Uwe Saeger's *Die Nacht danach und der Morgen* (1991) is a genuine oddity of a text that resists simple categorisation.¹ For no less a luminary than Wolfgang Emmerich it represents a 'Merkwürdigkeit ersten Ranges', and after an initial reading it is hard to disagree with that assessment.² Is it a novel or an autobiography? The text would seem to comprise elements of both, but contains much more besides: a screenplay, a poem, an *Erzählung*, diary extracts, a transcript of a cassette monologue, as well as extended quotations from Thomas Mann, Elias Canetti and Willy Brandt. Whilst the text might be a 'Merkwürdigkeit', it is not an essay in postmodern literary affectation; rather it is document of GDR life before and around the period of the *Wende*. It was begun at the time that Christa Wolf was completing work on *Was bleibt* (1990), a text with which it shares some thematic elements. As the text bears no definitive genre description, however, even though some catalogues list it as a 'Bericht', it is perhaps more akin to Reiner Kunze's *Deckname "Lyrik"*, published in December 1990 as the full extent of the Stasi's infiltration of GDR society was beginning to come to light.³ Kunze's book is created almost exclusively from extracts he was able to recover from his Stasi file, even including photographs and transcripts of telephone conversations. The various 'texts' that form the fabric of *Die Nacht danach und der Morgen* might also best be seen to resemble the assorted documents of a Stasi file, albeit forming a more self-consciously 'literary', or prosaic, assemblage than Kunze's documentation.⁴ That Saeger's text might be seen as more 'literary', or indeed as fictional, does not undermine its effectiveness as an exploration of the GDR, and in particular the painful legacy of the Stasi. Where Saeger's text surpasses those of Wolf and Kunze is that the debate is located ultimately in the present, while
posing crucial questions about the future. Wolf and Kunze's works are primarily retrospective with the aim of laying foundations for the analysis of the GDR's legacy that must necessarily ensue. What does not form the focus of their survey, but is at the very heart of *Die Nacht danach und der Morgen*, is the turbulence of the Wende period itself, and the uncertainties that lie ahead for individuals and society. In an essay on the relationship between writers and the Stasi, Joachim Walter observed that the key issue was not so much the question of 'was bleibt?', but rather 'was kommt?':

Was kommt künftig über uns, wenn wir das eigene wie das fremde Versagen, die eingebildete Angst wie die berechtigte Angst, die Inkonsequenzen im Denken und Handeln, das Anpassen und Überanpassen, wenn wir Lüge, Vertrauensbruch, Würdelosigkeit und Verrat nicht beschreiben und benennen? Was kommt, wenn wir die Erfahrungen aus einer modernen Diktatur wie die DDR nicht zur Kenntnis nehmen und als warnendes Lehrstück begreifen wollen?

Saeger's text asks precisely these questions. It lays bare aspects of the GDR and its legacy, looking specifically at individual responsibility and the relationship between Geist and Macht, as well as pondering what is to come the morning after the night before. The narrator of *Die Nacht danach und der Morgen* is not alone in this, for the Stasi man who has been spying on him for some time is equally perturbed and forced to confront his own role in the system.

*Die Nacht danach und der Morgen* is a complex text, and not simply on account of its eclectic composition. In fact, in addition to the various documents outlined above, there are at least four versions of 'Die Nacht danach und der Morgen' present in the text, each bearing the same title: (i) the overarching work itself; (ii) a short prose text written by the narrator, referred to throughout as 'Uwe Saeger', following completion of his military service as a border guard at the Berlin Wall; (iii) a screenplay derived from this original version, also by the narrator; and (iv) the prose text purportedly written by Mike Glockengiesser, the son of a former army acquaintance of the narrator, as a riposte to the latter's original text. Our suspicions about the wonderfully named Glockengiesser are swiftly aroused, as he professes to have been stirred to write his account of military service at the Wall, and to set it against the narrator's, after