



**IMAGES OF REVOLUTION. METAPHOR, POLITICS AND HISTORY IN
GERMAN EARLY ROMANTICISM**

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TOM MORTON

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the specific uses and functions of metaphor in the political and historical writings of two major figures of German Early Romanticism, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) and Friedrich Schlegel.

It attempts to situate the texts and the metaphors they employ in the context of contemporary political and cultural developments, of which the most important is the French Revolution. The starting point of my investigation was the conviction that Novalis' and Schlegel's political writings could only be properly understood and evaluated as a part and product of the "discourse of the Revolution", namely the repertoire of literary conventions, concepts and metaphors which grew out of the revolutionary experience and informed the political debates surrounding the Revolution.

I analyse Novalis' and Schlegel's metaphorical practice within a broad theoretical perspective which draws on a number of different approaches to metaphor, and attempts to understand its function within both "rhetorical" and "mythical" discourse.

No previous study has recognized the integral part which metaphor plays in the articulation of Early Romantic political and historical theory. My thesis shows how Novalis and Schlegel appropriate and transform the central concepts and impulses of the Revolutionary Enlightenment, so as to develop new models of liberation and collectivity. It also shows how these models are themselves deeply ambiguous, and how their "progressive" impulses repeatedly mutate, via a process of metaphorical abstraction or reduction, into their opposites.

Special attention is given to the close intellectual collaboration between the two writers, and the way in which they share and exchange concepts.

This approach enables me to make connections between Novalis' and Schlegel's sense of generational, cultural and national identity. The final part of the thesis argues that their political texts written between 1795 and 1800 embody a crucial moment in the development of German nationalism, in that they begin to articulate some of its central myths.



1. INTRODUCTION

The following study sets out to examine the specific uses and functions of metaphor in those theoretical texts of Early Romanticism which concern themselves primarily with contemporary political and historical processes. As such, it attempts to fill an existing gap in the critical investigation of the *Frühromantik*, which has enjoyed something of a renaissance in the last decade. A number of extensive studies of metaphor and imagery in the poetic texts of Romantic writers already exist, but few of these concern themselves more than fleetingly with metaphors for politics and history¹. Conversely, there has been a great deal written on the political views of the Early Romantics and the relationship of these to the dominant political currents in Germany in the Revolutionary decade². Their philosophies of history have also

1. See for example:

H. Hillmann, *Die Bildlichkeit der deutschen Romantik*, Frankfurt/M., 1971

Thomas Lippelt, *Studien zum Wortgebrauch in den Romanen der deutschen Frühromantik*, München, 1978 (Diss.)

An exception to the rule is the following witty and convincing interpretation of one of Tieck's *Märchen*: Hans-Wolf Jäger, *Trägt Rotkäppchen eine Jakobinermütze? Über mutmaßliche Konnotate bei Tieck und Jakob Grimm*, In: Joachim Bark (Hg.), *Literatursoziologie*, Bd. II, Stuttgart, 1974, pp 102-121

See also Gerhard Schulz, *Die metaphorische Darstellung des Gegensatzes Einsamkeit-Öffentlichkeit in der deutschen romantischen Lyrik*, in: Richard Brinkmann (Hg.), *Romantik in Deutschland. Ein interdisziplinäres Symposium*, Stuttgart, 1978, pp 611-624

been the subject of a large body of secondary literature³. As yet, however, there exists no study which concerns itself specifically with the function of metaphor in the articulation of the speculative political and historical theory of the Early Romantics⁴. As I shall try to show, metaphor and

2. See for example:

Richard Brinkmann, *Deutsche Frühromantik und Französische Revolution*, in: Brinkmann (Hg.), *Deutsche Literatur und Französische Revolution*, Göttingen, 1974, pp172-191;
 Richard Brinkmann (Hg.) : *Romantik in Deutschland. Ein interdisziplinäres Symposium*;
 Hermann Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus. Das >>politische<< Werk Friedrich von Hardenbergs (Novalis) im Horizont seiner Wirkungsgeschichte*. München, 1983;
 Hans-Joachim Mähl, *Der poetische Staat. Utopie und Utopiereflexion bei den Frühromantikern*, in: Wilhelm Voßkamp (Hg.), *Utopieforschung. Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur neuzeitlichen Utopie*. Bd.3, Stuttgart, 1982, pp 273-302;
 Horst Meixner, *Politische Aspekte der Frühromantik*, in: Silvio Vietta (Hg.), *Die literarische Frühromantik*, Göttingen, 1983, pp180-191;
 Claus Träger, *Ursprünge und Stellung der Romantik*, in: *Weimarer Beiträge* 21 (1975) II, pp 37-73;
 Werner Weiland, *Politische Romantikinterpretation*, in: Dieter Bänisch (Hg.), *Zur Modernität der Romantik*, Stuttgart 1977 (=Literaturwissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften 9), pp1-59.

These titles represent a selection of the more recent secondary literature. For a more complete list see the bibliography.

3. See for example:

Klaus Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie (1794-1808). Ein Beitrag zur politischen Romantik*, Tübingen, 1984;
 Gerda Heinrich, *Geschichtsphilosophische Positionen der deutschen Frühromantik (Friedrich Schlegel und Novalis)*, Berlin/DDR, 1976;
 Hans-Joachim Mähl, *Die Idee des goldenen Zeitalters im Werk des Novalis. Studien zur Wesensbestimmung der frühromantischen Utopie und zu ihren ideengeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, Heidelberg, 1965;

4. The most comprehensive and authoritative study of Novalis' political theory to date is Kurzke's (see footnote 2 above). Kurzke does consider Novalis' use of metaphor quite extensively, but it does not form the main focus of his investigation, and he tends to ignore the context of the contemporary usage of political metaphor during the Revolutionary decade. However, he has made an invaluable contribution to the understanding of many obscure texts by demonstrating how Novalis drew on contemporary scientific

metaphorical thinking are not only fundamental to the construction and elaboration of their arguments, but often seem to provide the originating impulses for their speculations. The starting point for my investigation is the assumption that, from the very beginning, the texts of the two major theoreticians of Early Romanticism, namely Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, are permeated and conditioned by their responses to the French Revolution and its reception in Germany. I use the word "reception" here with some reservations, since I do not wish to suggest that the Revolution was received or responded to purely as an aesthetic phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that the experience of the Revolution is, for the populations of the majority of German states east of the Rhine, essentially a mediated, literary experience. Thus the response of the vast majority of German writers and readers to the Revolution is a response not just to the events taking place in France, and to the principles which the revolutionaries sought to put into practice, but also to their representation in discourse. By the time Novalis and Schlegel began writing, this representation already had, as we shall see, a history and a well-established repertoire of forms and conventions.

It is not my intention in this study to attempt to determine the precise political "positions" of the *Frühromantiker*, or to demonstrate their alignment with any of the political fronts or currents which had emerged in Germany

theories for many of his metaphorical models for political and historical processes.

in the revolutionary decade. Rather, I shall attempt, in considering the function of metaphor in their texts, to situate them within the context of the competing representations and interpretations of the Revolution and its consequences in the literature of the period⁵. It will become apparent in this process that Novalis' and Schlegel's theoretical writings embody not a reaction against, but a continuation and elaboration of, some of the more decidedly radical impulses of the Enlightenment. The chief concern of my investigation is with the ways in which these impulses are appropriated, developed, inverted, refracted and subverted in such a way as to generate a political and aesthetic program which, in some of its later manifestations, appears inimical to the central principles of the Revolution, whilst still bearing the traces of its provenance. Once again: it is metaphor, and the recurrent use of certain "metaphorical operations" of equation, subsumption and concatenation, which makes these transformations and subversions possible.

There are, as Gerhard Schulz has recently pointed out, a number of problems associated with the common usage of the term *Frühromantik*, according to which the "Personenkanon" of "Tieck, Wackenroder, die Brüder Schlegel und Novalis in den

5. Some pithy and illuminating remarks about the methodological distinction between identifying a writer's "Meinungen, Ansichten, [und] Gesinnungen" with regard to the French Revolution, and considering that writer's texts as "Wirkungen und Verarbeitungen der Französischen Revolution" can be found in Kurt Wölfel, *Zum Bild der Französischen Revolution im Werk Jean Pauls*, in: Brinkmann, *Deutsche Literatur und Französische Revolution*, pp149-171, esp. 149-151.

Jahren zwischen 1795 und 1801" is supposed to be representative of an entire Early Romantic generation⁶.

Such usage fails to recognize adequately either the diversity of writers associated directly or indirectly with Early Romanticism, or the fact that their works were by no means accorded the same significance by their contemporaries as they have been subsequently by literary historians. To put it another way: to speak of a "frühromantische Generation" is misleading insofar as it suggests that the Early Romantic circle was representative of a whole generation of writers and intellectuals, whereas in fact they perceived themselves as belonging very much to a minority⁷.

This study commits some of the sins of generalization which Schulz reproves, since it concentrates almost exclusively on the writings of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. There are, however, certain reasons which justify this approach. None of the other writers associated with Early Romanticism, with the exception of Görres, produced any substantial theoretical writings on the subject of politics or history during the Revolutionary decade, though we know for example that both Tieck and Wackenroder were avid supporters

6. See Schulz's review of a recent collection of essays entitled *Die literarische Frühromantik*, Hg. Vietta, Silvio, Göttingen 1983. The review appeared in: *Arbitrium. Zeitschrift für Rezensionen zur germanistischen Literaturwissenschaft*, 1985, pp 297-99

7. Cf. Schulz, *ibid.*, p 298: "...sind fünf oder sechs Autoren schon eine Generation oder sind sämtliche deutschen Intellektuellen der Jahrgänge 1767-1773 Frühromantiker?". Schulz himself suggests a number of possible additions to the canon.

of the Revolution⁸. This does not mean that their responses to the Revolution and its consequences do not play a role in the poetic texts they produced during the 1790's, though actual direct reference to contemporary events in these texts is rare⁹. However, the need to set limits to the scope of my investigation has meant that it was simply not possible to attempt to consider both theoretical and poetic texts. It must be left to later studies to examine whatever relationships may exist between the functions of metaphors for politics and history in theoretical texts, and their functions in poetic texts which make no ostensible reference to political or historical themes.

Little attention has been given until recently to the writings - as opposed to the lives - of the women writers of the Early Romantic circle, and almost none to their responses

8. Görres' *Mein Glaubensbekenntnis* was published in 1798, the same year as the *Athenäum* and *Glauben und Liebe*. Whilst there are some interesting parallels between Görres' text and those of Schlegel and Novalis, Görres still stands at this time very much within the mainstream of German Jacobinism, and his affiliation with Romanticism does not really emerge until some time later. See Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, 1. Teil (=De Boor-Newald, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, Bd.VII/1), München, 1983, pp 97-8

For Tieck's and Wackenroder's views on the Revolution see especially Tieck's letter of 28.12.1792, and Wackenroder's of January 1793 and the 5th of March 1793, in: Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Werke und Briefe*, Heidelberg, 1967, pp 399, 405-6, 411-12, 435.

9. It is interesting, for example, that Tieck's first novel *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell* includes a section set in Paris which makes absolutely no reference to the Revolution, though by every indication the action of the novel is intended to be contemporary with the time of its writing. On the portrayal of the Revolution in Tieck's *Der gestiefelte Kater* see Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die neue Mythologie*. 1. Teil, Frankfurt/M, 1982, pp 176-180

to and evaluations of the Revolution. An investigation of this subject is all the more desirable in view of the fact that at least some of these writers - for example Caroline Schlegel-Schelling and Sophie Mereau - appear to have taken a more sustained and informed interest in the developments in France than their male counterparts, and, incidently, to have been a good deal more radical in their outlook¹⁰. None of these writers, however, produced a coherent body of theoretical writings, and once again, constraints of space have meant that their other works and correspondence could not be considered in this study.

Notwithstanding Schulz's timely admonitions to the literary historian, it can be said that Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel between them produced the body of political and historical theory which has at least been received as being quintessentially Early Romantic, and which exerted a considerable influence on the later generation of Romantic theoreticians such as Adam Müller. Furthermore, they conceived of themselves as belonging to the vanguard of a new generation of writers and intellectuals, and their need to establish and validate their identity in opposition to the dominant literary and political currents of the time is one of the governing impulses of their writings. In terms of their own self-perception, then, we may speak legitimately of a "frühromantische Generation"; when, however, in the following

10. See for example: Gisela Dischner, *Caroline und der Jenaer Kreis. Ein Leben zwischen bürgerlicher Vereinzelung und romantischer Geselligkeit*, Berlin, 1979. It is well-known that Caroline had a very considerable influence on the development of Friedrich Schlegel's views on the Revolution.

I refer to "Early Romanticism" or its compounds I have tried to be mindful of the dangers of generalization inherent in such a usage¹¹.

Much of the more recent secondary literature has concerned itself with the relationship between Early Romanticism and Enlightenment, and has been inclined, as Schulz says, "Verbindungslinien zwischen beiden herauszuarbeiten, statt einer scharfen dialektischen Entgegensetzung von Aufklärung und Romantik das Wort zu reden"¹². This approach has proved extremely fruitful, but its proponents have not always been sufficiently sensitive to the polarisations and transformations which the German Enlightenment itself begins to undergo in the 1780's, and which are intensified by the impact of the Revolution¹³. There has also been a tendency to regard Romanticism as having somehow supplanted the Enlightenment as the dominant cultural discourse by the turn of the century. This is certainly not the case; both the radical and the more conservative currents of Enlightenment continue to exert a decisive influence on German intellectual life and cultural politics well into the

11. It should perhaps be noted here that Hölderlin, Hegel and Schelling appear to have felt a similar sense of generational identity during their time in the Tübinger Stift.

12. See Schulz's review of Vietta (Hg.), *Die literarische Frühromantik*, in; *Arbitrium*, p 297

13. For a useful account of these transformations see Inge Stephan, *Die Debatte über die Beziehungen zwischen Literatur, Aufklärung und Revolution*, in: Schoeps, J.H. und Geiss, I. (Hg.), *Revolution und Demokratie in Geschichte und Literatur. Festschrift für Walter Grab*, Duisburg, 1979, pp 41-59

first decade of the new century¹⁴. The case of Kleist illustrates this point very clearly: his early correspondence is permeated by the language and axioms of the classical Enlightenment, and by his attempts to come to terms with his own growing scepticism towards these¹⁵. Similarly, the narrative conventions which his short stories and novellas appropriate and proceed to subvert are essentially those of the fiction of *Empfindsamkeit*, rather than the Romantic fiction of the 1790's¹⁶. Any analysis, therefore, which assumes a linear progression from Enlightenment to Romanticism will fail to comprehend the complexities and ambiguities in the relationship between the two.

In order to arrive at an understanding of this relationship in the course of my investigation, it will first be necessary to consider some of the political, social and cultural developments which took place in Germany in the decades leading up to 1789, and to gain some idea of the repercussions which the phenomenon of the Revolution produced in German literary culture in the succeeding decade. The following introductory remarks make no claim to comprehensiveness, and are intended simply to establish a

14. See Friedrich Sengle, *Biedermeierzeit. Deutsche Literatur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815-1848*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart, 1971, esp. Kapitel 3, "Die literarischen Richtungen", pp 114-7

15. See Anthony Stephens, "Wie bei dem Eintritt in/ Ein andres Leben". *Geburtsmetapher und Individualität bei Kleist*. In: Ulrich Fülleborn/Manfred Engel, (Hg.), *Das neuzeitliche Ich in der Literatur des 18. und 20 Jahrhunderts*, München, 1988, pp 195-214

16. See Timothy Mehigan, *Text as Contract. The nature and function of narrative discourse in the Erzählungen of Heinrich von Kleist*, Frankfurt/M, 1988, pp 84-89

broad framework within which to consider the texts. In some instances it proved more fruitful to integrate background information into the immediate context of my analysis of the texts. Consequently, so as to avoid repetition, certain important themes are only touched on briefly.

2. LITERATURE, POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN LATE 18TH CENTURY GERMANY

2.I Bourgeoisie and Enlightenment

As is generally known, the emergence of a self-confident and economically powerful bourgeoisie occurred much later in the German states than it did in France and England. The depredations of the Thirty Years War continued to hinder economic development long after the war itself had ended, and the political fragmentation of the German 'nation' into 314 separate sovereign territories, each with its own customs duties - and often its own currency - presented a severe obstacle to the growth of a market economy and entrepreneurial capitalism¹. The mercantilist economic doctrines adhered to by the majority of the absolutist states, which imposed strict controls on the production and distribution of goods and the conduct of particular crafts and manufacturing activities, put a very effective brake on the process of industrialization. Whilst full-scale industrialization was already well under way in Britain in the latter half of the 18th century, no "dark Satanic mills" were appearing in the German countryside; the first steam looms were only put into operation as late as 1784 in Ratingen near Düsseldorf². Certain forms of proto-

¹. See Horst Möller, *Epoche - sozialgeschichtlicher Abriß*, in: Horst Albert Glaser (Hg.), *Deutsche Literatur. Eine Sozialgeschichte*. Bd. 5. *Zwischen Revolution und Restauration: Klassik und Romantik*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1980, pp 14-29, here p 15.

². See Helmuth Kiesel/ Paul Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert. Voraussetzungen und Entstehung des*

industrialization did occur in Germany, but even by the turn of the century it still remained essentially an agrarian society, in which roughly eighty per cent of the population made its living wholly or partially from agriculture³.

Despite the many obstacles to the formation of an independent bourgeoisie and the ascendancy of a capitalist mode of production, the gradual breakdown of the old system of guilds, the growth of administrative bureaucracies, and an increased circulation of wealth within the states led to the emergence of an educated middle class during the 18th century⁴. "Commerz- und Finanzgeist", as Herder called it, shaped the aspirations of this new class, which was largely excluded from the exercise of any political power or influence⁵. The theories of the physiocratic philosophers achieved considerable popularity in Germany. Although they still regarded agricultural production as the true and legitimate basis of any national economy, they argued for the abolition of controls and constraints on economic activity, so that it might occur more "naturally"⁶.

literarischen Marktes in Deutschland. München, 1977, p 40

³. See Möller, Epoche - sozialgeschichtlicher Abriß, p 17

⁴. See Hans J. Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz und des Schriftstellers in Deutschland zwischen 1750 und 1800, in: Bernd Lutz (Hg.), Deutsches Bürgertum und literarische Intelligenz (=Literaturwissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften 3), Stuttgart, 1974, pp 113-276, here p 177ff

⁵. The phrase from Herder is quoted by Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz, p 177. See also *ibid.*, p 182ff

⁶. See Kiesel/Münch, Gesellschaft und Literatur, p 33

As the economic power of the middle class grew, it sought to establish for itself a position and identity separate from the old feudal order of the "Stände". It did this essentially in two ways: by placing a new emphasis on the importance of education, and by challenging indirectly the relevance of birth or lineage to the assessment of a private individual's personal worth or social status. Wieland speaks for the whole of the German bourgeoisie when he declares "...in der guten Gesellschaft gilt kein Unterschied der Stände; a gentleman kann überall tête levée gehen und ist in der Societät was ein Anderer; und a gentleman ist man nicht durch Geburt, sondern durch persönliche Eigenschaften"⁷. Excluded from the aristocratic "große Welt" of the courts, the urban bourgeois "gentlemen" evolved their own institutionalized forms of social intercourse and self-expression. Habermas christened these the institutions of "bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit", and, despite the criticisms which have been made of his concept of the bourgeois public sphere since he first proposed it, the term has not been superseded⁸. The principal institutions of the bourgeois public sphere - the salons,

⁷. Quoted by Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz, p 179. It should perhaps be pointed out that the principles of the "gute Gesellschaft" did not in themselves present a direct challenge to the existing social order; as Habermas puts it: "Zunächst ist eine Art gesellschaftlichen Verkehrs gefordert, der nicht etwa die Gleichheit des Status voraussetzt, sondern von diesem überhaupt absieht". See Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1983, p 52

⁸. For a useful survey of the major criticisms of Habermas' original characterization of "bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit", see the final chapter of Peter Uwe Hohendahl, The Institution of Criticism, Ithaca, 1982, entitled "Critical Theory, Public Sphere and Culture: Jürgen Habermas and his critics" (pp 242-280)

"Lesegesellschaften", and the various secret orders such as the Freemasons and Illuminati - provided both a social context within which individuals from all social backgrounds could meet and converse, and also a forum for the public criticism of the excesses and injustices of absolutism.

According to Koselleck, the critique of absolutism articulated by the bourgeois public derived its political potency from the very fact that it conceived of itself as essentially moral rather than political in character⁹. Instead of confronting the existing order directly, the critical Enlightenment developed a series of discourses which enabled it to challenge the legitimacy of the absolutist rulers rather than their actual political power. Amongst these were the philosophy of natural law, the philosophy of history, and the notion of public opinion itself as "das öffentliche Raisonement", which had as its purpose the "gewaltlose Ermittlung des zugleich Richtigen und Rechten"¹⁰. The bourgeois public sphere formed, according to Koselleck, a "moralische[r] Innenraum" within the absolutist state, from within which writers and philosophers could forecast the inevitable victory of morality - a victory which, as they saw it, was guaranteed by the teleology of history¹¹.

⁹. See Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise. Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt*, Frankfurt/M., 1979, 3. Aufl., p 105ff

¹⁰. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, p 104

¹¹. See Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*, pp 108, 111ff. Both Koselleck and Habermas also note the innate tendency of "Kritik" to move towards an eventual and inevitable dissolution of the "Rechtsstaat" itself.

Koselleck's characterization of the bourgeois critique of absolutism doubtless needs to be modified in some important respects, but it nonetheless provides a useful framework for the analysis of bourgeois political culture in Germany both before and after 1789¹². Moreover, it seems to correspond in some respects to the actual perceptions of contemporary authors. Knigge, in his book *Über Schriftsteller und Schriftstellerey* published in 1793 remarks on the tendency of "die unumschränkten Herrn" - that is to say, the absolutist rulers - to regard "die Republic der Gelehrten" as "gleichsam einen gefährlichen statum in statu"¹³. Knigge himself was not only a citizen of the "Republic", but had also been a leading figure in the forbidden order of Illuminati. Horst Möller has drawn attention to the paradoxical nature of the secret societies, which combined devotion to the principles of Enlightenment with decidedly arcane practices, and functioned as organs of "Öffentlichkeit" whilst, at least in some cases, maintaining a fanatical obsession with secrecy¹⁴. Such

¹². One of the problems with Koselleck's approach is that he seems not always to distinguish enough between developments in France and Germany in making generalizations about the "crisis" of Enlightenment. For a brief critique of Koselleck see Inge Stephan, *Literarischer Jakobinismus in Deutschland*. (1789 - 1806), Stuttgart, 1976, p 60

¹³. Quoted in Wilfried Barner, *Lessing zwischen Bürgerlichkeit und Gelehrtheit*, in: Rudolf Vierhaus (Hg.), *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, Heidelberg, 1981, pp 165-204, here p 171

¹⁴. See Horst Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik. Deutsche Aufklärung im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/M., 1986, pp 213ff. Möller calls into question the received notion that the "Orden" were oppositional in nature before 1789. His book is symptomatic of a general trend in a number of studies published since 1980 which revise, modify, and in some cases reject the key concepts with which the historians of the previous generation had described the bourgeois culture of the 18th century. The theoretical framework which I have employed in my investigation is largely that proposed by this previous

contradictions and incongruities were not confined to the secret societies: Hans Haferkorn argues in his authoritative study of the genesis of the bourgeois intelligentsia in Germany that it would be a mistake to see the discourse of the Enlightenment as homogenous or unified:

Die Inhalte der bürgerlich-literarischen Meinungsbildung...stellen keineswegs eine in sich geschlossene Weltanschauung o.ä. dar, sondern sind eher als verschiedene und manchmal gegenläufige, ja widersprüchliche geistige Strömungen und Beurteilungen zu verstehen, die sich im ständigen Wechsel von Progression und Regression, von Hoffnung und Resignation, von Mobilisierung und Konsolidierung, von Fortschritt und Restauration entwickelten. In der praktischen Konsequenz tendierte die Meinungsbildung jedoch generell dahin, die sich immer deutlicher abzeichnende gesellschaftspolitische Krise durch eine Bewußtseinsweiterung des Volkes bzw. der Nation - sprich: durch eine mehr ästhetisch-moralisch und gefühlhaft getönte literarisch-soziale Erziehung der Menschen aller Stände zum Wahren, Guten und Schönen - zu überwinden.¹⁵

A number of important points arise from Haferkorn's remarks; they can only be listed briefly here, but they will be of considerable moment for my investigation. To begin with, it must be pointed out that the bourgeois public sphere in the German Kleinstaaten was, by comparison with its counterparts in France and Britain, essentially inchoate, and lacked a real political basis. As Möller writes:

...auch bei radikaleren Aufklärern in Deutschland hatte Öffentlichkeit einen anderen Charakter als in

generation, and in particular by Habermas and Koselleck. It was simply not practicable to attempt an analysis of early Romanticism incorporating the newest research into the social history of the later 18th century; but I have attempted, where possible, to indicate the areas of major dispute amongst the social historians.

¹⁵. Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz, p 142

England: sie war nicht, auch nicht ansatzweise, politische Realität, sondern zunächst formales Postulat und Negation der bestehenden nicht-öffentlichen Kabinettsregierung. Es fehlte vor allem an einer dem Herrscher entgegengesetzten Repräsentation, für die nach Art des englischen Parlaments Öffentlichkeit mitkonstituierend war. Öffentlichkeit konnte lediglich tendenziell eine dem Staat entgegengesetzte Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft sein.¹⁶

Moreover, the social basis of "Öffentlichkeit" was severely restricted. Large sections of the German bourgeoisie were unreceptive and unsympathetic to the ideas of Enlightenment, and the same was often true of the "Volk" whom the more progressive *Aufklärer* sought to educate and 'improve',¹⁷. There was widespread disagreement as to whether or not universal Enlightenment was a desirable aim; some saw a pedagogic "Volksaufklärung" and universal access to education as the logical and proper extension of "Mündigkeit" to the whole population, whilst others saw it as unnecessary or even dangerous¹⁸. Many of the chief exponents of the bourgeois Enlightenment were themselves of aristocratic origin; the bourgeois public sphere was therefore neither homogenous in composition, nor did it conform to clearly defined class distinctions. It was, as Haferkorn puts it, in a certain sense "ohne Unterbau"¹⁹.

¹⁶. Möller, Vernunft und Kritik, p 287

¹⁷. See Möller, Vernunft und Kritik, pp 40, 293

¹⁸. *ibid.*

¹⁹. Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz, p 169

Concomitant with the emergence and expansion of "bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit" in the German states is a series of changes in the nature, function and social meaning of the family unit, which are themselves associated with the advent of a capitalist mode of production. The traditional extended family household, which included not just blood relations but also various categories of domestic servants, apprentices and journeymen, began to be replaced by the nuclear family, a form of social organization which is, in its origins, specifically bourgeois²⁰. In the traditional household, production was almost exclusively domestic; it took place in or around the house, and both male and female members of the household, including the wife of the "Hausvater", were involved in the processes of production²¹. With the gradual shift of production away from the household to the factory during the 18th century, the economic function of the family declined, and it began to contract. At the same time, a new division of labour and social roles within the family began to become visible. Women, who had previously participated both in the processes of production and in the economic management of the household as a productive unit, were increasingly excluded from the public sphere of economic activity and consigned to a purely private existence within the family²². The sexual

²⁰. Cf. Brunner, Conze, Koselleck, (Hg.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd. 2, Stuttgart, 1975, pp 269-273. According to Kiesel and Münch, the "ganzes Haus" could include "die Dienstbotenschaft (Amme, Magd, Kinderfrau, Hofmeister u.a.), das Gesinde (Knecht, Mägde), Lehrlinge und Gesellen" (Kiesel/Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur*, p61).

²¹. See *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, pp 272-3

²². Kiesel and Münch appear to argue that the bourgeois "Kleinfamilie" actually increased the standing of women in the family: "Von der vorher dem Mann untergeordnete Position stieg

division of labour became coterminous with the distinction between public and private²³.

As a corollary of this process, women become responsible not just for the "'gemütliche" Ausgestaltung des Wohnbereichs", but for the maintenance and enrichment of the domestic "Intimsphäre", which Habermas sees as the focus of the "spezifische Subjektivität" of the new middle class, the laboratory of an "intim sich herstellenden Humanität"²⁴.

I have attempted to outline very briefly some of the economic and social factors associated with the emergence of a bourgeois public and a culture of Enlightenment in Germany in the later 18th century. The new public is, as Habermas remarks, first and foremost a "Leseublikum", and its primary discursive forms and institutions are literary²⁵. It is to these that I shall now turn my attention.

sie auf zur Leiterin des Haushalts" (p 65). This directly contradicts the description of the economic role of women in the traditional family in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, which is probably more authoritative, and produces more documentary evidence.

²³. Habermas in fact defines the "Intimsphäre" of the patriarchal nuclear family as the "Kern...des Privaten", arguing that the basis of "Privatautonomie" is the ownership of property, and that the bourgeois individual functions essentially as a "Privateigentümer" within the market (*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, p 105). There is no reason to quarrel with his economic analysis, but it is somewhat difficult to determine where the boundary between the broader "private" sphere and the public sphere is drawn.

²⁴. Cf. Kiesel/Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur*, p 66, and Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 60, 65

²⁵. See Habermas, *ibid.*, pp 37, 107-8

2.2 "Literarische Öffentlichkeit"

The eighteenth century brought with it the emergence of a popular vernacular literature in German, and a very considerable expansion in the production and consumption of books. The nature of reading habits also changed. Whereas the majority of literate people had previously practised an "intensive Lektüre" - the repeated reading of the Bible or a small number of devotional tracts - they now began to read "extensively" from a much wider range of profane literature²⁶. The level of literacy amongst the population increased, especially in the latter third of the century, but by 1800 it had still only reached a figure of around twenty-five percent²⁷. Despite the increasing number of potential readers and the growth of the literary market, the prices of books and journals remained high; and this was the primary reason for the formation of the so-called "Lesegesellschaften", which in their original form were loose associations for sharing the cost of subscriptions to journals²⁸. The "Lesegesellschaften" not only made reading matter available to a non-scholarly public, they provided a forum for the discussion and circulation of new ideas and matters of "public" interest.

²⁶. See Alberto Martino/Marlies Stützel-Prüsener, *Publikumsschichten, Lesegesellschaften und Leihbibliotheken*. In Glaser, *Deutsche Literatur. Eine Sozialgeschichte*, Bd.5, pp 44-57, here p 44

²⁷. This is the estimate made by Rudolf Schenda in: *Volk ohne Buch. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der populären Lesestoffe 1770 - 1910*, Frankfurt/M., 1970.

²⁸. See Möller, *Vernunft und Kritik*, p 262

They also played an important role in enabling and encouraging the free association of members of different classes; within the "LeseGesellschaft" all individuals were, in principle, equal. Members of the aristocracy received no special privileges or recognition²⁹. Women and students were excluded from membership, though women began to be accepted by some societies in the late 18th century; they were, however, permitted to use the lending libraries of the "LeseGesellschaften".

Their promotion of a degree of social mobility, and their institutionalization of non-aristocratic forms of socialization meant that the "LeseGesellschaften" came to embody "den allgemeinsten, offensten und verbreitetsten Organisationstypus der Aufklärung"³⁰. They were, on the whole, not expressly political or oppositional in character, but they were often oriented towards discussion of political topics, and political journals were the most popular and heavily-subscribed reading material³¹. That the "LeseGesellschaften" fulfilled an important function in providing a focus for the development of a specifically bourgeois culture of Enlightenment is indisputable; but as Möller points out, the heterogenous social composition of both the "LeseGesellschaften" and the "Orden" poses the question as to why "die adligen Schichten, die Diplomaten, Domherren, hohen Beamten und Offiziere soziokulturell und

²⁹ . ibid., p 263-4

³⁰ . ibid., p 264

³¹ . ibid., pp 263, 267

gesellschaftspolitisch zum Vehikel der bürgerlichen Emanzipation sich haben machen lassen"³². This is a question which will be of some importance for my investigation.

The growth in demand for books and journals, and the widening of their distribution, led to the development of a "literary industry" in Germany - Kant himself referred to it as such - and to fundamental changes in the modes of production and consumption of literature and its social meanings³³. For the first time, professional writers or "freie Schriftsteller" began to emerge alongside the scholarly authors and "Hofpoeten" who had until then been the principal producers of literature³⁴. The trend towards a "professionalization" of the writer, and the need to come to terms with the demands of the market, created a radically new relationship between the producer, his or her literary products, and the consumer:

³². *ibid.*, p 268

³³. In his polemic against Nicolai entitled *Über die Buchmacherei* Kant writes:

"Die Buchmacherei ist kein unbedeutender Erwerbszweig in einem der Kultur nach schon weit fortgeschrittenen gemeinen Wesen: wo die Leserei zum beinahe unentbehrlichen und allgemeinen Bedürfnis geworden ist. - Dieser Teil der *Industrie* in einem Lande aber gewinnt dadurch ungemein: wenn jene *fabrikmäßig* getrieben wird...usw".

Quoted in: Peter Michelsen, *Der unruhige Bürger. Der Bürger und die Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*. In: Vierhaus (Hg.), *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit*, pp 101-130, here p 109

³⁴. On the emergence of the "freier Schriftsteller" see Haferkorn, *Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz*, pp 163-171, 195-203, 229-239. See also Herbert Jaumann, *Emanzipation als Positionsverlust. Ein sozialgeschichtlicher Versuch über die Situation des Autors im 18. Jahrhundert*. In: *LiLi* 11 / 1981, Heft 42, pp 46-72

...die Publikation von Büchern für das allgemeine, dem Autor völlig unbekanntes Publikum entspricht der auf dem anonymen Warenverkehr beruhenden Struktur der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. ... Bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts lebten die Schriftsteller nicht vom direkten Ertrag ihrer Werke, sondern von Pensionen, Pfründen, Sinekuren, die oft weder mit dem inneren Wert noch mit der allgemeinen Anziehungskraft ihrer Schriften im Verhältnis standen. Jetzt erst wird das literarische Produkt zur Ware, deren Wert sich nach ihrer Verkäuflichkeit auf dem freien Markt richtet.³⁵

The author's relationship to the public, and the "Antinomie von dichterischem Geist und bürgerlicher Erwerbsgesinnung" which the commercialization of literature institutionalized became sources of frustration and cynicism amongst both established and aspiring writers in the late 1780's and early 1790's³⁶. Paradoxically, it is the growth of the market and the increase in the number of "freie Schriftsteller" which are the primary causes of these reactions. The "Lesewut" or "Lesesucht" which, according to some contemporary commentators, had spread through the German population like an epidemic, created a situation of intense competition amongst authors and publishers. Social historians of the period continue to argue about the actual dimensions and ideological significance of the phenomenon of "Vielleserei". Despite the increase in literacy, and some of the other factors mentioned earlier, the actual reading public at the time of the Revolution probably only constituted a very small percentage of the total population, and it has been argued by Schenda in his pioneering study *Volk ohne Buch* that

³⁵. Arnold Hauser, *Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur*, München, 1972, pp 565-6

³⁶. Haferkorn, *Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz*, p 237

the chimera of a virulent "Le sewut" gradually infecting the whole of Germany was a malicious fiction perpetrated by conservative publicists alarmed at the spread of Enlightenment and the popular enthusiasm for the French Revolution³⁷. As Schenda puts it:

Die Klagen über eine allgemeine Lesesucht und über eine Massenproduktion von Büchern sind eine ideologische Fälschung.³⁸

Certainly the question of who should, or should not read was a highly controversial one, and although the extent of "Vielleserei" was doubtless exaggerated by the adversaries of "Volksaufklärung", it was perceived by both conservative and progressive elements of the bourgeois intelligentsia to be a phenomenon of great importance³⁹. In an essay written in 1793 Georg Friedrich Rebmann argues that humanity has benefited from the spread of reading amongst the "niedere Stände", but that the development of literature has suffered as a result of its commercialization, which, he says, reduces even the fruits

³⁷. See Kiesel/Münch, *Literatur und Gesellschaft*, pp 159-61

³⁸. Schenda, *Volk ohne Buch*, p 88

³⁹. See Martino/Prüsener, *Publikumsschichten, Lesegesellschaften und Leihbibliotheken*, pp 56-7:

"Wenn wir uns aber die Tragweite des Strukturwandels der Leserschaft und der Veränderung der Lesegewohnheiten, die radikale Umwandlung der Funktion der Lektüre und des Buchs in der Gesellschaft, die Zunahme der Leserzahl, die explosive Vermehrung der Leihbibliotheken, Lesegesellschaften und Buchhandlungen sowie der Buchproduktion..., die Korrelation zwischen Verbreitung der Lektüre und Entstehung der öffentlichen Meinung, wenn wir uns alle diese Erscheinungen aus der damaligen Sicht vergegenwärtigen ... so wird uns verständlich, warum in den Augen der Zeitgenossen der beginnende Prozeß der Demokratisierung des Lesens solche Dimensionen annahm".

of genius to "ein Modeartikel, eine Kaufmannsware"⁴⁰. Rebmann sees this as a consequence of the change in the social composition of the public and the general popularization of literature:

Unser Publikum besteht nicht etwa aus den Tribunalen, die in Jena, Göttingen und Berlin entscheiden, auch nicht aus den jungen Kandidaten, angehenden Pastoren oder Studenten, welche hie und da in mancher anderen gelehrten Zeitung spuken, nein, das Publikum, dessen Stimme zwar nicht in kritischer, aber in ökonomischer Hinsicht über unsere Schriftsteller richtet, besteht aus Friseuren, Kammerjungfern, Bedienten, Kaufmannsdienern und dergleichen, die man in unseren Lesebibliotheken zu Dutzenden antrifft. Daher gehen die gräuervollen Märchen, die Lauren und dergleichen trotz aller Geiselhiebe gut ab, während eine Buchhandlung in einer ansehnlichen Stadt Deutschlands mit Mühe und Not zwei Exemplarien von Herders zerstreuten Blättern absetzte! 41

Although Rebmann himself regards "die zur Mode gewordene Lesesucht", as he puts it⁴², as an essentially positive phenomenon, his remarks illustrate very clearly the tendency towards a "Dichotomisierung von hoher und niederer Literatur" which began to make itself felt in the late 1780's in the attitudes of some writers and critics as a consequence of the commercial instrumentalization of literature and the ascendancy of "Unterhaltungsliteratur"⁴³. Disillusioned by the

⁴⁰. This passage from the *Kosmopolitische Wanderungen durch einen Teil Deutschlands* (1793) is quoted in Kiesel/Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur*, p 155

⁴¹. *ibid.*

⁴². *ibid.*

⁴³. This phrase is taken from the title of a collection of essays edited by Christa Bürger, Peter Bürger and Jochen Schulte-Sasse entitled : *Zur Dichotomisierung von hoher und niederer Literatur*, Frankfurt/M., 1982. See in particular the introduction by Christa Bürger (pp 9-39).

reading public's preference for "gräuelvolle Märchen" over more serious and intellectually demanding works which sought to imbue readers with 'enlightened' principles, these authors - of whom Schiller is the most prominent example - begin to question the classical Enlightenment's definition of the social function of literature, and its relation to the public. According to Christa Bürger, this can be understood as an

...Ausdruck der Betroffenheit der Aufklärer..., die entdecken, wie die Eigendynamik des Markts das Projekt der Aufklärung unterläuft, indem er mittels einer massenhaft produzierten Literatur die kommerzielle Auswertung und Stabilisierung von Publikumsbedürfnissen betreibt, die nicht zuvor durch die kritische Öffentlichkeit als sinnvoll ermittelt und anerkannt worden sind. Die jetzt einsetzende Kritik an der Unterhaltungsliteratur geht hervor aus der Einsicht der Aufklärer, daß der Marktmechanismus durch das Versprechen von Profit und Geltung die moralische Identität der Schriftsteller zerstört und diese zu Herstellern von im Verständnis der Aufklärung wertloser, aber gut absetzbarer Fabrikware macht. Aus der Krise der aufklärerischen Literaturvorstellung geht eine neue Institutionalisierung der Literatur hervor, die autonome, wobei man sich den Ablösungsprozeß als Ergebnis zum Teil heftig geführter Auseinandersetzungen vorzustellen hat.
44

The emergence of an "Autonomieästhetik" and its significance for Friedrich Schlegel's aesthetic theory will be considered in a later chapter. It should, however, be pointed out here that an autonomous aesthetics was not the only solution to the "problem" of popular taste proposed at the time. G.A. Bürger, who propounded the view that literature must strive to appeal to the "Volk", saw the broad popularity of "Unterhaltungsliteratur" as an expression of economic inequality. He saw a redistribution of wealth as the

⁴⁴. ibid., pp 19-20

precondition for a change in the literary predilections of the public, arguing that

...die oberen Klassen mehr Vermögen und Gelegenheit haben, ihren Söhnen auf diese Stufe der Vollkommenheit...emporzuhelfen. Transportieren Sie auf einmal das Vermögen und den Unterricht der oberen Klassen auf die niederen, so werden Sie Lehrer und Meister des guten Geschmacks aus diesen hervorgehen sehen.⁴⁵

Bürger's analysis leads him to the conclusion that what is necessary is a social transformation, not just a transformation of the literary industry - a conclusion which the majority of his contemporaries shied away from. What is important to grasp here is the paradox that the economic foundations of the principal institution of the incipient bourgeois public sphere, namely the literary market, both enable its rapid expansion and contribute to its fragmentation, such that those who are the primary producers for this market become divided and polarised according to their beliefs about the proper function of literature. To oversimplify somewhat, one could say that the very success of the culture of the bourgeois Enlightenment sowed the seeds of its disintegration⁴⁶. This is, however, a complex process, which cannot be understood without at the same time considering the impact which the French Revolution had on the development of German political life and cultural politics.

⁴⁵. Quoted in Haferkorn, Zur Entstehung der bürgerlich-literarischen Intelligenz, p 142

⁴⁶. See Jochen Schulte-Sasse, Das Konzept bürgerlich-literarischer Öffentlichkeit und die historischen Gründe seines Zerfalls, in: Christa Bürger, Peter Bürger, Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Hg.), Aufklärung und literarische Öffentlichkeit, Frankfurt/M., 1980, pp 83-115, esp. pp 106-8

2.3 Germany and the French Revolution

The years leading up to 1789 were characterized by a change of emphasis in the development of German literary culture. As Gerhard Schulz has pointed out, the majority of the authors who achieved prominence during the 1780's devoted themselves to the production of "eine breite, volkstümliche, oft didaktisch und vorwiegend triviale Unterhaltungsliteratur"⁴⁷. This trend is only reversed after 1789, with the emergence of a new generation of writers, of which the Early Romantics form a part. According to Schulz, the 1780's were "eine Zeit der Fluchten, der Stagnation, der Erschöpfungen und Banalisierungen, des Zögerns und der Suche, der Vorbereitung zu neuen Zielen und neuer, von veränderten Voraussetzungen ausgehender künstlerischer Tätigkeit"⁴⁸. Against the background of this climate of frustration at the obduracy of the existing political order, the events of 1789 could not fail to seize the imaginations of a great many Germans. The following passage from one of Joachim Heinrich Campe's *Briefe aus Paris*, dated the 4th of August 1789, is typical of the responses both of those Germans like Campe who actually journeyed to Paris, and of those who eagerly followed the course of the Revolution through the reports in newspapers and journals:

Ob es wirklich wahr ist, mein lieber T*, daß ich in Paris bin? Daß die neuen Griechen und Römer, die ich hier um und neben mir zu sehen glaube, wirklich vor einigen

⁴⁷. See Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, p 13

⁴⁸. *ibid.*

Wochen noch - Franzosen waren? Daß die großen, wunderlichen Schauspiele, die in diesen Tagen hier aufgeführt worden sind und noch täglich aufgeführt werden, keine Geschöpfe meiner Phantasie, kein Traum, sondern Tatsachen sind? Fast könnte ich diese Frage allen Ernstes an Sie tun; sowenig stimmt, was ich hier stündlich sehe, höre und empfinde, mit den Begriffen überein, die wir in Deutschland von dieser Stadt und von diesem Volk uns zu machen bisher berechtigt zu sein schienen.⁴⁹

Campe's remarks bear witness to the fact that, even very early on in the unfolding of the Revolution, it was already being regarded as a phenomenon which signalled the beginning of a new era - a "dawn" or "sunrise", to name the favourite metaphors used by contemporary writers to describe it. In his history of the literature of this era, Schulz is careful to stress the essential continuity of the development of German literature from the middle of the 18th century through to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, but argues nonetheless that 1789 marks a "Zäsur" in this development⁵⁰, a point of transition from one phase to another:

Der Wandlungsprozeß, der sich in den achtziger Jahren deutlich vorbereitet hatte, erhielt durch die Ereignisse in Frankreich entscheidenden Nachdruck und bestimmtere Richtung.⁵¹

In attempting to understand this "Wandlungsprozeß", the transformation of German literary and political culture by the

⁴⁹. Joachim Heinrich Campe, Briefe aus Paris zur Zeit der Revolution geschrieben, Erster Brief, quoted in: Horst Günther (Hg.), Die Französische Revolution. Berichte und Deutungen deutscher Schriftsteller und Historiker, Frankfurt/M., 1985, p 9

⁵⁰. See Gerhard Schulz, Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration, pp 13-15

⁵¹. *ibid.*, pp 14-15

impact of the Revolution, we need to be aware both of the underlying continuities of the period, and of its ruptures and disjunctions. Above all, we need to be suspicious of any historical mode of explication which assumes a linear progression of Enlightenment, Revolution, reaction and romanticism, and which does not acknowledge the simultaneous existence of many different political and philosophical currents during the revolutionary decade, and their uneven rates of development. The Revolution is not simply a "Zäsur": it is also, and equally, on the one hand a "Katalysator"⁵², and on the other, in Schulz's words, "ein langwieriger, verwickelter Prozeß, der sich über rund zehn Jahre hinzog"⁵³. It precipitates the principles of Enlightenment into history, into the field of concrete political action, and in so doing it begins to transform them. As Jean Starobinski puts it:

Der Ursprungsakt der Freiheit schafft freien Platz, öffnet das unbegrenzte Feld der Möglichkeiten. Aber wer kann bei diesem Scheidemoment bleiben, wo die Finsternis zurückweicht und der anbrechende Tag alle Gesichter zeigt, da er noch kein Gesicht hat? Alles, was sich zunächst erahnen läßt, ist, daß das Feld für universale *Prinzipien* frei ist. Denn das Prinzip ist die Sprache des Anfangs, die begründende Äußerung, die vorgibt, die strahlende Autorität des Ursprungs in sich zu bergen und festzusetzen. Das weiße Licht des ersten revolutionären Momentes ist vielleicht nichts anderes als der Wirbel aller Farben des Prinzipienspektrums im Raum, den die Freiheit sich endlich erobert hat.⁵⁴

⁵². Möller, Vernunft und Kritik, p 288

⁵³. Gerhard Schulz, Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration, p 83

⁵⁴. Jean Starobinski, 1789. Die Embleme der Vernunft. Hrsg. und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Friedrich Kittler. Aus dem Französischen von Gundula Göbel. Paderborn; München usw, 1981, pp 48-9. All references are to this German edition of the text.

It would be an idle undertaking to attempt to survey here the range of responses which the Revolution elicited in Germany, or to summarize its effects on German intellectual life. Both these subjects have been dealt with in a very extensive secondary literature⁵⁵. My approach in this study has been to try to integrate comparisons between the responses of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis to the Revolution, and those of their contemporaries, into the analysis of specific texts. My intention in so doing is to illuminate the correspondences and disparities between their writings and other articulations of Revolutionary discourse, by examining particular concepts or conventions, and exposing the different nuances of meaning which they acquire in Early Romantic theory.

Having said this, there are a number of aspects of the reception of the Revolution in Germany which are important to our understanding of the context within which Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis begin writing, and which require some brief elucidation here. To begin with, we need to consider what may at first seem a trivial point, one of chronology. The first text which I shall be considering, Schlegel's essay entitled *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie*, is written between 1795 and 1797, that is to say, in the years following

⁵⁵. See for example:

Claus Träger, *Die französische Revolution im Spiegel der deutschen Literatur*, Röderberg-Verlag, Frankfurt/M., 1979

Jost Hermand, *Von deutscher Republik 1775-1795. Texte radikaler Demokraten*, Frankfurt/M, 1975

Inge Stephan, *Literarischer Jakobinismus in Deutschland (1789-1806)*

J.H. Schoeps/I. Geiss, *Revolution und Demokratie in Geschichte und Literatur. Festschrift für Walter Grab*. Duisburg, 1979

Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*.

the collapse of Jacobin rule and the reassertion of bourgeois control over the course of the Revolution under the Directorate. There has been a common tendency in the historiography of the Revolution to regard the fall of Robespierre as somehow marking the end of the Revolution, or at least the end of its historically significant development⁵⁶. This tendency has influenced the evaluation of German reactions to the Revolution; in keeping with the received wisdom, according to which initial enthusiasm for the events in France was succeeded by disillusionment, dismay and outrage at the execution of the king and the excesses of the Terror, not much attention has been given to German perceptions of the Revolution after 1794. It is certainly true that a great many writers and publicists in Germany do display precisely those responses which the traditional account of the revolutionary decade describes; but there are also an appreciable number who do not, and there is no indication in the latter part of the decade that German observers, whatever their political allegiances might have been, regarded the Revolution as having somehow run its course or come to a standstill after Thermidor.

⁵⁶. This tendency is repudiated by Denis Woronoff in the introduction to his study entitled: *The Thermidorean Regime and the Directory 1794-1799*, tr. by Julia Jackson, New York/Paris, 1984. See also Francois Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, quoted here and in the following in the German translation entitled: *1789. Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geisteswissenschaft*, Ullstein, 1980, 73 "Dies ist der Grund, weshalb der 9. Thermidor einen so tiefen Einschnitt in die Revolutionsgeschichte und in unsere Geschichte überhaupt darstellt...Hier ist die Revolution zu Ende..."

This is hardly surprising, given that large areas of German territory were under French occupation, and that the Revolutionary war continued in the south of Germany even after the Peace of Basle. When, some ten years later, Kleist produces a series of texts in which he exhorts the German nation to destroy Napoleon, the "Vatermördergeist"⁵⁷, it is clear that the Revolution is for him an as-yet-unfinished chapter in contemporary history. Indeed, the cosmic significance with which Kleist invests the war against Napoleon derives from his belief that Napoleon embodies all the negative tendencies of the Revolution. He is both its betrayer and its executor, the logical outcome of all those allegories of the failed new beginning which we find throughout Kleist's dramas and short stories.

The attitude of the German public to the war, and the extent to which it was perceived as being a direct consequence or expression of the Revolution itself, has not received a great deal of attention from historians of the period⁵⁸. As Gerhard Schulz points out, however, the war made a deep impression on many writers in Germany who set about discussing the question raised by Kant in his essay of 1795 entitled *Zum*

⁵⁷. See the "Katechismus der Deutschen", in: Sembdner, H. (Hg.), Heinrich von Kleist. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, 6. Auflage, München, 1977, Bd.2, p 354

⁵⁸. A useful introduction to this topic is given in Bärbel Raschke, Der Revolutionskrieg im Urteil historisch-politischer Zeitschriften der Jahre 1792/3, in: Weimarer Beiträge 30 (1984) Nr.2, pp 305-318

ewigen Frieden, as to what were the necessary preconditions for the creation of a lasting peace⁵⁹.

The war also posed a problem of allegiance for the German Jacobins, and for many other supporters of the Revolution in Germany, such as Klopstock and Bürger, who did not identify themselves with the radical "Klubisten". During the first years of the war they opposed any German involvement in the campaign against the new French republic, and many saw the occupation of previously German territories by the French armies as a liberation. Over and above this, they feared that a mobilisation of the German people against France would serve the interests of the existing political order by diverting the people from their own grievances and preventing them from recognizing that they had a common cause with the French revolutionaries⁶⁰. The fall of Robespierre, and bitter disillusionment with the conduct of the French administration in the occupied areas, led, however, to a shift in attitude as the decade wore on:

Die Entwicklung Frankreichs nach dem Sturz der Jakobinerherrschaft, das tendenzielle Umschlagen des französischen Kampfes von einem Freiheits- in einen Eroberungskrieg und die immer deutlicher zutage tretende Interessendivergenz zwischen französischen Revolutionären und deutschen Jakobinern stellte die Jakobiner in Deutschland vor erhebliche ideologische und praktische Probleme...Weit davon entfernt, in die von den Herrschenden verordnete nationalistische Begeisterungswelle einzuschwenken, sahen sich die deutschen Jakobiner doch gezwungen, ihre Haltung gegenüber Frankreich teilweise zu revidieren und die

⁵⁹. See Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, pp 159-180

⁶⁰. See Stephan, *Literarischer Jakobinismus in Deutschland*, pp 79-80

eigenen nationalen Belange und die Interessen der Bevölkerung stärker zu akzentuieren.⁶¹

The attitudes of the German Jakobins to the war are, as Inge Stephan points out, closely linked to their position in the debate as to whether the existing order in Germany could best be transformed by becoming part of the new French republic - the alternative of "Réunion", as it was called at the time - or by a revolution on German soil. This was, essentially, a debate about whether or not revolutionary change could be imposed from above, or whether it must, to be effective, be made actively by the people from below⁶². The complexities of this debate need not concern us here: it is, however, important to grasp the fact that the question itself was still considered crucial by progressive elements in Germany even after the period of the Terror in France.

It is difficult to determine to what extent the fall of the Jacobins was seen in Germany at the time as a decisive turning point in the Revolution. Certainly, there were those writers such as Dautzenberg, who believed that the Revolution had actually come to an end, but the more common response seems to have been a belief that the Directorate would institute a more moderate form of revolutionary government⁶³. The journal *Beytraege zur Geschichte der Französischen*

⁶¹.

 ibid., p 80

⁶². ibid., p 81ff

⁶³. See Gonthier-Louis Fink, Die Revolution als Herausforderung in Literatur und Publizistik, in: Glaser, Deutsche Literatur. Eine Sozialgeschichte. Bd.5, pp 110-129, here p 124

Literatur, which began publication in 1795, and which consisted in large part of translations of articles, reportage and letters from France, makes no bones about its support for the new regime in Paris, and sets about vilifying Robespierre and all associated with him⁶⁴. As Peter Schmidt has shown, a few German writers and publicists such as Rebmann and Matthias Metternich recognized and exposed the anti-democratic tendencies of the Thermidoreans and the massacres carried out by them during the "White Terror", but theirs are lonely voices; from 1794 descriptions of the bloodthirsty excesses of the Jacobin Terror become a favourite subject, not just of political polemics, but of a new genre of "Trivialliteratur"⁶⁵. In spite of this, neither the ideals and aspirations of the Revolution, nor the endeavours of the revolutionaries to put these into practice, were entirely discredited in Germany. The following passage from Görres' *Mein Glaubensbekenntnis*, which he published in 1798, and in which he declares his unswerving belief in "ein immerwährendes Fortschreiten der Menschheit zum Ideal der Kultur und Humanität", is a telling indication of the fact that he, like many of his contemporaries, regarded the Revolution as a continuing process, within which the Jacobin Terror was a

⁶⁴. See for example the "Vorrede" to the first number of the journal, in: *Beytraege zur Geschichte der Französischen Revolution, Erstes Stück, 1795* (Kraus Reprint, Nendeln, 1972)

⁶⁵. See Peter Schmidt, *Der Terreurjournalismus und die Darstellung des Terreur in Deutschland nach dem Ende der Jakobinerherrschaft*, in: *Weimarer Beiträge* 29 (1983) 12, pp 2092-2111. Schmidt's excellent article is not simply a compendium of primary material, but also identifies the primary aesthetic categories and descriptive modes used in the portrayal of the Terror.

temporary aberration⁶⁶. Görres is declaring his support for the Constitution of the Year VI, proclaimed on the 25th of August 1795, and for the second Directorate, which had seized power in the coup of the 18th of Fructidor (4.9.1797):

Die Konstitution vom Jahre VI. ist kein Werk eines überirdischen Wesens, sondern von Menschen, und was noch mehr ist, für Menschen gemacht...Nach zehnjährigen Experimenten, bei denen Menschenblut in Strömen aufging, und Menschenleben weniger, als Mückenleben geschätzt wurde, geht endlich diese Konstitution als das Resultat aller dieser Versuche, aller dieser galvanischen Krampferregungen hervor. Haben wir nicht Ursache, dies so schwer errungene, so teuer erkaufte Gut über alles zu schätzen, alle Kräfte aufzubieten, um es uns und unsern Enkeln zu erhalten? In ihr liegt der Zentralpunkt, um den sich alle Republikaner vereinigen müssen, um allen Angriffen von außen die Spitze zu bieten: von hier aus müssen sie jene Phlegmatiker, die sich nach den Schauessen der Höfe zurücksehnen, beleben, und die Feuerköpfe zügeln, die die Menschheit über Stock und Stein im sausenden Galopp und bei den Haaren ihrem Ideale zuführen wollen: die Bösewichter von beiden Seiten erdrücken.⁶⁷

Görres' remarks, and the brief sketch which I have given of German perceptions of the Revolution after the fall of the Jacobins, should make it plain that in the time during which Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis begin writing, and go on to produce their major works of political and historical theory, namely the years between 1795 and 1800, the Revolution is still regarded both in France and in Germany as a dynamic and continuing process. Schlegel himself expresses the view in one of the fragments in the *Philosophische Lehrjahre* that it is

⁶⁶. Cf. Joseph Görres, *Mein Glaubensbekenntnis*, printed in: Günther (Hg.), *Die Französische Revolution. Berichte und Deutungen etc*, pp 841-855, here p 844. Görres is highly critical of the Jacobins and the Constitution of the Year 2 (declared on the 24th of June 1793), which according to him, came "um Jahrtausende zu früh" (p 845).

⁶⁷. Görres, *ibid.*, pp 846-7

"sehr unwahrscheinlich, daß die Revolution jemahls aufhören wird", since "sie ist allem Anschein nach ewig", whilst Novalis confronts the possibility of a "permanente Revolution" in *Glauben und Liebe*⁶⁸. Moreover, the literary polemics surrounding the Revolution continue to dominate German literature and cultural politics. It is time now to consider briefly the literary context within which Schlegel, Novalis and their colleagues begin writing, that is to say, the context given by the representations of the Revolution in discourse.

2.4 The discourse of the Revolution / The Revolution as discourse

It is perhaps appropriate to say here that, in considering this subject, we are entering on an interpretative terrain whose outlines and contours are still being charted by the historians of the Revolution, and of which one might say, without overstraining the metaphor, that it has until recently been only a relatively minor province in the great realm of scholarship on the Revolution. The analysis of the discourse of the Revolution, and the Revolution as discourse, is a comparatively recent development, and one which has generated a good deal of controversy amongst historians. Perhaps its most notable proponents to date have been Jean Starobinski and Francois Furet. In his book *Penser la Révolution française* Furet argues for the primacy of

⁶⁸. See KA, XVIII, 71, 508, and GuL 21 (NS, II, 489-90), also chapter on GuL (6.III.3)

Revolutionary discourse and its institutions in shaping the choices and actions of the revolutionary subjects. He writes:

Wenn die Französische Revolution auf diese Weise in ihrer politischen Praxis die theoretischen Widersprüche der Demokratie auslebt, so deshalb, weil sie eine Welt ins Leben ruft, in der die Vorstellungen von der Macht der Kern des Handelns sind und in der das semiotische Kraftfeld absoluter Herr über die Politik ist Die Revolution setzt an die Stelle des Interessenkampfes um die Macht einen Redewettkampf um die Aneignung der Legitimität. Ihre Anführer treiben ein anderes >>Handwerk<< als das der Tat: sie sind die Deuter der Tat. Die Französische Revolution ist jene Gesamtheit von neuen Praktiken, die den politischen Bereich mit symbolischen Bedeutungen überfrachten.⁶⁹

Furet's concentration on the dimension of representation is itself a reaction against the orthodox Marxist or "social" interpretation of the Revolution, which saw it first and foremost as the result of a collision of class interests, and which is characterized, according to Lynn Hunt, by "a mechanistic deduction of politics from social structure"⁷⁰. Furet's approach to the analysis of revolutionary politics has subsequently been criticized for its tendency towards abstraction, but it is nevertheless of considerable importance for its recognition and elucidation of the complex and unstable relations between power, language and ideas in the revolutionary decade⁷¹.

⁶⁹. Francois Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, pp 60-61

⁷⁰. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, Berkeley, 1984, p 11

⁷¹. Hunt makes some trenchant criticisms of Furet in Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p 11ff

Starobinski's book 1789: *les emblèmes de la raison* appears to have laid some of the foundations for Furet's approach, though Starobinski is not concerned with challenging the classical Marxist interpretation of the Revolution, nor with arguing for the primary function of discourse in determining the development of revolutionary politics. His interest lies chiefly with the aesthetic forms with and through which the Revolution proclaims itself from 1789 onwards - forms which, as he says, were by no means radical or innovative in themselves⁷² - and with the transformation of the principles of Enlightenment in the course of their "Abstieg in die geschichtliche Wirklichkeit". Starobinski describes this process thus.

Der von der Willensleidenschaft ergriffene Diskurs der Vernunft sucht in der Welt seine Einlaßstelle und seinen Fruchtboden. Die großen revolutionären Momente sind Episoden einer *Fleischwerdung*: wir finden von nun ab den Diskurs der Vernunft nur in Verbindung mit der Willensanspannung der Männer der Tat und dem grundlosen Widerstand der vorher bestehenden Welt. Gewiß handelt es sich dabei um eine einverleibte und schon damals von ihrem Entwurf abgekommene Vernunft, aber auch um eine zur Potenz des Symbols erhobene Materialität.⁷³

The incarnation of reason, its precipitation into history by the events of 1789, means an inevitable and irrevocable alteration of its character. The symbolic victory of the light of reason over the darkness of the ancien régime conceals a fundamental contradiction:

⁷². Cf. Starobinski, 1789. Die Embleme der Vernunft, pp 15-16: "Die Formen, die die Revolution in ihren Dienst stellen wird, sind schon vor 1789 erfunden worden. Man bedient sich lange noch überkommener Formen, selbst in dem Bestreben, den Zusammenbruch der alten Welt zu verkünden".

⁷³. *ibid.*, p 53

Der Wille und die revolutionären Prinzipien streben eine universale Verbreitung an, die Versammlung der Menschen in einem und unteilbaren Raum des staatsbürgerlichen Eifers und der Transparenz der Herzen. Aber in das Wirkliche hinabzusteigen heißt für die Vernunft, in die undurchsichtige Dichte (opacité) hinabzusteigen. Die Revolution verdankt ihren Erfolg, ihren Rhythmus und ihre katastrophale Beschleunigung dem unvorhergesehenen Bündnis der Aufklärung (oder wenn man so will, des aufgeklärten Reformismus) mit dem dunklen Drang der erzürnten Menge.... So entsteht eine verwickelte Gegenüberstellung, die das innere Gesetz der Revolution ist. Die theoretische Sprache, die Sprache der Prinzipien, wird sich verbünden und belasten müssen mit einem Teil des Schattens und der Leidenschaft, der Angst und der Wut - mit der Gewalt des elementaren Bedürfnisses, das die rohe Masse antreibt.⁷⁴

Though Starobinski's terminology may appear somewhat abstract, the phenomenon which he describes is one which the contemporaries of the Revolution experienced in an immediate and often acutely painful way. The following passage from a letter written by Forster in April 1793 describes in the bleakest of terms what he sees as one of the possible consequences of the "Fleischwerdung der Vernunft":

Allein diese Enthaltbarkeit, diese Achtung für die Rechte des andern, welche dem Philosophen so natürlich ist, findet in der wirklichen Welt nicht statt; sie ist noch nicht reif dazu - und die Herrschaft, oder besser, die *Tyrannie* der Vernunft, vielleicht die eisernste von allen, steht der Welt noch bevor. Wenn die Menschen erst die ganze Wirksamkeit dieses Instruments kennenlernen, welche eine Hölle um sich her werden sie damit schaffen! Je edler das Ding und je allmächtiger, desto fürchterlicher und teuflischer ist der Mißbrauch. Brand und Überschwemmung, die schädlichen Wirkungen von Feuer und Wasser, sind nichts gegen das Unheil, das die Vernunft stiften wird - wohl zu merken, die Vernunft ohne Gefühl, wie sie nach den Merkmalen dieser Zeit uns bevorsteht...⁷⁵

⁷⁴ . *ibid.*, pp 53-4

⁷⁵ . Georg Forster, Im Anblick des großen Rades. Schriften zur Revolution. Hg. von Ralph Wuthenow, Darmstadt, 1981 p 193. The letter is dated 17. April 1793.

The phenomenon which Forster alludes to here is that innovation which Lynn Hunt sees as central to the development of revolutionary politics, namely "the invention of ideology"⁷⁶. The representatives of the people in the Convention, the clubs, and on the streets saw themselves as mouthpieces not for factional interests, but for the direct utterance of the general will, or as Starobinski puts it, "das nationale Ich"⁷⁷. Between the denial of esprit de parti and the struggle of the competing factions for legitimacy - between the rival claims to speak the true discourse of the nation - ideology came into being. It was, according to Hunt, made manifest in a new political culture of "symbolic practices, such as language, imagery and gestures"⁷⁸. Hunt argues that we need to see this new culture not simply as the "expression of "underlying" social and economic interests", but as existing in a dynamic and mutually conditioning relationship with these, at the same "level" of importance and explanatory power:

Through their language, images, and daily political activities, revolutionaries worked to reconstitute society and social relations. They consciously sought to break with the French past and to establish the basis for a new national community. In the process, they created new social and political relations and new kinds of social and political divisions. The revolution in politics was an explosive interaction between ideas and reality, between intention and circumstance, between collective practices and social context. If revolutionary politics cannot be deduced from the social identity of revolutionaries, then neither can it be divorced from it: the Revolution was made by people, and some people were more attracted than others to the politics of revolution.

⁷⁶. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p 12

⁷⁷. Starobinski, 1789. *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, p 52

⁷⁸. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, p 13

.... The new political class (using class in a broad sense) was formed by its relationship to revolutionary politics as much as it formed them.⁷⁹

Hunt's questioning of the usefulness of the base/superstructure model in the classical Marxist analysis of ideology will doubtless be debated vigorously by historians. What is particularly valuable about her approach to the understanding of the political culture of the Revolution is its demonstration of the significance which the revolutionaries - and their adversaries - accorded to the cultural sphere, and specifically to the use of language in furthering their aims and ideals. Language, writes Hunt, was itself considered "an instrument of political and social change"⁸⁰. There were, however, deep ambiguities in the revolutionaries' attitudes to language:

Revolutionary rhetoric was in some sense defeated by its inherent contradictions. While being political, it refused to sanction factional politicking. While showing the power of rhetoric, it denied the legitimacy of rhetorical speech. While representing the new community, it pushed toward the effacing of representation (in the name of transparency between citizens). While referring to a mythic present, revolutionary rhetoric also had to explain the failures of the present, which it could only lay at the door of conspiracy politics. In short, as a text, it was constantly subverting its own basis of authority.⁸¹

The question as to whether or not we can legitimately consider revolutionary rhetoric as a text has considerable bearing on another question which is also relevant to the

⁷⁹. ibid., pp 12-13

⁸⁰. ibid., p 24

⁸¹. ibid., pp 48-9

specific concerns of my investigation, namely: to what extent can we generalize from the French experience of the Revolution to its largely mediated reception in Germany? Both questions are very complex: yet we can say that there are demonstrable and diverse intertextual relations between the revolutionary rhetoric which evolved in France, and the polemical literature which articulated German responses to the Revolution. We can, furthermore, make some immediate observations about these relations. The transfer of ideas, symbolic practices and rhetorical conventions - of which latter category metaphor is an important constituent - occurred largely in one direction only, that is, from France to Germany. Moreover, whereas revolutionary rhetoric in France was primarily 'language in action' - language spoken publicly - it becomes an essentially literary phenomenon in Germany, except perhaps in Mainz and a few other isolated centres of Jacobin activity, such as Straßburg, Hamburg and Sachsenhausen⁸². The communicative situation is very different. There was, however, intense interest in Germany in the events taking place in France, and a multiplicity of German newspapers and journals transmitting eyewitness accounts, translations of speeches and articles published in Paris, and all manner of other information about the Revolution to the German public. Thus there is, a very real sense in which the 'text' of French revolutionary rhetoric is read in Germany and its language appropriated and modified by the producers of the "text" of the specifically German discourse of the Revolution. By the terms 'discourse of

⁸². See Stephan, *Literarischer Jakobinismus in Deutschland*, pp 58, 93-120

the Revolution' and 'revolutionary rhetoric', which I shall use often in the following pages, I mean the whole range of responses to, and evaluations of the Revolution and its European consequences, both 'pro-' and 'contra-revolutionary'. From the outset of my investigation I make the basic assumption that there is no text produced during the Revolutionary decade which can be read or fully understood outside the context of the discourse of the Revolution, so universal and pervasive was the penetration of the "language, imagery and gestures" of the new political culture into European culture as a whole.

Having said this, it is necessary to make some brief remarks here about the specific determinants and characteristics of the discourse of the Revolution in Germany as it develops from 1794 onwards. Peter Schmidt has pointed to the somewhat surprising fact that it is the liberal journals and publicists, rather than those who were avowedly anti-revolutionary, who, after the fall of Robespierre, contribute most to the dissemination of a "Terreurjournalismus" whose prime concern is the denunciation of the Jacobins⁸³. The conservative opponents of the Revolution were, according to Schmidt, more concerned with the activities of what they believed was a 'conspiracy' of German intellectuals, who were seeking to further the spread of the Revolution to Germany, than they were with the new developments in France. The conspiracy theory played a very important role in the conservative reception of the Revolution, providing as it did

⁸³. See Schmidt, Terreurjournalismus, pp 2106-7

a voluntaristic explanation of the events in France as the product of "a powerful international conspiracy spearheaded by Masons and *Illuminati*"⁸⁴. The forms and manifestations of the "Verschwörungstheorie", fascinating though they are, need not concern us here. What is most significant about the theory for our context is the power which it attributed to language and literature of 'causing' a political upheaval of such awesome consequence as the Revolution. As Hans-Wolf Jäger has shown, contra-revolutionary journals such as the *Wiener Zeitschrift* and the *Eudämonia* accused the supporters of the Revolution in Germany of preparing a "rhetorische[r] Komplott", and called on the authorities to impose rigid censorship and strict controls on the "Lesegesellschaften" and other centres of revolutionary ferment⁸⁵. The fact that these calls were heeded is evidenced by the inclusion in Svarez's *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten* of 1794 of a clause which dictates heavy penalties for the authors, publishers and printers of "aufrührerische Schriften"⁸⁶.

Paradoxically enough, those very writers who were accused of attempting to foment Revolution in Germany were a good deal more sceptical about the powers of rhetoric than their

⁸⁴. See Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism*, Princeton, 1966, pp 503-546, here 504. The roots of the "Verschwörungstheorie" lie in the years immediately prior to the Revolution, in which a series of repressive measures is taken against the *Illuminati* in Germany and censorship becomes more severe.

⁸⁵. See Hans-Wolf Jäger, *Die These von der rhetorischen Verschwörung zur Zeit der Französischen Revolution*, in: *Text und Kontext*, 1981, 9.1, pp 47-55, here pp 48-51

⁸⁶. See Inge Stephan, *Die Debatte über die Beziehungen zwischen Literatur, Aufklärung und Revolution*, p 47.

denouncers. Inge Stephan has demonstrated that authors such as Knigge believed that it was not the progressive writers who incited the people to revolt, but rather that the relationship of causality was reversed: as Knigge wrote "...die allgemeine Stimme des Volkes ist es, die durch diese Schriftsteller redet"⁸⁷. Despite this conviction on the part of the democratic writers and publicists of the "relative[r] Wirkungslosigkeit der Literatur in bezug auf die Revolutionierung der Bevölkerung", they continued to see it as an important medium for the dissemination of ideas and as a rhetorical tool to be used in conjunction with, but not as a substitute for, concrete political action⁸⁸.

Beginning in the very earliest months of the Revolution there sprang up in Germany "eine breite und reiche republikanische Redekunst"⁸⁹ and, as events in Paris took a more radical turn and the German public began to become polarised, its anti-revolutionary counterpart emerged likewise. German writers adopted many of the conventions and neologisms of the *éloquence révolutionnaire*; amongst the former was a large stock of metaphors and allusions drawn from classical antiquity. These were, however, supplemented by what

⁸⁷. Quoted by Stephan, *ibid.*, p 48

⁸⁸. See *ibid.*, p 48ff. Stephan shows that there is a broad spectrum of attitudes to the political efficacy of literature amongst the "demokratisch gesonnene[n] Schriftsteller" (p 49), including those such as Rebmann who were formally in agreement with the conservative view that ideas could actually initiate revolutionary action, but her overall conclusion that the majority of these writers recognized the limitations of language and literature seems to me convincing.

⁸⁹. Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, p 96

rapidly became a whole catalogue of metaphors used to describe the Revolution and its principal actors. Some of these were religious or mythological in origin, but the majority of them were taken from the natural or organic realm, and were popular, as Hans-Wolf Jäger has argued in his illuminating study of "jakobinische Metaphorik", precisely on account of their rhetorical effectiveness⁹⁰. The persuasive function of metaphor became predominant: and just as language itself became the arena in which rhetorical battles were fought for the possession of the true and legitimate definition of particular vital terms, so too did competing interpretations and polemical applications of certain metaphors emerge. By the middle of the revolutionary decade this intense "polemicisation" of language and literature had engendered the beginnings of a reaction in the opposite direction. The essay *Ueber den Mißbrauch der Worte, und den Unbestand der Begriffe, während der Revolution*, which appeared anonymously in the *Beytraege zur Geschichte der Französischen Revolution* in 1795, but was in fact translated from the French original written by Lenoir-Laroche in late 1794, castigates the misuse of rhetoric by the Jacobins, whom the author sees as having betrayed the true principles of the Revolution:

Es ist ein sehr merkwürdiger Umstand, daß die durch Aufklärung bewürkte Revolution, die, was man auch dagegen sagen mag, ohne Aufklärung nie zu Stande gekommen wäre, so schnell aus ihrer ersten Bahn, von einer Handvoll unwissender Bösewichter geworfen ward, die weder

⁹⁰. See Hans-Wolf Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik im Jakobinismus und Vormärz*, Stuttgart, 1971, p 80: "Die Momente Verständlichkeit, emotionale Ansprache und geschichtsphilosophisch-teleologische Suggestivität kennzeichnen und begründen...den politischen Gebrauch des Naturbildes".

Grundsätze noch Sittlichkeit, und kein anderes Talent besaßen, als durch geheuchelten Patriotism, und mittelst des Spiels einiger Worte, die über die Menge desto größere Herrschaft ausübten, je weniger sie verstanden wurden, und jemehr man ihre wahre Bedeutung zu verändern bemüht gewesen war, zu betrügen. Es dürfte auf dem Standpunkte der Revolution, auf welchem wir uns befinden, nicht ohne Nutzen seyn, einen Blick auf das Vergangene zu werfen, und zu untersuchen, wie es mit Hülfe von sieben oder acht Worten möglich war, eine so außerordentliche Umwandlung der Begriffe zu bewürken, und allen denen den Mund zu schließen, die im Stande gewesen wären, die Apostel so trügerischer und blutdürstender Lehren zu entlarven.⁹¹

Although Lenoir-Laroche seems to be allying himself with the conventional conservative view on the sinister powers of language, his main criticism of Robespierre and his colleagues is that they perverted the "demokratische Begriffe" of the Enlightenment and set up a "Demagogenherrschaft", which he equates with a new aristocracy, on the grounds that "Aristokratie ist allenthalben vorhanden, wo sich die Macht ausschließlich in einer Klasse der Gesellschaft, welche dieß auch immer seyn mag, befindet"⁹². The essay portrays the "ewig denkwürdige[r] Tag des 9en Thermidors" as the end of a nightmare, the restoration to the French nation of its natural character⁹³: it is also, by implication, a day of liberation for language, which will no longer suffer the "Überspannung" and "Entstellung" to which the Jacobins subjected it⁹⁴.

⁹¹. Beytraege zur Geschichte der Französische Revolution, Vol.1, 1795, pp 190-1

⁹². *ibid.*, pp 197, 256

⁹³. *ibid.*, p 271

⁹⁴. *ibid.*, pp 262,3

It has been argued by Starobinski and others that what in fact occurs after 1794 is a decline both in the intensity and inventiveness of revolutionary rhetoric, and in the significance accorded to language in revolutionary politics⁹⁵. This may well have been the case in France, but there is no evidence to suggest that a similar change occurred in Germany, or that there was any cessation in the polemical battles being fought by German writers and publicists after 1794. It can, therefore, be said that when Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis begin writing, the full repertoire of rhetorical and metaphorical conventions developed by German revolutionary discourse is still in general use. As we shall see, both writers refer to and make use of these conventions, though often with a speculative rather than a persuasive intention.

What does become apparent in the second half of the revolutionary decade is a process to which Claus Träger has drawn attention, whereby these same conventions begin to be employed not just in the immediate rhetorical context for which they were 'designed', but also in a more general and often metaphorical sense. Träger describes this phenomenon as follows:

⁹⁵. See Starobinski, 1789. *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, p 57: "In der Fühlungnahme mit dem Widerstand hat sich die Sprache der Prinzipien abgenutzt, verfälscht, und der Sinn der Wörter ist verarmt oder verdunkelt: zahlreiche Beweise zeugen von einer Sprachmüdigkeit nach 1794. Die Kraft der Allegorien erschöpft sich. Und die Mystifikationen werden rasch danach in Verruf gebracht". See also: Thomas Schleich, *Die Aufklärung und die Revolution. Überlegungen zu ihren Zusammenhängen am Fall Gabriel Bonnot de Mablys*. In: *LiLi* 41/11 (1981), , pp 27-51, here p 44

Für den Literaturwissenschaftler beginnt das Problem dort, wo diese politisch-ideologisch noch unmittelbar gebundene Begrifflichkeit von ihrem ursprünglichen Gehalt sich ablöst und ihr literarisches Eigenleben anfängt - gleichsam zu einem Jakobinismus der Sprache wird Es handelt sich also um eine spezifische Form der Konnotationsproblematik.⁹⁶

As Träger points out, this process can be seen in operation both in theoretical or philosophical and in poetic texts, and presents quite far-reaching problems for the interpretation of the latter, since it becomes necessary to attempt to gauge to what extent a metaphor is intended to "conserve its origins"⁹⁷. These difficulties also occur to some extent in the theoretical texts with which I shall be concerned.

As an illustration of the phenomenon which Träger describes, and of one final aspect of the German response to the Revolution which requires some brief comment, I shall turn now to a text written in May of 1795, namely Goethe's short essay entitled *Literarischer Sansculottismus*. Strangely enough, although the essay is often quoted as an expression of Goethe's attitude to the Revolution, he actually makes only one direct reference to it, in the famous sentence in which he declares:

⁹⁶. See Claus Träger, *Sprache des Jakobinismus - Jakobinismus der Sprache*, in: *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, 2 (1983), pp 134-141, here p 139

⁹⁷. *ibid.*, p 140

Wir wollen die Umwälzungen nicht wünschen, die in Deutschland klassische Werke vorbereiten könnten. 98

Where the term "Sansculottismus" is used in the essay, it has what is essentially a metaphorical sense, to characterize the importunateness of the author who has dared to suggest that German literature is lacking in "vortrefflich klassisch prosaische[n] Werke[n]". Goethe writes:

Ferne sei es von uns, den übelgedachten und übelgeschriebenen Text, den wir vor uns haben, zu kommentieren; nicht ohne Unwillen werden unsre Leser jene Blätter am angezeigten Ort durchlaufen und die ungebildete Anmaßung, womit man sich in einen Kreis von Bessern zu drängen, ja Bessere zu verdrängen und sich an ihre Stelle zu setzen denkt, diesen eigentlichen Sansculottismus zu beurteilen und zu bestrafen wissen. 99

It is plain that "Sansculottismus" has been at least partially dislodged or dissociated from its original specific context, and is functioning here in a partially metaphorical sense, whilst also by implication associating the behaviour of the author whom Goethe is attacking with that of the Parisian proletariat. We shall encounter this kind of "metaphorization" of common terms and concepts again and again in the writings of Schlegel and Novalis.

This particular example is also interesting in that it reflects a concern which Goethe expresses elsewhere in the essay that German literary culture should distinguish itself

⁹⁸. See Goethes Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe, 5. Auflage, Hamburg, 1963, Bd. XII = Schriften zur Kunst, Schriften zur Literatur, Maximen und Reflexionen, here p 241

⁹⁹. *ibid.*, p 240

quite clearly from that of the French¹⁰⁰. This is, to be sure, a concern which has its origins in the *Sturm und Drang*, but which is formulated here once again in full cognizance of the meaning of the Revolution for Germany. Goethe clearly rejects the notion that a revolution in Germany could bring any benefit either to its population or its literature. Yet the very terms in which he describes the situation of the writer in Germany seem to suggest a consciousness that the unity of culture whose absence he bewails may well have been brought into existence in France:

Jeder, auch das größte Genie, leidet von seinem Jahrhundert in einigen Stücken, wie er von andern Vorteil zieht, und einen vortrefflichen Nationalschriftsteller kann man nur von der Nation fordern.

Aber auch der deutschen Nation darf es nicht zum Vorwurfe gereichen, daß ihre geographische Lage sie eng zusammenhält, indem ihre politische sie zerstückelt. Nirgends in Deutschland ist ein Mittelpunkt gesellschaftlicher Lebensbildung, wo sich Schriftsteller zusammenfänden und nach einer Art, in einem Sinne, jeder in seinem Fache ausbilden könnten'¹⁰¹

The deficiency which Goethe describes here is to all intents and purposes the same as that which Forster points to in his fragmentary text entitled *Über die öffentliche Meinung*, where he observes that even though Germany has seven thousand writers, it has "keine deutsche öffentliche Meinung", let alone a "deutsche[n] Gemeingeist"¹⁰². Forster himself attempts

¹⁰⁰. Cf. the following passage, which without doubt refers chiefly to France: "Denn die Bildung der höheren Klassen durch fremde Sitten und ausländische Literatur, so viel Vorteil sie uns auch gebracht hat, hinderte doch den Deutschen, als Deutschen sich früher zu entwickeln" (p 242).

