Utopianism of the Right:
Maistre and Schlegel

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THE IDENTIFICATION of utopianism with the political Left is a well established practice among modern intellectuals. The reasons for this particular association are easily explained. Radical thinkers from the French socialist novelists of the 1830's down to the Marxist Frankfurt School for Social Research in our own century have proudly laid claim to the title utopian. Meanwhile conservative critics, such as Eric Voegelin and Thomas Molnar, have attacked utopianism as the catastrophic rejection of man's natural and historical limits as a social being. Despite this consensus about the ideological home of utopian thought, it might be possible to demonstrate that utopianism has historical roots on the political Right. The term, utopianism, will here be used in the sense in which Karl Mannheim defined it: as "an historical orientation transcending reality . . . which, when it passes into conduct . . . shatters the prevailing order."[1]

I believe one can find the presence of this orientation in the anti-revolutionary Right of the early nineteenth century. By analyzing two influential critics of the French Revolution, Joseph de Maistre (1754-1821) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), one may also show that a clear link exists between their defense of order and an apocalyptic and utopian world view. Unlike leftist utopias,

however, the futurist visions arrived at by these thinkers incorporated religious and hierarchical principles, not secular and egalitarian ones. This difference may explain the largely, although not entirely negative, reaction of Maistre and Schlegel to radical movements of the Left. They opposed them not because of hostility to change, and even upheaval, but rather owing to a fundamentally discrepant vision of the future. Undoubtedly Auguste Comte and Karl Marx grasped the nature of modernity, its faith in science and material progress, with more accuracy than the subjects of this paper. At least in their prognostications, Maistre and Schlegel were by far the less perceptive utopians. And yet, their faulty predictions need not reflect on the depth of their learning or on the sincerity of their utopian hopes. Nor, as will be shown, is one entitled to judge them as one American scholar does Maistre: as people who believed that "all problems would vanish if only the world turned its clock back to 1788 . . ."[2]

The social and political upheaval which accompanied the lives of Maistre and Schlegel, brought forth a flood of millenarian speculation. As the news, and later armies, of the French Revolution spread across Europe, its admirers and opponents marvelled at the extraordinary changes to be seen in their societies. The more mystically minded obser-

vers identified the Revolution with superhuman powers which were then expressing themselves through an epoch of turmoil. As word of the Revolution reached the German Pietist, Heinrich Jung-Stilling, he declared that the first six thunderbolts of the apocalypse had already struck. His close friend and fellow mystic, Heinrich Oberlin, set to work soon after constructing a millenarian calendar based on his own inspired reading of the Bible. Oberlin tried to show his followers in what close proximity they stood to the preannounced end of the world.[3] In May 1790 another apocalyptist, the Prince of Württemberg, in commenting on the meaning of the French upheaval to the Protestant evangelist, Johann Lavater, made the observation: "The time is short, the end approaches, the bow is bent, and the angel (Michael) is about to descend."[4]

Such comments were hardly incongruous with the spirit of the time; for one of the most striking characteristics of European culture during the revolutionary era was the proliferation of secret societies and evangelical movements. These groups have sometimes been referred to, generically, as Illuminati, a term which has come to denote a rather wide variety of religious and political enthusiasts who were preaching and proselytizing during the middle and end of the eighteenth century. The term was first adopted in the eighteenth century by the self-proclaimed disciples of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), who, like their master, sought personal communion with the deity. They believed that once illuminated by divine grace, they would penetrate beyond the literal meaning of Scripture, uncover arcane truths inaccessible to others, and thereby explain the course of future events. Later, in the 1770's a utopian band of revolutionary conspirators grouped around the Bavarian jurist, Adam Weishaupt, also laid claim to the name Illuminati. Although this second collection of Illuminati identified themselves as reforming rationalists, the mystical and chiliastic elements in their activities were not far to find. Viewing the Catholic Church and the by then dissolved Society of Jesus as their special

enemies, they sought to overcome these alleged causes of popular obscurantism by adapting Jesuit practices to progressive ends. Weishaupt required his followers to memorize his teachings on the Pythagorean mysteries, perhaps seeing in this ancient cult built on the study of numbers and numerical relations a fitting source of symbols for a society dedicated to the eradication of anti-scientific attitudes.[5] Prospective members were required to master a catechism containing Illuminati articles of faith and to affirm their belief in the revolutionary political order which Weishaupt and his associates elsewhere in Germany were trying to create.[6]

While German rationalists like Adam Weishaupt and his friend, Adolf von Knigge, proclaimed the arrival of an age of philosopher-kings, others who were also called Illuminati were awaiting a more clearly Christian kind of apocalypse. The reference here is to the Pietist awakening in eighteenth-century Germany and to the various disciples of the French theosophist Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), who was long known by his eponym *"le philosophe inconnu."* The thematic emphases in the tracts of Saint-Martin coincided rather closely with those of German Pietist preaching. An introspective professional soldier and an avid reader of Kabbalistic and Christian mystical texts, Saint-Martin produced a theology of personal redemption, stressing the subjective aspect of faith. Essential to understanding his appeal among German Pietists was his depiction of "an inner church of the elect" the origins of which allegedly went back to the dawn of history. His earliest book, *Des Erreurs et la Vérité*, written in 1773, delineated a view of the fall of man which greatly embellished the biblical account.[7] The Fall was a cosmological as well as a human disaster by which all of existence, starting even before the creation of man, became alienated from its divine source.

