

Narrating the Berlin Wall:
Nostalgia and the Negotiation of Memory, 20 Years Later

by

Sean Eedy

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for the degree of

Master of Arts

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**Narrating the Berlin Wall:
Nostalgia and the Negotiation of Memory, 20 Years Later**

submitted by

Sean Eedy, B.A. Hons.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

Jennifer V. Evans, Thesis Supervisor

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3 August 2011

Abstract

Memory and commemoration are as much constructed narratives as is fiction. Using Svetlana Boym's concept of restorative and reflective nostalgia and Paul Cooke's notion of the West German colonization of GDR memory as its point of departure, this thesis argues that official commemorations of the Fall of the Berlin Wall marginalized the experiences of former GDR citizens in pursuit of a narrative that framed the actions of East Germans as part of an inevitable process toward German reunification. Newspaper articles, German government publications, the demonstrations and exhibitions on display for the anniversary presented a dichotomy that celebrated the continuation of the history of the Federal Republic as superior to that of the East and the accomplishments of East Germans themselves. This thesis examines the ways in which memory was reconstructed during the twentieth anniversary and in post-*Wende* literature and narrated to a mass audience. While commemoration employed claims of historical truth, fictions' use of reflective nostalgia deconstructed notions of a collective East German memory and identity, arguing for a plurality of memory in narrated reconstructions of the GDR.

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A work such as this is never the product of an individual. Although my name appears on the title page, this thesis is as much mine as it is the work of all those who helped me with my studies, research, and writing over the past two years. As such, I would like to take a moment to thank a few of the people who helped me with this work, encouraged me along the way, and provided me with insight, sources, or perspectives I may not have considered alone.

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Sean Eedy
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Introduction

Narrating 1989 from East to West: Shifting Representations of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

On the evening of November 9-10, 1989, the Berlin Wall literally fell overnight and seemingly, with that single event, brought about the end of German and European division, the Cold War between the capitalist West and the communist East, and of Stalinist-style rule among the countries of the Warsaw Pact. At least, that is how the *Mauerfall* (fall of the Berlin Wall) has been remembered in the twenty years that followed. Throughout 2009, and especially on the night of November 9, 2009, Berlin, Germany, and the world celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall. These celebrations were organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, a non-profit organization formed as a result of a merger between *the Kulturveranstaltungen Ltd.* (Cultural Project Organizers) and Berlin's Museum Educational Offices (*Museumspädagogischer Dienst*) that "works for the promotion, networking, and mediation of culture."¹ Working in close cooperation with the local Berlin government and the *Bundestag* of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the highlight of the *Kulturprojekte*'s celebrations was the Festival of Freedom held in front of the Brandenburg Gate in the heart of the city and the symbolic place where East and West collided during the Cold War. Alongside the speeches from Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, activists from the reform movements of the late 1980s like Lech Walesa and Bärbel Bohley, and representatives of the four powers that occupied Germany after the Second World War (the United States of America, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France), the Festival of Freedom featured a domino wall made up of about 1000 over-sized, styrofoam domino tiles, painted by artists and children from Germany and countries around the globe, that ran along the former route of the Berlin Wall between the *Potsdamerplatz* and the

¹ "About Us," Kulturprojekte Berlin, <http://www.kulturprojekte-berlin.de/en/kulturprojekte-berlin/about-us/> (accessed May 9, 2011).

Bundestag. This new wall, constructed on the figurative ashes of the old was intended to represent the domino-effect of reform and the end of communist rule throughout Eastern Europe. As Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit stated in his greeting in *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt* (Domino Book: History/Histories with Domino Effect), published as a souvenir for the anniversary events:

Without [the Polish reform movement] Solidarity and [Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of] *Perestroika* (restructuring) (there would have been) no Peaceful Revolution, without revolution (there would have been) no opening of the Berlin Wall, without the Fall of the Berlin Wall (there would have been) no German reunification, without reunification (there would have been) no end of the Cold War, without the change in the structures of power (there would have been) no reunification of Europe—history with a domino effect.²

However, in reconstructing the wall and the memories of 1989, and the connections established between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification (*Wiedervereinigung*), the focus of the 2009 anniversary shifted from the memories of the Peaceful Revolution and the participation of East Germans in ending German division toward the political process of reunification and the triumph of West German capitalism over the failed experiment of East German socialism.

Just in time for this anniversary, 2009 also saw the release of numerous studies and histories of the events of 1989 in an effort to unpack the complexities of those events. As part of recent history, and as many people involved with or reporting on the opening of the Wall in 1989 were still alive and possessing the memories of 1989, history was no longer a domain solely occupied by historians and political scientists. This is not to say that academics neglected the events of 1989 during the anniversary year. Publications of note include German historian Mary Elise Sarotte's *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, German historian Patrick

² Klaus Wowereit, "Grusswort," in *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt* (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 11. *Ohne Solidarność und Perestroika keine Friedliche Revolution, ohne Revolution kein Mauerfall, ohne Mauerfall keine deutsche Wiedervereinigung, ohne Wiedervereinigung kein Ende des Kalten Drieges, ohne Systemwechsel kein wiedervereinigtes Europa—Geschichte mit Dominoeffekt.*

Major's *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power*, and Russianist Stephen Kotkin's *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, among others. Numerous others, such as *Revolution 1989: the Fall of the Soviet Empire* by journalist Victor Sebestyen, were written by individuals who reported on the collapse of communism as it unfolded. Like the Festival of Freedom, many of these books treat the fall of the Berlin Wall as one part of the collective events marking the Eastern European reform movements and the break-up of the Soviet Bloc. Additionally, and also similar to the Festival of Freedom's representation of 1989 through its connection between the Peaceful Revolution and German reunification, many of these studies and reminiscences treat the collapse of communism as a political process debated and negotiated between those in power and those attempting to reform that power. This downplays the role of individuals and of the protest movements and demonstrations throughout the Warsaw Pact states, making political interpretations of the collapse of communism "fashionable," to quote Patrick Major.³ This representation of the end of Soviet-style rule in Eastern Europe and especially of the fall of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* or SED) regime in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has the image of appealing to the victims of those fallen regimes at the same time as it reconstructs the East as a negative foil for the triumphant West.⁴

This introduction poses the argument that this recent trend in the historiography of the collapse of the SED regime and the revolutions of 1989 in East Germany and throughout the Soviet Bloc marginalizes the involvement of citizens of the former GDR in their own history. The history represented is one of politicians and governments in the reorganization of eastern

³ Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 293.

⁴ Konrad H. Jarausch, "Memory Wars: German Debates About the Legacy of Dictatorship," in *Berlin Since the Wall's End: Shaping Society and Memory in the German Metropolis since 1989*, ed. John Alexander Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 105 & 108.

European politics. In this historiographical trend, ownership of East German history and the history of East Germans is passed from the people themselves and into the hands of official bodies and institutions. As such, the history of 1989 becomes one less of people and more one of governments and bureaucracies restructuring the European order. Citizens of the GDR (and of the other former states of the Soviet Bloc) lose control of their involvement in that history and, instead, have that history enacted upon them by governing agencies. At the same time, as communist governments in the East turned to embrace the governmental structures and the economic systems of the capitalist West, this trend has the effect of arguing the continuation and superiority of the West as it analyzes the rupture in the history of the East. This representation of the end of communism in Eastern Europe generally and in the GDR specifically is problematic in that it invariably judges the former eastern states based on the values of the western model.

Sebestyen's book opens with the statement that "this is a story with a happy ending."⁵ Before reading the book, the first sentence of the introduction establishes a value judgment between the political and economic system of the eastern and western Blocs. The book spends very little effort examining the dissident movements in the GDR, the Leipzig demonstrations being mentioned only twice throughout the book, and only then in the context of their effects on the political maneuvers of the SED.⁶ Rather, the GDR is characterized as a state operated by the Stasi (*Staatssicherheitsdienst* or East German security service) that regularly sold dissidents, real and perceived, to the West German Federal Republic in order to earn convertible currency for the state.⁷ This immediately posits the East German experience of 1989, culminating with the opening of the Berlin Wall and the gradual dissolution of SED controls, as the end of a morally bankrupt political order. It should be noted that Sebestyen subtitled each chapter with the city

⁵ Victor Sebestyen, *Revolution 1989: the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London: Orion Books, 2009), xvii.

⁶ *Ibid*, 326-7.

⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

and date in which the discussed events occur. While chapters specifically regarding the German movement toward this happy ending are located in East Berlin or Bonn, none focus on developments in Leipzig, the heart of East German dissidence.⁸ The focus on the capital cities of the GDR and the FRG thus represent the East German collapse as a matter between the governments of those two states. As the demonstrations play so small a role, discussed in passing as background material and motivation for the decisions of the SED led by Erich Honecker, the revolutionary spirit of 1989 is transferred to the Party as it struggled for political life through efforts to placate a rapidly growing mass movement. This has the effect of creating a binary between the immoral East and the moral West. The happy ending mentioned by Sebestyen, then, is not for the dissidents and demonstrators characterized as “troublemakers” against whom Minister of State Security Erich Mielke issued “draconian orders” to put down the perceived counter-revolution, which would demonstrate the further moral bankruptcy of the GDR, but for the western democracies that brought freedom to the east.⁹ In terms of the populations of East Germany and the Eastern Bloc countries, the telos of their states and their revolutionary experiences is determined by the arrival of democracy across the former Iron Curtain following the collapse of the Soviet-socialist orders.

Representing the opening of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the SED regime as a happy ending is thus extremely problematic. First, by positioning 1989 as an almost exclusively political process negotiated between East Berlin, Bonn, and Moscow, Sebestyen fails to account for pre-existing political and economic conditions that caused the mass exodus of GDR citizens once the Iron Curtain opened through the hole in the Austrian/Hungarian border fence. It also fails to consider the impact of the immediate proximity of the Federal Republic of Germany and

⁸ Mike Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 276.

⁹ Sebestyen, 336.

the availability of West German media throughout most of the GDR in the formation of East German perceptions of the West and of their expectations for everyday-life at home in the East.¹⁰ At the same time, while a political consideration of the Warsaw Pact states in 1989 invariably focuses on the changing relationships between those states, the avoidance of the everyday ignores the transfer of influence between the domestic realm and the political sphere. Through the retreat of citizens into the private sphere where criticism of the regime was acceptable, protest of the SED regime was deeply embedded in the East German every-day.¹¹ News of changing political policy in one state affected the mindset of the population in neighbouring states, encouraging dissent and drawing it from homes back into the streets.¹² A prime example of this came with the rise of Solidarity in Poland throughout the 1980s and the formation of a coalition government with Solidarity and the Polish Communist Party in August 1989. The relative tolerance with which Solidarity was treated by the Party, in that the transfer of power was peaceful through semi-free elections, demonstrated the possibilities of change without the threat of Soviet or domestic reprisals to the East German dissidents as well as those throughout the Soviet Bloc.¹³

Second, the type of study conducted by Sebestyen assumes the East German population to be of a single mind or, more precisely, of two aspects of a single mind. This means that the population was divided between those leaving the GDR for change and those demonstrating for change and reform within the GDR itself. In his article, “Memory Wars: German Debates about the Legacy of Dictatorship,” historian Konrad Jarausch argues that the comparisons between the

¹⁰ Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 206.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 196-197.

¹² Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15.

¹³ Constantine Pleshakov, *There is No Freedom Without Bread* (New York: Picador, 2009), 119, 143, 165 & 181.

structural similarities of the National Socialist (Nazi) and SED regimes and the one-sided emphasis on SED repression made by the German Federal government, led by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the late 1980s and early 1990s, excludes the memory of most of the East German population and thus characterized the regime through its victims. Instead, he concludes, memorialisation requires the balance between this repression and the normality of everyday life.¹⁴ The dictatorship/democracy binary established in Sebastyen's approach to the *Mauerfall* as a matter of GDR and FRG politics thus assumes that the entire population was victimized by the regime and, as such, invalidates the memories that existed without specific reference to the regime.

In a 2007 review of Andrew Port's *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* for the online scholar's forum, H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online, historian Gary Bruce questions the move in East German historiography toward "the more positive aspects of the dictatorship and the fact that the SED did not exercise 'totalitarian' control over society."¹⁵ As nostalgia does not focus on abstract concepts such as injustice and totalitarianism but is a product of the concrete aspects of everyday life, in questioning this swing toward the more positive aspects of the GDR, Bruce suggests that these experiences are less relevant than those that speak to the perceived totalitarian nature of the SED and the Stasi.¹⁶ Incorrectly, Bruce perceives this examination of the everyday as "flirting with exoneration" of the SED regime.¹⁷ In doing so, Bruce judges the SED, the Stasi, and the lives of citizens living

¹⁴ Jaraus, "Memory Wars," 105-6.

¹⁵ Gary Bruce, "H-Net Book Review: Andrew Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic*," H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-german&month=0710&week=b&msg=faclQneMNsJCQHJtGd/bgg&user=&pw=> (accessed May 31, 2011).

¹⁶ Joseph F. Jozwiak and Elisabeth Mermann, "'The Wall in Our Minds?' Colonization, Integration, and Nostalgia," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 5 (2006): 784.

¹⁷ Bruce, "H-Net."

in the GDR, not on their own terms and with their own perceived merits, but on the terms and with the values of western democracies. This creates what historian Mary Fulbrook refers to as a “Manichean dichotomy between Evil and Good [that] runs...between East and West, Dictatorship and Democracy.”¹⁸ According to Fulbrook, this dichotomy is problematic as it clouds the issue of agency in GDR history and excludes “the actions and perceptions of the overwhelming majority of East German citizens.” As such, citizens become “anonymous objects of SED policies [and] passive victims rather than active subjects.”¹⁹

Through the invalidation of East German memories, this dichotomy paved the way for nostalgia as the illusion of a “happy-ending” broke down when the supposedly superior system failed to live up to the promises of reunification. Although the translator of former *Der Spiegel* journalist Jana Hensel’s memoir, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life That Came Next*, claims that Hensel writes “against the nostalgic longing for the GDR,” the title itself identifies a rupture in the memories of East Germans.²⁰ And yet, Hensel is a bit jealous when her West German friends talk about how much they love visiting home.²¹ This jealousy results from the fact that home, the GDR, no longer exists in both the literal and emotional sense, thus necessitating the turn toward nostalgia. Memory, for Hensel, becomes a series of “larger-than-life anecdotes that didn’t really have anything to do with what [her life] had been like,” demonstrating “how much [she] had internalized the West German take on [her] history.”²² A child when the Berlin Wall opened, Hensel’s history is not characterized by victimization at the hands of the regime. Nor is it representative of a citizenship protesting the

¹⁸ Mary Fulbrook, “Putting the People Back in: The Contentious State of GDR History,” *German History* 24, no. 4 (2006): 611.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 610.

²⁰ Jana Hensel, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life That Came Next*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Public Affairs Publications, 2004), 176-7.

²¹ *Ibid*, 15.

²² *Ibid*, 25.

SED regime as necessitated by the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy suggested by Sebastyen. Instead, Hensel's inability to discuss SED and Stasi repression in her experience with the GDR suggests a difference of experience with the regime. Although this may be potentially viewed as the result of a generational shift among Hensel's youth, explaining her inexperience with the regime, it also suggests a difference of experience between those victimized directly by the regime and those who were not. Such an experiential difference may be seen in the comparison between Hensel's memoirs and those of Claudia Rusch, *Meine freie deutsch Jugend* (2003). Rusch speaks to the totalitarian notion of the GDR and an awareness of the Stasi negotiated through the related experiences of her parents and their involvement with the dissident Robert Havemann.²³ As Rusch's memoir feeds into the dictatorship/democracy dichotomy, criticisms against the GDR state may be read into her work even where no such criticisms exist. By comparison, Hensel's inability to relate to the notion of Stasi victimization through experiential difference calls this good versus evil binary into question.²⁴

The problematic dichotomy between dictatorship and democracy is a core theme throughout this thesis and is central to the analysis in Chapter 1 regarding the commemoration of the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 2009. As early as 1933, the scholar Victor Klemperer equated the Nazi regime and Soviet Communism based on a totalitarian model developed by political theorists following the First World War. Klemperer's comparison was founded on the structural similarities, coercion, terror, and the dominant position of ideology employed by each of the two political systems. Significantly, both regimes, National Socialism and Communism, required voluntary support from below in order to seize power and to maintain

²³ Jennifer Bierich-Shahbazi, "The *Zonenkinder* Debate: An Analysis of Media Reaction to Two Popular Memoirs Written by East Germany's Youngest Generation of Authors," in *Ossi Wessi*, eds. Donald Backman and Aida Sakalauskaite (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 70.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 71.

it.²⁵ Following reunification, the Federal government of the unified-German state organized a Commission of Inquiry (*Enquete-Kommission*) to investigate human rights violations, particularly those involving victims shot while attempting to cross the Berlin Wall and the German-German border, in order to gauge and measure the guilt of core institutions within the GDR. The Commission supported the totalitarian paradigm in its reports, thus legitimizing the systems and structures of the Federal Republic and establishing the anti-totalitarian character of the newly unified FRG as a foundational myth.²⁶ This approach has been criticized as both relativizing Nazi atrocities and demonising the SED and the GDR. At the same time, the totalitarian paradigm and thus the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy immunizes western structures from criticism by comparison.²⁷ As the GDR was categorized and understood in terms of this totalitarian paradigm, the Commission also concluded that, while “normal” life was possible, observation and the coerced and voluntary participation by the population deformed “normal” everyday life.²⁸ Through this western lens, participation with the regime negated the value of East German experience in the unified, but still very western, Berlin Republic. The totalitarian paradigm and the dictatorship/democracy dichotomy that emerged from it speaks more to the presumed superiority of western institutions than in providing a useful model for analyzing East German history, memory, and identity.

Drawing similarities then to Sebastyen’s approach in downplaying the demonstrations and protests which led to the fall of the Wall, Stephen Kotkin’s *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* uses the concept of a “bank-run” in order to

²⁵ Konrad H. Jarausch & Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 150-1.

²⁶ Mike Dennis, “Constructing the GDR: Interpretations of GDR History since Unification,” in *United and Divided*, eds. Mike Dennis and Eva Kolinsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 25.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

thematically link the downfall of the communist regimes in Poland, East Germany, and Romania. In doing so, Kotkin argues that there were no revolutions in the Eastern Bloc as the regimes did not fully allow the formation of a civil society and thus they did not possess the mass organizations necessary to generate true opposition.²⁹ This approach recasts the dictatorship/democracy binary in economic terms as a clash between communism and capitalism. But in doing so, it still falls prey to discrediting any and all organic alternatives to western democratic capitalism through its argumentation of the structural flaws built in to the communist institutions and governing mechanisms.³⁰ In referring to the communist regimes in the Eastern Bloc as “a bankrupt political class...largely bereft of corrective [economic] mechanisms,” Kotkin, like Sebestyen, places a value judgement on those regimes based on the perceived success of opposing systems in the West.³¹ By downplaying the significance of the demonstrations within the GDR and other Warsaw Pact states (Kotkin refers to this as a disproportionate focus on “the ‘opposition,’ which they [most analysts] fantasize as a ‘civil society’”), Kotkin represents these states as imploding politically due to their inability to recover from economic indebtedness to western institutions. This has the effect of marginalizing eastern memory and, specifically for the purposes of this paper, discounts all East German memories especially those directly related to the opening of the Berlin Wall by removing the populations of those states from the discussion of events. Although the communist regimes collapsed due to flaws built in to the communist economic system itself, the fall of the SED and the parties of the other Warsaw Pact states are perceived as inevitable regardless of the actions of dissident

²⁹ Stephen Kotkin & Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment* (New York: Modern Library, 2009), xvii & xiv.

³⁰ Jaraus, “Memory Wars,” 107.

³¹ Kotkin, xvii.

movements. This negates the power of a popular opposition in favour of the perceived victory of the capitalist systems in the West.

Mary Elise Sarotte's study takes this notion of the political dynamic of 1989 and the inevitability of the opening of the Berlin Wall one step further than either Sebestyen or Kotkin. Rather than focus on the politics of the SED or the Soviet Union, Sarotte's study focuses instead on the subtitle to her study, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Concerning herself with the revolutions and political mistakes in the German Democratic Republic through only the first chapter of her book, Sarotte draws attention away from 1989 in order to demonstrate the impact of November 1989 on the year that followed, taking her analysis up to October 3, 1990, the day of German reunification. Celebrating the western interpretation of its victory of the Cold War, Sarotte posits the influence of West German media and its coverage of developments throughout the Soviet Bloc as inciting the courage to protest among East Germans.³² The opening of the Berlin Wall itself, as Sarotte argues, was not the result of East German protests (the Peaceful Revolution celebrated in Berlin on November 9, 2009) or of half-formed SED policy that attempted to alleviate the pressures on the state caused by these protests and the mass exodus of the population into the West through the escape hatches opening in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Rather, the Berlin Wall fell due to the western media's interpretation of the travel announcement made by Günter Schabowski, First Secretary of East Berlin and SED Politbüro member, on November 9, 1989. Specifically, Sarotte points to the reports of the West German ARD (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* or Consortium of public-law Broadcasting

³² Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 38-9.

Corporations of the FRG), a news source trusted by many East Germans.³³ But this is only where Sarotte begins her study, and in analyzing the politics, notably those of West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, between November 9, 1989 and October 3, 1990, she poses that German reunification was necessary for the establishment of a stable post-Cold War European order and reunification was an inevitable result of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Sarotte's study focuses on Helmut Kohl's Deutsch Mark politics, stressing Kohl's willingness to flex West German economic might to force the occupying powers from the Second World War to bend to the idea of a reunified Germany. In this study, the politicians of France, Great Britain, the United States, and especially the Soviet Union followed the hurried pace set by Kohl in securing German unity in time for upcoming West German elections.³⁴ Similar to the representation of Mikhail Gorbachev argued in Russian historian Constantine Pleshakov's Polish-centric study, *There is No Freedom without Bread: 1989 and the Civil War that Brought Down Communism*, the Soviet leader's role in the events of 1989-90 are described as merely having bumped into the Berlin Wall rather than taking an active part in its dismantling in terms of Soviet relinquishment of its Four-Power rights in the divided German state.³⁵ This positions the study against the view that Gorbachev's unwillingness to impose Soviet force throughout the Warsaw Pact states during 1989 exposed the structural weakness of the Stalinist-regimes of Eastern Europe and allowed for the success of the largely peaceful transference of power, Romania being the exception.³⁶ At the same time, Sarotte's insistence on Kohl's "purchase" of the German Democratic Republic deconstructs the heroization of Gorbachev that

³³ Ibid, 39-41.

³⁴ Ibid, 81-3.

³⁵ Pleshakov, 191.

³⁶ Kotkin, xv-xvii & 95.

gained currency in the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.³⁷ Instead, Sarotte's interpretation of 1989, or rather the processes leading toward German reunification in 1990, marginalizes East German participation in the revolution of 1989 in favour of Deutsch Mark nationalism, that is German, specifically East German, fervour toward the notion of reunification based on the perceived improvement in living standards and material well-being that accompanied the GDR accession to the Federal Republic.³⁸

One of the perceived strengths of democracy and capitalism was its economic might.³⁹ Erich Honecker understood the importance of economics and materialism as a means of placating the East German population, claiming that socialism stood the best chance of succeeding in this area over the capitalist alternative.⁴⁰ In demonstrating the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification as a political process backed by the West German Deutsch Mark, Sarotte exposes one of the failings of the GDR. As Kotkin argues in his "bank run" approach to the collapse of communism, Marxist-Leninism failed in East Germany and elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc due to escalating debts to western financial institutions as it attempted to maintain a standard of living comparable to the images of prosperity available to GDR citizens via West German media.⁴¹ As Gorbachev's policy of *Perestroika* was intended to revitalize the Soviet economy by injecting elements of western capitalism to stem the tide of economic decline, the Soviet Union lacked the economic ability to maintain the viability of its empire.⁴² The Red

³⁷ *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt* (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 25. *Für seine visionäre Politik und seinen Einsatz für Menschlichkeit und Gerechtigkeit wurde der ehemalige sowjetische Präsident Michail Gorbatschow in Berlin mit dem Quadriga-Preis 2009 geehrt* (For his visionary policy and his commitment to humanity and justice, the former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was honoured with the Quadriga Prize 2009 in Berlin).

³⁸ Sarotte, 9 & Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 65.

³⁹ Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 141-2.

⁴⁰ Jarausch, *Shattered Past*, 27 & 155.

⁴¹ Kotkin, 27-30.

⁴² Mikhail Gorbachev, *The Socialist Idea and Revolutionary Perestroika* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989), 19 & Sebestyen, 195-6.

Army, long the Soviet means of dealing with political instability throughout the Warsaw Pact as was the case in the GDR in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the socialist governments of the Warsaw Pact countries were powerless to prevent the loss of political legitimacy necessary to the survival of the states in the Soviet empire. *New Lives* by Ingo Schulze, a former East German himself, takes up this idea of German reunification as both an economic process and necessity, something which will be discussed in Chapter 3. But in demonstrating the *Mauerfall* in the same economic terms by which she explains the reunification process, Sarotte's approach casts the East German revolution as the expression of the population's desire to be West Germans in terms of the freedoms of choice and materialism embodied by western capitalism.

As with Sebestyen's reading of 1989 then, Sarotte's approach also suggests that the opening of the Berlin Wall be read as a "happy ending," not only for Germans, but also for western democracy itself. This concurs with German representations and explanations of 1989/90 as a closed chapter in German history, the end of totalitarianism on German soil, and of the Second Zero Hour.⁴³ The latter refers to the notion that 1945 and the end of the Second World War represented a distinct rupture or break in history that precipitated a new beginning for the Germans and the German state(s).⁴⁴ However, the new beginning embodied in these representations of the fall of the Berlin Wall and/or German reunification necessarily implied a break with the continuities of German history. Not only this, but, as argued above, the use of the adjective "happy" in describing the results of the 1989 revolution suggests that the period to follow that break is perceived as better than that which came before. Both of these explanations of the perception of a happy ending in the discussion of the opening of the Berlin Wall lend

⁴³ Kulturprojekte Berlin, "Press Information: The Open-Air Exhibition 'Peaceful Revolution 1989/90'" (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 1.

⁴⁴ Jaraus, *After Hitler*, 12.

themselves to the interpretation of western superiority and thus to the western colonization and representation of the East German memory and experience. As the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz* or constitution) of the FRG was adopted as the constitution of the unified Federal Republic, with the exception of the removal of the original Article 23 that allowed for the rapid accession of the GDR, the break mandated by the representation of the happy ending is thus away from GDR and East German history.⁴⁵ From a social stand-point, East Germans then had to adapt to foreign systems whereas their West German counterparts, largely, experienced a continuation of the conditions of life that existed prior to reunification.⁴⁶ The experience of 1989/90 was therefore a new beginning only in the lives of those in the east. Through the implied value judgement on the quality of everyday life in the east, the representation of 1989/90 as an historical break negates East German memory and experience as they are no longer applicable to the continuities found in the Bonn and Berlin Republics.

More properly, Frederick Taylor's study, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989*, both acknowledges this perceived break in German history and recognizes the continuities that carried over from the former GDR to problematize this division and the perception of a unified German population following the reunification of the state. This book, unlike the others discussed here, was not published to coincide with the twentieth anniversary, but came out already in 2006. As such, it tends not to fall prey to the trappings of the official narrative of the fall of the Berlin Wall as laid out by the German federal government as represented in the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution Open Air Exhibition 1989/90 in Berlin in 2009 and analyzed in depth in Chapters 1 and 2. Rather than treating the revolutions throughout

⁴⁵ Ibid, 238.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, "Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 166.

Eastern Europe and the collapse of communism together or examining the opening of the Wall and the German reunification as a single event, Taylor's study focuses specifically on era of the Berlin Wall, from its construction to its fall, as a period of recent German history that then influences the period of German unity that followed. The fall of the SED and the opening of the Wall becomes the subjects of only the last three chapters of the work, concluding that the *Mauerfall* was "followed by the biggest, wildest street party the world [had] ever seen. And, perhaps inevitably, by one of the biggest hangovers, too. But that is another story."⁴⁷ As suggested above, in this conclusion, Taylor sees the fall of the Wall as an ending, albeit one with continuities and threads which infect the period of reunification that followed. What others characterize as a happy ending, for Taylor is a street party in which Germans of both East and West celebrated the end of the physical division that kept families and friends apart. German reunification then is the suggested hangover. This alludes not to a break in the history of Germany, but rather the continuation of a dual German social history alluded to elsewhere by former West German chancellor Willy Brandt as the process of East and West growing together.⁴⁸ This suggests that the differences inherent to the populations of the GDR and the FRG caused by the forty year division of the state, and the twenty-eight year physical division by the Berlin Wall, were not to be overcome in the moment of the Berlin Wall's collapse or as simply as through the political and economic reunifications of the two states.

If there is indeed a decided break in German history as suggested by Taylor, it is German reunification and the process that led to it following the *Mauerfall* as it marked the end of the memory and experience of life in the GDR and of East German history. This should not necessarily be understood as a new beginning, but rather as the continuation of West German

⁴⁷ Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989* (New York: Harper, 2006), 428.

⁴⁸ "Willy Brandt on 'Growing Together,' 10 November 1989," in *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944-1993*, eds. Konrad H. Jarausch & Volker Gransow (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), 80.

history as the structures of the FRG remained intact. As mentioned above, East Germans were the elements of the newly unified population forced to adapt to the new life according to the old western model. The ending thus applies only to the eastern experience. The perceived happiness associated with this end is then made relative only to the events directly related to the opening of the Wall. In his closing words, Taylor suggests that reunification should be treated separately from an analysis of the fall of the Berlin Wall as the establishment of a bridge between the memories of the *Mauerfall* and reunification requires an exploration of the “hangover,” disappointment based on the promises of reunification and the pre-reunification nostalgia experienced in the East and to a lesser degree in the West. In connecting the two events as Sarotte does in her study, and in treating the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification in terms of the political and economic processes at work through the leadership of Chancellor Kohl, she fails to recognize the continuities that arise in the post-reunification period from this “hangover” of social memory.

Another publication released for the anniversary in 2009 was a slim ninety-five page volume entitled, *Wir sind ein Volk: 20 Jahre Mauerfall* (We are one People: 20 Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall). This souvenir-style coffee table book was published by Garant Verlag GmbH, publishers of populist volumes of current events, celebrity photo and biography books, calendars, and puzzle books.⁴⁹ With more page space dedicated to photos over text, the book presented a simplified version of the history of the opening of the Berlin Wall for people not typically interested in history. The problem with this celebration of November 9, 1989, the night the Berlin Wall opened through mass pressure from the population and a clerical error on the part of the SED, is evident in the title. “We are one people” was heard from the masses demonstrating against the regime, but only after the declaration by Helmut Kohl of his Ten-Point

⁴⁹ “Startseite,” Garant Verlag GmbH, <http://www.garant-verlag.de/> (accessed March 15, 2011).

