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Robert F. Spencer  
*University of Minnesota*

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# The German Paradox<sup>1</sup>

## (A Problem in National Character)

ROBERT F. SPENCER<sup>2</sup>

*University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

**ABSTRACT** — There has been considerable argument since World War II over whether the concept of a national character, such as might distinguish the Germans, the Japanese, the Russians, or any other contemporary national group, has any reality in fact. The present paper, operating on the assumption that there is a distinctive German character, one essentially different from that of the English, the Italians, the French, or the Russians, seeks to show, in terms of the processes of culture defined by anthropology, where German uniqueness lies. This, it is contended, rests not so much in factors of native psychology and social organization as it does in geographic position and in the German position in the stream of European history. The marginal position of the Germans, both in time and space, is a vital element in producing both excellence and excess.

### On Defining Germany

In 1789, Immanuel Kant surveyed his fellow Germans from his ivory tower in the little East Prussian city of Königsberg. His analysis was surprisingly felicitous, especially, be it remembered, since he was speaking of the behavior characteristics of citizens of a congeries of states — some major, some petty, but each an ostensible nation — and not of a single nationality. The German, he said, is honest and home loving, traits that make for phlegm instead of brilliance; he is industrious, saving, and cleanly; he possesses few of those qualities of alertness that make for genius; and he is persistent in both his reasoning and endurance. Able and intelligent, he lacks, nevertheless, sharpness of wit and refinement of taste. Among all civilized peoples, Kant noted, it is the German who becomes most docile under government. He fashions an elaborate hierarchy of rank and title, according more worth to these factors that promote a class structuring of society and a total absence of egalitarianism, than to natural ability. Further lacking confidence in his own abilities, he becomes imitative and methodical, fears to take an original step, and thus becomes pedantic (Kant. 1869:246-249).

Since 1789, the German nation has come into being; it has undergone the vicissitudes of empire, republic, and dictatorship, only to be torn asunder again in our own

<sup>1</sup>This essay, in attempting to come to grips with the elusive issue of national character, has benefited greatly as a result of conversations with Professor Don Martindale, Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley. Professor and, currently, Chairman, Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota, where he has taught since 1948.

Interests include culture history, comparative religions, and linguistics. Field investigations: Pueblo and Klamath Indians; Japanese-Americans; and Alaskan Eskimo. Research has also included Ceylon, Burma, and Turkey.

Along with numerous publications in general anthropology, is author of *The North Alaskan Eskimo: A Study in Ecology and Society* (Washington, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 171, 1959), *The Native Americans: Prehistory and Ethnology of the North American Indians*, with J. D. Jennings, et al. Harper & Row, 1965; editor of *Method and Perspective in Anthropology* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1954). Editor of the *Proceedings of the Minnesota Academy of Science* from 1958 to mid-1964.

day. Yet, despite the recently developed and essentially ephemeral national unity of Germany, despite localisms in custom and language — factors promoting regional particularism — Kant's characterization of his German countrymen seems as valid today as it did in that fateful year now nearly two centuries ago. These have been centuries of change and ferment in world history; centuries that have been roiled by the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Era and the Industrial Revolution. During this turbulence Germany coalesced into a single nation and reached its peak under Bismarck. If Bismarck's imperialism terminated with World War I, it was followed by the grosser imperialism of Hitler and the German disaster after World War II. Despite these vagaries of history, however, the German national character seems to have remained constant. Kant's adjectives seem still to be applicable and it seems evident that the actions and patterns that he described could never be applied to other Europeans.

The method that Kant employed to elicit his national type or characters — remembering that his interests extended beyond the German states and that he considered other Europeans as well — is hardly one that a contemporary social scientist could regard as valid. Kant's concept of an ethnic "soul," or "genius," that is at once both biological and historical, lays overmuch stress on intuitive judgment. Yet it is remarkable that even if a somewhat more detached and ostensibly objective methodology of analysis is employed, the results are not materially different from those to which Kant's intuitive reasoning led him, suggesting that essentially the same conclusions can be reached by other paths. Nevertheless, a somewhat more verifiable method and its applications are required.

It is necessary, first, to make one or two assumptions. It must be agreed, for example, that there is such a thing as a national character. At once, however, a problem arises since different levels must be considered. Western civilization offers a series of artifacts, beliefs, and points of view that can be quite sharply differentiated from those of other major areas of human development, such as China or India. And, of course, the Germans — like the Britons, French, Russians, Americans, and many

others — share in the common understandings of Western man. Hence, the point at which the German becomes differentiated from other participants in Western civilization is, paradoxically, also the point at which he begins to be similar. If, as Kant says, the German is to be characterized as pedantic, pedantry is by no means absent in the behavior of the English or French. If it be said that the German emphasis on social title obscures and minimizes individual growth and freedom of expression, a fixed social-class system can equally well be described for Italy, France, or Britain. Do such common points invalidate any appraisal of national character, German or otherwise? Some students of the problem argue in the affirmative. On the other hand, all experience does seem to point to the fact that there is a uniqueness in national behavior patterns, and that, however, much national enclaves may share in a totality of common tradition they hold in common local emphases and localized phrasings, and alignments of ideas and concepts.

A second assumption, equally important, holds national character to be an historical product. In this sense, history is to be understood as broadly comprehending both natural environment and geographical position as well as the totality of sociocultural development in time. A corollary to this assumption is that sociocultural development, whether German or any other, is a direct result of a process of learning. The point is an important one as it shifts the emphasis away from genetic or racial factors. Thus, when the Germans are considered, their ethos or "soul" must be viewed as based on a series of acquired understandings and not as innate. The Germans have been fighting aggressive wars with each other and others around them since the days of Caesar and Tacitus, and very likely before that. Does this mean that the Germans possess a genetically determined aggressive drive, that the Nazi movement is comprehensible only in terms of a vicious racial character? If this be true, then, obviously there is no living with the Germans in the modern world and surely no purpose in assisting and encouraging German rearmament. The aggressive pattern, however, does not appear among Germans who adapt themselves to other environments. They, like other immigrants to new social settings — better than most, in fact — adjust readily to new conditions. This is not to rule out certain kinds of genetic factors that may operate in segments of the German population, but to realize that the Germans, as is equally true of other Europeans living as national entities, are made up of many and diverse ethnic strains. Kant's racial soul can be questioned as well as national culture, such as the Germans seem to possess, for culture is never to be identified with race.

But if it is recognized that there is a German national character and that it is the product of its history, there is a tendency merely to type German behavior, or that of any national group, much in the way that Kant has done, and, thus, to fail to grasp the dynamic relation between history and culture. To type behavior, however such behavior may be derived, permits a statement that, on the surface, may be very interesting, but is this not merely a shorthand resolution of a problem that has far

greater dimensions? Even when the influence of history is considered, it seems legitimate to ask whether German national character is a result of historical accidents or whether the historical events themselves were brought about by actions and behavior that are peculiarly German. The question is not an idle one, nor is its answer so difficult of resolution as may appear at first glance, but it must be considered on differing levels of abstraction. To confuse history and psychology, society and culture, leads to the kinds of national characterizations that seem at best superficial. With these reservations, and still assuming that there is a German national culture, the problem arises of how it can best be delimited. In other words, who and what are the Germans?

A possible approach is to consider, first, what the Germans are not. This is admittedly troublesome, leading as it does to the syllogistic reasoning that Germans are Germans because they are not Poles. Somewhat more positively, and taking a cue from the anthropologist's experience with nonliterate peoples, a possible basis for ethnic definition can lie in language. Are Germans, then, those who speak German as a mother-tongue? Several problems arise at once. The German speech community does, of course, cross several international boundaries and would include not only the Austrians and the German-Swiss but also the German-speaking populations of such areas as Czechoslovakia and Poland. While the latter play a rather prominent role in recent German history, it is certainly clear that the Swiss, especially, but the Austrians, as well, despite some sense of linguistic identification, have pretty generally tended to shy away from pan-Germanism. Even within the vague national boundaries of Germany itself, the speech community is defined with difficulty because of several different levels of linguistic development and usage. When one dialect out of the many that can be listed in Germany begins to be so separated from its neighbors that it calls forth recognition as a distinct local language, linguistic uniformity is lost indeed. Dialect and local language are sharply set off from standard High German, the literary tongue (Lowie, 1945:4-13; and Lowie, 1954:5-15).

It is generally agreed that Luther's translation of the Bible set the tone for a conventional High German or *Schriftdeutsch*. But literary German, however, much it may reflect a classic spirit, is by no means the language of the folk. That there is today a somewhat more unified German language as a result of greater uniformity of education and the wider opportunity for communication afforded by press and radio, is probably true. This does not, however, erase the import of such separate languages as the North German *Plattdeutsch* or the *Schwyzertütsch* of German Switzerland, both independent literary languages, and it does not obscure the homely character of many local dialectic forms, both urban and rural, not excluding the Viennese or Berliner "cockney." Even the *Schriftdeutsch* has its local peculiarities. There is as much difference between the cultivated High German of North Germany and that of Austria as there is between British and American-English standards. Lowie, in his studies, points out that although Luther's choice of the official

language of the electorate of Saxony paved the way for a standardized High German, there were five major literary languages in the Holy Roman Empire of the day (Lowie, 1945:8-9). In the nineteenth century, localisms in speech tended to support a regional nationalism with the result that even scholars sneered at each other's versions of High German (Lowie, 1945:11). Again, in the twentieth century, Hitler's lack of linguistic elegance caused many cultured Germans to snicker. The language picture of Germany clearly offers nothing consistent. The classic Greek and Latin influences that developed in the German version of the Renaissance, coupled with the slavish copying of things French at the time of Frederick the Great, have only added to the German confusion of tongues. The patriotic Arndt is definitely wrong when he attempts to define his fatherland on the basis of language.<sup>3</sup>

But if it is recognized that the Germans cannot be identified as a racial group by a common language, what remains? If the Germans are not Poles, Frenchmen, or Italians, there is the suggestion of a political criterion. Some have held this to apply, but without coming to grips with the historic process as such. This is to say, in effect, that although Germany is made up of many political units that have existed both now and in the past, there is still a sufficient community of spirit that permits a resolution of the Germans as against other national groups. But this, too, it must be admitted, is wholly vague. After the period of the Germanic tribes and the *Völkerwanderungen*, after the time of the feudal baronies of the Dark Ages, there arose, not without uneasy travail, the holy Roman Empire. (One may echo Voltaire's contemptuous epigram that it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor yet an empire.) Despite the many petty principalities making up the so-called Empire, the German states developed something of a tradition of unity, however tenuous. Is it possible, then, to regard the German character and nation as stemming from the historical fact of empire? Clearly not since, on the face of it, the Holy Roman Empire remained a fiction, demanding no patriotic allegiance of its citizens. Just as in the case of the local language loyalties, so also with the body politic: there was identification with town, guild or parish, district, state, or province, but the nationalistic values and privileges of citizenship in Imperial Rome never carried over to its latter-day descendant.

One need consider only the somewhat more recent history of Germany to note the absence of a concerted drive toward unity. Bismarck had the task of upsetting an enforced separation that was convenient and congenial to the conquering French under Napoleon I. Although there was a brief flurry of emergent political nationalism in the Napoleonic period it was short-lived.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lowie (1954:8)

So weit die deutsche Zunge klinget  
Und Gott in Himmel Lieder singt;  
Das soll es sein!  
Das, wackrer Deutscher, nenne Dein!

(Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland? 1813,  
by Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860))

Bismarck's success appears to have depended on his methods of "blood and iron" and suggest a nationalism imposed from the top down and lacking popular spontaneity (Heuss, 1957). Similarly, it required the imposed racist theories of Hitler and the Nazis to break down the barriers of locality, class, and group. The Nazis created unity negatively, by force it is true, but also by means of scapegoat techniques. The permissible conclusion seems to be that a historical basis does not exist for German unity and, certainly, there is no deeply rooted sense of national identity. The two Germanies of today, a free federal union in the west, a communist-dominated totalitarian union in the east, need occasion no surprise. Both, as federal states, offer a reflection of a continuing concern with local autonomy and provincialism.

The absence of political unity is offset by the common stereotype of the German whose fervent love for fatherland is all but proverbial. And, indeed, the rather maudlin sentiments expressed in such a poem as Arndt's suggest a strong preoccupation with patriotic nationalism. But one is obliged to question German patriotism. Kant made a special point of the fact that the German lacked a passionate attachment to his homeland. This is why, he said, the German emigrates so readily, adjusts to conditions in alien lands, and, in fact, wins praise because of his solid qualities of thrift, order, and cleanliness. Actually, despite the many (and rather minor) poets of the nineteenth century, especially those who held themselves to be spokesmen for a German nationalism—praising at length the stolid German virtues—one is never sure whether the Prussian poet means to include Bavaria in his German fatherland or whether the Westphalian is really thinking of his Hessian neighbor. The idea and ideal of a whole Germany, a national state evoking deep emotional associations, is, thus, not only late in developing but often forced. The result is that patriotic and nationalistic zeal lacks depth and quality; when it is expressed, it seems to strike a false note. In this, as in so many other aspects of their behavior, the Germans become extreme and their overt expressions of the nationalistic ideal, however put forth, reach rather ludicrous heights of ecstatic and cloying sentimentality. Actually, patriotism among the Germans is a phenomenon associated not with land and the institutions serving to weld the land together in formal ways, such as governmental authority, or the symbol of flag, but, rather, with a view of self and egotistic morality. As will be seen, the German view of *Kultur* and its implied moral superiority is far more fundamental than the *patria* idea of Britain and the United States.

