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# Anna Seghers' "The Man and His Name": *Heimat* and the Labor of Interpellation in Postwar East Germany

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Anna Seghers' first major work set in the GDR, "The Man and His Name" stages the tension between the optimistic discourse of socialist construction and the realities that Seghers encountered upon her return to Germany. The 1952 novella narrates the breakdown of Stalinist models of social identification in the face of the apathy of the postwar German population as well as the ideological rigidity of German Communist discourse, while pointing towards a more democratic mode of collectivity based in a Marxist conception of *Heimat* rooted in material production.

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*What else could narrative closure consist of than  
the passage from one moral order to another?*  
Hayden White

Some two decades since the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the cold-war tendency to dismiss early East German literature as simple propaganda mired in a didactic socialist realism—a textual corpus of “boy meets tractor” stories written to support the consolidation of a Stalinist dictatorship—remains largely intact, despite a rhetorical shift from anticommunism to modernization theory. Wolfgang Emmerich exemplifies this reading of the so-called *Aufbauliteratur* in his essay “Gleichzeitigkeit,” where he argues that it belongs to an essentially premodern moment where “culture and literature were reduced to cogs and plan factors within socialist production, which is to say, instrumentalized.”<sup>1</sup> The integration of culture into the plan of production may indeed have been a fantasy of the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei*) elite in the early years of the GDR. But by adopting this fantasy of power as his own critical standpoint, Emmerich neglects the actual complexity of East German literature and the contradictions of the East German cultural scene.<sup>2</sup>

This article proposes instead to read an example of this literature, Anna Seghers' 1952 novella, “The Man and His Name,” in terms of Seghers' own exile and remigration and her complicated relationship to postwar Germany as a Communist author for whom the political and aesthetic dimensions were inexorably linked in the project of representing the catastrophe of recent German history and plotting a path out of the ruins of fascism, both psychic and material. Furthermore, a reading of Seghers' *Aufbau*-era writings must attend

to the modes by which these works, and *Aufbauliteratur* generally, thematize the role of the antifascist writer in a postfascist society, and how anxieties about the efficacy of this vocation underlie the superficial optimism of *Aufbau* narratives. Seghers' conception of the social role of literature in the years directly after the war points less to a "plan literature," a literary translation of SED ideology, than to the role of narrative and representation in the creation of social meaning itself as the condition of ideology as such. "The Man and His Name" uniquely foregrounds this work of narrativity on both the diegetic and formal levels at the same time that the novella betrays Seghers' concern about the ability of the East German social imaginary of the early 1950s to bear the weight of its own contradictions.

Like much of Seghers' postwar work, "The Man and His Name" attempts to bridge the dualistic topoi that structure the social imaginary of a divided postwar Germany—for example, past and present, Nazism and socialism—by way of a homology between labor and narrativity itself. In her work during the 1950s, material labor is generally represented as a form of social pedagogy and both literal and figural community-building. The resulting logic of vocation parallels Seghers' conception of narrative as a mode of coordinating the personal with the social and the historical. She uses this homology to support a Marxist-Leninist appropriation of the traditional German notion of *Heimat* common to the early GDR, inscribed within a regime of representation that emphasized the role of manual and industrial labor in the reconfiguration of both social and subjective dispensations. In most early GDR literature, production functions as a central metaphor in the construction of social meaning, as the matrix in which, as a contemporary critic framed the matter in the early 1950s, the "constant growth of the material and cultural needs of the masses" are stimulated and articulated,<sup>3</sup> at the same time that these needs are interwoven with the cities, farms, mines, and factories as sites of belonging, mutual aid, and collective labor. The *Aufbauliteratur* is animated by the tension between this productivist meta-narrative of a "socialist homeland" and the resistance posed by postwar realities to that narrative's possibility of coherence. Seghers' work of the 1950s expresses the extreme pressure placed on processes of social binding and integration through work in the early GDR while it mimetically rehearses the fissures of the East German ideological imaginary.

"The Man and His Name" highlights the fragility of this homology of labor and narration, which can be read as symptomatic of the decentered quality of the postwar East German social imaginary. In the novella this tension manifests itself not only in an awareness of the persistence into the GDR of beliefs and behaviors structured by the *habitus* of an only recently defeated fascism, but perhaps more importantly in a heightened insecurity about the capacity of the new socialist order to bind its citizens ideologically. In the face of the non-synchronicity, to borrow a term from Ernst Bloch, of the socialist

present, Seghers' narrative attempts to evacuate the emotional identifications of the fascist past in order to make way for the identification of the post-fascist population with the GDR as a socialist *Heimat*.

The project of constructing the GDR as *Heimat*, as it presents itself in the *Aufbauliteratur*, is that of remapping personal interests onto collective interests in order for a new *habitus* to crystallize around emancipated social production, which is to say the self-conscious production of social contexts and relationships. It seeks to release working class subjectivity, skills, capacities, and desires from the blockages of experience wrought by poverty and fascism, and to embed these liberated subjective and social forces into the working collective. This process also has its historical dimension, since early East German literature is centrally concerned with establishing a serviceable antifascist working-class tradition. The *Aufbauroman*, or production novel, of the early 1950s can be read as a medium for grafting the historical narrative of the German workers' movement onto the geographical space of the German Democratic Republic through a pedagogy based in material production.<sup>4</sup> This ideology of *Heimat* is as much a matter of historical narrative as it is of physical space. This notion of *Heimat* appears in the cultural production of the early GDR through the frequent literary deployment of affects such as *Vertrauen*, which denotes trust, confidence, and intimacy, and a sense of collective belonging. As Erika Haas writes of this meta-narrative, "*Heimat*... is where one belongs, where trust [*Vertrauen*] dominates, and where there are collective goals." Haas goes on to point out that this construction operates largely by bracketing the personal within the social, such that the Party itself becomes the medium by which this affect of *Vertrauen* is anchored. The socialist homeland is therefore also a learning process of integration whereby East Germans come to identify with the GDR and the values of the SED through their participation in social production. Socialism itself thus comes in many of the novels of early East German literature to be figured as "with us," or "at home"—phrases signifying a sense of social belonging, or what Peter Blickle refers to as the "collective singular" construction, the often ambiguous blurring of individual and collective identification typical of *Heimat* discourses.<sup>5</sup>

