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THE LITERARY THEORIES OF AUGUST WILHELM SCHLEGEL

by
Ralph W^{ide} Ewton, Jr.

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Thesis Director's signature:

Robert L. Kalm

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The details of August Wilhelm Schlegel's life and his accomplishments in other fields than literary theory are the subjects of the majority of scholarly works which deal with him. Our concern here is only to small extent with his activities as translator, medievalist and orientalist. Closer to our subject is Schlegel the reviewer, historian and critic. The most recent discussion of Schlegel's literary theories is by René Wellek.¹ Wellek considers the theories in their relevance to Schlegel's criticism. The present study's emphasis, however, is on the theories and deals only incidentally with his criticism. The subject has been relatively neglected by scholars of German Romanticism. The best account before that of Wellek was by Rudolf Haym in his Die Romantische Schule.² Schlegel's theories merit a more detailed exposition than either Wellek or Haym have given them. As an introduction to this undertaking, a few words about Schlegel's life, works and the men who influenced them will be helpful.

The most important early influences on Schlegel were

¹A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950 (New Haven, 1955), II, 36-73.

²3. Aufl., ed. Oskar Walzel (Berlin, 1914).

Herder, of whom more will be said later, and two of his teachers during his student days at Göttingen (1786-1791). Schlegel's first significant publication was his "De geographia Homerica comentatio" (1788) written under the direction of the classical philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812). A more important mentor at Göttingen was, however, the poet Gottfried August Bürger (1747-1794). He and Schlegel worked together in 1789 on a translation of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Bürger's journal Akademie der schönen Redekünste contained Schlegel's earliest poetry and an essay "Über Dante und die göttliche Komödie" (1791) together with a few attempts at a Dante translation. The translation was added to until 1797 but remained a fragment.

In the years 1789-91 Schlegel's first reviews appear in the Göttinger Gelehrten Anzeigen. These early reviews were competent but reflect little of the literary theoretician we meet later. The Dante essay, however, tries to carry the reader back into Dante's world. Schlegel's deep sense of history and its relevance to literature is characteristic of his life's work. His 1791 essay on Schiller's "Die Künstler" should also be mentioned as a foretaste of what was to come. There a careful reading of Schiller's poem is preceded by a theoretical statement on the nature of didactic poetry. Poetic inspiration is an apprehension of truth. What the highest kind of didac-

tic poem teaches is, by this standard, poetic in nature and is not just a mere casting in verse of prosaic ideas (SW, VII, 4-8).³ The Dante and Schiller essays reflect two of the greatest influences on the direction of Schlegel's thinking: the historical study of literature from Herder and Heyne and the philosophical aesthetics of Schiller and Kant.

At the completion of his university studies in 1791 Schlegel took a position as private tutor in the house of an Amsterdam businessman. There he continued his literary attempts and began the Shakespeare translation. In the Amsterdam years Schiller became Schlegel's poetic model and his correspondence with the poet led in 1794 to an invitation to write in Die Horen. Schlegel's "Briefe über Poesie, Sylbenmaß und Sprache" were published there in 1795 and 1796. A further theoretical endeavor of the same period was his "Betrachtungen über Metrik." Goethe also exercised a great influence on Schlegel, especially through Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre which led in 1795 to renewed efforts on the Shakespeare translation and to two important essays, "Etwas über William Shakespeare bei Gelegenheit Wilhelm Meisters" in 1796 and the essay on Romeo and Juliet in 1797. The first of these lays down the principles of adequate translation of foreign works of literary art and

³ References in this form are to August Wilhelm Schlegel's Sämmtliche Werke, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig, 1846-47).

the second is a profound appreciation of Shakespeare as an artist. The bulk of the Schlegel translation of seventeen of Shakespeare's plays was completed and published in the years 1797-1801, with the addition of one small volume in 1810.

