

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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IT is not very many years ago that Arno Holz, a German iconoclast, in matters artistic, came forward with the bold assertion that art equals nature *minus* x. The formula was hailed for a time as the final definition of the artistic instinct of modern German. That it was nothing of the kind was proved by the short-lived sway of naturalism. The artistic instinct of the German people rose in revolt and, following the usual course of all revolts, it put forward an antithetical definition: Art equals nature *plus* x. But art and the creations of art cannot be laced in the straight-jackets of definitions. Neither can literary criticism submit to the foolish demand that it define in advance the nature of that artistic impulse which dominates a particular work of literature or a whole period of literary activity. It is altogether probable that some doctrinaires will shake their heads in solemn protest when a writer attempts to set forth the philosophical significance of certain literary creations for modern life, and persistently refuses to define the x of modern life into relation with which this literature is brought. The democratic impulses of American life, for example, are not definable, and if they were it would be a superfluous task to seek enlightenment through the study of literature. Precisely because these impulses are difficult of formulation as concepts, and precisely because they are imperfectly transmuted into national character, social usages and conventions, religious creeds and organizations, civic statutes and institutions, economic values, or public taste and public opinion of any kind—precisely for this reason we turn to art, and in particular to literature, for some better understanding of the essential dynamic of contemporary life.

For more than a century civilization has been consciously democratic and the belief that all progress is essentially democratic has been the greatest civilizing agency of the last hundred years. But when we are asked to define "democracy," we are asked to define the undefinable, the very *x* of modern life. Democratic institutions and ideals we may define, for they are definite manifestations of the *Kratos* of the demos. But these manifestations only confine our consciousness to fixed forms and inflexible concepts. The dynamic of social life is not limited to these. If this were the case, the problems that seem so stupendous today would find quick solution. The "will" of the people, which is democracy, is not the sum of the individual wills of all its members, or the average conduct of these members, or the ideals of enthusiasts, or the passions of the mob. The moral, religious, and esthetic temper of an age is something that secretly controls individual opinion, individual feeling, and individual taste, as it controls the passions of the mob, but it eludes definition. And because this temper eludes definition, and always has eluded definition when definition is most desired, every age has longed for the artistic vision of its secret individuality in order that this individuality might express itself more completely in ideals and conduct.

Is it, then, altogether unworthy of a critic to turn to the literature of past or present with the avowed purpose of seeking enlightenment concerning the vital impulses of modern civilization? Or is it not the noblest function of literary criticism to emphasize, and call attention to, the significance of artistic conceptions as interpretative of the undefined impulse the social dynamic, of our day? Very recently the laboring men of a certain section of our country were told by our greatest academician that the true reward of labor is the joy of creating. When we reflect that one hundred years ago, Goethe set himself the task to depict the joy of activity as the only worthy reward of life, we surely have sufficient warrant for contending that the sympathetic study of literature may profit a man who is seriously concerned with the pressing problems of national and social progress. With some such purpose as this, the present paper ventures to review the fundamental aspirations of German poets in that period of German life when the cry for a definition of democracy was first raised in the German lands.

When Klopstock published the first canto of his "Messias" in 1748, he unwittingly became the German champion of a new art of poetry. Incontinently he brushed aside the worthless trash which had passed for poetry because it was coated with a poetic veneer.

This was only the wholesome effect of his great epic of the Redemption. It was not the new issue which this poem created. We of the twentieth century may regard the saying as trite that knowledge implies ignorance, and ignorance knowledge. We accept the fact that the individual is forever confronted by two worlds: the world of known experience and the world of unknown experience. No two individuals live in exactly the same world of the known, for the known world of every individual is in some measure an unknown world to every other individual. Communication and comparison combine these individually known worlds into a collectively known world. Modern education has seen its mission in acquainting the individual with the world of the collectively known, and modern science—to use a comprehensive term—has striven to enlarge the common store of the known. These observations would, however, have seemed anything but trite in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

In the history of European civilization the last five decades of the eighteenth century have become known as the Age of Enlightenment, not because knowledge was disseminated far and wide, but because these axioms were then discovered. At the time when Klopstock conceived his epic, the dawn was just breaking. The previous ages were dark for the reason that between the pitifully small worlds of the individually known and the vast world of the individually unknown, no sufficiently realizable world of the collectively known existed. The consciousness of the known was therefore overshadowed by the mysteries of the unknown. No proper relation could exist between the scientific consciousness and religious mystification. In the history of civilization, the dominance of religious mystification in individuals has always produced, through communication and comparison, a common religious world as a refuge from the over-powering awe of the unknown. The dogma of the Church was a refuge of this kind. It transformed the unknown of the understanding into a revealed known, and created a common world of positive religious experience out of innumerable individual worlds of negative experience. Human knowledge was bound to encroach on this world of revelation, individually at first, then collectively. In the eighteenth century the accretion of known facts began to make itself felt, and gave aid and comfort to the scientific consciousness. The world of science expanded and overlapped the fixed world of dogma. The relative truth of science challenged the absolute truth of revelation. Collective knowledge, unsystematized though it was, began to emphasize the consciousness of the

known, and by that act to offset the undue mystification of the unknown. It was the first assertion of rationalism. Out of this assertion sprang the effort to combine the world of common religious experience (revelation) with a world of common intellectual experience, and this effort was the distinctively new feature of the art of Klopstock. Since his day German poets have wrestled with the problem which he suggested. Two worlds in one—how shall art solve this problem? And can art supply the missing world in which Man shall abide, conscious alike of the known and the unknown, conscious, indeed, of no distinction between known and unknown?

Klopstock very naturally approached the problem without any theories concerning the known and the unknown. As a child of his day he was actuated by the impulse to make the world of revelation as real as the world of understanding. He felt vaguely the challenge which one world has for the other, and he ventured to transmute the world of revelation into a poetic world of experience that he might silence this challenge:

“Aber, o That, die allein der Allbarmherzige kennt,  
Darf aus dunkler Ferne sich auch dir nahen die Dichtkunst?  
Weihe sie, Geist Schöpfer, vor dem ich hier stille anbe,  
Führe sie mir, als deine Nachahmerin, voller Entzückung,  
Voll unsterblicher Kraft, in verklärter Schönheit, entgegen!  
Rüste mit deinem Feuer sie, du, der die Tiefen der Gottheit  
Schaut, und den Menschen, aus Staube gemacht, zum Tempel sich heiligt!  
Rein sei das Herz! So darf ich, obwohl mit der bebenden Stimme  
Eines Sterblichen, doch den Gottversöhner besingen,  
Und die furchtbare Bahn mit verzieh'nem Straucheln durchlaufen.”

Klopstock's faith in the revealed unknown was not shaken. Though his poetry opened the door between revelation and the understanding, the poet stood on the further side of the threshold and let what he regarded as the light of revelation stream forth and illuminate the darkness of the small world of rational experience. But the door was opened! Others might not be content to gaze from the unknown into the known. The world of sense was illuminated by its own light also, and the more this light spread, the

“But from the dim far-away shall poetry dare to approach thee,  
Deed, which to no one is known but to God the All-merciful Father?  
Consecrate, Spirit Creative, the Muse, as in silence I worship,  
Lead her enraptured to me, Thy handmaid and Thy imitator,  
Filled with Thy power divine and in beauteous transfiguration!  
Thou who dost see to the depths of the Godhead, inspire her, Spirit,  
Thou who hast sanctified man, who is born of the dust, as Thy temple!  
Pure be the heart! And if pure, I may sing, I, a mortal, with trembling  
Voice of the Saviour-Redeemer, who reconciled man and his Maker,  
Finish the awful course, though I stumble in pardonable weakness.”