If the concept of the German national state possesses a degree of mediocrity, it is, on the other hand, the great German poet who far transcends it and is indifferent to German destiny apart from humanity. The cosmopolitan figure, the vigorous and outstanding creator in the German arts, is a German paradox. Indifferent to *Kultur*, he nevertheless fosters and makes it. Heine's idealism and insight led him to despair of a German fatherland, while Schiller and, especially, Klopstock, although influenced in their writings by a sense of German history, tradition and destiny, emerge as pan-humanists, not as German

patriots. Goethe, in turn, was rejected by the Nazis precisely because of his indifference to things pan-German. Historically and conceptually, there is virtually no German state and surely, no tenable definition of Germany in nationalism or patriotism.

Thus, Germany, whether through the eyes of the outsider or the Germans themselves, becomes increasingly difficult to pinpoint. It is particularism, not nationalism, or national unity, that characterizes the Germans. Local interest and association pit north against south, east against west. It makes the Bavarian, with his particular idiom, identify with Munich, the Brandenburger with Berlin, and the Austrian with Vienna. It sets off a city such as Hamburg, still taking pride in its ancient Hanseatic heritage, and holds it aloof from intra-German entanglements so that its association with Prussian Empire and Third Reich is most reluctant. Until the Industrial Revolution—a process of change that entered Germany relatively late—and its accelerated pace and tempo of life, the German town and countryside retained something of its mediaeval color. The peasantry of the predominantly rural landscape retained its folk patterns. Not only localisms in speech but, far more, those in custom, religious festival, costume, house construction, and farm and village arrangement, suggest confusion and the total absence of a consistent pattern. Nor, despite modern complex lines of communication, have local loyalties and usages given way; on the contrary, one sees again, here and there, the distinctive regional peasant dress. It would not be surprising to see local customs again emerging along with local dialect.

Lowie, in his appraisals of the Germans, was so struck by these particularistic German developments that he found great difficulty in delimiting the total German sphere. His was essentially a sociological interpretation that permitted the analysis of particular aspects of social organization, such as social classes, urban, and rural developments, and familial arrangements: all of which show some uniqueness that might be defined as distinctively German. The difficulty arises, however, when sections of Germany are compared with each other; as much difference in overt organization and structure may be seen then as exists between the British and French, or the Germans and Italians, taken at large. Lowie suggested the possibility of eliciting one or two dominant themes in the total entity of things Germany. If Western civilization and all that the phrase implies is a continuum, Germany has a special place on it, but one that shades off gradually into that of neighboring peoples (Lowie, 1954:354-356). Granted that the distinctive German phrasing of Western civilization is discernible from that of Britain, France, Russia, or any other Western nation, the question still remains of how this special German development is made manifest and definable.

When attention is focused on German social structure and its associated behavior, it can be seen that distinctive attributes of the German character are observable in both the kinds of social forms that the Germans have fashioned and the ways in which Germans respond to their social institutions. These characteristic German organiza-

tions and behavior can yet be regarded from another perspective: defining the whole of Germany as a culture, one that exhibits a series of consistent and predictable patterns despite local and particularistic phrasings. Thus, it is possible to step behind the overt phenomena, behind the elements that make up the external structure and the associated observable ways of acting and behaving, and reach the postulates and premises underlying the culture and the historical causes of them.

But, again, it is necessary to make certain reservations. At the present time there is a vast number—a plethora indeed—of attempts to evaluate German national character. Many amount to no more than short-hand psychologizing to explain historical events. Germany has become a favorite target for such approaches, particularly since the Nazi excesses so appalled the world. The psychologizing of history can be noted, for example, in the person of Martin Luther who has been held by many to represent a prime case study of the “authoritarian personality” (Fromm, 1941:40-102). From this, it is argued that there is a basis for understanding the pattern of dominance-submission relationship that is applicable both to Lutheran theology and German society. Reserving this point for a moment, suffice it to say that psychology, whether individual or social, does not quite hold the dynamic explanation of social behavior in national terms. A criticism can be made precisely because, given a distinctive feature such as the authoritarian institutions that some societies have evolved, the institutions will function differently in different settings. If one can discuss the authoritarianism that operates within the characteristic institutions of German society and culture, it is obvious that one is not discussing the same kind of authoritarianism that was found in Japan or characterizes contemporary Egypt or Spain. This is not to deny the place of authoritarian character or personality in the German setting, but to recognize that it occurs among Germans in a pattern peculiar to Germans. A German personality, assuming that such a construct can be formulated, reflects a distinctive and idiosyncratic way of behaving that, in turn, is resident in the special kinds of definitions, premises, and understandings that mark German culture. Culture is not psychology and must be perceived differently.

By the same token, neither the German national character nor that of other nations can be explained in terms of events. Any culture is an historic product but is not the result of specific events. It is, rather, engendered by historic process. Nor can historic process be evaluated in wholly mechanistic terms. A view of manifest destiny, holding, in effect, that the seeds of Nazism were sown when the first Germans wandered into Bavaria and the Rhineland, or that in Martin Luther is born Adolf Hitler, cannot be cavalierly dismissed. One may incline to agree with Spengler that had Goethe died young, the spirit of *Faust* and *Tasso* would still have been present, even if to materialize in another form. But, on the other hand, such a view fails to recognize that history, like natural environment, imposes limits only to a degree. There is

latitude within the framework that history creates; the event itself can redirect the process.

The point is worth making, especially since, in modern terms, so much explanatory analysis has been dependent on interpretations of historical happenings themselves. The Treaty of Versailles undoubtedly created a situation in which an especially heavy blow was dealt to German hopes and in which, for the moment at least, a nascent imperialist spirit was crushed. There is no questioning the fact that the wrecking of Germany following the Treaty paved the way for some kind of resurgence. Versailles explains defeat, punishment, economic upheaval, and momentary societal disorganization; it does not explain why the Germans possessed sufficient toughness to rise again within a few short years. Nor can it offer a clue to the understanding of the peculiar patterning of aggression that Nazi Germany fostered. Twice within a generation the Germans have gone down to abysmal defeat. Yet each time they have come back. A nation or culture with a different kind of organization than the German might have shown continued dispirited disorganization. Why Germany should possess its remarkable resilience, why it should be able to rise phoenix-like from its defeats, are questions that call for historical explanations in the broadest sense, interpretations in the light of the broadest cultural analysis.

With all the foregoing reservations, one comes at last to a definition of the Germans. History and psychology and, particularly, depth psychology, as it has been applied so widely in recent years to the concept of national character, have their important places, but, like the historic conditions of economic, political, or social events, or, indeed, like social institutions themselves, they should not be confused with the cultural fabric in which the events occur. Although an approach to national character is necessarily eclectic, its roots lie in a concept of national culture.

**The Germans can thus be regarded as those Europeans who possess a specialized and particularized set of fundamental points of view and values that, interacting with a process of history, set them off from other groups in the community of Euro-American civilization.**

#### **Germany's Marginal Culture — The Time is Out of Joint**

If the problem of the German paradox can be resolved primarily on the basis of an understanding of the processes of cultural history, culture as such is to be understood in two related and yet somewhat different perspectives: on the one hand, a culture is a product of its history; more than this, a culture represents a specific kind of organization, a total constellation that is made up of elements—both material and nonmaterial—brought together in special ways and reflecting a distinctive alignment. Human behavior in culture mirrors this special kind of integration. If the puzzle of Germany is to be solved in cultural terms, one must look for causal factors in the culture-historic process and, at the same time, find the effects of such processes in level of integration

and in the peculiar and distinctive behaviors that the Germans exhibit.

National character or, better, national culture, it is agreed, exists as a related set of behavior patterns, attitudes, and values that singularly identify that integrated ethnic whole commonly called a nation. Remembering that the concern here is not with the political state as such but, rather, with a set of actions, beliefs, patterned ways of thinking and doing, it is possible to single out the German entity and to recognize a set of common understandings that, when given behavioral motion, are distinctively German. To state the matter in a somewhat different way, a German culture is resident in the characteristic series of premises or postulates—values in short—that lies behind the behavior identified as German. German values are, of course, those of Western civilization and are shared with other nations that participate in the total Western development, but the values are shaped and given meaning by the peculiar accidents of German history and the German geographical position and, further, are given reality in the action of the German individual and the German group.

No German questions the fundamental premises of Western civilization. Such concepts and values as those relating to human dignity and perfectability, progress, or the triumph of goodness over evil, are as much a part of the German heritage as that of Britain, France, or the United States. It is precisely here, in fact, that the non-German begins to balk, to view with amazement and even horror the kinds of excesses of which the Germans seem capable—behavior that seemingly represents a flagrant rejection of the deeply rooted and commonly shared values of Western man. Nor does it seem that the problem can be airily dismissed in rationalization. It is all very well laboriously to explain that the Nazis were a criminal and gangster element, that “good” Germans were really unaware of Nazi aspirations and acts, or that the German masses succumbed to false propaganda (Röpke, 1948: 74-78). This is rationalization, indeed, and fails to account for the display of an intense patterning of hostility and hatred, the solid front of National Socialism, genocide, and war guilt. (This is not to point a moral finger, nor even to denounce or condemn recent German acts.) The Nazi state and World War II suggest a behavioral excess that it is possible to find in other aspects of German life as well. National Socialism thus can be regarded not as a cause but as an effect of something resident in German culture (Kohn, 1949:157-172). It begins to appear as though the basic values of Western civilization are either rooted lightly in the Germans or are skewed in such a way as to be incomprehensible to the non-German.

How the Germans have given a slightly different weighting to Western man's fundamental points of view calls for some further comment. The Western ideal, for example, permits a high degree of articulate expression in the various forms of art. But, as the German arts are examined, this ideal is seen to be hemmed in with qualities of brooding sullenness or touched with the brush of incurable romanticism. Absent is the lighter touch and a

certain dignity perhaps; there is also, however, a ponderous quality. Like Faust, the German hero assumes too much; his very earnestness becomes oppressing to himself. Such evaluations are admittedly subjective but in them one begins to discover the features that set off the Germans from other national cultures in the total Western configuration. German culture begins to offer a series of variations on the major theme of Western civilization. A culture is a whole, an integrated totality of value and belief, social structure and psychological elements, worked on and shaped by the process of history. When these total aspects of content and process are analyzed, the German ethos begins to emerge as the result of some specialized rephrasings of major leit-motifs characteristic of the West.

An examination of Germany *qua* culture, embracing both history and psychology, obviates a problem of some contemporary importance. In the modern context of the social sciences it is fashionable to lay the burden of explaining national behavior at the door of national psychology. Lewis Mumford, for example, sees the roots of Naziism in the "human soul" and states, "In overwhelming pride, delight in cruelty, neurotic disintegration — in this and not in the Treaty of Versailles or in the incompetence of the German Republic lies the explanation of Fascism" (Mumford, 1940:118). The psychiatrist, Eric Fromm, on the other hand, justly impatient with so patently mystic a view, holds that Naziism is fundamentally a psychological problem, one that follows a particular psychological direction because of an interaction with socio-economic factors (Fromm, 1941:208). There is no argument with the latter position save that one dimension of importance is omitted: neither politics nor economics, nor yet the peculiar features of German psychology — however much these may indeed all interact — are wholly comprehensible out of context from the totality of German culture.

The problem thus remains of defining these dimensions of German culture. Two elements necessary to such a definition have been suggested. If it be regarded as axiomatic that a culture is an historic product, it is also held that a culture is a structured whole. The parts of such a total entity, whatever they may be, whether material and technological, political, economic, or religious, social or psychological, coalesce to form the whole structure. In this total sociocultural *Gestalt* they are interdependent. This definition, applied to Germany, as indeed it may be to any human group, suggests the interdependence of all human activity within a culture. There can be no adequate understanding of German political institutions without reference to the German family; family and state in turn relate to social class, to economic organization and to religious values. All such human institutions, in any culture, complement and balance one another in their interaction. Granted, however, that the problem is first one of structure, of the series of inter-related parts, there is also the dimension of the distinctive way in which the parts are assembled. This is the integration of the culture, the aspect that permits characteristic definition. This suggests that it is possible to elicit a

dominant chord, a leitmotif or primary expression, that may be traced through every facet of a given culture.

How valid is such a concept? It is a familiar one, admittedly, resting as it does in the historical idealism of Spengler and founded primarily in Nietzschean doctrines. Further, it has found its way into contemporary social scientific thought.<sup>4</sup> The authoritarianism of the Germans, for example, which emerges as a dominant-submissive relationship in so many contexts of observable German behavior, is often held up as a kind of keystone of German social structure. One cannot deny that empirically, authoritarian behavior among the Germans has been pretty well demonstrated. But, conversely, the striving German spirit and the progressive ideal, which are couched particularly in the romantic framework, are also significant attributes of the German character. There need be no contradiction nor, in fact, is there any. The individual who lives in the familiar framework of his culture, taking its orientations for granted and, indeed, being unaware of them, is always confronted with an imperfect structure and implicit contradiction. Western man as a whole, in fact, although stressing such values as human dignity and the worth of human life, still finds little difficulty in accepting war as a solution to certain kinds of problems. Culture is the entity in human life and affairs that establishes a framework of the familiar and permits the resolution of daily problems in acceptable and predictable ways.

