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Retracing the *Sattelzeit*: Thoughts on the Historiography of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras

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The era of the French Revolution and the Napoleon Wars left a deep mark not only on political, social, and cultural life in German-speaking Europe, but also on German academic historiography as it emerged over the course of the nineteenth century. Both before and after the formation of the *Kaiserreich*, professional historians like Leopold von Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen, Heinrich von Sybel, and Heinrich von Treitschke sought in their scholarship to justify Prussia's leadership role in Germany, and the French revolutionary and Napoleonic years figured centrally in this effort.[1] For Friedrich Meinecke, writing in the Wilhelmine years, a remembrance of this era was crucial if Germany was to retain its intellectual and moral bearings: "One thing is clear: the survival and continuity of German intellectual life is somehow related to the events between 1807 and 1815—the liberation of Germany from foreign rule, and the transformation of Prussia, her most powerful state, into a freer, more national political entity."[2] In *Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung* (1906), Meinecke related the process by which the formerly apolitical, individualistic musings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte were given practical, political implementation in the reforms of Karl vom Stein, Karl von Hardenberg, and Gerhard von Scharnhorst, and then in the Wars of Liberation: "By descending to the state, the spirit not only preserved its own endangered existence as well as that of the state, it secured a reservoir of moral and psychological wealth, a wellspring of creative power for later generations."[3]

The era of the French Revolution and Napoleon was also crucial to those historians who, especially after 1945, sought to develop a critical historiography of modern Germany, again with a focus on Prussia. Hans Rosenberg's *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience (1660–1815)* turned Meinecke's interpretation on its head, viewing the Prussian reforms as the substitution of dynastic absolutism for a bureaucratic absolutism that primarily served the interests of the aristocracy and that was powerful enough to deflect subsequent attempts at liberal and democratic reform.[4] Rosenberg's evaluation of this era was

[1] On academic history, see Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of History from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); on Borussian approaches to this era, especially the Wars of Liberation, see Karen Hagemann, *Revisiting Prussia's Wars against Napoleon: History, Culture, and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 293–300.

[2] Friedrich Meinecke, *The Age of German Liberation, 1795–1815*, trans. Peter Paret and Helmuth Fischer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 2.

[3] Ibid., 3.

[4] Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660–1815* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 202–28. In an essay devoted to Rosenberg's influence on the *Sonderweg* argument, William W. Hagen writes, "Of all arguments deriving the preconditions and triumph—though not the identity—of Nazism from the structures and dynamics of Prussian history, this

formative for a generation of scholars, including Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who traced what he saw as the political pathologies of the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine eras to, in part, political and economic arrangements made at the turn of the nineteenth century.[5] Intellectual historians like Hans Kohn, Georg Iggers, and Leonard Krieger likewise saw a crucial turning point in these years, highlighting Herder and Fichte's glorification of the *Volk* and G. W. F. Hegel's embrace of the state as fateful departures from a western tradition of liberalism, Enlightenment, and revolution (even as they ignored the inconsistencies of the "tradition" from which Germany supposedly deviated).

This interest in the revolutionary/Napoleonic era was reflected in the pages of *Central European History* (*CEH*), which, on its founding in 1968, became the central forum for "German history in the United States."[6] Many of the articles and reviews it published on this topic during the 1960s and 1970s worked within the broad outlines of the *Sonderweg* interpretation, though typically with their own individual twists and nuances. Reviewing Klaus Epstein's *The Genesis of German Conservatism*, Jacques Droz commented that it had helped him see "how deeply the *Obrigkeitsstaat* extended its roots in the German political conscience, and on what solid bases authority reposed among that people of whom Kant said, at the time of the French Revolution, that their dominant characteristic was obedience."[7] For Mack Walker, however, German distinction lay elsewhere, notably, in the "individualized country" located between Prussia and Bavaria, which was dominated by hometowns of ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants. In "Napoleonic Germany and the Hometown Communities," he traced the efforts of first French invaders and later German reformers (including Stein and Hardenberg before they joined the Prussian state) to reform these towns and their institutions in line with the needs of a modern society. The goal of such bureaucratic liberalism was not to reduce the power of the state but rather to enhance it, and this involved replacing the personalized processes and relationships of the hometowns with laws and procedures grounded in abstract legal codes.[8] In an essay on the Prussian reforms, Marion Gray contrasted the views of the Prussian officials Leopold von Schroetter and Theodor von Schön on the question of how to redistribute land once the serfs had been emancipated.[9] Although both could be classified as "liberals" and defenders of the free market, Schroetter sought to apply those principles so as to ensure aristocratic dominance in Prussia, while Schön envisioned a class of non-noble landholders that could challenge that dominance. In the end, Stein drew from the ideas of both men, despite their opposed visions of Prussia's future.

