

Abstract

This thesis investigates the differences in gendered experiences of the German reunification. I inquire into the medium-specificity of these differences as reflected in literature and cinema. The first chapter investigates the general status of memory in women's autobiographies and the particular use of scrapbooking techniques. Three autobiographical works are compared: *Die Mauer ist gefallen* (2010) by Susanne Fritsche, *Zonenkinder* (2002) by Jana Hensel, and *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* (2003) by Claudia Rusch. The analysis of these three novels focuses not only on how scrapbooking shapes the expression and content of what is remembered but also the gendered elements of these memories. The more autobiographies rely on scrapbooking the less feminist they are. By incorporating mass-produced visual objects, the East German female authors undermine the gendered qualities of their personal and collective memories. The second chapter turns to *Wende* cinema and considers the status of damaged male protagonists in a selection of the many male melodramas produced after 1989. The three films analyzed include: *Wege in die Nacht* (1999) directed by Andreas Kleinert, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* (2001) directed by Peter Timm, and *Berlin is in Germany* (2001) directed by Hannes Stöhr. By uncovering the triggers for the protagonists' emasculation as well as their fates, this chapter argues that German cinema conceptualized the fall of the Wall as directly affecting the security of East German masculinity. When juxtaposed with one another, female autobiographical memoirs and male melodramas show that experience is inherently gendered. Within the specific historical context of German reunification, these differences employ medium-specific strategies intrinsic to literature and film in order to make themselves understandable.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction: Post-Wall Memory and the Limits of <i>Ostalgie</i>	1
1. Women's Autobiography and Scrapbooking: Presentations of GDR Memory	11
2. Damaged Masculinities in the Male Melodrama after 1989	58
Conclusion: Gendered Memory	91
Bibliography	94

List of Figures

1.1 Map of German occupied zones in <i>Die Mauer ist gefallen</i> , Susanne Fritsche	24
1.2 Statistics on GDR emigration from <i>Die Mauer ist gefallen</i>	24
1.3 <i>Thälmannpionier-Ausweis</i> from <i>Die Mauer ist gefallen</i>	28
1.4 GDR military sheet music for youths from <i>Die Mauer ist gefallen</i>	29
1.5 Fritsche's letter to Erich Honecker from <i>Die Mauer ist gefallen</i>	31
1.6 Tchibo advertisement in <i>Zonenkinder</i> , Jana Hensel	37
1.7 Fünf-Mark-Treter shoes from <i>Zonenkinder</i>	40
1.8 1 st of May worksheet from <i>Zonenkinder</i>	41
1.9 <i>Jugendweihe</i> pamphlet from <i>Zonenkinder</i>	42
2.1 Martin prevents Peter's suicide in <i>Berlin is in Germany</i> (2001), Hannes Stöhr	24
2.2 Walter shoots into East German ruins in <i>Wege in die Nacht</i> (1999), Andreas Kleinert	28
2.3 An act of physical abuse between Walter and his wife in <i>Wege in die Nacht</i>	29
2.4 Hinrich sexual inabilities in <i>Der Zimmerspringbrunnen</i> (2001), Peter Timm	31
2.5 Martin watches Manuela and Wolfgang outside their house, <i>Berlin is in Germany</i>	37
2.6 Manuela embraces Martin in jail in <i>Berlin is in Germany</i>	40
2.7 The demolition of an East German building in <i>Wege in die Nacht</i>	41
2.8 Hinrich modifying the <i>Zimmerspringbrunnen</i> in <i>Der Zimmerspringbrunnen</i>	42

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank Dr. Richard Langston for his extraordinary support throughout this process. I always enjoyed our weekly conversations and our meetings will surely be missed. You have been an amazing and challenging guide and not only helped me in the development of my thesis but also my professional development. You were the best advisor I could have ever hoped for. I would also like to thank Dr. Ruth von Bernuth. I am so grateful that you afforded me with such personal insight into the GDR. Our discussions not only helped to fine-tune my thoughts but also brought a unique perspective to the project. To my parents, thank you for answering my frantic phone calls at odd hours of the day and propping me up during an overwhelming year. To the wonderful staff at UNC libraries, thank you for helping me locate my sources, even when the long German titles were off putting. I am also sorry for all the library fines, although I am sure the library does not mind the extra revenue. Finally, I would like to thank Rory. You've being a great partner and my greatest fan all the way from across the pond. Thank you for reading my work at all stages of the process, regardless of the state it was in, and for pushing me forward when I needed it most. This project thus represents a long journey not just for me but also for the extraordinary people in my life who have provided me with the support I needed to undertake such an endeavor. Thank you!

Introduction

Post-Wall Memory and the Limits of *Ostalgie*

While deciding on a topic for the following undergraduate thesis, I was drawn to the historical moment of German reunification. I have been interested in studying this time period and in way it has been portrayed through artistic expression. Given my own personal experiences, however, I recognize that I am an outsider gazing into this topic. I will never know firsthand the feelings and realities of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain. The Berlin Wall fell three years before I was born. As an American citizen, I will never fully comprehend the impact of the reunification on Germans. Despite the lack of personal connections with this time period, I am still drawn towards understanding the individual experiences of life in Germany directly after 1989. More specifically, I am interested in how gender shapes both one's experience and how that experience is relayed through storytelling and memory.

Gender provides a particularly interesting lens through which to analyze East German. The reunification of Germany impacted all aspects of life. Westernization imposed new rules and changed the dynamics of feminism under East Germany. Female experience after 1989 is inherently impacted by the reunification. In spite of the rhetoric sometimes surrounding GDR visions of equality, the East German state and way of life enforced a system of patriarchy. But East German patriarchy differed from its western counterpart in that it was enforced through the labor force and a social gendered hierarchy. Women under the East German state participated heavily in the labor force, with "90% of women of employable age were in work, studying or in training,"¹ While not all jobs were equal under the communist state, women in the GDR did have

¹ David Clarke, "Representations of East German Masculinity in Hannes Stohr's *Berlin is in Germany* and Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht*," *German Life and Letters* 55, no. 4 (2002): 442.

greater access to state-run childcare and abortions.² The feminist legacy of the GDR inherently changed under the power dynamics of reunification.

Katja Guenther's *Making Their Place*, for example, presents a sociological investigation of both the East German feminist movement and how the reunification impacted East German feminist groups. I could have approached studying this time period with a similarly scientific, sociological approach. She uses of data on measures such as unemployment, participation in the political sphere, and the change in access to services such as abortions and childcare to compare feminism before and after reunification. With this approach, Guenther paints a clear picture of how the imposition of Western ideals impacted East German feminism.³ Data, however, has its limitations. One passage from *Making Their Place* highlighted the more unquantifiable nature of some aspects of the reunification experience. When broaching the topic of *Ostalgie*, Guenther describes a personal conversation she had with a friend. Her friend, Marta, viewed the polished, Westernized stores in their former East German neighborhood as merely a “cover up” to distract Easterners from false promises of Westernization and the unemployment, emigration, and cultural dilution that followed.⁴ Anecdotes like this connect with the core issues of reunification and the complications that arose, complimenting the data driven analysis presented by sociologists like Guenther. These personal snapshots of the feelings and memories surrounding the former GDR since 1989 are what draw me into this specific historical moment. For this reason, I wanted to explore the issues of the time period not through impersonal data driven analysis, but through the artistic, intimate expressions found in various mediums, specifically literature and film.

² Katja Guenther, *Making Their Place: Feminism After Socialism in Eastern Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 17.

The original topic for this thesis was depictions of *Ostalgie* in film and literature. I was originally drawn into representations of the reunification by the 2003 film *Good Bye, Lenin!*. Wolfgang Becker's meticulously researched comedy focuses not only on the events directly preceding November 9th, 1989, but also highlights the generational and interpersonal impacts of the rapidly changing cultural and political climate. The film was not without its problems. Some scholars accuse the film of affirming the ideas of *Ostalgie* instead of providing critical commentary on the phenomenon.⁵ When Alex recreates the GDR on screen, the film presents this reconstructs not only for his moth but also for the audience. The reconstruction of East German products allows the viewer to indulge in *Ostalgie* and interact with items that represent relics from a decade prior.⁶ Opposing this viewpoint, scholars like Sean Allan argue *Good Bye, Lenin!* highlights the importance of memory for East Germans because it provides insight into the motivations for GDR nostalgia.⁷ Even when the parodist nature of the film is taken into account, *Good Bye, Lenin!* still undermines the exploration of individual experience. It subverts individual memory and experience when it generalizes East German experience of the reunification through kitsch comedy.⁸ The film only remains critical because it highlights the shortfalls of East German nostalgia through the incongruence between Alex's fantasy-based, historical revisions of the GDR and reality.

⁵ Mattias Frey, "'Ostalgie,' Historical Ownership, and Material Authenticity: *Good Bye, Lenin!* and *Das Leben der Anderen*," in *Postwall German Cinema: History, Film History, and Cinephilia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 107.

⁶ Katharina Gerstenberger, "Remembering the Writings on the Walls- Remembering East Berlin," *German Politics and Society*, 76, no. 3 (2006): 68.

⁷ Sean Allan, "*Ostalgie*, fantasy and the normalization of east-west relations in post-unification comedy," in *German Cinema Since Unification*, ed. David Clarke (London: Continuum with University of Birmingham Press: 2006), 118-119.

⁸ Anke Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 207.

From researching *Ostalgie* as depicted in film, I noticed two things regarding the scholarship. First, the literature is highly critical of the phenomenon. Many scholars view *Ostalgie* as an unimportant tool with which to understand the reunification experience. Secondly, a masculine perspective dominates the conversation on *Ostalgie*. Inherently this male-dominated conversation often fails to highlight the differences of gendered experiences of the reunification. The nature of *Ostalgie* and its use in reunification narratives presents a perspective empty of female experience. The concept thus limits what can be analyzed in terms of what experiences are presented by focusing only on one gender. *Ostalgie* provides a narrow glimpse at the array of stories depicting life in the GDR and during reunification. By focusing only on this phenomenon in cinema, I would severely limit what aspects of the East German experience I could investigate. With this conversation in mind, I was unsure what perspective I could provide. What could I add to the conversation of *Ostalgie*, on which much has already been written? In addition to the limitedness of *Ostalgie* as a topic, the phenomenon is simply not comprehensive enough to fully explain the experiences of the individual. The commercialized nostalgia of *Ostalgie* is problematic in that the movements depends upon the manipulation of individual's need to preserve his or her cultural memory in order to make a profit. This capitalistic filter on East German memory reduces the East German experience into stereotypes. Despite the inherently sentimental nature of *Ostalgie* films, works prescribing to phenomenon paint Western invasion of East German as successful.⁹

Wolfgang Becker's *Good Bye, Lenin!* was the jumping off point for this thesis, because it allowed me to the question the place of *Ostalgie* within German media since 1989. Upon closer inspection, the topic of *Ostalgie* in film and literature became a secondary interest. It became

⁹ Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany*, 207.

clear that *Ostalgie* was an insufficient concept with which to investigate personal experience. The phenomenon can be a useful tool in telling stories of some East German experiences of reunification. But *Ostalgie* presents only one aspect of the overall exploration of East German memory in literature and film. Instead, representations of memory and how these memories relate to the individual allow for a concentrated analysis of gendered experiences of East Germans during the reunification. The focus of this thesis then shifted and expanded from the limiting topic of *Ostalgie* to the issues of gendered memory presented by East German artists.

Gendered Explorations of Memory

Nostalgia intertwines not just with a longing for the past but also the exploration of personal memories. For the East German community, memory plays an important role in developing East German identity since the reunification.¹⁰ Since the sharing of memory relies upon storytelling, both literature and film possess the capacity to convey personal narrations. Through the study of memory, specifically narratives in film and literature, I explore the individual perspectives of adjusting to a unified Germany. These differences within gendered experiences of Germany since 1989 allow for a myriad of viewpoints on this complicated topic to arise. From the female act of recovering memory to the depictions of masculinity in crisis after reunification, literature and film allow for specific issues of memory and experience to be explored. Comparing different perspectives presented by female and male authors and directors allows for the gendered differences of East German memory to come to light. This thesis therefore explores how gender filters these personal experiences expressed through literature and film.

¹⁰ Nick Hodgkin, *Screening the East: Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Film since 1989*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 8.

Gendered experiences prefer different mediums for expression. Historically, autobiography is a tool for female experience to present itself into the greater dialogue. Female narratives of the GDR often employ autobiography as a way to understand and present the female experience. Successful autobiographies include a variety of women's narratives. The prevalence of female autobiographers originates in a tradition of feminist writers using autobiography to project their voice into the greater, male-driven dialogue. Female experience is less present in the world of film, which has and continues to be dominated by men. In film, male directors, actors, and writers dominate not only Hollywood but also within Europe. Because of the masculinity of cinema, film is a natural way to explore East German male experience. The more popular GDR films, such as *Good Bye, Lenin!*, *Helden Wie Wir*, and *Sonnenallee*, all center around male protagonists and thus present only the male experience. Because of this divide, I selected three female centered autobiographies and three fictional male-centered films. In the first chapter of this thesis, I analyze the differences between Susanne Fritsche's *Die Mauer ist gefallen* (2010), Jana Hensel's *Zonnenkinder* (2002), and Claudia Rusch's *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* (2003). In the second chapter, I chose to analyze Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht* (1999), Peter Timm's *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* (2001), and Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany* (2001).

Literature and East German Memory

"Literature has the power, if not the responsibility, to preserve and share memories after the conditions producing the lives to be commemorated have come to an end."¹¹ In Katharina Gerstenberger's essay on memory and writing on East Germany, she brings to light the idea that

¹¹ Gerstenberger, "Remembering the Writings on the Walls- Remembering East Berlin," 67-68.

East German literature has the ability to help preserve the realities of life in the GDR in the face of the historical memory and culture disappearing under Westernization.¹² Literature's ability to preserve and bring to light the realities of the past makes it an important tool for feminist writings, specifically autobiography. By providing a voice for the female experience, GDR autobiography can uniquely provide perspectives on the female experience without having to compete in the masculine dominated world of cinema. Despite autobiography's status as a feminist tool, not all of the works described in the first chapter are feminist. As will be explored later, a spectrum between the feminist statuses of the autobiographies exists.

From the three autobiographies selected for this thesis, all three display techniques of autobiographical scrapbooking. Scrapbooking originates as a female form of expression, which makes it fitting for use in stories dealing with female memories of the GDR. However, not all of the works selected perfectly conform to the scrapbooking tradition. While *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* clearly represents a scrapbook in its style, Hensel's *Zonnenkinder* only includes some pictorial elements. Contrasting the first two works, Rusch's *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* only utilizes scrapbooking in that the novel weaves together semi-related vignettes. This creates a gradient with which to analyze the works stylistically. The autobiographies also vary in their presentation of the self and the authors' projected relationships with both their communities and GDR society. A clear tension surfaces, one that could be described with the dichotomy of *Gemeinde* and *Gesellschaft*. First developed by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, the theory proposes two opposing societal stratifications that humans organize under.¹³ *Gemeinde* represents the formation of a community that relies upon kinship, shared history, and individuals

¹² Ibid., 68-70.

¹³ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, ed. Joe Harris, trans. Joe Harris and Margaret Hollis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xvii- xix.

that see themselves as part of an interconnected, greater whole.¹⁴ Opposing the pre-industrialized concept of *Gemeinde*, the organization of *Gesellschaft* relies independent individuals acting independently within a system of labor and production.¹⁵ Do these women present themselves in relation to their familial relationships and community, a commonality with feminist literature? Or, do they subvert their individual experiences, choosing to instead place their individual voice within the *Gesellschaft*? Do these authors focus more on micro-level, interpersonal memories or the collective memory and narrative of GDR social and political history?

East German Cinema Since Unification

In the overly masculine form of East German filmmaking, male directors and protagonists dominate the dialogue on memory. With the three masculine films chosen, the male protagonists share a commonality in their struggles with masculinity. This struggle ties directly into their experiences and nostalgia for the GDR and the adjustment issue the present, westernized world creates. The very focused nature of the stories on the male protagonists aligns with common male narration. Instead of focusing on how the individual relates to others and the larger society, all three narrations focus sharply on the individual struggles of the lone, damaged protagonist. The works all illustrate use of the male melodrama, a genre with rich history in GDR filmmaking. Melodrama allows a director to subversively deal with greater issues. The director achieves this through focusing on an emotionally driven narrative, often an interpersonal, domestic conflict.¹⁶ Within the GDR cinematic tradition, the melodrama allowed for directors to underhandedly grapple tough issues while still conforming to the anti-fascist, socialist demands

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See footnote 14.

¹⁶ Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany*, 23.

of East German cinema production.¹⁷ The use of male-centered melodrama after reunification highlights a need for some filmmakers to highlight issues of adjustment and masculinity through nostalgic and emotional narrative.

These films thus differ in how these protagonists deal with external pressures and internal conflict. The variation of responses and success with the three male characters provides a spectrum to view GDR melodrama. The successes and failures of the characters all tie directly into their memories of East Germany. Protagonists' abilities to adapt also connect directly with their relationships with GDR society and the unified reality of post-1989 Germany. The varied responses provide a spectrum for analysis, wherein some male figures succeed under the formula of GDR melodrama and other damaged men implode under the pressures of assimilation to Western ideals. The continued failures of the characters, however, does present interesting questions for analysis. Do GDR films seek to feminize East German men? Or, does manipulation of the memories and emotions of the male protagonists work to reject the tradition of East German melodrama?

Conclusion

The subject of this thesis has transformed during its development. I originally started with the very narrow focus of *Ostalgie*. Since exploring these initial research questions, this thesis now encompasses how different forms of media relay gendered memories of the East German experience from the narrative viewpoint of reunified Germany. The following chapters are primarily concerned with the artist's treatment of the subject. But an even interesting question that I explore is how form relates to these subjective experiences. What genres and narrative

¹⁷ Barton Byg, "DEFA and the Traditions of International Cinema" in *DEFA: East German Cinema 1946-1992*, ed. Sean Allan and John Sandford (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 1999), 29.

tools do authors and directors use to tell stories of the GDR? Post-1989 East German memory is especially unique in that the GDR becomes increasingly harder for the audience to relate to as time passes between its dissolution and the present. Memory thus functions not only as a therapeutic, personal device for the storyteller, but also helps to memorialize the GDR and add to the historical dialogue about life within East German society. As will be explored in the following chapters, how gender and form construct these memories vary in both the aspects of East German life discuss and the greater version of the GDR presented to the audience.

Chapter One

Women's Autobiography and Scrapbooking: Presentations of GDR Memory

This chapter investigates the prominence of scrapbooking in female, autobiographical accounts of the GDR. The theoretical framework supporting my analysis assumes that the feminine approach to writing about memory and personal histories differs inherently from the male approach. Masculine life writings revolve tightly around the male protagonist, viewing other figures merely as supporting figures to the protagonist's story. In contrast to the male tendencies in autobiographical writings, the female voice focuses primarily on relationships, life events, and the subjectivity of the self to others and to reality. Using these feminist theories on autobiography and memory, I investigate how the feminine form of life writing materializes in GDR literature. Scrapbooking techniques, which female GDR authors use in a variety of ways, provide a method for confronting and processing memories of an East German childhood. By infusing scrapbook techniques with traditional approaches to autobiography, female East German authors manipulate GDR memory and history to create a whole totality. These works thus acknowledge the authors' treatment of their GDR childhood memories while exploring East German history during the reunification process. These works differ, however, in the scope of GDR society they present. By analyzing the films through the *Gemeinde-Gesellschaft* dichotomy, the works present a spectrum of how the female protagonists relate with their community and the GDR society. Ultimately, the female protagonist who closely focuses on *Gemeinde* is the most feminist in that she conforms to the feminist traditions of relating the self to others. In juxtaposition to works emphasizing *Gemeinde*, the female subject who focuses only on *Gesellschaft* fails to present her voice clearly, thus allowing her voice to be subverted to the selected historical overview of the GDR.

