

# Introduction

## Gender in Transition

*Ulrike Gleixner and Marion W. Gray*

During the transitional era 1750–1830, the European gender system underwent a significant series of transformations. Cultural norms of the early modern era affirmed a multitude of differences within society—for example, in social, political, and juridical status. Gender therefore was part of a complex system of differences, although it was by no means the only such system. Modernity, however, was founded on the idea of equality, discussed as a universal maxim but applied only to white male citizens. Women, the poor, and nonwhites were excluded on the basis of the new discourse of differences: the dichotomies of gender, socioeconomic status, and race, all with social implications.<sup>1</sup> Law and science inscribed a new set of morals with gendered virtues and gendered social spheres. The new “sexual system” was produced by public discourse as well as by institutional and political change.<sup>2</sup> Masculinity and femininity came to be understood as opposites based in nature.<sup>3</sup> The transformed gender system constituted a major part of the social reordering of the epoch.<sup>4</sup> Gender itself lay at the core of the transformation of society.

This volume examines different scenes of social change between 1750 and 1830 in German-speaking Europe. Each chapter includes a case study that focuses on a different realm of gender-related change in society. Each author contributes to the question of how tightly the discourse of difference, the discussion of normative values, and sociopolitical and socioeconomic practice were related in the process of transformation. Did discourse and practice have a close and immediate interdependence, or was the connection more complex, depending on the context and the place in society?

Three decades ago, historian Karin Hausen first observed that “the

notion of *Geschlechtscharakter* [character of the sexes] emerged in the eighteenth century.” Searching for the origins of the “sex-specific character traits of man and woman” that profoundly shaped people’s lives in the nineteenth century, she concluded that the late Enlightenment acutely transformed gender definitions in German cultural areas, leading to a “polarization” of the sexes.<sup>5</sup> Enlightenment thinkers, educational theorists, philosophers, and publicists attributed gender distinctions to innate qualities, which they believed to be firmly rooted in nature. Hausen asked whether and how the normative values she documented were directly related to the experienced gender division of labor that has shaped human lives during the past two centuries.

Hausen’s interpretation brought the subject of gender into a discourse that was already definitively establishing that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries constituted an era of far-reaching transitions in many sectors of society. In 1972, introducing a pathbreaking project in the social history of ideas, Reinhart Koselleck called the period from 1750 to 1850 the *Sattelzeit* (saddle era), with one stirrup in the estate-based society of the old regime and the other in the new regime of individualism and state citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

Since Hausen posed this question, significant research has demonstrated how the notion of gender difference has reoriented the scholarly understanding of the gender system as it has changed since the eighteenth century. One area of inquiry concentrates on the question of the decline or other alteration of women’s position in the public sphere.

The participants in the debate over women’s positions in the public sphere emphasize various themes, one of which is the changing place of women as a consequence of the French Revolution. Although women played essential roles in the revolutionary process—in the march to Versailles, through participation in clubs, and as pamphleteers—they were among the revolution’s disenfranchised. They remained excluded from political participation in civil society, and only one single achievement of the revolution on behalf of women—equality of inheritance of sons and daughters—was retained in the *code civil*.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have commonly concluded that French revolutionary leaders insisted on the subordination of women to men through constitutional law and the regulatory mechanism of civil society.<sup>8</sup> Only men could be active citizens; women were passive citizens. Gisela Bock summarizes this shift: To the same extent that parliamentarism and representation were at the core of innovative political theories and became the concrete manifestation of the sovereignty of the people, the exclusion of women

became a key aspect of modern republicanism, democratic theory and practice.<sup>9</sup> Thus, one key concept of modernity is the exclusion of women from institutionalized republican political participation.

Some scholars emphasize the decline of women's public role. In her cultural history of the French Enlightenment, Dena Goodman shows that both men and women occupied space in the public sphere. She depicts those roles as they changed over time, from the origins of the Republic of Letters in the seventeenth century through the first years of the French Revolution: "The revolt against the monarchy in 1789 was prefigured by the revolt against salon governance in the 1780's, when young male citizens of the Republic of Letters formed their own societies based on a fantasy of masculine self-governance which displaced women from their central governing role and resituated them as the objects of male desire and male learning. After 150 years of female governance, the 'natural order' was restored in the Republic of Letters."<sup>10</sup> In a study of women's role in the literary world of the early Enlightenment, Katherine R. Goodman demonstrates that as early as the mid-eighteenth century, women of the German-speaking world met ridicule and exclusion when they gained public attention by publishing their work. They could achieve status, however, by presenting themselves as dutiful assistants or apprentices to their husbands and fathers.<sup>11</sup> A variety of researchers have demonstrated women's strategies of resistance against the new gender order that resulted in exclusion and disempowerment of women.<sup>12</sup> Authors such as Marie-Claire Hock-Demarle (in her work on women authors) and Anne Fleig (in her book on women playwrights at the end of the eighteenth century) emphasize the public role women could hold in the cultural life of German society.<sup>13</sup>

