

1990

GDR Literature in the International Book Market: From Confrontation to Assimilation

Mark W. Rectanus
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://newprairiepress.org/gdr>

Recommended Citation

Rectanus, Mark W. (1990) "GDR Literature in the International Book Market: From Confrontation to Assimilation," *GDR Bulletin*: Vol. 16: Iss. 2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4148/gdrb.v16i2.961>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in GDR Bulletin by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact nppress@ksu.edu.

²¹Gisela Helwig, ed. *Die DDR-Gesellschaft im Spiegel ihrer Literatur* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1986); Irma Hanke, *Alltag und Politik*, see note 17 above.

²²Cf. Wolfgang Emmerich, „Gleichzeitigkeit: Vormoderne, Moderne und Postmoderne in der Literatur der DDR“ in: *Bestandsaufnahme Gegenwartsliteratur*, 193-211; Bernhard Greiner, „Annäherungen: DDR-Literatur als Problem der Literaturwissenschaft“ in: *Mitteilungen des deutschen Germanistenverbandes* 30 (1983), 20-36; Anneli Hartmann, „Was heißt heute überhaupt noch DDR-Literatur?“ in: *Studies in GDR Culture and Society* 5 (1985), 265-280; Heinrich Mohr, „DDR-Literatur als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland“ in: *Deutschland Archiv* 21 (1988), 844-849.

²³Günther Rüther, Hg. *Kulturbetrieb und Literatur in der DDR* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1987, ² 1988) (*Veröffentlichung der Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*), 29. Cf. Jürgen Scharfschwerdt's 1982 observation „...nicht wenige Zeitgenossen [meinen] heute noch immer ihr ideologisches Süppchen bevorzugt mit Hilfe der Literatur kochen zu können.“ [*Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft in der DDR* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1982), 13].

²⁴quoted in Helwig, p. 14.

²⁵Cf. Christoph Hein's keynote address at the *X. Schriftstellerkongreß der DDR* in 1987. „Die DDR wird gelegentlich als Leseland bezeichnet...Das ist, bei aller erwiesenen Qualität, jedoch nicht das Verdienst unserer Literatur, sie ist nicht besser und nicht schlechter als die anderer Länder. Auch wird bei uns nicht mehr und nicht weniger als in anderen Ländern gelesen. Es werden hier jedoch weit mehr als in anderen Ländern Bücher gelesen. Die korrekte Bezeichnung wäre also: Buchleseland. Das Verdienst dafür gebührt unserer Presse, unseren Medien.“ 233. (*X. Schriftstellerkongreß der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Arbeitsgruppen*, hg. vom Schriftstellerverband der deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1988). Volker Braun also made trenchant remarks at the international conference on GDR literature in Pisa.

²⁶Cf. Emmerich and Greiner, note 22 above.

²⁷Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979; Orig. Random House, 1978), 206.

²⁸Cf. Klaus von Beyme, „Attitudes of German Youth toward Relations between the Two German States“ in: *West Germany, East Germany and the German Question* (= *German Issues 1*, publ. by American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Washington, D. C.), 33-43

²⁹Ralf Schnell, *Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986), 7.

³⁰Müssener, 23.

³¹Russell Berman, „Writing in the Republic“ in: *German Politics and Society* 16 (Spring, 1989), 31.

GDR LITERATURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK MARKET: FROM CONFRONTATION TO ASSIMILATION

Mark W. Rectanus
Iowa State University

In 1961 Klaus Wagenbach was a young editor at S.Fischer Verlag working on an anthology of contemporary German authors entitled *Das Atelier*. His attempt to include authors from the GDR was rejected by the Bermann-Fischers, although they did allow him to mention their censorship in the afterword. Shortly thereafter, S.Fischer was sold to the Holtzbrinck Group. When Wagenbach wrote a letter to *Generalbundesanwalt* Martin protesting the internments of GDR-publisher Günter Hofé during the 1964 Frankfurt Book Fair, he was immediately dismissed from the publishing house. Der Bayrische Rundfunk also informed him that his services would no longer be required, supposedly because the network was restructuring the format of its political commentaries.¹ Wagenbach started his own publishing house with some financial assistance from his father and the support of friends and authors (Ingeborg Bachmann, Johannes Bobrowski,

Günter Grass, Christoph Meckel and Hans Werner Richter). However, the socio-critical profile of the “Quartheft” and his commitment to leftist politics soon led to new problems:

Das erste Jahr brachte dem Verlag aber auch die ersten Schwierigkeiten. Die eine bestand im Boykott der konservativen Presse (hauptsächlich wegen der Veröffentlichung von Stephan Hermlin, dessen Bücher bis dahin von westdeutschen Verlagen boykottiert worden waren, aber auch wegen der Veröffentlichung von Wolf Biermann). Die zweite bestand in einem Herrn, der sich zu Silvester 1965 mit mir konspirativ im Café Kranzler traf, um mir mitzuteilen, daß, falls ich weitere Publikationen von Wolf Biermann unterlasse, die DDR offenstehe für Lizenzen jeder Art, umgekehrt aber leider... So kam es, daß ich ab 1966 für sieben Jahre weder in die DDR noch sogar durch die DDR reisen konnte.²

Wagenbach's experience was symptomatic of a general climate within the publishing industry and the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels during the 1950s and early 1960s, which reflected the confrontational nature of political and cultural politics during the Cold War.³ The foundation for the ideological confrontation, which had so thoroughly permeated the collective consciousness by the late 1960s, had already been established through the economic and political policies of the occupation forces from 1945 to 1949.⁴ While a number of leading authors (including Brecht, Plivier, Seghers and Tucholsky) were published in both the East and the West, they were the exception to the rule. Attempts to bridge the East-West gap by publishing works of contemporary German authors, irrespective of their momentary residence, were not only restricted by chronic material shortages, complicated rights questions and distribution problems, they were virtually eliminated after the monetary reform and the Berlin Blockade in 1948.⁵ Thus, Klaus Wagenbach's experiences in the early 1960s illustrate the extent to which ideological positions within the GDR and the FRG had hardened during the 1950s and were further entrenched during the early 1960s, particularly after the construction of the Berlin Wall.

These attitudes changed gradually during the late 1960s and then more rapidly in the 1970s as a result of the liberalization of political philosophies regarding the GDR and the subsequent normalization of relations.⁶ Wagenbach's programmatic decision to publish works by GDR authors and his recognition of works from the GDR as a significant body of literature, which should be published and read in the West, symbolized his response to the Cold War and marked the beginning of a new willingness to publish GDR literature in the Federal Republic. The fact that Wagenbach's publishing house was immediately beset with problems, precisely because his program represented a literary and political statement, reflected an increased consciousness among many authors (e.g. Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Peter Härtling, Franz Xaver Kroetz, Siegfried Lenz, Martin Walser and Gabriele Wohmann, among others) that literary and political spheres could not be divorced from one another. The dynamics of new socio-political forces, including the APO, the internationalization of the student movement, as well as *Ostpolitik*, were accompanied by extensive socio-economic changes in the literary marketplace.⁷