The Fall originated with the separation of mind and will, which had formerly existed inseparably as parts of the godhead. Once begun, this cosmic degradation continued until man, too, having been placed in a

fragmented universe, showed his sinful nature through Adam's rebellion. Nonetheless, God existed as a transcendent being as well as the ultimate source of cosmic disharmony. By placing an "inner sense" within some men, He drew them upward toward the realm of grace.[8] The Incarnation was interpreted as a sign of the deity's intention to be reunited with a morally divided world, although the operation of divine grace took place within a pre-Christian and non-Christian setting as well. Saint-Martin had great respect for ancient mystery religions, for hermetic theology and alchemy, for the Jewish Kabbalah, and (what little he knew of it) for Indian metaphysics. Considering them all products of religious piety, he praised them as admirable attempts to grasp the painful alienation of the material world from its divine source.[9] Moreover, he attacked with growing vehemence what he regarded as the pretensions of his own Catholic Church to dispense salvation through its sacraments. In one of his last works, *Le Ministère de l'Homme d'Esprit*, published in 1802, he decried institutional religion as a continuing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Its sin was to have denied the reality of *l'église intérieure:* that growing body of saints who by an inner sense realized their divine mission and who at the end of secular history, a point which Saint-Martin believed was fast approaching, would help establish the millennium.[10] At that time the members of the now invisible church would take their rightful positions as "commissars of God." Ruling society on the basis of an ongoing revelation, they would be recognized by their fellow-men as "true intermediaries between heaven and earth."[11]

Lavater and Jung-Stilling found support in Saint-Martin for their own belief in a church of the elect that cut across denominational lines. His French Catholic background rendered Saint-Martin even more appealing to German Protestants; being Catholic but enunciating Pietist beliefs, he was viewed as a link between the separated parts of Christendom. And though belonging to the nation which had produced the Enlightenment and the Revolution, he, nonetheless, radiated a kind of mystical piety which caused Joseph de Maistre, as well as German Pietists, to consider him a symbol of French spiritual regeneration.[12] Saint-Martin's reputation as a mystic spread eventually into the Catholic regions of Germany, where, despite his anticlericalism, he was hailed as a prodigy of Catholic wisdom. Franz von Baader and Johann Michael Sailer, both Bavarians active in defending the Catholic faith against the Enlightenment, presented him as an ecumenical coreligionist, appealing to all Christians on behalf of a common struggle, against unbelief.[13] Friedrich Schlegel, too, would acclaim Saint-Martin as a unifier of churches both before and after his conversion to Catholicism. Like Maistre, Schlegel would palliate Martinist attacks against the Catholic priesthood and against the sacraments, by ascribing them to an excusable reaction against empty ritualism in the Church.[14]

"Le philosophe inconnu" left his mark on two other groups of mystics often called Illuminati in the late eighteenth century, the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons. Throughout the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, the Rosicrucians emphasized alchemy in their rites and teachings. Arguing for the possibility of turning base matter into gold, they found evidence for their position in ancient hermetic literature, the Renaissance wizards, Paracelsus and Giordano Bruno, and in the theurgic literature of Christian Rosenkreuz, the apocryphal founder of their movement.[15] Matter in its present state, they believed, had been corrupted as a result of the Fall; nonetheless, there were those divinely illuminated ones who were able to raise material substances to their prelapsarian form as gold. This alchemical teaching involved "more of a creed than . . . a craft," and by the early 1790's the Rosicrucian movement, then largely concentrated in Bavaria, expanded its creed to include Martinist elements. That is to say, it incorporated those Martinist beliefs which were useful to Rosicrucian alchemy: the degradation of matter as a result of the Fall, the necessity of cultivating "an inner sense" for comprehending the divine will indepen-

dently of clerical mediation, and the tenet of an inner church of the elect whose members would gain power and prestige during the millennium.[16]

The most prolific Bavarian Rosicrucian author, Carl von Eckartshausen, treated all these themes in his widely read tracts *Information on Magic* (1788-1792) and *On Perfectibility* (1797). In the latter he developed the notion of an inner church extending in time back to Abraham and Melchizedek and forward to a world government ruled by custodians of divine light.[17] The third and final age of history, that of the Holy Spirit, was already at hand, Eckartshausen believed; and it would see, as Saint-Martin, one of its precursors taught, the acquisition of sovereignty by those who were properly illuminated whatever their religious backgrounds. Indeed, one sign of the approach of this age was the rapid spread of Rosicrucianism and Martinist theology, itself an obvious proof of the growing religiosity of men whose lives had been unsettled by two providential trials, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.[18]

Certainly it might well have appeared to the Rosicrucians at the end of the eighteenth century that their movement enjoyed a certain divine favor. In the 1780's their lodges had moved out from Bavaria into Austria, Silesia, and Prussia. The Prussian King and many of his courtiers became converts to the movement in the late 1780's; and soon afterwards the Russian Czar would follow suit, largely on the basis of his reading of Saint-Martin and Eckartshausen, both of whom he regarded as recipients of divine revelation.[19] The Freemasons also benefited from their association with Saint-Martin. An officer in the Scottish Rite Lodge at Lyons, Saint-Martin praised the Masonic movement and spoke in its favor to a young aristocratic member and visitor from Savoy, Joseph de Maistre.[20]

