



**MIFLC**  
**R E V I E W**

JOURNAL OF THE  
MOUNTAIN INTERSTATE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

© by *MIFLC Review*, Journal of the Mountain Interstate Foreign  
Language Conference

ISSN 1079-7866

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**Abstract.** Short stories published in the German Democratic Republic in the 1970s and early 1980s by Renate Apitz, Elfriede Brüning, Sarah Kirsch, and Dorothea Kleine, demonstrate that the processes of producing, disseminating, and consuming state-sanctioned knowledge inevitably permeate the porous boundaries between domestic life and the public sphere. Unpredictable consequences test the limits of personal relationships and the protection offered by the private sphere. Consequently, citizens are compelled to react to the unexpected state intrusion, and reevaluate the nature and source of private knowledge.