The *Systemkritik* of western, capitalist societies and the interest in alternative models of Socialism and Marxism, which had been largely limited to academic and intellectual subcultures, now had a direct impact on publishing, bookselling, literary criticism, indeed on the whole system of literary production, distribution and reception. Demonstrations by the APO during the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1968 and 1969 were the most visible manifestation of this revolution within the literary marketplace, but the desire for systematic reforms was also articulated by authors, editors, booksellers, and some publishers, and their politicizing of publishing houses ultimately had an even greater impact on publishing and

bookselling.⁸ The *Literaturproduzenten*, the Verband deutscher Schriftsteller, and the Gewerkschaft HBV pressed for economic reforms including greater participation in editorial decisions, improved working conditions, greater economic participation for authors and restructuring of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, although the groups were not united on the actual implementation of their objectives.⁹ The theoreticians and leaders of the *Literaturproduzenten* (Frank Benseler, Hannelore May, Hannes Schwenger) based much of their argumentation for restructuring the book publishing and distribution on analyses of the GDR, China, and the Third World. These programs for political action were published in a series of leaflets and later appeared in the volume entitled *Literaturproduzenten* (1970) which included: "Literaturproduzenten -- eine deutsche Kulturrevolution" (Hannes Schwenger), "Intelligenz und Klassenkampf" (Frank Benseler), "Über die Produktion von Literatur. Versuch einer sozio-ökonomischen Einordnung der Literaturproduzenten" (Hannelore May).¹⁰

Although the *Literaturproduzenten* had dissolved by the end of 1970 and the reform movements within the publishing industry had lost most of their momentum, the socio-political revolution of the late 1960s, including the recognition of, and growing rapprochement with the GDR, had been transformed into numerous new publishing programs. The "Quartheft", "edition suhrkamp" and "Reihe Hanser" mirrored the socio-critical atmosphere of the sixties by responding to the public discourse on literature and politics, and included contributions by GDR authors (e.g. Wolf Biermann, Günter Kunert, Peter Hacks, Heiner Müller, Stephan Hermlin) as part of this process of reflection. The emergence of these series was also a sociological phenomenon of sorts in that they were directed by editors/publishers (Günther Busch, "edition suhrkamp"; Fritz Arnold/Jürgen Kolbe/Michael Krüger, "Reihe Hanser"; Klaus Wagenbach, "Quartheft") who articulated many of their own experiences and interests in the series programs. At the same time the social movements sparked a number of small *Alternativverlage* (e.g. Rotbuch, Oberbaum, Trikont, Roter Stern, Karin Kramer, Basis) which produced high-profile, socio-critical programs. At Rotbuch Verlag, for example, approximately twenty-five percent of the program was represented by GDR authors during the seventies and the publishing collective produced a six-volume edition of the works of Heiner Müller.¹¹

Throughout the 1970s GDR literature was integrated into the programs of most literary publishers. GDR authors had certainly become acceptable, at least within literary publishing, and these publishers were also looking for new authors and approaches to contemporary German literature. The "Sammlung Luchterhand" emerged at the beginning of the decade and soon developed into one of the most important programs presenting GDR authors to readers in the FRG, Austria and Switzerland. Although the series was initially a response to highly-successful competitors like the "edition suhrkamp," it immediately established a strong reputation for GDR authors by publishing Jurek Becker, Hermann Kant, Irmtraud Morgner, Anna Seghers, Maxie Wander, and Christa Wolf. In 1973 Hans Altenhein joined Luchterhand and reinforced the strong profile of GDR authors by acquiring additional licenses. Altenhein's interest in developing GDR authors at Luchterhand was, as he recalls in a 1987 interview with Klaus Wagenbach, both professional and personal:

Es ist heute so, daß unser Anteil im Programm an DDR-Literatur so groß ist, daß für viele Leute der Luchterhand Verlag ein Verlag für DDR-Literatur ist. Das hängt an einigen Namen, natürlich Christa Wolf, Helga Schubert, Hermann Kant, Irmtraud Morgner, Christoph Hein. Es gibt eine Essay-Sammlung von Hermann Kant, in der der schöne Satz steht: Mein Verleger in Darmstadt hat recht: wenn ich meine Geschichten hier veröffentliche, sind es Geschichten des Landes, und wenn ich Sie bei ihm veröf-

fentliche, sind es Geschichten aus einem anderen Land. ... Das hat sicher etwas damit zu tun, das wird mir langsam klar, daß ich in Leipzig zur Schule gegangen bin. Für mich hat eine Autorin aus Chemnitz einen bestimmten Klang, den ich kenne, und ich bin im übrigen der Ansicht, daß die Literatur der DDR sich in den letzten 15 Jahren einen Rang erschrieben hat, der auch objektiv hervorragend ist. Ich verwende sehr viel Energie, Zeit und auch Reisetätigkeit auf diese Rolle eines literarischen Doppelagenten, denn ich bringe ja auch Otto Mops von Ernst Jandl in die DDR, oder die *Blechtrummel* jetzt, das späte Ergebnis sehr langen Nachdenkens der DDR. Ich muß gestehen, diese Art von Vermittlung, von Literatur-Austausch fasziniert mich ungemein.¹²

The VIIIth Party Congress of the SED and the following 4th Plenum of the Central Committee in December of 1971 marked a turning point for literature and politics in the GDR.¹³ Although the cultural policies of the GDR were punctuated by periods of liberalization and restriction throughout the seventies, publishers in the FRG turned both aspects to their advantage in order gradually to integrate more GDR literature into publishing programs. Now Bertelsmann, Hoffmann und Campe, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Knaus and Rowohlt (among others) proclaimed that they too were publishing GDR authors. While some West German publishers had perceived GDR literature as a tabu, even into the sixties, the waves of authors who were either expelled from, or moved to, the Federal Republic during the 1970s and 1980s, could now be tapped for West German publishing programs. Both the media attention surrounding Wolf Biermann's expulsion in 1976 and the television production of Stefan Heym's *Collin*, and its subsequent reception (in the FRG and the GDR), provide two well-documented examples of how GDR authors, regardless of their residence, were utilized to capitalize on the growing interest in the GDR.¹⁴ A report in *Buchreport*, entitled "TV-Film *Collin* nach Stefan Heym läßt bei Fischer TB und Bertelsmann die Kassen klingeln," illustrates the economic and promotional value of selected bestselling GDR authors during the seventies and eighties:

Die Erfahrung, daß thematisch brisante, mit einer entsprechenden Vorwerbung ausgestattet und zugkräftig besetzte Fernsehfilme den Absatz der Bücher, nach denen sie entstanden sind beträchtlich ankurbeln, haben jüngst am Beispiel des Zweiteilers *Collin* nach dem Roman von Stefan Heym die Verlage C. Bertelsmann und Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag bestätigt bekommen. Bereits zwei Wochen vor Ausstrahlung des ersten Teils in der ARD am vergangenen Sonntag... konnte Fischer -Vertriebschef Ulrich Fritz eine vier- bis fünffache Steigerung der Nachfrage nach der Taschenbuch-Ausgabe von *Collin* registrieren. Die TB-Ausgabe erschien im März 1981 in einer Auflage von 30.000 Exemplaren, die bereits im Vorfeld der Fernsehsendung restlos abgefließen ist. Die zweite Auflage von 10.000 Exemplaren ist in der letzten Woche ausgeliefert worden; in der ersten Hälfte dieser Woche hat die Nachfrage abermals angezogen. Auch die Hardcover-Ausgabe bei C. Bertelsmann, von der seit Frühjahr 1979 50.000 Exemplare verkauft wurden, ist erneut ins Geschäft gekommen. Der zweite Fernsehfilm, von dem die beiden Verlage profitieren, war als Erfolg programmiert--durch die Starbesetzung mit Curd Jürgens, Hans-Christian Blech, Margot Werner, Hannes Messemer u.a. und durch den DDR-Regisseur Peter Schulze-Rohr, der laut Stefan Heym "in einigen Details sogar Dinge vertieft hat, die im Buch nur angedeutet sind."¹⁵

