁷ Woderich. See also Steußloff.

¹²⁸ Reißig, p. 11. Robin Ostow talks of a population who must be the most interviewed in the world. Cited in Linklater, p.163.

¹²⁹ Reißig.

¹³⁰ This may apply to a community as a whole, too, when, as Lowenthal has suggested, 'heritage is invoked to requite displacement.' See David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; First published by Viking, 1997), p. 9.

¹³¹ Reißig.

Ostalgie has, then, perpetuated and further complicated the discourse surrounding post-unification identity. While a pre-existing GDR identity had, according to some, been denied by the demonstrators' choice of grammar in 1989, its desire to be 'ein Volk' confirming the essential failure of the SED's proselytising, the subsequent, apparently uncritical appreciation of the GDR seemed to indicate an emerging post-communist identity, which in *Ostalgie* found its most animated form. The following chapters trace these developments over the years since unification and investigate recurring themes that may shed some light on the east Germans' contested identity.

Chapter Two

Heimat stories: east meets west

The early years after unification witnessed the release of several ‘first encounter’ films in which the east and west Germans come face to face for the first time. Drawing from a reserve of symbols and ideas that were to become fixed tropes in *Wende* discourse, these early films encapsulate many of the preconceptions about the east Germans. Stereotypes that had been variously deployed in the years since unification are central to Peter Timm’s film, *Go, Trabi Go*, the most successful film of the *Wende*, and appear in other banal comedies such as Manfred Stelzer’s *Superstau* (1990). The inclusion of stereotypes -- typically, east Germans as straightforward, provincial figures, struggling to understand the values of the new society -- bears little evidence of the resentment with which they would later be associated. The films delight in the east Germans’ naivety, often emphasised in their reaction to the west’s unknown and exotic features, though their innocence is portrayed as a positive attribute and an indication of the easterners’ honesty - something that is lacking in the west Germans whom they encounter. Their innocence does not go unnoticed: alert to the profit to be made from the gullible *Ossis*, west Germans repeatedly exploit the visitors’ lack of cultural knowledge, thereby exacerbating what Hahn, leaning on Hans-Joachim Maaz’s psychological studies, has referred to as the east Germans’ ‘collective feeling of inferiority’.¹

Despite its focus on east Germans shortly after the collapse of the GDR, the films make little reference to either recent events or to the past. The *Wende* is mostly viewed as an opportunity, a vital escape from uneasy times and limited options, an approach that, in the case of Timm’s film, evidently resonated with eastern audiences, who were coming to terms with the challenges of the present.² Given that *Go Trabi, Go*

¹ Hans Hahn, ‘Ossis, Wessis and the Germans. An inner-German Perception of National Characteristics’, *Journal of Area Studies* (Perspectives on German Unification), No. 2, 1993, 114-128, p. 119.

² Elizabeth Mittman suggests that the film was reminiscent of 1950s vacation films, and that ‘the sheer sensual pleasures of the vacation are bundled together with an optimism that marks it as belonging to a specific historical moment early in the process of unification’. In ‘Fantasizing Integration and Escape in the Post-Unification Road Movie’, in *Light Motives. German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. by

was released soon after unification, it seems extraordinary that the film should so actively avoid any mention of the GDR. Tropes and stereotypes frequently associated with the east Germans in post-GDR discourse are included in Timm's road movie, but remain strangely separated from their historical context. Nevertheless, the surfeit of east German details, of which the Trabant is the most conspicuous, together with the protagonists' provincial manner, emphasises the Struutz family as the embodiment of the east German people and of the east German experience. The GDR's most famous icon, the Trabant, is in Timm's film more than just a prop for visual gags. The little car with the two-stroke engine, mocked and doted on in equal measure, had become one of the most recognisable GDR symbols since the border first opened, and is here elevated to star status. In *Go Trabi Go*, as with many of the early post-unification comedies, the car is not the feared emitter of dangerous fumes that it was to become, but the amusing old-fashioned contraption that was to endure as the butt of a thousand *Trabiwitze*. Impractical and unreliable, it serves as a quaint reminder of the GDR's lofty ambitions and material shortcomings.³

Not all the films to be made in the first years after the *Wende* viewed the encounter of the two populations in the same comical fashion. The general optimism of films like Timm's is not shared by the satires of this period. A number of filmmakers quickly sought to expose the west's exploitation of the east (and the east Germans' gullibility) in satires that deflated the Germans' chiasm. In *Deutschfieber* (1992), a sequel of sorts to his acclaimed *Der Willi-Busch-Report* (1977), Niklaus Schilling focussed on two small towns divided by the border, charting the initial excitement of the two populations' meeting which soon gives way to rancour as the commercial interests and the political corruption of both administrations are revealed. The surrealism of Schilling's film did not win the director much praise. In Ralf Schenk's round-up of German films in that year's *Berlinale*, the respected film critic was of the opinion that, 'viele Einfälle des Films sind abstrus, daß kaum noch deutbar ist, worauf im "realen

Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 326-348, p. 330; p. 337.

³ The Trabant eventually came to represent the GDR's arrested economic development and also the focus of the west's ecological objections. Such environmental concern was to deepen as the extent of the GDR's industrial negligence became apparent, eventually making the car something of a pariah on west German streets. See Daphne Berdahl's discussion of the car in "'Go, Trabi, Go!': Reflections on a Car and Its Symbolization over Time', *Anthropology and Humanism*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2001, 131-141, pp. 134-135.

Leben" sie eigentlich beziehen'.⁴ Schenk's doubts were confirmed at the box-office, where Schilling's impression of unification met with a 'gekippte Stimmung', perhaps having proved too abstract and obscure to win the film many supporters.⁵

The most caustic of the satires, Christoph Schlingensief's *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* (1990), also examined the first encounters between east and west, but did not, as the film's title implies, accord with the optimism and confidence of the Kohl administration. Schlingensief's narrative promotes integration in terms of digestive rather than national union with the east Germans embraced by west German cannibals looking to butcher their eastern visitors.⁶ Schlingensief's satiric grotesque, which clearly references Tobe Hooper's notorious *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), combines documentary with splatter movie to offer a dystopian vision of the new unified Germany. Schlingensief's supporters were not to be found only within avant-garde and experimental film circles. For Helmut Schnödel, writing in *Die Zeit*, a paper not known for its support of such underground figures, the film was something of a revelation: 'Schlingensiefs Film, der für mich ein Erlebnis ist wie früher nur Fassbinders "Götter der Pest", kann man gar nicht Ernst genug nehmen'.⁷ Others, meanwhile, noted that the director's promptness in responding to contemporary issues distinguished him from other filmmakers: 'die Kollegen überlegen, ob sie sich mit dem vergangenen Herbst beschäftigen sollen, da läuft "Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker" schon in den Kinos'.⁸

These counter-hegemonic narratives, which were often experimental in form, showed little concern for either commercial preferences or the audiences' mood. This disregard distinguishes them from mainstream filmmaking but is typical of the avant-garde's 'antagonism toward the public, toward the convictions or conventions

⁴ Ralf Schenk, 'Schattenboxer und Kinderspiele. Über einige neue deutsche Spielfilme während und im Umfeld der Berlinale', *Film und Fernsehen*, 2/1993, 23-27, p. 27.

⁵ Co-producer of the film, Elke Haltaufderheide, later explained that, 'bei noch späteren Diskussionsveranstaltungen zum leider "sehr bescheidenen" Kinostart wurde dies dann extrem deutlich. Nicht selten traute man dabei bereits seine eigenen Erinnerungen an diesen "positiven Ausnahmezustand" nicht mehr so ganz - in Ost wie West' (from correspondence with the author 12.3.2004).

⁶ Cannibalism is, according to John R. Clark, a device frequently employed by satirists in order to shock their audience. In *The Modern Satiric Grotesque and its Traditions* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), p. 132. Jonathan Swift's 'A Modest Proposal' offers one of the classic examples of its use. See *The Writings of Jonathan Swift. Authoritative Text. Background and Criticism*, ed. by Robert A. Greenberg and William Browman Piper (London; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), 502-513.

⁷ Helmut Schnödel, 'Würstel aus Krauts', *Die Zeit*, 14.12.1990.

characterising the public, by a polemical jargon full of picturesque violence, sparing neither person nor thing, made up more of gestures and insults than of articulate discourse'.⁹ With its provincial protagonists, whose spirit in the face of adversity reveals a family unit that, though inexperienced, is able to withstand the various challenges of their journey, it was Timm's film that resonated with audiences. Its stereotypes and banal dialogue notwithstanding, it is *Go, Trabi Go* that has come to be seen as the definitive *Wende* film. The director's cautious approach in representing the eastern *Länder* offers a clue about the film's appeal for east German audiences, for the narrative does not denigrate specific features of GDR life. The derogatory remarks about the *Ossis* are made by a number of characters who constitute a cross-section of west Germans. But the legitimacy of their attitudes is intentionally diminished through their characterisation, since these exaggerated figures -- overweight Bavarians, haughty garage owners, petulant shop assistants -- are themselves parodied. In characterising those unreceptive to the east Germans as somehow deficient, be it in manner or appearance, the director underlines the inadequacy of the (western) prejudice against the east Germans, without abandoning clichéd representations of the *Ossis* (their gracelessness, obduracy and material inadequacy). This latter feature did not go unnoticed, and the film received some hostile reviews. Daniel Simons, writing in the provincial east German *Volksstimme*, was peculiarly sensitive to the various depictions, and, in a strange misreading of the film claimed that it 'macht nur den Ex-Ossi zu einem anderen Menschen, als es die Urwessis zu sein glauben. Auf die Idee kann eigentlich nur ein Wessi kommen [...]. So blöd [...] können die Ostler doch gar nicht sein; und so cool die Westler auch wieder nicht'.¹⁰ Timm's east Germans are certainly not without their flaws; but the portrayal is parodic, and not the malicious distortion that Simons suspects. Recognising the danger of such interpretation, Wolfgang Stumph, who plays the lead role, was keen to counter such charges, when he explained that 'wir wollten nicht, daß unsere Landsleute ausgelacht werden, hämisch

⁸ Claudius Seidel, 'Von Metzgern und Menschen', *Der Spiegel*, 49/1990. See also Fritz Göttler, 'Wo alles Wurscht ist', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28.12.1990.

⁹ Renato Poggioli, *The Theory Of The Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 36-37.

¹⁰ Daniel Simons, 'Ein flacher Film über den doofen Ex-DDR-Bürger', *Volksstimme* (Magdeburg), 30.01.1991.

vielleicht gar. Der Ehrgeiz siegte: Wir wollten auch nicht, daß womöglich Wessis Ossis spielen. Wenn uns jemand durch den Kakao zieht, dann wir selber'.¹¹

Stumph's statement echoes Wolfgang Thierse's comment ('Über die Ostdeutschen muss man ja gelegentlich auch ein paar Gemeinheiten sagen, nicht? Ich darf das, weil ich selbst einer bin') mentioned above. It also suggests an interesting response to the emerging stereotypicality of the east Germans in unification discourse. Stumph initially rejects any possible derision of his 'Landsleute' before justifying his own caricaturing as a sort of pre-emptive parody. In so doing, he acknowledges the ambivalent power of the stereotype, recognising that its effectiveness is not exclusively determined by the information it disseminates, but also by the way the information is disseminated. It is likely that a west German's portrayal of the innocent and unsophisticated *Ossi* would certainly have been less tolerated than Stumph's representation, not least because of Stumph's reputation in the east and his credentials as a satirist with Dresden's celebrated cabaret, the 'Herkuleskeule'.

The representation of the east Germans as members of an endearingly provincial community, which was first seen in films like *Superstau* and *Go, Trabi, Go*, appealed to filmmakers and in the subsequent years several films followed suit. It was not the east Germans en route through foreign lands (or *Länder*) that was the focus of these films, however, but the east Germans *in situ* - specifically the rural east. This chapter considers claims that the several comedies that were released in the early to mid nineties resurrected a film genre associated with the early apolitical filmmaking of the west - the *Heimatfilm*. Traditionally associated with the post-war period, the genre offered an escape from the grim realities of contemporary Germany and offered a celebration of an idealised rural community. A number of films revert to this generic paradigm soon after the *Wende* and, it will be argued, perform a similar celebration, though the emphasis is specifically on the east German community. Before looking at these post-wall *Heimatfilme* -- the focus is on *Der Brocken* (Vadim Glowna, 1991), *Go, Trabi Go II*, *Das war der Wilde Osten* (Wolfgang Büld, Reinhard Klooss, 1992) and *Wir können auch anders* (Detlev Buck, 1993) -- the chapter looks at the original *Heimatfilme* in their historical context. I refer to recent studies that have reassessed a genre that has traditionally been dismissed as sentimental and escapist, and then

¹¹ Hans-Dieter Tok, 'Wir sind doch ganz schön naiv. Auskünfte des Hauptdarstellers Wolfgang Stumph zu "Go Trabi Go"', *Thüringer Allgemeine*, 20.3.1991.

considers the ideological problems that were associated with *Heimat* in the GDR. The second part of this discussion then looks at the films in some detail, paying attention to their representation of community and the post-communist *Heimat*.

Past genres for present tensions

Most of the unification narratives discussed so far exploit the encounters between east and west, either viewing such meetings as an opportunity for comic misunderstanding and humorous antagonism or as a means of critiquing unification. The films make use of a diverse range of genres and traditions, from road-movies to splatter films, dystopian fantasies to surreal allegories. The satirical approach to unification is evidenced in the cabaret performers who were frequently engaged for these early east/west encounters, including, among others, Hans-Eckhardt Wenzel and Stefan Mensching (cult subversive clowns in the GDR) in Jörg Foth's *Letztes aus der DaDaeR* (1990), and the Bavarian cabaret star, Ottfried Fischer (*Superstau* and *Go, Trabi, Go*). The exaggerated performances that were central to these films, from the experimentalism of *Das deutsche Kettensägemassaker* to the broad farce of *Go Trabi, Go* later waned, and the films discussed below maintain the satire of those above but couch it within the conservative paradigm of the *Heimatfilm*.

In her study of post-unification film, Naughton offers a strong case for viewing many of these early *Wende* films as a re-engagement with the *Heimatfilm* genre of the 1950s.¹² The unification films resurrect familiar *Heimatfilm* themes and ideas, among them the inheritance motif, utopian desires and the potential disruption caused by an outsider's arrival within an established community. Crucially, Naughton says, the unification films share with the much-derided West German genre a desire to 'present fantasies of social integration, opportunity, and prosperity rather than evidence of the suspicion, hostility, and resentment provoked by unification'.¹³ Naughton tells us, moreover, that these films actually revive the same kind of characters and antagonisms that were typically found in the original genre. She identifies a number of generic

¹² Naughton, 125-206. Cosima Reif had earlier drawn attention to a possible *Heimatfilm* revival in her review of Detlev Buck's 1993 comedy. In 'Die Provinz schlägt zurück. Über die Tugenden des Ländlers und Detlev Bucks neuen Heimatfilm "Wir können auch anders"', *Film und Fernsehen*, 2 /1993, 28-29. See also Martin Conboy, 'The Discourse of Location. Realigning the Popular in German Cinema', *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 14, No, 3, 1999, 353-377, p. 366.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

topoi, among them the country *versus* the city, a source of hostility in the original post-war films and which, several decades on, is used to reflect variations on the conflict between tradition and progress.¹⁴ Certainly, the post-unification comedies suggest that those from the city -- always west Germans -- are frequently represented as materialistic and exploitative. These urban interlopers typically constitute a threat to their country cousins, who are mostly portrayed as simple, decent folk, steeped in old-fashioned ways and innocent to the modern vices and suspect principles with which they are confronted.¹⁵

Despite the narratives' apparent sympathy for the rural protagonists and their sense of tradition, the post-wall films are, according to Naughton, careful to avoid any mention of the past that might compromise the idyllic rural communities that are depicted. She argues that this approach, too, is reminiscent of their cinematic forbears: 'neither *Heimatfilme* nor western unification films depict the relics of the previous regime - the fascist dictatorship in the case of the *Heimat* film or the communist dictatorship in the case of the 1990s variant'.¹⁶ This is not quite accurate in the case of the latter since the comedies do offer glimpses of the communist era. One of the characters in *Der Brocken*, for example, works in an attic room surrounded by portraits of the departed GDR gerontocrats and decorated with the flags and banners of the old regime. In *Go, Trabi Go II*, meanwhile, the previous administration is evoked in one scene, which takes place in a building previously housing the *Bezirksleitung* but later converted into a strip-club, while Buck's film acknowledges the past in its briefly glimpsed images of the disused observation towers along the former border.¹⁷

Though only fleeting in appearance, the features of the SED-state that frequently surface in post-unification discourse hint at a problematic comedic interpretation of the East German dictatorship that has not occurred in the Germans' reflection on National Socialism.¹⁸ Naughton's point is that the films, like those of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 129-130.

¹⁵ This narrative trait in fact reaches back even further than the original *Heimatfilme* of the fifties. The metropolitan-rural conflict was a much-used plot device in films dating back to some of German cinema's earliest films and evident in such pre-war classics as Murnau's (Hollywood) film, *Sunrise* (1927).

¹⁶ Naughton, p. 128.

¹⁷ Naughton's assertion that the films avoid the remnants of the SED administration is all the more strange, considering that she does mention the scenes in question.

¹⁸ Martin Amis talks of an 'asymmetry of indulgence' when he considers the humorous discourse that has accompanied discussion of communist dictatorships in his polemic on Stalin in *Koba the Dread. Laughter and the Twenty Million* (London: Vintage, 2003). Although German filmmakers have shied

fifties, do not fully address the issues related to the narrative context; that is, although the films are situated within a specific time and place, they do not acknowledge, indeed are reluctant to engage with, the social and political implications of their milieus: 'the films invest in the construction of a national imaginary [...], ignoring the disparity and discord that have characterised German-German relations in the 1990s'.¹⁹ Most tendentious, though, is her assertion that those films produced or made by filmmakers from the west 'display historical and political myopia by avoiding reference to invidious aspects of life in the ex-GDR'.²⁰ Directors from the east (or productions made with eastern backing), on the other hand, offer a more sombre approach that tends to focus on unification's negative consequences. Similar claims have been made of the decade's literary output, as Stuart Taberner notes in his survey of post-unification literature, with fiction from the east seen to be operating at a tragic level as opposed to the light-hearted fiction of the west.²¹ Both Naughton's and Taberner's accounts engage in the kind of generalising principles that have become all too common in post-unification discourse. Tempting though it is to stress distinguishing features in filmmaking from the east and west, a sufficient number of films contradict such sweeping statements. Films by western directors such as Helma Sander-Brahms, Ula Stöckl and Christoph Schlingensief, for example, offer a clear, often provocative interpretation of unification and the narratives are not afraid to address the politics and the history of the east (though the impact that these films had on cinema audiences was, admittedly, marginal). Naughton's failure to acknowledge the west German director, Heiko Schier, whose *Alles Lüge* is as concerned with satirising the invidious aspects of the GDR past as those of the present, reveals her own somewhat short-sighted approach in an otherwise comprehensive account of post-unification film.²² With no proof that there is an organised aesthetic or political agenda

away from any entertaining depictions of Nazis, this is not a taboo observed throughout Europe. The British sit-com *'Allo, 'Allo*, popular throughout the eighties, featured not only clownish *Reichswehr* personnel but even comical *Gestapo* officers.

¹⁹ Naughton, p. 126.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²¹ Taberner refers to *Die Zeit*'s critic, Iris Radisch. In *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond. Normalization and the Berlin Republic* (London: Camden House, 2005), p. 33.

²² Similarly, to claim *Go Trabi Go* as a west German film is not as straightforward as Naughton would like. Although she acknowledges the director's eastern origins, this fact might have benefited from some explanation before including the director in the west German camp. Did Kundera become a French writer after moving to Paris, or Lang an American director after his emigration? That said, the director does claim still to identify with the east: 'bei mir gibt es ein ganz starkes Bedürfnis nach einem Wir-Gefühl in der Gesellschaft. Dieses Gefühl vermisse ich oft in der westdeutschen Gesellschaft.'

amongst western production companies, such an assessment of the possible thematic or political correlation between the various films would benefit from a more circumspect approach. However, Naughton's observation that many of the post-unification films invoke the *Heimatfilme* genre is, on the face of it, sound. In a sense it was inevitable that these post-unification comedies which appear to provide a flight from reality would be compared with the post-war genre. After all, the *Heimatfilme* of the fifties and sixties have typically been discussed in terms of their escapist tendencies and of the distraction they offered from the unwelcome realities of the post-war period. The critical derision and popular acclaim of the films both after the war and after unification seemed to underline the similarities still further. However, as recent research has shown, *Heimatfilme* were perhaps not as insensible to post-war concerns as was previously thought. Some scholars have suggested that the narratives often acknowledge, even if they do not actively engage with, post-war concerns.²³ In referring to these alternative readings of the *Heimatfilm*, this chapter therefore departs from Naughton's analysis of the original genre, and suggests that the films do, despite their comic disposition, acknowledge issues associated with unification. It necessarily broadens the discussion of the *Heimat* concept in the GDR and its problematic status in the DEFA films and reflects on the critical, so-called anti-*Heimatfilme* of the sixties and seventies in the FRG, which has some bearing on the stark vision of the post-GDR *Heimat* discussed in the following chapter.

***Heimat* as refuge**

The popularity of the original *Heimatfilme* has been widely attributed to the reassurance it offered the audiences of the 1950s, who, scarred by the psychological traumas of the war, could find some comfort in the rural tranquillity and uncomplicated lives that the films offered.²⁴ The realities of the post-war period -- the ruined cities, the arduous reconstruction of the urban centres, the daily suffering -- were absent from the genre and audiences flocked in their millions to see the

Füreinander da sein, ohne Ellenbogen seinen Weg gehen - so bin ich erzogen worden und so war die DDR'. In 'Interview mit Peter Timm', *Dirk-Jasper Filmlexikon*. Online at: http://www.djfl.de/entertainment/stars/p/peter_timm_i_01.html [Accessed 12.12.2005].

²³ See, for example, Johannes von Moltke, 'Evergreens: The Heimat Genre', in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (London: BFI, 2002), 18-18.

²⁴ See for instance Boa and Palfreyman, p. 11.

Heimatfilme during the post-war years. The illusion of comfort and safety that the communities depicted in these films is, as Peter Blickle notes, appealing in times of crisis: 'whenever deep shifts in the self-definition of Germany as a nation took place, *Heimat* was there to counterbalance (in the case of loss of territory and its accompanying phantom pains) and to help integrate (in the case of expansions)'.²⁵

The enormous success of the films suggests that audiences in the Federal Republic regarded the films as happy distractions from their recent ordeals. The moral certitude and the focus on individuals that the films provided offered an escape from such complex and unwelcome issues as collective guilt and moral responsibility. On the whole, the medium served to entertain rather than to instruct. Instead of challenging German audiences to review the recent past and to reflect on the realities of the present, a task taken on by contemporary writers like Böll and others associated with the *Gruppe 47*, the *Heimat* films preferred to portray an idealised Germany, which might, in Fehrenbach's phrase, 'serve as social and psychic balm'.²⁶ The films presented beautiful landscapes inhabited by wholesome Germans, who appeared to live in a spatial and historical limbo beyond the realities of Germany's recent experiences. The genre restored a vision of Germany that, for the most part, denied the pernicious influence and support of the NS regime. The films appeared to confirm the Germans' innate decency and moral constancy and, in so doing, offered a corrective to the temporary immorality of the NS dictatorship. Those antagonisms that did arise in the films -- in addition to those between city dwellers and the people in the country, the films represented tensions between those displaced by the war and the host communities, and between the generations and between the sexes -- were reconciled by the end.²⁷ The films' organising principle generally attempted to re-establish the pre-war gender order as part of its drive to 'reinforce the conservative agenda'.²⁸ There was no evidence of the new roles that women had been forced to adopt; desirable female

²⁵ Peter Blickle, *Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester; Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002), p. 47.

²⁶ Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany. Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill; London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 151.

²⁷ Elizabeth Boa has suggested that the films had a naturalising function: 'close to the surface was also the theme of the lost *Heimat* following the division of Germany and the loss of lands in the East. *Heimat* films satisfied the perceived need of refugees and exiles to identify with a positive image of west Germany'. In Boa and Palfreyman, p. 11.

²⁸ Heidi Fehrenbach, 'The Fight for the "Christian West": German Film Control, and the Reconstruction of Civil Society in the Early Bonn Republic', in *War Stories. The search for a usable past in the Federal*

types abound, dressed not in the factory overalls or threadbare outfits worn by the *Trümmerfrau* and war widow but in *Dirndls* and other traditional costumes. Audiences could find some encouragement in the representations of Germans who were not faced with the kind of moral dilemmas and material privation of the real post-war world.²⁹ For many commentators, the films effectively presented a 'dream world', a fantasy of harmonious rural communities, where differences could be easily resolved.³⁰

The end of the war and the subsequent regime change may have been perceived as a caesura for many of those involved in contemporary literary debate, but Germany's democratic rebirth did not signify a radical programme of re-education or a break with the previous filmmaking traditions. Though the *Heimatfilme* mostly avoided any direct mention of the NS past, the genre showed continuities with exactly the kind of *Blut und Boden* filmmaking that had been popular with the Nazis and with the fashionable, so-called, *Bergfilme* of the 1920s and 1930s.³¹ According to Linda Schulte-Sasse, films like '*Das verlorene Tal* (1934), *Ewiger Wald* (1936) oder *Waldrausch* (1942) stilisieren bäuerliches oder dörfliches Leben als unschuldig und rein und grenzen es von einem städtischen Leben ab, das angeblich nur die Auflösung von Gemeinschaftsbanden, laszive Erotik und Degeneration kennt'.³² Most studies of *Heimatfilme* highlight their evocation of old-fashioned values and traditional lifestyles; the films appear to offer a salve that palliates the sins of urban, decadent modernity. For the Nazis, the dissolute character of the city had been the result of modernist impulses that had been so degenerately manifest during the Weimar Republic. In keeping with their ideological position, the NS had traced the immorality and corruption of the city to specific influences: the ideological subversion of the communists, the racial impurity of the Jews and the malign influence of foreign capital. This is not to say that films made during this period always exposed the city as

Republic of Germany, ed. by Robert G. Moeller (London; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 321-435, p. 321.

²⁹ See Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2005), p. 29.

³⁰ See Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat the Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 14.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15. See also Manuela Fiedler, *Heimat im deutschen Film. Ein Mythos zwischen Regie und Utopie* (Coppengrave: Coppi Verlag, 1995), 28-30.

³² Linda Schulte-Sasse, 'Stadt und Heimat. Die Metropole im Film des Dritten Reichs', in *In Der Großen Stadt*, ed. by Thomas Steinfeld and Heidrun Suhr (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain Verlag, 1990), 133-158, p. 133.

a site of transgression and moral decline. The city could, according to the same author, provide 'Heimat im ideologischen Sinne'.³³

In resurrecting images of German communities that tolerated an individualism that did not depart from, or threaten, the conservative patriarchal order that had existed before the war, and which confirmed a return to local, community issues rather than greater national concerns, the post-war films came to symbolise a national identity that was expressed through its regionalised character. Alasdair King has argued that a film such as *Grün ist die Heide* (Hans Deppe, 1951) was able to participate in the 'construction of a new German identity [...] anchored in a commitment to an authentic local identity', though he acknowledges that this was not the case with the genre as a whole.³⁴ At the same time, however, the films were able to reflect the new trends and materialist desires of a modern Germany as it transformed itself from a nation racked by war to Europe's economic powerhouse. Although the films celebrated the rural landscape and its traditions, they were not hostile to all aspects of progress: the images of quaint communities were also able to accommodate and indulge the Germans' post-war love of the car, which was often shown speeding through country lanes, past pine forests and gleaming lakes. As Germany's fortunes were revived, the genre eventually came to function less as an escape from psychological and material traumas, and more as actual geographical escape from the busy cities. In so doing, the films 'overlapped with the quintessential consumerist genre, the travel or vacation film', offering audiences 'a break from the pressures of economic growth and prosperity'.³⁵

Many scholars have focussed on this escapist impulse, emphasising the significance of such distraction for post-war audiences and underlining the 'high-brow lament' that has accompanied *Heimatfilm* discourse.³⁶ At the same time, what the genre excluded is as significant as what it included, an interpretation that sees the films as a corollary of certain post war attitudes. While writers such as Wolfdietrich Schnurre and Wolfgang Borchert, and philosophers like Karl Jaspers probed the national conscience and challenged the complacency of the period, filmmakers were generally

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Alasdair King, 'Placing Green is the Heath (1951). Spatial Politics and Emergent West German Identity', in *Light Motives German Popular Film in Perspective*, ed. by Randall Halle and Margaret McCarthy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 130-145, p. 136.

³⁵ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 110-111.

³⁶ Conboy, p. 357. See also Julia Knight, *Women and the New German Cinema* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 27.

reluctant to address morally awkward subjects.³⁷ The absence of any inquiry into moral responsibility and material questions concerning the loss of territory and post-war hardship in these films reflected the population's own disinclination to confront its past, a reluctance that was not challenged until well into the sixties. The emergent Cold War antagonism necessitated immediate, ideologically certain positions and ideological alignment assumed primacy over any acts of contrition or self-inquiry. The policy of denazification was therefore interrupted, a break that indirectly exculpated the legions of NS supporters who would not have to face those issues until confronted to do so by the next generation. In recent years, commentators have attempted to ascribe greater political and historical relevance to the genre's narratives, arguing that the films did in fact acknowledge the socio-political concerns of the post-war period. Sabine Hake for instance, has suggested that,

the *Heimatfilm* showed an acute awareness of contemporary problems in its preoccupation with incomplete, dysfunctional, and unconventional families; its emphasis on the trauma of displacement and the experience of loss; and its attention to the difficult question of legacies.³⁸

Hake provides an interesting analysis of the genre, seeing in the films indirect references to contemporary issues that other commentators often deny. Johannes von Moltke, meanwhile, has questioned those ahistorical, 'totalising approaches to the cinema of the 1950s' which focus on the escapism of the films. These new readings of the genre offer a compelling reinterpretation that challenges the traditional view of the films as romantic fantasies. New readings of the films suggest that the films do not simply provide prelapsarian visions of a mythical landscape that deny modernity's intrusion, but that they do reflect fundamental post-war issues such as the redrawn borders and forced migration. Von Moltke is among those who disagree with the traditional perception of the *Heimatfilm* as 'quintessentially an escapist genre', arguing that the genre was able to act as kind of curative, not in terms of the distraction from everyday suffering and the contaminated past that it effected, but in facilitating an easier encounter with modernity and with the present:

The undeniable political conservatism of such films, then, consists not in an anti-modern stance, but in the selective embrace of the modern and the

³⁷ See for example, Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage. Von der Politischen Haftung Deutschlands* (Munich: Piper & Co., 1987; first published 1946).

³⁸ Sabine Hake, 109-110. Fiedler also stresses the genre's implicit acknowledgement of contemporary issues, which, she argues, is manifest in the conflict between fathers and sons, p. 37. See also Moeller, p. 129.

mythologisation of modernisation as a process that ultimately does not threaten the underlying sense of continuity and *Gemeinschaft*.³⁹

Persuasive though these counter-claims are, they do not deny that the films lacked the kind of socio-historical acuity that would define the New German Cinema.⁴⁰

The apparent complacency of the genre and of that generation, together with their refusal to analyse recent and contemporary events, was eventually challenged in the sixties by a group of young directors, including Fassbinder, Herzog and Kluge (though this did not immediately hasten the genre's retirement). Their rejection of the 'deceitful movie kitsch' that they believed typified post-war genres like the *Heimatfilm* was made explicit in the confident declaration, 'Papap Kino ist tot', a slogan that advertised a screening of radical new films at Oberhausen in 1966.⁴¹ The New German Cinema directors would compensate for the reticence and conservatism of the previous generation by embarking on a course of boldly confrontational and political filmmaking, which delighted critics as much as it horrified domestic audiences. A number of films made in the sixties and seventies demonstrated the willingness of the manifesto's signatories to confront the older generation of filmmakers on their own territory - the provinces. The *Heimatfilms'* gentle melodramas and the saccharine representations of country life were caustically undermined; village life in these new films was no longer synonymous with neighbourliness and cosy tradition. For the filmmakers of what is now referred to as the New German Cinema, *Heimat* was not simply 'der schönste Name für die Zurückgebliebenheit', as Martin Walser had suggested, but was profiled as a repository of intolerance and malice.⁴² In films such as *Jagdscenen aus Niederbayern* (Peter Fleischmann, 1969), *Jaidler, der einsame Jäger* (Volker Vogeler and Ulf Miehe, 1970/71), *Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich* (Uwe Brandner, 1971), *Der Plötzliche Reichtum Der Armen Leute Von Korbach* (Volker Schlöndorff, 1971) and *Das Andechser Gefühl* (Herbert Achternbusch, 1974), the standard cinematic representations of *Heimat* were recalibrated, prompting some critics to talk

³⁹ Fiedler, p. 24.

⁴⁰ A number of articles have focussed on the introduction of outside figures in the genre, typically refugees from the east, who are eventually integrated within the host community and thus able to find a replacement *Heimat*. See for example, Ricarda Strobel's 'Heimat, Liebe und Glück: Schwarzwaldmädel (1950)', in *Fischer Filmgeschichte Auf der Suche nach Werten 1945-1960*, Band 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1990), p. 148-170. See also Georg Seesslen, 'Der Heimatfilm. Zur Mythologie eines Genres', in *Sprung im Spiegel. Filmisches Wahrnehmen zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit*, ed. by Christa Blümlinger (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1990), 343-362.

⁴¹ See Kaes, p. 15

⁴² Martin Walser, *Heimatkunde. Aufsätze und Reden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), p. 40.

of a new anti-*Heimatfilm* genre. In a recent study of those films said to constitute New German Cinema (whose directors now count as the industry's senior figures), Julia Knight argues that the films did offer such a challenge and that these films therefore came to present a 'counter-myth' of German identity.⁴³ Although some later scholars have questioned the appropriateness of referring to anti-*Heimatfilme*, arguing that the films were individual pieces and did not comprise an aesthetic agenda that sought to challenge the genre of the fifties, the films could more reasonably be referred to as having been part of a new, critical *Heimatfilm* genre.⁴⁴

The claim that certain films renegotiated the *Heimatfilm* genre led to further critical differences a decade later when, in the eighties, a decade that witnessed the revival of *Heimat* discourse, critics sought to classify some contemporary films as 'Neue Heimatfilme'.⁴⁵ Films like *Erst die Arbeit und dann?* (Detlev Buck, 1985), *Novemberkatzen* (Sigrun Koeppel, 1985), *Der Flieger* (Erwin Keusch, 1986) and *Daheim sterben die Leut* (Klaus Gietinger, 1986) marked a return to the provinces. However, unlike the deeply sceptical narratives of the New German Cinema, this new generation did not seek to expose the countryside as home to prejudice and brute intolerance; nor did they aim to re-present those rural spaces as the idylls of the original genre. Opting for a pseudo-documentary style that was emphasised through the use of lay actors, they offered realistic studies of country living that were both critical and sympathetic.⁴⁶ The significance of these films and their disputed generic relevance is considered in the following chapter, which proposes that a considerable number of *Wendefilme* similarly came to articulate and engage with a critical *Heimat* discourse.

⁴³ Knight, p. 45.

⁴⁴ This point is discussed in Thomas Hoffmann and Ines Steiner, 'Die Sechziger. Zwischen Jagdszenen und Jägerporno', in *Der deutsche Heimatfilm*, ed. by Wolfgang Kaschuba (Tübingen: Tübingen Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V.: 1989), 97-129, pp. 101-102.

⁴⁵ See Günther Mai, who argues that its revival was the consequence of postmaterialist conservatism, 'Vom Obrigkeitsstaat zur Demokratiefähigkeit? Westdeutsche Einstellungen seit Kriegsende', in Knoblich *et al.*, 66-84.

⁴⁶ Contemporary scholars suggested that the new *Heimatfilm* 'legt sein Finger in die Wunden, aber er vertieft sie nicht'. In Dieter Bahlinger, Thomas Hellmuth and Tobias Reister, 'Die Achtziger Jahre. Nostalgie oder Neuanfang?', in Kaschuba, 131-148, p. 132, for a discussion of the new *Heimatfilm*.

Locating *Heimat* in the GDR

Heimat posed an awkward problem for GDR ideologues. The state was to separate its idea of *Heimat* from the bourgeois conception that had been fashionable and politically useful in Wilhelmine Germany and under Hitler. The traditional idea of *Heimat* represented a particularly provincial, inward-looking way of thinking and identifying that clashed with the scheme of a progressive, all-inclusive trans-regional socialism. Marxist theoreticians naturally sought to debunk the West's hold on traditional *Heimat* values. Günther Lange, for example, attempted to explicate the incompatibility of the true sense of *Heimat* in the context of capitalism, arguing that *Heimat* served only to construct an 'illusorische Gemeinschaft' in the FRG that ultimately validated the interests of those in power.⁴⁷ According to Lange, it was in the GDR that one could find a pure understanding of the *Heimat* values. Perhaps mindful of Marx's phrase regarding the 'Idiotismus des Landlebens', communities in the GDR were not to be predicated on local tradition and values, but according to an understanding and appreciation of their place in a wider socialist community that would admit other peoples and recognise a common struggle against the west.⁴⁸

An identity that transcended the local and aspired to the international was not easily achieved. For all the rhetoric of socialist communality, hostilities and prejudices towards their eastern neighbours continued to exist and it proved difficult to inculcate an immediate aversion towards the Germans in the west. It was therefore imperative that the concept be reassessed and redefined within a socialist context; not to do so would have been tantamount to acknowledging the supremacy of a *German* national identity over a *socialist* identity. Realising this to be the case, GDR ideologues reincorporated the idea of *Heimat* into East German culture, redefining and recasting it within a politically reliable framework. It could no longer be allowed to perpetuate the

⁴⁷ See Lange, *Heimat. Realität und Aufgabe. Zur Marxistischen Auffassung des Heimatgefühls* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), p. 44.

⁴⁸ Lange outlines the concept in its (inter)national and local context when he writes, 'die größere Heimat ist eben mehr als die bloße Summe regionaler und nationaler Potenzen. Aber zugleich werden doch die Verhältnisse des sozialistischen Weltsystems und Vaterlandes weitgehend in den unmittelbaren Beziehungen an jedem lokalen Heimatort reproduziert'. Ibid., p. 121. There is some debate as to the meaning behind Marx's term. Although often translated as 'idioty', some scholars contend that the word in Marx's day meant isolation. Either suits my purpose here, since the point I am making is that the GDR wished to abandon the narrow provincial outlook associated with rural life. In Harry Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster, 'Notes from the Editor', *Monthly Review*, October 2003. Online at: <http://www.monthlyreview.org/nfte1003.htm> [Accessed 12.6.2004].

celebration of localised tradition over the state; nor could it be seen as a return to a quaint, pre-industrialised Germany that denied the modern East German state with its emphasis on progress and development. Lange envisioned a socialist *Heimat* in terms of man's control of the landscape. Only in the bourgeois west would they seek to ignore man's labour and productivity when looking at the landscape.⁴⁹ Consequently, the rural idyll that was central to the traditional *Heimat* vision could hardly be promoted at a time when collectivisation was the primary agricultural policy. In addition, the post-war situation in the rural east was not comparable with that of the west. The influx of displaced Germans from further east, which, combined with the arrival of large numbers of Soviet troops, put a tremendous strain on the region, creating hostility and fear.⁵⁰

Heimat in East German terms involved a difficult balancing act. It could sanction an essentially German identity that celebrated the local and traditional, so long as this did not actually contradict the wider socialist project. This turnaround was partly due to extenuating circumstances. The authorities soon realised that membership of a coalition of socialist states could not provide an adequate substitute for an East German identity. Moreover, the growing lure of the west posed a serious threat to the GDR's future; it was imperative not only to convince the population of its future prospects but also to make life in a contemporary GDR sufficiently appealing. The concept required new political and cultural cachet that would separate it from its traditional regressive tendencies.⁵¹ The word therefore came to be directly associated with the state, appearing on official banners and flags; songs and anthems were composed eulogising the East German *Heimat* and FDJ badges proclaimed 'Meine Heimat DDR'. In 1956, Johannes R. Becher, the state's leading poet and future Minister for Culture, a pivotal figure in GDR culture, published a collection of his poems titled 'Schöne Deutsche Heimat'. Though ostensibly a collection of innocent, bucolic verse, which celebrated the familiar *Heimat* topoi of mountains and meadows,

⁴⁹ The photos of the GDR *Heimat* that are included at the end of Lange's book are worth mentioning since they focus primarily on the state's modern architectural achievements: the television tower in east Berlin; Leipzig train station; and corroborate its ideological specificity: portraits of black and white students, fishermen, farmers.

⁵⁰ See Siegfried Kuntsche, 'Das Bauerndorf in der Nachkriegszeit. Lebenslagen und Alltag', in *Befremdlich anders: Leben in der DDR*, ed. by Evemarie Badstübner (Berlin: Dietz, 2000), 64-116, pp. 67-71.

⁵¹ See Boa and Palfreyman, p. 134. See also Stefan Berger, *The Search for Normality. National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York, London: Berghahn, 1997; reprinted 2003), p. 71.

the poet's introduction contextualised his poems, reminding the reader of the potential, if undefined threat to their *Heimat*, the GDR: 'wer die Schönheit seiner Heimat wahrhaft zuinnerst fühlt, der kann nicht anders, als all das, was in seinen Kräften steht, zu unternehmen, diese schöne Heimat vor Verderb und Vernichtung zu bewahren'.⁵²

Becher's caveat does not specify the origin of such a threat but, given the increasingly hostile east/west climate, the implication was clear. The protectionist aspect that had always been implicit within *Heimat* discourse was imperative in the GDR's understanding of the concept. Love of *Heimat*, as Judith Kretzschmar has pointed out, meant also the defence of *Heimat* – 'und der Heimatbegriff taucht gerade im Zusammenhang mit der Volksarmee der DDR häufig auf'.⁵³ The implied antagonism was simply a politicised positioning of the self against the other, a dynamic that had always been at the heart of *Heimat*.⁵⁴ The difficult relationship with the west inevitably required that the East German *Heimat* came to be articulated through its declared distinction from the FRG. The authorities therefore envisaged the GDR as an antifascist *Heimat*, which existed in contradistinction to the post-fascist *Heimat* of the FRG. Or, as Sabine Spindler has described it, the GDR saw itself as 'Heimat der Arbeiter und Bauern, als Heimat des "fortschrittlichen, sozialistischen Menschen", als Heimat des Friedens im Gegensatz zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland, die als Heimat der "Revanchisten, Imperialisten und Kriegstreiber" aufgefaßt wurde'.⁵⁵

Screening *Heimat* in the GDR

Although *Heimat* came to be redefined in a way that would make it compatible with the state's Marxist-Leninist profile, the *Heimatfilm* was not a genre that could be

⁵² Johannes R. Becher, *Schöne Deutsche Heimat* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1956), p. 5. Becher may have been a celebrated figure in GDR society but even his reputation could not safeguard him from policy turnarounds. The lyrics he had provided for the state's national hymn were amended in 1974 with the final version omitting the line 'Deutschland, einig Vaterland'. In Kretzschmar, p. 88. Kretzschmar's chapter provides a very useful account of the GDR's attempts to define *Heimat*, which included, among other things, a decision to co-opt local *Heimat* groups and researchers into a larger, and therefore more easily controlled, national organisation.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁵⁴ According to Wickham, 'as a psychological reality, there is a strong case to be made that the awareness of *Heimat* is only activated by the experience or awareness of *Fremde*'. In Christopher J. Wickham, *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany: Longing and Belonging* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), p. 55.

⁵⁵ Sabine Spindler, "'Erinnerung an eine Landschaft. Für Manuela" – ein Dokumentarfilm', in *Heimat in der DDR-Medien. Arbeitsheft zum Medienpaket 8* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998), 81-101, p. 82.

adapted to serve either the GDR's historical interpretation or its socialist vision. This was hardly surprising, given the genre's conservative character. With its focus on harmonious regional communities, which appeared to exist within an ahistorical society far removed from the crimes and collusion of the NS period, the *Heimatfilme* portrayed a world where commonsense and tradition reigned. The values celebrated in the West German *Agfacolor* melodramas contrasted sharply with the enlightened political understanding that the East's gritty socialist realist films aimed to provide. Moreover, the *Heimatfilms'* antecedents only confirmed the GDR's allegation that NS interests and ideology continued to underpin the FRG's ideological framework. The fact that many of the genre's directors had worked and trained in the film industry while under NS supervision apparently offered further evidence that they were serving the capitalist and nationalist project. Such suspicion did not naturally extend to their own directors, though some of these had also emerged from NS studios. While the GDR was keen-eyed when it came to discerning residual NS traits in West German society, its own decisions and policies suggested a degree of myopia. The authorities in East Berlin had recognised the need to engage as many film-industry employees, regardless of their previous work-experience, if they were to develop a credible industry of their own. Not even DEFA's first celebrated director, Wolfgang Staudte, could claim an unblemished résumé. Though his film, *Der Mann, dem Man den Namen stahl* (1940), had been banned by the NS authorities, thus apparently exonerating him from any political suspicions in the GDR, his role in Veit Harlan's feature, *Jud Süß* (1940), one of the most notorious anti-Semitic films, was a biographical detail conveniently forgotten.⁵⁶

The complacency and backwards-looking nature of the *Heimatfilme* was the antithesis of the GDR's thrust to forge a progressive national identity which could be imbricated within that of the wider socialist community. Yet this did not signify an absolute rejection of East German *Heimat* discourse *per se*. As Harry Blunk has noted, 'the task of winning the hearts and minds of the populace for *Heimat* and *Vaterland*

⁵⁶ There is some difference in opinion as to whether the personnel who had worked for the Nazi film industry were subsequently able to find work in the GDR. Dalichow stresses that few managed to find work with DEFA, whilst David Bathrick says that more than two thirds of DEFA's directors, producers and camera people had previously worked at *Ufa*. See Dalichow, 'Heimat-Filme der DEFA?', p. 56, and Bathrick, 'From UFA to DEFA: Past as present in Early GDR Films', in *Contentious Memories Looking Back at the GDR*, ed. by Jost Hermand and Marc Silberman (New York: Lang, 1998), 169-185, p. 171.

was seen primarily as that of the artistic media'.⁵⁷ The ahistorical rural communities so popular in the films in the west did not accord with the politically historicised working-class families invariably located within urban communities depicted in many DEFA films. Where the West German audiences could find some escape from the past and avoid the suffering of the present in the scores of *Heimatfilme* made after the war, audiences in the East were routinely reminded of the years under the NS dictatorship. If the *Heimatfilm* counted as the predominant genre in the west, it was the antifascist films which comprised the most prevalent and enduring genre of the DEFA studios.⁵⁸ They fulfilled a crucial role in the authorities' attempt to create a GDR identity, since they repeatedly provided the East German audiences with narratives that identified the NS supporters and activists together with the industrialists as the true villains of the dictatorship, while also indirectly absolving the (East) Germans of any crimes. Furthermore, the films reaffirmed SED discourse, which postulated the GDR as the logical consequence and objective of an apparently endemic socialist resistance native to the east. Audiences were offered the opportunity to identify with a new kind of hero, typically members of the communist resistance or ordinary Germans who refused to surrender to NS ideology. This piece of historical revisionism conveniently sidestepped the uncomfortable fact that Hitler had of course enjoyed support in the east as well as in the west.

The 1970s saw the regime directing its energies into promoting a more pronounced GDR identity, which required a re-emphasis on an East German *Heimat*. With this in mind, a series of documentary films were made by one of the state's most infamous figures and propagandists, the eloquently acerbic Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler. His short films were intended to play an important role in shoring up GDR identity and promoting a specific GDR 'Heimatliebe'. As Judith Kretzschmar has pointed out, these documentaries amounted to 'ein Loblied auf den DDR-Sozialismus und haben die Absicht, das Wir-Gefühl in der Bevölkerung zu stärken und zu vermitteln'.⁵⁹ Such paeans to the Socialist *Heimat* did not meet with the same kind of enthusiasm with which von Schnitzler made them:

⁵⁷ Harry Blunk, 'The Concept of "*Heimat*-GDR" in DEFA Feature Films', in Allan and Sandford, 204-221, p. 205.

⁵⁸ According to Willi Höfig's analysis, *Heimatfilme* accounted for at least 20% of domestic film production in the fifties. In *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947-1960* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1973), p. 166.

⁵⁹ Kretzschmar, p. 156.

Programme, die die (idealisierte) DDR zum Inhalt hatten, fanden beim Fernsehpublikum kaum Beachtung, da die Zuschauer zumindest visuell dieser eingengten Welt entfliehen wollten. Zumal es um Regionen ging, die die Bevölkerung in ihrem kleinen Land selbst aufsuchen konnte – die ersehnte weite Welt kam über das Fernsehen der Bundesrepublik in die Wohnzimmer.⁶⁰

More credible documents of the GDR *Heimat* could be found, but these were few and far between. For Sabine Spindler, it was documentary film such as *Erinnerung an eine Landschaft* (Kurt Tetzlaff, 1983) that explored issues pertinent to *Heimat* discourse.⁶¹ Tetzlaff's film focuses on a few of the families from rural communities in Saxony-Anhalt who were relocated to the new 'progressive' housing of the enormous *Neubaugebiete* on the edge of Leipzig following force-purchase plans to make way for a new open-cast mining project. The documentary, made over a period of four years, offers an insight into issues such as the relationship to family and community, the identification with landscape and the role of memory and history in the individuals' self-definition. According to Spindler, films such as this indirectly commented on *Heimat* topoi and presented an alternative to the preferred *Heimat* imagery and rhetoric espoused by the Party. By examining the *Heimat* of a small, long-standing rural community, Tetzlaff's film departs from the favoured version of a GDR *Heimat* that consisted of 'junge Familien in modernen Wohnungen, mit anspruchsvollen Aufgaben in modernen Betrieben'.⁶² *Erinnerung an eine Landschaft* reveals the alienation that displaced individuals feel in their replacement *Heimat*, the large conurbation of pre-fabricated tower blocks that are here unmistakably linked with the state's urban planning policies. While most of the villagers accept the justification for their relocation (though they are clearly parroting the official rhetoric when they discuss these reasons), it is clear that the psychological and geographical adjustment is profoundly difficult.⁶³ When the individuals comment on their new surroundings, there

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 151

⁶¹ Sabine Spindler, 81-101.

⁶² Ibid., p. 98

⁶³ I would disagree with Spindler's comment that 'allerdings wird deutlich, daß die Impressionen von dem neuen Wohnviertel in Leipzig-Grünau keine Vorwürfe an das Umsiedlungsprojekt sind, sondern daß sie als Dokument für den Verlust einer Generation stehen', p. 101. The urban-planning policies of the GDR could hardly have been explicitly criticised in the film (though one individual does openly remonstrate with the officials responsible for relocating his family, challenging their decision by producing a newspaper article which claims that all families will be taken care of). Tetzlaff imbues the film with a *tristesse* that balances the matter-of-factness of the engineers supervising the clearance of the villages and the subsequent plans to mine. The sadness and the sense of loss that is apparent in those scenes portraying the villagers in the barely completed tower blocks is far removed from the positive

is a discernible hesitancy in their appraisal that is not present when they recall their old homes, the memory of which is preserved through attachment to a handful of mementoes, the village street signs and a few photographs of village get-togethers. *Erinnerung an eine Landschaft* reminds the modern-day viewer that the regime's efforts to foster an attachment to a GDR-*Heimat* were as unsuccessful as were its attempts to deny the population their inveterate Germanness: 'die Leute [...], fühlen deutsch und nicht "DDR-sch"', as Manfred Jäger observed.⁶⁴

Socialist *Heimatfilme*?

While the ideological position of DEFA's many antifascist films was consistently unambiguous, the films' quality varied enormously. Though the willingness to confront the past distinguished them from the western *Heimatfilme*, they did not always offer a convincing, unequivocal engagement with recent political and historical events. The films were generally approved and supported not because of any commitment to a genuinely critical assessment of the period, but in order to emphasise the state's antifascist character. Of course, not all DEFA films were concerned with legitimising and historicising the antifascist position that had been the guiding principle of the early *Aufbaufilme*. Cotemporary social problems in the GDR were also addressed in the so-called *Gegenwartsfilme*. On first impressions, these urban narratives, which depicted everyday lives in East German society, could hardly have been more different to the sentimental melodramas that dominated film production in the West. Nevertheless, some commentators have argued that these are the GDR's equivalent of the *Heimatfilm* insofar as they are 'GDR films about *Heimat*'.⁶⁵

The authors of an article entitled 'Heimatfilm in der DDR' concede early on that the genre as it was understood in the west could not exist in the GDR (though one can find the term derogatively used in other articles), but that the definition has some validity if one acknowledges that the function of many DEFA films was to engender a

rhetoric typically associated with such building projects. The criticism, then, is implicit, rather than explicit.

⁶⁴ From 'Verdeckte Gemeinsamkeiten: Zur Kulturellen Topographie in Deutschland', in *Loccumer Protokolle* 58/1990, p. 17, cited in Kretzschmar, p. 88.

⁶⁵ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 132.

sense of *Heimat*, a connection to a geographically and ideologically determined area.⁶⁶ The films they identify as GDR *Heimatfilme* do not correspond with the rural settings of the traditional genre. Drawing on Lange's theory of *Heimat*, they suggest that those DEFA productions which made a specific milieu representative of a wider socialist whole, which extended it beyond its geographical and social specificity and promoted progress and development, were the films that constituted GDR *Heimatfilme*. The authors argue that, although the films they provide as examples of GDR *Heimatfilme* do not conform to generic convention, the label is valid since they provide indices of the GDR *Heimat*. There are some problems with this analysis, since all films are, in some sense, a reflection of wider social and political issues and therefore comment, in varying degrees, on the idea of *Heimat*.

The dissimilarity of the films that have been periodically claimed as GDR *Heimatfilme* goes to show just how problematic determining a socialist *Heimatfilm* is. Films such as Kurt Maetzig's two-part *Schlösser und Katen* (1957), a chronicle of village life set against a backdrop of historical events (even including the 1953 June uprising, one of the most sensitive episodes in the regime's history), and Konrad Wolf's Berlin drama, *Solo Sunny* (1980), about a young female singer's attempts to acquire both professional and personal autonomy -- a controversial idea in a society committed to the principles of the collective -- are thus offered as examples of the GDR *Heimatfilm*.⁶⁷ Elsewhere, it is DEFA's antifascist films that are offered as evidence of 'Heimat DDR'. Dalichow, for one, has suggested that such a view would be possible. Again the incongruity of the west German genre within the east German context is emphasised: the *Heimat* concept 'verklebte sich zur ekligen Kruste mit Assoziationen von Blutsbanden, väterlicher Autorität, Fahnen, Schwüren, Aufmärschen, Gesängen, mit idealisierenden Wunschbildern von heilen Dörfern und majestätischen Bergen', even if the kind of authority and such outward expressions of patriotic solidarity as flags and marching tunes were synonymous with the GDR itself.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Annette Battenberg *et al*, 'Heimatfilm in der DDR. Annäherung an eine Fragestellung', in Kaschuba, 149-172. For the use of *Heimatfilm* in the pejorative sense see Oksana Bulgakowa, 'Die Rebellion im Rock', in *Außerhalb von Mittendrin*, ed. by Annette Eckert and Merve Lowien (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1991), 98-102, p. 102.

⁶⁷ The celebrated DEFA director, Kurt Maetzig, was adamant that the term had no validity in any discussion of GDR cinema. Mentioned in Dalichow, p. 56.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

Dalichow echoes Kretzschmar's point when she writes that audiences in the GDR would not have been receptive to any blatant strategies that attempted to combine *Heimat* with the idea of a 'sozialistisches Vaterland'. Moreover, the *Heimatfilm* aesthetic of the West could never have been accommodated within the policy of socialist realism that dominated film production. Like Boa and Palfreyman, Dalichow proposes that it was the *Gegenwartsfilme* which came to represent a kind of GDR *Heimatfilm*. These did not offer schmaltzy romances and narratives of simple moral redemption but instead communicated a message, 'daß durch tätige Mitwirkung und Überwindung von Schwierigkeiten ein sinnvolles Leben in der Gemeinschaft möglich ist'.⁶⁹ She points to *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (Gerhard Klein, 1957) as an example of a genuine GDR *Heimatfilm*, though her article does not expand on what exactly qualifies Kohlhaase and Klein's film as such, other than that a number of characters conform to 'den Standardfiguren des DDR-Heimatfilms'.⁷⁰ However, Julie Gregson has suggested that it is the film's representation of East and West Berlin that is significant, since it is in the contrast of the two German states that one is able to detect key signals of identity. Where the western sector is offered as home to corruption and materialism, East Berlin, she says, functions 'as a neighbourhood or locale' with the (working-class) 'district of Prenzlauer Berg [marking] the GDR as the more German of the two states'.⁷¹ The film's socialist credentials were less obvious to the authorities. Though the film was critical of the West, with West Berlin given as a corrupt alternative to the East, the film's sympathetic treatment of its rebellious teenage protagonists was criticised in turn by the SED for its negative portrayal of the GDR and for its neo-realist tendencies.⁷² A similar proposition is made by Boa and Palfreyman, who also look to another of Kohlhaase's and Klein's films, *Berlin um die Ecke* (1965), the last of their Berlin series, and another victim of the 1965 cull. They argue that the working-class districts and industrialised regions that are the setting for many DEFA films constitute an urban GDR *Heimat*, which attempts to build on the founding myth of a pre-war revolutionary proletariat. These locations facilitated a

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

⁷¹ Julie Gregson, 'East or West – A Straight Choice? Representations of Masculinity and Constructions of National Identity in Wolfgang Kohlhaase and Gerhard Klein's *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*', in *Millennial Essays on Film and Other German Studies*, ed. by Daniela Berghahn and Alan Bance (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002), 63-77, p. 75.

⁷² Horst Claus, 'Rebels with a Cause: The development of the 'Berlin-Filme' by Gerhard Klein and Wolfgang Kohlhaase', in Allan and Sandford, 93–116, p. 108.

means of identifying with the previous generation, as well as supporting the GDR's myth of historical development. But the DEFA films needed also to 'perform a transaction which would open up *Heimat* GDR style with its backward yearning for an idealised humanist solidarity to integrate the desires of youth for new pleasures and freedoms'.⁷³ *Berlin um die Ecke* negotiates and reconciles a number of dilemmas, among them that between *Fernweh* and *Heimweh*; but it is the conflict between the older and younger generation that is crucial, and the film attempts to bridge the past with the present, in order to build a *Heimat* of the future.⁷⁴

Despite the variation of these claims, the majority of those scholars investigating the case for a socialist *Heimatfilm* do share the opinion that in the east *Heimat* is more evident in those films that depart from official self-representation. This is not to say that the films identified in varying ways as socialist *Heimatfilme* were therefore analogous to the western variant. In contrast to the geographical, historical and psychological escapism of the western *Heimatfilme*, these DEFA films sought to confront their audiences with films that took on and engaged with pertinent social issues, a commitment to inquiry and criticism that often resulted in official censure.

Contesting *Heimat*

The *Heimat* concept was, as I have indicated, problematic in the GDR. The Party never succeeded in disabusing the population of its old-fashioned interpretation of *Heimat* as the site of local tradition and familial connection:

Die Bürger der DDR unterschieden jedoch zwischen öffentlichem und persönlichem Begriff. Sie lehnten *Heimat* als verordnete SED-und FDJ-Ideologie ebenso ab, wie *Heimat* als Staatsbegriff. Die DDR und ihre Regionen

⁷³ Boa and Palfreyman, p. 135.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 138-139. There is no room here to compare and assess the credibility of those films that have been branded as DEFA *Heimatfilme*. The subject is a complicated one, not least because the attitudes to *Heimat* are rarely consistent. For Helmut Freiwald, Günther Rucker's debut, *Die Besten Jahre* (1965), which traces one man's attempt to find some footing in the new society of the post-war era, is a film very much concerned with the notion of *Heimat* in the East German context. The protagonist's sense of belonging -- always the critical *Heimat* issue -- is not engendered by the nascent East German state. His identification with GDR society necessitates a learning process during which he faces (and resolves) his ideological doubts. In Helmut Freiwald, "'Die besten Jahre'": Die neue *Heimat* des Ernst Machner', in *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?*, ed. by Klaus Finke (Berlin: Vistas, 2001), 49-52. Elsewhere, von Moltke offers Konrad Wolf's *Einmal ist Keinmal* (1955), Maetzig's *Das verurteilte Dorf* and *Schlösser und Katen* (1952;1955), and Artur Poehl's *Die Brücke* (1949) as East German films that engage with issues of *Heimat*. See Footnote 50, p. 28.

waren den Bürgern aber *Heimat* als Ort ihrer Herkunft, als Stätte der Sozialisation, als Teil der eigenen Biographie, des eigenen Lebens.⁷⁵

Their connection to *Heimat* continued to be disputed even after the SED had ceased to exist. It was no longer the ideological and ontological meaning that was challenged, however. The increasing number of disputes regarding property in the east was understood as a material threat against *Heimat* since the fear of eviction meant that it was not the east Germans' mental grasp of *Heimat* that was at risk but their actual physical connection to it. The eastern regions therefore became a contested site, one characterised by controversial property claims, business takeovers and by the arrival of western managers.

The property claims, which are routinely alluded to in unification films, became one of the most emotive issues of the *Wende*, provoking fierce debate and mutual recrimination. People filing claims naturally insisted on their right, as recognised by law, to reclaim property previously theirs. Those whose homes were thus suddenly thrown into jeopardy by these legal notices demanding restitution of property, numbering more than 2 million by mid 1993, perceived these claims not only as an attack on their right of residence but also, by implication, on their *Heimat*.⁷⁶ The journalist Daniela Dahn was one of many to become involved in the debate, detailing the reasons for her opposition in 'Wir bleiben hier oder wem gehört der Osten. Vom Kampf um Häuser und Wohnungen in den neuen Bundesländern', a polemic which, as its subtitle indicates, questioned the legitimacy of such claims. Dahn focuses on the inconsistency of the claims and the adjudications, arguing that similar settlements have not been reached in property claims dating back to either the NS or the post-war period; nor were those east Germans who were dispossessed of their property by the GDR authorities accorded similar compensation. She draws a provocative comparison between the east Germans' situation and the policies imposed on the Jews by the NS administration when she asks 'Soll der einstigen "Entjudung des Grundbesitzes" nun

⁷⁵ See Judith Kretzschmar, 'Sein Vaterland im Film – die DDR Reportagen', in Tilo Prase, Judith Kretzschmar, *Propagandist und Heimatfilmer. Die Dokumentarfilme des Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler* (Leipzig: Leipzig Universitäts Verlag, 2003), 83-174, p. 107. See also Jan Palmowski, 'Building an East German Nation: the Construction of a Socialist *Heimat*, 1945-1961', *Central European History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2004, 365-399.

⁷⁶ See David Schoenbaum and Elizabeth Pound, *The German Question and Other German Questions* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 155.

die “Entostung des Grundbesitzes” folgen?’.⁷⁷ In the course of her investigation, she considers the widespread suspicion that the state would favour its old members over the new, and wonders about the wider implications that such disputes will have on the two populations’ relationship. The decision of the ‘Gesamtverband der Wohnungswirtschaft’ not to appeal to the constitutional court, despite the breach of constitutional rights that the property claims involved, because it was pessimistic about the outcome, did not inspire the east Germans. As Dahn puts it, ‘wie sollen die betroffenen Ostdeutschen bei solchen Praktiken Vertrauen in den Rechtsstaat gewinnen?’⁷⁸

Strangely, the controversy surrounding property claims, which would seem to offer ample east/west drama, is seldom foregrounded in post-unification films (only Peter Kahane’s *Cosimas Lexikon* (1991), in which the residents of a block of flats try to save their homes from western developers, really looks at the issue). In general, the films focus not on the threat to *Heim* but to *Heimat*. This allows directors to address the east Germans’ post-unification anxieties, including the perceived loss of sovereignty, the threat to communities and the subsequent defence of local identity that is embedded in the idea of *Heimat*.

Der Brocken

Among the imagined totalities to which people were able to believe they belonged and where they believed they could seek (and hopefully find) shelter, a void yawns at the spot once occupied by ‘society’. That term once stood for the state, armed with means of enforcement as well as with powerful means of rectifying at least the most outrageous of social injustices. Such a state is receding from view. [...] It looks increasingly likely that the missing comforts of a safe existence need to be sought through other means. Safety, like all other aspects of human life in a relentlessly individualized and privatized world, must be a ‘do-it-yourself’ job, seen as a necessary condition of all safety, must be a neighbourhood matter, a ‘communal affair’. Where the state has failed, perhaps the community, the local community, the physically tangible, ‘material’ community, a community embodied in a territory inhabited by its member

⁷⁷ Daniela Dahn, *Wir bleiben hier, oder wem gehört der Osten. Vom Kampf um Häuser und Wohnungen in den neuen Bundesländern* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), p. 20. Dahn’s polemical style has irritated some readers. Richard Wagner, for example, accuses the author of discriminatory analysis, and refers to her as one of the east’s ‘Resentiment-Sammler’, in “‘Die Zurückgewiesene des Tages’”. Zu den Büchern von Daniela Dahn’, in *Text+Kritik Sonderband DDR-Literatur der neunziger Jahre*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag, 2000), 74-80, p. 76. Given her active involvement in resisting such claims, it is inevitable that Dahn’s account should be so partisan. She freely admits this and declares her allegiance early on: ‘ich lebe als Betroffene unter Betroffenen im Osten’, and that ‘eine ausgewogene Argumentation habe ich mir nicht vorgenommen’, p. 23. Stefan Heym also dealt with the subject and, in so doing, exposed the problems of such claims, which led to even older claims from disappropriated Jews. See the eponymous story in his collection, *Auf Sand Gebaut. Sieben Geschichten aus der unmittelbaren Vergangenheit* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1990), 34-48. Similar claims are addressed in Ula Stöckl’s film *Das Alte Lied* (1991).