"The Man and His Name" was Seghers' first sustained attempt to write about the transformations that had taken place in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ) and GDR since 1945. The novella takes place between 1948 and 1950, when reconstruction began in earnest in the SBZ/GDR. Seghers weaves her depiction of postwar reconstruction around the contradictions involved in building a socialist society on the physical and psychic rubble of Nazi Germany. The novella's protagonist, a young former SS officer named Walter Retzlow, returns from the war and is mistaken for Heinz Brenner, an antifascist resistance fighter. As the story unfolds, Retzlow appropriates this identity and becomes a model worker in the new socialist state. "The Man and His Name" attempts to

narrate a social transformation through this subjective transformation. Lenore Krenzlin has described the operative function of "The Man and His Name" in terms of the return and re-inscription of the Communist experience into the experience of the German working class. For Krenzlin, the novella aspires "to arouse reciprocal understanding for the emotional constitution of both groups who initially could hardly comprehend one another: the active antifascists, who had made the greatest sacrifices for their convictions, and those who allowed themselves to be misused by fascism."<sup>6</sup> Seghers attempts to narrate the reintegration of the working class with its antifascist "vanguard" through the reappropriation of Germany's suppressed antifascist traditions—offering this reappropriation as an alternative to the defensive symbolizations, both fascist and Stalinist, of the postwar period.

### I. The Return

"The Man and His Name" begins with a scene of aborted homecoming. This return is not that of the protagonist, but rather of a German soldier, a former plumber named Hermann Müller. Müller has faced every conceivable danger during his years at war and now reappears in his native city, "looking forward to his family and his craft."<sup>7</sup> Instead of this anticipated return to his prewar life, he finds a scene of complete destruction and social collapse:

Even if Hermann Müller knew from experience what "lying in the zone of combat" means for people and houses—he was first seized by horror at the sight of the remains of the town. There was nothing left of his house except for a few posts and a foundation wall. The rubble, in which his workshop and perhaps also his family were strewn, almost filled the shell crater that had taken the place of his house. A few survivors still crawled around here and there in the ruins. They could not, in their confusion, recollect Hermann Müller, and he, too, no longer recognized them.<sup>8</sup>

The depiction of the return to a non-place, a place evacuated of meaning is a generic trope of socialist realism, but it only acquires its specific weight in the context of postwar Germany. We see here that Seghers draws a parallel between the destruction of the built landscape and the unraveling of the bonds of recognition and memory that once held the community together. The destruction of the war precipitates a radical evacuation of experience. This scene of destruction here performs a sort of de-subjectivizing function on the inhabitants of the city as well as on Müller himself. In what follows, Seghers' novella attempts to respond to the crisis of meaning outlined in this opening scene.

The ruined city clearly poses the problem of the conditions of narration, how to insert this image within an historical and subjective discourse of meaning. The problem of narration, or of the capacity to narrate, can be understood through recourse to Louis Althusser's concept of ideology, particularly his notion

of ideological interpellation as a bridging operation between the material and discursive aspects of the ideological. This seems initially counter-intuitive, a cross-breeding of two very different species of Marxism—Seghers' Popular Front-era Marxist humanism and Althusser's theory of history as "a process without a subject."<sup>9</sup> Yet the problem posed by Seghers in "The Man and His Name" bears a striking similarity to the Althusserian notion of ideological interpellation, and there is a certain affinity between Althusser's account of ideology as an operation of hailing and a novella that is driven by the ambiguity of the act of naming. The narrative of "The Man and His Name" can be read as an attempt on the one hand to map the coordinates that would allow for a new mode of mediating the relationship of the individual subject to the social process. Underlying this effort is the implication of the novella that this cannot be imagined as an intersubjective encounter. At the same time, as we shall see below, this non-intersubjective encounter can only be represented as the mutual recognition of individual subjects. The Althusserian notion that ideological interpellation is only intersubjective on the level of appearance is analytically useful in understanding Seghers' novella.

For Althusser, then, interpellation is that moment of recognition where the subject is hailed as a subject precisely of a system of material practices through which ideology is articulated, "ideology being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of that functioning," which is misrecognized by the ideological subject as an intersubjective encounter.<sup>10</sup> If, as Althusser famously wrote, "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence,"<sup>11</sup> it follows first that ideology cannot be reduced in this account to "false consciousness," but is rather cast here as the mode through which the subject is bound to the social. Secondly, it follows that ideology itself depends on certain psychic capacities of the individual in order to operate. A person incapable of the ego operations of identification and recognition cannot be interpellated as an ideological subject. There is, after all, a minimum openness to the construction of meaning on the part of the individual that serves as the prerequisite of ideological binding. If for Althusser, interpellation has always already occurred,<sup>12</sup> Seghers nonetheless presents it here as interrupted, positing with the character of Müller a materialization of the abstract category of the pre-interpellated individual, not in a temporal sense, but in the sense that it is no longer capable of participating in an order of symbolic meaning. It is here that one would want to insist on the material dimension of ideology that Althusser brings to the fore: "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material."<sup>13</sup> Althusser's insistence on the materiality of ideology helps us to understand the function of this desolate postwar landscape as a signifier of the collapse of the social practice that inscribes the ideological subject within itself, instead of merely as a symbol of subjective confusion and desperation. Rather, in the opening pages of Seghers' novella,

the radical disarticulation of the “real conditions of existence” forecloses the capacity to form an imaginary relation to these conditions.