¹⁰¹. *ibid.*, pp 241-2

¹⁰². Georg Forster, Werke. Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe, hg. von der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Zentralinstitut für Literaturgeschichte, Berlin, 1974, Bd.8

to identify some positive aspect of the fragmentary nature of the German nation and the "Vereinzelung" of the Germans, and finds it via a comparison with ancient Greece:

Eine große Hauptstadt, die den Ton angiebt, kann zwar die Reife ihrer Nation befördern, allein wohl schwerlich anders, als auf Kosten ihrer reinen Universalität: Rom, Paris, London geben den Beweis. Die getheilte, rivalisirende Cultur der griechischen Städte, wenn sie auch zu dieser extensiven Vollkommenheit nicht gelangte, blieb schon darum der Natur getreuer, weil sie immer etwas hatten, wonach sie ihre Abweichungen corrigieren konnten. Die Vortheile unserer geographischen Lage müßten uns billig noch weiter bringen; wir sind zur vollendeten politischen Einheit gleichsam geschaffen, und sie verblühten schon in ihrer wetteifernden Periode.¹⁰³

Forster sets up an implicit opposition here between a German cosmopolitanism, which he sees as being positively encouraged by the "Vereinzelung" of the German states, and the kind of national culture which has crystallized around the great capital cities of France, England and Italy. He suggests, furthermore, that Germany will, in the future, achieve a "unity in diversity" which eludes the other European nations. As he admits, however, this positive aspect of the particular condition of Germany is offset by the lack of the kind of national public opinion which has grown up in the countries with large capital cities. Both Forster's and Goethe's texts display a tension between the Enlightenment tradition of cosmopolitanism and universality, and the desire to bring into being a national culture which would provide a sense of identity and a point of reference. This desire is itself rooted in the pre-Revolutionary Enlightenment, but it

Kleine Schriften zu Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte, p 365

¹⁰³. *ibid.*, p 364

cannot, and does not, remain untouched by the fact that the revolutionaries in France had redefined the whole meaning of the nation, such that it became "the active subject of a collective process"¹⁰⁴.

The tension between cosmopolitanism and an as-yet-inchoate nationalism also informs the political and historical speculations of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, and represents one of the major areas of interest of my investigation. It has been claimed that the "social component" of the revolutionary conception of the nation - which consisted in the identification of the third estate with the nation itself, and a radicalization of the whole notion of patriotism as the Revolution proceeds - made no real impression on German formulations of nationalism, and least of all on those articulated by the Early Romantics¹⁰⁵. As I shall try to show, this assertion is not entirely accurate. The idea of the German nation comes to function for both Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis as a kind of overarching metaphor for a range of concepts and attributes, of which some are derived from the radical and essentially Rousseauistic conception of the nation which came to the fore in France in the early 1790's. Other

¹⁰⁴. See Thomas Nipperdey, *In Search of Identity: Romantic Nationalism, Its Intellectual, Political and Social Background*, in: J.C. Eade (ed.), *Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, Canberra, 1983, pp 1-16, here p 4. I have chosen not to give a detailed account of German cultural nationalism at this point, as there is a considerable amount of discussion of this phenomenon and the background to it in later chapters. For an excellent overview of the subject see Gerhard Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, pp 21-33

¹⁰⁵. See Horst Möller, *Vom aufgeklärten Absolutismus zu den Reformen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: Glaser (Hg.), *Deutsche Literatur. Eine Sozialgeschichte*, pp 30-44, here p 37

attributes which they ascribe to Germany and the Germans are diametrically opposed to such a conception. It will be a recurrent theme of my investigation that Novalis' and Schlegel's theoretical writings are suffused by tensions and contradictions of this kind, and that these cannot be resolved by reference to a single interpretative model.

The foregoing introductory remarks should have served to indicate the broad framework within which I shall be examining the texts. Before proceeding to an analysis of individual texts, it will be necessary to consider some theoretical approaches to understanding the phenomenon of metaphor which will be useful for my particular topic.

3. METAPHOR : SOME THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

3.1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, the phenomenon of metaphor has become an important subject of empirical investigation and theoretical exploration in many diverse areas of the human sciences. The most basic questions about metaphor - questions as to what precisely it is, and how it works - and more general ones concerning its ontological status, and its forms and functions in our cultures, have been asked by researchers in the fields of linguistics, literary theory, anthropology, psychoanalysis, philosophy and the history of science¹. It would be neither practicable nor sensible to attempt to survey here the full range of theoretical approaches to metaphor, and the particular problems they raise; and in any case, this has been done recently with very considerable succinctness and authority². Rather, I shall attempt in the following chapter to give a brief summary of the theoretical approaches to metaphor

¹. A survey of selected literature on metaphor from these subject areas is given in the bibliography, and particular examples will be touched on in the course of this chapter. For a comprehensive listing of works on metaphor up to 1970 see Shibbes, Warren A., *Metaphor: An annotated bibliography and history*, Whitewater, 1971.

². See Nieraad, Jürgen, "Bildgesegnet und bildverflucht": *Forschungen zur sprachlichen Metaphorik*, Darmstadt, 1977, and: Kurz, Gerhard, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol*, Göttingen, 1982.

which have proved illuminating and useful in the course of my investigation, and to outline some of the specific methodological problems raised by the texts I shall be examining. Prior to this, however, I shall attempt to indicate some of the important general areas of debate amongst the theoreticians of metaphor, so as to provide a framework within which we may consider particular approaches.

Perhaps the central question about metaphor, at least for those commentators who have considered it from a philosophical perspective, is the question of what we might term its ontological status³. Terence Hawkes has argued that there are two essentially different views on this question, which he calls the "classical" and the "romantic" views⁴. The classical view - which extends back to Aristotle's definition of metaphor - sees it as an aberration from 'natural' language, a "distinctive" figure with an ornamental or rhetorical purpose⁵. Underlying this view is the assumption that metaphor belongs - to use the German term - to the realm of "uneigentliche Rede", and that it is capable of reduction to a literal meaning. In the romantic view, by contrast, metaphor is an integral part of natural language itself, which, when it is "deliberately invoked, intensifies language's

³. See the chapter entitled "Metaphor and philosophical discourse" in: Ricoeur, Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor. Multi-disciplinary studies of the creation of meaning in language.* Tr. by Robert Czerny et al., London and Henley, 1978, pp 257-313

⁴. See Hawkes, Terence, *Metaphor (=The Critical Idiom NO.25)*, London, 1972

⁵. *ibid.*, pp 6-15

characteristic activity, and involves, quite literally, the creation of a 'new' reality"⁶. It cannot be reduced to a literal or conceptual meaning, nor can it be expunged from linguistic discourse.

Hawkes argues that most modern theories of metaphor are essentially extensions of the romantic view, though he points out that there has been something of a rapprochement between the two views in some areas⁷. Probably the most influential body of writing on the ontology of metaphor produced in recent years is that of Jacques Derrida. Derrida's critique of traditional notions of metaphor, which forms part of a broader onslaught on the Western philosophical tradition and its "metaphysics of presence", rejects the belief that there is any such thing as a pre- or extra-linguistic reality which can be apprehended 'through' a language rendered transparent, that is to say, devoid of tropes. The starting point for his explorations of the nature of metaphor is an exhaustive analysis of Rousseau's *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, in the course of which he examines Rousseau's contention that language itself is metaphorical in origin, and that the first utterances made by human beings were themselves tropes, expressions of passion whose true meaning was only recovered later⁸. It is not necessary to retrace Derrida's meticulous

⁶. *ibid.*, p 90

⁷. *ibid.*, p 91

⁸. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Grammatologie*, (tr. by Hans-Jörg Rheinberger und Hanns Zischler), Frankfurt/M., 1983 (= suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 417), p 462ff. All references in my text are to this German translation. The passage in the *Essai* to which Derrida refers runs as follows:

analysis of Rousseau's text here; what is significant about it is that uses the *Essai* as a kind of foil for its own argumentative purposes. Derrida concludes that, although Rousseau sees metaphor as the constitutive element of language itself, his conception of language still assumes the existence of an extra-linguistic reality which will someday become directly accessible through language⁹.

It is precisely this assumption which Derrida sets out to demolish in his essay *White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy*, which was first published in 1971¹⁰. Put simply, his argument is that the Western philosophical tradition has been in a condition of bad faith at least since Aristotle, believing that it could somehow create a field of discourse

As man's first motives for speaking were of the passions, his first expressions were tropes. Figurative language was the first to be born. Proper meaning was discovered last.The illusory image presented by passion is the first to appear, and the language that corresponded to it was also the first invented. It subsequently became metaphorical when the enlightened spirit, recognizing its first error, used the expressions only with those passions that had produced them.

In: Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Essay on the origin of languages*, ed. and tr. Moran, John and Gode, Alexander, N.Y., 1975, pp 12-13

Herder pours scorn on Rousseau's argument in his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, which is translated along with Rousseau's *Essai* in the volume just cited. See pp 99-128

⁹. Derrida, *Grammatologie*, p 475: "Aus diesem Grund hält Rousseau, scheinbar in Bekräftigung der These, daß die erste Sprache figuriert war, die Eigentlichkeit aufrecht: als arche und als telos".

¹⁰. The original title of this essay was "La mythologie blanche". All references in my text are to the translation entitled "White Mythology. Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy", which appeared in: *New Literary History* VI, 1, (1974), pp 5-74.

which would either dispense entirely with metaphors and other tropes, or at least render them transparent:

"If there were only one possible metaphor (a dream at the basis of philosophy), if the play of metaphors could be reduced to a family circle or group of metaphors, that is, to a "central", "fundamental", or "principal" metaphor, there would no longer be any true metaphor: there would only be the guarantee of reading the proper sense in a metaphor that was true. Now it is because the metaphorical comes into play in the plural that it does not escape syntax: and that it gives rise, in philosophy too, to a text which is not exhausted by an account of its sense (a concept signified, or a metaphorical tenor: a *thesis*), nor by the visible or invisible presence of its theme (the meaning and truth of being)¹¹.

Philosophers have, according to Derrida, classified metaphor as a "provisional loss of meaning, a form of economy that does no damage to what is proper, an inevitable detour"¹². In his view, by contrast, metaphor is precisely that which cannot be expunged from the text of philosophy: it is the currency of "thought" itself, which cannot be cashed in in return for a transcendental meaning. There is no truth at the end of the detour: the detour of metaphor leads nowhere but to itself. Or, as Ricoeur has put it:

"Metaphoricity functions here in spite of us, behind our backs so to speak. The claim to keep semantic analysis within a metaphysically neutral area only expresses ignorance of the simultaneous play of unacknowledged metaphysics and worn-out metaphor".¹³

¹¹. Derrida, *White Mythology*, pp 70-71

¹². *ibid.*, p 73

¹³. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p 284

Derrida's position has been criticized by Ricoeur himself, and more recently by others¹⁴. The details of this criticism, and Derrida's reply to it, need not concern us here: what is perhaps most significant about his writing on metaphor is that it places the phenomenon or "problem" of metaphor at the centre - a figure of speech which he himself might well deplore - of a wide range of debates about the nature and functioning of linguistic discourse itself. Moreover, it provides a useful framework within which to consider some of the other debates about metaphor and its operation in discourse.

The stress which Derrida and others have laid on the irreducibility of metaphor has underlined, and perhaps contributed to, a tendency amongst some theoreticians to regard metaphor as the 'master trope' of all discourse. This tendency probably began with Jakobson's formulation of the distinction between metaphoric and metonymic uses of language in his *Fundamentals of Language*, and his attempts to classify all forms or genres of literary discourse according to whether they were structured metaphorically - that is to say, by relations of paradigmatic substitution - or metonymically by relations of syntagmatic contiguity¹⁵. This distinction was taken over enthusiastically and elaborated by numerous

¹⁴. See Ricoeur, *ibid.*, pp 284-313. For Derrida's reply to Ricoeur see Derrida, *The Retrait of Metaphor*, in: *Enclitic II/2*, (Fall 1978), pp 5-33. For a general critique of Derrida's work see Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Frankfurt/M., 1985, pp 191-247

¹⁵. Cf. Jakobson, Roman & Halle, M., *The Fundamentals of Language*, The Hague, 1956, Part 2, chapter entitled "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances"

literary theorists, and has been applied in particular to the theory of the novel¹⁶, but it has also been severely and justifiably criticized by a number of commentators for its tendency towards reductionism, and the fact that the grounds on which it distinguishes between metaphor and metonymy are somewhat arbitrary. Maria Ruegg, one of the most trenchant critics of Jakobson's approach, sums up its flaws as follows:

It is only by artificially abstracting both metaphor and metonymy from their syntactic contexts (and considering them only along the "semantic axis") that a comparison between metaphoric and metonymic poles of language can be made; if, however, semantic "value" can only be derived from the syntactic position occupied by the signifier in relation to the whole chain of signifiers, in the complex interplay between all possible combinatory positions of a given linguistic code (as in Wittgenstein's "meaning is use"), then the separation between "syntax" and "paradigm", between "contiguity" and "similarity" and between metaphor and metonymy is at best unfruitful, and at worst,¹⁷ a misleading oversimplification of what language does.

Ruegg's criticisms of Jakobson point to two further important areas of dispute within the theory of metaphor. The first of these has to do with the question as to whether the whole series of tropes enumerated by classical rhetoric can and should be subsumed under the master trope of metaphor. Much of the important debate on this question has occurred amongst those French literary theorists who have attempted,

¹⁶. See for example Lodge, David, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy and the Typology of Modern Literature*, London, 1977, pp 74ff

¹⁷. See Ruegg, Maria, *Metaphor and Metonymy: the Logic of Structuralist Rhetoric*, in: *Glyph 6*, (1979), pp 141-57. here pp 145-6. For another critique of Jakobson see Genette, Gérard, *Die restringierte Rhetorik*, in: *Haverkamp, Anselm (Hg.), Theorie der Metapher (=Wege der Forschung Bd. 389)*, Darmstadt, 1983, pp 229-252, esp 250ff

over the last two decades, to develop a new analytical rhetoric whose primary aim is, as Gérard Genette has pointed out, the construction of a general "Theorie der Figuren"¹⁸. Genette himself argues that, despite the professed desire of the authors of the *Rhétorique générale* and others to reassert the value of a differentiated rhetoric as a tool in the analysis of discourse, they too have fallen into the reductionist heresy of declaring metaphor to be the "zentrale Figur der ganzen Rhetorik"¹⁹. Without wanting to dispute the "evidente Metaphorizität" of both poetic and everyday language, Genette contends that "...die jeder Sprache eigentümliche Figurativität sich nicht auf die Metapher reduzieren lässt"²⁰.

Controversy about the value of a differentiated "taxonomy" of tropes has continued, and cannot be resolved here²¹. Nevertheless, Genette's strictures seem to me to be helpful rather than hair-splitting: though I shall not be attempting to classify the tropes employed by Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel according to a set of rhetorical

¹⁸ See Genette, *Die restringierte Rhetorik*, pp228-9. Genette observes that classical rhetoric - for which he cites Aristotle's writings as exemplary - had a much broader scope, concerning itself chiefly with questions of style and composition, and only in passing with the theory of figures.

¹⁹ Cf. Genette, *ibid.*, p 224. Typical of the tendency which Genette attacks is the following article: Sojcher, Jacques, *Die generalisierte Metapher*, in: Haverkamp (Hg.), *Theorie der Metapher*, pp 216-228. The *Rhétorique générale* was published in 1970 by the Liege Group (Groupe u).

²⁰ Genette, *Die restringierte Rhetorik*, p 248

²¹ See for example the two chapters entitled "The Decline of Rhetoric: Tropology" and "Metaphor and the New Rhetoric" in Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*.

categories, it will become apparent in the course of my investigation that it is sometimes important to differentiate between certain discursive or rhetorical operations in attempting to understand how a text's arguments are constructed or how it achieves particular discursive effects.

The second important point which arises out of Ruegg's criticisms of Jakobson concerns the contest between so-called "substitution" and "interaction" theories of metaphor. As she points out, Jakobson tends to abstract the figures of metaphor and metonymy from their syntactic contexts and consider them only along the semantic axis. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that the phenomenon of metaphor can be understood at the level of the individual word; or, to put it another way, that metaphor is a word substituted for another word, and that the substitution is made possible by a relation of similarity between the "signifieds" of both words. The "substitution" theory of metaphor is, as Gerhard Kurz observes, the oldest and most widespread theory of metaphor, and is essentially congruent with the "classical" view of metaphor²². The "interaction" theory, by contrast, is allied with the romantic view of metaphor, and argues that the meaning of a metaphor is not reducible to a single word, but can only be understood by reference to the context within which the metaphor occurs. A relation of "semantic incongruence" exists between the metaphor and its context which is the product of an interaction with the overall

²². See Kurz, Gerhard, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol*, p 7

syntagmatic organization of the particular context²³. As Ricoeur points out, this theory - which has developed primarily out of the work of I.A. Richards and Max Black, and has been elaborated by Harald Weinrich - treats metaphor as a "discursive event", whose total meaning derives not just from its interaction with the "immanent design" of the discourse within which it occurs, but from a process of contextualization by a whole "work" - by which Ricoeur means "a closed sequence of discourse"²⁴. Obviously Ricoeur's definition is intended primarily to apply to discourse which is divided into "closed sequences" with identifiable authors, and would need, if it were to be applied to a political slogan, an advertisement for soap powder, or a folk song, to be integrated into a theory of intertextuality which would account for the appropriation of texts and their conventions by other texts, and a less determinate notion of authorship than that which we attribute to, say, a novel or a philosophical tract on metaphor. However, as Ricoeur usefully observes, the interaction theory of metaphor does not "get rid of the theory of substitution" unless it is able to actualize the whole "network of interaction" which constitutes the context of a particular metaphor. This network is defined by the "intersection between several semantic lines" within the text, but also by the text's dimension of reference; that is to say, its "intentional direction toward a world" and its

²³. See *ibid.*, p 8

²⁴. See Ricoeur, Paul, *Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics*, in: *New Literary History VI.I* (1974), pp 95-110, here 97-100

"reflective direction toward a self"²⁵. We might say provisionally, and in very broad terms, that what Ricoeur means by this dimension of reference is essentially the pragmatic dimension of metaphor. The reasons for making this equation will become clearer in the course of my discussion of some particular approaches to the theory of metaphor, to which I shall now turn.

3.2 Weinrich : Metaphor and Context

The relationship between metaphor and its context is the crucial area of investigation in Harald Weinrich's writings on metaphor²⁶. Weinrich begins with a very broad categorization of metaphor as encompassing "alle Formen des sprachlichen Bildes"²⁷. Prior to exploring the semantics of metaphor in texts, he introduces the concept of the "Bildfeld". The "Bildfeld" is analogous to the linguistic concepts of the "Wortfeld" or "Bedeutungsfeld": it is a constellation of related images. Weinrich writes:

Im Maße, wie das Einzelwort keine isolierte Existenz hat, gehört auch die Einzelmetapher in den Zusammenhang ihres Bildfeldes. Sie ist eine Stelle im Bildfeld. In der Metapher Wortmünze ist nicht nur die Sache ‚Wort‘ mit der Sache ‚Münze‘ verbunden, sondern jeder Terminus bringt seine Nachbarn mit, das Wort den Sinnbezirk der Sprache,

²⁵. See *ibid*, pp 103, 100

²⁶. Weinrich's theory of metaphor is developed in a series of essays published from 1958 onwards, which have been collected in: Weinrich, Harald, *Sprache in Texten*, Stuttgart, 1976. In the following all references to individual essays will be given with the title of the particular essay and page numbers in the aforementioned collection.

²⁷. See Weinrich, *Münze und Wort. Untersuchungen an einem Bildfeld*, pp 276-290, here p 277

die Münze den Sinnbezirk des Finanzwesens. In der aktualen und scheinbar punktuellen Metapher vollzieht sich in Wirklichkeit die Koppelung zweier sprachliche Sinnbezirke.²⁸

Each metaphor partakes of a "bildspendendes" and a "bildempfangendes Feld", which correspond more or less to what I.A. Richards called the "vehicle" and "tenor" of metaphor²⁹. These are joined by "einen geistigen, analogiestiftenden Akt", and any theoretical consideration of metaphor must, according to Weinrich, concern itself simultaneously with both the "image-giving" and "image-receiving" fields, with their conjunction in the "event" of metaphor³⁰. The "fields of metaphor" in language are not necessarily always discrete or distinct from one another; they may overlap, and one metaphor may partake of several different image-giving or image-receiving fields. Moreover, these fields of metaphor are, as it were, latent in our consciousness and use of language, our competence and performance as speakers:

Wir dürfen wohl sagen, daß das Bildfeld nicht nur als objektives, soziales Gebilde im Gesamt der Sprache vorhanden ist, sondern daß es auch im einzelnen metaphorischen Sprechakt subjektiv vergegenwärtigt wird, indem es vom Sprechenden mitgemeint, vom Hörenden mitverstanden wird.³¹

Our understanding of a particular metaphorical event thus depends partly on our actualization of the "Bildfelder" of

²⁸. ibid., p 283

²⁹. See Hawkes, *Metaphor*, p 61

³⁰. Weinrich, *Münze und Wort*, p 284

³¹. ibid., p 288

which the metaphor partakes, and of their connotative possibilities. But in order for this to take place, Weinrich argues, the recognition of the event has to be triggered by the context in which the metaphor occurs:

Eine Metapher, und das ist im Grunde die einzige mögliche Metapherdefinition, ist ein Wort in einem Kontext, durch den es so determiniert wird, daß es etwas anderes meint, als es bedeutet. Vom Kontext hängt wesentlich ab, ob³² eine Metapher sich selber deutet oder rätselhaft bleibt.

In a later essay Weinrich refines this definition even further and arrives at the simple formulation: "die Metapher ist ein Wort in einem konterdeterminierenden Kontext"³³. "Konterdetermination" is defined here as the creation of a "Spannung zwischen der ursprünglichen Wortbedeutung und der nun vom Kontext erzwungenen unerwarteten Meinung"³⁴. This definition veers perilously close to resurrecting the substitution theory and emulating its concentration on metaphor at the level of the word. Weinrich saves himself, however, by declaring that the word is not just a word but always "ein Stück Text", and that as such it has to be understood in the framework of a "Textsemantik", which, he is quick to point out, is not simply the study of syntax under another name³⁵. The textual semantics of metaphor which he proposes would need, he says, to operate at three levels:

³². Weinrich, *Semantik der kühnen Metapher*, pp 295-316, here p 311

³³. Weinrich, *Allgemeine Semantik der Metapher*, pp 317-327, here p 320

³⁴. *ibid.*

³⁵. *ibid.*, p 319

those of "Mikro-Metaphorik", "Kontext-Metaphorik" and "Text-Metaphorik"³⁶. At the level of "Mikro-Metaphorik" it would concern itself with the "semantische Komponentenanalyse" of the metaphor, in order to determine which sets of - incongruous - semes are being activated within the context given by - to use Ricoeur's words - the "immanent design of the discourse"³⁷. But, as Weinrich points out, this immediate context often does not supply sufficient information as to which possible semes are being activated and which not. Thus it is necessary to proceed from the level of "Mikro-Metaphorik" to that of "Kontext-Metaphorik", at which the metaphor is considered within the broader context of the "Textstück" within which it occurs, this being essentially equivalent to that which Ricoeur calls the work³⁸. The process of contextual determination does not stop here; for, writes Weinrich, "dieses Textstück steht selber in einem größeren historisch-situativen Zusammenhang, der auch für seine Metaphorik von erheblicher Bedeutung ist"³⁹. This is the level of "Text-Metaphorik". Here the text itself is analysed as a "Text-in-der-Situation", which is to say that the analysis is concerned with "die ("pragmatischen") Bedingungen der Kommunikation, die das Textereignis möglich machen"⁴⁰.

³⁶. See Weinrich, *Streit um Metaphern*, pp 328-341

³⁷. See *ibid.*, pp 331-333

³⁸. See *ibid.*, p 336

³⁹. *ibid.*

⁴⁰. *ibid.*, p 337

Weinrich may seem at times to be stating the obvious here, but in fact his differentiation of the three levels of metaphorical interpretation is useful, in that it points to the need for an understanding of the process of contextualization within discourse, and the fact that the readings of a particular metaphor generated at each level may well not be congruent or easily reconcilable⁴¹. This is a point of particular relevance to the interpretation of metaphor in the discourse of the French Revolution. As has been mentioned previously, revolutionary discourse developed its own repertoire of metaphors for describing the events taking place in France. Much of this repertoire was, however, appropriated from long-standing literary tradition and invested with a political significance by the revolutionary polemicists: some of the most common metaphorical descriptions of the Revolution as a sunrise, the arrival of a new spring, a mighty storm, and so on, belong to the conventional imagery of poetic traditions which have nothing whatsoever to do with politics. When such metaphors occur in - for example - a poem of Hölderlin's or Novalis' written during the 1790's,

⁴¹. The problem of the contextualization of metaphor is approached from a slightly different perspective in Dobrzynska, Teresa, *Die Metapher im Märchen*, in: Kroll, W. & Flaker, A. (Hg.), *Literaturtheoretische Modelle und kommunikatives System: Zur aktuellen Diskussion in der polnischen Literaturwissenschaft*, Kronberg/Ts., 1974, pp 261-296. This fascinating essay rejects the notion that the meaning of a metaphor is determined by its immediate context, arguing that in determining the "status" of a particular word or expression "...nicht nur der unmittelbare Satzkontext, sondern auch der Gattungszugehörigkeit des Textes, dessen Teil der analysierte Wortausdruck bildet, zu berücksichtigen ist" (p 261). Dobrzynska comes to the conclusion that the choice as to whether a word or phrase is understood "literally" or metaphorically in a fairy-tale depends to a considerable extent on a commentary or indication from the narrator (see p 282 ff).

interpretation at the levels of "Mikro-Metaphorik" and "Kontext-Metaphorik" may indicate that they form part of a poetic reflection on the changing of seasons, the spirit of Nature or some similar subject. When, however, the level of "Text-Metaphorik", the "pragmatic" communicative dimension of the text is incorporated into the process of interpretation, it becomes possible to read such words as "Frühling", "Sonnenaufgang" etc. as references to the Revolution or elements in an allegorical reflection on it. I shall return to this problem later in this chapter: one possible method of dealing with it is suggested by the semantic approach to metaphor which I shall consider next, that of Greimas.

3.3 Greimas : Metaphor and Isotopy

An extremely useful tool for describing the function and operation of metaphor is A.J Greimas' concept of the "isotopy" of discourse, which he first proposed in his *Sémantique structurale*, and which has subsequently been developed and modified by Francois Rastier⁴². The starting-point for Greimas'

⁴². In my exposition of the concept of isotopy all references are to the German translation of the relevant chapter of the *Sémantique structurale*, published as: Greimas, A.J., Die Isotopie der Rede, in: Netzer, K. & Siebert, H. (Hg.), Lektürekolleg zur Textlinguistik, Bd.2, Frankfurt/M., 1974, pp 126-152.

Also referred to are: Rastier, Francois, Systematik der Isotopien, in: Netzer, K. & Siebert, H. (Hg.), Lektürekolleg zur Textlinguistik, pp 153-190, and Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., Semiotics and Language. An Analytical Dictionary, Tr. by Larry Crist et al., Bloomington,

elaboration of the concept is the phenomenon of redundancy in discourse, which is to say, the excess or repetition of information. Greimas see this redundancy as a factor contributing to the unity and coherence of any particular utterance, or to put it another way, as a structural principle of discourse⁴³. This structural principle he calls "isotopy": the simplest definition of it (to which Greimas himself has given his approval) is given by Rastier, according to whom isotopy is the repetition of any linguistic unit in a text or utterance, whether at the phonological, syntactical or semantic level⁴⁴. Both Greimas and Rastier are concerned primarily with the nature and functions of "semantic isotopies", those which, as Greimas puts it, "make possible a uniform reading of the discourse as it results from the partial readings of the utterances making it up and from the resolution of their ambiguities which is guided by the search for a single reading"⁴⁵. A semantic isotopy consists of at least two sememes which share at least one seme or semic category⁴⁶. These sememes, and the semantic fields to which they belong, are not necessarily linked within a text by logical

1982.

⁴³. See Greimas, A.J., *Die Isotopie der Rede*, p 127

⁴⁴. See Rastier, Francois, *Systematik der Isotopien*, p 157. See also Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., *Semiotics and Language*, entry for "Isotopy", pp 163-5. Greimas himself has also defined an isotopy as a "redundantes Bündel semantischer Kategorien": see Greimas, A.J., *Die strukturelle Linguistik und die Poetik*, in: Ihwe, J.: *Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven Bd.II/2*, Frankfurt/M., 1971, pp 472-483, here p 477

⁴⁵. Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., *Semiotics and Language*, p 164

⁴⁶. See Nieraad, *Bildgesegnet oder bildverflucht*, p 66

connections; the isotopies which organize them, however, provide us with axes "along which the text can be read" and give us access to its "thematic isotopies"⁴⁷.

As Greimas points out, human communication is not always unambiguous or unilinear: many forms of discourse, and in particular literary discourse, are characterized by ambiguity in their utterances, and exhibit non-linear forms of structural organization⁴⁸. Texts of this nature manifest a "complex isotopy" and may contain a number of isotopic "planes" or "axes" along which they may be read. According to Greimas and Rastier, metaphor functions as an "isotopic connector", linking the interwoven isotopies within the text to each other, and providing points of transition at which the reader of a text (or addressee of a particular utterance) may move from one isotopy to another⁴⁹. Rastier classifies metaphor as a "vertical isotopy" which links the horizontal sememic isotopies⁵⁰.

This definition of metaphor solves some interpretative problems and creates some new ones. On the one hand, the notion that a text may be read along a number of isotopies

⁴⁷. See Anthony Stephens, Narrative Structures in Karen Blixen's *The Dreamers*, in: Festschrift for Ralph Farrell, edited by Anthony Stephens, H.L. Rogers and Brian Coghlan, Bern, Frankfurt/M., Las Vegas, 1977, pp 121-136, here p 126, and Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., *Semiotics and Language*, p 164

⁴⁸. See Greimas, A.J., *Die Isotopie der Rede*, p 143ff

⁴⁹. See Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., *Semiotics and Language*, entry for "Metaphor", pp 191-2, also Nieraad, *Bildgesegnet und bildverflucht*, pp 67-9

⁵⁰. Rastier, Francois, *Systematik der Isotopien*, p 166-72

which are linked by metaphors suggests that these metaphors or metaphorical isotopies may provide access to a single thematic isotopy, which unifies the individual isotopies, and gives the text an overall coherence. This is true of some texts, but not of others: a literary text may contain a number of metaphorical isotopies which are not reducible to a single reading or thematic isotopy. Indeed, as Greimas himself points out, "it happens that different readings may be possible without their being thereby compatible with one another"⁵¹. A text may contain both simple metaphorical isotopies. The distinction between the two is perhaps best understood by reference to a text such as Kleist's *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*, in which imagery of darkness and light recurs throughout the narrative. These images form a simple semantic isotopy; but the opposition of light and darkness, and black and white, also functions metaphorically to suggest a conflict between good and evil. Moreover, the actions of individual characters involved in this conflict are constantly being re-evaluated, as are the values assigned to the signifiers "white" and "black", "light" and "darkness" etc. Thus the metaphorical isotopy "light/dark" both lends coherence to the narrative and complicates its signifying processes⁵². It forms part of a structure which is "architectonic" rather than linear or multi-dimensional, and which gives this and other texts of Kleist's their "perspectivist" character.

⁵¹. Greimas, A.J. & Courtés, J., *Semiotics and Language*, p 165

⁵². See Mehigan, *Text as Contract*, pp 216-226

Whether or not the reader or interpreter of a text considers it imperative to attempt to reconcile all the possible readings it contains, or to find one isotopy which will subsume all of the others, depends both on the type of text which is being interpreted and the aims of interpretation. There are plainly certain philosophical questions which come into play here, but which go beyond the scope of my investigation. At a practical level, however, we can say that in reading a poetic text such as the sonnet of Mallarmé which Rastier analyses, we may well be quite content as readers and interpreters to simply recognize and actualize the different isotopies along which the text can be read, without attempting to 'privilege' a particular dominant isotopy. If, however, it is a text which proposes a political theory, or a polemical interpretation of historical events, we may want to determine which isotopy or isotopies of the text give us access to its 'primary meaning', that particular interpretation or perspective which the author intends the reader to construe as true and correct.

This distinction is especially important for my investigation, since all of the texts I shall be considering can be read along a number of isotopies and encompass different and often conflicting attitudes to the Revolution and the questions which the practice of the French revolutionaries raised for political theory. This is true both of the longer texts, such as Schlegel's *Studium-Aufsatz*, and, at the other extreme, of individual fragments in Novalis' *Glauben und Liebe*. The fragments themselves pose a further methodological

problem, which has to do with their status as texts: as we shall see, many of the fragments in *Glauben und Liebe* consist of chains of metaphors which are linked by association and analogy both within individual fragments and across whole groups of fragments. Their 'discursive structures' often bear a closer resemblance to those of poetic discourse than they do to those we normally encounter in theoretical or philosophical texts which present arguments in a more or less polemical fashion.

Greimas offers some partial solutions to these problems, which are essentially problems of intentionality and contextualization. Noting that complex isotopy is a characteristic both of "social myths", whose authorship can be said to be collective, and of literary works which are produced by individual subjects, but are not solely the products of their conscious intentions, he argues that questions of intentionality are fundamentally irrelevant, since the "structure of manifestation" of complex isotopy within texts is concrete, determinable, and not contingent on the recognition of an ordering subjective intentionality 'behind' the text⁵³. Rather than pursue the spectre of authorial intention, he suggests, we should turn our attention to the "*Hierarchie sich ineinanderlagernder Kontexte*" within the text from the level of the sentence through to the level of the entire text - an approach which obviously has a great deal in common with those proposed by Weinrich and Ricoeur. Umberto Eco argues that there is a hierarchy of isotopies

⁵³ Cf. Greimas, A.J., *Die Isotopie der Rede*, pp 147-8

within the text which signals to the reader which isotopies are to be privileged in the process of reading - a notion similar in some respects to Colin McCabe's model of the "hierarchy of discourses" within the ("classical realist") text which is organized by a primary or dominant discourse⁵⁴. Neither Eco nor McCabe, however, are able to offer a satisfactory method of identifying the dominant isotopy or discourse in texts which do not possess a clearly defined internal narrative authority. It would seem that this problem cannot be resolved at the level of the text alone, and that a more fruitful approach to the interpretation of complex isotopies within texts is that which is hinted at, but not developed, by Rastier when he speaks of a "typology" of possible readings which would locate texts and their isotopies within the "ideological systems" of the societies in which they are produced. This brings us back to the consideration of the pragmatic dimension of literary communication, and the possibility of a specific pragmatics of metaphor.

3.4 Köller : Metaphor and Pragmatics

In the introduction to his book *Semiotik und Metapher* Wilhelm Köller states as his basic premise the view that the phenomenon of metaphor cannot be adequately described solely by reference to its "innersprachliche[n] Konstitutions- und

⁵⁴. See Eco, Umberto, *The Role of the Reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington, 1979, p 27, and McCabe, Colin, *Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses*, in: *Screen*, 15.2, (1974-5), pp 7-27

Relationsbezüge"⁵⁵. In order to explain the structure and function of metaphor, he argues, we must also ask "die grundsätzliche Frage nach ihrer Rolle bei der sprachlichen Bewältigung der Welt durch den Menschen"⁵⁶. This is essentially a question concerning the pragmatic dimension of metaphor, which consists, as he puts it, in its "communicative function". By this Köller understands

...sowohl ihre Leistungsfähigkeit zur Übertragung von Informationen im intersubjektiven Kommunikationsverkehr... als auch ihre Leistungsfähigkeit, Sachverhalte sprachlich zu objektivieren und zu differenzieren und damit für potentielle kommunikative Akte verfügbar zu machen, als auch ihre Leistungsfähigkeit, die Intentionalität und Rahmenbedingungen von kommunikativen Akten zu verdeutlichen.⁵⁷

The investigation of the communicative function of metaphor involves a recognition that the system of language is part of a more complex system which Köller describes as ">Lebenspraxis< der Kommunikanten"⁵⁸. This assertion stands in contradiction to the central tenet of most post-structuralist and modern psycho-analytic theories of language, according to which language is the system *per se*, the fundamental matrix of all psychological and social formation. This distinction need not concern us here, though it would seem that a confrontation of Köller's position with that of post-structuralists such as

⁵⁵. Köller, Wilhelm, *Semiotik und Metapher. Untersuchungen zur grammatischen Struktur und kommunikativen Funktion der Metapher*, Stuttgart, 1975, pp 1-2

⁵⁶. *ibid.*

⁵⁷. *ibid.*

⁵⁸. Köller, *ibid.*, p 37

Derrida and Lacan would raise some interesting questions about both the ontology of metaphor and its pragmatic dimension⁵⁹.

In the second part of his book Köller identifies a number of features of the communicative function of metaphor which I shall attempt to summarize briefly here⁶⁰. He begins by pointing to the difficulties raised for a systematic approach to the pragmatics of metaphorical signification by the "Historizität von Kommunikationsgemeinschaften und natürlichen Sprachen": that is to say, the mutable nature of both language and "Lebenspraxis"⁶¹. The communicative function of a metaphor or field of metaphors in a given society will change as that society and its language, modes of experience and material practices change. The creation of new metaphors may arise from a very specific "Sprachnot", such as the lack of a name to describe a new invention or discovery in the physical world⁶². New metaphors of this kind usually become conventionalized very quickly, and their metaphorical character ceases to be recognized or actualized by speakers and listeners. Where, however, the "Sprachnot" is more general

⁵⁹. For a powerful critique of the post-structuralist view of language see Anderson, Perry, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, Chicago, 1984

⁶⁰. The first part of *Semiotik und Metapher* is, as the title implies, devoted to the exposition of a semiotic approach to metaphor. Since, however, this does not generate any perspectives which are radically different from those offered by those theories which I have discussed above, I have chosen to concentrate on that part of Köller's work which is most fruitful for my own investigation, namely his approach to the pragmatics of metaphor.

⁶¹. Köller, *Semiotik und Metapher*, p 215

⁶². Köller, *ibid.*, p 220

and metaphors are created to describe new social and cultural phenomena, the process of their absorption into everyday language is more complex:

Metaphern, die...aus ganz spezifischen individuellen oder historischen Bewußtseinszuständen oder Kommunikationssituationen hervorgehen, verfestigen sich überhaupt nicht oder nicht so schnell zu Zeichen mit usuell stabilisierten Informationsleistungen. Da solche Metaphern in ihren Entstehungsbedingungen und pragmatischen Funktionen sehr stark kontextbezogen sind und nur unter genetischen Aspekten betrachtet werden können, besteht die Gefahr, daß ihr pragmatischer Wert aus historischem oder ideologischem Abstand nicht mehr richtig eingeschätzt werden kann. Je komplexer die ursprünglichen kognitiven und kommunikativen Funktionen solcher Metaphern waren, desto schwieriger ist es, ihren pragmatischen Wert durch hermeneutische Operationen einigermaßen exakt zu bestimmen.⁶³

A further important aspect of the pragmatic dimension of metaphor is touched upon here, namely its cognitive function. The notion of metaphor as a "cognitive instrument" which enables us to perceive connections between phenomena and articulate new perspectives on the world of our experience was first advanced by Black⁶⁴. Köller extends this notion by arguing that metaphors can be seen as "Symptome für neue Erkenntnisse und Vorstellungen...die in dem usuellen Sprachsystem noch keine konventionell legitimierten sprachlichen Repräsentationsmöglichkeiten gefunden haben"⁶⁵. Thus the cognitive function of metaphor will come to the fore in times of rapid and disruptive social change, in which

⁶³. ibid.

⁶⁴. See Black, Max, *Models and Metaphors*, New York, 1962, and the qualification of his original position in Black, Max, *More about Metaphor*, in: Ortony, Andrew (Ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, pp 19-45, here pp 39-40

⁶⁵. Köller, *Semiotik und Metapher*, p 259

"die traditionellen semantischen Kategorialschranken bewußt verletzt werden bzw. sich als brüchig erweisen oder wo ganz neue empirisch erfahrbare Sachverhalte benutzt werden, um unsinnliche Sachverhalte zu strukturieren"⁶⁶. This general description can be usefully applied to the period of the Revolution and the metaphorical "symptoms" which it generated: as the events in Paris progressed it became clear that, in a sense, the previously unimaginable was manifesting itself in history, and that new models and categories were needed to describe it. As Köller himself points out, however, there are certain limits on the degree of metaphorical innovation which can be readily comprehended and absorbed by a "Sprachgemeinschaft" even in times of revolutionary change. As we shall see, Novalis employs a number of metaphorical models from contemporary medical and scientific theories to describe the Revolution and its consequences which require - to use Köller's words - "umfangreiche hermeneutische Operationen" in order to decode them⁶⁷. These metaphors could not have - and it is arguable that they were not intended to - become part of the communicative repertoire of the German language, since the contexts which they invoked were not part of the "Präsuppositionsstrukturen" of the vast majority of those who spoke it⁶⁸.

The same limitations apply to what Köller calls the "manipulative aspects" of metaphor, or what has more

⁶⁶. *ibid.*, p 259

⁶⁷. *ibid.*, p 279

⁶⁸. *ibid.*, p 285

traditionally been known as its persuasive function. He is at some pains to stress that his approach is purely formal, and that it necessarily cannot attempt to consider the manipulative aspects of metaphor from the point of view of a critique of the ideology manifesting itself in and through them. This is because his investigation is intended to be a purely systematic approach to "die Strukturbeschreibung von informationellen Zeichensystemen und ... das Problem der Zirkulation von Sinn", and can thus not concern itself with the question as to the truth value of a particular ideology, which he sees as unavoidable for any approach which concerns itself with the manipulative aspects of political metaphor⁶⁹. Whether this is in fact so is an issue which cannot be debated here, though it should perhaps be said that my investigation proceeds quite definitely from an "ideologiekritische[n] Ansatz". It would be extremely rash to assert that I have not made any judgements about the truth value of particular ideologies: at the same time, however, I have attempted to interpret particular texts on the principle which Köller formulates thus, that "der Bestimmungsbegriff von politisch wirksamen Metaphern an den Erfahrungs-, Interessen- und Erwartungshorizont der jeweiligen Adressaten anknüpfen muß"⁷⁰. My approach has been to attempt to elucidate the manipulative and other dimensions of metaphor in the texts of Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel in the context of the social and ideological determinants of their production and reception.

⁶⁹. *ibid.*, p 277

⁷⁰. *ibid.*, p 279

In the conclusion to his study Köller argues that the definition of metaphor as a "semantic anomaly" indicated by a semiotic approach is not adequate to the task of explaining the cultural contextualization which determines the ways in which a metaphor is produced, received and understood. This leads him to the conclusion that all metaphors embody "metasprachliche Informationsstrukturen", and to the following definition of metaphor:

Die Metapher ist eine semantisch anomale Prädikation, in der sich objektsprachliche und metasprachliche Informationsstrukturen so miteinander verschränken, daß ihr die Kommunikanten im Gebrauchskontext durch ihre Fähigkeit zur metasprachlichen Reflexion und hermeneutischen Interpretation eine ganz spezifische Sinnstruktur zuordnen können, die hinsichtlich ihres komplexen pragmatischen Wertes nicht durch andere sprachliche Organisationsformen ersetzt werden kann.⁷¹

As he points out, this is a definition which takes conventional everyday speech and conceptual thought as its normative background, and may not necessarily encompass the use of metaphor in an aesthetic context. It is also clearly indebted to Hans Blumenberg's writings on metaphor and his exploration of the relationship between metaphor and conceptual thought, to which I shall now turn.

3.5 Blumenberg : "Metaphorologie", or metaphor and the dynamics of history

Hans Blumenberg's writings on metaphor have received little attention outside the German-speaking world, though to

⁷¹. ibid., p 335-6

a certain extent they share the same concerns as, and in some areas anticipate, the work of other influential theoreticians of metaphor such as Derrida and Ricoeur. It would, perhaps, be not entirely correct to say that Blumenberg had developed a theory of metaphor, since he is concerned not with its nature and operation as a linguistic phenomenon, but rather with its function within philosophical discourse. In the opening pages of his first major work on metaphor, the *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*, he addresses a question which is by no means new, but which, he argues, has never been satisfactorily resolved by philosophers themselves: the question, namely, "...unter welchen Voraussetzungen Metaphern in der philosophischen Sprache Legitimität haben können"⁷². He rejects the traditional view that metaphors are "Restbestände" of pre-logical forms of discourse, which philosophy has gradually eliminated and replaced with concepts in the course of its journey from myth to *logos*, and suggests the alternative hypothesis that certain metaphors are in fact "*Grundbestände* der philosophischen Sprache, "Übertragungen", die sich nicht ins Eigentliche, in die Logizität zurückholen lassen"⁷³. He gives these metaphors the name "absolute Metaphern", and argues that, should his hypothesis prove accurate, it must become an important task of any "Begriffsgeschichte" to recognize and analyse such metaphors in order to determine how they operate in philosophical discourse.

⁷². Blumenberg, Hans, *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 6 (1960), pp 7-142, here p 9

⁷³. *ibid.*

The term "absolute Metaphern" appears at first somewhat confusing, since the whole force of Blumenberg's argument seems to be directed towards demonstrating that their specific nature consists in the fact that they are historically mutable. The apparent contradiction in this designation disappears, however, when we realize that what Blumenberg sees as their "absolute" quality is their irreducibility: an absolute metaphor may be modified, suppressed, corrected or replaced by another metaphor, but not relieved of its metaphorical character by a concept or logical proposition⁷⁴. It is that without which a certain thought or a related series of thoughts cannot be thought, a constitutive element of the "Substruktur des Denkens"⁷⁵. An investigation of the historical evolution and transformation of absolute metaphors will therefore help to render visible "die Metakinetik geschichtlicher Sinnhorizonte und Sichtweisen...innerhalb deren Begriffe ihre Modifikationen erfahren"⁷⁶. It will, moreover, provide us with an insight into the dominant modes of perception and the construction of social meanings in particular historical periods: for the truth of absolute metaphors is always the truth of a particular historical formation:

Ihre Wahrheit ist, in einem sehr weiten Verstande, *pragmatisch*. Ihr Gehalt bestimmt als Anhalt von Orientierungen ein Verhalten, sie geben einer Welt Struktur, repräsentieren das nie erfahrbare, nie übersehbare Ganze der Realität. Dem historisch verstehenden Blick indizieren sie also die fundamentalen tragenden Gewißeheiten, Vermutungen, Wertungen, aus denen

⁷⁴. *ibid.*, p 11

⁷⁵. *ibid.*

⁷⁶. *ibid.*

sich die Haltungen, Erwartungen, Tätigkeiten und Untätigkeiten, Sehnsüchte und Enttäuschungen, Interessen und Gleichgültigkeiten einer Epoche regulierten.⁷⁷

Blumenberg succeeds in demonstrating his hypothesis with regard to a number of concrete examples which need not concern us here. Out of his analyses of the histories of particular absolute metaphors in the *Paradigmen* and later writings arise a series of conclusions which I shall attempt to summarize briefly. Probably the most important of these from the point of view of his specific concerns has to do with the ontological status of metaphor. Throughout his work he argues for a rigorously romantic view of metaphor, and against the notion that it can be made transparent, so that a transcendent or antecedent reality may shine through its "refracting" medium:

Realisten bauen immer Metaphorik ab, und das ist allemal recht und billig - aber ist die Realität das, was dabei übrig bleibt?⁷⁸

Metaphor is not an alternative to conceptual thought, or a poor substitute for it; wherever concepts come into being and become established within discourse, metaphor is already there, just as it occupies those spaces in the cognitive structures of our cultures which cannot be filled by concepts:

Der Raum der Metapher ist der Raum der unmöglichen, der fehlgeschlagenen oder der noch nicht konsolidierten Begriffsbildung. Die Norm der Begrifflichkeit beruht auf vorgreifenden Orientierungen, die ihrerseits notwendig außerhalb des Normbereiches und seiner Semantik liegen

⁷⁷

 ibid., p 21

⁷⁸ Blumenberg, *Beobachtungen an Metaphern*, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 15 (1971), pp 161-214, here p 170

müssen, die aber nicht dessen bloßes, sich ⁷⁹im Prozeß selbst aufziehendes genetisches Vorfeld bildet.

Metaphor may be implicitly present in a statement or series of statements which appear to contain purely terminological language. In this case it can be classified as "Hintergrundmetaphorik", a metaphor or field of metaphors which act as a "Leitvorstellung", underlying or informing a particular system of terminology and giving it an internal structure and coherence⁸⁰. "Hintergrundmetaphorik" usually makes its presence tangible in situations where two conflicting or competing absolute metaphors offer themselves as models for, or perspectives on, a particular set of phenomena; Blumenberg cites the opposition of organic and mechanical metaphor as one which is often present in the "Hintergrundmetaphorik" of texts dealing with philosophy or politics, whilst pointing out that the dualism is not always rigidly maintained⁸¹. This is certainly true of a number of the texts of Novalis' and Friedrich Schlegel's which I shall be considering.

Blumenberg sees a strong similarity between absolute metaphor and myth. Indeed, he suggests that the chief difference between the two is "genetic": mythical discourse effaces its human origins by grounding itself in some divine

⁷⁹. *ibid.*, p 171

⁸⁰. Blumenberg, *Paradigmen*, p 69

⁸¹. See *ibid.*, p 71: "Der Dualismus von Organismus und Mechanismus ist also keine Kategorie, mit der wir beliebig in der Geschichte des Denkens operieren können."

or transcendent order, whereas an absolute metaphor may admit to its fictionality whilst still demonstrating its truth value on the basis that it makes "eine Möglichkeit des Verstehens...ablesbar"⁸². Both myth and metaphor provide models for the apprehension and interpretation of the world, and myth, like metaphor, can function implicitly in the "background" of discourse, shaping and organizing perceptions without actually appearing in its narrated form in the particular text or utterance⁸³. The question as to the nature of the relationship between metaphor and myth is an extremely complex one, and cannot be addressed in the framework of this brief survey. It does, however, as we shall see, have some bearing on the analysis of certain of the texts which I shall be considering, but it has seemed to me more appropriate to introduce a theoretical approach to specific aspects of the problem in the context of this textual analysis, rather than attempting to deal with it more generally here⁸⁴.

⁸². ibid., pp 84-5: "...der Mythos trägt die Sanktion seiner uralt-unergründbaren Herkunft, seiner göttlichen oder inspirativen Verbürgtheit, während die absolute Metapher durchaus als Fiktion auftreten darf und sich nur dadurch auszuweisen hat, daß sie eine Möglichkeit des Verstehens ablesbar macht". It is somewhat difficult to determine what exactly Blumenberg means by this: I understand him to be saying that absolute metaphor may admit to its "secular" character, i.e. its lack of claim to some form of transcendent authority, but still be irreducible, "nicht hintergebar".

⁸³. See ibid., p 86

⁸⁴. On the relationship between myth and metaphor see for example:

Küster, Rainer, *Mythische Struktur und Metapher*, in: *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik* 7 (1979), pp 304-322;

Köller, *Semiotik und Metapher*, pp 222-234;

Wagner, Roy, *Lethal Speech: Daribi Myth as Symbolic Obviation*, Ithaca and London, 1978, esp. Ch.1 : "The Theory of Symbolic Obviation", pp 19-63

A further useful point which Blumenberg makes regarding the relationship between metaphor and conceptual thought concerns the "metaphorization" of concepts. As he observes, the traditional view of this relationship recognizes the movement from metaphor to concept, but not the reverse movement from concept to metaphor. This latter phenomenon he illustrates with the example of the model of the cosmos proposed by Copernican astronomy, which, he argues, quickly became transformed into an extremely influential absolute metaphor:

...indem die kopernikanische Umformung des Kosmos zum Orientierungsmodell genommen wird für die Beantwortung einer Frage, die sich mit rein theoretischen und begrifflichen Mitteln noch nie beantworten ließ: der Frage nach der Stellung des Menschen in der Welt, im Sinne seiner zentralen Bedachtheit und Vorgesehenheit oder seiner peripheren Mitläufigkeit im Weltgetriebe, also seines Verhältnisses zu allem übrigen Seienden und dieses Seiende zu ihm.⁸⁵

A similar metaphorization of concepts, though not usually of such far-reaching significance, takes place in many of the texts I shall be discussing. Blumenberg also draws attention to a related and inverse process, the "literalization" of metaphor. By this he means not the conversion of metaphor into concepts, but the "taking literally" of a metaphor whose figurative and fictional character has conventionally been taken for granted:

Daß Metaphorik ‚beim Wort genommen wird‘, läßt sich nicht selten beobachten. Dabei wird die Metapher der begrenzten Intention ihres Autors entzogen,

⁸⁵ Blumenberg, Paradigmen, p 108

verselbständigt und in einer Richtung erweitert, die zumeist die Verdeutlichung zur Erklärung verändert.⁸⁶

Put another way, we might say that the literalization of metaphor assumes that the similarity or structural relation between "Bildspender" and "Bildempfänger" which metaphor suggests corresponds to a natural relationship in the real world. It involves a suspension or suppression of the "fictional" character of metaphor.

One final aspect of Blumenberg's delineation of the nature and function of absolute metaphor must be mentioned. In his *Beobachtungen an Metaphern* he reflects at one point on a matter not dealt with in the *Paradigmen*, namely the relationship between "scientific" and aesthetic language and the function of metaphor in each, and draws the following conclusion:

Der ästhetische Gebrauch der Sprache ist dem Prozeß, der auf Eindeutigkeit tendiert, entgegengerichtet: die Vieldeutigkeit der sprachlichen Mittel wird entweder wieder- oder durch Bindung an bis dahin unzumutbare Kontexte neuerdings hergestellt. Die Aufgabe nun, Metaphorik selbst noch in der internen Wissenschaftssprache aufzuspüren, zielt nicht auf deren mögliche ästhetische Umwertung, also nicht auf Erhaltung oder Erweckung von Vieldeutigkeit, sondern viel eher auf einen in der Metaphorik konservierten Konsistenzfaktor. Die Metaphorologie hat deshalb keinen ästhetischen Aspekt, weil sie Vieldeutigkeit gerade nicht hinnimmt, sondern die Tendenz auf Eindeutigkeit der wissenschaftlichen Sprache akzeptiert.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ . Blumenberg, *Beobachtungen*, p 209

⁸⁷ . *ibid.*, p 191

If we accept this conclusion, it becomes questionable as to whether or not it can be legitimate to apply Blumenberg's insights into the nature of absolute metaphor to the texts which I shall be considering. The resolution of this question depends partly on the way in which we choose to classify the texts themselves: many of them purport to be of a philosophical or scientific nature (in the broadest sense of the terms), and yet display characteristics of poetic or literary discourse, especially with regard to their use of metaphor. The whole problem of what constitutes the "poeticity" or "Literarizität" of particular kinds of discourse is opened up here, and it is one which cannot be considered in any detail in this investigation. It is important to bear in mind, however, that that it is only with the Enlightenment that a sharp differentiation between scientific and other forms of speculative discourse begins to be made. Moreover, the parameters of scientific discourse are by no means stable nor universally agreed upon by the last decade of the eighteenth century. Nor were the borders between the exact and the human sciences - such as history and anthropology - drawn with anything like the clarity they acquired in the nineteenth century. It could be argued that Blumenberg's strictures on the application of a "Metaphorologie" to aesthetic discourse are too narrow. The kinds of metaphors whose functions in the texts of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis I shall be examining - metaphors for the Revolution itself, for the expression of the collective will, for the idea of the nation - are largely derived from the traditions and conventions of an existing discourse about

politics and history, and fulfil many of the functions which Blumenberg ascribes to absolute metaphor in that discourse. The phenomenon with which I am chiefly concerned in this study - namely the appropriation of those metaphors, their transformation and complementation or replacement by new metaphors - occurs, as it were, at the boundaries between "philosophical" and "poetic" discourse, boundaries which Early Romanticism is notorious for having obscured or erased. Notwithstanding this uncertainty about the status of particular texts, it should be possible to examine what it is that metaphor is doing in these texts, what range of possible meanings is actualized and how these may be organized by the pragmatic dimension of the text's production and reception, whilst keeping in mind the ways in which the putative "literariness" of that text may itself have some bearing on the constitution of that pragmatic dimension.

This leads me to a final and general remark about some of the approaches to metaphor outlined above, which arises out of the problem to which I have just drawn attention. It has to do with the nature of metaphorical innovation, and its significance in culture. As we have seen, the cognitive function of metaphor plays an important role in extending the repertoire of concepts and modes of perception with and through which a culture or "Sprachgemeinschaft" explains its experience of the world. The degree of metaphorical innovation which can be made meaningful within a particular cultural context is, however, limited by the "Grad ihrer Harmonie mit den Erkenntnisinteressen und Lebenserfahrungen von

spezifischen Kommunikanten", as Köller puts it, which is essentially to say that it must be capable of being integrated into the semantic universe and ideological structures of a particular society⁸⁸. Moreover, the recognition that a particular utterance is metaphorical in character may depend to a large extent on contingent factors, such as an individual's psychological state or cultural background. As Roy Wagner points out in the introduction to his study of the function of metaphor in the religion of the Daribi, the Bororo man who makes the statement "I am a parakeet" is really saying "As a man, I am a parakeet" and thus identifying himself totemically, rather than ascribing to himself the specific qualities of the parakeet in the kind of metaphorical sense in which we might - in the oft-quoted example - say "The king is a lion"⁸⁹. It is a relationship of "impersonation", not of perceived similarity⁹⁰. It can, therefore, be said that what would be perceived as an act of metaphorical innovation in our culture, albeit one which we should probably only accept as meaningful in a specifically literary context, is for the Bororo man non-metaphorical, meaningful and conventional within the ideological system of his culture.

⁸⁸. Köller, p 268

⁸⁹. See Wagner, Roy, Habu. *The Innovation of Meaning in Daribi Religion*, Chicago, 1972, pp 5-6. I am indebted to Mr. Rohan Bastin of University College, London, for introducing me to Wagner's extremely stimulating and original work on myth and metaphor.

⁹⁰. See *ibid.*, pp 9-10

According to Wagner, such ideological systems are composed of sets of what he calls "complementary metaphors"⁹¹. These embody a range of linked concepts which make a culture meaningful and order its social relations. Thus metaphor may have, as Hawkes notes, not just an innovative cognitive function, but also a strongly normative function which reinforces the existing order of things⁹². Innovation within cultures is, Wagner argues, always associated with a dialectical process whereby the relations signified by the dominant complementary metaphors of a culture become the contexts for new metaphors: where ideology is challenged, modified or transformed, metaphor itself is being metaphorized and refunctioned⁹³. We may say, therefore, that the act of metaphorical innovation is, in an absolute sense, always an act of ideological innovation, though the extent to which it may pragmatically be recognized and understood as such, and effect a change in the cognitive models of a culture, is a function of the success with which it engages and transforms the system of complementary metaphors which constitutes that culture's ideological system. Moreover, individual acts of metaphorical innovation need to be understood and interpreted within the specific "rhetorical situation" in which they are performed, irrespective of whether they occur in a poetic or a philosophical or polemical text⁹⁴. These recognitions give us,

⁹¹. ibid., p 7

⁹². See Hawkes, *Metaphor*, p 88

⁹³. Wagner, *Habu*, p 7

⁹⁴. The term "rhetorical situation" - which corresponds roughly to what Weinrich calls the level of "Text-Metaphorik" - is coined by Wayne Booth in an article entitled "Metaphor as

I think, a useful perspective from which to approach the question of metaphorical innovation in the texts of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis; and it is to the analysis of these that I shall now turn.

4. FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL: THE EARLY TEXTS

1. Introduction

Friedrich Schlegel's essay *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie* is the first major theoretical and programmatic text of Early Romanticism. Schlegel produced three versions of the *Studium-Aufsatz* during 1794 and 1795, making very substantial revisions to each version as a result of comment and criticism from friends and literary associates¹. The final draft was produced during autumn of 1795; Schlegel submitted sections of the essay to his publisher Michaelis as each was completed, and had given him the concluding section by December of 1795. Owing, however, to Michaelis' financial difficulties and the illness of the printer the essay was not published in full until 17 months later, early in 1797. In the intervening period extracts from the manuscript had been published in Reichardt's journal *DEUTSCHLAND*, which took a fiercely antagonistic line towards Schiller and the *HOREN*, and in which Schlegel published his *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus* in the summer of 1796.

¹. Schlegel's texts are quoted according to the *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, hrsg. von Ernst Behler unter Mitwirkung von Jean-Jacques Anstett und Hans Eichner, München, Paderborn, Wien: Schöningh; Zürich: Thomas-Verlag, 1958ff. This edition is indicated by the abbreviation 'KA', and quotes are acknowledged in the text or footnotes with the volume number indicated in Roman numerals and the page number in Arabic numerals, except in the case of the editors' commentaries, where page nos. are also indicated by Roman numerals. Details of the genesis of the *Studium-Aufsatz*, its publication history and its contemporary reception are given in Behler's introduction and commentary in KA, I, CLXI-CLXXIV

Although the *Studium-Aufsatz* purports to be a contribution to the history of aesthetics, it is also very decidedly an expression of Schlegel's response to the French Revolution and its effects on Europe. During the time in which he was working on the text in Dresden the course of the Revolution had changed drastically. The fall of Robespierre (27.7.1794) and the subsequent consolidation of power by the *honnetes gens* under the Thermidorean regime² brought the remorseless momentum of the Jacobin terror to an end, only to replace it with the White Terror of 1795. The popular movement had lost much of its motive force and its direction, and during 1794 and early 1795 it gradually surrendered its hold on political power. The new ruling elite - "...purchasers of national property, war contractors, speculators, profiteers and politicians", as Cobban describes them³ - dismantled the administrative machinery set up by the Jacobins and in 1795 introduced a new Constitution which abolished universal suffrage and restricted the franchise to owners of property.

In April of 1795 Prussia and France made a separate peace and signed the treaty of Basle, which gave Prussia effective control over most of Northern Germany whilst tacitly ceding former German territories west of the Rhine to France⁴. This development was greeted with widespread approval within Prussia (and strong disapproval from her allies, especially

2. See Albert Soboul, *The French Revolution 1787-1799*, tr. by Alan Forrest and Colin Jones, N.Y., 1974, pp 417-449

3. See Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France, Vol.1: 1715-1799*, 3rd edition, London, 1974, pp 417-449

4. See Braubach, Max, *Von der französischen Revolution bis zum Wiener Kongreß*, (pp.35-39) =Gebhardt Handbuch der dt. Geschichte Bd 14, dtv, München, 1983, pp 35-39

Austria), and generated a certain sense of renewal and optimism. Schlegel's positive assessment of German culture in the *Studium-Aufsatz* can be seen within the context of this change as manifesting a new or renewed interest in the future of the German "nation", now that it had become evident that the Revolution had failed to bring about the creation of universal freedom and equality in France, and the spread of republican sentiments throughout Europe.

The secondary literature on the *Studium-Aufsatz* is extensive, and on the whole sophisticated. It is largely concerned with three main themes. These are the development of a programmatic modern aesthetic which takes the culture of Greek antiquity as a source of inspiration and orientation, but not a model for emulation⁵; the grounding of this aesthetic in a specifically Romantic philosophy of history⁶; and arising out of this, the evaluation of the French Revolution and its relation to the "ästhetische Revolution" which Schlegel

⁵. See for example: Weber, H.D., Friedrich Schlegels "Transzendentalpoesie". Untersuchungen zum Funktionswandel der Literaturkritik im 18. Jahrhundert, München, 1973, Kapitel 7: "Modernität als kategoriales Problem der Kritik", esp. pp 144-165;

Szondi, Peter, Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie 1 (Studienausgabe der Vorlesungen Bd.2), Frankfurt/M, 1974, pp 99-148;

Briegleb, Klaus; Ästhetische Sittlichkeit. Versuch über Friedrich Schlegels Systementwurf zur Begründung der Dichtungskritik, Tübingen, 1962, esp. pp 11-18

Dierkes, Hans, Literaturgeschichte als Kritik. Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis von Friedrich Schlegels frühromantischer Literaturgeschichtsschreibung, Tübingen, 1984, esp. pp 42-80

⁶. See Jauß, H.R., Schlegels und Schillers Replik auf die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes', in: Jauß, H.R.: Literaturgeschichte als Provokation, Frankfurt/M, 1970, pp 67-106, and Klaus Behrens, Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie (1794-1808). Ein Beitrag zur politischen Romantik, Tübingen, 1984, esp. pp 42-80

declares is imminent⁷. It is not necessary to rehearse the interpretative debates surrounding these themes here, though they will enter into my discussion of the text.

Friedrich Schlegel's early writings are not distinguished by a particularly innovative or startling use of metaphor. Indeed, by contrast with the variety and originality of the imagery we find in Forster's *Parisische Umriße*, or the plain pithiness of the everyday metaphors with which Kant illustrates his arguments, Schlegel's theoretical texts often appear somewhat dry and abstract. Certainly there is nothing in his published writing - the letters display a very different style - to suggest a kinship with the denseness and intensity of the imagery in Novalis' works⁸. When Schlegel adopts the fragment form later in his literary career, his writing takes on a new dimension of concreteness; yet the metaphorical inversions and transformations which come to the fore as an essential ingredient of his speculative thought are performed, for the most part, with concepts rather than images.

7. KA, I, 269. On the relationship between the French Revolution and the "ästhetische Revolution" see: Bräutigam, Bernd, *Eine schöne Republik. Friedrich Schlegels Republikanismus im Spiegel des Studium-Aufsatzes*, In: *Euphorion*, Bd. 70, Heft 4, 1976, pp 315-339 and

Oesterle, Ingrid, "Der >>glückliche Anstoß<< ästhetischer Revolution und die Anstößigkeit politischer Revolution. Ein Denk- und Belegversuch zum Zusammenhang von politischer Formveränderung und kultureller Revolution im Studium-Aufsatz Friedrich Schlegels. In: Dieter Bänisch (Hrsg.), *Zur Modernität der Romantik*, Stuttgart, 1977, pp 167-216

⁸. To be entirely fair, it must be acknowledged that Novalis' early unpublished theoretical writings are also extremely dry, and betray no sign of the imagistic-aphoristic style which he adopts in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, or the "poetic" intensity of *Die Christenheit oder Europa*



It is for this reason that my approach to the *Studium-Aufsatz* is somewhat different to that which I shall be taking with Novalis' texts. Rather than concentrate on particular fields of metaphor or metaphorical isotopies, I have chosen to consider the metaphorical mechanisms which Schlegel employs in order to fuse the discourse of the Revolutionary Enlightenment and the discourse of aesthetic theory so as to create a new "master discourse" which will supersede both. From this perspective, the *Studium-Aufsatz* can be seen as standing within the tradition which Kurt Wölfel has designated as that of "klassischer Republikanismus", and described as follows:

Der klassische Republikanismus im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und des deutschen Idealismus,...ist eine Spielart dieses gemeineuropäischen Phänomens, deren Eigentümlichkeit vornehmlich darin besteht, daß sich die spezifischen sittlich-politischen Inhalte des republikanischen Gedankens mit einer individualistisch orientierten, ästhetischen Bildungsidee derart vereinigen, daß in der daraus geborenen Vorstellung einer "schönen Republik" der politische Status der Individuen nur als der kommunikative, gemeinschaftsbezogene Aspekt ihrer ästhetisch gebildeten Humanität erscheint, bzw. umgekehrt: daß ihre "schöne Individualität" nur die - mit Schiller zu sprechen - "lebende Gestalt" ist, in der sich der freie Bürger der Republik zeigt, wenn er sich in seiner individuellen Selbständigkeit vorstellt. Als 'Diskurs' besonderer Art verstanden, zeichnet sich dieser ästhetisch fundierte klassische Republikanismus ... dadurch aus, daß er die Grenzlinie zwischen Ästhetik und Politik dauernd überschreitet, ja sie eigentlich außer Kraft setzt, auslöscht: ästhetische, insbesondere poetische Praxis kann damit als 'ideale' Äußerung eines politischen Konzepts gelten, und andererseits als einzig wahrhafte, nämlich in die (Vervollkommungs-) Geschichte der Menschheit wirklich eingreifende politische Praxis, als ein solches Handeln vorgestellt werden, das zugleich reale Äußerung des ästhetischen Konzepts ist.

⁹. Kurt Wölfel, "Prophetische Erinnerung". Der klassische Republikanismus in der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts als utopische Gesinnung. In: Wilhelm Voßkamp (Hrsg.), Utopieforschung. Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie, Stuttgart, 1983, Bd.3, pp 191-217, here pp 191-2

Wölfel's characterization of "klassischer Republikanismus" seems to me admirably to describe some of the essential features of the *Studium-Aufsatz*, though as I shall try to show, the text also attempts a much more radical formulation of the aspirations informing the tradition than Schiller or any of his contemporaries had given them. In the *Studium-Aufsatz*, Schlegel grapples with three major problems, all of which are closely related. Firstly, he confronts the question as to how the Revolution in its radical form can be integrated into the program of classical republicanism. Out of this primarily political conundrum arises the problem of reconciling a radical political practice with the theory of aesthetic autonomy, whilst rejecting the instrumental affective aesthetics of the Enlightenment. Finally, there is the problem which particularly exercises the Early Romantics, namely the construction of a uniquely German cultural identity within the context of a cosmopolitan republicanism whose ultimate aim is the establishment of a "Weltrepublik"¹⁰.

4.2 Politics, aesthetics and the rule of public opinion

¹⁰. This utopian goal is stated very clearly in the *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus* of 1796. Schlegel writes:
 Es läßt sich allerdings ein *Völkerstaat* ohne dies Verhältnis ... denken, und ohne daß die verschiedenen Staaten in einem einzigen zusammenschmelzen müßten:
 ...Die Idee einer *Weltrepublik* hat praktische Gültigkeit und charakteristische Wichtigkeit. (KA, VII, 13)

For an account of the differences between Schlegel's idea of the "Weltrepublik" and the "*Föderalismus freier Staaten*" which Kant declared to be the foundation of a true and legitimate international law (*Völkerrecht*) in his essay *Zum ewigen Frieden*, see: Christa Krüger, *Georg Forsters und Friedrich Schlegels Beurteilung der Französischen Revolution als Ausdruck des Problems einer Einheit von Theorie und Praxis*, Göttingen, 1974, pp 74-5

The inter-relationship of politics and aesthetics is established in the 'Vorrede' to the text, which Schlegel wrote shortly before it was published in 1797. The purpose of the 'Vorrede' is, at least in part, to acknowledge the points of contact between the *Studium-Aufsatz* and Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, which appeared in the *HOREN IN* 1795-6, and was long thought to have directly influenced Schlegel's text. It has, however, been proven beyond doubt that Schlegel had completed his manuscript and submitted all of it to Michaelis before he read Schiller's essay¹¹.

According to the 'Vorrede', the present is a state of almost total aesthetic negativity, dominated by an "interessante Poesie" which can lay claim neither to "Schönheit" nor "Objektivität" (KA,I,208). Indeed, it is by nature inimically opposed to what Schlegel refers to variously as "schöne..." or "objektive Poesie". "Objektive Poesie" is defined as follows:

Die objektive Poesie...weiß von keinem Interesse, und macht keine Ansprüche auf Realität. Sie strebt nur nach einem *Spiel*, das so würdig sei, als der heilige Ernst, nach einem *Schein*, der so allgemeingütig und gesetzgebend sei, als die unbedingteste Wahrheit.
(KA,I,211)

By contrast, the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" (KA,I,254) which Schlegel detects in the whole of modern literature¹² is distinguished by "das totale Übergewicht des

¹¹. Cf. KA,I,CLXXI-IV

¹². I have chosen to translate the word "Poesie" in Schlegel's text with "literature"; Schlegel uses it consistently to refer to a range of forms and genres, and the literal English translations "poesy" or "poetry" seem to me too antiquated or narrow respectively to be appropriate. "Art" is too broad a translation, though Schlegel does refer occasionally to music and the plastic arts.

Charakteristischen, Individuellen und Interessanten" and "das rastlose unersättliche Streben nach dem Neuen, Piquanten und Frappanten" (KA,I,228).

The opening sections of the text are primarily taken up with a critique of the present parlous state of literature and its preoccupation with "das Interessante"¹³. It is, however, made quite plain in the 'Vorrede' that the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" is a necessary phase in the evolution of culture; it is "...die Vorbereitung zur unendlichen Perfektibilität der ästhetischen Anlage" and is, as such, "ästhetisch erlaubt" (KA,I,214). It is at this point in his argument that Schlegel introduces a direct analogy between aesthetics and politics:

Immer aber hat das Interessante in der Poesie nur eine *provisorische Gültigkeit*, wie die despotische Regierung.
(KA,I,215)

Schlegel had explored the subject of despotism in the political sphere in his essay of 1796 entitled *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus*, which was written in response to, and as a critique of, Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden*. In the *Versuch* Schlegel takes issue with Kant's assertion that democracy as a "Staatsform" is necessarily despotic¹⁴, arguing

¹³. The terms "interessante Poesie" and "das Interessante" are used at different times to denote both the "interested" literature informed by an Enlightenment *Wirkungsästhetik*, and, in a much broader sense, the literature of "modernity", ranging from late Roman times through Dante and Shakespeare up to the present. They are used specifically in a polemic context to refer to the vulgar affective techniques of popular literature. On the evolution of the terms "interested/disinterested" and "interessiert/uninteressiert" in the 18th century see: Martha Woodmansee, *The Interests in Disinterestedness. Karl Philipp Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth Century Germany*, in: *MLQ*, March 1984, Vol.45, pp 22-47, here p 31ff, esp. footnote 14

that a "Privatwille" cannot undertake the representation of the general will, as Kant had maintained was possible in a monarchy. In order for the principles of freedom and equality to be put into practice it is imperative that the general will become "...der Grund aller besondern politischen Tätigkeiten" (KA VII,15). For Schlegel, republicanism is necessarily democratic¹⁵, and the despotic, that is to say, non-democratic state at best a "Quasistaat" (KA,VII,15). From this basic premise he goes on to argue that "...jede provisorische Regierung notwendig despotisch sein muß; da der Despotismus den Schein des allgemeinen Willens usurpiert" (KA,VII,15). Schlegel's argumentation here involves a certain degree of philosophical sleight-of-hand; but it represents the continuation of a thought which is touched upon slightly earlier in the text:

Es ist auch *politisch möglich*, d.h. es ist nicht widersprechend, daß der allgemeine Volkswille beschlösse, auf eine bestimmte Zeit Einem alle Staatsgewalt zu übertragen (nicht abzutreten). Unstreitig ist die Trennung der Gewalten die Regel des republikanischen Staats; aber die Ausnahme von der Regel, die *Diktatur*, scheint mir wenigstens möglich. ... Die transitorische Diktatur...ist eine *politisch mögliche Repräsentation* - also eine *republikanische*, vom Despotismus wesentlich verschiedene Form. (KA,VII,14)

The affinities between despotism and "interessante Poesie" on the one hand, and democratic republicanism and "objektive Poesie" on the other, have been summarized concisely by Bernd Bräutigam¹⁶. Bräutigam points out that in both the *Studium-*

¹⁴. See Kant, Immanuel, *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik 1*, = Werkausgabe Bd.XI, hg. v. William Weischedel, suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1977 p 207

¹⁵. Cf. KA,VII,17: "*Der Republikanismus ist also notwendig demokratisch...etc.*"

Aufsatz and the *Versuch* Schlegel entertains the possibility that, in certain circumstances, a provisional dictatorship may be both justifiable and necessary:

Nicht als dictatura perpetua, wohl aber als eine transitorische Herrschaftsform auf dem Weg zum universalen Republikanismus, die auf den *Akt der Akzeptation* angewiesen ist, sieht Schlegel in ihr eine sich vom Despotismus qualitativ unterscheidende und dem Republikanismus schon angehörende politische Ordnung.¹⁷

Curiously enough, Bräutigam does not anywhere in his very thorough analysis explore the possibility of an implied link between the "transitorische Diktatur", whether political or aesthetic, and the Jacobin dictatorship which presided over the most radical phase of the Revolution. Certainly, Schlegel does refer to transitory dictatorship as a "scharfsinnige(n) griechische(n) Erfindung" (KA,VII,14), to which he gives the credit for "...viele der herrlichsten Produkte, welche das politische Genie je hervorgebracht hat" (ibid.). There is no direct mention of the Jacobins in either text. Nevertheless, the problem of the adequate representation of the general will, and the role of "Öffentlichkeit" or "Publizität" in the political process both bear importantly on the aesthetic deliberations of the *Studium-Aufsatz*; and the Jacobin dictatorship of virtue, as the most radical self-proclaimed embodiment of the general will to manifest itself during the Revolution, is, as I shall try to show, considered as a possible model for effecting change, rather than simply being

¹⁶. See Bräutigam, *Eine schöne Republik*, pp 319-20: "Der kritisierte Despotismus verhält sich zum universellen demokratischen Republikanismus wie die mit der Kategorie des Interessanten belegte und kritisierte literarische Moderne zur herbeigesehnten objektiven Poesie" usw.

¹⁷. Ibid., p 319

excluded from the context of Schlegel's speculations, as Bräutigam and others have argued¹⁸.

Precisely what it is that Schlegel understands by dictatorship is made clear in a passage from the 'Versuch' which employs a rather abstract variant of the metaphor of the body politic to describe the "anatomy" of political power:

Die *Bestandteile* der politischen Macht verhalten sich untereinander und zu ihrem Ganzen, wie die verschiedenen Bestandteile des Erkenntnisvermögens untereinander und zu ihrem Ganzen. Die *konstitutive* Macht entspricht der Vernunft, die *legislative* dem Verstande, die *richterliche* der Urteilskraft und die *exekutive* der Sinnlichkeit, dem Vermögen der Anschauung. Die *konstitutive* Macht ist *notwendig diktatorisch*: denn es wäre widersprechend, das Vermögen der politischen Prinzipien, welche erst die Grundlage aller übrigen politischen Bestimmungen und Vermögen enthalten sollte, dennoch von diesen abhängig machen zu wollen; und eben deswegen nur *transitorisch*.
(KA, VII, 18)

The constitutive power enjoys the same supremacy over the other powers as does reason over the other faculties. Moreover, the constitutive power is made the origin and condition of existence of the subordinate powers, which must also, by analogy, hold true for the relationship between reason and the other faculties. Schlegel implies that there is a hierarchical relationship between the constituent elements of political power and the corresponding mental faculties. In order to understand the nature of Schlegel's conception of republicanism, and its aesthetic correlate, "Objektive Poesie", we need to ask how it is that Reason becomes the "konstitutive Macht", and in what its authority as "governor" of all the faculties is grounded.

¹⁸. Cf. for example Bräutigam's assertion that Schlegel's evaluation of the Revolution is conditioned by an "Unterbietung des in der geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit erreichten Fortschrittsstands" - Eine schöne Republik, p 333

An answer to this question is given implicitly in the *Versuch*, but spelled out in much more detail in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, in the context of the text's enunciation of the characteristics of "objektive Poesie". The definition of "objektive Poesie" offered in the 'Vorrede' which I have quoted earlier is only one of a number of definitions with which Schlegel presents the reader. The adjectives "allgemeingültig" and "gesetzgebend" appear in most of these, and are contrasted with the merely partial validity or one-sidedness of modern "interessante Poesie", and its anarchic lawlessness:

Die Anarchie, welche in der ästhetischen Theorie, wie in der Praxis der Künstler so sichtbar ist, erstreckt sich sogar auf die *Geschichte* der modernen Poesie. Kaum läßt sich in ihrer Masse beim ersten Blick etwas Gemeinsames entdecken; geschweige denn in ihrem Fortgange Gesetzmäßigkeit, in ihrer Bildung bestimmte Stufen, zwischen ihren Teilen entschiedne Grenzen, und in ihrem Ganzen eine befriedigende Einheit. (KA,I,221)

"Interessante Poesie" is governed not by the rule of aesthetic law, but by "Zufall", which Schlegel describes as an "unumschränkter Despot" (KA,I,221). In order for the rightful reign of "objektive Poesie" to be instituted, the despotism of chance must be abolished by means of the "ästhetische Revolution"¹⁹. Only after this revolution, the text argues, can the universal rule of aesthetic law be established:

Eine entartete und mit sich selbst uneinige Kraft bedarf einer Kritik, einer Zensur, und diese setzt eine *Gesetzgebung* voraus. Eine vollständige ästhetische Gesetzgebung würde das erste *Organ* der ästhetischen Revolution sein. Ihre Bestimmung wäre es, die blinde Kraft zu lenken, das Streitende in Gleichgewicht zu setzen, das Gesetzlose zur Harmonie zu ordnen; der

¹⁹. Cf. KA,I,269: "Der Augenblick scheint in der Tat für eine *ästhetische Revolution* reif zu sein, durch welche das Objektive in der ästhetischen Bildung der Modernen herrschend werden könnte."

ästhetischen Bildung eine feste Grundlage, eine sichere Richtung und eine gesetzmäßige Stimmung zu erteilen. Die *gesetzgebende Macht* der ästhetischen Bildung der Modernen dürfen wir aber nicht erst lange suchen. Sie ist schon konstituiert. Es ist die Theorie: denn der Verstand war ja von Anfang an das lenkende Prinzip dieser Bildung. (Ka,I,272)

If we call to mind again the passage from the *Versuch* quoted above, we can see that there is a structural analogy between the "gesetzgebende Macht der ästhetischen Bildung der Modernen" embodied in aesthetic theory, and the legislative power within the state. "Verstand" is the guiding principle of aesthetic theory and the structural correlate of legislative power. But just as "Verstand" is subordinated to an antecedent "Vernunft", so too is the legislative power of aesthetic theory dependent on a primary instance for its legitimacy and authority:

Die Gesetze der ästhetischen Theorie haben aber nur insofern wahre *Autorität*, als sie von der Majorität der öffentlichen Meinung anerkannt und sanktioniert worden sind. Wenn das Bedürfnis allgemeingültiger Wahrheit Charakter des Zeitalters ist, so ist ein durch rhetorische Künste erschliches Ansehn von kurzer Dauer; einseitige Unwahrheiten zerstören sich gegenseitig, und verjährte Vorurteile zerfallen von selbst. Dann kann die Theorie nur durch vollkommene und freie Übereinstimmung mit sich selbst ihren Gesetzen das vollgültigste Ansehn verschaffen, und sich zu einer wirklichen öffentlichen Macht erheben. Nur durch *Objektivität* kann sie ihrer Bestimmung entsprechen. (KA,I,272-3)

There is a certain circularity about the process by which Schlegel arrives at many of the definitions given in his early texts, as has been observed by a number of commentators²⁰. In

²⁰. Cf. Jauß, *Schlegels und Schillers Replik*, p 90: "Es ist schwer zu entscheiden, ob Schlegel im Studium-Aufsatz schon den Zirkel sah, in dem er sich mit seiner Konzeption des objektive Schönen bewegte". Mennemeier refers in the course of his discussion of Schlegel's early poetics to the "zirkelhafte(r) Logik republikanischer Aktivitäten" which, he argues, was apparent to Forster but not, at least to the same extent, to Schegel, who reproduces it in his early texts. Cf.

this instance, he seems to be making the somewhat tautological assertion that objectivity is the precondition of its own existence; or, to put it another way, that the "gesetzgebende Macht" of theory cannot become objective until it has also become an "öffentliche Macht", but that, at the same time, it cannot become a public force until it has achieved objectivity. This is an abstract statement of one of the fundamental unresolved contradictions in the text, to which I shall return later.