(From the introductory lines of “The Messiah.” Translation by J. F. C.)

more it lured poets to cross the threshold and put their art in its service.

The transition from the point of view of Klopstock to the final point of view of Lessing was so rapid that it left no worthy record in the literature of Germany. In the history of esthetics Moses Mendelssohn represented this transition, but he found no poet to do justice to his view that artistic insight should be both divinatory and cognitive. The rapid change of poetic base is accounted for by the fact that the process of education had been going on in secret for many decades. The habit of acquiescence in the paramount authority of revelation prevented poets from viewing the known in its own light, though it could not prevent the development of a realistic bent of mind and feeling. When the latter began to assert itself, established dogmas fell back on the infallibility of revelation. The relation of science to religion became more pointed, and differentiation of intellectual and religious experience was unavoidable. The emphasis suddenly shifted from the unknown to the known.

It is no detraction from the great service which Lessing did German literature, to admit that he confined art to the world of sense. A work of art was for him primarily an object of sense, beautiful because the quantity and quality of its stimulus are in exact accord with the sensation which the maker intends to produce, and this sensation approved by the understanding. To this extent Lessing was the founder of realistic art in German. The author of "Philotas," "Miss Sara Sampson," "Minna von Barnhelm," "Emilia Galotti," was frankly concerned only with empirical problems, and in "Nathan, der Weise" he even confined the range of morality to human conduct. Explicitly and implicitly he excluded all ideal categories:

"Es eifre jeder seiner unbestochnen,  
 Von Vorurteilen freien Liebe nach!  
 Es strebe von euch jeder um die Wette,  
 Die Kraft des Steins in seinem Ring an Tag  
 Zu legen! Komme dieser Kraft mit Sanftmut,  
 Mit herzlicher Ergebenheit in Gott,  
 Zu Hülfe! Und wenn sich dann der Steine Kräfte  
 Bei euern Kindes-Kindeskindern äussern:  
 So lad' ich über tausend tausend Jahre  
 Sie wiederum vor diesen Stuhl. Da wird  
 Ein weisrer Mann auf diesem Stuhle sitzen,  
 Und sprechen."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>"Therefore, let each one imitate this love;  
 So, free from prejudice, let each one aim

If further confirmation of the attitude of Lessing were necessary, we might find it in the drama "Doctor Faust." The drama, if ever completed, is lost, but we know that its theme was delimitation and justification of rationalism. Faust is conceived of as a youth whom the passion for knowledge has kept free from the taint of all sensual passions. Satan holds council amid the ruins of a Gothic cathedral and decides to possess himself of the soul of Faust. If Faust can be tempted to seek a rational explanation of the primal causes of life, then his ruling passion will bring about his undoing. The lusts of life will entice him when its mysteries evade his understanding. But Satan is duped in his scheme. Faust is sunk in a deep sleep by his guardian angel and a phantom Faust is substituted in his place. Over this phantom Satan triumphs. In the midst of his triumph he hears the voice of the angel who now awakens Faust. The real Faust has dreamed what the phantom Faust has experienced. And these are the words of the angel to Satan: "Exult not! You have not triumphed over humanity and science: the noblest of passions was not implanted in Man by the Deity that it should lead to eternal doom: what you saw and what you think you now possess, was merely a phantom." The dream saves Faust. He gives up the attempt to explain the transcendental reality in terms of rational experience, and confines his search to temporal truths. And to these truths Lessing confined the artistic imagination.

Intentional ignoring of religious aspirations was the real cause of the revolution in German literature. It must not be assumed that Lessing denied the deep significance of these aspirations. On the contrary, he was convinced that their very existence proves the existence of a sublime reality. But he preached the gospel of empiricism and bade an age of almost senseless formalism turn back to the fountain-head of experience. Lessing held that the world of the understanding is our proper sphere. It is contained in the infinite as an inner concentric circle is contained in a greater circle. Every endeavor of art to pass from the inner to the outer circle can only distort the true relations of both circles. This was the exoteric doctrine of

To emulate his brethren in the strife  
 To prove the virtues of his several ring.  
 By offices of kindness and of love,  
 And trust to God. And if in years to come,  
 The virtues of the ring shall re-appear  
 Among your children's children, then once more  
 Come to the judgment-seat. A greater far  
 Than I shall sit upon it, and decide."

(From Lessing's "Nathan the Wise." Translation by R. Dillon Boylan.)

those relationists who were best represented by Lessing. It had been better for German literature had Lessing found more willing followers. For Lessing demanded that art emanate from a consciousness of the collectively known.

But even Lessing was not content with this exoteric doctrine. His esoteric views prove how difficult it is to confine art to the world of sense. According to these esoteric views everything is knowable, even the world that transcends sense. There is no set of knowable facts beyond which lies another set of unknowable facts. From the known we are forever proceeding to the unknown; the circle of our vision is forever enlarging. Finite and infinite flow together and the universal is a perpetual unit. In the world of the understanding the world of eternal reason is continually revealed. What the power is that lets us see this revelation, Lessing did not state. It was left to Kant to define this power as a power greater than the understanding, the power to conceive ideas: the reason. This much, however, is evident, that these views of Lessing resulted from a complete reversal of the attitude of Klopstock.

Unhappily for German literature the constructive elements of Lessing's rationalism were overlooked. Nor could it well be otherwise. Two centuries earlier, the Reformation started in to cultivate a new field, a world of common rational experience. The task was too great. It withdrew its hand from the plow, forsook the field of its toil, and returned to the field of revealed experience. But in secret, men sought out the forsaken field, and in secret tilled each his own small domain. Ever larger grew the number of these toilers until their numbers and their work attracted public attention in the eighteenth century. Then the general Hegira began which we call Rationalism. Men who were content to inquire, and to record their inquiries in philosophical systems, found ample reward. Men who were cursed—for curse it was in those days—with the creative instinct of poetry, found a wilderness. They went forth to sing of the harvest and there was no harvest. They hoped to find a land of harmonious effort and adjusted energies, and they found a land of strange contradictions and unrelated forces. It should be remembered that Germany had no great center of civic and social life where the disgust at senseless forms could collect and vent itself in collective repudiation of secular and ecclesiastical authority. In Germany the individual stood—relatively speaking—alone. His heart-ache was not assuaged through close community and found no outlet through concerted activity. The poetry of those days rang with the cry of Faust:

“Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugeteilt ist,  
 Will ich in meinem innern Selbst genießen,  
 Mit meinem Geist das Höchste und Tiefste greifen,  
 Ihr Wohl und Weh' auf meinen Busen häufen,  
 Und so mein Selbst zu ihrem Selbst erweitern,  
 Und wie sie selbst, am End' auch ich zerscheitern.”

