

The Intellectual Class and the Rise of German Cultural Nationalism

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ABSTRACT

German cultural nationalism emerged in the context of the invasion of French culture. This cultural nationalism was different from the nationalism represented by Britain and France, which focused on the expression of nationalism from the cultural level, and made use of cultural connection and unity to achieve the establishment of a nation state. In the 17th and 18th centuries, French culture invaded Germany in all aspects, and the aristocrat and the middle classes of the German states were proud of speaking French, while German was neglected as a national language. Against the background of the political and economic unification of the German region, a group of Deutsch intellectuals began to actively propagate and promote the German culture and language, hoping to establish a unified German national identity from the cultural identity to complete the unification of the country, and to make the German state regain its historical glory. The subsequent historical development proved that German cultural nationalism became the foundation stone of German unification. After the Napoleonic Wars, German cultural nationalism was further transformed into German political democracy, and Prussia finally completed the unification. How did German cultural nationalism emerge from all this, and what was the role of the German intellectual class in it? By studying this period of history, this paper is able to further understand the intricate international context and international situation in Western Europe at that time. At the same time, it draws on the positive factors of German cultural development.

KEYWORDS

Cultural Nationalism; Germany; Enlightenment; Cultural Self-defence.

1. THE FRAGMENTATION OF GERMANY AND THE REALISTIC CONCERN OF INTELLECTUALS

After the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia by the European powers in 1648, which clearly stipulated the autonomy of the German states, the German region became a completely geographical concept, where the states were divided and the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor was not as powerful as the Austrian Archduke who served in his place. This fragmentation of Germany, coupled with its long period of economic stagnation and backwardness, as well as invasions and interventions by Britain and France, prevented the emergence of a more robust and normal nationalism in Germany. The indispensable factor for the creation of a united nation-state was the need for a strong national consciousness and national cohesion. "No political movement of the present age is likely to succeed unless it is accompanied by nationalistic passions." [1].

Within the Empire there was an Imperial Council made up of hundreds of vassals, clerics and representatives of the free cities. The Emperor could not legislate, tax, conscript, declare war or make peace without the approval of the Council. However, because the large number of representatives

made it difficult to reach agreement on many issues, the Reichstag was as powerless as the Emperor, and it was not convened since 1663, when the Ottoman advance on Vienna was discussed, but at the same time it was not disbanded, so that the "Parliament of the Eternal Empire" remained in place until 1806, when it was terminated with the dissolution of the empire. The "Parliament of the Eternal Reich" ended with the dissolution of the Reich in 1806. All these conflicting interests made any attempt to establish a unified imperial government impossible. For about 200 years after the Treaty of Westphalia, the empire gradually became a loose confederation of states, and the emperor had only an empty role, with no more power than he had had during the time of the Electors. Divided Germany, having failed to fulfil the role of a state for so long, had evolved from a political concept to a geographical term.[2]. With the passage of time and the disappearance of the united country, the psychology of the Germans also began to change, from the united German national sentiment gradually changed into state and local sentiment. So much so that people travelling by train in Germany in the middle of the 19th century would often find a peculiar phenomenon, that is, every one or two bells, the uniforms of the soldiers and the colour of the stripes on the railway fences would change, and in effect, the traveller would have gone from a small state into another country. During this period countries such as Britain, France and the Netherlands flourished culturally and developed their economies rapidly, while on the contrary Germany, once the dominant continental power, crumbled into pieces, lost its former lustre and became the representative of a backward region in Europe. Germany fell into a long period of silence, and the development of industry and agriculture came to a standstill.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Enlightenment swept across Europe, and Germany was naturally no exception. The German Enlightenment came later than the English and French Enlightenment, which began in Germany around the end of the 17th century. In fact, the period from the 17th century to Hegel's death in the 1830s is the historical period when German philosophy reached maturity. During this historical period, the German philosophical circle can be said to be brilliant, and the value created by it has laid down that Germany is worthy of the title of "Kingdom of Philosophy", and has exerted a drastic influence on the philosophy and culture of the whole world.[1] The German Enlightenment had a dramatic impact on the philosophy and culture of the whole world. The German Enlightenment had a profound impact on the world view of the civic class and bourgeoisie of the German states. The Enlightenment helped the Germans to get rid of the traditional religion completely, and they began to take the nation and the state as the secular objects for pouring out their feelings. On the other hand it also envisioned the glory of the mighty empires of the past, and made far-reaching Enlightenment preparations for the unification aspirations of the German nation. Therefore, it can be said that the German Enlightenment was the preparatory stage for the formation of German cultural nationalism. Against this background, the German intellectuals started a series of movements to revive the glory of German culture. Early Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant expected to establish a new "Kingdom of Reason", in which intellectuals struggled for the freedom and equal rights of the new bourgeoisie, and for the wealth and power of the nation. But their struggle was not the same as that of the British and the French. But their struggle, compared with that of Britain and France, was not violent. The pre-German national movement was dominated by the German Enlightenment, and the spread of the Enlightenment was profoundly affected by the small states, so that the development of the Enlightenment promoted by the early intellectuals was mostly concentrated in the fields of art, philosophy and other cultural fields, unlike the French and British Enlightenment, which explored the political, social and legal issues in a big way. While the French Enlightenment prepared the ideological prerequisites for a "bottom-up" civil revolution, the Enlightenment promoted by the German intellectuals prepared the ideological conditions for a "top-down" Reformation, which profoundly influenced the development of the "German Special Way". The Enlightenment, promoted by the German intellectuals, prepared the intellectual conditions for a "top-down" Reformation and profoundly influenced the development of the "German Special Way". Against this background, in 1771, Lessing completed *Emilia Galotti*, the first play in Prussian history with strong anti-feudal colours, which profoundly influenced a series of emerging intellectuals such