Schlegel had returned to Germany in 1795. In May of 1796 at Schiller's prompting he settled in Jena. This was the year of his marriage to Caroline Böhmer and the beginning of an amazing production of reviews published in the Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung. In these we can see Schlegel's characteristic combination of historical and philosophical criticism and, in general, the practice of the critical theories which will be our concern later in this study. As far as theoretical content is concerned, the most important of these essays is that of 1797 on Goethe's Hermann und Dorothea where, starting from Friedrich Schlegel's thoughts on the subject, he works out his theories of epic poetry.

The reviews just mentioned were at first Schlegel's livelihood. In 1798, however, his Shakespeare translations earned him a professorship at the University of Jena. There he lectured on a number of subjects, among them aesthetics. The lectures on this subject were written down by a listener and are preserved in an edition by August Wünsche: Vorlesungen über philosophische

Kunstlehre (Leipzig, 1911).⁴ It should be mentioned here that these lectures deal with all the arts, not with literature alone. Schlegel's thoughts on the plastic arts are only peripheral to this study. The subject was, however, of lifelong concern to him. His desire to support the artistic claims of modern alongside the classic in art was as great as his desire to do the same for literature. Architecture, sculpture and painting occupy whole sections of the Jena Lectures and of the first series of the Berlin Lectures. Numerous essays, dialogs, poems and fragments deal with these matters and they are the subject of another set of lectures delivered in Bonn in 1827.

The 1798 Lectures are of lesser significance than those of Berlin and Vienna. The reason is their almost complete concern with purely philosophical questions. Schlegel is at his best when he combines a historical and theoretical approach to literature, an approach which he later justifies both in theory and in practice. History, insofar as it is dealt with in the 1798 Lectures, is not really literary history based on known works but rather is speculation on Urgeschichte, the supposed primordial origins of art, and above all of Poesie. The tone of the lectures is rather pedantic. Some of their abstractions are later supported by their application to concrete

⁴These lectures are cited in this study as 1798.

literary examples. Others, however, are forgotten or even contradicted by the more down to earth treatment of similar subjects in later lectures. The later lectures deal with art whereas the 1798 Lectures deal abstractly with the idea of art. Accordingly, the beginning chapters of this study will make the greatest use of the early lectures since there our concern will be largely with a clarification of Schlegel's theoretical vocabulary.

Schlegel's move to Jena brought him into closer contact with Goethe and Schiller, but a strain on his relationship with the latter was soon brought about by Friedrich Schlegel's criticism and the animosity between Schiller and Caroline. Schlegel's turn away from the classical ideals of Goethe and Schiller was later than that of his brother, but in the Jena period the change was gradually brought about by his nearness to Friedrich and his contacts and friendships with Tieck, Novalis, Schleiermacher and Schelling. Although Schlegel from his earliest publications had shown great admiration for modern literature, it was not until his return to Germany that he and Friedrich fully developed their ideas of romantische Poesie and associated the products of the circle we now call the Older Romantic School with the early modern writers whom they themselves designated as romantic. The journal of the new school was the Athenaeum which the Schlegels published jointly in Berlin from 1798 to 1800.

Although the period of his collaboration on the journal was important for Schlegel's developing romantic theories, most of his contributions to the Athenaeum are only of peripheral interest here. Schlegel's satires and poems do not concern us and his fragments contain little about literary theory. His theoretical statements which do appear there are for the most part concerned with the plastic arts.

In October of 1799 Schlegel broke off relations with the Allgemeine Literaturzeitung and in the summer of 1800 he gave his last lectures in Jena. Early in 1801 he moved to Berlin where he continued his translating and criticism. In the same year he and Friedrich published their Charakteristiken und Kritiken which contained Wilhelm's essay on Bürger in addition to the best of his previously published criticism. The most significant of his undertakings at this time was, however, the lectures on aesthetics and the history of classic and romantic literature which were delivered in Berlin in three successive winters beginning in December of 1801.⁵ Schlegel's audience was no longer an academic one. His lectures in Berlin were less pedantic than those in Jena, yet they embodied more philosophical insights than the earlier lectures. The influence