Using the concepts of *Gemeinde* and *Gesellschaft*, I investigate three primary texts, *Die Mauer ist gefallen* (2010) by Susanne Fritsche, *Zonenkinder* (2002) by Jana Hensel, and *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* (2003) by Claudia Rusch. The three texts are written by women and are semi-autobiographical. The protagonists of each work thus reflect the lives and personal memories of the female authors. While these texts embrace scrapbooking techniques and organizational structures differently, they all deal with memories and experiences from the GDR. The stories presented represent the unrecoverable past of the now gone East German *Gesellschaft* and the communities within it. All three use variations and tools inherent in scrapbooking and autobiography. This chapter thus investigates the texts and methods of representing East German history and women authors' relationships with autobiography and scrapbooking.

As I illustrate, the three works represent three varieties of female autobiographies with various degrees of feminist content. Susanne Fritsche's *Die Mauer ist gefallen* presents a preserved and reductive GDR history through scrapbooking techniques. Her approach does illuminate the importance of scrapbooking in women's autobiographical narratives of former East Germany. *Die Mauer ist gefallen* ultimately falls short of being feminist because Fritsche subverts her voice to maintain an uncritical narrative of East German society. Jana Hensel's *Zonenkinder* infuses scrapbook elements with traditional autobiographical narration, displaying pictorial fragments of an imperfect, disappearing reality. The work also presents a middle ground between Fritsche and Rusch in that she attempts to focus on traditionally feminist aspects within writing but ultimately fails in her attempts. Hensel as a writer and a protagonist is thus torn between blending into the greater *Gesellschaft* and focusing narration and her personal life on her interpersonal relationships and the community. Finally, Claudia Rusch's work *Meine freie*

deutsche Jugend utilizes autobiographical narration in a scrapbook-like style. Through semi-connected vignettes, Rusch explores her childhood and family life while simultaneously touching upon the darker elements of GDR history. With this style, Rusch utilizes traditional narrative devices found in feminist autobiography. By arranging her vignettes around matrilineal relationships and her experiences in relation to East German community, Rusch creates a work that touches on light, personal memories while also working through the grander, post-1989 historical issues regarding the GDR.

These three works represent an array of uses for scrapbooking techniques in dealing with GDR memory. The way these memories are handled in the works depends on the author's willingness to highlight stories relating to community. When these autobiographies instead unquestioningly prop up the greater society, be it the failed East German state or the imposition of Western values by reunified Germany, the works undermine the traditions of feminist autobiography. Regardless of the degree of feminist analysis provided for by these works, all present female memories of an East German childhood. Some authors, such as Rusch, utilize autobiography as a traditional space for sharing unique, feminine perspectives. In opposition to this, Fritsche merely operates under the tradition of female autobiography because of the access it provides without using it as a space to contribute critical historical perspective. By studying this gradient in the three works, this chapter seeks to understand how the female, East German author presents her pre-1989 experience through the process of remembering and relating her childhood.

Feminist Theories on Autobiography

The theoretical basis for this chapter is standard feminist interpretations of autobiography. First, I explore the purposes for choosing autobiography to express the reunification experience. General theories on autobiography illuminate its use as a tool for understanding memory. While memory and first person narration are inherently unreliable, the subjective nature of autobiography allows authors to provide personal interpretations of the past.¹⁸ Feminist theory supports the idea that female autobiography differs from its masculine counterpart. Autobiography provides an outlet for diverse experiences to be displayed, which allows previously suppressed subjects the space to explore their personal narratives.¹⁹ This assertion ties directly to general feminist theory. Liz Stanley asserts that, “accounts of other lives influence how we see and understand our own.”²⁰ In this way, female memories articulated in post-1989 German autobiographies and fiction holds a level of importance. Through this lens, some understanding of both life in the GDR and social issues of the reunification can be explored.

I chose to explore the female experience because of the viewpoint it provides, one that stands out from an often male-dominate dialogue. Female autobiographies provide an alternative to normalized writings on male experience. As Estelle C. Jelinek argues, “women’s life writings emphasize personal and domestic details and describe connections to other people” while male autobiographies often present a protagonist that fits within a masculine, heroic mold.²¹ In many male-driven autobiographies, “characters and events are little more than aspects of the author’s

¹⁸ Pauline Polkey, *Women’s Lives into Print*, (Chippenham, Wiltshire, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), xiv.

¹⁹ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, “Introduction: Situating Subjectivity in Women’s Autobiographical Practices,” in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 5.

²⁰ Polkey, *Women’s Lives into Print*, xiii.

²¹ Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, 9.

evolving consciousness.”²² Male autobiography often presents an entirely self-centered protagonist unconcerned with the greater historical developments in the community or society. Male narration often exhibits a coherent and linear model, one that conveys a sense of order and cohesion.

By contrast, the female voice seeks to authenticate herself through exploring her life and relationships for understanding, even at the expense of maintain a clear narrative style.²³ Female autobiographers often narrate via a disconnected and fragmented method.²⁴ This lends written narration to sometimes be infused with scrapbooking techniques, since this blends pictorial fragments of the past with the overall narration. Female autobiography often focuses on matrilineal relationships, which then provides a more comprehensive perspective on several generations of female experience.²⁵ Female autobiography thus allows for greater understanding of a historical experience through the sharing of a singular, subjective personal experience. In this way, autobiography provides a channel for the unique and often unread perspective of the female experience and memories to reach a broad audience. Within the genre of post-1989 GDR memoirs, we should expect to see more of a focus on community and the development of self-identity. However, as the three works are analyzed, this is not always the case. While autobiography certainly provides female authors the tools to assert a unique, personal perspective, the three authors in this chapter embrace this ability with to different degrees.

²² Mary G. Mason, “The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers,” in *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, 321.

²³ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, “Introduction: Situations Sbjectivity in Women’s Autobiographical Practices,” in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 9.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Catherine Byron, “The Most Difficult Door” in *Women’s Lives into Print*, ed. Pauline Polkey, 185.

In the broadest sense, autobiography functions as an instrument that helps the self in “the on-going search to find and recognize one’s story.”²⁶ As articulated by Shari Benstock, the autobiographical self, “questions notions of selfhood rather than taking the self for granted,” which allows autobiography to highlight how the self intimately entangled with every aspect of a culture.²⁷ Benstock also articulates how autobiography “slips in and out of genre definitions” and that the self-explored through autobiography and in reality “is both culturally constituted *and* composed of all that culture would erase.” The cultural importance of the self plays an important role in female autobiographies about the GDR. Because all three writers of the works discussed here live in Westernized, unified Germany, the authors are inherently influenced by a culture undermines and erases many of the elements of their past in East Germany. Thus, the narrative self of an East German writer post-1989 provides a unique prospective, one that is influenced by both modern day Germany and memories of a GDR childhood. The personal narrative structure of autobiography allows the female voice a medium with which to express herself.

The action of writing an autobiography is itself therapeutic.²⁸ Autobiographical fictions often originate from a need by the author to grapple with loss of authority, or loss of cultural or social legitimacy. The autobiographical form allows authors, particularly women, the opportunity to recover memories or feelings grappling with cultural and historical loss. For example, Hertha Wong’s study of Native American writers, she found that by “arranging fragments of myth, history, and identity” authors use creativity to return to a specific geographical or historical place via memory. This allows the author to “recollect or imagine the

²⁶ Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, 40.

²⁷ Shari Benstock, “The Female Self Engendered: Autobiographical Writing and Theories of Selfhood,” in *Women and Autobiography*, ed. Martine Watson Brownley and Allison B. Kimmich (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999), 12.

²⁸ Smith and Watson, *Women, Autobiography, Theory*, 40. Smith and Watson do admit this claim requires more research.

precise dimension of their loss (of land, language, culture, identity) in writing.”²⁹ While allowing authors to explore feelings of cultural loss, autobiography also functions as a counter-memory to the collective opinions of historical events.³⁰ Autobiography can provide a cathartic outlet to explore past experience. From my reading of East German female autobiography, writing on memory provides a specific tool to grapple with the experiences of reunification a decade or more later. Through this gendered lens, the need to uncover and therapeutically delve into the past will be analyzed in the three GDR autobiographical texts.

With regards to memory, autobiography allows all three female authors to explore their childhoods. As Douglas argues, autobiography creates “a rich case study to promote a better understanding of the myriad of ways in which constructions of childhood are contested everyday within a culture.”³¹ Social crisis can spark intellectual discussion and ruminations regarding perceptions of one’s childhood, forcing the individual to critically examine one’s childhood and relationships within the changing society.³² The upheaval of East German society from 1989 on provides this catalyst for the East German female autobiographer. Thus, the preponderance of female critical examinations of GDR childhoods can be explained as a reaction to the social instability in the wake of reunification. The ability to present a subjective historical reality enables the three authors of this chapter to explore their East German childhoods. Autobiography also allows the authors to understand the historical events surrounding their childhood in the wake of reunification.

²⁹ Hertha D. Sweet Wong “First-Person Plural: Subjectivity and Community in Native American Women’s Autobiography” in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 175.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Kate Douglas, *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory*. (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 2.

³² Ibid., 4.

Autobiographies of childhood act as a tool to understand the overall cultural memory, because social environments shape individual memory and perceptions.³³ Childhood memoirs provide a medium for the individual to challenge the collective worldview of a historical moment through the expression of the individual perceptions of the event. Thus, autobiography provides for a crucial tool crucial with which to understand the reunification process, a time marked by a domination of Western German culture over the disappearing history, culture, and state of East Germany. Indeed, reunification arguably sought to erase the much of East German culture completely. This cultural loss integrally affects the three female authors within this chapter and their understandings of their childhood within the GDR. Through memory, these East German authors explore the loss of their culture and identity through the use of childhood memoir.

The three works discussed in this chapter do not always align with the above theories. Instead, the theory provides a framework with which to understand the degree of agency the authors choose to assert. As will be seen, the author that subverts her voice unquestioningly to the overall historical narrative of the GDR, such as Fritsche, relies more heavily on scrapbook elements. She limits the scope of her writing, by dealing only with GDR society without providing individual experience or highlighting her relationship with community. Meanwhile, the more feminist autobiography, Rusch's *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, describes through personal anecdotes her East German childhood. By being more willing to offer up personal anecdotes and focusing more heavily upon familial relationships, Rusch highlights her relationship to her community. This narrative approach allows her to conform to the expected feminist theories discussed in this section.

³³ See footnote 31.

Scrapbooking in Female Autobiographies

Autobiographical styles vary greatly in the approach, organization, and methods used to incorporate and represent memories. The individualized nature of autobiographies naturally lends itself towards a broader, more creative approach. Susanne Fritsche's *Die Mauer ist gefallen* displays a particular autobiographical technique, the use of scrapbooking. Fritsche's use of scrapbooking in her work becomes the originating point with which to analyze the other two works in this chapter. *Die Mauer ist gefallen* represents the most extreme approach to scrapbooking, using charts, graphs, pictures, and personal objects to narrate her childhood and the historical context surrounding it. While certainly still an autobiographical work, the work's infusion of historical and personal artifacts creates a selective history of the GDR that is framed by Fritsche's own experiences. The use of commercialized pictorial elements in Hensel's *Zonenkinder* and the fragmented nature of Rusch's narration in *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* reflect Fritsche's reliance upon scrapbook elements in autobiography. Fritsche's work highlights a unique characteristic of scrapbooking within the autobiographical genre: the special utility of scrapbooking techniques in conveying and understanding individual memory and social history.

As defined by Goodsell and Seiter, scrapbooking is the "practice of preserving photographs and other mementos in an album garnished with narrative and ornamentation"³⁴ Scrapbooking, while a less traditional form of written expression, visually enhances autobiographical writing. While many scholars view scrapbooks as a mainly visual, pictorial piece of work, scrapbooking methods developed in the 19th century to include written word both in the form of "scraps," such as newspaper or book clippings, and written narration to pictorial

³⁴ Todd L. Goodsell and Liann Seiter, "Scrapbooking: Family Capital and the Construciton of Family Discourse," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40, no. 3 (2011): 318.

pieces.³⁵ Scrapbooking builds upon the tradition of using an album “as a keepsake for photos, captions and daily ephemera commemorating an event, person or theme.”³⁶

Modern scholars have described some of the early written scrapbooks from the 19th century as autobiographical in nature. For example, Buckler and Leeper investigate 19th century female scrapbooks that contained literary entries, such as poems, writings, and clippings, which function as an autobiographical method for the author to make sense of her life.³⁷ Scrapbooks, according to Buckler and Leeper’s theoretical analysis, provide “a type of rhetoric that expresses social as well as individual personalities, enabling a new personality to achieve self-determination through manipulation of the world in which the self is grounded. In other words, the self uses the situation at hand to construct its own separate reality while remaining rooted in that same cultural matrix.”³⁸ The unique utility of scrapbooks allows for the author to highlight her voice while relating her individual experience to the overall social context surrounding it.

Scrapbooks also provide a unique tool for expressing and understanding female voices within a historical context. Scrapbooking as a tradition emerged from 17th-century Germany in the form of an autograph book before appearing later in Victorian England as “a friendship album in which women preserved writings, pictures and locks of hair.”³⁹ Scrapbooks conform to the tradition of women’s craft works by recycling used materials to create a new whole, and the

³⁵ Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Book, Paper, Scissors: An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Scrapbooks,” in *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-60.

³⁶ Hof, “Something you can actually pick up,” 364.

³⁷ Patricia P. Buckler and C. Kay Leeper. “An Antebellum Woman’s Scrapbook as Autobiographical Composition,” *Journal of American Culture* 14, No. 1(1991): 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

³⁹ Karina Hof, “Something you can actually pick up: Scrapbooking as a form and forum of cultural citizenship,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (2006): 365.

creation of a scrapbook can therefore be viewed as a traditionally feminine activity.⁴⁰ As the form developed, feminist scrapbooks were used to assert a female selfhood into the public arena achieved by constructing a whole work with pieces of history.⁴¹ Through rearranging images and scraps from the past to create a whole, women scrapbooking authors can preserve and present, both visually and verbally, an alternative history.⁴² As Goodsell and Seiter argue, the scrapbooks continue to function as a preservation tool for female artists because it allows women to “build a collective identity and moral structure that she intends to pass on to her family and especially her children.”⁴³ This use of scrapbooks to preserve a blend of collective and personal memories for posterity is important for the analysis of GDR autobiographies.

Scrapbooking is traditionally an “output-oriented practice that values the personal touch as well as a community spirit” and allows for the self to uniquely assert itself while still cultivating and emphasizing a sense of greater communal belonging.⁴⁴ The assembling of visual pieces allows the female scrapbooker to create a unique, collective expression of the self.⁴⁵ Scrapbooks can then provide an arena for women authors to “voice their opinions, both personal and political.”⁴⁶ The modern commercialization of the scrapbooking tradition since the 1980s has somewhat changed this community focus. As argued by Hof, the industrialized scrapbook movement has migrated “from taking inventory within the home to commemorating and, in some

⁴⁰ Hof, “Something you can actually pick up,” 364.

⁴¹ Ellen Gruber Garvey, “Strategic Scrapbooks: Activist Women’s Clipping and Self-Creation,” in *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 172.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 196-7.

⁴³ Goodsell and Seiter, “Scrapbooking: Family Capital and the Construction of Family Discourse,” 320.

⁴⁴ Hof, “Something you can actually pick up,” 364.

⁴⁵ Juliana M. Kuipers, “Scrapbooks: Intrinsic Value and Material Culture,” in *Journal of Archival Organization* 2, No. 3 (2004): 86

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

cases, idealizing it.”⁴⁷ This struggle within the tradition between preserving expressions of community memories and seeking to preserve societal experience becomes clear in the analysis of the three works discussed in this thesis. While scrapbooking may have a tradition of fostering community, modern use of the scrapbook, such as in *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, can often undermine community to uphold collective, societally produced memories.

While feminist tradition on scrapbooking remains useful in analyzing GDR female autobiography, it remains important to note that the majority of scholarship on scrapbooks is Anglo-centric. The ties of scrapbooking to Western life play a particularly interesting role for the purpose of this analysis of GDR literature. While Germany has some tradition of scrapbooking, current forms of scrapbooking in German popular culture heavily follows the American tradition. Currently, there exists a plethora of how-to books using the English term *scrapbook* as opposed to the German word *Erinnerungsalbum*, with no clear consensus for the style existing in the German language. Hans Enzensberger highlights this lack of a word in German, choosing to define it in his highly varied collection of writings, poems, pictures, songs, and other assorted materials. He defines a scrapbook as a “Sammelbuch für Ausschnitte” while also mentioning that the word scrappy means “unausgewogen, zusammengestoppelt.”⁴⁸ Enzensberger defines the word through a mix of German and English. In doing so, he shows how the German language borrows the word to describe a scrapbook from other languages. With this recent example in mind, it is not at all unreasonable to use Anglo-centric scholarship to talk about the sub-genre of

⁴⁷ Hof, “Something you can actually pick up,” 365.

⁴⁸ Hans Enzensberger, *Album* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011). Even Enzensberger uses the term “Scrapbook” as the heading for the first page of his scrapbook-like book *Album*. In the introduction, Enzensberger struggles to find what to call his book. He goes through several words from different languages and German before stating, “kurz und gut, und damit fertig, es ist ein *scrapbook*.”

scrapbooking in relation to GDR literature, as the concept has been popularized and present within German culture.

Susanne Fritsche's *Die Mauer ist gefallen*: Scrapbooking and GDR society

The techniques utilized in Susanne Fritsche's autobiographical depiction of life in the GDR draws heavily from the tradition of scrapbooking. Incongruent to the feminist traditions of scrapbooking, *Die Mauer ist gefallen* does not conform to the feminist theory of autobiography explored above. The work does, however, present the clearest example of a scrapbook out of the three works discussed in this chapter. What becomes clear from this autobiography that Fritsche utilizes scrapbooking techniques in a way that overpowers her voice. Fritsche therefore subverts her voice in order to focus on presenting a reductive history of the GDR. She fails to focus on community and relationships, as one would expect from a female autobiography, and instead only presents herself in relation to the *Gemeinde* and East German society. The work focuses mostly on written descriptions of Fritsche's experiences as a teenager during the end of the GDR. The book contains pictures, diagrams, maps, and timelines, which overpower Fritsche's personal experiences. When coupled with Fritsche's young age, being born in 1979, *Die Mauer ist gefallen* falls short of providing the interpersonal, feminist perspective expected of female autobiography.

Common to the scrapbooking form, Fritsche narrates through polarization. She jumps between neutral, abstracted examples of GDR history and descriptions of how her own personal experiences fit within this greater whole. She frames any personal vignettes with textbook-like outlines of history, socialization, civics, the escalation of revolution, and a short acknowledgement of the Stasi. Ultimately, the very nature of scrapbooking allows for the

artifacts to dominate the historical discourse Fritsche presents. In this way, scrapbook elements relating the GDR society overpower her individual experiences. Her young age limits which topics she can provide personal details, since she was only alive for ten years of the GDR's history. The confines of her age and the narrative structure prevent Fritsche from providing much personal input. She uses scrapbooking techniques primarily to emphasize more universally experienced, historical moments of the GDR. She props up generalized facts and graphics with personal stories, which ultimately supports the common East German social history through emphasizing *Gesellschaft* over *Gemeinde*. When handling more sensitive and complicated aspects of East German history, she employs an even more removed, impersonal tone. Thus, the work uses scrapbooking elements to depict society and how it functioned without providing a traditional feminist perspective.