Plan to German Unification in late November 1989. This chant surfaced well after the border crossings at the Wall itself and the entry-points between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic were opened and after the original chant of “We are the people (*Wir sind das Volk*)” by the protestors in Leipzig and East Berlin in October and early November 1989.⁵⁰ That one small change in the use of language, “*das*” to “*ein*,” suggests the reunification of both halves of the divided German nation. At the same time, it describes the German reunification of October 3, 1990 as an inevitable conclusion to the narrative of Berlin Wall separation. The book is certainly not subtle in establishing this connection. The back cover of the book reads:

After more than forty years, Germans achieved that which was required by the Preamble of the German Basic Law (constitution of the FRG): The unity and freedom of Germany achieved in free self-determination.⁵¹

Without needing to read a single word of German, the pictures detail a similar portrait of the GDR: that they were citizens of the Federal Republic just waiting to become citizens of the FRG. The first photo was taken on the night of November 9, 1989 and depicts the opening of the Berlin Wall, from the West side, with people standing atop the Wall and throngs gathered in its shadow.⁵² The second shows the crowds gathered before the *Bundestag* waving the black, red, and gold tri-colours of the Federal Republic on October 3, 1990, the day of German reunification.⁵³ The book then concludes with a chronology of German history from 1945, the date of division following the Second World War, to 1990, the year of reunification.⁵⁴ As such, and although it was released for the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the

⁵⁰ Jaraus, *After Hitler*, 224.

⁵¹ Christoph Leischwitz, *Wir sind ein Volk: 20 Jahre Mauerfall* (Renningen: Garant Verlag GmbH, 2009), back cover. *Nach über vierzig Jahren erfüllte sich, wozu die Präambel des Grundgesetzes die Deutschen aufforderte: Die Einheit und Freiheit Deutschlands in freier Selbstbestimmung zu vollenden.*

⁵² *Ibid*, 4-5.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 6-7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 72-95.

volume is not a history of the Wall. Rather, the narrative constructed through the photos of protest and the border openings is the history and inevitability of the unified German state.

Although not done in a capacity that officially recognized the twentieth anniversary, Rammstein, the East German metal/industrial band, released the first single and video, “Pussy,” from their album *Liebe ist für Alle da* (There is Love for Everyone) in 2009, seemingly as a response to this narrative. Due to its explicit, arguably pornographic, depictions of sex, the video is largely unavailable to view online in its uncensored form. Whether censored or not, the band’s depiction of German reunification is clear. On the surface, the song is about positioning sex as a metaphoric unification in itself and in the crudest possible terms. As Till Lindemann sings, “You have a pussy/I have a dick-ah/So what’s the problem/Let’s do it quick.”⁵⁵ However, singing in English is atypical for Lindemann and was previously used only in the song “Amerika,” from the 2004 album *Reise Reise* as a representation of the western colonial influence on the German East. Singing back and forth between English and German creates a distinction between the American influence of the pre-reunification FRG and the former GDR.⁵⁶ In setting up the sexual scenarios in the “Pussy” video, then, the band casts itself as western stereotypes: the Playboy (Lindemann), the CEO (drummer Christoph Schneider), the Cowboy (guitarist Paul Landers), the sadomasochist Mr. Pain (bassist Oliver Riedel), and the Party Boy (guitarist Richard Z. Kruspe). The women in the video are largely employed by these people, such as the French maid and the secretary, with the notable exception of the cheerleader character. First appearing at fourteen seconds into the video, she is clothed with a black, red, and

⁵⁵ Rammstein, “Pussy,” *Liebe ist für Alle da*, CD (Santa Monica: Universal Music Group, 2009).

⁵⁶ John T. Littlejohn and Michael T. Putnam, “Rammstein and Ostalgic: Longing for Yesteryear,” *Popular Music and Society* 33, no. 1 (February 2010): 39.

gold bikini top and lies on a bedspread of the same colour scheme as the German flag.⁵⁷ From this depiction, the women in the video all become representations of Germans and of Germany separate from the male characters who proposition them through Lindemann's English, and thus American influenced, lyrics.

While the representation of the song and video thus far may create comparisons between America and German sexuality and sexual representation, the song's bridge and specifically the imagery accompanying it in the video argue against this interpretation. The bridge begins with Lindemann, waving a German flag, echoing the calls for "Germany" (in English and thus with the western voice) which the author Thomas Brussig claims was unimaginatively taken by West Germans to mean the Federal Republic.⁵⁸ Lindemann then stands before a podium cluttered with microphones in the shadow of the German flag, similar in style to a press conference, as he repeats the song's chorus, cited above. The imagery and lyrics here recall political campaigning during 1990, the speed with which German reunification took place located specifically within the sexual imagery of male (FRG) dominance in the song, and the "hangover" that followed as East German desires remained largely unfulfilled compared to the promises made during election campaigns.⁵⁹ In this way, the first single from *Leibe ist für Alle da* may be understood as a satirical criticism of western dominance or colonization during the reunification of Germany in 1990.

This is not the first time that Rammstein has used women to characterize the German East nor is the band a stranger to *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for the former GDR). The song "Moskau" depicted Russia and by extension the GDR as a pliant female, with "the sexual aspect of this

⁵⁷ Rammstein, "Pussy," video, Rammstein Official Youtube Channel (Santa Monica: Universal Music Group), <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=officialrammstein> (accessed March 15, 2011).

⁵⁸ Thomas Brussig, *Heroes Like Us*, trans. John Brownjohn (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 261.

⁵⁹ Jaraus, "Memory Wars," 104.

vocal relationship” of the female Russian answering the German male “mirror[ing] the perceived relationship of East and West Germany.”⁶⁰ The album title *Sehnsucht* (longing) and the song, “Mutter,” about a cloned child longing for the mother it never had have both been demonstrated as further examples of Rammstein’s nostalgic character and use of gender and sexuality as political satire and critique.⁶¹

These two examples, *Wir sind ein Volk: 20 Jahre Mauerfall* and Rammstein’s “Pussy,” represent two opposing forces in the study of nostalgia, which Svetlana Boym has called the restorative and the reflective. In her 2001 study of post-communist nostalgia, *The Future of Nostalgia*, she coined these terms in relation to how post-socialist states reconcile the communist experience before the fall of the Wall with the capitalist present. Coined in the 17th Century by Johannes Hofer in his medical dissertation regarding the severe homesickness suffered by Swiss mercenaries, nostalgia comes from the Greek word *nostos* meaning “to return home” and *algos* meaning “pain” or “ache.”⁶²

Boym’s concept of the restorative does not literally imply the desire to bring back the lost home which is remembered. Rather, and in terms of the memories of the East German state, the opening of the Berlin Wall, and German reunification, the restorative “characterizes national and nationalist revivals...which engage in the antimodern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths.”⁶³ That is to mean that restorative nostalgia looks back in order to revive historical narratives which create the foundational myths necessary to the modern state. This mode of nostalgia, Boym claims, is “paranoiac” in its “delusionary” reconstruction of

⁶⁰ Littlejohn, 40.

⁶¹ Ibid, 37-8.

⁶² Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 3.

⁶³ Ibid, 41.

the past and anxious over “those who draw attention to historical incongruities.”⁶⁴ The restorative is dependent upon a single representation of the past or a single historical narrative which is understood to be the truth. The perceived power of truth is invoked to overcome those historical incongruities.

Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, occupies the space of longing that exists between the present and the perceived past.⁶⁵ This is opposed to the restorative’s occupation with the concept of the lost home. Unlike the restorative, the reflective does not seek to eliminate incongruities in historical narrative. It is these incongruities that give the reflective its strength in that incongruities allow the reflective to exist in that place of longing while at the same time being critical of both the perceived past and of the present that sees necessity in its turn toward that reconstructed past. For Boym, these incongruities represent the “imperfect process of memory” which does not address a single truth, but allows for a plurality of truth in perceived collective experience.⁶⁶ Through the recognition of memory as an imperfect version of the past, the reflective invites the critical assessment of reconstructions and representations of the past as they occur in nostalgia and in the commemorations found in the restorative.

It is this knowingness or self-awareness of its own construction that differentiates Boym’s conception of reflective nostalgia from the more common perception of nostalgia. *Ostalgie* is oftentimes criticized as operating against the process of national unity through an uncritical romanticization of former East German state. Through the cherishment of everyday and kitschy objects and the rose-tinted recollection of the East German *Alltag* (everyday life) in relating the GDR experience, *Ostalgie* has been accused of white-washing the Stasi past. It does not attempt to rework the socialist past to the goal of furthering the democratic structures of the

⁶⁴ Ibid, 43 & 45.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 41.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 41.

united Germany.⁶⁷ Boym's concept differs from this more generalized perception of the past through its own awareness that the lost home is indeed permanently lost and the reconstruction of it is based on imperfect recollections. For Boym, the reflective is a nostalgic construction assembled for the purpose of critically assessing not only the past that is being rebuilt, but also the present from which that nostalgic construction emerges. Anthropologist Anselma Gallinat suggests that "*Ostalgie* uses both socialist political and mundane symbols to provide a way of remembering the GDR and of connecting personal biographies to the passing of time."⁶⁸ As such, the reflective has much in common with the double-meaning and detachment from the subject found in the use of irony.⁶⁹

The brief analyses of *Wir sind ein Volk: 20 Jahre Mauerfall* and Rammstein's "Pussy" provided above were not intended to plumb the depths of either of these sources. Instead, they were meant merely to demonstrate the opposing views of nostalgia posited by Boym in her study. Although *Wir sind ein Volk* does not suggest itself to be the truth outright, the reduction of the memory and the events of the opening of the Berlin Wall to the, largely, political narrative of the German reunification in October 1990 lends weight to that narrative through its basis on physical documentation easily found in the archives of the Federal Republic of Germany. Rammstein's song, on the other hand, while reflecting on the same process of German unity, criticizes that process in terms of its effect on the individual as negotiated through individual experience. Unlike *Wir sind ein Volk* and restorative nostalgia more generally, the reflective relies less of the process of memory that can be demonstrated through data, statistics, and

⁶⁷ Anselma Gallinat, "Intense Paradoxes of Memory: Researching Moral Questions About Remembering the Socialist Past," *History and Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (June 2009): 184.

⁶⁸ Anselma Gallinat, "Being 'East German' or Being 'At Home in East Germany'? Identity as Experience and as Rhetoric," *Identities* 15, no. 6 (2008): 668.

⁶⁹ Linda Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," University of Toronto UTEL, <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html> (accessed May 24, 2011).

paperwork than it does through less tangible sources of memory. Rammstein, and the reflective in general, thus employs the imperfections of memory to criticize the memory of the past and the present upon which that memory is based. Whereas *Wir sind ein Volk* presents a utopian version of the unified state through the completion of the tasks of the West German constitution, “Pussy” questions the sexual mores and the Deutsch-Mark nationalism that resulted from the reunification process. Boym’s conceptions of these two modes of nostalgia serve as a means of understanding how memories are negotiated and incorporated into historical narrative.

This thesis as a whole argues that a restorative interpretation of the fall of the Berlin Wall, as exemplified by the anniversary events organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, reduced East German memory to that of the political processes of German reunification in order to demonstrate a version of history devoid of incongruities. The restorative assumes a collective East German identity and uniformity of East German experience through western perceptions of the SED state and thus marginalizes the influence of the everyday, the *Alltag*, conceiving of it as a corrupted sphere of limited citizen freedom and activity. Furthermore, this reductionist vision of memory may then be understood as responsible for, at least in part, the rising sense of East German nostalgia since the mid-1990s which is frequently recognized as posing a threat to the officially accepted narrative of German reunification. The twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall was problematic in that the *Kulturprojekte*’s reconstruction of that history posed the *Mauerfall* as a step toward the inevitable reunification of the divided German state. This was, however, not the reason for protests against the SED regime, the exodus of the East German population through gaps in the Iron Curtain through Hungary or Czechoslovakia, or the misrepresented relaxation of travel that ultimately tore down the Wall. Konrad Jarausch suggests in his study, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, that to find the roots of resistance in

the GDR it is necessary to study the everyday life of East Germans. Civil and protest societies reactivated themselves in the private and semi-private spheres while the outward appearance of conformity to the state was maintained.⁷⁰ As the restorative memory of the Federal Republic reduced East German protest culture to a politically understood move toward reunification, and thus a western understanding of 1989 as the superiority of capitalism that legitimized western democracy, East German memory, and the everyday, was itself marginalized.

In order to demonstrate this, this thesis examines the ways in which memory, both official and unofficial, is negotiated and the ways in which this negotiation is narrated to a mass audience in order to incorporate the East German experience in to that of a unified Germany, where it remains marginal. As a recent example of the western perceptions of the GDR as a totalitarian regime and Stasi controlled police state it focuses on the celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁷¹ Although immediate connections may not seem apparent, attention is also paid to popular German fiction written by former East Germans and published in the years since German reunification since this demonstrates the impossibility of reconciling a single narrative view and thus questions the perceived truth presented through the commemorations.

Chapter 1: Commemoration and Commiseration examines the Festival of Freedom with its construction of a domino installation along the former route of the Berlin Wall. This was symbolic of the domino effect set in motion by the opening of the Wall throughout Eastern Europe and the European continent. Also examined, and an equal part of the organized anniversary festivities in Berlin, is the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition. Both were organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* for the twentieth anniversary of the *Mauerfall*.

⁷⁰ Jaraus, *After Hitler*, 196-197.

⁷¹ Dennis, "Constructing," 25.

Through an analysis of publications and press releases from *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the federal government, newspaper reports, magazine articles, and memoirs, the chapter focuses on the various narratives posed by the anniversary. In creating the festivities recognizing November 9, 1989, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* attempted to combine a number of different and disparate narrative threads catering to a variety of audiences. The first narrative dominant in this chapter is that of the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy which was first posed by the Commission of Inquiry and upheld throughout official unified German narratives of the former GDR. Second, is the narrative, mentioned briefly above, which draws the narratives of the *Mauerfall* and the reunification of Germany into a single sequence of events marking the end point of dictatorship on German soil and the new beginning of a united Germany in a united Europe. Rather than speaking to the memories of those marked by the post-war division of Germany, politicians and historical witnesses imparted these narratives to the schoolchildren involved in painting the domino tiles through *Kulturprojekte Berlin*. This effectively sold the utopian ideal of a unified German populace to the generation least affected by lingering East/West mental divisions as opposed to fostering true unity among those who remembered, and are still affected by, the division of the state.

Taking its starting point from the global dimension of the anniversary suggested in the first chapter, Chapter 2: *Beyond Berlin* explores *Kulturprojekte Berlin*'s events in the context of the international audience, the different focuses employed by the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) in advertising German tourism during the anniversary year of 2009, and the events, similar to those in Berlin, organized by the Wende Museum in Culver City, California. While the narrative of *Kulturprojekte Berlin* largely remains the same as it is laid out in the first Chapter, in the international arena it expands to portray the perceived collective German ability

to overcome the Berlin Wall and the division of the state. It is significant here that in this narrative, it was the perceived collective experience of Germans and not only the experience of East Germans that was used as an example to be exported globally to states divided by physical, social, or political barriers. While this was also a key goal in the Wende Museum's Wall Project, the reductionist narrative of the Wall Project attempted to negotiate ground common to the experience of both East and West Germans, finding that common narrative in the Berlin Wall as a physical structure and symbol. Facing the Wall, the Wende Museum's companion project to the Wall Project, then returned to the German narrative of the Berlin Wall as symbol of the GDR dictatorship and the oppression associated with the division. In doing so, the Wende Museum reinforced its overarching message, also a theme of *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, of the destructive effects of walls in all their forms on populations. But the advertisements of the GNTB demonstrated the most diverse portrayal of the German East by necessity, though not explicitly contradicting the official German narratives surrounding the former GDR. Through the promotion of German tourism, the GNTB was required to include museums and the physical traces remaining from the GDR. However, not all of this played to the idea of the GDR as a totalitarian police state, but rather indicated the existence of an everyday life experienced by the population that remained largely, though never completely separate from the politicization of the state. While the GNTB advertisements did not contradict the official memories of the GDR, they suggested the possibility of life beyond the regime and thus beyond the narrative that legitimized the unified state.

In an analysis of examples of reflective nostalgia and their negotiation to a mass audience, Chapter 3: Communist Kitsch turns toward the subject of post-*Wende* literature by former East Germans. Selected for the global and local impact of the works, these novels,

Heroes Like Us by Thomas Brussig, *New Lives* by Ingo Schulze, and *In the Flesh* by Christa Wolf, each employ narrative devices that draw attention to the constructed nature of narration and thus of memory. While construction is an integral part of any narrative, and arguably of memory, de-naturalizing narrative also holds the potential of opening up new forms of truth. In terms of the memory of November 9, 1989, each of the discussed novels is set immediately before or immediately after the opening of the Berlin Wall. As such, each is a reflection upon and a reconstruction of that time and place in German history through the lens of the post-unification context in which it was written. Each negotiates the memory of the Berlin Wall and of the German Democratic Republic less to dwell on nostalgia than to critique that nostalgia and the reality of the unified-German present. Bringing back Boym for a moment, each may be seen to employ reflective nostalgia in order to critique the marginalizing effects of reunification.

In her article, “Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration,” philosophy scholar Anita Kasabova argues that the continuities between the past and the present are constructions and that “memories, memorials, and histories are semantic means for dealing with the past.” While she goes on to suggest that the reconstructions of history are of that which no longer exists and cannot be reclaimed, “memory is alive and evolving.”⁷² Unlike the constructed narratives present in history, the reconstructions made in memory evolve with the individual responsible for the remembering and those alterations and adaptations are the product of present experience. Although the idea of the constructed nature of history and historical narratives is not unknown or even new to academics, this distinction between history and memory in many ways reflects the restorative and reflective nostalgias argued by Boym and the use of musealization and art in historical practice. German folklorist Gottfried Korff characterizes musealization as a stabilizing

⁷² Anita Kasabova, “Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration,” *History and Theory* 47 (October 2008): 331.

process that acts in complement to the inconsistent forces of modernization. Using “antiques” and the material remnants of the past, museums and display (such as the *Kulturprojekte Berlin*’s twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall) create “a sense of history” and act as grounding agents in the transitory present.⁷³ Art, as it is understood in the analysis of post-*Wende* fiction in Chapter 3, uses the past to deconstruct the perceived stabilizing influence of history. As memory is evolving as is argued by Kasabova, the narrative of the past reconstructed in art is perceived through the lens of the transitory present and, as such, is just as transitory and flawed as the present in which it was created. If divisions of identity are rooted in the perceived past, art seeks not to widen this rift between easterners and westerners but to question why this rift opened in the first place.

Anselma Gallinat argues that the unified German state has struggled with the commemoration of October 3rd as an event celebrated collectively by both East and West.⁷⁴ In arranging the events of November 9, 2009 as a celebration of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Peaceful Revolution, and German Reunification as argued in Chapter 1, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* forced East Germans to celebrate German reunification, if not October 3rd specifically, by default if they wished to commemorate the actions and participation of East Germans in the opening of the East and the collapse of the SED regime. The memories of 1989 represented, however, if memory is fluid creature as Kasabova argues, were those of the westernized narrative of the *Mauerfall*. The *Kulturprojekte*’s display of 1989 is then problematic in that it avoided those memories that could be specifically recognized as representational of the East German experience. In convincing East Germans to celebrate reunification through its connection to the

⁷³ Gottfried Korff, “Reflections on the Museum,” trans. John Bendix and Regina Bendix, *Journal of Folklore Research* 36, no. 2/3 (May-Dec. 1999): 268.

⁷⁴ Gallinat, “Being ‘East German’,” 667.

Mauerfall, rather than drawing German experiences together, it cemented the existing politicized perceptions of *Jammern-Ossis* (whining easterners) and *Besser-Wessis* (know-it-all westerners).

In “Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende,” cultural anthropologist Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke argues that the construction of memory creates or affirms collective identity and unity. She goes on to suggest that memory allows individuals the ability to function in daily life.⁷⁵ Both of these concepts are discussed at length in Chapters 1 and 3. The opening of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany serve as a single event only in that they invalidated East German memory in the functions of West German society by changing the conditions of everyday life. While restorative nostalgia attempts to create the conditions for unity and a collective German identity, whether in the official capacities of the Commission of Inquiry and the anniversary celebrations or the more *Ostalgie* specific incarnations of the expression of memory, the reflective allows the individual to ask why those memories are no longer relevant. In drawing attention to the constructed nature of memory in imagined communities, that is the perceived East German collective memory, the reflective attempts to deconstruct that construction, negotiating a space in which invalidated memories may be validated in the unified state.

One final note on the employed terminology: throughout this thesis, I use the word “reunification” to refer to the accession of the reincorporated states of the former GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany on October 3, 1990. I use this term for two reasons. First, it makes for less confusion regarding the unification of Germany and the formation of the Second Reich under the chancellorship of Otto von Bismarck in 1871 and the 1990 German-German

⁷⁵ Ten Dyke, 162-3.

union. Second, the official narrative and jargon of the German federal government refers to the unification of October 3, 1990 as *Wiedervereinigung*, quite literally meaning reunification.⁷⁶

The term “reunification” implies a coming together of two or more parts of the same whole, the perception that the GDR and the FRG were once halves of the united German nation. Forty years of division led to two drastically different social systems. In this I do not mean the politics of these social systems nor even the structures themselves, but the ways in which social systems were perceived to operate by those living within each system. ‘Actual existing socialism’ in the GDR practiced a cradle to grave approach to the care-taking of its population through full employment and the right to work, child care, and subsidized food and housing to name only a few examples.⁷⁷ The differences between the systems of the East and West became obvious following reunification as the East demonstrated an inability to compete with the West in terms of quality or base economics. The result was the closure of numerous established eastern firms, creating unemployment for the first time in the eastern states since the foundation of the GDR.⁷⁸ As the capitalist economy and western market failed to live up to the immediate expectations of an eastern population familiar with the guarantees of the state for the well-being of its citizens, *Ostalgie* manifested as an expression of the Wall in the Head (*Mauer im Kopf*) and a retreat into the everyday life of the former East. This maintained the division of Germans after the Berlin Wall had all but disappeared.⁷⁹ The nostalgic divisions and stereotypes emerging since reunification regarding “know-it all *Wessis* (Westerners)” or “lay-about *Ossis* (Easterners)”

⁷⁶ Jana Kellermann, “Von der Friedlichen Revolution zur Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands,” *Die Bundesregierung Magazin für Soziales, Familie und Bildung* no. 80 10/2009, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Magazine/MagazinSozialesFamilieBildung/080/s-a-zwanzig-jahre-friedliche-revolution.html> (accessed April 1, 2011).

⁷⁷ Dennis, *Rise and Fall*, 146-156.

⁷⁸ “20 Years After Reunification: Eastern Germany on the Road to Western Prosperity,” Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,druck-717136,00.html> (accessed September 13, 2010).

⁷⁹ Simon Green, Dan Hough, Alister Miskimmon, and Graham Timmins, *The Politics of the New Germany* (London: Routledge, 2008), 51-2.

serves as a present reminder of the differences that were fostered during the forty-year division of the German nation.⁸⁰ *Wiedervereinigung* as terminology does two things. The term perceives the significance of the nation as a political organization over its population. At the same time, it breaks through division by implying the sameness of Germans in both the East and the West.

The problematic nature of either the term “reunification” or “unification” to refer to October 3, 1990 could form the basis of a paper of an entirely different research agenda. As the German government uses *Wiedervereinigung* in the official narrative of German unity, in a bid to examine the constructed nature of historical narrative and the ways in which memories are negotiated in the reconstructions of the past, the use of “reunification” seems to be fitting here.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 51.

Chapter 1.

Commemoration or Commiseration: The Marginalization of GDR Memory in the Narration of the Berlin Wall and the East German Revolutions of 1989.¹

In 2009, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* hosted a *Themenjahr* (theme-year) around which the fall of the Berlin Wall (*Mauerfall*) served to orient the themes of diverse events. A number of commemorations were dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, with the sponsorship of the German Federal and the Berlin Municipal governments. From January until the anniversary itself on November 9, 2009, the *Kulturprojekte* and the city of Berlin produced a number of events and spectacles meant to invoke the memories and spirit of 1989, when protestors peacefully challenged the regime of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland* or SED) eventually bringing an end to Germany's physical division. Operating in a largely organizational capacity, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* worked closely in association with the Robert Havemann Society to develop the events of the twentieth anniversary. The Robert Havemann Society, formed by the New Forum in 1990 and named after the famous East German dissident, "documents and presents the history and the experiences of opposition and resistance in the Soviet-Occupied Zone/German Democratic Republic."² Of the produced events, the three largest spectacles, thus considered the highlights of the *Themenjahr*, were "Perspectives: A Changing Berlin" beginning on January 28, "the Peaceful Revolution

¹ An early version of this chapter was presented at the European Studies Conference at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, October 7-9, 2010. The conference paper was subsequently published in the Selected Proceedings as: Sean Eedy, "Commemoration and Commiseration: Memory Conflicts and Their Effects as Present in the twentieth Anniversary of the *Mauerfall*," European Studies Conference Selected Proceedings 2010, <http://www.unomaha.edu/esc/2010Proceedings/EedyPaper.pdf> (accessed June 13, 2011).

² "Robert Havemann Society," Peaceful Revolution 1989/90, http://revolution89.de/?PID=static.RobertHavemannGesellschaft_en (accessed May 9, 2011). It is unclear whether *Kulturprojekte Berlin* or the Robert Havemann Society played the larger role in the development of the twentieth anniversary celebrations. As the literature associated with the anniversary was published and distributed by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, this name shall be used throughout to refer to the anniversary organizers collectively.

1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition” on display from May 7 through November 14, and “the Festival of Freedom” on November 9.

The first explored different historical locations throughout the year, demonstrating how each site changed, developed, and evolved over the course of the last twenty years. The second was an open-air exhibit “tell[ing] the story of the Peaceful Revolution [*Friedliche Revolution*] and its main participants...[as they] resisted despair, hopelessness, decline, and stagnation in society, demanding freedom of travel and free elections.”³ Finally, on the proper anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall was the Festival of Freedom on November 9, 2009. This globally televised celebration was the lynchpin of the entire *Themenjahr* featuring concerts, distinguished guests and heads of state from around the globe, culminating in the toppling of a 1.5 kilometre wall of dominoes that stretched from Potsdamer Platz to the *Bundestag*. When set up along the original wall route, the 1000 domino tiles created a symbolic recreation of the Berlin Wall meant to evoke the “domino effect” that the *Mauerfall* had on Communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe.⁴

In organizing these events, especially the Festival of Freedom on November 9, 2009, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* set itself with a multi-faceted task. The Festival, including the domino wall, was intended to educate people about the history of the Peaceful Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall in order to demonstrate the world’s ability to overcome barriers, both physical and mental. The former was aimed largely at those German youths born after 1989 that possessed no direct memory of the historical events. The latter idea, that of the Berlin Wall as an example of overcome barriers, was then directed toward world leaders, tourists, and the television audience. These themes were similarly reflected in celebrations held outside of

³ “Berlin 2009—20 Years Since the Fall of the Wall: Overview of Events,” Brochure, (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 1.

⁴ *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt*, (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH, 2009), 13.

Germany, such as The Wall Project in Los Angeles, California, with the endorsement of the German government. Although these events perpetuated the German government's narrative of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as a *Rechtsstaat* (a Constitutional State governed by the rule of law) when compared to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the overall narrative of the official celebrations was conflicted and accused of simplifying history by the German media.⁵

The anniversary attempted to present an image of the unified Federal Republic that combined the experiences of both East and West Germans. However, this chapter argues that the simplification of GDR history necessary to achieve broad appeal came at the expense of the East German memory about participation in the Peaceful Revolution of autumn 1989. The first section of this chapter examines the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition, the Festival of Freedom, and the educational components that comprised the official celebrations. The dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy that was created and narrated through these visual representations of the history of the GDR effectively devalued East German life due to its western perception as a totalitarian state. The second section of this chapter traces the effects of these representations across the generations, analyzing their impact on those born in the GDR and those born following reunification given the differences in direct memory and experience with the GDR. The chapter concludes that the twentieth anniversary of the *Mauerfall* was less a commemoration of the Peaceful Revolution and the East German uprisings than it was a celebration of the continued success of the Federal Republic and German reunification as the inevitable telos of East German history. Through the lens of the commemoration studied here, I argue that this characterization of the anniversary colonizes East German memory of the former

⁵ Catherine Schaer, "The Official Ceremonies Simplify History," Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,660467,00.html> (accessed April 8, 2010).

GDR, marginalizing easterners from their own history and experience rather than celebrating the multiple and varied memories and experiences of 1989 that made German reunification possible in the first place.

This narrative, as projected by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, linked the *Mauerfall* with the Night of Broken Glass of November 9, 1938 as the completion of a chapter in German history, bringing about the myth of a second Zero Hour.⁶ The celebration also connected the narratives of November 9, 1989 to that of German reunification on October 3, 1990 in a sense of *Freiheit durch Einheit* (Freedom through Unity). In addition to promoting the FRG as a *Rechtsstaat*, this had the perceived effect of bringing together the memories of East and the West Germans, including those not directly involved in and with no memory of the non-violent struggle against the restrictions of the SED-led regime. More important was the involvement of children in the anniversary events. *Kulturprojekte Berlin* recognized that future generations, without the same burden of memory as their parents, possessed the ability to overcome mental divisions and nostalgia for the former GDR (*Ostalgie*).⁷ Combined with the perpetuation of a second Zero Hour, the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall excluded elements to which East Germans could claim the sole ownership of memory in an effort to present an image of post-reunification Germans as being united by the experiences of 1989/90.

⁶ Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12. The first Zero Hour, also referred to as a “rupture of civilization,” in German historiography is understood as the end of the Second World War. The Holocaust represented such a radical “failure...of radically guided human behaviour” that this event is necessarily a “point of departure for any history of postwar Germany.” While the fall of the Berlin Wall certainly represents a fundamental break or rupture in the history of the lives of East Germans, it is difficult to reconcile 9 November 1989 as a failure of civilization on the same level as the Holocaust. As such, an understanding of German history using 1989 or even reunification in 1990 as a point of departure is problematic in that it tends to stress the superiority of the western democratic institutions which have dominated post-Wall German history. This myth acts to the detriment of East German history and its inclusion into the larger framework of post-Wall history and, in effect, acts to divorce the unified German present of the actions of both the Nazis following the first Zero Hour and the Stasi and SED following the second Zero Hour.

⁷ *Dominobuch*, 13.

In her article, “Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende,” cultural anthropologist Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke argues that memory plays a crucial role in the ability of the individual or—in the case of East Germans as former citizens of German Democratic Republic—the collective to function with the day-to-day business of living.⁸ By this, she argues that accumulation of life experiences within the socialist system of the GDR, economics, employment, education, child-care, social activities, party involvement, and even encounters with the Stasi (*Ministerium für Staatsicherheit* or MfS), fostered the individual’s ability to function to the point where daily tasks within that system were taken for granted. With the *Wende* (Turning Point), the opening of the inner-German border in 1989, and the treaty on economic, monetary and social union, to say nothing of reunification in 1990, the accumulated experiences of those East Germans that had lived their entire lives in the GDR no longer applied to daily life in the unified Federal Republic. East German travel restrictions limited the exposure East German citizens had to the West.⁹ As a result, many knew only the “Alice in Wonderland” FRG, as American anthropologist John Borneman has called it, that vision of the west beamed into East German homes through the looking glass of West German television media.¹⁰ For East Germans, then, dislocation came as the expectations based on accumulated experience in the socialist GDR failed to apply smoothly, if at all, to the reality of daily life in the fantasy-land of the capitalist FRG.