Although many individual Freemasons in France were both anti-clerical and sympathetic to the Revolution, Masonic opposition to Catholicism issued not from rationalism, but rather from Masonic claims to being the true Christian church. The Masons of the Scottish Rite claimed spiritual descent from both the medieval Knight Templars and the priesthood of ancient Egypt. Saint-Martin helped to provide Masonry with a more clearly Christian focus, by bequeathing to it his doctrine of the inner church and his apocalyptic vision of history. Apparently Maistre developed his interest in Swedenborg, Lavater, and Saint-Martin while most actively involved with the Masons. His exposure to the theosophic and Christian side of Masonry probably kept him in the order in spite of his falling out with Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, the highest ranking priest of his senior lodge at Lyon and an emphatically non-Christian interpreter of Masonic religion.[21] Even in the face of repeated papal condemnation of the order, starting in 1738, and despite the continuing defection of his lodge brothers to the Revolution, he, nonetheless, persisted in describing the Freemasons as "essentially Christian." For to him and to other observers, the Freemasons were *au fond* "illuminés martinistes," and as such allies in a common struggle against rationalism in philosophy and skepticism in religion.[22]

Having discussed the various types of Illuminati active in the late eighteenth century, it might be possible at this point to make certain generalizations about them. All of the Illuminati were unmistakable apocalyptists. Although the Pietists were the most and the Weishauptians the least traditional in their millenarian visions, all people known as Illuminati believed themselves to be living at the dawn of the final age of the world. With the exception of the Weishauptians, they also conceived of the coming epoch as being marked by a theocratic world government. Already in the mid-eighteenth century the Swabian Pietists, Johann Albrecht Bengel and Johann Christoph Ötinger wrote in detail on the Millennium, Ötinger also describing a kingdom of saints, living without property or rank as members of Christ's commonwealth.[23] Eckartshausen, presenting his own version of the millennial government forty years later, would identify it with the rule of the once invisible church. Once "the struggle between light and shadow" had been resolved, all men would turn for leadership to the true Il-

luminati.[24] Indeed the Freemasons in France even anticipated this eventuality, by preparing their most promising members to become "elected Cohens," the high priests of what was to be a reconstructed Christian commonwealth. Saint-Martin and Maistre both belonged to this priesthood. What was more, even before his younger fellow-Mason wrote his famous *Considerations on France* in 1795, Saint-Martin had prepared a thematically similar "Letter on the French Revolution" in 1794. A striking feature of the latter composition is the emphasis found there on the apocalyptic significance of the Revolution. The French upheaval and its international consequences would clear away the decaying structure of institutional religion, while at the same time awakening Christians to the need for inner piety.[25] Nonetheless, the violence being released would not end with the reign of reason or with the establishment of a secular state. Quite to the contrary! The Revolution would ultimately bring to power the members of the now invisible church who would soon be recognized as the fitting rulers of a new order. Under them divine inspiration would be made the cornerstone for political policy, while religious leaders would supervise the commonwealth.[26]

Because of his view of the cathartic effects of the Revolution, Saint-Martin hesitated to attack it. Much to the embarrassment of many of his disciples, he remained in Paris during the 1790's as a generally uncritical observer of the revolutionary scene. His lifelong admirer, Maistre, fled from his native Savoy after French armies had occupied it in September 1792. Becoming eventually the representative of his ruler, the King of Sardinia, in St. Petersburg, he produced there some of his most eloquent diatribes against the Revolution. Yet, the similarities between his *Considerations* and Saint-Martin's "Letter" are conspicuous enough to have caused scholars, rightly or wrongly, to accuse Maistre of plagiarizing his favorite contemporary mystic.[27]

Like Saint-Martin's work Maistre's *Considerations* view the present revolutionary age as a providential occurrence, intended to purify the Catholic Church of excessive worldliness. Maistre alluded to "several remarkable men (Lavater, Saint-Martin, and Jung-Stilling)" whose "exalted ideas" were producing "the kind of disquiet" which would return his contemporaries to religion.[28] Their activities were traced back to the "secret force" operative in history, which would bring about, as the concluding section of his work indicates, not "a contrary revolution, but the contrary of revolution."[29] This "contrary of revolution" referred to a millenarian picture of the future which Maistre had just sketched in the preceding paragraph. Looking ahead there to a postrevolutionary Europe, he predicts:

> The return to order will not be painful because it will be natural and because it will be favored by a secret force whose action is wholly creative. We will see precisely the opposite of what we have seen. Instead of these violent commotions, painful divisions, and perpetual and desperate oscillations, a certain stability and indefinable peace will announce the presence of sovereignty.[30]

The hope of future peace was obviously related to the Maistrean theme of religious renewal; nonetheless, the view given of the new Europe suggested nothing of that militant ultramontanism which would later be associated with its author. During his years in Russia, Maistre would be urging European rulers to place themselves under papal leadership as a necessary condition for international order. His work, *On the Pope*, exalts the Middle Ages as a period of moral unity and extols Gregory VII as one of Europe's wisest leaders. Nonetheless, neither papalism nor medievalism has much of anything to do with the essentially Martinist vision of *Considerations*. The apocalypse described here is the ecstatic peace of a community of mystics, not the triumph of Catholic orthodoxy over heresy. After all, were not the precursors of the new society themselves Protestants or, in the case of Saint-Martin, an utterly heterodox Catholic?[31]