For the present, it is important to recognize that the linking of "Objektivität" and "öffentliche Macht" in this passage is highly significant for the argumentation of the *Studium-Aufsatz*, since it involves the equation of aesthetic objectivity with what was, for the time, a relatively radical notion of democracy. Schlegel had argued in the *Versuch* that, since there could be no perfect representation of the absolute general will²¹, the "Wille der Mehrheit" must function as "Proximum der Allheit und Surrogat des allgemeinen Willens" (KA,VII,19). He departs from Rousseau's original absolute formulation of the notion of the general will in maintaining that the popular majority cannot operate "in Person"²², but can

Franz Norbert Mennemeier, *Klassizität und Progressivität. Zu einigen Aspekten der Poetik des jungen Friedrich Schlegel*, in: *Deutsche Literatur zur Zeit der Klassik*, hrsg. von K.O. Conrady, Stuttgart, 1977, pp 283-295, here pp 285-6

²¹. Cf. KA,VII,16: "Aber wie ist der Republikanismus möglich, da der allgemeine Wille seine notwendige Bedingung ist, der absolut allgemeine (und also auch absolut beharrliche) Wille aber im Gebiete der Erfahrung nicht vorkommen kann ... Es bleibt hier nichts übrig, als durch eine *Fiktion* einen empirischen Willen als *Surrogat* des a priori gedachten absolut allgemeinen Willens gelten zu lassen."

be represented "...sehr füglich durch Deputierte und Kommissarien" (KA, VII, 17). This suggests that the general will can best be articulated through a constituted governing body or assembly; but both the *Versuch* and the *Studium-Aufsatz* also clearly comprehend the possibility of the rule of public opinion as a legitimate expression of the general will. Schlegel himself was, as the author of the *Forster-Charakteristik*²³, fully conversant with Forster's writings, and there can be no doubt that when he uses the term "öffentliche Meinung" he does so with the radical manifestation of public opinion described in the *Parisische Umriss* in mind²⁴. It must, of course, be acknowledged that Schlegel is extrapolating from Forster's account of the emergence of public opinion as a political force to a more abstract model for its operation within an ideal democratic republic, or its aesthetic correlate, the state of aesthetic objectivity.

Forster himself had experienced at first hand a form of "Öffentlichkeit" dramatically different from that which, according to Habermas, subsisted in France and Germany before

²². See J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, London, 1955, pp 47-9

²³. *Georg Forster. Fragment einer Charakteristik der deutschen Klassiker*, in KA, Bd.VII, pp 78-99

²⁴. According to Eichner's commentary (KA, II, XVIIIf) the *Forster-Charakteristik* was written while Friedrich Schlegel was still in Jena and published in the *Lyceum der schönen Künste* in 1797. Thus Schlegel must certainly have been conversant with Forster's writings at least before he wrote the 'Vorrede' to the *Studium-Aufsatz*, and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that he had read the *Parisische Umriss* prior to writing both the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Versuch*. Habermas suggests that it was in fact Forster who introduced the phrase "öffentliche Meinung" to Germany (*Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 125-6)

the Revolution. No longer was public opinion the product of the association of predominantly bourgeois private subjects for the purposes of conducting an "öffentliches Raisonement"²⁵, whose political character remained concealed under the mantle of a moral "Kritik". For Forster, public opinion as it manifested itself in the Convention and on the streets of Paris was "...das Werkzeug der Revolution und zugleich ihre Seele"²⁶. Not only had it declared its stake in the political process; it had, in Forster's view, become the enabling instance, the source of political power itself:

Ohne Auszeichnung, ohne irgend etwas Äußeres, das die Sinne besticht, ohne Vorzug und selbst ohne Autorität außer ihrem Versammlungssaale, ohne prätorianische Wache, endlich noch des Vorrechts der Unverletzbarkeit beraubt, herrschen die Repräsentanten des Volks durch die öffentliche Meinung ohne Widerrede über 24 Millionen Menschen. Nie befolgte man ihre Dekrete mit unbedingtem Gehorsam, nie war der Name des Nationalkonvents so die allgemeine Losung des Beifalls, des Zutrauens und des republikanischen Stolzes.²⁷

There is a strong affinity between the radical conception of public opinion which informs the *Parisische Umriss*, and Schlegel's basic premise that the "Majorität der öffentlichen Meinung" and its correlate in the *Versuch*, the "Volksmehrheit", are the constitutive instances, the sources of legitimacy in the aesthetic and political domains respectively. Both are synonymous with a generalized notion of "Vernunft", though Forster is the first to admit that the rule of public opinion in Paris has not always or consistently been

²⁵. Cf. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 51, 73-4, 104-5

²⁶. Forster, *Im Anblick*, p 142

²⁷. *ibid.*, p 152

guided by Reason²⁸. What distinguishes Forster's account of the Revolution from that of his contemporaries is his inclusion of the masses within the ambit of the public sphere and his recognition of the people not just as legitimate participants in the political process, but as the political agent *per se*. He attempts to come to terms with and comprehend what Kurt Wölfel rightly describes as the "soziale Revolution"²⁹ which is taking place in France, while all but a small part of the bourgeois intelligentsia in Germany, still dreaming "...den Traum von einer moralisch-ästhetischen Revolution"³⁰, recoil from what they see as its nightmarish antithesis, the ascendancy of the uneducated masses, who have profaned the sacred principles of morality and reason to whose temple they, the bourgeois public, had previously held the key.

²⁸. Forster's views on the operation of Reason in the course of the Revolution are complex and often contradictory. At times he appears to be beset by doubts about the uses and misuses to which reason can be put in the service of power; as for example in his letter to Therese Forster of the 16th of April 1793, in which he speaks with great feeling, and a disturbing element of prophecy of the "*Tyrannie der Vernunft, vielleicht die eisernste von allen*" which, he speculates, "steht der Welt bevor" (Im Anblick, p 193). In the *Parisische Umriss*, however, he appears to elaborate a conception of reason which is, as Christa Krüger argues, pragmatic, since it rests upon the notion that reason can only express itself historically through collective action within the historical process. Cf. Krüger, *Georg Forsters und Friedrich Schlegel's Beurteilung*, pp 84, 204-5. Forster makes the important qualification that the collective will manifesting itself in the streets of Paris is not solely, nor even predominantly governed by reason: "Diese bewegende Kraft ist allerdings nichts rein Intellektuelles, nichts rein Vernünftiges: sie ist die rohe Kraft der Menge" (Im Anblick, p 134)

²⁹. Wölfel, *Prophetische Erinnerung*, p 213

³⁰. *ibid.*

4.3 Schlegel and the masses

We need now to ask to what extent Schlegel shares not just Forster's conception of a collective Reason, but also his attitude to the role of the masses in the political and aesthetic spheres. This will enable us better to understand what Schlegel means by the possibility of a "transitorische Diktatur" and its place in his speculations about the realisation of objectivity and democracy. In order to answer these questions, we need to consider his invocation of "Öffentlichkeit" as the constitutive power of a future aesthetic Golden Age in the *Studium-Aufsatz* in relation to the text's portrait of public life in ancient Greece.

Throughout the *Studium-Aufsatz* Schlegel stresses the unity of Greek society, and the harmony and interdependence of the different spheres of social life; in attempting to understand the uniqueness of the Greeks, he argues, we must recognize that their "...Kunst, Sitten und Staaten so innigst verflochten sind, daß ihre Kenntnis sich nicht trennen läßt" (KA,I,206). Furthermore, he is at some pains to make it clear that the "natürliche Bildung" of the Greeks was a cultural process in which all were involved and whose aesthetic and intellectual products were the property of all:

Die griechische Schönheit war ein Gemeingut des öffentlichen Geschmacks, der Geist der ganzen Masse.
(KA,I,282)

Deliberately adopting the language of the Enlightenment, Schlegel goes on to argue that Greek culture was distinguished by "...der erste Gebrauch der Mündigkeit" (KA,I,285) in the

aesthetic sphere. It was this which set it apart from all other "Nationalpoesien" (KA,I,285):

Nur sie hat in Masse die Bildungsstufe der Selbstständigkeit erreicht; nur in ihr ist das idealische Schöne öffentlich gewesen. (KA,I,286)

The text carefully skirts around the embarrassing matter of the slaves who provided the material basis for "die griechische Schönheit" - except at the end of one passage which is particularly important for my investigation. Here Schlegel comes closest to explaining how it was that Greek culture, having reached the advanced stage it did, should subsequently have declined so far:

Auch das war *natürlich*, ja notwendig, daß die Griechische Poesie von dem höchsten Gipfel der Vollendung *in die tiefste Entartung versank*. Der Trieb nämlich, welcher die Griechische Bildung lenkte, ist ein mächtiger Bewegter, aber ein blinder Führer. Setzt eine Mannigfaltigkeit blinder bewegender Kräfte in freie Gemeinschaft, ohne sie durch ein vollkommenes Gesetz zu vereinigen: sie werden sich endlich selbst zerstören.

So auch freie Bildung; denn hier ist in die Gesetzgebung selbst etwas Fremdartiges aufgenommen, weil der zusammengesetzte Trieb eine Mischung der Menschheit und der Tierheit ist. Da die letztere eher zum Dasein gelangt, und die Entwicklung der ersten selbst erst veranlaßt, so hat sie in den frühern Stufen der Bildung das Übergewicht. Sie behielt dieses in Griechenland auch bei der größern Masse der ganz ungebildeten Bürger oder Bürgerinnen gebildeter Völker, und der rohgebliebenen Völkerschaften; und zwar eine Masse, aber nur die kleinere herrschende in der größern beherrschten wurde mündig und selbständig. Diese größere Masse äußerte beständig eine starke anziehende Kraft, die bessere zu sich herabzuziehn, welche durch den ansteckenden Einfluß durchmischer Sklaven und umgebender Barbaren noch ungemein verstärkt ward. (KA,I,316-7)

I have quoted the text at considerable length so as to preserve the continuity of Schlegel's argument. The system of binary oppositions which structures it underlies the whole of his confrontation of modernity and Greek antiquity. Greek

culture (Schlegel uses the term "Bildung" in a very broad sense to refer to culture or the cultural process in its entirety) was a product of nature, and as such derived its vital impulses and its orientation from instinct or "Trieb". Once these impulses were set free in the absence of a "vollkommenes Gesetz" - that is to say, the guidance of a perfect "Verstand"³¹ - the triumph of "Tierheit" and the self-destruction of Greek culture were inevitable. The text's statement that, in the entire mass of the people, only the ruling minority had become "mündig und selbständig" would seem to be at odds with earlier assertions about the universality of cultural life in ancient Greece and the involvement of the whole populace in a collective "Schönheit". Moreover, the subject masses, with their admixture of slaves and barbarians, are hardly presented in a very flattering light.

We can see, therefore, that there are certain incongruities in Schlegel's portrait of Greek antiquity. If we turn our attention now to his account of the "artificial"³² culture of modernity, we find the masses presented in a different light. Schlegel does not, however, refer to them directly, but rather by way of metaphor. One of the negative qualities of modern literature upon which the *Studium-Aufsatz* dwells is its lack of unity and coherence:

³¹. See KA,I,230-2, where Schlegel spells out the nature of the opposition of "Trieb" and "Verstand" in some detail. "Trieb" is roughly equated with "Tierheit", "Verstand" with "Menschheit". Interestingly "Vernunft" is not mentioned in this context, though elsewhere in the text "der kindische Verstand" is described as subordinate to a higher "Vernunft" (see KA,I,pp.238, 246)

³². This seems to me an appropriate translation of "künstlich", since Schlegel sees the culture of modernity as the product of artifice, rather than natural growth.

Wenn man diese Zwecklosigkeit und Gesetzlosigkeit des Ganzen der modernen Poesie, und die hohe Trefflichkeit der einzelnen Teile gleich aufmerksam beobachtet: so erscheint ihre Masse wie ein Meer streitender Kräfte wo die Teilchen der aufgelösten Schönheit, die Bruchstücke zerschmetterten Kunst, in trüber Mischung sich verworren durcheinander regen. Man könnte sie ein Chaos alles Erhabnen, Schönen und Reizenden nennen... (KA,I,223-4)

This passage is from the opening section of the text, which is entitled "Von dem Zustande der modernen Dichtkunst". The phrase "Meer streitender Kräfte" anticipates the "Mannigfaltigkeit blinder bewegender Kräfte" of the later passage quoted above. The link between the two passages becomes clearer if we recall that the ocean was a common metaphor in Revolutionary discourse for the people and the principles of freedom and equality which they represented³³. Furthermore, "Mannigfaltigkeit" was, according to Jäger, an attribute conventionally identified with democratic political forms ranging from the republican state to utopian anarchy³⁴. There is thus an implied analogy between the condition of modern literature and the condition of the masses under an imperfect political order which does not unite them through a "vollkommenes Gesetz".

Schlegel equates the "Meer streitender Kräfte" with "ein Chaos...", and following on from this, goes on to establish the condition of anarchy as the central metaphor for the aesthetic condition of modernity:

Schon oft erzeugte ein dringendes Bedürfnis seinen Gegenstand; aus der Verzweiflung ging eine neue Ruhe hervor, und die Anarchie ward die Mutter einer wohltätigen Revolution. Sollte die ästhetische Anarchie

³³. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, pp 26-8, and also Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p 135

³⁴. Jäger, *ibid.*, pp 35-41

unsres Zeitalters nicht eine ähnliche glückliche Katastrophe erwarten dürfen? (Ka,I,224)

The terms "Anarchie" and "Chaos" recur frequently in the text in connection with Schlegel's critique of modernity, and form an important part of the conceptual framework of later texts³⁵. Particularly interesting for our investigation is the chronological order of the postulated developments in the passage just quoted. According to the text it is the state of anarchy which will engender the "wohltätige Revolution" or "glückliche Katastrophe". This is a somewhat surprising statement, since it was a commonplace of counter-revolutionary polemics that the Revolution had unleashed anarchy, rather than vice versa. It is, however, quite consistent with the characterization of the present as a state of aesthetic anarchy at other points in the text. In the context of a stirring exhortation to "alle besseren Menschen" to become "selbsttätig" and participate in enhancing the "Würde der Kunst und der Menschheit" (KA,I,256) Schlegel declares:

Was hilft die Höhe der Bildung ohne eine feste Grundlage? Was ein Chaos einzelner schöner Elemente ohne eine vollständige reine Schönheit? Nur die gewisse Aussicht auf eine günstige Katastrophe der Zukunft könnte uns über den jetzigen Zustand der ästhetischen Bildung befriedigen und beruhigen. (KA,I,256)

Again and again the prospect of a "günstige Katastrophe", "glücklicher Anstoß"³⁶, or "wohltätige Krise"³⁷ is cited as the inevitable and desirable outcome of the anarchic "Herrschaft des Interessanten". For, as Schlegel argues, the "chaotische(n) Anarchie der Masse der modernen Poesie"

³⁵. Cf. KA,I,pp.219, 221, 238, 256, 264, 270, 355, 358.

³⁶. Cf. KA,I,367

³⁷. KA,I,258

(KA,I,270) embraces not just all the positive elements of literature, but also "die entgegengesetzten Arten des ästhetischen Verderbens" (ibid.). In order for these to be overcome and expunged from future literature, "bedarf es einer völligen Umgestaltung, eines totalen Umschwunges einer Revolution" (KA,I,270). Furthermore, in declaring that the time is ripe for such a revolution in aesthetics³⁸, he deliberately inverts and subverts the rhetoric of those critics of the French Revolution who argued that neither France nor Germany, nor indeed any nation had reached the stage of moral development at which they could be considered sufficiently "mature" to engage in the act of revolution³⁹.

4.4 Aesthetic revolution

How are we to interpret Schlegel's advocacy of the "ästhetische Revolution" in the context of his reception of a radical notion of the rule of public opinion, and his attitude to the concrete historical manifestation of politicized and collective public opinion in the Paris of the *sans-culottes*? Bräutigam has argued that Schlegel sees the political revolution in France as "...eher ein Negativfaktor der erhofften kulturellen Revolution"⁴⁰, and that his lack of

³⁸. See Footnote 20 above

³⁹. This is the central question which underlies much of the debate about the Revolution in Germany after the initial phase of euphoria had passed. The classic formulation of the conservative position is given in Schiller's *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung*. See also the extract from the 'Hyperboreische Briefe' of Gerhard Anton von Halen, entitled "Das größte Schauspiel der Menschheitsgesichte", in: Hermand, *Von deutscher Republik*, pp 91-2

regard for the positive achievements of the Revolution leads him to the false conclusion "in der politischen Revolution die interessante Poesie, in der ästhetischen Revolution aber die wahre politische zu sehen"⁴¹. He is quite correct to stress the metaphorical relationship between aesthetic and political revolution, but his interpretation of the *Studium-Aufsatz* ignores two salient features of the text's argumentation.

To begin with, it is perfectly true that, as Bräutigam points out, Schlegel only gives limited approval to the aesthetic products of the Revolution. In the final section of the *Studium-Aufsatz* he states that the French have reached a higher level of perfection "in der öffentlichen griechischen Poesie" than any other nation⁴², and that the appearance of "höhere Lyrik" in France is a direct result of the emergence of "öffentliche Sitten, öffentlichen Willen und öffentliche Neigungen, eine Seele und Stimme der Nation" (KA,I,362). The "höhere Lyrik" of the Revolution is, however, only a partial advance; the text goes on to argue that the French will not achieve the pinnacle of aesthetic perfection, namely the creation of "das schöne Drama", under present conditions:

Das schöne Drama...erfordert absoluten Umfang der Bildung, und völlige Freiheit von nationellen Schranken, Eigenschaften, von denen die Franzosen sehr weit entfernt sind. Es können leicht Jahrhunderte hingehn, ehe sie dieselben erreichen: denn die neue politische Form wird die Einseitigkeit ihres Nationalcharakters nur stärker konzentrieren, und schneidender isolieren. (KA,I,362)

Schlegel takes up again the theme on which he has dwelt at some length earlier in the text, namely his view that it

⁴⁰. Bräutigam, *Eine schöne Republik*, p 333

⁴¹. *ibid.*

⁴². KA,I,362

will be left to the Germans, who are much more advanced in the development of "objektive Theorie" and in the study of the culture of antiquity, to lead the way to the realization of the "schönes Drama"⁴³.

It is this passage which has lead Bräutigam, and more recently Klaus Behrens, to argue that Schlegel sees the French Revolution as a purely contingent phenomenon without any place in the teleology of modernity, or even as a negative factor working against the evolution of objectivity⁴⁴. This interpretation not only fails to recognize the strategic nature of Schlegel's assessment of French literature - a subject to which I shall return later - but also ignores the possibility that he is making a perfectly practical and realistic point about the political situation in Europe, namely that France, precisely because of the "neue politische Form" it had brought into being, was an embattled nation. There was consequently no prospect that the kinds of cultural contact and communication which would have been necessary for the creation of a truly cosmopolitan culture would occur, until the "öffentliche Sitten" which are the precondition of an objective culture emerged outside of France. The intensification of French "Einseitigkeit" is thus contingent on the anachronistic state of political culture in the rest of Europe, and is not the necessary product of France's attempt to establish a collective and democratic state.

⁴³. KA, I, 363

⁴⁴. Cf. Bräutigam, *Eine schöne Republik*, p 333, also Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie*, pp 66-7

The second major flaw in Bräutigam's interpretation lies in his oversimplification of Schlegel's account of the revolutionary process. He identifies the Revolution with the "Herrschaft des Interessanten", thereby ignoring the causal progression which is reiterated at a number of points in the text. It is in fact the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" which, as I shall go on to show, is actually identified with the *ancien régime*, which prepares the way for and precipitates the "glückliche Katastrophe" of the Revolution. In Bräutigam's view, Schlegel adopts much the same stance as Schiller in seeing the possible spread of the French Revolution to Germany as at best a "physische Revolution" (KA,I,262) which would bring with it a "Resurrektion des Animalischen"⁴⁵ and destroy any hope of the inauguration of a "durchgängige Herrschaft des Objektiven" (KA,I,360). As Ingrid Oesterle has shown, the formulation "physische Revolution" invokes the traditional meaning of "revolution", namely that of a violent change in the organic or inorganic natural order⁴⁶. Schlegel keeps the older meaning and its metaphorical application to the historical and political phenomena of the French Revolution quite distinct.

Moreover, there is no evidence in the text to suggest that he equates the Revolution with mass violence and the triumph of "Tierheit"; his description of the effect of the revolution on the French people in fact gives the opposite impression. Elaborating on his assertion that the French are far in advance of the Germans where "Mitteilung der

⁴⁵. Bräutigam, *Eine schöne Republik*, p 334

⁴⁶. See Oesterle, *Der >>glückliche Anstoß<<*, p 169

Kenntnisse, der Sitten und des Geschmacks"⁴⁷ are concerned, and have thus achieved a high level of public culture, Schlegel writes:

Man wird dann das unerwartete Phänomen vermutlich aus der neuen politischen Form erklären wollen, die doch weiter nichts sein kann, als der glückliche Anstoß, welcher die im Stillen lange vorhandene Kraft zur reifen Blüte treibt. (KA,I,362)

There is a clear causal connection between the "glücklicher Anstoß" of the Revolution and the development of "öffentliche Sitten" in France. Furthermore, the phrase "im Stillen lange vorhandene Kraft" echoes the repeated use of the word "Kraft" throughout the text to denote the dynamic energy of the masses, as in the passages quote above⁴⁸. Here the text quite plainly implies that the "glücklicher Anstoß" of revolution in France has encouraged this latent energy to "blossom" and express itself aesthetically in the form of "hohe Lyrik". In the penultimate paragraph of the *Studium-Aufsatz* Schlegel employs the metaphor of dormant power once more to describe the future potential of German culture:

Menschen, deren kurzsichtiger Blick jeder großen historischen Ansicht ganz unfähig ist, die im Detail nur Detail wahrnehmen, und alles isoliert sehen, wird es nicht an kleinlichen Einreden wider diese große Bestimmung der deutschen Dichtkunst fehlen. Wenn aber ein glücklicher Anstoß die noch schlummernde Mitteilungsfähigkeit des deutschen Geschmacks und der deutschen Kunst plötzlich in elastische Regsamkeit versetzte: so würden selbst die Beobachter, welche nur Fraktur lesen können, mit überraschtem Staunen gewahr werden, daß die Deutschen auch hier die kultiviertesten Nationen Europas im einzelnen an Höhe der Bildung ebenso weit übertreffen, als sie denselben an allgemeiner und durchgreifender Verbreitung der Bildung nachstehn. (KA,I,367)

⁴⁷. KA.I.361

⁴⁸. See for example KA,I,255, 262, 271-2

The repetition of the phrase "glücklicher Anstoß" is certainly no accident. The text proposes an analogy between the course of events in France, where the revolution has liberated the creative energy of the masses, and the possibility that a similar "Anstoß", that is to say, a political revolution in Germany, might galvanize the "Mitteilungsfähigkeit" of individuals, which Schlegel had declared in the *Versuch* to be the "Fundament und Objekt der Politik"⁴⁹, into collectively establishing an "objective" culture. One might argue at this point that even though Schlegel sees the necessity of the political revolution, his portrayal of the heights of cultural development to which the Germans might aspire "im einzelnen" suggests an elite rather than a collective notion of culture, and that the "soziale Revolution" has been suppressed or excluded from the speculations of the *Studium-Aufsatz*. To accept this argument would, however, be to ignore both the final sentences of the text, which plead for a broad and open definition of art⁵⁰, but

⁴⁹ Cf. KA, VII, 14-15:

Durch das theoretische Datum, daß dem Menschen, außer den Vermögen, die das rein isolierte Individuum als solches besitzt, auch noch im Verhältnis zu andern Individuen seiner Gattung, das Vermögen der Mitteilung (der Tätigkeiten aller übrigen Vermögen) zukomme; ... erhält der rein praktische Imperativ eine neue spezifisch verschiedene Modifikation, welche das Fundament und Objekt einer neuen Wissenschaft wird. Der Satz: das Ich soll sein; lautet in dieser besondern Bestimmung: Gemeinschaft der Menschheit soll sein, oder das Ich soll mitgeteilt werden. Diese abgeleitete praktische Thesis ist das Fundament und Objekt der Politik...

⁵⁰ Cf. KA, I, 367:

Winckelmann redet einmal von den Wenigen, welche noch die griechischen Dichter kennen. Sollten es nicht schon etzt in Deutschland einige mehr sein? In dieser Hoffnung konsakriere ich diesen

also the overwhelming weight of textual evidence which supports the conclusion that Schlegel had attempted, if only at a theoretical level, to comprehend the necessity for the democratization of political and cultural life.

This is further underlined in an important passage towards the end of the text in which he sets about refuting the conventional belief that it is chance, or more accurately, the boon of nature which gives rise to genius, and that the future development of culture consequently cannot be predicted. At the end of this passage he declares:

So viel weiß die Wissenschaft und die Geschichte nicht. Doch das weiß sie, daß die Seltenheit des Genies nicht die Schuld der menschlichen Natur ist, sondern unvollkommener menschlicher Kunst, *politischer Puscherei*. ... Wenn demungeachtet das unterirdische Feuer sich einmal Luft macht, so wird das als ein Wunder angestaunt. Gebt die Bildung frei, und laßt sehn ob es an Kraft fehlt! Warum hätte auch sonst von jeher selbst die kleinste Gunst des Augenblicks eine so majestätische Fülle schlummernder Kräfte, wie durch einen Zauberschlag ans Licht gerissen? (KA,I,359-60)

Schlegel states his premise and proceeds to illustrate it with a series of metaphors which act out the drama of revolution. The text links the volcanic imagery of "das unterdrückte Feuer", itself a popular conventional metaphor for the Revolution⁵¹, with the dormant or "slumbering" power of the masses. Within this context the admonition "Gebt die Bildung frei!" becomes an unequivocal expression of the conviction that it is both necessary and desirable to liberate the latent energy of the masses. The metaphorical resonances within the *Studium-Aufsatz* simply cannot be ignored: whilst

Aufsatz und diese Sammlung *allen Künstlern*.; so nenne ich alle die "Künstler", welche das Schöne lieben.

⁵¹. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, p 82

the social revolution may not be incorporated explicitly in its articulation of the basic principles of a democratic political culture, the text rehearses the social revolution, as the empowerment of the "Volksmehrheit", in a number of different contexts at a metaphorical level.

There are a number of further points relating to Schlegel's understanding of the revolutionary process which need to be made here. I have already referred to the misunderstanding to which some commentators have fallen prey in equating the destructive "physische Revolution, die freilich alle Kultur mit einem Streich vernichten könnte" (KA,I,262-3) with the Revolution in France and the possibility that it might spread to Germany. Were this indeed the case, then one would expect to find that the Revolution and the masses whom it had sought to empower would be portrayed in terms of arbitrary and destructive natural forces, since the "physische Revolution" is unambiguously identified with nature⁵². However, where the Revolution does appear in the text in the guise of a cataclysmic natural event, it does so as the "glückliche Katastrophe" which will institute the rule of objectivity. Similarly, when the masses are represented in terms of natural metaphor, as in the passage quoted above, where they are alluded to as a subterranean volcanic fire, the weighting which the text gives to this identification is invariably positive. The "große moralische Revolution" (KA,I,262) which Schlegel adumbrates embodies the triumph of freedom over nature in its manifestation as a kind of

⁵². Cf. KA.I,262: "Wenn die Natur nicht etwa *Verstärkung* bekommt, wie durch eine physische Revolution...etc."

deterministic "Schicksal"⁵³, and this triumph is defined as the decisive moment in which "auch im bewegenden Prinzip, in der Kraft der Masse, die Selbsttätigkeit herrschend wird" (KA,I,262). Contrary to what Karl Heinz Bohrer has argued in a recent article⁵⁴, the victory of freedom as it is described in this passage is eminently political, since its precondition, the expansion of "Selbsttätigkeit", is linked to the notion of "Mitteilungsfähigkeit" which Schlegel sees as the basis of political culture and which, as we have seen, he believes can only be activated and liberated by means of a revolutionary political and social transformation.

There is, however, a certain contradiction between the text's assertion on the one hand that it is nature as "Schicksal" which must be overcome if the artificial culture of modernity is to become truly objective, and the identification on the other of the primary agents in this process, namely "die Masse" with creative natural forces or phenomena. This contradiction is connected with a problematic aspect of the texts under discussion to which I have already alluded, namely their definition of "Vernunft" and their understanding of its practical operation. The "Vernunft" from which, according to the *Versuch*, all other faculties and instances derive their authority and legitimacy, corresponds to the objectivity of public opinion embodied in the "Volksmehrheit", and is radically opposed to a deterministic

⁵³. See KA,I,229-30 for Schlegel's elaboration of the identity of "Natur" and "Schicksal"

⁵⁴. See Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Utopie "Kunstwerk"*. Das Beispiel von Friedrich Schlegels *Rede über die Mythologie*, in: Wilhelm Voßkamp (Hrsg.), *Utopieforschung*, Bd.3, 303-332, here pp 328-9, Footnote 67

notion of nature. This is in one sense, a supremely practical definition of Reason, since it not only establishes the general will as the source of all political legitimacy, but also identifies Reason with the actual operation of the general will in the political process. But it also involves a fundamental aporia - or to put it simply, a chicken-and-egg problem. Schlegel cannot resolve the question as to how the abstract idea of a collective, objective reason may begin to operate before it has, in Starobinski's phrase, "become flesh"⁵⁵, that is to say, entered the world of political action. To put it another way: the dynamic energy of the masses has first to be liberated in order that they may become "selbsttätig" and participate in the collective political or aesthetic process. Yet the "vollkommenes Gesetz" whose rule the revolution would inaugurate, and which would unite the fragmented social order, cannot be proclaimed without the authority of a "Majorität der öffentlichen Meinung" which still remains to be constituted.

This unresolved contradiction in Schlegel's early texts has its roots in the same intractable question which nearly all of his contemporaries attempted to answer in one form or another, and which Bohrer has stated succinctly as a disagreement about whether "Sittlichkeit" was the prerequisite for a transformation of the "Staatsverfassung", or vice versa⁵⁶. Schlegel can be seen as having adopted and elaborated the response to this question which Forster had made in his *Darstellung der Revolution in Mainz*, where he wrote:

⁵⁵. See Starobinski, 1789. *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, p53

⁵⁶. *ibid.*, p 329

Ich gestehe, daß ich mich in den Ausdruck, dessen sich auch wohl kluge Männer bedienen, nicht wohl finden kann: Ein gewisses Volk...ist zur Freiheit nicht reif; die Leibeigenen sind zur Freiheit noch nicht reif; und so auch die Menschheit überhaupt sind zur Glaubensfreiheit noch nicht reif. Nach einer solchen Voraussetzung aber wird die Freiheit nie eintreten; denn man kann zu dieser nicht reifen, wenn man nicht zuvor in Freiheit gesetzt worden ist; (man muß frei sein, um sich seiner Kräfte in der Freiheit zweckmäßig bedienen zu können).⁵⁷

Interestingly enough, Forster himself does not deny the difficulties associated with this position. In the opening section of the *Parisische Umriss* he refers to the liberated energy of public opinion in action as "dieses große, nicht zu berechnende Mobil der Volkskraft"⁵⁸, and argues that it can never be wholly governed by the dictates of Reason:

Diese bewegende Kraft ist allerdings nichts rein Intellektuelles, nichts rein Vernünftiges: sie ist die rohe Kraft der Menge. Insofern die Vernunft ein vom Menschen unzertrennliches Prädikat ist, insofern hat sie freilich auf die Revolution ihren Einfluß, wirkt mit in ihre Bewegung und bestimmt zum Teil ihre Richtung; aber präponderieren kann sie nicht...⁵⁹

Thus Schlegel's identification of "Vernunft" with the "Volksmehrheit" or "Majorität der öffentlichen Meinung" as the constitutive source of legitimacy in both the political and aesthetic realms is in one sense more radical than Forster's conception of the rule of public opinion, but at the same time decidedly more utopian, since it does not comprehend the practical difficulties inherent in the operation of the general will as the fallible collective expression of fallible individual subjects. It is, however, instructive to recall that Schiller, whose *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung*

⁵⁷. Forster, *Im Anblick*, p 125

⁵⁸. *ibid.*, p 135

⁵⁹. *ibid.*, pp 134-5

propose a no less utopian program for the advancement of "Sittlichkeit", in preference to a revolutionary transformation of the "Staatsverfassung", had, in the 'Brief an Augustenberg', spoken of "dem herrlichsten aller Kunstwerke, der Monarchie der Vernunft", which the Revolution had, in his view, utterly failed to bring into existence⁶⁰. Contrasted with Schiller's metaphorical representation of the rule of Reason, Schlegel's attempts to articulate an understanding of the political process which is collective and democratic, and regards revolution and revolutionary dictatorship as legitimate and necessary steps in the "collectivization" of political and cultural life, must be seen as a radical elaboration and re-definition of the tradition of classical republicanism which Schiller strives to preserve in its pre-Revolutionary form. We need, moreover to recall that, in the time during which Schlegel was engaged in writing the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Versuch*, the popular movement of the sans-culottes, which Forster had seen as the motive force behind the rule of public opinion, was crushed and disenfranchised by the bourgeois Thermidoreans, who set about establishing a "Landowners' Republic"⁶¹. Seen against this background, Schlegel's advocacy of the rule of the "Volksmehrheit" represents a declaration of sympathy with the Jacobin experiment, despite its contradictory nature⁶², rather

⁶⁰. Cf. Träger, *Die Französische Revolution im Spiegel*, p 265

⁶¹. See Soboul, *The French Revolution*, p 455

⁶². See Soboul, *The French Revolution*, p 374ff; Soboul argues that the Jacobin regime was essentially bourgeois in character, and that tensions had emerged between it and the popular movement some time before the fall of Robespierre.

than the "moderate" bourgeois order, which reversed any progress made in the democratization of French political life in the radical phase of the Revolution.

Broadly speaking, one can say of the *Studium-Aufsatz* that, whilst it attempts, in conjunction with the *Versuch*, to argue at a theoretical level for the revolutionary inauguration of a democratic, republican state, the program of practical action which it presents remains firmly anchored in the realm of aesthetics. Furthermore, this program contains some elements which appear to conflict at least partly with the imperatives of Schlegel's theoretical political position. This has lead Bräutigam to conclude that, despite the avowedly progressive character of the early texts, "die revolutionären Impulse erkaufte sind mit einer Interpretation der vorhandenen geschichtlichen Realität, von der aus nicht mehr einsichtig ist, wie die im ästhetischen und politischen Imperativ formulierten revolutionären Ziele jemals noch an die zu verändernde Wirklichkeit herangebracht werden können."⁶³. There is a certain amount of truth in the latter part of this statement, though whether or not this is a direct consequence of Schlegel's interpretation of historical reality is a question which would require further consideration. For the present, however, I shall turn my attention to a few aspects of his aesthetic program for the fostering of objectivity, and, in particular, his repudiation of the affective aesthetics of the Enlightenment in favour of an aesthetics of autonomy or "disinterestedness", whose principal proponents

⁶³. Bräutigam. Eine schöne Republik, p 339

had been German writers and philosophers such as Kant, Schiller and K.P.H. Moritz.

4.5 Aesthetic autonomy and "social writing".

The salient features of Schlegel's "disinterested" progressive poetics have been outlined by F.N. Mennemeier in a short essay which also points to some of the contradictions and tensions in the early speculative and programmatic writings⁶⁴. Mennemeier demonstrates the connection between the rejection of an instrumentalist conception of literature as a tool of moral instruction in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, and the development of the idea of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller" in the *Forster-Charakteristik*⁶⁵. The redefinition of the category of the classic which Schlegel undertakes in the latter text so as to classify Forster as a classic prose writer allows him, in Mennemeier's view, to make "tatsächlich Fortschritte im Bereich poetischer Liberalisierung"⁶⁶, while rejecting the idea of revolution as a means to political emancipation in Germany⁶⁷.

Leaving aside Mennemeier's assessment of Schlegel's attitude to the Revolution, it will be useful to consider

⁶⁴. See Footnote 21 above

⁶⁵. On the idea of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller" see KA,II,91-99. See also Mennemeier, *Klassizität und Progressivität*, p 291

⁶⁶. Mennemeier, *ibid.*, p 290

⁶⁷. Cf. Mennemeier, *ibid.*, p 284: "Denn fraglos war die konkrete politische Einschätzung der deutschen Lage seitens Friedrich Schlegels wie fast der gesamten Frühromantik von der Position Goethes kaum oder gar nicht unterschieden...".

briefly the sources for the aesthetic program of the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Forster-Charakteristik*. As is well known, the notion of the disinterested work of art, whose sole purpose is the realization of "das Schöne", derives from the writings of Karl Philipp Moritz, and in particular his essay of 1785 entitled *Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des in sich selbst Vollendeten*⁶⁸. In a recent and very illuminating article Martha Woodmansee has advanced the hypothesis that Moritz' theory of the autonomy or self-sufficiency of the work of art, and its enthusiastic reception in the last decade of the 18th century, have their roots in specific social phenomena, namely the expansion of the literate bourgeoisie in the German states in the preceding decades, and the changes in the nature of the literary market which resulted from their "Lesewut"⁶⁹. As the size of the reading public increased, their reading habits and tastes altered; devotional literature declined in popularity as the middle classes developed "a voracious appetite for the entire spectrum of light entertainment"⁷⁰. In the course of this development, the pedagogic purpose of the Enlightenment, which had been at least partially responsible for the spread of literacy, and the growth of a vernacular literature, became increasingly subservient to the dictates and techniques of a

⁶⁸. See Peter Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie I*, p 89. Szondi gives a very clear account of Moritz' pioneering contribution to the development of "Autonomieästhetik", or as he puts it, "Realästhetik". See also Janz, *Autonomie und Soziale Funktion*, pp 57-60. Janz points out that Moritz modified his theory in a later text to include a collective dimension to art, p 59

⁶⁹. See Footnote 14 above

⁷⁰. Woodmansee, *The Interests in Disinterestedness*, p 39

literature seeking to entertain and captivate a broad readership under conditions of considerable economic competitiveness⁷¹. The demands of the market made it more and more difficult for writers to pursue the high moral aim which Wieland, in his preface to *Lady Johanna Grey*, had ascribed specifically to tragedy, but which might have served as a motto to the instrumental aesthetics of the Enlightenment generally. This aim was simply "das Große, Schöne und Heroische der Tugend vorzustellen"⁷². As popular literature left this aim further and further behind, those who felt that the affective powers of literature should serve serious ends reacted by condemning the public they had sought to educate:

Increasingly...the *Aufklärer* vent their frustrations on the reading public itself. Unable to reach the new broad-gauge audience on whose approval they depended for a livelihood, the *Aufklärer* decry the public for wanting only to be "diverted", "moved", "stimulated". Displaying a lack of fellow feeling without parallel in the English letters of the period, they condemn the unwitting public for its "addiction" to the "pleasant sensations" manufactured by the growing literature industry. It is Moritz, however, who converts these discontents into a viable weapon of cultural politics.⁷³

Woodmansee goes on to describe how this weapon was employed:

By shifting the measure of a work's value from its pleasurable effects on an audience to such purely intrinsic considerations as "the perfection of the work

⁷¹. *ibid.*, p 42: "With the expansion of the book market to satisfy demands which the *Aufklärer* themselves had devoted so much of their time and energies to stimulate, these writers began to see the goal of their efforts recede, betrayed by the profit motive of a free market and by the laws of supply and demand."

⁷². Quoted in M. Dietrich and P. Stefanek (Hrsg.), *Deutsche Dramaturgie von Gryphius bis Brecht*, München, 1965, p 64

⁷³. Woodmansee, *The Interests in Disinterestedness*, p 43. On the attitudes of "high Enlightenment" figures such as Schiller and Lessing to the public, see Kiesel & Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur*, pp 97-100

itself", Moritz arms his own and all "serious" writing against the eventuality of a hostile or indifferent reception. As literature became subject to the laws of a market economy, the instrumentalist theory, especially in the affective formulation given it by the generation of Mendelssohn, was found to justify the wrong works. That is, it was found to justify the products of the purveyors of strong effects, with whom more serious writers could not effectively compete. The theology of art fashioned by Moritz offered such writers both a convenient and a very powerful set of concepts with which to address the predicament in which they found themselves - concepts by which (serious or "fine") Art's *de facto* loss of direct instrumentality could be recuperated as a (supreme) virtue.⁷⁴

Whilst this hypothesis doubtless requires considerable elaboration and differentiation, it provides us with a useful framework within which to consider Schlegel's early texts. Woodmansee does not include in her conclusion any discussion of the fact that Moritz and those who developed his theory further succeeded, consciously or unconsciously, in throwing the pedagogical baby out with the affective bathwater⁷⁵. It is this dilemma - that, in freeing art from the imperative to manipulate the reader with effects, the educative social function which had constituted its value for the Enlightenment was sacrificed - which Schlegel attempts to resolve in the *Forster-Charakteristik* by formulating the idea of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller, welcher die gesamte Menschheit umfassen soll"⁷⁶, and whose goal it will be "alle

⁷⁴. *ibid.*, p 46

⁷⁵. Cf. Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie*, p 95:
 Moritz scheint...nicht bedacht zu haben, daß seine Auffassung vom Schönen als vom In-Sich-Vollendeten die Kunst aus den Fesseln der Nützlichkeit befreit; daß man das Schöne - um eine andere seine prägnanten Umkehrungen zu zitieren - *nicht betrachtet, in so fern man es brauchen kann, sondern man braucht es nur, in so fern man es betrachten kann.*

Further thereto p 97: "Damit aber ist die Grenze der Wirkungsästhetik überschritten..."

wesentlichen Anlagen des Menschen anzuregen, zu bilden und wieder zu vereinigen"⁷⁷. Schlegel's language seems hardly distinguishable from that of the classical Enlightenment. A link with the polemics of the *Studium-Aufsatz* is suggested by the continuation of his description of the task of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller":

Diese für das ganze Geschlecht wie für einzelne, unbedingt notwendige *Wiedervereinigung* aller der Grundkräfte des Menschen, welche in Urquell, Endziel und Wesen eins und unteilbar, doch verschieden erscheinen, und getrennt wirken und sich bilden müssen, kann und darf nicht etwa *aufgeschoben* werden, bis die Vervollkommnung der einzelnen Fertigkeiten durchaus vollendet wäre; das hieße, *auf ewig*. Sie muß mit dieser zugleich, als gleich heilig, und zu gleichen Rechten, verehrt werden; wenn auch nicht durch denselben Priester. Weltbürgerliche gesellschaftliche Schriften sind also ein ebenso unentbehrliches Mittel und Bedingnis der fortschreitenden Bildung, als eigentlich wissenschaftliche und künstlerische. Sie sind die *echten Prosaisten*; wenn wir nemlich unter *Prosa* die grade allgemeine Heerstraße der gebildeten Sprache verstehn, von welcher die eigentümlichen Mundarten des Dichters und des Denkers nur notwendige Nebenwege sind. (KA,II,91)

The stress which is placed here on the necessity for a reunification of the disassociated faculties or sensibilities, as part of a *collective* process, corresponds to the argument of the *Studium-Aufsatz* that the "interessante Poesie" of modernity is a fragmented, dis-integrated chaos which must be reunited under an aesthetic law which is "allgemeingültig". When Schlegel describes prose as "die grade allgemeine Heerstraße der gebildeten Sprache" the metaphor suggests a positive evaluation of the broad public of readers, and of a literature which fulfils their needs. Schlegel's further remarks on the nature of the public reinforce this impression:

⁷⁶. KA,II,83

⁷⁷. *ibid.*, p 91

Die allgemeine Vorliebe für Forsters Schriften ist ein wichtiger Beitrag zu einer künftigen Apologie des Publikums gegen die häufigen Winke der Autoren, daß das Publikum sie, die Autoren, nicht wert sei. Jeder, vom Größten zum Geringsten, meint auf das wehrlose Geschöpf unritterlich und unbarmherzig losschlagen zu müssen. Mehrere haben ihm sogar ins Ohr gesagt, was der Gottesleugner bei Voltaire dem höchsten Wesen: "Ich glaube, du existierst nicht." - Indessen stehn doch nicht bloß einzelne Leser auf einer hohen Stufe, wo sie der Schriftsteller nicht gar viele antreffen möchten. Selbst das große, allgemein verachtete Publikum hat nicht selten, wie auch hier, durch die Tat richtiger geurteilt, als diejenigen, welche die Fabrikate ihres Urteilstriebes öffentlich ausstellen. (KA,II,91-2)

This spirited defence of the public stands in sharp contrast to the condescending and often embittered assessments of public taste which Woodmansee cites in her article⁷⁸. It also corresponds closely to a passage in the *Studium-Aufsatz* in which Schlegel attacks the "illiberale Denkart"⁷⁹ of certain German writers and critics who despise the German public on account of its members' "Mangel an Mitteilungsfähigkeit" (ibid). Schlegel writes:

Die erhabene Gelassenheit der Deutschen Nation, und die neidischen Anfeindungen kleiner Geister erzeugen oft bei verdienstvollen aber eitlen Männern üble Laune, welche sich zu einer böartigen Bitterkeit verhärten kann. Ihr Gemüt ist so unfähig, sich über die enge Gegenwart zu erheben, daß sie echte Schönheit überhaupt für ein *Myster*, und die Öffentlichkeit der ästhetischen Bildung für ganz unmöglich halten. Nur durch *Geselligkeit* wird die rohe Eigentümlichkeit gereinigt und gemildert, erwärmt und erheitert; das innre Feuer sanft ans Licht getrieben, die äußere Gestalt berichtet und bestimmt, gerundet und geschärft. (KA,I,361)

Schlegel goes on to refer to the writers and intellectuals whom he is criticizing as an "Orden ohne Geheimnis", a somewhat sardonic description which, as we shall see in a later chapter, represents an interesting contrast to

⁷⁸. Woodmansee, *The Interests in Disinterestedness*, p 43

⁷⁹. KA,I,361

the recurrent use in Novalis' writings of the "Loge" or "Geheimorden" as a metaphor for an oppositional elite community, of which he and his Early Romantic colleagues would constitute the core.

It would seem from the positive attitude which Schlegel expresses towards the reading public and the "weltbürgerliche, gesellschaftliche Schriften" appropriate to their needs that there are two separate and at least partially contradictory strands in the programmatic intentions of the three texts which we have been considering. On the one hand, he rejects both a purely sensationalist and a pedagogically "interested" affective aesthetics, arguing consistently throughout the *Studium-Aufsatz* that:

Das Gute, das Wahre soll getan, erkannt, nicht dargestellt und empfunden werden... (KA,I,214)

and that the study of literature cannot in itself impart a sound moral judgement, or insight into human nature to the student⁸⁰. At the same time, however, he shows no inclination to adopt the elitist conception of art which developed with and through the theory of aesthetic autonomy. Instead, he stresses the necessary and laudable social function fulfilled by "popular" prose writers, for whom the radical democrat Forster is seen as exemplary.

As I shall try to demonstrate, we need to understand this contradiction, and the resolution of it which Schlegel attempts, in the context of his desire to participate in creating a progressive and uniquely German political and

⁸⁰. Cf. KA,I,214: "Für eine Menschenkenntnis, die aus dem Shakespeare, für eine Tugend, die aus der Heloise geschöpft ist, gebe ich nicht viel."

artistic culture. Both the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Forster-Charakteristik* place a considerable amount of emphasis on the special characteristics of German literature and its relationship to other European literatures. At the beginning of the *Forster-Charakteristik*, Schlegel states that "Deutschheit" consists solely in the "echte, eigne und gemeinschaftliche Bildung" which is spread amongst the middle-classes, who constitute "den gesundesten Teil der Nation", by literature, or *Schriften*, as he puts it⁸¹. Forster's writings are the epitome of German cosmopolitanism and universality; he was "ein echter Weltbürger deutscher Herkunft"⁸², and as such incorporated and united in himself and his works the partial achievements of individual national cultures:

Forster bewies auch darin seine universelle Empfänglichkeit und Ausbildung, daß er französische Eleganz und Popularität des Vortrags, und engländische Gemeinnützigkeit, mit deutscher Tiefe des Gefühls und des Geistes vereinigte. Er hatte sich diese ausländischen Tugenden wirklich ganz zugeeignet. Alles ist aus Einem Stück in seinen Schriften, und hat deutsche Farbe. Denn er blieb ein Deutscher; noch zuletzt in Paris fühlte er seine Deutschheit sehr bestimmt. (KA,I,93-4

Schlegel does not attribute to Forster's writings the quality of objectivity, even though he is at pains to establish his credentials as a "klassischer Schriftsteller". The distinction of having approached the condition of objectivity is reserved for Goethe, to whose writings Schlegel refers in the *Studium-Aufsatz* as "die Morgenröte echter Kunst und reiner Schönheit"⁸³, and, over and above this, "eine unwiderlegliche

⁸¹. KA,VII,78

⁸². KA,VII,89

⁸³. KA,I,260

Beglaubigung, daß das Objektive möglich...sei"⁸⁴. It is interesting to note that "Morgenröte" belongs to the field of metaphor associated with "daybreak" and "sunrise" which was a popular source of images for the Revolution from 1789 onwards⁸⁵.

This implied parallel between the importance of the Revolution in the realm of politics and that of Goethe's works in the literary sphere, which Schlegel was to give its most famous formulation in the Athenäums-Fragment No.216⁸⁶, is developed further. Schlegel goes on to trump his own bid by asserting of Goethe's writing's that "...Das Objektive ist hier wirklich schon erreicht", and that the aesthetic revolution is not only inevitable, but imminent. Goethe's objectivity and universality, and the progress towards a revolutionization of culture which they embody, are seen as a specifically German achievement:

Die berüchtigte Deutsche Nachahmungssucht mag hie und da wirklich den Spott verdienen, mit dem man sie zu brandmarken pflegt. Im Ganzen aber ist Vielseitigkeit ein echter Fortschritt der ästhetischen Bildung, und ein naher Vorbote der Allgemeingültigkeit. Die sogenannte Charakterlosigkeit der Deutschen ist also dem manirierten Charakter anderer Nationen weit vorzuziehen, und erst, wenn die nationale Einseitigkeit ihrer ästhetischen Bildung mehr verwischt, und berichtigt sein wird, können sie sich zu der höhern Stufe jener Vielseitigkeit erheben. (KA,I,259)

This argument is repeated again and again in various different contexts throughout the *Studium-Aufsatz*⁸⁸. Schlegel's

⁸⁴. KA,I,262

⁸⁵. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, p 16ff, and Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, pp 154ff

⁸⁶. See KA,I,198

⁸⁷. Cf. KA,I,262

apodictic statement in the course of his encomium to Goethe that "Das Ziel des Deutschen ist...das Objektive"⁸⁹ leaves little doubt that he regards German literary culture as the embodiment of the European avant-garde. This is the context in which we must see the disparaging remarks about French literature, and especially the French neo-classical tragedy, which are scattered throughout the text. Bräutigam has argued that the portrayal of French tragedy as "eine mißglückte Prätension des Objektiven", whose form is "ein widersinniger, barbarischer Mechanismus"⁹⁰, amounts to a damning condemnation of the French Revolution⁹¹. Yet the strict adherence to classical norms prescribed and practised by the French proponents of a "Nachahmung des Antiken"⁹², is clearly identified in the text with the *ancien régime* and its appeals to tradition, precedent and the natural order as the sources of its legitimacy. Schlegel writes:

Der kindische Verstand erhebt das einzelne Beispiel zur allgemeinen Regel, adelt das Herkommen, und sanktioniert das Vorurteil. Die *Autorität der Alten*...ist das erste Grundgesetz in der Konstitution des ältesten ästhetischen Dogmatismus, welcher nur die Vorübung der eigentlich philosophischen Theorie der Poesie war. (KA,I,238)

The "*ästhetische Vorurteile*" (KA,I,262) which have arisen as a result of an overly pious regard for the precepts of Greek literature and aesthetic theory are criticized at a number of points in the text⁹³, and it is wholly consistent

⁸⁸. See for example KA,I,226, 331, 355, 362-4

⁸⁹. KA,I,260-1

⁹⁰. KA,I,363

⁹¹. Bräutigam, *Eine schöne Republik*, pp 333-4

⁹². KA,I,238

⁹³. Cf. for example KA,I,264, and especially KA,I,349-50:

with this criticism that Schlegel should castigate the French tragedy for its "Prätension des Objektiven". Moreover, when Schlegel asserts that the new political form in France will have the effect of further concentrating and isolating the "Einseitigkeit" of the French national character, he is not only making a practical and realistic observation about the state of European politics, as I have argued earlier, but also scoring a strategic point. His intention is not to criticize the new political form brought into being by the Revolution, which he has already declared to be a precondition of objectivity, but rather to contrast the nascent universality of the Germans with the limited "nationale Subjektivität (KA,I,331) of the French"⁹⁴.

As I have tried to show, the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Forster-Charakteristik* offer two separate but related blueprints for a specifically German literature: the classic prose writer Forster, whose writings fulfil an indispensable social function, and the objective artist Goethe, whose primary concern is "das Schöne". If we attempt to locate these blueprints within the framework of Schlegel's speculations about the achievement of aesthetic objectivity and the empowerment of the "Volksmehrheit", we can, I would argue, see

Der unglücklichste Einfall, den man je gehabt hat, und von dessen allgemeiner Herrschaft noch jetzt viele Spuren übrig geblieben sind, war es: Der *Griechischen Kritik und Kunsttheorie* eine Auktorität beizulegen, welche im Gebiete der theoretischen Wissenschaft durchaus unstatthaft ist. Hier glaubte man den eigentlichen *ästhetischen Stein der Weisen* zu finden...

Schlegel's historical exposition of the successive phases of aesthetic development, of which the "Nachahmung des Antiken" is a necessary but transitory stages, is given on KA,I,355.

⁹⁴. See Oesterle, *Der >>glückliche Anstoß<<*, pp 191-2

them as successive terms in a teleological process, rather than mutually exclusive alternatives.

As we have seen in an earlier part of this discussion, both the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Versuch* propound the view that a transitory dictatorship is a legitimate, and at certain times necessary manifestation of the sovereign general will, providing it does not attempt to entrench itself in power. If we consider these two texts in conjunction with the *Forster-Charakteristik*, there is evidence to suggest that Schlegel contemplates a similar possibility in the sphere of aesthetics, namely a transitory dictatorship of "social writing" which will prepare the way for the rule of objectivity and a universal "Autonomieästhetik". F.H. Mennemeier has pointed to the significance of Schlegel's rejection of the *Sturm und Drang* cult of genius, and drawn attention to the alternative conception of aesthetic activity predicated on the "Fähigkeit..., mitwirkender Teil einer unendlich fortschreitenden Praxis zu sein"⁹⁵ which is elaborated in the early texts. This conception rests on the premise stated in the *Forster-Charakteristik* that there can be no "schriftstellerischer Künstler" so worthy of imitation that his work will not be superseded⁹⁶.

Once this premise has been accepted, a new definition of the classic work becomes necessary, which Mennemeier formulates thus:

⁹⁵. Mennemeier, *Klassizität und Progressivität*, p 291

⁹⁶. Cf. KA, II, 80: "Es kann fernerhin kein schriftstellerischer Künstler so nachahmungswürdig werden, daß er nicht einmal veralten, und überschritten werden müßte."

Nicht trotz, sondern wegen der Fähigkeit, durch den Schaffensprozeß der "Menschheit" überholt zu werden, dauert das "klassische Werk".⁹⁷

Schlegel's insistence that "das zweifelhafte und ominöse Merkmal der Unsterblichkeit"⁹⁸ be expunged from the concept of the classic is, once again, primarily strategic, but he is entirely consequent in the application of his revised notion of the classic to Forster's own writings:

Möchten doch Forsters Schriften recht bald so weit übertroffen werden, daß sie überflüssig, und nicht mehr gut genug für uns wären; daß wir sie von Rechts wegen *antiquiren* können. (KA,II,93)

The model of the "social writer" is thus seen as having a particular function within the progressive development of culture, but a function which may itself one day become redundant. There is a certain affinity between this pragmatic idea of the role of the social writer, and the delineation of the function of "politische Kunst" in a passage in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, in which Schlegel also discusses the relation of politics to aesthetics:

Die politische Beurteilung ist der höchste aller Gesichtspunkte: die untergeordneten Gesichtspunkte der moralischen, ästhetischen und intellektuellen Beurteilung sind *unter sich gleich*. Die Schönheit ist ein ebenso ursprünglicher und wesentlicher Bestandteil der menschlichen Bestimmung als die Sittlichkeit. Alle diese Bestandteile sollen unter sich im Verhältnisse der *Gesetzesgleichheit* (Isonomie) stehen, und die schöne Kunst hat ein unveräußerliches Recht auf *gesetzliche Selbständigkeit* (Autonomie). Es ist die Bestimmung des *politischen Vermögens*, die einzelnen Kräfte des ganzen Gemüts, und die Individuen der ganzen Gattung zur Einheit zu ordnen. Die *politische Kunst* darf zu diesem Zwecke die Freiheit der Einzelnen beschränken, ohne jedoch jenes konstitutionelle Grundgesetz zu verletzen; aber nur unter der Bedingung, daß sie die fortschreitende Entwicklung nicht hemmt, und eine künftige vollendete

⁹⁷. Mennemeier, *Klassizität und Progressivität*, pp 291-2

⁹⁸. KA,II,93

Freiheit nicht unmöglich macht. Sie muß gleichsam streben, sich selbst überflüssig zu machen. (KA,I,325)

This passage is remarkable in two respects: for its conflation of the language of the Revolutionary Enlightenment with Moritz' theory of aesthetic autonomy, and for the primacy which it accords to politics⁹⁹. This primacy is however, in a sense, historically conditional; there is a structural analogy between the function of "politische Kunst" and that of the "social writer". Just as the ultimate purpose of the social writer is to be superseded by the public culture he or she is helping to bring into being, so too is it the function of the "art" of politics and those who practice it to make their art and themselves redundant. Oesterle has shown that this

⁹⁹. A number of commentators have been at some pains to stress that when Schlegel uses the word "politics" he really means something else. So, for example, Krüger makes the following remarks concerning the passage quoted from KA,I,325:

Dabei muß aber berücksichtigt werden, daß Schlegels Auffassung des politischen Vermögens ebenso wenig sich auf das konventionelle Verständnis des Politischen als der Fähigkeit, die Aufgaben eines empirischen Staatswesens zu unterstützen und zu beurteilen, bezieht, wie Fichtes Begriff der Gesellschaft eine empirische Gesellschaft meint. (Krüger, Georg Forsters und Friedrich Schlegels Beurteilung, p 161).

A similar statement is made by Bohrer (Utopie "Kunstwerk", p 325, Footnote 15 - ref. to Mennemeier, *Poesiebegriff*, 338, Anm.58), but neither he nor Krüger gives any clue as to what Schlegel might mean by the terms "Politik", "politische Kunst" or "politisches Vermögen". Yet Schlegel quite explicitly declares in the *Versuch* that he rejects Kant's notion of politics as "die Kunst...den Mechanismus der Natur zur Regierung der Menschen zu nutzen" - an understanding of politics which owes more to the Renaissance and Machiavelli than it does to the Enlightenment - and chooses to define politics instead as "eine praktische Wissenschaft, im kantischen Sinne dieses Worts, deren Objekt die Relation der praktischen Individuen und Arten ist" (KA,VII,15). Regardless of whether or not Schlegel's own interpretation of Kant's conception of politics is correct, his definition of politics - vague as it is - and the remarks on "politische Kunst" in the *Studium-Aufsatz* belong within the mainstream of the modern conception of the political inaugurated by the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

conception of the political process derives from Fichte's series of lectures entitled *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*, which he had held in Jena in 1794¹⁰⁰. She does not, however, go on to make the connection between the statement in the above passage that a temporary and transitory curtailment of individual freedom is permissible if it serves the end of "unification", and Schlegel's remarks elsewhere about the legitimacy of transitory dictatorship.

There can be no doubt that when Schlegel raises the possibility of such a dictatorship as a means of effecting political transformation, he has the Jacobin "dictatorship of virtue" in the forefront of his mind. This is not to say that he is writing an apologia for the excesses of the Terror, or allying himself unreservedly with the radical phase of the Revolution, though he declares his support for some of the principles which informed it.

Rather, the Jacobin experiment is for Schlegel a paradigm which he has, as it were, abstracted from the materiality of history. Transitory dictatorship as the temporary but rightful investiture of the objective general will in an individual or individuals, as a "*politisch mögliche Repräsentation*" (KA,VII,14), is projected into the realm of aesthetics¹⁰¹. Schlegel envisages a temporary regime of "social writing",

¹⁰⁰. See Oesterle, p 183

¹⁰¹. Schlegel may have had the Roman notion of dictatorship in mind here, according to which dictatorship - at least as it was practised in the early part of Rome's history - was a justifiable condition so long as it remained temporary. The term "dictatorship" is used frequently in revolutionary discourse, especially during the Jacobin period, with both positive and negative connotations. See *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd.1, Artikel "Diktatur".

which will possess some objective tendencies but remain at least partially interested. He sees the immediate development of a literature oriented towards "das große, verachtete Publikum" as the precondition for the participation of the social totality - the masses, in other words - in what H.H. Ewers has called the "Restitution des Schönen"¹⁰². This social literature must however strive constantly to render itself superfluous, to pave the way for the "durchgängige Herrschaft des Schönen" presaged by the works of Goethe.

I have chosen to read these three early texts of Schlegel's in tandem, and to make broad inferences from one to another, in order to show both the structural congruences in their arguments, and the ways in which they can be seen as responses to the European political climate at the precise historical moment during which they were written, and, more specifically, the condition of German political culture and cultural politics. The idea of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller" which is developed in the *Forster-Charakteristik* represents, in my view, an attempt to overcome the "Dichotomisierung von hoher und niederer Literatur" to which I referred in my opening chapter. This attempt seeks to introduce a dimension of historical dynamism - a rudimentary dialectic, we might say - into the essentially static conception of literature as the composite of two distinct and complementary elements, namely a public writing for "das Volk" and a private, secret writing for "die Wenigen"¹⁰³. Oesterle's

¹⁰². Ewers, H.H., *Die schöne Individualität. Zur Genese des bürgerlichen Kunst-Ideals*. Stuttgart, 1978, p 144

¹⁰³. Quoted by Oesterle, p 184

careful and balanced exposition of the relationship between Schlegel's concepts of "Geselligkeit", "Gemeinschaft" and "Öffentlichkeit" and their literary manifestations does not take sufficient cognizance of the fact that the *Forster-Charakteristik* offers a possible "missing link" between the present "Herrschaft des Interessanten", which is the starting point of the *Studium-Aufsatz*, and the future rule of objectivity¹⁰⁴.

It must, however, be acknowledged that this link is not integrated into a coherent historical framework. Just as the *Studium-Aufsatz* employs a number of different models of history, which exist side by side in the text without one of them assuming a position of dominance, so do the three texts in conjunction articulate a series of possible reactions to what Schlegel perceives to be the imperatives of his political and cultural situation, which is not reducible to a single scheme or strategy. They repeatedly stress the necessity of the political and social revolution and rehearse these in a number of different guises; it seems almost as if, by invoking the revolution again and again, Schlegel hopes to conjure it through sheer demiurgic persistence. There is a distinct chiliastic element in some of these invocations, whose basic figure is exemplified by a statement made in the 'Vorrede':

Schon oft erzeugte ein dringendes Bedürfnis seinen Gegenstand; aus der Verzweiflung ging eine Ruhe hervor, und die Anarchie ward die Mutter einer wohltätigen Revolution. (KA, I, 224)

Should the invocations fail and the German revolution not be forthcoming - and it must have been fairly clear to

¹⁰⁴. Oesterle, pp 182-192

Schlegel that this would probably be the case - the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the *Forster-Charakteristik* outline an aesthetic program which he and his contemporaries must endeavour to implement.

It is, as we shall see, this aesthetic program and its latent contradictions which become particularly fateful for the development of Early Romantic ideology. I have drawn attention to the specific historical significance which Schlegel ascribes to German culture, and there can be no doubt that he sees himself and his colleagues as having an important, if not a leading role to play within the German cultural avant-garde. Here the drives to create a generational and a national identity become fused. The *Studium-Aufsatz* gives an unmistakable signal of Schlegel's rejection of Classical Enlightenment aesthetics; and, despite the exemplary status which he accords to Goethe, he certainly has no desire to identify himself with the aims and attitudes of Weimar classicism. Rather, he sets himself and his generation the task of furthering the development of the universal and objective potential of German literary production and theory.

This is particularly explicit in a letter to August Wilhelm of October 31st 1797, in which Friedrich expounds at length and in detail his plan for what will become the *Athenäum*. He writes;

Ein anderer großer Vortheil dieses Unternehmens würde wohl seyn, daß wir uns eine große Autorität in der Kritik machen, hinreichend, um nach 5-10 Jahren kritische Dictatoren Deutschl.(ands) zu seyn, die A.(llgemeine) L.(itteratur) Z.(eitung) zu Grunde zu richten, und eine kritische Zeitung zu geben, die keinen andren Zweck hätte, als Kritik... (KA,XXIV,31-2)

Within the overall scheme of his program this means, in immediate practical terms, the inauguration of the transitory dictatorship of social writing, which will stimulate the growth of "öffentliche Sitten" and thus create the necessary foundation for the rule of objectivity. It is, however, only a small step from here to the logical further conclusion that, just as the dictatorship of social writing is an immediate necessity in Germany, so too will the transitory dictatorship of German aesthetic theory become a necessity for European culture as a whole. The logic which operates in Schlegel's texts is a metaphorical logic; but rather than illustrating an argument with a series of concrete images, Schlegel sets up metaphorical correspondences between clusters of concepts. These correspondences reinforce the impression of logical progression by repetition - a discursive tactic which, as we shall see, Novalis also uses.

In conclusion, and as a prelude to the following chapters, I want to suggest that we need to see the ambiguous status of Schlegel's conception of German culture, and the transformations which it undergoes, in relation to another problem, namely the problem of collective agency. A number of commentators have already drawn attention to this problem. For Behrens, who sees "die Frage nach dem handelnden Subjekt in der Geschichte" as an essential element of Romantic political theory¹⁰⁵, the *Studium-Aufsatz* displays both the influence of Fichte's idea of "Bildung" as an "Akt der Selbsttätigkeit"¹⁰⁶, (and the belief in the possibility of an

¹⁰⁵. Behrens, Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie, p 16

¹⁰⁶. *ibid.*, p 77

active shaping of the historical process which this implies), and also traces of an opposing view:

Der Begriff der Revolution dient als Indikator für einen herbeizuführenden geschichtlichen Wandel, wobei das optimistische Vertrauen in die Gestaltbarkeit geschichtlicher Kräfte in den neunziger Jahren bald einer zunehmenden Skepsis angesichts der Übermacht der Geschichte weicht.¹⁰⁷

Bräutigam argues that Schlegel rejects the notion that history can be the product of the collective exercise of freedom by autonomous subjects, since this would mean that it were merely contingent, rather than the expression of some teleological purpose¹⁰⁸. Both refer to a passage in the text in which Schlegel appears to question the ability of human beings to "make" history individually or collectively:

Schon im Einzelnen ist das Schöne eine Gunst der Natur. Wie viel mehr wird es in der Masse immer von einem einzigen Zusammenfluß seltner Umstände abhängen, welchen der Mensch nicht einmal zu lenken, geschweige denn hervorzubringen vermag? Überhaupt können die Ansprüche an die Selbsttätigkeit der Masse, so scheint es, nie mäßig genug sein. Ihre Bildung, ihre Fortschritte, und ihr endliches Gelingen bleiben - trauriges Los! - dem Zufall überlassen. (Ka, I, 256)

Neither Behrens nor Bräutigam acknowledge that this passage, and a parallel passage later in the text which is almost identical in expression¹⁰⁹, are couched quite explicitly in rhetorical terms, and appear as part of a textual dialogue (in the case of the latter passage this is actually indicated by the fact that it appears in inverted commas). This rhetorical questioning of the possibility of human agency in

¹⁰⁷. *ibid.*, p 18

¹⁰⁸. See Bräutigam, p 327

¹⁰⁹. KA, I, 359

history is answered in the continuation of the passage quoted above:

Alle besseren Menschen hassen den Zufall und sein Gefolge in jeder Gestalt. Jene große Aufgabe des Schicksals muß gleichsam ein mächtiges Aufgebot der Aufmerksamkeit und Tätigkeit für alle die sein, welche die Poesie interessiert. Mag die Hoffnung noch so gering, die Auflösung noch so schwer sein: *der Versuch ist notwendig!* (KA,I,256)

Schlegel reinforces this point a little later in the text:

Der bessere Geschmack der Modernen soll nicht ein Geschenk der Natur, sondern das selbständige Werk ihrer Freiheit sein. (KA,I,259)

The conception of historical agency which we find in the early texts is neither purely voluntaristic, nor the product of a heroic individualism. As should have become apparent in the course of this discussion, Schlegel stresses the importance both of individual contributions to the development of culture, as exemplified by Forster's writings, and, with considerable insistence, the potential for political and aesthetic progress which will be generated if the latent energy of the masses is allowed to act on and through the historical process.

It is only the empowerment of the "Majorität der öffentlichen Meinung" which will make this possible. But Schlegel's radical program lays the foundations for its own subversion. The notion that a temporary dictatorship of social writing and social writers is the best alternative to a political revolution which is unlikely to occur already harbors the possibility of a shift away from a collective and democratic concept of culture and politics, towards an elitist and autocratic position which abandons the idea of a collective shaping of history. We can observe such a shift

taking place in Schlegel's and Novalis' thinking during the latter part of the Revolutionary decade; and as their belief in their special and unique cultural "mission" becomes stronger, so too does their conviction that this mission is indistinguishable from the historical destiny of German culture as a whole. The speculative blueprint for a transitory dictatorship of a democratically-inspired, cosmopolitan German social writing plays godfather to Novalis' vision of the authoritarian rule of a German "neue Kirche" over the whole of Europe in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*. And metaphor, we can say without being entirely flippant, is the midwife. It is time now to turn our attention to the unfolding of this process in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*.

5. SYMPHILOSOPHIE

5.I. Introduction

The publication of Friedrich Schlegel's *Kritische Fragmente* in the *Lyceum der schönen Künste* in 1797 marks the beginning of the most significant and influential phase of early Romanticism. Within the succeeding year, Novalis' first published work, *Blüthenstaub*, appears in the first volume of the *Athenäum*, to be followed by Schlegel's *Athenäums-Fragmente* in the second volume of the journal, which was printed only a few weeks after the first. Friedrich Schlegel made a number of editorial alterations to Novalis' manuscript, which in its original form bore the simple title *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. These included the addition of four of his own fragments to the *Blüthenstaub*, and the transfer of thirteen of Novalis' fragments from the manuscript of the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* to the published text of the *Athenäums-Fragmente*, in which they were included together with contributions from A.W.Schlegel and Schleiermacher¹. The particular significance of these

¹. Novalis' texts are quoted according to *Novalis. Schriften. Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, Hg. von Paul Kluckhohn und Richard Samuel. Zweite, nach den Handschriften ergänzte, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage in vier Bänden, Stuttgart, 1960ff. This edition is indicated by the abbreviation 'NS', with volume number given in Roman numerals and the page number in Arabic numerals. The fifth volume of this edition appeared after the completion of my study and could thus not be considered.

Occasional reference is also made to *Novalis Werke*, Herausgegeben und kommentiert von Gerhard Schulz. Zweite, neubearbeitete Auflage, München, 1981. References to this edition are indicated by the abbreviation 'NW'.

Further details of the chronology and publication history of the texts mentioned above are to be found in:

KA, II, XXXVff ; on the *Athenäums-Fragmente* see XLIIff, esp. XLV-XLVI

texts, and their centrality to the political and aesthetic theory of the *Frühromantik*, derives at least in part from the fact that they are the product of an extremely close intellectual co-operation between Schlegel and Novalis. This process, in which A.W.Schlegel, Schleiermacher, and Caroline Schlegel were also involved, was given the name "Symphilosophie" by Friedrich Schlegel². As I shall try to show, it is fundamental to the formation of the sense of identity of the early Romantic movement, and incorporates both a notion of collective activity, and the sense of belonging to an avant-garde elite. Friedrich Schlegel's pioneering development of the fragment form, the inspiration for which had come from the publication of Chamfort's *Pensees, Maximes, Anecdotes, Dialogues*, was in a sense, the formal innovation which made the literary practice of "Symphilosophie" possible³.

The two weeks which Friedrich Schlegel spent with Novalis in Weißenfels in July of 1797, and the publication of the *Lyceums-Fragmente* later that year, undoubtedly provided at least part of the impetus for Novalis' experimentation with the fragment form⁴. The *Vermischte Bemerkungen* represent the

NS, II, 399-405

NW, 741-5

². Cf. KA, II, 161, No. 112

³. Cf. KA, II, XLI

⁴. As Schulz points out, the aphoristic fragment form was also an appropriate vehicle for Novalis' responses to his reading of Fichte and Hemsterhuis (cf. NW, 743). Although Novalis did not see the final draft of the *Lyceums-Fragmente* before publication, he had almost certainly seen some of the materials on which Schlegel drew for the fragments; see for example Novalis' letter to Friedrich Schlegel of 14.6.1797: "Deine Hefte spuken gewaltig in meinem Innern usw" (NS, IV, 230). See also Friedrich Schlegel's letter to Novalis of

first fruits of this experimentation, and can be seen as entering into a dialogue with some of the ideas contained in the *Lyceums-Fragmente*. Schlegel's *Athenäums-Fragmente* continue this dialogue. The exact period of their genesis cannot be determined conclusively. In a letter to his brother dated the 31st of October 1797, Friedrich declares that he has "noch einen unendlichen Vorrath" of fragments which might be suitable for publication⁵. A little over a month later, he gives a more precise figure, estimating that he has "an die sechs Bogen voll Fragmente, die noch ein wenig aus andern Augen sehen sollen, als die im Lyceum"⁶. It would seem probable that the "Vorrath" to which Schlegel refers is identical with the series of *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie* published in Vol.XVI of the *Kritische Ausgabe*⁷. Schlegel had drawn on the first third of this series for the *Lyceums-Fragmente*⁸, and there are close correspondences between fragments in the latter part of the series and the *Athenäums-Fragmente*. It seems likely that the manuscripts of the *Athenäums-Fragmente* and the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* were produced at roughly the same time, namely in the first months of 1798. Both texts display common concerns and explore common themes; yet they also articulate markedly different perspectives on some of these. Moreover, as Schlegel's comment

26.9.1797: "Ich würde dann in Deinem Geist die Chamfortsche Form wählen..." (KA, XXIV, 21).

⁵. KA, XXIV, 34

⁶. KA, XXIV, 51

⁷. These are the fragments originally published under the title *Literary Notebooks*, ed. with an introduction and commentary by Hans Eichner, Toronto, 1957.

⁸. Cf. KA, XVI, XX

quoted above suggests, the *Athenäums-Fragmente* are a kind of continuation of his philosophical dialogue with himself, since they modify and in some cases appear to reject positions he had adopted in the earlier collection of fragments.

My approach in the following chapter will therefore be to begin by considering the *Lyceums-Fragmente* and their relationship to the *Athenäums-Fragmente*. I shall then turn my attention to the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. In the final part of the chapter I shall examine a number of related themes and concepts which are common to all three texts, and attempt to demonstrate an underlying structural coherence in their formulation of a programmatic early Romantic 'manifesto'. This coherence arises largely from the use of certain fields of metaphor and metaphorical discursive strategies, and it is on these that I shall be concentrating especially.

5.2 'Die Republik der Poesie'

A vast amount of secondary literature exists on Friedrich Schlegel's first two collections of fragments. Eichner, Belgardt, Mennemeier and a large number of other commentators have traced the evolution of Schlegel's ideas in the period of the *Athenäum*, concentrating mainly on the development of the concept of "romantische Poesie" and its cognates⁹. Others have

⁹. See for example: Hans Eichner, *Friedrich Schlegel's Theory of Romantic Poetry*, in: *PMLA*, LXXXVI, (1956), pp 1018-1041; Ernst Behler, *Friedrich Schlegels Theorie der Universalpoesie*, in: *Jb d DSchG*, I, 1957, pp 211-252; Franz-Norbert Mennemeier, *Friedrich Schlegels Poesiebegriff. Dargestellt anhand der literarkritischen Schriften*, München, 1971;

concerned themselves with his development of the fragment form, arguing that much of the originality and verve of Schlegel's thinking in this period derives from the tension between fragment and system; that is to say, between the dynamic qualities of spontaneity, polemical incisiveness and wit for which the fragment was the ideal vehicle, and the desire to build grand philosophical systems. Only a limited amount of attention, however, has been given to the inter-relationship of political and aesthetic speculation in the two collections of fragments, and the continuities between them and the *Studium-Aufsatz* and other early texts¹⁰. These continuities become immediately apparent if we look now at one of the best-known of the *Lyceums-Fragmente*:

Die Poesie ist eine republikanische Rede; eine Rede, die ihr eignes Gesetz und ihr eigener Zweck ist, wo alle Teile freie Bürger sind und mitstimmen dürfen.
(KA,II,155,No.65)

This fragment represents one of the most striking examples of the fusion of aesthetic and political discourse in early Romantic theory. The constitution of the republican state becomes a metaphor for the organisation, the structural disposition we might say, of the poetic text. Interestingly enough, the definition of republicanism which Schlegel employs here harks back not to the *Versuch*, but rather, as Janz has pointed out, to Kant's famous second formulation of the

Peter Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie II*
(Studienausgabe der Vorlesungen Bd.3, Frankfurt/M, 1974, pp 94-151;

Raimund Belgardt, *Romantische Poesie. Begriff und Bedeutung bei Friedrich Schlegel*, The Hague, 1969

¹⁰. Some discussion of these aspects can be found in:
Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion*, pp 106-118
Wölfel, *Prophetische Erinnerung*, pp 203-5

categorical imperative¹¹. It would appear that the fragment is concerned more with aesthetics than politics; the assertion that literature is "ihr eignes Gesetz und ihr eigener Zweck" is clearly a reaffirmation of the doctrine of aesthetic autonomy which Schlegel had enunciated in the *Studium-Aufsatz*¹². It is, however, not entirely clear to what the phrase "alle Teile" is intended to refer. A fragment from slightly later in the sequence helps to clarify this point:

Viele Werke, deren schöne Verkettung man preist, haben weniger Einheit, als ein bunter Haufen von Einfällen, die nur vom Geiste eines Geistes belebt, nach Einem Ziele zielen. Diese verbindet doch jenes freie und gleiche Beisammensein, worin sich auch die Bürger des vollkommenen Staats, nach der Versicherung der Weisen, dereinst befinden werden; jener unbedingt gesellige Geist, welcher nach der Anmaßung der Vornehmen jetzt nur in dem gefunden wird, was man so seltsam, und beinahe kindisch große Welt zu nennen pflegt. (KA, II, 159, No. 103)

There is an obvious element of self-reference in Schlegel's argumentation here, since his own collection of fragments could be described as "ein bunter Haufen von Einfällen", though one which he doubtless saw as being informed by some kind of unifying principle¹³. He is quite candid about the fact that the mode of political organisation which he proposes as a model for literature is utopian in character; it is that which will be experienced by the "Bürger des vollkommenen Staats". At the same time, his description of this mode as "jenes freie und gleiche Beisammensein" might also function as a definition of the classical form of the

¹¹. See Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion*, pp 109

¹². See Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie*, pp 141

¹³. See Mennemeier, *Fragment und Ironie*, pp 229-30

bourgeois public sphere as it is portrayed by Habermas¹⁴. It is explicitly opposed here to the "große Welt" of the "polite" classes, that is to say, the public life of the absolutist state, which functioned in such a way as to replicate and reinforce the structures of privilege and class domination.

There is a sense in which we can say that these two fragments speak the language of a pre-Revolutionary "klassischer Republikanismus": certainly, his characterization of the ideal republic contains no explicit reference to those axioms of the Revolutionary Enlightenment which Schlegel had invoked in the *Versuch*. One might quite reasonably argue that Schlegel did not see any need to repeat himself or reiterate those principles of republicanism which he had laid down in the earlier text. It had, after all, itself appeared less than a year before the *Lyceums-Fragmente*. Notwithstanding this recognition, it seems to me possible to discern a shift in emphasis in Schlegel's conception of republicanism, which becomes more pronounced in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*. To see precisely what this shift entails, we need to look now at the *Athenäums-Fragment* No.118, which Novalis himself gave the title "Republicanische Verfassung des Romans"¹⁵:

Es ist nicht einmal ein feiner, sondern eigentlich ein recht grober Kitzel des Egoismus, wenn alle Personen in einem Roman sich um Einen bewegen wie Planeten um die Sonne, der dann gewöhnlich des Verfassers unartiges Schoßkind ist, und der Spiegel und Schmeichler des entzückten Lesers wird. Wie ein gebildeter Mensch nicht bloß Zweck sondern auch Mittel ist für sich und für andre, so sollten auch im gebildeten Gedicht alle zugleich Zweck und Mittel sein. Die Verfassung sei republikanisch, wobei immer erlaubt bleibt, daß einige Teile aktiv andre passiv sein. (KA,II,183)

¹⁴. See Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 52,107

¹⁵. Cf. Novalis' "Kritik der Athenäumsfragmente", NS,II,633

A number of threads in Schlegel's argument begin to be drawn together here. To begin with, the fragment makes it plain that he is concerned first and foremost with the novel as the paradigm of aesthetic discourse. Whereas previously he had spoken of "Poesie" or simply "Rede", these terms are now subsumed by the concept of the novel, or as it is also referred to here, the "gebildetes Gedicht"¹⁶. The categorical imperative is invoked once again, and this time Schlegel specifically insists that the relationship between the characters in the novel be "republikanisch". The formulation given to this principle in the fragment echoes and partially qualifies a remark concerning the nature of the "philosophischer Roman" in one of the *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie*:

Im philosophischen Roman kein Held und keine gänzlich passive [sic] Menschen; alle müssen die Helden sein. Sonst wäre das sehr illiberal.
(KA, XVI, 117, No. 393)

When Schlegel states in AF No. 118 that it is permissible for some parts of the "gebildetes Gedicht" to be active and others passive, he is alluding to the distinction made by Sieyès in the Constituent's law of 1789 between active citizens, who owned property and paid a certain stipulated

¹⁶. On Novalis' equation of "Romandichtung" and "romantische Poesie" see Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie* II, p 131ff. According to Szondi, the novel is "die eine Gattung...die in Schlegels Theorie in dem präzisen Sinne stellvertretend für die Dichtung der Moderne und für die anderen Dichtarten ist, ...diese in sich vereinigt und damit recht eigentlich jene Dichtung der Epoche ausmacht und ihr ihren Namen gibt: der des Romans, adjektivisch des Romantischen." (p131). See also Helmut Schanze, Friedrich Schlegels Theorie des Romans, in: *Deutsche Romantheorien*, hg. v. Reinhold Grimm, Frankfurt/M, 1968, pp 61-80, esp. p 75

minimum amount of tax, and who were thus entitled to vote, and the passive citizens, who had no property rights and were excluded from the franchise¹⁷. The unpublished fragment quoted above states only that no character in the philosophical novel may be "gänzlich passiv", and it must be acknowledged that the distinction between active and passive components of the novel is more of a playful conceit than a seriously intended aesthetic precept. Despite all this, there would seem to be a contradiction between the earlier assertion in LF No.65 that in republican discourse "alle... mitstimmen dürfen", and that all of the characters in a novel must be "Helden", and the subsequent differentiation of active and passive components of the republican novel: in real political terms, Sieyes' distinction had excluded three million men (not to speak of women) from the vote, and would, as the democratic newspapers pointed out in 1789, have prevented Rousseau himself from becoming a deputy in the National Assembly¹⁸. Whilst the sense of his use of the image of planets circling the sun in AF No.118 is plainly anti-monarchic¹⁹, the notion of republicanism which underlies his prescriptions for the "gebildetes Gedicht" appears to be decidedly less democratic than that which he had articulated in the earlier texts.