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was the most influential." See Hagen, "Descent of the *Sonderweg*: Hans Rosenberg's History of Old-Regime Prussia," *Central European History* (*CEH*) 24, no. 1 (1991): 24–25. Hagen locates Rosenberg's arguments in their historical context while highlighting some of their shortcomings.

[5]Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871–1918*, trans. Kim Traynor (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985), 9–14. Wehler's later, more extensive confrontation with the reform era is discussed later.

[6]This term is from Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, "The Future of the German Past: Transatlantic Reflections for the 1990s," *CEH* 22, no. 3/4 (1989): 232.

[7]Jacques Droz, review of Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism*, in *CEH* 2, no. 2 (1969): 180.

[8]Mack Walker, "Napoleonic Germany and the Hometown Communities," *CEH* 2, no. 2 (1969): 99–113.

[9]Marion W. Gray, "Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism versus Middle-Class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808," *CEH* 6, no. 1 (1973): 60–82.

Reinhart Koselleck's initial description of the revolutionary/Napoleonic era of German history as a *Sattelzeit* coincided with the early years of *CEH* as well. In his introduction to volume one of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1972), Koselleck noted that the "heuristic anticipation" of the project was the "suspicion that, after the middle of the eighteenth century, a far-reaching transformation in the meaning of classical topoi took place, that old words gained meanings that, approaching the present-day, no longer require translation. This heuristic anticipation introduces, so to speak, a 'Sattelzeit,' in which origin [*Herkunft*] transforms itself into our present [*Präsenz*]."[10] The term *Sattelzeit* proved confusing to German- and English-speaking readers alike, but Koselleck seems to have meant to evoke a *Bergsattel*, over which a wanderer passes from one valley to the next. Thus the *Sattelzeit* was a period (roughly 1770 to 1830) in which a broad series of political concepts acquired their current meanings, and that both defined and reflected the fundamental experiences of modernity.[11]

Koselleck had already applied this type of *Begriffsgeschichte* in his massive *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution* (1967), which explored the legal and social contexts and long-term impact of the Prussian reforms. For a scholar whose earlier work had been in intellectual history, Koselleck's immersion in and understanding of the details of Prussian law and administration were impressive. Yet, his approach to this material often resembled that of the Heideggerian phenomenologist, attentive above all to questions of language, time, and meaning. For example, in describing the efforts of the Prussian reformers to eliminate the caste system encased in the *Allegemeines Landrecht* and to deliver the outlines of a genuine civil society, Koselleck highlighted how notions of the future shaped their thinking: "All the laws of the reform project were designed toward movement, whose goal … was conceived as the fulfillment of the global plan of universal human freedom and morality."[12] One of the advantages of Koselleck's use of *Begriffsgeschichte* was that it allowed him to show the degree to which the thinking of the Prussian reformers embodied a sense of the "modern"—even if their concrete reforms (the "modernizing project") fell short. In the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, this approach was vastly expanded, with the result that the German experience of the *Sattelzeit* was presented as not only relevant but also formative for the emergence of modernity. In this respect, one can see in this project a harbinger of later developments, despite the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*'s all too linear treatment of historical change and its narrow (and rather parochial) understanding of "modernity."

Although the *Sonderweg* interpretation maintained its hold on Anglo-American historiography, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a number of attempts to chip away at its narrative of the French Revolutionary/Napoleonic era, and some of these were published in *CEH*. For example, Karl Wegert's study of Hessian radicalism between 1806 and 1819 revealed that the radical opposition included not only university students but also members of other age and occupation groups, and that they were motivated not just by Romantic visions of

[10]Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1 (*A-D*), ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1972), xv.

[11]Daniel Fulda, "Sattelzeit. Karriere und Problematik eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Zentralbegriffs," in *Sattelzeit: Historiographiegeschichtliche Revisionen*, ed. Elsabeth Décultot and Daniel Fulda (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 2–3.