This is not to suggest that culture is a static entity; on the contrary, any culture and, particularly, one as complex as Germany's, is constantly confronted with the problem of reintegrating parts subjected to change. But the changes that occur are in line with existing patterns of internal arrangement. In respect to Germany or, indeed, any culture, the ways in which total sociocultural integration is achieved and the level of integration — i.e., whether the organization is tightly knit or loosely connected and mobile, or whether there is receptivity to new ideas — become a hallmark permitting specific identification (Steward, 1951). As the many human cultures are reviewed, it is evident that some are put together more effectively than others or, to put the matter more technically in language suggested above, there are differing levels of integration. German culture is made up of parts that do not seem to dovetail as well or completely as do other European units, especially, Britain and France; and, considering Europe as a temporal continuum, Germany makes a poor second to Renaissance Italy or the Spain of Charles V, in both of which a kind of integrative peak was reached. The question arises — what has happened in the case of the Germans to make this so?

The problem can be resolved historically by directing our attention to those special developments that, taken together, produce the flavor or climate of the existing cultural entity. What is implied here is an efflorescence — i.e., a specialized cultural growth — occurring in a point in time. It seems evident, from the lesson of history, that

<sup>4</sup>The concept is variously expressed in the work of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and his followers, in Malinowski's ideas on functionalism, and in the work of Talcott Parsons and others.



when one facet of a culture spurts or expands, others follow suit, resulting in a sudden and intensive total growth. This holds especially for the development of new ideas and inventions, and is a reflection of a cultural climate in which appear new wealth and geographic expansion, and developments in art and thought, science, and the appearance of a highly stable social order. Added to this may be a high degree of individual participation in the country's development, as well as an expanded opportunity to share in the benefits of the total culture and, indeed, of human freedom. Those cultures that follow such a course of integrated expansion leave a mark on the pages of human history and, by virtue of their contributions, become centers of civilization. They are many, and it is necessary only to recall Periclean Athens, Han China, or Elizabethan England to obtain a perspective.

Why such growths should take place need not be examined at length. The ancient river systems of the Tigris, the Nile, the Chinese Hoang Ho, or the Indus-Ganges in India, were crossroads where many peoples bearing many ideas came together and were stimulated to develop their ideas. If the Roman Empire represented a shift of culture to Italy, in the ancient world, it created in the Augustan age, at least, a period in which the ideologies of many peoples were given free exchange and expression. It is a principle of culture history that when exchange ceases and is replaced by isolation, cultural stagnation occurs. So it was in Europe in the Dark Ages. Not until the Crusades did Europe return to its heritage of civilization when Hellenism was rediscovered through the rich culture of the Arabs. As a result of interactions with latter-day Byzantium, the rise of the Italian Renaissance was promoted.

But where such crossroad situations have not existed, where cultures have grown in essential isolation, the kind of climactic development that characterizes a culture center does not take place. Here are the marginal cultures, less inclined to invent and more prone to borrow the ideas and inventions of others. Also, characteristic is the absence of well integrated unity. This means that the marginal culture, although able to refine and improve, and to achieve heights of greatness in one or another area, so fails to keep its other facets in balance that an impression of distortion is conveyed. Such marginality is, in part, a function of geography, in that the marginal culture is usually located away from a crossroads center. A result of such historical and geographical marginality may be discerned in cultural behavior that reflects a marked sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The marginal culture, uninventive itself, is a receiver rather than a giver of ideas and, consequently, frequently finds itself in a dilemma. By nature conservative, it is indifferent to innovation, rigid in its social structure and, indeed, often puritanical in defense of its own institutions; thus, it is often confronted with wholesale change as influences reach it from more stable central cultures. The result, when conservatism and change war with each other, may be revolution.

The classic example of the marginal culture is unquestionably Japan, both in its modern dependence on the

West and in its ancient and medieval relations to China. Located as it is on the edge of Asia, Japan was able to borrow selectively from the Chinese culture center. In modern times, the Japanese chose to follow the example of the West, resulting in a curious hodge-podge, composed of Chinese elements, Western technology, and yet a distinctive Japanese spirit. For, although the growth and development of Japan's culture are dependent on the diffusion of culture elements from abroad, the Japanese nation is an entity in itself and possesses its own characteristic flavor. The Japanese have made of traits that they have borrowed something peculiarly their own. Thus, the Japanese took over the Chinese system of writing but adapted it to their own linguistic needs by the invention of a secondary syllabic script. They adopted Chinese Buddhism but related it to their own ancestral cult and their own version of the patriarchal family. Japan refined to an extreme such basic Chinese ideas as drama, architecture, the tea ceremonial, and painting. Although they modified by diffusion the cultural elements that reached them, they could also afford to be selective. The Chinese system of bureaucracy and the Confucian ideal of the state could not be adjusted to existing Japanese social institutions. Similarly, in taking over ideas from the West, the Japanese improve and refine but, again, do not invent. They become scientific specialists and high-grade technicians yet contribute almost nothing to science as such. They avidly read Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming, Bodhidharma, Descartes and Schopenhauer, but they are not philosophers. From the example of Japan, it can be seen that the development of marginal cultures proceeds in spurts as it borrows or rejects elements from the more effectively integrated culture centers. The marginal cultural controls its own destiny but does little to further it.

Germany, in relation to the total history of Europe and that of Western civilization at large, is such a marginal culture. The concept of greatness, while admittedly subjective, permits evaluation in the sense of an ultimate, whether of form or idea. Germany has unquestionably produced greatness in many aspects of its development—in developing new forms and concepts—but it is characterized, on the whole, by a lack of inventiveness. Not, of course, that the Germans reach the same marginal extremes as the Japanese—their geographical position precludes this—but in a general way the same process is discernible. Germany does not show the clustering of achievement that is characteristic of more centrally located national cultures; the historic process is sporadic and the element of greatness is disjointed. The result is a kind of chaos in which two significant developments have occurred: on the one hand, there has developed in the German national culture a maelstrom of ideas imperfectly aligned and conceived. In this setting, cultural rigidity and an intensity of societal stability, factors held constant despite variability in historic circumstance, serve as an overt bulwark against sociocultural pressures from the outside. On the other hand, however, when genius does appear on the German scene, it is faced with the dilemma of being German or not German. When Ger-



man greatness is recognized by the world, it is the greatness of the cosmopolitan — the universalist — who is successful despite German marginality. In music and literature, especially, where the Germans have made their most significant contributions to culture, or again in thought, where the world debt to outstanding Germans is acknowledged, the concern has ever been with problems of humanity — not Germans only — in the broadest sense.

As one moves farther northward in Europe and away from the central developments of the Italian Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment in France, or even from the political stability afforded by the Spanish Habsburgs or the age of Elizabeth I, genius becomes less well focused. England, it is true, does not show quite the same intensity of tradition as marks Italy or France, but the total British development in literature on the one hand, and in imperial growth on the other, is sufficient to admit a discernible and characteristic British pattern. Germany and Russia share a like place in that their characteristic constellations are difficult to define. While figures of note emerge in both countries to mark particular epochs, it is in no case possible to define Russian or German periods with the same exactness that one can delimit Shakespeare's England. Neither the Gothic age nor Luther's era can be designed as specifically German; and *Sturm und Drang*, a notable German epoch, it is true, appears as a one-sided reflection of German marginality, Frederick the Great (whose greatness appears to rest in his emulation of things French), like his Russian counterpart, Peter, created political spheres that seem to suppress rather than further cultural spontaneity. Further north in Europe, in Scandinavia and the Low Countries, much the same problem exists. They are marginal areas in which there is disparity in total growth. One thinks of the Dutch and Flemish painters, of course, and Ibsen, Grieg, and, perhaps, Sibelius. There was a great age of Swedish science, but no comparable developments in literature, art, or philosophy. In these remoter areas, with smaller populations than either Germany or Russia, culture-historical development takes a somewhat different turn. The conclusion is that the cultures of Europe that are central can be defined exactly. Their internal cultural achievements tend to cluster and reach definable apices and climaxes. The marginal cultures do not show the same consistent unfolding.

The German place as a marginal culture thus carries with it the burden of lack of homogeneous development. The absence of a concerted integration of the elements of which German culture is made up causes the German historical record to appear inconsistent and spotty. The great literary age that begins with Klopstock and Lessing brings to mind at once Goethe and Schiller, but is not paralleled consistently in other areas. And here also the Germans agonized over problems of tradition, already resolved elsewhere, with a soul searching that was considerably more intense than in other countries. The search for improvement in the inventions of others is paradoxically allied with resistance to innovation and with rigidity. A classic example comes out of the modern context: Italians, never too noted as persistent or indefatigable

engineers, invented the jet airplane engine but Germans found the solutions to the technical problems of practical jet flight and applied the principle to the guided missile. German traditionalism, so characteristic a feature in the marginal culture, has tended to stifle invention throughout. Even where the inventor achieves a measure of success he seems to remain the prophet without honor in Germany. The case of Marx is suggestive on the one hand, while Freud, working in liberal Vienna, faced far greater odds than if he had been a Londoner or Parisian.

It follows that Germany's place as a marginal culture, remembering that it is the total culture itself that is in question, can be subjected to a series of tests. In essence, these are developmental and historical, permitting analysis in comparative terms of components of German achievement. Where, for example, do the Germans stand, in relation to the rest of Europe, in respect to the growth of philosophic systems, science, the arts — such as literature, music and painting — or the growth of the politically integrated state as such? In comparison to other European national cultures, the Germans rank quite high in some of these developments and extremely low in others. This striking disparity in German cultural growths is lent perspective only when viewed in terms of a comparative time sequence. In the Middle Ages, when the Church was a dominant force on the face of Europe, and feudal law, medieval scholasticism, and the Carolingian and Othonian heritage were uppermost, there is little to choose between Germany and France or Britain. German knights were in the forefront of the Crusades along with other Western Europeans. But when classicism made its return, when the worldly humanism of Italy began to change the color of the European scene, Germany suffered a lag. Overshadowed by Henry VIII and Francis I, by the splendors of Madrid and the petty yet highly sophisticated Italian courts, the German princes clung with tenacious stubbornness to their last vestiges of Gothicism and feudalism. And later, it was a psychological expatriate, the sullen Frederick the Great, who sought to recapture in Potsdam the French glories of a past century and generation.

These points suggest that the culture-historic process operated among the Germans in ways different from those affecting other sections of Europe. When the temporal aspects of German development are considered, it can be demonstrated that the whole of German culture possessed a particular kind of integration, in which the total constellation of the component elements was, in essence, different from that of neighboring nations.

### German Thought

The point has been made that the Germans, in accordance with their marginal cultural place, have subjected ideas of refinement but have not been inventors. In the development of philosophical systems in Germany, this feature is clearly demonstrable. As with other aspects of cultural growth, the German time lag is evident. Not only do systems of thought arise later in Germany than in other segments of Western Europe but, as a result of marginality, a process of selectivity has been at work.

The Germans have been free to make certain kinds of choices, accepting one point of view, exhibiting indifference to another; and indeed, once a choice has been made, intellectual growth is influenced. Thus, although it is apparent that Kant was stimulated by Descartes, Locke, and Hume, and although he developed his system in the framework of Western culture out of which the Cartesian and other systems also have come, his twisting of his materials paved the way for another paradox—the fact that an avowed human free will is pitted against the existing rigidity of a social system. To understand what the Germans have done in their intellectual life—creating elaborate philosophical systems—it is necessary to understand the consequences of marginality and cultural time lag: lack of balance and extremism.

With respect to the growth of the German philosophical schools and systems, the initial question is that of temporal development. Intellectual life reflects society and cultural premises and serves also to stabilize and justify social norms; it is an index of culture process and may be examined as a factor in the kind of total socio-cultural integration that the Germans have achieved. Thus, two aspects of the emergence of German thought are to be considered: on the one hand, there is the essential delay in the growth of what might be called characteristic and distinctive German systems; on the other hand such systems, arising in the climate of German culture, are in themselves forces that defend the past and channel the future.

For purposes of this discussion, and in the light of the foregoing considerations, thought may be defined in its very broadest context. It may be said to include all facets of those abstract intellectual movements that, propounded by intellectuals in the cloisters and university centers, have come to influence and shape the cultural setting of Germany. Admittedly, there is an arbitrary quality in respect to the latter point. Copernicus, as a scientist, falls into the German realm by virtue of his birth and activity; similarly, Leibnitz, as mathematician and philosopher, is definitely to be associated with the German historical scene. But both are anomalous in their place and age, standing seemingly as cultural isolates and reflecting not a German growth but, rather, one attributable to Western European civilization as a whole. Although Wolff (1679-1754) systematized Leibnitz, the influence of the latter was pan-European and was infinitely less significant in the Germany of his day than elsewhere. Leibnitz, in fact, becomes a precursor of the Age of Enlightenment, a complex that has little place in German culture. Copernicus, too, as a German-Pole by accident of birth, falls outside the stream of development of things specifically German. Thought may be widely defined, but when viewed as a cultural end product, one is concerned more with culture and thinker or, in an even broader sense and leaving the specific realm of philosophy, with the cultural determinism operative in respect to the inventor as opposed to the part that the inventor himself plays in perpetuating the cultural system in which he functions (White, 1949:190-232). The contrast in the present case is between the universal man and the specifically Ger-

man man. Neither Copernicus nor Leibnitz meet the criteria for the latter; the genius that they demonstrate arises out of a climate of universalism. Hence they are unpredictable and anomalous in respect to German philosophical and scientific growth.

