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**LOCATING THE LESBIAN SOCIALIST SUBJECT:
ABSENCE AND PRESENCE IN EAST GERMAN FICTION, SEX DISCOURSE,
AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES**

By

Dara Kaye Bryant

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

LOCATING THE LESBIAN SOCIALIST SUBJECT: ABSENCE AND PRESENCE IN EAST GERMAN FICTION, SEX DISCOURSE, AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES

By

Dara Kaye Bryant

Locating the Lesbian Socialist Subject: Absence and Presence in East German Fiction, Sex Discourse, and Personal Narratives, explores two distinct lesbian discourses in GDR culture that existed in the 1980s and continued through the political upheaval of 1989 and 1990. The first discourse is visible in the dominant culture in the form of East German sex manuals and women's fiction; it appropriates same-sex images for a variety of reasons, ranging from negative social reinforcement to portraying a utopian space symbolizing a political and social sisterhood. The other discourse comes from GDR lesbians attempting to naturalize lesbianism in socialist society. In reports documenting demonstrations at the Ravensbrück KZ memorial site and in interview literature, lesbian authors begin to create an "authentic" lesbian presence based on the material reality of their own lives and events. Their writing creates a sexual identity that challenges the images propagated by mainstream GDR culture. This study draws from approaches developed in queer theory and cultural studies that allow an investigation of how lesbian and socialist identities are intertwined in a variety of literary as well as extra-literary texts.

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This dissertation is dedicated with love to my mother, Ruth Ann Wood.

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Chapter One

Introduction

When I began working on my doctorate, I was interested in integrating questions of sexuality into feminist and gender analysis. My first experience with queer theory and the history of sexuality led me to the early question of how homosexuality in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) fit into histories of sexuality and specifically what was different in a socialist context from a Western, capitalist context. My first research project on homosexuality was something of a reconnaissance mission. Though I was well acquainted with East Germany and its literature, it was my goal to find as much primary material as I could on homosexuality specifically and track how it was portrayed in those documents. My first experience with this topic did not bear much fruit. There was very little that counted as a primary document from or by homosexuals that I was able to locate, but I did find the occasional thread, such as post-Wende articles on homosexuality in the GDR (Gay News Germany 1977, Gerlind/Schaab 1994, Lemke 1993, Schoofs 1994, Murray 1993, Soukoup 1990), basic articles on women's lives in the GDR (Funk 1992, Ferree 1993, Wierling 1993), a smattering of first-hand accounts from lesbians and gay men (Sillge 1991, Lemke 1991, NGC 1981), and a monograph from an East German sexologist about gay men in the GDR (Starke 1994). Though the information was somewhat hodge-podge in nature, it did provide me with some basic historical facts about homosexuality in the GDR as well as first insights into how East German homosexuals viewed their position vis-à-vis socialist society and the state and how they were portrayed by outside sources. I was unable to escape that a relatively positivist narrative was developing about the progress of homosexuals in the GDR.

A seeming lack of information whetted my curiosity, encouraging me to pursue the topic further. Specifically, I was interested in lesbian life in the GDR, but still on a content-based, material level. As I continued this line of research, I encountered two

collections of interview literature by lesbians (*Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, Gutsche 1991; *viel zuviel verschwiegen* Kartstädt/Zitzewitz 1996), lesser-known counterparts to the Lemke collection of narratives by gay men, *ganz normal anders*. As I continued to focus my energy on unearthing as much material as I could about East German lesbians, I realized that material on gay men was much easier to locate, while information on lesbians was somewhat more difficult. I also realized that, while there had been a limited amount of scholarship on the topic from Germanists (Paul 1994, Hillhouse 1990, Sweet 1994) none of it took a critical stance and examined how lesbians were portrayed or how they portrayed themselves. This scholarship was more concerned with proving that lesbians and homosexuals were on a teleological path toward emancipation in the East German system.

As a reaction to this, I became concerned with showing how two lesbian voices dominated East German lesbian discourse as well as attempting to uncover other stories that conflicted with the teleology. I found in the interview collections, that individual lesbian voices created a non-monolithic portrayal of GDR lesbianism with personal experience as varied as the number of voices. Thus, my first attempts to contribute to GDR homosexual scholarly discourse were frustrated and frustrating at best, though the germ of my dissertation project was contained in these early attempts. Though early presentations were able to show that these few personal narratives disrupted the teleology they were supposedly a part of, I became interested in finding more documentation from lesbians themselves as well as pursuing the question of the lesbian groups that appeared in 1982/1983 and eventually led to the publication of an underground newspaper *frau anders* by the Jena/Weimar group in January of 1989, shortly before the *Wende*. In addition to texts about the lesbian movement of the 1980s, I hoped to find other representations of lesbian life, especially from the first thirty years of the GDR. The search for ever more documentation was fueled by American scholarship on U.S. lesbian

personal narratives that encouraged creating a more differentiated lesbian identity (Zimmerman 1984, Martin reprinted 1998).

When I had completed research in Berlin archives *GrauZone* and the *Lila Archiv*, and *Spinnboden* as well as the library at the Humboldt University's *Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Frauenforschung*, I had amassed a sizeable collection of original documentation from different church-based lesbian groups as well as articles by and about GDR lesbians from a number of German feminists' and queer magazines. In discussions with Elizabeth Mittman, it became clear that, though I was prepared to investigate lesbian representations that they themselves generated, I was unfamiliar with other representations, which led to the choice to investigate literature by GDR sexologists as well as women's fiction. It was clear to GDR literary scholars that there was no lesbian literature that had been published in the GDR, just as it was clear that homoerotic images were often a part of women's texts. The question had not yet been asked or answered why lesbian images were used in women's fiction and why exactly East German literature that contained lesbian characters, especially when some of those characters are central to the plot, such as Waldtraut Lewin's short story "Dich hat Amor gewiß..." or Christa Wolf's *Kassandra*, could not be considered lesbian literature. It was with reservations about the predominant story of a homosexual teleology in the GDR as well as a curiosity about mainstream representations of lesbians and how they conflicted with/or reinforced lesbian's representations of themselves that I began working on the dissertation proper.

The first paragraph to Ursula Sillge's book about lesbians in the East Germany, *Un-Sichtbare Frauen*, relates the following anecdote. In 1989, a woman is interviewed on the street, and asked how she would react if her children were homosexuals. She answers, "That can't happen. I have daughters" (10). This story is indicative of how lesbians in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) felt about their social and political position.

Starting in the early 1980s, large cities like Berlin, Dresden, and Leipzig had lesbian groups that met under the protection of the Protestant Church. They networked with other non-sanctioned groups meeting in the church, such as feminists and peace advocates, and with other gay and lesbian groups in East Germany. East German controls on copying and paper had previously made any kind of underground paper or large-scale written communication, i.e. fliers, posters, newsletters, impossible. The church groups had new freedom to disseminate bulletins and other materials but had to stamp all of their copied material “for in-church use only.” The groups that formed outside of the church in the mid-1980s faced a 2-3 month runaround every time they wanted 100 copies of a program for their meetings.¹ Despite these controls lesbians started documenting their actions, and in January 1989 the first lesbian newsletter, *frau anders* was created. Though it was circulated among the lesbian groups meeting in the churches and their friends,² the formation of a lesbian movement remained largely unnoticed. Lesbians created a networking system, but access to civil society was still denied them.

This dissertation explores two distinct lesbian discourses in GDR culture in the 1980s and around the *Wende*. The one originates from non-lesbians and appropriates same-sex images to serve a specific purpose within the larger heterosexual discourse. This discourse is most evident in women’s fiction and GDR sexology. The other comes from GDR lesbians. It is an attempt to naturalize lesbianism in socialist society, i.e. to make lesbian presence an everyday, unquestioned element of society. Only when lesbians themselves write do they begin to create a lesbian “reality.” Their writing attempts to convey “authentic” lesbian images based on the material reality of their lives and events. Reports documenting demonstrations connected with Ravensbrück, a Nazi concentration camp for women, and personal narratives are core examples of how GDR lesbians

¹Sillge, Ursula. Lecture on lesbians in the GDR. MonaLiesa, Leipzig. October 4, 2001.

² Paper shortages meant that they could only make 100 copies. These tended to be passed around groups of friends.

authenticized themselves. Their writing creates a sexual identity that is distinctly different from the images propagated by GDR culture.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The overarching critical framework for this dissertation is forged from cultural studies and queer studies. In a cultural studies approach, instead of concentrating on the traditional ‘high’ cultural forms of literature, the relationships between high culture and the more common ‘everyday’ culture—including forms of social interaction—are examined. The redefinition of the meaning of text expands and explodes the category ‘literature’—as well as the canon—by allowing for a far greater range of analyzable material. In the East German context, the high/popular culture split takes on a new dimension, as high culture was easily accessible. Furthermore, popular culture was highly regulated by the state and either treated as a luxury item or discouraged altogether, as in the banning of some outside forms of popular music. Despite the line between “high” and “popular” that was defined along a different set of parameters in the GDR, cultural studies still allows literary analysis to examine a variety of literary and extra-literary texts, such as books and articles by prominent GDR sexologists, women’s fiction, documentation of public events, and personal narratives.

Though the Birmingham school privileged popular culture as a potential site of resistance in direct contrast to the Frankfurt school, which believed that mass culture was a site of potential danger, neither provides clear boundaries for East German text production. For example, though sex manuals fall on the side of popular culture in Western cultural contexts, in the GDR they formed one branch of state-controlled rhetoric defining parameters of socialist behavior. Life writing, in the form of *Protokollliteratur* in the East German context, is clearly a popular form hoped to counter socialist rhetoric. The keeping of minutes and report writing on group activities, a state-learned activity, is reclaimed by lesbians to record their own history, thus problematizing

a textual form usually directly aligned with the state. The reification of state ideology in state-sanctioned sex discourse is thus reasonably apparent, whereas how and whether that ideology gets replicated in other forms of discourse is not. To what extent does state ideology shape lesbian discourse as well as in what ways do lesbians, by creating their own discourse, create their own site for resistance to state ideology while also perpetuating it? Cultural studies allows for the analysis of how popular language and “common sense” were used to manipulate the populace and contribute to a larger hegemonic agenda: that is, cultural studies is concerned with how subject and ideology are mutually constitutive. Despite the apparent contradiction, cultural studies can both investigate popular culture as a vehicle for manipulating the “unwashed masses” as well as a site for resisting dominant ideology.

As text production is blurred in its correlation to the ideological project of the GDR, so is the creation of the lesbian subject. Just as cultural studies examines how subjects are formed within a dominant ideology, this dissertation examines what kind of lesbian subjects are constituted in a variety of texts. The texts will demonstrate that there is a shift from “the lesbian” as she is imagined in texts not created by lesbians to a plural subject in texts created by lesbians themselves. In multi-vocal lesbian-created texts, subjectivity is fluid and flows from group-identified to multiple individual subjectivities, depending on the context.

Queer theory reveals the unstable binary opposition of homosexuality and heterosexuality in which the dominant term, heterosexuality, depends upon the subordinate term, homosexuality, for its meaning. Moreover, this binary of sexuality/sexual orientation, even though it is a benchmark of identity in 20th century society, is revealed to be inadequate to contain the fluidity of sex/sexuality, or, for that matter, identity. It is the task of queer theory to expose the social constructedness of sexual identity and to disrupt the naturalized conflation of gender, sexuality, and identity.

Queer theory demonstrates that sexuality cannot be contained by the category of gender, since - as Judith Butler would argue - there is no clear correlation between genitalia and sexual practice or gender identity, other than that which is culturally prescribed. In essence, this breaks down assumptions about the necessary interdependence of sexual orientation, gender identity and sexuality by demonstrating that these categories are arbitrary constructions that contribute to the formation of post-19th century, capitalist, Western social and cultural structures. In East German socialism, a mutually constitutive binary between socialism and capitalism in the GDR subtended and delineated gender and sexuality.

The analysis of mechanisms of normativity proposed by queer theory allows this dissertation to examine how the construction of sexual identity is perpetuated in a variety of texts. It examines not only the fact that unmarked identities, such as male and heterosexual, are simultaneously created by and create marked identities, such as female and homosexual, but perhaps more importantly how this has been accomplished in various historical settings. West German anti-homosexual laws are based on a narrative of productive heterosexuality in which male homosexuals are in the long run more dangerous to the health of the state than lesbians who retain their status as mothers. This is based on the bourgeois myth/binary opposition that men are sexually active while women are passive/receptive. Thus, lesbianism remains unnamed in anti-homosexual legislation (Moeller 1994). In East Germany however the anti-homosexual discourse centered on a narrative of vulnerable youth. In this narrative, though based on a similar masculine/feminine binary as in the West, there is also the fear of the masculinized, sexually active lesbian. Both homosexual men and masculinized lesbians posed a threat to the social body through the potential *seduceability* of youth, that led to setting the age of consent at eighteen for homosexual sex acts while it was sixteen for heterosexuals.

In addition to queer theory, the history of sexuality also poses interesting questions to any study dealing with socialism and homosexuality. Despite the repressive practices

of the state, it cannot be ignored that, especially compared to the Federal Republic of Germany, laws regarding homosexuality were relatively progressive. Early on, the GDR completely repealed the Nazi additions to §175,³ the law from the turn-of-the-century German monarchy that outlawed male homosexual behavior, and then completely repealed the paragraph a year before West Germany decriminalized homosexual acts between consenting men age 21 and older. Even the addition of §151⁴ despite the problems that it created for homosexuals, in this case both gay men and lesbians, was in a legal sense less extreme than Western anti-homosexual legislation. Socialism has a history of contradictory responses to homosexuality. The Socialist Party in the Weimar Republic supported Magnus Hirschfeld's studies on sexuality as well as his campaign to decriminalize male homosexuality, while within the early years of the Nazi regime, Socialist rhetoric against the Nazi party conflated the Nazis' perverse political goals with a sexual perversion evidenced in Röhm's power and the supposed infiltration of the Nazi party with gay men. These are two extremes that are not easily reconciled. This dissertation will also examine the contradictions in East German socialist dealings with lesbians and find them to be, though not nearly as extreme, also problematic.

Legal Status and Historical Context

Though an understanding of lesbianism in the GDR cannot be reduced to its documentable history, it is necessary to understand the basic legal and social context that East German lesbians were a part of. Within six months of the formation of the GDR state, the Nazi Anti-Homosexual Law, §175a, was repealed. §175 was fully repealed in 1968. However, §151 of GDR law was ratified in the same year making the homosexual legal age of consent eighteen, while the age of consent for heterosexuals was sixteen. With the ratification of §151, lesbians were first legally recognized in the GDR, albeit

³ During the Nazi regime, §175 was newly applied so that seemingly harmless acts, such as "erotic glances" or mutual masturbation were treated as criminal. The paragraph was also modified into §175a so that it added crimes like the abuse of a situation of dependency (e.g., employer/employee or teacher/student).

⁴ In the GDR, it set the age of consent for homosexuals higher than for heterosexuals.

negatively. This law was in fact the legal basis for imprisoning many homosexuals in the GDR after homosexuality was ostensibly legalized: “Ein Erwachsener, der mit einem Jugendlichen gleichen Geschlechts sexuelle Handlungen vornimmt, wird mit Freiheitsstrafe bis zu drei Jahren oder mit Verurteilung auf Bewährung bestraft” (*Strafgesetzbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*). Despite the “legalization” of homosexuality in the GDR, it would be the mid-1980’s before homosexual clubs were officially recognized and §151 would not be repealed until December 1988. Up to the *Wende*, homosexuals were for the most part denied access to public space as homosexuals (Paul 1994, Sweet 1998, Sillge 1991).

One way that gays and lesbians found each other was through personal ads. Theoretically, any person could put a personal ad in a newspaper, like the *Wochenpost*, to meet people suitable for marriage or long-term relationships. The only restriction was that the ads could not be printed if they contained any “Formulierungen wider die sozialistische Moral und Ethik” (Sillge 1991 132). Depending on the year and political climate, this public venue was more or less useful. In order to place ads, lesbians used code words like *nette Brieffreundin*, *Sappho*, *Gleichgesinnte*, etc. (Sillge 1991 72; Müller 1988 104). At times when homosexuality was virtually invisible, like in the 70s, these types of ads were reasonably easy to place and the responses were numerous. However, as homosexual groups became more visible to the state and attempted to enter civil society actively as gays and lesbians, it became increasingly difficult to place a personal ad. Homosexual relationships were still considered contrary to the socialist moral code. Homosexuality was tolerated, but not encouraged and certainly homosexuals were not to be given a public forum.

As early as 1973, gays and lesbians attempted to form state-recognized *Arbeitskreise*. The first was the *Homosexuelle Interessengemeinschaft Berlin*. However, after being denied a permanent meeting place and requisite state funding, this group lost membership and eventually folded. Many other groups were formed in the next ten years

and they also attempted to gain state recognition, but without any lasting success. Homosexuality may have been legal, but homosexuals were told in no uncertain terms that their attempts to organize would continue to be denied by the state (Sillge 1991 125). In many cases, those who applied for meeting permits were often “invited” in by the police for questioning. They were also followed and harassed by the police and Stasi (Sillge 1991 138-139).⁵

In the years between the first attempt to gain licenses to meet publicly and the recognition of lesbian, gay and mixed homosexual groups, the state carried out psychological and medical studies to solve the encroaching homosexual “problem.” Early studies were predictably negative. For example, scientist Günther Dörner claimed that he had isolated a homosexual hormone and further hoped to cure homosexuals of their sexual desires. His scientific studies at the *Haus der Gesundheit* initially drew a large number of gay men and lesbians. However, as soon as it became apparent that they would be subjects for Dörner’s experiments, many did not return and those who did used the chance to “network” (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 60, 79, and 138). In the mid-80s, there appeared studies that were more positive as well as the first book about homosexuality.⁶ These may not have been well publicized, but they added legitimacy to requests for access to public space by GDR homosexuals.

While this was going on, in several cities such as Berlin, Leipzig, Halle, and Dresden, groups of homosexuals chose not to wait for state recognition and turned to the Protestant church. Under the protective umbrella of the church, groups were able to meet on a regular basis as early as 1982. Most of these groups split into separate lesbian and gay male groups that shared a common space and time slot. Although these groups were small, they created a vital network. By 1985 the *Sonntags-Club*, the first “secular” group formed. Although the church groups dominated, more secular groups were able to form,

⁵Of course, this was not only due to lesbian sexuality, but also to the state’s need to control and/or squelch any organization considered beyond its control.

especially after the dropping of §151 in 1988. The secular groups tended to be mixed, although there were concerns from lesbians that gay men dominated the groups, creating power struggles to maintain parity. 1989 saw a surge in the formation of secular and church groups, so that by the *Wende* every *Bezirk* in East Germany, with the exception of two (there were a total of fifteen), had either the one or the other.

Social Positioning of Lesbian Groups

In this section, I will look at how the lesbian movement is situated within the social context of the GDR: specifically, how it relates to the GDR state, the type of movement it was, and the alliances it formed. Lesbians in the movement were building their own community against the socially and politically accepted heterosexuality of the GDR, fighting for visibility, constructing a lesbian history and, consequently, placing traditional ideals of womanhood in question. Throughout German history in the late 19th and 20th centuries, compulsory heterosexuality was strongly undergirded by aggressive pro-natalist strategies of the various governments. Although each government strove to differentiate itself from the previous state (the Weimar Republic strove to differentiate itself from the monarchy, the Nazis strove to differentiate themselves from the Republic, etc.), women in each case continued to be reduced both socially as well as politically to their reproductive abilities.⁷ This was no different in the GDR. Although women were encouraged in the first 20 years of the GDR to take an equal role in the construction of the new German socialist state as workers, by 1972 they were once again encouraged to embrace the role of (working) mothers. In that year, Erich Honecker and the central committee passed a package that was unofficially termed *Muttipolitik* (mommy politics) which contained the initiative to legalize abortion and provide working mothers with a

⁶Reiner Werner's book *Homosexualität* largely deals with the term homosexuality as a universal for gay male sexuality, but does include a somewhat short chapter on *die weibliche Homosexualität* (133-137).

⁷For in depth discussions of pro-natalism in Wilhemine Germany see Fout, in the Weimar Republic see Grossman (1983), in Nazi Germany see Bock and Grossman (1991), and in the Federal Republic see Moeller (1989 and 1994).

paid year to care for a newborn (*Baby-Jahr*) and extensive child care (Ferree 1993). Under these socialist initiatives, men were in no way legally responsible for children, as long as the mother was alive and deemed fit. These rights for women, while arguably regarded as progressive--for example, they were often used by Western feminists to prove socialist women's emancipation in relation to themselves--also served to bind GDR women to child care and the reproductive process as well as limiting working women (approximately 94% of GDR women) to a limited range of stereotypically "feminine" jobs (e.g., teacher and health care worker).⁸ Moreover, mommy politics served, in some ways, to make lesbianism in the GDR inconceivable, since the concepts of mother and lesbian were mutually exclusive to the East German public (Sillge 1991). The emergence of the lesbian movement in the 80s was in and of itself a form of resistance to the GDR's (hetero)sexual politics.

By building a community centered around their sexuality, lesbians took a necessary first step in breaking away from hegemony of the state since it negated accepted ideology (in this case implicit heterosexuality) integral to the GDR. However, the counterhegemonic ideology formed by lesbian communities contained many of the pitfalls of the original dominant structure. Lesbian communities created their own codes of behavior that affected all aspects of everyday life from clothing to naming and how to describe sexual practices, though not all members necessarily conformed to these codes (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 1994, Gutsche 1991). Yet as the members of the lesbian movement created their own boundaries and set modes of behavior, they asserted themselves as agents within a social system which does not necessarily acknowledge that agency.

The position of the lesbian movement is further complicated by its unclear connection with the women's movement, both of which grew out of peace initiatives inside the Protestant Church. Lesbians in the movement were able to legitimize their

⁸Both Harsch and Ferree explain how women in the GDR suffered under the double-bind of workers and homemakers/child-care providers, Harsch by describing the context for abortion laws in the GDR and Ferree by explicating how the laws for mothers reified a pro-natalist GDR agenda.

position within the GDR social and political structure by claiming their rights as women and, to some degree, by basing their own activism on those rights (i.e., abortion rights, equal work for women and child care laws). In the GDR, the women's movement focused on women's equality and improving women's status vis-à-vis socialism. GDR women avoided—and many still do—the term feminist because it was too Western, too radical and did not represent their goal of equal partnership with men in childrearing and on the job. While remaining critical of the patriarchal structure of the socialist regime, the GDR women's movement promoted a vision of a society in which men and women were able to be “truly equal” in the workplace as well as in the care of the home and family. These goals did not support sexual separation; to a large degree they supported the pro-natalist rhetoric of the state. With such an emphasis on the family as well as childcare, the women's movement created an implicit structural homophobia—even though many members of that movement were lesbians. Heterosexual women's goals that centered on childrearing issues as well as the preservation of a nuclear family unit undercut lesbian goals to be, at least in the home, separate from men. Of course, this relationship is muddled even further by the fact that many lesbians are also mothers, demonstrating the unstable pairing of the lesbian movement with the women's movement.

By examining the lack of clarity regarding any of the aforementioned positions of the lesbian movement--the counterhegemony, the special-interest group seeking inclusion, the blurred alliance with the women's movement and the illusion of larger support from the complete lesbian population--it becomes clear that to speak of the lesbian movement as a single, uncomplicated entity is in and of itself problematic; however not to speak of it as an entity at all would be equally problematic. Therefore, the narratives by the participants of that movement will also contain contradictions and complications as each narrator not only negotiates her own memories of her participation, but also her fluid location within society, her gender, the lesbian community and the lesbian movement.

Dissertation Overview

The next two chapters, Two and Three, focus on representations of lesbians by non-lesbians. The second chapter shows how sex manuals in the GDR established and maintained gender divisions within the anti-fascist national narrative. Sex discourse, produced by the (male) scientific gaze, based socialist gender differences on the binary opposition of masculine/feminine. Moreover, it reinscribed gender based on a socialist/capitalist⁹ binary. Woman's sexual emancipation was, thus, a physical marker of difference between socialism and capitalism/fascism. Within this context, male homosexuality underwent a shift from being a sign of capitalist perversion to a sign of socialist tolerance and superiority. Since women's roles were tied to (re)production, women who fell outside of "normal" sexual practices were as invisible as "abnormal" sexual practices themselves were. Thus, as male homosexuality gained a certain level of tolerance in the GDR, lesbians fought to gain any recognition at all.

Chapter Three deals with representations of lesbians in GDR women's fiction. "The Lesbian" served a variety of functions in literature largely by creating a utopian space for heterosexual women who want to explode the social constraints created by GDR women's roles. Lesbianism is not about sexuality and this women's fiction is not about creating a dialogue centered on the practices and experiences of a community; lesbianism in this idealized form is an escape from the masculine/feminine binary. Thus, when women authors invoke "the lesbian," they are invoking their own imaginations thereof to deal with heteronormative practices under patriarchy.

Chapters Four and Five concentrate on personal articulations of lesbian subjectivity. In the fourth chapter, the dissertation shifts its focus to the first significant attempt by lesbians to enter civic space: creating themselves as both public and textual subjects. This chapter deals with demonstrations by the Berlin group *Lesben in der*

Kirche at Ravensbrück. Documents about the Ravensbrück demonstrations show the group was trying to escape the “sub”—the hidden subculture of lesbian life in the GDR—and break into civil society. In order to do this, they attempted to publicly honor the lesbians who were imprisoned and killed there. They were blocked from making this public “spectacle,” therefore they created their own space by recording these events. Their writing forms an *Ersatzöffentlichkeit* by creating an abstract space that replaces the material space to which they were denied entry.

The fifth and final chapter concentrates on life writing that emerged around the *Wende*. It demonstrates how lesbians, when they do publish, resort not to fiction, but rather to “authentic” writing. In their narratives, they create a multivocal lesbian subjectivity based on the wide scope of lesbian experience as portrayed in *Protokollliteratur*, a form that had attained a certain popularity and respect in the GDR. By drawing *Protokollliteratur*, lesbians were making two claims: that lesbians existed as a social group and that their lives complicated homosexual myths. Not only were lesbians taking advantage of a common literary form in the GDR, but also calling upon a tradition of lesbian writing created mainly in the U.S.¹⁰

It is the goal of this dissertation to deal with representations, not to make any claims about actual practice. By covering the wide scope of sex discourse, women’s fiction, lesbian personal narratives, and documentation of group activities, this dissertation reveals conflicting images of the lesbian and, in some cases, reveals that the lesbian simply does not exist. The following four chapters move through lesbian absence, the idealized lesbian, the creation of a lesbian group identity, and lesbian plurality. Analytically, it is a shift from absence to presence, though, except for the publication of the narrative collections after the *Wende*, these representations occurred simultaneously.

⁹ In GDR sexology, a slippage occurs between the terms bourgeois, capitalist, and fascist in which the one can be substituted for the other and using the one implies all three terms.

¹⁰ GDR lesbians, due to connections in the West Germany, had access to translated US lesbian writing.

Gertrude Stein may have claimed that a rose is a rose is a rose, but it is not the case with lesbians.

Chapter Two

Un-Sichtbare Frauen: East German Sex Discourse and the Occluded Lesbian

On June 28, 1985, a group of East German sexologists and homosexuals met in Leipzig for the first conference on “Psychosoziale Aspekte der Homosexualität.” This was the first conference of its kind in the GDR. The purpose was to create an atmosphere of trust and communication between sexologists and the homosexual community that was supposed to lead to a further understanding and tolerance of homosexuality in the GDR and to the striking of §151 of the East German penal code. There were only 3 women of 26 participants who took part in the conference: Lykke Aresin, sexologist at the University of Leipzig who was also hosting the conference, and Christine Schenck and Ursula Sillge, both scholars and lesbian activists. Ursula Sillge delivered the paper “Zur psychosozialen Situation der Lesben in der DDR.” She had long been politically active as a lesbian and above all, she was concerned with the visibility of lesbians in the GDR, as indicated in her post-*Wende* account of East German lesbian life in *Un-Sichtbare Frauen*.

Though the title of the talk and subsequent article implies a discussion of lesbians in the GDR, it is actually a general statement—as opposed to a discussion—of situations that homosexuals of both genders faced in East Germany; her opening declaration claims that she would like to see an improvement in the situation of “homosexuelle Bürger.” Sillge discusses the problem of searching for the origins of homosexuality, negative stereotypes of homosexuals, institutional discrimination, how to deal with coming out, etc, while using the gender-neutral term “Person.” In only one instance does she discuss a gender-specific, albeit hypothetical, situation—that of being closeted. This example is of a gay man:

Wie das Verheimlichen in der Praxis aussieht, dazu ein Beispiel: Ein junger Mann, der weiß, daß seine Eltern ausgesprochen negativ über Homosexualität urteilen, erzählt ihnen, er sei impotent, damit sie ihn nicht

ständig bedrängen, er solle doch heiraten. Den Kollegen, die sich über Impotenz lustig machen würden, spielt er eine heterosexuelle Rolle vor. Zu diesem Zweck bittet er eine lesbische Frau, mit der er befreundet ist, ihn zu den betriebsfesten zu begleiten, damit sie für ein heterosexuelles Paar gehalten werden. Er ist aus seiner Kleinstadt nach Berlin gekommen, weil das alles nur in der Anonymität der Großstadt möglich ist (Sillge “zur psychologischen“ 75).

Though a lesbian is mentioned in this hypothetical situation, she is literally serving the needs of the young gay man. She provides his camouflage. It is not until the last two paragraphs of the nine-page article that Sillge briefly and vaguely mentions gender-specific problems that lesbians deal with, such as being underpaid while having to raise children from a previous married life.

Why would a lesbian activist concerned with lesbian visibility give a talk ostensibly about lesbians and then speak only in gender-neutral terms or about gay men? The answer to that question lies in part in the forum—a relatively public event consisting mainly of sexologists and men, gay or straight—that seemingly forced Sillge to conform to mainstream East German sex discourse itself.

This chapter will show how mainstream East German sex discourse tied heterosexuality to the socialist subject in East Germany by exploring four popular East German sex manuals from the 1980s. Two of these are single author works, *Mann und Frau intim. Fragen des gesunden und des gestörten Geschlechtslebens* by Siegfried Schnabl and *Denkst du schon an Liebe?* by Heinrich Brückner. The other two are collections: *Liebe und Sexualität bis 30* edited by Kurt Starke and Walter Friedrich and *Unsere Ehe* edited by Wolfgang Polte. The Schnabl publication was the East German standard that families were most likely to have on their bookshelves and although it was originally published in 1968, it was reprinted every year through the 1980s in the same form. This was also the monograph that children might “sneak a peek at” when they

became sexually curious. Because there was no formal sex education as a part of the East German curriculum, Brückner wrote his monograph to guide children in discovering sexuality as well as adults in talking to children about sex. Starke and Friedrich's compilation addressed questions of sexuality for younger adults, and Polte's collection directly addresses married couples, containing a significant section on sex. Each of these books was relatively well known in East Germany in the 1980s and taken together they represent a cross section of official East German sex discourse.¹¹

A textual analysis of these four texts demonstrates how sex discourse contributed to the rhetorical maintenance of sexual and gender roles and established a code of East German sexual morality.¹² As Ann Stoler eloquently states in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, "the task is ... to identify the regimes of truth that underwrote such a ... discourse" (2). The goal of this chapter is to determine what "regimes of truth" were created by East German sex discourse, that is what fictions were created and maintained by sex discourse, not to what extent they were borne out in everyday East German practice. In this discourse, heterosexuality as a construct was a marker for social interaction within the larger opposition between socialism and capitalism. Being properly (hetero)sexual and integrating socialist sexual mandates meant making a clear break from German fascist/bourgeois history as well as denying contemporary Western capitalism/fascism. The binary of capitalism/socialism informs all aspects of East German socialist sexual formation ranging from gendered sex roles to the connection between sexuality and work. The state imposes its own sexual revolution from above that intertwines socialist sex roles with oppositions between nature and nurture as well as frigidity and orgasm. Whereas sexuality permeates obvious discourses such as birth control, monogamy, the female orgasm and masturbation as well as less obvious

¹¹ In my analysis, I concentrate on trends of signification that are supported by all of the texts, though the details presented by each text vary.

¹² This chapter, indeed my whole dissertation, deals specifically with representations of lesbians. For a clear discussion of the different audiences of sex discourse in the GDR, please refer to *Sex after Fascism* by Dagmar Herzog, Chapter Five "The Romance of Socialism."

discourses such as work and an emerging class system that is not directly based on economic advantage, the former discourses are also saturated by socialist rhetoric.

Due to the overwhelming dominance of heterosexuality as a constitutive element of socialist identity, the position of homosexuality as a socio-political construct is blurred, at best. On the one hand, East German sex discourse associates homosexuality with perversion, both sexual and social, making the homosexual suspect as a socialist citizen. Sexual perversions are directly tied to Western fascism, making the homosexual a sign of infection in the socialist body. This fear is played out especially in conjunction with East German boys, the site of potential infection as revealed in GDR sexology and penal code¹³ (Brückner, Schnabl). On the other hand, the acceptance or rather the tolerance of homosexuality is a public marker of socialist progress. Under socialism, the draconic laws against homosexuality were lifted relatively early: the Nazi version of the anti-homosexual law, §175a, was repealed in 1951 and §175, the holdover from the German monarchy, was repealed in 1968. Though there was a new paragraph added that established a higher age of consent for homosexual contact (§151), laws in the GDR were more advanced than those of their Western counterpart. The GDR established a forgiving tone toward homosexuals: homosexuality was not encouraged and it was certainly policed, but it was tolerated on some level. Despite this tolerance, homosexuality still is grouped together with other “perversions” in books about sexuality and children are warned of homosexual predators.

The last section of this chapter will demonstrate that lesbians were largely obscured in nearly all levels of sex discourse. In discussions about homosexuals¹⁴, the German term *schwul* always refers to a gay man, though it is often universally equated with

¹³ Although the wording of §151, the law that sets the age of consent for homosexual acts at 18, is gender neutral, in practice, sexual acts between men/boys were much more policed than those of women/girls. Though it is only one example, a close examination of all criminal cases at the Erfurt *Staatsanwaltschaft* between 1968 and 1989 showed that of those who were prosecuted under §151, only one was a woman. She and her husband were convicted of several sexual crimes against youth at their *Internat* (personal research May-July 2000).

homosexuality. It cannot be applied cross-gender as the term “gay” can and often is in English. Lesbians were barely present in the public version of East German homosexual activism or any discussion of homosexual sex. In addition, sexologists’ portrayal of lesbian sex further obscured the lesbian by imaging it as a simulacrum of heterosexual sex in which one woman, the *kesser Vater*—a term that can be equated with the English term *butch*—takes on the role of the man and the other lesbian remains in practice a heterosexual woman, being guided and penetrated by her *KV* lover.¹⁵ Furthermore, East German (re)productive sexual politics, or “mommy politics,” obscures any sex, especially that of women, that does not lead to reproduction as a woman’s sexuality is inextricably tied to motherhood. A woman’s pleasure in sex is also tied to the man, who is thought to awaken her sexually—erasing thoughts of sexual pleasure not arising from heterosexual vaginal intercourse. Thus, the female socialist (sexual) subject is for all intents and purposes impossibly lesbian.

The Socialist/Capitalist *Sexo-Political* Binary

A pervasive thread throughout all East German sexology is an either implicit or explicit comparison to either previous fascist/bourgeois or contemporary Western/capitalist social sexual practices. GDR sexual discourse was always setting itself in opposition to either the seen or the unseen present and past; overt examples of this crop

¹⁴ *Homosexualität* by Rainer Werner, the 1988 landmark text on East German homosexuality, contained only 5 pages on “*die weibliche Homosexualität bzw. Lesbizität*” in a 184-page text; seemingly relegating the marked term lesbianism to approximately 3% of homosexual experience.

¹⁵ This is not to claim that no East German lesbians played out butch/femme roles, but rather to critique the assumption that lesbian butch/femme relationships necessarily replicate heterosexuality. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* by Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis (1993) as well as *The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader* edited by Joan Nestle (1992) both provide more than enough evidence to demonstrate that sex as well as personal relations tended to work differently between two women than between a man and a woman. There are no clearly gendered divisions that fall along the same lines as male/female.

¹⁶ In my analysis, I concentrate on trends of signification that are supported by all of the texts, though the details presented by each text vary. Anecdotal evidence is used to reveal the trends themselves.

¹⁷ Although the wording of §151, the law that sets the age of consent for homosexual acts at 18, is gender neutral, in practice, sexual acts between men/boys were much more policed than those of women/girls. Though it is only one example, a close examination of all criminal cases at the Erfurt *Staatsanwaltschaft* between 1968 and the *Wende* showed that of all who were prosecuted under §151, only one was a woman. She and her husband were convicted of several sexual crimes against youth at their *Internat* (personal research May-July 2000).

up even in the most unlikely of places. Brückner's sex education book, *Denkst du schon an Liebe?*, dedicates a whole chapter to reproduction as the natural consequent of love. As he discusses the East German chemical advancements that aid in procreation, he becomes mired in a discussion of the evils of capitalist¹⁸ chemical research.

Unkrautbekämpfungsmittel (Herbizide) sind wertvolle Helfer in der Landwirtschaft und zur Freihaltung von Wasserstraßen. Aber mit den gleichen Stoffen haben US-amerikanische Militärs riesige Flächen vietnamesischer Wälder und Reisfelder vernichtet, den dort lebenden Menschen ihre Existenzgrundlage zerstört und vorsätzlich Schäden verursacht, die in ihren Auswirkungen noch gar nicht zu übersehen sind. Ich will damit nur andeuten, daß es nicht von den Forschern oder den Ergebnissen der Wissenschaft abhängt, was für die Menschen daraus folgt, sondern von der Art und den Zielen der herrschenden Gesellschaftsordnung, die bestimmte Forschungen wünscht, finanziert und ihre Ergebnisse nutzt (145).

In this example, Brückner wanted to show how scientific discoveries in the wrong (Western, capitalist) hands could lead to destruction, whereas science in socialist hands was useful. He argues further for the importance of genetic research carried out by the GDR to eradicate disease and social problems, but shows that Western *outsiders* would use such knowledge to further refine class society. On this view, Western genetics would predispose all children to serve a particular class function, (see: Huxley's *Brave New World*) whereas socialist genetics would eradicate disease, creating a healthier socialist body both literally and figuratively. What this pervading fear of the West, which was often covertly or overtly conflated with the bourgeois or even fascist past accomplished was, first, to occlude the similar practices in the GDR, be they social or environmental, as well as provide examples for the separate, progressive nature of GDR society.

¹⁸ In GDR sexology, a slippage occurs between the terms bourgeois, capitalist, Western, and fascist in

In GDR sex discourse, much emphasis was put on a freedom from class structure in socialism caused by the disruption of bourgeois social/sexual systems (Polte 35). Women in the GDR were also not viewed as property, but were independent (Brückner 120, 196). Furthermore, the fact that women were no longer forced to marry for social standing or economical security, since they were able to work in the GDR and earn their own money, was also repeatedly mentioned by sexologists. Focusing on these outside threats, from either the past or the West, created a smokescreen over a variety of socialist social sins, such as young people in the GDR marrying to be able to get apartments and also to get the marriage loan¹⁹, the latter of which was not available to single mothers. Moreover, it did not allow for the new class system built in the GDR that centered on political standing, education, and a *pure* socialist heritage.

For the most part, the West and the fascist/bourgeois past created the other side of the binary that supported GDR sexual and social morals. For example, Western advertising, pornography, and *perverted* sexual practices, such as group sex, are considered decadent capitalist practices, even though they did exist in the GDR. Children were warned against such practices, because they not only went against socialist sexual morality, but also hindered socialist goals, such as the preservation of the family unit as a socialist haven for children. The open secret of the prostitution industry in the GDR²⁰ was not acknowledged because it was seen to be “ein Erbe des Kapitalismus und der jüngsten Kriegsvorgänge” (Falck 59). Since in prostitution, sex was undeniably a commodity, neither (re)productive nor an act of love, it was contrary to GDR sexual emancipation rhetoric. The fact that many GDR prostitutes felt financially and socially empowered as

which the one can be substituted for the other and using the one implies all four terms.

¹⁹ When young couples married for the first time, they were able to borrow 5,000 DM from the state to establish their household. If they had one child within three years, 1,000 DM was forgiven, two children in the payback period meant that 1,500 DM would be forgiven, and three children meant that the remaining balance was forgiven.

²⁰ The embodiment of this industry was easily found around any ports, as well as bars frequented by businessmen, especially those visiting from the West or other Eastern countries. The most evident site of prostitution surrounded the Leipzig fairgrounds, especially when large international trade fairs were in session.

well as excited by the diversity of sexual contact (Falck) is spatially as well as morally obscured by placing prostitution outside the borders of GDR social life.

Western sexuality also signified the socialist fear of cultural infection, the fear that West would gain a foothold on socialist society through its sexual practices, which would then corrupt the whole social order. For example, the Western *free love* sexual revolution that overcame capitalist countries one by one, such as the US and England as well as Northern European countries (countries that had been too influenced by puritanical, bourgeois sexual practices) threatened to overtake the whole world (Brückner 198-99). The insidious concept of sex without social responsibility cut at the heart of socialist sexual politics. In addition to the general examples listed above, the dichotomy created by socialist/capitalist sex practices is carried throughout sexology by three returning tropes: the socialist sexual revolution, *natural* sex, and the frigid woman.

Sexual Revolution

It is commonly thought that the GDR did not go through a sexual revolution like many Western countries did in the 70s. There are many arguments for this point of view and it is certainly true that there are no cultural examples of a free love movement that corresponds in any way to the Western movements. There was however a type of sexual revolution that was strongly tied to the social revolution represented by the ideals of the GDR socialist government. If the West German sexual revolution grew out of “the commercialization, liberalization, and politicization of sex” (Herzog *Sex* 141), the East German sexual revolution was a top-down revolution of propaganda entrenched in socialist ideals and far from spontaneous.

Open sexuality in the GDR was a direct response to its bourgeois/fascist history and the contemporary West. Women were encouraged to break free from the prudery of their bourgeois heritage by learning to be sexually open; the female orgasm itself evidences this sexual shift. GDR sexuality was supposed to let loose the bonds of

“falsche [bürgerliche] Hemmungen” (Brückner 12). A healthy sex life was furthermore a sign of healthy socialism, whereas a bourgeois/fascist heritage was, especially for women, the greatest boundary to sexual pleasure, since they were, more so than men, “durch veraltete Sittengesetze geprägt” (Polte 145). Not only East Germany’s past threatened to infect the socialist sexual body, the GDR belief system, in real and imagined ways, was constantly under assault from outside culture, especially from West Germany. There was always the danger that natural GDR sexuality would be affected/infected by the “Vermarktungsmechanismen” of the West (Falck 141). The sexual revolution in East Germany was yet another marker in the GDR’s attempt to separate itself from outside influence, in this case the *artificial* sexual freedom practiced in the West.