as Herder and Goethe. Lessing believed that in order to achieve national unity, it was necessary to first form a unified national consciousness, and that national self-reliance could only be achieved if one considered one nation from the bottom of one's heart, for which it was necessary to establish a German literature. Lessing was at the same time the first to put forward the idea of opposing the invasion of foreign cultures from France, to establish a civic literature and a national literature in theory, and to use a unified German language in daily life, which provided a solid foundation for the unification of Germany. Through his own creative practice and innovative theories, Lessing laid a solid foundation for the establishment of a German civic literature, and his emergence "put an end to the paucity of German writings".

As Heine once said, "After Luther, Germany has not produced a greater and more brilliant figure than Lessing." [3] After this the German intellectual class, out of a sense of national mission, wished to revive the cultural self-confidence of the German nation and, at the same time, demanded the establishment of a united, strong and stable nation-state.

2. THE CONTENT OF GERMAN CULTURAL NATIONALISM

German cultural nationalism can be divided into two main points; discovery and unification. Discovery refers to the intellectuals' respect for, and promotion of, the German national culture, resistance to foreign cultures (such as French culture), and active expansion of the influence of the German language, but at the same time, they were too obsessed with the glorious past of the German nation, and pinned their hopes of saving the nation's survival on the so-called heroes or geniuses, and regarded themselves as geniuses, and tried to build up a nation by means of culture bypassing political struggles; unification naturally means the admiration of reason, equality, freedom, and the yearning for a strong and stable nation-state. Reason, equality, freedom, the desire for national unity, the desire to build a strong, united and stable German nation-state, and the rejection of theocracy and arbitrariness. However, in order to establish a united state, some intellectuals even chose to compromise and advocated improvement rather than revolution.[1] This article can regard German cultural nationalism as a reaction to the frustration of cultural backwardness under the impact of Britain and France, but if only regard German nationalism as a simple cultural conservatism (i.e. "nostalgia" formed in response to the foreign impact), This article will not be able to truly grasp the significance of the modernity of German nationalism.[3].

In a sense, German nationalism created new values and concepts rich in modernity, which did not prevent the development of modernity, but enriched the spirit of modernity in an anti-modern way. Self-reflexivity is one of the essential features of modernity. In terms of cultural identity, German thinkers contributed three very important concepts: Herder's "belonging", Kant and Fichte's "self-determination", and Hegel's "recognition". Hegel's "recognition". These three concepts have become key words in the study of societies and cultures today, and are important sources of ideas about nationalism, postcolonialism, subcolonialism, cultural pluralism and even feminism in today's world.

Johann Gottfried Herder was one of the most important German thinkers of the late 18th century, and he was called "the father of cultural nationalism" and "the father of Romanticism" by Isaiah Birling, a famous historian of 20th century thought. Many of the core concepts of cultural nationalism were put forward by Herder, who, as summarised by Birling, laid the foundation for later Romanticism and cultural nationalism in at least four aspects, namely populism, Ex-pressionism, pluralism, and the notion of belonging. [4] These concepts have had a profound influence on the anti-modern cultural nationalism not only in Germany, but also in all post-modernising countries. In Herder's thought, irrationality, distinctive emotional colours and critical spirit are intertwined, and he held a blunt and critical attitude towards the monism, idealism, universalism, and the concept of progress and development in the Enlightenment, etc. He believed and emphasized that every body and nation must be put into the history and environment in which it exists to think and understand, and return to its own traditional culture to search for the roots of self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance. Roots.

