PRELUDE

WAR, CULTURE AND MEMORY

In November 1816, an article on the latest exhibition at the Berlin Academy of Arts appeared in the *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt*. Held one year after the end of the 1813–15 wars against Napoleon, this exhibition was entirely devoted to "patriotic art."¹ One of the works introduced in the report was the diptych *On Outpost Duty – The Wreath-Maker* (see Figures 1 and 2), painted in 1815 by the Saxon artist Georg Friedrich Kersting, who had joined the artistic group of "Dresden Romanticism" some years before.² During and after the wars of 1813–15, Kersting expressed his German-national and early-liberal convictions in his paintings more explicitly than most of his artist friends.³ When he painted the diptych, the wars against Napoleonic France were coming to an end, and hopes for a German-national rebirth and greater political liberty were running high in the circles of "patriots"⁴ to which he belonged: reform-oriented, educated middle- and upper-class civil

¹ "Analekten: Die Berliner Akademieausstellung," ZfeW, no. 228, 19 Nov. 1816.

² On Kersting's biography and oeuvre, see also Hannelore Gärtner, *Georg Friedrich Kersting* (Leipzig, 1988); Werner Schnell, *Georg Friedrich Kersting* (1785–1847): Das zeichnerische und malerische Werk mit Oeuvrekatalog (Berlin, 1994); and Helmut Börsch-Supan, "Kersting, Georg," NDB 11 (1977): 539–541.

³ On patriotic German art in this period, see Renate Hartleb, ed., 1813: Die Zeit der Befreiungskriege und die Leipziger Völkerschlacht in Malerei, Graphik, Plastik, exhibition catalogue (Leipzig, 1989); Gerd Biegel and Christof Römer, eds., Patriotische Flugblätter, 1800–1815 und ihr Umfeld, exhibition catalogue (Braunschweig, 1990); Veit Veltzke, ed., Napoleon: Trikolore und Kaiseradler über Rhein und Weser, exhibition catalogue (Cologne, 2007); Michael Eissenhauer, ed., König Lustikl? Jérôme Bonaparte und der Modellstaat Königreich Westphalen, exhibition catalogue (Kassel, 2008); Veit Veltzke, ed., Für die Freiheit – Gegen Napoleon: Ferdinand von Schill, Preußen und die deutsche Nation, exhibition catalogue (Cologne, 2009); and Bénédicte Savoy, ed., Napoleon und Europa: Traum und Trauma, exhibition catalogue (Munich, 2011).

⁴ On the significance of this self-description, which was extremely widespread in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Bernhard Giesen, *Die Intellektuellen und die deutsche Nation: Eine deutsche Achsenzeit* (Frankfurt/M., 1993), 122–125.

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servants, officers, clergymen, educators, writers and artists whose objectives were the "liberation of the fatherland" and frequently more political liberty as well. His diptych depicts the complementary figures that embodied those hopes: young military volunteers and a "German maiden."⁵

On Outpost Duty, which Kersting himself had entitled "Theodor Körner, Karl Friedrich Friesen and Christian Ferdinand Hartmann on Outpost Duty," portrays three men who, like Kersting, served as volunteers in the Lützower Freikorps (Lützow Free Corps), which had been authorized by the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III one month before his declaration of war against France on 15 March 1813. The corps was to enlist into its ranks mainly "young men from abroad" - that is, from German regions outside Prussia - who could arm and outfit themselves. Because of its all-German composition and the activities and publications of its bestknown members, for the contemporary public and in collective memory it symbolized the German-national and early-liberal goals of the struggle for liberation.⁶ Among the most enthusiastic propagandists of the volunteer corps were Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Friedrich Friesen and Theodor Körner.7 Jahn, a Prussian teacher and journalist who is today known as the Turnvater - "the truly German father of gymnastics" - was one of the most influential activists of the early national movement. In 1810, together with his friend Friedrich Friesen, a teacher from Magdeburg, he began to build up a group of national-minded male gymnasts - the Turner.8 In the spring of 1813, Jahn's and Friesen's attempts to mobilize young men throughout Germany for the Lützowers were supported in no small part by an appeal from the popular young Saxon poet Theodor Körner, which had been distributed as a leaflet in Dresden, among other places, in early April 1813. Körner also supported the war effort with poems and songs, which became extremely popular in the volunteer movement. Körner's appeal challenged

⁵ For the following, see Karen Hagemann, "Gendered Images of the German Nation: The Romantic Painter Friedrich Kersting and the Patriotic-National Discourse during the Wars of Liberation," *Nation and Nationalism* 12 (2006): 653–679.

