"German History and the Contradictions of Modernity"

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Perhaps surprisingly, in light of the bitterly conducted critiques of the 1960s and 1970s, "modernization theory" seems alive and well. Two decades ago, a generation of radical social scientists—mainly Marxist and often from a Third-World perspective—attacked the patent Eurocentric, unilinear, progressivist, and teleological assumptions on which the developmental modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s tended to be based, while a related body of historical work questioned the adequacy of the "traditional" and "modern" dichotomy for analyzing the complexities of historical change, whether within or across particular societies. Of course, it would be wrong to assume that modernization theorists and their models just disappeared. The more simplistic versions, it is true, fell into disrepute or entered a crisis of confidence, their assumptions and predictions in disarray. But a large body of policy-oriented work continued as before, while the more sophisticated practitioners retreated, somewhat bloodied, to more moderate and careful ground, often accompanied by reflections on history, to reconsider the originary cases from which the operative developmental models were derived.

Moreover, in the meantime the original ground of the critique has itself become unsure. The superior virtues of the Marxist and related radical counter-positions have become less obvious than in the past. Since the mid-1970s Marxism has also come under attack for its teleological forms of reasoning, not least from a wide range of critics who began their rethinking from within the Marxist tradition's own political and intellectual domain. This Marxist ferment has also been characterized by a pronounced anti-reductionist turn, so that political and ideological changes can no longer be easily conceived as the logical and dependent consequences of underlying socio-economic causes in the classic "base-and-superstructure" sense. The main Marxist alternative to modernization-based models of the inter-relationship of industrialization and political change—namely, the framework of the transition from feudalism to capitalism—has been little more successful in specifying the causal relationship of particular political histories (like the English or French Revolutions) to structurally determining processes of capitalist developmental change. Recent revisionisms have also deconstructed the organizing concept of the Industrial Revolution itself. Given the uncertainty of the main alternative, therefore, the way has been clear for modernization theory's modest return.

If a less dogmatic, more agnostic understanding of modernization has been possible through a loosening of the older polemical fronts, the need to conceptualize modernity has been imposed by a different kind of intellectual challenge, namely, the philosophical and cultural discourse of postmodernism. By now the range of theory and commentary encompassed by the latter in the English-speaking world have become vast, and any full discussion goes beyond the bounds of this paper. For our purposes, we may briefly list three dimensions of critique, while noting their fuller elaboration in a more specifically post-structuralist theoretical context: (1) a critique of the universalist values and foundational categories of the Enlightenment philosophical tradition; (2) a critique of the familiar "grand narratives" of modern historical development, of progress and emancipation (the Industrial Revolution, the rise of democracy, the triumph of science over nature, the emancipation of the working class, the victory of socialism, the equality of women, and so on); and (3) a critique
As such, the postmodernist perspective implies a conception of modernity now in dissolution or supersession, which both the modernization theorists and their Marxist critics have held in common—one constituted epistemologically around totalizing notions of transcendent truth and the universalizing meta-narrative of the rise of "Western civilization" and "Man's" mastery over nature, in a way which allowed the world and its future to be known in a scientific, historical, and predictive sense. Such an understanding of modernity implied a strongly centered notion of identity and agency, of directionality in history, of the power of knowledge to shape the environment, and of the progressive impact of the West in the rest of the world (even where such transformations have proceeded through immediately destructive and exploitative encounters). There is much diversity of perspectives among and within these intellectual traditions, of course—liberal, Marxist, and others. But some version of the above, which combines assumptions about the reasoning individual with the overarching logics of universal rationalization, economic progress, and the West's expansion in the world, has been constitutive for the main forms of social theory since the end of the last century. As Nelly Richard says:

"With regard to its economic programme and its cultural organization, this concept of modernity represents an effort to synthesize its progressive and emancipatory ideals into a globalizing, integrative vision of the individual's place in history and society. It rests on the assumption that there exists a legitimate centre—a unique and superior position from which to establish control and to determine hierarchies".

[5]

This critique of the Enlightenment tradition is a highly charged political project, and it is no accident that in the English-speaking world its impetus has come increasingly from feminists, African-Americans, other minorities, and the Third-World critics of colonial and post-colonial forms of power—that is, precisely the voices historically most effectively silenced by the progressive Enlightenment-derived cultural and political traditions. Of course, the liberal and conservative upholders of the values of the West are unlikely to be moved by such voices from the margins, as controversies currently raging over the university curriculum in the USA eloquently confirm. Such debates, which focus around the established conception of "Western Civilization" and its cultural authority, are the opposite of an abstract or academic discussion, but grow from political demands for a fresh review of discriminatory structures and practices, typically precipitated by some incident or revelation of racist and/or sexist excess. At the same time, calls for non-sexist and anti-racist education, "diversity" and the validation of difference have entailed a radical and wide-ranging philosophical and theoretical debate, which elicit increasingly aggressive reassertions of the old truths, as in the current charges in the USA that the advocates of "diversity" are seeking to impose a single standard of politically correct ("PC") attitudes. The Salman Rushdie affair has been particularly interesting in this respect. While Rushdie himself speaks from within the post-colonial discourse of indeterminacy, his sentence to death by Ayatollah Khomeini (February 14, 1990) has ironically produced an outpouring of Eurocentric moralizing. Aside from the purer civil libertarian positions and a large amount of more nuanced commentary, Rushdie's defence
has called forth some startling restatements of "Western" tradition, drawn in sharp contradistinction to the irrational and dangerous Third World Other, in this case the demonized forces of fundamentalist Islam. [6]

Once we turn to German intellectual life, we will find "western values" much more strongly centered. The Enlightenment tradition has no shortage of critics--both from a "Green" political and cultural discourse on the left, and from the partisans of German "identity" on the right. But, on the whole it is still the strong orientation towards the values of the West--from the market-oriented ideology of the Free Democrats and the CDU center to the welfare statism of the SPD, and the obdurate rationalism and philosophical modernism of most liberal and social democratic intellectuals--that will leave us most impressed. Here, of course, the unavoidable context of such discussion--until the annus mirabile of 1989, at least--has remained the experience and legacy of the Third Reich. For Jürgen Habermas, especially, an explicit, systematic, and continuously reaffirmed allegiance to the "political theory of the Enlightenment" has become the unavoidable antidote to Germany's baleful pre-1945 past. In this case an abstract and normative constitutionalism deriving from the historic break of 1945-49--the necessity of a "constitutional patriotism", or a post-conventional identity based on rationalist adherence to an idealized construction of the liberal political community of the West--has become for Habermas the only permissible form of a German collective identity, because more traditional appeals to history and nationality ("identity" and "meaning", as privileged in the discourse of the intellectual right) have become morally forfeited due to the years 1933-45. The sense of a new beginning, of strict demarcation against certain older German continuities or traditions--political romanticism, decisionism, diverse illiberalisms and anti-modernisms--has been crucial to Habermas's conception of how post-war German democracy needs to be thought. As he insisted during the recent Historikerstreit:

"The only patriotism that will not alienate us from the West is constitutional patriotism. Unfortunately, a commitment to universal constitutional principles based in conviction has only been possible in German national culture since--and because of--Auschwitz. Anyone who wishes to expunge the shame of this fact with facile talk of 'guilt-obsession', anyone who wants to recall the Germans to more conventional forms of national identity, destroys the only reliable basis of our tie to the West". [7]

Thus for Habermas certain ideas are irredeemably contaminated by their associations with the past, and this connotative chain precludes the opening of the contemporary agenda towards the discourse of postmodernism. For him, critiques of Enlightenment are inseparably linked--logically and historically--to politically destructive and reactionary agendas. His worst fear is that the late-twentieth-century crisis of modernity, rightly defined by the catastrophe of scientific domination over nature, will open the door for irrationalism and a rehabilitated tradition of the anti-democratic right. And, of course, such voices have certainly been heard. At one intellectual retreat organized by the CDU soon after returning to government in 1983, on the theme of "German Identity Today", the conservative philosopher Günther Rohrmoser counterposed to the Enlightenment what he called a specifically German "answer to...modern society and the problems of human alienation connected with it". In the late twentieth century, Rohrmoser argued, the Enlightenment tradition's moral hegemony could no longer persuade. The "project of modernity" was in crisis,
and a certain heritage of critique should now come into play: "Is it really the case that the answers of an ideologically exhausted liberalism and a socialism that has failed in all its variants are better than those we can derive from the memory of the greatest philosophical and cultural achievements of the Germans?"

In fact, the post-1945 determination to treat "the difference between the Germans and all the ahistorical-abstract traditions of the West founded on natural law" as "nothing but an error" has produced only "the neuroticization of our national self-understanding". [8] Here the seamless unity of political romanticism, appeals to identity, and historical apologetics feared by Habermas --the harmful consequences of departing from the Enlightenment tradition--seems to be clearly at work.

In this respect Habermas speaks for a substantial body of German historical opinion, basically those responsible for the main innovations of the 1960s and 1970s, including Hans Mommsen and other so-called "structuralist" historians of Nazism, Wolfgang Mommsen, labor historians, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Jürgen Kocka, and other members of the so-called Bielefeld network. But is that really all there is to say? Can we really lump together all the present hesitancies and reservations about the Enlightenment tradition in all its dimensions and mark them negatively as danger, a re-emergence of tainted German traditions from before 1945, so that "precisely in [Germany] a 'grand coalition' of critics of enlightenment has formed, a coalition in which the brown, black, and green fringes meet?", as Habermas has put it? [9] Quite apart from the merits of current philosophical and theoretical critiques themselves (which, after all, many on the left have found compelling), enthroning the Enlightenment so intransigently also leads to a highly synthetic historical account of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the complexity of the processes which actually moved progressive or democratic change is flattened. Moreover, as feminist and post-colonial critics have taught us, "the political theory of the Enlightenment also involved silences and suppressions, so that the founding moments of modern democratic advance became predicated on the gendering of political capacities, the social qualification and limitation of citizenship, and the exploitative domination of some peoples by others. Social improvement and cultural goods involved similar privilegings and exclusions, in which certain constructions of value, agency, and interest were centered at the expense of others. The great movements of modern reform since the French Revolution were constituted from fields of contradiction in this way.