While a segment of the electronic and print media undoubtedly packaged and promoted GDR authors for short-term commercial speculation, the long-term result of numerous publishing programs, which included GDR fiction and nonfiction, was a broad-based acceptance of, and ongoing interest in, many aspects of

society in the GDR. Although publishers and producers perceived GDR literature as a market segment and structured their presentation and promotions accordingly, they would not have been successful without significant numbers of readers (or television viewers) who had more than a fleeting interest in the GDR. The popularity of GDR literature was, as Wolfgang Emmerich observes, also reflected in the increased sales of works such as Christa Wolf's *Kassandra* (415,000 copies), *Störfall* (300,000 copies); Maxie Wander's *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* (300,000); Christoph Hein's *Drachenblut* (120,000 copies), not to mention successful works by Stefan Heym (see above), or Reiner Kunze, Ulrich Plenzdorf, and Helga Königsdorf, who have experienced quite respectable sales in the 1980s.¹⁶ The booktrade enthusiastically embraced GDR literature, so much so that the Hugendubel chain featured it in the first issue of *Buch Journal* in 1989 and included an introductory essay by Elmar Faber (editor at Aufbau-Verlag and Rütten & Loening Verlag).¹⁷ The spectrum of GDR literature produced by a multitude of both large and small West German publishers stands in contrast to the limited presence of GDR authors in the marketplace twenty years ago. A selection of titles published in 1989 illustrate this diversity: Harald Gerlach, *Jungfernhaut* (Pahl-Rugenstein); Durs Grünbein, *Grauzone morgens* (edition suhrkamp); Werner Heiduczek, *Tod am Meer* (Pahl-Rugenstein); Christoph Hein, *Der Tangospieler* (Luchterhand); Stefan Heym, *Reden an den Feind* (Fischer Taschenbuch); Angela Krauß, *Kleine Landschaft* (Suhrkamp); Gert Neumann, *Die Klandestinität der Kesselreiniger* (S. Fischer); Bert Papenfuß-Gorek, *dreizehntanz* (Luchterhand); Erwin Strittmatter, *Der Laden* (Kiepenheuer & Witsch); Brigitte Thurm, *Liebe läßt sich nicht betrügen* (Scherz); *Siebenquant oder Der Stern des Glücks. SF-Satiren aus der DDR* (Sammlung Luchterhand); *Wenn wir den Königen schreiben. Lyrikerinnen aus der DDR* (Sammlung Luchterhand); Christel Hildebrandt (Hrsg.), *Liebes- und andere Erklärungen. Texte von und über DDR-Autorinnen* (Verlag Kleine Schritte); *Sinn und Form. Reprint der ersten zehn Jahrgänge (1949-1958) in elf Bänden* (Greno); Wolfgang Venohr, *Die roten Preußen. Vom wundersamen Aufstieg der DDR in Deutschland* (Straube).¹⁸

II

In some respects the publication history of GDR literature in other Western nations, such as the USA, was also characterized by the Cold War. During the period immediately following World War II the Allies were hardly interested in publishing German literature, rather they (particularly the USA) were more concerned with presenting their cultures as part of the program of denazification.¹⁹ With regard to France, Gilbert Badia writes: "Einen ausländischen Autor zu verlegen, noch dazu einen Autor der DDR, ist im Frankreich der Nachkriegszeit fast immer ein Risiko."²⁰ During the 1950s there was a tendency in Great Britain, as in France and the USA, to deal with German literature largely in terms of individual authors, without differentiation as to the FRG or the GDR, because many of the well-known authors (Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, Arnold Zweig) were at that time still associated with the cultural life of prewar Germany.²¹ However, as the political distinctions between the two Germanys became more marked, cultural critics began to recognize and address literary production from the GDR in the following decade (albeit frequently from the Cold War perspective).²² By the early seventies the gradual shift in attitude toward the GDR, which Gilbert Badia identifies in France, could also be found in the United States and Great Britain:

Mit den siebziger Jahren endet der Kalte Krieg. Die Entspannung gewinnt Gestalt mit dem Vier-Mächte-Abkommen über Berlin (1971), dem zwischen den beiden deutschen Staaten unterzeichneten Grundlagenvertrag und dem UNESCO-Beitritt der DDR (1972), der Anerkennung

der DDR durch Frankreich und dem Beginn der Konferenz von Helsinki. Im Januar 1970 wurde ein fünf Jahre gültiges Handelsabkommen zwischen Frankreich und der DDR unterzeichnet, während die DDR am 7. Mai desselben Jahres in Paris eine Außenhandelsvertretung eröffnen konnte. Kurzum, die DDR wurde zu einer europäischen Realität, die von nun an nicht mehr ignoriert werden konnte.²³

While the improvement of political relations between the GDR and the West was accompanied by stronger cultural ties, the levels of literary licensing from the GDR to Western Europe and the USA could not be compared to the role which GDR literature played in publishing programs in the Federal Republic. The conditions for the licensing, translation, publication, distribution, reviewing, and reception of GDR literature within the Western, non-German speaking nations are quite different than those which exist in the Federal Republic. Linguistic, cultural, historical, and economic factors limit the extent of literary transfer.²⁴ Any comparisons between GDR-FRG cultural relations on the one hand, and the GDR's literary relations with France, Great Britain, and the United States on the other, were complicated by the fact that many writers, who were perceived as "GDR authors" by readers in the FRG, or were presented as such by their publishers, resided in the FRG.²⁵ Thus, from the perspective of the West German publisher, the economic and legal issues relating to licensing and translating, which are normally considered when publishing contemporary foreign literatures, were virtually eliminated for numerous authors who were expelled or expatriated from the GDR and subsequently moved to the FRG, even though they may have been perceived as GDR authors by the book-buying public. While publishers in the Federal Republic still had to acquire the rights to many works already published in the GDR, the over 100 authors who have moved to the FRG since 1976 represented, and continue to represent, an enormous reservoir of "GDR authors" who, from an economic perspective, have become de facto "FRG authors," or simply "German authors," regardless of the thematic orientation of their works.