No common world of revelation, no common world of the understanding gave answer to this cry. Where then was a poet to seek the fair image of the Beautiful? Forced to rely on his private experience he became, in his estimation, a Titan. The day had come when “genius” was heralded as the modern Oedipus who could, and would, solve the riddle of the Sphinx. But the bewildering aspects of life grew more bewildering through the total absence of a common point of view and vainly the writers of the so-called Storm and Stress strove to fashion their experiences into a symmetrical world. Their art was baffled. Their passionate appeals to the imagination were unanswered. And in furious rebellion the longing of the soul stormed the skies. The phantom Faust of Lessing's drama became a Faust of flesh and blood in the works of the youthful Goethe, of Klingler, and of Müller. The dream changed to reality. Than this fact no other is more characteristic unless it be the preference which poets showed for the theme of brother-hate and fratricide. In this theme they concentrated their impressions of life. Through their futile quest for a solution they proved the folly of their art. Unable to decipher truths of causality, they spelled out the dreary fallacies of chance, and called them fate. Rationalistic art was gradually discredited and a step beyond rationalism became imperative. This step was taken by Schiller, Goethe, and the Romanticists.

The student who compares Schiller's “History of the Thirty Years' War” with the same author's “Wallenstein,” must feel that with the drama, he is entering a new world of artistic effort. The impetuous desire of the poet of “Die Räuber” to discover ideas in the world of phenomena, lies behind him. Hardly any of that old purpose is discernible which would explain a finite chaos by fixing the *terminus ad quem* of its infinite energies. Depressed below the plane of the loftier vision of reason, the circle of finite experience

“And all of life for all mankind created  
 Shall be within my inmost being tested:  
 The highest, lowest forms my soul shall borrow,  
 Shall heap upon itself their bliss and sorrow,  
 And thus my own sole self to all their selves expanded,  
 I too, at last, shall with them all be stranded.”

(Goethe's “Faust,” Part I., scene 4. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)



has dropped out of sight. The infinite alone remains, a limitless expanse of beauty which surrounds reason, and is itself Reason. This is the true sphere of art. Only in this sphere can Man realize the eternities. Here all limitations are gone:

“Froh des ungewohnten Schwebens  
Fliesst er aufwärts, und des Erdenlebens  
Schweres Traumbild sinkt und sinkt und sinkt.  
Des Olympus Harmonien empfangen  
Den Verklärten in Kronions Saal,  
Und die Göttin mit den Rosenwangen  
Reicht ihm lächelnd den Pokal.”<sup>4</sup>

The years in which Schiller struggled with the “shapeless and endless” fate of Wallenstein, saw the formulation of his new artistic *credo*. Never has a more magnificent statement of philosophical and artistic idealism been formulated than in Schiller’s poem, “Das Ideal und das Leben,” the last stanza of which has just been quoted in part. There can be no doubt that Schiller proclaims here the supreme purpose of art to be, “making the ideal real.” His aim was analogous to that of Klopstock, only that an individual world of ideas was substituted for a common world of religion. In this world of ideas the artist must secure his revelation of eternal truths.

“Wenn im Leben noch des Kampfes Wage  
Schwankt, erscheint hier der Sieg.”<sup>5</sup>

Nor can the artist create body. For these truths have no body. Body belongs to the world of sense. Eternal truths possess only form, and form is all the artist can create. The forms he shapes in marble, on canvass, or in speech and sounds, have no corporeal existence. They are flexible contours and the corporeal life they suggest is a figment of the soul. Ideas attain artistic reality through the semblance of corporeal form. Schiller called it *der schöne Schein*, “the illusion beautiful.”

“Nur der Körper eignet jenen Mächten,  
Die das dunkle Schicksal flechten:

“Behold him spring  
Blithe in the pride of the unwonted wing,  
And the dull matter that confined before  
Sinks downward, downward, downward as a dream!  
Olympian hymns receive the escaping soul,  
And smiling Hebe, from the ambrosial stream,  
Fills for a god the bowl.”

(From Schiller’s “The Ideal and Life.” Translation by Bulwer-Lytton.)

“If doubtful ever in the actual life,  
Each contest—*here* a victory crowns the end.

(*Ibid.* Translation by Bulwer-Lytton.)

Aber frei von jeder Zeitgewalt,  
 Die Gespielin seeliger Naturen,  
 Wandelt oben in des Lichtes Fluren,  
 Göttlich unter Göttern die Gestalt.  
 Wollt ihr hoch auf ihren Flügeln schweben,  
 Werft die Angst des Irdischen von euch!  
 Fliehet aus dem engen, dumpfen Leben  
 In des Ideales Reich!"<sup>66</sup>

Therefore the forms in which the imagination of the artist clothes truth seem temporal, and through their temporal seeming appear real. What we perceive is, however, an image of infinite reality.

"Nicht der Masse qualvoll abgerungen,  
 Schlank und leicht, wie aus dem Nichts gesprungen,  
 Steht das Bild vor dem entzückten Blick.  
 Alle Zweifel, alle Kämpfe schweigen  
 In des Sieges hoher Sicherheit:  
 Ausgestossen hat es jeden Zeugen  
 Menschlicher Bedürftigkeit."<sup>67</sup>

Schiller saw the errors in which this exalted conception of the sublime might evolve the artist. Indeed, he appreciated the aberrations to which it had led and still might lead him. Before "Wallenstein" was completed, we read of his purpose to confine himself to "idealizing the realistic," a process which he considers by no means equivalent to "making the ideal real." Such a purpose, if seriously entertained, would not comport with the artistic creed laid down in the poem "Das Ideal und das Leben." The fact that Schiller contemplated it proves how little Schiller realized the extent of his surrender to the allurements of his creed. No special acumen is necessary to detect the process of "idealizing the realistic" in the first part of "Wallenstein," "Das Lager," or in the official life and

"Only Matter yieldeth to those powers  
 Weaving this dark fate of ours;  
 While above the reach of time and storm,  
 Playmate of the Blessed Ones, up yonder  
 She amid the fields of light, doth wander,  
 Godlike 'mid the Gods, undying *Form*.  
 Would you soar aloft on her strong pinion?  
 Fling away all earthly care and strife!  
 Fly to the Ideal's pure dominion  
 From this dull and narrow life."  
 (Translation by J. S. Dwight. Revised.)

<sup>67</sup>The statue springs—not as with labor wrung  
 From the hard block, but as from nothing sprung—  
 Airy and light—the offspring of the soul!  
 The pangs, the cares, the weary toil it cost  
 Leave not a trace when once the work is done—  
 The artist's human frailty merged and lost  
 In art's great victory won.  
 (*Ibid.* Translation by Bulwer-Lytton.)

intrigue of the following parts—"Die Piccolomini" and "Wallensteins Tod." Nor is more than ordinary critical ability required to recognize in the Wallenstein of the drama an idealized image of that Wallenstein whose picture Schiller drew with such relentless pen in the fourth book of his "History of the 'Thirty Years' War." At the same time Max and Thekla are not idealizations of the realistic, but realizations of the ideal. They are images which Schiller, the philosopher, brought down to earth from those "blissful realms where pure forms abide." It is not a rash assertion that with these two figures the drama "Wallenstein" is sometimes more than the tragedy of a great historic epoch. It is the struggle of the soul of humanity to slough off its mortal coil, that struggle which Schiller pictured so finely in the imagery of ancient mythology in the next to the last stanza of "Das Ideal und das Leben." Through "Wallenstein" he aimed to set before our eyes the apotheosis of Man:

"Bis der Gott, des Irdischen entkleidet,  
Flammend sich vom Menschen scheidet,  
Und des Aethers leichte Lüfte trinkt."<sup>8</sup>

We may turn to any of the great works that Schiller gave to the world in the last six years of his life, always we shall meet with the secret purpose to depress the problems of the finite world below the horizon and leave men in the bright radiance of the ideal. In the drama, "Die Jungfrau von Orleans," Schiller probably went as far along the path of this artistic idealism as it is given any poet to go. In that drama the superlative conception of "the soul beautiful" was fashioned into the semblance of corporeal form in the figure of Joan of Arc. The personal misgivings of Schiller and the evidence of these in his poetic practice are inconsiderable when weighed against his aspirations. Schiller sought, and in a great measure found, his poetic inspiration in abstract thought. The manifestations of finite, or what we are wont to call real, life had only secondary value for the poet. He regarded them as the medium through which the imagination may produce the semblance of that which the reason alone sanctions as the archetype. In this faith he preached the gospel of the redemption of mankind in his "Letters on a Esthetic Education," and drew his magnificent picture of a future society.

