

sire to realize the Kingdom of God on earth," wrote Friedrich Schlegel referring to this ideal, "is the elastic point of progressive civilization and the beginning of modern history. Whatever has no relation to the Kingdom of God is of strictly secondary importance in it." Since the location of the ideal in time varied, the means believed to be necessary for its attainment and the institutional forms of the values it embodied differed, too. Later, left and right, radicals and conservatives, would adjust to this matrix equally well. Most of the "early" Romantics, on the whole, preferred the past. But even the fascination with the Middle Ages, so characteristic of the period that it is frequently identified with the Romantic mode of thought, was not essential to their social philosophy. When regarded as an embodiment of the Kingdom of God, the medieval society assumed the characteristics of this ideal image, rather than molding this image in terms of its own historical characteristics. And even the "early" Romantics did not always find this retrospective vision satisfactory. The only thing Friedrich Schlegel found to criticize in his "Critical Fragments" "about the model of Germany, which a few great patriotic authors have constructed," was "its incorrect placement." "It does not lie behind," he said, "but before us."¹⁵³

Wherever it lay, the ideal society in which all the wrongs suffered by *Bildungsbürger* because of the unfulfilled promises of Enlightenment would be corrected was the never-never land of the perfect Community. One can understand and even sympathize with their yearning for it: they wanted to escape a condition which caused them pain. But why have the intellectuals of the West been so taken up by this fantasy? How could we take this creation of bitter and fevered imagination for a scientific description of a possible—and more than that, desirable—reality? Why have we for almost two centuries admiringly followed those pied-pipers in their search for the Romantic dreamland (that terrible land of totally absorbing society, in which the individual was sacrificed to the higher individuality and found freedom and happiness in submission, and which was ruled by the unaccountable and unrestrainable semi-divine men of "genius" whose power was absolute)? We must leave this question for another occasion, but it is worth pondering.

III. The Materialization of the Spirit

The Impact of the French Revolution

The social philosophy of the Romantics, like the Romantic mentality in general, developed as a response to the depressing situation of the *Bildungsbürger*. The intellectuals did not perceive any realistic way out of their predicament. Extraordinary abilities were developed in them which cried for public

expression and recognition. They were trained to become men of importance in their society, but were doomed to obscurity and scorn. Their imagination, the cause of many of their sufferings, was also their only protection. They dreamed their humiliation away, and convinced themselves that the neglect and alienation which they could not escape were the signs of election and true nobility, and were freely chosen. Love, friendship, marriage, titanic emotions, suffering, art, the yearning for the infinite, even "glorious inactivity" were so many ways they conjured to ennoble and justify their lack of success, of which they were ashamed, in achieving the social position of honor they had prepared themselves for—that is, the inactivity they in the depth of their soul felt as ignominious. The totalitarian Kingdom of God was another such device. The enlightened society was evil to the extent that it would be simply unnatural not to be alienated in it. The Kingdom of God, on the other hand, was so remote an ideal that it did not seem to be within human powers to bring it about—and one would be foolish to try to—and so it was quite enough, and a service to humanity, just to philosophize about it. The conception utilized the same building blocks of totality and individuality on which was predicated the rest of the Romantic worldview, and thus had its own momentum, and could develop regardless of external events. It was, also, initially unrelated to the development of the national consciousness. But, with the rest of Romanticism, and Pietism before and alongside it, this social philosophy prepared the mold, the very skin, bones, and muscle, for the migrant spirit of the national idea, and added essential finishing touches to the character nationalism was to acquire in Germany at the moment of its arrival.

Although this portentous development was mainly fueled from within, the last layers in the fundament of the German national consciousness took shape in the forty years (roughly from 1775 to 1815) under the shadow—or the brilliant light, as the case may be—of the French Revolution. This world-shaking event had such a confusing effect on the Romantic generation that for a time the latter found itself, almost unconsciously, back in the camp of the *Aufklärung*. When the mistake was discovered—in the very last years of the eighteenth century and very first ones of the nineteenth—both the *Aufklärer* and the Romantics abandoned the camp, and "enlightened" Germany was no more.

The story of the German educated reaction to the French Revolution is well known: unreserved rapture, with which it was met, gave way to equally unreserved repugnance and indignation; the final judgment on it was harsh. The initial excitement was due to several factors. The ideas of the Revolution, or at least its slogans, were familiar to the educated Germans who were taught by the *Aufklärung* to recognize in them desirable social goals. G. J. D. von Scharnhorst, the famous Hannoverian and then Prussian general in the wars against France, reminisced in his *French Revolutionary War*:

"When the French Revolution began . . . those who loved reading—that is, most of the educated classes—had already grasped the idea of a better constitution, which had long been seductively preached in novels and poems; and the ideas of liberty, equality, and independence had been thrown into circulation by the American War."¹⁵⁴ It seemed as if the promise of the *Aufklärung* had in fact come true. "It is glorious to see what philosophy has ripened in the brain and realized in the State!" exclaimed Forster. For the discontented middle-class intellectuals, this realization of ideals promised to be of great practical significance. The Revolution preached—and evidently practiced—the gospel of equality; for a moment it appeared that in Germany, too, undeserved privilege would be toppled and merit, intellectual merit in particular, would rise in its place. "The hatred of nobility" was recognized as one of the most common reasons for sympathy toward the French, when the war began, and the lower classes and, significantly, "the scholars" were generally considered the most likely sympathizers. In 1793 Fichte, in "Contributions to the Rectification of Public Opinion on the French Revolution," expressed the opinion of the intellectuals. Addressing the nobility, he wrote: "You fear for us the subjection by a foreign power, and to secure us against this misfortune, you prefer to subject us yourselves? Do not be so confident that we regard the situation in the same way as you do. It is easy to believe that you prefer to subject us yourselves than to leave it to somebody else; but what we cannot understand is why we should prefer it so much." H. Ch. Boie frankly suggested insubordination: "For whom are they calling upon you to fight, my good German people? . . . For the vile breed of princes and nobles and for the priestly vermin!" Hölderlin counseled his sister to pray for the French and wrote to his mother to take the war lightly: "Wherever it had penetrated in Germany, the good citizen has lost little or nothing and gained a great deal."¹⁵⁵

The identification with France was made easier by the sense that it was no longer French. Since the German intellectuals saw in the Revolution the fulfillment of the *Aufklärung*, they found no difficulty in believing that the revolutionaries were moved by the plight of suffering Humanity, and that their concern for the French nation was of secondary importance. Cosmopolitanism, which, though widespread, had previously been more of an expression of diffuse indifference than of ardent feeling, turned into a passion, while the slowly brewing resentment against the French, which accompanied the yet unformed but already wounded national pride, retreated into the background. The letters of Joachim Campe, written from Paris in 1789, clearly reflected the new sentiment, as well as the sentiments it replaced. "Is it really true," the famous educator wrote in the first letter,

. . . that I am in Paris? . . . I could have embraced the first people, who met us. They seemed no longer French . . . All national differences and prejudices

melted away. They had regained their long-lost rights, and we felt that we were men . . . Even before we reached Paris, I often asked myself, Are these really the people we used to call and think of as French? Were the shrill chattering dandies, the arrogant and brainless swaggerers who used to cross the Rhine and turn up their noses at everything they saw in Germany—were they only the dregs and scum of a nation of which on our journey we have not seen a single example? Or has their whole character so changed with their revolution that the noble elements which were underneath have now come to the surface, and vulgarity sunk out of sight? . . . the cleansing of [the French] national character in the purgatorial fires of liberty is a fact which has struck German and other observers who were here before the Revolution.¹⁵⁶

No wonder that the "patriotic intoxication" of the Parisians on the night of August 4, noted by certain observers from Germany, perplexed and even disconcerted them. Still, in 1789, it failed to tint their opinion of the grand event. It was natural that, since all national differences and prejudices had melted away, the fact that Frenchmen had regained their long-lost rights made German intellectuals feel that they, too, were men, and they eagerly expected direct and personal benefits from the French upheaval.