When thought is viewed as a cultural end product, it is restricted to growths that arise out of a cultural context and reflect the cultural whole. In German culture, two major movements occur as secular philosophy is pitted against religious thought. Each has a place, and each represents an unfolding of the culture-historic process. In the embrace of the German cultural position, neither the Lutheran Reformation nor the idealism of Kant and his successors is out of place. Although the two forces differ in time of development and are conceptually at odds, it is no accident that they come together today. The romantic theologians, if such they may be called, such as Rudolf Otto, Barth, Tillich and others, seem possible only in a German context. German culture can still admit mystics and still produce saints; the secularism of Britain, France, the United States and even Italy cannot.

Viewed in his time and age in 1517, Luther is no anomaly as is his contemporary, Copernicus. The Reformation is Germany's great contribution to Western European culture. It is a particularistic religio-philosophical movement that follows hard on the heels of the Renaissance. As a cultural product, the Reformation reflects a distinctive sociocultural organization and a special pattern and level of cultural integration. It is no accident that Lutheranism becomes characteristic of Germany and, specifically, of north Germany, where Catholicism is less deeply rooted and less vital, than in Bavaria or Austria. But the Reformation would not have been possible without the stimulation of the Renaissance; it is, in fact, Germany's response to it at the time, for the implicit classicism of the Renaissance is to reach the Germans considerably later. Despite marginality, there is sufficient force and energy in German culture to produce a disjointed and secondary culture center, which is what happened during the Reformation, and to influence more marginal cultures to the north. Lutheranism became established in the Scandinavian countries but did not reach the Low Countries, France, Scotland, or England. It is clear that Henry VIII, whatever his attitude toward papal authority, had no sympathy with Luther. Luther's significance for Germany, however, was as much secular as religious: he provided the rationale for the country's social structure, a basis for the stability of the family system that has influenced both Catholic and Protestant alike.

Or, by contrast, turning to the more clearly secular philosophers, the important beginning of German philosophy lies with Kant, followed in turn by the distinguished thinkers of the early and middle nineteenth century. Kant, by creating a dialectic that renders the positions of both Locke and Hume untenable, paved the way for Fichte, Hegel, and Nietzsche and ultimately was responsible for the *raison d'être* of the German state that was established in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Both the Lutheran and the Kantian developments, as contrasted to the cultural growth in other European countries, are not only late in time but, more importantly, are distortions of existing European patterns, systems, and tendencies. Neither Luther nor Kant and his followers would have been possible in a setting other than that of German culture.

The historical facts of the rise of Lutheranism need no repetition here. The interests and influences that motivated the German princes who supported the Lutheran movement are sufficiently well understood to require no further comment. What is remarkable is the consistent conservatism of these very rulers and the states of Germany prior to the Reformation. Schism in the medieval church was a common phenomenon in areas outside Germany long before Luther. In the thirteenth century there were the Albigensians in France; in the fourteenth, England was rocked by the anti-papal teachings of Wycliffe; and the Lollards long remained a thorn in the side of the British kings. It was Wycliffe, indeed, who influenced John Huss. But it remained for Luther to work in a climate in which such schism could take lasting root. Although Calvin, like Luther, took an extreme position, it was Luther who formulated the revolutionary and wholly immoderate doctrine of salvation by faith. For his day, Luther's position was extreme but it was only moderately so when compared with the communistic ideals of Menno Simons or the Anabaptist theocracy. At this point in German history, the kind of cultural balance that the Germans achieve is clearly discernible. It is not one of basic moderation or of simple reform. Instead, the changes are sweeping, wholly dramatic, demanding in extreme terms a repudiation of ties with the past. Luther, as is known, thought of himself initially as a mere reformer but, as the doctrines gained momentum, was carried along into his extremist position.

There can be little doubt of Luther's early humanism. In him the tie with the classic past—at least in medieval terms—are expressed in his visit to Rome, his Latinity as well as his skill in Greek and Hebrew, and his doctorate in theology, and bespeak the cultured individual of the day. But there comes a point when the veneer rubs off, when he ceases to be the universal man and becomes the German. Luther's theology is in itself no startling innovation. It represents a trend toward simplification, as seen in the reduction of sacraments and the changes in the conception of the body ecclesiastical. Its significance, for purposes of the present discussion, lies not in the person of the innovator himself, in such questions as Luther's debt to Staupitz and others, or in the immediate political and economic influences operative in shaping the Reformation and its German success (in all this, there is a parallel in Calvin and many others, not excluding Henry VIII), but rather in the fact of Luther's "Deutschtum," his role as a German in a German setting. It is not so much what Luther accomplished, but rather the way in which he accomplished what he did. In this sense, Luther, not content with half-way measures, lays about him with a doctrinal club. His results must be immediate and extreme. Fromm is right when he suggests an analogy

between Luther and Hitler. These are extremist personality types, it is true, but it is the culture that produces the climate in which such personalities can act, the culture that both creates the type and gives latitude to the situation.

If Luther's activity represents imperfect sociocultural balance and integration, it must also be remembered that Reformation Germany was being torn asunder by events. But even if such events—the Peasant War, the rise of new economic institutions, the creation of new occupations, the increase in and redistribution of wealth, and a realignment of social classes—created a situation in which the new Lutheranism could more readily flourish, they reflect together with the modified religious forms, rapidity of change and the absence of inventiveness or, in short, they reflect the country's marginal cultural position. Other national entities could adjust far more readily to such trends that symbolized the dying Middle Ages, possibly because the process of change in their countries was an infinitely more gradual one. In Germany, the sweeping social reordering took the form of revolution. Instead of coming about slowly in a manner that permitted experimentation and accommodation, Germany's cultural changes are promoted from diverse sources within a remarkably short period of time. And most important, they are not the products of an organic German growth. Indeed, Luther's movement arises in the concept of reform of something that fundamentally is not German. That he makes it so, contributing thereby to a specifically German religious and social expression, is his achievement.

Luther's success is the success of an individual in harmony with his culture. His problem, in view of the awe with which his culture regarded established authority, is the break with Rome. But Rome was far away, and having once placed authority in the hands of God—indeed, having identified God in terms of the family system of his day—he arrived at an adequate solution that dovetailed with existing cultural institutions. One has only to consider, for example, his catechismal treatment of the God-Father concept.<sup>5</sup> Lutheranism is not new but it represents a peculiarly compatible alignment with the cultural matrix from which it emerges. Luther is acted on by his culture but also acts on it: he aids in crystallizing the cultural norm and becomes the pivotal point around which social forms can cluster.

Southern Germany and Austria, of course, remain Roman Catholic. Here is paradox again. Admittedly, the quality of Bavaria is different from that of Prussia or Schleswig-Holstein. One has only to cross the political boundary between the Reich and Austria to obtain a subjective, but definite, awareness of difference. But it is a difference of degree and not one of kind. The German civil wars of the seventeenth century, although avowedly

<sup>5</sup>From the introduction to the commentary on the Lord's Prayer, (*Kurze Auslegung des kleinen Katechismus*, var.): Gott will uns damit locken, dass wir glauben sollen, er sei unser rechter Vater und wir seine rechten Kinder, auf dass wir getrost und mit aller Zuversicht ihn bitten sollen wie die lieben Kinder ihren lieben Vater.

religious in origin, mirror the same cultural pattern on both sides. Luther's significance, it is worth repeating, lies not in the formation of new sects and new dogmas but, rather, in his crystallization of a German ethos that is derived from the past, and, although given Lutheran momentum, is applicable to Germans, regardless of religious persuasion.

The Lutheran spasm must be viewed at considerable distance and, because of the strong emotionalism that it evokes, it is difficult to obtain a detached and critical view. The problem of German marginality in respect to thought and the growth of thought on German soil is somewhat more easily resolved on the level of the secular. It is conceded that the Germans have produced some of the leading figures in Western philosophy. German thought becomes crucial and problematical, however, when it is considered as a whole, that is, not only because of its temporal development but, also, because of its remarkable intensity. A channel is dug by Kant and continued by his followers. The Kantian heritage, like the Lutheran, sets so forceful a tone for the future that little variation can occur. In France, Britain, and even America, nuance is given its due; experiment is possible to the point, in fact, where superficiality comes at times to keynote intellectual movements. This is a pitfall sedulously avoided by the German thinker. The German intellectual tradition sheds frivolity in any form. It is serious, uncompromising and always stern. On the secular side, it seems to represent hardly more than a series of variations on a theme by Kant. But stark realism is contrasted with heavy-handed mysticism, the heritage of German romanticism. Even the German mystic, however, allows no compromise. Rudolf Otto's idea of the "holy," in religious terms, permits no more equivocation than do the ideas of Marx. But this momentarily aside, the German intellectual tradition, as a pattern of culture, allows some interesting temporal comparisons.

The rise of the German intellectual, outside the realm of the religious, harks back initially to cosmopolitanism rather than provincialism. Copernicus and Leibnitz, as well as Kepler, cannot readily be identified with Germany. The same is generally true of so great a humanist-philosopher as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81). Attacking the notion of Christian supremacy in his drama *Nathan der Weise* (1778), Lessing holds all religious expression of whatever form to have its place in the human spiritual sphere. He thus argues that the accidents of history have no relation to the truths established by reason. Considered in this light, Lessing is no German but, instead, a cosmopolitan participant in the Age of Reason, a follower of Rousseau. It is no surprise to note that Adolf Harnack, more than a century later, feels obliged to repudiate such humanistic heresy and to reaffirm Christian supremacy in its creed of suffering and martyrdom. Lessing, however much he may pave the way for Germany's great literary period in the late eighteenth century, is another German anomaly. It may be said of him that he achieves genius in his time and place despite being German. Parenthetically, it is worth noting that even on the secular side the German preoccupation re-

mains religious and deals with religious themes. Clearly, the kind of introspection that this denotes is, perhaps paralleled in Russia but is not found in any other nation of Western Europe. They, once the storm and stress of humanism and religion passed, inclined to secular thought. It is no accident that the outstanding theologians of the modern world are Germans.

The trend toward the growth of secular philosophical systems arises in Europe after the Renaissance-Reformation. It may be agreed that Italy and Spain had reached their zenith of development somewhat earlier and that the centers of intellectual growth had shifted northward and westward. Thus, Macchiavelli belongs to a somewhat earlier period, as do the great Jewish and Mosarab philosophers in Spain. Still, in Italy, the pattern of intellectualism persists into the sixteenth century in the person of Giordano Bruno. It is already difficult to identify Bruno as an Italian, however, since, as a Calvinist, he was associated with both England and France. In Elizabethan times the beginning of a new intellectual era is marked by the development of a presystemic philosophical mode with Francis Bacon. The pattern is insignificant in itself, perhaps, but reflects the totality of creative energy operative in Britain of that day. It is the beginning of a post-Renaissance trend, one in which Germany is not to share for over two centuries. This being so, a comparison is in order to place German thought in the matrix of European development.

A. L. Kroeber, an anthropologist interested in the problem of culture growth, centers of development, and influences radiating from such centers in time and space, has painstakingly reviewed the comparative data (Kroeber, 1944). He is concerned with patterns of growth — florescence and peak — and with the decline of various aspects of human achievement across the world. He conveniently indicates the comparative dating of European thought and its general historical course. His analysis indicates that German philosophy is not only late in coming into its own but, paradoxically, is the most vital and clearly the longest lived in Europe. The point is interesting as a further indication of German marginality. The German historic process was such that it encouraged and permitted the flowering of philosophical systems, even if, as will be seen, the systems themselves provided a rationale for the behavior that led to German degradation. It is also of interest that Russia, still more remotely removed from the centers of development, produced no thinkers worthy of the name. In Russia, in fact, it was a German, a post-Kantian traditionalist, who provided the keynote for the modern state. The marginal character of German thought, as exemplified by the German-influenced Russian, is further attested by its extremism. The systems, once established, become fixed and continue to be expounded long after new preoccupations have arisen elsewhere. The comparison of culture centers in time and space, as summarized from Kroeber's analysis, reveals not only the presence of culture centers themselves but the kinds of constellations that such centers permit. Even if one chooses only those figures whose genius or im-

portance is universally acknowledged, a distinct pattern is apparent (Kroeber, 1944:46-62).

**France:** The development of French thought undergoes three distinct periods. The first and second are separated by somewhat more than a half century and reflect a preoccupation with systems and logical exposition. The earliest dominant figure is, of course, Descartes, whose *Discourse de la Méthode* appeared in 1637. He and his contemporaries are preoccupied with concepts of science and derive much of their approach to systemic ordering from mathematics. Descartes is no lonesome figure, a further reflection of the fact that internal stimulation is a necessary prerequisite to the growth of a culture center. It is clear, however, that the Cartesian movement surpasses the contemporary scientific inquiries of Mersenne or the eloquent logical theology of Pascal. This initial Cartesian period is then replaced by the neo-humanism and naturalism of the eighteenth century. This, the great period, may be said to lie between the appearance of Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophiques* in 1731 and the social upheaval of 1789, or perhaps, as Kroeber sees it, the publication of Condorcet's *Progrès de l'Esprit humain* in 1794. Unlike the scientifically oriented seventeenth century, the main figures of the Age of Enlightenment experiment with forms, drama, and the novel, and thus are with difficulty dissociated from creative writers. Between Diderot, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and so many others, a distinct period emerges in the mid-eighteenth century. It is a period that influences and shapes the Germans but, interestingly enough, only the great German poets and dramatists.