Schiller has been placed so persistently at the side of his great

<sup>8</sup>Until the god cast down his garb of clay  
And rent in hallowing flames away  
The mortal part from the divine—to soar  
To the empyreal air!"

(*Ibid.* Translation by Bulwer-Lytton.)

friend, Goethe, that the popular mind has come to regard the activity of both as well nigh identical. Popular instinct has, however, felt the difference in the attitudes of these poets toward the great problem of modern art. Long before scholars proved that the ways of Schiller and Goethe were divergent, the great public suspected that the world of Schiller was not the world of Goethe. A similar suspicion haunted both poets in the early years of their friendship. The dispute between Schiller and Goethe over the archetype of plant-life—Goethe's *Urpflanze*—turned their own early suspicion into knowledge. Schiller called this archetype an "idea." Goethe defined it as an "experience." Schiller asserted that the archetype is a concept of the higher reason and anticipates as such the conclusions of the understanding. Goethe insisted that it is an image seen in organic forms and that it merely supplements the conclusions of the understanding.

Goethe could not thrust chaos aside and postulate an Elysean world where reason and instinct transfigure each other. He could not take the step that Schiller took. Had he attempted this he would have entered regions whither we shall be obliged to follow his contemporaries, the Romantics. The problem with which he wrestled in youthful impetuosity, was not the problem of good and evil. That was the problem which Schiller faced. Standing on the shoulders of Kant, Schiller could gaze forth into a moral universe. Goethe was not concerned with moral categories. The problem of his youth was the problem of matter and spirit. Nowhere in the poetry of Schiller is that note struck which quivers in the soul of Werther and makes the first monologue of Faust a symphony of human despair. "To drink surging joy of life from the foaming goblet of infinitude and to feel, though it be but for a moment, in my cramped bosom, the bliss of that Being who creates all things in and through Himself,"—those are words which the youthful Goethe, not Schiller, might utter. The same problem is propounded in the words of Faust to Wagner:

"Du bist dir nur des einen Triebes bewusst:  
 O, lerne nie den andern kennen!  
 Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust,  
 Die eine will sich von der andern trennen;  
 Die eine hält in derber Liebeslust  
 Sich an die Welt mit klanmernden Organen;  
 Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich vom Dust  
 Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>"One impulse art thou conscious of, at best:  
 O, never seek to know the other!"

Goethe foresaw the doom to which this conflict leads. He pictured it in the story of Werther and described it in the words of Werther: "Round about me Heaven and Earth and their busily weaving forces: and I—I see only a monster forever devouring and forever ruminating." Goethe refused to let reason detach spirit from matter. Consistently he schooled himself in scientific reasoning. Spinoza, not Kant, was his guide. In the naturalism of Spinoza, Goethe found that which strengthened and united the two impulses of his being. He depressed the world of rational experience, and continued to dwell in this world with his understanding and with his imagination. In this Goethe took his step beyond rationalism. The world of material and temporal energies was always studied and regarded by him as the perpetual realization of a world of immaterial and eternal principles.

"So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit  
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid."<sup>10</sup>

This transcendentalism of Goethe substituted experience for ideas. His method was inductive, Schiller's was deductive. Addressing himself to the empirical thinkers of his day, Schiller wrote:

"Weil du liesest in ihr, was du selber in sie geschrieben:  
Weil du in Gruppen für's Aug' ihre Erscheinungen reihst,  
Deine Schnüre gezogen auf ihrem unendlichen Felde,  
Wähnst du es fasse dein Geist ahnend die grosse Natur."<sup>11</sup>

With equal conviction Goethe addressed the Christian believers when he extolled the religion of science:

"Ihr Gläubigen! rühmt nur nicht euren Glauben  
Als einzigen: wir glauben auch wie ihr:  
Der Forscher lässt sich keineswegs berauben  
Des Erbteils, aller Welt gegönnt—und mir."<sup>12</sup>

Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,  
And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.  
One with tenacious organs holds in love  
And clinging lust the world in its embraces;  
The other strongly sweeps, this dust above,  
Into the high ancestral spaces."

(Goethe's "Faust." Part I, scene 2. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

<sup>10</sup>"Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares  
The garment of Life which the Deity wears!"

(Goethe's "Faust." Part I, scene 1. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

<sup>11</sup>"When thou decipher'st in nature the writing which thou hast inscribed there,

When its phenomena thou castest in groups for thine eye,  
When thou hast covered its infinite field with measuring tape-lines,  
Dost thou imagine, thy mind really graspeth the All?"

(Translation by Paul Carus.)

<sup>12</sup>"Ye faithful, do not claim that your confession  
Be truth alone; for we have faith like you.

Goethe has often been condemned for his pertinacious realism. Many good men have thought of him as if the words of Robert Browning fitted his striving:

"Thou art shut  
Out from the heaven of spirit, glut  
Thy sense upon the world!"

It is not a condemnation that modern critics can uphold. The doom of the empirical thinker which Browning proclaims in these lines was anticipated by Goethe. Browning merely reiterates the thought that thrills in the words of Faust:

"Werd' ich zum Augenblicke sagen:  
Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!  
Dann magst Du mich in Fesseln schlagen,  
Dann will ich gern zu Grunde gehn!  
Dann mag die Totenglocke schallen.  
Dann bist Du Deines Dienstes frei.  
Die Uhr mag stehn, die Zeiger fallen,  
Es sei die Zeit für mich vorbei."<sup>13</sup>

The poet of "Faust" was a transcendental realist. The realities which he observed, imaged the type and this type strengthened his longing for an image of the eternal archetype. Bit by bit the understanding was related to the reason, matter to spirit. Goethe staked all his hopes on the revelation of the type through intimate experience, and all his faith on the analogy between the type and the divine. The record of a long life he could close with the lines:

"Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichnis:  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis:  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier ist es gethan;  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan."<sup>14</sup>

Science can't be deprived of the possession  
Belonging to the world and to me too."

(Translation by Paul Carus.)

<sup>13</sup>"When thus I hail the moment flying:  
'Ah, still delay—thou art so fair!  
Then bind me in thy bonds undying,  
My final ruin then declare!  
Then let the death-bell chime the token,  
Then art thou from thy service free!  
The clock may stop, the hand be broken,  
Then time be finished unto me!"

(Goethe's "Faust." Part I., scene 4. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

<sup>14</sup>"All things transitory  
But as symbols are sent:

Goethe had "experienced" womanhood as a type and he counted it the noblest experience of his life. He knew how much he owed to this experience. "Apples of gold in baskets of silver" he called it in his seventy-ninth year. No figure of speech could express more adequately his supreme faith in the redemptive power of an ever-enlarging and never completed revelation of the One type of all life than the metaphor "Das Ewig-Weibliche."