⁶ Peter Brandt, "Einstellungen, Motive und Ziele von Kriegsfreiwilligen 1813–14: Das Freikorps Lützow," in *Kriegsbereitschaft und Friedensordnung in Deutschland*, 1800–1814, ed. Jost Dülffer (Münster, 1995), 211–233. One of the many popular publications on the Lützowers in the nineteenth century was Karl von Lützow, *Adolf Lützows Freikorps in den Jahren* 1813–1814 (Berlin, 1884).

⁷ On their biography, see Horst Ueberhorst, ed., *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn:* 1778/1978 (Munich, 1978); idem, "Jahn, Friedrich Ludwig," NDB 10 (1974): 301–303; Christa Janic, "Ausgegraben: Friedrich Friesen oder Wie wird man ein deutscher Held?," WerkstattGeschichte 6 (1993): 22–34; Marianne Leber, "Friesen, Karl Friedrich," NDB 5 (1961): 613–614; René Schilling, "Kriegshelden": Deutungsmuster heroischer Männlichkeit in Deutschland, 1813–1945 (Paderborn, 2002), esp. 126–151; and Hans-Wolf Jäger, "Körner, Theodor," NDB 12 (1980): 378–379.

⁸ On the early gymnastic movement, see Dieter Düding, Organisierter gesellschaftlicher Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1808–1847: Bedeutung und Funktion der Turner- und Sänger-Vereine für die deutsche Nationalbewegung (Munich, 1984).

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the "arms-bearing young men of subjugated Saxony" to join the struggle for liberation and enter the ranks of the Lützow Free Corps, which he described as follows: "In our company there is no distinction of birth, station or country. We are all free men, defying hell and its confederates, whom we will drown, if need be with our own blood."⁹ Using similar rhetoric, he sought with his lyric poetry to mobilize young men for the wars as a struggle for both liberation and political liberty.¹⁰ By August 1813, the corps had grown to 3,666 men, with three-fifths of them from German-speaking "foreign countries," primarily from the Protestant areas of northern, central and western Germany.¹¹ Five hundred young men from Saxony alone joined the corps, among them the penniless Kersting, whose uniform and weapons were financed by his older and more-established painter friends Carl Gustav Carus, Caspar David Friedrich and Gerhard von Kügelgen.¹² In the corps he befriended Heinrich Hartmann, a law student and member of the patriotic student associations (*Burschenschaften*) from Thuringia.

Educated contemporaries in Berlin and elsewhere were well aware of the Lützow Free Corps; had surely heard of Jahn, Friesen and Körner; and very likely had read, listened to or personally sung some of Körner's lyrics, which were not only popularized in the poetry collection *Lyre and Sword*, published only one year after his death in August 1813, but also quickly set to music by such well-known composers as Carl Maria von Weber in 1814 and Franz Schubert in 1815.¹³ Contemporaries who saw Kersting's painting *On Outpost Duty* in the exhibition at the Berlin Academy of Arts in 1816 or read about it in a journal or newspaper understood its iconography.

The painting represented for them the German-national and early-liberal agenda of the wars of 1813–15 epitomized by the three bearded volunteers dressed in the black, red and gold uniform of the Lützowers and an "old German beret," all symbolizing their German-national aims.¹⁴ Kersting's

