Aussicht gestellte "kritische Textarbeit" leistet. Aber die nächsten beiden Essays bleiben weit hinter dem heutigen Forschungsstand zurück. Weder Kirsch noch Braun werden in ihrer bleibenden Essenz und Substanz erfaßt, denn mit abstrakten Hinweisen auf die "Dialogizität" oder "Prozessualität" ihres Schreibens ist für ihr Verständnis noch nichts gewonnen. Vollends ernüchtert der Beitrag zu Mickel. Zu Recht wird darin dessen dichterisches "Lob des Abschieds" (250) und "Lust auf Trennung" (251) hervorgehoben, aber hier wie andernorts folgt Berendse dem fatalen positivistischen Hang, eine überindividuelle Autonomie der Kunst nicht zu sehen und ihr transzendentes und holistisches Anliegen aus niederen, eigensüchtigen Teilzwecken heraus zu erklären (was in Mickels Fall heißt, ihn zum Don Juan und Brechtischen Baal zu stilisieren).

Obwohl der 1959 geborene Autor Holländer ist, ist die Studie in ausgezeichnetem Deutsch geschrieben. Nur mit dem "ß" scheint er auf Kriegsfuß zu stehen, da es häufig auch dort benutzt wird, wo es gar nicht hingehört (z.B. "beeinflußen" und "vernachläßigen" oder auch "aufweißen" und "schleußen"). Brauchbar ist die Bibliographie der Primär- und Sekundärliteratur der neunzehn Dichter (S. 340-354) und das Personenregister. Auch die vier photographischen Porträts von Endler, Kirsch, Braun und Mickel sind eine Zugabe, für die man dankbar ist. Besonders das ergreifende Bild von Adolf Endler, dessen Leben und Werk ein Desiderat der Forschung bleibt, obwohl er "die Zentralfigur der 'Sächsischen Dichterschule'" (S. 180) ist, sagt mehr als tausend Worte.

Als Gesamturteil aber ist festzuhalten: Die Studie befriedigt als literatursoziologische Untersuchung der "Sächsischen Dichterschule"; stellenweise beeindruckt sie sogar. Als Versuch einer Auslegung und Deutung ihrer Literatur jedoch enttäuscht und verärgert sie. Das uneingeschränkte Lob, das Barbara Mabee dem Buch in der *German Studies Review* (15, 1992, S. 420-422) zollte, vermag dieser Rezensent daher nicht zu teilen.

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Drescher, Angela, Hrsg. *Dokumentation zu Christa Wolf. "Nachdenken über Christa T.".* Hamburg: Luchterhand, 1991. 213 pp.
Verblendung. Disput über einen Störfall. Berlin und Weimar: Aufbau, 1991. 245 pp.

The "Literaturstreit" concerning Christa Wolf's *Was bleibt* (June 1990) lies almost precisely as far in the past as the debate regarding German unification. Wolf no longer figures prominently in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or *Die Zeit*, and Frank Schirrmacher's characterization of her as someone who "sich mütterlich der Verwendung der DDR-Gesellschaft annehmen möchte" (*FAZ* 2.6.90) would unlikely find its way into the same pages today. But although polemic discussions of the role of writers and the nature of responsibility in the former GDR have in general retreated behind issues considered more relevant to the whole of Germany, problems of divisiveness, miscommunication, and a tragic history are remembered and expressed anew in two volumes edited by Angela Drescher.

Drescher has done much painstaking archival work in compiling the publication history of *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (1969). *Dokumentation zu Christa Wolf. Nachdenken über Christa T.* spans the years 1966-1969 and contains numerous "Gutachten" and "Stellungnahmen" of the Mitteldeutscher Verlag (Halle) and the Central Committee of the SED in addition to letters addressed to Christa Wolf by Volker Braun, Sarah Kirsch, and more. What is for the Western reader initially a voyeuristic journey through the cultural policy of the "Zone" becomes a fascinating study in Cold War influence on literary criticism--and finally reveals far more unsettling premises about literary production and interpretation everywhere. As Christa Wolf writes, censorship is "nicht nur der anonyme Eingriff einer staatlichen Institution in Publikationsmöglichkeiten," it is "kompliziertes, konfliktreiches Handeln zwischen Personen" (*Dokumentation* 25); so is communication itself. Just how fine the line between productive discussion and censorship, good intentions and abuse of power may be is demonstrated by what happened to Christa Wolf's book and personal life after the Eleventh Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the SED in November 1968. It is also apparent in the impact of Western reviews and interpretations which Drescher also includes and which were no less destructive to Wolf than the restrictive SED policies of the late 1960s.