Elsewhere in the *Athenäums-Fragmente* Schlegel takes up the question of the nature of the republic in a purely political context:

¹⁷. See Soboul, *French Revolution*, pp 180-2,209

¹⁸. See *ibid.*

¹⁹. See Weiland, *Politische Romantikinterpretation*, p 19

Nur derjenige Staat verdient Aristokratie genannt zu werden, in welchem wenigstens die kleinere Masse, welche die größere despotisiert, eine republikanische Verfaßung hat. (KA,II,198,No.213)

Die vollkommne Republik müßte nicht bloß demokratisch, sondern zugleich auch aristokratisch und monarchisch sein; innerhalb der Gesetzgebung der Freiheit und Gleichheit müßte das Gebildete das Ungebildete überwiegen und leiten, und alles sich zu einem absoluten Ganzen organisieren. (KA,II,198,No.214)

The first of these fragments presents a definition of aristocracy which might well have applied to the Athenian polis. Here, however, it serves to introduce the re-definition of the republic which occurs in the second fragment. The interpretation of the word "überwiegen" is crucial: the sense of the second fragment is not that "das Gebildete" - namely the progressive, educated, or, to put it more accurately, the truly socialized members of the polis - will actually outweigh or outnumber "das Ungebildete", but rather that they must be accorded greater political power if they are to guide the process of "Bildung". This notion of aristocracy looks forward to a statement which Schlegel makes in the *Ideen* of 1800, in which he argues that artists are "...Brahminen, eine höhere Kaste, aber nicht durch Geburt, sondern durch freie Selbsteinweihung geadelt"²⁰.

There is a clear correspondence between the conception of a perfect republic 'governed' by a progressive elite, and the idea of a republican discourse within which all have the theoretical right to participate in the political process, but only "die kleinere Masse" actually exercise that right. It should perhaps be pointed out that Schlegel still

²⁰. KA,II,271, No.146

characterizes the "aristocratic" state as "despotic", and thus, within the terms of his earlier writings, only permissible as a provisory arrangement²¹. Nevertheless, it appears that the actual exercise of political power in the perfect republic occurs somehow independently of "jenes freie und gleiche Beisammensein" enjoyed by the "Bürger des vollkommenen Staats" according to LF. No.103.

In arguing for the ascendancy of a progressive aristocracy within the republic, Schlegel is, in a sense, looking back to the program of the radical Enlightenment prior to the Revolution, which saw the bourgeois "Bildungselite" as a kind of historical avant-garde whose ultimate purpose was to render itself redundant²². At the same time, he performs an interesting piece of ideological sleight-of-hand. Whereas the classical Enlightenment saw itself as constituting an oppositional elite, a "moralischer Innenraum"²³ within the state, which was essentially conterminous with the bourgeois public sphere, Schlegel extends the ambit of "Öffentlichkeit" to include the whole of the state and all its citizens. At the same time, however, this "Öffentlichkeit" becomes effectively depoliticized, since it is no longer the arena for a collective political discourse or "Räsonnement". As the corollary of this inversion, the pre-Revolutionary

²¹. Krüger argues that Schlegel's re-definition of the republic has nothing to do with the actual constitution of the republican state, but rather conceives of republicanism as a "Mittelbegriff zwischen den Extremen Demokratie, Monarchie, Aristokratie" which synthesizes all three. See Krüger, Georg Forsters und Friedrich Schlegels Beurteilung, pp 224-5

²². See Koselleck, pp 154-7

²³. See Koselleck, pp 108, 111ff

oppositional elite becomes the effective wielder of political power in the new republic.

Something, however, is lost in this process. The central concern of the *Studium-Aufsatz* and the other early texts with the means by which the true republic might be brought into existence, as well as their insistence on the role of a collective agency in the transformation of the existing order, appear not to figure in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*. Or, to put this shift within the concrete context of Schlegel's aesthetic speculations, one might say that he no longer seems to address the question of how those "Teile" or "Personen" oppressed by the present constitution of the novel might rise up and institute a more democratic and aesthetically legitimate order of discourse. One could conclude from the fragments discussed above that he had 'liquidated' the radical popular phase of the Revolution and was lending his support retrospectively to the bourgeois revolutionaries and their reassertion of control over the course of the Revolution after Thermidor.

This would, in my view, be at least an incomplete conclusion. Schlegel does in fact continue to concern himself in the two collections of fragments with the relationship between a democratic aesthetics and collective participation in the political process, but in a different context to that of the early texts. In order to see how this context is developed, we need to look again briefly at AF No.118. As Janz has pointed out, Schlegel's insistence on a democratization of the novel springs from the desire to abolish the direct identification between reader and "Held" which generates "die unheilvolle Wirkung...den Egoismus des >>entzückten<< Lesers

zu bestätigen"²⁴. Hand in hand with this rejection of a purely narcissistic relationship between text and reader goes an implicit injunction against a too-intimate relationship between author and text. The description of the narcissistically-structured text as "des Verfassers unartiges Schoßkind" suggests that, by contrast, the republican "gebildetes Gedicht" will be the expression not of an undisciplined subjectivity, but rather of a deliberate distancing of the author from the work. Schlegel's characterization of "romantische Poesie" in AF No.116 supports this interpretation. He writes:

Und doch kann sie am meisten zwischen dem Dargestellten und dem Darstellenden, frei von allem realen und idealen Interesse auf den Flügeln der poetischen Reflexion schweben, diese Reflexion immer wieder potenzieren und wie in einer endlosen Reihe von Spiegeln vervielfachen. (KA,II,182-3)

Here again we can discern the implicit identification of "romantische Poesie" with the republican novel. There is, moreover, as AF No.118 suggests, an analogy between the constellation of the characters within the novel and the mutual relationship of literary producer, product and consumer. In order to find the model of literary production which corresponds to the republican novel, we need to go back to the *Lyceums-Fragmente*:

Der analytische Schriftsteller beobachtet den Leser, wie er ist; danach macht er seinen Kalkül, legt seine Maschinen an, um den gehörigen Effekt auf ihn zu machen. Der synthetische Schriftsteller konstruiert und schafft sich einen Leser, wie er sein soll; er denkt sich denselben nicht ruhend und tot, sondern lebendig und entgegenwirkend. Er läßt das, was er erfunden hat, vor seinen Augen stufenweise werden, oder er lockt ihn es selbst zu erfinden. Er will keine bestimmte Wirkung auf

²⁴. Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion*, p 107

ihn machen, sondern er tritt mit ihm in das heilige Verhältnis der innigsten Symphilosophie oder Sympoesie. (KA,II,161,No.112)

This fragment contains one of the clearest rejections of affective aesthetics to be found anywhere in Early Romantic theory, and anticipates some of the aims and principles of classical modernism by over a century. Rather than seeking to manipulate the narcissistic reader through the calculated deployment of effects, the "synthetischer Schriftsteller" must seek to construct his or her readers within the text as active participants in its production. The "decentering" of the narcissistic reader, who is no longer simply the passive object of the artful techniques of the writer, is the precondition for a more democratic relationship between the two²⁵. Schlegel himself refers to this imagined form of communication as "Symphilosophie oder Sympoesie", and it is highly significant, as we shall see, that in so doing he identifies it with the intellectual activity being carried on by himself and his colleagues and collaborators. His appeal for a "synthetic" approach to the production of literature is placed in a broader framework of cultural politics in LF No.70:

Leute die Bücher schreiben, und sich dann einbilden, ihre Leser wären das Publikum, und sie müßten das Publikum bilden, diese kommen sehr bald dahin, ihr sogenanntes Publikum nicht bloß zu verachten, sondern zu hassen; welches zu gar nichts führen kann. (KA,II,156)

²⁵. Gerhard Kurz has, in a slightly different context, drawn attention to an "Ermächtigung des Lesers" and a corresponding "Entmächtigung des Autors" in Early Romantic literary theory. See Kurz, Gerhard, Friedrich Schlegels Begriff der "Symbolischen Form" und seine literaturtheoretische Bedeutung, in: Text und Kontext, Sonderreihe, Bd. 18 "Aspekte der Romantik", 1983, pp 40-41

The continuities between Schlegel's utterances concerning "das große, allgemein verachtete Publikum" in the *Forster-Charakteristik* and the *Studium-Aufsatz*²⁶ and this fragment are plain. Schlegel does not necessarily dismiss out of hand the notion that literature has an educative function, nor does he argue solely for an autonomous esoteric literature for the elite. Rather, he directs his polemic against those writers who, frustrated by the refusal of the public to read what was good for them, assume a position of hostile contempt towards their readers²⁷. Stubborn adherence to an instrumental aesthetics must, he argues, end in disillusionment about the capacity of literature to effect the work of "Bildung"; and this disillusionment will, in turn, lead to that "Illiberalität" which he had criticized in the *Studium-Aufsatz*²⁸, and to an elitist attitude towards the masses whom the classical Enlightenment had sought to educate.

As we have seen in LF No.112, Schlegel is no less scathing than many of these contemporaries about the popular literature in which, to quote Christa Bürger, "Kunstmittel, unabhängig von moralisch-politischen Gehalten, nur mehr als Reizmittel verwendet werden, die die Schriftsteller einsetzen zur Durchsetzung egotistischer Interessen"²⁹. However, he does not argue that the emancipation of these "Kunstmittel", and of the reader, must involve the expulsion from literature of all social ends. It is significant that in one of the

²⁶. See KA,I,361 and KA,II,91-2

²⁷. See chapter on the *Studium-Aufsatz*, footnote 78

²⁸. See KA,I,360-1

²⁹. Bürger, *Literarischer Markt und Öffentlichkeit*, p 179

Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie belonging to the same series on which Schlegel drew for the *Lyceums-Fragmente*, he revises the definition of "das Schöne" which appeared in the *Vorrede* to the *Studium-Aufsatz*, stating that

Das Schöne ist eben so wohl angenehme Erscheinung
d[es] Wahren und d[es] Rechtlich-Geselligen als des
Guten. (KA,XVI,95,[124])

The concept of "Symphilosophie" as an aesthetic practice which will democratize the production and reception of literature follows on from the notion of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller" in attempting to mediate between the demands of aesthetic autonomy and social purpose. LF No.85 stresses that literature must be universal, capable of communicating with all readers if it is to succeed:

Jeder rechtliche Autor schreibt für niemand, oder
für alle. Wer schreibt, damit ihn diese und jene lesen
mögen, verdient, daß er nicht gelesen werde.
(KA,II,157)

This fragment echoes, consciously or unconsciously, a remark which Wieland had made twenty years earlier, to the effect that the German author wrote "ins Blaue hinein, für alle Menschen...und eben dadurch für niemand"³⁰. The nature and structure of the reading public had changed radically by the time Schlegel began writing; whereas Wieland might have doubted the existence of a large body of readers for German literature in 1776, Schlegel is primarily concerned with the way in which the word-hungry masses read, and the correct attitude for the writer to take towards them. The phrase "für niemand, oder für alle" carries with it, however, a certain

³⁰. Quoted by Herbert Jaumann, *Literatur als Positionsverlust*, p 62

ambiguity which becomes easier to comprehend if we look back to another fragment earlier in the collection:

Mancher redet so vom Publikum, als ob es jemand wäre, mit dem er auf der Leipziger Messe im Hotel de Saxe zu Mittag gespeist hätte. Wer ist dieser [sic] Publikum? -- Publikum ist gar keine Sache, sondern ein Gedanke, ein Postulat, wie Kirche. (KA.II,150,[35])

In a sense, Schlegel is repeating Wieland's question about the identity of the German literary public, though both the context in which it is asked, and Schlegel's answer to it, are totally different. For Schlegel, the public becomes a hypothesis which is still to be tested, an as yet imaginary identity which must still be brought into being. Read in conjunction with the fragments discussed earlier, LF No.35 seems to suggest that it is the task of the "synthetischer Schriftsteller" to create not just "einen Leser, wie er sein soll", but a whole public of readers. This newly constituted public will be defined by the fact that it will be active rather than passive, and that its relationship to the literary text will be one of "dialogic" interaction rather than narcissistic identification. At the same time, Schlegel employs for the first time, albeit in passing, the metaphor of the church as an imagined form of community interchangeable here with the hypothetical public³¹.

In this connection, it is instructive to consider two further fragments, one from the *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie*, and a second which may have been adapted from the first for the *Lyceums-Fragmente*:

³¹. Compare *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie*, KA,XVI,91,[73]: "Das *Publicum* existiert eben nur so problematisch wie die Kirche".

Nicht aus Goethescher (Heuchler)toleranz muß man der Kritik entsagen. Einer kann's nicht; eine Gesellschaft ist noch nicht vorhanden. Ihr ertstes *Princip* müßte kritisch und moralisch sein, nicht litterarisch und merkantilisch. Wo das lezte ist muß alles Gute nur zufällig bleiben. (KA,XVI,95,[123])

Es gibt so viele kritische Zeitschriften von verschiedener Natur und mancherlei Absichten. Wenn sich doch auch einmal eine Gesellschaft der Art verbinden möchte, welche bloß den Zweck hätte, die Kritik selbst, die doch auch notwendig ist, allmählich zu realisieren. (KA,II,161,[114])

These two fragments illuminate each other, and seem to express the same conviction as LF No.35, with the difference that they substitute the word "Gesellschaft" for "Publikum". The society which does not yet exist, the analogue of the hypothetical public or church, is conceived of here in primarily literary terms; but it is also genetically related to the "öffentliche Meinung" which both Forster, and Schlegel after him, had seen as lacking from German political and cultural life, despite Germany's seven thousand writers. As the first of the fragments quoted makes clear, the "Gesellschaft" or "Publikum" which is as yet unconstituted must be guided first and foremost by the imperatives of a critical morality, and the need to put these into practice³². We can see, therefore, that Schlegel has not abandoned his insistence on the need for the creation of a broadly-based and democratic "Öffentlichkeit", or on the primacy of the political over the aesthetic. There does, however, appear to

³². The question as to whether Schlegel sees the practice of "Kritik" as a purely aesthetic activity, or as a process which incorporates a political and social dimension, is complex, and cannot be adequately addressed here. Dierkes argues - correctly, in my view - that the idea of "Kritik" is linked to Schlegel's philosophy of history; see Dierkes, *Literaturgeschichte als Kritik*, pp 112-4, 185ff

have been a shift of emphasis in his speculations; the Revolution, the dominant paradigm for political and social transformation in the earlier texts, seems to have faded into the background as Schlegel concentrates on the possibilities for reactivating the social project of the Enlightenment in the context of a democratic aesthetics. Political considerations, the preconditions for the creation of a true public, may outweigh literary ones; but politics appears to have been effectively relocated in the sphere of literature, and the exercise of collective will transformed into the active participation of the reader in the act of aesthetic productioⁿ³³.

³³. A number of fragments in both the *Lyceums-Fragmente* and the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* deal with the Revolution, but seem to downplay its political character; as Behrens puts it: "Die Revolution wird zur universalen Metapher, bzw. zum Erklärungsmodell für geschichtliche Veränderung in Vergangenheit und Zukunft" (Friedrich Schlegels *Geschichtsphilosophie*, p 145).

I have chosen not to embark on a detailed discussion of the metaphorical representation of the Revolution in the fragments in this study; Schlegel continues, on the whole, to employ much the same metaphorical models for the Revolution as he had in the earlier texts, and consequently I have concentrated on areas not previously examined in great detail in the secondary literature.

For a detailed account of the portrayal of the Revolution in the fragments see Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie*, pp 139-159. Not all of Behrens' conclusions are supported by either sound logic or the texts themselves. At one point in his discussion he states: "Als ein die Zeitgeschichte strukturierendes Geschehen wird die Revolution bejaht; als politisches Ereignis wird sie abgelehnt" (p148). There is no meaningful sense in which the two can be separated in Schlegel's assessment of the significance of the Revolution, and no suggestion that he rejects the political and social transformations which he had previously hailed.

It would, however, be true to say that the notion of republicanism seems to become increasingly dissociated from the Revolution as a practical realization of republican principles and to be reconstituted within the realm of aesthetics.

As we have seen, there are certain incongruities in Schlegel's articulation of the concept of "republikanische Rede" and its relationship to the existing and imaginary public. His description of the "vollkommene Republik" as a state in which the "active" part of the social whole - "das Gebildete" - leads the passive component - "das Ungebildete" - within a *forma imperii*, to use Kant's term³⁴, which is "nicht bloß demokratisch, sondern zugleich auch aristokratisch und monarchisch" would seem to conflict not just with his own earlier definition of the republic in the *Versuch*, but with the spirit of his conception of "Symphilosophie". One could postulate a reading of the fragment according to which the "vollkommene Republik" would actually have abolished political inequality, and the only differences between individuals "innerhalb der Gesetzgebung der Freiheit und Gleichheit" would be in their relative levels of "Bildung". Such a model for the ideal state would, however, leave out of account the economic basis of political inequality. While we can hardly expect to find a fully-fledged class analysis of the state in Schlegel's texts, it is significant that, the distinction between active and passive citizens, which plays a part both in the definition of the "Republicanische Verfaßung des Romans" and, by analogy, in the characterization of the perfect republic, was predicated precisely on the possession of property. It would seem, therefore, that there is a certain incommensurability between the equal and mutual relationship of writer and individual reader - "das heilige Verhältnis der innigsten Symphilosophie" - and that between the writer and

³⁴. See Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie*, pp 206-7

the collective reader or public. In the movement from the individual to the collective, the "aristicratic" dominance of the writer is restored.

A number of the *Athenäums-Fragmente* dealing with the nature of the public, and the writer's relationship to it, seem to directly contradict Schlegel's earlier statements in the *Lyceums-Fragmente*. According to AF No.275, universality is no longer a necessary quality for literature:

Sie jammern immer, die deutschen Autoren schrieben nur für einen so kleinen Kreis, ja nur oft für sich selbst untereinander. Das ist recht gut. Dadurch wird die deutsche Literatur immer mehr Geist und Charakter bekommen. Und unterdessen kann vielleicht ein Publikum entstehen. (KA,II,212)

Schlegel appears to be arguing here for precisely the kind of elitist literary practice which he had earlier rejected. Isolation from the mainstream of literary production and consumption becomes a positive factor aiding the development of "immer mehr Geist und Charakter"; it is no longer important that the writer write for everyone or no-one, in fact it is probably better that he or she write for as confined a circle as possible. This apparent *volte-face* becomes easier to understand if we look at an unpublished fragment which, according to Eichner's chronology³⁵, must have been written down after the completion of the *Lyceums-Fragmente*, and which seems to formulate an intermediary position between the two published collections of fragments:

Es ist eine schlechte Denkart an Autoren, das daseiende Publ.[icum] zu verachten und zu beschimpfen, und das idealische zu ignorieren. - Das Publ.[icum] existirt nicht; es kann diese Idee höchstens nur durch

³⁵. See KA,XVI,XX

dasjenige repräsentiert werden, was man empirisch so nennt. (KA,XVI,139,[641])

The wording of this fragment is very similar to that of some of Schlegel's earlier remarks about the public, but it also states the premise on which he is operating in the *Athenäums-Fragmente* very clearly. The ideal public, the public to which a truly progressive, "symphilosophic" literature might address itself, must remain an abstract ideal so long as the existing public is not given the opportunity to emancipate itself. Consequently, it is pointless for authors to castigate the existing public for its present reading habits. One does not have to look very far for the source of this argument: there is a clear analogy between the assertion that the public must be constituted in a radically different and "active" relation to literature before it can behave as a true public, and the proposition that a subject people must be given their freedom before they can be expected to exercise that freedom in concrete action in a moral fashion.

Schlegel had, as we have seen, already addressed the question of whether or not maturity of moral development must precede political emancipation, and had assumed a position sharply at odds with that of Schiller and the majority of his contemporaries in arguing that the political revolution must precede its aesthetic or moral counterparts. Here he is arguing that the postulate of the "ideal" public can only be represented, however imperfectly, by the existing or "empirical" public. But whereas the the earlier texts had proposed a "social writing" which would bridge the gap between the political and the aesthetic revolution, and address itself

specifically to the empirical public, the *Athenäums-Fragmente* adumbrate a different strategy. Schlegel suggests that German writers may actually create the necessary preconditions for the emergence of an ideal public by withdrawing from the public sphere and public discourse and operating within a confined circle. Alternatively, this circle itself, in its practice of a mutual "Symphilosophie", might constitute the nucleus of a new public. As AF No. 264 indicates, however, the strategic means which Schlegel decides are appropriate to the implementation of his aesthetic project begin to lead him away from its egalitarian ends:

Man soll nicht mit allen symphilosophieren wollen, sondern nur mit denen die *à la hauteur* sind.
(KA,II,210)

The elitist overtones of this statement, which are reinforced by the use of the phrase "*a la hauteur*", with its allusion to the polite society whose pretensions Schlegel had scorned in LF No.103, cannot be overlooked. He seems to be opting quite unambiguously for a "geheime" rather than an "öffentliche Dichtkunst"³⁶, and, in so doing, abandoning any insistence on universality or popularity as criteria for a progressive discourse.

There is, however, another dimension to the position which Schlegel adopts in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*, which has to be understood as a function not of his attitude to the reading public, but rather of his relation to the dominant literary

³⁶. Friedrich Schlegel had first postulated a distinction between "öffentliche" and "geheime Dichtkunst" in a letter to August Wilhelm dated Nov. 1791. See Bürger, C, Die Dichotomie von hoher und niederer Literatur. Eine Problemskizze, in; Bürger, Zur Dichotomisierung, p 191. See also Chapter 6.3

culture in Germany in the 1790's. It can be formulated generally as a problem of the avant-garde, and specifically as a need on Schlegel's part to distance himself from those who had been his original models and mentors. His break with Reichardt is a very good illustration of this problem. Raymond Immerwahr has wrongly interpreted the incident as a consequence of Schlegel's rejection of Reichardt's pro-Revolutionary stance³⁷. In fact, it is Reichardt's inflexibility and dogmatism which he objected to, and considered an obstacle to literary co-operation, as the following passage from a letter to A.W. Schlegel dated the 31st of October 1797 makes plain:

Ueberdem ist R.[eichardt] jetzt hier und wir leben natürlich im besten äußern Vernehmen zusammen. Der Mann hat viel Gutes, aber da er nicht liberal ist, so würde es thöricht seyn, wenn ich mich entetiren wollte, in litter.[arischer] Gemeinschaft mit ihm zu bleiben. Sein soidisant *Republikanism* politisch und litterarisch ist alter Aufklärungsberlinism, Oppositionsgeist gegen die Obskuranten, und Franzosenhang, die er als Deutscher haßt und verachtet, ohne doch von ihnen lassen zu können, so wie er die Deutschen hinwiederum völlig wie ein Franzose verachtet. (KA,XXIV,30)

Schlegel's remarks here are a remarkably trenchant summary of some of the contradictions underlying the feuds and political battles which characterized the German literary scene at the time. For our immediate purposes, it is important to recognize that what Schlegel is attacking here is not republicanism itself, but rather Reichardt's particular brand of it, which is essentially rigid and dogmatic and has been shaped by the climate of "Aufklärungsberlinism" - a term which

³⁷. See Immerwahr's introduction to the edition of the letters from "Die Periode des Athenäums" in KA,XXIV,XXIVff, and also his commentary to letter No.26 (ibid.,pp 338-9)

Fichte himself had used in his polemic against Jacobi earlier in the decade³⁸. Later in his letter, Schlegel repeats the statement that Reichardt is "...nicht liberal, und also ist es nichts mit ihm" (KA,XXIV,30). "Liberalität" becomes one of his touchstones, and its compounds occur frequently in the *Lyceums-Fragmente* and *Athenäums-Fragmente*, where it is given the following definition:

Liberal ist wer von allen Seiten und nach allen Richtungen wie von selbst frei ist und in seiner ganzen Menschheit wirkt; wer alles, was handelt, ist und wird, nach dem Maße seiner Kraft heilig hält, und an allem Leben Anteil nimmt, ohne sich durch beschränkte Ansichten zum Haß oder zur Geringschätzung derselben verführen zu lassen. (KA,II,253, [441])

As Immerwahr points out, Schlegel's definition does not possess the specific political connotations of the nineteenth century notion of liberalism, though in many ways it anticipates it³⁹. "Liberalität" is for Schlegel a condition of openness, flexibility, the ability to engage and enter into a productive relationship with other human beings, impressions, ideas and influences⁴⁰. As such, it is not dissimilar to the condition recommended for the active reader in the *Lyceums-Fragmente*. Just as Schlegel rejects the prescriptive,

³⁸. Cf Dahnke, R. and Leistner, B., *Literarische Debatten um 1800*, in: WB, 1987, 4, p 551. Fichte was a stern critic of dogmatism in all its forms according to Störig, *Kleine Weltgeschichte der Philosophie*, Bd.2, 11. Aufl., Frankfurt/M, 1981, p 114

³⁹. Schlegel may well have derived his conception of "Liberalität" from Gentz's characterization of "Liberalität des Geistes" in his letter to Böttiger of 21.12.1796 (see Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 91). In Gentz's formulation it comes to mean something like the humanist notion of "critical objectivity".

⁴⁰. See for instance KF Nos. 26, 37, 117, 123, and AF Nos.64 and 67.

instrumental aesthetics of the classical Enlightenment, so too does he denounce its conventional political catechism, which even in its pro-Revolutionary form, he regards as inadequate to the task of understanding the condition of Europe and the true meaning of the Revolution. Moreover, he conceives of "Liberalität" not as an attitude of neutrality or "Goethesche[r] (Heuchler)toleranz" (KA,XVI,95,[123]), but rather as a kind of radical scepticism coupled with a universal receptivity.

This conception is an attempt to trump the trumps, as it were, of the radical Enlightenment, to turn its own weapons against it: for the "kritische Gesellschaft" which must, according to another unpublished fragment, be composed of "<lauter> politisch[en] Cynikern"⁴¹, there can be no sacred cows or shibboleths, nothing which is exempt from criticism, not even the fundamental principles of the Revolution itself. The notion of "Liberalität" allows Schlegel to construct a new "front" in German literary politics in opposition to all the existing parties and affiliations and their particular dogmas. To do so, however, is, by definition, to assume a position of isolation, and it is this very sense of isolation, I would argue, which is one of the motivating impulses behind his declaration that the withdrawal of "die deutschen Autoren" - by which he means first and foremost himself and his colleagues - from the sphere of public or popular discourse is a fruitful strategy.

What this attitude means in concrete terms is suggested by another of the *Athenäums-Fragmente*:

⁴¹. Cf. KA,XVI,95,[125]

Gibts eine unsichtbare Kirche, so ist es die jener großen Paradoxie, die von der Sittlichkeit unzertrennlich ist, und von der bloß philosophischen noch sehr unterschieden werden muß. Menschen, die so exzentrisch sind, im vollen Ernst tugendhaft zu sein und zu werden, verstehn sich überall, finden sich leicht, und bilden eine stille Opposition gegen die herrschende Unsittlichkeit, die eben für Sittlichkeit gilt. Ein gewißer Mystizismus des Ausdrucks, der bei einer romantischen Fantasie und mit grammatischem Sinn verbunden, etwas sehr Reizendes und etwas sehr Gutes sein kann, dient ihnen oft als Symbol ihrer schönen Geheimnisse. (KA,II,244,[418])

Membership of the "stille Opposition", for which the "unsichtbare Kirche" is a metaphor, is defined by a committment to virtue; it is an informal association of individuals which, once again, bears a strong resemblance to the pre-Revolutionary "moralischer Innenraum" constituted by the bourgeois public and its institutions of "Kritik"⁴². Like all avant-gardes, the "unsichtbare Kirche" defines its identity against, and in opposition to, the existing order, here "die herrschende Unsittlichkeit". It is important to ask, however, just what "die herrschende Unsittlichkeit" might represent. AF No. 425 gives us a clue:

Die erste Regung der Sittlichkeit ist Opposition gegen die positive Gesetzlichkeit und konventionelle Rechtlichkeit, und eine grenzenlose Reizbarkeit des Gemüts. Kommt dazu noch die selbständigen und starken Geistern so eigne Nachlässigkeit, und die Heftigkeit und Ungeschicklichkeit der Jugend, so sind Ausschweifungen unvermeidlich, deren nicht zu berechnende Folgen oft das ganze Leben vergiften. So geschiehts, daß der Pöbel die für Verbrecher oder Exempel der Unsittlichkeit hält, welche für den wahrhaft sittlichen Menschen zu den höchst seltenen Ausnahmen gehören, die er als Wesen seiner Art, als Mitbürger seiner Welt betrachten kann. Wer denkt hiebei nicht an Mirabeau und Chamfort? (KA,II,248)

Taking the two fragments together, it follows logically that "die positive Gesetzlichkeit" and "konventionelle

⁴². Cf. Koselleck, Kritik und Krise, pl08

Rechtlichkeit" are elements of "die herrschende Unsittlichkeit". In declaring the need to oppose these, Schlegel stands within the mainstream of the Enlightenment critique of the existing political order from the standpoint of natural law⁴³. Here, however, the phrase "herrschende Unsittlichkeit" has a wider and much less specific import. It fulfils much the same function as the notion of the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" in the *Studium-Aufsatz*: both are a kind of conceptual shorthand for the negativity of the present. The strategy which Schlegel suggests should be employed by the eccentric devotees of virtue and morality in attempting to put an end to this condition of negativity is somewhat different to that proposed in the earlier text. Rather than participating in a collective process of transformation - e.g. a political revolution - or establishing a dictatorship of social writing, they are to oppose the rule of immorality by articulating an essentially private oppositional discourse characterized by "ein gewißer Mystizismus des Ausdrucks". The implication is that their "schöne Geheimnisse" can only be represented or symbolised within such a private, esoteric discourse, unlike the universal principles of the classical Enlightenment⁴⁴.

There is, as we shall see, a close correspondence between the "Mystizismus des Ausdrucks" which Schlegel sees as one of

⁴³. On the subject of Schlegel's attitude to the idea of natural law see Behrens, *Friedrich Schlegels Geschichtsphilosophie*, p149ff, esp. p 150, Anm. 213

⁴⁴. It is important to recognize that the Enlightenment had its own "Arkanpraxis" and private discourses, as Koselleck, and more recently Poser have pointed out. I shall address this question in more detail in the next chapter.

the distinguishing characteristics of the "unsichtbare Kirche", and the "Tropen- und Räthselsprache" whose use by the elite community of the initiate Novalis advocates in *Glauben und Liebe*. Both writers share a sense of their precarious relationship to the dominant political and literary culture in Germany at the time, though Schlegel is in all likelihood more conscious of the threat of censorship, since, unlike Novalis, he is attempting to make his living as a 'Berufsschriftsteller' in a largely hostile literary scene⁴⁵. He tends, however, to see his 'state of siege' as a predicament linking him with his historical peers, as AF No.373 indicates:

Die Philosophie war bei den Alten *in ecclesia pressa*, die Kunst bei den Neuern; die Sittlichkeit aber war noch überall im Gedränge, die Nützlichkeit und die Rechtlichkeit mißgönnen ihr sogar die Existenz.
(KK,II,234)

Here "Sittlichkeit" is not identified expressly with either philosophy or art, but appears rather as a kind of general historical principle, though the statement that "Rechtlichkeit" and "Nützlichkeit" are inimical to it suggests that it is in some way analogous to the principle of aesthetic autonomy. One of the later *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie*, though very similar in its wording, illuminates the notion of "Sittlichkeit" from a slightly different angle:

Wie die [Philosophen] bei d[en] Alten, so bilden d[ie] Künstler bei d[en] Neuern einen Staat im Staate. -- Am meist[en] aber sind die wahrhaft moralischen Menschen *in ecclesia pressa* auch gegen die [Philosophen].--
(KA,XVI,174,[1090])

⁴⁵. See Peters, *Das tägliche Brot*, pp 252,257,260ff

Here the embattled minority of "wahrhaft moralischen Menschen" is identified by implication with the "Künstler" who constitute a "state within the state'. The further inference that can be drawn from this equation is that the practice of virtue or morality is becoming gradually disassociated from the sphere of public political life and relocated within the sphere of aesthetics.

* * * *

In this section I have attempted to chart the course of Schlegel's political and aesthetic speculations as they move from the identification of a progressive aesthetics with a republican and egalitarian political order towards a conception of an esoteric aesthetic practice. This, in turn, can only establish its authentic and progressive character at the cost of a withdrawal from the existing public sphere, and a renunciation of any claim to universality. In some respects Schlegel appears to be echoing Schiller's remarks at the close of the *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung* concerning the gulf between the utopian ideal of the "ästhetischer Staat" and the political realities of Europe. Schiller himself argues for a purely private and quietist form of "opposition":

In dem ästhetischen Staate ist alles - auch das dienende Werkzeug ein freyer Bürger, der mit dem edelsten gleiche Rechte hat, und der Verstand, der die duldende Masse unter seine Zwecke gewalthätig beugt, muß sie hier um ihre Beystimmung fragen. Hier also in dem Reiche des ästhetischen Scheins wird das Ideal der Gleichheit erfüllt, welches der Schwärmer so gern auch dem Wesen nach realisiert sehen möchte....Existiert aber auch ein solcher Staat des schönen Scheins, und wo ist er zu finden? Dem Bedürfniß nach existiert er in jeder feingestimmten Seele, der That nach möchte man ihn wohl

nur, wie die reine Kirche und die reine Republik in einigen wenigen auserlesenen Zirkeln finden...⁴⁶

Unlike Schiller, however, Schlegel does not see a total disjunction between individual activity and the transformation of the social whole; there is still a possible point of contact between the inner freedom of individual subjects and the collective freedom of the state. It is, I think, legitimate to argue that Schlegel sees the esoteric activities of the avant-garde as a paving of the way for the emergence of a transformed *res publica* which is also a public of active, liberal readers:

Aber freilich müßte ein Volk, das die beschämenden Gestalten einer würdigen Darstellung der bessern Zukunft ertragen sollte, mehr als eine republikanische Verfassung, es müßte eine liberale Gesinnung haben. (KA,II,187, [138])

In the third part of this chapter I shall show how Schlegel and Novalis develop a further variant of "Symphilosophie" which provides a possible model for the movement from the closed circle to the collective. From this section we may draw the provisional conclusion that, in attempting to fuse republican political principles with a progressive aesthetics, Schlegel seems to become fascinated to such an extent by the speculative possibilities of his metaphorical equation of the novel with the republican constitution that the transition from theory to practice, which is crucial in the earlier texts, tends to be pushed into the background. Put simply, the dimension of speculation tends to subvert that of argumentation. I shall return to this

⁴⁶. Schiller, NA, XX, 412

problem, and to the causes underlying it, in the final section of this chapter.

5.3 From the body politic to the poetic state

The handwritten manuscript of Novalis' *Vermischte Bemerkungen* was produced sometime between the middle of December 1797 and the middle of January 1798⁴⁷. It seems likely, however, that many of the fragments in the text were in fact written down, at least in a provisional form, somewhat earlier. The *Hemsterhuis-Studien* and the *Kant-Studien* both served as sources for the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, and whilst no other earlier versions of the fragments have been preserved, there is evidence in Novalis' correspondence to suggest that he began working on the material which became his first published work after Schlegel's visit to Weißenfels in July of 1797⁴⁸. As was mentioned earlier, Novalis seems also to have conceived of his collection of fragments as a response to and a "symphilosophic" continuation of the *Lyceums-Fragmente*. In the same letter to Friedrich Schlegel dated 26.12.1797, in which he refers to his friend's fragments as "durchaus neu - ächte, revolutionäre Affichen", he declares that, whilst he is still "in Vorübungen begriffen", he will be able to submit a contribution to the *Athenäum* by the following Easter, and goes on to say of the fragments which he has

⁴⁷. For details of the genesis, editing and publication of the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* see Samuel's introduction in NS,II,pp 399-405

⁴⁸. See Samuel's introduction, pp 403-5

already written down "...revolutionairen Inhalts scheinen sie mir hinlänglich"⁴⁹. Thus the final selection of the fragments by Novalis himself was made specifically with the aims of the *Athenäum* in mind.

The *Vermischte Bemerkungen* have been the subject of an exhaustive analysis by Gerhard Neumann⁵⁰, and individual fragments and their relation to the context of Revolutionary polemics have been examined in great detail by Kurzke⁵¹. Neumann's reading of the text is extremely sophisticated, and makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of Novalis' rhetorical and discursive strategies, and, more importantly, the epistemological foundations of his philosophical project. In his concentration on "Erkenntnisproblematik", however, Neumann tends to argue that those fragments which appear to deal explicitly with questions of political theory are in fact primarily concerned with the structure of human experience and perception. Throughout his exposition, he stresses the innovative nature of Novalis' approach to language, whose basic impulse he sees as the desire "festgewordene Begriffe zu sprengen, dem Altgewordenen neue Bedeutungen zu unterschieben", so as to achieve an "Öffnen der Begriffe nach mehreren semantischen Bezirken"⁵². According to Neumann, metaphor is not simply a tool in this process, but rather the irreducible structuring

⁴⁹. NS, IV, 241-2. See also NS, II, 411

⁵⁰. See Neumann, Gerhard, *Ideenparadiese. Untersuchungen zur Aphoristik von Lichtenberg, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel und Goethe*, München, 1976, pp 265-416

⁵¹. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 85-132

⁵². Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 338

element of Novalis' epistemology and its linguistic concretizations in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*⁵³.

There can be no disputing the central premises of Neumann's approach to the text, and even Kurzke declares that he would not wish to take issue with its "Erkenntnis von der Prävalenz des Methodischen" in the fragments⁵⁴. There is a problem, however, in reducing the political speculations of the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* to functions or illustrations of the 'method' of transcendental experience. Neumann tends to concentrate on the self-referential aspects of Novalis' use of metaphor, and to ignore the dimension of reference to the political and historical discourses within which the text is situated. A preoccupation with one dimension need not necessarily preclude or exclude an awareness of the other; Neumann himself speaks of the choice of "Lesemodelle" with which the text presents the reader⁵⁵. It is my intention to focus on a limited number of fragments from the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and to attempt to delineate two of the basic forms of metaphorical structuring which are fundamental to Novalis' methods of argumentation, and to the development of his political theory.

The first of these can best be illuminated through a consideration of some of the usages of the metaphor of the body politic in the text. The comparison of the state or *polis* with the human body can be traced at least as far back as Plato, and is one of the central *topoi* of Western political

⁵³. *ibid.*, p 340

⁵⁴. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p85, Anm.2

⁵⁵. Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p381 ff

philosophy⁵⁶. Its most famous literary formulations are found in Livy, and in Shakespeare, where Meneius Agrippa elaborates it into an allegory which is intended to convince the plebeians - the limbs of the body politic - that they will only harm themselves if they rebel against the patricians, represented in this instance by the belly⁵⁷. The version of the metaphor which we encounter in VB No.42 is, by contrast, much less physical:

...Die Gesellschaft ist nichts, als *gemeinschaftliches Leben* - Eine untheilbare denkende und fühlende Person. Jeder Mensch ist eine kleine Gesellschaft. (NS,II,430)

Here the emphasis lies not so much on a physiological correspondence between the internal structure of the body, and that of the state, as on the postulation of an analogy between individual consciousness and the consciousness of the social whole. It is useful to compare VB No.42 with a similar fragment from the fourth group of the *Fichte-Studien*:

Der Staat ist eine Person, wie das Individuum. Was der Mensch sich selbst ist, ist der Staat den Menschen. Die Staaten werden verschieden bleiben, so lange die Menschen verschieden sind. Im wesentlichen ist der Staat, wie der Mensch, immer derselbe. (NS,II,236,[421])

It is interesting that Novalis speaks here of the state, and in the later fragment of "die Gesellschaft", a distinction which it is important we bear in mind in our reading of these

⁵⁶. Cf. Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, pp20-21. Demandt quotes a fragmentary Egyptian text which he thinks is the earliest known instance of the metaphor.

⁵⁷. See Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act 1 Scene 1 : "There was a time when all the body's members/ Rebell'd against the belly...". As Demandt points out, in most usages "der leitende Teil des Ganzen" is represented not by the belly but by the head (*Metaphern für Geschichte*, p22)

texts. Although his remarks on the nature of the state hardly constitute a profound contribution to political thought, they do display some affinities with Schiller's characterization of the relationship between the individual and the state in the fourth of the *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung*. In this letter, Schiller attempts to mediate between a series of antinomies, such as "Pflicht" and "Neigung", "Einheit" and "Mannigfaltigkeit", "den objektiven und generischen...Charakter" and its subjective and specific counterpart⁵⁸. The starting point for this attempted mediation is the individual subject:

Jeder individuelle Mensch, kann man sagen, trägt, der Anlage und Bestimmung nach, einen reinen idealischen Menschen in sich, mit dessen unveränderlicher Einheit in allen seinen Abwechslungen übereinzustimmen, die große Aufgabe seines Daseyns ist. Diese reine Mensch, der sich mehr oder weniger deutlich in jedem Subjekt zu erkennen giebt, wird repräsentiert durch den Staat; die objektive und gleichsam kanonische Form, in der sich die Mannichfaltigkeit der Subjekte zu vereinigen trachtet.⁵⁹

Schiller postulates a reciprocal process in which the state is internalized by its members, and is simultaneously itself the product of their externalized subjectivities:

Weil der Staat der reinen und objektiven Menschheit in der Brust seiner Bürger zum Repräsentanten dient, so wird er gegen seine Bürger dasselbe Verhältniß zu beobachten haben, in welchem sie zu sich selber stehen, und ihre subjektive Menschheit auch nur in dem Grade ehren können, als sie zur objektiven veredelt ist. Ist der innere Mensch mit sich einig, so wird er auch bei der höchsten Univalisierung seines Wesens seines Betragens seine Eigenthümlichkeit retten, und der Staat wird bloß

⁵⁸. Schiller, Friedrich, *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*, begründet von Julius Petersen, fortgeführt von Liesliotte Blumenthal & Benno von Wiese, Bd.20, Weimar, 1965, pp316-7. This edition is referred to in the following with the letters 'NA'.

⁵⁹. *ibid.*, p 316

der Ausleger seines schönen Instinkts, die deutlichere Formel seiner innern Gesetzgebung seyn.⁶⁰

There is a marked similarity between Schiller's notion of a correspondence between the inner harmony of the individual and that of the state, and Novalis' laconic assertion that "Was der Mensch sich selbst ist, ist der Staat den Menschen"⁶¹. The fragment from the *Fichte-Studien* is reductive to the point of banality; but if we return now to the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, we can discern signs that Novalis has adapted for his own use some of the concepts which Schiller employs in the *Briefe*⁶². His characterization of society - not, we must note, the state - as "Eine untheilbare denkende und fühlende Person" echoes Schiller's insistence on the need for a balance between the demands of "Vernunft" and "lebendige Empfindung" in the ideal "Staatsverfassung"⁶³. What distinguishes Novalis' 'personification' of society from Schiller's description of the state as the representative of pure objective humanity, however, is his supposition of a structural homology between the individual and the social whole. The traditional form of the metaphor of the body politic, where the human body serves as schematic

⁶⁰. *ibid.*, p 317-8

⁶¹. It is also interesting to compare Novalis' fragment with the passage in *Über Anmuth und Würde* in which Schiller speaks of the "dreyerley Verhältnisse...in welchen der Mensch zu sich selbst...stehen kann" (NA, Bd.20, p 280).

⁶². The first nine Briefe were published in the *Horen* in January 1795 (cf. NA, Bd.21, p 241). The fourth group of *Fichte-Studien* to which the fragment quoted belongs was written down, according to Samuel, sometime during the early months of 1796. It is therefore quite possible that Novalis had read the Briefe even before beginning the *Fichte-Studien*.

⁶³. NA, Bd.20, p 316-7

representation of social complexity, is reversed: just as society is a single individual, so too does the individual carry a "kleine Gesellschaft" within him or herself. This idea is repeated in a slightly different form in VB No.47:

Das Volk ist eine Idee. Wir sollen ein Volk werden.
Ein vollkommener Mensch ist ein kleines Volk. Ächte
Popularität ist das höchste Ziel des Menschen.
(NS,II,432)

Here it is the "Volk" which represents the inner plurality to which the individual striving for perfection must aspire. This "Volk", however, is described here in the abstract as an "Idee" rather than as an individual. Once again we may recognize an echo of the "reine[r] idealische[r] Mensch" who, according to Schiller, is represented by the state. The two fragments from the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* seem at first glance almost identical in content. A close comparison, however, reveals that they articulate two very different ontological perspectives, which stand side by side in much of Novalis' speculations on politics, and in other areas. A certain unresolved tension between these perspectives is responsible for many of the contradictions and incongruities in his texts. It arises from his use of two quite distinct notions of representation: one which assumes a fundamental difference or discontinuity between signifier and signified - or between ideal essences and their material representations - and another, which conceives of the universe as a cosmic and infinite system of analogies, in which the signifier is, in essence, always homologous with the signified. This latter notion was developed most fully by

scholastic theology, which referred to it as the idea of an *analogia entis*⁶⁴.

In order to see how the tension between these two perspectives manifests itself within the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, we need to look more closely at Novalis' exploration of the possibilities of a homological view of the state. In VB No.64 he anthropomorphizes the common social and political institutions:

Gerichtshöfe, Theater, Hof, Kirche, Regierung, öffentliche Zusammenkünfte - Academieen, Collegien etc. sind gleichsam die speciellen, innern Organe des mystischen Staatsindividuums. (NS,II,436)

This idea is elaborated further in VB No.71, which postulates that "Schriften" are "die Gedancken des Staats" and archives "sein Gedächtnis". This incarnation of the body politic is playful and speculative in character, but we need to recognize that the traditional usage of the metaphor - as the basis of an allegorical exhortation to the lower classes to remember their proper place and function within the social order - is no longer invoked. Instead, we are presented with a personalized notion of the state with thoughts and a memory, rather than just a physical body. At the same time, Novalis

⁶⁴. Cf. Nieraad, *Bildgesegnet und bildverflucht*, p 15: "Es wird angenommen, daß alle Substanzen,, insofern sie aus einem Schöpfungsakt hervorgegangen sind, im Verhältnis der Teilhabe (participatio) zum Schöpfergott stehen und sich in den aufeinander aufbauenden Seinsebenen des Mineralischen, Vegetarischen, Animalischen und Human-Geistigen auf das absolute Sein Gottes hinordnen. Die Welt erscheint in dieser Perspektive als ein geschlossenes, hierarchisch geordnetes System von Existenzen, zwischen denen Analogie- und Korrespondenzbeziehungen auf horizontaler Ebene - die Existenzen auf der gleichen Seinsebene betreffend - und auf vertikaler Ebene - also zwischen Existenzen verschiedener Seinsebenen - gelten. Demgemäß hat alles Seiende Verweischarakter...".

gives the conventional metaphor a very concrete and literal sense by conjecturing a structural homology between the internal organs of the human body and those of the "mystisches Staatsindividuum". The original rhetorical and persuasive function of the metaphor is suppressed in a process of "Wörtlichnehmen" comparable with that described by Blumenberg in the *Beobachtungen an Metaphern*⁶⁵.

The disappearance of the traditional, essentially conservative function of the metaphor of the body politic does not, in this instance, mean that it acquires a new, emancipatory sense. In other fragments in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, the focus of Novalis' speculations is widened. VB No.3 speaks of a "Weltstaat" which is the "Körper" animated by "die schöne Welt, die gesellige Welt" (NS,II,412). Two fragments later in the series elaborate this notion. According to VB No.100, "die Menschenwelt ist das gemeinschaftliche Organ der Götter" (NS,II,456), whilst VB No.95 uses a chemical metaphor to suggest a homology between the human and the divine:

Wenn die Welt gleichsam ein Niederschlag aus der Menschennatur ist, so ist die Götterwelt eine Sublimation derselben. Beyde geschehen uno actu. Keine Praecipitation ohne Sublimation. Was dort an Agilitaet verloren geht, wird hier gewonnen. (NS,II,456)

Taken together, these three fragments outline a conception of the universe which sees it as homologically, and by implication, hierarchically structured. The prevalence of this conception throughout Novalis' philosophical writings has been documented by Barbara Senckel, who argues that his

⁶⁵. Cf. Blumenberg, *Beobachtungen*, p 209

central concern is to reveal the "Menschlichkeit der gesamten Wirklichkeit"⁶⁶ from the perspective of a kind of cosmic anthropology:

Als dieses dem Ganzen strukturgleiche Teil verkörpert der Mensch immer schon als Mikrokosmos die gesamte Wirklichkeit.⁶⁷

Gerhard Neumann goes one step further when he asserts that what we observe in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* is not just Novalis' exploration of "die Vorstellung des Wechselbezuges von einzelmem Element und Pluralität"⁶⁸, but the actual dissolution of the "Grundpolarität von Teil und Ganzem"⁶⁹. Precisely this tendency, which Neumann sees as an innovative and productive aspect of Novalis' philosophical speculation, is criticized sternly by Blumenberg in his chapter on Romanticism in *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*:

Die Romantik hat nicht nur die Grenzen der literarischen Gattungen verwischt, überhaupt Grenzen zugunsten des Eindrucks oder Symbolisierung oder auch nur der Illusion der Unendlichkeit - sie hat auch die Differenz von Bedeutung und Bedeutetem aufgelöst zugunsten einer Art von universeller⁷⁰ Plastizität, die alles für alles andere eintreten läßt.

⁶⁶. See Barbara Senckel, *Individualität und Totalität. Aspekte zu einer Anthropologie des Geistes bei Novalis*, Tübingen, 1983, here p 33. Senckel's monograph takes no account whatsoever of the chronology of Novalis' writings, of their historical context, and the text amounts to little more than paraphrase; but it is a useful assembly of quotes, and of the various different manifestations of the notion of homology and of the "anthropomorphic" structure of the cosmos.

⁶⁷. Senckel, *ibid.*, p 34

⁶⁸. Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 323

⁶⁹. Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 395

⁷⁰. Hans Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*, Frankfurt/M, 1981, pp 236-7

Blumenberg's strictures are accurated to a certain extent, but he seems to overlook the fact that in order for the perception of analogies or homologies to be possible in the first place, there must be certain structures in the experienced world which delineate differences of order or degree between the objects of comparison. To put it another way: even in a world where the signifier is homologous with the signified, there must be some distance between them in order for the process of signification to take place, and in the kind of world which Novalis describes, this distance is marked out and preserved by the existence of a cosmic hierarchy of essences and entities. The hierarchy of "Welt", "Menschennatur" and "Götterwelt" in VB No.95 is a simple illustration of this principle.

The structures of such a world must, of necessity, tend towards stasis and immutability, rather than "universelle Plastizität". The problem of how to introduce a dynamic of change and evolution into the homologically-structured universe is one which exercises Novalis not just in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, but in many of his other philosophical writings as well⁷¹. The full implications of this problem cannot be examined here. It does, however, have a bearing on our understanding of the status of Novalis' concept of representation. There is a subtle, but fundamental difference between the notion that every object, entity or essence is ultimately homologous with all others, and is only

⁷¹. An example of Novalis' attempts to come to terms with this problem in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* is given in VB No.94, where he posulates a movement from a chaotic original unity through the process of "Abstraction" to a renewed unity which is described as a "Gesellschaft" or "mannichfaltige Welt".

distinguished from them by its place within the cosmic hierarchy, and the belief that there are certain essences or ideas which cannot be apprehended directly, but which must be represented or mediated through material forms of communication which are fundamentally unlike them. This latter belief is that which is stated at the beginning of VB No.73:

Nichts ist zur wahren Religiositaet unentbehrlicher, als ein Mittelglied. Unmittelbar kann der Mensch schlechterdings nicht mit derselben in Verhältniß stehen. (NS,II,440-2)

Novalis' theory of religious "Mittlertum" is complex, and has been dealt with exhaustively in the secondary literature⁷². Its political correlate is the idea of representation which is outlined in the first part of VB No.75:

Fast immer hat man den Anführer, den ersten Beamten des Staates - mit dem Repraesentaten des Genius der Menschheit vermengt, der zur Einheit der Gesellschaft oder des Volks gehört. Im Volk ist...alles Schauspiel - mithin muß auch der Geist des Volks sichtbar seyn. Dieser sichtbare Geist kommt entweder, wie im tausendjährigen Reich ohne unser Zuthun - oder er wird einstimmig, durch ein lautes oder stilles Einverständniß gewählt. (NS,II,444)

This passage leads us, albeit by a somewhat circuitous route, back to Schiller. The "Genius der Menschheit" of which Novalis speaks is reminiscent of the "reine und objektive Menschheit" for which, according to Schiller, the state serves as a representation. For Schiller, the state is, in its concrete and manifest form, a tangible representation of the abstract idea of pure objective humanity. In order for such a

⁷². See for example Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 345-8, Mähl, *Die Idee des goldenen Zeitalters*, p 344ff, Kuhn, *Der Apokalyptiker*, pp 107-9, 135-47

state to come into existence, a "Staat der Freyheit", rather than a "Staat der Noth", the people must possess "Totalität des Charakters"⁷³. According to VB No.75, by contrast, it is the ruler or "Anführer" who has traditionally embodied or represented in himself the "Genius der Menschheit" which is the unifying principle of society.

The fragment appears for a moment to be arguing that the "Geist des Volks" is distinct from the "Genius der Menschheit", but then veers off into eschatology with the suggestion that the former will manifest itself "im tausendjährigen Reich ohne unser Zuthun"⁷⁴. The alternative suggested by the text - that the "Genius des Volkes" is chosen "durch ein stilles oder lautes Einverständniß" - anticipates the assertion in *Glauben und Liebe* that "Geburt" amounts to "die primitive Wahl"⁷⁵. The practical implication of this statement would appear to be that every people gets the ruler it deserves or secretly desires, whether by active choice or passive acceptance. The continuation of VB No.75 sheds some light on these obscurities:

Es giebt viel interessante hierher gehörige Züge aus der Geschichte - z.B. In Indien ist an einigen Orten Feldherr und Priester getrennt gewesen, und der Feldherr hat die 2te Rolle gespielt.

⁷³. Schiller, NA, Bd.20, p 318

⁷⁴. A possible interpretation of this passage would be that the it is the Revolution which has made visible the "Geist des Volks" and thus ushered in the "tausendjähriges Reich" - but this thought doesn't seem to be pursued any further in the fragment.

⁷⁵. See NS,II,488,[15]

Der Priester muß uns nicht irre machen. Dichter und Priester waren im Anfang Eins - und nur spätere Zeiten haben sie getrennt. Der ächte Dichter ist aber immer Priester, so wie der ächter Priester immer Dichter geblieben - und sollte die Zukunft nicht wieder den alten Zustand der Dinge wieder herbeyführen? Jener Repraesentant des Genius der Menschheit dürfte leicht der Dichter kat exochin seyn.

Übrigens ist es auch eine unwidersprechliche Thatsache, daß die meisten Fürsten nicht eigentlich Fürsten - sondern gewöhnlich mehr oder minder eine Art von *Repraesentanten des Genius ihrer Zeit* waren. und die Regierung mehrentheils, wie billig, in subalternen Händen sich befand. (NS,II,444-6)

When the future restores "den alten Zustand der Dinge", the text argues, it will be the "Dichter" who represents the "genius" of humanity, and who will apparently resume the position of supremacy he enjoyed in his dual role of poet and priest in the mythical past. Furthermore, Novalis suggests that although "die meisten Fürsten" were only representative of their time, and not of the idea or anthropological constant which he refers to as "Genius der Menschheit", it is still desirable that this representative function should be separate from the business of government.

A number of important points arise from the consideration of these fragments and from the comparison with Schiller in particular. Firstly, it is important to realize that neither Novalis nor Schiller are concerned here with that aspect of political representation which was of paramount importance for political theory and practice at the time, namely the active representation of the general will. Indeed, as Hans Heino Ewers has pointed out, Schiller is not really concerned in the *Briefe* with the form of the state or the realization of "reine

objektive Menschheit" within the political process⁷⁶. The purpose of the state is to represent the ideal of "schöne Individualität" to which all subjective individuals must aspire, and not to promulgate the general will. For Novalis it is the "Anführer des Staats" who must embody and make visible a transcendental idea of humanity, whereas for Schiller it is the state itself. Novalis concedes that the majority of individual kings and princes tend to embody a "Genius der Zeit" or a "Genius des Volks" which is not always identical with the "Genius der Menschheit", but which may approximate it. Having established this principle, however, he seems unable or unwilling to choose between two alternative modes of representation. On the one hand, he postulates a direct and concrete mode, in which the individual would embody the plurality of the "Volk" or "Gesellschaft", and these entities would conversely reflect the unity of the individual, not in a figurative or metaphorical sense, but on the basis of an actual homology in their internal structures. This mode corresponds to the notion of the state as a "Person" or a "mystisches Staatsindividuum". The alternative mode acknowledges the existence of a necessary disjunction between ideas and their material representations; its basic premise is that the state as "Idee" has to be made concrete

⁷⁶. See Ewers, Die schöne Individualität, p 42 : "Schiller entwickelt im vierten Brief jedoch nicht alle Momente und Bestimmungen des Ideals einer schönen gesellschaftlichen Vereinigung. Er legt hier einseitig den Akzent auf die Voraussetzungen, die auf der Seite des Individuums, des einzelnen Bürgers, erfüllt sein müssen, um ein schönes gesellschaftliches Leben hervorbringen zu können....Unklar und offen aber bleibt weiterhin, welche Form der Staat, welche Daseinsweise das Allgemeine haben soll".

metaphorically in the person of the king⁷⁷. This conception of representation is perhaps best summed up by one of the laconic epigrams in the *Teplitzer Fragmente*, which states that:

Die Welt ist ein *Universaltronus* des Geistes - Ein symbolisches Bild desselben. (NS,II,600,[349])

Novalis applies this generalized notion of representation to a number of different contexts, including religious experience, politics and semiotics⁷⁸, and as a result these contexts take on the ability to function as metaphors for one other, and often tend to be conflated. In particular, the representation of the divine tends to become synonymous with the representation of an ideal humanity within the state, as VB No.75 implies⁷⁹. This tendency becomes even more pronounced in *Glauben und Liebe*, where Novalis states explicitly that monarchy is based on "den Glauben an einen höhergeborenen Menschen, auf der freiwilligen Annahme eines Idealmenschen", and goes on to declare that the king is "ein zum irdischen Fatum erhobener Mensch" (NS,II,489,[18]). Both in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and, as we shall see, in *Glauben und Liebe*, his conception of the mode of representation which obtains in a monarchy seems to oscillate between the homological and the metaphorical modes. At times the king is a

⁷⁷. Cf. *Glauben und Liebe* No.15: "Bedarf nicht der mystische Souverain, wie jede Idee, eines Symbols..." (NS,II,487).

⁷⁸. See Ruder, Klaus, *Zur Symboltheorie des Novalis*, Marburg, 1974, p 92, Anm. 376. Novalis devotes part of the *Fichte-Studien* to Fichte's writings on semiotics: see NS,II,283, 301. See also Hannah, R.W., *The Fichtean Dynamic of Novalis' Poetics*, Bern, 1981, esp. Ch.4

⁷⁹. See Mähl. *Goldenes Zeitalter*, p 345

symbol, and at others he or his household are the visible patterns which every citizen must strive to duplicate. Moreover, these two modes not only exist side by side in the same texts, but in certain instances the distinctions between them become blurred as one slips into the other.

We can see this tendency in operation in VB No.122, the longest and most important of the fragments in the text dealing with political theory⁸⁰. Despite its length, I shall quote the fragment here in full, and then proceed to discuss it in stages.

Wo die Majorität entscheidet - herrscht die Kraft über die Form - umgekehrt, wo die Minorität die Oberhand hat.

Kühnheit kann man den theoretischen Politikern nicht vorwerfern. Keinem ist noch eingefallen zu versuchen - ob nicht Monarchie - und Demokratie schlechterdings, als Elemente eines wahren Universal-Staats, vereinigt werden müßten werden und könnten. Eine wahre Demokratie ist ein absoluter Minus-Staat. Eine wahre Monarchie ist ein absoluter Plus-Staat. Die Konstitution der Monarchie ist der Character des Regenten. Ihre Garantie ist sein Wille. Demokratie, im gewöhnlichen Sinn, ist im Grunde von der Monarchie nicht verschieden, nur daß hier der Monarch eine Masse von Köpfen ist. Ächte Demokratie ist Protestantismus - politischer Naturstand, wie der Protestantismus im engern Sinn - religiöser Naturstand. Die gemäßigte Regierungsform ist halber Staat und halber Naturstand - es ist eine künstliche, sehr zerbrechliche Maschine - daher allen genialischen Köpfen höchst zuwider - aber das Steckenpferd unsrer Zeit. Ließe sich diese Maschine in ein lebendiges, autonomes Wesen verwandeln, so wäre das große Problem gelöst. Naturwillkühr und Kunstzwang durchdringen sich, wenn man sie in Geist auflöst. Der Geist macht beides flüssig. Der Geist ist jederzeit poetisch. Der poetische Staat - ist der wahrhafte, vollkommne Staat.
Ein sehr geistvoller Staat wird von selbst poetisch seyn - Je mehr Geist, und geistiges Verkehr im Staat ist,

⁸⁰. Novalis himself seems to have had some reservations about the content of this fragment, since he himself crossed it out in his revision of the manuscript: it is, however, possible that he decided to use it for *Glauben und Liebe* and then revised it into an entirely new form for that text. The continuities between the fragment and (for example) the adumbration of a synthesis of monarchy and democracy in *Glauben und Liebe* are clear.

desto mehr wird er sich dem poetischen nähern - desto freudiger wird jeder darinn aus Liebe zu dem Schönen, großen Individuo, seine Ansprüche beschränken und die nöthigen Aufopferungen machen wollen - desto weniger wird der Staat es bedürfen - desto ähnlicher wird der Geist des Staats, dem Geist eines Einzelnen musterhaften Menschen seyn - der nur ein einziges Gesetz auf immer ausgesprochen hat - Sey so gut und poetisch, als möglich. (NS,II,466-8)

This fragment has been discussed extensively in the secondary literature, and the most sophisticated interpretation given by Kurzke⁸¹. Kurzke comes to the conclusion that the apparent invocation of the notion of the state as "Makroanthropos" in the final section, where the "poetische[r] Staat" is identified with "dem Schönen, großen Individuo", is in fact deceptive⁸². The state as individual, writes Kurzke, represents "das transzendente Selbstbewußtsein des Menschen"⁸³, and consequently the use of the metaphor of the body politic must be seen as standing outside the "organologische Staatslehre" of the conservative tradition⁸⁴. This interpretation seems to me somewhat questionable, but in order to expose the logical flaws in it it will be necessary to look at the steps in Novalis' own argumentation in some detail.

⁸¹. Cf. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 120ff. See also Berglar, Peter, *Geschichte und Staat bei Novalis*, in: *Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts 1974*, p 143-208, here p 187ff, and Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 376ff

⁸². Cf. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 127. Novalis himself only begins to use the term "Makroanthropos" in the *Allgemeines Brouillon*. See NW, p457, 466

⁸³. *ibid.*

⁸⁴. *ibid.*, p 126

The first section of the fragment is concerned with a comparison of democracy and monarchy, and with the possibility of a synthesis of the two. As Kurzke suggests, it seems logical to assume that Novalis sees democracy as a form of the state where the majority rules and "Kraft" dominates "Form". Monarchy thus represents its polar opposite⁸⁵. The problems of interpretation begin when we try to determine what is meant by the terms "Minus-Staat" and "Plus-Staat". Clues to this puzzle are given, as Kurzke rightly points out, by passages from other fragments where Novalis uses the terms in an aesthetic context. In the sequence entitled *Poesie* from the unpublished *Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen*⁸⁶, which, according to Samuel, had been committed to paper before Novalis dispatched the final draft of the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, No.51 equates the "Gedicht" with "PlusPoesie" and "Prosa" with "MinusPoesie" (NS,II, 536). A contemporaneous fragment from the sequence *Poeticismen* places this equation in an historical context:

Wie episches, lyrisches und dramatisches Zeitalter in der Geschichte der griechischen Poesie einander folgten, so lösen sich in der Universalgeschichte der Poesie die Antike, Moderne, und Vereinigte Periode ab. Das Interessante ist der Gegenstand der Minus Poesie. (NS,II,537,[54])

The parallels with Schlegel's *Studium-Aufsatz* are obvious. Kurzke draws attention to these, but he then mistakenly identifies "MinusPoesie" with "das Interessante", ignoring the actual wording of the text, which states that

⁸⁵. *ibid.*, p 120

⁸⁶. This sequence is designated in my text by the initials VF.

"das Interessante" is the object of "MinusPoesie"⁸⁷. This distinction is crucial. A further fragment from the *Poeticismen*, which follows immediately after No.54, declares that "Voltaire ist einer der größten Minuspoeten, die je lebten. Sein Candide ist seine Odysee" (NS,II,537). This statement suggests that what Novalis means by "Minuspoesie" is in fact "Kritik", the sceptical anatomization of the present condition of negativity. Some support for this interpretation is given by the opening lines of VB No.105, in which Novalis refers to Schlegel's writings as "lyrische Philosopheme", and states that "sein Forster und und Lessing sind vorzügliche Minuspoesien und ähneln den Pindarischen Hymnen" (NS,II,462). This latter comparison is somewhat confusing, unless we look more closely at VF No.51 and its characterization of "Plus-" and "MinusPoesie". The first part of this fragment reads as follows:

Es wäre eine artige Frage, ob denn das lyrische Gedicht eigentlich *Gedicht*, PlusPoesie, oder Prosa, MinusPoesie wäre? Wie man den Roman für Prosa gehalten hat, so hat man das lyrische Gedicht für Poesie gehalten - beydes mit Unrecht. Die höchste, eigentlichste Prosa ist das lyrische Gedicht. (NS,II,536)

A distinction is made here between the traditional notions of the novel as prose and the lyrical poem as poetry, and true prose, which is actually identical with "das lyrische Gedicht". The second section of the fragment clarifies this distinction:

Die sogenannte Prosa ist aus Selbstbeschränkung der absoluten Extreme entstanden - Sie ist nur ad interim da und spielt eine subalterne, temporelle Rolle. Es kommt eine Zeit, wo sie nicht mehr ist. Dann ist aus der

⁸⁷. See Kurzke, Kurzke, p 122: "Die MinusPoesie ist also individuell, künstlich, maniert...usw."

Beschränkung eine Durchdringung geworden. Ein wahrhaftes Leben ist entstanden, und Prosa und Poesie sind dadurch auf das innigste vereinigt, uns in Wechsel gesetzt.

Novalis' historicization of the two genres follows the schema already familiar to us from the *Studium-Aufsatz*. Prose, which is the dominant literary mode of the present will be succeeded by a "Durchdringung" of "Prosa" and "Poesie" analogous to Schlegel's notion of the reunification of literature under the rule of "objektive Poesie". This notion is echoed by Novalis with the phrase "Vereinigte Periode" in VF No.54. The supremacy of "sogenannte Prosa" is a temporary phase, "ad interim"; but Novalis seems also to allude here to Schlegel's notion that a temporary dictatorship of prose in the form of social writing will pave the way for the rule of objectivity. His description of Schlegel's writings as "lyrische Philosopheme" suggests that they have transcended the condition of "sogenannte Prosa" and have progressed at least part of the way towards becoming "höchste eigentliche Prosa". It is certainly no accident either that in the continuation of VF No.54 he echoes Schlegel in remarking that "In Göthen scheint sich ein wahrer Kern dieser Vereinigung angesetzt zu haben" (NS,II,537).

Thus Novalis does not define prose purely negatively, but rather follows Schlegel in seeing the ascendancy of prose as part of a dialectical process of movement towards a condition of harmonious "Vereinigung". This calls into question the conclusions which Kurzke draws from the equation of "MinusPoesie" and "Minus-Staat", which he summarizes as follows:

Der Minus-Staat geht aus von modernen und hochentwickelten Individualitäten, die jedoch nur die privaten Interessen kultiviert haben und sich zum Staat nur vereinigen, um den nötigen Schutz für die ungestörte Ausübung ihrer Individualität zu haben; daher rührt das "minus", denn der Staat ist nur negativ definiert....Der Minus-Staat im allgemeinsten Sinn ist der Staat der aufklärerischen Theorien vom Gesellschaftsvertrag. Der Plus-Staat ist analog ein Staat des Vereinigten, des Konkreten und des Schönen, ein utopischer Staat einer Zukunft, in der die Leiden der Vereinzelung ausgestanden sind und die Menschheit zur Persönlichkeit geworden ist. Seine Constitution ist daher der "Character des Regenten", er ist also eine Person mit geschlossener Identität, kein Produkt eines Vertrags atomisierter Individuen.⁸⁸

To begin with, if we accept that Novalis was following the schema of the *Studium-Aufsatz* fairly consistently, as the examples above seem to indicate, then we must recognize that the ascendancy or temporary dictatorship of "MinusPoesie" is a response to, and critical departure from, the "Herrschaft des Interessanten", which is quite unambiguously identified with the ancien régime in the *Studium-Aufsatz*. The correlate of the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" in Novalis' fragment is the "gemäßigte Regierungsform"⁸⁹. Moreover, it is highly probable that there is an implicit counterweight in Novalis' argument to his apparently entirely positive characterization of the monarchy, namely Schlegel's *Versuch*. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Schlegel argues there that the constitution is "der Inbegriff der permanenten Verhältnisse der politischen Macht"⁹⁰. The constitutive element of political power and source of legitimation for this power is the general will as

⁸⁸. *ibid.*, p 122

⁸⁹. This is consistent with the characterization of Voltaire as a "Minuspoet", since he was a critic both of the *ancien régime* and some of the more crudely eudaemonistic precepts of the Enlightenment.

⁹⁰. KA, VII, 18

represented by the "Volksmehrheit". Novalis' equation of the constitution of the monarchical state with the "Character des Regenten" doubtless refers back to VB No.75 and its statements about the representation of the "Genius der Menschheit", or more commonly the "Genius der Zeit", by the "Regent" or "Fürst". The implication of his characterization of the monarchy in VB No.122 is clear; it is not the ideal future monarchy which he is describing, but rather the principle of the monarchical state *per se*, which encompasses the possibility that the "Character des Regenten" will be far less than ideal. The primary evidence of this possibility was the behaviour of the absolutist rulers of the states of the European *ancien régime*. For precisely this reason, Novalis argues for a corrective to the "Konstitution der Monarchie" - namely a dose of democracy along the lines which Schlegel had described in the *Versuch* - and an eventual synthesis of the two systems. This conclusion is borne out by the parallels between the "Durchdringung" of the absolute extremes of poetry and prose which is envisaged in VF No.51, after which they will be "auf das innigste vereinigt", and the rhetorical question in VB No.122 "ob nicht Monarchie - und Demokratie schlechterdings ... vereinigt werden müßten und könnten". Thus Kurzke's assertion that the "Plus-Staat" is a "Staat des Vereinigten, des Konkreten und des Schönen" -and moreover, a monarchy⁹¹ - is incorrect, since it ignores the internal logic of Novalis' argument in the two fragments. "PlusPoesie" and "MinusPoesie" and their respective correlates monarchy and

⁹¹. See the continuation of Kurzke's argument quoted in the text above - p 120ff

democracy, are clearly conceived of as analogous stages or terms in a dialectical process leading to synthesis⁹².

Precisely what this synthesis might amount to in practical political terms is not entirely clear, as Kurzke himself has observed⁹³. Novalis' immediate concern appears to be with the excoriation of the "gemäßigte Regierungsform", which is not explicitly linked with a particular state, but which Novalis almost certainly sees as being exemplified by post-Friderician Prussia⁹⁴ and its correlates elsewhere in Europe. To the mechanical and artificial nature of this form of government Novalis opposes the possibility of its transformation into "ein lebendiges, autonomes Wesen", which corresponds to "dem Schönen, großen Individuo" mentioned later in the fragment.

It is somewhat surprising that the secondary literature has not, as yet, remarked on the reference which Novalis makes here to a well-established metaphorical convention, which was widely employed in polemical philosophical writings on the nature of the state in the eighteenth century. This convention

⁹². There is a considerable amount of self-contradiction in Kurzke's argument on this point, since he himself later goes on to state that the "wahrer Universalstaat" will be a combination of "Minus-Staat" and "Plus-Staat". Cf. Kurzke, p 123

⁹³. Kurzke, *ibid.* : "Er leistet insofern...keinen Beitrag zur staatsrechtlichen Diskussion...".

⁹⁴. A comparison with *Glauben und Liebe* No.36 supports this view. As Manfred Frank points out, Fichte had also described the absolutist state in its various manifestations as a "künstliche politische Maschine" in his *Beitrag zur Berichtigung der Urteile des Publikums über die Französische Revolution*. See Frank, Manfred, *Der kommende Gott, Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie*, Frankfurt/M., 1982, pp 174-5, also Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Gesamtausgabe*, Hg. v. Lauth, R. and Gliwitsky, H., Stuttgart/Bad-Cannstatt, 1970ff, Bd. I/1, p 249

has its origin in Hobbes' *Leviathan*, where the state is described as "an artificial man, of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended"⁹⁵. Hobbes' view was turned on its head by Rousseau, who argued that the inception of the state and the appearance of private property actually intensified the *bellum omnium contra omnes* and the alienation of individual from individual. For Rousseau, the task of politics is to reverse this process, "gleichsam die menschliche Natur umzuwandeln, jedes Individuum, das für sich ein vollendetes und einzeln bestehendes Ganzes ist, zu einem Teil eines größeren Ganzen umzuschaffen, aus dem dieses Individuum gewissermaßen erst Leben und Wesen erhält"⁹⁶.

The parallels between this passage from the *Contrat social* and Novalis' speculations about the transformation of the "künstliche, sehr zerbrechliche Maschine" in VB No.122 are obvious. Manfred Frank has demonstrated the affinities between Rousseau's notion of the interdependence of individual and social whole, and Kant's conception of the "nach innern Volksgesetzen eingerichteten, demokratisch-organischen Staat" as it is articulated in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*⁹⁷. Though Kant himself subsequently shifted his position by declaring the democratic *forma imperii* to be necessarily despotic, the premises of his conception of the state were taken over and

⁹⁵. Quoted by Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 172. The following brief account of Hobbes' and Rousseau's conceptions of the state draws on Frank's lucid comparison of the two.

⁹⁶. Quoted by Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 173 (=Contrat social II,7 - no edition given)

⁹⁷. See Frank, *ibid.*, p 171, 173

radicalized by Fichte, who argued that the state was only a means to an end, namely the "Gründung einer vollkommenen Gesellschaft", and that its ultimate purpose was to make itself redundant: "es ist der Zweck aller Regierung, die Regierung überflüssig zu machen"⁹⁸. Frank summarizes the basic impulse underlying this stage in Fichte's political thought as follows:

In jedem Falle ist der verträgliche Zustand für Fichte bloß temporär, er soll mitsamt dem Staat aufgehen in einem Organismus der sozialen Interaktion, in dem jedes Teil um seiner eigenen Selbsterhaltung willen an das Ganze und das Ganze an die Erhaltung seiner Teile verwiesen ist, was Fichte am Beispiel eines Naturorganismus (eines Baums, wie bei Kant) erläutert.⁹⁹

Viewed against this background, it would seem that some of the same impulses inform VB No.122 as do Rousseau's, Kant's and Fichte's progressive elaboration of an organic notion of the state. The process which Novalis describes in the last paragraph of the fragment, whereby the state, as it becomes increasingly imbued with "Geist" and in so doing approximates perfection more and more closely, achieves a condition where it requires "nur ein einziges Gesetz auf immer", displays a certain affinity with Fichte's view that government must seek to make itself superfluous¹⁰⁰. Indeed, Novalis' formulation appears to echo a hypothesis advanced by Fichte in the

⁹⁸. See Fichte, *Über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*, in: Fichte, Gesamtausgabe I/2, p 37

⁹⁹. Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 176

¹⁰⁰. The same conclusion is reached, though by a very different route and with other emphases, by Neumann: "Die Vollendung des Staats fällt zusammen mit seiner Aufhebung. Das Wechselspiel von starrem Denksystem und freiem Denkorganismus wird gegenstandslos, sobald der Mensch zum "Ideenparadies" zurückkehrt." (Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p 378).

Beitrag, according to which a state which pursues as its "Endzweck" a universal "Cultur der Freiheit" would no longer require laws or a constitution:

Das allgemeingeltende Gesetz der Vernunft würde alle zur höchsten Einheit der Gesinnungen vereinigen, und kein anderes Gesetz würde mehr über ihre Handlungen zu wachen haben.¹⁰¹

It is important to recognize both the similarities and the divergences between these two conceptions. Whilst Novalis would seem to have appropriated the notion of the withering away of the state and its laws, he replaces "das allgemeine Gesetz der Vernunft" with "poetischer Geist" as the source of unity and social cohesion in the "stateless" society. There is also a radically reductive and homogenizing tendency in Novalis' speculations. Whereas Fichte foresees a society in which each individual has internalized the universal law of reason to such an extent that other laws or norms become redundant, and which will implicitly accommodate a degree of social diversity, Novalis seems to envisage the incarnation of a personalized state in a somewhat literal sense, arguing that the "Geist des Staats" will eventually conform to the "Geist eines Einzelnen musterhaften Menschen". Here we encounter once again the merging of the two modes of representation identified previously. The text oscillates between an abstract vision of the state become pure "poetischer Geist" - a condition in which it would have no further need of institutions or laws - and the idea that this "Geist" will be made manifest in a single, exemplary

¹⁰¹. Fichte, Gesamtausgabe, I/1, p 253. Novalis makes a very similar statement in NS,III, 284, [250].

individual, namely the king, whom every citizen must strive not simply to emulate, but actually to become.

It remains to be asked whether or not we can determine more accurately what constitutes "poetischer Geist" and its manifestation in the "poetischer Staat". Kurzke has explored the parallels between VB No.122 and the theory of "Poesie" outlined by Novalis in his letter to A.W. Schlegel of 12.1.1798, and in the sequence entitled "Poesie" in the *Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen*¹⁰². The comparison is illuminating; but he proceeds to argue that the "poetischer Staat" is "keine Staatsform, sondern eine Lebensform"¹⁰³, and is in fact "nichts anderes als das kommende goldene Zeitalter des Hemsterhuis". This argument reduces the concept of the "poetischer Staat" to a purely internalized utopia. In attempting to refute the conservative interpretation and appropriation of Novalis as an "organological" thinker, Kurzke argues that he sees the creation of the Golden Age not as a problem of politics, but of "transcendental method"¹⁰⁴. But this is to ignore the context of political discourse within which Novalis quite unambiguously locates his speculations.

¹⁰². See Kurzke, pp 124-127

¹⁰³. Kurzke, p 126. In identifying the source for Novalis' concept of poetry as "Das Flüßige, alles Verbindende, alles miteinander in Berührung Setzende" in Hemsterhuis' *Alexis ou l'age d'or*, Kurzke makes the rather positivistic assumption that Novalis has simply taken over the concept without adapting it for his own specific purposes.

¹⁰⁴. See Kurzke, *ibid.*: "Indem ich also mein Ich transzendental reflektiere und so das "Ich meines Ichs" werde, stelle ich das goldene Zeitalter her."

If we look at the function which "poetischer Geist" fulfils in the evolution of the state in VB No.122, we can see that it acts as a kind of catalyst or historical solvent. The implication here is that the dialectical process of movement from monarchy to democracy to a synthetic "Universalstaat", and the parallel progression within the aesthetic sphere, will not actually take their course without some kind of external stimulus provided by the action of "Geist", which will "dissolve" the antithetical principles of monarchy and democracy, and enable their "Durchdringung". At this stage in my discussion, I want simply to advance a hypothesis whose validity the final part of this chapter will attempt to establish. This is that the notion of "poetischer Geist" is genetically related to Fichte's "allegemeines Gesetz der Vernunft" and Rousseau's *volonté générale*, and that it belongs to the same philosophical tradition as these; that tradition, namely, which conceived of the "intersubjektive Verbindlichkeit"¹⁰⁵ of the social as being grounded in the objectivity of the general will and its collective expression. It is the discourse of this tradition which Novalis appropriates and transforms into a number of different concretizations, one of which is the "poetischer Staat". In the process of transformation, these concretizations acquire a certain eschatological dimension: this is evident in the following passage from one of the *Logologische Fragmente*, which also exemplifies the reductionist tendency to which I have drawn attention, and with which I shall close this section:

¹⁰⁵. See Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 174

In der letzten Hälfte dieses Jahrhunderts entstand ...eine neue, heftigere Entzündung, als je - die feindlichen Massen thürmten sich stärker, als seither, gegen einander auf - die Gährung war übermäßig - es erfolgten mächtige Explosionen. Jetzt behaupten Einige - es habe sich irgendwo eine wahrhafte Durchdringung eräugnet - es sey ein Keim der Vereinigung entstanden, der allmählich wachsen und alles zu Einer, untheilbaren Gestalt assimiliren würde - Dieses Princip des ewigen Friedens dringe unwiederstehlich nach allen Seiten, und bald werde nur Eine Wissenschaft und Ein Geist, wie Ein Prophet und Ein Gott, seyn. (NS,II,527, [16])

5.4 *Symphilosophie* / Mass Writing

We have seen earlier in this chapter that Schlegel had made the need for a more equal and democratic relationship between writer and reader in the literary process one of the central imperatives of his aesthetic program. "Symphilosophie oder Sympoesie", the two terms with which he describes the "sacred" relationship into which the writer must enter with the reader, are also used by Schlegel himself, and by Novalis, to describe their literary and philosophical collaboration. In the same letter in which Friedrich Schlegel reports to Novalis that he has sent off the *Lyceums-Fragmente* for publication he states that "Symphilosophie" is "der eigentliche Name für unsere Verbindung"¹⁰⁶. Shortly afterwards he relates to Wilhelm his plan for a series of "analistischer [sic!] Rhapsodien über die Philosophie der Tage", for which he hopes to enlist the help of Schleiermacher and Novalis, "um meine Ideen von Symphilosophie auf diese Art (etwas) zu realisieren"¹⁰⁷. Novalis himself employs the term to describe

¹⁰⁶. Friedrich Schlegel an Novalis, 26.9.1797, KA,XXIV, p 122

¹⁰⁷. Friedrich Schlegel an August Wilhem Schlegel, 28.11.1797, KA,XXIV, p 44-5

his philosophical conversations with Schelling¹⁰⁸. Thus the word quickly becomes evocative of the emerging sense of identity and the sharing of intellectual activity within the Early Romantic circle. For Friedrich Schlegel it takes on a particularly practical meaning with regard to the *Athenäum*. While the journal is still in the planning stages, Friedrich writes to Wilhelm expressing pleasure at his brother's positive response to the *Lyceums-Fragmente*, and declares:

Allerliebste ist der Gedanke, *gemeinschaftlich* solche Fr.[agmente] zu schreiben. Das wäre göttlich für unsern *Herkules*'¹⁰⁹

Herkules was one of the titles considered by the Schlegels for their journal before they eventually settled on *Athenäum*. As the brothers' plans for the journal became more concrete and they prepared for publication, Friedrich places considerable stress on the importance of collaboration, not just in the area of intellectual or aesthetic production, but in the editing and shaping of the journal's content as well. In a letter dated March 1798, in which he refers to the collection of fragments by himself, Wilhelm, Novalis and Schleiermacher which he is assembling as "die große Sinfonie"¹¹⁰, he asks Wilhelm to approve his editorial practices:

¹⁰⁸. Cf. Novalis an August Wilhelm Schlegel, 25.12.1797, NS,IV,240: "Mit Schelling bin ich sehr Freund geworden. Wir haben einige köstliche Stunden symphilosophiert."