In the forward, Fritsche outlines her intentions for writing the book. Fritsche claims to use her work as a way to place her personal memories within the overall history of the GDR.

“In diesem Buch verbinde ich meine eigene Vergangenheit mit der Geschichte der DDR. Ich schreibe über geschichtliche Fakten, um den Staat, in dem ich zehn Jahre lebte, besser zu verstehen. Diese Fakten verknüpfe ich mit meinen eigenen Erfahrungen, weil ich hoffe, dass sich so auch anderer, vor allem Kinder und Jugendliche, ein Bild von der DDR machen können.”⁴⁹

She seeks to primarily create a work that presents the social history of the GDR for future generations to understand. She does not assume to create the most complete work on life in East German. Instead, she asserts that her efforts are only to inform through the creation of a picture of the GDR through supporting her personal experiences with historical facts. Her use of memory thus becomes not a therapeutic tool, as feminist theory would predict from a female

⁴⁹ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 11.

autobiography. Fritsche's use of her childhood memories works only to support the greater historical narrative.

Fritsche's blending of historical facts and pictures with personal anecdotes and input conforms to genre of scrapbooking. Because of the preponderance of visual and written scraps throughout the work, *Die Mauer ist gefallen* provides the best example of a female-authored, GDR scrapbook of the three texts within this chapter. Fritsche presents a selective work, since she blends a selective use of facts with a childlike perspective. Fritsche fails to use the work as an outlet to confront and analyze her personal memories, as would be expected of feminist autobiography. Instead, she attempts to string together of her memories of an East German childhood through the use of broad historical facts. In this way, the work clearly attempts to focus more on presenting the average citizen's relationship with GDR *Gesellschaft* than with her individual relationships and interactions at the community level.

Chapters one, three, and five all lack any mention of first person narration or any personal artifacts, save for Fritsche's forward to chapter five ruminating on East and West German stereotypes. These chapters also deal with more historical and, inherently, sensitive topics within GDR history. Through an impersonal tone, Fritsche explores the history of the founding and politics of the GDR, socialization and the building of the Berlin Wall, and a brief acknowledgement of the work of the Stasi. Fritsche relies upon passive language to distance herself from certain historical moments. An example of this passive and remote tone is the passage describing the building of the Berlin Wall:

“Um den „Grenzdurchbruch“ von fluchtwilligen DDR-Bürgern zu verhindern, wurden zahlreiche Maßnahmen zur Grenzsicherung unternommen. Offiziell sprach man vom „antifaschistischen Schutzwall“ gegen den westlichen „Feind.“ Doch eigentlich sollten DDR-Bürger an der Flucht in den Westen gehindert werden. Öffentlich durfte man diesen Gedanken nicht äußern.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 88-89.

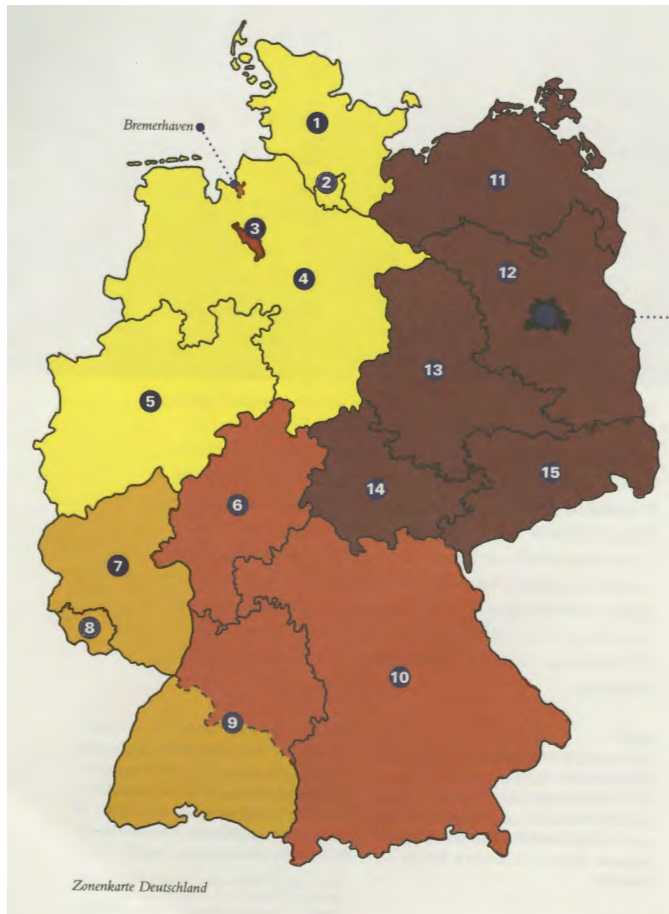
Through employing the passive voice and framing opinions with “man” instead of the personal pronoun “ich,” Fritsche distances her voice from speaking on the darker elements of East German society. She also accompanies the written text with a picture of the Berlin Wall and statistics describing the various measurements of it. By remaining impersonal, Fritsche attempts to deal with difficult topics without imposing her personal influence. In doing so, she fails to live up to the feminist tradition. She inherently underscores her personal perspective, which only helps to uphold the mainstream cultural memory.

A large majority of the work provides a generic, third person narrative of GDR history. Chapter one reads like a textbook, beginning with a timeline of GDR history. Chapter three continues this tread by outlining the structure of the GDR society, economy, and government. Fritsche highlights key terms and moments of East German history, utilizing learning aids throughout. For example, Fritsche includes early on a map of the four German occupied zones [See Figure 1.1].⁵¹ These visual aids accompany basic history of the GDR. Fritsche also defines a broad range of terms that are perhaps unfamiliar to a modern young audience, such as the differences between democracy, capitalism, socialism, and communism.⁵² In a section describing East German emigration throughout the duration of the GDR, Fritsche includes a pictorial representation of various statistics [See Figure 1.2].⁵³ This figure illustrates clearly the mass emigration prior to the building of the Berlin Wall and the stark decrease after 1961.

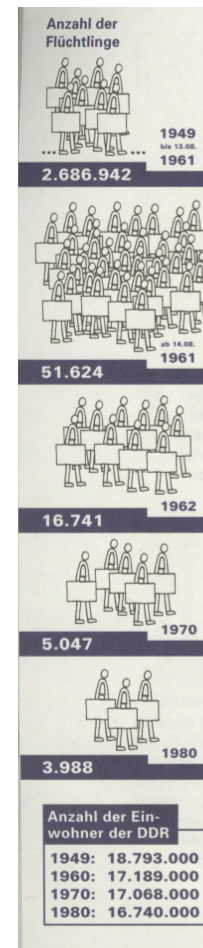
⁵¹ Ibid., 20.

⁵² Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 22.

⁵³ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 30.



1.1: Fritsche's map of the four occupied zones



1.2: Statistics on German emigration

Throughout this description of a controversial historical moment, Fritsche attempts to present a balanced perspective. She cites the reasons for building the Wall, that “[d]ie Regierung begründete ihre Maßnahmen mit dem Schutz vor dem westlichen „Feind.“” She then acknowledges “[v]iele Menschen konnten diese Begründung nicht glauben.”⁵⁴ However, Fritsche does not expand upon this contrasting perspective, which she presents in third person instead of as her own personal opinion. While Fritsche could have used this historical moment to provide criticism, she instead attempts to remain balanced. She presents the opposing viewpoint. She argues that many East Germans viewed “den Bau der Mauer als gerechtfertigt” because those

⁵⁴ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 30.

living near the border could unfairly collect a higher wage if they worked in West Berlin than those working in the East.⁵⁵

Through this collection of pictures, statistics, and definitions, Fritsche presents a lesson in basic East German civics without providing any personal input. From this emphasis on providing a factual approach, *Die Mauer ist gefallen* generally fails to adhere to the common traits female autobiographies. Despite this general emphasis on society and generic history, Fritsche does provide a limited personal perspective. Peppered throughout the work, she mentions her relationship with her family, her place within society, and her personal experiences within the larger historical context. While not concentrating on the community sized aspects of her East German childhood, these moments do allow Fritsche to express her experiences in relation to GDR society. These personal experiences occur when she addresses the common aspects of East German life that she experienced as a child.

Fritsche's autobiographical voice appears mostly throughout chapter two. This chapter, which begins with the subheading "Beginn meiner sozialistischen Laufbahn," deals with her socialization as a young GDR citizen. Fritsche thus provides direct personal input, although her perspective is framed in relation to general descriptions of GDR society. She provides anecdotes of her school life and includes pictures, artifacts and mass-produced items belonging to her as a child. Visual objects belonging to Fritsche such as magazine articles and sheet music litter these sections. With these illustrating artifacts, Fritsche attempts to substantiate her claims of having experienced some part a typical GDR-experience:

⁵⁵ Ibid

Als Kleinkind habe ich natürlich noch nicht verstanden, dass ich ausgerechnet in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic geboren bin und was das bedeutet. Ich hatte keine Ahnung von deutscher Teilung, Mauerbau, Ausreiseantrag... Ich hatte allerdings auch noch keine Ahnung davon, dass meine sozialistische Laufbahn nur zehn Jahre dauern und ich nach der friedlichen Revolution im vereinten Deutschland weiterleben würde.⁵⁶

This passage functions in highlighting Fritsche's limitations as an author. Because of her young age, as a ten year old, at the time of reunification, Fritsche feels restricted in her ability to provide a unique perspective on the GDR. Her age difference also shows why she subverts her experience to the greater GDR narrative. This age restriction also explains why Fritsche over-relies upon scrapbook elements to create her autobiographical account of the GDR. She ultimately does not create a personal memoir. She instead forces her individual story to conform to the dominant cultural memory of the GDR.

As she ruminates on the limitations of her age immediately, she still conform her limited, childhood memories into what she perceives is a "typical" (*typische*) East German experience.

In den zehn Jahren habe ich trotzdem einige typische DDR-Erfahrungen gemacht. Ich wurde in die Pionierorganisation aufgenommen lief auf Mai-Deomnstrationen winkend an einer Tribüne vorüber, bastelte Glückwunschkarten zum Internationalen Frauentag...⁵⁷

She claims to not provide an exceptional voice for GDR history but instead presents her childhood as typical. The more macro-level focus on what makes her typical instead of unique presents Fritsche's experiences entirely in relation to GDR society and not community. This emphasis on society prevents her from presenting her unique feminine perspective, as would be expected from a female autobiographer.

While much of this chapter contain an uncritical tone, Fritsche does use some moments of her childhood highlight her questioning the system and society she was raised under. One

⁵⁶ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 36.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 36.

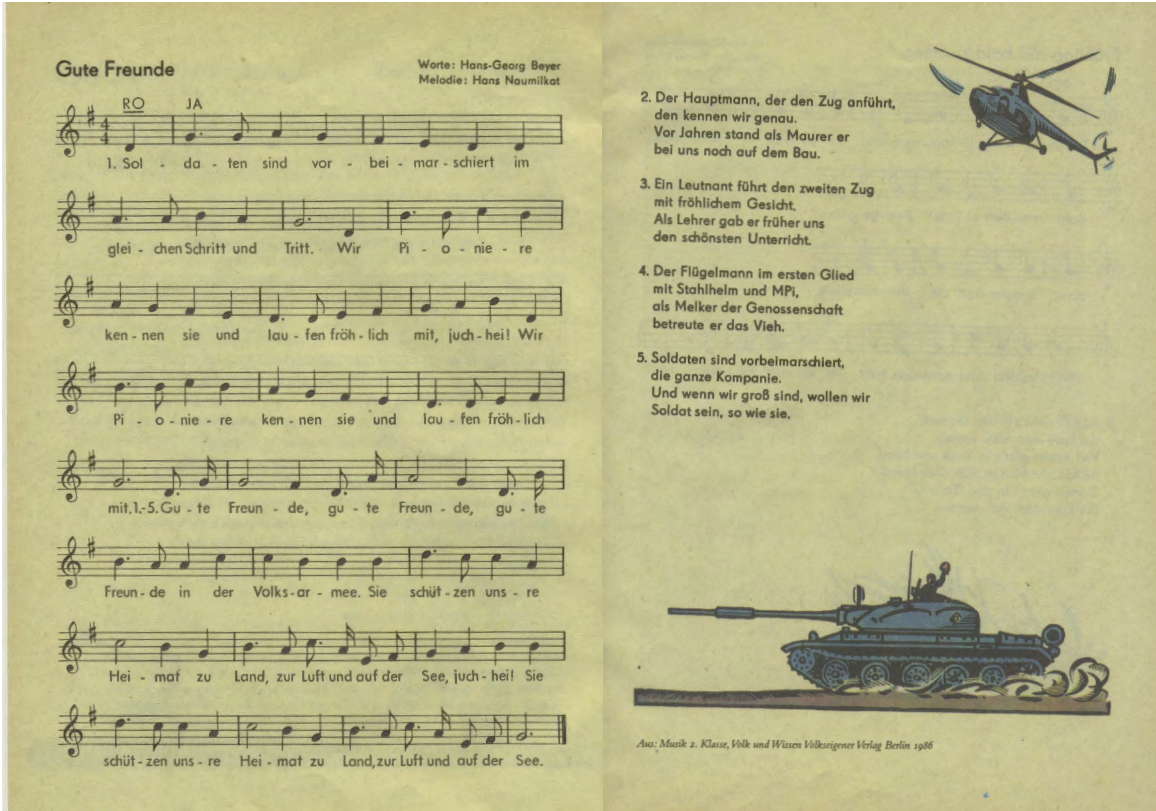
example occurs in the section on “Vormilitärische Erziehung.” Tucked between Fritsche’s Thälmannpionier-Ausweis and a scan of military song, “Gute Freunde,” [See Figures 1.3 and 1.4], This framing with pictorial elements surrounds the reader with the societal materials from Fritsche’s childhood. Within this framework, she ruminates on how hard it was to sometimes accept the strict solidarity against capitalism preached by the East German state. She thus cites the “Statut der Thälmannpioniere,” which states they “üben aktive Solidarität mit allen um ihre Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit kämpfenden Völkern und hassen den Imperialismus.”⁵⁸ Imperialism in this case stands for “natürlich die nichtsozialistischen Länder hinter dem ‘Eisernen Vorhang.’”



1.3: Fritsche’s *Thälmannpionier-Ausweis*

⁵⁸ Fritsche, *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, 53.

Gute Freunde Worte: Hans-Georg Beyer
Melodie: Hans Naumilkat



1. Sol - da - fen sind vor - bei - mar - schiert im
glei - chen Schritt und Tritt. Wir Pi - o - nie - re
ken - nen sie und lau - fen fröh - lich mit, juch - hei! Wir
Pi - o - nie - re ken - nen sie und lau - fen fröh - lich
mit, 1. 5. Gu - te Freun - de, gu - te Freun - de, gu - te
Freun - de in der Volks - ar - mee. Sie schüt - zen uns - re
Hei - mat zu Land, zur Luft und auf der See, juch - hei! Sie
schüt - zen uns - re Hei - mat zu Land, zur Luft und auf der See.

2. Der Hauptmann, der den Zug anführt,
den kennen wir genau.
Vor Jahren stand als Maurer er
bei uns noch auf dem Bau.

3. Ein Leutnant führt den zweiten Zug
mit fröhlichem Gesicht.
Als Lehrer gab er früher uns
den schönsten Unterricht.

4. Der Flügelmann im ersten Glied
mit Stahlhelm und MPI,
als Melker der Genossenschaft
betreute er das Vieh.

5. Soldaten sind vorbeimarschier,
die ganze Kompanie.
Und wenn wir groß sind, wollen wir
Soldat sein, so wie sie.

Ans: Musik z. Klasse, Volk und Wissen Völkeringer Verlag Berlin 1986

1.4: “Gute Freunde,” a military song from Fritsche’s youth

Fritsche only questions the GDR society and her memories of it when reflecting inward on her own personal relationships. Specifically, her greatest introspections occur when discussing her family members. The passage utilizes broader societal materials like military songs and the *Thälmannpionierre* pledge to frame her relationship with individuals. Even as a child, Fritsche wondered “Wie sollte es mir gelingen, Menschen, die ich nicht kannte zu hassen?” This hatred created a conflict within individuals when thinking of friends and family in the West. Fritsche, not uncommonly, had family living in the West. Her uncle kept contact with her family and he, for example, regularly sent her presents on holidays. “Wollte dieser Staat wirklich von mir, dass ich die eigene Familie hasse? Für viele Menschen in der DDR war das ein

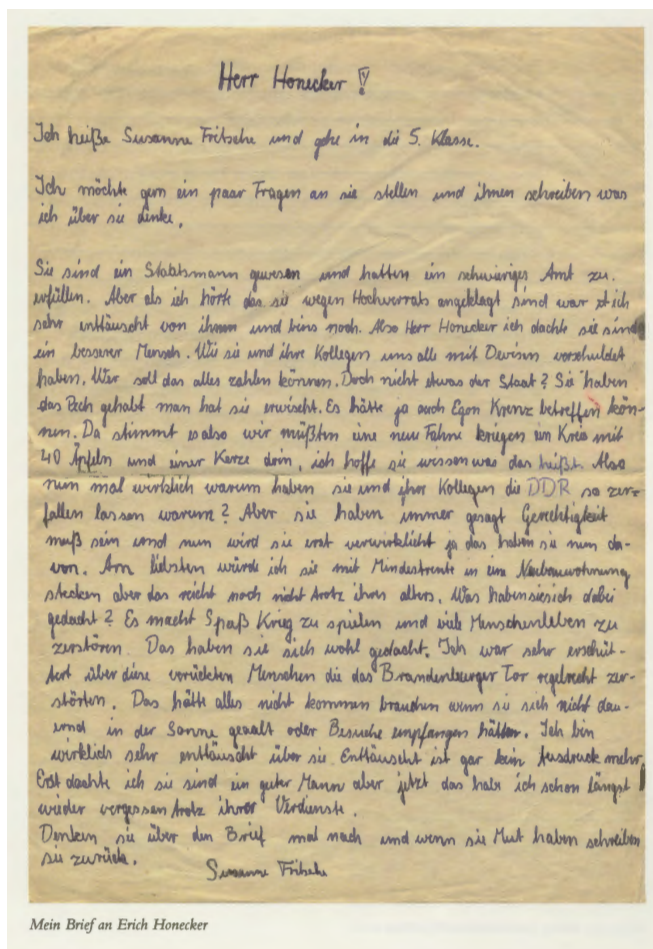
Widerspruch.”⁵⁹ How was she then to reconcile the ideas presented by her society instructing her to hate Westerners such as her uncle? Fritsche uses one of these rarely critical moments to acknowledge the complications of accepting all aspects of GDR society. This emphasis on personal relationships, though lacking in the majority of the work, presents Fritsche’s memories in a way that questions GDR *Gesellschaft*.

In chapter four, Fritsche provides a personal perspective to historical events and the quickly evolving period that characterized the months immediately after 9 November, 1989. Fritsche provides pictures of her with welcoming payment from West Germany (*Begrüßungsgeld*). Later, she includes a letter she wrote to Erich Honeker expressing her discontent for recent events and blaming him for the reunification [Figure 1.5].⁶⁰ Fritsche also uses this chapter to share her first experience of West Germany. She describes how easy it was to drive over the border without a visa, an impossible feat just months prior. She also describes this moment as a sort of awakening, allowing her to begin to understand the full ramifications of the GDR and its attempts to divide a people. “Mir wollte nicht in den Kopf, wie man ein Volk mit der gleichen Sprache in zwei Teile trennen konnte.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 121-3.

