This survey covers the years 2015 and 2016.

1 GDR and FRG; Cold War Politics and Culture

Throughout the 1990s a genuine interest in the history, society and culture of the GDR dominated academic and popular publications, events, conferences and workshops. Nearly three decades on, however, there is a tendency to debate the impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent Unification rather than the culture and development of a country which, after all, lasted for 40 years. Instead, today key topics in dealing with the GDR’s existence between 1949 and 1990 are memorialization and ‘musealization’. All the more welcome are a number of studies that acknowledge the GDR’s culture in context. Rereading East Germany. The Literature and Film of the GDR, ed. Karen Leeder, CUP, 2015, xvii + 255 pp., is a good example. The contributions are arranged in chronological rather than thematic order and therefore acknowledge the GDR as a historical entity, highlighting the experiences of different generations and their responses to the challenges of communist life. The introduction by the editor (1–7) emphasizes that, beyond the historical interest in film and literature, there remain innovative strategies on behalf of writers and directors to be discovered—strategies which ‘negotiate autonomy, dissidence and complicity’ within the constraints of living in an authoritarian regime. Wolfgang Emmerich, ‘The GDR and Its Literature. An Overview’ (8–34) provides an insightful and thought-provoking approach to a literary scene that was far from homogenous. The chapter usefully reminds readers that the regime did take its writers seriously, acknowledging the profession and its importance. Emmerich traces the development from a ‘Gesinnungsliteratur’ towards ‘Sinngebungs­literatur’ that reflects the differences between writers agreed on an anti-fascist consensus and a later generation that experienced socialism as ‘deformed reality’. He highlights the lasting importance of writers such as Heiner Müller, Günter de Bruyn, Christa Wolf, Jurek Becker, Christoph Hein and Stefan Heym. Stephen Brockmann, ‘Resurrected from the Ruins. The Emergence of GDR Culture’ (35–51) explores how literature and the arts served to support the fundamental changes that marked the GDR’s early years, when the actual division between East and West, despite all differences, was not yet anticipated. Seán Allen, ‘DEFA’s Antifascist Myths and the Construction of National Identity in East German Cinema’ (52–69) exemplifies how decisive the GDR’s early years were for the promotion of the socialist agenda. Dennis Tate, ‘Autobiographical Writing in the GDR Era’ (88–105) carefully disentangles the sense of crisis, hope and disillusionment that marks life-stories, differentiating between a generation that took part in the early development of the GDR and those who were brought up in the GDR. For the former, coming to terms with the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the failure of the Prague Spring in 1968 were distinct turning points. Authors under consideration include Franz Fühmann, Hermann Kant, Stefan Heym and Christa Wolf and, as representatives of the ‘integrated generation’, Angela Kraß, Irina Liebmann and Monika Maron. Georgina Paul, ‘Gender in GDR Literature’ (106–125) is interesting on the representation of masculinity. The contribution by Birgit Dahlke, ‘Underground Literature? The Unofficial Culture of...
the GDR and its Development after the Wende’ (160–179) serves as a bridge between developments before and after Unification; the latter are covered by a number of further articles in this volume. Importantly, despite all difficulties, East Germany’s underground scene differs considerably from that in other socialist countries, not least in terms of linguistic opportunities to publish outside one’s own country. Ways of escaping censorship mark the time before the fall of the Wall, followed by an ‘explosion of creativity’ in 1989 and 1990. By 1997 the German Historical Museum was able to dedicate an exhibition to the phenomenon of ‘Bohemia and Dictatorship’, while continuing success, not least in travel guides, made alternative ventures such as ‘Kaffee Burger’ part of the establishment. Dahlke observes that ‘for a long time, categorising authors as participants in the “independent East-German literary scene” was a contributing factor towards the canonization of their works, regardless of objections of the authors themselves’. This no longer applies, marking the passage of time in perceptions. Alison Lewis, ‘Tinker, Tailor, Writer, Spy: GDR Literature and the Stasi’ (180–196) draws attention to the role of the Stasi files, accounts that are by means of literary engagement ‘turned into restorative justice’. While all contributions merit attention, the strength of this volume is the collection as a whole: literature and film form an integral part of the chronology of a country that might be a matter of the past, but whose directors and writers have provided films and literature that remain relevant.

Das 20. Jahrhundert erzählen. Zeiterfahrung und Zeiterforschung im geteilten Deutschland, ed. Franka Maubach and Christina Morina, Göttingen, Wallstein, 508 pp., explores how the engagement with 20th-c. German history and its turning points has been shaped by politics in East and West. As such the volume reflects on German intellectual history too. Of particular interest for this survey are Christoph Klessmann, ‘Geteilte Nation. Über die (Un-)Möglichkeiten deutsch-deutscher Zeithistorikerge-

Diverse interpretations also feature in the volume Mehr als eine Erzählung. Zeitgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik, ed. Frank Bajohr et al., Göttingen, Wallstein, 408 pp. Here, contributors respond to Axel Schildt’s article of 1999, ‘Fünf Möglichkeiten, die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik zu erzählen’ which questioned and differentiated established ‘master-narratives’.


2 Film and Media

Märchen, Mythen und Moderne: 200 Jahre ‘Kinder- und Hausmärchen’ der Brüder Grimm, ed. Claudia Brinker-von der Heyde et al., 2 vols,