It is worthy of note that *Considerations*

partook of that Illuminati utopianism that achieved its greatest popularity in the 1790's. Lavater, Eckartshausen, and Saint-Martin all anticipated Maistre in prophesying a coming age of spirituality and the breakdown of old distinctions between the religious and political spheres. On the other hand, except for the Masons, none of the Illuminati had looked back to the Middle Ages for his theocratic ideal. Their hope of religious revival was indissolubly linked to an inner church of the elect, the recognition of which lay wholly in the future.

The focus of this vision would change somewhat with the advent of German romanticism. In 1799 Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis) set the future course of this movement in "Europe or Christendom," Lamenting there the passing of the peaceful and spiritually cohesive Middle Ages, he identified "those beautiful times" with a spirit of cooperation between political and religious authorities. Moreover, unlike modern rationalists, its inhabitants bowed before the mysteries of nature, finding miracles and divine apparitions everywhere. [32]

This romantic discovery of the Middle Ages came in the wake of the Revolution's assault on such medieval remnants as seignorial privilege, feudal ranks, and the political and economic powers of the Catholic clergy. To leftwing radicals like Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx, this medievalism would seem nothing more than the desperate swan song of a decaying social order. [33] Yet, the romantic exploration of the Middle Ages brought forth much that was creative and intellectually impressive. Already during the first decade of the nineteenth century, it had taken the form of studies on medieval art and architecture, lyrical poetry, law, and theology.

From the outset this nostalgia for the Middle Ages, however, was joined to a utopian frame of mind not unlike the one encountered among the Illuminati and the young Maistre. Returning to "Europe of Christendom," it is possible to find there juxtaposed to Novalis' hymn to the past, an even more effusive glorification of the future. Once the present era of revolution had failed in its "assault against Heaven," European civilization would move toward an era of faith more lustrous than any to be seen in the past. The forerunners of this age were already present and ranged from the Rosicrucians and Martinists through the early German romantics to the exponents of the new sciences of electricity and magnetism. [34] The new European religion would be bottomed on pantheism which, in its identification of the earthly with the divine, taught men to revere nature, not simply to exploit it. Novalis refers to the possibility of creating a new priesthood. Romantic poets and scientists would belong to it, and its members would be charged with the care of his nature cult. To avoid the desacralization of life and society which he thought characteristic of his age, he urged, and finally considered inevitable, the construction of "a new church of integral Christianity, or ideal Catholicism where a fusion would take place of all the religious beliefs of the past." [35]

Among the thinkers who most contemptuously scoffed at his dream was Maistre, although *On the Pope* expressed some of the same utopian tendencies which he criticized in Novalis. Books I and III, for example, discuss the projects of a "universal republic" of sovereigns and a "league of nations." [36] Although human beings, we are told, have hitherto never advanced beyond a territorial state to a universal one, Maistre finds neither a moral nor a rational reason for why this should be the case. Instead he speaks of "an occult and terrible law which has need of human blood" and by which alone one might be able to understand the frequency and ferocity of international strife. [37] Still and all, this "occult and terrible law" was soon to be replaced, at least in Europe, by the perfected medieval ideal of a unified Christendom. According to Maistre, Europeans would once again accept "the hypothesis of all Christian sovereigns (being) united by religious fraternity in a sort of universal republic under the measured supremacy of the supreme spiritual power." After all, he asks rhetorically, was not such a plan "if rationally presented superior to the Amphyctions?" [38]

The analogy between medieval Christen-

dom and the ancient Pan-Hellenic league was typical of that comparative historical approach to political problems often found in Maistre's writings. And yet, for all that he might have argued that his defense of medieval Europe was made on strictly scholarly grounds, it was in fact related to his essentially mystical vision of the future. The Middle Ages were seen as providing an historical example of an international community held together always in theory and often in practice by common religious ideals. As such they prefigured the final age of history, although Maistre explicitly warned that *"d'autres moeurs, d'autres connaissances, d'autres croyances amèneront nécessairement d'autres lois."*[39] The desired society would affirm the theological basis of political authority, without straying into sterile imitation of the past. It would appeal to the universal religious power soon to be vested in a revitalized papacy, without a confusing two different historical epochs in the process.[40]

During his exile from Savoy, first, in Switzerland and Italy and, then later, in Russia, Maistre kept in close contact with other Masons. In St. Petersburg he frequented the gatherings of Martinists and Swedenborgians, while at the same time asserting his loyalty to the Church. One of the justifications which he gave for these contacts was his firm conviction that "all this illuminism will end up eventually as Catholicism." "Through their inner church and their rediscovery of Catholic mystics like Saint Theresa and Francis of Sales, the Illuminati will become reconciled to us (Catholics)."[41] To many of his contemporaries, however, this explanation was not entirely convincing. One of Maistre's Catholic apologists, Abbé Lagrange, noted his lifelong attachment to Martinism and to Masonry. Again and again "Maistre struggled to reconcile by one bold stroke (illuminism) with the dogmas of Catholicism." At times abandoning his analytical study of political and religious institutions, he plunged suddenly "into the boldness of hypothesis, into premonitions, and into prophetic views."[42]