If that is so, then Habermas's connections look less automatic. Once we accept that the story of the Enlightenment tradition is one of contradictory movement and effects, so that the ideals of progress, rationalism, and science may be treated problematically as well as affirmatively, then the issue of negative continuities (which Habermas locates in political romanticism and right-wing anti-Enlightenment oppositions) can be very differently posed. Such dangers can be found not only in the various forms of conservatism and right-wing anti-Enlightenment critique, but also--and more insidiously--working away at the heart of the Enlightenment ideas themselves. It is this point--which destabilizes the rationalist unity of economic and cultural progress Habermas wishes to hold together, and problematizes the post-war "anti-totalitarian consensus" on which he believes West German political culture to have been based—that Habermas's affirmative centering of "Western values" tends to obscure.

How, then, are we to judge the category of "the modern"? A full-scale conceptual review would outgrow the terms of this essay, and instead I want to indicate briefly some of the salient present meanings before moving, eclectically and agnostically, to a consideration of some current historiographical issues.
The simplest meaning is the one embodied in the following quotation by Lawrence Stone, inscribed by his pupils at the head of his recent Festschrift:

"...how and why did Western Europe change itself during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries so as to lay the social, economic, scientific, political, ideological and ethical foundations for the rationalist, democratic, individualistic, technological industrialized society in which we now live? England was the first country to travel along this road..." [10]

Or, as Anthony Giddens puts it in his most recent work: "'modernity' refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence”. [11] This is also the approach of Thomas Nipperdey and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. After beginning his account with an exhaustive catalogue of particular changes signified by the progressive transition from the "traditional" to the "modern", Nipperdey locates the latter in an epochal conjuncture of underlying conditions: Weber's "disenchantment of the world" [Entzauberung], where modernization appears as "systematische, zweckgerichtete und konsequente ["purposeful and sustained"] Rationalisierung", originating in the universalism permitted by the monotheism of Judeo-Christian religion; the universalistic rationality and anti-particularism of Roman law; and the territorial pluralism of the European state-system, which interacted with the consequences of the Protestant Reformation to promote bureaucratic processes of state formation and key institutional autonomies around both towns and universities. Together these processes constituted "modernization" as a "Schlüsselbegriff der Universalgeschichte": "Er soll den einmaligen Prozess des ungeheuer schnellen ökonomischen, sozialen, kulturellen, politischen Wandels beschreiben, der sich in den letzten 200 Jahren, seit der Doppelrevolution des späten 18. Jahrhunderts, der industriellen und der demokratischen Revolution, zuerst in der europäisch-atlantischen Sphäre und dann in der ganzen Welt abgespielt hat". [12] Wehler takes a similar approach, authorizing his account more explicitly from Weber, and defining modernization by a distinctive set of West European peculiarities ("Dieses gesamte Ensemble okzidentaler Sonderbedingungen"). Wehler also follows Weber in refusing a Marxist or similar materialist privileging of economic and social determinations. But while he maintains political rule, economics, and culture in a dynamic state of reciprocal interaction, as opposed to ordering them around the primacy of, say, state formation or industrialization ("Viemehr bewährt es sich erneut, an der Trias von Wirtschaft, Herrschaft und Kultur festzuhalten, denn diese drei relativ autonom Dimensionen fügen sich zur sozialen Lebenswelt zusammen, eine einzige von ihnen konstituiert sie nicht".), the Weberian "rationalization" tends nonetheless to order the account as a capacious portmanteau concept. [13]

What are we to make of such a usage? At one level it reflects a recent and continuing genre of historical sociology focused on the dialectic of capitalism and state-making, based particularly in early modern Europe, but also including a range of global histories which are seeking in effect to rebuild social theory via writing the history of the world. [14] In effect, this amounts to a more careful disengagement of a more manageably specified question (the relationship of capitalist development to processes of state formation) from the over-totalized framework of modernization theory as it was presented in the 1950s and 1960s, a specification assisted by a more open relationship to Marxist theory, and given powerful impetus by the reception of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of...
Dictatorship and Democracy. [15] On the other hand, the German discussion seems more continuous with the earlier more totalizing moment of modernization theory--Nipperdey more pragmatically, Wehler in explicitly theorized way. [16] Moreover, Wehler retains modernization theory's normative ambition, both theoretically-comparatively and politically-ethically, as in the explication of "erkenntnisleitende Interessen" in terms of "the historical origins of our present" [die Entstehungsgeschichte unserer Gegenwart] and the "imagery of a desirable future" [Vorstellungen über eine gewünschte Zukunft]. [17] In Wehler's case, the normativity of the West German present (meaning more specifically the consolidated reform values of the 1970s), and of an allied conception of the Western community, is palpable.

In other words, "modernity" here is not just a postulated relationship between social change and institutional forms, but a set of philosophical positions about the contemporary world. Here the relations among contemporary commentary, traditions of thought, and the specific histories through which the latter emerged (the historicity of ideas, as opposed to their universalized abstraction) are much less clear and imply notions of origin, linked to arguments about the rise of bourgeois society or the importance of the French Revolution, which historians would usually suspect. [18] At a certain point, therefore, discussions of modernization in the more controlled sense (capitalism and state-making) shade into more encompassing claims about modernity, whose license is far less dependent on historical argument and research. This is true both of the specifically German discussion, where Habermas has become such a leading voice in the reaffirming of Enlightenment traditions, and in the English-speaking world among those social theorists seeking to hold the ground of classical sociology. Giddens, for example, has offered the concept of "high modernity" against the claims of postmodernity, grounding his discussion of modernity in the themes of "security versus danger" and "trust versus risk". Yet for Giddens the emergence of modernity is abstracted from multi-dimensional processes of institutional development--relating to (a) the growth of capitalism ("Capital accumulation in the context of competitive labour and product markets"), (b) industrialism ("Transformation of nature: development of the 'created environment'"), (c) the growth of administrative power and surveillance ("Control of information and social supervision"), and (d) military power ("Control of the means of violence in the context of the industrialization of war")--which have a completely non-specific relationship to the historical contexts in which such a modernity was allegedly produced. [19]

(2) There is a second complex of meanings, as pervasive to late-twentieth-century vocabulary as the "modernization/modernity" complex, and indeed inescapably a part of our contemporary common sense, and that is the "modernism/modernity" range of meanings in cultural theory and the arts. While notoriously hard to pin down, modernism here is associated with a concentrated period of formal innovation in writing and the visual arts in the early twentieth century, which experienced a dramatic process of politicized radicalization during and after the First World War, before becoming extended to the new mass media of film, radio, photography, and advertising and their technologies, and thereby to a general sensibility of fashion, style, and design. Other arguments relate this burst of creativity to the artist's changing place in society (that is, structurally speaking in relation to the market, private patronage, and the state) and the self-conscious emergence of a radical literary-artistic intelligentsia claiming a distinctive social and political voice (the avant-garde). The argument can be further extended--in both the understanding of the innovators
themselves and the theorizing of the subsequent commentators—to the aesthetic and perceptual consequences of the new urban, industrial, and technological conditions of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century social world. And the most fruitful specifications of this sociological dimension have focused on the metropolis as the crucible and inspiration of the new sensibility, leading to a distinctive human condition of fragmentation and individual isolation, which is both producer and product of the emergent modernist discourse. Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin become the classical theorizers of this metropolitan moment, while the "modern predicament" becomes canonized into a now-familiar line of artistic and literary achievements. How exactly this discourse of modernism should be conceptualized in relation to the new one of postmodernism remains an open question. [20]

In this cultural complex of meanings, it will be noticed, the origins of "modernity" migrate from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. In the German context it is above all the Weimar Republic that defines our perceptions of modernism in this sense. Detlev Peukert has made perhaps the strongest argument for appropriating this Weimar moment of cultural experimentation, characterized as "classical modernity", as the basis for a general analysis of political and social-historical, as well as cultural, problems of the early twentieth century. In this view, the transition to industrialism in the 1890s created the conditions for "the socio-cultural penetration of modernity": "Since the turn of the century modernity has classically shaped developments in the fields of science and culture, in town planning, in technology, and in medicine, in spiritual reflection, as well as in the everyday world--has rehearsed our present-day way of life, so to speak". [21] Peukert framed this as a specific proposal for the Weimar Republic, but his own broader work reached back to the Kaiserreich, and an exploration of the argument could be very fruitful. So far, the concept of "modernism" has mainly been engaged in the historiography of the Kaiserreich as its opposite, namely, resistance to modernity or "anti-modernism", either as a social history of the casualties of industrialization or as a very conventional intellectual history (as in the "politics of cultural despair"). The positive modernity of the Kaiserreich, as opposed to various kinds of traditionalism, is waiting to be explored. [22]

(3) There is a third current of meaning associated with the category of the "modern" in the English-speaking intellectual world, much less so in the German, namely, the influence of Michel Foucault. [23] Since the early 1980s work in Britain and North America on sexuality (particularly the late-nineteenth and twentieth-century constructions of sexual categories), on prisons, hospitals, asylums, and other institutions of confinement, on social policy and public health, and on the history of science and the academic disciplines, has been shot through with Foucault's inspiration. [24] Aside from helping to open up new areas of empirical research, Foucault's ideas have had major theoretical effects. They have fundamentally redirected the analysis of power away from traditional institutionally-centered conceptions of government and the state, and from allied sociological conceptions of class domination, towards a dispersed and decentered conception of power and its "microphysics". They have sensitized us to the subtle and complex forms of the inter-relationship between power and knowledge, particularly in the latter's modes of disciplinary and administrative organization. They have delivered the extraordinarily fruitful concept of discourse as a way of theorizing both the internal rules and regularities of particular fields of knowledge (their "regimes of truth") and the more general structures of ideas and assumptions
which delimit what can and cannot be thought and said in particular contexts of place and time. They have radically challenged the historian's conventional assumptions about individual and collective agency and their bases of interest and rationality, forcing us to see instead how subjectivities are constructed and produced within and through languages of identification that lie beyond the volition and control of individuals in the classical Enlightenment sense.