Although not autobiographical, this scene of a foreclosed return alludes to Seghers’ experience of the return from exile as a moment of suspended meaning. The parallel between the physical destruction of Germany and the confusion, desperation, and psychic collapse of the German people, such that one can stand in an allegorical relation to the other, is a common trope in Seghers’ postwar writings, both fictional and otherwise. Upon her return to Berlin from Mexico City in 1947, she wrote: “fascism has horribly devastated the country, inside and outside, above all inside.”<sup>14</sup> She seems to be using the landscape as a way of moving from the individual to the social. The landscape here functions not so much in the sense of an objective correlative, but rather as a way of concretizing the evacuation of social and psychic structures of collective meaning. With the character of Müller, she points to an elementary dilemma of exile experience: the point of return is no longer the point of departure. In order to understand this point properly, it is necessary to examine Seghers’ schematization of the relationship of the antifascist exile to Nazi Germany. The capacity of the exile to identify with the lost homeland, according to her 1941 essay “Deutschland und wir,” is enabled by the recognition and separation of a progressive, socialist German tradition from the body of Hitler’s Germany, based on a distinction reminiscent of Lenin’s famous two-cultures thesis, postulating a split within each national culture between forces arranged across class lines.<sup>15</sup> The invocation of the “other Germany” was a common part of KPD-exile rhetoric.<sup>16</sup> Seghers situates this distinction historically, leaning upon the classical Marxist reading of the so-called German *misère*, a concept dating back to the period before the abortive 1848 revolutions. She asserts that the unification and capitalization of Germany were not achieved under the banner of an ascendant bourgeoisie, but by the reactionary Junker aristocracy.<sup>17</sup> Thus social demands were never articulated in concert with national ones. This rupture between political power and civil society is therefore pathologically accentuated in the German context, and “the life experience of the Germans is also fissured, burdened by its history.”<sup>18</sup>

Seghers’ essay articulates this duality through the figure of the German landscape, opposing the abstract and clichéd notions of blood and soil deployed by Nazism with another kind of German landscape, inscribed with the history of class struggle and the divisions of German society. It is less the natural landscape than the built environment of Germany, especially its industrial landscapes, that interests her:

If one of our writers travels diagonally through Germany, more or less from the north-east to the south-west, and he caught sight of the grandiose, dreadful, sulfur-yellow Leuna factory-landscape, the pumping heart of our fatherland where tens of thousands of workers realize peculiar inventions



for the frugal country, is he then proud of this sight? Is he proud of Leuna, the national asset? He is not proud of the national asset, and yet he is proud of the labor power of 50,000 workers, proud of the achievement of this landscape saturated with the blood of the Central German Uprising, proud of the future of Leuna. Ask first of the weighty word *Vaterlandsliebe* what it is about your country that is cherished. Do the holy goods of the nation console the dispossessed? ... Does the "holy earth of the homeland" console the landless? Yet he who has worked in our factories, who has demonstrated in our streets, who has struggled in our language, he would not be human if he did not love our country.<sup>19</sup>

This presence of the "other," proletarian Germany inscribed into the landscape of the country functions in the speech as a concretization of the "progressive" German culture, a source of German antifascist identification in exile. The return from exile, however, called into question this image of opposition within Germany. Upon her return in 1947, Seghers wrote, "I was ashamed in the first week, because I was not surprised. The second week I was very surprised.... I had, for example, always believed I knew exactly what a Nazi is, what a thief is, what an honest man is."<sup>20</sup> Her re-encounter with Germany is a return less to a liberated antifascist consensus than a return to a country where remnants of fascism seem to be embedded beneath an inscrutable layer of ruins, not only literally, but also in the subjectivity of the German people. The distinction made by the exiles between the Nazis and the oppressed and terrorized German working masses proves inadequate to the reality of German fascism and the modes of passive support and complicity, which allowed German workers as well as everyone else to survive it.<sup>21</sup> The shock of return is revealed here and in Seghers' other writings of this period as an inability to carry over leftist and antifascist oppositional discourses and traditions into the postwar German context, despite the consolidation of Communist political and cultural hegemony after the war. The exile returns to a situation where all that had sustained her in memory during her exile—the factories, the streets, and the German workers' movement as a whole—simply is not there. Thus the landscape of Leuna, signifying the historical dynamic of class struggle, is replaced by a stagnant almost post-historical landscape. As she recounted in 1956, "in those days Germany offered a 'unity' of ruins, desperation, and hunger."<sup>22</sup>

The suspension of the antinomy between fascist and antifascist cultural traditions, which had sustained the Communist exile literature of Seghers, Eduard Claudius, Hans Marchwitza, Willi Bredel, and others, in the reality of the postwar period posed creative difficulties for many authors returning from abroad. For Seghers, as for other authors, the problem was one of the narrativity of the present. A notebook from these years found among Seghers' posthumous papers points to the depths of the aporias she felt confronted with

at the time:

The world to which I belonged was ungraspable for me as an artist. It is clear to me in its causes and goals. It was not yet expressible, not yet able to be written. Why not on the representation of a process that involves us directly?—because no story would come out of it. Because the montage of isolated impressions, even if they are correctly represented, still yields no story. They should have asked, why are you not able to write the correct story from what directly involves you and us, right now, instead of a montage of random impressions. I could not do that. I could only write this story. I was homesick.<sup>23</sup>

This last sentence seems enigmatic, since Seghers was indeed back in Berlin after 14 years of exile. Perhaps what she was missing was precisely that “other Germany,” which she had known before 1933, so different from the ruined nation to which she returned.<sup>24</sup> Postwar Germany seemed stripped of the social dynamic of class struggle that had grounded her work as a Communist author since the late 1920s. With the character of Müller, she raises the possibility of the erasure of “the other Germany”: not just the defeat of the progressive forces of German history, but the possibility of the foreclosure of the very alternative, such that the distinction between “socialist” and “fascist” becomes meaningless in a *posthistoire* of disarticulated ruins. The return from exile cannot be told as a story capable of binding meaning. Thus the enigmatic reference above to the only story Seghers could write at this time, which is presumably “Das Argonautenschiff,” a first draft of which appears in the same notebook as the passage cited above. This story narrates another homecoming, that of a tired and indifferent Jason, who numbly moves through a landscape marked by longing and disappointment. Seghers portrays this returning adventurer as a sort of troublesome ghost, a man who inspires others to break out of the constraints of their quotidian lives, but who has outlived himself. Without reducing “The Ship of the Argonauts” entirely to an allegory of postwar Germany, it is impossible not to read Seghers’ Jason alongside the common East German trope of the antifascist exile as a positive hero and role model. It is precisely Jason’s realization that his life, and by implication history itself, is merely “coincidence,” that “there is no hidden path with a goal,”<sup>25</sup> which must be warded off in “The Man and His Name” as the positive condition of narrative as Seghers understood it, as the representation of reality such that “the development, the guidelines” of social conflicts “become clear.”<sup>26</sup> “The Man and His Name” attempts to render postwar conditions susceptible to narration through an attempt to re-inscribe Germany as a field of dynamic meaning by staging a reconsolidation of social class, particularly of the proletariat, as the basis for narrative representation.