⁶¹ Ibid., 123



1.5: Fritsche's letter to Erich Honecker

Fritsche fails to sustain this personal tone during historical explanations of the reunification process throughout the chapter. When not addressing aspects of the process directly tied to her personal experiences, Fritsche uses third person pronouns to convey a sense of a unified sentiment among East Germans during this time. Yet, the use of third person in this section conveys a certain sense of “we,” implying these were feelings that Fritsche herself also felt. Fritsche conveys this feeling through the use of scrapbook techniques. She carefully organizes pictures and artifacts to aid in her description of the events leading up to reunification. Fritsche utilizes word bubbles as a tool to convey this unified “we” voice. These bubbles pictorially depict phrases that were used during protests. Each set of word bubbles face sideways,

emulating a megaphone, with the phrase getting smaller and smaller in font. These quotes then help represent the demonstrators' demands, littering the pages with the rallying cries used in the final days of the GDR. Shouts of "Wir wollen raus!," "Freie Wahlen," "Demokratie," "Pressefreiheit" and more work to represent the unified voice for reunification.⁶²

Die Mauer ist gefallen adheres to the tradition of most autobiographical scrapbook in that it places personal and impersonal pictures and artifacts within her written commentary. Ultimately, however, Fritsche subverts her narrative voice to an overarching narrative of GDR society. The majority of the work focuses more on presenting of GDR history rather than delving into Fritsche's unique childhood experiences. Her narration mirrors the dry tone of a textbook when dealing with general GDR history. When addressing GDR society, she then incorporates scrapbook elements to subvert her memories and experiences. Yet, Fritsche never delves into community and relationships. She rarely mentions her parents, teachers, or friends. When they are mentioned, she does not delve into anecdotes concerning her interpersonal relationships, but how the people surrounding her conformed to the general expectations of East German society.

The autobiographical scrapbook as a form certainly allows Fritsche a space to place her own female perspective of her childhood during the reunification within the greater conversation surrounding the history of the GDR. Yet, she fails to utilize this space to achieve the typical, feminist presentations of female autobiography. Her narration turns away from first person experiences to employ dry, historically based narration. The stark difference between where the first person voice appears and when it recedes indicates Fritsche's tenuous treatment of GDR history within the work. Overall, the text focuses on the relationship between the self and history,

⁶² Ibid., 100 and 109.

community, family, and society, with Fritsche's voice flitting between stark existence and reserved, third person narration.

Jana Hensel's *Zonenkinder*: Indecisiveness in Form and Content

Where Susanne Fritsche's work attempts to present a personally infused study of East German history, Jana Hensel's *Zonenkinder* seeks to understand the struggles of a childhood during the final months and years of the GDR. Hensel relies more heavily upon discursive, written narration infused with some pictorial and historical context. She does not overtly use a scrapbook style. Hensel's work does, however, utilize a disjointed narration with historical pieces to provide a greater context for her personal life writing. Pictures of everyday aspects of GDR life accompany Hensel's narration of the quickly disappearing aspects of her childhood. This works to ground her discussions of her rapidly changing environment with the solid remnants of the not-too-distant past. In addition to mixing in scrapbook techniques into her autobiographical work, *Zonenkinder* presents work that does not entirely adhere to the feminist theories of autobiography. While not focusing entirely on macro-level, societal elements as in *Die Mauer ist gefallen*, Hensel does not entirely present a feminist work focused on familial bonds and her relationship to her community. *Zonenkinder* thus represents a middle ground between Fritsche and Rusch.

While Fritsche attempts to create a unified picture of East German society, Hensel mixes her specific experiences and memories with generalized language. Because of her attempts to balance writing on community and society, *Zonenkinder* achieves mixed results as a feminist work. Hensel attempts to situate herself within the tradition of feminist autobiography from the onset. The opening scene of the novel describes a young Hensel accompanying her mother to a

Nikolaikirche protest. This immediate focus on her relationship her mother establishes Hensel's voice as a female author. However, Hensel does not fully embrace feminist autobiographical writing. Her focus on scrapbooking instead works to subvert her individual voice. This focus on mass-produced items results in Hensel attempting to create a generic narrative self, often speaking for not just her experience but also the overall experience of her peers. This attempt to focus on society and her peer's unified experience becomes clear also in the first chapter, which is titled, "Das schöne warme Wir-Gefühl: Über unsere Kindheit." Hensel does not just focus intensely on her own personal experience. Instead, *Zonenkinder* functions as commentary for what Hensel perceives is the collective East German experience of her and her peers. This focus thus deviates from the traditions of feminist autobiography by sometimes subverting Hensel's voice to the collective memory.

Zonenkinder mimics a scrapbook in its structure. The work is composed of eight distinctly themed chapters and comprised of twenty-two images in total. *Zonenkinder* does not entirely conform to the form of scrapbooking. Unlike Fritsche, who consistently uses visual elements in addition to her writing, visual pieces are concentrated within specific sections. Several chapters are void of any visual aids while some chapters have several pictures spread throughout. Hensel concentrates visual aids around stories and insight addressing general elements of GDR society. The chapters thus place mass produced items, clippings, and pictures beside personal narration and memories. This chapter also highlights the growing divide between Hensel and her parents. Hensel argues that this reflects a greater tension between her generation, who experienced puberty after the reunification, and those who reached adulthood prior to 1989.

From the onset, *Zonenkinder* defines itself as novel focused on both Hensel's relationships and feelings of community while placing these experiences within descriptions of

the rapidly changing society around her. Hensel often attempts to elevate her personal experiences to a status of universality. She seeks to achieve this by infusing mass-produced visual tools alongside personal anecdotes. Within these anecdotes, however, Hensel uses a collective tone through creating “we” statements instead of “I”. The first chapter’s title highlights Hensel’s attempts to capture the collective East German experience. Titled “Das schöne warme Wir-Gefühl: Über unsere Kindheit,” Hensel signals to the reader that she is writing not just on her own experiences and memories but on the universal, collective memories of her East German peers. Hensel uses this device consistently throughout the work by employing similar subheadings such as “Über unsere Eltern” and “Über unsere Zukunft.”

The novel focuses on the universally experienced aspects of life, such as childhood, home, parents, love, and friendship. By addressing these community-based relationships, Hensel sometimes aligns with the feminist traditions of autobiography. She addresses the need to juggle the normal complications of puberty with the instability of her surrounding community, such as shops closing and schools being reformed. Hensel’s feelings of identity were constantly revised and challenged during the reunification, feelings she begins to delve into in the second chapter. “Nach der Wende aber kam mir *Ich bin Deutsche* nie so richtig über die Lippen.”⁶³ Hensel thus grapples with confused feelings of belonging and her identity as “German.” What drives Hensel to write the memoir derives in part from the violent focusing event of the complete disappearance of the political system, state, and way of life she had come to rely on as a young child. Living in a time of change during such a critical, developmental moment thus drove her to delve into her experiences in a critical way.

⁶³ Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 40.

Chapter three, “Die hässlichen Jahre: Über den guten Geschmack,” addresses Hensel and her family’s adjustments to the changing German society in 1990. She describes how the value of items changed after the reunification, much to the consternation and frustration of her parents. Hensel explains, with some frustration, how her parents struggled to understand how goods once valuable in the GDR now became irrelevant under capitalism.

“Warum konnten sie nicht begreifen, dass man mit einem Päckchen Kafee, das früher jede Tür zu öffnen half und über Jahrzehnte das beliebteste Schiebergeschenk der DDR gewesen war, heute niemand mehr beeindruckte?”⁶⁴

Next to this example of the generational tensions underlying her youth, Hensel places an advertisement for Tchibo coffee [See Figure 1.6]. The advertisement caters to an East German audience with the slogan “Oh, die Revolution geht weiter: Grenzlos günstige Kaffeepreise bei Tchibo!.” In the eyes of Hensel, however, the cheap price of what was once a hard to attain good, Western coffee, devalues it. Hensel resents the overwhelming amount of inferior goods she receives at Christmas, writing that she stood “vor dem riesigen Berg mit Geschenken, die niemand brauchte und keiner wollte, und wünschte mich weit weg.”⁶⁵ Hensel’s parents viewed Christmas after the reunification as an opportunity to finally provide their children with what were once luxurious goods. For Hensel, however, her parents’ fascination with cheap Western goods proved to be embarrassing.

⁶⁴ Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 49



1.6: An advertisement for Tchibo coffee catering to East Germans

Throughout the novel, Hensel continues to touch upon the generational strains between her and her parents. She often extrapolates her personal experiences to present a collective experience by using inclusive pronouns to summarize not just her experience but also her generation's. When comparing her relationship with her parents to the family dynamics of her Western peers, Hensel noted stark differences between the two. While her Western friends called their parents over failing an exam and visited home spontaneously and frequently, Hensel recalls the stricter divide existing between herself and her parents. This divide of widened as Hensel adjusted and embraced Westernization while her parents struggled to keep up. Despite her parents' justified and obvious adjustment issues, Hensel grows impatient of their woes. When writing on the "wichtige Regeln, die wir nicht verletzen durften" which dominate her conversations with her parents, Hensel undertakes an exacerbated tone.

Ohne Unterbrechung würden [unsere Eltern] uns über Arbeitslosigkeit, soziale Kälte, Korruption im Bundestag, die ostdeutsch Misere und den Bundesdeutschen, den sie Bundi nannten, in seiner natürlichen Umgebung aufklären müssen. Wir konnten es nicht mehr hören.

Kinder hatten einfach weniger verstand zu haben als ihre Eltern.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 71-2.

Again, Hensel continues to create a collective perspective from her personal experience by employing pronouns like “uns” und “wir.” She also holds little sympathy towards the frustrations of her parents, which are grounded in the reality of the reunification. Hensel’s limited understanding highlights the immaturity of her memories from her youth and the inherent bias these memories present.

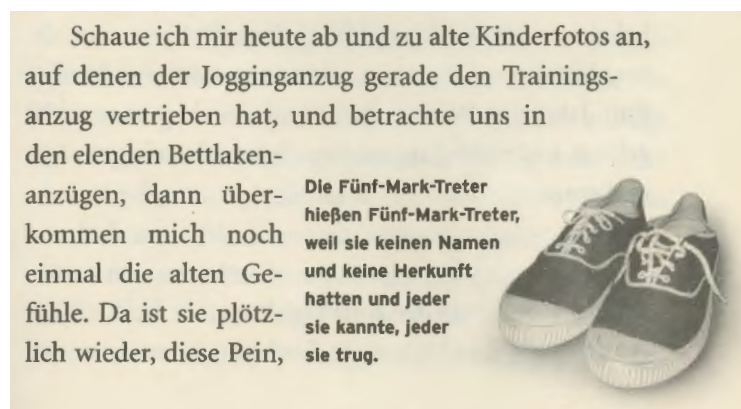
Hensel also mentions how her and her peers attempted to straddle two identities. She argues that they sought to maintain their Eastern roots and childhood while also embracing the positive changes imported from the West. For Hensel and her peers, the task of teenage conformity was exacerbated because the cultural norms of her childhood disappeared. East German norms were thus replaced with a culture foreign to her. She thus became at an unfair disadvantage, since her Western peers could more seamlessly adapt. Because of these issues, Hensel remembers her youth through a lens of embarrassment. She expresses how she was unable to fit into the Western norms because of her East German background.

Hensel symbolizes this fear and embarrassment with a pair of cheap, West German shoes she calls five-Mark-shoes (*Fünf-Mark-Treter*). She places the picture next to her memories of her failed attempts to fit into Western clothing trends. “Denke ich an diese Zeit und betrachte Bilder unserer Jugend, wird mir schlecht. Unsicher, etwas verschreckt und immer unpassend gekleidet schauen wir in die Kamera.”⁶⁷ Hensel thus represents this uneasy feeling with the cheaply made, generic looking shoes accompanying the narration [See Figure 1.7]. Once again, Hensel frames this experience as a shared one, describing this a problem for not just herself, but her peers. Hensel also mixes between commentating on her personal experience and that collectively of her peers a few paragraphs later:

⁶⁷ Hensel, *Zonnenkinder*, 60.

Vielleicht werde ich später, wenn ich meinen Kindern von unserer Jugend erzählte, einfach so tun, als habe es erst mit zweiundzwanzig begonnen, vielleicht werde ich diese ersten, unsicheren und hässlichen Jahre kurzenhand aus unserem Leben streichen. Die Beweisfotos der Lehrjahre würde ich jedenfalls schon jetzt gern vernichten. Mitte der Neunziger, wir waren mittlerweile über fünf Jahre im Westen, hatten wir noch immer nicht gelernt, uns richtig anzuziehen. Jeder sah sofort, wo wir herkamen.⁶⁸

Hensel presents here her personal reaction to this memory of embarrassment. She says that she wishes to erase these years of awkward acclimation from her personal memory. Hensel does not remain entirely focused on the personally, however. She blends her personal stance with more general, universal language in an attempt to speak on her generation's experience. By scrapbooking with the generic imagery of the "five-Mark-shoes," Hensel elevates her personal experience into the broad cultural memory of the reunification. As she has employed throughout the work, Hensel seeks to claim her experience was not unique. In writing "hatten wir noch immer nicht gelernt, uns richtig anzuziehen," Hensel attempts to present her and her peers experience of the reunification similarly and with the same awkward mix of embarrassment and failure to conform.



1.7: "Fünf-Mark-Treter" shoes

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The latter half of the novel describes of Hensel's views on socialization. During this section, she continues to sporadically blend scrapbook elements to confer her reunification experience as universal. This section most clearly illustrates Hensel's struggle between concentrating on her personal, female experience and her need to employ universal language when speaking on GDR society and experience. She creates a collection of school artifacts such as worksheets and programs for events. Hensel blends these persona, visual artifacts with her memories to illustrate how her East German education was linked intimately with the principles of GDR society. When talking about the threat of war, she places a worksheet on the 1st of March, "Tag der Volksarmee" [See Figure 1.8]. Worksheet, filled with cartoon pictures of smiling East German soldiers, accompanies Hensel's childhood fears of nuclear war and conflict. Interestingly, Hensel uses this moment to reflect on her personal experience, choosing not to speak in general terms. "In meiner Kindheit, so kommt es mir heute vor, herrschte Kriege. Überall auf der Erde..."⁶⁹ In expanding further upon her fears, Hensel mentions how she would be so afraid of nuclear war that she would write Erich Honecker saying, "in denen ich ihn bat, alles zu tun, damit die Amerikaner ihre Bomber wieder in die Garage fahren..."⁷⁰ She thus uses an anecdote from her personal childhood memories to discuss critical societal issues during East Germany. Hensel thus comments on GDR society through her own female perspective, something never employed under Fritsche.

⁶⁹ Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 87.

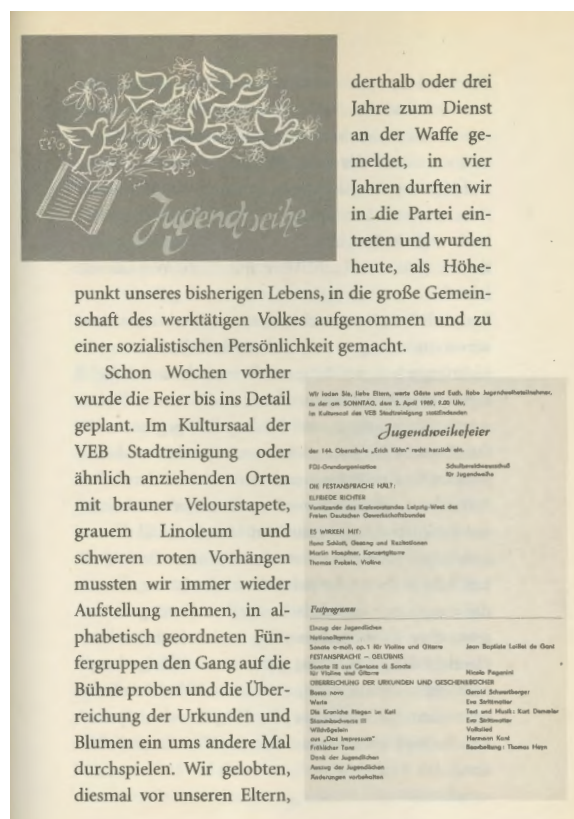
⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.



1.8: Hensel's worksheet for the 1st of May

Despite Hensel's sometimes-feminist approach to dealing with key social issues, she often reverts back to generalized narration. This mixed narration of personal memory and generalizations clearly highlights Hensel's struggle between conforming to Fritsche's focus on society and using a more feminist focus on community and relationships. Pages after her personal insights into war and GDR society, Hensel focuses more generally on her perceptions of universal educational experiences. By including generic articles relating to the *Jugendweihe*, she seeks to highlight her and her peer's shared educational and social experiences [See Figure 1.9]. For Hensel and her classmates, the long-standing traditions slowly crumbled away, creating a lack of stability that characterized her entire youth. The *Jugendweihe* represents a unifying moment for her and her peers. "Wir gelobten, dismal vor unseren Eltern, Oma und Opa und dem gesamten Lehrerkollektiv, dass wir uns immer für die große Sache des Sozialismus

einsetzen...⁷¹ To Hensel, this moment is one of pride and represents the unity of her community and society under the GDR.



1.9: Hensel's pamphlet from a *Jugendweihe* event.

Hensel juxtaposes the image of a unified society, aided with the image of the *Jugendweihe* pamphlets, with one of an East German culture completely altered by the reunification:

Als die Mauer dann weg war, war alles anders. Auf einmal hatten viele Familien zwei Autos, die Muttis hießen nicht länger Muttis und gingen nicht mehr arbeiten. Die meisten von ihnen hatten drei oder vier Kinder. Saubere Taschentücher in meinen Taschen waren kein Problem mehr, konnte ich doch immer gleich zehn mit mir rumtragen und die dreckigen einfach wegwerfen.⁷²

⁷¹ Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 93-94.

⁷² Hensel, *Zonenkinder*, 95.

Hensel's experience certainly stems from some truth. As elaborated earlier in this thesis, the reunification and Westernization of society had a profound effect on the East German family structure. Westernization sought to create a more nuclear family, with mothers being forced into staying at home. The influence of West Germany also introduced to East Germans the convenience capitalism- and its excess- into the previously resource restricted GDR. Yet, with the narrative devices she previously employs, Hensel again relies upon assuming a collective perspective to describe what ultimately is her personal experience. While she chooses not to add pictorial support to her argument, Hensel still narrates in a disjointed style. She weaves between voices and presents her personal experience in one sentence next to a general "we" statement. With this narrative style, *Zonenkinder* seeks to create a singular commentary on the East German experience supported by her personal memory.

Thus, familial relationships and friendships highlight Hensel's experience growing up during the reunification. This focus illustrates how the changes in interpersonal dynamics reflect the overall feelings of change in the community and socialization. She remarks on the divide that remained between Westerners and Easterners, even after the Berlin Wall fell. Opportunities opened up for mingling directly in the West, and many of Hensel's peers, Hensel included, took these opportunities to study abroad in the West without caution. Yet, these moments still necessitated constant integration as her Eastern, Communist upbringing was not easy to dismiss- as any aspect of one's childhood cannot be. "[D]auerte es noch ein paar Jahre, bis der Kalte Krieg in meinem Kopf vorüber war und ich auf die Idee kam, wir könnten uns tatsächlich in sie verlieben"⁷³ This politically driven social divide is a big theme throughout Hensel's continued adjustments to integrating with her Western peers.

