

## [Unrealized Futures: Post-Socialist Memory in German-speaking Literature and Culture \(Edited Anthology\)](#)

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Call for Papers

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Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Eastern Europe History / Studies, Film and Film History, German History / Studies, Literature

We are currently inviting abstracts for contributions to a peer-reviewed edited collection that examines the socialist legacy in Eastern Europe in its relation to the present and the future. We would particularly welcome contributions that focus on German-speaking film, theater, and other media in order to complement already secured contributions that primarily focus on literature.

Much of the post-1989 scholarship on the socialist past has focused on *Aufarbeitung*. Our collection aims to bring into view another dimension of engagement with Eastern Europe's past, i.e. an engagement with the hopes and dreams that never came to fruition and the unrealized, alternative futures embedded in the socialist past. These unrealized pre-1989 expectations and envisioned futures are often conceived of as failures since they did not come to pass. However, remembering them in contemporary literature, film, theater, and other cultural media not only creates new perspectives on the past but also offers a different lens to envision and evaluate possibilities and pathways into the future. In line with scholars such as Silke Arnold-de Simine, who analyses nostalgic memory "as a yearning for the dreams and possibilities that never became reality" or with Paolo Jedlowski, who describes "memories of the future" as "recollections of what individuals and groups expected [of the future] in the past", this collection seeks to expand our understanding of the re-imagination of the socialist past in contemporary culture through critical discussions of the future-oriented quality of post-socialist memory.

Potential lines of questioning include but are in no way limited to:

- How (both thematically and stylistically) do literature, film, theater, and other media about former socialist countries written and produced in German remember and evaluate aspects of the socialist past beyond an exclusive focus on its obvious negative aspects such as authoritarianism, surveillance, or

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dictatorship?

- How can critiques of “real existing socialism” before 1989 lead to positive, future-oriented projections for a post-socialist world?
- To what extent can narratives of dissidentism and rejections of “real existing socialism” in literature, film, theater, and other media not only engage the past, but also challenge current social and economic assumptions and serve as thought experiments for alternative futures?
- How do transcultural reflections on these shared histories and memories in Eastern Europe contribute to a sense of European unity in the present?
- What kinds of alternative visions for communities and social formation as well as social and political engagement can be formulated based on post-socialist memory?
- How do these cultural products remember and/or envision the relationship between the individual and the collective in socialist and post-socialist societies?
- Can ‘positive’ memories of pre-1989 Eastern Europe be adequately conceptualized by the various existing definitions of nostalgia and/or how can they be brought into conversations with critical discourses around utopia, hope, mourning, ‘Heimweh’, etc.?

Please submit a 500 word abstract and a short bio by **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020** to Michel Mallet [michel.mallet@umoncton.ca](mailto:michel.mallet@umoncton.ca), Maria Mayr [mmayr@mun.ca](mailto:mmayr@mun.ca) and Kristin Rebien [krebien@sdsu.edu](mailto:krebien@sdsu.edu). (Submission of completed chapters: October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.)

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