This apocalyptic Martinist strain can be found especially in Maistre's St. Petersburg

writings. A reading of them should show up the inadequacy of that conventional view which would have him abandoning his Masonic tier and embracing ultramontane Catholicism in proportion to his counterrevolutionary zeal. The older Maistre seems even more given than was the younger one to prophetic vision and Martinist mysticism. *On the Pope* concludes, by describing the age of political revolution as "the dismaying prelude—the terrible and indispensable preliminary stage" to a great event already impending on the present.[43] Attention is also paid to the international activities of the Masons who are viewed as harbingers of a reunified Christendom. In a letter to Vicomte de Bonald, another anti-revolutionary Catholic, in December, 1814, Maistre characterized the "deplorable state of Europe" as the "inevitable shading which must separate the current state from what we all await."[44] In 1815 the news of the Holy Alliance and his increased contact with the Illuminati gave Maistre cause to rejoice that "the revolutionary fire has cleansed the place in preparation for the true architect."[45]

His *Evening Conversations in St. Petersburg*, often interpreted incorrectly as an unequivocal statement of Catholic counterrevolutionary thought, contains in fact a compendium of Illuminati notions. The two principal interlocutors, the senator and the count, in these reconstructed, though sometimes fictional, conversations between Maistre and his dinner companions, take positions which the author himself held at various times. Whatever their other differences, one being a Martinist mystic and the other an ultramontane Catholic, both figures are agreed that the Millennium is near at hand. In the eleventh conversation much discussion is given to "a new effusion of the Holy Spirit."[46] According to one commentator, "Nowhere else more than here does there emerge the mystical character of Maistrean thought and the influence of its Illuminati initiators."[47] As the conversation between the senator and the count turns to millenarian topics, agreement is reached on the imminence of a new religious revelation. Just as Christ had

founded the Church to replace the more limited Mosaic revelation, so, too, was it necessary, as mankind entered the final age, to have a "new manifestation of divine kindness."[48]

Maistre believed that this third revelation was already occurring and that its content would become increasingly apparent to mankind as it overcame the lingering effects of the Fall. Like Saint-Martin, he viewed the distortion of human knowledge as the cumulative result of this catastrophe. The Mosaic and Christian revelations were, in a sense, only stop-gap measures against a growing divorce between mankind and the deity. For Maistre Egyptian mathematics represented the pinnacle of human science, while the religion of Noah and his family " was the purest and most enlightened that one might imagine."[49] At other times he transferred his vision of near human perfection to certain periods of the Middle Ages. And yet, he emphasized that each past achievement had not halted the slide back into religious and social dissolution. This process would only be reversed with the advent of a theocratic Millennium. Only then would there occur the sudden illumination of mankind and the end of all political and intellectual dissension.

II

ALMOST ALL these millenarian hopes found further expression in the historical writings of Friedrich Schlegel, who came to equate the apocalypse with the perfection of medieval culture. His intellectual development carried him through all the major stages of Germany's romantic movement. Between 1795 and 1802 he helped to midwife this creation, first, in Jena under the influence of Johann Fichte and, then later, in Berlin together with his brother, August Wilhelm, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, August Hülsen, and the young Schelling. The *Athenäum* journal which he edited in Berlin defined the major principles of the new romantic cosmology: the ethical and artistic sovereignty of the creative individual, the view of imagination as a source of divine revelation, and the omnipresence of the Absolute the nature of which could only be grasped by reference to the full range of human activity and knowledge.[50] This exultant pantheism and its implied transvaluation of values may have helped to lead Friedrich into his much publicized affair with Dorothea Veit, née Mendelsohn, the disguised heroine of his novel on free love, *Lucinde* (1797). The two lovers were eventually married.[51] Then starting with a trip to Paris in 1802, followed by a three year stay in Cologne, the Schlegels became increasingly devoted to the study of medieval art and religion. Their formal conversion to Catholicism in 1808 seemed to flow logically out of an accretion of reviews and essays produced by Friedrich since 1802, which exalted the spiritual splendor of the Middle Ages and deplored the moral and philosophical chaos of the present.

In 1809 the Schlegels moved to Vienna, where Friedrich became closely identified with the cause of Catholic restoration. As the editor of *Der Österreichische Beobachter* and of *Concordia,* two clericalist journals, and as the author of *The Vienna Lectures* (1810), *Lectures on Ancient and Modern Literature,* (1812) and *The Philosophy of History* (1827), Schlegel held up to his contemporaries the medieval ideal of a unified Christian culture. Indeed his *Vienna Lectures* end, by exhorting their listeners "to restore—and perfect the constitution of the Middle Ages insofar as that may endure without damaging the development of the human race."[52] From the standpoint of the evolution of German romanticism, Schlegel's career had moved, as the Italians might say, *per l'appunto giusta la norma.* From his early romantic phase, he had plunged into the medieval revival at a time when Tieck, Achim von Arnim, Josef Görres, and Clemens Brentano were celebrating medieval German literature. He then joined the Church during a period when other refugees from romantic pantheism, like Adam Müller, would embrace Catholic doctrine as a path out of moral confusion. Thus Schlegel in one lifetime passed through what are seen as the three major stages of German romanticism: an aesthetic and pagan pantheism, the rediscovery of the Middle Ages as an alternative to

modernity, and the gradual affirmation of a Christian conservative value system.