⁷³ Ibid., 126

As a whole, the novel identifies more with Fritsche's focus on *Gesellschaft* and society than Rusch's feminist focus on familial and female relationships. *Zonenkinder* represents a mixture of fragmented narration, which blends collective "we" statements with Hensel's presentation of personal memories. The work mixes this narration with some of the scrapbook elements widely employed in *Die Mauer ist gefallen*. Hensel more sparingly uses pictures and historical snippets, which serves to show how she is torn between focusing her novel on macro-level, societal issues and the more nuanced, feminist issues of family, community, and relationships. Still, Hensel grapples with her relationships and community on a scale not found with Fritsche. But because of her implementation of some scrapbook elements, she inherently ties her relationships and experiences into the greater context of the changing society.

Claudia Rusch's *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*: Fragmented narration of community

While Fritsche and Hensel's works utilize pictorial scrapbooking within their autobiographical works, Claudia Rusch's novel *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* provides a more imperfect fit. To the unsuspecting reader, the work appears as a poor example of scrapbooking in autobiography. Yet, the work does utilize a very important aspect of scrapbooking, primarily its structure. Composed of fragmented, loosely connected vignettes, Rusch's work leaves the reader to construct the total picture of her GDR childhood. Thus, this disjointed autobiography allows for Rusch to explore different aspects of her life. The most feminist of the three works, Rusch uses this style to emphasize the community and interpersonal elements of GDR experience. Instead of attempting to address broader societal issues and aspects, as with Fritsche and Hensel, Rusch focuses primarily on her very personal memories, especially her matrilineal relationships. This micro-focus on her personal memories expresses Rusch's personal perspective of a key

historical moment. By not relying upon generic, mass-produced materials, Rusch does not subvert her voice. She thus allows on her own perspectives to drive the narrative. In this way, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* clearly identifies with the feminist traditions on autobiography.

In this way, Rusch breaks the previously discussed work on GDR experience through creating a narrative less focused on generalizations and mass-produced pieces of history. Instead of assuming a collective “we,” *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* focuses much more heavily on Rusch’s narrow, personal experience. As utilized in the other two GDR memoirs, Rusch touches on typical topics inherent in an East German childhood- from Ernst Thälmann to FKK culture to the *Stasi*. Rusch deviates from the other two works by honing her novel in on her individualized experience. She presents her personal experience with a fragmented narrative style similar to that of scrapbooking. Rusch creates her novel through pieces of independent and loosely linked short stories. Her narration maintains a scrapbook structure through less cohesion, which she uses to highlight major, personal life events. She then loosely orients these personal life events with general GDR history and societal aspects common throughout the collective memory.

The narrative structure of *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* utilizes a scrapbook-like framework, composed of individual short stories that jump erratically from one to the other. Rusch does not, however, use on this fragmented narrative style to subvert her voice to mass-produced elements of society. *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* does not contain any pictorial elements. Because of this lack of overpowering, generalized artifacts, Rusch strengthens the focus on her individual voice and experience. This allows the autobiography to be the most feminist of the three discussed in this chapter. The only scrapbook element utilized- fractured storytelling- helps to construct an overarching narrative on Rusch’s personal memories on her community and inter-personal relationships. While these pieces never seem intuitively connected

in theme, tone, or composition, this does allow the reader to construct a loose picture of Rusch's East German childhood and identity. Like a scrapbook, Rusch merely creates and assembles the pieces without necessarily linking them together.

What delineates *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* as a distinctly feminine work is Rusch's constant emphasis on her personal, matriarchal relationships. The novel begins with "Ich bin an der Ostsee groß geworden. Wie meine Mutter, mein Großvater, dessen Eltern..."⁷⁴ Rusch chooses to mention her mother first and foremost in the list of family members who grew up on the *Ostsee*. By linking her own upbringing to her mother's, Rusch sets the tone for the importance of her relationship to her mother, even more so than Hensel's *Zonenkinder*. Indeed, twenty-two of the twenty-seven individualized chapters in the work use the term "Meine Mutter." Many of the short stories focus directly on Rusch's relationships with the women in her life, specifically her mother and her maternal grandmother. Even when not focusing on her matrilineal relationship, Rusch still emphasizes throughout the work the importance of all her relationships. Of the five chapters not mentioning her mother specifically, Rusch still mentions other personal relationships, such as her parent's combined influence on her through their privately displayed opposition to the regime or her relationships with her schoolmates. One example of this interpersonal focus is the vignette, "Peggy und der Schatten von Ernst Thälmann." In this story, Rusch relays an anti-Thälmann joke she picked up on from her parents to her classmates, which leads to being admonished by a girl named Peggy.⁷⁵ Unlike Fritsche and even Hensel's works, Rusch still keeps the focus tightly on the individual and community in her work.

The later chapters, which lack the earlier familial emphasis, depict Rusch and her friends exploring the newly opened world. While these are personal highlights for a young Rusch, she

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 35-40.

still emphasizes her own voice and her relationships with others over the generalized newness of experience itself, a characteristic of feminist autobiography. She frames her description about her first time in West Berlin around her father in the story “Mauer mit Banane.” In Rusch’s typical humorous style, she describes hearing of the opening of the Berlin Wall during her graduation party (*Abschiedsparty*). The story begins, however, by Rusch framing her experience of the 9th of November around her mother and father.

Am Morgen des 9. November 1989 wurden meiner Mutter in einer komplizierten Operation die zertrennten Sehnen der rechten Hand genäht. Damit zusammenwäscht, was zusammengehört. Als sie aus der Narkose erwachte, waren alle Fernsehprogramme unterbrochen und an den geöffneten Grenzübergängen floss der Sekt bereits in Strömen.

Mein Vater verpasste das alles, weil er auf einem Jazz-Konzert war. Als er gegen drei Uhr nach Hause kam, legte er sich sofort ins Bett. Ich weckte ihn um sechs per Telefon mit den Worten: "Papa, mach dir keine Sorgen, ich bin im Westen."⁷⁶

While memories of the fall of Berlin Wall are a shared, universal experience, Rusch chooses to focus first on her mother, father, and then herself. Instead of writing on the general reaction throughout GDR society, Rusch concerns herself only with how the reunification affected her family. Rusch choosing to call her father first while explaining why she did not call her mother since she was recovering. For Rusch the fall of the Berlin Wall was an important moment for her and her family first and foremost, society second. Her ordering of family and community above society is a common theme throughout the work of *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*.

Unlike Fritsche and Hensel, Rusch does not attempt to speak on the shared feelings or collective moment of this personal experience. She instead focuses on her memories and emotions of the night. When choosing to discuss her reactions to the fall of the Berlin Wall, Rusch avoids speaking on behalf of all East Germans. She uses the historical moment to

⁷⁶ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 74.

highlight her personal memories of the GDR, the reform efforts with East Germany, and the reunification.

Das war das Ende. Montagsdemos, Neues Forum, Friedenwachen, alles umsonst. Kein reformierte Sozialismus. Die Mauer war gefallen und der Weg zu Aldi offen. Das war viel zu früh, das bedeutete Wiedervereinigung. Und die passte nicht in meinen Plan. Ich glaubte tapfer an eine eigenständige DDR. Der Gedanke an *ein* Deutschland war mir fremd. Ich hatte zu Hause gelernt, dass die DDR, trotz Stalinismus und Volksverdummung, von den Grundlagen her der bessere deutsche Staat sei. Es ware unsere Aufgabe, ihn zu reformieren und auf den richtigen Weg zu bringen. Darum blieben wir hier, das war der Grund, warum wir nicht in den Westen gingen.⁷⁷

Rusch thus takes this moment, the fall of the Berlin Wall, to focus on other major events within GDR social history: the Monday demonstrations (*Montagsdemos*), the New Forum (*Neues Forum*), and the peace vigils (*Friedenwachen*). She does not, however, attempt to comment on shared experience. Rusch utilizes this historical moment to comment on her personal perspective on the GDR, which was influenced by her parents. When speaking on why “wir nicht in den Westen gingen,” Rusch does not employ “we” as a pronoun to imply a universal feeling. Instead, this “we” relates to Rusch and her family. She also focuses on her personal memories of the moment. Without implying this as a universal feeling, Rusch shows that for her and her family, a unified Germany was never anticipated. They had instead fought for a reformed socialism, “auf den richtigen Weg zu bringen.” Rusch’s narration of the biggest focusing event of East German society, the fall of the Berlin Wall, still revolves around memories of her family and of her parent’s personal opinions. In using the events of 9th of November in this way, Rusch highlights her focus and caring for her East German community as well as her family. In talking about this widely experienced cultural event in such a concentrated manner, Rusch projects her unique, female voice into the cultural memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

⁷⁷ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 75.

Intermingled with very serious subjects, Rusch often highlights more ordinary anecdotes of her life in East Germany. One ordinary anecdote that touches upon a serious aspect of GDR society is “Die Stasi hinter der Küchenspüle.” The vignette focuses on a misunderstanding, which originates with the rule in her house disallowing talk on the *Stasi* or cockroaches. A young Rusch, however, believed that cockroaches (*Kakerlaken*) was a term for *Stasi* workers, saying “Ich dachte, Kakerlaken sei der gängigste Begriff für das Fußvolk der Stasi.”⁷⁸ At age sixteen, Rusch still believes that word *Kakerlaken* was a specific member of the *Stasi*. When her friend tells her so casually that the apartment was fine except for the cockroaches, Rusch is shocked. Under her misunderstanding, she questions her friend with a bit of hysteria, exclaiming, “Du hast 200 Kakerlaken hinter der Küchenspüle?!?!,”⁷⁹ Her reaction continues as Rusch’s imagination takes over:

Und ich sah es schlagartig vor mir: die Miniküche, in die nicht mal ein Tisch passte, die Spüle gegenüber der Zimmertür, in Höhe der Armature ein riesiges Loch im Gemäuer, dahinter ein Raum, in dem 200 Männer standen, eng aneinander gedrängt, wie in einem überfüllten Bus, und alle schauten unbeweglich durch das Loch über dem Wasserhahn... [...] Nie im Leben war so ein vermufftes Studentenwohnheim so wichtig, dass sich zwei Hundertschaften Stasimänner dafür in einen winzigen Raum hinter einer Küchenwand pferchen ließen. Nicht mal für Frieden und Sozialismus. Ich war hier Verrückte.⁸⁰

Rusch thus uses this short, comical short story to broach a serious and dark topic, spying on citizens by the *Stasi* in the GDR. Rusch differs from Fritzsche and Hensel, however, by never assuming to speak on behalf of a collective “we.” Rusch focuses tightly on presenting her personal voice, using only “I” statements to mix a humorous story with darker element of the GDR. She avoids using generalizations, although the anecdote would certainly provide the opportunity to delve deeper into spying by the East German state. Despite this opportunity,

⁷⁸Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 17.

⁷⁹ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 18.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 18-19

Rusch chooses to speak on her personal experiences to present her memories and perspective on East Germany. The light-hearted nature of the vignette also illuminates Rusch's ability to approach real issues within the GDR through humorous and personal memories.

Rusch utilizes fragmented writing through a constant a variation in tone and voice. For example, she bookends the darker vignettes of her childhood with lighter, more frivolous short stories. This allows the novel to provide more personal depth than Fritsche or Hensel allow. Rusch uses succinct vignettes to investigate heavy personal issues, such as how the *Stasi* impacted her life. Some stories appear more mundane, such as being followed in the woods or receiving a package with the contents of it already confiscated.⁸¹ Yet, other moments relay the true personal distress the *Stasi* imposed upon her family. One example of this narrative technique is "Der Verdacht." Rusch places this vignette between two more lighthearted memories, "FKK am Mittelmeer" and "Der Bücherschatz."⁸² The two surrounding stories present enjoyable aspects of the GDR, such as FKK culture or Rusch's love of reading Western novels. Rusch then juxtaposes the more mundane and light-hearted nature of these vignettes with "Der Verdacht," which addresses a more personal and darker memory. This vignette addresses a dark aspect of GDR society through the tightly focused lens on Rusch and her matrilineal relationships. In doing so, the story exemplifies the feminist nature of the work.

This short story describes how the *Stasi* were directly responsible for the death of Rusch's grandfather.⁸³ The story, like the other important life event of the 9th of November, begins with Rusch focusing immediately on her mother.

⁸¹ Ibid., 20-30. "In "Die Hauptabteilung VIII im Märchenwald" and "Die Meissner Porzellantasse."

⁸² Ibid. 104-122. "FKK am Mittelmeer" and "Der Bücherschatz"

⁸³ Ibid., 115-116.

1962 verlor meine Mutter ihren Vater. Meine Großmutter befand, dass es nach einer Scheidung keinen Anlass für Kontakt zwischen Vater und Kind gäbe. Strafe muss sein. Bevor meine Mutter alt genug war, sich darüber hinwegzusetzen, starb ihr Vater. Im Januar 1967 in einer feuchten Zelle der Untersuchungshaftanstalt des MfS in Rostock. Er war 42 Jahre alt.⁸⁴

Rusch does not attempt to hijack this story. By focusing on her mother's relationship with her mother and father, Rusch admits from the onset that this deeply personal and affecting vignette is used to display her mother's pain, not necessarily her own. Through telling this story, Rusch instead highlights the matrilineal conflicts tied into her identity. Rusch uses her autobiography in the traditional sense to highlight the matrilineal relationships and tensions that created her individual voice and self. She also ruminates on the general effects of her grandmother's divorce and how it impacted Rusch's mother's relationship with her father.

The vignette delves further into the pains of Rusch's matrilineal relationships. After opening the archives, Rusch's mother began to wonder who the informant nicknamed "Birch" (*Buche*) could be. This informant provided the information for Rusch's grandfather to be imprisoned and eventually die at the hands of the *Stasi*. When her mother comes to the realization it could be her own mother, Rusch's grandmother, her mother becomes sick:

Meine Mutter wurde schlecht. Sie rannte aufs Klo und übergab sich.
Dann rief sie mich an. Ich setzte Kaffee auf. Fünf Minuten später klingelte es an der Tür. Meine Mutter stürmte an mir vorbei in die Küche und ließ sich kredebleich auf einem Stuhl nieder.⁸⁵

Rusch quietly narrates her mother's actions and emotions. By only using personal pronouns sparsely, Rusch subverts her voice and memories to the narrative and pain of her mother. Her voice only begins to overcome her focus on narrating her mother's emotions and behaviors when discussing her own feeling towards the situation. As her mother questions how Rusch's

⁸⁴ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 109.

⁸⁵ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 111.

grandmother could possibly be the informant, Rusch then begins to express her emotional memories of the moment. Rusch goes back and forth as to how plausible it is that her grandmother was an informant:

Aber nicht meine Oma. Sie hätte uns niemals verraten. Wir waren ihre Familie. Alles, was davon nach dem Krieg noch übrig war.
Oder doch? Hatte sie erst ihren Mann bespitzelt und dann ihre Tochter...? Wie sehr kann man sich in einem Menschen täuschen? Wie weit kann ein emotionaler Betrug gehen? Was kann man noch glauben, wenn das stimmte?⁸⁶

She pleads to the idea that familial bonds would have never allowed her grandmother to betray not only Rusch's grandfather but the two women dependent upon her as well- Rusch and her mother. Rusch honestly discloses a painful piece of family history between two the lighthearted vignettes so as to highlight the fragmented nature of memory and her narration.

Her mother's suspicions (*Verdacht*) prove to be false, allowing for the matrilineal bonds of Rusch to remain solidified. Her mother discovers instead that her friend was *IM Buche*. The friend explained that she had no reasoning for divulging information to the *Stasi*. When Rusch's mother asks why the codename *Buche* was used, the friend replied, "Reiner Zufall. Wegen der abgebuchten Informationen. Wie vom Konto. Ich hatte ein Guthaben, die haben abgebucht. Abbuchen- Buche."⁸⁷ Thus, her mother incorrectly believed the codename related to a birch tree near her childhood home instead of the other translation of *Buche*, booking. The story ends with Rusch, her mother, and her grandmother together and strong in their bond.

Am nächsten Wochenende fuhren wir gemeinsam zu meiner Großmutter und beichteten ihr alles. Zuerst lachte sie schallend. Dann wurde sie ernst. Sie stand auf, stellte einen großen Cognac auf den Tisch und füllte seufzend die Schnapsgläser. Sie hob ihres, sah uns an und sagte: "Darauf, dass dieser Kelch an uns vorübergegangen ist."

⁸⁶ Rusch, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*, 113.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 116.

This act of feminine unity solidifies the work as both deeply feminist and committed to exploring Rusch's personal relationships. While the content of the story relates to a dark aspect of GDR society, Rusch chooses to keep the focus tightly honed in on her personal memories. In doing so, she presents a convincing feminist autobiography.

Some vignettes do focus on Rusch's personal story after reunification. While she does not always focus on her family or community, these vignettes do serve to project Rusch's voice and experience above the general memory and conversation on East Germany. Many of the later vignettes depict Rusch traveling to the West, specifically realizing her dream of visiting France. During her first winter break she drove with friends to France, remarking on the ease of the boarder crossing⁸⁸ While *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* begins with an emphasis on her familial relationships, it ends with a chapter on traveling to Paris. Rusch admits to building up the place beyond realistic expectations, that "Paris war eine Projektion- keine reale Stadt, die ich erobern konnte."⁸⁹ This ending thus deviates from the previous scheme of relying on relationships to orient Rusch's discussion of GDR historical events. Instead, she looks towards the West and all it offers for the next phase of her life. Additionally, this way of ending the story further ties into the theme of scrapbooking, in that no coherent theme or first person narrative emerges. Instead, the difference between the family history provided in the first vignette and the travel story of the last displays the disjointedness of the work as a whole.

Meine freie deutsche Jugend illuminates the limitations of scrapbooking as a tool for feminist autobiography. Rusch masterfully weaves a personal history together with independent vignettes. Her avoidance of pictorial, mass produced elements allows for a more personally focused story that elevates her personal self. As often found in scrapbooking, no clear connecting

⁸⁸ Ibid., 80-85. "Der Stempel"

⁸⁹ Ibid., 147.

theme emerges from the collection short stories, aside from the overall emphasis on Rusch's personal relationships and memories. Rusch mixes deeply personal stories of her and her family's history with entertaining and amusing anecdotes. This intermingling allows for Rusch to provide several distinct pieces of her childhood. These memories do not seek to create a total whole or speak on the whole of GDR experience. Instead, Rusch leaves these pieces for the reader to construct an incomplete yet nuanced picture of Rusch's experience of life both prior, during, and after the reunification of Germany.

Conclusion

In emphasizing the importance of her personal relationships, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* aligns with the feminist traditions of autobiography. Rusch frames her stories around community and interpersonal elements, specifically issues relevant to her matrilineal relationships. This differs greatly from the approach of the previous two authors. Hensel attempts to focus on these familial elements and often mentions her parents, although she talks about them in an abstract and generalized manner. Hensel also attempts to speak on behalf of her peers. In the process, she subverts her voice and personal experiences to present a generalized East German experience reinforced by mass-produced, pictorial elements of the GDR. Fritsche deviates the farthest from the feminist autobiographical tradition. In employing scrapbooking elements, specifically a wide variety of generic and widely spread visual materials, Fritsche creates a disjointed picture of the GDR. Her efforts to present a unified picture of East German society deviating works to only subvert Fritsche's voice. Fritsche's focus on society and her subversion of her voice places *Die Mauer ist gefallen* the farthest away from the feminist autobiography presented by Rusch. Hensel appears caught between the two extremes. *Der Zonenkinder* thus looks to use focused,

interpersonal stories to project a unified and generalized picture of life in the GDR. Opposing Fritsche, *Meine freie deutsche Jugend* presents the clearest example of feminist autobiography, specifically through Rusch's focus on matrilineal relationships and community. With these works in mind, it becomes clear that scrapbooking of female East German experience prohibits the female voice from freely expressing individual experience.