⁷⁸ Dahn (1994), p. 19.

and no one else (no one who 'does not belong'), will purvey the 'being safe' feeling which the wider world evidently conspires to destroy?⁷⁹

At first sight, *Der Brocken* presents one of the most obvious re-engagements with the *Heimatfilm* of the post-war years. The film's central character, Ada Fenske, a good-natured widow living alone in her island cottage, bears a resemblance to the matriarchal figures found in those films. The widow displays a wholesomeness and integrity typical of the humble 'Oma' characters whose traditional values and lifestyle are threatened by the arrival of strangers, who challenge or cannot understand the principles of the local community. Contemporary reviews, however, were less inclined to see Glowna's comedy drama as a *Heimatfilm*; impressed by the lead performance of the respected East Berlin stage actress, Else Grube-Deister, reviewers made quite different connections, with Grube-Deister's character referred to as a 'Mutter Courage' of the *Wende*.⁸⁰ The character does not only show continuity with the theatre. Strong female protagonists, and Ada is the first of many self-assured east German women in post-unification film, were a tradition in *DEFA* films, examples of which can be found throughout the state's production history, from Kurt Maetzig's *Die Buntkarierten* (1948) to *Solo Sunny*. Ada's circumstances may differ from those of her cinematic predecessors, but her resistance recalls the *modus operandi* of those earlier women, involving a kind of principled opposition that counters the ideologically suspect or politically expedient strategies employed by her opponents. Despite this thematic continuity, the film does invoke the *Heimatfilm* tradition. Like those old *Heimatfilme*, Glowna's film flaunts the beauty of its island location and its traditions. But despite the film's flattering visual representation of Rügen, one of the east's most popular resorts, *Der Brocken*'s narrative does not represent a holiday from history. Glowna's comedy of intrigue and underdog defiance against financially superior but politically and morally corrupt forces reflects key issues and attitudes associated with unification, even if the event is never explicitly mentioned. The film builds on only the simplest of plots - the machinations of a western undercover military agent (Zwirner), to gain control of an old family property on an east German island, and the homeowner's attempts to thwart these plans. In its isolated coastal setting, *Der Brocken* is reminiscent of other comedies in which individuals and small communities triumph

⁷⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Community. Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), pp. 112-113.

over larger mainland corporations, like *Local Hero* (1982), Bill Forsythe's Scottish comedy.⁸¹ The narrative is played out within the confines of the small east German island, bar Zwirner's brief excursion to Berlin, and the islanders living there comprise a hermetic society, which, after years of seclusion, is suddenly exposed to western interests and intrigue, a metaphor, of course, for the east German experience.⁸²

The west is mostly represented through an assortment of men -- with the exception of one brief scene, there are no women from the west at all -- each there to reconnoitre various business possibilities. Zwirner (played with aplomb by former Fassbinder associate Rolf Zacher) represents the quintessential western technocrat. A devious figure, he is determined to accomplish his mission (his purchase is connected with German military interests) regardless of the cost to others' livelihoods, an insensitive approach that had come to be seen as typical of the 'Ellbogen-Gesellschaft'. His entrance, as with many other post-unification films, is heralded by a sleek, black Mercedes, which symbol of modernity and token of material success clashes with the rusticity and provincialism of Ada's quaint house, the property in question. Although not nearly as sinister or ruthless as Zwirner, the other characters from the west are equally motive-driven and ready to exploit the provincial islanders as far as is possible, though the approaches and level of exploitation vary. Whilst Zwirner manipulates and schemes on behalf of the military, others simply investigate the potential for private enterprise. One *Wessi*, Raschke, views Ada's house for potential interior design treasures that he might successfully feature in his real estate business. Certain of his bargaining power, he offers to buy a painting by a local artist that he sees hanging in the widow's house. Ada, surprised by its desirability but increasingly alert to such business opportunities, proves not to be the ingénue the businessman was expecting and the latter is taken aback by her confident bargaining skills:

Ada: Im Westen würden sie es nicht so billig kriegen.

Raschke: Ich hab' auch nichts zu verschenken. Heutzutage erst recht nicht bei den Steuern. Ich muss Ihnen ja nicht sagen wohin das geht.

⁸⁰ See for instance, Detlef Kühn's review in *epd film*, 5/1992, p. 40.

⁸¹ This point has also been made by Kühn.

⁸² Von Schnitzler also made Rügen one of his destinations for his 'Heimat Reportagen' in *Rügen – Entdeckung aus der Ostseeregion* (1976). According to Kretzschmar, it was not just the beauty of the location that was the attraction for the reporter but the island's VEB Fischfang. Always keen to trumpet the accomplishments of his state, the documentary is therefore not a simple holiday programme but an 'Entdeckungsreise' and 'geht über die gesamte Insel und zeigt das makellose Leben im Sozialismus'. In Kretzschmar, p. 126. See also Anna Funder's post-GDR account of Stasi operatives and victims, which contains an insightful interview with the impenitent von Schnitzler. In *Stasiland* (London: Granta, 2003), 129-139.

Ada: Aber dafür haben sie vierzig Jahre besser gelebt.

Raschke: Ich hab' doch keine Schuld, dass das bei Ihnen so war

Ada: Aber Ich, was?!

Raschke: Ich möchte mich mit Ihnen jetzt nicht streiten.

Ada: Doch, ich will mich streiten! Glauben Sie wenn Sie hier gelebt hätten, Sie hätten irgendwas anderes gemacht als wir, ha?

This exchange does not simply demonstrate Ada's assertiveness, it also gives voice to two of the major issues in post-*Wende* Germany, the west's opposition to a taxation policy initiated to prop up the east's parlous economy, and the east Germans' refusal to accept any responsibility for the GDR's failings.⁸³ It also heightens the antagonism between east and west already detectable in previous scenes. In keeping with the conventions of the film's comedy genre, such confrontational exchanges are, however, kept to a minimum, though this does not lessen their impact when they do arise. This is not untypical of Glowna's film, which frequently punctuates the comedy-intrigue with more serious moments, before launching into farce once again. Mostly the comic tempo is maintained via an assortment of exaggerated characters, ranging from effusive ex-Party functionaries hoping to exploit their connections with western interests, to simple islanders who demonstrate only a primitive understanding of events taking place around them.

The west Germans are little better served by Glowna's film, being mostly portrayed as shrewd venture capitalists whose interests in the east are based only on its economic potential. But unlike other *Wende* comedies, *Der Brocken* does not rely exclusively on such overstated characterisations and Glowna brings some balance to the east/west stereotypes. The west German, Herr Naujock, for example, identifies a potential business opportunity at Ada's home and proposes that she and her friends provide him with hand-knitted pullovers, confident of their value in the west. Like the other west Germans in the film, Naujock recognises the commercial value of the east's rustic authenticity but, in contrast to his fellow entrepreneurs, he is presented as someone prepared to combine his experience of the market and the islanders' marketable skills in order to establish a joint venture, initiating the kind of economic co-operation that was much desired after unification. Despite the apparent fairness of such business strategies, *Der Brocken* does not focus on this kind of partnership or

⁸³ See, *inter alia*, Helga A. Welsh, Andreas Pickel and Dorothy Rosenberg, 'East and West German Identities. United and Divided?', in Jarausch (1997), 103-137, p. 121.

urge collaboration between east and west. This is partly explained by the film's indictment of western business practices in general. When Ada wonders that such labour-intensive products can make any profit, Naujock assures her that the mass-produced items, which he himself manufactures, are in fact poor quality and that hand-made goods are at a premium. This is not the only comment in the film to offer such critical truisms about the west's market economy and hints at Glowna's thesis of local, domestic products and small cottage industry being a better alternative to the mass-production of capitalist practices in the west.

If the west is represented by an assortment of carpetbaggers keen to import their business methods while they export the profits, the east is mostly represented as a naïve community, inexperienced in the ways of market-capitalism. Glowna's film does, however, identify fissures within the east German community. Although the greatest threat to the island *Heimat* is posed by the west in the form of anonymous corporations whose decisions pose potentially disastrous consequences for the local industries, and the forceful entrepreneurs keen to exploit the islanders' naivety, the island itself is home to several disagreeable characters. Chief among these is the former local Party secretary, demoted to archival clerk in the town hall, where he presides over dusty documents amidst redundant GDR placards and the ephemera of a finished regime. Devious and rather unpleasant though he may be, Bräseke lacks the capacity for terror with which such characters are usually endowed in other films - as in Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Apfelbäume* (1992) or Michael Gwisdeck's *Abschied von Agnes* (1993). Instead, he counts as a rather pitiful figure who hopes that things will be as they once were: 'Freu' dich nicht zu früh', he warns his stepdaughter, 'es kommen noch wieder andere Zeiten'. Other undesirables include the mayor, who is vaguely linked to the Stasi and who reluctantly colludes in Zwirner's scheme for gaining possession of Ada's home. The local bank's surveyor, too, is open to a little bribery, agreeing to undervalue the house, thus weakening Ada's bargaining position.

This shifty trio, all men in their 50s and 60s, are the exception to the otherwise decent islanders, who mostly show themselves willing to help one another and make the best of difficult times: the young man who taxis Ada around in his *Lada*, the fisherman, who contravenes new rules and sells Ada fish fresh from the boat, and others who help steal sheep destined for slaughter. Only one family, redundant since the *Wende* and surviving on state benefits, remains impassive to Ada's 'pro-active'

enterprise, and apparently inured to their marginalised and impotent role in the new Germany. When Ada challenges their apathetic outlook, ironically suggesting that 'früher war alles besser?', the husband responds, 'will ich nicht sagen. Aber irgendwie schon'. Glowna frequently ends dialogues with such remarks, which offer thoughtful observation but resist any further resolution. It is again heard in an exchange between Ada and Zwirner:

Zwirner: Glauben Sie, Sie können die DDR retten mit Marmeladenkochen und Saftpresen und Pulloverstricken?

Ada: Die DDR gibt's nicht mehr, Herr Zwirner.

Zwirner: *In vielen Köpfen aber schon.* [My emphasis].

This device is used once more in the final scene amidst the carnival atmosphere of the celebration party in a drunken discussion between two of the west Germans. Here, Glowna's film offers an exchange that is interesting for its rare articulation of opposing western attitudes towards unification -- one hesitant, the other confident -- though a final, bathetic line rescues it from too didactic a conversation:

Naujock: (referring to the islanders) Sie sind aus dem Winterschlaf erwacht.

Raschke: Aber alle wohl nicht. Das macht mir angst und bange, was das kostet – das kann uns alle pleite machen.

Naujock: Sie aber nicht, Herr Raschke, Sie verdienen noch...

(Drunken east German bystander): Wir sind Deutsche...wie Ihr!

Naujock: Erstmal ein Paar kräftige Finanzspritze, dann läuft die ganze Sache ganz von allein. Wirtschaftswunder, nur so.

Raschke: *Aber irgendwie sind sie doch anders als wir.* [My emphasis].

Such dialogue provides insight into Glowna's attitude to the new, united Germany. The director does not hesitate in presenting the west's interest in the eastern *Länder* as one driven by financial self-aggrandisement with little thought to the consequences for the local community. Mostly they are introduced as 'Glücksritter', to borrow Reißig's term, who arrive like some modern cavalry in a host of Mercedes speeding across the plain towards Ada's house. Even Naujock, though a more sympathetic *Wessi* than the villainous Zwirner and foolish Raschke, is ultimately interested only in the profit margin of the potential business. Glowna attempts to offer greater balance in his depiction of the eastern locals, but in so doing resorts to familiar tropes, with the officious and corruptible SED/Stasi characters set up against the non-partisan, good and honest locals, who in their simple and inoffensive ways confirm the *Gemütlichkeit* of the GDR. The solution that Glowna provides in response to the west's simultaneous

exploitation and neglect of the east is a curious mix of old GDR-style socialist principles, as in the call for collective responsibility -- the collective, as it were, winning the battle against diverse individual interests -- policy advice (more investment, as advocated by both Ada and Naujock), and a belief in the more western concept of individual responsibility, which belies the difficulties facing such communities.

What the east Germans lack in experience, they make up for in solidarity and in a sense of communal enterprise. By the end, the successes appear to involve most of the island, even including the corrupt town officials who are permitted to share in Ada's triumph. Though those from the west essentially facilitate the island's reversal in fortunes, providing as they do the market, the impetus and the business practices so lacking among the easterners, they are mostly presented as superficial and lacking real values. Seeing the modern sculptures that Ada's nephew produces, the *Wessis* are only able to appreciate them in terms of functionality and material desirability, rather than simply as art in and for itself. Similarly, the importance of kinship and community -- 'da kommen diese häßlichen Kinder', one Wessi mutters on seeing his children arrive -- has to them become subordinate to the primacy of business and of profit. The east Germans, meanwhile, rapidly acquaint themselves with a new way of life and with the different demands of post-unification society whilst at the same time managing to retain their fundamentally decent -- east German -- values. Ada confirms as much when she decides that she will forgo her dream of one day visiting Mont Blanc and, recognising the busy times ahead, settles instead for a more modest outing, 'mit allen Mitarbeiter', to the Harz mountains. This willingness to sacrifice her dreams and her reiterated dedication to her community echoes the kind of rhetoric heard in the GDR in previous decades, while the planned trip recalls the GDR tradition of group outings for workers that was an annual event in many companies. The celebration party at the end of the film -- a standard ending in the original *Heimatfilme* -- offers something of a didactic coda to the issues raised.⁸⁴ Asked to make a speech, the unassuming Ada takes to the stage, from which she entreats her fellow islanders to invest their money. Her final phrase, 'Ohne Investition – keine Zukunft...es liegt an uns', which sounds not

⁸⁴ See Naughton, p. 145.

unlike a political slogan, reminds those gathered (including some westerners) that the responsibility for future success lies with them all.⁸⁵

The island's cosy community, whose members are willing to help one another in troubled times, continues the GDR's oft-mentioned *Nischengesellschaft* with their system of exchange and mutual co-operation and the low-key resistance to authority.⁸⁶ Whilst there is little indication of the islanders' affiliation to the previous regime -- Ada's few comments hint at a self-perceived victim status -- their attitude to the recent social and political changes is often ambivalent. Sufficient evidence is presented to allow a degree of (self-)pity, be it in the policies affecting the fishermen, who must send their harvest to Hamburg, leaving the locals with nothing, or the shepherd, who is instructed to send his uneconomical flock to slaughter. The disagreement between the islanders and the western mainlanders ultimately confirms Dahn's assessment of the conflict between east and west as one between wealthy, professional organisations and the folksier 'Bürgerinitiative', which relies on communal interdependence and sheer spirit.⁸⁷

Der Brocken does not attempt to argue the case for the similarities between east and west; if anything, it confirms the territorial differences in character and identity. Raschke's suspicion that they are 'irgendwie anders' -- the inscrutability of this difference hints at the complexity of the issue -- is not the only comment to suggest this. When it transpires that Ada's nephew, Funke, is the mayor's son, the aunt exclaims, with some relief, 'dann bist du ja gar kein Wessi – nicht mal ein halber!', even progeny and identity have managed to triumph over adversity, for the blossoming relationship between the nephew and the young woman staying with Ada is not a relationship between east and west, as previously thought, but now a pure east German affair. The film may, then, offer the case for further financial investment and advance collective responsibility as a course of action for the future, but, contrary to Glowna's appeal, it stops short of prompting east and west towards cohabitation or procreative integration, settling instead for nothing more than mutual tolerance.

⁸⁵ This entreaty corresponds with Glowna's own opinion. The director told one interviewer that it was necessary to combat the 'verrückte DDR-Nostalgie' and that, 'wenn wir mit wachen, blitzenden Augen auf unsere Gegenwart und Zukunft gucken, kommen wir vielleicht viel schneller zusammen'. In René Römer, 'Dein Lebens-Budget voll ausschöpfen', *Junge Welt*, 21.2.1992.

⁸⁶ The local population is a literal manifestation of Bauman's 'vision of community [which is] that of an island of homely and cosy tranquillity in a sea of turbulence and inhospitality'. In Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 182.

⁸⁷ See Dahn (1994), p. 22.

Heimat Found? Go Trabi, Go II. Das War der Wilde Osten

The success of Timm's earlier *Trabi* film predictably gave rise to a sequel, which was released two years later in 1992. Though intended to capitalise on the format of its predecessor, with the *Trabi* even earning an opening credit, the follow-up, *Go Trabi Go II. Das war der wilde Osten*, showed more interest in acknowledging issues relevant to the east than had its predecessor. Where Timm's film had largely avoided specific references to contemporary developments, Wolfgang Büld's and Rheinhard Klooss's film focuses on the consequences of unification for the region and examines in particular the mounting tensions between east and west Germans, a conflict that was only fleetingly acknowledged in the original.

The attention to more important contemporary issues is, one suspects, a way of compensating for the perceived deficiencies of the earlier film. Some reviewers had criticised *Go Trabi Go*'s sentimentality and its failure to address any of the significant unification issues (a fact that has not deterred television broadcasters from screening it most years on the anniversary of unification). Birgit Galle, writing in *Neues Deutschland*, claimed that 'der Film will ja bloß ulkige Akzente setzen auf eine euphoristische Zeit, an die sich noch mancher mit einem lachenden und einem weinenden Auge erinnern wird, die obwohl sie nur ein paar Monate alt ist, dicke Vergangenheit ist'.⁸⁸ The mass redundancies that followed unification -- 40% of the labour force had lost their jobs by the end of 1992 -- presumably dissuaded producers from attempting to repeat the frivolous road-movie of the original.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the replacement directors do not sacrifice the comedy of the first for an earnest representation of contemporary issues; indeed, the slapstick evident in *Go Trabi Go* is even more in evidence in the sequel, once again featuring hapless Struutzs. The sequel's rather untidy narrative -- an 'assault of preposterous and barely integrated events' according to Naughton -- is the result of the directors' attempts to shoehorn a wide range of post-unification concerns including unemployment, right-wing

⁸⁸ Birgit Galle, 'Das strapazierte Sachsenauto', *Neues Deutschland*, 7.2.1991

⁸⁹ See Schoenbaum and Pound, 152-153.

extremism, the *Treuhand*, commercial takeovers, property claims and east/west hostilities into the narrative.⁹⁰

Returning to find Bitterfeld a ghost town, a victim of new economic policies, the Struutzes, unlike their fellow (unseen) Bitterfelder, are offered a way out of this dire environment in the form of an inheritance near Dresden. The bequest is rather less auspicious than the family imagined, being a factory that produces that ridiculed symbol of German *Gemütlichkeit*, the garden gnome.⁹¹ Nor is the business as promising as they hope, since the gnome factory too has experienced severe decline and its future enterprise seems doubtful. Unperturbed, the Struutzs decide to revive the factory's fortunes, which brings them into conflict with the local west German mayor whose grand designs for the area anticipate a rather different strategy for economic regeneration, and with western bankers, who are similarly unconvinced of their plans.⁹² The Struutzes' resistance to western interests mirrors contemporary events, specifically the *Treuhand*'s controversial widespread closure of former GDR businesses (the department is embodied here in less ambiguous terms as the 'Zentrale für Abwicklung'), and the equally controversial arrival of west German politicians to help steward the newly democratic *Länder*.

Critical though it is of the western establishment, *Das war der wilde Osten* does not offer a one-sided account of the *Wende*'s economic impact on the region. The closure of the Bitterfeld industry may be disastrous for the local population, which remains notable by its absence, but it is clearly beneficial in terms of health – the returning family can at least breathe clean air again. This is the single benefit of the new economic policy and while the air may be cleaner, the optimistic post-unification atmosphere has been tainted by the western institutions' uncompromising policies. The administrators in charge of the transition are presented as ungracious and unsympathetic to ordinary people; the politicians are dilettantish and lack genuine

⁹⁰ See Naughton, p. 173.

⁹¹ The gnome's appeal to a particular kind of provincial German cosiness is a more plausible explanation of its role here, I think, than Naughton's mythical reading according to which it somehow functions as a 'guardian of the homeland', p. 194. See Hermann Bausinger for more on its historical appeal. *Typisch Deutsch. Wie deutsch sind die deutschen?* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2002, 3rd edition), p. 60-63.

⁹² Inheritance may be a recognisable *Heimatfilm* motif, but the east German's attempt to manage a factory has other antecedents. In Tom Toelle's West German comedy, *Grüß Gott, ich komm' von drüben* (1978), an East German attempts to introduce socialist management principles in an inherited factory in the FRG, while one man's altruistic commitment to socialist working practices and increased production

commitment to or understanding of their constituents. The mayor is presented as vain, conceited figure, exasperated by his slow-witted (east German) assistants and the locals' lack of initiative and vision. His scheme to rejuvenate fictional Lachwitz by introducing a motorway link, cineplexes and shopping centres corresponds with actual plans for resuscitating the eastern *Länder*. An imported project which denies the specificity of this region (the filming makes use of the 'Sächsische Schweiz', the picturesque sandstone mountains to the east of Dresden, and the town is possibly a reference to the nearby hamlet of Landwitz), the proposal demonstrates the west Germans' supreme arrogance and lack of understanding. The inappropriateness of such a development in Lachwitz refers to the kind of projects that were put forward in the wake of unification. In the rush to modernise the east, local opinion did often fall victim to larger commercial concerns. As corporations moved in to capitalise on the opportunities that the east offered, local people were routinely told to accept these features of progress (rhetoric that must have seemed strangely familiar). In *Das war der wilde Osten* similar proposals are rejected by Rita Strutz, who attempts to convince the Mayor that Lachwitz can prosper with its old ways. In the choice of enterprise, the product being the garden gnome, the filmmakers confirm the old-fashioned and provincial nature of the region. Corresponding with the methods for financial autonomy in *Der Brocken*, the moral implicit in *Das war der wilde Osten* is that local economic recovery can be achieved by adhering to the east Germans' old and apparently preferred ways. There is even the notion that they may offer some balance to the ugly corporatism of the west, and that rather than being discarded and declared obsolete the old values can, indeed should, have a place in the new Germany. Provincial, homemade and old-fashioned, the east German ways are therefore mediated as more authentic than the established practices of the west.

The post-unification grievances of the east are, then, far more acute in *Das war der wilde Osten* than they were in the original, though the comedy consciously inhibits any inquiry into these social issues from becoming too serious. This newfound commitment to relevant issues divided critics in the east. While some approved of the characterisations and claimed that 'der Film bringt den Westdeutschen die ostdeutsche Mentalität', others were unimpressed by the film's sentimentality and lack of satirical

in a failing factory forms the basis of Horst Seemann's sober DEFA film, *Zeit zu leben* (1969). On this last film, see Hake, p. 133.

bite.⁹³ Günther Sobe, writing in *Berliner Zeitung*, even went so far as to suggest that ‘das konnte die DEFA beim besten Willen nicht schlechter’.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the filmmakers’ *volte-face* in wishing to acknowledge certain problems that were considered to be consequences of unification and of the west’s influence were presumably less appreciated by audiences, despite the comedic portrayal, and may have been a deciding factor in the film’s disappointing box-office returns. The film’s failure to match the success of its predecessor may also have been due to the less exotic, though by no means unattractive, east German location.

The conflicts between east and west Germans that were briefly, and comically, sketched out in *Go Trabi Go* are far more vociferous in the sequel, though it is the agents of the state that are the targets of criticism: bankers, petty bureaucrats, and political representatives typically comprise the hegemonic opposition to east German interests. These supervisors of the east German *Länder* are disinclined either to compromise or empathise with the locals and are apparently motivated only by rules and regulations. Unlike *Der Brocken*, in which the community comes together in order to defy the individual challenges from the west, the Strutz’s battle with the various authorities represents east German individualism against the west German hegemony. As with most *Wende* comedies, their success depends not on any ideological victory, but on wildly contingent factors: providence, assistance from atypically sympathetic west Germans, and, finally, an uncanny ability to beat the west at its own game - Udo is able to secure backing from an American millionaire whose corporation is buying up the east, and thus save his factory and his employees and his rediscovered *Heimat*. Looking at these films, one is forced to conclude that the east Germans’ chances of financial independence and future stability require nothing more than a few traditional recipes, some old-fashioned cottage industries and continued reference to their own past. ‘Vorwärts und nicht vergessen’, the opening line to Eisler’s and Brecht’s ‘Solidaritätslied’ and later a rallying cry of the GDR, might now be re-conceptualised as a mission statement for regional success.

⁹³ Thomas Klug, “‘Go, Trabi, Go 2’”. Stumpi jetzt im wilden Osten’, *Volksstimme* (Magdeburg), 13.8.1992. Ralph Umard was among those hostile to the film, ‘Im Kleinen Ganz Gross’, *TIP*, 17/1992, 26-28.

⁹⁴ Günther Sobe, ‘Heimkehr und Aufbruch des Udos’, *Berliner Zeitung*, 21.8.1992.

The occidental tourists: *Wir können auch anders*

Unlike the previous unification comedies, Detlev Buck's 1993 film, *Wir können auch anders*, was the first film to be both a commercial and critical success. It met with enthusiastic newspaper reviews, with the film's title frequently, if optimistically, interpreted as a declaration to break with the kind of banal commercial filmmaking that had heretofore typified German film culture in the 1990s.⁹⁵ There was little disagreement about the film's merits and the critics were positive about its refusal to engage in the kind of stereotyping that had become commonplace in unification comedies. The lack of east/west clichés in the film was widely attributed to Buck's talent as a director and scriptwriter, and offered further evidence of the young director's eye for detail and observational, down-to-earth comedy that had characterised his earlier films, *Erst die Arbeit und dann?* (1985) and *Karniggels* (1991). Buck's ability to combine gentle humour and realism in his previous films had earned him plaudits from many critics. The comic, yet affectionate, accounts of life in the provinces had, as mentioned previously, led some reviewers to refer admiringly to a new type of *Heimatfilm*, one that was both sentimental and authentic, with Buck's own background, a farmer's son from rural Schleswig-Holstein, often mentioned as if to contextualise the apparent contradiction of this approach.

In *Wir können auch anders*, Buck continues his interest in the northern provinces and in ordinary, unassuming protagonists, only this time his attention shifts eastwards, towards the more remote regions of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Essentially a road-movie, the film follows two brothers' journey to the house they have inherited from their grandmother in Wendeslohe near Schwerin. Their illiteracy enables the film to avoid Germany's geographical limitations: the seeming endlessness of the journey, a convention of the road movie genre, is made possible by their inability to read road signs or maps. But Buck's film is not just a reworking of the road movie genre set among the back roads and lost highways of Germany's sparsely populated northeast. *Wir können auch anders* mimics other film genres, notably the western, which is

⁹⁵ See for example Cosima Reif's review, p. 28.

referenced throughout, from the mock spaghetti-western musical score to the comic undertaker who must continually recalculate his coffin quota.⁹⁶

Buck's arrangement and subversion of these miscellaneous genres, a 'high-low self-reflexive' narrative strategy that avoids the paradigmatic tendencies discernible in other unification comedies.⁹⁷ In *Wir können auch anders*, the director effectively imports the images and motifs found in other genres, such as the road movie and the western, employing these in a new narrative context. The western had enjoyed an exalted position in both east and west German cinema, with each state producing its own versions of the genre. Indeed, the Karl-May adaptations in the FRG, which, according to Tassilo Schneider, 'generated a pop-cultural phenomenon of unprecedented proportions', finally supplanted the dominance of the *Heimatfilm*.⁹⁸ In the East, DEFA enjoyed the success of a new film genre, the hugely popular 'Indianerfilme', which made Gojko Mitic, the actor whose virtuous on-screen native American routinely triumphed over imperialist Europeans, a household name.

The (domestic) road movie was a far less established, though not unknown genre in German cinema. Precedents could be found particularly in the west, with Wim Wenders the genre's most enthusiastic and original proponent, whose *Im Lauf der Zeit* (1976) is perhaps the pre-eminent German road movie. The situation was, as ever, different in the east, where the strict travel restrictions placed on the east German population meant that it was not a genre much suited to GDR narratives. The genre was not completely unknown in the east, however, and Frank Beyer's much-admired *Karbid und Sauerampfer* (1963), which follows one man's journey to obtain the carbide that is needed if he is to resurrect his treasured factory, might be considered an example of the socialist road-movie. After 1989, the genre quickly established itself as a useful template for unification narratives. *Go Trabi Go* had already made use of the genre, with the escape and (self-)discovery involved in the Struutzkes journey

⁹⁶ The western theme was noted by a number of critics. See, *inter alia*, Frank Arnold's review in *epd Film*, 4/1993, p. 40. Naughton considers the issue in more detail, p. 160. Mittman, meanwhile, identifies the influence of genres as diverse as the 'sci-fi and the Soviet agricultural epic', p. 338.

⁹⁷ Hutcheon's original refers to 'high-low self-reflexive fiction'. Cited in Stephan Mamber, 'In Search of Radical Metacinema', in *Comedy/Cinema/Theory*, ed. by Andrew Horton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 79–90, p. 85.

⁹⁸ Tassilo Schneider, 'Finding a New Heimat in the Wild West: Karl May and the German western of the 1960s', in *Back in the Saddle Again. New Essays on the Western*, ed. by Edward Buscombe and Roberta E. Pearson (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), 141–159, p. 142. See also Gerd Gemünden, 'Between Karl May and Karl Marx. The DEFA Indianerfilme (1965–1983)', *New German Critique*, No.

conforming to certain comic road movie conventions. In charting his protagonists' route into the west, Timm's film was an exception to the rule. The majority of unification road movies attempted to offer a psychological and geographical map of the former GDR, effectively guiding audiences across the under populated regions of the east that were largely unknown to those in the west and which had seldom served as a location in the DEFA films. The genre's relevance to unification narratives becomes all the more clear, given that the road movie provides, as Steven Cohan and Ira Rae Hark put it, a 'ready space for exploration of the key tensions and crises of the historical moment during which it is produced', and examples of the road movie are repeatedly found in more serious films and comedies alike.⁹⁹

Buck resists the style of other unification films not only in his eclectic generic references, but also in his choice of protagonist. The brothers Kipp and Most, variously described by critics as a modern-day Laurel and Hardy, 'childlike figures from a fairytale', or worthy of Wilhelm Busch, are certainly atypical figures in German film.¹⁰⁰ Kipp, a slight, endearingly affected figure in a suit and silk scarf, and the bulky Most, an equally gullible though less dapper figure, deny the standard representation of the prospecting *Wessis* venturing eastwards into the German hinterland. Most collects Kipp from a psychiatric hospital with the immediate intention of driving to a house they have inherited in the east. Thus, despite their unsophisticated appearance and crude means of transport, their motivation for heading east is not very different from that of other west Germans', who travelled to the new states in the hope of reclaiming old family property. Their journey, however, is not a simple route to the old family home. They are hijacked along the way by Viktor, a Red Army deserter whom they eventually befriend despite the language barrier, and together they travel eastwards, a highly eventful journey during which they encounter con-men and bandits, a number of whom they unintentionally kill, forcing the trio to travel further east in an effort to escape the authorities.

82, Winter 2001, 25-38. The genre was later parodied in Herbig's record-breaking *Der Schuh des Manitu*.

⁹⁹ Steven Cohan and Ira Rae Hark, 'Introduction', in *The Road Movie Book*, ed. by Steven Cohan and Ira Rae Hark (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 1-16, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ See Stefan Lux's review of the film in *Film Dienst*, No. 6, 1993; see Mittman, p. 339; also Frank Arnold. Only Bruno S., who appeared in a number of Herzog's films (*Kaspar Hauser*, *Jeder für sich allein und Gott gegen alle*, 1974 and *Stroszeck*, 1977), surpasses Buck's characters in simple eccentricity.

Buck's film raises narrative motifs common to other unification comedies but it departs from the familiar characterisation of the entrepreneurial west German figures found in other contemporary unification comedies like the *Trabi* films or *Der Brocken*. 'Daß sie nicht im dicken Daimler in den wilden Osten fahren, sondern mit einem klapprigen Laster' was, as Michael Hanisch noted, 'bezeichnend' of Buck's feel for the realities of the post-Wende period.¹⁰¹ Hanisch's praise of the film's realism may seem odd, given the film's far-fetched narrative and the bizarre characters that people the film. However, it is not the plausibility of the actual story or the various characterisations that is being commended here, rather the film's individual portrayal of the east, even if that depiction employs the topoi of diverse genres. Asked about his reasons for wanting to film in the east, Buck replied that he was motivated by the 'Bedürfnis, davon nicht das typische Bild zu zeigen', adding 'das nervt mich. Der Osten ist ja nicht nur erdrückend, niederschmetternd, traurig'.¹⁰²

The director's aversion to conventional modes of representation had informed his previous portraits of country life, which similarly resisted the clichés associated with the milieu. His insistence that depictions of the east need not adhere to the narrative and visual codes typically found in such films hinted at an affinity with the east that can be attributed to the filmmaker's own rural origins and identity. Nevertheless, his rejection of the east as 'erdrückend, niederschmetternd, traurig' is presumably not a comment directed at his generic stable mates, the unification comedies, since these, as we have seen, resolutely ignore the starker realities of post-unification life. Instead, one can infer that Buck's remark is aimed at the other representations of the east. Contemporary films like *Apfelbäume* (Helga Sanders-Brahms, 1992), *Herzprung* (Heike Misselwitz, 1992) and *Jana und Jan* (Helmut Dziuba, 1992) offer sober reflections of the *Wende* and may be seen as a correlative to the neo-*Heimat* films, a proposition that will be discussed in the following chapter.

While Buck's dismissal of the bleak representations of the east may have been the motivation for his comedic take on the *Wende*, the result is not a superficial celebration of the new post-GDR opportunities. Nor is it a comedy that seeks to avoid any reference to the realities of the situation, even if the characters are often exaggerated, unrealistic figures. The film frequently acknowledges the expectations

¹⁰¹ Michael Hanisch, 'Eine lustige Reise zum stillen Don', *Neue Zeit*, 1.4.1993.

¹⁰² In Merten Worthmann, 'Dann setzen wir eben eine Kalaschnikow ein', *Berliner Zeitung*, 1.4.1993.

associated with unification only to subvert them. The house that Kipp and Most inherit is not the quaint, rural cottage that the viewer may have expected, nor is it the grand residence that the two illiterate brothers assume to be theirs, but a property so dilapidated that is barely standing. The brothers may be further examples of those west Germans who frequently made claims on old family property but given the condition of the home, the claim is not a contested issue as it was in films like *Der Brocken*, *Cosima's Lexikon* (Peter Kahane, 1991) and *Das alte Lied*, which use such appeals to fuel their narrative. The inheritance, then, serves only one narrative function, namely to lead Kipp and Most into the east German hinterlands. Although the brothers fulfil the road-movie role of strangers in a strange land, little, in fact, is made of their west German origins. That they are from the west is only attributable to a vague remark Kipp makes as they cross the former border to the east, and to an observation made by two local women that they must be west Germans. This latter comment exposes precisely the way in which Buck's film subverts the usual stereotypes. The women's assumption is clearly prompted by the 'otherness', the vaguely exotic, or western, appearance of the three. Such assumptions are not allowed to go unchallenged in Buck's film, and the associations prompted by the ostensible sophistication of the trio is quickly undermined by their speech difficulties and an artlessness not typically exhibited by western visitors in these films. Moreover, the scene reverses the familiar relationship between east and west, with the east German here ready to exploit the west Germans when they realise that the men before them are not the urbane westerners they supposed but unsophisticated nobodies. Buck's protagonists depart so radically from the prevailing representation of *Wessis* that some scholars have claimed Kipp and Most as surrogate *Ossis*. Naughton proposes that such a view is possible, even claiming that it 'rationalizes their movement further east with Viktor, because the brothers show their preference for what East Germans are familiar with: Soviet influences'. Mittman, meanwhile, suggests that 'their marginal awareness of the value of things in a market economy' makes them 'more 'Eastern' than the East itself'.¹⁰³ There are problems with these analyses. Naughton's claim is undermined by her attempt to ascribe a conscious disavowal of capitalist characteristics to the two brothers. Kipp and Most do not in fact 'eschew the westernised GDR with its fast-food

¹⁰³ See Naughton, p. 140, and Mittman, p. 339. Naughton bizarrely mentions the Polish etymology of Joachim Krol's (the actor playing Kipp) surname by way of suggesting a further 'eastern affinity', p.

kiosks, gas stations, twenty-four-hour convenience stores, thugs and con-men' as she claims.¹⁰⁴ These westernised locations and features provide key moments and actions in the narrative. The fact that the brothers' lack of social and commercial skills results in further mishaps is not to be mistaken with any ideological objections or a pronounced identification with the east. Ever the naïf, Kipp is happy to go to anywhere, east *or* west (he cheerfully mentions Scandinavia as a possible destination), whereas Most announces on several occasions that he will *not* be going to Russia. The brothers themselves make little reference to the geographical and political space that they traverse during the course of their journey. No mention is made of east Germany's past or of its present situation. Though Most is aware of the change in currency, his brother naively accepts and later offers an old GDR banknote during one transaction, a mistake that east Germans in particular would be careful not to make. The brothers' experiences at the hands of various hostile or exploitative characters may function as a reminder of the east Germans' own uneasy first contact with the market economy but Buck's film cannot be described as a simple allegory. Mittman's comment, that the pair is somehow more eastern than even the GDR community reveals a degree of cultural essentialism in her reading of their behaviour; worryingly, it also implies that their illiteracy, and Kipp's speech defects and learning difficulties, are somehow eastern attributes. The brothers' en route vicissitudes as they negotiate their way across the north-eastern *Länder* might approximate the challenges faced by the east Germans, but it does not guarantee their assimilation into the east German community. Forced in the end to flee the country altogether, they are finally seen in Viktor's hometown, a small village on the Don, somewhere in Siberia. If not quite assimilated (as Naughton would have it), they are at least accepted by the local community, which seems mostly to consist of genial elderly peasants. No longer inhibited by his stammer or by the usual reactions to his manner, Kipp is able to regale the villagers with a typically muddled monologue, while Most pours and serves rounds of beer. Apparently at ease with this surrogate community, it is not *Heimat* that is regained, but rather its Russian equivalent, *Rodina*.¹⁰⁵

161.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Mittman makes a similar point when she says that the film evokes the agricultural epic of Soviet cinema in scenes where the brothers' old truck steers through the expansive rural landscape of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, commenting that it offers a vision of *Heimat*: 'Heimat, yes – but German, no', p. 341.

Buck's film ultimately presents the integrative possibilities of unification as a fantasy that can only be realised outside the German context. His road movie is thus one that needs to transgress not only the conventions of the genre but also the borders and the culture of the original locations. Even the film's happy ending is conditional on the continued otherness of the protagonists; and, paradoxically, the implied harmony of the conclusion may only be sustained through difference. It is significant that the few east Germans that appear in the film -- and their presence is limited to cameo roles -- are not offered such comfort of community. They remain disendowed, solitary figures. In keeping with the road movie, it is passage that offers the hope of some redemption; those that are left behind are left in limbo, beyond the dynamic of the narrative. The film's only east German character, the barmaid who becomes the trio's willing hostage, is able to escape the dreary hamlet and finds happiness with the three fugitives in a distant Russian village.

Wir können auch anders does not present the east Germans with ambitious schemes for resistance and cultural security found in unification comedies like *Go Trabi Go*, *Der Brocken* or *Alles Lüge* (discussed in the final chapter). The few east Germans in Buck's film are disparate individuals who lack the organisational flair and cohesive identity found in the other films. There is no equivalence to the Strutz family or the Rügen islanders, who participate in various micro-enterprises as part of a collective strategy designed to safeguard their eastern identity against the new economic and cultural hegemony. A group of would-be bandits, who occupy a rarely used back road, waiting for someone to rob, epitomise the passive nature of the east Germans in Buck's film. Otherwise, the local inhabitants are only seen in passing, or as lone figures walking up country lanes or looking out of windows. Those that are seen in groups are usually silent: the skinheads in the local bar; the older villagers on a roadside bench. A wake offers the closest thing to community, but one where little is said and no great community spirit evident.

One can see, then, why some critics described *Wir können auch anders* as a film that is not about *Wessis* and *Ossis* at all. Not that this diminished Buck's contribution to unification discourse; as one critic observed, his film offered 'mehr satirisches Potential als die bekannten Wiedervereinigungs-Komödien'.¹⁰⁶ Yet the film

¹⁰⁶ Lux.

is not explicitly satirical. It does not directly address the problems of unification by centring them within the narrative. Instead, life in the east is only incidentally communicated, seen *en passant*. The ennui of small-town life is visible in the children standing on the roadside, drinking beer and smoking cigarettes. The skinheads that sit in the small town bar and the town sign that warns ‘Fremder, folge unseren Gesetzen sonst folgen wir Dir’, reveal small town prejudice, an inversion of the community values that typically constitute a sense of *Heimat*. As with many other modern road movies, which ‘produce visionary images in place of the absent image of the people’, it is the east German countryside rather than its inhabitants that is repeatedly the subject of the camera’s gaze.¹⁰⁷ The landscape is not just a mere backdrop, but featured in pseudo-documentary detail: the flat sweep of the north-eastern fields, the regions’ long straight roads, the dilapidated bridges and simple housing all appear to emphasise the rusticity of the region, its old-fashioned features and ways. Buck introduces a tension between nostalgia and actuality, between the sentimentally rendered vistas of the east German landscape and the economic torpor of the rural east, home to the disenfranchised figures and those *Wende* opportunists who were ready to exploit – the road bandits, the garage attendants, the second-hand car salesman. *Wir können auch anders* acknowledges these aspects of life in the east but does not draw them too deeply into the narrative. Nor does the film simplify or ignore the consequences of the GDR’s collapse -- as represented by the Russian army’s sudden loss of authority or the uneasiness of the east’s isolated communities -- by presenting them as humorous subjects, an approach that is more typical of the previously discussed *Wende* comedies. Again, one can assume that Buck’s own experiences have some bearing on his representation of the rural east. The film is, in a sense, further proof of the director’s reluctance to resort to familiar depictions. Andreas Kilb makes a similar point when he says that:

der Buck-Effekt [...] wird nicht vom Viehzeug ausgelöst, sondern von Bucks Geschichten: Bewegungen übers flache Land, ohne sicheres Ziel und aus nichtigem Anlaß, off-road movies über Eigenbrötler, die in der Heimat nicht mehr ganz und in der weiten Welt noch lange nicht zu Hause sind.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Bennet Schaber, “‘Hitler can’t keep ‘em that long’”, in Cohan and Hark, 17-44, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ Andreas Kilb, ‘Ein allerletzter Versuch, die neue deutsche Filmkomödie zu verstehen’, *Die Zeit*, 19/1996. Online at: <http://zeus.zeit.de/text/archiv/1996/18/komoedie.txt.19960426.xml> [Accessed 18.8.2004].

In *Wir können auch anders*, seemingly incongruent genres are made compatible: the topoi of the traditional *Heimatfilme* are variously fused with the road movie, the buddy-movie and even the western. These disparate influences problematise Naughton's proposal that Buck's film is a *Heimatfilm* reimagined in the context of the *Wende*. Though she correctly adduces certain *Heimat* motifs -- the issue of inheritance, the tension between town and country, the itinerancy of the two 'bumpkins' and the conciliatory conclusion -- Buck's film cannot be so easily classified.¹⁰⁹ Where westerns often involve the salvation of rural community (not *Heimat* but a *pueblo*) from hostile outsiders, here the protagonists' confrontation with bandits and their unwitting escape from the law takes place within a territory that is essentially foreign to them, a territory in which they are the transgressors. It is important, too, to recognise the brothers' outsider status. Road movies of course thrive on the otherness of their protagonists; this difference ensures their failure to be welcomed in as fixed members of the community or society. The brothers' apartness is not attributable to existential personas, however. They are not the disaffected wandering anti-heroes that people Wenders' road films; nor do they imitate the archetypal road movie nihilists. Instead, they are two innocents looking forward, as Kipp repeatedly says, to 'nette Zeiten', and in search of a house that will never be a home.

The pursuit/escape motif that characterises many road movies is likewise subverted by Buck, whose hapless heroes meander through the empty landscape of east Germany unaware that they have left behind them a trail of dead and are the focus of a major police hunt.¹¹⁰ Indeed, Kipp and Most are oblivious to most things. Their strange manners and trusting nature are evident throughout, and this childlike-innocence frequently makes them easy prey for the various swindlers and opportunists whom they encounter. Their innocence, which is compounded by their illiteracy, extends to their understanding of historical events and current affairs. Such ignorance is not necessarily disadvantageous. Their lack of historical and political knowledge unburdens them of the prejudices associated with the *Wende* and with other social situations, allowing them to travel undaunted into the east and to talk with everyone

¹⁰⁹ See Naughton, p. 126; p. 139-140; p. 154; p. 158-159.

¹¹⁰ Examples of the pursued protagonists are to be found in classic road movies such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967), *Badlands* (Terence Malick, 1974), *Wild at heart* (David Lynch, 1990) and *Thelma and Louise* (Ridley Scott, 1991). Pursuit and escape also provide the narrative dynamic in road movie comedies like *The Sugarland Express* (Steven Spielberg, 1974) and *Smokey and the Bandit* (Hal Needham, 1977).

they meet. Unaware of the constraints that usually govern social behaviour, Kipp, in particular, is prepared to chat quite openly with strangers, regardless of their superior station and unsuspecting of any malevolent intentions. In trying to reach their destination -- and here the film is both road movie *and* travel western -- they come into contact with antagonistic individuals and pass through established communities, even if these are revealed as forlorn districts, where little happens and only death or murder brings the people together. The desire to return home is expressed by Viktor alone. In accompanying him home, Kipp and Most are thus able to discover *Heimat* by accident, where, though apparently welcome, they are and must remain outsiders.

Like *Der Brocken* and *Das war der Wilde Osten*, *Wir können auch anders* promulgates localised social harmony through retrogression. Kipp's and Most's progress across the east begins in their old pick-up truck and ends on horseback (an acknowledgment of the tension between tradition and modernity that was often featured in the genres to which it refers - the western, the *Heimatfilm* and the road movie). After their travels through the neglected spaces of the east, ignorant both of the calamitous events of their wake and of wider contemporary events, the small Siberian village in which they finally come to rest is one in which their otherness is not determined by Most's old-fashioned outfit or Kipp's unmodern *politesse*. Here it is the cultural differences that distinguish but do not alienate them from the local populace, who, like its two new inhabitants, appears to exist in a state of historical and political abeyance, in a reality apart from the *Wende* and from *glasnost*.

Buck's film can be seen as a bridge between the faux utopias of unification comedies like *Der Brocken* and the *Trabi* sequel and the dystopian narratives of later films, which imagine the east as a site of indolence, petty crime, prejudice and violence. The eastern states that are depicted in *Wir können auch anders* are not the pastoral retreats of either *Der Brocken* or *Go Trabi Go II*; nor is the region represented as the physically and emotionally scarred *Heimat* that was to define many later films. Instead, the film counts as a rare example of a balanced mainstream *Wendefilm* that is able to be comedic without resorting to crude stereotypes and is elegiac but never portentous.

Conclusion

The *Heimatfilm*'s aesthetic has not faded from narratives located in the east. The genre has long been a favourite on German television, which frequently screens the films of the fifties and sixties. In 2001, Wolfgang Panzer's short television series, *Liebesau - Die andere Heimat*, compensated for the lack of real *Heimatfilme* in the index of DEFA films, by offering one that charted life in an east German village from 1953 to 1989. The genre continues to find favour among producers and directors. Aspects of the idealised eastern *Heimat* surface, for example, in Gordian Maugg's *Zutaten für Träume* (2001), in which two former lovers and celebrated chefs face one another in a series of cooking competitions, a contest that is ultimately less about cooking than about wider tensions between east and west (characterised as a conflict between a quaint and honest community-orientated region and an individualistic and superficial society). The influence of the *Heimatfilm* is obvious, too, in Klaus Gietinger's *Heinrich der Säger*, made in 2001. Gietinger, whose acclaimed *Daheim sterben die Leut'* was considered to have revitalised the flagging *Heimatfilm*, returned to the provinces, specifically to Thüringen, whose picturesque forests and hills constitute a quintessential *Heimatfilm* location. Gietinger's comedy-drama revisits the earlier *Wende* comedies in which determined locals defend their *Heimat* against the financial interests of the west. Not the threat to property is the issue in *Heinrich der Säger*, but the threat to the local train route, which is timetabled for closure by its western owners. Using numerous tools, from hi-tech gadgets to voices from the spirit world, a trio of resourceful locals sets about sabotaging the lines and disrupting the police's investigation into the mysterious Säger's activities. Although the film's plot echoes those of *Der Brocken* and *Go Trabi Go II*, the conclusion is closer to that of Buck's film: having evaded the police, the trio relocates to South America, where the three east Germans find an *ersatz* community among the native people. Unlike *Wir können auch anders*, Gietinger's film had few admirers and barely made any impression at the box-office.

Despite the comic approach the films discussed in this chapter take and the fanciful solutions they propose, they do reflect the difficult consequences of unification. One of the most important of these is the threat to *Heimat* and to community identity (a

metaphor for the wider east German identity) posed by western interests and, to a lesser extent, eastern recidivists – the diehard communists or dim-witted fascists that periodically come into view. In engaging with these themes, the *Wendefilme* evoke the cinematic *Heimat* tradition with plot devices familiar to the post-war genre revived and redeployed in a modern context, as Naughton's study clearly illustrates. The subjects and motifs in these modern films may be recycled but their relevance is not diminished by their generic provenance, since these modern narratives, despite being comedies, politicise the *Heimatfilm* aesthetic.¹¹¹ Subjects such as the inheritance claims and the outsider/native nexus that were characteristic of the post-war *Heimatfilme* relate, as we have seen, to acute issues in the post-GDR context even if the films offer a comical resolution. The directors look to these *Heimatfilm* topoi as a means of commenting on contemporary concerns. The conflict between community and outsiders, for example, assumes greater social relevance in these films than it was traditionally seen to in the original genre.¹¹² This is partly attributable to the actual circumstances of unification. The process of integrating the east with the Federal Republic, which resulted in much criticism of the specific policies, naturally had more of a direct influence on the eastern *Länder* than in the west (though west Germans have also felt the impact though increased taxation to help fund the economic re-generation of the east). These films present the east as a region explored and colonised by the west, an interpretation that arouses sympathy for the colonised subjects among those in the old *Länder*.

Often the *Heimatfilm* heritage is perceptible in the visual look of the films. One scene in *Go Trabi Go II*, in which Rita Struutz's picnic with the mayor and their stroll through the forest -- a rendezvous that initially hints at a possible union between the two Germanys -- echoes the kitsch rural scenes of some *Heimatfilme*. However, the idyllic scene, which for Rita is the embodiment of *Heimat* but for the ambitious mayor a site for future development and modernisation, finally leads to discord and not to any

¹¹¹ See Peter Blickle, who argues that 'in Heimat, politics is aestheticized and aesthetics is politicised', p. 138.

¹¹² Antagonism between *Ossis* and *Wessis* in the old Federal States doubtless also exists -- the sheer number of east German economic refugees relocating to the west makes this more than likely -- yet it is the conflicts that occur in the east that have tended to dominate in post-unification discourse. Manfred Stelzer's TV comedy, *Grüß Gott, Genosse!* (1993) is one of the few films to portray an east German's attempt to find footing in the west. Stelzer's protagonist finds that his past comes back to haunt him and his new position and status in his new Bavarian *Heimat* is compromised by the revelation that he was a once enthusiastic supporter of the SED. The experience of an east German in west Germany is raised in Matthias Glasner's *Die Mediocren* (1995), a twenty-something comedy about a group of young friends whose friendship is threatened when they discover that one of them is an *Ossi*.

romantic alliance. The cinematographic aesthetic, a kind of *Heimatfilm* veneer, did not completely disappear from German filmmaking and continues to be evident in television productions and series (one thinks of the popular ZDF *Heimat*-soaps, *Schwarzwaldklinik* or *Marienhof*). The genre's aesthetic influence on these films is clearly visible, and this recourse to an established cinematic tradition appears to have been a convenient means of representing the east, of making the unfamiliar familiar.

Whilst these *Wende* comedies draw on *Heimatfilm* motifs, they depart from the paradigm of the original genre in a number of ways. Unlike the films of the fifties, the post-unification narratives are geographically and historically fixed. Their locations tend to be recognisable places (Rügen and the Sächsische Schweiz, rather than an anonymous alpine/rural setting); and the action is historically determined by certain calendrical details (the *Treuhand*'s period of operation; the currency union). All the same, one should recognise that these films are not primarily concerned with accuracy or authenticity; nor are they intended as social critical narratives.¹¹³

The films offer an appealing mix of tradition, solidarity, individual strength, family responsibility and simple morality against the exploitation and unsympathetic policies of anonymous western corporatism. Nevertheless, their appeal lies in a sympathetic representation of the underdog that is not necessarily determined by a definite regional loyalty or identity. So insensitive are the vulgar commercial plans of the west that western audiences might conceivably identify with the Strutzkes' struggles against their adversaries, or Ada Fenske's resistance to the various underhand methods employed by her antagonists. In their exaggerated characterisations, these *Wessis* function as negative representatives of the FRG, whose conduct would be similarly inexcusable in their local context. Equally, the films' east German heroes may appeal to western audiences on the strength of their personality, rather than a specifically eastern pedigree. For western viewers, Udo's *Sächsisch* may announce his regional origins but the accent is more likely to amuse than to alienate. At the same time, the films include a sufficient number of specifically east German details to ensure their resonance with audiences in the east; so, whilst viewers in *Schleswig Holstein* might sympathise with the provincials' resistance to metropolitan intrusions,

¹¹³ That *Das war der Wilde Osten*'s most direct criticism of life in the New Germany should be articulated in the lyrics of the closing musical sequence (accompanying the credits and the audience's departure from the cinema) is hardly evidence of any committed social critique. See Naughton, p. 204.

viewers in Brandenburg might identify with the protagonists in the particular social and economic context of the *Wende*.

The sympathy that is extended to protagonists like Udo Struutz and Ada Fenske is not unconditional; nor is it motivated simply by their dire circumstances. The characters are not sympathetic by virtue of their East German origins. Since their east German status is not by itself a signal for empathy or understanding, the filmmakers must imbue their protagonists with ostensibly ahistorical, apolitical qualities. To that end, the protagonists' east German specificity is in no way linked to the character of the SED state. To emphasise this, the films' heroes are distinguishable from the SED goons that occasionally appear. Udo's adversary in the second of the *Trabi* films may be west German, but his subordinates are clearly former SED cadres – their allegiance hinted at by the red socks they still each wear. And though Ada Fenske resists those western entrepreneurs who would intrude on her community, this is not an indication of any posthumous loyalty to the defunct state, a fact that is emphasised by her opposition to the old guard, the island's insidious ex-officials and bureaucrats.

With the protagonists therefore set apart from the erstwhile SED flag-wavers and *Mitläufer*, their actions in combating the various west Germans is not attributable to a specifically East German -- SED -- ideology. The solidarity on which the protagonists rely may be indicative of an ethos that was inscribed within East German culture but it is not the defining strategy in the communities' opposition to the west. The prime movers of this economic and social resistance are ultimately triumphant because they succeed in beating the west at its own game. Following a moment of revelation in which they realise that they must employ the same tactics that threaten them, the characters become adept at harnessing the standard practises of the west for their own protection. Udo, for example, shows dogged determination -- a quality that jars with his hangdog look and downtrodden attitude -- in pursuing an American millionaire in order to acquire the financial backing necessary to save his business (and the livelihoods of the small rural community). Ada, on the other hand, motivates her island neighbours to produce a variety of goods whose sale to west Germans she successfully and assertively negotiates. The characters' transformation into self-assured venture capitalist overnight is not permanent, however. Despite their commercial and moral success, the characters retain an east German identity, which is confirmed when they return to type at the end of the films.

Although the films effect a rescue of an eastern identity, the traditions and customs that are under threat are not given as examples of a socialist *Heimat* but of a true originary German *Heimat* that invites all Germans to reminisce and empathise. The films reach back through history to invoke a *Heimat* that attempts to transcend the political and to fix itself within an idealised, apolitical cultural context. Indeed, the narratives confirm one of the prevailing opinions of the former east, namely that the region is somehow more German than the west, that, despite four decades of single party rule, the east has managed to hang on to core German values that have been eroded in the west.

The films may not celebrate a postnational identity or support modern notions of integration. They do, however, correspond with what Morley and Robins have referred to as the “‘small is beautiful’ ideal of [...] Europe’, and ‘a romantic utopianism in this celebration of small nationalism and regionalism, *a utopianism of the underdog*’ [My emphasis].¹¹⁴ The appeal, then, is to an identity that seeks to connect German audiences from Rügen to Bautzen to Saarbrücken, even if the films do not ultimately redress the east/west differences in order to make the case for true integration. The *Heimat* envisioned in these films finally allows the easterners the utopia they never had.

¹¹⁴ David Morley and Kevin Robins, ‘No Place Like *Heimat*: Images of Home(land) in European Culture’, in *Space and Place. Theories of Identity and Location*, ed. by Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (Lawrence & Wishart: London, 1993), 3-33, p. 7.

Chapter Three

Lost Landscapes

By drawing on the *Heimatfilm* heritage, the unification comedies discussed in the previous chapter are able to present a sanitised version of the *Wende*, in which genial east Germans overcome the challenges of transition. The films typically centre on small communities in the east, which, despite limited means, manage to withstand the vulgar pressures of western commercial interests. Combining aptitude with a sense of collective purpose, the fictional communities stand firm against the corrupt power of anonymous corporations. Though the heroes of the films are east German everyman figures, their east German identity is not inscribed with either the politics or the ideology of the SED regime. Their values, however, often bear more than a passing resemblance to the principles enshrined in socialist rhetoric and the solidarity on display is frequently reminiscent of the *Gemeinschaft* values that had underpinned GDR society.

Such collective resistance was, in reality, little more than a dream and the films' happy endings hardly offer an accurate portrayal of the *Wende*'s economic fallout. Many east German businesses were ill equipped and not able to survive the take-overs and the aggressive competition that followed the *Treuhand*'s administration.¹ Since the films are comedies borne of the *Wende* and all its attendant frictions, the films cannot but acknowledge a few of the conflicts of the time. Yet, the issues do not distract from the films' primary purpose. They are, first and foremost, films which seek to entertain, and the hostilities and traumas of the *Wende* are therefore happily resolved, with plucky individuals mustering support against the unsympathetic agents of the state and the representatives of western business.

¹ For further information and details of the *Treuhand*'s management of former GDR businesses, see Peter H. Merkel, 'An Impossible Dream? Privatizing Collective Property in Eastern Germany', in *German Unification. Process and Outcomes*, ed. by M. Donald Hancock and Helga A. Welsh (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), 199-221. In *Kolonie im eignen Land. Die Treuhand, Bonn und die Wirtschaftskatastrophe der fünf neuen Länder* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991), Peter Christ and Ralf Neubauer offer an impression of the financial and structural problems facing agriculturalists in the region (197-205). A more polemical treatment is to be found in Heinz Suhr's *Der Treuhandskandal. Wie Ostdeutschland geschlachtet wurde* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1991).

But does the films' tacit acknowledgement of social and political issues invalidate attempts to categorise them as a continuation of the *Heimatfilm* genre, a genre widely considered to have provided a German never-never world, far removed from the less than fairytale-like environments of the post-war period? Naughton has suggested that recourse to the 'Heimat heritage provides opportunity for sentimental and often reassuring reflection on national identity [...], an activity that may otherwise have been the cause for bewilderment and dismay'.² It is true that the films do establish certain behavioural patterns and responses that may be understood as qualities constitutive of an east German identity. The solidarity and the communal resistance are here presented as natural responses to the urgency of the situation and the coercive (metropolitan, global) forces that threaten the rural and the local.

The unification comedies presented a view of the east that largely contradicted the usual perception of the east as an environmental disaster zone, a landscape polluted and scarred by industries that had been able to operate, unchecked, for decades. Unable to modernise its outdated heavy industry, the GDR's industrial production had resulted in an egregious environmental record. This had an appreciable effect on the local population but pollution also caused anxiety among west Germans whose support for environmental issues had long been a feature of mainstream politics in the FRG - to the point that some commentators warned that standards imposed by the west might be understood as 'green imperialism' and would lead to resentment in the eastern regions.³ The unification *Heimat* films barely acknowledge particular *Wende* issues such as racism and unemployment and they completely sidestep the environmental question. The Struutz family might have come from the most polluted town in the GDR, but Bitterfeld only featured briefly in both films, and then only as a point of departure to more distant and scenic areas (northern Italy in the first film and the forests and hills of eastern Saxony in the sequel).⁴ Similarly, Rügen, a long-established holiday resort for (east) Germans, provided the location for *Der Brocken*; and the heroes of *Wir können auch anders* were able to steer a course through the thinly populated east German hinterland of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, following a route

² Naughton, p. 125.

³ Harold James, 'West Germany's Green Imperialism', in James and Stone, 227-229.

⁴ The region around the East German town of Bitterfeld with its highly toxic chemical plants was regarded as the most heavily polluted place in Europe. See Helmut Wiesenhal, 'From 'Prime Mover' to 'Victim of Change': Political Environmentalism and Its Effects in Central and Eastern Europe' (Draft Paper prepared for a seminar held on March 10, 1998, at the Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Waikato at Hamilton, New Zealand). Online at: <http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/gesint/publik/hw/sub3/polenv2.htm#4a> [Accessed 9.9.2004].

that avoided the industrial regions and impoverished landscapes with which the GDR had become synonymous.

The old Party apparatchiks would have doubtless balked at these visual representations of the east which completely by-passed the achievements of the SED's forty year project -- the socialist *Heimat* was in an ongoing process of construction -- but it would not be unreasonable to surmise that the films' pleasant imagery would have earned their approval.⁵ But, as Stefan Wolle has suggested, 'offiziell gab es in der DDR kein Waldsterben, keine Luftverschmutzung, keinen Atommüll. In der Kitschpostkarten-Welt des real existierenden Sozialismus waren die Wiesen grün, der Himmel blau, und die Quellen sprudelten so kristallklar wie in einem Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre'.⁶ The post-GDR *Heimat* comedies presented a picture of the east as uncontaminated by the hazardous emissions and effluences of the GDR's chemical plants and heavy industry; instead, it offered meadows, rolling hills and the sparkling waters of the rivers and sea. Not that this had any great effect on the western audiences. Perhaps more immune to the allure of advertising than audiences in the east, they were not suddenly induced to visiting this region of apparent natural beauty and for a long time the *Neue Länder* were not considered a viable holiday destination for anyone other than for a few intrepid tourists. Holiday traffic continued to be a one-way affair with the west and not the east the ultimate destination.⁷ Nevertheless, some of those west Germans who did venture into the east returned to report a region that was somehow more German than the west. West German journalist Irmela Hannover was, for instance, struck by the quaint backwardness of the rural regions of the east. Once past the obvious signs of state bureaucracy and petty officialdom that was in evidence at the border, time and the way of life in the remote communities of Mecklenburg-

⁵ The chorus to the FDJ's anthem epitomised the attitude towards *Heimat* as a process of construction: 'Bau auf! bau auf! bau auf! Freie deutsche Jugend, bau auf! Für eine bessere Zukunft richten wir die Heimat auf!'. Not that images of the GDR always focussed on the state's achievements. Blunk suggests that DEFA films were occasionally prone to a kind of *Heimatfilm* aestheticisation, noting of *Weil ich dich liebe* (Helmut Brandis, Hans Kratzert, 1970) that the filmmakers strictly avoided the provinces' usual connotations ("langweilig", "bäuerisch", "kulturfern", "öde", "schwerfällig – plumpe Menschen"). 'Stattdessen', he says, 'begegnet man einer Reihe charakteristischer Landschaftsmerkmale – Meer, See, Wiesen, usw., - Tiere und Pflanzen, ihrerseits noch einmal ausgewählt nach dem Grad ihrer emotionalen Attraktivität (Blüten in Grossaufnahme, Lämmer, Storchenpaar)'. In 'Heimat und Vaterland in DEFA-Spielfilm', *Deutsche Studien*, Vol. 26, Part 103, 1988, 226-238, p. 231.

⁶ *Die Heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR, 1971-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998), p. 210.

⁷ In this sense, the films depart from the original *Heimatfilme*, which also came to function as a kind of extended advertisement for the forested and mountainous regions of West Germany.

Vorpommern appeared to have stood still.⁸ Perhaps, believing the SED's rhetoric, these travellers had expected the rural east to consist of a landscape that would confirm the highly mechanised agricultural policies of a centrally-planned economy. The antiquated farm machinery and the simplicity of the rural homesteads that were reported contradicted such preconceptions, though they perhaps confirmed the state's self-proclaimed *Bauernstaat* status. For some, the east came to represent an authenticity that had been lost in the sanitised rural districts found in the Federal Republic; ironically, such observations confirmed Lange's contention that a West German *Heimat* was an oxymoronic notion. Thus, the east seemed to provide a kind of essential *Heimat* because of its perceived backwardness, a quality that was not without its appeal. The GDR's arrested economic development could equally be considered as evidence of quaintness, corresponding with Walser's view of *Heimat*.

But these areas were not just forgotten landscapes to be discovered by west German journalists keen to journey east and into the past. The rural east came also to function as a critical space of enquiry, from which to examine the idea of memory, the effects of the past, and the consequences of unification for the people living there. If the films previously discussed constituted a post-unification equivalent of the *Heimatfilm*, in which a vision of *Heimat*, however anachronistic, was re-addressed, then these constituted its antithesis, presenting the east as a kind of lost *Heimat*, whose communities were on the brink of collapse. Already the titles of some of the films under discussion in this chapter indicate an alternative vision of the east. The idea of landscape, and of home and of *Heimat*, is hinted at in titles such as *Stilles Land* (Andreas Dresen, 1992), *Landschaft mit Dornen* (Bernd Böhlich, 1992), *Verlorene Landschaft* (Andreas Kleinert, 1992) and *Fernes Land Pa-isch* (Rainer Simon, 1994), and certainly these films share a fascination with the secluded provinces of the east. The east is presented not as the *Länder* of opportunity but as a hopelessly dreary province, from which the protagonists yearn to escape. The films therefore reject the escapist entertainment of the original *Heimatfilme* and of the *Wende* comedies. Escape is, nevertheless, a recurrent theme in the films, with the road movie genre in play once again, though the eastern highways are seldom routes to a better place; in general, the roads travelled do not lead to any new beginning or way of life but back to the place of origin.

⁸ See Irmela Hannover, 'Von Ost nach West und Umgekehrt', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23.9.1989, in Golombek and Ratzke (1991), 65-72. See also Jens Tilman's sardonic reports, 'Grüsse aus der neuen Heimat', *Geo-Spezial DDR*, no. 2, 11.4.1990, 39-49.

This chapter considers those films which comprise a critical response to unification and which communicate a sense of loss when looking at the east, a loss that is understood in different ways – the loss of *Heimat* and community, the *Wende* as a lost opportunity and the loss of certain values associated with the GDR. It divides the films into subsections, and considers the films in terms of particular themes: the east as location of prejudice and intolerance; the attempt to escape the east German *Heimat*; the GDR as a failed utopia and, finally, the role of memory and the use of geography in reflecting the east.

