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Be a Man, Comrade! Construction of the 'Socialist Male Personality' in the GDR Youth Literature of the 1950s and 1960s.

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Joanna Broda-Schunck entitled "Be a Man, Comrade! Construction of the 'Socialist Male Personality' in the GDR Youth Literature of the 1950s and 1960s.." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Modern Foreign Languages.

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Be a Man, Comrade!
Construction of the 'Socialist Male Personality' in the GDR Youth
Literature of the 1950s and 1960s.

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED FOR THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEGREE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

JOANNA BRODA-SCHUNCK

AUGUST 2013

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved husband, Nicolas Schunck, whose continuous support and encouragement made this achievement possible.

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ABSTRACT

One of the main goals of the East German government was the education of its population towards Socialism, and the creation of the new type of human – the *Neue Mensch*. The belief in the possibility of molding the next generation was particularly strong in the first decades of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), – in the 1950s and the 1960s. At the same time, the leaders of the regime presented the new Socialist state as the rightful heir to the German cultural and historical traditions. Both claims were aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* (SED – Socialist Unity Party). The SED wanted to influence every aspect of life, including gender. The proclaimed gender equality in the GDR entailed the inclusion of women in the Socialist ideal; however, the association in the public sphere with traits commonly attributed to men resulted in the use of masculine ideals as positive models for identification.

The East German government celebrated certain “heroes” as models for successful Socialist engagement. These heroes present what I call “ideological masculinities”. In my analyses, I concentrate on how literature for children and young adults describes two of these models for its young readers: the Socialist soldier and the Socialist worker. I offer a theoretical model with which to read these representations and contextualize them within the social and political institutions of the GDR. Based on examples from a selection of canonic texts, I analyze the traits that authors depict as characteristics of the *Neue Mensch* and investigate their gender association.

In the texts I examine, the combination of the goal of creating a new, better society based on the primacy of the working class, with the claim of being the rightful heir to the German, bourgeois traditions leads to a set of contradictions as to the expectations for the young generation. In addition, I show that even though education was aimed at the entire population (men and women) with the goal of creating gender equality, in East German literature for young adults of the 1950s and 1960s, traditional gender roles seems to take upper hand.

Table of Contents

Introduction:.....	1
Der Neue Mensch	1
Socialist Models in the GDR Culture	7
A Short History of the Establishment of Socialism in the German Democratic Republic	12
Chapter 1: Masculinity as Propaganda?.....	17
Gender as a Socially Constructed Category.....	17
Masculinities	21
Hegemonic Masculinity	24
Ideological Masculinity	26
Ideological Masculinities in/and GDR Realities.....	28
Chapter 2: GDR Organizations and Their Role in Creating the <i>Neue Mensch</i>	31
Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ).....	32
Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik (GST)	36
Nationale Volksarmee (NVA)	38
Staatssicherheit (Stasi)	41
Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (FDGB)	42
Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund (DTSB).....	44
Schools	45
Chapter 3: The Socialist Soldier Personality	56
General Remarks on the Connection between Militarism and Masculinities in Western Societies	56
The Soldier Personality in Pre-GDR Germany.....	58
The Soldier Personality in Early GDR Culture.....	62
The Soldier Personality in Selected GDR Educational Literature of the 1950s and 1960s.....	69
The Novels Featuring Soldier Personalities.....	69
Literary Representations of Traditional Soldier Characteristics.....	77
Literary Representations of Socialist Soldier Characteristics.....	87
Concluding Remarks about the Socialist Soldier Personality.....	95
Chapter 4: The Socialist Worker Personality.....	100

General Remarks on the Connection between Work, Worker, and Masculinity in Western Societies	100
Work and Workers in Pre-GDR Germany	105
The Worker in the Early GDR Culture	109
The Worker in the Selected GDR Educational Literature of the 1950s and 1960s	116
The Novels Featuring the Worker Personalities	116
Literary Representations of Traditional Worker Characteristics	126
Literary Representations of Socialist Worker Characteristics	144
Concluding Remarks on the Socialist Worker Personality in Early GDR Educational Literature	152
Conclusion	157
The <i>Neue Mensch</i> and the All-round Educated Personality	157
Is the <i>Neue Mensch</i> in Fact a ‘Traditional Man’?	160
Bibliography	167
Appendices.....	179
Appendix 1	180
Appendix 2.....	182
Vita.....	184

Introduction:

Der Neue Mensch

“Die sozialistische Schule hat den allseitig entwickelten Menschen von hoher Kultur und Bildung, mit einer sozialistischen Weltanschauung und Moral zum Ziel.” (BArch DR2/3740 p. 51)

The creation of a new Socialist personality, often referred to as the *Neue Mensch*, was one of the main political goals of the German Democratic Republic (GDR),¹ and was considered a precondition to achieve Socialism and, ultimately, Communism. The belief that this goal was achievable was especially strong in the early years of the Socialist state (Wierling 2002, 7). The success of this enterprise required an entire young generation to be educated from the earliest possible age. According to Nothnagle “[m]ost SED propaganda was aimed at young people, who practically from the moment of birth were to be molded into ‘new human beings’” (12).² The educational system was put to use for this purpose. Education concentrated on body and mind, and, whether consciously or unconsciously, it also fostered gender-specific traits and behaviors in young men and women. It was a political goal that the traits of the Socialist *Neue Mensch* should be internalized to the point that they would be perceived as ‘natural’ and become the ultimate filter for all actions and decisions. In furtherance of its goal, the state-controlled institutions and organizations in the GDR took part in the raising of children and youth. Every aspect of education, every subject at school, every literary work, film, song, etc, was meant to infuse the young person with the Socialist spirit, thereby creating the *Neue Mensch*. Dorothee

¹ “Nachdem die Grundlagen des Sozialismus in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik im Wesentlichen errichtet sind, wird die sozialistische Erziehung zur Hauptaufgabe der Partei” from a Politbürobeschluss, March 1958 (qtd in Gibas 45).

² SED – Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party) was the leading Party in the German Democratic Republic.

Wierling, the deputy director of the *Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte* (Research Center for Contemporary History) in Hamburg, even goes so far as to call the system an *Erziehungsdiktatur* (educational dictatorship) (2002, 10, 168). She explains that the leaders of the SED (Socialist Unity Party) believed that they could plan the lives of citizens, that the creation of the *Neue Mensch* was actually possible, and that they could control how people conducted their lives (Wierling 2002, 16).³ Wierling further explains: “Die Gründer und Beherrscher der DDR waren vor allem zu Beginn von einem unbegrenzten Planungs-Optimismus geprägt und überzeugt, es gelte nur, alle gesellschaftlichen Einflüsse unter Kontrolle zu bekommen, um dies dann zur Produktion solcher Biographien einzusetzen, die optimal mit dem Projekt DDR kompatibel sein würden” (2002, 16). Thus, the leaders of the SED thought that by controlling the ways children and youth spent their time, they could shape the personalities of young men and women and thus influence their future decisions. In effect, they believed this would ultimately lead to the creation of a *Neue Mensch*, a ‘good citizen’ who would support not only Socialism but also the Party.⁴

Literature was one of several methods of propaganda employed by the leaders of the GDR to provide children and young adults with ideas that aimed at their development towards the *Neue Mensch*. In the context of this dissertation, children and young adult literature is defined mainly by the readers intended. This definition is common in Western cultures: Chris Crowe, an English Professor and the author of the article “Young Adult Literature: What is Young Adult Literature?” argues that “...YAL restricts itself to literature *intended* for teenagers”

³ “Dazu [zum Willen zur Kontrolle –JBS] gehörte aber auch untrennbar der Glaube an die tatsächliche Planbarkeit von Biographien, an die Machbarkeit des Neuen Menschen, an die Kontrollierbarkeit der Lebensvollzüge” (Wierling 2002, 16).

⁴ Educational systems geared towards the formation of a “good citizen” and human being are not unique to the GDR. In this context, however, the definition of ‘good citizen’ was quite specific and meant someone who would never question the leading position of the SED and follow its directions. In addition, propaganda in the GDR was tightly centralized: it spoke with one voice in contrast to Western societies, where many voices compete with one another, thus allowing the possibility of different models of ‘good citizen’ and human being.

(121) [italics in the original]. Steven VanderStaay, a scholar in English studies, adds that it is very much influenced by what adults want teenagers to learn (51). In the GDR, children and young adult literature explicitly had to fulfill an educational role. The authors of the *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur SBZ/DDR von 1945 bis 1990* explain that the content and form of novels written for children and young adults was expected to be beneficial to the development of the *Neue Mensch*, the new type of human being wished for in the Socialist state:

Vor allem in den ersten Jahren und Jahrzehnten bis in die 1970er Jahre hinein erfüllt die KJL der DDR – auch getragen vom Selbstverständnis ihrer Autoren – den erzieherischen Auftrag, ihren kindlichen und jugendlichen Lesern solche Bilder bzw.

Anschaungsmomente aus den unterschiedlichsten Lebensbereichen und Epochen (von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart – nicht zuletzt aus dem DDR-Alltag) und in einer Art zu entwerfen, die der Herausbildung des erwünschten und erstrebten sozialistischen Menschentypus dienlich sein konnte (Steinlein *et al.* 7).⁵

Literature for young adults in Western cultures often takes the form of a ‘coming-of-age’ story. For Günter Lange,⁶ adolescents or young adults undergo a process of becoming integrated into the world of adults (152). In a similar fashion, VanderStaay, in his definition of literary works for young adults, argues: “Typically, they describe initiation into the adult world, or the surmounting of a contemporary problem forced upon the protagonist(s) by the adult world” (48). In the GDR, because of the emphasis on the socialization of the next generation into Socialism, the stories for children and young adults focused on the development of the protagonist towards the ideal of the *Neue Mensch*, who was supposed to learn how important it is to fulfill his, or her,

⁵ KJL is the commonly used abbreviation for *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* (literature for children and youth).

⁶ Günter Lange is the Academic Director for German Language and Literature and its Didactics, at the Technical University Carolo-Wilhelmina in Braunschweig.

duties towards the collective and the state. In addition, for the purposes of this dissertation, one selection criterion for identifying the GDR novels that classify as young adult literature was the publisher's recommendation for specific age groups and/or the allocation of the works in the reading lists for students at a specific age.

The state influenced the content of the literary works produced in the GDR through direct and indirect censorship: several *volkseigene* (nationally owned) publishing houses were created, and directly controlled by the state, which could thus regulate the books children were expected to read, both in school and in their free time.⁷ In school, children received lists of mandatory and suggested readings. The choice was based primarily on the educational value of the literature, which aimed at promoting Socialist ideas and the model of the *Neue Mensch*, (Steinlein *et al.* 22). The curriculum for the German Literature class in the *Mittelstufe* of the *Grundschule*⁸ stated: “Die Schüler sollen an hohen Beispielen der Literatur zu bewußt denkenden und verantwortungsvoll handelnden Menschen erzogen werden, Helden des Friedens, der Wissenschaft und der Arbeit sollten ihnen zum Vorbild dienen” (qtd in Göbel 55).⁹ While the curriculum explicitly referred to ‘high literature,’ in practice content often prevailed over artistic value.

All literature produced in the GDR had to be approved by the *Amt für Literatur und Verlagswesen* (Department of Literature and Publishing) in order to be cleared for publishing. It had to conform to Socialist ideology and needed to embrace its key features: antifascism, anti-imperialism, the constant class-struggle, and the superiority of Socialism (Steinlein *et al.* 16).

⁷ This does not necessarily mean that children did not have access to other literature, both through their parents' collection of older books, or through those smuggled over the border.

⁸ Equivalent of Middle School.

⁹ “Lehrplan für den Deutschunterricht in der Mittelstufe der Grundschule.” *Deutschunterricht*. Heft 1-2, 1951, 82.

The influence of the principles of Socialist Realism in literature can be seen in the emphasis on content over literary quality, as well as the social role these texts were to play in the Socialist education of the *Neue Mensch*.

Damit wird einmal mehr ihre [Kinder- und Jugendliteratur – JBS] gesellschaftliche Funktion unterstrichen, die sie einerseits dazu ermächtigt, in ihren Handlungs- und Konfliktentwürfen Gegensätze zwischen kindlichen Helden und ihrer sozialistischer Umwelt aufscheinen zu lassen, sie andererseits darauf verpflichtet, dabei ‘die grundlegenden Ziele von Gesellschaft, Staat und Jugend’ letztlich als Einheit darzustellen und die auftretenden Widersprüche in diesem Sinne auch aufzulösen (Steinlein *et al.* 15).¹⁰

In literary works for children and young adults, there was an expectation that the protagonist be always active in the class struggle (Steinlein *et al.* 27f.). Moreover, the figure of the Socialist hero had to be contrasted with examples of the evil imperialist. The purpose of this antagonist character was to expose the negative aspects of Capitalism, as perceived from a Socialist perspective, and to present the Socialist hero in a favorable way. Through identification with the heroic protagonist, readers were to learn and internalize the desired traits of the Socialist personality.

Gender is a key component of personality. In addition to teaching young Socialist boys and girls to adhere to Socialist ideology, the works concurrently instructed them as to what behavior was expected from women and men. The GDR, as a Socialist society, considered itself egalitarian, as women possessed the rights to work and to receive an education and were even

¹⁰ Steinlein *et al.* refers here to Emmerich, Wolfgang. *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR*. Expanded ed. 1996, 118ff.

encouraged to pursue them.¹¹ This may lead to the assumption that children were accustomed to the idea that there was no difference between men and women, at least during childhood. To some extent, this observation is true, as most opportunities presented to children were addressed to both boys and girls. However, many areas were still considered male dominated; in heavy industry, administration, certain sports, or science, the highest positions were most often entrusted to men. “The higher the pay status or influence of any position, the less women were represented” (Langenhan and Roß 182). In other words, though women were welcomed into the public sphere (in work and culture), the patriarchal association of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers remained. In fact, “the history of socialism (as well as earlier history of bourgeois revolutions) has been full of comradely forms of neopatriarchal power, up to the ‘geriatric patriarchy’ that came to dominate the former Eastern Bloc” (Holter 21). In spite of the propaganda of equality, men were still given priority when filling key political and economic positions in the GDR.¹² This seems to point to a large rift between ambitious theoretical concepts (such as the *Neue Mensch*) and social reality. I suggest that looking at the models in children’s and young adult’s literature in East Germany will give us better insight as to the desired traits of the *Neue Mensch*, and to how, if at all, they differed from those associated with bourgeois masculinities in the late 19th and early 20th century European cultures. In addition, analyzing the literary representations of gender models in the educational literature produced in the GDR can

¹¹ The right to work for women and to ‘equal pay for equal work’ was already part of the first Constitution of the GDR from 1949 (Art. 7 and Art. 18) (Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik [vom 7. Oktober 1949]). This, however, did not take into account women’s lack of qualifications, especially in the early years. In addition, while in the first two decades of the GDR there was an emphasis on working women, due to a falling birth rate, in later years women were presented with the possibility of staying at home or working part-time. (Wierling 1996, 50).

¹² See Dagmar Langenhan, Dagmar, and Sabine Roß. The Socialist Glass Ceiling: Limits to Female Careers.” *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. Ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (1999).

shed light on whether, and if so to what extent, the proclaimed equality between men and women made its way to the literature for children and young adults.

Socialist Models in the GDR Culture

The ideals toward which a society strives can usually be seen in the heroes it celebrates. From the examples in Silke Satjukow's and Rainer Gries' *Sozialistische Helden: Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR* (2002), one can argue that the heroes of East Germany belonged to different domains of life and society. Indeed, the *Charakteristischen Merkmale des sozialistischen Menschen*¹³ described in the *Gesamtkonzeption des Lehrplanwerke für die sozialistische Mittelschule*¹⁴ (BArch DR2/5624) are divided into the areas of work, learning, sports, artistic activities, family, and love for the Socialist Fatherland, or patriotism. The fact that Socialist ideology celebrated heroes from different domains of life, can be seen on the one hand as an implementation of the ideal of an *allseitig gebildete Persönlichkeit* (all-round educated personality), and on the other hand as an illustration of the government's influence on all aspects of life, since it suggested role models for school, work, home, and even leisure time. Because these models illustrated different traits of the Socialist citizen, the emphasis on one or the other varied with time and according to the specific needs of the government. In the 1950s and 1960s, the priority of the GDR was to establish the state, define its borders and protect them from the outside, and to re-build the industry. During this period, the prominent models of the *Neue Mensch* seemed to be those of the Socialist soldier and worker. However, these models existed and were accepted by Western societies well before the GDR

¹³ 'Characteristic features of the Socialist human being.'

¹⁴ 'Overall plan for the curricula at the Socialist middle school.'

came into being. For this reason I investigate whether there was a difference between the ‘traditional’ models of soldiers and workers and those presented as ‘new’ and ‘Socialist’.

My dissertation begins with a short overview of the historical beginnings of the German Democratic Republic, followed by a brief discussion of the theories pertaining to construction of gender in public discourse, in which I introduce the concept of ideological masculinity as a way for a government to influence the behavior and thinking of the population. Education was used to mold the young generation and encourage it to build Socialism, and, at the same time, to ensure the support and legitimacy of the SED rule. All state-controlled institutions played their part in promoting the characteristics embodied by the soldier and the worker, which were the prevalent models in the 1950s and 1960s, the time period studied in this dissertation. Before analyzing these models in detail, I give in chapter 2 a description of the state-controlled institutions, which outlines the methods used to promote the ideal of the *Neue Mensch*.

In chapters 3 and 4, I present the models of the Socialist soldier and that of the Socialist worker. I begin by analyzing the connection between each specific model and the traditional understanding of masculinities in Western societies. This is followed by a short overview of the moments in Germany’s history that played a special role in influencing the development of these particular types of personalities I then concentrate on the meaning and importance of the models in the context of the GDR. In the second part of these chapters I analyze literary works aimed at children and young adults. I made my selections from the lists of mandatory or suggested readings for children and young adults in the GDR, which I found in school curricula (BArch DR2/2060, BArch DR2/3739), and I concentrate on works produced in the GDR in the 1950s

and 1960s. Since the GDR was a very young country, relatively few contemporary works made their way into the school reading lists, which contained mostly pre-war literature. I also included the older novel by the Soviet author Nikolai Ostrowski *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde* (1932-34). This novel was a mandatory reading in the GDR and was very important in the entire Socialist bloc. An additional source for identifying mandatory, suggested, and other readings from the canon of children's and youth's literature in the GDR in the 1950s and 1960s is the *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur SBZ/DDR Von 1945 bis 1990* by Rüdiger Steinlein, Heidi Strobel, and Thomas Kramer (2006).¹⁵ In the novels selected here, I analyze the protagonists who are presented to the reader as models: I search for features that are commonly associated with the Socialist ideal, and investigate how these features are presented as Socialist traits. I also investigate what gender-specific connotations are attached to these traits. Because a desired trait is often emphasized and illustrated by a depiction of its opposite, I examine the images associated with the political enemy that are presented in these texts: the fascist and/or the representative from the Capitalist West.

In chapter 3, I analyze the soldier personality, a personality often associated with the GDR, especially in the context of the Cold War. One of the most idolized characters in GDR culture was Ernst Thälmann. He was the leader of the Communist Party before World War II, and he was imprisoned and executed by the National Socialists. As such, Thälmann became a Political martyr who, in the GDR, served as an example for the continuous fight young people supposedly had to lead against capitalist and fascist powers in the West. Thälmann was an anti-fascist hero who the SED leadership chose to bolster the ideal of the soldier personality. The link between the military and masculinity has a long history; in what way, then, was the Socialist

¹⁵ For a full list of works see Appendix 1.

soldier different? How could one reconcile any military ideal with the claim that GDR was a pacific society? Was there a way besides the military to defend the Fatherland? In the spirit of an egalitarian ideology, the leaders of the GDR insisted that the entire population be trained for *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), but was the Socialist soldier personality adapted to fit both men and women? Or did the traits remain associated with men? And how was this soldier model presented in educational literature?

In chapter 4, I investigate the representation of the worker personality. A major hero of the working-class was Adolf Hennecke, a simple miner, who during one shift performed 387% of his norm (Satjukow 118). He was glorified publicly and presented to the young generation as a model. This *Held der Arbeit* (Hero of Work) served as an idealized representation of the worker personality. According to Socialist ideology the working-class was to assume the leading role in society. This position, in addition to the proclaimed freedom from exploitation and the possibility of working on their own account, placed upon the people a huge responsibility. It required the creation of a different attitude towards work. What were the responsibilities that the worker now had to face, and how did they match with the 'traditional' expectations of the worker? What character traits would a worker need in order to fulfill these responsibilities? Were the individual workers in the West different, or was it only the Capitalist system that was presented in a negative way? Admittedly, women in East Germany had the opportunity to enter the workforce even in domains traditionally assigned to men, but did that influence the traditional association of manual labor with masculinities? How were such women portrayed in literature? Were portrayals of working women common, or rather an exception?

The questions I pose here contribute to the more general investigation on the Socialist personality in East German society and aim at examining to what extent politics can influence the construction of gender. My analysis will show that literature in the GDR not only aimed to support Socialist ideology itself, but also propagated the ideals of the *Neue Mensch*. It thus had an influence on the construction of gender by promoting an ideological masculinity, a concept I will explore in the following theoretical section.

The GDR government claimed to be the ‘real Germany’ (see Nothnagle 1999), and was, therefore, confronted with the problematic task of combining the heritage of traditional, bourgeois, ‘German’ values with Socialist ideology and its insistence on the goal of creating a *new* and better society. This was bound to lead to tensions within the model of the *Neue Mensch*. In my dissertation I analyze how these tensions were resolved in educational literature. In addition, the models identified here were part of an educational system directed towards the entire population. However, I argue that the traits of these models maintain a strong masculine connotation, and that in this self-proclaimed egalitarian society the most prevalent ideals seem to remain those traditionally associated with masculinity. One may, therefore, wonder if there was anything new with regard to the Socialist *Neue Mensch*.

A Short History of the Establishment of Socialism in the German Democratic Republic¹⁶

The Third Reich and its propaganda profoundly impacted the German people. For this reason, one of the main challenges for Germany after the end of the Nazi regime was the re-education of its citizens. However, this re-education had different goals and took on different forms depending on the occupying powers. The Western Allies concentrated on de-nazification, understood as exposition and repudiation of the Nazi atrocities and punishment of the regime's top leaders.¹⁷ In the Soviet Occupation Zone (SBZ), the goal was not only to expose the Nazi's evil, but most importantly, to portray the Communists as the ones who had fought and ultimately succeeded in defeating the Nazi regime. The fact that many Communists had been imprisoned and killed in Nazi concentration camps supported the idealization of the entire movement, as it placed its members in clear opposition to the system that wrought war and destruction across Europe, including in Germany itself. Socialism (and the Soviet Union) was to be seen as the just alternative to the exploitative system of bourgeois Capitalism that led to the tragedy of two World Wars.

Another reason why the re-education of society played an important role in the German Democratic Republic was the fact that Socialism was a system established on German soil by the Soviet Union. While there was some popular support for the new system, the occupying Soviets ensured the implementation of the new system by openly favoring the Communist Party and placing only loyal people in important administrative positions (Kenntemich *et al.* 23). This is

¹⁶ The following historical overview is based primarily on the works of Stefan Wolle *DDR* (2004), and Wolfgang Kenntemich, Marfred Durniok, and Thomas Karlauf *Das war die DDR: Eine Geschichte des anderen Deutschlands* (1993).

¹⁷ Interestingly, the rhetoric used by the Nazis, showing Communism as a danger, still existed in Western propaganda after the war and grew stronger with the tensions between East and West.

the reason why the SED “lacked indigenous legitimacy – whether national or political – from the outset” (Fulbrook 3f.). The legitimization of the SED by its own people was something the party struggled with throughout its existence. According to Marxism-Leninism, the Party assumed the leading role in society for the good of its people. The masses, supposedly suffering from a ‘false consciousness’ (Fulbrook, 22f.), were deemed not yet capable of acting in their own interests, and thus needed the guidance of the Party. Convincing its people that this leadership was necessary and that the SED should assume the foremost position became one of the main goals of GDR propaganda (Gibas 15ff.), but the undemocratic way in which the Communists came to their leading position in East German politics made the legitimization of their ruling particularly difficult (Wolle 20).

The implantation of the Soviet system in Germany had already been prepared prior to the end of World War II. Days before the end of the war, the Soviet army transported three groups of Communists to Germany, of which the *Gruppe Ulbricht* (Ulbricht’s group) was the most prominent. Their task was to gather loyal antifascists and make preparations for their employment in the occupied territory. With the help of the Soviet occupiers, the Communists managed to fill the most important positions in the newly created administration. However, the growing popularity of the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany)¹⁸ incited the KPD (Communist Party of Germany)¹⁹ and the Soviets to push towards the unification of the two worker’s parties. The SED (Socialist Unity Party) was founded on April 21st and 22nd 1946 out of the consolidation of the KPD and the SPD. While there were many supporters of the merger in the SPD, its opponents were pressured and even arrested (Kenntemich *et al.* 25), which may

¹⁸ Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands.

¹⁹ Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands.

justify seeing this unification as forced. Initially, the responsibilities of the KPD and SPD within the SED were assigned on equal terms; however, after the proclamation of the SED as the *Partei neuen Typus* (Party of a new type) in 1948, the new party aligned itself along the Stalinist model (Wolle 15). With time, all reference to Social Democracy disappeared from the ideology presented by the SED (Wolle 15). Other parties were increasingly forced into political conformity with SED directives and ended up playing a rather unimportant role: the dictatorship of the SED in the GDR was established. In 1952, at the 2nd Party Conference, Walter Ulbricht announced the *Planmäßige Aufbau des Sozialismus* (Systematic Construction of Socialism). Referring to this meeting, Stefan Wolle emphasizes the sentence with which Walter Ulbricht continued his proclamation: “Das Hauptinstrument bei der Schaffung der Grundlagen des Sozialismus ist die Staatsmacht Es ist zu beachten, dass die Verschärfung des Klassenkampfes unvermeidlich ist und die Werktätigen den Widerstand der feindlichen Kräfte brechen müssen” (qtd in Wolle, 23).²⁰ By 1958 Ulbricht had managed to purge the SED of any reformist spirit, and in the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the repressive organs of the state had been established (Fulbrook 270). Their creation was motivated by the need to infiltrate all the institutions of the state in order to control and properly ‘educate’ the people.

There was to be *no* area of society uncontrolled by the state, the organization of which was to penetrate even to the most basic, fundamental level of society (...)

Education, the media, sports and leisure, even the family, were all to be controlled and manipulated by the state. Parents had a duty to bring their children up to become loyal, obedient, committed subjects of the communist state (...). *All* areas of life were observed,

²⁰ II. Parteikonferenz der SED. Aufruf zum planmäßigen Aufbau des Sozialismus in der DDR (Walter Ulbricht), 9-12. Juli 1952.

manipulated, controlled, in the interest of alleged greater good of the whole (Fulbrook 19) [italics in the original].

This education was supposed to lead to the creation of the *Neue Mensch*, who would understand the Socialist vision of the world and who, under SED guidance, was expected to do his or her part to transform this vision into reality.

To secure its leadership the SED employed two important tools: propaganda to support and ensure a willing co-operation, and repression of those who opposed it. This does not automatically imply that people in the GDR were either completely ‘brain-washed’, or that they lived in constant fear for their lives because of the Stasi (Ministry of State Security),²¹ but rather that people learned how to deal with, and operate within, this system. Fulbrook explains that by learning to conform to the system, East Germans created a ‘niche society’. She uses here the word *Anpassung* (Adaptation) (Fulbrook 139), to describe the capability of human beings to adapt to different circumstances in order to lead a ‘normal’ life. In the four decades of the GDR’s existence, people learned to pay lip-service to ideology and not stand out from the crowd so as not to attract the interest of the Stasi. This *Anpassung* does not, however, imply that the majority was happy with the situation. Scholars generally agree that the GDR was a dictatorship, but there are on-going discussions as to what specific type of dictatorship it represented. Jürgen Kocka, in his article “The GDR, a Special Kind of Modern Dictatorship”, analyzes this debate by invoking terms such as Konrad Jarausch’s ‘welfare dictatorship’ (Kocka 17; Jarausch 6) and Klaus Schroeder’s ‘totalitarian dictatorship’²² (Kocka 23). Kocka, hinting at the difficulty of defining

²¹ Ministerium für Staatssicherheit.

²² Kocka refers here to Sigrid Meuschel’s *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR: Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR 1945-1989* (Frankfurt, 1992), and Klaus Schroeder’s *Der SED-Staat: Geschichte und Strukturen der DDR* (Munich, 1998).

totalitarianism, suggests a more neutral term such as ‘modern dictatorship’ (24), from which the nature of the government cannot be deduced. Even after taking into account known empirical facts, the characterization of political systems like the GDR often depends on one’s own political views and experiences, and on the materials, facts and aspects upon which one focuses.²³ Many academics have chosen to concentrate on only one side of life in the GDR. While some focus on the repression and constant threat of the Stasi lurking behind every corner and hiding even amongst closest friends and family members,²⁴ others recall the population’s relative compliance with the authorities (*Anpassung* – Adaptation),²⁵ with some degree of *Eigen-Sinn* (self-will),²⁶ and the possibility of leading a ‘normal’ life. Yet others take an alternative route and explore the biographical depiction of life in the communist state.²⁷ Today, more than two decades after the collapse of the German Democratic Republic, there is a multitude of works discussing the various facets of life in the Socialist state. From these multiple points of view, a fairly complete picture of life in the GDR is slowly emerging, which does not minimize the repressive state apparatus,²⁸ but nuances it by showing the system’s more positive aspects.

²³ As an example we can look at the availability of free crèche and Kindergarten for children of working mothers. On the one hand one can consider this a positive achievement of Socialism, in the sense of a progress in family care. On the other hand, it can also be viewed as a way for the state to exercise control over the education of the next generation from the earliest age. In addition, one might consider this a way to make the women available for work in building up Socialism, which again can be seen “positively” (as progress towards gender equality) or “negatively” (alienating children from their parents).

²⁴ Klaus Behnke, Jürgen Wolf, eds. *Stasi auf dem Schulhof: Der Mißbrauch von Kindern und Jugendlichen durch das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*.

²⁵ Mary Fulbrook *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1949-1989*. Oxford, 1995; Marc-Dietrich Ohse *Jugend nach dem Mauerbau. Anpassung, Protest und Eigensinn (DDR 1961-1974)*. Berlin: Ch.Links, 2003.

²⁶ For *Eigen-Sinn* in the GDR see Lindenberger Thomas “Die Diktatur der Grenzen: Zur Einleitung.” *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur: Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*. Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1999; Esther von Richthofen *Bringing Culture to the Masses: Control, Compromise and Participation in the GDR*.

²⁷ See Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato and Dorothee Wierling. *Die volkseigene Erfahrung: Eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR: 30 Biographische Eröffnungen*, Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991; Dorothee Wierling *Geboren im Jahr eins: Der Jahrgang 1949 in der DDR. Versuch einer Kollektivbiographie*, Berlin: Ch.Links, 2002.

²⁸ A difficulty in assessing the repressive side of the GDR may come from the problems associated with defining repression: should it be restricted to the imprisonment and killings of people showing the slightest signs of

Chapter 1: Masculinity as Propaganda?

Gender as a Socially Constructed Category

Acknowledging the difference between ‘sex’ as a biological category and ‘gender’ as a social concept constitutes the center of Gender theories. The relation between these two categories has been studied since the 1950s from many different points of view. Some scholars such as Nancy Chodorow, or Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who were influenced by Freud and Lacan, employed a psychoanalytical approach to explain gender differences. These theories concentrate on the role of individual processes and family relations in the development of gender. They could certainly be applied in the investigation of gender construction in the GDR, by analyzing, for example, the effects of women’s inclusion in the workforce, and child care in public institutions. However, in the investigation of the mechanisms of propaganda, these psychoanalytic theories play a lesser role. For this reason, I turned to scholars such as R.W. Connell, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, or Judith Butler, who see the construction of gender as a result of social practice, thus pointing to the role culture plays in its construction.

A commonly-used term to describe the construction of gender is that of ‘sex roles’. Connell describes them as the enactment of “a general set of expectations which are attached to one’s sex” (22). This statement implies that gender is socially constructed and that a certain behavior is expected according to one’s biological sex. From a very young age, children are bombarded with information on how they should behave or dress, and what is deemed

opposition, or should it also include demotions at work, the blocking of careers, expulsions from school, no admittance to universities, inability to travel outside of the country, permanent surveillance, etc.? For more on the definition of Repressive State Apparatus see Louis Althusser “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B Leitch. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001. 1483-1509.

appropriate for a boy or a girl. They are then implicitly expected to assume their prescribed role and thus perpetuate the traditional definition of male or female. This sex role theory, developed in the 1950s,²⁹ was an important milestone in gender studies as it separated biological sex from constructed identity. Seeing “role norms as social facts” allowed the possibility of their change (Connell 23). However, the normative character of these roles did not leave room for individual agency. As the idea of ‘sex roles’ contains the notion of something that one needs to learn and accept, the theory disregards the active part men and women play in constructing these ‘role norms’. In addition, the theory of sex roles does not take into account other social factors, such as race, class, etc. that influence the norm.

In 1987, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman published their article entitled *Doing Gender*, in which they argued “that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort”. Based on these observations, they concluded that “gender itself is constituted through interaction” (West and Zimmerman 129). In other words, the way people act creates an image of what we understand as feminine and/or masculine behavior, looks etc. As Marilyn Frye explains:

[...] we are trained to behave so differently as women and as men, and to behave so differently toward women and toward men, itself contributes mightily to the appearance of extreme natural dimorphism, but also, the *ways* we act as women and as men, and the *ways* we act toward women and toward men, mold our bodies and our minds to the shapes of subordination and dominance. We do become what we practice being. (34)

[italics in the original].

²⁹The ‘sex role’ theory was developed among others by Talcott Parsons in his work: *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (1956).