For Jürgen Habermas, male intellectuals constituted the public sphere that became the foundation of modern political discourse.<sup>14</sup> The research of gender historians, however, shows that a plurality of public spheres has always existed and that in spite of the discourse of gender difference, women participated in the literary public sphere. The works of Barbara Becker-Cantarino and Gisela Brinker-Gabler also verify that women had access to the literary public sphere.<sup>15</sup> Ruth B. Emde demonstrates that until the end of the eighteenth century, actresses saw themselves as advocates of the Enlightenment. Only during the Restoration did their self-confidence, sexual charm, and attraction come to be viewed as unfeminine. Not expecting to assume the same status as male actors during their active years, they often wrote

their autobiographies at the end of their careers as a way of creating a heritage for themselves.<sup>16</sup> Deborah Hertz demonstrates a change in the position of Jewish women of high status in the public sphere in Berlin as the famous salons over which they presided disappeared around 1806. Not only the leadership of Jewish women in salon culture but also the salon as an institution declined radically after Napoleon conquered Prussia. Friendship within salon circles deteriorated into a one-sided antipathy on the part of aristocratic intellectuals and incorporated increasingly anti-Semitic sentiments. Part of the strong disposition against the Jewish salon culture was the misogynistic argument that the Jewish *salonières* sought to master high culture for the sole purpose of showing it off to men.<sup>17</sup> German intellectuals' new anti-Semitic mood was linked with criticism of the gender order. The *salonière*, who had been celebrated in the late eighteenth century, was now seen as immodest, arrogant, vain, and self-satisfied. Women and Jews were explicitly not part of the emerging *Tischgesellschaft* culture.<sup>18</sup> Women's opportunities changed in the public sphere. A new, compelling cultural emphasis on family and motherhood for the female half of the population meant that they could not be respected as intellectuals. Dagmar Herzog examines the views of religious conservatives, political liberals, religious dissenters, and activists on behalf of Jewish rights and women's rights in pre-1848 Baden, combining both religious and political history to reveal that Jews and women were denied political equality on the basis of the supposed differences from Christian male norms.<sup>19</sup> Hertz and Herzog show that within the context of the Enlightenment, changing religious values and new notions about culture, race, and ethnicity constructed gender differences and created exclusion of women and Jews.

Despite women's subordination to men, females found ways to acquire the capacity for self-constitution and for participation in public discourse after 1800. Jean Quataert shows that the separate spheres did not result in women's exclusion from the process of modern nation building in the nineteenth century. Women practiced nation building in the public realm in such fields as patriotic philanthropy and charitable activities. Dynastic-sponsored philanthropic associations, institutions, and ritual worlds reshaped the arenas of public and private, blurring the lines between charity and politics as well as those between religious and secular identities.<sup>20</sup> Carla Hesse clarifies how women, though defined as "other," participated in the philosophical awakening after the French Revolution, arguing that women wrote fiction to

probe philosophical issues and in so doing established themselves as morally autonomous subjects. Working outside the institutional structures of the professions and the academy, from which they were excluded, they utilized the realm of literature to command cultural activity and to carve out a space for their public self-constitution.<sup>21</sup> Bonnie G. Smith also reviews literary activities of women to analyze their attempt to create an intellectual realm for themselves.<sup>22</sup> Women seldom wrote historical works during the eighteenth century but began to do so increasingly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Women wrote primarily biographies, especially collective histories of English and French queens, as well as accounts of aristocratic and influential women. The authors were educated women who had been excluded from the professionalization process in civil service and the academic disciplines. They engaged in the productive collection of memories about admirable and influential women that in turn provided strength in the authors' lives. Smith argues that the amateur female historians' accounts of queens and noble ladies constituted a resistance against the personal experience of devaluation of female intellectual abilities as well as against the exclusion of women from the civil emancipation project of the nineteenth century, the legal basis of which was set in the *code civil* of 1804. Angelika Epple demonstrates that the polarization of *Geschlechtscharakter* is reflected even in the historiographical discourse between the Age of Enlightenment and the era of historicism. Historians largely negated women's discontinuous historical experience by assuming that women did not change and by failing to historicize female lives. Transformation, however, constituted a prerequisite for the presumed development into autonomous subjects of civil society as well as historicization. Breaks—the differences between past and present—constitute development. However, not only the biographies of female authors of historical narratives but also the life experiences of their protagonists contained discontinuities. Hence, women, although excluded from the discourse of history, experienced historical change.<sup>23</sup> Thus, most gender studies discussed here demonstrate that discourse and practice in the *Sattelzeit* do not coincide. In spite of a discourse of difference and exclusion, women did participate in the public sphere. Likewise, within the realm of middle-class family, discourse was not synonymous with practice.<sup>24</sup>

A second discussion is the new public-private division that structured nineteenth-century society. Recent gender studies reveal that early modern European states and societies considered the household

a part of the public sphere. Under this arrangement, while men and women were by no means equal, they nevertheless shared important responsibilities.<sup>25</sup> The husband was the head of the household, and the wife had to subordinate herself under his will. Marriage was constructed simultaneously as an institution of equality and inequality.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, married women in the eighteenth century were officeholders in their household positions. The housewife's responsibilities and labor were seen as part of a public duty. The public legal status of the household justified the intervention of the absolutist state in family and household affairs whenever the civil order appeared to face threats. However, as the economy became more capitalistic, middle-class husbands presided increasingly over the external world of business, while their wives became confined to a largely reproductive existence. Many women created a domestic realm according to their personal values and imagination.<sup>27</sup>

The Code Napoléon, which became the basis of new law throughout much of Europe, finally declared the husband's authority to be the constitutive principle of the family. The wife had no rights of disposal over family property, including the property that she brought to the marriage. She could undertake no legal transaction without her husband's authorization, and she could not appear in court.<sup>28</sup> The code strictly separated a female private sphere from a male public sphere in a way that had never before been known in European history.

