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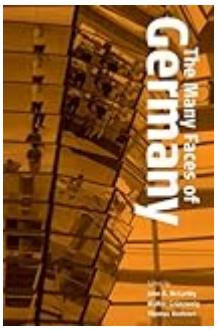

John A. McCarthy, Walter GrÖ¼nzweig, Thomas Koebner, eds. *The Many Faces of Germany: Transformations in the Study of German Culture and History–Festschrift for Frank Trommler.* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004. xx + 411 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57181-034-2.

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Past Contours and Future Prospects of German Studies

This is a festschrift Frank Trommler can be proud of. It reflects the many research interests he has pursued and his continuous quest for innovation in German Studies. Moreover, it contains some excellent essays on the future course of German Studies and history.

The editors have divided the twenty-eight essays in four sections: "Dialectics of Memory," "Mining History," "Bilateral Understanding," and "Closures-Transitions-Openings." Almost half the contributions are in German. In the introduction, John A. McCarthy lists the ambitious goals the editors have set for the collection: it is intended both as a "forum to discuss issues that were raised in the twentieth century and will continue to attract attention well beyond the year 2000" and as "an assessment of the past contours and future prospects of bilateral understanding and of the place of the study of things German in American academe" (pp. ix-x). Of course–this being a festschrift–not all authors have followed these guidelines. The majority of articles in "Mining History" and "Bilateral Understanding," for example, are conventional case studies dealing with a wide variety of topics, including the Walser-Bubis debate (David Bathrick), Fritz Lang's "M" (Anton Kaes), culture wars in postwar Austrian radio (Joseph McVeigh), Brecht (Russell A. Berman) and Wolfgang Koeppen's *Amerikafahrt* (Klaus R. Scherpe). Enough space is left, however, for several thorough and necessary reflections on "the study of things German."

With "Jenseits von Verdammung und VerklÃ¤rung. PlÃ¤doyer fÃ¼r eine differenzierte DDR-Geschichte" Konrad H. Jarausch has written a timely and well-argued contribution on the future of GDR history. He sets out a course for a more balanced, less ideological and less provincial historiography. Four areas of comparison should, in Jarausch's eyes, guide future historians: first, the systemic comparison with other dictatorial regimes (including, despite obvious differences, the National Socialist state); second, the process of *Sowjetisierung* in Central and Eastern Europe; third, a comparison of the two German states; and, finally, the international transformations of the post-industrial society. The last area seems especially promising, because the GDR's self-image was to a large extent based on being the more advanced (*fortschrittlich*) of the two German states.

In his concluding remarks, Jarausch is careful to emphasize that moral criticism of the repressive GDR system remains legitimate. But it should be combined with a differentiated analysis of GDR society and every day life. Several contributors wrestle with the implications of the end of the Cold War and the September 11 attacks for German Studies and history. In his excellent essay, "The State of the Art in Contemporary German History," Michael Geyer warns of a widening rift between academic and popular cultures. The "largely self-sustaining academic public sphere" is in danger of operating increasingly detached from the nation as a whole (p.207). The September 11 attacks and their disruptive aftermath, moreover, have called into question the continued relevance and "normative role" of German history in the United States. Geyer seeks the answer to this challenge in a transnational history of Germany within Europe and the Western world. In his eyes, the "provincialization of Europe" (a phrase borrowed from Dipesh Chakrabarty) should be regarded as an opportunity for a fresh look at Europe "from inside and out" (p. 210). In practical terms, Geyer identifies network history (*Beziehungsgeschichte*), the history of Europe's (imperial) encounter with the world, and new inquiries into the "invention of peace" as the most promising areas of new research. He fails to explain, however, where exactly the *transatlantic* world fits in. This omission is surprising, given his earlier emphasis on "a history that takes on both the United States and Germany" (p. 208). But perhaps Geyer simply takes for granted that the United States should be an integral part of any transnational history of Germany within the Western world.

Sara Lennox and Jeffrey M. Peck both explore post-Eurocentric territory in their respective contributions "Globalization, Alternative Modernities, and the Future of German Studies" and "The World is Full: Changing Discourses of Space and Place after September 11." Lennox proposes to use the idea of alternative modernities, developed by thinkers like Arif Dirlik and Charles Taylor, in German Studies. As she puts it: "the 'new paradigm' might ... require that not just scholars of non-Western countries, but also scholars of Europe and North America recognize how, from the voyages of discovery onward, impulses from the colonies and beyond have affected the so-called First World in complex though often unacknowledged ways" (pp. 340-341). Lennox identifies the "current attention to German heterogeneities and singularities" (p. 345) as a step in the right direction and implores scholars to move away from the grand narrative of a dominant Western modernity. As a point of criticism it should be noted, however, that Lennox does not try to move much beyond such generalities. Consequently, the question of how the "new paradigm" should translate into a concrete research agenda remains largely unanswered. Michael Geyer does a better job in this respect.

Jeffrey M. Peck is also concerned with the future of German Studies in the post-September 11 world. He uses the writings of Zygmunt Bauman to advance our understanding of the effects of globalization. Peck argues that a "cultural resignification" of categories like "the local and the global, stranger and friend, home and foreign" has taken place (p. 352). In this connection, he raises several questions about the possible consequences for the field. Most fundamentally, Peck asks whether we need a "redefined particularism" or a "new universalist global studies more in the postmodernist mode that takes into consideration the shifting significations of space, place, and time" (p. 353). He leaves it to the reader to answer this important question.

John A. McCarthy takes a different approach in his "Goethe and Schiller after Adorno: Using the Past to See the Future." He is worried about the current trend in German Studies to be almost exclusively concerned with contemporary events. This means that the "broader view and knowledge" necessary for a real understanding of history, as opposed to a mere knowing of facts, is lacking. McCarthy uses Adorno's concept of *MÃ¼ndigkeit*, Goethe's views on the function of the literary canon, and Schiller's and Herder's respective philosophies of history to argue persuasively for a return to a "focus on core material." As he puts it: "Without a clear sense of self-identity grounded firmly in the discipline ... we have nothing that truly defines us individually or collectively. Without an authority figure or a canonical base unique to our discipline, we cannot truly establish our own identity" (p. 333). It is impossible to do justice to the depth of McCarthy's argument in a few sentences. Suffice it to say here that his essay deserves to be widely read.

In the end, what is most remarkable about *The Many Faces of Germany* as a whole is the large degree of transatlantic interconnectedness in German Studies it reflects. Many of the contributors–as indeed Frank Trommler himself–are living examples of the high level of academic integration between the United States and Germany. The question remains, however, whether after the global transformations of the last fifteen years German Studies will be able to keep its privileged place in the United States. Possibly, in thirty years time historians will regard *The Many Faces of Germany* as the product of a distinct generation of German-American scholars–

shaped by the Cold War, but unable to adapt to a changing world. More plausibly, however, they will see this collection as a successful attempt to help chart a new course for a discipline that is lucky to have Frank Trommler as one of its preeminent scholars.