As in the concept of ‘doing gender,’ Judith Butler also puts special emphasis on agency. Butler explains that “...acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (185) [italics in the original]. These acts are dictated by what is currently accepted and they influence what others perceive as appropriate. In other words, viewing gender as a performance suggests that one is ‘doing gender,’ creating the currently accepted version of it, rather than expressing a solid, immutable, essentialist sex role. In addition, Judith Butler’s view of gender as ‘performative’ can lead to the conclusion that both “men and women can and do perform the gender scripts of either masculinity or femininity” (Nye 1942).³⁰ In the context of this dissertation, the performances are those of the characters of educational literature. A government, trying to influence the construction of gender, would need to make use of models designed especially for this purpose. Through their examples, by learning how these role models ‘do their gender,’ the reader was supposed to learn appropriate behaviors and associate them with his/her biological sex.

Jon Swain, in his article “Masculinities in Education”, explains that institutions such as school can have a very strong influence on the formation of masculinities. Although he concentrates on masculinities, his argument remains valid for gender in general. Swain insists on the importance of the unofficial and informal culture of the school (the peer group). However, he also acknowledges the role of the policies and practices of the school (Swain 215ff.). The more time a child spends within an institution, and the more control this institution has over him or her, the more influence it has on the formation of the child’s personality. By setting an example and enforcing specific rules, schools tend to promote a specific behavior and teach children to

³⁰ Nye refers here among others to Judith Halberstam’s work *Female Masculinity* (1998).

perceive it as ‘normal’ and desired. A child acting outside of the boundaries of acceptable behavior would be stigmatized as ‘different’ and as a consequence may suffer rejection. Swain’s emphasis on the role of institutions is extremely important when discussing the effect of propaganda on gender expectations, and applies especially to public institutions where the government regulates the policies. In such cases, the government would directly influence the construction of gender.

For a long time, research on gender focused only on the construction of femininity. The reason for this was that masculinity was not questioned as a construction. Michael Meuser, with reference to Georg Simmel, explains that masculinity was hypostasized as something generally human (8),³¹ something natural, while only femininity was understood as constructed. “Masculinity was ... rendered both invisible and normative” (Gardiner 36). In addition, as Øystein Gullvåg Holter, a professor of men’s studies at the University of Oslo, insists, “there is a tendency to make masculinity static and solid..., power stems from ‘inner’ workings of masculinity (or male nature, in traditional terms)” (18). Though discussions about gender included the male role, it was only in the mid-1970s in Western cultures that a small Men’s Liberation Movement was formed³² and the development of studies of men began (Connell 23ff.). Here feminist theories on construction of gender influenced masculinity studies to a high degree. The end of the 20th/ beginning of 21st century experienced an upsurge in literature focused on the study of men and masculinities, including works such as Robert Bly’s *Iron John: A Book About*

³¹ Simmel, Georg. “Das Relative und das Absolute im Geschlechter-Problem.” *Schriften zur Philosophie und Soziologie der Geschlechter*. Frankfurt a..M.:200-223.

³² Some important names mentioned in this context are Warren Farrell, Jack Nichols and Joseph Pleck.

Men (1990), David D. Gilmore's *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts about Masculinity* (1990), and the ground-breaking works of Michael Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R.W. Connell.³³

Masculinities

In an attempt to answer the question 'what is masculinity?' Ronald F. Levant, a professor of psychology and the editor of *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, refers to Michael Addis' comment in the online discussion hosted by the Society for the Psychological Study of Men, who says: "I see masculinity not as an essential component of men, but as historically situated norms, ideologies and practices that cultures use to create various meanings of being a man" (qtd in Levant 2).³⁴ This means that it can be regarded as a set of rules of behavior commonly associated with the biologically male. This set of rules can and will be different depending on the society, time, circumstances etc. Thus, not only will the meaning of masculinities differ from one society to another, but also within one society there are in all likelihood several competing views of what constitutes masculine behavior.

R.W. Connell, one of the leading figures in the studies of masculinities and the author of the seminal work *Masculinities* (1995), argues that there are always multiple masculinities in existence³⁵ depending on the societal background (Connell 76; see also Kahn 2). Because relations among these multiple masculinities are influenced by factors such as race, class, nationality, etc., they can serve as a basis to analyze the character of the society in which they are

³³ See, for example, Michael Kimmel *Men's Lives* (1989), Jeff Hearn *Men in the Public Eye* (1992), R.W. Connell *Masculinities* (1995).

³⁴ Addis M. (2006, Spring) Unknown title. Message posted to SPSMM@Lists.apa.org.

³⁵ For a multiple-masculinities approach see also Wesley D. Imms "Multiple Masculinities and the Schooling of Boys." *Canadian Journal of Education* Vol.26, No. 2 (2000).

embedded. I argue, therefore, that the study of masculinities can give insight into the expectations, life, and culture within a given community. This is particularly true in patriarchal societies, where men play the most active role in public life. There, the domination of men is particularly visible in politics. Connell argues: “Public politics on almost any definition is men’s politics. Men dominate in cabinets, general staffs, the senior civil service, political parties and pressure groups as well as in the executive levels of corporations” (204). This division of work and position, as well as the hierarchy between the sexes, has existed in politics since Aristotle (Döge and Meuser 9), and though today it is slowly changing, men still usually assume a leading position. In addition, because patriarchy was (and is) the prevalent way Western societies were (and are) organized, institutions of the state are organized according to men’s needs and expectations. Frank J. Barrett, when exploring the construction of hegemonic masculinities in organizations, uses the example of the US Marine to prove that gender constructions shape the organizational culture and practice as strongly as they do the individual personality (72).³⁶ This means that often, in order to achieve success in any of these institutions, men and women need to display a type of personality, which most of the time will feature traits traditionally associated with being male. Joane Nagel, exploring the connection between masculinity and the construct of modern nations in her article featured in the *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, argues: “Men organize, run and ‘man’ the machinery of government, they set policy, and they make war, men occupy the vast majority of positions of power and influence in nations in the global system” (2005, 597). For this reason, it is important not only to investigate the position of women in Western societies and the transformations they have brought upon these societies, but

³⁶ “Die vorliegende Studie bestätigt ein weiteres Mal, daß ‘Geschlecht’ ein aktiv hergestelltes, gesellschaftliches Konstrukt ist und daß Geschlechtskonstruktionen die Organisationskultur und die Organisationspraxis ebenso stark prägen wie die individuell Persönlichkeit” (Barrett 72).

it is crucial to also research the situation and construction of masculinity. “Not to study men is to miss a major, perhaps *the* major way in which gender shapes politics – through men and their interests, their notions of manliness, and the articulation of masculine micro (everyday) and macro (political) cultures” (Nagel 2005, 397) [italics in the original].

Interestingly, while Levant and Connell insist on the possibility that masculine models may change over time and social circumstances, George Mosse, investigating the development of modern masculinity in Western societies, remarks:

[D]uring its relatively short life – from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards – the manly ideal changed very little, projecting much the same so-called manly virtues, such as will power, honor, and courage. These and other so-called attributes of manliness ... remain near the center of our language to this very day. There have been no dramatic transformations, even if towards the end of the twentieth century the pace of change has accelerated. (3f.)

Following Mosse’s argument, one may conclude that the various masculinity models accepted in Western societies contain, in fact, similar characteristics. This relatively constant image of masculinity may be due to the dominating position of men in these societies: Changes became necessary only because of the evolution of the role of women in the public sphere. As I argue in this dissertation, this somewhat static concept of masculinities had an impact on the image of the *Neue Mensch* presented to young readers in the GDR.

Hegemonic Masculinity

One of the main ideas in the studies of men and masculinities is R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. She explains that gender is a structure of social practice, which may change over time, and which interacts with other social structures like race, class, nationality etc. In her book *Masculinities*, Connell asserts that: "Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77). However, relations between men and women are not the only ones to influence masculinities. Connell insists on the importance of relations within the gender itself. She identifies and characterizes four positions in the hierarchy of masculinities: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized masculinities (Connell 76ff.) The 'hegemonic masculinity' of a particular group or society can be seen as the ideal every man within that group should strive to achieve. The characteristics of the 'hegemonic masculinity' are accepted both by the society as those of a 'real man' (Connell 77). The position of hegemony gives not only power over women but also over other men. The subordinate masculinity is at the bottom of the hierarchy and in most Western societies, this category traditionally has included primarily homosexual men.³⁷ However, it also refers to boys and men whose character and behavior stand in contrast to the hegemonic standards, and thus lack certain of its qualities, for example, courage, risk-taking, sexual prowess etc. The absence of these qualities is often associated with femininity. 'Complicit masculinity' includes men who support the ideal, but do not embody its traits. An example given by Connell is that of football supporters, who, by

³⁷ In many Western societies, this classification of homosexual men as the subordinate masculinity has been changing in the context of the gay liberation movement.

glorifying the athletes uphold the ideals represented by them (79). 'Marginalized masculinity' describes men who present some traits of the hegemonic masculinity, but are otherwise perceived as belonging to the subordinate category. Connell uses here the example of a strong and successful black athlete (81). In this case, it is the particular feature that is recognized, without assigning hegemonic status to the man himself. As Connell admits, hegemonic masculinity is mostly represented by fantasy figures. "Nevertheless, hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual" (Connell 77).

I agree with Connell that institutions play an important part in the construction of gender. Moreover, I argue that institutions, if driven by a political ideology, will not only support the current hegemonic masculinity, but also steer the direction in which this construction goes. The promotion of a certain type of masculinity by institutions would elevate its characteristics to a 'norm' and by controlling the normative behavior of its citizens, a government would be able to secure its position. This was particularly visible in totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany, but also in the Communist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe. The ruling parties realized that by manipulating gender expectations, a government could influence the worldview of the population and thus secure its power. While there were certainly roles prescribed for women in these ideologies, the tradition of patriarchy in Western and Central Europe led these governments to, consciously or otherwise, concentrate on the manipulation of young men, assuming their future influence in the public sphere and on politics. The goal was that these young men believe in the promulgated ideology and think that what is asked of them is nothing other than what a 'real man' would do.

Joane Nagel, in her article *Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations*, explores men's domination in the creation of the modern state and politics in Europe, and the influence of male supremacy on the state of contemporary affairs in the United States (1998, 244). Following her argument, it becomes clear that hegemonic masculinity affects politics and did so throughout the history of Western and Central European societies. I argue that the opposite can also be true, namely that hegemonic masculinity itself is affected by politics, shaping the future generation and pushing it towards a model of citizens needed for the purposes of the state. Put simply, in order to guarantee legitimacy for itself, a government can use its control over public institutions to influence the socially accepted view of gender.

Ideological Masculinity

The ideology promoted by a government will thus influence the hegemonic masculinity of the society. I propose to call the models promulgated by the leading power *ideological masculinity*. The name ideological masculinity refers to Althusser's 'Ideological State Apparatus,' which, he says, is responsible for the reproduction (or production) of the social order. For Althusser, ideology in this case means to "recognize the existing state of affairs; that 'it is true that it is so and not otherwise'" (Althusser 1507). The goal of ideology is thus to make people accept certain ideas, and to make them believe that they came from their free consciousness. Consequently, I argue that *ideological masculinity* can be seen as a tool used by a government to influence the accepted ideal of masculinity and turn it into hegemonic masculinity, thus encouraging men to strive for it. However, behind the ideas of what is 'manly' are hidden ideological beliefs.

My focus on masculinities is linked to the traditional division of labor between men and women. Though one can also speak of ideological femininity, in patriarchal societies the role most often assigned to women placed them at home in the role of mothers and wives; it was men who played a role in the public sphere, and thus had more influence on politics. However, the notion that women also can perform masculinities leads to the conclusion that ideological masculinity could be expected to become the norm for both men and women. This should especially be the case during the transformation of a patriarchal into an egalitarian society.

The influence of an ideological masculinity will be especially strong in a society under dictatorship, where there is only one officially accepted view of what is right, and where the government has better control of the society through its institutions, be they the school, the workplace, or other organizations. Lacking easy access to different perspectives, people will be more susceptible to emulating the promoted ideals. Of course, one should stress that every ideology will create its own ideological masculinity. In addition, multiple ideological masculinities can coexist at any given time. Therefore, the ruling power may attempt to promulgate models tailored to different parts of the society (even though they would probably display a number of similar traits) in order to create legitimacy for its rule among the largest possible number of people. These models can also change over time depending on the government's policies.

Ideological masculinities are presented to society through all possible means of propaganda. Commonly this is done through literature, films, posters, etc. The analysis of different works produced under the control of a government can therefore give important information about the ideological masculinities officially endorsed in a given society. In a

dictatorship, standard propaganda channels are all controlled by the leading power, which can use them to encourage specific types of behaviors and mindsets. While everyone is exposed to this type of manipulation, children and youth, who are still developing their views on life and on what being a man (or woman) means to them, will be especially susceptible. The idea is that a young person conditioned into accepting the current ideological masculinity as a 'norm' would not only try to perform the expected acts, gestures, and duties, but this performance will also perpetuate them. The goal of the ideological masculinity is that people learn to accept the government's teachings and follow the roles assigned to them. As such they would also accept the legitimacy of the regime and support it. What is important is that they would do so not because they have been forced to, but rather because they would be convinced that these ideas come from their own free will.

Ideological Masculinities in/and GDR Realities

The case of the former East German nation gives us a unique opportunity to study the connection between the construction of gender roles and state propaganda. The state existed for forty years, a timespan in which several generations were influenced by the organizations and cultural life controlled by the regime. During this time, an explicit goal of the ruling party was the creation of a new type of human being, referred to as the *Neue Mensch*, who would not only accept but would also be capable of creating, and ultimately living in, Socialism/Communism. The fact that the state was governed by a single Party, which controlled most institutions, implied that there should have been a clearly stated goal as to what was expected from these new Socialist men and women. But was there?

Investigations of the construction of gender roles in the GDR mostly concentrate on women.³⁸ This appears legitimate since it is the role of women in society that seemed to change the most in the immediate post-war years. Research on this topic gives us invaluable information on how ideology influenced women's situation in the Socialist state. However, in order to find out more about how the politics of the leading party affected the whole society, we have to look at its other part – the men, who, despite the officially proclaimed equality between men and women, still occupied the highest positions (Brandes 190).

In “‘Sozialistische Helden’ Hegemoniale Männlichkeiten in der DDR”, Sylka Scholz investigates hegemonic masculinities as represented by the national heroes celebrated by the ruling party. She argues that “die von der Staats- und Parteiführung der DDR geschaffenen sozialistischen Helden nicht nur zur Legitimation der sozialistischen Staatsmacht und Ideologie dienten, sondern zugleich hegemoniale Männlichkeit verkörperten und damit die männliche Herrschaft einer politischen Elite legitimierten” (Scholz 2008, 11f). With reference to Silke Satjukow's and Rainer Gries' *Sozialistische Helden: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, Scholz identifies and explores the connection between the official heroes of work, sports, and technology, and the hegemonic masculinity as envisioned by the regime, especially in the first two decades of the GDR.³⁹ She argues: “[Ü]ber dieses Pantheon wurde zugleich auch die männliche Herrschaft legitimiert, indem mittels dieser Heldenfiguren hegemoniale Männlichkeit kreiert wurde” (Scholz 2009, 15). In the context of this dissertation, these models will be seen as examples of ideological masculinities.

³⁸ See Leonore Ansorg's and Renate Hürtgen's “The Myth of Female Emancipation: Contradictions in Women's Lives.” *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. Ed. Konrad H. Jarausch (1999).

³⁹ Gries explains the almost complete absence of official heroes in the last two decades of GDR's existence with the crisis in propaganda, caused among others by the lack of suitable events and successes, and thus lack of credibility of such heroes (Gries 100).

In an earlier article,⁴⁰ Scholz investigates whether the official ideals of masculinities in the GDR can be understood as hegemonic. She concentrates on the models of the soldier and the worker because of the established connection between these professions and masculinities in modern societies.⁴¹ As such, she attempts to give an answer to the question of whether the models of the Socialist worker and Socialist soldier, promulgated by the government, became hegemonic indeed. Drawing from interviews with men from the former East Germany, Scholz argues that, although the areas of work and military (albeit in a more specialized manner) played an important role in the lives of men in the GDR, the political connotations that were officially associated with these models were usually rejected. In general, Scholz shows that Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity can be used in the context of the GDR. However, she insists on the possibility of multiple hegemonic masculinities within a society.

While Scholz examined the models of masculinities prevalent in the reality of the GDR, my goal is to analyze the *ideological masculinities* that the government promulgated. I contend that the investigation of literary representations of ideological masculinities in the GDR will not only give us more insight into the desired characteristics of the *Neue Mensch* but also reveal that the members of the new society, both men and women, were supposed to display traits heavily based on a traditional, bourgeois, image of masculine gender expectation.

⁴⁰ Scholz, Sylka. "'Sozialistische Soldatenpersönlichkeit' und 'Helden der Arbeit'. Hegemoniale Männlichkeiten in der DDR?" *1. Tagung AIM Gender*. 2001.

⁴¹ "Evident für moderne Gesellschaften ist die Verknüpfung von Männlichkeit-Berufsarbeit und Männlichkeit-Militär, aus letzterer resultiert des Weiteren die Verknüpfung von Männlichkeit-Staatsbürgerschaft-Nation." (Scholz 2001, 2).

Chapter 2: GDR Organizations and Their Role in Creating the *Neue Mensch*

State-controlled organizations played an important role in the SED's attempt to create the *Neue Mensch*. Since it was expected that everyone be a member of one or several of them, they were the perfect conduit to keep constant control of the educational content delivered to children and young adults. Activities suggested to young people in these organizations, while presented as fun, always aimed to promote traits looked for in a Socialist citizen. This system offered two benefits for the ruling party: on the one hand, by constantly engaging young people in activities that it organized directly, the government gained control over their free time; on the other hand, each of these organizations, by focusing on a specific area of life in society, provided young people with a variety of role models that were essential to the overarching goal of creating the *Neue Mensch*.

In the 1950s and 1960s the efforts of the new Socialist state to consolidate its borders and re-construct a functioning industry were the reason it focused on the Socialist soldier and the Socialist worker as its main models for the *Neue Mensch*. Even activities such as sports, art, or science, which played a more important role with respect to other aspects of the Socialist personality, were used to reinforce the qualities expected from a soldier or a worker. Sports, for example, helped develop the necessary strength and discipline associated with the soldier, while the promotion of scientific curiosity aimed at improving the economic (or military) situation of the Socialist state, and so was expected from every citizen. What is important is that the organizations, by encouraging or requiring the youth to perform certain activities, aimed to cultivate a specific behavior in the younger generation. Children and young adults were supposed

to not only accept and perform these duties, but more importantly, to also see them as something ‘natural’. In addition, the political education that accompanied these activities presented them as opportunities for young people to take direct part in the building of Socialism as a way to prove their worth as human beings.

In the following, I will describe some of the activities proposed to young people by organizations such as the Free German Youth (FDJ), the Society for Sport and Technology (GST), the National Peoples’ Army (NVA), the State Security, the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB), the German Association of Gymnastics and Sports (DTSB), and the school system. I will concentrate on how these organizations promoted the qualities associated with the ideals of the Socialist soldier and worker.

Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ)

The Free German Youth was the largest and best-known youth organization in the GDR. It gathered young people ages 6-25 (the 6-10 year-olds in *Jungpioniere*,⁴² and the 10-14 year-olds in *Thälmann Pioniere*⁴³), and supported the creation of the *Neue Mensch* at all levels. The main goal of the FDJ was to win all young East Germans over to the idea of Socialism (McDougall, 19). For this reason it was present in all areas of East German Society: schools, universities, factories, collective farms, shops, residential areas, the army, and the *Staatssicherheit* (State Security). The FDJ organized political meetings, cultural and sporting events, and Socialist education for its members.

⁴² Young Pioneers.

⁴³ Thälmann Pioneers.

The military aspects of this organization were visible in some of its rituals, for example, the morning *Fahnenappell* (flag ceremony), or the salute of the young pioneers with a flat hand, fingers joined, above the head. Furthermore, though the blue or white shirt with the blue or red neckerchief was not officially considered a uniform, the image of young boys and girls dressed in the same fashion evokes association with the army. In addition, the organization of the FDJ and its hierarchal structure aimed at directing the thought processes of young people towards greater discipline. The FDJ played an active part in the recruitment for the armed forces: the *Volkspolizei* (People's Police), the *Kasernierte Volkspolizei* (the Barracked People's Police) and later the *Nationale Volksarmee* (NVA – National People's Army). It also helped organizations of paramilitary character such as the *Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik* (GST – Society for Sports and Technology). For example a document published in August 1961 in the official newspaper of the *Zentralrat der FDJ* (Central Council of the Free German Youth), *Junge Welt*, shows how the FDJ launched a campaign to recruit volunteers for the NVA: “Das Vaterland ruft! Schützt die sozialistische Republik” (qtd. in McDougall, 134).

Work was also central to the FDJ's activities. Even the youngest group within the FDJ, the *Jungpioniere* (Young Pioneers), learned of the importance and value of little odd jobs. Children were expected to help older people, collect old papers, bottles etc. These menial jobs were called *Timur Hilfe* (Timur's help) from the novel by Arkadi Gaidar *Timur und sein Trupp* (1940). This idea of helping out in free time was also applied to the rest of the population in the form of *Subbotnik*, from Russian ‘суббота’, meaning Saturday. It called for people to sacrifice their day off to help others.

The FDJ was active, among others, in the workplace of young people, in the *Betrieb* (production facilities). Here it mobilized and exhorted young workers to build *Jugendbrigaden* (youth brigades). The first such brigade was formed in 1948. These youth brigades consisted of workers under the age of 25, and were supposed to form a collective where members would help one another at work and outside of it. Though not all workers in the brigade needed to belong to the FDJ, it was understood that those associated with this organization should be the driving force of the group (Freiburg and Mahrada 189). The FDJ could also be responsible for an entire project in the production facilities, albeit for a limited time: these were the so-called *Jugendobjekte* (youth objectives). Among these objectives, the best-known are works performed at the Talsperre des Friedens (Sosa, 1949-1951), the Eisenhüttenkombinat Ost (1951-1954), the Kraftwerk Trattendorf (1954-1958), the Überseehafen Rostock (1957-1960), and the Flughafen Berlin-Schönefeld (1959-1962).⁴⁴

The FDJ also supported athletic activity among young people. It encouraged children and youth to participate in popular sports and was in charge of the political education of athletes. It organized competitions such as *Kleine Friedensfahrt* (Little Peace Race), orienteering races, athletics tournaments, etc. It co-organized the *Spartakiaden*,⁴⁵ coordinated popular sports festivals, and was responsible for the *Hans-Beimler-Wettkämpfe der FDJ* (Hans-Beimler Tournaments),⁴⁶ a sports competition where one could earn the distinction and associated medal *Bereit zur Arbeit und Verteidigung der Heimat* (Ready to Work and to Defend the Homeland) (Freiburg and Mahrada 225). A special emphasis was placed on the ideological education of the

⁴⁴ For more information on the *Jugendobjekte* see Arnold Freiburg and Christa Mahrada *FDJ. Der sozialistische Jugendverband der DDR*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982. 195-201.

⁴⁵ The Spartakiads were national sporting events similarly structured as the Olympic Games.

⁴⁶ The *Hans-Beimler-Wettkämpfe* (Hans-Beimler Tournaments) were sporting events that consisted mostly of paramilitary competition. They were organized since 1967.

GDR's top athletes. This was particularly important, not only because these sportsmen and -women traveled to Western countries,⁴⁷ but also because of their influence as role models on the population of East Germany. The FDJ was supposed to ensure "daß jeder Sportler nicht nur gute sportliche Leistungen, sondern auch hervorragende Taten in Industrie und Landwirtschaft vollbringt" (Freiburg and Mahrad 226).

From the beginning, the FDJ supported the right to education for all young people (McDougall 6). Once this right to free education was established, children were taught that not only it was a great privilege, but it was also their duty to do their best in school. "In der Schule war der wichtigste 'Pionierauftrag' zu erfüllen: das fleißige Lernen. Pioniere sollten gute Schüler sein, und sie sollten den schwächeren und gleichgültigen Schülern helfen, sie kontrollieren und disziplinieren" (Wierling 2002, 144). In order to maintain the young people's motivation, and to advertise learning as a fun activity, the FDJ organized *Arbeitsgemeinschaften* (study / working groups), where children could spend their free time in a productive way, according to their own interests in art, technology, or natural sciences. Thus, not only did the Socialist youth organization promulgate the notion that children have the responsibility to study, it also directly supported the development of future scientists. For those inclined towards technology, the FDJ organized the *Messe Meister von Morgen* (Convention of Tomorrow's Foremen), a competition where children and youth between 6 and 25 years of age showcased their inventions. As explained in a brochure by the Central Council of the FDJ: "Der eigentliche Wert für die Aussteller besteht jedoch darin, daß sie mit ihren Exponaten nicht schlechthin irgendetwas

⁴⁷The ability to travel without the restrictions that the general population had to face was a motivating factor for young people to engage in athletic activities. In addition, many East German athletes, among them the cyclist Jürgen Kissner and the soccer player Lutz Eigendorf used the opportunity of competitions taking place outside of the socialist bloc countries to defect.

Erfindungen zeigen, sondern Lösungen von volkswirtschaftlichen Problemen” (Zentralrat der Freien Deutsch Jugend 19). This means that the young generation was encouraged to be active in the field of technology; the goal, even here, was to use its potential for solving economic problems.

Yet, there is also a negative link between the FDJ and education. In order to ensure that young people, after completing their education, would remain loyal to the state, there was a careful selection process before admitting a person not just to university, but even to *Oberschule* (secondary school). A membership in the FDJ highly increased the chances of being considered for higher education (Häder 67).

Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik (GST)

The Society for Sport and Technology was a euphemistic name for an organization whose primary purpose was to foster a military-style education and to prepare boys for military service (Heider 9). The GST was founded in 1952, and supplemented the political education of the FDJ. The model for this organization was the Soviet *Freiwillige Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung der Armee, der Luftstreitkräfte und der Flotte* (Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet).⁴⁸ The GST provided young people with the possibility to participate in sports in order to strengthen body and mind in case of war. In addition, members had the opportunity to develop their technical and scientific skills, especially in domains useful to the military. However, as Matthias Rogg explains, young people’s enthusiasm for technology

⁴⁸ DOSAAF - Добровольное общество содействия армии, авиации и флоту.

and sports was channeled so as to introduce them to military structures and tasks (87).⁴⁹ The anonymous author of the book *Ich schoß für den Frieden* (I Shot for Freedom) emphasized that the idea behind this training was to prepare young men for service in the military. Heider explains that the idea of practicing sports just for the athletic activity, or of acquiring technological skills simply for their own sake, was to be rejected. Instead, every activity was supposed to be geared toward the construction, the support, and the defense of the GDR (Heider, 42).⁵⁰ The promotion of *Wehrsport* (paramilitary sport)⁵¹ served to underscore the notion that preparedness for military defense of the country was indeed to become a part of life for every citizen, and that even children were expected to become accustomed to handling weapons and gain familiarity with military technology and behavior (Rogg, 100). All these activities were accompanied by instruction in Marxist-Leninist ideology.

In a decree from 24 January 1956, the *Politbüro* (Politbureau) outlined the main goals of the patriotic education that were supposed to shape the educational work of the GST. One of the major points mentioned in this decree was “die Vermittlung von waffentechnischen und militärischen Kenntnissen für den Schutz unseres Arbeiter-und Bauern-Staates und die Vorbereitung zur freiwilligen Dienstzeit in unserer Nationalen Volksarmee” (Heider, 29).⁵² This emphasis on recruitment for the *Nationale Volksarmee* (National People’s Army) caused the

⁴⁹ “Nach dem Vorbild der sowjetischen ‘Freiwilligen Unionsgesellschaft zur Förderung der Land-, Luft- und Seestreitkräfte’ (DOSAAF) sollten junge Menschen über ihre Begeisterung für Technik und Sport frühzeitig an militärische Strukturen und Aufgaben herangeführt werden” (Rogg, 87).

⁵⁰ Heider refers here to a letter to the members and functionaries of the organization from spring 1957, co-authored by the Minister of the *Nationale Verteidigung* (Ministry of National Defense), the Colonel-General Stoph, and the Chairman of the *Zentralvorstand* (central board) of the GST, Staimer.

⁵¹ Paramilitary sports “weckt technisches Interesse und vermittelt anwendungsbereites Wissen und Können, schafft Bewährungssituationen, entwickelt Mut und Ausdauer, Disziplin und Einsatzbereitschaft, Standhaftigkeit und Kollektivgeist, regt zu einer sinnvollen Freizeitbeschäftigung an” (Fragen und Antworten zum Wehrdienst, S.92 in Rogg, 97).

⁵² “Der Jugend unser Herz und unsere Hilfe.” *Dokumente der SED*, Bd. VI, Berlin 1958, 22ff.

organization to center its attention on boys. Paul Heider, in his work on the history of the GST, argues that although every citizen had the right to join, without regard to class, worldview, or gender, the GST did not apply much effort to winning over girls or male adults who were no longer fit to serve in the army.⁵³ He refers to the report of the administration to the *Vorstandstagung* (Meeting of the Board) on 9/10 January 1958 made by Artur Dorf, according to which many functionaries of the organization thought that those who did not want to join the NVA should not be members of the GST (Heider, 45).

Nationale Volksarmee (NVA)

The National People's Army was created in 1956. Historically speaking, it can be seen as a response to the establishment of the *Bundeswehr*⁵⁴ in West Germany. In its first years, it was strictly voluntary, and for this reason, there was a lot of emphasis on military propaganda. Youth organizations and schools prepared many programs aimed at convincing young men to join the armed forces. In January 1962, shortly after the construction of the Berlin Wall (August 1961), the GDR government decided to introduce conscription. From this moment on, every man between the ages of 18 and 50 had the obligation to serve in the military for at least 18 months, which meant that from 1962 onwards, all men in the GDR had this one experience in common. One may thus argue that military training influenced the ideals of masculinity of young East

⁵³ Heider, referring to the report about the state of the GST in 1957 in the document BA-MA, VA-01/39561, pages 62-71, supports this claim by pointing to the fact that the number of GST female members was only around 12% of total membership (45ff.).

⁵⁴ *Bundeswehr* is the name of the West German Army, created in 1955. Its name in German means 'Federal Defense'.

Germans. Matthias Rogg emphasizes this fact saying: “Die Armee ... bildete ... eine entscheidende Etappe im Leben der meisten jungen DDR-Männer” (3).

The state-sanctioned representation of the NVA was marked by a sharp distinction drawn between the NVA as a progressive communist army and the supposedly reactionary, imperialist, capitalist *Bundeswehr*. Not only was the comparison between the two armies used to present the West in a negative way, it also emphasized the positive qualities of a Socialist soldier. As Rogg, with reference to Hanisch, illustrates:

Die positive Bewertung soldatischen Handelns konnte nach dieser Vorstellung nie auf die ‘reinen Soldatentugenden’ beschränkt bleiben, wie militärische Professionalität, Tapferkeit, Disziplin und Treue. Sie musste vielmehr immer an den moralischen Kategorien des Kampfes für eine bessere Gesellschaftsordnung und dies natürlich im Sinne der marxistisch-leninistischen Weltanschauung ausrichten (Rogg 42) [emphasis in the original].⁵⁵

The self-image that the Army constructed in the booklet: *NVA – Sozialistische Armee des Friedens. Eine Information über die Nationale Volksarmee der DDR* written by Lieutenant-Colonel Hartmut Geibel and Lieutenant-Colonel Jürgen Walter in 1971, presented the Socialist soldier as guarantor of peace, by stating: “In einem sozialistischen Staat und damit also auch in der DDR gibt es niemanden, der irgendein Interesse am Krieg hat” (10). In addition, the existence of a strong East German army was supposed to serve as a deterrent for those who sought to attack it:

⁵⁵ Hanisch, Wilfried. “In der Tradition von Müntzer, Scharnhorst, Engels und Thälmann? Zum Traditionsverständnis und zur Traditionspflege in der NVA.” *NVA. Ein Rückblick für die Zukunft. Zeitzeugen berichten über ein Stück deutscher Militärgeschichte*. Manfred Backerra (Ed.), Köln, 1992.

Die Soldaten der Nationalen Volksarmee kennen ihre Aufgabe, die sich in voller Übereinstimmung mit ihren Interessen befindet. Sie stärken ständig ihre Kampfbereitschaft, erhöhen so das Risiko für einen Angreifer und vermindern damit die Gefahr einer bewaffneten Auseinandersetzung. Sie werden aber, darüber muß sich jeder im Klaren sein, mit allen Mitteln zurückschlagen, sollte es ein Gegner wagen, unseren Staat anzutasten (Geibel and Walter 19).

Socialist soldiers would fight if necessary, but they would only do so in the context of a – from their perspective – ‘just’ and ‘justified’ war. In contrast to the NVA, Geibel and Walter show the *Bundeswehr* and the Army of the United States as constantly seeking an imperialist war, a confrontation from which only those already powerful would gain (7).

In 1964, shortly after the introduction of conscription, young men joining the military were given the option to choose a service without a weapon. However, those who opted for this pacifist option would be pressured and bullied to decide otherwise. The young men who petitioned for such an option were included in the *Baueinheiten* (construction units). The *Bausoldaten* (construction soldier) swore a slightly different oath of enlistment and their uniform had a gold spade on the epaulette, which gave them their nickname *Spatensoldaten* (spade soldier) and their usual duties consisted of constructing civilian and military facilities (Rogg 598). The choice to serve as *Bausoldat* was strongly discouraged by the government. In order to prevent young men from taking this route, the SED enforced certain disincentives such as limiting the young men’s options for a future career through denying them access to higher education or more lucrative positions (Rogg 210). While the unarmed service was strongly

discouraged, one should emphasize that becoming a *Bausoldat* (construction soldier) constituted the only alternative option granted to a young man not willing to become a ‘real’ soldier.