It is well known that Goethe was definitely committed to this transcendental realism through his first sojourn in Italy. There plant-life revealed to him the type and there his presuppositions in classic art were illuminated by new and original observations. He came to regard sculptures of ancient art as expressions of the human type, and they supplied, so he fondly believed, an experience analogous to his botanical type. That he was not wholly mistaken is proved by the statuesque beauty of "Iphigenie auf Tauris." Under the influence of French thought Goethe had sought to enlarge his conception of the typical, to pass from the individual to the social type. For a time it seemed to him as if his cherished hopes were to be realized. But the terrors of the French Revolution which followed the halcyon days of liberty, fraternity, equality, dashed his hopes of experiencing human society in its archetypal form. The French Revolution became a holocaust and its lapping flames consumed the image of the social type:

"So ist es also, wenn ein sehnd Hoffen  
Dem höchsten Wunsch sich traulich zugerungen,  
Erfüllungspforten findet Flügel offen:  
Nun aber bricht aus jenen ewigen Gründen  
Ein Flammenübermass, wir stehn betroffen:  
Des Lebens Fackel wollten wir entzünden,  
Ein Feuermeer verschlingt uns, welch ein Feuer!"<sup>15</sup>

Not until the last years of his life was Goethe privileged to experience some of that glory of the social type of which "Hermann

Earth's insufficiency  
Here grows to Event:  
The Indescribable,  
Here it is done:  
The Woman-Soul leadeth us  
Upward and on!"

(*Ibid.* Part II., Act V. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

<sup>15</sup>"'Tis thus, when unto yearning hope's endeavor,  
Its highest wish on sweet attainment grounded,  
The portals of fulfilment widely sever:  
But if there burst from those eternal spaces  
A flood of flame, we stand confounded ever;  
For Life's pure torch we sought the shining traces,  
And seas of fire—and what a fire!—surprise us."

(Goethe's "Faust." Part II., Act I. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

und Dorothea" was hardly more than the cold grey dawn. Goethe continued undaunted his analytic-synthetical observations of phenomena of nature. They confirmed his faith in an immaterial world, and brought him to the point at which the endless forms of organic life mirrored the archetype. He discontinued his analytic-synthetical observations of social phenomena. Here Goethe was daunted. Of moral relations he had much to say, of the evolution of morality, nothing. He could make nothing of the French Revolution, nothing of the German uprising against Napoleon, nothing of the incipient civic and industrial unrest. None of these facts was experienced by Goethe as evidence of growth or as change wrought from within. For at least two decades Goethe could not apply his own lines to the world of social activity:

"Was wär' ein Gott, der nur von aussen stiesse,  
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse!  
Ihm ziehmt's die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,  
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,  
So dass, was in Ihm lebt und webt und ist,  
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst."<sup>166</sup>

Every attempt of Goethe's to deal with the great problems of social morality, "Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre" not excepted, impresses the reader with the conviction that Goethe had not found in the moral life of society manifestations of that God who dwells in the physical life of nature. Accordingly his conception of revolution was superficial, his treatment of national problems inadequate, and his remedy for social disquiet both superficial and inadequate. In every instance we encounter the preacher or the teacher, not the artist. The man who could so describe the evolution of plant-life that even Schiller acknowledged the beauty of his poem ("Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen") could not describe the evolution of moral forms. Goethe could not suffuse his didactic writings with the consciousness of his personal debt to society. His novel-study, "Die Wahlverwandtschaften," is the best evidence of this failure.

In one respect the divergence of Goethe and Schiller has a counterpart in the divergence of Browning and Coleridge. Goethe made ceaseless aspiration the glory of manhood, so did Brown-

<sup>166</sup>What were a God that but from outside thrust,  
The circling All at finger to adjust?  
Nay! from within it He the world is moulding,  
Nature in Him, Himself in Nature, folding,  
So that what in Him lives and moves and is  
At no time can His power or spirit miss."

(From Goethe's Poems: "God and the World." Translation by William Gibson.)



ing. Goethe and Browning were persuaded that moral being is not self-gratified through science, through art, through love. Through these the immortal aspirations of Man are stimulated and through these he ascends to God. That is the transcendental teaching of Goethe's "Faust." It is the keynote of Browning's poetry. Schiller, too, was a transcendentalist, as was Coleridge. A transcendental realist he was not, nor was Coleridge. Both were rational transcendentalists. In the terminology of Goethe and Browning reason was almost equivalent to that scientific imagination through which Man fulfills his destiny and returns to the Divine. When Goethe and Browning spoke of "reason," Schiller and Coleridge thought of "Reason." In the terminology of Schiller and Coleridge, Reason and the Divine were equipollent. The individual cannot possess Reason, though it may shine in him or he may move in its radiance.

The parallelism of transcendental thought in Schiller and Coleridge, in Goethe and Browning, did not, and could not, lead to a similar parallelism of esthetic temper. The temper of Browning was as different from the temper of Goethe, the temper of Schiller from the temper of Coleridge, as the conditions under which the English poets lived were different from the environments of their German predecessors. Catholic the temper of Goethe and Schiller certainly was, democratic it, as certainly was not. The temper of Browning and Coleridge was democratic, and perhaps for that very reason less catholic. Browning and Coleridge paid the penalty exacted by English conditions; Goethe and Schiller the penalty exacted by German conditions. The democracy of England was insular not catholic, the catholicity of Germany was academic and not democratic. The sympathies of Browning and Coleridge were post-revolutionary, the sympathies of Goethe and Schiller were pre-revolutionary. The efforts of the latter two to put the individual in touch with the universal, the temporal in relation to the eternal, were essentially evasions of democratic "experience" and democratic "idealism." Doubtless the catholic temper of each enabled him to see visions of the future that were unseen by those who plunged into the turmoil of readjustment. Doubtless, too, each set standards of individual morality and individual emancipation that exerted, and always will exert, a benign influence. And yet, these standards satisfied neither the generation that was nor the generations that followed, except in moments of threatening despair or of rising exaltation. It is a great thing to stay and support life at its extremes. It is, perhaps, a greater thing to walk with it hand in

hand, participate in its trials, and find the abiding joy of its ordinary demesnes.

Abstract thinkers and "world-removed" scholars may possibly span an aerial bridge from the lofty heights of Goethe to the equally lofty heights of Schiller. The world that lies between will interest them little. What they cannot avoid seeing in their sublimated passage, they will most likely measure only by the altitude of its *termini*. Between Goethe and Schiller lie the vast stretches of every-day experience and every-day ideas, where human beings must move. Needless to say that few have climbed the higher levels of the poetry of Schiller or Goethe for a view over the plane of their daily endeavor, without being forced to retrace their steps and to plod through the democratic flat-lands before reaching the higher places of the other. A whole century has not changed the situation. Goethe and Schiller have never towered like twin mountains before the spiritual eye of the masses. Those to whom Goethe beckoned have turned their backs on Schiller, and those whom Schiller inspired have dreaded to approach Goethe. Germans have admired Goethe and they have admired Schiller. Their admiration has been like unto the admiration we accord heroes, men who—however much they may inspire us—seem somehow of a different mold than we, and independent of the forces to which we know ourselves subject. We feel that we and they have little in common, and that their greatness is not essential to our well-being. And if we emulate them at all, it is either slavishly, with the secret consciousness that we are untrue to ourselves, or selfishly, with the desire to lift our individuality into a position no less commanding than theirs. Heroic personality, which—after all else is said—was the aim of Goethe and Schiller, as it is the characteristic glory of their poetry, condemned each to stand isolated from the other in the eyes of his people.