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall reveal that men and women of the English middle class adopted distinctly female and male versions of class identities and that the language of class formation itself was gendered. The acquisition of gendered subjectivity was a process that continued through the life cycle. Masculinity and femininity were not fixed categories acquired in childhood but were constantly tested, challenged, and reworked, both in imagination and in the encounters of daily life. In this process, linguistic, cultural, and symbolic representations of sexual differences played a vital part, as did social organization. All cultural and economic institutions were gendered, from family and kinship systems to chapels and corn markets.<sup>29</sup>

Isabel V. Hull has demonstrated how the new "sexual system" combined with the institutionalization of the separate spheres. Between approximately 1700 and 1815, a social discourse arose that established a new set of sexual behaviors with new meanings ascribed to them. This process contributed to the establishment of modern culture based on bourgeois legal codes. The state lost interest in the disciplining of

male sexuality, handing this responsibility over to the private and now self-determined realm of the male citizen. The newly established sexual code for women remained, however, a matter of public regulation. With the Code Napoléon, women became the property of male citizens. The dichotomy between private and public life in the redistribution of rights, privileges, and responsibilities rested on the new “sexual system.”<sup>30</sup>

In her analysis of French feminism after the French Revolution, Joan Wallach Scott points out that the discourse of gender difference itself was a pitfall. For women to become involved in the discourse of difference, they were forced to engage in a discussion that accepted difference itself as a given, not as social construction.<sup>31</sup>

Scholars have shown with increasing complexity how the polarization of the sexes became institutionalized and practiced in society. Systems of difference—their functioning and their connection with one another—have become central points of historical inquiry. Class, race, gender, and sexuality are among the most important systems of difference. In practice, they are bound together in multifaceted ways and produce new differences, even within a given category.<sup>32</sup> Gender was not in every case the primary system of difference: race, social class, or other distinctions could prevail, including in the realm of gender relations. Each historical research problem has its own configuration of systems of difference. Perceiving the full meaning of the Enlightenment and the pre-1848 nineteenth century requires an understanding that society’s metamorphosis into modernity is based on the production of differences and deduced exclusion. The interactions of race, class, and gender, of ethnicity and sexuality, produced complex inequalities. The historical interpretation of the Enlightenment is enhanced by insights recently developed in postmodern studies, postcolonial theory, feminist theory, and the history of sexuality. Hausen’s specific interest in her 1976 article on the polarization of sexual stereotypes focused on the dissociation of the economic and domestic spheres. She challenged future researchers to ask whether the model of the polarized sexes had become entrenched in the social world and, if so, in what realms. Case studies that focus on the concrete social and economic transformations remain helpful in understanding the relationship between discursive, legal, and everyday practice of the transitional 1780–1830 era. This volume seeks to build on other scholars’ work in contributing to the deeper understanding of the social change of the epoch. In this project we have attempted to examine varied local situations and diverse

realms of sociocultural change during the *Sattelzeit*. Thus, this project belongs to a larger scholarly search for a systematic analysis of the social history of the Enlightenment.<sup>33</sup> How, when, and where did the polarization of the sexes become established and imprint its particular hierarchy of characteristics in society?

The concept of sexual difference based in nature clearly became a normative model for social, legal, economic, and cultural change. While the late-eighteenth-century discussion of gender definitions was polyphonic, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the single notion of a dichotomous gender order had become a basis of social modernization. Social reforms that had their origins in the ideals of equality of the early Enlightenment and the French Revolution no longer prevailed, replaced by a firmly established gender polarity. However, the change did not result from a direct transformation of discourse into social practice. The process was often fraught with inner contradictions, and it frequently yielded unexpected results, different than would have been predicted on the basis of the social discourse.

The case studies collected in this volume contribute to at least two important historiographical discussions. First, they suggest new ways of conceptualizing historical change in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; second, they elucidate the complex relationship between social discourse and praxis.

In spite of the negative developments for women demonstrated by historians of gender, the general historical narrative regarding the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries frequently continues to represent the era as one of progress. Historians celebrate the separation of state and society at the end of the *ancien régime* without restrictions, along with related innovations such as the establishment of citizenship, with its rights and privileges. Many scholars regard the creation of the modern male citizen, educated and guided by reason and protected in private life by civil law, as a positive step in the process of modernization,<sup>34</sup> often overlooking the degree to which the formation of modernity is based on exclusion through class, race, and gender. Asking analytically for whom the changes were advantageous, one must conclude that although the old hereditary limitations, restrictions, and inequalities were indeed undergoing dissolution, new systems of boundaries and differences were being established. In this process, women as a category were disadvantaged because they lacked access to the possibilities of change based on equality of rights.<sup>35</sup> Recent postcolonial approaches, set in motion by intellectuals from outside Europe, have

clearly shown that the metamorphosis of modern Europe was rooted in the endeavors to consolidate the predominance of male, middle-class Europeans.<sup>36</sup> In an important discussion of the relationship between general history and women's history, Hausen recently advanced the argument that the accepted historical narrative—a cultural construct of the eighteenth century—should be replaced by a multitude of particular histories. She argues that hierarchy is an underlying categorical concept that continually privileges the dominant in society, and as long as it remains so, inequality and underprivilege will never have an equal place in the historical narrative. The gender systems that were established in the nineteenth century have overtly aimed to privilege the male sex. As a consequence, Hausen persuasively concludes, the history of the gender systems belongs to those themes that have been excluded from purported general histories.<sup>37</sup>