## II. Evacuating the Past

In the midst of Hermann Müller's psychic collapse, labor itself remains as a stratum of experience and functions as the material for his post-traumatic work of repetition, and this stratum is work itself. "It was as if only a weak memory of his craft, the bent lead pipe, held the plumber, whom God and man had forsaken, firmly from the abyss of madness."<sup>27</sup> Müller's craft is figured as written into his very body, "as if his mind lay inside his fingers,"<sup>28</sup> as a kind of somatic memory. His activity is marked by an absence of volition, which Seghers ties to a compulsive anxiety produced by the sudden suspension of the authoritarian structures that shaped his socialization as a soldier in Hitler's army:

Müller would not have undertaken to do anything by himself; he was too dull for that. Rather, he did what he was told to do.... He plumbed, knocked, and twisted in hurried fear, as if he still stood under command, whatever ovens, pails, cooking pots, hotplates were brought to him.<sup>29</sup>

Müller is not a class-conscious worker deploying his labor in the struggle for socialism, but rather a subject reduced to its vanishing point: "He remained, however, stupid and dull despite all of this bustle, except in the memory of his prewar craft."<sup>30</sup> This mute labor can be read as a defensive symbolization, or what Walter Benjamin calls a mimetic shock absorber;<sup>31</sup> Müller's senseless business is an attempt to give figuration to the senselessness of alienated labor itself. This defensive symbolization, however, seems to carry within it another danger, that of the flight of the working class into pathology. Indeed, Müller's labor, a labor of flight from a present rendered meaningless by the erasure of the built environment as a signifier of memory, anticipates Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's famous account of work as a mode of repressing the trauma of Germany's collapse in *The Inability to Mourn*.<sup>32</sup>

This is also the condition in which Retzlow is found in the same bombed out courtyard on Alexanderplatz by the occupation authorities, who ask him to fill out identity papers. The identity papers invoke the totality of social and personal relationships in all of their apocalyptic meaninglessness, and Retzlow is unable to provide answers. He is rescued from paralysis and disaster by sheer accident. At this moment, he is misrecognized by one of the strangers in the courtyard as Heinz Brenner, a man with whom the stranger had served in a penal battalion in northern Africa, and who was a committed antifascist. Taking his cue from the stranger, Retzlow registers himself as Heinz Brenner.<sup>33</sup> Immediately following this incident, he is again recognized and stopped on the street by an old acquaintance, Berg, who knows him to be the young SS man that he is, or was.<sup>34</sup> It is important to bear in mind that before this event of tripartite interpellation (the questionnaire, the stranger's misrecognition, and Berg's recognition), Seghers has also not yet named her character. It is in the failed attempt to produce a name, to account for himself, that the young man

is suddenly doubled into two names, both in some sense incomplete.

Upon meeting Berg, "Heinz, who was called Retzlow again, now remembered everything."<sup>35</sup> We learn that Retzlow had joined the SS in the last year of the war. At the same time, Retzlow realizes how secure his position actually is in the Soviet Zone, since the entire symbolic structure of which the SS was a part has collapsed, "the war had burned out."<sup>36</sup> This collapse has occurred without branding Retzlow, since he never received the standard SS blood-type tattoo. Berg takes Retzlow to his apartment for a reunion with the survivors of his unit and their families, who have become a sort of resistance cell against the Soviet occupation. Retzlow himself perceives this atavistic world as a "a type of community in a world without coherence."<sup>37</sup> This defensive community is not able, however, to endow itself with any kind of meaning. "He felt no binding force. Previously his indifference would have shamed him, now he was no longer capable of any emotional arousal."<sup>38</sup> The affective bond that ties him to this spectral and disaffected milieu is in fact, again, one of repetition. Seghers writes: "the boy thought: I had thought what's sitting around here was long dead. And maybe it is. But: Why do the dead make so much noise?—They're even starting to sing. The old songs that were now forbidden."<sup>39</sup> The image that we are given is of animate corpses in a strange sort of ritual, signifying a history that has obliterated itself. This defensive community is a parallel to Müller's catatonic labor. Like Müller's compulsive labor, this group functions as a protective barrier against the shock of recent history by repeating it in an evacuated form. The authoritarian structure of this group, with all of the members carrying their SS ranks, is a figural defense against the "ungraspable, uncanny pursuer... that could take on any or no shape," which haunts Retzlow in his solitary moments.<sup>40</sup>

For Retzlow and Müller, the trauma of fascism only begins to emerge against the background of fascism's collapse. With the erasure of the fascist dispensation a variety of defensive symbolizations arise in its place. Seghers' narrative attempts to undermine these defensive symbolizations by evacuating the subjective identifications that adhere within them, not only to pave the way for identification with the new socialist order, but also to excavate the points of affinity with this order buried in the rubble of postfascist experience. Retzlow's reliving of the increasingly evacuated postfascist fascist milieu opens a space in which both he and the novella itself can begin to recuperate the desire for a meaningful collectivity. Boredom here is an essentially compensatory attitude in the face of the collapse of community and social meaning. Yet as with the double interpellation that we witnessed above, boredom is both a question and the foreclosure of its answer. "With what should the human heart have answered the full emptiness of the world, except with desperation of boredom?"<sup>41</sup> It is only in reliving the past in the form of boredom that the inadequacy of previous psychic dispensation can appear as an object of cognition. At the same

time, as we shall see, the reliving of this fascist past in its evacuated form is necessary not only on the psychological level of the character, but also on the level of the narrative structure, to rebuild the antipodes according to which something like a “taking of sides” might occur, pointing the way past defensive symbolizations of trauma to the self-conscious production of social relationships.