- ⁹ [Theodor Körner], "An das Volk der Sachsen, anonyme Flugschrift, 5. April 1813," in Die Erhebung gegen Napoleon 1806–1814/15, ed. Hans-Bernd Spies (Darmstadt, 1981), 269–270.
- ¹⁰ Karen Hagemann, "Of 'Manly Valor' and 'German Honor': Nation, War and Masculinity in the Age of the Prussian Uprising against Napoleon," *CEH* 30 (1997): 187–220.
- ¹¹ Brandt, "Einstellungen."
- ¹² On these painters, see Wolfgang Genschorek, *Carl Gustav Carus: Arzt, Künstler, Naturforscher* (Leipzig, 1980); Bernhard Knauß, "Carus, Carl Gustav," *NDB* 3 (1957): 161–163; Wolfgang Hofmann, *Caspar David Friedrich* (New York, 2000); Herbert Einem, "Friedrich, Caspar David," *NDB* 5 (1961): 602–603; Gerhard Schöner, *Gerhard v. Kügelgen: Leben und Werk* (Kiel, 1982); and Bernt von Kügelgen, "Kügelgen, Gerhard," *NDB* 13 (1982): 184–185.

¹³ Theodor Körner, *Leyer und Schwert* (Berlin, 1814, 2nd edn.); see also Susan Youens, *Schubert's Poets and the Making of Music* (Cambridge, 1999), 51–150. On Weber, see Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, "Weber, Karl Maria," *ADB* 41 (1896): 321–333; on Schubert, see Ernst Hilmar, "Schubert, Franz Seraph Peter," *NDB* 23 (2007): 609–612.

¹⁴ Hans Hattenhauer, *Deutsche Nationalsymbole: Zeichen und Bedeutung* (Munich, 1984), 9–39.

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diptych, however, was not merely an emphatic declaration of his belief in this agenda. At the same time, he created in it a memorial to three fallen friends, all of whom had died during the fighting of 1813–14: from left to right Hartmann, Friesen and Körner. The three Lützowers – marked as heroic by the Iron Cross medal on their chests – are keeping watch at an advance post on the frontier of the German fatherland, symbolized by the oak forest. They represent the German nation to the outside world as a valorous, manly community of brothers who are restoring their national and thereby their virile honor by liberating the fatherland from the French. Theodor Körner in particular was quickly stylized in contemporary discourse and collective memory as the very embodiment of the young German-national hero (*deutscher Heldenjüngling*) who voluntarily sacrifices his life to protect the "fatherland" from its enemies.¹⁵

The companion piece, *The Wreath-Maker*, represents the complementary interior image. The German oak forest, symbolizing the unified German nation, connects the two paintings. This nation is shared by both sexes, but assigns men and women different, gender-specific spheres of activity. Whereas the three men in *On Outpost Duty* are represented as individuals whose names are carved in the oak trees close to the young woman, her portrayal lacks individuality. In her plain, white, national dress and pinned-up blonde hair, she is the allegorical incarnation of the moral and domestic German maiden who emboldens men's fighting resolve, upholds virtue and modesty at home, greets and honors the returning victors with wreaths and commemorates the fallen heroes. For that very reason she is the ideal visual embodiment of the German-national war aims for which the three young heroes are fighting. The allegory of Germany as a young woman was quite widespread in the art, literature and poetry of the time.¹⁶

Kersting's complex diptych thus represents a gendered vision of the German nation that was popular in the patriotic circles of the small elite of educated middle- and upper-class men and women in Prussia and beyond at the time of the wars against Napoleon. They not only aspired to the liberation of their fatherland, but also to national unity within a confederation and greater political rights, especially a constitution. This German-national and early-liberal idea of the nation competed during and after the wars with a far more widespread notion of a Christian-conservative regional patriotism focused on the territorial state and its monarchical ruler, which was propagated by the Prussian and other territorial governments, the churches

¹⁵ Karen Hagemann, "German Heroes: The Cult of the Death for the Fatherland in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink et al. (Manchester, 2004), 116–134.

¹⁶ Monika Wagner, "Germania und Ihre Freier: Zur Herausbildung einer deutschen nationalen Ikonographie um 1800," in Volk – Nation – Vaterland, ed. Ulrich Hermann (Hamburg, 1996), 244–267; and Bettina Brandt, Germania und ihre Söhne: Repräsentationen von Nation, Geschlecht und Politik in der Moderne (Göttingen, 2010), 166–206.

