

Johnson's case anticipated the success of Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* Robert Gillett and Astrid Köhler explore Adolf Endler's *Tarzan am Prenzlauer Berg* as a personal recollection of the Prenzlauer Berg literary scene in the early 1980s and as an example of the interplay between life writing and literary montage. Frank Thomas Grub examines historical and mnemonic tensions in the mostly satirical and often overlooked radio plays of Jens Sparschuh. Finally, Sabine Egger's excellent article traces the use of the radio as a transgressive historiographical narrative tool in Lutz Seiler's poems and his novel *Kruso*.

The third section, *Reflecting*, gives space to six personal reflections from interviewees who lived in the GDR, including academics such as the late Frank Hörnigk, Hannes Krauss and Therese Hörnigk, authors Kathrin Schmidt and Katja Lange-Müller and playwright and theatre practitioner Reinhart Kunert. As any oral history accounts, these contributions of significantly different length are most productive when seen in their highly subjective perspective with limited claim to being representative, somewhat rewardingly subverting the systematics of the antecedent academic works.

This is what, overall, makes this volume such an intriguing read. The diversity of perspectives is a commendable achievement, and the range of meaningful and fruitful discussions of mostly uncanonical materials proves that there is a lot still to discover even for an academic target audience that already has a substantial knowledge of the GDR and its cultural sphere. One might argue that the volume's supposedly coherent theme remains too vague, and that German reunification/the end of the GDR is often only the inception of a critical involvement rather than necessarily its theme. That said, to an advanced GDR connoisseur or aficionado this does not undermine a pleasurable read, and the resulting plurality of perspectives makes this volume the much more interesting and compelling contribution that it is.

Stephan Ehrig

Virtual Walls? Political Unification and Cultural Difference in Contemporary Germany. Edited by Franziska Lys and Michael Dreyer. Rochester, NY: Camden House. 2017. Pp. x + 201. £75.00 (hbk).

'What was the GDR and how do we remember it?' (p. 3). This question is posed by essays, originally given as papers to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of German (re)unification in 1990, and now edited by Franziska Lys and Michael Dreyer. Beyond questions of political integration, in which numerous studies have registered considerable progress, this volume focuses on culture defined very broadly. In particular the authors are interested in the ways in which memories of the GDR changed during the complex process of unification and the ways in which the GDR remains central to public debate in Germany. Significantly, they treat the unification process as ongoing and open-ended. They are not so much concerned to measure the distanced travelled against a notional point of arrival as to document the ever-evolving challenges of a journey that perhaps has no finite end.

The editors set out their agenda in a highly informative introduction which gives an excellent overview of the events of 1989–90 and of the economic, political and cultural changes since then. The nine chapters grouped under four headings offer in-depth discussions of a range of relevant issues.

The framework is established by the discussion of politics and history in Part I by Charles S. Maier and Andreas Neuberger. Maier claims that the GDR exists largely in the contested memories of the present and that this ‘ghostly’ state will only be fully understood when memory is transformed into history. Even the most cursory glance at the myriad historical research projects devoted to aspects of the GDR worldwide would surely suggest that this transformation is well underway. Neuberger registers a parallel process of transformation, but one that has in his view actually been substantially completed, by examining the way in which the constitutional debates about the legal nature of the unification process in the early 1990s essentially turned the Basic Law itself into a subject of political debate alongside regular everyday political issues.

Under the heading ‘How and What We Remember’, three contributions explore literature, film and exhibitions. Stephen Brockmann asks whether there is still such a thing as East German literature, concluding that writers socialized in the GDR who write about the GDR after 1990 should be viewed as East German writers who produce East German literature. A survey of the GDR in contemporary German film, from the DEFA films of 1989–92 to material produced in both East and West since then, leads Mary-Elizabeth O’Brien to conclude that the past is ‘anything but over, mastered and departed’ (p. 75). Kerstin Brandt is interested in museums and open air exhibitions and focuses on the 2009 open air exhibition on the Alexanderplatz commemorating the events of 1989–90, the German pavilion at the 2000 Hannover world fair, and a cluster of post-industrial landscape art projects in Lusatia.