Staatssicherheit (Stasi)

The concept of the *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* (IM – unofficial collaborator) of the State Security reporting suspicious activity goes hand in hand with the *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) nourished in every citizen, especially in the younger generation. Sylka Scholz refers to them as the “*Kämpfer an der unsichtbaren Front*” (2001, 3).⁵⁶ Gries and Voigt, pointing to the studies by Schnee and Fuchs, recall that, by today’s estimations, about 6 to 10% of the IMs were teenagers fourteen and fifteen years old (Gries and Voigt 116).⁵⁷ Some of these young people were certainly motivated by the desire to elevate themselves above the common crowd, while others may have been blackmailed (Behnke and Wolf 14f.). In “*Kindheit im Schatten des MfS*”,⁵⁸ Franziska Groszer, with reference to a Stasi document, explains a typical recruitment strategy for IMs: “Bei den Z. [Zersetzungsmethoden/ -maßnahmen – JBS] gilt es geschickt die Vertrauensseligkeit, das Mitteilungsbedürfnis, den unausgereiften teilweise überspitzten Gerechtigkeitssinn, die Neigung zur Opposition gegen Stärke, die Neigung Jugendlicher zur Übertreibung, ihren Wissens- und Tatendrang, ihre mangelnde Lebenserfahrung, Eifersucht usw. auszunützen” (292). In these recruitment efforts, the idea of working with the Stasi was presented to the potential IMs as a way to protect the country. The work of an informant was

⁵⁶ Fighters on the invisible front.

⁵⁷ Schnee, A. “Kinder als Spitzel benutzt. Viele jugendliche IM erlitten psychische Schäden.” *Schwäbische Zeitung*. 13.12. 1996: 2; Fuchs, J. “Im Ergebnis der Durcharbeitung der Kinder.” *Beschädigte Seelen. DDR-Jugend und Staatssicherheit*. Mothes, J. *et al* (Eds). Rostock 1996: 9-19.

⁵⁸ MfS - *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (Ministry of State Security).

considered an important part of the *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend). The activity of an IM was seen as equally valuable as that of the soldiers on the ‘visible’ front, or at the border, because the young Stasi informants were considered to be protecting the Fatherland from within.

Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (FDGB)⁵⁹

The Free German Trade Union Federation was the largest mass organization in the German Democratic Republic. Founded in June 1945, it united the members of different free trade unions in one, state-controlled organization. The FDGB was responsible for social activities within the production facilities; however, its main task was to foster among workers the Socialist work ethic and further the goals of the Party, which meant “die Bereitschaft von Arbeitern und Angestellten, ihre physischen und psychischen Ressourcen zur Erzielung einer quantitativ und qualitativ möglichst hohen Arbeitsleistung einzusetzen” (Dowe *et al.*).

In March 1950 the FDGB began the mass creation of *Arbeitsbrigaden* (labor brigades), which, by the mid-‘50s, included about half of GDR’s industrial workers (Roesler 56). They were expected to participate in the formation of the Socialist personality, namely, “als kleinste abrechnende und planende Betriebseinheit einen Beitrag zur Formung sozialistischer Persönlichkeiten und zur Entfaltung des sozialistischen Bewußtsein [zu] leisten” (Soldt 90). In such groups, people worked together on similar tasks and had to rely on each other: this was considered an educative tool for strengthening the Socialist collective. In 1959, the FDJ and the FDGB initiated a campaign encouraging the brigades to compete for the title of *Brigade der sozialistischen Arbeit* (Brigade of Socialist Work). Workers participating in this program were

⁵⁹ Information in this part is mostly based on Dieter Dowe’s, Karlheinz Kuba’s, Manfred Wilke’s *FDGB-Lexikon. Funktion, Struktur, Kader und Entwicklung einer Massenorganisation der SED (1945-1990)*.

expected to commit to the Socialist way of life not only at work but also in their free time (Roesler 56).

To spur the will to perform, the FDGB introduced the *sozialistische Wettbewerb* (Socialist competition) that aimed to inspire workers to do their best in order to fulfill and exceed the official economic plans. In the *sozialistische Wettbewerb* (Socialist competition), the *Aktivistenbewegung* (activists' movement) played an important role. This movement was based on the Soviet Stakhanov movement. The name refers to the performance of the Soviet miner Alexey Stakhanov in 1935.⁶⁰ In East Germany, the hero standing in for all the activists was Adolf Hennecke. This simple and modest miner had performed 387% of his norm during his shift on October 13th 1948, and the report of his accomplishment soon made him an example and model for all workers and for the rest of the society (Satjukow 118ff.). In their 2002 article "Von Menschen und Übermenschen: Der 'Alltag' und das 'Außertägliche' der 'sozialistischen Helden'", Rainer Gries and Silke Satjukow explain:

Für die sozialistischen Werktätigen sollten sie *Vorbild* sein, für die sozialistischen Konsumenten und mit Blick auf die Zukunft sollten sie *Vorschein* sein. Denn so wie der Held Hennecke heute lebte, ausgestattet mit einer guten Wohnung, ausgestattet mit einem Automobil und versehen mit manchen Privilegien und Statussymbolen, so sollten morgen auch die Vielen leben (Gries and Satjukow) [italics in the original].

Because productivity was such an imperative in the Socialist work ethic, and because the worker was expected not only to work hard and fulfill the norm, but also to look for new methods that would make production faster, cheaper, and of better quality, those who exceeded

⁶⁰ On August 31, 1935, the miner Alexey Stakhanov fulfilled 14 times his quota in one shift. He hewed 102 tons of coal (Schmeemann).

in this domain were bestowed by the state with the honorary title and medal of *Held der Arbeit* (Hero of Work). According to the FDGB lexicon, this distinction was awarded for “besonders bahnbrechende Leistungen in der materiellen Produktion, die für die dynam. und stabile Entwicklung der Volkswirtschaft von entscheidender Bedeutung sind, sowie für beispielgebende Initiativen und andere hervorragende Verdienste bei der Gestaltung der entwickelten sozialist. Gesellschaft” (Dowe *et al.*). The title was given to people in all spheres of society, for example, to the writer Anna Seghers (in 1980), but also to Erich Mielke, the head of the Stasi (in 1964 and 1968). One example of a *Held der Arbeit* (Hero of Work) who was presented as a model for others to follow was Hans Garbe, a mason and activist from the Siemens-Plania factory who created a new norm in oven-building.⁶¹

Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund (DTSB)

The German Association of Gymnastics and Sports was a sport mass organization created in 1957. All citizens had the right to become members by submitting a written application. Interestingly, the proportion of female members in the 1950s and 1960s never exceeded 25% (Freiburg and Mahrad 227). The main task of the DTSB was not only to encourage the practice of sports through the organization of events, but also to promote popular and high-performance sports. Together with other organizations, such as FDJ and FDGB, the DTSB organized events such as the aforementioned *Spartakiade* (Spartakiads), forest runs, and other sporting festivals and competitions. The DTSB gathered smaller organizations such as the *Betriebssportgemeinschaften* (BSG - enterprise based sport clubs) (Litz 39). “If one wanted to

⁶¹ This mason was the archetype of Hans Aehre, the protagonist of Eduard Claudius’ novel *Menschen an unserer Seite* (1951) and served also as a model for Heiner Müller’s play *Der Lohndrucker* (1956/57) (Bathrick 112).

play competitive sports one had to join the BSG; this integrated all citizens inclined to athletics into state-sponsored organizations” (Johnson 74). The members of these clubs were allowed to train and use the facilities of the club; however, in return they were required to participate in state celebrations, such as May 1st, the International Worker’s Day (Johnson, 74). The idea behind a factory-based sport club meshed with the SED’s ideology and the goal of organizing people’s lives around their work (Wierling 1996, 54). Thus, joining a BSG meant that workers would also spend their leisure time with their co-workers on factory grounds. This created a feeling of community within the enterprise, which in turn was intended to strengthen the workers’ attachment to the factory and the state, and to develop a spirit of camaraderie between the workers (Johnson 84). In short, one may say that the BSG supported the connection between sports and work, just as the paramilitary organization GST stood for the link between sports and the military.

Schools

One of the main pillars of the GDR educational system was the so-called *polytechnische Bildung* (polytechnic education). This form of education was introduced in the beginning of the 1950s and remained important until the demise of the GDR. A crucial aspect of this type of education was the connection between theoretical instruction in school and practical work, which would give the students the “Allgemeinbildung, die den Bedingungen und Anforderungen des Aufbaus des Sozialismus in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik entspricht” (BArch DR2/5230).⁶² The goal was “die Schüler zur Liebe zur Arbeiterklasse, zur Achtung vor der

⁶² This document contains general instructions for the realization of the polytechnic education.

täglichen Pflichterfüllung und den Leistungen der Arbeiter sowie zu einer politischen Einstellung zur Arbeit, besonders der körperlichen Arbeit, zu erziehen” (BArch DR2/5230, p.136). It was thus important to teach students respect for physical work and to acquaint them with the achievements of manual laborers. For this reason, young people were taught that every type of work, even the most banal, was important for the state and the collective and, thus, worthy and valuable.

The idea behind polytechnic education was not only to encourage students to engage in physical labor, but also to educate them through it. In addition, an official goal was to overcome the differences between intellectual and physical work. This added to the model of the worker the notion that workers were required and, more importantly, were inherently able to perform scientific research. GDR’s Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl explained at the *Volkskammer* (People’s Parliament) meeting in December 1959:

Durch die Verbindung von Lernen und Arbeit wird die große erzieherische Kraft menschlicher Arbeit wirksam. Die Unterschiede zwischen geistiger und körperlicher Arbeit werden allmählich überwunden, und es entwickelt sich jener harmonisch gebildete Mensch, der die ganze Vielfalt unseres gesellschaftlichen Lebens richtig begreift (BArch DR2/5236).⁶³

Just as the importance of work was emphasized, the curricula of most subjects were also infused with topics supporting the love of the Socialist country, and with a positive presentation of the Socialist soldier. As such, schools played an important role in supporting the soldier personality. In 1966, an agreement between the *Ministerium für Volksbildung* (Ministry of

⁶³ This quote was presented in a footnote to the *Bemerkungen für die Überarbeitung der neuen Lehrbücher für den Deutschunterricht in der zehnklassigen allgemeinbildenden polytechnischen Oberschule und erweiterten Oberschule*.

National Education) and the *Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung* (Ministry of National Defense) ensured an even closer cooperation between schools and the military, and resulted in more military content in schoolbooks and common events (Heinemann 64). In the directives for the school year 1955/56, the presence of patriotic education in schools was explained as follows:

Die Bereitschaft zur Verteidigung aller Errungenschaften der Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Macht in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik gegen alle Anschläge der imperialistischen Aggressoren ist der höchste Ausdruck der patriotischen Haltung. Aus diesem Grunde hat jeder Lehrer und Erzieher die Pflicht, seine Schüler für den Ehrendienst der Kasernierten Volkspolizei zu begeistern und vorzubereiten (BArch DR2/2508).

All of this points to an overall presence of the soldier and worker models in the educational system of the GDR. I, therefore, analyze below the curricula of different school subjects in the GDR in order to examine in more detail how their content contributed to propagating the models of the *Neue Mensch*.

Werken (handiwork) was a subject students attended starting from the first year of school. Here, young people of both sexes learned different types of handiwork, including metal processing, wood processing, garden work, and also more child-friendly activities such as cardboard-crafting (BArch DR2/2014). The amount of time students spent on this type of ‘hands-on’ learning increased with age. The topics in this class were often coordinated with those discussed in natural science classes. They were presented in such a way that the students understood that “die Vermehrung des gesellschaftlichen Reichtums auch vom allgemeinen Stand der Wissenschaft, vom Entwicklungsgrad der Technologie und von der Anwendung der Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Forschung auf die Produktion abhängig ist” (BArch DR2/

5624). Thus, these classes promoted also the scientific facet of the worker model, who develops new technologies for the good of his country and of its people.

Einführung in die sozialistische Produktion (Introduction to Socialist Production), Technisches Zeichnen (technical drawing), and Unterrichtstag in der sozialistischen Produktion (A Day in Socialist Production) introduced productive work to students beginning in the seventh grade. In the *Einführung in die sozialistische Produktion*, young people learned about different industrial and agricultural tasks. The *Unterrichtstag in der sozialistischen Produktion* was the practical component of the GDR's polytechnic education. In this class, students joined the workforce at a local production facility. The goal was to enhance their technological knowledge and skills and, above all, the students were supposed to acquaint themselves "vor allem mit den Grundfragen der ökonomischen Politik der Partei der Arbeiterklasse und unseres Staates der Arbeiter und Bauern von der Praxis her" (BArch DR2/5320). A way to reinforce the collaboration between schools and local industry was the introduction of *Patenschaften* (mentoring) – a special kind of one-on-one relationship between one school and one production facility, the goal of which was to ensure the influence of the working-class on the educational mission of the schools (BArch DR2/3496).

As another way to strengthen the ties between the students and the 'Workers and Peasants,' the *Ministerium für Volksbildung* (Ministry of National Education) instructed schools to implement *Betriebspraktika* (internships) in summer for students of high schools. According to instructions from 1957, young people were not only expected to learn the skills necessary to perform the work, but also to see the worker as a roles model: "Durch die Betriebspraktika wird

die Entwicklung bestimmter wertvoller Fähigkeiten, Gewohnheiten und Eigenschaften der Schüler unterstützt” (BArch DR2/2548).

Geschichtsunterricht (history class) served especially to expound upon patriotic themes. In the guidelines for schoolbooks, from as early as 1948, we find that the topics included in this subject emphasized class struggle across the centuries and its heroes. In addition, students were taught the significance of fighting for freedom and peace, that there would be ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ wars, and that peace could not be achieved without a fight (BArch DR2/1049). In the early 1960s a directive for the curriculum for History class called for the inclusion of topics such as:

“Wir haben starke Freunde ...

Mit unseren Freunden sichern wir den Frieden ...

Westdeutschland, der Staat der Kriegstreiber ...

der Friedensvertrag sichert uns eine glückliche Zukunft ...

Keiner ist zu klein, um ein Kämpfer für Frieden und Sozialismus zu sein” (BArch DR2/6997).

Staatsbürgerkunde (Civics class) also played an important role in the patriotic education of the young generation: “Das Unterrichtsfach ‘Staatsbürgerkunde’ unserer deutschen demokratischen Schule dient hauptsächlich der politischen, weltanschaulichen und charakterlichen Erziehung der Schüler ...” (BArch DR2/2538) [emphasis in the original]. Students of the 7th – 10th grades of the *Erweiterte Oberschule* (EOS – Extended Secondary School) were instructed in Marxist philosophy, the political and social structure of their country, the role of government, and the economies of Capitalism and Socialism. According to the curriculum from 1957, students in the 9th grade were also presented with an image of the

Bundeswehr (West German army) as a (nuclear) danger. In contrast, the NVA was highlighted as protector of peace. In addition, students discussed their role in the building and defense of Socialism (BArch DR2/2538).

The content of *Staatsbürgerkunde* (Civics class) was not limited to patriotic education, nor to solely the soldier model of the *Neue Mensch*. The fact that students were also instructed in the economic and political system of the GDR demonstrates that it also supported the worker model. For example, in the same curriculum from 1957, topics for the tenth grade concentrated on the planned economy of the GDR (BArch DR2/2538). Most importantly, not only were the Socialist worker and the Socialist economy presented as the way to peace, freedom, equality, and happiness, they were also contrasted to the situation in the West. In the same class, students were taught about the negative aspects of Capitalism such as: “Die ‘Wolfsmoral’ der Kapitalisten. Der Einfluß der kapitalistischen Verhältnisse auf die Gewohnheiten und Denkweise der Werktätigen. Die bürgerliche Demokratie als verschleierte Diktatur der Imperialisten und Militaristen in der Bundesrepublik” (BArch DR2/2538). In addition to learning the theory and praxis of economics, young people were also conditioned to see the superiority of Socialism over Capitalism in this context. They were expected to appreciate all that the state was giving them, and in return to give back to the state.

Civics class for eighth grade students discussed (for four hours) the achievements of the Soviet space program. This included the lives of Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titow, their trips into space, and their visit to the GDR (BArch DR2/6997). Besides showing the superiority of Socialism, the intellectual abilities of the working-class were particularly emphasized. The adventures of space travel aimed to ignite young people’s interests in science and technology.

Staatsbürgerkunde (Civics class) served thus as a means to expose the students to the propaganda of the regime, emphasizing the ‘soldier’ and the ‘worker’ as attractive role-models.

Astronomie (astronomy class) was used to promote scientific curiosity and a sense of adventure. There was an overlap with the civics class; indeed, together with teaching about planets and stars, the main topic to be treated was the space program, space travel itself, and the superiority of the Soviet Union over the Western powers in this area. The two Soviet cosmonauts, Gagarin and Titow, were again presented as examples to be followed by the youth. In addition, the outline of the curriculum specifically mentions the usefulness of science in leading to this success, the humanist nature of space experiments, and the military importance of rocket experiments. (BArch DR2/6937)

Turnunterricht (physical education class) targeted not only the athletic capabilities of the next generation, but also the concomitant desired soldier characteristics. At the same time, it hinted at the need for fitness in order to be a good worker. Physical preparation as a prerequisite to being able to successfully defend the country, and the support of physical fitness in general, were parts of the *allgemein gebildete Mensch* (all-round educated human being). For this reason, there was a strong emphasis on *Turnen* (gymnastics) in schools in the GDR. Horst Thiele, a member of the *Staatliche Komitee für Körperkultur und Sport, Abt. Kinder, lernende Jugend* (State Committee for Physical Culture and Sport, Dept. for Children and Learning Youth), wrote about the decision from 1954 to elevate *Turnen* (gymnastics) to a major subject:

Mit dieser Entscheidung unterstrich unsere Regierung erneut, wie wichtig es ist, daß unsere Kinder und Jugendlichen durch sportliche Wettkämpfe und Spiele zu mutigen, kühnen, gesunden und verantwortungsbewußten Menschen erzogen werden, die bereit

sind, all ihr Wissen und Können für die Sache der Einheit Deutschlands und des Friedens in der Welt einzusetzen (BArch DR2/2942).

In the curriculum for the *Turnunterricht* (physical education) at the *Erweiterte Oberschule* (EOS – Extended Secondary School) from 1961, we find that exercises such as obstacle courses, club throws, ski tourism, terrain exercises and games were meant not only to support general physical education, but also to make students aware of the importance of physical and moral fitness when it came to increasing preparedness to defend the country (BArch DR2/4231). The same document explains the importance of sports for the health, and thus productivity, of citizens in the GDR (BArch DR2/4231).

The time dedicated to physical education varied between 2 and 4 hours per week. Though both boys and girls took part in gym classes, the sessions were conducted separately and included different types of sports. While girls would practice gymnastics and popular dances, boys were introduced to boxing and wrestling. In grades nine through twelve, the main emphasis for boys was *Körperformende Arbeit* (body-sculpting activities) and the development of traits such as strength, quickness, persistence, and agility (BArch DR2/4231). This division suggests that certain athletic traits, such as strength or endurance, remained associated with masculinity.

In addition to athletic activities, students also received schooling in theoretical aspects of sports in East Germany, and on the history of the German *Körperkultur* (physical body culture). This meant not only studying traditions and the stories and achievements of famous GDR athletes, but also acquainting themselves with the current development of Socialist as well as Capitalist sports. Moreover, they were trained in the rules of particular forms of sports, not just

so that they could play by the rules, but also so that they could become referees at different sporting events (BArch DR2/4231).

Thus *Turnunterricht* (physical education) was used to mould the young people, to instill them with patriotic fervor, ensure their health and strength in order to perform their duties for the country, and to form their characters in such a way that they would thrive towards and uphold the Socialist ideals. These goals show that sport classes contributed to promoting the soldier and the worker as positive models for identification.

Physical education classes also served as a place where future talents could be recognized and developed. Following the Soviet example, the GDR introduced in 1952 schools that concentrated on furthering the athletic education of young athletes. In fifth grade, students showing signs of athletic talent were selected to attend *Kinder- und Jugendsportschulen* (sports schools for children and youth). These schools focused on high performance sports and aimed at producing professional athletes able to compete and succeed in the Olympic Games and other international competitions. Officially, these institutions were considered special schools within the framework of the *zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule* (ten-class general educational polytechnic secondary school). Their existence was explained as follows: “Sie verfolgen das Ziel, sportlich besonders veranlagte Kinder und Jugendliche in Verbindung mit einer guten Allgemeinbildung zu hohen sportlichen Leistungen zu führen. Sie sollten durch systematisches wissenschaftliches Training die Voraussetzungen dafür schaffen, daß die besten Schüler die Weltspitzen in den Olympischen Spielen erreichen” (BArch DR2/6932). Everything in the students’ education was subordinate to their physical training, including their participation in work assignments. Moreover, in addition to more training, longer school time, and less labor,

students attending these schools were subject to a more intensive political and patriotic education (BArch DR2/2010). The focus on ensuring the young athletes' loyalty to the Socialist state came out of the potential exposure they would have to Western culture when traveling to competitions.

The pressure on these schools to produce professional athletes was high. By 1956, strategies for an increase in the schools' achievements explicitly set quotas for the number of top ten places the students were expected to obtain in different competitions. These quotas even explicitly stated that the students attending these schools should hold 50% of all athletic records (BArch 2/2010). The creation of athletes who could compete at a world level was important to the SED, not only in order to improve acceptance and admiration from outside, but also to infuse pride of country in the young generation and to demonstrate the superiority of Socialism. These goals became increasingly important in the 1970s and 1980s and resulted in a growing emphasis on the athlete as a model for the *Neue Mensch* during those two decades.

Similarly to those with athletic skills, students who demonstrated an interest and ability in specific scientific subjects were directed into special schools. As in sports schools, students received a general education with a concentration on a particular field. Such was the *Naturwissenschaftlich technische Schule* (scientific and technological school), the goal of which was to train engineer-technical cadres in special domains, such as nuclear physics. The creation of the other type of scientific schools, the *Schulen für theoretische Mathematik und Physik* (schools for theoretical mathematics and physics), was justified and explained by the following fact: “[A]lle Berechnungen, die mit dem Sputnik zusammenhängen, stützen sich auf die theoretische Mathematik und Physik” (BArch DR2/4368). Education in all these scientific schools usually started with ninth grade, at about 15 years of age.

The educational system, together with the state-controlled organizations, aimed to create the *allseitig gebildete Persönlichkeit* (all-round educated personality), an attribute of the *Neue Mensch*. This was attempted by introducing special school subjects and activities into the lives of young people in the GDR. Both boys and girls were subject to this education and were supposed to participate in the same activities in these organizations. In the following chapters, I will analyze whether, in spite of this attempt at an egalitarian system, a division based on biological sex still existed, and whether the characteristics of the ideals of the ‘soldier’ and ‘worker,’ as represented in the literature analyzed in the context of this dissertation, remained associated with men.

Chapter 3: The Socialist Soldier Personality

„Stets bereit zu sein die ganze Kraft und Fähigkeit für die Verteidigung der Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Macht einzusetzen“ (Gebot 2.)⁶⁴

General Remarks on the Connection between Militarism and Masculinities in Western Societies

The origins of the connection between masculinity and militarism are still a much-debated topic. As Ruth Seifert, one of the leading authors on the connection between gender and military suggests, the discussions pertaining to this connection are being revived now and again as there is an ongoing debate about the participation of women in the armed forces in many Western countries. Depending on their understanding of the development of gender identity, scholars explain the provenance of the link between men and the military differently. Seifert argues that those whose reasoning is based on biology emphasize the natural strength, aggression, and ability for violence commonly attributed to men, suggesting that it makes them more suitable for the role of protector and fighter (45f).⁶⁵ It is, however, more common to view this connection as socially constructed. Scholars such as Ruth Seifert, Joane Nagel, and George L. Mosse often point to the concepts of nation and nationalism as factors that have greatly influenced the connection between the soldier profession and masculinity, as well as the division of labor based

⁶⁴ *10 Gebote für den sozialistischen Menschen* (10 Commandments for the Socialist Human Being) – announced by Walter Ulbricht during the V. Parteitag (Party Meeting) of the SED, 10 July 1958 in Berlin. In Gibas, Monika *Propaganda in der DDR (1949-1989)*. Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung. 2000, 49.

⁶⁵ Ruth Seifert refers here to the Socio-biologists Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox (Seifert 45). Brian Easlea, in *Fathering the Unthinkable: Masculinity, Scientists and the Nuclear Arms Race* (1983), argues that men supposedly experience a so called *Gebärneid*, or uterus envy – envy of the fact that women are able to give life - which would cause men to thrive towards assuming the power of taking it away (Easlea 14; see also Seifert 46.).

on biological sex. Seifert explains that in the soldier, gender becomes tied to the power structures of the state and the individual masculine identity:

In der Konstruktion des Soldatenberufes in der Konstitutionsphase des bürgerlichen Staates der Neuzeit, ... wird das fundamentale gesellschaftliche Ordnungskriterium 'Geschlecht' in beispielhafter Weise mit den Machtstrukturen des Nationalstaates und der individuellen männlichen Identität gekreuzt (47).

From the birth of the modern nation-state onwards, there has been a need for a national army, and politicians have thus had an interest in cultivating soldier personalities. Paul Higate and John Hopton, two researchers investigating the gendered culture of the military, also argue that there is a reciprocal relationship between masculinity and militarism. According to their reasoning, the model of masculinity that emphasizes strength and self-sacrifice for the good of the community leads to popular support for military interventions by the state. At the same time, militarism supports the ideologies of masculinity by valorizing stoicism, risk-taking, and violence (Higate, Hopton 434). Higate and Hopton further suggest that governments, wishing to have enough support for their military actions as well as a higher number of volunteers for the army, are willing to promote a soldier personality as something attractive and desirable among men (435).

Frank J. Barrett, with reference to studies by Arkin and Dobrofsky (1978), explains that the traits commonly attributed to those who serve in the military, such as courage, discipline, strength, and aggression are transferred from the military to civil life (Barrett, 71).⁶⁶ Barrett further argues, particularly with reference to the popular media in the U.S.: "Nahezu weltweit gilt der Soldat als Prototyp eines traditionellen männlichen Rollenverhaltens" (71). This means

⁶⁶ Arkin, W. and L. Dobrofsky. "Military Socialization and Masculinity." *Journal of Social Issues*. 34. 1, 1978: 151-168.

that the soldier model influences (Western) stereotypes of masculinities and, as such, shapes expectations and behaviors.

The Soldier Personality in Pre-GDR Germany

In the 19th century, Europe experienced a growth of militarism. However, according to Roger Chickering, an American historian focusing on the German Empire, this development had a specific character in Germany. In his article, “Militarism and Radical Nationalism”, Chickering explains the following:

[T]he fact that the German Empire was born on the battlefields of France in 1870 - 71 – as the issue of one of the most splendid military campaigns ever fought – was of signal importance. The Franco-Prussian War certified the army as the agent and symbol of Germany’s national destiny, and it ensured that soldiers would enjoy elite status in the state that emerged out of the conflict (197).

The foundations for the Prussian ideal of the soldier, however, had already been laid during the Napoleonic Wars. Christian Ripp, in his article on the ‘Socialist soldier personality’, explains the evolution of militarism and its combination with masculinity as follows: after the defeat of the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806, the leaders of Prussia decided to implement measures that were designed to improve the relationship between citizens and soldiers. Moreover, as Ripp suggests, there was a push towards education reform that aimed to address complaints about the ‘feminine education’ of men in the upper classes. These factors played an important role in the context of the introduction of conscription in Prussia in 1814 (Ripp 86). Ripp explains that, because of conscription, military service became a common experience for men of all social

classes (89). The ideal of soldier masculinity thus grew to be most prevalent in Prussia. To use Connell's term, it became hegemonic and, in turn, supported militarism as the dominant ideology.

In Imperial Germany, this soldier model of masculinity was fostered not only through military service but also through the educational system and literature for young men (Wilkending 235). In many of the literary works aimed at a young male readership in Imperial Germany, war was presented as an adventure, a 'rite-of-passage' into adulthood, and an unsurpassable experience of camaraderie.⁶⁷ In his article on German youth literature in the time of the First World War, Andrew Donson highlights the role of the popular 'war penny-dreadfuls' (Kriegsschundschriften), whose readership ranged from working-class to bourgeois young men. He points here to the link made in this literature between the ideas of being able to achieve manhood through war, and the numbers of volunteers in the Great War (Donson 580f.). Donson's investigation illustrates the power that this kind of subtle propaganda could have on young men: they were led to perceive war as a noble duty for the greatness of the Fatherland. The fight was the fight for glory, and even if they died, it would be the death of a hero (Donson 587).

Gerhard Ritter, a distinguished German historian,⁶⁸ explains that the modern popular war took on the character of a crusade: "man spricht gar nicht mehr von konkreten Machtzielen, die man zu erreichen wünscht, sondern man ficht (wirklich oder angeblich) zur Austilgung irgendwelches Unrechtes, zur Sühne der Gerechtigkeit, wohl gar zur Bestrafung von irgendwelchen Verbrechen an der Menschheit" (30). In Germany, this feeling of injustice was

⁶⁷ Wilkending names, for example, Wolf von Baudissins' *Ein Jahr in Waffen* (1911) in this context (Wilkending 235).

⁶⁸ Gerhard Ritter (1888-1967) greatly contributed to the study of German militarism. His works are still valued and referred to by contemporary scholars.

fueled by the impositions of the allied powers, especially the high reparations. In addition, the propaganda of the ‘stab in the back’, in the context of WWI, placed the blame of losing the war on the domestic situation, and especially on the Social Democrats (Keil and Kellerhoff 33f.).⁶⁹ This rhetoric helped to preserve the status of military masculinity in the German context by eliminating the stigma of defeat from the soldiers, and instead showed them as having bravely fought for the Fatherland until the end of the war. Hitler repeated the legend of the ‘stab in the back’. As Ritter explains: “Wer eine moderne Nation für den Krieg begeistern, sie aus ihrer bürgerlich-friedfertigen Haltung herausreißen will, der bedarf dazu einer rücksichtslosen Aufpeitschung politischer Leidenschaften: nicht nur ganz allgemein des politischen Geltungsdranges der Nation, sondern zugleich eines urtümlichen Hasses gegen die Fremden” (29). Hitler played on these emotions and channeled them by blaming Jews and Communists for all the country’s post-WWI problems. This anti-Semitic and anti-Communist propaganda, connected with the need for *Lebensraum* (living space),⁷⁰ claimed by the National Socialists, supported the need for a strong militarism. Gerhard Ritter in his work “The Military and Politics in Germany” describes the Nazi period as “nothing but an attempt to militarize the entire nation ... Never has the militarization of all spheres of life been so radical, never before so effective as by these most extreme of all militarists” (qtd in Spencer 721).⁷¹ In the Third Reich, the soldier personality remained both the hegemonic and ideological masculinity, embodying what traditionally had been considered masculine traits such as courage, discipline, strong will, love for the Fatherland, and especially the willingness to sacrifice one’s life for its grandeur.

⁶⁹ The Social-Democrats were blamed for subversion to the military because of their campaign to end the war.

⁷⁰ The word *Lebensraum* – originally ‘living space’ – has passed into the English language alluding specifically to the NS-context.

⁷¹ Ritter, Gerhard. “The Military and Politics in Germany.” *Journal of Central European Affairs*, XVII (October, 1957), 259, 169-70.

Militarism in Nazi Germany was held in such high regard that everything was considered subordinate to it, including education and family (Ritter 47). Young boys were taught that nothing would be as important as the fight for the Fatherland and the *Führer*, and that war was glorious and great: war was presented as an adventure and a way to show that one is a ‘real’ (German) man.

Sylka Scholz, the author of multiple works on masculinities in the GDR, explains that after WWII, the ideal of the German soldier became tainted. The returning men were defeated warriors, and through the atrocities of the war the honor of the military men became besmirched. With reference to Martin Kutz’s “Militär und Gesellschaft in der Nachkriegszeit”,⁷² Scholz admits that as a consequence, military values were rejected in the East as well as in the West. However, she also argues that militarized masculinity ideals remained important (Scholz 2001, 2).⁷³ The increasing tensions between Soviet and Western forces reinforced the need for this type of masculinity. Ingomar Klein and Wolfgang Triebel argue in their book “Helm ab zum Gebet: Militarismus und Militarisierung – ein deutsches Schicksal” that an idea similar to the ‘stab in the back’ legend was created in the West: They explain that the responsibility for the war (and its loss) was placed entirely on Hitler and the top Nazis (Klein and Triebel 132). In addition, propaganda about the dangers of Bolshevism and Communism supported the armament of the West and the establishment of the Bundeswehr (see, for example, Klein and Triebel 136).

⁷² Kutz, Martin. “Militär und Gesellschaft in der Nachkriegszeit.” *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert*. Ed. Ute Frevert. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1997, 280-313.

⁷³ “Obwohl auch im sowjetisch besetzten Teil Deutschlands die Männer als geschlagene Krieger heimkamen und – wie in den westlichen Besatzungszonen – militärische Werte in der Folge eher abgelehnt wurden ..., blieben militarisierte Männlichkeitsideale in hohem Maße bedeutsam” (Scholz 2001, 2).

The Soldier Personality in Early GDR Culture

In the GDR, the ruling party neatly circumvented the aforementioned crisis in the soldier ideal in the years after WWII. Alan Nothnagle, a historian from the European University Viadrina, argues that one of the most important foundations upon which the identity of East Germans was built was antifascism (93ff.). The leading party emphasized the role that Communists played during the war; not only were they presented as innocent of Nazi atrocities, but even more importantly, they were portrayed as men and women who had been fighting against the Nazi regime from the beginning, which, in turn, allowed presenting them as heroes and victims of Nazi persecution. This enabled the East German population to feel exculpated from the responsibility of the crimes committed by the Nazis, and to still hold on to the traditional ideals and values of ‘manhood’. Moreover, after the war, the general mood among Europeans was pacifist; no one wanted another war. For these reasons, the anti-fascist, humanist, peace-promoting propaganda put forward by the GDR government had a broad appeal: “Der in der DDR mit großer Intensität verbreitete und von der Mehrheit der Bürger angenommene Antifaschismus ... war von einem grundsätzlich humanistischen und antimilitaristischen Ansatz geprägt” (Klein and Triebel 137).