According to sex discourse, East German childrearing practices contributed greatly to the further development of an open socialist sexuality. “Das einheitliche sozialistische Bildungssystem und die gesamtgesellschaftliche Situation in der DDR ermöglicht alle Jugendlichen, Wissen auf alle Gebieten einschließlich der Sexualität zu erwerben” (Starke 253). Since GDR schools offered no organized sex education, the East German social system itself was supposed to perpetuate healthy socialist sexuality. In addition the *real existing* women’s emancipation in 1980s East Germany supposedly provided the impetus for a progressive, productive sexual attitude.

Erklärt werden können solche, den älteren Untersuchungen widersprechende Ergebnisse wiederum nur aus den veränderten sozialen Lebensumständen der Mädchen und jungen Frauen unserer Gesellschaft. Die soziale Lebensweise, das Denken und Werten von Studentinnen und jungen Arbeiterinnen gingen vor Jahrzehnten noch erheblich auseinander. Ein größerer Teil der Studentinnen verstand sich damals auch auf erotisch-sexuellem Gebiet als Avantgardisten, war selbstbewußter, anspruchsvoller und setzte sich energischer als andere Mädchen mit herkömmlichen

Moralanschauungen auseinander. Heute ist das anders. In unserer Gesellschaft wurden diese früheren Divergenzen im Denken, Werten und Verhalten der Heranwachsenden überwunden. Das schlägt sich eben auch im Bereich des Sexualverhaltens nieder (Starke 189).

Socialist activists from the early years of the GDR were by association considered sexually emancipated because of their commitment to socialist values, but over time all women and girls raised under socialism were supposedly more confident and active, making them sexually confident as well.

Specifically, the legislated emancipation of women was thought to result in the GDR's new sexual order. "Mit der Veränderung der gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau verändert sich auch deren konkreten Sexualverhalten" (Starke 77). Since socialism is to have conquered the patriarchal order, women gained equality and society was reorganized according to this principle; all aspects of a woman's life were affected (Brückner 213). Old stereotypes were eradicated and women were living, not only the so-called real existing socialism, but also real existing sexual and relationship-oriented emancipation (Starke 203). There were several social signs of the new sexual emancipation: young people were having sex earlier, women were having their first orgasms earlier, sexual positions were more varied, other non-intercourse sexual acts were finding more favor, the double standard was disappearing, tolerance of masturbation and homosexuality was growing, sexual openness became less dependent upon education and social standing, nakedness in the home and on beaches was considered normal, the female orgasm was more common, and multiple orgasms were more frequent (Starke 348).

The female orgasm, for example, continued to designate socialist progress in comparison to a supposed Western regression.²¹

²¹ Katrin Rohnstock's *Erotik macht die Häßlichen schön: Sexueller Alltag im Osten* is a collection of "Ostalgic" texts about East German sexuality. It is dominated by wistful images of sexual freedom from the GDR. There is an overwhelming emphasis on the openness of East German couples compared to West

Was ein Orgasmus für junge Frauen bedeutet, welch berauschende Erlebnisqualität er für sie hat, das können sie nur selbst ausdrücken. Und sie sprechen sehr freimütig darüber. Sie nehmen sich kein Blatt vor den Mund. Warum auch? Sie sind gewohnt, selbstbewußt Liebesglück zu fordern, auszukosten und darüber zu reflektieren – sie tun es in bemerkenswert feinsinniger Weise (Starke 202).

Socialism itself was the catalyst for female (sexual) emancipation, which revealed itself more and more as generations were raised in the socialist system and were no longer dependent upon their constrictive past. Furthermore, as socialism continued to develop, a growing number of its citizens embraced its freedoms that were also naturally evident in the sexual realm (Starke 350).

Perhaps the most visible physical marker of East German sexual emancipation was the naked body.²² The fact that children often saw their parents naked, that they were allowed to see each other naked, and that East Germans commonly were naked at the beach²³ are used as rhetorical indicators of the revolutionary attitude toward the body in the GDR. An acceptance of the naked body not only demonstrated a break with outdated taboos, but was also a sign of socialist progress in many realms.

Wie unsere erste Partnerstudie ergab, ist ein hervorragender Indikator für die familiäre Gesamtsituation die Einstellung zur Nacktheit. In vielen Familien ist es heute normal, daß sich Eltern und Kinder voreinander nackt zeigen. Das hängt neben einer freien und ungezwungenen

German couples. For example, writers claim that East Germans had sex more frequently and at a younger age. After the *Wende*, East German couples also visited sex shops like Beate Uhse together, sharing the pornography they were denied access to under socialism. As further texts such as *Liebe, Ehe, Sexualität in der DDR: Interviews u. Dokumente* by Barbara Bronnen

(1975) and *Nackter Osten* by Uta Kolano (1995) demonstrate, many East German women felt empowered by the sexual lives they experienced in the GDR and after the *Wende*, as Rohnstock's text demonstrates, this was a point for a certain "Ostalgie" on their part.

²² As an interesting side note, "municipal authorities" wanted to halt the practice of nudism in East Germany in the 1960s and it was the mobilization of the public that stopped the harassment. For a full discussion of the advent of FKK in the GDR, and the state's reaction to this practice, see Dagmar Herzog's *Sex after Fascism*, pp 203-204.

²³ Even today, *FKK* or *Freie Körper Kultur* (nude beaches, etc.) is more common at the ocean and lakes in the new German states than in the old German states.

Einstellung zu allem Körperlichen auch mit den Lebensbedingungen zusammen. Insbesondere in gut beheizten Neubauwohnungen und häufigem, oft täglichem Duschen oder Vollbad gewöhnen sich die Eltern (und die heranwachsenden Kinder sowieso) an das Nacktsein (Starke 251).

Nakedness thus signified normality or *naturalness* in GDR culture, given that the naked body was considered a natural state. Furthermore, it demonstrated not only revolutionary sexuality, but also that economic progress, symbolized by central heating and hot showers, was fully integrated in GDR sexuality. Thus, it was impossible to be correctly sexual without all of other progressive developments that socialism provided.

Schnabl also attempts to create women's bodies as positive sites of sexuality. This takes on the form of socialist reeducation as he introduces female genitalia.

An den äußeren Geschlechtsorganen der Frau fällt zunächst der behaarte Schamberg auf, auch Venushügel genannt. (Die Bezeichnung 'Scham' für die äußeren Geschlechtsorgane hat sich bis heute aus einer Zeit erhalten, in der die Namengebung der Wissenschaftler noch durch vorherrschende Moralvorschriften verwirrt war) (31).

This was a valiant attempt on his part to free women in the GDR from the *shamefulness* of their bodies. The German word most connected with female genitalia is *Scham*, or shame; Schnabl chooses to replace this prefix with "Venus." Foremost however is the attempt to separate GDR sexuality from bourgeois German history and body imagery by emphasizing the naturalness of the body and removing any connections to shame and prudery.

Nature

GDR sexual discourse also proclaimed that the socialist sexual revolution was a natural revolution, in comparison to the Western sexual revolution that was induced by power struggles and market capitalism. Thus, the concept of the *natural* in GDR sexual

discourse is juxtaposed against the Western artificial sexual model. A telling example of this comes from GDR prostitutes. In general, they believed that Western businessmen and politicians much preferred them to their Western counterparts because socialist prostitutes were thought to be more understanding, pleasant, and independent, but above all, more *natural* than Western prostitutes (Falck 17).

Natural sexuality in East German sex discourse was demonstrated on many levels:

- ß Sexual equality, equal sexual satisfaction, and escaping sexual objectification²⁴ were considered a natural demand from women (Polte 145). Women deserved to have this sexual demand met and socialist rhetoric promised it to them.
- ß Naked bodies were natural (Polte 255). They were supposed to be visible and not hidden away; the naked body broke taboos, and contributed to women's sexual emancipation.
- ß It was natural to fall in love and have long-lasting relationships that would hopefully be life long (Starke 16).
- ß The physical and emotional attraction between men and women was natural as well as the desire to engage in sexual activities, such as kissing and "andere Zärtlichkeiten" (Polte 152).
- ß Genital intercourse was the most natural of these sexual activities (Polte 159).
- ß Above all, it was natural to want to conceive and produce children (Polte 178).

Though GDR sexologists acknowledged that sexuality was culturally influenced in Western countries, East German sexuality supposedly embodied the epitome of a natural sexual evolution, in which women's emancipation guaranteed the heterosexual formation

²⁴ Below I will show that East German women were also sexual objects, though this objectification took on more subtle forms than the neon pornography of the West.

of families with children. This was understood to be contrary to the artificial, perverted, taboo-filled so-called sexual freedom guaranteed in the West.

The Frigid Woman

According to East German sexology, women who exemplified socialist ideals (such as political activism, participating in the workforce, having an active family life, reproduction) were more likely to have orgasms and enjoy sexual life. Confident participation in socialism guaranteed sexual confidence for women. The opposite side of this socio-sexual coin is that frigid women were potential sites for corrupting the socialist body. Frigid women were either trapped by bourgeois taboos, proving that they had not overcome their bourgeois fascist inheritance, or they were lured into the perversions offered by Western capitalism.

GDR sexual discourse repeatedly compared socialist sexuality with historical bourgeois sexuality in order to demonstrate that contemporary socialist values had outstripped outdated bourgeois ideals.

Das Auftreten von Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber dem Partner und sexuelles Mißverstehen hängen in erster Linie davon ab, daß sich viele Menschen noch zuwenig mit diesen Problemen auseinandersetzen. Das Thema wird als heikel bezeichnet, die Folge ist fehlendes Wissen. *Ein Rückblick auf die Jahrhundertwende hierzulande bestätigt das. Mann und Frau waren in dieser Zeit sexuell völlig unvorbereitet. ... Frauen dieser Zeit haben mitunter zehn und mehr Kinder zur Welt gebracht, aber viele, vielleicht die meisten von ihnen, nicht einen einzigen Orgasmus, das Glücksgefühl der Liebesvereinigung, erlebt* (Polte 144—emphasis mine).

...This quote not only makes the overt claim that socialists are more prepared to deal with their sexual lives, but it also conflates love with orgasm, showing that this is more likely under socialism. The understood implication is that though the

turn-of-the century family was reproductive, women suffered under a system that forced them into loveless, unfulfilling sex lives.

Though the connection between bourgeois taboos and frigidity may seem fairly evident, the connection between perversion, frigidity, and the West is less transparent. Brückner dedicates a whole chapter to outside (read: West German) influences on children and how capitalist images *prey* on developing socialists. He also demonstrates that perverted sexual practices are created by artificial capitalist sexuality. This connection of the perverted to the West is not accidental, since GDR sexuality is based on *natural* sexual practices. Thus, frigid women, already suspect because of their unhealthy sexual lives and other antisocialist faults such as gossip are also more susceptible to perversions such as masochism or lesbianism (Schnabl 279-280, Polte 135²⁵). Sexologists also claim that these female perversions, while they may lead to masturbation, actually make it less possible for women to experience orgasms during heterosexual intercourse. However, when a man engages in any form of sexual perversion, it is usually described as some part of his natural sexuality that has been indulged too far. For example, a man's sexual exuberance might lead him to becoming a voyeur.

Allerdings ist diese Schaulust noch nicht gleich als Deviation zu verdammen. Es gibt keinen normalen Mann, den der Anblick einer schönen unbedeckten Frau nicht erfreut. Die Aktfotos in den Magazinen überblättert kaum ein Mann unbesehen, und viele geben zu, davon ein wenig oder stark sexuell angesprochen zu werden. Auch erwartungsvolle Blicke ins gegenüberliegende Fenster eines Jungmädchenschlafzimmers und die Astlockguckereien im Freibad bereiten den Männern – ziemlich harmlose – Vergnügen, über die man in der Karikatur und im Film verständnisvoll schmunzelt, ganz gleich, ob sich junge schüchterne oder ältere, daheim zu kurz kommende Männer die Augen verrenken. Abwegig

wird die Sache erst, wenn sie stärker erregt als der geschlechtliche Verkehr (Schnabl 275).

Male sexual perversion is an extension of his sexual potency, whereas frigidity is a sign of female impotence, be it sexual or social.

Though frigid women were still able to fulfill their socialist duties as a sexual partner on two levels, by providing the vessel for the male orgasm as well as continuing to conceive and bear children, it was critical that women be cured of their frigidity. Otherwise, they could never become full members of East German society, thus cutting off their unhealthy connection to Western sexuality. As long as women were frigid, they would remain potential sites of socialist corruption.

Correcting female impotence was given over to men on two fronts: men had to correctly understand and overcome the complicated woman's body, and women had to be fully committed to/in love with the man. The path to proper orgasm in sexual intercourse was the realm of the man. It was his task to teach the woman how to have an orgasm. Whether women were orgasmic or frigid, there is virtually no recommendation in socialist sexology that women stimulate themselves in order to learn how to have orgasms.²⁶ The other advice was that women had to love the men with whom they had sex: Schnabl dealt with this in the section of his book labeled *Anorgasmie und Liebe*.

Verständnis der Anorgasmie ist so wichtig. Zwar löst sich ein Sexualproblem auch bei gegenseitiger Liebe nicht von selbst, aber sie ist oft die wichtigste Voraussetzung, sexuelles Versagen zu überwinden – insbesondere die Anorgasmie der Frau – und körperlichen Einklang zu finden. Für die orgastische Potenz der Frau ist es sogar fast noch notwendiger, daß sie den Mann liebt, als daß er sie liebt (Schnabl 138, emphasis mine).

²⁵ In the four sex manuals, this one reference by Polte is the only place that posits that frigid women could be lesbians.

Oddly enough, it was not important necessarily that he love her back, but only that she was able to make that emotional connection to him. As will be discussed in more detail below, the orgasmic woman needs to be emotionally tied to a man; women are not naturally orgasmic, they have to learn it.²⁷ It was natural for men to find/define a woman's orgasm for her, both emotionally and libidinally. By doing this, he was (re)initiating her into socialism and breaking the possible capitalist/bourgeois hold over her sexual power. Lesbians—especially those who never were married nor conceived children—are particularly suspect given that they are often hidden behind discourses of frigidity. Though many lesbians has relationships with men, at least an equally high percentage are either not interested in men, or they are not able to sexually perform with men. They occupy a sexual space that mainstream society cannot acknowledge—one in which sexual satisfaction is reached without a man's guidance.

Gender Roles

As both Michel Foucault and Judith Butler have demonstrated, the connection between biological sex, gender, and sexual roles is not natural, but rather culturally determined. Given the similarities in Western, capitalist countries and the GDR (which, though socialist is culturally very Western due to its history), it is only to be expected that there are many similarities between gender roles in Western countries and East Germany: In the contemporary U.S. context, self-help relationship guides are committed to helping the two sexes understand each other as they claim that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, and decry so-called biological reasons why women cannot parallel park (I can!). Reading Masters and Johnson's *Human Sexual Response* (1966) clearly reveals not only similar roles that Schnabl outlines in *Mann und Frau intim*, but also shows how indebted Schnabl was to the American sex study. It is not the similarity in gender roles

²⁶ This seems an appropriate point to reiterate that this is part of socialist sex discourse and in no way attempts to reflect any material sexual reality.

that is interesting for this study, but rather how the explication of those roles in East German sex discourse is overlaid with socialist rhetoric, which tries to recreate these sexual roles as natural and inherently socialist.

Socialist sex discourse reveals not only a heterosexist sexual ideal, but also an inherently heterosocial interaction at all levels of society. Schnabl makes this connection in the claim that, “Der Inhalt der sexuellen Partnerschaft [ist] die Beglückung des Menschen und [fördert] damit die harmonische, ungehemmte Entwicklung seines Wesens in der Gesellschaft und in Gemeinschaft mit einem Menschen des anderen Geschlechts” (Schnabl 53). Sexuality and biological sex are both integral components of social interaction. Furthermore, sex education is not only important in developing healthy sexual lives, but is also its own kind of social education. “Sexualerziehung ist in erster Linie der praktische Umgang miteinander” (Polte 254). Because GDR gender roles were in a state of flux due to the expansion of the woman’s sphere beyond the home to include the workplace, it was not always clear in emerging socialism where gender roles continued to signify and where they dissipated. The state itself created much of this fluidity in its insistence on women’s emancipation within the GDR—a necessary move to pull the woman out of the home, at least for a few hours a day, to help build the growing socialist economy. Sex discourse in the 50s thus had the task of allowing women to join the workforce while encouraging them not to abandon their roles as wives and mothers. In the 60s and 70s, the formalization of “mommy politics” reinforced the woman’s bond to the familial sphere, and 80s sexology seemed dedicated to maintaining sex divisions and sex roles. Thus while sex discourse shifted focus as women’s constitutional rights to abortion, child care, and state financial support changed in the early 1970s, its role in reinforcing and in part establishing gender roles never decreased.

The myth of a public and private sphere is also by needs exploded in socialist practice. By the 1980s, it was unavoidably evident as women returned home from work

²⁷ Only in one case does any author make the suggestion that women were able to teach themselves to have

and were burdened with the same responsibilities that they had always had in the nuclear family—childcare and housework—that women’s emancipation in the material sphere, as opposed to the rhetorical one, was questionable at best.²⁸ This created a double-bind in GDR ideology as well as women’s lives: How could women be doubly (re)productive—in the home as well as in the workplace—and simultaneously exemplify the ideals of the caring mother and wife as well as the emancipated woman as dictated by Marx and Engels? In order to deal with this dichotomy, 1970s and 1980s popular sex manuals reified gender and sex roles which allowed for women to break out of the supposed private sphere of the home while leaving bourgeois gender roles based on the nuclear family virtually unchanged, despite the rhetoric condemning them. Through definitions of sexual norms and established codes of sexual morality, women’s roles only increased their production levels (effectively doubling it by preserving sexual reproduction and adding economic production).

Though much of the rhetoric about women’s changing roles was certainly just that, there were some decisive shifts. It is important to remember, however, that the emphasis on women’s active role in society, especially in the workforce and the bedroom, was above all influenced by antifascist rhetoric.

Niemand kommt bei uns auf den Gedanken, [Frauen] “aufheben” zu wollen oder Frauen [...] gering zu schätzen. Die Forderung nach voller Gleichberechtigung bezieht sich auf die *gesellschaftliche Stellung* der Frau, auf die Gleichheit ihrer politischen, juristischen, sozialen Rechte und Entwicklungsbedingungen. Dafür bietet die sozialistische Gesellschaft beste Voraussetzungen (Starke 59).

Throughout these texts we will see again and again that one of the major concerns is not social freedom of women or their more active role in society, although that did play an

orgasms by doing Kegel exercises and masturbating (Aresin in Starke/Friedrich 336).

²⁸ Evidence for this crops up in many places, especially interview literature such as *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* by Maxie Wander.

important role in the economy of the GDR, but rather that social as well as sexual emancipation was a marked sign of socialist difference from fascism and capitalism.²⁹ Being sexually and socially active assured women a correctly socialist role, without actually relieving many household and/or childrearing burdens.

Even in childhood the female role was being shifted as girls were targeted to conform to new ideals of gender roles as well. For example, parents were encouraged to take their young girls and give them not only traditionally *feminine* toys, such as dolls, but also more “aktivitätsfördernde” toys, such as building blocks, so that they could build garages and houses for their dolls. In addition, parents were encouraged take their young girls out to visit developments in the technological and scientific world (Polte 196). All of this was targeted at making girls more willing to enter the work force and to take part in heretofore non-traditional fields, such as construction or the natural sciences. On the other hand, girls were not to forget their roles as future mothers; they were not supposed to abandon play that encouraged nurturing, such as playing with dolls or playing house, but rather supplement nurturing play with the active mental and physical play that mimics the working world. Moreover, boy’s roles were not mentioned at all. There was no attempt to encourage boys to engage in nurturing play. Sexologists did acknowledge that women were overworked. For example, Starke writes about the problems that young women have juggling being a full-time employee, young mother, and primary caretaker in the house, especially when men do not pitch in with the housework (263). Both Starke and Schnabl are however more concerned with how this affects the femininity of the woman and causes her to lose pleasure during sex. Unfortunately, being responsible for so many fields in the domestic and work spheres can lead the woman to lose all interest in sex. Schnabl shows that when on vacation, briefly relieved of their double burden, women often return—however briefly—to the role of the “zärtliche Gattin” (129). The

²⁹ This is evidenced in the lip service paid to equality while placing women in the double bind of worker/homemaker. Were equality more than a rhetorical priority, more legal emphasis would have been

implication here is that any equal division of housework is necessary only so that the woman can continue to do her proper duty as a loving wife. Thus, the new GDR woman may have been able to fix a truck, but she was still tied to a socially and politically passive role typified by texts that naturalized her as emotional (feminine = receptive) as opposed to libidinal (masculine = active). Old stereotypes had been modified and some lines had been redrawn, but in the end, the woman was similarly tied to and defined by her motherhood.

There are also compelling connections between the socialist shift in women's roles and sexuality. Although boys were not being encouraged to develop cleaning, nurturing, and cooking skills, they were expected as husbands to help around the house. Sexologist applied a certain *sexual* pressure to men to ensure that they would help their wives (although it hardly seems to have worked). Sexologists stressed that, because both partners worked outside the home and came back with a full day already under their belts, men were supposed to share in the housework (Starke 336). In fact, men who did not help with housework while expecting their wives to slave for them—men with a certain “Paschamanier”—could then hardly have expected their partners to be able to devote themselves freely to fulfilling sexual desires (Starke 203-204, Polte 151). These men were also accused of not socially satisfying their partners, which then led to their inability to sexually satisfy. A sexually frustrated wife supposedly suffered from/engaged in all sorts of unwanted (sexual) social behavior, such as frigidity and unfaithfulness (Starke 336-337). Therefore, sex was supposed to guarantee women a helpmate in the home as well as at work and in bed. These spheres become inseparable.

Women were also encouraged to take on more “active” roles, in bed as well as in the workplace. By the 80s, women had supposedly achieved this sexual goal (Starke 240). Even though particularly Starke and his sexologist cronies often cited the tendency that women were taking a more active role in lovemaking as well as initiating the sex act,

placed on achieving equal status in the home as well. For example, women would not have been completely

they also stress that men simply have not adjusted to women's sexual emancipation. Starke et al. anticipate that there could still be some disparity between social and sexual goals and actual practice, especially on the part of men (204). Not only sexual aspect of emancipation is stressed within East German heterosexual relationships. By comparing women's sexual roles in bourgeois society with those under socialism, an additional economic factor is evident in sex discourse. GDR women had supposedly broken out of these bourgeois sex roles that would have forced them into a type of sexual slavery/forced prostitution in which they had to care for household and children in exchange for financial security provided by the male breadwinner. Sex under capitalism is a commodity to be bought and sold on the market of the marriage bed, whereas socialist sex is a product of love, supposedly devoid of economic binding. Of course, by emphasizing this opposition between the socialist and bourgeois it was possible to further obscure the fact that GDR women were equally tied to the unpaid roles of homemaker and mother.

This leading discussion of bourgeois sexual roles, especially the "double standard," serves yet another purpose. It first demonstrates that bourgeois women's roles were not biologically determined, but rather socially constructed—largely by implicitly contrasting them to those of GDR women. The *sleight of hand* comes when sexologists elaborate the same kind of social constructions in the GDR, claiming that GDR sexual differences (and thus gender roles) stem from natural differences in the sexes. Thus, gender roles are reified by obscuring their social construction in the GDR context; this builds a binary opposition between *natural* GDR roles and *artificial (constructed)* bourgeois roles. This construction/nature binary is evident as Schnabl, for example, talks about the differences between Western/bourgeois *Begehren* (desire) and socialist ideals of *Liebe* (love). "Einige Unterschiedlichkeiten im Intimverhalten von Mann und Frau resultieren aus der entwicklungsgeschichtlich entstandenen und begründeten Polarität der

saddled with childrearing responsibilities.

Geschlechter” (49). What are then the naturalized sexual differences Schnabl and the others establish?

Ontological and Cultural Sexual Differences

Although socialist rhetoric demanded that women were completely equal to men (even that formulation shows the inequality of the supposition), it seems that there was never any question about whether men and women were the same. “Die Zuerkennung der leichten sittlichen Würde für jeden Menschen enthält auch die Anerkennung der Gleichwertigkeit und die Gleichachtung der Geschlechter. Gleichwertigkeit ist aber nicht zu verwechseln mit Gleichartigkeit. *Die Geschlechter sind durchaus unterschieden*” (Schnabl 27—emphasis mine). Thus, GDR sexuality worked from the assumption that men and women were equal, but different. In fact, they were diametrically opposed. Following this line of reason, it is then easy to see how, although women were supposed to be equal to men, they were still able to be oppressed based on their supposed ontological differences.³⁰ Furthermore, since sexual roles were accepted as oppositional, it follows to reason that they were also represented as heterosexual, since men and women’s roles were supposedly two sides of a coin that belong together. Thus, even though homosexuality was the topic of comparatively brief discussions in mainstream East German sex discourse, there was never any question of the prevalence or the ultimate naturalness of heterosexuality. In fact, as is often the case with dominant, unmarked terms, the term *Heterosexualität* first is introduced after homosexuality is introduced. “Den typischen Homosexuellen gibt es nicht. Immerhin sind unter diesen Menschen einige körperbauliche Eigenheiten und vor allem manche Persönlichkeitszüge verbreiteter und ausgeprägter als beim Durchschnitt der *Heterosexuellen* – so nennt man die das andere Geschlecht liebende Mehrheit der Menschen” (Schnabl 285—emphasis mine).

³⁰ An extreme example of the “separate but equal” fallacy is the treatment of blacks after slavery was repealed in the U.S. Although it is no longer common to require that kind of racial differentiation, it is still

The belief that there are inescapable ontological differences between men and women is a thread that runs through most GDR sexology in telling and unsuspected ways. In general, the scientific portrayal of women's bodies is tainted with negative associations. Recent historical and philosophical research has shown science is not the unbiased field it was once thought to be. What scientists pursue as well as the language they use to report their findings are culturally bound and filled with the sometimes most subtle socio-political biases. It is not surprising that GDR sexologists also revealed much about social prejudices toward women in their studies.

Perhaps the most insidious of these prejudices is the claim that women's bodies are simply more complicated than men's, they are full of "viele Verstecke und Schlupfwinkel" (Brückner 188). They are also more likely to have a variety of problems than men. Not only their bodies are complicated, but all processes connected to them are as well. "In weit stärkerem Maße muß die Frau darauf achten, denn Bau und Funktion ihrer Geschlechtsorgane sind viel komplizierter als die des Mannes" (Polte 126). Unfortunately, it is not only their genitalia that are complicated and must be monitored, but also all physiological as well as psychological processes connected with them. "Der weibliche Orgasmus beruht auf einem Komplexen physiologischen Geschehen" (Starke 67). Already we have come to the heart of the point, men have a difficult time satisfying women, so it must be due to women's complicated bodies as the source of their complicated orgasms.³¹ Men must then learn to *master* these complicated women and their orgasms as they would master intricate machinery or a difficult math problem. Of course, the term complicated also carries with it the implication that they are more difficult—men and women, but especially men must make grave efforts to understand them. Complicated bodies predetermine women for pathologies specific to their physical

common to believe that men and women are still completely different which leads to the different treatment of men and women.

³¹ This acts as a powerful example of Foucault's premise that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive. As the knowledge of women's complicated bodies dominates sex discourse it is tied with the power or the orgasm—namely who grants orgasms to whom.

and psychological complexity. “Die meisten Frauen sind aus psychologischen Gründen sexuell störanfälliger als Männer. Überdies erwacht ihr Geschlechtsverlangen nur allmählich...Ihre orgasmische Fähigkeit festigt sich langsam” (Schnabl 143). Thus, women and their bodies are already physically as well as psychologically suspect.³²

Men, on the other hand, are simple. Whereas women are still a sort of “dark continent,” full of unexpected nooks and crannies that function in mysterious ways and lead them to psychological as well as physiological disorders, men are the opposite; their simplicity is pitted against women’s complexity. “Die männlichen Geschlechtsorgane sind in Bau und Funktion einfacher zu verstehen als die weiblichen (Brückner 45). In this quote, Brückner introduces genitalia and sexual organs to youth; from the beginning, the sexual lines are drawn. Furthermore, Starke also emphasizes man’s genital simplicity, not at the biological, but rather at the functional level. “Das Orgasmusgeschehen des Mannes ist einfacher zu objektivieren und darzustellen als das der Frau” (64). Of course, men are not considered susceptible to psycho-sexual problems, since the one form of simplicity (physical) implies the other (psychological).³³

There are, of course, other differences, besides the level of complexity, that show how women differ from men. Women are softer and rounder than men (Schnabl 42), they have softer skin (Schnabl 43), their voices are brighter and more melodious (Schnabl 44-45), and they have “[die] runden, weichen, wiegenden und schwingenden Bewegungsabläufe, die der Mann als anmutig empfindet, während die männlichen steifer, ‘eckiger’ und abrupter erscheinen” (Schnabl 44). Women’s more delicate features *naturally* make them subject to the masculine gaze. It is this softness that supposedly determines their emotional needs during sex. “So nimmt sie feinste Hautreize, wie sie beim Streicheln und Kosen gesetzt werden, gern. ... Dazu kommt reizsteigernd die

³² In the West, it was feminist discourse that called for a reformation of sexual practices to give women more satisfaction. Specifically Anne Koedt’s article “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” sparked a movement to teach women that the vaginal orgasm is a construct and to value the clitoral orgasm overtook both the US and Germany.

elastische Weichheit des Gewebes unter der Haut gegenüber dem festeren und derberen des Mannes, bei dem sich die Muskulatur stärker ausbildet" (Schnabl 43).

Women are not only biologically but also psychologically softer; they are more emotional than men. Not only a woman's body reveals her femininity, but her "Gefühle, Charaktereigenschaften, Interessen, Neigungen" are also typically feminine (Schnabl 49). Even if feminine emotional attributes are seen as socially determined in part, they are at the very least "zugleich biologisch verankert" (Schnabl 49). The woman is ontologically predestined to be soft, which is connected to her natural physical and psychological weakness. She is known for her "schwächeres Kinn" (Schnabl 43) as well as her skeleton that is smaller and more delicate (Schnabl 44). Even at the chromosomal level, we can see that the masculine chromosomes (Y) are faster (read: stronger) than the feminine X-chromosomes.

Die männlichen Hoden produzieren ebenso viele Samenzellen mit X- wie mit Y-Chromosomen. Einer vielleicht möglichen stärkeren Beweglichkeit von Spermien, die ein Y-Chromosom erhalten (und deshalb das Ei schneller erreichen sollen als die X-Träger), wird es zugeschrieben, daß zur Zeit auf 100 Mädchen 106 Knaben geboren werden (Schnabl 29).

Not only after birth, but before they are born, men are faster and stronger than women.

Examples that GDR sexologists draw from the animal kingdom demonstrate that humans are just like other animals in this respect:

Angeborene bei verschiedenen Tierarten in unterschiedlichem Zeitablauf nach der Geburt erst ausreifende Sexualreflexe werden im allgemeinen beim männlichen Tier durch Reize 'geweckt,' die vom weiblichen, paarungsfähigen Tier ausgehen und über Sinnesorgane wahrgenommen werden. Dadurch werden Verhaltensweisen ausgelöst (Schnabl 24).

³³ This motif of masculine simplicity also masks the problem of male impotence. Women's potential frigidity is a recurring theme in many threads of East German sex discourse whereas male impotence is contained solely within a discussion of how to treat it.

All male animals are supposedly more adept physically whereas females are nurturing. This selective connection to parts of the animal kingdom further ontologically predestines human masculine and feminine sexual roles. Females are immediately pushed into the weaker object position (sexually awakened by their need to nurture and create a family) and the man is the stronger subject (sexually awakened by his need to ejaculate). In conforming to ontologically predetermined sexual roles, East German men and women thus conform to the natural dictates of socialist sexuality. The natural is newly reified in GDR sex discourse.

GDR sexology biologically predetermines sexual and gender differences and then further intensifies these differences with cultural influence. Brückner warns that “Selbstbeherrschung wird jungen Menschen besser möglich, wenn sie wissen daß Mädchen und Jungen ihre Sexualität unterschiedlich erleben” (82). The emphasis here is that boys and girls are not only built differently, but also that they actually use or experience their sexuality differently. Only by knowing that, can they then control that sexuality. Acknowledging cultural influence on sexuality does not, however, lead sexologists to question any validity in their studies. It rather gives them another outlet for proving that women and men are exactly as they should be—polarized. When children, for example, do not conform to prescribed sex and gender roles, cultural pressure will eventually modify their behavior so that it does conform.

Im fünften Lebensjahr ist der typische Geschlechtscharakter (von Spielzeug Interessen bis zum Grad der Selbstbeherrschung) relativ verankert und ... [ist] von Gesellschaft zu Gesellschaft sehr verschieden. Ausnahmen sind nicht selten, z.B. wenn sich Jungen wie Mädchen oder umgekehrt Mädchen wie Jungen verhalten. Solche atypischen Fälle können aber meist leicht aufgeklärt werden (Starke 82).

As we see in this quote from Starke, children who do not conform, even though they are supposed to be fairly well indoctrinated into the social system's expectations by age five, will most likely at some stage conform to predefined gender differences. Exactly what those differences are supposed to be, will be discussed in this section.

Schnabl is the author most willing to spell out gender differences as he sees them and, although the other sexologists are rarely so obviously stereotypical, they largely agree with the sexual differences that Schnabl presents by maintaining similar sexual binary oppositions. Schnabl establishes the following (sexual) roles for men and women (49-53):

- 1) Woman's sexuality is imbedded in her whole personality. For example, men are far more likely (2 1/2 times more likely) to sleep with someone they don't like than women.
- 2) Men are more sexually attracted to women's bodies than women are to men's bodies.
- 3) Women are more interested in love than sex.
- 4) Women want long-term relationships; this is less important to men.
- 5) The man is often the sexually active partner. "Dagegen läßt sich die Frau von ihm lieber hingebend leiten, ohne daß in dem Gewähren Passivität liegt" (50). Although Schnabl overtly rejects the word *passive*, his writing reveals that women are in the very least *receptive* partners, and passiveness is often strongly implied.
- 6) A woman is often not aware of how she sexually affects men.
- 7) Both man and woman want tenderness, but society won't let him admit it.
- 8) Women are more loyal than men.
- 9) Environment is more likely to sexually influence or disturb women.
- 10) Women's orgasms cannot be counted on. The woman's orgasm is "außerordentlich unbeständig und versagt oft" (52).

- 11) A woman's orgasm is holistic, whereas a man's is genital.
- 12) Women need tenderness after sex; men do not.
- 13) A woman is satisfied by one orgasm for a long time, whereas a man needs them more frequently. Thus women experience one-tenth the orgasms that men do.

Schnabl uses sex to reify social roles that establish men as libidinal, active, dominant teachers, while pushing women into being emotional, receptive, subordinate students. Men and women are not discussed with an eye to their similarities, since they are only viewed as polarities.

Sex Roles

GDR sexology unmistakably establishes that men act in direct accordance with their libidos; they are driven by libidinal impulses in ways that women are not. Firstly, men are shown to want sex far more frequently than women. This is shown not only in studies on sexual frequency (Schnabl *Sex* 23, Schnabl 92), but also in studies dealing with first orgasms. The male orgasm is portrayed as a physical necessity, thus a boy's need to masturbate (Brückner 82). In fact, only 12% of men reported having their first orgasm during sexual intercourse with a woman (Starke 124). This need for "Entladung" does not however die with puberty; even in adulthood, a man experiences the driving need for the "Ausscheidungsvorgang" that the orgasm provides. Man's need for sex is also his reason for departing from sexual norms more often.

Vielleicht ist ein wesentlicher Grund für die Tatsache, daß Männer weit häufiger als Frauen pervertieren und sich auch im Normbereich weniger treu verhalten, darin zu erblicken, daß sich die männliche Sexualität leichter von der Erotik löst, während beide Erlebnisweisen bei der Frau allgemeiner und totaler verschmelzen (Schnabl 269).

Not only does a man's libido lead him astray from normal sexuality and fidelity more than women, but he also is more affected by sexual impotence, since impotence is then implied in all facets of his life. "Potenz heißt Macht, Wirkungsfähigkeit, innewohnende Kraft, hat also an sich keinen unmittelbaren Bezug zur Sexualität. Das Wort wird jedoch meist einfach als Inbegriff sexueller Leistungsstärke des Mannes aufgefaßt" (Schnabl 173). Though Schnabl would divorce potency from the sexual act, giving it a more universal importance in a man's life, it is exactly the connection between sexual and social potency that binds men. Sexual potency is social potency.

Closely connected to the masculine libidinal drive is the sexually active role the man takes. He is the initiator of the (hetero)sex act as well as heterosocial interaction. Childhood provides the first example of this initiation as children's sex play is examined by Polte. Boys tend to masturbate as their first sex act, but girls are most likely to undergo genital examination by a boy as their first sex act, or "play doctor" (Polte 261)—a girl's sexual initiation often comes from the boys she plays with. Thus, a boy's first sex act is private and arises from his own sexual need, whereas a girl's is a social act. Furthermore, the boy's first sex act ends in orgasm, while the girl's likely does not. The boy is the initiator of both. In adulthood, the roles are not much changed. Men have orgasms because they are physically driven to do so, but women have orgasms in sociosexual interaction with men. Even if a woman seemingly chooses to have an affair, Schnabl's more conservative sexology would have his readers believe that she is lured by the other man, thus robbing her of all sexual agency (139). In addition, if in the course of an affair a woman achieves sexual satisfaction, that is due to the prowess of her sexual predator.

Men dominate heterosexual intercourse. Men have to be "geschickt" during sex, which allows them to bring about the woman's orgasm (Schnabl 145). How orgasm is achieved as well as whether and when it is achieved by both partners is controlled by the man. "Die Auslösung des Orgasmus hängt von der Harmonie beider Partner ab. Der

Mann sollte stets seine Bewegungen und Kräfte so einteilen, daß er etwa gemeinsam oder unmittelbar nach der Frau den Höhepunkt erreicht" (Polte 149). It is the man who has to pace his movements and control not only when the woman comes, but also that he comes at the same time or right after her. He also controls how many orgasms the woman has. If he is "einfühlsam, phantasievoll, klug" and sexually savvy, he can make his partner orgasm up to ten times (Polte 159). Although men may be sexually turned on by women's bodies, women are not turned on by his "Glied" until it "in ihren Körper eindringt" (Schnabl 179). The masculine thrust supposedly arouses feminine sexual response.

Male dominance is expanded as the man assumes the teacher's role over the woman and her body. This begins at a young age as "junge Männer sich nach Mädchen um[schauen] und Mädchen nach männlichen Partnern" (Brückner 107). Men, even young ones, look for girls while girls are looking for men. This is because the girl's/woman's sexuality is wakened in general by a *man* (Schnabl 143).³⁴ In fact, women usually seek older partners in order to learn from their partner's experience (Schnabl 94). If women experience feelings of shame or guilt because of their bodies or because of sex, it is up to the man to educate her, thus leading her to sexual freedom and orgasms (Schnabl 156). Should a woman's husband not be able to sufficiently guide her through her sexual inexperience, she must seek the guidance of a (male) marriage counselor or psychotherapist (Schnabl 95). Furthermore, men are considered more reliable when dealing with women's bodies, for example, regarding birth control. If a man and woman decide to follow the rhythm method, it is suggested that the man keep the calendar of the woman's cycle, should she prove either too irresponsible or uninterested in her own possible pregnancy to be trusted (Schnabl 219, 221).

The prevalence of male dominance in sex discourse fails to address the possibility that some women may have a difficult time during sex based on their past experiences

with men. Male violence against women certainly did not conform to socialist ideals, sexual or social. Therefore, past experience with violence does not get thematized in any significant way by these authors when dealing with frigidity.

If male sexual behavior is marked by visceral drive, then female sexual behavior is portrayed as being emotionally motivated, if not removed from physical needs. As Starke states, there are physical and psychological differences between men and women during sex (196). First of all, women need to work up to sex; it is not simply a physical reaction, like in men (Schnabl 146). Above all, the orgasm is a psychological experience for women (Starke 64, 123). Even their first sex act is “von besonderer Bedeutung” and often has “eine stärkere Bewertung” for young women, or *girls*, than for boys (Kunzt-Brunner/Kwast 72). When it comes to emotions, women are less “gehemmt” than men and strive for “Zärtlichkeit” in ways that men cannot easily attain.³⁵ Women need more “Vereinigung” than men, more “geistige Zärtlichkeit” (Polte 134). In fact, “Eine Frau, die nicht gern Küsse empfängt und gibt, findet man nur unter Hunderten einmal” (Schnabl 149); thus, women are largely defined by their sensual reactions as opposed to physical driving urges. Sexologists further warn men that ignoring the emotional connection women have to sex and their bodies will lead to difficulties in achieving the female orgasm during heterosexual intercourse. Ultimately, these unsatisfied women will seek out other, more understanding men (Schnabl 147).

Because of their emotional tendencies coupled with their complicated bodies, women need a wide range of proper conditions to be able to achieve an orgasm at all. Firstly, they must experience deep love for their partner. Secondly, they must be able to find release from all problems presented by work, studies, and family. Thirdly, they need a “langfristige, positive Einstimmung” as well as harmonious atmosphere all day long to

³⁴ This does, of course, conflict in detail with Polte’s claim that girls are initiated into sex acts by boys: the overall gist is not however contradictory. Both claims reinforce male sexual dominance.

emotionally prepare for the orgasm. Fourthly, foreplay must be long and full of tenderness. Lastly, there must be plenty of “Spielraum” for the orgasm to happen. The man must be prepared to try a variety of sexual techniques, proving sensitive to finicky female sexual needs (Starke 185). In East German sex discourse, a myth of complexity and mystery was built up around the female orgasm so much that orgasm is portrayed as a complicated ritual instead of a potentially enjoyable sex act.

Women were still sexual only inasmuch as they were nurturing, the foremost reason for their supposedly inescapable emotional attachment to sex. “Nach wie vor ist die Mutterschaft eine der schönsten Aufgaben jeder Frau, und der Wille zum Kind sollte in jeder Familie vorhanden sein” (Polte 184). Here, Polte provides the strong reminder that sex is a social act that culminates in procreation; women remain mothers in that structure. Not only is emotion bound to women’s sexuality in GDR sexology, but also a woman’s passivity comes out in various threads. For example, East German girls were thought to masturbate much less than boys (Brückner 60). In girls, sexual inactivity is not only more acceptable but encouraged, since it preserves their feminine inner peace. A woman who is too sexually assertive is undesirable, since sexually aggressive women are thought to stunt the male orgasm (Schnabl 278). Sexual aggressiveness in women is also seen as compensation for the effects of menopause (Schnabl 95).

Another aspect of sexual passivity can be found in the receptive role women were supposed to play. As part of the active/passive binary, the woman is portrayed as a vessel for male sexuality. The vagina is accommodating; it will stretch to the size appropriate for any penis (Schnabl 168, 169). In sex education, girls are assured that they too will stretch so that their bodies can *mold* to their lover’s penis (Brückner 68-69). Sex discourse, while allowing for other areas of stimulation, emphasizes that sex can only provide full satisfaction in heterosexual genital intercourse.

