Germany: What is the Question? What is Germany?—I cannot answer this.
he collective subject at the cost of any and all individuality, there is doubled reason in Germany to guard against relapsing into the cultivation of self-idolatrous stereotypes.

Tendencies of just this sort have emerged in recent years. They are conjured up by the political questions of reunification, of the Oder-Neisse Line, also by several claims raised by the refugees; a further pretext is offered by a completely imagined international ostracism of the German, or a no less fictive lack of that national self-esteem that so many would like to incite again. Imperceptibly an atmosphere is slowly taking shape that disapproves of the one thing most necessary: critical self-reflection. Once again one hears the ill-fated proverb of the bird that darts its own nest, whereas those who grouse about the bird themselves tend to be birds of a feather who flock together. There are no more than a few questions to which almost everybody refrains from voicing his or her true opinion in consideration of the consequences. Such consideration swiftly becomes autonomous and assumes the authority of an internal censor that ultimately prevents not only the expression of uncomfortable thoughts but the thoughts themselves. Because historically German unification was belated, precarious, and unstable, one tends, simply so as to feel like a nation at all, to overlook the national consciousness and irrationally avenge every deviation from it. In this situation it is easy to regress to archaic conditions of a pre-individualistic disposition, a tribal consciousness, to which one can appeal with all the greater psychological effectiveness the less such consciousness actually exists. To escape these regressive tendencies, to come of age, to look one's own historical and societal situation and the international situation straight in the eye, is incumbent upon precisely those people who invoke the German tradition, that of Kant. His thought is centered upon the concept of autonomy, the self-responsibility of the reasoning individual instead of upon those blind dependencies, which include the unrestrained supremacy of the national. According to Kant, the universal of reason realizes itself only in the individual. If one wanted to give Kant his rightful due as the star-witness of the German tradition, then this would mean the obligation to renounce collective obedience and self-dolatry. Indeed those who most loudly proclaim Kant, Goethe, or Beethoven to be German property are regularly those who have the least to do with the contents of these authors' works. They register them as possessions, whereas what these writers taught and produced prevents them from being transformed into something that can be possessed. The German tradition is violated by those who neutralize it into cultural property that is at once both admired and of no importance. Meanwhile people who know nothing of the obligation inherent in these ideas are quickly seized with indignation whenever even one critical word falls upon a great name they want to confiscate and exploit as a German brand-name product.

This is not to say that the stereotypes are devoid of any and all truth. Recall the most famous formulation of German collective narcissism, Wagner's: to be German means to do something for its own sake. The self-righteousness of the sentence is undeniable, as is its imperial over-tone contrasting the pure will of the Germans with an allegedly petty mercantile spirit, that of the Anglo-Saxons in particular. However, it remains clear that the exchange relation, the permeation of all spheres, even that of spirit by the commodity form—which is popularly called commercialization—in Germany in the later eighteenth and in the nineteenth century had not flourished as widely as in the advanced capitalist countries. This lent some power of resistance at least to intellectual production. It understood itself to be a being in-itself, not merely a being for-something-else or for-others, but as an object of exchange. Its model was not the entrepreneur operating according to the laws of the market but rather the civil servant fulfilling his duty to the authorities; this has often been emphasized in Kant. In Fichte's doctrine of action as an end-in-itself it found its most rigorous theoretical expression. One might learn what is true in this stereotype by studying the case of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose name and development are linked to the most disastrous aspects of modern German history, the völkisch and anti-Semitic. It would be rewarding to understand how the sinister political function of this Germanized Englishman came about. His correspondence with his father-in-law, Cosima Wagner, offers the richest material for such an inquiry. Chamberlain originally was a sophisticated, delicate man, extremely sensitive to the insidiousness of commercialized culture. He was attracted to Germany in general and to Bayreuth in particular by the proclaimed rejection of commercialism there. That he became a racial demagogue is neither the fault of a natural maliciousness or even of a weakness before the paranoid, power-hungry Cosima but rather of naïveté. What Chamberlain loved in German culture in comparison with the fully developed capitalism of his homeland, he took to be absolute. In it he saw an immutable, natural constitution, not the result of nonsynchronous developments in society. This led him smoothly to those völkisch notions, which then had incomparably more barbaric consequences than the unartistic existence he wanted to escape.

While it is true that without that "for its own sake" at least the great German philosophy and the great German music would have been impossible—significant artists of the Western countries have no less resisted the world disfigured by the exchange principle—it is not the
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Cuban
On the Question "What is German?"

The image contains a page of text that seems to be discussing philosophical or academic content, possibly related to German studies or culture. Due to the nature of the content, it's challenging to provide a precise transcription without the ability to read the text legibly. However, it appears to involve discussions on concepts, theories, and possibly philosophical questions or arguments. Without clearer visibility, a detailed transcription cannot be accurately provided.
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in Europe and from whom it was expected that he would prove himself in
"merit" was still a magic word, especially to someone carrying perspec-
tion one came there thirty years ago, however this was not the case, deist-
and in the meantime has become familiar to American students. When
between anonymity and distinction was recognized early on by Frank
must emphasize itself from this very identification. This relation
By means of the mechanism of self-identification with its lack of identi-
identification and the result of identification the transcendental perspective
opposition and the result of identification the transcendental perspective, also consider is the
through the process of identification and self-identification, and so consider is the
recognize that the transcendental perspective can only develop
as I recognize these intellectual identifications and dissolve as much
of the problem of self-identification in nature of intellect and spirit, as much
certainty myself for self-identification, but also introduce me to be like her.
my natural disposition and my past make me into...
Productos de la tierra: el conocimiento de la naturaleza. Cuando la experiencia, a
people used to go back from a good friend, when she explained, "People used to go
very few days in New York from an environment, a young
received during our first days in New York from an environment, a young
I fully realized quickly enough in America, I fully realize the shock I
would maintain this intellectual conductivity seems self-definition for as
have considered myself a European from the first to the last. That I
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were also on what is called 6th avenue experience. A little higher may be
products in this way from an external perspective, a little higher may be
note down some of my intellectual experiences during my time there.
In America I maintained myself to

European Scholar in America

Scientific Experiences of a