Provincial fears and loathing

While the directors of the *Wende* comedies gravitated towards narratives that centred on east/west encounters, in many other *Wendefilme* the focus turned eastwards and inwards. Filmmakers' attentions generally turned to small eastern communities on the brink, or in the wake of, unification. These films were less concerned with the individual impact of a few west Germans, like the oleaginous mayor in the *Trabi* sequel, or the Machiavellian undercover agent of *Der Brocken*. Instead, the west functions as a more abstract reference; often, the free market's presence in the new *Länder* is perceptible only in the form of advertising and commodities, which are incongruously arranged: advertising hoardings at the sites of abandoned businesses and deserted industries promise a better future, golf courses, a new and improved lifestyle. These western signifiers emphasise the distance, economically and culturally, between the west and the east. The western goods that are a symbol of capitalism's sudden ingress into once forbidden territory appear unattainable and out of place in the impoverished east. Equally evident is the west's institutional command of the east, though the shift in power and authority is studied not in terms of its governance but in its effect. Far from the power base of the new administration, the provinces are home to communities who remain passive onlookers to the economic and social transition. Many of the films offer a portrait of communities, whose *Heimat* is threatened by the need to adjust to new values and changed circumstances. The communities are prone to dislocation rather than coalescence; unification is seen to rupture the east's real existing communities.

The effect of unification is especially noticeable in two films of the period, Helke Misselwitz's *Herzsprung* (1992) and Helma Sanders-Brahms's *Apfelbäume* (1992). One of the GDR's few celebrated women filmmakers, Misselwitz had been lauded for her documentaries, particularly *Winter adé* (1985), but had never been given the opportunity to make feature films by DEFA, a decision that was the cause of some frustration for the prize-winning filmmaker and 'Meisterschülerin' of Heiner Carow.⁹ In *Herzsprung*, Misselwitz turned her attention to rural Brandenburg during the early days of unification. Misselwitz's background in documentaries explains the documentary aesthetic that informs her debut feature (prolonged, static shots of the barren winter landscape), although this is by no means consistent throughout. There are theatrical sequences, too, and moments of artifice (the actor, Ben Becker, plays two roles for no obvious reason), and a combination of styles that Nora M. Alter has described as a "magical realist" fusion of DEFA social realism and Hollywood, UFA, or ZDF illusionism'.¹⁰ Red functions as a colour motif, compromising the realist tone, while the film's music, a heady mix that mingles the melancholic with the exotic, rejects the sombre soundtracks that typically accompany such gloomy material.

The *Heimatfilm* is also referenced by Misselwitz. The genre is clearly alluded to in the opening scene, where *Heimat* as a harmoniously imagined rural past is briefly invoked by a group of women sitting in a circle, plucking geese and singing an old-fashioned *Küchenlied*, entitled 'Süße Heimat'. But *Herzsprung* is no paean to the *Heimat* ideal. What quaint rural past there may have been has long since disappeared. A pitiful village, its streets muddy, its buildings disintegrating, *Herzsprung* is far removed from the aestheticised locales of *Heimatfilme*. The Ost-Prignitz *Heimat* of contemporary Brandenburg is no rural idyll, providing a home for contented communities, but an area that suffered decades of neglect during the GDR and which has fared no better since. As with other rural districts in the east, it continues to be economically disadvantaged and struggles to survive. Misselwitz's film captures the pessimism, revealing a region in which business are closing or downsizing, unemployment is high and little investment is made to entice business there or to retain its dwindling population. The only profitable company is the local chocolate factory, which is supervised by a west German – a crudely conceived figure whose arrogance

⁹ See Bernd Lubowski, 'Vom Herzsprung in Herzsprung', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 19.11.1992 and Ralf Schenk, 'Toleranz und Zärtlichkeit', *Film Dienst*, 20/1996.

¹⁰ 'Re/fusing the past and Present. Cinematic Reunification under the Sign of Nationalism and Racism: Helke Misselwitz's *Herzsprung*', in *Beyond 1989. Re-reading German Literary History since 1945*, ed. by Keith Bullivant (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 129-152, pp. 149-150.

and manipulative behaviour corresponds with the perceived colonialist impulses of western enterprise in the east. The job he offers Johanna, the film's central character, is conditional on her submitting to his advances: the perceived (economic) rape of the east is thus invoked in physical terms, though Johanna is able to reject him.¹¹ In *Herzprung*, such violation is considered in terms of a threat to *Heimat*, a warning note that has already been sounded in the film's opening song:

Und als der Maskenball zu Ende,
da schlief sie ein, das war ihr Pech.
Da kam der Leutnant von der Garde
und raubte ihr die Unschuld weg.
Da rief sie: Heimat, süße Heimat,
wann werden wir uns wiedersehen?

Johanna's forceful rejection of the sleazy manager is not part of a general opposition to the west, nor does it instigate a collective sense of outrage and a protection of community. The east's economic situation is not an incentive for any pro-active response or communal co-operation of the kind seen in the *Wende* comedies. Nor does Misselwitz's film offer any grand schemes for economic rejuvenation; the town's entrepreneurial vision amounts to nothing more remarkable than a lay-by snack-bar and a corner sex-shop, the latter an indication of the west's corrupt values, which has come to figure more frequently in later unification films. The economic circumstances of the new era threaten to sour the 'süße Heimat'. Johanna loses her job at the same time that her husband is made redundant from the slaughterhouse where he works. In Misselwitz's film, such events are not a springboard for spirited resistance but augur tragedy: Johanna's husband kills all the cattle for which he is responsible, before turning the weapon on himself, an incident that does not appear to surprise the community.

Despite this early trauma, *Herzprung* is not a study of bereavement. Johanna appears to adjust quickly to her redundancy and to her widow status, a fact that might be explained by her freedom from an abusive relationship. Nonetheless, a sense of loss and decline underscores the film. Implicit in *Herzprung*'s study of a community in transition -- and, like the other films, the village can be regarded as a microcosm of the wider east German community -- is the community's need to adjust to a new way of life, the difficulty in adapting that led one journalist to describe the film as a 'DDR

¹¹ See Alter, 136-137. Actual rape as a metaphor for the west's takeover has featured in other post-unification accounts, notably Ingo Schulze's *Simple Storys. Ein Roman aus der ostdeutschen Provinz* (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag: Munich, 1999), 24-30. Andreas Kleinert's television film, *Im Namen der Unschuld* (1997), also features a West German raping (and murdering) a woman from the east.

adé'.¹² Departure is accentuated, too, by the Soviet troops seen leaving early in the film; their exit is not portrayed as a triumphant expulsion but as sad withdrawal (accompanied by melancholic melodies). Indeed, the carefully selected musical score, together with the frequently expressed regrets and lamentations, correspond with the generally mournful mood of the film.¹³ Jakob, Johanna's father, muses on the places he would have liked to have visited. Others dream of a life more exotic, with Johanna's friend one of the few characters in these films able to realise her dream and escape to the Mediterranean. For Johanna, an exotic distraction to the drab reality of her life comes in the form of the proverbial tall, dark stranger ('der Fremde'), a mysterious figure, whose provenance remains unexplained, and whose name remains unspoken. He figures as an exotic composite, part dandy, part musician and traveller, a polysemic, overcoded figure according to Alter, who advances multiple readings of him, from 'racially displaced wandering Jew' and 'latter-day Pied Piper' to 'runaway slave'. The latter acknowledges the rather problematical stereotypicality of the character. His sexual appetite, which clearly marks him apart from the provincial, sexually frustrated locals, confirms old racial stereotypes.¹⁴ The stranger stands apart from the local men; where one gang member is routinely rejected by Johanna, and her father is given to voyeurism, women are magnetically drawn to him.

Whatever the specificity of his heritage, it is his otherness that eventually threatens to upset the social, not to mention racial, balance of the village. Provincial east German intolerance -- already acknowledged by the sign warning 'Fremder, folge unseren Gesetzen sonst folgen wir Dir' in Buck's film -- is provoked by Johanna's relationship with the Stranger. Disapproval is voiced by all sectors, including local officials, church members and finally the village gang, whose transformation from village thugs to paramilitary neo-Nazis appears to coincide with the stranger's arrival. The gang's increasingly provocative behaviour, from vandalising a memorial plaque remembering those who were dispatched to Sachsenhausen, to threatening and finally abusing the Stranger counters both the GDR's self-avowed antifascist and internationalist character and marks the east's post-unification shift towards bigotry. The reference to the perceived threat posed by immigrants in the context of a new geo-

¹² Peter Körte, 'DDR adé', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20.11.1992.

¹³ See Anthony S. Coulson, 'New land and forgotten spaces: the portrayal of another Germany in post-unification film', in *The New Germany. Literature and society after Unification*, ed. by Osman Durrani et al (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 216.

¹⁴ Alter, p.138. See also 146-148. Equally questionable is his association with superstition and magic, as suggested by a shark's tooth talisman he gives Johanna and the non-diegetic tribal percussion that accompanies their first meeting.

political situation outlines and contemporises the east Germans' apparent hostility to others. In so doing, it confirms many west Germans' fears about their neighbours' threat to the principles of liberal democracy. At the same time, the prejudice is historicised through reference to the Konzentrationslager (KZ). Again, this is articulated in terms of loss: the loss of certain communal values, the ebbing away of the state's antifascist ideology (even if this had never been as firmly ingrained as the GDR's leaders would have hoped). Having helped shave the gang members' heads, Johanna comments of those who will eventually, albeit inadvertently, kill her, 'ich versteh' das nicht: wir sind doch zusammen zur Schule gegangen'. The comment reflects not only the ideological and behavioural variance between former classmates, it also implies that the gang's new direction is contrary to their political education, and their socialist heritage, values which are still recognisable in the figure of Johanna's father, a former KZ prisoner and 'Altkommunist', a paternal socialist in the DEFA tradition. The film may indirectly allude to the GDR's antifascist past, but Misselwitz is not ready to identify right-wing extremism as a post-unification phenomenon. Countering the antifascist profile of the GDR, the director drew attention to extremism in the GDR: 'latentem Rassismus hat es ja schon zuvor gegeben, auch in der damaligen DDR. Nur wurde [sic] der unterdrückt, war er nur unterschwellig vorhanden'.¹⁵ Released not long after the infamous attack and murder of asylum seekers by neo-Nazis in Rostock in August 1992, *Herzprung* gained additional and sudden relevance within the discursive context of east German xenophobia, though the director was keen to point out that this incident was not what had inspired her film – a fact that was confirmed by the chronology of the film's production.¹⁶

The racism in *Herzprung* is revealed as endemic, even constituent of the east German provincial mentality. Not even Jakob, the solid antifascist character, is above such discrimination, even if his comments are less a question of prejudice than they are

¹⁵ Quoted in Lubowski.

¹⁶ Paul Hockenos suggests that the GDR's political legacy partly explains the sudden escalation of racist violence, with the fascist youth movement representing 'an active, albeit extreme extension of the authoritarian, petty bourgeois mindset that the state had nurtured'. In *Free to Hate. The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 103. Right-wing extremism in the east has risen since unification, but it is not, as Misselwitz correctly says, a post-1989 phenomenon. The GDR had its own problems with neo-Nazi groups, whose violent attacks received media coverage during the late eighties. See Peter Ködderitzsch and Leo A. Müller, *Rechtsextremismus in der DDR* (Göttingen: Lamuv Verlag, 1990), 15-18; and Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger and Patrice G. Poutrus, who make a similar claim in 'Zur Einführung' in their edited volume, *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR. Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2003), 9-21, p. 10. See also May Ayim's article 'Die afrodeutsche Minderheit', which argues that the GDR's rhetoric of solidarity with suppressed ethnic groups did not cross over into everyday practice with ethnic minorities living in the east. In *Afrikabilder. Studien zu Rassismus in Deutschland*, ed. by Susan Arndt (Münster: Unrast, 2001), 71-87.

of political correctness. Though dismissive of the neologisms, 'Afro-Amerikaner' and 'Afro-Deutscher', he assures his daughter that he has 'nichts gegen Neger'. Despite these narrative developments, Misselwitz does not investigate the root of racism in her film, a failure that leads Nora to question the director's own attitude to the issue.¹⁷ If Misselwitz avoids any deep analysis of their behaviour, she does at least focus on its faulty logic. The graffiti that reads 'Ausländer Raus. Ab ins KZ' is a slogan that has little context in a village seemingly devoid of any other ethnic or foreign national groups. Later, one of the newly-shorn men denies his involvement, but identifies Russians, Poles 'und sogar Neger' as threats to the local economy, recommending their deportation to concentration camps.

The rise in right-wing extremism in the east since unification has proved a peculiarly difficult issue for (feature) filmmakers. The presence of the radical right is often acknowledged through obvious signifiers -- typically skinheads in bomber jackets and jackboots -- but the appeal of right-wing politics for east Germany's disenfranchised youth is rarely investigated in any detail. Instead, the turn towards such radicalism is seen as a natural and inevitable reaction to social, political and economic developments. The fact that there are very few ethnic minorities in the eastern states does not preclude such prejudice. Indeed, 'antiforeigner sentiment virtually without foreigners' is, as Patrick R. Ireland has noted, 'a puzzling phenomenon' in the east.¹⁸ In *Vergiss Amerika* (Vanessa Jopp, 2000), a film which follows the relationship between three friends, each trying to realise their dreams in a provincial eastern town, the protagonist's brother undergoes a similar transformation from sullen teenager to shaven headed 'Fascho', a development that receives little commentary, as if such a conversion were a natural reaction to small town anomie.¹⁹ A similar explanation is proposed by Mirko Borscht in his film, *Kombat Sechzehn* (2005), in which the attraction of the extreme right is an inevitable consequence of

¹⁷ Nora, p. 145 (footnote).

¹⁸ Patrick R. Ireland, 'Socialism, Unification Policy and the Rise of Racism in Eastern Germany', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Autumn 1997, 541-568, p. 542. Ireland considers the cause of east German racism in his article and offers a number of possible reasons, among them the authorities' failure to integrate foreigners living in the GDR into the community. Guest workers and political refugees were frequently housed together in separate apartments well apart from the local population, 546-551. See also Alan B. Krueger and Jorn-Steffen Pischke's useful study, which concludes that racist attacks in the east are more likely to occur in rural areas and that the region's poor economic situation is not a contributing factor. In 'A Statistical Analysis of Crime against Foreigners in Unified Germany', *The Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 1997, 192-209.

¹⁹ Vanessa Jopp's debut received enthusiastic press coverage, where it was praised for a normalised representation of life in the east, that is one that did not foreground the region's social problems. See, for example, 'Wolfgang Höbel, 'Mach nur einen Plan'', *Der Spiegel*, 45/2000, 360-362, and Martina Knobens review ('Vergiss Amerika') in *epd Film*, 11/2000, 42-43.

living in the east's grimmer districts (Frankfurt an der Oder), with even its young, urbane west German (from Frankfurt am Main) succumbing to the camaraderie offered by his new right-wing peers.

In many ways, *Herzprung* resembles Bernd Böhlich's TV drama, *Landschaft mit Dornen*, also made in 1992. *Herzprung* even offers actor Ben Becker the opportunity to reprise his earlier role of provincial gang leader. The delinquents' shift to the right is in both films strikingly similar. In Böhlich's film, racism is a symptom of post-unification malaise, though there is no identifiable catalyst. The only evidence of outsiders' presence in the town is a newly opened bank, an arrival that is perceived by some as a threat to the community, and a portent of the unwelcome changes to come. The arrival of strangers in the small community fuels the local jobs' hostility, who employ the vocabulary of racial prejudice: 'wir wollen uns nicht kaputt machen lassen. Uns nicht und unser Land nicht - Deutschland. Wir machen uns gerade gegen die Kanacken. Wir machen uns gerade für Deutschland'.

Escaping *Heimat*

If, as Morley and Robins suggest, 'Heimat is rooted in that intolerance of difference, that fear of the "other"', then these films may be regarded as genuinely concerned with notions of *Heimat*, if not the notional aestheticised *Heimat* that is central to the *Heimatfilm*.²⁰ Intolerance of outsiders is frequently on display in these films. It is only the chief protagonists who are willing to accept others, a sentiment that distinguishes them from their own community and disconnects them from their *Heimat*. Often, the rejection of local values eventuates a search for some replacement *Heimat*. Tangible evidence of otherness, of lives beyond the east German provinces, can therefore be seen as an attempt to connect with some distant authentic culture, one whose distinctiveness, unlike that of the post-communist east, remains assured. The distance between the east German provinces and the exoticised far off locations reduces the probability of the protagonists ever realising their dreams. The fantasised lands remain idealised sites onto which the protagonists, who invariably fail to escape even their immediate environment, continue to project their hopes and dreams. Gabriele Kreutzner has argued that the (west) German left felt the need to identify with remote cultures by way of compensating for a German culture, whose authenticity has been

²⁰ Morley and Robins, p. 26.

undermined by American society.²¹ Similarly, one might argue that the interest these east Germans express for *extracultural* articles and people (trinkets, amulets etc) reflects a desire to connect with cultures far removed from western influence. No longer following a course mapped by the state, the east Germans in the films look for guidance elsewhere. Scientific Marxism is replaced by superstition and magic; exotic artefacts replace what one might call the 'objets d' état', the signifiers of 'banal nationalism' that were everywhere on display in the GDR, on murals and office walls, on desks and above school blackboards.²² Ironically, it also marks the abrupt end of the east Germans' fascination for, and fetishisation of, western consumer products, which were highly prized during the GDR. The exotic can only retain its status if its idealised character remains unchallenged; it is only when such unverified assumptions are contested that the perceptions of the other begin to crumble. This is the case in the east Germans' view of the west. Several of the films under discussion here reflect the east Germans' declining interest in the west. The state that previously represented the ideal other, the superior version of the east, is exposed as a false or corrupt ideal. Its cities prove hostile, its authorities unsympathetic. The once sought-after markers of *westernness* are no longer signifiers of a more successful and appealing culture but reduced to being mere commodities. Financially beyond reach, they only confirm the east's material deficiency and emphasise their second-class status.

The east Germans' waning interest in western goods, which will eventually lead to *Ostalgie's* revival of GDR merchandise, a development that is explored in the final chapter, is already in evidence in these films. The commodities of advanced capitalist production are rejected and interest shifts towards the products of other cultures, to items representative of more authentic or alternative ways of life. Thus, amulets and lucky charms appear repeatedly, suggesting a substituted enthrallment with the exotic and mysterious, and providing characters with material evidence of an imagined, magical life beyond the drab reality of their immediate borders and compensating for their delusions with the west.²³

²¹ See 'On doing Cultural Studies in Western Germany, *Cultural Studies*, vol. 3, no 2, May 1989, cited in *ibid*, p. 16.

²² The term is from Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism* (London; New Delhi: Sage, 1995) and refers to the routinised 'flagging' of nationalism through subtle everyday reminders of the state's authority.

²³ The east Germans' apparent interest in mysterious powers and superstition reflects also the (unexpected) decline in Church attendance and the loss of guidance to which they had been accustomed, albeit grudgingly, before 1989. For further details of continued secularisation after unification see L.K. Davidson-Schmich, K. Hartmann, U. Mummert, 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't (always) make it drink: positive freedom in the aftermath of German unification', *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, 35, 2002, 325-352.

In Rainer Simon's first post-DEFA film, *Fernes Land Pa-isch*, made in 1993 but not released until 2000, a foreign object, this time an African artefact, similarly becomes a symbol of otherness and a mascot of escape for Umberto, the teenage east German protagonist.²⁴ Simon's film was one of several (*Asphaltflimmern*, *Fernes Land Pa-isch*, *Jana und Jan*) to view post-unification society through the experiences of young adolescents on the run. The tendency to use lay actors in the main roles of these films was intended to authenticate these interpretations of life in the east in which the young heroes' course across the region offers an insight into the east Germans' material and psychological condition.

In Helmut Dziuba's *Jana und Jan*, the seasoned DEFA director follows the route of two teenage runaways, who abscond from a juvenile detention centre during the *Wende*, as they make their way across the forlorn territories of the east towards the west, a journey that comes to a symbolic halt at the former border. Their final resting point is a redundant watchtower on the German-German border. Their hideout situates them not just spatially but temporally - between the GDR and the FRG, between an unforgiving past and an uncertain future. Dziuba offers no salvation for its young couple. The film's hurried ending quashes any hope that the viewer may have invested in the pair's future: the scene suddenly switches from the deserted watchtower, where Jana lies pregnant and in pain, to an anonymous hospital room, where her distraught face and anguished cry provide the final sound and image. Dziuba's abrupt and unexpected conclusion refuses to mark the birth on the border as Germany's new beginning. It remains unclear whether the final yell is a consequence of Jana's labour or of a more tragic outcome.

Life is hardly more positive for the young protagonist of Simon's film, *Fernes Land Pa-isch*. Umberto lives in a small town in Sachsen, beyond the centres of political change in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig. Like many of the characters in these films, Umberto dreams of escaping this particularly depressed and depressing milieu -- a world that revolves around his alcoholic mother, violent, asocial friends with few prospects (the kind that are transformed into right-wing bullies in Misselwitz's and Böhlich's films) -- and visiting Africa, the home of his one-time friend and father to

²⁴ Although the reasons differ, this delay between production and exhibition was depressingly familiar to the director. His previous (DEFA) film, *Jadup und Boel* (1980-81), did not meet with official approval and was only released in 1988.

Bianca, his half-sister. Simon's film is rare in allowing its protagonist to escape his environment -- brother and sister relocate to Hamburg with their mother, who dreams of a better life in the west -- though the destination does not symbolise any new beginning. The city's sex shops and arcades may present a colourful, neon-lit alternative to the dull greys and browns of Sachsen but the film counters the east's popular image of the west as one defined by material comfort and social freedom, and focuses instead on the extant social and economic problems. The tower block in which Umberto and his family live is, at first sight, hardly more comfortable than their home in the east, and the local environment has its own social underclass and behavioural problems in the form of prostitutes, teenage gang culture, and domestic abuse - issues that GDR propaganda always identified as a western problem. While the change in residence provides no change in his mother's circumstances, a vicious circle revolving around her alcoholism, financial problems and casual prostitution, Umberto's independence is at least facilitated by his job as a mechanic and the disposable income that this generates. Despite this, Simon's protagonist shows no interest in conforming to the society around him; nor are there any mechanisms in place to facilitate such integration. A recurring visual motif of a tightrope walker functions as a metaphor for the balancing act that Umberto must master if he is not to fall through the social net. Hamburg proves an alienating environment and the east German is perceptibly drawn to other marginal groups (prostitutes, ethnic minorities). Africa continues to loom large in Umberto's imagination and the deteriorating domestic situation, his mother's prostitution, social security inspections and finally his mother's hospitalisation prompt him to renew his journey to Africa, and he heads south with Bianca on a stolen motorbike. Despite the generic impulse of this narrative development, Simon's film resists becoming a road movie and any escape that might entail.²⁵ Umberto and his sister finally return to the east, a journey facilitated by *Ost Kamaradschaft* - a chance meeting with his fellow compatriot, the footballer, Ulf Kirsten, results in a trip back east in the Bayer Leverkusen team bus. The eastern identity and sympathy exists only outside of the east. Such camaraderie does not manifest itself in the eastern capital, and Berlin proves as alienating as Hamburg and Simon's protagonists retreat again to society's boundaries, a strange nether world of counter cultural figures, addicts and

²⁵ The film's first draft, however, did involve greater geographical scope, stretching from Sachsen to Paris and eventually Marseille. The financial limitations meant that Simon's film does not stray beyond the German border. See Hans-Jörg Rother, 'Die Provinz als Reservoir der Utopie', *Film und Fernsehen*, 4+5/1994, 68-69.

thieves. And it is here, among the outcast and the marginalised, that the pair for the first time appear to have found some footing. But this is no cosy home for the republic's dropouts. Umberto's shelter comes at a price and, in a Dickensian touch, he is expected to steal for his supper, a course of action that he reluctantly adopts.

Of all the post-unification films, Simon's is perhaps the most despairing. In *Fernes Land Pa-isch*, the director scrutinises German society from below and offers a narrative that stretches beyond the bleak post-GDR provinces to Hamburg's equally grim concrete estates and finally to the nation's new capital, revealing the west as a society already burdened with its own problems. There is no hope in Simon's film and certainly no blossoming landscapes; community has disintegrated and in its stead is a new society where exploitation and corruption are the prevailing values. For all their travels, the two children are unable to find a replacement *Heimat*. Life in Hamburg presents them the potential for material improvement but the housing estate offers no sense of community. *Fernes Land Pa-isch* does not offer the support network of family or community that is on display in the comedies. Where those films exhibit a unity of purpose, a regional identity that buttresses the eastern communities in times of adversity, the eastern community in Simon's film is both fractious and fractured. Nor does the German welfare state, here represented by officious social workers more interested in punishment than assistance, fare well. The pair's introduction to the group of outcasts living on the periphery of society is the closest they come to experiencing some communal unity; but they are unable to transcend their second class status even within this group. The siblings' futile efforts to find a replacement home and community makes their return to the provinces, to the only *Heimat* they have known, inevitable. The return is no happy homecoming and the final scene, set in a desolate spot in the east, ends with his sister crying as she watches Umberto dancing wildly around a hut in flames, to the imagined rhythm of African drums. The beat becomes more feverish, as their shelter and dreams of a different, better future go up in smoke.

Compared with these endings, Johannes Heibendanz's *Asphaltflimmern* is practically upbeat. His film also follows teenagers on the run, though unusually the principal characters are not east German. Heibendanz pairs a West German joy rider and a diminutive Rumanian immigrant who, despite their ostensible differences, form an unlikely friendship as they travel through the east, where they are later joined by Philippa, an east German waitress and petty thief, who effectively becomes a surrogate

mother to the two boys. The relationship that develops between the three travellers can be interpreted as a positive solution to antagonisms between east and west which even allows for the inclusion of the otherwise excluded (both Germans are ready to help the young Romanian find his brother, though the quest is unsuccessful). However, the characters' mutual understanding and friendship do not grow and blossom against east German landscapes. *Hebendanz* avoids any edifying conclusion that might outline the possibility for a harmonious and integrated society in Germany. Having established a bond that transcends age, culture and gender, the characters leave the eastern *Länder*, which are characterised as an unwelcoming environment, with Italy their spontaneously chosen destination and their fate uncertain.

Failed utopia or paradise lost?

Where Misselwitz's film reports on post-*Wende* life in the rural east through a narrative that is confined to the geographical and temporal limits of Ost-Prignitz, and Simon's film traces life among contemporary Germany's underclass, Sanders-Brahms' *Wendefilm* provides a far more ambitious study of the east. A celebrated member of the New German Cinema, who was actively involved in trying to save the east German film industry after unification, Sanders-Brahms was one of the few high-profile west German directors to draw inspiration from the demise of the GDR.²⁶ *Apfelbäume* focuses on provincial life set within the broad sweep of Honecker's era, beginning some time in the 1970s and followed into the 1980s and up to 1990. Sanders-Brahms's ambitious film addresses a series of related *Wende* issues, including failed utopias, the corrupting nature of office and the GDR's economic demise, which are interlaced in an intense relationship drama that revolves around two young idealists and a corrupt Party official.

The GDR represented in *Apfelbäume* is, despite the bucolic title, inexorably bleak and though the periodic shots of the eponymous trees during the different seasons represent the cycle of life, the overall impression is one of emotional and

²⁶ Where one might have expected some contribution from the once politically-engaged proponents of the New German Cinema, these remained strangely silent when it came to dealing with the complicated issue of unification. Wenders, Herzog, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, and Hans-Jürgen Syberberg have, in fact, shown little interest in the troubled dialogue of unification, preferring to make quirky documentaries, experimental films, or working in Hollywood. Sanders-Brahms and Margarethe von Trotta (whose GDR melodrama, *Das Versprechen*, was released in 1994) are among the few to have responded to unification. One might include Ulrike Ottinger, whose documentary film *Countdown* (1991) chronicled the last ten days before unification, to that list.

physical austerity. As with many of the films under discussion, the opening shot establishes the grim awfulness of the east German landscape. A voiceover, employing standard GDR phrases, *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat, Fortschritt, Klassenkampf*, describes life in this dour environment. These keywords contrast sharply with the images they describe. There is little evidence of the state's forward thinking, or of its commitment to the people in such an environment. The material deterioration of the roads and buildings hints at a related breakdown in social relations and the only struggle would seem to be that of accepting the bleak conditions.

Sanders-Brahms's film differs from the others already mentioned in this chapter in one important aspect. The eastern provinces are portrayed as ideologically and environmentally contaminated and left to ruin by the state's political custodians long before unification had been proposed as the origin of the region's problems. Yet *Apfelbäume* is not simply an extended criticism of the GDR. The opening scene may be consistent with the director's early social critical filmmaking, but the film's formal character fluctuates between social realism and, in terms of German cinema, its generic antonym, the *Heimatfilm*. Having introduced the GDR of popular (western) imagination in the opening sequence, the location and tone alters. A peaceful and harmonious setting replaces the hostile environment of the former scene. At her idyllic country home, the narrator's grandmother sits, sage-like in dappled light, among the trees and tall grasses adjacent to her property, offering words of wisdom to her granddaughter. Representing a traditional, pre-GDR Germany, her old-fashioned ideas and superstitions contrast with Lena's modern paroles and parroted slogans. This pastoral life is given as dignified and pure, enveloped in an idealised conception of *Heimat*. The rest of the GDR is presented as the antithesis of such sentimental idealism, and the state's politics and ideology are, in practice, a matter of drab routine; the land appears as worn-out as the language of progress.

Despite this portrayal of East Germany as a dreary, ideologically complacent state, Sanders-Brahms's film does not deny the idealism of the GDR. Socialist utopianism is revealed as a project that has been undermined by the state's fraudulent officeholders, a collection of careerists and corrupt ideologues. The discrepancy between the grandmother's existence, a way of life that is traditional, natural and outside of German history, and the GDR *Alltag* is repeatedly emphasised. The old way of life has been lost to political reality. Lena's idealism and her grandmother's traditional values are at odds with the society around them, a society manipulated by

the state. It is the state's mismanagement of the GDR that is the target of Sanders-Brahms's film and not the GDR *per se*. Initially, Lena and her husband, Heinz, positively embody the idealism of the GDR. Their subsequent disillusionment is a response to the state's lack of effective progress and the administration's representatives. Their scepticism at the authorities' hollow rhetoric and the Party *apparatchiks* does not preclude their commitment to socialist idealism, a position that was by no means untypical in the GDR.

Criticism of the state is apparent in the characterisation of the local officials, represented here by Sienke, who repeatedly abuses his power: influencing others for personal gain, molesting Lena and finally abandoning the state whose name and ideology he has so staunchly defended. In the end, he betrays his own community and the collective when he returns to the east after unification in order to sell the apple orchards that will be cleared to make way for a theme park. Ideologically hollow, exploitative and self-aggrandising, Sienke (and other members of the local elite) conform to all stereotypes of the GDR administration, a feature of the film that was criticised by eastern reviewers but hardly noticed by those in the west.²⁷ Only once Sienke becomes involved in the pair's relationship does their commitment to the GDR and to one another deteriorate. His malign interest in the couple amounts to a kind of moral and ideological contamination, and the pair's relationship succumbs to paranoia and deceit. Their principles are compromised by the state as Lena conducts an affair with one of the 'Bonzen', while Heinz betrays his ideals and his wife by becoming a Stasi informant.

The state's intrusion into individual relationships is a theme which has been explored in other post-unification narratives, notably Heiner Carow's *Verfehlung*. Carow's film, which is set in the late stages of the GDR, portrays the relationship between an east German widow, living alone in the provinces, and a west German man. The relationship is put under pressure by the woman's family who fear reprisals, and by the authorities – as the result of a jealous Mayor, who objects to the affair for personal rather than political reasons though his censure is voiced according to the latter. Like Sanders-Brahms's persecutor, Carow's villain, though portrayed as a somewhat tragic figure, represents the chauvinism and manipulation of the GDR

²⁷ For a negative review of the film, see Andre Simonovicz, 'Gartenlaube', *TIP*, 12/1992. Reinhold Jacobi, meanwhile, was upbeat about Sanders-Brahms's achievement; and Patty Lee Parmalee was equally positive, praising the director's 'remarkably perceptive insights', whilst acknowledging that Ralf Schenk, the respected east German critic and film historian, had listed it as one of the year's worst films. See *Film Dienst* ('Apfelbäume', 14, 1992, p. 23) and 'Movies Document a Turn', *German Politics and Society*, Issue 29, Summer 1993, 112-133, p. 132.

authorities. However, *Verfehlung* offers no redemption, no escape to pastures new. After being raped by the mayor, Carow's protagonist shoots her assailant, which results in her freedom from persecution but also in her incarceration. The east Germans' freedom from SED repression is not extended to her and in the final scene, set during the *Wende* when the east Germans have finally been released from their confinement, she must face a new period of internment.

The films discussed in this chapter convey the feeling of loss that is linked to the difficulties of transition and the disorientation following unification. In *Apfelbäume*, such loss is more directly concerned with the life before unification. Above all, it is the GDR's failings that are criticised. The GDR's forty year existence is outlined as a wasted opportunity, a period in which idealism was sacrificed to ideological expediency. Attempts to develop a society according to a principled, honest socialism could not but fail in a state that perceived any criticism as treachery and in which lip-service and self-advancement replaced genuine ideological commitment. The bleak geography confirms this view of a failed utopia, where policies announcing 'Jedem DDR-Bürger sein Apfelbaum' are no substitute for a regime as corrupt and repressive as the one depicted in Sanders-Brahms's film. It is not the ideology that is the target of the director's criticism but the regime's failure to realise a truly socialist society. The end of the state is therefore understood in terms of loss – a loss of the GDR's latent potential to which the left always clung. For one sceptical reviewer, the film's narrative had more to do with the unrealised 'Sehnsüchte der Achtundsechziger' than any direct engagement with unification.²⁸ The criticism of the GDR's failed potential is unequivocally articulated by Heinz when he berates the drunken 'Bonzen' at a harvest festival: 'ein Traum, ein Traum war das der Menschheit. Von Freiheit. Und Gerechtigkeit. Und Brüderlichkeit. Und nicht von Arschkriecherei und Beschiß und Lüge'. This same line is repeated towards the end of the film, as Sienke (in a Mercedes, the western status symbol that has replaced his former GDR vehicle of status, the Wolga) cruises past the orchards made barren by the diggers. Updated, the sentiment corresponds with new disappointments and grievances, specifically the hasty dissolution of the GDR. Inflexible capitalist ethics have replaced the east's intransigent ideology as the threat to the eastern community. The hurried union with the FRG has overtaken any hope for reform and ruled out any alternatives.

²⁸ 'Liebesgeschichte ertrinkt in DDR-Klischees', *Sächsische Zeitung*, 16.7.1992 (no author).

Like others of her generation, the director was eager to emphasise that her criticism targeted the GDR's supervision and not the state's original direction: 'it's the socialist paradise that's shown in this film, which doesn't work at all, of course. In a way *it's a sort of paradise*, until the apple trees are destroyed' [my emphasis].²⁹ The orchards function as a rather awkward metaphor and the director's own admission that they represent a socialist Eden and their subsequent deracination amounts to the 'degradation of the GDR' reflects the left's difficulty in letting go of the GDR, which they regarded as sound in theory but flawed in practice.³⁰ West German intellectuals' post-GDR melancholy, where 'mourning utopia replaced an engagement with new realities', is in evidence in *Apfelbäume*, and the film's conclusion offers just such a flight from reality.³¹ Though their idealism is in tatters and their state has come under the *Treuhand's* knife, Sanders-Brahms's protagonists are given a lifeline. In an ending that is as fanciful as those of the *Wende* comedies, the reconciled couple retreats even further from their limited locality to the smallholding left by Lena's grandmother in order to tend her small orchard, a plan that denies the progressive rhetoric of the GDR and resists the development initiatives of the new capitalist order. Idealism is substituted for escapism, finally confirming the east Germans' irreversibly provincial outlook.

The films discussed in this section deny the integrative possibilities and the fictional opportunities put forward by the comedies. The few integrative impulses that do exist in the films are not countenanced. Discussing social communication theory and its relevance to film, Philip Schlesinger has noted that whilst nationality 'becomes an objective function of communicative competence and belonging', not all nations are able to integrate new members -- foreigners or other marginalised groups -- and 'may throw the process into reverse by expulsion or even extermination' of these outsiders.³² It is not only the non-Germans in the films who become the victims of local prejudice.

²⁹ 'Interview and Excerpts from a Master Class with Helma Sanders-Brahms. Conducted by Judith Plessis, Steven Taubeneck, and Penelope Buitenhuis, in *Women Filmmakers. Refocusing*, ed. by Jacqueline Levitin *et al* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 71-77, p. 77.

³⁰ *Ibid.* Hochhuth also railed against the clearance of east German apple orchards (here, a result of EU regulations), 33-49.

³¹ Jan -Werner Müller. *Another Country. German Intellectuals, Unification and National Identity* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), p.134. The left's post-GDR crisis of faith has been closely explored in *Die Unberührbare* (Oskar Roehler, 1999). Christa Wolf had already offered a melancholic view of the GDR as a lost opportunity. *Was Bleibt*, according to Huyssen (1995) 'articulates a radical critique of real existing socialism, a good-bye to the GDR as 'the better half, a loss of confidence in the utopian promises of GDR socialism', p. 50.

³² Philip Schlesinger, 'Sociological Scope of "National Cinema"', in Hjort and Mackenzie, 19-32, p 20.

Those members of the community whose way of thinking departs from the hegemonic order are expelled and even in some cases murdered. Johanna's relationship with the Stranger leads ultimately to her death. Umberto's relationship with Tschibo (also a mixed race relationship) fails before it has even had time to begin. Significantly, the films also mark the passing of any localised co-operation: there is no evidence of any community identity supporting the marginalised communities against the challenges of transition; individuals are unable to find any comfort or retreat within the niche of their families. Instead, the characters are left as individuated and isolated figures, alone in a landscape of ruins. *Heimat* GDR has ceased to exist and they are left in a kind of vacuum from which they are rarely permitted to escape. Whilst the physical boundary that separated them from freedom may have disappeared, other circumstances continue to restrict their movement and their futures. Economically limited but socially adrift, the east Germans are prisoners not of ideology but of the provinces.

Post-unification landscapes: charting memory

The ruined features of the GDR that are glimpsed in the films discussed above play a more prominent role in other films of the period, with the remnants of the past emphasising the east as a site of inactivity and squandered hopes. But the foregrounding of the GDR's material conditions in these films is not intended simply to confirm the east's economic hardships; nor is it an attempt to muster sympathy for a land clearly in need of financial investment. The mining operations that have fallen into disrepair or the disused manufacturing premises serve as important reflexive prompts. They function as 'memory beacons', potent reminders of the passing of the *Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat*, highlighting the neglected state of the east but also countering the official rhetoric of the GDR as a state committed to progress and achievement.³³ The films therefore counter the former state's 'monopoly on social memory' and the GDR myth of continued development and economic self-reliance.³⁴ At the same time, and no less important, the sites render the promised 'blühende Landschaften' as a similarly utopian vision.

³³ The phrase is taken from Douglas Peifer, who employs it to signify 'resonant symbols meaningful to the general public'. In 'Commemoration of Mutiny, Rebellion, and Resistance in Postwar Germany: Public Memory, History, and the Formation of "Memory Beacons"', *Journal of Military History* 65, October 2001, 1013-1052, p. 1016.

³⁴ Paul Betts, 'The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72, September 2000, 731-765, p. 739.

The representation of the eastern territory in these films approximates to Smith's idea of 'ethnoscape', in which

the territory mirrors the ethnic community and is historicised by the communal events and processes whose relics and monuments dot its landscape, so that the land comes to belong to a people in the same way as the people belong to a particular land.³⁵

The east Germans may not be members of a separate *ethnie* in the sense that Smith means (though some scholars have suggested that the eastern population *is* ethnically distinguishable from their western compatriots), but his analysis does have some relevance to our discussion.³⁶ Land and property laws did, as the previous chapter outlined, problematise ownership of east German land, and the countless disputes after 1989 exacerbated east/west relations. But people's connection with their surroundings is as much a question of historical and geographical identification as it is an issue of legal possession. The landscape is historicised; it is inextricably linked to the people's history - to the GDR.³⁷ The ruins on display may not resemble the architectural remnants of a past age so beloved by the Romantics but their significance is the same, for they come to represent a lost time and serve as mnemonic landmarks that fix the local population historically and geographically. Lowenthal stresses the importance of such markers for collective memory:

Tangible survivals provide a vivid immediacy that helps to assure us that there really was a past. Physical remains have their limitations as informants, to be sure: they are themselves mute, requiring interpretation; their continual but differential erosion and demolition skews the record; and their substantial survival conjures up a past more static than could have been the case. But however depleted by time and use, relics remain essential bridges between then and now. They confirm or deny what we think of it, symbolize or memorialize communal links over time, and provide archaeological metaphors that illumine the processes of history and memory.³⁸

But the eastern landscape has become a kind of palimpsest, where the signs of the previous administration are under threat of erasure by new building projects, and by agricultural and economic policies. Certain features (the regime's ubiquitous symbols

³⁵ Anthony D. Smith, 'Images of a Nation. Cinema, Art and National identity', in Hjort and Mackenzie, 45-59, p. 55. Smith gives a fuller account of the relationship between landscape and identity in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986). See also Richard Muir, 'Conceptualising Landscape', *Landscapes*, 1, 2000, 4-21.

³⁶ Marc Howard for one has advanced such a theory in 'An East German Ethnicity? Understanding the New Division of Unified Germany', in *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 1995, 49-70. Detlef Pollack, meanwhile, claims that the east Germans are not treated seriously by those in the west but culturalised (and therefore dismissed) as an ethnic group. See Pollack, p. 2.

³⁷ See also Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 185-188.

³⁸ David Lowenthal (1990), p. xxiii.

for instance, the emblems and flags, the State statuary) have already disappeared and others will do so.³⁹ Some of these films therefore count as the last visual records of particular GDR markers which have all but vanished (the watchtowers are an obvious example).

Landscape features prominently in many of the films with the sites representing the faded symbols and hopes of the former state. In *Die Vergebung*, the representation undergoes a number of permutations. Scenes set during the GDR establish the east as a contaminated region, exposing the coal and chemical industries' detrimental effects on the landscape (a land laid bare by open cast-mining; noxious gases that pollute the atmosphere) and on the people (skin contamination; respiratory complaints). In Andreas Kleinert's *Neben der Zeit*, the debris of the past is on display throughout: a derelict swimming pool, deserted army barracks, a scrap heap of old East German cars. However, the material disintegration does not only serve as an indictment of the state's disastrous economic and environmental policies. The sites featured are places of local significance and relevance, since, for good or bad, they constituted a nexus for the individual and the collective, the community and the state. So while they symbolise the state in terms of production (obsolete and fragile though many of them were), they were equally important to the people as the lifeblood of local communities, offering a source of income and as a basis for identification and professional self-esteem. Building socialism and, *ipso facto*, a socialist identity, had been the primary purpose of these industries even if the technology and manufacturing procedures had in reality made this target increasingly unlikely. The state's economic neglect and complete disregard for environmental issues not only resulted in physical health problems, it also undermined any confidence in the state's apparent commitment to the welfare of its citizens. Charges of environmental neglect typically met with official denial and counter-accusations which labelled the detractors 'staatsfeindlich'. This was not simply a matter of curbing any criticism of the state. It was necessary for the SED to promote the land as lovingly maintained for the socialist cause: 'die Natur mußte so intakt, so rein und so harmonisch zu [sic] sein wie die Familie, die Arbeitswelt oder die zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen'.⁴⁰ The eastern territory was understood as inviolable, as a land in which population and state were investing in the future in order

³⁹ The green netting covering the socialist murals that decorate (or blemish, depending on one's politics) many of the civic buildings throughout the east is an example of the present superposing the past.

⁴⁰ Wolle, p. 210

to build the east German *Heimat*.⁴¹ Industry was to be instrumental in achieving that ideal; paradoxically, it was their noxious emissions and other pollutants that undermined and corrupted *Heimat*. Their obsolescence became proof of the state's failure to devote itself to reaching the ideal it had set itself. The images of crumbling industrial sites are, then, more than just a comment on the GDR's economic mismanagement or an attempt to mirror political realities but reflect the population's precarious identity.

Though the regime is implicated as the institution ultimately responsible for the country's parlous state, the films do not represent a totalising critique of life in the GDR. They show that the GDR is irreducible and cannot be portrayed simply in terms of moral and material decay. It is also revealed as a state in which there was room for utopian hopes and individual idealism, though these individual utopian impulses are by no means analogous to the state's progressive values, a dichotomy between citizen and state that is repeatedly emphasised. The films are less concerned with establishing a case against the SED administration than they are with reflecting on the east Germans' life after the GDR. The focus on the east's material conditions enables them to reflect the disintegration of the means of identification, which has repercussions for both the individual and the community, as they try to come to terms with the present often whilst occupied with thoughts and memories of the past.

Andreas Kleinert's two films, *Verlorene Landschaften* (1992) and *Neben der Zeit* (1995), Andreas Höntsch's *Die Vergebung* (1994) and, to a lesser extent, Andreas Dresen's *Stilles Land* (1992) represent a conscious recording of the passing of time, of the shift from the GDR past to the FRG present. Though many of the films reference broader issues, they centre on individual stories and on personal histories without abandoning political and social realities. These films chronicle the east's transition; the documentary-like fragments that inflect and interrupt the narratives represent a conscious decision to record the actual, to imbue the films with moments of authenticity. These moments -- long takes of locals drinking beer; close-ups of worn faces; the recurring shot of an empty landscape, empty roads -- offer a still life of the east. The inclusion of these genuine East German details clearly attempts to lend the narratives a visual authority, a degree of truth that was absent in the *Wende* comedies

⁴¹ I am suggesting, then, that the East Germans' relationship with their environment was identified and closely bound to an ideological purpose, with a strong emphasis on progress and development. 'A territory', as Anthony Smith notes, 'can also become sacred through a quest for liberation and utopia'. *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 153.

and which had been supplanted by popular stereotypes and histories of the east Germans. The directors' reasons for concentrating on the east's simple stories may not be driven merely by an uncritical desire for preservation, but there is an appreciable determination to make a record of that which is quickly disappearing. And generally it is to the rural locations, 'wo Revolutionen erst 100 Jahre später stattfinden', that these filmmakers venture.⁴² In contrast to metropolitan locations, which have traditionally provided the setting for politicking and consequently for change, the provinces, above all the rural provinces, are often the last to undergo any transformation.

Stories from the Margins

The filmmakers' tendency to restrict themselves to such enclaves, rather than embarking on ambitious narratives about the actual collapse of the SED state, may also have been a question of practicality. Depicting revolutions is a difficult and costly affair and throughout the history of cinema there have been relatively few successful examples (there is Maetzig's *Thälmann* series in the GDR; but superlative dramatic accounts of revolutions such as Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* and *October* (1925; 1928) or Gillo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers* (1965) remain rare). In addition, the east German revolution's lack of action and, crucially, lack of leader -- there were pivotal figures but no defining revolutionary hero -- might explain some directors' hesitancy in representing the population's bid for freedom, though the uprising was not quite as peaceful as is often thought.⁴³ To date, only Frank Beyer's two-part television drama, *Nikolaikirche* (1993), has ventured to provide a comprehensive account of the unrest that would eventually result in the GDR's downfall. Confirming Habermas's theory that the east Germans later surrendered the revolutionary character of the uprising (and that 'wir im Westen haben ihnen in den ersten Monaten die Revolutions-Interpretationen angedient'), the films are disinclined to acknowledge the events of 1989 directly.⁴⁴ For the most part, the films set within this timeframe acknowledge the

⁴² Ulrich von Thüna, 'Stilles Land', *epd Film*, 12/1992, p. 44. Admittedly, the statement is somewhat skewed, ignoring as it does, the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, the Cuban revolutionaries' rural support, the Chiapas revolt in Mexico.

⁴³ It is worth noting that security measures were in place and ready to be deployed, which made many observers anxious that the demonstrations would result in a repeat Tiananmen situation. Though mostly a bloodless revolution, early demonstrators were certainly not treated lightly by security forces. See Tobias Holitzer, '15 Jahre Friedliche Revolution', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 4.10.2004, 3-11.

⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Vergangenheit als Zukunft* (Zürich: Pendo-Verlag, 1990), p. 53.

demonstrations only in passing; the revolution's fault line is distant and its tremors are only barely perceptible.

Though the political developments are sidelined, events left to develop off-camera, the films do engage with political and social realities. Of primary concern is the social and economic collapse in the eastern territories - the torn fabric of east German society that covers communities, families, and regional identities. Avoiding a historical overview of the period, the films do not aim to provide a vague impression of the period and the place but seek to highlight individual details and to articulate the concerns of its subjects. Pierre Nora's comment that, 'memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events' might be seen as a description of these films' approach.⁴⁵ Indeed, it is memory, as opposed to history, that plays the more significant role in most post-unification films. The films naturally have some historical value for film scholars, but their concern is not with representing historical accounts of the GDR and the *Wende*, but with stimulating memories of the GDR - whether good or bad is not the issue. The significance lies in the supposed authenticity of memory over history; the local population's experiences - or, 'mass individual memory' -- acquire a legitimacy that was frequently occluded by the GDR's official history and which, in the new Germany, is in danger of being subverted by a new objective, historical account.⁴⁶ Nora says as much when he writes: 'At the heart of history is a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory. History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it'.⁴⁷ The post-GDR accounts of life in the east provide a space in which memory competes with history, an issue that appeared to gain widespread support and which, as the final chapter will discuss, perhaps validated the popularity of *Ostalgie*.

⁴⁵ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, 26, Spring 1989, 7-24, p. 22. Kerwin Lee Klein offers a useful analysis of the antithetical relationship between memory and history in 'On the Emergence of Memory and Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69, Winter 2000, 127-150.

⁴⁶ Jan-Werner Müller refers to 'collective and national memory on the one hand and mass individual memory on the other. The latter refers to the recollection of events which individuals actually lived through. The former establishes a social framework through which nationally conscious individuals can organise their history; it is possible, but perhaps somewhat misleading, simply to call this memory a form of myth. It is this national-collective memory and national identity which are mutually constitutive. This type of memory influences, but also sometimes conflicts with, individual memories'. 'Introduction: the power of memory, the memory of power and the power over memory', in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. by Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-33, p.3.

⁴⁷ Nora, p. 9.

Andreas Dresen's debut feature film, *Stilles Land*, avoids the familiar locations of protest and the demonstration and dramas that were on view in the GDR's urban centres, in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig. Eschewing the action, though not the significance, of the escape route to the West that was suddenly and unexpectedly made possible by Hungary's relaxed border control, and the mass demonstrations in East German cities, Dresen focuses instead on the almost inert provinces of the east (though not mentioned, the location is Anklam in Mecklenburg). The film's title works both as a description of the town's geographical distance from the tumultuous events and as a reference to a kind of mental detachment that is discernible among the small-town population. The film's characters, all members of a provincial theatre ensemble, lack the pro-active communal spirit and solidarity on display in *Wende* comedies and are generally aloof or confrontational. Dresen's film charts the attempts of young theatre director Kai Fincke to stage a production of Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot'. Recently arrived from Berlin, Fincke's idealism, passion and choice of material for his debut production are, initially, the source of some conflict between director and a cast that is both unfamiliar with anything but standards and unaccustomed to such idealism.⁴⁸ Their objection to the play is not based on Beckett's incompatibility with GDR ideology and dramaturgy (in fact, the play had first been staged by Wolfgang Engel in 1987) but because it strikes the provincial actors as abstruse and irrelevant. The cast members are more concerned with getting information about the events taking place at the western borders (their location being so remote that they are beyond even the west German broadcasting ranges) than they are with staging Beckett's absurdist drama. Kai's vision and commitment to the play, his explanation that it has great relevance 'für unsere Zeit', initially meets with little understanding. For the actor playing the role of Beckett's Estragon, however, its relevance indeed proves too much. In one rehearsal, he reveals such profound hopelessness at the prospect of waiting for Godot that Kai raves over the power and emotional intensity just witnessed: 'es war wirklich gut; echt deprimierend'. But the passion the actor brings to these lines is drawn not from the play; it articulates a frustration, frequently heard in the GDR, at forever

⁴⁸ The decision to stage a play that did not accord with SED ideology is not an indicator of the authorities' new-found openness. Away from the GDR epicentre, the authorities could afford to be moderate; and Anklam was, as one journalist noted, 'die Strafkolonie am Ende der Welt'. Matthias Matussek, 'Rodeo im Wilden Osten', *Der Spiegel*, 22/1990, 194-206, p. 195.

having to wait, whether for material goods, or for bureaucratic decisions or for political reform. 'Warten!' he responds, 'das kann ich nicht mehr hören!'.⁴⁹

Despite the play's bearing on the contemporary situation, *Stilles Land* is not a metafiction that presents Beckett's play as an allegory of the GDR. Its relevance is Kai's fixation, of course, and not Dresen's.⁵⁰ Kai is so preoccupied with his project and its significance for East German society that he largely fails to register the events taking place beyond the theatre, weighing up these events only when they threaten to overtake, disturb or trivialise his interpretation of Beckett. With each new account of events taking place at the border, the director quickly redrafts his 'concept' of the play. While Dresen's film satirises the obsessive artist and the small-town cast (one suspects a degree of self-parody, given that Dresen, like his father, had some experience as a director of provincial theatres), the film resists an explicit criticism of his characters, an approach that has come to define his films. This point was clearly made in a conversation he had with former DEFA director Dietmar Hochmuth: 'es ging uns irgendwo um die Liebe zum Menschen, zu diesen gebeulten Leuten an diesem kleinen grauen Theater, in diesem kleinen grauen Land – die trotzdem ihre Träume verwirklichen möchten'.⁵¹ The relative generosity of Dresen's and Laila Stieler's script even extends to the theatre manager and the Party official appointed to the theatre, neither of whom conforms to the prevailing one-dimensional characterisations of GDR bureaucrats and officials. Made at a time when the GDR past was being discussed and filed according to rather narrow discursive parameters which largely ignored subjective accounts (where these did not confirm the west's condemnation of the GDR's tyrannical character), Dresen's film came under some criticism for being apolitical, and the director found himself defending the film's lack of political punch:

Ich finde nicht, daß der Film zu deutlich ist, denn genau in den Momenten z.B., wo es um Politik geht, gehen wir weg. Das haben wir schon mit Absicht

⁴⁹ Moray McGowan stresses the relevance of Beckett's play for the GDR when he asks 'how could a play about continually frustrated hopes fail to resonate in an Eastern Europe characterised by restricted freedoms and arbitrary bureaucracies?'. In 'Waiting for Waiting for Godot: Echoes of Beckett's Play in Brecht's Chosen Land', in *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, 27, 2002, 133-149, p. 133. Joe Moran, meanwhile, notes that the east Germans' primitive technology meant that they became accustomed to waiting and even developed a different attitude towards time than those in the west. See 'November in Berlin. The End of the Everyday', *History Workshop Journal*, 57, 2004, 216-234, p. 220.

⁵⁰ This is not to say that the play was randomly chosen. However, Dresen considered Beckett's text apposite because of its bearing on Fincke's situation (he decides finally to wait in Anklam) and not necessarily that of the GDR. See Dieter Hochmuth, 'Gespräch mit Andreas Dresen (1992)', in *Defa Nova*, 298-315, p. 310. This may also be a matter of Dresen wishing to distance himself from the numerous other East German plays that referenced Beckett's play. Again, see McGowan, who traces the influence of Beckett's play in a number of East German productions, 140-147.

⁵¹ In Hochmuth, p. 309.

gemacht, daß wir die politischen Momente rausschneiden aus dem Film, jene Punkte also, wo es nach Direktheit schreit.⁵²

As with his east German contemporaries, Dresen's focus is not on the extraordinary (the escapes, the demonstrations, the arrests) but on the ordinary, the GDR *Alltag*, an approach that has characterised his oeuvre from his film school debut, *So schnell geht es nach Istanbul* (1991) to his Silver Bear winner at the Berlin Film Festival, *Halbe Treppe* (2002). The film strives for an authentic representation of the daily conditions in the GDR, with the *mise-en-scène* revealing the daily features of the east German state - drunken men in the *Volkshaus* bar, badly maintained housing, shabby interiors. At other times, the camera's gaze is fixed on the environment, employing a visual style that tends towards documentary realism, a mode preferred by Dresen's role models and one with which he has continued to experiment.⁵³ The long, static shots of the bleak, winter landscape emphasise both the inertia of the remote rural location and provide physical anchorage for the characters' emotional atrophy. The symbiosis of the physical and the emotional, of external and internal, is emphasised in the cutting, with scenes suddenly switching from dialogical exchanges and interior scenes, to silent, exterior shots.

The film acknowledges political and social circumstances - the east's material shortcomings, the frustrations that derive from such lack, the quietist mentality that pervaded East German society.⁵⁴ But a political reckoning is not the incentive for the film, as Dresen's comment makes clear. *Stilles Land* calls no one to account. The film nevertheless provides an insight into the everyday attitudes that underpinned the regime. In true *Nischengesellschaft* form, the members of the theatre avoid the directly political; all frustrations are introverted, all protestations are impotent. A (drunken) decision to write to Honecker demanding openness is the sole act of political brio and comes too late (not least because the theatre manager, in typical 'Schere im Kopf'

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See Karsten Herold and Jens Scherer, *Wegzeichen. Fragen von Filmstudenten an Regisseure. Beiträge zur Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft* (Berlin: Vistas, 1998), p. 210. Dresen, meanwhile, has expressed admiration for other Soviet filmmakers such as Rjasanow, Iosseliani and Mittas, directors whom he admires not because of their particular formal style but because of a commitment to story-telling and authenticity. See Dietmar Hochmuth, p. 306. In an interview with this author, he spoke highly, too, of the social criticism and realism in Ken Loach's work.

⁵⁴ Though not confirmed by Dresen, it seems likely that the film was inspired by Matussek's report in *Der Spiegel*. The script closely resembles features of the journalist's account, including an ambitious young director, actors who hope that certain contacts in the west will be able to support the provincial theatre ('und so warten sie auf Penzel, auf den Westen, auf Godot', p. 198), and an ensemble comprising of disenchanted individuals or alcoholics. Unlike the magazine report, Dresen's film does not consider the theatre's Stasi members and avoids the details given by Matussek about the *Volkshaus* drunks, whose drunken belligerence reveal extremist views, p. 200.

mentality, does not post the appeal until after Krenz has been instated as the new Secretary General and the danger of repercussions has diminished). Other circumstances inhibit any opportunities for possible heroism. The play's political edge is dulled by real-life events.⁵⁵ The decision to witness events in Berlin is literally stalled by the aging company bus; the characters are once again stranded in the provinces.

Significantly, the troupe's most idealistic character refuses to hitchhike to the capital and participate in or witness the true *coup de théâtre*. That Kai's passion and commitment to change is ultimately limited to his production satirises the role of the dissidents and counter-cultural figures in the GDR. Preoccupied by his work and idealistic only in terms of abstract notions of utopia, his intellectual pursuits obscure his vision of events taking place around him and finally wreck his romance with his assistant who is more tempted by the real drama happening in Berlin than by Kai and his enthusiasm for 'Bloch und Fromm und Sinnsprung'. Desperate though he is to keep his play relevant, he is incapable of recognising the revolution's potential and, *contra* Bloch, largely fails to grasp the new possibilities available to him.⁵⁶

On release, Dresen's film failed to stimulate the kind of interest and acclaim it had won at film festivals, though the director's later successes (notably *Halbe Treppe* but also *Willenbrock* (2005), an adaptation of Christoph Hein's novel of the same name) have resulted in a belated appreciation of his earlier work. Since there is no actual evidence to explain its lack of resonance with audiences, one can only speculate as to the reasons. Dresen himself provided a clue when he explained that his motivation for making the film was 'zu zeigen, wie auch der Alltag in so einem Land aussah'.⁵⁷ *Stilles Land* engages with the realities of life in the east (an aspect of the film that was warmly greeted by eastern reviewers but questioned by those writing in western papers and journals), and in so doing, it underplays the revolution as a moment of heroic collective participation and nationwide civil disobedience, again confirming

⁵⁵ As with east German cinema and cabaret, the relevance of theatre was being questioned in the light of real political developments. The issue was recognised by journalist Gerhard Ebert who noted 'Jedes Ensemble, ob in einer neuen Landeshauptstadt in "tiefer Provinz" oder in Berlin, wird bei anhaltenden Turbulenzen im Zuschauer-Interesse herausfinden müssen, ob es auch weiterhin vor allem ästhetischer und damit politischer öffentlicher Anwalt seines konkreten Publikums sein will'. 'Plebejisches oder bürgerliches Theater, das ist nun die Frage'. *Neues Deutschland*, 7.8.1990, in Golombeck and Ratzke (1990), 219-222, p. 222.

⁵⁶ As Douglas Kellner and Harry O'Hara noted, Bloch's 'critique of ideology [...] is not merely unmasking (*Entlarvung*) or demystification but is also uncovering and discovery: revelations of unrealized dreams, lost possibilities, abortive hopes – that can be resurrected and enlivened and realized in our current situation'. In 'Utopia and Marxism in Ernst Bloch', *New German Critique*, No. 9, Autumn 1976, 11-34, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Author's interview with Dresen.

Habermas's point. The mini rally that takes place in Anklam towards the end of the film, in which a few people holding protest signs walk in circles, is looked on by a couple of bemused policemen, who are more concerned with the forthcoming football match between Berlin and their rivals Dresden. The only moment of non-compliance occurs off-screen when one of the cast is caught up in a wave of arrests by the Berlin police. What is first recounted in a factual manner to admiring colleagues assumes more heroic and mythic qualities with each retelling. The memory of the event is finally divorced from the actual experiences, the supplementary details of opposition and struggle compensating for its banality.⁵⁸ *Stilles Land's* inclusion of such details is not an attempt to humourise the GDR or the historic events but simply to moderate the post-wall accounts of the GDR and its collapse. The director is certainly aware of the emerging stereotypes and clichés that are essential to characterisation in many *Wende* narratives, and subtly subverts them: the German who arrives at the theatre from the west therefore arrives not in the standard Mercedes, but in a modest Saab.⁵⁹ Other characterisations similarly destabilise familiar *Wende* figures - the unresponsive policemen, the self-styled activist.

Made within two years of the wall being dismantled, Dresen's film can be seen as an early example of archiving the GDR in a manner that resists the prevailing historical account of the period in favour of something more nuanced and ambiguous, in which subjective memory balances the objective version.

Memory and Loss: *Verlorene Landschaft*

It is fitting to include Andreas Kleinert's *Verlorene Landschaft* in a discussion of films that wrestle with the idea of a lost or spoiled *Heimat*, even if Kleinert's film differs visually from the other films of this period.⁶⁰ The director's use of symbolic imagery and the film's formal experimentation make for an early, abstract meditation on a re-

⁵⁸ Dresen made clear his objection to such retroactive heroism, commenting, 'das finde ich zum Kotzen, wenn Leute heute sowas von sich verkünden'. In Hochmuth, p. 302.

⁵⁹ As Dresen said, 'wir [haben] versucht, soweit das möglich war, gegen Klischees zu bürsten'. Ibid. p. 307.

⁶⁰ Others have discerned in Kleinert's work the influence not of the DEFA house style but of other directors, notably Tarkovsky. The Russian director's insistence 'that audiences should "experience" his films before attempting to "understand" them', is echoed in Kleinert's approach: 'Meine Modellwelt ist nahe an der Realität, der Betrachter muss ohne große Anstrengung in sie gut eintauchen können. Er muss dabei auch übrigens nicht alles erklären wollen'. In Graham Petrie, 'Andrei Tarkovsky', in Vida Johnson, 'Russia After the Thaw', in the *Oxford History of World Cinema*, ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 640-651, p.647; and Ralf Schenk, 'Tote Pferde werden Sie bei mir nie finden', *Neues Deutschland*, 28.10.1993.

involvement with the lost landscape of the east that distinguishes it from the social realism to which the majority of the other films mostly adhere. There are, nevertheless, commonalities here, not least the film's thematic pre-occupation. Kleinert's (debut) feature contemplates the meaning of *Heimat* and, in tracing the protagonist's return to his childhood home, offers a poetic treatment on the subject, which considers memory and loss, the balance of the subjective and the objective, and acknowledges the discrepancy between individual experience and depersonalised history. Memories of the past collide with new and actual confrontations of the present, offering insight into the GDR's isolation from the West and the problems faced in reconciling differences that have evolved between the two states.

But in *Verlorene Landschaft* memory is not merely adumbrated, sketched out in metaphorical images, it is the conceptual glue binding the narrative, which relies heavily on chronological disjuncture (analepsis and prolepsis are a mainstay of the film). A phone call to a west German politician informing him of his parents' recent death is the prompt for the protagonist's (Elias) decision to revisit his east German *Heimat*, a journey into the lost landscapes of the title, which assumes both a literal and a figurative significance. Elias's trip eastwards is a journey to provinces from which he has become estranged over time and which appear not just geographically and emotionally remote, but isolated, too, from reality. As with other films under discussion in this chapter, the image of the east here does not match the touristic vision found in the unification comedies. Elias' chauffeur-driven BMW glides along empty roads into the crumbling, dilapidated geography of rural East Germany, between unkempt fields and through neglected streets before finally stopping at a secluded provincial town, where the urbane politician is a conspicuously incongruous figure.

Verlorene Landschaft is neither a study of east/west relations, nor a critical examination of the post-unification topography, despite its early narrative implications. Kleinert abandons the kind of documentary realism evident in his contemporaries' work and engages instead in formal and thematic experimentation: strange imagery, awkward gestures, *mise-en-scène*, and symbolism combine to give the film a tense atmosphere. The scenes are often surreal and inhabited by bizarre characters (an organ grinder playing in an empty street; a small boy dancing in tattered angel's wings; an ancient hotel porter in an old-fashioned uniform). The organ's hypnotic tune becomes something of a leitmotif, a melancholic refrain, punctuating a complex and elliptical narrative that substitutes temporal disjuncture for any linear development. The

narrative flits between times, from the post-war past to the post-wall present. The initially indeterminate structure begins to acquire a more coherent pattern as the film progresses. Elias' memory is prompted by the long unseen environment of his formative years, and the scenes that cut from one period to another establish parallel chronologies, of the GDR past and the post-GDR present. Elias' visit to his family home prompts a series of remembered scenes; in each of the rooms that he enters, a moment from his childhood is played out before him. The past is intermingled with the present and the scenes have a phantasmagoric, oneiric quality, where the boundaries between what is real and what is illusory are blurred. The hallucinatory quality is sustained by formal randomness: the film switches from colour to monochrome; expressionistic moments reflect the protagonist's delirium and his disconnectedness from his erstwhile home. This aesthetic style has led to the oft-repeated description of Kleinert as a film-poet, a mannered approach to filmmaking that would have been impossible in the GDR.⁶¹ Kleinert's fondness of the abstract had been noted early on by a senior staff member of the film school, who wrote disapprovingly of the student's tendencies: 'Kleinert ist sich seiner gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung im allgemeinen bewußt. Seine gestalterischen Bemühungen stehen damit aber noch nicht in voller Übereinstimmung. Er tendiert zu ausgefallenen und etwas abseitigen Gegenständen, in seinen ästhetischen Haltungen klingen surrealistische Poistionen an'.⁶² Freed from DEFA's aesthetic straitjacket, Kleinert's debut is able to offer a formally diverse study. But as with his *Hochschule* contemporaries, Kleinert does not follow a western, that is, Hollywood paradigm. The film may not exhibit the (DEFA) documentary realism that finds some continuity in Dresen or in Misselwitz's films, but an east European aesthetic is nonetheless discernible. In particular, the director's reluctance to supply meaning to the incomprehensible imagery betrays the influence of Tarkovsky (on whom Kleinert wrote his dissertation).⁶³

The protagonist's return to his family home prompts forgotten memories of his childhood and of the East German state past. Elias' return to the disappeared world of

⁶¹ See, *inter alia*, Ron Holloway's review of Kleinert's later film, *Wege in die Nacht* (1997). Online at: <http://www.filmfestivals.com/cannes99/html/quinzaine2.htm> [accessed 8.12.2004].