³⁵ Men however are encouraged to strive to understand the emotionality of women so that they can communicate with them sexually.

Auch eine vorwiegende an der Klitoris stimulierbare Frau soll keines falls auf vaginale Geschlechtsverkehr verzichten, sonst würde nicht nur der Mann enttäuscht, sondern auch die auf das männliche Glied bezogenen Bedürfnisse der Frau bleiben unbefriedigt (Schnabl 167).

Vaginal penetration is necessary to avoid male/masculine disappointment and required to fulfill the female/feminine inherent needs, one that is inscribed on their reproductive bodies.

This passive, vessel-like sexuality of the woman also places women in the subordinate position of the sexual hierarchy. Starke states, for example, that the female orgasm is more tied to men than a man's is to women (125).³⁶ The woman is not only physically dependent/subordinate to the man, but also emotionally. It is claimed that women want to be dominated by men. "Vom Manne wünschen die meisten Frauen einen kleinen Schuß Agressivität, das heißt Angriffslust. Die deuten das ganz richtig als Beweis ihres Begehrtseins" (Schnabl 277).³⁷ Women are supposedly aroused emotionally when men dominate them, leading to physical arousal dependent upon rituals of desire.

Women also inhabit the position of the naive, uninitiated student. First of all, women are supposedly unaware of their erotic effect on men; they unwittingly taunt and tease men. Girls choose clothing without considering the erotic effect it will have on men they come in contact with.³⁸ Brückner writes of the young woman/girl who first realizes that she looks "grown up." She dresses herself up, enjoying her appearance, but she "[wird] durch das Ansinnen des jungen Mannes überrascht oder abgestoßen, weil es nicht bedacht hat, wie sexuell anregend seine Aufmachung für einen Mann erscheinen kann"

³⁶ This disregards the fact that many women can have orgasms when they masturbate, but not during genital intercourse.

³⁷ Such thinking also perpetuates violence as a common, if not necessary element of sex. The myth of male dominance and aggression is tied up with rape scripts that portray the man as the dominating, dangerous gender. Thus women are often taught to react passively in order to protect themselves. Recent studies have shown however that women who adopt aggression are more likely to stave off rape, exactly because it disrupts the accepted rape script and power dynamic (Marcus 1992).

³⁸ Not only are they then expected to police their clothing choices, but also this further reifies the myth that men are sexually dangerous, scarcely able to control their sexual impulses. Thus, any unaware woman who

(89). This is supposedly a sign of feminine naiveté. Not only girls are considered to be guilty of this, but women as well are supposedly unaware of the “erotisch-sexuell” effect their clothing, gait, and make-up have (Schnabl 50). This is part of the script where women let men lead them into sexual activity, instead of making the step on their own, and preserve their innocence.

In addition to being unaware of the sexual effect their actions and bodies have on men, women are supposedly uninformed about their own bodies and need doctors and/or husbands to guide them in caring for their bodies. Women, for example, do not know how to care for their menstruating bodies and need to have doctors—who, if they are not necessarily men, could arguably be seen as representatives of patriarchal medical practices—explain proper procedures to them (Polte 129). They furthermore do not know how their own bodies function during sex.

Viele Frauen vermögen überhaupt nicht zu beurteilen, ob sie in der Vagina oder von der Klitoris her zum Orgasmus kommen. ...Frauen, die auf manuelle oder orale Reize angewiesen zu sein scheinen, können unter behutsamer Hilfe des Mannes lernen, sich allmählich auf seine Genitale umzustellen (Schnabl 167).³⁹

The emphasis here is woman’s receptive function for male sexuality; men *gently* teach women to adapt to the vaginal orgasm as a part of genital intercourse. Other orgasms are considered secondary and unfulfilling. Should women be unable to achieve orgasm during genital intercourse, the blame lies with the man. The woman becomes a potential site for social instability since she is considered prey to men who would take advantage of her frigid, anorgasmic state and lure her into infidelity (Schnabl 140). That women experience their first orgasms with men (or, according to Starke, at least 76% of them do)

catches the dangerous end of the stick is herself suspect. She has let herself in for the unwanted sexual attentions she then receives—fully taking the blame off of the man and placing it on the woman.

³⁹ In the 1970s, US sex advocate Anne Koedt also claims that women are unfamiliar with their own bodies, in the attempt to inform women about the clitoris. There is no way of knowing to what extent Koedt’s or Schnabl’s claims may be true.

is considered indicative of feminine and masculine sexual differences; men are driven to have orgasms by their bodies, but men teach women how to achieve orgasms (Starke 125). Thus, from the first sexual initiation to a mature sexual life, the feminine is guided by the masculine. The man is sexually savvy, physical, and independent; the woman is naïve, emotional, and dependent.

In this oppositional heterosexual discourse, it seems therefore inconceivable that women could have sex without men. Though gay men are conceivable as a super-sexed combination—which creates its own kind of dangerous sexuality—true women are simply too emotionally bound to engage in more than *zärtliche* exchanges. Visceral sex from women is not part of this sexual schematic.

So wie sich effemierte homosexuelle Männer gern mit maskulinen Partnern verbinden, spielt im lesbischen Verhältnis stets eine von beiden Frauen die aktiv männliche Rolle, ja sie hört auf einen männlichen Vornamen und spielt den Mann, während die andere sich als hingebende, weiblich-weiche Frau verhält. Diese Rollen werden auch im intimen Verkehr beibehalten bzw. bevorzugt. Einer von beiden Partnern ist meist der Initiator, der aktiv Handelnde. Der oder die andere läßt mit gleicher Lust die sexuellen Handlungen mit und an sich geschehen (Schnabl 297).

Masculinizing one lesbian partner effectively masks lesbian sex in sex discourse by portraying it as a shadow of “real” heterosexual sex that can never lead to the desired end result: children.

Harnessing Sex Drive

Using sex discourse to solidify socialist identity and develop socialist citizens must necessarily begin with developing sexual gender roles; normalization however goes much deeper. It is further necessary to regulate sexual behavior to conform to socialist standards. Sexological studies not only reflected and perpetuated this normalization, but

also reified the rules that socialists were to follow. First and foremost, it was critical for the socialist regime to harness sexuality so that it could help the state achieve control. This was first achieved by controlling the family unit so that the heterosexual relationship was indicative of the relationship between the citizen and the state.

Wir sprechen davon, daß in unserer sozialistischen Gesellschaft die Familie die Keimzelle oder – besser – die kleinste Einheit des Staates ist. Vergleichen wir unseren Staat mit einem lebendigen Organismus, so erscheint sein Bestreben einleuchtend, daß alle seine Zellen gesund und lebensfähig sind; denn nur dann wird sich auch der Gesamtorganismus gesund entwickeln (Polte 14).

The family was necessary as a unit of socialist control and indoctrination. The second aspect of socialist societal control was reproduction; it allowed the state to increase its numbers of members who were malleable from the first moment.

The first step in this process was to bind sex to heterosexual love; being in love set boundaries for achieving *happiness* in the socialist system. “Für die meisten Jugendlichen gehören, wie eingangs betont, Liebe und Sexualität eng zusammen, und diese Grundeinstellung determiniert meist auch die Aufnahme von Geschlechtsverkehr” (Starke 154). Thus, the logical precursor to genital intercourse was love. GDR sex education—the occasional lecture in biology class, advice letters in *Junge Welt* (the FDJ youth magazine), and the Brückner text—all had the task of ensuring that youth identified sex with love. Not only was sex supposed to be “in dem Dienst der Liebe,” but also having sex without love was indulging in “vorzeitiger Geschlechtsverkehr” that served no purpose (Brückner 54). Of course, this message does not end with the youth. “Erfüllte Liebe- und dazu gehört auch die sexuelle Befriedigung – ist eine ein wesentliches Element der Persönlichkeitsentwicklung und der Daseinerfüllung des Menschen. Sie ist eines der elementaren Bedürfnisse menschlicher Lebensäußerung” (Schnabl 47). Thus, the only way to become a fulfilled as well as fully developed individual was to

experience sex and love together. In fact, a loving relationship between two partners led to contented wives who were more willing to have sex with their (male) partners (Starke 165).

Love and sex were not the end goal of socialism, but rather they led to heterosexual partnership (Starke 14). Mating rituals such as flirting were seen as “eine wirkliche, erotisch gefärbte Umgangsform zwischen Menschen *verschiedenen Geschlechts*” (Brückner 73-emphasis mine). Placing love and sex, combined with marriage, in a privileged social position was seen as a break with a history in which bourgeois (sexual) relationships supposedly had been dominated by religious beliefs and taboo.

Nachdem jahrhundertlang religiöse Tabus, Prüderie und Geheimnistuerei die menschlichen Begegnungen in der Intimsphäre falsch reglementiert haben, ist es an der Zeit, Klarheit zu schaffen, damit nicht als Folge unangebrachter Scham und Unwissenheit weiter hin Irrtümer, Konflikte und tiefe Zerwürfnisse entstehen. Erotik und Sexualität haben im Bereich der Gattenliebe ihren festen Platz; sie gehören zu jedem innigen Partnerschaftsverhältnis; sie sind Ausdruck des Glücks und der tiefempfundenen Liebe (Polte 140).

In real existing socialism, to love, have sex, and then marry (in that order) was considered a progressive step away from contemporary Western capitalism as well as fascist history. Not only was socialism a break with the taboos of a prude, religious bourgeois society, but it was also a break from a woman's economic dependence on men (Starke 258). According to East German sex discourse, financial gain and/or dependence was the seminal reason for marriage in historical bourgeois and contemporary capitalist society—implying that love was not a motivation. “Heute wird nicht wegen des Geldes, Besitzes oder Prestiges geheiratet. Da ist mehr Liebe, gegenseitige Achtung und

Zuneigung im Spiel” (Polte 97). Thus, love is highlighted as the natural, socialist reason for marriage.

Allerdings lag auch in ihr in vergangenen Generationen der Akzent entweder auf einer Zeugungsgemeinschaft oder auf der Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft. Vollkommen kann die Ehe erst als *Liebesgemeinschaft* sein, in der sich die Partner mit gleichen Rechten und Pflichten gegenseitig Anerkennen, Achten und Vertrauen entgegenbringen” (Schnabl 56).

By placing overt emphasis on love that leads to sex and then marriage, it then becomes possible for love discourse to occlude the fact that reproduction and economic factors were valid reasons for marrying in the GDR as well. Though the marriage loan is highlighted in some sex discourse, such as Brückner’s text, this seemingly direct contradiction—monetary reward for following the steps prescribed above—is rationalized as a kind of “parental” help from the state for the newlyweds. Let us remember that this loan is completely forgiven for couples who produce three children over a five-year period. The emphasis on love in the socialist marriage also masks the continuing economic inequality found in East German marriages. Women continued to receive on average approximately 75% of what men earned and were, for the most part, limited to (stereo)typically women’s jobs, such as “secretaries, nurses, preschool teachers, ...[and factory workers in] textiles and electronics assembly” (Ferree 92-93). Furthermore, it effectively made East German sexual taboos such as non-monogamy, prostitution, or homosexuality—all of which were parts of everyday life—invisible in society at large.

The connection to sex is not however lost in this love discourse. Even though love is supposed to lead to “fest und bewußt gestaltete Paarbeziehung, die sich optimal in der Ehe verwirklicht” (Brückner 125), sex among youth was certainly accepted and in many ways encouraged, especially if it led to a more stable relationship, i.e. marriage. “DDR-

Jugendliche gehen meist recht früh feste Partnerbeziehungen ein, in denen es im Verlaufe einer oft nur kurzen Phase körperlichen Kennenlernens, die auch Stimulierungen der Geschlechtsorgane einschließt, bald zum Geschlechtsverkehr kommt” (Starke 130).

Pressure was already exerted on the young members of society to use their sexuality wisely and ground their marriages in the first sex act, which was also supposed to provide the best conditions for a successful marriage: “Der erste Geschlechtsverkehr ist Ausdruck einer ‘großen’ Liebe, die oft stabil bleibt und in eine glückliche Ehe mündet” (Starke 143). By creating an atmosphere in which love and sex are early goals for GDR youth and providing the opportunity for them to marry young, the state was also more swiftly able to realize its goal of having young women bear three or four children before they reach the age of 30. Thus, sex education, limited as it was, had the goal not only of helping youth prepare for a sexual life, but also of preparing them for an early marriage and family (Kunzt-Brunner/Kwast 108).

Therefore, love and sexual companionship were not the final goal, but rather it was marriage that above all led to childbearing. In fact, marriage was seen as the highest form of social development in which the man and woman form a new social unit. “Wir haben aber gefunden, daß das Paar die entwicklungsgeschichtlich entstandene *Lebenseinheit* darstellt, durch die ein jeder die ihm durch Natur und Gesellschaft eröffneten Möglichkeiten für ein befriedigendes und erfolgreiches Leben überhaupt erst voll nutzen kann” (Schnabl 54-55). This institution served the two purposes of the state listed above, control of the population at large through family units and producing children to enlarge the population. Marriage then became a duty to be fulfilled. “Die Gemeinsamkeit braucht Pläne und Ziele—immer die bestmögliche Entwicklung beider Partner eingeschlossen; sie braucht Pflichten und Aufgaben—die schönste davon ist die Erziehung der Kinder” (Polte 43). As soon as love has reached its goal of producing a pair, that pair is then *beauftragt* to fulfill the task of producing children—the task that supposedly makes marriage worthwhile and holds it together. This is also further

ordained by biology and the classification of humans as a higher species of animals. “Die Vereinigung von Samen- und Eizelle bietet allen lebenden Systemen die grundlegende Voraussetzung für die Kontinuität ihrer Existenz über Generationen hinweg, und sie wird für höhere Tierarten und Menschen zur Wurzel der Sexualität, weil sie die Paarung notwendig macht” (Schnabl 22). Therefore, sexuality makes a full circle; it is not only the impetus for love, leading to marriage, but also the final goal in proving the advanced nature of the species through reproduction.

Reproduction as Sexual Goal

Understanding gender roles and how they are reified by sexual discourse is only one critical step in elaborating the influence sexuality had on socialism or visa versa; another necessary step is defining what actually constitutes *sex*. Although other sexual activities are discussed, and sometimes preferred⁴⁰, in general sex is defined as genital intercourse—emphasizing the dominance of heterosexual discourse in sex discourse. There may be other sexual activities, but all of these are confined to the sphere of “Vorspiel,” “eigentlicher Geschlechtsverkehr” being the real goal. Thus, the sex act “beginnt mit dem Einführen des erigierten Penis in die Vagina und endet gewöhnlich kurz nach der Ejakulation des Mannes” (Starke 158). The realm of sex is fully defined by the penis; it begins with the penile thrust and ends in ejaculation (notice that it does not necessarily end in orgasm, for either the man or the woman). Despite the recurring motif of the female orgasm, focus remains centered on the penis throughout the whole act. Furthermore, the ejaculation is important because of what it carries with it, the possibility of impregnation.

Female sexuality is largely, though not completely, defined by the fact that the woman is the main (re)productive cog in the East German social machine. Under GDR law the woman is completely responsible for raising the child (Polte 223), and should she

⁴⁰ According to Schnabl, sexual experimentation is especially critical in the case of male impotence (201).

have a child outside of marriage, she is assured the full help of the state (Polte 176). The woman's (re)productive role is emphasized on many levels. Sexual maturity is defined by menstruation, the point when she becomes fertile (Brückner 65). A girl's/woman's first genital intercourse, whether willingly engaged in or not, supposedly represented a physical and emotional "Intimität." Despite the circumstances, she was encouraged to carry a possible pregnancy to full term: "durch die mögliche Fortpflanzung, trat der erste Geschlechtsverkehr aus dem individuellen Lebenskreis heraus und erlangte gesellschaftliche Bedeutung" (Starke 131—emphasis mine). Female sexual maturity is a socially significant event that guarantees the continuation of the socialist state, which is evident as Brückner describes male and female sex organs to teenagers; he focuses on male ejaculation and female conception. The opening statement in the section on female genitalia is: "Ein Kind an der Brust zu nähren kann mit zu den tief beglückenden Erlebnissen im Leben einer Frau gehören" (57). From the first discussions of sexuality, girls and women are identified as potential mothers, not as women who potentially experience satisfying sex. Thus, what makes sex satisfying for a woman is not necessarily orgasm, but rather motherhood.

Sex is directly tied to reproduction for women. "Die Hauptaufgabe der weiblichen Geschlechtsorgane ist neben der Sexual- die Fortpflanzungsfunktion" (Polte 128). Brückner is more forceful in his language as he claims that women reach "volle Erfüllung" only in reproduction (128). Indeed, in the case of an unplanned pregnancy, girls are encouraged not to abort.⁴¹ "Natürlich sind nicht alle Kinder gewünscht, und manche Frau ist zunächst überrascht oder erschrocken, wenn ihr klar wird, daß sie ein Kind erwartet. Aber es ist ganz erstaunlich, wie tiefgreifend sich im Laufe der Schwangerschaft die Einstellung zum Kind wandeln kann. Die Mütterlichkeit erwacht"

⁴¹ Of course, this discourse is perhaps in direct conflict with East German material reality, since a number of women did take advantage of the right to abort after 1972. Such rhetoric, combined with the state-supported crèches and day care, must have had some effect however given the high birthrates in young women, even in school and university, as compared to contemporary West and post-*Wende* Germany.

(Brückner 182). Any pregnancy provides the catalyst to a woman fully assuming her special role as a mother; thus sex is also the catalyst to fulfilling her socialist duty.

As a socialist subject, it is the woman's *right* to decide when to reproduce, not *if* to reproduce. "In unserem sozialistischen Staat soll jede Frau das Recht haben, Anzahl und Zeitpunkt ihrer Geburten selbst zu bestimmen. Das gehört mit zur Verwirklichung ihrer gleichberechtigten Rolle in der Gesellschaft" (Brückner 183). Socialist gender equality rests on choosing how many children to have and when to have them. Though this is supposedly a woman's choice, she is given a great deal of *guidance* in the matter. She is not only encouraged to have children while she is young, that is between the ages of 20 and 25 (Brückner 146, Polte 184), but also encouraged to have at least three children (Schnabl 243, Kunzt-Brunner/Kwast 348). Without a minimum of three children per family, the socialist state would not grow, but rather stagnate. In fact, the more children a woman has in a short period of time, the more money she can receive from the state for those children in the form of the marriage loan, natal care, and "Schwangerenbeihilfe" in the amount of 1000 DM per child.

Though financial, as well as other social gains such as housing, are considerable for young parents⁴², sexologists emphasize that children are the ultimate product of the love/sex act.

Auf dem Höhepunkt der Erregung, dem Orgasmus, wird die Samenflüssigkeit in die Scheide entleert. Männliche Keimzellen dringen, wie ihr wißt, in die inneren weiblichen Geschlechtsorgane ein, und falls eine befruchtungsfähige Eizelle da ist, vereinigen sich beide. Ein Stück Mann und ein Stück Frau verschmelzen miteinander zu einer neuen Einheit. Das habe ich deshalb so ausgedrückt, weil es im körperlichen Bereich veranschaulicht, was auch im seelischen Bereich geschieht. Man fühlt sich in diesem Moment gar nicht mehr als selbständiger Mann und

⁴² The financial gains are dealt with alongside personal ones.

als unabhängige Frau, sondern wie ein neuer gemeinsamer Organismus (Brückner 80).

Conception signifies the epitome of the socialist collective as both man and woman lose all vestiges of independence in the common creation of a child.

Special Role of the Family

As already mentioned above, the family had a privileged status in East Germany, not only in social life, but also for the state.

Ehe und Familie, die zwischen Mann und Frau am häufigsten gebildeten Partnerschaften, stehen unter dem besonderem Schutz des Staates. Durch zahlreiche soziale und juristische Maßnahmen werden staatlicherseits andersgeschlechtliche Beziehungen moralisch anerkannt und gefördert (Warczock 124).

This especially heterosexual institution, a marker for East German heterosocial interaction, was protected by laws and received special moral recognition. “Die Familie ist neben dem Arbeitskollektiv der wichtigste Bereich, in dem sich der Mensch mit seiner Lebensweise entwickelt” (Polte 13).

The family unit, as the other side of a social coin that consisted of family and work, was also strongly connected to equality discourse—especially as women’s roles in the workplace shifted.

Mit dem Aufbau der sozialistischen Gesellschaftsordnung in der DDR veränderten sich auch die Ehe- und Familienbeziehungen. Eine große Rolle spielte dabei der grundlegende Wandel der gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau, ihre wachsende Teilnahme am Arbeitsprozeß und am gesellschaftlichen Leben. Ein Komplex sozialpolitischer Maßnahmen fördert besonders die jungen Ehen in der DDR (Starke 258).

The family no longer confined women's movement. By the end of the 80s, approximately 91% of the women worked outside the home (Ferree 91) and a woman's economic contribution to society came from her paid work as well as unpaid work in the home.⁴³ Due to the constitutionally mandated emancipation of women, there was neither a formal discussion of equality nor of inequality in the GDR. Thus, women who had difficulties managing both work and familial duties were considered to have "personal shortcomings" (Ferree 92).

Real as well as imagined instances of gender equality also broke down the traditional gendered division between public and private. In the GDR, there is no private sphere per se, not only because the woman was no longer confined to the familial sphere, but also because family life was supposedly as *public* as the work sphere. It was saturated with the larger socialist goal of educating and initiating youth for the state. The family was to contribute to the social redefinition of class and production by providing the sphere in which individuals could be properly indoctrinated into socialism. Indeed, the "Familiengesetzbuch der DDR" states that

Aus der Ehe soll eine Familie erwachsen, die ihre Erfüllung in gemeinsamen Zusammenleben, in der Erziehung der Kinder und in der gemeinsamen Entwicklung der Eltern und Kinder zu charakterfesten, allseitig gebildeten Persönlichkeiten findet....Kinder vollenden die eheliche Gemeinschaft zur 'kleinsten Zelle der Gesellschaft,' wie sie im Vorspruch unseres Familiengesetzes genannt wird (Brückner 128).

Thus, a healthy family life in which parents and children reach socialist maturity together meant a healthy socialist society, solidifying the family as the smallest socialist unit. Not only do sex and gender roles erase lesbianism in sex discourse, but lesbians are also excluded from East German ideals of the family, because lesbians cannot overcome

⁴³ In the bourgeois model a woman's economic contribution was by remaining at home and providing unpaid work for the family.

the ultimate sexual limitation. “Natürlich bleibt ihnen versagt, auf diese Weise ihr Liebesglück in eigenen Kindern, in einer eigenen Familie vervollständigt zu sehen. Und wenn sich ihr Geschlechtsleben im einen Intimbereich, also unter Ausschluß anderer, abspielt, werden die Interessen der Gesellschaft nicht berührt“ (Brückner 202). According to Brückner, lesbian sex does not allow these women to achieve the full potential of a loving relationship, thus blocking their full participation in society.⁴⁵

Socialist Sexual Morality

Despite its desired break with history, or perhaps because of it, it was critical in the GDR to establish a morality that was seen as being specifically socialist. This was necessary because: “Moralische Normen...dienen den Interessen verschiedener Gruppierungen der Gesellschaft” (Schnabl 45). To serve the interests of socialist society and groups within it is only the superficial reason for establishing a set of moral ground rules. This moral code actually served several specific purposes, especially in connection with GDR sex discourse.

A new moral order was supposed to differentiate GDR socialist society from the fascist and bourgeois societies that not only preceded it, but also supposedly existed simultaneously.

Die Durchsetzung unserer sozialistischen Moral ist verbunden mit der Überwindung der Überreste der Inkonsequenz, Unaufrichtigkeit und Unehrlichkeit dieser “doppelten Moral”, die im Grunde genommen Unmoral ist. Unter neuen Formen der Begegnung zwischen den Geschlechtern werden sich auch heute noch bestehende

⁴⁴ In the bourgeois model a woman’s economic contribution was by remaining at home and providing unpaid work for the family.

⁴⁵ Of course, what Brückner’s reasoning manages to leave out is that many lesbians already have children from earlier marriages. It also ignores the fact that many East German heterosexual marriages are “completed” with children from earlier partnerships.

Unterschiedlichkeiten im durchschnittlichen Sexualverhalten von Mann und Frau “ändern” (Schnabl 47).

Let me reiterate that East German sex discourse emphasized that women had escaped the property status they occupied under bourgeois capitalism. Furthermore, they supposedly enjoyed a type of sexual revolution that allowed them to take a more active role in their own sexuality and determine their own sexual roles. This was a so-called shift from the bourgeois practice of marrying for economical reasons and social standing as well as from the bourgeois sexual *double standard* in which men were allowed several sexual partners while women were only allowed the one: their husband. Thus the new socialist morality was to form a critical building block of the GDR woman’s emancipation.

Second, GDR morality supported the family unit in education and socialist childrearing. This meant establishing solid marriages that provide a proper model for children leading them to establish proper heterosexual relationships. The family was supposed to teach children important interpersonal skills so that the child could better interact with/conform to society at large (Polte 255). Within the family there were two specific sexual goals. One was to enlighten children, so that they would escape the bourgeois double standard. The second was to model an open attitude toward the body and sex while teaching them scientific names for genitalia and sexual acts, such as “Glied, Scheide, Geschlechtsverkehr” as well as more colloquial terms, such as “Puller, Muschi, usw.” (Polte 255). Opening up language to include both kinds of sexual terms created an atmosphere in which sex talk was not supposed to be shrouded in euphemism. This shroud was further lifted by demystifying the body altogether.⁴⁶ Sexual enlightenment was coupled with the naked body (Kunzt-Brunner/Kwast 92). Open nakedness in the family as well as in certain public locations was a physical marker for

⁴⁶ Nakedness, of course, only demystified the body to a certain extent due to the complex nature of women’s bodies. This belief, as discussed above, rested largely on the fact that women’s reproductive organs were hidden while men’s were visible.

the departure from bourgeois prudery. Thus, nakedness became a critical motif in East German sexual emancipation rhetoric.

Another goal in the family was the maintenance of critical social norms: the induction of children into this moral system while protecting them from conflicting belief systems (which remain largely unnamed, but imply West German influence).

Großen Einfluß hat die Familie darauf, daß mit der Vermittlung sozialistischer Werte und Normen auch gesellschaftsfeindlichen Einflüssen entgegengewirkt wird. Die Einhaltung der Normen der sozialistischen Moral und Gesetzlichkeit liegt im Interesse jedes Bürgers. Deshalb gehört es zu den Aufgaben der Familienerziehung, den Kindern von klein auf deutlich werden zu lassen, was Recht und Unrecht ist (Polte 233).

Children were not supposed to learn about socialism and its moral system in school, but rather at home. A major goal of the family was to build socialism from the ground up, and if achieved, the younger generations would consider East Germany's real existing socialism natural.

Since the ideal of marriage and family was the basis for socialist morality, this ideal mutually constituted a *heterosocialism* that implicitly—if not explicitly—enforced heterosexuality. This was first established as children were raised to follow the heterosexual models set by their parents. Heterosexism extended further than the family sphere, however. In biology, children were taught that “Frau und Mann ziehen sich seit eh und je gegenseitig an” (Schnabl 39). They were presented with a model that conforms to the family model as well as the social moral system. This was not necessarily achieved by creating a negative atmosphere for homosexuality, but rather by creating a society in which heterosexuality was inevitable. “Wird die öffentliche Meinung im Kinderkollektiv entsprechend entwickelt, werden auch Freundschaften zwischen Jungen und Mädchen nicht verspottet, sondern gefördert, dann kann die Einstellung zu Freundschaft, Liebe,

Sexualität günstig beeinflußt werden” (Starke 110). Even at the earliest social interaction, heterosocial behavior was encouraged, naturalizing socialist heterosexism.

This points to the last function of socialist morality, namely the effective obfuscation of any behavior that does not conform. For example, prostitution directly after WWII was widespread, but by the 50s it had become all but unknown in the GDR. “Getreu dem neunten Gebot der sozialistischen Moral, das lautet: ‘Lebe sauber und anständig und achte deine Familie!’, wurde Sexualität ausschließlich in stabilen heterosexuellen Zweierbeziehungen angesiedelt – diskret und möglichst ohne darüber zu sprechen” (Falck 58). In *VEB Bordell*, Uta Falck demonstrates how prostitution, a thriving business for many GDR women and homosexual men, for all intents and purposes in GDR culture did not exist. The main function of GDR morality seemed to be to establish a norm that had no contradictory visible evidence. Thus, it remained equally important to keep even acknowledged homosexuality limited to the margins of sex discourse.⁴⁷ In mainstream sex discourse, homosexuality is never more than a deviation from normal sex. It is mentioned at the ends of books in conjunction with other perversions.

As the church, a suspect bourgeois institution, lost influence in the GDR, socialist ideals combined with sex discourse formed its own morality. It may not have been formalized or even state sanctioned, but there was an implicit understanding that this code existed. For example, as the Berlin group *Lesben in der Kirche* met with police to protest the harassment they encountered when they attempted to honor the victims, especially lesbian victims, at Ravensbrück⁴⁸, the police representative claimed: “Der Staat hat nichts dagegen [being lesbian], aber die Moralvorstellung der Bürger sind anders” (Transcript 31 May 1965). This quote clearly points to an understood socialist morality. East German sex discourse maintains a sexual moral code around the following

⁴⁷ Chapter Four will show that this was also true for public space.

⁴⁸ The protests at Ravensbrück form the material for the fourth chapter of this dissertation and will be described in detail at that point.

phenomena: monogamy, masturbation, orgasm, work, birth control, and a (sexual) class system. The rest of this section discusses each term individually, shows how they participate in the socialist moral code, and demonstrates how they are imbued with specifically socialist rhetoric.

Heterosexual Monogamy

It was considered a “Fehlhaltung” when members of GDR society were not able to establish long-lasting (hetero)sexual and emotional partnerships. Citizens who did not engage in long-term relationships, but rather had sex with many partners were marked as asocial, because they were driven solely by their sexual desires, instead of placing those desires into the larger context of acceptable social conduct (Brückner 203). Transgressing this aspect of sexual morality warranted government policing. Those who were known to frequently change sexual partners were labeled “HwG-Personen (Menschen mit häufig wechselndem Geschlechtsverkehr)⁴⁹” and health officials tracked their sexual activity ostensibly to protect others from sexually transmitted diseases (Brückner 190). Their sexual exploits were observed by the same government officials who kept track of prostitutes and homosexuals; HWGs were suspect not only as carriers of disease who could infect the individual, but also the socialist body. The government used their sexual practices against them so that they could get information from them about their partners, often by blackmailing them into becoming unofficial *Stasi* informants (Falck).

Masturbation

In GDR sex discourse, masturbation has several telling aspects. Masturbation is openly discussed and not as a sexual perversion. The general opinion was that men/boys masturbate more frequently than women/girls. Some sexologists even see it as a critical element of sexual health, not to be underestimated or considered inferior to genital

⁴⁹ This is a term that originated in Nazi-Germany.

intercourse. On this view, it is even considered an important act for adults (Starke 112). However, most masturbation discourse takes on a more negative tone. On one hand, it gains partial acceptance as a necessary safety valve for boys and adults of both sexes, especially unmarried women. Since boys supposedly awaken sexually much earlier than girls and they are driven by their bodies to have orgasms, masturbation can give them the release they need to keep them from pressuring girls into sex (Brückner 54). A similar argument is presented when considering its importance for adult women.

Auch die Masturbation jener alleinstehenden Frauen, die unter der Sexualnot leiden, ist sicher eher gutzuheißen als der Einbruch in fremde Ehen, den viele verheiratete Männer in rührender Nächstenliebe noch immer mit Vergnügen gewähren und durch großzügiges Entgegenkommen erleichtern. Sowohl Frauen als auch Männer, die aus irgendeinem Grunde eine Liebesgemeinschaft entbehren müssen, verhalten sich viel achtbarer, wenn sie masturbieren, statt in flüchtiger Bekanntschaft mit einem ungeliebten Partner zu verkehren (Schnabl 261).

In this case, masturbation provides a necessary outlet for single women. Without this release, those single women who suffer from sexual desire are considered a threat to the socialist institution of marriage. Thus masturbation is presented in some contexts as the logical lesser of two evils.

Masturbation is however still portrayed as secondary to “real sex,” that is genital intercourse. Since sex is bound to heterosexual love in East German sex discourse, any non-heterosexual sexual activity is suspect. “Gehaltvoll wird die Sexualität allein durch die Liebe zweier [heterosexuellen] Menschen” (Schnabl 262). Orgasms lack physical and emotional intensity when not achieved in genital intercourse (Schnabl 160).

Sexologists also emphasize the lower frequency of masturbation in females. The most common reason given for this is that girls/women do not experience a separation of sex from the mind, but rather can only achieve sexual fulfillment when both genitals and

emotions are stimulated. This is best accomplished in a relationship with a man (Schnabl 60). Furthermore, they are subject to social taboos that men are not (Schnabl 263-64). This may actually be a more accurate assessment by Schnabl, since there is a lot of talk about male masturbation, while female masturbation is largely invisible. Supposedly, women who masturbate do so only after a man has awakened them sexually—that is, they have already had their first orgasm during intercourse (Starke 125). In discussions about masturbation, there is not a single reference to masturbation helping girls learn about their own bodies and orgasms, though this is considered normal for boys. In fact, as discussed above, when girls masturbate, it supposedly upsets their emotional equilibrium.

Masturbation in married women is seen as a sign of an unhealthy (sexual) relationship, demonstrating that her partner either lacked tenderness or the sexual prowess necessary for a “richtigen, großen Orgasmus” (Starke 128). Brückner further claims that a high frequency of masturbation in young people can signify other problems.

Wenn wir jetzt noch einmal auf die Frage der Häufigkeit der Selbstbefriedigung zurückkommen, so versteht ihr nun, daß sie nicht nur von Mensch zu Mensch sehr verschieden sein wird, sondern auch beim einzelnen Jugendlichen ganz erheblich schwanken kann. Gelingt es ihm, den gestellten Aufgaben in Schule und Berufsausbildung gerecht zu werden, findet er Anerkennung bei Lehrern, Klassenkameraden und Eltern, dann wird er verhältnismäßig selten diesen Wunsch haben. Erwischt ihn aber eine Pechsträhne, regnet es plötzlich schlechte Zensuren, gibt es zu Hause unerfreuliche Auseinandersetzungen oder verliert er seinen Freund, dann kann die Häufigkeit plötzlich ansteigen. Sie hängt also weit weniger vom Körper und von der “Triebstärke” ab als vom seelischen Zustand (52).

The (young) person who was in control of *his* life was less likely to masturbate. Brückner gives youth the message that masturbation is not only a sad substitute for sex, but also a

poor substitute for social success, whether with friends, in school, or at home. Thus, a well-adjusted person would not need to masturbate because successful social experiences would obviate the physical compulsion.

Orgasm

A critical element of the GDR sexual moral system was the status of the orgasm. Since GDR society was supposedly, at least in its own representations of itself, a model society, then sexual practices—a benchmark of social identity—were necessarily at the forefront of social progress.

Mann und Frau waren [um die Jahrhundertwende] sexuell völlig unvorbereitet. Aufgrund eines “Sieges über das Weib” durch die Hochzeit hat der Mann Anspruch auf sexuelle Befriedigung. Und die “Besiegte”? Sie hatte alles “Über sich ergehen zu lassen” und mußte damit “zufrieden” sein. Sie lernte höchstens das Notwendigste im sexuellen Verhalten durch ihren Mann, der selbst wenig wußte. Damit war der “Liebeslehrgang” beendet, der erotische Horizont abgegrenzt. Frauen dieser Zeit haben mitunter zehn und mehr Kinder zur Welt gebracht, aber viele, vielleicht die meisten von ihnen, nicht einen einzigen Orgasmus, das Glücksgefühl der Liebesvereinigung, erlebt. (Polte 144).

In this quote, the female orgasm signifies love inside the marriage. Since love and sex were the cornerstones of a GDR marriage, the lack of the female orgasm during bourgeois sex pointed to the belief that bourgeois women were property. Thus, the bourgeois marriage equaled little more than a contract of acquisition for the man.

Because of their supposed superior sexual knowledge, East Germans were expected to better achieve the sign of mutual love in the sex act, the female orgasm. The female orgasm became a sign of sexual progress⁵⁰ as well as a motif representing the success of socialism. Due to this social importance, sex discourse scrutinizes whether women have orgasms, how they have orgasms, and if they do not, why not. In addition, the male and female orgasm as a simultaneous occurrence during intercourse became the

⁵⁰ Although the social context is different, a similar emphasis was placed on the female and simultaneous orgasm in the U.S. sexual revolution, effectively occluding other sexual practices. This was a common

ultimate goal of genital intercourse. Not only was emphasis shifted to the female orgasm during sex, but pressure was also exerted on the man to control the sex act. If he did so properly, the couple would reach simultaneous orgasm, proving their ultimate unity (Schnabl 161, Polte 125). In fact, this was considered the epitome of married sex, the “höchste Befriedigung” for a couple (Starke 194).

However, before this *Zusammengehörigkeitserlebnis* could be achieved, sexologists needed to again make apparent the process of achieving orgasms in women. A high frequency of sex marked the successful socialist marriage. Thus, the way to ensure that women would want to have frequent intercourse—overcoming their natural instincts toward sexual inactivity—was to educate men about how to successfully bring about the female orgasm, since studies showed a positive relationship between frequency of sex and the frequency of the female orgasm (Starke 170). East German men needed a basic understanding of the female orgasm on two fronts: 1) women’s orgasms were considered more powerful than men’s and 2) women could have multiple orgasms. This orgasm discourse was in direct reaction to (a perhaps partly imagined) historical bourgeois sexual piety, which questioned whether women should have orgasms at all, since joy in sex was considered a sign of inherent feminine sinfulness; East German sexual rhetoric portrayed the woman as a powerful sexual creature, at least in some respects. For example, women could have longer orgasms, at shorter intervals, and sometimes the interval diminished entirely, so that one orgasm melted into the next (Starke 69). The once forbidden fruit for women became a consequence of her success as a socialist citizen.

Je positiver die Frau ihr Leben bewertet, je harmonischer, aktiver und leistungsfähiger sie sich fühlt, je mehr sie glaubt, den Aufgaben ihres Lebens, vor allem in Familie, Beruf oder Studium gewachsen zu sein, desto genußfähiger ist sie auch im sexuellen Bereich (Starke 190).

complaint among lesbians in the women’s movement of the early 70s (B.K.O. 1971, Katz,

If women's orgasms were seen as more powerful than men's, they were nevertheless still more troublesome—just like women's bodies. The simplicity of a man's orgasm was marked by its visibility; his ejaculation was a simple observable process.⁵¹ The woman's orgasm, like her sexual organs, was hidden, marking it with mystery and an ineffability. The female orgasm is complex (Starke 67) and, unlike the man's, can be caused by stimulating a variety of areas (Starke 217). In fact, some women describe their own orgasm as a "Pulsieren oder Pochen," that defied both location and explanation (Starke 68).

The mystery of the female orgasm left sexologists themselves sometimes at a loss for words; sexologists were not sure what causes them. On the one hand, they seemed to think that they were not tied to any "*spezifischen psychischen oder sozialen Bedingungen*" (Starke 195). On the other hand, there was the general belief, stated above, that orgasms, and even more so multiple orgasms, could only be achieved "wenn [Frauen] eine harmonische Lebensentwicklung genommen haben, ihren Partner lieben, mit ihrem Leben zufrieden sind, keine großen Ängste haben und wenn keine sozialen Barrieren dem entgegenstehen" (Starke 196). Physical indicators were completely removed from discussions of the female orgasm. East German sex discourse delivered evidence demonstrating that women needed above all to be well integrated socially to consistently achieve orgasms. They needed to meet a variety of conditions to be orgasmic and if socialism itself worked, then women would be sexually satisfied.

Repeatedly, sex discourse shows that women themselves were not necessarily in control of their sexual and/or social happiness. Women have to be taught to have orgasms by men (Schnabl 134). Should the woman not be able to achieve orgasm, then her

Baxandall/Gordon 2000).

⁵¹ As briefly mentioned above, this belief does not seem carried out in discussions of male impotence. At the point that the male orgasm becomes difficult to achieve, it takes on its own aura of mystery, or perhaps helplessness, as the woman is encouraged to subtly control a variety of variables, such as the arrangement of furniture in the bedroom, how long she is undressed before intercourse begins, the kind of lingerie she wears, how long foreplay lasts, whether she discusses his impotence with friends, that impotence only be referred to in the most positive ways, what kind of birth control she uses, and whether the sex position allows for the best enclosure of the penis (Schnabl 173-221).

psychotherapist—also portrayed as a man in sexology—was supposed to guide her emotionally to achieve what her husband could not help her achieve physically (Starke 188). Polte further discusses at some length what he considers the reward men receive for bringing their partners to orgasm.

Es ist zum Beispiel bekannt, daß die Frau während eines Geschlechtsaktes den Orgasmus zwei- und mehrmals erleben kann, während der Mann seinen Höhepunkt erst beim zweiten bzw. x-en Orgasmus der Frau gemeinsam mit ihr abschließt. Geht der Mann vorher leer aus? Oder bedeutet das für ihn Verzicht auf Liebesgenuß? Im Gegenteil. Nicht nur, daß sich der Mann über längere Zeit selbst ständig an der Grenze des hohen Lustgefühls bewegt; er erlebt außerdem mit vollem Bewußtsein und in freudiger Erregung die Liebesgebärden seiner Partnerin. Ja, er genießt die Zweisamkeit in anderer Weise, als Erfolgserlebnis, und sein ganzes Streben im Liebesakt konzentriert auch nur auf die geliebte Partnerin. Er erlebt die Liebe ohne Egoismus. Ist die Partnerin hierbei sehr aktiv, dann ist der Liebesgenuß noch höher. Ein einfühlsamer, phantasievoller, kluger und sich natürlich auch im Liebesspiel auskennender Mann vermag seine Partnerin bis zu zehnmal und mehr in das hohe Lustgefühl zu versetzen, bevor er selbst mit ihr gemeinsam seinen Orgasmus erlebt. Danach werden sich beide in glücklicher Entspannung und Erschöpfung voneinander lösen und an dem zuvor Erlebten erfreuen. Wenn, fußend auf der griechischen Sage, behauptet wird, die Frau erlebe den Orgasmus siebenmal stärker als der Mann, so ist der Mann durchaus in der Lage, diese “Manko” der Natur auszugleichen. In dem Auslösen des sich wiederholenden Orgasmus seiner Partnerin verschafft er sich gleichzeitig ein ebenfalls tiefes und langanhaltendes emotionelles Erlebnis der Liebe. Das geschieht jedoch

nicht automatisch, sondern verlangt die Klugheit und Aktivität beider (159).