This volume comprises five parts. Part 1, "Law, Administration, Moral Discourse, and Gender," looks at the reorganization of the relationship between the center and the margins of society. This part explores the impact of bourgeois conceptualizations of femininity on women of the lower classes. Dietlind Hüchtker analyzes the practice and the debates regarding the implementation of municipal reforms related to the politics of poverty during the era of Prussian reforms (1809–19). She asks how changing, gendered understandings of poverty influenced the creation of modern social policy on poverty, in which the image of the deserving mother was transformed into that of the wretched prostitute. Kerstin Michalik explores changes in the judicial punishment for infanticide, asking why reformers separated it from other capital crimes by assigning to it a unique set of punishments. She questions why the legal system established harsher sentences for wives than for unwed mothers who committed infanticide. Like Hüchtker, Michalik analyzes these topics within the context of the emergent ideal of the middle-class family.

Part 2, "The Economy, the Public, and the Private," takes up individual studies of women and men coping with changing values and circumstances in evolving but not yet clearly defined gender spheres in society. Daniel A. Rabuzzi researches a situation of marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the changing socioeconomic conditions of a merchant city, Stralsund. Rabuzzi is interested in a cultural conflict between a notion of male honor and an oligarchic network's perceived right to establish rules governing private life. The case he investigates suggests a conflict between the privatization of marriage through the

legal option of divorce and the conception of marriage as an institution that served public interests above private ones. Eve Rosenhaft takes up an episode concerning new ideas and practices about providing security for middle-class widows: life insurance. In the debate over what to do about the collapse of two “widows’ funds,” Rosenhaft sees a male notion of scientific rationality pitted against the older, very material interests of wives and widows. Assessing the late-eighteenth-century debates regarding what to do about the failed institutions, she seeks to explain the gendered implications of rational, scientific thought and planning. Rebekka Habermas measures the experiences of everyday middle-class marital life against normative bourgeois ideals of polarized gender roles. Especially important in her investigation is education (*Bildung*), an arena in which marriage partners shared mutual responsibilities and activities, such as reading, memory work, and correspondence, which maintained ties of kinship and friendship. She asks whether these shared experiences sustained a mutuality between the sexes and potentially elevated women’s role.

Part 3, “Religious Imagery and Spiritual Empowerment,” explores the changing understanding of symbols, meaning, and agency of gendered religious life in the transitional era. Stefanie Schäfer-Bossert seeks meaning about gender change in the Lutheran Church’s religious artistic representations of males and females. Having established that prior to the eighteenth century, feminine figures in the church space represented the virtues and were intended as models for all of society, she asks why this tradition changed dramatically by the nineteenth century, rendering the feminine either invisible or garbed in notions of domesticity, charm, and meekness. Ulrike Gleixner explores the interplay between Lutheran Pietistic forms of religiosity and the changing constructions of gender in the eighteenth century, when women within the inner churchly Pietistic movement were experiencing a relative decline in status. She reads closely the personal diary of a Württemberg Pietist to determine how the writer drew on her spirituality to gain agency in a marital conflict with her husband. Gleixner seeks to explain the relationship between the spirituality and agency.

Part 4, “The Late Enlightenment, Professionalization, and Exclusion,” examines the intellectual work and practice of women in the context of Enlightenment ideals, seeking to interpret the relationship between discourse and exclusion in the process of professionalization. Ulrike Weckel analyzes the demise of the prolific work of female editors, bringing to an end a period in which women contributed substan-

tially to the literary marketplace. She asks what drove independent female editors out of business after twenty-five years of success and seeks answers in changing practices in the publishing business and new literary tastes. After documenting that a remarkable number of early modern women participated in scientific investigations carried on by male scientists, Beate Ceranski seeks to explain women's increasing exclusion from laboratories, reading rooms, and scientific discourse beginning in the early nineteenth century. She asks if this development was related to the establishment of a reformed and vigorous university system in Germany. The background for her study and a significant explanatory factor is the emergent bourgeois gender system. Ruth Dawson compares the autobiographical writings of a male and a female author from the 1780s against the backdrop of Kant's answer to his famous question, "What is Enlightenment?" She asks why the male writer possessed a significantly greater sense of entitlement than the woman did and looks for explanations in the material and ideological rules that governed women's and men's lives. Marion W. Gray seeks answers about female exclusion in the writing of two women who understood and protested the disempowerment of women in the late eighteenth century. He asks why, despite their fervent advocacy of women's inclusion, both ended up affirming rather than effectively challenging the Enlightenment's distinctions based on sex.

Part 5, "Conceptualization of Masculinity and Femininity," explores new ideals of gender differences, fears about cultural change, and an Enlightenment experiment designed to dissolve the barriers between the separate spheres. Teresa Sanislo employs the history of the body to answer questions about changes in gender and sexuality. Comparing ideals about physical education and gymnastics in Germany during the late eighteenth century with those of the Napoleonic era, she examines emerging programs designed to harden and discipline the male body in light of the military-political environment of the times, asking if rising ideals of masculinity were related to the emergence of a German nationalism. Katherine B. Aaslestad seeks in patterns of dress and consumption in early-nineteenth-century Hamburg an understanding of women's and men's changing place in society. She inquires why critics in the urban press claimed that new lifestyles emphasizing sexuality and materialism threatened Hamburg's traditional republican values. William Rasch probes the implications of the famous Enlightenment ideal of *Geselligkeit* (sociability), a concept that was supposed to allow the two sexes to join one another in intellectual dis-

course and thus break down the walls between them. Rasch seeks to know why the conscious experiment of a well-known male and female Enlightenment figure ultimately failed to achieve the ideals of *Geselligkeit*.