In order to understand how the soldier model fit into the Socialists’ humanist and peace-promoting propaganda, it is important to see how, according to Marxism-Leninism, peace was supposed to be achieved: Socialism positioned itself in opposition to Imperialism and Capitalism, which, in Marxist-Leninist theory, always give rise to war.⁷⁴ But Socialism was not pacifist; it did not condemn all wars. According to Marxism-Leninism, the working-class had to

⁷⁴ According to SED propaganda, one of the reasons for WWII was that the bourgeois profited from the production of arms (Wolle 2004, 3f.).

continuously fight for an egalitarian society, a society in which there would be no exploitation and no need for war. Until this ideal was achieved, however, the struggle had to continue.⁷⁵ In “Socialism and War”, Lenin even presents an explanation stating under which circumstances war would be justified:

Socialists have always condemned war between nations as barbarous and brutal. But our attitude towards war is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the Anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within the country; we understand that war cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and Socialism is created; and we also differ in that we fully regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by the oppressed class against the oppressing class, slaves against slave-owners, serfs against land-owners, and wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as legitimate, progressive and necessary. (Lenin, Marxist Internet Archive)

According to these principles, the fight against fascism in WWII was considered a ‘just’ and ‘justified’ war. For this reason, those who fought against the Nazis, the *Widerstandskämpfer* (resistance fighters), could be regarded as a military ideal of men, without carrying the blemish of the Nazi past. “Sie konnten an militärischen Werten und Männlichkeitsideal(en) festhalten, da sie auf der ‘richtigen’ Seite gekämpft hatten” (Scholz 2001, 2). This rationale was carried over into post-WWII times because, according to Socialist propaganda in the GDR, the fight against Fascism was not yet over, since the Socialist ideal of an egalitarian, free society had not been achieved yet. In addition, in the official rhetoric of the German Democratic Republic, the SED,

⁷⁵ For a more complete account of the development of militaristic aspects in the Marxist ideology, see Udo Baron *Wehrdeologie der Nationalen Volksarmee der DDR*.

the leading party, claimed that the class enemy kept on committing crimes behind the Western border. Even though there was a process of denazification in the occupation zones administered by the Western Allies, East German propaganda insisted that politics and social realities in the West, especially the Federal Republic and the United States, had to be seen as a continuation of Fascism (Henrich 14). Indeed, according to the East German interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, Capitalism was equated with Fascism. This definition of the class enemy was supported by the assertions that Fascism not only continued to exploit workers all over the world but also endangered the existence of the GDR, and that the Fascist West was gearing up for a new war (Schirrmeister 84).⁷⁶

At the end of WWII, with the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, the common enemy of the Western Allies and the Soviet Union was defeated. The two opposing systems returned to the conflict that had existed between them before the war: The Cold War had begun, and the threat of its turning 'hot' was constant in the 1950s and 1960s. The conflict between the two major powers (the Soviet Union and the USA) spread out to the territory of 'third parties,' making a third World War seem at times very possible. The war in Korea (1950-1953) was the first proxy war between the United Nations and the Socialist countries, and with the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) the threat of a nuclear war was just a single 'red button' away. For this reason, the SED promoted its military force by idealizing the characteristics of the soldier, emphasizing the positive aspects of this role model in its dedication to protect peace and the Socialist Fatherland. Preparedness for a military confrontation was fostered in young people from a very early age onwards. Heider explains that, according to the official rhetoric of the early

⁷⁶ Of course, in Western societies, propaganda presented a similar enemy image of the Communists, emphasizing the imperialist goals of the Soviet Union.

1960s, the assumption was that such a war would be of short duration and that it would end with a Socialist victory if the population of the GDR, and particularly the GDR military, were adequately prepared: “Entscheidend für den Ausgang eines solchen Krieges sei die Vorbereitung des Landes in Friedenszeiten. Ein solcher Krieg werde der gesamten Bevölkerung nie gekannte moralische und physische Leistungen abverlangen. Deshalb gelte es schon jetzt, die sozialistische Disziplin des Volkes zu festigen und jeder Panikstimmung entschlossen vorzubeugen” (Heider 78). This preparation began at a very early age: in Kindergarten, children learned the difference between the ‘good Socialist soldier’ who was protecting peace, and the ‘bad American warmonger’ (Prawossudowitsch 19, 33). Interestingly, as Matthias Rogg, the current director of the *Militärhistorische Museum* (Military History Museum) in Dresden, points out with reference to the *Militärlexikon* (Military Dictionary), the GDR did not see itself as militaristic, though every part of its life pointed to military ‘traditions’:

Für die DDR bestand kein Definitionsproblem. Die SED-Ideologie erklärte ‘Militarismus’ in den engen Grenzen ihres ideologischen Prokrustesbettes, als eine Herrschaftsform ‘in allen Sphären der Lebenstätigkeit der Gesellschaft durch eine reaktionäre herrschende Klasse zur Aufrechterhaltung und Ausdehnung ihrer Klassenherrschaft’. Da die DDR nach eigener Lesart eine klassenlose Gesellschaft war, erübrigten sich weitere Diskussionen über mögliche Formen von Militarismus im ersten ‘sozialistischen’ deutschen Staat... (Rogg 8).⁷⁷

However, idealizing the Socialist soldier personality was important for two reasons. On the one hand, it could serve as a demonstration of power. The parades of young people were supposed to

⁷⁷ Militärlexikon [Unter Mitarb. eines Red.-Kollektivs der Militärakademie “Friedrich Engels” unter Leitung von G. Artl], 2. Aufl., Berlin (Ost) 1973.

show to the world the wide-ranging support the SED government enjoyed, as well as to illustrate the force of a society bound by the collective vision of Communism. A marching army projects an image of power and strength, and this demonstration of strength was directed towards enemies, both outside and within the country. On the other hand, representing itself as a disciplined, hierarchical society, in which citizens were accustomed to following orders, supported the inner stability of the SED leadership. Therefore, in spite of its self-proclaimed lack of militarism the GDR society was, in fact, heavily militarized: Heribert Seubert explains how essential this militarization was for the ruling Party to ensure its position:

Die Militarisierung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens in der DDR kann unter dem Aspekt der Herrschaftssicherung der Partei als Form der sozialen Kontrolle und innergesellschaftlichen Disziplinierung interpretiert werden. Sie war eng mit der ideologischen Legitimierung der Parteiherrschaft verknüpft. Die Mobilisierung der Massen, die Ritualisierung des gesellschaftlichen Verkehrs nach militärischen Mustern und die Disziplinierung der Menschen zielten in letzter Konsequenz auf die auch notfalls mit militärischer Gewalt zu verteidigende sozialistische Gesellschaftsordnung (qtd in Heider 14).⁷⁸

For this reason, the GDR government put a strong emphasis on the military education of the younger generation. Boys and girls were readied to become fighters for the common cause, by being filled with love for the Socialist Fatherland and hate towards its enemies. Interestingly, in this process of creating a new society, the leadership of the working class significantly relied on a traditional bourgeois ideal of a man. In order for it to appear as something new, the traditional

⁷⁸ Seubert, Heribert. *Zum Legitimitätsverfall des militarisierten Sozialismus in der DDR*. Münster, Hamburg, 1995, p.101.

traits of the soldier personality were enhanced by Socialist features. Sylka Scholz, when investigating the hegemonic aspect of the soldier-type masculinity in the GDR, in reference to Frevert, summarizes the traditional characteristics that remained a center-piece of the Socialist soldier personality: “Dieses Männlichkeitsideal umfasste nun spezifisch militärische Tugenden in der Tradition des preußischen Wehrpflichtigen wie Willenskraft, Gehorsam, Disziplin, Siegeswillen, Entschlossenheit, Opferbereitschaft, Kameradschaft, freiwillige Selbstunterwerfung und Disziplin im Sinne der Unterordnung” (Scholz 2001, 3).⁷⁹ Scholz then continues by building on to Christian Ripp’s findings, as she lists the Socialist features of the ‘new’ soldier personality:

Zugleich wurde es [dieses Männlichkeitsideal – JBS] um sozialistische Tugenden erweitert wie Liebe zum sozialistischen Vaterland, treue Ergebenheit gegenüber der Arbeiterklasse und der Partei, Durchdrungenheit vom Geist des Internationalismus und der Waffenbrüderschaft, Bereitschaft und Fähigkeit, jeden Befehl der Partei und Staatsführung zu erfüllen, Hass gegen den Imperialismus und seine Söldner, Selbständigkeit in der Beurteilung der politischen und militärischen Lage (Scholz 2001, 3f.).⁸⁰

Identification with the Socialist state, the maintenance of a friend-foe dichotomy, *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), respect towards authority figures, and discipline can be seen as the main ideals the GDR leadership wanted to cultivate in the minds of young people. The promotion of these traits officially targeted both boys and girls, as all citizens ought to have eventually incorporated the characteristics of the *Neue Mensch* into their own being.

⁷⁹ Frevert, Ute. “Das Militär als ‘Schule der Männlichkeit.’ Erwartungen, Angebote, Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert.” *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Ed. Diess. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995, 145-173

⁸⁰ Ripp, Christian. “Die ‘sozialistische Soldatenpersönlichkeit’” (2000).

Nevertheless, since in the GDR only men could join the army, the traits of the soldier personality continued to be perceived as predominantly masculine.

GDR Military propaganda was especially important before the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the introduction of conscription in 1962. The goal was not only to dissuade young people from escaping to the West, but also, as Christian Ripp in reference to Rüdiger Wenzke argues, to educate the military cadres to guarantee the loyalty and reliability of the army to the SED (Ripp 89f.).⁸¹ In 1962, when it became mandatory for all young men to serve in the military for 18 months, SED propaganda shifted towards convincing them to sign up for a longer term of service, either as *Offizier auf Zeit* (soldier for a determined time) or *Berufsoffizier* (professional soldier) (Rogg 79).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the GDR experienced a gradual militarization. Before the founding of the Socialist state, the overall tenor of the rhetoric was pacifist; military undertones consisted mainly of antifascist propaganda aimed at punishing the guilty, re-educating society, and glorifying the *Widerstandskämpfer* (resistance fighter). With the unfolding of the Cold War, the need for a more explicit military education of the population became pronounced, e.g., the creation of the Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army) in 1956, and the model of the Socialist Soldier personality was put to the forefront of SED propaganda. With the change of the SED's leadership to Erich Honecker in 1971 came a time of détente.⁸² However, the military was still very important, and in 1982, a clause was introduced in the *Wehrdienstgesetz* (National Service Act) allowing women to be conscripted in case of general mobilization (Gesetz über den Wehrdienst in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1982 §3 Abs. 5.). The idea of a soldier

⁸¹ Wenzke, Rüdiger. "Die Wehrpflicht im Spiegel der marxistisch-leninistischen Theorie und der 'realsozialistischen' Praxis in der DDR." *Die Wehrpflicht*. Roland G. Foerster (Ed.), München: R. Oldenburg, 1994, 119-130.

⁸² Honecker replaced Walter Ulbricht as the General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party in 1971.

personality continued to constitute an important educational goal, and it featured many of the traits that were considered as highly desirable for the *Neue Mensch*.

The moral principles expected from a Socialist soldier and citizen revolved around three key features. First, young people were expected to completely identify with their country. With reference to its Western counterpart that was under Capitalist influence, the GDR always presented itself as the ‘better Germany’, and Socialism as a higher moment in the evolution towards the ultimate goal of worldwide Communism; the ideal GDR citizen was expected to believe in the final triumph of Socialism over Capitalism. Second, from a very young age children were taught to hate the enemies of the state.⁸³ This categorization was assigned not only to the proponents of Fascist ideology, i.e. the West, but also to all those who disagreed with the ruling party. This friend-foe dichotomy created a need for the third key feature of the *Neue Mensch*: the so-called *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) of all Socialist citizens, the willingness and readiness to defend the GDR.

The Soldier Personality in Selected GDR Educational Literature of the 1950s and 1960s

The Novels Featuring Soldier Personalities

Influenced by the current political situation and the developments of the Cold War, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the ideal of the army-man and the need to be prepared everyday to defend the Socialist Fatherland were especially highlighted by GDR authors in this

⁸³ See Schirrmeister, Karl-Günter. *Erziehung zum Haß: geistige Militarisierung in der DDR*. Stuttgart: Bonn Aktuell, 1987.

period. It is important to stress that every citizen of the GDR was expected to cultivate some of the characteristics of the soldier personality. In literature, the reader could find either literal models of soldiers or examples of young people defending Socialist achievements in everyday life. In this chapter of my dissertation, I discuss both types of models and base my analysis on five widely read books taken from the literature produced during these two decades and earlier.⁸⁴

The first book is Nikolai Ostrowski's novel *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde* (How the Steel was Tempered), which was considered one of the 'must-reads' for the entire Socialist Bloc. It appeared first in two volumes in 1932-1934 in the Soviet Union. The first German language edition was published in 1937 in Kiev. In 1947, the publishing house *Neues Leben* printed the entire text which became known as the "Entwicklungsroman des sozialistischen Realismus" (Steinlein *et al.* 648). The novel is a fictionalized autobiography presented as the biography of Pawel Korchagin. It depicts the coming-to-life of the 'New Soviet Man'. Pawka's story takes place at the very beginnings of Soviet Socialism, the Revolution in 1917 and the fight against Polish and German occupation in Ukraine. He joins the Red Army and becomes a member of the Party and of the Komsomol.⁸⁵ He devotes his entire life to the Socialist cause and eventually loses his health, becoming blind and paralyzed. The figure of Pawel Kortschagin was considered a model "[das] der Jugend als Identifikationsfigur dienen sollte, weil sie nur in harten Bewährungssituationen jene Charaktereigenschaften erwerben könne, die notwendig seien, um die persönlichen Ideale in Übereinstimmung mit dem gesellschaftlichen Anliegen zu bringen und darin Erfüllung zu finden" (Steinlein *et al.* 648).⁸⁶ Excerpts of Ostrowski's novel were analyzed in GDR schools at all levels (Steinlein *et al.* 650). The instruction for the curriculum guide *Arbeit*

⁸⁴ The rationale for the selection of each novel will be presented together with its plot summary.

⁸⁵ The Soviet Youth Organization.

⁸⁶ Steinlein *et al.* Refers here to Ludwig, Nadeshda. Ed. *Handbuch der Sowjetliteratur*.

mit dem Kinderbuch (1952) reads as follows: “Dieses Buch ist uns heilig, man darf es nicht unachtsam beiseite legen, in seiner Gegenwart schämt man sich, ein böses Wort zu sagen” (qtd in Steinlein *et al.* 42).⁸⁷ These words highlight the prominent position the novel occupied in the Socialist state.

Contrary to Ostrowski’s novel, the second and third selected books are part of the German literature written in the 1950s and 1960s. Soon after their publication, they were already included in the mandatory readings at school (BArch DR2/2060; Steinlein *et al.* 1204): Bruno Apitz’ *Nackt unter Wölfen* and Dieter Noll’s *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*. Apitz’s novel, *Nackt unter Wölfen* was published in 1958, after the creation of the NVA (and the Bundeswehr), and after the GDR had joined the Warsaw Pact. It is based on a true story that happened during WWII in the Buchenwald concentration camp. A Polish prisoner smuggled a Jewish child into the camp, and all inmates helped to save the child. The novel also illustrates the organization of the International Camp Committee within the camp, made up of Communists of different nationalities. The uprising that these men were planning and preparing helped liberate those who remained in Buchenwald after its partial ‘evacuation’. Bruno Apitz himself was a prisoner in Buchenwald, which gives the novel an air of authenticity. “Mit der Heroisierung der Widerstandsgruppe trug der Roman, der zum Klassiker des Genres avancierte, zur antifaschistischen Legendenbildung bei. Der operative Charakter der fiktiven Literatur ist klar erkennbar und zeigt sich auch daran, dass die Fiktion des Romans sich nur unwesentlich von den vorgeblich ‘wahren’ Darstellungen der Sachliteratur in der DDR unterschied” (Steinlein *et al.* 353) [emphasis in the original]. Put simply, the novel encouraged the antifascist spirit and

⁸⁷ Ministerium für Volksbildung der DDR: Hauptabteilung Außerschulische Erziehung. *Die Arbeit mit dem Kinderbuch und ihre Bedeutung für die Erziehung der Jungen Pioniere und Schüler*. Berlin (1952). Materialien für die außerschulischen Arbeitsgemeinschaften; Junge Künstler.

glorified former *Widerstandskämpfer* (resistance fighters), especially those who were incarcerated in Buchenwald.

Dieter Noll's novel *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt* was published as a story in two parts. The first part, *Roman einer Jugend*, was published in 1960 by the publishing house *Aufbau*, with many subsequent editions in different publishing houses, including a licensed edition for GDR schools in the publishing house *Volk und Wissen*. The novel depicts the evolution of a young man – Werner Holt – in the last two years of WWII. At first a stereotypical young man corrupted by Nazi propaganda, Werner fantasizes about the adventures of war. The examples of his friends and family, together with his experience in the military, where he has witnessed the atrocities committed by the SS, eventually bring Werner to the right (Socialist) path. The novel can be seen as an *Entwicklungsroman* (development novel) that showcases how a young man develops an antifascist consciousness (Steinlein *et al.* 362). A highly revealing interpretation of Noll's novel was written by Werner Neubert in his book *Literatur, Geschichte Wehrmotiv: Essays und Rezensionen*, published in the *Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Military publishing house of the German Democratic Republic). Though this interpretation is written in the spirit of GDR-propaganda and should be seen as such, it sheds light on how the novel was supposed to be interpreted:

Als eine für die Jugend dieser Zeit selbst bedauerliche und folgenschwere Tatsache muß man feststellen, daß es den Hitlerfaschisten vor allem im Zeichen der antisowjetischen Hetzkampagne gelang, beträchtliche Teile bis zum letzten Augenblick ihrer Herrschaft zu mißbrauchen und in Tod und Verderben zu stürzen. Auch im Lichte einer solchen tragischen Tatsache, die im vorliegenden Roman gleichsam zu einer erschütternden Fabel

geronnen ist, wird die Größe des Erfolges der auf deutschem Boden wirkenden Kommunisten und Antifaschisten ersichtlich. In der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik gelang es ihnen, Tausende und aber Tausende Werner Holts von ihren schweren geistigen Ketten zu befreien und zu aktiven Erbauern der antifaschistischen Demokratie und schließlich des Sozialismus, im brüderlichen Bunde mit der Sowjetunion, zu erziehen. (Neubert 73)

The first part of the novel, *Roman einer Jugend*, ends with Werner's release from the POW (prisoner of war) camp and his return to the 'new,' Socialist Germany. The second part, *Roman einer Heimkehr* (1963), takes place after the war, and marks a 'new' beginning for the hero as he struggles to find his place in the new society. Though the sequel was less popular, certain ideas and models that were considered of educational value are developed only in this sequel. The conversion of Werner, for example, is not complete at the end of the first part; he only becomes disillusioned with Nazi ideology. He tries settling initially in the East and then in the West. These experiences eventually allow him to understand the superiority of Socialism.

The models presented in Apitz' and Noll's novels promote qualities such as duty, honor and patriotism, and these qualities are always illustrated by the examples of men rather than women. As Joane Nagel explains in her article on masculinity and nationalism, such imagery is precisely what facilitates men's acceptance of war. She adds that "the allure of adventure, the promise of masculine camaraderie, the opportunity to test and prove oneself, the chance to participate in a historic, larger-than-life, generation-defining event" makes army life more attractive, and glorifies being a soldier (Nagel 1998, 259). Nagel points here to an important part of military propaganda, which Bruno Apitz and Dieter Noll utilize to promote the ideal Socialist

soldier personality among young people. They clearly show that patriotism, understood here as the defense of the Socialist Fatherland and the working-class people, is a core character trait of every ‘good citizen’ and along this, they stress that only Socialism can lead to a better Germany. Combined with the propaganda claiming that Fascism continues behind the Western border, patriotism provides a compelling reason for why the readers should embrace the duty to defend their homeland, whether it is through participation in the army or in everyday life.

Finally, my fourth and fifth selections illustrate the concept of the need to constantly defend Socialist achievements in everyday GDR life: they are Benno Pludra’s *Sheriff Teddy* (1956) and Horst Beseler’s *Käuzchenkuhle* (1965), both found in the curricula for German Literature classes (BArch DR2/3739; Steinlein *et al.* 996). While none of them depict an actual soldier, they can still be seen as promoting the ideal Socialist soldier personality, as they emphasize the importance of the same character traits, especially *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) in everyday life. Pludra’s novel was published by the *Kinderbuchverlag* in 1956 in 30,000 copies. Until 1964 it was reprinted yearly, and even twice in 1958. The targeted readers were 13 years old and up. Sheriff Teddy is the assumed nickname of a 13 year-old boy, Kalle. Together with his parents and little sister, he moves from West- to East Berlin, because of his father’s new job. The story shows the changes Kalle undergoes under the influence of his new (Eastern) friend Andreas. This positive process is juxtaposed with the negative effects of the intrigues of his brother, Robert, who remained in West Berlin. In 1956, the Wall did not yet divide the city, and people could move freely from one side to the other. Taking Berlin as an epitome for his demonstration, the author depicts the differences between the two systems, Socialism and Capitalism. He emphasizes the safety, love, and respect for others in the Socialist

state, and the positive attitude of the people living there. By contrast, he shows crime and greed as being prevalent in the West.

Horst Beseler's *Käuzchenkuhle* was published by *Verlag Neues Leben* in 1965 and was included in the mandatory reading list for students of the seventh grade in the GDR (Steinlein *et al.* 27). The work was one of the most popular crime stories for children (Steinlein *et al.* 487). It depicts the story of Jean-Paul, shortened to Jampoll, a young boy with a detective spirit.

Together with his friends Schraube, Kristian, and Spinne-Schnarr, he uncovers a crime committed in the last days of WWII by two SS officers. The tension is heightened by the fact that Jampoll's grandfather is implicated in this crime, to which he confesses on his deathbed. The story illustrates the importance of a continued readiness to defend the homeland from Fascist danger, even when close relatives are involved. With reference to Fred Rodrian, Steinlein *et al.* explain: "Horst Beseler thematisiert in seinem Roman *Käuzchenkuhle* ... Widerstand als Gebot der Gegenwart, indem er Kinder und Erwachsene mit einem Verbrechen und Verbrechern aus der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit konfrontiert und so 'die Leser [vor] die Gegenwärtigkeit faschistischer Bedrohung' stellt" (Steinlein *et al.* 340) [grammatical adjustment in Steinlein *et al.*].⁸⁸ Steinlein *et al.* agree with Rodrian when stating the following: "Die Botschaft dieses Kinderromans, der ... in der Gegenwart spielt, ist, sich der allgegenwärtigen 'faschistischen Bedrohung' bewusst zu werden und die antifaschistischen Errungenschaften zu verteidigen" (Steinlein *et al.* 340). In 1965, two decades after the end of WWII, and soon after the Cuban Missile Crisis, it seemed important for the SED to remind its people where the danger originated, and how very real it still was. By extension, people were expected to always be prepared to fight for their Socialist Fatherland.

⁸⁸ Rodrian, Fred. *20 Jahre sozialistische Kinderliteratur in der DDR: Beginn, Bilanzen, Aufgaben*, 1969, 23.

These five novels present very different types of stories, with protagonists of different ages and social backgrounds, and they take place at different junctures in the history of Socialism and /or the GDR. Their commonality is the need to fight the Fascist danger, whether it takes the form of a direct military confrontation or the exposition of the hidden crimes committed by the enemy in everyday life. In all of them, we see a mixture of traditional masculine traits commonly associated with the military, yet these traits are often ‘improved’ by specific Socialist qualities. At the same time, the reader gets a clear understanding of who these texts implicate as ‘the enemy’, which is part of the educational program aimed at creating the *Neue Mensch*: “Feindbild heißt, daß alle Nachteile, schlechte Eigenschaften, alles Minderwertige zu einem Bild zusammengefügt wurden, das den Feind für immer zum absoluten Bösewicht stempelt. Einmal zusammengefügt, wird das Feindbild so oft beschrieben, der Jugend und vor allem den Soldaten anerzogen, bis es das Verhältnis zu diesem feindlichen System oder Staat völlig beherrscht” (Henrich 7). The authors of the five selected novels go to great lengths in their texts to explicitly show who the enemy was: in the words of a soldier preparing to surrender to the Soviet army, Noll explicitly says: “...wer unser Todfeind ist! ... es heißt nicht: Russen und Deutsche, sondern es heißt immer noch: Bourgeois und Proletarier!” (1960, 440). In the work by Ostrowski, the children in the GDR also encountered the image of the bourgeois as the enemy.⁸⁹

In *Nackt unter Wölfen* and in *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, the authors give the concrete example of a Nazi soldier as the antagonist figure to Socialism. In both these novels, young readers witness tortures meant to surprise and shock because of their inventiveness. It is, among other things, this brutality that turns Werner away from Nazi ideology. These atrocities make the Socialist soldiers look noble and honorable. In his interpretation of the novel, Werner

⁸⁹ The enemies in the Revolution were the Russian, Polish and German Bourgeois.

Neubert explains as follows: “So sollte der Roman ‘Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt’ heute durchaus auch als Bestätigung für die Überlegenheit des realen Humanismus über alle menschenfeindlichen Zielsetzungen und Theorien gelesen und verstanden werden” (73). Neubert thus emphasizes that these comparisons were intended to compel young readers in the GDR to learn about and understand the superiority of Socialism.

In the novels analyzed for this dissertation, the insistence on the understanding that the ‘Fascists still live in the West’ became more prevalent in later works, such as Noll’s *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*. Werner learns from his own family the connection between bourgeois and Fascists (Noll 1964, 243ff.), and that the Western bourgeois present a danger to a peace-loving society by their insisting on class division (Noll 1964, 132). With the example of the ‘Western’ part of Holt’s family in the second part of his novel, Noll associates the fight against Fascism with the notion of class-struggle. The heightened tensions of the Cold War and the construction of the Berlin Wall, called *Antifaschistischer Schutzwall* (anti-Fascist protection wall), may have played a role in the emphasis on the constant danger and the need for a continuing fight against the West.

Literary Representations of Traditional Soldier Characteristics

As explained in the first part of this chapter, the soldier personality already had a long tradition before it was adopted by the SED. For this reason one may say that certain character traits came as part of a ‘package deal’: The traits traditionally associated with the military, such as discipline, courage, protection of the Fatherland and the ‘womenandchildren’ (Eifler and Seifert 12), and camaraderie were incorporated into the Socialist interpretation of the soldier. By

contrast, the enemy soldiers were usually portrayed as lacking all these positive characteristics. In the following, I discuss each of these character traits separately and demonstrate, based on examples from the five selected novels, that they were still considered part of the Socialist soldier personality.

Discipline is an important factor in the army. Most commonly associated with discipline is obedience to orders. Christian Ripp points to the fact that traits expected from a soldier such as devotion, obedience and subordination, are oftentimes connoted as feminine (87).⁹⁰ However, as Ripp explains, unlike feminine unassertiveness, masculine obedience seems to be based on willpower and self-control and thus clearly sets itself apart from the former (87). In GDR literature, we find many examples of texts that glorify discipline, be it by following orders or by displaying absolute self-control. Pawel Korchagin in *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde* is illustrative of both. Ostrowski presents him as someone who follows orders even when his pride or his body is hurt, such as when he is told to dismount his horse even though his legs refuse to obey him (329). His willpower pushes him to continuously disregard his pain, hunger, and cold, which leads him to several near-death experiences. The author explains the importance of discipline by having the political leader in the army state the following: “Partei und Komsomol stützen sich ... auf eiserne Disziplin. Die Partei über alles! Ein jeder von uns muss nicht da sein, wo er möchte, sondern da, wo man ihn braucht” (Ostrowski 163). The young Korchagin does not yet understand that and leaves his regiment; however, with time, he learns about the importance of discipline in the ranks of the Party. At last, even when his health declines, Korchagin follows

⁹⁰ “Einerseits verlangte man vom Rekrut weiblich konnotierte Eigenschaften wie Hingebung, Gehorsam, Unterordnung und andererseits wurde er auf seinen Körper und damit auf einen Objektstatus reduziert” (Ripp 87).

orders and continues working and teaching others because he has learned to understand that the Party needs him and that the larger cause supersedes even his wish to end his life.

Such extreme self-control and willpower are also presented in Bruno Apitz' *Nackt unter Wölfen* in the examples of Höfel, Kropinski and Pippig. When tortured to reveal the location where the Jewish child is hidden, as well as to give information about the illegal inmate organization, *das Internationale Lagerkomitee* (ILK – International Camp Committee), they remain firm and do not talk. Throughout the novel, the Communists in the camp are depicted as being guided by discipline at all times. Even when facing death, the Buchenwald prisoners remain calm and orderly. When 46 of the inmates are to be executed, the rest of the camp follows the orders of the ILK and hides the 46 disregarding the danger that such behavior brings upon them. One of the Communist leaders explains: “Zeigt denen da oben, daß wir kein wilder Haufen sind, sondern eine Gemeinschaft disziplinierter Menschen! ... Wir müssen jetzt das Leben aller verteidigen! Wir verteidigen unser Leben mit den Waffen, die wir besitzen, mit Mut und eisenharter Disziplin!” (Apitz 314f.). In the figures of POWs from the Red Army walking into certain death in perfect marching order when being evacuated,⁹¹ Apitz shows the most shining example of discipline:

Der Zug formierte sich. Als letzter kam Bogorski. Er trug nicht mehr das Häftlingsdrillich, sondern wie die übrigen seiner Kameraden eine abgeschabte Felduniform der Roten Armee.

In Gliedern zu zehn Mann stellten sich die Gefangenen auf. ... Bogorski ließ den Zug an sich vorbei. Er prüfte die geheime Einteilung. ... In militärischer Ordnung, mit dem

⁹¹ Evacuation from a concentration camp meant a long march in harsh conditions to a different location. In practice, this meant almost certain death.

typischen, ein wenig schaukelnden Schritt marschierten die 800 den Appellplatz hinauf. ... Die Flügel des schmiedeeisernen Tores öffneten sich. Der Zug mußte anhalten und marschierte auf der Stelle, dann bewegte er sich wieder vorwärts, bis der letzte Mann durchs Tor marschiert war (373f.).

While discipline is closely associated with any military, Apitz presents the Communists as superior when compared to the Fascist soldiers, who, though seemingly disciplined, lose their composure in the face of danger. Even their hierarchy falls victim to panic (Apitz 262). In fact, the Nazi officers at the camp recognize the discipline of the Communists and use it to organize life in the camp (Apitz 39).

Apitz and Noll also present the dilemma that the rigors of discipline may create, focusing in particular on conflicting situations when a received order stands in clear opposition to one's duties towards Humanity: Höfel in Bruno Apitz' *Nackt unter Wölfen* has to face this difficult situation, knowing that the order to send away the Jewish child who has been smuggled into the camp, would mean its certain death. In the *Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, Werner struggles with a similar dilemma when he escorts a Slovak girl and her father as prisoners. On the one hand, he knows he would have to shoot them if they tried to escape, but on the other, he is aware of the fact that the only reason why they killed a German soldier was to prevent him from raping the girl. While Noll leaves Werner debating such a conflict in theoretical terms, Apitz has his protagonist determine that there is a greater good than blindly following orders, which he must choose. Though this behavior endangers the existence of the secret ILK, the Communists understand that Höfel has to break the discipline "[w]eil in der Wahl zwischen zwei Pflichten stets die höhere und dringendere entschied" (Apitz 281). By extension, such an understanding of

discipline made it possible for young readers in the GDR to excuse and commend those soldiers who, during the war, chose to disobey orders from the Nazi regime.

But young people in the GDR needed to learn that discipline is important not just to the army; it is useful also in everyday life, and it was, in fact, expected to become a quality of every *Neue Mensch*. In Benno Pludra's *Sheriff Teddy*, the reader is supposed to learn that undisciplined behavior is not tolerated in a Socialist state. For all his wrongdoings, Kalle, Pludra's protagonist, needs to be punished. However, when he understands his mistakes, Kalle is given a second chance. Discipline and self-control were also attributes that were expected of young pioneers in the GDR. This is emphasized in Horst Beseler's *Käuzchenkuhle*: Schraube finds a part for his motorcycle at a junkyard and wants to take it without permission; at that time, however, he is wearing the uniform of a Young Pioneer, which compels him to adhere to Pioneer discipline, and prevents him from taking the only thing that stands between him and a functioning bike (Beseler 245f.). Though in the end Jampoll takes the part, he does that not for himself but for a friend. In addition, the way the administrator of the junkyard treats Schraube - not giving him a chance to explain himself or simply purchase the part - places the sympathy on the children's side. Jampoll's decision to break discipline and take the part in the name of his friendship with Schraube may be seen as a good deed and an example, in this context, of the 'greater good'.

The authors of the novels analyzed in this dissertation clearly demonstrate that discipline was an important trait of the Socialist soldier and of the *Neue Mensch*. However, they also pointed out that being disciplined could not be understood as blindly following orders. Young people were expected to rather learn that they have a duty towards Humanity, which should be seen as the core of Socialism and always retains priority.

Courage and protecting the weak are probably the characteristics most commonly associated with good soldiers and, in fact, with every man. The protagonists presented in the aforementioned novels allow the reader to identify courage and protecting the weak as desirable. In Apitz' *Nackt unter Wölfen*, the inmates in the Buchenwald concentration camp are protecting a child. Their caring for a child, something commonly regarded as women's duty in a stereotypical, Western, view of gender roles, is imbued with a masculine slant through the danger associated with it. It proves the bravery of the inmates, and thus their manhood. Dieter Noll's Werner Holt shows the same courage in risking his life to protect those in need. Already at the beginning of the novel, he convinces Wolzow to exact revenge on a *Hitler Jugend*-leader (Hitler Youth) for driving a girl (Ruth Wagner) to suicide. He instinctively knows that he is supposed to defend those who are weaker, whether they be the Russian prisoners who are mistreated by the SS, or a little girl he carries out of a house bombed by the allies,⁹² or an orphan (Gundel) whose parents were killed by the Nazis. Gundel is treated as a slave in the house of a German SS Officer, and she is one of the main forces in the transformation of Werner through her statement: referring to Nazi brutality, she tells Werner "Etwas davon ist auch in Dir" (Noll 1960, 327). Gundel's statement makes Werner realize that he has to distance himself from the Nazi ideology if he does not want to be equated with those whose atrocities he witnessed. Through these examples, the authors reinforce the traditionally accepted role of a man to protect and defend those who are weaker. In addition, they suggest that the Socialist *Neue Mensch* is responsible for the well-being of those around him.