⁸ Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, “Memory and Experience: Implications of the Wende,” in *The Works of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 154.

⁹ Angela Merkel, “Speech by Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel on Receiving the Eric M. Warburg Award in Washington on 25 June 2009,” Bundeskanzlerin, <http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reden/2009/2009-06-25-warburg-award,layoutVariant=Druckansicht.html>, (accessed August 4, 2010).

¹⁰ John Borneman, *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin*, (United States of America: Basic Books, 1991), 201.

As Ten Dyke outlines, despite having been born into the socialist system of the GDR, children did not possess the same accumulation of memories and experiences as did their parents at the time of reunification. Jana Hensel, for example, author of *After the Wall: Memoirs of an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next* was only thirteen years old when the Berlin Wall fell. In her memoirs of life as one of the *Zonenkinder*—children born into the former Soviet Zone of Occupation, Hensel writes that children are not supposed to know more than their parents. Yet, due to German reunification Hensel’s formative experiences in united Germany were cast as more valid than those of her parents in the former GDR. As a result, she felt compelled to hide those experiences from her parents that they were unable to share.¹¹ Overall, Hensel recognizes the difficulties and sacrifices made by her parents through the failure of their East German experiences to aid their ability to function in the reunified German reality. As such, the success of her entire generation in the reunified FRG is imperative to validate the hardships of those who came before.¹² In an essay published in *Der Spiegel* magazine, Hensel writes:

The *Wende* is the most important memory of my life. I don’t wish the Wall to come back. I also do not long for a return of a dictatorial regime. I live in the here and now and exactly for that reason I cannot tolerate the faulty trivialization of the fall of 1989.¹³

Hensel expresses a certain acceptance of the unified Federal Republic as a fact of life. In her estimation, the positives that came to the East as a result of reunification outweigh any of the negatives. However, she is unable to accept the “trivialization,” perhaps a reference to the wave of *Ostalgie* that surfaced in Germany since the 2003 release of *Good-bye, Lenin*, of what

¹¹ Jana Hensel, *After the Wall: Memoirs of an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 73.

¹² *Ibid*, 74.

¹³ Jana Hensel, “Der Fremde Blick,” in *Der Spiegel* 46, November 9, 2009, 134. *Die Wende ist das wichtigste Ereignis meines Lebens. Ich wünsche mir die Mauer nicht zurück. Ich sehne mich auch nicht nach einer Rückkehr in diktatorische Verhältnisse. Ich lebe im Jetzt und Heute, und genau deswegen ertage ich die fortschreitende Trivialisierung des Herbstes 1989 so schlecht.* Translation by the author.

amounts to her “most important memory.” Trivializing the events of 1989/90 repackages the memories and experiences of the former GDR as easily digestible pieces of communist kitsch. The former East thus appears quirky and strange when viewed through the western lens. That being the case, Hensel claims that she may have turned out exactly like her parents if their experiences were the same; her experience and memories made obsolete under the western gaze and the advice she had to give no longer applied to the conditions of the reunified state.¹⁴

Although it is unclear as to whether or not an individual, in this case Hensel, should be allowed to speak on behalf of her entire generation and whether the experiences of a single individual are representative of the collective, Jennifer Bierich-Shahbazi suggests that the *Wende* marked a definitive break in the lives of all GDR citizens which explains the tendency among East German authors to write in the plural and thus denote a collective experience.¹⁵ Bierich-Shahbazi also notes that the sheer volume of memoirs published by former East Germans suggests that the need to tell of unremarkable childhoods in the GDR is not unique to Jana Hensel.¹⁶ The establishment of the GDR as unremarkable in these works operates against the image of the GDR as “quirky” or “strange” by expounding the ordinariness of East German experience and thus the ability to draw comparisons to the western experience. This being so, and under the assumption that the published experiences of Jana Hensel are representative of the collective, her willingness to embrace the modern FRG supports the argument made by Ten Dyke. As Hensel was only thirteen when the Wall fell, she did not possess experiences comparable to those of her parents. The experiences Hensel possessed as a child within the GDR system were those dominated by the influence of her parents and would still be controlled by her

¹⁴ Hensel, *After the Wall*, 74.

¹⁵ Jennifer Bierich-Shahbazi, “The Zonenkinder Debate: An Analysis of Media Reaction to Two Popular Memoirs Written by East Germany’s Youngest Generation of Authors,” in *Ossi Wessi*, eds. Donald Backman and Aida Sakalauskaite, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 62.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 59.

parents even had she been born in the FRG.¹⁷ Without the same accumulation of memory and experience associated with the East German regime as their parents, Hensel's generation was more readily able to adapt to the new circumstances of life in the unified Federal Republic without the same sense of dislocation.

In opposition to Ten Dyke's vision, the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was organized in a way that addressed the gap between the experiences of the generations. In press information regarding the Domino Wall and the Festival of Freedom, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* stated that "the Domino Action to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of November 9, 1989 will involve many young people who did not experience this recent past themselves...and will deal with historical events that are among the most significant of the previous century."¹⁸ While Hensel's generation had some degree of experience with the Berlin Wall, the division of Germany, and life in the German Democratic Republic and thus possessed memories upon which to base their experiences of reunification, the children targeted by *Kulturprojekte Berlin's* celebrations were specifically those born after 1989. Architectural historian Brian Ladd told *Spiegel Online* that "the forthcoming twentieth anniversary is an awkward time for Germany... because...division had left wounds that would be difficult to heal."¹⁹ In targeting those born after 1989, those without direct historical memory and experience with the events of the Peaceful Revolution, it may be assumed that *Kulturprojekte Berlin* left the representation of November 9, 1989 in the hands of those most integrated into the unified FRG.²⁰ Born post-*Wende* or post-reunification, their memories were those of the undivided state. This generation was happy that

¹⁷ Hensel, *After the Wall*, 73.

¹⁸ Kulturprojekte Berlin, "Press Information: Theme Year 2009—20 Years since the Fall of the Wall: Domino Action to Celebrate 9 November" (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH, 2009), 1.

¹⁹ Jess Smee, "Heated History: Berlin Still Divided on How to Commemorate Wall," *Spiegel Online*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,druck-611790,00.html> (accessed May 9, 2011).

²⁰ Kulturprojekte Berlin, "Domino Action to Celebrate 9 November," 1.

their lives moved forward after the fall of the Wall. They were unconcerned by the anniversary because their most important life-decisions lay before them. East/West divisions appeared “daft” and occupied their thoughts as a matter of history and not as experience.²¹ Bringing back Ten Dyke’s argument, their accumulated experiences allowed them to function unhindered by any memories and experiences of the socialist German state unlike their parent’s generation or even Hensel’s.

Evidence of this line of thought is apparent in *Kulturprojekte Berlin*’s documentation that accompanied the organized events of the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall. As these children did not possess the same direct memories of German division and of the GDR,

in their classes and in additional workshops, often after discussions with historical witnesses and politicians, under the guidance of artists and especially committed teachers, [the students] dealt intensely with the fall of the Wall, the history and the consequences.²²

It is then necessary to ask which version of the history of the Peaceful Revolution and the *Mauerfall* these children were taught. This is significant as guided tours and workshops organized within the context of the official anniversary events, in particular the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition, focused on “issues relating to dictatorship and democracy that still affect us today” following themes of “Escape,” “Protest,” and “Freedom.”²³ The narrow scope of the Peaceful Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall do not immediately lend themselves to nostalgic discussions of everyday life in the GDR. As the press release clearly labels the themes of the exhibition as “Escape,” the flight of refugees over the Wall to the

²¹ Sebastian Esser and Susan Mücke, “Geboren am 9. November 1989: Generation Deutschland-Barometer,” Berlin: Berliner Morgenpost, 9 November 2009, 19.

²² *Dominobuch*, 27. *Sie haben sich im Unterricht und in zusätzlichen Workshops, oft nach Gesprächen mit Zeitzeugen und Politikern, unter Anleitung von Künstlern und ganz besonders von engagierten Lehrern, intensiv mit dem Mauerfall, der Vorgeschicht und den Folgen auseinandergesetzt.*

²³ Kulturprojekte Berlin, “Press Information: The Open-Air Exhibition ‘Peaceful Revolution 1989/90,’” (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH, 2009), 4.

Federal Republic, “Protest,” the Peaceful Revolution and demonstrations against the SED-regime, and “Freedom,” the *Mauerfall* and the opening of the borders with the West, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* sought to avoid nostalgia and the plurality of memories and experiences of the forty year lifespan of the German Democratic Republic.

It is not surprising that a dichotomy was created between dictatorship and democracy. The GDR was described in terms of “the hopelessness, decline and stagnation of society” with the express purpose outlined by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* “to encourage critical discussion of the issues around a free and democratic society.”²⁴ By using terminology such as dictatorship and democracy in dealing with the histories of the GDR and the FRG, the organizers of the twentieth anniversary hoped to address the perceived failures and successes of each political system. At the same time, the overt avoidance of the terms “socialist” and “communist” (or socialism and communism) in reference to the GDR allowed the organizers to dodge arguments of nostalgia. As nostalgia among East Germans is largely rooted in the everyday implications of economic forces that were displaced during reunification, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* did not need to address the ways in which economic and social reunification failed to live up to the expectations of East Germans.²⁵ Moreover, the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy points only to the political union of the two states and the ways in which life in the unified Federal Republic is better because of human rights, free elections, and the ability to travel freely. Without the incorporation of nostalgic reflection into the official events, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* displayed an image of the GDR in its final weeks as that of an *Unrechtsstaat* (unjust state).

²⁴ Ibid, 2 & 3.

²⁵ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 281 & 312. Examples of the East German everyday experience rooted in economic forces that were disrupted by German reunification may be found in the government guaranteed ability to produce in the GDR that ensured one’s place in the ration line and commodities and consumerism as ways to anchor the life of the individual. These ideas are discussed further by Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer in *Shattered Past*.

Just as important as the claim that “the events of the Peaceful Revolution...brought about an end to dictatorship in Germany,” the press release on the open-air exhibition drew to mind comparisons between the GDR and the Third Reich.²⁶ Such comparisons are not new to the way in which the socialist history in East Germany has been treated historiographically. In his essay, “Memory Wars: German Debates About the Legacy of Dictatorship,” Konrad Jarausch discusses the resurgent emphasis on structural and repressive similarities between the Nazi and SED-regimes since 1990. While this appeals to the victims of the respective regimes, it also serves to create a “tunnel-vision” in the historiography of both periods in German history that focuses attention almost unconditionally on the state and its opponents.²⁷ The western Federal Republic thus became the example of a just state (*Rechtsstaat*) contrasted against the totalitarian image of the GDR. This black and white dichotomy becomes problematic in that, although the situation in 1990 was perhaps reminiscent of that of 1945, the SED-regime was overthrown from within rather than without, as was the case with the National-Socialists at the end of the Second World War.²⁸ This dichotomy discredits GDR history and society as inferior to that of the Federal Republic. In doing so, the dictatorship versus democracy binary also inadvertently undermines the memories of those responsible for the Peaceful Revolution and thus the conditions that made the reunified state possible.²⁹

We see this logic similarly at work in the third section of the exhibition surrounding the “important historical events” included in the educational component of the Peaceful Revolution

²⁶ Kulturprojekte Berlin, “Press Information: Open-Air Exhibition,” 1.

²⁷ Konrad H. Jarausch, “Memory Wars: German Debates About the Legacy of Dictatorship,” in *Berlin Since the Wall's End: Shaping Society and Memory in the German Metropolis since 1989*, ed. John Alexander Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 105.

²⁸ Jarausch, *Shattered Past*, 77.

²⁹ Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 46-55. This dichotomy also suggests that the FRG was itself free of the Nazi past when, upon closer inspection, there are continuities between the two states through the integration and continuation of former Nazis in positions of power after 1945 as argued by Jarausch in *After Hitler*.

1989/90 exhibit entitled “Unity.” This section “describe[d] the short path from the first free elections in the GDR to the first all-German elections in December 1990.”³⁰ In doing so, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* made the conscious decision to link the memories of the fall of the Berlin Wall with that of the process of reunification on October 3, 1990. In the press information for the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition, the organizers noted the change in slogan among East German protestors from “*Wir sind das Volk* (We are the people)” to “*Wir sind ein Volk* (We are one people).” They added that, “while some East Germans want[ed] to reform the GDR, others vote[d] with their feet, leaving the country...[and] the majority vote[d] for the parties promising the quickest route to reunification.”³¹ While this is not untrue in the strictest sense, it glossed over the many reasons East Germans had for favouring the Alliance for Germany (*Allianz für Deutschland* or AfD) and its platform of rapid reunification under Article 23 of the FRG Basic Law.³² This also treated the urge to reform the GDR government and election process present in 1989 and the German reunification in 1990 as a single and inevitable sequence of events. As the slogan “We are one people” was given in the press information without sufficient context beyond the shift from “We are the people,” the meaning of such a slogan may be interpreted differently. “We are one people” suggests people united toward a common cause. In this case, however, the people united shifts from East Germans united against the repression of the SED-regime to the German people, East and West, united toward the goal of the reunification of Germany to which the Berlin Wall was a major obstacle. This interpretation

³⁰ Kulturprojekte Berlin, “Press Information: Open-Air Exhibition,” 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³² The Alliance for Germany (*Allianz für Deutschland*) was a coalition opposition party in the first free East German elections of March 1990. It was comprised of the Christian Democratic Union, the Bavarian Christian Social Union, Democratic Awakening, and the German Social Union parties, most of which were backed financially and politically by their West German counterparts. Article 23 made possible to accession of the GDR to the FRG through the wholesale transfer of western political, economic, and social system structures to the eastern territories.

follows the notion that unification in 1990 was carried out on the belief in common values among West Germans and their Eastern counterparts, requiring little or no negotiation.³³

Neither the press releases regarding the open-air exhibition, nor any of the published material related to the events surrounding the twentieth anniversary give any indication as to why the decision was made to link the memory of the Peaceful Revolution with that of German reunification. Internationally, this connection reinforced the vision of the unified Federal Republic of Germany as a *Rechtsstaat* in comparison to the former GDR and its neighbouring and partner states.³⁴ Internally, the unification of these memories allowed for the unification of *Ossis* (Easterners) and *Wessis* (Westerners) for whom social unification is not yet complete. West Germans have little or no claim to the memories of the Peaceful Revolution beyond those of outside observers, celebrants, and perhaps as a matter of unified German history. The Peaceful Revolution began in East Germany and was completed by East Germans, arguably, with the opening of the Berlin Wall, the relaxation of travel restrictions, and the first free elections in the German Democratic Republic in March 1990.³⁵ Combining the memories of the Peaceful Revolution with that of reunification, in effect celebrating the two anniversaries on the same date in 2009, allowed West Germans the ability to recapture the spirit of 1990 as Westerners were just as involved with and had to adjust to life in the newly unified Federal Republic, although not to the same degree as their Eastern counterparts.³⁶ In doing this, the memory of 1989 and the months leading up to the *Mauerfall* became the memories of all Germans united toward a common end.

³³ Andreas Glaeser, *Divided in Unity: Identity, Germany, and the Berlin Police* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 2 & 5.

³⁴ Merkel, "25 June 2009," (accessed August 4 2010).

³⁵ Richard Schröder, "Ein Herz und Zwei Seelen," <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/meinung/kommentare/ein-herz-und-zwei-seelen/1629004.html> (accessed July 31, 2010).

³⁶ Walter Momper, "Sind wir noch das glücklichste Volk der Welt?," Berlin: Berliner Morgenpost, 9 November 2009, 14.

This interpretation of the significance of the fall of the Berlin Wall, resting on the vision of German unity as an extension of the Peaceful Revolution, became especially apparent in the images of the Domino Wall on display in the days before the anniversary proper. Many domino tiles pictured in *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt*, published by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* in conjunction with the Festival of Freedom and sold along the Wall route in front of the Brandenburg Gate on November 9, 2009, demonstrate in fairly straight-forward imagery the dichotomy taught in the educational portion of the Peaceful Revolution Open-Air Exhibition. Bearing the title “*East Side*,” with the undisplayed image of “*West Side*” on its back, a tile designed by *Nikolaus-August-Otto-Oberschule* showed the hammer and compass crest of the GDR with barbwire and one of the Wall guard-towers.³⁷ A second tile, designed by the *OSZ Bürowirtschaft und Dienstleistungen* (Business Management and Services), displayed the silhouettes of figures standing with arms raised before a Stasi prison and a building flying the red flag of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with a broken heart pictured in the immediate foreground.³⁸ In the background stood the opened Berlin Wall decorated in the black, red, and gold of the FRG flag. Beyond that was the Brandenburg Gate with the word “*Frei* (Free)” stencilled across its columns. The phrase, “*Die Sonne scheint wieder* (the sun shines again)” was printed on a black, red, and gold sun.³⁹ Although the geography in this image leaves something to be desired as the Brandenburg Gate was depicted as standing on the West side of the former Wall route, the message it contained is most clear; that of freedom through unity. An

³⁷ *Dominobuch*, 129.

³⁸ The *OSZ Bürowirtschaft und Dienstleistungen* is a centre for vocational training located in the Prenzlauer Berg area of the Pankow district located in the northeast of Berlin. While this may point to this tile being representative of an eastern perspective, the school was only opened in 2001 as part of the redevelopment of East Berlin. The district in which the school is located also cannot account for potential population movements since 1990 or the makeup of the student body of Easterners and Westerners. <http://www.oszbwd.de/> (accessed April 21, 2011).

³⁹ *Dominobuch*, 142.

argument may be made that the Brandenburg Gate has, since reunification, become a symbol of German Unity, but this does not affect how the GDR was depicted on the tile. In this image, the GDR was little more than a system of repression and domination over the population. Freedom, through the opened Berlin Wall, lay in the West with the Federal Republic. The Brandenburg Gate, if interpreted as a symbol of unity, then only adds to this argument.

Emblazoned with the famous image of the *Nationale Volksarmee* (National People's Army or NVA) soldier, Hans Conrad Schumann, leaping the earliest barbwire incarnation of the Berlin Wall on August 15, 1961, the title "*Freiheit kann tödlich sein*" (Freedom can be deadly), a white diamond bearing the letters MfS and the date the Stasi was established, the tile produced by *Festung Europa, ElfZwanzig (Schüler), Berlin-Weißensee*, needs little by way of interpretation. The textual description of the tile reads: "The idea is that with the fall of the domino stones the historical side disappears and the true situation about the theme of walls comes to light."⁴⁰ This text says very little about the image to which it is attached. The image on the domino tile itself was a demonstration of the GDR as a repressive regime that killed those trying to escape the dictatorial system in place. The same goes for the tile entitled "*Peter Fetche: Er wollte nur frei sein*" (Peter Fetche: He wanted only to be free), dedicated to victims of the Wall and the SED's "shoot to kill" order against its own people.⁴¹ The text appearing in the *Dominobuch* for "*Freiheit kann tödlich sein*," however, indicates that the intentions of the domino's design extend beyond the immediate context of the Peaceful Revolution, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and into the more international dimension of existing walls. This latter idea will be developed in detail in the following chapter. Here, the domino is significant in its oppressive representation of the GDR and how that depiction does not allow for the presence of nostalgia.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 74. *Die Idee dabei ist, dass mit dem Umfallen der Domino-steine die historische Seite verschwindet und die aktuelle Situation zum Thema Mauern zum Vorschein kommt.*

⁴¹ Ibid, 65.

This sample is, admittedly, small. With 1000 domino tiles used to recreate the Wall from Potsdamer Platz to the *Bundestag* during the Festival of Freedom, citing only four cannot be taken as a sufficient cross-section of images and ideas. These are, however, not only representative of the whole, but also indicative of the themes present in the exhibition and the educational segment of the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition. Of course other examples exist, such as that of an *Ampelmann* (the East German pedestrian cross-walk icon) stepping from the monochromatic East into a colourful and vibrant West (“*Schritt in die Freiheit/Die Mauer ist weg!*”), of an East German silhouette holding hands with his West German counterpart on the opposite side of the tile (“*...so happy together...*”), or of an East German guard tower across barbed wire from a blonde woman, a lipstick tube, and numerous brand logos like the “*United in Peace. Ost-West*” domino.⁴² The ideas behind these different tiles were themselves numerous, but the themes behind them numbered only a few. They underscored the notion that the GDR was an oppressive, murderous, grey regime. More importantly, they addressed the belief that life in the unified Federal Republic was better in the sense that there was a broader range of choice in the consumer and political spectrums, human rights without the repressions and controls inherent to a totalitarian system, and metaphoric colour as compared to the perception of the former GDR. As the Festival of Freedom was broadcast on television stations worldwide, these representations put forth the perception that the German Democratic Republic was a blemish on German history that differed exponentially, and in all aspects, from the past and current FRG.

And, yet, among the images were anomalies in this demonstration of national memory making. The dominoes were sprinkled, sometimes liberally, with doses of East German popular culture which, with consumer products such as *Vita-Cola*, *Spreewalder Gurken*, and similarly tangible memories of the GDR, have become the foci of *Ostalgie* at least since the release of

⁴² Ibid, 106, 91 & 75. *Schritt in die Freiheit/Die Mauer ist weg!*—Step into Freedom/The Wall is gone!

Good-bye, Lenin in 2003.⁴³ Images of the East German *Trabant* and the *Ampelmann* ran throughout the dominoes.⁴⁴ The character of the *Sandmännchen* appeared on two panels. In the first, “*Bruderkuss der Kultfiguren*,” he kissed the West German character of *Maus* from *Die Sendung mit der Maus* in the shadow of the Victory Column in the *Tiergarten* in West Berlin.⁴⁵ In the second, the *Sandmännchen* drove fearlessly through a hole in the grey Berlin Wall to the colourful West.⁴⁶ As the former was sponsored by *Zielgruppe Kreativ Gesellschaft für Marketing* in Treptow, a working-class district in East Berlin, and the latter by *Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg*, a radio consortium founded in 2002, its offices located in the western district of Charlottenburg, it is difficult to pin down the precise motives behind the character’s appearances. However, in the coming together of East and West in the imagery, both appeared similar in sentiment to previous examples of East embracing the West. Incorporating East and West German cultural icons, they typically demonstrated either an embrace of West Germany and western values or indicated movement from the drab confinement of the former East to the green, openness of a *Heimat* (homeland) inspired depiction of the West.

More important than these simple demonstrations of material nostalgia were two panels that addressed the continued German division, the “wall in the head” (*Mauer im Kopf*) discussed in numerous monographs including Germanist Paul Cooke’s *Representing East Germany since Unification*, sociologist Andreas Glaeser’s *Divided in Unity*, and John Borneman’s *After the Wall*. The first, entitled “*Einklang/Heilung alter Wunden*” (Harmony/Healing old wounds) and created by *Katholische Schule des St. Franziskus*, depicted the torn German black, red, and gold

⁴³ Susan Stone, “DDR Living: Museum Offers ‘Ostalgic’ Look at East Germany,” Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,druck-427579,00.html> (accessed August 4, 2010).

⁴⁴ *Dominobuch*, 53, 76, 84, 92, 101, 106, 120, 122, 138. This list is abridged and cites only a few of the more prominent examples.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 143.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 145.

tri-colour bandaged together. The white space of division, however, was still visible and obvious between the halves.⁴⁷ The second, “*Rebecca und Jennifer*” by *Bertha-von-Suttner-Gymnasium*, displayed the eagle crest of the Federal Republic stitched to the hammer and compass of the GDR.⁴⁸ Each of these images demonstrated that reunification marked the coming together of two drastically different cultures in the forms of the pre-1990 FRG and the former GDR and that once the novelty of reunification wore off on both the East and West German populations, each group returned to life-patterns that were both well-known and comfortable.⁴⁹ At the same time, with what has already been written of the ability of memory to ease the individual’s ability to function in society through the internalization of established life-patterns and routines, what was considered well-known and comfortable no longer applied in the Eastern states following reunification. Instead of functioning as symbols of unity, in their own ways, these tiles were indicative of the continuing division among Germans. Both represented a hap-hazard joining of Eastern and Western memory and culture, justified by the greater unity of an all-German history and the shared values of human rights and freedoms apparent in the overall motif of the black, red, and gold of the German tri-colour. As both images demonstrated that these two cultures were held together by other means, bandages in the former example, thread in the latter, these divisions were still in the midst of a healing process requiring far more time than anticipated by the founders of reunification.

This does not suggest that the designers of these tiles felt the direct effects of this continued division. As both schools are located in the former-West Berlin, the simplest observation may be that these are both Western representations of continued social division. This basic geographic assessment cannot, however, account for population movements in the

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 117.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 131.

⁴⁹ Glaeser, *Divided in Unity*, 41 & 44.

intervening twenty years and the numbers of representatives of East and West now in attendance at these schools. What can be assumed with a degree of certainty is that none of the students that participated in the creation of these tiles were alive at the time of the Peaceful Revolution, the opening of the Berlin Wall, or of reunification. As such, the imagery expressed on these tiles was indicative of generational observations made immediately following the Peaceful Revolution and reunification.

The students of *Katholische Schule des St. Fraziskus* recognized the incompleteness of the reunification process. In the text accompanying “*Einklang/Heilung alter Wunden*,” they wrote: “The adhesive indicates the coming toward togetherness and should simultaneously serve as a bridge between the two formerly separated States.”⁵⁰ While this does not suggest how the continued divisions were to be overcome, in the opinions of the creators, it appears to indicate that social and mental divisions require a growing together, represented here in the form of a bridge, that necessitates the effort of both those in the East and West in order to create such an adhesive.

“*Rebecca und Jennifer*” goes one step further when the text accompanying the domino tile suggests that: “The process of growing together is complete only when we no longer know who are the new and who are the old citizens of the Federal Republic.”⁵¹ Although this caption does not attempt to present any solutions to the perceived problem of inner-German unity, it does suggest that this is a process that requires time. It may be argued that no longer being able to differentiate old citizens of the Federal Republic from the new (former citizens of the GDR)

⁵⁰ *Dominobuch*, 117. *Die Heftpflaster wiesen auf den Zusammenhalt hin und sollen gleichzeitig als Brücke zwischen den beiden ehemals getrennten Staaten dienen.*

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 131. *Abgeschlossen ist der Prozess des Zusammenwachsens erst, wenn wir nicht mehr wissen, wer die NEUEN und wer die ALTEN Bundesbürger sind.* The origin of the name Rebecca is Hebrew meaning “to bind.” Jennifer is of Welsh origin meaning “white” or “fair and smooth.” In this way, the odd title of this tile may imply East Germany being bound to the West, either West Germany or the structures of Western Europe and the European Union. Both of these definitions are according to <http://www.thinkbabynames.com>.

requires an assimilation of those of the former East into the culture and social structures of the West, as in the case of a cultural colonization of the GDR by the pre-1990 Federal Republic.

Jana Hensel suggests that such assimilation often occurs in “*Der Fremde Blick*,” published in *Der Spiegel* on November 9, 2009. She wrote,

All of these people...have smoothed or roughened their biographies, straightened, refined, maybe even let run a little wild...On that evening, this adaptation of the East Germans took hold of the new: an East German hid himself from the others, each one would not recognize his neighbours.⁵²

Like the text of “*Rebecca und Jennifer*,” Hensel here suggests that East Germans made themselves indistinguishable from West Germans in order to function in the newly unified state, which largely provided a continuity of Western institutions. As the memories of older East Germans no longer allowed them to function in daily life, as suggested by Elizabeth Ten Dyke, it was necessary for former East Germans either to adopt or assimilate the memories and the “identities” of West Germans in order to move through the new experience of daily life without notice to outside observers. In this way, reunification could be considered to be completed through assimilation where the citizens new to the Berlin Republic would be indistinguishable from those of the old FRG.

While assimilation has occurred to an extent, as evidenced by Hensel, the presence of these domino tiles suggests the noticeable and continued presence of division twenty years later. In 2008, 70 percent of citizens in the new German states (*Neue Bundesländer*) expressed an East German (GDR) sense of identity and solidarity, down only 10 percent from 1992. This

⁵² Hensel, “*Der Fremde Blick*,” 134 & 135. *Alle diese Menschen...haben ihre Biografien geglättet oder aufgeraut, begradigt, geschönt, vielleicht auch ein bisschen verwildern lassen...An jenem Abend war diese Anpassung der Ostdeutschen an das Neue zu greifen: Ein Ostdeutscher hatte sich vor dem anderen versteckt, ein jeder wollte sich vor seinem Nachbarn nicht zu erkennen geben.* Translation by the author.

compares to only 42 percent identification with the unified Federal Republic in 2008.⁵³ The presence of a single GDR hammer and compass flag hanging on the East side of the Wall route on November 8, 2009 further suggests that unity is not yet complete.⁵⁴ The only way to truly make old and new citizens indistinguishable from one another is to erase the identifications of “old” and “new.” As argued by Ten Dyke and discussed here at length, the designers of these tiles, students from schools located in the former West-Berlin, lacked a direct memory-set associated with the reality of life in the German Democratic Republic or even of life in the divided city. I have argued that this lack of memory, or rather the cumulative memories of life in the unified Federal Republic, made this generation more adapted to life in the unified state than the generation of their parents or even Jana Hensel’s age group who were still young at the time the Berlin Wall fell. In the case of these two tiles, the designers themselves represented a step toward the suggested German citizen that is indistinguishable between the old and the new. The accumulation of memories associated with the unified Federal Republic thus allowed East German youths under twenty-five years of age to demonstrate acceptance and solidarity with the modern FRG at levels slightly higher than average (59 percent), the highest sense of being “proper citizens” in the Federal Republic (40 percent), and the lowest levels of identification with the former GDR (60 percent). At the same time, the 2008 study found that this same age group felt reunification as it happened in 1990 to be overwhelmingly positive (25 percent considered reunification all wins for the new Länder, 26 percent more wins than losses, and 23 percent found that wins and losses balanced).⁵⁵

⁵³ *Sozialreport 2008: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern* (Berlin: Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg e.V., December 2008), 42.

⁵⁴ This flag was photographed by the author on Ebertstraße near the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* (Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe) on 8 November 2009. By 9 November 2009, the flag was gone and the author has been unable to find any media report discussing its presence.

⁵⁵ *Sozialreport 2008*, 40-2.

It remains clear that much work remains to be done to complete social unity.⁵⁶ Despite being the lowest percentage among age groups in the eastern states, 60 percent identification with the former GDR is a staggeringly high percentage for those under twenty-five who barely knew or did not know the GDR at all with the exception of history books. These tiles, two among the 1000 used at the Festival of Freedom, were reasonably anomalous representations of the Peaceful Revolution, the opening of the Berlin Wall, and German reunification. Despite the acknowledgement of the “wall in the head” that has preoccupied historians and journalists both within Germany and without over the past twenty years, the imagery used in each demonstrated the connection between the Peaceful Revolution and German unity found elsewhere in the educational program of the twentieth anniversary. Whether or not German reunification could be considered complete was hardly the point. More so than in other examples of the domino tiles or in the open-air exhibition, “*Rebecca und Jennifer*” and “*Einklang/Heilung alter Wunden*” recognized unity, social unity in particular, as a process not necessarily completed with the signing of economic and political treaties. This process is, according to the images and the accompanying texts, still underway due to the events of the Peaceful Revolution and November 9, 1989. By targeting youth in their educational programs concerning the former East Germany and its demise, the German Federal Government through *Kulturprojekte Berlin* recognized that this generation, while perhaps not solving the problems of *Ostalgie* or the *Mauer im Kopf*, may provide the adhesive or thread that binds the former GDR to the Federal Republic in a more permanent manner.