⁶² Prof. Dr. Köhler's 'Leistungseinschätzung', reproduced in Herold and Scherer, p. 196.

⁶³ Unlike the grotesque narratives which characterised a number of DEFA directors' first post-GDR work (Herwig Kipping's 1992 film, *Das Land hinter dem Regenbogen*, or Ulrich Weiß's *Miraculi*, released in the same year), the incomprehensibility of some images in Kleinert's film did not alienate critics. Evelyn Schmidt, writing in *Film und Fernsehen*, was one of many reviewers who reacted positively to *Verlorene Landschaft*, despite her inability 'alle Metaphern zu enträtseln'. 6/1992-1/1993, 136-137, p. 136. It is worth noting that *Verlorene Landschaft* brings together a number of other influences, including film noir, expressionism and, inevitably, Kafka, which combine to menacing effect.

his childhood is, unsurprisingly, tinged with sadness. This melancholy refers not just to the loss of innocence that typically accompanies such recollection but also, specifically, to the unrealised and unrealisable hopes of his parents (and of the GDR) to establish and maintain utopia. Certain key historical events are outlined so that the narrative presents an account of Elias's formative years and indexes developments within the East German state: Stalinism; the repression of liberals; the subsequent rejection of the Stalinist course; the steady emigration of GDR citizens. Though Elias' recollection of his past is synonymous with the GDR, the memories of those times are disinvested of the historian's grip, for Kleinert refuses to represent the past as historically or factually fixed; the past is, instead, filtered through the subjective memories of its protagonist. The flashbacks present personal snapshots of the past that do not strive to be accepted as an objective account. Kleinert qualified this individual approach, arguing that, 'der ganze Film ist ja Legende, Erinnerung und manchmal Traum. Diese Erzählhaltung erlaubt mir einen viel freieren Umgang mit dem historischen Material, als wenn ich eine quasi authentische Gestaltungsweise gewählt hätte'.⁶⁴

Elias' increasing closeness to the dreamed and remembered past is emphasised by his estrangement from the present. His return to the family home, to his *Heimat* and its subsequent effect on him, is remarkably similar to a hypothesis outlined by Nora:

In the same way that we owe our historical overview to a panoramic distance, and our artificial hyper-realization of the past to a definitive estrangement, a changing mode of perception returns to the historian, almost against his will, to the traditional objects from which he had turned away, the common knowledge of our national memory. Returning across the threshold of one's natal home, one finds oneself in the old abode, now uninhabited and practically unrecognizable – with the same family heirlooms, but under another light; before the same *atelier*, but for another task; in the same rooms, but with another role.⁶⁵

The protagonist's former home is the equivalent of the 'lieux de mémoire', the sites of memory that Nora discusses; the physical space offers a portal to an intangible past. Elias' memories of his childhood conform both to the traditional image of a *Heimat* idyll: a house in the forest, a life that strives to maintain its autonomy and resists change and external interference. It also resembles an imaginary place and time, a fairytale past that Elias once inhabited with his parents, whose construction and defence of their world (a life purposely lived within the confines of their property)

⁶⁴ Quoted in Schenk (1993).

⁶⁵ Nora, p. 18.

blurred the boundaries between reality and make-believe, as they tried to keep their son cosseted from the world beyond. Elias' childhood and his relationship with his parents are offered as an allegory of the East German state in the post-war years. Although his parents' clearly reject the State -- 'der vernünftige Mensch ist Staatsfeind', his father comments at one point -- their attempts to avoid becoming involved in the mechanics of day-to-day living in the GDR, to avoid involvement with life beyond their fence altogether, do not constitute clear ideological opposition. Their resistance to the state is a rejection of all outside influences, a desire to stay isolated from the world itself. While the family's rejection of the political and social world beyond their perimeter fence represents the *Nischengesellschaft* taken to its insular extreme, a sign of a quietist mentality that Marxists would criticise as secessionist, their attempts to determine their own existence echoes the GDR's utopian aspirations and desire for autonomy.⁶⁶

The idiosyncratic childhood is of course an allegory of the east German experience itself. The parents' attempts to shelter their son from outside influences, however naïve and impractical, are motivated by love and by parental protection rather than by any pedagogical or ideological convictions. At the same time, their desire to enclose themselves within the world they have created reflects the utopian ideals of the GDR. But for Elias, as for millions of east Germans, the measures undertaken create an environment that stifles as it secures; the carefully guarded borders of the family property are as restrictive as those of the state. Kleinert's film may be critical about the effects that such control has on its subjects but it is not directly critical of the GDR. The parents' instinct to protect themselves, and especially Elias, from the external ironically mirrors the SED's own concerned 'protective' policies, and just as the GDR citizens fled the State, so Elias finally escapes from the only environment he has known.⁶⁷ In forsaking the microcosmic world ordered around a familial centre, the adolescent Elias abandons his *Heimat* and his family's niche utopia.

Returning to his erstwhile *Heimat*, Elias is forced to re-examine his childhood. *Heimat* in Kleinert's film is the imagined landscape lost since childhood, and accords with Bloch's oft-quoted description of *Heimat*, 'das allen in die Kindheit scheint und

⁶⁶ See Kellner and O'Hara, p. 29.

⁶⁷ According to Maaz, east German families frequently mirrored the repressive tendencies of the state resulting, ultimately, in a society of conformists, who from birth, did not presume to question or criticise authority – whether of the parents or of the state, 31-40.

worin noch niemand war'.⁶⁸ His remembered past offers a kind of refuge, for Elias is alienated by the present (the strange surroundings of the eastern town) and by his western lifestyle (a life that appears materially comfortable but spiritually and emotionally empty). Yet the past is not merely a sanctuary, offering shelter from the present's real and actual challenges, but enables Kleinert's protagonist to comprehend the present. The process of return echoes what Douglas Kellner and Harry O'Hara have referred to as Bloch's

dialectical analysis of the past which illuminates the present and can direct us to a better future. The past – what has been – contains both the sufferings, tragedies and failures of humanity – what to avoid and redeem – and its unrealized hopes and potentials – what could have been. Crucial is Bloch's claim that what could have been still can be: for Bloch history is a repository of possibilities that are living options for future action.⁶⁹

For Kleinert's protagonist, the past is significant for the present and therefore the future. Elias's confrontation with the past represents a process of individuation and, in making sense of the past, he appears to make sense of the present. But it is not through dreams that Elias's childhood is re-activated. The strange visions of the remembered past are not the incoherent, unfathomable visualisations ('stammender Un-Sinn der Nacht', as Bloch calls them) available to the unconscious dreamer, but conjured up through a series of conscious daydreams, which finally lead to self-realisation. The politician is offered renewed insight into his past, even if the fractured hopes of the past do not positively outline future development in the sense that Bloch means when he talks of daydreams.⁷⁰ When, at the end of the film, Elias, back in his smart apartment, reviews a recorded televised speech he previously made about the *Wende*, he laughs derisively at the smiling on-screen politician earnestly reminding the electorate that not just the geographical borders need to be overcome during these momentous times, but the internal, private borders too. Elias' personal confrontation

⁶⁸ Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959). The full quotation reads: 'Der Mensch lebt noch überall in der Vorgeschichte, ja alles und jedes steht noch vor Erschaffung der Welt, als einer rechten. Die wirkliche Genesis ist nicht am Anfang, sondern am Ende, und sie beginnt erst anzufangen, wenn Gesellschaft und Dasein radikal werden, das heißt sich an der Wurzel fassen. Die Wurzel der Geschichte aber ist der arbeitende, schaffende, die Gegebenheiten umbildende und überholende Mensch. Hat er sich erfaßt und das Seine ohne Entäußerung und Entfremdung in realer Demokratie begründet, so entsteht in der Welt etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint und worin noch niemand war: Heimat'. , p. 1628

⁶⁹ Kellner and O'Hara, p. 16.

⁷⁰ Consider Bloch's view on the utopian character of Tagträume: 'der Inhalt des Nachttraums ist versteckt und verstellt, der Inhalt der Tagphantasie ist offen, ausfabelnd, antizipierend, und sein Latentes liegt vorn [...] Der Tages-Wuschtraum bedarf keiner Ausgrabung und Deutung, sondern der Berichtigung und, sofern er dazu fähig ist, der Konkretion', *ibid.*, p. 111.

with the east has revealed that this may prove more complicated than such entreaties imply.

***Die Vergebung*: searching for truth and reconciliation**

Memory continues to play a significant role in later films such as *Die Vergebung* and *Neben der Zeit*. But, unlike *Verlorene Landschaft*, memory provides no redemptive possibilities; the protagonists are denied any self-understanding through memory and are, instead, torn between the process of remembering and the inability to forget.

Andreas Höntsch's first feature film after his tenure at DEFA travels across the east German landscape and across time, alternating between the GDR past and the post-unification present, and offers a complex narrative in which, as the opening voiceover warns, 'nichts ist wie es ist'. As with other films of this period, *Die Vergebung* considers the consequences of state policy on the east German population. In particular, the film considers the threat to individuals' physical health and to the environment as a result of inadequate manufacturing processes, and the psychological effects wrought by the state's security forces. But the film is neither an environmental drama, nor a simple critique of the Stasi. The department's effect on individuals' lives is evident and yet the menacing Stasi figures familiar to other post-unification films are seldom in sight. As with Kleinert and Dresen's films, their absence may be explained by Höntsch's reluctance to avoid a portrayal that relied on 'Schwarz-Weiß-Malerei'.⁷¹ Höntsch's film therefore ignores the state security's *modus operandi*, -- Mielke's department had, after all, already received wide media coverage following the GDR's collapse, and the Stasi's tactics had become a feature of salacious newspaper reports and a routine plot development -- preferring to examine how the state's mistreatment of individuals continues to have repercussions even after unification, and how these repercussions affect individuals, relationships and communities.⁷²

It is the harm done to individuals who are unable to forget or to forgive that is central to the film, rather than Stasi intrigue or the east's damaged environment. Victims remain scarred by their memories. The main character (a part credited simply as 'Der Mann', played by Sylvester Groth) communicates both the pain and

⁷¹ Andreas Höntsch interviewed by Dorothee Trapp in 'Ungeheure Bilder zum Nachdenken. 'Die Vergebung': Ein Gespräch mit den Filmschöpfern', *Schweriner Volkszeitung*, 9.11.1995.

⁷² As Ralf Schenk, noted, in a review of Florian Henckel's *Das Leben der anderen* (2006), 'es ist, wie so oft, wenn es um den Osten geht, eine Stasi-Geschichte'. In 'Das andere Leben', *Das Magazin*, March 2006, p. 86.

bewilderment suffered by individuals detained by the state. Uncertain of the reasons for his imprisonment and reluctant to believe that his brother-in-law (revealed to be a former Stasi employee) may have betrayed him, he remains subdued and introspective after the *Wende*, unable to communicate with his family and unwilling to question anyone directly. His wife, meanwhile, tries desperately to discover the collaborator, for only the truth can initiate the healing process and effect reconciliation, as Höntsch's film repeatedly stresses: 'Was heißt jeder hat jeden verraten? Wo ist die Wahrheit? Wo die Wahrheit ist, da ist die Lösung. Wo die Lösung ist, da ist der Frieden. Wo der Frieden ist, da ist die Wahrheit'.

Paul Connerton stresses that it is routine for totalitarian states to record and control memory.⁷³ The SED-state's attempts to supervise public and private life resulted in a huge archive detailing the activities of millions of its citizens. While access to reports was made possible after the *Wende*, the truth, according to Höntsch, cannot be so easily supplied. The director is therefore reluctant to adduce information and the plot relies as much on implication as exposition (an approach that shaped his last DEFA production, *Der Strass* (1991)). The narrative thread that follows the wife's efforts to identify her husband's betrayer entwines different characters without conclusively discovering the true villain. While she attempts to remember details that might bring to a close her investigation, others prefer to forget the past. The truth that she feels is necessary, if she and her family are to move on, is evaded by others for the same reason. Where the victims remain burdened by memories that they are unable to harness, former Stasi apostates strive to disinvest themselves of the past - 'die Zeiten sind vorbei', one tells the couple optimistically.⁷⁴

The protagonists' inability to connect the memories results in gaps in their historical narrative. Though *Die Vergebung's* narrative is ordered around one extended family, its significance for the wider east German society is apparent: the inability to resolve the past necessarily hinders the potential for present and future progress. Any attempt to deny such recollection therefore problematises a new start. The protagonists' parents attempt to discourage their daughter-in-law's enquiries, recommending that the past be left alone - an approach that was typical of the post-war generation. Such advice is, in Germany especially, problematic and unwise. Complete erasure of the past has serious implications for the success of the east Germans in

⁷³ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 14.

⁷⁴ The so-called *Wendehals* was a feature of several films, including *Der Blaue* (Lienhard Wawrzyn, 1993). Grub has written on the emergence of the *Wendehals* in the literature of the nineties, 533-539

establishing themselves in the present. Memory is, as Smith says, 'crucial to identity. In fact, one might also say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation'.⁷⁵ Höntsch's film outlines the danger of not engaging with memory. Attempts are made by the characters in his film (both victims and villains) to deny their memories and to reject those of others. Continued repression hampers any reconciliation and problematises the chances of community: without memory, then, there can be no identity; without identity, there can be no community. But memory offers no solace in Höntsch's film; it is mediated only as trauma and haunts those individuals who are unable to face the present while they cannot resolve the past. Others, meanwhile, refuse to engage in the activity of remembering, preferring to suppress memories that might risk their present comfort. For them, the past is therefore best forgotten if normality is to be achieved; but normality is impossible if there is a risk of dangerous memories resurfacing and upsetting any ordered balance between past and present.⁷⁶ The tragedy that concludes the film (the couple's daughter is killed by her young cousin) coincides with the adults' long-suppressed confrontation and emphasises the dangers of failing to reconcile the past.

***Neben der Zeit*: memories in ruins; ruined memories**

Memory continues to be a dominant subject in representing the east in Kleinert's second feature film, *Neben der Zeit*, and, like Höntsch's film, it is the consequences of repressed memory that dominates the narrative. Höntsch's second film demonstrates a formal restraint that distinguishes it from his debut. The controlled narrative is appropriate, given that the film's focus is on a family of inhibited individuals, who are forced to confront difficult issues and memories long stifled. Kleinert's film is set in a by now familiar provincial east German 'Nest', far removed from the hub of political events. The village remains, as the title suggests, beyond time and beyond modernity.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Anthony D. Smith, 'Opening Statement. Nations and their pasts', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 2, No. 3, November 1996, 358-366, p. 383.

⁷⁶ Others have argued that dangerous memories which pose a risk to established patterns of remembrance can be cathartic. See, for example, Steven T. Ostovitch, 'Epilogue: Dangerous Memories', in *The Work of Memory. New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. by Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 2002) Available online: <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/confino/epilog.html#foot10> [Accessed 10.4.2005].

⁷⁷ The threat of expunction from the rail schedule is a common metaphor in post-unification films. Naughton discusses its use in relation to the 'unity train' metaphor in the political campaigns that followed the GDR's collapse, 196-197. The train continues to be a motif for both progress and backwardness in later films, something that is considered the chapter's final section. Wilfried Korngiebel and Jürgen Link have argued that as a metaphor the train was better suited to Socialism (old-

Only the departure of the Soviet troops and the introduction of shadowy Russians acknowledge new political developments and power shifts in the new *Länder*. The *Wende* appears to have had little positive effect on the villagers. Its inconsequential status is suggested by the trains that mostly pass through without stopping, an image of speed and movement that contrasts with the inertia of the village. The train station serves chiefly as the location for the regular drinking sessions in the grimy station bar, a recognisably provincial routine that confirms the east Germans' reputation for passivity and heavy drinking.⁷⁸

Despite these details, Kleinert denied that the film was specifically about the GDR, an assertion repeatedly made by younger east German directors who fear being categorised as such. Yet *Neben der Zeit* clearly engages with the problems of remembering that had come to inflect GDR discourse. Kleinert subsequently conceded that the film did reflect the east German tendency to stifle truth and the consequences that this might have:

Wir haben viele Dinge nicht verarbeitet, haben es nicht geschafft, bestimmte Dinge auszutragen, zu diskutieren, Fairness zu wahren, uns von Vorurteilen zu befreien – diese Dinge werden sich auszahlen bzw. sie zahlen sich jetzt schon negativ aus. Wir werden für alles, was wir in der Vergangenheit nicht bewältigt haben, die Quittung bekommen.⁷⁹

Kleinert's film acknowledges the broader issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which had assumed a new relevance in the context of the GDR past, but *Neben der Zeit* concentrates not on the wider social and political issues but narrows its sights on a single family, suggesting that coming to terms with the past is a process that must first start at home. Again, a feeling of loss filters through the narrative. The loss of economic potency and of political authority is implied throughout. While the locals need alcohol in order to maintain some semblance of community, the family at the centre of the narrative is dependent on keeping up fixed primary roles and repressing natural feelings in order to maintain its fragile survival. Loss is evident in the material details: the abandoned barracks and ruined properties represent the state's loss of power and its subsequent dissolution; and details within the family's home similarly

fashioned, reliant on a plan and timetable, and only able to function if the collective -- of the wagons -- are to follow the single engine); they propose the car as 'Fahrzeug der Freiheit'. In 'Von einstürzenden Mauern, europäischen Zügen und deutschen Autos', in Bohn *et al*, 31-53.

⁷⁸ According to Maaz, the East Germans' propensity to alcoholism is, along with widespread nicotine addiction and pill-popping, evidence of their arrested development and indicates an inability to develop beyond their oral fixation, 87-88.

⁷⁹ In an interview with Erika Richter, 'Anarchie und Menschlichkeit', *Film und Fernsehen*, 5+6/1996, 52-55, p. 54.

acknowledge loss (furniture shrouded under blankets; the dead father's clothes hanging in the wardrobe).

Following the paradigmatic *Heimatfilm* plot, it is the arrival of a stranger within a small, self-contained community that upsets the order and harmony that may have previously existed. Despite this generic pattern, *Neben der Zeit* is clearly not a traditional *Heimatfilm*, even if the east German *Heimat* is the backdrop to the film's narrative. Again, it is not the cosy community that is in evidence here. The locals' livelihoods are under threat as a result of economic developments, and solidarity is only manifest in collective drunkenness. The environment, meanwhile, is further evidence of a region in decline and reflects the bleak mood of the populace. The arrival of a fugitive Russian soldier threatens not the local community, but a family, whose hermetic relationship comes undone when the daughter introduces them to the exotic 'Sergei'. Kleinert was keen to acknowledge his positive relationship with the Soviet Union and Sergei is, as with several films of this period, portrayed in a way that counters the general post-unification representation of Russians as members of the German underworld.⁸⁰ The Russian troops' withdrawal from the GDR, which was a decision that was widely supported in the east, is a departure that in post-unification films is frequently thematised in terms of loss - the loss of the GDR's connection with the Soviet superpower (and that superpower's own gradual loss of authority).⁸¹ The relationship between the East German population and the Soviet people was never as close as the *Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft* implied, yet the troops' exit is often a prompt for nostalgic reminiscences, for sudden efforts between guest and host to communicate at the point where such communication is no longer necessary.⁸² In what looks like an attempt to preserve some connection with an eastern culture and tradition

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸¹ The 'Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany' (signed in Moscow on 12.9.1990) prepared the way for German unification. The treaty, also known as the 'Two Plus Four Agreement' included also a clause regarding the withdrawal of Soviet troops. For more on the treaties, see Werner Weidenfeld *et al.*, 'Verhandlungen zur deutschen Einheit: Internationaler Prozeß', in Weidenfeld and Korte, 794-804. See also Helga Reidemeister's documentary film, *Rodina Heisst Heimat* (1992), which follows the departure of a Soviet regiment from the German-German border back to Russia, where the soldiers are disconcerted by the changes that have taken place during their absence and by the continuing instability of the political climate. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk and Stefan Wolle provide a useful history of the Soviet troops' presence in the east in *Roter Stern über Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2001). See 206-240, which documents their departure.

⁸² This special relationship between Germans and Russians was an official and never private matter. In fact, the soldiers stationed in the GDR had a poor reputation, even among Stasi observers, who recorded that rapes were high in those areas in which they were to be found. See Jan C. Behrends, 'Sowjetische "Freunde" und fremde "Russen"'. *Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft zwischen Ideologie und Alltag (1949-1990)* in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR. Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Jan C. Behrends *et al.* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2003), 75-98.

before the golf courses and burgers arrive, the Russians are associated with a genuine folk culture, drinking vodka, singing folk songs - signals of an authentic tradition that could, as Buck's film shows, provide an ersatz *Heimat*. In Kleinert's film, however, the Russian's arrival threatens to disrupt the self-enclosed family, which is as resistant to outsiders as was the family in his earlier film. Like *Verlorene Landschaft*, the close relationship between family members is intended to protect them from outsiders. Their withdrawal, which according to one reviewer confirms a typically east German retreat into a private sphere, is not as complete as that of the earlier film but is detrimental nonetheless.⁸³

Maaz has noted that East German parents often failed to understand the needs of their children and were unable to provide the necessary emotional support. Both *Die Vergebung* and *Neben der Zeit* portray relationships that correspond with Maaz's theory of emotional deficiency, despite the family's physical closeness. There is no direct suggestion of incest in Kleinert's film, but certain scenes imply an irregular intimacy between mother, daughter and son and later between the mother and her daughter's lover.⁸⁴ The close interdependence of the family members hampers any possible development and the children, obedient and emotionally immature, remain fixed in their undeveloped filial roles. Sergei's arrival therefore ruptures the emotionally confined domestic situation and forces brother, sister and mother to confront their emotions, a process that eventually results in tragedy - in a homoerotic scene, Sergei is asphyxiated by the jealous brother, an assault motivated by his fears of losing his mother and sister to the stranger and his uncomfortable attraction to the Russian.

While Kleinert's film could hardly be described as positive, the tragedy does not herald the film's conclusion, as does Höntsch's. *Neben der Zeit* does not attach a bathetic, upbeat ending, but it does offer a glimmer of optimism: the events ultimately compel the daughter to break free of her environment and, in the final reel she is seen boarding a train and escaping an emotionally and physically ruined *Heimat*. For the protagonists of Kleinert's film, the answer lies in escape rather than confrontation and reconciliation.

⁸³ Georg Seesslen, 'Deutschland, Niemandsland', *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*, 26.9.1996.

⁸⁴ One can, perhaps, look to Maaz for an explanation of the mother's failure to recognise the emotional environment as unwholesome: 'Alleinstehende oder sexuell gehemmte Frauen klammerten sich an ihren Jungen, er "durfte" bei ihnen schlafen, er sollte sich ständig schmuse und küssen lassen', p. 38.

Conclusion: Landscape and Meaning

The bleak narratives of the films discussed in this chapter present the east German *Heimat* as a territory enervated by post-GDR circumstances. No longer the embodiment of atomised resistance, the dispirited east German communities are seen to be on the verge of disintegration. Landscape, which so often plays a crucial narrative role in film, becomes a critical space in the post-unification films. It serves a significant, never incidental, function in the films' representation of the east, reinforcing the territory as a barren, hostile place. The material deprivation of the environment is given partly as a consequence of the GDR's agricultural and industrial policies but it also implies post-unification neglect. The landscape often appears to have been abandoned; the figures crossing empty fields and passing bare and twisted trees seem all the more solitary in such a visual context. It is hard to imagine communities within the deserted streets and derelict buildings. One gains only an impression of what may have been, rather than of what is. Representing the country in such a way may signify the end of a way of life, without specifying which life has disappeared - the recent GDR communities or some older, more bucolic life, one that is central to the mythologised concept of *Heimat*. The visual composition of many of these films emphasises estrangement from the local. The barren and desolate environment captures the mood of the local population. The pastures and fields assume a wild look, one that seems to anticipate a post-GDR wilderness.⁸⁵ The eastern states' synonymy with the wild west of popular imagination has already been referred to in the previous chapter. In the *Wende* comedies, the western motifs allowed for a comic take on the east as a wild frontier and provided a generic reference to the communities' resistance to outsiders. In a nod to the ghost towns of the western, tumbleweeds roll past the Struutzes in Bitterfeld. The roadside bandits who lie in wait in *Wir können auch anders* hint at the lawless nature of the east, a territory not yet subject to the sophisticated laws and governance of the west.

The films under discussion in this chapter also acknowledge the region's wildness but they avoid the comic implications and pastiche that 'der wilde Osten' presents in the comedies. According to John Rennie Short, 'the fear of the wilderness involved and reflected a fear of those living in the "wilderness". By definition they

⁸⁵ That the region has seen the return of wolves and an increase in the population of wild boar since the state's collapse appears to confirm the east's wild reputation. See Steffen Winter, 'Wölfe am Wasser', *Der Spiegel*, 26/2005, 56- 59.

were not part of the formal social order. The wilderness was the residence of the marginalised elements in society'.⁸⁶ The quote is apposite since the desolate landscape perfectly reflects the sense of neglect felt by its inhabitants, who have been divested of their past and remain marginalised in the present. While the state was clearly undergoing massive structural changes, the transformations are barely perceptible in the German provinces. The transition is marked only by its negative attributes: the collapse of the local industries, the rise in unemployment and the impact that this has on the local population. Infertile and disregarded, the landscape acts as a metaphor for the psychological state of its inhabitants. The scenery does not prompt the kind of pastoral reverie witnessed in a film like *Das war der Wilde Osten*, where the (contained and maintained) wilderness of the Sächsische Schweiz represents a longing for some prelapsarian *Heimat*, a fairytale forest retreat in which its inhabitants will not be disturbed by any outside metropolitan interests. If the earlier films link the countryside to fecundity, less in terms of human reproduction, though the romance in some of the films implies sexual activity, but through the increasing yield of local goods, the rise in productivity, and a general evolution of a group identity, the barren nature of the land depicted in these later films connotes not just a wasting of the local economy but an allied fall in east German fertility and a threat to identity.⁸⁷ Studies show that in the first year after unification, fertility rates in east Germany had indeed fallen by almost 40%, while those in the west remained relatively stable.⁸⁸ Though the authors urge some caution in reading the results as a direct response to the *Wende*, they concede that 'economic uncertainty defined in terms of one's personal interests appears to inhibit fertility'.⁸⁹ Astonishingly, these fertility rates represent 'as close to a

⁸⁶ John Rennie Short, *Imagined Country. Society, Culture and Environment* (Routledge: London, 1991), p. 8.

⁸⁷ Consider Baudrillard's assertion that "in the desert one loses one's identity", cited in Jonathan Rutherford, 'A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference', in *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 9-28, p. 10.

⁸⁸ James C. Witte and Gert G. Wagner, 'Declining Fertility in East Germany after Unification: A Demographic Response to Socioeconomic Change', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 1995, 387-397, p. 388. Marina A. Adler considers related factors such as the provision of child care before and after unification. See 'Social Changes and Declines in Marriage and Fertility in Eastern Germany', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, February 1997, 37-49. One might surmise that the socio-economic changes that have led to the downward trend in birth rates might also be the foundation for present grievances, considering the generous state support offered to east German mothers in the GDR.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

temporary suspension of child-bearing as any large population in the human experience'.⁹⁰

While the sizeable transmigration that occurred after the *Wende* suggests the east as a territory abandoned to fate, the films' representation of the rural east is not of a region abandoned to nature, transformed into a wilderness.⁹¹ The east resembles not a wilderness but a wasteland – a land which has wasted its chance for reform and which remains materially deficient and physically exhausted. The ruined landscape is a sign, then, of the GDR's economic retardation and the regime's intransigent ideology - by the end of the eighties, the land seemed to be withering away as rapidly as its geriatric rulers. But the ruins frequently sighted within the landscape are not deployed as a matter of ideological triumphalism -- proof that the communist system was bound to fail -- for loss and not victory is the subtext of the films.

Such films would have doubtless been shelved by the DEFA management, even though their formal style is evidence of an aesthetic lineage that loosely connects them to the social(list) realism tradition. As well as presenting a bleak picture of contemporary Germany, one should recognise, too, that these 'lost landscapes' are a belated reckoning of issues that were seldom aired in the GDR. Some critical DEFA films had been made during the final decade of the GDR. Their focus on the material condition of the GDR's cities and the villages revealed the east as a *Heimat* struggling to survive. Harry Blunk has identified a small number of DEFA films -- among them, *Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet* (Heiner Carow, 1977-78), *Bürgerschaft für ein Jahr* (Hermann Zschosche, 1982), *Solo Sunny* and *Vorspiel* -- which provide rather downbeat accounts of life in the East German state, and which were each criticised in for their pessimism in official reviews. These filmmakers chose their milieux in order that 'die Provinzialität und Zurückgebliebenheit der DDR symbolisch gefaßt wird'.⁹² The films discussed in this chapter similarly convey the retarded nature of the east German provinces. Provincialism and backwardness are clearly not understood as quaintness, or as the ideal condition for some primary German identity, as the

⁹⁰ Eberstadt, p.521. Eberstadt also notes the dramatic rise in east German age-specific mortality rates after unification. The author acknowledges that the GDR's often inconsistently recorded statistics and its intentionally misrepresented records makes an accurate before/after comparison difficult. Nevertheless, 'the sudden and broadly based mortality increases signified declines in health status for large portions of the general public – and by this most important of measures, real reductions in material well-being'. P. 530.

⁹¹ According to Eberstadt, more than a million people left the eastern Länder between 1989 and 1992. In 'Demographic Shocks in Eastern Germany, 1989-93', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1994, 519-533, p. 520.

⁹² Blunk (1988) p. 232.

Heimatfilme propose. These films therefore problematise notions of an east German identity. While they frequently acknowledge the population's shared experience, they do not focus on the common experience as potentially unifying or as a foundation for identity. Rather, the films debunk the myth of social harmony and counter the state's self-declared tolerance. Focussing on the provinces, they explore the rural communities' 'dormant and newly-composed social conflicts' and reveal the disintegration of the east German *Heimat*.⁹³ A strong relationship between community and landscape may exist but the individuals feel stifled and constrained by their environment. Their impulse is not to defend or preserve their material world but to escape it.

⁹³ Bettina van Hoven, 'Women at Work - experiences and identity in rural East Germany', *Area*, 2001, 33.1, 38-46, p. 43.

Chapter Four

Heimat as ‘Arsch der Welt’

The depiction of the east as a geographically remote and culturally stunted region, a ruined *Heimat* located at the edge of German culture and civilisation, has proved to be an enduring one in post-unification films. This is not to say that the regional film boards were keen to continue financing the depressing representations of the east that characterised the films discussed in the previous chapters. While several of those films earned their directors critical kudos from international film festival panels, critics and film scholars, they did not fare well at the box-office. Inclusion on university syllabi may have assured some directors' reputations, but it was no substitute for the films' lack of commercial success. However, the films' repeated box-office disappointments did not dissuade producers and television stations from funding other post-unification narratives set in the region and numerous directors were able to secure financial backing for their provincial east German stories.

Later filmmakers, mostly young, first-time directors, were similarly interested in the east as a depressed region, but the films made by this younger generation did not resemble the critical approach evident in the earlier films. Bleak though the films' locations are, the narratives are of a lighter disposition than the morose productions discussed in the preceding chapter. Geographically, then, the films invite comparison with the provincial dramas already discussed, but there the similarity ends, for thematically the films mostly diverge from the kind of sustained critical engagement with unification discourse or earnest introspection offered in films discussed in the previous chapter. Instead, humour returns to post-unification discourse. Producers may have considered the combination of serious unification issues and comedy as a recipe for critical and commercial success. The droll portraits of the east Germans' encounters with the west, which were central to the early comedies, were not exactly tenable by the mid-nineties. The economic and political optimism had disappeared, as the reality of rebuilding the eastern economy and integrating the two populations became clear. Light-hearted takes on unification were no longer suitable given the continued disparity between eastern and

western lifestyles and the east Germans' sense of inferiority. It would be a mistake therefore to categorise them as updated *Wende* comedies. The good natured, exaggerated comedy that was central to the witty, sentimental take on unification and the two populations' idiosyncrasies gave way to a humour that was more cheerless than merry.

On the Road Again?

Where *Heimat* had previously been an aestheticised landscape, offering a haven from the challenges of unification and providing east Germans with a collective niche existence beyond the real and the present, this vision of community success and old-fashioned good sense petrified, becoming a site associated with failure, as the title of this chapter, taken from a line in Nathalie Steinbart's film, *Endstation: Tanke* (2001), implies.¹

Like the directors of the previous chapter, these filmmakers search out similarly uncongenial and out-of-the-way locations for their narratives. The filmic vision often extends eastwards, not in an effort to explore any revanchist claims or to focus on the relationship between east Germans and their eastern neighbours (something that has seldom been considered in post-unification film), but as a means of addressing regions that had ceased to exist in the national imaginary. Not that the films are indebted to any east German or eastern European filmmaking tradition. Indeed, what is most apparent about the films analysed in this chapter is the influence of western -- that is, Hollywood - - filmmaking conventions. And it is the road movie, in particular, that proves to be an enduring template for cinematic explorations of the new, still unknown eastern states in a number of later post-unification films. The genre, which had been effectively used by Buck in his film, was to be revived by Peter Welz in *Burning Life* (1994), by Peter Kahane in *Bis zum Horizont und weiter* (1997), by Jan Ralske in his deadpan *Not a Love Song* (1997), and in *Endstation: Tanke*. The east's reputation as 'der wilde Osten' corresponds with the (Hollywood) road movie's traditional fascination for the badlands and wide open spaces of the American mid-west even if the region is hardly able to offer the geographical vastness of those films. But despite the geographical limitations, eastern Germany is able

¹ Wolf Biermann had previously referred to Germany's position 'als Arsch der Welt' in his song, 'Deutschland - ein Wintermärchen', on his album *Chausseestrasse 131* (Berlin: Wagenbachs Quartplatte, 1969).

to mirror certain codified road-movie features. The genre's influence is clear in the way in which the region is profiled: panoramic shots of open fields stretch to the horizon and long, straight roads cut through the landscape allowing the viewer to imagine the east as similarly expansive. And just as road movies frequently represent the territories through which their protagonists pass as existing in a separate time-frame, so the focus in these films is on the east as somehow separated from modern life. Territories in the road movie are traditionally portrayed as isolated and insular locations, associated with backward, hermetic communities who are suspicious of, and unreceptive to, strangers. Those passing through are not just excluded in these eastern road movies, but are marked as outsiders whose presence potentially threatens to upset the local way of life. Of course, the characters in these films are not searching for the security of *Heimat* within the communities through which they pass; the deserted homesteads and abandoned residences offer them no anchorage. Like most road-movie protagonists, they are either en route to a particular destination, or travelling as a means of escape.

For the most part, these directors, like Buck and Wenders before them, distort the American genre that they mimic.² Certain props initially connect the films to the road-movie, but looked at closely the impression is often auratic.³ In truth, the films amount to more than just the transposition of the Hollywood paradigm to east German soil, for the directors frequently subvert the genre by including certain subtle details that would register more deeply with audiences in the east. The protagonists' car in *Burning Life* (Peter Welz, 1994) is such an example. Though it resembles the hulking fifties models popular in Hollywood road movies, the GAZ Volga 'Tschaika' was an iconic Soviet car, a handmade luxury vehicle that was associated with the (male) party elite. The fact that the car's reverse gear does not operate is doubtless a satirical swipe at communism's self-proclaimed progressive tendencies. The choice of vehicle is not just important because its post-communist status now sees it serving the two heroines (any feminist triumph is, one should add, compromised by recurring gender stereotypes, among them the women's

² Wenders stands out as the most individual proponent of the genre. Most German road movies, however, are unashamedly American in terms of plot, direction and dialogue. Consider the American sounding *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* (Thomas Jahn, 1997), whose tagline reads 'ein schnelles Auto, 1 Million Mark im Kofferraum und nur noch eine Woche zu leben'. See also Sönke Wortmann's *Mr. Bluesman* (1993).

³ I refer to 'auratic' according to Walter Benjamin's description: 'als einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag'. Here the genre's (cultural) distance is mitigated by its appearance within a recognisably German context. In his essay 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', in *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften I* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 136-169, p. 142.

mechanical ignorance), but also because its eastern origin (Nizhny Novgorod) acknowledges the new states' old political and cultural orientation. In *Not a Love Song* (Jan Ralske, 1997), meanwhile, the disaffected hero stands apart from his friends with their Mercedes and BMWs, preferring an old Czechoslovakian car, the similarly admired *Tatra* T603. These weighty vehicles can be seen as replacements for the once ubiquitous Trabant, as if the ridiculed *Trabi*, symbol for a flimsy, inferior east German identity, had been exchanged for more staid vehicles, old-fashioned, yet robust. Moreover, this alternative car problematises the *Trabi* as a newly established signifier of a post-wall identity: not only does it displace it as the symbol of the east's ridiculed achievements as perceived by the west, it also rejects the popular (and uncritical) nostalgic function that it had come to serve for those in the east.⁴ The most important difference in these road-movies, though, is the directors' refusal to comply with the fundamental dynamic of the genre they evoke, since the films are road-movies whose roads lead nowhere. While this may, etymologically speaking, indicate some utopia (utopia literally meaning 'no' and 'place'), the desire to escape is, more accurately, the desire to be elsewhere. With escape the prime motive, the destinations named by those desperate to leave are often randomly chosen. Welz's heroines vaguely mention Africa -- or Australia -- as they escape the police in a stolen helicopter, while in Ralske's film, the protagonists spontaneously opt for Italy. Only in Voigt's film is there any realistic vision of a life elsewhere, with the film's principal character hoping to move to Hanoi, a plan, which though better arranged, ultimately fails.

On the Run

Welz's film consciously references the key road movie of recent times, Ridley Scott's highly successful *Thelma and Louise* (1991), and the influence of American filmmaking is evident throughout *Burning Life*, particularly in its bluesy, country-and-western soundtrack. Despite the similarity of the narrative structure to Scott's film -- two women (Anna and Lisa) impulsively decide to leave their respected homes and together undertake a journey during which the two dissimilar characters become bank robbers and close friends -- Welz's film does not transplant *Thelma and Louise*'s feminist concerns to an

⁴ See Berdahl, p. 136. Berdahl also notes that the *Trabi* was seen as the ideal getaway car, p. 133.

east German milieu. Given the discrimination facing east German women after unification, this absence is somewhat surprising. East Germans may have wondered at their marginalisation from the process of unification that they had initiated, but if any group truly qualified as the losers of the unification, it was east German women. Birgit Meyer summarises the situation for women in the east thus:

the ideological and economic rejection of socialism, technological rationalization, capital restructuring, public savings plans, the dismantling of many government social programs and child care facilities, and the elimination of numerous jobs had a disproportionate impact on women in the East. Despite women having contributed in large measure, from the mid-1980s to the end of the decade, to destabilizing the system in the former GDR, they have become the losers of the unification process.⁵

Once active members of the GDR workforce, women suffered the highest proportion of redundancies after unification and struggled more than their male counterparts to find employment in the new system whose policies did little to promote women's return to employment.⁶ Their new status did more than put them at a financial disadvantage. The workplace had not just been a scene of labour and productivity for women in the GDR but a place of vital social interaction, providing a close community, one that many women were subsequently unable to replicate within their private/domestic spheres.⁷ Nor did women find themselves well represented at policy-making levels, despite, as Birgit Meyer indicates, their previously active engagement with grass-roots organisations before and during the *Wende*.

Beyond mirroring Scott's subversion of the gender roles that traditionally define buddy-movies, Welz's film, like many post-unification films, avoids any specific critique -- or even mention -- of relevant gender issues. The narratives' ascription of strong and affirmative roles to women seldom advances any feminist cause but provides further evidence of the east German men's relative loss of power and authority in gender relations

⁵ Birgit Meyer, 'Much Ado about Nothing? Political Representation Policies and the Influence of Women Parliamentarians in Germany', *The Review of Policy Research*, September, 2003, 401-421, p. 417.

⁶ See Angelika Koch, 'Equal Employment Policy in Germany: Limited Results and Prospects for Reform', *The Review of Policy Research*, September 2003, 441-457, p. 445.

⁷ See van Hoven. See also Dinah Dodds, 'Ten Years after the Wall. East German Women in Transition', *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1998, 261-276. Dodds's interviews with east German women over the decade following unification revealed a weary resignation among some of the subjects who, having failed to find an equivalent sense of purpose and community outside the workplace, had become depressed and withdrawn.

and emphasises their social, political and (occasionally) sexual impotence.⁸ In contrast to their ineffective male counterparts, the east German women are the stronger, more confident characters. The presence of confident women is reminiscent of *Thelma and Louise* but it also recalls East German cinema. DEFA, unlike Hollywood, had a tradition of self-assured heroines, though their attributes were embedded within socialist discourse and did little to further the cause of emancipation which, according to the state's ideology, was a *fait accompli*.⁹ Despite its English title and generic derivation, *Burning Life* is primarily concerned with wider east German issues rather than universal gender politics. Though clearly indebted to Scott's film, the anti-capitalist, pro-communitarian impetus of Welz's protagonists connects them with this latter tradition, even if it lacks the relevant ideology. Although the women assume roles that are traditionally associated with men, exploits that combine bank robber with Robin Hood, their east German heredity is at least as important as their gender categorisation. Their rebellion constitutes a politically motivated act, an attempt to undo the effects of the new administrations' policies: robbing the banks that they believe are robbing the east and redistributing the proceeds to needy local residents.¹⁰ Mitigating factors explain (and are intended to justify) their deeds. Stefan Kolditz's script provides an emotional validation for Lisa's actions: she finds her father, who has committed suicide after discovering that his plans to regenerate the small town by selling land to developers (a site, as in *Das war der wilde Osten*, that is destined to be a golf course, the defining symbol of a self-indulgent western lifestyle that sacrifices place and people to minority pleasures) have resulted in forced evictions. *Burning Life* therefore aims to provide relevant details that absolve the women of any moral crime, even if the women's legal guilt is unequivocal. Their popularity with the east German population, who cheer them on and ask for autographs, represents a wish projection by people forced

⁸ Research shows that though east German women were actively involved in many democratic initiatives, they were ultimately sidelined and forced to adapt to new roles after unification. See Irene Dölling, 'Between Hope and Helplessness: Women in the GDR after the "Turning Point"', *Feminist Review*, No. 39, Winter 1991, 3-16.

⁹ For further discussion of women and GDR film (in later DEFA productions) see Andrea Rinke, 'Images of an Extinct State: Heroines in the GDR Cinema', in *Images of Germany. Perceptions and Conceptions*, ed. by Peter M. Daly *et al* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 73-85. See also Elke Schieber, 'Anfang vom Ende oder Kontinuität des Argwohns 1980 bis 1989', in Schenk (1994), 273-274.

¹⁰ Numerous armed hold-ups did in fact take place after the *Wende*, as robbers took advantage of the east's poorly defended safes storing newly stocked DMs. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that these raids were motivated by anything other than private need. See van der Vat, p. 39.

to accept the policies of a new political order. *Burning Life* clearly presents the east as a colonised territory, whose inhabitants have come to accept their subjugated roles.

The film contextualises the east Germans' plight, showing them (the population as a whole and not women in particular) to be victims of the west, which is represented by unsympathetic institutions, property developers, and specialist policemen from the west. Importantly, the characterisation of the east Germans distinguishes Welz's film from the early *Wende* comedies: the solidarity that was previously aroused by inspired individuals is absent. While the early *Wendefilme* found solutions to the threat from the west through a revitalised eastern solidarity, Welz's film advances no such strategy for collective action. Resistance remains an individual (or rather double-act) endeavour, and does not provide a transferable scheme for defending regional identity, as did the pro-active but non-aggressive tactics employed in the earlier films. Instead, *Burning Life* echoes the leftist criticism of the east Germans' gullibility and their irritation that the population has (again) come to accept their subordinate role. Their passivity suggests that the east Germans' essentially submissive disposition did not disappear with their old political masters. As if to emphasise their innate obedience and perplexed identity, the hostages, when asked to sing the national anthem as the robbers make their escape, are unsure whether to sing that of the GDR or that of the new, united Germany, resulting in jarring polytextual renditions.

Like Welz, Peter Kahane chose to focus on individual, rather than collective, acts of rebellion in his later film, *Bis zum Horizont und weiter*. Avoiding the community altogether, Kahane's film concentrates on individuals who reject the apparently submissive role adopted by their compatriots and attempt to wrest control of their lives away from the new administration. The east/west antagonisms in Kahane's film shows some continuity with the simplified characterisation of the east and west Germans as unification's winners and losers that was central to the *Wende* comedies. The west is represented by an impassive bureaucrat -- a prosperous and conceited judge-- while the east Germans are presented as the more human and sympathetic figures - emotional, disorganised and dispossessed (Stahnke, the film's hero, sleeps in his car, while the judge, who he will kidnap, pads about in her luxury villa). Stahnke's decision to abduct the judge is never questioned; and though it is not motivated by the altruism that guides Welz's

protagonists, the narrative's supplementary biographical details qualify his decision – as they do his fiancée's prison escape. The action swiftly relocates from the Berlin courts to the open road, taking in a number of visually striking sites, the most symbolic of which is Stahnke's former place of work, a disused, open-cast mining district in the north east.

Unlike the early east/west narratives, which pit east German individuals against faceless institutions, the establishment is individualised in Kahane's film in the form of a west Berlin judge (played by Corinna Hauch). The abduction results in her transformation from hard-hearted civil servant to affectionate sympathiser. Her experiences on the road with her abductor (a role created for Wolfgang Stumph) finally allow her to understand and empathise with the east German as victims. Stahnke's motivation for the abduction is not to acquaint the hostage with the realities of the life in the east, but to secure the release of his girlfriend whom the judge has sent to prison.¹¹ Oliver Bukowski's script makes little allowance for the judge's actual victim status, which is largely disregarded and of minor importance compared with the generalised victim status of the east Germans.

Again, the landscape is analogous to the east German psychological state: the deserted mines offer a bleak impression of the east, an uncanny vista that shows no sign of vegetation, let alone human activity. These barren surroundings serve to remind the viewer of the east's once active industries and, by implication, its once active community. Nor is there any sign of the community in which Stahnke grew up. The kidnapper's maternal home, a lone house, presided over by his mother, another veritable Mother Courage figure, appears to be the last inhabited building in the district.¹² The landscape and locations may be etched with the memories of the past, but it is a past that is understood differently by the characters. For the east Germans, it symbolises an idealised past that was associated with progress and the collective. For the west German judge, the lonely house with its orchard and wizened owner engaged in traditional *Heimat* activities – knitting, making Schnapps, preserving fruit – represents an older past and briefly offers an *ersatz* existence that compensates for the implied vacuity of her metropolitan lifestyle. But the envisioned *Heimat* is unable to resolve the post-unification problems as it did in

¹¹ The kidnapper's route to his hideout follows a particular road movie sub-genre – the *en route* hostage comedy. Examples include films such as Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* (1935) and Barry Levinson's *Bandits* (2001). The sub-genre typically employs the 'Stockholm Syndrome', according to which the antagonistic relationship between abductor and abducted is resolved as a bond develops between them, with the victim finally recognising, and even supporting, the kidnapper's motives.

¹² Gudrun Okras, the east German actress playing the role, was indeed a celebrated interpreter of Brecht's heroine.

the earlier, positive comedies. The space offers neutral ground -- being neither quintessentially eastern (as with the abandoned mines), nor typically western (as with the judge's designer home) -- on which to reconcile the immediate differences between the characters. The mutual understanding that develops may hint at a happy ending, but Kahane's film presents a resolutely downbeat conclusion. Surrounded by a heavily armed police unit dispatched to rescue the judge, the reunited lovers finally choose to commit suicide, stepping in front of an approaching train.

The film's combination of melancholy and comedy did not find much critical or commercial favour. Reviewers attributed the narrative's uneven tone to the odd pairing of a director known for his serious dramas with the popular cabaretist.¹³ The response to Stumph's performance was revealing: most journalists commended his attempt at gravitas but found that the former cabaret star was unable to separate himself from his earlier screen personas, which had made him a national star after unification. Stars are often prone to such categorisation (and Stumph had exploited this guise not only in the *Trabi* films but also in the television comedy series, *Salto Postale* and *Salto Kommunale*, which ran to fifty episodes during the mid-nineties), but the ambivalent reception to his most serious role arguably revealed the public's disappointment with a narrative in which the loveable east German underdog was unable to prevail.¹⁴

The Community as Mob

The prognosis of the east Germans' future is less optimistic in these films than it had been in the earlier comedies. The tragic ending in Kahane's comedy was perhaps the clearest indication that east/west encounters were no longer considered the laughing matter that they had once been. The shift in mood from light comedy to dark humour became increasingly common in later productions. The rivalry between east and west was not always the films' essential ingredient. Over the decade, the camera's gaze would also turn inward, finding similar conflict among the east Germans themselves, with inner strife as

¹³ See for example Birgit Galle, 'Das mit uns geht so tief rein', *Berliner Zeitung*, 28.01.1999.

¹⁴ In fact, Stumph has now widened his scope with his highly popular role as a detective in the ZDF television series *Stubbe – der Mann für jeden Fall* (which has also reunited him with Kahane), though the new character hardly constitutes a complete reinvention. A later television comedy, *Das Blaue Wunder* (also by Kahane, 2004), set in Dresden, capitalised on Stumph's everyman figure, this time as an Elbe riverboat captain trying to keep his business afloat.

much a feature as the tensions between east and west Germans. In Sören Voigt's ironically titled debut, *Tolle Lage*, a shabby east German campsite provides the location for a number of conflicts ranging from the domestic (family strife) to the regional (east/west tensions).¹⁵ Where comic one-upmanship had previously characterised the competition between east and west, it is in Voigt's film defined by acrimony and the threat of violence. This balance between tension and comedy owes more to the bittersweet social realism of directors such as Mike Leigh (an influence acknowledged by the young director) than the slapstick and sentimentality on offer in films such as *Superstau* or *Der Brocken*. Like Leigh's films, the social criticism in *Tolle Lage* operates on a number of levels, highlighting various unification issues (property claims, cultural antipathy, unemployment, and economic exploitation) through a cast of grotesquely realised characters. These range from the ridiculous -- petty bourgeois campers, who tend their barbeques in their socks and swimming trunks; drunken campsite inspectors, who don formal jackets over their Hawaiian shirts when reprimanding the negligent owner -- to more disagreeable figures (a husband with poor personal hygiene who mistreats his wife and daughter), who lack the sympathetic qualities that had been present among even the villains in the earlier comedies.

While Voigt makes use of essentialised cultural differences -- simple east Germans opposing devious west Germans -- his film refuses to represent the locals as sympathetic victims attempting to defend their identity. The community spirit that provided a safety net in *Der Brocken* and *Das war der wilde Osten* has all but disappeared; not even the family unit is able to offer any security or comfort. Perhaps the most important break with the earlier comedies is the representation of the east Germans. Without anyone to motivate them or to re-kindle the *Gemeinschaft* values that offered a foundation for resistance, they remain isolated and unengaged individuals.

Economic decline was, as I have indicated above, a catalyst for assertive, often criminal, enterprise in Kahane's and Welz's film. Here, too, an east German robs a bank in

¹⁵ The success of the RTL series, *Die Camper* (Peter Lichtfeld and others), which had a following of over six million viewers and originally ran to more than ninety-one episodes from 1996-2005, demonstrated the Germans' fondness for the comic deprecation of particular German mores -- fastidiousness, petty rivalry, general *Spießigkeit*. See <http://www.rtl-television.de/4426.html>. The campsite had already briefly featured as a location for ridiculing certain regional and class differences in a number of post-unification films (in *Go Trabi Go* and also in *Superstau*, where one of the regional traffic jams becomes an impromptu caravan park in which Germans from all over republic -- including the FRG's newest members -- come into contact with one another).

an attempt not just to improve his financial situation but in order to regain some pride by bettering the bank's security. But the crime counts as an individual reckoning and is not a symbolic gesture or matter of regional defiance. The additional detail that the criminal enjoyed torturing the bank manager, together with the character's disagreeable personality and habits, confirms the bank robbery as an act of personal revenge. Moreover, the successful bank raid worsens the robber's situation, further alienating him from his family and neighbours. The campsite's west German owner is similarly alienated from his family, whom he bullies and exploits, particularly his son-in-law, the east German-Vietnamese, Pit (played by German music channel host, Ill Young Kim). Disillusioned and dysfunctional, the east and west Germans are, then, increasingly similar, though their mutual prejudices ensure continued hostility, with the campsite owner representing exploitative western business, and the campers, who are frequently characterised as dreary provincials, economically restricted and emotionally retarded.

There are few winners in Voigt's film. The western entrepreneur's business prospects are routinely sabotaged - the campsite is subjected to anti-west graffiti and vandalism (ironically by his daughter who is ashamed of her father's exploitative methods). Those who oppose the western manager are only able to perform crude acts of defiance - driving cows through the campsite, refusing to pay their rent. There is no framework for any positive, collective opposition, no sense of communal motivation directed to securing some future autonomy, as in the earlier *Wende* comedies, nor the heroics and/or philanthropy found in Kahane's and Welz's films. Only when the east Germans are drunk on free beer do they unite, suddenly asserting collective authority through mob rule. Looting and wrecking the camp shop, the synecdoche of western exploitation, they suddenly display communal strength under the guise of anonymity.

Such revenge without personal responsibility also emerges as the east German response to their apparently intolerable situation in *Endstation: Tanke*. In Steinbart's film, the locals are mostly presented as narrow-minded provincials, united only in their outrage and bigotry. *Endstation: Tanke* clearly identifies brute hostility as the defining characteristic of the provinces, which in turn is manifest in the transformation of a group of villagers into a drunken mob, determined to hang to the village sign a western interloper, an escaped convict mistaken for the financial advisor who has deceived the community.

Numerous generic features are included -- the landscape is shot to resemble the flat, open plains of the mid-west, while the remote petrol station, staffed here by a young woman in baseball cap and worn dungarees who is harassed by a local 'redneck' in a pick-up truck -- but their inclusion is not simply a question of pastiche or homage, for they also allude to the post-unification frontier mentality and to the region's 'wild-east' reputation. Such recourse to the western has, as previously discussed, been a recurring feature in post-unification comedies. Its influence is evident in the film's thematic as well as its visual scheme: Steinbart for instance reworks one of the genre's enduring narratives, in which spirited villagers resist marauding bandits (representing the community *versus* outsiders). In Steinbart's and Voigt's films, the western does not act as a model for such small-scale community resistance as it did in the earlier films, but provides a generic paradigm for the east Germans' mob justice.¹⁶ Significantly, the portrayal of the locals as a mob ready to take their revenge on those apparently responsible for their miserable situation reveals a new version of the east German community that is no longer associated with the positive communitarianism evident in the earlier films. And the sight of a crowd demanding justice refers not to the demonstrators of 1989 but to a darker past, with the lynch mob reminiscent Hitler's of malevolent gangs.¹⁷ Similar scenes of mob rule are to be found in Norbert Baumgarten's *Befreite Zone* (2002), in which the residents of a small east German town squander their recent economic successes and finally reveal themselves as a community of unreconstructed provincials unable to escape the narrow minded provincialism that west Germans believed defined 'die Zone'.

Unique among post-unification films, *Tolle Lage*'s main protagonist is a non-ethnic German, the Vietnamese/east German, Pit Sun. His presence extends the familiar east/west tension even further eastwards, and relativizes the east Germans self-perceived 'minority', second-class citizen status.¹⁸ Pit himself mentions his 'otherness' (from both

¹⁶ Examples of mob rule/lynch justice in westerns include Anthony Mann's *The Tin Star* (1957), Delmar Daves's *The Hanging Tree* (1959) and William A. Wellman's *The Ox-Bow Incident* (aka *Strange Incident*, 1943).

¹⁷ That their wrath is directed at two individuals, one of whom has a Polish name (Marek) and another who is disabled, offers further parallels with NS politics. The only member of the crowd to voice an objection is a homosexual, who is routinely, and often violently, dismissed by his neighbours

¹⁸ The only other post-unification film to feature a non-ethnic German as the main character is Branwen Okapko's television drama, *Tal der Ahnungslosen* (2003), in which an 'Afro-Deutsche' returns to her home in Dresden. See Ireland's article for an overview of the different ethnic groups living in the GDR, p. 547.

east and west Germans) as the reason behind his plan to escape to Hanoi with his son and wife. Prejudices towards the Vietnamese are acknowledged, but the film examines the issue of prejudice as a matter of cultural and historical antipathy between the east and west Germans. Ironically, the character's distinctiveness allows him to act as mediator between the west (his boss and father-in-law) and the locals, since he is exempt from any historical rivalry. In fact, Pit's hybridity problematises the notion of an unalterable east German identity. That he is viewed as an outsider despite his GDR biography -- many Vietnamese emigrated to East Germany -- is a fact not considered by the 'real' east Germans, while his father-in-law's hostility towards him could be based as much on his South East Asian origins as his east German socialisation. The enlarged photo of his German passport, which he hangs in the camp shop where he works, serves to remind the locals that, despite his physical appearance, he too is an east German. *Tolle Lage* casts several characters in a similar mould to those found in the *Wende* comedies but the qualities that were previously considered charmingly backward are in Voigt's film further proof of an unappealing and occasionally malignant provincialism. Although the east German *Heimat* is once again associated with chauvinism and rivalry, Voigt's film does not imply that the prejudices that are aired are in any way a consequence of unification.

Tolle Lage is concerned with a contemporary east German identity that references and reworks the GDR past. A decade after the state's collapse, the GDR past continued to be the key reference point for their identity. But reference to the past was no longer a matter of working through thorny issues of collective guilt or personal accountability. Remembering the past had also begun to facilitate the personal celebration of GDR life and history from below. The focus on individual experience resisted the historicising of the personal and its inclusion within the wider political context, which had earlier defined east German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. It was the cultural rather than historical references that had gained currency in the process of remembering the east. While *Ostalgie* partly ushered in a bathetic reappraisal of commodities once reviled for their ordinariness -- from tinned lentils to pickled gherkins -- it was not, as the final chapter will argue, simply a question of resuscitating good old GDR brands. Though not an *Ostalgie* film (in the sense that *Sonnenallee* and *Good Bye, Lenin!* are seen to be), *Tolle Lage* does acknowledge certain nostalgic impulses. The east German campers reconnect with their past in a number of scenes. One resident, in particular, is seemingly unable to forget the

past, and builds a Heath Robinson-like contraption which allows him to replicate Jürgen Sparwasser's goal which secured the East German team's 1974 World Cup victory over its western neighbours (a triumph that mattered more to the east than the west, who went on to win the title). The invention once again demonstrates the east Germans' knack for resourceful invention, borne of a time when materials were at a premium, while underlining the paradox of applying such aptitude and innovation to a project used only to celebrate past victories.

Such impulses have no useful purpose, according to Voigt's film, which ends on a surprisingly positive note - for the only non(ethnic)-German. Pit transcends regional prejudices and historical enmity between east and west and assumes ownership of the site, which is restored with friends from diverse backgrounds, displaying a kind of harmony that may not be possible between the Germans themselves but which is able to exist among ethnic communities on the fringe of German society.

Borderland/Bored land

The east German backwater continued to be the favoured location for many filmmakers throughout the nineties. Among them was Jan Ralske, whose debut *Not a Love Song* earned him several awards at international film festivals but hardly caused a stir in Germany, where it fell victim to the usual distribution problems. The film's English title is perhaps more understandable than is the case with most other post-unification films with English names, given its references to American iconography.¹⁹ Unlike the other films, it is not Hollywood's influence that is visible in Ralske's film, but the smaller lo-fi cinema of the American independents, particularly Jim Jarmusch's early work, whose 'gently ironic, dedramatised, barely generic narratives' the film echoes.²⁰ In contrast to the mainstream style that shapes most of the other early *Wende* comedies (standard colour,

¹⁹ This is common to many post-unification films, from *Go Trabi, Go* in the early nineties to *Kleinruppin Forever* (Carsten Fiebler, 2003), made more than a decade after. Although it is tempting to see this juxtaposition as a deliberate reference to the films' application of American genres or Hollywood storytelling to specifically German narratives, in an industry that is largely defined by US cinema, the reason may be more a matter of commercial appeal rather than a self-referential gag. Ralske's original title, *Fata Morgana*, could not be used as another film bearing the same name was released at the same time. Unimpressed by the suggested alternatives, the director eventually chose an English title that the film's producers 'couldn't debate on linguistic grounds'. From correspondence with Jan Ralske, 29.7.2005.

²⁰ Geoff Andrew, *Stranger than Paradise. Maverick film-makers in recent American cinema* (London: Prion, 1998), p. 164.

predictable dialogue, common narrative patterns), Ralske's deadpan film opts for long takes, spare dialogue and, like Jarmusch, forgoes colour for monochrome. Though Ralske is indebted to a film language that is unmistakably American in origin, neither the film's east German location nor its context is downplayed.²¹ *Not a Love Song* acknowledges the region's economic decline and its depressed residents but avoids apportioning any blame or enquiring into the social and economic reasons behind the circumstances, preferring instead to look at the effects on the inhabitants. Ralske's style, then, is observational rather than analytical; its tendency towards social realism celebrates the ordinary and the mundane, seeking to bring an additional stamp of authenticity that counterbalances the melodrama: briefly, a love triangle between three friends (Bruno, Luise and Karl). A documentary-like approach is apparent in the forensic focus on locals and imbues the film with a degree of authenticity that was new to unification comedies. In one long shot (of almost 30 seconds), the camera concentrates on a man downing his beer, while his bored girlfriend watches with a look of tired disapproval. These documentary touches also balance the mannered behaviour of the three protagonists who are quite unlike their fellow villagers. Such formal inconsistencies are not uncommon in the later comedies, which compensate for their rather atypical (east German) protagonists by including realistic snapshots of the east German *Alltag*, usually focussing on disaffected individuals suffering from small-town ennui or shots of the landscape that confirm the region's dilapidation.

Central to the narrative is Bruno, the film's antihero. Coolly nonchalant, the character's swagger and poise was intended to resemble that of James Dean, but the role is arguably closer to the central character of Terence Malick's *Badlands* (1974), a role made famous by Martin Sheen. Certainly, the latter offers a more direct comparison, given the similarities of the two protagonists' environments - the Dakota Badlands in Malick's film and Germany's north-eastern badlands in Ralske's.²² As a young man from the provinces keen to escape his environment, Bruno is equal to Malick's hero. Yet this desire to escape does not become the starting point for a road movie/crime spree through the hinterlands as in *Badlands*, since Bruno's *Tatra* fails to convey him even beyond Ketschdorf, the *Kuhdorf* that is his home. With its businesses closing and its insolvent locals attempting

²¹ A fact that is made less surprising given the director was born in Texas (1959), though he has lived and worked in (east and west) Germany since the 1980s.

²² In fact, Ralske's intention was to 'make the Uckermark look like Texas' (From correspondence with Jan Ralske). The area's tourist website prefers the sobriquet 'Toskana des Nordens'. Online at: <http://www.uckermark.de> [Accessed 26.7.2005].

suicide, the village conforms to the gloomy portrait of the east German provinces that had become the staple of many unification dramas. But the humour in Ralske's film distinguishes it from those dour studies and aligns it instead with the other films in this chapter. Suicide, for instance, is a darkly comic motif throughout, affecting not only the human population but, according to Bruno, even the animals. One character repeatedly tries to end his life without success. The catalytic converter on the newly purchased BMW that he cannot afford thwarts one suicide attempt. Later, Bruno finds him sitting on the train tracks, where again his attempt to end his life cannot succeed, since the trains no longer run on that line. Only when told that, 'ab Juli wird es sich doch erst wieder lohnen für dich hier zu sitzen', does he reconsider his plans.

This eastern *Heimat* could hardly be further from that envisioned in the early comedies. Drunkenness and boredom typify village life, a mood that is emphasised by the film's slow pacing. Enervated by their provincial lives, the locals only come together as a community with the promise of free beer. Little remains of the east German *Heimat* in Ralske's film; nor is there much evidence of the new society. The Berlin Republic is an abstract concept, as distant as the capital itself which is made even more inaccessible by the train station's closure. Other than the high speed trains that pass through, there is no sense of the outside world, the world beyond the village itself. The west's influence is only evident in the effect it has had on Karl, the optimistic local who takes on not just the principles of western venture capitalism but its tactics too, suddenly treating Lisa, his wife, and Bruno as subordinates and threatening to dock their pay. His plans for recreating the area as a fashionable spa resort, together with the investment jargon learned at business seminars, stand in contrast to Bruno's pessimistic evaluation of local prospects and his disgruntled demeanour. Where Bruno is a would-be James Dean, with quiff and sunglasses, Karl is the would-be high-flyer, the pro-active entrepreneur. Like Udo's unconvincing conversion from parochial local to snappy businessman in the second of the *Trabi* films, Karl is ill-suited to this new role. This inability effectively to mimic the new political and economic masters reaffirms an essentialised view of the east Germans as lacking the ability to escape their innate provincial simplicity – which is reinforced in Ralske's film when Karl's plans fail and he suffers a breakdown.²³

²³ Only in *Sumo Bruno* (Lenard Fritz Krawinkel, 1999) does an east German succeed in mimicking an 'other'. In Krawinkel's film, a timid, overweight east German is encouraged to train and enter for the Sumo

The realities of life in the provinces inevitably crush the aspirations of the characters and none is finally able to succeed in their aspirations, a disheartening conclusion that is typical for many of the post-unification dramas. Karl's grand scheme inevitably fails, as does Luise's newly-opened café at the redundant train station.²⁴ Bruno, too, proves less spontaneous than his attitude first suggests and he abandons both his dreams of escape and the girl of his dreams. Stranded at a motorway service station when their (stolen) car has been stolen, he decides, with evident relief, to return to Ketschdorf, telling Luise 'ich habe überhaupt keine Hemden eingepackt'. Only Luise, who is never wholly convinced by either Bruno's or Karl's visions, succeeds in her (ad)ventures. Mistreated by her egotistical husband, and finally disappointed by Bruno's inability to commit, she is the most determined of the three, showing willingness in her café project, and then eagerness in the flight to Italy (a further example of empowered east German women taking the initiative in post-unification film).