[12]Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1967), 160.

national unity but also by the economic and social distress of the broader population.[13] William W. Hagen published a study on the impact of the Polish partitions on the "crisis" of the Prussian state in the years 1772–1806, anticipating his more extensive work on the significance of the Polish question for German history.[14] Hagen's later studies of litigious and rebellious Prussian serfs would help dismantle the image of Junker authoritarianism that had been passed down from Hans Rosenberg, among others.[15] Meanwhile, Deborah Hertz published a study of Jewish-Christian intermarriage in Berlin, focusing on the experiences of salonniers like Rahel Varnhagen. Hertz argued that, while Prussia "has long been viewed as a land where upward mobility was blocked by a rigid social structure, with the weighty consequence of retarding the lively contact among the elites so useful elsewhere in the development of political democracy," a combination of wealth and gender allowed Varnhagen and other Jewish heiresses to move into the Prussian nobility, in the process acquiring a measure of personal freedom that would not have been possible otherwise.[16]

By the end of the 1980s, the number of articles in *CEH* devoted to the *Sattelzeit* era had slowed to a trickle, but the publication of the initial volumes of Hans-Ulrich Wehler's and Thomas Nipperdey's multivolume histories of Germany, both of which contained extensive coverage of 1789–1815, nevertheless provided the occasion for a full-scale evaluation of the era by T. C. W. Blanning.[17] This took place under the rubric of "modernization," still a viable category of analysis at this time and, in any case, central to the projects of both Nipperdey and Wehler, as different as they were in other respects. Nipperdey had memorably begun his *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866* with the claim that, "in the beginning, was Napoleon." What this meant was that "the basic principles of the modern world," which came into being in the French Revolution, only became a "practical reality" for Germans with Napoleon and his campaign of military conquest.[18] Yet, Blanning was skeptical of this claim, noting that many of the key features of modernization (as defined by Nipperdey himself) were already underway well before Napoleon's armies invaded the German lands. For evidence, he pointed to material in the first volume of Wehler's *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (1987), which tracked the secularization of education, the

[13]Karl Wegert, "The Genesis of Youthful Radicalism: Hesse-Nassau, 1806–19," *CEH* 10, no. 3 (1977): 183–205.

[14]William W. Hagen, "The Partitions of Poland and the Crisis of the Old Regime in Prussia, 1772–1806," *CEH* 9, no. 2 (1976): 115–28; also see idem, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[15]William W. Hagen, "The Junkers' Faithless Servants: Peasant Insubordination and the Breakdown of Serfdom in Brandenburg-Prussia, 1763–1811," in *The German Peasantry: Conflict and Community in Rural Society from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 71–101; idem, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[16]Deborah Hertz, "Intermarriage in the Berlin Salons," *CEH* 16, no. 4 (1983): 343.

[17]Blanning noted that "modern Germany has usually been deemed to begin in 1815, so the period which immediately preceded the Vienna settlement has been studied with a view to what it started." This situation was reflected, in fact, in most of the major surveys of German history at this time. See T. C. W. Blanning, "The French Revolution and the Modernization of Germany," *CEH* 22, no. 2 (1989): 109–29. The volumes under discussion were Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866, vol. 1: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1983) and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte,* vol. 1 (*1700–1815*), vol. 2 (*1815–1848/49*) (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987).

[18]Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 11, cited in Blanning, "French Revolution," 110.

growth of literacy, the implementation of the agrarian revolution, the growth of market conditions, and the pace of bureaucratization across the eighteenth century. If anything, Blanning argued, the French Revolution and Napoleon had actually *slowed* the pace of modernization in Germany, particularly in Prussia. Prussian elites, mindful not to repeat the mistakes of the Bourbons, made sure that reform would only come from above if it came at all, and thus made sure to block off routes to popular participation in government. Wehler, for his part, characterized the Prussian reforms as an "Anti-Revolution."[19] But he was considerably more generous in his evaluation of the reforms in *Rheinbund* states like Baden, Bavaria, and Württemberg, which had engaged in a program of state-building, administrative reform, economic liberalization, and parliamentarization, paving the path for the emergence of South German liberalism in the *Vormärz* era.[20] In subsequent years, the experiences of the "Third Germany" during the revolutionary/Napoleonic era would be the subject of intensified research, both in the pages of *CEH* and elsewhere.[21] But if the Napoleonic presence helped advance the project of "defensive modernization," Blanning and Wehler also saw it as inspiring distinctly anti-modern cultural reactions, in the form of the Romantic movement and the early nineteenth-century religious revival.[22] They disagreed, however, on the character of German nationalism. Wehler acknowledged the role of xenophobia and the search for a "substitute religion" in early German nationalism, but he also noted the role of the latter as an ideology of liberalism and political opposition.[23] Blanning, by contrast, stressed the origins of German nationalism in "resentment at French cultural and political hegemony," which had first emerged at the time of the Seven Years' War and had only grown more extreme in the wake of the revolutionary and Napoleonic experiences.[24]