The third or final French period, the nineteenth century, is marked by a return to science and Comte is the dominant figure. But, by this time, France has taken on something of the marginal quality itself and its great period of productivity is over. German scientism has already outstripped French creativity and neither Bergson, nor, in modern times, Sartre, can as yet be taken seriously.

**Britain:** The growths of British thought, in which the Scotch developments also play a significant part, parallel the French in time. Unlike the French, British thinkers do not have a great impact on an immediately succeeding period. Locke, for example, influenced France and was widely read by the French eighteenth century Physiocrats, such as Turgot and d'Alembert but—unless his part in the shaping of colonial thought in America be considered—does not provide a step toward revolution in the same way that Rousseau does. Locke and, later, Hume, are far more significant in influencing the development of modern British and American sociopolitical institutions (Northrop, 1947: III-116). From the point of view of immediate effects, the French patterns are more dramatic, but the British, it would seem, are longer lasting. And it is Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, in fact, who provide the motivation for Kant.

British thought begins with Bacon but does not reach systematized proportions until Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* was published in 1651. After Hobbes, Locke (1632-1704) and Berkeley (1685-1753) emerge as the domin-

ant earlier figures of a British philosophical period. Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* appeared between 1680 and 1690 and Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* in 1710. They were dominant personalities but the same general epoch saw many more. The next development in British thought shifts to Scotland. This is later in time and parallels the French development of the mid-eighteenth century. The leading figure is, of course, Hume (1711-1776). Britain first, but then Scotland, indicate the swing toward the secular. By the nineteenth century, paralleling the Comtean age in France, the scientific philosophers, with their concern with human progress, come to the fore. Bentham, Malthus, Mill, Herbert Spencer, and others, suggest continuing trend and a further parallel to France in the alliance of thought with scientific methods. (Reichenbach, 1951).

While the present discussion has deliberately omitted some very important thinkers in both France and Great Britain, sufficient number has been cited to indicate a general trend. There are differences between the two countries in style and pattern, in concern and preoccupation with problems and clearly, some difference in temporal quality. Both, however, represent culture centers, not only in respect to thought, but in other aspects of development as well. It is difficult to select the abstract thinker *per se*, since it is apparent that on the one hand, the scientist and mathematician, such as Newton, Lamarck, or Darwin, must be passed over, while on the other, the poet, dramatist, or novelist fail to gain their proper share of attention. But the implication is perhaps clear. France and Britain pass through several epochs of greatness, of tremendous productivity and invention, and of the clustering of what can be called genius. Moreover, the periods of productivity that have been noted here correspond to periods of national greatness; these are periods of the harnessing and channeling of creative energy. It must be concluded that the total civilization—the cultural milieu—sets the stage that permits breadth of expression. It creates the climate in which such expression can reach a peak or climax. The same historic processes, causing a shift in climate, bring these epochs of maximum intensity to an end; the pattern changes when perfection of integration ceases and when creative energies are dispelled. Because the British and French, beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have been able to create, to “invent,” as it were, complex and new idea systems, and because other aspects of their respective developments fall significantly into line, they can be regarded as centers of culture and givers of civilization.

The same temporal clustering is not paralleled elsewhere. There is, to be sure, the aberrant figure, such as Spinoza in Holland. But if it is remembered that Spinoza carries on a tradition begun centuries earlier in Mosarab Spain, it is clear that he does not belong to the Dutch setting. Similarly, Kierkegaard, like Spinoza, lacks national contemporaries. The occasional exception personality will be found outside a central focus and is, perhaps, the greater genius for it, since his culture fails

to provide him with an adequate framework in which to operate.

**Germany:** The influences of the French Age of Enlightenment and the English-Scotch peaks of development made themselves felt on the growth of German thought fairly immediately. If Lutheranism can be viewed as a German response to the intellectual movements in several other centers, so also can the reasoning of Kant and the influences he wields be regarded as a latter-day and essentially German response to external stimuli. In England and France, one can point to Bacon, Hobbes, and Descartes as representatives of a trend toward the establishment of secular systems of thought. There is no corresponding parallel in Germany. It might be argued that the Thirty Years' War had a retrograding effect on cultural developments in Germany—indeed, there are many historians who would support this contention—but on the other hand, since out of strife may be born productivity, as the age of Cromwell in Britain attests, one is led in Germany to a consideration of the seventeenth century as a period of stagnation, a period of stress following an imperfectly integrated Reformation. Hence, when in the eighteenth century such figures as Kant and Lessing appear, it is evident that they lack German precursors and that the forces that influence them come from without. This, as has been seen, was true in the case of Lessing and, earlier, of Leibnitz. It is particularly true in the case of Kant.

Kant's long life (1724-1804) overlaps that of several eighteenth century thinkers, among them Herder and Goethe. With these, since he first published in 1746, Kant represents an initial phase, a formative epoch or pulse of German thought. It is not, however, until his maturity, in the period 1781-88, that his great works appear. From this decade on there is the era of climax, the *Blütezeit* of German philosophical growth, which may be said to terminate in 1819 with the publication of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Thus, between 1781 and 1819, there appear in Germany, along with Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, to mention only a few of the more prominent names. This is a period essentially comparable to the earlier climactic epochs apparent in France and Britain. Unlike these, however, it seems more intense, more productive, and in essence more reflective of the national ethos than do the earlier counterparts elsewhere. Clearly, too, it is more rigid. It permits little by way of experimental deviation. As an aspect of total culture, German thought illustrates the general trend.

So it is that the nineteenth century witnesses a long decline, a feature that has no comparable counterpart in either France or Britain. Feuerbach and Hartmann, and, especially, Marx, suggest the continuing slavery to the period of climax. And at the end, one is lost in the maze of paradox, freedom versus anti-freedom expressed so bitterly by Nietzsche or, indeed, by Richard Wagner. From Kant to Marx to Nietzsche may seem a horrendous step. That it is not is indicated by the fact

that Kant's hypotheses are carried to their inevitable and logical conclusion by Adolf Hitler. The Germans of the nineteenth century, by successfully riding dead horses, by repudiating the new and carrying the old to its ultimacy, manage to balance science and mysticism, philosophy and theology. They become mystic theologians and dry fact-gatherers at the same time, indifferent to the British nineteenth century ideal of scientific progress or the logical syntheses of Comte. Scientists par excellence, they fail to grasp the implications of science for society. Great philosophers, theirs is a different reality from that known to other Western men. The marginal culture, in summary, in its extremism, inhibits a logical and easy connection between ideal and overt behavior.

If the long period of florescence of German thought may be said to come to an end, at least, as far as the development of formal system is concerned, with Nietzsche, attempts at renaissance have been made, some not altogether unsuccessfully. The course of the nineteenth century reveals a disparate quality, an absence of synthesis, and a perpetuation of endeavor in unrelated channels. It is out of this disunity of purpose that the Germans, however indifferent they may remain to secular nuance, have become the theologians of the age. The quality of mysticism, of other-worldly striving, characterizes not only the mystic poets and painters, seen in a near contemporary such as Rilke, but remains as a conspicuous feature of the German theological schools. The near Gnosticism of Tillich, Troeltsch, Barth, or Otto, as well as numerous others, indicates a repudiation (Otto, 1936).

Nazism and World Wars I and II have unquestionably a part to play in bringing this about as a general tendency but, in a sense, Lutheranism, in the soil in which it grew, calls forth the same degree of extremism in thought as do Nietzsche and Marx. Failing to come to grips with the world and society, the German theologian turns his back to it, seeking a spiritual self-immersion. And it is precisely this feature that makes possible sainthood and the bloodbath in the same culture.

Finally, to this movement in modernism may be added the name of the philosopher-novelist, Thomas Mann. By universal agreement here is the outstanding literary creator of the present day. Mann is a German who seeks, like his theological contemporaries, a universal and hence non-German solution in a German setting. From *Buddenbrooks* to *Felix Krull* he watches society change, but he is no social philosopher. In the Olympian withdrawal of *Zauberberg* he combines the Hegelian concept of will with a deep sense of humanity in a way that amounts almost to arrogance. And finally, being a German, Mann must epitomize the Faust theme and the German paradox; *Doktor Faustus*, as the eternal German, still seeks his soul. Mann offers no system and no solution; as a novelist, this is not his task. His place is interesting, however, making as it seems to do the end of an age, a time that began with Lessing and Goethe, endured the long nineteenth century, and finally came to grief on the Hitlerian shoals.



If a German cycle has ended in our own day and if, as James B. Conant seems to think, West Germany is taking the road of American pragmatism, does the future promise a new direction? (Conant, 1957). Such a prediction must obviously be reserved. But when the cultural hypothesis is again considered, the problem of German marginality and extremism seems in no way diminished. German thought of the period of Kant and his epigones came to have so startling an influence on the shaping of the German national character that it would certainly be amiss merely to say that German thought is late in developing. The French Age of Enlightenment had a social effect that was immediate and shattering, leading as it did directly to the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleonic nationalism. There was a parallel in Germany in that the Germans succeeded all too well in putting into practise the ideals put forth by Kant and, particularly, by his followers, Fichte and Hegel. Out of the moral ideas of Kant and the dialectic logic of Fichte and Hegel arose the concept of German *Kultur*, an idea, one must hasten to add, not to be identified with the broader sense of process, as described here, but rather a conceptual end-point. It is this notion, of German *Kultur* as a product of will, clearly not of the end-result of a process of evolution, that comes to motivate the Germans so strongly through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is the idea of moral superiority, baldly put into racist terms by the Nazis, and it is the basis for German nationalism. The latter point, in fact, is highly significant, creating as it does a cultural and moral fatherland, a patriotism founded less in land and state, in flag and society, and more in the self-righteousness of assumed moral authority and superiority (Northrop, 1947:202-215). The Germans are not without a view of themselves as the chosen people. Japan had it, too, it will be recalled, and Russia possesses a slightly changed version. In Germany, the idea of cultural superiority seems to stem from the Reformation, from the notion of Luther and the Germans as instruments in the hand of God. But it remained for the Kantian development to lend it meaning and system.

Why indeed should Kant, Fichte, and Hegel be so important? It is simply that these philosophers succeeded in epitomizing intellectual currents already operative in the totality of German culture, on the one hand, and setting the tone for the manifestations of German intellectual (and political) behavior on the other. Theirs became the systems promulgated in the German universities. This philosophical triumvirate, beginning with the milder Kant, avowedly seeks flaws in the scientific and philosophical systems advanced by Descartes, Locke, and Hume. It finds them and, in finding them, charts Germany's intellectual course in a direction away from the democratic political institutions that characterize Britain and, particularly, the United States. In this sense, because their influence is by no means dead—Marxism, after all, is an off-shoot of the Hegelian system—they have made German destiny.

Any system of thought is a cultural product, that is, in order to be meaningful and accepted it must arise

within an established framework of understandings and conventions. If out of joint with the total milieu, it can have neither significance nor place. In this sense, Kantianism and Hegelianism are cultural products, brought about by a specific kind of background and circumstance. And, in this sense, too, any cultural product is culturally determined. A caution is in order since the Hegelian dialectic of history and Spengler's views at once conceptually intrude. Cultural determinism, as the term is used here, means no more than that any human invention, of whatever kind, is to be viewed as an effect arising out of antecedent causes. It is the simple truism that one would not expect a small isolated hunting population to develop a complex religious system in which the hunting theme did not appear. Or, to put it in another way, an Eskimo is out of place in a grass skirt. Historical (and cultural) determinism, as conceived by Hegel, is of an entirely different order. It is an easy step from Kant through Fichte and Hegel and it is easy to see how Hegel is able to identify the absolute of will and the ideal of history. Hegel's concept of history is evolutionary, it is true, but clearly not in the sense of the British social evolutionists who appear later in the same century. It is, instead, the elicitation of the ultimate will, a determinative process of history that produces the good, the divine, and the German. In this sense, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, like Luther, provide a rationale and so succeed in stabilizing German sociocultural institutions.

The Nazi movement, or indeed, the Lutheran Reformation, the German expression in the time of Frederick the Great or Wilhelm II, are wholly comprehensible in the light of the philosophy of the nineteenth century Germans beginning with Kant. In the idealistic notions of Fichte and Hegel, in the moral ideas of Kant, there is the implicit paradox that freedom of the will leads to determinism. Because, according to Fichte, man is not moral unless by an act of will, such an act arising from within and unconditioned by considerations of nature and culture, it follows that he who can make a show of will and is able to enforce it is the human ultimate. This explains much, providing a justification for German authoritarianism, for the superman ideal, for the Nazi state. Philosophy thus rationalizes social institutions. A driving will, in Hegel's view, sets its ends and destroys all in its way to achieve them. The individual who shapes history does so with an act of will. This is moral and good, achieved not in and with nature, but by rising above and overcoming nature.