But they were impatient. "My heart is heavy," complained Novalis to Friedrich Schlegel, "that the fetters do not already fall to pieces like the walls of Jericho." The welcome transformation tarried on the way, and the hope was abandoned. The consciousness that one was misled, that one hoped in vain, led to a drastic change of sentiment. The opinion of many a German intellectual about the French Revolution transformed overnight, yet this did not happen at the same time in every case. This lack of synchronization makes it difficult to attribute the disgust which replaced unqualified admiration to the shock to sensitivity caused by the revolutionary excesses, to which, in retrospect, many did attribute their about-face, an argument later backed by historians. Nursed as they were at the springs of Pietism, Klopstock, and *Sturm und Drang*, the Germans saw nothing wrong in violence. During the days of their short-lived revolutionary enthusiasm, they in fact had been rather annoyed when anyone pointed to the excesses and saw in them the reflection of the evil nature of the Revolution. "Blessed be its influence on nations and rulers," wrote Johannes Müller of the Revolution in 1789. "I am aware of the excesses; but they are not too great a price to pay for a free constitution. Can there be any question that a clearing storm, even when it works some havoc, is better than the plague?" Johanna Schopenhauer remembered later "the ardent love of liberty which burned in every young breast." "Murders and excesses committed," she wrote, "were regarded as inevitable incidents in a time of excitement."¹⁵⁷

In some cases, at least, the decision, or rather the impulse, to change sides was directly related to the degree to which persistent hope in a better future interfered with the possibilities of a comfortable present, and the extent to

which such possibilities were indeed open. The opportunities, after all, depended on those who could regard sympathy with the revolutionary cause as a personal affront. Thus Johannes Müller, employed as the secretary of the Elector of Mainz since 1788, seeing no sign that liberty would triumph in Germany by the spring of 1792, no longer felt inclined to sympathize with its cause. "People have told [the Elector] that I am a democrat and mixed up with the enemies of princes," he wrote at the time anxiously. "I am not . . . these cabals are a great worry to me." Indeed he turned into a sworn enemy of the Revolution, by which, as he saw it now, "all mankind was outraged in their deepest feelings," and did not lose an opportunity to stress that he, personally, was "for evolution, never for revolution." "Since the Elector ennobled him, made him his Councillor, and called him to his table," noted once an admirer of Müller's, Reichardt, "he is as zealous for the Emigrés and as hostile to the Constitution as he was previously enthusiastic for liberty and the rights of man."¹⁵⁸

Young men, who could disregard the concerns of adult life, or men for whom no opportunities were open anyway, persisted much longer. Friedrich Schlegel, that eminently excitable young man, wrote to his brother in May 1796: "I am tired of criticism and shall work at revolutions with incredible enthusiasm. I shall also write something popular on republicanism . . . I do not wish to conceal from you that I have republicanism even more at heart than divine criticism or still more divine poetry." Even he, however, was aware of the danger such audacity might have presented for his advancement—had the new world he wished for failed to materialize—and he did not neglect to take the necessary precautions. In preparing the essay on "The Conception of Republicanism," which was published in 1796 in Reichardt's *Deutschland*, he chose to abide by the following rule (revealing both his anxiety and the spirit of Romantic science): "Because of the rigor of the scientific approach," he decided, "I shall refrain from any allusion to facts." He also comforted himself with the consideration that "the obscurity of abstract metaphysics will protect me. When one writes solely for philosophers, one can be incredibly daring without anyone in the police perceiving it, or even realizing how daring it is." After his hopes for a professorship were ruined, Henri Brunschwig tells us, Schlegel gained courage, and since there seemed nothing else for him to lose in this world, he put his faith in the prophets of the new one. In 1799, Dorothea, his wife, still hoped for salvation from the West: "The whole world is talking of Buonaparte. Can one not put one's trust in the fortunes of a truly great man?" That same year Caroline, Wilhelm Schlegel's, later Schelling's, wife, wrote to her daughter: "And now Bonaparte is here! Rejoice with me, or I shall have to think that you are not good for anything save romping and haven't a serious thought in your head."¹⁵⁹ The admiration for Napoleon among the Romantics was general.

Schlegel's circle, however, was among the very last champions of the revolutionary cause in Germany. And the mood was changing rapidly at the time even among Schlegel's familiars. The political works of Novalis distinctly sounded a new note. In *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (Christianity or Europe) he condemned the Revolution, the values it stood for, the nation that made it, and the age in which it occurred. Though a "Fragment," this essay represented an early self-contained statement of the *Weltanschauung* of mature Romanticism, and the arguments which first appeared in it were later to reappear again and again in German thought.

Novalis saw the Revolution as the final stage in the process of alienation and spiritual destruction started by the Reformation, a child of Reason, which undermined the pristine, wholesome world of Catholic Christianity. He wrote:

With the Reformation Christendom was lost, and from that time onward it no longer existed . . . Modern Politics originated first during this period . . . religious hatred extended very naturally and consequently to all objects of enthusiasm, and denounced imagination and feeling, morality and the love of art, the future and the past as heretical, and gave man the highest place in the order of natural beings . . . One enthusiasm was generously left to the miserable human race and as a touchstone of the highest education was made indispensable to everyone thus concerned . . . France was so fortunate as to become the source and seat of this new faith, which was pieced together from mere knowledge . . . Light became their favorite subject on account of its mathematical obedience . . . and thus they named after it their great enterprise, enlightenment . . . They took pleasure in enlightening the common people and in training them to this cultured enthusiasm. Thus arose a new European guild of philanthropists and men of enlightenment. It is a pity that nature remained so wonderful and incomprehensible, so poetical and infinite, defying all attempts to modernize it. If anywhere there arose an ancient superstition about a higher world or something similar, alarm was immediately sounded on all sides and, if possible, the dangerous spark was suppressed by philosophy and wit; nevertheless, tolerance was the watchword of the educated, and especially in France it was synonymous with philosophy. This history of modern skepticism is the key to all the monstrous phenomena of the modern age, and only in this century and especially in its later half has it begun to grow to an immense size and variety . . . Shall the revolution remain the French Revolution, as the Reformation was the Lutheran reformation? Shall Protestantism once more be established contrary to nature as a revolutionary government? Is the letter without spirit merely to replace another letter without spirit?¹⁶⁰

Novalis' answer to these burning questions is: "No!" Salvation will come and it will arrive from Germany, which "goes its slow but sure way in advance of other European countries." In this, too, he established a compelling pattern to be picked up by most unlikely followers in the years to come.

Friedrich Schlegel, in 1799, found the historical conception of *Die Chris-*

tenheit oder Europa "too arbitrary," its religiosity excessive; refused to publish the essay in the *Athenaeum*; and ridiculed it. In his case, as in several others of equal importance, it took a visit to France—at that time (in 1802) aglow with new national pride and aspirations—to effect a final conversion and to wean him irrevocably from the cosmopolitan and libertarian preoccupations of the *Aufklärung*. But by the beginning of the new century the transformation was complete. The revolutionary cause in Germany had only enemies. With the victorious advance of the French army, new, unexpected opportunities opened to the intellectuals, and with them the era of nationalism.

The Birth of German Nationalism

It was the defeat of Prussia in the course of the French revolutionary wars that finally ushered German nationalism into the world. The emergence of the national sentiment was nothing short of miraculous. Notwithstanding the feeble and uncertain expressions of enlightened patriotism among the eighteenth-century *Gelehrte*, the conception in this case seemed to be immaculate and no visible pregnancy preceded the appearance of the infant. Yet, it emerged—endowed with healthy lungs and fists—and at its very birth acquired all the long-formed habits of its native land, to become the unexpected culmination of a century-long development of the German spirit.

For the unattached intellectuals, nationalism indeed was God-sent. It provided a practical, this-worldly solution to their problem, and put an end to their alienation. To Pietism and Romanticism it added directedness and activism—instead of persistence and acquiescence in the status quo, with its dubious emotional pleasures, it offered a goal for which to fight and a realistic possibility of changing the status quo and distinguishing oneself in the world, rather than through *reine Innerlichkeit*—and all this while remaining faithful to the Pietist-Romantic worldview and standards.