⁵Vorlesungen über schöne Literatur und Kunst, ed. Jakob Minor, Deutsche Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts, 17-19 (Stuttgart, 1884). These lectures are hereafter referred to as Berlin.

of Fichte and Schelling is evident. The essential unity of criticism, history and theory, maintained on theoretical grounds in the first series of Berlin Lectures, is proven in practice in the subsequent histories of classic and romantic poetry. The view of literature presented here is largely that held in common with Friedrich Schlegel and the circle of the Schlegels' friends. There are many personal insights, but the whole is an argument for the validity of views held by many. The excursions through literary history are, however, as original as any personal view of given historical facts can be.

Schlegel continued his translating, turning his efforts now to writers in the Romance languages. In 1804 he published his Blumensträube italienischer, spanischer und portugiesischer Poesie. Tieck had aroused Schlegel's interest in Calderon and the two planned a joint translation. The joint project was abandoned, however, and Schlegel published his own translation of five plays by Calderon in 1803 and 1809 under the title Spanisches Theater. Other lesser efforts at translation were published in the journal Europa (1803-1805).

Schlegel was divorced from Caroline early in 1803 and it was later in the same year that, through Goethe, he met Mme. de Staël. His alliance with her soon led to wide travels, notably in France, Switzerland and Italy. His writings during the next five years reflect continued

efforts at poetry and drama, translation, criticism and theorizing on art and literature. Of particular interest to us is Schlegel's concern with French drama. Here his criticism is almost completely negative, for he lacked all sympathy for rationalism and for neo-classicism and its corollary depreciation of the distinctively modern. This is reflected in his discussions of the French in the Vienna Lectures and in his famous essay "Comparaison entre la Phedre de Racine et celle d'Euripide" (written in French) published in 1807.

Schlegel's travels with Mme. de Staël took him to Vienna in December of 1807. There, in the spring of 1808, he delivered the most famous of his series of lectures. They were soon published (1809-1811) under the title Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur.⁶ These lectures were quickly translated into all the major European languages and became the most widely read of all the works of German Romanticism. Their popularity is chronicled in Josef Körner's Die Botschaft der deutschen Romantik an Europa.⁷

With few exceptions, Schlegel's activities after the presentation of his lectures in Vienna are of little concern to us here. After the Vienna Lectures theoretical

⁶ Hereafter cited as SW, V-VI.

⁷ (Augsburg, 1929)

questions are only in the background of Schlegel's work. The bulk of his published writings between 1810 and his death in 1845 are historical and philological studies. The works which concern us most are, of course, the three series of lectures delivered between 1798 and 1808. To a lesser extent we are interested in those of Schlegel's reviews which parallel the lectures and in shorter treatments of theoretical matters. Nearly all the relevant statements come from the years 1790-1810 and most from 1798-1808.

A survey of Schlegel's works reveals the following accomplishments during his first two decades of writing: several volumes of poetry and drama, the Shakespeare translation, translations from the Romance languages and from Greek and Latin, several hundred reviews which included some masterpieces of literary criticism, several minor theoretical works on poetry and the fine arts and, finally, the three courses of lectures. A good many of his literary endeavors were in the mode of satire. This is noteworthy here since the purpose of the above list of Schlegel's undertakings is to point out the extent to which he sought to influence public opinion by his writing. In the years named he wrote epigrams, satires, parodies, reviews, criticism, theoretical works, essays and lectures all of which add up to some twelve volumes in the standard editions of Schlegel's writings.

It should be clear from what has just been said that Schlegel held points of view which he was concerned to impress on the educated public. Some of his opinions are unique with him. Most of his critical and theoretical writing was, however, concerned with a criticism of neo-classicism while upholding the artistic claims of the classic and the distinctively modern. It hardly needs pointing out that neither philosophizing nor propagandizing along these lines was an activity carried on alone by August Wilhelm Schlegel. His tastes and antipathies were shared by many of his contemporaries and most of his theoretical justifications for his attitudes were also held in common with mentors and friends.