Chapter Two

Damaged Masculinities in the Male Melodrama after 1989

When talking of the phenomenon of *Ostalgie*, it has become almost customary to mention the international hit directed by Wolfgang Becker, *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003). The film was popular across the East-West divide, both within Germany and abroad. It also raised controversy for its handling of the memory and relics of the disappearing GDR. Many film critics and scholars claim the film caters to nostalgic thinking.⁹⁰ Some authors argue the film does not conform to the *Ostalgie* tradition but instead highlights how the individual handles memories of the GDR, both collective and personal. As mentioned in the previous chapter, telling stories about memories remain important tools for former East Germans to reconcile the effects of unification.⁹¹ The mediums chosen to express these memories are, as I argue, gendered. While the autobiography was a clear form of expression for female experience of the GDR, film provides the dominant form of media for discussions of masculine perspective. *Goodbye, Lenin!* Reasserts this idea of the male experience dominating East German cinema.

At its core, the film addresses the relationship between a son, Alex, and his mother, Christine.⁹² *Goodbye, Lenin!* explores the lengths Alex goes to in order to protect and nurture his dying mother. To accomplish this feat, he believes that he must preserve and maintain the dying East German state. Here lies the central crux in reading *Goodbye, Lenin!* as an *Ostalgie* film. Alex himself acclimates well to invading culture and rules of capitalism, bribing friends, neighbors, and strangers to help in his recreation of the East. In the process, Alex becomes a

⁹⁰ Mattias Frey, "Ostalgie," Historical Ownership, and Material Authenticity" in *Postwall German cinema: History, Film History, and Cinephilia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013). Wolfgang Becker claimed to intentionally avoid making a nostalgic film, yet many have sought to place that label on the film against his wishes.

⁹¹ Sean Allan, "East-West Relations in Post-Unification Comedy" in *German Cinema Since Unification*, ed. David Clarke (London ;New York : Continuum, c2006.).

⁹² Ibid.

perfect capitalist. He thus conforms to the theories on male centered narratives. Alex's seemingly selfless efforts to maintain his mother's help stem from his need for self-discovery.⁹³ While the film revolves around Christine's health, she becomes little more than the catalyst that initiates Alex's self-centered character development. Alex struggles to recreate an improved East German state. Alex reconstructs East German life because of his false anticipations of his mother's needs. The irony of Alex's hard work to recreate the dying East is that he misinterprets Christine's acting as nostalgia. Indeed, both characters embrace capitalism. Christine dutifully adapts to the changes of Berlin, despite the capitalistic elements being hidden from her. Alex's actions are ultimately based in his own fantasies and his desire to better the history of the East German state.

In the end, Alex admits to creating a thing that never existed. He therefore does not delve into nostalgia but instead historical revisionism. As one of the most famously proclaimed *Ostalgie* films, *Goodbye, Lenin!* does not even conform to the phenomenon. The film may deal with feelings of *Ostalgie*, but it presents characters that all embrace capitalism. Even Christine, who drives the *Ostalgie* elements of the film, Christine admits before her death that her perfect devotion to communism was merely an act of protection. This admission essentially renders her nostalgic character a lie. At the time of Christine's death, the audience discovers that she knew and accepted the dissolution of the GDR. With his efforts, Alex subverts the female perspectives and opinions of his mother, sister, and girlfriend while allowing for his male experience of the unification to dominate. He effectively buries the female experience under his extravagant efforts to preserve the dying East. While *Goodbye, Lenin!* may present the female viewpoint through a male voice, the work of Alex does not reflect his own transition into the West. The film merely represents the false attempt by a male to depict his interpretation of the female voice of the

⁹³ Mary Mason, "The Other Voice; Autobiographies of Women Writers," in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, ed. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 321. For more, see Chapter One of this thesis.

reunification.

Ostalgie becomes a tool in the film for Alex to harp on the male experience of the reunification. This focus on his own experiences and interpretations of the reunification never acknowledges the feminine perspectives surrounding him. Alex never consults the ideas and wishes of Christine, his sister Ariane, or even his girlfriend Laura. When Ariane and Laura protest his increasingly more extreme actions for creating a better the East Germany, Alex completely ignores their ideas. More so than Alex himself, his mother, sister, and girlfriend all embrace Westernization with various degrees. Alex choosing to ignore their voices, however, relates directly into theories of masculine film. Alex's actions represent the male-centric voice of the reunification. When looking at the tradition of masculinity and the East German, post-wall experience, male directors and actors tend to focus more on the individual experience of men. Female experience is only explored in relation to how it affects the male protagonist. Alex exemplifies this trend. He efforts directly opposes to the expressed and hidden wishes of all the female characters surrounding him. In the end, Alex's efforts to preserve the East German state clearly were a not for the women in his life, but an effort entirely for himself.

Unlike the female perspectives explored in the first chapter, post-unification cinema illuminates a particular facet of the East German male experience: the damage male. The feminine perspective certainly varied. A wide variety of issues surrounding the female self were presented. Fritsche sought to present a history of both GDR society and the impact of reunification on the East German state. Rusch, the most feminist of the works, explores the impacts of GDR society and reunification on her life and the relationships surrounding her. The masculine perspective in film, however, differs greatly. The male perspective as it appears in the many East German films focuses on the individual struggles common to masculine characters. In

post-reunification film, the East German male makes sense of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the readjustment issues of the imposing West. The works selected for this chapter, certainly grapple with the past. These figures do not so much delve to memories of their lives within the GDR, such as the female autobiographies do, but how the differences in their past and the unstable present affect them. The masculine characters discussed here struggle to adapt to a West because of their past experiences within the GDR.

In this chapter, three similar *Ostalgie* films are analyzed, all of which attempt to explore the damaged male perspective of the effects of German unification. Common to all three texts is the male protagonist's struggle to readjust to the newly unified Germany and the hegemony of capitalism. *Wege in die Nacht* (1999), directed by East German director Andreas Kleinert, deals with the inner struggles of unemployed East German Walter. Through a black-and-white style reminiscent of *film noir*, the film illustrates Walter's discontent with the invading West, feelings he expresses through violence and vigilante justice. Walter's character struggles constantly under the force of capitalism, eventually leading to his suicide. In stark juxtaposition to *Wege in die Nacht*, East German director Peter Timm depicts the triumphs of a struggling East German male after embracing capitalism in *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* (2001). Timm presents a lighthearted comedy about the personally and professionally impotent Hinrich, who overcomes his unemployment and his status as a loser by exploiting the *Ostalgie* movement. By competing on the free market of Western society, Hinrich becomes not only professionally successful but also wins back the love of his wife. Between these two extremes of downfall and triumph lies West German director Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany* (2001). This film depicts the dual readjustment issues of Martin "die letzte Ossi." Martin, imprisoned in the early fall of 1989, is the last East German man released from a former GDR prison. Unlike the other two protagonists,

Martin must acclimate not only to life beyond his cell after reunification but also to the changing reality of reunified Germany. He tries to retrieve some of his long-gone East German life while navigating realities of the West. Ultimately, Martin manages to survive while still finding success hard to come by.

For all three protagonists, masculinity collapses along with the Berlin Wall. For all three damaged men, the unified German state and the forces of capitalism imposes subvert their free agency as individuals. Each film explores the protagonists and their attempts to adjust to Westernization, all with various results. The ways in which these films imagine the crisis of East German masculinity differs. *Wege in die Nacht's* Walter views his masculinity as irreparably damaged, so much that he becomes reliant on the state and his wife. His inability to embrace capitalism and relinquish his loyalties to the disappearing GDR leads to his eventual downfall. In contrast with Walter's struggles, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen's* Hinrich embraces the help of the Westernized state to become a thriving entrepreneur. He embraces capitalism, playing by its rules to profit off his fellow East Germans who, like Walter, remain reluctant to let the GDR go. This attitude allows Hinrich to succeed in both his professional and personal life in a way that Walter never could. While the two extremes of over-reliance and self-reliance emerge between comparisons of *Wege in die Nacht* and *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*, Martin's struggles are more nuanced. In *Berlin is in Germany*, Martin toggles between the influences of *laizze-faire* capitalism and the overbearing state. The lures of a comfortable life through capitalism and the limitations imposed by state bureaucracy, both from the dead GDR and unified Germany, push and pull Martin throughout the film. In the end, Martin is left in a state of little to no resolution.

Each of these films exemplifies three clear struggles, all resolved in different ways for the three very different protagonists. First, all three men typify the damaged male or male in crisis

trope.⁹⁴ Capitalism and Westernization act as forces that emasculate each of these men. This Western imposition destroys a distinctly East German masculine identity, and each of the three characters react differently. Because of this emasculation, all three men seek to reassert themselves as fathers, husbands, and breadwinners, leading to tensions between them and their wives. This second struggle between the male protagonist and his respective romantic relationship plays a pivotal role in the crumbling of the East German masculine identity. Finally, these issues with emasculation and love eventually lead to a third struggle, namely attempts by these individual men to overcome the limits to their agency within the changing social context. All three have varying degrees of success or lack thereof. Walter collapses totally under the elimination of the East German state while Hinrich achieves success through fully embracing the capitalist system. Martin falls somewhere between these two extremes. By investigating these male protagonists' struggles, I construct a clearer picture of the East German masculine experience of the reunification imagined in film.

Melodrama

If the female East German voice materializes itself in the form of autobiography and scrapbooking, these damaged male protagonists represent a male-centric melodrama. Of the three films chosen for this chapter, all of which have been addressed to various degrees in the scholarship on *Ostalgie* and post-reunification cinema, all share qualities common to male-driven melodramatic narratives. Melodrama, however, emerged from a feminine film tradition. The

⁹⁴ Phil Powrie, Bruce Babington, and Ann Davis, "Turning the Male Inside Out" in *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*, ed. Phil Powrie, Bruce Babington, and Ann Davis (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), 12-13. This trope has appeared in Hollywood films of the 1980s and 90s as a reaction to both the Feminist movement and to illustrate the pressures of masculinity on men who fail to live up to these norms. The key aspect of this trope is the ability of these men to overcome the force emasculating them to begin once again pristine masculine figures.

trope of masculinity in crisis therefore does not exemplify the movement. What instead characterizes melodrama are “films of pathos and heightened emotionality including women’s film and family melodrama.”⁹⁵ All three of these male protagonists are damaged not just from their conflicts with the state and capitalism. As common in the melodrama tradition, these male figures also feel damaged because a lack of self-worth and their broken relationships with their wives, friends, and, in the case of Martin, his child.

Traditional definitions of the melodramatic genre vary. The term itself carries a sense of ineffable vagueness, making it hard to pin down its exact, universal attributes.⁹⁶ Melodrama can be a “form of expression that disrupts the reality of a text to allow for subversion and alternate meanings to surface,” often done through tactical use of “...emotion, music, and gesture”⁹⁷ Pinkert also uses a similar definition, arguing that melodrama often indulges in “strong emotionalism, moral polarization, and overt schematization” and renders complex social interactions into simplistic codes so that the audience not only feels specific emotional responses to the work, but so that the repressed message may also be revealed.⁹⁸ Melodramas are not always subversive, but rather many utilize for a happy ending to create escape for the audience.⁹⁹ In this way, both the happy ending of Hinrich’s success and Walter’s self-destructiveness can both embody the two extremes of melodramatic film.

⁹⁵ Philippa Gates, “The Man’s Film: Woo and the Pleasures of Male Melodrama.” *Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 1 (2001): 59. Gates also goes into an extensive history of melodrama, pointing out its original roots in not just female-centric dramas but in action-oriented, violent male driven films. This is also key to understanding how masculine films portraying violence can still adhere to the melodrama genre.

⁹⁶ Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987) 71. Doane speaks in depth to the difficulties in defining melodrama, a form that strives to make its subtext obvious and understandable to all.

⁹⁷ Gates, “The Man’s Film,” 61.

⁹⁸ Anke Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 23.

⁹⁹ Thomas Elsaesser, “Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama” in *Film Genre Reader, III* ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin, Tex. : University of Texas Press, 2003), 4.

East German film possesses a long-standing tradition of melodrama for dealing with personal and collective crises. With melodrama, a director depicted an inter-personal crisis while subtly critiquing the social structures throwing the individuals into said turmoil. Originally a way to understand the trauma of post-war Germany, melodramatic imaginings sometimes worked to grapple with the issues of failing masculinity through portraying male figures as “instantaneously salvable through a women’s affirmation or as hopelessly lost in a realm of mental debilitation or insanity.”¹⁰⁰ Melodrama played a key role in GDR cinema, mostly as a means to reinforce the socialist state’s anti-fascist ideals.¹⁰¹ This reliance on anti-fascist melodramas also explains why many GDR films focus on a heterosexual love affair wherein a female is a central protagonist.¹⁰² Furthermore, many GDR political melodramas focused on individual suffering without questioning the failures of socialism, which often played some role in the victimization of the protagonist.¹⁰³

Damaged Men

The struggles of ordinary men to transcend an overbearing, external force plays a huge role in male-centered melodrama. These so-called damaged men typically view their masculinity and traditional gender roles as endangered by specific forces, often coinciding with a sharp

¹⁰⁰ Anke Pinkert, *Film and Memory in East Germany*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 24. Pinkert argues that this form of dealing with post-war masculinity representations of “narrative fetishism,” which postpone the resolution of mourning and work through “undoing, in fantasy, the need for mourning by simulating a condition of intactness.” Thus, through expunging the trauma that the narrative works around, the act of mourning can be skipped over and the posttraumatic period can simply be indefinitely postponed. Pinkert draws upon these ideas from the work of Eric Santner.

¹⁰¹ Barton Byg, “DEFA and the Traditions of International Cinema” in *DEFA: East German Cinema 1946-1992*, ed. Sean Allan and John Sandford (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 1999), 29.

¹⁰² Ibid. Furthermore, unlike Hollywood post-war melodramas, which functioned as a way to encourage women to relinquish their wartime jobs and return to domestic life, DEFA melodrama rewarded the female protagonist for resisting fascism and capitalism by reinforcing her role as a socialist citizen and worker.

¹⁰³ Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in East German Cinema, 1949-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 238.

focusing event.¹⁰⁴ East German cinema often handled the issues of masculinity-in-crises distinctly from its Western counterpart. The tradition of post-war East German cinema often focused on a male subject in crisis and a strong female character. In the socialist context, the female character could not be portrayed as a threat to masculinity but instead must play a role in the solution of the masculinity in crisis.¹⁰⁵ For the East German male after reunification of Germany, the rules and competition of capitalism provides threatens their masculinity and throws them into a new crisis. While personal crises affect all three protagonists, they all struggle to adopt the capitalistic version of masculinity, which places enormous pressure on the masculine figure to be an indispensable husband, father, and breadwinner.¹⁰⁶ Some embrace this trope by overcoming this temporary form of emasculation, like Martin in *Berlin is in Germany* and Hinrich in *Zimmerspringbrunnen*. Not all of these emasculated figures, however, overcome their struggles. *Wege in die Nacht's* Walter eventually commits suicide after several personal struggles with his lack of importance within the capitalist system.

One central tenant of the ideal damaged man is not that he is internally flawed and always damaged, but that he experiences a trauma that changed his circumstances and emasculated

¹⁰⁴ Nicola Rehling, *Extra-ordinary Men: White Heterosexual Masculinity in Contemporary Popular Culture*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 3. Rehling argues that when studying masculinity in crisis, "it is more productive to pay attention to which particular forms of male insecurities are made manifest at specific historical junctures." In this case, the overwhelming affect of capitalism on East German men puts these characters into crisis as they struggle to redefine and reassert their masculinity as the term itself is redefined.

¹⁰⁵ Barton Byg, "DEFA and the Traditions of International Cinema" in *DEFA: East German Cinema 1946-1992*, ed. Sean Allan and John Sandford (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 1999), 27. Byg draws these conclusions based on *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, a famous post-war film done in the style of *film noir*. This tradition certainly carries over into the struggles depicted in *Wege in die Nacht*, which hails back to *film noir* style of the early DEFA films while also delving into the melodramatic masculinity in crisis.

¹⁰⁶ David Clarke, "Representations of East German Masculinity in Hannes Stohr's *Berlin is in Germany* and Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht*," in *German Life and Letters* 55, no. 4 (2002): 457. Clarke delves further into this idea of a distinctly East German masculinity, one that was threatened by the cultural colonialism of capitalism. Clarke argues that because East German women were mostly employed, though in no way always equally to men, East German men were not pressured to be sole breadwinners like males are in the capitalist system.

him.¹⁰⁷ While not always clearly depicted in the films, all three characters are introduced to the viewer immediately after they have become damaged. The primary force emasculating the protagonists, the replacement of communist East Germany with a Western, capitalistic reunified Germany, provides the characters with a choice. In order to overcome their personal crises, Walter, Hinrich, and Martin must work to either adapt to capitalism and the Western notions of masculinity or perish under the pressures of adjustment.

All three of wives in these films defy harsher realities for East German women after reunification. After 1989, women from East Germany faced high unemployment rates and suffered worse than their male counterparts.¹⁰⁸ The women in the three films in this chapter all remain successfully employed after reunification. Although they all having varying degrees of successful, the three women are gainfully employed while their husbands struggle to overcome unemployment. This inversion of expectations further exacerbates the damage to the male protagonists' masculinity. The relationships between all three protagonists and their wives present a special case of East German masculinity in crisis. These men feel various degrees of emasculation not only by the imposition of capitalist masculinity, but also their inability to be breadwinners. Furthermore, the ability of all three wives to defy the odds and overcome Western notions of the nuclear family, and thus their roles as strictly stay-at-home wives and mothers, seeks to further illustrate the ineptitude of the struggling protagonists. Not only does society threaten these heterosexual, East German male figures, but also the success of their wives further threatens their places in the newly developing Germany.

¹⁰⁷ Phil Powrie "Turning the Male Inside Out", *The Trouble With Men*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ Katja M. Guenther "Feminist Organizing Under Socialism and Capitalism" in *Making Their Place: Feminist After Socialism in Eastern Germany* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010) 31. By 1992 the unemployment rate for East German women was twice as high as for men and the imposition of Western, capitalistic ideals of the nuclear family pushed many women to stay at home as mothers, dropping out of the labor force completely.

On the extreme end of the struggling male, the sociopathic, violent, and eventually suicidal figure of Walter provides a clear picture of the negative impact of capitalism and Western conceptions of masculinity had on some men. *Wege in die Nacht* employs a minimalist style to characterize Walter's struggles. The tight focus on Walter's character and internal struggles highlights how his victimization is a direct result of the imposition Western capitalism and value on him. Unemployed and reliant upon his wife for income, Walter becomes emasculated through the obvious role reversals between him and his wife.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the film, Walter revisits the ruins of East German factories, reminiscing on his times as a factory leader before a Japanese firm devoured it. While this film employs no flashbacks, Walter's behaviors and words clearly illustrates that he longs for the structure of the GDR, a society wherein he flourished. He makes no attempts to find a job in the new capitalist system and seeks to gain a sense of belonging through his late night vigilante rides throughout Berlin. Walter's refusal to adapt leads to his eventual downfall.