In a very qualified sense, both Goethe and Schiller were mystics. A recent expounder of mysticism (W. R. Inge in his "Hampton Lectures," 1899) distinguishes two great types of mystics: "those who try to rise through the visible to the invisible, through nature to God, who find in earthly beauty the truest symbol of the heavenly, and in the imagination—the image-making faculty—a raft whereon we may navigate the shoreless ocean of the Infinite, and those who distrust all sensuous representations as tending 'to nourish appetites which we ought to starve,' who look upon this earth as a place of banishment, upon material things as a veil which hides God's face from us and who bid us 'flee away from hence as quickly as may be' to seek 'yonder' in the realm of ideas, the heart's true

home." The poetry of Goethe is unquestionably representative of the first type, that of Schiller as unquestionably of the second. Yet few of us think of Goethe or Schiller as mystics, and most scholars would reject the thought with scorn and derision. Nevertheless, the term mystic, as defined in the words of Mr. Inge, applies to both these poets. Moreover it has the merit, when so applied, of pointing out clearly the oppositeness of the poetry of each, and the opposition of both to the cut and dried rationalism of their day. The definition is, however, of no avail when we seek to understand the forward movement of Romanticism. It supplies us with no criterion by which we may distinguish between the mysticism of these great classicists and the mysticism of the Romanticists.

Whatever else we may think of the German Romanticists, they were assuredly as different from Goethe and Schiller in their attitude toward the problems of spirit and matter, of good and evil, as Wordsworth and Shelley were different from Browning and Coleridge. In the domain of morals they were transcendental realists, in the domain of metaphysics they were rational transcendentalists. By the method of Goethe they weened to answer the question of good and evil, by the method of Schiller to solve the problem of spirit and matter. In no two poets of Romantic mysticism were the two methods fairly balanced, and in no two were they employed with equal ingenuity or with equal integrity of purpose. And yet—though the creative work of these writers proved the folly of their methods—it must be conceded that these same Romanticists were the first to point German art, notably poetry, to new fields. They were the first—and this statement takes due account of their virulent opposition to the empirical thinkers of rationalism—they were the first to draw the legitimate conclusion of the esoteric doctrine of Lessing and to proclaim boldly the principle of modern art, which Herder had suggested. They placed the individual in the center of an indivisible universe, and there, in common with all his fellows he sees truths greater than his individual ideals because he perceives life with the insight of collective reason. It is true that German Romanticists counted no Wordsworth among their number. But the impassioned contemplation of Wordsworth was theirs, not so highly developed, or so perfectly blended of understanding and imagination, of receptivity and creative energy, of brooding thought and spiritual emotion; but theirs it was, rudimentary in its development, rudimentary also in its nature. In the charred soil of an old civilization over which the fires of revolution had swept, the Romanticists planted their "blue flower," and though they left the field bar-

ren to the eye, the "blue flower" was there, the first sign of a new life in the planes. We must not look for the massive spirituality of Wordsworth in the erratic contemplation of the German Romantists. Tentative in its being, their spirituality was attenuated in its expression.

Ludwig Tieck has been placed by German scholars in the lead of the literary movement designated by the term Romanticism. The position of literary leader—though it was claimed by Friedrich Schlegel and his older brother August Wilhelm Schlegel—may well be accorded him. Poetic leadership belongs not to Tieck nor to either Schlegel. This leadership belongs to Friedrich von Hardenberg, better known by his pen-name, Novalis. In the poetry of Novalis we find for the first time the principle of modern art spontaneously asserting itself. What matter that the followers of Novalis were few and that even these few were led—like the knights of King Arthur by Merlin—into the wilderness of speculative mysticism. Novalis was groping for something which he felt to be true and which, moreover, was true. He once made the assertion that "the ego is a plurality." The statement was certainly vague enough to delight the heart of any mystic. It differed, however, from similar vague assertions of poetic principles which other Romantists of his day put forward, in one essential point: it was a statement of his poetic attitude and not a formulation of a poetic theory. The vagueness of this poetic attitude accounts for the use which Novalis made of the symbols of the Roman Catholic Church. He employed these symbols to express, and perchance make more distinct to himself, his dim consciousness of fellowship with the religious aspirations of other men. In doing so he did not humble himself at the shrine of the Roman Catholic dogma. Romantic theorists, like the Schlegels, ended in that manner. Novalis has, indeed, been accused of Romanism by careless writers, as if Romanism were an all sufficient impeachment of the Romantic principle of art. But even if the accusation were true, one might as well hope to impeach the poetry of Wordsworth because it came in touch with the Oxford High Church movement in England! If English poets resorted to the symbols of ecclesiasticism to further their poetic conception of spiritual fellowship, was a similar expedient less excusable in Germany? Or was it not more excusable in a country where communal life was far more artificial than in England? And was not a Schiller forced into a similar use? In truth, if there were that in the checkered and unstable lives of these German Romantists which now bespeaks or should bespeak favorable consideration of their artistic principle, it

was the flight for refuge to the Mother Church, the only organism in which they could hope to feel the impulse of plural being. For if the principle which underlies the poetry of Novalis and the theories of the other Romanticists, be traced to its last hiding place in the curiously formed, and more often deformed, structure which it wrought, it will appear to be something like this: the individual soul can become fully conscious of itself only as it communes with other souls, and can express itself fully only when it expresses the spiritual experience of all men.

In his unfinished novel, "Heinrich von Ofterdingen," Novalis sends his hero forth in quest of peace of soul. Somewhere there blooms for him the "blue flower." In moments of intimate communion with men, in moments of self-forgetful sympathy, in moments of that second sight which envisages nature with the eyes of others, his eyes catch a glimpse of this wondrous flower in the misty distance. In his selfish desire to find and possess it, he forgets all else, and hastens to pluck the flower. But—the flower has vanished. No one else has seen it, no one has heard of it, this flower that is the bloom of spiritual fellowship perfected. Shall one not say that this was a new thought for German poetry, and was recognized as new by the poets? To a populace that knew not the meaning of civic democracy Novalis sang of a new spiritual democracy. There was at that time no sodality of temporal interests, and no sodality of religious interests. Governments and theologies were equally of the past. Germany was an agglomeration of individuals. How should a poet glorify the non-existent? How quicken the unconceived and, at that time, inconceivable, social ideal? Is it strange that the artistic impulse of Novalis led him—who desired to be of life as much as in life—back to the primitive ideal of a Catholic Church which Marsilio of Padua called the "universitas credentium" to distinguish it from the "universitas civium?" Novalis should receive all credit for the first tentative putting forward of the ideal of a spiritual democracy. It was a distinct gain for German poetry, offset, it is true, by the fact that there was no "universitas civium" to restrain the new poetry of the "universitas credentium." No law of secular gravitation held it to the earth and its only reality became the super-rational world.