⁹² Though the girl died during his flight out of the flames, it is important for young readers to note that Werner knew he could not leave her in the burning cellar.

The importance of this trait is supported by its countertype. Joane Nagel, investigating the historical and modern connection between manhood and nationhood in the context of the USA, explains that the construction of an image of the enemy often entails representing him as either an over-sexed ‘rapist’ or under-sexed ‘wimp’ (Nagel 1998, 242).⁹³ The authors of the novels discussed here create a similar countertype in the figure of the Fascist, who is often portrayed as abusing and raping women. Ostrowski depicts the enemies (here, the White Army) taking what they want by force or threat (105). Through such examples, young readers were supposed to learn that there is no honor in fighting the weaker, be it by torturing prisoners, or by stealing from the elderly, as shown in Benno Pludra’s *Sheriff Teddy* (77). By comparison, the Socialist soldier appeared even nobler. In fact, Bolshevik fighters were presented as soldiers who considered it to be their duty to punish those who loot or rape (Ostrowski 161.), and Ostrowski emphasizes that they would not maltreat the prisoners who are weak and defenseless. Ostrowski points this out in the words of the regiment commissioner to Pawel: “Grausamkeit wehrlosen Gefangenen gegenüber wird mit Erschießen bestraft. Wir sind nicht wie die Weißen!” (173).

In the traditional image of the soldier found in literature, risking one’s life for others and dying for the Fatherland are often considered the most honorable (Donson 587). However, as I will show, this is not enough for the Socialist soldier: He needs to stay alive to help build and defend the Socialist Fatherland. In Ostrowski’s novel, for example, the reader follows the struggle of Pawka as he, facing complete disability at the age of 24, realizes that it is a hard task to be really brave. Ostrowski explains to the reader the importance of this realization: “Erst jetzt

⁹³ There is an incident in Noll’s *Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, when Werner catches one of the most vocal supporters of Fascism *in flagrante* with another boy, identifying these Fascists as homosexual. In the GDR, homosexuality was “viewed as a remnant of bourgeois decadence, a sign of moral weakness, and a threat to the social and political health of the nation...” (Evans 360f.).

begriff Pawel, dass es keine große Kunst war, mit gesundem, jugendlichen [sic] Körper standhaft zu sein; doch auch nun nicht zu wanken, da einen das Leben mit eisernen Ringen umklammert hielt – das war, fühlte er, eine Sache der Ehre” (410). Ostrowski suggests through this example that real courage can be found in the daily struggles of everyone’s lives.

Apitz, Noll, and Ostrowski thus present a Socialist definition of courage to their readership. Both Ostrowski and Noll see it as the capability to never give up working towards a better future, and continuing the fight against Fascism. Noll states explicitly that dying is the easy way out: “Für das riesige, schimmernde Deutschland von gestern zu sterben, das nenn ich Feigheit, Holt! Aber für das arme, todwunde Deutschland von morgen zu leben ... das ist Heroismus, dazu gehört Mut” (1960, 294). Noll also points out that courage should be understood as saying the truth and standing up for your beliefs, no matter the consequences. Werner’s father, who refuses to work for the Nazis, is accordingly called “ein Mann von Charakter” (Noll 1960, 67). Apitz sees courage in a similar way as Noll when he tells of the continuous fight of the prisoners in Buchenwald. However, he elaborates also on a possible misinterpretation of bravery. Apitz explains that being courageous does not mean being reckless and adventurous, but rather being resilient even if the odds are against you: “Sein Mut war nicht draufgängerisch, sondern abwägend, beobachtend und berechnend. Wenn Bochow etwas als richtig erkannt hatte, dann setzte er es in stiller Beharrlichkeit durch...” (138). The emphasis on these specific, Socialist, aspects of courage can be found also in Pludra’s *Sheriff Teddy*, where the author suggests to younger readers that being brave can often be misunderstood. His protagonist, Kalle, believes it to mean doing crazy things, like stealing a boat or smuggling, but

the author clearly states that these are “falsche Begriffe von Mut und Ehre” (Pludra 125), and that this behavior should not be emulated.

In *Käuzchenkuhle*, Horst Beseler shows the importance of courage by pointing to the negativity of fear, which is “ein böses Geschwür; sie steckt an. Leugnen, Heuchelei, Beklemmung, Sichverstecken kamen in ihrem Gefolge” (204). Beseler presents this negativity of fear as a defining trait of Fascists: He shows them as coming at night, pretending to be someone else, and using their power, when they have it, for their own benefit. In the face of defeat, however, they panic and run away.

These examples show the place courage occupied in GDR rhetoric. Since the Socialist *Neue Mensch* was expected to participate in the fight against the class enemy in the West who threatened the Socialist Fatherland, young readers needed to be instructed about the need for bravery. But they also needed to learn *how* to be brave: Courage, in this given context did not mean being a maverick, but rather standing up one’s beliefs and defending the achievements of Socialism.

Camaraderie. The almost legendary male bonding in the military has often been a part of the discourse in war literature.⁹⁴ These homosocial relations need to be understood as something much stronger than simple friendships, since soldiers fighting next to each other have to trust their comrades with their lives. In his article on *Kameradschaft* (camaraderie) the historian Thomas Kühne argues that many of the soldiers in the Wehrmacht in WWII fought neither for Germany nor for the *Führer*, but first of all for their comrades (506).

⁹⁴ One of the most commonly mentioned example is Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* and its sequels.

Dieter Noll and Bruno Apitz, in their novels, contrast the ‘real camaraderie’ of the Socialist soldiers with that of the Fascists: In *Nackt unter Wölfen*, Apitz shows the inmates in the concentration camp standing up for each other and enduring torture to save a fellow prisoner. By contrast, the supervisors of the camp not only constantly undermine one another, but in the face of danger they also immediately escape, only trying to save their own lives (Apitz 386). In Noll’s *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, the young man’s vision of camaraderie is contrasted with the reality of the integration of his group in the Flak. Not only is there no bonding with the older soldiers, but there is even a feud between the two groups, which includes attacking and vandalizing each other’s quarters (Noll 1960, 185ff). While Gottesknecht (the ‘good’ sergeant) tries to stop these incidents, the chief condones them by calling it *Selbsterziehung* (self-education) and not meting out punishment (Noll 1960, 139, 151). Within this group of former classmates, there is nonetheless some kind of friendship,⁹⁵ and Werner, in fact, remains loyal to it almost until Wolzow’s death. Werner and Sepp are presented by Noll as true comrades who respect, value, and trust each other. They remain friends even after Sepp Gomulka deserts and surrenders to the Red Army. Through this contrast of behavior between Fascist and Socialist soldiers, Apitz and Noll build the sense of the superiority of the Socialist army, with its notion of collectivity, over the Western and Capitalist one.

The deep friendship between the two boys, Andreas and Kalle, in *Sheriff Teddy*, can also be seen as male bonding. Kalle’s sister seems more an obstacle, and though she is not completely left behind, she is not entirely integrated in this friendship either. In contrast to the group of boys in the Socialist state, the members of which maintain a strong friendship, the group of Kalle’s

⁹⁵ This friendship is more an allegiance to the ‘Führer’ figure, Wolzow (Neubert 70), and the following of his commands. It is of symbolic nature that this ‘friendship’ begins at the Rabenfelsen where the boys vow faithfulness to Wolzow. The legend says that a pact with the devil was made there (Noll 1960, 52).

former friends from West Berlin easily gives up on him: as soon as he moves, the boys decide to treat him as unworthy and fight him the next time he comes around.

Through the aforementioned examples, the authors suggest to the readers that only in Socialism is true camaraderie possible, a camaraderie which is characterized by an enduring friendship in the face of adverse circumstances. In the context of the soldier personality, this trait suggests not only the superiority of the Socialist army over its the Western counterpart, but also promotes the idea of becoming a soldier.

Literary Representations of Socialist Soldier Characteristics

The traditional characteristics of the soldier personality were not enough in the eyes of SED propaganda. At school, students learned that Socialism was intrinsically peaceful, anti-militaristic, and anti-imperialistic (BArch DR2/2538). Certainly, the claim of fighting for peace and prosperity of the people, the creation of the enemy image, the honorability of soldier's conduct, or the vigilance in the population was anything but new, and it is, in fact, very common in military propaganda. However, in the GDR these qualities were presented as unique to the Socialist soldier. Citizens had to be convinced of their superiority and of the importance of the fight for the ultimate goal, Socialism and Communism. Moreover, the *Neue Mensch* had to know who he (or she) was supposed to follow, who the enemies were, what he (or she) was fighting for, and why. The *Neue Mensch* was expected to love the Socialist Fatherland and be grateful for the opportunity to live there. This gratitude he (or she) was to show by defending GDR's borders and achievements.

Fighting a ‘just’ war, according to GDR propaganda, was one of the main distinctions between the Socialist and the Capitalist soldier. Socialism in East Germany, although based on anti-fascism and officially pacific, was not a pacifist ideology. Nonetheless, the reasons for fighting were presented as different from those in the West. We find an example of this difference in Noll’s depiction of Werner and his friend Gilbert Wolzow, who was introduced as coming from a family of Prussian officers. Wolzow’s only interest is fighting a war, but not because of fanatic belief. He fights “weil sich das für einen Soldaten so gehört! ... Ein Soldat ist zum Kämpfen da” (Noll 1960, 281). He fights for the pleasure of it: “Anlaß? Braucht er keinen. Er prügelt sich aus Sport!” (Noll 1960, 245). But he also knows much about strategy, methods, and the equipment of war. He is brave, strong, and has all the ‘*kriegerische Tugenden*’ (military virtues). These characteristics impress Holt the most, and he initially believes that in order to be a ‘real man’, he needs to acquire them, too: “Ich bin viel zu weich. Ich muß härter werden! Mir graut vor Wolzow. Er hat was mir noch fehlt: diese ‘Mörderkaltblutigkeit mit gutem Gewissen’, von der ich gelesen hab” (Noll 1960, 73) [emphasis in the original]. Yet Wolzow’s brutality and ruthlessness drive Werner away from him in the end. It seems apparent that the author wants to make clear to his readers in the GDR that ‘*kriegerische Tugenden*’ (military virtues), though certainly good when used in a proper manner, are not enough to be ‘a man’. According to Noll, a ‘real man’ knows the difference between a just and an unjust war. Noll shows an example of wrong motives for waging war in the figure of Christian Vetter, who seeks only his own profit. In the beginning, the boy is everything other than manly – he is fat, clumsy, and often battered by his family. The time spent with his friends as a *Luftwaffenhelfer* (Luftwaffe auxiliary personnel), and later at the front, makes him grow stronger and more adroit. From this point of

view, war can be seen as a rite of passage into becoming a ‘real man,’ yet Noll never emphasizes Vetter as a desirable example of masculinity. In fact, he remains someone nobody ever takes seriously. He blindly follows Wolzow, but does not have the same knowledge of the military. Moreover, he thinks only of his own advantage. After an extremely hard night at the Flak, the chief asks if the boys have any wishes; Vetter immediately answers for everybody: “Na, Herr Hauptmann, auf das Gemetzel wär [sic] eigentlich eine Flasche Schnaps fällig, und der Küchenbulle könnte mal wieder eine Büchse Rindfleisch rausrücken [sic]!” (Noll 1960, 238). Christian Vetter’s selfishness is even clearer in the second part of the novel, in which he has become a smuggler and a thief who finally kills someone (disguised in a Red Army uniform) and ends up in jail (Noll 1964, 81, 421).

Ostrowski also emphasizes the negative image of the enemy in the examples of the White Army, the bourgeois, the intellectuals, the rich etc, who are depicted as fighting for their own profit, and not caring about others. By contrast, he presents the Socialist soldier as one who fights for his country, for justice, and to end exploitation. Of course, the Socialist soldier is also presented as someone who needs to be prepared to kill, but he does this only out of necessity. In *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde*, Ostrowski depicts such a situation when Sergej, Pawel’s friend, is forced to kill a Pole:

Sergejs Hand zuckte nicht. Er weiß, dass er jetzt töten muss, er, Sergej, der so zärtlich lieben, der so innig Freundschaft wahren kann. Er ist kein böser, kein grausamer Bursche, aber er weiß, dass diese von den Weltparasiten geschickten, betrogenen und bösartig aufgetzten Soldaten in tierischem Hass gegen die geliebte Sowjetheimat ausgerückt sind.

Und er, Sergej, tötet, damit der Tag schneller komme, da man auf der Welt einander nicht mehr töten wird (155).

It is the vision of a just and free world that is supposed to make the use of force by the Socialist soldier understandable to the reader. The prisoners of Buchenwald in Bruno Apitz' novel are models for such a better, just society:

Was an Menschen den Stacheldraht der Konzentrationslager lebend hinter sich läßt, das wird der Vortrupp einer gerechteren Welt sein! Wir wissen nicht was kommt. Gleich, wie die Welt danach aussehen mag, sie wird eine gerechtere sein, oder wir müssen verzweifeln an der Vernunft der Menschheit. Wir sind kein Dünger, wir sind keine Märtyrer, wir sind keine Opfer. Wir sind die Träger der höchsten Pflicht! (252).

Apitz places high emphasis on convincing his young readers that they live in this just, better world. It seems that the survival of the child symbolically stands for those born after the war who should be grateful to the members of the resistance. Along this line, the young generation of readers should realize that they have a moral obligation to their country, the GDR: what better way to pay it off than to join the ranks of the Party in the fight that still goes on?

A crucial characteristic of a Socialist soldier, and, by extension, of every citizen in the GDR, is his or her acknowledgement and acceptance that **the Party / the Cause** are of higher importance than anything else (Scholz 2001, 3f.). The fact that the reasons to fight a war can be noble is used to suggest that some wars are not only justified, but also necessary. As a consequence, one's personal needs become secondary relative to the bigger cause. Pawka, in Ostrowski's novel, is a perfect example here. From early on, he is an admirer of Giuseppe Garibaldi, whom he finds to be a 'real hero' – strong, courageous, and fighting for the poor

people: “Das war ein einmaliger Mensch, dieser Garibaldi! ... ein richtiger Held! Wie viele Länder hat er durchzogen! Ach, wenn der heute lebte, ich würde mich ihm sofort anschließen. All seine Leute waren einfache Arbeiter, und immer hat er für die Armen gekämpft” (Ostrowski 57). As soon as Pawka learns that the Bolsheviks are fighting for the rights of the working people, he joins their ranks to fight for this grand idea (Ostrowski 141). Ostrowski, as Lilya Kaganovsky explains, makes his protagonist internalize the power structures of the Soviet society. Through his personal history and experience, Kaganovsky claims, Korchagin acknowledges that power – Stalin – is outside of himself, and the commitment to the cause takes precedence over his own needs, such as food, warmth, etc. (Kaganovsky 580). This behavior leads the young man to encounter several near-death experiences. Here, the idea of dying for the larger cause resembles what had been promulgated in Germany in the late 19th and early 20th century. Death for the Fatherland was considered a great honor, almost a goal in itself, and it was presented so in the literature for the young generation (Donson 587).⁹⁶ In Ostrowski’s novel, however, there is a big difference. The author explains that the cause is most important, and it is worth fighting for, even if it takes one’s life. But Ostrowski also insists on the value of life, especially if it is spent building Socialism:

Das Wertvollste, was der Mensch besitzt, ist das Leben. Es wird ihm nur einmal gegeben, und er muss es so nützen, dass ihn später sinnlos vertane Jahre nicht qualvoll gereuen, die Schande einer unwürdigen, nichtigen Vergangenheit ihn nicht bedrückt und dass er sterbend sagen kann: Mein ganzes Leben, meine ganze Kraft habe ich dem Herrlichsten auf der Welt - dem Kampf für die Befreiung der Menschheit – geweiht. Und er muss sich

⁹⁶ An example here is Detlev von Liliencron’s *Unter flatternden Fahnen* (1888).

beeilen zu leben. Denn eine dumme Krankheit oder irgendein tragischer Zufall kann dem Leben jäh ein Ende setzen (259)

These words make clear the ultimate goal of the Socialist soldier in Communist propaganda – namely, the liberation of mankind, ensuring a peaceful life through Socialist / Communist leadership. In order to achieve this goal, the Socialist soldier may have to fight a war; however, such a war would then be presented as a ‘just’ and necessary war.

This idea of giving up one’s own life for a greater cause was particularly common in the antifascist literature depicting the war and the Resistance. In Bruno Apitz’ novel, Pippig dies through torture but does not reveal the hiding place of the child, and Höfel and Kropinski stay strong throughout their torture in order to protect the ILK and the uprising they are planning.

Wehrbereitschaft (readiness to defend) was an attitude cultivated in GDR society. The propaganda of a constant threat from the West and the tensions caused by the Cold War were used to instill in the citizenry the perceived need of permanent preparedness for the impending war. Schools, media, and all state organization supported the *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) showing “daß die Verteidigung des sozialistischen Vaterlandes ehrenvolle Pflicht ist” (Heider, 104). However, children needed to be instructed that danger does not always come in the form of an open attack, but sometimes from people they know. The schooling in *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) emphasized that everybody, even small children, should pay attention and protect Socialist achievements and the Fatherland from enemies (from outside and from within). In *Sheriff Teddy*, Pludra exemplifies this attitude in the figure of Andreas, Kalle’s friend: Kalle, corrupted by his brother, is supposed to pick up a package from a man working in a warehouse and bring it over to Robert in West Berlin. The package contains a

camera with modern technology. Upon hearing this, Andreas confronts his friend in order to defend the *Volkseigentum* (public property), even if that would mean losing him as a friend: “Leg es zurück! ... oder es ist aus zwischen uns! ... Kalle ahnte, was für ihn auf dem Spiel stand. Andreas spaßte nicht. Nie hatte Kalle den Freund so unheimlich ernst gesehen. Folgte er seinen Worten nicht, so würde er ihn verlieren, in dieser Minute” (Pludra 200). Andreas serves here as an example of how a young man can defend the achievements of Socialism, be it against Robert, the enemy from the outside, or Kalle, the danger from inside. Other examples of this attitude in Pludra’s novel are Andreas’ friends from the FDJ – Walter Franke and Bodo Winkler – with whom he captures Robert and turns him over to the police.

Nearly two decades after the end of WWII, GDR society needed to be reminded of the danger of Fascism that remained among them, and/or just across the border as exemplified in the figure of the *Fremde* (Stranger) in Horst Beseler’s *Käuzchenkuhle*. Beseler explains that at the end of WWII, this Stranger and his colleague, two SS-members, sunk in the lake a treasure stolen during the war (254ff.). Now, after the war, they want to recover it and finally benefit from the crimes they committed. During their attempt to recover the treasure, they do not care if anybody will be hurt, and do not even hesitate to use weapons. Through this example, Beseler explicitly shows the dangers coming from the Fascists still living in the West.

The readers of *Sheriff Teddy* and *Käuzchenkuhle* were expected to learn that all the ruthlessness and brutality of militarism and imperialism still continued in the West. This evil should immediately be associated with the Capitalist states, and one was to understand that only Socialism could guarantee peace and prosperity. The message passed to young people was that they had an obligation to defend Socialism and its achievements. An important facet of this duty

is that it should be done even if doing so involves family: Beseler's Jampoll, seeing that something wrong is happening, never gives up trying to find out what it is. Even when he learns that it would harm the good name of his grandfather, he knows that in order to stop the Stranger from getting the treasure, he has to tell the police. "Man muss zugeben, dass er [Jampoll - JBS] sich in einer schlimmen Lage befand. Er liebte seinen Großvater und wusste ihn doch ... schuldig. Er wollte den Fremden entlarven und konnte es nicht, ohne den Alten zu belasten..." (Beseler 347). However, Beseler stresses that Jampoll's observations could have helped catch the criminal earlier (347). Pludra's example of Andreas, as well as Beseler's Jampoll and his friends, point to the importance that *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) was supposed to play in the life of the Socialist *Neue Mensch*. They emphasize that the danger from within and also from the outside is still very much real and that personal attachments cannot interfere with one's obligation to defend the Socialist state and/or what belongs to it.

Connected to the *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend) is the expectation of **vigilance** from the citizens of the GDR. A very important characteristic of the Socialist *Neue Mensch* is the insistence on spying, discovering secrets, finding the enemy. This attitude promotes a specific facet of the soldier personality, emphasizing the 'danger from within'. Sylka Scholz, in her article "'Sozialistische Soldatenpersönlichkeit' und 'Helden der Arbeit'. Hegemoniale Männlichkeiten in der DDR?", mentions the "*Kämpfer an der unsichtbaren Front*" (fighter on the invisible front) as the masculinity ideal of the *Staatssicherheit* (2001, 3). By playing detective and trying to uncover the dealings of the enemy, the young people are encouraged to watch their 'neighbor' very carefully and report on his activity to the authorities. As Horst Beseler demonstrates in *Käuzchenkuhle*, this behavior contributes to the defense and protection of the

Heimat (Homeland), and it is presented as something that does not have the negative connotation of a denunciation. He explicitly explains the difference between spying for the good cause, and the negatively connoted word ‘*Spitzel*’ (snitch): “Ein Spitzel ist jemand, der Verrat übt und Geld dafür nimmt. Aber ich hab dich nicht verraten! Ich hab dir helfen wollen. Und ich hab dir die Wahrheit gesagt!” (Beseler 205). Informing should thus be considered a positive, and even honorable, thing to do. Through these examples, the authors emphasize to their young readership that every citizen of the GDR needs to be observant and, in case of any suspicious activity, report it to the authorities.

Concluding Remarks about the Socialist Soldier Personality

In the 1950s and 1960s, the need to define the GDR’s borders and to protect them, in addition to the Cold War tensions with the West, pushed the SED to concentrate its educational efforts on the promotion of the ideal of the Socialist soldier as a model for the *Neue Mensch*. In the educational literature of this period, there are numerous examples of this ideal. Though none of the novels analyzed in this dissertation depict an actual soldier of the *Nationale Volksarmee*,⁹⁷ they portray military ideals set before young people in the GDR through their mandatory readings at school.

Interestingly, the literary models of the *Neue Mensch* are based on qualities associated with the traditional models of masculinity which were connected to the soldier profession. In the five novels analyzed in this chapter, the authors illustrate their protagonists as embodying traits such as discipline, courage, and willingness to protect the weak. In addition, the Socialist soldiers

⁹⁷ The NVA was created only in 1956 and was not deployed anywhere during its entire existence. This may be the reason for the lack of NVA soldiers in the literature of the 1950s/60s.

are shown as good comrades, because they are loyal and willing to sacrifice their lives for the larger cause. This was meant to facilitate the acceptance of the Socialist soldier personality within society. However, the Socialist soldiers also needed to be set apart from other ‘non-Socialist’ soldiers. For this purpose, they were imbued with certain characteristics that were presented as specific to Socialism. These included their commitment to the cause of Socialism as the way to a better world, their confidence that they were fighting a just war, *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), and vigilance. These attitudes were important not only as traits of the soldier in the NVA (People’s Army), but also as traits expected from every ‘good’ citizen in everyday life. Yet, upon a closer look, these qualities are not really much different from those used in any other military propaganda. In many modern societies, a soldier is shown as fighting for a noble cause, believing in the superiority of a final goal, and willing to place a cause above his or her own needs. Moreover, the traditional honor code in the military, as developed in European cultures, stated that soldiers should never abuse power over the weak. In GDR literature, the association of these traits – fighting a just war, *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), and vigilance – with Socialism is to a large degree achieved by creating a countertype in the figures of the Capitalist, Fascist, bourgeois, etc. soldier.

The authors of the texts discussed in this dissertation clearly differentiate between the Socialist soldier, presented as someone who does not take pleasure in killing but does so only in the defense of peace and for the preservation of Socialism, and the Capitalist, Fascist, and bourgeois soldier, who is shown as lacking such morals rooted in a humanist ideal. The young readers of GDR literature were supposed to learn that the Socialist world is the better one and that it is everybody’s obligation to defend it, even if this means standing up to closest friends and

family. Hints at collaboration with the authorities, be they the police or the Stasi, suggest that young readers were supposed to internalize that acting as an informant should be considered a positive and desirable trait. The soldiers in the service of Capitalism, in contrast to Socialists, are often presented as those who maltreat the weak. The ‘good’ Socialist soldier is presented as someone who knows that he has the duty to defend and protect those who cannot defend themselves (women, children, prisoners, etc.). However, this idea of caring for others does not make a man any less ‘manly’. As the authors point out, the dangers that come with it, would exclude any possible association with femininity.

The difficulties that a model based on a soldier personality faced lay primarily in the connection between the pacifist spirit of the society after the war and the Cold War tensions that required preparation for a new armed conflict. In the works discussed in this dissertation, the authors attempted to solve this problem by applying Lenin’s idea of the just and unjust war.

In addition, some conflicting messages can be seen in the depictions and definitions of the enemy: At least until the mid-1950s there still existed hopes for reunification; this made it difficult to depict the people on the other side of the border as enemies, while simultaneously blaming the Western Capitalist for ‘all evil’. A similar problem was the need of accepting and including in GDR society those who had fought in the German army during WWII, while, at the same time, depicting all those previously involved in the Nazi regime as malicious and immoral. In several books analyzed in this chapter, the authors try to resolve these problems. In works like Noll’s *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt* or Beseler’s *Käuzchenkuhle*, we find the explanation that the minds of good people may have been corrupted by Nazi propaganda, and that many of them deserve a second chance. Interestingly, in the works from the 1950s, the distinction between

‘good’ and ‘evil’ is drawn much clearer. The working class, including workers in the West, and the Socialist East is presented as good; whereas ‘the evil’ is equated with the ‘bourgeoisie’ in the West. I see two possible explanations for this development. First, this contrast may be a consequence of the Stalinist distinction in “You’re either with us, or against us”. With the Cold War tensions growing stronger, the need of a clearer image of the enemy became more urgent. The second possible reason may be the growing influence of the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (MfS – Ministry of State Security), and the increased use of surveillance: the emphasis on the danger from within supported the idea of suspecting everybody as a potential traitor.

These tensions within the model of the Socialist soldier seem to stem from the constantly changing international situation of the GDR: the end of the war, the hopes for reunification, the growing tensions of the Cold War, etc. Though such conflicts within the model of the Socialist soldier personality might have made it difficult for the young generation to identify completely with the ideal of the *Neue Mensch*, the ideal of the soldier personality was nevertheless presented to the younger generation as a positive model for identification.

The model of the Socialist soldier personality, although based on traits traditionally associated with masculinity, was explicitly presented as an ideal for the entire society, men and women alike. However, the authors of educational literature used primarily examples of boys and men to highlight these traits. By presenting the desired qualities and behavior as performed by male protagonists, the authors perpetuated the association of these traits with characteristics of masculinity. This link between the soldier characteristics and masculinities was made even clearer through the fact that only men were expected to serve in the military forces.

Underneath this construction of a masculinity based on and guided by a soldier ideal, there were political ideas. The soldier traits, especially obedience, discipline, loyalty, vigilance, and *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), aimed to ensure that the *Neue Mensch* would remain loyal to the SED and that he (or she) would defend the Socialist Fatherland. The illustration of the enemy as the countertype to the Socialist ideal and the insistence on the danger from the West, as the threat to the new (and better) home was always present. Familiarization with order and hierarchy from an early age onwards was intended to prepare the new generation for a life under authoritarian rule. With the model of a soldier, young men, or women, were supposed to learn to identify with and love the Socialist home, and to distance themselves from the class enemies. For these reasons, the SED leadership emphasized the model of the Socialist soldier as a vehicle to promote the ideal of the *Neue Mensch* by including in the mandatory and suggested readings in the GDR works like those analyzed in this dissertation (BArch DR2/2060, BArch DR2/3739, Steinlein *et al.* 1204).

In addition to the fact that the model of the Socialist soldier was based on traits traditionally seen as masculine, and that the authors of educational literature perpetuated this association, the political reasons behind it made the ideal of the Socialist soldier personality an ideological masculinity as defined in chapter 1. By promoting this model through all channels of propaganda, the Socialist government aimed at making it the hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter 4: The Socialist Worker Personality

„Du sollst beim Aufbau des Sozialismus im Geiste der gegenseitigen Hilfe und der kameradschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit handeln, das Kollektiv achten und seine Kritik beherzigen.“ (Gebot 5.)⁹⁸

General Remarks on the Connection between Work, Worker, and Masculinity in Western Societies

In Western societies, work as a professional occupation has traditionally been associated with masculinity (Scholz 2001, 2). On the one hand, this connection results in the understanding that the traits necessary to perform the work are masculine. On the other hand, the identification of men with their profession may also influence the hegemonic masculinity of a society. In the context of the GDR, where the working class supposedly assumed the leading position, the manual/industrial worker, as the ideal of man, occupied a central position. In the following I discuss how the connection between work and men developed. I also review the traits commonly associated with this type of masculinity by scholars investigating different Western societies, and at different times. In this historical overview, I show that in spite of the changes to the working conditions and economic systems, the traits associated with the worker, taken as a masculinity model, did not change much over the time.

To a large degree, working-class masculinity in Europe was a product of the Industrial Revolution that took place in the 18th/19th century. However, many of its characteristics can be traced to earlier time periods. Connell argues that during the transformation of the state

⁹⁸ *10 Gebote für den sozialistischen Menschen* (10 Commandments for the Socialist Human Being) – announced by Walter Ulbricht during the V. Parteitag (Party Meeting) of the SED, 10 July 1958 in Berlin. In Gibas, Monika *Propaganda in der DDR (1949-1989)*. Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung. 2000, 49.

associated with industrialization, and because of the increase of bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie assumed some forms of gentry masculinity (192). This included the division of labor, which placed men in the public sphere and restricted women to the private sphere. This division played an important role in the valorization of the occupations men and women performed: Even though men, as workers, and women, as housekeepers and mothers, performed work, only men received compensation for their labor in the form of a salary (Holter 27).⁹⁹

This traditional division of labor prevalent in what was later labeled as the bourgeois class entailed the existence of the concept of ‘breadwinner’ and ‘provider’ for the family as a male role, and that of ‘homemaker’ as a female role (Morgan 169). In his article on class and masculinity, David Morgan, a sociologist focusing on family sociology and gender studies, emphasizes the role of the ‘provider’ as a “major element in the construction of masculine identity” because of it being “a moral as well as economic category” (169). The ability to provide for the family became an attribute of a ‘real man’.

Sylka Scholz, a German sociologist, explains how industrialization influenced the position that professional occupation took in men’s lives: “Im Zuge der Industrialisierung bildete sich eine spezifische Männlichkeitskonstruktion heraus” (2009, 1). Scholz, referring to Michael Meuser characterizes the construction of this masculinity as follows:

eine Ausrichtung auf lebenslange, kontinuierliche und die materielle Existenz sichernde Erwerbsarbeit, eine hohe Identifikation mit dem Beruf, oft auch mit dem Betrieb bzw. der Firma. In seinem Kern ist das Männlichkeitskonstrukt von einer Berufsorientierung bestimmt, während die Familienorientierung sekundär ist. Gleichwohl aber sind Beruf

⁹⁹ While the strict division of labor has been weakened in more recent times in the Western world, and women are now more readily accepted in the workforce, their compensation still remains lower than that of men who hold comparable positions.

und Familie über die Position des Familienernährers in einer hierarchisierenden Weise miteinander verknüpft (Scholz 2009, 1).¹⁰⁰

Hence, one may say that in the course of industrialization, men's identification through work became more important and turned into the primary goal in life and family became secondary. Yet, through the role of the provider, the two spheres, private and public, still intertwined (Scholz 2009, 1). The accent on the role of the 'provider' and a man's identification with his professions led to the association of work as a masculine occupation. The performance of this role – the duty of a man to provide for his family – reinforced this connection. The traits needed to successfully fulfill these duties were consequently accepted as those of the 'real man'.

In the 19th century working-class, women were not excluded from professional work even though men had the dominant position in the household: Before the upheavals of 1848-50, workers, because of poverty, low wages and limited employment opportunities, commonly had to rely on their wives and children to be able to provide for the family (Campbell 16). Women were present especially in textile factories, and in industries such as coal mining, printing and steelmaking (Connell, 196). However, as Connell explains, the "expansion of the industrial production saw the emergence of forms of masculinity organized around wage-earning capacity, mechanical skills, domestic patriarchy and combative solidarity among wage earners" (196). She continues by explaining that "the expulsion of women from heavy industry was ... a key process

¹⁰⁰ Meuser, Michael. "Nichts als alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen? Männlichkeitskonstruktionen im Informationszeitalter." *Geschlechterverhältnisse im Informationszeitalter*. Eds. Heike Kahlter and Claudia Kajatin. Frankfurt, 2004: 73-93.

in the formation of working-class masculinity, connected with the strategy of the family wage and drawing on the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres” (Connell 196).¹⁰¹

This development led to the understanding that there would be a direct connection between the ability to perform hard physical labor and a masculinity that seems particular to working-class men. Character traits such as physical strength, skill, and endurance are perceived as the defining characteristics of a working-class masculinity. A visible manifestation of these traits can be seen in the tangible results of workers’ physical labor, such as constructions, industrial products, etc. This association also allows men to develop a sense of pride vis-à-vis these accomplishments (Freeman 732),¹⁰² which, in turn, may serve as confirmation of their masculinity. The risks that such manual work sometimes entails are commonly seen as a sacrifice men need to make in order to support their families (Johnston and McIvor 138).¹⁰³ Thus, the more courage a man shows in order to perform these dangerous tasks, the more ‘manly’ he is considered.

In addition, adopting the role of a ‘provider’ for the family can be seen as assuming the role society historically expects from a man. With regard to this context, Johnston and McIvor

¹⁰¹For a more detailed description of the development of gender differentiation see Karin Hausen. “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere’: Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben.” *Sozialgeschichte der Familien in der Neuzeit Europas: neue Forschungen*. Ed. Werner Conze. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1976, 363-393. While the article appears to be older, it is still highly regarded by contemporary scholars.

¹⁰² Joshua B. Freeman is a historian who focuses on the working-class. In his article “Hardhats: Construction Workers, Manliness, and the 1970 Pro-War Demonstration,” he presents the example of construction workers in the 1970s in the U.S.

