gender. As I read and re-read the book, I found myself questioning some interpretations, frustrated at repetitions and a roughness that might have disappeared with more serious editing, but was most often impressed by the evidence and arguments. *Men, Women and Property* is an impressive and important book.

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RIEGER, Bernhard — *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 319.

Using the tools of comparative analysis, this rich, multi-layered, meticulously researched, and carefully crafted monograph probes key questions about the role of technology in mass society, modernity, and nationalism and national identity. Focusing on the period between 1890 and 1945, Bernhard Rieger traces British and German experience, debate, and discourse pertaining to three technological realms: airplanes/airships, motion pictures, and large ocean-going passenger ships. At the most immediate level, Rieger explores the discourses surrounding these technologies on the part of users, the mass public, governments, media, and the companies and individuals involved in their development. Rieger finds that, on the whole, despite their widely publicized and debated risks and dangers and despite frequent undertones of ambivalence, the mass public in both countries remained supportive of these innovations and of technological innovation in general. Rieger finds little trace in this period of the more far-reaching distrust and malaise about technology that has become so prevalent today.

Rieger's overarching goal is to use these empirical studies as a foundation for comparative analysis of how technology was linked to ideas of modernity, nationalism, and national identity in Britain and Germany. He notes that both the German and British publics viewed technological innovations as tools of national development and symbols of national identity and international status. Yet these ideas took somewhat different forms in each country. Britons linked technology to a world view focused on preserving the nation's colonial empire and world position, whereas Germans linked technology to an ideology focused increasingly (after 1918) on a perception of needing to advance within a world order that unfairly penalized their nation. Rieger observes that these distinct world views embodied different conceptions of modernity: Britain's notion of modernity was conservative, "predicated on a desire for continuity" (p. 274). Germans, however, particularly during the Nazi regime, held a far more radical conception of modernity, aimed at altering the status quo and rooted in an anti-Enlightenment view of technological innovation "as the expression of a will to fight" (p. 280) rather than as a product of rational thought. Rieger considers how these diverging visions shaped particular technological discourses. For example, he shows that

public discourse about military aviators diverged in Britain and Germany. British discourse tended to be more restrained, attempting to seek a balance between the need to engage in aerial warfare and a reluctance to cause destruction and loss of life, whereas German discourse on military aviators under the Nazis increasingly became a "pornography of violence" linked to a will to power that rejected moral limits.

Unfortunately it is impossible to convey all the unique facets of Rieger's empirical analysis in a short review. Several points about the technological case studies should be noted, however. First, Rieger chooses to focus on several specific technologies, rather than on technology in general, to avoid reifying the concept. Broad depictions of technology's role in society often become distorted oversimplifications because they ignore profound differences in meanings and discourses attached to specific technologies. In contrast, Rieger's more empirical approach reveals the "multifaceted, context-related, and frequently contradictory meanings that the term 'technology' denotes" (p. 5).

All of the technologies Rieger explores were developed or remade during his period of inquiry, and all were linked in key ways to ideas of modernity. Yet they were also associated with risks — everything from the bombing of cities to air crashes and shipwrecks to social dislocation and moral decline — and the technologies allow comparative analysis of these varied discourses of risk and how they were managed. In addition, the technologies had both civilian and military applications, allowing Rieger to explore "central assumptions about technological change in times of peace and war" (p. 4). Finally, whereas many studies of the technology-society relationship gloss over the ways in which class and gender profoundly shape the experience of particular technologies and the discourses associated with them, Rieger is always sensitive to these questions. To give one example, his study of large ocean liners shows how the shipping industry deliberately crafted a new view of these giant ships not only as symbols of modernity and national prowess, but also as sites of luxury consumption and relaxation — "floating palaces" — to counteract a long-standing perception of ocean-going ships as unhealthy, dirty, and physically and morally dangerous. Yet Rieger also explores the exceedingly poor working conditions of the crews of these luxury liners, noting how this alternate world of deprivation, physical danger, and oppression — although structurally linked to the use of the technology — was deliberately and carefully kept out of public sight.

In the conclusion, using insights derived from his case studies, Rieger challenges an interpretational tradition that extends from the work of Horkheimer and Adorno in the closing years of WWII to the Frankfurt school and, most recently, to scholars like Zygmunt Bauman. According to this line of thought, technology is a root problem of modernity because it has encouraged ever-widening quests for destructive power and control. The product of this trajectory, born of Enlightenment rationalism, is ultimately warfare, destruction, and holocaust. From this perspective, the Nazi regime was not an aberration, but an inevitable byproduct of the unfolding of technological modernity. Rieger rejects such a view, however, concluding that comparative analysis of British and German

discourses on technology "shows that the causal link between an embrace of technological change and fantasies of destruction, which laid the mental foundations for actual atrocities, is more strongly contingent upon a nation's political culture" (p. 284) than the Horkheimer/Adorno tradition allows.

If I have any criticism, it is that Rieger's concluding discussion does not adequately convey the historiographical implications of the book's innovative methodology. Rieger has brought together quite different case studies, which he nevertheless melds into an integrated tapestry, displaying two nations' ideas about the relation of technology to war and peace, to tradition and modernity, to nationalism, identity, and morality, and to social organization and social place. The analysis and presentation of this complex yet coherent tapestry offers a fresh approach that takes the social and cultural history of technology to a higher level. This, to my mind, is the book's most important contribution.

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ToEWS, John Edward — *Becoming Historical: Cultural Reformation and Public Memory in Early Nineteenth-Century Berlin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. 466.

In many ways, Berlin of the early 1840s seems an unlikely site for an exploration of the relationship between the historical principle, ethical-national community, and modern definitions of selfhood. Ruled by Frederick William IV, who ascended to the throne as Prussian king in 1840, it has long been associated with a religiously inspired conservative restoration — the determined efforts to turn back the forces of early-nineteenth-century reform liberalism, participatory nationalism, and democratic revolution. In this extraordinary book, however, John Toews draws our attention not only to the elements of "authoritarian containment" (p. 14) embedded in the new regime's intellectual and artistic commitments but also to the preoccupations with ethical subjectivity momentarily opened up or dialectically called forth by its anti-Hegelian cultural politics. As Toews demonstrates, the new Prussian regime pursued an innovative programme of "cultural reformation" (p. 19) designed to create Prusso-German national subjects who embraced the historical principle at its core: the claim or assumption that personal identities and human communities are the products of determined and determining acts of individual and collective "self-making" in time, especially those involving the self-conscious or "subjective identification" (p. 133) of individuals with a shared national past and public memory, rather than being the logical outcomes of self-contained systems of rational thought and bureaucratic state direction or the entailed expressions of essential, pre-reflective ethnicities. In identifying the centrality of a new, post-Romantic historicism in early-nineteenth-century Berlin in this way, Toews provides both a rich analysis of this critical moment in