One of the major consequences of Foucault's impact has been to problematize the very categories of modern understanding themselves--from the collective goods of society and citizenship to the individual values of rationalism and the self. It has done so by historicizing them, by specifying the terms of their own social, political, and intellectual history, and of their emergence and elaboration as the constitutive elements for ordering the material and mental world. We can do this for the fundamental category of "society" itself by looking at the terms under which "the social" first became abstracted into thought and practice--as an object of theory-knowledge, a target of policy, and a site of practice, so that the material context in which "society" could be convincingly represented as an ultimately originating subject or causality became gradually composed. [25] Thus "the social" refers not to the global analytical category of "society" in some unproblematic social-science sense, but to the historically located methods, techniques, and practices that allowed such a category to become constructed--to be constituted as a basic element of understanding for the world--in the first place. Foucault's concept of the disciplinary society is concerned directly with this process. At one level, it profoundly shifts our understanding of politics, carrying the analysis of power away from the core institutions of the state in the national-centralized sense towards the emergence of new individualizing strategies "that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level". [26] But at another level, it is precisely through such individualizing strategies that society ("the social" or the "social body") became recognized, constituted, and elaborated as the main object of science, surveillance, policy, and power. Population (fertility, age, mobility, health), economics, poverty, crime, education, welfare became not only the main objects of government activity, but also the measure of cohesion and solidarity in the emerging nineteenth-century social order. If we are to understand the latter, it is to the new social-science and medico-administrative discourses, their technologies, and effects (i.e. ideas and practices, rhetorics and apparatuses, policies and processes) that we must look--to the new knowledges "concerning society, its health and sickness, its conditions of life, housing and habits, which served as the basic core for the 'social economy' and sociology of the nineteenth century". [27]

For Foucault, "modernity" is to be characterized mainly by the third of Giddens' four institutional dimensions, namely, the growth of administrative power and surveillance, although Foucault's understanding of the latter involves the more distinctive conception of disciplinary power linked to a fundamental argument about epistemological change. At the same time, Foucault is no more specific about the precise historical contexts in which this occurred (indeed, behind his exposition seems to lurk an extremely classical argument about capitalist development and the rise of the bourgeoisie), and his dating of the "modern" with the late eighteenth century creates a major ambiguity in the light of the actual rhythms and patterns of state-administrative innovation between then and the end of the nineteenth/start of the twentieth century. On the
one hand, there clearly were fundamental transformations in the period between c.1770 and c.1850, as Foucault and many historians have claimed. But on the other hand, in the later time the repertoire of power-producing knowledges greatly expands--through psychiatry and psychology, social work and the welfare state, youth policy, industrial relations, public health, social hygiene, eugenics, and so on. In the words of Scott Lash:

"The rationalization of management and the shopfloor, the bureaucratization of the capitalist state, the rationalization of extra-institution practices of social workers vis-à-vis the mad, criminal, indigent, 'idle', and otherwise deviant were phenomena contemporaneous with the birth of the Welfare State at the end of the nineteenth century. The beginnings of nationalism --hence the priority of the social--as well as the centrality of demographic concerns, and the ethos of social citizenship, as well as the birth of the human sciences themselves, came by most accounts (and even at points by Foucault's) rather at the end than at the outset of the nineteenth century". [28]

As Donzelot and others have argued, the family becomes a particular object of such interventions and expertise, while sexuality provides an especially rich field in the twentieth century for showing such power relations under construction. [29]

Where do these alternative notations of "the modern" leave us? Most obviously, there is a clear convergence between the second and third complexes of meaning outlined above--between Peukert's particular formulation of the argument concerning cultural modernity in the period between the turn of the century and the crisis of the Weimar Republic, and Foucault's ideas about the relationship of knowledge, discipline, and power. Moreover, if we take the direction of the last paragraph concerning appropriate periodization, such a definition gains in historical specificity what the first of the three notations--the surviving version of modernization theory--sacrifices to a more normative philosophical conception of modernity. Given the relative exhaustion of a more conventional modernization theory perspective for generating new knowledge about modern German history--the most recent defence limits itself to measuring the Weimar polity against an ideal type of stable parliamentary representation, an approach that owes nothing to modernization theory per se [30]--there are good grounds for exploring what alternative possibilities there might be. In particular, as I have argued elsewhere, it is important to separate the instabilities of the Weimar Republic and their effects--the obstacles to stable governing consensus and a politics of successful parliamentary integration--from the political dynamics of the Imperial period that came before, not because the question of continuity should now be dropped, but because it needs to be much better conceptualized in non-linear and non-teleological ways. In what follows I shall offer some thoughts on the capacity of the political institutions of the Kaiserreich for stability and viable development. Implicitly, these will engage the underlying theoretical question alluded to above, namely, of what does "modern" political rule really consist? And in the process a Foucauldian understanding of modernity's darker side--the importance of disciplinary power--will certainly be in play.

Backwardness and Modernity in the Kaiserreich

Since the 1960s, a set of organizing interpretations have dominated perceptions of the Kaiserreich, some of them anticipated by Anglo-American scholarship
of post-1945, some going back to older pre-Nazi critical traditions. These include: belief in direct continuities between Bismarck and Hitler; the idea of a fundamental contradiction between economic modernity and political backwardness leading to the Empire's structural instability; the view that Germany lacked the progressive emancipatory experience of a successful bourgeois revolution, falling prey instead to the continued dominance of old-style "pre-industrial élites" in the political system; the notion that these élites exercised their power by repressive means of social control and manipulative techniques of rule; and the belief that German history was the site of exceptional "mis-development" by comparison with the healthier trajectories of "the West". Revisionist historians of the 1960s developed a powerful deep-structural perspective on the origins of Nazism in this way, stressing how backward political interests--traditional élites and their pre-industrial, pre-modern mentalities--prevented any democratic modernizing of the political system and instead allowed what Ralf Dahrendorf called "authoritarian and anti-democratic structures in state and society" to endure. [31]

On the one hand, the Kaiserreich is categorized as "authoritarian" within the generally agreed typology of nineteenth-century regimes. On the other hand, the victory of authoritarianism in the formation of the Imperial-German state is thought to be an aberrant and abnormal interruption of the "process of democratization" that otherwise and in the long run inevitably "accompanies economic growth". In Germany a "truly realistic" appreciation of what a lasting and consistent modernization would require in this respect was precluded after the 1870s by a profound shift in ideological orientations, resulting from the liberals' changed access to government influence once Bismarck turned strongly to the right, from the discrediting of liberal economics and the general "deliberalizing of public and political life" [Entliberalisierung des öffentlichen und politischen Lebens] in the post-1873 depression, from the growing aggression and conservatism of German nationalism as a new integrative ideology for the Empire, and from the degeneration of the ideal of Bildung into a culture of careerism and advancement. This key ideological watershed amounted to a new structure of political values for the German bourgeoisie--"diesen fundamentalen Konstellationswandel", in Wehler's words--which displaced liberalism from its previous integrative role, what Wehler calls the "Dreierkonstellation von 'Bildung', Liberalismus und liberalen Nationalismus" that dominated the 1860s. The new bourgeois consciousness (or perhaps "false consciousness") responded to a powerful combination of factors: anxieties produced by the irregularities of economic growth and the fears of social unrest, but also the manipulation of those fears by the political managers of the "old élite" (Bismarck, later Bülow and Tirpitz). [32]

It is hard not to be impressed by the powerful teleology running through this account. "Modernization" in this discourse is avowedly abstracted from the present-day forms of pluralist democracy. As such, it is thought to be built into the structures of economic growth, and to explain why German history diverges from this model until after 1945 German historians have logically been thrown back onto a vocabulary of "wrong turnings", "failures", "blockages", and "mistaken development". As Wehler has baldly put it, "any modern society attempting to be equal to the demands of constant social change" logically requires a constitutional framework of parliamentary democracy. [33] Conversely, the authoritarianism of the Imperial state becomes the institutional expression of the "pre-industrial traditions" and their modernization-obstructing dominance in the pre-1914 political culture. Thus a radical disjunction is postulated
between "wealth" and "power", between the "modern" basis of the industrial-capitalist economy and the "traditional" political arrangements which the bourgeoisie in Germany proved incapable of sweeping away. In the long run, stability could only be assured by the development of more "modern" institutional arrangements for containing social conflicts—that is, by "welfare-statist" and parliamentary-democratic replacements for "the rule of an authoritarian leadership and of privileged social groups centering around the pre-industrial élites of the aristocracy". [34] Otherwise, the inescapable dictates of power legitimation in the developed industrial economy could be satisfied only by artificial forms of "secondary integration", which Wehler has argued may be conceptualized as "social imperialism", or the diversion of tensions outwards into expansionist drives for imperialist accumulation. Thus between the modern economy and the backward state there arose destabilizing contradictions, which could only be artificially bridged by manipulative techniques of rule, so long as the "real" solution of "modernizing" democratic reform was not embraced. In this view, the unreformed Imperial state was incapable of reproducing itself other than by an escalating procession of crises, culminating eventually in the miscalculated risk of July 1914. [35]

This approach constructs an extraordinarily powerful structural frame for interpreting the history of the Kaiserreich, which severely restricts the latitude for analyzing particular problems or events within this fifty-year block of time. Moreover, this "permanent structural crisis" [strukturelle Dauerkrise] itself provides the framing for a larger story, the specifically German "master narrative" of the origins of Nazism, which are thought to be deeply inscribed in the flaws of the Kaiserreich:

"Modernisierung scheint ohne Transformation der Sozialstruktur und der traditionalen Machtverhältnisse, ohne soziale und politische Emanzipation, nicht möglich, wenn der innere und äussere Friede erhalten werden soll. Die fatalen Folgen der Regierungspolitik, durch welche die politische Vorherrschaft der vorindustriellen Eliten in der Periode der Hochindustrialisierung erhalten werden sollte, zeigte sich ganz klar zwischen 1914 und 1929, als diese Strukturen zerbröckelten. Bis dahin hatte die Politik gefährliche Bedingungen mitgeschaffen, die den Weg für den Nationalsozialismus ebneten". [36]

As many readers will be familiar, this is the master narrative of German exceptionalism, of the German Sonderweg, which performed such an important function in the intellectual politics of the 1960s and early 1970s, and authorized many of the key historiographical breakthroughs of that time. As readers will also remember, this Sonderweg thesis also became the object of wide-ranging critical debate in the early 1980s, a discussion which the present author played some modest part in helping to begin. Now that those polemics have somewhat settled down, it is worth asking what may have changed, with a particular eye to the issues of backwardness and modernity this essay is seeking to raise. [37]