The surveys by Wehler and Nipperdey, as well as Blanning's analysis of them in *CEH*, testified to the ongoing influence of modernization theory when it came to analyzing German history in the revolutionary/Napoleonic era. Yet, the very next issue of *CEH* would signal a major shift in the field away from that approach. This was the massive "Theory" issue, which brought together many of the most distinguished American scholars of German history to address the implications of what was then known as "the linguistic turn" or, simply, "postmodernism."[25] Yet, the articles in that issue were grappling not only with a methodological rupture, but also with the historical rupture of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a development that, as Michael Geyer and Konrad Jarausch noted, threatened to undermine

[19] Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1:397.

[20] Ibid., 1:380–96.

[21] See Barbara C. Anderson, "State-Building and Bureacracy in Early-Nineteenth-Century Nassau," and Loyd E. Lee, "Baden between Revolutions: State-Building and Citizenship, 1800–1848," *CEH* 24, no. 2/3 (1991): 222–47, 248–67; both were part of a symposium on "State-Building in the Third Germany." A later article that fits squarely in this context is Ian F. McNeely, "Hegel's Württemberg Commentary: Intellectuals and the Construction of Civil Society in Revolutionary-Napoleonic Germany," *CEH* 37, no. 3 (2004): 345–64.

[22] "If modernity began for the Germans with Napoleon," Blanning asked, "why was he followed by a surge of cultural manifestations which appear more medieval than modern?" See Blanning, "French Revolution," 118. Blanning revisited these topics in *The Romantic Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2010).

[23] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, 1:545.

[24] Blanning, "French Revolution," 127.

[25] The special issue grew out of the conference "German Histories: Challenges in Theory, Practice, and Technique," which was held at the University of Chicago in early October 1989, but the essays were heavily revised in light of subsequent developments.

both popular and academic American treatments of German history as a neat morality tale.[26] In addition, the unification of Germany in 1990 not only brought an end to the German Democratic Republic and the Bonn Republic but also forced scholars to treat both as central chapters of twentieth-century German history rather than as just its coda. All of this, along with the fact that history did not end in 1990, that there was no "happily ever after," shifted the center of "modern" German history ever further forward, which meant that the *Sattelzeit* era would be pushed further backward and out of sight, especially within the Anglo-American historical guild.[27]

At the same time, however, the theoretical developments of the 1980s suggested new paths forward for those who continued to work on this period. Michel Foucault, for example, had located the turn from the "classical" to the "modern" episteme in the decades around 1800, and this era retained its significance in later iterations of his theories, most notably in the first volume of his history of sexuality.[28] Moreover, by shifting attention away from high politics and Marxian class analysis and toward the realm of legal, scientific, and medical discourse, Foucault had put German-speaking Europe on a more level playing field with its traditional measuring sticks, Britain and France. In *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society* (1996), Isabel Hull built on some of Foucault's insights in order to show how, in the course of defining "civil society," cameralist and late-absolutist legal theorists reformulated (and hardened) traditional gender dichotomies by positing a fundamental opposition between heterosexually active (and thus politically independent) males and sexually passive (and thus politically dependent) females.[29] Lynn Hunt, Joan Landes, and Joan Wallach Scott had long stressed the importance of the French Revolution for the formation of an ideology of separate spheres and starker gender differences. In the process, they pioneered the methodologies of the new cultural history and gender history, which in turn began to leave their mark on the historiography of revolutionary-era Germany. This could be seen in the work of Karen Hagemann, who, in a series of influential articles and books, examined the role of a militarized notion of masculinity in the nationalist rhetoric and cultural practices surrounding the German/Prussian "Wars of Liberation."[30]

Hagemann's work has been part of another trend in the historiography of this era: the treatment of the Napoleonic Wars as *wars*. To be sure, the Battles of Jena, Austerlitz, and Leipzig have been staples of military history for over two hundred years, and this seems unlikely to change in the near future. What *is* new is the application of approaches from the social history of war, especially those focusing on its impact on civilians, to the Napoleonic conflicts. Katherine Aaslestad, for example, has focused on the war experience

[26] On this point, see Geyer and Jarausch, "The Future of the German Past," 232–41.