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and army leaders. The two approaches thus represented competing visions of the future of the German nation and its political order that were debated with increasing vehemence during the wars of 1813–15 and the first postwar decades. Despite all political differences, the supporters shared an understanding of patriotism¹⁷ as the self-sacrificing "love of the fatherland," an adoration of German culture and language and similar ideas about the gender order. In the context of the war, these common ideas, which are also present in Kersting's diptych, created the unity beyond all political conflicts that was necessary for a successful war against Napoleon.¹⁸

After 1815, Kersting continued to paint explicitly patriotic subjects. In 1821 he exhibited *The Soldier's Farewell to His Family*, now lost, in the Dresden Academy exhibition, and in 1829 he showed his oil painting *The Outpost* there (see Figure 3). In this picture Kersting again portrays a volunteer. This time, however, he shows a solitary and isolated soldier on sentry duty, lying alone on a hill, far from his comrades and the civilization that is still suggested by the houses vaguely visible in the background. The middle-aged man, whose beret and full beard reveal his German-national allegiance, appears to be more melancholy than valorous. The color blue dominates the picture, intensifying the lonely, cold aspect of the volunteer, who is wrapped in his cape and clearly shivering. He no longer radiates the middle-class, manly self-confidence of the subjects in Kersting's earlier drawings and paintings. The nameless volunteer appears to be more doubtful, broken and ambivalent, mirroring Kersting's own situation at the time and that of the nation in general.

Kersting's paintings were not as well received by art critics in the 1820s as they had been during and immediately after the wars of 1813–15. A period of restoration had set in after the final victory over Napoleon in June 1815, and the national opposition movement increasingly became the target of conservative criticism and censorship. The *Turner* and the *Burschenschaften* as the vanguard of this movement were outlawed and their leading proponents persecuted following the Carlsbad Decrees of September 1819. In Prussia alone, 345 trials were held in the wake of these decrees.¹⁹ Kersting's paintings no longer fit the zeitgeist. Through his art, he had tried to support the

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¹⁷ "Patriotismus," in Conversations-Lexicon oder Encyclopädisches Handwörterbuch für gebildete Stände, ed. Friedrich A. Brockhaus, 10 vols. (Altenburg and Leipzig, 1814–1819), 9:306–307 (1817).

¹⁸ On the patriotic-national discourse of the time, see Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus*, 1770–1840 (Frankfurt/M., 1998); Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture*, 1806–1848 (Oxford, 2000); and Karen Hagemann, "*Mannlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre*": *Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens* (Paderborn, 2002). Important early studies of the national movement are Düding, *Nationalismus*; and Karin Luys, *Die Anfänge der deutschen Nationalbewegung von 1815 bis 1819* (Münster, 1992).

¹⁹ Düding, Nationalismus, 130–135.

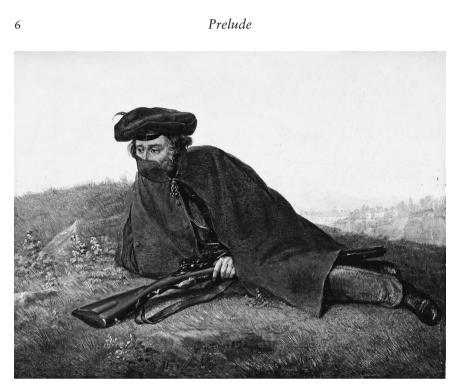


FIGURE 3 Georg Friedrich Kersting, The Outpost (*Auf Vorposten*), oil painting, 1829, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

early-liberal demand that the territorial states of the German Confederation created by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 award more political rights to the men who had valorously protected their fatherland and approve the promised constitutions. After the final victory, the conservative governments of the restoration period increasingly attempted to suppress such dangerous ideas. In 1818 Kersting had to abandon his attempts to make a living as a freelance artist and accept a position as supervisor of the designers at the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Meissen, near Dresden, which allowed him to marry and support a family. Kersting continued to paint in his leisure time, but he never again achieved the same reception as in the period during and immediately after the wars of 1813-15. He responded to the conservative political climate by changing his *sujet*, increasingly painting middle-class men and women performing gender-specific tasks in appropriate interiors. His German-national and early-liberal paintings were forgotten as the nineteenth century wore on. Kersting's name surfaced only sporadically in writings about art. On Outpost Duty - The Wreath-Maker was not shown again until the Third Reich, when it resurfaced as part of a 1936 exhibition on German Romanticism in Rostock. The reception in the Nazi press emphasized the nationalist aspects of the iconography in the

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two paintings and suppressed their liberal agenda.²⁰ After 1945 the two paintings were included in the permanent exhibition first of Charlottenburg Palace and later of the Old National Gallery in Berlin. Only recently have art historians rediscovered Kersting's oeuvre, although they usually continue to overlook its gender dimensions.