Herder does not mince words in his praise for his people, the German nation, and hopes that it will flourish in the future without the influence of other cultures, such as French culture. Herder's direct contribution to the idea of cultural nationalism is particularly evident in the concepts of "belonging" and "authenticity". [5] Belonging is the nature of human beings. Aristotle once called human beings a political animal, which indicates that human beings are a kind of belonging to a certain group. On this basis, Herder believed that every person belongs to a group of his or her own characteristics, and if the individual is separated from the group, then loneliness and loss will accompany the individual. [6]. Another characteristic of Herder is that he was keen to collect folk songs and ballads of various nationalities. He believed that all nationalities were equal, and that there was no difference between the Slavic peoples of Volynia and Mazovia and the so-called "noble" peoples of England and France, which best describes the characteristics of his idea of cultural nationalism. He compiled and published a collection of folk songs, which, after his death, was renamed *Voices of the Peoples in Poetry* and widely circulated. This was the first complete anthology of world literature, which profoundly inspired many backward peoples to national awakening and national identity, and the pioneers of national awakening in many countries were more or less influenced by Herder's philosophy. [7] With the further development and widespread dissemination of cultural nationalism, a group of newly bourgeois youths in the German region were inspired to launch the famous "Rampage Movement" in literature. The image of the masses in Johann Christoph Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* completely overturned the narrative of the masses in the history of Western thought: the masses were no longer a rabble and a gang of social misfits who hindered development, but a free and virtuous people and a nation united in steel and identity. The most important reason for this transformation was the rise of German cultural nationalism. Schiller looked for resources from the unique and vibrant national culture against Enlightenment dogmatism and French cultural hegemony, he praised the German nation, he worshipped humanism, he respected the human being as an individual, and his humanism could get rid of his prejudice against the masses, and moreover, he could become a real warrior with the spirit of equality and fraternity, as he said in "*Wilhelm Tell*": "We are one people, and we shall act in unity." Johann Wolfgang Goethe was also a representative of the "Rampage" movement, and he used German folklore as literary material on many occasions. For example, at least four of his poems from his middle age were based on German folklore and songs. Goethe's creative habit in this period was, on the one hand, to promote German culture, so that some dusty national literatures of the past could once again see the light of day and expand their influence, thus achieving the purpose of developing German cultural nationalism, and on the other hand, it was influenced by the exploration of new myths in the German literary world at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Goethe believed that the scientific method was not feasible, and preferred to experience and observe the cultural manifestations of a people, and to gain a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the national culture by comparing the commonalities and peculiarities of different phenomena. This is reflected in the fact that Goethe did not limit himself to selecting the culture of the German region, on the contrary, he was influenced by Herder and actively examined and drew on the folklore of such regions as Scandinavia, the Don Valley, ancient Greece, etc., propagating the traditional cultures of a number of nationalities. Certainly for Goethe, his view of world literature was populated by his vision of a great, united German nation, and at the same time this Germany underpinned Goethe's view of world literature. Goethe pursued art believing that artists and scientists needed a unique spirituality that came from the uniqueness of their people, which was both mysterious and sacred and symbolised infinite vitality. [8] Goethe wanted to observe and depict the beauty of nature and life with his own changes and state of mind. In his masterpiece "*The Trouble with Young Werther*", he reflected a series of opposition to the social problems of the time and preached the spirit of oppression through the portrayal of the main character, and Werther's eventual suicide shocked and moved a series of young people in Europe, especially in this region of Germany, and instilled in them the rebellious spirit of "Like Werther".