¹⁰⁹. Friedrich Schlegel an August Wilhelm Schlegel, 31.10.1797, KA,XXIV, p 34. This is the same letter in which Friedrich describes at some length his plans for their "gemeinschaftliches Journal".

¹¹⁰. Friedrich Schlegel an August Wilhelm Schlegel, Mitte März, 1798, KA,XXIV,103

Ich wünsche sehr, daß Du immer Lust behältst, Fragm.[ente] zu machen und zu sammeln. Bey der nächsten Masse die wir gemeinschaftlich geben, will ich Die sehr gern die Redaktion des Ganzen überlassen mit allen zugehörigen kleinen Rechten. - Ich hoffe gewiß, daß Du aber auch mir die Benutzung Deiner Erlaubniß nicht für eine Anmaßung anrechnest. Die heilige Gleichheit soll gewiß nie verletzt werden. - Da ich aber hier bin am Ort des Drucks, so liegt mir auch ob, zu sorgen ne res publica detrimentum capiat d.h. daß beyde Stücke zur Messe fertig werden, und im Nothfall, muß ich in Rücksicht der Anordnung Deinen tacitum consensum fingieren dürfen. ¹¹¹

It is certainly no accident that Schlegel uses the language of democratic republicanism to describe the way in which he thinks editorial decisions should be made. In another letter written roughly a week later he characterizes his handling of the fragments, and the motive behind his alteration of a number of them, as "revoluzionär"¹¹², and then goes on to suggest a *modus operandi* for the future editing of the journal:

Ich wünsche die größte Strenge. Aber noch ist ja unsre Konstitution nicht einmahl gemacht, und die Regierung also provisorisch. -
Daß du mir die Anordnung der beyden ersten Stücke ganz überläßt ist sehr guth und sehr nothwendig. Ich bitte Dich dagegen die Anordnung der zwey oder drey nächsten Stücke zu übernehmen und schlage vor, daß sie überhaupt wechsele; ohne dadurch die *gemeinschaftliche* Berathschlagung auszuschließen, muß doch die letzte Entscheidung von Einem abhängen.¹¹³

The last sentence quoted, though eminently practical in intent, points to a certain contradiction in Friedrich's attitude to the *Athenäum*, and it is no secret that his actual editorial practice was of a decidedly autocratic nature; he

¹¹¹. *ibid.*

¹¹². Friedrich Schlegel an A.W.Schlegel, 25.3.1798, KA, XXIV, 108

¹¹³. *ibid.*

did not consult Novalis about alterations to the published text of *Blüthenstaub*, and he appears to have ignored his brother's right of veto with regard to the content of some fragments¹¹⁴. Despite this, he still felt able to argue that his unilateral decisions had been made in the interest of "fraternale Wechselwirkung", "gigantische Synfonierung" and "Popularität"¹¹⁵.

Schlegel's characterizations of "Symphilosophie" in these letters help to illuminate the development of a particular notion of collective intellectual and aesthetic activity in the *Lyceums-Fragmente* and the *Athenäums-Fragment*. As we have seen, the former text links the idea of literature as "republikanische Rede" with the inauguration of a new, 'dialogic' relationship between reader and writer, which will enable both to participate in the production of the literary work. The letters written in the period between the publication of the two collections of fragments show Schlegel articulating the idea that the *Athenäum* will be the "symphonic" expression of a collaborative activity founded on "die heilige Gleichheit". This activity is specifically described as being "revolutionary" or "republican" in nature. The possibility that it might be practised outside the immediate circle of the contributors to the journal is explored in AF No.125:

Vielleicht würde eine ganz neue Epoche der Wissenschaften und Künste beginnen, wenn die Symphilosophie und Sympoesie so allgemein und so innig

¹¹⁴. Cf. the same letter, especially the passages concerning Friedrich's alleged "Vetoscheu", and his editing of the *Blüthenstaub*.

¹¹⁵. *ibid.*, pp 110, 111, 113

würde, daß es nichts Seltnes mehr wäre, wenn mehre sich gegenseitig ergänzende Naturen gemeinschaftliche Werke bildeten. (KA,II,185)

The fragment goes on to argue, albeit in a playful manner, that the end result of a synthesis of this kind could be the creation of "einen vortrefflichen romantischen Dichter" (II,186). There are other implicit links between the concept of "gemeinschaftliche Werke" and the program of "romantische Poesie" as it is formulated in AF No.116 and other fragments. In particular, Schlegel's declaration that it is the task and vocation of romantic literature "die Poesie lebendig und gesellig, und das Leben und die Gesellschaft poetisch [zu] machen" (KA,II,182), and his insistence that "Geselligkeit" is the fundamental impulse of "Geist"¹¹⁶, both suggest that there is an affinity between the "sociability" of romantic literature, and the collective activity of "mehrere sich ergänzende Naturen". We may also detect a 'family resemblance' between the "poetische[r] Geist" which Novalis invokes in VB No.122 and the related concepts of romantic literature and "Symphilosophie".

Elsewhere in the *Athenäums-Fragmente* Schlegel explores parallel notions of friendship as the communion of two complementary natures¹¹⁷, and of "wirkliche Ehe", whose true nature consists in a union in which "mehrere Personen nur eine werden" and the individual becomes "der integrante Teil einer

¹¹⁶. Cf. AF No.339: "Sinn, der sich selbst sieht, wird Geist; Geist ist innre Geselligkeit..." (KA,II,225). See also *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie* No.617 (KA,XVI, p137): "Imp[erativ]: die *[Poesie] soll gesellig und die Geselligkeit *[poetisch] sein. -". See also LF Nos. 9 and 56.

¹¹⁷. KA,II,226,[342]

gemeinschaftlichen Personalität"¹¹⁸. Each of these concepts functions at a metaphorical level as a representation of the harmonious cooperation of individuals in performing a collective activity, or their integration into a collective identity. They are, moreover, linked by association with the republican principles which inform Schlegel's progressive aesthetic program, and with the "progressive Universalpoesie" which it seeks to bring into being. There is therefore, I would argue, a continuity between the *Studium-Aufsatz*, the *Versuch*, and the two collections of fragments. This continuity can be seen most clearly in the stress which they place on the collective shaping of social or aesthetic ends, and in the kinship between the various metaphorical models for the exercise of a collective will which they propose. There is, however, as I have suggested earlier, an unresolved tension between the attempt to translate the axioms of revolutionary republicanism into the sphere of aesthetics, and the perception that, in the existing political and cultural climate in Germany, the ideals of a "sociable" and democratic "Symphilosophie" can only be realized within the confines of an elite "stille Opposition".

Schlegel does not elaborate on the idea that "Symphilosophie" might one day be practised on a mass basis in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*. The notion of "gemeinschaftliche Werke" seems, however, to have made an impression on Novalis, who gave AF No.125 the title "Neue Litteraturepoke oder allgemeine Sympraxis"¹¹⁹. He develops the idea further in one

¹¹⁸. KA,II,170,[34]

of the *Teplitzer Fragmente* written in the late summer of 1798¹²⁰:

Journale sind eigentlich schon *gemeinschaftliche* Bücher. Das Schreiben in Gesellschaft ist ein interessantes Symptom - das noch eine große Ausbildung der Schriftstellerei ahnden läßt. Man wird vielleicht in *Masse* schreiben, denken, und handeln - Ganze Gemeinden, selbst Nationen werden Ein Werck unternehmen. (NS,II, 645, [465])

The notion of "mass writing" which Novalis explores here amounts to a collective activity on a larger scale than Schlegel had envisaged, since it may be practised by whole communities or even nations. This activity, moreover, is the product of a unified collective agency: the speculation that individuals will not only write, but also think and act "in *Masse*" in undertaking "Ein Werck" suggests that their cooperation will extend beyond the production of literature into other areas of social action.

It is somewhat puzzling that Novalis should have chosen to elaborate on Schlegel's hypothesis in this way, since there is, on the face of it, nothing in either the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* or *Glauben und Liebe* (which appeared shortly before the *Teplitzer Fragment* was written down) to suggest that he had been harboring similar notions. Indeed, as I shall argue in the following chapter, the model for an aestheticization of public life which is proposed in *Glauben und Liebe* consigns the masses to an essentially passive role.

¹¹⁹. See Novalis' *Kritik der Athenäumsfragmente*, and the list of titles which he gave the fragments, in: NS,II,pp 623-39, here p 633.

¹²⁰. According to Samuel, the sequence to which the fragment belongs must have been written down between the meeting in Dresden on the 25-26th of August, and the 9th of September 1798. The *Athenäums-Fragmente* had appeared in early July. Cf. Samuel's commentary, NS,II,518-9.

It seems to me, however, that there is a certain affinity between the idea of the "poetischer Staat" and the concept of "mass writing", isolated though it may be in the mainstream of Novalis' thinking at the time¹²¹. Both postulate the unification of the social whole in the pursuit of a single objective, and both presume the replacement of a static, hierarchical order by a dynamic process in which all participate equally and actively. As we have seen earlier, "poetischer Geist" fulfils the function of a kind of historical solvent which assists the dialectical movement from monarchy to democracy to the synthetic "Universalstaat". The step forward from the production of "gemeinschaftliche Werke", as Schlegel envisages it, to the notion of mass writing presupposes the creation of the true public which is at present only a "Postulat". Schlegel suggests in the *Athenäums-Fragmente* that the realization of this postulate will come about through an implicitly dialectical process whereby a withdrawal from the public sphere and the practice of synthetic writing or "Symphilosophie" by the oppositional avant-garde will somehow facilitate the emergence of the true public. Both writers' conception of dialectic is somewhat rudimentary; it would seem though, that "poetischer Geist" in Novalis' text is the catalyst which will precipitate the arrival of the "neue Epoche" in which mass writing - or, to put it another way, universal access to public discourse - will become possible.

¹²¹. As we shall see in the chapter on *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, Novalis does invoke the notion of mass writing in a somewhat different form in that text.

The themes of collective identity and collective action surface in the context of another area of speculation explored by both writers: their attempt to arrive at a programmatic definition of "Deutschheit". In the concluding part of this chapter I shall try to show that certain key elements of their aesthetic and political programs are also identified as characteristics of a specifically German identity, and that this equation leads to a further conclusion that it is the Germans who are best suited to further the practice of "Symphilosophie" and establish the "poetischer Staat".

5.5 "Deutschheit"

At the beginning of the *Forster-Charakteristik* Schlegel had defined "Deutschheit" as the "echte, eigne und gemeinschaftliche Bildung" disseminated amongst the "Mittelstand" by "Schriften" (KA,II,78). The possibility that it might come to encompass something more than this seems to him no more than "ein gutherziges Postulat" (ibid.), and likely to remain so for some time. This thought is taken up again in LF. No.38:

An dem Urbild der Deutschheit, welches einige große vaterländische Erfinder aufgestellt haben, läßt sich nichts tadeln außer der falschen Stellung. Diese Deutschheit liegt nicht hinter uns, sondern vor uns. (KA,II,151)

The "große vaterländische Erfinder" to whom Schlegel refers are presumably those authors of the later German Enlightenment such as Lessing, Herder and Wieland who had begun to interest themselves in aspects of the medieval or pre-Roman history of the German peoples and their cultural

traditions¹²². He appears to be arguing against the grounding of a German cultural identity in the mythical past; rather than attempting to find the constitutive elements of "Deutschheit" in history, the fragment suggests, one must create them in the present.

Novalis appears to take up an opposing position in VB No.63, which begins with an evocation of the German past:

Unsre alte Nationalität war, wie mich dünkt, ächt römisch - natürlich, weil wir eben auf dem Wege wie die Römer, entstanden - und so wäre der Name, römisches Reich, warlich ein artiger, sinnreicher Zufall.
(NS,II,436)

The "alte Nationalität" which Novalis invokes here is that of the Germanic tribes first described by Tacitus in the *Germania*. In declaring their kinship with the Romans, he is appropriating and turning to his own ends a convention of the discourse of the Revolution. The Roman republic was one of the chief sources both of historical precedent and a ready-made iconography for the revolutionary republicans, especially during the ascendancy of the Jacobins, and it fulfilled the same function in revolutionary polemics in Germany¹²³. It is, however, not only to this convention that Novalis alludes. Herder had painted a very negative portrait in the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* of the domestication of the Germanic peoples under Roman Christianity; for him, there existed a natural antipathy

¹²². Cf. Schulz, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, VII/I, p76

¹²³. Cf. Hunt, *Politics, Class and Culture in the French Revolution*, pp 62ff, and Behler, E., *Französische Revolution und Antikekult*, in: Mandelkow, K.R. (Hg.), *Europäische Romantik I* (=Neues Handbuch für Literaturwissenschaft, Bd.XIV), Wiesbaden, 1982, pp 83-112.

between the German and Roman nations, whereas VB No.63 points to an affinity between the two¹²⁴. The continuation of the fragment draws parallels between Roman history and the contemporary situation of Europe:

Deutschland ist Rom, als Land. Ein Land ist ein großer Ort mit seinen Gärten. Das Kapitol ließe sich vielleicht nach dem Gänsegeschrey vor den Galliern bestimmen.

Die Instinktartige, Universalpolitik und Tendenz der Römer liegt auch im deutschen Volk. Das Beste, was die Franzosen in der Revolution gewonnen haben, ist eine Portion Deutschheit.

Gerhard Schulz has shown that the first paragraph contains an allegory based on a Roman legend, according to which the sleeping watchmen of the Capitol were alerted by the crying of geese to a raid by the Gauls in 390 B.C.. He interprets the allegory as follows:

An dem Geschrei über die Gallier, d.h. die Franzosen, nach der Revolution ließe sich der Ort des <<Kapitols>>, also der religiöse und politische Mittelpunkt Deutschlands bestimmen.¹²⁵

Novalis sets up an antagonism between the French revolutionaries, cast here in the role of the barbarians, and the Germans, only to relativize it in the final paragraph. The apparent antagonism is illusory, the text suggests: the French are deluding themselves in believing that they are the true heirs to the republican traditions of ancient Rome, and that they have brought these traditions back to life in the Revolution. Rather, what they have done is to partially

¹²⁴. See Weiland, Politische Romantikinterpretation, p 4

¹²⁵. Cf. Schulz, NW, p 747. There is also perhaps an allusion here to one of the *Xenien* published in the *Musenalmanach* for 1797, which begins "Aber der Gallier...". See Schiller, Nationalausgabe, Bd.1, p 321.

realize in themselves as a nation those qualities which are latent in the German people and which are traceable to their historical affinity with the Romans¹²⁶. What are these qualities? VB No.63 describes them simply as "Die Instinktartige, Universalpolitik und Tendenz der Römer". The *Vermischte Bemerkungen* as a whole offer two possible paths to an exposition of the meaning of these terms. The first of these leads us through VB No.75:

Die Basis aller ewigen Verbindung ist eine absolute Tendenz, nach allen Richtungen. Darauf beruht die Macht der Hierarchie, der ächten Mäsonnerie, und des unsichtbaren Bundes ächter Denker. - hierin liegt die Möglichkeit einer Universalrepublik - welche die Römer bis zu den Kaysern zu realisieren begonnen hatten. Zuerst verließ August diese Basis - und Hadrian zerstörte sie ganz. (NS,II,444)

The logic of this fragment is somewhat opaque, but it becomes easier to follow if we read it, as it were, back to front. "Absolute Tendenz" - one of the qualities shared by Romans and Germans - is the basis for the "Möglichkeit einer Universalrepublik". This basis was destroyed by the Roman emperors, presumably through their arrogation to themselves of supreme state power and the numina of godhead. It is difficult to reconcile this definition with the prior statement that "absolute Tendenz" is also the foundation of "die Macht der Hierarchie, der ächten Mäsonnerie etc". "Die Macht der Hierarchie" could be taken to refer to the hierarchical organization of the orders of Freemasons and Illuminati, to which Novalis also alludes here, with their inner and outer

¹²⁶. Kurzke arrives at a similar conclusion, though by a somewhat different route, and without drawing any further consequences from it. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 96

circles and strictly delineated degrees of initiation into the mysteries¹²⁷. As we shall see in the following chapter, Novalis uses the "Loge" as a metaphor for the elite community of the initiate, and the reference in VB No.74 to the power of "des unsichtbaren Bundes ächter Denker" clearly echoes the notion of an "unsichtbare Kirche", which is itself a metaphorical cognate of the "Loge". It is significant also that, in a letter to Friedrich Schlegel dated 26.12.1797 in which Novalis describes his new friendship with Schelling he praises the "ächte Universaltendenz in ihm", a quality which qualifies Schelling for admission to the Romantic "Cosmopolitenloge"¹²⁸.

Alternatively, we could read the phrase "Macht der Hierarchie" as an echo of a sentence from Herder's *Ideen*, in which he passes judgement on the domination of the Northern peoples by the Roman church during the Middle Ages:

Der Druck der römischen Hierarchie war vielleicht ein notwendiges Joch, eine unentbehrliche Fessel für die rohen Völker des Mittelalters.¹²⁹

If we accept this latter reading, it would seem to follow that Novalis is actually conflating republican Rome with the Holy Roman Empire, or, more accurately, declaring the latter

¹²⁷. See Hans Poser, *Mythos und Vernunft. Zum Mythenverständnis der Aufklärung*, in: Hans Poser (Hg.), *Philosophie und Mythos. Ein Kolloquium*, Berlin, 1979, pp 130-53, esp. pp 144-150.

¹²⁸. Cf. NS,IV,242. This is the same letter in which Novalis mentions his promised contributions to the *Athenäum*, and in which he also refers to "meinen ächt republikanischen Freunden i[d] e[st] mit denen ich gemeine Sache habe" (NS,IV,244), anticipating the formulation of his later letter concerning the creation of "eine[r] ächte[n] CosmopolitenLoge" (*ibid.*, pp 268-9).

¹²⁹. Quoted in Weiland, *Politische Romantikinterpretation*, p 5

spiritual heir to the former. This interpretation is certainly borne out by the assertion in VB No.63 that the name "römisches Reich" is "warlich ein artiger, sinnreicher Zufall". Taken in conjunction, the two fragments establish a lineage for a modern German identity which encompasses both the historical Roman empires which Herder - and, as Helmuth Plessner argues, a whole tradition succeeding him - had seen as essentially antagonistic to the true nature of the German peoples¹³⁰. They also anticipate the equation of the as-yet-unborn German nation with a unified Christian Europe, the "sichtbare Kirche ohne Landesgränzen" whose advent Novalis announces in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*.

There are, however, obvious incongruities in both these readings, since it is difficult to see how the "Macht der Hierarchie", whether of a politically progressive "Geheimorden" or of the Roman church, is reconcilable with the idea of an "Universalrepublik", nor indeed how the latter might arise through the exercise of the power of the invisible league of true thinkers. These incongruities can, I think, be partially resolved if we now consider the second definition of "Deutschheit" which proceeds from VB No.63. The first part of this is to be found in VB No.56:

Deutsche giebt es überall. Germanitaet ist so wenig, wie Romanitaet, Graecitaet oder Brittanitaet auf einen besondern Staat eingeschränkt - Es sind allgemeine Menschencharacteres - die nur hie und da vorzüglich allgemein geworden sind. Deutschheit ist ächte Popularitaet und darum ein Ideal. (NS,II,438)

¹³⁰. Cf. Plessner, Helmuth, *Die verspätete Nation*, Stuttgart, 1969, 5. Aufl. Kap. 3 "Nicht Staat sondern Volk. Der römische Komplex", esp. pp 48-50

Here Novalis appears to perform a complete about-face by deliberately disassociating "Germanitaet" from a particular state and declaring it to be one of a series of "allgemeine Menschenkaraktere". There is a close correspondence between this view and the sentiments expressed by Goethe and Schiller in two of the *Xenien* published in the *Musenalmanach* for 1797:

Das Deutsche Reich

Deutschland? aber wo liegt es? ich weiß das Land
nicht zu finden,

Wo das gelehrte beginnt, hört das politische auf.

Deutscher Nationalcharakter

Zur Nation euch zu bilden, ihr hoffet es Deutsche,
vergebens,
Bildet, ihr könnt es, dafür freyer zu Menschen euch aus.
(NA,I,320-1)¹³¹

As Gerhard Schulz has pointed out, these two distichs sum up very accurately the problematic relation of the enlightened German intellectual to the question of a German national identity at the end of the eighteenth century¹³². A further variant of the notion that "German-ness" is a category divorced from nationality is given in another of Schlegel's *Lyceums-Fragmente*:

Die Deutschen, sagt man, sind, was Höhe des
Kunstsinns und des wissenschaftlichen Geistes betrifft,
das erste Volk in der Welt. Gewiß; nur gibt es sehr
wenige Deutsche. (KA,II,161,[116])

¹³¹. Schiller, NA Bd.1, pp 320-1

¹³². See Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen Französischer Revolution und Restauration*, p 25ff

Both Novalis and Schlegel, however, go on to develop a notion of "Deutschheit" which goes beyond the Enlightenment ideal of a cosmopolitan humanity expressed in the *Xenien*. Novalis' declaration in the final sentence of VB No.66 that "Deutschheit ist ächte Popularitaet und darum ein Ideal" is clearly intended to be understood in conjunction with another of the fragments discussed earlier in this chapter:

Das Volk ist eine Idee. Wir sollen ein Volk werden.
Ein vollkomner Mensch ist ein kleines Volk. Ächte
Popularitaet ist das höchste Ziel des Menschen.
(NS,II,432,[47])

The logical conclusion which we are obliged to draw from a juxtaposition of these two fragments is that "Deutschheit" is a synonym for "das höchste Ziel des Menschen" , and that this aim consists in becoming "ein kleines Volk" and thus embodying the plurality of the idea of the "Volk" in oneself as an individual. A precursor of this formulation of "Deutschheit" occurs in a letter which Novalis wrote to A.W. Schlegel in October of 1797, in which he praises Wilhelm's translation of Shakespeare and remarks on the German gift for translation:

Außer den Römern sind wir die einzige Nation, die den Trieb des Übersetzens so unwiederstehlich gefühlt, und ihm so unendlich viel Bildung schuldig sind. Daher manche Aehnlichkeit unsrer und der spätrömischen litterairischen Kultur. Dieser Trieb ist eine Indication des sehr hohen, ursprünglichen Karacters des deutschen Volks. Deutschheit ist Kosmopolitismus mit der kräftigsten Individualitaet gemischt. (NS,IV,237)

Here we find also an anticipation of the linking of Germany and Rome in VB No.63. The mention of "des sehr hohen, ursprünglichen Karacters des deutschen volks" attests to a desire to create a myth of origins and a lineage for the

German nation, which would seem to be in conflict with the view advanced in VB No.66 that the quality of "German-ness" is not tied to any political, or, by implication, any ethnic or linguistic entity. There is, I think, a sense in which Novalis is unable to decide between these two alternatives. On the one hand, there is a congruence between "Instinktartige, Universalpolitik", "ächte Popularitaet" and "Kosmopolitismus"; each of these terms refers to a notion of universality which is grounded not in a notion of national identity, but in a conception of the harmony of individual and collective, according to which the individual can embody the plurality of the "Volk", and the collective becomes individualized. The parallels with VB No.122 and the idea of the "poetischer Staat" are obvious. But Novalis' construction of "Deutschheit" also lends itself to a reductive reading which would allow the conclusion that "das höchste Ziel der Menschheit" is, simply, to be a German. In order to show how the text itself gives some support to such a reading, I shall quote one more fragment from the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*:

Der Deutsche ist lange das Hänschen gewesen. Er dürfte aber wohl der Hans aller Hänse werden. Es geht ihm, wie es vielen dummen Kindern gehen soll - er wird leben und klug seyn, wenn seine frühklugen Geschwister längst vermodert sind und er nun allein Herr im Hause ist. (NS,II,436,[60])

It is difficult to resist the impression that the sentiments expressed here, despite the fact that they are couched in a German reminiscent of a children's story, are anything but cosmopolitan. It is precisely utterances such as these which, in conjunction with the text's provision of a mythical historical lineage for the German nation, make it

susceptible to the kind of chauvinistic reading with which history has made us all too familiar. This is not to say that the chauvinistic variant is presented with any greater force than its cosmopolitan counterpart; but to pretend that the two can be harmonized, as Kurzke comes close to doing¹³³, is to distort the text, and ignore the very real contradiction in Novalis' construction of "Deutschheit".

Unlike Novalis, Schlegel makes no attempt in either the *Lyceums-Fragmente* or the *Athenäums-Fragmente* to provide the German nation with a mythical past. Rather, he concentrates on the present characteristics of the Germans and German literature, not all of which he sees in a positive light, as LF No.79 shows:

Zur Popularität gelangen deutsche Schriften durch einen großen Namen, oder durch Persönlichkeiten, oder durch gute Bekanntschaft, oder durch Anstrengung, oder durch mäßige Unsittlichkeit, oder durch völlige Unverständlichkeit, oder durch harmonische Platttheit, oder durch vielseitige Langweiligkeit, oder durch beständiges Streben nach dem Unbedingten. (KA,II,156)

Schlegel sees the most important characteristic of the Germans as a kind of critical scepticism directed both towards the rest of the world and towards themselves¹³⁴. They are, he goes on to argue in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*, an unfinished nation:

Die Deutschheit ist wohl darum ein Lieblingsgegenstand der Charakteriseurs, weil eine Nation

¹³³. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 96. Kurzke generally ignores the chauvinistic elements in Novalis' concept of "Deutschheit", or attempts to neutralize them by recourse to a putative "transcendental" dimension of the texts.

¹³⁴. Cf. LF No.122: "Wenn irgend etwas die hohe Idee von Deutschheit rechtfertigen kann...usw" (KA,II,162-3).

je weniger sie fertig, umso mehr ein Gegenstand der Kritik ist, und nicht der Historie. (KA,II,169,[26])

A fragment belonging to the *Philosophische Lehrjahre*, and written down in the summer of 1798, draws an interesting conclusion from the unfinished condition of the German nation:

Der deutsche Nationalcharakter muß gemacht und konstruiert werden. (KA,XVIII,269,[889])

What is significant about this remark, which follows logically from the statement in LF No.38 that German-ness really only exists in the future as a potential, is the way in which its wording echoes the assertion in LF No.112 that the synthetic writer "konstruiert und schafft sich einen Leser". The parallel formulation seems to suggest that there is an analogy between the construction of an active reader in the process of "Symphilosophie" and the construction of "Deutschheit". If we are prepared to accept this initial hypothesis, it is not hard to discern further correspondences between the true public which is, as yet, only a postulate, and which must be brought into being by the symphilosophic writers, and the postulate of "Deutschheit". A look at two more of the *Fragmente zur Litteratur und Poesie* reinforces these parallels:

Es giebt noch keinen Roman, der recht deutsch wäre. (KA,XVI,111,[324])

Es gehört schon zu d.[em] Begriff eines Romans, daß er keine Nazionalität haben muß. (KA,XVI,123,[467])

On the face of it, these two statements would appear directly to contradict each other. If, however, "Deutschheit" is defined as the absence of national character - or, to put

it another way, a universality of character, "ächte Popularität" in Novalis' words - then the contradiction appears at least partially resolved. A further fragment from the same series supports this interpretation:

Alles Provinzielle ist d[em] Classisch[en] entgegengesetzt; Jede Nation in Europa ist aber nur als eine Provinz der Modernheit zu betrachten. - <Ein moderner Classiker muß zugl.[eich] universell sein. -> (KA,XVI,98,[167])

The process of cross-referencing could be continued further, but the range of fragments already considered should be sufficient to illustrate the way in which a number of different discourses converge and coincide in the concept of "Deutschheit"¹³⁵. The fragment just quoted equates modernity with a supra-national universality; modernity and universality are linked with the novel, the truly progressive and romantic form of discourse, which must ideally be devoid of nationality. The novel in its republican form constitutes the site of a possible "Symphilosophie", and the latter is the aesthetic precondition for the realization of the postulate of the true public, which is, by association, identified with the nascent German nation. There is, moreover, an implicit suggestion that intellectual vanguard of "Germany", the progressive elite who will put the theoretical program of "Symphilosophie" into practice, is represented by the "circle" surrounding the Schlegels and Novalis.

The overall effect of these convergences and correspondences is to produce a curious lack of substance in

¹³⁵. See also for example LN 434, p58, 1 (= KA,XVI,?): "R[oman] überhaupt die Vereinigung zweier Absoluten, der absoluten Individualität und der absoluten Universalität". See also KA, XVI,108,[289], and 133,[575].

the battery of concepts which Schlegel employs to describe his political and aesthetic project. This tends, however, to be concealed by the multiplicity of these concepts and their frequent mutations. The notions of "republikanische Rede", "Symphilosophie", "Roman" and "Deutschheit" all share the same attributes, though in somewhat different constellations, and can and do function as metaphors for each other. As a consequence of this, the dimension of self-reference within the discursive 'world' of his texts tends to supplant that of reference to an exterior world of concrete objects and actions; or, to put it another way, the relations of analogy between signifiers become more central to the discourse than the possible signifieds to which they might refer. An exception to this general tendency can perhaps be seen in the fact that Schlegel appears to have regarded *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a concrete realization of the principles of "republikanische Rede"¹³⁶. There are, however, few other concrete examples given in any of the collections of fragments to suggest - for instance - how the processes of "Symphilosophie" or "mass writing" might function in a practical sense. As speculative metaphors for collective activity, their genealogy is directly traceable to the discourse of the radical Enlightenment; but the vital link, which is still retained in the earlier texts, between the utopian impulses to which they give expression and the imperative of social transformation, is dissolved. Given the narrow chronological intervals between the production of the

¹³⁶. Cf. the passage in Schlegel's essay *Über Goethes Meister*, which begins "...und hier, wo alles zugleich Mittel und Zweck ist...etc"(KA,II,131).

texts, it is more appropriate to speak here of a change in accent and emphasis, the exploration of an alternative model, than of a major shift in Schlegel's position.

The process of abstraction in his two collections of fragments is, however, unmistakable. If, as Starobinski put it, the principles of the Enlightenment were made flesh in the Revolution, then we can say that Schlegel sets about reversing this transubstantiation by restoring to them their speculative freedom, using the revolutionary experiment as raw material for a set of conceptual experiments of his own. In the next chapter we shall see how Novalis suggests a series of possible new concretizations for the concepts evolved in his symphilosophical collaboration with Schlegel. We shall see also how the process of metaphorical experimentation leads Novalis to a vision of a new political order which has very little to do with the liberation of individual or collective subjects.

A computer error which could not be corrected without retyping a whole chapter has caused some of the following 10 pages to break unevenly. The text itself is still complete. I ask for the reader's indulgence.

6. NOVALIS : GLAUBEN UND LIEBE

6.1. The text and its critical reception

On May 11th 1798 Novalis sent a manuscript to Friedrich Schlegel in Berlin, with a request that Schlegel arrange for it to be published as soon as possible. Interestingly enough, he suggested that it should be published not in the *Athenäum*, but in a new journal entitled *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*, which the publisher Unger had founded to celebrate the accession to the throne of Friedrich Wilhelm III. Since the original manuscript has not been preserved, a certain degree of uncertainty surrounds the precise form in which Novalis intended this text, which has become generally known as *Glauben und Liebe*, to be printed. Unger thought the manuscript, which contained two series of fragments and a number of verses, too long to be published in a single number of the *Jahrbücher*. After some negotiation, but without consulting Novalis himself, Schlegel agreed that it should be printed in three parts. Only two of these were actually published: the eight short verses appeared in the June edition of the *Jahrbücher* under the title *Blumen*, and the first sequence of fragments, entitled *Glauben und Liebe oder Der König und Die Königin*, followed in July. Due to the king's somewhat hostile reaction to the sentiments expressed in *Glauben und Liebe*, the second sequence of fragments, the *Politische Aphorismen*, was suppressed by the censor¹.

Glauben und Liebe as a whole represents the most

¹. For a full account of the genesis and publication of the text see my introduction in NS.II, 475ff.

extensive and coherent single statement of Novalis' views on politics and contemporary history. It has also, since its publication, been one of the most controversial pieces of early Romantic literature. In a letter written a few months after it first appeared, Novalis' friend and former superior Just pointed to the ambiguities in the text which have engendered this controversy:

Wir haben ihre Blumen, Glauben und Liebe gelesen. Was meine Frau im Allgemeinen dazu sagt? Wenn Franzosen hereinkämen, möchten Sie Ihren Kopf festhalten! Doch wenn sich nach diesem Aushängeschild ein Monarch in Ihnen einen eingefleischten Monarchisten kaufen wollte, und Sie dann nach dem Kaufe näher besähe, würde er sich trefflich betrogen fühlen... (NS,IV,505)

This remark might serve as a motto to the history of the reception and interpretation of *Glauben und Liebe*. Kurzke has documented this "Rezeptionsgeschichte" very thoroughly, and it would be superfluous to repeat his account of it here². He does, however, make a number of general criticisms of tendencies in the secondary literature which are particularly relevant to our discussion of *Glauben und Liebe*. According to Kurzke, the treatment of Novalis' philosophical works as "den großen Fragmenthaufen, aus dem man nach Bedarf auswählt" is in large part responsible for the controversy about his political views. Much of the writing on *Glauben und Liebe* is characterized by a blithe disregard for its place in the chronology of his work as a whole, and for the integrity of individual texts. Passages from the more obscure fragments are taken out of context and their content elucidated through cross-referencing and comparison with similar passages from earlier and later texts. There is certainly nothing wrong in attempting to make apparent the continuities and consistent themes in Novalis' writings: but we need also to be aware of the subtle shifts of emphasis in his speculations, and to attend to the sequence of their development, or our readings will homogenize the texts and lose sight of their context.

². See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 11-66, esp p 55ff

Kurzke's treatment of *Glauben und Liebe* is a great deal more careful and thorough than that of most of his predecessors. He also refuses to follow the path of a number of previous commentators, who avoid any confrontation with the text's often unpalatable political content by arguing that it is really not about politics at all, and that its unambiguous references to contemporary European political events are merely a "Substrat" for a more important process of transcendental reflection³.

My own reading of *Glauben und Liebe* is deeply indebted to Kurzke's; but, as I shall try to show, his does not take sufficient account of the conventions of revolutionary discourse within which the text is situated, or of the changes in the nature and social meaning of the family in the late eighteenth century. Both of these considerations bear directly on the text's use of metaphor.

³. Cf. Kurzke's comments on the interpretations offered by Kuhn, Hans-Wolfgang, *Der Apokalyptiker und die Politik*, Freiburg, 1961 and Link, Hannelore, *Abstraktion und Poesie im Werk des Novalis*, Stuttgart, 1971 in: *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 58-60

Glauben und Liebe is more densely metaphorical than the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, and more adventurous both in its appropriation of convention, and its origination of new metaphors. Its fundamental concerns, however, are very much the same; the salient difference being that Novalis gives the conception of the "poetischer Staat" a hypothetical home in the Prussia of Friedrich Wilhelm III. Why did he choose to do this? A brief look at developments in Prussia, and throughout Europe as a whole from the summer of 1797 onwards will throw some light on this question.

6.2. A precarious peace

During the months in which Novalis was occupied with the writing of the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and *Glauben und Liebe*, the political situation in Germany and Europe underwent significant changes. The signing of the Peace of Campo Formio in October 1797, and the subsequent issue of an imperial decree inviting all parties previously involved in the war to the Congress of Rastatt, had spread hopes for a lasting peace through the whole of Europe. The Emperor's decree promised that negotiations at Rastatt would be carried out on the basis that the "Reichsintegrität" would be preserved, or in other words, that no German territories formerly belonging to the Holy Roman Empire would be ceded to the French. This was welcome news to the inhabitants of the German states east of the Rhine, which were still under French occupation. But the hopes raised by the decree that the map of Europe might be restored to its pre-Revolutionary state soon proved to be vain. At the same time as the Congress of Rastatt was beginning its deliberations, the Emperor was negotiating secretly with Napoleon. As early as the first of December 1797, the imperial garrison in Mainz withdrew, this being Bonaparte's condition for the return of Venice to the Empire. Shortly thereafter the French reoccupied Mainz - and on the 17th of January 1798 the French delegates at the Congress formally demanded that all German territories east of the Rhine, the "natural border" as they put it, be handed over to France. In March 1798 their demands were approved in principle, thus paving the way for the dismantling of the *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*⁴.

Novalis makes no direct reference to any of these events in his correspondence, but certainly neither he nor his colleagues can have been unmoved by the general mood of relief and optimism in Germany following the end of five years of war. What would subsequently prove to be a merely temporary cessation of hostilities coincided with the death in November 1797 of Friedrich Wilhelm II and the accession to the throne of his son.

Even before the death of his father, the young Friedrich Wilhelm III and his wife Luise had acquired the reputation of leading a simple life free of excess and courtly luxury. They were generally admired for their strict morals: indeed, they appear to have embodied, in the popular eye, many of the bourgeois ideals of marriage and domesticity which had become established in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

⁴. For a brief account of these events see Braubach, Max, *Von der französischen Revolution bis zum Wiener Kongreß*, Gebhardt Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, Bd. 14, München, 1983, pp 41-50

Furthermore, it was expected that Friedrich Wilhelm III would carry on the enlightened traditions of Friderician Prussia, which had suffered a considerable reversal during the reign of his father. Before his succession to the throne he had been given private lectures by Carl Gottlieb Svarez, the chief architect of the Prussian "Landrecht", and he had himself expressed the opinion that the French Revolution should be a dire warning to rulers who neglected their proper duties⁵. The beginning of his reign was seen by intellectuals, writers, and much of the educated middle class as the advent of a new era for Prussia.

⁵. See *ibid*, pp 63-4

Richard Samuel has argued that the publication of the first issue of the *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie* in January 1798 was a "Kristallisationspunkt" for Novalis' political speculations and the development of his conception of monarchy⁶. Whether the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* were finished before *Glauben und Liebe* was begun is difficult to say with any certainty, although there is, as we shall see, a definite shift of emphasis in the latter text from the "poetischer Staat" to the "Familienmonarchie" as the model of the ideal state. What is perhaps a more interesting question has to do with Novalis' choice of the *Jahrbücher* as the appropriate place for publication. Why did he not offer it to Schlegel for the *Athenäum*, given that the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* had been published there only recently? Novalis' own pronouncement on the subject is somewhat laconic:

Ich schicke Dir hier etwas, was ich gern bald irgendwo abgedruckt hätte. Am besten schickt es sich in die *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*, ihrem Plane nach. In Euer Journal paßt es, wie mich dünkt, nicht. (NS,II,253)

Novalis' reasons for preferring the *Jahrbücher*, or believing at least that *Glauben und Liebe* did not belong in the 'symphilosophic' surroundings of the Schlegels' journal, become a little clearer if we turn now to the "Vorrede" to the text, in which Novalis offers some introductory remarks about the relationship between writer and reader.

6.3. Text and reader: the "Vorrede"

⁶. See Samuel's introduction to the text, NS,II, 475-6

Wenn man mit Wenigen, in einer großen, gemischten Gesellschaft etwas heimliches reden will, und man sitzt nicht neben einander, so muß man in einer besondern Sprache reden. Diese besondre Sprache kann entweder eine *dem Ton nach*, oder den Bildern nach fremde Sprache seyn. Dies letztere wird eine Tropen- und Räthselsprache seyn. (NS,II,485)

This fragment, which opens the *Vorrede*, describes the method of communication which Novalis proceeds to employ in his text. It is this metaphorical code, the "Tropen- und Räthselsprache", with which I shall be concerned in this chapter. But it is also important to consider here what we might call the text's "pragmatic" dimension, the nature of its communicative strategy, on which Novalis himself is reflecting in the "Vorrede". The first sentence of the "Vorrede" suggests that the text contains some kind of secret communication which is intended for a particular and select audience. The nature of this audience is enlarged upon in the second fragment:

Es käme auf einen Versuch an, ob man nicht in der gewöhnlichen Landessprache so sprechen könnte, daß es nur der verstehn könnte, der es verstehen sollte. Jedes wahre Geheimnis muß die Profanen von selbst ausschließen. Wer es versteht ist von selbst, mit Recht, Eingeweihter. (NS,II,485)

It appears that Novalis intends his tract to be understood only by an elite readership which has been initiated into the use and meaning of his "Tropen- und Räthselsprache" and will thus be able to decode it. The secret or sacred mode of communication which he describes in the "Vorrede" bears certain similarities to the notion of a "geheime Dichtkunst" which Friedrich Schlegel had expounded in a letter to his brother in November of 1791:

Ich nehme auch eine *geheime Dichtkunst* an. Je inniger diese mit der Eigenthümlichkeit der wenigen, von denen und für sie ward, verkettet ist; je mehr erfüllt sie ihre Bestimmung und je mehr ist sie vielleicht dem Volke ungenießbar. Man sieht diese Geheimnisse zwar oft um einen Lobspruch verkaufen, aber ich für meinen Theil würde nie im Stande seyn, mein innerstes Ich, gleichsam als eine Natur-Seltenheit, die in einem Naturalien-Cabinet verwahrt wird, den Liebhabern vorzuzeigen.⁷

Schlegel distinguishes between "geheime Dichtkunst" and "öffentliche Dichtkunst", the merit of which lies in "die Wirkung auf das Volk und also der Grad des Vergnügens und der Erhöhung zur Wirkung für dieses"⁸. In her discussion of the "dichotomization" of "high" and "low" literature in the late eighteenth century, Christa Bürger interprets Schlegel's remarks as follows:

Friedrich Schlegel setzt hier eine auf Wirkung und "Glück" berechnete Unterhaltungsliteratur für breite (volkstümliche) Leserbedürfnisse ab von einer esoterischen. Die erste faßt er unter dem Begriff des Interesses und weist ihr die Darstellung (wirklicher) Verhältnisse zu. ... Die "geheime Dichtung" wird explizit als eine für wenige bestimmt, ihr Gegenstand ist die (problematische) Subjektivität fiktiver Gestalten. ... die Dichotomie von ernster und Unterhaltungsliteratur stellt sich auf der Ebene der dargestellten Gegenstände dar als eine von Subjektivität und Alltagswirklichkeit.⁹

Christa Bürger's equation of "öffentliche Dichtkunst" with "Unterhaltungsliteratur" seems, in the light of Schlegel's later writings, a little too simplistic. It is tempting to see in the distinction between "öffentliche" and "geheime Dichtkunst" a precursor of the distinction between

⁷. Quoted by Christa Bürger in her article "Die Dichotomie von hoher und niederer Literatur", p 191

⁸. *ibid.*

⁹. *ibid.*

the writings of the "gesellschaftlicher Schriftsteller" and a classical "objektive Poesie" which Schlegel enunciates in the *Forster-Charakteristik* and the *Studium-Aufsatz*. But "objektive Poesie" is, as we have seen, by definition public and universal. Rather, the notion of "geheime Dichtkunst" for the select few seems to prefigure that of the "neue Kirche" and the practice of "Symphilosophie" in a small circle of the progressive elite. Some seven years after the letter to August Wilhelm, Friedrich Schlegel wrote to Novalis regarding the publication of *Glauben und Liebe*, and used a metaphor not unlike that of the "Naturalien -Cabinet" in the earlier letter to describe Novalis' action in placing his text before the public:

Dein Manuscript wird in den Jahrbüchern gedruckt. Zu einem Werkchen für sich werden wohl alle Büchhändler mehr Popularität verlangt haben, und da ich einige Wörter darüber fallen ließ, sah ich daß es nicht ging. ... Es darf Dich nicht gereuen, Deine Heiligthümer ausgestellt und öffentlich gemacht zu haben. Wenn ich nach meinem kleinen Kreise urtheilen darf, so sind Dir alle gewiß, die viel Sinn haben; die andern wirst Du ganz abstoßen. Du wirst beynah so viel Verstehrer als Leser haben.¹⁰

Schlegel's description of the contents of *Glauben und Liebe* would perhaps be less immediately surprising if it applied to the *Hymnen an die Nacht*, and not to a text which is, at least on the face of it, a political tract. Yet, in taking up the suggestion made in the "Vorrede" that the text is communicating something sacred, which by its very nature excludes a "profane" readership, Schlegel's remarks point to a paradox in Novalis's own intentions. Would Novalis not have

¹⁰ . NS, IV, 493

been more certain of reaching an "initiate" readership if he had submitted his text for publication in the *Athenäum*, a journal much more likely to be read by those of like mind and sensibility than the *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*? If, on the other hand, he intended that it should be widely read by the Prussian public, why should he (and Schlegel) have been at pains to stress the exclusive nature of the text's content and its mode of communication?

It is not difficult to suggest a possible answer to the latter question. I have already referred to the problems with the Prussian state censor which Novalis himself encountered after the publication of the first half of *Glauben und Liebe*. Censorship in Prussia had become steadily more repressive during the revolutionary decade, and Novalis would have been well aware of the dangers involved in publishing anything which might be considered subversive or inflammatory¹¹. Only a year prior to the publication of *Glauben und Liebe*, Reichardt had been forced to cease publishing his journal *Deutschland*. Fichte had endured years of harassment and intellectual persecution in Jena as a result of declaring his "republican" sympathies too openly in his writings and lectures at the university. The "Atheismusstreit" which led to the suppression of the *Philosophisches Journal* edited by Fichte and Niethammer, and which ultimately cost Fichte his professorship at Jena, had not yet begun at the time at which Novalis was working on *Glauben und Liebe*. Nevertheless, the

¹¹. On censorship in the 1790's, see Stephan, Inge, *Die Debatte über die Beziehungen zwischen Literatur, Aufklärung und Revolution*, esp. p 47

severity of the official reaction to Fichte's short (and by no means inflammatory) essay *Über den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung* is indicative of the restrictions and often quite arbitrary persecutions with which writers in Germany had to contend¹².

Given the very real threats to a writer's freedom of expression and public reputation posed by state censorship, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that Novalis may have chosen to write in a metaphorical code or "besondere[r] Sprache" with the aim of evading the attention of the censor. The advantages of such a strategy had already occurred to Friedrich Schlegel. In a letter to his brother in May 1796 he had written:

Bey der Griechischen Politik ist dem Himmel sey Dank keine Gefahr. ... Die Obskurität der abstrakten Metaphysik wird mich schützen, und wenn man nur für Philosophen schreibt, so kann man unglaublich kühn seyn, ehe daß jemand von der Polizey davon Notiz nimmt, oder die Kühnheit auch nur versteht.¹³

Was Novalis, like Friedrich Schlegel, simply taking refuge in abstract metaphysics in order to pull the wool over the eyes of the police?¹⁴ It would certainly be over-simplistic

¹². For an account of the "Atheismusstreit" see Janz, Rolf-Peter, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion der Kunst*, p 123ff. It is worth noting that it was at the instigation of the state of Kursachsen, to whose aristocracy Novalis himself belonged, that Fichte received his initial reprimand from the governors of the university.

¹³. Friedrich Schlegel an August Wilhelm Schlegel, in: Walzel, Oskar, (Hg.), *Friedrich Schlegel. Briefe an seinen Bruder*, Berlin, 1890, p 258

¹⁴. Richard Brinkmann has argued that Schlegel himself was not really trying to outwit the censor: "Was Friedrich Schlegel betrifft, so ist die Vorstellung zweifellos falsch, ... Friedrich Schlegel habe seine frühen Schriften ..."

to assert that this was the only reason for Novalis' decision to employ a "Tropen- und Räthselsprache" in communicating with his readers. The "Vorrede" is, in part, enunciating a series of poetological speculations which are put into practice in the body of the text. But as I have argued in the previous chapter, there is a strong sense in both Friedrich Schlegel's and Novalis' writings of belonging to an embattled minority which defines its identity in opposition to the dominant literary and political culture. The threat of censorship or political persecution certainly contributes to this sense of embattlement, and to ignore it simply lessens our understanding of the "rhetorical situation" within which the text was produced¹⁵.

Let us return for a moment to the most well-documented "reader response" to *Glauben und Liebe*, that of Friedrich Wilhelm III and his ministers. According to Richard Samuel,

gewissermaßen als >>Blendlaternen des Ideenschmuggels<< ... benutzt, um der Zensur zu entgehen und revolutionäre Gedanken zu verbreiten". See Brinkmann, Richard, Deutsche Frühromantik und Französische Revolution, in: Brinkmann, R., Wirklichkeiten. Essays zur Literatur, Tübingen, 1982, pp 189-220, here pp 200. This was clearly not Schlegel's only purpose; but it would be naive to assume that Schlegel was not acutely conscious of the political climate in Berlin. Moreover, it is plain from the letter to August Wilhelm that he took a certain pleasure in seeing what he could get away with!

¹⁵. This sense of embattlement is expressed quite clearly in a letter which Novalis wrote to Friedrich Schlegel in December of 1798: "Mein neuer Plan geht sehr ins Weite ... Bleib ich bey euch, so soll dieser Plan ein Hauptgeschäft meines Lebens werden - Er betrifft [sic] *Die Errichtung eines litterairischen, republicanischen Ordens-der durchaus mercantilisch politisch ist - einer ächten Cosmopoliten Loge. ... Gemeinschaftlicher Fleis, gemeinschaftlicher Kopf - gemeinschaftlicher Kredit kann den kleinen Zündfunken bald vergrößern. Ihr sollt nicht mehr von Buchhändlern litterairisch und politische gewißermassen dependiren.* (NS, IV, 269)

the king did not understand the essay, and passed it on to Generaladjutant Köckeritz, who was likewise baffled by it and gave it to Konsistorialrat Niemeyer, who immediately suspected that it had been written by one of the Schlegels¹⁶. This led Friedrich Schlegel to remark in a letter to Novalis at the end of July 1798:

Es ist nämlich für ihn [Niemeyer] wie für mehrere Philister Axiom: Was man nicht versteht, hat ein Schlegel geschrieben. (NS,IV,497)

Friedrich Wilhelm's own pronouncement on the text is also interesting:

Von einem König wird mehr verlangt, als er zu leisten fähig ist. Man solle nur einen Mann, der dem König seine Pflichten vorhält, vom Schreibepult zum Thron bringen, und dann wird er erst die Schwierigkeiten sehen, die ihn umgeben und die nicht möglich zu heben sind.¹⁷

It appears that the king and his ministers read *Glauben und Liebe* as yet another variant of the "Fürstenspiegel", to which genre it bears some superficial resemblance. Whether or not they recognized the more radical implications of its content is not apparent. What is clear, however, is that they understood the text to be a piece of public discourse with a public purpose, and treated it as such when they stopped the publication of the second half.

This "misreading" of the text illustrates some of the problems associated with Novalis' chosen method of

¹⁶. See Samuel's introduction to *Glauben und Liebe*, NS,II,479.

¹⁷. Quoted by Samuel, NS,II,479

communication. The very individual whom *Glauben und Liebe* appeared to be addressing most directly proved incapable of decoding it.

Kurzke has argued that Novalis intends his readers to engage in a process akin to "Symphilosophie", in which they would construct "allegorical" connections between the literal and metaphorical levels of the text:

Das allegorisierende Verfahren der "Tropensprache" gibt also der Aktivität des Lesers einen konstitutiven Spielraum. Der Text verlangt Realisationen, die über das in ihm explizit Formulierte hinausgehen.¹⁸

According to Kurzke, Novalis promotes the reader to the status of a "Mitautor", actively involved in the production of the text's meaning¹⁹. Seen from this perspective, the distinction between the "profane" public meaning - that identified by Wilhelm III and his ministers - and the "sacred" private dimension of the text would gradually be dissolved as it initiated more and more of its readers into "symphilosophic" reading. At a practical - or more accurately, pragmatic - level, Novalis overestimated the sophistication of the readers he was addressing from the pages of the *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*. And as we shall see, the text goes on to propose a linkage between aesthetic production and political power which is both hierarchical and authoritarian in character, and which is sharply at odds with the "Wirkungsästhetik" which Kurzke ascribes to it.

¹⁸. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 200

¹⁹. *ibid.*

There is, I think, one possible hypothesis which may help to illuminate the intentions underlying Novalis' communicative strategy in *Glauben und Liebe*. As we have seen in the introductory chapter of this study, the intense polemicization of Revolutionary discourse in the early 1790's led to a feeling amongst some writers that the "demokratische Begriffe" of the revolutionary Enlightenment, and indeed language itself, had been perverted. The principles from which the Revolution derived its legitimacy had been appropriated and misappropriated, redefined and ritualized to such an extent, and by such a broad spectrum of interest groups, that their authenticity as universal principles had been seriously undermined. It seems to me arguable that Novalis sets out in *Glauben und Liebe* to liberate revolutionary discourse - and by implication, language itself - from the "Entstellung" and "Überspannung" to which they had been subjected by the radical phase of the Revolution²⁰. He does so not by attempting to restore to them their pristine and unambiguous pre-Revolutionary meanings, but by playing with these, transplanting concepts and metaphors into new contexts and allowing them a speculative rather than a persuasive function. Thus the use of a "Tropen- und Räthselsprache" could be seen as an attempt to find a new, authentic way of speaking politically - and this would help to explain why Novalis chose to place his text before a broad public in the *Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*. I shall explore this hypothesis further in the analysis of a number of fragments from *Glauben und Liebe* which follows.

²⁰ These are the terms used by Lenoire-Laroche in his essay *Ueber den Mißbrauch der Worte usw* - see Chapter 2, section 5

6.4. Subverting Revolutionary Discourse

6.4.1. Nature and art

Ein blühendes Land ist doch ein königlicheres Kunstwerk, als ein Park. Ein geschmackvoller Park ist eine englische Erfindung. Ein Land, das Herz und Geist befriedigt, dürfte eine deutsche Erfindung werden, und der Erfinder wäre doch wohl der König aller Erfinder. (NS,II,486)

This fragment begins the main body of the text of *Glauben und Liebe*, and introduces the explicitly political subject matter. The argumentation is constructed around a set of metaphorical oppositions, the first of which is stated in somewhat paradoxical terms. One would normally think of a "blühendes Land" as a product of a bountiful Nature, rather than as a work of art. The opposition of "blühendes Land" to "Park" is in fact a convention of later eighteenth century literature denoting the rivalry of nature and art²¹. The writers of the *Sturm und Drang* had taken the image of the English garden or park, whose appearance strove to simulate nature in its wild, undomesticated state, and opposed it to the formal elegance of the French garden. In declaring their preference for the English garden, they were advocating a "natural" art - which they saw exemplified in the works of Shakespeare - untrammled by the rigid forms and conventions of French neoclassicism. The formal French (or Dutch) garden also functioned as a representation of the absolutist state, and the contrast between the French and English garden comes

²¹. Here and in the following paragraph see Jäger, H-W., *Politische Metaphorik im Jakobinismus und Vormärz*, p 34ff

to symbolize the opposition of freedom and repression, of the *ancien régime* and the republic. This convention is part of a broader discourse linking the political and aesthetic characteristics of the old order, which we have also seen at work in the *Studium-Aufsatz*.

When Novalis adopts the metaphor of the English garden, he reveals the contradiction inherent in its conventional usage by stressing its artificiality. The English garden was, after all, just as much a work of art as its French counterpart; it simply pretended to artlessness. In attributing "tastefulness" - traditionally a property of all things French - to the English park, Novalis subverts the *Sturm und Drang* opposition of naturalness and artificiality, and places the English park on the "negative" side of the opposition, formerly reserved for the French garden²². The "blühendes Land" which Germany has the potential to become is substituted for the English garden on the positive side: it becomes associated with nature, as was the English park according to convention.

However, the repetition of the words "Erfindung" and "Erfinder", and the description of the country as "Kunstwerk", leave us in no doubt that the "blühendes Land" is something

²². Kuhn argues that the English park is a metaphor for the constitutional monarchy, which Burke had described in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* as a product of natural, organic growth, in contrast to the French republic, which Burke saw as unnatural and artificial. There seems to me not enough evidence to prove or disprove this interpretation, but it is not incompatible with my own. See Kuhn, *Der Apokalyptiker und die Politik*, p 129

which must be invented; it will be, like the English garden, a work of art, but one that will truly aspire to the condition of nature. This is a particularly important point, since Novalis is touching here on an idea which is crucial to the later development of his and Schlegel's aesthetic and political programs. This is given concrete, if somewhat laconic expression in a fragment forming part of an unfinished essay on Goethe written later in 1798:

Jetzt ist der Geist aus Instinkt Geist - ein Naturgeist - er soll ein Vernunftgeist werden, aus Besonnenheit und durch Kunst Geist sein. (Natur soll Kunst und Kunst 2te Natur werden). (NS, II, 646)

This fragment describes what is essentially a teleological movement from a state of nature, through a state of artificiality, ending ultimately in a state of nature restored, or rather re-created, by the perfection of art. Moreover, the notions of art and artifice, creativity and design are conflated here; the "Land, das Herz und Geist befriedigt" is both a work of art and an invention. The "blühendes Land" is thus a product of an art where the political and the aesthetic have become fused; and the fragment identifies that fusion as a specifically German achievement. These themes will recur, as we shall see, in the *Politische Aphorismen*.

6.4.2 Allegories of Revolution

11. Ein einstürzender Thron ist, wie ein fallender Berg, der die Ebene zerschmettert und da ein totes Meer hinterläßt, wo sonst ein fruchtbares Land und lustige Wohnstätte war.

12. Macht nur die Berge gleich, das Meer wird es euch Dank wissen. Das Meer ist das Element von Freiheit und Gleichheit. Indes warnt es, auf Lager von Schwefelkies zu treten; sonst ist der Vulkan da und mit ihm der Keim eines neuen Kontinents.

13. Die mephitischen Dünste der moralischen Welt verhalten sich anders, wie ihre Namensvettern in der Natur. Jene steigen gern in die Höhe, da diese am Boden hängen bleiben. Für die Höhenbewohner ist kein besseres Mittel dagegen, als Blumen und Sonnenschein. Beides hat sich nur selten auf Höhen zusammen getroffen. Auf einer der höchsten moralischen Erdhöhen, kann man aber jetzt die reinste Luft genießen und eine Lilie an der Sonne sehen.

14. Es war kein Wunder, wenn die Bergspitzen meistens nur auf die Täler herabdonnerten und die Fluren verwüsteten. Böse Wolken zogen sich meist um sie her, und verbargen ihnen ihre Abkunft vom Lande; dann erschein ihnen die Ebene nur wie ein dunkler Abgrund, über welchen sie die Wolken zu tragen schienen, oder wie ein empörtes Meer, da doch nichts eigentlich gegen sie empört war, und sie allmählich abstumpfte und herunterwusch, als die anhänglich scheinenden Wolken. (NS,II, 487)

These four fragments form a coherent group, employing a particular field of metaphor in a series of speculations about the causes and consequences of the French Revolution. In terms of the chronology of events to which they refer, the fragments are in reverse order; No. 14 describes the condition of pre-Revolutionary France, whilst Nos. 11 and 12 deal with the results of the Revolution. It is, however, plain from the generalized nature of the imagery that these pronouncements and speculations about the Revolution are intended to apply also to other European states. This is made apparent in No. 13, which in a sense completes the series and establishes its relevance to Friedrich Wilhelm III's Prussia.

The fragments draw on a combination of natural and scientific metaphor, which is organized around the basic spatial opposition between the "Berge" and the "Ebene" or "Meer". As Kurzke demonstrates, the mountains are intended to represent the absolutist monarchies of pre-revolutionary Europe²³. The fragment presents a fairly conventional justification for the depredations inflicted by the absolutist monarchs on their subjects: the "böse Wolken" of a venal and self-serving aristocracy came between them and the true nation, namely the common people, denoted here by the plains or ocean. These "böse Wolken" are, by implication, analogous to the "mephitischen Dünste" of No. 13, which according to contemporary scientific sources are non-respirable gases generated by combustion²⁴. Thus the monarchs' treatment of their peoples can be excused because the true nature of the people was hidden from them, and what they saw instead of the "Täler" and "Fluren" was a "dunkler Abgrund" or an "empörtes Meer".

Kurzke's use of contemporary scientific theories to explain some of the more obscure details of these fragments is very illuminating. But he and other commentators fail to provide a satisfactory account of the role of the people in the revolutionary allegory. The following interpretation of GuL No. 12 is fairly typical in this respect:

Politische Geschichte wird als Naturgeschichte
begriffen. Freiheit und Gleichheit stellen einen

²³. Kurzke, *Romantic und Konservatismus*, p 134ff

²⁴. *ibid.*

zerstörenden Eingriff in die natürliche Ordnung dar, die sich indessen selbst wiederherstellt. So sicher die Einebnung der Berge, die sie dem Meer preisgibt, ein neuer Kontinent folgt, so sicher folgt auf die >Gleichmacherei< die Auferstehung der Aristokratie.²⁵

This interpretaion confuses the causality of the processes described in the fragment, and provides no concrete meanings for the individual terms "Meer", "Vulkan", "neuer Kontinent" etc. The description of the people as an ocean can be traced at least as far back as Homer; the Enlightenment adopted the related metaphor of the river for freedom²⁶. After the outbreak of the Revolution a favourite metaphor for the events taking place in France is the river in flood which has burst its banks and swept away the dams and restraints of despotism²⁷. The second sentence of GuL No. 12 - "Das Meer ist das Element von Freiheit und Gleicheit" - corresponds closely to these conventions. Yet Novalis is not employing the metaphor here in an entirely conventional way. If we return briefly to Fragment 11, we can see that it presents a negative allegory of the Revolution. The collapse of the throne results

²⁵. Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion der Kunst*, p 117

²⁶. See Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p 135

²⁷. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, pp 23-8. A particularly dramatic variant of this metaphor with a somewhat different political orientation can be found in Kleist's "Das letzte Lied":

Und wie ein Strom, geschwellt von Regengüssen,
Aus seines Ufers Bette heulend stürmt,
Kommt das Verderben, mit entbundnen Wogen,
Auf alles, was besteht, herangezogen.

Der alten Staaten graues Prachtgerüste
Sinkt donnernd ein, von ihm hinwegespült.

In: Heinrich von Kleist, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, hg. v. Helmut Sembdner, 6. Aufl., München, 1977, Bd.1, p 31

in the destruction of the kingdom and leaves behind a "totes Meer", that is to say a dead people. The Revolution is depicted as a purely natural process; there is no suggestion of any human agency which has brought about the fall of the mountain or the collapse of the throne. Fragment 12, by contrast, begins with a direct appeal to the agents in the revolutionary process:

Macht nur die Berge gleich, das Meer wird es euch Dank wissen. Das Meer ist das Element von Freiheit und Gleichheit.

Here again, however, the "Meer" is presented in purely passive terms; it is not the people who are exhorted to lay low the mountains of the old order, but the "ihr" to whom the first sentence is addressed. The use here and elsewhere in *Glauben und Liebe* of forms of address is a rhetorical strategy intended primarily to achieve a greater immediacy of communication between writer and reader. The specific historical event to which these fragments refer is the French Revolution; but Novalis seems to be addressing not so much the Paris revolutionaries, as those in Germany who would like to emulate them. If it is possible to identify them more closely, we might say that Novalis is speaking not to the people, but to bourgeois intellectuals who attempt to incite the people to revolution.

What role, then, do the people in their manifestation as "Meer" play in this process? Kurzke writes:

Ergebnis der Revolution ... ist das Meer als Element von Freiheit und Gleichheit. Das Meer ist Bild für

chaotische Urnatur, in Anspielung an den biblischen Schöpfungsbericht. Die dort geschilderte Trennung von Land und Meer macht die Revolution wieder rückgängig. ... Das Meer als "Element von Freiheit und Gleichheit" ist aus diesem Kontext negativ zu interpretieren: "Freiheit" und "Gleichheit" erscheinen²⁸ wie im Konservatismus als Anarchie und Nivellierung.

This interpretation ignores both the contemporary conventional meaning of the "ocean" metaphor and the causal processes described in the fragments themselves, vague as they are. This becomes clearer if we consider the last sentence of Fragment 12:

Indes warnt es, auf Lager von Schwefelkies zu treten; sonst ist der Vulkan da und mit ihm der Keim eines neuen Kontinents.

As Kurzke shows, Novalis has turned to contemporary geological theories for the vehicle of his allegory:

Schwefelkies (Pyrit) spielt eine wichtige Rolle in den zeitgenössischen Theorien zur Erklärung der Vulkantätigkeit. Dem Schwefelkies wurde von Martin Lister die Fähigkeit zugeschrieben, sich u.a. selbst durch Reiben zu entzünden. ... "Auf Lager von Schwefelkies treten" bewirkt also eine Entzündung, diese hebt die Erde ("Neuer Kontinent") und bildet einen Vulkan. Die Nähe des Meeres ist zur Vulkanentstehung nach der gleichen Theorie erforderlich. Daher enthält gerade²⁹ das Meer bei Novalis potentiell einen neuen Kontinent.

This interpretation is illuminating up to a point. However, Kurzke ignores another contemporary metaphorical convention: the volcano was a common image for the Revolution in the polemic literature of the 1790's. According to Hans-

²⁸. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 135

²⁹. *ibid.*

Wolf Jäger, it represents one element in a whole complex of imagery associated with meteorological phenomena and natural disasters which was used to portray "...de[n] Eintritt der Volksmassen ins Feld historischen Handelns"³⁰. Thus the link which Kurzke suggests between the volcano and the ocean is reinforced; both are associated with the emergence of the "Keim eines neuen Kontinents". As such, however, they surely play a more positive role in this metaphorical drama than Kurzke suggests. The clear allusion to the Atlantis myth, and the fact that the pseudonym Novalis means "der Neuland Rodende", suggest that Novalis regards the emergence of the new continent as a positive phenomenon. We might read Fragment 12 as follows: the collapse of the old order and its repressive structures has the potential to release enormous destructive energy - as it had done in the Terror - but also to create new social forms out of the ruins of the old.

It is important to recognize that in this particular sequence, and more generally in the text of *Glauben und Liebe* as a whole, Novalis is hedging his bets about the political and historical significance of the Revolution. Fragment 11 is quite clearly a negative allegory of the Revolution, while No. 12 is a more positive interpretation of the same event, achieved by a different manipulation of the same metaphorical "substrate" and the incorporation of another metaphor from the same "field"³¹. Moreover, it is not sufficiently precise to

³⁰. Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, p 82-3. The image of the Revolution as volcano is used repeatedly by Forster in the *Parisische Umriss* and elsewhere.

speak of "the Revolution" as simply the Revolution in France: the Revolution in Novalis' writings is very often at one and the same time the obdurate historical reality of the events in France and an idealized process, a possible model for radical transformation which may function either at a social or an individual level. If anything, he is less interested than most of his contemporaries in judging the Revolution in a moral sense. Rather, it is the dynamics of the Revolution and its possibilities as a metaphor for other transformations which preoccupy him.

Having said this, the question of agency, of who the initiators of change might be, remains a crucial one in both *Glauben und Liebe* and later texts. It is fairly clear in the sequence of fragments I have been discussing that while the people in their various guises as "Meer", "Ebene" and "Vulkan" may be the source of a new continent, they do not themselves initiate the process of transformation which will create it. This, presumably, must be left to the elite avant-garde, the "unsichtbare Kirche".

6.4.3 "Fortgesetztes Allegorisieren": *Glauben und Liebe*

No. 21

Die alte Hypothese, daß die Cometen die Revolutionsfackeln des Weltsystems wären, gilt gewiß für eine andre Art von Cometen, die periodisch das geistige Weltsystem revolutioniren und verjüngen. Der geistige Astronom bemerkt längst den Einfluß eines solchen Cometen auf einen beträchtlichen Teil des geistigen Planeten, den wir die Menschheit nennen. Mächtige Überschwemmungen, Veränderungen der Klimate, Schwankungen des Schwerpunkts,

³¹. See Chapter 3.II for a summary of Harald Weinrich's concept of "Metaphernfelder".

allgemeine Tendenz zum Zerfließen, sonderbare Meteore sind die Symptome dieser heftigen Incitation, deren Folge den Inhalt eines neuen Weltalters ausmachen wird. So nöthig es vielleicht ist, daß in gewissen Perioden alles in Fluß gebracht wird, um neue, nothwendige Mischungen hervorzubringen, und eine neue, reinere Krystallisation zu veranlassen, so unentbehrlich ist es jedoch ebenfalls diese Krisis zu mildern und die totale Zerfließung zu behindern, damit ein Stock übrig bleibe, ein Kern, an den sich die neue Masse anschieße, und in neuen schönen Formen sich um ihn her bilde. Das Feste ziehe sich also fester zusammen, damit der überflüssige Wärmestoff vermindert werde, und man spare kein Mittel um das Zerweichen der Knochen, das Zerlaufen der typischen Faser zu verhindern.

Würde es nicht Unsinn seyn eine Krisis permanent zu machen, und zu glauben, der Fieberzustand sey der ächte, gesunde Zustand, an dessen Erhaltung dem Menschen alles gelegen seyn mußte? Wer möchte übrigens an seiner Nothwendigkeit, an seiner wohlthätigen Wirksamkeit zweifeln? (NS, II, 489-90)

This fragment, or selected passages from it, have been quoted in the secondary literature more frequently than any other part of his writings as a summation of his views on the Revolution and its historical significance. Few commentators before Kurzke have taken the trouble to analyse the fragment as a whole, or to consider the relationship between the different fields of metaphor which are employed in it. I see no reason to repeat or paraphrase Kurzke's careful decoding of the fragment here³². I wish rather to focus on a number of questions about the text which Kurzke leaves unanswered. In particular, I shall consider the nature of the metaphorical logic which links the terms of Novalis' allegory together, and its implications for our understanding of his ideas about history.

³². See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konnservatismus*, p 151ff

The first section of GuL 21 draws chiefly on astronomical and cosmological theories for its imagery, and refers to a hypothesis advanced during the eighteenth century, according to which comets passing close to the earth could bring about fearsome natural disasters³³. This hypothesis had, however, been superseded and abandoned by the 1790's. Moreover, just as the astronomical theory which Novalis employs here as a metaphorical model is outdated, so too is the conception of revolution which he uses the model to illustrate. As Karl Griewank has shown, the experience of the French Revolution had, by the middle of the revolutionary decade, radically altered the sense of "revolution" as a historical concept³⁴. Prior to 1789, it had meant, in a strictly political sense, a regeneration of the state carried out from above, or as Griewank puts it, "... eine zu vollziehende und anzuerkennende Staatsumwälzung" quite distinct from popular uprisings or revolts³⁵. In a broader sense, the notion of periodic revolutions had been incorporated by Herder into a model of history which attempted to reconcile the notions of perfectibility and progress with more traditional notions of

³³. See *ibid.*

³⁴. See Griewank, Karl, *Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff. Entstehung und Entwicklung*, Frankfurt/M, 1973, here pp 187-191

³⁵. *ibid.*, p 189

history as a repetitive cycle or pattern of recurrence³⁶. It is this model which Novalis appears to be reviving in GuL No.21.

The imagery of natural disaster used to describe the effects of the Revolution, in this case signified by the comet, lent to itself to both positive and negative interpretations. Opponents of the Revolution chose images of flood, fire and earthquake in order to stress its purely destructive aspects. Sympathisers used the same images, but ascribed to the Revolution a cleansing and cathartic effect on the existing order; they saw it as a natural process with a degree of inevitability about it³⁷.

The first section of GuL 21 appears to introduce a fairly conventional allegory of the Revolution. It is, however, interesting to note that the unfolding of this allegory is governed by what might be termed a "tautological" causality. In the first sentence comets are referred to as "Revolutionsfackeln", which may mean either that they are heralds of revolution - an interpretation which would accord with the traditional superstition that comets were portents of scourge or plague - or that they are a physical manifestation of the Revolution itself, since the image of "Fackeln"

³⁶. Cf. *ibid*, pp 182-3: "Die stoßweisen und grundstürzenden Revolutionen sind für Herder nicht ein ewiges Weben und Aufreißen, keine sinnlose penelopeische Arbeit, wie die >>Philosophen des Zweifels<<, voran Voltaire, mit ihrer wertfreien und skeptischen Revolutionslehre gemeint haben; sie sind Entwicklungserscheinungen ... und ebenso notwendig und sinnvoll. ... Große geistige Umwandlungen, wie das bei Herder echter als bei den Aufklärern gesehene Auftreten des Christentums, werden als >>Revolutionen<< eingeführt.

³⁷. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, p 25

conjures up that popular cliché of the Revolutionary literature, the torches carried through the streets of Paris at night by the "mob". Indeed, the text seems to imply that the particular comet referred to is the Revolution itself, since it is the comet's influence which is revolutionizing and renewing "das geistige Weltsystem". Yet the various cataclysmic events referred to in the third sentence - the "mächtige Überschwemmungen, Veränderungen der Klimate" and so forth are, within the conventions of revolutionary rhetoric, metaphors for the Revolution itself, rather than its consequences. Thus the Revolution appears both as cause and as effect.

The logic of the fragment's argumentation is further complicated by the abrupt introduction of a new field of imagery at the end of the third sentence. The natural cataclysms are redefined as "Symptome dieser heftigen Incitation". This shift from geophysical to medical imagery serves here to place the Revolution in a broader historical context. The "Incitation" seems to have the same place in the causal chain as the comet, since it fulfils the same function as a kind of catalyst. Thus the Revolution, in its apparently purely destructive manifestations as "mächtige Überschwemmungen, Veränderungen der Klimate", is reinterpreted as the symptom of a more far-reaching historical movement which will bring into being "ein neues Weltalter". Here we are reminded of the "neuer Kontinent" of GuL No. 12. Once again Novalis seems to be arguing that the Revolution is a necessary part of a process whose end result will be creative and

constructive. In this particular instance we might interpret the obscuring of causal connections in the opening sentences of the fragment as a deliberate rhetorical strategy intended to impress upon readers the fact that they should not confuse the symptoms with the disease, the immanence of history with its underlying "grand scheme".

The second section of the fragment offers a further perspective on the Revolution by transposing it into a different field of metaphor.

So nöthig es vielleicht ist, daß in gewissen Perioden alles in Fluß gebracht wird, um neue, nothwendige Mischungen hervorzubringen, und eine neue, reinere Krystallisation zu veranlassen, so unentbehrlich ist es jedoch ebenfalls diese Krisis zu mildern und die totale Zerfließung zu behindern, damit ein Stock übrig bleibe, ein Kern, an den sich die neue Masse anschließe, und in neuen schönen Formen sich um ihn her bilde. Das Feste ziehe sich also fester zusammen, damit der überflüssige Wärmestoff vermindert werde, und man spare kein Mittel um das Zerweichen der Knochen, das Zerlaufen der typischen Faser zu verhindern.

As Kurzke has demonstrated, Novalis draws here on contemporary scientific theories about the formation of crystals in solutions and the role played by "Wärmestoff" in this process. Using Gehler's *Physikalisches Wörterbuch*, which was published between 1786 and 1795, as his source, Kurzke explains that "Wärmestoff" was considered to be some form of elemental fire which was responsible for the formation of liquids and which was released when crystals formed or were precipitated in a solution³⁸. Novalis was plainly fascinated

³⁸. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 152. According to Gehler, some theories equated "Wärmestoff" with phlogiston,

by the processes of "Auflösung" and "Krystallisation". Their complementary and reversible nature made them especially suitable as metaphorical paradigms of transformation and mutability, models which could be applied to quite different classes of phenomena and areas of experience³⁹. In the passage quoted above he uses crystallisation and liquefaction as metaphors for the dynamics of the Revolution. Kurzke summarizes the characteristics of the historical principle which Novalis is describing as follows:

Geschichte ist ein Lebensprozeß, in dem Fluiditäts- und Kristallisationstrieb einander unaufhörlich entgegenstreben. Eine Revolution ist in diesem Prozeß ein ungesundes Überhandnehmen des Fluiditätsprinzips (eine Restauration analog ein Überhandnehmen des Kristallisationsprinzips); der Wärmestoff als Verflüssiger muß daher verhindert werden.⁴⁰

The "scientific" model of history which Kurzke identifies in the text could be seen as lying somewhere between a cyclical and a dialectical conception of the historical process. It is a variation, at a rather more abstract level, on the astronomical paradigm in the first section of the fragment, in that it suggests that the "liquefaction" of history is a recurrent process, the precondition for a "Verjüngung" of civilisation and the creation of a "neue, reinere Kristallisation". The text gives no clue as to what this might represent in concrete terms, nor does it suggest what the starting point of the "Kristallisation", the "Kern,

a hypothetical substance supposed to be present in all combustible matter, while others saw the two as separate.

³⁹. See Hegener, Johannes, Die Poetisierung der Wissenschaften bei Novalis, Bonn, 1975, p 433ff

⁴⁰. Kurzke, Romantik und Konservatismus, p 154

an den die neue Masse anschlieÙe", might consist in. If we consider some of the subsequent metaphorical terms in the fragment, we can see that the "Kern", "das Feste", "[die] Knochen" and "[die] typischen Faser" all fulfil, by association, an analogous function within the structure of the allegory. They are that which must be preserved in order that a new order may emerge from the disintegration of the old. The abrupt transition from chemical to organic metaphor in the midst of a sentence is somewhat confusing, since there is no immediate indication as to which "Knochen" and "Faser" the text is referring, nor to whom they might belong. The reappearance of the metaphor of disease, which was introduced earlier in the fragment with the phrase "Symptome einer heftigen Incitation", helps to answer these questions. Novalis returns in the final part of the fragment to a more familiar and conventional field of metaphor:

Würde es nicht Unsinn seyn eine Krisis permanent zu machen, und zu glauben, der Fieberzustand sey der ächte, gesunde Zustand, an dessen Erhaltung dem Menschen alles gelegen seyn mußte? Wer möchte übrigens an seiner Nothwendigkeit, an seiner wohlthätigen Wirksamkeit zweifeln? (NS, II, 489-90)

The imagery of infection, disease, plague, and of the means to their cure or prevention, was employed by Greek and Roman orators in their speeches as a means of characterizing their opponents and the problems afflicting the state⁴¹. Even the notion of political crisis itself derives originally from a "medical" metaphor:

⁴¹. See Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p 26

Wo immer von Krise die Rede ist, läßt sich auch ein *Patient*; wenn nicht in der Wirklichkeit, so doch im Kopfe dessen, der von "Krise" redet.⁴²

In the polemics of the 1790's the Revolution is often described by its critics as a disease or plague which threatens to infect the whole of Europe⁴³. The "Fieberzustand" to which Novalis refers echoes the notion that the Revolution is a disease which must be contained or cured. The patient in this case, to whom the "Knochen" and "typische Faser" of the previous sentence presumably belong, might be France alone, or the whole of Europe.

Novalis' rhetorical question - "Würde es nicht Unsinn seyn, eine Krisis permanent zu machen...?" - implies a very different conception of the nature of revolution to that suggested in the first part of the fragment. As I have shown in my introduction, it was a commonly held view in the latter half of the revolutionary decade that the Revolution had not ended with the fall of the Jacobins, but was in fact still in progress. As Griewank has shown, the idea that the Revolution had acquired a momentum of its own and become a historical force at least partly independent of its agents gradually replaced more traditional "cyclical" notions of revolution during the 1790's⁴⁴. This "dynamic" conception of the Revolution was articulated both by its supporters and its critics. Forster speaks in the *Parisische Umriss* of the

⁴². *ibid.*, p 27

⁴³. See Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik*, p 46

⁴⁴. See Griewank, *Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff*, p 195ff

"große[s], nicht zu berechnende[s] Mobil der Volkskraft" as the driving force of the Revolution, the "ungeheuere Triebfeder" which France's former ruling class could no longer control⁴⁵. The conservative publicist and translator of Burke, Friedrich Gentz, argued like Forster that the French Revolution was qualitatively different from all previous revolutions: but he saw it as a dislocation of normal historical processes, a "Totalrevolution", which, unless arrested, would tend

... andere Revolutionen ins Unendliche zu begünstigen, ... einen Wechsel von Revolutionen einzuführen, und die menschliche Gesellschaft in den Schauplatz eines seiner Natur nach nie beendigten Bürgerkrieges zu verwandeln.⁴⁶

If we now consider GuL No. 21 as a whole, we can see that it juxtaposes two different notions of revolution. The first is the more traditional view of revolution as a recurrent phenomenon in a cyclical, natural historical continuum. The second sees the French Revolution as a fracture in this continuum, with the potential to bring about a state of perpetual excitation and agitation, a kind of inverted historical entropy.

The idea of a drastic break with history certainly does not seem to have appealed to Novalis, whose whole philosophy is informed by the need to preserve continuities and unities, or create them where they did not exist before. If we consider

⁴⁵. See Forster, Im Anblick, p 135

⁴⁶. Quoted by Griewank, Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff, p 202

once again the repetitive causal logic of the processes described in the text, we can see that the "Stock" and "Kern", and by analogy the "Knochen" and "Faser", are all antecedent to the process of "Auflösung", and thus presumably remnants of the pre-Revolutionary order, rather than products of the Revolution. Are we then to conclude that Novalis is arguing for a regeneration of the old order "in neuen schönen Formen"? It is indeed possible to read the latter part of the text as an allegory on the literal dis-integration of the *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation* in the wake of the revolutionary wars and the secularization of Europe. The entry of French troops into Mainz on the 30th of December 1799 had given Joseph Görres cause to declare, with some jubilation, the imminent demise of the Empire⁴⁷. Novalis must have seen the writing on the wall as clearly as his contemporaries; but there is no reason to assume that he, any more than they, should have been particularly concerned about the collapse of the *Reich*, which most saw as an anachronism commanding no political or patriotic allegiance.

What is more likely is that the "fall of the Empire" impresses itself upon Novalis as one more symptom of the general tendency towards "Auflösung" which the Revolution has come to embody. Against this background, Prussia, with its relatively enlightened traditions and a young king who was expected to carry on the reforms begun by Friedrich der Große, seems to have seized Novalis' imagination as the "Kern" around

⁴⁷. See Braubach, Max, *Von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Wiener Kongreß*, p 46

which a new order might crystallize. At the same time, the closing sentence of the fragment stresses again the positive cathartic character of the Revolution, implying that without it the nascent possibilities of Friedrich Wilhelm III's Prussia might never have come into being.

This reading allows us to give some sort of coherent interpretation to the fragment. However, it should be stressed that the text's method of signification tends to work against interpretations which attempt to impose the degree of coherence on it which we normally expect from allegory. I have called this and other fragments under discussion allegories, and in some respects this classification is appropriate⁴⁸. Conventionally, though, we expect from allegory a one-to-one correspondence between signifier and signified, and an essentially linear narrative structure. In GuL No.21 the connections between the successive metaphorical terms, and the fields of metaphor to which they belong tend to be associative rather than causal, additive or repetitive rather than linear. Furthermore, even the contemporary metaphorical conventions to which I have drawn attention do not offer a "key" by means of which the text can be comprehensively decoded. The succession of alternative metaphorical models for the condition of revolutionary Europe which Novalis sets up in the text is given coherence not so much by the desire to present an

⁴⁸. For a useful survey of definitions and types of allegory, and an account of the relationship between allegory and metaphor, see Kurz, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol*, pp 27-64. Kurz makes the following simple but practical distinction between metaphor and allegory: "Die Metapher verschmilzt zwei Bedeutungen zu einer, die Allegorie hält sie nebeneinander". (ibid., p 36)

effective polemic, as by the author's fascination with the "synthetic" possibilities of metaphor. The metaphorical level of the discourse assumes primacy over the polemical; or to put it another way, the associative linking of signifiers results in their dissociation from the dimension of signification, from rhetorical and didactic intentions which inform conventional allegory.