The conversion, the transformation of the Romantic mentality into nationalism, was sudden and unforeseen, for the glorious opportunities it offered were created all of a sudden, by an extraneous, unforeseeable event—the intervention and victorious advance of the French army. The idea of the nation was known in Germany throughout the eighteenth century; it was almost commonplace. But until the fall of Prussia and the dismemberment of the Empire, it did not ring a bell. It held nothing in store for the intellectuals marginalized by the unhappy inconsistency between the principles of the *Aufklärung* and the arrangements of the traditional society. Unlike the French and Russian aristocracies, the downtrodden German *Bildungsbürger* had no power to enforce the new definition of nobility and social honor which the idea of the nation implied. To demand it, to insist on the redistri-

bution of prestige in open disregard of the class which controlled its distribution at present, would be inviting frustration and ridicule and was worse than a cry in the wilderness (and thus all sorts of escapism which the intellectuals practiced), for in this case one was certain to be heard. The news of the French Revolution, which inspired them with hope, moved them to do just that, but their optimism was short-lived and heavily tinted with cosmopolitanism. The tragedy of the *Bildungsbürger* was that their predicament was theirs alone. Without nobility and/or bureaucracy at their side, they had no chance whatsoever to change it, and for this the community of interest was lacking. The Napoleonic invasion created such a community of interest.

Whatever the effect of the invasion on the German population as a whole, the attack of the revolutionary army was explicitly directed against and intended to injure the representatives and beneficiaries of the "old order," the aristocracy and the bureaucracy. The intellectuals made the cause of the old order, which they christened the "German cause," their own. This identification allowed them to share in the common humiliation, the humiliation whose brunt was born by the most powerful and respectable members of society, the very groups whose acceptance the intellectuals so fervently desired, and into which this common experience finally afforded them the entry. This grand humiliation in which the *Bildungsbürger* had the privilege of sharing was far less humiliating than the "unbearable sense of being unnoticed" and the abject state of poverty and obscurity which contrasted so painfully with their self-esteem and was their singular dole. It was in fact elevating and filled them with noble sentiments. And for this reason they felt it all the more; they willingly let it eclipse the memory of all their private humiliations and concentrated solely on this collective misfortune. From this time on the pride and the self-esteem they strove to defend was national pride and self-esteem. They changed their identity and became, passionately and irrevocably, Germans.

Owing to the circumstances of its birth, the German national cause was from the start defined as the anti-French cause. This suited the influential groups who were directly affected by the invasion, and they lent a sympathetic ear to the nationalistic admonitions of the intellectuals. For the first time, the intellectuals were explicitly invited to participate in the experience and efforts of the highest ranks of society and were seen by them as valuable allies. Since the *Aufklärung* was irreparably stigmatized by its association with the French Revolution, the positive definition of the German national consciousness was left entirely in the hands of the Romantics. For several decades they vied successfully with the drier and less enchanting *Aufklärung* for the attentions of the German public. They were the voice of their people; they spoke to every German who could read through their novels, poems, and periodicals, and by this means furnished the terms in which their readers thought. Through their writings the Romantic *Weltanschauung* was already becoming the German *Weltanschauung*; their influence had been sig-

nificant even before the war, though they were unaware of the degree of its significance. But this influence doubled and trebled now that their teaching had the weighty approbation of the upper classes and the governments of states behind it, and was elevated into the official gospel of the new public religion. The happy union of the intellectuals and the establishment lasted but briefly. The attachment was momentary, and with the end of the Wars of Liberation was over, leaving the most ardent of the *Bildungsbürger* "unattached" again. But in the ten years or so of the great collective effervescence in which they were allowed to play the central role, these intellectuals forged the national identity of the German-speaking people. German nationalism is Romantic nationalism. German national social philosophy is Romantic social philosophy, and the German national character is the Romantic character, for the ideal, the "true" German, expressing the individuality of his nation, is either the creature of nature, faithfully obedient to his *Wesenwille*, or the *Genie*—the man of titanic emotions and contempt for the peace and calm of the little men's lives—the creature of nature's art.

While Romanticism left a permanent imprint on the character of German nationalism, nationalism in turn reacted back on Romanticism. It broke the narrow circle of personal life and purely expressive agitation, which had constrained the expressions of the revolutionary inclinations of the Romantic spirit to futile rage about itself, and opened for it a room for activity, the one that Lenz had so fervently hoped for before he went mad. In this room, the spirit was let loose. It became imperative—and seemed possible—to establish the ideal state, instead of simply lamenting the perfidy of the existing reality. It became imperative to fight the holy glorious war, and receive and inflict real wounds, and meet and cause death, instead of simply imagining it and singing its praise. The "gloomy philosophy of quiescence" which Romanticism had inherited from Pietism was transformed into an unshakable belief that the infinite—the Kingdom of God—was within easy reach, and spurred the believers on to a frenzied activity to help in its realization. The Romantic spirit of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was revolutionary in a way very different from that of the eighteenth: it was determined to be fulfilled in this world. The first expression of this reinvigorated Romantic mentality, and of the nascent German national consciousness, was the war against the French. This explains why German nationalism, which arrived on the stage so late, and almost unannounced, instantly became the most activist, violent, and xenophobic species of the phenomenon.

First Expressions and Crystallization of German National Consciousness

This German nationalism, full-fledged and endowed with all the characteristics which made it unique, was quickly embedded in the soil which ten

years before would have seemed a most unlikely place for its emergence. Friedrich Schlegel, who turned nationalist after his visit to France, and Ernst Moritz Arndt, who in 1802 wrote *Germanien und Europa*, were among the very first converts. But innumerable others followed in quick succession. Collections of folk songs and tales, expressive of the preoccupation with questions of national identity, began to appear in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Ludwig Tieck published his *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter* in 1803, and pointed in the introduction to "the quick change which has occurred in so short a time, so that one is not only interested in the monuments of the [national] past but appreciates them."¹⁶¹ The first collection of folk songs edited by Arnim and Brentano appeared in 1805, and the "folk-song fever" reached its peak in the next decade, when the brothers Grimm published their famous collections of tales. The patriotic zeal of poets and folklorists was supplemented by that of the scholars in established disciplines. The interest in German history revived. Anxious to foster this interest, Karl vom Stein sponsored the work on the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, a monumental collection of sources, which took more than a hundred years to complete, and which at the time of its completion, in 1925, numbered 120 volumes.¹⁶²

It was clearly the preoccupation with the honor of the German nation which inspired the champions of liberal reform in Prussia—Stein, Hardenberg, Humboldt, and their counterparts in the military, such as Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Clausewitz. These leaders explicitly stated their motives. Stein wrote that the reforms were intended to create a "civic spirit" among Germans, to bring about "the revival of patriotism and of the desire for national honor and independence"; they aimed at imposing "the obligation upon the people of so loving king and fatherland that they will gladly sacrifice property and life for them." Clausewitz proclaimed fatherland and national honor two earthly deities he felt himself obliged to serve. The interests of Prussia were of secondary importance. "I have but one fatherland," wrote Stein, "and that is Germany . . . to it and not to any part of it, I am wholeheartedly devoted . . . my desire is that Germany shall grow large and strong, so that it may recover its independence and nationality."¹⁶³

Das Deutsche Volkstum of "Turnvater" Jahn, published in 1810 and, along with Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* of 1808, that "bible of nationalism," recognized by the grateful compatriots as "one of the 'spiritual sponsors' of the new Germanness" and "one of the most precious products of the German spirit,"¹⁶⁴ gave national sentiment an articulate ideological expression. In the electrifying sermons of Schleiermacher, who preached it from the pulpit of the Holy Trinity Church in Berlin, this sentiment was represented as a new religion, the true heir of the Reformation, and soon eclipsed the message of the Gospels, adulterated as it was already by the century-old labors of Pietists before him. In 1814, a Junker, F. A. L. von der

Marwitz, unsympathetic to popular nationalism and opposed to reform, which was one of its manifestations, admitted, in a letter to Hardenberg, that "the idea of a common German fatherland has taken . . . deep root. Whoever seizes upon this sentiment will rule Germany."¹⁶⁵

The sudden conversion to nationalism was in many individual cases triggered by the collapse of Prussia in 1806. At least in some of the most important of these cases, an obvious connection existed between Prussian interests and the personal interests of the neophytes, which were directly affected by the defeat. One of the most influential propagandists of German nationalism, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, was before his conversion a principled cosmopolitan and sympathized with the French. As late as 1799, when, accused of atheism, he lost his professorship at Jena, he hoped for French victory in Germany, for nothing was more certain to him "than the fact that unless the French achieve the most tremendous superiority . . . in Germany . . . no German who is known for ever having expressed a free thought will in a few years find a secure place." Moved by this consideration, he asked to be employed by the French Republic, but then did find a secure place in Prussia. There, until 1805 faithful to his cosmopolitan credo, he remained indifferent to the fate of Germany and untouched by the nationalism to which some of his friends had already converted. The war of 1806 between France and Prussia, however, changed everything. There was no doubt in Fichte's mind that in this conflict France represented the forces of darkness and Prussia those of light, and he longed to be a soldier in its battle. In the absence of a sword, he wished "to talk swords and thunderbolts."¹⁶⁶ The *Addresses to the German Nation*, which were the product of this state of mind, indeed added a formidable weapon to the arsenal of the nation which he now proclaimed his own and through his attachment helped to create.