Kersting, his paintings and their changing reception (to the point of total oblivion) are a fitting starting point for a book on war, culture and memory focusing on the history of Prussia's wars against Napoleon between 1806 and 1815 and how they were remembered up to the First World War. Kersting's story encapsulates several themes that this book explores. Its aim is to rewrite the history of the wars by emphasizing the importance of the era's political culture for war mobilization; connecting the analysis of this culture and the contested contemporary perceptions of the wars with the study of the creation of collective memories; and focusing on the significance of gender and other constructed differences in these intertwined processes of the creation of meaning and memory. I use the concept of "political culture" here, broadly defined as the concepts, "values, expectations, and implicit rules that expressed and shaped collective intentions and actions."21 The focus of the study is on the highly contested discourses and symbolic practices by which individuals and groups made political claims in the broadest sense.²² The construction of competing memories played an important role in this hard-fought process. Although art and other visual representations were obviously very important in the intermedial creation of the collective memories, I decided to concentrate my analysis on textual representations and cultural practices to give the book a clearer focus. In the following Introduction I discuss in more detail the framework of the study, reflecting on the place of the wars in history, historiography and memory, and outlining my own approach.

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²⁰ Kunstverein Rostock, ed., Ausstellung Deutsche Romantik: Malerei und Zeichnung. 18. Oktober – 15. November 1936 im Städt. Kunst- und Altertumsmuseum (Rostock, 1936); and "Kersting im Kreis der Romantiker," Mecklenburgische Tageszeitung, no. 281, 1 Dec. 1936.

²¹ Lynn Hunt, Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution (Berkeley, CA, 1984), 10.

²² Here I follow Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), 4; for a more developed discussion of his approach, see 4–7.

INTRODUCTION

REVISITING THE WARS AGAINST NAPOLEON

In 2013, the media and museums throughout Germany began to mark the bicentenary of the last, ultimately victorious wars against Napoleon in 1813–15, which are usually referred to as the "Wars of Liberation."¹ Several academic conferences have debated the history of the period and a plethora of public events – including a vast reenactment of the central battle at Leipzig in October 1813, lectures, readings and "history festivals" – have recalled the wars.² Documentaries and other programs on television,³ newspapers and magazines,⁴ popular history books and bestselling historical

¹ See 1813. Auf dem Schlachtfeld bei Leipzig: Ein Rundgang durch das Gemälde "Siegesmeldung" von Johann Peter Krafft, exhibition catalogue, ed. German Historical Museum Berlin (Berlin, 2013); Volker Rodekamp, ed., Helden nach Maß: 200 Jahre Völkerschlacht bei Leipzig, exhibition catalogue (Leipzig, 2013); Gerhard Bauer, Gorch Pieken and Matthias Rogg, eds., Blutige Romantik: 200 Jahre Befreiungskriege – Essays, exhibition catalogue (Dresden, 2013); and Andrej Tchernodarov, ed., "Und Frieden aller Welt gebracht." Russisch-Preußischer Feldzug 1813–1814, exhibition catalogue (Berlin, 1813). The following introduction is to some extent based on Karen Hagemann, "Occupation, Mobilization and Politics: The Anti-Napoleonic Wars in Prussian Experience, Memory and Historiography," CEH 39 (2006): 580–610, "Desperation to the Utmost': The Defeat of 1806 and the French Occupation in Prussian Experience and Perception," in The Bee and the Eagle: Napoleonic France and the End of the Holy Roman Empire, ed. Alan Forrest and Peter Wilson (Basingstoke, 2008), 191–214, and "The Military and Masculinity: Gendering the History of the French Wars, 1792–1815," in War in an Age of Revolution, 1775–1815, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Förster (Cambridge, 2010), 331–352.