3. INFLUENCE OF GERMAN CULTURAL NATIONALISM

Before the French Revolution in 1789, a series of cultural activities in the German region was only in the embryonic cultural nationalism, has not risen to the level of the nation-state until the French Revolution, German cultural nationalism was finally born. Cultural developments inevitably affected the political level, and German political nationalism was born out of resistance to oppression and the demand for unity. Fichte declared that "the dark ages are over", but the subsequent reign of terror of the Jacobins and the Misty Moon Coup of Napoleon changed their views. During the Napoleonic Wars, the German states were inevitably caught up in fighting, and the loss of the wars led to the occupation of the German states by the French and the imposition of a series of military alliances by French will, which greatly aroused the democratic consciousness of the people of the German region as well as their national identity, and the German people generally hoped for the liberation and revitalisation of their own great nation, and it was at this time that Fichte held up the banner of liberalism, combined with the cultural nationalism that had been developed in the past, and refined his views. At this time, Fichte raised the banner of liberalism, combined it with the cultural nationalism he had developed in the past, perfected his philosophical ideas, and began to spread them to all classes. When Berlin was occupied by Napoleon, Fichte made several speeches entitled "Address to the German Nation", trying to awaken the national will of the German people. Fichte's subject which "the great German nation is creative and deserves to be superior to all other nations" was widely recognised, and in combination with the humiliating dimensions of a reality that was the exact opposite of that, German political nationalism was born. [9] But Fichte's mean view of the Jews and his national superiority over the Poles reflected a bit of his Greater Germanism. Fichte knew that in the face of reality, only by shaping the national spirit can Germany get out of the quagmire, and the key point of shaping the national spirit is education, Fichte carefully set up the layers of education, Fichte believed that education should be intellectual, physical education is also designed to help cultivate the free will that is not tainted by materialistic desires. However, freedom of will is not the same as being able to do whatever one wants, but is combined with obligation. The will is freest, and at the same time has the clearest sense of mission and obligation, when man, as a finite ego, tends to align his intentions with the movements of the absolute ego. This sense of obligation is called conscience.

It was by virtue of the educational blueprint drawn by Fichte that German cultural nationalism was able to penetrate deep into the heart of every German child and youth. By emphasising German nationality and national spirit and advocating national culture, German cultural nationalism opened the way for the development of German bourgeois national culture and laid a solid foundation for the formation of the system of thought and theory of German bourgeois nationalism. It fostered the sense of identity of the German national culture, aroused the overall national consciousness of the German nation, stimulated the national spirit of the German nation, built up the national self-esteem and self-confidence of the German nation, and gave a great impetus to its move towards national identity and unity. The Germans began to think of themselves no longer as Mecklenburgers, Prussians, or Saxons but as Germans, which contributed to the German cultural unity and the establishment of a united Germany. After cultural nationalism penetrated into the upper middle class of Germany, a group of politicians in different states of Germany aspired to complete the unification of the fragmented territory of Germany, and two paths of "top-down" and "bottom-up" were formed in Germany. The bottom-up approach, which lacked a mass base, soon proved to be unsuitable for Germany. In the end, Bismarck of Prussia, after three top-down dynastic wars, finally unified Greater Germany and Lesser Germany, and fused and united Germany, and after the accession of Wilhelm I to the throne, the united and powerful Second German Empire was established formally, which put an end to the division of Germany in the past several centuries. At the same time, however, cultural nationalism had a negative impact on the emergence of populism, national fanatics, and ultra-nationalism, and just like Fichte's Greater Germanism, the united Germany quickly embarked on the path of militarism. Even before the establishment of the powerful Second German Empire, many fanatical nationalists

were born in the German region. After the establishment of the state, the Prussian tradition of militarism catered to Germanic nationalism, which led to the peak of the fanatical cult of the state and the emergence of populism. At the same time various folk nationalist groups sprang up due to the dual encouragement of the government and William I himself. The chaotic international situation at the end of the nineteenth century led to the beginning of an arms race in Germany, and the state became a war machine in preparation. Even a series of ideas influenced Germany after the First World War, which led to the establishment of the Third Reich by Hitler, the deeper development of Greater Germanism combined with Fascism and Nazism, and the inhumane genocide of the Germans, all of which had a certain connection with the German cultural nationalism.

4. CONCLUSION

The emergence of "cultural nationalism" has its deep ideological roots, and the national elites make use of the historical and cultural traditions of their own people to construct a spiritual community for their own people; the emergence of "cultural nationalism" has its historical inevitability, and the emergence and development of German cultural nationalism foretells that, in the long history of the future, "cultural nationalism" will be the most important factor in the development of Germany. The emergence and development of German cultural nationalism predicts that "cultural nationalism" will exist for a long time in the long history of the future; the field of culture is the place where social differences exist and where social struggles take place, and the ideological nature of culture determines that it is a kind of political capital, and a political weapon for safeguarding the interests of the nation and the country. Therefore, we should take advantage of the situation to enhance the cohesion and centripetal force of the nation, clear the ideological obstacles for the construction of the socialist economy and the improvement of the political system, and resist the invasion of various forms of "cultural hegemony".

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