According to Polte, the man gains sexual pleasure from the knowledge that he has brought the woman to orgasm and controlled the sex act so that they achieve mutual orgasm. Conversely, if men failed in this task, they were likely to be as disappointed as, if not more so, than women; it even effected his level of sexual desire (Starke 201). In general, the female orgasm was not inborn, like the male orgasm, but rather a “Lernprodukt.” It was a skill that a woman was able to learn with her husband, just as she has to be taught to swim: “Man kann vielleicht einen Vergleich wagen: so wie die Fähigkeit zu schwimmen erlernt werden muß, so müssen die Frauen die Fähigkeit, orgasmisch zu reagieren, erlernen. Dieser Vergleich ist keineswegs exakt, er verdeutlicht aber doch die Problematik“ (Starke 183). In order to become orgasmic, a woman had to trust and love her husband. This was “eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für den Orgasmus” (Polte 158). In fact, Starke’s studies show that the percentage of women who had orgasms without loving their husbands was a full 12% lower than women who did (190).

When the man—through his skill and his wife’s devotion to him—had achieved this goal, the next goal was the simultaneous orgasm. To achieve this, it was again the man who was in control. He had to control the pace “allein oder intensiver als die Frau“ when negotiating the woman’s *plateau phase*, in which she “bleibt eine Zeitlang trotz weiterer Friktionen auf gleichem oder nur leicht antsteigendem Niveau” (Schnabl 75), save up his strength for the right moment (Polte 149), and employ the proper techniques (Starke 199) to make them both come together.

Although the female orgasm was a sign of healthy socialism, it still did not rate higher than male ejaculation in the orgasmic hierarchy. As long as the man’s own sexual potency remained intact, he was supposed to do all he could to ensure the female orgasm, but the moment that he was unable to perform sexually, that shifted. At that point, the

woman had to direct all of her sexual energies toward enabling his orgasm (Schnabl 82). This, despite the rhetoric of sexual freedom and the importance of female orgasm, points to a deeper socialist need, of reproduction. State childrearing policies, the marriage loan, and rhetoric supporting the *Wunschkindpille* (discussed below) demonstrate the state's commitment to reproduction in the GDR. Women were still able to conceive without orgasms, but this was impossible if the man did not ejaculate—at least when conception is confined to genital intercourse. Thus, at the most basic level, despite the sexual knowledge that GDR citizens had gained over their bourgeois counterparts from fin-de-siècle Germany, the ultimate goal of childbearing had not changed.

Work

When dealing with socialism, especially in the GDR, it is critical to remember that work as an institution is a critical part of social life. Socialists are supposed to express themselves in society through the work that they do (Starke 283); it is the sphere in which the socialist is supposed to fully develop his/her personality (Polte 112). It is not surprising that this sphere supposedly affected all aspects of socialist life, providing the “Basis für Liebe und Sexualität auf einem bestimmten Kulturniveau” (Starke 272). Work formed one side of a two-part structure that undergirded all social life, both work and family. On the one hand, the connection between family/love/sex and work is perhaps tenuous, such as it is easier to concentrate at work when all in the family or love life is running well, or that it is easier to relax at home or while having sex, when work problems are not pressing in (Starke 274). These are fairly commonsensical connections between work and sex. GDR sex discourse however forged direct bonds between the two: “Insgesamt läßt sich nachweisen: Liebe fördert durchaus die Arbeit” (Starke 275). Love/sex and work influenced each other in GDR culture, so that the work ethic could be also seen as a significant part of sexual morality.

According to sexological studies, socialists with happy family and sex lives made the best workers. For example, as youth entered the work sphere as apprentices or students (also a form of apprenticeship, especially in the GDR where education was directly connected to the *real* workforce), it was supposedly proven that the best students and apprentices had the best love lives. Women who had successful careers were also thought better capable of orgasms. This relationship also works the other way around. If there was a problem in the sex life, one of the first areas to examine—besides whether or not the female was frigid—was satisfaction with the workplace (Starke 92). Thus, if we examine sexuality and its moral code, it is clear that the best sexual partners were supposedly those who correctly participated in work culture; a properly developed work ethic encouraged a healthy sex and family life and vice versa.

Women were supposed to work as a sign of their emancipation under socialism. Not working meant not being a full citizen, so much so that Starke, for example, did not include housewives in his study of sexual practices up to age thirty (101). “Ihre Tätigkeit [die Tätigkeit der Frau] kann sich aber nicht allein auf den Kreis der Familie beschränken. Als gleichberechtigte Partnerin muß sie gemeinsam mit dem Mann am Berufs- und gesellschaftlichen Leben teilnehmen können” (Polte 180). We have already seen that women were required to take part in both spheres of East German culture: work and family. The family however was not of lesser importance than work; East German women were required to take equal part in both spheres. In order to accomplish this, it was of equal importance that women be able to control when and how to have children. In fact, family planning and gainful employment were tied together, since the woman could not take a job without knowing how she could continue to successfully manage her family life (Polte 19). Birth control was a part of the woman’s right to work and also have a family as well as state-provided daycare services (Polte 213), allowing GDR women to be doubly productive: sexually and in their chosen career. Furthermore, pregnant women

were to be well cared for at the workplace and assured the chance to return to their job after pregnancy (Polte 170).

Birth Control

Birth control in the GDR, especially from 1972 on, was a marker for women's equality and power within the socialist system. Available birth control along with legal abortion was part of the GDR plan to be more progressive as well as more humane than the West. This landmark change in women's legislation came during the second and perhaps final socialist thaw, right after Honecker became head of the *Zentralkommittee*, demonstrating his forward-thinking brand of socialism, a definite break with the first twenty years of the GDR. On the positive side, the new laws did give women more control over their bodies. It was a material act that coincided with GDR rhetoric about female equality. The availability of the pill and legal abortion changed women's lives in two ways: it gave them new physical freedom and also resulted in higher confidence levels for many women. Not only was this seen as a kind of women's social empowerment, but also of sexual empowerment. The fear of getting pregnant caused "habituelle Verklemmungen und emotionale Barrieren" which led to "Störungen des Orgasmuserlebens" (Starke 203). Therefore, the pill allowed women to relax during sex and have more orgasms, better conforming to socialist sexual ideals.

This newfound freedom was not however to be taken lightly by women. They were warned to use the pill, other types of birth control, and abortion wisely; their functions should only be those of family planning. Using birth control to regulate when—and not whether—to have children, "entspricht voll und ganz den Grundsätzen der sozialistischen Moral" (Polte 184). Using birth control however as a means for having *uninhibited* sex with many partners was considered an abuse of a woman's socialist privileges (Polte 184). The pill, popularly known as the *Anti-Baby-Pille*, was renamed the *Wunschkindpille* in socialist sexual rhetoric to underscore the fact that birth control was

supposed to be used to plan conception, not to prevent it altogether (Brückner, Starke, and Polte).

Of the different kinds of birth control practiced in the GDR, such as the pill, condoms, *coitus interruptus*, IUD, the rhythm method, and the “day-after” pill, the pill was by far the most preferred. Studies showed that at least 50-60% of all adult women used the pill long term (Starke). It was preferred for its convenience and young women were given the pill long before it was thought they would engage in sex. Schnabl even implies that using the pill could contribute to curing male impotence (204).

Unfortunately, the dangers of all birth control methods were not presented as fully as their convenience was emphasized. Especially the IUD was used without reasonable warnings. If women noticed that they were having undesirable side effects from the pill, such as vomiting, etc. they were counseled to find another brand that their bodies could better cope with (Brückner 178). All in all, the advantages were seen to far outweigh any disadvantages.

Abortion was also seen as a form of birth control and it was connected with a seemingly contradictory mixture of concepts. Women were encouraged to carry an unwanted pregnancy to full term, even in cases of rape. The belief that women attained ultimate satisfaction when they conceived took precedence. At the same time, abortion itself was a sign of progressive socialism. Because the GDR legalized abortion, women no longer had to rely on “butchers” not regulated by the medical system. Legalizing abortion supposedly actually led to fewer of them being performed (Brückner 182). Sexual openness, as well as the supporting social system, allowed women other choices than abortion. Childcare and birth were not supposed to restrict the mother’s social and work life and many of the social taboos against, for example, unwed mothers were supposed to have disappeared under socialism. Lastly, although girls and young women were informed of their legal rights to abortion, they were in some cases given detailed descriptions of the process. In Brückner, abortion was presented as an unsavory process

and terms like “Schwangerschaftsunterbrechung” were dismissed as being euphemistic. He reasoned that if a woman chose to end a pregnancy, she was supposed to confront the material reality of the situation: “der Embryo wird zerstört, nach Dehnung des Gebärmutterhalskanals [und] operativ ausgeräumt beziehungsweise abgesaugt“ (180).⁵²

Sexual Classism/Social Hierarchy

In East German sex discourse, there was a hierarchy of sexual enlightenment based on work and education. Children who grew up with parents in managerial positions, especially if both parents were supervisors, were supposedly better able to deal with their own sexuality. Furthermore, they were considered better able to evaluate the importance of sexuality, while also demonstrating an interest in high culture (Starke 255). Daughters of managers were though more likely to have orgasms more frequently as well as earlier than other young women, since their parents were supposedly more engaged in a family life invested in socialist ideals of childrearing (Starke 190). In addition, managers themselves supposedly had a more active sex life than normal workers; young female supervisors seemed to be most differentiated from other women in their age group. These women were “sehr aktiv, anspruchsvoll, überdurchschnittlich verlangend und genußfähig” and they supposedly had an “Ausstrahlung” that other young women lacked (Starke 168).

As a supposed rule of thumb, women who were satisfied at work, led strong family lives, were politically active, and were educated were more likely to lead sexually satisfied lives (Schnabl 95). They in turn were more appealing sexually. Social and sexual success also translated into aging more gracefully (Schnabl 95). Similarly, young men and women (but more so men) who identify with socialist society more strongly tended to have more satisfied sex lives (Starke 166). Again, social and political activity

⁵² This was likely a reaction against what some sexologists considered lightheartedness on the part of some women who aborted unwanted pregnancies. Thus they felt the need to emphasize the responsibility that comes with the right to abort.

seemed to correspond directly to sexual activity. The socially and politically active had more sex and were better satisfied by that sex (Starke 167).

The less educated and less socially motivated members of socialist society also supposedly tended to be less sexually enlightened. Women above all were confined by outdated bourgeois taboos. These women also had a difficult time dealing with their own sexuality—revealing a higher percentage of frigidity (Schnabl 128-162). Young people who are “weniger gebildet [und] unqualifiziert” are also less likely to actually touch the genitalia of their partner during sex, especially during their first intercourse. These youth also seemed to have their first sexual experiences without having carefully chosen their partner and seemed to change their partners frequently (Starke 146). In fact, in the sexual questionnaires that Starke’s group handed out, those who were less educated were supposedly less likely to understand the point of many of the questions and therefore did not put much energy or thought into answering them (104-105). Thus, well-educated socialists who were politically committed and successful at work were more likely to have more sex, more orgasms, and raise their children with an open attitude toward sex, whereas the less educated were less likely to care about sex, more likely to perpetuate sexual and physical taboos, frequently change sexual partners, and less likely to raise their children in a sexually positive atmosphere, according to Starke et al.’s evaluation. It is clear then that sexual progressiveness was, at least in sex discourse, directly tied to social and political progressiveness, creating a socialist hierarchy that valued its citizens based on their political activity, intelligence, success in the workplace, and sexual satisfaction.

Discourse on Homosexuality

How does homosexuality fit into a moral system that favored heterosexual monogamy and placed special emphasis on reproduction? Homosexuality and its discourse in the 1980s occupied a site of contradiction.

In der Literatur, die populärwissenschaftliche Kenntnisse über Sexualität und angrenzende Bereiche vermittelt, zeichnet sich ein Wandel ab. Aber typisch für viele Veröffentlichungen ist ihre Widersprüchlichkeit. So werden zwar homosexuelle Bürger z.B. als gleichwertige Bürger akzeptiert und die Schlußfolgerung gezogen, sie nicht zu diskriminieren. Dann aber kommt das ABER... Entweder wird bedauert, daß diese Leute nicht zu heilen sind, und/oder Homosexualität wird zu negativen Werten in Beziehung gesetzt, wie falsche Erziehung, Abnormität, mangelnde Intelligenz, Kriminalität, Asozialität etc. (Sillge, "zur psychosozialen Situation" 77).

This contradiction is not only evident in Ursula Sillge's evaluation of the homosexual and society in the GDR, but is also evident in sex discourse. On the one hand, homosexuality had been legal in East Germany since 1968 and was a sign of East German sexual progressiveness couched in antifascist discourse (Starke 297). Sex discourse of the 1980s encouraged acceptance and/or tolerance, claiming that homosexuality is a "Variante der Sexualität" (Schnabl 300, Starke 297), or an "Eigenart, die [Homosexuelle] weder wählen noch ändern können" (Starke 297). On the other hand, homosexuals were considered more likely to develop psychological neuroses due to their "Anderssein" (Starke 292) and talk of "Heilaussichten" for homosexuals was not completely absent from sex discourse (Schnabl 300). Schnabl encouraged a strategy of "*Vorbeugung der Homosexualität*" in youth. "Wenn von früher Kindheit an durch konsequente Entwicklung von Leitbildern heterosexuellen Gepräges das spätere Sexualstreben in die normale Richtung gelenkt wird – eingebettet in eine zweckmäßige Gesamterziehung -, kann manche homosexuelle Entwicklung aufgehalten werden" (301).

Mainstream sex discourse sent mixed messages about homosexuality by aligning it with *Fehlhaltungen*, *Perversionen*, and *Abarten*, that were also dealt with marginally at the end of books (Schnabl, Starke/Friedrich, Brückner) or not at all (Polte). While overtly

claiming “wir zahlen Homosexualität nicht zu den Persionen” and that “echte Liebe” was possible among homosexuals, homosexuals were portrayed as “sehr empfindsam, schnell beliedigt, reizbar, unausgeglichen, leicht zu beeinflussen, nervlich labil, ja neurotisch” (Schnabl 284-5).⁵³ Special attention was dedicated to discussing the causes of homosexuality, specific problems caused by homosexuality, as well as the necessity for therapy—not as a curative, but for equipping the homosexual with the proper tools to cope in a heterosexual society. Some mainstream sexologists, such as Schnabl and Brückner, also seriously cautioned against interaction between homosexuals and youth. “Wenn nun Jugendliche durch erwachsene Homosexuelle verführt und in deren Vorstellungswelt eingeführt werden, so kann das eine ‘Umformung’ ihrer noch nicht fest ausgerichteten Erlebensweise bewirken (Gewöhnungshomosexualität)” (Brückner 202-203). At the same time, other sexologists disavowed this belief by stating that young heterosexuals are no more susceptible to homosexuality than homosexuals are to heterosexuality (Starke 114). Homosexuals were, at best, seen as a site of instability in the socialist body.

Parallel to mainstream sex discourse of the 80s there was an emerging discourse of homosexuality that, though dominated by mainstream sexologists, did not enjoy the same visibility as popular sex manuals. Between 1985 and 1989 there were three conferences on homosexuality at the universities in Leipzig, Chemnitz (then Karl-Marx-Stadt), and Jena respectively—the proceedings of each was published the following year.⁵⁴ 1988 also saw the publication of Rainer Werner’s publication *Homosexualität: Herausforderung an Wissen und Toleranz*. Though not sexology but still a part of homosexual discourse, in 1989 Jürgen Lemke’s collection of interview literature *Ganz normal anders* was published by the Aufbau-Verlag and the first East German feature film on homosexuality entitled “Coming Out” debuted (on the rather auspicious date of 9

⁵³ Though I have directly quoted Schabl here, the language used by the other sexologists does not greatly differ.

November). The overall trend in all of these publications is that gay male experience is, for the most part, universalized as pan-homosexual experience. In very few instances is lesbianism thematized. Werner's book on homosexuality dedicates five pages to lesbians. At the conferences on homosexuality, lesbian papers remained static a two per conference, although the last conference had three papers that compared lesbian to gay male experience. Both the film and interview literature collection were about gay men. Much as mainstream sex discourse relegates homosexuality to the margins, lesbians are relegated to the margins of homosexual discourse. Lesbian discourse, such as the underground newspaper *frau anders* that appeared January 1989, remained just that—underground—and never joined the more visible homosexual discourse.

Mainstream sex discourse had little to no room for the lesbian; she was obscured in a number of ways. Heterosexuality as a constitutive element of socialist identity denied homosexuality, much less lesbianism. Sex practices that privileged the male penis failed to recognize sex acts in which a penis was not involved—for hetero or homosexuals. Women who did not respond to the male penis were hidden behind the monolithic term *frigid* and considered unstable socialist subjects in sex discourse. Because female sex and gender roles were bound to receptive practices, lesbian sex in mainstream sex discourse is frequently portrayed as a pale mimicry of heterosexual genital intercourse and relying on a “künstlichen Penis,” further erasing lesbian experience. The conflation of female sexual experience with productive motherhood within a heterosocial context rendered non-productive lesbian sex, as well as any lesbian family unit, practically invisible in socialism. Moreover, even homosexual discourse was dominated by male discourse, so

⁵⁴ In 1989, Günther Amendt published a West German selection of texts from the first two conferences entitled *Natürlich anders: zur Homosexualitätsdiskussion in der DDR*.

much so that to be homosexual was, as many East Germans understood it, to be a man, to be *schwul*.

⁵⁵ Of course, what Brückner's reasoning manages to leave out is that many lesbians already have children from earlier marriages. It also ignores the fact that many East German heterosexual marriages are "completed" with children from earlier partnerships.

Chapter Three

The Idealized Lesbian in East German Women's Fiction

In 1985, the first nation-wide women's festival⁵⁶ in East Germany, which was largely organized by lesbians, took place in Dresden under the topic of "Lesbische Liebe in der Literatur" (Waberski 90). Though lesbian literature was a common topic among lesbians in the GDR, much of the literature they discussed was not generated by East Germans and stemmed from the Anglo-American or West German traditions. Despite the paucity of lesbian representations on the East German front, GDR authors did, on occasion, mine same-sex relationships for literary material, and some of these such as Waltraut Lewin, Irmtraud Morgner, and Ingeborg Arlt were even invited to talk about their literary works by lesbian groups, since they were recognized as authors "deren Bücher offensichtlichen lesbischen Gestalt hatten" (Waberski 90). Despite the presence of lesbian characters in GDR women's literature, there was no lesbian literature per se in the GDR. Thus the question arises: What was the function of the lesbian in literature?

The preceding chapter demonstrates that the socialist subject was clearly heterosexual to coincide with the socio-political goals of the GDR state. Within this social/institutional construct, the lesbian could not exist. She does not conform to the sexual roles created for socialist women as either mothers or partners to the man in the smallest unit of socialism, the nuclear family. This chapter further investigates texts that conceal lesbian experience. In the case of East German women's fiction, the lesbian is obscured behind the imagined "Lesbian" who has a specific role in East German oppositional literature.

Literary scholarship has clearly established that East German literature was a literature deeply embedded in the socialist project. Whether scholars tend toward the

⁵⁶ The first three of these were in Dresden. Although they must have been organized through the Protestant Church, there is no indication that they were part of the *Kirchentag*, which took place in Greifswald in 1985 and other cities in the subsequent years.

periodization of GDR literature into the categories of socialist realism, modernism, and postmodernism attributed to Wolfgang Emmerich, in which modernism consists of the “better texts of GDR literature [that] disengage themselves from official discourse and cast literature as a ‘counter-text’; as a subversion of the official discourse” (*Rewrite* 125) or prefer the arguments posed by Julia Hell that:

Following the collapse of National Socialism and its political imaginary, organized around Hitler’s body, the locus of power was empty. For the SED, reconstruction involved creating a new symbolic order, and the center of this new order was constructed by deploying *a symbolic politics of paternity*, a cultural discourse centered around the Antifascist Father. This discourse characterizes the political speeches and essays of the immediate post-war period; but, above all, it is developed in literature (*Critical Orthodoxies* 70);

it is clear that socialism, as either the central or oppositional thread, is a constitutive element in East German literature. As the *Literaturstreit* of the early 1990s established, even so-called oppositional literature is deeply invested in the socialist agenda, a socialist utopia, and the “real existing socialism” of mundane life in the GDR. The reading public that was surprised by this devotion to the socialist utopian vision by many of the GDR’s premier authors, in the words of Günther de Bruyn, “gibt damit zu, [Christa Wolf und andere Autoren] vorher nicht richtig gelesen zu haben oder aber in ihnen, nachdem ihre oppositionelle Rolle gegenstandslos wurde, nur noch politische Gegner zu sehen” (quoted in Rossbacher 23).

This chapter than investigates specifically how the lesbian is used as a literary device to support the sociopolitical project of GDR women’s fiction. Marilyn Farwell, in “Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Subtexts,” pursues a similar issue in the context of Anglo-American literature, and she proposes that “What we must ask instead [of whether a work of literature is lesbian literature] is how the strong lesbian overtones function in

the text as a whole, especially in a novel, which cannot, without violence, be called lesbian” (92). It is the goal of this chapter to show how the lesbian as an ideal woman functions within the agenda of women’s fiction.

The lesbian is used symbolically to point to the ever-widening chasm between the real existing socialism pronounced by Erich Honecker in 1971 and the socialist utopia as a political goal, however unreachable that goal may be. In order to establish this argument, I will first elaborate the position of literature in the GDR as a supposed *Ersatzöffentlichkeit* as well as look specifically at the socialist utopia and its role in GDR literature. I will also review the goals of women’s fiction specifically and how, in a number of specific works, the lesbian functions, at least in part, in achieving these goals. Then, using the work *Kassandra* as a point of study, I will show that at the plot level, characters marked as lesbian are used to establish a utopian space in direct conflict with the everyday heterosexual “reality.” In addition, I will demonstrate, at the meta-level of character configurations, that by Oedipal positioning—by this I mean how the character is created in the Oedipal symbolic established by Freud—or other alignments, a lesbian is structurally created (not at the plot level) which adds a dis-ease to even heterosexual female characters, contributing to the critique of the patriarchal order. Lastly, I will show how the lesbian, or the “rumor” of the lesbian, can be used to drive the heteronarrative, but that, as the narrative in *Kassandra* so aptly shows, the heteronarrative, as the patriarchy, is inescapable, or escapable only in death.

GDR Literature and the Socialist Agenda

Early literary production in the GDR was strictly controlled by the ideals of socialist realism; it was the goal of literature to project the desired reality of the developing socialist state in order to encourage the citizenship to strive toward creating a material version of that “reality.” This developed in a state that set itself up as the oppositional state to Nazi fascism and created itself out of a myth of resistance and

victimization. As the East German state progressed, the gap between the rhetorical and quotidian existence of East Germans did not seem to be closing. It is in this context that literature began to take on what is known as the role of the *Ersatzöffentlichkeit* (substitute public sphere). Brigitte Rossbacher, discussing this common view of the role of GDR literature of the 1970s and 1980s, uses the work of Monika Maron, which was actually never published in the GDR, as critical of GDR censorship; Maron's literature "stresses journalism's propagandistic role within a society where ideological proclamations were divorced from lived experience. As a consequence there was immense pressure on literature...to document public opinion and address societal contradictions" (Rossbacher 18-19).

Polemical views of GDR literature have often divided authors and their works by conflating seemingly collaborative content with the bad and dissenting with the good. In fact, for many years this was the main criterion in the West for judging GDR literature, either explicitly or implicitly, but as we have seen in the last fifteen years "Reality was, indeed, much more complex" (Hamburger 171). For example, Western readings of Christa Wolf and Heiner Müller often saw them only in their dissident role against the GDR state, thus "logically" placing them in the same camp of Western ideals of democracy while overlooking their pro-socialist stance. This sort of reading, then, of course allowed the Western world to be completely shocked when it was revealed that both authors—having been firmly placed on the top of a high, moral, and certainly Western pedestal—had briefly worked for the Stasi in their youth. Thus, although literature has often been seen as a type of *Ersatzöffentlichkeit* allowing certain authors the necessary space to voice concerns about daily life in the GDR, state constraints and censorship make this view too black and white. "In a certain concrete sense, the writer bore the inscription of the difficult task that all GDR citizens faced in negotiating their individual and corporate selves. By exposing the seam between these different selves, the writer was reproducing a fundamental trope of daily life" (Mittman 23).

Literary space allowed for criticism of as well as alliance with the state, but the division of these two categories was fuzzy and often both voices could be found within the same text. With the onset of literary production in the 1970s (specifically landmark works around 1968, such as Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.*), the development of literary techniques such as fragmented voices and episodical organization often allowed authors more room for play, giving them the chance to develop "alternative perspectives and diverse discourses" (McClintock). These are exactly the modernist traits in that literature that led to Emmerich's separation between socialist realism and modernism. If writers were able to create more alternative narratives, "encod[ing] criticism within the texts" as Costabile-Heming claims, then their readers were forced to learn to "read between the lines" in order to decode these texts created out of an "inner exile" enforced upon the writer (4). Literary space was, furthermore, filled with ambiguity because of censorship, "the public sphere was not 'open' in the GDR. Rather censorship and other oppressive practices turned literature into an extension of the state" (Costabile-Henning 16). Thus state control over literary production in civil society created not only overtly collaborative texts, but also a space in which instructive texts,⁵⁷ such as Müller's plays, were a labyrinth of postmodern form combined with encoded messages hidden in myths.

Current reading strategies of GDR literature must be aware of "The failure of many Western critics to acknowledge the complexities of literary production in the GDR [that] contributed to one-sided readings of texts" (Rossbacher 23). It is simultaneously difficult, but also critical, to avoid judging GDR literary production solely based on its dissident status, as Emmerich does above. GDR literature, like other national literatures, is not solely political production. In fact, Kane reminds us:

⁵⁷ Many socialist authors still believed that literature served a social as well as educational purpose and their contribution to socialist society would be to create texts that illuminate the reader or audience. Thus, many "critical" authors—Müller, Braun, Wolf, etc.—did not abandon the educational potential that literature had.

to regard the GDR's novelists, poets and playwrights and what they have written either as pawns and pieces in a cultural and political debate, or, to use a scathing expression of one of the distinguished East German contributors to this volume, as 'Zeitungersatz', would be deeply insulting and a severe diminishment of what individual writers have achieved (x).

Though much of the literature was indeed used as a vehicle for expressing ideas that may have been socially critical, the literature itself did not solely pursue a political agenda; it is both literature as well as a critical voice.

Within the almost journalistic function that has been ascribed to GDR literature, there developed a sophisticated critique and playful observation of the disconnect between socialist rhetoric and the daily life. Brigitte Rossbacher describes the function of literature thus:

The officially prescribed role of literature was to support and further socialist development, a role regulated through censorship and other government-implemented controls. Yet the literary realm also constituted one of the few domains of the public sphere in which societal conflicts and contradictions could be voiced. The resulting double bind of collaboration and critique characterizes GDR literary production of the 1970s and 1980s, years in which the glaring disparity between the dream and the reality of socialism became apparent (34).

Of course, the socialist utopia could never be attained, but when real existing socialism was declared, it was as if the dream had been completely abandoned for a reality that was found wanting. Many writers still longed for the third way. It is this tension between the desire for improvement and the government's denial of the need for change that led to the expulsion of Wolf Biermann and the subsequent abandonment of the GDR by so many authors. Those who chose to remain did so in pursuit of this utopia. "Das geliebte Objekt des DDR-Autors: Das war der 'wirkliche' (dabei nie wirklich!)

Sozialismus im Gegensatz zum 'realen', eine Utopie, die in immer noch nicht ganz aufgeklärter Weise an der mißgestalteten Wirklichkeit hing – und von der die libidinöse Energie abzuziehen so schwer fällt" (Emmerich 176).

It was also in the 1970s that a philosophy professor at the Leipzig Karl-Marx University, Ernst Bloch, began to gain popularity and also face growing difficulties from the East German state because of his call for a "concrete utopia" that was:

closely connected to everyday life. For Bloch, utopian thinking had subversive potential. In contrast to ideologies, which he defined as groups of ideas that reflect and defend the status quo, he attributed the idea of utopia to groups who attempt to undermine and rupture the status quo in the hope of a better society (Rossbacher 15).

This kind of concrete utopia was in direct conflict with the real existing socialism that had seemingly given up any hope for more. Bloch was not against the idea of a utopia, but rather the fact that the socialist utopia had been abandoned as a social project, while a lesser shadow of that ideal—i.e. "real existing socialism," or the material conditions of the GDR in its last two decades—was praised by the state as the end goal.

In literature, there were definite reactions to the abandonment of the ideal. *Protokolliteratur*, for one, used the voices of everyday subjects to highlight the vast difference between socialist goals and everyday life. For example, various women's collections showed the reality of women's double burden at work and home that contrasted vastly with the promises of equality in socialist rhetoric and law. The literary subject also differed greatly from the flat ideal of the socialist subject. "The misinterpretation of Marx had led to a predetermined and fixed subject [the comrade] within a ideological framework, and any development of the subject is consequently per se heretic. Hence, women writers who could not fit into this model of the subject must be heretical" (Dueck 58). By fragmenting the subject and drawing attention to internal contradictions, which mirrored the contradictions in the state only played out on the body

of the literary subject, the misconstrued and falsely idealized East German socialist subject was revealed. As writers drew attention to the dystopia that was the GDR, the *Wende* revealed the chasm of expectations between those writers and the citizenship, which in the majority had abandoned socialist ideals for Western ones.

Women's Fiction and the Function of "the Lesbian"

Women's literature had its own set of concerns directly connected to those of the larger context of East German literature. East German authors of women's literature were concerned with the "[f]ormation of body image, femininity, and sexuality" (Dueck 15) as well as the development of subjectivity "as a measure for reality...If the subject can fully and freely develop itself and engage thereby with societal structures and processes, something will have truly been achieved by the socialist state" (Dueck 52). As feminist concerns develop into the 1980s, women's literature becomes more concerned with the "roots of patriarchy...its manifestations in society, its impact on the female subject" (Dueck 17). Feminist utopias and quotidian dystopias then become the realms in which these women's issues were dealt with.

In a pragmatic way, there is a large body of GDR women's literature that deals with the everyday issues faced by women under socialism, especially the "doppelte Last" women had to carry because they were not only fully active members of the work force, but they were also almost solely responsible for household duties and childrearing. Though socialism supposedly assured them full equality with men, this equality never completely broke the private barrier; men and women—outside of isolated cases—never really shared household duties, and legally women were fully burdened with childrearing. An observable rift between socialist rhetoric and everyday experience was a real part of women's lives and by the 1970s women authors took this up in their writing to "beklagen das Versagen der DDR, eine form des Sozialismus zu entwickeln, welche die Selbstverwirklichung möglich macht, sie reden oft satirisch, über die 'doppelte Last', ...

[Autorinnen] suchen tastend nach Alternativen, die über die Beschränkungen des heutigen Lebens in der DDR aufweisen” (Lennox 235).

An idealized version of lesbian relationships is one of the alternatives used in women’s literature to playfully point to the uneven relationship in GDR heterosexual relationships and posit an idealized solution to women’s double burden under socialism. “Ich habe wieder geheiratet” by Christine Wolter is an especially good example of how the myth of the lesbian, or perhaps in this case the innuendo of a lesbian relationship, very clearly points to the inadequacies of the socialist nuclear family. The short story is about two women who live together, share housekeeping and child raising duties and, in general, find that they are much happier because of this. The narrator, a woman who recently left her husband, plays with the fantasy of the reader. She begins the story with the statement, “Ich habe wieder geheiratet. Diese Nachricht hat meine Freunde, die, die mich gut kennen, überrascht. Um genau zu sein, eine wirkliche Hochzeitszeremonie hat nicht stattgefunden, das erlauben die Umstände nicht” (Wolter 143). The narrator’s “wife” Rosa is described as the antithesis of the narrator’s ex-husband, T. Whereas he never helped in the house, harassed her while she drove, would not let her go to private parties with him and had an affair, Rosa is T.’s exact opposite. The two women share all chores, Rosa is confident of the narrator’s driving skills, and she goes out frequently with the narrator. Therefore, Rosa becomes for all intents and purposes the positive force that fills the negative space left by T.

Though no sexual relationship is mentioned, there are inconclusive hints throughout the story, such as comments from the narrator’s friends such as “Du warst immer ein bisschen verrückt,” and glances from the neighbors that heighten suspicion. When the two women arrive at a party together, they both notice—and enjoy—how the air begins to crackle when the other guests notice that it is not a “normal” couple entering the room, but rather that two women have come together. The narrator, without naming

it, is purposely leading the reader to the almost inescapable conclusion that these two women are lesbians.

In fact, they are not. The critical shift from a hinted-at perversion to normalcy occurs on the last page. For the first time in the short story, the narrator seems to notice that this woman, Rosa, with whom she shares her life, possesses “äußere Reize” and considers that—albeit briefly—a “Versuchung” (*geheiratet* 149). This thought is quickly squelched, however, by the thought that both women are much too smart to ruin what they have together, as companions, as helpmates. The last action in the story displaces the sex that Rosa and the narrator would have together, were they lovers, from the narrator onto the ex-husband T. The object of desire, the lesbian body, is replaced by the male closest to the possible lesbian body. Reader expectations are flirted with and teased out, much as the narrator briefly flirts with the idea of sexual experimentation, creating tension to drive the narrative on.

East German women’s writing is strongly based in the second wave feminist ideal that women and men are inherently different and that, to at least some degree, women are morally and ethically superior to men because of their nurturing traits. Women also supposedly have stronger connections to nature, the magical, and the fantastic (Lewis). This connection to the fantastical is used in women’s literature to further emphasize the split between the socialist utopia and real existing socialism—the fantastic is used to uncover “a repressed and censored narrative that charts the continued subordination of women in the private sphere, in the work place, and in the domains of historical and scientific inquiry” (Lewis 9). Fantasy literature is common in any culture that is especially repressive because it provides hope for alternate and better worlds: “It subverts official or public versions of the truth by opposing dominant ideologies with alternative truths, counter-myths, and other histories” (Lewis 3). According to Alison Lewis, for GDR authors like Morgner, who relied heavily on the fantastic in their literature, it is

“transgressive rather than escapist, critical rather than celebratory” (4). Fantastic elements in realist texts, creating a “fantastic realism,” reveal the utter contradictions in society.

In combination with the fantastic lesbianism is not only idealized, but also possesses dream-like qualities; fantasy allows it to be played with without being presented as a viable alternative to heterosexuality. In the short story “Meine ungehörigen Träume” by Helga Königsdorf, comprised of five vignettes, the second vignette centers on a lesbian encounter between Snow White and the narrator. In this dream version of Snow White, she is dressed like a stereotypical GDR housewife, in “einer blauen Schürze und einem gelben Kopftuch,” and it is one of the narrator’s (ex)lovers, Karlchen, who has eaten the stepmother’s apple. As Karlchen lies in a death-like sleep and Peter, the other love interest (both men are, incidentally, dwarves), is put to sleep with a strong punch; the two women “kosten [sich] und genossen erregt die weibliche Weichheit” (67). In the middle of this description of their lovemaking, the narrator gives a short exegesis on the fact that women cannot possibly understand the nature of men and that patriarchal literature has led to the misplaced belief that men are logical creatures. This is largely due to the fact that men have written the literature in which gender relations are thematized. Thus, male authors are certain of their own logical intent. This is then followed with the statement that:

In keinem Augenblick meines Lebens habe ich alle diese Barrieren so weit überschritten wie in diesem Traum mit Schneewittchen. Für einen Moment war eine fremde Trieblandschaft in grelles Blitzlicht getaucht, um sofort erneut ins Dunkle zu fallen, unverständlich wie zuvor (*Träume* 68).

The love scene between the two women is completely disrupted when Karlchen wakes up, starts chasing Peter around in a jealous rage, and Snow White is distracted by Karlchen’s needs. The interlude is over and the narrator is left, even as she begs and throws herself at Snow White’s feet, commenting that “Unseren Stolz hatten wir irgendwo hinter den sieben Bergen zurückgelassen” (*Träume* 69). Ultimately, the narrator

is unable to convince Snow White to ignore the men. Snow White, in the guise of protecting Karlchen, then eats him while the director⁵⁸ storms in, blowing out all of the candles and destroying the last vestiges of any romantic mood.

The lesbian scene proves to be a too-brief interlude that allows the narrator to voice her critique on the difficulty of understanding heterosexual-based gender roles. Even this however demonstrates that the lesbian love scene is controlled by heterosexual desires given that it is—at its core—controlled by the narrator’s reflections on the literary source of gender myths. Only in the dream-world arms of another woman is the narrator able to use this woman-defined outsider position as a place of criticism before she is completely pulled back into the circle of heterosexual intrigue among Snow White, Karlchen, and Peter.

Like the text from Königsdorf, “*Gute Botschaft der Valeska in 73 Strophen*” by Irmtraud Morgner, also plays with gender and sexuality to critique societal gender roles. The story itself, organized like one of the books of the Christian Bible, is established as a kind of “tract” or religious parable to help other women overcome the problems they face due to gender roles; they are taught how to step out of those roles using their “magical” powers as women. The following longer quote from Eva Kaufmann clearly highlights the revolutionary aspect of Valeska’s message to disrupt the status quo. Perhaps a gentle reminder that Christ was a radical activist as Valeska is, though it is the religious devotion to the patriarchal elements of the East German socialist system and male power that Valeska attempts to overcome:

Was Morgners Valeska zu ihrem und ihrer Geschlechtsgenossinnen Heil praktiziert ist der durch den Geschlechtertausch ermöglichte fröhliche Sieg über Würde und Macht des Phallus. Welch ein Blasphemie, dies zum Kern der “guten Botschaft” für die Frauen zu machen. Damit verletzt Morgner Tabus auf der Sitten-, Geschmacks- und Politikebene alle auf einmal,

⁵⁸ The “director” is another character in these dream sequences. He is the head of the narrator’s department

wenn sie das weibliche Erlösungswerk – noch dazu mit lesbischem Einschlag – in Moskau inszeniert, wo die Frauen unter dem “schleppenden Fortgang revolutionär eingeleiteter Veränderungen” besonders leiden. Morgners Berufung auf die Begrifflichkeit der Bibel (Offenbarung, Botschaft, Lehre, Evangelist, Prophetin) ist zugleich parodistisch und ernst. Damit ist auf spielerische Weise auf die menschliche Dimension verwiesen, um die es in der Erzählung geht. Valeska ist auch ein weiblicher Messias (111).

Archetypes of gender roles are presented by Valeska and Rudolf. Valeska, defined by her relationship to her future husband, is further defined as modest as well as nurturing; at work she is competent and but she is defined through her motherhood and heterosexual relationship with Rudolf. Rudolf, on the other hand, supposedly adheres to stereotypical masculine roles in his arrogance, “Rudolf betrieb seine Forschung in der Überzeugung, der größte Wissenschaftler seines Fachs zu sein” (Morgner 27) and also somewhat cerebral attitude, allowing Valeska to take care of the physical, daily chores—despite the fact that are professionally equal. Rudolf takes for granted that Valeska will cook, do the shopping, as well as entertain guests. Valeska is unsure of moving in with Rudolf and is reluctant to give up the relative ease of being a single mother, where she only has the one person to care for, her son. “Schließlich lebte sie wunderbar erleichtert allein mit ihrem Sohn, seitdem die Scheidung ihr alle Mühen des Daseins auch offiziell allein zu tragen erlaubte” (*Botschaft* 29).

Valeska’s transformation to a man is accomplished solely through her own magical powers as a woman; she repeats “Man müßte ein Mann sein,” three times before she is “miraculously” changed. She accepts her male body as a type of disguise—never accepting its potentially masculinizing effect on her inner life. On the other hand, knowing that Rudolf would not approve of this new “uniform,” she escapes him until she

at work and he invades all of the dreams.

can come to terms with this body. She is surprised at some point to find that she is completely unprepared, not having had the background, to act as men act. Valeska's friend Shenja sees this as an advantage. The following quote is just one of the situations in which Valeska realizes that fulfilling masculine actions does not make her feel like the men around her act:

Sie küßte Schenja hingerissen die Hand. Der erste offizielle Handkuß. Das männliche Vorrecht, den Hof zu machen, gehört auch zu den allerersten Vergnügungen der menschlichen Rasse. Später Liebe in der kommunalen Wohnung.

Gedankenlos. Nachdem beide erfreut waren, fiel Valeska ein, daß die erstmals erprobte Apparatur ohne herrscherliche Gefühle und Unterwerfungsvorstellungen funktioniert hatte. Schenja war nicht verwöhnt, also begeistert (*Botschaft* 48).

Even after engaging in sex, or especially after engaging in sex, Valeska is amazed to realize that she feels no stereotypically masculine tendencies. This lesbian sex, which is coded as sex between two women, one of whom happens to have the body of a man “can be read as a general expression of the desperation at the lack of sexual and social alternatives available to women in the GDR: as the negation of all feminine desire—for love between two women, for social mobility, for travel and adventures, and for difference” (Lewis 138).

Given the narrative form and the exaggerated stereotypes represented by the characters, Morgner has attained a humorous, but also incredibly critical look at male-female relationships. Even though she alludes to homosexuality, we see that she is unable to escape the heterosexual pairing and Valeska returns to Rudolf, moves in with him, and they lead an equal and happy life, in which Valeska, “Um die landläufigen moralischen Vorstellungen nicht zu verletzen” (Morgner 62), returns to her female body to have sex with Rudolf.

On the other hand, women-centered alternatives to the nuclear family take on a central importance. In fact, they dominate much of the narrative; ultimately, other women are the intended recipients of this gospel. Sharing a house with other working mothers, instead of with Rudolf, “presents a utopian perspective that touches on a subject that has constituted one of the taboo topics in GDR literature. Such solutions as communal ... were thought to be incompatible with the socialist ideal of the harmonious nuclear family” (Lewis 112-113). She is giving women news of a miracle on which they can pattern and change the material conditions of their lives. Thus, even though heterosexual dominance is not completely undone in the plot of this short story, it is certainly disrupted by the dominant woman-centered communities since romantic relationships are not valued as the optimal living arrangement.

Unlike the Morgner text, which relies on the fantastical elements in a woman’s nature to provide solutions to social and gendered inequities, “Selbstversuch” by Christa Wolf, also a short story about gender transformation, has a less positive outcome. The transformation that the character Anders [other/different] undergoes is based in science, not in magic, and for it to become permanent, Anders has to take on all aspects of being male. Because he s/he cannot accept the physical as well as mental shift, Anders breaks off the experiment. The fantastically induced change that Valeska undergoes allows her to overcome many age-old dilemmas, such as how to create the ideal marriage or solve world hunger (Kaufmann 110), whereas Anders in “Selbstversuch” loses all of a woman’s positive qualities and they are not replaced by equally positive male traits. By becoming a man through and through, Anders also loses the privileged position women supposedly hold in society to critique its problems (Lennox 231).

Irene, Anders’ one love interest, is unable to respond to the sexual advances Anders makes, replying “wie schade es jetzt doch sei, daß wir uns von früher kannten” (*Selbstversuch* 87). The only chance the narrator has of living out his/her sexual masculinity is with someone who does not know his/her feminine past. That is, with a

woman who would not be concerned—because she would not know—that she is “really” having sex with a woman, despite the masculine apparatus. Of course, the irony of this situation is that Anders becomes less and less the woman s/he was before as the experiment progresses.