This phenomenon bears some similarity to a tendency which Forster criticizes in the writings of his contemporaries in a footnote to the *Parisische Umriss*:

Daß die Gleichnisse *hinken*, hätte man sie bemerkt, wenn man nicht versucht hätte, sie *gehen* zu machen: das heißt, wenn man sie nicht aus ihrer natürlichen Lage gerissen und durch fortgesetztes Allegorisieren ihre wahre Bestimmung⁴⁹ als bloß erläuternde Bilder zu dienen, vereitelt hätte.

Forster's remark, although it pre-dates *Glauben und Liebe* by some four years, seems to me to describe fairly accurately the way in which Novalis plays with metaphor, and particularly conventional metaphor, setting up correspondences between different fields of metaphor and using these as the basis for speculation about the nature of historical and political processes.

It is also possible to apply a somewhat more modern model of explication to this aspect of the fragments I have been discussing. Their patterns of thought and rhetorical structures bear a strong resemblance to some of the features

⁴⁹. Forster, *Im Anblick*, p 134

of mythical discourse identified by Lévi-Strauß and others. The associative logic which links the metaphorical terms in GuL No.21, and which we have also seen in operation in Nos. 11-14, corresponds closely to the type of causality which obtains in myth, where relations of contiguity and contemporaneity replace the linear succession of cause and effect which the Western rationalist tradition associates with the notion of causality⁵⁰. Moreover, Novalis' penchant for providing a number of different metaphorical models for the same historical event or process is comparable to the the repetition or transformation of a motif within a particular version of a myth, or of larger structural units in different versions of the same myth, which Lévi-Strauß has identified as one of the distinguishing characteristics of mythical discourse⁵¹.

G. S. Kirk, who has written one of the most lucid and interesting discussions of Lévi-Strauß' theory of myth, identifies a category of "speculative myth" which seems to me to provide a useful approach to the fragments we have been considering. Proceeding from Lévi-Strauß' premise that myth represents a form of cultural "problem-solving", he describes the function of speculative myths as follows:

The kinds of solution that speculative myth can offer are these: the removal of the problem, or its effective disguise, by a tale that implies it to be

⁵⁰. See Köller, *Semiotik und Metapher*, p 231

⁵¹. See Claude Lévi-Strauß, *Structural Anthropology*, tr. Claire Jacobson, N.Y, 1963, p 229: "The function of repetition is to render the structure of the myth apparent".

irrelevant or simply pretends that it is not there; the resolution of a contradiction after the manner indicated by Lévi-Strauß, which entails the introduction of a mythical factor that serves to mediate polar extremes ... and the use of other kinds of allegory in which the transposition of a problematic situation into a fresh set of terms seems to reveal new associations and relationships that make the problem less severe.⁵²

Within this framework, I would argue that the "problem" which Novalis is attempting to solve can be formulated as follows: how can the French Revolution and its consequences be integrated into some kind of unifying historical teleology, which will allow both the creative and destructive energies which it has liberated to be understood as part of one organic process. As we have seen, one of the strategies he adopts in trying to solve this problem involves, to paraphrase Kirk, the repeated transposition of the revolutionary "drama" into a fresh set of metaphorical terms. The "associations and relationships" which are revealed in this process reinforce the idea that the Revolution can somehow be seen not as a rupture in the natural order, but as part of it, analogous to certain processes in the physical world and governed by the same laws.

One might justifiably ask whether or not it is useful to apply such general categories as those in which Kirk and Lévi-Strauß deal - which derive, moreover, from the study of ancient or "savage" myth - to texts as eclectic in their borrowings and idiosyncratic in their construction as Novalis' fragments. I shall defer an answer this question until the

⁵². See Kirk, G.S., *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Cambridge, 1970, p 259

final chapter of my study, where it will be taken up again in the context of my discussion of Friedrich Schlegel's conception of a "neue Mythologie".

6.5 Blueprints for the post-revolutionary state

6.5.1 From the body politic to the ideal citizen

In the previous sections I have dealt at some length with Novalis' appropriation of certain contemporary metaphorical conventions in the context of his evaluation of the French Revolution and its historical and political meanings. I shall turn now to a consideration of the notions of an ideal state and the citizen's place within it which he proposes in *Glauben und Liebe* and opposes to what he perceives to be the nature of the "revolutionary" state in France. The first of these derives once again from the metaphor of the body politic, though as we shall see, it is less dependent on the idea of a homology of structure between the state and the individual than the speculations in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* on the same subject. Indeed, organic metaphor as a whole does not have such a central function in the elaboration of concepts in *Glauben und Liebe* as it had in the earlier texts. The metaphor of the body politic is only invoked implicitly, usually without reference to the actual anatomy or physicality of the state. Only Fragment No.10 employs a concrete physical image, in this instance to describe not the body politic, but the body economic:

Gold und Silber sind das Blut des Staats. Häufungen des Bluts am Herzen und im Kopfe verrathen Schwäche in beiden. Je stärker das Herz ist, desto lebhafter und freigebiger treibt es das Blut nach den äussern Theilen.

Warm und belebt ist jedes Glied, und rasch und mächtig strömt das Blut nach dem Herzen zurück. (NS,II,486)

At first glance the fragment appears to be offering a relatively straightforward argument for a more equal and even distribution of wealth within states. It can be seen as belonging to the tradition of Enlightenment criticisms of extravagance and excess at the courts of Europe. However, as Ulrich Stadler has shown, this text needs to be understood in the context of contemporary theories of political economy. The image of the circulation of gold and silver, the economic blood of the state, is strongly reminiscent of the physiocratic conception of the circulation of goods, which had been expounded by Quesnay in his *Tableau économique* in 1758¹. Novalis' attitude to the ideas of Quesnay, and to other economic theories which competed with, or, as in the case of Adam Smith's *laissez-faire* liberalism, grew out of physiocracy, has been discussed at length by several commentators⁵⁴. As Stadler and Kurzke have pointed out, his advocacy of a free circulation of wealth within the state, whilst it involves an implicit criticism of the restrictive mercantilism practised in Prussia under Frederick the Great, does not imply an expression of support for the physiocratic ideas of natural government and an economic system based entirely on self-interest⁵⁵.

1. See Stadler, Ulrich.: Die theuren Dinge. Studien zu Bunyan, Jung-Stilling und Novalis, Bern und München, 1982, p 189, also p 325 (Anm.310) and p 327 (Anm.324)

⁵⁴. See Stadler, *ibid.* p 186-7, and also: Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 137-144 Janz, *Autonomie und soziale Funktion der Kunst*, p115-6 Kuhn, *Der Apokalyptiker und die Politik*, p 187

If we now look closely at the text of Fragment No.10, we may observe two aspects thereof which have previously gone unnoticed by commentators. Firstly, we can see that the fragment displays a relatively high degree of internal consistency. It functions as a closed allegory *en miniature*, unlike the fragments discussed previously, which tend to veer off into abstraction via a chain of metaphorical substitution. Secondly, we may identify what might be termed a metaphorical "sub-text" of the fragment, which is constructed upon the opposition of "Schwäche" and "Stärke". In the second sentence we are told that "...Häufungen des Bluts am Herzen und im Kopfe verrathen Schwäche in beiden". It is not made explicit precisely which parts of the "state apparatus" are signified by "Herz" and "Kopf". One thing, however, is clear: in order that the weaknesses of these existing states be corrected, and a proper circulation of wealth established, it is necessary that the "heart" of the state become stronger:

Je stärker das Herz ist, desto lebhafter und freigebiger treibt es das Blut nach den äussern Theilen...

Not only will wealth flow to every part of the state; it will also return, apparently supplemented, to the "heart". Whether we take "Herz" to refer here to the court, the government, or the king himself, it is plain that the fragment is presenting an implicit metaphorical argument for a strong central control of the state. This argument is taken up again and enlarged upon in *GuL* No.37:

Ein König muß, wie ein Vater, keine Vorliebe zeigen. Er sollte nicht bloß militairische Gesellschafter und Adjutanten haben. Warum nicht auch civilistische? Wenn er sich in seinen militairischen Adjutanten fähige

Generale bildet, warum will er sich nicht auf ähnliche Weise fähige Minister und Presidenten bilden? Bei ihm laufen alle Fäden der Regierung zusammen. Nur von dort aus läßt sich das ganze Triebwerk des Staats überblicken. Dort allein lernt man im Großen den Staat und sein Detail ansehen. Zu Directorialposten kann man sich nirgends so bilden, als im Kabinet, wo die Staatsweisheit des ganzen Landes sich konzentriert, wo man jede Sache durchaus bearbeitet erhält, und von wo aus man den Gang der Geschäfte bis in seine kleinsten Adern verfolgen kann. Hier allein würde jener eingeschränkte Geist verschwinden, jener Pedantismus der Geschäftsmänner, der sie auf ihre Bemühungen einen einzigen, auf ihre Vorschläge einen infalliblen Wert legen läßt... Dieses kleinstädtische Wesen ist überall sichtbar und verhindert am meisten echten Republikanismus, allgemeine Theilnahme am ganzen Staate, innige Berührung und Harmonie aller Staatsglieder. (NS,II,495-96)

I have quoted at some length from the fragment in order to show that Novalis' critique of parochialism and "Kleinstaaterei", and the particular brand of centralism which he proposes as an antidote to these ills, both play an important part in the political deliberations of *Glauben und Liebe*. They are elaborated in some detail in the latter part of the text⁵⁶. His attack on "dieses kleinstädtische Wesen" is in one sense highly conventional, rehearsing once again the frustrations of the nascent German bourgeoisie at the restrictions imposed on its economic and political power by the existing order. Yet the basis on which he argues the need for change, asserting that the present state of things hinders "ächten Republikanismus, allgemeine Theilnahme am ganzen Staate", suggests a more radical motivation to his criticisms than that which underlay the political discourse of the *Spätaufklärung*. In particular, the notion of a general

⁵⁶. See *GuL* Nos.38 and 39. Novalis argues in No.39 that the king must exercise ultimate control over all aspects of political life, "...weil nur er das Bild im Ganzen aus dem rechten Standpunkte übersieht, weil ihm nur die große Idee, die ... executirt werden soll vollkommen gegenwärtig ist". (II,497-8)

participation of all sections of the *polis* in public life, which is formulated here and developed elsewhere in the text, appears to go beyond the conventional late eighteenth century conceptions of "republicanism". It would also seem to be incompatible with the type of state centralism which he sees as necessary if "Pedantismus" and "kleinstädtische(s) Wesen" are to be combatted.

If we turn our attention again to the passage from Fragment No.37 quoted above, we can observe a somewhat curious concatenation of mechanical and organic metaphor in its description of the state. In the central part of the fragment Novalis speaks of the "Fäden der Regierung" and the "Triebwerk des Staats", and then goes on to assert that it is only from the standpoint of the (Royal) Cabinet that one is able to follow "den Gang der Geschäfte bis in seine kleinsten Adern". These are, of course, thoroughly conventional metaphors. Nevertheless, it is significant that Novalis does not maintain the strict polarity of "negative" mechanical and "positive" organic models of the state around which the argumentation of *Vermischte Bemerkungen* No.122 is structured. A similar linking of organic and mechanical metaphor occurs in *GuL* No.36:

Kein Staat ist mehr als Fabrik verwaltet worden, als Preußen, seit Friedrich Wilhelm des Ersten Tode. So nöthig vielleicht eine solche maschinistische Administration zur physischen Gesundheit, Stärkung und Gewandheit des Staats seyn mag, so geht doch der Staat, wenn er bloß auf diese Art behandelt wird, im Wesentlichen darüber zu Grunde. (NS,II, 494)

The characterization of Prussia as a "Fabrik" regulated by a "maschinistische Administration" echoes the critique of the "gemäßigte Regierungsform" in *VB* No.122, where it is described

as "eine künstliche, sehr zerbrechliche Maschine"⁵⁷. In *GuL* No.36 the metaphor of the state as machine acquires an added dimension of reference, since it is linked implicitly with Novalis' rejection of the doctrines of physiocracy in the continuation of the fragment:

Das Prinzip des alten berühmten Systems ist, jeden durch Eigennutz an den Staat zu binden. Die klugen Politiker hatten das Ideal eines Staats vor sich, wo das Interesse des Staats, eigennützig, wie das Interesse der Unterthanen, so künstlich jedoch mit demselben verknüpft wäre, daß beide einander wechselseitig beförderten. An diese politische Quadratur des Zirkels ist sehr viel Mühe gewandt worden: aber der rohe Eigennutz scheint durchaus unermesslich, antisystematisch zu sein. Er hat sich durchaus nicht beschränken lassen, was doch die Natur jeder Staatseinrichtung nothwendig erfordert. Indeß ist durch diese förmliche Aufnahme des gemeinen Egoismus, als Prinzip, ein ungeheuerliche Schade geschehn und der Keim der Revolution unserer Tage liegt nirgends, als hier. (NS,II,494-95)

As Stadler has pointed out, this linking of the description of the Prussian state as factory or machine with physiocratic utilitarianism is somewhat arbitrary⁵⁸. The principles of Quesnay's political economy were inimical to the still essentially feudal, mercantilist economic system which existed in Prussia in the late eighteenth century. Yet this very arbitrariness in the relationship between metaphor and referent is typical of the larger rhetorical structure of *Glauben und Liebe*. The description of a particular object or process as "mechanical" does not always rest on the assumption of a formal analogy between the object or process and the

⁵⁷. NS,II,468

⁵⁸. See Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 186: "...doch die Verbindung von Egoismus und Mechanismus ist keineswegs selbstverständlich; sie bedarf eines Kommentars...usw". Frederick the Great had himself declared the intention of transforming the Prussian state into a machine (cf. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 138)

workings of a machine. The adjective "mechanical" often functions simply as a synonym for "negative", "prosaic" or "bad". In a similar fashion, the organic metaphors of health and strength which accompany the depiction of Prussia in the first part of *GuL* No.36 have, in this particular case, been placed on the negative side of the political equation. Novalis is tacitly invoking the opposition of "Körper" and "Geist", one of the major metaphorical "isotopies" of the text as a whole. The implication is that the Prussian state may well be physically healthy, but that it is spiritually ill and will ultimately perish unless there is some change in its "treatment". This change would involve a rejection not only of the rigidity and restrictiveness of traditional feudal mercantilism, but also of the physiocratic formulation of the ideology of emergent capitalism, which Novalis sees as embodying "die förmliche Aufnahme des gemeinen Egoismus, als Prinzip". Ulrich Stadler has argued ingeniously that *GuL* No.36 expresses an essentially dialectical view of contemporary history, in which the economic emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the enthronement of self-interest as the basic principle of social organization are seen as a necessary, yet potentially disastrous stage in the development of the state⁵⁹. Regardless of whether or not we accept Stadler's

⁵⁹. See Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 186:

Er gesteht der egoistischen Maxime des Mechanismus und der sich mit ihr emanzipierenden bürgerlichen Klasse eine historische Daseinsberechtigung zu, ja er erblickt in beiden sogar ein historisches Erfordernis. Gleichzeitig jedoch hält er auch die negativen Konsequenzen der Maxime fest und bezeichnet ausschließliche "mechanistische Administration" als ungeheuer schädlich für den Staat, als eine mögliche Ursache für dessen Untergang.

interpretation - and there are certain good reasons for doing so⁶⁰ - we must ask at this point what alternatives are proposed in the text to the "maschinistische Administration" of late eighteenth century Prussia. In answering this question, I shall consider firstly the notion of the ideal state which Novalis articulates in terms of the relatively concrete organic metaphors of disease and health, before turning in the next section to an analysis of the more abstract "organic" conception of the state as "Ehe" or "Familienmonarchie".

The body politic, its diseases, and the means to their cure figure prominently in the sequence of fragments which forms the first part of the *Politische Aphorismen*. I shall quote this sequence in full in order that the argument which Novalis develops concerning the nature of the ideal citizen and his⁶¹ relation to the state may be considered as a whole:

46. Revolutionen beweisen eher gegen die wahre Energie einer Nation. Es gibt eine Energie aus Kränklichkeit und Schwäche - die gewaltsamer wirkt, als die wahre - aber leider mit noch tieferer Schwäche aufhört.

...

⁶⁰. As has been argued in the previous section, Novalis seems to have regarded the Revolution and the period of "Auflösung" which it heralded as a necessary precondition for the emergence of a new order of things. Since he also associates the advent of an economic order based on unrestrained competition and self-interest with the Revolution, it is not unreasonable that he should have seen the rise of the bourgeoisie and the beginnings of capitalism as a phase of negativity, dominated by "Antagonismus der Gesellschaftsmitglieder, das Alle-gegen-Alle" (Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 189) which must be passed through before the "Familienstaat" could be instituted.

⁶¹. The citizen in *Glauben und Liebe* is, by implication, always male. Women have no place in the public sphere; as we shall see, their prescribed activities and functions are quite clearly delineated from those of men.

48. Kein Argument ist der alten Regierung nachtheiliger, als dasjenige, was man aus der disproportionellen Stärke der Glieder des Staats, die in einer Revolution zum Vorschein kommt, ziehen kann. Seine Verwaltung muß höchst fehlerhaft gewesen sein, daß viele Theile fehlerhaft werden konnten und eine so hartnäckige Schwäche überall einwurzelte.

49. Je schwächer ein Theil ist, desto mehr zu Unordnungen und Entzündungen geneigt.

50. Was sind Sklaven? Völlig geschwächte, comprimirt Menschen. Was sind Sultane? Durch heftige Reizungen incitirte Sklaven. Wie endigen Sultane und Sklaven? Gewaltsam. - Jene leicht als Sklaven, diese leicht als Sultane, d.h. phrenitisch, hirnwüthig. Wie können Sklaven kurirt werden? Durch sehr behutsame Freilassungen und Aufklärungen. Man muß sie wie Erfrorene behandeln. Sultane? Auf die Art, wie Dionysus und Krösus kurirt wurden. Mit Schrecken, Fasten und Klosterzwang angefangen und allmählig mit Stärkungsmitteln gestiegen. Sultane und Sklaven sind das Extrem. Es gibt noch viel Mittelklassen bis zum König und dem ächten Cyniker - der Klasse der vollkommensten Gesundheit. Terroristen und Hofschranzen gehören so ziemlich in die nächste Klasse nach Sultanen und Sklaven - und gehen so in einander über, wie diese. Beides sind die Repräsentanten der beiden Krankheitsformen einer sehr schwachen Constitution.

51. Die gesundeste Constituion unter einem Maximum von Reizen repräsentirt der König, - dieselbe unter einem Minimum von Reizen repräsentirt der König, - dieselbe unter einem Minimum von Reizen - der ächte Cyniker. Je gleicher beide sind, je leichter und unveränderter sie ihre Rollen verwechseln könnten, desto mehr nährt sich ihre Constitution dem Ideal der vollkommensten Constitution. Je unabhängiger also der König von seinem Thron lebt, desto mehr ist er König. (NS,II,499-500)

Kurzke has shown that the concepts of health and disease which Novalis employs in this sequence derive from the physiological theories of the Scottish physician John Brown. He had probably not read Brown in the original, but had come into contact with his ideas through the writings of Röschlaub, Eschenmayer and Schelling⁶². Kurzke summarizes the basic premises of Brown's theory as follows:

⁶². See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 156

Gesundheit ist...durch ein je ausgewogenes Verhältnis von Reiz und Erregbarkeit bestimmt. Reize sind die Eindrücke der Aussenwelt, Erregbarkeit ist die Kapazität zur Verarbeitung von Reizen. Im asthenischen ("zärtlichen") Zustand bedarf die Lebensfunktion stärkerer, im sthenischen (robusten) schwächerer Reize. Krankheit ist nach Röschlaub "...eine Disproporzion zwischen der Gewalt des Inzitates und der Stärke des Wirkungsvermögens" (also zwischen Reiz und Erregbarkeit). Therapie im Krankheitsfall⁶³ ist die jeweils komplementär ausgleichende Reizdosierung.

Within the framework of Novalis' aetiology of the Revolution the *ancien régime* would represent a state of "Kränklichkeit und Schwäche", of "Asthenie", out of which the energy of the Revolution itself arose. Kurzke elaborates:

In GuL Nr.46 ist der Fall einer "indirekten Asthenie" beschrieben, die als Folge eines krankhaften hypersthenischen Zustands eingetreten ist. Röschlaub definiert die indirekte Asthenie als diejenige Schwäche, die als Sekundärphänomen einer Sthenie folgt, z.B. als Kater nach der unnatürlichen Steigerung der Lebensfunktion im Rausch. Der Rausch...ist somit auf die Diagnose der Revolution zu übertragen: sie ist der Rauschzustand, der Krankheitszustand des Ancien Regime. Das Ancien Regime neigt zu Asthenien: es ist zärtlich, hypochondrisch und überzivilisiert.⁶⁴

Kurzke's exposition of GuL No.46 and the sequence which follows it is extremely illuminating, but seems to contain certain contradictions. He argues that both the final years of the *ancien régime* and the Revolution are characterized by the condition of "Asthenie", of which the Revolution is an intensification to the point of intoxication:

Ancien Regime und Revolution werden durch die gemeinsame Diagnose "Asthenie" zu einem auseinander hervorgehenden [sic] Prozeß verbunden.⁶⁵

⁶³. ibid.

⁶⁴. ibid., pp 156-7

⁶⁵. ibid., p 159

It is difficult to see how this "gemeinsame Diagnose" can be consistent with the explication of Fragment No.46 quoted above. Kurzke states that "indirekte Asthenie" follows a condition of "Sthenie", and quotes Röschlaub's example of the hangover which follows intoxication. Thus the Revolution would, if one ascribes to it the character of "Rauschzustand", represent a case of "Sthenie" rather than "Asthenie". We may well concur with Kurzke's view that Novalis sees the "illness" of the *ancien régime* and the Revolution as belonging to the same "organic" process; his exposition of this medical allegory does, however, become problematic when we attempt to locate the historical moment of the text's production within the succeeding phases of "Asthenie", "Hypersthenie" and "indirekte Asthenie". Are we to take it that the "Energie" of the Revolution, the violence of which is proof that it has sprung from a state of "Kränklichkeit und Schwäche", has now subsided, and that, as Kurzke maintains, a phase of "indirekte Asthenie" - a sort of post-Revolutionary hangover - has already begun? This interpretation would seem to conflict with the view expressed in other fragments discussed in previous sections that the Revolution was still in progress, and anything but a spent force. Both the metaphorical logic of the fragment itself, and its relation to the overall context of *Glauben und Liebe* suggest that it is looking both backwards and forwards, identifying the political condition of pre-Revolutionary France and intimating that, once the Revolution has run its course, things will, if anything, have become worse. This is the basic historical framework within which the argument of the whole sequence is developed. In

order to introduce the theme of this sequence, it will be illuminating to consider some remarks made by Jean Starobinski concerning the popular image of the *ancien régime* and its significance for revolutionary discourse. Starobinski observes that French aristocratic culture of the period immediately prior to the Revolution was perceived as being obsessed with hedonism and excess. The feckless profligacy of the court of Louis XVI was a crass public manifestation of this obsession, and possessed a strong symbolic value for the revolutionaries. Starobinski writes:

Gewiß verbietet sich die Vermengung beider; wir müssen einerseits den unwiderstehlichen Drang des aristokratischen Libertinismus unterscheiden, der im Vergnügen und in der Zerstreuung die eigene Vernichtung sucht, and andererseits die Heftigkeit der Volksgewalt, die über einen entschieden außerhalb ihrer stehenden Feind herfällt. Die Zerstörungskraft entfaltet sich in zwei genau entgegengesetzten Richtungen. Kein gemeinsames Maß macht auf den ersten Blick den tödlichen Taumel des Roué und der Personen Sades mit der Wut der Massen vergleichbar, die, von Angst und Not beherrscht, die Symbole des Feudalismus zerschlagen. Bei Nahem besehen jedoch merkt man eine Entsprechung und Ergänzung, die wie eine Umkehrung und Verwandlung anmutet. Das Leben des Roué besteht aus einer *diskontinuierlichen* Folge betörender Augenblicke, die durch düstere Zwischenzeiten voneinander getrennt sind; es stürzt sich schließlich in den Abgrund des Todes. Das aufbegehrende Bewußtsein aber will mit einem raschen, entscheidenden Zerstörungsakt *anfangen*, von dem das *ununterbrochene* Tageslicht leuchten soll. Die Zeichen kehren sich um. Der Reichtum, den der Libertin braucht, um seine Vergnügungen wieder zu erneuern, hat als Gegenpol die Bedürfnisse des Volkes. Die dunkle Macht des Bedürfnisses, des Hungers und der Not ist also der Schatten, den die exklusiven Genüsse der Privilegierten werfen.⁶⁶

This exposition of the relationship between individual excess and collective violence is obviously very general in nature. However, whilst acknowledging that one should be cautious about applying broad statements of this kind to a

⁶⁶. Starobinski, *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, p 44

text as idiosyncratic as *Glauben und Liebe*, I would suggest that there are certain symbolic or metaphorical resonances between the particular construction of Revolutionary discourse which Starobinski describes and Novalis' physiological account of the condition of France. To begin with, we might discern a certain degree of correspondence between the "tödlicher Taumel des Roué", the "exklusiven Genüsse der Privilegierten" and the "Rauschzustand" which, Kurzke argues, is implied in the historical scenario of *GuL* No.39. For Kurzke, the Revolution itself is the "Rauschzustand...des Ancien Régime"⁶⁷, the frenzy of the body politic *in extremis*; for Starobinski it is the egocentric hedonism of the French aristocracy which, as it were, engenders the destructive energy of the Paris mob. Neither of these interpretations can pretend to being an "objective" model of historical explanation; yet both are concerned with *representations* of the Revolution in a discourse which, as it develops, incorporates into its mode of operation the "inversion of signs" of which Starobinski speaks, and which we encounter again and again in Novalis' texts.

A further feature common to both Starobinski's remarks and the sequence of fragments we are considering is that they both present an aetiology of the Revolution, and in particular, of the "Heftigkeit der Volksgewalt". The fragments N.48, 49 and 50 trace the excesses of the French people, their "Unordnungen und Entzündungen" to their position as the weakest part of the pre-Revolutionary state, the chief fault of which consisted in a "disproportionelle(n) Stärke der

⁶⁷. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 159

Glieder" (II,499). It is difficult to determine whether or not "Stärke" is intended here to denote actual political power within the state, or whether it simply provides the metaphorical foil to the general political malaise or "hartnäckige Schwäche" which afflicted France under the rule of Louis XVI. The oxymoronic phrase "hartnäckige Schwäche" points to a notion of a general corruption and imbalance in the affairs of the state, which encompasses the traditional disenfranchisement of all but a small section of the populace. This is elaborated in Fragment No.50, which sets up a simple and symmetrical model of the political antagonisms of the *ancien régime*:

Was sind Sklaven? Völlig geschwächte, comprimerte Menschen. Was sind Sultane? Durch heftige Reizungen incitirte Sklaven. Wie endigen Sultane und Sklaven? Gewaltsam - Jene leicht als Sklaven, diese leicht als Sultane. d.h. phrenitisch, hirnwüthig. (...) Sultane und Sklaven sind das Extrem. Es gibt noch viele Mittelklassen bis zum König und dem ächten Cyniker - Der Klasse der vollkommensten Gesundheit. Terroristen und Hofschranzen gehören so ziemlich in die nächste Klasse nach Sultanen und Sklaven, und gehen so in einander über, wie diese.

The oppositions "Sklaven/Sultane" and "Terroristen/Hofschranzen" refer to corresponding upper and lower levels of the social hierarchy. Kurzke explains the significance of this model for the diagnosis of the Revolution as follows:

Sklaven und Sultane sind Entartungsformen des Ancien Regime...Die Revolution ist der Rauschzustand des Ancien Regime und zugleich das phrenitische Fieber seiner Sklaven, sie endet daher mit Schwäche. Es bedarf behutsamer und langwieriger Kuren, um die Proportionen der Gesellschaft wieder ins Lot zu bringen.

What is interesting about this model is the fact that it is politically somewhat ambiguous. Implicit in the notion of a society composed of corresponding and symmetrical classes is the assumption that oppressor and oppressed, "Sultan" and

"Sklave" are equally victims of a system which distorts their true nature, which is represented by the "Klasse der vollkommensten Gesundheit" embodied in the "König" and "dem ächten Cyniker". In attempting to exonerate both "Sultane" and "Sklaven" from any "blame" for the events of the Revolution, by arguing that the nature of "die alte Regierung" precluded the possibility of historical agency and responsibility, Novalis is providing another variant of the historical apologia contained in Fragments Nos.11-14 of *Glauben und Liebe*⁶⁸. The underlying theme of the whole sequence is the conviction that the Revolution is the logical consequence of the condition of France under the *ancien régime*. Thus "Terroristen" can be equated with their pre-Revolutionary counterparts, the "Hofschranzen"; the implication is that Revolutionary terror is the mirror image of the court intrigues and vying for privilege which prevailed prior to 1789.

The conclusion which Novalis draws from this analysis bears testimony more to his desire to preserve the symmetry of his model than it does to any practical political concern. His cure for the ills of the absolutist state is to recommend, on the one hand, a program of cautious and limited reforms, "sehr behutsame Freilassungen und Aufklärungen", for the slaves, and on the other, a kind of political shock treatment for the "Sultane". Whilst amounting to a rejection of revolution as a means of transforming the state, Fragment No.50 and the sequence preceding it do not suggest any

⁶⁸. On the question of free will and determinism in Novalis' adaptation of Brown see Kurzke, *ibid.*, p 160-1

alternative political practices appropriate to the conditions of 1798. Instead, Novalis abandons the consideration of the body politic as a whole and turns his attention to the "microcosm" of the state, namely the individual citizen:

Die gesundeste Constitution unter einem Maximum von Reizen repräsentirt der König, - dieselbe unter einem Minimum von Reizen - der ächte Cyniker. Je gleicher beide sind, desto mehr nährt sich ihre Constitution dem Ideal der vollkommensten Constitution. Je unabhängiger also der König von seinem Thron lebt, desto mehr ist er König. (NS,II,500)

Novalis took the idea of the "Cyniker" from two of Schlegel's *Athenäums-Fragmente*:

(16) Wenn das Wesen des Zynismus darin besteht, der Natur vor der Kunst, der Tugend vor der Schönheit und Wissenschaft den Vorzug zu geben; unbekümmert um den Buchstaben, auf den der Stoiker streng hält, nur auf den Geist zu sehen, allen ökonomischen Wert und politischen Glanz zu verachten, und die Rechte der selbständigen Willkür tapfer zu behaupten: so dürfte der Christianismus wohl nichts anders sein, als universeller Zynismus.

(35) Der Zyniker dürfte eigentlich gar keine Sachen haben: denn alle Sachen, die ein Mensch hat, haben ihn doch in gewissem Sinne wieder. Es kommt also nur darauf an, die Sachen so zu haben, als ob man sie nicht hätte. Noch künstlicher und noch zynischer ist es aber, die Sachen so nicht zu haben, als ob man sie hätte.⁶⁹

The definition of "Zynismus" offered in these two fragments, which were partly the work of Schleiermacher⁷⁰, is interesting in that it combines an assertion of the "Rechte der selbständigen Willkühr" - a typically Early Romantic sentiment - with the proviso that the cynic give virtue precedence over art and science. This latter stipulation seems to belong more to the ideology of the Enlightenment. It is difficult to tell whether or not Schlegel intends the idea of

⁶⁹. KA, II, pp 167, 171

⁷⁰. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 163 (Anm.119), also KA,II, p 171 (Anm.35)

the "Zyniker", which one might see as a kind of blueprint of Romantic individualism, as a model for emulation. In Novalis' text the "ächter Zyniker" or "Indifferentist" possesses a healthy constitution by virtue of the fact that he is independent of the purely mechanical dynamics of "Reiz" and "Erregbarkeit" which, according to Brown, govern the individual's state of health⁷¹. He is "der Mensch mit der größten Selbstgenügsamkeit, der mit einem Minimum an äußeren Reizen auskomme"⁷², and, over and above this, is capable of a voluntary "Steuerung der Reizbarkeit"⁷³. The king represents the mirror image or counterpart of the cynic; the two categories are the public and private embodiments of Novalis' conception of the ideal constitution. Kurzke explains this equation as follows:

Die Kombination von König und Zyniker ist also so zu verstehen, daß der König, obgleich durch ein Maximum von Reizen verwöhnt, doch so lebt, als ob er sie nicht hätte, daß umgekehrt der Zyniker das Maximum der Reize "so nicht hat, als ob er sie hätte"...Der König kann also nichts verlieren, der Zyniker nichts gewinnen; beide sind nicht erpreßbar, ⁷⁴verwirklichen das biblische "Haben, als hätte man nicht".

In order that both king and cynic may progress from merely possessing the healthiest of constitutions to actually attaining a perfect constitution, a process of transformation must take place in both. Novalis goes on to describe how this process is catalysed:

52. Alle Reize sind relativ - sind Größen - bis auf Einen, der ist absolut - und mehr als Größe.

⁷¹. See *ibid.*, p 162

⁷². See Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 197

⁷³. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 161

⁷⁴. *ibid.*, p 163

53. Die vollkommenste Constitution entsteht durch Incitation und absolute Verbindung mit diesem Reize. Durch ihn kann sie alle übrige entbehren - denn er wirkt anfänglich stärker im Verhältniß, daß die relativen Reize abnehmen, und umgekehrt. Hat er sie aber einmal ganz durchdrungen, so wird sie völlig indifferent gegen die relativen Reize. Dieser Reiz ist - *absolute Liebe*.

54. Ein Cyniker und ein König ohne sie, sind nur Titulaturen.

55. Jede Verbesserung unvollkommener Constitutionen läuft daraus hinaus, daß man sie der Liebe fähiger macht. (NS,II,500)

Novalis' conception of "absolute Liebe" has been discussed extensively by Mähl and Kurzke⁷⁵, and there is no need to repeat their comments here. What is interesting about the sequence as a whole is the progressive redefinition of the term "Constitution" which accompanies the movement from the social to the individual, from the examination of the body politic to a prescription for the citizen which will assist him in attaining a healthy political consciousness. It is clear that both possible meanings of "constitution" are actualized, and that the constitution of the state is implied where the text speaks of the constitution of individuals. At the same time we may observe a curious conflation of the concrete, physical sense of the term with its abstract derivative. In retaining Brown's terminology in its elaboration of the notion of the "vollkommene Constitution" the text not only hints at the analogy between the "organisation" of the individual and that of the polis; it also suggests an identity between the figurative "health" of the body politic and the nature of its constitutive or

⁷⁵. See *ibid.*, pp 148-150, 163-4, and Mähl, *Die Idee des goldenen Zeitalters*, p 332ff.

"organising" principles. The first possible sense of "constitution" springs from a "concrete" metaphor, that is to say, a physical representation of an abstract condition, whilst the second is a purely abstract term whose "origin" is not in the field of organic metaphor⁷⁶. Novalis' use of the word amounts on the one hand to a metaphorical pun, on the other to a kind of "literalization" or "taking-at-its-word" of a metaphor of the kind which Blumenberg describes in *Beobachtungen an Metaphern*:

Daß Metaphorik ‚beim Wort genommen wird‘, läßt sich nicht selten beobachten. Dabei wird die Metapher der begrenzten Intention ihres Autors entzogen, verselbständigt und in einer Richtung erweitert, die zumeist die Verdeutlichung zur Erklärung verändert.⁷⁷

Whilst the sequence as a whole plays with the notion of an identity between the individual's constitution and that of the state, it does not posit a homology between the two. The question of the nature of the ideal state, and the citizen's relation to it, is approached from an individual rather than a

⁷⁶. It is difficult to say whether or not the use of "constitution" in the sense of "a body of fundamental principles according to which a state is governed" (Oxford English Dictionary) itself derives from an organic notion of the state; what can be said is that the two possible senses of the term had become separate in common usage by the time Novalis wrote *Glauben und Liebe* and that the sense quoted above had lost any metaphorical dimension it may once have possessed.

⁷⁷. Blumenberg, *Beobachtungen an Metaphern*, p 209

Although one cannot speak of an "author" in this particular case, Blumenberg's comments seem to me apposite; the conflation of the two usages of "Constitution" involves a suppression of the rhetorical dimension of the metaphor of the body politic (as exemplified by its use in the fable of Menenius Agrippa), or perhaps more accurately, its fictionality.

collective perspective, as the final part of the sequence makes plain:

56. Der beste Staat besteht aus Indifferentisten dieser Art.

57. In unvollkommenen Staaten sind sie auch die besten Staatsbürger. Sie nehmen an allem Guten Theil, lachen über die Alfansereien ihrer Zeitgenossen im Stillen, und enthalten sich von allem Uebel. Sie ändern nicht, weil sie wissen, daß jede Aenderung der Art und unter diesen Umständen nur ein neuer Irrthum ist, und das Beste nicht von außen kommen kann. Sie lassen alles in seinen Würden, und so wie sie keinen geniren - so genirt auch sie keiner, und sind überall willkommen. (NS,II,500)

As Stadler has pointed out, there can be little doubt that the political standpoint which Novalis commends to his readers is one of "totale politische Abstinenz"⁷⁸. Stadler elaborates:

Angesichts dieser Äußerungen über vollkommene und unvollkommene Staaten wird zweierlei deutlich. Zum einen wird die Frage, wie aus dem unvollkommenen ein vollkommener oder zumindest ein vollkommenerer Staat werden soll, ganz dem Zuständigkeits- und Tätigkeitsbereich derer anheimgestellt, die keine "Cyniker" sind. Zum anderen wird hier erkennbar, daß der "Cyniker" nur eine höchst unvollkommene Subjekt/Objekt-Identität verkörpert. Wenn seine Existenz mit der eines unvollkommenen Staates vereinbar ist, so bleibt die Subjekt/Objekt-Identität bloß subjektiv, während der Staat selber als "tote Schale" der⁷⁹ Objektivität aus dieser Identität ausgeklammert bleibt.

These observations point to a central paradox or contradiction which underlies the arguments of the text as a whole. On the one hand *GuL* No.56 appears to advocate quietism as an acceptable political practice, in the hope that, with time, the state might come to consist entirely of "Indifferentisten" or "Cyniker" and would thus transform itself from within. This view represents a radical formulation, or strictly speaking, reformulation, of the

⁷⁸. Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 197

⁷⁹. *ibid.*, p 330 (Anm.347)

conservative position on the much discussed question as to whether or not a nation of people could emancipate itself from the state of "selbstverschuldete Unmündigkeit" described by Kant⁸⁰ and live according to the dictates of reason in a republic, without first being *educated* to political responsibility and self-determination. Novalis' answer to this question is firmly in the negative. The fragment states quite emphatically the view that the true Revolution can only occur in the heads of individual subjects, since "jede Aenderung der Art und unter diesen Umständen nur ein neuer Irrthum ist, und das Beste nicht von außen kommen kann". Yet - and this is the paradox which the text as a whole does not resolve - much of *Glauben und Liebe* is concerned with outlining a program of radical change, albeit within a traditional framework, which would of necessity have to be imposed from above by a strong central authority of the type referred to earlier in this section.

The fact that this inconsistency is not identified within the text as a contradiction is not, in this case, due simply to the "perspectivism" which, as we have seen, is one of the salient features of Novalis' discursive method in *Glauben und Liebe*. At a deeper level it springs from a certain ambivalence in his attitude to contemporary conceptions of the state and the individual's place within it. This becomes clearer if we consider once again the equation of king and cynic as opposite but complementary examples of "die gesundeste Constitution". Novalis argues that the closer the two types come to forming a

⁸⁰. See Kant's essay: Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?, in: Kant, Schriften zur Anthropologie, p 53

single identity, or becoming entirely interchangeable, the more perfect their constitutions will become. The consequences of this affinity for the role of the king are described as follows:

Je unabhängiger also der König von seinem Thron lebt, desto mehr ist er König.

At a simple level, we can read "Thron" as a metaphor for the trappings of royal authority, a representation which belongs to the domain of the "Buchstabe" rather than that of "Geist". Thus the less need the king had of these trappings, the closer he would come to being truly royal, the "thing itself" rather than its semblance. There is, however, a more complex dimension to the concepts of the king and "kingliness" which Novalis propounds in the text, which is elaborated in Fragment No.18:

...Man hat sehr unrecht, den König den ersten Beamten des Staats zu nennen. Der König ist kein Staatsbürger, mithin auch kein Staatsbeamter. Das ist eben das Unterscheidende der Monarchie, daß sie auf dem Glauben an einen höhergebornen Menschen, auf der freiwilligen Annahme eines Idealmenschen, beruht. Unter meines Gleichen kann ich mir keinen Obern wählen; auf Einen, der mit mir in der gleichen Frage befangen ist, nichts übertragen. Die Monarchie ist deswegen ächtes System, weil sie an einen absoluten Mittelpunkt geknüpft ist; an ein Wesen, was zur Menschheit, aber nicht zum Staate gehört. (NS,II,489)

Taken in conjunction with the sequence from later in the text which we have been discussing, this statement amounts to a categorical rejection of the basic principles of representative democracy, and of the notion of political representation *per se*, or at least in the terms in which the late eighteenth century conceived of it. The king, Novalis argues, does not actually belong to the state at all. He is *not* a citizen amongst citizens representing and exercising the

volonté générale; he is not a private subject but a purely public symbol of the transcendental potential of mankind⁸¹.

This is, in a sense, a reformulation of the notion of representation explored in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. What is important here is that Novalis is placing the king outside what was and is conventionally understood as the public political sphere. In so doing he appears to be advocating a return to what Habermas has defined as the dominant mode of representation of power in feudal society. Habermas has called this mode "repräsentative Öffentlichkeit", and characterized it as follows:

Diese "repräsentative Öffentlichkeit" konstituiert sich nicht als ein sozialer Bereich, als eine Sphäre der Öffentlichkeit, vielmehr ist sie, wenn sich der Terminus darauf übertragen ließe, so etwas wie ein Statusmerkmal. Der Status des Grundherrn, auf welcher Stufe auch immer, ist an sich gegenüber den Kriterien "öffentlich" und "privat" neutral; aber sein Inhaber repräsentiert ihn öffentlich: er zeigt sich, stellt sich dar als die Verkörperung einer wie immer "höheren" Gewalt. Der Begriff der Repräsentation hat sich bis in die jüngste Verfassungslehre hinein erhalten....Und zwar gibt sie vor, ein unsichtbares Sein durch die⁸² öffentlich anwesende Person des Herrn sichtbar zu machen.

Habermas' remarks help to explain the equation of the king with the "Cyniker" or "Indifferentist". The king must place himself outside the state in order to become truly kingly; in the same way, the ideal citizen must withdraw from participation in the political process, at least in the forms which it had taken in the Revolutionary decade; that is, he

⁸¹. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Kurt Wölfel of the Universität Bonn (formerly of the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg) for his illuminating remarks on this subject.

⁸². Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 19-20

must effectively cease to be a citizen. Here, as elsewhere, we should be wary of simply attributing Novalis' rejection of representative democracy to a "reactionary" desire to restore the pre-Revolutionary order, or to a nostalgia for an idealized medieval "heile Welt". Whilst the conception of political life in the perfect, and political practice in the less-than-perfect state which he outlines in *Glauben und Liebe* displays some affinities with that which prevailed in feudal society, it has to be seen in its proper context. At the time at which the text was written the social constructions of the public and the private were in a state of flux; furthermore, the whole notion of "public opinion", and of an arena in which it might be expressed, had not become established in Germany prior to the Revolution in the way that it had in France and England⁸³. As I shall try to show in the following section, the "depoliticization" of the public sphere which is one of the governing impulses of *Glauben und Liebe* occurs as a result of a certain scepticism towards the ways in which the bourgeois culture of the Enlightenment had chosen to constitute public and private, political and personal. The alternative which Novalis proposes amounts to a "privatisation" of the public and political, and his articulation of it, while it still falls within the general ambit of an "organic" view of the state, involves the abandonment of the traditional metaphor of the body politic for the more abstract and innovative metaphor of the state as family.

⁸³. *ibid.*, pp 76-94

6.5.2 "Familienmonarchie"

In the previous sections of this chapter I have dealt at some length with Novalis' assessment of the French Revolution and his evaluation of existing forms of political organization in France and Germany. The fragments discussed thus far have been primarily of an analytical and critical nature, describing an existing state of extreme negativity, but offering no concrete proposals for creating an alternative to the existing order of things, apart from a kind of political "anti-practice". It is now time to consider Novalis' major "positive" and innovative contribution to political theory, namely the notion of "Familienmonarchie" which he outlines in *Glauben und Liebe* as a model of the ideal state.

This model is placed in opposition both to the political practice of the revolutionaries in France, and to the corruption and excess of the *ancien régime*. It is elaborated within a system of metaphorical antinomies, which Novalis employs in order to delineate the essential differences between revolutionary republicanism and his own conception of the state as family and the king and queen as symbolic father and mother. As I shall try to show, the rhetorical strategy of the argument, and the linking of the different metaphorical isotopies which structure it both contribute to a general tendency towards "dehistoricization" of the Revolution and depoliticization of the idea of the state.

The first mention of the family occurs in Fragment No.16 of *Glauben und Liebe*:

Meinethalben mag jetzt der Buchstabe an der Zeit seyn. Es ist kein großes Lob für die Zeit, daß sie so weit von der

Natur entfernt, so sinnlos für Familienleben, so abgeneigt der schönsten poetischen Gesellschaftsform ist. Wie würden unsere Kosmopoliten erstaunen, wenn ihnen die Zeit des ewigen Friedens erschiene und sie die höchste gebildetste Menschheit in monarchischer Form erblickten. Zerstäubt wird dann der papierne Kitt seyn, der jetzt die Menschheit zusammenkleistert, und der Geist wird die Gespenster, die statt seiner in Buchstaben erscheinen und von Federn und Pressen zerstückelt ausgingen, verscheuchen, und alle Menschen wie ein paar Liebende zusammen schmelzen. (NS,II,488)

The argumentation of this fragment is particularly dense. Once again we may note Novalis' propensity for jumping from one metaphor to the next without exploring or making explicit all of the possible connotations of each individual metaphor. Here as elsewhere in his writings, particular metaphors or fields of metaphor invoke discourses which participate in the text and its arguments, but which are not brought into the foreground or connected by a series of logical propositions. The "key" or dominant metaphorical isotopy of the fragment is established in the first sentence through the use of the metaphor of the "Buchstabe". The antinomy of "Buchstabe" and "Geist" functions in this instance as a simplifying metaphorical schema for a particular view of history. It denotes the opposition between a present condition of negativity, of actions and convictions devoid of authenticity, and a future Utopian order referred to in Kant's words as "die Zeit des ewigen Friedens", in which "Geist" will inform every area of life.

The second sentence goes on to argue that the negative present is "weit von der Natur entfernt". Here what we might term a "vulgar" Rousseauism obtrudes itself into the text; Novalis invokes Rousseau's notion of the denaturation of

civilised man, but his description of how the original state of nature might be restored at some stage in the future departs radically from Rousseau. Rousseau had himself argued in the *Abhandlung über den Ursprung und die Grundlagen der Ungleichheit* that the family did not exist as a unit of social organization in the state of nature⁸⁴. In Novalis' fragment, however, "Familienleben" is clearly identified not only as "die schönste poetische Gesellschaftsform", but also as the natural form of social life. In the latter part of the fragment family life is linked with monarchy:

Wie würden unsre Kosmopoliten erstaunen, wenn ihnen die Zeit des ewigen Friedens erschiene und sie die höchste gebildete Menschheit in monarchischer Form erblickten? Zerstäubt wird dann der papierne Kitt seyn, der jetzt die Menschen zusammenkleistert, und der Geist wird die Gespenster, die statt seiner in Buchstaben erscheinen und von Federn und Pressen zerstückelt ausgingen, verscheuchen, und alle Menschen wie ein paar Liebende zusammen schmelzen. (NS,II,488)

This remarkable passage anticipates, in a strongly apocalyptic tone, the restoration of mankind's "natural" state. It is difficult to say whether "der papierne Kitt" is intended to be read at an abstract level as a metaphor for the insubstantial and inauthentic nature of the ties which bind individuals together in the prosaic present, or much more concretely, as a "literalization" of the "Buchstabe" metaphor, that is to say, a metonym for the books and journals which, emanating from isolated "pens" and "presses", served as the primary means of communication amongst the members of the emergent bourgeois "public", and as an arena for their

⁸⁴. See Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Schriften in zwei Bänden*, hg. von. Ritter, Henning, Hanser, 1978, Bd.1, p 210

constitution of a group identity. A third interpretation, which falls somewhere between these two alternatives, is also possible: "der papierne Kitt" may stand for the "letter of the law", or indeed for the Enlightenment project of encoding the principles of social organization in a constitution or charter⁸⁵. Whatever the case, the coming of "die Zeit des ewigen Friedens" will make all partial forms of communication and formalizations of communal life redundant. There will plainly be no need for institutionalized structures of power and authority, or for reading and writing when all of humanity has become "wie ein paar Liebende", united in an ecstatic act of direct communication.

This is the most radical formulation of the conception of the "Familienstaat"; indeed, its visionary quality and its suggestion of an erotic union which will actually make the state redundant seem very much at odds with the rigidly structured model of the state developed in other fragments. If we consider the text of *Glauben und Liebe* as a whole, we can discern an unresolved tension underlying its arguments between the elaboration of a detailed blueprint for the immediate transformation of Prussia under Friedrich Wilhelm III and Luise on the one hand, and, on the other, an apocalyptic impulse which sweeps aside the practical problems of the realization of this particular utopia in historical time, and opens up a more global perspective. This latter tendency is

⁸⁵. Cf. *Glauben und Liebe* No.15:

Ein wahrhaftes Königspaar ist für den ganzen Menschen, was eine Constitution für den bloßen Verstand ist. Man kann sich für eine Constitution nur, wie für einen Buchstaben interessieren... (INS,II,487)

exemplified by the following passage from the penultimate fragment of the *Politische Aphorismen*:

...Wären die Menschen schon das, was sie sein sollten und werden können - so würden alle Regierungsformen einerlei sein - die Menschheit würde überall einerlei regiert, überall nach den ursprünglichen Gesetzen der Menschheit. Dann aber würde man am Ersten die *schönste, poetische*, die natürlichste Form wählen - Familienform - Monarchie, - Mehrere Herrn - Mehrere Familien - Ein Herr - Eine Familie! (NS,II,503)

Once again Novalis invokes a "myth of origins" to suggest that the family is the natural form of social organization, and that the "laws" of family life are "die ursprünglichen Gesetze der Menschheit". The reductionist method of the argument depends on the familiar postulate of a homology between the "macrostructures" of the state and its "microstructures". In an earlier part of the text Novalis describes in more detail, and without the apocalyptic overtones of Fragment No.67, how the "Familienmonarchie" might function:

Der Hof ist eigentlich das große Muster einer Haushaltung. Nach ihm bilden sich die großen Haushaltungen des Staats, nach diesen die kleinern, und so herunter. Wie mächtig könnte nicht eine Hofreform wirken! Der König soll nicht frugal, wie ein Landmann, oder ein begüterter Privatmann seyn; aber es giebt auch eine königliche Frugalität, und diese scheint der König zu kennen. Der Hof soll das klassische Privatleben im Großen sein. (NS,II,492-3)

Likening the state to a household, or hierarchy of households, may seem to the modern reader a thoroughly conventional, if not hackneyed comparison. Yet the use of this metaphor, which the rhetoric of economics has made commonplace⁸⁶, bears witness to changes in the social and

⁸⁶. The entries for "Haushalt" and "haushalten" in Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* include the observation "... häufig in

economic structures of life which were taking place in the German *Kleinstaaten* at the time at which the text was written. The traditional extended family unit of feudal society was being replaced by a specifically bourgeois definition of the economic role and social meaning of the family⁸⁷. Whereas the traditional family had existed primarily as a unit of production embracing all members of the household⁸⁸, and allowing women active participation in the economic management of domestic production⁸⁹, the division of labour within the family began to take on a very different character in bourgeois families towards the end of the eighteenth century:

Signal für das Ausscheiden der erwerbswirtschaftlichen Komponente aus dem Familienbegriff ist auch der Umstand, daß sich seit Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts allmählich die Vokabeln 'Hauswesen' und 'Haushalt', die zur Bezeichnung der familiären Wirtschaftseinheit bis heute lebendig geblieben sind, auf das Bedeutungsfeld der Konsumgemeinschaft beschränken. Das wird überall deutlich, wo die Frau von der Gehilfin des Mannes im Hauswesen zur dessen Leiterin "aufsteigt"; sie soll damit natürlich nicht zur Chefin des Erwerbsbetriebs, sondern der täglichen Verbrauchsverwaltung werden....es werden also zwei Arten von Hauswesen unterschieden, ein konsumwirtschaftliches, das gemeinschaftlich ist und von der Frau geleitet wird, und ein erwerbsbezogenes, das dem Mann zugeschrieben wird und in dem die Frau unter der Voraussetzung sozialer Üblichkeit mitzuwirken hat.⁹⁰

freierem sinne angewendet: der haushalt eines staates, haushalt der natur; der haushalt einer stadt" but do not indicate when the words first came to be used in this sense. (Grimm, Bd.10, p.670). The metaphor has been enthusiastically revived in our time by Mrs. Thatcher.

⁸⁷. See Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 60-69, also pp 73-75, and also: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd.2, Stuttgart, 1975, Artikel "Familie" pp 253-302, and especially pp 278-284.

⁸⁸. See *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Artikel "Familie", p 269

⁸⁹. *ibid*, pp 272-3

⁹⁰. *ibid*, p 274

The role which bourgeois ideology prescribed for women within the family is exemplified by Novalis' description of the division of labour in the royal household in the continuation of Fragment No.29:

Die Hausfrau ist die Feder des Hauswesens. So die Königin, die Feder des Hofes. Der Mann furnirt, die Frau ordnet und richtet ein. Ein frivoles Hauswesen ist meistens die Schuld der Frau. Daß die Königin durchaus antifrivol ist, weiß jedermann. Daher begreife ich nicht, wie sie das Hofleben, wie es ist, ertragen kann. Auch ihrem Geschmack; der so innig eins mit ihrem Herzen ist, muß die fade Monotonie desselben unerträglich auffallen....Ein geistvoller Maitre des Plaisirs könnte, geleitet vom Geschmack der Königin, aus dem Hofe ein irdisches Paradies machen... (NS,II,493)

A considerable part of *Glauben und Liebe* is devoted to an enunciation of the functions of the queen as exemplary wife and mother of the "Staatsfamilie". Fragment No.27 makes it quite plain that there will be a political as well as an economic division of labour in the ideal monarchy:

Die Königin hat zwar keinen politischen, aber einen häuslichen Wirkungskreis im Großen. Vorzüglich kommt ihr die Erziehung ihres Geschlechts, die Aufsicht über die Kinder des ersten Alters, über die Sitten im Hause, die Verpflegung der Hausarmen und Kranken, besonders der von ihrem Geschlechte, die geschmackvolle Verzierung des Hauses, die Anordnung der Familienfeste, und die Einrichtung des Hoflebens von rechtswegen zu. Sie sollte ihre eigene Kanzlei haben, und ihr Mann wäre ihr erster Minister, mit dem sie alles überlegte. (NS,II,491)

A further part of the queen's role will consist in the promulgation of a distinctly bourgeois sexual morality:

Ihr Beispiel wird übrigens unendlich viel wirken. Die glücklichen Ehen werden immer häufiger und die Häuslichkeit mehr, als Mode werden. Sie wird zugleich ächtes Muster des weiblichen Anzugs sein. Der Anzug ist gewiß ein sehr richtiger Ethometer. Er hat leider in Berlin immer auf einem sehr niedrigen Punkte gestanden, oft unter Null. Was könnte nicht die Gesellschaft der Königin auf die jungen Weiber und Mädchen in Berlin wirken? Es wäre an sich schon eine ehrenvolle Distinktion und würde die öffentliche Meinung nothwendig wieder sittlich stimmen; und am Ende ist doch die öffentliche Meinung das kräftigste Restaurations- und Bildungsmittel der Sitten. (NS,II,492)

The last sentence of this passage points to the peculiar mingling of private and public spheres which characterizes Novalis' depiction of political life in the imagined "Familienmonarchie". The text seems, on the one hand, to be arguing for a strict differentiation between a private sphere constituted by the nuclear family, a "Sphäre der intim sich herstellenden Humanität"⁹¹ which defines the limits of women's activity and influence, and the public sphere of political and economic activity which is the sole province of men. This differentiation seems, on the other hand, to be undercut by the text's insistence on the importance of the queen's and king's roles as the arbiters and shapers of "öffentliche Meinung". Fragment No.28 expands on this theme:

Von der öffentlichen Gesinnung hängt das Betragen des Staats ab. Veredlung dieser Gesinnung ist die einzige Basis der ächten Staatsreform. Der König und die Königin müssen als solche das Prinzip der öffentlichen Gesinnung sein. Dort giebt es keine Monarchie mehr wo der König und die Intelligenz des Staats nicht mehr identisch sind. Daher war der König von Frankreich schon lange vor der Revolution dethronisirt, und so die meisten Fürsten Europas. (NS,II,492)

⁹¹. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, p 154. The exclusion of women from any participation in public life once they have married is one of the tenets of Fichte's *Grundriß des Familienrechts*, which was published in 1797. Fichte writes:

Die Frau gehört nicht sich selbst an, sondern dem Manne...Der Mann tritt ganz an ihre Stelle; sie ist durch ihre Verheirathung für den Staat ganz vernichtet, zufolge ihres eigenen nothwendigen Willens, den der Staat garantirt hat. Der Mann wird ihre Garantie bei dem Staate; er wird ihr rechtlicher Vormund; er lebt in allem ihr öffentliches Leben; und sie behält lediglich ein häusliches Leben übrig.

In: Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1.4,, p 102 and p 113

On the subject of contemporary (male!) views on women's place in public life and the political process, or their exclusion from both, see Bovenschen, Silvia: *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit*, Frankfurt/M, 1979.

A new element is introduced into the argument at this point with the reference to the "Intelligenz" and the emphasis placed on the importance of their relationship with the king. It would seem that Novalis, in emphasizing the importance of "öffentliche Meinung" and "öffentliche Gesinnung", is in fact reappropriating the public sphere for the state by placing it under the aegis of the personifications of state power, namely the king and queen. "Öffentliche Meinung" comes to mean something half-way between "public morality", in the broadest sense of the term, and a consensus amongst an intellectual elite who are in some way identified with the king. There is no suggestion that the "Prinzip der öffentlichen Gesinnung" which the king and queen will embody incorporates the elements of public political debate and criticism which were the very essence of the Enlightenment and Revolutionary conception of "public opinion". Nor is there any indication that there will be any place in the public sphere for the social institution which Habermas has identified as the bourgeois public's primary medium of political debate, namely "das öffentliche Raisonement"⁹².

The conception of "öffentliche Meinung" which informs the argument of the fragments quoted above is obviously diametrically opposed to that articulated by Schlegel in his early texts; yet the two share a certain radicalism, both according an almost absolute status to public opinion and seeing it as the essential and indispensable constitutive element of the political process. As Novalis argues, the "Veredlung" of public opinion - the term seems to function

⁹². *ibid.*, p 42 and p 302, footnote 1

here as a kind of synonym for "Bildung"⁹³ - is "die einzige Basis der ächten Staatsreform". His version of "öffentliche Meinung" is another example of the appropriation, transformation and inversion of Revolutionary concepts which we have already seen at work in other fragments, and which as a general phenomenon, constitutes one of the major strategies employed by the *Frühromantiker* in their self-definition.

We can see further evidence of this process in another aspect of the sequence of fragments just discussed, which problematizes to an even greater degree the whole notion of the "public" in *Glauben und Liebe*. If we turn our attention again to GuL No.29 we can see that, at the same time as it is being argued that the king and queen must be the arbiters of "öffentliche Meinung" and the instruments of public education and improvement, we are also told that the life of the court should be "das klassische Privatleben im Großen" (NS,II,493). Later in the text we are reminded again of the beneficial effect which the example of the royal couple will have on the youth of Prussia and the state as a whole:

Die edle Simplizität des königlichen Privatlebens, das Bild dieses glücklichen, innig verbundenen Paares, würde den wohlthätigsten Einfluß auf die sittliche Bildung dieses Kerns der preußischen Jugend haben, und so würde dem König am leichtesten der angeborne Wunsch seines Herzens gewährt, der wahrhafte Reformator und Restaurator seiner Nation und seiner Zeit zu werden. (NS,II,496)

It appears that the private life of Friedrich Wilhelm and Luise will be very much a public affair; yet there is also a

⁹³. "Veredlung ... der öffentlichen Gesinnung" as Novalis uses the formulation in GuL No.28 appears to denote something akin to Schiller's concept of "ästhetische Erziehung": whilst the forms may be different, both concepts rest on the assumption that a people must be educated to "Mündigkeit", rather than achieving it through revolution.

sense in which the public sphere is being contracted, and, *mutatis mutandis*, the exemplary private sphere of the royal family expanded, so that public life becomes "privatized" and private life becomes the essence of the public. This process is reinforced by the tendency towards reductionism in the text's mode of argumentation, which we have already seen in operation and which manifests itself in the conclusion to Fragment No.36:

Uneigennützigte Liebe im Herzen und ihre Maxime im Kopf, das ist die alleinige, ewige Basis aller wahrhaften, unzertrennlichen Verbindung, und was ist die Staatsverbindung anders, als eine Ehe? (NS,II,495)

In blurring the distinction between the public and private spheres Novalis is attempting to eliminate what he sees as a potential rivalry between the two, which he had first alluded to in the following passage from a letter to his mother written some five years before *Glauben und Liebe*:

Die Familie ist mir noch näher als der Staat. Freylich muß ich thätiger Bürger seyn um eine Familie an mich knüpfen zu können. Aber mir ist das Letztere näherer Zweck als der Erstere. Man ist auch am allervollkommensten Bürger des Staats, wenn man zuerst für seine Familie ganz da ist - Aus dem Wohlseyn der einzelnen Familien besteht der Wohlstand des Staats. Nur durch meine Familie bin ich unmittelbar an mein Vaterland geknüpft - das mir sonst so gleichgültig seyn könnte, als jeder andere Staat. (IV,121)

This statement amounts to a classic formulation of the specifically bourgeois conception of the primacy of the personal over the political sphere, and is, in a sense, quite radical in its anticipation of the bourgeois ideology of the family which achieves dominance in German social life during the *Restaurationszeit*⁹⁴. The notion of the family which Novalis

⁹⁴. Cf. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Artikel "Familie", p 271-2

proposes in *Glauben und Liebe* is a fairly idiosyncratic reformulation of the attitudes expressed in the earlier letter, and one which attempts to mediate between family and state by, as it were, absorbing the state into the family. It is interesting to note that the distinction between private and public, or "häuslich" and "politisch" as Novalis puts it⁹⁵, is still maintained and in fact stressed with regard to the sexual division of labour, and the status and legal autonomy of the family *vis-a-vis* the state⁹⁶. His conception of the family's relation to the state does not entirely accord with that which has been commonly identified with the "romantischer Familienbegriff" and described as follows:

Weit mehr noch als im aufgeklärten Individualrecht wird die Familie als soziale Grundeinheit durch eine seit der Mitte des Jahrhunderts in Deutschland vordringenden sensiblen Individualismus in Frage gestellt, der mit der Ausweisung des Rechts aus dem Kern der familiären Beziehungen auf die politische Entpflichtung der Familie hinsteuert. [...] Die romantische Familienauffassung deutet familiäre Beziehungen demnach als im Psychischen gegründete Naturverhältnisse, die dem Zugriff des Rechts noch nicht einmal für den Individualschutz, geschweige denn für andere soziale Anforderungen offenstehen.

While it is certainly true that Novalis sees the family as the "natural" form of social organization, it cannot be argued that the creation of a "Familienmonarchie" as he envisages it would result in a "politische Entpflichtung" of the family. Rather, familial relationships and the

⁹⁵. Cf. *GuL* No.27, passage quoted above, and also No.37: "So könnte durch diese beständige Verwebung des königlichen Paares in das häusliche und öffentliche Leben, ächter Patriotismus entstehen." (NS,II,493)

⁹⁶. Cf. *GuL* NO.27: "...So wenig sich die Regierung in Privatangelegenheiten mischen dürfte...etc". (NS,II,491)

⁹⁷. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Artikel "Familie", pp 284-7

obligations and responsibilities attendant upon them become identified with their civic counterparts, thus eliminating any possible conflict of interests.

At this point in our discussion it will be helpful to consider an observation about Novalis' own family origins made by Ilse Hoffman-Axthelm in her excellent study of Romantic ideas of the family. She writes:

Die Unterscheidung zwischen (aristokratischer) Großfamilie und (bürgerlicher) Kleinfamilie ist in Novalis' Erfahrung verwischt: Im Rahmen seiner Zugehörigkeit zur Hardenberg'schen Sippe hatte sein Vater im eigenen Hause ein Familienleben mit pietistisch verinnerlichtem Charakter aufgebaut.⁹⁸

This biographical circumstance may have contributed to some of the inconsistencies in Novalis' conception of the family, in particular the conflation of a bourgeois "Ideologie der Familie" with the more traditional feudal notion of "repräsentative Öffentlichkeit" which seems to inform his idea of the exemplary function of the royal family. The strongly patriarchal nature of his family background⁹⁹ could also be seen as giving rise to the repeated stressing of the role of the king as father in *Glauben und Liebe*, and to the sentiments expressed in a further sequence of fragments from the *Politische Aphorismen*:

58. Der jetzige Streit über die Regierungsformen ist ein Streit über den Vorzug des reifen Alters, oder der blühenden Jugend.

59. Republik ist das Fluidum deferens der Jugend. Wo junge Leute sind, ist Republik.

⁹⁸. Hoffmann-Axthelm, Inge: *Geisterfamilie. Studien zur Geselligkeit der Frühromantik*. Frankfurt/M. 1973, p 35, Anm. 3

⁹⁹. *ibid.*, pp 11-18, and also p 35

60. Mit der Verheirathung ändert sich das System. Der Verheirathete verlangt Ordnung, Sicherheit, und Ruhe - er wünscht, als Familie, in Einer Familie zu leben - in einem regelmäßigen Hauswesen - er sucht eine ächte Monarchie.

Ein Fürst ohne Familiengeist ist kein Monarch.
(NS,II,500-1)

This sequence leads into a discussion of the merits of representative democracy, or "vollkommene Demokratie" as Novalis refers to it, which begins with the question as to whether or not one should submit oneself to the arbitrary rule of "ein einziger, unbeschränkter Hausvater"¹⁰⁰. The textual dialogue on this subject is extremely complicated and cannot be rehearsed once again here¹⁰¹; it is brought to a close in the final fragment of the text, but the argument is resolved in mythical terms through recourse to the metaphors of youth and maturity, rather than being given a logical conclusion:

68. Jetzt scheint die vollkommene Demokratie und die Monarchie in einer unauflöselichen Antinomie begriffen zu sein - der Vortheil der einen durch einen entgegengesetzten Vortheil der Andern aufgewogen zu werden. Das junge Volk steht auf der Seite der Ersten, gesetztere Hausväter auf der Seite der Zweiten. Absolute Verschiedenheit der Neigungen scheint diese Trennung zu veranlassen. Einer liebt Veränderungen - der Andre nicht. Vielleicht lieben wir alle in gewissen Jahren Revolutionen, freie Concurrenz, Wettkämpfe und dergleichen demokratische Erscheinungen. Aber diese Jahre gehn bei den Meisten vorüber - und wir fühlen uns von einer friedlicheren Welt angezogen, wo eine Centralsonne den Reigen führt, und man lieber Planet wird, als einen zerstörenden Kampf um den Vortanz mitkämpft. (NS,II,503)

The identification of youth with revolution and maturity with monarchy completes the system of alliances and oppositions which Novalis has been constructing throughout *Glauben und*

¹⁰⁰. NS,II,501

¹⁰¹. See the very thorough discussion in Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 186-191

Liebe. The relationship between the important elements of this system, and their allocation to categories of "positive" and "negative" phenomena can be represented in schematic form as follows:

Demokratie	<--->	Monarchie
Eigennutz	<--->	Liebe
Revolution	<--->	Familie
freie Concurrenz	<--->	regelmäßiges Hauswesen
Veränderungen, Wettkämpfe	<--->	friedlichere Welt
Auflösung	<--->	Kristallisation
Kosmopoliten/Philister	<--->	Zyniker/Indifferentisten
das junge Volk	<--->	gesetztere Hausväter
Republik	<--->	Familienform

This schematization does not attempt to include all of the key concepts used by Novalis in *Glauben und Liebe*, and certainly involves a degree of simplification, especially with regard to the precise status of the term "Republik", which, the text argues at one point, can and must become synonymous with "Monarchie"¹⁰². However, it does help us to identify some of the constitutive elements of the "Familienmonarchie" and the metaphorical axes with which they are associated, and it also enables us to see what it is that Novalis' utopia defines itself in opposition to.

In this connection we need to ask ourselves who or what is represented by its antagonists, namely "das junge Volk". At

¹⁰². Cf. *GuL* No.22: "Es wird eine Zeit kommen und das bald, wo man allgemein überzeugt seyn wird, daß kein König ohne Republik, und keine Republik ohne König bestehn könne Der ächte König wird Republik, die ächte Republik König seyn. (NS,II,490)

a simple level, the sequence of fragments beginning with No.58 seems to suggest that republican or revolutionary sentiments are something which one grows out of, or which cease to be relevant when one becomes integrated into a family through marriage and begins to devote one's energies primarily to the private sphere of existence. This line of argument also provides a convenient framework within which Novalis can situate his own (and his contemporaries') initial "youthful" enthusiasm for the Revolution and their subsequent 'disenchantment' with it.

Yet, whilst it is perfectly possible to read the text in this way, we need to recognize that the metaphorical model of the Revolution as a conflict between "generations" which Novalis employs here both to justify and to dismiss the events in France actually functions in such a way as to obscure or efface the class antagonisms which catalysed the Revolution and gave it its whole impetus. It also dehistoricizes the fact of the Revolution in France, since it implies that the desire to effect change in the existing order of things through revolutionary action is a product of a phase through which everyone may pass - "Vielleicht lieben wir alle in gewissen Jahren Revolutionen Aber diese Jahre gehn bei den Meisten vorüber..." - rather than a response to a specific historical moment and particular material social conditions. Revolution, the text appears to argue, is just a state of mind.

It is possible to interpret this depoliticized and dehistoricized theory of revolution, whose relativization of historical explanations is underlined by the use of the plural "Revolutionen" in No.68, as the product of a strategic concern

which Novalis has inherited from the pre-Revolutionary Enlightenment. As has already been mentioned, the German bourgeoisie began, in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, to regard the family as an autonomous entity existing within the state but not subject to the authority or intervention of the state. Habermas has argued that this tendency is not simply a reaction to the exclusion from political life and power experienced by the emergent bourgeoisie, but also an expression of the economic foundations of their class identity:

Eine solche in der Verfügung über Eigentum gegründete, in der Teilnahme am Tauschverkehr gewissermaßen auch verwirklichte Autonomie der Privatleute muß sich als solche darstellen lassen. Der Selbständigkeit der Eigentümer auf dem Markte entspricht eine Selbstdarstellung der Menschen in der Familie. Deren, wie es scheint, vom gesellschaftlichen Zwang gelöste Intimität ist das Siegel auf die Wahrheit einer im Wettbewerb geübten Privatautonomie. Private Autonomie, die ihren ökonomischen Ursprung verleugnet, eine außerhalb des Bereichs der durch den autonom sich dünkenden Marktteilnehmer einzig praktizierten, verleiht denn auch der bürgerlichen Familie das Bewußtsein ihrer selbst, [...] Diese Idee, die sich die kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre von sich selber macht, kollidiert allerdings mit den realen Funktionen der bürgerlichen Familie noch im Bewußtsein der Bürgerlichen selber. Denn natürlich ist die Familie von dem Zwang nicht ausgenommen, dem die bürgerliche Gesellschaft wie jede vor ihr unterstand. Sie spielt ihre genau umschriebene Rolle im Verwertungsprozeß des Kapitals. Vor allem dient sie, als eine Agentur der Gesellschaft, der Aufgabe jener schwierigen Vermittlung, die beim Schein der Freiheit die strenge Einhaltung der gesellschaftlich notwendigen Forderungen dennoch herstellt.¹⁰³

Thus the representation of the family as an autonomous entity and as the primary source of individual self-definition and social identity (as typified by Novalis' letter to his mother, where he states that he is first and foremost a member of a family and only then a citizen) conceals both the economic

¹⁰³. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, pp 64-5

constraints on individual freedom, and the normative role of the family as the instrument of social reproduction. Habermas argues that this function of the bourgeois family as "Agentur der Gesellschaft", which is hidden by ideology, is exemplified in the way in which it effects the "Internalisierung väterlicher Autorität". The performance of this function creates a tension within the emerging form of the 'Kleinfamilie', which, Habermas suggests with reference to Freud and his Frankfurt disciples¹⁰⁴, is expressly patriarchal in nature. This tension manifests itself as follows:

Die Ambivalenz der Familie, Agent der Gesellschaft und doch auch in gewisser Weise die antizipierte Emanzipation von der Gesellschaft zu sein, drückt sich in der Stellung der Familienmitglieder aus; sie sind einerseits durch patriarchalische Herrschaft zusammengehalten, andererseits durch menschliche Intimität einander verbunden [...]. Jedenfalls entsprach der Selbständigkeit des Eigentümers auf dem Markte und im eigenen Betrieb die Abhängigkeit der Frau und der Kinder vom Familienvater; die Privatautonomie dort setzte sich hier in Autorität um und machte jene prä¹⁰⁵tendierte Freiwilligkeit der Individuen illusorisch.

It seems to me plausible to argue that, in his presentation of the idea and function of the king, who is frequently described as a father, and in stressing the desire of "gesetztere Hausväter" to live in a society presided over by a royal father of a fairly autocratic nature, Novalis is propounding a specifically bourgeois notion of patriarchal authority which, in its original pre-Revolutionary manifestation, set out to challenge the traditional structures of feudal hierarchy and

¹⁰⁴. Ibid., p.65. Habermas bases his arguments on Horkheimer's Autorität und Familie (Paris, 1936); whilst this theoretical base could doubtless be supplemented by reference to more recent work in the area of social history and psychoanalysis, Habermas' central thesis seems to me still perfectly plausible.

¹⁰⁵. ibid., pp.74,65

hereditary power and privilege¹⁰⁶. Whilst we might have expected that the strategic opposition of the family to the power of the state in the Enlightenment would have been made redundant by the Revolution and its inauguration of the bourgeois state, it seems that Novalis' scepticism about the French Revolution as a paradigm for transforming the existing order of things and creating a desirable form of communal life led him to attempt, as it were, to erase the Revolution from history or to circumvent it by proposing as an alternative model of transformation the radicalization of an essentially pre-Revolutionary oppositional strategy.

It would be very illuminating, in relation to the arguments which I have just been advancing, to explore the relationship between individual psychology and class ideology as it manifests itself in Novalis' and his Early Romantic colleagues' attitudes to their own fathers and to bourgeois notions of patriarchy in general. The father-son relationship appears to have been both deeply influential and highly problematic for Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, Tieck and their fellows¹⁰⁷, and a study of this subject would doubtless assist

¹⁰⁶. Here my interpretation is sharply at odds with Wolf Kittler's reading of *Glauben und Liebe*. In the course of a comparison between Goethe's *Märchen* and Novalis' text Kittler writes:

Das liebende Paar, daß Novalis an die Stelle der ehrwürdigen Gebilde stellt, die für Goethe das Reich der Väter symbolisieren, ist zentriert auf die Gestalt der mütterlich liebenden Frau. Anstelle des patriarchalischen Systems, das Goethe propagierte, tritt eine eindeutig matriarchalische Phantasie, das Ziel aber bleibt dasselbe.

See Kittler, Wolf, *Die Geburt des Partisanen aus dem Geist der Poesie. Heinrich von Kleist und die Strategie der Befreiungskriege*, Freiburg, 1987, p 163. It seems to me very curious to assert that Novalis' "Familienstaat" is

us in understanding the attitudes of the *Frühromantiker* to authority as it confronted them in both the public and the private spheres. Such a study would, however, exceed the scope of this investigation, as would a more detailed examination of the changing economic functions and social meanings of the family in late-eighteenth-century Germany.

I have argued that Novalis' metaphorical model of the state as family represents an extrapolation of the specifically bourgeois conception of the family, which had been articulated at least partly in opposition to the hierarchical and autocratic organization of the existing order. It would, however, be a mistake to see Novalis' "Familienstaat" as a specifically bourgeois utopia. As has been shown in the previous section, Novalis was by no means sympathetic to the economic theories and practices which formed the basis of the economic power of the bourgeoisie. He regarded the physiocratic formulation of the ideology of emerging laissez-faire capitalism as, at best, the product of a necessary but decidedly negative phase in the evolution of

matriarchal, since it is quite clear from the text that women will be rigorously excluded from political power, and assigned a purely domestic role within the state.

¹⁰⁷. See for example the remarks concerning their relationships with their respective fathers in the correspondence of Wackenroder and Tieck. This topic seems to have preoccupied Tieck more than any of his colleagues, as is evidenced by the complex structure of parallel father-son relationships in *William Lovell* (which could quite aptly have been titled "Fathers and Sons" and anticipated Turgenev by some 50 years).

¹⁰⁸. Some very useful insights into the representation of patriarchy in the later eighteenth century are given in: Neumann, Horst Peter, *Der Preis der Mündigkeit. Über Lessings Dramen*, Stuttgart, 1977. See esp. pp 17, 52

the state, in which human relations would be dominated by "Eigennutz". This phase would eventually end and be followed by an era in which the sole basis of political organization would be "uneigennütige Liebe im Herzen und ihre Maxime im Kopf"¹⁰⁹. The coupling of "freie Konkurrenz" and "Wettkämpfe" with "Revolutionen" and "dergleichen demokratische Erscheinungen" in the final fragment of the *Politische Aphorismen*, together with the suggestion that it is only "das junge Volk" which could be in favour of such things, makes it quite plain that the economy of the "Familienstaat" will not be run according to principles of free enterprise and unrestricted competition. Indeed, the centralist and interventionist tendencies in Novalis' blueprint for the ideal state are underlined once again in the continuation of the same fragment. The metaphor which he employs to represent the state of stability which will succeed the revolutionary era serves once again to invoke the notion of a "natural" political order which is both hierarchical and autocratic. Maturity, the fragment argues brings with it a disenchantment with "demokratische Erscheinungen"; instead

...wir fühlen uns von einer friedlicheren Welt angezogen, wo eine Centralsonne den Reigen führt, und man lieber Planet wird, als einen zerstörenden Kampf um den Vortanz mitführt. (NS,II,503)

The degree of power and the extent of the social control which Novalis allots to the state and the king as its representative are completely inimical to the economic autonomy which bourgeois ideology claimed as a right for the citizen, or,

¹⁰⁹. See Stadler, *Die theuren Dinge*, p 194, also pp 325-6 (Anm. 310-12)

more accurately, the possessor of wealth and/or property¹¹⁰. Seen in terms of conventional concepts of class ideology, this represents a fundamental contradiction in the political "program" of *Glauben und Liebe*, and one which cannot be resolved purely in terms of Novalis' individual biography and class background.

In a recent article entitled "Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism" Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy have attempted, within the framework of a general discussion of European Romanticism, to identify the "social bases" specific to the types of Romantic anti-capitalism which they are able to distinguish¹¹¹. In so doing, they take issue with the view

¹¹⁰. Cf. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, (pp 101-2):

Die allein von Gesetzen des freien Marktes bestimmte Gesellschaft präsentiert sich nicht nur als herrschaftsfreie Sphäre, sondern überhaupt als eine von Gewalt freie (...). Die Marktgesetze spielen sich freilich von selber ein, was ihnen in der klassischen Ökonomie den Schein eines *ordre naturel* verlieh; während die Gesetze des Staates doch ausdrücklich der Setzung bedürfen.

Habermas explains the nature of the autonomy claimed for the individual citizen thus:

In gewisser Weise können sich Warenbesitzer als autonom verstehen. Im Grade ihrer Emanzipation von staatlichen Direktiven und Kontrollen entscheiden sie nach Maßgabe der Rentabilität frei, darin niemandem zu Gehorsam verpflichtet und nur den anonymen, nach einer, wie es scheint, dem Markte innewohnenden ökonomischen Rationalität funktionierenden Gesetzen unterworfen. Diese sind mit der ideologischen Garantie des gerechten Tausches versehen und sollten überhaupt Gewalt durch Gerechtigkeit überwinden können. (pp 63-4)

For a more detailed account of this subject see pp 94-100 and 106-111 of the same text..

¹¹¹. Sayre, Robert and Löwy, Michael: *Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism*, in: *New German Critique*, 1984, No.32, pp 42-92

advanced by Arnold Hauser that Romanticism was an "essentially bourgeois phenomenon"¹¹², arguing that

...if Romanticism is in its essence anti-capitalist, it is the antithesis of a bourgeois ideology.¹¹³

However, as they go on to suggest, it is counter-productive, if not mistaken to attempt to tie any of the manifestations of Romanticism to any one specific social base or class grouping. Rather, one needs to consider the originators of Romantic ideology first and foremost as members of an intelligentsia which they define as

...a group made up of individuals coming from varied social backgrounds but which possesses a unity and (relative) autonomy due to its position in the process of the production of culture.¹¹⁴

In Sayre and Löwy's view it is "the experience of alienation and reification", and a resistance to the hegemony of exchange value" which are the governing impulses of Romantic literary production, rather than the expression of particular class interests or antagonisms¹¹⁵. We need to be somewhat cautious in applying these formulations to the German *Frühromantik*. If we accept Sayre and Löwy's premise that the "experience of alienation and reification" was a consequence of the emergence of capitalism as the dominant mode of production, then we must recognize that this experience will have been largely theoretical rather than practical for Novalis and his colleagues. Gerhard Schulz has pointed out that the expressions of alienation which we can discern in the works of

¹¹². Quoted by Sayre and Löwy, *ibid.*, p 88

¹¹³. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴. *Ibid.*, p 89

¹¹⁵. *Ibid.*, p 89-90

the *Frühromantiker* are indications of "...antikapitalistische Tendenzen, noch ehe der Kapitalismus recht in Deutschland Fuß gefaßt hatte"¹¹⁶; and it is certainly unlikely that any of them would have been directly exposed to the social consequences of capitalism's ascendancy in the way that Blake and Wordsworth were. Despite this reservation, there is ample evidence of a strongly negative reaction to the principles of capitalism in *Glauben und Liebe*, if not to their practical manifestation, and in this respect we can situate Novalis' text within Sayre and Löwy's account of Romanticism as a phenomenon which is anti-capitalist without being necessarily either anti-bourgeois or bourgeois in its class "affiliation". Furthermore, their definition of the intelligentsia as a group which could subsume individuals from a variety of different class background and neutralize class differences within its own bounds is particularly apposite to the German intelligentsia in the late 18th century. Novalis and his Early Romantic colleagues choose most of the time to see themselves as an enclave within this group, a dissident minority in a culture of dissent.