A. Re-Judging the Bourgeoisie

In the meantime—during the 1980s—views of the German bourgeoisie have been considerably rethought. In particular, the older ideas of bourgeois weakness and self-abnegation, the so-called Defizit an Bürgerlichkeit oder lack of bourgeois virtues (where the latter implies an elusive and ambiguous blend of socio-cultural self-assertion and civil courage) have been called into doubt. [38] There is now a much greater readiness to see the extent to which bourgeois values were in the ascendant after the 1860s—in everything from taste, fashion, and the
everyday conduct of affairs, to the main lines of the German Empire's public
culture, including the ethos of local administration; the prevailing views
of law, morality, and the social order; the notions of private property
and social obligation; and the general principles of public life. Thus Wehler
distinguishes two areas of bourgeois success or collective self-realization
under the Kaiserreich, in the sense of values that originated sociologically
in a specifically bourgeois milieu in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth
centuries, but expanded in the course of the nineteenth century to become
universal social and cultural goods: on the one hand, "bestimmte bürgerliche
Organisationsformen"--a particular model of the family, and the Verein or
voluntary association as the all-purpose medium of sociability, cultural exchange,
and public political activity--showed themselves "als sehr verallgemeinerungsfähig"
and acquired normative validity; while on the other hand, "bourgeois norms
and values" [bürgerliche Normen und Werte] became culturally dominant--most
decisively in the "system of law" [Rechtssystem], but also "das revolutionäre
Leistungsprinzip, die Arbeitsorientierung, die Säkularisierung, die Rationalis-
erierung des Denkens und Handelns, die Autonomie des Individuums, überhaupt der
Individualismus, aber auch die Vereinigung der Individuen zur Klärung ihrer
Probleme in öffentlicher Diskussion". [39] Moreover, a case can be made for
seeing the Kaiserreich institutionally as the classical embodiment of bourgeois
values as these have usually been understood: in the constitutionalizing of
public authority via parliamentary institutions; in the recodifications of
commercial, civil, and criminal law; in the models of administrative efficiency,
particularly at the level of the city; and in the growth and elaboration of
public opinion in the form of an institutionally complex and legally guaranteed
public sphere. In the structures of the capitalist economy, the strength
of bourgeois achievements goes without saying. [40]

Of course, it is in the political domain in the stricter sense that the
weakness of the German bourgeois was always thought to most clearly revealed:
in the economy and civil society, even in the public sphere in the broader
sense, bourgeois achievements can be shown, but in the state and the political
system (so the argument runs) the power of the traditional élites remained
as strong as before. Now, recently Wehler has gone some way towards acknowledging
the "bourgeois" character of the Imperial polity: "Das Reich als Verfassungsstaat
verkörpert trotz seines Kompromisscharakters auch den Triumph bürgerlicher
Liberaler"; and, despite the moderation and non-combativity of parliamentarian
culture before 1914, "wirkt doch eine starke, vielleicht unwiderstehliche
Kraft zugunsten einer kontinuierlichen Aufwertung des Reichstags". Furthermore,
other "Erfahrungen auf Politikfeldern", such as the progressive expansion
of the rule of law, municipal self-government, and public opinion, "müssen
eigentlich das Gefühl genährt haben, dass das Kaiserreich doch noch modernisierungs-
fähig, im Sinne bürgerliche Ziele mit viel Geduld weiter reformierbar sei". [41]
These are major concessions to the critique. But at the same time, while these
revisions leave intact is the central argument regarding the backwardness of
the Kaiserreich's core political structures (to do with the monarchy, the
military; aristocratic privilege, Prussian predominance, more ambivalently
the bureaucracy, but in general the institutionally secured primacy of pre-industrial
interests and élites), which have always been counterposed to the ideal of
modernity that was not attained. After the recession of "kraftvolle bürgerliche
Politik" since the 1870s, the bourgeoisie accommodated itself to a subordinate
political position, or at most to co-partnership with the traditional élites,
above all due to the rising pressure of the labor movement from below. Even
the most acute "bourgeois observers" [bürgerlichen Beobachtern] made this accommod-
nation—that is, "akzeptieren die konstitutionelle Monarchie—nicht einmal das parlamentarische System wollen alle--, akzeptieren eine öffentliche Rolle des Adels, den 'Militärstaat', meist die Mitherrschaft der Bürokratie". Of the necessary presence of a combative bourgeoisie—recognizable in "bürgerliches Selbstbewusstsein, Siegeszuverlässigkeit, Befreiung von Selbstzweifel, politische Erfahrung, Resistenz gegen die neuen Gefahren von rechts"—there was not much evidence, whether in the final decades before 1914 or in the new environment of the Weimar Republic. To this extent, the master narrative of the Sonderweg, the deep-structuralism of the account of the origins of Nazism, is still intact. The advance of the bourgeoisie stopped at the gates of the political system. This was what distinguished German history in the nineteenth century from the successful modernizations of the West. The long-term consequences were immense. Nazism was
"die Quittung für bürgerlichen Konservatismus und Nationalismus, für bürgerliche Scheu vor der riskanten Machtprobe, für das Defizit an liberal-bürgerlicher politische Kultur, an erfolgreicher bürgerlicher Politik, an bürgerlicher Prägung von Staat und Gesellschaft überhaupt". [42]

There is, however, a noteworthy shift in the terms of definition between the beginning and end of Wehler's discussion: if at the start of his essay his concern is quite properly to distinguish the constituent elements in the social category "Bürgertum" qua bourgeoisie—that is, the "traditionale Stadtbürgertum", the "Bildungsbürgertum", and the economic "Bourgeoisie" ("der freien industriekapitalistischen, verkehrswirtschaftlichen, marktbedingten Besitzklasse der Unternehmer") in their various regional manifestations, whose tendential unification during the later nineteenth century allows us to use the category in the first place—then by the end he is talking more about the weakness of a particular political tradition, namely, liberalism. This change of registers occurs in the course of the opening definitional discussion itself, as Wehler moves from the three social constituents mentioned above, through the question of the bourgeoisie's demarcation against the petty bourgeoisie (Kleinhürgertum, including "old" and "new" Mittelstand), to a reflection on the idea of citizenship ("Begriff und Wirklichkeit des Staatsbürgers"), and a more open-ended discussion of the term "bürgerliche Gesellschaft", which incorporates precisely the confusing German dualism affirmed by Dahrendorf in Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland, namely, a "society of citizens" and a society "dominated by a confident bourgeoisie". [43] Moreover, when Wehler sets out to explain the transition from bourgeois self-confidence to bourgeois abnegation—what he calls "den Beginn der fatalen Pathogenese des Bürgertums"[44]—it is not the economic, social, and cultural strength of the bourgeoisie as a social force, which unfolded much as before, but the difficulties and transformations of political liberalism that he addresses. In fact, Wehler himself concedes this, commenting that the new political "constellation" that emerged from the 1870s was perfectly capable "die heterogenen Soziallagen der bürgerlichen Sozialformationen zu überwölben", particularly the emergent forms of nationalism, and acknowledging in effect that the political ideas capable of harnessing allegiances within the bourgeoisie were changing, rather than bases of bourgeois power and interest themselves. [45]

I have commented on the consequences of this conceptual slippage from the bourgeoisie as a social category to liberalism as a political tradition extensively elsewhere. [46] For one thing, the understanding of liberalism tends to be abstracted inappropriately from the strong forms of liberal democracy (including the latter's welfare-statism) in the late twentieth century, whose possibility
is then projected quite unhistorically onto the collective agency of the bourgeoisie a hundred years before. [47] In the process, the more appropriate context for judging German liberalism, the "modernity" of the time--the Europeanwide conjuncture of constitutional revision, nation-forming, and state-making in the 1860s, together with the culture of progress and the general remaking of the social environment for capitalism--gets confused. The demonstrable affinities between a liberal political outlook and a specific configuration of bourgeois interests and aspirations at this particular time is also allowed to license harder assumptions about the conceptual unity of bourgeois and liberal identities in general, whereas really these are separable phenomena. The common equation of "liberalism" and "democracy" compounds the conceptual elision of "liberal" into "bourgeois" still further, making the connotative continuum of "bourgeois=liberalism=democracy" into an implied causal chain. But specifically democratic impulses originated elsewhere, in the labor movement and other popular traditions. Indeed, the articulation of bourgeois aspirations in the later nineteenth century, including their liberal forms, usually took an exclusionary anti-democratic turn (as Wehler also sees), and were no less bourgeois for that.

So in other words, we should perhaps be willing to consider the possibility that bourgeois interests/aspirations were becoming dominant in the political as well as in the socio-economic and cultural realms, because at present the main argument against this is the failure of the Imperial state to acquire a liberal or even a liberal-democratic form. If we can free ourselves from the assumption that the achievement of bourgeois hegemony (in the sense of the political dominance of bourgeois values) can only be conceptualized via the organization of the bourgeoisie's collective political agency within a specifically liberal movement or party, then the way would be clear to consider other, non-liberal forms of political articulation; and the social coding of "authoritarianism" in the pre-1914 state as "artistocratic", "pre-industrial", and "traditional" rather than "bourgeois" and "modern" would start to look more questionable. [48] In other words, "bourgeois" interests and values could be at work, and "modern" political forms be in play, even if "liberal" ones were not. Why is Wehler unable to see (or unwilling to admit) this possibility?