The documents which bear testimony to the *Nachdenken über Christa T.* controversy deal with

nothing less than the function of literature in any society. Although the "Arbeitsgutachten" written for Mitteldeutscher Verlag for the purpose of approving *Christa T.*'s publication express a now-anachronistic concern for the novel's effect on the "sozialistische Bewußtseinsbildung des Lesers" (*Dokumentation* 34), the question remains: must literature either be invested with so much sociopolitical significance that censorship results, or is it relegated to a realm of irrelevance characterized by what Wolf calls the "Unverbindlichkeit...die man im Westen so häufig mit Freiheit verwechselt" (*Dokumentation* 186)? The problems SED bureaucrats had with *Christa T.* stemmed in part from their inability to place the book on either side of this opposition. Christa T. is neither a sociopolitical model nor irresponsible.

One of the work's more generous GDR critics writes: "angesichts der gegenwärtigen Reife unserer Literaturgesellschaft [bleibt es] ein großes Risiko, würde man den Roman zur Diskussion stellen" (*Dokumentation* 37). But most commentators--particularly those writing after the November 1968 Plenary Session--maintain that *Christa T.* had no place in a socialist society of any age. "Betonte Innerlichkeitsproblematik läuft von alters her immer noch Gefahr, sich individualistisch zu belasten. Von solchen alten Belastungen muß sich unsere Literatur frei machen," writes Max Walter Schulz (*Dokumentation* 114). Although such implicit connections between Wolf's work and "spätbürgerliche" texts are drawn fairly frequently by her critics, the real offense the author has committed lies in her creation of a fallible, mortal, female subject. That the critics living in the West were no more prepared for this particular subject at that particular time than those in the East is evident in the polemics of Rolf Michaelis and Marcel Reich-Ranicki. Their reviews co-opt both Christa T. and Christa Wolf into ideologically motivated critiques: "Sagen wir klar: Christa T. stirbt an Leukämie, aber sie leidet an der DDR" (Reich-Ranicki, *Dokumentation* 105).

Christa Wolf had numerous supporters during these years; she was permitted to publish *Christa T.* in the West and to travel to Sweden in order to meet with her publisher there. Acquaintances such as Paul Kanut Schäfer defended her work publicly as well as privately (*Dokumentation* 94ff). But the frustration and depression created by the entire process (which culminated in her exclusion from a Deutscher Schriftstellerverband-Vorstandsitzung in November 1969, where a blatantly aggressive attack on her work and person took place (*Dokumentation* 166ff.)) are evident in a letter written in late 1968 to Helmut Materna: "Wissen Sie, manchmal bin ich in letzter Zeit doch ein bißchen mutlos gewesen, habe mich gefragt, ob das eigentlich Sinn hat, zu schreiben, und für wen" (*Dokumentation* 60).

GDR cultural functionaries' objections to *Christa T.* certainly included the fact that it described an individual woman's unavoidable death within a socialist society. Equally catastrophic for the work's reception was Wolf's displacement of the concept of truth from the catagory of socially defined objective entity to that of almost completely subjective perception. To a certain extent, these problems recur nearly two decades later in the criticism of *Störfall. Nachrichten eines Tages*, Wolf's 1987 description of one woman's reaction to the Chernobyl disaster and her brother's brain surgery. *Verblendung. Disput über Störfall* records the debate about the novel which took place in the pages of the journal *spectrum* in 1988/1989 in addition to correspondence on the subject. Two "Gesprächsrunden" in which scientists and artists participated (in the "Akademie der Künste der DDR" on November 29, 1989 and January 23, 1990) are also transcribed.

These documents support Christa Wolf's assertion that "Kernkraftwerksbauer und -betreiber... den Text auf ein Plädoyer für oder gegen die Erzeugung von Atomenergie reduzierten" (*Verblendung* 6); she perceives this simplification as symptomatic of a broader "Mangel an Krisenbewußtsein" (6). But scientists with a compelling self-interest in the survival of nuclear reactors after Chernobyl are not the only readers who offer narrow interpretations. Nearly all the participants in the *spectrum* debate completely ignore *Störfall*'s other themes: the possibility of an ethical technology (the only disputant who discusses Wolf's treatment of neurosurgery is a neurosurgeon), the constitution of subjectivity, and the necessity of thinking about the private and public past.