Similarly, the change in Schleiermacher was effected to a large degree by the fact that the French closed the University of Halle, where he was a professor. He described the circumstances that grieved him in this period of national humiliation in letters to Henrietta Herz,¹⁶⁷ enumerating his concerns in the following revealing order: "The sudden destruction of the school which I was in the act of founding here . . . the probable dissolution of the entire university . . . and added to this the precarious state of our fatherland . . . Dearest, you can hardly conceive how this affects me . . . The thought that it may be my fate for a long time to live only for and by authorship, is very depressing." "This much only is certain," Schleiermacher reflected on the vicissitudes of military fortune, "that as long as the war lasts, there is little likelihood that the university will resume its activity . . . Napoleon must have a special hatred for Halle." This terrible disaster, he concluded, meant that the rod of God's wrath fell on Germany, obviously for its past inability to fulfill the high mission for which it was destined. This pater-

nal punishment was a sure sign of Germany's election. Its very degradation at present made it crystal clear that the triumph of Germany was willed by God, and that everyone had to toil without rest and do his part in helping to bring this triumph about. Patriotism was piety.

German nationalism brought together the Peto-Romantic mentality, forged and hardened in the lasting predicament of successive generations of *Bildungsbürger*, which penetrated deeply into the souls of the Germans who could read, to become the way they thought and felt, and the idea of the nation, which, though long available, until then had had no appeal in Germany. When this idea was finally appropriated, it was inevitably interpreted in the light of Peto-Romantic mentality and imbued with an entirely new meaning. At the same time, the Romantic ideals were "nationalized" and represented as the reality peculiar to the German people, language, and land. The German nation, which was now seen as the object of supreme loyalty, and which did not at the time exist as a united polity (or economy), assumed the characteristics of the true Church and the Romantic ideal community. Now it was the embodiment of true individuality, the moral totality, the eternal in this world. Only in the nation could an individual become a whole man, and therefore individuals did not live but for it. "The concept of nation requires that all its members should form as it were only one individual," declared Friedrich Schlegel.¹⁶⁸ In the Eighth Address, Fichte defined a nation less aphoristically. It is, he wrote,

a totality which lives and represents a definite and particular law of the development of the Divine . . . its distinctive characteristics . . . are the Eternal to which [the noble-minded individual] entrusts the eternity of himself and his continual influence, the eternal order of things in which he places his portion of eternity; he must will its continuance, for it alone is to him the means by which the short span of his life here below is extended into continuous life . . . his conception [of] his own life as an eternal life is the bond which unites first his own nation, and then, through his nation, the whole human race, in a most intimate fashion with himself, and brings all their needs within his widened sympathy until the end of time. This is his love for his people, respecting, trusting, and rejoicing in it, and feeling honoured by descent from it. The Divine has appeared in it, and that which is original [the source of all things] has deemed this people worthy to be made its vesture and its means of directly influencing the world; for this reason there will be further manifestations of the Divine in it. Hence the noble-minded man will be active and effective, and will sacrifice himself for his people. Life, merely as life, the continuance of changing existence, has in any case never had any value for him; he has wished for it only as the source of what is permanent [the Eternal]. But this permanence [eternity] is promised to him only by the continuous and independent existence of his nation. In order to save his nation he must be ready even to die that it may live, and that he may live in it the only life for which he has ever wished.¹⁶⁹

This view of the nation did not differ from the Romantic concept of the state. Indeed, the words "nation" and "state" were frequently used interchangeably. Some difference in meaning did emerge, though, with the "nationalization" of Romantic concepts. "Nation," which was also synonymous with *Volk*, as distinct from the state, represented the inner unity and spirit of the people (designated by a variety of new concepts: *Volksgeist*, *Nationalgeist*, *Volkstum*, and others); it was the immediate embodiment of this spirit and unity, again reminiscent of the invisible Church of the Pietists, while the state represented its outward structure. The German *Volk* was preferred to *Nation*, which was of foreign derivation, but the two words referred to the very same concept.¹⁷⁰

Since Germany was, apparently, one nation among many, a legitimate inference would be that it was also one individuality and one invisible Church among many. But this was not the inference made by the German patriots. In pre-nationalist Pietist and Romantic thinking, too, the original postulation of multiple equal individualities or expressions of Divinity inevitably gave way to the selection of only one of them as the true one, and the rejection of others as either incomplete or false. Thus, reason, initially conceived of as a part of nature and one way through which God manifested Himself to man, was rejected as unnatural, while irrational emotion became the sole venue of Divine revelation; and modern "enlightened" society was denied "individuality," its specific character being represented as the embodiment of alienation from natural will. Though no logical necessity commanded such conclusions (which were unequivocally *non sequitur* in each instance), the minds that conceived them were obviously unable to accept pluralism with equanimity and were driven to them by psychological necessity. When these logicians of Pietist and Romantic formation turned nationalists, therefore, they were immediately driven to abandon the inherently vexing position of cultural relativism, which presented Germany as one nation among many, for the much more satisfactory view that only Germany was a nation, or, which meant the same thing, that it was the only *true*, ideal, perfect nation in the world.

Germany was the perfect nation because it expressed humanity most fully, the most *human* nation of all. This was consistent with the ground rule that true individuality is the expression of the universal. For this reason, Germany was destined to play a great role in the world. The fate of Europe, or, alternately, of the entire world, depended on her. Every German personality of renown in the period of nationalist "awakening" expressed this belief in one form or another. Wilhelm von Humboldt reflected: "There is perhaps no country that deserves to be free and independent as Germany, because none is so disposed to devote its freedom so single-mindedly to the welfare of all. The German genius is among all nations the one which is least destructive, which always nourishes itself, and when freedom is secured Ger-

many will certainly attain an outstanding place in every form of culture and thought . . . Other nations do not love their country in the same way as . . . we love Germany. Our devotion is maintained by some invisible force, and is far less the product of need or habit. It is not so much affection for a particular land as a longing for German feeling and German spirit." For Arndt, the German was "a universal man, to whom God has given the whole earth as a home," and Germany, consequently, "the greatest world-nation of the present earth." This view was most forcefully stated by Fichte in his Eighth Address, where he asserted that "only the German—the original man, who has not become dead in an arbitrary organization—really has truly a people and is entitled to count on one, and . . . he alone is capable of real and rational love for his nation."¹⁷¹

The reasoning behind this astounding claim testified to the remarkable single-mindedness beneath the apparent heterogeneity of Pietist-Romantic thought and reflected its unifying master-idea. True individuality was the expression of the universal; it strove toward the realization of the purpose of the universal. In "Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil," composed in 1806, Fichte explained that the will of the universal, "the dominant will," was "that the purpose of the existence of humanity be really achieved by humanity." He called this will "cosmopolitanism." Patriotism represented the individualization of the universal will; it was "the will that the purpose be first fulfilled in that nation of which we ourselves are members, and that the result shall spread from it to the whole of mankind." However, to will something necessitated first the knowledge of what to will. Therefore, patriotism, and consequently cosmopolitanism, could characterize only certain elite nations to whom such knowledge was revealed. In his as yet pre-nationalistic days, in the lectures on "Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters" of 1804–5, Fichte maintained that at different ages different nations assumed the leadership of mankind on its way to the fulfillment of its purpose, and that the loyalty (or patriotism) of any reasonable person, whatever his nation of origin, was due to such leader-nations. "Which is the fatherland of the truly educated Christian European?" he asked, and responded: "In general it is Europe, in particular it is in each age that European state which had assumed the cultural leadership."¹⁷² To use a more modern idiom, not all classes of humanity represented humanity equally; rather, it was represented in each age by one, ascending, class that was on its road to dominance fully justified by its universal role. The nation in which the knowledge of the purpose of humanity, or the true philosophy, was created was in a favorable position to perceive and follow this purpose. In Fichte's age such true philosophy was created by him, in Germany. Thus, in "Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil," he concluded that "the German alone, by possessing this knowledge and understanding the age through it, can perceive . . . the next objective of humanity."