Where unity and resourcefulness were central to the survival strategies conceived by the community in comedies made at the beginning of the decade, Ralske is one of several directors to propose escape as the only chance of survival for those in the east German provinces. The proposal bears some correlation with fact, given the migration of significant numbers of people from the rural east. Beyond the rather skewed comedy, the final scene does not offer any happy ending: walking directly up to the camera, Bruno adopts the pugilist's posture, before dropping his raised fists and muttering 'Scheiße', as if only then realising that he has wasted the one real opportunity to escape his *Heimat*.

One of the few films to allow its protagonist an escape from the depressing east German provinces was Michael Schorr's *Schultze gets the Blues*, a well-received study of one man's attempt to adjust to his early retirement after a lifetime working in the mining

World Championship in provincial Riesa (which, incredibly, did host the first such competition outside Japan). Bruno struggles to adapt to this foreign sport, but does finally qualify for the tournament, though Krawinkel does not offer any fairytale ending. Like these other films, the portrayal of the east is uninviting and confirms the region's intolerance of outsiders and of those who would attempt somehow to deny their 'easterness'.

²⁴ Their plans exhibit a naive understanding of business that corresponds with a general view of the east Germans as financially naive. Consider also *Vergiss Amerika*, in which one of the characters living in a depressed town opens a garage selling American imports. Of the 1.3 million businesses that opened between 1990 and 1995, 600 000 did indeed close. See L.K. Davison Schmich *et al*, p. 329.

industry in provincial Sachsen-Anhalt.²⁵ Though Schorr had written the screenplay in the early nineties in response to the mass redundancies then facing the west's mining and steel industry, he later rewrote his script in order to reflect a similar situation in the former GDR.

Like *Not a Love Song*, Schorr's film is a laconic, poignant film that strives for authenticity through its documentary approach, which is evident in the long takes, static camerawork and spare dialogue. Unusually for the films of this period, *Schultze gets the Blues* reflects not on the region's youth but on the older generation forced into early retirement. Despite the difference in age between the characters in Schorr's film and the generation portrayed in the other films, the narratives converge in articulating the anxieties and frustrations that appear to be symptomatic of the provinces. Schorr's film, too, comments on *Heimat* and on identity. The narrative exposes the provincial prejudice and intransigent conservatism of the east German *Heimat*. The locals' resistance to outsiders is not concentrated on any non-natives; there are no west Germans to imperil or exploit the community, no strangers passing through. The cause of hostility is more subtle but no less threatening to local identity: when Schultze (played by Horst Krause, whose other major role was as Most in Buck's film) decides to substitute the traditional polka that he always plays at the annual *Heimatverein* celebration for the unfamiliar rhythms of a Cajun melody, members of the audience are outraged and accuse him of playing 'Negermusik'. While Schorr references the insularity and chauvinism of small town life, his film is not an indictment of the east German provinces. Indeed, Schorr's interest in regional identity and community values extends far beyond Sachsen-Anhalt to Texas and finally to Louisiana. In the Texan town of New Braunfels, where Schultze is sent to represent his hometown at the annual accordion festival, he is disappointed to discover that the event, organised by the American-German community, is equally narrow in its musical focus. Ironically, Schultze, coded as the epitome of the provincial German (evident in his eating habits, his old-fashioned clothing, his home and allotment, which even features that ridiculed garden ornament, the plastic gnome), is even less comfortable in these self-consciously German surroundings -- a perfect example of a constructed and self-perpetuating identity -- than he

²⁵ See for example, Michael Ranze, 'Schultze gets the Blues' (review), *epd Film*, 5/2004, p. 22. Schorr's film, a low budget production which, like numerous post-unification films, was part funded by ZDF for their series, 'Das Kleine Fernsehspiel', did reasonably well at the box-office and earned an award at the Venice Film festival.

is on his home territory. In search of the authentic music and community that has captured his imagination (the Cajuns of the Louisiana bayous), he escapes this faux *Heimat* and heads downriver. More riverine than road movie, *Schultze gets the Blues* nevertheless observes generic convention as Schultze travels deep into the marshlands of the southern states, encountering eccentric characters and narrowly avoiding disaster. But Schorr's film avoids clichéd storytelling and, contrary to expectation, his protagonist does not, after all, find a home among the Cajuns or return to his *Heimat* the experienced traveller. Schultze's escape provides no salvation: temporarily taken in by a sympathetic Afro-American woman and her daughter, Schultze finally dies aboard her houseboat.

Conclusion

In an article published sixteen years after the collapse of the GDR, Thomas Bulmahn offers an analysis of the relationship between modernity and happiness in Germany that counters the generally held (Durkheimian) proposition that modernisation and rapid social transformations inevitably result in 'anomic reactions' amongst those affected.²⁶ Bulmahn remains sceptical to other studies of modernity and anomie, saying doubtfully of a study by Hans Hartwig Bohle et al, 'structural crises, they believe, "lead to innovation, ritualisation, withdrawal, protest and criminality"'.²⁷ Using data taken from the Federal Republic's *Wohlfahrtssurvey*, Bulmahn argues that in east Germany, 'the subjective well-being of the people has improved considerably' and that accelerated modernisation 'does not perforce lead to a permanent increase in anomic reactions'.²⁸ Bulmahn's is a lone voice. Other articles may not specifically address east German anomie, but the evidence presented in many other studies contradicts his cheerful diagnosis. Reißig, who draws on a wider range of reports and surveys than Bulmahn, talks for instance of 'eine Sinnkrise in Ostdeutschland, ein entstandenes Vakuum'²⁹.

²⁶ Thomas Bulmahn, 'Modernity and Happiness – the case of Germany', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1, 2000, 375-400.

²⁷ Bulmahn is referring to a chapter by Hans Hartwig Bohle et al, 'Anomie in der Gesellschaft. Bestandsaufnahme und Kritik eines klassischen Ansatzes', in *Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Auf dem Weg von der Konsens- zur Konfliktgesellschaft. Vol. 1. Was treibt die Gesellschaft auseinander?* ed. by Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), 29-62, p. 59, cited in Bulmahn, p. 383.

²⁸ Bulmahn, p. 391.

²⁹ See Reißig (1999). It should be added that others accused the media of disproportionate reporting, and of exaggerating the level of dissatisfaction felt amongst east (and west) Germans. See Hans Mathias Kepplinger's article, 'Wie sehen sich die Deutschen?', in *Die Deutschen auf der Suche nach ihrer neuen*

Certainly, many of the films made during the nineties confirm Reißig's point; there is scant evidence in their narratives of the happiness to which Bulmahn refers. Unlike the *Heimatfilme* that were made soon after unification, the majority of comedies made since the mid-nineties present narratives whose protagonists are no longer constituent of the east German community. Sympathy lies with those individuals who stand apart from the mass and who do not, therefore, embody the community and its values. Struggling to find some footing in the post-unification society, some of the protagonists eventually rebel against its values and regulations, directly challenging the authority of the new establishment – the banks and the courts in Kahane's and Welz's film, the police and immigration control in Hebenanz's film. Rather than accepting their marginalised status and general disempowerment, they opt for a forceful rejection of their colonisers, engaging in practices intended to sabotage their authority.³⁰ The two bank robbers in *Burning Life* donate their money to poor locals yet remain emotionally and physically distant from their compatriots. In Kahane's film, Stumph's character voices grievances that were common in the east, but his act of defiance is motivated by personal issues and lacks the sense of indignation and integrity (leading to a re-energised regional loyalty) that guided his characters in previous films. The motivation for their rebellion has various causes -- redundancies, property claims, and other financial woes -- but the criminal strategies they employ provide neither a suitable blueprint for future resistance nor an incentive for collective action.

Although the characters' dismal economic situation is a recent development, that is post-*Wende*, unification is seldom mentioned and there is rarely any reference to the GDR. Occasional details provide visual reminders of the East German state but these are, for the most part, subtly inscribed. In an attempt to present a more authentic vision of the east,

Identität?, ed. by Eduard J. M. Kroker and Bruno Dechamps (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, 1993), 45-61. A lengthy cover article in *Der Spiegel*, ('Jammertal Ost'), 39/2004, would also seem to reject Bulmahn's thesis.

³⁰ Though the post-unification situation is never described in terms of colonisation, their attitude resembles the kind of conflict discussed in post-colonial theory. For a good introduction to the subject, see *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by Bill Ashcroft *et al.* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995) and *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrismen, (New York; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994). On the alleged colonisation of the east, see also Fritz Vilmar and Wolfgang Dümcke, eds, *Kolonialisierung der DDR. Kritische Analyse und Alternativen des Einigungsprozesses* (Münster: Agenda, 1995) and Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification. From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005), 2-20.

these filmmakers often eschew those relics of the state that had subsequently acquired cult status (the *Trabis*, the SED mementos etc) and avoid the quaint *Heimat* images that characterise the *Wende* comedies, focussing instead on the east as a forlorn territory - from the coast's deserted lunar landscape in Welz's film to the barren fields captured by Hans Fromm in *Not a Love Song*, and the empty vistas of Sachsen-Anhalt in Schorr's film. The depressing environment may provide some context for the inhabitants' grievances, but sympathy for the region's population has, surprisingly perhaps, ceased to be unconditional, despite -- and this is the important difference between the early and late comedies -- the similarity in their circumstances. The economic and social situation remains bleak, yet the portrayal of the east Germans as victims of unification has diminished. Indeed, several of these later films imply that it is the east Germans who are, in part, responsible for their situation.

The east Germans that people these films are not, then, the cognates of those characters found in the *Wende* comedies. The previous representation of the east Germans as either loveable naïfs, inveterate provincials whose old-fashioned guile proves a match for the sophisticated tactics of the west, or slow-witted ex-Stasi operatives, had, it seemed, exceeded its shelf life, as had the schematic vision of the east German province as some quaint, pre-industrial *Heimat*. Like the films discussed in the preceding chapter, the rural provinces, re-presented in more authentic accounts, constitute a depressing post-industrial *Heimat* often associated with indolence, drunkenness and insularity. The protagonists, meanwhile, do not try to mobilise the community and reawaken its inherent integrity and solidarity but surrender community to individual self-realisation – often manifested in the attempt to escape. This countered not just the post-*Wende* version of the east German community, but denied the socialist values that underpinned many DEFA narratives. For the most part, then, the characters' responses to the structural crisis that followed unification do in fact support some of the claims that Bulmahn dismisses, with withdrawal, protest and criminality replacing the buoyant diligence and common sense that had defined the earlier post-*Wende* communities.

Chapter Five

Berlin: Disorientation/Reorientation

One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory, it is associated with objects and places. The city is the *locus* of the collective memory.¹

Since the beginning of film, certain cities have become synonymous with the metropolitan experience. Often it is a nation's capital -- London, Paris, Tokyo, Buenos Aires -- which offers the model urban site, while in the United States, New York rather than Washington was the quintessential metropolis for much of the twentieth century. In German film culture, meanwhile, Berlin was and continues to be the quintessential cinematic city. Though the seat of political power in the west shifted to Bonn, Berlin's reputation as Germany's filmmaking capital did not diminish and an active film culture was sustained, resulting in a steady release of films that documented and represented life in the German capital, with the city as much as the lives contained therein the subject of the camera's gaze.² After the war, the studios at Babelsberg came under the Soviet authority and it was at those studios, where the celebrated Weimar filmmakers and later those working under the aegis of Goebbels had made their films, that the East German film industry was nurtured and matured.

Once a microcosm of the Cold War, Berlin then became a microcosm of unification's political and cultural upheavals. The film scene in Berlin may not have confirmed Volker Schlöndorff's optimistic vision of Babelsberg as a centre for innovative filmmaking that would attract internationally celebrated directors, but the city continues to be the preferred setting for tales of contemporary urban life.³ While many of these narratives continue to focus on the modern (and postmodern) condition, exploring the symptoms of modern life that have long fascinated filmmakers, they also provide insight

¹ Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1982), p.130.

² See Guntram Vogt's comprehensive study of the (German) city and film, *Die Stadt im Film: Deutsche Spielfilme 1900-2000* (Marburg: Schüren, 2001). See also Ralf Schenk's summary of the city's significance in recent film, 'Das andere Leben', *Das Magazin*, March 2006, p. 86.

³ Though Babelsberg attracted a number of international productions, the studio complex ultimately failed to become the new centre of European filmmaking, a fact that was doubtless made more painful to its owners because of its poor financial return than because of its failure to engender the professional collegiality and the quality productions envisioned by Schlöndorff.

into the troubling effects of unification on the capital's eastern population -- individuals rather communities -- and their reaction to material and social upheaval. Before addressing these narratives, the chapter begins with an historical overview of filmmaking in Berlin, then moves on to discuss the city's significance for filmmakers east and west of the border. Since the city's architecture was intended to aid in the construction and expression of identity, a fact that was evident in the resistance to the proposed demolition of buildings in the east, and which plays a role in the protagonists' disorientation, the chapter also assesses changes in the city's architectural profile.

Berlin: Film and History

Filmmakers had been in operation in Berlin since film's embryonic stage, but it was during the twenties that Berlin's reputation as a centre for technical innovation had been established, from the highly stylised expressionist films (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1920) to the inventive montage of *Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927). The period also witnessed the release of films that aimed to capture the pace and atmosphere of a city in the midst of expansion in the so-called *Straßenfilme*: *Asphalt* (Joe May, 1929), *Menschen am Sonntag* (a collaborative project by Robert Siodmak, Rochus Gliese and Edgar G. Ulmer, 1929), and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (Piel Jutzi, 1930). Influenced by the objectives of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, these films offered portraits of everyday lives, and signalled a shift from the experimentalism associated with the early Weimar films.

Berlin's divided status -- 'cut in two like a brain severed by an artificial scalpel' was Baudrillard's description -- did not lessen its allure.⁴ As the frontline between East and West, Berlin particularly attracted Western filmmakers, for whom the city's geopolitical enclave status made it the ideal setting for numerous Cold War thrillers and propaganda pieces, including George Seaton's *The Big Lift* (1950), Carol Reed's *The Man Between* (1953) and Michael Anderson's *The Quiller Memorandum* (1966). Even when filmmakers departed from the view of West Berlin as a frontier between two opposing ideologies, the focus often continued to be on the city as a site of transgressed boundaries, though it was no longer the geographical and ideological borders that were crossed but

⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories* (London; New York: Verso, 1990), p.135

society's moral parameters. Tempting as it is to read this loosening of the strictures governing social behaviour as compensation for the city's geographical restrictions, Berlin's reputation for dissipation and lapses in decency had in fact been established at least since the 1920s. More than any other German city, Berlin has proved to be an enduring location for narratives of vice and corruption, an association that has its origins in the pre-War period, when it 'seemed synonymous with all that was most hopeful and exciting -- or alternately troubling and dysfunctional -- about Weimar culture'.⁵ The city's notoriety as a centre of cultural decadence, artistic irreverence and as a home to a (romanticised) criminal underworld has been a defining aspect of its filmic representation. Richard Oswald sought out the milieu during the Weimar period in his film *Ganovenehre. Ein Film aus der Berliner Unterwelt* (1932, remade by Wolfgang Staudte in 1966). The city's insalubrious side continued to attract attention long after the war, as with *Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (Ulrich Edel, 1981) and, in particular, Lothar Lambert's provocative sub-cultural portraits (among others, *Berlin Harlem*, 1974). During the Cold War, Berlin provided the setting for numerous melodramas in which national and emotional boundaries were frequently broken, offering allegories for unification when political unity itself seemed little more than fiction. In western productions, romance across the divide is to be found in the previously discussed *Der Boss aus dem Westen*, while DEFA directors invariably used the partition as a means of illustrating positive resolutions that East Germans, forced to choose between the GDR and the FRG, were able to make (Heinz Thiel's *Der Kimmhaken*, 1962, for example). Later, the city's gay scene, which had a long history in Berlin's film and literature, became the focus of attention for directors such as Frank Ripploh (*Taxi zum Klo*, 1980). Of these gay dramas, a number unite individuals from opposite sides of the city, as in Wieland Speck's *Westler: East of the Wall* (1984) and Heiner Carow's internationally celebrated *Coming Out* (1989), a rare portrait of East Berlin's gay scene, and the only DEFA film to consider the subject (though homosexuality was not a taboo in the GDR).⁶ The city's divided status served the metaphorical imaginations of other directors, such as Helma Sanders-Brahms and Wim

⁵ Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, 'Berlin and the Countryside', in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. by Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley; London; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 412-413, p. 412. Hitler famously hated Berlin, as did Goebbels, who believed the city to be corrupted by 'Israelites', rendering the Germans 'alien and superfluous'. See Joseph Goebbels, 'Around the Gedächtniskirche', (reprinted) in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 560-562, p. 561.

⁶ The representation of east/west homosexual encounters continued after unification in even more explicit films, as in Jürgen Brüning's pornographic film, *West fickt Ost* (2001).

Wenders (*Die allseitig reduzierte Persönlichkeit-Redupers*, 1977; *Himmel über Berlin*, 1987), two films that, according to Barbara Mennel, emphasised the ‘marginality and lack of a center for West German identity’.⁷

Berlin reunited was not Berlin restored. Partition had resulted in a city of two clearly identifiable halves. Each of the governing authorities was aware of the city’s significance for the state and set about imprinting its ideology onto the city’s architecture. Not that this upset Berlin’s urban identity, for the city had never really had a fixed architectural design. Since at least the 1800s, it had been the drawing board for a succession of egos and ideologies, resulting in a city whose various pasts remain encribed in a mixture of architectural styles. Rebuilding in both halves after the war (the ruins, rather than Speer’s plans, having been Hitler’s most obvious architectural legacy) had been haphazard. While the west embraced new architectural forms and sought to restore a pre-war vitality to Berlin, whose epicentre needed shifting from the old heart of the city (which was located in the east), the regime in the east struggled for decades to repair its half. The SED’s urban vision was optimistic but the state never successfully implemented its socialist town development and the result was an architecturally heterogeneous conurbation, where nineteenth century tenements on cobbled streets stood opposite high rise flats, the derided *Plattenbau* estates (an architectural juxtaposition that was memorably captured in *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*).⁸ These ‘residential silos’ which dominated the eastern districts of Marzahn, Hellersdorf and Hohenschönhausen never really fulfilled the state vision of utopian living.⁹ Though the hastily constructed apartments were conceived according to a guiding principle of ‘Ganzheitlichkeit’, a symbiosis of town planning, architecture and artistic expression, the results -- enormous housing projects on the outskirts of the traditional centres of community and social

⁷ Barbara Mennel, ‘Shifting and Contested Centers: Changing Cinematic Visions of (West) Berlin’, in *Berlin. The Symphony Continues. Orchestrating Architectural Change in Germany’s New Capital*, ed. by Carol Anne Costabile-Heming *et al* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 41-59, p. 41.

⁸ Duncan Smith argues that the SED’s housing problems were largely a legacy of the war. Not only were many of the eastern cities badly damaged, but the influx of German migrants from the pre-war eastern territories put further pressure on the authorities who were already struggling to maintain some infrastructural order. Unlike the FRG, which was able to rebuild after receiving valuable financial support in the form of the Marshall Plan, the GDR was further burdened by the reparations it was obliged to pay to the Soviet Union, pp. 133-139.

⁹ Michael Mönninger, ‘Growing Together Again’, in *Berlin Tomorrow. International Architectural Visions*, ed. by Andreas C. Papadakis (London: Architectural Design, 1991), 16-20, p. 17.

interaction -- hardly attested to any notion of cohesion.¹⁰ After 1989, it was the neglected nineteenth century buildings, roads studded with cobbled stones and edifices still pockmarked by Russian shells that enabled strangers to gauge whether they were in the eastern or western half of the city. Paradoxically, the east's material deprivation renewed and validated many West Berliners' dormant contempt for the poorer east.¹¹ West Berlin was not without its run-down areas. Kreuzberg, in particular, was an appealingly shabby district, squeezed right up to the wall, a bustling *Kiez* of immigrant communities too poor to afford accommodation in the areas further west and home to the nation's counter-cultural community, many of whom had relocated to Berlin because of the city statute that exempted its residents from military service. These non-conformist/non-native communities and the city's island existence notwithstanding, West Berlin was able to confirm the west's high standard of living, from the elegant villas of Grunewald to the retail indulgence offered at the 'Europa Center', Germany's first shopping mall above which revolved the symbolic Mercedes star (the launching point for a (feigned) suicide in *Himmel über Berlin*).

The eastern authorities naturally tried hard to present the capital of the German Democratic Republic as the epitome of socialist progress, much to the irritation of smaller towns and cities in the east, whose citizens frequently felt that the capital received a disproportionate amount of funding. This was particularly the case in 1987, the year in which the city celebrated its 750th anniversary. Their resentment was justified, given that, with the exception of a few high-profile rebuilding projects (as in Dresden), the rest of the state was forced to make do with buildings that had not been modernised since before the war, while those living in the capital could enjoy a relatively high level of comfort.¹² Unlike his predecessor, Honecker initiated dozens of renovation projects in the city in an attempt to compete with the west, though these were often dismissed as piecemeal accomplishments which 'stood out like new teeth in a mouth of decay'.¹³ The SED's ambition to transform East Berlin into the modern socialist metropolis ultimately failed.

¹⁰ See Robert Halsall, 'GDR architecture and town planning in post-unification Germany: "Geschichtsaufarbeitung" or aesthetic autonomy?', *German Monitor*, No. 49 (*The GDR and its History: Rückblick und Revision. Die DDR im Spiegel der Enquete-Kommissionen*), ed. by Peter Barker (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 185-214, p. 188.

¹¹ See *ibid.*

¹² See Eckart Bethke, 'Vom Wohnen der DDR-Bürger', in *Alltag im anderen Deutschland*, ed. by Werner Filmer and Heribut Schwan (Düsseldorf; Vienna: Econ Verlag, 1985), 277-285, p. 280.

¹³ Anthony Read and David Fisher, *Berlin. The Biography of a City* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 294.

Lacking both the monumentalism of Soviet architecture that it hoped to emulate, and the elegance of West Berlin to which it was umbilically tied, east Berlin came to be seen as the poor, ugly capital of a provincial state, a 'notably untouristic, working city of studied boringness'.¹⁴

East Berlin and DEFA

For all the investment made into presenting East Berlin as a modern and vibrant capital, DEFA films did little to persuade audiences that it was the beating heart of their socialist state. Early films often highlighted the advantage of life in the eastern sectors over that in the West, even when East Berlin was barely standing, by portraying West Berlin as an immoral, ideologically unsound place. Berlin's ruined architecture was memorably used by Wolfgang Staudte in *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (1946), in which the bomb-damaged buildings provided a setting for his post-war, neo-expressionist melodrama of guilt and revenge. In *Die Bunkarierten*, the city's old tenement buildings served as the location for a drama that sought to historicise the Berlin proletariat and, more broadly, the GDR's population, while focussing on the rebuilding projects that were part of the SED's 'Aufbau DDR' project in particular and their progressive ideology in general. Later, as Cold War positions became more entrenched and the material benefits more obvious, DEFA's Berlin films steered clear from such direct comparisons. Ruins had been an understandable feature of the urban landscape in the post-war period and served as a potent reminder of Hitler's bellicose regime. That many were still there years later was a reminder of the east's parlous economy, a fact that was made all the more apparent if compared to the west's post-war facelift. The grey, empty space that represented West Berlin on GDR city maps both indicated an attempt to deny its existence and a means of restricting the population's cartographic identification with the city behind the wall. Many of the DEFA films that are set in East Berlin sought to offer a normalised portrait of life in the city. Only a handful of films considered the city's bi-polar profile. Nor was the state capital often imagined as the city of vice or alienation that its counterpart was (even by West German filmmakers). This is not to suggest that DEFA's Berlin films met with official approval. Those films that have come to be seen as some of DEFA's most significant

¹⁴ Moran, p. 217.

productions -- among them, *Berlin - Ecke Schönhauser* (Gerhard Klein, 1957), *Jahrgang '45* (Jürgen Böttcher, 1966; released 1990), and *Solo Sunny* (Konrad Wolf, 1980) -- were withdrawn or criticised by the east German authorities for failing to offer an accurate, or desirable, portrait of life in the socialist capital, but celebrated on their re-release after the *Wende* as among DEFA's finest films, offering valuable insight into the lives of east Berliners.¹⁵

The GDR's urban experience was often presented to audiences in the form of the east's giant building projects. The state's solution to the GDR's housing shortage was to construct the *Plattenbauten*, whose expansive estates came to define the east's urban profile. The regime provided these industrial building schemes as evidence of magnanimous state provision, the standardised accommodation offering further proof of the GDR's egalitarianism rather than a quick-fit solution. Many of the older pre-war properties had been so neglected that they no longer provided suitable accommodation – at least not for the state's upright citizens. In reality, they continued to provide homes for many East Berliners, who either refused to move out of districts in which they had grown up, or who were not persuaded by the new living quarters with all their mod cons. This often resulted in districts which had been largely abandoned by families and by those with contacts among the authorities, leaving only the old, original residents and others whose reluctance to embrace the new accommodation possibilities in a sense marked them as outsiders.¹⁶ Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin counted as such a district and developed a reputation as the east's most subversive community. Once home to a 'small but harassed alternative scene', it has been gentrified in the years since unification, with the original residents making way for a rather self-consciously unconventional bourgeoisie.¹⁷

Some films clearly supported the new developments as modern, utopian living. Examples include *Ein April hat 30 Tage* (Günther Scholz, 1979) set in the Berlin satellite

¹⁵ In fact, the majority of Berlin films were not withdrawn; this is not proof of conformity but of the GDR's often unpredictable attitude towards its cultural products. Some of DEFA's most celebrated directors filmed the GDR capital, including Kurt Matezig (*Vergesst mir meine Traudel nicht*, 1957), Heiner Carow (*Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (1973), and Roland Gräf (*P.S.*, 1979). Dieter Wolf provides an absorbing account of the films and film projects that were withdrawn or closed down during production in *Gruppe Babelsberg. Unsere nichtgedrehten Filme* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2000).

¹⁶ One can see this in some DEFA films (*Jahrgang '45*, and *Solo Sunny*, for example), which house their unconventional characters in less salubrious homes – often located in Prenzlauer Berg.

¹⁷ Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting the German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 107. See also Daniela Dahn's portrait of the suburb and its residents in *Kunst und Kohle. Die 'Szene' am Prenzlauer Berg Berlin, DDR* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1987).

district of Marzahn and which portrays the apartment blocks not as the 'Fickzellen mit Fernheizung' that Heiner Müller once called them, but as home to a lively community that includes a number of international residents.¹⁸ Frank Vogel, meanwhile, was one of the few filmmakers to reference East Berlin's most infamous building project, the Berlin Wall, whose construction was thematised in his film, *...und deine Liebe auch* (1962). Other films, such as *He, Du!* (Rolf Römer, 1970), emphasised the GDR's building projects by foregrounding the city's ongoing construction in their positive socialist narratives. But not all the films set in and around the new housing developments confirmed the state's optimistic architectural vision. Hermann Zschoche's *Insel der Schwäne* (1983) implied a causal link between social problems and the uncongenial Marzahn housing estate to which the protagonists move. Such pessimistic descriptions were hardly tolerated. As Elke Schieber noted, 'nur der geringste Zweifel am Wohnungsbauprogramm, mit dem man in den achtziger Jahren ein soziales Hauptproblem zu lösen versprochen hatte, galt als Angriff auf die Arbeiterklasse und ihre Führung'.¹⁹ Zschoche's and Plenzdorf's film was duly condemned in several Party organs and the problems associated with the east's housing estates would not be dealt with again until 2001, when the area's mean streets provided the setting for a post-unification study of gang culture in Esther Gronenborn's *alaska.de*. The authorities' sensitivity to any criticism of their architectural accomplishments and building philosophy was naturally reflected in their attitude towards architects themselves, who were subjected to careful scrutiny and occasionally even imprisoned for their 'staatsfeindliche Entwürfe'.²⁰

The architect's role in the GDR was itself the subject of two controversial films, *Unser Kurzes Leben* (Lothar Warnecke, 1981) and Peter Kahane's film, *Die Architekten* (eventually made in 1990). The former, based on Brigitte Reimann's novel, 'Franziska Linkerhand', in which an idealistic young female architect joins a provincial practice, offered some criticism of state planning but nothing as explicitly critical as Kahane's film. *Die Architekten* demonstrated the authorities' dispiriting effect on a group of young architects engaged to design a cultural centre for a satellite town. The housing projects were unequivocally criticised in Kahane's film as sterile environments in which communities cannot hope to prosper. But the film did more than decry GDR town-

¹⁸ Heiner Müller, *Germania 3. Gespenster am toten Mann* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996), p. 7.

¹⁹ Schieber, p. 274.

²⁰ Wolfgang Kil, 'Staatsfeindliche Entwürfe', *Arch+*, 103, 1990, 62-65, p. 62.

planning. It demonstrated the state's instrumentalisation of the individual and used the conflict between students and their sclerotic elders as a metaphor for the wider conflicts between the state and a younger generation denied any autonomy or means of self-expression.²¹ One of DEFA's last films, it captured the sense of hopelessness that had pervaded East German society after forty years. Though Kahane's film offered a rare and honest evaluation of generational conflict, its release after the GDR's demise served to blunt its critical edge.

After Unification: *Lapsus memoriae?*

In contrast to the provinces, which were represented as geographically and historically distant, existing outside time, the city -- or at least Berlin -- came to define the times. Short notes that the city is invariably 'a metaphor for social change, an icon of the present at the edge of the transformation of the past into the future', adding that 'attitudes about the city reflect attitudes about the future'.²² It comes as no surprise, then, that directors have frequently turned to Berlin as the setting for their post-unification dramas. The reasons are self-evident: Berlin provides the symbolic expression of the country's recent history, the location where east meets west, the vortex of change. Despite the freedom of access, movement between the two Berlins has not proved as effortless as the post-unification maps would suggest, and for much of the nineties was weighed down not by bureaucratic procedure but by cultural baggage. This has allowed filmmakers to explore the east/west conflict as a condition naturally arising within the city. Since the end of the city's bi-polar status in 1989, directors have often focussed on Berlin's constituent elements. Ironically, neither the opening of the border nor the federal government's relocation to the city after its forty-year residence in provincial Bonn has promoted a unified civic identity. Berlin's political profile as the seat of German power may have been restored (to the consternation of a good many west Germans who were alarmed about Germany's 'Veröstlichung'), but the city has witnessed the re-emergence of localised identities and neighbourhood pride, which have been the focus of a number of *Kiez* dramas. Films such as *Wedding* (Heiko Schier, 1990), *Heidi M.* (Michael Klier,

²¹ See Klaus Finke's useful reading of the film, 'Utopie und Heimat. Peter Kahane's Film "Die Architekten"', in *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?*, ed. by Klaus Finke (Berlin: Vistas, 2001), 53-60.

²² Short, p. 41.

2000), *Status Yo!* (Till Hastreiter, 2004), and *Kroko* (Sylke Enders, 2004), attempt to capture the current atmosphere of particular city districts and largely avoid framing them within an historical narrative.²³

This is not to say that Berlin's regeneration has been ignored. Documentary filmmakers, in particular, have chronicled the architectural changes taking place, especially those involving the grand designs for the city's former commercial centre, Potsdamer Platz. An empty space for decades, the site was considered a *tabula rasa* after 1989, a blank canvas for competing architects desperate to showcase their talent. The area was not a place untouched by history, however, but a void haunted by the ghosts of the past.²⁴ The city's history repeatedly resurfaced in post-unification dialogue, especially where there were proposed changes to the city – whatever the changes. The heated quarrelling that accompanied proposed changes to the urban nomenclature was an extension of the disputes accompanying the plans to alter the city. A number of west German politicians (mostly Christian Democrats), took issue with the continued use of street signs bearing names associated with the East German regime, which they provocatively likened to the honorific practices that had existed under the National Socialists, and proposed restoring them to their original names. Their objections may have stemmed from genuine discomfort with certain dubious GDR figures but a degree of political triumphalism cannot be entirely discounted.

This discomfort with the past only focussed on particular pasts, however. The authorities were not quite ready to remove all those markers of the previous ideologies (the Olympia stadium, for example, re-opened in July 2004; the road that had once borne the names of Stalin and later of Marx was placed under 'Denkmalschutz', a decision that perhaps not only acknowledged its historical significance but also its relegated status).²⁵ Above all, it is the Weimar period that has been reified by contemporary architects with the modernism of the twenties informing new architectural schemes (including the designs for former urban centres in and around Potsdamer Platz and the Reichstag) in an attempt

²³ The city's heterogeneous constitution has also been manifest in a number of metropolitan novels, or *Kiezromane*, including Wladimir Kaminer's Prenzlauer Berg stories, *Schönhauser Allee* (Munich: Goldmann, 2001) and Sven Regener's Kreuzberg tale, *Herr Lehmann* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag, 2001).

²⁴ See Andreas Huyssen (2003), p. 52; p.78.

²⁵ An example of architectural hubris, the avenue and adjacent buildings never truly fulfilled the Party's ambitions. By the early 1990s, it had begun to lose its commercial and residential appeal. See Peter Norden, 'Was wird aus der früheren Stalinallee?', in *Architektur in Berlin*, 98-99.

to circumvent the city's 'more recent and disquieting assaults on tradition'.²⁶ Interestingly, the (admittedly much smaller) debate surrounding some of the films of the period similarly makes claims for the influence of Weimar aesthetics, which is seen as evidence of a more engaged and dynamic film culture. But successful documentaries such as *Berlin – Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (Thomas Schadt's 2001 film, which reconceptualised Walter Ruttmann's 1927 classic, *Berlin. Die Symphonie der Großstadt*) and *Berlin Babylon* (Hubertus Siegert, 2001) have also been accused as lacking the critical impetus of the period's earlier documentaries (Jürgen Böttcher's *Die Mauer* (1991); Heide Reidemeister's *Lichter aus dem Hintergrund* (1998) and Hito Steyerl's *Die leere Mitte* (1998), and for failing to present a sustained, historically specific reflection of developments within the city's urban space.²⁷

In an effort to consolidate Berlin's film history, journalists and scholars have gone to great lengths to establish links between post-unification films and the city's pre-war film tradition. Mila Ganeva, for instance, claims that 'in consciously avoiding engagement with recent history and politics, recent Berlin films inevitably tap into some highly effective and productive aspects of past traditions' and that the return of 'the outsider, the underdog, the marginal character' shows some continuity with narratives of the New German Cinema.²⁸ In fact, figures such as these have a long tradition in urban narratives and are by no means a construct unique to the critical reflections of the directors associated with that period. Tracing the influences of these films certainly continues to be a task to which scholars apply themselves, resulting in considerable divergence. Andreas Dresen's celebrated *Nachtgestalten* is a case in point. His film has variously been claimed as a film that operates 'in true Film Noir style', one that employs 'Weimar-era aesthetics for specifically German identity-forming purposes', and as a film that also follows the critical tradition of the New German Cinema. Others, still, have linked Dresen's work to

²⁶ Ladd, p.125. Taberner notes also the influence of Weimar's Berlin novels on the contemporary literary scene, p. 217.

²⁷ See Evelyn Preuss, 'The Collapse of Time: German History and Identity in Hubertus Siegert's *Berlin Babylon* (2001) and Thomas Schadt's *Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (2002)', in Costabile-Heming *et al*, 119-142, p. 123. It should be noted that numerous filmmakers, including several foreign directors, were attracted to the city during its transformation, resulting in some highly individual (and seldom screened) accounts, among them the film essays by Jean-Luc Godard (*Allemagne Neuf Zero*, 1991) and Jan Ralske (*Vergangen, Vergessen, Vorüber*, 1994).

²⁸ Mila Ganeva, 'No History, Just Stories. Berlin Films of the 1990s', in Costabile-Heming *et al*, 261-277, p. 263

Soviet film culture.²⁹ Of course, Dresen's film may be all (or even none) of those things. Certainly, the director, who counts as one of the most cine-literate directors working in Germany today, will be aware of these traditions and genres and indeed his film may consciously reference a number of incongruent styles. In interviews, Dresen has also acknowledged the work of British directors Mike Leigh and Ken Loach (and there are certain similarities between Leigh's 1993 film, *Naked*, and *Nachtgestalten*, though his protagonists are less prone to the nihilism that guides Leigh's anti-hero).³⁰

Nachtgestalten offers a view of the city that is analogous to the flâneur's roving observations, with Dresen's interest in the motley characters that people his film (all of them outsiders - punks, the homeless, junkies, refugees) corresponding with the 'eccentric and despised representatives' that so fascinated Benjamin.³¹ Dresen's narrative avoids obvious east/west references; the city is, overall, not thematised in terms specific to the east German experience. But his interest in Berlin's marginalised figures offers a view of the city from the bottom up, a sub-urban perspective that aligns it with other films of the period (from the comedy-drama of Wolfgang Becker's *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* to Susann Reck's bizarre 1998 documentary-like feature, *Alle der Kosmonauten*). Dresen says his intention is 'das pralle Leben erzählen zu können, mit Humor und viel Schmerz', an approach that is reminiscent of the bittersweet accounts favoured by Leigh.³² *Nachtgestalten* foregrounds the depressing side of metropolitan life (drugs, prostitution, violence, theft) in a manner close to documentary realism -- a realism that is reinforced by the city's authentic locations, by the hand-held camerawork and the desaturated film stock -- but does not investigate the causes and origins of addiction, cultural hostility or social

²⁹ Sunka Simon, 'Weimar Project(ion)s in Post-Unification Cinema', in *ibid.*, 301-320, p. 302. In the same volume, see also Mila Ganeva, 'No History, Just Stories. Berlin Films of the 1990s', 261-277. See also Cooke, p. 110, and Alexandra Ludewig, 'Heimat, City and Frontier in German National Cinema', *Debatte*, Volume 9, No. 2, 2001, 173-187, p. 181.

³⁰ In 'Interview with Andreas Dresen'. The director has also acknowledged the importance of Gianni Amelio and the Dogme filmmakers. See 'Gespräch mit Andreas Dresen (Drehbuch und Regie)', *Nachtgestalten*, Andreas Dresen (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), 105-112, p. 112.

³¹ Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p. 9. See also Vidler, who suggests that 'a fondness for the marginal and the forgotten: these are the traits of flâneur and filmmaker alike', in *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), p. 116.

³² 'Gespräch mit Andreas Dresen', p. 112. The director's interest in outsiders can be traced throughout his oeuvre, from the young Turkish German who relocates to east Berlin as soon as the wall has opened in his debut film (*So schnell es geht nach Istanbul*, 1990) to the naive political candidate desperately campaigning in an east German town that is unreceptive to the CDU in his documentary film, *Denk ich an Deutschland - Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (2003).

disintegration.³³ Despite the dismal portrait of the urban environment that the film initially advances, Dresen's film includes some unexpectedly positive moments: a homeless couple is reconciled and allowed a night of brief luxury; an irascible businessman is softened by his brief guardianship of a young Angolan, while a farmer and addict/prostitute each experience unanticipated acts of kindness. As with so many of the characters in post-unification films, their circumstances are improved, albeit briefly, by chance and not by design (or perhaps providence, given that the film is set at the time of the Pope's visit). The urban environment never ceases to be intimidating, but respite and contentment may occasionally be found in the most unexpected of places.

No-Man's Land

The energy and tension fuelled by the protestors on the streets of Berlin in the cold, autumn days of 1989 did not dissipate once the people had returned home but was manifest in the passionate discourse and frenetic building activity. The no-man's land, which had once been the location of Berlin's bustling Potsdamer Platz, did not remain an empty, unclaimed terrain for long. The debates that ensued went beyond the aesthetic differences of ambitious architects, for any discussion about building and rebuilding at such historical locations could not but acknowledge the city's problematic pasts if they were to draw up plans for a city of the future.³⁴ Although not the true centre of Berlin, it was regarded as the heart of the city; and reconstituting the area was considered an operation that was necessary if the real Berlin was to be brought back to life.³⁵ The discussions concerning the centre's new urban scheme were analogous to those regarding

³³ The treated film stock was important to the film's realism, as the cameraman conceded: 'letztlich wirkt das natürlicher, denn das nicht-manipulierte Filmmaterial macht die Wirklichkeit bunter und schöner als sie ist, es verfälscht sie im Sinne der "Traumfabrik"'. In 'Gespräch mit Andreas Höfer (Kamera) und Claudia Jaffke (Szenenbild)', in *Nachtgestalten*, 113-119, p. 118.

³⁴ Francesca Rogier gives a sense of the atmosphere of the time, which she describes as a 'tale of hypocrisies, conspiracies, and manipulations unfolding with strange reversals and intrigues and behind each competition or project'. In 'Growing Pains: From the Opening of the Wall to the Wrapping of the Reichstag', *Assemblage*, No. 29, April 1996, 40-71, p.46.

³⁵ The surgical metaphor appeared again, for example, in the wording of the challenge presented to architects, 'das Herz einer der wichtigsten europäischen Großstädte neu zu gestalten'. Cited in Bernhard Schulz, 'Wer plant die deutsche Hauptstadt?', *Architektur in Berlin. Jahrbuch 1992* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 1992), 14-19. Architects Volker Fischer and Anna Measure, meanwhile, considered the question of renovation as a surgical process, recommending that 'the tissue needs to heal again', in 'Ideals for the Heart of A Great City', in Papadakis, 12-16, p.13. Architects' fondness for seeing their work as a means of treating some urban disorder goes back at least as far as Le Corbusier. See James Donald, *Imagining the Modern City* (London: Athlone Press, 2000), p. 42.

Germany's new identity: both demanded careful handling of the past and sensitivity to the present if they were to offer a dependable and appealing foundation for the capital of a united Germany. As ever, the decisions taken tended to indulge the investors and not the local population and the reactions to the final building projects have not been upbeat. For many, the designs failed to live up to expectations, while others (principally Berliners) feel that the area now exudes a corporate rather than a civic identity.

The construction of Potsdamer Platz attracted documentary filmmakers throughout this period. Directors such as Hubertus Siegert were eager to capture the process of architectural transformation as city planners, together with major corporations and their architects, sought to fill the void. The few feature film directors that chose to set their narratives against the reconstruction of the city's centre considered the development from the viewpoint of the city's marginalised figures, as in Eoin Moore's *Plus-minus-null* (1998), whose protagonists are drawn from society's edges (refugees, prostitutes, petty criminals, illegal workers) and positions them in the heart of the city.³⁶ However, the majority of the post-unification films set in Berlin tended towards a decentred portrait of the city. Thus, several of the films consider the post-unification experience in Berlin's (eastern) outskirts amid the massive prefabricated housing estates, or in the old, dilapidated districts, which were slowly transforming as investors moved in and rents rose.³⁷ It was in these areas, away from the touristic routes, that directors could focus on the people displaced or marginalised by unification.

Orientations

The eastern orientation of Michael Klier's narrative was evident in the title of his film, *Ostkreuz*. Made in 1991, *Ostkreuz* presented the city at a time between times, between the GDR past whose legacy is apparent in the architectural references, and an unknown future - implied in the as yet empty spaces. Berlin exists as a place of urban decay, an unremittingly grim world of housing estates, vacant plots and lifeless waste grounds.

³⁶ See Daniela Sannwald's review, "Ich heiße Alex, wie der Platz". Berlin-Film der anderen Art: Plus minus null von Eoin Moore', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30.03.2000.

³⁷ Kerstin Decker gives an account of the difficulties facing tenants of those apartments whose central location led to a re-evaluation of their rents, in 'Gärten und Straße. Wohnen in Berlin Mitte', in Kerstin and Gunnar Decker, *Gefühlsabbrüche, oder ewig pubertiert der Ostdeutsche. Reportagen, Polemike, Porträts* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2000), 211-216.

These gaps in the city's urban makeup have been evaluated by others. The Spanish architect Manuel De Sola-Morales has described Berlin as a city marked by clear distances, 'a city in which the recurrence and sequence of the buildings counts for less than the recurrence and sequence of the spaces between them'. The 'urban structure of East Berlin', he adds, 'thus appears as an exercise in keeping things apart, as a spatial separation of buildings according to various different activities and purposes'.³⁸ With the state departed, the open spaces are emptied of their original meaning - whether as points of public interaction (according to some utopian socialist town planning), or sites designated for some future project. That the ideology that had once brought people together within these open spaces was no longer was evident in the plinths symbolically denuded of their statues and the more unyielding effigies of once revered socialist heroes, whose imposing demeanour was repeatedly compromised by graffiti assaults.

Berlin has, according to Andreas Huyssen, been characterised by voids of one sort or another for much of the twentieth century. They are represented by the craters and cavities left in the city after the war, the cartographic void that replaced West Berlin on East German maps, and the open space between east and west Berlin that after unification was to become Europe's biggest building site.³⁹ The voids in Klier's film -- the expanse of land surrounding the angular *Plattenbau* estates, the disused premises of former businesses -- suggest the incompleteness of the GDR without indicating whether plans were curtailed by historical events or by the state's financial shortcomings. Voids are implied also in the absence of any emotional connections between the film's characters (as in the teenage protagonist, Elfie, or the petty criminal, Darius, or the homeless Edmund).⁴⁰ The lack of a home and of possessions reflects the characters' transient status and aligns the east Germans with the city's other refugees, represented here by the disenfranchised Polish community. Elfie's efforts to earn the deposit needed for one of the *Plattenbau* apartments constitutes an attempt to recover some material and emotional security; in short, to fill the voids. Paradoxically, the newly opened city is all the more difficult to access and Elfie is just one of several characters caught in a no-man's land between the society she has left behind and the society that seems to deny her admission. Life for the

³⁸ Manuel de Sola-Morales, 'The Abstract City', in Papadakis, 84-88 p. 85.

³⁹ Huyssen (2003), p. 54. See Rogier, who also refers to the 'vacuous intersections' left by certain post-Wall developments, p. 45.

⁴⁰ The biography provided by Edmund is in fact that of the lay-actor, Stefan Cammann. Abandoned by his parents, he was found drifting the streets by the production crew and invited to participate.

displaced characters in *Ostkreuz* is thus a matter of existing rather than living. With the demonstrators long gone and many Berliners emigrating, the Berlin that Klier investigates is an abandoned environment. Even the imposing *Plattenbauten* seem little more than facades and give no indication of any human activity. The many empty spaces in Klier's film, the vacant buildings, the near-motionless streets, accentuate this lifelessness and the lack of hope; Berlin is thus imagined not as the centre for a new beginning but as a ghost city, the dilapidated buildings in the east as the tombstones of the former state. Yet Klier's young protagonist is not haunted by the past. Elfie's movements across the city do not prompt a remembrance of things past, as they do for the (older) protagonists of other Berlin films; instead, her energies are focussed only on surviving the present in order to establish a foundation for the future. Uprooted from her home and environment, she is cast into an unfamiliar territory that she must learn to navigate. This poses both a geographical and psychological challenge; Elfie must identify and comprehend a new set of coordinates if she is to survive. Klier uses Elfie's geographical confusion as a metaphor to highlight the east Germans' problems of direction in the new society; her experience of the city, meanwhile, is a rude introduction to predicaments that have arisen in the absence of accommodation, of state control and, importantly, community. It is clear that Elfie must learn to overcome the obstacles she encounters -- by whatever means -- if she is to make her way in the new Germany.

Despite Elfie's fortitude, Berlin proves a demanding, frequently hostile and disorientating environment. In one scene, she comes across one of the city's many empty spaces. Out in the open, she momentarily appears to have lost her bearings. Filmed at long distance, she is made small against the rising urbanscape, one of many visual compositions in the film that emphasises the isolation of the subject. Dressed in black, Elfie appears silhouetted against the uniform apartment blocks, a fragile specimen framed by the massive concrete towers. The camera focuses on her temporary bewilderment as she struggles to recognise some landmark – the *Fernsehturm*, piercing the grey sky, is the only recognisable pointer. The emptiness is emphasised by the long takes and the static camera, which characterises Klier's distanced relationship to his subjects. Characters thus photographed are dwarfed by the surrounding brutal architecture. Shots of buildings and of austere rooms and corridors are suddenly interrupted as people move in and out of the frame, the camera remaining motionless, 'cutting only when it seems each shot has

exhausted itself'.⁴¹ The unnaturalness of the ghostly city is intensified by the audiovisual techniques used by Klier. The eerie soundtrack, a score consisting of echoed discordant instrumentation (composed by avant-garde composer Fred Frith) imbues the scenes with a sense of dread that emphasises the city's alienating effect. The film's aural arrangements, from the echoes and electronic howls of the score to the diegetic sounds, fill the void left by the minimal dialogue (consisting of little more than staccato questions and challenges, demands and threats). The spare communication and restrained camerawork in *Ostkreuz* again recall Jarmusch's work, to whose work Klier's earlier film, *Überall ist es besser wo wir nicht sind* (1988), had been favourably compared. The film shows Klier's continuing interest in this audiovisual approach and in the relationship between the environment and the individual, which is filmed in a detached manner, avoiding both drama and exposition.

Ostkreuz was more than just an opportunity for Klier to study the displaced and marginalised. The director was determined to capture the images and the mood of a city on the brink of change: 'die Zeit dort ist stehengeblieben, und ich wollte unbedingt dort drehen, bevor diese "Zeit" verschwunden sein würde'.⁴² The film's locations together with the struggles of his protagonists to negotiate the transition led some reviewers to speak positively of 'eines neuen "Trümmerfilms"', a comparison that perhaps overstated East Berlin's material condition.⁴³ Nor is *Ostkreuz* a film that advocates the reconstruction of the city or provides its characters with the kind of redemption offered in the post-war films. Others pointed to Italian neo-realism as a more likely source of influence, and though Klier's film does not emulate the poetic drama and sentimental pathos of the neo-realists, there are certain thematic parallels. In Elfie's desire to acquire the money for the unseen flat, upon which all her hopes and future seem pinned, there are echoes, for example, of De Sica's *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948) and its protagonist's desperate search for the bicycle that will guarantee him the job that he needs. *Ostkreuz* is equally concerned with documenting the uncertainties of a society in transition (*The Bicycle Thieves* of course focuses on Italian society in the aftermath of the war), though Klier does not emulate the liberal humanism of De Sica. Nor does Klier promote the family as an inviolable refuge as does De Sica, since Elfie is finally abandoned by her mother, who

⁴¹ Coulson, p. 223.

⁴² Quoted in Inga Meißner, 'Die neunziger Jahre'. Online at: <http://www.deutsches-filminstitut.de/sozialgeschichte/dt105a.htm> [Accessed 20.5.2000].

⁴³ Wilfried Wiegand, 'Anpassung als Katastrophe. Ein ungewöhnliches "Kleines Fernsehspiel": "Ostkreuz"', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25.7.1991.

leaves the city for the small town comfort of Duisburg in the west. There are parallels too, with Rossellini's neo-realist masterpiece, *Germany Year Zero* (1946), an influence acknowledged by the director.⁴⁴ As with the young protagonist of Rossellini's film, Elfie drifts through Berlin, trying to earn money on the black market. Interestingly, the children in both films come to the conclusion that they are a burden to their families. Rossellini's film ends tragically with the young protagonist committing suicide in order to relieve the pressure on his family. It is perhaps surprising, given that Elfie overhears her mother conceding that 'ohne sie wäre es einfacher', and that, statistically speaking, young women were most prone to suicide during the period, that Klier's film resists a similarly tragic conclusion.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, some future tragedy cannot be wholly dismissed, since the film ends with Elfie and her friend, Edmund, cold and alone in an empty, windowless building, smoking cigarettes and sharing their modest food supplies.

Haunted by the past

Klier's characters uncomfortably occupy a space that represents a threshold between two worlds; though desperate to establish herself in the new society, Elfie is inevitably drawn back east. When she is stranded at an abandoned Polish border train station during a botched black market deal, she is, ironically, even further east than she was at the beginning. That she is there fulfilling a role as a translator in a stolen car deal between Russians and Poles is evidence of her 'in-between' status: unable to participate in the new opportunities of market capitalism, she is forced to make use of her school Russian for black-market activities. But these returns to the east and to the past carry no emotional significance for Klier's heroine, a fact that is emphasised when she purloins her grandfather's Meissen porcelain, not for its emotional significance but for its black market value. The past simply equips her with the resources for surviving the present.

⁴⁴ See Meißner.

⁴⁵ According to Nicholas Eberstadt, 'death rates for girls aged 10-14 [...] were up by nearly 70%' during the *Wende*. In 'Demographic Shocks in Eastern Germany 1989-1993', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1994, 519-533, p. 528. It should be noted that studies of suicide in the east since unification have not resulted in consistent conclusions. A recent report by Sibylle Straub, for instance, stresses that the number of people taking their own lives did not increase after 1989. Nevertheless, the author's prognosis for suicide rates in the new federal states is not optimistic: since employment was fundamental to GDR citizens' self-realisation, the region's current high unemployment may yet result in an increased number of suicides. In 'Der Suizid und "die Wende" in der DDR. Zur Tragfähigkeit von Durkheims Konzeption des (anomischen) Selbstmords am Beispiel Thüringens', *System Familie*, 13, 2000, 59-69, p. 68.

Ostkreuz imagines Berlin not as the frenzied metropolis but as a ghostly, dehumanised city; in other urban dramas the focus is on individuals haunted by the past. The transience emphasised by the vacant plots and temporary housing units in *Ostkreuz* is echoed in these films, and though the characters (primarily middle-aged men) are more firmly rooted in their milieus -- not the transitional no-man's land of *Ostkreuz* but a more identifiable east Berlin -- they are no less dislocated than Klier's young protagonist. The architectural makeup in films such as *Der Kontrolleur* (Stefan Trampe) and *Wege in die Nacht* (Andreas Kleinert) plays a similarly symbolic role, with the crumbling facades and demolished buildings of East Berlin corresponding to the protagonists' emotional state, their dispossession and loss of stability. Just as the city appears to be disintegrating, so all relationships are ruptured: there is no evidence of neighbourhood identity; gone is the *Nischengesellschaft*, the professional camaraderie and private, social friendships; families no longer exist and marriages barely function.

Where Elfie resourcefully attempts to assume some control over her situation and her future, the male protagonists in these later films respond to their post-unification anxieties by reverting to the past. Regression becomes a coping strategy, an attempt to restore some order to lives that have lost all constancy and whose impermanence finds its apotheosis in the ruins and the rubble. The effects of the social, architectural and cultural transformations do not so much arouse a fear of what is to come than a dread realisation of what has been lost. As Marc Augé notes:

It is only the idea, partially materialized, that the inhabitants have of their relations with the territory, with their families and with others. This idea may be partial or mythologized. It varies with the individual's point of view and position in society. Nevertheless, it offers and imposes a set of references which may not be quite those of natural harmony or some 'paradise lost', but whose absence, when they disappear, is not easily filled.⁴⁶

Erasure of the GDR past does not constitute the loss of paradise (none of the characters actually eulogises the former state) but represents the disappearance of a way of life that provided coherence and direction. Whether or not such principles were enthusiastically embraced is immaterial; it was the sense of collective purpose, in following the regime's rallying call or in rejecting it, that was important. The reaction to the loss of structure and

⁴⁶ Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995; reprinted 2000), p. 56.

to the certainties that the GDR provided, as fragile as these were, is explored in a number of post-unification films. It is central to Trampe's and Kleinert's films, which consider the post-unification experiences of men of authority - Hermann, an ex-border guard in *Der Kontrolleur* (1994); and Walther, a former director of one of the state's factories, in *Wege in die Nacht* (1999). The narratives' uncritical focus on individuals who are identifiable with the state apparatus and who remain unapologetic about their former roles marks a significant departure from the majority post-unification films. The period's comedies tend towards apolitical everyman figures, while the rural dramas centre their narratives on ordinary individuals with no official connection to the state. Those associated with the Party tended to be portrayed as crude caricatures, as with the bumbling bullies in *Das war der Wilde Osten* or the sinister bureaucrats in *Apfelbäume*. Both Trampe and Kleinert eschew such characterisation, refusing to judge their characters because of their past allegiances. While neither Hermann nor Walther is specifically linked to the Party (Walther distances himself from a secretive network of the former *Nomenklatur* whom he accuses of opportunism), they are clearly adherents of the previous administration, a relationship that in other films is contiguous with the crimes of the state (Lienhard Wawrzyn's 1993 film, *Der Blaue*, for instance). Paradoxically, it is their dubious past that makes them the more sympathetic. As once-loyal servants of the state, they feel the pressures of the new society more keenly and struggle to maintain some equilibrium between the past and a new society that operates according to different rules of conduct and behaviour.⁴⁷

The films portray a city that is in transition; a new Berlin emerges between the ruins and the architectural remnants of the previous administration. The openness of the city is often acknowledged in the characters' movements around the metropolis. With the exception of Gwisdeck's chamber-film, *Abschied von Agnes*, which limits its views of the city to the protagonist's peregrinations around Berlin Mitte, most of the characters in the films are seen passing through the urban landscape at various stages in the films. This mobility is ultimately limiting, however, for rather than leading to any positive resolution, the characters' increased exposure to the city only reinforces their displacement and anxieties. The locations in which they find themselves are often the city's 'non-places',

⁴⁷ Maaz's observation is relevant to at least two of the characters here: 'vierzig Jahre lang galt unter der Diktatur der Bann: "Sei angepasst, ordne dich unter und du wirst versorgt!" Und jetzt heisst die Nötigung: "Kümmere dich selbst um deine Belange, sonst musst du stehen wo du bleibst!'", p. 162.

places of transition (the subway system, the airport, for example), or sites that are the loci of bureaucracy and administration (the job centre, the defunct border station).⁴⁸ Although the protagonists are occasionally in places that offer some opportunity for interaction -- bars, restaurants etc -- they each remain separate from the people there, resistant to any conviviality or camaraderie. The freedom of movement and the release from the strictures of a closely monitored society introduces the inhabitants to new problems, not least the problem of orientation. Since the environment's physical structures are bound up with the social activity and urban identity of the east Berliners, their collective past encoded by place, the disappearance of particular landmarks necessarily requires considerable physical and psychological readjustment, a process that is especially applicable to the protagonist in Hannes Stöhr's film, *Berlin is in Germany*.

For Heiner, the central character in *Abschied von Agnes*, it is exposure to the past, in the form of an unwanted guest (played by a maniacal Sylvester Groth), that threatens to disrupt his fragile existence. The former Stasi operative's intrusion disturbs Heiner's efforts to systematise his memories of the past in general and of his late wife in particular. Gwisdeck's understated psychological drama focuses on Heiner as he struggles to cope with the intrusion into his personal (physical and mental) space. *Abschied von Agnes* -- the title refers to the protagonist's deceased wife -- considers the relationship between victim and antagonist, which is transformed by evolving mutual dependencies -- with the victim dependent on his visitor's knowledge about his past, and the antagonist reliant on his host for shelter. The visual composition heightens the film's claustrophobic mood, with Gwisdeck's rangy frame frequently enclosed by doorways, window frames and narrow corridors. This claustrophobia is not simply a reaction to physical containment but also to the city's generally oppressive atmosphere. Surveillance, an act in which all of the characters engage, adds to the film's sense of paranoia and unease. Although surveillance is most closely aligned with Stefan, the former Stasi agent who appears to know every detail of Heiner's life, Gwisdeck's film reveals a society given to voyeuristic tendencies, be it the nosy neighbours or unappeasable journalists, who follow the fugitive to Heiner's door. Heiner, too, surveys and scrutinises the city around him. Initially, Gwisdeck's character is reminiscent of the *flâneur*: apart from the crowd ('ein Preisgebener in der Menge'), he observes and records the city around him in a manner that is 'inquisitive,

⁴⁸ See Augé.

anecdotal, ironic, melancholy, but above all voyeuristic'.⁴⁹ However, Heiner is not the detached observer to which Benjamin refers in his writings on the *flâneur*.⁵⁰ His record of the events happening around him is not prompted by dispassionate observation but by an existential desire to make sense of developments (the material and social changes in Berlin, and the changes within his private, domestic space) that threaten his identity. His surveillance signifies a need to organise his memories: he tapes his thoughts and conversations, and documents his experiences, casting himself as a detective in his own story. He attempts to decipher the clues that he is given by his visitor/tormentor, whom he also continually monitors. In trying to organise his understanding of the past he becomes dependent on the interloper who exploits his position and knowledge, a situation that echoes the real-life encounters between Stasi employees and those they persecuted.⁵¹

Heiner's rehabilitation is possible only once he has rid himself of the intruder, thereby symbolically exorcising the past: in a shock ending, he throws Stefan from the window - a scene filmed so casually that the viewer is momentarily unsure as to what has actually happened. Although the film ends with the disturbing revelation that Heiner dispatched his wife in similar fashion, Gwisdeck's hero (played by the director himself) looks to have settled an account with the past and emerges from his ordeal revitalised and confident, ready to face the present.

Disorientation

The past is not so easily resolved in Trampe's and Kleinert's films, whose characters are less willing to disengage from their memories than Heiner. This is understandable, given the characters' changed fortunes - a decline in circumstances which counters Kohl's assurance that with unification no one would be any worse off. Trampe's protagonist, in particular, is a disenchanted, wretched figure. Demoted from border guard to watchman at the same site, premises now overgrown with weeds, Hermann counts as one of the losers of unification. By focussing on a former member of the security forces, Trampe employs

⁴⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: Zwei Fragmente: ein Lyriker im Zeitalter des Hochkapitalismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), p. 58. See Elizabeth Wilson, 'The Invisible Flâneur', *New Left Review*, No. 191, February, 1992, 90-110, p. 96.

⁵⁰ See Benjamin.

⁵¹ A strange psycho-sexual tension develops between the two men. This is perhaps not as contrived as it may appear, given the curious relationships that did sometimes develop between Stasi operatives and their targets. See Epstein, who discusses this point, p. 652.

an extreme agent of GDR authority and thereby maximises the conflict between the order of the GDR and apparent disorder of post-unification society. But the observations that Hermann makes, mostly spat out in near incoherent disgust, are not unrepresentative of attitudes in the New Federal States. Principal among these is a perceived breakdown in civil behaviour and the fear of increased criminality. These sentiments awaken a paradox: while those surveyed confirm their anxieties about these threats, the safeguards against them that existed in the GDR would hardly be wished for, since they cannot be divorced from the other repressive implications that they had. Still, this paradox does not diminish the unease many east Germans feel about behaviour that they associate with the west. The vandalism that Trampe's character witnesses results in violent agitation and when Hermann struggles to find an appropriate label for the kids who have broken his window, his final cry is 'Verräter!'. The inappropriate description hints at a fundamental despair and sense of betrayal. Not the children are the traitors, but the society that allows such antisocial behaviour. His later comment, 'Scheiß-Kriminalität - früher hätten sie's sich nicht getraut', echoes the idealised memories of the GDR as a near crime-free society (naturally disregarding the state's own crimes) and reveals a yearning for the punitive measures that had previously existed.⁵²

Trampe's film is one defined by voids and ellipsis. Hermann's memories of the past shape his experience of the present, from the corporeal absence of his wife, who is present only in photographs and when resurrected in frequent flashbacks, to the emptiness of the sprawling border complex that he alone monitors.⁵³ His continued attachment to this site of memory goes beyond taking refuge in the comfort of the past, as he soon becomes incapable of distinguishing between past and present. While GDR uniforms had reappeared as ironic fashion statements at *Ostalgie* parties, to Hermann his official livery remains a last vestige of individual authority and identity. His decision to wear it once more does not signal nostalgic fancy-dress but an attempt to re-engage with the past. Believing himself to be a border guard once again, he begins conducting an absurdly officious interrogation of two strangers he has detained as intruders. Once he realises his mistake, Hermann tries to rid himself of the past by burning the uniform together with the

⁵² East Germans certainly felt that the life in the east was safer before unification. What is more, statistics show that the general fear of an increase in crime in post-unification society has proved justified. See David E. Clark and Manfred Wildner, 'Violence and fear of violence in East and West Germany', *Social Science & Medicine*, 51, 2000, 373-379, p. 377.

⁵³ Trampe had previously worked as assistant director to Gwisdeck on *Abschied von Agnes*.

contents of his office. Realisation brings no happy resolution for the protagonist: finally aware that the role that has defined him no longer exists, he bricks up the spy holes in the narrow watchtower, thus sealing himself inside. Hermann's final response to the events around him literally results in his being 'eingemauert'. By entombing himself within the watchtower, he invokes the two rationalisations of the Berlin Wall, for this last desperate act can equally be seen as self-imprisonment and as a means of protection against the influences beyond.

Like *Der Kontrolleur*, Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht*, whose distinctive visual style delighted critics and film festival jurors alike, focuses on one man's difficulties in accepting his diminished post-unification status (an intense performance by the expatriated DEFA veteran, Hilmar Thate). Although the characters differ in terms of their professional profile and social standing (Walther is closer to the 'zwanghafter Charakter' identified by Maaz), both figures are marginalised and divested of their previous responsibilities.⁵⁴ The changes in the men's individual circumstances amounts to a kind of emasculation, since their new responsibilities are reduced to domestic roles typically associated with women, whose absence is acknowledged in each of the films (they exist only as photographs and as memories in Trampe's and Gwisdeck's films; Kleinert's film, meanwhile, make obvious the reversal of traditional gender roles in Walther's and Sylvia's marriage: he cooks and cleans, she goes out to work). Kleinert's protagonist experiences a similarly profound loss of self -- so profound that, according to Kerstin Decker, he may already be dead -- and struggles to regain the order and authority that defined his pre-wall role.⁵⁵

Huyssen's remark that 'Berlin as text remains first and foremost historical text, marked as much, if not more, by absences as by the visible presence of its past', is borne out in Kleinert's film.⁵⁶ Walther's frequent visits to his former factory, an ethereal location of deserted and partially demolished buildings, demonstrate the past's mesmeric hold. Though he is unable to re-establish his professional base and authority, he is able to

⁵⁴ Whereas Hermann counts as one of the 'unmündige Bürger, der die Abhängigkeit brauchte und zur Autoritätshörigkeit bis –glaubigkeit verurteilt war' Maaz, p.97. See pp. 99-102 for Maaz's classification of the 'zwanghafter Charakter'.

⁵⁵ 'König im Niemandsland. Hilmar Thate', in Kerstin and Gunnar Decker, *Gefühlsausbrüche oder Ewig pubertät der Ostdeutsche. Reportagen, Polemike, Porträts* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2000), 189-194, p. 192.

⁵⁶ Huyssen (2003), p.52.

restore order to the world around him. Perceiving a breakdown in civil society, Walther reinvents himself as a vigilante, a new out of hours role that compensates for his passive daytime existence. Accompanied by a young couple, he patrols Berlin looking to administer justice of a very rough kind to any transgressors that they encounter on their nocturnal tours of duty. Belligerent racists are targeted, as are gangs who torment S-Bahn passengers and abuse the homeless. But Walther is no heroic figure and certainly not the positive socialist defending the rights of others. The 'insecurity of existence' in this new society does not become, as Bauman previously proposed, a communal affair, but remains a matter of personal righteous anger.⁵⁷ His form of justice exposes a deeper rage, as Walther seeks to resume his original authority, resulting in brutal acts of aggression in which the antagonists themselves become victims. Just as Hermann's re-immersion into his former role hastens his own downfall, retrieving some semblance of his previous influence does not mark the beginning of Walther's psychological rehabilitation, but the beginning of his demise, which ends in suicide at the site of his former factory.