Since 1977 the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels has conducted extensive annual surveys of licenses granted to foreign publishers.²⁶ Although this data does not include licenses granted by GDR publishers to foreign licensees, it does offer a quantitative indication of the degree to which contemporary German literature (from West German publishers) is being published in other nations. For the English language, an average of about 50 licenses are granted in the area *Schöne Literatur* each year, and approximately half (20-25) of the licenses are granted to US publishers and the other half to publishers in Great Britain, according to Horst Machill at the Börsenverein.²⁷ However, these are not necessarily 50 different licenses, since publishers in the USA and GB frequently license some of the same titles and then split the translation costs. This data is corroborated by publishers and agents who state that there are no more than twelve to fifteen publishers who produce German literature in translation (averaging 1-2 titles per year) in the USA on a regular basis.²⁸ For French, Italian, Dutch, and Spanish the numbers of licenses are somewhat higher, averaging between 50 and 60 licenses per annum.²⁹ Thus, overall levels of literary transfer from the FRG to other countries (especially the United States and Great Britain) have not been particularly high, when compared to the hundreds of titles translated into German from other languages.³⁰ Any discussion of licensing activity from the GDR to other (non-German speaking) Western nations should be considered within the context of: 1) a sluggish or stagnating demand for licenses for all German fiction regardless of national boundaries (with a few notable exceptions), 2) the levels of fiction production as well as controls and/or stimuli utilized to regulate literary production in the GDR, 3) the extent to which GDR authors have been published primarily in

the FRG, or have left the GDR, and how this will affect new-author acquisition and development by GDR publishers, and 4) a competitive international media marketplace which requires more effective forms of targeted communication for successful licensing activities.³¹

When assessing the role that GDR literature played within national bookmarket(s) it is necessary simultaneously to consider the relative (un)importance of translations in general, and German literature in particular, within socio-economic and cultural contexts.³² The licensing and reception of contemporary German literature in the United States, for example, is marked by discontinuity. The relatively few titles which are licensed and published each year scarcely reflect the diversity of literary production within the body of contemporary German literature. Cycles of production and reception are sporadic, because they are largely dependent upon the dynamics of cultural mediation and reception in the United States (e.g. the popularity of Hermann Hesse during the sixties). While some authors like Grass and Böll have achieved somewhat wider recognition, other leading authors, such as Martin Walser, remain relatively unknown among readers of foreign literatures in translation, despite positive reviews. Peter Handke has received considerable review attention, but the sales of his works have not increased until recently.³³ Yet it is possible for relatively unknown authors like Lothar-Göthner Buchheim (*The Boat*), Michael Ende (*The Never-ending Story*) or Patrick Süskind (*Perfume*) suddenly to achieve significantly wider recognition in the mass media (not to mention substantially higher licensing fees) than other German authors whom publishers have consistently attempted to promote over a period of many years. The success of Buchheim, Ende, or Süskind is directly related to the evolution of a two-tier licensing system which allocates proportionally larger shares of capital investment in licensing and promotion for international bestsellers.³⁴

As a result of this system there are few, if any, GDR authors who have recently achieved the commercial success or coverage in the popular media (e.g. *People* magazine) comparable to Buchheim, Ende, or Süskind.³⁵ GDR literature is indeed published in the United States, but, as Margy Gerber and Judith Pouget observe in their introduction to *Literature of the German Democratic Republic in English Translation. A Bibliography*, the majority of translations are poems and short prose texts appearing in small journals and literary magazines.³⁶ Some of the authors who have had novels or dramas, as well as short prose and poetry, published in the USA, include: Jurek Becker, Wolf Biermann, Johannes Bobrowski, Fritz Rudolf Fries, Peter Hacks, Stephan Hermlin, Stefan Heym, Peter Huchel, Reiner Kunze, Heiner Müller, Ulrich Plenzdorf, Hans Joachim Schädlich, Rolf Schneider, Anna Seghers, Christa Wolf, and Arnold Zweig.³⁷ Gerber and Pouget conclude:

...one is struck by the fact that while some authors are translated practically in their entirety ... some well-known writers are strangely under-represented: for example, none of the novels of Hermann Kant have been translated into English; only one of the plays of Volker Braun; and only a few of the plays of Peter Hacks.³⁸

Effective distribution is a problem for works of foreign literature in translation. Many of the literary journals and magazines which Gerber and Pouget identified as publishers of short prose and poetry from the GDR have small readerships, erratic publication schedules, and are frequently short-lived.³⁹ With the exception of works by leading authors such as Günter Grass, Christa Wolf, or international bestsellers, few novels gain access to the mass-market distribution system which is dominated by the book chains, e.g. B. Dalton Booksellers and WaldenBooks (owned by the mass-merchandising giant K Mart). Since first printings of most works of contemporary German literature are

around 6,000 copies, it would be quite difficult to distribute to most of the chain outlets in the USA, even if the publisher decided to take this risk. Roger W. Straus, Chief Executive Officer and President of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, publishes Elias Canetti, Hermann Hesse, Peter Handke, Heinar Kipphardt, Siegfried Lenz, and Christa Wolf in the USA. Straus states that chain distribution is reserved for only a very few well-known German authors, and even then he would begin with 1,000 - 2,000 copies in the chains, for to do otherwise would be "a big mistake--for them and for us."⁴⁰ Other leading publishers of foreign fiction, including Alfred A. Knopf and Pantheon Books (at Random House), Helen and Kurt Wolff Books (a Harcourt Brace Jovanovich imprint) or Harper & Row express similar concerns with regard to distribution.⁴¹

Christa Wolf is, not surprisingly, among the best-known GDR authors published in the United States. In his review of *Accident: A Day's News (Störfall)* in *Newsweek*, Jim Miller begins:

Christa Wolf is an East German writer whose almost plotless brand of highly condensed, strenuously reflective fiction has won her a growing legion of international admirers. She will be an acquired taste for many Americans; but in Germany she is both a best seller and widely regarded as a national treasure. *Accident* epitomizes her unusual gifts.⁴²

Christa Wolf's major works have been widely reviewed in: *The New York Times Book Review*, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, *The Nation*, *The Saturday Review*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and the *Village Voice Literary Supplement*, among others.⁴³ Although her works have not broken through to best-seller status (a la Buchheim, Eco, Grass or Süskind) they have received recognition comparable to Handke or Frisch.

Recently, the works of Monika Maron (*The Defector*, *Flight of Ashes*) and Christoph Hein (*The Distant Lover*) are being published or distributed in the United States.⁴⁴ Thus, GDR literature continues to be licensed to US publishers; however, the demand is largely limited to authors who have already established a sales record in the Federal Republic, and even among this group relatively few titles are selected for publication. Gerber and Pouget have observed that a significant number of the translations in their bibliography are works which have already been published in the West as *Lizenzausgaben*, or as first editions.⁴⁵ And in this sense the book market in the Federal Republic functioned as a preliminary filter for licensing in the West. This is undoubtedly a result of extensive contacts between major European and US publishers, the evolution of institutionalized systems of international licensing (including literary agents and scouts), and the convergence of production and distribution systems in Western nations (e.g. international conglomerates like Bertelsmann operate in numerous markets). In his analysis of the reception of GDR literature in France, Gilbert Badia concludes that there has been little change in the nature of literary relations with the GDR, and his comments could also apply to the situation in the United States:

Der literarische Austausch zwischen Frankreich und der DDR verlief--und verläuft noch--weitgehend in einer Richtung. Man kann nur bedauern, daß die Literatur der DDR in Frankreich daher weitgehend unbekannt bleibt. Ist das für unser Land nicht eine 'verpaßte kulturelle Chance'? Die DDR bleibt, literarisch gesprochen, in Frankreich ein 'verkanntes Land'. Glücklicherweise hat sie ihre Sportler, und insbesondere ihre Sportlerinnen, die bei internationalen Wettbewerben Goldmedaillen sammeln. Soll man damit zufrieden geben, daß in Frankreich die Leistungen der DDR-Sportler die der Schriftsteller in den Schatten stellen?⁴⁶

III

Since the fall of 1989, major political changes have occurred in the GDR and throughout Eastern Europe. Certainly the most visible, and highly publicized, have been the opening of the Berlin

Wall and the reunification of the two German states.⁴⁷ Although it is difficult to predict precisely how German reunification will reshape the literary marketplace in the former GDR, there can be little doubt that the process of economic and political reunification has already led to fundamental changes in the conditions under which this literature is produced, distributed, and received. The following discussion is, therefore, a consideration of emerging trends in the literary marketplace as they relate to the role of GDR literature and its internationalization within the context of a reunified Germany, but it is also an acknowledgment of the unpredictability and dynamic quality of this process.