In summary, the total cultural expression that can be derived from Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, not to mention the thematic variations that can be seen in Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and again, not excluding Marx, represent a closing of the German ranks against the outside. It follows that there is an implicit denial of freedom and the premise of human equality that was put forth by such a philosopher as Locke. This is an extreme expression, one reflecting the intensity of the German ethos, the rationale for it, and the tremendous output of energy that has been required to maintain it.



The same kind of extremism, borrowed from Germany, reaches another marginal culture and it is no accident that the historical determinism of Goebbels differs from that of the Soviet Union only in degree.

Considerable space has been devoted here to a review not so much of the content of the German systems of thought—although admittedly this is extremely important—as of the ways in which these systems bear out a concept of German national culture. A system of thought, stemming from culture but serving then to stabilize and to channel cultural norms, has far reaching repercussions. In Germany, this becomes equally true of the related area of science and scientific thought.

### German Science

The Germans were noted as mediaeval scientists and distinguished themselves in mathematics, botany, astronomy, and several other fields (Kroeber, 1944:154-162). The economic upsurge of the late Middle Ages, resulting as it did in shifts of occupation and labor specializations, stimulated technological change in Germany. Not the least of the German creations of the preLutheran era was the invention of printing. But, as has been seen, the late Middle Ages were less well differentiated both politically and socially. Not only was the period one of general unrest, which was to culminate in the Reformation, but, as a result, there was a general receptivity to new ideas across Europe. Germany shared in this character and climate of cosmopolitanism; its marginal lag was not yet wholly manifest. Prague and Vienna, as well as many German cities, were becoming centers of learning and helping to provide foci of activity.

Probably much of an initial growth of German science can be explained as a result of medieval and pre-Reformation pan-Europeanism. Several scientists emerge out of this context. There is Copernicus, the German-Pole (1472-1543), and also his predecessors, Cusanus and Regiomontanus, and many others, scientists and mathematicians, who reflect the age. The Reformation marks a continuation of this somewhat freer intellectual exchange. Copernicus and his pan-European contemporaries can probably be explained thus, and it is also worth noting that when the Reformation gained momentum, there was a corresponding flurry of activity in art, particularly in painting, music, and science. Kroeber locates much of this, particularly the scientific activity, in Saxony where, along with the Lutheran movement, several streams converged and where there was an apparent stimulation to productive activity. It is after the Reformation, when the free intellectual climate of a humanistic Europe is broken by the emergence of better defined national interests and religious suspicions, that Germany recedes more and more into obscurity.

Thus, the science in Germany of the seventeenth century is much more difficult to explain. Some of the free spirit of inquiry seems to have persisted among the scientists of Europe, but Galileo and the school of Pisa do not explain the uniqueness of the German, Kepler. He and Leibnitz are unique in Germany since the other

patterns of development in art, literature, and thought, do not keep pace.

There follows a long sterile period. Germany has no personality corresponding to Descartes (in his role as scientist), Fermat, or Pascal. Nor is there any German counterpart of Isaac Newton. German science begins, at least in its modern orientations, with the last decade of the eighteenth century, at a time essentially coterminous with the rise of the secular philosophical systems. Considering the neighboring national cultures, it can be seen that Germany was exceptionally late in developing its science, even remoter Sweden had made daring advances through its many eighteenth century investigators long before any German ascendancy.

The growth of science in Germany reflects a sudden and tremendous burst of energy that is seen in the remarkable versatility of German activity. It begins in mathematics and astronomy (with Gauss, the mathematician, in 1799), and moves quickly into the physical and biological fields. There is little of scientific interest in the world that has not been explored thoroughly and painstakingly by Germans. Added to this has been the German interest in applied science, not only in engineering and medicine, but in technology generally. How else, indeed, could the Germans of the twentieth century have twice created a fantastic war potential and machine? As noted earlier, the Germans have been technological improvers rather than inventors and innovators. In borrowing the industrial complex from Britain, the German factories could, by virtue of the lateness of the Industrial Revolution, modernize and surpass Britain by the development of newer methods and machinery.

After about 1800 or, perhaps, after Goethe's scientific work, the German scientists begin to cluster. This is so marked, in fact, that one is at a loss to select representative names. What, for example, of Haeckel, Wundt, Virchow, Mach, or, for that matter, Freud? The list is endless. But, omitting Freud for a moment, it must be noted that there is a monotonous quality to German science. Its representatives are ardent discoverers, unshakable seekers after truth, but it seems fair to say that they lack originality. There is no German Lamarck or Mendel, no Davy, Lyell, Galton, or, especially, no Darwin. This is no implied criticism of German science; it is uniformly painstaking, of the highest quality. It is good, but it is not reflective of genius. German science lacks the flair for imaginative endeavor. It improves, it sets an inordinately high premium on scholarship and truth, but it lacks, in the end, insight and subtlety. This is why Freud, one of the most significant figures in modern times, must be excepted. Freud, the Austrian, introduces precisely what German science fails to present—a new system and new kinds of insights.

It is not difficult to understand why German science should have taken this particular course. It is late in comparison with developments in the rest of Western Europe and it is, hence, marginal. The Germans possessed some insecurity about the imprecise and the imaginative, laying emphasis on the known and the knowable in the Kantian sense. Further, although the Germans

stressed freedom of will and, hence, freedom of investigation, they were paradoxically bound to a formal system in which the subordinate individual, the student, could not deviate from the path set by the superior, the teacher. It is no surprise to discover that it was the Germans who invented the idea of "academic freedom" —this clearly follows from the line of reasoning that Kant makes explicit—but, at the same time, they never learned to live with it. A rationale for the scientific method lay in Kant's "categories of the understanding," the relatedness of things perceived by the knowing mind. Out of such a concept arises the German scientific methodology of the nineteenth century, a characteristic by no means abandoned today. This produced the need for order and detail and if, as Kant himself says, the Germans incline toward pedantry, this is a feature that his own philosophical system decisively promulgated and did nothing to erase.

German science, of however high an order it may be, and however dedicated to scientific procedure, is nevertheless characterized by an absence of the scientific method. The gathering of data became an end in itself, regardless of discipline and field of inquiry, and intimidated and discouraged the would-be theorist. In the German universities, the atmosphere paradoxically encouraged freedom of research and new endeavor but punished him who was so bold as to draw conclusions. How familiar it is, in fact, to hear the German savant, a man tremendously learned in astrophysics, Tibetan iconography, or ethnology, remark—"Ah, I cannot yet publish; I do not have all the facts!" There are exceptions of course—Max Weber and Wilhelm Wundt in the social sciences, Rudolf Virchow in medicine and anthropology, the Swiss, Jacob Burckhardt, in history, Freud—but the general result has been to channel science. Classification, ordering, synthesis, laudable and necessary though they may be, have produced a stultification. The imaginative scientist, blessed with insight and imagination, with daring sufficient to essay interpretations or so bold as to question the nature of fact, is the German *rara avis*. More often, when such attempts are made, they fall afoul of brooding mysticism, Hegelian determinism, or Hitlerian pseudoscience.

As a final note, and a somewhat more optimistic one, the splendid activity of German scientists, particularly in the nineteenth century, is not to be decried. Britain and the United States, particularly, succumbed to the force of German scientific scholarship. The Ph.D. is a German academic degree. But despite the alleged respect that the Briton and American give to the possessor of abstruse factual knowledge, new ways of science have characterized the twentieth century. The Nazis, coldly and with calculation, killed science, exiling and destroying learned men. The result has been the end of an era and the Germans today seem to be suffering the birth pangs of a new intellectualism.

### The German Arts

The development of Germany as a marginal culture is perhaps best attested in the growth of literature. It is

also exemplified, however, in related arts, such as art, architecture, and music. These aspects are not wholly organically connected, either in time or space, but it is possible to detect one dominant chord that runs through the whole of German creative expression. Romanticism and all that it implies is essentially a German growth. It is taken in stride by the artistic creativity of other nations and incorporated into existing patterns, but the Germans themselves, however, agonize and suffer over it. The trend, while true of all the German arts, is best exemplified in literature, interpreted in its broadest sense to include drama as well as the lyric and prose (Kroeber, 1944:292-297; 369-375; 440-442; 548-559; 637-643).

Even if the medieval periods with their extremely rich literary contributions be omitted, it is a long road from Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* to Thomas Mann's unfinished *Felix Krull*. The literature of the last four hundred years begins with one satire and ends with another, the latter symbolically incomplete. In between, the pendulum seems to swing widely from nature to nationalism only to come again to a dead stop. And let it be quickly said that the other arts follow suit. In German literature there is a strong beat. The Middle Ages and the German humanists reflect this strength, not only in the earlier epic and *Minnesang*, that German expression of the Troubadour Era, but in the vigor of the literature of folk and land, from the *Meier Helmbrecht* to *Tyl Eulenspiegel* and the amusing creations of Hanns Sachs. As with thought and science, these early phases are European and medieval, essentially cosmopolitan and, even if German oriented, not yet symptomatic of the internalizing of the German spirit. Richness ends again after the Reformation, when austerity arises and when there is a growing indifference to the Renaissance rediscovery of the Classical (Rössler, 1955:146-166 passim).

Thus one can give little attention to German literature in the period roughly dated 1550-1750. There are writers and names, to be sure, but scrutiny of them is reserved for the specialist. The seventeenth century attempt to find the Renaissance was abortive. Martin Opitz (1597-1639), for example, might have done well in France of his day, where the classic pulse out of Italy was beginning to be felt, but as it is he must be seen as a German anachronism.

It is the eighteenth century and indeed, the latter half of it, when the Germans begin to feel the Renaissance mode and struggle with it in a way that is peculiarly German. Lessing and Goethe, it has been said, to a degree, Schiller, and somewhat later, Heine, were not German in their total grasp of human problems, in their successful cosmopolitanism, and in their universalist attitudes. But it must be considered that Lessing's *Laokoön* set a neoclassic tone and that the *Sturm und Drang* period brought classicism and romanticism together in a distinctive way, a specifically German way. Schiller, apostle of human liberty, dealt with German themes, while Heine was the prophet without honor precisely because he did not. However eclectic, however universalist the eighteenth century period of German litera-

ture was in its beginnings, the tone that it set moved off tangentially to something wholly German. It kept pace with the Kantian-Hegelian drive toward German *Kultur*. For here again a familiar pattern is discernible. German literature, late in its beginnings, chooses widely from the archtypes of Europe and is impressed with the intellectual trends of pan-Europe. These coalesce on German soil in such a way as to be integrated meaningfully in the German context and to create a pattern of Germanicness. One need only compare, for example, the first part of Goethe's *Faust* with the second, the initial drama the work of a young, vigorous, and buoyant mind, the creation of universalism, even if Germantoned, while *Faust, Part II* possesses all the recondite symbolism that an aging German mystic could bring forth.

The beginnings of the eighteenth-century period of greatness date at 1758, with the publication of Klopstock's *Messias*. Goethe died in 1832. Between these two dates is the initial pulse, the beginning and clustering of an extensive and imposing list of creative minds. But the cycle does not wholly end with the passing of Goethe; it goes into a series of epigonal phases. There is a gradual transition through the nineteenth to the twentieth century. German letters continue to flourish up to modern times or, at least, until the advent of World War I and the period of National Socialism thereafter. The growth of German literature corresponds fairly closely to that in both philosophy and science; 1800 saw something of a peak or climax and the nineteenth century a gradual trend downwards. This is not to decry the near modern period. It is simply to say that through the bulk of the nineteenth century there was greatness but no genius. Heine is a great lyricist but no one would rank him above Goethe in this achievement and, certainly, the later German lyricists fall well below Heine in universal esteem. There is a marked parallel in philosophy: Nietzsche is interesting but he is not the creator that Kant, Fichte, Hegel, or even Schopenhauer, were. Greatness, it seems, constellates and the Germans provide lucidly discernible constellations. Literary greatness in Germany lay in the peculiar and distinctive resolution of the problem of classicism and romanticism, not only because of the intensity of the response to their discovery. Just as in philosophy the mode of expression and the dominant theme were channeled by Kant, so also in literature and allied arts romanticism set the tone. The nineteenth century saw its problem solved and no reason to deviate from the existing solution.

Literature best exemplifies the two points of culture process operative in the building of German character and culture. The first is lateness and a sudden period of greatness. Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, the Schlegels, Tieck, Uhland, Grillparzer—names picked at random—characterize the beginning. As Kroeber points out, all these were born within a 65-year period, and theirs is the age of greatest energy and productivity, reflecting a sudden upsurge essentially without antecedents. Heine follows, and from him it is possible to move into the constellations of the nineteenth century German writers, interesting but lesser

men who combine romantic idealism with *Vaterland* and *Kultur*. And this, as may be seen in the case of Wagner, Nietzsche, and many others, can have dire results. But these latter-day themes suggest the second point of culture process. This is intensity, depth, and the displacement of energy. Whatever else may be said about German literature, it must be taken seriously. Sentimental, mystical, brutal, brooding, withal highly romantic, it does far more than tell a tale.