Walter resorts to violence to express his discontent by attempting to assert power in an otherwise powerless situation.¹¹⁰ His reliance on violence escalates throughout the film. He initially encourages violent behavior in Gina and Rene, Walter's two teenage protégés. Walter uses them as a proxy for his violence. Under Walter's gaze, Gina and Rene commit violent acts against minor criminals. Eventually Walter becomes unsatisfied with vicarious violence. He begins to utilize direct violence, such as coercing a man to jump off a train, abusing his wife, and

¹⁰⁹ Hodgin, *Screening the East*, 144.

¹¹⁰ Susanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer, *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities*. (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 4. Much has been written on the use of violence by emasculated figures to reassert their masculinity.

committing armed robbery.¹¹¹ Walter's violent expression his emasculation as a damaged male concludes with his suicide. His suicide becomes the penultimate expression of his status as a completely damaged male. The GDR forbid portrayals of violent deaths and suicides in cinema since these deviated from the allowed heroic deaths caused by enemies of the state.¹¹² Walter's death therefore defies the cinematic tradition of East German melodrama and its history censorship.

In *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*, Hinrich exemplifies the cinematic loser who overcomes his state of powerlessness.¹¹³ Hinrich's success originates in his complete adaptation of capitalism through the manipulation of *Ostalgie*. Like Martin and Walter, Hinrich also experiences a disappointment in the wake of reunification. Like *Wege in die Nacht*, the film remains securely grounded in the present and makes few overt references to the past. The audience remains unsure if Hinrich was successful in the GDR. What is clear, however, is that his current issues stem from the struggles of reunification. Unlike Walter, Hinrich attempts to find employment. When he does land a job as a traveling salesman, he is still criticized by his wife, who embraces capitalism. Her and her friends do not view the job as prestigious enough. Hinrich's attempts to overcome the historical trauma of reunification are therefore ridiculed by those close to him because his has not conformed to the high expectations of capitalism placed specifically upon many men. His wife provides a steady income through her job as an architect. Her success pressures Hinrich even more thrive as a husband and a successful breadwinner. Not until Hinrich embraces capitalism to an extreme, by tapping into the money making potential of

¹¹¹ Daniela Berghahn, "East German cinema after unification," in Clarke, *German Cinema Since Unification*, 93. Berghahn elaborates further on Walter's internalization of his powerlessness and his need to express it through violence.

¹¹² Ibid., 91.

¹¹³ Clarke, *German Cinema Since Unification*, 2-3.

Ostalgie products, does he become successful. After becoming “ein genauer Kapitalisten,” Hinrich wins back his wife and gains his status as a successful businessman. Only once he has overcome his personal and professional impotence does Walter surmount his status as a damaged male

Berlin is in Germany's Martin becomes damaged dually. Before his prison sentence, Martin was planning to escape the GDR with his pregnant wife. Their neighbor discovers Martin's plans and threatens to report him and his wife to the *Stasi*. After accidentally killing the neighbor, Martin is convicted of first-degree murder. His East German peers and the GDR system and state thus separate Martin from his family.¹¹⁴ While he had attempted to protect his family from the threats of another man, the GDR state ultimately destroys his ability to be a caretaker. After reunification, the capitalist system does seek to help Martin and his sentence is reduced to manslaughter. The unified German state does provided him with a safety net. Despite the state helping to aid in his adjust, Martin finds himself constantly struggling against the Westernized reality of Berlin. As Nick Hodgin writes, “His discharge hardly amounts to a homecoming, since the defining aspect of his home.... have all but disappeared.”¹¹⁵ The capitalist state does not help him in find employment. During his decade in prison, his wife begins a life with a West German man. The state of the reunification threatens his role as both as a husband and father.

Martin is juxtaposed by the two other characters, who together present extremes of the post-unification East German male. Peter, like the struggling Walter, has no job prospects and contemplates committing suicide before Martin intervenes. On the other end of the spectrum, Martin seeks to follow his Cuban friend Enrique's lead. Enrique, like Hinrich, embraces the rules

¹¹⁴ Clarke, “Representations of East German Masculinity,” *German Life and Letters*, 438.

¹¹⁵ Hodgin, *Screening the East*, 146-147.

and laws of West German capitalism, and he thus lives comfortably as a taxi driver.¹¹⁶ These two characters show the varying routes the East German male in crisis may take. For Peter, much like Walter, his “inability to achieve the status of a potential breadwinner in the new Germany is not only destructive of his masculine identity, but also potentially deadly.”¹¹⁷ Martin first encounters Peter after the reunification during Peter’s attempts to commit suicide. Martin runs up to the roof of the building that Peter wants to jump from. All of East Berlin overlooks Peter as he contemplates suicide. Post-1989 Berlin looms at Peter, as the TV-Tower (*Fernsehturm*), East German bloc housing and a construction crane dominates the skyline [See Figure 2.1]. The developing East Berlin skyline reminds Peter of the change and instability of reunified Germany that he has failed to adapt to. Later, after Martin talks him down from jumping, Peter references his dwindling job prospects as his reason for contemplating suicide. His unemployed state makes him undesirable to women. Peter explains how sitting in a bar, a woman asked him what his occupation was. Peter admits he is unemployed, saying he does, “nicht, ganz einfach nicht.... Du weisst, wie Frauen sind. Hast du nicht, bist du nicht.” Peter illustrates the masculinity crisis imposed upon some East German men after the reunification and the consequences of failing to conform to it. Martin’s ability to prevent suicide highlights his role as a complicated figure in the spectrum of damaged East German men.

¹¹⁶ Owen Evans, “Taking Stock of the Wende on Screen: Michael Klier’s *Ostkreuz* and Hannes Stöhr’s *Berlin Is Germany*,” in *German as a Foreign Language* 1 (2006): 71. Stöhr’s use of several different types of East German men is elaborated further upon.

¹¹⁷ Clarke, “Representations of East German Masculinity,” in *German Life and Letters*, 439.



2.1: Martin talks Peter down from committing suicide.

Romance, Family, and the Masculine Crisis

Beyond the conflicts between the damaged male protagonists and greater society, the heterosexual male in crisis also experiences an inability to maintain the balance and health of his relationships, specifically with his wife. For all three protagonists, it is either explicitly stated or implied that the status of their romantic relationships before the unification was somewhat healthy and conformed to traditional East German standards. All three of the wives hold employment, although this was a common aspect of GDR life that prior to 1989 did not necessarily threaten the East German heterosexual male. After the reunification, all three wives in the films shift roles from contributors to sole breadwinners.¹¹⁸ The reversal of roles, combined with pressures to conform to Westernized, nuclear family structures, threatens the male protagonists. The need for these East German men to regain their role as breadwinners creates

¹¹⁸ Clarke, "Representations of East German Masculinity," 432.

much of the tension for the films' protagonists. This tension drives the second key aspect of the struggling East German male: his inability to maintain his family and romantic relationships. The ability on the part of these male protagonists to fix their relationships relies upon their relationship with both the state and capitalism. When viewing these men in relation to their familial relationships, a huge contrast emerges. On one end, we see the success of Hinrich in *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*. Opposing Hinrich's success is the downward spiral of Walter in *Wege in die Nacht*. Between these two poles, we see the continued, unresolved familial issues for Martin in *Berlin is in Germany*.

Since each male experiences his personal crisis of East German masculinity differently, we also see how their relationships with their wives and families, as heterosexual men, also differ. For Walter, his emasculation by the *Wende* and capitalism disables his ability to provide for his wife. In doing so, his inability destroys his identity as the typical, East German masculine figure who held a prestigious job important to the labor economy. Hinrich directly opposes Walter's experience. The archetypal "loser," Hinrich's discontent with the reunification only surfaces after his wife leaves him. Her leaving him forces Hinrich to prove himself as a successful capitalist. Martin has balanced feelings of emasculation. His relationships with both his wife and son present a more complicated and nuanced perspective. Martin struggles under the dual forces of the dying East German state and capitalism. He sacrifices his role as husband and father, deferring to a West German man to fill the role as primary breadwinner. Even in Martin's more nuanced account of an East German male in crisis, heterosexual conceptions of love and family vanish under the imposition of capitalism. The West appears to tear apart each of these East German men from their family, which leaves their emotionally and financially more stable wives to support their struggling husbands.

For Walter, the fall of the Berlin Wall did not just eliminate his revered career but his whole East German masculine identity. The domineering shift of Western capitalism, and the proceeding Western conceptions of masculinity, threatens Walter's entire understanding of his self. Emasculated by unemployment and lack of purpose, he struggles further to adjust to the power imbalance in his marriage. In the wake of reunification, Walter's masculinity becomes rendered obsolete.¹¹⁹ Once the successful factory manager, Walter succumbs to unemployment, relying on his wife's job as a waitress to support the two of them. In one scene, Walter does not have enough money to buy a coffee at the restaurant his wife works at. She quietly hands him some money but Walter appears visibly embarrassed. Walter expresses this embarrassment in the next two scenes with violence. First he confronts two young men outside his wife's workplace and accuses them of breaking into what they claim is their car. When the young men ignore Walter, he becomes visibly upset and asks the men for their ID cards (*Personalausweis*). His wife tears Walter away, but he then drives them to the abandoned factory he once managed. Walter fires off two rounds of his gun into the rubble of the dark, wet, and destroyed building [See Figure 2.2]. The two rounds seem to symbolically represent the two men who defied him earlier. As argued by David Clarke,

“Thus, on the site of his former authority, Walter plays out in fantasy the violent revenge he desires against those more successful men under the new capitalist system who refuse to show him respect of the kind he enjoys from Rene and Gina.”¹²⁰

He then shoots off a third round and, appearing to have found some peace, closes his eyes. Early on in the film, the audience sees Walter's expressions of his inability to prove himself as a strong masculine character through his violence.

¹¹⁹ Clarke, “Representations of East German Masculinity,” 444.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 446.



2.2: Walter expresses his frustrations through violence. He fires off a handgun into the rubble of an East German factory as a way to symbolically grapple with his loss of status and his current inabilities.

Walter expresses his interpersonal struggles, both in his relationship with the young West German couple and his wife, through increasingly more drastic means of violence. Walter's initial inability and unwillingness to integrate pushes him towards vigilante justice. He initially aims his violent outbursts only towards other violent and Western men. While originally using Gina and Rene as a proxy for this violence, Walter eventually begins to physically abuse others himself. His need to utilize violence in his relationships, specifically with women, becomes clearer as Walter fails to integrate. The turning point in his relationship with Gina, for example, is when Walter begins to resort to actual use of violence. Gina confronts Walter after seeing him interact with a former East German colleague, who calls Walter "Genosse Bergkampf." Walter's interaction with the man exposes thus his true biases for the dead GDR. Gina confronts him about his role in the GDR after Walter brings him to the factory ruins he frequents. Surrounded by the destroyed remnants of Walter's former life, Gina calls him "ein verdammtes wahnwitziges

schweinchen.” Walter responds by shouting “Ihr bleibt hier!” and proceeds to shoot Gina in the leg. His violent act effectively divides Walter from Gina but does not fully destroy their relationship.

Similarly, Walter expresses increasingly paranoid and physically abusive behavior towards his wife. He takes from his wife while failing to provide for them, as is expected out of him. Throughout the film, Walter’s abuses his wife’s doting kindness and concern. He stays out late at a casino to flirt with the female bartender and get drunk. After these late nights out, he comes home and passes, all while his wife cares for him. Later, Walter becomes obsessed with the loud, jarring new-jazz music he takes from Gina. At home, Walter blasts the music throughout the house at a deafening level. The jazz music seems to tonally express Walter’s brewing internal conflict and downfall. When his wife comes in to turn it off, Walter snaps in a fit of jealous rage. He asks why she has brought home a friend from work and why she will be working late. Walter accuses her of being intentionally deceptive, attempting to force her to call her boss. Like with Gina, Walter oversteps from internal violence to physically expressing it, striking his wife in their living room [See Figure 2.3]. This poignant moment of violent expression visually presents Walter’s internal frustrations. For Walter, his wife’s ability to acclimate in the face of his ineptitude threatens his already damaged masculinity. He continues to express this with outward violence outwards again, later to rob a necklace from a jewelry store. He hopes this will gain back status with his wife. Walter realizes, however, that he is trapped under the pressures of Western masculinity. His suicide becomes inevitable, as Walter sees it as the only means for escape.



2.3: Walter expresses his dissatisfaction with his place in reunified Germany and the imposition of Western masculinity through violence. This eventually turns him towards violent behavior towards the one supporting character in his life- his wife.

The melodramatic romantic comedy of *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* hinges heavily upon the marital issues of the protagonist Hinrich. His wife, an architect, integrates quite easily into post-unification culture. She works under a successful West German man, a relationship that later develops into a romantic one. However, Hinrich's initial lack of career prospects truly threatens his relationship with Julia. His unemployment creates a disparaging mood in Hinrich that prevents him from succeeding in his job, his role as a provider, and even in the bedroom with his wife. Even full employment cannot satisfy his wife, who by embracing capitalism begins to equate success with the model of Western masculinity. Only when Hinrich becomes a true capitalist through capitalizing on *Ostalgie* desires does he win back the love of his wife. Walter's ability to succeed creates the perfect happy ending to his melodrama.

At the onset of the film, Hinrich appears to be making a mild attempt at living an

inversion of the Western nuclear family, wherein he tends to the needs of the house, his wife, and the dog. By staying at home and preparing meals for his wife, however, Hinrich comes across as the typical male “loser,” who depends upon his wife for income. While his wife, Julia, has a successful job as an architect, Hinrich seems unmotivated to find a job of equal prestige. Only after his wife leaves him does Hinrich feel the need to embrace capitalism. Hinrich feels unbothered by this power inversion while his wife finds the arrangement unacceptable. She ostensibly wants to conform to Western ideals. She expresses this need by engaging in the advances by her suave Western boss and pressuring Hinrich into gainful employment.

Hinrich’s inability to be a strong, masculine figure sexually further exacerbates his wife. His inability to dominate in the bedroom visibly frustrates Julia. After Hinrich gains employment, Julia attempts to seduce him, assuming a position on top of him in their bed [See Figure 2.4]. Hinrich, however, seems unsure of the situation and nervously lets Julia seduce him. His inability to react strongly to his wife’s advances highlights Hinrich’s status as a male “loser.” Their role reversal and Hinrich’s impotence further exacerbates his wife. Julia ties Walter’s inability to provide economically directly with his worth as both a husband and a lover. The imposition of the nuclear, Western family structure clearly matters to her and when Hinrich fails to live up to this ideal, she leaves him. His wife’s decision to leave him thus becomes the catalyst for Hinrich to change and embrace capitalism. He utilizes entrepreneurship to overcome both his unemployment and the loss of his wife. For Hinrich, financial independence and success holds the key to overcoming all of his personal roadblocks.¹²¹

¹²¹ Hodgin, *Screening the East*, 168.



2.4: Despite his wife's blatant sexual advances, Hinrich remains entirely submissive and shy during their scene of intimacy. His impotence illuminates his status as a "loser" male protagonist.

Finally, the least extreme of the three films, *Berlin is in Germany*, portrays the complex, evolving relationship between Martin, his wife Mauela, and his son. For Martin, his oppression and emasculation come from both the state and the harsh realities of capitalism. While he faces obstacles, Nick Hodgkin argues that Martin's "masculinity is never in doubt."¹²² Martin does not conform to the loser status of Hinrich or the brokenness of Walter. Instead, Martin merely faces obstacles by the state and his circumstances that prevent him from fulfilling his masculine roles. While the other films present only result for East German after reunification, *Berlin is in Germany* does not present any specific construction of masculinity and instead presents a spectrum.¹²³ Martin therefore presents a masculine character whose ability to be a masculine figure is threatened. While the GDR ultimately separated Martin from his pregnant wife, West

¹²² Hodgkin, *Screening the East*, 149. Hodgkin further argues that martin is also not "compromised by his western rival" also does not hold true.

¹²³ Clarke, "Representations of East German Masculinity," 448.

Germany maintains his status as a felon. With few resources to help in his reintegration to both life outside prison and post-unification, Martin becomes submissive to the will of both Western bureaucracy and unrelenting capitalism. These outside forces thus hamper Martin's masculinity and his attempts to reconnect with his wife, Manuela, and his son, Rokko.

On an interpersonal level, a West German man, Wolfgang, threatens Martin's ability to reconnect with his family. Wolfgang, Manuela's boyfriend and Rokko's father figure, drives a new Mercedes and helps provide the family with a comfortable, West German home. One of Martin's first acts after being released from prison is visiting Rokko. After learning that Manuela is not home, he waits outside her house to catch a glimpse of her. Hiding behind a tree, he observes a scene of perfect domesticity. Manuela and Wolfgang, in their modern Mercedes, unload their shopping bags and kiss [See Figure 2.5]. As Martin looks on, his role as an outsider becomes clear. Manuela embraced Westernization and this allows for stability for her and Rokko. After observing this, Martin realizes how vital it is for him to embrace Western roles in order to reassert himself as a father and husband.



2.5: Hiding outside of Manuela's house, Marin observes the new state of his family.

Throughout Martin's process of reasserting himself as a father and husband, Wolfgang clearly exhibits contempt and distrust towards him. Wolfgang, a West German teacher, embodies the West German masculinity Martin seeks to gain. This becomes an ideal that Martin cannot live up to despite his best efforts. Their struggles to assert their role as the leading masculine figure in both Manuela and Rokko's life creates a clear tension in the family. When Martin needs Manuela most, after being accused erroneously of distributing Viktor's child pornography, Wolfgang ludicrously intervenes. He locks Manuela in the bathroom and calls the police on Martin. The embodiment of Western masculinity therefore attempts to further destroy Martin's healing East German family. Wolfgang's ill-planned attempts to ward off Martin fail. Wolfgang's outburst works to alienate Manuela, who still sees Martin as an important figure in her and Rokko's life.

As Martin awaits a sentence of potentially decades more in prison, Manuela visits him. Although Martin attempts to push Manuela towards once again embracing her new life with

Wolfgang, as Martin did when he was previously imprisoned, Manuela resists. She hands Martin Rokko's gameboy. Included with it is a note from Rokko acknowledging Martin as his father. With this gesture, Manuela signals to Martin her wishes to continue repairing their broken family. Separate again by prison bars, the pair kiss [See Figure 2.6]. Despite the threat of further incarceration and the hurdles of the bureaucratic and unforgiving state, Martin's arduous attempts to repair his fractured family appear to be paying off. Manuela reaching out to Martin gives him hope that he can reassert himself as the central male in his family.¹²⁴



2.6: Manuela chooses to visit Martin in prison after sharing with Rokko that Martin is his father.

Despite Martin's efforts to reunify his divided family, he still seeks physical comfort in Ludmilla, an Eastern European stripper. Their relationship starkly contrasts with Martin's attempts at a stable relationship with Manuela and Rokko. When Martin's initial attempts to re-establish his familial role falter, Ludmilla provides a temporary escape. As an individual, she

¹²⁴ Owen Evans, "Taking Stock of the Wende on Screen: Michael Klier's *Ostkreuz* and Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany*," in *German as a Foreign Language*, 1 (2006), 70. Evans argues that unlike early unification films, *Berlin is in Germany* highlights not the disintegration of the East German family but instead the ability to repair it. The hopeful message of the film thus makes it stand out in relation to other unification melodramas.

presents an interesting characterization of the use of sex and the fetishism of the East in reunified Germany. Educated at the University of Vienna, Ludmilla, with a mixed heritage of Macedonian and Ukrainian, grew up in Serbia and Croatia. She represents a blending of Eastern European culture that places her firmly in as an “other” in the face of Westernization. She strips with a Russian accent, cultivating the image of an exotic, sexualized woman because it sells better. Martin bonds with her as a fellow outsider to the westernized world engulfing him. The fact that their relationship fails to culminate into a truly successful sexual relationship highlights Martin’s focus on reintegrating and reunifying his family. While Ludmilla seems the easiest choice for romantic endeavors, they both are aware of Martin’s desire to fit in as a traditional masculine figure for his wife and son.