In this story, Wolf creates a solid criticism of gender roles and even how they create heterosexual practices. The criticism ranges from bodily contact, either with women or the men around Anders, to linguistic crisis. Just as Anders is not able to have sexual contact with those women who know him/her, s/he is not able to communicate either. All forms of expression are gendered and Anders’ liminal state as the transformation from the female to the male is not completely finished finds him unable to speak as well as love. Anders is struck by the irony that words are supposed to mean something else to him/her in a masculine body than in a feminine one:

Sollte ich als Frau antworten? Als Mann? Und wenn als Mann: Wie denn, um Himmelswillen? So daß ich schließlich auf “rot” nicht “Liebe” sagte, wie sonst immer, sondern “Wut.” Auf “Frau” nicht “Mann,” sondern “schön.” Auf “Kind” “schmutzig” anstatt “weich,” und auf “Mädchen” nicht “schlank,” sondern “süß.” Olala, sagte mein Freund Rüdiger, ganz schön schon, mein Lieber (*Selbstversuch* 78-79).

S/he can imagine what the answers should be and how s/he “should” react as a man. By pointing this out, s/he is however demonstrating the outrageousness that there should be another “language” for men—who incidentally live on a different planet as women—as well as the instability of language and how it manages simultaneously to undergird and undermine established gender roles.

Another common theme that can be found in the works above is that men under patriarchy are unable to love; they are only able to conquer. Only outside of patriarchal structures can men and women come together as equal subjects in a relationship. Brigitte Reimann’s *Franziska Linkerhand* seems to support this feminist assertion. Throughout

the story, Franziska's love relationships are disturbed by patriarchal structures. She gives in to romantic notions of love only to marry a man who beats her. As an architect, she is subject to the whims of both her architecture master Reger as well as the architectural designs of the state that are represented by Schafheutlin. The one innocent expression of love in the whole text is presented as an almost primordial occurrence with another young girl in Franziska's youth. Before she has her first relationship with the young artist Django, before she marries, before she is consumed by her career making love impossible (taking on masculine traits for professional success), she enjoys the idealized sexual contact with another "innocent" girl:

Sie war ein schönes Mädchen mit zimperlichem Mund und einer Masse von weizenblondem Haar, das ihr beim Kämmen in die Kniekehlen fiel, und du kannst dir denken, wie attraktiv sie neben ihrem struppigen Pagen aussah. Sie küßte mich... Manchmal, vom Sonnabend auf den Sonntag, durfte ich bei ihr schlafen, und wir spielten allerlei unschuldige Spiele...oder doch nicht so unschuldig...verwischte Erinnerung an Fragiles, Zärtliches, zwei Kinder in einem großen Bett, der gelbe gefältelte Seidenschirm der Nachttischlampe" (*Franziska* 35—ellipses in original).

Lesbian contact is presented as an ur-sexuality, an utopian precursor to the realities of heterosexuality awaiting Franziska as well as her friend. It also provides an innocent counterpoint to the jaded Western consumerism indicated in the following quote: "Sie wurde zu Haus streng gehalten, und mit sechzehn hatte sie einen geheimnisvollen Freund, der einen Porsche fuhr, und mit achtzehn, kurz vorm Abitur, die erste Abtreibung, und mit zwanzig heiratete sie einen Mercedes in Bad Pyrmont" (*Franziska* 35). Of course, this cannot provide the basis for sexual or love relationships and is remembered as a brief, innocent prelude to the realism of socialist and/or Western heterosexuality.

Here we see that lesbianism, either as a relationship between two helpmates in the home, or prefigured as a utopian innocence that is contrasted with heterosexual love, is

used in women's fiction as the fantastical, utopian other to the dystopia of real existing socialism.

The Case of *Kassandra*

This section specifically deals with *Kassandra* by Christa Wolf. I have chosen this text for two main reasons. First, it demonstrates a shift in GDR women's writing of the early 1980s, especially noticeable in Morgner's *Amanda* and Wolf's *Kassandra*, away from the quotidian issues confronting women under socialism to the mechanisms of state power and patriarchal control and how they are interwoven with gender dominance (Kaufmann). In *Kassandra*, Wolf traces the utilization of women within the militaristic decline of the patriarchal order. *Kassandra* was published in 1983 at the height of Reagan/Brezhnev-Andropov cold war tensions as the two Germanies formed the focal point of those tensions due to the addition of short-range nuclear missiles on both sides of the wall. By "focusing on the antagonism between the Greeks and the Trojans, Wolf prefigures East-West relations in her own time and relates masculinist patterns of thought, the mentality of war and women's objectification in the past and the present" (Rossbacher 115). Because of the connection Wolf draws between war and patriarchy, she has chosen the Trojan War specifically because it is the earliest recorded history, demonstrating the shift from the matriarchal to the patriarchal, and marking the emergence of war as a phallic power play. *Kassandra*, as the main character "ist eine Schnittstelle der beiden Themenbereiche" of that shift (Stein 173). Secondly, the narrative complexity of this one text allows for an in-depth analysis of the function of "the lesbian" at three levels: the characters marked as lesbians, the meta-lesbian of character configurations, the lesbian as a critique of/disturbance in the heteronarrative.

The first level of analysis, that of characters more or less obviously marked as lesbians, is in many ways the easiest to conceptualize. The individual lesbian figures and lesbian community function in *Kassandra* by providing a utopian counterpoint to the

patriarchal order and creating a space for working out sociopolitical solutions to the damages caused by the patriarchy: “Der weibliche Eros wird bei Christa Wolf zum Grundstein einer weitergehenden feministischen und politisch-utopischen Theorie gemacht” (Tabah *Fiktionalisierung* 227). In fact, “Wolf’s continued interest in utopian themes has made her work suspect to the East German establishment. The concept of a ‘real, existing utopia’ ironically inverts the government’s oft repeated appeal to the people to be content with ‘real existing socialism’; i.e., the status quo” (Pickle *Scratching* 44). Some theorists see lesbianism in close, physical relationships between women (that are not necessarily genital) as well as strong, women-centered communities; for example, Birgit Waberski argues for viewing any close women’s friendships as lesbian (11). Others would claim that there is no lesbianism present if no direct mention is made of sexual contact between women. For this analysis, I will consider both extremes. The community on Mt. Ida is clearly women-centered and matriarchal—though this does not exclude the presence of men, especially in the last two years of the war, any more than the patriarchy excludes the complicity of women—and as such is also portrayed as containing intimate women’s relationships. This section will also consider the individual characters of Cassandra, Myrine, and Penthesilea as lesbians.

Lesbian Utopia in the Women-Centered Community

The Mt. Ida community is a women’s community outside of the citadel walls of Troy that is led by the strong matriarch Arisbe and worships the goddess Cybele. The first time the reader is introduced to this community is during a rite to Cybele in which the women participate in a wildly sexual dance that Cassandra observes from the outside and the sexuality of which she finds intimidating. This community proves dangerous to the Trojan/Greek patriarchy in a number of ways: First, they are the truly matriarchal, the proto-matriarchal culture that provides a utopian counterpoint for Trojan culture. Though both women and men are part of the Mt. Ida community, women govern it; men, such as

Anchises, though they are taken as counsel over the duration of the war, do not form or create any governmental structure. In fact, instead of there being a single ruler of the community, the women form their own council and discuss how to proceed, how to continue to protect themselves. Secondly, Mt. Ida is also a threat to warlike patriarchy in its silence and pacifism. There is a tension created in the way that they allow themselves to be plundered by the Trojans of cloth and foodstuffs but still manage to survive the war in the end. They choose to remain outside Troy's city walls in secret, but manage to provide more safety to their community than the stone walls of Troy do for its inhabitants. As pacifists and nurturers, they provide a political counterpoint for the warmongering of the patriarchal societies in Greece and Troy. Lastly, there is a rampant sexuality displayed by these women, both around the fire dancing to Cybele and in their uninhibited touching that defies masculine power.

Through their pacifist behavior as well as sexual freedom, as opposed to the stringent heterosexual sexual rites and rituals observed by the Trojans, the Mt. Ida women also provide a space in which men and women work together, not ruled by patriarchal sexual rites. Social interaction is not governed by sexual tensions created by patriarchy and thus men and women coexist peacefully without women being oppressed by the men who live on the mountain. In fact, the only sexual oppression they suffer is under the Trojans when they take part in Trojan society and they are only relegated to servant roles when working in Troy or when their goods are stolen by the Trojans. Otherwise, they benefit fully from their own labor. Thus, the society has to guard its paths and sneak into the caves, hiding themselves away from the Trojans in order to preserve their way of life as well as that of the women and men who find refuge there. It is not only sexual expression that marks this woman-centered community as "lesbian" even though, throughout the war and especially in the last two years, it expands to include men, with Anchises (Aeneias' father) as a male complement to Arisbe.

In the end the community consists of women and men from all levels in the social hierarchy who have taken refuge in the caves and wish to pursue a peaceful alternative to the “toxic situation in Troy” (Resch 135). Margit Resch reads the Mt. Ida community as a “feminist paradigm” not to be “emulated” (i.e., that it only has value in its oppositional function, not in any real sense); it would seem that she misses the point. It is exactly the alternative to the toxic Troy, that is the toxic patriarchy, that this community allows and that is created as more than a counterpoint, but a utopian goal to strive for—it is no accident that Wolf has created a community in which there is no privilege or gendered antagonisms. Mt. Ida is the “geographical space in which [the feminine ethic of love] can be sheltered and nurtured...where female slaves, women from outside the citadel, and other women gather to dance and commune” (Finney 101). It would be a mistake to claim that this fictional Mt. Ida community is congruous with the historical Minoan society that Wolf discusses in her lectures on poetics that accompany the *Kassandra* narrative; though Wolf has certainly preserved the utopian qualities of the Minoan in the Mt. Ida community, she abandons the problematic aspects of the Minoans, such as slave ownership.

What is critical about this community in its final form, though it begins as a utopian women’s-only space, is that it expands to include men who are peaceful. “For Wolf, emancipation can only emerge if men and women work together toward a common goal” (Rossbacher 143). The amalgamation of the women-centered community and the refugees of patriarchy creates a version of the “third way” that is related to Wolf’s “real, existing utopia” and Bloch’s “concrete utopia.” (Rossbacher 142). In its original form, the Mt. Ida community embodies a “form of feminism that emphasizes women’s position outside of a patriarchal history of oppression, women are untouched by that history’s most destructive forces” (Hell *Critical* 93). Although, according to Hell, Wolf seems to advocate the purity allowed by this kind of feminist vision, I would argue that *Kassandra* does not support this kind of utopia and opts for the integrative community at the end.

Anchises is no less critical of the advancement of patriarchy inside Troy's city walls and, as a man, is not afforded this supposed critical purity that women would claim. Linda Pickle also stresses that, though the roots of the Mt. Ida women's community predate Troy, the community is enhanced by its alterations:

In her recreation of the world of the Trojan War, Wolf goes beyond the portrayal of women's growing powerlessness in this male-dominated world. She also posits the formation of an alternate female subculture as part of the hidden but absolutely spontaneous and natural reaction to it. This subculture predates the war itself, and stems from the exiling of the old female gods from Troy (*Scratching* 43).

It is the expulsion of women's gods from Troy—i.e., the formation of the patriarchy by exiling the gods of the matriarchy—that creates the Mt. Ida community and the war that leads to its simultaneous expansion to accommodate the needs of those who support neither the war nor its underlying patriarchal order.

The formation of this patriarchal order in Troy rests solely on

objective binary thought:..."Für die Griechen gibt es nur entweder Wahrheit oder Lüge, richtig oder falsch, Sieg oder Niederlage, Freund oder Feind, Leben oder Tod. Was nicht sichtbar, riechbar, hörbar, tastbar ist, ist nicht vorhanden" (VK 124). Although they initially sustain remnants of matriarchy and its values, the Trojans eventually internalize and reproduce this mode of thinking. In place of subjectivity and valuation of self-knowledge and intersubjective knowledge, they adopt a rationalist mentality based on objectivity and utilitarianism (Rossbacher 139)

Thus, while the spirituality of the Mt. Ida community is driven by sexuality and a connection to the earth, Arisbe is a mother-earth like character in her immensity and presence, spirituality in Troy and for the Greeks is led by men who are calculating;

Kalchas stays in Greece to save himself and provide visions that Agamemnon wants to hear while Panthoos is equally self-serving in his spiritual leadership.

Furthermore, in Troy, as the patriarchy is more deeply established and war is entered upon, women are increasingly pushed out of seats of power: Hekabe is removed from the ruling council because in war it is “keine Frauensache mehr” (K 105). “Im Gegensatz dazu steht die friedliche Gemeinschaft auf dem Berg Ida, fast ausschließlich eine Frauengemeinschaft, die sich wohlgeordnet außerhalb der Zitadelle Troia bildet (Stein 175). The patriarchy, while shutting women out of the ruling process, uses women as political tools: Agamemnon has his daughter Iphigenia sacrificed to the gods for favorable winds, Polyxena is bartered to Achilles ultimately to lure him to his death, Cassandra is married to a potential ally, Eurpylos, who is killed the following day, after impregnating her, and Helen, who never makes it to Troy but rather is taken captive by the Egyptian ruler, is used as a symbol for a grueling war that is in actuality about trade policy. In the patriarchal order, women are nothing more than tools to be used for political and personal gain. As the patriarchy develops, the two communities, Troy and Mt. Ida, do not become closer, as is the goal of a society and its utopia, but they diverge so that there is ultimately no crossover between the two communities. The women who moved between the two at will at the beginning of the narrative are forced to completely abandon Troy for their own safety in the end. There are examples of women who demonstrate aggressive traits throughout the narrative, but this violence occurs due to interactions with the patriarchy, such as Penthesilea, the female guards who abuse Cassandra, and the women who kill Panthoos as revenge for Penthesilea’s death.

Intimate Friendships and Sexual Alternatives to Heterosexual Patriarchy

We also find intimate relationships between individual women, such as the friendship that develops between Marpessa and Cassandra. In this relationship, it is the nurse Marpessa who is able to remain by Cassandra’s side, no matter what happens. After

all of Cassandra's lovers have either deserted her or have been killed, it is Marpessa who takes the ship with Cassandra to Greece, who continues to care for Cassandra's children, even after Cassandra's death and who comforts Cassandra in her final hours. She is the helpmate who shores up Cassandra in her last hours of need. In a both political and social context, regardless of the passing satisfaction that can be gained from a lover, it is this kind of friendship that provides support and enduring companionship.

Beyond friendship, sexual relationships between two women have political implications in *Kassandra*; lesbianism is used as a sensual contrast to the harshness of the subject/object control implicit in patriarchal heterosexual pairings. According to Mireille Tabah, "[Der weibliche Eros] korrigiert andererseits die brutale Sexualität, auf die sich die männliche Erotik in der patriarchalischen Gesellschaft reduziert hat, indem er Anspruch auf eine entfaltete, alles umfassende Sinnlichkeit erhebt und nach Zärtlichkeit, Vertrauen, Offenheit, Rücksicht und die Bedürfnisse des anderen verlangt"

(*Fiktionalisierung* 229). Not only is the physical and emotional aspect of the utopian lesbian relationship more satisfactory, it also allows Cassandra to be an equal subject, what she was seeking as a priestess and seer in Troy (Tabah *Liebesleben* 85). This is in direct opposition to the violence that patriarchal sexual relationships do to women and even other men: "Sexuelle Potenz ist im patriarchalischen Klischeedenken Synonym für Macht und Herrschaft" (Tabah *Liebesleben* 86). This is played out on many levels in the *Kassandra* narrative; Achilles is the worst example. He takes out his (sexual) frustrations on serving women, young men, and then on Penthesilea's dead body on the battlefield, not having humiliated her enough by killing her. That Achilles engages in same sex relationships does not hold the same meaning as lesbian relationships, but is rather, like the necrophilia practiced on Penthesilea, an indication of his "verabsolierter Männlichkeit, die sich destruktiv gegen Menschen richtet" (Waberski 198). He is the ultimate symbol of all sexual repression that happens between men and women in the novel. Furthermore, the patriarchal sexual relationship establishes the less powerful

member of the relationship, that is the woman, as the object; it is Wolf's utopian goal that sexual partnerships contain no object, but rather be established by two equal, autonomous subjects, as in her version of a utopian lesbian relationship (Tabah *Fiktionalisierung* 228).

Though a sexual relationship is an expression of the "Zugewandtheit von Frauen, die nicht länger die Körperlichkeit ausschließt...als *rein weibliche* Erfahrung positiv dargestellt und von den Frauen lustvoll erlebt" (Waberski 197), according to Tabah, a sexual relationship between women is, however, only a utopian, exemplary relationship that does not actually play out in any developed way in the text:

[D]ie gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe [ist] das Modell einer erotischen Beziehung ohne Gewalt- und Herrschaftsstrukturen, wie sie nach C. Wolf in einer nicht patriarchalischen Welt auch zwischen Mann und Frau möglich sein soll...Das Verhältnis zwischen [Kassandra und Myrine] wird nur in wenigen Seiten angedeutet und mit einer stilistischen Diskretion nahegelegt, die es nicht erlaubt, es tatsächlich als Modell erotischer Entfaltung der Frau zu betrachten (*Fiktionalisierung* 234).

As a utopian space for women, the lesbian relationship is also seen as a refuge. After Kassandra escapes her imprisonment and retreats to the Mt. Ida community to live out the rest of the war, though she is still in love with and friends with Aineias, she only allows Myrine to approach her sexually. The abuses from men have simply overwhelmed her to the point that she no longer wants to participate in a sexual relationship with the future hero Aineias.

It is the love relationship with Myrine that stands in stark contrast to the ultimately failing relationship with Aineias. As Kassandra is more and more abused by her heterosexual sexual relationships, either at the hands of Panthoos or her father (not directly sexual, but in the form of his utilitarian use of her sexuality in the war and her physical imprisonment to squelch the "voice" of warning and criticism that Kassandra cannot control) she loses the ability to be touched by men. After she is freed from her

prison by Myrine, Cassandra remains bonded to Aineias by friendship, but can no longer tolerate the touch of a man. She only allows Myrine into her physical realm; it is this relationship between Myrine and Cassandra that is related with hints and innuendo:

Das war dein geballter Trotz und deine flammende Trauer um Penthesilea, die ich, was denkst du denn, verstand. Da war ihre tief verkrochene Scheu, ihre Furcht vor Berührung, die ich niemals verletzte, bis ich ihre blonde Mähne um meine Hand wickeln durfte und so erfuhr, wie mächtig die Lust gewesen war, die ich lange schon darauf gehabt. Dein Lächeln in der Minute meines Todes, dacht ich, und hatte, da ich mich keiner Zärtlichkeit mehr enthielt, für lange den Schrecken hinter mir. Jetzt kommt er dunkel wieder auf mich zu.

Myrine ist mir ins Blut gegangen, im gleichen Augenblick, da ich sie sah, hell und kühn und in Leidenschaft brennend neben der dunklen sich selbst verzehrenden Penthesilea. Ob sie mir Freude oder Leid brachte, loslassen konnte ich sie nicht, aber sie jetzt neben mir zu haben, wünsch ich nicht (K 9-10).

The images of Cassandra's hand entwined in Myrine's blond hair and words like *Zärtlichkeit* (tenderness) are the emotive sexual markers for Cassandra and Myrine's relationship. Like the time spent with the women in the mountains, the passages that reveal the relationship between Cassandra and Myrine are few, whereas the passages dealing with Cassandra's male lovers, Panthoos and Aineias, are relatively extensive and direct. Heterosexual pairings, either between Cassandra and men or her sisters and brothers, are straightforwardly presented throughout the text and form a large part of the narrative, paired together with the destruction of the war, whereas the women-centered and lesbian relationships are told in snatches of interspersed narrative. Though the time spent on Mt. Ida at the end of the war, for example, was a full two years, it only makes up four pages of the narrative. It signals that Cassandra has chosen to quit fighting the

patriarchy and simply chosen to disengage; after her imprisonment and Penthesilea's death, she no longer feels the need to interact with Trojan society. The relative peace and silence among the women needs little narration in order to provide a stark and critical contrast to the ravages of a patriarchal and warmongering society.

In Penthesilea however Wolf locates the supposedly negative aspects of a lesbian separatist. Wolf clearly establishes Mt. Ida as the positive alternative to the violence done by patriarchy and it is not accidental that this society is mixed in gender, though matriarchal in conception. Though literary scholars attribute Penthesilea with a range of symbolic attributes, from a *Bund-Deutscher-Mädel*-leader and ultimate fascist to the bad example of separatist feminism, it is this last example that Waberski takes up in her analysis of the *Kassandra* narrative. Whereas the women on Mt. Ida and Cassandra are willing to work together with men to forge an equitable society, Penthesilea chooses to not join this community, opting for the life of a warrior instead; she literally fights against the patriarchal order, but in the end, this kind of unilateral separatist approach leaves her too weak to triumph and she is literally ravished on the battlefield. Penthesilea makes this choice, though it spells her demise, because she does not believe in any alternative:

Penthesilea: Die Männer kommen schon auf ihre Kosten.

Arisbe: Du nennst ihren Niedergang zu Schlächtern auf ihre Kosten kommen?

Penthesilea: Sie sind Schlächter. So tun sie, was ihnen Spaß macht.

Arisbe: Und wir? Wenn wir auch Schlächterinnen würden?

Penthesilea: So tun wir, was wir müssen. Doch es macht uns keinen Spaß.

Arisbe: Wir sollen tun, was sie tun, um unser Anderssein zu zeigen!

Penthesilea: Ja.

Ainone: Aber so kann man nicht leben.

Penthesilea: Nicht leben? Sterben schon.

Hekabe: Kind. Du willst, daß alles aufhört.

Penthesilea: Das will ich. Da ich kein andres Mittel kenne, daß die Männer aufhörn.

Da kam die junge Sklavin aus dem Griechenlager zu ihr herüber, kniete vor ihr hin und legte Penthesileas Hände an ihr Gesicht. Sie sagte:

Penthesilea. Komm zu uns. – Zu euch? Was heißt das. – Ins Gebirge. In den Wald. In die Höhlen am Skamander. Zwischen Töten und Sterben ist ein Drittes: Leben. (K 137-138).

Penthesilea believes that men are incorrigible; therefore as a woman she has the single option of playing their game better than they do in order to end the game. Because Penthesilea cannot accept the third option, to live, but feels she has to choose either between men or women, to kill or be killed, “Penthesilea ultimately chooses death” (Rossbacher 143).

I would however argue that the black/white analysis of Penthesilea’s role provided by Waberski is not that cut and dried. The futility of Penthesilea’s battle is not lost on the reader, but neither is the futility of Cassandra’s fight. She too eschews patriarchy, which leads directly to her death. And though the Mt. Ida community survives to escape with Aineias, they are likely to be subjected to the same utilization of women under patriarchy as they are re-formed under a patriarchal system that forces them to adapt in order to survive. After all, it is because Cassandra is convinced that Aineias will have to succumb to patriarchy and become a hero, which will force him to adopt patriarchal strategies and oppress women, that leads her to choose death herself. Cassandra cannot stand to become Aineias’ tool. Myrine, the female warrior alternative to Penthesilea, who never takes up the mantle of the hero, also dies in the fight against patriarchy as the only warrior who will listen to and act upon Cassandra’s warnings about the Trojan horse. Ultimately, all of the paths against patriarchy are doomed in this narrative.

The Symbolic Lesbian

The previous section dealt with the idealized lesbian as a character in the narrative and how lesbian pairings and lesbian community both function to provide a utopian opposition to the failings of the patriarchy, both at the social and the intimate, sexual level. This section will focus on character configurations and how a lesbian is created as part of the character structure; this lesbian influences the narrative by her positioning, not by her actions within the narrative.

According to Julia Hell in *Post-Fascist Fantasies*, in GDR literature, and especially in the writing of Christa Wolf, “The identification with the father’s body [the sublime body] results in the fantasy of the post-fascist body...sexuality is defined as that part of subjectivity which links the subject to its fascist past, and the new subject comes about as a result of the erasure of its material body, its sexual body” (19). It is exactly this Oedipal identification with the father’s body that creates a further social disjunction between Cassandra and the other characters in the Trojan and Greek patriarchy.

In the process of Oedipal identification, Cassandra is rejected by her mother Hekabe, who claims that Cassandra does not need her, and is taken in by the father. Freud claims that the young woman, in order to rightfully inhabit a “normal” heterosexuality, is supposed to desire the father. This requires that she identify with the mother; in Cassandra’s case, the opposite happens. Not only does she clearly identify with the father, he in turn seems to desire that identification from her. Cassandra’s identification with Priamos is not one of desire as much as it is one of replacement, of both her father and the sublime father in the form of the king. The king himself perpetuates this identification process by sharing his fantasy with Cassandra that she should take his place on the throne, “dressed in his clothes” and discussing politics with her: “ich, Liebling des Vaters und an Politik interessiert wie keines meiner zahlreichen Geschwister, ich durfte bei ihnen sitzen und hören” (*Kassandra* 17). He further makes it

clear that he considers her the one true heir to his throne and bemoans that she is female, not male.

Further identification with her twin brother Helenus, the highest priest, reinforces this masculinization. Cassandra claims that Helenus is “the image of me if I had been a man. If only I were!” (C 28). Hell further claims that in the act of losing her father’s relationship she replaces him through an “act of identification” (238). Effectively, instead of usurping the mother’s position, it is the father’s position that is usurped, and near the end of the narrative it is the mother who is taken into protection on Mt. Ida by the Oedipally lesbianized Cassandra.

Kassandra attempts from the beginning to occupy the place of a subject, a masculine position in the patriarchy, instead of a feminine position of an object. It is her desire to be a subject in the subject/object patriarchal heterosexual order (before she deserts the order altogether) that creates Cassandra’s outsider position in Trojan society, so much so that she balks at Apollo’s attempt to bed her in the vision he grants her. Thus, he gives her the subject position she seeks as a seer, but curses her for denying her object position in relation to him by making sure that she will never be believed. Her positioning as a subject is never accepted in the subject/object society and only by escaping to the Mt. Ida community is she able to act as a subject in a societal structure that ideally places everyone in the role of subject. At the plot level, it is this society that also claims to have no heterosexual relationships, though men and women live peacefully together, or perhaps because of that fact.

Queering the Heteronarrative

This last section is concerned with the narrative structure of *Kassandra* and specifically how by manipulating the intersection of sexuality and narrative, Wolf disrupts heteronormative narrative structure. Judith Roof in *Come as You Are*, an examination of the connection between sexuality and narrative, demonstrates how Freud

not only creates a story about how sexuality develops, but also how stories are told and the connections between the two. In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* he does not begin with normative sexuality, but rather with the perverse, what can go wrong, or obstructions to “normal” sexual development. Freud’s story of sexual development:

proceeds from risky multiplicity to productive singularity. Freud’s story features a struggle and victory instead of the erroneous account’s inevitable and unmotivated line of least resistance. In his narrative, Freud situates the perversions as the spot where the story falls apart, a spot that is also part of the story, serving its function as inhibition or dissociation only in relation to the narrative’s ultimate end, ‘the discharge of the sexual substance’ (xx).

This sexual discharge that is the end goal of sexual development is also the instance of reproduction in the narrative, the ultimate goal of the narrative. As such, the narrative “is the expression of an ideology of value and meaning that resides in the pattern of joiner to product where products parallel such other metaphorically reproductive yields as children, knowledge, and victory” (Roof *Come* xxii). Of course, homosexuality and other “perversions” provide the obstacles to the development of the narrative; they are the tension or titillation that keeps the reader involved until normalcy is recovered. So, there is a clear connection here between content and form in that it is the heterosexual story that contributes to the form of the narrative. As Roof claims, if the story were between two men or two women, it would not end the same, because the chance for reproduction would be disrupted.

In her theoretical analysis, Roof comes to the conclusion that the heteronarrative is inescapable; it is irreversibly connected to production of text and sexual reproduction and could only be escaped when the need for reproduction is no longer socially valued, i.e., when we manage to escape death altogether. In *Kassandra*, it is exactly in death of the narrator that heteronormativity is finally escaped. “‘In den Tod’ geht ja nicht

Kassandra allein, auf der inhaltliche Ebene, sondern ebenso der Erzähler, der einmal erzählend, in Kassandras Tod geht, zum anderen auf außertextualler Ebene, in seinen eigenen, in dem Sinne, daß erzählen einer zeitlichen Spur folgt, die unausweichlich auf den Tod zusteuert” (Stein 178). Though the death of the narrator/narrative shows that heteronormativity in the patriarchal order is inescapable, Wolf does not attempt to escape heteronormativity in order to devalue heterosexuality, but rather to expose the violence done to women as objects within the patriarchal system. It is this patriarchal subjugation that Cassandra chooses to avoid, by choosing death. Wolf systematically critiques, perverts, and queers the narrative, stretching its boundaries until it can no longer be sustained.

Wolf ties linear narrative to patriarchy and “argues that women should not simply adopt aesthetic modes passed down by men, but must develop synthetic forms that reflect their engagement, multiplicity and interdependence. [Her narrative] resembles an intricate artistic weaving: in parts imperfect, tangled and irreducible to a single thread” (Rossbacher 132). Cause and effect as a staple of the reproductive narrative structure, especially when tied to heterosexuality, are disrupted throughout the narrative. We see this disruption on several occasions throughout the text. In the case of Cassandra, but also with her sister as a negative mirrored figure, the reader sees that love ≠ romance ≠ marriage ≠ reproduction. It is clearly established that Cassandra is in love with Aineias. This does not however directly lead to sex; at her sexual initial rite, Aineias is unable to perform and Cassandra remains a virgin. Instead, Cassandra is initiated into sexual practices by Panthoos, the high priest of her temple where she is a seer. The fact that this sex is supposedly between Apollo and his high priestess does not conceal that not only does Cassandra not love Panthoos, but rather it is quite clear on many occasions that she does not particularly like him. On top of this, when Cassandra does get married, it is to a man her father wants as an ally at the end of the war. Instead of quarreling with her father, she marries the man, who dies the next day in a skirmish. In the end, Cassandra

claims that Aineias is the father of the children, who are obviously a product of her short-lived marriage to Eupylos; Cassandra had stopped having a physical relationship with Aineias by this time.

In Polyxena's case, the heterosexual ideal of love is also disrupted on all fronts. She is so traumatized by the war that she succumbs to plans to use her body to lure Achilles out of the Greek camp. On the city wall, she exposes herself and later in the narrative, she is the one who is able to draw Achilles to the temple, so that he can be killed in revenge for Hector's death. The ideal of heterosexual love is broken down to its basest elements of lust driven by power; Achilles wants Polyxena as his just spoils of war. The damages caused Polyxena leave her insane and defenseless. Though this alone does not queer the narrative, it points to an unequal power exchange between men and women in heterosexual relationships under the patriarchy.

These disruptions of romantic love would not be enough, on their own, to disrupt heteronarrative structure. In the place of a narrative structure based on cause and effect, this narrative is driven by repetition. Instead of linear reproduction, it is the sameness in the form of Cassandra's memories of Aineias that drives the narrative. The iteration of memories about their relationship keeps the narrative moving. On the one hand, this is clearly a heterosexual phenomenon, because it is a relationship between a man and a woman. On the other hand, repetition "underscores a crucial sameness between lesbians...[creating] 'a disruptive space of sameness'" (Zimmerman 11). This sameness displaces the dominance of heterosexual narrative drive based on cause and effect, and brings it into the realm of the queer, thereby creating a space in which the narrative simultaneously criticizes the story it is conveying. This kind of repetitiveness is a queer production can be found in theories of queer relationship building (Sinfield) as well as concepts of queer reproduction, in which genealogy is not generational, but rather based on patterns of initiation and adaptation (Halberstam).

Though Wolf is able to expand, parody, and play with the heteronarrative, she is not able to completely create a new narrative form. The connection between reproduction and narrative is too strong to be completely overcome, even if it is diverted through the disruption of cause and effect. The narrative is dominated by the various heterosexual pairings, despite its disruption by women-centered relationships. From beginning to end, it is the relationship with Aeneas, in its various forms, that is carried throughout the whole narrative and when Cassandra finally denies Aeneas, the narrative ends. The love affair with Myrine and the women-centered community of Mt. Ida were neither able to withstand heterosexual pressures. Despite the temporary refuge that Cassandra's relationship with Myrine as well as the Mt. Ida community provide, in the end Myrine was killed by destructive masculinity and the Mt. Ida community does not provide enough safety to continue, it will have to transform into the kind of patriarchal community it wants to avoid for further survival under Aeneas. Cassandra is separated from them both when Greek patriarchy overwhelms them all. Separated from her female support system, all that is left Cassandra is submission to patriarchal heteronormativity by staying with Aeneas and the Mt. Ida community as it escapes. However she rejects heterosexual ideology as she rejects Aeneas and within a page, the narrative itself ends; "she experiences the contradictions of individual and society at a physical level and dies" (Dueck 119). "An deinen Augen sah ich, du hattest mich begriffen. Einen Helden kann ich nicht lieben. Deine Verwandlung in ein Standbild will ich nicht erleben" (K 159). Cassandra chooses death over seeing Aeneas become a hero, or perpetrator of women's subjugation, and ultimately her own subjugation. Cassandra's, and subsequently, the story's final words, are "Das Licht erlosch. Erlischt. Sie kommen" (K 159). As Cassandra, the narrator, voluntarily goes to her death, she takes the narrative with her as well, letting it die on the ashes of the heterosexual promise that was not able to sustain its tension. The text ends.

Idealized lesbian images and narrative queering serve specific functions in *Kassandra*, as well as other East German women's fiction, notably to provide contrary examples for the patriarchy in the case of symbolic representations and also of heteronormative practices. The "story" neither in its content nor structure, actually focuses on lesbian or queer alternatives; there is no material lesbian condition in and of itself that is represented in this text or in other GDR women's fiction. Lesbianism is used to socially critique the patriarchy and everyday women's issues such as the double burden. Though, just as the matriarchal community on Mt. Ida is composed of women and men, it is a reformed, but ultimately heterosexual, political and social system that is the end goal.

Chapter Four

Queering the Antifascist State: Ravensbrück, Social Drama, and the Problem of Historical Representation

On 10 March 1984, a group of lesbians from the Berlin-based *Arbeitskreis Homosexuelle Selbsthilfe-Lesben in der Kirche* (Lesbians in the Church) made their first “official” trip to the former concentration camp Ravensbrück in Fürstenberg north of Berlin. They had booked a tour of the grounds and museum for eleven a.m. on that day, but due to train schedule complications, arrived at four p.m. When they arrived, they visited the museum—where they commented on the fact that the pink triangle was not among the description of prisoner markings⁵⁹—and wrote the following passage in the visitor’s book: “Unsere Gedanken gelten allen Frauen, die im KZ Ravensbrück ihr Leben lassen mußten und gelitten haben, insbesondere unseren lesbischen Schwestern. Außerdem gedenken wir allen Frauen, die noch heute unter Faschismus und Unterdrückung leiden müssen“ (Letter of Official Complaint, 20 March 84). They also placed a wreath with the inscription “Im Gedenken an das Leid der Frauen des ehemaligen KZ Ravensbrück—Arbeitskreis Homosexuelle Selbsthilfe Berlin-Lesben in der Kirche” (Letter of Official Complaint, 20 March 84) in honor of the women who had suffered and died there. Four days later, two women returned to the memorial to find that the entry in the visitor’s book had been removed. The rest of the book was there, intact. They further discovered that the floral wreath, along with the inscription, had also been removed. The lesbians re-wrote the entry in the book and left. Three days after that, other women from the group returned to the memorial only to discover the entry had been removed yet again. They inquired about the removal, but did not leave a new entry after they were informed that entries and wreaths left by organizations unrecognized by the state were, as a rule, removed.

The group then registered a formal complaint that led to a meeting with a *Herr England*, from the justice department of the Ministry of Culture, who told them their group's name was the problem. Although the group was allowed to exist within church boundaries⁶⁰, it was not allowed to present itself as an organization outside of the umbrella of the church. England assured them that further attempts to honor victims of fascism at Ravensbrück would not be interfered with, as long as they did so without their group's name, Lesbians in the Church.

In the following year on 20 April 1985, eleven women from the same group planned to travel to Ravensbrück again on the 40th anniversary of its liberation. They ordered a wreath with the inscription: "zum andenken an die lesbischen frauen die im kz ravenbrück gelitten haben" (Transcript 18 April 1985), and signed their first names. On the day before the planned trip, Marina, the woman who ordered the wreath, was taken to the nearest police station and interrogated by a woman (frau x) from the criminal police division and a man (herr y) from the permit bureau. She was informed that the list of first names on the wreath's ribbon *implied* the presence of a group and that they therefore would not be allowed to place the wreath at the memorial on the following day. Marina and the other women decided to travel singly and without the wreath (that had been stripped of its ribbon before Marina was allowed to take it) and take part in the memorial activities anyway.

All eleven women were followed from their respective homes in Berlin to the train station in Fürstenberg, where the riot police rounded them up, took their identification papers, and loaded them into a truck. After being driven around for over an hour, the women were driven to a school, interrogated, finally given back their IDs and allowed to leave, without going to the memorial. In response to this treatment, the women

⁵⁹ The emphasis the group places on the pink triangle carries with it certain problems that will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, "Subverting Object Position into Subject Position."

⁶⁰ In the GDR, there were a variety of "special-interest" groups that found a home in the Protestant Church after they had been denied meeting space by the state. They were not recognized by the state as official groups, but they were allowed to exist within the space of the church, as long as they confined their activities to church-only venues.

once again lodged a formal complaint, this time to the Ministry of the Interior and Honecker. Eventually, they were granted a meeting with two men from the Ministry. The men apologized officially for the police's actions on 20 April and informed them, once again, that their organization's name was the problem; it was unrecognized by the state and the state could not allow them to give the impression to society at large that unrecognized groups existed. He assured them that this would not happen again and that, if the group could find an "appropriate" way to honor the lesbians who had been interned at Ravensbrück, they would not be bothered again. He was unable to give them any idea however of what that appropriate memorial might be.

On the same day a year later, the women from Lesbians in the Church, after hearing that the *Arbeitskreis* from Leipzig had been successful in honoring the homosexuals who had been interned at Buchenwald, once again made their way to Ravensbrück. This time, accompanied by representatives from the organization *Aktion Sühnezeichen*, they received a tour of the grounds and museum, wrote in the visitor's book, and placed a wreath.

The facts of the story above are gleaned from the following collection of documents: a short description of the meaning of the pink triangle, 14 letters (two of which are formal complaints to government offices), a questionnaire, four reports of events, two newsletter articles, one open letter, four transcripts of meetings, and one radio transcript. The main actors of this social drama are members of the program committee of the Berlin-based *Arbeitskreis*, Lesbians in the Church, who also wrote these documents. After the *Wende*, when this group as well as other gay and lesbian groups in the East disbanded, these documents were collected by Samira Kenawi at the GrauZone archive in Berlin.

After reviewing the facts of these events, the questions emerge: Why the fuss? What could possibly have been the problem with honoring women who died at the hands

of Nazi fascists in Ravensbrück? How could this behavior be contrary to the GDR's antifascist agenda? The lesbians involved asked Ministry officials a similar question: "Inwiefern würden wir, wenn wir als Gruppe auftreten würden, den gesellschaftlichen Interessen widersprechen?" (Transcript, 31 May 1985). To which they received only the answer, "Das kann ich nicht beantworten" (Transcript, 31 May 1985). It is however clear throughout the whole set of events that the problem is the identifiable, or even the threat of an identifiable, lesbian presence in a public venue; it is a question of space and power. As long as these women were content to act within the invisible sphere of the church, raising no suspicion that there could be a lesbian minority, in fact *any* minority or "special-interest group," lurking in the background, they were tolerated. This chapter deals with the social drama, the conflict of a specific social group with the with the ruling body, represented in these recorded events and demonstrates how the GDR state blocked lesbian participation in Ravensbrück to control East German civil society. It shows that civil society, as a critical part of hegemonic state control, was a space that also figured as heterosexual, and while homosexuality was tolerated inside certain queer niches, allowing lesbians incursions into public space would not only contradict GDR state policy against special-interest groups, but would also risk queering civil society as well as antifascism. The Berlin group was thus limited to recording the events as an attempt to preserve their actions while creating themselves as agents within East German socialism; their agency is based on their simultaneous attempt to recover an obscured lesbian history from the ashes of Nazism and align themselves with that history by claiming it as their own cultural, antifascist inheritance.

Victor Turner is an anthropologist who, after observing how conflicts within tribal structures arose and played themselves out, decided that these conflicts were subject to many of the same rhythms of Western drama; he created a dramatic structure, the social drama, to discuss the development, climax, and resolution of those conflicts. In order for

a conflict to qualify as a social drama, the public manifestation of the conflict had to have wider political implications and at least attempt to bring about social change. When reading through the documents created by the Lesbians in the Church, which they carefully preserved by sending them to the Grau Zone archive after the *Wende* and their group was no longer active within the church, it was clear that the group attributed these events at Ravensbrück a special status in their struggle to gain acceptance from the East German state. The Ravensbrück demonstrations,⁶¹ which began innocently enough and then spanned three years, showed the group's commitment to engaging the state in an attempt to change the state's policy, or perhaps non-policy, regarding homosexual presence within a clearly dominant heterosexual social structure. Turner's social drama allows us to understand how these demonstrations and all other surrounding events follow a clear narrative structure of social conflict, which in turn provides a template for evaluating how the Lesbians in the Church create their own lesbian subjectivity vis-à-vis a state that refuses to acknowledge that subject status.

According to Turner, social drama consists of "four phases...breach, crisis, redress, and either reintegration or recognition of schism. Social dramas occur within groups of persons who share values and interests and who have a real or alleged common history. The main actors are persons for whom the group has a high value priority" (Turner 145). For the lesbians participating in this drama and then recording it, Lesbians in the Church was their "star group": the group in which each member "looks most for love, recognition, prestige, office, and other tangible and intangible benefits and rewards" (Turner 146). It is the group that they use to establish a sense of belonging and history and to define their emerging lesbian identity.

By tracking the four phases of the social drama, we can see what the lesbians themselves and, to some degree, the GDR state had invested in the drama. It reveals that

⁶¹ Similar demonstrations, or "guerilla wreath-laying ceremonies" were held in West Germany at various concentration camp memorials surrounding Pride celebrations. This led to an official commemoration by

the question of special-interest groups attempting to enter civil society took on a new layer of meaning in the form of public morality in connection with (homo)sexuality. It especially demonstrates that civil society was a space in which the myth of socialist solidarity was created and it is this sense of solidarity and homogeneity that is most threatened by homosexual groups.