Two essays under the heading ‘A Changing Reception’ examine the ways in which unification changed perceptions of art, theatre and music. April Eisman discusses the reception of East German painting since 1990 which transformed Bernhard Heisig from a painter regarded before 1989 as progressive to one excoriated after 1990 as an SED hack. Daniel Ortuno-Stühring illuminates the transformation of GDR orchestras and theatres in a post-unification environment overwhelmed by a plethora of institutions competing for shrinking public and private funding, which increasingly threatens the traditional German ensemble and repertoire model.

Finally, under the heading ‘A Virtual Wall?’, two essays explore the legacy of the GDR in education and public debate. Andreas Eis asks ‘what do German high school students think about the GDR?’ His answer is not encouraging, and he concludes that much learning is still dominated by ideological black-and-white thinking, either relentlessly negative or unrealistically positive. Cartoons and comics, he suggests, such as the 2009 publication by Flix entitled *Da war mal was: Erinnerungen an hier und drüber*, comprising cartoons published over two years in *Der Tagesspiegel*, might be more effective in engaging the minds of the young, at least in stimulating an initial interest in exploring the less accessible academic media. Michael Dreyer underlines the continuing significance of East Germany and the *Wende* narrative in German public discourse. He identifies three current and one desirable future discourse: the ‘evil empire’ discourse that prevails in the West; the ‘Ampelmännchen discourse’ popular in the East; the ‘who cares?’ discourse that is also widespread in the West; and what he calls the ‘Rodney King

discourse' in which 'we can all just get along', which he believes is 'the politically most desirable, yet perhaps more wishful thinking than reality at the moment' (p. 169).

In an engaging epilogue Peter Hayes argues that the *Wende* did at least solve one problem: the 'German Problem'. There are indeed good reasons to think this might be the case. Or rather, perhaps, there *were* good reasons to think this: Trump, the UK Brexiteers and other critics of the EU on the right and the left would disagree. Of course Germany no longer threatens the peace of Europe, but views on the German role in the EU, especially in relation to its current profound crisis, will surely be contested for many years to come.

Overall, the essays succeed both in presenting a mass of material and in raising questions that will interest anyone concerned with contemporary Germany. The volume would be a very good basis for a student seminar at either undergraduate or graduate level.

Joachim Whaley

Modern Germany in Transatlantic Perspective. Edited by Michael A. Meng and Adam R. Seipp. New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2017. Pp. xiii + 312. £90.80 (hbk).

Anyone who has followed the development of scholarship on Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially the post-1945 period, will be familiar with the name of Konrad H. Jarausch. The Cambridge University Library catalogue alone lists 76 books under his name, some just with contributions by him, many edited or co-edited by him, and nine single-author volumes. His trajectory has been remarkable, itself a true German story. Born in Germany in 1941 the son of a Protestant theologian and teacher who died the following year on the Eastern Front, he chose to study in Wyoming rather than Germany. He went on to complete a PhD on Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg under Theodore S. Hamerow at the University of Wisconsin at Madison before teaching at the University of Missouri from 1963 to 1983. Since then he has been based primarily at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, though he was also co-director of the Potsdam Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung 1998–2006. Jarausch has been indefatigable in promoting new methodologies (for example, quantitative methods and the new social history) and in helping to open up new fields of research (for example, historiography in the GDR, the nature of the East German dictatorship, historians and the Third Reich). It is hardly surprising that his many students wish to pay tribute to his indefatigable interest and support. The diverse and stimulating volume edited by Michael Meng and Adam Seipp in every way reflects the extraordinary diversity of their mentor.

In their introduction Meng and Seipp focus on Jarausch's magisterial 2015 survey *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*. This was notable not only for its judicious treatment of the 1945 period but also for its balanced analysis of post-1945 developments. Above all it did not duck the challenge posed by the crisis of liberal democracy since the last years of the twentieth century. It remains to be seen whether the cautious optimism he expressed about a Europe chastened by its history, compared with a US that fails to reflect on the errors of its past, will be justified. In August 2018 the outlook seems darker than it seemed in 2015. But that does not diminish the interest of the essays collected in this volume.