### III. Labor

The role of the Party in “The Man and His Name” consists in calling the working class out of these defensive symbolizations of repetitive meaningless labor and increasingly empty fascist identifications. The novella grounds both of these psychic structures in that classic leitmotif of the *deutsche misère*, passivity. Thus the SED functionary Lohmer lectures Retzlow: “you’ve danced long enough to the tune of that rabble [the Nazis]. Somehow you must get the feeling that you could finally be your own man for once, after everything you’ve been through.”<sup>42</sup> The dynamic of activity versus passivity brought to the fore by this comment is complicated by the duality of Retzlow-Brenner, since Lohmer’s injunction to “be his own man” is at this moment identical with the injunction to be someone else. In other words, Lohmer’s appeal is to Brenner the antifascist prisoner, but Retzlow the SS officer receives it. Conversely, the doubling of the *interpellated* subject thus points to the fracturing of the *interpellating* subject into Berg on the one hand and Lohmer on the other, behind whom stand two social formations, fascism and socialism.

The two incomplete interpellations cross when Retzlow goes to work in a Soviet-run machine factory in Berlin. This occurs through an ironic reversal, since it is Berg and his cronies who urge Retzlow to exploit his misnaming in order to enter the factory and join the SED, to “look at their cards and ruin the game if necessary.”<sup>43</sup> What began as deception, however, quickly turns serious, and through his increasingly enthusiastic involvement in his work and the SED, Retzlow draws the attention of the Party and of the other workers in the factory. “He achieved for the first time a firm place in people’s minds,” Seghers writes, “whether they spoke of him with approval or with disparagement.”<sup>44</sup> Retzlow gains recognition as a worker who, as Lohmer puts it, “sensed what we needed to get ahead before it was even written down.”<sup>45</sup> This comment comes shortly before the SMAD Order 234,<sup>46</sup> of which Retzlow is immediately made an example. In the framework of the story, SMAD Order 234 marks a distinct temporal break: “around this time, Order 234 was issued. It said that the workers could rebuild the destroyed economy by their own power and solve all of the problems connected with it.”<sup>47</sup> The novella takes this document at face value: as an injunction to the workers to rebuild on their own initiative not only the East German industrial base, but implicitly also to take the initiative in constructing social structures based on collective social responsibility and participation. Order 234 provides a collective framework to the injunction to

“be your own man.” This order, in other words, is the social lever by which work as a defensive deployment is to be replaced by conscious work for socialism, a move that Andreas Schrade sees as integral to the narrative of “The Man and His Name.”<sup>48</sup> In so far as it appeals to the activity of workers as a class and not as dispersed individuals, Order 234 recenters the narrative in the site of production. In a parallel fashion, the narrative figure of the factory as a space provides the novella with a tool for centering the oppositions that have been laid out thus far: “The little factory whistled over the ruined streets where the black market blossomed. It whistled over all of the rubble where the people still dug for pipes, bicycle wheels, and sunken treasures. Every morning a column of workers passed by all of the hungry, greedy, and desperate faces.”<sup>49</sup>

The decentered landscape with which the novella opens is thus, through the insertion of the factory, provided with an anchoring point of reference, just as the column of workers serves to evoke a working class over and against the mass of disparate and desperate scavengers before whom they daily parade. The organizing function of the factory in turn provides a discursive space for the Party as a mediating element between the actual labor of the workers and their subjectivity. The role of the Party is to enable reflection on the social horizon of labor, as in Retzlow’s epiphany following a meeting of the factory SED group: “everything changes through our work. Up to now Heinz only understood this in terms of changing his own life.”<sup>50</sup> At the same time, the factory, as well as the rural Machine Loan Station that provides the setting for the latter part of the novella, is a space where working-class history is constituted through the telling of and discussion about individual events and experiences. Schrade has pointed to the prominent role of such conversations, of “talking things out,” in Seghers’ work as a mode of focusing narrative and building solidarity.<sup>51</sup> Yet this talking things out, with its potential for a sort of collective interpellation, can only be partially accommodated in the fragile symbolic order of *Aufbau*-era East Germany, given the clear limits of public discourse in the early 1950s.

Through Lohmer and his colleagues Lüdecke and Böttcher, Retzlow learns “his own story,” piecing together the life of Heinz Brenner from various anecdotes. More importantly, Retzlow learns through these exchanges the truth of his own experience as Retzlow and is able to reconstruct and to gain a minimal distance from it through their example, realizing that “earlier, he had thoughtlessly followed every command.”<sup>52</sup> This knowledge of his own former passivity is only possible through the appropriation of Lohmer’s experience as a class experience, a sort of recovered memory of the “collective singular.” This learning process, or process of cognitive mapping, to borrow a phrase from Fredric Jameson, the grafting one’s own experience onto history, parallels the one that Lohmer describes undergoing at the Antifascist School as a POW in the USSR: “The history of socialism. Marx. Engels. Lenin. It was finally clear to me what I am, and what was made out of me.”<sup>53</sup> These talks with Lohmer in

a sense recapitulate the mediating role of representation itself, in that through Lohmer's experience, Retzlow begins to see his own life no longer as an unfortunate accident, but as inscribed within a historical narrative, which, like labor itself, is a practice of giving form, of putting things together in the right order. As Seghers noted in her 1956 speech to the East German writers Union, "through representation, the single stands in relation to the whole."<sup>54</sup> These exchanges and the unification of production in a centralized framework allow for a reconstitution of the German working class as a social agent and as the bearer of an historical tradition, capable of binding and retroactively endowing collective meaning upon individual experience. It is in this sense that one must read the assertion made by Böttcher, whose trajectory from quasi-fascist apathy to committed socialist parallels Retzlow's own: "And I am a worker. I had just forgotten it."<sup>55</sup> Put another way, in these passages, the SED, through characters like Lohmer, becomes a functioning ideological apparatus in the Althusserian sense, capable of interpellating and guaranteeing the interpellation of ideological subjects.<sup>56</sup>