⁵⁶ Although social unity need not necessarily be the sought after ideal, the emphasis given to the project of German social unification and the complaints made by German Federal government and the media against *Ostalgie* suggests otherwise. That the Social Science Research Centre in Berlin (*Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum*) thought the *Sozialreport 2008* necessary to judge the level of satisfaction among Germans in the Eastern states indicates that inner unification is, in fact, the ideal in official circles.

In his monograph, *United City, Divided Memories*, political scientist Dirk Verheyen states that, since reunification, Germany has been in need of a new national history which serves as a vehicle for a national identity that emphasizes continuity and coherence.⁵⁷ While the open-air exhibition and the Festival of Freedom both recognized the significant involvement of East German citizens, the twentieth anniversary was not a celebration of life in the GDR. Given the prevailing memory landscape, it could never be. As a symbol, the Berlin Wall represented the division of the city, the German nation, and Europe as a whole. While it stood, the Wall embodied the SED's repression of the freedoms of its own citizens and those who died attempting to flee.⁵⁸ The twentieth anniversary was a celebration of the demise of the GDR and the SED regime. Perhaps more importantly, the twentieth anniversary was a celebration of the continuation of the Federal Republic. On June 25, 2009 during a speech in Washington, Chancellor Angela Merkel said that 2009 was a:

sixty year success story for one part of Germany...this year we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. On that day...we will have spent almost one third of the Federal Republic of Germany's history together, as a reunified Germany.⁵⁹

Here, the Chancellor clearly pointed out that the German success did not include the East for the entire history of the FRG. This is perhaps due to Dr. Merkel, herself, being East German. At the same time, it is just as clear that she intended to establish a connection between, not only the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification, but the twentieth anniversary and the continuance of the sixty year success of the Federal Republic of which the former East Germany is now a part. If this may be applied to the educational program accompanying both the Peaceful

⁵⁷ Dirk Verheyen, *United City, Divided Memories? Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 216.

⁵⁹ Angela Merkel, "25 June 2009," (accessed August 4, 2010).

Revolution exhibit and the Festival of Freedom, as it was represented in the domino tiles that constituted the *Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt* (history/histories with a domino-effect), this connection furthered the internationally broadcast image of the Federal Republic as a *Rechtsstaat*, discussed above and discussed in further depth in the following chapter.

While the Berlin Wall stood, those fleeing the German Democratic Republic enhanced the perceived legitimacy of the Federal Republic as the better of the two German states. The higher standard of living in the West thus produced a larger degree of popular acceptance of the West German democratic institutions.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Peaceful Revolution and the popular East German desire to reform governmental institutions provided further legitimacy to the FRG in that the East German's acquisition of what was already achieved in the West confirmed what it meant to be West German. This perpetuated the idea that the institutions, structures, and goods that existed and were available in the West were better and more desirable than in the GDR.⁶¹ As such, the connection between the narrative of the Peaceful Revolution and that of reunification became one of the fulfillment of East German desires to not only reunify as a nation-state but to become West Germans. This reduced the historical narrative of the former GDR to the simplistic perception of East Germany as an *Unrechtsstaat* and dictatorial state by which similarities with Nazi Germany (1933-1945) could be drawn. As noted above from the press information on The Peaceful Revolution 1989/90: Open-Air Exhibition, the twentieth anniversary was a celebration of the end of German dictatorship. In making this claim, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* also established the twentieth anniversary as a celebration of the success of (West) German democracy, making judgements as to which of the two systems and which of the

⁶⁰ Eva Kolinsky, "Meanings of Migration in East Germany and the West German Model," in *United and Divided*, eds. Mike Dennis and Eva Kolinsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 149.

⁶¹ John Borneman, *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 314.

two lives were better. German history was not represented as a mere demonstration of facts, but as a qualitative statement that contrasted the two socio-political systems that was carried into the present of the unified state.

As Paul Cooke notes, the history of the German Democratic Republic and its demise is more complicated than the narrative of the people rising up against oppression. In reading GDR history in this way, it is more a matter of putting forth a western focused political agenda. As the Federal Republic “appropriated” this narrative for the self-justification of its own existence, it “expropriated” GDR history as a lived experience.⁶² In short, Cooke implies that the use of the GDR as a political tool, as demonstrated in the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, equates to the colonization of GDR life to which former East Germans may no longer claim ownership. Beyond the already established link between the memories of the Peaceful Revolution and German reunification, this appropriation of the East German claims to memory of the GDR allowed West Germans to participate in those memories as a continuous narrative of memory. At the same time, this had the inverse effect of reducing the significance of East German claims to direct participation with, and thus ownership of, those same memories. This “colonial” narrative of GDR history is problematized by East German involvement in the Peaceful Revolution. Despite providing further legitimacy to the Federal Republic, as the SED-regime was overthrown from within, the simplification of GDR history also simplifies the role East Germans played in that history. However, without the involvement of the East German protestors, reunification in 1990 would have been impossible.⁶³ Cooke also suggests that this reduction of GDR history to that of an *Unrechtsstaat* creates the sense that GDR history was an

⁶² Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 43 & 46.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 40.

“illegitimate history,” the memories of which had no place in the unified FRG.⁶⁴ In other words, the memories of all former East Germans were made irrelevant to life after 1990 as similarly argued by Ten Dyke. The marginalization of these memories and the characterization of lives in the former GDR as somehow of less value than those in the pre-1990 Federal Republic were, in part, responsible for the rising trend of *Ostalgie* over the past twenty years.

As Jana Hensel explains, *Ostalgie* is “like the feeling to have already died once...because this life will always be divided in a before and an after and they [former East Germans] themselves look on from these two lives.”⁶⁵ As the memories of the GDR were delegitimized and held no bearing over life in the unified Federal Republic, thus stripping some former East Germans of their immediate abilities to function at the level of everyday life as Ten Dyke argues, the previous generations were caught between the life that was and the life that is yet to be. The individual’s understanding of the world is based upon a series of continuities that on any given day may be assumed to be largely the same as the day before and the day after.⁶⁶ Reunification caused the basis of understanding, finding interpretations of the present in past experiences, to no longer be true or useful. The reduction of East German memory to the history of a population that wanted to be like its western counterpart caused a number of former GDR citizens, for not all in the new eastern states succumbed to nostalgia, to look into memories no longer considered valid after 1990 for points of comparison to life in unified Germany. *Ostalgie* is problematic because, in drawing on everyday memories of GDR life, it could relativize the oppression and victims of the SED-regime which runs counter to the official, western-oriented narrative of the

⁶⁴ Ibid, 28.

⁶⁵ Hensel, “Der Fremde Blick,” 134. [*Ostalgie ist] gleich dem Gefühl, schon einmal gestorben zu sein...Weil man dieses Leben dann stets in ein Vorher und ein Nachher teilt und sichselbst zusieht bei diesen zwei Leben.* Translation by the author.

⁶⁶ Glaeser, *Divided in Unity*, 178.

GDR.⁶⁷ Through the application of the East German everyday experience as a means of navigating the post-reunification present, there is a tendency to white-wash the brutality of the SED system. This is not the result of convenient gaps in memory, but rather that past Stasi repressions have no direct point of comparison in the present as do more mundane issues such as employment and consumerism. *Ostalgie* is an attempt to interpret the present unified Republic based on past GDR experiences.⁶⁸ It does not attempt to deliberately undercut the legitimacy of the Federal Republic, but gives the individual or the group a point of reference by which to give meaning to memory and experience at the personal level. In 2008, 63 percent of citizens in the new states considered the current democratic institutions of the unified Federal Republic important or very important.⁶⁹ As such, the weight behind *Ostalgie* in the spheres of social, material, and economic life may be interpreted as Easterners asserting the validity of their memories by applying them to their “second lives” in the unified Federal Republic.

Born after the fall of the Berlin Wall, subsequent generations should not be as effected by *Ostalgie* as are their older cohorts. Although Jana Hensel, and arguably her fellow *Zonenkinder*, voices fond memories for the collective institutions that shaped her youth such as the socialist youth group, the *Frei Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth or FDJ), she actively avoids nostalgia in her memoir.⁷⁰ She does, however, identify as being East German with a specifically eastern-oriented sense of identity which she calls *Ostidentät*. She narrates in the plural voice, referring to herself and her implied audience as “we children of the GDR” who no longer want to be thought of as West Germans, throughout.⁷¹ Similarly, those born since 1989 were proud to be

⁶⁷ Mike Dennis, “Constructing East Germany: Interpretations of GDR history since Unification,” in *United and Divided*, eds. Mike Dennis and Eva Kolinsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 31.

⁶⁸ Glaeser, *Divided in Unity*, 90.

⁶⁹ *Sozialreport 2008*, 31.

⁷⁰ Hensel, *After the Wall*, 176-7.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 64 & 34.

from the East, although they could not differentiate between those that came from the East or from the West, nor felt that this mattered.⁷² This pride in one's origin is not an expression of nostalgia among youth. Andreas Glaeser suggests that East Germans continued to define themselves by their Eastern biographies after 1989. For those born after 1989, then, there was no East-German biography upon which to draw, only a post-reunification German biography. As such, the situation is currently changing as East Germans develop the faculties with which to deal with West-German codes of conduct.⁷³ As Ten Dyke may argue, the *Mauerkinder* (children born at the time of and since the *Mauerfall*) lack the memories of youth activities in the GDR necessary to participate in the *Ostidentität* voiced by the *Zonenkinder* or the *Ostalgie* of those who lived their entire lives in the former East. That the *Mauerkinder* cannot distinguish between East and West made them blank slates upon which to scribe a narrative of GDR history and the continued history of the Federal Republic.

Of course, the colonization and manipulation of East German memory is neither new to the official narrative of German history in the unified Federal Republic or to German historiography, nor is it new to the perception of subsequent generations in the process of social reunification. Verheyen discusses the findings of the second Commission of Inquiry, introduced in the Introduction of this thesis, which read:

the division of Germany and the inhumane GDR border-regime with its numerous victims and terrible misfortunes is no longer tangible for many people, especially the younger generation...particularly in the case of [these] younger generations as well as in the international public sphere the remembrance of the SED dictatorship and the commemoration of its victims must be kept alive.⁷⁴

⁷² Esser, "Geboren," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 19.

⁷³ Glaeser, *Divided in Unity*, 333 & 330.

⁷⁴ Verheyen, 178.

He suggests that the post-reunification emphasis on guilt and punishment of those responsible for the SED border-regime demonstrated the GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* and, for all intent, put every GDR citizen on trial for cooperating or not resisting strongly enough “at the expense of a nuanced consideration of Cold War reality and domestic life.” This focus on the GDR as a totalitarian state led to comparisons to the Nazi-regime despite ideological differences between the two systems and was characteristic of official efforts to confront the German past. Partially in response to this, as discussed above, *Ostalgie* emerged as former East Germans turned toward those nuances of memory, the domestic, material, and ideological life of the GDR state, in order to deal with the reality of life in the reunified state.⁷⁵ Verheyen does not, however, address the impact that the western colonization of eastern memory had on the different generations, those who lived their entire lives in the GDR, the *Zonenkinder*, or those born after 1989. In altering the meaning of November 9, 1989, and here that meaning involves the incorporation of the memories of German reunification, both political and social, with the remembrance of the Peaceful Revolution of the opening of the Berlin Wall, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* marginalized the significance of East German involvement and participation in the actual events being celebrated. Not only this, but in marginalizing the direct memories of East Germans in the Peaceful Revolution in favour of the themes of freedom and unity for the benefit of the *Mauerkinder* generation, this minimized the place these memories held in the minds of former citizens of the GDR. Thus, a shift in the narrative of 1989 was represented in the twentieth anniversary from the unity through freedom present in East German memory to the western perception of freedom through unification. This had the effect of narrating the inevitability of reunification as the penultimate goal of East Germany’s struggle toward freedom.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 177-8.

As Mathias Döpfner, CEO of the Axel Springer AG media group, suggests in his front page article, “*Revolution für die Freiheit*” (Revolution for Freedom), from the right-leaning *Berliner Morgenpost* of November 9, 2009, as the Wall still divided Germans *im Kopf* (in the head) twenty years after the Berlin Wall, “What we celebrate today should be named differently: Twenty years of the peaceful revolution for freedom.”⁷⁶ In doing so, the celebrations would prove able to evoke only a limited set of memories and emotions related directly to the successful revolution against the SED-regime. The Leipzig and Berlin rallies and their culmination on November 9, 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ultimate failure of the SED-regime were the successes of the Peaceful Revolution. To quote Richard Schröder’s opinion piece in the centrist newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*, “before freedom, liberation was necessary. And this East Germans had to accomplish for themselves.”⁷⁷ Liberation and freedom from SED repression paved the way for German reunification. Assuming the course of *Freiheit durch Einheit* follows the thinking that freedom from the SED-regime and the inferior quality of life in the GDR could only be achieved by embracing not only western values, but by embracing the pre-1990 Federal Republic. This line of thought may be accused of giving rise to nostalgia as it supports the belief that all East Germans wanted to be West German, but were denied the opportunity by the regime. It also suggests that the GDR had no good of its own and that true freedom could only be imported from the West. In renaming the anniversary, Döpfner seeks to limit the scope of memory to that of the successes of the Peaceful Revolution and *Mauerfall*. Incorporating the remembrances of the reunification that followed, which was largely dictated by

⁷⁶ Mathias Döpfner, “*Revolution für die Freiheit*,” Berlin: *Berliner Morgenpost*, 9 November 2009, 1. *Was wir heute feiern, sollte anders heißen: 20 Jahre friedliche Revolution für die Freiheit.*

⁷⁷ Schröder, “Ein Herz,” (accessed July 31, 2010). *Aber vor der Freiheit war die Befreiung nötig, und die mussten die Ostdeutschen selbst bewerkstelligen.*

western terms and under the appearance of the west as an “occupational force,” threatened to alienate those who lived their entire lives in the GDR from memories to which they had claim.⁷⁸

Likewise, the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was not the first time a link between the Peaceful Revolution and German reunification was made. During the first free elections in the GDR in 1990, the *Allianz für Deutschland* and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) used slogans such as “Never again socialism/Yes!/Freedom and prosperity” and “Prosperity for everyone/We are one people!”⁷⁹ These slogans promised East Germans that reunification would bring an economic miracle to the GDR as had happened in the Federal Republic decades earlier. They promised equality. They promised that freedom could be found in a vote for the AfD or the CDU. They promised that socialism and the SED-regime were to blame for the hardships of East Germans and the western democracy through reunification was the better system. While the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition attempted to avoid nostalgia for the former GDR, the connections established in the displays between the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification was a return of unfulfilled promises of the 1990 elections among the older generations of former East Germans. The failures of western democracy and the social-market economy to live up to the promises of politicians and the expectations of those in the former East brought into the present by the *Kulturprojekte Berlin*’s multi-faceted narrative of the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, served to highlight the ultimate, although arguable, failure of the Peaceful Revolution in the memories of the older generation of former East Germans.

⁷⁸ Glaeser, *Divided in Unity*, 95.

⁷⁹ *Allianz für Deutschland* DA, DSU, CDU Poster, German Democratic Republic, 1990, Print on paper, 33x23 in., Wende Museum: Museum and Archive of the Cold War (Culver City: United States of America), 2005.900.743, “*Nie wieder Sozialismus/Ja!/Freiheit und Wohlstand*” and CDU Poster, Federal Republic of Germany, 1990, Print on paper, 33x24 in., Wende Museum: Museum and Archive of the Cold War (Culver City: United States of America), 2005.900.337, “*Wohlstand für Alle/Wir sind ein Volk!*”

Although *Kulturprojekte Berlin*'s officially organized events to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, most notably the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open-Air Exhibition, were meant to demonstrate a linear narrative of the chain of events beginning with the demonstrations in Leipzig and culminating with the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, the linking of these memories to those of German reunification and life in the Berlin Republic post-1990 diluted the memories of 1989. In demonstrating the GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* in this narrative, as has been the case since the Berlin Wall fell and arguably longer during the pre-1990 Federal Republic, the event organizers effectively put on trial the realities of GDR-life and those who experienced it. As the themes of the Festival of Freedom and the Open-Air Exhibition were Freedom and Unity, giving rise to the perception of freedom through unity, the narrative of events sought to incorporate West German memory into a series of events that began and ended at the hands of citizens of the former GDR. *Kulturprojekte Berlin* projected an image of the post-1990 Federal Republic as a wholly unified, both politically and socially, *Rechtsstaat* to its neighbouring states and on the world stage. This narrative represented the colonization of East German memory, originated by politicians and for political purposes at the time of reunification and in the earlier days of the unified Federal Republic. As a result, this marginalized the significance of East German involvement and the memories of the events of autumn 1989. In attempting to avoid a nostalgic representation of the GDR in the twentieth anniversary events and demonstrate a historical continuity within the German state, organizers perpetuated conditions that were, in part, responsible for *Ostalgie* among the older generation of citizens of the former GDR.

That said, based on the stated objectives of *Kulturprojekte Berlin* in the organization of the official events of the twentieth anniversary, and thus the colonized version of the memories

of November 9, 1989, those celebrations were not meant for or directed towards the participation of those born in and with direct memories of the former GDR. Rather, the events and this version of the memories of 1989 were directed toward the generation born after 1989, and thus free of the burden of memory associated with the former GDR, due to their involvement in the various projects. This latter generation had no memory of the GDR, beyond that which was bestowed upon them by their parents, and thus no access to the nostalgia associated with the former East Germany. To extrapolate from Elizabeth Ten Dyke's thinking as it applies to the situation of Germany after twenty years of reunification, the thoughts and associations associated with GDR life were no longer applicable after the *Wende*. As a result, no stimuli in the unified Federal Republic would prove able to awaken memories, positive or negative, among the generation of former East Germans toward the FRG because of the rupture reunification caused to their memories and experiences.⁸⁰ By employing the younger generation in the painting of the Festival of Freedom's domino stones and in the educational material incorporated into the Peaceful Revolution exhibition, the official events of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall sought to justify the continued existence and legitimacy of the unified Federal Republic and the memories of that *Rechtsstaat* among those born into the post-1990 reunified state. The colonization of the memories of the Peaceful Revolution, then, while further integrating the younger generation, already the most integrated generation, into the workings and narratives of the unified FRG, widened the gulf that exists between the generations, their memories, their experiences, and their ability to function in the modern, unified state. In doing so, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the German Federal Government placed their hopes for the long-term completion of social unification in the next generations as nostalgia and experience

⁸⁰ Ten Dyke, 161.

prevents the GDR generation and, arguably, the *Zonenkinder* generation of achieving a fully realized integration into the order of the post-1990 Federal Republic.

Chapter 2.

Beyond Berlin: International Narratives of the *Mauerfall* and Their Effect on East German Memory.

In the preceding chapter, the twentieth anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall was discussed in terms of the narrative it created surrounding the events of the autumn of 1989, the methods employed to involve the younger generation in perpetuating this official narrative in the larger body of German history, and the effect of this narrative upon the generation that lived the events being narrated. One important element of the anniversary was, of course, the anniversary's international dimension. Beyond the presence of international officials, tourists, and heads of state, the organizers of the anniversary attempted to make the event both marketable and relatable to those abroad with an eye on the happenings in Berlin, through television coverage, in newspapers, or with even only a passing interest in world events. In selling the event to an international audience, it was necessary for *Kulturprojekte Berlin* to incorporate a second narrative into the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy. This is not to suggest that these two narratives incorporated into the anniversary were at odds with one another. Rather, this second narrative developed with an eye toward the international audience was meant to be as all-encompassing as possible, reducing German history, specifically the history of November 9, 1989, to its base components. Thus, the narrative created was one of walls, the division of populations, and the detrimental effects those divisions have upon those populations. In exporting this narrative, *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, and through this organizational body the government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) that set *Kulturprojekte Berlin* upon this task, touted Germany, and German history by extension, as a global model toward the overcoming of these physical barriers that divide populations.

This chapter will explore and analyze the events of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 2009 and the ways in which this anniversary was covered by media sources seeking to appeal to an international audience. The Wall Project sponsored by the Wende Museum will be analyzed as a point of comparison both to the reconstruction of the Berlin Wall and the exhibits and historical witness projects on display in conjunction with and running concurrently with that reconstruction. While this chapter focuses on the narratives of 1989 that were transmitted abroad and the ways in which the organizing bodies of the twentieth anniversary transmitted those narratives, the events organized by the Wende Museum are representative of the American and thusly western democratic perceptions of 1989. This was a narrative of the fall of the Berlin Wall that differed from the official German narrative in some significant ways as it was broadcast back to Berlin. As the Wende Museum was not responsible for the representation of post-Wall German unity noticeable in the anniversary events in Berlin, it is important to recognize this approach to the memories of the *Mauerfall* (the fall of the Berlin Wall) and how the Wende Museum represented unity through difference of experience without suggesting the inevitability of German reunification.

In addition, the publications of German tourist bureaus not directly associated with *Kulturprojekte Berlin* will be discussed in terms of the way in which Germany, specifically the territories of the former GDR, and the anniversary were promoted to the foreign audience. Ultimately, this chapter argues that the promotion of the anniversary to an international audience and the ways that anniversary was celebrated abroad represented a western-oriented restoration of the former East Germany and of November 9, 1989. That is to say that these celebrations were not indicative of an authentic East German experience, but rather were based on western observances and interpretations of events across the Wall. Through the distillation of the

opening of the Berlin Wall to the synonymous nature of freedom and unity in its international promotions, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and other groups associated with the anniversary reconstructed East German experience in terms of a perceived East German desire to replicate life in the West, thus marginalizing the lived experience of many former East Germans.

This narrative was taken up in newspapers and magazines and, perhaps most notably, in the Wall Project organized and sponsored by the Wende Museum. Like the celebrations in Berlin on the evening of November 9, 2009, this multi-faceted project culminated with a representation of the Berlin Wall being knocked down in Berlin's sister-city of Los Angeles, California. Not only did the Wall Project mirror the festivities in Berlin through the creation of Berlin Wall displays and a recreation/representation of the Berlin Wall in downtown Los Angeles, but it also mirrored *Kulturprojekte Berlin's* creation of the dictatorship versus democracy narrative through the displays and historical witness project hosted in the museum itself. Much like its counterpart in Berlin, these projects were intended to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, but also provide a symbol of the ability of those nations and populations still divided to overcome their physical divisions.

At the same time, with most of the attention paid to the anniversary focussed on Berlin and the representation of 1989 demonstrated in the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90: Open Air Exhibition and the Festival of Freedom, discussed in the previous chapter, the international community was exposed to the narratives of dictatorship versus democracy and freedom through unity created through the efforts of *Kulturprojekte Berlin*. This put the existence of East German memory in an odd position. On the one hand, the dictatorship/democracy narrative paired with the inevitability of German unity downplayed the memory of East Germans in terms of the history lived in the everyday life of citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The incorporation of German unity into the narrative of the fall of the Berlin Wall, again as argued previously, made the assertion that East German memory had no place in the reunified German state. German reunification itself was then based on the western assumption that East Germans wanted to be West German, but were prevented through the actions of the GDR state. On the other hand, creating the fall of the Berlin Wall as a symbol of the ability of populations to rise up against the forces keeping them walled off from other global populations and/or segments of what is considered their own population, by necessity, put the experience of East Germans front and centre, but only as it related to their resistance to perceived tyranny.

In this way, the perception of the GDR being reconstructed at home and abroad was one of an oppressive, totalitarian state in which life could not exist, at least according to western, capitalist-democratic conceptions of what “the good life” entails. The reduction of East German history to that of oppression symbolized by the existence of the Wall, in turn, reduced the perception of the former GDR population to that of a society of victims. As such, it was implied that the Berlin Wall and the regime of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) made it impossible for the population to experience everyday life in a comparable manner to that experienced in the West. The memory and experience of East Germans was further marginalized by the central message of unity in the international dimension of the anniversary of the Berlin Wall’s fall. *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, the German federal government, German media sources, and institutions outside the FRG that hosted their own celebrations, promoted the opening of the Wall as a model to those states and populations still divided by walls. In doing so, German reunification was made a core theme of this model. In the generalizations crafted to apply to international audiences, freedom from barriers meant the embrace of western values, systems, and structures. When this is taken back to the specific German example, then, freedom meant unification with the West. The

normalization of East German everyday-life was only possible without the Wall. Moreover, freedom could only be realized in West German terms. In order to stop being victimized, East Germans could no longer be East Germans. The reconstructed narrative produced was that of an all-encompassing and oftentimes barbaric regime, that may not have existed in reality, dismantled by the will of its victims. While this valorized East German memory in terms of the mass demonstrations that precipitated the events of November 9, 1989, it did so through the perception of western, and specifically West German, superiority.

On the rainy night of November 9, 2009, *Kulturprojekte Berlin's* Festival of Freedom physically divided the German capital of Berlin for the first time in twenty years. The domino wall set up along Ebertstraße between Potsdamer Platz and the *Bundestag* was completely sealed off from the public. This was necessary to ensure that none of the domino tiles were accidentally knocked over by any of the thousands of locals or tourists gathered near the Brandenburg Gate. Gone were the crossing-points that allowed the visitors access between East and West and thus a different perspective of the reconstructed wall and of the city itself. Because the Brandenburg Gate was itself made the central focus of the Festival of Freedom through the lights, the music, and the speeches delivered there, a no-man's-land was created around the monument. Not nearly as threatening as the death-strip that existed on the same spot during the rule of the SED, pedestrian access from East to West, or vice versa, was nevertheless blocked. In order to cross to the western side of the Gate, pedestrians were required to walk a few blocks to the north or south before security was thin enough to allow the crossing. To cross the wall itself, one had to walk the entire length of the wall in either direction to access the other half of the city. The East side of the Gate was converted to a beer-garden and cordoned off and, because of lack of access to the West, the only way to view the speeches themselves was on the giant screens erected for the

events. Ironically, this was comparable to the East German access to western television stations and the so-termed “emigration in the head” condition demonstrated by the scene in Leander Haußmann’s film, *Sonnenallee*, in which a pair of Dresdeners visiting Micha’s (the film’s protagonist) family are fascinated with the West German television signals received in East Berlin.¹ When the Festival of Freedom proper began, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Horst Köhler and international guests, United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, and former Polish President and co-founder of Solidarity Lech Walesa, to name only a few, entered through the Brandenburg Gate crossing from East to West. As they addressed the audience gathered in the portable seating erected on the western side of Ebertstraße, they faced west. Symbolically, their backs were turned firmly from the East and the crowds massing beyond the Brandenburg Gate behind them.

The intention of this arrangement was to mirror the opening of the Berlin Wall on the night of November 9, 1989 and the mass exodus of joyful East Germans through the gap in the Iron Curtain and into the West, in many cases for the first time.² Given the physical limitations of the city, the buildings and monuments that cropped up along both sides of the former border area in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* was forced to make decisions in order to allow the most people access to the celebrations. Symbolically, practically, and geographically, this arrangement was the most feasible as the East side of the Brandenburg Gate is boxed in by the American and British Embassies and also served the purposes of *Kulturprojekte Berlin*. Unintentionally, yet equally symbolic, was the lack of attention turned towards the East. Although not geared specifically to the international audience beyond those tourists in Berlin or watching the televised events, the design and implementation

¹ Leander Haußmann, *Sonnenallee*, DVD (Berlin: BojeBuck Produktion GmbH, 1999).

² “Die Welt feiert den Mauerfall,” *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin/Brandenburg), November 10, 2009, 1.

of the Festival of Freedom suggested a decidedly western-oriented perspective. None of the speeches or festivities could be viewed from the East-side without the provided screens due to the physical obstructions of the city itself. While the implementation of the Festival of Freedom was intended to invoke the spirit of 1989 through the act of remembering the “new beginning” the fall of the Berlin Wall brought to Germany, Europe, and the world, it physically and symbolically separated East and West and the memories of each through the direction of those events towards the West.³ East German memory, beyond the memories of mass demonstrations culminating in the opening of the Wall for which the Festival of Freedom was constructed to celebrate, was marginalized. More immediate and noticeable to those watching, the East and specifically the territories of the capital of the former GDR were physically marginalized. The Festival of Freedom thus created an East German history that narrated the movement into the West without the possibility or desire of return.

Equally unintended by the organizers of the Festival of Freedom were comparisons that may be drawn between the presentation of the Festival and the process of German reunification in 1989/90. On the night of November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall and the inner-German border opened and thousands of East Germans poured into the Federal Republic. This added to the number of refugees that previously fled the GDR via the escape hatch provided by the opening of the Hungarian-Austrian border and the ease of travel within the Communist Bloc. By the time of the elections of March 18, 1990 where the Alliance for Germany (AfD) coalition, led by the East German branch of the West German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), won by nearly 50 percent of the total vote giving mandate to rapid unification according to Article 23 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) of the FRG, East Germans effectively turned their backs on the East,

³ “Berlin 2009—20 Years since the Fall of the Wall: Overview of Events,” Brochure, Kulturprojekte Berlin, Berlin: Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft e.V., 2009.

including GDR social and political structures, eastern products, and the experiences of everyday life.⁴ This westward turn was formalized and completed through the implementation of the Treaty on German Economic, Monetary, and Social Union on July 1, 1990 whereby the West German Deutschmark (DM), social and economic structures and institutions, and the social market economy were extended into the territories of the German Democratic Republic.⁵ This became a sticking point among nostalgic East Germans in the mid-1990s as one of the first ways in which *Ostalgie* (the sense of nostalgia for the former GDR) manifested through an embrace of East German products and brand names that were forsaken given the glut of western products in GDR shops.⁶ This was, arguably, the economic colonization of the GDR by the Federal Republic, albeit a welcomed colonization by decision of the East German electorate during the months of anticipation immediately following the opening of the Wall.⁷ As the circumstances by which East German memory negotiated life ceased to exist after the GDR's accession to the Federal Republic, the legitimacy given to the FRG through the process of reunification allowed the west to narrate the nature of GDR past and present to its former population.⁸

In the preceding chapter, the domino wall that represented the core and the highlight of the Festival of Freedom was discussed in terms of its effect upon the generation of German school-children with no memory of the events of 1989, imparting on them the official narrative of the former GDR as an *Unrechtsstaat* (illegitimate state) and the creation of the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy. Beyond this, however, domino stones were painted in cities such

⁴ Konrad H. Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 116.

⁵ *Ibid*, 147-8.

⁶ Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia*, (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 146.

⁷ Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, "Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, Urbana: University of Illinois Press (2002), 166.