It was but a short step to a further, and this time *non sequitur*, conclusion that Germany was a universal nation *par excellence*, that is, that, at all times, only it truly represented humanity and perceived its purpose: "The German alone can therefore be a patriot; he alone can for the sake of his nation encompass the whole of mankind; contrasted with him from now on the patriotism of every other nation must be egoistic, narrow and hostile to the rest of mankind."¹⁷³ A pan-human nation, Germany bore on its shoulders the destiny of humanity. "If there is truth in what has been expounded in these addresses," Fichte concluded his impassioned appeal to fellow-Germans, "then are you of all modern peoples the one in whom the seed of human perfection most unmistakably lies, and to whom the lead in its development is committed. If you perish in this your essential nature, then there perishes together with you every hope of the whole human race for salvation from the depths of its miseries . . . if you go under, all humanity goes under with you, without hope of any future restoration."¹⁷⁴

Very frequently, the humanity which called for Germany's salutary intervention, however, was defined rather narrowly. The world for Germany was Europe, Western Europe, to be precise. It was European civilization that Germany represented to its thinkers, rather than the spirit of humanity, and they were concerned solely with the preservation of what they took to be this civilization. "The great confederation of European nations," prophesied Adam Müller, "will . . . wear German colors; for everything great, thorough and lasting in all European institutions is German." And Fichte warned: "Should the German not assume world government through philosophy, the Turks, the Negroes, the North American tribes, will finally take it over and put an end to the present civilization." There was no shadow of a doubt in the German educated mind that Western Europe, the perfidious world of enlightenment, was far superior to "the Turks, the Negroes, and the tribes of North America." Fortunately, Germany was the ultimate expression of the true spirit which Europe had betrayed, and while the latter decayed, it stood ready to uphold and reveal to the world God's will:

Europa's Geist erlosch: In Deutschland fließt
Der Quell der neuen Zeit.¹⁷⁵

German superiority was evident, first and foremost, in its thinkers, "the German mind." This understandably self-congratulatory attitude on the part of its representatives predated their wholesale and irrevocable conversion to nationalism, and was voiced frequently in the late eighteenth century by people otherwise professing cosmopolitanism. Friedrich Schlegel, for example, already in 1791 had discovered that the German people "has a very great character . . . There is not much found anywhere to equal this race of men, and they have several qualities of which we can find no trace in any known people." He saw this "in all the achievements of the Germans, espe-

cially in the field of scholarship," and foresaw (quite rightly, as it happened) "that things will happen among our people as never before among men." Time and again he returned to this point. Germanity was a specifically intellectual virtue—a superior degree of artistic sensibility and scientific spirit. "Not Hermann and Odin are the national gods of the Germans, but art and science . . . this spirit, this power of virtue, is precisely what differentiates the German from everyone else."¹⁷⁶

In the nineteenth century, however, when the nation of whose superiority the excellence of the German mind was a sign was exalted by the triumphant nationalism as the incarnation of the Absolute and the Eternal, the praises of the German letters both increased in number and became louder, and its evident greatness was assigned a far greater significance. "The development of the scholarly mind in Germany is the most important event in modern intellectual history," announced Adam Müller. "It is certain that . . . just as German tribes have founded the political order of Europe, the German mind will sooner or later dominate it." The specific virtue of the German mind, and a reflection of its universality, was its ability to transcend itself and respect and appreciate the imperfect individualities of other peoples. Müller asserted that, apparently in spite of its natural humility, "the German mind is forced to ascribe to itself as an advantage over all other nations its obedient and pious understanding of everything alien, even if this prostration and understanding may sometimes degenerate into the idolatry of foreign habits and persons." "We find our own happiness," he concluded, "not in the suppression but in the highest flowering of the civilization of our neighbours, and thus Germany, the fortunate heartland, will not need to deny its respect for others when it will dominate the world by its spirit." Fichte commented on the German generosity of spirit in a similar vein, claiming that "this trait [was] so deeply marked in their . . . past and present, that very often, in order to be just both to contemporary foreign countries and to antiquity, they have been unjust to themselves."¹⁷⁷ Father Jahn thought that this generosity went too far. To him the alleged readiness to appreciate foreigners and to depreciate their own worth was the greatest vice of the Germans, rather than their virtue.

Driven sophists as were these *Erwecker zur Deutschland* could not, however, stop at asserting the superiority of their nation, but had to discover the deep and convincing-to-them reasons why this should be so. Their explanation derived from notions already present in Pietism. In distinction from all other nations (at least the Western European ones that counted), the German nation preserved its individuality unadulterated. For believing Pietists, this of course meant that Germany was the only God-fearing, pious people, for in its loyalty to its own ways it deferred to and acknowledged God's will. For those nationalists "of pietist formation" who no longer believed in God, (national) individuality nevertheless retained its ultimate value. The individ-

uality—in this case the innermost unique character—of a nation was faithfully reflected in its language, and the German tongue differed from the rest in that it was not contaminated by borrowings from other languages, but remained pure. In Fichte's words, it was the *Ursprache*, the original language. It was directly related to Nature, and therefore, being whole (not alienated) in its humanity, was the only one capable of serving as a basis for a true Culture.¹⁷⁸ This admiration of individuality as a principled, adamant impermeability to outward influences contradicted the belief in the universality of the German mind in which its spokesmen (such as Fichte) took understandable pride. But contradictions in a system of thought, for the Romantic mentality, were a merit rather than a fault.

During the period of German Liberation, German language became an object of worship. It was a favorite theme of patriotic poetry. Arndt's "Des Deutschen Vaterland," one of the most popular examples of such poetry, defined Germany as the realm of the German language (and, incidentally, also as the land where every Frenchman was called an enemy and every German a friend).¹⁷⁹ "Turnvater" Jahn, whose zeal for the perfectly German body did not lead him to neglect its spirit, but whose obsession with the necessity of combatting foreignisms in the German language might lead one to suspect whether its much advertized purity was not somewhat exaggerated, proclaimed in *Das deutsche Volkstum*: "A people is first made into a nation by its mother-tongue. Attention to the national vernacular has made victors and rulers . . . All foreign words are to be avoided. Only German family names should be permitted." The spirit of the people, he added, is reflected in its popular literature, one of the best examples of which he considered the collection of the Grimm brothers.¹⁸⁰ In the same work Jahn advised that the state should develop the teaching of the mother tongue and suggested that the knowledge of German be used as a qualification for citizenship.

Language was a reflection of the unique spirit of the people, of its *Volkstum*. With all due respect to higher realities, the champions of German nationality, "enlightened pietists [and Romantics]" as they were, refused to see this ethereal entity as the beginning of all things, and made it itself a reflection of material reality. The spirit of the nation, and therefore its language, reflected the body; ultimately nationality was based on blood. Again, the excellence of the German nation lay in the fact that its blood was pure, there were no foreign admixtures, the German was the *Urvolk*. Arndt put it rather bluntly: "The Germans are not bastardized by alien peoples, they have not become mongrels; they have remained more than many other peoples in their original purity and have been able to develop slowly and quietly from this purity of their kind and nature according to the lasting laws of time; the fortunate Germans are an original people." This was written in 1815, long before the word "race" acquired its specific meaning and assumed its hon-

orable place in the German vocabulary, and long before racism, bolstered by the authority of science, became an articulate and presumably objective view. Nevertheless, German national consciousness was unmistakably and distinctly racist from the moment it existed, and the national identity of the Germans was essentially an identity of race, and only superficially that of language or anything else. The language, deeply revered as it was, was but an epiphenomenon, a reflection of race, "the indisputable testimony of common descent." In the mind of the architects of the German national consciousness, one could not exist without the other, and both represented the fundamental bonds of German nationality:

Uns knüpft der Sprache heilig Band
Uns knüpft ein Gott, ein Vaterland,
Ein treues deutsches Blut.¹⁸¹

Since the spirit and the language reflected the race, they could retain their originality—their *Ur-character*—only if the blood was kept pure. The founders of German nationality were utterly opposed to the blending of different nationalities. "The purer the people, the better," ruled Jahn. "For the benefit of the whole world as well as for the benefit of each individual nationality there must not be any universal union," stated Arndt. "It is much more appropriate to nature," decreed Schlegel, "that the human race be strictly separated into nations than that several nations should be fused as has happened in recent times." "Each state is an independent individual existing for itself, it is unconditionally its own master, has its peculiar character and governs itself by its peculiar laws, habits and customs."¹⁸² National individuality, especially the individuality of the original and universal nation, was nothing to toy with.