² See for example, http://www.mgfa-potsdam.de/html/aktuelles/54.itmg?teaser=o&PHPSESSI D=55b1336eeabbc69be4c65f1a34bdodao; http://www.voelkerschlacht-jubilaeum.de/home. html; and http://www.leipzig1813.eu/de/home.html (Accessed 17 December 2013).

³ See for example, http://www.mdr.de/voelkerschlacht/index.html (Accessed 17 December 2013).

⁴ For example, Jan Fleischhauer, "Der Parvenue als Kaiser," *Der Spiegel* 32 (5 May 2013); Gerd Fesser, "Die Stunde der Befreiung," *DIE ZEIT* 39 (16 October 2013); and "1813: Für Freiheit und Einheit! Die Deutschen gegen Napoleon," special issue of *Geschichte* 5 (2013).

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novels have re-narrated them.⁵ The hype around the anniversaries of the Napoleonic Wars began in 2005 in Britain, occasioned by the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar with a major exhibition on Nelson & Napoleon. Exhibitions in Austria, Germany, Italy, Russia and Sweden followed.⁶ The most recent include Napoleon and Europe: Dream and Trauma, a Franco-German project that was shown in Bonn in 2011 and in Paris in 2013. It explores "the close connection between the level of expectation that Napoleon created and the deep distress he caused."7 This book also emphasizes the ambivalence, frictions, ruptures and contradictions that marked the period of the wars of the Napoleonic Empire and the preceding French Revolution – which raged across and beyond the Continent between 1792 and 1815 - and its legacy. The sometimes sudden and dramatic transformations in the economy, politics, the military and society that characterized this time occurred unevenly across Europe and were accompanied by stagnation and the persistence of tradition in other areas of work and life, particularly in the culture of everyday life and mentalities. Contemporaries had to cope with the coexistence of accelerated change and cultural continuities, and the contradiction between universalist rhetoric and exclusionary practices.8 These ambivalences also formed the memories of the Napoleonic Wars from 1803 to 1815, which were at once national and European. The nation defined, following Benedict Anderson, as an "imagined community" - was the main framework in which most memories of these wars were initially constructed and in which they then evolved and circulated.9 Many European

- ⁵ For example, Steffen Poser, *Die Völkerschlacht bei Leipzig: "In Schutt und Graus begraben"* (Leipzig, 2013); Gerd Fesser, 1813: *Die Völkerschlacht bei Leipzig* (Jena, 2013); Hans-Ulrich Thamer, *Die Völkerschlacht bei Leipzig: Europas Kampf gegen Napoleon* (Munich, 2013); and Andreas Platthaus, 1813: *Die Völkerschlacht und das Ende der Alten Welt* (Berlin, 2013). The bestselling novel is Sabine Ebert, *Kriegsfeuer: 1813* (Munich, 2013).
- ⁶ For Germany, see Veltzke, Napoleon; Eissenhauer, König Lustik!?; Veltzke, Für die Freiheit; Savoy, Napoleon. Other important exhibitions include Margarette Lincoln, ed., Nelson & Napoléon, exhibition catalogue (London, 2005); and Jan Berggren, Bernadotterna och Helsingborg: 200 år sedan Karl XIV Johan landsteg i Helsingborg, exhibition catalogue (Helsingborg, 2010). Two of the major books that remember the Russian campaign are Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812: Napoleon's Fatal March (New York, 2004); and Dominic Lieven, Russia against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814 (London, 2009).
- ⁷ Savoy, Napoleon, 16–17.

⁸ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantic of Historical Time* (New York, 2004), 246.

⁹ Benedict R. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London, 2006). For the state of research, see Lloyd Kramer, Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775 (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011); and Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, eds., The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories (Basingstoke, 2011). On nation and war in the nineteenth century, see Jörn Leonhard, Bellizismus und Nation: Kriegsdeutung und Nationsbestimmung in Europa und den Vereinigten Staaten, 1750-1914 (Munich, 2008). A still useful introduction to the development of the conceptual debate is Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of