⁸ *Ibid*, 166.

as New York and Paris in the West, and Prague, and Warsaw in the East, representing both sides of the former Cold War Blocs. More importantly, through the federally-funded Goethe Institute, artists on both sides of the border in regions still divided by walls contributed to the domino wall in Berlin, including Cyprus, South Korea, Mexico, and Yemen.⁹ The dominoes were not limited to these countries with populations physically divided, but were also sent to countries with political, ideological, or racial differences in either their present or their past, such as South Africa.¹⁰

In doing so, *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, the Goethe Institute, and the federal heritage industry constructed an image of the reunified German state as a global model for the overcoming of divisions constructed through official narrative represented in the Festival of Freedom. In the *Dominobuch* published in conjunction with the Festival of Freedom, the section titled “*Hoffnung für Frieden und Freiheit*” (Hope for Peace and Freedom) establishes a direct link between the opening of the Berlin Wall and democratic changes elsewhere in the world. As the “Festival of Freedom...aim[ed] to show that the historical events of 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall did not only change Germany, but also the world,” the Press Information thus credited the fall of the Berlin Wall as the marked end of the Cold War, the division of Europe, and, ultimately, global divisions.¹¹ “*Hoffnung für Frieden und Freiheit*” then begins by connecting the end of European division with the racial divisions of Apartheid in South Africa.¹² While the text does not openly state the direct correlation between the collapse of the SED regime and the beginning of the end of South African Apartheid, the language suggests a chain of events beginning with the opening

⁹ Kulturprojekte Berlin, “Press Information: Theme Year 2009—20 Years since the Fall of the Wall: Domino Action to Celebrate 9 November,” Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (2009), 1.

¹⁰ *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt*, Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (2009), 39.

¹¹ Kulturprojekte Berlin, “Domino Action to Celebrate 9 November,” 2.

¹² *Dominobuch*, 39. „Das Ende des Kalten Krieges in Europa führte auch am Kap zur demokratischen Wende. Südafrikas Nationalheld Nelson Mandela kam Anfang 1990 aus 27-jähriger Apartheidhaft frei.“

of the Berlin Wall. This is then predicated upon the perception of the GDR as a totalitarian regime and the dictatorship versus democracy narrative created by the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90: Open-Air Exhibition discussed in the first chapter.

In press kits for the twentieth anniversary of the Wall's opening, the German division was described in regard to the "inhumanity of the Berlin Wall" from which East Germans liberated themselves during the Peaceful Revolution in the autumn of 1989.¹³ Although this does not specifically mention either the SED or the former East German state, it places judgement upon the regime responsible for the construction of the Wall thus creating that division and of life within the GDR itself. The SED and the Berlin Wall are here equated with barbarism and repression by which the East German population, and thus the entire population of the reunified state, was victimized and in need of the liberating forces of the *Wende* (turning point). While the participation of East Germans in the Peaceful Revolution is valorized through this liberation, it says nothing of the participation or existence of East German civil society beyond this narrative of the opening of the Berlin Wall. At the same time, this dichotomy treated the population of the former East Germany as a collective unit wholly in support of the end of SED repression and, by extension, of the GDR. This collective treatment is inverse to the perception of East Germans as individuals, some of whom favoured a separate East German-style communism or supported, if not actively participating with, the regime itself. In the memorialisation of the opening of the Berlin Wall and the East German state, collective East German memory was then reduced to the implication that the normalcy of the life of this collective in the GDR was impossible under the heel of the regime's brutality. In order for East Germans to experience life from the perspective of what is considered to be "normal" by the implications of the Festival of Freedom and official

¹³ Kulturprojekte Berlin, "Domino Action to Celebrate 9 November," 1.

memory of the reunified state, the Wall, and the division of Germany and Europe, needed to be removed.

Historian Mary Fulbrook argues against this perception of the impossibility of the experience of a “normal” life in the GDR, suggesting that “‘ordinary citizens’ helped to shape the processes and character of their state and in so doing were themselves transformed.”¹⁴ This means that the stability of the state was dependent upon the support of the ordinary citizen. Citizens thus affected the shape of the East German state which, in turn, affected the citizens’ perceptions of normalcy. As such, the regime largely accepted “outward conformity without inner commitment” so long as this lack of inner commitment posed no threat to the stability of the state.¹⁵ Citizens were able to lead normal lives within the “framework of rules and norms” and with the satisfaction of needs.¹⁶ This suggests a difference in the perception of “normal” as it is used by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and by Fulbrook. Discussed later in this chapter, life with the Berlin Wall was not a normal experience. However, Fulbrook argues that the normalization of the lives of East German citizens was possible in the GDR based on the conditions of what was normal within the SED controlled state, judged solely on the terms of what was possible within the shadow of the Wall. Normalization as it was understood in the press information published by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* thus represents a westward-facing perception and moralizing vision of existence behind the Berlin Wall. To return to the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy argued previously, this perception of “normal” indicates western triumphalism through the judgement of East German life based on the model of its West German counterpart.

¹⁴ Mary Fulbrook, “Putting the People Back in: The Contentious State of GDR History,” *German History* 24, no. 4 (2006): 613.

¹⁵ Mary Fulbrook, “Power Structures and Political Culture in the GDR,” *German Life and Letters* 45, no. 4 (October 1992): 385.

¹⁶ Fulbrook, “Putting the People”: 613.

Kulturprojekte Berlin, in the *Dominobuch* publication, then drew comparisons between the conditions in the SED-controlled German Democratic Republic and the Apartheid in South Africa upon this foundation of a population in need of liberation from repression in order to achieve the normalization of life and living conditions. Nelson Mandela was asked by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* through the Goethe Institute to participate in the anniversary both as a guest at the Festival of Freedom and as a contributor. More important than Mandela's contribution of two domino stones bearing the themes of Peace, Love, and Understanding, produced together with the help of his daughter and several grandchildren, was the use of Mandela's name as a symbol of the struggle against inhumanity and barriers portrayed by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*.¹⁷ In this, the *Dominobuch* encapsulates Mandela's biography through his incarceration followed by his release and his ascendancy to become the first black president of South Africa. In 1993, he "was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his struggles against Apartheid and against the world-wide oppression of peoples of African descent."¹⁸ This does not necessarily have much, if anything, to do with the opening of the Berlin Wall. However, this simple narrative of Mandela's biography serves to link his own struggles against tyranny and inhumanity similar to those that were embodied by the existence of the Berlin Wall.¹⁹ As the simplified narrative of November 9, 1989 posits itself as the turning point for Germany, Europe, and the world through the perceived embrace of democracy and freedom that found expression in

¹⁷ *Dominobuch*, 39.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 39. „Nelson Mandela wurde für seinen Kampf gegen die Apartheid in Südafrika und gegen die weltweite Unterdrückung von Menschen afrikanischer Herkunft mit dem Friedensnobelpreis geehrt.“

¹⁹ In establishing this narrative of the oppressive nature of the Berlin Wall and the SED regime, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* with its western democratic orientation set itself up as presenting an anti-communist version of 9 November 1989. While Nelson Mandela is touted as a hero of post-apartheid South Africa, in drawing parallels between his struggles and the struggles of the oppressed peoples of South Africa, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* neglected Mandela's ties to the African National Congress, a left-wing Socialist party, and its militarized branch, the "Spear of the Nation (Umkhonto we Sizwe)," which Mandela led. This puts *Kulturprojekte Berlin's* interpretation of 1989 in a hypocritical position as being against the perceived detrimental effects of socialism in East Germany while supporting the beneficial effects of radical socialism for the peoples of South Africa.

the Peaceful Revolution, Mandela and East Germans, again the assumed East German collective, are connected through this struggle against oppression and the barriers, be they racial or physical, that divide populations. Through incorporating Mandela, his work, and his family into the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* established the history of the Peaceful Revolution and the end of the Cold War as a part of, and possibly at the beginning of, a larger, global movement away from tyranny and barbarism and toward democracy and the unity of peoples.

While the brochure published by the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) plays to this idea of the destruction of barriers and the unity of peoples, bearing the title “20 years since the Fall of the Wall—a journey which unites: Welcome to the country without borders,” it also presents the most diversified portrait of the former German Democratic Republic state and the new federal states in the East.²⁰ As necessary in luring tourists, the brochure discusses museums and exhibitions in the eastern regions beyond those directly attached to the anniversary of the Berlin Wall. This is considered the “Authentic German-German history,” at once recognizing its place within the context of the history of the unified state, but also, and perhaps more significantly, recognizing the division and the representation of GDR history as separate from that of the Federal Republic.²¹ Of course, the GDR’s history of oppression and brutality cannot be avoided and descriptions of attractions such as the Stasi Museum in Berlin speak to this narrative of the GDR’s totalitarian trappings. At the same time, however, the GNTB addresses the “collections of artefacts [that] show typical living spaces to give an idea of everyday life and

²⁰ “20 years since the Fall of the Wall—a journey which unites: Welcome to the country without borders,” Frankfurt/Main: German National Tourist Board GNTB, http://cometogermany.com/pdf/GNTO_Sales_Guide_Fall_of_the_Wall.pdf (accessed February 16, 2011), 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

exhibitions about culture, holidays, consumption and professional life.”²² This directly confronts the notion of the GDR existing only in terms of its mistreatment of the population. The DDR Museum in Dresden aimed to “provide insight into all aspects of living conditions in an entertaining way while making observers aware that the GDR was really not so grey and miserable” with the accompanying realization that “some eras were very similar in east and west and that the people had to come to terms with the circumstances brought about by their regime.”²³ This approach does not pass judgement on the GDR or the people that lived in the former state. Nor does it speak to the detrimental effects of the Berlin Wall, East German socialism, the perceived impossibility of “normal” life under the conditions created by the state, or even to the oriental mystique attached to East German life and products. Rather, this narrative of the GDR past sells itself entirely on the observer’s ability to recognize similarities and continuities through the histories of both East and West. While “[d]aily life in the GDR was characterized by improvisation and a limited choice of consumer goods,” this merely defines those “conditions created by the state” particular to the GDR without reference to totalitarianism.²⁴ Drawing attention to the importance of leisure activities and consumer goods and choice, rather, has the effect of unifying the perspectives of eastern and western observers through common cultural touchstones.

Consumer goods also played a vital role in memory and the activation of memories in that they provide tangible reminders of the past and of the “lost home” referenced through the participation with nostalgia. The DDR Museum in Berlin was criticized for pandering to “shallow *Ostalgie*.” As such, the presentation of East German history in the museum contributed to the white-washing of SED totalitarianism through its exhibition of consumer goods “without

²² Ibid, 4.

²³ Ibid, 5.

²⁴ Ibid, 18.

context.”²⁵ This criticism, however, fails to acknowledge that while these goods are arranged according to themes such as education, leisure, and work, the spectre of the East German secret police or Stasi is still present within the museum. In a reconstruction of a “typical” GDR living room, all conversations are bugged. Another corner of the museum houses Stasi listening devices where these conversations can be overheard. Rather than present the GDR as a totalitarian or police state separated from the West by a Wall, the museum focuses on the effect the border situation had on daily life and the concessions, and arguably participation, of the population in maintaining this version of normalcy.²⁶

Consumer goods themselves represent an area that remained largely untouched by state controls, aside from the regime’s initial responsibility to provide these products to the population. In “Shopping, Sewing, Networking, Complaining: Consumer Culture and the Relationship between State and Society in the GDR,” independent scholar Judd Stitzel argues that consumers were forced to remake or refashion goods in order to fulfill desires not met by goods available in the state-owned shops (*Handelsorganisation* or HO).²⁷ In the 1950s and 60s, tailor-made clothing was still a viable alternative by which consumers were able to bypass the limitations of available stock in the HOs.²⁸ More common, however, was the alternative of home-made clothing or the alteration of purchased articles in the home. When no other means of fulfilling consumer desires presented themselves, consumers wrote letters of complaint to the

²⁵ Susan Stone, “Museum Offers ‘Ostalgic’ Look at East Germany,” Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,druck-427579,00.html> (accessed August 4, 2010).

²⁶ Ibid, (accessed August 4, 2010).

²⁷ Judd Stitzel, “Shopping, Sewing, Networking, Complaining: Consumer Culture and the Relationship between State and Society in the GDR,” in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 254.

²⁸ Katherine Pence, “Women on the Verge: Consumers between Private Desires and Public Crisis,” in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, eds. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 297. Pence’s chapter speaks greatly of women’s resentment toward the HO and availability of desired goods at affordable prices. Often goods available in the HO were priced beyond the reach of most GDR citizens when the products they were made with, such as pastries made with real butter, were not available with ration cards.

Party.²⁹ This directly confronts the notion of the SED and Stasi controlled regime as an all-encompassing totalitarianism in that it is cast as a background, or a circumstance, beyond which a percentage of the population experienced the everyday. Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer argue that everyday life in the GDR was defined by the population's ability to circumvent the SED system in order to satiate their appetites for consumer goods that would occupy the free time granted them by the GDR social apparatus. Society was thus constructed through the act of consumption.³⁰ Through the example above provided by Stitzel, consumption also provided citizens of the GDR an acceptable avenue through which criticisms could be levelled against the regime. Remembering the GDR through its consumer products thus does not white-wash history as critics argue, but recognizes the conditions of the regime, shortages and limited choice, that necessitated the adaptation of the population and of the state.³¹ Without targeting the nostalgia surrounding consumer goods, the museums of GDR culture and the GNTB then used eastern consumer products to draw comparisons between East German everyday life and the formations of society and individual identity in western capitalist states, the FRG in particular.

That said, the GNTB brochure and the ways in which the German tourist industry was represented in the run up to the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was underpinned by the concept of Germany's appearance as a nation without divisions and the equation of freedom and democracy. These ideas, in fact, bookend the promotion of a separate East German history, thus treating the GDR as a closed chapter in the reunified German past. The introduction, titled "Welcome to the country without borders," states that "Germany, Europe

²⁹ Stitzel, 260 & 265.

³⁰ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 300 & 270.

³¹ Pence, 291.

and the whole world look back, in order to look forward.”³² Immediately following the “Authentic German-German history” and “Discover witnesses of the most recent history,” both of which deal almost exclusively with the East German everyday, the Stasi, and the post-war division of Germany, is a section entitled “Enjoy celebrations to honour Unification.” This events calendar “is completely devoted to the fall of the Wall and reunification.”³³ The organization of the brochure thus firmly roots the history of the GDR within the context of barriers and the need and/or desire to establish the unity of peoples. Significantly, this also intentionally blurs the line between the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 2009 and the twentieth anniversary of German reunification on October 3, 2010. Not only does this promote the concept of unifying populations, but also links the two events thus establishing German unity and the legitimacy of West German-style democracy as the inevitable conclusion of East German history. This concept was an important theme running through the composition of both the domino wall highlighting the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition discussed in depth in the first chapter. The inevitability and triumph of West German democracy are then demonstrated to be the natural conclusion to a modern reading of German history as the brochure ends by offering tours of various political institutions; the chambers of the *Bundesrat* and the *Bundestag*, the Chancellery, and the Ministry for Economic Affairs among them.³⁴ When read as a progression of the recent German past, the GNTB brochure draws the separate identity of the GDR and the memory of the GDR into the larger and seemingly more important facets of a history of the Federal Republic. Freedom from the oppression represented by the SED, the Stasi, and the Berlin Wall they built finds expression in unity between the FRG and the former GDR.

³² “20 years since the Fall of the Wall—a journey which unites,” 3.

³³ *Ibid*, 17.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 26.

By entrenching GDR history into that of the Federal Republic, the removal of barriers, specifically the Berlin Wall, and the unity of the peoples on either side of that barrier, the populations of the two Germanys, are then demonstrated to be necessary steps on the path toward legitimizing and exporting western-style democracy to the global stage. In this way, East German history and the memory, reconstruction, and the representation of East German participation in the opening of the Berlin Wall are subordinated to the ideal and the inevitability of German reunification and ultimately the spread of democratic institutions as the solution to barriers world-wide. Asking that the world “look back, in order to look forward” models the Federal Republic as the exemplary and legitimate microcosm which reflects the possibilities of the larger macrocosm.³⁵ Recreating the narrative of the Berlin Wall and the opening of East and West as “the symbol for fresh starts, hope and a new future” that restored “balance between East and West,” reduced East German memory to the struggle against tyranny in order to realize the democracy and capitalism of the western world and of the FRG.³⁶

Similar to the events organized and produced by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the *Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft e.V.* in Berlin, the Wende Museum in Culver City, California produced its own multi-faceted celebration for the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Collectively titled “The Wall Project,” the program of events under this banner ran from September through November of 2009 and included panels on the experience of the opening of the Wall, a conference at the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA) on material culture, and art

³⁵ “Doc 3: Basic Law of the Federal Republic, 23 May 1949,” in *Uniting Germany: Documents and Debates, 1944-1993*, eds. Konrad H. Jarausch & Volker Gransow (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994), 7. The preamble to the FRG constitution, the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), claims to have “also acted on behalf of those Germans to whom participation was denied,” meaning those Germans who were citizens of the GDR. The Basic Law itself was considered to be provisional constitution insofar that it applied only to West Germany until 1990. As Article 23 claims that the Basic Law “shall be put into force on their [East German territories] accession,” this assumes the superiority of West German institutions by leaving open the door to reunification through accession (or assimilation) to the Federal Republic.

³⁶ “20 years since the Fall of the Wall—a journey which unites,” 3.

exhibitions and discussions with Wall artists like Thierry Noir and Kent Twitchell.³⁷ Of significant note for the purposes of this chapter and as points of comparison to the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90: Open Air Exhibition in Berlin, are the arguable highlights of The Wall Project: The Wall Along/Across Wilshire and the Facing the Wall exhibition at the Wende Museum itself. The official status of the Festival of Freedom and the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition has been discussed in some depth above and in the preceding chapter. As “The Wall Project” was thought to be the largest commemoration of the Berlin Wall held outside of Germany and was fully supported by both the German Consulate and the German Foreign Ministry, the events organized by the Wende Museum may also be considered official and, to a degree, an extension of the events in Berlin by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*.³⁸ In this regard, a comparison of the events in Berlin and Los Angeles is significant toward the ways in which the representations of the GDR and the fall of the Berlin Wall differed and how these differences may be interpreted.

The Wende Museum was founded by modern history Doctor of Philosophy candidate Justinian Jampol to “address the wholesale neglect...of Cold War material culture in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union” beginning in the 1990s. Starting with inheritance money left to him by his grandfather, the museum evolved partially from Jampol’s own interest in the era and partially to combat the existing perception in Germany that the GDR has been researched enough and nothing new will come to light.³⁹ The museum and archive became incorporated in the state

³⁷ “The Wall Project,” Documentation (Culver City: The Wende Museum: Museum and Archive of the Cold War, 2009), 20-1.

³⁸ “Berlin Wall’s Graffiti Draws twentieth Anniversary Artists to LA,” Auswärtiges Amt, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/WillkommeninD/D-Informationen/Nachrichten/091019-3.html> (accessed April 26, 2011).

³⁹ Jody K. Biehl, “A Cold War Museum in Sunny Climes,” Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,352278,00.html> (accessed June 1, 2011). This observation is interesting in that it reflects the perception of the GDR as a closed chapter of German history from which German wish to move away from (as in the case of a second Zero Hour) or forget due to wounds that have yet to heal due

of California in 2002 and two years later was awarded funding from the Arcadia Fund, a charitable organization for the preservation of endangered cultures, in order “to make a significant and necessary contribution to the illumination of a fascinating, yet still largely unexamined, era.”⁴⁰ In addition to being the sister-city to Berlin, Los Angeles and specifically the museum’s physical remoteness from the former Soviet Bloc provides intellectual distance from the emotional and political connections to artefacts that may otherwise necessitate their destruction.⁴¹

The Wall Project was a bi-fold art installation symbolic of the Berlin Wall and its fall in the autumn of 1989. Reminiscent of the East Side Wall Gallery on Mühlenstraße in Berlin, the Wall Along Wilshire installed ten sections of the original Berlin Wall alongside Wilshire Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles. Local and international artists, such as Thierry Noir who was among the first to use the original Wall as a mural canvas in 1984, were then invited to create new works on these sections. In addition, segments of the original graffiti adorning these segments were preserved, “giving the installation further international and historical perspective.”⁴² The Wall Across Wilshire, on the other hand, was more representative of the domino wall constructed in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin for the Festival of Freedom. Another art project like the Wall Along Wilshire, the Wall Across Wilshire was a temporary installation that bisected Wilshire Boulevard on the night of November 8, 2009 (November 9, 2009, the date of the anniversary proper, Berlin time). Like the Wall Along Wilshire, this project

to the temporal proximity of the GDR to the unified German present. The suggestion that there is nothing new to learn when Jampol has yet (as of the writing of this article in 2005) to sort through the papers of SED Secretary Erich Hoenecker or tied stack of unopened Stasi letters leads me to suspect the latter. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the pursuit of GDR study may be considered to contribute to the continuing division of Germans since reunification among those in officials circles.

⁴⁰ “The Wende Museum History,” The Wende Museum: Museum and Archive of the Cold War, <http://www.wendemuseum.org/about-us/history> (accessed June 1, 2011).

⁴¹ “The Wende Museum: About Us,” The Wende Museum: Museum and Archive of the Cold War, <http://www.wendemuseum.org/about-us> (accessed June 1, 2011).

⁴² “The Wall Project,” 6.

was decorated by local and international artists and students, then was broadcast live in Germany as this recreation of the Berlin Wall came tumbling down at midnight LA time to coincide with the anniversary in Berlin.⁴³

This Wall Across Wilshire was intended to be symbolic of the actual opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 as the location selected divided the “two cultural anchors of the city [of Los Angeles]...reflective of what happened in Berlin...divid[ing] up the cultural institutions.”⁴⁴ Not only was this project reflective of Germany’s division, or rather of the state’s and more specifically of Berlin’s physical reunification (not to be confused with the German social and political reunifications of 1990), but also as a reminder that “[a]nother Berlin Wall can happen anywhere, anytime, unless we’re vigilant.”⁴⁵ This recalls the message demonstrated by the Festival of Freedom in Berlin whereby the Berlin Wall and German history were used to argue against the physical division of populations with barriers similar to that constructed by the SED regime. However, this attempt to reflect the situation in Berlin, and throughout Germany, between 1961 and 1989 and arguably before and since, suffers from a reduction of the memory of the Berlin Wall in order to make it applicable to modern barriers. Significantly, this act decontextualized the Wall and removed the reasons for its initial creation in order for it to occupy its new role as a global symbol beyond that of Cold War division. In an article titled, “The Wall Project: Good Cause, Bad Comparison,” of November 3, 2009 in the *Jewish Journal*, Rob Eshman criticizes the Wall Project and the statements it made as a head-on comparison as doing “a gross injustice to Israel, to Berliners who survived the Wall, and to Truth, which Art is

⁴³ Ibid, 8 & 16.

⁴⁴ “Berlin Wall’s Fall Will Be Memorialized across Wilshire: a Wall, Painted by Pros and Amateurs, Will Stand for Three Hours to Mark the twentieth Anniversary of the Fall of the Cold War Era Symbol,” Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, August 12, 2009.

⁴⁵ “The Wall Project,” 18.

supposed to serve.”⁴⁶ Eshman argues that “Israel built the wall to keep Palestinian terrorists from killing soldiers and civilians,” while the “Berlin Wall was built by the Soviet Union...to keep civilians in.”⁴⁷ It is not the place of this chapter to critique Eshman’s own simplification or elastic interpretation of German history, most notably that the Berlin Wall was constructed by the Soviet Union directly rather than by the SED with Soviet support, but to examine the point he makes.⁴⁸ Without going into the cases made for or against the “Wall of Palestine,” the wall dividing the United States from Mexico, or other examples cited by the Wende Museum, reducing the Berlin Wall to a barrier that divided two halves of the same population neglects the unique conditions which led to the Wall’s initial construction and its ultimate demise.

The way in which the Wall Project was conceived combines and confuses the ownership of German memory and experience related to the opening of the Berlin Wall. Through the act of tearing down the wall, the Wall Across Wilshire recalled the night of November 9, 1989 whereby the Berlin Wall crossing points were opened following Günter Schabowski’s bungled announcement that East Germans would immediately be able to experience freedom of travel and emigration.⁴⁹ The physical destruction of the Wall occurred later, but after the East German masses stepped across the border and reunited Germans celebrated atop the Wall itself, the fall was clear in symbolic terms. The symbolic destruction of the Wall Across Wilshire, then, also recalls the East German participation in mass, spontaneous demonstrations that precipitated Schabowski’s announcement and the fall, thus bestowing memory and responsibility for the fall upon the East German masses.

⁴⁶ Rob Eshman, “The Wall Project: Good Cause, Bad Comparison,” Los Angeles: Tribe Media Corp., http://www.jewishjournal.com/bloggish/item/the_wall_project_good_cause_bad_comparison_20091103/ (accessed February 21, 2011).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989* (New York: Harper, 2006), 150.

⁴⁹ Mike Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 288-9.

That said, the Wall Project was also conceived as an art project wherein artists were invited to paint the walls, both the Wall Across Wilshire and the Wall Along Wilshire. Justinian Jampol, Director of the Wende Museum and sponsor and organizer of the Wall Project, states that,

[a]n important part of the Berlin Wall's legacy was that it...attract[ed] artists from around the world whose paintings transformed the Wall into a canvas reflecting real and imagined divisions.⁵⁰

Furthermore, he claimed that painting the Berlin Wall, prior to the autumn of 1989, was not art, but a political act.⁵¹ These statements are not in dispute. Defacing the Berlin Wall was illegal under the laws of the German Democratic Republic and periodically border guards emerged from secret doors in the Wall to whitewash graffiti from the Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier (socialist terminology for the Berlin Wall). The death strip also prevented East Germans from making such bold, visible statements against their perceived imprisonment, the barrier, German division, or the regime. The messages of the original murals are not as important here as are the acts themselves. As the original graffiti adorned the West-side of the Wall, the memory invoked through this reconstruction and representation is of western origin where the artists and populations were permitted to question and make such visual statements.⁵²

Similar to *Kulturprojekte Berlin's* Festival of Freedom, this incorporation of both East and West German experiences with the Wall suggest the concept of freedom through unity discussed above. The Festival of Freedom made overt reference to the German reunification in both the iconography of the domino tiles and in the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition as the inevitable end-point of the East German protests against the SED regime. Unlike the events

⁵⁰ "The Wall Project," 4.

⁵¹ "Berlin Wall's Fall Will Be Memorialized across Wilshire," Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, August 12, 2009.

⁵² Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 26.

in Berlin, however, the unity demonstrated by the Wall Project was not suggestive of the vision of German reunification which was in evidence in the Festival of Freedom and discussed in the preceding chapter. Rather, the unity suggested by the Wall Project was that of East and West difference of experience through the shared experience of the Wall and the division of the German population. Thus, the freedom through unity suggested by the Wende Museum is that of the destructive effects caused by the physical division of populations. Also unlike Berlin, the Wende Museum's Wall Project does not allude to the democracy versus dictatorship binary prevalent in the Festival of Freedom. The Wall Project instead focused on the "enormous human consequences" of the Berlin Wall that "separat[ed] colleagues, friends, and families [and how the Wall] spread fear, led to the loss of dreams, and to the loss of lives."⁵³ Although the Wall Project was accused of doing a disservice to the victims of the Berlin Wall through direct comparisons made to walls around the world, this further reduction of the memories of the Berlin Wall served to unify the German experience in a way that the Festival of Freedom did not. Namely, through the focus on separation given the Wall Project with its emphasis on the experiences of the West (through the recreation of the wall as a canvas of protest) and the East (through the physical act of recreating the wall's destruction), the Wende Museum unified the German experience through the differences of experience related to the same Wall. Through the suggestion that German reunification was the inevitable conclusion to the opening of the Berlin Wall and the judgements weighed against the GDR and the SED regime negotiating the East German experience as a society of victims, discussed in the preceding chapter and above, the events sponsored by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* divided East German memories between the experiences of the GDR and of the reunified Federal Republic. While the Wall Project made similar claims to the connections between freedom and unity, this suggestion of unity was more

⁵³ "The Wall Project," 4.

abstract in concept, recognizing the differences in experience, thus did not openly seek to promote one set of memories and experiences (those of the FRG) at the expense of another (those of the GDR).

Facing the Wall, however, was more a traditional museum exhibition and more closely related to the Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 exhibition discussed in the previous chapter. This exhibition was a collection of Cold War era artefacts specifically related to the Berlin Wall, surveillance, and the border crossings, highlighted by a collection of four historical witness interviews. As these provide the context through which the entirety of the Facing the Wall exhibition was to be viewed, these interviews will be the core of the analysis to follow regarding this exhibition. These were titled, “Crossing the Border: The Day Visitor,” “Protecting the Barrier: The Border Guard,” “Behind the Curtain: The Stasi Officer,” and “Concrete Canvas: The Wall Painter.”⁵⁴ Before delving into the interviews themselves, a few key points regarding the presentation of the exhibition reveal themselves through the titles assigned to each of the interviews, thus applying to the ways in which the exhibition as a whole was to be interpreted. Relating to the Berlin Wall and the themes of the exhibition, the interviews were normally presented in their pertinence to that barrier. However, with the second and third interviews, although it appeared as though the organizers attempted to present a small cross-section of individual experience, there exists an obvious emphasis on participants in and supporters of (although this support was limited and changed over time in the case of the Stasi officer) the SED regime and the oppression represented by the Wall itself. Given the subject of the Berlin Wall, perhaps this orientation should not be surprising. But the interviews themselves, as they were edited and presented in the Facing the Wall exhibition, were not entirely indicative of the

⁵⁴ “Facing the Wall,” Documentation (Culver City: The Wende Museum: a Museum and Archive of the Cold War, 2008), 2-4.

average East German experience and how the everyday was impacted by the existence of the Wall. Rather, they explored the impossibility of a normalized experience in the shadow of the Wall.

Although the exhibition argues that “the Wall became a place where the realities of political identity and personal experience came face to face,” the ways in which the interviews were edited position the individuals according to an identity of resistance to the Wall and the regime it represented.⁵⁵ As the Berlin Wall was demonstrated as a destructive presence in the lives of the German populations of both the East and the West in the Wall Project, and this interpretation of walls and division more generally exported with the intent of criticizing the existence of walls around the world, it was necessary to demonstrate the immediate impact of the Wall and the distortional effects it had on the individual. While normal lives existed in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, living with the Wall itself was not a normal experience. Thus, a discussion or exhibition of the Wall experience necessitated an exploration of the ways in which the Wall shaped East German identities. The day visitor became vocal in his resistance after witnessing the “oppressive restrictions and monitoring through which the [SED] exercised control over its citizens.”⁵⁶ The Stasi officer submitted his resignation after his grandfather was deported at which point he became victim of Stasi harassment and imprisonment himself.⁵⁷ As the information plate beside the video screens states, “the testimonials...have been concisely edited to illuminate life with the Wall.”⁵⁸ This, however, implied that life with and resistance to the Wall, and by default to the regime responsible for the Wall, were the same. It is understandable that an exhibition about the brutalities inflicted through and during the Wall’s

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁸ “Facing the Wall Exhibition,” Culver City: Wende Museum: a Museum and Archive of the Cold War (visited August 6, 2010).

existence demonstrates experience as it relates directly to the barrier. That said, representing the Wall in such a way and editing the testimonials toward individual response and resistance to the Wall reconstructed an image of the GDR solely in terms of repression, violence, and as the totalitarian state reigning currently in the official FRG narrative of East German history. At the same time, and perhaps more important for the discussion running throughout this thesis, the notion of resistance was not reflective of individual experience, but of a presumed collective eastern experience based on western conceptions of the Wall as an SED instrument of repression.