The integration of European literary ideals in a specifically German way necessitates coming to grips with the romantic ideal. France, it can be suggested, is dealing successfully with Renaissance classic modes by 1650, England a trifle later, while Germany, despite the aspirations of Opitz, is obliged to wait yet another century. But when classicism reaches Germany, there is a virtual explosion, a concatenation of the classic spirit, naturalism, and convention wrestling with innovation. The result is a German brand of romanticism, earlier, it is true, than the movement operating in England and France. *Sturm und Drang* is definable in terms of culture process as the late arrival of influences brought together hurriedly, excitedly, and in an essentially uncrystallized way. Shakespeare, Rousseau, and the Greek tragedians are strong meat; when taken together, there is reaping of the whirlwind. Lessing's *Laokoön* marks the start of the struggle; his *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilia Galotti* accentuate it. Goethe's own ambivalence to mode and style lies in the contrast between *Götz von Berlichingen* and the *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Here the nationalist prose drama is pitted against the pseudo-classic Greek style, the latter a psychological play, in hexameters, and one that drops the *deus ex machina* in favor of naturalism. German romanticism is thus not wholly a repudiation. Classic strains persist in style and theme and, as with other aspects of German total culture, are brought to an intense and skewed culmination.

Lessing's *Laokoön* essays analysis of the relations between the poetic and the plastic in art. Motivated by the discovery of the Laokoön sculpture, Lessing is struck by the fact that the Trojan priest and his sons, strangling in the serpentine coils, show anguish but not frenzy. On the other hand, Vergil, in describing Minerva's vengeance in the Aeneid, stresses the frenzied agony of the serpents' victims. Lessing's basic question relates to the problem of naturalistic expression in art and poetry. He resolves it by the dictum, ". . . dass die Poesie eine redende Malerei, die Malerei eine stumme Poesie sei." The influence of Lessing on romantic growth among the Germans is clearly defined. While the plastic arts did not keep pace, definitely lagging behind in both greatness and intensity in the period in question, it is this rationale that underlies the *Götz* and it is the same spirit that evokes the agonies of *Werther*. Germany's literary greatness lies directly in the abrupt transition from classic modes coupled with romanticism through *Sturm und Drang* to an ultimate of romantic expression. In its beginning, this was something characteristically German, so much so, in fact, that the process of culture building now operates in reverse, France and Britain being the

laggards. Macpherson's *Ossian* had its German part to play, Goethe admired Byron, but it was a long time before Scott and Carlyle discovered the German romanticists. *Werther* accompanied the conqueror Napoleon I on his campaigns and on reading it, countless young men in Europe blew out their brains. This product of *Sturm und Drang*, Lessing's creation, culminating in the intensity of the romantic ideal, remain as the hallmark of German culture.

German music parallels literature most felicitously, both in its upsurge and in its later romantic configurations. A late medieval impulse, derived from Italy, but also from the Netherlands, and again, both the polyphonic movement and the Lutheran chorales of the sixteenth century suggest the parallels in other developments for the same period. German opera comes in with Schütz (1585-1672), but there is otherwise a fairly sterile period until the rise of Bach. Music thus slightly antedates literature in its culminations. While Bach must be regarded as something more than a product of his age and place. The *wohltemperierte Klavier* of 1722-25 is a major development, establishing as it does the pattern for the music of the West through the next two centuries. The great period lies between 1725 and 1828, with the death of Schubert, between these dates falling Bach, Händel, Glück, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and Schubert. This classic period parallels significantly the developments in literature and philosophy, especially when it is remembered that Beethoven had composed eight of his nine symphonies before 1812. The post-classic period, with Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner, Offenbach, Johann Strauss, and Brahms, not to mention the Hungarian, Liszt, and many others, is somewhat more difficult to characterize. The transition away from controlled forms and into a deep and complex emotional realm obviously requires wholly subjective evaluation. One can think, however, of Richard Strauss, and Thomas Mann as latter-day revivalists of German classicism, even if Beethoven and Goethe loom significantly above them.

Romanticism in literature and music, characterizing the nineteenth century, passes to France on the one hand and to Russia on the other. Both in the novel and in musical forms especially, Germany begins to lag. This is perhaps less apparent through the middle decades of the nineteenth century but obvious by the beginning of the twentieth. With the death of Brahms there remains Richard Strauss, and Mann, too, seems to stand alone.

In other facets of artistic endeavor, the Germans have been less well recognized. In painting, sculpture, and architecture they are pretty well overshadowed by their counterparts in other nations. Kroeber analyzes the temporal and sequential development and for the first time, the pattern fails to be consistent. The classic period of Germany from, one may say, 1775-1825, is not one of greatness in the plastic arts. There were German romantic painters but the great impulse of the classic period is lacking; Germany produces no artists worthy of the name. Here again is the marginal culture. Not only is Germany out of step with the rest of Europe,

but its facets do not keep pace with each other. Music offers the longest period, art virtually none. The development is inconsistent, although there is one early period of German artistic growth, one that ties in with the developments of the early sixteenth century. Holbein and Dürer can be equated with the phenomenal burgeoning of art that characterized the Netherlands and Italy of that day. But Germany's greatness lies not so much in the age of Luther as it does in the age of Kant and Goethe. The lack of consistent internal development spells out marginality, the fact that the Germans chose to be selective and steeped themselves deeply in the things that their culture came to emphasize. Fine craftsmen they were and are, but their technology is imitative and lacks profoundness. It appears that the German preoccupation with self-determinism and destiny, with the theoretic component, has ruled out a balance with the aesthetic component. Music may be an exception to this, although, be it remembered, German greatness in this area is one of form. Art and architecture, however, even if, at an early period, the Gothic styles represent German perfectionism, clearly are no such exception.

#### Summary:

It should not be forgotten that the foregoing review, subjectively selective though it must be, has as its aim the demonstration of Germany as a marginal culture. In line with these various aspects of German growth, developments late in time and essentially out of keeping with discernible patterns elsewhere in the continuum of Western European culture, the behavioral vagaries and excesses associated with imperfect sociocultural integration should be anticipated. The implications of this for contemporary behavior are to be considered presently. For the moment, however, suffice it to remark that of the German periods of ascendancy, two main ones appear. The first has been equated with the Reformation, an era in which a general constellation of social change and originality and inventiveness can be outlined. This, as has been suggested, is a German constellation but one that owes much of its being to the general humanism and cosmopolitanism that characterized Europe of the day. It was the time of the universities, of the growth of trade, a time of political and social unrest when general currents swept back and forth across Europe. Hence, the earlier culminations of literature, music, philosophy, art, and science are as much pan-European as they are German. This is not to deny that the seeds of German social structure and German culture had been sown. Luther's concept of family, his view on authority, his general ideology, in fact, is sufficiently indicative of this. The beginnings of nationalism and the rise of local interest put the Germans in a difficult position. This, more than the specific event, the struggles of the Thirty Years' War or the slow decay of the Holy Roman Empire itself, shoved Germany into a European back seat.

Generally, the sixteenth century in its latter half, as well as the whole seventeenth century, are times of stagnation for the Germans. England, France, and Spain were carving out world dominion, even the Por-

tuguese and the Dutch were struggling in the international arena. Germany, lacking political unity, land rather than sea oriented, was removed from the stage. The Germans hung behind, uncertain of their position, confused concerning their place as a nation and their culture. The age of Elizabeth I, Cromwell, Francis I and Louis XIV, was not duplicated in Germany. The result is that the Germans proceed slowly and with caution. Conversely, they avidly seize on new ideas, do not experiment with them, and cling tightly to what they have gained. How well this borne out can be seen by the tremendously long periods of ascendancy of various cultural aspects, the long periods of music, from 1725, of literature, from 1748, of philosophy, from 1797, and of science, from 1800. Painting, sculpture, and architecture they never really discovered, although had they done so, it seems safe to surmise that these too would have followed a like pattern.

There can be no question of German ingenuity. The intellectual, suddenly aware of numerous traditions emerging from many sides, responds with the invention of the romantic movement, earlier in Germany than elsewhere. But the later development was an unfortunate one. The integration of the romantic movement came to mean the idealization of *Kultur* and the identification of *Kultur* with nation. As idea and ideal, German *Kultur* forced the nationalistic spirit, promoted national unity under Bismarck far more effectively than it could in its nascent period under Frederick the Great. The demand for colonies and *Lebensraum*, pseudo-scientific geopolitical and racist theories, as well as a distorted view of historical determinism and destiny are patterns developed by Germans as part of a national and marginal self-consciousness. Kroeber's review of the German growth is to the point:

. . . their strange anticipations must not be overlooked; the Othonian sculpture and architecture, the poets Wolfram and Walther a century before Dante, the first science in Europe, printing, the Reformation. Germans simply have not moved in accordance with a generic European pattern. Early and thoroughly original in spots, they have nevertheless done much imitating, have often proceeded confusedly, and have been retarded in growing to full civilization maturity (Kroeber, 1944:715).

This is the price that the Germans have paid for marginality—self-glorification in *Kultur*, suspicion and hostility against the outside—and yet with a sense of destiny and a shaping of destiny through will.

It remains for such cultures as theirs to assume the burdens of humanity, to view their own achievements with an inordinate seriousness and earnestness, and to concern themselves deeply with outward form. Japan and Russia have followed a similar course, accepting innovation, but remaining essentially uninventive. The new forms of culture that they adopt sit upon them lightly and imperfectly. Yet their mission to remake the world and to assume leadership in the world as an integral part of their own conception of manifest destiny reflects their basic uncertainty, their unwilling depend-

ence on firmer, better integrated, and more centrally located cultures.

A recent theory regarding the nature of culture holds that advances are made through the control and output of energy (White, 1949:363-393; Hoebel, 1956, Childe, 1951:180-188). Throughout the previous sections, the comment has been frequently made that the Germans are characterized by an outpouring of force, a factor that makes for some of the more deeply rooted and intense developments in their culture. Any theory of this kind implies an inevitable ideal of progress, not necessarily in unilineal terms, such as, for example, Marxism would profess, but at least a continuing multilineal growth. The German culture, again like the Japanese and the Russian, and many other marginal growths, suggests intensity and the outpouring of free energy. But as long as Germany and its history can be viewed as ancillary to the central growths of Europe, the only possible conclusion is that German culture, proceeding in spurts and starts, uncertain, confused, has been unable to harness the forces of energy generated by its very nature.

And the end is not in sight. If the lessons of culture history are at all to be taken seriously, the Germans are no different in the contemporary world setting. Buoyed up by economic supports, bolstered by their own sense of goal and the striving to achieve it, which again seems so vital a part of the marginal consequence—flurried activity, translatable perhaps as *Tüchtigkeit*, being little more than a hurried effort to “catch up,” the result of a national inferiority complex—the modern Germans repeat a pattern. In a federal union of Europe, assuming such might one day come about, the culture center could conceivably shift to Germany and the consequent pace become more measured. Throughout German culture history, no less today, the pattern of lateness and imbalance is discernible. One can echo Grillparzer and say of the whole of German culture and its components—“Es kam zu spät,” and the results are the *incertitudes allemandes*.

#### **The German Family — Authoritarian Ideal?**

One question of importance remains. Intellectual currents are not necessarily popular currents, even if, in a balanced and well integrated culture there is seemingly a higher degree of participation by the mass. But many factors in German society would preclude such sharing—class structuring and the educational system among them. Hence, the problem remains of how the German citizen, the inhabitant of town and country, is affected by the culture processes described here. The individual in any culture is not critical of the premises on which his life is founded. How many Protestant Americans, indeed, could explain the doctrine of original sin? Similarly, how many Germans could expatiate on the nature of authority or freedom of the will? Very few, of course, but here are principles and postulates that play an extremely significant role in the life of that individual. Moving away, then, from the great themes of German culture, the forces that the Germans have unleashed and the mark that they have made on the pages of world and Western civilization, it seems important to consider the effects of

the culture-historic process on daily life. Marginality still has a place, as analysis of the institution of the family shows.

Since 1945, the years that have seen the formidable power of the Soviet Union, the exigencies of the cold war, and the shifts of power in Europe, Germany has come to have more and more of a place. There was an ostensible expiation in the war crimes trials, even if many Germans of today retain, in keeping with their extremist cultural ideals, an oppressive sense of guilt. But the world seems to breathe more easily now that Goebbels' philosophy is no longer overt and the personalities connected with the National-Socialist movement are dead, imprisoned, or released as having paid a debt to world society. The fangs are drawn, presumably, and the free world is willing to accept the Germans as a potential ally. There is no quarrel with the ideal of war guilt even if, as seems evident, effects were being treated as causes, and, certainly, no attempt is made here to cast moral aspersions on the Germans. They are what their culture has made them and it is doubtful that the process of history can be reversed in a few short years. But, if the Germans are to be the ally of the free world and to stand as something of a bulwark against the Hegelian-Marxian notions that the Germans themselves brought into being, it has seemed necessary to understand, to find causes for German behavior. The view has been that if German behavior could be predicted, if there could be more adequate comprehension of the German value system, and if the German personality could be more systematically delineated, it might be considerably easier to share a world with the Germans.

These questions of behavior, personality, and values have been so pressing that every attempt has been made to find a quick and ready answer to them. A contemporary solution has been found in the tools provided by psychiatry, in the attempt to elicit for the Germans, or in fact, for any and all national cultures, the modal personality, the construct individual who might, given various socializing institutions in the culture, be expected to emerge. The thesis has been explicitly put forward that personality is derivative of sociocultural forms and, in turn, by operating in a climate favorable to itself perpetuates such sociocultural institutions. This circular interpretation seems logical and plausible, even if, with the possible exception of Erich Fromm, the psychiatrically oriented critic ignores history. A commonly held contemporary view is that Germany is an authoritarian culture, one bound to the image of the stern father who arbitrarily and capriciously directs, controls, rewards, and punishes. Freud, many have held, could not have expounded his Oedipal reasoning so lucidly if he had lived in a cultural setting where the father-child relationship was not so fraught with tension. The stage is apparently set by Freud, since the personality constellation of the Germans has been most frequently analyzed in terms of depth psychology. Abrahamson, for example, explains the Nazi tyranny in terms of personality derived from family and familial relationships. Adolph Hitler, he notes, became the symbol of paternal supremacy and the Ger-

mans readily gave in to the culturally comprehensible (Abrahamson, 1945:27ff.).