German nationalism, like any other, symbolically elevated the masses and profoundly changed the nature of status hierarchy in German society. In its veneration of the people, specifically the peasantry,¹⁸³ the virtuous *Volk*, gloriously indifferent to the march of unnatural civilization and faithfully upholding its pristine purity, German nationalism, in fact, far surpassed its Western counterparts and, among the societies in this sample, was comparable only to nationalism in Russia. As in Russia, the internal political consequences of this outright adulation were insignificant. The people that was worshipped did not consist of living individuals, but represented a cognitive construct. Like "early" Romantics, who professed their passion for republicanism, their successors frequently declared themselves champions of democracy. In both cases this meant nothing but the total submersion of the individual within the collectivity (in the latter instance—the nation), renunciation of every particular interest, and unconditional service of the collective self by each in his proper place. "The rights of citizens," said Father Jahn in *Das deutsche Volkstum*, "are dependent upon the activity of such citizens.

That citizen loses his rights who deserts his flag, besmirches his Fatherland in foreign countries, or loses his reason."¹⁸⁴ What were the rights of citizens who did not defame themselves by a similar lack of patriotism or by cowardice, and remained sane, he did not deign to explain. This complete submission to the higher individuality could satisfy the craving for equality of a certain kind (and, naturally, one was to desire no other). However humble in his own state, each servant of the nation was equal to any other in its eyes, as the servants of God were all equal before God.

As to liberty, which was the watchword of the day and constantly on everybody's lips, the period of Liberation added to its definition a new meaning. This meaning was entirely consistent with the demand for dissolution of the person within the collectivity (and the abdication of the personal for the collective will) and reflected the belief in the salubrity and necessity of cultural and racial isolation. In addition to voluntary submission to recognized necessity, liberty came to mean freedom from foreign domination. Arndt defined it aptly: freedom he said, was a condition "in which no foreign executioner can order you around and no foreign slave-driver exploits you"¹⁸⁵ (native executioners and slave-drivers were apparently all right).

In this framework, foreign intervention was, by definition, the most heinous of crimes. It encroached upon the liberty of the people and threatened its individuality (which in the case of Germany was both universal and true, and therefore thrice sacred). No wonder that the French invaders were attacked with such vehemence and fought (at least by the minority of true believers) with such ardor. At the same time, there was more to the calls for war than the immediate need to expel the impudent foreigner. War was a good thing in itself. It was an ennobling, purifying rite which alone could assure true consciousness of nationality and the wholeness of human existence, which was impossible without the latter. Max von Schenkendorf gave this lofty thought a poetical expression:

Denn nur Eisen kann uns retten
Nur erlösen kann uns Blut.

Already after the war, on his return from vanquished Paris, Jahn dreamed: "Germany needs a war of her own. She needs a private war with France in order to achieve her nationality." "Germany . . . needs a war against Frankdom to unfold herself in the fullness of her nationhood [*Volkstümlichkeit*]."¹⁸⁶

There was hardly an exception to this spirit among the German patriots of the Liberation period. Clausewitz argued that war was the most efficient means of politics and needed no further justification. But most of his contemporaries regarded it as an end in itself. Its virtues were expressive rather than instrumental. Peace was beneath German dignity; it was uniformly

scorned. God spoke his word on the subject through Arndt: "Tell this lazy people: I am not the God of their perpetual peace; I am the God, the avenger, the terrifying, the destroyer who lusts for struggle and war. Otherwise all history which is my history would be a lie; for its beginning is war and its end will be war. Their peace is called death and rotting, my war is life and movement. To shed blood is always a horror, but not the blood which flows for liberty, for freedom and virtue. War and struggle, the live movement of live forces, that is my lust, thus my name is called, that is myself, I, God the Lord."¹⁸⁷ It is not surprising to find Arndt among worshippers of war, but to discover among them Wilhelm von Humboldt is somehow disheartening. Yet he, too, joined in singing its praises. "I recognize in the effect of war upon national character," he is reported to have said, "one of the most salutary elements in the molding of the human race. The possibility of war is required to give the national character that stimulus from which these [noble?] sentiments spring and thus only are nations enabled to do justice to the highest duties of civilization in the fullest development of their moral forces."¹⁸⁸

Only several years earlier, in 1802, Friedrich Schlegel lamented the degeneracy of his nation with but a glimmer of hope that it would stand up to its former fame: "The poetry of former times has disappeared and with it virtue, its sister. Instead of the *furor tedesco* which had been mentioned so frequently by the Italian poets, patience has now become our first national virtue and beside it humility, in contrast to the formerly reigning mentality, on account of which a Spaniard who traveled with Emperor Charles V through Germany called the Germans *los fieros Alemanos*. But as far as we are concerned, we wish to retain firmly the image or rather the truth of the great times and not become confused by the present misery. Perhaps the slumbering lion will wake up once more and perhaps even if we should not live to see it, future world history will be full of the deeds of the Germans."¹⁸⁹ His hope was not in vain. The demonic spirit of the Romantics, long bottled within the tiny space of their personal existence and finally released, sought to avenge itself in destruction. Their passionate exhortations fell on attentive ears and set men's hearts on fire; their tireless efforts revived the *furor tedesco*, which swept around the world. The slumbering lion woke up time and again, history was full of the deeds of the Germans, and the lust of Arndt's terrifying God was, at least temporarily, quenched.

The Finishing Touch: *Ressentiment* *The West as the Incarnation of Evil*

The belief that Germany, too, was a nation took root in the land only after it had been trodden by the victorious armies of the conqueror from the West;

France was ultimately responsible for the emergence of German nationalism. Its contribution to the development of the national spirit in the days of its fragile infancy, though incomparable in importance to the contribution of the Pseudo-Romantic mold, was nevertheless inestimable. France gave Germans the Enemy, against whom all the strata of the disunited German society could unite, on whom everyone could blame their misfortunes and vent their frustrations. Hatred of France inspired the uncertain patriotism within the German breast; it provided this new and as yet flickering passion with a reason for existence and with a focus. Without the decade of collective effervescence and common effort, the vital enthusiasm which was sustained by the persistence of the French menace, German nationalism would not have survived its birth. The French victories preserved it through the first tender years, and, thanks to them, nourished by the incessant patriotic agitation which was its mother's milk, it could stand, in 1815, on its own.

France continued to stimulate German nationalism even after 1815. The Francophobia of the Wars of Liberation was aroused only in part by the aggression and the interference with the German order of things. It went much deeper. It was rather an expression of existential envy, *ressentiment*. Naturally, nothing but "total annihilation"—indeed demanded by Schlegel—could satisfy this sentiment; neither the temporary termination of the conflict nor even the German victory would put an end to it.

In the "German mind," that is, in the mind of its scholars and writers, Germany was never anything but a part of the Western world, to which it historically belonged. Much of German culture in the eighteenth century drew its inspiration from and developed in response to and in imitation of the "advanced" Western nations: France and England. *Aufklärung* was thoroughly Germanized, but Enlightenment was not a German invention. The nobility, insofar as it busied itself with culture at all, patronized French culture, Frederick the Great being only the most famous example of the utter contempt in which native genius was held. But even *Bildungsbürger*, determined to win for themselves, to the last person, the public justly appertaining to the universe of the German tongue, who since Lessing and *Sturm und Drang* had fought French culture in Germany—even they were encouraged to do so by the example of French and English men of letters and the imported spirit of Enlightenment, and, however reluctantly, saw in the countries west of Germany the model to be followed. The cosmopolitanism of the end of the century, so characteristic of German intellectuals, as well as the fight against foreignisms at the beginning of the new century (the very furiousness of which meant that there were foreignisms to fight indeed), betrayed the fact of the widespread acceptance of the West—that is, of France, first of all, and of England—as the model.