The latter half of the 1980s was characterized by closer ties between publishers in the GDR and the FRG, and by 1987 Elmar Faber concluded: "Es hat sich alles schrecklich normalisiert."⁴⁸ Faber was referring to the fact that Aufbau-Verlag was publishing over 50 authors from the Federal Republic and had organized a promotional tour for Günter Wallraff (*Ganz unten*), previous tours for Gabriele Wohmann and Gert Hoffmann, and was planning a trip for Siegfried Lenz. Publishers had already launched major co-production projects, such as the Suhrkamp/Aufbau Brecht Edition (*Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*). GDR literature had become an institutionalized sector within literary publishing programs, along with programs on women ("neue frau" at Rowohlt), contemporary literature ("Collection S. Fischer") and Science Fiction ("Phantastische Bibliothek" at Suhrkamp), not to mention the proliferation of non-fiction paperback series on everything from astrology to zoology.⁴⁹ Within the West German book market, GDR literature was no longer exotic, strange, or new.

From the international perspective, GDR literature was not usually published in large enough quantities to make it a program category. While ideological differences between East and West were apparent in the reception of GDR literature during the 1950s and 1960s, by the 1970s it was perceived by most publishers in the West (in non-German speaking countries) as simply German literature. Michel-Francois Demet remarks:

Für den französischen Leser gibt es, so scheint es mir, keine eigentliche Literatur der Bundesrepublik, sondern viel mehr eine Literatur deutscher Sprache mit den verschiedenen kulturellen und stilistischen Merkmalen Österreichs, der deutschsprachigen Schweiz, der Bundesrepublik und der DDR.⁵⁰

As an editor familiar with the difficulties of publishing GDR literature in the West, Hans-Jürgen Schmitt addressed the question of national designations in the afterword to the anthology *Geschichten aus der DDR* (1978):

Wären die Rechte nicht in der Hand der Autoren oder bei Verlagen in der Bundesrepublik, ich hätte diese Auswahl nie zustande gebracht. Dabei schwebte mir vor, mit all den angesprochenen Autoren, vielleicht zum letzten Mal die in Ost und West aus unterschiedlichen Bewertungen heraus unternommene Aufteilung von DDR-Autoren hier aufzuheben.⁵¹

In his discussion of national literatures, Wolfgang Emmerich identifies thematic similarities in the contemporary literatures of the FRG and the GDR (e.g. the environment, nuclear energy, the alienation of the individual, the role of women), which have resulted from the development of modern industrial societies.⁵² (These similarities have undoubtedly made it much easier to market GDR literature to Western audiences.) However, he also underscores important East-West differences in the aesthetic programs of authors such as Karl Mickel, Rainer Kirsch, Volker Braun, or Christoph Hein, and concludes by offering a more differentiated, albeit complex, answer:

So zeichnet sich ausgangs der 80er Jahre ein komplexes Bild von der deutschsprachigen Literatur in den beiden deutschen Staaten ab, dem weder mit Begriffen wie

Published by New Prairie Press, 1990

'sozialistische Nationalliteratur' oder, umgekehrt, 'gesamtdeutsche Literatur' beizukommen ist, noch auch mit Günter Grass' Wunschbild einer immer noch einheitlichen deutschen 'Kulturation'. Gewiß, es gibt alte Gemeinsamkeiten--in Geschichte, kultureller Tradition und Sprache--, und es gibt auch gravierende Unterschiede, die in über 40 Jahren getrennter Geschichte und Gesellschaftsentwicklung begründet liegen. Das Verhältnis von deutscher Literatur Ost und deutscher Literatur West ist heute eines von Konvergenz und Divergenz zugleich--einfacher ist es nicht zu haben.⁵³

The problem is indeed complex, for even within a particular society there are phenomena of convergence and divergence. One area of highly-visible convergence is the internationalization of mass culture. In 1988 Bruce Springsteen performed at the Radrennbahn Weißensee in East Berlin to an audience estimated at 160,000.⁵⁴ The mass media (especially television, film/video and music) will be increasingly effective in producing and communicating cultural products after the elimination of trade barriers in the European Community in 1992, and as Eastern Europe continues to encourage Western investment. Cable and satellite television have already achieved a significant share of the media market in Western Europe. It is not a question of if, but rather when, cable and/or extensive program selections from the West will become available in Eastern Europe, so that a pensioner in Bitterfeld can view the same programs as his brother in Munich. As the East/West dichotomy dissolves, various forms of product culture will become widespread. Not only will Western consumer products be more heavily promoted in the East through life-style marketing, which utilizes international entertainers (e.g. Michael Jackson or Bruce Springsteen), but corporations in the West will increasingly utilize cultural productions from the East to access and communicate with new audiences. One example of the latter is *Kultur Sponsoring* for the visual arts from the GDR, sponsored by firms such as BASF or Salamander.⁵⁵

There are also other signs that GDR authors are more conscious of new roles in an international marketplace. Authors in both the East and the West are engaged in multi-media projects (e.g. screenplays), or have turned to electronic media to supplement income from writing.⁵⁶ The role of the author, the function of the book medium and the value of literature in the Western marketplace is problematized by Jurek Becker in his dispute with a fictional friend:

Das Abwenden von ihnen d.h. Büchern habe eben nicht nur mit den Büchern zu tun, sondern auch mit der nachlassenden Aufnahmefähigkeit und der schwindenden Denkbereitschaft des Lesers. Er, mein Freund, demonstriere das überdeutlich, indem er meine, daß in seiner Wohnung mit vier Radios und zwei Fernsehern und Plattenspieler und CD-Player und Recordern und Hunderten von Tonbändern und Hunderten von Videokassetten kein Platz für Romane und Gedichte sei. Dieser Entschluß habe etwas unangenehm Zügelloses, die Wohnung werde sich jetzt wohl allmählich in ein Vergnügungszentrum verwandeln.⁵⁷

And there seems to be little hope for fiction in this "brave new world":

Auch die Literatur sei an ihrem Scheitern schuldlos, somit natürlich auch die Literaten--der wahre Schuldige sei ein gewisser Zeitgeist. Der verneble den Leuten die Hirne, der mache sie unempfindlich für die Reize der Bücher, der locke sie zu stumpfsinnigen Vergnügungen und verwandle die Leser von gestern in die Kretins von heute. Und da auch die Schriftsteller den Einflüsterungen des Teufels Zeitgeist ausgeliefert seien, paßten sich ihre Produkte allmählich der neuen Situation an und würden überflüssig.⁵⁸

Becker's dire predictions regarding the function and fate of literature are, of course, not new.⁵⁹ However, they do reflect common concerns by authors in both East and West for the

conditions under which literature is produced, distributed and read.⁶⁰ The preeminent role which the book once played in the GDR will now be reduced as a result of the proliferation of new communication technologies which alter patterns of media usage (and program content), just as they have in the West.⁶¹ As the Comecon nations continue to encourage capital investment from the West and restructure their economies according to Western models (e.g. in Hungary and Poland) these trends will be accelerated.