The coercive aspect of the construction of class in "The Man and His Name" becomes apparent in the quintessentially Stalinist address through example.<sup>57</sup> Retzlow, in so far as he is Heinz Brenner, is not just the product of the new relations, but also their signifier. The role of the model worker and the literary reflection of this phenomenon as the positive hero was the subject of much debate in the GDR of the 1950s. Indeed, the positive hero is one of the central conventions of a pedagogically oriented socialist realism, providing a model of heroic worker and socialist fighter.<sup>58</sup> The example of Heinz Brenner is therefore an organizational rubric not only for the workers in Retzlow's factory, and for Retzlow himself, but also for the entire order of this example-based complex of identification upon which the interpellative structure of the novella is based. The fragility of this symbolic structure, which Seghers underscores through Retzlow's doubled identity, sets into motion a cycle of belatedness and repetition around the revelation of the name of Retzlow. To the same degree that Retzlow feels himself to be internally divided, he presents himself as an example of a class-conscious worker, i.e., as a unitary subject, and indeed it is his social obligation to do so within the symbolic order of the early GDR. As long as the social formation is fragile enough to be based on intersubjective identifications, the confession will always be both too late and too soon, since this dispensation cannot absorb it. Furthermore, Retzlow's fear of being excluded from this order of meaning should be regarded as secondary to the danger that this symbolic order could in fact collapse if the fascist kernel of the socialist-realist positive hero were to be revealed. Thus, at all the moments that Retzlow could have confessed, the realization that to do so would endanger not only his participation in the construction of socialism, but the construction of socialism itself, held him back, since "confessions are no use to anyone. Only

work is useful.”<sup>59</sup> Within the logic of the Party, there is no room for ambiguity. The Party, and the socialist labor that it guarantees, thus threatens to become nothing but another mode of defensive symbolization against the past, since the Stalinist model of identification cannot accommodate the complexities of experience.

The question then becomes one of the narrative’s ability to absorb the breakdown of the exemplary structure. This resolution, as Krenzlin points out, cannot be an individual one in the *Aufbau* period, since the individual, by implication, cannot encompass its own conditions, it cannot explain itself, but rather, “the transformation of a person can only be a fundamental one if all spheres of the personality are addressed by the transformation of the social environment—and indeed, over a long period of time.”<sup>60</sup> The model of identification based on the antifascist example is insufficient to “address all spheres of the personality,” since the development of this exemplary individual, by demarcating the norms of social discourse, sets the limit of development for the collective that he or she represents.<sup>61</sup> This becomes especially problematic in that the antifascist, Communist resistance fighter as a template for a postfascist subjectivity cannot encompass the experiential content of the postfascist subject, whose imbrication in fascism is precisely what demands representation. Thus, Retzlow can neither serve as a positive hero nor be fully interpellated by Lohmer, the novella’s other positive hero figure.

Parallel to the problem of the positive hero as a locus of interpellation is that of the *Aufbau*-era’s understanding of the social and psychic role of labor. There is an unsolved internal ambiguity in Seghers’ novella—and in the public discourse around postwar reconstruction—between labor as an expansive process that integrates and articulates history on the terrains of the personal and the collective and labor as a protective barrier against unmetabolized experience. Seghers directly addressed this compensatory function of labor in her 1946 story “Das Ende,” whose protagonist, a concentration camp guard named Zillich, goes into hiding as an anonymous worker at various construction sites and eventually hangs himself. She describes Zillich’s sudden passion for work after the war as a sort of narcotic, ameliorating the guilt, fear, and confusion of the postwar period.<sup>62</sup> This ambiguity is introjected into the labor process as a lack in “The Man and His Name,” an incompleteness of the function of social binding with which work itself has been burdened. The structures created in GDR society actively reproduced many of the social dynamics (apathy, submission, an alienated division of labor, and social atomization) that socialist construction claimed to have overcome.<sup>63</sup> Thus the old is not the material of the new, i.e. is not socially overcome and integrated into the experiential space of the GDR, but is rather an object of violence and repression, both through the intensive labor discipline and restricted public sphere of the early GDR, and through the rigid narrative conventions of East Germany’s *Aufbau*-literature.



The incompleteness of labor as an operation of social binding has far-reaching implications for East German *Aufbau*-literature as a textual corpus, for more than most bodies of literature, *Aufbau*-literature insists on the integrity and fullness of material labor as an interpellative operation.

"The Man and His Name" begins and ends with the representation of the unraveling of meaning. Following Retzlow's confession and his expulsion from the SED, the entire narrative of the novella seems ready to repeat itself. Retzlow is excluded from the field of meaning based on the example of the positive hero, and his world again devolves into a disassociated mass of splinters and ruins.<sup>64</sup> As a narration of historical transition, the novella seems to be groping in the final pages toward a model of collectivity beyond that based on identification with the Stalinist fantasy of the unified Communist subjectivity. Seghers manages to sketch such a model in the closing pages, where labor returns as a point of entry into social meaning, but this time not as a pedagogy, but rather as a scene of discourse. For the workers, Retzlow loses his status as an object of identification and imitation, as a role model, but at the same time his story becomes an event that opens onto a discourse about history, politics, and experience, about the relationship between the personal and public, which is organized not by the SED, but by the workers of the factory themselves. "If a couple of people in the factory began to speak about Walter," Seghers writes, "then their conversation started with judgments about the man, about the partially known events. Then it usually went on to other things.... So they moved in the course of the conversation from the fate of one man to the fate of the people."<sup>65</sup> This model of collective negotiation of history and experience stands opposed to that of personal identification through which the Party attempts to structure discourse. Rather, in these closing pages, Seghers is gesturing toward a model of collectivity based on conscious and democratically mediated practices that address the individual subject in its totality and are thus capable of ideological binding without recourse to the SED as an intermediary.

The use of story telling and "talking things out" as the basis of a postfascist public sphere anticipates Johannes R. Becher's conception of the "literary society," or *Literaturgesellschaft*, as a cultural program for East Germany. Becher's notion of the literary society is one of broadly conceived democratic cultural participation. His characterization of literature itself aimed beyond the purely literary sphere; rather literature becomes, in his conception, a collective organ of social perception, a democratic enterprise where previously excluded social groups, primarily the working class, could participate in a grand discussion of the meanings and forms of social experience. The literary society was functionalized into "a political cliché" by the SED, ignoring its democratic element.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, Becher's literary society emphasized aims that had been fundamental to German Communism's cultural conceptions since the Weimar Republic: the overcoming of the capitalist separation between high

and mass culture as well as the centering of cultural discourses on the needs of the working class and the masses at large. This mode of collectivity remains an intangible horizon in "The Man and His Name," and it is that intangibility that again points to the precarious nature of the GDR as a social formation in these early years. If we are to regard Retzlow's nominalization as a socialist subject as a successful interpellation in the Althusserian sense, we must also acknowledge that it is an interpellation that is forced to posit its own conditions retroactively. In order for Retzlow's labor to become a practice through which he might be interpellated as a worker, as a member of a class, both work and identity must be constituted on an explicitly social level in the novella. In holding open this incompleteness of the East German symbolic order, in its refusal of the temptation of proving fictive solutions to real problems, Seghers' "The Man and His Name" distinguishes itself from most of East Germany's *Aufbau*-literature.