Physicist Bertholf Schmidt is certainly correct when he states: "Reduktionismus ist eine notwendige Methode des Denkens"; however, this cannot justify his own reductive reading of the text, a reading which exemplifies Wolf's thesis about our increasing inability to pose "die Fragen...[die] zu radikalen Antworten führen könnten" (*Störfall* 99). Wolf's "Betroffenheit...ihre scheinbar übertriebenen oder unzulässigen Verallgemeinerungen," Schmidt says, "[kann] ich als Physiker nicht unmittelbar nachvollziehen" (*Verblendung* 35,37). Here again, as elsewhere in *Verblendung* and *Dokumentation*, Wolf's work is assailed as too emotional, too personal, and too subjective. The (exclusively male)

scientists who discredit the perceptions of *Störfall*'s female subject justify their arguments by retreating into their fields of specialization and refusing to speak in or listen to a different vocabulary. On the other hand, *Störfall*'s narrator learns their language, as she must, on the day of the Chernobyl accident (*Störfall* 10ff.).

Although *Störfall*'s structure depends on "Spaltungen," these same divisions constitute the "Ja-nein-Weltbild" (*Verblendung* 225) that contributes to problems such as those apparent in the Christa Wolf reception of very different decades. A world of strict binary oppositions, in which a "them versus us" mentality reigns, is a fundamentally uncritical and dangerous place. Wolf's attempt to bring artists and scientists together in a discussion focused on questions raised in her book is an attempt to avert further dangers. Yet the difficulties the disputants have in communicating are evidence of how deep and multiple divisions are--even within one relatively homogenous society. The participants are a self-described elite by GDR standards; as screenwriter/dramatist Eberhard Görner points out, they are separate from the masses and therefore have different concerns (*Verblendung* 229). Yet, among each other, thay do have much in common. If the amount and type of attention the SED invested in the production of socialist-realist literature seems excessive, the letters and discussion rounds recorded in *Verblendung* offer a glimpse of what scientists confronted. Nuclear physicists and other energy researchers certainly knew plenty about the environmental destruction taking place all around them, but no document in this volume mentions this until after Fall 1989. The stringent publication policies of journals such as *wissenschaft + fortschritt* are also hinted at several times. On the whole, though, these commonalities fail to overcome the "Verblendung" characteristic of much Christa Wolf criticism, East and West, past and present.

Both collections yield a disturbing and instructive overview of what can happen when, as Drescher puts it: "Der Apparat beginnt zu arbeiten" (*Dokumentation* 14). Drescher is referring to the bureaucratic institutions of the former GDR, but an extension of the idea to the functioning of our own psychic apparatuses, whether in the service of ideology or self-interest, is not implausible.

In the June 1, 1990 edition of *Die Zeit*, Ulrich Greiner maintains that Chista Wolf's *Was bleibt* appeared at an inopportune, but not incapacitating, time: "denn Gefahren drohen keine mehr." On the contrary, new dangers to Christa Wolf's work and reputation have simply shifted to new ground. The 1990 "Literaturstreit," which included Heimo Schwilk's decision to call *Was bleibt* Christa Wolf's "allerletztes Buch" (*Rheinischer Merkur* 22.6.90) and Frank Schirrmacher's insistence that authors who remained in the GDR are the direct descendents of the Third Reich cultural policy (*FAZ* 2.6.90) demonstrates this. Among the issues virtually overlooked in the debate was Manfred Jäger's contention that in Christa Wolf's "literaturpolitischen Monologen, hinter deren 'allgemeinen Einschätzung der Lage' sich die permanente Auseinandersetzung mit dem Zustand des eigenen Bewußtseins kaum verbergen ließ" (*Sozialliteraten. Funktion und Selbstverständnis der Schriftsteller in der DDR*, Düsseldorf 1973, 21). Critical reflection about one's own work, conscience, and responsibility within a community (East or West) is what is lacking in much criticism of Christa Wolf's person and texts--on the part of many literary critics as well as among several of the scientists gathered to discuss *Störfall*.

Referring to Germany after unification and using Bertolt Brecht's language, Ulrich Greiner writes: "Es beginnen nun wirklich die Mühen der Ebene und des aufrechten Ganges" (27,7,90). Drescher's compilations of the publication history of debates about Christa Wolf's work should be understood as part of that type of process. But Wolf herself entertains no more illusions about the reception of these volumes in Germany after real existing socialism than she did during the Cold War. She writes to Angela Drescher in August 1991: "Du kannst meine Skrupel angesichts dieser Publikation, die im ungünstigen Fall, mit dem zu rechnen ist, (wieder nur) einer feuilletonistisch-moralisierenden Betrachtungsweise Vorschub leisten wird und der Bestätigung der vorgefaßten Erwartungen" (*Dokumentation* 189). The ideological posturing, misunderstanding and defensiveness which continues to characterize much discussion of Wolf's texts is further testimony to the continuing existence of destructive "Spaltungen" in a still-divided Germany.

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