Immediately after the opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, publishers in the FRG gathered to discuss the possibilities of increasing cooperation with, and support for, GDR publishers. At this point West German publishers also recognized that they would have to address fundamental issues concerning the economic restructuring of publishing and bookselling in the GDR:

Es gilt nach Jahrzehnten der wirtschaftlichen und politischen Isolation nun die Abgeschnittenheit von einem großen Teil der Literatur zu überwinden. Dabei stehen in der augenblicklichen Situation eher wirtschaftliche Gründe im Vordergrund: Bücher sind knapp, weil Papier noch immer rationiert ist und die Druckereien aufgrund von Exportaufträgen nicht einmal entsprechende Kapazitäten hätten.⁶²

Some of the suggestions for closer cooperation included: positions for apprentices and interns from the GDR in West German publishing houses, bookstores, and printing plants; weekend seminars for all interested individuals from the GDR involved in any aspect of publishing and bookselling; licensing seminars including participants from the GDR.⁶³ The discussion of these activities was prefaced by Hans-Karl v. Kupsch, Managing Director of the Börsenverein, who warned that West German publishers and booksellers should not appear to be economic opportunists:

Wie kann verhindert werden, daß unser Goodwill in der DDR falsch ankommt, zum Beispiel als gönnerhafte und blauäugige Geste? Wir dürfen uns nicht dem leisesten Verdacht merkantilen Denkens aussetzen; wir müssen einen Weg finden, der die Glaubwürdigkeit nicht gefährdet.⁶⁴

Even before the prospect of German reunification became a reality, the road to economic reunification within the publishing industry was being paved with copublishing and licensing agreements as well as cooperative ventures in publishing, distribution, and bookselling. However, German reunification has led to an economic crisis for most GDR publishers and booksellers. Ulrich Wechsler, former Chairman of the Bertelsmann Publishing Group, has identified four challenges for GDR publishers:

- 1) Anpassung der Kapazitäten bei gleichzeitiger Neukonzeption der Verlagsprogramme
- 2) Aufbau von Marketing, Vertrieb, Werbung und Pressearbeit im bisherigen Absatzgebiet und Behauptung im Wettbewerb gegen westdeutsche Verlage
- 3) Erschließung der neuen Märkte in den deutschsprachigen Ländern, insbesondere in der Bundesrepublik
- 4) Einführung unternehmerischer und betriebswirtschaftlicher Denkweisen und Instrumente.⁶⁵

Wechsler concludes that few GDR publishers will be able to meet these challenges without significant support from publishers in the Federal Republic. The extent to which publishers in the GDR will be able to continue publishing programs in a reunited Germany, as Wechsler observes, is highly questionable. Despite efforts to support publishing and bookselling in the former GDR (through seminars and workshops) and to develop a *Verhaltenskodex* which would provide guidelines for fair business dealings with the East, there can be little doubt that the new marketplace will be dominated, if not overwhelmed, by West German firms as a result of critical

undercapitalization in the East.⁶⁶ Not only is it likely that the media marketplace will be dominated by West German or European firms (particularly in view of the economic integration of the European Community after 1992), investment groups such as Thurn and Taxis (which would like to acquire 57 former *Volksbuchhandlungen* in the district of Dresden) could also become major investors in the publishing and bookselling industry.⁶⁷ All of these factors indicate that GDR authors will become part of a much larger international media marketplace, and in this regard the economic context within which they produce their work will not be significantly different than that which exists for other European authors.⁶⁸ The internationalization of literary production (particularly on the level of literary bestsellers) possesses the technological potential of presenting diverse forms of discourse across national, linguistic and cultural boundaries. Yet significant numbers of works never enter the international licensing system due to established patterns of capital allocation.⁶⁹

Will the designation "GDR author" still be used? This is largely a matter of perception. What determines a "French author," a "US author," or a "German author," and to what extent do readers and book buyers really think in these terms? These seem to be categories which are often superimposed by publishers and literary critics. For readers of literature in translation, identifying factors (other than language and citizenship) which determine national characteristics of foreign authors is even more problematic, and authors themselves frequently resist national labels.⁷⁰ Undoubtedly some distinctions between authors, regardless of whether they are based on language, gender, race, geography, nation, or literary genre, will be utilized (overtly or covertly) by publishers, if for no other reason than to provide a short-hand for the communication of information on books and authors, which is required by distribution systems.⁷¹ Rather than focusing on factors which constitute the national identity of an author, it is perhaps more productive to examine, as Wolfgang Emmerich does, convergences and divergences in their thematic and aesthetic approaches within the international context.⁷² In the West, the designations "East German author" or "GDR author" have often been misused as labels to accentuate ideological boundaries, but they have also been used quite productively to inform readers on new publishing programs (i.e. authors and their works), which offered different aesthetic and thematic perspectives. And for many readers in the Federal Republic this dialogue with the "other Germany" has served an important function within the overall context of the question of national identity. Whether German authors in the reunified Germany are perceived as "former GDR authors," "German authors," or simply as "authors," it would appear that this dialogue will continue, in its multifaceted forms of expression, but within a markedly international environment.

Notes

1 Klaus Wagenbach, "Nachwort", in: *Eintritt frei. Beiträge zur öffentlichen Meinung* (Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1982), 182-183.

2 Wagenbach, 184.

3 See for example: Wolfgang Paul, *Prozeß gegen Leser*, (Frankfurt/M.: Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, 1961).

4 Jean Mortier, "Ein Buchmarkt mit neuen Strukturen. Zur Verlagspolitik und Buchplanung in der SBZ 1945-1949", in: *Frühe DDR-Literatur. Traditionen, Institutionen, Tendenzen* (Argument Sonderband 149) eds. Klaus R. Scherpe and Lutz Winckler (Hamburg/Berlin: Argument Verlag, 1988), 62-80.

5 Jost Hermand, "Der geteilte Himmel. Exilliteratur im Verlagsprogramm der vier Besatzungszonen (1945-1949)" in: *Frühe DDR-Literatur*, 28-29.

6 The most visible shift in policy began with the election of the SPD/FDP coalition in 1969 and the articulation of Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. The further normalization of relations was institutionalized

in four treaties between 1971 and 1972: "Viermächte-Abkommen über Berlin" (3.9.1971); "Transitvertrag" (17.12.1971); "Verkehrsvertrag" (26.5.1972); "Grundlagenvertrag" (21.12.1972).

7 Ralf Schnell, *Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1986), 168-251.

8 Mark W. Rectanus, *Literary Series in the Federal Republic of Germany from 1960 to 1980* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), 9.

9 Rectanus, *Literary Series*, 15-17.

10 Frank Benseler, Hannelore May, and Hannes Schwenger, *Literaturproduzenten!* (Berlin: Edition Voltaire, 1970).

11 Ursula Schaaf, "Engagement für Modernes aus der DDR", in: *Das Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel* (Frankfurter Ausgabe), 47/13.6.78, 1209. (Further citations abbreviated as Bbl.)

12 Klaus Wagenbach and Hans Altenhein, "Die Quadratur des Zirkels", in: *BuchMarkt*, 4/87, 82.

13 Wolfgang Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR* (Erweiterte Ausgabe), (Frankfurt/M.: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1989), 242-243.