Overcoming Crisis

Most Western damaged men successfully overcome their crisis of masculinity in the male melodrama. For the East German male, his ability to succeed is far from guaranteed. The three male protagonists, Walter, Hinrich, and Martin, provide an array of experiences of the GDR male-in-crisis. The epitome of failure in *Wege in die Nacht*, Walter consistently struggles to grapple with the vanishing GDR and clings to a crumbling state that eventually pushes him towards self-destruction. *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* contrasts Walter’s complete failure and unwillingness to adapt with Hinrich. By memorialize his love for the GDR while embracing the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism, Hinrich repairs his failing relationship with his wife. Between these two extremes lies Martin in *Berlin is in Germany*. While seeking to close the chasm between himself and his wife and son, he oscillates between succumbing to the pressures of Western masculinity, like the nearly suicidal Peter, and attempting to conform to Western

standards of success like his friend and taxi-mentor Enrique. These three male experiences help to illustrate how the films and directors, both East and West, depict the East German masculinity crisis on film.

Walter's attempts to overcome this situation fail miserably. He expresses his frustrations with his inability to be a breadwinner primarily through his vigilante justice endeavors. On the one hand, by mentoring two young West Germans as self-appointed police, Walter seeks to control his internal feelings of weakness in the face of Western imposition. For Walter, having power over these two West German individuals gives him a sense of control over the capitalism that dismantled his livelihood. His pursuit of vigilante justice allows him to feel as if he can influence the shortfalls of the unified German state. For Walter, promoting his own brand of justice allows him to overcome the lack of security he feels in the absence the East German state. Upon finding out that the unified, Western German state has no need for his moral impositions, Walter finds himself at a loss. If society does not even need his self-appointed roles as a moral enforcer, he feels that he finally has no place in the post-reunification world.

Within his marriage, Walter attempts to overcome the blatant power imbalance. His expressions of discontent become increasingly more extreme and violent throughout the film. Initially, he seems merely disappointed by having to rely on his wife for money and food. Yet, the later scene in which he physically abuses his wife shows how violence bleeds over into his relationship. His violent behavior culminates in Walter's last-ditch attempt to right the power imbalance: armed robbery. As David Clarke illuminates, "He may be able to come up with an expensive gift for Sylvia, but this has not fundamentally altered his situation: she is still the breadwinner, he is still unemployed and now criminal."¹²⁵ Despite Walter's best and most

¹²⁵ Clarke, "Representations of East German Masculinity," 448.

extreme efforts, he cannot change the gender imbalance in his relationship. Compounding this loss of masculinity with the further pressures to conform to the capitalism, Walter finds no other outlet. His discontent becomes particularly clear when he watches the demolition of an old East German building. Prior to the demolition, Walter sits on a blanket next to his gun as the camera slowly closes in on him. He then runs up to the top of a building to watch the complete implosion of an old East German building, which mirrors his own internal decay [See Figure 2.7]. Unaccepted by society, jobless, and incapable of providing for his wife, he finds no place for himself in the rapidly evolving society.



2.7: Walter watches the demolition of an old East German building. The mix of sorrow, helplessness, and violence characterizes Walter's entire existence in the void of East German life brought on by the unification.

If *Wege in die Nacht* paints a bleak picture of the damaged, heterosexual East German male's ability to overcome adversity, *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen* provides the case for extreme success. Yet, the key difference between the two is their willingness to embrace capitalism. For Walter, his reluctance towards and downright disdain for capitalism and the West leads to his

suicide, Hinrich embraces capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit to overcome all the adversity he faces. Despite his wife leaving him for a West German man, Hinrich continues to fight for his wife's affections. Indeed, Hinrich's desire to gain an impressive career drives his success. The need to win back his wife drives Hinrich's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, allowing him to build upon his job as a salesman, an occupation his wife found to be insufficient for conforming to Western notions of masculinity and heterosexual relationships.

While Hinrich initially seems tied to the memory of East Germany, he quickly learns to manipulate *Ostalgie* to gain success. Just as Walter manipulates West Germans to overcome his masculinity crisis, Hinrich capitalizes upon the reliance of many individuals on the memory and nostalgia for the disappearing East German state. When he changes the *Zimmerspringbrunnen* from a kitsch scene composed of rotating dolphins into an emerging TV Tower (*Fernsehturm*) over the outline of East Germany, Hinrich taps directly into *Ostalgie*. He validates the East German experiences and the collective memory of the GDR. Hinrich creates in outlandish fashion a private memorial to the GDR. This renovated version of the *Zimmerspringbrunnen* becomes a commodity that individuals can relish as “unsere Deutsche Demokratische Republik.” The unifying nature of the piece spreads throughout East Germany and rapidly taps Hinrich into a network of eager buyers.

Hinrich does seem genuinely invested in the preservation aspect of the piece. As Hinrich struggles initially with his employment and marital problems, he responds to the bartender's sarcastic question of “Noch eins? Haben Sie noch ein Wunsch...?” with “Ich liebe meine Heimat, die deutsche demokratische Republik!” Walter's love for the GDR remains clear despite his struggle to adapt and overcome his status as a “loser.” During a moment of creativity, Hinrich modifies the *Zimmerspringbrunnen*. He erects the GDR relic in his workroom surrounded by a

DDR sticker, an East German cooperative (*Konsum*) gas pump, and the inspiring *Fernsehturm* figurine [See Figure 2.8]. Despite his initial loyalties to the GDR, Hinrich clearly capitalizes upon the idea of *Ostalgie* in order to gain success and the affections of his wife. His Western boss further supports Hinrich's efforts and encourages him to modified product to Hinrich's fellow East Germans. Hinrich shows no remorse at his actions to embrace capitalism. In the end, he concerns himself primarily with his professional success, because it enables him to succeed in his private life.



2.8: Hinrich creates the modified *Zimmerspringbrunnen* in his workshop, which he has decorated with East German collectables.

While Hinrich and Walter present extremes with which to understand the East German male's experience after the reunification, Martin's attempts to overcome his situation provides a more complicated perspective. For Martin, his East German past functions to help ease his integration issues. Early after his release from prison, Martin reconnects with some of his friends

from his life in the GDR. Martin models his plan to integrate after observing the successes and failures of Peter and Enrique. Through them, Martin gathers the advice and support necessary for rebuilding his life in an emergent new Germany. The spectrum of male figures that re-enter Martin's life provide the extremes that Walter and Hinrich also represent. Peter, hopeless with his situation, cautions Martin to the costs of failure. Enrique, like Hinrich, tells Martin that the path to success in reunified Germany depends upon embracing capitalism.

Martin's primary focus on rebuilding his life centers on his ability to be a father for his son. Martin's first action as a free man is to buy a toy for his son, a boy he has never met. The scene at the toy store illustrates the mundane issues hindering his personal reintegration, as he struggles with the technology and choices that capitalism presents. Despite these roadblocks, Martin perseveres in reconnecting with his son. Martin engages with Rokko through Western commodities, such as buying him a Game Boy and playing a computerized soccer game with him. These items become symbols for the access into Western masculinity that capitalism grants him. As Martin gains success as a father by embracing Western ideals, he sees the importance of reputable employment. What thus drives his desire to become a taxi driver is not only his need for employment but also his desire to become a man worthy of the role of father, husband, and caregiver for Rokko and Manuela.

Martin's success as a father naturally hinges on rebuilding his relationship with his estranged wife. While initially cold to Martin's abrupt entrance into her life, Manuela soon reconnects with Martin. It is clear that what became a wedge in their relationship was not Martin's criminality, but the harsh retribution by the East German state. Not only is Manuela receptive to Martin's actions to become a part of her and Rokko's life, but she also aids his reintegration. Manuela helps him study for the taxi driver exam, despite Wolfgang's discontent.

Manuela seems to indecisively oscillate between her life built around the West German Wolfgang and her desire to reintegrate Martin into her family.

Ultimately, Martin neither succeeds nor fails in the film. *Berlin is in Germany* avoids presenting a resolution to Martin's fumbled attempts to reacclimatize. Instead, the film presents the states, both communist and capitalist, as failing Martin. His ability to be a strong masculine figure first fails when he seeks to undermine the East German surveillance state. The retribution for his insolence is a hefty prison sentence and estrangement from his wife and unborn child. Upon release, Martin faces barriers to living, employment, and his masculinity, though the state and his wife attempt to give some assistance. While Martin has a degree of agency in his subsequent arrest and inability to become a taxi driver, the reasons for these setbacks stem from the bureaucracy and cold-heartedness of the capitalist state. Unified Germany provides him a slim safety net to reintegrate, but the laissez-faire economy still requires him to compete while abiding by the rules of capitalism. Unlike Walter and Hinrich, Martin not only experiences setbacks because of the disappearance of the GDR. He is also failed by both the East German and West German states.

Conclusions

The films discussed in this chapter present a spectrum with which one may analyze the variety of experiences typical of masculine crisis in the post-unification Germany. All three films conform to or acknowledge the cinematic history of GDR melodrama, focusing tightly on the interpersonal relationships and the masculine figures' shifting roles within these. *Wege in die Nacht* seeks to reject the usual outcome of the GDR melodrama. The strategic use of *film noir* style portrays a disturbed man struggling to find a place in a Germany that no longer needs him.

His eventual self-implosion further subverts the ideals of GDR melodrama, which for ideological reasons shied away from violence, and especially suicide. On the other end of the spectrum lies *Der Zimmerspringbrunnen*, a perversion of the melodrama that uses the techniques of a Hollywood-style, romantic comedy. For Hinrich, his status as a GDR male loser and the interpersonal struggles this imposes upon him drives him to great success. After embracing capitalism via the manipulation of *Ostalgie*, Hinrich overcomes all the barriers Westernization poses for him. Finally, *Berlin is in Germany* attempts to show an unresolved GDR melodrama, one that shows intimately the drama and obstacles facing Martin's divided family. Furthermore, by focusing on Martin's relationships with other GDR men, the work seeks to illustrate a variety of ways in which the imposition of Western masculinity may be handled.

Conclusion: Gendered Memory

Early on in this project, it became clear that viewing East German experience through the lens of *Ostalgie* would produce only limited results. By focusing on mass-produced consumer goods, expressions of *Ostalgie* can only tell us about limited facets of GDR society in the memories of East Germans after 1989. This thesis therefore focuses on memory as the more important overarching concept with which to study the recalling of East German experiences after the GDR ceased to exist. In order to delve into the experiences, I analyzed six works presenting the prevalence of memory after the GDR. The three female scrapbook autobiographies and three male melodramas discussed in this work all grapple with individual experience of the Iron Curtain falling. I argue that both the literary texts and the films convey experiences that are inherently gendered and different from one another.

Gendered experiences are recorded in two very different media. Female experiences were told through a structure of autobiographies marked by scrapbooking and, by extension, fractured narration. By including generic visual products from the GDR in their autobiographies, Fritsche and Hensel create scrapbooks that depicted experiences of the GDR state and society in a highly constructed, inorganic fashion. Only through a more intimate use of original, written memories can a female author like Rusch delve into her memories of community and personal relationships. In spite of their formal and substantive differences, all three autobiographies do investigate past lives in the GDR through the lens of the reunified experience. The process of remembering for these female authors allows for a certain recovery of past experiences. In comparison, male experience as captured in the films studied here took a far more linear and organic narrative approach. All three male-focused films adapted the GDR tradition of male-centered melodrama. By focusing directly on the familial relationships surrounding their male protagonists, the films

focused almost exclusively on the remnants of an East German community after reunification. Unlike the autobiographies, none of the films grapple directly with past experience prior to 1989 and none seek to recover GDR memories. The melodramas instead use the past as a catalyst to recover and repair the damaged masculinities of the three East German protagonists.

There are additional differences that must be drawn from this study's comparison of women's autobiographies and male melodramas. The female authors all struggle to recover community and remember society through their autobiographies. Rusch takes this recovery to the extreme by validating female experience at the personal level and, in so doing, comes closest to the commonly accepted conventions of feminist autobiography. Opposing Rusch's personal approach, Fritsche and Hensel superficially use scrapbooking, which can heavily rely on mass-produced print culture, to compliment the limited mnemonic reach of their autobiographical selves. In so doing, as I show, Fritsche and Hensel undermine any purchase their memories may claim to have on the personal and its relationship to community. Their stories are ultimately more about memories of society than of personal recollections. Similarly, my chosen films are, although centered on single male protagonists, focused primarily on community. This focus is in keeping with the cinematic conventions of melodrama, originally a form of cinematic narration focused on female agency and female spectatorship. Instead of recovering men's memories lost because of reunification, these films seek to recover a lost sense of masculinity. The protagonists' inability to recover their gendered identities propels conflict and narrative tension throughout all three films. In their struggle for identity, these films refrain from delving directly into the past and memory. Their protagonists focus on their altered places within their radically reorganized communities after 1989. These men all struggle with how displaced their masculinities, which stem from the GDR's state ideologies, are in reunified Germany. Unlike the focus on the past in

the female autobiographies, the male melodramas focus on their transformed present. These films all suggest that male identity was a product of GDR society. As I argue, these masculinities after 1989 suddenly became worthless not only for society but also for community at its most fundamental level- within the sphere of the family.

Memory of society in all the works studied here is selective, which reflects the inherent unreliable and selective nature of memory. Despite these differences, both the autobiographies and the melodramas work to navigate the impact of the reunification on their protagonists. For the female autobiographers, their childhood disappeared with the Berlin Wall. Writing on memory and presenting images from their childhood function as a recovery tool, whereby the author attempts to retrieve lost experience. In those two works reliant on the incorporation of visual materials, scrapbooking molds disparate experiences together but underscores the fragmentary nature of memory work performed by writers who were still children when the Wall fell. Unlike these literary texts, melodramas forego dealing with memory and instead focus on the construction of masculinity after the disappearance of GDR society. While society thus plays a role for the male identity and experience, the directors of all three films use melodrama to focus on how changing society impacts family and community. Much like the autobiographies reliant on scrapbooking, the films follow male subjects struggling to preserve their fragile communities and navigate the altered society through the lens of melodrama. When taken together, both the autobiographies and films attempt to express common East German experiences after 1989. The possibility for happiness for some of the female and male protagonists is rooted in the preservation of memories of community and family. Others associate happiness with the East German state, but this choice fails to produce cohesive or lasting results.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Novels

Fritsche, Susanne. *Die Mauer ist gefallen: Eine kleine Geschichte der DDR*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2010.

Hensel, Jana. *Zonenkinder*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002.

Rusch, Claudia. *Meine freie deutsche Jugend*. Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003.

Films

Berlin is in Germany. Directed by Hannes Stöhr. (2001; Berlin: Senator Home Entertainment, 2009). DVD.

Der Zimmerspringbrunnen. Directed by Peter Timm. (2001; Berlin: Absolut Medien, 2003). DVD.

Wege in die Nacht. Directed by Andreas Kleinert. (1999; Berlin: Filmgalerie 451, 2010). DVD.

Secondary Sources

Allan, Sean. "East-West Relations in Post-Unification Comedy." In *German Cinema Since Unification*. Edited by David Clarke. London; New York: Continuum, 2006.

Allan, Sean. "Ostalgia, fantasy and the normalization of east-west relations in post-unification comedy." In *German Cinema Since Unification*. Edited by David Clarke. London: Continuum with University of Birmingham Press: 2006.

- Benstock, Shari. "The Female Self Engendered: Autobiographical Writing and Theories of Selfhood." In *Women and Autobiography*. Edited by Martine Watson Brownley and Allison B. Kimmich. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1999.
- Berghahn, Daniela. "East German Cinema After Unification." In *German Cinema Since Unification*, edited by David Clarke. London: Continuum, 2006.
- Buckler, Patricia P. and C. Kay Leeper,. "An Antebellum Woman's Scrapbook as Autobiographical Composition." *Journal of American Culture* 14, No. 1 (1991): 1 - 8.
- Byg, Barton. "DEFA and the Traditions of International Cinema." In *DEFA: East German Cinema 1946-1992*, edited by Sean Allan and John Sandford, 22 – 41. Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 1999.
- Byron, Catherine. "The Most Difficult Door." In *Women's Lives into Print*, edited by Pauline Polkey, 185 - 196. Chippenham, Wiltshire, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999.
- Clarke, David. "Representations of East German Masculinity in Hannes Stohr's 'Berlin is in Germany' and Andreas Kleinert's 'Wege in die Nacht'." *German Life and Letters* 55, no. 4 (2002): 434 - 449.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Douglas, Kate. *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama." In *Film Genre Reader, III*. Edited by Barry Keith Grant. Austin, Tex. : University of Texas Press, 2003.

- Enzensberger, Hans. *Album*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011.
- Evans, Owen. "Taking Stock of the Wende on Screen: Michael Klier's *Ostkreuz* and Hannes Stöhr's *Berlin is in Germany*." *German as a Foreign Language*, 1 (2006): 60 – 75.
- Feinstein, Joshua. *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in East German Cinema, 1949-1989*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Frey, Mattias. "'Ostalgie,' Historical Ownership, and Material Authenticity: *Good Bye, Lenin!* and *Das Leben der Anderen*." In *Postwall German Cinema: History, Film History, and Cinephilia*, 107 – 138. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.
- Garvey, Ellen Gruber. *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Gates, Philippa. "The Man's Film: Woo and the Pleasures of Male Melodrama." *Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 1 (2001): 59 - 79.
- Gerstenberger, Katharina. "Remembering the Writings on the Walls- Remembering East Berlin." In *German Politics and Society*, 76, no. 3 (2006).
- Goodsell, Todd L. and Liann Seiter. "Scrapbooking: Family Capital and the Construction of Family Discourse." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40, no. 3 (2011): 318 – 341.
- Guenther, Katja. *Making Their Place: Feminism After Socialism in Eastern Germany*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Hodgin, Nick. *Screening the East: Heimat, Memory and Nostalgia in German Film since 1989*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011.
- Hof, Karina. "Something you can pick up: Scrapbooking as a form and forum of citizenship." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (2006): 363 – 384.

Kord, Susanne and Elisabeth Krimmer. *Contemporary Hollywood Masculinities*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

Kuipers, Juliana M. "Scrapbooks: Intrinsic Value and Material Culture." *Journal of Archival Organization* 2, No. 3 (2004): 83 – 91.

Mason, Mary G. "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers." In *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 321 – 324. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Pinkert, Anke. *Film and Memory in East Germany*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Polkey, Pauline. *Women's Lives in Print*. Chippenham, Wiltshire, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999.

Powrie, Phil, Bruce Babington, and Ann Davis. "Turning the Male Inside Out." In *The Trouble With Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*. Edited by Phil Powrie, Bruce Babington, and Ann Davis. London: Wallflower Press, 2004.

Rehling, Nicola. *Extra-ordinary Men: White Heterosexual Masculinity in Contemporary Popular Culture*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009.

Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. "Introduction: Situating Subjectivity in Women's Autobiographical Practices." In *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 3- 52. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. "Introduction: Situating Subjectivity in Women's Autobiographical Practices," in *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. Edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Sweet Wong, Hertha D. "First-Person Plural: Subjectivity and Community in Native American Women's Autobiography." In *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, 168 – 182. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Tönnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Civil Society*, edited by Joe Harris, translated by Joe Harris and Margaret Hollis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.