Perhaps the most interesting of the interviews was that of the border guard. While not a victim of the regime as were the day visitor and the Stasi officer, the border guard is described as fully investing himself in his job of “securing the border and preventing *Republikflucht*—the attempt of some East Germans to escape to the West.”⁵⁹ Immediately, this representation of the GDR recreated it in light of the West German perception of an *Unrechtsstaat*. The border guard was, however, perhaps the only testimonial of the edited versions available in the public exhibition to demonstrate and “illuminate life with the Wall.” In this, the Wall did not serve as a background to daily life. Rather, the everyday experience was incorporated into the existence of the Wall as “[b]order guards developed an everyday familiarity with the warning signs, passageways, and concrete barricades within the checkpoint complex.” Similarly, the routine associated with the Wall was incorporated into the experience of everyday life as he recorded “his vacations...in the same format as the official logbooks that documented border incidents” just as he “fully noted the commotion [of November 9, 1989] in [his] standard yellow logbooks.”⁶⁰ Unlike either the day visitor or the Stasi officer in their edited testimonials, the

⁵⁹ “Facing the Wall,” 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

border guard demonstrated the impact of the Wall and of the routine associated with the Wall on daily life.⁶¹ This was, however, still couched in the terminology of a totalitarian GDR.

But the experience of the border guard extends beyond the immediate Wall experience and into the present of the reunified German state. In his testimonial, he states that he never considered taking that extra step to illegally emigrate because the GDR was his homeland and one's homeland should be respected. In addition, the guard acknowledges that the Wall created the perception of the GDR as a prison, but behind the Wall there were no drugs, no crime, and no unemployment as is the case in the modern, reunified Federal Republic. Of course, this was not meant to imply that he wanted the Wall back.⁶² This obvious expression of nostalgia stems from disillusionment with what the border guard perceives as social problems based on the remembered experience of life in the former GDR. As historian Peter Fritzsche describes nostalgia in his chapter, "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," it is the measure of the distance by which experience falls short of expectation in one's efforts to make oneself at home. Dislocation is caused by a massive rupture in historical experience, in this case the opening of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification that followed as a colonization of the former GDR by the Federal Republic. Nostalgia then represents the narration of that dislocation in terms of that break in history as having extinguished earlier traditions and experiences.⁶³ The border guard's implication that social conditions behind the Berlin Wall were "perfect" in comparison

⁶¹ Taylor, 395. While escape attempts number in the thousands in the 1960s, shortly after the Berlin Wall was constructed, this number dropped to hundreds in the 1970s. By the 1980s, the number of escape attempts was so small that in 1984, the Stasi logged less than forty such attempts. Although this number may be argued based on the source, even if this number was doubled it still represents a large amount of time without a single attempt to illegally cross the border. As such, for much of the time spent guarding the barrier, routine was all the border guards had.

⁶² "Facing the Wall Exhibition: Protecting the Barrier: The Border Guard," Culver City: The Wende Museum: a Museum and Archive of the Cold War, Video Interview (viewed August 6, 2010).

⁶³ Peter Fritzsche, "How Nostalgia Narrates Modernity," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 62 & 68.

to the FRG present is predicated upon this measure of distance between experience and expectation. This was, then, not an expression of the border guard's experience with the Wall as suggested by the organization of the exhibition or by the way in which the testimonial was edited. Rather, this nostalgia was suggestive of the post-Wall experience. This reconstructed an image of the German Democratic Republic contrary to the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy discussed in the previous chapter from a starting position which accepts that dichotomy. According to Paul Cooke, this creates a "positive hybrid position" which is also evident in post-*Wende* literature by former East German authors, something which will be examined in depth in the following chapter.⁶⁴

The inclusion of this expression is the product of the eastern post-reunification experience. It points to the individuality of experience within the perceived collective experience. However, this concept will be discussed further in the chapter to follow. For the purposes here, it is significant that this contrary expression informs the perception of the Wall as a functional aspect of the everyday. Even into the post-reunification period, the Wall still serves as a measure for both the GDR and the Federal Republic. It is important that this expression is then made by the border guard. Being fully integrated into the SED and Stasi bureaucracy of repression, the border guard's nostalgia may be dismissed as not reflective of popular opinion. In a 2008 Social Report of the new Federal states (those located in the territories of the former GDR), an average of 11 percent with a high of 23 percent among the unemployed wanted the GDR back.⁶⁵ Likewise, a 12 percent and 4 percent average of the population surveyed were either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied respectively with the conditions of life in the reunified state.

⁶⁴ Cooke, *Representing*, 61.

⁶⁵ „Sozialreport 2008: Daten und Fakten zur sozialen Lage in den neuen Bundesländern,“ Berlin: Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungszentrum Berlin-Brandenburg e.V., 31.

These numbers again leapt to 34 and 14 percents in each category among the unemployed.⁶⁶ With the exception of the unemployed whose disillusionment was dictated by their employment status in the West German capitalist structures versus the full employment promised by the SED regime, the small percentages of the population dissatisfied with the present conditions in the reunified German state support the idea of nostalgia as not indicative of the majority, but being reflective of those who lost the most when the Berlin Wall opened. As such, the border guard's nostalgia did not serve to deconstruct the perception of the GDR as a repressive, totalitarian state, but created a difference of experience based on a single point, the Berlin Wall. As the border guard recognized the GDR as prison and thus the perceived perfection of that former society having its basis in the restrictions of the state, at the same time noting that he did not want to see the Wall return, this invocation of nostalgia legitimized the modern FRG and the narrative of German dictatorship in the GDR.

Thus the two events organized by the Wende Museum for the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall reduced the East German memory and the memory of participation in the demonstrations leading to that fall in two ways. The Wall Project, with its twin focus on the Wall Along Wilshire and the Wall Across Wilshire, reduced the memory of the Berlin Wall to the political act of painting the Wall as experienced by the western half of the city and the physical and also very political act of opening and deconstructing the Wall as experienced in the East. This served to unite two very different memories of experience with the Wall and suggested freedom through the unity of diverse experience in the elimination of barriers beyond that of the Berlin Wall. At the same time, the Facing the Wall exhibition demonstrated the Berlin Wall as an instrument of oppression constructed by an *Unrechtsstaat*. The historical witness testimonies incorporated into the exhibition largely supported this narrative of East

⁶⁶ Ibid, 8.

German history. The testimony of the border guard, however, tended to suggest the perceived normalization of everyday life in the shadow of the Wall. This experience with the everyday was negotiated through the negative impact of the Wall. Similarly, the comparisons drawn by the border guard between the former GDR and the reunified Federal Republic and the nostalgia expressed were determined solely through the ways in which the Wall sealed the GDR from the perceived social and cultural problems of an open, capitalist society. Like the Wall Along/Across Wilshire, the differences of experience were unified through the social distortion of life behind the Berlin Wall. Read together, then, these two events suggested that a unity of experiential difference may overcome the detrimental effects of dictatorship and physical division.

This positive affirmation of memory was not present through every demonstration of memory associated with the twentieth anniversary of 1989, however. Even then, it was positive in that it demonstrated the perceived legitimacy of the FRG. As positive East German experiences were negotiated through the perception of the Berlin Wall as a means of oppression, barriers as harmful to the populations they divide, and the GDR as a dictatorship in the narrative presented by the Federal Republic, the negative impact of the Wall suggested the impossibility of positive experiences within its shadow. Through the reduction of the 1989 experience to a narrative of freedom through unity, *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, the GNTB, and through them the German government implied the victory of East Germans in 1989 through the inevitable reunification of Germany in 1990. This tends not to recognize the difference of memory experienced by Germans, but instead focuses on the continued de-legitimization of the former East German state through the western-held perception of the GDR as a totalitarian regime and *Unrechtsstaat*. Consequently, the messages of struggle and unity in the international

demonstration of the twentieth anniversary coupled with the dictatorship versus democracy narrative on the domestic front enabled the events to be read, not as a reflection of East German experience and memory of 1989, but as a further legitimization of the reunified Federal Republic and the superiority of the West German democracy prior to the end of the Cold War. Although East Germans as a collective were valorized for their efforts creating the conditions that opened the Berlin Wall, this was done in terms of the German reunification that followed, seemingly as a natural and inevitable conclusion to those events. This was not indicative of the individual East German experience with 1989, and especially not with the East German experiences of the everyday, but instead the promotion of a unified German myth whereby freedom was attained through incorporation into the western systems against the deviation presented by the existence of the Berlin Wall.

Chapter 3.

Communist Kitsch: the Deconstructing and Reconstruction of the GDR in Post-*Wende* Literature.

In her 2001 study of post-communist nostalgia, *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym positions nostalgia within two tendencies described as reflective and restorative nostalgia. She describes the reflective as dwelling in the *algia* portion of nostalgia; it is that which involves “the imperfect process of remembrance.”¹ Her study argues that the reflective is about the individual and cultural memory and “reveals that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another.” Instead, the reflective is “aware of the gap between identity and resemblance.”² This is to say that the reflective nostalgic does not attempt to rebuild the lost home based on the fantasy of imprecise memory, but rather focuses on the distance between the past and present homes and that exact imperfection of memory associated with the lost home. On the other hand, restorative nostalgia “proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps” in pursuit of a singular truth in historical narrative. This form of nostalgia is found in the formation of national myths and concepts of shared experience as a foundation driving the unity of the population of a state.³ Restorative nostalgia was at the core, not only of the claims of a shared German culture and history that justified the unification of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the western Federal Republic (FRG) in 1990, but also of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the *Mauerfall* (fall of the Berlin Wall) organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and discussed in the two previous chapters. As Boym argues, the restorative concerns itself with the “reconstructions of monuments of the past” while the reflective “lingers on the

¹ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 41.

² *Ibid*, 49-50.

³ *Ibid*, 41.

ruins.’⁴ These types of nostalgia and the differences between them are of particular importance as this chapter turns from the official memories of the GDR, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and German reunification to the unofficial, but still very public, representations of those memories by former citizens and public representatives of the former German state.

Here, the question of the representation of memory and nostalgia in East German post-*Wende* (turning point) literature is addressed in three novels: Thomas Brussig’s *Heroes Like Us* (English edition, 1997), *New Lives: the Youth of Enricho Türmer in Letters and Prose* (English edition, 2008) by Ingo Schulze, and famed East German author Christa Wolf’s *In the Flesh* (English edition, 2005). Not only are each of these texts set during different points in late GDR history (the months leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first seven months of 1990 leading to the implementation of German-German economic and social unification, and one year before the fall of the Wall, respectively), but each approaches the subject of remembering the GDR and nostalgia in very different ways. What these novels share is that each author, in his or her own way, draws attention to the process of remembering and Boym’s imperfection of memory in their recreations and representations of the former German Democratic Republic. Despite the obvious imperfections of these memories—and here it is not meant how the events of each novel comes into conflict with historical events but how the narratives each point to discrepancies between the memories being relayed and the events within the novels themselves—each narration stresses the authenticity and validity of those memories. As such, the ways in which these narratives are structured bring Boym’s concepts of reflective and restorative nostalgia into conflict. The restorative, upon which commemorations are based, invokes the singular truth and cannot co-exist with reflective nostalgia which questions the truth of nostalgic recollections. In the novels discussed here, as additional memories and experiences are introduced and co-exist alongside the

⁴ Ibid, 41.

singular narrative voice, the plurality of memories conflict with the recollections of the individual narrator. This begs an interesting question: if the memories are authentic to the experiences of the characters and, as such, representative of the East German experience itself, despite their inconsistencies within the narratives, does there exist a shared East German experience and identity beyond that of material culture as necessitated by the concept of *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for the former GDR) as Konrad Jarausch argues?⁵

This problem is complicated by the gap in experience created by the generational transition. The authors selected for this analysis represent two distinct generations of former citizens of the GDR. Christa Wolf, born in 1929 and thus having lived through the entire forty year history of the German Democratic Republic, not only has a longer memory of the GDR than either Schulze or Brussig, both children of the 1960s, but also a memory of the National Socialist regime which preceded the post-war division. Wolf's developmental years came during the shift from Nazi to Socialist Unity Party (SED) control and the revelation of Nazi atrocities whereas Schulze and Brussig were products of the experience of transition from socialism to democratic capitalism. Wolf also has the experience of having acted as an IM (*inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* or unofficial informant), however reluctantly, for the Stasi in the 1950s and 60s.⁶ This cannot help but inform the ways in which memories are constructed, the former East German state reconstructed, and the lenses through which they are viewed. The question then becomes a matter of how these differences of experience manifest themselves in the nostalgic memories of the same lost home. Do these differences in generational experience affect the ways in which the

⁵ Konrad H. Jarausch, "Memory Wars: German Debates About the Legacy of Dictatorship," in *Berlin Since the Wall's End: Shaping Society and Memory in the German Metropolis since 1989*, ed. John Alexander Williams, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 104.

⁶ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 255.

GDR is recreated through the memories of the protagonists of these narratives and of the authors that created them, as Jana Hensel would have us believe?⁷

Through an analysis of narrative styles, the creation of an authentic yet imperfect memory, the GDR recreated in each of the three novels, and the points where these three intersect, this chapter argues that in drawing attention to the processes of memory and their imperfections, the authors of *Wende* novels deconstruct the notion of *Ostalgie* as something predicated on a shared and collective East German experience. In spite of the insistence on the authenticity of memory and of the East German experience, I argue it is not *Ostalgie* but nostalgia that creates the shared experience and identity which then fabricates the “authentic” memory.

In his monograph, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia*, Paul Cooke argues that, as most of the headlines were being grabbed by information pertaining to the activities of the Stasi, the earliest literature emerging from the former GDR were the writings of the victims, thus confirming the dictatorship versus democracy dichotomy created by the FRG’s narrative. By the mid-1990s, however, the outing of numerous IMs, turning Stasi victims into perpetrators, became over-saturating. This, Cooke argues, encouraged authors to treat the former GDR with a lighter tone, employing the Stasi as a “landscape metaphor” in order to deconstruct East and West German stereotypes of the GDR and its population.⁸ As convincing as Cooke’s argument is, his study falls short in two areas.

First, Cooke does not identify the kind of nostalgia employed by writers in this project of recreating the GDR in order to deconstruct stereotypes following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

⁷ Jana Hensel, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life That Came Next*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 72.

⁸ Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 61-2, 67 & 73.

While Cooke is aware of the nostalgia and criticisms written into a novel such as Brussig's *Heroes Like Us*, he analyzes the book as a post-colonial reclamation of an East German identity and memory that utilizes western tropes in order to question the western perspective. By using what he identifies as a "hybrid position," Cooke argues that Brussig creates "a self-reflexive mechanism through which he can interrogate the views of his fellow East Germans."⁹ However, in not recognizing the reflective aspect of nostalgia as Boym describes and thus the awareness of the imperfections of memory and the existing gaps between identity and the drawn upon memory, Cooke is limited to defining this hybrid position as that of the author recreating the orient through the use of dominant western narrative tropes, in this case that of satire.

Second, and significant to my argument here, Cooke fails to address the processes of memory as made apparent by *Heroes's* author. Nostalgia is, by definition, dependent upon that act of remembering. Boym's own notion of reflective nostalgia imparts the importance of the distance between identity and memory as the focus of individual and cultural nostalgia. Whereas Cooke views East and West German perceptions of the former GDR as being called into question by his conception of the "hybrid position," it is the process and act of imperfect memory that facilitates the recreation of the lost home. Through highlighting the act of remembering and the intentional or accidental imperfections of memory, East German authors question the authenticity of the memories upon which East German nostalgia and West German stereotypes are based. This is not meant to discount the very real existence of a perceived shared experience among former citizens of the GDR, but rather points to the individualist nature of memory and thus to the polyphonic voice of nostalgic recreations and remembrances of the former GDR.

⁹ Ibid, 74.

In a speech delivered on December 18, 1989 before the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) Conference in Berlin and published the following day in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, West German author Günter Grass argued that German reunification in the form of the annexation of the GDR by the Federal Republic would result in “irredeemable losses” of the history of the citizens of the former East Germany.¹⁰ The losses to which Grass referred were the distinctive identities of East Germans which would be irrevocably lost in what was later and officially recognized as the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90.¹¹ In official German memory, and in modes of remembering and commemorating the Peaceful Revolution, East German identity became overshadowed by the historical narratives of dictatorship versus democracy, the triumph of West German capitalism over East German socialism, and the supposed inevitability of German reunification. Anthropologists John Borneman and Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke both argue that, to an extent, East Germans themselves participated in and perpetrated the loss of their own history by so swiftly exchanging freedom from the communist yoke for the material well-being experienced in the West.¹²

Material and consumer culture provided a point of orientation for citizens in the FRG in the post-war years following the West German currency reform (1948) that was not shared to the same extent in the GDR.¹³ As West German colonization devalued and delegitimized East German memory during reunification in 1990, and the anticipated repetition of the West German economic miracle failed to produce results as quickly and to the promised extent, citizens of the

¹⁰ Günter Grass, *Two States—One Nation?* trans. by Krishna Winston with A.S. Wensinger (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1990), 12.

¹¹ “Berlin 2009—20 Years Since the Fall of the Wall: Overview of Events,” Kulturprojekte Berlin, (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 1.

¹² John Borneman, *After the Wall: East Meets West in the New Berlin* (United States of America: Basic Books, 1991), 240-241 and Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke, “Memory and Existence: Implications of the *Wende*,” in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 166.

¹³ Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 313.

new German states in the East expressed disillusionment and disorientation with their new lives in the unified Federal Republic.¹⁴ This problem was compounded by reports of the Commission of Inquiry, commissioned by the FRG government, which drew similarities between the GDR and the National Socialist state. These reports claimed that totalitarian power structures deformed the everyday life of the individual in addition to deforming the GDR state itself. They drew distinct lines between the GDR's dictatorial past and the democratic present of the unified Federal Republic with the purpose of legitimizing that democratic system via its history.¹⁵ At the same time as these reports were tearing down the GDR in order to buttress the democracy of the Federal Republic, they delegitimized the memories of individual citizens of the former East. As discussed at length elsewhere in this paper, under the terms of economic and social union, East German memory did not transfer to the newly unified FRG in terms of its ability to allow the individual to function through the repetition of daily tasks, such as those areas dealing with personal and home economics, shopping, and even social customs and interactions. The experiences of disorientation and disillusionment that resulted from this lack of memory transfer and the creation of an official historical narrative meant to delegitimize the collective memories of former East Germans in their everyday lives up to the point of unification with the West, ironically, created a foundation for the collective experience of nostalgia among many citizens of the new eastern states.

East German nostalgia is generally predicated upon this turn toward the collective East German experience of everyday-life which becomes problematic when whitewashing the atrocities of the Stasi and of the apparatus of the SED regime.¹⁶ This is certainly not the case in the three novels examined below. Each adopts a positive hybrid position as outlined by Cooke's

¹⁴ Ten Dyke, 154-55.

¹⁵ Cooke, *Representing*, 37-9.

¹⁶ Jaraus, "Memory Wars," 104.

study in that the narratives start from the position of the GDR as a totalitarian and/or police state in order to deconstruct the reality of that (western) assumption. Brussig provides a narrator embedded within a keystone cop version of the Stasi. Schulze's protagonist envisions himself as a dissident writer hoping to be published in the West. And Wolf's protagonist dreams of an oppressive present resulting from an oppressive past. But it is the negotiation of the memories themselves that act to criticize not only this version of the GDR, but also the notion of *Ostalgie* based on the assumption of a shared East German experience.

The plot of Thomas Brussig's *Heroes Like Us* has been dissected elsewhere in numerous articles and monographs, including Paul Cooke's previously mentioned study, cultural historian Brad Prager's "The Erection of the Berlin Wall," and historian Patrick Major's *Behind the Berlin Wall*.¹⁷ When the novel was released in Germany, it was greeted with almost universal acclaim from such diverse publications as *Der Spiegel*, *Die Welt*, *Stern*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.¹⁸ Although the East German dissident folk-singer Wolf Biermann blasts Brussig's portrayal of the Stasi as a harmless body, he applauds the book as the light-hearted take on the GDR necessary for those of both the East and the West.¹⁹

The novel revolves around Klaus Uhltzsch's upbringing in the GDR with a Stasi agent father and a hygiene-conscious and state employed mother. Brussig's narrative explores Klaus's indoctrination into the socialist order and his employment by the Stasi. He both loves and hates the GDR and the Federal Republic. He fears the Stasi, but his desire to work for them is equally strong. Klaus is characterized as paralleling the forty-five-year East German mindset through his

¹⁷ Brad Prager, "The Erection of the Berlin Wall: Thomas Brussig's '*Helden wie wir*' and the End of East Germany," *The Modern Language Review* 99, no. 4 (October 2004): 986 and Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 261.

¹⁸ David Hudson, "Heroes Like Us," *Spiegel Online*, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,51703,00.html> (accessed May 5, 2011).

¹⁹ Wolf Von Biermann, „Wenig Wahrheiten und viel Witz: Wolf Biermann über Thomas Brussigs Roman ‚Helden wie wir,‘“ *Der Spiegel* 5/1996, January 29, 1996.

vacillation “between profound insecurity and salvational flights of fancy.”²⁰ He begins life as an average GDR citizen whose delusions of grandeur are first fed by winning the science fair and having his picture appear in *Berliner Zeitung*, although this was for propagandistic purposes and the political fall of the Party official with whom the photo was taken. Throughout the story, Klaus claims sole responsibility for the opening of the Berlin Wall on the night of November 9, 1989 due to the revelation of his grossly swollen penis to border guards. In Klaus’ quest to be recognized as someone greater than himself, he turned to sexual perversion, exploring new aberrations that could be classified with the -philia suffix. When Klaus finds himself at perhaps the height of his status with the Party, having saved the life of SED secretary Erich Honecker, he injures himself at the Alexanderplatz during a rally on November 4, 1989 at which author Christa Wolf spoke. His swollen penis that resulted from this injury suggested that the entire East German state required “a transformation from impotence to courage” without the “overcompensation by adopting grandiosity and tyranny.”²¹

Major argues that the satire apparent in this narrative represents a resistance to the “heroicization of the West” in Cold War narratives that, at the same time, ridicules the concept of the “heroes of socialism” and criticizes the role of East German citizens in bringing an end to the SED regime.²² In a similar vein, Paul Cooke’s argument focuses on Brussig’s creation of a “positive hybrid position” created through the use of a western stance as a “rhetorical device to question the victim/perpetrator binary” that exists in the dominant Western narrative of the 1989 revolution.²³ This is to say that Brussig’s use of satire in his conception of the GDR as an all-encompassing Stasi-state, as follows the perception of the East in the dominant Western

²⁰ Robert Schwarz, “Helden wie wir Review,” *World Literature Today* 70, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 682.

²¹ *Ibid*, 682.

²² Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 260-1.

²³ Cooke, *Representing*, 61.

democracy versus dictatorship dichotomy, serves to deconstruct that Western narrative.

Likewise, Prager's article emphasizes Brussig's stylistic similarities to both American and West German literature using J.D. Salinger, John Irving, and Günter Grass as examples reflected in Brussig's work.²⁴

Unlike Cooke's analysis, Prager goes on to say that Brussig, through Klaus' narrative, repeatedly attacks the author Christa Wolf to overcome the legacy of GDR literature as complicit, at least in part, with the regime, at the same time as his "depictions of ideological formations and...GDR political discourse" place *Heroes Like Us* alongside Wolf's *Kinderheitsmuster* (1976) and *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (1968) in the GDR literary canon.²⁵ In this way, the narrative both confirms and rejects Cooke's perception of Brussig's hybrid position. The use of the Stasi as what Cooke describes as a "landscape" or as a point of focus in Brussig's recreation of the GDR in the Western-centric perception of a police-state and Brussig's narrative comparison to American and West German literature place *Heroes Like Us* within the realm of Cooke's post-colonial conception of hybrid literature. At the same time, the novel both questions and confirms the relevance of GDR literature and intellectual life. In that this style then draws from both Eastern and Western traditions at the same time as it criticizes each, the narrative of *Heroes Like Us* creates itself as a hybrid separate from Cooke's conception of the "positive hybrid position." This does not invalidate the positions taken by either Major or Cooke, but limits their findings to the terms and terminologies of their own studies.

Of the three analyses currently discussed, only Prager approaches the subject of the narrative voice on its own terms. In drawing from Foucault, Prager describes Klaus' exposition to the *New York Times* reporter, Mr. Kitzelstein, as a confession whereby Klaus turns westward

²⁴ Prager, 984.

²⁵ Ibid, 994.

for absolution. Prager writes that “the injunction to confess was an important aspect of the history of self-policing” thereby transforming desire into discourse and an important aspect of GDR culture itself.²⁶ However, Prager is missing, here, the need for truth in confession. In addressing Mr. Kitzelstein, Klaus opens his narrative with a brief account of how his birth was connected to the Prague Spring on August 20, 1968, thus confirming the Western perception of the Soviet bloc’s policy of force, before immediately questioning that same reading of the implosion of the communist establishment in the GDR. Klaus relays to Mr. Kitzelstein, “Yes, it’s true, it was me: *I* toppled the Berlin Wall...but shall I tell you what really happened? The world is entitled to my story, especially since it makes sense.”²⁷ Here, through the narrative voice, Brussig is balancing a number of important issues at once.

Most obviously, Klaus, and through him Brussig, is clearly establishing a claim to memory, specifically to those memories associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of a separate and Soviet-style socialist East Germany. As such, the entire narrative of November 1989 is negotiated through Klaus’ imperfect recollections of the events. This is conveyed earliest when Klaus requests that Mr. Kitzelstein treat the entire interview like a voice test so that Klaus “will be able to say anything that comes into [his] head without having it pinned on [him] afterward.” Despite Klaus’ assertion as to the truth of the narrative he is relating, by requesting that the interview be treated as a voice test, Klaus is acknowledging that parts or all of his story may be subject to doubt. The unreliability of Klaus’ memory is reinforced, then, as this request not to have his words pinned on him immediately follows a brief discussion of doubt and the use of aphorisms due to their “desired effect on fat-assed, corpulent listeners.”²⁸ The implication

²⁶ *Ibid*, 995.

²⁷ Thomas Brussig, *Heroes Like Us*, trans. John Brownjohn (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 5. Italics from the original.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 12.

here is that aphorisms make generalizations of the truth. These generalizations then possess the ability to convince through the reduction of context to its base components. By Klaus' own admission, he is experienced in the use of aphorisms, and thus with convincing through generalizing, to the extent that his "brain is awash with such...nonsense," without weight or substance.²⁹ As such, Klaus' narrative of the fall of the Berlin Wall and his role in those events should be treated carefully as he, himself, derails his own reliability as a narrator and, by default, the recollection of memory framing that narrative.

And yet, there is the claim to truth in this recollection. Directly, and previously noted, Klaus asserts that his sole responsibility for the opening of the Berlin Wall is the true story. In this, Klaus' imperfect memories and, thus, the nostalgia imparted through his recreation of the GDR and of November 9, 1989 fall into the tendency of nostalgia described as the restorative. Boym explains that nostalgics of the restorative tendency are of the belief "that their project is about truth" and participate in the return to the lost home through "the antimodern myth-making of history."³⁰ This is to say that, in context of the novel and Klaus' claims to the authenticity of his story, Klaus as a narrator is recreating the GDR and East German history according to his own imperfect memory. In doing so, he is also discrediting alternative recreations of that same history, the Eastern and Western narratives of 1989. He refutes East German participation in the fall of the Berlin Wall by asking Mr. Kitzelstein how Easterners could have brought down the Wall when they are "as passive today as they always were."³¹ Brussig is here, through Klaus' narrative, entering a debate recently posed by historians Stephen Kotkin and Jan T. Gross in *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, questioning the reality of the 1989 revolutions as revolutions due to the lack of a mass organized opposition to the

²⁹ Ibid, 12-13.

³⁰ Boym, 41.

³¹ Brussig, 4 & 259.

Communist regimes, the SED regime in the East German case.³² This will be discussed in further depth below, but for now it is significant to note that Brussig as the author of *Heroes Like Us* is not participating in the restorative nostalgia as much as his narrator. Importantly, Brussig relies on the reflective in order to deconstruct the notions of *Ostalgie* and of western interpretations regarding the collapse of the East German state.

The way in which Klaus narrates a reconstructed image of the GDR for the interviewer draws attention to the processes of recall and the construction of his memories. In doing so, Brussig's view of nostalgia becomes connected with critical inquiry necessitated by Boym's definition of the reflective. Through the use of humour and satire, as Cooke claims to be part of the hybrid position taken by Brussig, but more precisely as Boym claims to be a part of the reflective, Brussig's novel dwells in the longing aspect of nostalgia and in the disconnect between the present and the lost home in order to criticize both the accepted Western view of 1989 and the Eastern nostalgia itself.³³ Kotkin argues that, until recently, a disproportionate amount of 1989 literature focussed on the strength of the protestors in bringing about the fall of the Berlin Wall and an end to the Cold War. Alternately, Kotkin argues that the weaknesses built into the socialist systems of the East German state lacked the ability to adapt to the combined conditions created by *Perestroika* (restructuring) rippling out of Moscow and the protests within the GDR and the other Warsaw Pact states. Pushed by the seeming mobilization of the people and unable to adapt to the new economic realities, the system simply collapsed.³⁴ In titling the exhibition and educational components of the twentieth anniversary of the *Mauerfall*, the Peaceful Revolution, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* emphasizes the role played by the

³² Stephen Kotkin with Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, (New York: Modern Library, 2010), 7.

³³ Boym, 49.

³⁴ Kotkin, xiv.

revolutionary spirit of 1989 against dictatorship. This view, however, stemming from the Commission of Inquiry's assessment of the GDR as totalitarian and akin to the Third Reich, fails to address the inherent weaknesses of the SED regime as Kotkin suggests.³⁵ The GDR Brussig creates initially bears the likeness of the dictatorship portrayed in Western reports and in the displays, demonstrations, and events organized for the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Wall in November 2009. In doing so, however, Brussig portrays the GDR as a Stasi or police-state controlled by an incompetent, key-stone cop-like organization.

Cooke argues that while this portrayal confirms the oppressive nature of the GDR, it simultaneously confronts and questions the importance of the Stasi in any post-*Wende* reading of the German Democratic Republic.³⁶ Likewise, Brussig is critical of East German participation in and memory of the GDR and the events culminating in the fall of the Wall. As much as the GDR was itself incompetent, by Brussig's account, so too was the population. In the story, he tells us that the crowd gathered in front of the border guards were "a pathetic sight," standing around in "such a docile, diffident way, shuffling from foot to foot," shoving at the gates only "symbolically."³⁷ It is in this recreation of the GDR and its population as a means of confronting those Western-held perceptions and East German memories that Cooke locates his argument of the positive hybrid position in Brussig's work. But it is the process of memory and, more accurately, the imperfections of what is claimed to be an authentic memory highlighted by Brussig, as are both the West and East German memories in the restoration of November 9, 1989, which allows for the further questioning of those memories.

³⁵ Mike Dennis, "Constructing East Germany: Interpretations of GDR History since Unification," in *United and Divided*, eds. Mike Dennis and Eva Kolinsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 25.

³⁶ Cooke, *Representing*, 75.