The answer lies with the avowedly political and prescriptive aspects of Wehler's work. For quite beyond the specificity of the Kaiserreich discussion, Wehler wishes to retain the notion of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" (as an untranslatable cross between "bourgeois society"/"civil society") as an enduring good--as "die Zielutopie einer Gesellschaft rechtlich gleicher, durch Besitz und Bildung ausgezeichneter, wirtschaftlich frei konkurrierender, besitzindividualistischer, politisch handlungsfähiger, das 'vernünftige' Gemeinwohl ermittelnder und verwirklichender Bürger". [49] "Viel von dieser Utopie einer wahrhaft bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ist in den westlichen Ländern in den vergangenen 200 Jahren, zuerst in den Vereinigten Staaten, dann nach der Französischen Revolution in Europa in unterschiedlichem Tempo, mit unterschiedlicher Intensität und Reichweite, Schritt für Schritt verwirklicht worden"; and to the extent that it remains unrealized, it may be regarded "als eine unvollendete Aufgabe der westlichen Gesellschaften". It is precisely when measured against this ideal, in Wehler's view, that German history proves to be a site of omissions and failures, of "Verfallserscheinungen und pathologische Entwicklungen", of "vernichtenden Niederlagen, and ultimately of the "Verrat der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft". [50] The normative relationship to a highly presentist version of modernization theory could hardly be more clearly stated:
"Man kann 'bürgerliche Gesellschaft'--wie wir das schon oft mit 'okzidentaler Modernisierung' getan haben--als idealtypisch definiertes, hochgradig normativ besetztes, evolutionstheoretisches Richtungskriterium verstehen. Bestimmte, aufgrund einer weit zurückreichendes Gesamtkonstellation gerichtete Prozesse der okzidentalen Modernisierung laufen auf die Ermöglichung dieses Gesellschaftstypus zu. Wo sie es nicht tun--und quasi-automatisch, ohne harte Konflikte setzt er sich ohnehin nie durch--, sollte man für die normative Vorentscheidung zugunsten der besten Zielvision, die der Westen hervorgebracht hat, mit guten Argumenten streiten und politisch für eine Richtungskorrektur sorgen". [51]

In fact, Wehler constructs a highly idealized version of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft". He is unable to move from elucidating the abstract principles of emancipation within the Enlightenment tradition to specifying the equally important privilegions and exclusions which that tradition always entailed. The crucial elision in Wehler's argument comes with the transition from the universalizing claims of bourgeois values as abstract desiderata (whether to do with voluntary association and the family, or with the franchise and the rule of law) to the practical exclusiveness of bourgeois ideals in their actual realization--in the transition, that is, from "bürgerlich" qua citizenship and the universals of progress, to "bürgerlich" qua the bourgeoisie as a specific class sociology. Where the one was theoretically open to all, the other was constituted by principles and practices of exclusion. Moreover, this discrepancy between the ideal and its forms of realization was bound to become more acute after the 1860s, because the suppressions and silencings required by the pursuit of bourgeois values mattered far more once those ideals had become institutionalized as a set of cultural and societal norms. At one level Wehler also sees the exclusions. He mentions the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and working class in this respect, though interestingly he passes by the exclusions of nationality and gender. Yet he largely dismisses their importance. On the one hand, such excluded social groups had no viable counter-utopias to offer; on the other hand, their futures were also bound up in the specifically bourgeois achievements, and they wanted nothing better than to join the ranks of the bourgeoisie themselves. For Wehler, "embourgeoisement" [Verbourgerlichung] was, and remains, an unqualified social good.

In some respects Wehler can be veritably starry-eyed. Thus he celebrates the bourgeois capacity for self-criticism ("Die Chance zur Selbstkorrektur ist dank der Hochschätzung kritischer Vernunft fest verankert"), which he finds inscribed in the structures of the Bildung tradition itself, and which could function as a constant resource for ethical consistency and reformist self-correction. [52] Here Wehler's argument, with its stress on the back and forth of public exchange and the "critical reasoning" [kritisches Räsonnieren] of an "enlightened public opinion" [aufgeklärten öffentlichen Meinung], derives from Habermas's theory of the public sphere [Öffentlichkeit]. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere, the latter is an extremely idealized abstraction from the political cultures that actually took shape at the end of the eighteenth century. Habermas both idealizes the public sphere's bourgeois character by neglecting the ways in which its elitism blocked and consciously repressed possibilities of broader participation and emancipation, and ignores alternative sources of an emancipatory impulse in popular radical traditions. The rise of a bourgeois public sphere was never defined solely by the struggle against
absolutism and traditional authority, but always addressed the problem of popular containment as well. The classical model of the public sphere was always already being subverted at the very point of its formation, as the actions of subordinate classes threatened to redefine the meaning and extent of the "citizensry", whether in France during the Revolution, in Britain between the Wilkite agitations and the Jacobinism of the 1790s, or in Germany between the 1840s and 1870s. Moreover, feminist critiques have shown how far modern political thought is highly gendered in its basic structures, and how the public sphere was shaped at its inception by a new exclusionary ideology directed against women, a dimension on which Wehler remains largely silent. [53]

In all of these ways, "civil society" [bürgerliche Gesellschaft] was very far from the neutral site of rational political discourse in Habermas/Wehler's sense. Instead, it was an arena of contested meanings, where different—and opposing—publics maneuvered for space, and from which some "publics" (women, subordinate nationalities, the urban poor, the working class, the peasantry) may have been excluded altogether. Moreover, this element of contest was not simply a matter of coexistence, in which such alternative publics participated in a tolerant pluralism of tendencies and groupings. Such competition also occurred in class-divided societies structured by inequality, and consequently questions of domination and subordination—of power, in its economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions—were also involved. This ambivalence, which cannot be easily dealt with in Wehler's idealizing of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" as a utopian project, returns us to the critique of the Enlightenment tradition discussed at the start of this essay. For the Enlightenment project was partial and narrowly based in the above sense, constituted from a field of conflict, contested meanings, and exclusion. In particular, the claim to rational discourse, certainly in the social and gendered exclusiveness of its historical manifestations between the late eighteenth century and the First World War, was simultaneously a claim to power in Foucault's sense.

B. Defining the Imperial State

When we turn to the state as such, we find some ambiguity in the prevailing literature. In particular, if the Imperial state was not a "liberal" state on the "Western" model, then what kind of state was it? As we have seen, Wehler goes quite far in the modernizing political changes between 1871 and 1914 he is now prepared to allow, but he still stops his catalogue of bourgeois achievements at what he takes to be the core institutions of the political system—the monarchy, the military, and the apparatus of aristocratic privilege in Prussia. Now, as I will argue briefly in my conclusion, it is far from clear whether these actually are to be deemed the Kaiserreich's core political institutions, or whether by 1900 the main site of state activity begins to lie elsewhere, particularly if we take a Foucauldian understanding of power into account. For the moment, however, I want to explore some of the inconsistencies in Wehler's and others' own approach to the definition of the state by questioning the conventional identifications of: authoritarian=aristocratic, and liberal=bourgeois. Instead, I want to argue that a state with authoritarian features should not be assumed automatically to express the political dominance of a landowning aristocracy and other pre-industrial élites. On the contrary, it might also articulate the interests of the bourgeoisie, and might even provide a framework for the latter's social and political hegemony.

In recent writing the Imperial state seems to have been given at least four distinct definitions, which cohabit in the work of the two most influential commentators, Wehler and Kocka:
The first definition attributes a dominant role to the Junkers as a "pre-industrial" ruling group whose unbroken influence explains the political system's specific "backwardness", as that is usually understood. The twin characteristics of backwardness and aristocratic dominance are thought to have had a number of institutional expressions: the executive power of the King-Kaiser; the autonomy of the military; the preferential recruitment of the bureaucracy and the officer corps from the aristocracy; the limited powers of the Reichstag; the transmuted seigneurialism of local government east of the Elbe; the effective immunities of the landowners from certain kinds of taxation in the same region; and, of course, the special qualities of the Prussian, as opposed to the Reich, Constitution. Now, at one level such factors might amply justify an "aristocratic" description of the state. But in most discussions the nature of the state/society relationship (that is, the relationship of the aristocracy as a social class to the state as an ensemble of political institutions) is left under-theorized. Sometimes that relationship is conceptualized as direct political control, which subordinated state apparatuses and their direction to Junker interests; at other times the apparatuses appear to be given equivalent autonomy in a manner reminiscent of C. Wright Mills' theory of the "power elite", so that "Junkers, bureaucracy, military" appear collectively as "pre-capitalist ruling strata". [54] In effect, such writing oscillates between two different conceptions of the state, both equally inadequate—an instrumentalist one which sees the state as a passive tool available for manipulation by ruling interests, and a "subjectivist" one where it appears as itself the primary agency, arbitrating the conflicts of classes and social interests and apparently autonomous of their control. There is much theoretical uncertainty here, and talk of "pre-industrial traditions", an "autocratic, semi-absolutist sham-constitutionalism", and the "feudalization of the bourgeoisie" has even suggested notions of a state that was primarily feudal. [55]

A more sophisticated variation along these lines is the concept of "Bonapartism" adapted by Wehler from Marx and Engels, where the state's autonomy is constituted from the political equilibrium of dominant socio-economic interests (the alliance of "iron and rye"), originally beneath the directive genius of Bismarck, but then achieving an unstable existence of its own. [56] In the Critique of the Gotha Program Marx called the resultant state "nothing but a military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie, furnished by the bureaucracy, and protected by the police", and this ultimately unsatisfactory "agglutination of epithets" (as Perry Anderson calls it) seems consonant with Wehler's similarly eclectic version. Anderson's own formula places the accent rather differently, arguing that "the German state was now a capitalist apparatus, over-determined by its feudal ancestry, but fundamentally homologous with a social formation which by the twentieth century was massively dominated by the capitalist mode of production". [57] In Wehler's case the main effect of this "Bonapartist" definition is certainly to acknowledge the new salience of industrial capital within the German social formation after unification. But this is expressed in such a way as to leave the first "aristocratic" or "Junkerist" definition intact. Industrial capital may have arrived, but its interests are accommodated within a "traditional" power structure of a basically unreformed kind.