Yet, the three phases in Schlegel's case overlap repeatedly. Already in 1800, in *Discussion on Poetry*, he had declared that: "Our poetry is lacking a focal point as mythology was for that of the ancients, and that essential thing in which modern poetic composition is inferior to the ancient, can be summed up in the phrase: We have no mythology."[53] This quest for a suitable mythology for his age would carry Schlegel beyond his youthful *culte de moi* into that leap of faith which occurred in 1808. All the same, at the very time of his conversion he had just produced *On the Wisdom of the Indians*, which, among other things, praised in glowing terms the religious genius of ancient India. His *Lectures on Ancient and Modern Literature*, delivered in Vienna in 1812, exalt the Vedantic writings and Homeric epics as specifically Christian works of literature. In fact Schlegel equates here what is Christian with what is romantic, by asserting that both terms may be applied to literature "based on the sentiment of love" and on "a serene playfulness of the imagination."[54]

Much scholarship has already appeared dealing with the way in which Schlegel transferred early romantic aesthetics and religious universalism to a Catholic conservative philosophy. His medievalism would offer a similar case of thematic and conceptual continuity. In 1804 *Europa*, a journal which he had founded in France, posed the question: "Should Europe become one people (through some form of political fusion), or should each nation remain by itself?" "Perhaps," responds *Europa*, there should be both as in the Middle Ages." Schlegel then goes on to point out: "The real Europe must yet arise. For soon we shall be living in the actual Middle Ages which men have wrongly assigned to the past."[55] Four years before his conversion, Schlegel had not only come to admire the Middle Ages, but was looking forward to their re-emergence and perfection at some point in the near future. Like Maistre, he viewed the medieval epoch as one

of international order, contrasting it with the bloodshed and political distemper of his own time. The theme of a coming Middle Ages is one which conspicuously recurs in Schlegel's historical writings and journal articles up until the year of his death.

In the post-Napoleonic period he grew disenchanted with Metternichean Austria for failing to bring into existence his notion of a corporate state. He supported an updated medieval constitution which would integrate temporal and ecclesiastical authorities and a variety of social interests into a single government.[56] The restorationist era left Schlegel, as it did Maistre, a politically unhappy man. The defeat of the Revolution and Napoleon had not given rise to a morally purified or socially harmonious Europe. The Congress of Vienna had not revived the Holy Roman Empire. Although the Holy Alliance in 1815 pledged the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian rulers to mutual bonds of Christian fraternity, this too had proved an empty gesture, not the beginning of the "actual Middle Ages." In view of his disappointment one need not be surprised that Schlegel and his colleagues ran afoul of the Austrian censors. In fact he and two other philosophers of the restoration active in Vienna, Joseph von Pilat and Adam Müller, became an acute embarrassment to the Austrian Chancellor, Prince Metternich. More than once the pragmatic Metternich was heard to complain of their visionary madness.[57]

In 1825 in a letter to his *confidante*, Christine von Stransky, Schlegel spoke of a "divine catastrophe" which would beset Europe for the next seven years. At the conclusion of that ordeal Providence would raise up again in glory whatever it had "smitten down."[58] This comment is instructive in revealing the true apocalyptic cast of Schlegel's understanding of history. In his publications this apocalyptism may be seen in the repeated references made to a seventh age of the world. Essential to this period would be the establishment of international peace, the prevalence of Christian ideals among Western peoples, and the construction of a neo-medieval corporate state. Another feature of

this coming epoch would be the formulation of a new philosophical synthesis which, like Thomism, would aim at reconciling reason and faith.[59]

Behind these modest hopes, however, there throbbed the kind of millenarian mysticism which went back to both the Illuminati and Saint-Martin. We have already remarked on Schlegel's admiration for *le philosophe inconnu*, a reverence which lasted during most of his adult years. It is striking to what extent he attempted to depict Saint-Martin as a Catholic as well as a Christian theologian; for, on the whole, Schlegel was less than forthcoming about his growing fascination with millenarian movements. In his public lectures he ridiculed those Christians who took seriously a Pietist prediction that the world would come to an end in 1836; in his letters to Christine von Stransky, on the other hand, he professed deep belief in the same prediction, while pointing to the crisis of his own age as an omen of the Apocalypse.[60] Perhaps Schlegel was of two minds about the issue in question. As a philosopher of social order, he might have felt some scruples about arousing disruptive enthusiasm in the populace. Nonetheless, as he brooded over the distance between his utopian ideal and the prevailing political reality, his mind turned increasingly to apocalyptic speculation.