Two points are thus suggested that presumably shed light on the German national character of today. Personality and family, it has been argued, bound together inextricably, interact to produce the stern authoritarian ethos of the Germans. Interaction there unquestionably is, but the equation is considerably oversimplified. Neither family nor personality can exist outside the community of understandings that has been defined as culture. There is a German value system, or better, a German culture, in which values play a vital part. The German emphasis on *Kultur*, moral and spiritual supremacy, the kinds of interpersonal relationships that the Germans have established—in short, the peculiar and idiosyncratic definitions that the Germans have developed against the background of Western civilization—suggest a need for a considerably broader approach than one based on concern with individual social institutions or modes of personality. The family and the individual are also parts of the cultural whole.

Family, and its concomitant, personality, are historically derived. Like other aspects and facets of culture, these cannot be perceived out of context from the total fabric. Where consideration has been given in the previous sections to the products of culture in an historical matrix and in terms of function, society and its associated institutions can be subjected to the same yardstick. The German family is a growth that also reflects the processes of culture building. Much the same forces have been operative as in the rest of Europe; clearly, the Germans do not differ in their organization from the British or French, or even the Americans. But the constellation is slightly different. A social skewing takes place that is suggestive and that, in turn, may have implications for the development of a construct individual different from the average in another nation. If the German culture is marginal, what effect does this marginality have on the growth of social institutions and thereafter, on behavior? Character, reflected in behavior, is derived from the processes of learning. In this sense, the family becomes a fundamental institution in any society, having as its primary function education and socialization, the making of the individual and the creation of harmony between him and the society at large.

The problem of defining the German family is admittedly difficult. How does this institution differ from that in France, England, or even, if one moves south, to Italy and Spain, or eastward, to the Slavic areas, is there a significant departure? It would seem, on the contrary, that the German family structure is wholly like that of much of the rest of Europe. To an American, in fact, the German family as structure seems wholly comprehensible and predictable. There is monogamy, essential permanence of the marital tie, the parents emerging as primary in the care and management of the young, and a general extension of kinship to relatives of various kinds. Grandparents, brothers and sisters of the parents, cousins to various degrees are variously reckoned by the individual nuclear family, both within and outside the



household. It is a simple picture, one not complicated by the notions of collective responsibility that seem to motivate the southern Italians or the Sicilians or by any particularistic variation in organization. In other words, the German family resembles, on the surface, at least, that of Western Europe generally, and ideally, too, that of the United States.

The difference between the German family and that of the rest of Europe thus seems to be one of shading and emphasis. It is clearly a difference of degree and not of kind. A strong patriarchal tone characterized the Germanic tribes of Tacitus' time, but this was in no way out of joint with the gentile system of the Romans. Historically, Germany shares its familial institution with the rest of Europe and begins to differ from its national neighbors only when the exigencies of history force the Germans to a conservative retention of patterns that other national cultures could more freely permit to change. "Patriarchal" is the adjective usually applied to the German family, but it must be noted that instances of strong paternalistic institutions can readily be found elsewhere in Europe. This being so, the question of whether one is confronted by a stereotype or whether the Germans actually move further in the direction of strong patriarchalism than other Europeans must remain.

Complexity arises in delimiting the German family in the face of regional, urban-rural, and class differences. A great deal has been written about the family in Germany, both from the point of view of these differences and in terms of the changes that are taking place in the troubled times of modern industrialism (Schelsky, 1954: 17-26). A visitor to modern West Germany, however casual his stay, is struck at once by the presence of the so-called "Halbstarcken," the groups of sometimes vicious adolescents who arise as a disturbing social problem in virtually every city and town. The East Zone is, if anything, more subject to these excesses of juvenile gangs. Does this one symptom mean that the German family is in a state of decay, that the strong familial bonds that characterized the last century are now less effective? To a certain extent, it probably does, since familial disruption in the modern setting of industrialized individualism is seemingly taking place less gradually and later among the Germans. The result is that the associated problems seem all the more cogent. Further, since conservatism and observance of outward form seem to have keyed the German family until relatively recently, the storm and stress of change is all the more acute. Probably, too, the Nazi glorification of the state at the expense of the family is having its latter-day effect. But to say that the modern familial institution is suffering some disorganization is to imply that there is a consistent thread running through German society, a family theme that permits definition and is distinctive. Despite the differences of locality and class, it does seem defensible that the German family possesses certain kinds of attributes that can be analyzed. Forgetting the disruption of the present, or, at least, the symptoms of change to which German sociologists are calling attention, and omitting, too, the local and particularistic differences, one can say that there is a family

ideal, a goal to be attained, and a convention that is familiar to all participants in the culture. Rarely, in any culture, can an individual meet the ideal, but invariably, he possesses an awareness of it. Hence, the family, in its idealized form, can be looked at not so much as an element in the structure of society as in its reflection of culture.

But even if a family system, idealized in German culture, is discussed, paradox again intrudes. The question has been fully explored by Lowie in his analyses of German family types. He calls attention to the tremendous contrast between the idyllic family situation of the Germans, rapturously described as the ultimate in human warmth and love by any number of German nationalists and Teutonophiles, and the strongly authoritarian family, ugly and distasteful to the outsider, in which the tyrannical father is master, arbitrarily bending wife and children to his will (Lowie, 1954:197-262). The *Kultur* ideal led such writers as Karl Immermann (1796-1840) to eulogize the German family and look with some disdain at the parallel institution in France and Britain. While there are commendable traits, Immermann maintains, neither the French nor the English family can offer the warmth and harmony and sanctity of love that radiates from mother to child and pervades the German home. Modern times have seen this idealistic view carried into Nazi propaganda, where, despite practice to the contrary, the glorification of the German family was used as a point of argument for German moral superiority. Conversely, a modern psychiatrist, such as Schaffner, returns to the authoritarian figure of the father in order to explain Nazism (Schaffner, 1948).

Certainly, a stereotype of the German family is widely held. A fairly common image is that of Luther's comments on his own childhood.

My parents treated me very severely; so much so that I became timid and withdrawn (gar schüchtern). My mother once beat me so that the blood flowed because I had taken a worthless nut; her severity and the strictness of the life she made me lead had the effect of driving me into a monastery (Buchwald, 1947:1-2).

But elsewhere, Luther justifies his mother's action and goes on to praise the strict parent. His Christian family ideal, in fact, suggests both points of view: the loving family circle in which the parents, the father especially, become wholly dominant.

Luther's epitome of the German family indicates that neither the romantic idealization of it nor the wholly vicious tyranny by a father figure can be held as a true conception. One finds both, of course, as Lowie's careful researches indicate. There is, on the one hand, the happy family life of the eminent historian, Theodor Mommsen, a truly ideal picture, with its close and intimate human relations. On the other hand, there is the biography of the workingman, Karl Fischer, collected by Göhre, whose reminiscences spell out the father's sadism and pointless cruelty. Lowie is unquestionably correct in finding that each extreme is rare and that the family structure of the Germans falls generally somewhere between.



One might add further that the absolute limits on either end of the scale are no more than variations on the major theme of German familism. As Lowie notes, whether there is a panegyric or an indictment, there is still agreement on the authoritarian focus.

In the modern and near modern economic system, omitting from consideration the fact that more extensive employment of women may undoubtedly have a modifying effect, the balance of roles between family members was fairly constant and predictable. The male as provider, the woman as household manager, is a picture applicable to Europe at large. The change comes not so much with urban-rural differentiation in modern times as it does with industrialization. Admittedly, the German family has changed as a result, as has the family structure in other nations of the west. With respect to this point, Lowie carefully reminds one of the fact that in Europe, in general, there was for centuries a strong patriarchalism, a situation of social and legal dominance for males and of subordination of both women and children. If this point is remembered, it is somewhat difficult to see the causal connection between German familism as such and the rise of the dominant political personality such as a Bismarck or a Hitler. Lowie asks, quite legitimately, why does not the patriarchalism of France, and it is clearly there, also produce a ruthless dictator (Lowie, 1945: 251-252)?

One is left with the conclusion that it is not primarily a question of structure that arises when the German family comes to the fore, but again, one of culture. In other words, the structure of the German family looks like that of the rest of Western Europe, but when the relations of that family system to the total array of understandings characteristic of Germany are considered, a difference is noted. The same extremism that can be seen in German historical development generally, in thought, science, or literature, is also observable in the family. It has been said that the familism of Germany represents conservatism. If this means that the Germans have held more tightly to the bonds of family, that they have invested the institution with a preciseness of definition of social role, the description is a fitting one. This is the marginal consequence repeated. Insecurity and uncertainty lead to precision of form and adherence to fixed pattern. In one sense, the German family reflects a survival of the past; in another, it suggests the virtual compulsion to avoid responsibility—improvement, perhaps, but not invention. The German cultural insecurity is translated into the family in that out of the submissive child comes the authoritarian parent. Thrust into the dominant role, the individual lacks preparation; if he succeeds, the family takes on the idyllic tone; if he fails, he becomes the brutal master. The insecure tyrant is a personality type discussed at length by psychiatry. From the family to personality is an easy step and it is possible to find the same extremes of sensitivity and brutality in this area.

It is not difficult to understand how the processes that shaped the total culture of the Germans have also had their affect in the rise of the family system. The problem that the Germans faced in respect to the concept of free-

dom applies as much to the family as it does to political institutions. The Germans, regardless of religious orientation, have accepted the Lutheran premise that man is fundamentally evil, "blind, dead, and an enemy of God." The acceptance of God as a free act, the subordination of self willingly to authority, have their repercussions in the Kantian formulation. This, a rational explanation for a covert cultural premise, explains the concept of *Schichtung*, the paradox of hierarchial ordering against freedom of will.

It is in this area and in this paradox that the German family possesses its distinctiveness. The virtually intranslatable concepts that the Germans utilize to express the gamut of relational attitudes reflect the patterning. *Ehrfurcht*, for example, conceptually keynotes the interpersonal relations within the family. Far more than respect, although inclusive of it, the term implies the proper emotional balance between parent and child, the honorable submission to the will of the parent by an act of one's own will. And by extension, one accords *Ehrfurcht* to all authority. It would be incorrect to imply docility or meekness in the concept of *Ehrfurcht*; it is, instead, a positive, inspired feeling, one brought about by the sense of what is fitting, proper, and honorable (hence, *Ehre*) in human relationships. Similarly, the noun *Demut*, implying much more than humility, is the positive act of submission to parents, God and Church, and to constituted authority.

Thus, it would be rank error to follow the reasoning that makes of the German a robot product of his social structure. The notion of "honor," not unlike a somewhat more familiar one that occurs particularly in the British setting, implies a quest and a choice, indeed, a dilemma at times, as Sudermann's drama, *Fritzchen*, so poignantly shows. Here, the hero, having been caught in a compromising situation with the wife of a brother officer, faces a duel. His guilt is clear and his death a certainty. His problem arises in the delicate situation of explaining his action to his father and of balancing personal and family honor. It is a play—one of many dealing with a type situation—that can have little meaning outside of a Prussian military context, but it succeeds admirably in illustrating the Faustian antithesis of destiny and will that affect a family circumstance.

It is this kind of example that sheds light, not so much on the formal structure of the German family and the circle of interpersonal relationships operative within it, as it does on the values that lie hidden in both family and personality and that create the climate in which both can be effective. Is the German family an authoritarian institution? It is indeed, given the cultural premises of the Germans. It seems, too, that the Germans have chosen to stress this feature somewhat longer and to accord it a greater patterned and institutionalized emphasis than has been true of other western national cultures. In German culture there is the happy family, the Christmas and birthday party, the *bürgerliche Vater*, honorable, strict, yet jovial, predictable and consistent to the children who sit at his board. Conversely, there is Luther's mother and the sadistic father of Frederick the Great.

*Max und Moritz*, *Struwwelpeter*, and the intense and oversensitive revolutionary lie somewhere between. For all its human warmth, for all the closeness of human ties that the marginal culture of Germany has in fact begotten, the channels and directions are clear. There is still a certain distance between family members. Certain things have not come about; there is no German *Dombey and Son*.

The present study began with Kant, was influenced by him, and in the end, it seems fitting to return to his analysis of German character. It is acceptable. The "why" of German behavior, perhaps, can be arrived at by different means. When, in history, things passed Germany by, when event and invention, drama and cataclysm were taking place elsewhere, a course was set for German growth. Uncertain, lacking unity, content to wait until virtually too late, the Germans coped with innovation only with travail. Is there a German mentality? Cheering though a shorthand psychological analysis might be, a German mind can only be found in the complexities of the totality of values and behavior, artifact and social structure, that make up the ethos that is German. And this is a product of history. As the course of history changes, so also may German culture, and with German culture, so also German destiny.

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