Hegemony, Civil Society, and Discipline

This section considers three aspects of the East German state and society, hegemony, civil society and discipline, in order to foreground the discussion of the Ravensbrück social drama and provide the context in which that drama unfurled. Although the GDR state contained elements of totalitarian and dominant government, such as a central party ruled by a Central Committee, neither is sufficient for imagining the type of control attempted in the GDR. Totalitarianism implies a monolithic ruling body. The GDR government was a collection of individuals who were more or less committed to achieving more or less similar political goals. These political goals were certainly not identical to all members of the state, neither were they pursued with the same strategies or levels of commitment to the socialist ideal, although the East German political structure was one of centralized decision-making. Dominance implies a top-down ruling structure that is driven by “coercive force alone” (Gramsci 276). This is of course called into question by Foucauldian theories of power, in which power is a fluid force, not owned by one single person or group; it is a positive force, creating instead of restricting, that is used by all members of society in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the GDR government sought to saturate all levels of socialist society and gain control at the micro-level, not just from above. I will show that a third form of governmental control, hegemony, allows for the kind of control pursued by the GDR state; it accomplishes this by relying on “noncoercive power, but it is power nonetheless...flexible, and often

President Richard von Weizsäcker in May 1985 followed by a number of memorials on West German soil

camouflaged” (Buttigieg 27). This non-coercive power plays out in civil society largely under the guise of discipline.

Hegemony is dependent upon a superficial plurality by allowing other political groups to exist, but then gains indirect control of competing political groups as well as of society at large. In the GDR, there were political parties other than the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), but these block parties, such as the Christian Democrats and the Farmer’s Party, had no real political influence and they were controlled, overtly as well as covertly, by the SED. When the block parties were formed, many of their leaders were ousted by the SED Central Committee and quickly replaced by former members of either the communist party or the SED. This covert control is also part of every other sphere in the hegemonic society and hinges on the appearance of personal consent. Consent in a hegemony means however

not the spontaneous outcome of ‘free choice’, consent is manufactured, albeit through extremely complex mediums, diverse institutions, and constantly changing processes. Furthermore, the power to manufacture consent is not evenly distributed in society... and there are even those who remain unaware of the fact that consent is manufactured and actually believe that they give their own consent ‘freely’ and spontaneously (Buttigieg 7).

By permeating all levels of society, the state attempted to create a socialism in which its members were freely subordinate to state will.⁶²

One sphere in East Germany that most successfully manufactured consent and maintained a mythical “free-will” compliance with state doctrine was civil society. Some social theorists viewed civil society as that oppositional part of the public sector that

being unveiled in subsequent years (Jensen 336).

⁶² It cannot be stressed enough however that it is questionable whether or not the state ever reached this level of control. If the state ever attained it, they certainly lost their grasp on it, despite, or more likely because of, the construction of the GDR’s socialist apparatuses and the state’s—or perhaps Honecker’s—apparently unflinching commitment to them.

operates outside of political influence; it develops in social and economic institutions that are not part of the ruling body, whether that is a political body such as the state or a religious body such as the Catholic Church. Hegel, for instance, believed the global body of the state was comprised of three elements: the family, civil society and the state or political society (the political state was part of the global state). “Whereas the family was a natural institution...that had existed prior to civil society, as had the state...civil society according to Hegel was a creation of the modern world; he associated its emergence with industrial development” (Colas 1015). Civil society is inextricably tied up in production, the “accumulation of wealth,” and the “systematic division of labor” (Colas 1015). According to Marx, in an idealized past of “primitive communism” that existed in Germanic tribes, civil society was an “economic sphere” mutually constitutive with the state. In this utopian model “there was no personal ownership; the state was a collective landlord, owner of the land and of all wealth” (Colas 1018). Under industrial capitalism these two spheres split, creating a political sphere of “bureaucracy and violence” that protects the economic interests of civil society while allowing the bourgeoisie to oppress the working class. Though the state no longer serves a directly economic function, it “becomes a tool for the bourgeoisie, an instrument for class domination by the capitalists” carried out in the economic sphere, or civil society (Colas 1019). In Russia, Lenin believed that there was no civil society, because there was no bourgeois class to develop one. There was only despotic rule that oppressed a proletariat that was further damaged by the “parasitic peasantry, the kulaks” whom Lenin planned on eradicating. As Lenin saw it, it was necessary to purge society of the harmful elements—the despots and the kulaks—and rule the emerging state with a single party, the Bolsheviks. Therefore, though Lenin did not believe a civil society had ever emerged in Russia, his new governmental plan also did not call for the emergence of a civil society (Colas 1020-1022).

Gramsci's view of civil society differs greatly from that of Hegel, Marx, and Lenin. Hegemony as a state model gains control not by eradicating, but rather by manipulating civil society. "Gramsci regarded civil society as an integral part of the state; in his view, civil society, far from being inimical to the state, is, in fact, its most resilient constitutive element, even though the most immediately visible aspect of the state is political society, with which it is all too often mistakenly identified" (Buttigieg 4). Civil society is not pitted against political society, but rather is perhaps the most important realm in which consent necessary for hegemony is manufactured; it is used by the state to "reinforce its power by nonviolent means" (Buttigieg 26) and "best described not as a sphere of freedom but of hegemony" (Buttigieg 6-7). By controlling civil society, political society ensures the relatively peaceful hegemony it seeks. For hegemony to be successful, civil society must appear not to be influenced by the state/political society at all⁶³; it is such a part of the hegemonic system that state manipulation of civil society is obfuscated.

"The intricate, organic relationships between civil society and political society enable certain strata of society not only to gain dominance within the state but also, and more importantly, to maintain it, perpetuating the subalternity of other strata" (Buttigieg 4). Thus, by influencing civil society, the state is also creating norms that push the "abnormal" groups into non-existence, or at least into seclusion by disallowing them access to civil society as a group altogether. It is also critical that the apparatuses of civil and political society differ, but not the nature of the two societies. That is, theater, literature, social interaction, etc. belong to civil society while political parties, elections, etc. belong to political society, but the consistent ruling force in both areas is state involvement.

⁶³ In the GDR, this level of hegemony was never achieved, so that even though in many normalizing forms, state control had become invisible, state presence in civil society never achieved the same level of anonymity.

In the GDR, state control saturated all levels of political and civil society. Just as the political parties were completely controlled by the state so that all block parties were nothing more than puppet parties for the state, the state also infiltrated civil society apparatuses. For example, the state was at the formative level of all publishing, theater, education, and organized forms of social life, such as renting halls for parties, etc. Taking censorship in literature as one example—even though it was clear that censorship was somewhat erratic in its severity—the role of the censor was always to be taken in account by every author who tried to publish inside the GDR. It was never a given that any literary work would be approved and East German writers were subject to a complex interaction of self-censorship (whether conscious or subconscious), censorship at the publishing houses, as well as at the Party level. Thus publishing was a constant negotiation of an unpredictable system. Furthermore, strictly controlled access to paper and copy machines all but halted the possibility of underground publications until the mid to late 1980s, when for example, the Prenzlauer Berg poets began circulating underground poetry magazines and a lesbian group in Jena and Weimar managed to start an underground newsletter.⁶⁴

This complete saturation of civil society by the state left GDR citizens practically no refuge from the state. Thus, in order to escape, many East Germans created *niches* in which they could create a space parallel to the state-scrutinized civil society. “The majority in the GDR seemed to be able to live a dual existence between the ‘lie’ in the official discourse and their normal discourse within the niche society” (Grix 4-5). These niches cropped up in many different areas of life, sometimes in the family, but also in work or education. Regardless of the location of the niche, it had the function of providing a “safety valve” for East Germans, who used niches to escape.

⁶⁴ Since Gramsci formulated his political theory with an eye to its application to capitalism and bourgeois society, he was fearful of the decline in civil society caused by state control and that this control would lead to the loss of a development of real thinkers. But to look at it from the other side, to really control civil society, a state would strive to achieve the kind of journalism, literature, etc. that serves state needs and discourage the kind that could produce *thinkers* who would be able to successfully formulate rebellion against the state.

A niche network grew out of these pockets of retreat and in the case of subaltern, or “special-interest,” groups exiled from open participation in civil society, these niches allowed them to create their own subculture. For lesbians, this subculture occurred in private homes, the Protestant church, and at private parties as opposed to the appropriated public spaces used by gay men, such as bars and parks.

Despite the fact that Gramsci clearly establishes the necessity of hegemonic control in civil society, civil society is a conflicted space in which counterhegemony also exists. Counterhegemony is a double-edged sword; on the one hand, by opposing hegemony, counterhegemonic groups inadvertently allow the hegemony to set the terms for conflict and end up reinforcing the hegemony they oppose. On the other hand, counterhegemony allows the possibility of practical resistance. In the GDR, for example, the Protestant Church was a counterhegemonic space because it allowed for the formation of so-called special-interest groups. These groups were contained within a limited space and under constant surveillance and were not given access to civil society in the larger sense. It was however one of these groups in St. Nicholas’ Church in Leipzig that directly contributed to the peaceful revolution of 1989. As a counterhegemonic space, the church was conflicted on other levels as well. While the Protestant Church represented a certain conservatism that did not condone alternative lifestyles⁶⁵, because of its contrary position to the state, many individual churches, such as the Gethsemane church in Prenzlauer Berg, housed dissenting organizations that found no room in civil society, such as peace, feminist, environmentalist, gay, and lesbian groups. Civil society with its many attendant institutions is the sphere critical for hegemonic control, because it allows for the

⁶⁵ There were ongoing debates within the Protestant church as a larger institution about whether and to what extent they should support alternative groups and which groups should be allowed to meet in their space. Not all churches were open to gay and lesbian groups. Their acceptance was dependent upon the actual clergy and administration of the individual church. “Die Frauen des Arbeitskreises ‘Homosexuelle Selbsthilfe – Lesben in der Kirche’ in Berlin haben ein vorläufiges Gastrecht in der Gethsemane-Gemeinde. In einigen Gemeinden sind sie abgewiesen worden, hier ist dies Gastrecht vorläufig. Warum wurden sie woanders abgewiesen? Was mögen die Gründe für die Vorläufigkeit des Gastrechts sein?” (Report by Dörte Beyer on “Lesbians in the Church” in the Gethsemane Church Newsletter, no date).

manufacturing of consent at a fairly invisible level, even if it is the space in which resistance is still possible.

It is not enough however to claim that civil society was a space of invisibly manufactured consent by the hegemony, but rather the question must be asked: How was this consent manufactured? Michel Foucault's theories of surveillance and bodily discipline, though conceived by observing French prisons and boys' schools, when applied to the larger context of the GDR, prove most helpful in illuminating how consent was manufactured. In the "disciplined society" as conceived by Foucault, it is critical to indoctrinate the members at a young age into discipline (in East Germany this happened at school, in the *Young Pioneers*, and in the family), spread the disciplinary institution's surveillance (East Germany's *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, known as the "Stasi"), and create self-regulation through the constant fear of regulation from above (Foucault 209). Although in the GDR this was not achieved on the same level as the micro-systems of the prison or the school⁶⁶, its successes were achieved by following similar strategies.

Foucault found three criteria for creating a disciplined society that can be observed in the GDR. The first, hierarchical organization, is the organization (read: control) of space. One level of spatial control is "an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them" (Foucault 172). New housing settlements (*Neubaugebiete*) in the GDR are one example of this kind of hierarchical organization. These *Neubaugebiete* were organized not only to provide necessary housing after the war, but also followed socialist ideals. They removed many overt markings of individuality by, for example, making all housing look the same or using numbers instead of street names, thus reinforcing each inhabitant's place in the GDR work collective. Certainly, similar housing has been erected in many modern industrial societies, not just socialist and communist ones, for a variety of reasons, such as

⁶⁶ The objects of Foucault's study in *Discipline and Punish*.

providing housing for the poor (for example, the “projects” in cities throughout the U.S. and Great Britain) or concentrated housing for university students. Though this type of housing is an efficient mode of manufacture, it does not change the fact the GDR had specific socialist goals they wished to achieve with the addition of socialist housing, especially that of the 60s and 70s. *Neubaugebiete* were often directly connected to specific industrial complexes or *Kombinate*, such as the connection of Halle *Neustadt* to the *Buna* and *Leuna* works by tram and train lines. “The aim is to derive the maximum advantages and to neutralize the inconveniences...as the forces of production become more concentrated...to master the labour force” (Foucault 142). Workers were encouraged to live together and, of course, the hot running water and central heating (a rarity at that time) made the new housing a luxury. Moreover, workers were surrounded by their co-workers, at home and on the job.

This kind of spatial control moved beyond housing into civil society and confined like-minded minorities away from the collective. The state controlled group formation altogether, by administrating “functional sites” where people are allowed to gather for social functions (Foucault 143). The state also confined the socialist collective citizenship by using the *anti-fascistische Schutzwall* (known as “the Berlin Wall” in English, but a direct translation—the antifascist protection wall—reveals its political underpinnings) to create a “safe space” for socialism, away from the dangers provided by Western cultures. Within this “protected” space, obvious state involvement at all levels of society created an atmosphere of constant policing:

The East German regime was sustained to a great degree by integrating the population into its structures and organisations essential for its functioning. For example, almost all of the work force were members of the FDGB [Confederation for Free German Trade Unions], through which practically all holidays, convalescence holidays, shopping and many other services were distributed “top-down” (Grix 3).

State intervention in all aspects of life, like participation in state-sanctioned clubs, led to citizens needing state permission for nearly all activities, making them more accessible to the state.

Policing even permeated the so-called private spheres of the family and friends. The GDR was a surveillance society loosely similar to the *panopticon*, a circular building with a dark tower in the center. In the panopticon, all rooms face a central glass tower without curtains, thus the inmates could never escape surveillance, and because the tower was dark, they never knew when they were being watched (Foucault 201). Similarly, GDR citizens—because of the widespread distribution of State Security (Stasi) official operatives, unofficial informants for the Stasi, and Party members at work and in clubs—never knew exactly when they were being observed⁶⁷. Foucault directly addresses this phenomenon in relation to the panopticon:

[H]e who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power...he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault 202-03).

Thus, by controlling space and movement in the GDR, the state was not only able to police its inhabitants more effectively, but also create an atmosphere of fear in which its citizens would then police themselves and each other. A pointed example of this is to be found in the documents about the Ravensbrück demonstrations. A woman who worked at the flower shop where the Lesbians in the Church ordered their wreath contacted the criminal police division about the group's planned visit to the Ravensbrück memorial in 1985; it was not a state operative who turned the Lesbians in the Church in to the police.

The second tool used to create a disciplinary society is the establishment of a normalizing system of judgment. A whole catalogue of misdemeanors against the social order categorized by time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), activity (inattention,

negligence, lack of zeal), behavior (impoliteness, disobedience), speech (idle chatter, insolence), body (incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), and sexuality (impurity, indecency) existed (Foucault 178). Displaying any of these aberrations is then strictly policed by society at large. Social conduct becomes naturalized while also serving as a subtle litmus test for an individual's commitment to the social and political order; being a good citizen is directly bound with seemingly insignificant details such as punctuality, personal hygiene, and sexual habits.

The last area, examination, "transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power" (Foucault 187). Proving one's indoctrination into social structures critical to the maintenance of society becomes the key to hierarchical advancement. This ranges from the most basic steps in advancing through youth groups, to becoming a Party member, and even moving into leadership roles in the SED.

Hegemony based on discipline manufactures consent at the most basic level; most citizens do not even realize that they are perpetuating state control themselves. Power becomes anonymous, carried out by the state without a face, but in reality it is so entrenched at the individual level that the state is most concerned with perpetuating the institutions that allow for individual consent. To achieve manufactured consent, power cannot be exerted from above, but rather must be supported by the individuals in society. In fact, "the acquisition of a hegemonic position in civil society is ultimately more important to the ruling classes than the acquisition of control over the juridico-political apparatuses of the government" (Buttigieg 30).

Breach or the "Fear of the Queer"

The next four sections will return to the social drama and follow the Ravensbrück demonstrations as they progress through the four stages: breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration/recognition of schism. The conflict between the state and the Berlin group,

⁶⁷ This became evident after the Ministry for State Security's files became accessible to the general public

Lesbians in the Church, is over civil society and the state's careful control thereof as a public space. This study will show that the social drama confronts not only the problem of supposedly counterhegemonic special-interest groups in the public arena, but also how the sexuality of this particular group plays a special role in the conflict.

It is the breach, the exposition, that sets the parameters of the conflict. "Social drama first manifests itself as the breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom, or etiquette, in some public arena. This breach is seen as the expression of a deeper division of interests and loyalties that appears on the surface" (Turner 145). This clearly applies to the situation that the women from *Lesbians in the Church* entered into on 10 May 1984. By publicly asserting themselves as lesbians, announcing their membership to a larger organization, the *Lesbians in the Church*, both in the visitor's book of the memorial and on their wreath's ribbon, they became a name, a group, an entity that the larger public would be able to recognize. As an *Arbeitskreis* within the protective sphere of the church, this homosexual group, along with others that had existed in large cities of the GDR since 1982/1983, was stepping out of its niche. For the public, they had remained largely invisible; up to that point their reports, newsletters, etc. were "*nur für innerkirchlichen Gebrauch*" and the workshops or conferences they participated in all remained within the protected sphere of the church. This action was a definite step out into the "public arena," as Turner calls it, or, in this case, the visitor's book and the area where wreaths are placed at the Ravensbrück memorial. By doing this, the *Lesbians in the Church* were defying hegemonic rule of civil society and challenging socialist society at its root, its myth of the (heterosexual) homogenous collective.

In order to understand the full implications of the breach phase, not only is an understanding of civil society and its control by the state critical, but also how space is created as inherently heterosexual as well as how queer space intersects with that dominant heterospace. Space is the setting for daily life, the *where* that accompanies the

shortly after the *Wende*. The full extent of *Stasi* surveillance was not known until that point.

what, why, and how. Since the nineteenth century, as space became more of a concern for the nuclear family, “private” space became increasingly contested as well as necessary; for example, to “enhance [re]production” (Ingram et al. “Making” 374). Queer space, as opposed to naturalized heterosexual space, is a “cultural construct that provides a territorial basis for considering opportunities for and persistent disparities in access to public space and various respective services and amenities, as well as options for personal and collective expression” (Ingram *Marginality* 41).

This construct can result in spaces that are concrete and (semi)permanent such as bars, bookstores, and community centers as well as temporary and/or abstract, such as the “Michigan Women’s [sic] Festival or the ‘space’ of an on-line lesbian/gay e-mail conference” (Inness 151). Some common levels of queer space are: the body (established by queer markings and/or fashions), the queer ghetto (symbolized by some sort of “haven” which can also become a target), and oppositional or “designed” space used to “disorient the normal masses” (Ingram). Recognizing queer space is not only dependent on recognizing queer markings that delineate the space, but also the oppositions that help to define or form it. For example, considering concrete as well as abstract and/or transitory spaces, we see that queer space is often defined by “relations between queers and nonqueers within different spatial regions” (Inness 147). Queer space is considered different from heterosexual space while also being “multivalent in nature” (Inness 145). Often, queer space is appropriated space and inhabiting that space can be a political or social statement in and of itself. “Queer places have been forged within spaces not originally intended for gay use. Identifying a place as queer is a deliberate action parallel to ‘coming out’” (Ingram, et al. *Placemaking* 295).

As is already implied in the quote above, queer space is often a conflicted space that is defined by its opposition to normative heterosexuality⁶⁸ and its conscious desire not to be part of heterosexual space. Chapter two has already shown that East German sex

discourse predetermined the socialist subject as a heterosexual subject, thus the space provided by civil society, as well as political society—or in which those heterosubjects moved—would then necessarily also be a normalizing heterospace. As a survival tactic, queers choose to “create [their] own worlds and words to describe [their] spaces; only in this way can [they] maintain existence where existence is denied” (Inness 133). Queer space, because of its oppositional nature, whether intentional or not, is a “singular point of expression, exchange, sexuality, or resistance in the landscape that counters loss of use and habitation because of social changes and events rooted in homophobia” (Ingram *Marginality* 43).

Queer sites/spaces are also ambiguous in that they can provide solidarity for the inhabitants while also being risky sites for policing by and spectacle for the “normal, straight” audience (Nestle). On the other hand, this kind of spectacle, or “gay referencing” can also help to “create gay space. When a place is labeled gay, it becomes part of a common language and enters into the gay discourse” (Inness 152). Thus, the spectacle surrounding queer space can be the means by which, especially uninitiated, queers find and gain access to queer space. Not all queer space is visible, however. The queer community is also mindful, if not always accepting, of the fact that for many homosexuals, the closet—which queer space seems to want to escape—is still the most viable space. Queer space is not always meant to be visible or politicized and for queers who have other priorities, the so-called closet might be their chosen home.

Queer space however is not totally separate from heterosexual space and many, if not all, of its inhabitants have to negotiate both spaces. Especially when building queer space seems impossible, queer use of heterosexual space is inevitable. “In times of repression, public open space has had particularly crucial roles in making contact and subsequent socialization, education, nurturing, and protection” (Ingram *Marginality* 45). Heterosexual space is also not monolithic and it continues to be inhabited by visible

⁶⁸ Even though not all queer space is necessarily rebellious space the two kinds of space are inextricably

queer activity, even outside of periods of repression. For example, despite visible queer spaces in the early 21st century, queer men still meet in public parks for sex, creating a conflicted queer/heterosexual public/private space. In fact, the further onset of queer political power will lead to “queer (re)appropriation of public space, whether it be safety from violence in a park or ten seconds on national television” (Ingram *Marginality* 39). A goal of queer activism is, in fact, to further blur the lines between heterosexual and queer space, so that it will be more difficult to label seemingly universal public/civic space as heterosexual or queer. In this endeavor to consciously overlap queer and heterosexual space, making the former more visible in so-called neutral space (read: heterosexual space) and move out of queer ghetto spaces, queer activism has had its most effective, but also dangerous, encounters with heterosexual society (Wolfe and Sommella).

Breach occurs exactly because of this blurring of heterosexual and queer space that the Berlin Lesbians in the Church are trying to achieve with their Ravensbrück activism. Lesbians were successful at meeting in the church group and private homes⁶⁹, but as they gained a sense of community, they also wanted social and state recognition.⁷⁰ They wanted to leave the queer ghetto that provided them the security to formulate their political and social desires and merge queer space with (socialist state-controlled) heterosexual space. They wanted to be visible, accepted, and gain civic mobility. Thus, in their case, and perhaps in the case of queer space in general, it can be seen as a temporary step to a larger goal of creating spaces not defined/limited by sexuality. Of course, given

interwoven, whether contentious or not.

⁶⁹ Charlotte von Mahlsdorf shows in her autobiography *Ich bin meine eigene Frau* and film of the same title, that her *Gründerzeit* museum on the outskirts of Berlin became a popular semi-public meeting place for Berlin gays and lesbians in the 1980s, though they were often observed by the police and Stasi. Some events, as portrayed by Ursula Sillge in *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* were prevented from taking place because they were too large.

⁷⁰ Though the goals of gay and lesbian groups were similar, indeed it was a gay group that staged similar demonstrations at Buchenwald, there are also differences between how gays and lesbians were perceived in public. Gays had a much higher profile, as I already discussed in Chapter Two, and, as is seen in other countries as well, they also had their own spaces that more successfully, or perhaps covertly, mixed heterosexual and queer space, as they made more use of at least semi-public spaces such as bars.

the state's motivation to gain and uphold a socialist hegemony, this lesbian desire could not be granted, because it would expose the falsely homogenous nature of GDR society.

Admittedly, homosexuality gained a limited presence⁷¹ throughout the 1980s, though any visibility was largely freighted by contradictory socialist ideals and value judgments. That is, homosexuality was seen as a condition that homosexuals suffered from. Though it was no longer considered a disease to be healed, it took on the status of an unavoidable condition that was to be tolerated and pitied. Lesbians, however, remained largely invisible in sex and homosexual discourse and certainly secondary to gay male presence. This gay male presence was allowed in order to assimilate homosexuals into the collective rather than to give them more personal control over their own image:

That the authorities at last began to respond more positively to the representations made to them by homosexual interest groups in the mid-1980s may be put down to the fact that it was only in this initial phase of the debate that they were persuaded of the extent of homosexuality within GDR society and therefore of their own interest in ensuring the social integration of such a significant minority which might otherwise develop into a politically subversive organised unit (Paul 234).

Though lesbians formed a somewhat less recognizable subset of homosexuals, their special-interest groups were allowed to inhabit the counterhegemonic space of the church in order to keep them somewhat satisfied, but of course, lesbians as such were still not allowed free access to civil society.

When breach occurred and the lesbian group took a small step into civil society, the initial reaction against the group was literally to erase its existence. When all traces of the group's actions from 10 May were removed from public access, the Ravensbrück leadership did not confront the Lesbians in the Church directly, but rather quietly

removed all evidence of their visit after they had gone. Further attempts to leave evidence of their existence, four days as well as seven days after the initial visit, were either removed or prevented. The state was clearly sending them a message not to transgress heterosexual civil society.

This is complicated by the problem that the socialist citizen, in the GDR, was also an antifascist citizen, given that s/he was part of the socialist antifascist regime. Thus, not only was civil society already predetermined as heterosexual space, it was also antifascist space. This creates a strange set of correlations in which if socialist equals heterosexual, and socialist equals antifascist, then homosexual was left with either a blank political identity, or perhaps even the parenthetical implication that homosexual could equal capitalism and fascism, two concepts that were blurred in socialist rhetoric. Though this logic may seem simplistic, historically the German socialist party has made this same logical leap. Though socialists from the Weimar period supported Magnus Hirschfeld's efforts to decriminalize homosexuality, that same party in exile attempted to cast doubt on Hitler's legitimacy by painting the Nazi party as "riddled with homosexuals" (Giles 259)—based largely on Ernst Röhm's controversial sexual tastes and further rumors about the SS and the Nazi movement due to its cult of male bonding—seemingly making the claim that fascists were not only politically but also sexually perverse (Giles and Micheler). In addition to this, homosexuals were seen as a security risk in the GDR because they were considered "blackmailable" (Dodds and Allen-Thompson 119). This is coupled with the correlation of sexual decadence and/or perversions with the West (Brückner 195-199).

Whether consciously or unconsciously, lesbians staged the battle over their presence in civil society in terms that squarely identified them as socialist antifascists with the interests of disrupting the facile binary opposition they were caught up in as homosexuals. In their formal complaint from 20 March 1984 to the *Minister für Kultur*,

⁷¹ This presence was largely relegated to medical discourse, specifically sexual research, and advice

they wrote, “Es ist eine Behinderung in der umfassenden aktiven Auseinandersetzung mit der Zeit des Faschismus in Deutschland...ein Verstoß gegen die Verfassung der DDR, Artikel 20, Abs. 1,” couching their right to be seen in socialist terms, calling on their rights as GDR citizens—reminding the state that they are part of the antifascist collective without reference to their sexuality.

Their plea was ignored and in response to their complaint, Justice England of the Ministry for Culture reiterated that their presence in the *Öffentlichkeit* simply would not be tolerated. In a letter from 14 June 1984, England told them that the ministry was less concerned with “das Verhalten der NMG Ravensbrück,” and more so whether “das öffentliche Auftreten einer *sexuell motivierten Vereinigung* von Bürgern außerhalb religiöser Handlung [emphasis mine]” was allowable at all. He shifted the blame off of the Ravensbrück staff and put any questionable actions on the shoulders of the members of Lesbians in the Church.

In a meeting with England as well as a Herr Gräfe from the *Staatssekretariat für Kirchenfragen*, England consistently claimed that it was the name of the group that led to the removal of their entries and the wreath. Though he denies any discrimination against homosexuals in the GDR, and allows that any group, regardless of its “intime Gepflogenheiten,” is allowed space in the church, “[England] äußerte Bedenken gegen die Ausweitung *bestimmter Formen* kirchlicher Arbeit in Organisationsform” (21 August 1984). He further emphasizes that, according to the rules for the formation and activities of groups, such a lesbian group would not be able to exist outside of the church⁷². Homosexuality does not have a place in the *Öffentlichkeit*, though “dies sei eine Frage der Moral und keine staatliche Sache...die Meinung zur Homosexualität [sei] historisch gewachsen und [könnte] nicht vom Staat beeinflußt werden” (21 August 1984). As happens throughout the documents regarding these protests, the state hides behind a legal

columns.

⁷² This is a problematic statement that England is making, since it is around this time that the secular group “Der Sonntagsclub” finally gained permission from the state to meet in state-run clubs.

argument that regards a “gesetzlich nicht anerkannte Vereinigung” as well as a moral argument that is attributed to society itself. In the end, the breach is explained as an “infraction of a rule of...law” but the underlying message is inescapably that multiple sexualities do not fit into the imagined GDR collective space.

Crisis: Challenging the State

Crisis, the culmination of the breach, is reached on 20 April 1985. The breach of the previous year—had it gone unnoticed—could be read as an attempt by *Lesbians in the Church* to subtly enter civil society while also showing themselves to be in support of the socialist state’s antifascist agenda. Perhaps the lesbians in the *Arbeitskreis* had expected a denial when on 12 January 1984 they requested a tour of the Ravensbrück memorial in celebration of International Women’s Day, but since their visit, official tour, and placement of a memorial wreath were approved at the initial stage, the removal of their wreath and book entry came to them as something of a surprise while creating the circumstances for the ensuing social drama. However, when the *Lesbians in the Church* planned to return to Ravensbrück in 1985, it was obviously a calculated move. Though they took Justice England at his word and did not plan a memorial demonstration as a formal group, signing only their first names on the wreath, they chose the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Ravensbrück—a highly publicized event. Despite a warning not to attend the event, the eleven women still chose to make their scheduled trip to the Ravensbrück memorial.

One certain reason for this calculated crisis is that it allows the lesbians to once again lodge a formal complaint, this time to the Ministry of the Interior and Honecker himself (although I doubt they expected any direct recognition of the event by Honecker). A formal complaint would push the state to acknowledge them on some level; therefore the lesbian group wanted to push the government into a corner. Marina, was warned by *herr y* and *frau x* on 18 April 1985, “käme dem öffentlichen auftreten einer (in diesem

Fall nur getarnten) organisation von bürgern gleich. die behörden würden das als umgehung der bestehenden gesetze deuten.” By actually going to the memorial, the lesbians pushed the government to a point of overreaction. The police took the women into custody for 4 1/2 hours, drove them around, harassed them, interrogated them about their personal lives and then released them with the warning that each of them would be taken into custody again, if they didn’t *behave* in Fürstenberg and on the way back to Berlin. While in police custody, the lesbians read out loud, sang, and yelled to get attention while they were in the truck, further aggravating the police, who in turn gave the women a reason to pursue the issue of lesbians in the public sphere formally again. The formal complaint itself left the government with the choice either to fully squelch this particular lesbian group and by extension, all homosexual groups, or to give some room in civil society over to them.

It also became somewhat clearer that the legal breach was only one side of the state’s problem with the lesbian group. They were not only concerned with the fact that this was a supposed special-interest group, but also concerned with the sexuality of the group—what they saw to be a moral breach—which was already thematized in the meetings with England the year before. This is evident in the following statement from the transcript of the meeting between Marina and the two unnamed officials from the *Kriminalpolizei* and *Erlaubniswesen*.

die dame von der kriminalpolizei warf...ein, dass es sich bei und um eine gruppe von frauen handelt, die sich zusammengeschlossen hat mit dem ziel *ihre sexuellen interessen öffentlich zu vertreten*. unser auftreten als gruppe mit solcher kranzschleife würde in der öffentlichkeit den eindruck erwecken dass es in der ddr nicht staatlich anerkannte vereinigungen von bürgern gäbe (18 April 1985, emphasis mine).

Here is it equally clear that the heterosexual nature of civil society is at least partially the reason for state interference.

The lesbian group achieved its goal—at least in part—the moment that its members were rounded up on the platform of the train station and sequestered from the general public; the government itself established the identity of the lesbian group and made them visible. “Wir sind nicht als Gruppe aufgetreten, sondern wurden durch gezielte Festnahme gerade von uns elf Frauen von Ihnen dazu gemacht” (Transcript, 31 May 1985) This crisis then became the threshold that forced this social drama into the redress phase and in some ways catapulted the group, even if for only a few hours, into the public spotlight. These women completely took advantage of their visibility at that moment by resisting the police, singing, playing games and calling out to passersby. They took advantage of the tactical miscalculation on the part of the government.

Redress: Establishing the “Outsider” Lesbian

“The redressive phase of social drama frames an endeavor to rearticulate a social group broken by sectional or self-serving interests” (Turner 164). In this phase of the social drama, the state, represented by two members of the Ministry of the Interior, endeavored to do exactly that. It was their agenda to convince the lesbians that they should, for their own good, retreat back into the safety afforded them by the church—which also effectively would have erased their existence and reintegrated them into society as its accepted silent members. In the transcript of an open discussion between several members of the *Arbeitskreis* and the Ministry officials, the Ministry clearly raises the sexuality/morality issue, emphasizing that the collective was not willing to be as tolerant as the government. “Der Staat hat nichts dagegen, aber die Moralvorstellungen der Bürger sind anders...Wir sind der Meinung, daß, wenn Sie an die Öffentlichkeit treten, sich negative Reaktionen der Bevölkerung noch verstärken. Das werden Sie sicherlich schon bemerkt haben.” The officials build a supposed protective bond between themselves and the lesbian group by stating that they accept lesbian sexuality, but that they cannot vouch for the acceptance of the public. In fact, they cannot

affect the public's opinion, so it would be better for lesbians, and all homosexuals, if they chose not to be so open. The Ministry officials further attempt to smooth over the breach and subsequent crisis by formally apologizing for the *Bereitschaftspolizei*. The Ministry representatives claim that it is lesbianism that pushed those young police officers to overreact. Thus, the Ministry claims that it can only protect lesbians by encouraging them to remain hidden, reinscribing the idea that the lesbian group only has true safety in silence and privacy. Moreover, by emphasizing the danger of a public presence, the Ministry is naturalizing the lesbian outsider position, demonstrating to them that socialist hegemony and the collective are stronger than sexuality. The state may change its position on the acceptance of homosexuality, but the collective they have established through hard work over many years is less forgiving. The hegemonic force in motion has already produced a collective that is undeniably heterosexual.

Despite these warnings, the *Arbeitskreis* takes advantage of their mistreatment and uses all channels available to them to keep this incident from retreating back into the unknown. Using a report format and a choral voice, versions of this event are sent to Emmy Handke, General Secretary of the International Ravensbrück Committee, to the Ministry of the Interior and also to other homosexual and church-based groups, especially those in the peace movement. They also adopt a voice that best fits each intended audience. For example, when asking Handke—a former inmate of the Ravensbrück camp—for help, they place themselves in a passive role, emphasizing the frightening aspects of their captivity:

Nach ungefähr 15 Minuten wurden wir von einem Zug
Bereitschaftspolizisten – 30 Mann – eingekreist und mit groben Worten,
Püffen und festen Handgriffen zu einem LKW der Bereitschaftspolizei
getrieben und genötigt dort aufzusitzen, ebenfalls wieder mit unflätigen
Worten gesagt...wir [wurden] durch ein Spalier uniformierter und ziviler

Sicherheitskräfte in ein kleines Klassenzimmer delegiert (Letter, 25 April 1985).

When sending the report to another *Arbeitskreis*, they bring out their own resistance: “Von einem Herrn im Zivil erhielten wir die energische Aufforderung zum Stehen, sonst könnten sie auch anders. Wir leisteten dem nicht Folge, es passierte nichts. Wir lasen wiederum vor und machten kleine Ratespiele” (Report, no date). In the formal complaint, they adopt a legal tone, demanding reconciliation based on their “constitutional” right to honor the victims of fascism. Moreover, they clearly draw a comparison between Nazi persecution of lesbians and the injustice they endured at the hands of the Fürstenberg *Bereitschaftspolizei*:

Homosexuelle Frauen gehören ohne Zweifel zu den Opfern des Faschismus. Es ist daher nur legitim, daß lesbische Frauen heute das Bedürfnis, das Anliegen und das Recht haben, diese auch zu ehren. Wir lesbische Frauen fühlen uns noch heute... diskriminiert... So ein Verhalten ist entmündigend, ganz zu schweigen von den verbalen Beleidigungen und körperlichen Belästigungen. Frauen, die nach Ravensbrück fahren wollen, um Opfer des Faschismus zu ehren, sind wie Verbrecherinnen behandelt worden. Wir finden dies als Kriminalisierung unseres humanistischen Anliegens (Formal Complaint to Ministry of the Interior, 3 May 1985).

This was not the first time that they drew parallels between their trials with the GDR state and the victims of Nazi persecution. In their formal complaint from 20 March 1984, they claimed that the discrimination they were suffering from by having all evidence of their initial visit removed was a form of latent discrimination against the women who had suffered in Ravensbrück. It was critical for these women to establish a separate lesbian history, so that they could—for themselves as well as in the eyes of society—justify their citizenship in GDR society. On many occasions, from the point of breach throughout this social drama to the point of “reconciliation,” the members of *Lesbians in the Church*

reiterate their desire to uncover and make public their history. This then catapults them, in the present, into civil society and helps them achieve their second goal of public recognition to some degree. Furthermore, the mistreatment they receive during the breach allows them to further align their own personal fate with that of lesbians who suffered in Ravensbrück, reinforcing their victim status.

Reintegration/Recognition of Schism: Which is it?

The reintegration phase comes quietly, long after the political negotiations and public appeals of the redress phase. On the one-year anniversary of the day when the eleven lesbians were taken into custody, they return to Ravensbrück with members of *Aktion Sühnezeichen*, a peace group affiliated with West Germany known for its volunteer work in Eastern Europe, Israel, and the U.S. as an atonement for Germany's actions in WWII. Together with the members of this peace group, they achieve their original goal, complete with guided tour, the laying of the wreath and an entry in the book. This event itself is textually indicated in one short write-up in a church bulletin by the members of *Aktion Sühnezeichen* and a short paragraph at the end of a description of all of the Ravensbrück events by the lesbians themselves. It is unclear to whom this latter report is directed—most likely the other lesbian and gay groups in the GDR at that time. There are two comments from the lesbians themselves that add a degree of uncertainty as to what they have attained. They are satisfied that the pink triangle has been added to the museum's explanation of the complex system for marking prisoners and even more satisfied that they were able to successfully carry out their visit—without interference. “Der 20. April 1986 zeigt uns, daß staatliche Behörden lernfähig sind im souveränen Umgang mit für sie bislang noch “unbekannt” und demzufolge “nichtdurchschaubare” Minderheiten” (Final Report of Events, no date). It seems that these women accept the end result of their two-year battle with the government.

In contrast to this positive statement, a postscript to the last report completely changes the reception of the previous quote. “P.S. eine Stippvisite im Mai 1986 ließ uns ein neues Besucherbuch in der Nationalen Mahn- und Gedenkstätte erblicken. Seine erste Eintragung datiert vom 1. Mai 1986” (Final Report of Events, no date) The actual climax, then, becomes something of an anti-climax, given that the message these lesbians wanted to leave in the visitor’s book was not ripped out, but the replacement of the book with a newer one ensures that their entry will still not be read. The replacement of the book is also not the kind of action that the lesbians can protest against. The government has found its loophole around the actions of the lesbians, but also allowed a small victory in the addition of the pink triangle to the museum.

This “victory” is then a prime example of the GDR government giving in enough to quiet unrest, but not enough for the group to be completely satisfied with the outcome. In the long run, the group has been neither successfully reintegrated nor has there been any real recognition of schism. Rather, they have an open-ended border experience that contains both partial reintegration on the part of the state by laying the matter to rest and also recognition of schism, in that the *Arbeitskreis* realizes the necessity of moving on to another possible venue for future demonstrations, or perhaps abandoning this goal altogether; it is not clear.

Throughout their accounts, the Lesbians in the Church emphasize sexual discrimination. Their representations support that they are sure that their treatment is due to the fact that they are lesbians: there is some evidence to support this. In their confrontations with state representatives, their sexuality and moral otherness is often a point of discussion: England refers to them as a “sexuell motivierte Vereinigung” (Letter, 14 May 1984) as well as a “Gruppe, die andere Bedürfnisse hat” when the Lesbians in the Church protest the former formulation (Transcript of Meeting, 21 August 1984). One of the unnamed functionaries in the meeting from 31 May 1985 stressed that although lesbians are equal under the law, “wenn ich beim Erlaubniswesen wäre, hätte ich bei dem

Wort 'lesbisch' auch den Kranz aus dem Verkehr gezogen." "frau x" from the criminal police division claims that the group wants only "ihre sexuellen interessen öffentlich zu vertreten" while "herr y" from the permit bureau, at the same meeting, claims that "das boesondere hervorheben der lesben sei unlogisch da sie allgemein zur grossen gruppe der OdF [victims of fascism] zählen die aufgrund der politik des 3. reiches verfolgt wurden, nicht aufgrund ihrer spezifischen andersartigkeit." At the end of the meeting, herr y called to Marina "diskriminieren sie nicht die opfer des fascismus" (18 April 1985)! The police who took the women in custody on 20 April 1985 told the lesbians they were being taken "ins Arbeitslager," referring to the persecution of gay men and lesbians under the Nazi regime. In a meeting with two unnamed functionaries on 31 May 1985, one of them further—while seemingly distancing the state from any sign of discrimination—emphasized that their "sexuelle Auffassung" would have been the reason they were so mistreated when they were taken into custody.

This representation of the social drama created by the Ravensbrück protests will never be able to fully clarify whether these women really were only discriminated against because they were a special-interest group. Though state officials told them: "Das Festhalten war nicht wegen Ihrer sexuellen Veranlagung, sondern wegen dem Verdacht einer Vereinigung" (Transcript of Meeting with Two Officials, 31 May 1985), the repeated emphasis on their sexual difference does make this difficult to believe. In addition, the Lesbians in the Church are first allowed to successfully honor women and lesbians at Ravensbrück when accompanied by members of a group that, while it is also a special-interest group, is not seemingly "sexually motivated."

Creating a Socialist Subjectivity/Subject Position

For the *Lesbians in the Church*, it is clear that they are the acting subjects of the text they create. Out of the complicated situation, they are compelled to create a story of their actions, which also includes a somewhat coherent lesbian, activist subject. Although

we exist in a split, fragmented world, alienated from any possibility of reaching any level of “reality” “In conscious life, we achieve some sense of ourselves as reasonably unified, coherent selves, and without this action would be impossible” (Eagleton 147). Although they attempt to create a subject, they are not attempting to create an individual or even coherent group identity, but rather they create a subject position from which they can speak. This subjectivity is difficult to achieve on two levels.