To some critics, *Wege in die Nacht* was further evidence of Kleinert's debt to Tarkovskian composition and narrative organisation; others began to refer to Kleinert as an auteur – a word long not heard in German cinema.⁵⁸ Regardless of the accuracy of such claims, *Wege in die Nacht* certainly counts as one of the most distinctive films of the post-unification period. The city had been made to look suitably austere and unappealing in most other Berlin films, which tended to film in dreary locations in the pallid winter light. In Kleinert's film, the cinematography (by erstwhile Fassbinder collaborator Jürgen Jürges) transforms the city into something more sublime. Berlin is made to resemble a noir location, a shadowy world of subterranean passages, half-lit streets and mists that drift across abandoned buildings. The visual reference to film noir is apposite, since Walther, the determined solitary figure at odds with society around him and determined to see justice done, is driven by impulses that typically guide noir figures. The black and white photography adds a chiaroscuro quality that deepens the contrast between light and dark and gives expression to Walther's inner division.

⁵⁷ Bauman (2001), p. 112

⁵⁸ See the reviews by Josef Lederle, 'Wege in die Nacht', *Film Dienst*, 24/52, 1999, and Bernd Reinhardt, 'Wege in die Nacht', *World Wide Socialist Web Site*, 24.12.1999. Online at: <http://www.wsws.org.de/1999/dez1999/Wege-d24.shtml> [Accessed 25.10.2001].

New cartographies: *Berlin is in Germany*

Hannes Stöhr's film *Berlin is in Germany* (2001) charts a convict's return to Berlin after a decade's imprisonment during which time the GDR has fallen and the two states unified. Readjusting to freedom is doubly problematic for Martin, the film's hero, since his release introduces him both to a life outside prison and to life outside the erstwhile containment of the GDR. Berlin's palimpsestic quality is emphasised in Stöhr's film, as his protagonist attempts to find his way in the new metropolis using co-ordinates that have been superseded during his incarceration. Martin experiences the city as if for the first time: the film focuses on the wide-eyed innocent, a latter-day Rip van Winkle, as he encounters, and is confused by, the banal features of the modern city: ticket machines, mobile phones, the ephemera of everyday life. In postponing Martin's exposure to western modernity by a decade, Stöhr's film imaginatively reengages with the image of the unreconstructed *Ossi* so popular at the beginning of the decade.⁵⁹ This is not to say that *Berlin is in Germany* revives the crude stereotypes of *Der Superstau* or *Go, Trabi, Go*; nevertheless, there is a degree of continuity in the characterisations, a nostalgia even for the optimism of the early days of the *Wende*, before such portrayals had taken on more hostile signification. Martin's belated exposure to the peculiarities of the modern city allows the viewer a repeat enjoyment of the east German's happy bewilderment with the objects of the everyday, that pays little attention to the developments of the intervening years, the increased antagonism and disillusionment.

Nevertheless, Stöhr's film is not a uplifting and updated version of the east-west encounters. Berlin is frequently depicted according to familiar modernist anxieties: home to vice and corruption (represented by pornography and prostitution), a city in which individuals lack community and remain isolated from one another. Importantly, Stöhr's film implies that these features and the angst and social dislocation that they generate are the by-product of life in the new post-socialist city. The envisaged life in the *Plattenbau* estates is far removed from DEFA's predominantly rosy portraits of city living. No longer proof of the state's provision, the east's mass housing estates are now synonymous with social problems associated with a new economic underclass (xenophobia, unemployment,

⁵⁹ The innocent east Berlin resident struggling with the challenges of the city is also explored in Helke Misselwitz's Berlin film *Engelchen* (1996).

suicide) that were unimaginable, or at least, unrepresentable, in the GDR. If the commercialisation and corporate redevelopment of Berlin bear the influence of (western) market capitalism, a seamier entrepreneurship in the form of the sex industry is linked to the arrival of eastern Europeans, a link that is also implied in Eoin Moore's Berlin film.

Stöhr's film emphasises Berlin as existing in a state of flux. This is evident not only in its physical regeneration, the architectural developments that are observed en passant, but in its changing values and new modes of behaviour. In contrast to the staid, predictable pace of life that characterised the city under the former political masters, those elderly cadres whose prescribed plans never allowed for spontaneity, (as the reactions to the demonstrations in 1989 clearly showed), life in post-wall Berlin is one in which the old certainties have been swept away. But while this release from the previous regime denotes new freedoms (independence, individuality), it also signifies the end of certain securities that its citizens later often missed (even if they were the result of economic and political stagnation). Few securities are evident in the open city - though a similar, if less malign, level of bureaucracy exists, as represented by the police, the judiciary and the parole agency. No longer controlled, protected or regulated by the state, the east Germans have been set adrift in the new society. The veneer of stability that state regulation appeared to guarantee, fragile and compromised though it was, has been stripped away, leaving the east Germans exposed to the vagaries of life in the capitalist metropolis.

Martin's place in this strange environment is therefore not assured. His discharge hardly amounts to a homecoming, since the defining aspects of his home -- on a personal level, his domicile, his family (in an Odyssean twist, his wife is remarried and his young son a stranger to him), his social world; and in a more general sense, the state in which he was socialised -- have all but disappeared. A late arrival in the new Berlin, Martin struggles to establish himself in a society that he barely recognises. Yet in contrast to the protagonists who remain imprisoned by the past in Kleinert's and Trampe's films, Martin understands the need to disengage from his former co-ordinates if he is to gain some footing in the new Germany. The film traces his movements around the city that is both familiar and unknown to him with numerous shots positioning him in trams and subway trains as he travels across the ever-changing landscape. In *Berlin is in Germany*, the city's pasts are intricately layered; mastering Berlin's new codes and signs is essential for Martin's successful adjustment. This is symbolically underlined in his decision to train as

a taxi driver in the new capital, a process that poses an anamnestic dilemma, as he struggles to acquaint himself with Berlin's new map while simultaneously trying to forget the co-ordinates that previously existed.⁶⁰ His willingness to familiarise himself with the new system (via its signage) in effect acknowledges the new administrative order but it also demonstrates a resolve that is apparently lacking in the other east Germans.⁶¹

Made at a time when the east Germans' selective retrieval of their past had become commonplace, Stöhr's film offers a counterpoint to such nostalgic processes. *Berlin is in Germany* seems to privilege the elision, not the celebration of memory. Remembering to forget, 'active forgetting', as Huyssen calls it, is therefore the key to survival.⁶² Stöhr's film even outlines the dangers of failing to break with the past. While Martin embodies the preferred east German characteristics (a positive stereotype of the honest, unpretentious proletarian), his friend, Peter, exhibits the worst traits of the post-unification *Ossi* - or the *Jammerossi*. Emerging in opposition to the *Besserwessi* (the east Germans' neologism for arrogant west Germans), the *Jammerossi* encapsulated the western view of those indolent and ungrateful east Germans who apparently preferred to complain about their situation rather than actively improve it. Resentful, timid and self-pitying, Peter thus personifies the stereotype. His is a wretched account of life in the post-socialist republic, a jeremiad that admits no personal responsibility for his failures and disappointments and explains his suicidal tendencies, a fate from which his friend rescues him. Conversely, Stöhr makes plain the benefits to be had from divesting oneself of such rudimentary east German thought and behaviour. Unlike Peter, the *Plattenbau* resident and Trabant driver, Martin's ex-wife, Manuela, is one of the few east Germans in post-unification cinema to have successfully transformed into a west German. Having shaken off all vestiges of her east German past she is rewarded with a comfortable apartment in Pankow (the leafy Berlin

⁶⁰ See Nick Hodgin, 'Berlin is in Germany and Good Bye Lenin! Taking Leave of the GDR?', *Debatte Review of Contemporary German Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 1, May 2004, 25-46, pp. 30-34.

⁶¹ Martin's fortitude also distinguishes him from the east Berlin taxi driver who does not dare head west for fear of being mocked by impatient fares in Christa Wolf's essay, 'Wo ist euer Lächeln geblieben? Brachland Berlin 1990', in *Auf dem Weg nach Tabou. Texte 1990-1994* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1994), 38-58, pp. 39-40. In a scene in Tykwer's hip Berlin film *Lola Rennt* (1998), the eponymous heroine complains that a taxi driver has misunderstood her Grunewald Strasse destination for an eastern address (presumably a joke about the general problems of orientation in post-wall Berlin since no such street exists in the east). As for the taxi business, it had its own share of east/west problems and, like many other East German businesses, had undergone fundamental changes to its organisation and administration after 1989. The west German takeover was signalled by the arrival of the substitution of the standard West German taxi, the Mercedes, for the trademark East German taxis, the Wolgas. See 'Mercedes statt Wolga', *Der Spiegel*, 3/1990, p.124 (no author).

⁶² Huyssen (1995), p. 34.

suburb that was once home to loyal SED functionaries), a partner from the west, and all the trappings of a bourgeois lifestyle that includes a Mercedes, bijoux home furnishings and international cuisine.

Stöhr's hero oscillates between these two worlds, between the familiar environment of the past and the unfamiliar and exotic surroundings of the present but remains detached from both, reluctant to mimic his wife's assimilation to western codes and practices, and alert to the dangers of Peter's recidivism. Martin's restlessness causes his friends to evaluate their own lives: in acknowledging her long-absent husband, his wife rediscovers a connection to the east and appears to break free from the west's mesmeric hold, suddenly aware of her partner's cowardly and ineffectual side. Peter, meanwhile, is prompted out of his torpidity by Martin's reappearance, renewing his efforts to find work. Despite the positive influence that he brings to bear, Martin does not seek to revive any east German community in the way that the protagonist of the early *Wende* films did, though his reappearance does reunite former east German friends. His personality appears to stir affirmative east German traits -- cooperation, initiative, resilience -- which have been dormant in others in the years since unification, without invoking SED ideology or expressly valorising the collective/community. Unlike the protagonists of *Wege in die Nacht* and *Der Kontrolleur*, Stöhr's protagonist is certainly not of the Party fold, a point that is confirmed in a flashback sequence that explains Martin's incarceration and draws attention to his opposition to the GDR.

Martin therefore symbolises an idealised, depoliticised east German – a humble figure whose motivation for finding work is principally to provide for his family (in this case his son) and not to secure the material comforts favoured by his ex-wife. Though Martin's lack of enthusiasm for the new culture of untrammelled consumerism does not amount to actual critique (his hostility towards electronic toys for example reflects his age rather than any ideological or pedagogical objection), his indifference to such materialism at least indicates a lack of pretension that distinguishes him from the west Germans and the new eastern materialists, whose sudden consumer fervour disheartened left-leaning critics. Stöhr's hero therefore offers substance rather than style. His interest in Russian literature conveys some seriousness and depth that is absent in his western hosts, but in case the point is somehow misunderstood as an attempt to extol the GDR's Soviet orientation, Martin qualifies his literary tastes (writers who in any case either pre-date the

October Revolution or opposed its ideology), emphasising 'von Politik haben se keene Ahnung. Aber schreiben – dat können se'. Despite his reading habits, which suggest a sensitive and introspective reader, Martin does not resemble the emasculated figures found in other post-unification films. A number of scenes stress his masculinity, be it his romance with Ludmilla, a Serbian prostitute (a relationship that at the same time emphasises his broad-mindedness) or in aggressive confrontations with bullies who express racist and homophobic sentiments (a reaction that emphasises his active rejection of prejudice).⁶³ Displaced though he is from his traditional gender role as paterfamilias, his masculinity is never in doubt. Certainly, it is not, as some have suggested, compromised by his western rival. Lacking Martin's humility and physical presence, he is an effete poltroon to Martin's sturdy proletarian, and his status is weakened as Martin's wife and son each identify with the true husband/father.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The post-unification portraits of Berlin looked at in this chapter do not endorse the grandiloquent discourse of Berlin's new start or the speechifying of the architects, politicians and city-planners intent on re-energising the capital. The city's architectural rebirth is occasionally acknowledged in the films but it is the demise of east Berlin that is foregrounded. The city's renaissance is clearly a project that will not extend to all, that is, to the losers and other marginalised figures who are typically the focus of the urban narratives. For all the political rhetoric of integration and inclusion, it seems that disorientation, isolation and exclusion are the dominant characteristics. These brooding chronicles of metropolitan life are by no means unique to post-unification representations of the city. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the view of Berlin as the comfortless environment, the city as asphalt jungle, has a long history, though such cheerless accounts were not a common feature in DEFA's output. These films have their antecedents; scholars have sought to analyse the films diachronically, expended much

⁶³ It should be noted that Martin's permissiveness does know its bounds. He expresses his contempt for hardcore pornography when he briefly works in the peep show run by a former prison acquaintance, in whose dealings with the paedophile market he is unwittingly implicated.

⁶⁴ See David Clarke, 'Representations of East German Masculinity in Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany* and Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht*', *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 55, No. 4, October 2004, 343-449, p. 438.

energy into tracing their influences. However, contemporary filmmakers' continued interest in the city's underbelly -- sub-urban Berlin -- must also be considered synchronically, that is in terms of their specific post-unification, context. Just as writers were using the city's 'symbolic landscape [...] to find spatial correlatives for their experience', so the filmmakers also explore and fix on images of a city in decay, or a city that has been abandoned and consigned to a history of failed dreams and lost communities.⁶⁵

A number of the narratives suggest that the new freedoms that unification offers are no less isolating and constrictive than life in the closely regulated East German state. The tangible certainties and assurances that the GDR offered have been replaced by intangible freedoms - abstract notions such as autonomy and freedom of choice. Similarly, the security previously provided by families, close professional groups and social circles, the constituent features of an east German community, has all but eroded. The early *Wende* narratives demonstrated that reviving a dormant community was essential to the east Germans' success. The urban dramas allow for no such continuity. The focus, instead, is on individuals struggling to find their way in an urban environment that is ever changing and in which nothing can be certain. The ensuing disorientation was, in part, spatial, but the energetic redefinition of the city -- as much a question of erasing as defining -- corresponded with the wider social confusion following unification. Disorientation is the result of the east Germans' general (that is social, ideological and political) loss of direction since the state's collapse as much as it is a problem of spatial bearing. Excluded from policy-making (unless high-ranking SED members), much of the population had adapted to the Party's chosen course - whether in opposition or in support. The east Germans thus require new mental and geographic cartographies, if they are to navigate the city and society successfully.

In their separate ways, the protagonists in Klier's and Stöhr's films each recognise this and set about learning how to read the city anew. Importantly, they show no desire to be fully assimilated, a course of action that is associated with other self-effacing characters. The challenge of adjusting to the new city looks more likely to succeed in *Berlin is in Germany* than *Ostkreuz*, whose heroine is likely to remain a victim of the new

⁶⁵ Karen Leeder, *Breaking Boundaries. A New Generation of Poets in the GDR* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 57.

geography. In his own insular way, Gwisdeck's protagonist is also ready to relinquish the past. Less hopeful are Trampe's and Kleinert's films whose characters are unable to escape their past. Like the obdurate *Ossis* in films such as *Der Brocken* and the *Trabi* series, there is some opposition to the new changes, though resistance is not of the sentimental, apolitical kind favoured in those narratives. Unlike the characters in those films, Hermann and Walter are too shaped by the GDR's political and ideological culture to be able to adapt. Recourse to the past, to its values, its ideology, can only result in one's undoing, as *Wege in die Nacht* and *Der Kontrolleur* unequivocally demonstrate.

Against these narratives, the city functions as 'both a physical site and a pathological state'.⁶⁶ Architects may have felt that their designs go some way to addressing the city's pathology. The symbolic use of glass in many of the prestigious building projects implies an openness and transparency that distinguishes the Berliner Republic from the opaque SED regime and the dark shadows of NS dictatorship. However, the directors of these films do not concur with the optimism inherent in these constructions, which they mostly avoid, and keep instead to the city's darker recesses, its alleys and abandoned plots. There, in the shadows, its protagonists suffer from claustrophobia, paranoia and melancholia, symptoms of a new pathology for which unification has, as yet, offered no cure.

⁶⁶ Vidler, p. 26.

Chapter Six

Good Bye, *Ostalgie*?

The crusade for cultural amnesia coincided with the rise of nostalgic time travel and the manipulation of history as a commodity; all three trends converge in the impulse to preserve.¹

Perhaps the most significant development within unification discourse and in the discussions about east German identity was the rise of *Ostalgie*. As outlined in the first chapter, this neologism which originally described a simple, localised nostalgia for the GDR that enabled east Germans to rescue their past from evanescence developed into a full-blown and lucrative industry, in which enterprising individuals provided nostalgic east Germans with material reminders of their past, a profitable business, given that ‘most people’, as John Gillis observes, ‘find it difficult to remember without having access to mementoes, images, and physical sites to objectify their memory’.² Many of these markers were under threat in the post-communist east as the incumbent administration set about removing not just the obvious political totems but other signs that were of cultural significance to the local population. The ensuing rescue of East Germany’s discontinued products thus came to serve an important mnemonic function, these ‘talismans of continuity’ enabling its citizens to perpetuate their memories of life in the GDR.³ Their memories, too, came to serve a dual function: not only did they connect them to the past as a way of barricading themselves against the present, they also acted as a secret handshake, one that was able to identify those without a legitimate claim to the east German memory bank.

Over time, *Ostalgie* has slowly been separated from this defiant regionalism and the east German past has evolved, becoming a commercial venture that is open to all – t-shirt sellers specialising in ‘original’ GDR tops obviously do not restrict sales to those with genuine east German postcodes, just as the ‘Ostalgie Shows’ of recent years (discussed below) are not broadcast only within the territories formerly constituting the

¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985; 1990, 3rd edition), p. 384.

² John R. Gillis, ‘Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship’, in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-24, p. 17.

³ Lowenthal (1985), p. xxiii.

GDR. Nevertheless, the rediscovered materials from the past have become central to many east Germans' sense of identity, corresponding with what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as an 'elaborate language of symbolic practice and communication'.⁴

In a culture obsessed with quality and excellence, the east Germans' celebration of unremarkable GDR products also introduced an antagonistic counter value of modesty and simplicity (characteristics that had also been attributed to the east Germans themselves), which is often intended as a snub to the west's assumed superiority. The actual quality of the products (in truth, often mediocre, though appealingly so) was of less significance than their provenance. At first, some commentators were reluctant to see the resurgent interest in the once commonplace as anything other than a whim, a harmless fashion that would soon be replaced. But *Ostalgie*'s periodic appeal throughout the nineties is not evidence of a superficial attachment to the GDR, even if the importance of appearance (in the guise of GDR ephemera) is one of its defining features. The interest in surface authenticity -- the genuine GDR labels, the original east German clothes, provisions, furniture -- has not lessened its significance for a deeper post-communist east German identity. Nor did the west's subsequent embrace of old east German products prove that *Ostalgie* was simply part of a modern fascination with the retro-authenticity. As Moran has noted, 'depending on its context, *ostalgie* can function as decontextualized retrochic or as an important conduit of the non-discursive aspects of cultural memory'.⁵ But it is certainly ironic that an east German identity previously predicated on socialist ideology is now largely based on the artefacts of its material culture. The economic principles that were behind the uncomplicated packaging and basic commodities have disappeared, leaving behind tins on shelves that may be branded as *Ostprodukte* but which are now firmly established within the ethos of a capitalist market economy. The *schein* of an east German distinctiveness is now bound up with the *sein* of its place in western consumerism (though some might argue the reverse).

The previous chapters analysed the east Germans' response to their post-unification situation from a number of perspectives. The significance of place and belonging was

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Tradition', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983, 10th edition, 2003), 1-15, p. 6.

⁵ Moran, p. 228.

central to the discussion of *Heimat*, which served as a central topos in a number of post-*Wende* films. The *Heimat* theme typically prompted memories of the past in some films, leading to a revitalised community that refused to surrender the sentimentalised values of the *Gemeinschaft* to those of the new *Gesellschaft*. In others, a mournful memory of the past was a symptom of post-GDR malaise, with ruins typically symbolising a past that had been lost, and with it the hopes for a better future. Memory was central, too, to the chapter focussing on Berlin narratives, which assessed the dangers associated with not forgetting as outlined in a number of urban dramas.

This final chapter continues the inquiry into the east Germans' focus on memory. It assesses the significance of the films generally regarded as *Ostalgie* films (how accurate a designation this is remains to be seen) in re-imagining the GDR and considers what significance these reflections of the past have had for the population's post-unification identity. In particular, the chapter seeks to question the films' celebration of the past. Do the films provide east German audiences with the opportunity to revisit memories unblemished by a post-*Wende* discourse that concentrated on the crimes of the GDR state? Do they amount to a kind of revisionism? Instrumentalising the past is a dangerous business and attempts to whitewash history are particularly risky, given Germany's problematic past. The bitter *Historikerstreit* of the eighties demonstrated just how contentious reappraising the past could be when new historiographical approaches to the NS period, which their advocates hoped would result in a normalised Germany that was no longer overshadowed by the past, were interpreted as an apology for the regime's crimes. Whitewashing the past was not unprecedented in the GDR. Expedient historical narratives were routinely constructed as a means of tracing a revolutionary spirit that would fortify the SED's position. Attempts to revise east German history since unification have proved no less controversial. Such revision is not just a matter of academic debate but has led to passionate discussion at ground level, that is, among the people who experienced the GDR first-hand: the east German population. These memories 'from below' seek to broaden what are considered narrow, reductive historical accounts. In contrast to the 'consecutive account of all that happened in a particular point in the past' that defines what Gillis terms 'elite memory', these popular memories often make 'no

effort to fill in all the blanks'.⁶ Despite, or because of, such partiality, these disaggregated histories have proved popular and oral histories and autobiographies abound.

It was perhaps inevitable that *Ostalgie*'s counter-narratives would find favour among east Germans exasperated by a reductive post-*Wende* account of the GDR, which considers the east German state principally in terms of its dictatorial character and its many flaws. The respected journalist Christoph Dieckmann has highlighted the fact that the GDR past is often narrated by west Germans. 'Manchmal', he writes, 'schickt der Westen einen Auslandskorrespondenten herüber, zur vertiefenden Verallgemeinerung des Bekannten: Arbeitslosigkeit, Stasi, Ausländerhaß. Mehr und mehr wird auch *mein* Osten ein mir westlich vermitteltes Summarium altbundesdeutscher Medien'.⁷ According to these reports, issues such as pollution, political extremism and economic torpor are frequently viewed as the legacy of forty years of corrupt and incompetent rule. While east Germans may be sensitive to accounts that blame post-unification troubles on the pre-unification administration, their main indignation has been reserved for other, more generalising claims. A number of gaffes and disputed research by public figures and academics has ensured that the east Germans' perceived inferiority continues to be a source of debate. The different attitudes to work and the challenges facing the east German economy resulted in numerous publications. Of these, Thomas Roethe's 'Arbeiten wie bei Honecker, verdienen wie bei Kohl', a controversial study that pointed to the east German workforce's indolence, was among the most contentious and did little to dispel mutual suspicions and recriminations.⁸ The inflammatory claim by Jörg Schönbohm (a west German politician in an east German seat) that a serial infanticide in the east was attributable to a regional moral degeneracy borne of the communist regime offered further

⁶ John R. Gillis, 'Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship', in *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity*, ed. by John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-24, p.6.

⁷ Christoph Dieckmann, *Das wahre Leben im Falschen. Geschichten von ostdeutscher Identität* (Berlin: C. Links, 2000), p. 15.

⁸ Thomas Roethe, *Arbeiten wie bei Honecker, verdienen wie bei Kohl. Ein Plädoyer für das Ende der Schonfrist* (Frankfurt: Eichborn Verlag, 1999). Heiner Meulemann also considers the issue in 'Arbeit und Leistung 1990: Differenzen von Werten und Differenzen von Konnotationen', in *Werte und nationale Identität im vereinten Deutschland. Erklärungsaufsätze der Umfrageforschung*, ed. by Heiner Meulemann (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998), 104-126. In the same volume, Max Kaase and Petra Bauer-Kaase refer to a questionnaire in which respondents from the east overwhelmingly believe that their eastern neighbours 'wollen leben wie im Westen und nur so arbeiten wie früher im Osten'. In 'Deutsche Vereinigung und innere Einheit 1990-1997', 251-267, p. 258.

evidence of a coloniser's view of the east as a region in need of civilisation.⁹ Although these are among the more extreme examples of the kind of prejudice directed against the east (and were roundly criticised in the press), they give some sense of the hostility and suspicion that has come to define post-unification discourse.

Commodifying the Past

The resurgence of east German products can be attributed to a number of facts. Regional identification partly explains the unexpected consumer loyalty: aware of the *Wende*'s economic consequences for the province, east Germans looked to support eastern businesses which had come under threat from western interests - the 'Kolonialwaren-Händler', as one *Spiegel* report described them.¹⁰ Buying east German products was not an exclusively east German matter. The need to support old and new east German business was both politically and economically necessary, and investment in *Ostprodukte* was encouraged by, among others, the German President, Richard von Weizsäcker. It was ironic, considering the significance of regional products for an eastern identity, that the east Germans partly had their western neighbours to thank for the products' revival, for it was often western entrepreneurs who established shops specialising in east German goods. Moreover, at a time when many east Germans were rejecting anything 'Made in GDR' [sic], as their products were traditionally branded, be it ideology, consumer goods or cultural products, it was western supermarkets that offered customers the opportunity to assist their eastern neighbours by carrying contemporary eastern products which were clearly highlighted as such.

A further consideration when it comes to the east's preference for regional produce carries greater political significance and concerns the population's exposure to neo-liberal values, in which freedom of choice is one of the dominant principles. It is paradoxical that the east Germans' experience of this new culture of freedom is often overshadowed by the restrictions and inadequacies seen as synonymous with the replacement political system and which seems to deny any east German specificity. Averse to local products, when

⁹ The comment made by Brandenburg's Interior Minister naturally provoked outrage. See for example Florentine Fritzen, 'Zu so etwas hat die DDR doch nicht geführt', *FAZ.NET*, 4.8.2005. Online at: <http://www.faz.net/s/RubCD175863466D41BB9A6A93D460B81174/Doc~E0982E27E56F5405492D254C2C05D8FE2~ATpl~Ecommon~Spezial.html> [Accessed 12.10.2005].

¹⁰ 'Blindes Gekaufe', *Der Spiegel*, 19/1991, 121- 124, p. 121 (no author).

these were the only products available, the east Germans' re-evaluation of their own domestic output can also be understood as a symbolic rejection of the west and the market's homogenising tendencies.¹¹ As one east German interviewee put it, 'den Leuten hängt die westdeutsche Einheitswurst zum Hals raus'.¹² The snub is particularly ironic given that it was western products that previously served as tokens of resistance for disgruntled east Germans. C&A carrier bags, once provocatively sported as banners of superior western consumerism, have lost their appeal and have more likely been replaced by old-fashioned paper grocery bags, which now denote threatened east German values: homeliness, a lack of affectation, and local, not global, commerce. Although *Ostalgie* has seen dozens of old GDR goods rescued and resignified, these are piecemeal accomplishments and hardly compensate for the east's severe economic decline that followed the *Wende*, a slump that the population was inclined to attribute to the *Treuhand's* dealings rather than the SED's neglect.¹³ *Ostalgie* offers an option for individual and collective performative opposition but hardly extends to providing the condition for any significant industrial recovery.

It is the trivial, commonplace features of the GDR past that have been instrumental in regrouping an east German community. This may be explained in terms of ease -- reviving a favoured brand of chocolate is of course far easier than restoring a steelworks -- but also in terms of effect. Although both olfactory and gustatory senses are important in stimulating memory, biting into a bar of 'Rotstern Schokolade' is more likely to stimulate positive memories than are the noxious fumes emitted by one of the former steel foundries. The causes championed by doughty east Germans may strike outsiders as rather mundane, but the importance often lies more in the effect they have on local (i.e. east German) morale than in restoring the fortunes of small businesses.¹⁴ Occasionally, the cause has had no obvious economic purpose; the defence is instead demonstrative, as in the furore that erupted when it was announced that the *Ampelmännchen*, the spry

¹¹ Admittedly, the GDR's trade agreements with other countries allowed for some diversity, but the point is that, compared with their western counterparts, east Germans' choice was limited. Christoph Dieckmann reminds east Germans of their initial, post-*Wende* enchantment with western consumer goods in 'Honis heitere Welt', *Die Zeit*, 28.8.2003, No. 36. Online at: http://zeus.zeit.de/text/2003/36/Ostalgie_ [Accessed 1.1.2006].

¹² In Broder, p. 56.

¹³ See Staab, p. 42.

¹⁴ Consider Lowenthal's point that, 'what warrants preservation expands with what is thought historically significant', and that 'many communities wish to save structures and scenes that would never qualify as "aesthetic" or "historic", perhaps not even as pleasant or comfortable' (1985), pp. 387-388.

pedestrian figure found on eastern traffic lights, was to make way for its western counterpart. Finally rescued from forced retirement, the figure has become so popular that it now features as one of the emblems of unified Berlin and a small industry selling *Ampelmännchen* memorabilia is booming. It has been suggested that the campaign to save the figure succeeded ultimately because it was 'free of the taint of totalitarianism', but the symbols of SED totalitarianism have been commodified, too, though these are typically pitched at western consumers, often tourists.¹⁵ In fact, a general interest in the Eastern Bloc has led to the current vogue for Communist chic that has seen a renaissance of the Soviet style in advertising and the ironic application of Communist imagery to new business identities in the west. With its ideology defused by history, its iconography has been re-cycled for postmodern culture.¹⁶ In Britain, the national chain of 'Vodka-Revolution' bars that has appropriated Communist symbols as part of its corporate identity is one of many to indulge this post-modern fascination with the imagery of the once-feared Cold War enemies. Temporal and historical distance makes such appropriation possible. A Soviet star above a city centre bar specialising in vodka is unlikely to cause offence given how far removed it is from the original context. With the symbols' ideological origins largely consigned to history, the referents have been destroyed, allowing them to be recontextualised. There is evidence of the communist past enjoying new, tamer usage in its original sites. Certain SED phrases and captions may have been borrowed by east German businesses (a bar called 'Planwirtschaft' opened in Dresden soon after the *Wende*), but the GDR is perhaps not long enough past for a 'Café Honecker' or 'Restaurant zum Ulbricht' to emerge.¹⁷ Generally, the east Germans' celebration of their past focuses on the material past, while the west Germans' interest in the GDR often centres on explicitly Socialist tokens (Party memorabilia such as hats, flags, badges), mementoes of the anti-fascist ideology that was the cornerstone of the official state-

¹⁵ Moran, p. 228. See also Boym, p. 196. The figure has its own official website: <http://www.ampelmann.de> [Accessed 10.9.2005]. See also Paul Betts, 'Remembrance of things Past', in *Pain and Prosperity: Reconsidering Twentieth Century German History*, ed. by Paul Betts and Greg Eghigian (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003), 179-207, p. 195.

¹⁶ One might compare the neutralisation of communism with the aestheticisation of fascism as discussed by Susan Sontag in her essay, 'Fascinating Fascism'. In *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1972; reprinted London: Readers and Writers, 1980), pp. 100-101.

¹⁷ Similar trends are observable in other former Soviet Republics, including Russia. See Theresa Sabonis-Chafee, 'Communism as Kitsch', in *Consuming Russia. Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev*, ed. by Adele Marie Barker (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999), 362-382. Only in Georgia, Stalin's birthplace, could a cigarette packet featuring the Soviet dictator be named 'Prima Nostalgia'.

defined identity but with which the GDR population never convincingly connected. Whether these remnants of the past are dismissed by the east Germans appears to be of little consequence to their western collectors, for whom they act as 'the preferred emblems of their own imagined GDR', thereby maintaining precisely the kind of image from which many east Germans would escape.¹⁸

This is not to say that western consumers' interest in east German goods is limited to the old Party mementoes found at flea markets and junk shops. Specialised *Ossi* stores in the west do good business in eastern products that continue to be marketed in original GDR packaging, though the important difference between these products and those marketed as 'aus den neuen Bundesländern' standing on national supermarket shelves is that these consumer goods are advertised in terms of GDR heritage as well as their eastern production.¹⁹ Lucrative though the *Ossi*produkte are, no politician has yet sought to endorse retro-GDR produce as the answer to the considerable economic problems facing the new federal states. Government interest in national heritage may often encourage nostalgic reflection but nostalgia is never promoted as policy.

Although some scholars have suggested that *Ostalgie* may be a useful tool in helping the Germans deal with the past, it is probable that continued reference to and use of GDR realia will sustain division, since these function as beacons of different pasts.²⁰ Nostalgia is, as Steven Ostovitch has pointed out, a dangerous aspect of memory, a 'refusal to let the past be simply past while resisting its incorporation into the present'.²¹ For some, the east Germans' nostalgia appears, therefore, as a threat to a post-unification identity. Nostalgic practices blur the line between simply remembering the GDR and actively missing the GDR. The desire to save east German biographies from a generalised narrative that appears not to recognise the nuances of experience has proved contentious

¹⁸ Betts (2000), p. 17.

¹⁹ Online shops specialising in *Ossi* goods clearly seek to capitalise on this vogue, describing their wares as 'Ostprodukte von früher und heute' or as 'Ostklassiker'. See, for example, <http://www.kaufhalle-des-ostens.de/> and <http://www.ossiversand.de/>. No research is available to tell us whether their customers are west Germans looking to fill their cupboards with Socialist curios or east German economic refugees wishing to connect with their past. A recent article, however, suggests that most of the customers were originally from the east. See 'Trabiduft und mehr. Ostalgie übers Internet', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 28.7.2005 (no author). Online at: <http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/stz/page/detail.php/963667> [Accessed 23.10.2005].

²⁰ See Martin Blum, 'Remaking the East German Past: *Ostalgie*, Identity and Material Culture', *Journal of Popular Culture*, Winter 2000, Vol. 34, No. 3, 229-253, p. 233.

²¹ Steven T. Ostovitch, 'Epilogue: Dangerous Memories', in *The Work of Memory. New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. by Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). Online at: <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/confino/>

and has led to accusations of selective amnesia, an allegation that echoes the delayed post-NS discourse in the west that only began to take place in the late sixties. Central to the criticism of east German nostalgia, is the charge that a refusal to acknowledge the crimes of the former state ultimately excuses the perpetrators and disregards the regime's victims. For its critics (including civil rights campaigners and conservative politicians), *Ostalgie* does exactly that.²² It encourages east Germans to wallow in memories of their past, and sanctions self-indulgent recollection at the expense of other truths. It reinforces a post-unification identity that may (indirectly) encourage a mentality of exclusion and cultural segregation. In re-establishing old co-ordinates for a newly defined east German community, *Ostalgie* rejects the modern, politically correct plea for integration and pluralism.

Over the years, the material features of *Ostalgie* have transcended any regional particularism. GDR relics may serve a mnemonic function, providing tangible evidence that stimulates memories of the past, but the question remains, whose past? Collectors of *FDJ* shirts and boxes of original *Tempo Linsen* may well search for such mementoes because these items enable them to reengage with their past. However, their appeal is as much a matter of taste -- a postmodern appreciation that values the 'lack of emotional attachment to a specific past' -- as it is of sentiment.²³ GDR design has been accorded a new post-communist value, as the numerous exhibitions and books about everyday life in the east indicate.²⁴ The continued sale of old GDR products is therefore not only evidence of sentimentalists wishing to surround themselves with commodities that remind them of other times but proof also that the west continues to be fascinated with the past -- even if it is not their own.²⁵ This has caused considerable irritation. In a caustic article that appeared in *Das Magazin*, a liberal Berlin-based glossy that survived the NS period, was popular in the GDR and was revitalised after the *Wende*, André Meier focussed on what he considered a looting of the GDR past, commenting that, 'die Mumie ist endlich

²² See Guntram Doelfs, 'Die DDR ist plötzlich trendy', *Morgenpost.de*, 13. 8 2003, <http://morgenpost.berlin1.de/content/2003/08/13/berlin/622561.html> [Accessed 20.5.2005]

²³ Jonathan P. G Bach, "'The Taste Remains": Consumption (N)ostalgia, and the Production of East Germany', *Public Culture*, Vol. 14, Number 3, Fall 2002, 545-556, p. 547.

²⁴ See for example Ralf Ulrich's *DDR Design 1949-1989* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), a glossy volume containing photos of mundane artifacts, from showerheads to toilet paper, whose appeal the editor explains thus: 'der verstaubte Charme ihrer Formen und ihre Verpackungen fasziniert den heutigen Betrachter; zugleich sind sie Dokumente einer Stagnation, die nicht unwesentlich zum Scheitern der DDR beigetragen hat', p. 7.

²⁵ See Betts (2003), p. 205.

freigegeben. Unbekümmert darf jetzt geerntet und geplündert werden'.²⁶ East Germans were naturally exasperated at seeing their discarded consumer goods converted into profit by those enterprising west Germans who were able to anticipate the subsequent recovery of the products' value. There is also some discomfort in the knowledge that flagship east German companies are actually steered by western management and owned by western multinationals.²⁷ Worse still is the feeling that not even east German history is free of western manipulation. As one *Spiegel* interviewee put it, 'wir wollen uns nicht von den Westlern an der Hand führen lassen. Das ist unsere Vergangenheit'.²⁸

Though the GDR no longer exists, East German culture continues to be accessible through various archives and museums. The east German past is readily available in the form of its cultural products and anyone can build up an impressive collection of genuine GDR curios. DEFA films are routinely broadcast on regional public service stations in the east and old GDR rock bands are on tour once again, promoting their reissued albums. In terms of its commercial manifestation, *Ostalgie* is no longer an exclusively east German practice, since anyone can buy into GDR culture. But the one thing that remains elusive, and exclusive to the east German community, is their memory of the past, their personal experience. Those from the west may cherish the period's features or myopically envy certain comforts that the east enjoyed (consider the western directors retrospectively envying the DEFA directors' fixed salary and generous studio support), but they cannot miss what they never had. And yet, this paradox also informs many east Germans' nostalgia.²⁹ Regardless of the frustrations of 'real existierender Sozialismus', these east Germans harboured a utopic yearning for a model socialist state (as indeed did many Socialists in the FRG). The collapse of the Eastern Bloc signalled the end of the communist system (with a few exceptions) and the end, too, of the east Germans' dreams for a credible socialism.³⁰ For some, then, there is more to *Ostalgie* than exuberant

²⁶ André Meier, 'Ach, wie niedlich', *Das Magazin*, 6/2003, 14-17, p. 16.

²⁷ Even if though they are now owned by western companies, many businesses emphasis their east German heritage. F6 Cigarettes, based in Dresden, are for example owned by Philip Morris.

²⁸ In Henryk M. Broder, 'Wir lieben die Heimat', *Der Spiegel*, 27/1995, 54-64, p. 56.

²⁹ I am distinguishing between those east Germans socialised in the East German state rather than those simply born there. The latter often profess to miss the GDR even though their experience of life under socialism was negligible.

³⁰ See Bach, p. 548.

performance or the accumulation of socialist paraphernalia. *Ostalgie* also offers a means of remembering unrealised aspirations.

Disneyland GDR

The first film to engage with post-communist nostalgia was a little-seen, low-budget satire by a young west German filmmaker, Heiko Schier. Made within a year of the GDR's disintegration, *Alles Lüge* anticipates many features later associated with *Ostalgie* that in 1991 were considered grotesque exaggerations but in hindsight have proved remarkably perceptive.

Like other directors in those early days after unification, Schier drew inspiration from the cabaret, casting the popular comedian and satirist, Dieter 'Didi' Hallervorden (who was originally from the east, but was well known to audiences in both the GDR and FRG as a result of various television shows), in the lead role as Günther Kasulke. Schier's film follows Kasulke, an ex-GDR cabaretist formerly engaged, as he says, in the 'Entwicklung des volkseigenen Humors', as he attempts to locate his daughter in Berlin, a quest that involves a series of comic encounters in the recently unified Germany and offers a satire whose good-natured humour barely masks the film's deeper distrust of unification's positive outcome for the east. Kasulke's admission that he would rather have been united with Switzerland foreshadows the east Germans' disenchantment with unification and echoes the director's own considerable scepticism towards the process of unification, which closely echoes the east German sense of betrayal and disappointment.³¹

Alles, was uns über die Wiedervereinigung erzählt worden ist, ist Lüge. Das reicht von der Unnötigkeit einer Steuererhöhung über das Versprechen, in drei bis vier Jahren ein blühendes Gemeinwesen erreicht zu haben, bis zur Legende, die Deutschen wären ein Volk und würden jetzt endlich zusammenwachsen, weil sie zusammengehören. Diese ganze Politikerpathos ist eine einzige Lüge.³²

³¹ Peter Thompson summarises this disappointment when he suggests, 'they imagined they would get the West Germany of the 1950s, but got that of the 1990s. They wished for the *Wirtschaftswunder* but got the *Standortskrise* instead'. See "'CSU des Ostens"? – Heimat and the Left', in Taberner and Finlay, 123-141, p. 126.

³² Interview with Merten Worthmann, 'Die leicht verderbliche Vereinigung', *Berliner Zeitung*, 10.4.1992.

Schier is among the few west German directors to criticise Kohl's supervision of unification so directly. Other west German directors, such as Sanders-Brahms, had their misgivings, too, but the qualms of the *68er* often gave rise to a regret at the passing of the east Germans' unrealised socialism, something that Schier is not willing to countenance.

Though Schier's film is critical of unification and ridicules many aspects of the free-market society, which its protagonist discovers to be a breeding ground for treachery and vice, it also targets the GDR. *Alles Lüge* happily satirizes east as well as west Germans, and not just those entrenched SED supporters who show no signs of relinquishing their allegiance to the GDR state. Indeed, this is one of the few unification comedies in which east Germans are as proficient in the art of exploitation as their western neighbours. Portmann, Kasulke's former cabaret partner, displays a profiteering spirit normally associated with the west in these films. The one-time comedian has changed his act and now inveigles sponsors to invest in a series of 'guaranteed' ventures, ranging from Swiss oysters to Finnish wool, a swindle whose success depends on the greed and gullibility of investors, which the new, open Berlin apparently attracts like the Klondike. When Kasulke, who is innocent to the various cons, asks his friend, 'es ist also Betrug?', Portmann reassures him, answering, 'es ist Kapitalismus'. Kasulke lacks the confidence trickery of his friend and his few attempts to dupe potential investors prove unsuccessful. Apparently incapable of exploiting others, he draws instead on his past experiences and does what comes best to him: he improvises. But Kasulke does not use his talents to cheat or deceive; recognising the opportunities available in this new market economy, he prefers a more legitimate enterprise. Rebranding himself a 'Komiker, den man mieten kann', he hires himself out as GDR fool, a jester whose wild antics and pre-arranged irreverence provide executive stress relief. This is more than an opportunity for Hallervorden to showcase his comic talents. It satirises a post-unification tendency to view the east Germans as figures of amusement (the reverse side of which saw them as criminals).

Unlike the majority of early unification comedies, Schier's film does not eschew the features of the GDR past in its portrayal of life in the post-wall period. The director makes use of the kind of details that would generally appear only in more sober reflections of the east, with Schier's protagonist making fun of subjects that, in the early nineties, were still taboo. The Stasi are among the once unmentionables to be mocked; so, too, the Party adherents, seen here clinging on to vestiges of the recent past. Indeed, Schier's film,

which was one of the less successful comedies of the period, is remarkably perceptive in anticipating the later craze for all things 'Ost', and the commodification of the east German past. The director's approach may be exaggerated, certainly the characterisations in *Alles Lüge* are perhaps too indebted to their cabaret origins -- Schier admitted that some east German actors declined the parts 'weil sie sich darin zu grob karikiert fanden' -- but the film's ending, which at the time of release might have seemed an absurd fantasy, in hindsight appears to have been remarkably prescient.³³ Buoyed by his success as GDR clown-for-hire, Kasulke recognises the further potential to be had from mining the past and proposes that the defunct *Palast der Republik* become a 'Sozialistisches Disneyland'. The location's redefined role is not as strange as one might think, given that the building once housed not only the East German parliament but also provided room for numerous cultural functions and entertainments.³⁴ Schier's film shows some acuity in focussing on a new role for 'Honis Lampenladen' as it was known locally. Plans for the building's demolition after unification immediately roused consternation among some east Germans. Their indignation was prompted as much by the detractors' apparent disregard for the building's cultural significance for east Germans as by the determination to rebuild the *Stadtschloss*, which had previously stood on the site.³⁵ The final scene shows the enterprise up and running, complete with mock *Volkspolizei* (VoPo) supervising entry to the museum-cum-entertainment park, where children sing *FDJ* songs and Portmann is already planning a similar scheme for the Cuban people - when the time comes.

Schier's film imagines a perfect solution for the unification blues. Kasulke's inspired project allows wistful east Germans to re-engage with the GDR, albeit on a micro-scale. The 'Sozialistisches Disneyland' offers east Germans a re-acquaintance with their *Heimat*, one that is not compromised by the exigencies of the actual SED state. West

³³ The unification comedies' reliance on members of established cabaret groups was often seen as a weakness. One reviewer of *Go Trabi Go* also grumbles about the film's debt to cabaret. *Film Dienst* 44/1991, p. 26 (no author).

³⁴ The building's imagined use as an entertainment centre does not indicate a complete change in purpose. Ladd describes its multi-use function, commenting, 'perhaps nowhere else in the world did a parliament share quarters with a bowling alley', p. 59.

³⁵ The journalist Klaus Hartung notes that, 'obwohl sich vor allem Architekten besonders heftig beteiligten, war der Schlossstreit eines nicht: eine Architekturdebatte'. 'Eine Stadt hofft auf Heilung', *Die Zeit*, 30/2001. Online at: http://hermes.zeit.de/pdf/archiv/archiv/2001/30/200130_schloss.xml.pdf [Accessed 12.8.2005]. See also Anna Teut, 'Wider die Kopie des Berliner Stadtschlusses', in *Architektur in Berlin*, 36-57. Despite continued protests, the building's fate was finally sealed, and demolition began in early 2006, making way for the *Stadtschloss*, a decision that received backing from the *Bundestag*. See Thomas Fülling, 'Das Ende des Palastes wird heute besiegelt', *Die Welt*, 19.01.2006. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2006/01/19/833559.html> [Accessed 12.2.2006].

Germans, meanwhile, are also given the opportunity to satisfy their curiosity. In the limited space of the *Palast der Republik* they are also able to experience a miniaturised GDR, which observes the health and safety guidelines of a theme park. In re-imagining the GDR past as a source of future income, *Alles Lüge* offers a foretaste of the late *Ostalgie* trend. But significantly, Kasulke's motivation for restaging the obsolete state is not a wish to restore the past. He is as derisive of his wife's attachment to the former regime as he is indignant at the swindles that appear to be a consequence of unification. His business strategy does not rely on duplicity but capitalizes on the east Germans' bond to the GDR and the west's posthumous interest in their former neighbours in an honest fashion. In a bizarre case of life imitating art, the unthinkable seemed likely to become real: among the more dubious schemes to have been proposed was that by Massine Productions, whose directors in 2003 hoped to build an east German Disneyland in a disused warehouse in the Berlin district of Oberschöneweide, a project that ultimately failed due to lack of funds.³⁶

Reimagining the GDR

Nostalgia was, as previous chapters have indicated, a sentiment that suffuses many of the post-unification narratives. Under threat from a modern western lifestyle, the east German communities frequently look to secure a way of life which is firmly rooted in past traditions. Reference to the past is generally not politicised, or made to shore up a distinct ideology. Values such as solidarity were upheld in the post-GDR *Heimatfilme*, for example, as traditional ways of being and not the consequence of (socialist) ideology and, though this reflected a conflict of interest between east and west, it addressed contemporary concerns about globalisation and connected with a general yearning for simpler times. From the mid-nineties, however, nostalgia, or rather *Ostalgie*, was a malaise borne of post-unification frustrations and expressed a more precise loss, a longing

³⁶ See Boris Dombrowski, who reports of a planned GDR theme park that will offer visitors a genuine GDR experience including 'Schlangstehen, Pässe vorzeigen, Taschenkontrolle, Zwangsumtausch und misstrauischen Blicken'. See 'Tolle Idee für Nostalgiker. Wir bauen hier'. *Berliner Zeitung* (no date), p.4. See 'Projekt "Ossi-Park" an der Finanzierung gescheitert', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 25.2.2004 (no author). Online at: <http://morgenpost.berlin1.de/content/2004/02/25/bezirke/661918.html?redirID> [Accessed 12.1.2005].

that focussed its desire specifically on the GDR past, thereby excluding the west Germans from participation.

Although films such as *Der Kontrolleur* engage with the memory and nostalgia for the past, these are not considered *Ostalgie* narratives. They may focus on individuals who regret the passing of the GDR state, but they do not echo the cheerfully defiant mood with which *Ostalgie* has come to be associated. The protagonists' memories of the past are specifically linked to those GDR features that are largely absent from *Ostalgie* discourse. This might explain the films' failure to resonate with the wider east German community (along with the general principle that socially-critical filmmaking seldom works well at the box-office). Audiences may have been able to identify with the protagonists' helplessness but the antisocial behaviour and biographical information that was presented made any emotional attachment to the characters problematic. What is more, the films' tragic endings -- death, suicide, murder -- indicated that east German nostalgia could in fact prove fatal.

Late autumn of 1999 is significant to this discussion of *Ostalgie*, for it witnessed the release of two films, one of which, *Sonnenallee*, has come to be seen as a key *Ostalgie* text, while the other, *Helden wie Wir*, is an adaptation of what was generally held to be 'der Wenderoman', Thomas Brussig's novel of the same name. The release of each film was timed to coincide with an important anniversary. Released on 7.10.1999, *Sonnenallee* coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the GDR; *Helden wie Wir*'s release, some weeks later on 9.11.1999, coincided with the anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall.

The calendrical proximity was not the only connection that the films had. Like *Helden Wie Wir*, *Sonnenallee* was based on a book (and script) by Thomas Brussig, and each film marked the debut of its young director (Haußmann had come from a background in theatre, Peterson had just graduated from the Film School in Potsdam), and, most importantly, each film offered a narrative of the GDR that ran contrary to post-unification accounts - although in what ways remains to be seen.³⁷ Despite these similarities, it was Haußmann's film that resonated with cinema audiences and not Peterson's. *Sonnenallee*'s success was considerable. With over 2.4 million viewers, it was one of the biggest domestic films of the decade, and seemed to suggest that, ten years after unification, what

³⁷ Thomas Brussig, *Am kürzeren Ende der Sonnenallee* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1999).

east German audiences were most interested in seeing was not films that chronicled their current difficulties but a film that celebrated their past.³⁸ At least, this is what many of the film's review appeared to imply, for *Sonnenallee* was seen by some critics as a hagiography of the GDR. While some reviewers were sympathetic to a vision of the GDR that challenged the standard media representation, others expressed misgivings at the film's tame depiction of the GDR authorities, claiming that the film showed little respect for the victims of the regime or that the rosy view of the GDR was, as one reviewer claimed, a long advert for the 'party of dissent and nostalgia', the PDS, which that year had finally gained a seat in the Berlin *Landtag*.³⁹ Where the film came under attack, it was the comic representation of those figures symbolising the state that provoked the strongest criticism. The film even faced a court case for defamation (under Paragraph 194 of the Criminal Code, a law that is better known for its use in prosecuting Holocaust deniers) brought by *Help e.V.*, the 'Hilfsorganistaion für die Opfer politischer Gewalt in Europa', which considered the film an affront to the victims of the Wall. While Brussig criticised the organisation's misuse of funds (for a case that they would not win), the director dismissed their objections, impudently claiming that he had understood the accusation to be a practical joke.⁴⁰

The film's irreverence was arguably a crucial reason for its success, for *Sonnenallee* is a film that, ostensibly, refuses to recognise any authority, be it the authority of post-unification history, which views the GDR according to its politics and distorted ideology, or the agents of East German authority, who are lampooned throughout. The portrayal of the state's agents as little more than bumptious bureaucrats and goonish careerists (as exemplified by Detlev Buck's interpretation of the humourless *Abschnittsbevollmächtigter* (ABV)) was frequently understood by the film's detractors as an attempt to make light of the state's well-known iniquities and not seen as a long-delayed opportunity to ridicule those who had once persecuted the East German

³⁸ Though nowhere near as successful as *Sonnenallee*, Peterson's film did tempt almost 200 000 viewers to the screen, a respectable figure for a German film in a market typically dominated by Hollywood.

³⁹ For hostile reviews to the film see Gunnar Decker, 'Freiheit zu lachen', *Neues Deutschland*, 6.10.1999. See also Kerstin Decker, 'Soviel DDR war nie', *Tagesspiegel*, 7.10.99 and Claus Löser, 'Die Lümmel aus dem Sperrgebiet', *TIP*, 21/1999. Another review, meanwhile, by Andreas Platthaus, refers to Haußmann's 'Lügenmärchen'. In 'Deutsche Dynamische Republik', *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 9.10.1999. The description of the PDS is from Kurt Sontheimer, 'United Germany: Political System Under Challenge', *SAIS Review*, (Special Issue), 15, 1995, 39-54, p. 48.

⁴⁰ Thomas Brussig offered a more rational response in an open letter, entitled 'Opfer politischer Gewalt haben ein Recht auf Wiedergutmachung', *Der Tagesspiegel* 29.01.2000.

population. No less important to the film's success, though, was the film's timing. Haußmann's film capitalised on *Ostalgie* and a general enthusiasm for retro-fashion, specifically the nineties' interest in seventies' culture. Set in and around Sonnenallee, a road divided by the wall, the film follows a group of East Berlin teenagers in the mid-seventies. The film therefore offered the generation that had been socialised in the GDR the opportunity of indulging their reminiscences. Despite *Sonnenallee*'s attention to period detail, the various GDR in-jokes and the presence of former east German actors such as Henry Hübchen, Katharina Thalbach, and later Winifred Glatzeder, whose cameo references DEFA's one true cult seventies film, *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*, *Sonnenallee* is more indebted to western filmmaking than it is to DEFA. Observing the thematic and stylistic conventions of the western teen genre -- sex, drugs, friendships threatened; a pop soundtrack, a wistful voiceover -- the film is closer in spirit to the nostalgic high school films that have been popular since George Lucas's *American Graffiti* (1974) and bears little resemblance to the DEFA films of the day, thus making it accessible to western audiences (though anecdotal information tends to emphasise their incomprehension at many points in the film). The seventies' voguish appeal also satisfied a younger audience that had no memory of the period. Haußmann's decision to set the film during the seventies actually deviated from the original script, which began the action during the eighties, finally culminating in the collapse of the wall. Setting the film a decade earlier may have created narrative difficulties (solved by an alternative ending in which it is a song and dance routine that finally undoes the barrier between east and west), but it undoubtedly contributed to the film's overall appeal, even if the director was less inclined to acknowledge the period's voguish popularity, and claiming instead that 'die DDR war eigentlich immer in den Siebziger'.⁴¹

This indifference to historical fact, together with the film's kitsch take on the GDR, irritated a number of critics, whose reading of the film revealed a remarkable lack of irony. Claus Löser, who thought the film an egregious production, highlighted its numerous anachronisms and inaccuracies, as if the jumble of clothing styles from various

⁴¹ Brussig was less disingenuous, and suggested that the director 'fand nur die Siebziger Jahre kultiger'. In Sandra Maischberger, 'Sonnenallee. Interview mit Thomas Brussig und Leander Haußmann'. Online at: <http://www.thomasbrussig.de/interviews/sonnenallee.htm> [Accessed 12.8.2005]. Of course, Haußmann's comment reflects his own age and experience of the GDR (born in 1959).

decades or the inconsistency of the soundtrack lessened the film's worth.⁴² Such incongruities are intentional, of course. Though a novice filmmaker, Haußmann was an experienced theatre director and well aware of presentation. In *Sonnenallee*, he favours a look that substitutes artifice and theatricality for realism. The director claimed that the unconventional, non-realistic style was simply the only satisfactory course open to him when dealing with the memory of life in the east. To do otherwise was clearly not an option he was willing to entertain: 'ein unangenehmer Gedanke, dass man versucht, diesen vollkommen unrealen Zustand, in dem wir damals gelebt haben, realistisch zu machen'.⁴³ This allows him certain freedoms, as with the physical layout of the street in which most of the action takes place. The Sonnenallee that is recreated here (a set on the edge of the Babelsberg studios) offers a microcosm of GDR life and is not concerned with factual accuracy. According to this account of life in the east, grocers sold their cabbages yards from the border crossing; Micha and the other teenage protagonists are apparently able to dance in front of the border control, occasionally exchanging jeers with the curious western tourists peering over from a viewing platform that rises over the wall. The *mise-en-scene* is deliberately artificial; the visual composition of the interior scenes, especially, supplies a mass of period details the inclusion of which is more a nod to the lucrative rehabilitation of that era's fashion in our own than an attempt to recreate an authentic GDR. This is not to say that *Sonnenallee* is intended as a surreal account of life in the east, but rather, as Paul Cooke has suggested, a 'hyper-real simulation' which initially panders to nostalgic east Germans.⁴⁴ On the one hand, the film's inclusion of so many East German signifiers offers an inventory of souvenirs intended to stimulate (eastern) audiences' memories -- ungainly furniture, unsophisticated packaging -- but the film also reminds audiences that it was western products that were fetishised in the GDR, particularly by the young.⁴⁵

Asked by one interviewer whether he had been unwilling or unable to present a more critical response to the SED State, Brussig explained, 'das hielt ich nicht für nötig, weil das Buch gar nicht versucht, die reale DDR auszuleuchten, sondern sich mit den

⁴² Claus Löser, 'Sonnenallee', *Film-Dienst*, 52/1999. Among the film's many faults, according to the reviewer, were the idioms and descriptions that post-date the *Wende*.

⁴³ In Maischberger.

⁴⁴ Cooke, p. 116.

⁴⁵ Hodgin, p. 40.

Erinnerungen an die DDR beschäftigt'.⁴⁶ There is, then, a distinction in the author's mind between the GDR state and the memories of having lived in it. This distinction is alluded to also in the cheerful voiceover with which the film closes: 'es war einmal ein Land und ich hab' dort gelebt. Und wenn man mich fragt wie's war, es war die schönste Zeit meines Lebens. Denn ich war jung und verliebt'. *Sonnenallee* is an attempt to present an alternative account of the GDR, one that defiantly supports the east Germans' right to individual recollection without recourse to the assumed GDR differentia.⁴⁷ Yet, by accentuating to the artificiality of the recreated GDR, Brussig's and Haußmann's film also draws attention to the unreliable, disjointed nature of memory.

Given that the second Brussig adaptation that autumn was based on his fêted *Wende grotesque*, 'Helden wie Wir', and that the film met with critical approval, with some reviewers praising it above the original novel, it seemed likely that Peterson's debut film would match the success of *Sonnenallee*. That was not to be. Not only were the film's box-office returns disappointing, it has been all but ignored in the critical literature on post-unification film, where it is mentioned only in passing, and usually as an addendum to discussions of Haußmann's film. This seems strange given that the novel has received so much critical attention and that, formally, *Helden wie Wir* is (for the first half at least) one of the most inventive films of the period.

Though the adaptation does not remain faithful to the novel's more grotesque caricatures or its psychosexual aspects, the Oedipal turns and the alleged misogyny, the film (which was co-scripted by Peterson, Brussig and Markus Dittrich) keeps to the novel's picaresque tale of Klaus Uhltscht, a young, prurient east German who becomes a Stasi employee in the vain hope that his role will involve sex-espionage.⁴⁸ His professional work is as disappointing as his sexual experiences (the penis complex that results in number of comic, if humiliating, sexual escapades is mostly omitted) and he is only rescued from anonymity when, following a blood transfusion for Honecker, he is left with

⁴⁶ 'Nachdenken Über Thomas B'. Interview with Volker Günske and Sven S. Poser. Online at: http://www.thomasbrussig.de/filme/helden_berliner.htm [Accessed 13.3.2004]. The book to which Brussig refers is his own *Am kürzeren Ende des Sonnenallees* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1999).

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that the script underwent numerous changes before final approval. Among the suggested changes was the inclusion of a Stasi element proposed by the film's west German co-producer, Detlev Buck, a suggestion that was not welcomed by Brussig.

⁴⁸ See Brad Prager, 'The Erection of the Berlin Wall: Thomas Brussig's *Helden wie wir* and the End of East Germany', *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4, October 2004, 983-998, p.16.

what he proudly refers to as 'das größte Glied, das Sie je gesehen haben'.⁴⁹ This side effect, and not Günter Schabowski's famous blunder, is ultimately the reason for the breach of the wall: distracted by the hero's tumescent member, the border guards allow the swelling crowds to pass through.

This new piece of historical evidence is emphasised at the beginning of the film, which opens with footage of people crossing the border accompanied by the soundtrack of Louis Armstrong's 'What a Wonderful World'. In a voiceover that adapts one of the novel's closing lines, Uhltscht asserts the accuracy of the account that is to follow: 'ich mache mir keine Illusionen. Wer meine Geschichte nicht glaubt, wird nicht verstehen, was mit Deutschland los ist. Ich, Klaus Uhltscht, habe die Berliner Mauer geöffnet'. The editing of this opening scene reflects Peterson's attempts to capture the novel's unfilmable irony. The use of Armstrong's utopian ballad, a song that has become a byword for syrupy emotion, simultaneously engages and deflates nostalgia for those days. Uhltscht's claim, meanwhile, which could not be more preposterous, mocks historical fact and parodies those east Germans who were quick to rewrite biographies after 1989.

No attempt, then, is made to present a conventional or realistic picture of the GDR past. Rather, *Helden wie Wir* re-invents the GDR throughout, drawing from an image bank of east German documentary footage, animation, and period advertising, and juxtaposing these dissimilar styles in order to create a portrait of the past that reflects the constructiveness of memory. Like *Sonnenallee*, the film's artificiality therefore consciously undermines the supposed reliability of its own account. The protagonist's birth, in 1968, as the Russian tanks head towards the Czech capital, is shot in black and white stock and in a manner that recalls the DEFA films of the period. In other sequences, GDR footage, accompanied by an upbeat muzak soundtrack, documents the state's parades, the building projects and sporting events, a reminder of the state's more optimistic self-image. Other sequences show the filmmakers' indifference to GDR icons, as in the story concerning Ernst 'Teddy' Thälmann, the socialist hero (then and now), who is visualised by Uhltscht as a giant bear agitating for the socialist cause in a film style reminiscent of early agitprop, complete with simulated aged film stock and an old time piano score.

⁴⁹ Brussig (1995), p. 300.

For all its artifice, this postmodern collage of East German details was admired as a credible representation of the GDR. Indeed, a number of critics claimed that this Brussig adaptation offered a more accurate portrayal of the GDR than had Haußmann's. For Peter Eniskat, the film was 'authentisch. Und deshalb das Gegenteil von Ostalgie'.⁵⁰ Initially the film appears to be edging towards a nostalgic representation of the GDR. Like *Sonnenallee*, it offers a collage of recognisable symbols and details with which east German audiences in particular might connect, from television shows to cartoons, interior décor and vintage clothing. But *Helden wie Wir* does not indulge in any performative nostalgia in the way that *Sonnenallee* does - or at least was seen to. While it appears to approximate nostalgia films -- images of the protagonist's halcyon childhood amid the Berlin *Plattenbau* are shot to resemble the period's super8 home movies, with bright sunshine and a breezy melody -- Peterson's direction routinely disrupts all sentimentality, either exaggerating the sentiment beyond all plausibility or introducing elements that frustrate any nostalgic expectations.

It may seem inconsistent that one Brussig novel should appear to validate positive memories of the GDR while the other satirises them, but this 'cognitive dissonance' is commonplace among east Germans, as we have already seen; indeed, such contradictions are central to the nostalgic turn, which as Svetlana Boym has noted, 'can be homesick and sick of home, at once'.⁵¹ Brussig has tried to clarify his ambivalent attitude to the past in a number of articles. The following extracts (from two separate publications) might be usefully compared in order to gain some insight into his approach in dealing with his east German past and with east German nostalgia in general:

Die Ostalgie unterscheidet sich nur in einem wesentlichen Punkt von der üblichen Nostalgie: Das Objekt der Verklärung ist in seiner Deutung schwer umkämpft. Die DDR steht unter besonderem Druck; die Verklärung muß sich über ein herrschendes Geschichtsbild vom 'Stasi-Terror', 'SED-Staat', 'totalitären Regime' usw. hinwegsetzen. Dieses Geschichtsbild steht in einer toten Ecke des Erfahrungsraumes vieler Ostler. Die DDR ist in den Köpfen vieler Menschen etwas anderes als das, was ihnen von den Historikern - auch im Fernsehen - präsentiert wird.

Niemand lebt gern mit seiner Schande, und so kursierten plötzlich nur noch Heldensagen. Alle bestätigten sich plötzlich, schon immer dagegen gewesen zu

⁵⁰ Peter Eniskat, 'Filmtipp der Woche', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 9.12.1999.

⁵¹ Boym, p. 50.

sein. Jeder konnte seine Widerstandsgeschichte erzählen, jeder wurde verfolgt, benachteiligt, bedroht, bzw. von Verfolgung, Benachteiligung und Bedrohung bedroht.⁵²

Brussig is thus sympathetic to *Ostalgie* as a means of balancing an uneven view of the GDR that denies the specificity of its citizens. But he is critical, too, of those east Germans who, after 1989, altered their biographies as a means of compensating for their own failures -- in this case, the failure to oppose the state -- a practice that he likens to the hastily constructed resistance biographies that surfaced after the *Wende* and after the war.

While *Sonnenallee* provides a less seductive vision of the east than many critics imagined (focussing on the film's comedic representation of the authorities, most of the reviews fail to acknowledge the film's general criticism of the GDR, evident in the dialogue about the poor quality consumer goods, the state's travel restrictions and the rigid ideology), it does commemorate East German adolescence, showing that high spirits and youthful capers existed in the shadow of the wall.⁵³ *Helden wie Wir*, by contrast, is less interested in a noisy celebration of youth than it is in ridiculing the SED-state, epitomised by the farcical Stasi agents with a penchant for meaningless departmental jargon, and the obsessiveness of Uhltscht's parents. It was the film's scepticism, its refusal to indulge memory, that almost certainly accounted for its disappointment at the box-office.

Recycling the Past: *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*

A couple of years after *Helden wie Wir*, Peter Timm released *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*, his adaptation of another much-admired and best-selling satire (by Jens Sparschuh) which had been published the same year as Brussig's 'Wenderoman'. Unlike Peterson's film, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* lacks inventiveness and relies on the kind of clichéd representations that had dominated early *Wende* comedies, with the west represented by superficial businessmen looking to conquer the eastern market, and the *Ossis* fulfilling the

⁵²In 'Der Brechreiz ist ein aktueller', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 31.8.2003, and 'Wir sind nostalgisch weil wir Menschen sind' (originally published 2001). Online at:

<http://www.thomasbrussig.de/publizistik/sehnsucht.htm> [Accessed 12.5.2005].