As everywhere, the satisfaction to be derived from national identity (adopted to satisfy the thirst for dignity which the traditionally defined so-

ciety had failed to quench) depended on the ability to sustain and enjoy the elevating sense of national pride. National pride, in turn, depended on how well Germany measured against its significant other, and on the recognition of its merit by the latter. Thus with the conversion to nationalism, the psychological importance of the West for Germany increased. The arena of contest was political culture; for those who had any doubts on the matter, this had been clearly demonstrated just years ago by France in its explicit bid to outdo England. Political culture—with its three immovable pillars: reason, individual liberty, and political equality—defined the nature of the West and distinguished it from other societies. No special astuteness was needed to realize that, judged by these standards, Germany was inferior to its Western neighbors. German intellectuals only too clearly saw the truth in Mirabeau's indictment of German reality: "Your brains are petrified with slavery."¹⁹⁰ Thus the moment Germans turned to national identity and acquired national pride, this pride was wounded, and not by Napoleonic conquest alone, but rather by the miserable and laughable state of their society, rendered conspicuous by the proximity of the West. Their hatred toward the West was fed by the very fact that the West existed. The enemy could be driven out of the land and aggression stopped, but the springs of *ressentiment*, replenished as they were from within, would never dry out.

Even the heat of the Wars of Liberation was powerless to obscure French superiority. The borrowed idea of the nation was conceptualized with the help of specifically French importations: as in France, the emphasis was on unity and "regeneration." Though grinding their teeth, the Prussian reformers saw France as the model to be imitated. It is from France they learned that only a united nation could be strong, and only citizens could create a united nation. To be citizens people had to participate actively in their society; they could not remain slaves. The leaders of the Prussian state administration and the military understood and willed this as much as any—that is why, in the face of virulent and persistent opposition, accused of Jacobinism and lack of patriotism, they staunchly advocated the emancipation of serfs (Stein), the abolition of restrictions on economic activity (Hardenberg), the reorganization of the army along the lines of the *levée en masse* (the generals), in short, a revolution—from above—as thoroughgoing and radical as was the French Revolution. What was it, asked Stein's biographer, Lehmann, "that attracted these thoroughly German minds . . . to the revolutionary legislation of France, which they only approved with large reservations? The answer is that they desired to attain for their country the position of power which these laws had secured for France."¹⁹¹ Liberal reforms were deemed necessary for the achievement of national unity, "regeneration," and strength.

This determined imitation, however, was very different from a genuine effort to become like the West, based on the acknowledgment of the West as

the model. Of the three logically possible ways to deal with the sense of inferiority (see Chapters 2 and 3), this first one was ruled out from the beginning—by the native cultural tradition, the amalgam of Pseudo-Romantic sentiments and concepts, which became the German character long before it was thought to be national. The second alternative, that of cultural relativism, which had been tried and abandoned by Herder, was never picked up by his successors. The Romantic mentality irresistibly impelled toward the remaining possibility: the definition of the West as the anti-model, the incarnation of evil, of all the values of *Aufklärung* that Romanticism rejected for its own reasons.

The choice of this third possibility as the archetypal response to the sense of inferiority was, as everywhere, prompted by *ressentiment*. In Germany *ressentiment* did not result in a transvaluation of values. The values which were to form the core of German national consciousness were already present and firmly embedded in the collective mind. The function of *ressentiment* in Germany was different. It fueled and directed, rather than defined, nationalism defined by indigenous cultural tradition. It allowed goal-oriented expression to the aimless Romantic spirit. Blended with the Romantic *Weltanschauung*, *ressentiment* focused its passionate but diffuse bitterness and hatred of the world. It eternalized both Germany's peril and its Enemy and not only explained the laughable present state of German society by the perfidy of the West and the fact that its malice and envy prevented Germany from attaining the greatness to which it was destined, but pictured the West as ever concerned about the possibility of such greatness in the future and ever ready to attack Germany again. A holy eternal war against this alien civilization and everything it stood for was the only way to cope with this situation.

The image of the West which resulted from its definition as the anti-model was not a reflection of empirical reality; it represented a projection of the ideal image of the evil world of the *Aufklärung*, an abstraction and generalization of the Romantics' personal experience, on the West. This projection was analogous to the "nationalization" of the image of ideal community, believed now to be represented by Germany. As a description of concrete societies, the image of the West was almost as far from reality as the Romantic image of perfect community was far from the real Germany. Whether this latter image was believed to exist in the past or in the future, the actually existing German society had to be changed to achieve the ideal. But in both cases Germany was much closer to it than the West, either because it was less estranged from the ideal past or because it was better prepared to make the leap into the ideal future. The values which the West, however imperfectly, embodied were unequivocally condemned.

The centrality of French letters in the German cultural life of the eighteenth century, the direct competition of the German intellectuals with the

products of the French *philosophes* for the German public, and the Napoleonic invasion made France a natural choice for the personification of the imaginary "West." The rejection of Enlightenment, when first "nationalized," focused on this one country. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, Germany could boast of an established tradition of Gallophobia and possessed an impressive arsenal of clichés with which to express its sentiment.

In his essay on Strassbourg Minster, included in the collection *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*—the manifesto of the *Sturm und Drang*—Goethe attacked "Frenchmen of all nations": French culture was the embodiment of the artificial, unnatural, dead rational thought. Unlike all other cultures, it was not "characteristic," not truly reflective of the being of the people which had created it (or perhaps this people was not worthy of being reflected?); it imitated classical antiquity and prescribed rational rules. But the rule for Romantics was no rules, and no imitation, and so the French culture was rejected. *Athenaeum*, "that journal which in a unique way represents the pure Romantic ideal at its actual fountain head,"¹⁹² contains a whole gamut of the "early" Romantics' opinions on France: they range from judgments of the French superficiality to amazement at the French stupidity to the inevitable and grave conclusion of the worthlessness of the French culture as a whole. France is "a chemical" (as opposed to organic) nation; this explains its dominance in the "chemical" age. French tragedy "is merely the formula of a form"; "what can be more contrary to good taste than writing and performing plays that are completely outside nature?" The French language is a language "bound by conventions," French poetry is worth nothing, the philosophy is "pitiful." Even the famous "Fragment" #216, whose first line is so frequently quoted, aims in fact only at belittling the historical significance of the French Revolution. After the opening phrase—"the French Revolution, Fichte's philosophy, and Goethe's Meister are the greatest tendencies of the age"—it reads: "Whoever is offended by this juxtaposition, whoever cannot take any revolution seriously that is not noisy and materialistic [like the French], hasn't yet achieved a lofty, broad perspective on the history of mankind . . . many a little book, almost unnoticed by the noisy rabble at the time, plays a greater role than anything they did."¹⁹³

The admiration for English literature, which was in great vogue among the *Bildungsbürger* in Germany throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, and later for some Spanish authors, owed a great deal to the general resentment of the still-unchallenged centrality of the French culture. Yet, in the judgment of the Romantics, England on the whole fared little better than France. In the "Athenaeum Fragments" it is attacked almost as frequently as France and with equal acerbity. English freedoms are worthless and will be made "wholly superfluous through the possession of freedom." Virtue, in England, can be bought and sold for money. "The notion

that the English national character is sublime is . . . a by no means contemptible contribution to the science of sublime ridiculousness." The English are characterized by "pedantic bigotry"; they misunderstand Shakespeare. Even their Satan is not sufficiently Satanic in comparison with the German Satan, "to that extent one might say that Satan is a German invention." Besides the Germans, the French, and the English, the only other nation mentioned in the "Athenaeum Fragments" is the Dutch; characteristically, it is mentioned in a comparison. "Don't criticize the limited artistic taste of the Dutch," advises "Fragment" #179. "In the first place, they know exactly what they want. Secondly, they have created their own genres for themselves. Can either of these statements be made about the dilettantism of the English?"¹⁹⁴ England was a natural object of Romantic criticism, for it, like France, stood for rationality and represented the forces of "enlightenment."