¹⁰³ Johnston and McIvor base on their investigations of the Clydeside Heavy Industry in the early decades of the 20th century.

argue that an apprenticeship performed by a young man, earning a lower salary, or maybe even nothing at all, can be considered a rite of passage, the transition from a boy to a man (139).¹⁰⁴

Bonding with other men at the jobsite, often also after work, plays an important role in the creation of solidarity. This solidarity can be compared to the feeling of camaraderie experienced by soldiers. Workers often have to rely on their co-workers for their safety, such as when working in mines or at high elevations (Freeman 731). Male bonding as such can be seen as a very influential factor in determining what traits and behavior are considered appropriate for men. By association with their male colleagues and by, in Butler's terms, 'performing,' the same behavior, men attempt to assert their own masculinity; at the same time, they perpetuate the association of this specific behavior with men. Historian Chad Gregory, based on his own experience working on the docks in the USA, explains that such male bonding often involves whistling after girls, cursing, or showing off how much alcohol one can consume (Gregory 258). Sociologist Karen D. Pyke explains that such behavior can be perceived as a way to assert one's manliness. She argues that in order to "compensate for their subordination, some lower-status men ... engage in pervasive talk of their sexual prowess and a ritualistic put-down of women" (Pyke 531f.). They attempt to affirm their masculinity by separating themselves from everything that could be considered feminine, which they associate also with upper-class men (Pyke 531).

The connection between manliness and 'getting your hands dirty' and hard physical labor, still exists today. Karen D. Pyke, with reference to Collinson and Donaldson, explains the

¹⁰⁴ Johnston and McIvor add: "Furthermore, assuming the breadwinner status, with a dependent wife, sharpened men's sense of entitlement and power within the home and marital relationship" (Johnston and McIvor 140). Thus, the connection between work and masculinity also helps to reinforce the patriarchal system.

emphasis on physical traits such as endurance and strength in lower-class masculinity as a response to the subordinate position vis-à-vis the higher classes (Pyke 531).¹⁰⁵

Similarly, as Louise Archer, Simon D. Pratt, and David Phillips explain in their article “Working-class Men’s Constructions of Masculinity and Negotiations of (Non) Participation in Higher Education”, the emphasis on strength, risk-taking, and manual skills by working-class men can also be seen as a response to the hegemonic claims of the educated middle-class masculinity. Working-class boys position themselves as ‘others’ vis-à-vis the middle class students. Analyzing data collected from a discussion group with 64 ethnically diverse working-class men participating, or willing to participate, in higher education, Archer *et al.* claim that working-class men seem to accept that society values educated men more, which, for example, translates into higher salaries. Nevertheless, they characterize men participating in higher education as unattractive, unmanly, socially inept, and even feminine (Archer *et al.* 435f.). Thus, they assert the working-class ‘hard’ masculinity and, by denigrating the concept of higher education and its representatives, they mark it as not only distinct but also as superior to other masculinities (Archer *et al.* 435f.). This distinction between the educated and the physical worker was supposed to disappear in the GDR according to the official claims of the SED.

Work and Workers in Pre-GDR Germany

Industrialization not only played an important role in the creation of the working-class, it also made the relationship with work more impersonal. In particular, work at an assembly line

¹⁰⁵ Collinson, David L., ““Engineering humour””: Masculinity, joking, and conflict in shop-floor relations.” *Men’s lives*. Eds. Michael S. Kimmel, Michael A. Meuser. New York: MacMillan, 1992: 232-46; Donaldson, Mike. “Labouring men: Love, sex and strife.” *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 23, 1987: 165-84.

was always considered a source of alienation and dissatisfaction. Historian Joan Campbell, investigating the work ethic in Germany from 1800 until 1945, explains that in the 1920s “[i]ndustrialists, engineers, educators, churchmen, artists, trade unionists, and politicians joined in the effort to increase the productivity of German labor while improving the quality of life” (4). Their discussions aimed at finding a way to promote the idea of *Arbeitsfreude* (joy of work) and thus change the workers’ attitude towards their occupation (Campbell 10). Campbell further explains that these discussions focused on “the significance of work for the individual and the community, the cultural implications of mechanization and rationalization, the educational potential and the need to educate people for work, and the relationship of work and leisure” (14). In the context of the working-class, and taking into account the connection between work and masculinity, the notion of changing people’s attitude towards work can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the position of worker-masculinity.

Early Socialists in Germany insisted on both educating people to work, and educating them through work to combat alienation. Marx’ concept of alienation is based on the fact that workers are not able to relate to the object they produce, because they sell their labor power in order to obtain means of subsistence rather than enjoying their labor. Therefore, it is the employer who owns the product and decides on its value. Joan Campbell explains that Marx and Engels believed that “labor would one day be transformed from a tool of subjugation to a ‘means of emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full,’ making work a ‘pleasure instead of burden’” (24). Campbell further explains: “Drawing on Marx’s later writings, Engels stressed that automation would progressively reduce the physical burden of labor, that modern industry,

once freed from its capitalist shackles, would offer full scope to scientific creativity and technical ingenuity and thus bridge the gap between mental and physical labor ...” (24). These ideas of work and the workers’ relation to it were to become very important in GDR ideology, where the progress and the development of the state depended to a high degree on the workers’ participation.

With the revolution in 1848, workers began forming *Arbeitervereine* (worker’s associations): among others the *Arbeiterverbrüderung* (brotherhood of workers) and the *Bund der Kommunisten* (the Communist League) (Grebing 19). Their main goal was to fight for the improvement of workers’ living standards and working conditions. As a consequence of the attempted revolution, all such organizations were prohibited. However, soon after workers started again to create their own associations: in 1859, the liberal *Deutscher Nationalverein* (German National Association) was founded, which supported the creation of many workers’ associations. In 1863, Ferdinand Lassalle, together with twelve representatives of eleven cities, founded the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein* (General German Worker’s Association), and in 1869 August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, followers of Karl Marx, founded the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* (Social Democratic Worker’s Party) (Grebing 23f, 236f.)

The revolutionary component of Karl Marx’ and Friedrich Engels’ *Manifesto of the Communist Party* projects the image of the Socialist worker as a class-warrior who should fight against the capitalist system, believe in the superiority of his class, and aim to take over power from the bourgeoisie. The *klassenkämpferische Arbeiter* (worker involved in class-struggle) hence became the most important model for working-class masculinity. Another important aspect of the workers’ movement was the international character of its aims. The slogan from the

Manifesto of the Communist Party, “Working Men of all Countries, Unite!” is one of the best known and most often used mottos of the Socialists and Communists. The goal was to lead a global revolution that would ultimately eliminate class divisions.

Notions such as class struggle and internationalist aspects were removed from the ideal of the worker in the National Socialist worldview. Though entirely rejecting Marxism, Nazi ideology nevertheless contained many Socialist ideas. In particular, the worker was still to play a dominant role in society. Even the official name of the Nazi Party – *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* – indicates the importance that workers were to play in the III Reich. Heike Pantelmann explains: “Die Wertschätzung des Arbeiters, seine Gleichstellung mit anderen Berufsgruppen kam dadurch zum Ausdruck, dass alle ‘Schaffenden’ als Arbeiter bezeichnet wurden, je nach Tätigkeit als ‘Arbeiter der Stirn’ oder als ‘Arbeiter der Faust’” (27)[emphasis in the original]. The Nazi ideal of the worker explicitly rejected class-struggle as outdated, and replaced it with the idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* (people’s community) (Pantelmann 38). This idea influenced the characterization of the National Socialist worker, who should: fulfill his duty (*Pflichterfüllung*) vis-à-vis the community; be a fighter or a soldier (*Kämpfer bzw. Soldat*); serve the community (*Dienst*); know that he is, in fact, a part of the community (*Gemeinschaft*), which emphasizes the idea of camaraderie; and be willing to and capable of performing for the community (*Leistung*) (Pantelmann 27ff.). Internationalism was also displaced by the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people’s community), which emphasized the purity of the race and blood. The idea of service and fulfilling of duty, the need for skills and strength in order to be able to perform the work, as well as the spirit of camaraderie are grounded in traits traditionally associated with men.

The Worker in the Early GDR Culture

From early on, the GDR was known as the *Arbeiter-und Bauern-Staat* (State of Workers and Peasants). This name was enshrined in the Constitution of 1974 (Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1974); as can be seen, the centrality of the worker was already apparent in its name. This emphasis was not only modeled on the Soviet example, it was also crucial for the reconstruction of the country and its industry, as well as to support the claim of the SED, as a workers' party, to be in the leading position. The GDR economy was in constant need of workers. This was the case especially in the time of the *Aufbau des Sozialismus* (Construction of Socialism), in the first two decades of its existence. Dorothee Wierling describes the 1950s as a time “marked by the pathos of difficult beginnings; but at the same time they [these years -JBS] inspired some of the best memories held by older workers at the end of the GDR” (1996, 45). The 1960s can be described as a period of relative prosperity with “ample supplies and technical advances” (Wierling 1996, 45). The need for workers' participation in the reconstruction of industry, in the development and progress of the society, and in the construction of Socialism, eventually turned the officially sanctioned and promulgated concept of the worker into an ideological masculinity.

After the end of the WWII and the division of Germany into zones, East Germany found itself practically without heavy industry.¹⁰⁶ Coal mines, smelting mills, and steelworks were now located in West Germany and the newly Polish Upper Silesia (Roesler 30). In order to develop a functioning economy, the GDR had to first focus on creating a new heavy industry, from scratch, on its territory. Another difficulty East Germany had to struggle with was the high war

¹⁰⁶ For more information on history and the economic system in the GDR see Jörg Roesler's *Die Wirtschaft der DDR* (2002).

reparations and the dismantling of the industry carried out by the Soviet Union, which reduced industrial capacities/assets by almost a third (Roesler 15).¹⁰⁷ The dismantling was concentrated on the most technically developed production facilities. After losing their modern equipment, the factories had to resort to older technologies in order to function, which often meant that work previously performed by machines had again to be done by hand (Roesler 15). This situation led to an emphasis in GDR propaganda on reconstructing the Fatherland, building Socialism, and the importance of the worker, who was presented as indispensable to fulfill these tasks. The worker, as well as the traits associated with people who engage in hard physical labor, were of utmost importance for the well-being of the state, because the workforce, diminished by the war, did not grow as fast as expected: until the building of the Wall and the sealing of the border between the two Germanies, many workers fled the GDR in search of better living conditions.

The economy of the GDR was based on the Soviet planned economy. It was developed by drawing on Marx analysis of the capitalist market, and it was supposed to eliminate the hazard factor of the free market economy. In the GDR, modeling on the Soviet Union, the *Politbüro des Zentralkomitees der SED* (Politbureau of the Central Committee of the SED) dealt with and decided upon all basic economic issues. The *Staatliche Plankommission* (State Plan Commission), an institution of the *Ministerrat der DDR* (Council of Ministers of the GDR), prepared long-term economic plans. The goal was to link the different branches of the economy and to harmonize production with expenditure. In 1963, the government implemented *Das Neue Ökonomische System der Planung und Leitung* (New Economic System) which combined

¹⁰⁷ According to the agreements of Yalta (1944) and Potsdam (August 1945) the allied forces had the right to dismantle and use for themselves strategic industries within their own zone. In the West, the dismantling stopped already in 1950 and was replaced with financial help for rebuilding in the form of the Marshall Plan. The Soviet Union continued to dismantle East German industry until 1953.

elements of a free-market economy with those of a planned economy by giving more power to the production facilities and demanding a labor force of ‘qualified’ workers: “Die DDR nahm Züge einer ‘sozialistischen Leistungsgesellschaft’ an, in der nicht mehr nur politische Rechtgläubigkeit, sondern auch fachliche Qualifikationen über berufliche und damit gesellschaftliche Stellung entschied. Fachleute, wie Ökonomen und Techniker, rückten in politische Führungsstellungen auf. Verfassungsrechtlich festgeschrieben wurden die gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Veränderungen 1968 in einer neuen, der zweiten Verfassung der DDR” (Bleek) [emphasis in the original]. Placing high emphasis on an educated workforce in the 1960s triggered some modifications of the model of the worker: What constituted an ideal or model worker was no longer solely defined in physical terms but it was now expected that workers would also be able to perform intellectually at their best.

A word often associated with the GDR’s economy is *Mangel* (lack). As Jörg Roesler explains, this was not solely a symptom felt by the people, who complained about the lack of economic goods. More important was the lack of natural resources that caused the production processes to stagnate (43f.). Roesler argues that the negative effect such waiting periods, caused by *Mangel* (lack), had on the workers’ morale was even more important. On the one hand people were supposed to come to work, only to find themselves twiddling their thumbs. On the other hand, management, eager to fulfill the quota, compensated for the lost time with overtime work, often even on weekends. As Roesler continues to point out, attempts to overcome these difficulties often remained futile and caused more problems than they solved (Roesler 45f.).

Roesler explains that the methods used to compensate for *Mangel* (lack) consisted mostly of demanding too much of the scarce resources, calculating that not all demands would be

fulfilled; if they were, the surplus could be traded in with other plants. Furthermore, workers were encouraged and even expected to show inventiveness in solving problems in better and cheaper ways. This expectation led to an augmentation of the list of character-traits associated with the worker-model of the *Neue Mensch* by adding 'inventiveness' as an important and necessary core element.

Belonging to the 'working-class' can be understood very broadly. In fact, the GDR government's guidelines from 1959 for granting educational support include in the working-class not only workers in industry, agriculture, trade, craft, etc., but also members of the military and other armed forces, as well as those who "nach dem Jahre 1945 im Gebiet der DDR als Angestellter der staatlichen Verwaltung, in der volkseigenen Wirtschaft und in den sozialistischen Genossenschaften sowie kulturellen, wissenschaftlichen, medizinischen und ähnlichen Einrichtungen tätig sind" (BArch DR2/3863). Basically, everyone who supported the Socialist system could be counted as belonging to the working-class. As Dorothee Wierling explains: "[i]n the end, the identification between socialism and the worker led to an identification of socialists, members of the SED, with the working-class; communists thus shared the cachet of the ideal worker. A telling sign of this affected identity is the fact that high party functionaries and officers were statistically counted as industrial workers" (1996, 48). By bestowing upon themselves the status of 'ideal worker' while simultaneously promoting this ideal in order to turn it into hegemonic masculinity, the members of the SED attempted to secure their prominent position.

Among the entire working-class, the industrial worker was the most glorified. Dorothee Wierling argues that according to Marxist views "industrial work was believed to reflect the

technical and social progress of society” (46). She further claims that “[i]ndustry was viewed as an educational institute for molding the raw class instinct present in all workers, changing them into class-conscious revolutionary subjects” (Wierling 1996, 46). One of the difficulties the SED faced in co-opting workers for its own purposes was the persistent view of work as a means to earn a living, and not a source of enjoyment, self-fulfillment, and progress for oneself and society. Most workers did not acknowledge that working for the state meant in fact working for themselves and their future. Oftentimes, personal interests even stood in stark contrast to what was expected by the GDR government, and Wierling points out very aptly that workers’ hopes, expectations and ambitions such as “maximum income with minimum norms and smoothly running productions” (1996, 46) often did not match up with what was promulgated as an ideal (Socialist) worker’s attitude towards work. The SED tried to address this discrepancy through propaganda and education, presenting such self-centered attitudes as remnant of the capitalist system. The guidelines summing up the *Charakteristischen Merkmale des sozialistischen Menschen* (characteristics of the Socialist human being) specifically explained how young people were expected to see work:

Die Arbeit, die in der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft für den Arbeiter nur ein Mittel ist, sein Leben zu fristen, ist für den neuen, sozialistischen Menschen zu einer unmittelbaren gesellschaftlichen Tätigkeit geworden. Er ist sich bewußt, daß seine Arbeit im Dienst der sozialistischen Gesellschaft steht und daß er durch sie an der Vollendung des Sozialismus mitwirkt. Die Arbeit ist ihm nicht nur erstes Lebensbedürfnis, sondern zugleich eine Sache der Ehre und des Ruhmes geworden (BArch DR2/5624) [emphasis in the original].

Therefore, the younger generation was expected to perceive work as a value in itself, and it was through it that they would build a better future for themselves and their children by helping to build Socialism.

All in all, however, the main characteristics of the Socialist worker model did not differ much from the traditional image of the male worker in Western Europe that had developed in the 19th century. They included such traits as strength, skill, risk-taking, pride in accomplishments, and solidarity. However, expectations towards the new Socialist worker differed in several important aspects: in the GDR every worker was perceived as an integral part of a collective whole, was assumed to continuously further his education, and was expected to participate in cultural life. The collective aspect of the work imparted on the workers a huge responsibility. In Socialism, the role of provider and breadwinner was extended from the family to the entire society. As a part of the collective, each worker was also held accountable for the well-being of those around him, and he was expected to help educate those that ‘strayed from the right path’ and did not yet understand the Socialist way of living. At the same time the Socialist worker was supposed to actively protect the state by exposing saboteurs and slackers, who inhibited or slowed down the progress of the Socialist state.

The need for new technologies and good technicians meant that education was very important. A model worker was expected to be able to think and adjust his working habits and methods on demand, and to try, always, to find new ways to build more, cheaper, and make it of better quality. The model of the educated worker gained importance especially in the 60s in the form of the *Leiter und Planer* (leader and planner) (Scholz 2001, 8). The Socialist worker was supposed to outperform West German workers in all aspects. In addition, the SED emphasized

the importance of modernization of technologies by appealing to its population to thrive towards surpassing the technological know-how of the Federal Republic instead of (simply) trying to ‘catch-up’, a concept that was promoted with the slogan *überholen ohne einzuholen* (surpassing without catching up).¹⁰⁸

The worker, who was now assigned the leading position in society, was also in charge of its culture. “Based on the claim of proletarian dictatorship, the working-class became the carrier of a national cultural tradition...” (Wierling 1996, 48). The Socialist worker was expected to be interested in art and literature, because he now “creatively participates in the further development of the totality of our cultural life,” as Walter Ulbricht proclaimed at the Bitterfeld Conference in 1959 (qtd in Wierling 1996, 49).¹⁰⁹ Following these directions, not only were the working men (and women) supposed to find time to appreciate literature, theatre, film, art, and opera, but they were also expected to participate in its creation.

The SED claimed the leading position in the state, and, at the same time, wanted to emphasize the high value of work and the prominent position of the working-class. To this purpose it promoted an idealized image of the worker. Dorothee Wierling shows that “[t]he body of the male industrial worker, the ‘heart of the working-class’ in Marxist-Leninist theory, the guarantor of the future and economic and social progress epitomizes this image” (1996, 47f.). This model was intended to become a part of the ideological masculinity of the German Democratic Republic. However, as Wierling adds: “Although a male ideal, it expressly included women” (1996, 48). This suggests that women, who were also employed, including in heavy

¹⁰⁸ This concept promoted the idea of a possible progress without following the same directions as the West.

¹⁰⁹ The Bitterfeld conference in April 1959 concentrated on the program of the Socialist cultural policies: the Bitterfelder Weg, which aimed to create a greater connection between workers and writers in the GDR. Wierling notes the following source for the Walter Ulbricht quote: Haral Bühl *et al.* *Handbuch für den Kulturfunktionär* (Berlin, 1961), 10.

industry, were also supposed to exhibit the qualities associated with the worker. However, the fact that gainful employment for women was often considered as a supplemental occupation to their domestic and reproductive duties, may suggest that the professional model of worker remained normatively connected to masculinity.¹¹⁰ Sylka Scholz, referring to Ina Merkel's analysis of the GDR print media of the 1950s argues "dass der 'neue Mensch' als Leitbild der sozialistischen Gesellschaft ... unter der Hand vermännlicht wurde (Scholz 2001, 7).¹¹¹ While official rhetoric in the GDR suggested that the ideal of the *Neue Mensch* included both women and men, and while it further implied that both, women and men, were expected to actively engage in 'building' a Socialist state, the following analysis of literary texts will reveal that this vision was not necessarily projected in educational literature for children and young adults and that the association of work and worker with masculinities remained valid.

The Worker in the Selected GDR Educational Literature of the 1950s and 1960s

The Novels Featuring the Worker Personalities

From early on, the SED had a keen interest in having 'work' and 'workers' prominently featured in the literature of the GDR. However, in the first years after the war, GDR literature for

¹¹⁰ ¹¹⁰ Scholz explains: "Erwerbsarbeit fungierte für Frauen als eine Ergänzung zu den Reproduktionsaufgaben, wobei sich die Gewichtung von Erwerbsarbeit und Familienleben im Laufe der DDR-Geschichte verschob" (2001,6). While this connotation was valid for the entire duration of the GDR, Scholz specifies that the accent on presenting women as important and valuable members of the workforce was stronger in the early decades. She illustrates this by making reference to changes within the officially promoted role models for women, that shifted from *berufstätige Frau* (working woman) in the early years of the GDR, to *berufstätige Mutter* (working mother), in the 70s (Scholz 2001, 6).

¹¹¹ Merkel, Ina. "Modernisierte Gesellschafts- 'Bilder' in den DDR Printmedien der fünfziger Jahre." *Biographien in Deutschland*. Eds. Wolfgang Fischer-Rosenthal and Peter Alheit. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1995: 171-176.

children and young adults mainly focused on combating the national-socialist ‘demons’ and on the re-education of the population. Literature written during the first decade of the German Democratic Republic’s existence (the 1950s) is usually characterized and referred to as *Aufbauliteratur* (Literature of Construction). The name refers to the building of Socialism, as well as the physical construction, and re-construction, of industry in East Germany (Emmerich 116ff.). The guidelines released after the Bitterfeld Conference in April 1959 emphasized the necessity to ensure that workers would be featured widely in GDR literature. The instructions called for an active involvement of workers in the creation of written works. The slogan of this appeal was *Greif zur Feder, Kumpel! Die sozialistische Nationalliteratur braucht dich!*¹¹² Groups of *schreibende Arbeiter* (writing workers) were created, and members of the brigades were encouraged to write brigade diaries. In addition, writers were now strongly advised to search for inspiration in industrial facilities, and many tried to comply with these new expectations. Brigitte Reimann, for example, moved to Hoyersweda and worked in the *Kombinat Schwarze Pumpe* (Bircken). Her experience, and the insights she gained on life in the brigades, served as material base for her novel *Ankunft im Alltag* (1961). This book gave the name to the second period in GDR literature: *Ankunftsliteratur* (Literature of Arrival). A characteristic of *Ankunftsliteratur* (1960s) is the literary form of *Entwicklungs-* or *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age novel) (Emmerich 129). These educational novels usually show the development of the protagonist: a rebel, or at least someone who initially rejects the system, but who is shown to eventually accept Socialism as superior political system, and who, at the same time, realizes his/her obligation to play an active role in building it.

¹¹² Grab the pen, buddy [*Kumpel* is also reference to a miner]! The Socialist National Literature needs you!

The German Democratic Republic portrayed itself as a classless and egalitarian society. When discussing worker masculinity in GDR literature, it is, therefore, important to keep in mind that the model was intended for the entire society, and that its declinations were supposed to serve for everybody: the manual laborer, the leaders and the management of production facilities, men and women. In addition, as Holger Brandes in his article on “Hegemonic Masculinities in East and West Germany” explains:

[T]he class concept [in the GDR – JBS] was so theoretically broadened that most vocational groups fell under the worker category. Thus, it must be considered that in the FRG, the job title ‘skilled worker’ was little valued, while in the GDR, it was considered as the epitome of a member in the nominally ruling class and was rather highly esteemed” (187).

In short, since everybody received a salary, everybody was a wage laborer, and thus belonged to the working-class. As a result everybody in the GDR was supposed to adopt the qualities projected through the worker model.

Because of the international character of the proletarian movement and the belief in the superiority of the entire working-class, the worker, no matter where he was living, needed to be seen as a positive model for identification. This implied that it was not possible to depict all workers from the West as counter-examples to the Socialist ideal simply because of their association with the West. For this reason, the authors preferred to use as counter-examples either factory owners, or the workers, from the East or the West, who, corrupted by Capitalism, ended up on the path of criminality. In GDR literature, the Federal Republic was represented as a

place where workers were exploited and dismissed if injured.¹¹³ The texts also suggest that, in the West, the only reason for working was to make money.

The model of the Socialist worker was presented in GDR literature in many different variations. Oftentimes, the age of the target audience determined the age and the function of the laboring people who were depicted: Younger readers, for the most part, were presented with children as main characters in their readings. In addition, secondary adult characters were introduced as examples to convey the importance and pleasure of work. The protagonists of the novels targeting older readers were oftentimes workers. For my analysis of the literary representations of the character traits associated with the worker model, I chose examples from three widely-read novels from the 60s, namely the *Ankunft im Alltag* (1961) by Brigitte Reimann, *Spur der Steine* (1964) by Erik Neutsch, and *die Aula* (1965) by Hermann Kant. While these novels were not included in the lists of mandatory readings for students in the first decade of the GDR, they are among the titles that were commonly included when reference is made to most Children's and Young Adult Literature in East Germany.

Ankunft im Alltag by Brigitte Reimann can be characterized as a prototype of the literature inspired by the guidelines resulting from the Bitterfeld conference. It was published by the *Verlag Neues Leben* in 1961, and it received the literary Price awarded by the *Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (FDGB) in 1962. Reimann tells the story of three young people: Recha, Curt, and Nikolaus who each decide to perform a practical year before continuing their education at the university. They join a brigade in the *Kombinat Schwarze Pumpe* (industrial conglomerate 'Schwarze Pumpe'). Recha, at first, falls in love with the handsome, but irresponsible Curt. However, Nikolaus' unpretentiousness, honesty, and industriousness finally win her over. The

¹¹³ See the example of Kristian's father in Horst Beseler's *Kätzchenkuhle*.

plot of this story illustrates how the attributes of a Socialist worker make a young man appear much more masculine, and thus more attractive to a girl. The description of the young men and their relation to, and treatment of, Recha, is intended to demonstrate the correct, and manly, manner to behave. As Reimann shows that Recha falls in love with Nikolaus, she simultaneously presents him as someone who possesses all the character traits that define and are expected from a 'real man'. Nikolaus is presented as a positive role model and readers are hence guided to believe that it is highly desirable to emulate the character traits that Reimann, presenting him as an ideal or model worker, had bundled in this character. In this novel, the example of Curt serves as a countertype and personifies a flawed type of masculinity. However, Reimann tells that through work at the production facility, and through the example of other workers, Curt realizes his mistakes, learns the correct way of behavior, and eventually accepts responsibility for his actions.

Erik Neutsch's novel *Spur der Steine* also takes place among workers – on a construction site of the *Betrieb* in Schkona. The novel was first published by the Mitteldeutsche Verlag Halle in 1964. The over-900-page-long book centers on the forbidden love affair between Katrin Klee and the Party secretary Werner Horrath. At the same time, Neutsch depicts the personal development of the worker Hannes Balla, who is presented as someone who initially rejects any involvement in the system but eventually learns to appreciate the advantages of the Socialist life. In the background, however, Neutsch touches upon many other themes. For example, there is a plot thread concerning Balla's father and his refusal to join the collectivization process; another thread emphasizes the role of art in Socialism; yet another shows how technologically and socially advanced the Soviet Union is; a colleague of Balla illustrates the negative influence of

the West, etc. An important aspect of the novel is that the author attempts to depict the characters with all their qualities and flaws. Interestingly, this may also be the reason why, though the novel was popular and even received a literary award, the film based upon the novel was taken off screens only three days after its premiere.¹¹⁴

The third book I chose to discuss in the context of the worker as an educational model communicated via literature is Hermann Kant's novel *Die Aula*. It was first printed in 1964 in the magazine *Forum*. The first bound edition came out in 1965 and was published by the Rütten & Loening publishing house in East Berlin. This story places the workers in a different milieu and a different role than was the case in the novels by Reimann and Neutsch that were discussed early: In *Die Aula*, workers are depicted as students of the *Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät* (School of Workers and Peasants), a school aiming at preparing young workers and peasants for the *Abitur* (final high school exams) and university studies. The protagonist, Robert Iswall, who enrolled during the school's first year of existence, is preparing a speech for the celebration of its closing.¹¹⁵ In order to do that, he recollects the events that happened while he attended the school. He also investigates what happened to some of his former colleagues. The novel shows the possibilities that Socialism gives to workers; it is also intended to counter an old stereotype, by demonstrating that people from the working-class can indeed achieve high intellectual positions if they are given the proper opportunities. Thus, we see a young tailor who changes careers to become a doctor of medicine, an electrician who becomes a journalist, a carpenter who becomes a Sinology professor, etc. The book's title *die Aula* symbolizes the proletariat's takeover of the

¹¹⁴ As a consequence of the 11. Plenum of the *Zentralkomitee der SED* (Central Committee of the SED) in December 1965, called the *Kahlschlag-Plenum* (clear-cutting plenum), which restricted cultural representations of the system, several films, including Frank Beyer's *Spur der Steine*, were banned (Kramer 133).

¹¹⁵ This type of school only existed from 1949 to 1963.

bourgeois symbols of education (Emmerich 191). Bertelsmann, a West German publisher based in Munich, published the novel in 1966. Though criticized for the loyalty towards the Socialist system, the book was acknowledged in the West for its literary qualities (Becker).

Other widely read texts that depict workers are Dieter Noll's *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, especially the second part, *Roman einer Heimkehr* (1963), and the older, Soviet, novel *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde* (1932-34) by Nikolai Ostrowski. Texts intended for younger children are *Sheriff Teddy* (1956) by Benno Pludra, and *Käuzchenkuhle* (1965) by Horst Beseler. These texts were already introduced in chapter 3 as the authors used them also to depict the qualities associated with the soldier model of the *Neue Mensch*. In addition to these novels, I will also analyze the protagonists of Erwin Strittmatters's *Tinko* (1954) as examples of the worker model.

Excerpts from Strittmatter's novel were first published in 1953 in the magazines *Neue Deutsche Literatur*, *Sonntag*, and *Neues Deutschland*. In 1954, the *Tägliche Rundschau* printed the entire novel as a series, and in the same year *Aufbau Verlag* published the first book version. Subsequently, there were 33 editions from the same publishing house. In addition, it was printed in the *Reclam Universalbibliothek Leipzig*, which, at the time, also belonged to the *Aufbau Verlag*. The novel was included in the list of mandatory reading for children in the ninth grade (BArch DR2/3740). The story centers on the conflict between two men who influence the life of eight year-old Tinko: his grandfather and his father. The grandfather has received land after the war and wants to prove to everybody that he is capable of working it by himself. He is depicted as someone who believes in the value and even superiority of traditional, patriarchal, and authoritative systems and methods of production, and relies on his 'friendship' with the richer farmer Kimpel. Kimpel is depicted as a representative of the bourgeois class, and he is portrayed

as someone who drinks (Strittmatter 41) and does not want to participate in the collective (Strittmatter 160). Tinko's father is a *Heimkehrer* (repatriate). He returned home after the war in 1948, after his release from a POW (Prisoner of War) camp in the Soviet Union. With the introduction of this character, Strittmatter turns to a topic prevalent in *Trümmerliteratur* (Rubble Literature). However, while this type of literature typically depicts soldiers as having difficulties finding their place and battling with their guilt, Strittmatter emphasizes some benefits of their experience, namely the new knowledge that Tinko's father has acquired in the Soviet Union.¹¹⁶ Once he returns home, he knows exactly what to do, and begins working right away. For Tinko, the return of his father means a transition from the outdated methods of the grandfather to the new, Socialist methods. These changes, implemented by his father, bring Tinko relief from his heavy workload, and give him a chance to go (more often) to school. Though the story is presented from the perspective of Tinko, he is not the main figure in the novel. Rather he stands for the new generation, which was taught and expected to believe that the Socialist methods of production were better. For this reason, critics in the GDR claimed this novel should not be considered a children's book, but rather preferably serve as highly recommended reading for adults and youth (Steinlein *et al.* 145).¹¹⁷

Positive attitude towards work, and especially hard, physical labor was an essential characteristic of the *Neue Mensch*. This type of work ethics and worker's morale is particularly well-illustrated by Erik Neutsch in *Spur der Steine*, where the character of Balla serves as an example to instruct the reader about the importance and value of physical labor. In the GDR,

¹¹⁶ Works depicting returning soldiers searching for a place in the new society include Noll's novel *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, as well as *Trümmerfilme* (rubble films) like Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* and Gerhard Lamprecht's *Irgendwo in Berlin*.

¹¹⁷ Steinlein *et al.* refer here to the commentaries on the manuscript in the document BArch, DR1/5086a, Bl.231.

hard, physical labor was perceived as a continuation of the fight for a better Germany (Neutsch 480). It served not only to achieve economic advantage (Neutsch 349), but also to secure peace in Germany (Neutsch 481). In the words of Jansen, the first Secretary of the District Administration of the SED, Neutsch explains:

Die Geistesgröße der Arbeiterklasse liegt in ihrem Klassenbewußtsein, in dem Vermögen, die Rolle zu verstehen, die die Arbeiterklasse und ein jeder Arbeiter als Teil der Klasse bei der Entwicklung der Gesellschaft spielt.... Ein Mensch aber muß begreifen, wofür er arbeitet, ein Mensch in unserer Republik, daß er mit seiner Arbeit sich und seine Klasse stärkt. Die Arbeiterklasse wird nur dann siegen, wenn sie nach der Machtergreifung vermag, die Produktion so zu organisieren, daß die Arbeitsproduktivität höher ist als zu jener Zeit, da für den Nutzen der Kapitalisten gearbeitet wurde (483).

The SED thus expected everyone to work for the good of the state and society. However, people were also expected to recognize that work, in itself, can bring pleasure and fulfillment. In *Spur der Steine*, Neutsch explains it by having Voss, the artist, point to this connection:

Das sind keine Gegensätze: Arbeit und Vergnügen. Das eine ist nur der Beginn, das andere die Folge. Arbeit, schon im Prozeß, bereitet Vergnügen. Künstler und Wissenschaftler leben eigentlich von jeher, was ihre Arbeit betrifft, im Kommunismus. Oder wollen Sie behaupten, Rembrandt und Dürer, Einstein und Marx hätten ihre Arbeit als Fessel empfunden? ... Später, davon bin ich überzeugt, wird im übertragenen Sinne jeder Mensch ein Künstler oder ein Forscher sein. Und als Begriff wird die Arbeit etwa diese Bedeutung erhalten: Spiel zum Wohle der Gesellschaft (532).