⁵³Birgit Galle, 'Die DDR beim Wort genommen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 9.11.1999.

role of unification's unlucky bystanders.⁵⁴ Though the film engaged with *Ostalgie*, Timm's film was mostly ignored and enjoyed neither the critical success of the novel, nor the commercial success of his *Trabi* film.⁵⁵

Central to *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* is its luckless protagonist, Lobek, who finally manages to shake off his post-unification lethargy and becomes a regional sales representative for a particularly kitsch product, the water feature of the title. Although mainly set in east Berlin, Timm's film travels briefly to the west, where Lobek is required to attend an induction day. Lobek is temporarily transformed by newly practiced marketing jargon and mission statements, and is soon repeating absurd management-speak, phrases as hollow as were the old socialist slogans routinely uttered in the GDR and which Lobek also randomly repeats in the hope of sounding apposite. This is not the first film in which an east German attempts to undergo some form of social ecdysis, shedding their old east German skin in an effort to adapt to their changed environment. Such metamorphoses are rarely successful; whatever external changes the characters may undergo (and these are seldom credible), they remain, at core, east Germans who will never be quite like their western compatriots, and whose makeover even risks alienating them from their own community (as with Karl, the would-be entrepreneur *Not a Love Song*). Some scholars have considered the east Germans' imitation of their western neighbours -- invariably characterised as colonisers -- in terms of Homi Bhabha's influential reading of mimicry.⁵⁶ Certainly, the east Germans' attempts to mirror the west Germans seems to echo Bhabha's theory, according to which the result is an exaggerated replica, a parody that exposes the absurdity of the original.⁵⁷ I do not wish to make too much of Bhabha's concept of mimicry in the German context, however. On no occasion does the overstated impersonation in any way truly threaten the authority of those mimicked, that is the west. What it does do, however, is reveal a fundamental inability to

⁵⁴ Jens Sparschuh, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen. Ein Heimatroman* (Köln: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1995).

⁵⁵ Wolfgang J. Ruf, 'Der Zimmerspringbrunnen', *epd-Film*, 12/2001, p. 36. Most reviews were unenthusiastic. See, for example, Anke Westphal, 'Es lebe die Empfindlichkeit', *Berliner Zeitung*, 29.11.2001. Online at: <http://www.berlinOnline.de/berliner-zeitung/archiv/.bin/dump.fcgi/2001/1129/berlinberlin/0028/> and Hanns-Georg Rodek, 'Der menschlich anständige Erfolgsunternehmer-Ossi', *Die Welt*, 1.12.2001. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2001/12/01/537270.html> [Both accessed 23.7.2005].

⁵⁶ See Cooke, p. 17.

⁵⁷ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York, 1994), p. 86.

be assimilated, highlighting the deep-rooted differences between east and west and thus reaffirming the east Germans' distinctiveness.

There is, in any case, a sense of relief when the characters, self-conscious and awkward in their act of imitation, are able to return to type. Certainly, this is the case when Papa Struutz is able to get out of his suit (a costly and ill-fitting item) and back into his workaday clothes. Lobek's transformation into a western salesman is similarly unconvincing and, like Udo before him, he reverts to his original, natural behaviour soon after. It is only when the characters revert to type that they are able to remedy their situation. As with many other post-unification narratives, Timm's film suggests that the east Germans know best how to overcome their problems and this either involves mobilising the community or, in this case, applying the east Germans' well-known ability to improvise (a talent witnessed throughout in films as diverse as *Superstau*, *Das war der Wilde Osten*, *Alles Lüge*, and *Bis Zum Horizont und Weiter*).⁵⁸

Timm's satire fails to convey the ironic tone of Sparschuh's novel and, in keeping with the director's oeuvre, it settles instead for the exaggerated characterisation of east and west Germans that had proved so successful in his earlier film, though *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* lacks the clowning that had been a factor in *Go, Trabi, Go*'s success. Timm's film is closer to *Alles Lüge* than it is to the Brussig adaptations. Like Schier's film, it targets western business strategies and unreformed *Ossis* alike, though neither is unsympathetically treated. At a basic level, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* parodies the kind of east German nostalgia that *Alles Lüge* had anticipated. As with the virtual GDR that Kasulke assembles within the walls of the *Palast der Republik*, the water fountain that Lobek secretly adapts for his east German clientele -- the 'Atlantis', which features a model of the east German *Fernsehturm* rising to the tune of the GDR's national anthem, 'Auferstanden aus Ruinen' -- allows each teary-eyed owner to observe a symbolic resurrection of the east German state. Atlantis' success, evidence once again of the east Germans' ability to improvise, is Lobek's success. It signifies his financial independence from his wife, the state and the west German parent company. Lobek's market triumph revitalises him in other ways, too. He overcomes his sexual impotence, which is a

⁵⁸ See Jennifer A. Yoder, *From East Germans to Germans? The New Postcommunist Elites* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 136.

consequence of his low self-esteem and general indolence, and wins back his estranged wife, a plot development that echoes the *Trabi* sequel, if not the original book's grotesque ending.

Unlike the two Brussig adaptations, which both exploit and undermine *Ostalgie*, Timm's treatment of *Ostalgie* is not ambiguous. The film targets the regressive desires of the east Germans, who are mostly presented as unsophisticated plebeians in Berlin's high-rise estates, but also the commodification of their nostalgia.

Reconstructing the GDR

The box-office achievement of Haußmann's film was as nothing compared with the international success, some four years later, of Wolfgang Becker's film, *Good Bye, Lenin!*. For most critics, *Good Bye, Lenin!* counted as the unification film par excellence, even suggesting that the film went some way to burying the GDR. Few saw it as an exercise in nostalgia, or one that sought to sacrifice the GDR's more uncomfortable features for a relaxing trip down memory lane.⁵⁹ That Becker's film does engage with *Ostalgie* is undeniable. Like the Brussig adaptations, it views the GDR through the eyes of a teenage protagonist, something that connects the film with the biographies of East German adolescence that had become increasingly common.⁶⁰ *Good Bye, Lenin!* is not just a nostalgic account of life before 1989. A film that pines for the happy days of the GDR would, regardless of its trophy value to Germany's rather unexceptional film industry, hardly have gained the official support that it did. Like *Alles Lüge*, whose title would have been equally appropriate to Becker's film, *Good Bye, Lenin!* satirises the east Germans'

⁵⁹ The film did have its detractors, the most vocal of which was Peter Alexander Hussock, director of the same organisation that had accused Haußmann of defamation. It was, according to Hussock, 'empörend, dass sich mehr als eine Million so einen Film unkommentiert ansehen kann'. Hussock's was a lonely voice and drowned out under the vast praise that was bestowed on the film, at home and abroad. See Peter Alexander Hussock and Siegmund Faust, 'Pro & Contra. Verharmlost der Film "Good Bye, Lenin!" die DDR?', *Junge Freiheit*, 7.3.2003. Online at: <http://www.jf-archiv.de/archiv03/113yy07.htm> [Accessed 7.7.2005].

⁶⁰ Among the titles published around the same time of Becker's release were Claudia Rusch's *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2003), Susanne Fritsche's *Die Mauer ist gefallen. Eine kleine Geschichte der DDR* (München: Hanser, 2004), and Michael Tetzlaff's *Ostblöckchen* (Frankfurt am Main: Schöffling, 2004). As with the film's producers, the publishers were keen to distance their titles from an unreconstructed *Ostalgie* (whilst exploiting exactly the kind of imagery associated with the trend for the books' sleeves).

nostalgia for their pre-unification lives whilst simultaneously indulging that very nostalgia.

In contrast to the simulacrum of the GDR offered by Haußmann and by Peterson, *Good Bye, Lenin!* strives for a degree of authenticity that distinguishes it from these other films and connects it instead with Becker's earlier Berlin film, *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (1997), which had been much admired for its realism and which is subtly referenced in the later film. At heart, *Good Bye, Lenin!* is a tragic-comic family drama set in East Berlin during the *Wende*. It follows the attempt of Alex Kerner to convince his ailing mother, Christiane, a recovering coma patient whose collapse took place on the eve of the state's downfall, that the GDR is still extant, a charade that becomes increasingly complicated as the son, fearing that the truth will prove fatal to his mother, tries to explain away mounting discrepancies with assistance from friends, family and neighbours. Children are hired to sing old FDJ songs, television shows are recreated with amateur equipment, and discontinued East German groceries are frantically collected. Finally, even recent historical events are manipulated as Alex contrives to explain that the images his mother sees of people crossing the wall are West Germans escaping the FRG for the safety of the East.⁶¹ Like the films above, *Good Bye, Lenin!* engages with the construction of the east German past. However, the GDR that Alex is determined to recreate is not the recently deceased state but one that, in retrospect, he would have preferred, a position made clear in Alex's voiceover: 'die DDR, die ich für meine Mutter schuf, wurde immer mehr die DDR, die ich mir vielleicht gewünscht hätte'. This sentiment reminds the audience that the GDR Alex recreates is illusory, a safe reproduction as unreal as the *Sonnenallee* sets and the flat-pack GDR of *Helden wie Wir*, and that there was more to the GDR than the décor and comfort foods, more, perhaps, than the east Germans care to remember. Should this point be missed, it is repeated in another voiceover towards the end, shortly after his mother's death: 'das Land, das meine Mutter verließ, war ein Land, an das sie geglaubt hatte [...] Ein Land, das es in Wirklichkeit nie so gegeben hat'.

Good Bye, Lenin! is not a succession of melancholic utterances warning of the pitfalls of nostalgia. Becker's deft directorial hand works these issues into a rather tender portrait of a family that suffers several tragedies, beginning with the loss of a father and

⁶¹ A similar emigration had been envisaged by Reinhold Andert in his satire, *Rote Wende. Wie die Ossis die Wessis besiegten*, a mock historical account (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1994).

ending with the death of a mother. Though it offers a gentle critique of *Ostalgie*, it also recognises the reasons for the east Germans' nostalgia. The elderly neighbours who participate in Alex's increasingly complicated deception may do so out of respect for Christiane, but their collusion is also motivated by an understandable sense of loss, for the freedoms of the new republic are presented as the extravagances of youth and have less meaning for this generation than they do for Alex and his sister, Ariane. For the latter, the open border to the west offers an introduction to an unknown and exotic lifestyle, associated here with drugs, sex and fashion. Their wide-eyed view of the west distinguishes Becker's film from many other post-unification films, which, as previously demonstrated, seldom record the east Germans' post-1989 experience of the west in a positive light. Not just the west is the unknown and exotic location. The difficulties Ariane's western boyfriend has in playing his assigned role as *Ossi* in Alex's hoax underlines the otherness of the east and serves as a reminder that differences between the two cultures exist. Differences are not insurmountable and *Good Bye, Lenin!* is the first film since unification in which the union between east and west is given a symbolic reward: by the end of the film Ariane and her boyfriend are expecting a baby, while Alex's new Russian girlfriend suggests the possibility of a new ideology-free *Deutsch-sowjetische Freundschaft*.

Unlike *Sonnenallee*, Becker's film is not intended to resonate with the eastern audience in particular, and this may account for the film's international success. It largely avoids a partisan account of events, managing to appeal to various sides at once.⁶² It shows moderation in its depiction of the GDR past, paying reference to both the state's achievements -- in particular the Cosmonaut Sigmund Jähn's space launch -- and its iniquities (the Stasi, the VoPo).⁶³ This endorses east German pride and cautions against nostalgia's asymmetry. At the same time, *Good Bye, Lenin!* does not vilify the west.

⁶² A number of reviewers ironically noted that the most successful *Ostalgie*/unification film was a western production (the cast includes some actors from the east but the scriptwriter, director and lead actor are all from the west).

⁶³ The East Germans' outer space success, which preceded the FRG's explorations beyond the stratosphere by some five years, was a Cold War victory and was, as expected, downplayed in the west. After 1989, the drive to suppress the state's legacy involved a wholesale rejection of any east German achievements. The renaming of Jena's central square, which since 1978 had been known as 'Platz der Kosmonauten' (because of the town's association with Jähn's spaceflight) to 'Eichplatz', counts as such an example. Becker's film is a rare recognition of a pivotal event in East German history. See Hodgin, p. 36.

Though it sets its sights on the usual representatives of global capital (banks, *Coca Cola*), Becker's film is not a criticism of the west. Although *Good Bye, Lenin!* frequently touches on pertinent unification issues -- among them, currency reform and unemployment -- their brief inclusion hardly amounts to a strident critique of unification. Equally important to the film's success (in Germany at least) was the film's symbolic farewell to the GDR. Other films had chronicled the dying days of the GDR but these narratives were caught between a unloved past and an uncertain future, as exemplified in the final frames of Dziuba's film *Jana und Jan. Sonnenallee*'s repossession of the GDR past, meanwhile, was limited in its appeal. Its success was localised and it failed to make an impression on audiences beyond Germany. *Good Bye, Lenin!* goes so far as to allow the GDR a fond farewell, since a distinction is made between Christiane Kerner's principles and the distorted ideology that informed East German politics, therefore conceding that a *good* socialism, associated with a belief in true solidarity, kind deeds and neighbourliness, was ultimately suppressed in the GDR. The state to which Alex finally waves goodbye is, as he acknowledges, 'das Land, das in meiner Erinnerung immer mit meiner Mutter verbunden sein wird' and not the SED-state of unpopular memory.

Between *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie*

Good Bye, Lenin! naturally had its imitators; the success of Becker's film confirmed that *Ostalgie* had not exceeded its shelf-life, as had previously been predicted. The productions that sought to capitalise on the film's brand of nostalgia were, however, not feature films but television programmes, 'Ossi-Shows' such as *Meyer & Schulz - Die ultimative Ost-Show* on Sat1, *Die DDR Show* on RTL, the *Ostalgieshow* on ZDF and MDR's *Ein Kessel DDR*. Programme-makers may have offered alternative explanations for their show, variously claiming that they served some educational purpose or that they aimed to address unknown aspects of daily life in the GDR, but they were primarily interested in a new variation on the successful nostalgia shows of the period - a winning formula on television in Germany and abroad. The resulting programmes were mostly light-hearted retrospectives that failed to live up to these (unconvincing) declarations of intent. Seldom straying from anything but a narrative of GDR consumerism, with the east's poor quality (but in hindsight much cherished) goods the principal focus, they succeeded in attracting

considerable audiences, who regularly tuned in to watch east German celebrities reminisce about growing up in the GDR.⁶⁴ Cooke has suggested that, 'while the rationale for these shows is to normalize the GDR past, the underlying reason would seem to run in the opposite direction, namely to endow this past with exotic chic'.⁶⁵ The criticism that was aimed at the shows, for the critical reception certainly did not accord with the shows' ratings, tended to argue that the shows were part of a bathetic move to substitute a politically deterministic account of life in the GDR with one that verged on the comedic.⁶⁶ Maaz was one of several high-profile personalities to write disapprovingly of the shows, claiming that these portrayals of life in the east were neither accurate nor honest.⁶⁷

It is possible that the critical aversion to the programmes, together with the realisation that these television shows might finally exhaust the interest in *Ostalgie*, discouraged filmmakers from quickly issuing similar films, a reaction that runs counter to usual film industry behaviour. To date, only Carsten Fiebeler's *Kleinruppin Forever* (2004) can be seen as an attempt to capitalise on the success of Becker's film, though the producers were naturally keen to point out that the film had been conceived long before *Good Bye, Lenin!* (though Lichtenberg, had, in fact, written his treatment soon after the *Wende*).

Kleinruppin Forever synthesises the interest in the eighties that, by the turn of the century, had already begun to displace the seventies as the preferred retro fashion, the continued interest in the GDR and a newly expressed nostalgia for the west that had been established since the publication of Florian Illies' bestseller *Generation Golf*.⁶⁸ Offering a corrective to the east German nostalgia, these *Westalgie* texts, as they came to be known, proved popular and several were adapted for film. Of these, the most successful was

⁶⁴ See Cooke, p. 141.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶⁶ See Holger Witzel, 'Das Märchen von der Ostalgie. Die DDR-Welle im Fernsehen', *Der Stern*, No. 37/2003, 190-194. Among those hostile to the programmes was Christoph Dieckmann, who wrote a particularly arch review (2003).

⁶⁷ Hans-Joachim Maaz, 'Ich fürchte, wir kommen wieder nicht vor', *MDR-Online*, 1.9.2003. Online at: <http://www.mdr.de/kultur/896480.html> [Accessed 9.5.2005].

⁶⁸ Florian Illies, *Generation Golf* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2000). See Gerrit Bartels, 'Wie die Westalgie das Laufen lernt', *taz*, 4.9.2003. Online at: <http://www.taz.de/pt/2003/09/04/a0132.1/text> and Matthias Heine, 'Es war nicht alles schlecht', *Die Welt*, 1.7.2003. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2003/07/01/126863.html?prx=1> [Both accessed 9.2.2005]. Andrew Plowman discusses writers' nostalgia for the FRG in "'Westalgie'? Nostalgia for the 'Old' Federal Republic in recent German Prose", *Seminar*, 40, 3, 2004, 249-261.

Leander Haußmann's *Herr Lehmann* (2003), adapted from Sven Regener's milieu comedy set among West Berlin's counter culture.⁶⁹

In *Kleinruppin Forever*, audiences are once again presented with a scenario in which a protagonist is immersed in an unfamiliar environment to which he must quickly adapt if he is to survive. This was, by now, a tried and tested plot and had been used with increasing inventiveness since the earliest *Wendefilme*. It had been used recently in *Berlin is in Germany* (Martin's delayed confrontation with a strange new world) and *Good Bye, Lenin!* (Christiane's post-operative adjustment to a new Germany). Fiebler's film requires a greater suspension of belief: identical twins separated at birth and each brought up in the other state unexpectedly meet one another, when Tim, the western brother, visits the GDR on a school trip from Bremen. Knocked unconscious by Ronny, his brother, who assumes his identity and returns to the west in his place, the West German is forced to adjust to life behind the wall.

For the most part, *Kleinruppin Forever* reinforces the differences between the two states, relying on the clash between cultures that had been a mainstay since the earliest post-unification films, albeit with a west German experiencing the east. Though the film's premise hinges on a case of mistaken identities, the eastern twin's progress in the west is not taken into account. As a 'Popper', Fiebler's western protagonist appeals to both the contemporary fascination for one of the eighties' most iconic styles (ostentatious, conceited, the 'Popper' embodied the decade's financial immodesty and its political conservatism, thereby distinguishing it from the radical politics associated with the previous decade).⁷⁰ The film's early scenes establish Tim's 'Popper' credentials, focussing on his affluent social circle – moneyed teenagers dressed in the period's designer clothes, who play tennis and attend cocktail parties. The focus on tennis, which in the eighties enjoyed unprecedented and widespread popularity in the FRG following Boris Becker's success, is here associated with the affluent elite, a view that corresponds with the GDR authorities' view of the sport as a bourgeois pursuit that was undeserving of any

⁶⁹ The fact that the best of the films documenting the old West Germany was made by an east German director did not draw nearly as much attention as had the western provenance of *Good Bye, Lenin!*'s director. Other *Westalgie* films released that year include Hendrik Handloegten's adaptation of Frank Goosen's *Liegen lernen* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1999), and Benjamin Quabeck's *Verschwende deine Jugend* from Jürgen Teipel's novel of the same name (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

⁷⁰ On the re-emergence of the eighties in current fashion (including the Popper) see Jens Jessen, 'Verklemmt und zugeknöpft', *Die Zeit*, 41/2004. Online at: http://hermes.zeit.de/pdf/archiv/2004/41/Thatcher-Chic_41.pdf [Accessed 22.12.2005].

significant financial support.⁷¹ The portrait of the FRG as a prosperous, materialistic society largely confirms east German suspicions, old and new.

The depiction of West German society is more than a parody of the 'greedy eighties'. The image the young director presents echoes the post-unification stereotype of the west as a superficial society that values status and wealth. The east, by contrast, is a more authentic, if pitifully run-down society, though Fiebeler's film is not intended as a critique of the east's falsified economy. Denying that *Kleinruppin Forever* glorifies the east, the director did, however, confirm that the film is intended as a celebration of values considered to have been more manifest in the east (among them solidarity and friendship): 'darum geht's: zurück zu den alten Werten die doch sehr vernachlässigt werden'.⁷² Like *Sonnenallee*, Fiebeler's film is also intended to redress the imbalanced accounts of life in the east but also to emphasise the similarities between the two societies:

Die 80er im Osten und die 80er im Westen – das ist das Thema meines Films. Das bedeutete zwei verschiedene Welten in Deutschland, und doch hatte gerade die Jugend im Grunde die gleichen Probleme und Sorgen – wo will ich hin mit meinem Leben, die erste Liebe und wo läuft die nächste gute Party.⁷³

Fiebeler naturally endeavours to acknowledge the state's repressive nature in his portrait of life in the GDR. The Stasi, the VoPo, and the *Nationale Volksarmee* (NVA) are all present. However their representatives are not the formidable and ruthless figures of popular memory, but dim-witted and corrupt individuals unable to get the better of the local population, a depiction that is perhaps less improbable than it might at first seem, given that the Stasi were, as Catherine Epstein has argued, often 'surprisingly inefficient, ineffective, and counterproductive'.⁷⁴ Despite the state's obvious material shortcomings and the comic-insidious figures that appear throughout the film, the East German society that Fiebeler recreates is largely defined by strong bonds between young people and a general, if impassive, opposition to the state. While the state agents are immediately identifiable as such -- uniformed policemen and army officers; Stasi officers in leather

⁷¹ See Simone Windhoff, 'Der verpönte Sport - wie SED und Stasi das Tennis in der DDR drangsalierten', *Die Welt*, 14. 11.2002. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2002/11/14/456215.html> [Accessed 22.12.2005].

⁷² Interview with director. Online at: <http://www.makingofeuropa.net/makingclip.asp?documentID=379> (1171 kb) [Accessed 26.12.2005].

⁷³ *Kleinruppin Forever* Press Pack, p. 26.

⁷⁴ Catherine Epstein, 'The Stasi: New Research on the East German Ministry of State Security', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Spring 2004, 321-348, p. 323.

coats -- their narrative function is ultimately little different to that of the authority figures found in most teen nostalgia films: in keeping with the paradigm of the genre, they are depoliticised, represented as a nuisance to the local population rather than as a sinister threat.

More controversial than this tame depiction of those normally disreputable figures is the reverse migration that takes place in *Kleinruppin Forever*.⁷⁵ Having succeeded in returning to his home in the FRG, Tim recognises that it was in the GDR that he discovered true love, friendships based on common values and genuine affection. Surrendering his tennis career, his glittering social life and all his western possessions, he returns to the true *Heimat* of the east. Despite the restrictions of state socialism, the West German interloper is able to connect with an 'emotional community' in the east, one that the west lacks - then and now, according to the director.⁷⁶ In targeting the West German society of the eighties in particular, Fiebeler's film effectively reverses the western criticism of *Ostalgie*. In the same way that Peterson's film invokes east German nostalgia only to undermine it, the nostalgic look at a period regarded by West Germans as their last decade of prosperity, which Fiebeler's film initially promises, soon gives way to a version that aligns the economic success of the eighties' with moral vacuity and exposes a society that values neither affection nor solidarity.

Fiebeler's film did not live up to expectations. It received some favourable press (and won the special prize of 'Schreibtisch am Meer' at the little-known International Film Festival in Emden), but most critics found it clichéd and derivative. One reason might be its economically ill-advised decision to satirise a period of nostalgic significance to audiences in the west, who, unlike their eastern cousins, are offered no positive reference points. One might also ascribe the film's failure to the absence of irony, which, as I have already indicated, was a key ingredient in each of the *Ostalgie* films. Andreas Hahn's review in the former FDJ organ, *Junge Welt*, was sceptical about the producer's claim that the film's theme -- 'ein Zuhause zu finden' -- was universal, and objected to the reductive representations: 'Zuhause ist die entschleunigste und entpolitisierte

⁷⁵Emigration was overwhelmingly a one-way affair - and a fraught one at that. The GDR authorities arrested as many as two thousand people a year for attempting to flee the state. See <http://www.bpb.de/themen/P2F402,2,0,Glossar.html#art2> [Accessed 19.12.2005]. There are other narratives in which those who have escaped the GDR finally choose to return -- *Der Boss aus dem Westen*, or F.C. Delius's novel, *Der Spaziergang von Rostock nach Syrakus* (Reinbek, Rowohlt-Verlag, 1995) -- but the important difference is that the protagonists in each case are east German.

⁷⁶ Michel Maffesoli, cited in Gerard Delanty, *Community* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 139

(“freundliche”) DDR-Dorfsgemeinschaft im Gegensatz zur “entfremdeten”, urbanen Pop-Gaga-Welt des Westens’.⁷⁷ The acerbity of Hahn’s tone is revealing, given that much the same could have been said of those other films that envisage the east as a cosy community attempting to preserve some autonomy against the assimilationist tendencies of (globalised) western capital. This image, as we have seen, has been a mainstay of many post-unification films, particularly those released soon after the *Wende*. But where those films offered refuge in a depoliticised *Heimat*, Fiebeler’s situates his narrative specifically in the GDR of the eighties (a decade not generally considered to have been one of the GDR’s happiest, though perhaps fondly remembered by the young east German director).⁷⁸

It is interesting also to consider Fiebeler’s film in light of the success enjoyed by the previous films. Despite the superficial similarity to the other *Ostalgie* comedies -- the focus on teenagers, pop soundtrack, retro-appeal, even a stylish website that resembled those of *Sonnenallee* and *Good Bye, Lenin!* -- the film attracted only 122.382 viewers.⁷⁹ One explanation for the film’s disappointing box-office return may be a degree of *Ostalgie* fatigue. Fashions come and go and even the enthusiasm for the East German past can only be sustained for so long. Yet there is no evidence at present that the market interest in the GDR has waned. Online *Ossi* shops continue to sell original east German goods and anyone visiting the eastern districts of Berlin will notice that GDR icons are still very much in evidence. Retro t-shirts bearing eastern brands (*Interflug*, *Schwalbe*) or logos and phrases resurrected for a generation too young to remember their original context (‘Meine Heimat DDR’, ‘Held der Arbeit’, ‘Aktivist der 1. Stunde’), to the authentic and much prized home furnishings, are not hard to find.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Andreas Hahn, ‘Ins Gehege’, *Junge Welt*, 9.9.2004. Online at: <http://www.jungewelt.de/2004/09-09/021.php> [Accessed 23.12.2005]. See also Mark Stöhr’s review in *Schnitt*. Online at: http://www.schnitt.de/filme/artikel/kleinruppin_forever.shtml [both Accessed 22.12.2005].

⁷⁸ Lest one should think Fiebeler an east German revisionist, it is important to note that east Germans who are unable to separate themselves from their past come in for some criticism in *Die Datsche* (2003), his previous (graduation) film, a ‘psychothriller’, in which a couple are held hostage in their simple holiday home.

⁷⁹ Statistics from *Filmförderungsanstalt*. *FFA-info*, No. 2, 26.8.2005. Online at: http://www.filmfoerderungsanstalt.de/downloads/publikationen/ffa_intern/FFA_info_2_2005.pdf, p. 10 [Accessed 26.12.2005]. Of these websites, only those for *Sonnenallee* and *Good Bye, Lenin!*, which counted as the period’s two most successful films, are still maintained. See <http://www.sonnenallee.de/> and <http://www.good-bye-lenin.de>

⁸⁰ Of course, these t-shirts are not, strictly speaking, retro, since no such t-shirts existed in the GDR. They are evidence of a postmodern design principle that jumbles the new with the authentic - original East German mottos and symbols are re-contextualised, divorced from their political and historical origins and

A more reasonable explanation of the film's failure lies in its portrayal of the two German states. Despite the director's claim that the film uses 'Überhöhung und Ironie als Stilmittel [...], um das Absurde vieler Situationen zu zeigen', it lacks the ironic, self-reflexive distance that informs some of the other films discussed in this chapter.⁸¹ Only the lyrics to the film's title track (a song taken from Claude Pinoteau's 1980 coming-of-age film, *La Boum*) could be regarded as ironic: 'dreams are my reality/a wondrous world where I like to be/illusions are a common thing/I try to live in dreams although it's only fantasy'.⁸² This ironic touch, if indeed it is intended as such, risks being missed completely since the film offers no other indicators or signals that prompt such inference - and, not least, because the lyrics are in English.⁸³ *Kleinruppin Forever* does not imply that its twisting of history is ironically intended, or foreground its own artificiality as do the Brussig adaptations. Indeed, it can be said of each of the previous films that they emphasise the subjective construction of the past. In *Sonnenallee*, it is evident in both the film's appearance, which offers a conscious mock-up of the GDR, and in the narrative. When the hero sets about writing a volume of backdated diaries with which he hopes to convince a girl of his subversive credentials, Brussig joins other writers in satirising those east Germans who manipulated their past, a theme that is also raised in *Helden wie Wir*.⁸⁴ Becker's film, too, acknowledges the manipulation involved in restaging the past; Christiane's world is nothing more than a reproduction GDR - stage-managed in much the same way that Schier's protagonist supervises his theme park in *Alles Lüge* and Lobek profits from the 'Verkitschung' of the GDR.

given a new life as design statements. Authentic or not, we might agree with Lowenthal's point that 'imitations, fakes, and new works inspired by earlier prototypes extend and further alter the aura of antiquity. The scarcity of originals spurs the making of replicas that at least echo the old'. He may be discussing older civilisations but the idea is the same. See Lowenthal (1985), p. xxiii.

⁸¹ *Kleinruppin Forever* Press Pack, p. 28.

⁸² 'Reality' performed by Eskobar (written by Jeff Jordan /Vladimir Cosma and originally performed by Richard Sanderson).

⁸³ Admittedly, irony operates at different levels and requires different degrees of decoding. Other post-unification films have used far more elaborate structures with which to address a point. In *Tolle Lage*, Sören Voigt introduces a character called Michi Fanselow, a former GDR 'Schlagersänger' whose career has hit rock bottom, forcing him to tour east German campsites. Many reviewers (and presumably audience members) failed to recognise that the character was invented but factualised by the director, who acknowledged 'Michi Fanselow' in the credits). *Tolle Lage* thus makes a satirical point about the unreliability of memory (and the quality of reviewers' research). The joke went so far as to record Michi's 'original' hit, 'Mauerblümchen', and an accompanying video for 'die Schlagerlegende aus dem Osten'.

⁸⁴ See Cooke, p. 118. Also Taberner, p. 37.

Conclusion: 'Ein Land, das es in Wirklichkeit nie so gegeben hat'?

In his exhaustive survey of post-unification literature, Frank Thomas Grub wonders whether *Ostalgie* texts rely so heavily on contemporary readers' recognition of the products of the east's former consumer culture that the narratives will become meaningless to future generations. 'Wer', he asks, 'wird in 20 Jahren die erwähnten Produkte noch kennen bzw. mit positiven Kindheits- und Jugenderinnerungen verbinden?'⁸⁵ The question is apposite; yet, as Patricia Hogwood has observed, *Ostalgie* (and by implication its referents) may not fade as quickly as some have suggested. If the inequitable situation in east Germany persists -- and recent social policy reforms such as 'Harz IV', which led to sizeable demonstrations in the east, where these belt-tightening measures would be most keenly felt -- the impulse behind *Ostalgie* might not die out with the postwar generation but 'pass on to the post-unification generation of east Germans, and form the basis of a lasting cultural myth'.⁸⁶

This chapter has sought to separate certain narratives from the uncritical nostalgia that might result in such myth making, arguing that although they appear to promote a nostalgic reading of the past, in truth they problematise any sentimental recollection. While some of the films do legitimise the east Germans' right to reminisce, they satirise the related commodification of memory, targeting both proponents and consumers. That Christiane Kerner in *Good Bye, Lenin!* is ultimately unable to identify the ersatz gherkins that Alex has transferred to an original *Spreewaldgurken* jar is just one example in which the films gently highlight *Ostalgie*'s hollowness. Of the (so-called) *Ostalgie* films discussed, two were among the most successful German productions of the post-unification period. While *Sonnenallee* was considered (even accused) by several critics to advance an east German identity that was rooted in a falsely conceptualised past -- erroneous though this assessment was -- the other, *Good Bye, Lenin!*, appeared to finally bury both the GDR and the hatchet between east and west.⁸⁷ Only *Kleinruppin Forever*, the last of the films made in this period, can be said to promulgate an account of the GDR

⁸⁵ Grub, p. 569.

⁸⁶ Patricia Hogwood, 'Identity in the Former GDR: Expressions of 'Ostalgia' and 'Ossi' Pride in United Germany', in *Globalization and National Identities. Crisis or Opportunity?*, ed. by Paul Kennedy and Catherine J. Danks (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 64-79, p. 78.

⁸⁷ See Gunnar Decker, 'Vielfalt statt Einfalt', *Neues Deutschland*, 8.9.2003 [Accessed 2.10.2003].

according to which life in the east was not only better than post-unification discourse often allows but actually preferable to life in the west, a claim that is anchored in a celebration of apparently innate eastern values.

Conclusion

The strongest sense of community is [...] likely to come from those groups who find the premises of their collective existence threatened, and who construct out of this a community of identity which provides a strong sense of resistance and empowerment. Seeming unable to control the social relations in which they find themselves, people shrink the world to the size of their communities, and act politically on that basis. The result, too often, is an obsessive particularism as a way of embracing or coping with contingency. And as critics of community have pointed out, social pluralism and the proliferation of associations do not necessarily mean variety for men and women personally: embeddedness means people can get stuck.¹

Although the films considered during the course of this study address a broad range of issues and represent dissimilar approaches to screening the east, they coincide in their representation of the east Germans as a separate community. From *Go, Trabi, Go* to *Goodbye, Lenin!*, post-unification narratives emphasise the continued differences between east and west. Even those films that allow for a degree of reconciliation or mutual understanding do so while underlining the cultural distinctiveness of the two communities (though, in truth, the west barely features in any meaningful way). While this was to be expected in the films that immediately followed unification, it is perhaps surprising that, a decade and a half later, the east Germans continued to be portrayed as a community apart. The purpose of this study was to trace how the development of the east Germans' separate identity came about, as indicated in film.

In Chapter 1, I offered a summary of the attempts made by the authorities in the two German states to create separate national identities. Invoking the other Germany was, as I indicated, crucial to each state's image of itself and reflected an adversarial process of self-definition (of the self against the other) that was anchored in the politics of the Cold War. While a common national culture survived the opposing ideologies, the disintegration of the East German state did not collapse all differences between the Germans. Forty years of education, of economic and political separation, of cultural and ideological influence that stemmed from opposing ends of the political spectrum could not be undone with the simple dismantling of the wall. The differences that remained were no longer rooted in ideology, and seemed sometimes only trivial. Yet seemingly insignificant differences between ostensibly similar cultures can, as Freud noted, be magnified out of all proportion and problematise relationships between neighbours.² It had been expected that unification would re-

¹ Weeks (2000), p. 182.

² Freud terms this the 'Narzißmus der kleinen Differenzen' and discusses it with regard to anti-Semitism. Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unbehagen in der Kultur', in *Fragen der Gesellschaft. Ursprünge der Religion. Studienausgabe Bd. 9* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1974), 193-270, p. 243.

establish a German cultural dialogue that had survived the states' opposing ideologies; instead, new distinguishing features have emerged, of which the economic disparity between east and west is perhaps the most significant. Similarly, divergent political and cultural values, which appear to confirm that a separate consciousness had developed in the GDR, even if the final product was not true to the original SED design, meant that the adjectival designation 'east' or 'west' is not simply a reference to geographical origin but carries with it certain assumptions about political and cultural orientation that have not been resolved in the period since unification.

In Chapter 2, I considered how *Heimat*, once vilified by the GDR authorities because of its conservative associations, returned as a foundation for building new post-communist communities. In the films of the early nineties, the *Heimat* community offers a place of refuge, a shelter where friendship and common values bind the east Germans. The return of community to political discourse was by no means unique to the former GDR. Gerard Delanty has suggested that 'community was the ideology of the 1990s', and that it assumed a new potency in the political campaigns of that decade.³ Its proponents (Delanty mentions Bill Clinton and Tony Blair) found it useful as a means of countering the individualism favoured by their predecessors -- the hallmark of the selfish 1980s -- and the social policies of New Labour's 'Third Way' and Gerhard Schröder's 'neue Mitte' are clearly embedded in community discourse.⁴ The new commitment to community championed by Blair, Schröder, and others was not an appeal to an older way of living, a return to tradition, even if the new discourse of community -- 'a response to the failure of society to provide a basis for the three core components of community: solidarity, trust and autonomy' -- implicitly acknowledged the loss of certain values associated with the past.⁵ Community seen in these terms obviously has some resonance for the east Germans. Certainly, a parochial vision of community, which is central to the films' depiction of post-GDR *Heimat*, has been recognised by, among others, the PDS.⁶ In re-connecting with the idea of community, east Germans are attempting to safeguard factors that are fundamental to their group identity. In the films, the appeal to community *does* herald

³ Gerard Delanty, *Modernity and Postmodernity. Knowledge, Power and the Self* (London: Sage, 2000), p. 120.

⁴ Numerous articles examine the political value of community discourse in Britain. See Isabelle Fremeaux, 'New Labour's appropriation of the concept of community: a critique', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 3, July 2005, 265-274.

⁵ Delanty, p. 128

⁶ See, for example, Beatrice Harper, who notes that the PDS members 'hold traditional festivals of beer and sausages' as a way of integrating people within localised communities. 'Why does the PDS reach the parts that Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Cannot?', in *The Party of Democratic Socialism in Germany. Modern Post-Communism or Nostalgic Populism?* German Monitor, ed. by Peter Barker (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1994), 94-108, p. 84.

a return to old traditions, since community living is repeatedly linked to a particularly bucolic vision of life, one that resists modernity entirely.

Paradoxically, this post-GDR *Heimat*, which is as anachronistic as it is invented, is seen to provide an authentic alternative to the impersonal, superficial society beyond, a distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (intimate, congenial) and *Gesellschaft* (impersonal, artificial) first theorised by Tönnies and which has been a mainstay of *Heimat* discourse.⁷ As my account of *Heimat* in the GDR showed, the restored *Heimat* had no precedent in the GDR, let alone in East German filmmaking, but is the result of grafting a specifically west German film aesthetic onto an east German theme. This allows different viewers different means of identifying with the films. Those in the west may respond positively to a visual style that facilitates some connection to their own past; at the same time, it allows east Germans a return to a depoliticised *Heimat* of the kind that had been anathema to the East German authorities.

Though a sentimental conception of community is not intrinsically east German, it is, in the post-unification period, presented as such. This allows east Germans to imagine themselves as a more wholesome counterpart to their western neighbours. It also allows west German audiences the possibility to see the east as a quaintly unsophisticated region which, freed from the tyranny of state socialism, has reverted to a romantic vision of Germany embedded in the traditional view of *Heimat*, albeit it one from which they are necessarily excluded. Where these films make use of the east German countryside as a symbolic site of imagined harmony, a romanticised vision of the rural east in which community offers a refuge from western materialism and its attendant dangers, the films discussed in the third and fourth chapters offer a corrective to this idealised vision. With the focus on geographic, cultural, and social alienation, these critical narratives reject the fantasy communities of nostalgia that are revived in the post-unification *Heimatfilm*. The community that is represented in these films no longer provides any such shelter and the 'vocabulary of values' that traditionally binds communities has ceased to provide any meaning.⁸ There are, nonetheless, traces of the original *Heimat* genre, particularly in the arrival of strangers in small, local environments and the perceived threat to the local community. The contact between those inside the community and those from without does not lead to any resolution as it does in the simple east/west encounters, but frequently provides the catalyst for extreme (and extremist) reactions.

⁷ See Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991). It is worth noting that the west's encroachment into the traditional homeland, the symbolic site of the nation, was also a theme in post-communist Russian films. See Susan Larsen, 'In Search of an Audience: the New Russian Cinema of Reconciliation', in Barker (1999), 193-216, p. 207.

⁸ Weeks (2000), p. 182.

These films seek to dissociate the eastern locality from any post-unification idea of a natural idyll; they refuse to facilitate a return to the mythical territories imagined in the *Heimatfilme*. The occasional documentary tone found in these films distinguishes them from the contrived and sentimental *Heimat* imagined in other films. Focussing on the region's despoiled surroundings, its ruins, and the disintegration of community, the films invariably communicate a sense of loss. This loss is not nostalgia for an irretrievable past but for the utopian aspirations associated with the GDR rather than the empty promises of the SED state. Just as the idyllic surroundings captured in *Der Brocken* and *Das war der wilde Osten* are encoded and offered as a physical representation of its inhabitants' psychological and social well-being, the neglected eastern geography in other films reflects the communities' social and psychological decline.

In contrast to the *Heimat* iconography, which transcends regional borders and ignores the geopolitical details of the recent past, the films that focus on the east as a landscape of loss acknowledge the local environment as a critical space of inquiry. Concentrating on the region's myriad difficulties, they underline the east as a territory that will not easily be incorporated within the newly expanded national imaginary. Equally, the films deny any official historicised memory of the GDR, rejecting both the west's post-unification account and the SED state's self-depiction. In choosing images constitutive of the east's economic collapse, which cannot be entirely attributed to the west's administration, and characters whose politics and behaviour contradict the east's core socialist values (internationalist, anti-fascist, progressive), they underline the failure of the GDR national project. The films also remain sceptical as to an undifferentiated, unified German society. The protagonists remain 'extracommunitari', to borrow Morley's and Robins' phrase, not just from the Berlin Republic but also from their local community.⁹ With the GDR *Heimat* gone, and their position within the wider German community not (yet) established, they remain disconnected from both the past and from the present. Placing particular emphasis on the eastern geography, these films represent the east not as a lost *Heimat* but as a ruined *Heimat*.

Few of these films are able to offer a positive resolution. Unlike the celebratory mood that characterises the endings in the *Wende* comedies, the east is given no glimmer of hope for a better future. In many of the films the final image is one of flames. Fire provides a common metaphor, for as various buildings burn, so, too, do the hopes for a better future. In *Herzprung*, the local yobs set fire to the roadside café in which the 'Fremder' has been working. Fire is the result of incendiary hostilities in several other films, including *Endstation: Tanke* in which the protagonists are forced to

⁹ Morley and Robins, p. 6.

escape their roadside sanctuary when it is set alight by a drunken mob. The drunken righteousness and inebriated courage of the mob figures again in *Tolle Lage*, where angry east German campers finally round on the site's west German owner, setting fire to the camp shop - an impotent act as it turns out, since he has just sold the premises. In other films, characters are consumed by fire in road accidents (*Landschaft mit Dornen* and *Vergiss Amerika*), while Simon's film concludes with its protagonists dancing around his blazing shelter. The death of the protagonist is, in fact, not an unusual ending. *Herzprung*, *Die Vergebung*, *Bis zum Horizont und weiter*, *Wege in die Nacht* and *Schultze gets the Blues* are among those that end in a violent, tragic fashion. Those films that do not close with an image of fire or death are no more upbeat. Final scenes typically emphasise the uncertain future that the east Germans face: in films such as *Ostkreuz*, *Asphaltflimmern*, *Stilles Land*, and *Neben der Zeit*, characters are left wondering, or waiting for something, or seen heading off into the distance, having succeeded only in escaping their *Heimat*. The motivation behind this desire to escape varies slightly and the characters react differently to their circumstances, but boredom, unemployment and the deterioration of the community typically account for the chronic provincial pessimism for which escape appears to be the only cure.

Pessimism is not, of course, a condition that affects only those habitués of the eastern provinces. City residents are, according to several urban narratives set in and around east Berlin, likewise lacking in confidence and isolated from those around them. Disorientated by the changes in their physical and social environment, the figures in the Berlin films looked at in Chapter 5 struggle to adjust to life after the GDR, and inevitably seek refuge in their memories of the past, memories that focus not on old-fashioned and ahistorical notions of community as in the *Heimatfilme*, but on the security and social order associated specifically with the GDR. The protagonists' attempts to impose the order that they associate with the life before 1989 only worsens their situation, and the films count as a warning against such recourse to the past, while acknowledging the reasons for the characters' retrospection. Conversely, retrospection of a rather different kind has been central to the most significant trend in the development of a post-communist identity. Faced with the possible erasure of their past, the east Germans took to reconstructing the past that they preferred to remember, a process that Foucault, in a discussion about post-war French films, called a 're-programming of popular memory'.¹⁰ The version of the GDR that they present is a backwards

¹⁰ Michael Foucault, 'Film and Memory. An Interview with Michael Foucault', *Radical Philosophy*, No. 11, 1975, 24-29, p. 25. Foucault suggests that people are subjected to versions of their past that they are encouraged to believe. My point is that the east Germans themselves indulge this false account of the GDR by way of balancing the 'official' history of the GDR as Stasi-state.

projection of the past the east Germans wish they had experienced rather than a realistic re-enactment of those times, as the narrator of *Good Bye, Lenin!* makes clear. Elsewhere in Chapter 6, I argued that *Ostalgie* blocks complete cultural assimilation as a means of guarding the east Germans' memory and identity. It strives to promote a collective memory that necessarily denies the reconstructed history imposed by the outsiders (i.e. the west) and subdues or ignores any competing or alternative voices within - the foreigners who lived in the GDR, for example, are not generally involved or invited to participate in the retrogressive celebration of the East German yesteryear. The importance of *Ostalgie* lies in its potential to celebrate and therefore reinforce an east German distinctiveness. *Ostalgie* is significant for what it does not celebrate as much as what it does. It is not the GDR's unpalatable features that are acknowledged, but the inconspicuous, everyday items and lives. Possessing some totemic values for the east Germans and what Brussig has called the 'Wiedersehensfreude mit dem Inventar, mit dem man aufgewachsen ist', the GDR products that were on view in the *Ostalgie* films seem to gratify the east Germans' nostalgic tastes, even if the films were satirising such retrogressive yearning (and sometimes they were, as I suggested, doing both).¹¹ It is ironic that *Ostalgie* and the related commodification of GDR culture, which gave fresh impetus to a new eastern identity, may also have enabled west Germans to participate in the celebration of the East German past, which in turn might facilitate a more nuanced understanding of their eastern compatriots even if it does not collapse the barriers between the two communities.

Towards Normalisation?

The interpretation of the GDR past is obviously not the only point of contention between the populations east and west of the former border. The controversial problems of the present suggest that the future may prove equally problematic. Given that the eastern *Länder* remain Germany's poor region, and that the Federal Republic's struggling economy, seen by many as a consequence of financing the east, has put an end to many west Germans' sympathy for their eastern neighbours, the division between the two is likely to persist. At the same time, the interest in the GDR shows no immediate signs of abating and the fascination for the state's uglier aspects will doubtless prolong suspicions about the east Germans. Filmmakers continue to probe issues related to the former state. Films such as *Hundsköpfe* (Karsten Laske, 2001), *Drei Stern Rot* (Olaf Kaiser, 2002), *NVA* (Leander Haußmann, 2005), and *Das Leben der Anderen* (Florian Henckel-Donnersmarck, 2006) suggest that

¹¹ In Gunske and Poser.

the curiosity about certain subjects -- the Stasi, the border patrols, the East German military -- from which many east Germans have tried to distance themselves has continued. These narratives do, however, depart from the one-dimensional portrayals of the GDR that typified the early post-mortem of the SED-state, especially Haußmann's film (co-written with Brussig), which again offers an irreverent account of GDR, centring this time on conscript life in the East German army shortly before unification.¹²

But a growing number of films reveal the tendency towards normalised portraits of the east, a trend that has also been recognised in contemporary literature.¹³ In the years since unification, several films set in the east played down the crude references to the GDR and avoided well-worn post-unification issues. This was not, I would suggest, driven by a desire to have done with the GDR, to overlook or negate the crimes of the SED-state, but rather a means of addressing issues in contemporary Germany without needing to invoke the overused and exaggerated features - an 'attempt to get away from the extremes', as Boym says.¹⁴ Few of the films made in the first decade following unification provided anything like a normal representation of the east, that is one that steered clear of stereotypes or of obvious unification issues, but there were exceptions. *Heidi M.* (2001), Michael Schier's much-admired follow up to *Ostkreuz*, for example, offered an intimate city portrait of a woman in her forties in a touching melodrama that avoided contextualising the east German experience in terms of the GDR and unification.

By far the most interesting (and critically acclaimed) representations of contemporary eastern Germany are those films made by Andreas Dresen, who has proved to be one of the industry's most versatile directors, working successfully in a number of formats, from documentaries to television and feature films. More than any other director, Dresen has applied himself to the task of narrating life in the east in films that do not have recourse to the past and which consciously avoid the topoi of post-unification film - the provincial simpletons and brooding loners, the trite unification issues are

¹² The reaction to Haußmann's film has not been enthusiastic. See for example, Christiane Peitz, who concludes 'dem DDR-Märchenonkel ist die erzählerische Kraft ausgegangen'. In 'Sonnenallee, Schattenarmee', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29.09.2005. Online at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/index.asp?ran=on&url=http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/29.09.2005/2059376.asp> [Accessed 3.1.2006]. Haußmann has defended charges that *NVA* makes light of the East German army, arguing that it was intended to normalise life in the GDR by focussing on the tedium of conscript life. See Kerstin Decker, 'Rote Seelen', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29.09.2005. Online at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/archiv/29.09.2005/2084849.asp> [Accessed 3.1.2006]. Documentary films continue to explore aspects of the *Stasi*-state; those broadcast on television tend to be more sensationalist than those, such as *Jeder Schweigt von etwas Anderem* (Marc Bauder, Dörte Franke, 2006), which are also screened at festivals and have a (limited) cinema distribution.

¹³ See Taberner, p. 54.

¹⁴ Boym, p. 216. Boym is referring to post-war discourse but her point is applicable to post-communist dialogue.

all noticeably absent in his films.¹⁵ Instead, his films offer realistic, often affecting portraits of everyday east Germans, young and old. Since unification, his films have explored life in both the provinces and in Berlin, from *Halbe Treppe*, which follows the lives of a group of friends living in Frankfurt am Oder whose affairs threaten their relationships, and the raw portrait of life in Rostock as seen through the eyes of a woman police officer in *Die Polizistin* (2000), to the Berlin films, *Willenbrock* (2004), an adaptation of Christoph Hein's novel, and *Sommer vorm Balkon* (2005).

Dresen's normalising approach is now observable in other recent representations of life in the east, particularly in those films by young directors. While the attention paid to the SED-state has not yet declined, the obvious markers of 'easterness' are no longer a pre-requisite for east German stories. Nor do these filmmakers seek to include the 'typical' east German, whether the underdog and everyman figures played by Wolfgang Stumph, or the harried characters often played by Michael Gwisdeck. Since most of these normalised narratives centre on young east Germans, it follows that former DEFA actors are increasingly absent from such portraits, too.¹⁶ Berlin features in many of these films, offering a location for a series of edgy city portraits as in Sören Voigt's *Identity Kills* (2003), Vanessa Jopp's *Komm näher* (2005) and Detlev Buck's *Knallhart* (2006). Most of these narratives -- one can also include Martin Gypkens's *Wir* (2003) and Robert Thalheim's *Netto* (2004) -- follow the experiences of (east) Berlin's youth, the first post-GDR generation, and do not reference the East German past or place the lives depicted in the context of unification, but present universal stories.¹⁷

The focus on young people in contemporary east Germany extends also to those films set in the provinces. For the first time in post-unification film, these narratives reflect on Germany's eastern borders -- usually with Poland -- and have begun to consider the experiences of non-Germans at the eastern border. Non-Germans seldom featured in those films discussed above. This was surprising given the substantial migration that took place after the borders between east and west were opened and the large numbers of new arrivals from the former Eastern Bloc and beyond. The appearance of non-Germans generally fulfilled a narrative function, in which their 'otherness' set off a chain of calamitous events that exposed the east German community as one hostile to outsiders,

¹⁵ To date, the director has only made one film about the GDR. His television film, *Raus aus der Haut* (1997), offered a view of growing up in the East that neither glorified nor vilified the GDR but managed to be both sentimental and critical.

¹⁶ Dresen, however, has used the same actors (including Thorsten Merten, Axel Prah, and Gabriela Maria Schmeide) in a number of films, though these are not usually typecast.

¹⁷ Films featuring central characters old enough to have had some experience of the GDR are much less common, though the characters in *Sehnsucht* (Valeska Grisebach, 2006) and *Jena Paradies* (Marco Mittelstaedt, 2004) are old enough to remember life in the East.

however innocent they might be (as in *Endstation: Tanke* and *Herzsprung*, for example). Outsiders, typically eastern Europeans, briefly figured in other films where they were problematically linked to criminal activities (car thieves in *Vergiss Amerika* and *Asphaltflimmern*, pornography in *Berlin is in Germany*, the mafia in *Neben der Zeit*), an example of ‘othering the immigrant’ that had become increasingly common in the decade after unification.¹⁸ But recent films such as *Klassenfahrt* (Henner Wickler, 2002), *Lichter* (Hans-Christian Schmid, 2003), and *Das Lächeln der Tiefseefische* (Till Endemann, 2005) offer a more nuanced representation of Germany’s eastern neighbours, who assume a more central role than was previously the case.¹⁹ It is too early to say whether interest in Germany’s newer arrivals will continue, though the acclaim that some of these films have received will give directors and producers cause to exploit what seems like a good thing. Films that reflect the experiences of non-native Germans could enhance Germany’s multicultural profile and give weight to a vision of a culturally heterogeneous society, which recognises and celebrates pluralism. But it might also be that the emergence of a new ‘other’ arriving from the east once again (whether Ukrainian refugees, Polish smugglers, or Russian criminals) will challenge the east Germans’ eastern identity (in terms of their supposed geographical and cultural distinctiveness) and indirectly confirm their ‘Germanness’, as the Germans recognise their similarities against a new eastern community.

¹⁸Anna Triandafyllidou, *Immigrants and National Identity in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 76. See also Willfried Spohn, ‘European east-west integration, nation-building and national identities: the reconstruction of German-Polish identities’, in *National Identities and Migration: Changes in Boundary Constructions between Western and Eastern Europe*, ed. by Willfried Spohn and Anna Triandafyllidou (London: Routledge, 2003), 123-144, p. 124. According to Spohn’s account, the good relationship between German and Poland will prevent this disparity between Germany and its eastern neighbour from becoming too divisive. That said, he does concede that the Germans’ ‘self-images of a remoralised, economic and political model for Europe revitalise the traditional counter-image of Poland as a rather economically backward, politically still unstable, and culturally unenlightened society’. pp. 136-7.

¹⁹Edgar Reitz, meanwhile, has considered the ambivalent reception offered to east Germans and renaturalised Germans from eastern Europe arriving in the provincial west in the final series of his television epic, *Heimat 3* (2005).

Filmography

alaska.de (Esther Gronenborn, 2001)
Alle der Kosmonauten (Susann Reck, 1998)
Allemagne Neuf Zero (Jean-Luc Godard, 1991) Doc.
Alles auf Zucker! (Dani Levy, 2005)
'Allo 'Allo (Robin Carr and others, 1984-1992) TVS
Als Unku Edes Freundin war... (Helmut Dziuba 1980)
Alte Lied, Das (Ula Stöckl, 1991)
Andechser Gefühl, Das (Herbert Achternbusch, 1974)
Apfelbäume (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1992)
Architekten, Die (Peter Kahane, 1990)
Asphalt (Joe May, 1929)
Aus meiner Kindheit (Bernhard Stephan, 1975)
Badlands (Terence Malick, 1974)
Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1965)
Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)
Befreite Zone (Norbert Baumgarten, 2002)
Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser (Gerhard Klein, 1957)
Berlin Alexanderplatz (Piel Jutzi, 1930)
Berlin Babylon (Hubertus Siegert, 2001)
Berlin Harlem (Lothar Lambert, 1974)
Berlin is in Germany (Hannes Stöhr, 2001)
Berlin um die Ecke (Gerhard Klein, 1965)
Berlin. Die Sinfonie der Grossstadt (Walter Ruttmann, 1927)
Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt (Thomas Schadt, 2002)
Besten Jahre, Die (Günther Rucker, 1965)
Bewegte Mann, Der (Sönke Wortmann, 1994)
Bicycle Thieves, The (Vittorio De Sica, 1948)
Big Lift, The (George Seaton, 1950)
Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet (Heiner Carow, 1977-78)
Bis zum Horizont und weiter (Peter Kahane, 1999)
Blaue Wunder, Das (Peter Kahane, 2004) TVM
Blaue, Der (Lienhard Wawrzyn, 1993)
Bonnie and Clyde (Arthur Penn, 1967)
Boum, La (Claude Pinoteau, 1980)
Brocken, Der (Vadim Glowna, 1993)
Buntkarierten, Die (Kurt Maetzig, 1949)
Brücke, Die (Artur Poehl, 1949)
Bürgschaft für ein Jahr (Hermann Zschosche, 1982)
Burning Life (Peter Welz, 1994)
Camper, Die (Peter Lichtfeld, 1996-2005) TVS
Christiane F. – Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo (Ulrich Edel, 1981)
Coming Out (Heiner Carow, 1989)
Cosima's Lexikon (Peter Kahane, 1991)
Countdown (Ulrike Ottinger, 1991) Doc.

Daheim sterben die Leut (Klaus Gietinger, 1986)
Datsche, Die (Carsten Fiebeler, 2001)
Denk bloß nicht, ich heule (Frank Vogel, 1965)
Drei Stern Rot (Olaf Kaiser, 2002)
Ein April hat 30 Tage (Günther Scholz, 1979)
Einmal ist Keinmal (Konrad Wolf, 1955)
Endstation: Tanke (Nathalie Steinbart, 2001)
Engelchen (Helke Misselwitz, 1996)
Erinnerung an eine Landschaft (Kurt Tetzlaff, 1983) Doc.
Erst die Arbeit und dann? (Detlev Buck, 1985)
Ewiger Wald (Hans Springer, Rolf von Sonjevski-Jamrowski, 1936) Doc.
Familie Benthin (Slatan Dudow, Kurt Maetzig and Richard Groschopp, 1950)
Fernes Land Pa-isch (Rainer Simon, 1993; released 2000)
Flieger, Der (Erwin Keusch, 1986)
Ganovenehre (Wolfgang Staudte, 1965-6)
Ganovenehre. Ein Film aus der Berliner Unterwelt (Richard Oswald, 1932)
Germany Year Zero (Roberto Rossellini, 1946)
Go, Trabi, Go (Peter Timm, 1990)
Go, Trabi, Go II. Das war der Wilde Osten (Wolfgang Büld, Reinhard Klooss, 1992)
Good Bye, Lenin! (Wolfgang Becker, 2003)
Grün ist die Heide (Hans Deppe, 1951)
Grüß Gott, Genosse! (Manfred Stelzer, 1993) TVM
Grüß Gott, ich komm' von drüben (Tom Toelle, 1978)
Halbe Treppe (Andreas Dresen, 2002)
Hanging Tree, The (Delmar Daves, 1959)
He, Du! (Rolf Römer, 1970)
Heidi M. (Michael Klier, 2001)
Heimat 3 (Edgar Reitz, 2005) TVS
Heinrich der Säger (Klaus Gietinger, 2001)
Herr Lehmann (Leander Haußmann, 2003)
Herr Wichmann von der CDU (Andreas Dresen, 2003) Doc.
Herzprung (Helke Misselwitz, 1992)
Himmel über Berlin (Wim Wenders, 1987)
Hundsköpfe (Karsten Laske, 2001)
Ich liebe dich, ich töte dich (Uwe Brandner, 1971)
Identity Kills (Sören Voigt, 2003)
Im Lauf der Zeit (Wim Wenders, 1976)
Im Namen der Unschuld (Andreas Kleinert, 1997) TVM
Insel der Schwäne (Hermann Zschoche, 1983)
Jadup und Boel (Rainer Simon, 1980)
Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern (Peter Fleischmann, 1969)
Jahrgang '45 (Jürgen Böttcher, 1966)
Jaider, der einsame Jäger (Volker Vogeler and Ulf Miche, 1970/71)
Jan auf der Zille (Helmut Dziuba, 1985)
Jana und Jan (Helmut Dziuba, 1992)
Jeder Schweigt von etwas Anderem (Marc Bauder, Dörte Franke, 2006) Doc.
Jena Paradies (Marco Mittelstaedt, 2004)
Johannes Kepler (Frank Vogel, 1974)

Jud Süß (Veit Harlan, 1940)
Karbid und Sauerampfer (Frank Beyer, 1963)
Karniggels (Detlev Buck, 1991)
Kaspar Hauser, Jeder für sich allein und Gott gegen alle (Werner Herzog, 1974)
Katze im Sack (Florian Schwarz, 2005)
Kinnhaken, Der (Heinz Thiel, 1962)
Kleinruppin Forever (Carsten Fiebler, 2003)
Knallhart (Detlev Buck, 2006)
Knockin' on Heaven's Door (Thomas Jahn, 1997)
Kombat Sechszehn (Mirko Borscht 2005)
Komm näher (Vanessa Jopp, 2005)
Kontrolleur, Der (Stefan Trampe, 1994)
Kroko (Sylke Enders, 2004)
Lächeln der Tiefseefische, Das (Till Endemann, 2004)
Land hinter dem Regebogen, Das (Herwig Kipping, 1992)
Leben der Anderen, Das Anderen (Florian Henckel-Donnersmarck, 2006)
Leben ist eine Baustelle, Das (Wolfgang Becker, 1997)
Lebende Waren (Wolfgang Luderer, 1966)
Leere Mitte, Die (Hito Steyerl, 1998) Doc.
Legende von Paul und Paula, Die (Heiner Carow, 1973)
Leiden des jungen Werthers, Die (Egon Günther, 1976)
Letztes aus der DaDaeR (Jörg Foth, 1990)
Lichter (Hans-Christian Schmid, 2003)
Lichter aus dem Hintergrund (Heide Reidemeister, 1998) Doc.
Liebesau - die andere Heimat (Wolfgang Panzer, 2001) TVS
Liegen Lernen (Hendrik Handloegten, 2003)
Local Hero (Bill Forsythe, 1982)
Lola Rennt (Tom Tykwer, 1998)
Man Between, The (Carol Reed, 1953)
Mann auf der Mauer, Der (Reinhard Hauff, 1982)
Mann, dem Mann den Namen stahl, Der (Wolfgang Staudte 1940)
Mauer, Die (Jürgen Böttcher, 1991) Doc.
Mediocren, Die (Matthias Glasner, 1995)
Meier (Peter Timm, 1987)
Menschen am Sonntag (Robert Siodmak, Rochus Gliese and Edgar G. Ulmer, 1929)
Miraculi (Ulrich Weiß, 1992)
Mörder sind unter uns, Die (Wolfgang Staudte, 1946)
Monstrum, Das (Miriam Pfeiffer, 2001)
Mr. Bluesman (Sönke Wortmann, 1992)
Nachtgestalten (Andreas Dresen, 1998)
Naked (Mike Leigh, 1993)
National Lampoon (Harold Ramis, 1983)
Neben der Zeit (Andreas Kleinert, 1995)
Netto (Robert Thalheim, 2004)
NeuFundLand (Georg Maas 2003)
Novemberkatzen (Sigrun Koeppel, 1985)
NVA (Leander Haußmann, 2005)
October (Sergei Eisenstein, 1928)

Ostkreuz (Michael Klier, 1991)
Out-of-towners, The (Arthur Hiller, 1979)
Ox-Bow Incident, The (aka *Strange Incident*) (William A. Wellman, 1943)
Plötzliche Reichtum Der Armen Leute Von Kombach, Der (Volker Schlöndorff, 1971)
Polizistin, Die (Andreas Dresen, 2000) TVM
Quiller Memorandum, The (Michael Anderson, 1966)
Redupers: Die allseitig reduzierte Persönlichkeit (Helma Sanders-Brahms, 1977)
Rodina Heisst Heimat (Helga Reidemeister, 1992) Doc.
Rote Kakadu, Der (Domink Gräf, 2006)
Rügen – Entdeckung aus der Ostseeregion (Eduard von Schnitzler, 1976) Doc.
Salto Kommunale (Ralph Gregan and others, 1998-2001) TV Series
Salto Postale (Bernhard Stephan and others, 1993- 1996) TV Series
Schlösser und Katen (Kurt Maetzig, 1957)
Schönste aus Bitterfeld, Die (Matthias Tiefenbacher, 2001) TVM
Schuh des Manitu, Der (Michael Herbig, 2001)
Schultze gets the Blues (Michael Schorr, 2004)
Sehnsucht (Valeska Grisebach, 2006)
Smokey and the Bandit (Hal Needham, 1977)
So schnell geht es nach Istanbul (Andreas Dresen, 1991)
Solange Leben in mir ist (Günther Reisch, 1965)
Solo Sunny (Konrad Wolf, 1979)
Sommer vorm Balkon (Andreas Dresen, 2005)
Sonnenallee (Leander Haußmann, 1999)
Status Yo! (Till Hastreiter, 2004)
Stilles Land (Andreas Dresen, 1992)
Strass, Der (Andreas Höntsch, 1991)
Stroszeck (Werner Herzog, 1977)
Stubbe – der Mann für jeden Fall (Peter Kahane, 1995 - present day) TVS
Sugarland Express, The (Steven Spielberg, 1974)
Sumo Bruno (Lenard Fritz Krawinkel, 1999)
Sunrise (F.W. Murnau, 1927)
Tal der Ahnungslosen (Branwen Okpako, 2003) TVM
Taxi zum Klo (Frank Ripploh, 1980)
Thelma and Louise (Ridley Scott, 1991)
Tin Star, The (Anthony Mann, 1957)
Trotz Alledem! (Günther Reisch, 1972)
Unberührbare, Die (Oskar Roehler, 1999)
...und deine Liebe auch (Frank Vogel, 1962)
Unser Kurzes Leben (Lothar Warnecke, 1981)
Verbotene Liebe (Helmut Dziuba, 1989)
Vergangen, Vergessen, Vorüber (Jan Ralske, 1994) Doc.
Vergebung, Die (Andreas Höntsch, 1994)
Vergesst mir meine Traudel nicht (Kurt Matezig, 1957)
Verlorene Landschaft (Andreas Kleinert, 1992)
Verlorene Tal, Das (Edmund Heuberger, 1934)
Verschwende Deine Jugend (Benjamin Quabeck, 2003)
Verspielte Heimat (Claus Dobberke, 1971)
Versprechen, Das (Margarethe von Trotta, 1994)

Verurteilte Dorf, Das (Kurt Maetzig, 1952)
Vorspiel (Peter Kahane, 1987)
Wahlverwandschaften (Siegfried Kühn, 1974)
Waldrausch (Paul May, 1939/1942)
Wedding (Heiko Schier, 1990)
West fickt Ost (Jürgen Brüning, 2001)
Westler: East of the Wall (Wieland Speck, 1984)
Wie Feuer und Flamme (Connie Walther, 2001)
Wild at heart (David Lynch, 1990)
Willenbrock (Andreas Dresen, 2005)
Winter adé (Helke Misselwitz, 1985) Doc.

