

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

LITERATURE AND  
GERMAN REUNIFICATION

This book is the first systematic attempt in English to examine the literary consequences of German reunification. Placing the concept of the *Kulturnation* at the center of its analysis, the book explores the ways in which literature both responds to and helps to constitute notions of German national identity. Previous studies of postwar German literature have tended to avoid the problem of nationhood: this is one of the few books in any language to treat contemporary Germany as a cultural and national unity. The book discusses German literature from the early 1980s through the late 1990s, with a primary focus on the way in which authors of the 1990s have sought to cope with and respond to reunification and emerging questions about history, politics, and identity. Larger questions are addressed about the role of both the nation and a national literature in the context of economic and political globalization.

Stephen Brockmann is Associate Professor of German in the Department of Modern Languages at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. He is co-editor, with Thomas Kniesche, of *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic* (1994), and, with Frank Trommler, of *Revisiting Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Post-War German Culture* (1996).

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN GERMAN

*General editors*

H. B. Nisbet, University of Cambridge

Martin Swales, University of London

*Advisory editor*

Theodore J. Ziolkowski, Princeton University

Also in the series

SEÁN ALLAN: *The Plays of Heinrich von Kleist: Ideals and Illusions*

0 521 49511 3

W. E. YATES: *Theatre in Vienna: A Critical History, 1776–1995*

0 521 42100 4

MICHAEL MINDEN: *The German “Bildungsroman”:*

*Incest and Inheritance*

0 521 49573 3

TODD KONTJE: *Women, the Novel, and the German Nation 1771–1871:*

*Domestic Fiction in the Fatherland*

0 521 63110 6

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# LITERATURE AND GERMAN REUNIFICATION

STEPHEN BROCKMANN



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
 Stephen Brockmann  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521660549](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521660549)

© Stephen Brockmann 1999

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1999  
 This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Brockmann, Stephen.  
 Literature and German reunification / Stephen Brockmann.  
 p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in German)  
 Includes bibliographical references and index.  
 ISBN 0 521 66054 8 (hardback)  
 1. German literature – 20th century – History and criticism.  
 2. Politics and literature – German – History – 20th century.  
 3. Literature and society – German – History – 20th century.  
 4. German reunification question (1949–1990) in literature.  
 5. Germany – History – Unification, 1990. I. Title. II. Series.  
 P1405.B684 1999  
 830.9'358–dc21 98–53641  
 CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-66054-9 hardback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-66054-8 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02784-7 paperback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-02784-5 paperback

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*to my mother,  
Karen Brockmann*

## *Contents*

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> xi
Introduction: locating the nation	1
1 Searching for Germany in the 1980s	22
2 A third path?	45
3 Literature and politics	64
4 Literature and the Stasi	80
5 The rebirth of tragedy?	109
6 The defense of childhood and the guilt of the fathers	137
7 The time and the place of the nation	163
<i>Notes</i>	199
<i>Works cited</i>	225
<i>Index</i>	239

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## *Acknowledgments*

I am grateful to many people for their support and encouragement during my work on this book. Rita Wegner, Thorsten Hinz, and Frank Linke have been important partners in Leipzig and Berlin, while Mabel Lesch-Rey and Claus and Erika Keiper have helped me further west. Kurt Drawert has given me insights in both the East and the West. Professor Erhard Schütz at the Humboldt Universität has been remarkably helpful to me during several research visits to Berlin, while Professor Klaus Schuhmann provided vital support to me in Leipzig; I am also grateful to Professor Jochen Vogt in Essen. In the United States, I owe a debt of gratitude to Professors Frank Trommler and David Bathrick, who have provided consistent support and help to me throughout my work on this book. To Professor Keith Bullivant I am grateful for giving me the opportunity, in his book *Beyond 1989: Re-reading German Literature Since 1945*, to develop some of the ideas which ultimately became part of chapter one of this book. Professor Hinrich Seeba helped to start the ball rolling on this project many years ago, while Professors Jost Hermand, James Steakley, Peter Uwe Hohendahl, Marc Silberman, Siegfried Mews, and Neil Donahue have all given me valuable advice along the way. To Professors Sabine Hake at the University of Pittsburgh and Vibeke Petersen at Drake University I owe particular thanks for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of the manuscript as well as for their friendship and support. At Carnegie Mellon University I am grateful to my colleagues Christian Hallstein and Anne Green in the German program for their encouragement; and to Peter Stearns and Dick Tucker in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for their support. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Geraldine Kruglak and Joan Stein at the Hunt Library, who have given me invaluable help in tracking down materials. I am grateful to the many inquisitive students I have had and continue to have in

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-02784-7 - Literature and German Reunification  
Stephen Brockmann  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

xii

*Acknowledgments*

my courses on contemporary German culture; it is partly their questions that I have set out to explore in this book. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, German Academic Exchange Service, and the National Endowment for the Humanities have provided generous financial support during my work on this project, and I was also the beneficiary of a Falk Grant and a Faculty Development Grant at Carnegie Mellon University. Bill and Judy Craig and Paul and Chuck Brockmann have been unfailing in their encouragement, and Johnny and Dannel Ward-Packard have been good friends to me throughout. Without my first language teacher, Karen Brockmann, I could never have completed the project, and it is to her that I dedicate this book.