Oskar Vogt was born on April 6th, 1870 in Husum, a small town in Schleswig-Holstein, which was annexed by Prussia and then incorporated into the German Empire of the Kaiser. Being the oldest of five siblings, at the age of 9 he lost his father, a Lutheran minister of modest means, who died in his seventies. All of these facts have a potential bearing on the development of Oskar’s personality.

The annexation of Schleswig-Holstein by Prussia in 1864 was met with little enthusiasm by the native population, including the Vogt family, several members of which had served as Lutheran pastors at the Danish court. The unpopularity of the Prussians had further increased after the proclamation on January 18th, 1871, of the new German Empire, reuniting the previously independent German States under Kaiser Wilhelm I. The reunion was staged triumphantly in the Hall of Mirrors of Versailles’ palace after the humiliating defeat of France in 1870, – the year of Oskar’s birth. The new German Empire, engineered by Bismarck, was imbued with nationalistic fervor and dominated by Prussian militaristic spirit, which had no appeal to the pastor’s son from Husum. It is possible that Oskar’s dislike of nationalistic militarism later played a role in his political leanings towards the Social Democratic Party which he considered to be striving for goals of social justice and progress.

The death of Oskar’s father made his deeply religious mother feel very happy, since she strongly believed that the deceased pastor was now receiving his highly deserved reward in Heaven for a moral, blamelessly virtuous life on Earth. After the death of the pastor the family found itself in difficult economic straits and Oskar, being the oldest, immediately felt responsibility to do his best in helping the family. He knew that he could accomplish this only by hard work and perseverance. He quickly became an honor student in the Husum gymnasium*, receiving awards and stipends which he shared with his brothers, helping with their tuition fees. Hard work and tenacity thus became implanted early in his character endowing him with self-assurance in reaching his goals. Otherwise, Oskar was a strong, robust youngster, capable of doing forward and backward somersaults (*M.V.).

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* European system of high school education, which includes the equivalent of two years of college, following which, after successful passing of final examinations (Abitur), the candidates are eligible for admittance to various departments of the university.
A remarkable strong feature, which Oskar exhibited since childhood, was the possession of an extremely searching mind, persistently seeking an explanation and justification of events around him.

Since human affairs appeared mostly too complex, he became very interested in observing and trying to understand nature. It did not take very long for the young Oskar to find "words of truth" in the teachings of Charles Darwin. These appeared to provide reasonable explanations instead of murky religious dogmas, and made Oskar eager to search for new elucidations of evolutionary phenomena. His enthusiasm led soon to confrontation in the gymnasium, where the 'revolutionary' ideas of Darwin were still not acceptable, — and in spite of his record as a brilliant student, Oskar was not spared from a temporary expulsion (*M.V). Vogt's art of brinkmanship became tested later in confrontations with the Nazi authorities, events in which he always managed to retain his basic position, although sometimes being forced to compromise on nonessential appearances.

The reprimand he received from the headmaster of the gymnasium did not for a moment stop Oskar in pursuit of his interests in the study of nature. He grasped that a crucial event in the evolution is the variability within species, which promotes natural selection and survival of animals better adapted to the environment. To study variability one has to operate with a large number of specimens, and in this respect, bumble-bees presented an especially suitable object, since Darwin mentioned in his writing that bumble-bees are in the process of new species formation. Oskar quickly discovered that the trunk-markings of bumble-bees showed variations, particularly when comparing specimens from different regions, and he assumed that this observed variability must represent a genetic adaptation to environmental factors. Thus, the exploration of genetic adaptation mechanisms became a fundamental interest in Oskar's scientific career, providing the basis for his later brain research. As a sensitive teenager, Oskar was becoming increasingly interested in human motivation and behavior, and he promptly arrived at the conclusion that all psychological phenomena must originate in the brain and have some anatomical substrate. The study of the interrelationship between mind and brain became the main theme of his research for the rest of his life.

Upon graduation from the gymnasium, he decided to program his future university studies strictly in accordance with his research aims and interests, focused on parallel exploration of both the psychic phenomena and their respective localization within brain structures. He remained indifferent to collecting diplomas & academic degrees, which could have been valuable in providing a secure career and a comfortable life.

Following his Abitur (graduation) from the Husum gymnasium in 1888, which opened for him the entry into the academic world, he met his first guru in the person of the Ferdinand Tönnies, a Privatdozent at the Kiel University. Tönnies, like Oskar born in Husum, was an inspiring sociologist, and later, was one of the founders of the German Society for Sociology. Tönnies's ideas, that criminal and psychopathic behavior might be related to genetically induced brain anomalies, presented a great appeal for