[27] This was less the case in Germany given the division of history faculties into modern (*neuere*) history and contemporary (*neueste*) history, which effectively meant the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[28] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1971); idem, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

[29] Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); see also idem, "Feminist and Gender History Through the Literary Looking Glass: German Historography in Postmodern Times," *CEH* 22, no. 3/4 (1989): 279–300.

[30] Karen Hagemann, "Of 'Manly Valor' and 'German Honor': Nation, War, and Masculinity in the Age of the Prussian Uprising against Napoleon," *CEH* 30, no. 2 (1997): 187–220; idem, "*Mannlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre": Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002).

in Hamburg, while Ute Planert has described its effects on southern Germany.[31] Although neither location was central to the heroic narrative of the "Wars of Liberation" or particularly susceptible to the allure of Prusso-German nationalism, both regions suffered considerably during the wars. Indeed, Hamburg's harsh treatment at the hands of Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout in 1813–1814 became a *cause célèbre* in the hands of anti-French propagandists. Aaslestad and Planert both contributed articles to a special issue of *CEH* in 2006 on "1806 and its Aftermath," as did Michael Rowe, who examined "shifting allegiances" in the Rhineland as it was passed from the *Reichskirche* to revolutionary France, and then to Prussia.[32] Hagemann's contribution to the same issue foreshadowed her later work on the memory of the Napoleonic Wars, making the case that their repercussions were felt well into the nineteenth century—just as those of World War I were felt well into the twentieth century.[33]

The recent emphasis on the destruction, economic devastation, and loss of life caused by Napoleon's wars has undercut his Hegelian image as the "world spirit on horseback" or as an agent of modernization. This increasingly negative view of Napoleon has coincided with a reevaluation of the Congress of Vienna, as well as its *spiritus rector* Clemens von Metternich. Whereas the Congress has long been seen as carrying out a "restoration" that crushed the aspirations of liberals and nationalists in Germany, recent work has noted the pragmatic and often emancipatory nature of its ambitions and accomplishments. Brian Vick, in particular, has highlighted the efforts of Metternich and other negotiators at the Congress to secure religious toleration in the German Confederation—not only for Protestants and Catholics, as called for in Article 16 of the *Bundesakte*, but also for Jews, an effort thwarted primarily by local interests in Germany.[34] He likewise notes the efforts at the Congress of Vienna to ban slavery worldwide, another initiative that fell short. Finally, by highlighting the role of women's salons at the Congress, he suggests that the emergence of a separate-spheres ideology in this era did not mean that it was implemented immediately or consistently. And by showing the incorporation of nationalist themes into the pageantry and political culture of the Congress of Vienna, he undercuts any strict dichotomy between nationalism and cosmopolitanism or, for that matter, between politics and culture. Wolfram Siemann's recent biography of Metternich undertakes a similarly revisionist approach to its subject, not only on the question of the Congress of Vienna but also with regard to the Carlsbad Decrees, which he

[31]Katherine Aaslestad, *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Ute Planert, *Der Mythos vom Befreiungskrieg: Frankreichs Kriege und der deutsche Süden: Alltag, Wahrnehmung, Deutung, 1792–1841* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007).

[32]Michael Rowe, "France, Prussia, or Germany? The Napoleonic Wars and Shifting Allegiances in the Rhineland," *CEH* 39, no. 4 (2006): 580–610.

[33]Karen Hagemann, "Occupation, Mobilization, and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory, and Historiography," *CEH* 39, no. 4 (2006): 580–610; idem, *Revisiting Prussia's Wars against Napoleon*; on Napoleonic memory, see also Katherine Aaslestad, "Remembering and Forgetting: The Local and the Nation in Hamburg's Commemoration of the Wars of Liberation," *CEH* 38, no. 3 (2005): 384–416.