In endeavouring to understand Novalis' relation to this culture of dissent, we need to bear in mind the fact that it itself was by no means homogenous in nature¹¹⁷. The kinds of contradictions and incongruities which I have attempted to render apparent in the text of *Glauben und Liebe* reflect a

¹¹⁶. Schulz, Gerhard, *Der Fremdling und die blaue Blume. Zur Novalis-Rezeption*, in: *Romantik heute*. Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann und Tieck. Inter Nationes, Bad Godesberg, 1972, p 42

¹¹⁷. See Chapter 2.II, Footnote 29

certain incoherence or fragmentation in what we would nowadays classify as "bourgeois ideology". What history - or the historians of political culture - have constituted retrospectively as bourgeois ideology did not exist as a rigid and unified structure of economic and social axioms, but was rather in a state of instability and transformation as a result of being precipitated into history by the French Revolution¹¹⁸. Ideology had entered the field of action; and in so doing it forfeited the unanimity and consistency with which it had been promulgated as "Kritik" by the Enlightenment.

6.V.ii The despotism of aesthetics

To conclude my analysis of *Glauben und Liebe*, I want to consider one further aspect of the "Familienmonarchie" which relates back to the first fragment discussed in this chapter, and looks forward to *Die Christenheit oder Europa*. This has to do with Novalis' explicit rejection of the notion of representative democracy in favour of a despotism of aesthetics.

As certain commentators have already pointed out, Novalis follows Kant's argument in *Zum ewigen Frieden* in asserting that representative democracy is "despotic"¹¹⁹. The

¹¹⁸. On this subject see Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class*, esp. pp.12-13, and Starobinski, *Die Embleme der Vernunft*, pp 52-3

¹¹⁹. See Koch, Helmut, *Der philosophische Stil des Novalis*. Diss., 1972, p 274ff, and also Kurzke, pp 182ff. Kurzke's analysis of Novalis' understanding of "Republikanismus" is very thorough, but he tends to fall into the same error which he criticizes in his predecessors, namely to argue that all

idea of the representation of the state and its authority in the person of the king which he opposes to representative democracy appears to owe much to the following statement of Kant's:

Man kann daher sagen: je kleiner das Personale der Staatsgewalt (die Zahl der Herrscher), je größer dagegen die Repräsentation derselben, desto mehr stimmt die Staatsverfassung zur Möglichkeit des Republikanismus, und sie kann hoffen, durch allmähliche Reformen sich dazu endlich zu erheben. Aus diesem Grunde ist es in der Aristokratie schon schwerer, als in der Monarchie, in der Demokratie aber unmöglich, anders, als durch gewaltsame Revolution zu dieser ¹²⁰einzigsten vollkommen rechtlichen Verfassung zu gelangen.

Despite the fact that Friedrich Schlegel had undertaken a rebuttal of Kant's arguments in his *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus* Novalis preferred, although he must have read Schlegel's essay, to continue the line of argument adopted by Kant that democracy could not fully and faithfully represent the general will, and that monarchy was more able to do so. In my view it is necessary to see the rejection of democracy in *Glauben und Liebe* in conjunction with the text's idiosyncratic construction of "öffentliche Meinung". The argumentation of the closing sequence of the *Politische Aphorismen* suggests that behind the term "repräsentative Demokratie" and, in particular, its more extreme variant

the aspects of Novalis' thinking which we might find unpalatable really only refer to a transcendental realm in which they embody something quite different to their conventional meanings. The obverse of this tendency is exemplified by Kurzke's assertion that, according to Novalis, "...Der Monarchismus ist institutionell und transzendental, der Republikanismus nur transzendental" (p 187)

¹²⁰ Kant, Immanuel: Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf. In: Kant, Schriften zur Anthropologie, pp 195-254, here pp 207-8

"vollkommene Demokratie"¹²¹, Novalis senses the menacing presence of the Paris mob and the tyranny of public opinion.

Here, once again, a comparison with Forster is illuminating. Forster had given a positive account of the rule of "öffentliche Meinung" in the *Parisische Umriss*:

Der Nationalkonvent herrscht lediglich durch die Opinion, bald, indem er sich ihr bequemt, bald, indem er durch seine Beratschlagungen und seine ungeheuere Tätigkeit auf sie zurückwirkt und sie bestimmt. So wenig wünschenswert unser Zustand in Absicht auf die Regierung immerhin genannt und geschildert werden mag, so irrt man doch bei Ihnen gar zu sehr, wenn man von ihrer heteroklitischen Beschaffenheit auf ihre Zerstorbarkeit schließt, denn was ihr Dauer und Stärke verspricht, ist ja gerade diese durch das Ganze jetzt unwiderstehlich herrschende Einheit des Volkswillens, verbunden mit der Repräsentativenvernunft.¹²²

Unlike Forster, Novalis sees in the rule of public opinion neither the precondition for a gradual coming-to-consciousness of "die allgemeine Vernunft"¹²³ nor the potential for representation of individual subjects through a consensus in which all citizens participate. Rather, he regards such a consensus as purely arbitrary¹²⁴, and the whole notion of majority rule as a specious fallacy:

Es liegt am Tage, daß sich aus todtten Stoffen kein lebendiger Körper - aus ungerechten, eigennützigem und einseitigen Menschen kein gerechter, uneigennützigem und liberaler Mensch zusammensetzen läßt. Freilich ist das eben ein Irrthum einer einseitigen Majorität, und es wird noch lange Zeit vergehn, eh man sich von dieser simplen Wahrheit allgemein überzeugen wird. Eine so beschaffene Majorität wird nicht die vortrefflichsten, sondern im Durchschnitt nur die Bornirtesten und die Weltklügsten wählen. Unter den Bornirtesten versteh ich solche, bei

¹²¹. See *Politische Aphorismen* Nos 63 and 68 (NS,II,501,503)

¹²². Forster, *Im Anblick*, p 136

¹²³. *Ibid.*, p.144

¹²⁴. Cf. *Politische Aphorismen* No.63: "In allen relativen Verhältnissen ist das Individuum einmal für allemal der Willkühr ausgesetzt ...usw". (NS,II,501)

denen Mittelmäßigkeit zur fertigen Natur geworden ist, die klassischen Muster des großen Haufens. Unter den Weltklügsten - die geschicktesten Courmacher des großen Haufens. Hier wird sich kein Geist entzünden - am wenigsten ein reiner - ein großer Mechanismus wird sich bilden - ein Schlendrian - den nur die Intrigue zuweilen durchbricht. (NS,II,502)

It is interesting to note that in evoking the metaphor of the body politic and employing it once again in a negative context to describe the condition of the state under the government of representative democracy, Novalis is echoing almost literally a usage of the same metaphor in the *Parisische Umrisse*, where Forster is characterizing the condition of a people ruled by a despot:

Warum verhält es sich beim Despotismus anders? Die Auflösung liegt am Tage. Die Einheit fehlt, Vernunft und Wille sind beide nur im Kopfe des Herrschers und seiner Räte; das Volk ist eine leblose Masse, ein toter Körper, der bloß mechanischen Antrieben gehorcht; jene geistigen Kräfte durchströmen und beleben ihn nicht, verbinden ihn nicht mit sich selbst zu einem lebendigem Ganzen.¹²⁵

Here we see another striking example of the "intertextuality" of political discourse in the Revolutionary decade, and of the versatility and mutability of its metaphorical repertoire. Furthermore, the comparison of the two passages points up very clearly the differences between Forster's and Novalis' conceptions of the workings of representative democracy. Forster sees the revolutionary government as the expression of a dialectical process of negotiation between the "Nationalkonvent" and "die Opinion", in which each influences and is influenced by the other. One could perhaps argue that Novalis' objection to this form of government results from the fact that he sees it as having arrogated to itself, in Kant's terms, not just executive power ("die ausführende Gewalt"),

¹²⁵. Forster, *Parisische Umrisse*, p 137

but also legislative power ("die gesetzgebende Gewalt")¹²⁶. However, the form of government which Novalis envisages in the "Familienstaat", despite his claims that it will represent a synthesis of "Republik" and "Monarchie", is unequivocally despotic in its concentration of all state powers in the person of the king. Fragment No.65 of the *Politische Aphorismen* emphatically rejects the notion that the whole community of individual citizens can participate in the making of laws or the process of government. The division of the state into "Stände" and "Zünfte" and the division of intellectual labour is, according to the text, the function of a natural economy:

Jeder Mensch konnte bisher nicht alle Künste und Wissenschaften lernen und zugleich treiben - sich nicht alles in Allem sein. Die Arbeiten und Künste wurden vertheilt. Nicht auch die Regierungskunst? Der allgemeinen Forderung der Vernunft zufolge sollten auch alle Menschen Ärzte, Dichter, und so fort, sein. Bei den übrigen Künsten ist es übrigens schon größtentheils hergebracht, daß sich da die Menschen darüber bescheiden - nur Regierungskunst und Philosophie - dazu glaubt jeder gehöre nur Dreistigkeit, und jeder vermißt sich, als Kenner, davon zu sprechen, und Prätensionen auf ihre Praxis und Virtuosität zu machen. (NS, II, 501-2)

As I have already indicated, there is no place in the "Familienstaat" for "das öffentliche Raisonement", the public discourse of private subjects. "Regierungskunst", according to Novalis, is something which *cannot* be practised by the whole

¹²⁶. See Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie*, pp 206-7. Kant summarizes his reasons for rejecting representative democracy as follows:

Unter den drei Staatsformen ist die der *Demokratie*, im eigentlichen Verstande des Wortes, notwendig ein *Despotism*, weil sie eine exekutive Gewalt gründet, da alle über und allenfalls auch wider Einen (der also nicht mit einstimmt), mithin alle, die doch nicht alle sind, beschließen; welches ein Widerspruch des allgemeinen Willens mit sich selbst und mit der Freiheit ist.

body of the citizens; it is ultimately only the king who would be able to acquire and exercise all of the "Künste" and "Wissenschaften" which make it possible to govern. In short, the king becomes for Novalis not simply a ruler, "der erste Beamte des Staates"¹²⁷, but a demiurge:

Ein wahrhafter Fürst ist der Künstler der Künstler; das ist, der Director der Künstler. Jeder Mensch sollte Künstler seyn. Alles kann zur schönen Kunst werden. Der Stoff des Fürsten sind die Künstler; sein Wille ist sein Meißel: er erzieht, stellt und weist die Künstler an. (NS,II,497)

This fragment echoes the notion introduced in GuL No.7 according to which the ideal state will be a work of art and the ideal ruler the "König aller Erfinder" (NS,II,486). In elaborating this notion, Novalis presents the reader with a further metaphorical representation of "Öffentlichkeit". The continuation of No.39 describes the demiurgic activities of the ruler in more detail:

Der Regent führt ein unedlich mannichfaches Schauspiel auf, wo Bühne und Parterre, Schauspieler und Zuschauer Eins sind, und er selbst Poet, Director und Held des Stücks zugleich ist. (NS,II,498)

In this dramaturgical Utopia the distinctions between ruler and ruled, public and private will apparently disappear, and the life of the state will become a continuous pageant, which will be both "politisch" and "häuslich" at once. The comparison of political life with a drama is by no means original¹²⁸. What is radical about Novalis' usage of this conventional metaphor is the way in which the synthesis of aesthetic and political practice which had been first

¹²⁷. See GuL No.18

¹²⁸. For a summary of the history of "Theatermetaphern" see Demandt, Metaphern für Geschichte, Chapter 6, esp. pp 344-54

entertained by the pre-Revolutionary *Spätaufklärung*, and given its classical formulation in Schiller's *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung*, is not only taken to its logical extreme, but also made the foundation of a conception of the state which is essentially autocratic, if not totalitarian. Despite the assertion that conventional political distinctions will cease to exist when the spectators become participants in the pageant of political life, it is quite clear that the role of individual subjects in this pageant is essentially a passive one. Absolute control over the aestheticization of the state, and over the participants in this process, is vested in the king:

Der Stoff des Fürsten sind die Künstler; sein Wille ist sein Meißel.

A more drastic metaphor for the autocratic exercise of power would be hard to find. By the same token, if we consider Novalis' vision of the state as a dramatic work of art in its contemporary context, we can see that in appropriating the Enlightenment belief in the affective and pedagogical powers of art, and taking it to one possible extreme, Novalis has in fact left the Enlightenment far behind. Schiller himself had declared the primacy of the political over the aesthetic in his letter to Augustenberg written in July 1793 during the most radical phase of the Revolution:

Wäre das Faktum wahr - wäre der außerordentliche Fall wirklich eingetreten, daß die politische Gesetzgebung der Vernunft übertragen, der Mensch als Selbstzweck respektiert und behandelt, das Gesetz auf den Thron erhoben und wahre Freiheit zur Grundlage des Staatsgebäudes gemacht worden, so wollte ich auf ewig von den Musen Abschied nehmen und dem herrlichsten aller Kunstwerke, der ¹²⁹Monarchie der Vernunft, alle meine Tätigkeit widmen.

Whereas Schiller feels that centuries will pass before the necessary conditions for the creation of "das herrlichste aller Kunstwerke" will come into being, and proposes a program of aesthetic education as the means to establishing these conditions, Novalis substitutes for the "Monarchie der Vernunft" the despotism of aesthetics.

The Enlightenment notions of the perfectibility of man and of the prime importance of "Bildung" survive in a modified form in the "Familienmonarchie"¹³⁰; yet, despite the assertion that every individual should be an artist, there is scant evidence in *Glauben und Liebe* to suggest that individuals will be able to participate in the demiurgic process - that is to say, in writing the script of history - in the way that Schelling suggests in the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, which was published in 1800:

Wenn wir uns die Geschichte als ein Schauspiel denken, in welchem jeder, der daran Teil hat, ganz frei und nach Gutdünken seine Rolle spielt, so läßt sich eine vernünftige Entwicklung diese verworrenen Spiels nur dadurch denken, daß es Ein Geist ist, der in allen dichtet, und daß der Dichter, dessen bloße Bruchstücke ... die einzelnen Schauspieler sind, den objektiven Erfolge des Ganzen mit dem freien Spiel aller einzelnen schon zum voraus so in Harmonie gesetzt hat, daß am Ende wirklich etwas Vernünftiges herauskommen muß. Wäre nun aber der Dichter unabhängig von seinem Drama, so wären wir nur die Schauspieler, die ausführen, was er gedichtet hat. Ist er nicht unabhängig von uns, sondern offenbart und enthüllt er sich nur successiv durch das Spiel unserer Freiheit selbst, so daß ohne diese Freiheit auch

¹²⁹. The full text of Schiller's letter is given in Träger, *Die französische Revolution im Spiegel der deutschen Literatur*, pp 260-270. The passage quoted is on p 264.

¹³⁰. Cf. *GuL* No.18: "...Alle Menschen sollten thronfähig werden. Das Erziehungsmittel zu diesem fernen Ziel ist ein König ... usw.". Once again, it is important to recognize that Novalis' conception of "Erziehung", unlike that of the Enlightenment, which presumes activity on the part of the individual, assumes a passive subject: "Er assimiliert sich allmählich die Masse seiner Unterthanen". (NS,II,489)

er selbst nicht wäre, so sind wir Mitdichter des Ganzen, Selbsterfinder der besonderen Rolle, die wir spielen.¹³¹

Schellings' frame of reference - the participation of individuals in the teleology of history - is obviously broader than Novalis', but the comparison of their uses of demiurgic metaphor underlines the autocratic and authoritarian nature of government as it will be practised in the ideal monarchy. The transfiguration of politics into "schöne Kunst", into a perpetual pageant of family life, will serve to conceal from the citizens of the "Familienstaat" both the workings of state power and their own disenfranchisement.

In drawing attention to the "totalitarian" tendencies in *Glauben und Liebe* I should not want to imply that these amount to an exclusive or definitive statement of Novalis' political "position". A number of alternative conceptions of the state and the individual's place within it are entertained within the text itself. Among these is the notion of "ächter Republikanismus, allgemeine Theilnahme am ganzen Staate, innige Berührung und Harmonie aller Staatsglieder", which is introduced in *GuL* No.37 and suggests a more democratic model of the political process than that which I have identified elsewhere in the text. The concept of "allgemeiner Republikanismus" is, however, never developed. We find an echo of it in the assertion in *GuL* No.39 that "Jeder Mensch sollte Künstler seyn". This clearly corresponds to the notion of collective aesthetic production explored in the previous chapter. But as we have seen, artists in the "Familienstaat" will have little individual autonomy or creative freedom.

¹³¹. Quoted by Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, p 351

It is impossible to reconcile all of the arguments, assertions and speculations which are presented in *Glauben und Liebe* so as to arrive at the basic axioms of a consistent and unified political philosophy or program which the text is articulating. Yet it is too simple, on the other hand, merely to acknowledge that *Glauben und Liebe* is a pluralist text without trying to account for the fact that it does display very definite emphases and obdurate inconsistencies.

I have tried to suggest some explanations for the problematic aspects of the "ideological construction" of the text. These have had to do with, amongst other things, Novalis' reluctance to completely reject or embrace either the traditional "protectionist" economic practices of mercantilism, or the competitive free-market principles of emergent capitalism. Coupled with this is the unstable and controversial status of definitions of and attitudes to "Öffentlichkeit" at the time at which the text was written. A further explanation lies in the fact that the forms of social and political organization which are adumbrated in *Glauben und Liebe* as alternatives to the existing order are based on two different metaphorical models of "community". The dominant model is that of the family; it appears in a number of manifestations, but each of these function in such a way as to break down the distinction between private and public and to efface class differences and antagonisms within the social whole. Existing side by side with this model in the text is that of the elite circle of the initiate, which is not mentioned explicitly, but which underlies the argument of the "Vorrede" and speculations in the first section of the

Politische Aphorismen about the nature of the ideal citizen. this is the same dichotomy between the collective and the elite avant-garde which was discussed in the previous chapter, one which Novalis seems incapable of overcoming.

I want finally to return to the hypothesis advanced earlier in this chapter concerning Novalis' use of a "Tropen- und Räthselssprache, a secret language addressed to the initiate. I suggested then that he was attempting to liberate language from the deformations and misappropriations to which it had been subjected in revolutionary polemics. The traces of this wish to reappropriate language for purposes which, if not purely subjective and expressive, are at least unconstrained by "Parteilichkeit", can be detected in Novalis' criticisms in *GuL* No.22 of of the "philistine" supporters of the Revolution, the "Buchstäbler" whose shallowness and dogmatism attests to their lack of "Geist"¹³². Similarly, the Enlightenment preoccupation with defining and codifying the natural rights of the individual and the fundamental laws of the state is dismissed as an aberration, a misuse of language:

Man kann sich für eine Constitution nur, wie für einen Buchstaben interessieren. Ist das Zeichen nicht ein

¹³². The text of *GuL* No.22 is as follows:

Diejenigen, die in unseren Tagen gegen Fürsten, als solche declamiren, und nirgends Heil statuiren, als in der neuen, französischen Manier, auch die Republik nur unter der representativen Form erkennen, und apodiktisch behaupten, daß nur da Republik sey, wo es Primair- und Wahlversammlungen, Direktorium und Räte, Munizipalitäten und Freiheitsbäume gäbe, die sind armselige Philister, leer an Geist und arm an Herzen, Buchstäbler, die ihre Seichtigkeit und innerliche Blöße hinter den bunten Fahnen der triumphirenden Mode, unter der imposanten Maske des Kosmopolitismus zu verstecken suchen, und die Gegner, wie die Obscuranten verdienen, damit der Frosch- und Mäusekrieg vollkommen versinnlicht werde. (NS,II,491)

schönes Bild, oder ein Gesang, so ist die Anhänglichkeit an Zeichen, die verkehrteste aller Neigungen. - Was ist ein Gesetz, wenn es nicht Ausdruck des Willens einer geliebten, achtungswehrtten Person ist? Bedarf der mystische Souverain nicht, wie jede Idee, eines Symbols, und welches Symbol ist würdiger und passender, als ein liebenswürdiger treflicher Mensch? Die Kürze des Ausdrucks ist wohl etwas werth...(NS,II,487)

The desire to speak in a "Tropen und Räthselsprache" which will automatically exclude the "profane" from what is being said, to replace the "Buchstaben" of Enlightenment and Revolutionary rhetoric with the "mystische(r) Ausdruck"¹³³ or symbol which will only be comprehensible to the initiate who are in possession of "Geist", amounts to an attempt to "reprivatise" language, and more particularly, literary discourse, as a reaction to the deformation and denudation which it had undergone as purely public property. This tendency towards a privatisation of language is, in a sense congruent with the tendency towards privatisation of the state itself which we have seen in operation in connection with Novalis' idea of the "Familienmonarchie". Yet, just as it is possible to observe a "contrary motion" in his elaboration of the principles of the "Familienmonarchie" - on the one hand, towards the privatisation of public life, on the other towards a neutralization of the "oppositional" character of the family and the concentration of state power and social control in the person of the king - so too we may discern a certain ambiguity in his attitude to language. On the one hand the "geheime Sprache" of the intitates functions as a means of defining identity; it sets apart the "few" from the "große, gemischte Gesellschaft" (NS,II,485). It is the essentially private discourse of the "Cosmopoliten Loge". At the same time

however, the text indicates a supremely public function for language in the form of "Kunst"; that is to say, the art practised by the king as demiurge. This is the public discourse *par excellence*, and it operates in such a way as to transform every aspect of life into "schöne Kunst", and, in so doing, conceal its function as the instrument of social control. It is interesting to reflect at this point on the fact that both the Paris revolutionaries and their opponents had made extravagant claims for the power of Revolutionary rhetoric as an instrument of persuasion and control. One could see the demiurgic power with which Novalis invests the king as an inversion or transformation of the ability which popular belief attributed to those orators who could lash the Paris mob into a frenzy through the power of speech.

It should have become apparent in the course of my discussion that the sorts of irreducible tensions and contradictions which I have identified in the arguments of *Glauben und Liebe* spring, at least in part, from the fact that Novalis' discourse is still embedded in the discourse of Enlightenment and Revolution. In trying to dissociate his vision of the ideal state from those of his predecessors and contemporaries, Novalis produces a number of different metaphorical models or constructs; yet these have a curious tendency to reorganize, reiterate, invert or conflate certain elements and structures of the ideology of the bourgeois Enlightenment in such a way as to produce what is more a refracted image of the very things they are intended to replace than an entirely new prospect. This tendency is matched by a pervasive indeterminacy in what we might call the

"time-frame" of the text's arguments and speculations. Novalis continually switches the location of his argument back and forth from the historical present to an idealized future. The present is seen as a state of unmitigated negativity, in which the only possible mode of existence for individuals who carry within them a spark of "Geist" is to form an enclave within the dominant "Philistine" culture and to withdraw from all participation in the public and political sphere. The polar opposite to this state of negativity, the "Familienmonarchie" in which all social and political distinctions will dissolve, whilst the king paradoxically retains absolute control over a rigidly and hierarchically structured state, is both centuries distant and immanent in the negative present, about to erupt into historical time:

42. Wer den ewigen Frieden jetzt sehn und lieb gewinnen will, der reise nach Berlin und sehe die Königin.

The bridge between these two contradictory views of contemporary history is the same metaphorical figure which we have identified in Schlegel's *Studium-Aufsatz*, namely that of the "glückliche Katastrophe" or "Umschlag" which will result when the present condition of negativity has reached its extreme limit and suddenly begins to transform itself into its opposite. The eschatological element in this process is implied rather than overtly stated in *Glauben und Liebe*; it is only in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, written some eighteen months later, that it assumes a central position in Novalis' thinking. It is to this text that I shall now turn my attention.

7. NOVALIS : DIE CHRISTENHEIT ODER EUROPA

7.1 Introduction

The text which has come to be known¹ as *Die Christenheit oder Europa* was written during October of 1799 and read to a small circle of Novalis's friends and literary colleagues in Jena in November of that year². He subsequently offered it for publication in the *Athenäum*, and despite the generally critical reaction which it elicited from those who were present at the reading, they were initially in favour of printing it, together with Schelling's satirical rejoinder entitled *Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntnis Heinz Widerporstens*, in the next number of the journal. A.W. Schlegel was, however, not convinced that this was advisable, and eventually Goethe was asked to give an opinion on the matter. He counselled against publication of the two texts. Novalis himself does not appear to have been excessively disappointed by this rebuff. He wrote to Friedrich Schlegel on the 31st of January asking him to return the handwritten manuscript in order that he might revise it:

Die Europa schickt mir wieder - ich habe eine andre Idee damit - Sie kann mit einigen Veränderungen zu einigen andern öffentlichen Reden kommen, und mit diesen besonders gedruckt werden. Die Beredsamkeit muß auch gepflegt werden und der Stoff ist herrlich, z.B. Reden an

¹. On the subject of the title see Samuel's introduction to the text in : *NS* III, 501-4.

². This and other details of the genesis, publication and reception of the text can be found in Samuel's introduction *NS*, III, pp 497-504, and Schulz's commentary in : *NW*, pp 799-805.

Buonoparte, an die Fürsten, ans europaeische Volk, für die Poesie, gegen die Moral, an das neue Jahrhundert. (NS,IV,317-8)

What revisions, if any, Novalis actually made to the original version of the text is not known, since a manuscript has not been preserved, and the essay was not published in full until 1826.

Like *Glauben und Liebe, Die Christenheit oder Europa* has provoked a lasting controversy amongst its readers. A large part of this controversy has sprung from Novalis's idiosyncratic treatment of his historical material, and the thoroughly unrealistic nature of his portrayal of the Middle Ages, which even his Romantic colleagues found unsatisfactory when the text was first read to them³. Recent commentators have been at pains to correct what they see as a fundamental misreading of the text by their predecessors, who tended to see it as an attempt at serious historiography rather than a "Poetische Rede", the title given to it by Wilfried Malsch, who has produced the most extensive study of the text to date⁴. Gerhard Schulz speaks for the majority of contemporary commentators when he writes:

³. Tieck recalls the response to Novalis' reading in his "Vorrede" to the 5th edition of Novalis' *Schriften* published in 1837 (quoted in NS, III, 500). Tieck writes:

Wir fanden die historische Ansicht zu schwach und ungenügend, die Folgerungen zu willkürlich, und die ganze Abhandlung schwach, so daß sehr leicht die Blößen von jedem Kundigen entdeckt werden konnten.

⁴. Cf. Malsch, Wilfried, <Europa>. Poetische Rede des Novalis. Deutung der französischen Revolution und Reflexion auf die Poesie in der Geschichte, Stuttgart, 1965.

Unter Religion die weltlichen Formen christlicher Kirchen zu verstehen, wäre genauso verfehlt, wie wenn man in der <Christenheit> nun wirklich eine beim Wort zu nehmende abgekürzte Darstellung der abendländischen Geschichte sehen wollte. Die <Christenheit> ist weder Geschichtsschreibung noch romantisches Manifest - sie ist der Versuch, aus den Konstellationen vergangener Ereignisse die Hoffnung auf eine geistige Erneuerung der Gegenwart abzulesen.⁵

Richard Brinkmann also stresses the "Fiktionscharakter" of the 'Europa-Rede', but adds the important qualification that the "fictionalization" of the Middle Ages which Novalis has undertaken corresponds to his own conception of the writing of history as an active shaping of historical facts by a historian who is also a "Dichter"⁶.

Other commentators have pointed to the fact that the rediscovery and rehabilitation of medieval history was a process which had in fact begun at least with the *Aufklärung*⁷, and have identified critical and progressive impulses in the enthusiasm of Novalis and his colleagues for medieval culture and Catholicism⁸. Yet whilst all of these

⁵. See NW, p 804.

⁶. See Brinkmann, Richard: Deutsche Frühromantik und französische Revolution, pp 205-6.

⁷. See for example: Wolfgang Harms, Das Interesse an mittelalterlicher deutscher Literatur zwischen der Reformationszeit und der Frühromantik, in: Akten des VI. Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Basel 1980, hg. von Heinz Rupp und Hans-Gert Roloff, Bonn, 1980-81, pp60-84, and Werner Krauss, Französische Aufklärung und deutsche Romantik, in: Romantische Utopie - Utopische Romantik, hg. von Gisela Dischner und Richard Faber, Hildesheim, 1979, pp93-

⁸. Cf. Ernst Behler, Gesellschaftskritische Motive in der romantischen Zuwendung zum Mittelalter, in: Das Weiterleben des Mittelalters in der deutschen Literatur, hg. von J.F. Poag und G. Scholz-Williams, Königstein T/s, 1983, pp47-60. A useful summary of Early Romantic attitudes to the Middle Ages

approaches to the 'Europa-Rede' have doubtless helped to furnish us with a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of Novalis' intentions with regard to his material, and the nature of contemporary attitudes to religion and medieval history, they seem excessively concerned to free Novalis of the taint of reaction. This tendency is exemplified by Brinkmann's explication of the image of the Middle Ages which is presented in the text:

Indem das, was als Potenz, als ideale Möglichkeit in der Vergangenheit des Mittelalters steckt, als ihr Telos, als wirklich, als verwirklicht vorgestellt wird, läßt sich aus dem Rückblick in die Vergangenheit ein Leitbild für die Zukunft, die Grundlage für eine Theorie zur Gestaltung der Zukunft gewinnen. Die Visionen einer neuen universellen Christenheit bedeuten nicht Wiederherstellung einer geschichtlichen Vergangenheit, vielmehr gleichfalls eine Metapher, die für den Geist der Freiheit, der Gleichheit, des Friedens aller Menschen steht, wie auch Europa sowohl in seiner für die Zukunft erschauten Gestalt von metaphorischer Bedeutung ist.⁹

As the following discussion will attempt to show, the interpretative equation which Brinkmann makes here, and, indeed, his use of the term metaphor in this context, are somewhat questionable. In assuming that "die Christenheit" and "Europa" function as 'transcendental' metaphors for freedom, equality and peace, he reduces the text's processes of signification to a very abstract level, and in so doing ignores the actual construction of the "Visionen" which it

is given by Helmut Schanze in : "Es waren schöne glänzende Zeiten ...". Zur Genese des 'romantischen' Mittelalter-Bildes, in: Studien zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, hg. von R. Schützeichel, Bonn, 1979, pp761-8.

⁹. Brinkmann, Deutsche Frühromantik und Französische Revolution, pp 267-8. Brinkmann's conclusions are criticized by Meixner, Politische Aspekte der Frühromantik, pp 180-192, esp. pp 188-9.

conjures up. It is certainly true that the manipulation of the "Zauberstab der Analogie" which the speaker of the "Rede" commends to his audience¹⁰ tends to result in a homogenization of history and ideological distinctions. At the same time, however, it is necessary to look behind these mythicising processes within the text, in which metaphor plays a central part, in order to discover those specific historical and political tensions and contradictions which they attempt to mediate or overcome. My analysis will therefore aim to provide a counterbalance to the 'transcendental' readings of Brinkmann and others by concentrating on some of the more important metaphorical isotopes within the text and exploring their full range of connotation, rather than seeing the 'Europa-Rede' as an abstract representation of principles devoid of any concrete political meaning.¹¹

As a prelude to this analysis, it is necessary to consider briefly the role of what we might call the rhetorical 'macrostructure' of the text in determining its production of meaning. Richard Samuel, in a valuable essay entitled "Die Form von Friedrich von Hardenbergs Abhandlung Die Christenheit

¹⁰. See *NS III*, 518.

¹¹. None of the "transcendental" readings of the text is really able to answer the simple objection raised by Kurzke in his review of the secondary literature on Novalis. Kurzke writes: "Dennoch bleibt abermals die Frage offen, warum Novalis als Substrat seines Verfahrens den König und die Königin, das Mittelalter und die Kirche gewählt hat, warum nicht die Revolution, die Aufklärung, die Illuminaten?" (*Romantik und Konservatismus*, p58). Kurzke does, however, himself fall into the error which he criticizes in others, in that he tends to privilege a "transcendental" reading of the more alarming conservative passages in Novalis' texts over the possible political interpretations.

oder Europa", has demonstrated that the 'Europa-Rede' is divided chronologically and thematically into seven sections, beginning with the portrayal of the High Middle Ages and ending with a vision of "Das Heraufkommen des neuen Zeitalters"¹² Within these sections Novalis employs a variety of stylistic modes and rhetorical devices which serve to heighten the contrasts between the different periods and his evaluations of them. Samuel shows how the 'Rede' approaches its climax and conclusion in the final two sections, where the author switches from a "monologic" to a "dialogic" and "demagogic" mode in which the audience is addressed through rhetorical questions which become more and more frequent. This deliberate use of all the tools of rhetoric can, Samuel argues, be understood as a practical experiment involving the principles of the fragmentary theory of public discourse which is set down in some notes made by Novalis early in 1800 - that is to say, two to three months after the completion of *Die Christenheit oder Europa*. One of these notes describes succinctly a number of the techniques and effects used in the text:

In einer wahren Rede spielt man alle Rollen - geht durch alle Charaktere durch - durch alle Zustände - nur um zu überraschen - um den Gegenstand von einer neuen Seite zu betrachten, um den Zuhörer plötzlich zu illudieren, oder auch zu überzeugen; Eine Rede ist ein äußerst lebhaftes, und geistreiches, abwechselndes Tableau der innern Betrachtung eines Gegenstandes. Bald fragt der Redner, bald antwortet er, dann spricht er und dialogirt, dann erzählt er, dann scheint er den Gegenstand zu vergessen, um plötzlich zu ihm zurückzukommen, dann stellt er sich überzeugt, um desto

¹² Richard Samuel, *Die Form von Friedrich von Hardenbergs Abhandlung <Die Christenheit oder Europa>*. In: *Stoffe Formen Strukturen*. H.H. Borchardt zum 75. Geburtstag. Hg. von A. Fuchs und H. Motekat, München 1962, pp 284-302, here p 293.

hinterlistiger zu schaden, dann einfältig, gerührt, muthig [....] Kurz eine Rede ist ein monologes Drama. (NS,III,648-9)

"Wahre Rede", according to this description, is characterized by the maximum possible degree of perspectivism in the speaker's treatment of his or her material and the presentation of an argument. We have already encountered a version of this approach in *Glauben und Liebe*. Whilst the number of "Rollen" and "Characterere" which the speaker adopts in *Die Christenheit* is arguably less than in the earlier text, and the variety of political perspectives presented more limited, the text certainly does possess the "dramatic" dimensions to which Novalis alludes in the passage quoted above. Coupled with this is a technique which we have also seen in operation in his earlier writings, but which is used here within a more complex structure. This involves the apodictic statement of an axiom which is subsequently qualified, relativized, or augmented by a number of alternative axioms. Used over a long range, as it were, this technique enables Novalis to establish the frame of reference of his polemic in the early part of the text - the idealization of medieval Christianity and the linking of the Reformation and the French Revolution as negative, destructive tendencies - and then progressively modify it at later points. Failure to pay sufficient heed to the rhetorical structuring of the argumentation has led some commentators to quote selectively and emphasize particular perspectives, without acknowledging the essentially "dialogic" nature of the 'Rede'. My investigation will attempt to point to the way in which the

various perspectives and emphases within the text are organized by and through its rhetorical structure.

7.2 Europe past, present and future

Die Christenheit oder Europa appears at first glance to represent a fairly radical departure from the blueprint for an ideal state which Novalis had developed in *Glauben und Liebe*. The utopian perspective has broadened. Whereas previously he had focussed his speculations on Prussia and its new king and queen, it is now the vision of a united Europe ruled over by "eine sichtbare Kirche ohne Rücksicht auf Landesgränzen" (NS,III, 524) which seizes his imagination. The dream of "ewiger Frieden" is no longer localized, incarnate in the person of Queen Luise; instead it has been postponed, yet at the same time proclaimed in the form in which Kant had first envisaged it, as the future state of all mankind:

Die andern Welttheile warten auf Europas Versöhnung und Auferstehung, um sich anzuschliessen und Mitbürger des Himmelreichs zu werden. [...] Nur Geduld, sie wird, sie muß kommen die heilige Zeit des ewigen Friedens, wo das neue Jerusalem die Hauptstadt der Welt seyn wird. (NS,III,524)

Despite the manifest differences between the 'national' and 'supranational' versions of Utopia proposed in *Glauben und Liebe* and *Die Christenheit*, there are also strong affinities and similarities between the two texts with regard to their

use of metaphor. If we turn our attention now to the opening paragraphs of the 'Europa-Rede' this will become apparent:

Es waren schöne glaänzende Zeiten, wo Europa ein christliches Land war, wo Eine Christenheit diesen menschlich gestalteten Welttheil bewohnte; Ein großes gemeinschaftliches Interesse verband die entlegensten Provinzen dieses weiten geistlichen Reichs. - Ohne große weltliche Besitzthümer lenkte und vereinigte Ein Oberhaupt, die großen politischen Kräfte. (NS, III, 507)

The image of Europe which Novalis conjures up here represents the complete antithesis of the actual condition of Europe in the closing months of 1799. The fragile treaty of Campoformio had begun to disintegrate early in the year, and was dealt a final blow by the murder of two French emissaries near Rastatt on the 28th of April. Despite initial successes for the Second Alliance in Switzerland and Italy, lack of coordination and internal national rivalries led to its collapse with the withdrawal of Russia in October.¹³ Pope Pius VI, exiled from Rome after it had been captured and razed by the French in early 1798, died in Valence in August of 1799, and the Catholic church was forbidden to choose a successor.

By a strange irony, Napoleon's coup of the Brumaire took place only two days before the "Romantikertreffen" in Jena at which Novalis first read the draft of *Die Christenheit oder Europa* to his colleagues. Whilst the news of this event could certainly not have travelled that far in so short a time, one cannot help speculating about how they might have reacted to

¹³ See Braubach, *Von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Wiener Kongreß*, pp 49-52.

the ascendancy of the man whose ambition it was to unite all of Europe under one rule, albeit a very different one to that which Novalis envisaged. What is certain is that the spectacle of a disunited Europe made up of states motivated by Revolutionary fervour or pure self-interest, and seemingly destined to be forever at war, is the starting point from which Novalis develops his own vision of a universal "ewiger Frieden".

But how, precisely, is this vision constituted? If we return now to the opening passage of the text, we can see that the image of Europe united by "*Ein großes gemeinschaftliches Interesse*", and ruled over by "*Ein Oberhaupt*", is not without resemblance to the portrayal of the ideal state governed by a royal demiurge in *Glauben und Liebe*. The continuation of the passage reinforces this impression:

Eine zahlreiche Zunft, zu der jedermann den Zutritt hatte, stand unmittelbar unter demselben [dem Oberhaupt] und vollführte seine Winke und strebte mit Eifer seine wohlthätige Macht zu befestigen. Jedes Glied dieser Gesellschaft wurde allenthalben geehrt, und wenn die gemeinen Leute Trost oder Hülfe, Schutz oder Rath bei ihm suchten, und gerne dafür seine mannigfaltigen Bedürfnisse reichlich versorgten, so fand es auch bei den Mächtigeren Schutz, Ansehn und Gehör, und alle pflegten diese auserwählten, mit wunderbaren Kräften ausgerüsteten Männer, wie Kinder des Himmels, deren Gegenwart und Zuneigung mannigfachen Segen verbreitete. (NS, III, 507)

The members of this "Zunft" seem to perform much the same function of exercising and maintaining state power as the "Künstler" in *Glauben und Liebe*. Here we may observe once again the curious concatenation of interests and ideologies which characterizes much of Novalis' political speculation.

The assertion that admission to the "Zunft" was open to all is clearly an expression of the frustration experienced by the German bourgeoisie in their attempts to gain access to state and public office. At the same time, however, the "Zunft" is the instrument of a highly autocratic will. Novalis has deliberately endowed the medieval clergy with attributes which contrast sharply with those for which they were known and criticized, both in the later Middle Ages and in his own time. Indeed, the members of the clergy are referred to as "Kinder des Himmels" and "diese auserwählten ... Männer", a formulation which harks back to the "Vorrede" of *Glauben und Liebe* and the distinction it draws between the profane and the initiate. As I shall try to show later, there is also a measure of self-projection in the characterization of the "Zunft", in that it seems to play the same role in Novalis' fictionalized version of medieval Europe as he envisages for himself and his colleagues in the transformed present. For the moment, however, it is important to grasp the nature of the social function which is ascribed to the "Zunft". The text continues:

Kindliches Zutrauen knüpfte die Menschen an ihre Verkündigungen. - Wie heiter konnte jedermann sein irdisches Tagewerk vollbringen, da ihm durch diese heilige Menschen eine sichere Zukunft bereitet und jeder Fehltritt durch sie vergeben, jede mißfarbige Stelle des Lebens durch sie ausgelöscht, und geklärt wurde. Sie waren die erfahrenen Steuerleute auf dem großen unbekanntem Meere, in deren Obhut man alle Stürme geringschätzen, und zuversichtlich auf eine sichere Gelangung und Landung an der Küste der eigentlichen vaterländischen Welt rechnen durfte. (NS, III, 507)

There is plainly little room for individual self-determination or "Mündigkeit" in the social world which

Novalis describes here. The traditional metaphor of the ship of state appears in a somewhat abstract guise. Demandt has shown that the very ancient comparison of the state with a ship, and the ruler with its captain or navigator, is complemented in the Christian literary tradition by the use of the ship as a metaphor for the church, plying the perilous and unpredictable ocean of life - or history itself - under the guidance of Christ.¹⁴ Both of these conventional usages are alluded to in the passage quoted. What precisely is meant by the "Landung an der Küste der eigentlichen vaterländischen Welt" is not entirely clear, though in the Christian tradition the destination of the ship of Holy Church was heaven itself¹⁵. What is clear is that the "heilige Menschen" or "erfahrenen Steuerleute" appear as the promulgators and guardians of a strongly paternalistic social order. Within this "mächtige friedensstiftende Gesellschaft", as it is described in the continuation of the text, not only the forms of social life but also the pursuit and dissemination of potentially dangerous knowledge are strictly regulated:

Mit Recht widersetze sich das weise Oberhaupt der Kirche, frechen Ausbildungen menschlicher Anlagen auf Kosten des heiligen Sinns, und unzeitigen gefährlichen Entdeckungen, im Gebiete des Wissens. So wehrte er den kühnen Denker öffentlich zu behaupten, daß die Erde ein unbedeutender Wandelstern sey, denn er wußte wohl, daß die Menschen mit der Achtung für ihren Wohnsitz und ihr irdisches Vaterland, auch die Achtung vor der himmlischen Heimath und ihrem Geschlecht verlieren, und das eingeschränkte Wissen dem unendlichen Glauben vorziehn und sich gewöhnen würden alles Große und Wunderwürdige zu

¹⁴. See Demandt, *Metaphern für Geschichte*, pp190-198, esp. pp194-5.

¹⁵. *ibid.*, p 194. According to a further variant, the Church was a harbour or haven for those battered by the storms of life (p 195).

verachten, und als todte Gesetzwirkung zu betrachten.
(NS,III,508-9)

This passage establishes the opposition between "Glauben" und "Wissen", which is one of the series of oppositions which structure the whole argument of the *Rede*. Later in the text "Wissen" is expressly identified with the *Aufklärung*; the description of the strictures placed on the spread of knowledge by the "Oberhaupt der Kirche" in the Middle Ages prepares the way for the treatment of the Enlightenment not as a phenomenon specific to the 18th century, but as a principle of disorder, active throughout history, perpetually working to disrupt the harmony created by "Glaube".

Novalis explains the decline of the "göttliche[n] Regierung auf Erden" (NS,III, 509), and its subsequent overthrow, by arguing that mankind was not yet ready for it:

Noch war die Menschheit für dieses herrliche Reich nicht reif, nicht gebildet genug. Es war eine erste Liebe, die im Drucke des Geschäftlebens entschlummerte, deren Andenken durch eigennützige Sorgen verdrängt, und deren Band nachher als Trug und Wahn ausgeschrien und nach spätern Erfahrungen beurtheilt, - auf immer von einem großen Theil der Europäer zerrissen wurde.(NS,III, 509)

Curiously enough, the formulation "Noch ... nicht reif, nicht gebildet genug" seems to echo the view of contemporary history taken by writers such as Wieland and Schiller, according to which the French nation and humanity as a whole had not reached the stage of moral development which would

have made a revolution both justifiable and desirable¹⁶. This allusion does not play any immediate part in the historical explanation which follows, though it does, as we shall see, have some significance in relation to a later part of the text. Here it serves rather to introduce the two elements which form the basis of Novalis' account of the decline of Christian Europe, namely a broadly Rousseauistic view of "modern" history, and coupled with this, a "Geschichtstheologie" which sees history as a cycle of fall and redemption. Superimposed on these two schemata are a number of other historical models of explication. I shall not attempt to describe or elucidate these models in detail; my discussion is considerably indebted to the framework provided by Jürgen Kreft's article on "Die Entstehung der dialektischen Geschichtsmetaphysik aus den Gestalten des utopischen Bewußtseins bei Novalis", and the subsequent criticisms and modifications of his approach¹⁷ My specific intention is

¹⁶. Wieland's formulation of this particular criticism of the Revolution is exemplary. Writing in reply to an attack made on him by Schubart in 1791, he declares:

So würde mir jezt noch größeres Unrecht geschehen, wenn mir Schuld gegeben werden wollte, daß ich der Sache der wahren Freiheit und der wahren Menschenrechte ungetreu worden sey, weil eine zweijährige genaue Aufmerksamkeit auf die französischen Angelegenheiten endlich die Überzeugung in mir zur Reife gebracht hat, daß das Französische Volk und dessen zeitherige Repräsentanten *gleich unreif* sind - jenes, die Freyheit, in die man es setzte, recht zu gebrauchen, diese, ihren Mitbürgern eine Constitution zu geben, worin die *möglichste Freyheit (...)* mit der *nothdürftigsten Sicherheit, Ordnung, und Dauerhaftigkeit* des Staates, nicht vereinigt, - sondern nur vereinbar wäre.

Quoted by Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 107.

¹⁷. See Jürgen Kreft, *Die Entstehung der dialektischen Geschichtsmetaphysik aus den Gestalten des utopischen Bewußtseins bei Novalis*, in: DVjS 39, 1965, pp213-245. Kurzke makes some justifiable criticisms of Kreft's approach

rather to identify the metaphors which underpin these models and their relation to the overall discursive structures of the text.

7.3 Metaphor and history

Novalis prefaces his description of the disintegration of medieval Christianity by stressing that the rule of God's vicar on earth was a truly natural form of government - "Wie wohlthätig, wie angemessen der innern Natur der Menschen, diese Regierung, diese Einrichtung war ..." (NS,III, 509) - and goes on to argue that it was undermined by the growth of culture:

Diese innere große Spaltung, die zerstörende Kriege begleiteten, war ein merkwürdiges Zeichen der Schädlichkeit der Kultur für den Sinn des Unsichtbaren, wenigstens einer temporellen Schädlichkeit der Kultur einer gewissen Stufe. [...] Eine längere Gemeinschaft der Menschen vermindert die Neigungen, den Glauben an ihr Geschlecht, und gewöhnt sie ihr ganzes Dichten und Trachten, den Mitteln des Wohlbefindens allein zuzuwenden, die Bedürfnisse und die Künste ihrer Befriedigung werden verwickelter, der habsüchtige Mensch hat so viel Zeit nöthig sich mit ihnen bekannt zu machen und Fertigkeiten in ihnen sich zu erwerben, daß keine Zeit zum stillen Sammeln des Gemüths, zur aufrichtigen Betrachtung der innern Welt übrig bleibt. (NS,III, 509)

The passage is strongly reminiscent of the critique of "grober Eigennutz", and of the economic theories of Adam Smith and his adherents which made self-interest the dynamo of economic and social life, in *Glauben und Liebe* No. 36. It also

(Romantik und Konservatismus, p61) as does Mähl, *Der poetische Staat*, p286ff. Both Kurzke and Mähl, however, tend to overlook some of the valuable insights which Kreft has gained through applying Mannheim's typology of "utopisches Bewußtsein", artificial though it may be.

represents a repudiation of Kant's assertion in his essay of 1786 entitled *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* that it is "die ungesellige Geselligkeit der Menschen", their essentially anti-social self-interest, which has paradoxically been the source of "alle Kultur und Kunst"¹⁸. In an unusual reversal of roles it is Novalis who historicizes Kant's "anthropological" account of self-interest by specifying that it lies at the root of "einer temporellen Schädlichkeit der Kultur einer gewissen Stufe". The text goes on to describe how the "habsüchtige[r] Mensch" develops within this stage of the expansion of the culture of self-interest.

In Collisions-Fällen scheint ihm das gegenwärtige Interesse näher zu liegen, und so fällt die schöne Blüte seiner Jugend, Glauben und Liebe ab, und macht den derbern Früchten, Wissen und Haben Platz. Man gedenkt des Frühlings im Spätherbst, wie eines kindischen Traums, und hofft mit kindischer Einfalt, die vollen Speicher sollen auf immer aushalten. (NS, III, 509-510)

The natural metaphor employed in this passage, though it tends to a certain degree to veer off into abstraction, creates the impression that the economic and social developments referred to in the previous passage are part of a cyclical natural process in which the development of the individual is paralleled by the historical development of a whole society. There is a certain tension here between the condemnation of "Habsucht", and the growing sophistication of those aspects of "modern" culture which encourage it, and the tendency towards naturalization or dehistoricization. A

¹⁸. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie*, 1, pp 37 & 40. See also Mähl, H-J., *Der poetische Staat*, p 299.

NOTE: Page 356 is missing from the print and digital copies of the thesis

The shift into an expressly rhetorical mode in this passage, whose long periods are strongly reminiscent of Biblical language, points to the fact that it is intended to offer both a summary of and a guide to the interpretation of the preceding section of the text. Notwithstanding the faults of his overall analysis²¹, it seems to me that Kreft is correct in arguing that Novalis does not present an integrated dialectical conception of history at this point²². The first schema which is introduced hints at the mechanism of dialectic as a "Wechsel entgegengesetzter Bewegungen", but the model of history as natural cycle which follows tends to neutralize any idea of a possible synthesis or progression. Curiously enough, it is the religious metaphor of "Auferstehung" and "Verjüngung" which also suggests the potential for transformation rather than simple repetition, in the assertion that the past will be resurrected "in neuer tüchtiger Gestalt". In one breath the speaker switches from the discourse of Christianity to that of the Enlightenment; the cycle of death and resurrection is juxtaposed with the "fortschreitende, immer mehr sich vergrößernde Evolutionen" which are now defined as the "Stoff der Geschichte". This latter formulation implies something other than the purely linear progression which the classical *Fortschrittsidee* ascribes to history. However, the continuation of the text conjures up an image of historical progression which seems to correspond to a process of refinement rather than dialectical synthesis:

²¹. See Footnote 17 above.

²². See Kreft, *Geschichtsmetaphysik*, pp 241-3.

Was jetzt nicht die Vollendung erreicht, wird sie bei einem künftigen Versuch erreichen, oder bei einem abermaligen; vergänglich ist nichts was die Geschichte ergriff, aus unzähligen Verwandlungen geht es in immer reicheren Gestalten erneuet wieder hervor. (NS, III, 510)

As Kreft points out, even this somewhat abstract representation of an "immanente[n] Dynamik der Geschichte" is immediately relativized by the statement that the decline of "das Christenthum" continued "bis zu einer neuen Welt-Inspiration" (NS, III, 510), which would seem to suggest that some sort of divine intervention in the historical process had occurred²³. This "neue Welt-Inspiration", which appears initially as a "Verjüngung", but later proves to have overwhelming negative consequences, is the phenomenon of Protestantism.

The metaphorical "density" of the passage we have been considering, and its linking of different fields of metaphor by association, are reminiscent of the fragments dealing with the Revolution in *Glauben und Liebe*. A further similarity lies in the tendency towards abstraction which results from the exploration of the synthetic possibilities of metaphor. At the same time, however, the 'Europa-Rede' displays a countervailing impulse which seeks to privilege a particular metaphorical isotope and thus create a hierarchy amongst the

²³ See *ibid.*, p243: "Erst recht stimmt nicht zur konservativen Konzeption des Geistes und nicht zur dialektischen Geschichtsmetaphysik und ihrer Auffassung von der immanenten Dynamik der Geschichte die Vorstellung, daß die dritte Epoche bzw. der Geist, der sie hervorruft, von außen oder oben zu den beiden vorhergehenden Epochen hinzukommt."

isotopes and with it a more coherent perspective on contemporary history.

If we look back over the passage quoted above, we can see that it incorporates three different models of history. Firstly, there is the Rousseauistic view of history as "Verfall"²⁴; this has, however, been partially integrated within a cyclical scheme of growth, decay and regeneration not unlike that which Schlegel applies to the history of antiquity in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, though Schlegel adopts a series of different non-cyclical models for the "modern" era. The natural cycles of history do not, however, simply represent the "ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen", but actually generate a degree of change and progression. It is here that the inconsistencies in Novalis' conception of history seem to arise, since, in attempting to mediate between the different models which he enlists, he appears unable to choose between a rudimentary notion of historical dialectic and a simplifying "chiliastic" vision²⁵. Associated with the latter perspective is an interpretation of European history as an allegory of fall and redemption. This comes to the fore in the description of the Reformation and its consequences. Novalis does not dispute the legitimacy of many of the intentions and actions

²⁴. Malsch notes the influence of Rousseau at a number of points in his exposition of *Die Christenheit*, but does not comment on it at any length - see Malsch, *Poetische Rede*, pp 39, 107, 135.

²⁵. See Mähl, *Der poetische Staat*, p286ff. Mähl allies the chiliastic elements in the 'Europa-Rede' with Kant's notion of a "philosophischer Chiliasmus", an equation which is somewhat dubious.

of the Protestants, or "Insurgenten", as they are referred to (NS,III, 501); but, he argues,

sie vergaßen das nothwendige Resultat ihres Prozesses; trennten das Untrennbare, theilten die untheilbare Kirche und rissen sich frevelnd aus dem allgemeinen christlichen Verein, durch welchen und in welchem allein die ächte, dauernde Wiedergeburt möglich war. (NS,III, 511)

This division of the indivisible church is accompanied by an intervention of the temporal powers - "die Fürsten"²⁶ - in spiritual matters. These actions acquire the character of something approximating hybris, or an actual fall from a state of grace - a view which Joseph Görres was to state more concretely some twenty years later in his essay *Europa und die Revolution*, in which he describes the Reformation as a "zweiter Sündenfall"²⁷. In arrogating to themselves many of the powers which had previously belonged to the bishops and creating local "Konsistorien"²⁸ under their control the princes and rulers of the Reformed States were responsible, according to Novalis, for sowing the seeds of lasting division and violent conflict throughout Europe:

Sie waren eifrig besorgt die gänzliche Vereinigung der protestantischen Kirchen zu hindern, und so wurde die Religion irreligiöser Weise in Staats-Gränzen eingeschlossen, und damit der Grund zur allmählichen Untergrabung des religiösen cosmopolitische[n] Interesse[s] gelegt. So verlor die Religion ihren großen politischen friedensstiftenden Einfluß, ihre eigenthümliche Rolle des vereinigenden,

²⁶. See NS, III, 511 : "Unglücklicher Weise hatten sich die Fürsten in diese Spaltung gemischt ... etc."

²⁷. Quoted in Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europabild und Europagedanke*, München, 1964, p 206.

²⁸. See Schulz's commentary on the text in NW, p806.

individualisierenden Prinzips, der Christenheit. Der Religionsfriede ward nach ganz fehlerhaften und religionswidrigen Grundsätzen abgeschlossen, und durch die Fortsetzung des sogenannten Protestantismus etwas durchaus Widersprechendes - eine Revolutions - Regierung permanent erklärt. (NS,III, 511-2)

It is the act of division, the fragmentation of the single "großes gemeinschaftliches Interesse" into a multitude of competing local and partial interests which is seen as decisive for the history of modern Europe. In yet another strategic *volte-face*, the term "cosmopolitisch" is given a positive loading and identified with medieval Catholicism, a usage which amounts to an "expropriation" of the Enlightenment, in that it deliberately ignores the conventional connotations of the word. If, however, we turn our attention now to the closing passages of the text, we can see that Novalis' "heresy" - namely the vision of a "cosmopolitan" Europe united by faith rather than reason - retains certain aspects of the idea of a European "Völkerbund" as envisaged by the progressive Enlightenment, whilst discarding others. He expressly rejects the view that a European balance of power is the natural and necessary guarantee of peace. This view belongs essentially, as Heinz Gollwitzer has shown, to the ideology of enlightened absolutism²⁹. Here, as elsewhere, Novalis was influenced by Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden*, in particular in rejecting the notion that peace can consist in what Kant called "...ein

²⁹ See Gollwitzer, *Europabild*, p 71-77, esp. p 77. See also Lützel, P.M., "Kosmopoliten der europäischen Kultur". *Romantiker über Europa*, in: Ribbat, Ernst, (Hrsg.), *Romantik. Ein literaturwissenschaftliches Studienbuch*, Königstein, 1979 pp 213-36.

bloßer Waffenstillstand, Aufschub der Feindseligkeiten", rather than "...das Ende aller Hostilitäten"³⁰. As Novalis puts it:

Es ist unmöglich daß weltliche Kräfte sich selbst ins Gleichgewicht setzen, ein drittes Element, das weltlich und überirdisch zugleich ist, kann allein diese Aufgabe lösen. Unter den streitenden Mächten kann kein Friede geschlossen werden, aller Friede ist nur Illusion, nur Waffenstillstand; auf dem Standpunkt der Kabinetter, des gemeinen Bewußtseins ist keine Vereinigung denkbar. (NS, III, 522)

What quite clearly distinguishes the argument of the 'Europa-Rede' from that of Kant's text is its insistence on some form of eschatological intervention by "ein drittes Element, das weltlich und überirdisch zugleich ist" in order for eternal peace to be created out of the present state of darkness and conflict. Indeed, as an earlier passage suggests, it is precisely the total negativity of the present which makes a sudden and sweeping transformation in the near future a certainty:

Daß die Zeit der Auferstehung gekommen ist, und grade die Begebenheiten, die gegen ihre Belebung gerichtet zu seyn schienen und ihren Untergang zu vollenden drohten, die günstigsten Zeichen ihrer Regeneration geworden sind, dieses kann einem historischen Gemüthe gar nicht zwiefelhaft bleiben. (NS, III, 517)

We have already encountered this figure in *Glauben und Liebe*, and also, in a more pervasive form, in Schlegel's *Studium-Aufsatz*. It seems to me to constitute an example of what Blumenberg refers to as "säkularisierte[r] Chiliasmus":

³⁰. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie I*, p196.

namely, "de[r] Glaube an eine bevorstehende radikale Änderung der Weltgeschichte"³¹ The status of what appear to be chiliastic elements in Novalis' texts, and particularly *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, has been the subject of a considerable controversy in the secondary literature. Kreft sees traces of "die reale, historische chiliastische Utopie"³² even in those passages of the 'Europe-Rede' which appear to be developing a dialectical perspective, whilst Mähl has maintained consistently that the chiliastic components of the text are "...doch nur Namen und Chiffren" which assist "eine[r] mythische[n] Übersetzung des geschichtlichen Zukunftsbildes"³³; they are, Mähl argues in a recent article, manifestations of what Kant referred to in his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* as "philosophischer Chiliasmus"³⁴. The application of Kant's phrase to the speculations of the 'Europa-Rede' does not appear at first glance to be particularly apposite, since Kant quite clearly states that the creation of "...eine innerlich- und ... auch äußerlich-vollkommene Staatsverfassung" will only be achieved in the far distant future, since all that is visible of this ideal in the present are "die schwachen Spuren der Annäherung"³⁵. Mähl attempts to resolve this apparent incongruity by arguing that what appears to be the

³¹. Hans Blumenberg, *Säkularisierung und Selbstbehauptung*, Frankfurt/M, 1974, p 62.

³². Kreft, *Geschichtsmetaphysik*, p 227.

³³. Hans Joachim Mähl, *Die Idee des goldenen Zeitalters*, p 381.

³⁴. Mähl, H-J., *Der poetische Staat*, p286.

³⁵. See Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie*, pp45-6.

... beschwörende[n] *Naherwartung* ... mit der das unendliche Zukunftsziel (des ewigen Friedens)...als unmittelbar bevorstehend geschildert wird ...

is in fact a function of "eine bestimmte rhetorische Wirkungsabsicht" which seeks to realize a utopian "Intention" by means of a philosophical fiction or construct³⁶. Whilst Mähl is certainly correct to stress the importance of the rhetorical dimension of Novalis' texts, it seems to me insufficient to simply accord a utopian intention to the 'Europa-Rede' on the basis of its "Negation der Gegenwart"³⁷ without enquiring what it is that the text opposes to the present and how this will be brought into being.

An answer to the former question should emerge in the following discussion; with regard to the latter question, however, it does not seem to me possible to dismiss the chiliastic elements in the text as "mere" ciphers or metaphors which can in some way become transparent or purged of their conventional connotation, so as to allow some form of ideal intention to radiate through them. Even if this were possible - and I have followed Blumenberg in arguing consistently that it is not³⁸ - the fact remains that metaphors and figures of

³⁶. See Mähl, H-J, *Der poetische Staat*, pp278, 279, 280, 281.

³⁷. *ibid.*, p280.

³⁸. See for example Hans Blumenberg, *Beobachtungen an Metaphern*, p192: "Es zeigt sich plötzlich, daß die einzelne Metapher zu einem Orientierungssystem gehört und dieses anzeigt, daß aber zugleich die Latenz des Hintergrundes auch durch die vermeintliche Evidenz gesichert und abgeschirmt wird. [...] Die Metapher hat ein Potential an Implikationen, an Konnotationen, die nicht beliebig ausgetauscht werden können...".

speech drawn from the Christian chiliastic tradition abound at precisely those junctures in the text where a germinal dialectical perspective is entertained but not developed, as in the passage discussed above, or, as I shall try to show, where Novalis does in fact flesh out his "Zukunftsbild" in more detail. It is for this reason that I would argue that the chiliastic dimension of the text cannot be integrated into a unified historical perspective, dialectical or otherwise, but rather has to be seen as one of the possible modes of apprehending the historical moment which Novalis had at his disposal, and which tends to become the dominant mode of the 'Europa-Rede',³⁹.

7.4 Eternal peace

In order to better understand Novalis' assertion that peace can only be achieved through the agency of a quasi-divine "drittes Element", we need to turn our attention once more briefly to Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden*. Kant had laid down, in the ironic form of a contract consisting of a series of "Präliminarartikel", "Definitivartikel" and "Zusätze", the preconditions for the creation and survival of a European "Völkerbund"⁴⁰. Gerhard Schulz has drawn attention to the fact that Kant sees the establishment of a true and lasting

³⁹. See Kreft, *Geschichtsmetaphysik*, p 244: "Sehr wichtig ist hier, daß die chiliastischen Elemente eben nicht in das dialektische Schema integriert sind ...".

⁴⁰. These preconditions, and the salient features of Kant's argument, are summed up with admirable succinctness by Gerhard Schulz in the section entitled "Zum ewigen Frieden: Entwürfe der Philosophen", in: Schulz, *Die deutsche Literatur zwischen französischer Revolution und Restauration*.

peace not just as the work of Reason alone, but also as the product of a kind of economic determinism based on enlightened self-interest⁴¹. The following passage from the section entitled "Von der Garantie des ewigen Friedens", although somewhat lengthy, deserves to be quoted here in full:

So wie die Natur weislich die Völker trennt, welche der Wille jedes Staats, und zwar selbst nach Gründen des Völkerrechts, gern unter sich durch List oder Gewalt vereinigen möchte : so vereinigt sie auch andererseits Völker, die der Begriff des Weltbürgerrechts gegen Gewalttätigkeit und Krieg nicht würde gesichert haben, durch den wechselseitigen Eigennutz. Es ist der *Handelsgeist*, der mit dem Kriege nicht zusammen bestehen kann, und der früher oder später sich jedes Volks bemächtigt. Weil nämlich unter allen, der Staatsmacht untergeordneten, Mächten (Mitteln) die *Geldmacht* wohl die zuverlässigste sein möchte, so sehen sich Staaten (freilich wohl nicht eben durch Triebfedern der Moralität) gedrungen, den edlen Frieden zu befördern, und, wo auch immer in der Welt Krieg auszubrechen droht, ihn durch Vermittelungen abzuwehren, gleich als ob sie deshalb im beständigen Bündnisse ständen [...] Auf die Art garantiert die Natur durch den Mechanism in den menschlichen Neigungen selbst, den ewigen Frieden; freilich mit einer Sicherheit, die nicht hinreichend ist, die Zukunft desselben (theoretisch) zu *weissagen*, aber doch in praktischer Hinsicht zulangt, und es zur Pflicht macht, zu diesem (nicht bloß schimärischen) Zwecke hinzuarbeiten.⁴²

There is for the modern reader a deep and somewhat lugubrious irony in the fact that Kant should have declared the incompatibility of "Handelsgeist" and "Krieg", and made economic self-interest one of the cornerstones of his vision of a peaceful Europe, at the very dawn of the era in which war became the ultimate instrument of trade, and "Geldmacht"

⁴¹. *ibid.*, pl61. See also Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie* 1, pp37-9.

⁴². Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie* 1, pp226-7.

assumes an autonomy which may exceed that of nations⁴³. Kant's image of the "Mechanism in den menschlichen Neigungen selbst" amounts to a metaphorical transfer of Adam Smith's notion of the 'natural' equilibrium of the free market from the economic to the political sphere. This Novalis cannot accept. Whilst he does cite "der überall blühende Handelsverkehr mit geistigen und irdischen Waren" (NS,III, 509) as one of the positive features of Catholic medieval Europe, there is no indication that economic forces of the kind mentioned by Kant will have any part to play in bringing into existence that "Staat der Staaten" (NS,III, 522) which he envisages. Furthermore, the form of government which he sees as appropriate to a Europe reunited by religion is not dissimilar to that which had supposedly existed in the Middle Ages: it is strongly centralist and authoritarian in nature, and thus, like the "Familienmonarchie" of *Glauben und Liebe*, inimical to the laissez-faire economic philosophy which underlies Kant's speculations. Novalis outlines the necessary

⁴³. Schiller presents a very different view of the workings of colonial "Handelsgeist" in his poem *Der Antritt des neuen Jahrhunderts*:

Zwei gewaltge Nationen Ringen,
Um der Welt alleinigen Besitz
Aller Länder Freiheit zu verschlingen
Schwingen sie den Dreizack und den Blitz.

Gold muß ihnen jede Landschaft wägen,
Und, wie Brennus in der rohen Zeit,
Legt der Franke seinen ehrnen Degen,
In die Waage der Gerechtigkeit.

Seine Handlesflotten streckt der Brite
Gierig wie Polypenarme aus,
Und das Reich der freien Amphitrite
Will er schließen wie sein eignes Haus.

basis for "Europas Versöhnung und Auferstehung" in the final paragraphs of the 'Europa-Rede':

Die Christenheit muß wieder lebendig und wirksam werden, und sich wieder ein[e] sichtbare Kirche ohne Rücksicht auf Landesgränzen bilden [....] Aus dem heiligen Schooße eines ehrwürdigen europäischen Consiliums wird die Christenheit aufstehn, und das Geschäft der Religions-erweckung, nach einem allumfassenden göttlichem Plane betrieben werden. Keiner wird dann mehr protestiren gegen christlichen und weltlichen Zwang, denn das Wesen der Kirche wird ächte Freiheit seyn, und alle nothwendigen Reformen werden unter der Leitung derselben, als friedliche und förmliche Staatsprozesse betrieben werden. (NS, III, 524)

It is difficult to see what can be meant by the statement that "...das Wesen der Kirche wird ächte Freiheit seyn", given the reunification of church and state which Novalis proposes and the resultant social order which he describes. This did not escape the notice of Schelling, who included the following lines in his satire *Heinz Widerporstens Glaubensbekenntnis*:

Deswegen mir nichts ist so verhaßt
 Als so ein fremder fürnehmer Gast,
 Der auf der Welt herumstolziert
 Und schlechte Red' im Munde führt
 Von der Natur und ihrem Wesen
 Dünkt sich besonders auserlesen.
 Ist eine eigne Menschenrasse
 Von eigenem Sinn und geistlicher Rasse,
 Halten all' andre für verloren,
 [....]
 Glauben sich in allen Gliedern trüchtig
 Von dem neuen Messias noch ungeboren,
 In ihrem Ratschluß auserkorn.
 Die armen Völker groß und klein,
 Zu führen in einen Schafstall hinein,
 Wo sie aufhören, sich zu necken,
 Hübsch christlich in eins zusammen blecken...⁴⁴

⁴⁴. In: Deutsche Literatur in Entwicklungsreihen, Reihe 17: "Romantik", Bd. 9: Satiren und Parodien, bearbeitet von Andreas Müller, hg. von Heinz Kindermann u.a., Reclam, Leipzig, 1935, p 184

Whilst Schelling's characterization of Novalis' intentions in the 'Europa-Rede' is naturally somewhat exaggerated, it contains more than a grain of truth; it is simply not possible to ignore the similarities between the future "Staat der Staaten" and the medieval papacy as it is described in the early part of the text. Both display distinctly authoritarian, if not totalitarian features which are very difficult to reconcile with (for example) the argument advanced recently by Mähl that Novalis' political writings are distinguished from those of his immediate predecessors, such as Kant, and the classical tradition of social utopias in general, by their "Ablehnung des Institutionalismus... und... der für das frühere utopische Denken charakteristischen >>anti-individualistischen<< Anthropologie, die den Menschen lediglich als Gattungswesen betrachtete."⁴⁵

7.5 Protestantism and Revolution

In order to understand the nature of the individuals' relationship to the state and the historical process as the text constructs it, it is necessary to consider the role of the great antagonist of Catholic unity and harmony - that is, Protestantism in all its manifestations - in Novalis's account of modern history. The antinomy of Catholic Christianity and Protestantism, or "Glauben" and "Wissen", is represented metaphorically by the familiar opposition of "Geist" and

⁴⁵. See Mähl, *Der poetische Staat*, p 288.

"Buchstabe". Initially it is the decadent, wordly carapace of the medieval church against which Luther revolted which is identified with the "letter":

Was war natürlicher, als daß endlich ein feuerfangender Kopf öffentlichen Aufstand gegen den despotischen Buchstaben der ehemahligen Verfassung predigte, und mit um so größerem Glück, da er selbst Zunft-Genosse war. (NS, III, 511)

But, the text argues, the spirit of renewal or "vorübergehendes Feuer des Himmels" (NS, III, 512) with which Protestantism appears to be suffused was merely transitory, and in fact an illusion:

Indeß liegt dem Protestantismus bei weitem nicht bloß jener reine Begriff zum Grunde, sondern Luther behandelte das Christenthem überhaupt willkürlich, verkannte seinen Geist, und führte einen andern Buchstaben und eine andere Religion ein, nemlich die heilige Allgemeingültigkeit der Bibel. (NS, III, 512)

The enthronement of the letter as a spiritual authority and its usurpation of the rightful place of "Geist" are explicitly linked with revolution, long before the French Revolution itself is actually mentioned:

Der Religionsfriede ward nach ganz fehlerhaften und religionswidrigen Grundsätzen abgeschlossen, und durch die Fortsetzung des sogenannten Protestantismus etwas durchaus Widersprechendes - eine Revolutions-Regierung permanent erklärt. (NS, III, 512)

Later in the text this analogy is spelled out very plainly:

Soll die Revolution die französische bleiben, wie die Reformation die Lutherische war? Soll der Protestantismus abermals widernatürlicherweise, als

revolutionaire Regierung fixiert werden? Sollen Buchstaben Buchstaben Platz machen? Sucht ihr den Keim des Verderbens auch in der alten Einrichtung, dem alten Geiste? und glaubt euch auf eine bessere Einrichtung, einen bessern Geist zu verstehn. O! daß der Geist der Geistereuch erfüllte... (NS,III,518)

Novalis' evaluation of Protestantism and its affinities with the Revolutionary Enlightenment have been the subject of a considerable amount of debate in the secondary literature. It seems to me that Kurzke is correct in arguing that his sudden enthusiasm for medieval Catholicism is a "bewußte Provokation", and is thus strategic in essence⁴⁶. Through his own upbringing he had come into contact with the pietistic Protestantism of the *Herrnhuter*, and was thus familiar with a variety of Protestant faith very different from the fundamentalist orthodoxy which he lambasts in the passages quoted above. The identification of Protestantism with the Enlightenment - which is itself described within the space of a single page firstly as a "neue Kirche" (NS,III,516), then as "gebildeten Enthusiasmus", and finally as "modernen Unglauben" - and the characterization of the Revolution as a "zweite Reformation" (NS,III,517) are, in a sense, more the consequence of a need to create an appropriate foil to his vision of universal Catholicism than the perception of an essential affinity between the two. The fact that both are assigned to the realm of the letter is associated likewise with the somewhat arbitrary schematization of which Novalis carries out in the course of his argumentation⁴⁷.

⁴⁶. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 230-1

⁴⁷. It is interesting to compare Novalis' use of the metaphor of the letter with the usage in the first of Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion*. Schleiermacher declares that religion

Failure to recognize the fact that the metaphorical identification of Reformation and Revolution is first and foremost a rhetorical device has produced interpretations such as that of Sara Ann Malsch⁴⁸, which depends upon a fairly literal reading of the text within a rigidly Hegelian framework. Interpretations of this kind tend to smooth over the contradictions in Novalis' arguments and overlook the strategic nature of his use of the "Zauberstab der Analogie". For, as Kurzke points out, Novalis does not necessarily see the Reformation as having engendered the Enlightenment or the Revolution:

Die erste Reformation war Folge des asthenischen Zustands der Kirche im Spätmittelalter gewesen. Die zweite Reformation ist Folge der Asthenie des Ancien Régime. Die Religions- und Poesiezerstörung durch die materialistische Aufklärung ist eine Erscheinungsform dieser Asthenie. Die Logik ist also nicht die einer linearen Abfolge Reformation - Aufklärung - Revolution, sondern die einer postfigurativen Wiederholung der Reihe Asthenie des Spätmittelalters - Reformation durch die Reihe Asthenie des Ancien Régime - Revolution. Die Revolution geht nicht aus dem Protestantismus hervor, sondern aus dem Ancien Régime. Revolution und Reformation

can only be "ein toter Buchstabe" for the English, who are preoccupied with "eine jämmerliche Empirie". His criticism of the French is even more damning, but seems to imply that "Religion" is associated with the spirit of the French Revolution, to which the majority of the French people have been indifferent. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*, hg. v. Rudolf Otto, 6. Auflage, Göttingen, 1967, p 28.

⁴⁸. Malsch, Sara Ann: *The Image of Martin Luther in the Writings of Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel. The Speculative Vision of History and Religion*, Bern, 1974 (Europäische Hochschulschriften 103), esp. pp 29-32 and 47-68. Malsch's reliance on Hegel leads her to make such alarming, but (one hopes) naive statements as the following: "If we are consequent in our thinking, Luther's role, the roles of other great, historical personalities and of each relative form as well, must be evaluated *amorally*". (p67). One fears that Malsch's grasp of history is not much more sophisticated than her syntax and punctuation.

stehen im Verhältnis⁴⁹ der Analogie, nicht in dem der Kausalität zueinander.

The analogy between Reformation and Revolution is structural, based on their function within the historical process. Although the physiological model of history which Novalis had elaborated in *Glauben und Liebe* is only invoked in passing in one passage of the 'Europa-Rede'⁵⁰, Kurzke's comments hold true for the text's overall treatment of the relationship between Protestantism, Enlightenment and revolution. The cyclical view of history implied by the succession of sthenic and asthenic states is complemented by a later passage in which the speaker qualifies his previous harsh judgement on the *Aufklärung* and its revolutionary manifestations:

Beide Theile haben große, nothwendige Ansprüche und müssen sie machen, getrieben vom Geiste der Welt und der Menschheit. Beide sind unvertilgbare Mächte der Menschenbrust; hier die Andacht zum Alterthum, die Anhänglichkeit an die geschichtliche Verfassung, die Liebe zu den Denkmalen der Altväter und der alten glorreichen Staatsfamilie, und Freude des Gehorsams; dort das entzückende Gefühl der Freiheit, die unbedingte Erwartung mächtiger Wirkungskreise, die Lust am Neuen und Jungen, die zwanglose Berührung mit allen Staatsgenossen, der Stolz auf menschliche Allgemeingültigkeit, die Freude am persönlichen Recht und am Eigenthum des Ganzen, und das kraftvolle Bürgergefühl. Keiner hoffe die Andere zu vernichten. (NS, III, 522-3)

⁴⁹. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp238-9.

⁵⁰. See NS III, 517 : "... eine zweite Reformation, eine umfassendere und eigenthümlichere war unvermeidlich, und mußte das Land zuerst treffen, daß am meisten modernisirt war, und am längsten aus Mangel an Freiheit in asthenischem Zustand gelegen hatte."

The metaphorical opposition of youth and age appears here in much the same context and with much the same effect as in the *Politische Aphorismen*. Whilst Novalis seems to be pleading for pluralism and tolerance, there is also a naturalizing, dehistoricizing dimension to his argumentation which suggests that religion and enlightenment, faith and knowledge, age and youth are natural and immutable principles whose antagonism cannot be resolved by human agency. As Kurzke puts it:

Es geht im strengen Sinne nicht um eine Geschichtsphilosophie, sondern um die transzendente Anthropologie und Physiologie des großen Ich.⁵¹

Whilst this interpretation seems to me somewhat one-sided⁵², it does point to an aspect of the text which has not hitherto received a great deal of attention, namely its attempt to deal with the question as to whether or not individuals can and should participate actively in the historical process. The following much-quoted passage appears to state Novalis' attitude quite plainly:

O! daß der Geist der Geister euch erfüllte, und ihr abließet von diesem thörichten Bestreben die Geschichte und die Menschheit zu modeln, und eure Richtung ihr zu geben. Ist sie nicht selbständig, nicht eigenmächtig, so gut wie unendlich liebenswerth und weissagend? Sie zu studiern, ihr nachzugehen, von ihr zu lernen, mit ihr gleichen Schritt zu halten, gläubig ihren Verheißungen und Winken zu folgen - daran denkt keiner. (NS,III, 518)

⁵¹. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, p 239.

⁵². Mähl has also argued that the 'Europa-Rede' has been wrongly classified as a "geschichtsphilosophische Abhandlung" (*Der poetische Staat*, p281). Whilst there are good grounds for considering the term "Abhandlung" inappropriate, it is difficult to understand how the text's putative status as an "utopisches Zukunftsprojekt" should make the very considerable part of it which is concerned with speculation about the nature and meaning of history redundant.

From this passage, and its condemnation of human attempts to manipulate or intervene in the course of history, Kurzke deduces what he sees as being the true character of the speaker of the 'Rede':

Der Redner ist der wahrhafte Cyniker aus GIL Nr. 51-57, der die Anwesenheit des Höheren im Gemeinen verkörpert, aber nicht konkret verändernd ("modelnd") eingreift. Sein Handeln ist ein Sich-Bereit-Machen für die Selbsttätigkeit der höhern Welt, ist nicht "Politik", die das Höhere manipulieren und durch Rechenkunst ersetzen will. Seine Aktivität besteht darin, für sich selbst das Neue zu leben, als ob es schon gälte, für sein Teil die erstarrte Natur in ihr wahres Wesen zu entzaubern, und dadurch ein Kristallisationspunkt des höhern Menschen⁵³ zu sein. Sie besteht nicht im Revolutionieren.

It is undeniable that the quietistic sentiments which Kurzke identifies are present in the text. A strain of the Christian chiliastic tradition which reduces the Apocalypse to the level of private, individual experience had existed since the very early beginnings of the Church, and was an important component of the pietistic Christianity with which Novalis was familiar from his upbringing⁵⁴. It is not, however, correct to argue that quietism is the only possible *modus vivendi* for the individual entertained by the text, as Kurzke suggests when he states his conclusion that *Europa oder Die Christenheit* is a document of "Naturphilosophie" rather than "Geschichtsphilosophie":

⁵³. See Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp 244-5

⁵⁴. See Kreft, *Geschichtsmetaphysik*, p 225-7. On the chiliastic elements in the pietistic tradition, and their transformation in the course of the 18th century, see Mähl, *Idee des goldenen Zeitalters*, pp232-245, esp. p241ff.

Es gibt kein autonomes geschichtliches Handeln des Menschen, es gibt nur ein die Anlage der Natur, ein goldenes Zeitalter zu sein, befreiendes, begleitendes und sie beförderndes Handeln [....] *Im Plane der Natur* liegt es, daß sich aus Krankheiten das höhere Leben gebiert, daß aus Sünde Liebe, aus Revolution transzendente Monarchie,⁵⁵ aus Anarchie Religion, aus Natur Moral erwächst.

There is a certain difficulty in coming to grips with this interpretation which derives from the fact that Kurzke appears to be alluding to a famous formulation of Kant's which begins the "Achter Satz" of his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*:

Man kann die Geschichte der Menschengattung als die Vollziehung eines verborgenen Plans der Natur ansehen, um eine innerlich - und zu diesem Zwecke, auch äußerlich-vollkommene Staatsverfassung zu Stande zu bringen, als den einzigen Zustand, in welchem sie alle ihre Anlagen in der Menschheit völlig entwickeln kann.⁵⁶

Whilst Kurzke might seem to have simply adapted Kant's statement to reveal the import of Novalis' injunctions against a "modelling" of history, there is in fact a fundamental difference between the view of history which is ascribed to the 'Europa-Rede' and that which Kant postulates. The whole of Kant's thesis is informed by the belief that history can be made or shaped by rational subjects; or, to put it another way, that the "verborgene[r] Plan der natur" can only be brought to fruition through the active participation of those subjects.

⁵⁵. Kurzke, *Romantik und Konservatismus*, pp245, 247.

⁵⁶. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie* 1, p45.

Koselleck has propounded the view that this belief can itself be seen as a secular translation of the faith in a divine teleology. In the guise of a "Geschichtsphilosophie" whose central tenet was the inevitable triumph of morality over the corruption of the *ancien régime*, the bourgeois Enlightenment's conviction that history was susceptible of "rationale[r] Steuerung"⁵⁷ served to conceal the truly political nature of its *Kritik* of the existing order and its pursuit of particular class interests. Koselleck writes:

Der dem Menschen undurchsichtige göttliche Heilsplan wird zum Geheimnis geschichtsphilosophischer Planer. [...] Der göttliche Heilsplan wird zwar säkularisiert zur rationalen Geschichtsplanung, die Planung aber ist zugleich die Geschichtsphilosophie, die den Ablauf der nunmehr selbstgeplanten Ereignisse garantiert. Die Philosophie des Fortschritts lieferte die weder religiöse noch rationale, sondern spezifisch geschichtsphilosophische Gewißheit, daß die indirekte politische Planung auch verwirklicht wird, wie umgekehrt die rationale und moralische Planung selber den Fortschritt der Geschichte bestimmt.⁵⁸

Koselleck's account of the "pathogenesis" of the specifically bourgeois notions of historical progress and the perfectibility of man have been rightly criticized by Blumenberg, who calls into question the assumption that the "Philosophie des Fortschritts" had its roots in Christian eschatology⁵⁹. For Blumenberg, the hypothesis that the

⁵⁷. Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*, 1979, p134.