As is indicated by many writers about GDR lesbians, not least Ursula Sillge in her book *Un-Sichtbare Frauen*, they were a subaltern group, kept away from civil society as a group by state control translated into government and social policy. Even when homosexuality became somewhat visible, female homosexuals were still largely invisible due to their sex. Using Gyatri Spivak’s words, as she describes the subaltern status of third-world women, there are definite parallels that help to clarify why lesbians were doubly hidden in the GDR. “[B]oth as object of colonialist historiography and as the subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak 83). Structurally, I will argue that lesbians in the GDR are in a similar position to that of colonized people in a European colony. First of all, homosexuality was long hidden in the daily life of the GDR and, even when it began to be recognized, it was not seen as being a historical sexuality or as female. The anti-homosexual law, §175 from Wilhelmine Germany, though modified under the Nazi regime, in the GDR returned to its original Wilhelmine wording in 1950. “Die widernatürliche Unzucht, welche zwischen Personen männlichen Geschlechts oder von Menschen mit Tieren begangen wird, ist mit Gefängnis zu bestrafen; auch kann auf Verlust der bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte erkannt werden.” Though under the Nazis, there were debates about including women in the wording, neither version targeted homoerotic acts between women, only those between men or with animals. It was not until 1968, when in the GDR §175 was stricken but §151 was added,

which forbade homoerotic contact with any youth under the age of 18, that women were included in anti-homosexual legislation. In addition, when considering the texts written in the latter half of the GDR about homosexuality, little to no mention of women is ever made, the authors of the texts are rarely women or lesbians, and the universal term “homosexual” is basically equal to the term *Schwuler* (gay man).⁷³

When the presence of lesbians in East Germany is acknowledged, for example in sex discourse, or portrayed in women’s literature, it is, as I have already shown in Chapters Two and Three, based on preconceived notions of lesbianism that rarely have any correlation to material lesbianism. Of course there is a paradox here, as lesbians are an open secret in the GDR; it is one that no one acknowledges, but most everyone knows about. Again, I would like to return to Spivak and her demonstration of the misunderstanding of the word *sati*, which has the effect of changing expressions by subaltern women into pre-conceived notions of the listeners/readers.

To see [the destructed female body⁷⁴] as proof of the feminism of classical Hinduism or of Indian culture as goddess-centered and therefore feminist is as ideologically contaminated by nativism or reverse ethnocentrism as it was imperialist to erase the image of the luminous fighting Mother Durga and invest the proper noun Sati [meaning good wife] with no significance other than the ritual burning of the helpless widow as sacrificial offering who can then be saved. There is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak (Spivak 103).

Entrenched in lexical and logical slippage, the reading imposed on any subaltern work completely occludes any space from which the female subaltern could speak, because she

⁷³ Sillge’s book begins with the following anecdote: “1989 wurden für eine Sendung des DDR-Fernsehens Eltern auf der Straße befragt, wie sie sich verhalten würden, wenn ihre Kinder homosexuell wären. Eine Frau antwortete: ‘Kann mir nicht passieren. Ich habe Töchter’“(Sillge 10). The book by Reinhardt Werner *Homosexualität* included four and a half pages about „feminine homosexuality,” at the three conferences about homosexuality held in the GDR, there was little to no lesbian representation, and there are many other examples of this lack of talk about lesbians.

⁷⁴ The goddess Sati, killed by the suffering she underwent by her father’s abuse of Sati’s husband Siva, was dismembered and distributed over the earth by Vishnu—incribed on the earth as sacred geography.

is always already pre-interpreted through that prejudice in the mind of the reader. To return briefly to an example from sex discourse, this is evident in Schnabl's interpretations of lesbian sex, which he reads as the imitation of heterosexual sex. That any butch/femme relationship could be working with different signifiers behind the obvious signs simply does not occur to him, nor does he feel he needs to further research the topic. Furthermore, lesbian sex that does not conform to the butch/femme model falls completely out of his scheme of interpretation.

GDR lesbians expressed themselves using non-sexual voices, in an attempt to escape the super-sexualized prejudice attached to them as homosexuals. Thus, they chose to enter civic space in the Nazi victim identity, rather than the lesbian one, per se. This strategy de-emphasized their sexual difference and focused on their identification with state-sanctioned anti-fascism. Not only lesbians in the GDR have made such a political move. "In the 1970s lesbian feminists [in the U.S.] sanitized sexuality in order to make themselves more palatable to heterosexual feminists and the public, leading to a 'civil war' of S/M women and other sexual liberationists versus lesbian feminists" (Ingram, et al. *Lost* 12). Of course, this is still an issue as many lesbians and gay men restrain from kissing, holding hands, or any other sexual gesture in public, so as to secure their presence there.

Subverting Object Position into Subject Position

When reading the Ravensbrück texts, it is clear that the lesbians are subjected to the whims of the state; they are objects of state abuse from the police and misinformation from many different state functionaries. Despite this objectification—and perhaps in some ways because of it—in these texts the lesbians are the subjects, they are the actors and simultaneously the acted upon. How then do they change their status as victims of the state into a speaking subject position in their own writing?

One way they do this is by manipulating, or at least attempting to manipulate, class distinctions in the GDR. Though socialism was believed to have eradicated class, we have already seen in chapter two that a clear hierarchy, or “class” system did develop. This can be demonstrated by taking an everyday situation, in this case, entering the university for further studies. If attempting to enter the university, suitability was figured only partially by the potential student’s academic background. A more salient factor was which group (read: social class) the student belonged to.⁷⁵ In the GDR, these were not racial or economic categories, but rather social background categories, such as worker, production worker, farmer, survivor of Nazi persecution, intellectual, etc. Depending on one’s group membership, one would or would not be allowed to study. These groups create a new class in which, for example, members of the worker group would be given first consideration. In fact, however, these “worker children” were actually children of party functionaries and people in leadership positions. The actual workers were called “production” workers, and they were given consideration only after the “workers” had all been given university admission. Ahead of production workers were also the victims or children of victims of Nazi persecution. If you were a part of the group “intellectual,” the chances of actually being allowed to study, if your parents were not party functionaries, were slim. (Sillge, Ursula, public reading at Leipziger LesbenTreffen, MonaLiesa, Saturday, 4 October 2002)

Thus, a class system is created out of the non-classed Socialist system, but this class system, creating an elite, is based on political affiliation. Of course, the significance for Berlin lesbians trying to gain access to civil society, is that a concrete connection with victim status would allow them the kind of access they had been denied. This recognition would also shift the perception of them being sexual outsiders to them being political

⁷⁵ If comparing it to the U.S., one is reminded of all kinds of government forms on which race has to be filled out, Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, etc.

insiders. For lesbians to gain access, they had to couch their arguments in this rhetoric of socialist class and create an acceptable identity for themselves.⁷⁶

In order to shift civic perception then, instead of drawing attention to their outsider status as lesbians, Berlin lesbians allied themselves to their victim past and couched their entrance into civil society in antifascist, socialist terms.

Wir sind betroffen, weil wir in der Öffentlichkeit oft Diskriminierungen erfahren, z.B. Sätze wie: So das wie ihr ist früher erschossen oder vergast worden. Daraus resultiert für uns die Notwendigkeit, uns mit der Situation der Lesben in der Nazizeit zu beschäftigen. Ausdruck dessen ist auch unser Wunsch, lesbische Opfer des Faschismus zu ehren. *Wir wollen uns in der Öffentlichkeit frei bewegen.* Darum ist es unser Anliegen, daß Bürger erfahren, daß es uns in der Gesellschaft gibt“ (Transcript of Meeting with Two Officials, 31 May 1985—emphasis mine).

Thus, although they wanted recognition as lesbians, emphasis is removed from sexuality and placed on their anti-fascist history, hopefully allowing them to take advantage of the antifascist prerogative in the GDR. This is not an uncommon strategy for marginalized groups and can be used as a “strategy to raise awareness within the community of oppression...in order to goad that community into political action” (Jensen 326).

Antifascism was stressed in all aspects of GDR culture, and if GDR lesbians could show that homosexuality and by extension lesbianism was wrongly persecuted under Nazi fascism and furthermore show themselves to be the social inheritors of that persecution,

⁷⁶ Lisa Rofel in “Qualities of Desire: Imagining Gay Identities in China,” addresses contemporary Chinese articulations of gay male identity that confront some of the same issues that GDR lesbians confronted in the 1980s. Rofel stresses that Chinese gays are concerned with “intense desires for cultural belonging, or cultural citizenship” (453). Like the group Lesbians in the Church, these are gays who have chosen to remain in their homeland (a significant point in the GDR) and though they are interested in what it means to be gay in other places, they are most concerned with how they can effectively “be gay” in their own cultural context. It’s clear that the Lesbians in the Church also have outside influence on their concept of being lesbian, this is shown in their adoption of the pink triangle as a symbol (which will be discussed in depth later) or the choice of staging wreath-laying demonstrations at Ravensbrück, but they continue to

they could then express their desire for public recognition and blending queer/heterosexual space in a political argument instead of facing the sexuality/morality question head on. Though identifying themselves with lesbian history under Nazism is still connected with sexualized difference, it is also an inclusionary move based on antifascist sameness while detracting from that sexualized difference emphasized by their encounters with the GDR state and its officials, or as an anonymous report with no recorded date stated: “Zum anderen handelt es sich hier um eine Gruppe von Lesben..., denen es um ihre Identität und nicht um die Zur-Schau-Stellung ihrer Sexualität geht.”

Victim status and antifascism also establish their textual subjectivity. Throughout the social drama, the lesbian group draws parallels between their own experiences in the GDR and the persecution of lesbians under the Nazi regime, while naming the Nazi persecution as part of their own history: “Wir sind Frauen, und wir haben eine Vergangenheit, eine Geschichte, die es aufzuarbeiten und vor allen Dingen zu verarbeiten gilt, um in unserem Emanzipationsprozeß und in unserem Selbstverständnis weiter zu kommen” (Letter to Ravensbrück Archive Director, 12 March 1984). “Wir beschäftigen uns auch mit unserer Geschichte” (Letter to General Secretary of the Ravensbrück Committee, 25 April 1985). This historical binding is further expressed in several texts as a desire to honor their own “lesbische Schwester” (Letter to Minister of Culture, 20 March 1984; Report on Events of 20 April 1985, no date; Letter to General Secretary of the Ravensbrück Committee, 25 April 1985, Transcript of Meeting with Anni Sindermann, 3 May 1985; Report by Dörte Beyer on “Lesbians in the Church” in the Gethsemane Church Newsletter, no date).

The smaller acts of discrimination that GDR lesbians, and specifically the Lesbians in the Church, suffer are aligned with the greater acts of discrimination that lesbians in the camps suffered. In some cases, contemporary discrimination is seen as a continuation of the former discrimination: “Wir empfinden [the removal of the visitor

define what it means to be lesbian in the GDR and stretch the parameters of the boundaries that confine

book entries and wreath] als latente Diskriminierung der Frauen, die im KZ gelitten haben und sind betroffen über die Mißachtung uns gegenüber” (Letter to Minister of Culture, 20 March 1984). Correlations are also drawn between the discriminatory practices of the GDR state, not only the legal discrimination implied by the wording of §151, but also in its disregard of homosexual victims of fascism:

Sowohl England als auch Gräfe sagten wiederholt, daß Homosexuelle in der DDR in keiner Weise diskriminiert würden. Beide blieben auch bei dieser Meinung nachdem sie den Paragraphen 151 des Strafgesetzbuches gelesen hatten und andere Diskriminierungsbeispiele von uns gehört hatten. Wir verwiesen zB [sic] auf Unterlassungen bei der Wiedergutmachung und Anerkennung von Homosexuellen als Verfolgte des Naziregimes (Transcript of Meeting with England and Gräfe, 21 August 1984).

The most extreme example tying contemporary discrimination to historical persecution makes the cognitive leap that the smaller discriminations from which contemporary lesbians suffer allow for extreme persecution such as occurred under the Nazi regime:

In der letzten Zeit wurde viel über Homosexualität unter Männern und Frauen geschrieben und geredet – es scheint zu Modethema geworden zu sein. Es ist aber zum Modethema für die geworden, die nicht direkt Betroffene sind. Für die lesbischen Frauen selbst ist eine Entwicklung wichtig, die sie an sich erleben und die es auch in einer Gesellschaft geben muß. Es darf nicht dabei bleiben, daß Homosexuelle als nicht Normale abgestempelt und damit abgeschoben werden, denn mit Nicht-Normalen möchte kaum einer etwas zu tun haben. ... So konnten ideologische begründet Gruppierungen wie Homosexuelle, Zigeuner, Juden, Geistig

Behinderte der Vernichtung preisgegeben werden (Anonymous Report, no date).

Furthermore, the lesbians show that they find the state and its officials in no way prepared to deal with either form of discrimination: “ich will die kurze diskussion über unsre motive für eine ehrung der lesben im früheren kz Ravensbrück nicht vollständig widergeben [sic] da sie streckenweise hochgradig unsinning verlief da herr y sich in der problematic der diskriminierung homosexueller früher und heute als inkompetent erwies” (Transcript of Meeting between Marina and herr y and frau x, 18 April 1985).

The members of Lesbians in the Church also suffer from a partially inaccurate conceptualization of the history they are intending to recuperate. They emphasize the importance of the pink triangle—which in today’s Western lesbian and gay culture stands as a sign of recognition based on the suffering of homosexual men under §175a. It was a common assumption in the West up until the mid-1980s that gay men and lesbians had suffered equally and similarly under Nazi persecution. In the meantime, scholars such as Claudia Schoppmann, Christa Schikorra, and Erik Jensen have all conclusively show this to be a misconception and proven that lesbians were not systematically persecuted during the Nazi Era. This misconception, which was so strongly supported at the time that it becomes part of the story East German lesbians tell about their cultural heritage, fully supports the antifascist victim status that the *Lesben in der Kirche* are claiming.

By showing that their contemporary socialist state continues to disregard the existence of homosexuals who suffered under Nazism, the Lesbians in the Church are dealing with a double-obscuring of homosexuality and specifically lesbianism. They are aware that homosexual persecution has been ignored by the state—or, as *herr y* so clearly demonstrated—it has been hidden behind the universalization of fascist persecution. In the socialist, universalized concept of history, all victims of fascism suffered equally, though it is those communist and socialist victims who define the universal while

marginalized groups such as gay men, the Sinti and Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Jews (!!) gained little to no recognition. In their written portrayal of the social drama created by the Ravensbrück demonstrations, members of Lesbians in the Church hope to recover their obscured past while simultaneously creating the circumstances for their contemporary presence.

Chapter Five

Personal Narratives and the Reclamation of East German Lesbian Plurality

In the wake of the social revolution that brought about the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic when it joined the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990, there was a literary explosion of voices that had been either directly or indirectly repressed in the GDR. One of the classic examples of indirect repression is the publication of Christa Wolf's *Was bleibt* in the early nineties. Though there was a general uproar in the literary community, especially the Western literary community, condemning her for waiting until the relative safety of the post-GDR to publish (though, given the tumult, it is questionable just how "safe" this was for her), Wolf preserved the text for a time when she felt she could publish it within her own country; she chose to remain in the GDR in the 1970s and also not to publish works solely for foreign audiences. Not only high-profile writers took advantage of the open publishing atmosphere post-1989, but women's magazines and queer publications also began to surface to fulfill a need that 40 years of socialism and strict publication controls had created. For the first time, publications that dealt with complicated women's issues and homosexuality were readily accessible to the East German public. It was during 1990s, shortly after the social upheaval that three lesbian texts, in fact the only three book-length publications written by lesbians and that directly deal with East German lesbians to this day, appeared. These three texts provide the material for this chapter. The first, *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, was published in 1991 and is a collection of personal narratives compiled by Kerstin Gutsche. The second volume, *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, is also a collection of personal narratives, gathered by Christina Karstädt and Anette von Zitzewitz, and though it was not published in book form until 1996, it consists of personal narratives from interviews taken in 1990-1991 that appeared in the 1992 film documentary of the same name. *Un-sichtbare Frauen*, by Ursula Sillge, is the only single-author text, and it was published in 1991.

In the titles of these three works, there is a common East German lesbian problematic demonstrated by the terms *ahnungslos*, *verschwiegen*, and *unsichtbar*. Each term confronts a different aspect of lesbian experience in the GDR, namely of being unaware, silenced, and invisible; the mere presence of these texts, which are all three personal accounts from East German lesbians, calls for consciousness, voice, and visibility. The question may follow, *whose* consciousness, voice, and visibility? Who were these texts written and/or published for? The narratives contained in these three books largely narrate experiences gained pre-1989, though they were not published until after the GDR became the new German states of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990, these works are an historical attempt to draw attention to the silenced/hidden existence of lesbians in East Germany. Though there was a small underground lesbian newspaper, *frau anders*, that a group of lesbians in Jena and Weimar began publishing in January of 1989, it only had a circulation of 100 copies, and even 15 years after the *Wende*, my conversations have shown that mainstream Germans from the East were not aware of the lesbian subculture.⁷⁷ By drawing on personal experience, lesbians from the GDR used these texts to say to anyone willing to read them, be they East Germans or readers outside the former GDR: “We were there and this is what it was like.” As can be seen in the chapter prior to this one, conditions in the GDR prevented such a public statement at that time.

This chapter will show these three books as part of a historical attempt to recoup a material reality of being lesbian in the GDR. Both content and form of the narratives reinforce the “authenticity” of the experiences portrayed and introduce a lesbian plurality that was not an element of either East German mainstream sex discourse, which silenced the lesbian altogether, or women’s fiction, which used an idealized fiction of “The Lesbian” to further feminist issues. This chapter will specifically ask what kinds of

⁷⁷ Having lived in the Jena, a small city in Thuringia, from 1999-2005, the opportunity to talk to former citizens of the GDR about the topic of my dissertation presented itself frequently and, except when I was

similarities and differences are evident in the subjects portrayed in these personal narratives. According to Lacan, the split subject—demonstrated by the mirror image, which a child identifies as “me,” but which cannot be the actual physical “I” of the child—is proof of the fictive, constructed, coherent self that is created through language. Using language to embody the self is elusive and any “coherence” projected through language can only be a chimera. Since the self is known to be a fiction, this illusion is replaced with the concept of the subject that is “always split and always in the process of constituting itself through others” (Smith/Watson 19). Using Lacan and the split as an overarching conceptual framework I will pursue how East German lesbian narrators create narrative coherence.

Each narrator, to either a greater or lesser extent, was at odds with the East German ideological system, if solely by virtue of her sexuality, raising the question of how she gained agency within a system that failed to recognize her as both a lesbian and socialist subject at the same time. It is through her personal narrativization of experience that each narrator is able to assert subjectivity in the East German socialist context—even if that narration happens after the GDR has failed. Furthermore, these texts are grounded in East German literary traditions such as *Protokollliteratur* and a certain understanding of Wolf’s term “subjective authenticity” as well as a Western lesbian narrating tradition, which pave the way for the agency the individual narrators are able to draw upon.

Protokollliteratur

Ich ahnungsloser Engel and *viel zuviel verschwiegen* continue in part a literary tradition when collections of interviews published as personal narratives became an important part of GDR literature in the 1970s; that is when Maxie Wander published her collection of women’s narratives *Guten Morgen, du Schöne*. This tradition was not invented in the GDR per se, but rather grew out of confessional documentary-type

talking to other lesbians, to a person, the people I talked to were always surprised that I was able to pursue

literature from the end of the Nazi era that was mostly published in the West. This documentary literature ranged from narrative portraits to collected interviews and also to *Protokolle*. What differentiated the *Protokoll* from interviews was that an interview was printed in its entirety, with questions from the interviewer, whereas *Protokollliteratur* worked those interviews into an unbroken monologue (Schröder 29-30). Maxie Wander, among others, transported this style of writing to the GDR in the early 1970s. *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* set the standard of *Protokollliteratur* in the GDR by creating a literary form that is based on material experience.

Ausgangspunkt der Protokollliteratur sind Gespräche, die Autoren mit Mitmenschen führen, im allgemeinen auf Tonband festhalten und dann später transkribieren, bevor sie diese Gespräche zu Prosa umarbeiten. Indem sich die Schriftsteller in der veröffentlichten Version des Gesprächs als sichtbaren Bestandteil des Textes weitgehend ausschalten, entstehen scheinbare Monologe, die erlebt und erzählt, öffentliche und private sowie vergangene und gegenwärtige Alltagswirklichkeiten zum Inhalt haben. Autobiographie, Erinnerung und Kommentar bilden die Formen. Die Texte werden meistens gesammelt herausgegeben (Andress 2).

The author/editor of this type of literature ostensibly remains invisible as s/he records the experiences of the narrators/interviewees; the editor does, however, play an important role in the reception of the narratives. Although the interviewer's voice is never directly present in the printed narratives, the interviewer leaves traces in the monologues through answers to ghost questions or direct speech aimed at the interviewer. Also, the editor shapes narratives when transcribing them and often selects the printed narratives from a larger sampling. Either explicitly or implicitly, the narratives conform to a purpose the editor has for the collection. There is no way for the editor's voice to remain completely suppressed. In addition, the editor commonly introduces the narrative collection, which

such a dissertation topic, much less find enough material to sustain an investigation.

also pre-determines how those narratives will be read to some degree. Therefore, we can read this literary form as crafted by the editor to tell a “story.”

Reinhard Andress sees *Protokollliteratur* as being especially useful for post-*Wende* readers by creating an everyday image of the GDR that is usually in direct conflict with the party-dictated image:

Protokollliteratur ist eine Fundgrube für die Untersuchung von Alltagsleben, und da die typische Veröffentlichung in der Protokollliteratur aus einer Anzahl von individuellen Stimmen besteht, die aneinandergereiht werden, wird dort die Vielzahl der Standpunkte in einer bestimmten Zeit stärker als in Autobiographien bewahrt. Im Vergleich zu Autobiographie zeigt sich ebenfalls der demokratische Anspruch der Protokollliteratur (Andress 13).

Unlike autobiography, which usually tells one person’s story in a conscious, and self-reflective manner, *Protokollliteratur* utilizes a multivocal approach and draws on oral tradition, since the narratives are transcripts of taped interviews and/or monologues on a topic. There is always a collection of many different voices, usually centered around some theme, such as being a woman, a gay man, lesbian, Jewish, or “surviving” the *Wende*; *Protokollliteratur* also has the function “Gespräche zu initiieren,” around complex social issues (Schmidt 17). Though Felicity Nussbaum claims that initiating dialogue is a common byproduct of any autobiographical production that presents “marginalized versions of identity and experience [which] contest the culture’s more public and institutionalized constructs of reality” (166), it is one of the primary functions of *Protokollliteratur* in the East German context.

Andress however seems most concerned with the idea that the interview texts create together an unofficial historical account for the reader today:

Darüber hinaus beleuchten Protokolltexte die alltägliche Situation von DDR-Bürgern...Es ist ein Bild, das seine Gültigkeit dadurch gewinnt,

indem es die Wirklichkeit in der DDR real erfaßt und im Kontrast zum exaltierten offiziellen Bild dieses Landes steht, das der Staat während seiner Lebzeit propagierte. Aus Protokolltexten läßt sich ein inoffizielles Bild der DDR heraus kristallisieren (1-2).

His readings of *Protokollliteratur* on various topics, among which are the collections by women such as the influential Wander collection, concentrate almost solely on the value these texts have historically: “die DDR-Protokollliteratur [besitzt] aus heutiger Perspektive einen historischen Wert” (Andress 209). Although he points to the fact that writers like Wander, Sarah Kirsch, author/editor of *Pantherfrau*, or Christine Müller, author/editor of *Männerprotokolle* did not necessarily pass on their interviews word for word, but rather used their own writing to change them, or “tune them up,” he never deconstructs the concept of the *authentic*. He stands by the term “authentische Aussagen” throughout his book. *Protokollliteratur* is the convergence of three different types of scholarly inquiry: oral history, autobiography, and documentary literature, he analyzes these collections mainly based on their worth as historical finds, rather than literary ones and never deals with the perhaps uncomfortable connection between the two. This approach is not vastly different from that of Hans Joachim Schröder who also emphasized the sociological, historical and scholarly importance of *Protokollliteratur*, in addition to its literary significance (26-38).

Although Sabine Schmidt recognizes the impulse to read *Protokollliteratur* as an expression of “die Information über Realität und damit eben für die Wahrheit” of East German life and that this type of reading carries with it “die interpretatorische Vorgabe für eine auf den Inhalt konzentrierte Rezeption und Analyse” (12), she encourages a reading strategy that moves away from the socio-political value of the texts and emphasizes “die Gestaltung der Texte und ihre Produktionsbedingungen” (13). Above all, she is concerned with seeing how the texts that seem the most authentic carefully construct their façade of authenticity. This chapter reads the lesbian personal narratives

contained in the two *Protokoll* collections *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* and *viel zuviel verschwiegen* through a lens more consistent with Schmidt's view of *Protokollliteratur* than as a historical find suggested by both Schröder and Andress.

These two collections not only participate in the East German tradition of *Protokollliteratur*, but can also be read as part of a trans-national lesbian tradition of similar narratives that began in the lesbian community of the U.S. in the late 1970s and early 1980s with publications such as *The Coming Out Stories* edited by Susan J. Wolfe and Julia Penelope Stanley (1980), *The New Lesbians* edited by Laurel Galatia and Gina Cavina (1977), and *The Lesbian Path* edited by Margaret Cruikshank (1980). According to Bonnie Zimmerman in "The Politics of Transliteration," in the U.S. lesbian movement narrating becomes a major way to create a personalized, politicized lesbian community. Because of lesbian invisibility and silence within larger culture, lesbian politics are directly tied to overcoming invisibility and silence through the acts of speech—writing, speaking, and naming. These are critical for creating a lesbian identity. Telling one's personal story is, then, part of community building because it creates the fabric of experience with which other lesbians can identify; publishing those stories also allows lesbians to join a mainstream dialogue reaching beyond the lesbian community.

It is not a very far stretch to see a similar community-building agenda in the personal narratives published in Germany in the early 1990s. As a proclamation of participation in a past culture, that of the former GDR, these narratives are also directed at lesbians in post-*Wende* Germany; these narratives not only claim "we were there" but also "we are here." Sillge's *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* does this by actively reaching out to post-*Wende* lesbians; she provides information at the back of the book such as contact addresses of lesbian groups, cafés, and hotlines at the time of publication throughout the new German states.

Political Projects and Narrative Structures

As mentioned above, two of the three texts in this chapter are *Protokoll* collections, and the other is a single-author narrative that is intended as a history, but relies mainly on the author's personal experience. Taken together, all three books create a body of narratives that provide the reader with multiple experiences of lesbians in the GDR, though there is some limited mention of life during and directly after the *Wende*. Two of the publications, *viel zuviel verschwiegen* and *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* concentrate on the political and community-building activities of lesbians, while the third book, *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, is comprised of interviews with lesbians who either did not participate in the lesbian community that emerged in the 1980s in church and secular clubs or this aspect of their lives was simply not part of their narratives. Though all three books, by nature of when they were published, have a clearly historical function, they each have a specific project to fulfill as well: *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* presents "authentic" lesbian lives in the GDR, *viel zuviel verschwiegen* presents a historical development of lesbianism in the GDR, and *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* presents the development of lesbian activism in the GDR.

In the two *Protokoll* collections, *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* and *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, in which the narratives are interviews transcribed and compiled by an editor/editors, not only is the narrating style of the interviewee important, but also the form the editor may or may not have imposed on the narrative. "The narrative form a writer [or editor] gives to a life necessarily involves her sense of the purpose for which her or another's story is told and is responsive to her notions of audience" (PNG "Forms" 99). The form of the narratives is not arbitrary, but rather—at least to some degree—consciously chosen by either the author or the editor of the narrative to speak directly to her perceived audience. Thus, we will see that the two *Protokoll* collections demonstrate different narrative forms, at the individual as well as the collection level, but also that the single-author text is again different, because its perceived readers, or even its

perceived readers' expectations are different. In *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, one can observe a relative formal similarity for all of the narratives—which corresponds to the editors' emphasis on the historical as will be discussed further below—in comparison to *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, in which the individual narratives are more random, allowing for the “process of self-interpretation, the most salient aspect of the personal narrative...partially revealed through the choice of narrative form” (PNG “Forms” 100).

Ich ahnungsloser Engel

Around the time of the *Wende*, Kerstin Gutsche began collecting interviews with lesbians all over the GDR. She began working on this project while dealing with the problem that homosexuality, and by extension lesbianism, is exclusively portrayed as a natural predisposition instead of a choice. “Doch wenn eine Lesbe behauptet, sie habe sich entschieden, so zu leben, weil sie ausprobiert hat, was ihr besser gefällt, rüttelt sie an den Grundfesten moralischer Auffassungen vieler Menschen” (Gutsche 8). The connection between choice and morality is a disturbing one that she hopes to deconstruct to some extent with these narratives.⁷⁸ This collection consists of twelve interviews with lesbians and one interview with the mother of one of the lesbian interviewees (Ursula, Andrea's mother) and was published one year after the GDR joined the Federal Republic of Germany. The interviewees range from 25-66 years of age, although the majority (seven) are in their thirties. Each of the women is identified by her code name, her age, and her profession; the interviews are organized in a seemingly arbitrary fashion. The interviewees seemingly come from all over the GDR, but since the place names have been changed, there is no way of knowing their exact distribution.⁷⁹

Gutsche states in her preface that she is most interested in providing a varied glimpse into the “sehr unterschiedliche Lebensvorstellungen von Frauen...die es

⁷⁸ Criticism of the predisposition/choice dichotomy and how it's politically used as well as received is a constitutive element of much current queer theory and can be found in the writings of Michael Warner, Lisa Duggan, Janet R. Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, and Richard Goldstein.

vorziehen, mit Frauen zu leben” (Gutsche 9). Above all, Gutsche is concerned less with the “literarische Ansprüche” of this collection and more with the “*Authentizität der Äußerungen*” (Gutsche 10, emphasis mine). It is this desire to present a collection of so-called authentic narratives that most strongly connects *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* to the tradition of women’s *Protokollliteratur* of the GDR. Just as *Guten Morgen, du Schöne* juxtaposes women’s material conditions against the socialist assumption of gender equality, this collection provides mundane lesbian experiences juxtaposed against the assumed East German socialist, heterosexual subject. She attempted to change the interviews themselves as little as possible, preserving a “dokumentarischen Charakter” (Gutsche 10), so that the reader has access to a relatively accurate version of the original interview. This is connected to her stance as interlocutor. For the most part, she claims to have tried to keep these interviews from seeming like interviews in order to preserve a sense of “authenticity,” but she admits “daß mir das nicht durchweg gelungen ist und ich nicht ohne Fragen auskam. Eigentlich wollte ich mir erzählen lassen, was den einzelnen Frauen selbst wichtig erschien” (Gutsche 9). There are however thematic similarities and implied questions that seem to dominate the content of the narratives; Gutsche herself admits that she is woven as interlocutor throughout the interviews. In some cases, questions were restated: “Wie ich damals dazu kam, diesen Mann zu heiraten?” (Gutsche 14—Christiane). Sometimes, the interviewee directly addresses the interlocutor, for example in Bettina’s narrative. “Du willst ein Beispiel, denke ich...” (Gutsche 50). In the most extreme case, in Julia’s interview, in addition to restating interlocutor questions, the interview lacks the fluidity of the other interviews and seems to be moving from one question to the next. Gutsche, as editor and interviewer of these different women, is unable to completely take an overt or covert role in the interview process, but vacillates between those extremes; the narratives demonstrate the difficulty the interlocutor has remaining completely out of the process.

⁷⁹ In her preface, Kerstin Gutsche claims that all “Namen und Orsangaben” have been changed (10).

Although each narrative is in the first person, they each have a different structure according to the flow of their oral interview. For example, the first interview with Christiane is roughly chronological, but each part of her life is characterized by a different theme, such as sexuality, family, university, husband and marriage, first experiences with women, first female love, and personal relationships. Despite this chronological/thematic structure, the interview begins with a discussion of the importance of her job in her life, instead of her childhood. The following narrative, Rahel's, however, is circular in nature, always returning to certain themes, such as love, relationships, and being lesbian. She does not share her life story with us and what she does share of her personal life outside of these themes, such as work, always relates back to the three main themes. These differences continue throughout, ensuring that each narrative retains its own personality. There has been no chronological order or other kind of structure obviously imposed on the narratives. Although some of the interviews tell a coming-out story, this is not the primary objective of the interviews. Each interview seems to reflect what that woman thought most important at the time of the interview; thus, some concentrate on love and the lesbian relationships they have had, while others concentrate on their work, the butch/femme dilemma as they see it, or a poor housing situation, while others give their personal histories.

...viel zuviel verschwiegen

This collection is the published follow-up to a film documentary by East German dramatist Christina Karstädt and West German psychologist Anette Zitzewitz of the same name that was released in 1992; it is distinctly different than the preceding one, especially due to its strong political agenda. Although both collections are based on personal experiences of the narrators, *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* concentrates on presenting an "authenticity" of everyday lesbian life in the late GDR, while *viel zuviel verschwiegen*

is concerned with creating lesbian history. *viel zuviel verschwiegen* was not published until 1996, though most of the interviews took place in 1991 and 1992. The main difference between the film and the book is that the interviews are extended (material is included that was cut out of the film version due to constraints on length) and three interviews have been added, specifically those of Christel Neumann, Anna, and Maike F. In addition, the book contains a documentation index that also could not be part of the film. In an attempt to recreate the flow of the documentary, the book also contains the lyrics of three of Maike Nowak's folk songs, which were used as interludes in the film version. The book consists of 12 interviews, of which ten are with individuals and two are with small groups; thus 15 women were interviewed. The interviewees' ages ranged from 67 to 27 at the time of their original interview (between 1991 and 1993). The reader is also given the interviewee's name (either real or code name, depending on the interview), job, and the place where the interview took place. The ages are relatively evenly spread out, but eight of the twelve interviews were held in Berlin, and a further two were in Potsdam; only two interviews took place outside of this Berlin/Potsdam sphere: one in Dresden, and one in Weimar. The interviews are roughly organized according to age, oldest to youngest, although there are some slight deviations, especially in the two group interviews.

The historical agenda of this collection is strongly reflected in the organization of the interviews. In the introduction, although there are different topical headings, such as "Lesben suchen ihre Geschichte," "Lesben in der Auseinandersetzung mit Wissenschaft und Psychiatrie," "Rückblick: die Dokumentarfilmarbeit," and "Die Bucharbeit," lesbian history and the addition of GDR lesbian history to the greater whole is thematized throughout the whole introduction, which is strongly indicated in the first two paragraphs:

Die Geschichte von lesbischen Frauen ist seit Jahrtausenden eine
Geschichte von Schweigen und Verschweigen, von Andeutungen und

Auslassungen, von Fragmenten. Immer wieder suchen lesbische Frauen nach Wurzeln und Ursprüngen, nach einer historischen Identität. Dabei begibt sich jede Generation von neuem auf den Weg, um ihre Geschichte selbst zu erarbeiten und sich anzueignen (9).

As stated, this historical project is carried out not only on the content level of the interviews, but also at the structural level. Not only is the narrative organization of each interview chronological, but the interviews are also organized according to the age of the interviewee; from oldest to youngest, creating a chronological development throughout the whole collection. The interviews also demonstrate a historical shift from the personal to the community. The older women concentrate on the development of their whole lives, focusing on their discovery and naming of their lesbianism and finding suitable partners, whereas the interviews of the younger lesbians concentrate almost solely on community building in the 70s and 80s, without much “personal” content. The interviews in the middle are a mixture of the two, moving from early community building attempts and subculture to contact with larger or at least more open lesbians and then, the first attempts at community building. Emphasis here has moved from the mundane to the historical/teleological development of the movement; much as the Berlin group Lesbians in the Church grounded their contemporary subjectivity in the historical roots provided by lesbian persecution under the Nazis, the narrators of this collection create their own textual subjectivity by calling on the historical, teleological development towards enlightenment of the public and thus the eventual acceptance of lesbians in society.

Un-Sichtbare Frauen: Lesben und ihre Emanzipation in der DDR

This text from Ursula Sillge is vastly different from the other narratives in that it is a single-author text that attempts to be a kind of scholarly history of the development of the lesbian movement in the GDR; this goal it shares with the collection *viel zuviel verschwiegen*. *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* is not *Protokollliteratur*, and neither was it Sillge’s

intent to write a personal narrative. Despite her attempts at “scientific objectivity,” Sillge almost exclusively writes about her own experiences and her interactions with a specific group. Her narrative thus is a combination of semi-scientific report, personal history, and advice (such as how to deal with coming out and who to contact) for the lesbian community in the early 90s. In the narrative, Sillge shifts seemingly arbitrarily between the third and first person—often within the same report about the same group. Compare this quote about the formation of the *Sonntags-Club* (of which Sillge was a member and head organizer): “1987 beschloß der [Berliner] FreundInnenkreis, sich ‘Sonntags-Club’ zu nennen. Programme vervielfältigten *die OrganisatorInnen* zunächst mit der Schreibmaschine, das einzige *ihnen* zugängliche Verfahren, das nicht verboten war” (100, emphasis mine) with the following quote where she talks about problems with the club leadership about a year later:

Seit dem Frühjahr 1988 kam es zu ständigen Attacken und inneren Auseinandersetzungen, die die Existenz des Sonntags-Clubs mehr bedrohten als alle äußeren Auseinandersetzungen vorher. An *meine Stelle als Leiterin* sollte ein sicherer Kader rücken: Mitglied der SED und Lehrer für Marxismus/Leninismus (ML) an einer FDJ-Schule. Von *mir* befragt, ob er sich nicht schäbig vorkomme, erwiderte er: ‘Ich stelle mich dieser Aufgabe’. ...Die Aktion gegen den Club war begleitet von Verleumdungen gegen *mich* und andere Mitglieder, an denen sich auch verschiedene Lesben und Schwule kirchlicher Gruppen beteiligten (102, emphasis mine).

Within a span of two pages, Sillge shifts from talking about her actions with others in an impersonal third person (assuming the tone of an omniscient, distanced narrator) to a personal first person when talking about the split in group leadership—seeming to indicate that she also felt the split was a personal attack.

Her shifting tone undermines her reliability as a narrator because her involvement is buried beneath a thin veneer of scientific objectivity. In the end, there is a disconnect between content and style. Instead of creating an “objective” history of lesbian history in the GDR—a project which in and of itself is questionable given the subjective nature of any scientific or scholarly inquiry—she has written a personal account of her and her cohort’s own experiences combined with advice for lesbians in post-*Wende* Germany. Using a scholarly vehicle for a personal history that is not self-reflective⁸⁰ puts form and content at odds with one another, creating an awkward narrative.

Subjectivity

To a large degree, the East German lesbian narrators ground their subjectivity in a variety of communities, whether they are work, familial, or lesbian-centered—in fact, in the widest sense, the narratives in *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* concentrate on love and familial relationships as well as work, while both *viel zuviel verschwiegen* and *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* are concerned with the emerging lesbian community, whether in church-based or secular groups. Women commonly organize their personal narratives around their connection to the community (they are locally bound), their awareness of their own multiple roles within society, and their need to relate personal experience (Morgan). Narrating personal experiences in East Germany is self-referential and works as a means of self-discovery as well as narrative creation. In her investigations of modern feminist autobiography, or what she calls *autography*, Jeanne Perreault states that women’s voices do not come from their experience directly, but from the process of relating that experience; thus subjectivity grows out of the process of narrating. In her view, “the feminist ‘self’, then, exists in the particular of feminist texts and not in any

⁸⁰ There are scholars who have been able to write self-reflective personal histories that also confront complicated social issues. Most notably, Carolyn Kay Steedman’s *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives* relates her own complicated memories of growing up in working-class England with analysis of how class is gendered. It is because Steedman confronts her own implication in her object of study that the text is so successful as a scholarly work.

particular kind of text” (193). Paul John Eakin would agree that there is no self without narrative, though he would extend the process of becoming and narrating beyond the written sphere to include all forms of narration that help us distinguish ourselves from our social context. The real effect this has for East German lesbian narrators is that, though they are not necessarily recognizable in the mainstream fabric of GDR social life, they create themselves as participants in that society, not just in forms that conform to socialist compulsory heterosexuality, but also that allow for the varieties of sexual and familial experiences that do not conform.⁸¹ This can be seen in the friendship circles that older lesbians like Tommy and Cristel Neumann moved in as well as the number of shared living situations, having multiple partners, male and female, cross-generational relationships, and the separation of sex (with men) from an emotional experience (with women).

If subjectivity is attained in the act of narrating, subjectivity is not prior to narration, but simultaneously created in the act of production. Eakin shows however that both narration and subjectivity are not solely textual production, but always/already part of the process of becoming who we are, even if we are not always aware of the process.

We don’t, I think, pay much attention to this process [of becoming a “self”], not only because we want to get on with the business of living our lives, but also because identity formation is not available for conscious inspection as it happens. We can never expect to witness the emergent sense of self as an observable event precisely because it is an ongoing process, taking place mostly beneath our notice from day to day—and indeed, physiologically, moment by moment. We never catch ourselves in

⁸¹ Though Morgan and Perreault would confine this relational form of autobiographical production to women’s production, in *How our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* Eakin sets out to deconstruct the gender polarization implied by this approach. He shows that it is rather a common strategy of postmodern life writing to focus on relationships, how postmodern personal narratives, regardless of the gender of the author, create the subject in relation to a spectrum of “others.”

the act of becoming selves; there is always a gap or rupture that divides us from the knowledge that we seek (Eakin x).

It is not only growth and differentiation that determine subjectivity, but also the act of explaining the self. Subjectivity comes not only from the narrating process, but also from the perceived audience or telegraphed purpose of the text. In the texts in this chapter, it is clear that all of the narrators derive subjectivity from their own experiences, but it is also the form used to relate those experiences that further lends them an authoritative voice. In the case of *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, narrators' concentration on everyday experiences such as relationship formation or work strongly embeds them in the socialist fabric of society, demonstrating that lesbians had concerns "just like everyone else." Conversely, Sillge's adherence to a scholarly voice in *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* supports her efforts to create a text that is seemingly more concerned with the political and social issues that lesbians face, even if or perhaps because those issues place them in an outsider position to mainstream society.

All of these personal narratives also point to a schism between GDR culture and the narrators' own experiences within that culture. Not unlike Althusser, Felicity Nussbaum confronts the subject under ideology and whether she may conceive of herself as an agent without being able to identify the ideologies and institutions that determine that agency. This seems to leave little space for any kind of subject that can in some way produce a text not wholly determined by ideologies—hegemonic or not. In Michel Pêcheux's "theories of the transformation of the subject" (164), Nussbaum sees the possibility of a subject position that "disidentifies" with the ideologies that create it (or rather, is forced to accept a subject position that is inadequate or incompatible); thus, the ideological system becomes transparent to the subject who may then effect some sort of social/political change. This means that through disidentification, language usage will shift as well, as new subject positions "contest dominant ideologies" (164).

Disidentification is exactly the strategy that GDR lesbians used to relate their stories while also pointing to their oppression within the GDR, thereby creating an interesting paradox for GDR lesbians. Their texts exist in a space of what Nussbaum calls *interdiscourse*—the place where disidentification meets up with ideology allowing for a discourse that simultaneously critiques ideology and its institutions while using the language of that ideological system; thus, to some degree they are forced to couch their arguments/create their subjectivity according to the rules of their oppressor, the GDR social system, while also attempting to point to the oppressive nature of the system on them. Reinhard Andress sees this as a critical point as well in his analysis of GDR *Protokollliteratur*. As a common form in the GDR that he traces back to its formative period, Andress states that:

Durch das Erzählen unserer Geschichte und Geschichten in diesem Kontext erkennen wir den Grad unserer eigenen Eingliederung bzw. Nicht-Eingliederung in eine Gesellschaft, definieren unser Selbst und geben unserem Leben Sinn. Daraus ergibt sich unsere Identität; autobiographisches Erzählen bildet ein wichtiges Mittel zur Herausbildung eines Selbstverständnisses (24).