At some variance with these first two approaches is a third definition of the state, stressing the changing forms of economic intervention.
Here Wehler proposes a notion of the modern interventionist state, which rests on a particular appropriation of Habermas's concept of legitimation. In terms of the latter, "politische Macht vor allem durch wohlüberlegte staatliche Intervention legitimiert wird, die Dysfunktionen der Wirtschaft, besonders Störungen im wirtschaftlichen Wachstum, auszugleichen sucht, um die Stabilität des soziopolitischen Systems zu sichern". The new interventionist ideology (which replaces the "diskreditierten Ideologie der liberalkapitalistischen Marktwirtschaft") is meant both to re-establish conditions favorable for economic growth and to secure the acquiescence of the wage-earning masses by suitable "Kompensationen". Government increasingly has no choice but to pursue these aims as the organizing priority of its activity, for otherwise "die herrschenden Eliten" would be unable "das System und ihre eigenen Interessen zu erhalten". [58] Wehler dates the start of these processes in the so-called Great Depression of 1873-96, but others associate them with the stronger appearance of "organized capitalism" after that time. [59]

(4) The fourth definition of the Imperial state is advanced especially by Kocka in his analysis of the First World War, and concerns its "relative autonomy" from direct control by the dominant socio-economic interests. In this view, the capitalist state's autonomy arises logically from the dictates of legitimation, because government now needs a certain latitude both for the purposes of general economic management and for satisfying certain demands of the subordinate classes. Kocka sees such tendencies towards relative autonomy being strengthened during the First World War by the well-known processes of corporative interest negotiation. [60]

Taken together, these four perspectives reflect an oddly bifurcated approach to the pre-1914 German state. They maintain a powerful discrepancy between: (a) the state as a system of political domination (its constitutional "backwardness", the Junkers' controlling power and institutional privileges, and the general primacy of "pre-industrial traditions"); and (b) its role in the economy (namely, its "modern" interventionist character). For example, Wehler's work contains both a strong view of the needs of capital deriving from the logic of industrial growth (as expressed through the concepts of interventionism, organized capitalism, and legitimation), and yet an equally powerful insistence on the ultimate efficacy of specific political traditions: "It was not the industrial economy as such that by itself established the conditions of societal development, because the latter had to unfold in an institutional framework preformed and codetermined by political culture, the system of political domination, and the political interests of pre- and non-industrial social forces". [61] As should be clear from quotations such as this, the political factors are also conceived mainly as linear continuities from an earlier era—that is, inherited structures, rather than ones directly generated, produced, or determined by the Bismarckian conjunctures themselves. Moreover, it is more than anything else in the contradiction between these two levels of the "social system"—a non-correspondence between the political and the economic—that the Imperial state's structural instability and ultimate collapse are thought to be inscribed, on the grounds that the inherited syndrome of "traditional" authoritarianism consistently worked against the needs of "modern" legitimation.

This dualism has been a defining feature of recent German historiography. It implies that a genuinely "modern" state would be one in which the progressive social predominance of the bourgeoisie was formally consummated in a constitutional liberalization of the state. That would have brought the Imperial state into
proper alignment with the modern economy, whereas the disjunction that actually persisted (of "modern" economy/"backward" state) proved to be irrational, dysfunctional, and crisis-producing, historians like Wehler would argue. But why must the authoritarian features of the Imperial state be equated automatically with archaism, backwardness, or political inefficiency? Neither the exclusivist, executive, nor aristocratic features of the German polity before 1914--that is, the checks on popular participation, the relative weakness of parliamentary controls, and the privileges of the titular nobility--were at all unusual by the contemporary European standards of the time. Indeed, the Kaiserreich was more frequently regarded as an exemplary "modern" state--in the technocratic efficiency of its bureaucratic and military machines, in its more interventionist relationship to the economy and society, in the vaunted excellence of its municipal government, in its system of social administration, and (from a different point of view) in the existence of universal manhood suffrage and the extent of popular political mobilization. Paradoxically, as we saw, Wehler has gone far in his recent writings to acknowledging the force of precisely these points, conceding the bourgeois transformation and permeation of the political culture in the broadest sense, and retaining the "traditionalist" argument mainly for the visible core of the state-institutional complex (monarchy/army/Prussia).

If that is so, one might argue, then why not go further and question the meaning currently given to the core institutions themselves? Perhaps the answer is to rethink the basis on which "the state" per se is currently being conceptualized in the German discussion--not just by changing the valency of authoritarianism and accepting its compatibility with bourgeois values (its potential "modernity") in the specific circumstances of the Kaiserreich, but by specifying what was most important in what the state actually did between the 1870s and 1914, by reflecting on the changing boundaries between state and civil society, and by exploring the larger field of state/society relations. If we undertake this rethinking, in my view, the following recognitions become crucial:

(a) After two decades of searching state-theoretical discussion, we need to begin from the state's autonomy ("relative" or otherwise), as opposed to its dependence on class or other socio-economic interests in a directly instrumental or expressive way. State policies cannot be reduced to a reflection of dominant social forces or an effect of ruling interests in an epiphenomenal way. We can be very precise about the sociology of the recruitment and behavior of the state managers (the personnel directly in charge of the state), but this is not the same as defining the social character of the state in the sense of its relationship to society. The autonomy of the state has two dimensions: in its character as a particular institutional complex it becomes a source of independent bureaucratic, military, and judicial initiative, but at the same time a permeable arena in which contending social and political forces interact. As Göran Therborn puts it, the state is both a relatively unified and independently organized system of apparatuses (whose staff can therefore have independent effects), and "an institution where social power is concentrated and exercised" (and which therefore becomes subject to external intervention). [62]

(b) In a complex social formation, state power cannot be structured in a straightforwardly pyramidal way or around a protected core of "traditional" institutions which somehow retained their immunity to change and their primacy over the state complex as a whole, least of all in the dynamically
expanding capitalist society Imperial Germany was in the process of becoming. State power was constituted not just in the actions and intentions of a set of visible rulers, or in the collectively willed domination of a ruling class or an aggregate of ruling élites, but in a much broader field of socio-economic and politico-cultural intervention encompassing a complex repertoire of tasks: economic management and social administration in the stricter technical sense; organizing the cooperation of the dominant classes at the national political level, and mediating the economic interests of their various fractions into a workable general policy; regulating the relations of dominant and subordinate classes; maintaining the basis of cohesion in society as a whole through a broadly constructed popular consent; integrating the relations between state institutions in the narrower sense and a richly textured civil society.

(c) Consequently, even in a fully "bourgeois" society (taking Dahrendorf's double sense of a "society of citizens" and a society "dominated by a confident bourgeoisie", or perhaps the more minimalistic definition of a society in which the bourgeoisie as the owners and controllers of means of production are the dominant class), we would not expect to find the bourgeoisie directly controlling the state in any straightforward instrumentalist sense. Its status as a dominant class derives less from any capacity for backstage string-pulling (though this obviously takes place), than from a capacity to ensure that the sum of state interventions (or "the societal content of the actions of the state", in Therborn's words) works predominantly in its favor. If we define the state with Therborn as an institutional complex "which concentrates the supreme rule-making, rule-applying, rule-adjudicating, rule-enforcing, and rule-defending functions" in a society, then the power of a dominant class resides in the capacity "to bring about a particular mode of intervention" of that "special body", in order to secure the conditions in which "the economic, political, and ideological conditions of its domination" in society may be reproduced. [63] In that case, the bourgeoisie "rules" less by the direct wielding or disposal of state power than by restructuring and maintaining the social, institutional, and ideological arena in which politics and governance have to take place--that is, by exercising "hegemony" in the Gramscian and frequently misunderstood sense. [64]

In light of the above, I would argue that the authoritarian parameters of the Imperial Constitution allowed much latitude for maneuver, negotiation, and compromise before the inner limits of the Bismarckian settlement from Wehler's point of view (the prerogatives of the monarchy, the survival of the landowning aristocracy, and so on) began to be breached. Within the same limits, the Imperial state showed itself adaptable to the tasks which a "modern" state is called upon to perform--securing the conditions of capitalist reproduction, doing the work of legitimation (in the Wehler/Habermas sense), organizing the unity of the dominant classes, mobilizing the consent of the people. Indeed, I would suggest that the strictly reactionary elements were more isolated in the political system, that the Constitution was more flexible, and that the "modernizing" forces had achieved more penetration--in fact, that the "traditional" elements were less "traditional"--than recent historians have been willing to allow.
C. Modernity's Dark Side

Thus perhaps we should think again about what exactly the categories of the "traditional" and the "modern" mean, both in general and in the specific context of the Kaisereich. In particular, I have been trying to suggest, the common equation between authoritarianism, right-wing politics, and imperialist foreign policies on the one side, and "backwardness", archaism, and "pre-industrial traditions" on the other side, is highly misleading. It may be, in fact, that precisely the most vigorous "modernizing" tendencies in the Kaisereich, rather than the recalcitrantly "anti-modern" ones, were the most pugnacious and consistent in their pursuit of imperialist and anti-democratic policies at home and abroad. What I want to argue is that Wehler's recent revisions—which abandon the extreme "feudalization" thesis for a picture of bourgeois values reshaping the cultural and institutional world of the Empire—should be pushed still further. The complexity Wehler now sees in the Imperial polity and its relationship to the expanding dominance of bourgeois influences should lead us to give up the conceptual framework of the primacy of "pre-industrial traditions" altogether. For if we accept the irreducible contingency of political forms, and reject the premise that the dominance of a particular social class has a logical or lawlike requirement for one type of state and political culture over another, then we are free to think through the specificity of the Imperial state more critically.

In concluding, I wish to propose five areas in which these possibilities might be explored, areas in which political life disobeyed the binary distinction between modernizing liberalism and backward authoritarianism that Wehler and others are trying so hard to maintain. The first two of these I have already presented extensively elsewhere; the last three are proposals for the future.