During and after the Liberation period invectives against everything French increased in number and ferocity. The "odious French nation" was the "natural and hereditary enemy" of the Germans, an "impure, shameless, undisciplined race." "In no history," thought Stein, "does one find such immorality, such moral uncleanness, as in that of France." "I hate the French as cordially as a Christian may hate anyone," he confessed when already an old man. "I wish they would all go to the devil."¹⁹⁵ With a passion of which the statesman was incapable, Arndt avowed the same sentiment: "I hate all Frenchmen without distinction in the name of God and of my people, I teach this hatred to my son, I teach it to the sons of my people . . . I shall work all my life that the contempt and hatred for this people strike the deepest roots in German hearts and that the German men understand who they are and whom they confront." To him, as to Romantics before him, the Frenchmen were "a talking, the Germans a thinking people." He failed to understand and refused to reconcile himself with the evident willingness of a still significant number of his compatriots to see in France the apex and fountain of civilization. "Can those men educate," he asked fervently, "who themselves are no men, who give you artificiality for nature, elegance for beauty, illusion for virtue, fashion for morality, and chatter for thought? Who understand and esteem nothing foreign? . . . Incapable of eternal ideas of deep enthusiasm, blissful ecstasy, human longing, for which they even lack words; making fun of the holiest and highest of mankind for the sake of wittiness." French language (which as any language "mirrored the soul of the people, molded and embodied its ideas, and therefore had a peculiar character corresponding to the quality of the people") indeed would hardly have words for anything worthy of expression. It was, wrote a German army volunteer from Paris in 1815, "not an orderly organic language" at all, but resembled "animal noises." The German tongue, which had words for everything, pinpointed the French bestiality with such apt epithets as *ein*

Affenvolk and, the animal world being unable to adequately express and sufficiently castigate its wickedness, offered some religious metaphors as well. To the learned Professor Heinrich Leo, whose creative mind it was that discerned the resemblance between the French people and the apes, the capital of that beastly nation was not a jungle, but rather "das alte Haus des Satans."¹⁹⁶

In their rage against France, German patriots of the Liberation period were willing to go to any lengths, even as far as to consider England a paragon of virtue. Both Stein and Arndt, for example, admired England. His hatred of France, recalled Arndt, dated back to his childhood. Already then the story of that evil people had filled him with "distaste, even with repulsion" and he felt toward them "just like an Englishman."¹⁹⁷ To begin with, the English had the indisputable advantage of being of the same racial stock as the Germans; their Germanic blood was not contaminated by subhuman admixtures, as was that of the irresponsible Franks. In addition, England, like Germany, had fought Napoleon and was most instrumental in bringing about his downfall.

Yet with this downfall went the protection of the German economy from British competition. England could have been impeccably Germanic, but its economic might transcended the limits of good taste; it was too affluent for comfort. Now it, too, showed its true and ugly face. An admirer of British character, Friedrich List, the "apostle of German economic nationalism," clearly saw the treacherous ends that England pursued. "English national economy," he explained to his countrymen, "has for its object to manufacture for the whole world, to monopolize all manufacturing power, [and] to keep the world . . . in a state of infancy and vassalage by political management as well as by the superiority of her capital, her skill, and her navy." England was evidently opposed to Germany's economic greatness and would resist German unification.¹⁹⁸

And what else could one expect of "perfidious Albion?" (Here the French had a point.) It was, after all, the country of Adam Smith, the prophet of capitalism, and capitalism was "the most general manifestation of that anti-social spirit, of that arrogant egotism, of that immoral enthusiasm for false reason and false enlightenment,"¹⁹⁹ in short, the spirit of the West. It believed in reason, it upheld individualism—wicked, infamous notions—it was as irredeemably Western as France, and perhaps even more so. Herder recognized this in the eighteenth century, and Marx believed this in the nineteenth. In the middle of the nineteenth century the German opinion of the English nation was summarized by Treitschke. Wrote the famous historian: "The hypocritical Englishman, with the Bible in one hand and a pipe in the other, possesses no redeeming qualities. The nation was an ancient robber-knight, in full armor, lance in hand, on every one of the world's trade routes. The English possess a commercial spirit, a love of money which has killed

every sentiment of honor and every distinction of right and wrong. English cowardice and sensuality are hidden behind unctuous, theological talk which is to us free-thinking German heretics among all the sins of English nature the most repugnant. In England all notions of honor and class prejudices vanish before the power of money, whereas the German nobility has remained poor but chivalrous. That last indispensable bulwark against the brutalization of society—the duel—has gone out of fashion in England and soon disappeared . . . This was a triumph of vulgarity.”²⁰⁰

As the West was increasingly identified with capitalism, England eclipsed France and emerged as “the leader of the bourgeois world.” Later still, the United States of America, “the land without a heart,”²⁰¹ assumed its place by the side, and soon at the head, of the other two representatives of evil. The “German mind” justifiably regarded these three societies as faithful heirs of Enlightenment, and pinned on them the biased and exaggerated image of *Aufklärung*, generalized from everything it hated in it. This living anti-model, prosperous, proud in its freedom, and looked upon by the rest of the world as the center, kept alive the deepest grief of the *Bildungsbürger*—the “unbearable sense of being unnoticed”—with the difference that now they saw it as the unjust fate of their nation brought upon it by the malicious West, and spurred German nationalism to ever greater heights of xenophobic hysteria and ferocity. Yet the principal embodiment of Western degeneracy and the chief perpetrator of its treacheries was none of the actually existing Western societies. And not the actually existing West, forbidding in its might (though not so forbidding as to rule out the hope and eventually attempts of a just retribution), bore the brunt of Germany’s rightful ire. Instead, it was “an Asiatic folk,” the children of the bearers of an ancient religious creed, whose residence in Europe was but a sign of well-deserved Divine punishment—the eternal enemy of the Christian peoples, the scourge of humanity, the Jews.

Anti-Semitism

How, through which mental gymnastics, Germany was led to this remarkable conclusion will forever remain obscure to the Western mind incapable of higher understanding. The Romantic psycho-logic, which ruled that a thing exists if it should exist (that is, if the “German mind,” the representative of the Ego, the Individuality, and the Absolute, wills that it exist), undoubtedly helped. As a result of a double intellectual somersault through which the adjustment to the painful comparison between Germany and the “advanced nations” was in part accomplished, the Jew became the symbol of the West.

This portentous association was born together with German national consciousness during the years of Napoleonic invasion. In opposition to the

liberal reforms of the “Jacobin” Hardenberg, high-minded patriots of noble birth and Romantic persuasion, von Kleist, von Arnim, and von der Marwitz, formed a *Christliche-germanische Tischgesellschaft*, from which they excluded the three enemies of virtue: “Jews, Frenchmen, and philistines.”²⁰² In the wake of the Wars of Liberation, “the fire that burned . . . in patriotic hearts was fueled with hatred of the French and the Jews; the French who had invented Cosmopolitanism and invaded their sacred soil; the Jews who incarnated Cosmopolitanism and who, as born bloodsuckers and money-lenders, had profited by the French invasion. But the French were safely back home.”²⁰³ “Philistines” also got away lightly. In their rejection of the “enlightened” Western society, German intellectuals were led to compare Germany to the ideal community which personified the anti-West and anti-Enlightenment, and which for them was the “real” and true, not merely apparent, Germany. When they turned inward and searched for it in the Germany that existed, they were likely to find appalling those qualities in German life which represented points of similarity with, or reminded them of, Western values (and in which they could not but see a reflection of their hated selves that they wished to forget): the bourgeoisie, trade and industry, cities, science. Yet their attitude toward all these had to remain ambivalent: all these factors were absolutely necessary if Germany was not to forsake the hope of one day triumphing over the Western nations.²⁰⁴ Jews represented all of these hated un-German values and they were not necessary.

The escalation of anti-Jewish sentiment after the Wars of Liberation was, Treitschke explained, an expression of a healthy German patriotism. “The powerful excitement of the War of Liberation,” he wrote, “brought to light all the secrets of the German character; amid the general ferment all the old and profound hostility to everything Judaic once more made itself manifest.”²⁰⁵ But the hostility, which was indeed profound and harkened back to some very old traditions, was in effect rather new. So much militated against the Jews in the recent past and the present that their crimes of bygone days were all but forgotten. Their liberation was defended by the appeal to reason, and as reason became increasingly discredited toward the end of the century, to many Romantic minds it became increasingly indefensible. The Jews were further stigmatized by the determined French intervention on their behalf, and by the policy of emancipation conceived by the Prussian reformers who followed the French example. Jews, German patriots as they were in their infinite naiveté, did benefit from the *Aufklärung* which made German intellectuals suffer and from the French occupation which was a slap in the face of the German nation. It was clear that they were in a pact with the Devil.

To the honor of the German nation, it must be said that it did not invent the hatred and persecution of the Jews. These were Christian sentiment and pastime, as universal as Catholic Christianity itself. The Reformation in