

Assignment 9

Course: **World Society GenEd**

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Essay (3-5 paragraphs, 600 words)

Based on Khan's, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Séance with the Stasi*, Hensel's, *After the Wall*, the movies *Good Bye, Lenin*and T*he Lives of Others* describe how the Socialist past was re-evaluated after German reunification. For the test discuss the notion of "Ostalgie" meaning nostalgic longing for the past in East Germany (Think of *Good Bye Lenin* as a clear example for Ostalgie. Alex re-created East Germany for his mom but on his own terms. How? Why?). There are different explanations why Ostalgie was prominent in some works, but I think "Post-Reunification Cinema" (p. 120-123) provides a good answer. The author describes it as counter-memories to oppose the dominant discourse about East Germany in contemporary media. Hensel's book tells in details what West Germans were thinking of East Germany. You do not need to use every text and movie.

### Introduction (1 paragraph)

* Start by introducing the topic of the essay and briefly mention the texts and movies you'll be discussing.
* Provide some context on the reunification of Germany and the subsequent re-evaluation of the socialist past.
* Introduce the concept of "Ostalgie" and its significance in the cultural discourse post-reunification.

### Body Paragraphs (3-4 paragraphs)

#### **Paragraph 1: Ostalgie in "Good Bye, Lenin"**

* Begin by discussing the film "Good Bye, Lenin" as a prime example of Ostalgie.
* Describe how Alex, the protagonist, recreates East Germany for his mother but on his own terms.
* Analyze the reasons behind Alex's actions, delving into his motivations and the implications of his portrayal of East Germany.
* Consider how the film reflects a longing for the past while also critiquing the socialist regime.

#### **Paragraph 2: Post-Reunification Cinema and Counter-Memories**

* Discuss the concept of "Post-Reunification Cinema" as described by the author, focusing on its role in presenting counter-memories.
* Explain how these counter-memories oppose the dominant discourse about East Germany in contemporary media.
* Provide examples from the texts and movies you've chosen to illustrate how they contribute to this counter-narrative.
* Analyze the significance of presenting alternative perspectives on East Germany's socialist past.

#### **Paragraph 3: West German Perspectives in Hensel's "After the Wall"**

* Summarize the portrayal of East Germany from the perspective of West Germans as depicted in Hensel's book.
* Discuss the implications of these depictions on the understanding and re-evaluation of the socialist past.
* Compare and contrast the West German perspective with the nostalgic longing portrayed in Ostalgie and Post-Reunification Cinema.
* Analyze how these differing perspectives contribute to a nuanced understanding of Germany's divided history.

### Conclusion (1 paragraph)

* Summarize the main points discussed in the essay, emphasizing the role of Ostalgie, Post-Reunification Cinema, and West German perspectives in re-evaluating the socialist past after German reunification.
* Reflect on the significance of these cultural representations in shaping collective memory and historical narratives.
* End with a thought-provoking statement that ties together the themes explored in the essay and invites further reflection on the complexities of German identity post-reunification.

By following this structure, you can effectively address the requirements of the essay assignment while providing a comprehensive analysis of the topic. Remember to support your arguments with evidence from the texts and movies and to engage critically with the concepts introduced in the prompt.