³⁷ Brussig, 256-7.

By negotiating memory through restorative nostalgia and the claims to the truth of Klaus' memories, Klaus restores the GDR in himself. As much as Klaus is the son of an uncaring, Stasi-agent father and an overly concerned, cleanliness obsessed mother, he is Stalin's unwanted child, to borrow the title of Wilfried Loth's monograph. Toward the end of the novel, Klaus asks how East German society could have survived forty years if the entire population was always unhappy, answering himself that as much as the population was against the system, they equally integrated and collaborated.³⁸ Klaus freely admits that the system deformed people, not in that it disregarded human nature, but in that it contravened it.³⁹ As Brussig's reflection and recreation of the GDR perceives the East German citizenship as having integrated and collaborated with a system and state they claimed to hate, in 1989, the population is at the same time responsible for having created the GDR and the Stasi as the deforming forces they are in the novel. The population metaphorically gave birth to these detrimental societal forces as Klaus, who evolves into a perverse Stasi agent himself, is the product of his parents and his upbringing in the GDR. Thus the state is perverted by the collaboration of the population, expressed through Klaus' self-confessed sexual perversion as a backlash against GDR repression, at the same time as the deformations of the state pervert the population that supported it, memories included. When Klaus is running through the crowds of November 4, 1989, following Christa Wolf's speech at the Alexanderplatz in East Berlin, hoping to be recognized as a Stasi agent, and thus a representative of the state, the crowds view him only as one of their own.⁴⁰ Were the crowds to acknowledge Klaus as an agent of the state, they would be required to acknowledge their own participation with the GDR and SED systems, the deformations of their own lives because of those systems, and their own responsibility in the formation of those deforming systems. In

³⁸ *Ibid*, 253.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 84.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 235.

effect, both Brussig and Klaus criticize the nostalgia for November 9, 1989 and the GDR state as it ignores collective responsibility for those systems.

To return to Stephen Kotkin's argument that there was no mass organized revolution in 1989, but that the incompetence of the GDR itself caused its demise, Brussig argues along a similar line.⁴¹ When Klaus initially states that "*I* toppled the Berlin Wall," as the demonstrated embodiment of the GDR, Klaus' claims to the truth of his own memories reveal that the state itself was responsible for opening the Wall, specifically the incompetence of the state and its perversions. Klaus' incompetence stems from his naivety toward society despite the education administered by his parents, his perversions from his inferiority complexes, represented by his small penis and sexual inadequacy, and the previously suggested repressions of GDR society. These formative forces are then attributable to the Stalinist-style systems of the GDR and to the population, both represented in Klaus' parents. This creates a disconnection between the system, Klaus, and the society in which that system operates that no longer allow for the system to function properly as a part of society. Thus, when Klaus reveals his injured and massively swollen penis to the border guards on November 9, 1989, in turn revealing the perversions of the state and its disassociation from society to itself, the GDR system was paralyzed in such a way that required only a nudge from the street protesters to precipitate its collapse and open the Berlin Wall.⁴²

This operates counter to both East and West German memory of November 9, 1989 in a very significant way, namely that it questions the perceived collective experience of memory. In questioning the importance of the mass demonstrations in the fall of the Berlin Wall, although Kotkin does not question that there were mass protests, only that these protests had mass

⁴¹ Kotkin, xiv-xv.

⁴² Ibid, 65.

organization, Brussig questions a foundational myth of East German and unified German identities. Both Brussig and Klaus, author and narrator, come to question the foundations upon which *Ostalgie* is built. By refusing to recognize the GDR and Klaus for the deforming force that they were, the former GDR population, in-part responsible for collusion with that deforming system, are creating a further perversion through memory. Through the introduction of the possible plurality of memory and experience, Brussig deconstructs the notion of a shared and collective East German experience as the foundational myth of nostalgia.

Somewhat similar to the literary form used in Brussig's *Heroes Like Us, New Lives* by Ingo Schulze employs Paul Cooke's conception of the positive hybrid position in its use of Western literary forms as a means of deconstructing Western-held perceptions and stereotypes. *New Lives* is written as a monologic epistolary novel. That is to say that it is written as a series of letters from a single character in order to convey a sense of authenticity through its reflection of life. This style has similarly been employed by Western writers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, and Bram Stoker. Further, Dagmar Jaegar notes that Schulze's efforts to distance himself from authorship, discussed in detail below, in *New Lives* and his second book, *Simple Stories*, connect his work to the Romantic tradition.⁴³ However, *New Lives* is most definitely not a Stasi-novel, as are the subjects of Cooke's study, and thus it does not begin with the reconstruction of the German Democratic Republic as a Stasi-controlled police-state as emphasized in Cooke's analysis of the hybrid position. Rather, Schulze's novel is set during the months between the opening of the Berlin Wall in the autumn of 1989 and German reunification on October 3, 1990. As such, Schulze's recreation of the German Democratic Republic is significantly different from that of Brussig and those studied by Cooke. Noticeably

⁴³ Dagmar Jaegar, "'Only in the 1990s Did I Become East German: A Conversation with Ingo Schulze about Remembering the GDR, *Simple Stories*, and *33 Moments of Happiness*; with an Introduction to His Work," *New German Critique* 101 vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 144.

absent, though not entirely forgotten, are the Stasi and the repressions and deformations of GDR social systems upon which Brussig hung his narrative. Schulze's GDR is a state in the transitional phases from the East German socialist economy to the West German market economy, thus recreating the GDR itself as a hybrid of the two.

Through the letters used to construct the novel, Enricho Türmer tells his own story set in the post-Wall 'present' and his GDR youth. Following seven years after the German publication of *Simple Stories* (1998), Schulze's long awaited *Wende* novel was heralded as "monumental" in its telling of the German "insanity-intoxication" of the opening of the Wall and the "longer, close-mouthed hangover" that came after.⁴⁴ The 'present' story is told through letters addressed to his family, his mother and his sister Vera, and friends. This story-arc follows Türmer during the first six months of 1990, shortly before German reunification. As Türmer works at a local Altenberg newspaper office that started up shortly after the fall of the Wall, he develops a friendship with Clemens von Barrista, a western capitalist, which operates inversely to his marital relationship with Michaela, a member of New Forum. In the 'past' story-arc, similar to Klaus' tale in *Heroes Like Us*, Türmer recounts his upbringing in the GDR, his half-hearted attempts to write a novel that would be banned by the SED regime, his work as a dramaturge, and his eventual and reluctant participation and leadership in the New Forum in Altenberg. These letters are addressed to Nicoletta, another western figure and Türmer's muse. In addressing these letters to Nicoletta, Türmer seeks to make the same confession to and receive the same recognition from the West as Klaus in his relationship with Mr. Kitzelstein in Brussig's work. By the end of the novel, the two timelines meet and Türmer's life reaches rock bottom, professionally and personally, just as the border is opening elsewhere in the country.

⁴⁴ Wolfgang Von Höbel, "Der ganz normale Wahnsinn," *Der Spiegel* 41/2005, October 10, 2005.

In a fashion not unlike Brussig's recreation of the GDR in *Heroes Like Us*, Schulze's narrative draws attention to the operations of an imperfect memory. As examined in detail above, Brussig approaches his subject through the style of an interview. The protagonist, Klaus, confesses to his role in the opening of the Berlin Wall and the moments in his life which led to that outcome. It creates a perception of the former GDR contrary to the official narratives of GDR and unified German history negotiated through the memories of a single character. Likewise, through the use of the epistolary narrative, Schulze recreates the GDR through letters "written" by his protagonist, Enrico Türmer. As letters, there is a disconnection between the events themselves and the narration of those events. By their nature, letters are written after the fact as a record of previous experiences. As such, like Brussig's confessional interview style, *New Lives* recreates the GDR in a state of transition and, through Türmer's letters to Nicoletta Hansen in the West, Türmer's formative years in the GDR past and his own role in the fall of the Berlin Wall negotiated through the memories of an individual. This in turn removes GDR memory from the collective experience, placing it squarely in a position of dependency upon individual experience. However, Schulze's narrative is much denser than is demonstrated here and in need of further consideration.

Many of Türmer's letters, particularly those telling of his history, and thus the presumed collective memory and history of the German Democratic Republic, are addressed to Nicoletta Hansen. It is these letters that, cited previous, led the imagined author to question Türmer's authorship and thus his authority. In relating his past to Nicoletta, a Western figure whom Türmer met only once prior to establishing a regular correspondence, one-sided though it may be, Türmer is confessing to the Western-held perceptions of the East German totalitarian state and seeking recognition from the West in a manner similar to that which has already been

demonstrated in Brussig's novel. In recounting his past to Nicoletta, Türmer reconstructs an East Germany built upon compulsory and perpetual military service, "as if in this country service in the army could ever come to an end," and compliance and cooperation with the Stasi and the state, "as if no letter can fail to mention some connection between Vera and State Security" despite a noted lack of evidence.⁴⁵

At the same time, Nicoletta represents a source of longing for Türmer that further allows the narrative and the narration to dwell in the space of longing found in Boym's reflective nostalgia. Türmer met Nicoletta only once before Türmer's writing of these letters that can be proven.⁴⁶ Although she appears elsewhere in the novel alongside Türmer on a few occasions, these memories are discredited by the footnotes of the imagined author.⁴⁷ Even during their correspondence it remains unclear if Nicoletta truly exists as the character that Türmer envisions her to be, rather that her lack of reply to Türmer's letters are a test of Türmer's faith in Nicoletta as the character he recreates through the narrative.⁴⁸ As such, Nicoletta becomes the Eastern perception of the golden-West. The relationship between Nicoletta and Türmer changes significantly in Türmer's letters as the German reunification draws nearer in Türmer's memory, evidenced in his warm salutations being replaced by a more "mechanical 'Your Enricho T.' and later lacking any closure at all."⁴⁹ The imagined author confirms that this relationship was dissolved in the mid-1990s.⁵⁰ This follows the pattern established by those experiencing nostalgia for the former GDR and the rise of *Ostalgie* as a mainstream phenomenon in the new German states in the East as disillusionment with the promises of German reunification failed to

⁴⁵ Ingo Schulze, *New Lives: The Youth of Enrico Türmer in Letters and Prose Edited and with Commentary and Foreword by Ingo Schulze*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 192 & footnote 266.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, footnote 66.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 445.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 391 & 125.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, footnote 294.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, xi.

live up to unreasonably high expectations. *Ostalgie* and East German identities as phenomena experienced noticeable rises in the mid-1990s as East German perception divorced itself of the idealized golden-West.⁵¹

Inverse to Türmer's relationship with Nicoletta is the one he shares with Michaela. Through Türmer's narrative, Michaela is portrayed as the representative of New Forum in Altenberg and thus representative of the hopes for a renewed socialist East Germany held by GDR intelligentsia and artists. Schulze himself, as opposed to the imagined author of *New Lives*, claims to have supported the idealism of a proposed "Third Way" for East German socialism, albeit only until December 1989. After that, Schulze believes that idealism to be "a completely wrong assessment" and the economic differences between East and West made German reunification inevitable.⁵² This being the case, Michaela's marriage to Barrista was itself inevitable. This does not mean to suggest that GDR idealists sold out the East German population and social systems, but rather that the real existing situation of the East German economy made the notion of reform unrealistic. In terms of the novel then, Barrista, representative of the FRG and specifically of the western market economy, could not take his eyes from Michaela upon their meeting.⁵³ This meeting is, in part, a celebration of the opening of Barrista's real estate agency, Fürst & Fürst. In terms of Michaela's representation of the German East, this is significant as Barrista purchased the use of her last name for the title of his agency and thus represents the first step toward a metaphoric unification between East and West in the terms of a western financial transaction. Michaela's miscarriage immediately following this celebration is demonstrative of her shift away from the perspectives of the "Third Way" and the New Forum. These perspectives were themselves already obsolete due to the collapse of the

⁵¹ Cooke, *Representing*, 7-8.

⁵² Jaegar, 152-3.

⁵³ Schulze, 180.

SED regime and “how quickly Barrista won her over.”⁵⁴ Although this may be perceived as the East German hopes of renewal selling out those aspirations when faced with West German economic might, more properly, this should be viewed as a necessary act due to the economic and political realities of the East and the opening of the Berlin Wall.

As Michaela comes to know, and ultimately marry (or in metaphoric terms, unify with) Barrista, her hopes of a renewed eastern socialism embodied in her connections with the New Forum give way to the renewal offered the East through Barrista’s western economics. Michaela “joined the New Forum out of a sense of responsibility...political activism—those were important things in a time of crisis, but interested her only in a time of crisis.”⁵⁵ In other words, New Forum and the involvement of the people in the demonstrations and politics before the opening of the Berlin Wall were necessary due to the persisting existences of the Berlin Wall and the SED regime. After November 9, 1989, the New Forum and political involvement ceased to carry the same weight as the reasons for their original creations and involvements no longer existed and the differences between East and West became obvious. In the opinions of both Schulze, expressed in his interview with Jaegar, and of his character Türmer, the reality following the opening of the Berlin Wall became that of an either-or situation, rebuild the Wall or introduce a market economy in the GDR.⁵⁶ As Michaela, and the New Forum and “Third Way” of which she was a believer and representative in the novel, protested against the Wall and the SED regime, not embracing the market, and thus Barrista, would entail a reversal of the ideals reflected in her character.

As mentioned in brief above, Barrista stands in place of the influence of the West German market economy in the GDR microcosm reconstructed in the newspaper offices of the

⁵⁴ Ibid, 179.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 457-8.

⁵⁶ Jaegar, 152 & Schulze, 409.

novel and with Türmer's internalized East German collective memory. Introduced in the novel as the harbinger of the hereditary prince, thus connecting his character with the perception of a shared German history that predicated the desire toward German unity, and investor in the newspaper through large-sum and long-term advertising, Barrista is both familiar and entirely foreign to Türmer.⁵⁷ He falls in love with Altenberg because it stood "as good as no chance, and if it ever could be saved, then only by a miracle," promising himself as that miracle within a short time as "everything he touched turned to gold."⁵⁸ This harkens back to the second economic miracle promised by Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democrat pro-unity coalition, the Alliance for Germany (*Allianz für Deutschland* or AfD), during the 1990 election campaign in the former GDR. To his sister in the letter dated April 12, 1990, Türmer writes that Barrista "literally wooed [him]" although he didn't remember Barrista's words exactly, only their "tender lilt" and the fervour with which Barrista spoke.⁵⁹ In addition to introducing Michaela, described above, and Türmer to the operations of the market economy, it is through Barrista's prodding that Türmer's character is radically altered through incorporation into that system.

It is significant, then, that by the time the imagined author seeks to publish his book neither Türmer nor Barrista can be contacted for their consent.⁶⁰ By the time of the novel's original German publication in 2005, as far as Schulze is concerned, neither the former GDR nor the FRG as it existed prior to German reunification in 1990 exist as separate entities nor in the same forms they did in the months between November 1989 and October 1990. As the imagined author notes in his foreword, "Türmer's first name was originally Enricho, and it was not until

⁵⁷ Schulze, 54.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 122-4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 178.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, x-xi.

midyear 1990 that he began using the German form, Heinrich.”⁶¹ This marks a bold distinction in the character of Türmer and in the social body of the former GDR which he represents.

Arguably, naming is a means of identification. In the transition from Enricho, the name used during the course of Türmer’s entire life in the GDR, to Heinrich, what the imagined author notes as the “German form,” Schulze is arguing that the Türmer that represented East German society as separate from that of the FRG ceased to exist after mid-1990. Not coincidentally, mid-1990 also saw the implementation of the Treaty on Social, Monetary and Economic Union between the two German states, preceding political reunification later that same year. This coincides with more recent accounts of the reunification experience, most notably for those of the generation born on the cusp of or following October 3, 1990, that no longer knows or recognizes where the divisions between people of the East and West or the physical divisions of the united-German state lie.⁶² This, ultimately, is Schulze’s argument. To compare the process of German reunification to gambling, specifically roulette, he writes that “with a run of incredible good luck, [Michaela’s son] Robert followed every spin of the ball.”⁶³ Thus reunification was not meant for the generation that experienced the forty year division of the two German states, but for the next generation and those to follow. They are Schulze’s true winners of unity. As Türmer asks in the rhetorical, “what was I, as a writer, going to do without a wall?”⁶⁴ As Türmer’s written accounts are the only ones imparted to the reader, the opening of the Berlin Wall means the end of Türmer and of Schulze’s reconstruction of the GDR. In the reality of post-reunification Germany, neither the former GDR, Türmer, nor the old FRG, Barrista, exist.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, ix.

⁶² Sebastian Esser and Susan Mücke, “Geboren am 9. November 1989: Generation Deutschland-Barometer,” *Berliner Morgenpost* (Berlin, FRG), November 9, 2009, 19.

⁶³ Schulze, 251.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 319.

Jaegar's previously noted suggestion that Schulze hides the authorial voice in *Simple Stories* carries over into the narrative of *New Lives*. In the foreword to the novel, which more properly should be considered the first chapter of the novel's fiction, Schulze the imagined author recounts his discovery of Türmer's letters. When read together and in chronological order, these letters "unfolded...a panorama of a period when everything in Türmer's life—and not just his [referring to all East Germans]—stood in the balance."⁶⁵ In doing this, Schulze, the actual author, assigns authorial voice, and thus authority, to the fictional Türmer removing authorship of the novel from himself. The authenticity of these letters, similar to Klaus' claims to the truth of memory in *Heroes Like Us*, is then created through the imagined author's claims that he personally knew Türmer and that his doubts concerning authorship of the letters found no validation.⁶⁶ At the same time, the imagined author points out that "the attentive reader will not fail to notice that... Türmer describes the same incident in very different versions depending on his addressee" and that "every sentence Türmer wrote...kept one eye cast on an imaginary audience."⁶⁷ Just as obviously as in Brussig's narrative, Schulze here presents the concepts that the letters that comprise the novel proper are the negotiation of memory and that these memories are intentionally imperfect and constructed to meet a certain goal in the mind of Türmer.

Throughout the novel, then, the imagined author Schulze inserts himself into the narrative flow through the use of footnotes. Not only do these footnotes fill in details and background not provided in the body of the work, but more significant for the purposes of this chapter, they serve to cast doubt on the authenticity, validity, and truth of Türmer's memories. One of the more obvious examples of this comes as the imagined author claims that

⁶⁵ Ibid, x.

⁶⁶ Ibid, x.

⁶⁷ Ibid, xii & x.

it is rather unlikely that Roland, who according to V[era] T[ürmer] was relatively well informed about conditions in the GDR, would have asked such a question. Perhaps here as well [Enrico] T[ürmer] is sacrificing truth for the sake of a punch line.⁶⁸

This passage is of particular significance in that, not only does it demonstrate the imagined author's apprehensiveness regarding the honesty of Türmer's narrative, and thus his memories, it questions the notion that the GDR may be reconstructed from individual experience and memory through the use of the plurality of memory. Here, Roland's knowledge of the GDR differs between the recollections of Türmer and his sister, Vera. The society and the social interactions, and thus the GDR itself, are initially represented through the memory of experience and the assumed goals of Türmer. They are then renegotiated through the imagined author who possesses a wider knowledge of those events and the recreated GDR gained through his explorations of the memories of the other characters in the novel. The imagined author thus represents the East German collective memory, although it is clear that this collective is still the compilation of individual memories. As Türmer writes with his imagined audience in mind, he assumes a collective experience that is not reflected in the reality of the situation when the individual voice of memory is given the plurality of voice, represented in the imagined author, through which to speak. It is in this way that Schulze questions GDR nostalgia and the assumption of a collective East German memory and experience.

Unlike Brussig's narrator who, in the first few pages of *Heroes Like Us*, imparts to Mr. Kitzelstein the claim of the authenticity of his memories, Türmer makes little direct claim to the truthfulness of his memories or his recreation of the GDR. Only once, in the recollection of a confrontation with an army colonel regarding something Türmer said during his mandatory military service, although he purportedly didn't remember the question or his answer exactly and

⁶⁸ Ibid, footnote 3, 255.

the imagined author provides no evidence to confirm or deny this, does Türmer feel himself to be “the only honest man still standing.”⁶⁹ But this does not apply to Türmer’s letters or to his memories. Rather, Türmer’s memories are a contrivance. As the imagined author points out, Türmer made carbon copies of all his letters.⁷⁰ Had Türmer wished to portray events similarly to his various readers, he therefore could easily have done so. In addition, some paragraphs are constructed to the point where the imagined author thinks them to be fabricated and other letters were nearly completely illegible due to cross-outs, deletions and insertions.⁷¹ Directly quoting his wife Michaela, Türmer writes that “only in art do our lives experience justice, only in art is there a language appropriate to justice.”⁷² Moreover, as a writer, Türmer viewed himself as having taken the omniscient position upon which God sat. It did not matter what humanity did or thought, only “that [he] was observing them,” because the position of a writer allowed and demanded that Türmer impart those thoughts, actions, and even their words with meaning.⁷³ Instead of insisting on the truth of memory, Schulze through Türmer insists upon the construction of memory, both of the individual and of the collective. The cross-outs, deletions, and insertions of memory then allow for those constructions of memory to be given meaning upon which the individual or the collective can anchor their own senses of identity.

In the introduction to their edited volume *German Memory Contests*, German literary scholars Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove describe the reflective condition of memory as “postmemory” which speaks to the increasingly constructed nature of memory.⁷⁴ This invests

⁶⁹ Ibid, 236.

⁷⁰ Ibid, x.

⁷¹ Ibid, 415 & 265.

⁷² Ibid, 458.

⁷³ Ibid, 142.

⁷⁴ Marianne Hirsch, “Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 8. This term was first coined by the literary scholar Marianne Hirsch. She used this terminology, unlike the usage by Fuchs and Cosgrove, to describe “the response of the second generation to the trauma of the first.”

history with degrees of fictional memory to produce continuities or wish-fulfillment narratives. As far as GDR memory is concerned, Fuchs and Cosgrove argue that post-GDR identity manifests itself as a distancing from the founding generations of the GDR and thus critical of complicity in the operations of the state.⁷⁵ Similarly, sociologist Christine Leuenberger suggests that the Berlin Wall “provided a discursive framework in which it made sense to feel aggrieved, emotionally stultified, or culturally distinct and alienated” in the post-Wall era. The psychological interpretations of the Wall, however, were “transitory” and “could be made to be situationally meaningful” in discourse and the construction of identity.⁷⁶ By positioning himself as the god-like figure that inscribes meaning upon his memory and the memories of the other characters in the novel, Türmer is making the experience with the Berlin Wall situationally meaningful in his own wish-fulfillment narrative and in the construction of his identity and the identity of the former GDR. In turn, Schulze questions the identity constructed by Türmer and his perception of the GDR by drawing attention to the “postmemory” employed by Türmer.

The narration of *New Lives* thus presents a twice negotiated memory of Boym’s conception of reflective nostalgia, by Türmer’s letters initially and then through the footnotes provided by the imagined author. The constructed nature of both the text and the footnotes challenge the notions of collective experience and memory at the same time as they impart meaning and justice to the recollections. In this way, the narrative dwells in the space of the nostalgic longing or in the processes of memory, necessitated by Boym, recognizing the separation between the lost home, here the former GDR, the memories associated with that home and the inability of a true recovery of the home. Through this, Schulze suggests the constructed

⁷⁵ Anne Fuchs and Mary Cosgrove, “Introduction: Germany’s Memory Contests and the Management of the Past,” in *German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film, and Discourse since 1990*, eds. Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove, and Georg Grote (Rochester: Camden House, 2006), 11-15.

⁷⁶ Christine Leuenberger, “Constructions of the Berlin Wall: How Material Culture is Used in Psychological Theory,” *Social Problems* 53, no. 1 (February 2006): 31.

nature of the German Democratic Republic. As the GDR is now part of the history of the unified Federal Republic, it is accessible to former citizens only through the process of remembering and is thus subject to the constructions of memory. As such, the GDR no longer exists nor can it be recaptured in the form that it truly existed between its inception in 1948 and its demise in 1990. There then exists a disconnection between the lost home and the recreated image of the home as Boym argues. The GDR reconstructed through Türmer's narration is a fabrication designed to suit Türmer's needs and his portrayal of self. Türmer's recreation is questioned throughout the novel through the voices of additional characters in the novel's footnotes. Through this negotiation of memory, Schulze questions nostalgic recreations of the GDR, exposing the fabricated nature of individual memory. At the same time, this challenges the notion of truth in the creation of a collective memory as that collective is composed of individual memories, the truth of which is subject to the goals and needs of the individual.

Türmer, like Klaus in Brussig's *Heroes Like Us* and as shall be demonstrated in the protagonist of Wolf's *In the Flesh*, recreates an image of the German Democratic Republic in himself, through his individual memories under the assumption that those memories represent the collective. When read as metaphor, the relationship between Türmer, Nicoletta, Michaela, and Barrista becomes a representation of German reunification on Western terms whereby Eastern aspirations are subsumed by the market economy and the East ceases to exist as a separate entity altogether. Unlike the GDR establishment reconstructed in Klaus, Türmer is the East German social body. Viewing himself as a writer, although not much of one according to the imagined author, Türmer participates fully in the oppressive social systems of GDR life, equally longing to become a dissident writer who is published, flees to, or is exiled in the West.⁷⁷ His biography loosely follows that of Schulze himself in that he worked with a theatre company

⁷⁷ Schulze, x & 99.

in Altenberg before the opening of the Berlin Wall and with a start-up newspaper immediately following, but Schulze himself claims that “only in the 1990s did [he] become East German.”⁷⁸ Both Cooke and Jaegar point out, in regard to *Simple Stories* but the same is true of Schulze’s characters in *New Lives*, that the characters, and Türmer in particular, “attempt to gain a sense of being different” from the marginalizing effects of the colonizing West. In moving beyond this identity of difference, the characters find themselves constructed by the events of 1989 instead of merely reacting to them.⁷⁹ The further Türmer moves away from the opening of the Wall in a temporal sense, the more he comes to embrace the ways of the western Federal Republic, shutting out former relationships with friends and colleagues in the former East, including the one with his wife Michaela, in favour of new contacts in the West and his participation in entrepreneurial ventures into the market economy.

The GDR thus reconstructed in Schulze’s narrative calls itself into question through the process of memory. This recreation cannot truly exist in the post-reunification German present, either. Although making claims to represent an East German collective experience, Türmer’s memories, and subsequently all memories of GDR life, are those of the individual. While Schulze’s narrative largely follows the accepted narrative of the *Wende*, the restorative voice of an either-or situation following the opening of the Berlin Wall as demonstrated at the twentieth anniversary of November 9, 1989, the plurality of memory deconstructs this supposition of truth. In drawing attention to the process of memory through footnotes discrediting Türmer’s reconstruction of a collective GDR, Schulze reveals that the reconstruction itself dictates the memories which seemingly negotiate that reconstruction. In other words, the GDR represented, or the nostalgic recreation of the GDR, determines the use of memory that proves its own truth.

⁷⁸ Jaegar, 144 & 152.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 145.

Nostalgia itself is then a construction of individual ends and not of a reality of collective experience.

While still dwelling in Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia, Christa Wolf's *In the Flesh* at first appears the least critical of the GDR past and the reunified German present. Set in 1980s Berlin, Wolf narrates the story of a woman sick from an unknown illness. The story opens with this protagonist being rushed to the hospital, having fallen prey to an illness that, revealed later, has always been with her but never to this extent. This development reflects Wolf's feelings regarding the continuities of German history infecting the communist ideals for the German East. This shall be discussed below. The remainder of the story follows the woman's downward spiral, on the verge of death and dreaming of the GDR and of the Nazi-German state, and her eventual recovery with the help of medicines purchased from the West. The protagonist remains unnamed and, in part, is a reflection of Wolf herself. Although the plot itself is short, the novel employs illness as a metaphor, here the problematic nature of the SED regime. This is a device similarly employed throughout Wolf's body of work including *Divided Heaven* (*Der geteilte Himmel*, 1963) and *The Quest for Christa T.* (*Nachdenken über Christa T.*, 1968) and reflective of Wolf's own life as she was rushed to the hospital following her speech at the Alexanderplatz on November 4, 1989.⁸⁰ About *The Quest for Christa T.*, critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki says that "Christopher T. died of leukemia, but suffered from the GDR."⁸¹ Although, the protagonist of *In the Flesh* survives her experience, she is hospitalized by the corruptions of the GDR caused by the infections of the National Socialist state (1933-1945). This perception of the German East may be attributed to Wolf's own experience with the corruption of the SED state, her forced involvement with the Stasi as an IM, and her later participation with the

⁸⁰ Volker Von Hage, "Auf Leben und Tod," *Der Spiegel* 8/2002, February 18, 2002.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

revolutionary movements in 1989.⁸² Wolf's own biography thus shaped her representation of the GDR and the illness suffered by the protagonist in her novel.

As there is little by way of plot aside from the protagonist's road to recovery in an East Berlin hospital, the novel itself is entirely one of metaphor with the protagonist standing in for the German Democratic Republic, as was the case with the protagonists of both *Heroes Like Us* and *New Lives*. As such, the reasons for the GDR's illness in the 1980s of the novel are rooted in the GDR's history and the shared German past, notably that of the National Socialist regime. The soul of the GDR thus tortures the GDR body (politic) through its connection to that past. The result comes across almost as a display of wishful-thinking or alternate history on the part of Wolf, notably in the recovery of the protagonist and thus of the GDR body. That said, Wolf reconstructs the GDR as a sick and potentially dying state which uses memory, and specific memories, as explanation for those conditions. Wolf insists upon the continuities between the two German totalitarian regimes as cause of the GDR's inherent weakness. The attention paid to the operation and process of memory and to the characterization of the protagonist as the representation of the GDR state demonstrates the problems of German history as explanation of the problems of the "present," that is the time in which the novel is located, of the GDR. In doing so, Wolf's narrative is less critical of post-reunification memory of the GDR as it is of the conditions that led to the collapse of the GDR and the failure of a "Third Way" toward socialism with a human face.

Unlike Brussig's protagonist narrating his version of events to an unheard interviewer or Schulze's narration through the letters of his protagonist to unseen readers, Wolf approaches the narrative of *In the Flesh* as a more traditional description of events themselves largely without commentary from the protagonist, though more will be said of this below. As such, her narrative

⁸² Fulbrook, *People's State*, 255.

lacks the claim to truth inherent to the negotiation of memory found in the novels of both Brussig and Schulze. Rather, for Wolf, the initial negotiation of memory appears directly in the relationship between the author and her reconstruction of the German Democratic Republic. In this relationship, there exists the inherent claim that the reconstruction is the truth, but only in that it is truth for the characters inhabiting that reconstruction. More than this, however, Wolf, like the two authors previously discussed, draws attention to the act of memory itself here through the frequent use of the protagonist's dreams. These dreams are not specifically the memories of the protagonist, but more of the nature of generational memory and thus speak to the notion of collective memory and of a collective East German experience.