14 Geoffrey V. Davis, "'Bloß kein Berufs-Dissident werden!': Zum Phänomen der DDR-Literatur in der Bundesrepublik", in: *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*, eds. Paul Michael Lützeler and Egon Schwarz (Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1980), 238-239; Rolf Becker, "Endlich die Wahrheit", in: *Der Spiegel*, 49/1981, 247; Emmerich, 335.

15 "TV-Film Collin nach Stefan Heym läßt bei Fischer TB und Bertelsmann die Kassen klingeln", in: *Buchreport*, 56/11.12.81, 21.

16 Emmerich, 446 (Sales figures are for the period up to 1988).

17 Elmar Faber, "Der Zöllner, der dem weisen die Weisheit abverlangt", in: *BuchJournal*, 1/89, 3.

18 Hans J. Schütz, "Literaturland DDR", in: *BuchJournal*, 1/89, 10-11.

19 Wolfram F. Hanrieder, "German-American Relations in the Postwar Decades" in: *America and the Germans*, eds. Frank Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 91-116; Jost Hermand, "From Naziism to NATOism: The West German Miracle According to Henry Luce", in: *America and the Germans*, 74-87.

20 Gilbert Badia, "Die Rezeption der DDR-Literatur in Frankreich 1949-1973", in: *Frühe DDR-Literatur*, 197.

21 Uta Kreuter, *Übersetzung und Literaturkritik: Aspekte der Rezeption zeitgenössischer deutschsprachiger Literatur in Großbritannien 1960 - 1980* (Frankfurt/M.: Verlag Peter Lang, 1985), 183-191.

22 Literature within the broader context of East-West relations was discussed by: Kay Boyle, "Big Books on the Bonn Side", in: *The Saturday Review*, 30 May 1959, 21-22; R.C. Raack, "Novelist of Two Berlins", in: *The Nation*, 2 February 1962, 148-150; Bruce A. Cook, "Guilt and the Postwar German Novel", in: *The Commonweal*, 26 October 1962, 120-122; E.R. von Freiburg, "Half & Half Equals Two", in: *The Nation*, 17 April 1967.

23 Badia, 199.

24 For an extensive discussion of this topic with regard to the USA see: Mark W. Rectanus, *German Literature in the United States: Licensing Translation in the International Marketplace* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990).

25 See for example: Jurek Becker, Monika Maron, Hans Joachim Schädlich, Stefan Schütz, among others.

26 Statistical data on licensing was gathered on an annual basis starting in 1977 and reported in: *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* (Frankfurt/M.: Buchhändler-Vereinigung GmbH).

27 See: *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* (1977-1988). Statistical information on the approximate number of licences to the USA and Great Britain was provided by Horst Machill (Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels).

28 This information is based on interviews with publishers, agents and scouts in: Rectanus, *German Literature in the United States* (see above).

29 *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen*, (1977-1988).

30 According to *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen*, as much as 50% of all paperback fiction published in the FRG has been translations from other languages.

31 With regard to the second point: Economic reforms and changes in publishing policies altered the levels of literary production in the GDR. Volker Hage reports: "Aufruhr und Umbruch in den Verlagen. Deren Leiter und Lektoren sollen nun selbst entscheiden, welche Bücher sie verlegen, wie hoch die Auflage sein soll und der Preis. Und sie sollen sehen, wie sie an ausländische Lizenzen kommen, das heißt: an Devisen, denn ohne Devisen keine Lizenzen." See: Volker Hage, "Nach der Zensur", in: *Die Zeit*, 3/19.1.90, 13.

32 For a discussion of these factors in the USA see: Rectanus, *German Literature in the United States*.

33 Based on information provided by Helene Ritzerfeld, Rights Director for Suhrkamp/Insel Verlag.

34 *Publishers Weekly* reported a first printing of 150,000 copies (paperback) of Ende's *The Neverending Story* (published by Penguin). Süskind's *Perfume* was acquired for an estimated \$100,000 by Alfred A. Knopf Publishers and received a 40,000 copy first printing (hardcover). All of these works had an established sales record as bestsellers, and the sales of *The Neverending Story* and *The Boat* profited from movie tie-ins. See: "Fiction Reprints", in: *Publishers Weekly*, 8 June 1984, 63; "The Phenomenon of Michael Ende", in: *Publishers Weekly*, 28 May 1982, 46. See also interviews with Roger Straus and Carol Janeway in: *German Literature in the United States*.

35 The works of Stefan Heym, which were originally published in English and were quite successful, would prove the exception to the rule.

36 Margy Gerber and Judith Pouget, *Literature of the German Democratic Republic in English Translation. A Bibliography* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 4.

37 Gerber/Pouget, 9-121.

38 Gerber/Pouget, 5.

39 Gerber/Pouget, 5.

40 See interview with Roger Straus in: *German Literature in the United States*.

41 Carol Janeway, International Rights Director at Alfred A. Knopf is particularly concerned about the returns policies of the retail book chains. See: *German Literature in the United States*.

42 Jim Miller, "A Tale for Nuclear Times", in: *Newsweek* (International Edition), 22 May 1989, 50.

43 See annual editions of *Book Review Index* and *Book Review Digest*.

44 Monika Maron, *The Defector*, (Readers International/Distributed by Consortium in the USA), 1988; *Flight of Ashes*, 1986. Christoph Hein, *The Distant Lover*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

45 Gerber/Pouget, 4.

46 Badia, 202.

47 Apart from the departure of Erich Honecker and the SED Party leadership from the government of the GDR, the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 and the currency union on July 2, 1990 were among the most highly publicized events leading up to reunification on October 3, 1990.

48 "Günter Wallraff auf Lese- und Signierreise in der DDR" in: *Bbl.*, 24/24.3.87, 986.

49 See annual editions of *WerWasWo? im Taschenbuch. Gesamtverzeichnis aller Taschenbücher* (Calw-Stammheim: Rossipaul Verlagsgesellschaft).

50 Michel-Francois Demet, "Rezeption der deutschen Literatur in Frankreich aufgrund einiger editorischer Erfahrungen: ein Überblick", in: *Literaturszene Bundesrepublik-GfE in Blick von draußen*, eds. Ferdinand van Ingen and Gerd Labrousse, (*Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*) 25/1988, 214.

51 Hans-Jürgen Schmitt, "Nachwort", in: *Geschichten aus der DDR* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1979), 247.

52 Emmerich, 447.

53 Emmerich, 449.

54 Cherno Jobatey, "Born in the DDR", in: *Die Zeit*, 31/29.7.88, 38. After the opening of the Berlin Wall and the German border numerous other rock groups, e.g. The Rolling Stones, performed to large audiences in the East.

55 Art exhibits have been funded by Gruner & Jahr, Salamander, Hoechst and BASF, among others. Eduard Beaucamp, "Hemmungen: DDR-Kunst im Westen", in: *Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 164/18.7.88, 19; Ulrich Greiner, "Mercedes Amen. Sponsoring: über die Verflechtung von Wirtschaft und Kultur", in: *Die Zeit*, 27/1.7.88, 43.

56 Heiner Sylvester reports that many younger GDR authors whose works have not been published change to other media. Heinar Sylvester, "Kuchenkrümel Kommunismus", in: *Der Spiegel*, 39/85, 238.