Moreover, the issues of *Concordia* betray sometimes that "lust for general upheaval" which Schlegel's editorial collaborator, Adam Müller, gave as an essential aspect of romantic conservative thought.[61] The French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars had not sufficed to complete "the dismaying prelude" to the final age. Else, how did one explain the utterly bureaucratic character of restorationist governments and the continuation of human strife? The only plausible answer for Schlegel and Müller, who lived longer into the post-

Napoleonic period than did Maistre, was that the preordained cataclysm had not yet ended. Hence *Concordia's* editorial staff noted with alacrity the presence of social conflict in the more industrialized regions of Europe. England, it reported, was "divided already into two hostile, economic camps," a situation which would soon lead to class war.[62]

It is worthy of note that *Concordia's* critiques of industrial society made a profound impression on the Catholic social reformer, Franz von Baader, and, at least indirectly, on Lorenz von Stein, Marx, and Engels. A mystical and apocalyptic vision caused Müller and Schlegel to focus on these signs of unrest. Out of this unrest they hoped to see realized their own conception of a just and harmonious society. Despite its medieval character, the new order which Schlegel projected, represented at most a variant of the Martinist, Pietist, and Rosicrucian dreams of a future theocracy. Instead of identifying his final age with the elevation of the invisible church, however, he followed Novalis and other romantics, by turning to the Middle Ages for utopian inspiration.

From the foregoing analysis, it is necessary to conclude that the conventional identification of utopianism exclusively with the political Left can no longer be sustained. The attempt of Karl Mannheim, for example, to exclude romantic conservatives from a utopian mode of thinking owing to their "purely negative" response to revolutionary change, must now be judged to have failed. The discussion of utopianism will henceforth have to be conducted from a different perspective than the one traditionally applied. Historians must ask not why utopianism has been a defining characteristic of the modern Left, but why it has gained support among the enemies as well as the advocates of revolution.

[1]Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. C. Wirth (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1936), p. 123. [2]Peter Viereck, *Conservatism* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1956), p. 11. [3]*Cf*. Auguste Viatte, *Les Sources Occultes du Romantisme* (Paris, 1928), Vol. II, p. 201. [4]Quoted *ibid*., Vol. I. pp. 97-99. [5]*Cf*. Hans Grassl, *Aufbruch Zur Romantik: Bayerns Beitrag zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte 1765-1785* (Munich: Beck, 1968), pp. 173-197. [6]*Ibid*., pp. 197-218. [7]Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, *Des Erreurs et la Vérité* (Edinburgh and Lyon, 1775), I, pp. 72-87. [8]*Ibid*., pp. 87-90. [9]On this facet of Saint-Martin's theology, see Ernst Benz, *Les Sources*

