

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

Prussian-German history, which makes strikingly original connections between the works of a wide range of thinkers and artists and a deeply learned reflection on debates over the formation of individual selfhood and ethical community that have preoccupied historians and philosophers since the early nineteenth century.

The book is framed by discussions of historical selfhood in the anti-Hegelian philosophy of Schelling at the outset and the anti-philosophical critiques of Hegel produced by Kierkegaard and Marx at the end, but its central chapters explore the intellectual and artistic trajectories of several major philosophers, scholars, and artists involved in Frederick William's efforts to promote a new German national culture: the scholar and ambassador Christian Carl Josias Bunsen, the king's former tutor; the architect and guiding force of the Prussian State Building Commission Karl Friedrich Schinkel; the composer Felix Mendelssohn; the jurists Friedrich Karl von Savigny and Friedrich Julius Stahl; the philologist and folklorist Jacob Grimm; and the historian Leopold von Ranke. Each of these figures, according to Toews, travelled a broadly similar intellectual path from a post-Kantian vision of Romantic Idealism and ethnic nationalism, which was forged in the national liberation struggles against Napoleon and placed its hopes in the immanent, self-organizing capacities of an emancipated people, to a chastened project of limited national reform, which emphasized the historical formation of a "self-legislating" (p. 119) German-national community under the guidance of established paternal authority and the transcendental force of (Protestant) Christianity.

Toews traces these individual projects, as well as their tensions in relation to Frederick William's own cultural project, in illuminating empirical detail and with daunting theoretical sophistication. After exploring Schelling's attempts to establish a religiously oriented, "positive" philosophy in response to a regnant Hegelianism in Berlin, he begins with an analysis of Bunsen's plans to "redeem" German nationality in the wake of the post-Napoleonic settlements. This project of redemption, which Toews examines primarily in Bunsen's writings on Protestant hymnals and prayer books of the early 1830s as well as church ritual, architecture, and ecclesiastical organization in the 1840s, involved a turn away from an earlier focus on the immanent expression of national cultures in the ineluctable evolution of historical forms of human community and toward a call for the formation of an ethical community of Christian believers as "self-relating" subjects (p. 104), guided by the church and the normative, transcendent, and patriarchal principles of divine authority — the "law of the father" (p. 81) — and realized in acts of public religious commemoration. In a slightly different way, Schinkel's architectural vision moved from his early Romantic preference for Gothic design — most visible in his 1814–1815 sketches of a Cathedral of Liberation in Berlin — as the spatial representation of the liberated (awakened to its essence) and "self-transcending" German nation, to his neo-classical plans for public buildings (for example, the *Altes Museum* or Old Museum), which sought to educate German subjects into an ethical bearing by means of historical narratives articulating lessons of civic order. These pedagogical functions were also expressed in Mendelssohn's more religiously inspired musical compositions,

ranging from his early *Reformation Symphony* to his later oratorios (especially *Elijah*). The latter reveal complex modes of instrumentation, vocal arrangements, and compositional structures that were designed to facilitate acts of ethical-national self-making out of the dialectic between received ethnicity and self-conscious interaction with a “divine personality.” Indeed, this dialectic emerged equally forcefully in the writings of those scholars of jurisprudence, nationality, and history usually identified as the founders of the Historical School: Savigny, Grimm, and Ranke. By 1840, both Savigny and Stahl had given up their earlier “Romantic-Idealist” treatments of the historical evolution of law strictly in terms of a body of jurisprudence organically evolved within an ethnic community in favour of a definition of law as a set of ethical norms derived in part from human interaction with a “transcendent other” and imposed from above by monarchical and church authority. Grimm, in his studies of Germanic myths, legends, folk tales, grammar, and languages, had abandoned his earlier quest to locate national identities in the organic or spontaneous expression of “natural poetry” in favour of a scheme that granted the importance of “artificial poetry” or the self-conscious forms of cultural expression of an ethnic people; Ranke, whose historical writings had once emphasized the continuities between the “essential unity” (p. 381) among Germans in the past and present, had come to emphasize the authority of transcendent religion and the state in the historical process by which a nation was guided into being.

This general intellectual context, Toews argues, prompted Kierkegaard and Marx to develop their own understandings of the historical nature of individual subjectivity. In a fascinating epilogue, Toews examines the shared concerns of these two thinkers, beginning with their rejection of the “conceptual abstraction” of Hegelian philosophical systems and their efforts to theorize self-conscious identity from the ground of “prelinguistic” being (p. 420). If Kierkegaard began with a focus on psychological desire and Marx with a focus on labour, both philosophers sought to develop theories that would rescue individual selfhood from ever more powerful processes of objectification and commodification in an emergent bourgeois society. They rejected blind or unselfconscious being and emphasized the attainment of freedom through volitional acts of self-making or “self-choice” — Kierkegaard in relation to a “leap” into religion and Marx in relation to communist revolution and the collective human appropriation of the means of production.

No short review can possibly do justice to this beautifully researched and profoundly thoughtful book. It is no ordinary monograph. A major sequel to Toews’s still unsurpassed study of Hegelianism, this work has much to communicate to intellectual historians, cultural critics, and philosophers interested in Prusso-German politics of the early nineteenth century, historical culture in nineteenth-century Europe, and “modern” theories of human subjectivity and historical self-consciousness.

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