[34]Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). In a recent article in *CEH*, Scott Berg emphasized Metternichian Austria's relative success (when compared to Prussia) at encouraging Protestant-Catholic comity. See Scott Berg, "'The Lord Has Done Great Things for Us': The 1817 Reformation Celebrations and the End of the Counter-Reformation in the Habsburg Lands," *CEH* 49, no. 1 (2016): 69–92.

interprets as an understandable response to the very real threat of political violence in the post-Napoleonic era.[35]

The future of historiography on revolutionary and Napoleonic Germany will lie in scholarship that revises received assumptions about the era's heroes and villains, brings new actors onto the stage, and alters its traditional chronological and geographical parameters. Although important work has been done already, the cultural history of women in this era still remains to be written, while the impact of female writers has yet to be fully explored.[36] For several decades, historians of Germany have sought to shift the emphasis away from Prussia onto other German lands, but in recent years scholars have turned their attention to Germans living outside Central Europe altogether—for example, in the scattered communities of the Moravian Brethren, or the southern German Protestant communities invited to the Russian empire during the reign of Alexander I.[37] Still other communities of German speakers, such as those in the Baltic lands, have been relatively neglected, particularly in the Anglo-American historiography. The economic history of this era is also ripe for renewal, particularly given the centrality of the *Sattelzeit* years for the most recent histories of capitalism and slavery. Moreover, as the age of the French Revolution becomes ever more firmly the age of the Atlantic Revolutions, with the weight of interpretation shifting from Paris toward Haiti, German history has the potential to become more, rather than less, central to the understanding of this era, even if it lacked overseas colonies at the time. Many of the most important and influential theorists of race in this era were German, but so, too were some of the most important critics of the European colonial project. Moreover, issues of bound and free labor stood at the very center of the Prussian Reforms, as they did in other European lands grappling with the problem of serfdom. Kant and Hegel, once treated by historians of Germany as alien to the Western liberal tradition, are considered elsewhere in the academy as among the most articulate and consequential theorists of the nineteenth-century liberal subject, with its notions of freedom and rationality, its reliance on a dialectical understanding of history, and its grounding in a well-developed schema of racial whiteness.[38] Understanding these writers and their historical contexts will remain an urgent task for some time to come.

[35] Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Strategе und Visionär. Eine Biographie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2016). For a similar argument, see George S. Williamson, "'Thought is in itself a dangerous operation': The Campaign Against 'Revolutionary Machinations' in Germany, 1819–1828," *German Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (2015): 285–306.

[36] Over the past decades, Germanists specializing in the so-called *Goethezeit* have produced a wide range of works relevant for historians of this era. See, e.g., Daniel Purdy, *The Tyranny of Elegance: Consumer Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Goethe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1998); Karin Wurst, *Fabricating Pleasure: Fashion, Entertainment, and Cultural Consumption in Germany, 1780–1830* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2005); Birgit Tautz, *Translating the World: Toward a New History of German Literature Around 1800* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017); Chunjie Zhang, *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017).

[37] Gisela Mettele, *Weltbürgertum, oder, Gottesreich: Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine als globale Gemeinschaft 1727–1857* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009); Planert, *Mythos vom Befreiungskriege*, 336–82; Susan Crane, "Holy Alliances. Creating Religious Communities after the Napoleonic Wars," in *Die Gegenwart Gottes in der modernen Gesellschaft. Transzendenz und religiöse Vergemeinschaftung in Deutschland*, ed. Michael Geyer and Lucian Hölscher (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), 37–59.

[38] See, e.g., Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 139–49.

Finally, there is much to be gained from breaking down the very temporal framework that has informed this essay. The years 1789 and 1815 were crucial, no doubt, but they certainly do not mark the borders between Enlightenment and Romanticism, or Revolution and Restoration. The *Aufklärung* persisted well into the nineteenth century, and the radical impulses generated during the Napoleonic years extended at least into the 1820s, even if this history has yet to be fully explored. The "survival and continuity" of our intellectual life may not depend on revisiting the *Sattelzeit*, as Meinecke once thought it did for Germany, but periodic attention to it, not only as a source of European modernity but as a complex and fascinating epoch in its own right, cannot but enrich the ongoing project of "German history in the United States."

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