57 Jurek Becker, "Bücher? Weg mit ihnen!", in: *Die Zeit*, 24/9.6.89, 60.

58 Becker, 60.

59 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend", in: *Kursbuch* 15, 1968.

60 See remarks on author-publisher relations by Günter Kunert and Monika Maron: "Der Dichter und sein liebster Feind. Eine ZEIT-Umfrage unter deutschsprachigen Autoren über Verleger", in: *Die Zeit*, 21/19.5.89, 62.

61 Television programing and videorecorders will have the greatest

immediate impact. For a study of the function of the book in the media marketplace see: Ulrich Saxer, "Das Buch in der Medienkonkurrenz", in: *Lesen und Leben*, eds. Herbert G. Göpfert, Ruth Meyer, Ludwig Muth, Walter Rüegg (Frankfurt/M.: Buchhändler-Vereinigung GmbH, 1975), 206-243.

62 Hanns Lothar Schütz, "Nicht mit unserer schnellen Gesellschaft da 'reinbrettern'", in: *Bbl.*, 93/21.11.89, 3661.

63 Schütz, 3661-3662. See additional suggestions by Hans Altenhein, "Stimme der DDR", in: *Bbl.*, 90/10.11.89, 3591.

64 Schütz, 3661.

65 Ulrich Wechsler, "Go East oder Kapitalismus in der Kultur", in: *Bbl.*, 42/25.5.1990, 1783.

66 Wechsler, 1783.

67 "Fürstenhaus strebt die Mehrheit bei 57 sächsischen Buchhandlungen an", in: *Bbl.*, 44/1.6.1990, 1817. See also: Hanns Lothar Schütz, "Verführung ins Trabi-Land", in: *Bbl.*, 44/1.6.1990, 1828-1833.

68 Hage, "Nach der Zensur", 13.

69 With regard to international literary reception in the United States, it seems that diverse forms of expression are limited to reception within, or recognition by, subcultures (e.g. academic audiences, university students, intellectual communities, minorities). Popular reception of translations (bestsellers) occurs only when the work is effectively "uncoupled" from the original context of production and is largely determined by the foreign context. (See: Rectanus, *German Literature in the United States*)

70 See for example an interview with Sascha Anderson, "Die Generation nach uns ist freier", in: *Der Spiegel*, 36/86, 78.

71 In general the value of the author's image, and reader identification with his/her works, becomes more important as the author achieves an audience, readership or market. (The more well-known an author becomes, the more his/her name is used to promote a book.) This market could be relatively well-defined, as is the case for certain fiction genres (e.g. Westerns), or much larger and diffuse, in the case of bestsellers. In both cases, however, the author's image, and the perceived relationship of that image to his/her works, tends to become a commodity which overshadows other aspects. This seems to be the case for international bestselling authors as well as for authors who achieve a cult status within a market.

72 Emmerich, 468-470.

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST RECEPTION OF GDR LITERATURE (WITH A GLANCE AT WEST GERMANY)

Angelika Bammer
Emory University

To discuss the feminist reception of GDR literature in the United States (or West Germany, for that matter) is to raise the question not only of cultural difference, but of the political difference between different forms of feminism. Specifically, it means to take up the question of the difference between feminism in the West and, as that curious cold-warlike phrase would have it, feminism "under socialism."

In the mid-1970s several things brought this relationship into particularly sharp focus: (1) the rapid and dynamic development of feminist theory and literary scholarship in the West was generating a keen interest in women writers; (2) in the GDR a new proto-feminist body of women's literature was emerging; and (3) the development of GDR studies as a new field of scholarly inquiry in the United States was providing the means for exchange and mediation between these two otherwise quite unrelated feminisms. These three developments converged and, in converging, established the terrain on which the feminist reception of GDR literature in the United States took shape. It is around this convergence and its implications that I will focus my reflections in this essay. My argument, in brief, is that in the course of the 1970s the path of influence between and among these three different movements took a strange and circuitous route: from

GDR women writers to American feminist Germanists to American GDR-Marxists back to GDR women writers and feminists.

In particular, I will argue that, while American feminism overall has to date remained virtually unaffected by the work of GDR women (or men, for that matter), this does not hold true in reverse. In fact, I propose that the theory and practice of American feminism in the 1970s contributed significantly to the shaping of GDR scholarship in this country by its radical challenge to the traditional Marxist paradigm within which this scholarship had been framed. In the dialogues and debates that took place among the overlapping circles of new left journals like *New German Critique*, feminist organizations like Women in German, and American GDR scholars, feminist perspectives played an important role in the developing critique of Marxism itself. In turn, through the active exchange between feminist Germanists in this country and women writers in the GDR, this critical rethinking of Marxist paradigms from a feminist perspective affected the development of a critical consciousness in the GDR. In the fourth of her *Kassandra* essays (presented in 1983 as the Frankfurt Lectures on Poetics) Christa Wolf likened this development (at least as she experienced it), to a virtual paradigm shift:

Mit der Erweiterung des Blick-Winkels, der Neueinstellung der Tiefenschärfe hat mein Seh-Raster, durch den ich unsere Zeit, uns alle, dich, mich selber wahrnehme, sich entschieden verändert, vergleichbar jener frühen entscheidenden Veränderung, die mein Denken, meine Sicht und mein Selbst-Gefühl und Selbstanspruch vor mehr als dreißig Jahren durch die erste befreiende und erhellende Bekanntschaft mit der marxistischen Theorie und Schweise erfuhr.¹

I begin around 1975. By the mid 1970s feminist theory and feminist literary studies had established themselves as legitimate fields of inquiry within American universities. The call for a radical revision of literary scholarship from the perspective of gender that had been initiated in the late 1960s by texts like Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968) and Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969) had begun to show results. By 1975 the publication of the first review essays and the first anthologies both attested to the impact feminism had already had on literary studies and pointed ahead to the impact it was to have on the critical inquiry of western culture at large.² Perhaps the best indicator of the degree to which feminist literary studies had arrived was the fact that major commercial publishers were investing in it.³

In western Europe the incursion of feminism into the academic and literary public spheres was also well under way by the mid-1970s. In fact it was precisely around the mid-decade mark that some of the texts that were subsequently to become landmarks in the history of contemporary feminist theory appeared: In France, Hélène Cixous' "Le rire de la méduse" and, co-authored with Catherine Clément, *La Jeune née*, were published in 1975; Luce Irigaray's *Spéculum de l'autre femme* had been published a year earlier, the same year in which Julia Kristeva had taken up the question of woman in her work.⁴ In England, Sheila Rowbotham (particularly with her 1973 study, *Woman's Consciousness, Man's Time*) had laid the groundwork for a socialist-feminist analysis of culture, while Juliet Mitchell had proposed and initiated a feminist revision of psychoanalysis.⁵ In West Germany, the first contribution to feminist theory, Alice Schwarzer's *Der "kleine Unterschied" und seine großen Folgen* appeared in 1975, while the "feminine aesthetics" debate was launched a year later with the publication of Silvia Bovenschen's essay on this question.⁶

Meanwhile, in the GDR, women were also engaging in public debate on what, in traditional Marxist parlance, was still commonly referred to as the Woman Question. Unlike in the West, however, their engagement did not take the form of political activism in behalf of women's liberation nor was it articulated in the form of feminist theory. In the GDR, rather, where oppositional