### **A New Structural History Based on Gender**

The transitional epoch from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century—marking the end of the early modern period and the beginning of the modern era—is associated in historical meta-narratives with the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, the end of absolutism, the middle-class revolution, and the rise of modern nation-states. We suggest following up with new metanarratives such as “sexual system,” “gender system,” and “sexual contract” that have the potential to demonstrate the link between gender and the overarching social transitions. Eras of change and transformation in history are expressed, practiced, and realized through shifting gender systems.

Historians who work with the methodologies of structural history and social history have in some cases accepted the category of gender as an additive, statistical variable relative to women.<sup>38</sup> But to develop an integral perspective of gender rather than approach it as an additive perspective, one must accept that each epoch is based on a specific structural gender system. Few examples still exist of the blending of general structural historical categories with gender histories or structural analyses. One of the early feminist structural-historical conceptualizations was that of patriarchy.<sup>39</sup> More recently, other structural historical models, especially that of separate spheres, have been used historically to explain gender.<sup>40</sup> Davidoff and Hall carried the analysis further with their conceptualization of a gender system,<sup>41</sup> while Carole Pateman coined the term sexual contract<sup>42</sup> and Hull employed the concept of sexual system to characterize the connection between sexual relations and the state.<sup>43</sup> Scott proposes analyzing gender as a “system of difference” that produces power relations and social hierarchy and asks how other differences are related to the gender difference in society.<sup>44</sup>

Like the Enlightenment, all such transitional areas as the Renaissance and the Reformation are based on shifts in the gender system. Joan Kelly-Gadol attracted much attention with her provocative question of the 1970s, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” She analyzed changes in Italy between 1350 and 1530, employing four categories of

analysis—regulation of sexuality, economic and political position, ideology about women, and sex roles—and found that the Renaissance brought no advantage for women of the influential urban middle classes and the aristocracy. In contrast, such women experienced a “contraction of social and personal options.”<sup>45</sup> Lyndal Roper shows that the Protestant Reformation in the cities strengthened male interests in household governance. City and guild elites shared common interests in Protestant ideology that enabled sociopolitical changes to extend and stabilize the patriarchal household.<sup>46</sup> Also in the Catholic Reformation, state building was based on the extension of the patriarchal household and female subordination, as Sarah Hanley and Ulrike Strasser demonstrate.<sup>47</sup>

As Lynn Hunt concludes, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, the rise of nationalism—in short, all of the epochal moments of the modernist teleology—have been shown to have negatively affected women’s place in society.<sup>48</sup> This is true in spite of the fact that long-duration sociohistorical analyses demonstrate that women’s life spans, economic possibilities, and chances for self-determination have improved in Europe during periods of both stability and instability.<sup>49</sup>

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from the pessimistic interpretation for the historicization of change? Kelly-Gadol called into question accepted schemes of periodization, and Gianna Pomata argues for a new chronology that describes the turning points of women’s history. To simply insert women’s history into the traditional chronology is to add information without taking into account its meaning.<sup>50</sup> Hunt insists that a failure to create new metanarratives only ensures the marginalization of the history of women and gender.<sup>51</sup> The interests of gender history are inseparably bound together with those of general history, she argues; they cannot be separated from one another. She appeals for a reexamination of the classic categories of the narrative of modernity, for a reperiodization to emphasize continuities rather than great political turning points. And finally she argues for consideration of non-Western histories that challenge the definition of modernity.<sup>52</sup>

### **Perceived Differences Shape Social Institutions**

*Gender in Transition* is dedicated to an analysis of change that seeks to understand that historical transition is realized through changes in the current gender system. We seek to better comprehend and explain the

connection between discourse and practice. An example is found in the Prussian administrative reforms of the early nineteenth century. In the context of conflict of interests between municipal and state authorities, *poverty* and *the poor* were redefined through the language of administrative debates. Through gender dichotomies as well as regulated and unregulated gender relations, the lower classes came to be understood as a part of the newly conceptualized urban society. Institutional change rested on the redefinition of gender, and governmental reform was based on a new gender order (see Hüchtker, this volume). In the recodification of laws regulating illegitimate births and infanticide, transformations in the gender order not only preceded legal changes but also formed the basis for the statutory innovations (Michalik, this volume). In the realm of the economy, emerging modernity became connected with male expert knowledge. The restructuring of life insurance associations that had fallen into crisis at the end of the eighteenth century appears as a breakthrough of modern thought—abstract, general, and impersonal. Male experts became preoccupied with abstract actuarial data of female clientele (Rosenhaft, this volume).