⁵⁸. *ibid.*, p 111

⁵⁹. See Blumenberg, *Säkularisierung und Selbstbehauptung*, pp 40-41:

Es ist ein formaler, aber gerade darum manifester Unterschied, daß eine Eschatologie von einem in die Geschichte einbrechenden, dieser selbst transzendenten und heterogenen Ereignis spricht, während die

postulate of "Planbarkeit der Geschichte" amounted to a self-verifying theology of the bourgeois revolution is not tenable, at least in the absolute form in which Koselleck has chosen to state it:

Der Satz, daß der Mensch die Geschichte macht, enthält noch keine Garantie für den Fortschritt, den er beim Machen bewirken könnte; es ist zunächst nur ein Prinzip der Selbstbehauptung gegen die Verunsicherung der Erkenntnis durch das übermächtige theologische Fremdprinzip, dessen Nichtanwendbarkeit auf die Einsicht des Menschen in seine eigenen Werke,⁶⁰ also auch in seine eigene Geschichte, postuliert wird.

Notwithstanding this criticism, Koselleck's analysis gives us a useful framework within which to consider the contradictory attitudes to human agency in history which are expressed in the 'Europa-Rede'. On the one hand, the desire to reinstate "die Regierung Gottes auf Erden" (NS, III, 523) clearly incorporates a chiliastic component which cannot be simply dismissed as a metaphor. The divine or transcendent intervention in history which this would necessitate would override human acts of "Selbstbehauptung". Furthermore, the

Fortschrittsidee von einer jeder Gegenwart präsenten Struktur auf eine der Geschichte immanente Zukunft extrapoliert. (p39) [...] Aber gerade wenn die Utopie in dem politischen Defizit der moralischen Geschichtskritik der Aufklärung begründet ist, in ihrem Verzicht auf Gegenwärtigkeit, wird es zweifelhaft, daß ihr das Zukunftsverhältnis als Festlegung aus der eschatologischen Bewußtseinsprägung vorgegeben war. [...] Hinsichtlich des Fortschritts hätten sich die Verfechter der Säkularisierung frühzeitig entscheiden müssen, ob sie das Jüngste Gericht oder die Vorsehung zum *terminus a quo* machen wollten [...] aber die Fortschrittsidee ist eben nicht eine bloße Schwächeform des Gerichts oder der Revolution, sondern die ständige Selbstrechtfertigung der Gegenwart durch die Zukunft, die sie sich gibt, vor der Vergangenheit, mit der sie sich vergleicht.

⁶⁰. Blumenberg, *ibid.*, p44.

chiliastic perspective is, as Blumenberg points out, incompatible with the "Fortschrittsidee" of the Enlightenment⁶¹. A "secular" reading of the text would, on the other hand, stress those elements in it which embody the conviction, which Koselleck sees as being central to bourgeois "Geschichtsphilosophie", that "die Geschichte als der Sündenfall der Natur rückgängig gemacht werden müsse"⁶². In this variant, it would be the "Selbstbehauptung" of individual subjects and their collective activity which would effect the reversal of the "fall".

If we look back over the range of speculative metaphorical models for the historical process which we have identified in the 'Europa-Rede', it appears that the majority of them do not allow for the possibility that human beings might, individually or collectively, become the subjects rather than the objects of history. The evolutionary model, which attempts to introduce a dynamic of progression into a cyclical view of history, represents a partial exception to this rule; and it is important to remember that Kant himself had used the image of the "Kreislauf" in the *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte etc.*, where he declares that an "allgemeiner weltbürgerlicher Zustand" will only be achieved "nach manchen Umbildungen der Revolution"⁶³. Nevertheless, Kant implies that there is necessarily a degree of intention, of the free exercise of will, associated with the progress of

⁶¹. ibid.

⁶². Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*, p 155.

⁶³. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie* 1, pp45, 47.

civilisation⁶⁴, whereas in Novalis' text nature's hidden plan appears totally autonomous in its historical unfolding.

7.6 The new church

There is, however, one aspect of the text which does point towards the possibility of an active rather than a passive role for individuals in the "making" of history, albeit individuals of a particular type. This has to do with what Novalis sees as being the urgent need for a "neue Kirche". Schlegel had already invoked the notion of an "unsichtbare Kirche" in the *Athenäums-Fragment* No. 243, where he describes it as "ein stille Opposition gegen die herrschende Unsittlichkeit"⁶⁵. Novalis goes one step further in announcing that the invisible church must now become visible and enter the public arena:

Die Christenheit muß wieder lebendig und wirksam werden, und sich wieder ein[e] sichtbare Kirche ohne

⁶⁴. Kant poses the questions as to whether we can deduce the workings of a "Naturabsicht" in history from our experience, and answers "...daß man aus dem kleinen Teil, den die Menschheit in dieser Absicht zurückgelegt hat, nur eben so unsicher die Gestalt ihrer Bahn und das Verhältnis der Teile zum Ganzen bestimmen kann, als aus allen bisherigen Himmelsbeobachtungen den Lauf, den unsre Sonne samt dem ganzen Heere ihrer Trabanten im großen Fixsternensystem nimmt" (*Schriften zur Anthropologie* I, p45). He goes on to argue, however, that one can confidently predict the spread of enlightenment, and stresses that its influence must "...nach und nach bis zu den Thronen hinauf gehen" (p46-7). This formulation, together with others in the "Achter Satz" of the *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte*, implies that Enlightenment is a collective process which must filter up through the social order rather than being imposed from above, and that there is a dimension of human intention to the "Naturabsicht" which Kant postulates.

⁶⁵. KA, II, 243

Rücksicht auf Landesgränzen bilden, die alle nach dem Ueberirdischen durstige Seelen in ihren Schooß aufnimmt und gern Vermittlerin der alten und neuen Welt wird. (NS, III, 524)

Whilst the phrase "unsichtbare Kirche" is not actually used in the text, the existence of such an entity is alluded to at a number of points, with the attendant suggestion that it will form the nucleus of the new "sichtbare Kirche". In the passage which follows the rehabilitation of Protestantism and the Enlightenment, the speaker exhorts any adherents of the latter to cast aside their prejudices and join the new church themselves:

Also kommt auch, ihr Philanthropen und Encyclopädisten, in die friedensstiftende Loge und empfangt den Bruderkuß, streift das graue Netz ab, und schaut mit junger Liebe die Wunderherrlichkeit der Natur, der Geschichte und der Menschheit an. Zu einem Bruder will ich euch führen, der soll mit euch reden, daß euch die Herzen aufgehn, und ihr eure abgestorbene geliebte Ahndung mit neuem Leibe bekleidet, wieder umfaßt und erkennt, was euch vorschwebte, und was der schwerfällige irdische Verstand freilich euch nicht haschen konnte.

Dieser Bruder ist der Herzschatz der neuen Zeit, wer ihn gefühlt hat zweifelt nicht mehr an ihrem Kommen, und tritt mit süßem Stolz auf seine Zeitgenossenschaft auch aus dem Haufen hervor zu der neuen Schaar der Jünger. Er hat einen neuen Schleier für die Heilige gemacht Der Schleier ist für die Jungfrau, was der Geist für den Leib ist, ihr unentbehrliches Organ dessen Falten die Buchstaben ihrer süßen Verkündigung sind; das unendliche Faltenspiel ist eine Chiffren-Musik, denn die Sprache ist der Jungfrau zu hölzern und zu frech, nur zum Gesang öffnen sich ihre Lippen. Mir ist er nichts als der feierliche Ruf zu einer neuen Urversammlung (NS, III, 521)

The "Bruder" whose annunciation of the coming "neue Zeit" has created a "Schaar der Jünger" is, as the pun on his name indicates, Schleiermacher. Although the new Church which Novalis envisages is radically different in conception to the

idea of the "wahre Kirche" as Schleiermacher outlines it in the fourth "Rede" of the *Reden über die Religion*, the above passage echoes some of the vocabulary and sentiments of the *Reden*, in which the speaker implores his listeners to allow themselves to be led "zu der erhabenen Gemeinschaft wahrhaft religiöser Gemüter, die zwar jetzt zerstreuet und fast unsichtbar ist, deren Geist aber doch überall waltet, wo auch nur wenige im Namen der Gottheit versammelt sind"⁶⁶. Novalis' use of the words "Bruder" and "Bruderkuß" evoke the close-knit communities of the *Herrnhuter* or *Brüderunität*⁶⁷ with whose religious beliefs and practices both he and Schleiermacher were familiar.

Peculiar to the 'Europa-Rede', however, is the description of the new community of the faithful as a "friendensstiftende Loge". Novalis had adumbrated the need for such a "Loge", which would serve as the focus of a new religious inspiration, in a fragment written several months before *Die Christenheit oder Europa*.⁶⁸

Noch ist keine Religion - Man muß eine Bildungsloge ächter Religion erst stiften. Glaubt ihr - daß es Religion gebe - Religion muß gemacht und hervorgebracht werden - durch die Vereinigung mehrerer Menschen. (NS, III, 557)

⁶⁶. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion*, p159.

⁶⁷. For an introduction to the history and ideas of the *Herrnhuter* or Moravian brotherhood see Kurt Galling (Hg.), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 3. Auflage, Bd.1, Tübingen, 1957, pp1439-1446.

⁶⁸. According to Samuel this note was probably written down sometime in Aug.-Sept. 1799 - See NS III, 530-1.

The notion of a "Bildungsloge ächter Religion" is strongly reminiscent of the "ächte Cosmopolitenloge" which Novalis had described in his letter to Friedrich Schlegel of the 10th of December 1798.

...so soll dieser Plan ein Hauptgeschäft meines Lebens werden - Er betrifft

Die Errichtung eines litterairischen, republicanischen Ordens - der durchaus mercantilisch politisch ist - einer ächten Cosmopoliten Loge. Eine Buckdruckerey - ein Buchhandel muß das erste Stamen sein. Jena - Hamburg, oder die Schweitz, wenn Frieden wird - müssen der Sitz des Bureaus werden....Gemeinschaftlicher Fleis, gemeinschaftlicher Kopf - gemeinschaftlicher Kredit kann den kleinen Zündfunken bald vergrößern. Ihr sollt nicht mehr von Buchhändlern litterairisch und politisch gewissermassen dependiren. (NS,IV,269)
(NS,IV,268-9)

Although the context has changed, the function of the "Loge" as a model for an elite oppositional community remains the same. In the 'Europa-Rede' the "friedensstiftende Loge" is linked by implication to the Jesuit order, which was, according to the text, "... Mutter der sogenannten geheimen Gesellschaften, eines jetzt noch unreifen, aber gewiß wichtigen geschichtlichen Keims" (NS,III, 514). The proselytizing fervour of the Jesuits is referred to approvingly in the statement that the Society of Jesus will be eternally "ein Muster aller Gesellschaften ... die eine organische Sehnsucht nach unendlicher Verbreitung und ewiger Dauer fühlen" (NS,III, 513).

Novalis' enthusiasm for the Jesuits is part of a deliberate strategy of provocation, but it also enables him to appropriate a tradition of "oppositional" activity which was anathema to the Enlightenment and link it, on the basis of a structural and functional similarity, to his idea of the

"friendensstiftende Loge": a particularly bold conjugation, given that a part of the *raison d'être* of the "Logen" of the Freemasons and Illuminati consisted in their desire to counter the influence of Catholicism. Over and above this, the comparison seems to suggest that he conceives of the "Loge" as having a wider, more active role than that of the "litterairische[n], republikanische[n] Orden[s]" which is the predecessor to the "Bildungsloge ächter Religion". The necessity of collective action is underlined in the fragment quoted above by the assertion that "...Religion muß gemacht und hervorgebracht werden - durch die Vereinigung mehrerer Menschen". Novalis restates this view in a slightly different form in one of the "Randbemerkungen" which he wrote to Friedrich Schlegel's *Ideen* sometime between late September and mid-October of 1799⁶⁹. He addresses Schlegel and declares:

Du wirst der Paulus der neuen Religion seyn, der überall anbricht - einer der Erstlinge des neuen Zeitalters - des Religiösen. Mit dieser Religion fängt sich eine neue Weltgeschichte an. Du verstehst die Geheimnisse der Zeit - Auf dich hat die Revolution gewirckt, was sie wircken sollte, oder du bist vielmehr ein unsichtbares Glied der heiligen Revolution, die ein Messias im Pluralis, auf Erden erschienen ist. (NS, III, 493)

The phrase "Messias im Pluralis" echoes a speculation which Novalis had committed to paper three or four months earlier⁷⁰. It begins as follows:

⁶⁹. See NS, III, 482-3

⁷⁰. Samuel dates this note (No. 107) to "Sommer 1799" - see NS III, 532.

Über die menschliche Unsterblichkeit *en masse* - Über das Leben und Denken in masse - Gemeinschaft - *Pluralism* ist unser innerstes Wesen ... (NS, III, 517)

Considered in conjunction, the three fragments I have quoted articulate a conception of a possible form of collective activity which would involve not just an elite of the initiate, but a community, an association of individual subjects *en masse*. It is true that this activity is conceived of primarily as "Denken", or what we might call "intellectual production", and as such harks back to the idea of "das Schreiben in Gesellschaft" which was discussed in an earlier chapter. Here Novalis had explicitly bridged the gap between thought and action in speculating that "... Man wird vielleicht in Masse schreiben, denken, und handeln" (II, 645). Although he does not explicitly refer in his reflections on religion to "mass action" as such, the notions that religion must be collectively "produced", and that the Christian religion constitutes a kind of raw material which artists may shape and manipulate, are explored in a number of other contemporaneous notes and fragments. Novalis implies that there is a close connection, if not an identity, between aesthetic and religious production; both are, in the literal sense of the word, demiurgic. Furthermore, both can and should be practised collectively. In this collective or communal activity, which is given a specific metaphorical concretization in the idea of a "Messias im Pluralis", we may recognize a refracted image or inversion of the collective or

⁷¹. See NS III, 488, No. 15, also NS, III, 562, 48, III, 566, Nos. 76 & 84, and III, 569, No. 97.

general will which had manifested itself politically in revolutionary France. The "Pluralism" envisaged by Novalis has, to be sure, been disassociated from the complementary notion of a social contract upon which Rousseau's elaboration of the concept of the *volonté générale* and its revolutionary offshoots depend. In this sense, one might argue that it represents a depoliticized version of the general will. At the same time, however, it stands in sharp contrast to the hierarchical organization of intellectual and aesthetic activity in the "Familienmonarchie" described in *Glauben und Liebe*. In this respect it is perhaps comparable with the ideal form of the bourgeois public sphere as Habermas had characterized it:

The fragments which we have been considering all date from the months immediately prior to the writing of *Die Christenheit oder Europa*. The text itself does not, at first glance, display any signs of an attempt to develop the idea of collective religious "production". Indeed, the closing passage of the text seems to suggest that in moving from an oppositional role to one of public dominance and leadership, the "friedensstiftende Loge" will take on a decidedly paternalistic aspect:

⁷². See Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, p50. Habermas stresses that the suspension of class and status differences was only possible outside the state: "...Zunächst ist eine Art gesellschaftlichen Verkehrs gefordert, der nicht etwa die Gleichheit des Status voraussetzt, sondern von diesem überhaupt absieht" (p52). Similarly, it seems likely that Novalis' fragmentary utopia of collective aesthetic production can only exist outside the hierarchical social order which he appears to favour.

Sollte es nicht in Europa bald eine Menge wahrhaft heiliger Gemüther wieder geben, sollten nicht alle wahrhaft Religionsverwandte voll Sehnsucht werden, den Himmel auf Erden zu erblicken? ... Aus dem heiligen Schooße eines ehrwürdigen europäischen Consiliums wird die Christenheit aufstehn, und das Geschäft der Religionserweckung, nach einem allumfassenden, göttlichem Plane betrieben werden. Keiner wird dann mehr protestiren gegen christlichen und weltlichen Zwang, denn das Wesen der Kirche wird ächte Freiheit seyn, und alle nöthigen Reformen werden unter der Leitung derselben, als freundliche und förmliche Staatsprozesse betrieben werden. (NS, III, 524)

I have quoted this passage a number of times already, but the repetition has been necessary in order to show how the different elements contained therein relate to the complex and contradictory impulses which inform the text as a whole. Novalis replaces Kant's exemplary formulation of the Enlightenment view of history as "die Vollziehung eines verborgenen Plans der Natur" with a chiliastic conception of a new age governed by "einem allumfassenden, göttlichem [sic] Plane". The latter is, to a certain extent, a transformation of the former, and it would be possible, within the terms of this transformation, to see in the new Church a post-revolutionary, re-sacralized successor to the "geschichts-philosophischer Planer" who, according to Koselleck, were the motive force behind the Enlightenment's disguised attack on the *ancient régime*. Indeed, it bears a strong resemblance to the elite "Zunft" which is described in the opening passage of the text.

The true character of the "neue Kirche" as Novalis envisages it becomes more clearly apparent if we compare it with Schleiermacher's conception of the "wahre Kirche".

Schleiermacher adopts the language of the revolutionary Enlightenment to describe a church in which there will be no rigid hierarchical distinctions "zwischen Priestern und Laien"⁷³, but rather a free and fluid association of equals:

Jeder ist Priester, indem er die andern zu sich hinzieht auf das Feld, welches er sich besonders zugeeignet hat, und wo er sich als Virtuosen darstellen kann: jeder ist Laie, indem er der Kunst und Weisung eines andern dahin folgt, wo er selbst Fremder ist in der Religion. Es gibt nicht jene tyrannische Aristokratie, die Ihr so gehässig beschreibt: ein priesterliches Volk ist diese Gesellschaft, eine vollkommene Republik, wo jeder abwechselnd Führer und Volk ist ...⁷⁴

Although the terminology used in this passage is explicitly political, Schleiermacher is at great pains in the *Reden* to stress that the "wahre Kirche" must be entirely distinct from the state. Indeed, he refers to the conjoining of the temporal and spiritual powers in one particularly vehement section of the fourth *Rede* as "die Quelle alles Verderbens"⁷⁵, and calls for an end to "jede[r] solch[n] Verbindung zwischen Kirche und Staat!"⁷⁶. The "wahre Kirche" is thus a community existing either outside the state, or else occupying a position within the state comparable with the "moralischer Innenraum" which, according to Koselleck, the bourgeois intelligentsia had inhabited prior to the Revolution.

⁷³. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion*, p 131.

⁷⁴. *ibid.*

⁷⁵. *ibid.*, p 147

⁷⁶. *ibid.*, p 153

Furthermore, Schleiermacher expressly condemns "Bekehrungswut", and argues that the communication of religious experience is "... ein Privatgeschäft des einzelnen für sich", and not the proper concern of an institutionalized church⁷⁷.

There are some obvious similarities between the "wahre Kirche" and the various forms of oppositional community which are evoked in Novalis' texts, including the "friedensstiftende Loge". But the "sichtbare Kirche" which appears at the end of the 'Eruopa-Rede", which will presumably evolve from the "Loge" or "unsichtbare Kirche", is explicitly identified with the state and state power:

Keiner wird dann mehr protestiren gegen christlichen und weltlichen Zwang, denn das Wesen der Kirche wird ächte Freiheit seyn, und alle nöthigen Reformen werden unter der Leitung derselben, als friedliche und förmliche Staatsprozesse betrieben werden. (NS, III, 524)

It seems, therefore, that the possibility of non-hierarchical, collective religious or aesthetic activity which is entertained in the fragments will not be realized within the new Church. However, Novalis does raise this possibility at another point in his argument, namely in the passage in which he extols the unique character and achievements of the Germans.

7.7 "Deutschheit" revisited

⁷⁷. *ibid.*, pp 135-6

Taking up again the speculations about the nature of "Deutschart" which he had developed in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, Novalis writes:

In Deutschland ... kann man schon mit voller Gewißheit die Spuren einer neuen Welt aufzeigen. Deutschland geht einen langsamen aber sichern Gang vor den übrigen europäischen Ländern voraus. Während diese durch Krieg, Spekulation und Parthey-Geist beschäftigt sind, bildet sich der Deutsche mit allem Fleiß zum Genossen einer höhern Epoche der Cultur, und dieser Vorschrift muß ihm ein großes Übergewicht über die Andere[n] im Lauf der Zeit geben. In Wissenschaften und Künsten wird man eine gewaltige Gährung gewahr. Unendlich viel Geist wird entwickelt Alles wird bearbeitet Eine Vielseitigkeit ohne Gleichen, eine wunderbare Tiefe, eine glänzende Politur, vielumfassende Kenntnisse und eine reiche kräftige Fantasie findet man hie und da, und oft kühn gepaart. (NS, III, 519)

A little earlier in the text it is stated that the work of Enlightenment had been carried out especially thoroughly in Germany⁷⁸. The text seems to suggest that this process was in fact the precondition for the present advanced state of the German people⁷⁹. In the continuation of the passage, however, the speaker abandons the discourse of Enlightenment and adopts a distinctly mythicising mode of description:

⁷⁸. See NS, III, 516: "In Deutschland betrieb man dieses Geschäft gründlicher ... etc".

⁷⁹. In the continuation of the passage on the Enlightenment Novalis states that "... eine zweite Reformation, eine umfassendere und eigenthümlichere war unvermeidlich, und mußte das Land zuerst treffen, daß am meisten modernisiert war, und am längsten aus Mangel an Freiheit in asthenischem Zustande gelegen hatte" (NS, III, 517). Plainly it is France which is meant here, rather than Germany, which would logically seem to suggest that by modernization Novalis means *not* the spread of the Enlightenment, but rather the social and economic order which had fostered it - by which he seems to understand the enlightened absolutist state: "Längst hätte sich das überirdische Feuer Luft gemacht, und kie klügen Aufklärungs-Pläne vereitelt, wenn nicht weltlicher Druck und Einfluß denselben zu Statten gekommen wßren" (NS, III, 517).

Eine gewaltige Ahndung der schöpferischen Willkühr, der Grenzenlosigkeit, der unendlichen Mannigfaltigkeit, der heiligen Eigenthümlichkeit und der Allfähigkeit der innern Menschheit scheint überall rege zu werden. Aus dem Morgentraum der unbehülflichen Kindheit erwacht, übt ein Theil des Geschlechts seine ersten Kräfte an Schlangen, die seine Wiege umschlingen und den Gebrauch seiner Gliedmaßen ihm benehmen wollen. (NS, III, 519)

Richard Samuel sees the last sentence of this passage as a reference to the story of Laocoon, whilst Gerhard Schulz interprets it as an allusion to the legend concerning the infant Hercules, according to which he throttled two snakes sent by Hera to kill him with his bare hands⁸⁰. This latter reading seems the more likely one; and if we consider the image in its historical context it is possible to construe it as an allegory of the situation of the awakening German nation, cast in the role of the young Hercules, surrounded by "Schlangen" in the shape of the French armies. The actual military position of the German states at the time was somewhat ambiguous; some impressive gains had been made earlier in the year, but by October, the month during which Novalis appears to have produced the manuscript of *Die Christenheit*, the French had counter-attacked successfully in Zürich and the Second Coalition was about to collapse. The comparison with the infant Hercules might just as fittingly have been applied to revolutionary France itself, as it had been already earlier in the decade⁸¹. Interestingly enough, the attribute of youth, which functions elsewhere in the "Europa-Rede", and in earlier texts of Novalis' as a

⁸⁰. See NS, III, 1015, and NW, 808

⁸¹. See Hans-Wolf Jäger, *Politische Metaphorik im Jakobinismus und Vormärz*, pp55-6.

metaphorical representation of the revolutionary impulse, is associated here with Germany. Plainly, the identity which the text constructs for Germany and the Germans embodies certain contradictions, as evidenced by the fact that the Hercules allusion contrasts sharply with the earlier statement that the Germans are rightly occupying themselves with cultural development rather than "... Krieg, Spekulation und Parthey-Geist" - which may itself be a reference to Prussia's policy of neutrality in the revolutionary wars.

Such contradictions can be seen as the product of a tension between what we might call a cultural and a political nationalism. On one level "Deutschheit" is a form of cosmopolitan individualism which is not identical with any political or geographical entity and is thus unmoved by "Parthey-Geist" or national chauvinism. This is the form of cultural nationalism which is articulated in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*⁸². At another level the mythicising tendencies of Novalis' discourse tend to constitute the identity of the German nation in such a way that, within the context of the contemporary condition of Europe, it can only be understood as a political entity, a subject and object of history. This ambiguity is given a further twist by the continuation of the passage, which switches abruptly from the mythological tradition of antiquity to that of Christianity:

Noch sind alles nur Andeutungen, unzusammenhängend und roh, aber sie verrathen dem historischen Auge eine

⁸². See earlier chapter on the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, and especially VB No. 66: "Deutsche giebt es überall ..." NS, II, 438.

universelle Individualität, eine neue Geschichte, eine neue Menschheit, die süßeste Umarmung einer jungen überraschten Kirche und eines liebenden Gottes, und das innige Empfängniß eines neuen Messias in ihren tausend Gliedern zugleich. Wer fühlt sich nicht mit süßer Scham guter Hoffnung? (NS,III, 519)

Whilst we may well have some sympathy with Richard Samuel's opinion that the last sentence of this passage is "unvergeßbar geschmacklos"⁸³, it is important to recognize the range of connotations which the conflation of religious and erotic imagery brings into play. The metaphorical depiction of the church as the bride of Christ has its origins in the earliest Christian traditions; here, however, it seems to be alloyed with elements of the stories of Leda and the swan, and Zeus and Alkmene. This latter allusion would establish a connection with the Hercules image, and thus suggest an analogy between the "Messias" and the youthful, "Herculean" German nation.

At any rate, the conception which is described here is most definitely sexual rather than immaculate in nature. Furthermore, it is effected in a manner which as the adjective "überrascht" suggests, affords what is at best a passive role, if not that of the victim of a divine rape, to the "junge Kirche"⁸⁴. The "Neue Geschichte" and "neue Menschheit" whose advent is certain for those who can read the signs will be the fruit of this "süßeste Umarmung", which will involve "das

⁸³. See Richard Samuel, Die Form von Friedrich von Hardenbergs Abhandlung <Die Christenheit oder Europa>, p297.

⁸⁴. Compared with the image of an ecstatic union of all humanity of *GuL* No. 16, this "umarmung" involves a definite element of domination.

innige Empfängniß eines neuen Messias in ihren (der Kirche) tausend Gliedern zugleich". This image is deeply ambiguous. On the one hand it echoes the formulation "Messias im Pluralis" and implies a dimension of collectivity which is underlined by the androgynous character of the new Church⁸⁵. At the same time, the metaphor of mass conception is grounded in a breaking-down of the distinction between public and private experience. The collectively experienced historical process and individually experienced sexual intimacy are fused, but in such a way as to allow the "junge Kirche", which is presented quite clearly as the object of sexual domination, not a hint of active participation or "Mitspracherecht" in the shaping of the "Neue Geschichte". This impression is reinforced by the use of the metaphor of "Geburtswehen" slightly later in the text, at the close of the passage which refers to Schleiermacher, and by the continuation of the passage we have just been considering:

Das Neugeborne wird das Abbild seines Vaters, eine neue goldne Zeit mit dunkeln unendlichen Augen, eine profetische wunderthätige und wundenheilende, tröstende und ewiges Leben entzündende Zeit sein - eine große Versöhnungszeit, ein Heiland, der wie ein ächter Genius unter den Menschen einheimisch, nur geglaubt nicht gesehen werden (kann), und unter zahllosen Gestalten den Gläubigen sichtbar, als Brod und Wein, verzehrt, als Geliebte umarmt, als Luft geathmet, als Wort und Gesang vernommen, und mit himmlischer Wollust, als Tod, unter den höchsten Schmerzen der Liebe, in das Innre des verbrauchenden Leibes aufgenommen wird. (NS, III, 520)

The use of sexual imagery to describe ecstatic religious experience has a long history in the Christian mystical

⁸⁵. See Wilfried Malsch, *Poetische Rede*, p103, and Anm. 173 on that page.

tradition. Yet, as I have indicated above, there is a further dimension to the erotic metaphor employed in the text. This consists in the representation not just of the sexual domination of woman by man, but also of individual or collective subjects by the historical process or its orchestrator. In this instance, the prior course of history is to be brought to an end by a "große Versöhnungszeit" and superseded by a "neue Geschichte". The agent of this process is God the Father - "Das Neugeborne wird das Abbild seines Vaters" - and His role with regard to His subjects is that of patriarch, possessor and impregnator. Viewing the text from this perspective, it is not difficult to make a structural and psychological identification between the heavenly father, the autocratic "Oberhaupt" mentioned in the opening passage of the text, his royal predecessor in *Glauben und Liebe*, and the patriarch of the bourgeois "Kleinfamilie".

Clearly, the homology of divine, temporal and domestic patriarchy which I have identified needs to be understood in the context of a detailed investigation of the inter-relationships of power, sexuality and social structures in Novalis' texts⁸⁶. Nevertheless, it is plain that the imagery of sexual domination which Novalis uses to describe the moment of chiliastic transformation which will "engender" the "neue goldne Zeit" suggests that this process will occur under the aegis of a divine will, and will inhibit or preclude the

⁸⁶. A step in this direction is taken in Kittler, Friedrich, *Der Dichter, die Mutter, das Kind. Zur romantischen Erfindung der Sexualität*, in: Brinkmann, (Hg.), *Romantik in Deutschland*, pp 102-114

active exercise of a collective will or what we might term a collective aesthetic practice on the part of human subjects.

As we have already seen, there is at least an associative link between the "junge[n] überraschte[n] Kirche" and Germany or the Germans. This is reinforced by the annunciation of "eine universelle Individualität" in the same breath as "eine neue Geschichte" and "eine neue Menschheit", since "universelle Individualität" corresponds very closely to the definition of "Deutschheit" which Novalis had developed in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and stated in his letter to A.W. Schlegel of 30.10.1797⁸⁷. In arguing at the beginning of the passage concerning the Germans that it is primarily and particularly in Germany that one can discern "die Spuren einer neuen Welt" he is, in fact, following Schleiermacher, who addresses his educated countrymen in the first of the *Reden* with a fervent plea for their attention:

... an wen soll ich mich damit wenden als an Euch? Wo anders wären Hörer für meine Rede? Es ist nicht blinde Vorliebe für den väterlichen Boden oder für die Mitgenossen der Verfassung und der Sprache, was mich so reden macht, sondern die innige Überzeugung, daß Ihr die einzigen seid, welche fähig und also würdig sind, daß der Sinn ihnen aufgeregt werde für heilige und göttliche Dinge. ... Hier im väterlichen Lande ist das beglückte Klima, was keine Frucht gänzlich versagt, hier findet Ihr alles zerstreut, was die Menschheit ziert, und alles, was gedeiht, bildet sich irgendwo, im Einzelnen wenigstens, zu seiner schönsten Gestalt; hier fehlt es weder an weiser Mäßigung noch an stiller Betrachtung. Hier also muß sich eine Freistatt finden vor der plumpen Barbarei und dem kalten irdischen Sinne des Zeitalters.⁸⁸

⁸⁷. NS, IV, 237: "Deutschheit ist Kosmopolitismus mit der kräftigsten Individualität gemischt".

⁸⁸. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion*, pp 27-9

Schleiermacher's conclusion that true religion is most likely to flourish in Germany derives in part from his criticism of the English, whom he sees as being concerned only with the pursuit of self-interest and "eine jämmerliche Empirie", and the French, whom he castigates for their indifference to the Revolution, which he calls "die erhabenste Tat des Universums"⁸⁹ The portrayal of the Germans in the 'Europa-Rede' echoes Schleiermacher's text without making concrete comparisons with other nations. If we consider the two passages quoted in conjunction, there would seem to be strong grounds for arguing that the new church will in fact be identical with the German nation as it is constituted in this particular text.

This identification has some very important consequences for our evaluation of Novalis' version of nationalism, and for the evaluation of the political significance of the text as a whole. It is useful to call to mind at this point Stolberg's description of Germany in 1789 as "unser zwar unvaterländisches, aber desto mehr cosmopolitisches Deutschland"⁹⁰, and to ask whether or not the conception of Germany we find ten years later in the 'Europa-Rede' is radically different. The question acquires a certain keenness when we consider that the text was produced at a historical watershed, that is to say at the very moment before Napoleon's

⁸⁹ . *ibid.*, p 28

⁹⁰ . Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg an Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, 12. Sept. 1789, quoted in Träger, *Die Französische Revolution im Spiegel*, p 4

seizure of power ushered in a completely new phase of the revolutionary wars and Germany's involvement in them.

It is a commonplace of the historiography of the period that it was ultimately Napoleon who catalysed the development of a conservative German nationalism, which evolved in a quite different direction to that taken by socially progressive nationalist movements in other European countries⁹¹. There is doubtless a great deal of truth in this; but it seems to me that in *Die Christenheit oder Europa* we can see the construction of a German national identity in the moment of transformation, poised between a cosmopolitan cultural nationalism and the fiercely chauvinistic versions of "Deutschheit" which begin to emerge in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and find their most grotesque and extreme expression in Kleist's patriotic writings.

This may become somewhat more clear if we consider some of the structural and thematic affinities between the two forms of nationalism as they are articulated in the 'Europa-Rede' and earlier texts. The cosmopolitan notion of "Deutschheit" which is invoked in the passage quoted above refers back to the fragments in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and statements in some later letters, which define the essence of "German-ness" as a supra-national phenomenon, a counterpoising of universality and individuality. The lineage of German

⁹¹. See Heinrich, Gerda, *Geschichtsphilosophische Positionen der deutschen Frühromantik*, Kronberg/TS., 1977, pp 128-9, 239-40.

political and literary culture is extended back to Roman antiquity - a strategy which itself involves some problems, since a good deal of the impetus for the development of an independent German literary culture, as propounded by the *Sturm und Drang* and Herder, had come from the rejection of French neo-classicism and its rigid adherence to Greek, but more particularly Roman aesthetic precepts. In a sense, however, Novalis is merely attempting to correct an incongruity in the status of France as a symbol in the discourses of the German Enlightenment during the revolutionary decade.

Up to 1789, France and French culture had functioned as representations of the old order in the aesthetic sphere and its political correlate. When the German intelligentsia declares its initial fervent enthusiasm and support for the Revolution, it seems that its previous antipathy towards all things French is forgotten. For a moment, the political subsumes the aesthetic; whereas previously the two discourses had, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, become intertwined, each conditioning the other and borrowing its concepts and terminology, politics at least appears to become the "master discourse", as France becomes the embodiment of all positive values. As the Revolution takes its course, and German attitudes to it begin to polarize, aesthetic discourse once again become a prime vehicle for the articulation of political argument. At the same time, even those German writers who continue to support the Revolution during and after its radical phase declare that, whilst France may have

progressed far beyond Germany in the political sphere, German literature is the most aesthetically progressive in Europe.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Friedrich Schlegel himself had argued in the *Studium-Aufsatz* that one of the principal effects of the Revolution in France had been to intensify the one-sidedness of the French national character, a development diametrically opposed to the German movement towards universality. We can see this "cultural chauvinism" as a continuation of the pre-Revolutionary German Enlightenment's attempts to create a separate literary identity for itself; Schleiermacher and Novalis take it a step further, in that they generalize the aesthetic ascendancy of the Germans onto other areas. German culture is portrayed as the truly progressive European culture; and in Novalis' version it is projected both back into history, by virtue of its status as heir apparent to the culture of Roman antiquity, and also "synchronically" across the breadth of Europe. In dissociating "Deutschheit" from Germany as a national political entity, Novalis appears to be allying himself with the cosmopolitan Enlightenment. But "Deutschheit" is really another synonym for the elite oppositional culture of the initiate, as the implied linking of the German nation and the new Church in the 'Europa-Rede' makes plain.

As I have argued in the chapter on *Glauben und Liebe*, this elite culture occupies much the same position with regard to the dominant culture of the post-Revolutionary Enlightenment as the Enlightenment had to the feudal

absolutist state. It is an embattled minority culture, striving to assert an independent identity in the face of an all-pervasive "Philistertum"; and, as such, it has a certain affinity with the embattled German nation, a nation which does not yet exist in its modern incarnation, but is nevertheless able to look backwards to a more glorious past and forward to a unity necessitated not just by the exigencies of war, but also by the economic and social pressures of modernization and the advent of the bourgeois capitalist order.

Once we have recognized this affinity, it is possible to see how cosmopolitan cultural nationalism could have, and did transform itself into a chauvinistic political nationalism under the pressure of Napoleon's sustained onslaught on the integrity of the German states. Furthermore, we may now observe that Novalis; condemnation of nationalism, and his insistence that the "fall" represented by the division of Europe must be reversed by the inauguration of a "sichtbare Kirche ohne Rücksicht auf Landesgränzen", actually conceals a *potentially* extreme form of nationalism. It is quite plausible to construe the cumulative argumentation of the text as pointing towards a Europe ruled over by a central and autocratic spiritual authority which will, logically, be German. This is not to say that Novalis has written a blueprint for the establishment of a German "tausendjähriges Reich". He himself would doubtless have seen his vision of the new Church as embodying values which were essentially progressive and humanistic, and tied primarily to a notion of

"universelle Individualität" rather than an aggressive nationalism.

Nevertheless, the reading of the text which I have proposed is entirely consistent with a dimension of its internal processes of metaphorical association and predication which is, as it were, the refracted image of the cosmopolitan anti-nationalist perspective which it appears to be elaborating. The potentially chauvinistic elements of the 'Europa-Rede' anticipate tendencies which were to appear in analogous, but more extreme form in the literature of the "Befreiungskriege" and the subsequent "Restauration", for example in the writings of Görres.

This is not the place to raise the important and complex question of the Fascist reception and appropriation of Romanticism in the Nazi period. It seems to me, however, that in the light of the interpretation which I have given, it becomes easier to understand how texts such as *Die Christenheit oder Europa* could be pressed into the service of a German fascist ideology with strongly chauvinistic, not to say expansionist motives. Over and above this, there can be no doubt that, despite the text's final rehabilitation of the Enlightenment and its assurance that the essence of the new Church will be "ächte Freiheit", its constant underlying impulse is towards a revocation of one of the central tenets of the enlightenment, namely the belief that individual subjects could participate collectively and democratically in the shaping of history. Indeed, the most powerful image of

the relationship between ruler and ruled which the text offers us is that of the sexual domination of the "junge[n] überraschte[n] Kirche" by God the Father. No matter how loving the father, and how sweet the embrace, this image, and the consistent identification of an autocratic, paternalistic order with the church which it typifies, represents a step backwards not just from the Revolution, but from the enlightenment itself, and a step towards passivity and quietism for those whom the Enlightenment had sought to empower. It is perhaps no accident that the mythical account of Leda's rape by Zeus, an allusion to which is arguably intended simultaneously with the reference to the Christian tradition, was used more than a century later by Yeats as a vehicle for his reflections on the nature of power and domination. The following lines might serve as an epilogue to some of the more historically fateful elements of *Die Christenheit oder Europa*.

Being so caught up,
 So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?⁹²

⁹² See Yeats, William Butler, *Collected Poems*, 2nd. Edition, London, 1971, p 241

CONCLUSION

If there is one great theme, one common concern which pervades all of the texts which we have been considering, it is the construction and representation of the idea of the collective. The fundamental problems with which Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel grapple in their political and historical theory have to do with the constitution of collective identity, the relationship between the individual and the social whole, and the role of collective agency in history. These problems had been posed by the Enlightenment - above all by Rousseau - and made concrete in a form never before experienced in the history of Western Europe by the French Revolution. They were no less manifest and immediate as the new century began than they had been when Novalis and Schlegel began writing. One could describe the development of their political theory from the *Studium-Aufsatz* through to *Die Christenheit oder Europa* as an exploration of different metaphorical models for collectivity, each of which is genetically related to the theoretical notion of the *volonté générale*, and to the "republikanische Öffentlichkeit" which would provide the forum for its exercise. Amongst these models are the "objektive Poesie" of the *Studium-Aufsatz* and its offspring in the *Athenäum* - the notions of "republikanische Rede", the theory of the novel, and the practice of mass writing - and Novalis' conceptions of the "poetischer Staat", the "Familienmonarchie", and of a Europe united by religion in a state of eternal peace. All of them share common elements and associations which are latent in their "Hinter-

grundmetaphorik", to use Blumenberg's term. Furthermore, each of them is identified to a greater or lesser extent with the concept of "Deutschheit", which itself serves as a kind of overarching metaphor for an ideal collectivity. "Deutschheit" subsumes many of the progressive or republican impulses of the other models; but its ideal status tends also to be contaminated at times by the realities of contemporary history. Or, to put it another way, there are points of contact between the "erhabene Idee der Deutschheit" and the decidedly less sublime forms of German nationalism which begin to emerge at the turn of the century. I shall return to this point a little later.

It is normally regarded as a contravention of the rules of debate to introduce new material in the summing-up. There is, however, a strategic reason which I think justifies the irregular course I am about to take. I am going to propose an interpretative hypothesis which I think will furnish a useful model for understanding the proliferation of metaphorical models for collectivity in the texts we have been considering, and their relationship one to another. This hypothesis I intend to outline and illuminate through reference to a text which not only offers a further model of collectivity, but also thematizes the processes of proliferation and transformation which we have observed. This text is Friedrich Schlegel's *Rede über die Mythologie*.

My hypothesis is, simply, that the series of metaphorical models for collectivity evolved by Schlegel and Novalis are

variants of a myth, and that the processes whereby one is transformed into, or conflated with another, approximate some of the features of mythical discourse identified by Lévi-Strauß and his successors. I have touched on this subject already in the chapter on *Glauben und Liebe*, where I argued that Kirk's concept of the "speculative myth" could be usefully applied to the discursive structures of some of Novalis' fragments. If we supplement this theoretical framework with the definition of myths as "stylistically definable discourses that express the strong elements of semantic systems" given by Pierre Maranda, it becomes possible to see in the texts under discussion a progressive reorganization of certain "strong elements" into different configurations with the same underlying or inherent structure¹. Precisely what these elements are, and how fruitful the application of this particular theoretical model is in bringing to light an underlying coherence in the texts, should become apparent in the following pages.

Schlegel began work on the *Gespräch über die Poesie*, of which the *Rede über die Mythologie* forms a part, around July or August of 1799, and finished it the following January. At the time he was also in the process of completing the *Ideen*, a collection of fragments which was subsequently published along with the first part of the *Gespräch* in March 1800 in the *Athenäum*. Interestingly enough, it is the *Rede* itself, rather than the *Gespräch* as a whole, which has become one of the central documents of the Early Romantic canon and generated a

¹. See Maranda, Pierre (Ed.), *Mythology. Selected Readings*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p 13

large body of secondary literature. Recently, two comprehensive and illuminating interpretations of the *Rede*, whose conclusions about its political significance are almost diametrically opposed, have been put forward by Manfred Frank and Karl-Heinz Bohrer. Since my reading of the text will situate itself somewhere between theirs, it will be useful to summarize both interpretations briefly here.

In the seventh chapter of his book *Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die neue Mythologie*, Frank reads Schlegel's text in conjunction with a fragment of disputed authorship but comparable importance for the literary history of the period, the so-called *Ältestes Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*. As Frank says, it is hard to believe that Schlegel wrote the *Rede* entirely independently of the *Systemprogramm*, given the very strong similarities in the argumentation of both texts². Both, according to Frank, are concerned primarily with a problem of legitimation. The author of the *Systemprogramm* launches an attack on the analytical conception of reason on the grounds "...daß sie [die analytische Vernunft] mit der erfolgreichen Kritik an den ideologischen Rechtfertigungsversuchen des Feudalismus zugleich die Möglichkeit zerstört habe, menschliche Gesellschaft überhaupt noch zu legitimieren"³. He recognizes that reason cannot

². See Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 205

³. Frank, Manfred, *Der kommende Gott*, p 188. I have assumed for the sake of simplicity that the author of the *Systemprogramm* is singular and masculine. Certainly there is no reason to discount the possibility that the text was written co-operatively by Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling; but since it actually contains a "speaking subject", I refer to an author rather than authors.

provide its own transcendental legitimation, unlike myth, which Frank defines as a "Begründungs-Rede"⁴. For him, the state can only draw its legitimacy from a single source, namely from the "Idee der Freiheit"⁵. In order for this idea to be made manifest and communicable a "Mythologie der Vernunft" must be brought into being, a mythology which will exist "im Dienste der Ideen" and imbue them with a transcendental legitimacy⁶. The motivation behind this argument is, Frank asserts, utopian and "radikal volksdemokratisch" in nature⁷, and he bases this assertion on the following passage from the *Systemprogramm*:

Ehe wir die Ideen ästhetisch d.h. mythologisch machen, haben sie für das Volk kein Interesse und umgekehrt ehe die Mythologie vernünftig ist, muß sich der Philosoph ihrer schämen. So müssen endlich Aufgeklärte und Unaufgeklärte sich die Hand reichen, die Mythologie muß philosophisch werden, um das Volk vernünftig, und die Philosophie muß mythologisch werden, um die Philosophen sinnlich zu machen. Dann erst erwartet uns gleiche Ausbildung aller Kräfte, des Einzelnen sowohl als aller Individuen. Keine Kraft wird mehr unterdrückt werden, dann herrscht allgemeine Freiheit und Gleichheit der Geister!⁸

The construction of the new mythology of reason will be an act of aesthetic, and not simply intellectual or

4. Frank, *ibid.* See also Chapter 1 of the same book, in which Frank establishes his definition of myth as a "Begründungs-Rede".

5. *ibid.*, p 189

6. Cf *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*, in: Hölderlin, Friedrich, *Sämtliche Werke*, Hg. von Friedrich Beissner, Stuttgart, 1961, Bd.IV, pp 297-299

7. Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 189

8. *Systemprogramm*, p 299

philosophical production; as the author of the *Systemprogramm* declares

Ich bin nun überzeugt, daß der höchste Akt der Vernunft ein ästhetischer Akt ist, und daß Wahrheit und Güte, nur in der *Schönheit* verschwistert sind.

Thus literature or "poetry", as the locus of "das Schöne" in the broadest sense, become a possible way of supplying the "Legitimationsdefizit der analytischen Vernunft"¹⁰. Frank demonstrates that the inability of the absolutist German states to lay claim to any kind of political legitimacy is traced by Schelling, Schleiermacher and Schlegel to the "Verlust einer funktionierenden Öffentlichkeit"¹¹. None of these writers, however, see the bourgeois revolutionary order of the Thermidorean state as a viable model for "Öffentlichkeit", and this leads them to search for alternative models in the realms of aesthetics and religion.

As Frank points out, Schlegel's text differs from the *Systemprogramm* in that it forms part of what is ostensibly a purely poetological discourse devoid of any explicit reference to politics or the nature of the state. Yet it too is concerned with the fragmentation of the social order, and the lack of any unifying source of legitimacy which could underpin a sense of collective identity. Ludovico, the speaker of the

⁹. *Systemprogramm*, p 298

¹⁰. Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 194

¹¹. *ibid.*, p 195

Rede, describes to his friends the aesthetic consequences of this specifically modern condition:

Soll die Kraft der Begeisterung auch in der Poesie sich immerfort einzeln versplittern und wenn sie sich müde gekämpft hat gegen das widrige Element, endlich einsam verstummen? ... Ihr vor allen müßt wissen, was ich meine. Ihr habt selbst gedichtet, und Ihr müßt es oft im Dichten gefühlt haben, daß es Euch an einem festen Halt für Euer Wirken gebracht, an einem mütterlichen Boden, einem Himmel, einer lebendigen Luft.

Aus dem Innern herausarbeiten das alles muß der moderne Dichter, und viele haben es herrlich getan, aber bis jetzt nur jeder allein, jedes Werk wie eine neue Schöpfung von vorn an aus Nichts.

Ich gehe gleich zum Ziel. Es fehlt, behaupte ich, unsrer Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es die Mythologie für die der Alten war, und alles Wesentliche, worin die moderne Dichtkunst der antiken nachsteht, läßt sich in die Worte zusammenfassen: Wir haben keine Mythologie. (KA, II, 311-2)

Aesthetic production for the modern writer is thus of necessity an essentially individual and subjective activity¹². It is this point which Bohrer seizes on in his essay entitled *Utopie >>Kunstwerk<<*, in which he argues that the *Rede über die Mythologie* is an early and important example of a tendency in utopian discourse which was to become pronounced in the nineteenth century. This is the tendency towards a "Reduktion der gesellschaftlichen Utopie auf den Augenblick des Subjekts": it manifests itself in and through a "radikale Verzeitlichung der utopischen Antizipation", such that utopian consciousness is reduced to the private and subjective "moment" of aesthetic experience¹³. According to Bohrer,

¹². *ibid.*, p 206

Schlegel abandons in the *Rede* both the notions of the progress and perfectibility of mankind and the metaphorical models for the historical process which figure in the historical and political speculations of the *Studium-Aufsatz*. He replaces them with an essentially chiliastic notion of historical change as a moment of sudden and ecstatic transformation. This notion was, Bohrer maintains, already present in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, but achieved increasing prominence in Schlegel's thinking as the turn of the century approached, and eventually supplanted the conception of human history as the ever-closer approximation over time of an unattainable utopian ideal¹⁴.

Along with its claim to a teleological inevitability, the "neue Mythologie" is also, according to Bohrer, in danger of forfeiting the universal legitimacy or "objectivity" to which Schlegel's earlier utopian constructs aspired, the ability to be what myth and utopian discourse must be, namely a "kollektiv Verpflichtendes"¹⁵. Bohrer explains this process thus:

...das nach der Revolution auf den Augenblick seiner Verinnerlichung zurückgeworfene, ästhetisch gewordene Subjekt bedarf als Gegenstrategie einer neuen Objektivierung, eines neuen >>Mittelpunktes<<. Diese Objektivierung geschieht im Entwurf der >>neuen Mythologie<< nicht als Rückzug auf Archaisches, sondern als Artefakt. In dieser Dialektik bleibt die Intersubjektivität erhalten. Sie beruht aber nun nicht mehr auf dem Paradigma der >>Idee<< beziehungsweise der >>Institution<<, sondern auf der Künstlichkeit des aus

¹³. See Karlheinz Bohrer, *Utopie >>Kunstwerk<<. Das Beispiel von Friedrich Schlegels Rede über die Mythologie*, in: Voßkamp, Wilhelm (Hg.), *Utopieforschung Bd.3*, pp 302-332, here p 303

¹⁴. See *ibid.*, p306ff

¹⁵. *ibid.*, p 302

der künstlerischen Phantasie kommenden ästhetischen Konstrukts.¹⁶

Bohrer argues that Schlegel attempts to recoup a dimension of "intersubjektive Verbindlichkeit" for this artificial new mythology by replacing the idea of "nazionelle Phantasie" as the source of "objective" mythical discourse with a much vaguer, "anthropological" conception of some kind of universal substrate in the human imagination - "das heilige Dunkel der Phantasie", as Schlegel puts it in the *Rede*¹⁷ - out of which myth arises. In so doing, Bohrer maintains, he leaves behind the social and political concerns which had informed the *Studium-Aufsatz*, and the two great collections of fragments discussed earlier in this study.

What separates Frank's and Bohrer's interpretations is, in large part, a disagreement about the presence or absence of some form of historical dialectic in the speculations of the *Rede*. Frank sees in the description of the present isolated condition of the artist, and the lack of a "Mittelpunkt" or supporting culture, an analogue of the state of negativity represented by the "Herrschaft des Interessanten" in the *Studium-Aufsatz*. As such it is a necessary phase in a dialectical process which will result in the creation of a mythology of universal validity:

...die neue Mythologie soll nicht nur einem Volk zur nationalen Synthesis verhelfen, sondern >>die

¹⁶ . *ibid.*, p 304-5

¹⁷ . KA, II, 316

Menschheit<< in¹⁸ einem neuen Jerusalem als >>Zentrum<< wiedervereinigen¹⁸.

Bohrer himself does not refer specifically to the notion of dialectic, but his reading of the text precludes the possibility of any form of historical dialectic continuing to operate within Schlegel's radically altered world view¹⁹. Eschatology replaces history: but it is an eschatology which has been personalized, privatized even, with the consequence that the individual artist's release from the prison of his or her isolated subjectivity will come not through some form of collective transformation or liberation, but through an essentially individual experience of momentary aesthetic ecstasy or illumination²⁰.

As I have attempted to show in a previous chapter, the range of historical models proposed in the *Studium-Aufsatz* is a good deal more complex than Bohrer admits, and is not reducible to a single eschatological or teleological variant²¹.

¹⁸. Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 209

¹⁹. See Bohrer, *Utopie >>Kunstwerk<<*, pp 312ff

²⁰. Cf. Bohrer's concluding remarks, where he claims to have demonstrated "...wie die eschatologische und geschichtsphilosophische Sprache der frühromantischen Naherwartung von zwei Sprachformen der >>Jetzt<<-Zeit überlagert werden. Durch die Sprache des transzendentalen Subjekts und durch die Sprache einer jähren Verzeitlichungs-Erfahrung: die aufklärerische Theorie der absehbaren, gesetzlich fortschreitenden Zeit, in der sich die Menschheit approximativ ihrem Ziele nähert, wird durch die mit entdeckterischer Rhetorik vollzogene Darstellung des jeweils gesetzlos einbrechenden Zeit-Punkts ersetzt" (p 322).

²¹. There seems to be a certain incongruity in Bohrer's own argument when he argues on the one hand that the *Studium-Aufsatz* is still dominated by the Enlightenment notion of historical progression, and then asserts later that

It is possible, moreover, to demonstrate that a notion of historical dialectic does continue to operate in the *Rede*, and indeed contributes importantly to Schlegel's whole construction of the notion of the "neue Mythologie".

This becomes clear if we examine a passage from the text which is often quoted, but which has never been adequately explained in the secondary literature. In the section which precedes it Schlegel sketches the outlines of a somewhat Fichtean conception of individual aesthetic or intellectual production, according to which "...es das Wesen des Geistes ist, sich selbst zu bestimmen und im ewigen Wechsel aus sich heraus zu gehn und in sich zurückzukehren" (KA,II,314). Every thought, writes Schlegel, is the product of such an activity, and he goes on to generalize from the individual to the "Gang des Ganzen" (KA,II,315):

Der Idealismus in jeder Form muß auf eine oder die andre Art aus sich herausgehn, um in sich zurückkehren zu können, und zu bleiben was er ist. Deswegen muß und wird sich aus seinem Schoß ein neuer ebenso grenzenloser Realismus erheben; und der Idealismus also nicht bloß in seiner Entstehungsart ein Beispiel für die neue Mythologie, sondern selbst auf indirekte Art Quelle derselben werden....

Auch ich trage schon lange das Ideal eines solchen Realismus in mir, und wenn es bisher nicht zur Mitteilung gekommen ist, so war es nur, weil ich das Organ dazu noch suche. Doch weiß ich, daß ichs nur in der Poesie finden kann, denn in Gestalt der Philosophie oder gar eines Systems wird der Realismus nie wieder auftreten können. Und selbst nach einer allgemeinen Tradition ist es zu erwarten, daß dieser neue Realismus, weil er doch

"Geschichtsphilosophie ist in Schlegels Vorrede zum *Studium-Aufsatz*, so sehr er auch deren Termini anwendet, schon auf das Bewußtsein eines Umschlagpunkts reduziert" (p 320). Despite the fact that the "Vorrede" was written some time after the rest of the text, a close reading of both will show that such a reduction has simply not occurred.

idealischen Ursprungs sein, und gleichsam auf idealischem Grund und Boden schweben muß, als Poesie erscheinen wird, die ja auf der Harmonie des Idealen und Reellen beruhen soll. (KA,II,315)

The linking of "Poesie" and "Realismus" in this passage is somewhat surprising, especially as "Realismus" is not a term which Schlegel has used frequently in his earlier writings. His assertion here that "realism" will never again appear in the form of a philosophy or a system implies that it once did before; presumably what Schlegel has in mind here is - once again - the culture of Greek antiquity, which he sees as having integrated philosophy and poetry into a single entity, namely their mythology. A fragment from the *Ideen* published concurrently with the *Gespräch über die Poesie* develops the opposition of "idealism" and "realism" in a different direction:

Alle Philosophie ist Idealismus und es gibt keinen wahren Realismus als den der Poesie. Aber Poesie und Philosophie sind nur Extreme. Sagt man nun, einige sind schlechthin Idealisten, andre entschieden Realisten; so ist das eine sehr wahre Bemerkung. Anders ausgedrückt heißt es, es gibt noch keine durchaus gebildete [sic] Menschen, es gibt noch keine Religion. (KA, II, 265)

Here Schlegel appears to be arguing for the necessity of mediation between the "extremes" of poetry and philosophy, in the form of a synthesis of the two which would be achieved by "durchaus gebildete Menschen", and to which he gives the name "Religion". The suggestion here of a dialectical movement towards a future synthesis is repeated in the *Rede*. Schlegel explicitly links "Idealismus", which he refers to as "das

große Phänomen des Zeitalters" (KA,II,313)²², with the French Revolution:

Der Idealismus, in praktischer Hinsicht nichts anders als der Geist jener Revolution, die großen Maximen derselben, die wir aus eigener Kraft und Freiheit ausüben und ausbreiten sollen, ist in theoretischer Hinsicht, so groß er sich auch hier zeigt, doch nur ein Teil, ein Zweig, eine Äußerungsart von dem Phänomene aller Phänomene, daß die Menschheit aus allen Kräften ringt, ihr Zentrum zu finden. Sie muß wie die Sachen stehn, untergehn oder sich verjüngen. (KA,II,314)

Once again we encounter the notion, familiar to us from the *Studium-Aufsatz* and a number of the other texts we have been considering, that "Idealismus", like the French Revolution, is a necessary but incomplete or provisory step in the direction of a future utopian condition, a "Tendenz" which still has to be carried through to its logical conclusion²³. The link between the two phenomena is reinforced in Schlegel's essay entitled *Über die Unverständlichkeit*, published in the second volume of the *Athenäum* for 1800, in which he declares

²². In the text the phrase is in the dative case.

²³. It is important, as Bohrer points out (*Utopie >>Kunstwerk<<*, p 312) not to assume that every usage of the word "Revolution" must necessarily refer to the French Revolution, since the Revolution has become itself a "sign among signs". In this context, however, it is clear that Schlegel is referring throughout the whole passage both to the revolution as a paradigm for the transformations of social, political and intellectual life in his time, and specifically in the section quoted above to the historical facticity of the French Revolution. This will become clearer in the continuation of my argument.

that the Revolution constitutes a "vortreffliche Allegorie auf das System des transzendentalen Idealismus" (KA,II,366).

If we return now to the passage quoted earlier from the *Rede*, we may ask ourselves in exactly what sense "Idealismus" may serve "auf indirekte Art" as the source of a new mythology. The passage states that "Idealismus" itself will engender "Realismus"; and according to the fragment from the *Ideen*, the synthesis of the two will produce "Religion". Another of the *Ideen* develops this notion further:

In der Welt der Sprache, oder welches ebenso viel heißt, in der Welt der Kunst und der Bildung, erscheint die Religion notwendig als Mythologie oder als Bibel. (KA,II,259)

Mythology is thus a concretization or materialization of "Religion" in language: it is to religion what "Poesie" is to "Realismus" and what the French Revolution is to "Idealismus", a necessary representation²⁴. The movement from thesis to antithesis to synthesis is no less crucial to this particular variant of Schlegel's aesthetic and political critique of his times than it was to his account of "interessante" and "objektive Poesie" in the *Studium-Aufsatz*. The same could, moreover, be said of the description of the "neue Mythologie" in the *Rede* as "das künstlichste aller Kunstwerke" (KA,II,312"). The notion that cultures must necessarily progress from a past in which art and nature were one, through a present state of artificiality (negative because partial),

²⁴. It is, therefore, simply not correct to argue as Bohrer does that "Poesie" and "Mythologie" are identical (ibid., p 316).

to a future in which artifice, in its perfection, will recover the condition of nature, is one common to both Novalis' and Schlegel's texts, and is perhaps their boldest answer to the cultural pessimism of Rousseau. Bohrer's assertion that the program of the *Rede* is reducible to a dehistoricized aesthetic absolutism must therefore seem highly questionable²⁵.

Less easy to dispute is his claim that the historical agent which Schlegel identifies as the subject of the new mythology is "nicht mehr die Gesellschaft, die republikanische Öffentlichkeit...sondern eine esoterische Gemeinschaft Auserwählter"²⁶. On the one hand, the speaker of the *Rede*, Ludoviko, declares to his friends shortly before he begins his address that poetry is "der edelste Zweig der Magie, und zur Magie kann der isolierte Mensch sich nicht erheben" (KA,II,310). But, he says

...wo irgend Menschentrieb durch Menscheng Geist verbunden zusammenwirkt, da regt sich magische Kraft. Auf diese Kraft habe ich gerechnet; ich fühle den geistigen Hauch wehen in der Mitte der Freunde; ich lebe nicht in Hoffnung sondern in Zuversicht der neuen Morgenröte der neuen Poesie. (KA,II,310-1)

This statement appears to repeat the pattern we have observed in the *Athenäums-Fragmente*, where Schlegel envisages a progression from the "Symphilosophie" practised in a small circle of friends to the collective practice of mass writing. However, a number of fragments from the *Ideen* - to which Bohrer himself does not refer - suggest that Schlegel's

²⁵. *ibid.*, p 308

²⁶. *ibid.*, p 318

conception of the artist and the social function of art had moved a long way in the direction which Bohrer indicates. One of the shorter *Ideen* encapsulates this tendency:

Was die Menschen unter den anderen Bildungen der Erde, das sind die Künstler unter den Menschen. (KA,II,260)

According to the sequence of fragments which follows this one, the artist has both a sacred and a secular role. The influence of some of the notions developed by Novalis in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen* and *Glauben und Liebe* is apparent in Schlegel's assertion that the artist has a kind of priestly or prophetic function as a "Mittler". As he puts it in *Idee Nr. 44*:

Ein Mittler ist derjenige, der Göttliches in sich wahrnimmt, und sich selbst vernichtend preisgibt, um dieses Göttliche zu verkünden, mitzuteilen, und darzustellen allen Menschen in Sitten und Taten, in Worten und Werken. (KA,II,261)

This "sacred" function of the artist is made even clearer a little later in the sequence:

Dem Bunde der Künstler einen bestimmten Zweck geben, das heißt ein dürftiges Institut an die Stelle des ewigen Vereins setzen; das heißt die Gemeinde der Heiligen zum Staat erniedrigen. (KA,II,261)

There are obvious echoes of Novalis' idea of the "Cyniker" or "Indifferentist" here. Yet only a few fragments

later, Schlegel seems to suggest that the artist has a very definite secular function:

Der Künstler darf ebenso wenig herrschen als dienen wollen. Er kann nur bilden, nichts als bilden, für den Staat also nur das tun, daß er Herrscher und Diener bilde, daß er Politiker und Ökonomen zu Künstlern erhebe. (KA,II,261)

It is interesting to reflect on the parallels between this notion of the artist as an educator of "Herrscher und Diener", and the pedagogical theories of the "Gehülfe" in Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften*, who declares that "das ganze Erziehungsgeschäft" can be summed up in the following sentence:

Man erziehe die Knaben zu Dienern und die Mädchen zu Müttern, so wird es überall wohl stehen.²⁷

Without needing to suggest any direct intertextual relation between the *Wahlverwandtschaften* and the *Ideen* we can, I think, see that the remark from Goethe's text illuminates Schlegel's fragment, in that it points to the notion latent therein that art, conceived of broadly as incorporating the arts of pedagogy, can serve to reproduce, reinforce and perpetuate the existing social and political order. Taken together, the fragments from which I have quoted elaborate a decidedly undemocratic and hierarchical conception of society, within which the artist belongs to an elite whose

²⁷. See J.W. von Goethe, Hamburger Ausgabe, Bd.6, p 410. See also Kittler, Friedrich, Ottilie Hauptmann, in: Bolz, N. (Hg.), Goethes *Wahlverwandtschaften*, Hildesheim 1981, pp 260-273

function it is not to rule, but to reflect the division between ruler and ruled in the work of representation.

Is this the same conception which informs the *Rede über die Mythologie*? The text's rhetorical situation makes it all the more difficult to decide this, since it is ostensibly an address delivered to a circle of friends. The collective pronoun "Ihr" with which Ludoviko exhorts his listeners to participate in the creation of the new mythology may refer solely to an artistic elite, but it seems more likely that it is intended to have a wider audience, since the whole thrust of Schlegel's argument is that mythology has to be, in Bohrer's phrase, a "kollektiv Verpflichtendes"²⁸. There are two possible ways of resolving what would appear to be a major contradiction in Schlegel's thinking at the time at which he wrote the *Rede*. One might argue that the kind of role he envisages for the artist in the *Ideen* paves the way for a new mythology which would derive its universality from its potentially totalitarian authority. It would function as an instrument of social control, in much the same way as the art practised by the demiurgic ruler of *Glauben und Liebe*: it would both bestow legitimacy on the state and the social

²⁸. Bohrer, *Utopie >>Kunstwerk<<*, p 303

order, and simultaneously derive its own authority from the power articulated through it²⁹.

Alternatively, we may wish to follow Manfred Frank in seeing the contradictions in the idea of the "neue Mythologie" as the product of a "zirkuläre Verwicklung" in Schlegel's thinking, which Frank describes thus:

Einerseits setzt ja die Verkündigung einer >>Neuen Mythologie<< die bereits vollzogene Vereinigung der Menschheit zur universellen Assoziation (um einen Begriff des romantischen Sozialismus in Frankreich vorwegzunehmen) voraus: denn nur wenn eine als Individuum begründete >>sittliche Totalität<<, ein >>Volk<< (so auch bei Marx), mit einer einzigen Stimme spricht, wird seine Dichtung zum Mythos. Andererseits soll die >>Neue Mythologie<< die Bedingungen für die Konstitution dieser Menschenklasse erst herstellen.³⁰

This is the problem which we have encountered again and again in a number of different forms in our reading of the texts: the question as to whether a new social and political order is the precondition for a new "objective" and universal aesthetics, or vice versa. As I have tried to show, this conundrum is itself the specific formulation which Novalis and Schlegel give to a broader question which lies at the heart of much of the polemics of German revolutionary discourse: the question as to whether the people must first be liberated by the revolutionary transformation of the political and social

²⁹. It is plain that the model of a new mythology which I am describing here is essentially a model of ideology. Without wishing to enter into theoretical debate about the nature and construction of ideology, it seems to me that it is not misleading to suggest that Schlegel is advancing a rudimentary theory of ideology, albeit a "positive" rather than a "negative" one.

³⁰. Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 217

order before they could be expected to behave morally, or whether, as Schiller argued, they must first undergo a moral revolution through the process of aesthetic education, in order that they might exercise their democratic freedoms responsibly.

This, I would argue - applying Lévi-Strauß' definition of myth - is the problem which both Schlegel and Novalis attempt to resolve by resorting to mythical discourse, the contradiction they wish to overcome³¹. Their 'solutions' - from the reign of "objektive Poesie" in the *Studium-Aufsatz*, to that of the "sichtbare Kirche ohne Landesgränzen" in *Die Christenheit oder Europa* - operate, so to speak, both synchronically - so as to produce a series of representations of collective identity - and diachronically, so as to produce a narrative of the constitution of such an identity. Let us first consider this latter aspect.

The "problem" which I have outlined above can be understood in terms of the notions of "Mündigkeit" and "Mündigwerden", which, according to Kant's famous definition, are the basis of "Aufklärung"³². It is a problem which, as Peter Horst Neumann points out, arises out of the interaction

³¹. See Lévi-Strauß, *Structural Anthropology*, p 229: "The purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction".

³². Kant's definition is as follows: "Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit ist die Unfähigkeit des Menschen, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen". Quoted by Peter Horst Neumann, *Der Preis der Mündigkeit*, p 9

of two hypotheses which were fundamental to the Enlightenment's conception of democracy:

Die eine [Hypothese] besteht in der Gleichsetzung von Mehrheit (common sense) und Vernunft. Sie stellt den Versuch dar, das *Problem der rationalen Autoritätsbegründung* mit dem Hilfsmittel der Quantifizierung wenigstens politisch-pragmatisch zu lösen. Sie setzt zugleich (ebenfalls hypothetisch) das andere Grundproblem der Aufklärung, *die Mündigkeit des einzelnen*, als bereits gelöst voraus und erhebt solche Mündigkeit zur Bedingung jeder funktionsfähigen Demokratie. Dabei sind im Begriff der Mündigkeit die Fähigkeit und die Ermöglichung des Bestimmens und Selbst-Bestimmens, des Wissens und des Erkennens zusammenzudenken. So ist es die Paradoxie der Demokratie, dies alles sowohl voranzusetzen wie überhaupt erst zu ermöglichen.³³

This contradiction - which is, essentially, a version of the chicken-or-the-egg riddle - is not susceptible to a logical, only an ideological solution. 5 years before the Revolution, Kant attempted to anchor the "Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit" in a teleological conception of history as the unfolding of "eines verborgenen Plans der Natur"³⁴. This plan, however, will only come to fruition in the far distant future, "nach manchen Umbildungen der Revolution"³⁵. This classical formulation of the notions of progress and perfectibility has itself the character of a

³³. *ibid.*, pp 5-6

³⁴. See Chapter 7, Footnote 55 (check)

³⁵. Kant, *Schriften zur Anthropologie*, p 45. The concept of revolution which he employs here is cyclical and essentially traditional.

myth, as Kant seems to recognize when he acknowledges that it contains an element of "Chiliasmus"³⁶.

It is this myth - refracted, as it were, through the experience of the Revolution - which Schlegel and Novalis set out to re-tell. The Revolution had short-circuited the slow unfolding of Nature's plan. It offered an unprecedented and awesome paradigm of empowerment and enfranchisement, which could be understood both as a sudden acceleration of humankind's slow progress towards "Mündigkeit" - from the viewpoint of a "dynamischer Revolutionsbegriff" - and as a radical break or rupture in the continuity of history - the eschatological viewpoint³⁷.

The achievement of a revolutionary "Mündigkeit" by the Parisian sans-culottes - the social revolution, in other words³⁸ - filled Schiller, and the majority of German bourgeois intellectuals, with such deep dread that they attempted to put back the clock and declare the Revolution a false path, an unnatural deviation from Nature's hidden plan. As I have tried to show, both Schlegel and Novalis remain a good deal more agnostic about the Revolution as a paradigm for political and social transformation than most of their

³⁶. The formulation "Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit" seems to me to correspond to Blumenberg's description of the "Höhlenmythos" in Plato's *Politeia*: "Für Plato selbst ist das Heraustreten aus dem unterirdischen Dunkel 'ins Licht' der elementare Vorgang der Menschengeschichte". See Blumenberg, *Paradigmen*, p 86

³⁷. See Griewank, *Der neuzeitliche Revolutionsbegriff*, pp187-209, also my Chapter 6.4.3

³⁸. See Wölfel, *Prophetische Erinnerung*, p 213

contemporaries. They neither embrace nor reject it; instead, they appropriate it for their own ends. To paraphrase Pierre Maranda: they take the "semantic system" of Revolutionary discourse and reorganize its "strong components" into new configurations. Or, to place their activities within another theoretical context, we might say in Roy Wagner's terms that their metaphorical innovations themselves transform the relations between the central "complementary metaphors" of revolutionary discourse³⁹.

What emerges is a new myth of "Mündigkeit", one which equates "Mündigkeit" itself not with the individual's independent exercise of reason, but rather with his or her capacity for aesthetic production. Collective aesthetic production, "Das Schreiben in Gesellschaft", replaces the collective shaping of social ends, "das öffentliche Raisonement". Aesthetics subsumes politics.

It might be argued that this substitution merely represents a logical extension of the tradition of "klassischer Republikanismus" which we have encountered in Chapter IV. But it was the exponents of this very tradition who, when confronted with the radical phase of the Revolution, retreated into the "Traum von einer moralisch-ästhetischen Revolution"⁴⁰. As I have shown, Schegel and Novalis do not retreat from the Revolution. Instead, they appropriate it as a metaphor of transformation, a possible model for the process

³⁹. See Chapter 3.5

⁴⁰. *ibid.*

of "Mündigwerden". But the Revolution is only one among a number of new narrative forms which Novalis and Schlegel give to their 're-telling' of the myth of the "Mündigwerden der Menschheit". They experiment both with eschatology, and the notion of a temporary dictatorship, whether of social writing, or the "neue Kirche" in its various guises. These models depart radically from the gradual progression envisaged by Kant, and implicit in the tradition of "klassischer Republikanismus".

Thus Novalis and Schlegel develop a number of possible narrative models for collective enfranchisement, the creation of a state of collective "Mündigkeit". These processes have as their imagined end point 'forms of collectivity' which range from the republicanism of Schlegel's early texts (and its aesthetic correlates), through the "poetischer Staat" and the idea of a symphilosophic "mass writing", to the "Familienstaat" and ultimately the vision of a Europe united under the "sichtbare Kirche ohne Landesgränzen". Each of these variants owes something, by way of metaphorical genealogy, to the model of revolutionary "Öffentlichkeit" represented by the rule of public opinion in Paris; they could not be thought without it.

Yet, as we have seen, these myths of "Mündigkeit" almost invariably embody not just new means to liberation, but new forms of subjugation. We see the culmination of this tendency in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, where the whole notion that rational subjects can participate individually and

collectively in the shaping of history seems ultimately to be rejected in favour of a "Bevormundung" of the individual by the "neue Kirche".

There is one further possible explanation for these contradictions which I shall explore briefly. Let us return for a moment to Manfred Frank's contention that the common myth-making project of the authors of the *Systemprogramm*, and the Early Romantics, sprang from the need to find some source of transcendental legitimacy for the Revolutionary or post-Revolutionary polis, which had been divested of its traditional sources of legitimacy and social cohesion.

This need was obviously also strongly felt by the revolutionaries in Paris⁴¹. They attempted to assuage it in the first instance with and through the idea of the nation; that is to say, the nation manifest not in the persons of the king and his nobles, but in the people. The nation became, under the pressure of war and the threat of counter-revolution, the ultimate good, the source and repository of all values. When, however, the idea of the nation proved insufficiently powerful to unify the competing factional and class interests at work in France, the Jacobins and their supporters began, during the most radical phase of the Revolution, to invent alternatives: the cult of the Supreme Being and the so-called "Festival of Reason"⁴². It is no accident that Novalis should have drawn

⁴¹. See Furet's description of revolutionary politics as "einen Redewettkampf um die Aneignung der Leitimität", in: *Penser la Révolution Française*, pp 60-61

attention to this phenomenon in *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, since he plainly recognized it for what it was, namely an attempt to synthesize myth. It is also significant that he remarks on the failure of what he calls "diese[r] Mystizismus der neuern Aufklärung" to touch the hearts and minds of the French populace⁴³.

Schlegel thematizes the lack of a "transzendentes Fundament" for the new mythology in a passage in the *Rede*⁴⁴. He has been drawing parallels between mythology and the "Witz der romantischen Poesie" , which he sees as exemplified by the works of Shakespeare and Cervantes. He continues:

Weder dieser Witz noch eine Mythologie können bestehn ohne ein erstes Ursprüngliches und Unnachahmliches, was schlechthin unauflöslich ist, was nach allen Umbildungen noch die alte Natur und Kraft durchschimmern läßt, wo der naive Tiefsinn den Schein des Verkehrten und Verrückten, oder des Einfältigen und Dummen durchschimmern läßt. Denn das ist der Anfang aller Poesie, den Gang und die Gesetze der vernünftig denkenden Vernunft aufzuheben und uns wieder in die schöne Verwirrung der Fantasie, in das ursprüngliche Chaos der menschlichen Natur zu versetzen, für das ich kein

⁴². See Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*, p 62ff

⁴³. Cf. NS, IV, 518: "Historisch merkwürdig bleibt der Versuch jener großen eisernen Maske, die unter dem Namen Robespierre in der Religion den Mittelpunkt und die Kraft der Republik suchte; auch der Kaltsinn, womit die Theophilantropie, dieser Mystizismus der neuern Aufklärung, aufgenommen worden ist".

⁴⁴. See Frank, *Der kommende Gott*, p 210

schöneres Symbol bis jetzt kenne, als das bunte Gewimmel der alten Götter. (KA,II,319)

In a slightly earlier passage Schlegel gives the "erstes Ursprüngliches und Unnachahmliches" a different name:

Die Mythologie ist ein solches Kunstwerk der Natur. In ihrem Gewebe ist das Höchste wirklich gebildet; alles ist Beziehung und Verwandlung, angebildet und umgebildet, und dieses Anbilden und Umbilden eben ihr eigentümliches Verfahren, ihr innres Leben, ihre Methode... (KA,II,318)

Considered in conjunction, these two passages reveal a striking similarity between Schlegel's description of mythology, and the transformative and recombinative properties of myth enumerated by Levi-Strauß and his successors⁴⁵. I do not wish to attribute some kind of specious "modernity" to Schlegel here, but rather to point to the fact that he is one of the contributors to what Terence Hawkes has called "a momentous historic shift in the nature of perception" which begins with Vico and "finally crystallized in the early twentieth century"⁴⁶. Hawkes describes this shift as follows:

The 'new' perception involved the realization that despite appearances to the contrary, the world does not consist of independently existing objects, whose concrete features can be perceived clearly and individually, and whose nature can be classified accordingly. In consequence, the true nature of things may be said to lie not in things themselves, but in the relationships which we construct, and then perceive, *between* them.

This new concept, that the world is made up of relationships rather than things, constitutes the first

⁴⁵. See earlier chapter on *Glauben und Liebe*, Section ii) 1.

⁴⁶. See Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 2nd edition, London, 1986, p 17

principle of that way of thinking which can properly be called 'structuralist'.⁴⁷

Having established this similarity, it is important to point to the fundamental difference which underlies the notion common to both authors of myth as a system of relations and transformations. Whereas for Schlegel myth both materializes "das Höchste", and is itself at the same time transparent, allowing some dimension of irreducible transcendence to shine through it, for Levi-Strauß there is nothing "behind" myth, only the invariant structures of the human unconscious⁴⁸. Schlegel does see the "received" mythology of the ancient world as a "Kunstwerk der Natur", a more or less spontaneous product of the "schöne Verwirrung der Phantasie"; but the new mythology will, he insists, be the truly artificial product of the conscious volition of individual subjectivities acting alone or, preferably, in concert. For Levi-Strauß, this is a contradiction in terms, since individual subjectivities do not "think" or "make" mythical discourse; rather, they are thought by it, or rather by the structures of consciousness and language which it embodies.

The comparison between Schlegel and Levi-Strauß is, I think, illuminating, since it points up more clearly both the audacity of Schlegel's program, and the problems with which it is fraught. There can be no doubt that, speaking functionally,

⁴⁷. *ibid.*

⁴⁸. Levi-Strauß has recently reiterated the important elements of his theory of myth in a concise and readable form in a series of radio talks published as: Levi-Strauß, *Claude, Myth and Meaning*, London, 1978

human cultures have invested their myths with some kind of transcendental or numinous significance, and that what Schlegel proposes amounts in one sense to an attempt to construct, or at least simulate such a dimension of transcendence. I say construct, because the method which he suggests amounts to a kind of "bricolage", a welding together of classical mythology, Spinoza, physics and the "Schätze des Orients" (KA,II,319). It is easy to dismiss this project as at best, ill-judged, and at worst a form of hybris. To do so, however, is to ignore the fact that it represents the logical conclusion of those "demiurgic" elements in Novalis' and Schlegel's thinking to which I have repeatedly drawn attention. The notion that human artifice, exemplified here by "das künstlichste aller Kunstwerke", the new mythology, has the ability to equal, or improve upon, the work of nature is itself an extremely potent myth. It informs debates in our own time about humankind's domination and exploitation of nature, and science's intervention in "the natural order" in areas such as biotechnology and gene manipulation⁴⁹.

The "neue Mythologie" has a twin elsewhere in Novalis and Schlegel's symphilosophic endeavours, and their common lineage shows itself in the fact that they are both constructs. This twin is the concept of "Deutschheit". As we have seen in Chapter 5, "Deutschheit" exists for both writers as a

⁴⁹. This is not the place to elaborate on this argument, though it seems to me a very important one. In a sense, the Early Romantic equation of the apotheosis of art with the achievement of an ideal form of collectivity continues the "Dialektik der Aufklärung" identified by Adorno and Horkheimer, in which the discourse of progress and perfectibility is also a discourse of power and subjugation.

potential, something which must be actively made or constructed in the future. For Novalis it is "das höchste Ziel des Menschheit", the end point of history's teleology, and thus analogous with the state of "Mündigkeit" which lies at the end of Kant's "verborgene[r] Plan der Natur". But it is also prefigured in the "unsichtbare Kirche", the elite community of the initiate, who themselves will form the vanguard of the "sichtbare Kirche ohne Rücksicht auf Landesgränzen". The "Himmelreich" which Europe will become under the rule of the new church will, by implication, be a "deutsches Reich".

The concept of "Deutschheit", like the "neue Mythologie", embodies the attempt to construct a legitimating discourse, a "Begründungs-Rede" for a post-Revolutionary social order. Both are the product of a speculative playing with the possibilities of metaphor, and the relationships and affinities between different fields of metaphor. As such, they are products of a truly "structuralist" activity. Yet both concepts bear witness also to a strong tendency towards reductionism, a desire to subsume all of the models of collectivity generated in the play of metaphor under one single metaphor or concept. Thus the infinite exfoliations of myth are reducible to "ein erstes Ursprüngliches und Unnachahmliches", and the notions of republican "Öffentlichkeit", the true public, the "poetischer Staat", collective aesthetic production, and ultimately the "neue Kirche", can all be subsumed under the concept of "Deutschheit". Once this reduction has been made, the

possibility exists for the readers of these texts to make a single further reduction and equate the concept of "Deutschheit" with the existing political and historical materiality of Germany. Since, however, Germany itself did not exist as a sovereign "nation", they could at best equate the historical destiny of the Germans as outlined by Novalis and Schlegel with the historical destiny of the post-Revolutionary German states. I need not elaborate on the consequences of this potential identification.

It is, as we have seen, metaphor and metaphorical transformation which constitute the most basic tool of the Early Romantic *bricoleurs*, the structuring principle of all their models of collectivity. I should not wish it thought that in pointing to the more disturbing aspects of their metaphorical practice, I am reiterating the ancient argument of the 'classical' view of metaphor as a misleading and potentially sinister rhetorical device which ought to be eliminated from rational public discourse. Metaphor is with us, in all of our acts of communication and negotiation, and in the social discourses which inform them, and it will not go away.

It is for this very reason that an understanding of how metaphor contributes to an early but influential formulation of German national identity is, I think, especially important today. As I write, the year marking the bicentenary of the French Revolution is drawing to a close. It is likely that history will remember 1989 for two events which recall that

first and archetypal revolution much more directly and poignantly than the carefully stage-managed celebration of the bicentenary in France. In China, the brave and spectacular demonstrations of millions of people calling for democracy seemed, for a few days, to presage a peaceful revolution on a scale never seen before in human history. That hope came to end on the morning of June the 5th in Tianenman Square. Yet only a few months later, smaller, but no less astounding protests on the streets of Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden have toppled the SED leadership and achieved what can only be described as a peaceful revolution - as Günter Graß has said, the first of its kind in Germany⁵⁰. This revolution has reopened the question of German identity at a time of momentous historical risks and opportunities for the whole of Europe. For the people of both German nations, who will ultimately decide how this question is to be answered, it is now more important than ever to understand the roots of their particular and peculiar historical situation. One hopes that they will answer in the spirit of that cosmopolitanism and universalism which informs Novalis' and Schlegel's more positive visions of the Germans as citizens of a united and peaceful Europe.

Melbourne, December 1989

⁵⁰. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* published on the 20th November 1989, Graß said: "Ich dachte, hier hat eine deutsche Revolution stattgefunden: unblutig, mit klarem Kopf, und offenbar erfolgreich. Das hat es in unserer Geschichte noch nie gegeben".

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