For all that, the principle which controlled the poetry of Novalis and the theorizing of the other Romanticists was as justifiable as it was new. To know and feel himself not as an isolated being, but as a member of a democracy, that is the first great requisite of artistic conceiving which the poet must fulfill. If the artist would depict

life in all its fullness as a conceivable reality, he must see it with the eyes of humanity and feel in it the pulse-beat of humanity. The complex soul of humanity must in him be as *one*. That is the meaning of the words, "The ego is a plurality." The Romanticists regretted the passing of the Middle Ages because they believed—mistakenly it is true—that Catholicism reflected the spiritual unity of mediæval society. They clamored for such a unity to inspire modern artist. A new "allgemeine Weltanschauung" they called it. In the heyday of their hopes they prophesied the coming of the time when the diffusion of scientific education would bring about a common interpretation of the relation of Man to the Universe. In this catholic democracy artists would discover the statue of the veiled Goddess of Sais, and tear off the veil. Then beauty, in immaculate form, would again disclose eternal verities. Nor did the Romanticists hesitate to draw the logical conclusion of their principle of the plural soul. They maintained that some day art might no longer be a necessity, and this for the reason that communal life would become truly catholic in temper and organization. The individual soul would then touch the great complex soul of humanity at every point, and no longer crave the mediation of art. Life would supply the experience of plurality, life itself become a work of art, and thereby render meaningless the fictitious visions of the few.

Meanwhile the passion for a vision of beauty filled the hearts of these would-be disciples of the new truth, and the heart of Novalis more than that of another. He stood alone, and very much alone. Unlike Wordsworth he was not swayed by sentiments that only he can have who has communed with social life before he communes with nature. And just here began that fatal schism between theory and practice, between artistic inspiration and artistic experience, which is the central theme of the story of German poetry in the nineteenth century. Lacking the necessary basis in their social experience for the structure of their social art, the Romanticists impatiently ventured to put theory into practice. Contemplation of non-self became contemplation of a vague universal self, not contemplation of a potential social self or even of definite individual "selves." The line of demarcation between conscious and unconscious life vanished. Nature has a soul as well as Man—so ran the Romantic argument—and the calm of its singular plurality will silence the cry of our souls lost amid the unrelated fractions of humanity. "The grandiose simultaneousness" of Nature attracted the Romanticists, and fascinated them. Society offered no compensating attraction. Like Euphorion in Goethe's "Faust," they disdained

all laws of social gravitation and, like Euphorion, they ended with a wail for beauty:

“Lass mich im düstern Reich,  
Mutter, mich nicht allein.”<sup>17</sup>

Novalis was the impassioned mystic of this school of theoretical mystics. He attempted the descent to the “Mothers,” and undertook the journey into regions that know not space or time, without the key that Mephistopheles presses into the hand of Faust. The faculty of thinking in the concrete (*gegenständliches Denken*) was not acquired, and Novalis could not act on the sage advice of Mephistopheles to Faust:

“Wie Wolkenzüge schlingt sich das Getreibe,  
Den Schlüssel schwinde, halte sie vom Leibe.”<sup>18</sup>

The Romantic transmutation of matter into spirit was adventured through elimination of characteristic forms. By a similar process Schiller had reached his moral archetype. He put aside characteristic moral forms. But it should be noted that the Romanticists were not here concerned with the problem of Schiller. It was the problem of Goethe, and Goethe experienced his spiritual type by careful and sympathetic observation of the characteristic forms of matter. Strikingly significant of this Romantic adaptation of the method of Schiller to the aims of Goethe, is the fact that Novalis could only feel the spiritual unity of existence, and could feel it only when daylight vanished and darkness obscured the outlines of individual forms. “Away sped the splendor of Earth and with it my sadness,” he sang in the third of his “Hymns to the Night.” “In a new unfathomable world all my heaviness of heart was absorbed. Thou fervor of Night, thou slumber of Heaven, camest over me. Gently the landscape soared upward, and o’er the landscape hovered my unfettered, my newly born spirit.” He who has tasted this bliss—Novalis continues in the next Hymn—“verily, he will not return to the busy life of the world, to the land that is haunted by light with eternal restlessness.” Twilight—Night—Death, is the crescendo movement of the poetry of Novalis. Death does away forever with all characteristic forms; Death is the glorious night of

<sup>17</sup>“Leave me here in the gloomy Veil,  
Mother, not thus alone!”

(Goethe’s “Faust.” Part II., Act III. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

<sup>18</sup>“There whirls the press, like cloud on clouds unfolding;  
Then with stretched arm swing high the key thou’rt holding.”  
(*Ibid.* Act I. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)

Eternity, the dream of the soul. In Death we taste the ineffable bliss of our spiritual plurality. Singing of this bliss, Novalis closed the "Hymns to the Night":

"Hinunter zu der süßen Braut,  
Zu Jesus, dem Geliebten!  
Getrost! die Abenddämmerung graut  
Den Liebenden, Betrübten.  
Ein Traum bricht unsre Banden los,  
Und senkt uns in des Vaters Schoss."<sup>19</sup>

To this conception of matter and spirit the Romantic conception of good and evil formed a curious contrast. With a tenacity that seems almost perverse, every member of the School sought the moral type in characteristic forms. Novalis was not much concerned with this phase of the Romantic doctrine. For him the problem of morality was overshadowed by the problem of spirituality. Within the shadows of his spiritual world one may, however, discern the outlines of his moral society, as when he sings in "Astralis," the introductory poem to Part II of "Heinrich von Ofterdingen":

"Der Liebe Reich ist aufgethan,  
Die Fabel fängt zu spinnen an.  
Das Urspiel jeder Natur beginnt,  
Auf kräftige Worte jedes sinnt,  
Und so das Grosse Weltgemüt  
Ueberall sich regt und unendlich blüht.  
Alles muss in einander greifen,  
Eines durch das andere gedeihn und reifen:  
Jedes in allen dar sich stellt,  
Indem es sich mit ihnen vermischt  
Und gierig in ihre Tiefen fällt,  
Sein *eigentümliches* Wesen erfrischt,  
Und tausend neue Gedanken erhält."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup>"Adown to my Betrothed I wend,  
To Jesus, my Belovèd.  
Take heart! the evening shades descend  
On lovers, sadly provèd.  
A dream unfetters us to rest,  
And lays us on our Father's breast."

(Translation by J. F. C.)

<sup>20</sup>"Love's realm beginneth to reveal,  
And busy Fable plies her wheel.  
To its olden play each nature returns,  
And a mighty spell in each one burns;  
And so the soul of the world doth hover,  
And move through all, and bloom forever.  
For each other all must strive,  
One through the other must ripen and thrive;  
Each is shadowed forth in all.



One of Novalis's "Fragments" reads as follows: "The excellence of representative democracy is undeniable. Model Man is not natural. He is a poet's dream. What remains? Composition of artistic manhood. The best men of the nation complement each other. In this society is born a new social spirit. Its decrees are emanations of this spirit—and the ideal ruler is realized."

For Tieck and the Brothers Schlegel the problem of good and evil was of greater importance. But even to these poets it did not occur that ideal categories were necessary. To their way of thinking the moral type was an experience. If we can experience the evolution of morality, so they thought, then we may know the divine type, and no categorical imperatives can take the place of this experience. Hence every individual has unlimited license to live as his impulses direct. For only in the sum total of freely developing and freely developed individualities can the ultimate, or the primal, type be revealed. That this argument presupposed conditions of social life from which German society was far removed, is apparent. Theoretically, anarchy may be considered the most highly developed manifestation of democracy, and it may even be that the social millenium shall consist in the realization of this ideal. Practically, the anarchical theory of Romanticism disintegrated and debased society. No more convincing proof of this could be adduced than the total absence of moral fibre in Friedrich Schlegel's "Lucinde" and in the life of the author of this "Dame Lucifer." Once more the destructive schism between principle and experience is to be noted. The principle of moral evolution was sound, but this principle was not the basis of social morality in Germany. Therefore it bred unsound conditions, and prostituted art. Its soundness is appreciated by us when we remember that it asserted the emancipation of women from the overlordship of men. In America that assertion has not only found its champions, it has become a social axiom. Here it has been fathered by prevailing democratic conditions and sentiments. In Germany it was so entirely novel and so thoroughly at variance with the aristocratic standards of society that its champions were regarded as revolutionist. To this day the acceptance of the principle as a social axiom is problematical. We cannot question the philosophical soundness of this Romantic emancipation. We cannot question even some of its practical results. How much intellectual power and grace it set

While itself with them is blending,  
And eagerly into their depths doth fall,  
Its own peculiar essence mending,  
And myriad thoughts to life doth call."