Early modern models of female learning and scientific inquiry had disappeared by the nineteenth century. The new scientific and academic systems were exclusively identified with maleness. Although women could participate as invisible helpers, the connection between woman and science was undermined (Ceranski, this volume). However, in the discourse of the late Enlightenment, new literary possibilities for women did emerge. The new genre of the woman's journal evolved out of the "moral weeklies" of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Women edited the new journals and conceived them for a female readership with the purpose of combining useful information with recreational reading. However, changes in the literary marketplace at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought the journals to an end. The Enlightenment discourse had initiated the notion that women's writing was desirable and positive, but the new economy of the literary market became an insuperable barrier for female editors, and their journals vanished (Weckel, this volume).

One way to comprehend the anatomy of social change is through the study of subjective discourse contained in autobiographical and other personal writings. The friendship between Henriette Herz and Friedrich Schleiermacher reveals their attempt to establish—against the powerful backdrop of the discourse of gender difference—an ideal form of bourgeois sociability (*Geselligkeit*) that was platonic, intellec-

tual, and based on the standard of equality. The two friends strove to ignore but could not escape the pervasive discourse. From the beginning, they had to defend and protest the innocence of their friendship (Rasch, this volume). The self-conceptualization of the individual always depends on the discourse and cannot stand outside it. Autobiographical documents demonstrate the differing socializations of men and women of similar social standing who attempted to personify the principles of the Enlightenment. The autobiographies of Friedrika Baldinger (1782) and Melchior Adam Weichard (1784), both conceived in the tradition of the academic biography (*Gelehrtenbiographie*), exhibit completely dissimilar conceptualizations of the self. Baldinger portrays herself as an object of the Enlightenment, providing the context for her development of understanding and sentiment but with her husband occupying an overriding position as master teacher. In contrast, Weichard conceived himself as a subject of the Enlightenment: as a man and a physician, even if poorly trained as a student, he was empowered as an academic to write about himself and his life (Dawson, this volume).

The efforts of the Philanthropinists, educational reformers of the last decades of the eighteenth century, reveal that the transitions in the gender order involved not only new understandings of gender but also new physical ideals of masculinity and femininity. They strove especially to improve the young male body, which they saw as endangered by an effeminate culture. They sought a balance between the mental and physical elements of masculine character. By the nineteenth century, during the era of the Napoleonic Wars, these principles incorporated nationalistic and militaristic attributes and therefore aroused great interest in the context of new plans for the education of young males (Sanislo, this volume). The pedagogical discourse of the eighteenth century assumed an increasingly social relevance with the advent of nineteenth-century national movements.

### **The Limits of Discourse and the Diversity of Social Practices**

New practices arose from the discourse of difference of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with its conceptualization of the “character of the sexes.” The transformation of society into its modern middle class form was based on the relational model of gender difference. However, historical practices in the *Sattelzeit* were more diverse than the discourse would suggest. This was true not only because traditional ideas

and practice continued to exist alongside the new but also because syntheses often arose out of the commingling of the two. Discourse and practice do not interact solely in a simple cause-and-effect relationship. As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, discourse and practice are interwoven in varying ways, and only through the study of specific examples can the complexities of historical change become clear. The case of two female authors illustrates the imbedding of the discourse of difference in the debates of the Enlightenment. School director Amalia Holst and economics author Christine Gürnth hoped to ensure the inclusion of women in the educational project of modernity. Both sought to employ the vocabulary of the Enlightenment to this end but also brought notions of gender difference into their conceptions. They conceived of family and motherhood as the primary work of women and based their appeals for an improved and more complete female education on the argument that it would lead to a perfection of their given female roles (Gray, this volume).

Connections between discourse and practice are evident in the discussion about poverty among Berlin's administrative authorities, which led to new policies to regulate the lives of the poor. The new relationship between authorities and the poor in the cities rested on two well-known stereotypes: the innocent, abandoned mothers with children who had fallen into poverty through no fault of their own, and the dangerous, immoral poor who required police oversight. The combination of perceived material, sanitary, and moral endangerment in the discourse of the municipal administration led to a new practice of police control over the lower classes. Bourgeois civil servants' fears of a massive rise in the number of needy poor caused urban officials to envision a leveling of the old city regulations and their replacement by free markets, freedom of settlement, and a new governmental obligation to care for the poor. This change resulted in a new boundary between the perceived innocent poor and those who came to their condition through immorality (Hüchtker, this volume). The new regulation of infanticide through revision of criminal punishments was based on the conceptualization of innate female gender characteristics. The heterogeneous discussion of the eighteenth century, in which the improvement of the social conditions of the unwed mother—seen as a deceived and seduced woman—had played a leading role and in which claims against the father of the child were established in the Prussian General Law Code of 1795, came to a sudden halt in the nineteenth century. New psychological and biological arguments about “woman's

nature” led to a changed significance of the crime. The unmarried mother who committed infanticide had supposedly become a creature of lessened sensibility and was therefore less accountable than a married mother who committed a similar crime. The natural motherly instinct was ineffective in the unwed mother. In all reforms of the penal code between 1830 and 1860, the killing of illegitimate children became a unique crime, less severely punished than others. In a parallel revision of matrimonial and family law, the unmarried mother’s claim of support was abolished with the argument that her situation was produced through wrong and that compensation would further encourage depravity (Michalik, this volume). The objective of social prevention shaped the discourse of the Enlightened eighteenth century and therefore the legal reforms derived from it.