Mystiques de la Philosphie Romantique Alle mande (Paris, 1968), pp. 18-20. [10]*Ibid.*, pp. 84-86, 97-102. [11]Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, *Le Ministère de l'Homme d'Esprit* (Paris, 1802), pp. 418-471. [12]*Cf* Emile Dermenghem, *Joseph de Mainstre Mystique* (Paris, 1946) pp. 44-47. [13]*Cf.* Hans Grassl's monograph, pp. 301-319 and Franz von Baader, *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig, 1856), Vol XV, pp. 162- and 163. [14]*Cf.* Ernst Benz's monograph, pp. 103 and 104. [15]See Arnold Marx, "Die Gold-und Rosenkreuzer. Ein Mysterienbund des ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland," *Freimaurermuseum*, V (Zeulenroda-Leipzig, 1929). [16]On the apocalyptic expectations of the Rosicrucians in Bavaria, See Graf Alexander von Westerholt, *Andenken für Freunde* (Sulzbach 1795-1820), especially pp. 86-88. [17]Carl von Eckartshausen, *Über die Perfektabilität* (Munich, 1797), pp. 17-22. [18]*Ibid.*, pp. 42-46. [19]*Cf.* Antoine Faivre, *Eckartshausen et la Théosophie Chrétienne*, pp. 178-180, 623-638. [20]*Cf.* Emile Dermenghem's monograph, pp. 44-46. [21]*Ibid.*, pp. 53-72. [22]See Maistre's defense of the Masons in *La Franc-Maconnerie: Mémoire inédit, Sau Duc de Brunswick* (Paris:Rieder, 1925). [23]See Ernst Benz's work cited above, pp. 48-55. [24]See Ernst Benz's work cited above, pp. 48-55. [24]*Cf.* especially Carl von Eckartshausen, *Die Wolke über dem Heiligtum oder etwas, wovon sich die stolze Philosophie unseres Jahrhunderts nicht träumen lässt*, second edition (Munich, 1823). [25]On the place of "Lettre sur la Révolution francaise" within the framework of Martinist millenarianism, see E. Caro, *Essai sur la vie et la doctrine de S.-M., le philosophe inconnu* (Paris, 1852), pp. 259-262. [26]See Saint-Martin's *Oeuvres Posthumes* (Paris, 1807), Vol. II, pp. 112, 117 and 120. [27]See, for example, A. Frank, *la philosophie mystique en France à la fin de XVIII e siècle: Saint-Martin et son maître Martinez Pasquallis* (Paris, 1866). [28]Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France,* trans. Richard A Lebrun (Montreal:McGill-Queen's University, 1974), p. 46. [29]*Ibid.*, p. 169. [30]*Ibid.*, [31]On Maistre's contacts with Protestant, mystics, see F. Baldensberger, *Le Mouvement des idées dans l'emigration* française (Paris:Plan-Nourit, 1925), Vol. II, pp. 185-215. [32]See Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. J. Minor (Jena, 1907) Vol. II, p. 332. [33]On the attitude of Marx and of other German radicals of his day toward the romantic movement, see Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (London and Cambridge, 1968), pp. 51-55; on the ambiguity present in Heine's rejection of the romantics, see Ilse Weidekampf, *Traum und Wirklichkeit in der Romantik und bei Heine* (Leipzig, 1932). [34]Novalis, *Schriften*, Vol. II, pp. 36 and 37. [35]E Spenlé, *Novalis* (Paris, 1904), p. 2. [36]Joseph de Maistre *Oeuvres Complètes* (Lyon, 1884), Vol. II, pp. 4-15, 320-339. [37]*Ibid.*, pp. 285-294. [38]*Ibid.*, p. 275. [39]Quoted in Dermeghem, p. 245. [40]*Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. II, p. 256-258. [41]*Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 221. [42]Quoted in Antoine Abalat, *Joseph de Maistre* (Paris: Librairie Emmanuel Vitte, 1914), pp. 118 and 119. [43]*Oeuvres Complètes* Vol. II, p. 536-541. [44]*Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 468. [45]*Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 27. [46]*Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 246-247. [47]*Cf.* Dermenghem, p. 285. [48]*Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. V, pp. 235-236; 254 and 255. [49]*Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. VIII, p. 103. [50]*Cf.* Rudolf Haym, *Die romantische Schule* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 290-294, 297-300, and 301-311. [51]*Ibid.*, pp. 553-563. [52]*Cf.* Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler (Vienna, Paderborn, Munich:Ferdinand Schoningh, 1960), Vol. XIII, p. 256. [53]Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften,* ed. Wolfdietrich Rasch (Munich:Carl Hanser, 1964), p. 497. [54]*Kritische Ausgabe*, VI, p. 285. [55]*Ibid.*, VII, p. 78. [56]On Schlegel's theory of the state, see Friedrich Meinecke's *Cosmopolitanism and the Natural State*, trans. R.B. Kimber (Princeton, 1970), pp. 66-71. [57]On the relationship of conservative theoreticians, and of Schlegel in particular, to the post-Napoleonic Austrian government see J. C. Allmayer-Beck, *Der Konservatismus in Österreich* (Munich, 1959), especially pp. 10-30. [58]Friedrich Schlegel, *Briefe an Frau Christine Stransky,* ed. M. Rottmanner (Vienna, 1907-1916), Vol. II, p. 89. [59]See Schlegel's *Philosophy of Life* (English trans.: London 1851), especially pp. 160-163. [60]On this apparent inconsistency in Schlegel's presentation of his religious views, see Hans Eichner, *Friedrich Schlegel* (New York: Twayne, 1970), pp. 128-133. [61]On the revolutionary impulse present in German romantic conservatism, see R. W. Lougee's "German Romanticism and Political Thought," *Review of Politics*, 21 (October, 1959), pp. 631-645; and Paul Gottfried's "Eschatology of the *Eos*-Circle," *Church History*, 39 (June, 1970), pp. 187-197. [62]*Concordia* (Vienna, 1821), p. 102.

Kirk, Rossiter, Hartz, and the Conservative Tradition in America

W I L L I A M   C.   D E N N I S

THREE SIGNIFICANT studies published in the 1950's discussed the relative lack of influence of conservatism in the American political tradition. In *The Conservative Mind, Fron Burke to Santayana*, Russell Kirk argued that conservatism as a recognizable body of political thought or persuasion dated from the writings of Edmund Burke against the excesses of the French Revolution.[1] Kirk listed six principal characteristics of conservative thought: 1. "Belief that a divine intent rules society . . ." (the sixth edition states a "Belief in a transcendent order, or body of natural law . . ."); 2. "Affection for the proliferating variety and mystery of traditional life . . ."; 3. "Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes . . ."; 4. "Persuasion that property and freedom are inseparably connected . . ."; 5. "Faith in prescription . . ." (and a distrust of abstract design), and 6. "Recognition that change and reform are not identical . . ."[2] Kirk then traces the influence of these ideas in American and British politics and culture to the present day. Despite the conservatism of the Revolution and the Constitution, the young Madison, the Federalists, Randolph, and Calhoun, Kirk found conservatism to exist in America only as an oppositional philosophy as early as 1800. After 1860, conservatism persisted primarily as a cultural and intellectual persuasion best found in the writings of such men as Henry Adams and T. S. Eliot. America had too much "democratic complacency," too much "voracious democracy and a ponderous state," too much "discussion and private judgment," too much individualism, too much materialistic, melioristic progressivism, and too much of "ceaseless flux" and "incessant experiment" to be truly conservative.[3]

Clinton Rossiter in *The Conservative Tradition in America: The Thankless Persuasion* adopted much the same view as Kirk.[4] Rossiter too defined conservatism in Burkean terms; developed a similar, though more elaborate list of conservative canons; thought the foundation of American society and government to be remarkably conservative, and yet concluded that by the 1820's genuine conservatism had died "as a major force in the life of the whole nation," to the point that "the one glorious thing to be conservative about has been the Liberal tradition of the world's most liberal society."[5]

Finally, Louis Hartz in *The Liberal Tradition in America*[6] differed from Kirk and Rossiter in that he found no real conservatism to have existed even in the founding of America: "Colonial history had not been the slow