(Translation by F. S. Stallknecht.)

free in those early days, is well known. Rahel von Ense, Dorothea Schlegel, Caroline Schelling, Sophie Schlegel, Caroline von Günderode, Bettina von Arnim, are names suggestive of the very acme of intellectual refinement. But if the Romantic principle was responsible for this refinement, it was also guilty of moral anamorphosis. Few of these names there are that do not suggest moral inertia every whit as much as mental refinement. The manner in which some of these women were treated by their temporary consorts has not been criticised too harshly by George Brandes: "Far from raising the women who gave themselves to them and followed them, they dragged them down, took from them their highest interests and sympathies, and gave them small and mean ones in exchange. . . . They treated the great women given them by the gods as they did the great ideas which were their own heritage: they took from them the noble, liberal-minded social and political enthusiasm by which they were naturally characterized, and made them, first Romantic and literary, then remorseful, and finally Catholic."

By these fruits the Romanticists have been judged. But the tree is not always to be condemned because it brings forth poor fruit. Uncongenial climate will blight the fairest promise. And the social atmosphere of Germany was ill-adapted to assist the Romantic principle of growth and fruitage. There was a fair promise in the principle of the plural soul. The promise was not kept. No Romantic poet of the older school applied to nature, or to moral, forms any other test than the test of his private personality. Into nature or into human life each one projected his isolated subjectivity, convinced that his methods of treating nature and human life made this subjectivity universal. The mystic was complete. Where the two phases of transcendentalism met in a mind so singularly pure as Novalis's, mysticism attained its most enraptured and enchanting expression. Where this rich purity was supplanted by worldliness, rapture lost its ecstasy and enchantment its thrill. Only a willful critic can break the staff over the poetry of Novalis and the later poetry of Tieck. No critic can, however, assert with truth that this poetry, even at its best, was representative of the artistic principle which the Romanticists proclaimed. The nineteenth century has not protested against the Romantic principle. It has protested against conditions that made the artistic application of the principle seem so often like veritable juggling with the impatient demands of the human soul. And this protest has voiced itself in the poetry of the century.

Franz Ziegler, one of the keenest observers of the intellectual and social life of the Germans in the nineteenth century, asserts boldly that Rationalism, Classicism, and Romanticism agree in their fundamental tendencies. He declares that the tendency common to all three was individualistic, and that every one of these Rationalists, Classicists, and Romanticists strove for a "beautiful and harmonious personality." If Ziegler means no more than this, he is right, but right only because he states a truism. Such striving characterizes every human being worthy of the name. It is as essential to democratic as it is to aristocratic ideals and institutions. It is as dominant in your representative man, as it is in your hero. However, Ziegler implies more, namely, Rationalists, Classicists and Romanticists regarded the individual as an isolated unit. In their philosophy the individual stood not so much in life, as apart from life. Instead of being informed by life, he informs himself of life. This information becomes the stuff which he models into ideas, and these ideas he transfers back to life. He treats life as though it were unconscious action which his ideas galvanize into conscious activity. This type of individuality—which, by the way, Ziegler seems to regard as the only possible type, and which he would have us accept as the ideal also of the Romanticists—was portrayed by Goethe in "Wilhelm Meister." Carlyle, of all English writers, subjected it to the most sympathetic analysis in his "Heroes and Hero Worship." "Force, force, everywhere force," Carlyle writes; "we a mysterious force in the centre of that." Carlyle's hero is the man who centralizes this force in his personality. Evidently this is Ziegler's view of the fundamental philosophy of Rationalism, Classicism, and Romanticism. It must be admitted that German critics generally entertain the same view. They identify philosophic personality, poetic personality, and human personality: and these were surely identical in German Romanticism. They measure the entire significance of Romanticism by one standard, and that standard is heroic individuality as the union of these diverse personalities. That beautiful and harmonious personality can develop in any other way seems not to have occurred to them. Ziegler closes his review of nineteenth century progress in German with the hope that the ideal of Goethe may be accepted by Germans in the century to come. Such a hope is characteristically German. Characteristically human it is not. Personality is conceivably representative. It is not necessarily heroic. Emerson's "Representative Man" puts the individual in the very heart of life where he is informed by life. Such an individual does not regard life as unconscious action,

but as conscious activity, as ideas. The duty and the privilege of the representative man is not the composition of ideas out of the mass, but the detection and clearer definition of ideas that are in the mass. That his private stature is thereby ennobled, is happily true. That he becomes heroic either in his own estimation, in the estimation of others, or by philosophical deduction, is certainly not true. He remains representative, a leader, but a democratic leader. That Emerson did not do justice to Goethe by treating him as a representative man, does not disprove the value or reality of the type. It was one of the restrictions on Emerson's mind that he could not appreciate the heroic type, the type of concentrated individuality. In Germany the principle of representative manhood was for the first time put forward by the Romanticists as the fundamental principle of art. Through the wayward theorizing of the Romanticists runs one thoroughly sane refrain: Poets must be representative. In no other way can modern poetry fulfill its mission. Surely, that is the crux in the problem of democratic art. In spite of this view, the Romanticists were not able to make their poetry democratic. Their search for ideas inherent in life produced results which controverted the sanity of their principle, because they sought these ideas in that portion of life which is "force" to men, in unconscious nature. Conditions made it difficult to discover ideas where ideas are most truly found—in intimate communion with contemporary society. And the transmutation of matter into spirit tempted them to compose ideas where ideas can only be found by the transcendental idealist. That was their fate. Yet they led the movement which gathered headway in the nineteenth century in art as well as in affairs of daily life. And for poetry in Germany and elsewhere, that movement has as its goal: the poet a representative leader, the creator of an artistic reality in which the ideas of his age are fused into a vision of the future. That vision may encompass temporal realities, it may also reveal eternal verities. It may show us the ideals and forms that are taking shape as social character, it may also reveal the import of that unknown something in which we all share and in which we attain to the most satisfying consciousness of self—social or democratic individuality. German Classicism and German Romanticism could not define this unknown, but they proved its potentiality, and since that day the consciousness of this potentiality has been responsible for the mighty issues that have been raised in every field of human experience. Without such issues civilisation would be at a standstill, with them it may seem a hopeless chaos, but is in reality a

process of unwearied striving. Those who see only the superficial tendencies of modern society may well ponder the lines of Goethe :

“Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
Den können wir erlösen.”<sup>21</sup>

(Goethe's "Faust." Part II., Act V. Translation by Bayard Taylor.)  
These lines apply as much to society as to the individual, and it was Goethe who suggested this application.

<sup>21</sup>“Whoever aspires unweariedly  
Is not beyond redeeming.”