If work could be understood as pleasure, the alienation that existed since the beginnings of industrialization would disappear. Taking joy in work was also believed to yield higher productivity and a better quality of product. In addition, putting emphasis on physical work was intended to raise the societal value of the manual worker in the perception of the population.

In her novel *Ankunft im Alltag*, Brigitte Reimann shows the beauty and joys of manual labor. Reimann explains this feeling through Lehman's words to Nikolaus, who is not used to manual work: "Wenn du fünfzigmal damit zuggedroschen hast ... dann weißt du abends, was du getan hast" (68f.). Working with one's own hands and seeing the result in the form of the final product (Reimann 29) brings an end to the alienation between the worker and the product of his labor.

The centrality of the worker in GDR discourse is particularly well illustrated in Hermann Kant's *Die Aula*: in the first History class the teacher asks the students a question from a poem by Bertold Brecht: "Wer Baute das siebentorige Theben?" (Kant 57).¹¹⁸ With this question, the teacher insists on the fact that the history of mankind is the history of the working-class. Interestingly, although Kant emphasizes in his novel the intellectual capabilities of the working-class, the new students of the *Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät* (School of Workers and Peasants) are still called *Arbeitsgruppe* (Workgroup), and they continue to perform volunteer work in the form of *Subbotnik*.¹¹⁹ Quasi (Karl-Heinz Riek), one of the students, explains that Subbotnik is "eine Keimform des Kommunismus. Ein freiwilliger Arbeitseinsatz" (Kant 45). The students show that intellectual and manual work are not incompatible, and that, given the chance, members of the working-class can achieve high intellectual positions. Kant highlights this

¹¹⁸ The question comes from Bertold Brecht's poem *Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters* from the collection *Syendborger Gedichte* (1939).

¹¹⁹ *Subbotnik*, from Russian 'суббота', meaning Saturday, called for people to sacrifice their day off to help others.

possibility in Robert's thought-process: "Das ist doch bei uns nichts Besonderes, daß ein Landarbeiter Arzt geworden ist" (Kant 246).

In his novel *Tinko*, Strittmatter focuses on the farm worker, who, next to the industrial worker was supposed to play an important role in the *Arbeiter-und-Bauernstaat* (Workers' and Peasants' State). Strittmatter, by showing the difficulties of work at the farm, emphasizes the positive aspects of new methods, collective work, and new technologies in agriculture (43, 69, 373, 380). By contrasting the opposing convictions and attitudes of Tinko's grandfather and father, Strittmatter suggests that progress is achievable only through Socialism.

These examples demonstrate how work and the working-class were presented according to Marxism-Leninism. While the History lesson from *Die Aula* illustrates the idea that the working-class is the most progressive one, and consequently ought to be granted the leading role with the state, in *Spur der Steine*, the reader gets acquainted with the meaning of work in a contemporary world, its significance for personal development, as well as its importance for the entire society and humanity in general.

Literary Representations of Traditional Worker Characteristics

One of the main goals of education was to foster in young people the idea that the worker epitomizes the ideal that everyone, including women, should imitate. However, like the soldier, the representation of the worker in early GDR literature was also based upon traditional traits of working-class masculinity. The GDR government presented and promoted the Socialist worker ideal as a hegemonic masculinity for its own purposes, which makes this model an ideological masculinity.

The traditional attributes included in the model of the Socialist worker are: **pride of accomplishment, risk taking and self-sacrifice, strength, endurance and skill, discipline, and solidarity**. In the Socialist interpretation of these traits, special emphasis was placed on the motives that supposedly guided Socialists workers when engaging in physical labor. The effort they put into often boring and strenuous work was always interpreted to serve the greater good, the collective, and the advancement of Socialism and peace. While the workers in the West were presented as possessing the same characteristics, the fact that they were working for money made them unable to truly enjoy the experience.

Strength, endurance, and skill are the attributes most commonly associated with physical labor. Consequently, hard, physical work is the type of labor that is often connected with masculinity even to this day. Women, as the ‘weaker sex’, supposedly do not to have the strength to perform certain tasks, such as, for example, in mining or construction. One may argue that the quality of physical strength is not limited to the Socialist worker. However, in Socialist literature, these attributes are sometimes highlighted to such an extent that they may appear supernatural. In Ostrowski’s novel *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde*, we see this in the image of the working men building railroad tracks in the forest. “Patoschkin beobachtete den stummen und erbitterten Wettkampf der Bauarbeiter. Erstaunt fragte er sich: ‘Was sind das bloß für Menschen? Woher diese unbegreifliche Kraft?’” (249). In fact, this almost superhuman strength of working men is underscored in the paragraph which contains the title of the novel: “Fjodor sah die flitzenden Spaten, sah die angespannt gebeugten Rücken und sagte leise zu Akim: ‘Ein Meeting brauchen wir nicht. Agitation ist hier überflüssig. Du hast Recht Tokarew, das sind Prachtkerle.

Ja, so wird der Stahl gehärtet” (Ostrowski 239). The Soviet men working on the project are – as suggested in this allusion – strong as steel.

In the GDR, the Soviet worker was presented as the ultimate model to follow; however, in GDR literature, we also find examples of the strength and skills of the German worker. In Neutsch’s novel *Spur der Steine* we find an abundance of descriptions that epitomize strength and masculinity: “stämmig” (27), having a lot of “Kraft” (77), “die Muskeln rollten wie Bälle unter seiner Haut” (96), “die rohe Kraft des Mannes” (97) are some of the expressions Neutsch uses to describe Hannes Balla’s masculine appearance. Though Balla initially rejects Socialist ideology,¹²⁰ he is, nevertheless, shown to be respected for his skills and strength. The workers listen to him and see him as a model to follow (Neutsch 18). Even the leadership of the construction site accepts his *Eigensinn* (stubbornness, self-will) and lack of engagement in the Party.¹²¹ Yet, Balla also recognizes the strength and endurance in other people, especially in Horrath. This is made particularly visible in the first meeting of the two men on the construction site in Schkona: Balla and his brigade are working in the rain, when Horrath decides to join them. While the Party secretary is not strong enough for the job, he would not quit: “Bald jedoch merkte er [Balla - JBS], daß Horrath eher zusammenbrechen als seine Schwäche eingestehen würde” (Neutsch 95). A similar situation takes place when Kati offers to help out and operate the crane. Only by proving that she has the skill does Kati earn the respect of that man:

Sie hatte ihn [Balla –JBS] während der letzten Tage allein mit sich, mit ihrem Gesicht für sich einnehmen wollen, denn sie hatte seine heimlichen Blicke bemerkt. Es war ihr nicht

¹²⁰ After the experience of Nazi ideology, Balla wants to remain outside of politics and not get involved in any ideology anymore. Thus, he cannot be seen as entirely ‘bad’ because, at least, he rejects fascism.

¹²¹ This lack of engagement changes through the influence of Werner Horrath and Kati Klee, who slowly convince him of the superiority of Socialism.

gelingen. Sie mußte mit ihrer Arbeit beeindrucken; ein paar Handgriffe am Schaltbrett würden über Freundschaft oder Feindschaft entscheiden. ... Der Brigadier blickte auf, nachdem die erste Ladung ausgeschüttet war. Er lachte und winkte zufrieden, drückte den Hut auf den Schädel und verschlang beide Hände ineinander: Gratuliere... (Neutsch 100).

Through the respect that both, Horrath and Kati, earn by showing their skill, strength, and endurance, Neutsch shows that these traits are highly admired and indispensable.

Similarly, in *Ankunft im Alltag*, Reimann emphasizes strength, skill, and endurance as qualities of a worker. Already on the second page of the novel, Reimann shows that Recha assumes Nikolaus to be a manual worker, a mason or carpenter, because of his physical appearance (6). Nikolaus, who is described as big, strong, and muscular, quickly discovers the joy and beauty of physical work. He becomes a good worker who does not abstain from hard work (Reimann 69). Endurance is also one of his qualities, as he continues to work even though his hands are full of blisters (Reimann 71). Through the comments of other workers at the production facility, Reimann depicts this trait as specifically ‘manly’: The men take pride in making it through the extra night shift that the brigade undertakes to fulfill an assigned task (Reimann 205). Nikolaus perseveres through the shift, and at the end, he is invited to join the rest of the men in the brigade to go out for a beer. This particular episode can thus be seen as a ‘rite of passage’ for him and Erwin, in order to be accepted as men and invited into the male-bonding ritual (Reimann 207f.). The association of endurance as a quality of men is emphasized by the counter-example of Recha, who does not persevere through the effort and falls asleep (Reimann 204). While Reimann shows that women could be part of the working force and accomplish physical labor, she describes such women by using masculine attributes. An example is Recha’s

roommate: “eine Tiefbauarbeiterin, ein stämmiges, untersetztes Mädchen ... ihre Stimme war männlich tief und rauh ... [sie hatte-JBS] eine schaufelbreite Hand mit zerspellten Nägeln ... [und-JBS] gewaltige Muskeln” (Reimann 10f.). While implying that women can also be good workers, Reimann perpetuates by her description the association of the worker model with masculinities.

In the second part of *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt*, Dieter Noll shows an example of model masculinity in the figure of Schneidereit. This young man uses his skills and strength to rebuild the state and to organize youth for that purpose. In addition, he insists on doing everything without asking for extra help: “das machen wir alles selber” (Noll 1964, 33, 41, 58). With these words, Noll, through Schneidereit, not only rejects the idea of the Marshall plan, but also tacitly supports the notion of the man as the one who is responsible for the family, the state, and the society.

In literature for younger children, the protagonists were most often boys whose ages ranged between twelve and fourteen. The reader could find the descriptions of hard-working men often overcoming their weaknesses to finish the work they had started, for the benefit of the collective. An example is the figure of the teacher Lenz in Horst Beseler’s *Käuzchenkuhle*. In the summer, while school is out for vacation, the teacher, together with other volunteers from the village, decides to expand the school building so that the ninth and tenth graders could continue their education in the same place. To do the work, the teacher has to battle with his heart condition, which earns him the respect of his students:

-‘Herr Lenz ist krank. Trotzdem will er beim Neubau weitermachen!’

-‘Brauch er doch aber auch nich! [sic]’

-‘Er macht’s eben freiwillig’ (Beseler 136).

The admiration that the teacher’s sacrifice and endurance receives from the children is intended to communicate to the young readership that this trait is worth emulating.

In his most prominent novel for children, *Tinko*, Erwin Strittmatter also presents strength as an attribute of ‘a man’: the hands of the *Heimkehrer* (repatriate) are “hart wie ein Brett” (17), and the muscles of a man are “steinhart” (85). The author emphasizes the importance of hard work, whether it is the old-fashioned grandfather, or the more modern, Socialist *Heimkehrer* (repatriate): both work hard on their field (Strittmatter 86, 124, 373), and in both instances, they are presented as epitomizing workers. However, the different motives of these characters suggest to the reader which way is more likely to lead to success in their farming.¹²² Here, as in the conflict between Hannes Balla and his father in *Spur der Steine*, generational differences come into play. On the one side, we have masculinities fashioned on the owner/ bourgeois model, and on the other - modern sons. In both novels, the old generation sees masculinity as something asserted mostly through possession and personal success. In the case of Tinko’s grandfather, there is also the desire to be accepted by a representative of the former owner-class as an equal.¹²³ The *Heimkehrer* (repatriate) in Strittmatter’s novel has a modern vision of the future, and understands the advantages of working collectively (159f., 237). His motivation is the common good, as well as the good of the Socialist state. Collective work brings him not only help in the fulfillment of his own duties, but also joy and respect. Balla, in Neusch’s *Spur der Steine*, also learns this through his personal development. In Connell’s terms, while the sons may

¹²² While the grandfather wants to accumulate personal wealth (Strittmatter 40), the *Heimkehrer* rather helps others and emphasizes collective work (Strittmatter 164, 151).

¹²³ The grandfather does not realize that he is manipulated into going against the system (by, for example, not planting what is expected from him), and thus against his own interests. By rejecting the *Bauernhilfe* (farmers’ help) and waiting for the ‘*Freundschaft*’ (friendship) to help, he loses time during the harvest (Strittmatter 237).

be regarded as representing hegemonic masculinity, the fathers are presented as examples for marginalized masculinity: The qualities of the older men in Strittmatter's and Neutsch's novels are admired; however, because of their belonging to the antiquated class system, they cannot be seen as ideals to follow. They cannot serve as a model for the reader because they do not want to participate in the collective, and think only of their own profit. In addition, they do not acknowledge the superiority of Socialism.

Risk taking and self-sacrifice are traits that require courage, endurance, and strength, and are connected to the role of the 'provider'. Men working in heavy industry traditionally see their work, with its dangers, as a sacrifice they make in order to support their families (Johnston and McIvor 138). In Socialist literature, the reasons for enduring hardship and for taking risks were extended from the family to include the entire Socialist state. Workers depicted in readings for children and young adults in the GDR show the importance of the willingness to suffer, and neglect their own needs in order to fulfill the task assigned to them. The Socialist worker knows that what he is doing serves the state, the society and the greater good. The fact that there are people depending on the work to be done is often stressed, and the necessity of sacrifice is presented in a very tangible manner. It can be people without access to burning wood freezing to death, such as in Ostrowski's novel, or the perspective of the state-owned enterprise losing a large amount of money (*Spur der Steine*), which pushes the worker to this sacrifice.¹²⁴ The episode from the novel *Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde*, showing men building railroad tracks in the middle of winter, is a great example for the attitude 'real men' should have towards the hardships and difficulties of their work: "Und wenn wir tausendmal zu Grunde gehen, die

¹²⁴ Since the worker, like the entire society, is the co-owner of the enterprise, it means that he would also be losing money.

Zweigbahn muss fertig werden. Was wären wir den sonst für Bolschhewiki? Schweinehunde wären wir, weiter nichts” (Ostrowski 227). Even though the weather is freezing and the workers do not have proper clothing, they continue working. In fact, Pawka completely disregards his own well-being and almost dies because of his commitment to the work.

Erik Neutsch in *Spur der Steine* depicts workers who, in a very similar fashion, disregard difficult weather conditions when performing their work (94, 323ff.). Balla does this instinctively, because he is a ‘good’ worker, but with time, and particularly through conversations with Horrath, he comes to understand why it is so important that the wall is built now, and not a week later:

‘Ich könnte dir vorrechnen, haargenau, wieviel eine Wand kostet, wenn sie um eine Woche verzögert wird. Auf Heller und Pfennig könnte ich das...’ Horrath lauschte seinen Worten nach. ‘Doch das ist es nicht, nicht das allein, daß ich für die wirtschaftliche Überlegenheit meines Landes kämpfe. Es ist viel mehr. Jede Stunde des Lebens, Balla, erfordert eine Entscheidung von uns, heute, in unserer Welt. Die menschliche Gesellschaft strebt einem einzigen Ziel entgegen, dem Sozialismus. Niemand kann sich davor verschließen. Es ist ein Wettlauf um Meter und Sekunden, er reißt jeden mit. Man kann keine Pause einlegen, wenn man gewinnen will. Eine einzige Stunde, die ungenutzt verstreicht, kann über Sieg oder Niederlage entscheiden, über ein sinnvolles oder ein verpfushtes Leben. So hart stoßen sich heute die Dinge. Die Frage ist nur, ob man es einsehen will oder nicht, ob man dafür ist oder dagegen. Ich bin dafür, ohne Vorbehalte, mit allen Konsequenzen. Ich wäre es für hundert Mark im Monat’ (Neutsch 337).

Through Horrath's words, Neutsch alerts the reader to the main goal of work – to support Socialism and to build a new society: Horrath does not work for money, as people in the West supposedly do. But the author also insists that this goal is not yet achieved. It is presented as a fight, in which every moment matters, and for which it is worth taking risks and making sacrifices.

Yet it is not only the manual laborer who makes sacrifices, and the risks that a worker faces are not only those that endanger his life or health. Neutsch shows that the work of the engineer Hesselbart, who sacrifices his private life to improve the methods of construction, earns him the title of the *Held der Arbeit* (Hero of work) at the same time as Balla. The members of the brigade in Reimann's *Ankunft im Alltag* also accept to put their private lives on hold when they are needed for an extra shift:

Sie verständigten sich mit ein paar Sätzen, sachlich und ohne dramatischen Aufwand, obgleich ihnen diese zweite Schicht gewiß irgendwelche Pläne durchkreuzte: den Feierabend mit einem Mädchen, mit einem Fernsehspiel oder der Skatrunde in der Bierschwemme. Sie ließen Skat und Mädchen fahren mit der unheroischen Selbstverständlichkeit von Leuten, die Überraschungen eingeplant haben: sie waren eine Reparaturbrigade, sie waren, Hamann an der Spitze, verantwortlich für das Rohrleitungsnetz im Kombinat (Reimann 66f.).

Complete commitment in the work, and by extension in the building of Socialism, is also visible in the example of the teacher Lenz in Horst Beseler's novel *Käuzchenkuhle*. The author depicts him as a man who sacrifices his own money, which he has saved for a car,¹²⁵ in order to finish

¹²⁵ In the GDR, the waiting time for a car could be many years.

the extension of the school. In the eyes of the children, especially Schraube, who is fascinated with cars and motorcycles, this makes him a hero:

‘Un die Piepen für’n Klempner? Werd ich Ihnen auch stecken, woher er die hat...! Aus der eigenen Tasche! 3500 Mark! Von sei’m Ersparten hat er sie gegeben ...! Dabei hätte Herr Lenz noch in diesem Jahr ein’ TRABANT kriegen können! Un den ganz Neuen, dufte Karre, mit Synchrongetriebe un so weiter ...!’ Schraubes Gesicht verklärte sich in bewunderndem Mitgefühl eines leidenschaftlichen Motorenfreundes. ‘Nu wissen Sie’s also! Darauf hat er verzichtet, bloß wegen der dämlichen Klempnerrechnung! Das soll ihm einer nachmachen; Sie bestimmt nicht, Herr Wirshaus ...! Freiwillig! TRABANT! Lenkerschaltung!’ (Beseler 227).

The sacrifice of a free evening made by the members of the brigade in *Ankunft im Alltag*, and the gesture of the teacher Lenz in *Käuzchenkuhle*, emphasize that the good of the collective should always be perceived as prevailing over the superfluous satisfaction of the individual. Schraube’s reaction also suggests to the reader that this gesture should be highly valued by the society.

Discipline, mostly associated with the military, also played an important role in the representation of the worker in the early GDR. Philosophy professor and author of the book *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity*, Kenneth Clatterbaugh argues that, even today, “the working man must be submissive to the powers that control him” (123). Though he refers here to the Capitalist worker, the illustrations given in GDR literature suggest that the same was true for the Socialist laborer. Yet, it was crucial for young readers in the Socialist state to understand that discipline should come from conviction and the will to support the progress of Socialism. For this reason, people in the GDR were not only taught that this virtue was an indispensable

characteristic of the *Neue Mensch*, and therefore should be adopted by everybody; they also needed to be convinced about the superiority of Socialism, and that the progress of the Socialist state depended on their discipline. This trait appears even more important taking into account that discipline at work is essential in an economic system that relies on the fulfillment of plans.

As Reimann explains:

‘In der Schule mußttest du auch Disziplin halten’, sagte Schach. ‘Denkst du, im Betrieb kann jeder aus der Reihe tanzen, wenn’s ihm paßt?’ - ‘Schule ist was ganz anderes’, widersprach Curt ... ‘Ich war froh, daß ich den ganzen Krampf mit Schulaufgaben und Stundenplänen hinter mir hatte’ - ‘Aber wir haben genausogut unsere Pläne’, rief Preuß ‘Wir haben unsere Aufgaben’ (239).

The author thus presents to the reader the connection between discipline and fulfillment of the economic plan. By emphasizing it with the words of an older and more experienced worker, Reimann presents it also as a general attribute expected from a worker and a man.

In educational literature, readers often find illustrations of what lack of discipline can cause. This negative image highlights the importance of this trait, and shows it as a characteristic of a responsible worker, facilitating its acceptance. Reimann gives an example in the behavior of Curt towards the end of the novel *Ankunft im Alltag*: Without the supervision of his superior and against his directions, Curt decides to disassemble the machine they were working on. Not knowing the precautions he should take, he causes huge damage (Reimann 247ff). Though he wanted to do something good, not following what he was told led to this accident. Moreover, from the beginning, his lack of discipline is the reason that the brigade does not accept him.

Erik Neutsch in *Spur der Steine* illustrates how much was accomplished through Balla's 'sticking to the plan' even in freezing temperature. Yet, he stresses the importance of discipline even more through Kati, who confronts Balla after he missed two days of work unannounced:

Und wo verbuchen wir, was Ihr Fehlen angestiftet hat? An beiden Tagen wurde der Plan nicht erfüllt. Ihr Vorbild, Brigadier, hat gewirkt. Ihre Schicht hat nicht die Hälfte der Vorgabe geschafft. Büchner hat seine Leute sich selbst überlassen. Ziehmer fand einen Wirrwarr vor... Wir wollen nach neuen, wissenschaftlich errechneten Methoden bauen. Deshalb sind wir hier, um zu siegen. Sie aber organisieren die Niederlage. Sie zersetzen die Arbeitsmoral. Und das alles, glauben Sie, mit zwei Tagen Urlaub abgelten zu können (Neutsch 411f.).

Reimann and Neutsch, by showing the negative consequences of lack of discipline at work, demonstrate that this trait is considered as crucial for the improvement of living conditions for the entire society, and along with this, for the advancement of Socialism. Thus, the readers were expected to understand that others depend on the Socialist worker to do his or her work, and, therefore, would accept discipline as a necessary trait.

In the texts analyzed, discipline is presented as equally important in the private life of the worker, because private situations can have consequences at work. A romantic affair between Horrath and Kati in *Spur der Steine*, as well as a fight between Curt and Nikolaus in *Ankunft im Alltag*, are examples of irresponsible behavior with no regard for the Socialist discipline. Although both transgressions happen outside of work and concern their private lives, all participants are held accountable by their supervisors at work (Neutsch 902, Reimann 239). Their behavior is depicted as a violation of the basic principles of a Socialist life, with which

Horrath and Kati, as members of the party, and Nikolaus and Curt, as members of a Socialist workers brigade, have to comply. As representatives of the Socialist ‘elite’, they are held to a higher standard, both as workers and as human beings. Through their example, the reader is shown that the trait of discipline is required from them not only as Socialist workers, but more importantly, as Socialist *Neue Menschen*.

Pride in accomplishment is also commonly connected to the strength and skills of the worker. The result of the effort is proof of the abilities of the worker. Of course, this is not a character trait of the worker *per se*, but rather an emotion they experience after the completion of a project. Nevertheless, it is a crucial element of identity building for the next generation of workers. The worker, showing pride in his creation, asserts his masculinity in reference to the position of the manager, generally seen as superior. Joshua Freeman, a historian whose focus centers on labor history, explains that construction workers often bring their families to the working site to ‘show off’ their accomplishments (733). This behavior, together with the admiration that the workers receive, builds up their self-esteem and affirms their masculinity. In the texts analyzed here, the achievements of the workers are emphasized not only in order to glorify the worker himself, but also to induce pride in the young readers and strengthen their identification with the state and the working-class.

In *Spur der Steine*, Balla discovers the ‘trace of stones’ that he himself produced through his work. He realizes: “[e]r, Balla, hatte Geschichte gemacht. Vielleicht war es die Freude am Gelungenen – ein Blick zurück vermag oft viel -, vielleicht war es die zunehmende Ahnung von einem anderen Glück, mit dem er sich fester verbunden sah, als er je zuvor geglaubt hatte, vielleicht das dämmernde Bewußtsein der eigenen Kraft...” (Neutsch 409). Such pride in one’s

accomplishments is, according to Neutsch, the joy that work can bring, and anticipating this joy may motivate young people to work. However, not only single and isolated achievements count; being part of the history of the state, building it, securing peace and providing prosperity through work, as stressed by the authors, is what really matters. Neutsch explains this through the artist Voss:

Dieser Balla hat mir vor kurzen gestanden, nach dem Richtfest hier, er habe so etwas wie die Spur der Steine erblickt, des Aufbaus, seiner Hände Arbeit, und damit den Aufbau des eigenen Ichs. Es ist sicherlich richtig, aber es ist noch mehr. Die Steine ziehen eine Spur, die nicht durch das Land geht, Häfen, Talsperren, Fabrikhallen... Sie quält sich mitten durch uns hindurch, und sie ist mit keiner von ihr vergleichbar. Wie sollte es anders sein, wenn man sich selber aufbaut (646).

With these words, Neutsch claims that the accomplishments of the workers in the Socialist state are visible proof of the growth of the state and of its people, not only in the material sense, but also as human beings, brought about by the collective effort of everybody.

Similarly, in Brigitte Reimann's *Ankunft im Alltag*, Curt talks about the joy of seeing the results of manual labor and of the pride that participating in a common effort can bring (29f.).¹²⁶

In the same fashion, Hamann, the leader of the brigade also describes this feeling: “‘Wir bauen das größte Braunkohlveredelungswerk der Welt’, seine Stimme hatte nun doch einen feierlichen Klang, ‘und eines Tages werdet ihr stolz darauf sein, daß ihr euren Teil dabei geleistet habt. Wir machen Geschichte hier’” (Reimann 54).

Reimann's examples, by pointing to the joy, pride, and self-fulfillment that a well-accomplished work can bring, aim at promoting hard physical labor among the young readers. In

¹²⁶ Though Curt talks this way only to win over his roommate, the latter clearly agrees with it.

addition, the emphasis on being part of a historical process should motivate young people to join in the common effort.

Beseler and Strittmatter show that children can also experience pride in their accomplishments, be it by helping in collecting scrap metal (Beseler 135ff), in the harvest (Beseler 196, Strittmatter 352), or by being the best pioneer (Strittmatter 341). The important message is that no matter how small the work children perform, it is important they do it earnestly. Then, they can be proud of the result knowing that it serves the greater good.

Solidarity and male bonding traditionally played a major role in the construction of working-class masculinity (Freeman 731; Gregory 258). Similarly to the soldiers, workers on many occasions depended with their lives on their co-workers. As Joshua Freeman, in the context of American construction workers in the 1970s, explains: “For workers in occupations like mining, police work, and construction, which combine high risk with small team organization, safety and survival depend on the establishment of mutual trust” (731). Likewise, in the novels from the early GDR analyzed here, work not only brings men closer, but also emphasizes the importance of having ‘good comrades’ as co-workers. Neutsch, in *Spur der Steine*, shows that Balla, for his brigade, needs “handfeste Kerle, die mit mir durch dick und dünn gehen” (Neutsch 93), and even much earlier in the text, readers are told: “[E]r duldet nie Streitigkeiten in der Brigade” (Neutsch 17). As the leader of the brigade, Balla knows that he has to be able to depend on his people. The bonds between members of the brigade are tightened through common activities such as, for example, going out for a drink after work. This male bonding, a conventional aspect of the worker masculinity, receives its Socialist character as Balla’s conversion progresses and his behavior becomes more respectable. To highlight the

correct way of male-bonding, the author presents the reader with two counter-examples: Bolbig and Galonski – two members of the brigade. Though all of the workers in Balla's brigade drink, most of them see it as a way to socialize and spend their time off work with friends. However, Bolbig and Galonski skip work to have fun: "Du hast dich gedrückt... Vor der Arbeit" (Neutsch 16). In addition, both of them disrespect women by making them drunk and abusing them (Neutsch 596). Balla at first tolerates this behavior; however, once he discovers the abuse, he expels them both from the brigade. Through a later incident involving Bolbig, who, during a fight, kills Elbers (another member of Balla's brigade), Balla realizes that Bolbig not only had a bad influence on the brigade, but, even worse, that he was a criminal:

Balla war endlich ein Licht aufgegangen, er hatte den Burschen zu wenig beachtet, er hatte zwar die bunten Illustrierten bemerkt, die Bolbig ständig gelesen, die parfümierten Zigaretten, die Bolbig geraucht hatte, aber er hatte ihn nur aus der Brigade hinausgeprügelt. Er bereute es, denn wenn er der Polizei schon eher seinen Verdacht mitgeteilt hätte, wäre Bolbig schon eher hinter Schloß und Riegel gesetzt worden (Neutsch 740).

Balla recognizes that even the smallest signs of corruption by Western, Capitalist '(un)culture', should not be ignored. If trivialized, these seemingly small problems can become destructive. Through these countertypes, Neutsch explicitly shows how a Socialist worker should NOT be. In addition, by emphasizing the Western influence on Bolbig, the author contributes to the creation of the image of the 'enemy' who not only lacks the basic qualities of a good worker and human being, but who also never stops in his attempts to corrupt people.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ This episode highlights a trait described before in the soldier personality – the readiness to defend the achievements of Socialism.

In Reimann's novel *Ankunft im Alltag*, the importance of solidarity is presented in the story of Erwin: The brigade does not like him because he often comes late and seems to be lazy. During one FDJ meeting within the brigade Erwin's co-workers finally discover his problems: an eye disease and his situation at the asylum, where he lives. Through the help he is offered, Erwin is able to better fulfill his duties, and proves to be a helpful and productive worker.

In novels for younger readers, the authors show groups of boys that spend their time together and are always willing and ready to support their friends. In Horst Beseler's *Käuzchenkuhle*, the three boys: Jampol, Schraube, and Kristian, exclude the one girl present in the story, Linde, from their adventures. Whether it is the search for the answer to grandfather's secret, or just the simple collection of scrap metal,¹²⁸ when they end up in a situation where they need to depend on each other, the girl has no place in their group. Through the exclusion of this female character, Beseler seems to reinforce the stereotype that solidarity and bonding are attributes associated with men. This also suggests to the young readership that girls do not, in fact, have these qualities and thus cannot be used as models.

Solidarity among the boys is also shown in the way they care for each other. Thus we see them trying to help Schraube after he ran away from home and taking care of Kristian when he has problems with his father (Beseler 116ff., 283). In Strittmatter's novel, we also find an example of solidarity among the children. Tinko, though sad that he cannot go with the Pioneers to Poland, gladly gives his uniform to the small Schuricht, who otherwise would also have had to stay behind (Strittmatter 344).

¹²⁸ The collected scrap metal was to be sold the junkyard, and the money was meant to support the construction of the new school building.

In the texts analyzed in this dissertation, alcohol seems to play an important part in the ritual of male-bonding. Reimann in *Ankunft im Alltag*, depicts the workers drinking alcohol during their meetings outside of work. However, the author presents it as an excusable weakness of the men (Reimann 173). Reimann shows the tradition that a brigade goes out for a beer after work (208), but drinking is (quite clearly) NOT presented as an attribute of masculinity.¹²⁹ Recha explains this when talking about Curt: “Er ist klug, er muß wissen, daß Trinken und Rumtoben und Krakeelen nichts mit Männlichkeit zu tun hat...” (Reimann 123). Alcohol may be seen as a prop in the male bonding ritual, but Reimann does not present it as an aspect of masculinity itself. Interestingly, biological sex does not determine who is able to join this ritual. While Recha spends time with the brigade members also outside of work, Curt realizes that his colleagues “ihn nicht einmal nach Feierabend in ihren Kreis aufnehmen [würden] ...” (Reimann 241). In other words, in the Socialist brigades, the determining factor about who is ‘manly’ enough to bond with is the attitude towards work, and the responsibility that one assumes.

In Beseler’s novel, alcohol is shown as having a negative influence on life, work, and the collective. The owner of the local bar, Hebestreit,¹³⁰ was angry at the school-teacher for conducting a lesson about the harmfulness of drinking schnapps, which explained how “Alkohol auf die Dauer dumm mache” (Beseler 84). But, even in this text, the bar is depicted as a place for men to meet after work, or to discuss current problems (Beseler 219ff).

The characters in these novels display many of the traits traditionally associated with working-class masculinity. Following their example, young readers in the GDR were supposed

¹²⁹ Neutsch, in *Spur der Steine*, shows the members of the brigade meeting after work in a bar and drinking beer (Neutsch 15f.).

¹³⁰ The name ‘Hebestreit’ (to raise, lift, enhance a quarrel) already hints at the negative image of the bar owner.

to learn what qualities a good, Socialist worker and citizen should possess. Not only were these traditional traits depicted as part of the Socialist worker, the authors also insisted on the specific motivations that guided the behavior of the protagonists: the good of the community and of the society and the state that, according to the official rhetoric, separated the Socialist worker from his counterpart in the West.

Literary Representations of Socialist Worker Characteristics

Masculine character traits associated traditionally with the worker were still considered suitable in Socialist societies. However, the model of the Socialist worker went beyond that. The concept of a classless society made it necessary to remove divisions between the ideals of masculinity of working-class men and educated men. As a consequence, even boring and strenuous labor should be seen as requiring some kind of creativity. The ‘new’ qualities of the Socialist worker and citizen included such traits as **inventiveness**, which was needed to optimize work. Another notable distinction of the Socialist worker and citizen was his/her understanding of the importance of the **collective**: The worker was expected to no longer look for personal gain, but rather, as a part of the collective, build a brighter future for everyone. Connected to the aspect of collectivity is the trait of **responsibility**: Not only are Socialist workers and citizens responsible for their own actions in their private lives, but also for the prosperity of the entire society. This implied that they were expected to perform their work conscientiously and react to acts of sabotage. Another feature of workers emphasized in the Socialist state was the ability and willingness to **further their education**. This is specifically a concept that aimed at destroying the old stereotypes that members of the working-class and peasants were less intelligent.