(1) The first of these concerns radical nationalism, the distinct politics generated by the nationale Verbände (especially the Flottenverein and Alldeutscher Verband between the late-1890s and 1914), which crystallized as an extra-parliamentary "national opposition" to the moderate governmentalism of the conservative party-political establishment before exploding into an open confrontation with the Imperial government itself during 1907-08. There were many complexities to radical nationalism as a political formation. But here I want to present its central paradox from Wehler's point of view. On the one hand, radical nationalists were clearly on the right of the political spectrum—despite the populism of their ideology, they were profoundly anti-socialist and anti-democratic in the core of their political being, and on the face of it corresponded closely to the type of anti-modernizing authoritarianism that preserved the Kaisereich in the backwardness of its illiberalism before the First World War. But on the other hand, radical nationalists do not fit with this interpretative framework. Sociologically, they were not the casualties or opponents of modernization, but mainly the self-confident beneficiaries of Imperial Germany's new industrial civilization. Politically, they committed themselves to the powerful modernity of the new German national state, which they constructed through the discursive novelty of a "German-national" [deutsch-national] rhetoric. Most obviously, this new deutschnational ideology was focused on Weltpolitik and the naval arms drive, which were thought to be both the logical correlate of German industrial strength in the world market and the condition of the latter's future growth. But it also embraced a range of additional concerns, including an anti-clericalism originating in the Kulturkampf, and a relentless hostility to all particularisms (especially that of Catholic
Bavaria), both of which expressed a positive desire for a unitary state. The political drive for a strengthening of the centralized state fabric, produced a range of specific reformist commitments, including the demand for an Imperial system of taxation which could more effectively harness the nation's material resources, and the pressure to "nationalize" the school curriculum, which was also linked to the call for a general ideological program of "civic education" [staatsbürgerliche Erziehung]. At the height of the tensions with the government in 1907-08, radical nationalists also assumed positions which were potentially anti-monarchist. In all of these ways, radical nationalism amounted to a modernizing ideology of "national efficiency" (to adapt a British political phrase of the same time), which was extremely subversive of a traditional conservative standpoint. It opened a crucial ideological fracture in the established discourse of right-wing political legitimacy. How the radical nationalist political formation could be fitted into Wehler's framework is just not clear.

(2) The second area concerns industrial relations and the political and ideological status of the industrial paternalism that dominated heavy industry in the Ruhr, Saar, and Silesia, and other sectors of large-scale industry before 1914, including shipbuilding, and heavy machinery. Briefly, the issue here is whether the industrial paternalism concerned is to be best seen as a "pre-industrial" type of authoritarianism (the "Herr-im-Haus" outlook), which involved the taking-over of older pre-liberal and aristocratic cultural patterns inappropriate to a modern society; or whether it expressed specific forms of capitalist rationality, in the sense that it presupposed and was determined by certain conditions of large-scale and well-organized capitalist production. I have discussed this question at some length elsewhere. The point I wish to make here is that there are other ways of interpreting the repressive industrial relations described by the paternalist model than by seeing them as a backward impediment to the evolution of the forms of labor conciliation which Wehler identifies with modernity in this respect. In fact, it makes more sense to see company unions, company housing, black-lists, and company welfare schemes as both illiberal and modern. It was no accident that such practices were adopted by all the most advanced industrial sectors in Germany before 1914, regardless of the employers' particular political affiliations—that is, a self-consciously liberal employer such as Siemens in the more dynamic electro-technical sector, as well as a reactionary heavy industrialist such as Krupp. How this question fits with the recent discussion of Bürgerlichkeit would be interesting to work out.

(3) Thirdly, it is worth returning to Wehler's grand-interpretative framework of social imperialism in order to recast it—partly again to deconstruct the relationship to conservative politics and manipulative "system-stabilizing" strategies in which he locates it, and partly to broaden our understanding of the ideological and cultural consequences of the new relationship between the colonial and metropolitan worlds. On the one hand, Wehler argues that Germany's later nineteenth-century imperialism had a conservative function and effect (in terms both of the "ideological consensus" for overseas expansion in the context of the so-called Great Depression, and of Bismarck's manipulative intentions), and draws an explicit contrast between the authoritarian system which social imperialism successfully guaranteed and the alternative developmental possibility of "welfare-statist mass democracy" [sozialstaatlichen Massendemokratien] which remained blocked in German history until after 1945. Yet, historically speaking, it would be very hard to deny the positive relationship between
liberal and social democratic reform politics and imperialism in most periods since the Enlightenment, whether we consider (just to take the British example) the forms of free-trading imperialism, the new liberalism before 1914, or Fabian views of the empire between and after the two world wars. In fact, the most compelling voices of liberal renewal in Germany before 1914 elaborated their reformist projects (in relation to social legislation and political reform) precisely through an engagement with the possibilities of imperialist expansion. In this respect, as in others, neither liberalism nor Wehler's abstract utopia of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" can be protected against the contamination of imperialism, because imperialism/colonialism as a set of exploitative power relations with the extra-European world were inscribed in the Enlightenment tradition from the beginning. On the other hand, therefore, it is important to begin exploring the ways in which forms of social relations, patterns of culture, and increasingly racialized discourses of national superiority developed in the colonies were powerfully reinserted within the metropolitan society. "Colonial knowledge" in this sense should be a rich field of inquiry, for it has become clear from recent work on British and French colonialism how far metropolitan understandings of nationality have been constructed since the eighteenth century via an elaborate encounter with the colonial "Other". Forms of colonial representation through literature, museums and exhibitions, entertainment, and popular culture have been especially fruitful in this regard. The gendering of national identity, whether in militarist activities and warfare per se or in the more general ordering of nationalist representations around conceptions of masculinity and femininity, also had key colonialist roots: for example, intensive discussions of colonial intermarriage generated a complex discourse around gender inequalities, sexual privilege, class priorities, and racial superiority, which then became powerfully rearticulated into nationalist discourse at home. This was the real ground of social imperialism, arguably—that is, not so much the conscious manipulations by governing élites focused on by Wehler, but the more insidious processes of ideological structuration. At all events, this implies a much richer field of relations between empire and domestic politics. The consequences of imperialism certainly cannot be bracketed from the "modernization" project by identifying social imperialism so unidimensionally with conservative anti-modern strategies. [68]

(4) Next, we need to recognize the importance of gender, not just as the kind of formality that acknowledges the previous neglect of women, but as the complex and variable construction of sexual difference that affects both women and men, and whose recognition therefore changes our understanding of the world as a whole. On the one hand, feminist theory has now shown how fundamentally the terms of modern social and political identity—of class, citizenship, "race", nationhood, religion, the very category of the self—have been constituted from dichotomous assumptions about what it meant to be a woman or a man. Those assumptions were ordered during the nineteenth century into a pervasive dualism that aligned men with the worlds of work and the public domain of politics and women with the home and the private realm of domesticity, the one a site of control, agency, and reason, the other a site of quiescence, passivity, and emotion. Inscribed in the language of identity have been definite notions of masculinity and femininity which limited "women's access to knowledge, skill, and independent political subjectivity". [69] Thus the basic category of "civil society" [bürgerliche Gesellschaft] presumed the exclusion of women via the construction and naturalizing of claims about sexual difference, and to include women as full citizens consequently makes it "necessary to deconstruct and reassemble our understanding of the body politic". [70] Similarly, this
"gendering of the public sphere" was matched by the gendered construction of class identities. Thus Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have stressed both the constitutive role of gender (that is, the historically specific structuring of sexual difference) in the ordering of the bourgeois social world (via particular structures of family and domesticity, and particular styles of consumption) and the reciprocal interactions between this private sphere and the public sphere of associational activity and politics, in which the latter both reflected and actively reproduced the gendered distinctions of class identity generated between home and work. [71] Likewise, the importance of gender, sexuality, and the family cannot be bracketed from the processes of working-class formation either, because notions of physical labor, skill, the wage, respectability, and political voice were all completely shot through with assumptions about masculinity. [72] In the light of this accumulating authority of scholarship and argument, it seems to me naive and at best an unacceptably partial truth to present the possibility of the women's movement as being inscribed in "einige Grundprinzipien der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft", so that "die Emanzipation der Frauen [erscheint] als späte Konsequenz der Dynamik, die mit dem Übergang zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Gang gesetzt wurde" [73] Such Whiggishness takes no account of the critiques mentioned above. Nineteenth-century conceptions of progress were, on the contrary, inscribed with powerful assumptions that worked consistently against women's emancipation and assigned women to dependent positions and a disempowered subjectivity.

On the other hand, as a "useful category of historical analysis" gender can change and enrich our understanding of particular questions. I have already alluded to some general examples—the gendering of citizenship and the public sphere, and the gendered discourse of class, together with the relationship between masculinity/femininity and nationalist ideology—which can be explored in a specifically German context. But some established questions of German history can also be illuminated by a gender perspective. One of these could be the "social question". Thus whereas the late-nineteenth-century apparatus of poor relief, charity, and social insurance may have been formally based on a mixture of arguments (Christian responsibility, capitalist rationality, political calculation, national efficiency), these were also predicated upon gendered assumptions in the manner indicated above, particularly regarding the social importance of the family. This was true both of national and local state provision, charitable work, and company-provided welfare, all of which reflected definite assumptions about what constituted orderly domestic living arrangements. Moreover, from the 1890s, with changing bases of women's work (waged/unwaged, domestic/industrial, blue-collar/white-collar), the growth of urban living, the rising industrial and parliamentary strength of labor, and the manifold concerns regarding German national efficiency, the discourse of social reform became charged with new meanings, not least through the involvement of new forms of professional expertise in social policy and the pressure of the emergent women's movement. When we add certain other issues, including child and maternal welfare, public health, policies for the control of youth, and the general regulation of morality and sexuality, we have an especially promising field for gender-sensitive analysis. Of course, the First World War, the Weimar discourse of the "new woman", and the Nazi counter-revolution produced a series of radicalizations around these issues, and the valuable contribution of women's history to our grasp of these later moments should re-emphasize the need for similar analysis of the Kaiserreich. [74] My point is that none of these areas unambiguously involved an enlargement of women's rights or political capacities in the liberal sense, but that the
meaning was none the less "modern" for that.