In his consideration of autobiographical subjectivity, Andress brings together, albeit unconsciously, both Perreault and Nussbaum in that he claims that subjectivity is created in the process of writing—autobiographical writing allows the writer to reach a certain *self-understanding*—while emphasizing the degree of integration or lack of integration into society. In *Protokollliteratur* by women, Andress further ties subjectivity to reality by stating that “menschliche Subjektivität [ist] Bestandteil der Wirklichkeit. Im Falle von Wanders Protokollband erhöht das Subjektive an den Aussagen das Identifikationspotential mit den Frauen in den Protokollen, vor allem bei den Leserinnen” (86). The rest of this chapter, while showing how subjectivity is grounded in experience,

will engage that experience and confront its constructed nature, as well as the kind of subject it creates.

The narrators of *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, and *Unsichtbare Frauen* all derive their subjectivity from different kinds of experience as well as their anticipated reader. The narrators in *Engel* find their voice in their everyday lives—they narrate through their current experiences whereas the narrators of *verschwiegen* narrate with an eye to a historical development that expands beyond their individual experiences. Their subjectivity is derived from their connection to history, whether it is their individual history, or whether it is their participation in a GDR collective lesbian history through the acts of community building and participation in the lesbian movement. These narratives call on history as their basis for authority. Sillge's narrative, however, calls on a completely different authority—one given her by scientific inquiry, or at least the appearance thereof. Her experiences are partially historicized, but even more, they are couched in a supposedly objective, scientific language that lends her narrative authority.

The importance of experience and a sense of authenticity in all of these personal narratives are inescapable. In order to locate the discussion of experience and authenticity in an East German as well as lesbian context, I will first take a short excursion into Christa Wolf's concept of *subjective authenticity* since it becomes a cornerstone of women's writing in the GDR and specifically in conjunction with *Protokolliteratur*.

According to Kathleen Komar, it is Wolf's intention to complicate her own authorial voice as well as the narrating voice, to intertwine them inextricably, making it also difficult for the reader to separate them. She uses (auto)biography fictionally, using the form to create uncertainty about the (auto)biographical voice altogether: when a story is told, whose is it? This fragmented voice can also be seen as a communal voice—a pluralized "I." For Wolf, this fragmentation, in conversation with itself, stands in for a

utopian, cooperative social(ist) structure she sees as the eventual outcome of socialism. Thus the end goal of Wolf's writing is that the collective develops into a community, but one in which the "other" is critically engaged, so that the question arises why it is the "other," not the "same." Wolf uses subjective authenticity, calling on experience—her own, and yet not her own—to create this pluralized "I" with which the reader can simultaneously identify and not identify.

The author thus does not attempt to separate herself from her texts and create an objective distance to textual matter, but rather is communally entwined in the text, so that author and narrator become inextricable, although they are not the same. "For Wolf, 'authenticity' goes beyond the traditional (auto)biographical convention of verifiability or attempted objectivity. The authenticity she models for the reader is that of a consciousness intent on revealing its own self-deceptions, continuously questioning its own assumptions, and persistently redefining itself in, as, and apart from 'the other'" (Frieden "Transformative" 173-174). Thus authenticity is no longer connected to providing the salient number of supporting documents, pictures, etc., but rather refers to authenticity in representation—not necessarily an authenticity that promises documentable truth or accuracy, but rather authenticity of voice, of authorial commitment to the written. Because of this, Wolf "sees in [Protokolliteratur]... an answer to the GDR literary establishment's call for 'realism' in literature: namely, a concept of realism which does not exclude the subjective interaction of the self with the text" (Pickle 217).

The author is thus free to play with form and subject matter, as well as narrative voice, in the hope of creating a subjectivity that extends beyond the subjectivity of the author, but also allows the reader to gain subjectivity from the reading process.

Als Autorin strebt [Wolf] eine literarische Reflexion ihrer eigenen Erfahrungen an (in doppelten Sinn von Widerspiegelung und weiterführender Auseinandersetzung) und hofft, eine Beziehung zwischen sich und den Text herstellen zu können. Durch Verweigerung der

erwarteten Form und durch das Beispiel ihres eigenen 'Subjektwerdens' hofft sie im Leser einen neuen Bewußtwerdungsprozeß zu fördern (Frieden 156).

Wolf's subjective voice not only directly engages the text, but also the reader; not in an attempt to provide answers, but rather to challenge the reader to look beyond the mediated/written material as well as her/his own material conditions.

The reader and author thus use experience as a starting point, not the end point of understanding the narrative. This approach is supported by the theoretical writing by Joan Scott who states that experience, when used as evidence, stunts historical analysis of difference in that it naturalizes the categories of difference being examined. Thus, experience [read: personal narratives for our purposes] occludes the working of categories while stating "the fact of difference" (Scott 59). Experience has to be historicized, problematized, and explained. It is not the end goal of history, but rather the starting point of historical inquiry. In order to historicize—instead of naturalize—experience and difference we need to treat the "emergence of a new identity as a discursive event" (Scott 66), inquire how representation is constructed and what stands behind that construction (Scott 67), and situate and contextualize language and its shifts, looking at the politics of identity construction.

Experience/Authenticity

If we take theories of autobiography as well as Wolf's fluid definition of authenticity into consideration, it is possible to take each narrator's experience and look beyond it. Since any subject is necessarily a constructed fiction that seems to create a coherent narrator, the question of experience becomes not what kind of experiences the writers/narrators had, but rather how they use their own material conditions and memories to shape the kind of narrative that is most effective for their textual intent, and it is not necessary that the narrator be conscious of this selecting process. All of these

narrators are concerned with visibility; the question then is not whether they were able to gain that visibility, but rather how their personal narratives are constructed to that end.

Ich ahnungsloser Engel and *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, following a common agenda in *Protokollliteratur* of the GDR, attempt to show the reader lesbian life in the GDR that is in direct conflict with mainstream East German ideas about being lesbian. These collections provide a plurality of lesbians who were inextricably woven into the fabric of East German socialist life, as opposed to either the missing lesbian of East German sex discourse or the singular, idealized “Lesbian” of East German women’s fiction. In many ways, the narrators’ mediated experience first demonstrates to what extent they resemble the general population. Their experience emphasizes that they had similar concerns to other GDR citizens.

In almost all of the narratives, work is centrally thematized; the workplace occupied a central place in not only many of the narrators’ professional, but also their social lives. Employment not only provided the financial means to provide for their necessities as well as luxuries, but it is also a constitutive element of their identity under socialism. The very first sentence of the first narrative in *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* is “Meine Arbeit macht mir unheimlichen Spaß” (Gutsche 11). Andrea, in the same collection, gains much of her self-worth from the community she takes part in as overseer of a construction crew. When she was younger, it was as “one of the guys”: Mit den Jungen, mit denen ich da zu tun hatte – wir feteten viel –, da brauchst du bloß mal ankratzen, und da fingen die an zu erzählen... Wenn wir auf der Baustelle waren und irgendwas zusammen machen konnten, irgendwas mauern oder so. Die Jungen waren immer ein bißchen unkomplizierter als die Mädels in dem Alter“ (Gutsche 155-156). As she gained experience, became qualified as a civil engineer, and supervised construction, her attitude shifted so that she made more of a division between her work and her private life: “Wichtig ist für mich das Arbeiten, arbeiten, arbeiten und dann Schluß. Und in meiner Freizeit mache ich ganz was anderes” (160). Many of the narratives give detailed

accounts of the different paid work they have done throughout their lives, and in some cases, as with Andrea above, their work experience is more fully narrated than their experiences discovering their sexuality. In fact, all lesbians who provided narratives were identified by their names or pseudonyms as well as by their ages and their professions, and although the names may have been modified, their professions were accurately identified.

An additional concern thematized by GDR lesbians in their narratives was the search for appropriate living space. Like other citizens, housing was at a premium and the competition for spacious, centrally heated housing was intense. Furthermore, this brought up issues of privacy and problems with shared space, which was often the problem with singles (or at least legally unmarried people), who either had to share apartments with other singles or had to live with their parents. Thus, finding an apartment as a single or as part of an unmarried couple was problematic. Living space was not, however, the only spatial concern lesbians shared with the population at large. Lesbians also had the problem of finding public meeting spaces they were allowed to use. Although this may seem to be a problem specific to lesbians and other homosexuals, any group that was perceived as too specialized/independent—this included groups as simple as mah jong enthusiasts—were denied meeting space since public space was closely guarded by the state.⁸²

A last example of commonality between lesbian concerns and those of other GDR citizens is that of finding an appropriate partner. GDR sexologists as well as other numerous forums, such as the personal ads in newspapers, especially the *Wochenpost*, demonstrate the problems associated with finding a companion. Pairing off is a main concern in GDR social life and it is no less so in lesbian narratives. Especially the narratives by Inge Scheuer and Christel Neumann outline how they used the personal ads to find women who they could form partnerships with. Christel Neumann “kam ... eines

Tages auf die Idee, auf Annoncen in der Wochenpost zu antworten” (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 44-45) and met two women that way. Inge Scheuer placed her own ad looking for a “Lebensgefährtin für gemeinsame Stunden” and received sixty answers to that one ad (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 37). Sillge, in her interview in *viel zuviel verschwiegen* as well as in her own book also discusses the problems associated with personal ads in the GDR, especially as lesbians and gay men became more visible, the ads were more controlled.

Not only is the content of these narratives critical in establishing mundane similarities between lesbians and the mainstream population but also the structure of the narratives as well. According to the Personal Narratives Group, the form a narrator chooses can allow her to represent her life and how she feels about it in a way that may be incongruent with her actual material possibilities. She can express her self textually in a way that she could not materially; she can develop a textual subjectivity denied her by the material conditions of her everyday existence (PNG “Forms”). By accentuating their participation in the mundane activities of socialist life, the narrators portray themselves as “normal” members of society, whether or not they were actually accepted as such. Except for the narrative by Sillge, all of the narratives have a conversational tone, and since all but Sillge’s text have been transcribed from interviews, this has largely to do with the oral quality preserved in many of the narratives. Gutsche, editor of *Ich ahnungsloser Engel*, even states that she tried as little as possible to edit the narratives, because she did not want to disrupt the quality of the original; she attempts to preserve the tone and structure as well as the content of the narratives/interviews, thus ensuring them an “everyday” feel. Furthermore, she states that she does this because she is not interested “literarischen Ansprüchen gerecht zu werden” (10). In *viel zuviel verschwiegen*, two of the narratives consist of small groupings, so the interview/discussion quality of the narrative is even more present. In almost all cases, although the narrative form varies from chronological to cyclical to almost free association, the mundanity of the narratives

⁸² For a full discussion of civil society and the state’s control thereof, please see the previous chapter on the

does not call attention to itself; it makes the reader feel at ease with the narrative and makes it easier for her to identify with the narrator and her (mediated) experiences. According to Monika Totten, this is also due to the fact that the reader can imagine the questions and the implied dialogue, if she pays attention to the places where the shift to a new theme is sudden or where questions are restated in the answer. This silent interviewing voice that is present throughout the collections manages to preserve the intimate tone, instead of disrupting it. In comparing the implied dialogue in Wander and the inner dialogue, often present in Wolf's writing, Pickle says that it is "not surprising that an intimacy of tone results from these inner meditations which resembles that in the Wander interviews. In addition, the underlying, usually unarticulated participation of Maxie Wander in the interviews reminds one of the complex narrative structure in *Kein Ort. Nirgends*" (223). The reader feels she is taking part in or being allowed to listen to an intimate discussion between friends.

Although the narrators focus on the mundane and, in many ways, make it easier for all readers to identify with them, they also highlight their difference as lesbians as well as the problems associated with lesbianism in GDR society, stressing the necessity for acceptance within that society. In the concerns mentioned above, there is a special lesbian bent to each concern. In the GDR since living space was such a problem, lesbians had even more problems finding accommodations suited to their needs, especially if they were in a long-term relationship. As two "single" women, they would not qualify for an apartment together, so they would be forced to either keep two smaller apartments and cope with that, or to consolidate into what was mostly a much smaller space, a studio or one-bedroom apartment for the both of them. Sometimes this was made easier if one of the women had children and had been able to keep a larger apartment she had shared with a husband, but this was not necessarily the norm. Concerning work, many of the lesbians lived with the fear that their sexuality would be discovered and either used against them

in the workplace or would even lead to them losing their positions—which was not a completely unfounded fear. Christiane, who worked for the *Abteilung Kultur* of her city, was in danger of losing her job because she admitted to having a relationship with a woman:

Ich mußte mich zum Beispiel bei dem Kreissekretär der SED verantworten, bei dem Stadtrat für Kultur und bei meinem Chef. Die überlegten dann gemeinsam, acht Wochen lang, ob ich meine Arbeit weiter machen darf. Weil ich ja im Lichte der Öffentlichkeit stehe, das wäre ja nicht so günstig...Man teilte mir nach diesen acht Wochen mit, daß ich meine Arbeit weitermachen darf, es aber bitte nicht so an die Öffentlichkeit dringen soll (Gutsche 19-20).

For some lesbians, meeting potential long-term partners was also a problem since visibility for lesbians was at a minimum until the 1980s, though even then, many lesbians did not benefit from the lesbian groups formed in the last decade of the GDR. These women were limited to either word-of-mouth within their circle of friends, if they were lucky enough to have a circle that included lesbians other than the one they were currently in a sexual relationship with, or the personal ads they were sometimes allowed to place in the *Wochenpost*. This opportunity was shaky at best and as lesbians gained visibility—limited as it was—the opportunity to place ads declined. At the best of times, these ads used covert language like *Brieffreundin* and *Gleichgesinnte* and drew a limited number of responses that the women who placed the ads felt they could reply to (Christel Neumann— Karstädt/Zitzewitz 41-52). The problem with lesbians encroaching on public space to find each other did not end at the personals, but rather became one of the main points of contention for the lesbian/gay groups in the 1980s. Most solved this by meeting under the protection of the church, since secular groups were not allowed to form and gather publicly until the last two or three years before the *Wende*. If the emphasis on mundane problems encouraged readers to identify with the narrators, the emphasis on

lesbian singularity was not intended to cause disidentification but rather to garner sympathy from the reader regarding the problems lesbians faced.

Further emphasis was placed on the shift to community—the necessity of creating a lesbian collective so that lesbians were able to be better integrated into socialist society (see *viel zuviel verschwiegen* and *Un-Sichtbare Frauen* especially). These two goals may seem contradictory, but the right to develop one's individuality within an appropriate environment was considered, at least on a theoretical level, indispensable to successful integration with the socialist collective:

Notwendig bleibt allerdings die Berücksichtigung der spezifischen Interessen homosexueller Personen. Sie haben, wie alle anderen Gruppen der Gesellschaft, allgemeine und spezielle Interessen. Sie müssen, wie alle anderen Gruppen der Bevölkerung, die Möglichkeit haben, ihre Bedürfnisse zu artikulieren und ihre spezifischen Interessen zu vertreten. Das ist eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für die individuelle Persönlichkeitsentwicklung einerseits und sozialistische Demokratie in der Gesellschaft andererseits.

Wenn der Grundsatz, daß der Sozialismus für alle da ist und alle braucht, wenn das Bestreben, alle Menschen zu erreichen und einzubeziehen, realisiert werden soll, muß sich die konkrete Interessenstruktur auch in der politischen Organisation der Gesellschaft widerspiegeln, d.h. in der möglichen Existenz der Begegnungsstätten homosexueller Bürger wie Klubs etc. (Sillge *Sonntagsclub*).

In this statement, Sillge uses personal development as a basic principle of socialism to argue for the inclusion of homosexuals. She couches her argument in socialist rhetoric to reach the logical conclusion that homosexuals must be allowed special considerations in order to become successful citizens under socialism.

The content of *viel zuviel verschwiegen* especially maintains the teleological development of lesbian culture in the GDR. In this collection, not only is there a chronological organization of the narratives, moving from the oldest to the youngest, there is also a shift from narratives that reflect the total isolation of lesbians in their monogamous relationships (Inge Scheuer) to the development of friendship circles of lesbians and gay men who met in each other's homes (Christel Neumann and Tommy), to lastly the development of the lesbian community in the churches, the secular groups, and the creation of the first lesbian newspaper (Anna, Gabriele S., Heinrike, Ursula Sillge, Arbeitskreis "Lesben in der Kirche," "frau anders"). This shift is accompanied by a shift from individual concerns and the discussion of love as the main narrative motivators to the creation and continuation of the collective as the main narrative motivators. Lastly, within this shift it is the last group of narratives, the ones about lesbian community, that further establishing the importance of the collective voice (for example, this is the section with the group or pair interviews). The constructed nature of this teleology becomes evident as the narratives themselves reveal that: 1) in the early years of the GDR there were lesbians that participated in friendship groups and queer communities, and 2) during the 1980s and the proliferation of lesbian groups leading to a burgeoning lesbian community, there were still many—in fact the majority of—lesbians who were not connected to any kind of collective based on sexuality. Most lesbians in the 1980s were still struggling with the problems of finding and keeping partners; all twelve narratives in *Ich ahnungsloser Engel* discuss this problem, though none of them talk about taking part in the lesbian movement of the 1980s. In some ways this was further complicated by the fact that newspapers quit carrying personal ads from women seeking women, since it was becoming increasingly difficult for the newspapers to accept the pretense that these were "fraternal" ads given the rising visibility—however limited—of lesbians and homosexuality in general.

Moreover, in order to stress their place in GDR society, very little attention is paid to sex or sexuality; sex itself is mostly referred to by euphemisms such as “tenderness” (*Zärtlichkeit*), so that for the most part the only real references to sex are either heterosexual, or misplaced perversions that the lesbian narrator did *not* participate/want to participate in. Of all the narratives, only two narrators thematize sex itself: Martina talks about lesbian sex practices and S/M sex and Mirjam talks about her days of “playing the field” as it were— “Damals dachte ich auch sofort immer an Sex. Das war immer alles eins, eine Frau kennenlernen, eine Frau lieben, war sofort immer Sex” (Gutsche 42-43)—but otherwise, sex gets talked about only indirectly, if at all. This may, in part, dispel the myth of the oversexed lesbian/homosexual, though it is more likely to reinforce the stereotypes of mainstream sex discourse that women are concerned with the emotional, not the physical side of sexual relationships. Although sex is not directly talked about, there is a lot of talk about love, love problems, and relationships and their problems. Thus, as lesbians divorce themselves from the myth of their sexed selves, they reconfirm the myth of their female emotional selves. Another way in which many lesbians conform to the female sexual role is as mothers, since many of them were married first and many lesbians have children, creating another bridge between lesbians and reproductive socialist women.

This is seen in contrast to the highly sexualized heterosexuality that is a constitutive element of socialist identity. As was shown in Chapter Two, the GDR woman is sexualized not only as the child-bearing nurturer, but being properly socialist *also* assures that women are more likely to be orgasmic and instigate sex acts. However, it is through masculine stimulation that the socialist woman reaches an orgasmic state, and thus, since lesbians are not “stimulated” by men, they have no language for their own sexuality.

The seemingly tame or desexualized expressions of sexual intimacy may also be tied to Western feminist influences, since East German feminists and lesbians had at least

limited access to such texts. It was especially during the 1970s and the sex wars of the 1980s that feminists were skeptical of using patriarchal language to express sexuality and some feminists even considered all “masculine” sex acts, such as penetration, to be oppressive and even violent acts: “Jetzt ist eine neue art von sehnsucht entstanden, von erregung und von *hingabe* – hingabe, die mit *zuwendung* zu tun hat, nicht mit unterwerfung und gewalttat” (Stefan 119). The linguistic dilemma regarding sex is well-portrayed in Verena Stefan’s *Häutungen*; she creates a binary opposition between feminine sex, that is based on offering oneself and excitement, and oppression and violence. She also searches for a new bodily, sexual language: “Ich habe keine klitoris, ich habe keine vagina. Keine scheide. Keine möse. Keinen busen, keine warzen“ (Stefan 129). Several lesbian scholars such as have discussed the post-Stonewall desexualization of the lesbian in the U.S. context as well:

[I]n the late 1970s dyke relationships had to be heavy on the romance and light on the sex because women were terrified of using each other as sexual objects: “Inserting your fingers into your lover’s vagina was considered heterosexual,” she says. “Touching her breasts meant that you were just objectifying her. The only thing that was all right was oral sex, and you had to be sure that you both got it for an equal time” (Fadernann quoting a 1987 personal interview with Susie Bright, 337).

Though GDR feminists tended to eschew separatist practices, lesbian politics were not so clearly defined; most of the lesbian groups, especially in the churches, felt that they could only develop if they chose to meet separately from the gay men’s groups. Though this is speculation on my part, it is not inconceivable that the convergence of socialist heterosexuality and the desexualization of feminist lesbians from the West could both explain, in part, the desexualized representations put forth by East German lesbians.

Narrating Diversity

Though up to now, I have talked about these narratives as collections, there are also 28 different stories being told by these narratives. The different narratives bring a plurality to East German lesbianism that simply did not exist in any published form before the *Wende*. Despite common themes that each collection works through as part of its social/political agenda, the narrators all represent a unique standpoint based on their own experience and material conditions.

Although East German lesbian narratives have received little scholarly attention, there has been much scholarship dealing with lesbian narrative collections in the U.S. Though U.S. narrative collections were socially useful in bringing visibility to lesbians, criticism centered on the identity-building project of the personal narratives, especially as these collections were considered too representative of white, middle-class experience. This is a reasonable concern, especially as white Euro-centric societies struggle to disrupt the homogenous stereotypes that form national identity in order to embrace the heterogeneity that is seen in European and American contexts. As a next step in the identity-building project, Bonnie Zimmerman encourages a move away from personalizing politics and into pluralizing lesbianism, which she sees in U.S. anthologies such as *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* edited by Evelyn Torton Beck (1989) and *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color* edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (1984). This line of criticism gets picked up by Biddy Martin in “Lesbian Identity and Autobiographical Difference(s),” who points to what she sees as the major problems of identity politics and how it is tied to personal narratives; Martin believes that collections of personal narratives mold multiple voices into a single, cohesive voice. She further claims that lesbian personal narratives anticipate a unified lesbian picture, by defining how to be lesbian and backing this up with “authentic” lesbian experience—creating an authoritative lesbian voice. Where Martin’s criticism weakens is in the assumption that multiple narratives necessarily create a monolithic

lesbian identity. This assumption seems to rest on anticipating how readers will receive, process and file away what they learn from reading personal narratives and I am not sure that a reader's response is any more predictable than authorial intent.

At the very least a double bind exists in that, on the one hand, it seems only fair to expand the number of identity categories that are represented, but, on the other hand, eventually it becomes clear that possible categories are infinite. In addition to the infinite possible category distinctions, material conditions are infinitely different for the inhabitants of each category. As Eve Sedgwick's first axiom states in her introduction to *The Epistemology of the Closet*, "People are different from each other" (22). The categories we use to differentiate people from each other, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, are so general that the complexity of each human cannot begin to be contained by these limitations. At each node of identity combinations, the possible material conditions/experiences of each subject are still infinite. Thus, another reading strategy presents itself: to look to how identity as well as subjectivity is constructed and not invest it with universalizing authority. "Rather than labeling any story as true or untrue, interpreters need to look for the reasons *why* narrators tell their stories" (PNG "Whose" 203). This requires reading each narrative as a complex site instead of a statement of "how it was/is" or necessarily conflating the personal narrative with prescriptive identity politics. This reading strategy requires understanding that each narrative is a mediated construction through language and that authenticity is a cleverly constructed artifice.

George Chauncey, queer theorist and historian, develops many strategies for seeing beyond contemporary contexts when reading personal narratives by attributing what he considers to be the misreading of homosexual history to many factors.⁸³ Chauncey claims that historical development is read through the lens of current

⁸³ In his book *Gay New York*, Chauncey uncovers a visible gay community that existed in New York City in the early 20th century, demonstrating that post-Stonewall definitions of gay community have occluded the visibility of earlier communities.

experience, obfuscating the strategies lesbians and gay men used in different social contexts to define and organize their worlds. For example, if lesbian community building in 1950s GDR is seen through the lens of the lesbian movement in the 1980s, it is easy to conclude that women in the 1950s had no lesbian community. However, if we reconsider the definition of community within that earlier context, it becomes apparent that the search for a lesbian community at that time must investigate/include different social venues.⁸⁴

Narratives by lesbians active before the 1970s present a number of strategies these women had for creating their own communities beyond their family circle:

Cristel Neumann: Wir lebten durchaus nicht isoliert mit unserer Familie.
Ich lud öfter Sängerinnen zum Musizieren ein, die mein Anderssein
akzeptierten (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 50).

Cristel not only demonstrates that she and her lover were “out” at some level with their families, but also that they had friends who accepted them and with whom they had frequent social contact. Other examples demonstrate that community building was not restricted to family and heterosexual friends:

Anna: Danach haben wir versucht, auch andere homosexuelle Menschen
zu finden. Bis dahin hatten wir nur zu Heterosexuellen Kontakt. Wir
hatten dann eine *Annonce* aufgesetzt, daß wir andere Freundinnen oder
Freunde suchen zwecks “Freizeitgestaltung”. Wir haben aus
unterschiedlichen Motiven eindeutig Paare gesucht: Wenn es zwei Männer
sind, dann können wir so tun, als seien wir zwei heterosexuelle Paare.
Frauen haben wir gesucht, weil wir uns austauschen wollten
(Karstädt/Zitzewitz 94).

⁸⁴ Similar discoveries were made by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis in their research for *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*. They show that the lesbian community in 1940s Buffalo, NY, revolved around house parties and closed circles of friends while the 1950s sees a shift among working-class lesbians to a more public bar culture.

Anna and her partner found the public space offered by personal ads useful for building relationships to other homosexuals, both women and men. In this way, they were able to create their own underground community of homosexual friends as well as enhance their public social lives by passing as straight couples with the men and sharing their different experiences as lesbians with the women. Tommy also describes an underground group of friends who met in each other's homes on a regular basis:

Tommy: Wir haben uns dann irgendwo in Wohnungen getroffen. Wir hatten ja viele Freunde. Oft haben wir uns hier bei mir getroffen oder auch in anderen Wohnungen, haben ein lustiges Beisammensein gehabt und haben über alles mögliche gesprochen (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 58).

Even after this group of friends was cut off from the homosexual scene in West Berlin by the building of the wall in 1961, they continued to interact socially within a homosexual community of their own making. Tommy, Anna and Cristel were not only *not* isolated, but they led rich social lives—in Tommy and Anna's cases these social lives were filled mostly with contact to other homosexuals. All of these women describe situations in which their social lives were played out in the mostly private sphere of their homes, which is similar to Chauncey's assertion that gay men in early twentieth century New York enjoyed the private sphere they created. This has further resonance in the GDR, where the private sphere was the refuge for many people—not only lesbians—who wanted to express themselves in ways not condoned by the state. On the other hand, Tommy also describes the many different bars—some of which were mainly gay, but some of which had a mixed gay and lesbian clientele—as well as a gay and lesbian theater group. Although these communities are dismissed by the Karstädt and Zitzewitz because they are private—"Sie blieben versteckt in ... privaten Freundinnenkreisen" (11)—that is a value judgment that discounts the community building before the lesbian movement of the 1980s.

It is also critical to acknowledge the “strategies of everyday resistance” demonstrated by the older lesbians. An act such as women dressing in a “masculine” fashion within a social context which strongly encourages women to be feminine, is one example of an everyday resistance. Tommy talks about confusion she dealt with in her youth because of how she dressed and her name, as well as the assumptions that people made about her sexuality based on her desire to wear pants:

Weil ich meistens sowieso in Hosen ging und die Haare kurz hatte, fand ich es irgendwie doof, wenn ich da hingegangen wäre und hätte gesagt: hier, ich heiße so und so. Das wollte ich nicht. Da habe ich gewollt, daß man lieber Tommy zu mir sagt, weil ich doch angeeckt wäre, wenn ich da plötzlich als Mädchen...ja, da hätten die ein bißchen doof geguckt, weil ich so anders aussah.

Damals war es eigentlich so, wenn man Hosen getragen hat, da haben die Leute gleich gesagt, man ist vielleicht andersrum, was eigentlich auch kein Beweis war, denn heute weiß man auch nicht, was vorne und hinten ist (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 54, ellipsis part of original).

Other resistances are remaining single, despite the pressure to marry, and remaining childless, despite the pressure to reproduce. Of all of the older lesbians in both collections (*Ich ahnungsloser Engel* only contains one narrative by a woman in her sixties, and this same woman, Inge Scheuer, also has a narrative in *viel zuviel verschwiegen*), none of them were married and all of them had to create social circles that centered on something other than marriage and childrearing. In fact, these everyday acts can prove more difficult than walking a picket line proclaiming homosexual rights.

Another kind of resistance is evident in the fight against invisibility, as Sillge makes clear in her text, *Un-Sichtbare Frauen*. When confronting the problem of invisibility, it is useful to remember Michel Foucault’s criticism of the repressive hypothesis. He claims that times of supposed repression create such an atmosphere of

policing, chatter and rebellion, that the repressed topic often receives more attention than it would during times of liberation—which create their own repressions (as Sillge’s anecdote may demonstrate, since it comes from the 1980s, a period of relative visibility for homosexuals in the GDR, or at least of relative visibility for gay men).⁸⁵ Therefore, even though the lesbian community had been driven underground during the 50s and 60s, only to emerge slowly again in the 70s in certain gay men’s bars, there are many indications that lesbian life was no less visible than it was in the last decade before the *Wende*.

There are many levels of invisibility, and often what is supposedly invisible in society, is simply undesirable, though it is policed against. In the case of the early GDR and the repression of lesbianism, it is clear that those suspected of being lesbians were under constant surveillance by the larger community, especially at the workplace and in the schools:

Gunna Bohne: Ich kam [1961] in Untersuchungshaft in Dresden bei der Staatssicherheit....Es war ein Mittelpunkt der Verhöre, mich auf den Tatbestand meines Lesbischseins zu fixieren und mich da irgendwo zu kriegen. Ich habe das damals in der eigentlichen erpresserischen Art und Weise gar nicht so wahrgenommen (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 72).

Lesbianism had an unclear status in East German culture. Under §151, the law regulating the age of consent for both heterosexual and homosexual contact, Gunna Bohne was put in prison for three years and the state classified her a political prisoner because of her lesbianism. The government, while banning homosexuality from public venues, was still very concerned with the development of homosexual relationships. Gunna explains further that this is the way the GDR managed to outlaw homosexuality while ostensibly legalizing it (Karstädt, 72-73). Anna talks about a close friend and roommate she had **when** she was nineteen and lived in her university dormitory. Though their relationship

⁸⁵ **A** full discussion of the repressive hypothesis can be found in the introduction to Foucault’s volume

was not sexual, they spent most of their time together and sometimes slept in the same bed in their six-person dorm room. Because of this, one of Anna's instructors decided to speak with both Anna and her friend about the relationship and how it looked:

Es war wirklich wie ein Verhör. Er stellte mir merkwürdige Fragen, z.B. ob ich homosexuell sei, ob ich lesbisch sei....Ob ich einen Verlobten habe, fragte er, alles Mögliche, lauter idiotisches Zeug. Ich habe den Ernst der Lage überhaupt nicht erkannt, weil ich im ersten Augenblick erleichtert war, daß es nichts Politisches ist. Bis er dann anfang zu drohen, wenn es sich herausstellt, daß da was dran sei, dann müßte ich natürlich exmatrikuliert werden, denn besonders für Psychologen ist das unwürdig...Dieser Dozent hat dann das Wort "invertiert" gebraucht. Er hat uns gefragt, ob wir invertiert wären. Er meinte dann, wenn wir das nicht sind, dann wäre es auch besser, nicht zusammenzuziehen, damit das gar keiner erst denken kann (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 90-91).

He introduces them to the labels that will, either through identification or opposition, reify their sexual identity, while simultaneously indoctrinating them into the process of self-surveillance so that they will "police" themselves. In fact, Anna never had a lesbian relationship with her roommate, but used that friendship—which was already under suspicion—to mask the sexual relationship she had with her actual lover. Inge Scheuer also relates that she was accused of being a lesbian by a coworker. Although the assertion was true at the time, there was no physical proof and Scheuer felt that it was a professional attack, so she pressed charges against her co-worker causing the woman to lose her job and further distancing Scheuer from sexual policing:

Ich hatte eine Kollegin, die hat mir wohl meine Arbeit geneidet. Sie war Schaffnerin. Sie hat mir nachgesagt, ich wäre lesbisch und hätte ein Verhältnis mit der und der. Erstmal hat das Verhältnis mit der und der gar

nicht gestimmt, und das Lesbische, ich weiß nicht, ob man das damals so genau wußte. Jedenfalls hat mein Chef gesagt, das geht nicht, die müssen wir wegen übler Nachrede anzeigen. Ich habe es gemacht. Wie die Verhandlung war, ist mein Chef sogar mitgekommen und hat mir das innere Ich gestärkt. Wie die Richterin fragte, was denn da nun dran ist, habe ich gesagt: “Festgestellt kann sie das nicht haben. Das wird sie nur erzählt haben, um sich wichtig zu tun.” Da wurde sie wegen übler Nachrede verurteilt, und ein Vierteljahr später haben wir sie auch entlassen (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 35).

This example also demonstrates how insiders in society create and label the categories that society’s marginalized members inhabit. Naming was not, however, restricted to those in positions of institutional power, like the Stasi or an instructor:

Tommy: “Bubi” hat man immer gesagt. Wenn man in Hosen geht und ein bißchen streng aussieht, dann ist man ein Bubi....Das war so ein Ausdruck, Bübchen oder Bubi, und Mäuschen...Helli ist ein Mäuschen, denn sie macht sich fein, und ich bin eher ein Naturbursche, würde ich sagen (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 55).⁸⁶

Terms like *Bubi* and *Mäuschen* to designate butch and femme roles among lesbians were used by society at large. These terms were used as insults against lesbian couples, and are also examples of a kind of policing of societal norms by the members of society, not institutions. Any member of society, especially if s/he was speaking from the secure insider position—such as a heterosexual—could reinforce that position by marking the marginal position of an outsider—such as a butch lesbian. The resistance carried out by women who dared to depart from the norm and be labeled lesbians becomes more apparent when we consider the physical risk involved. Tommy explains that they were

⁸⁶“Bubi”[similar to ‘butch’] is what they always said. If you went around in pants and looked a little bit **strong**, then you were a Bubi ... That was an expression, Bübchen or Bubi , and also Mäuschen [similar to ‘femme’] ... Helli is a Mäuschen, because she dresses up, and I am more of a natural guy, I would say.”

sometimes beaten up (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 57). All of these incidents indicate that lesbians in the GDR before the lesbian movement were not only visible, but also that they were a marginal group—named by the center—which reinforced the heterosexual cultural center of the GDR.

The analytical category of the closet is relatively new and did not emerge in the U.S. and Germany until the post-Stonewall 1970s—Rosa von Praunheim’s landmark West German film “Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt” modified the American “closet” to fit the West German *Schwuler* and the kind of closet he hid in with the slogan “raus aus den Toiletten, rein in die Straßen” (Jensen 324). This film was not only important for West German gay men, but also for homosexuals in the East who were able to watch it on *Westfernsehen* when ARD showed the film in 1973 (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 94, 100, 135). This brought the “closet” and coming out of it to the GDR. However, applying late-twentieth century “closet logic” to homosexuals in the 1950s and 1960s masks how many lesbians and gay men moved between different worlds. The “closet” has implicit significance for many GDR lesbians discussing their own coming out process. It signifies, however, the barrier to their self-realization as often as it is connected with hiding one’s lesbianism from others. For example, Gunna Bohne uses “coming out [of the closet]” to map out the different steps of her process to realizing her lesbianism. This process begins with childhood friendships and ends many years later with her self-acknowledgement of her sexual desire for women. She names this whole process her “Coming Out” and she never explicitly states that this coming out was to anyone other than herself (Karstädt/Zitzewitz 69-78), whereas other women in these narratives name the act of telling others of their lesbianism as their “Coming Out.”

Comparing the lives of lesbians in the first thirty years of the GDR with those of *lesbians* who participated in lesbian activism in the last decade of the GDR is misleading **and** occludes that many lesbians did not hide their partners from friends and family. For

example, as mentioned above, older lesbians like Cristel Neumann and Tommy had tight circles of friends, straight and queer, with whom they regularly socialized. The so-called closet allowed lesbians before the 1980s to commonly use coded language to find other women in personal ads, but as the closet gets opened, that coded language becomes transparent and those ads are no longer an option for many lesbians, especially those who did not take part in the church or secular groups. The closet also devalues lesbians and gay men from other times—as well as currently—who enjoy the separation of their private and public lives, disregarding that being gay and lesbian carried different personal and political significance for them. It is possible, after all, to organize one's life around other characteristics than one's sexuality. In fact, feminist scholarship has demonstrated that subjectivity is multiple and that persons have many different organizing points for their identity, which tend to shift according to the context.⁸⁷ For example, Andrea spends as much time establishing herself as an overseer for construction sites as she does describing her life as a lesbian (Gutsche 155-162). None of the lesbian narratives not written by activists, and not all of the ones written by activists either, discuss coming out.

These three books comprise the published primary literature on being lesbian in the GDR. They combat mainstream images of the lesbian provided by women's fiction, which was not interested in providing any kind of lesbian experience, but rather used an idealized image of the "the lesbian" to work through aspects of heterosexual relationships under the patriarchal system of the GDR. These narratives also attempt to fill the hole left by official GDR sex discourse, which for all practical purposes absences the lesbian altogether. By providing readers with a combined 28 narratives based in lesbian experience, these narratives are able to present a lesbian plurality that rests neither on idealized myths of lesbianism nor heterosexual imagination.

⁸⁷For an introduction to shifting identities and how those play out in feminist and (homo)sexual politics, read Riley, Butler, and Sedgwick.

Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated lesbian representations found in four different textual discourses from the late German Democratic Republic: sex discourse, women's fiction, demonstrations by the group *Lesben in der Kirche* and their aftermath, and finally personal narratives from lesbians who lived in the GDR. Although these four discourses coexisted at roughly the same time, with the exception of the personal narratives, which were published in the early and mid-1990s, they do not overlap and there are few commonalities between them, though some do exist. It is possible to divide them into texts created by lesbians (demonstrations and personal narratives) and those not created by lesbians (sex discourse and women's fiction). The similarities in the discourses are to be found in those divisions.

In the texts not created by lesbians, lesbians are largely obscured by those discourses. In the case of sex discourse, it is the institutionalized nature of the discourse that does this. She is hidden behind a socialist heterosexuality that expects her to bear children and be awakened sexually by a man. Her sexual practice is seen only as a shadow of heterosexual practices. Even as a homosexual, she is defined by male homosexual practices, as the male is the universalized homosexual. Since "the lesbian" cannot conform to these sexual expectations, though lip service is paid to her existence, she is in essence absent from sex discourse. Women's fiction further obscures lesbian experience by creating lesbian characters that fulfill feminist expectations of the oppositional text. The idealized lesbian becomes the utopian or dystopian figure against which feminist desires for parity in personal as well as social relationships are projected. One-on-one relationships between women as well as women-centered communities are grounded in an imagined counterhegemony of womanhood that can stand against the dangers of a patriarchal system. These occluded lesbians created by non-lesbian authors are very different from the identities created by lesbians.

Lesbian-authored texts are motivated by presence. In the demonstration texts, the *Lesben in der Kirche* have provided letters and transcripts of the events that were blocked from public knowledge in an attempt to revive those demonstrations and create a textual presence where public presence was denied. Their recollections of events highlight that lesbians were shut out of public space not only because they were a special-interest group, but also because of the sexual politics, or sexual morals, of the GDR. This discourse foregrounds their victim status in the GDR and creates parallels to the victim status of lesbians in concentration camps based on contemporary beliefs about lesbian experience in concentration camps. Though their ideas about lesbian persecution at the hands of the Nazis were based on a common fallacy from the 1980s their own “imagined Lesbian” supports the anti-fascist identity that they claim for themselves. Thus, although sex discourse blocks the lesbian as a socialist subject based on sexual practice, this discourse reclaims their socialist status and embeds it in the socialist anti-fascist myth.

Personal narratives published in the 1990s are also aimed at creating lesbian presence in the GDR, albeit retroactively. By basing lesbian personal narratives in personal experience and creating a lesbian “authenticity,” these narratives attempt to recoup lesbian identity in its multiplicity that was virtually hidden in East Germany before the *Wende*. By concentrating on themes such as work experience and the formation of families, these women further weave themselves into the socialist fabric that denied their presence—these narratives show that lesbians participated in the day-to-day struggles of the East German citizens as lesbians.

Despite certain commonalities in these four textual contexts, it is clear that they coexisted while not necessarily overlapping or even informing each other. I expected to find that these four text types created a common discourse by articulating similarities that echoed back and forth. What I found was that there was little to no communication between the contexts. Despite attempts to reveal themselves to a larger public inside and outside of the GDR, lesbian experience is still an “insider’s secret” for those who interact

with queer communities. To this day, the idea that there was a lesbian movement in East Germany is new to those people who did not in some direct way interact with it. Despite the prevalence of lesbian groups in thirteen of the fifteen *Bezirke*, most lesbians did not participate in them and the larger public was not aware of their presence. In the subculture of active lesbians, however, a network was being built. There were women's festivals and lesbian retreats. There is a non-articulated absence and presence of lesbians that existed in East Germany and to a large extent, still exists.

Fifteen years after the GDR ceased to exist and became part of the Federal Republic of Germany, the extensive programs offered by women's centers—largely run and frequented by lesbians—as well as the struggles that they are facing in the current economic climate are largely unknown to the public at large. Though festivals are more prevalent and lesbian publications are readily accessible, the largest portion of the population is unaware of this visible subculture. The visibility that GDR lesbians sought in the 1980s still remains to be achieved on any large scale.

In queer studies, this project provides an opening to a wide range of possible studies dealing with the creation of homosexual identities in socialist and communist states. Most queer studies research focuses on either the U.S. or Western European countries, largely because these countries have been most accessible. My project along with future projects can help to round out the range of knowledge about how queers/homosexuals interact in a variety of cultural contexts. This dissertation reveals that, though there are similarities between Western and East German experiences, there are far more differences based on the cultural specificity of East Germany. Though East German lesbians had access, due to their close contact with the West, to literature and film that supported the gay and lesbian movements in both the Federal Republic of Germany and the U.S., they dealt with social constraints that their Western counterparts can still barely conceive of. Future research will hopefully further break away from

Western expectations and comparisons to reveal the complexities faced by Eastern queers.

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