Inventiveness can be seen as one of the new attributes of the Socialist worker personality. Not only must he now follow the instructions from the management in order to adhere to important deadlines, but he is also expected to improve his methods of work, try to find cheaper and better ways to arrive to identical, or better results. He should manage his time in a manner that enhances his productivity, and, through that, the productivity of the whole factory. A prime example is Hannes Balla in Erik Neutsch's *Spur der Steine*. Together with the engineer Hesselbart, he develops a new method using Bakelite¹³¹ to facilitate and reduce the costs of pouring cement. For this innovation they both receive the title of the *Held der Arbeit* (hero of work): "Den Orden kriegst du für das Komplexe und Industrielle. Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität, Beharrlichkeit und Mut, das alles muß sich verbinden..." (Neutsch 863). The pride of the accomplishment, together with the honor that it has brought him, makes Balla realize the joy that work can give, and that this could be possible only in this Socialist state, "[w]o ich nicht belästigt werde, wo meine Arbeit was gilt, dorthin geh ich... Wo aber wurde sie mehr geachtet als hierzulande" (Neutsch 862). But Neutsch, in Balla's words, also emphasizes the need for a continued effort in building Socialism and he points to the Soviet workers as the ultimate model of the Socialist worker: "In Rostock und in Schkona, dort hab ich die Spur der Steine erblickt, die ich durch das Land gezogen hab. Hier [in Soviet Union -JBS] aber war mir, als hätt ich die Spur der Steine gesehen, die noch vor mir liegt..." (848). Balla's visit of the Soviet Union, and his experience there, highlight how much can be accomplished by the use of new technologies and inventions. Through Balla's words, the readers are supposed to learn that they also need to look ahead and contribute to progress.

¹³¹ Bakelite, or polyoxybenzylmethylenglycolanhydride is an older form of plastic. Balla and Hesselbart used it instead of wood for the support of concrete walls when pouring them.

Hamann, the leader of the brigade in Reimann's *Ankunft im Alltag*, is also an example of the *Neuerer Bewegung* (movement of innovators): His whole life revolves around the *Kombinat* (industrial conglomerate) and he spends his evening hours trying to find new ways to save money in the production: "Abends (...) saß [Hamann-JBS] am Tisch, rechnete, schrieb und entwarf Verbesserungsvorschläge. Er hatte, unermüdlich im Tüfteln und Erfinden, dem Kombinat schon mehr als eine halbe Million an Einsparungen gebracht, und er war entschlossen, sie auf eine volle Million aufzurunden" (Reimann 134). While, for sure, inventors receive a material bonus, Hamann makes it clear to Curt: "aber darum geht es nicht". He explains further that the importance of innovation lies rather in the reduction of the costs of production, and in the independence from Western suppliers (Reimann 53f.). Hamann is thus presented as a perfect example of the Socialist worker, who works not for his own profit but for the good of the state. Moreover, he is invested with his whole life in the progress of the GDR. His position in the brigade, and the respect he enjoys from its members, show that the attitude he exemplifies is expected from the Socialist worker and human being.

Improvements of working methods are also present in the texts that depict agricultural production. Readers encounter them, among others, in Strittmatter's *Tinko*. The new farming methods and techniques that the *Heimkehrer* (repatriate) wants to introduce, which he has learned in the Soviet POW (Prisoner of War) camp, are rejected by his father, but the reader is alerted to the positive effects that they have on the cultivation of the land. An illustrative example is the *Heimkehrer's* idea to build cold frames and grow lettuce, radishes and other vegetables (Strittmatter 69). Strittmatter juxtaposes the new and old methods of production in order to illustrate that the new methods and machines make the farm work much easier and faster.

As a result, it is possible to cultivate more and thus increase the productivity, and with it, the well-being of the people.

Some of the texts analyzed for this dissertation imply that children can also be inventive, and thus have the potential to improve the well-being of everyone. An example is Schraube, in Beseler's *Käuzchenkuhle*. Schraube misses one crucial piece to make his motorcycle, a *ZÜNDAPP*, work. Unfortunately, the part is not produced anymore and, therefore, there is little hope that Schraube would ever find it (Beseler 56). Schraube tries to find innovative solutions. While they do not work, the author aims at emphasizing the boys' perseverance. This quality is important in the context of the *Mangel* (lack) of economic goods constantly felt by people in the GDR. The accent on inventiveness as a method to improve, not only one's personal situation, but also the situation of society, placed the responsibility for progress in the hands of Socialist citizens, and thus was an integral part of the Socialist worker.

The literature of the early GDR analyzed in this dissertation usually stresses that all improvements undertaken by the workers needed to be in accordance with the directives of the SED, and with the economic plan. A conflict between inventiveness and discipline is shown in the example of Werner Horrath's behavior in Neutsch's *Spur der Steine*: He decides, contrary to the instructions of the economic plan, to stop work at one construction site because the architectural plans have not been finalized yet: The constant need of addressing errors in these architectural plans makes the construction costly and wastes time. While the idea itself turns out to be profitable and wise, Horrath receives a reprimand for going against the party discipline: "Ich bin zur Rechenschaft gezogen wegen eines Fehlers. Aber mein Fehler wurde gut geheißten. Weil durch ihn die Arbeitsproduktivität gesteigert wurde" (Neutsch 188f.). While inventiveness

and ideas for improvement of productivity are considered a very important trait of the Socialist worker, in this case the proper route to solve the problem has not been taken. Neutsch points, therefore, to a conflict between the traditional trait of discipline and the Socialist expectation of participating in the progress of production methods. Horrath's punishment suggests that, in this conflict, it is discipline that is supposed to have the highest priority for the Socialist worker.

The collective plays an important role for the workers and the Socialist citizens.

Connected with it is the trait of **responsibility**. On the one hand, the worker can rely on the collective to help him. On the other hand, workers are expected to assume responsibility not only for themselves and their families, but for the entire society. Strittmatter explains the idea of the collective in the words of the mayor of the village, where the action of *Tinko* takes place: "Es geht uns an, ich sag dir. Das Korn gehört dir nicht allein. Der Gemeinde gehört ein Teil, den Stadtleuten gehört's, kurzum dem Staat" (380). In a different place, Strittmatter defines: "Kollektiv gleich Arbeits- und Herstellungsgemeinschaft" (366). He shows that being part of the collective means sharing the responsibilities of production, in order to be able to share its gains. A collective of farmers can thus decide where to plant different types of crops, and work on the field together using the technical support they receive from the government. In return, they are expected to supply the people with food (Strittmatter 65, 125, 239, 380).

We find this reciprocal relation in the collective also in Reimann's novel *Ankunft im Alltag*, when Nikolaus' mother insists that he needs to spend the year between school and university as a factory worker: "Damit du nicht vergißt, woher du gekommen bist ... Und damit du kapiert, wer dein Studium bezahlt. Wir können's nicht" (22). This stresses the necessary gratefulness for the opportunities given by the state. Not only does Reimann present Socialism as

the better option for the people, she also emphasizes the duty of the young generation to give back to society in any possible way. Those who do not are depicted as *Schmarotzer* (freeloaders) like Curt, who lives off his father's money and achievements (Reimann 122, 130f.). The message passed by the author is that in the collective, everybody needs to assume responsibility and play his/her part.

Everybody was assigned a role to play in the Socialist state. The goal was to build Socialism and to achieve a better life in peace. Everyone was expected to contribute according to his/her own talents, and no assignment could be considered too small. In Neutsch's *Spur der Steine*, the first secretary of the district administration of the SED, Jansen explains to Balla that his duties are not limited to the work at the construction site: "Zu deiner Arbeit gehört auch, in Deutschland den Frieden zu sichern. Wer sollte es sonst tun, wenn nicht du, ich, wir alle? Mach es mit neuen Schalttafeln, mit höherer Arbeitsproduktivität, ja. Doch du mußt wissen, wie beides zusammenhängt" (481). Strittmatter's *Tinko* also illustrates how young children can help the collective: they can pick caterpillars from cabbage (111), or potato-beetles (352), etc. Thus, the children are supposed to learn from a very young age onwards about the importance of work and mutual support.

In all of the texts discussed here, the important message to the readers is that, in Socialism, everybody is the co-owner of the production; everybody, therefore, is also co-responsible for it and for the future of the entire society. This means that they, as members of the collective, ought to participate in the construction of Socialism and the development and progress of the society. However, the readers also are expected to learn that this goal will be achieved faster and easier, when everybody plays their part: "Die Partei kann vieles, und sie

kann noch mehr, wenn alle mitarbeiten” (Strittmatter 92). The power to create a better future grows with every pair of hands that join in the common struggle.

Responsibility is an important part of living in a collective. For the worker, the obligation lays particularly in meeting the prescribed norm, thus ensuring the fulfillment of the plan. In Reimann’s *Ankunft im Alltag* and in Noll’s *Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt: Roman einer Heimkehr* the protagonists go through a development of character. Both Curt and Werner commit many mistakes in their life or work because they are searching for an ‘easy way’. However, through the examples of others, and their own experiences, they learn eventually about the importance of accountability. Only then can they find their place in the society and peace of mind.

Culture also played an important role in the life of the worker and of the Socialist citizen. In the context of Marxist-Leninism, the working-class, as the most progressive, was not only responsible for the production of material goods, but it was also supposed to be in charge of the cultural development. This means that workers were expected to seek higher education in order to acquire the skills necessary to assume the leading positions in the state. Hermann Kant in *Die Aula* explains, in the words of a professor: “Unser Land braucht alle Hände. Aber braucht es nicht auch alle Köpfe? In der Tat braucht es sie. In der jetzigen Situation ist es, wie Genosse Stalin sagt: Die Kader entscheiden alles” (22). In this novel, Kant illustrates the achievements of which people from the working-class are capable. The idea that a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, or a tailor can become a professor, a journalist, or a doctor emphasizes the capabilities of those, who, until then, were considered members of a lower class. Neutsch and Reimann also hint at the opportunities given by the state to the workers to continue their education. The notion

that the separation between physical and intellectual work should vanish can also be seen in the idea of students performing a ‘productive year’ by joining a brigade for a year, as illustrated in *Ankunft im Alltag*.

One of the resolutions of the Bitterfeld conference in 1959 was to encourage workers to participate in the domain of art and literature. The image of a manual worker interested in the arts became a central element in depictions of the working-class. In Brigitte Reimann’s *Ankunft im Alltag*, Nikolaus is the most dedicated among the three students working at the factory, and thus he is elevated into a positive model for identification. He comes from the working-class and he understands that he owes his ability to study to the Socialist system. Unlike his father, he can pursue his dream of becoming a painter. Through Nikolaus, the other members of the brigade eventually also come into contact with art. Under his guidance, they learn to see everything with different eyes. They discover the beauty of the place of their daily labor (Reimann 109f.) and they learn about the power of art to bring to the foreground something that, in everyday life, seems trivial.

Balla, the protagonist of *Spur der Steine*, also is shown as developing an interest in art through his contact with the artist Eberhard Voss. He watches with pleasure and interest the work of the painter and realizes “Unsereins steckt mittendrin, merkt gar nicht mehr, was für gewaltige Bauten wachsen. Da muß erst solch ein Maler kommen, um einem die Augen zu öffnen...” (Neutsch 473f.). With time, Balla’s interest in art grows, and he learns to appreciate not only paintings, but also music: “[D]ie Musik nahm ihn gefangen, erfüllte ihn mit Unruhe und Gewißheit, mit der Sehnsucht aller seiner dumpfen Wünsche” (Neutsch 852). His interests in art also bring Balla closer to the ideal of the Socialist man.

The emphasis on being active in culture and education as an attribute of the Socialist worker supported the claim to the leading position of the working-class. Therefore it needed to be included in the ideological masculinity. However, while education and the need for educated people are clearly highlighted, art occupies only a marginal position in the novels discussed in this dissertation. It serves rather to show the beauty of industrial achievements (Reimann 110; Neutsch 472f.). This focus of art on the industrial and technical part of life could be what connects this trait with masculinities.

Concluding Remarks on the Socialist Worker Personality in Early GDR

Educational Literature

To create the Socialist worker personality was perhaps the most important goal of Socialist education, especially in the early decades of the GDR. At every step, young children were shown the importance of physical and intellectual labor, and what it meant to be a good worker. The Socialist characteristics of the worker did not differ much from the traditional image of masculinity connected with this profession: the Socialist worker was still supposed to be strong, skilled, and disciplined; he was supposed to be brave enough to embrace adventure and risk-taking; he would assert his masculinity by bonding with other men. The readers were supposed to see the superiority of the Socialist worker also in the motivation that stood behind his performance. In the GDR, the goal was Socialism – a better future for everybody, through common effort. To achieve this goal, the worker was expected to be willing to work hard and thrive towards finding newer, cheaper, and better ways to fulfill his part of the job. Workers were supposed to be aware that they were responsible not only for themselves and their families as

providers and breadwinners, but that they were also accountable for their performance vis-à-vis the entire society. In contrast to National-Socialism, this societal ideal was not limited to Germany but rather included all Socialist states. In exchange, workers were promised better working conditions and better access to cultural activities.

In literature, the depiction of work and worker depended on the time of creation and on the age of the targeted readership. In the *Aufbauliteratur* (Literature of Construction), the literary period of the first decade of the GDR, the reader encounters a conflict between the representatives of the old and the new systems. Those who do not want to accept the new Socialist methods of production are often depicted as stubborn, and eventually must make room for the new (*Tinko*). In the literature of the 1960s, especially in the books targeted at older readers, the focus is more on industry and the glorification of the industrial worker. His need and importance in the society are emphasized. The protagonists often go through a development phase, and thus eventually learn to understand the superiority of the Socialist system (*Spur der Steine, Ankunft im Alltag*). The texts for a younger audience put the emphasis on the value of every type of work. The small jobs performed by groups of children, the so called *Timur Hilfe* (Timur's help), are examples of this idea. In addition, the readers often were shown examples of adults sacrificing their time, effort and even money to do something for the community or to help out.

Similarly to the soldier personality, the Socialist worker was presented as superior to the Capitalist worker because, as the texts analyzed here show, he was depicted as actually possessing the traits of the ideal worker. Juxtaposed to these ideals, those workers who were corrupted by Capitalism, and who did not comprehend the superiority of Socialism, usually were

depicted as characters who lack discipline, courage, endurance, and even intelligence. They were portrayed as people who disrespect other workers and women, and abuse of alcohol.

It is important to stress that it is the Capitalist system in the West, not the worker himself, which was depicted in negative terms. The option was left for the reader to understand that there were also good workers in the West, but that their working conditions were much worse. In much the same fashion these texts gave examples of bad workers in East Germany. In literature, such negative examples helped to highlight the desirable opposite and to emphasize the undesirable consequences of Western influences. The authors, however, also appealed to the readers emphasizing the need to expose such negative behavior.

The inclusion of new traits of the *Neue Mensch*, such as inventiveness, into the ideal of the worker was often a source of tensions. On the one hand, the worker was supposed to prove his own thinking and make attempts at improving the production; on the other hand, he was expected to be disciplined and follow the economic plan. This conflict was not resolved, but the emphasis seemed to be placed on the traditional trait of discipline. Inventiveness was a welcome trait in overcoming the shortages that the East German economy experienced. However, discipline, as a characteristic of the *Neue Mensch*, was needed not only to fulfill the economic plans, but also, and especially, to secure the leading position of the ruling party. As such, it can be seen as an ideological goal. The traditional connection of this worker quality with masculinity makes it a trait of the ideological masculinity.

Similarly, the emphasis on education for the workers may be seen as in contradiction to the ideal of the manual and industrial worker. As explained above, however, this problem does not exist according to Marxism-Leninism: One of the goals of Socialism was to eliminate the

distinction between physical and intellectual work. As a consequence, both categories would eventually be included in the working-class. The authors of the texts analyzed here often depict the educated worker; however, the goal of advancing technology seems to aim at eliminating the need of physical work, which presents an inconsistency with the glorification of the industrial worker

An official claim of Socialism was the realization of gender equality. Thus, according to GDR propaganda, women were expected to work in every domain. However, not only does the ideal of the Socialist worker presented in the texts analyzed here consist almost exclusively of traits traditionally associated with masculinity; more importantly, the authors perpetuate the association of these qualities with men by predominantly choosing young men and boys as protagonists. Establishing the characteristics of the Socialist worker primarily on traits commonly associated with working-class masculinities, and showing them as attributes of men, suggests that the *Neue Mensch*, in essence, was supposed to be masculine. The portrayal of women in the novels analyzed for this dissertation supports this conclusion, as most of the female figures are depicted in rather traditional roles, or described as ‘manly’. Thus, the inclusion of women in the ideal of the Socialist worker did not induce a change in its perception as a masculine ideal. Rather, women joining the work force were expected to be more like men, more masculine. Sylka Scholz explains that women may be included in the professional ideals as long as they perpetuate and reproduce the masculine norms and values (2004, 39f.). The connection between masculinity and work was still valid in the so-called egalitarian society of the GDR, but women could participate in it, if they were willing to adjust to this masculine ideal. For the creation of the *Neue Mensch*, this meant that, although the model of the Socialist worker

remained associated with masculinities, it was still targeted at the entire society. The ideological goals behind it made it an ideological masculinity.

Conclusion

The *Neue Mensch* and the All-round Educated Personality

The early years of the GDR were filled with the idea of creating a new society that would implement Socialist ideals. Achieving such an ambitious goal required to forge a new type of human being, the *Neue Mensch*: People, therefore, needed to be educated in the new spirit. To this purpose, the SED utilized all possible means such as state-controlled organizations and schools. School mandatory reading lists were especially useful since literature still played a prominent role in the formation of young people in the 1950s and 1960s. The novels in these lists were used to promulgate the desired character traits of the *Neue Mensch*.

The fragile situation of the GDR in the years after its foundation, the necessity to assert its borders and to reconstruct an industry destroyed during, and further dismantled after WWII, led to an emphasis on the Socialist soldier and the Socialist worker as the primary models for the *Neue Mensch* presented to young people in the 1950s and 1960s. An analysis of the *Charakteristische Merkmale des sozialistischen Menschen* listed in the *Gesamtkonzeption des Lehrplanwerks für die sozialistische Mittelschule* (BArch DR2/5624) shows that the characteristics expected from the *Neue Mensch* also included traits associated with learning, artistic activity, sport, and family. Young citizens of the GDR would also encounter examples of the scientist, the artist, the athlete, and the family-man or -woman as positive role models for identification. At their core, these ideals share the same characteristics as the soldier and the worker, and likewise, they are based on traits traditionally associated with masculinity, even if they also tend to emphasize other traits expected from the next generation.

The main models embodied by the young men featured in the literature analyzed for this dissertation are those of the soldiers or workers. However, these protagonists can also serve as models of the scientist, the artist, the athlete and the family-man. Among the many examples are Nikolaus in Reimann's *Ankunft im Alltag*, who is actually a painter, and in Erik Neutsch's *Spur der Steine*, Hannes Balla develops a keen interest in art. In *Die Aula*, Hermann Kant shows workers following their dreams of education, and Kristian, in Horst Beseler's *Käuzchenkuhle*, is fascinated by natural science. In *Sheriff Teddy*, Benno Pludra emphasizes the athletic activity of both Kalle and Andreas, as well as of other *Jung Pioniere* (young pioneers), while Erik Neutsch's engineer Hesselbach displays an admiration for the spirit of collectivity and teamwork of the cyclist Täve Schurr. In Erwin Strittmatter's *Tinko*, the *Heimkehrer* (repatriate) is depicted as an exemplary father who takes care of his family, and in Bruno Apitz' *Nackt unter Wölfen*, the prisoners are shown to take care of a Jewish child. Thus, in every literary character, the reader is presented with multiple facets of the character traits of the Socialist *Neue Mensch*.

Oftentimes, the authors of the novels analyzed for this dissertation explicitly represent the connection between these various models. They point to the fact that learning, sports, art, or good family relations can positively influence performance in the building and defending of the Socialist state and society. In *Sheriff Teddy*, Benno Pludra points to the importance of fitness for the *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend): Andreas and his friends, all members of the *Jung Pioniere* (Young Pioneers), manage to catch Kalle's older brother, who had attempted to steal East German products, which he wanted to smuggle over the border. As the thief tries to escape, the boys give chase to him: "Der Verfolgte suchte sein Tempo zu beschleunigen. Er hatte Vorsprung verloren, atmete keuchend und schwitzte unter dem Mantel wie ein abgetriebener

Gaul. Seine Lunge fing an zu brennen; sie war solchen Sport nicht gewöhnt. Die Jungen hinter ihm trugen kurze Hosen, und ihre Körper waren geschmeidig und durchtrainiert. Es stand schlecht um Roberts Gewinnchancen” (Pludra 239). Here Pludra emphasizes that athletic activity must be part of the *Neue Mensch*, because, among other reasons, it enables the citizens of the GDR to protect more effectively the Socialist state and society.

The connection between the model of the artist and the ideal of the Socialist worker is presented in Reimann’s *Ankunft im Alltag*, especially in the figure of Nikolaus: his drawings of the *Kombinat* (industrial conglomerate) help the other workers rediscover the beauty of their work: “Es war mehr als ein Wiedersehen: es war eine Neuentdeckung. Schach hielt lange ein Blatt mit den flach gewölbten Brückenbögen unter hohen fliegenden Wolken, er sagte stolz und erstaunt: ‘Zum Teufel, ich hab’ gar nicht gewußt, wie schön es bei uns ist’” (Reimann 109f.). In addition, Reimann emphasizes here the need for the workers’ involvement in the arts. In a similar fashion, the model of the scientist aims at promoting the continuation of education, with the goal of advancing the technology used in East Germany’s industry or military.

People who maintain good relations within their family circle and exhibit an exemplary morality were considered more likely to take responsibility for the society as a whole, or take care of those in need. Erik Neutsch, in *Spur der Steine*, demonstrates through the counter-example of Horrath that lack of morality in private life has consequences at work.

The models of the scientist, the athlete, the artist, and the family-man or -woman, as presented in these texts, seem to promote the almost same traits as the models of the Socialist soldier and worker. However, each of them may also be considered as emphasizing a particular facet of the *allseitig gebildete Persönlichkeit* (all-round educated personality), which was

expected to become the norm for every citizen of the GDR. For example, the model of the athlete was intended to help young Socialists learn about the importance of fair play and of the collective. In *Spur der Steine*, Erik Neutsch uses Täve Schurr¹³² as the perfect exemplar of the collective (607). Likewise, the model of the scientist aimed at encouraging scientific curiosity and technical interests. For example, Strittmatter, in his novel *Tinko*, shows the advantages that technology can bring to agriculture (373).

The models of the artist and of the family-man, though still based on traditional ‘manly’ characteristics, appear the most adaptable to a truly egalitarian society, as they could be seen as examples stressing traits commonly associated with women, such as emotionality, attentiveness to beauty, and caring for others. However, a more detailed investigation of these models would be required to see how far this adaptability went.

Is the *Neue Mensch* in Fact a ‘Traditional Man’?

The East German government claimed that, under its leadership, achieving a quasi-utopian Socialist/Communist world was possible. It was further claimed that such a new society would require a new type of human being, the *Neue Mensch*. The SED reoriented the entire educational system with the purpose of directing the next generation towards this goal. The belief in the possibility of creating a *Neuer Mensch* in the German Democratic Republic especially characterized the beginnings of the Socialist state. Educational literature of the 1950s

¹³² Gustav-Adolf Schurr, known as Täve, was the most famous cyclist of the GDR. He won the Peace Race in 1955 and 1959. During the World Championship in 1960, Täve used a tactic that made him lose but helped his teammate Bernard Eckstein win the race, thus guaranteeing the victory for the GDR. This gesture became of symbolic value for the Socialist society, where the promotion of the collective prevailed over the individual.

and the 1960s in the GDR provides models of this ideal that were designed to inspire the young generation to fervently believe in, and to support, Socialism. The protagonists were intended to serve as role models for children and young adults. Through identification with the male or female protagonists the readers became acquainted with the type of behavior that was expected of them. The goal was to make this model personality accepted by the entire society, or in Connell's terms, hegemonic. The fact that the creation of this 'new' personality also aimed at securing the leadership position of the party suggests that the models presented in this literature are in fact ideological.

The very concept of the *Neue Mensch* suggested that this kind of human being had not existed before. However, the novels analyzed here prove that the ideals were, to a high degree, based on rather traditional masculine characteristics that were enhanced by features identified as Socialist.

Interestingly, while the official propaganda explicitly expected both girls and boys to adopt the characteristics of the *Neue Mensch*, the protagonists of the novels analyzed here who displayed these traits were mostly male. Therefore, the association of these traits with the biological sex of the protagonist perpetuated their masculine character. The traditional association of the desired characteristics with masculinities, their depiction based almost solely on male examples, and their ideological underpinning suggest that the ideal presented to the next generation in the GDR is an 'ideological masculinity'.

The combination of traditional and Socialist qualities often caused conflicts, since, sometimes, the varied expectations of the *Neue Mensch* seemed to contradict each other. For example, in the soldier model, readers would simultaneously be faced with the emphasis on

peace and the characterization of fighting and even killing when necessary as a duty. Likewise, the worker was encouraged to be inventive, while he was at the same time expected to be disciplined and to follow the economic plan. An analysis of the other models used to emphasize specific features of the ideal Socialist citizen, may reveal yet other, different tensions created by the association of traditional traits and Socialist expectations of the *Neue Mensch*. In the SED's propaganda, these conflicts were not present. The aspects of the model that may be perceived as negative were always justified by the positive motivation that drives this type of behavior. Of course, such a justification is neither new nor unique to the Socialist system. In the GDR, the goal was to build, support, and defend Socialism, and this was to provide the motive behind every action. As an example of such a rationalization of negative features, the authors of the novels analyzed in this dissertation draw a clear line between so-called just and unjust wars. The Socialist soldier is presented as someone fighting only out of necessity, in defense of his Fatherland, to protect it against the imperialist goals of the Capitalists. The negative aspect of such a fight, the killing, is presented as a noble thing to do, because it aims to ensure peace and wealth for all people.

Through the model of the worker, young readers are instructed about the importance of building Socialism and the satisfaction experienced when working towards this ultimate goal. The authors of the novels analyzed here emphasize that Socialist workers understand that they work in society's interest. By contrast, workers in the West are depicted as exploited by the rich, and working only for money. Therefore, these texts suggest that the Western worker experiences only alienation and frustration, whereas the Socialist worker is instead happy and fulfilled. Nonetheless, the authors also remind the readers that co-ownership of the fruits of labor brings

responsibility. The aim of the writers is to show young people that they are expected to be breadwinners and providers for the entire society: the Socialist notion of collectivity is clearly highlighted. The emphasis the authors place on the leading role of the SED aims also to convince the readers that the Party knows best what is needed to achieve Socialism, and that people should follow the SED's directions in a disciplined manner. By identifying with the models presented in the literature, the readers were taught that the *Neue Mensch* was always supposed to search for better and cheaper ways to fulfill the economic plan. In addition, the new role of the worker included the need for his participation in the creation of culture. The primary message sent to the reader is that the Socialist *Neue Mensch* needs to build Socialism, not only physically, but also on a higher, intellectual level.

The aim of the educational literature analyzed here was to provide positive models for identification, which, at the same time, differed from parallel models in the West. This difference can be illustrated by depicting the enemy, be it the Capitalist, the Fascist, or the bourgeois man, as lacking traditional masculine traits. The Socialist soldier or worker is always shown as disciplined, courageous, and strong, whereas the Capitalist is portrayed as a wimp, a coward, and an evildoer. At the same time, these counter-examples serve to emphasize the positive traits of the presented models. The authors thus depict the 'flawed' Western soldier or worker to highlight its 'flawless' Socialist equivalent. Sometimes, the flaws of the Western worker and soldier are interpreted as a consequence of Western propaganda, which, as was claimed in these texts, has the power to corrupt young minds.

The texts analyzed for this dissertation often take the form of a 'coming-of-age' story, through which the author aims to guide young people towards full comprehension of the

superiority of the Socialist system. It is only in the later years, after the change of the SED's leadership to Erich Honecker in 1971, during a time of apparent stability, that a liberalization of the cultural policy took place and allowed for a more realistic illustration of fictional characters (Steinlein *et al.* 222).¹³³

An interesting conclusion that emerges from the analysis of the different models of the *Neue Mensch* is the fact that these ideals of masculinity exhibit the same, or at least similar, qualities, even though they may emphasize a different aspect of the *allseitig gebildete Persönlichkeit* (all-round educated personality), the creation of which was the official ultimate goal of Socialist education. In the model of the soldier, the most important message for the young generation is *Wehrbereitschaft* (readiness to defend), be it in war or in everyday life, and through cooperation with the authorities. Through work, the young Socialists were supposed to learn the advantages of the collective and the duties that come with it. They were also expected to appreciate the workers' achievements and accept the leading role of the working-class (led by the SED). Similarly, the models presented to young readers in the form of the athlete, the scientist, the artist and the family-man emphasize the spirit of fair play and the importance of the collective, scientific curiosity, the need for culture, and exemplary morality, respectively.

Although these models incorporate a core of similar traits, they each can certainly stand alone. The notion that every community and society, or a group, can and will create its own hegemonic masculinity suggests that these models can serve also as separate ideological masculinities, to which men should attempt to conform according to their interests and talents. This would give the opportunity for all young people in the GDR to embrace the model of the

¹³³ An example of a literary work that showed flaws in the system is Ulrich Plenzdorf's *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.* (1973).

Neue Sozialistische Mensch as their own hegemonic personality, which – and this needs to be stressed – was shaped by traits predominantly associated with masculinity.

The idea that women can also display characteristics associated with masculinities would extend this opportunity to the entire society. However, the women portrayed in the texts that were analyzed for this dissertation are rarely depicted as having internalized any of the models associated with the *Neue Mensch*. Most often, the reader finds them in the traditional roles of wives, mothers, and homemakers. If they are working, they rarely do physical work. Usually, they are depicted in the role of a teacher; if on a construction site, they will be part of the educated management, working ‘inside’. In those instances when we do find examples of women who perform work traditionally associated with men, the authors describe them as ‘manly.’ This depiction includes not only their behavior and characteristics, but even their looks and their voice. The novelty is that this comparison is meant in a positive way, thus suggesting that women were, in fact, not only allowed to, but also expected to adopt these characteristics, and to become more ‘manly’, or in Butler’s words – to perform masculinities.

Did the leaders of the SED, or the authors discussed in this dissertation, consciously decide to base the model of the Socialist *Neue Mensch* on traditional masculine traits, or was it rather the result of their own socialization? And did the promotion of these masculine traits influence the contemporary understanding of gender? An analysis of the literature produced by those born and raised in the GDR may give an answer to these questions. Even when taking into account the influences from the West and changes in the political situation of the GDR, the socialization to which these authors were exposed probably affected the ways in which they depicted their protagonists. In other words, these representations of young men or women can

provide information about the acceptance of the models among the society, and whether in fact these ideological masculinities became hegemonic.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Primary Literature

181

Title	Year	Information about Inclusion in the Mandatory/Suggested Reading List found in	Soldier	Worker
Wie der Stahl gehärtet wurde - Nikolai Ostrowski	1932-34	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR; BArch DR2/2060	X	X
Tinko - Erwin Strittmatter	1954	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR; BArch DR2/2060		X
Sheriff Teddy - Benno Pludra	1956	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR; BArch DR2/3739	X	X
Nackt unter Wölfen - Bruno Apitz	1958	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR; BArch DR2/2060	X	
Ankunft im Alltag - Brigitte Reimann	1961			X
Die Abenteuer des Werner Holt - Dieter Noll	1960/63	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR	X	X
Spur der Steine - Erik Neutsch	1964			X
Käuzchenkuhle - Horst Beseler	1965	Handbuch zur KJL SBZ/DDR	X	X
Die Aula -Hermann Kant	1965			X

App. 1. Table of primary literature used in the dissertation.

Appendix 2

List of Most Common Abbreviations

BSG	<i>Betriebssportgemeinschaft</i>
	Enterprise based sport club
BArch	Bundesarchiv
	Federal Archive (followed by document number)
DDR / GDR	<i>Deutsche Demokratische Republik</i>
	German Democratic Republic
DOSAAF	<i>Добровольное общество содействия армии, авиации и флоту</i>
	Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet
DTSB	<i>Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund</i>
	German Association of Gymnastics and Sports
EOS	<i>Erweiterte Oberschule</i>
	Extended Secondary School
FDGB	<i>Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund</i>
	Free German Trade Union Federation
FDJ	<i>Freie Deutsche Jugend</i>
	Free German Youth
GST	<i>Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik</i>
	Society for Sport and Technology
ILK	<i>Internationales Lagerkomitee (Buchenwald)</i>
	International Camp Committee (Buchenwald)
IM	<i>Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter</i>
	Unofficial Collaborator
KPD	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i>
	Communist Party of Germany
MfS / Stasi	<i>Ministerium für Staatssicherheit</i>
	Ministry of State Security
NVA	<i>Nationale Volksarmee</i>
	National People's Army
POW	Prisoner of War
SBZ	Sowjetische Besatzungszone
	Soviet Occupation Zone
SED	<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i>
	Socialist Unity Party of Germany
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i>
	Social Democratic Party of Germany

App. 2. List of most common abbreviations used in this dissertation.

Vita

Joanna Broda-Schunck was born in Cracow, Poland. Her first studies were at the Teacher's College of Foreign Languages, German Section at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She finished it with a Licentiate (Bachelor) degree by writing her thesis on the use of songs in teaching German as a foreign language. While teaching German and French at a technical high school in Krakow, Poland, she continued her studies for a Master's Degree at the Jagiellonian University, finishing it with a thesis on school dictionaries in German. In 2001, she passed the exam for the Diplome Approfondi de la Langue Francaise. In 2004/2005, she attended 'One year postgraduate University Studies of Interpreting at the UNESCO Chair for Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication, Faculty of Philology at the Jagiellonian University.

In Fall 2008, she joined the PhD program in Modern Foreign Languages at the University of Tennessee with the first concentration in German, and second concentration in Applied Linguistics and in French. In this time, she was a Teaching Associate teaching lower level German classes (101, 102, 201, 202) as well as the upper level class "German for Reading Knowledge" (331,332). In 2010, she received the Graduate Teaching Assistant Award for best teacher in Lower Division German at the University of Tennessee. She is also the recipient of the Nordsieck Scholarship and the Gerti Wunderlich Award given by the German Program of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Tennessee.

She successfully defended her dissertation "Be a Man, Comrade! Construction of the 'Socialist Male Personality' in the GDR Youth Literature of the 1950s and 1960s", and earned her doctoral degree in August 2013.