Seghers' piece gestures toward the solidarity of the working collective as the basis of a conception of *Heimat* that seeks to overcome the contradiction between belonging and emancipation, which the theorist Peter Blickle sees as central to German notions of homeland, or *Heimat*, generally.<sup>67</sup> In our current postmodern conjecture, when industrial production is increasingly shifting from the center to the periphery of the global system, critics like Slavoj Žižek and Charity Scribner have become preoccupied with precisely this aspect of socialist literature, that, at its best, as Žižek writes, represented a model of collectivity, where "modern individuals discuss their problems rationally" as opposed to some notion of a "ritual archaic community."<sup>68</sup> Here the collective emerges less as a site of some imaginary de-individuation, but rather as the site where individual attributes, capacities, and needs are liberated from the claustrophobia and deprivation of the proletarian anti-*Heimat* of capitalist modernity. Wolfgang Engler draws attention to this reciprocal relationship between the individual and the collective in his description of Berlin's Stalinallee, which, with its playful axial asymmetry, managed to embrace the desire for social connection and integration after the chaos of the war, while demonstrating through its variations within socialist-realist themes and clever embedding of its "great and small irregularities" into the street as an ensemble "how one individuates oneself without losing the support and protection of the greater whole."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Emmerich, "Gleichzeitigkeit. Vormoderne, Moderne und Postmoderne in der Literatur der DDR," in: *Gegenwartsliteratur* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1988), 200. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Loren Kruger makes this point in her book, *Post-Imperial Brecht. Politics and Performance, East and South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58–59.

<sup>3</sup> Günther Cwojdrak, "Stalins letztes Werk und Fragen unserer Literatur," *Neue deutsche Literatur* 1/4 (April 1953): 154.

<sup>4</sup> Ursula Heukenkamp, "Ortsgebundenheit. Die DDR-Literatur als Variante des Regionalismus in der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur," *Weimarer Beiträge* 42/1 (January 1996): 46 and 47.

<sup>5</sup> Erika Haas, "Heimat und Vaterland. Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zum Stellenwert im Werk von Anna Seghers," *Argonautenschiff. Jahrbuch des Anna-Seghers-Gesellschaft* 8 (1999): 129; Peter Blickle, *Heimat. A Critical Theory of The German Idea of Homeland* (Rochster: Camden House, 2002), 69. For Seghers' own analysis of the difference between the "feigned community" of fascism and the real collectivity promised by socialism, see Anna Seghers, "Vaterlandsliebe," in: *Glauben an Irdisches. Essays*, Christa Wolf, ed. (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam, jun., 1968) 11–12.

<sup>6</sup> Lenore Krenzlin, "Theoretische Diskussionen und praktisches Bemühen um die Neubestimmung der Funktion der Literatur an der Wende der fünfziger Jahre" in: *Literarisches Leben in der DDR, 1945 bis 1960. Literaturkonzepte und Leseprogramme*, Akademie für Wissenschaften der DDR, Zentralinstitut für Literaturgeschichte, ed. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1979), 193.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Seghers, "Der Mann und sein Name," in: *Gesammelte Werke, Band XI: Erzählungen, 1952–1962* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 5. The novella was originally published by Aufbau-Verlag in 1952.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Louis Althusser, "Lenin before Hegel," in: *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>10</sup> Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in: *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Ben Brewster, trans. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 171–72.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>14</sup> Anna Seghers, *Hier im Volk der kalten Herzen, Briefwechsel 1947* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), 118.

<sup>15</sup> See V.I. Lenin, "Two Cultures in Every National Culture," in: *The Lenin Anthology*, Robert Tucker, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975).

<sup>16</sup> David Pike, *Deutsche Schriftsteller im sowjetischen Exil 1933–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1981), 495, 522, 534ff.

<sup>17</sup> For an interesting historical discussion of the German *misère*, see Jost Hermand, "Heines Wintermärchen: Zum Topos der 'deutschen Misere,'" in: *Sieben Arten an Deutschland zu leiden* (Königstein / Taunus.: Athenäum Verlag, 1979). Also Alexander Abusch, *Der Irrweg der Nation, ein Beitrag zum Verständnis deutscher Geschichte* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag 1946).

<sup>18</sup> Anna Seghers, "Deutschland und wir," in: *Glauben an Irdisches*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Anna Seghers, "Vaterlandsliebe," in: *Glauben an Irdisches*, 10–11. The massive central German Leuna works was a vibrant center of KPD and left-wing political organization and the site of the so-called March Action in 1921, where the Prussian state authorities provoked the KPD into a violent uprising. After suppressing the insurrection, the police and military conducted a merciless campaign of terror against the central German proletariat. See Eric D. Weitz, *Creating German Communism, 1890–1990. From Popular Protests to Socialist State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 103–6. Also proletarian author Otto Gotsche's novelistic account in *Märzstürme* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961 [orig. 1931]).

<sup>20</sup> *Hier im Volk der kalten Herzen*, 40.

<sup>21</sup> On the passive support of German fascism by the working class, see Alf Lütke, "What happened to the 'Fiery Red Glow'? Workers' Experiences and German Fascism," in: *The History of Everyday Life, Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, Alf Lütke, ed., William Templer, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Anna Seghers, "Der Anteil der Literatur an der Bewußtseinsbildung des Volkes," in: *Glauben an Irdisches*, 199.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Inge Diersen, "Jason 1948—Problematische Heimkehr," in: *Unerwünschte Erfahrung, Kriegsliteratur und Zensur in der DDR*, Ursula Heukenkamp, ed. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1990), 75–76. For a good account of the circumstances surrounding Seghers' first years in the SBZ, see Alexander Stephan. "Ich habe das Gefühl, ich bin in die Eiszeit geraten... ' Zur Rückkehr von Anna Seghers aus dem Exil," *The Germanic Review* 62/3 (Summer 1987): 331–62.