TVS denotes television series
TVM denotes television film.
Doc. Denotes documentary film.

Bibliography

Adelson, Leslie A. *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995)

Adler, Marina A. 'Social Changes and Declines in Marriage and Fertility in Eastern Germany', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 59, February 1997, 37-49

Adorno, Theodor W. and Max Horkheimer. *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995)

Agde, Günther, ed. *Kahlschlag. Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965. Studien und Dokumente* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991; 2nd edition, 2000)

Ahbe, Thomas. 'Gruppenbild mit Banana. Aus dem Kulturalmanch Des Vereinigten Deutschlands', *Freitag*, 40, 29.09.2000. Online at: <http://www.Freitag.de/2000/40/00400401.htm> [Accessed 08/05/02]

—. 'Hammer, Zirkel, Kaffeekranz'. Ostalgie als Methode. Wie sich die Ostdeutschen stabilisieren und integrieren', *Berliner Zeitung* (Ressort Magazin), 5.2.2000. Online at: http://www.kulturinitiative-89.de/Texte/Ahbe_Thomas.html [Accessed 08/05/02]

—. 'Ostalgie als Selbstermächtigung. Zur produktiven Stabilisierung ostdeutsche Identität', *Deutschland Archiv*, 4/1997, 614-619

Aitkenhead, Decca. 'Division of the Spoils', *The Guardian*, 25.9.1997

Allan, Seán and John Sandford, eds. *DEFA. East German Cinema, 1946-1992* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 1999)

Alter, Reinhard and Peter Monteath, eds. *Rewriting the German past. History and Identity in the New Germany* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997)

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; revised and updated, 1991)

Anderson, Christopher, Karl Kaltenthaler and Wolfgang Luthardt, eds. *The Domestic Politics of German Unification* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993)

Andert, Reinhold. *Rote Wende. Wie die Ossis die Wessis besiegten* (Berlin: Elefant Press, 1994)

Andrew, Geoff. *Stranger than Paradise. Maverick film-makers in recent American Cinema* (London: Prion, 1998)

Arblaster, Anthony. 'Unity, identity, difference: some thoughts on national identity and social unity', *New community*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1995, 195-206

Architektur in Berlin. Jahrbuch 1992 (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 1992)

Ardagh, John. *Germany and the Germans. United Germany in the mid-1990's* (London: Penguin Books, 3rd edition, 1995)

Arndt, Susan, ed. *Afrikabilder. Studien zu Rassismus in Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast, 2001)

Arnold, Frank. 'Wir können auch anders', *epd Film*, 4/1993, 40

Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, ed. *Text+Kritik Sonderband. DDR Literatur der neunziger Jahre* (München: Richard Boorberg Verlag GmbH, 2000)

Asmus, Ronald A. *German Strategy and Public Opinion after the Wall 1990-1993* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1994)

— . *Germany in Transition. National Self-Confidence and International Reticence* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1992)

Auf Neuen Wegen. 5 Jahre Fortschriflicher Film (Berlin: Deutscher Filmverlag, 1951)

Augé, Marc. *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995; reprinted 2000)

Azaryahu, Maoz. 'Street Names and Political Identity: The Case of East Berlin', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 21, 1986, 581-604

Bach, Johnathan, P. "'The Taste Remains": Consumption, (N)ostalgia, and the Production of East Germany', *Public Culture*, Vol. 14, No.3, Fall 2002, 545-556

— . *Between Sovereignty and Integration. German Foreign Policy and National Identity after 1989* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999)

Badstübner, Evemarie, ed. *Befremdlich anders. Leben in der DDR* (Berlin: Dietz, 2000)

Baer, Volker. 'Zehn Jahre danach. Wie hat sich das deutsche Kino seit 1989 verändert?', *Film Dienst*, 23/1999, 44-46

Banville, John. 'The Harbinger of Calamity', *The Observer*, 11.10.1992

Barasch, Francis K. *The Grotesque. A Study in Meanings* (The Hague: Moulton, 1971)

Barber, Stephen. *Projected Cities. Cinema and Urban Space* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002)

Barker, Adele Marie, ed. *Consuming Russia. Popular Culture, Sex, and Society since Gorbachev* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999)

Barker, Peter, ed. *The Party of Democratic Socialism in Germany. Modern Post-Communism or Nostalgic Populism? German Monitor* (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1994)

Bartels, Gerrit. 'Wie die Westalgie das Laufen lernt', *taz*, 4.9.2003. Online at: <http://www.taz.de/pt/2003/09/04/a0132.1/text> [Accessed 9.2.2005]

Bastian, Jens. 'The Enfant Terrible of German Politics: The PDS between GDR Nostalgia and Democratic Socialism', *German Politics*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1995, 95-110

Baudrillard, Jean. *Cool Memories* (London; New York: Verso, 1990)

Bauman, Zygmunt *Community. Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001)

— . *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000)

Bausinger, Hermann. *Typisch deutsch. Wie deutsch sind die Deutschen ?* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000; 3rd edition, 2002)

Becher, Johannes R. *Schöne deutsche Heimat* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1956)

Becker, Thorsten. *Schönes Deutschland* (Berlin: Volk + Welt, 1996)

Behrends, Jan C., Thomas Lindenberger and Patrice G. Poutrice, eds. *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR. Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2003)

Bellon, Bernard, P. *Mercedes in Peace and War. German Automobile Workers, 1903-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990)

Benjamin, Michael. 'Ostdeutsche Identität und ihre sozialen Grundlagen - Gedanken über linke Politik', *Marxistisches Forum*, 6/1996

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften I* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 136-169

Berdahl, Daphne. "'Go, Trabi, Go!": Reflections on a Car and Its Symbolization over Time', *Anthropology and Humanism*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2001, 131-141

Berdahl, Daphne. *Where the World Ended. Re-unification and Identity in the German Borderland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)

Berger, Stefan. *The Search for Normality. National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York; London: Berghahn, 1997; reprinted 2003)

- Bergfelder, Tim, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk, eds. *The German Cinema Book* (London: BFI, 2003)
- Bergfelder, Tim. *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2005)
- Berghahn, Daniela and Alan Bance, eds. *Millennial Essays on Film and Other German Studies. Selected papers from the Conference of University Teachers of German* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2002)
- Berghahn, Daniela. *Hollywood behind the Wall. The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005)
- Betts, Paul and Greg Eghigian, eds. *Pain and Prosperity. Reconsidering Twentieth Century German History* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2003)
- Betts, Paul. 'The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture', *The Journal of Modern History*, 72, September 2000, 731-765
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Bialas, W. 'DDR-Identität im Umbruch', *Das Argument*, 186, 2/1991, 257-265
- Biermann, Wolf. 'Wenig Wahrheiten und viel Witz', *Der Spiegel*, 5/1996, 186-187
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism* (London; New Delhi: Sage, 1995)
- Bisky, Lothar and Dieter Wiedemann. *Der Spielfilm. Rezeption und Wirkung* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1985)
- Blacksell, Mark. 'State and nation: Germany since reunification', *Europa*, No. 3, 1997
Online at: <http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/number3/blacksel.htm> [Accessed 23/05/02]
- Blickle, Peter. *Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester; Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002)
- Bloch, Ernst. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1959)
- Blum, Heiko R., ed. *Film in der DDR* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1977)
- Blum, Martin. 'Remaking the East German Past: *Ostalgie*, Identity and Material Culture', *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Winter 2000, 229-253
- Blümlinger, Christa, ed. *Sprung im Spiegel. Filmisches Wahrnehmen zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1990)

Blunk, Harry and Dirk Jungnickel, eds. *Filmland DDR. Ein Reader zur Geschichte, Funktion und Wirkung der DEFA* (Köln: Wissenschaft und Politik 1990)

Blunk, Harry. 'Heimat und Vaterland in DEFA-Spielfilm', *Deutsche Studien*, Vol. 26, Part 103, 1988, 226-238

Boa, Elizabeth and Rachel Palfreyman. *Heimat. A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Boerner, Peter. *Concepts of National Identity. An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Baden Baden: Nomos, 1986)

Bohn, Rainer, Knut Hickethier and Eggo Müller, eds. *Mauer Show. Das Ende der DDR, die deutsche Einheit und die Medien* (Berlin: Sigma Medienwissenschaft, 1992)

Bornemann, John, "State, Territory and Identity Formation in the Post War Berlins", *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1992, 45-62

—. *Belonging in the Two Berlins. Kin, State, Nation* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Boyer, Dominic. 'Postcommunist Nostalgia in Eastern Germany: An Alternative Analysis. *Ostalgie* and the Politics of the Future in Eastern Germany', *Public Culture*, 18 (2), 2006

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001)

Bracher, Karl Dietrich, ed. *Deutsche Sonderweg. Mythos oder Realität?* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1982)

Breuilly, John, ed. *The State of Germany. The National Idea in the Making, Unmaking and Remaking of a Modern Nation-State* (London: Longman, 1992)

Brockmann, Stephan and Frank Tommler, eds. *Revisiting Zero Hour 1945. The Emergence of Postwar Culture* (Washington D.C.: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies 1996)

Brockmann, Stephen. *Literature and German Reunification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Broder, Henryk M. 'Wir lieben die Heimat', *Der Spiegel*, 27/1995, 54-64

Brussig, Thomas —. 'Der Brechreiz ist ein aktueller', Online at: <http://www.thomasbrussig.de/publizistik/ostalgie.htm> [Accessed 12.5.2005]

—. 'Wir sind nostalgisch weil wir Menschen sind', Online at: <http://www.thomasbrussig.de/publizistik/sehnsucht.htm> [Accessed 12.5.2005]

—. 'Opfer politischer Gewalt haben ein Recht auf Wiedergutmachung', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29.01.2000

—. *Am kürzeren Ende des Sonnenallees* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1999)

—. *Helden wie Wir* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1995)

Bullivant, Keith, ed. *Beyond 1989. Re-reading German Literary History since 1945* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997)

Bulmahn, Thomas. 'Modernity and Happiness – the case of Germany', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1, 2000, 375-400

Buscombe, Edward and Roberta E. Pearson, eds. *Back in the Saddle Again. New Essays on the Western* (London: BFI, 1998)

Byg, Barton German Unification and the Cinema of the Former German Democratic Republic', *Michigan Germanic Studies* 21.1/2 Spring/Fall 1995, 150-168

—. 'What might have been: DEFA films of the Past and the Future of German Cinema', *Cineaste*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer, 1990, 9-15

Calhoun, Dave. 'Afghan Aftermath', *Sight and Sound*, February 2004, 20-22

Cameron, Keith, ed. *National Identity* (Exeter: Intellect Books, 1999)

Carter, Erica, James Donald and Judith Squires, eds. *Space and Place. Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993)

Childs, David, Thomas Baylis and Marilyn Rueschemeyer, eds. *East Germany in Comparative Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1989)

Childs, David. *The Fall of the GDR. Themes in Modern German History Series* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001)

Christ, Peter and Ralf Neubauer. *Kolonie im eignen Land. Die Treuhand, Bonn und die Wirtschaftskatastrophe der fünf neuen Länder* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991)

Clark, David E. and Manfred Wildner. 'Violence and fear of violence in East and West Germany', *Social Science & Medicine*, 51, 2000, 373-379

Clark, John R. *The Modern Satiric Grotesque and its Traditions* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991)

Clarke, David. 'Representations of East German Masculinity in Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany* and Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht*', *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 55, No. 4, October 2004, 434-449

Cohan, Steven and Ira Rae Hark, eds. *The Road Movie Book* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997)

Conboy, Martin. 'The Discourse of Location: Realigning the Popular in German Cinema', *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 14, Issue 3, 1999, 353-379

Confino, Alon and Peter Fritzsche, eds. *The Work of Memory. New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 2002). Online at: <http://www.press.uillinois.edu/epub/books/confino/epilog.html#foot10> [Accessed 10.5.2005]

Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Conrad, Christoph, Michael Lechner and Wolf Werner. 'East German Fertility after Unification: Crisis or Adaptation?', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1996, 331-358

Conrady, Karl Otto, ed. *Von einem Land und vom anderen. Gedichte zur deutschen Wende* (Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1993)

Cooke, Paul. *Representing East Germany since Unification. From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005)

Cosentino, Christine. 'Ostdeutsche Autoren mitte der Neunziger Jahre', *The Germanic Review*, 71, 3, 1996, 177-94

Costabile-Heming, Carol Anne, ed. *Textual Responses to German Unification. Processing historical and social changes in literature and film* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001)

Costabile-Heming, Carol Anne, Rachel J. Halverson and Kristie A. Foell. eds. *Berlin. The Symphony Continues. Orchestrating Architectural Change in Germany's New Capital* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004)

Cresswell, Tim and Deboarh Dixon, eds. *Engaging Film. Geographies of Mobility and Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002)

Dagan, Daniel. *Die über uns. Deutschland und das Fremde* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1993)

Dahn, Daniela. *Westwärts und nicht vergessen. Vom Unbehagen in der Einheit* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1996)

—. *Wir bleiben hier oder, wem gehört der Osten. Vom Kampf um Häuser und Wohnungen in den neuen Bundesländern* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994)

—. 'East German Identity'. *Regional Identities in Europe* Conference. Centre for European Studies, University of Sunderland. 12.10.1998. Online at: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/~us0cma/europe/dahn.htm> [Accessed 22.08.1999]

—. *Kunst und Kohle. Die 'Szene' am Prenzlauer Berg Berlin, DDR* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1987)

Dalichow, Bärbel 'Leben unsere Leichen noch?', *Film und Fernsehen*, 1/1998, 48-53

—. 'Heimat-Filme der DEFA?', in *Film und Fernsehen*, 6/92 + 1/93, 55-6

Daly, Peter M., Hans Walter Frischkopf, Trudis E. Goldsmith-Reber, and Horst Richter, eds. *Images of Germany. Perceptions and Conceptions* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000)

Davidson-Schmich, Lousie Karen, Klaus Hartmann and Uwe Mummert. 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't (always) make it drink: positive freedom in the aftermath of German unification', *Communist and Post-communist Studies*, 35, 2002, 325-352

de Bruyn, Günter. *Deutsche Zustände. Über Erinnerungen und Tatsachen, Heimat und Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2001)

Decker, Gunnar 'Vielfalt statt Einfalt', *Neues Deutschland*, 8.9.2003

—. 'Freiheit zu lachen', *Neues Deutschland*, 6.10.1999

Decker, Kerstin and Gunnar. *Gefühlsausbrüche, oder ewig pubertiert der Ostdeutsche. Reportagen, Polemike, Porträts* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2000)

Decker, Kerstin. 'Rote Seelen', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29.09.2005. Online at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/archiv/29.09.2005/2084849.asp> [Accessed 3.1.2006]

Decker, Kerstin. 'Soviel DDR war nie', *Tagesspiegel*, 7.10.1999

DEFA NOVA-nach wie vor? Versuch einer Spurensicherung (Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek eV., No. 82, Berlin, 1993)

Del Caro, Adrian. *German Studies in Post-Holocaust Age. The Politics of Memory, Identity, and Ethnicity* (Boulder: Colorado University Press, 2001)

Delanty, Gerard *Community* (London: Routledge, 2003)

—. *Modernity and Postmodernity. Knowledge, Power and the Self* (London: Sage, 2000)

Delius, F.C. *Der Spaziergang von Rostock nach Syrakus* (Reinbek: Rowohlt-Verlag, 1995)

Dennis, Mike. *Social and Economic Modernization in Eastern Germany from Honecker to Kohl* (London: Printer Publishers, 1993)

Der Spiegel (no author), 3/1993, 'Erst vereint, nun entzweit. Spiegel Umfrage über die Einstellungen der West- und Ostdeutschen zueinander', 25-62

Der Spiegel, ('Jammertal Ost' - cover title), 39/2004

Der Spiegel, 'Aufbruch Ost', 47/2005 (cover article)

Dieckhoff, Alain and Natividad Gutiérrez, eds. *Modern Roots. Studies of National Identity* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2001)

Dieckmann, Christoph. 'Honis heitere Welt', *Die Zeit*, 28.8.2003, No.36. Online at: http://zeus.zeit.de/text/2003/36/Ostalgie_ [Accessed 1.1.2006]

—. *Das wahre Leben im Falschen. Geschichten von ostdeutscher Identität* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2000)

Dijkink, Gertjan. *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions. Maps of Pride and Pain* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Dodds, Dinah. 'Ten Years after the Wall. East German Women in Transition', *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1999, 261-276

Doelfs, Guntram. 'Die DDR ist plötzlich trendy', *Morgenpost* 13.8.2003. Online at: <http://morgenpost.berlin1.de/content/2003/08/13/berlin/622561.html> [Accessed 20.5.2005]

Doerry, Martin and Volker Hage. 'Zurück auf den Teppich! Der Schriftsteller Jurek Becker über seine neue Fernserie, über deutsche Dichter und die Nation', *Der Spiegel*, 50/1994, 197-198

Dölling, Irene. 'Between Hope and Helplessness: Women in the GDR after the "Turning Point"', *Feminist Review*, No. 39, Winter 1991, 3-16

Dombrowski, Boris. 'Tolle Idee für Nostalgiker. Wir bauen hier.' *Berliner Zeitung* (no date)

Donald, James. *Imagining the Modern City* (London: Athlone Press, 2000)

Dornberg, John. 'Five Years After Reunification -- Easterners Discover Themselves', *German Life*. December 1995/January 1996

Drummond, Phillip, Richard Paterson, and Janet Willis, eds. *National Identity and Europe. The Television Revolution* (London: BFI, 1993)

Dubiel, Helmut. 'Linke Trauerarbeit', *Merkur*, 496, 1990, 482-491

Dulles, Eleanor Lansing. *One Germany or Two. The Struggle at the Heart of Europe* (Stanford: Hoover Institutions Press, 1970)

Dümcke, Wolfgang and Vilmar, Fritz , eds. *Kolonisierung der DDR. Kritische Analyse und Alternativen des Einigungsprozesses* (Münster: Agenda, 1995)

Durrani, Osman, Colin Good and John Hillard, eds. *The New Germany. Literature and society after Unification* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995)

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory. An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 2002)

Eberstadt, Nicholas. 'Demographic Shocks in Eastern Germany, 1989-93', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1994, 519-533

Eckert, Annette and Merve Lowien, eds. *Außerhalb von Mittendrin* (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 1991)

Edensor, Tim. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Eisenmann, Peter and Gerhard Hirscher, eds. *Die Deutsche Identität und Europa* (München: V. Hase und Koehler, 1991)

Elliott, David and Bojana Pejic, eds. *After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe* (Stockholm: Modern Museum, 1999)

Elm, Ludwig. *Nach Hitler, Nach Honecker. Zum Streit der Deutschen um die eigene Vergangenheit* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991)

Elsaesser, Thomas. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003)

— . *Weimar Cinema and After. Germany's Historical Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2000)

— . *New German Cinema. A History* (London: BFI Publishing, 1989)

Elsaesser, Thomas and Martin Wedel. 'Defining DEFA's Historical Imaginary: The Films of Konrad Wolf', *New German Critique*, No.82, (Special Issue on: East German Film), Winter 2001 3-25

Eniskat, Peter. 'Filmtipp der Woche' (*Helden wie Wir* review), *Der Tagesspiegel*, 9.12.1999

Epstein, Catherine. 'The Stasi: New Research on the East German Ministry of State Security', *Kritika. Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Spring 2004, 321-348

— . 'East Germany and Its History since 1989', *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 75, No. 3, 2003, 634-661

Esser, Hartmut, ed. *Der Wandel nach der Wende. Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft, Politik in Ostdeutschland* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutsche Verlag, 2000)

Facijs, Gernot. 'Integration of the East German Media into an All-German Structure', *Aussenpolitik*, Vol. 41, 4/1990, 388-399

Falkner, Thomas. *Absturz in die Marktwirtschaft. Der Schwere Weg durch die ostdeutsche Wirtschaftskrise* (München: Knaur, 1994)

Faraday, George. *Revolt of the Filmmakers. The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the Soviet Film Industry* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 2000)

Faulstich, Werner and Helmut Korte, eds. *Heimat in der DDR-Medien. Arbeitsheft zum Medienpaket 8* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998)

Fehrenbach, Heidi. *Cinema in Democratizing Germany. Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995)

Feinstein, Joshua. *The Triumph of the Ordinary. Depictions of Daily Life in the East German Cinema, 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill; London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

Fiedler, Manuela. *Heimat im deutschen Film. Ein Mythos zwischen Regression und Utopie* (Coppengrave: Coppi Verlag, 1995)

Figes, Orlando. 'Birth of a Nation', *The Guardian (Review)*, 14.9.2002, p. 35

Filmer, Werner and Heribut Schwan, eds. *Alltag im anderen Deutschland* (Düsseldorf; Vienna: Econ Verlag, 1985)

Finger, Evelyn. 'Der Ossi als Wessi', *Die Zeit*, 25.8.2005, p. 35

Finke, Klaus, ed. *DEFA-Film als nationales Kulturerbe?* (Berlin: Vistas, 2001)

Fischer Filmgeschichte. Auf der Suche nach Werte, 1945-1960, Band 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1990)

Fitzgerald, Thomas K. *Metaphors of Identity* (New York: New York State University Press, 1993)

Fleischhauer, Jan. "‘Ick will meine Ruhe wieder’", *Der Spiegel*, 19/1990, 117-124

Flockton, Chris and Eva Kolinsky, eds. *Recasting East Germany. Social Transformation after The GDR* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1999)

- Forbes, Jill and Sarah Street, eds. *European Cinema. An Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2000)
- Forrester, Sibelan and Magdalena J. Zabrowsk and Elena Gapova, eds. *Over The Wall/After the Fall. Post-communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004)
- Foucault, Michael. 'Film and Memory. An Interview with Michael Foucault', *Radical Philosophy*, No. 11, 1975, 24-29
- Fremeaux, Isabelle. 'New Labour's appropriation of the concept of community: a critique', *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 3, July 2005, 265–274
- Freud, Sigmund. *Fragen der Gesellschaft. Ursprünge der Religion. Studienausgabe Bd. 9* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1974)
- Freyermuth, Gundolf S. *Der Übernehmer. Volker Schlöndorff in Babelsberg* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1993)
- Fritsche, Susanne. *Die Mauer ist gefallen* (München: Hanser, 2004)
- Fritzen, Florentine. 'Zu so etwas hat die DDR doch nicht geführt', *faz.net*, 4.8.2005.
Online at:
<http://www.faz.net/s/RubCD175863466D41BB9A6A93D460B81174/Doc~E0982E27E56F5405492D254C2C05D8FE2~ATpl~Ecommon~Sspezial.html> [Accessed 12.10.2005]
- Fulbrook, Mary and Martin Swales, eds. *Representing the German Nation. History and Identity in twentieth century Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Fulbrook, Mary. *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1945-89* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Fülling, Thomas. 'Das Ende des Palastes wird heute besiegelt', *Die Welt*, 19.01.2006.
Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2006/01/19/833559.html> [Accessed 12.2.2006]
- Funder, Anna. *Stasiland* (London: Granta, 2003)
- Galle, Birgit. 'Die DDR beim Wort genommen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 9.11.1999
- . 'Das mit uns geht so tief rein', *Berliner Zeitung*, 28.01.1999
- . 'Das strapazierte Sachsenauto', *Neues Deutschland*, 7.2.1991
- Gaus, Günther. *Wo Deutschland liegt. Eine Ortsbestimmung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1983)
- . *Über Deutschland und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1990)

Gemünden, Gerd. 'Between Karl May and Karl Marx: The DEFA Indianerfilme (1965-1983)', *New German Critique*, No. 82, Winter 2001, 25-38

Gerber, Margy and Roger Woods, eds. *Changing Identities in East Germany. Selected Papers from the Nineteenth and Twentieth New Hampshire Symposia* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996)

Gerber, Margy, ed. *Studies in Culture and Society 7 Selected Papers from the Twelfth New Hampshire Symposium in the German Democratic Republic* (Lanham; New York; London: University Press of America, 1985)

Giesen, Bernhard, ed. *Nationale und Kulturelle Identität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991)

Gillen, Eckhart and Gerd Lindner, eds. *Klopffzeichen. Kunst und Kultur der 80er Jahre in Deutschland. Begleitbuch zur Doppelausstellung Mauersprünge und Wahnzimmer* (Leipzig: Verlag Faber & Faber, 2003)

Gilliar, Beate. *The rhetoric of (re) unification. Constructing identity through East and West German newspapers* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996)

Glaser, Hermann, ed. *Was Bleibt – Was Wird. Der kulturelle Umbruch in den Neuen Bundesländern* (Bonn: Inter-Nationes, 1994)

Golombeck, Dieter and Dietrich Ratzke, eds. *Facetten der Wende. Reportagen über eine deutsche Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Medienentwicklung und Kommunikation GmbH, 1991)

— . *Dagewesen und Aufgeschrieben. Reportagen* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Medienentwicklung und Kommunikation GmbH, 1990)

Goosen, Frank. *Liegen Lernen* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1999)

Görke, Andre. 'Berliner Amateurfußball. Heckenschere in der Sporttasche'. *Tagesspiegel* 11.12.2000. Online at: <http://www2.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/2000/12/10/ak-be-10955.html> [Accessed 21.10.2002]

Göttler, Fritz. 'Wo alles Wurscht ist', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28.12.1990

'Go Trabi Go' (review; no author), *Film Dienst*, 3/1991, 26

Gransow, Volker. 'National Identity and Non-Identity as Problems of the Two German Societies', *Studies in GDR Culture and Society*, 3/1983, 13-26

Grass, Günther. 'What Am I Talking For? Is Anybody Still Listening?', *New German Critique*, No. 52, Winter, 1991 (Special Issue on German Unification), 66-72

—. *Ein Schnäppchen namens DDR. Letzte Rede vorm Glockengeläut* (Frankfurt am Main: Luchterhand Verlag, 1990)

Greenberg, Robert A. and William Browman Piper, eds. *The Writings of Johnathan Swift. Authoritative Text. Backgrounds Criticism* (London; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973)

Grix, Jonathan. 'East German Political Attitudes: Socialist Legacies v. Situational Factors – A False Antithesis', *German Politics*. Vol. 9. No. 2, August 2000, 109-125

Grub, Frank Thomas. *'Wende' und 'Einheit' im Spiegel der deutschsprachigen Literatur. Band 1: Untersuchungen* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003)

Gunske, Volker and Sven S. Poser. 'Nachdenken Über Thomas B', Online at: http://www.thomasbrussig.de/filme/helden_berliner.htm [Accessed 13.3.2004]

Habermas, Jürgen. 'Yet Again: German Identity - A Unified Nation of Angry DM-Burgers?', *New German Critique*, (Special Issue on German Unification), No. 52, Winter, 1991, 84-101

—. *Vergangenheit Als Zukunft* (Zurich: Pendo Verlag, 1990)

—.. *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990)

Hahn, Andreas, 'Ins Gehege', *Junge Welt*, 9.9.2004. Online at: <http://www.jungewelt.de/2004/09-09/021.php> [Accessed 23.12.2005]

Hahn, Hans-Joachim. 'Ossis, Wessis and the Germans: an inner-German Perception of National Characteristics', *Journal of Area Studies* (Perspectives on German Unification), No. 2, 1993, 114-128

Hake, Sabine. *German National Cinema* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002)

Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser (London; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1996)

Halle, Randall and Margaret McCarthy, eds. *Light Motives German Popular Film in Perspective* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003)

Hamm, Marion, ed. *Wendemarken. Zum Symbolbruch in Ostdeutschland. Eine Ausstellung des Ludwig-Uhland-Instituts der Universität Tübingen im Haspelturm des Tübinger Schlosses vom 15. November bis 22. Dezember 1991* (Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e. V.: Tübingen)

Hanisch, Michael. 'Eine lustige Reise zum stillen Don', *Neue Zeit*, 1.4.1993

Hartung, Klaus. 'Eine Stadt hofft auf Heilung', *Die Zeit*, 30/2001, Online at: http://hermes.zeit.de/pdf/archiv/archiv/2001/30/200130_schloss.xml.pdf [Accessed 12.8.2005]

Heilemann, Ulrich and Wolfgang Reinicke. *Welcome to Hard Times. The Fiscal Consequences of German Unity* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995)

Hein, Jakob. *Mein erstes T-Shirt* (München: Piper Verlag, 2001)

Heine, Matthias. 'Es war nicht alles schlecht', *Die Welt*, 1.7.2003. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2003/07/01/126863.html?prx=1> [Accessed 9.2.2005]

Heneghan, Tom. *Unchained Eagle: Germany after the Wall* (London: Pearson Education, 2000)

Henning, Falko. *Alles nur geklaut* (München: btb Verlag, 1999)

Hennings, Dirk. 'Im Lauf der Zeit – die Entwicklung Kinolandschaft in den neuen Ländern', *Film und Fernsehen* 4/1993, 4-7

Hermund, Jost and Marc Silberman, eds. *Contentious Memories. Looking Back at the GDR* (New York: Lang, 1998)

Herminghouse, Patricia and Magda Mueller, eds. *Gender and Germanness. Cultural Productions of Nation* (New York; Providence: Berghahn, 1998)

Herold, Karsten and Jens Scherer. *Wegzeichen. Fragen von Filmstudenten an Regisseure. Beiträge zur Film-und Fernsehwissenschaft* (Berlin: Vistas, 1998)

Heuser, Uwe Jean. 'Ossi-Bashing als Sport', *Die Zeit* 42/99. Online at: http://www.zeit.de/archiv/1999/42/199942.sl-ossi_.xml [Accessed 21.06.2004]

Hewison, Robert. *The Heritage Industry. Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987)

Heym, Stefan. *Auf Sand Gebaut. Sieben Geschichten aus der unmittelbaren Vergangenheit* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1990)

Hickethier, Knut, ed. *Deutsche Verhältnisse Beiträge zum Fernsehspiel in Ost und West*, No. 41 (Siegen: Arbeitshefte Bildschirmmedien, 1993)

Hill, John and Pamela Church Gibson, eds. *Film Studies. Critical approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Hjort, Mette and Scott MacKenzie, eds. *Cinema & Nation* (New York; London: Routledge 2002)

Höbel, Wolfgang. 'Mach nur einen Plan', *Der Spiegel*, 45/2000, 360-362

—, 'Das andere Gesicht der DEFA', in *Film-Dienst*, 8/1998, 12-14

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983, 10th edition, 2003)

Hochhuth, Rolf. *Wessis in Weimar. Szenen aus einem besetzten Land* (Berlin:Verlag Volk und Welt, 1993)

Hockenos, Paul. *Free to Hate. The Rise of the Right in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Hodgin, Nick. 'Berlin is in Germany and Good Bye, Lenin! Taking Leave of the GDR?', *Debatte. Review of Contemporary German Affairs*, Vol. 12, No.1, May 2004, 25-46

Höfig, Willi. *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947-1960* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1973)

Hollitzer, Tobias. '15 Jahre Friedliche Revolution', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 4.10.2004, 3-11

Holloway, Ron. 'Wege in die Nacht' (review). Online at: <http://www.filmfestivals.com/cannes99/html/quinzaine2.htm> [accessed 8.12.2004]

Horton, Andrew, ed. *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991)

Hosking, Geoffrey and George Schöpflin, eds. *Myth and Nationhood* (London: Hurst & Co., 1997)

Howard, Marc. 'An East German Ethnicity? Understanding the New Division of Unified Germany', in *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 1995, 49-70
http://www.kulturinitiative-89.de/Texte/Ahbe_Thomas.html [Accessed 08/05/02]

Huelshoff, Michael G., Andre Markovits, and Simon Reich, eds. *From Bundesrepublik to Deutschland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993)

Hussock, Peter Alexander and Siegmund Faust. 'PRO&CONTRA. Verharmlost der Film 'Good Bye, Lenin' die DDR?', *Junge Freiheit*, 7.3.2003. Online at: <http://www.jf-archiv.de/archiv03/113yy07.htm> [Accessed 7.7.2005]

Huyssen, Andreas *Present Pasts. Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

—, *Twilight Memories. Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995)

- Illies, Florian. *Generation Golf* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2000)
- 'Interview mit Peter Timm', *Dirk-Jasper Filmlexikon* [no author]. Online at: http://www.djfl.de/entertainment/stars/p/peter_timm_i_01.html [Accessed 12.12.2005]
- Iordanova, Dina. *The Cinema of the Other Europe. The Industry and Artistry of East Central Europe* (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2003)
- Ireland, Patrick R. 'Socialism, Unification Policy and the Rise of Racism in Eastern Germany', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3, Autumn 1997, 541-568
- Jacobi, Reinhold. 'Apfelbäume', *Film Dienst* 14/1992, 23
- Jaeger, Tobias. 'Medienpolitik nach Kolonialherren-Art. Die Transformation des Rundfunksystems in den fünf neuen Ländern im Zuge der deutschen Vereinigung', 2000. Online at: <http://www.jaeger.com/rundfunk.htm> [Accessed 21.5.2004]
- James, Harold and Marla Stone. *When the Wall Came Down. Reactions to German Unification* (New York: Routledge, 1992)
- James, Harold. *A German Identity 1770 - to the Present Day* (London: Phoenix Press, 1989; reprinted by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000)
- Jameson, Frederic. 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, July/August, 1984, 53-92
- Jaraus, Konrad H, ed. *Dictatorship as Experience. Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999)
- ed. *After Unity. Reconfiguring German Identities* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1997)
- Jaraus, Konrad H. and Volker Gransow, eds. *Uniting Germany Documents and Debates, 1944-1993* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1994)
- Jaspers, Karl. *Die Schuldfrage. Von der Politischen Haftung Deutschlands* (Munich: Piper & Co., 1987)
- Jessen, Jens. 'Verklemmt und zugeknöpft', *Die Zeit*, 41/2004. Online at: http://hermes.zeit.de/pdf/archiv/2004/41/Thatcher-Chic_41.pdf [Accessed 22.12.2005]
- Jung, Uli, ed. *Der deutsche Film. Aspekte seiner Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Trier: Trier Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1993)
- Jürgs, Michael and Angela Elis. *Typisch Ossi, Typisch Wessi. Die längst fällige Abrechnung unter Brüdern und Schwestern* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 2005)
- Kaes, Anton, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg, eds. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley; London; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994)

Kaes, Anton. *From Hitler to Heimat. The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1992)

Kaltefleiter, Werner and Ulrike Schumacher, eds. *Five Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1996)

Kaminer, Wladimir. *Schönhauser Allee* (Munich: Goldmann, 2001)

Kane, Martin ed. *Legacies and Identity. Literary Responses to Unification* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002)

Kannapin, Detlef. "GDR identity" in DEFA Feature Films', *Debatte*, Vol. 13, No. 2, August 2005, 185-200

Kaschuba, Wolfgang, ed. *Der deutsche Heimatfilm* (Tübingen: Tübingen Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V., 1989)

Kattago, Siobhan. *Ambiguous Memory. The Nazi past and German national identity* (London; Westport: Praeger, 2001)

Kellner, Douglas and Harry O'Hara. 'Utopia and Marxism in Ernst Bloch', *New German Critique*, No. 9, Autumn 1976, 11-34

Kennedy, Paul and Catherine J. Danks, eds. *Globalization and National Identities. Crisis or Opportunity?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)

Keupp, Heiner and Renate Höfer, eds. *Identitätsarbeit Heute. Klassische und Aktuelle Perspektiven der Identitätsforschung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997)

Kil, Wolfgang. 'Staatsfeindliche Entwürfe', *Arch+*, 103, 1990, 62-65

Kilb, Andreas. 'Ein allerletzter Versuch, die neue deutsche Filmkomödie zu verstehen', *Die Zeit*, 19/1996. Online at:
<http://zeus.zeit.de/text/archiv/1996/18/komoedie.txt.19960426.xml> [Accessed 18.8.2004]

Klein, Kerwin Lee. 'On the Emergence of Memory and Historical Discourse', *Representations*, 69, Winter 2000, 127-150

Kleßmann, Christopher, ed. *The Divided Past. Rewriting Post-War German History. German Historical Perspectives XV* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001)

Klug, Thomas. "'Go, Trabi, Go 2" Stumpi jetzt im wilden Osten', *Volksstimme* (Magdeburg), 13.8.1992

Knight, Julia *New German Cinema. Images of a Generation* (London: Wallflower Press, 2004)

—. *Women and the New German Cinema* (London: Verso, 1992)

Knoben, Martina. 'Vergiss Amerika', *epd Film*, 11/2000, 42-43

Knoblich, Axel, Peter Antonio and Erik Natter, eds. *Auf dem Weg zu einer gesamtdeutschen Identität* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1992)

Koch, Angelika. 'Equal Employment Policy in Germany: Limited Results and Prospects for Reform', *The Review of Policy Research*, September 2003, 441-457

Kocka, Jürgen. *Vereinigungskrise. Zur Geschichte der Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995)

Ködderitzsch, Peter and Leo A. Müller. *Rechtsextremismus in der DDR* (Göttingen: Lamuv Verlag, 1990)

Köhler, Otto. 'Kohl und Köhler', *Freitag* 40, 24.9.2004. Online at: <http://www.freitag.de/2004/40/04400502.php> [Accessed 23.11.2004]

Kolker, Robert Phillip and Peter Beicken. *The Films of Wim Wenders. Cinema as Vision and Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Körte, Peter. 'DDR adé', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20.11.1992

Kowalczyk, Ilko-Sascha and Stefan Wolle. *Roter Stern Über Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2001)

Krisch, Henry. *The German Democratic Republic. The Search for Identity* (Boulder; London: Westview Press, 1985)

Kroker, Eduard. J. M. and Bruno Deschamps, eds. *Die Deutschen auf der Suche nach ihrer neuen Identität?* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 1993)

Krueger, Alan B. and Jorn-Steffen Pischke. 'A Statistical Analysis of Crime against Foreigners in Unified Germany', *The Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 1997, 192-209

Kühn, Detlef. 'Der Brocken', *epd Film*, 5/1992, 40

Kürten, Joachim. 'Ein Filmland wird "abgewickelt"', *Film Dienst*, 22/1992, 4-8

Ladd, Brian. *The Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting the German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997)

Lange, Günther. *Heimat. Realität und Aufgabe. Zur Marxistischen Auffassung des Heimatgefühls* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973)

Larres, Klaus. *Germany since Unification. The Development of the Berlin Republic* (London: Palgrave, 2001)

Lasch, Christopher. *The True and Only Heaven. Progress and Its Critics* (New York; London: E.E. Norton, 1991)

Lash, Scott and Kajsia Ekholm Friedman, eds. *Modernity and Identity* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1992)

Lawton, Anna. *Before the Fall. Soviet Cinema in the Gorbachev Years* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2002; originally published as *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Lay, Conrad. 'Der Siegeszug der Ostprodukte. Zur Mentalitäts- und Produktgeschichte der deutschen Vereinigung', *Kommune. Forum für Politik, Ökonomie, Kultur*, 1/1997. Online at: <http://www.oeko-net.de/kommune/> [Accessed 8.10.2004]

Leach, Neil, ed. *Architecture and Revolution. Contemporary Perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999)

Lederle, Josef. 'Wege in die Nacht' (review), *Film Dienst*, 24/1999

Leeder, Karen. *Breaking Boundaries. A New Generation of Poets in the GDR* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)

Levitin, Jacqueline, Judith Plessis and Valerie Raoul, eds. *Women Filmmakers. Refocusing* (Routledge: New York, 2003)

Lewis, Alison. 'Unity begins together. Analysing the trauma of German unification', *New German Critique*, 64, Winter 1995, 135-159

Lewis, Derek and John R. P. McKenzie, eds. *The New Germany. Social, political and cultural challenges of unification* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995)

'Liebesgeschichte ertrinkt in DDR-Klischees', (no author), *Sächsische Zeitung*, 16.7.1992

Liehm, Mira and Antonin J. Liehm. *The Most Important Art. Soviet and Eastern European Film After 1945* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1977)

Löser, Claus 'Die Lümmel Aus Dem Sperrgebiet', *TIP*, 21/1999, 44

— 'Sonnenallee', *Film Dienst*, 52/1999

Lowenthal, David *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; First published by Viking, 1997)

— *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1985, 1990, 3rd edition)

Lubowski, Bernd. 'Vom Herzsprung in Herzsprung', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 19.11.1992

Lux, Stefan. 'Wir können auch anders', *Film Dienst*, 6/1993

Maaz, Hans-Joachim *Das gestürzte Volk, oder, die unglückliche Einheit* (Berlin: Argon, 1991)

—. 'Ich fürchte, wir kommen wieder nicht vor', *MDR-Online*, 1.9.2003. Online at: <http://www.mdr.de/kultur/896480.html> [Accessed 9.5.2005]

Maaz, Hans-Joachim. *Der Gefühlsstau. Ein Psychogramm der DDR* (Berlin: Argon, 1990)

Magdoff, Harry and Foster, John Bellamy. 'Notes from the Editor', *Monthly Review*, October 2003. Online at: <http://www.monthlyreview.org/nfte1003.htm> [Accessed 12.6.2004]

Maier, Charles S. *Dissolution. The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997, 4th edition, 1999)

Maier, Gerhart. *Die Wende in der DDR* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 1991)

Maischberger, Sandra. 'Sonnenallee. Interview mit Thomas Brussig und Leander Haußmann.' Online at: <http://www.thomasbrussig.de/interviews/sonnenallee.htm> [Accessed 12.8.2005]

Marsh, David. *The Germans. Rich, Bothered and Divided* (London: Century, 1989)

Mast, Gerald. *The Comic Mind. Comedy and the Movies* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1973; 1979 2nd edition)

Matussek, Matthias. 'Rodeo im Wilden Osten', *Der Spiegel*, 22/1990, 194-206

May, Ruth. 'Planned city Stalinstadt: a manifesto of the early German Democratic Republic', *Planning Perspectives*, 18, 2003, 47-78

MDR-retrospektive. Die 50 besten deutschen Filme (Berlin: Vistas, 1995)

Mehr Max, Thomas and Regine Sylvester, 'The Stone Thrower From Eisenhüttenstadt', *Granta* 42 (Krauts!), Winter 1992, 133-143

Meier, André. 'Ach, wie niedlich', *Das Magazin* 6/2003, 14-17

Meinhof, Ulrike M. and Dariusz Galasinski. 'Reconfiguring East-West identities: cross generational discourses in German and polish border communities', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 28, No. 1, 2002, 62-82

—. 'Photography, memory, and the construction of identities on the former East-West German border', *Discourse Studies* Vol. 2, No. 3, 2000, 323-353

Meißner, Inga. 'Die neunziger Jahre'. Online at: <http://www.deutsches-filminstitut.de/sozialgeschichte/dt105a.htm> [Accessed 20.5.2000]

'Mercedes statt Wolga' (no author), *Der Spiegel*, 3/1990, p.124

Meulemann, Heiner, ed. *Werte und nationale Identität im Vereinten Deutschland. Erklärungsaufsätze der Umfrageforschung* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998)

Meurer, Hans Joachim. *The Split Screen. Cinema and National Identity in a Divided Germany, 1979-1989* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000)

Meuschel, Sigrid. *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945-1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992)

Meyer, Birgit. 'Much Ado about Nothing? Political Representation Policies and the Influence of Women Parliamentarians in Germany', *The Review of Policy Research*, September 2003, 401-421

Milful, John. 'Who Owns GDR Culture? Against Analogy', *Debatte*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1997, 194-201

Moeller, Robert G. *War Stories. The search for a usable past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (London; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)

Monteath, Peter and Reinhard Alter, eds. *Rewriting the German Past* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997)

Moosmann, Elizabeth, ed. *Heimat. Sehnsucht nach Identität* (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1980)

Moran, Joe. 'History, Memory and the Everyday', *Rethinking History*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2004, 51-68

Morley, David. *Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000)

Mückenberger, Christiane and Günther Jordan. "Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst..." *Eine Geschichte der DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1994)

Muir, Richard. 'Conceptualising Landscape', *Landscapes*, 1, 2000, 4-21

Müller, Beate, ed. *Zensur im modernen deutschen Kulturraum* (Tübingen: Max Niemayer Verlag, 2003)

- Müller, Heiner. *Germania 3. Gespenster am toten Mann* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996)
- Müller, Jan-Werner. *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- ., ed. *Another Country. German Intellectuals, Unification and National Identity* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000)
- Münter, Michael and Roland Sturm, 'Economic Consequences of German Unification', *German Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2002, 179-194
- Mushaben, Joyce M. *Persistence of East German Identity* (London: Macmillan Press, 1994)
- Naughton, Leonie. *That Was The Wild East. Film Culture, Unification and the "New" Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002)
- Nelson, Brian, David Roberts, and Walter Veit, eds. *The Idea of Europe. Problems of National and Transnational Identity* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994)
- Nguyen, Angelika. 'Ein klares Bild von gestern – Regisseur Jörg Foth über den Film "Letztes aus der DaDaeR"', *Neues Deutschland*, 7.10.1990
- Nora, Pierre. 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, 26, Spring 1989, 7-24
- Nothnagle, Alan L. *Building the East German Myth. Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999)
- Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey, ed. *Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Olick, Jeffrey K. 'Collective memory: The Two Cultures', *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 3, November 1999, 332-348
- Ostow, Robin. 'Restructuring our lives: National unification and German biographies', *The Oral History Review. Journal of the Oral History Association*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1993, 1-8
- Otto, Thomas and Lutz Pehnert. "'Denk ich an Deutschland...'" Letztes aus der DaDaeR'. *Junge Welt*, No. 234, 6/7 October, 1990, 7-8
- Owen, Ruth J. *The Poet's Role. Lyric Responses to German Unification by Poets from the GDR* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2001)

Palmowski, Jan. 'Building an East German Nation: The Construction of a Socialist *Heimat*, 1945-1961', *Central European History*, Vol. 37. No. 3, 2004, 365-399

Pampel, Bert. 'Was bedeutet "Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit"? Kann man aus der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" nach 1945 für die "Aufarbeitung" nach 1989 Lehren ziehen?', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, 27-38

Papadakis, Andreas C., ed. *Berlin Tomorrow. International Architectural Visions* (London: Architectural Design, 1991)

Parkes, Stuart. *Understanding Contemporary Germany* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997)

Parmalee, Patty Lee. 'Movies Document a Turn', *German Politics and Society*, Issue 29, Summer 1993, 112-133

Peifer, Douglas. 'Commemoration of Mutiny, Rebellion, and Resistance in Postwar Germany: Public Memory, History, and the Formation of "Memory Beacons"', *Journal of Military History*, 65, October 2001, 1013-1052

Peitz, Christian. 'Sonnenallee, Schattenarmee' *Der Tagesspiegel*, 29.09.2005. Online at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/index.asp?ran=on&url=http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/archiv/29.09.2005/2059376.asp> [Accessed 3.1.2006]

Petrie, Duncan, ed. *Screening Europe. Image and Identity in Contemporary European Cinema* (London: BFI, 1992)

Pfennig, Werner, ed. *United We Stand Divided We Are. Comparative Views on Germany and Korea in the 1990s* (Hamburg: Abera Verlag, 1998)

Pickering, Michael. *Stereotyping. The Politics of Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)

Platthaus, Andreas. 'Deutsche Dynamische Republik', *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 9.10.1999

Plowman, Andrew. "'Westalgie'? Nostalgia for the "old" Federal Republic in recent German Prose', *Seminar*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2004, 249-261

Prager, Brad. 'The Erection of the Berlin Wall: Thomas Brussig's *Helden wie wir* and the End of East Germany', *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 99, No. 4, October 2004, 983-998

Prase, Tilo and Judith Kretzschmar. *Propagandist und Heimatfilmer. Die Dokumentarfilme des Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler* (Leipzig: Leipzig Universitäts Verlag, 2003)

'Projekt "Ossi-Park" an der Finanzierung gescheitert', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 25.2.2004 (no author). Online at:

<http://morgenpost.berlin1.de/content/2004/02/25/bezirke/661918.html?redirID> [Accessed 12.1.2005]

Pronay, Nicholas and D.W. Spring, eds. *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45* (London: Macmillan, 1982)

Quabeck, Benjamin. *Verschwende deine Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001)

Rajchman, John, ed. *The Identity in Question* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996)

Ranze, Michael, 'Schultze gets the Blues' (review), *epd Film*, 5/2004, 22

Räthzel, Nora. *Gegenbilder: Nationale Identitäten durch Konstitution des Anderen* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1997)

—. 'Aussiedler und Ausländer: Transforming German National Identity', *Social Identities, Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, 263-283

Read, Anthony and David Fisher. *Berlin. The Biography of a City* (London: Pimlico, 1994)

Regener, Sven. *Herr Lehmann* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag, 2001)

Reif, Cosima. 'Die Provinz schlägt zurück. Über die Tugenden des Ländlers und Detlev Bucks neuen Heimatfilm "Wir können auch anders"', *Film und Fernsehen* 2 /1993, 28-29

Reinhardt, Bernd. 'Wege in die Nacht', *World Wide Socialist Web Site*, 24.12.1999. Online at: <http://www.wsws.org.de/1999/dez1999/Wege-d24.shtml> [Accessed 25.10.2001]

Reißig, Rolf and Gert Joachim Glaeßner, eds. *Das Ende eines Experiments. Umbruch in der DDR und deutsche Einheit* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1991)

Reißig, Rolf. 'Die Ostdeutschen – zehn Jahre nach der Wende. Einstellungen, Wertemuster, Identitätsbildungen', 1999. Online at: http://www.biss-Online.de/download/Die_Ostdeutschen_zehn_Jahre_nach_der_Wende.PDF [Accessed 21.2.2003]

Rentschler, Eric. 'Post-Wall Prospects: An Introduction', *New German Critique*, No. 87 (Special Issue on Post-Wall Cinema), August 2002, 3-5

Richter, Erika. 'Anarchie und Menschlichkeit', *Film und Fernsehen*, 5+6/1996, 52-55

—. *Alltag und Geschichte in DEFA Gegenwartsfilmern der siebziger Jahre* (Berlin: Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen, Konrad Wolf, 1976)

Richter, Wolfgang, ed. *Unfrieden in Deutschland: Weissbuch Teil 2 Wissenschaft und Kultur im Beitrittsgebiet* (Berlin: Kolog-Verlag, 1993)

- Robb, David. 'Literary Heritage in the 'Clowns-Liedertheater' of Wenzel and Mensching'. *German Life and Letters*, Vol. 52, No. 3, July 1999, 382-397
- Rodek, Hans-Georg. 'Der menschlich anständige Erfolgsunternehmer-Ossi', *Die Welt*, 1.12.2001. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2001/12/01/537270.html> [Accessed 23.7.2005]
- Roethe, Thomas. *Arbeiten wie bei Honecker, leben wie bei Kohl. Ein Plädoyer für das Ende der Schonfrist* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1999)
- Rogier, Francesca. 'Growing Pains: From the opening of the Wall to the wrapping of the Reichstag', *Assemblage*, No. 29, April 1996, 40-71
- Römer, René. 'Dein Lebens-Budget voll ausschöpfen', *Junge Welt*, 21.2.1992
- Ross, Corey. *The East German Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Rother, Hans-Jörg. 'Die Provinz als Reservoir der Utopie', *Film und Fernsehen*, 4+5/1994, 68-69
- Ruf, Wolfgang J. 'Der Zimmerspringbrunnen', *epd Film*, 12/2001, 36
- Rusch, Claudia. *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2003)
- Russo, Mary. *The Female Grotesque* (New York: Routledge, 1995)
- Rust, Roland. 'Die DEFA Auf Motivsuche. 6 Spielfilmfestivale der DDR in Ost-Berlin', *Film Dienst*, 12/1990, 14-15
- Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. *Identity. Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990)
- Sannwald, Daniela. "'Ich heiße Alex, wie der Platz". Berlin-Film der anderen Art: "Plus minus null" von Eoin Moore', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30.03.2000
- Schenk, Ralf. 'Das andere Leben', *Das Magazin*, March 2006, p. 86
- . 'Zwischen Fangschuß und Unhold', *Berliner Zeitung*, 04.12.1997. Online at: http://www.berlinOnline.de/wissen/berliner_zeitung/archiv/1997/1204/feuilleton/0005/index.htm [Accessed 04.03.2002]
- . ed. *Das Zweite Leben der Filmstadt Babelsberg DEFA-Spielfilme 1946-1992* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1994)
- . 'Toleranz und Zärtlichkeit', *Film-Dienst*, 20/1996

- . 'Zerissene Seelen und gefundene Fressen', *Berliner Zeitung*, 20.05.1996.
Online at:
<http://www.berlinOnline.de/wissen/berlinerzeitung/archiv/1996/0520/kultur/0004/index.html> [Accessed 4.3.2002]
- . 'Schattenboxer und Kinderspiele. Über einige neue deutsche Spielfilme während und im Umfeld der Berlinale', *Film und Fernsehen*, 2/1993, 23-27
- Schittly, Dagmar. *Zwischen Regie und Regime. Die Filmpolitik der SED im Spiegel der DEFA-Produktionen* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002)
- Schmidt, Evelyn. 'Verlorene Landschaft' (review), *Film und Fernsehen*, 6/1992-1/1993, 136-137
- Schmiechen-Ackermann, Detlef. *Diktaturen im Vergleich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002)
- Schmitt, Elfriede and Leder, Dietrich. 'Solidarität als Selbstschutz', *Film Dienst*, 20/1990, 12-13
- Schneider, Peter. *The German Comedy. Scenes of Life after the Wall* (New York: Farar, Straus & Giroux, 1991)
- Schnödel, Helmut. 'Würstel aus Krauts', *Die Zeit*, 14.12.1990
- Schödelbauer, Ulrich. *Notizen zur deutschen Einheit* (Heidelberg: Manutius, 1994)
- Schoenbaum, David and Elizabeth Pound. *The German Question and Other German Questions* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996)
- Schöpflin, George. *Nations, Identity, Power. The New Politics of Europe* (London: Hurst, 2000)
- Schulze, Ingo. *Simple Storys. Ein Roman aus der ostdeutschen Provinz* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999)
- Schwarz, Hans Peter. 'Das Ende der Identitätsneurose', *Rheinische Merkur*, 7.9.1990
- Schweigler, Gebhard. *Nationalbewußtsein in der BRD und der DDR* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1973)
- Schwoch, James. *They're Working on Global TV: Cold War Television, Psychological Warfare, Information Diplomacy, and the Global Image of America from 1946-1969* (book manuscript, 2006) [manuscript provided by Schwoch]
- See, Wolfgang. *Mauerfreunde. Menschen von drüben mit neuer Befangenheit betrachtet* (Berlin: Wichern Verlag, 1992)

— *Dein Volk ist mein Volk: deutsche Grenzgänge* (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1982)

Seesslen, Georg. 'Deutschland, Niemandland', *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*, 26.9.1996

Segert, Astrid. 'Problematic normalisation – eastern German workers eight years after unification', *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1998, 105-24

Seidel, Claudius. 'Von Metzgern und Menschen', *Der Spiegel*, 49/1990

Shaw, Tony. *British Cinema and the Cold War. The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001)

Short, James Rennie. *Imagined Country. Society, Culture and Environment* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Simon, Jana, Frank Rothe and Wiete Andrasch, eds. *Das Buch der Unterschiede. Warum die Einheit keine ist* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2000)

Simonoviecz, Andre, 'Gartenlaube', *TIP*, 12/1992

Simons, Daniel. 'Ein flacher Film über den doofen Ex-DDR-Bürger', *Volksstimme* (Magdeburg), 30.01.1991

Smith, Anthony D. 'Opening Statement. Nations and their pasts', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 2, No. 3, November 1996, 358-366

— *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

— *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991)

— *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)

Smith, Gordon, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett, eds. *Developments in German Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992)

Smith, Patricia J. *After the Wall. Eastern Germany since 1989* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998)

Sobe, Günther. 'Heimkehr und Aufbruch des Udos', *Berliner Zeitung*, 21.8.1992

Sontag, Susan. *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1972; reprinted London: Readers and Writers, 1980)

Sontheimer, Kurt. 'United Germany: Political System under Challenge', *SAIS Review*, 15, 1995, 39-54

Sparschuh, Jens. *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen. Ein Heimatroman* (Köln: Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1995)

Spohn, Willfried and Anna Triandafyllidou, eds. *Europeanisation, National Identities and Migration. Changes in Boundary Constructions between Western and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2003)

Squires, Judith, ed. *Principled Positions. Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993)

Staab, Andreas, *National Identity in Eastern Germany. Inner Unification or Continued Separation?* (Westport; London: Praeger, 1998)

Stein, Mary-Beth. *Berlin/Berlin. The Wall in the Expressive Culture of a Divided City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998)

Steinfeld, Thomas and Heidrun Suhr, eds. *In Der Großen Stadt* (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain Verlag, 1990)

Stephan, Günter, ed. *Gemeinsam im Kosmos. Museale Zeugnisse zum ersten gemeinsamen Weltraumflug UdSSR-DDR* (Dresden: Armeemuseum der DDR, 1983)

Stern, Klaus, ed. *Das Geeinte Deutschland. Erwartungen und Perspektiven* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1992)

Stettner, Peter. *Vom Trümmerfilm zur Traumfabrik Die "Junge Film-Union", 1947-1952. Eine Fall zur westdeutsche Filmproduktion* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992)

Steußloff, Hans. 'Zur Identität der Ostdeutschen. Merkmale und Tendenzen eines Phänomens'. *Hefte zur ddr-geschichte* 66 (Berlin: Forscher- und Diskussionskreis DDR Geschichte, 2000)

Stevenson, Patrick and John Theobald, eds. *Relocating Germanness. Discursive Unity in Unified Germany* (London: Macmillan, 2000)

Stöhr, Mark. 'Kleinruppin Forever', (review), *Schnitt*. Online at: http://www.schnitt.de/filme/artikel/kleinruppin_forever.shtml [Accessed 22.12.2005]

Stone, Marla. 'Nationalism and Identity in (Former) East Germany', *Tikkun*, Vol.7, No.6, 1992, 41-46

Straub, Sibylle. 'Der Suizid und "die Wende" in der DDR. Zur Tragfähigkeit von Durkheims Konzeption des (anomischen) Selbstmords am Beispiel Thüringens', *System Familie*, 13, 2000, 59-69

Suhr, Heinz. *Der Treuhandskandal. Wie Ostdeutschland geschlachtet wurde* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1991)

Taberner, Stuart and Frank Finlay, eds. *Recasting German Identity. Culture, Politics and Literature in the Berlin Republik* (Rochester, N.Y.; Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2002)

Taberner, Stuart. *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond. Normalization and the Berlin Republik* (London: Camden House, 2005)

Tapper, Richard, ed. *The New Iranian Cinema. Politics, Representation and Identity* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002)

Teipel, Jürgen. *Verschwende Deine Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001)

Tetzlaff, Michael. *Ostblöckchen* (Frankfurt am Main: Schöffling, 2004)

Teusch, Wilfried, ed. *Heimat in der DDR-Medien. Arbeitsheft zum Medienpaket 8* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998)

Thompson, Peter. *The Crisis of the German Left. The PDS, Stalinism and the Global Economy* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005)

Tilman, Jens. 'Grüsse aus der neuen Heimat', *Geo-Spezial DDR*, No. 2, 11.4.1990, 39-49

Tok, Hans-Dieter. 'Wir sind doch ganz schön naiv. Auskünfte des Hauptdarstellers Wolfgang Stumph zu "Go Trabi Go"', *Thüringer Allgemeine*, 20.3.1991

Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991)

Töteberg, Michael, ed. *Szenenwechsel. Momentaufnahmen des jungen deutschen Films* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 1999)

'Trabiduft und mehr. Ostalgie übers Internet' (no author), *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 28.7.2005. Online at: <http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/stz/page/detail.php/963667> [Accessed 23.10.2005]

Trapp, Dorothee. 'Ungeheure Bilder zum Nachdenken. "Die Vergebung": Ein Gespräch mit den Filmschöpfern', *Schweriner Volkszeitung*, 9.11.1995

Triandafyllidou, Anna. *Immigrants and National Identity in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2001)

Trumpener, Katie. 'Old Movies: Cinema as Palimpsest in GDR Fiction', *New German Critique*, (Special Issue on East German Film), No.82, Winter 2001, 39-75

Ulrich, Ralf. *DDR Design 1949-1989* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004)

Umard, Ralph. 'Im Kleinen Ganz Gross', *TIP*, 17/1992, 26-28

van der Vat, Dan. *Freedom Was Never Like This. A Winter's Journey in East Germany* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991)

van Hoven, Bettina. 'Women at work-experiences and identity in rural East Germany', *Area*, Vol. 33, Issue 1, March 2001, 38-46

van Voorst, Bruce. 'Back in the GDR: Nostalgic Easterners Miss Cheap Wines and Old Certainties of the Past', *Time International Magazine*, 30.9.1996

Vidler, Anthony. *Warped Space. Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000)

Vogt, Guntram. *Die Stadt im Film. Deutsche Spielfilme 1900-2000* (Marburg: Schuren, 2001)

von Billerbeck, Liane. *Generation Ost. Aufmüpfig, angepaßt, ehrgeizig? Selbstaussagen von Jugendlichen* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999)

von Dittfurth, Christian. *Die Mauer steht am Rhein. Deutschland nach dem Sieg des Sozialismus* (München: Droemer Knaur, 2000)

von Dohnanyi, Klaus. *10 years of German unity. Too much faith in the wisdom of the market* (Bonn: Inter-Nationes/IN-Press, 2000)

— . *Das deutsche Wagnis. Über die wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Folgen der Einheit* (München: Knaur, 1990)

von Krockow, Christian Graf. *Über die Deutschen* (Berlin: Ullstein Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000)

von Thüna, Ulrich. 'Stilles Land', *epd Film*, 12/1992, 44

Wallace, Ian, ed. *The GDR in the 1980s* (Dundee: GDR Monitor Special Series, No. 4, 1984)

Walser, Martin. *Heimatkunde. Ausfälle und Reden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968)

Weber, Hermann. *DDR. Grundriss der Geschichte, 1945-1990* (Hannover: Fackelträger 1976; reprinted, 1991)

Weeks, Jeffrey. *Making Sexual History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000)

Weidenfeld, Werner, and Hans Zimmermann. *Deutschland-Handbuch: Eine Doppelte Bilanz 1949-1989* (München: Carl Hanser, 1989)

Weidenfeld, Werner, ed. *Deutschland. Eine Nation – doppelte Geschichten* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1993)

Welch, David. *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)

Westle, Bettina. 'Strukturen nationaler Identität in Ost-und Westdeutschland', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 44, 1992, 461-485

Westphal, Anke 'Es lebe die Empfindlichkeit', *Berliner Zeitung*, 29.11.200. Online at: <http://www.berlinOnline.de/berliner-zeitung/archiv/.bin/dump.fcgi/2001/1129/berlinberlin/0028> [Accessed 23.7.2005]

—, 'Wer hat Angst vor Konrad Wolf', *Berliner Zeitung*, 2.6.2000. Online at: <http://www.berlinOnline.de/berliner-zeitung/archiv/.bin/dump.fcgi/2000/0622/feuilleton/0096/> [Accessed 14.5.2001]

Wickham, Christopher J. *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany. Longing and Belonging* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999)

Wieckhorst, Karin. *Die Darstellung des "antifaschistischen Widerstands" in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur der SBZ/DDR* (Frankfurt; New York: Peter Lang, 2000)

Wiedemann, Dieter. 'Fluchtpunkt DEFA-Filme?', in *Weiterbildung und Medien*, 4, 1991, 49-51

Wiegand, Wilfried. 'Anpassung als Katastrophe. Ein ungewöhnliches "Kleines Fernsehspiel": "Ostkreuz"', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25.7.1991

Wiesenthal, Helmut. 'From "Prime Mover" to "Victim of Change": Political Environmentalism and Its Effects in Central and Eastern Europe' (Draft Paper prepared for a seminar held on March 10, 1998, at the Department of Political Science and Public Policy, University of Waikato at Hamilton, New Zealand). Online at: <http://www2.rz.huberlin.de/gesint/publik/hw/sub3/polenv2.htm#4a> [Accessed 9.9.2004]

Wilson, Elizabeth. 'The Invisible Flaneur', *New Left Review*, No. 191, February 1992, 90-110

Windhoff, Simone. 'Der verpönte Sport - wie SED und Stasi das Tennis in der DDR drangsalierten', *Die Welt*, 14. 11. 2002. Online at: <http://www.welt.de/data/2002/11/14/456215.html> [Accessed 22.12.2005]

Winter, Steffen. 'Wölfe am Wasser', *Der Spiegel*, 26/2005, 56- 58

Witte, James C. and Gert G. Wagner, 'Declining Fertility in East Germany after Unification: A Demographic Response to Socioeconomic Change', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1995, 387-397

Witzel, Holger 'Das Märchen von der Ostalgie. Die DDR-Welle im Fernsehen', *Der Stern*, 37/2003, 190-194

—. 'So sind wir, wir Osis', *Der Stern*, 18/2002, 40-52

Woderich, Rudolf. 'Ostdeutsche Identität zwischen symbolischer Konstruktion und lebensweltlichem Eigensinn' (Schriftfassung des Referats auf der Konferenz "The German Road from Socialism to Capitalism", Harvard University, Centre for European Studies, June 18-20, 1999). Online at: http://www.biss-Online.de/download/ostdeutsche_identitaeten.pdf [Accessed 21.01.2003]

—. 'Gelebte und inszenierte Identitäten in Ostdeutschland', *Welttrends*, 15, 1997, 79-98

Wolf, Christa. *Auf dem Weg nach Tabou. Texte 1990-1994* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1994)

Wolf, Dieter. *Gruppe Babelsberg. Unsere nichtgedrehten Filme* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2000)

Wolle, Stefan. *Die Heile Welt der Diktatur. Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR, 1971-1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998)

Worthmann, Merten. 'Dann setzen wir eben eine Kalaschnikow ein', *Berliner Zeitung*, 1.4.1993

Worthmann, Merten. 'Die leicht verderbliche Vereinigung', *Berliner Zeitung*, 10.4.1992

Wroblewsky, Clement, ed. "Da wachste eines Morgens uff und hast 'nen Bundeskanzler". *Wie DDR Bürger über ihre Zukunft denken* (Hamburg: Rasch und Röhring, 1990)

Yoder, Jennifer A. *From East Germans to Germans? The New Postcommunist Elites* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1999)

Zhang, Yingjin. *Chinese National Cinema* (New York; London: Routledge, 2004)

Zimmer, Matthias, ed. *Germany – Phoenix in Trouble?* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1997)

Zoll, Rainer. *Ostdeutsche Biographien. Zwischen Nostalgie und Neuanfang* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999)