Guided by the "dark woman," the protagonist follows her own aunt and uncle, a German woman married to a Jewish doctor, along the Spree River in a version of Berlin that belongs to both the GDR and the early Nazi regime as "the time periods are becoming hopelessly mixed up."⁸³ Albeit in a dream-state, in the present the protagonist experiences the memories, if not the experiences themselves, of the abuses of the previous generation at the hands of the Nazi-state. The narrator's confusion as to the time period of her dreams serves to create a comparison between the Nazi and SED regimes that specifically teases out the continuities between the two. While this does not imply the persecution of Jews in the GDR-state, the persecution of the population is still evident as naming her aunt would put the woman in danger before the man she is with is identified as a Jew.⁸⁴ In forging this link between past and present in such an obvious manner, Wolf argues that the experiences of National Socialism and of Nazi atrocities permeates and infects the GDR of the protagonist's present. Speaking metaphorically, the Nazi past becomes the source of the infection and illness that ravages the body of the protagonist. This

⁸³ Christa Wolf, *In the Flesh*, trans. John S. Barrett (Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 2005), 39-40.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 40.

connection is furthered through the protagonist's perceived descent into Hades, led by this "dark woman," in fact Kora Bachmann the anaesthesiologist.⁸⁵ Hades in turn becomes, to the protagonist, the "Underworld" as she descends into a shop basement infiltrated by the Stasi in the GDR, following subterranean passages reminiscent of air-raid shelters, into the German past, and emerging in the bombed-out shell of Berlin at the end of the Second World War.⁸⁶ The physical connection between the undergrounds of the GDR, specifically the GDR of the SED regime, and the Nazi state, demonstrated through the narrator's physical ability to pass from one to the other, makes real the continuation of Nazi practice, thus turning to a narrative of the continuities between the German totalitarian regimes, in East German life. As the narrator passes through basements and passageways, moving between the two states and the two time periods, the GDR-state is quite literally built on the ruins of the Nazi-state and of Nazi practice if not ideology.

Wolf's reconstruction of the dreamed GDR thus becomes apologetic toward the problems and failings of the former state. On the protagonist's descent from the GDR present into the Nazi-era past, the protagonist is following the cries of a dead infant. Not only is the object of the protagonist's search dead, but a child that was never born, or rather, stillborn.⁸⁷ This child is, in metaphoric terms, the ideals of the creation of Wolf's conception of a socialist state. That the protagonist never finds this child is demonstrative of these ideals that went unrealized and represent a missed opportunity. For Wolf, these unrealized ideals are twofold. First, the stillborn ideals are those of a socialist Germany emerging from the ruins of the Second World War, hijacked and deformed by Stalinist and Soviet-style communism. Second, these stillborn ideals speak of the socialist "Third Way" and the path not taken during the process of German reunification representing a potential divergence from the historical continuities from one regime

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 73-77.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 76.

to the next. As a result of this path not taken, the protagonist observes that the “dream of reason produces monsters.” Dependent upon who is the dreamer, in this case the idealist communists, when the dream is usurped by “petty demons,” reason “is in big trouble.” The protagonist finds it necessary to rhetorically ask, then, if “the way to paradise led unavoidably through hell.”⁸⁸ Represented by the dead infant she follows through the Underworld of the GDR, the best intentions led to this continuity between the Nazi and SED regimes, rather than the idealism of Wolf’s conceived socialism. Blame for the allowance of this continuity is put on the shoulders of the German people and of the East German people in particular as they were not grateful enough when the battles and massacres of the Second World War finally stopped.⁸⁹ When a break from these continuities finally presented itself (in 1989, although the events of the autumn of that year remain conspicuously absent from the narrative and the protagonist’s memory), the protagonist, a semi-autobiographical construction of Wolf herself, finds herself shoulder to shoulder with those responsible for those continuities, criticized for moderation in her calls for action against the state, relinquishing responsibility and control of those actions to others.⁹⁰ Thus, it is the responsibility of East Germans for not realizing the ideals of the dead infant and for allowing the socialist dream to produce the monsters of continuity.

But Wolf is not attempting to create a new narrative of the German Democratic Republic’s foundations or to restore the unquestioned nostalgia surrounding life in the state. While *In the Flesh* is nostalgic in its reconstruction within the walls of the hospital itself, demonstrating a microcosm of how a renewed East Germany could function, Wolf remains critical of the real possibility of the unattainable past. The protagonist recognizes the criticisms she received for her moderation, but is unsure as to what else she could have done, whether she

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 81.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 56.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 54-55.

should have come to lead “some non-existent movement” when she can’t even control her limbs beyond the dreamed memories and in her perceived reality of the hospital bed.⁹¹ In doing so, Wolf questions East German participation in the founding of the GDR as a totalitarian regime in one breath and their participation or their ability to participate in the events that led to its ultimate demise in the next.

Like Brussig who is critical of nostalgia and the East German participation in the collapse of East German communism, and coincidentally critical of Wolf herself, Wolf’s protagonist wonders “whether the longing for security and the realization that there’s no such thing have been fighting violently with [her].”⁹² While this appears in the novel in relation to a memory of the flight of Germans before the Russian advance toward the end of the war, as the narrative drifts between the memory and the novel’s GDR “present,” the perceived longing also applies to the ways in which the East German everyday is remembered. This being the case, Wolf’s criticisms of nostalgia and of the GDR past extend to the actual present of the unified Federal Republic and the questions surrounding *Ostalgie*. As East German nostalgia is predicated upon the disjunction between memory and its ability to function in the present reality causing insecurities related to the social and economic realities of the unified state, Wolf points out the inability of nostalgia to provide the security desperately sought through nostalgia.⁹³ In this manner, Wolf’s narrative, or rather the protagonist, through the dreams drawn out of the perceived collective memory, operates in reflective nostalgia as conceived by Boym. Moreover, as Boym’s reflective operates within the space between the present and the lost home, Wolf’s narrated dreamscape and the distinction made between that and the protagonist’s waking reality acts as the direct embodiment of that distance and distinction. Though the novel is set within the

⁹¹ Ibid, 54.

⁹² Ibid, 69.

⁹³ Ten Dyke, 161.

GDR itself, the GDR of the protagonist's dreams disassociates itself from Wolf's reconstruction of that GDR through the waking/dreaming dichotomy.

Like both Brussig and Schulze examined above, Wolf then reconstructs the GDR through the character of the protagonist. Specifically, she is the body politic whose soul is infected by the Nazi and totalitarian memory. As a result of this, she "always had...good intentions, frequently the best of intentions... [and] eventually all [she] did was show it because...gradually my good intentions, put to use too often, got damaged...got away from me."⁹⁴ Wolf portrays the GDR state apparatus as "hopelessly corrupt" and irrevocably damaged; the problems of the state destroying what good there was in the socialist project, manifesting that corruption as the illness suffered by the narrator.⁹⁵ Thus, the GDR body politic, in the novel, lies in a hospital bed, prone and on the verge of death. The totalitarian memory and the resultant corruption of intentions in the protagonist's soul were cause for the collapse of the protagonist's immune mechanisms. In her weakened state, then, the protagonist became susceptible to the bacteria rebelling against her body (politic).⁹⁶ The bacteria that the *Chefarzt* (chief of medicine), the agent of the state, "brought to their senses" were the dissidents throughout the GDR past, the demonstrators of 1989 to whom the body politic was vulnerable.⁹⁷ In this, Wolf suggests that the 1989 Peaceful Revolution was successful due to this collapse of the GDR state's ability to defend itself against the will of the people. While Stephen Kotkin does not point to the oppressive natures of the Nazi memory and of totalitarianism as cause for "uncivil society's," that is the society that existed in support of Soviet-style communism and in the power structures of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, paralysis in dealing with the 1989 revolutions, but rather the inadequacies and

⁹⁴ Wolf, 35.

⁹⁵ Von Hage, *Der Spiegel*, February 18, 2002. „Die illusionslose Wahrnehmung des rettungslos beschädigten Staates beginnt schon gleich auf der ersten Seite—eben mit jener holprigen Fahrt ins Hospital.“

⁹⁶ Wolf, 109.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 109.

inefficiencies of those power structures, Wolf's reconstruction of the GDR argues a similar point.⁹⁸ In Wolf's conception, the totalitarian nature of the GDR, based on a collective Nazi memory, weakened the body politic sufficiently to make it susceptible to the concerted uprisings of the social body.

However, Wolf's GDR survives these uprisings, saved by the state apparatus and proponents of socialism with a human face represented by the hospital staff and the doctors, in particular. They promised to "build her up" from her position of collapsed immune mechanisms and, in doing so, indirectly reference the building of true socialism in the former GDR.⁹⁹ But, as far as Wolf is concerned, the building of this human and humane socialism is dependent upon help from the outside, specifically the West. It was there that the doctors obtained the proper medicine to satisfy the bacteria so that they could turn to this task of rebuilding the protagonist.¹⁰⁰ She does not imply the necessity of German unity, as do Brussig and Schulze both, instead implying that the same medicine is available to any requiring it, moving westward to cure social ills, to satisfy material wants, and returning again to the east and to socialism.¹⁰¹ As such, the two states, in Wolf's reconstruction, exist side by side and in a beneficial relationship with each other. This harkens back to idea posited by Günter Grass in *Two States—One Nation*, wherein German unity should take the form of a confederative structure ensuring the survival of each state to the mutual benefit of each independently and of Europe as a whole.¹⁰² Thus, the apologetic tone with which Wolf approaches the problems of Soviet-style socialism in the GDR, the need for the "bacterial" uprisings against the body politic, and the ever-present and utopian dream of real and existing human socialism turns to pride within the

⁹⁸ Kotkin, xiv-xv.

⁹⁹ Wolf, 62.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 119.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 119.

¹⁰² Grass, 52.

protagonist. The *Chefarzt* tells her that if her intention was to die, then those intentions were only slightly too weak to succeed. If, however, she meant to take a breather from the absurdity of life, the capitalist world, through the battle she fought to do so she should be proud of her victory.¹⁰³ And in this, Wolf becomes a proponent of reflective nostalgia. Nothing of her work here indicates a desire leaning toward the restorative, but she implies that the GDR did not die and East Germans should draw pride from an East German identity that struggled to create an alternative system, despite the outcome of that system resulting from the problems of its past.

Wolf's GDR is one of a dream, but a dream that should not be given up on as with the narratives of Brussig or Schulze. Through the use of the dream-space as the negotiation of a collective German memory, she approaches the problems and weaknesses of the East German state as the result of the infection of the shared German past informing the "present" failures of the GDR in the 1980s. In doing this, she does not argue against the existence of a collective memory in remembering the East German state, the East German experience, or life in the GDR. Rather, she questions the collective memory in terms of the foundations and intentions of East German socialism in contrast to her own utopian ideals of a humanist communism. Wolf's reconstruction of the GDR, then, as a weak and dying state informs the ways in which memories are used in that reconstruction. While she remains obviously nostalgic of what could have been, Wolf uses memory differently than either Brussig or Schulze. Each of the latter uses memory to criticize nostalgia itself. Wolf, on the other hand, uses memory to criticize the political problems of the GDR and, in doing so, perceives the GDR body politic along the terms of an *Unrechtsstaat* (constitutionally unjust state) similar to arguments made in FRG reports and in the exhibitions associated with the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is not Wolf's purpose in her novel, *In the Flesh*, to criticize the need for nostalgia, but to nostalgically

¹⁰³ Wolf, 114.

celebrate the accomplishments of East German socialism without totalitarian power structures. As such, Wolf's approach to that nostalgia participates in Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia only insofar as it recognizes the dream-like and wishful-thinking qualities possessed of that nostalgia.

While the novel makes no claims to the authenticity of the protagonist's memories, and thus does not adopt Boym's position of restorative nostalgia, the memories and their impact upon the "present" of 1980s East Germany is predicated on the notion of a shared and thus collective German past. However, the protagonist's weakness and often delirious condition throughout most of the narrative combined with her inability to discern time periods is indicative of her unreliability and the imperfections of her memory. As the embodiment of the GDR body politic itself, she seeks reasons for her weakened immunity to the dissenting bacterial infection outside her own experience, never once considering those problems as having roots within her own structures. Considering then the expression of the collective Nazi memory through the protagonist's dreams and the way in the which the narrative quickly shifts between the past and the present, sometimes confusing the two, Wolf appears less to criticize nostalgia and collective experience as she does the GDR's oppressive nature and the inability of German communism to survive the collapse of SED rule.

This significant difference between the three narratives may, in fact, be the result of the generational difference between the authors. Without the possession of memories of the Nazi regime, Brussig and Schulze are unable to and do not choose to address the influence of one totalitarian German regime on the one that followed. As such, they do not possess this collective memory drawn upon in Wolf's work and in the process, themselves, deconstruct the notion of its existence. Wolf's narrative and the nostalgia surrounding her reconstruction of the GDR follow

her support of socialism with a human face, her criticisms of rapid East German integration into the western culture and society, and the possibility of reform following the opening of the German-German border.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Schulze never thought seriously about the GDR as “a state that [did] not leave [him] with any possibility to make a decision [was] in a certain way not worth being talked about.”¹⁰⁵ It was not until after German reunification and into the mid-1990s when Schulze finally considered himself to be East German.¹⁰⁶ The same sentiments are raised by former *Der Spiegel* journalist Jana Hensel in her memoir, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life That Came Next*, and became part of Elizabeth A. Ten Dyke’s study, “Memory and Existence: Implications of the Wende.”¹⁰⁷ Although these experiences suggest commonalities in the experiences of the *Zonenkinder* (children of the GDR) generation of which Schulze, Brussig, and Hensel are a part, the differences in their reconstructions of the GDR, in addition to the differences found in Wolf’s text predicated on the collective experience, argue against that notion of the shared experience in favour of reconstructions based on individual experience and memory.

Through the turn to everyday life and culture, East German nostalgics can make the claim that life in the GDR was not as bad as it is portrayed in the dictatorship versus democracy narrative favoured by organs of the unified Federal Republic. Post-*Wende* authors do not approach the use of nostalgia or the memory of the GDR from this position. Through the demonstration of the imperfections of the memories upon which the “not that bad” representations of the GDR themselves are founded, these authors criticize the ways in which nostalgia recreates the past and the effects it has on the modern reunified state. Whether through

¹⁰⁴ Myra N. Love, “The Crisis of East German Socialism: Christa Wolf and the Critique of Economic Rationality,” *Monatshefte* 84, no. 1 (1992): 60.

¹⁰⁵ Jaegar, 152.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁰⁷ Hensel, *After the Wall*, 34 and Ten Dyke, 162.

the process of interview or in the form of letters with contradictory footnotes, drawing attention to the process of memory attacks the notion of a shared experience upon which nostalgia is composed. In questioning the foundations of nostalgia, authors seek to demonstrate that the lost home of the GDR is one that does not and never did exist as a collective experience. Rather, its existence as collective experience is a composite of individual memories and dreams. The representations of nostalgia thus create a cyclic relationship with memory. Individual memory dictates the reconstruction of the GDR. That reconstruction, in turn, dictates which memories become parts of that reconstruction and which are suppressed through claims to the truth of a collective memory, experience, and East German identity. Through the reconstruction of an obviously contradictory GDR, post-*Wende* writers argue the reality of that reconstruction and that East German identity is itself a personal experience.

Of course, the works analyzed here differ greatly from the representations of memory and nostalgia found among individuals in that the novel, and the three discussed in particular, is a public act of remembrance. As are the memories of the protagonists and the reconstructions of the GDR state, the narratives themselves are constructed not only to tell a compelling tale about life in the former East Germany, but to make a point about the construction of memory itself. In this way, the public memory of the GDR found in post-*Wende* literature bears striking similarities to the restorative nostalgic narrative surrounding the Peaceful Revolution, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and German reunification as it was found in the twentieth anniversary of November 9, 1989 and incorporated into the official myth of the unified Federal Republic. What post-*Wende* literature does differently in its reconstruction of the past is to draw attention to the fabrication of a collective truth of experience that is unable and unwilling to find expression in a restorative account of the past. The use of memory then suggests that, while the reconstructed

GDR is the GDR that is remembered for good or ill, the reconstructed GDR is not the GDR as it was. As previously cited, Schulze writes that “only in art do our lives experience justice, only in art is there a language appropriate to justice.”¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that post-*Wende* literature is meant to be nostalgic in and of itself, nor is it meant as a window into the truth of the GDR past. What post-*Wende* literature does, however, through its negotiation of memory is to criticize a memory left unquestioned about the GDR past or about the unified German present. As much as the reconstructed GDR is critical of nostalgia for a past that may or may not exist and the need for that nostalgia, it finds itself able to question a restorative narrative that neglects the human factor in its simplification of a multifaceted experience. In this, post-*Wende* literature, or art, does justice to the experiences, and not the singular experience, it reconstructs.

¹⁰⁸ Schulze, 458.

Conclusion.

Admittedly, the scope of this study is relatively narrow. In dealing with the negotiation of memory, it largely examines the events of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the post-*Wende* literature of Thomas Brussig, Ingo Schulze, and Christa Wolf. Chapter 2: Beyond Berlin incorporates the ways in which travel and tourism in Germany were advertised in their relation to the anniversary and two of the dominant events organized by the Wende Museum in Culver City, California, again, for the anniversary. As this thesis sought to analyze the ways in which memories of the Berlin Wall and its fall were negotiated to a mass audience, the popular receptions to both Brussig's *Heroes Like Us* and Schulze's *New Lives*, in addition to the overall popularity of Wolf, the literary examination offered in Chapter 3: Communist Kitsch provides a reflection of the popular negotiation of memory operating outside the official memory endorsed by the Federal Government.¹ It is one thing to say that the official memory alienates the East German experience and memory of November 9, 1989 and the opening of the Berlin Wall, but quite another to show it demonstrated through popular mediums. That said, more work still needs to be done in this area.

Much has already been written on *Ostalgie* and film, notably in such examples as *Sonnenallee* (1999), *Good-bye Lenin!* (2003), and *The Lives of Others* (2006), presumably due to their popularity both domestically and internationally and their successes with awards.

Sonnenallee is, perhaps, the exception here as it was largely popular only in the former East

¹ David Hudson, "Heroes Like Us," Spiegel Online, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,51703,00.html> (accessed May 5, 2011). *Helden wie wir* is said to have been released to "universal acclaim," warranting a film adaptation in 1999. Wolfgang von Höbel, "Der ganz normale Wahnsinn," *Der Spiegel* 41/2005, October 10, 2005. Given the popularity of Schulze's previous book, *Simple Stories* selling more than 100 000 copies in hardback with translations in 23 languages, the German publication of *New Lives* was highly anticipated. Volker Von Hage, "Auf Leben und Tod," *Der Spiegel* 8/2002, February 18, 2002. *In the Flesh* had an initial print run of 100 000 copies. Wolf gave a first reading of the work in the Chancellery of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

Germany and did not enjoy the number of awards as did the other two.² But as Leander Haußmann's film is considered the first *Ostalgie* film, it is important and thus subject of much study. These films have largely been considered in terms of their portrayed nostalgia and how their reconstructions of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) play to the western-stereotypes of the totalitarian state and their considerations or concerns regarding the reunified Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

This thesis does not pretend to delve into memory and experience at the ground level; that is, at the level of personal experience. Such projects are ongoing through the Wende Museum and have been conducted by the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) among other institutions.³ Although it would prove interesting to compare these personal memories to their representations in popular media and to a mass audience within and outside of the Federal Republic, this, however, is not the purpose of this paper.

This thesis began with the distinctions of restorative and reflective nostalgia as Svetlana Boym argues and analyzes in her 2001 study, *The Future of Nostalgia*. The restorative, as Boym states and as developed at length elsewhere in this paper, is the form of nostalgia which makes the argument that the expression of memory it represents is that of the truth. This form of nostalgia is often used in the establishment of new holidays, the resurrection of older, forgotten holidays and, most important to my purposes here, for the creation of national myths, practices, and commemorations aimed at creating "social cohesion."⁴ Through the endorsements of the *Bundestag* and the support of the Federal Republic of Germany, the events of the twentieth

² Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany Since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 129.

³ "Historical Witness," Wende Museum: A Museum and Archive of the Cold War, <http://www.wendemuseum.org/collections/historical-witness> (accessed March 11, 2011) and "Zeitzeugen der Wende," Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland—Thüringen, http://www.spd-thueringen.de/?mod=content&menu=1807&page_id=2747 (accessed March 11, 2011).

⁴ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 42.

anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall organized by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* were also granted the power, or perhaps burden, of this claim to the representation of truth. The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) claims truth in its portrayal of the history of 1989/90 through the Board's close cooperation with the German Federal Government in the promotion of Germany as a tourist destination abroad.⁵ Similar claims to the truth of memory were presented by the Wende Museum's Wall Project likewise through the endorsement of the project granted by the FRG.⁶ Therefore, much of this argument lingered on the restorative aspects of nostalgia, two thirds at the very least, and its implications on the remembrance of and the construction of memory associated with November 9, 1989, the GDR, and East German experience as it was negotiated through the myth building of the FRG. It should be recalled here that through the terms of reunification of the two German states in 1990, governmental structures of the (old) western Federal Republic were extended to incorporate or colonize the territories of the former GDR under the old Article 23 of the FRG Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*).⁷ Thus, the governmental institutions making these claims to truth through the recreations and representations of the memories of the autumn of 1989 are themselves representative of a western-oriented perspective. The officially produced myth-building narratives of the Berlin Wall and its fall then sought to establish continuities between the pre- and post-reunification FRG pivoting on the axis of the 1989 experience. As the western state became the perceived "victor" of reunification, the truth in the restorative memory of the Federal Republic had the effect of ostracizing and

⁵ "About Us," German National Tourist Board GNTB, http://www.cometogermany.com/ENU/about_us/about_us.htm (accessed March 4, 2011).

⁶ "The Wall Project," Documentation (Culver City: The Wende Museum: A Museum and Archive of the Cold War, 2009), 4.

⁷ Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 228.

marginalization the experience and memory of the colonized state (the former GDR) and its population.

Kulturprojekte Berlin's Peaceful Revolution 1989/90 Open Air Exhibition narrated the demonstrations and protests against the regime of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) that culminated with the collapse of the regime. This narrative continued beyond that point, which should have proved the focus of events celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall to incorporate German reunification into that history. Two things emerged from this reconstruction of the GDR. First, the narrative demonstrated a dictatorship versus democracy binary that celebrated the end of totalitarianism on German soil and touted the accomplishments and success of the Federal Republic's own capitalist democracy. Second, a connection was established between the narrative of the East German population's revolt against the regime and the inevitability of German unity as its ultimate end and goal of that revolution. In marketing this narrative to a tourist and globally televised audience, this construed the East German population collectively as a population of victims whose sum total effort toward freedom proved a further legitimization of the democratic West. This narrative effectively ignored the reasons for the Peaceful Revolution and the weaknesses of the GDR state's political and economic structures that allowed for the peaceful transfer of power from the SED regime to the people in the autumn of 1989. It also failed to recognize the history of resistance, albeit to a lesser degree than was present in other former communist states such as Hungary, Poland or Czechoslovakia, found in the history of everyday life and the East German retreat into the private sphere as a means of quietly protesting the state.⁸ Rather, the official recognition of the Berlin Wall and its opening on November 9, 1989 are narrated, not through the history of everyday life, but through history of the Federal Republic as a political experience.

⁸ Ibid, 197.

Through the incorporation of youth into the creation of the domino tiles used in the Festival of Freedom, this narrative was passed to the generation born since the German reunification and possessing no direct memory of the GDR. Initially realized through the reports of the Federal Republic's Commission of Inquiry, this narrative was one of the totalitarian GDR negotiated through the western lens.⁹ Thus, the officially recognized celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall narrated a foundational myth surrounding German unity and the modern Berlin Republic. As with Boym's conception of restorative nostalgia, this foundational myth and the concept of truth which accompanied it were predicated on a single narrative thread. Through the incorporation of the history of everyday life necessary to a more thorough exploration of East German resistance and the demonstrations against the SED structures of control, the inevitability of German unity, especially under the accelerated terms of accession to the West German state, is questioned and undermined. This, however, perpetuates the perceived harmful effects of *Ostalgie* to German unity and creates an image of the unified German population divided against itself due to the differences in memory and experience between Easterners and Westerners, the perceived "Wall in the Head." Incorporating youth into the creation of the Festival of Freedom, and thus into the foundational myth of the Berlin Republic, thus sought to overcome this perceived division in a generation that did not truly understand the internal division itself.¹⁰

Exceptions to this overwhelming narrative of dictatorship versus democracy may be found in the international representations of the fall of the Berlin Wall, specifically in those of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) and the Wende Museum's Wall Project.

While the Wende Museum's Facing the Wall exhibition is demonstrative of the oppression created by the Berlin Wall, the regime, and the border guard, on the one hand

⁹ Ibid, 231.

¹⁰ *Dominobuch: Geschichte(n) mit Dominoeffekt* (Berlin: Kulturprojekte Berlin, 2009), 27.

reinforcing the dictatorial nature of the SED and East German society, the Wall Project and the Wall Along/Across Wilshire linked the East-West German experiences surrounding the Berlin Wall and its opening in November 1989. Arguably, *Kulturprojekte Berlin*'s Festival of Freedom achieved the same goals through the acts of painting domino tiles as western artists painted the Wall and knocking down the dominos which re-enacted the East German demonstrations that forced the SED to make concessions regarding GDR travel laws. The Festival of Freedom, however, drew attention away from this unification of experience through the importance given to the inclusion of the younger generation and the Festival's metaphor of the walls and barriers that divide populations across the globe. The Wall Along/Across Wilshire also drew on this concept of global barriers, but largely in secondary media allowing the Wall Project to focus on the East-West experiences with the Berlin Wall more directly. Reducing the experience with the Wall to its base components, that of division of populations, the western act of painting, and the eastern act of toppling the Wall thus allowed a fuller participation with the Wall than was permitted in *Kulturprojekte Berlin*'s narrative of the Berlin Wall as a step toward the inevitable reunification of (the Federal Republic of) Germany.

An even more diverse experience of the German East was portrayed through the tourist advertisements published by the GNTB. Because tourism is in part dependent upon lingering physical traces of the GDR past and the museums and tours that evolved around these traces, as much as the GNTB spoke to the westernized perception of the totalitarian SED and Stasi regime, the GNTB offered experiences with the East German everyday and the material culture that grew into core components of *Ostalgie*.¹¹ At the same time, and similar to the treatment offered the anniversary by the Wende Museum, the GNTB chose not to address the connections between the

¹¹ Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 262.

fall of the Berlin Wall and German unity as represented by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*. In doing this, the GNTB celebrated the East German experience as separate from the history of the Federal Republic, both in terms of the everyday experience as it differed from the West and the terrible experiences of division and death associated with the Wall itself of which the western states had little or no direct memory. Although this demonstration of the former GDR provided a reconstruction that leaned toward the nostalgic at times, an aspect consciously avoided by *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the German *Bundestag*, the GNTB must still be viewed in terms of Boym's restorative nostalgia and the claim to truth made by the restorative due to tourism's reliance upon physical traces.

While both of these reconstructions of the former German East claimed to represent the truth and shared many elements in common with the reconstruction of the GDR by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, they diverged from the official narrative of the opening of the Berlin Wall and of the twentieth anniversary of the Fall in a number of ways, both significant and otherwise. Restorative nostalgia and the representation of the truth are predicated on the notion of a single, coherent voice and narrative. Although the efforts and events of the Wende Museum and the GNTB did not intend to question the official narrative associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the points at which these narratives diverge, particularly with regard to the GNTB's representation of the East German every-day, and their simultaneous endorsement by the German *Bundestag* provided alternate narratives of the restorative truth regarding the foundational myth of the unified FRG.

Alternately, Boym's conception of reflective nostalgia argues that, unlike the restorative's claims to truth, it dwells in the act of longing of the lost home and in the disconnected space between the present and the past. From this position between the two realms

of existence and experience, reflective nostalgia is critical of the ways in which the past is remembered and narrated and of the present society that fondly looks back.¹² As a counterpoint to the truth of the restorative presented during the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin by *Kulturprojekte Berlin*, the GNTB, and the Wende Museum, this study analyzes post-*Wende* literature as a means of negotiating the East German past, its memories, and its nostalgia.

Selected for their popularity at the times of their release and/or the overall popularity of their authors, each novel discussed has been translated and released outside of Germany. Brussig's *Heroes Like Us (Helden wie wir)* also received a film adaptation in 1999. These novels are arguably representative of the (East) German memory and experience of the former GDR. It is interesting then that each of the novels examined employs narrative devices to disassociate the author from the narrative voice. Not only this, but each novel also incorporates the plurality of East German memory which contradicts the singular and assumed collective experience of each protagonist. The plurality of memory and experience represented in each novel criticizes, and in the case of Brussig's novel, satirizes, the truth found in restorative nostalgia that predicates both the construction of national myths and *Ostalgie* by pointing to the constructed nature of memory.

Of course, the novels analyzed in the preceding chapter are not the only examples of this construction of memory or the critique of a perceived East German collective experience. Leander Haußmann's film, *Sonnenallee* (discussed above), also written by Brussig, closes with a narrative voice framing the film in the past tense.¹³ Thus, the dramatic comedy that unfolds through the viewing experience is negotiated through the memories of the protagonist, Micha. Set directly in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, and thus in the western perception of the totalitarian GDR, the film makes a farce of those western perceptions, exemplified through dance

¹² Boym, 49-50.

¹³ Leander Haußmann, *Sonnenallee*, DVD (Berlin: BojeBuck Produktion GmbH, 1999).

sequences and the ineptitudes of the *Volkspolizei* (East German People's Police), in order to foreground the universal experience of youth and first love. Similar to the representation of the Berlin Wall in the Wende Museum's Wall Project examined in depth in Chapter 2, this reduces the totalitarianism of the GDR to create a universal and thus a truly shared experience. But, like the post-*Wende* fiction of Chapter 3, this is made possible through the attention paid to the obvious constructions of the involved memories.

This thesis has said much about the construction of both memory and experience in the representations of memory. Difference between the restorative and the reflective comes in the recognition of memory as a construction and the ability to allow interpretation, criticism, and plurality into those memories and nostalgias. While East German experiences certainly exist, those experiences are subject to the individual. Nostalgia for the former state differs based on generation, participation with the former state, and the situation of the individual in the unified Berlin Republic to name only a few potential reasons. As such, memory in itself among individuals and most certainly within the context of the perceived collective memory are the products of construction.

However, in terms of narrating memory to a mass audience both internationally and especially to the German population which celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 2009, memory was necessarily reduced to its most essential components in order to transmit the message of a collective German experience to an audience that experienced the Berlin Wall in different ways. As the Federal Republic's Commission of Inquiry judged the GDR to be a totalitarian regime with continuities from the Nazi regime that preceded it, at the same time ignoring the Federal Republic's own continuities with Nazi Germany, the dictatorship versus democracy narrative of the anniversary was not particularly surprising. In establishing

connections between the opening of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification that followed less than a year later, *Kulturprojekte Berlin* and the German *Bundestag* narrated East German resistance and the actual experiences of everyday-life in the GDR largely through the terminology of political and economic processes. The representation of the narrative of German reunification, as it was no longer the narrative of the fall of the Wall, distanced itself from the East German experience as it narrated the Berlin Wall through western stereotypes of dictatorship. By endorsing this narrative as truth, then, through the representation of a foundational myth of the Berlin Republic, the narrative found at the anniversary alienated and discredited East German experience except where it legitimized the structures of the FRG as the superior of the two divided German states.

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