New, polarized gender models were also established in the realm of religion. In Protestant churches, the pictorial and three-dimensional images of female spirituality, strength, and divinity as well as depictions of androgyny and gender crossing that were representative of the Baroque era were removed from churches on the grounds that they were offensive and shameful. These campaigns did not end in iconoclastic struggle but rather facilitated the replacement of the historical female images of the traditional virtues of antiquity—conceived as guides for both women and men—with those of middle-class domestic female virtues (Schäfer-Bossert, this volume). Microhistorical analyses based on autobiographical texts can demonstrate that the domestication of female spirituality did not occur without resistance. Pietist Beate Hahn refused to surrender her spiritual responsibility for the sake of marital obedience. Her status as a Pietist, inspired and called by God, enabled her to understand her life and family role as an overriding religious calling, even though this view led her to transgress the matrimonial command of wifely subordination. Her personal testimony shows, however, that she required great strength and energy to persist in view of these contradictory demands of religious responsibility and obedience. The discourse of the exclusive female virtues had replaced the individual spiritual agency of early modern women (Gleixner, this volume).

### **New Self-Consciousness through the Practice of Difference**

In the educated middle class, the new polarized gender roles did not necessarily lead to master-servant relationships; such roles could also

establish teacher-student relationships, which, in turn, could become more companionable through shared concerns and mutual attractions of the partners. Middle-class women learned letter writing and literary interpretation from their husbands and within two generations demanded professional education (Habermas, this volume). Nineteenth-century women enjoyed little empowerment in their own right; however, when fathers and husbands conferred rights and offered participatory roles, women could take on responsibilities that transcended the domestic realm.

### **Other Systems of Difference Sometimes Prevail over Gender**

The urban public sphere offers evidence that gender did not always constitute the prevailing system of difference. Questions of heritage, class, or republican conviction could in some cases be deciding factors. In the political economy of the commercial city of Stralsund, social climber Carl Ehrenfried Reimer could not prevent the remarriage of his former wife, Johanna Sophia Gebhard, daughter of one of the city's most important clergymen. She married Georg Emmanuel Charisius, a man of the old municipal elite. Reimer's honor was publicly injured through the divorce and remarriage, which the city saw as the consequence of his loss of control over his wife (Rabuzzi, this volume). In defense of republican values in the city of Hamburg, gender difference was not the decisive line of demarcation. Instead, a traditional understanding of republican patriotic culture struggled against a new notion of individualism and luxury imported from France. Fashion and lifestyle were themes in early-nineteenth-century occupied Hamburg, providing avenues for debates of change, republican virtue, and distance. In this process of negotiation, the traditional urban culture stood in conflict with the invasive foreign culture (Aaslestad, this volume). In this discourse, gender was a subordinate—but not irrelevant—category of difference. Numerous examples show that the anti-French rhetoric was bound up with antifeminist sentiment.

### **Notes**

We thank Dietlind Hüchtker and Ulrike Weckel for their comments and additions.

1. Merry Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, 1986); Merry Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany* (London, 1998); Barbara Vogel and Ulrike Weckel, eds., *Frauen in*

*der Ständegesellschaft: Leben und Arbeiten in der Stadt vom späten Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit* (Hamburg, 1991); Ulrike Gleixner, “Das Mensch” und “der Kerl”: *Die Konstruktion von Geschlecht in Unzuchtsverfahren der Frühen Neuzeit (1700–1760)* (Frankfurt, 1994); Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe* (London, 1995); Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women: The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres during the German Enlightenment* (New York, 1999); Heide Wunder, *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany* (1992; Cambridge, 1998).

2. On the concept “sexual system” see Isabel V. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815* (Ithaca, 1996).

3. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, 1990); Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750–1850* (Frankfurt, 1991); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston, 1993); Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jakob, eds., *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, 1994).

4. Iris Bubenik-Bauer and Ute Schalz-Laurenze, eds., *Frauen in der Aufklärung: “. . . ihr werten Frauenzimmer auf!”* (Frankfurt, 1995); Claudia Opitz, Ulrike Weckel, and Elke Kleinau, eds., *Tugend, Vernunft, und Gefühl: Geschlechterdiskurse der Aufklärung und weibliche Lebenswelten* (Münster, 2000).

5. Karin Hausen, “Family and Role-Division: The Polarization of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century—An Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family Life,” in *The German Family: Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee (London, 1981), 51–83; originally published as “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere’—Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas: Neue Forschungen*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart, 1976), 363–93.

6. Reinhart Koselleck, “Einleitung,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart, 1972–92), 1:xv.

7. Gisela Bock, *Women in European History* (Oxford, 2002), 32–81.

8. Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, 1988); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance and the French Revolution* (Berkeley, 1992).

9. Bock, *Women in European History*, 41.

10. Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, 1994), 11.

11. Katherine R. Goodman, *Amazons and Apprentices: Women and German Parnassus in the Early Enlightenment* (Rochester, 1999).

12. Claudia Honegger and Bettina Heintz, eds., *Listen der Ohnmacht: Zur*

*Sozialgeschichte weiblicher Widerstandsformen* (Frankfurt, 1981); Sylvia Wallinger and Monika Jonas, eds., *Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung: Studien zur bezwungenen Weiblichkeit in der Literatur vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, 1986); Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig, ed., *Bürgerliche Frauenkultur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1995); Magdalena Heuser, ed., *Autobiographien von Frauen: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte* (Tübingen, 1996).

13. Marie-Claire Hoock-Demarle, *La Rage d'Écrire: Femmes-Écrivains en Allemagne de 1790 à 1815* (Aix-en-Provence, 1990); Anne Fleig, *Handlungs-Spiel-Räume: Dramen von Autorinnen im Theater des ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1999).

14. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, 1989); Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, 1988).

15. Barbara Becker-Cantarino, ed., *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik: Epoche—Werke—Wirkung* (Munich, 2000); see also Barbara Becker-Cantarino, ed., *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit: Frau und Literatur (1500–1800)* (Stuttgart, 1987); Gisela Brinker-Gabler, ed., *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen* (Munich, 1988).

16. Ruth B. Emde, *Schauspielerinnen im Europa des 18. Jahrhunderts: Ihr Leben, ihre Schriften, und ihr Publikum* (Amsterdam, 1997).

17. Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven, 1988), 257–60. For a different interpretation, see Barbara Hahn, “Der Mythos vom Salon: ‘Rahels Dachstube’ als historische Fiktion,” in *Salons der Romantik: Beiträge eines Wiepersdorfers Kolloquiums zu Theorie und Geschichte des Salons*, ed. Hartwig Schulze (Berlin, 1997), 213–34.

18. Hertz, *Jewish High Society*, 271.

19. Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton, 1996), 4.

20. Jean H. Quataert, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Woman and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813–1916* (Ann Arbor, 1992), 295. On women's participation in nation building, see also Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 2000).

21. Carla Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton, 2001), 154–55.

22. Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, 1998).

23. Angelika Epple, *Empfindsame Geschichtsschreibung: Eine Geschlechtergeschichte der Historiographie zwischen Aufklärung und Historismus* (Cologne, 2003).

24. Ulrike Prokop, *Die Illusion vom Großen Paar*, vol. 1, *Weibliche Lebensentwürfe im deutschen Bürgertum, 1750–1770* (Frankfurt, 1991); Birgit

Panke-Kochinke, *Göttinger Professorenfamilien: Strukturmerkmale weiblichen Lebenszusammenhangs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Pfaffenweiler, 1993); Anne-Charlott Trepp, *Sanfte Männlichkeit und selbständige Weiblichkeit: Frauen und Männer im Hamburger Bürgertum zwischen 1770 und 1840* (Göttingen, 1996); Sylvia Möhle, *Ehekonflikte und sozialer Wandel: Göttingen, 1740–1840* (Frankfurt, 1997); Rebekka Habermas, *Frauen und Männer des Bürgertums: Eine Familiengeschichte (1750–1850)* (Göttingen, 2000).

25. Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoisies of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981), 3–52.

26. Wunder, *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon*; Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1993); see also Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State*; Ingrid Hotz-Davies, “‘Wives Submit Yourselves unto Your Own Husbands, as unto the Lord’: Das Problem der Untertänigkeit der Frau bei William Gouge, Rachel Speght, und Margaret Fell,” in *Text und Geschlecht: Mann und Frau in Eheschriften der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Rüdiger Schnell (Frankfurt, 1997), 197–213.

27. Smith, *Ladies*.

28. Bock, *Women in European History*, 63–64.

29. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London, 1992), 450.

30. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society*.

31. Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, 1996).

32. Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender a Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 1053–75; Joan Wallach Scott, introduction to *Feminism and History*, ed. Scott (Oxford, 1996), 1–13.

33. Franklin Kopitzsch, “Einleitung: Die Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Aufklärung als Forschungsaufgabe,” in *Aufklärung: Absolutismus und Bürgertum in Deutschland*, ed. Kopitzsch (Munich, 1976), 11–169.

34. See, for example, Winfried Schulze, *Einführung in die Neuere Geschichte*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1991); Wolfram Siemann, *Vom Staatenbund zum Nationalstaat: Deutschland, 1806–1871* (Munich, 1995).

35. Ute Frevert, “Bürgerliche Meisterdenker und das Geschlechterverhältnis: Konzepte, Erfahrungen, Visionen an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Bürgerinnen und Bürger: Geschlechterverhältnisse im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Frevert (Göttingen, 1988), 17–48.

36. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London, 1988); Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (London, 1989); Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Difference* (Princeton, 2000).

37. Karin Hausen, “Die Nicht-Einheit der Geschichte als historiogra-

phische Herausforderung: Zur historischen Relevanz und Anstößigkeit der Geschlechtergeschichte,” in *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte*, ed. Hans Medick and Anne-Charlott Trepp (Göttingen, 1998), 15–55.

38. See, for example, Jürgen Kocka, “Kontroversen um Frauengeschichte,” in *Geschichte und Aufklärung*, ed. Kocka (Göttingen, 1989), 45–52.

39. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York, 1986).

40. See, for example, Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven, 1977).

41. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

42. Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, 1988).

43. Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society*.

44. Scott, “Gender.”

45. Joan Kelly-Gadol, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston, 1977), 139.

46. Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford, 1989).

47. Sarah Hanley, “Engendering the State: Family Formation and State Building,” *French Historical Studies* 16 (1989): 4–27; Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, 2004).

48. Lynn Hunt, “The Challenge of Gender: Deconstruction of Categories and Reconstruction of Narratives in Gender History,” in *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte*, ed. Medick and Trepp, 85.

49. See, for example, Hufton, *Prospect before Her*.

50. Gianna Pomata, “Partikulargeschichte und Universalgeschichte—Bemerkungen zu einigen Handbüchern der Frauengeschichte,” *L’Homme: Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 2 (1991): 35.

51. Hunt, “Challenge of Gender,” 81.

52. *Ibid.*, 43.