(5) The ambivalence of reform, and the difficulties of assimilating the actual "modernizing" initiatives of the turn of the century to the progressive or liberal-democratic normativity against which Wehler insists on measuring the German past, brings me to the last of my proposals, concerning the dynamics of disciplinary power in Foucault's sense—that is, the framing and application to the "social body" of new knowledges of science and ambitions of control. Here we connect back to the question of Imperial continuities with Nazism, though not in the sense claimed by Wehler of deficits of modernity producing pathologies that were the condition of Nazi success. On the contrary, I would argue, it was precisely the most striking manifestations of modern scientific and technocratic ambition in the sphere of social policy that laid the way for Nazi excess. For example, there is a growing literature on the eugenicist consensus that formed the disquieting background to Nazi racism between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s, and in whose light Nazi anti-semitism has increasingly appeared as the most virulent form of a much more extensive biological politics that systematically naturalized and essentialized social, cultural, and political phenomena under the sign of race. In Robert Proctor's view, "the ideological structure we associate with National Socialism was deeply embedded in the philosophy and institutional structure of German biomedical science". Consequently, if we take a broad view of the biomedical sciences as an ideological field, in which the Nazis' racial programs (from genocide to the anticipatory treatment of the Gypsies and the 1939 euthanasia program, back through population policies aimed at women and the 1933 sterilization law) were authorized by much longer traditions of racial hygiene from before 1914, then the Judeocide appears as the most vicious part "of a larger attempt ...to medicalize or biologize various forms of social, sexual, political, or racial deviance". [75] Moreover, we know from the work of Paul Weindling and others on the origins, rise, and mature elaboration of the eugenicist complex between the 1870s and 1945 that this was a restlessly aggrandizing ideological field. It convened biomedical knowledge, public health, and racial thought on the ground of social policy, and it was there that not only the politics of the family and motherhood, but also the most progressive achievements of the Weimar welfare state were completely embedded. [76]

Perhaps the key point to emerge from this recent literature concerns the "normality" of racial science in the Kuhnian sense. So far from corrupting "true" science by the intrusion of irrational and anti-intellectual pressures from the outside, Nazism worked within an established eugenicist paradigm by appealing to the existing "imagery, results, and authority of science". [77] Rather than politicizing science in some illegitimate sense, Nazism worked upon traditions of discourse that had articulated science to politics since the Kaiserreich. On the one hand, not just entire nationalities (Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and other Slav groups), but also entire social categories (gays, the handicapped and mentally ill, various groups of the socially incompetent and incurably ill, and then Polish intellectuals, Soviet prisoners of war, "political commissars", and so forth) became slated for racist and eugenicist attack. On the other hand, this was possible because of the prior diffusion of eugenicist and related ideologies of social engineering, which to a great extent had permeated the thinking of the social-policy and health-care professions long before the Nazis arrived. In both respects the ground for Nazi racism was discursively laid—not in the limited sense of "linguistic" preparation, but by an entire institutional apparatus and system of practice aimed at defining
deviant or "worthless" categories of people and at restructuring popular assumptions about what an acceptable social policy could be. This is where my two earlier points concerning colonial knowledges and the importance of gender also converge. Work by Michael Burleigh and Woodruff Smith has shown how the disciplines of anthropology and ethnology also helped compose the ideological context from which the specifically Nazi project was to emerge. [78] Likewise, Gisela Bock pioneered our understanding of the race/gender connection in her study of Nazi sterilization policy; Claudia Koonz saw the Third Reich doubly ordered around the naturalized poles of biological distinction, male/female and aryan/non-aryan, in a "social order founded on race and gender"; and the programmatic essay-volume, When Biology Became Destiny, successfully made the case for seeing "biological politics" as a unifying principle of Nazi practice. The logical imbrication of these two sets is perhaps clear enough--centering one's understanding of society around a biologically constructed concept of race had immediate consequences for how one understood the place of women, given the key importance of sexuality, family, and reproduction to both--and the Nazis' racial policies do seem to have been prefigured very strongly in a complex of policies affecting reproduction (population, welfare, family, motherhood, euthanasia, sterilization) that go back to the late Kaiserreich. [79] Consequently, we need to recognize once again that Wehler's understanding of modernizing reform as a set of abstract liberal-democratic desiderata and the discourse of modernizing reform as we actually encounter it in the early twentieth century simply do not fit. Instead, the Nazis' racialized policies were continuous with what passed as the ruling knowledge of the time, and were less an eruption of the irrational than an extreme form of technocratic reason in that sense. If we are to understand the origins of Nazism, therefore, it is not to the Kaiserreich's deficient modernization that we must look, but to early twentieth-century modernity's dark side--to "the genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the spirit of science", in Detlev Peukert's compelling phrase. [80]
References


9. Ibid.


13. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Erster Band: Vom Feudalismus des Alten Reiches bis zur Defensiven Modernisierung der Reformära 1700-1815; Zweiter Band: Von der Reformära bis zur industriellen und politischen "Deutschen Doppelrevolution" 1815-1845-49 (Munich, 1987), esp. I, 332ff., and II, 589ff.; quotations are taken from I, 334, 333. On the one hand, Wehler maintains a schematic fourfold separation (he adds a fourth sphere, social inequality, to the Weberian trinity); but on the other hand, it is frequently "rationalization" that speaks through the presentation of them all. See I, 14ff.


16. To a great extent this is also a stylistic difference: Nipperdey eschews footnotes; Wehler saturates his text with the citations and their authority.


18. For interesting attempts to ground this view historically, see Ferenc Feher (ed.), The French Revolution and the Birth of Modernity (Berkeley, 1990); Charles Taylor, Sources of the Self (Cambridge, 1990). One classic study is still Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit (Neuwied, 1962). For some reflections on the latter, see Craig Calhoun (ed.), Jürgen Habermas and the Public Sphere (Cambridge, Mass., forthcoming 1991), including my own contribution, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century".


23. The reception of Foucault in the English-speaking world occurred originally along the margins of official academic life, in journals like Telos and Partisan Review in the USA, by a self-conscious avant-garde of post-New Left journals like Economy and Society, Radical Philosophy, Ideology & Consciousness, and m/f, in Britain. It was only in the 1980s that his influence extended to historians more generally. In Germany the reception was pioneered in the same way--outside the mainstream of recognized scholarly discussion, in the so-called alternative scene. But by contrast Foucault's German influence has yet to extend very far into historical discussion. See the fascinating article by Uta Liebmann Schaub, "Foucault, Alternative


25. Whereas this approach derives strongly from Foucault himself, it also has affinities with the "keywords" method of Raymond Williams and with the work of Reinhart Koselleck and the West German tradition of Begriffsgeschichte. See Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (2nd ed., London, 1983); Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (eds.), Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, 5 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972-1989).


32. The quoted phrases are taken from two essays of Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Industrielles Wachstum und früher deutscher Imperialismus", and "Wie 'bürgerlich' war das Deutsche Kaiserreich?", in Wehler, Aus der Geschichte lernen?, 269, 213, 215, 212 respectively.
Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Industrial Growth and Early German Imperialism", in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (eds.), Studies in the Theory of Imperialism (London, 1972), 84. I have left this quotation in the original English, because in the recently published translated version cited in footnote 32 above, "Industrielles Wachstum und fruher deutscher Imperialismus", Wehler revealingly substitutes "liberaldemokratischen Industriegeellschaft" for "modern industrial society". The full statement reads: "Bismarck und die seine Politik unterstützenden Kräfte hatten es versäumt, Möglichkeiten für eine legitime parlamentarische Opposition zu institutionalisieren, wie sie die Verfassungsstruktur einer liberaldemokratischen Industriegeellschaft verlangt, die den Anforderungen des ständigen sozialen Wandels gerecht zu werden versucht". A clearer illustration of the identity in Wehler's mind between "modernity" and "liberal democracy" could hardly be wished for. See Wehler, Aus der Geschichte lernen?, 266.

34. Wehler, "Industrial Growth", 78 ["Industrielles Wachstum", 261].


38. This doubled meaning of bürgerlich— as a "society of citizens", and a society "dominated by a confident bourgeoise" (Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy, 397)— is more central to the German etymology of the term than it is to the anglicized use of "bourgeois". It is a particular problem in the German term "bürgerliche Gesellschaft". Kocka, "Bürgerstum und bürgerliche Gesellschaft", is very good on the definitional complexities of nineteenth-century usage.

39. Wehler, "Wie 'bürgerlich' war das Deutsche Kaiserreich?", 204f.


41. Wehler, "Wie 'bürgerlich' war das Deutsche Kaiserreich?", 206, 208.

42. Ibid., 216f.

43. Wehler's definitional discussion in this respect is in ibid., 192-202.

44. Ibid., 214.

45. Ibid.

46. Esp. Geoff Eley, "The British Model and the German Road: Rethinking the Course of German History before 1914", in Blackbourn and Eley, Peculiarities, 75-90; Eley, "Liberalism, Europe, and the Bourgeoisie 1860-1914", in Blackbourn and Evans (eds.), German Bourgeoisie, 293-317.

47. The problems here are manifold. On the one hand, it is conceptually and empirically extremely doubtful whether the bourgeoisie may be treated as a collective class agent in this fashion, possessing a corporate political consciousness of a unified kind. On the other hand, specifically democratic demands in the nineteenth century came largely from popular movements which the bourgeoisie sought to suppress.

48. The tendency to speak of the bourgeoisie as a collective acting subject (whether its political orientation be liberal or not) is a large part of the problem. As Blackbourn says: "Stellt man das Bürgertum als eine Boxhandschuhe tragende Klasse dar, die mit ihren Gegnern kämpft, dann lässt sich leicht beweisen, dass sie keinen unumstrittenen Sieg gewonnen hat". See Blackbourn's "Kommentar" on the original version of Wehler's "Wie 'bürgerlich' war das Deutsche Kaiserreich", in Kocka (ed.), Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit, 283.

49. Wehler, "Wie 'bürgerlich' war das Deutsche Kaiserreich?", 199.


52. Ibid., 201.

Language, Gender and Childhood (London, 1985), 10-33. I have discussed the difficulties with Habermas’s public sphere concept in general in Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures".


57. Anderson, Lineages, 277f.

58. Wehler, "Industrielles Wachstum", 260f., and Wehler, Bismarck, 500. The quotations are from Wehler’s paraphrase of Habermas. See footnote 35 above.


67. E.g. Wehler, Bismarck, 19.

69. Sally Alexander, "Women, Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s: Some Reflections on the Writing of a Feminist History", History Workshop Journal, 17 (Spring 1984), 137.


73. Kocka, "Bürgerturn und bürgerliche Gesellschaft", 46f. Significantly--and by contrast with the rest of his generously footnoted essay--the bibliographical citations dry up at this point in Kocka's survey of research and discussion on the bourgeoisie (that is, no references to Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, to the works cited in footnote 53 above, or to the extremely large literature in US women's history in this area).


77. Proctor, Racial Hygiene, 283.


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61. "Historicizing 'Experience','" Joan Scott, Oct 90, 19 pp. (CRSO #451)


68. "Political Culture and the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Making of Citizenship," Margaret Somers, Oct 91, (CRSO #459)


70. "German History and the Contradictions of Modernity," Geoff Eley, Feb 92