<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, it is not impossible that what Seghers longed for was in fact the city of Mainz in what was then the American zone, where Seghers grew up and which provided the highly textured setting for her story "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen," written shortly before her return to Germany. Anna Seghers "Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen," in: *Gesammelte Werke, Band IX: Erzählungen, 1926–1944* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 143–52. The story was originally published in 1946 by the New York-based antifascist German exile press Aurora-Verlag.

<sup>25</sup> Anna Seghers, "Das Argonautenschiff," in: *Gesammelte Werke, Band X: Erzählungen, 1945–1951* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981), 142. Although written in 1948, "Das Argonautenschiff" was initially published in the journal *Sinn und Form* in 1949. For an extended reading of this story in the context of Seghers' creative difficulties in the late 1940s, see Diersen, 81–97.

<sup>26</sup> "Der Anteil der Literatur an der Bewußtseinsbildung des Volkes," 209

<sup>27</sup> "Der Mann und sein Name," 6

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in: *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, Hannah Arendt, ed., Harry Zohn, trans. (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 176. Freud describes such a mechanism as a process of anti-cathexis, wherein other psychic systems are impoverished to the benefit of summoning a sufficiently high level of cathexis to secure the breach, in other words to bind the flood of excitations rushing in on the psyche. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, James Strachey, trans. (New York: Norton, 1961), 33–34. Benjamin's innovation is to connect the Freudian notion of the Reizschutz to Marx's account of the dulling effects of machine labor on the industrial worker.

<sup>32</sup> Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn. Principles of Collective Behavior* (New York: Grove Press, 1975). On the opposition of work as a defense against reality as opposed to conscious work, see Andreas Schrade, *Entwurf einer ungeteilten Gesellschaft. Anna Seghers Weg zum Roman nach 1945* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 1994), 45. Whereas Schrade reads this "empty business" as itself the beginning of a socialist transformation, I argue that Seghers in fact maintains an ambivalent attitude toward

the German proclivity for work for its own sake, which finds expression for instance in her characterization of the German work ethic as a “virtue in the service of devils and angels.” *Hier im Volk der kalten Herzen*, 43.

<sup>33</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 10.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. Klaus Theweleit discusses the post-World War One German Freikorps in the context of this sort of defensive community in the second chapter of the second volume of his *Male Fantasies*, “Male Bodies and the ‘White Terror.’” Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Volume 2. *Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> SMAD, the Soviet Military Authority in Germany, issued Order 234 in 1948, when it became apparent to Soviet planners that taking reparations out of the running production in the SBZ was more practical than the previous method of disassembling the East German industrial plant and transporting it to the Soviet Union. Thus, Order 234 authorized the rebuilding of industry in the SBZ, as well as instituting stringent labor discipline and piece wages. Weitz, 351–52. SMAD order 234 also provides the starting point for Seghers’ 1959 novel of socialist reconstruction, *Die Entscheidung* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2003).

<sup>47</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 40.

<sup>48</sup> Schrade, 45.

<sup>49</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 31.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>51</sup> Schrade, 69.

<sup>52</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 43.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> “Der Anteil der Literatur an der Bewußtseinsbildung des Volkes,” 204.

<sup>55</sup> “Der Mann und sein Name,” 45.

<sup>56</sup> “Ideology,” 179.

<sup>57</sup> The process of learning by example, which structures the novella, has its material basis in the Aktivistenbewegung, or activist movement, introduced in 1948. The activist movement was based on the Soviet Stakhanovite movement, encouraging workers to exceed piece rate norms, and then publicizing such model workers as examples to other workers. The workers of the SBZ saw the activist movement as a method of speed-up and wage cutting, and the model workers were often shunned by their colleagues. Hermann Weber, *Geschichte der DDR* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), 110.

<sup>58</sup>See Maxim Gorky's formulation at the Soviet First All-Union Writers' Congress in 1934, where socialist realism was proclaimed the official literary method of the Communist movement, that "as the principle hero of our books we should choose labor, i.e. a person, organized by the forces of labor." Maxim Gorky, "Soviet Literature," in: *Problems in Soviet Literature. Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writers' Congress*, H.G. Scott, ed. (Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1981), 54. The process by which Soviet models of socialist realism were appropriated by writers in the GDR was a complicated one. See Anneli Hartmann and Wolfram Eggeling, "Vom Gremjatschi Log nach Katzengraben. Zum Transfer Sowjetischen Arbeitskultur und ihrer Literatur," in: *Literatur der DDR, Rückblicke*, Heinz Ludwig Arnold and Frauke Meyer-Gosau, eds. (Munich: edition text + kritik 1991). At the same time, socialist realism was by no means a Soviet import to the GDR, since many East German writers in the 1950s had themselves played a formative role in the development of socialist realism as an international phenomena during the literary debates of the late 1920s and the Popular Front period of the 1930s.

<sup>59</sup>"Der Mann und sein Name," 55.

<sup>60</sup>Krenzlin, 193.

<sup>61</sup>Heinz Hillmann, "Subjektivität in der Prosa," in: Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, Band 11. *Die Literatur der DDR*, Hans-Jürgen Schmitt, ed. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 1983), 389.

<sup>62</sup>Anna Seghers, "Das Ende," in: *Gesammelte Werke, Band X: Erzählungen, 1945–1951* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981).

<sup>63</sup>Peter Zimmermann, *Industrieliteratur der DDR. Vom Helden der Arbeit zum Planer und Leiter* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1984), 90–91.

<sup>64</sup>"Der Mann und sein Name," 68–69.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 100.

<sup>66</sup>Becher outlined this conception at the Fourth Congress of the German Writers' Association in 1956. See Simone Barck, Martina Langermann, and Siegfried Lokatis, "The German Democratic Republic as a 'Reading Nation': Utopia, Planning, Reality, and Ideology," in: *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany*, Michael Geyer, ed. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 90–91.

<sup>67</sup>Blickle, 7.

<sup>68</sup>Slavoj Žižek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions on the (Mis)Use of a Notion* (New York: Verso Press, 2001), 133. See also Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>69</sup>Wolfgang Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen. Kunde von einem verlorenen Land* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuchverlag, 1999), 43.