Schlegel's criticism is characterized by thoughtful reading, the application of broad knowledge of literature and art and by personal insight. Many theoretical premises arise from his criticism and bear the mark of his individuality. Yet it is undeniable that in many respects his theories are eclectic. He did draw from many sources. The question before us is that of his claim to be read.

Schlegel's success as a literary critic is far more widely acknowledged than his success as a literary theorist. But anyone who studies Schlegel's criticism must consider the theories at the same time. The best literary critics set down the basis of their judgments' claim to

objective truth. Only within the framework of his theories does Schlegel's criticism become more than an expression of purely personal likes and dislikes.

This study is, however, to be of the theories apart from the criticism, insofar as this is possible. Due to the fact that Schlegel usually developed his theories from criticism of works of literary art, ignoring his critical writings will be impossible. It will be clear, however, that there is a distinct body of ideas that can be called the literary theories of August Wilhelm Schlegel. The reasons for studying these ideas are many.

First of all, Schlegel's theorizing on literature is a model of what literary theory should be. It is true that he sometimes, especially in his earlier writings, wanders off into vacuous speculation and groundless abstractions. For the most part, however, his theorizing will be seen to be solidly based on literary facts, on literary history and his own critical examination of literary works. Schlegel's poetics are worth reading for their exemplary concern with literature and not just with the abstract idea of poetry. Here too is the basis of a claim that Schlegel individualized what he borrowed, for the great majority of his borrowings are from writings which dealt with art in the abstract. Schlegel ties ideas to the practice of criticism and the historical study of literature. His theories are pragmatic (and those he

borrowers become so) in the sense that every idea is ultimately proven by its usefulness in explaining literary facts.

Schlegel should not be called a philosopher. Many more prosaic names suit him far better, among them scholar, critic, historian and belletrist. All of these names are for a man distinguished not so much for philosophic genius as for the comprehending, broadening and communicating of a cultural tradition. When speaking of the scholar's interest in Schlegel's theoretical writings, it must be recognized that to some extent they are only a secondary source for the study of German Romanticism. On the other hand, these writings gain importance when we consider their closeness to the romantic movement. Schlegel was not only a scholar of romantic poetry but also a romantic scholar. His theories must be considered as one of the first scholarly formulations of the romantic view of art, but one close enough to the origins of this view that Schlegel must be considered along with its originators.

The closeness of Schlegel's theorizing to his criticism must be mentioned again. Literary criticism was one of the more important means whereby he and his contemporaries promulgated their new poetic doctrines. Schlegel's criticism and its theoretical foundations cannot be ignored in any study of the history of the growth and spreading of the idea of romantic poetry. Moreover, it

should be noted too that the bulk of his theoretical writings was first in the form of lectures and the rest appeared in widely read journals of his time. Schlegel's main activity in the decade which concerns us most (1798-1808) can be characterized as propagandizing for a view of art in which romantic poetry's claims to artistic worth were justified alongside those of the classic. We are dealing with important documents for the history of ideas.

Finally, it must be remembered that when ideas are influential on artistic and cultural facts, their development becomes more than a matter of mere historical record. Schlegel's answers to a number of timeless questions will be considered throughout this study. It should be mentioned here, however, that one such question is that of art's freedom from the constraints of the non-aesthetic, real world. The problems of extreme aestheticism are central to Schlegel's poetics. From Kant came the argument, all important for systematic aesthetics, for the autonomous, non-teleological nature of aesthetic experience. Romantic theorists, with the philosophic aid of post-Kantian idealism, argued further that the artist is autonomous in the act of creation. At first poetry is freed from classical rules and eventually it is freed from virtually all rules. The arguments for such freedom, the nature of its limitations and the problems arising from denying any

limitations are matters considered by Schlegel. These are perennial questions facing any modern poetics. Even when we leave his historical importance out of our consideration, Schlegel deserves to be read, for many of his arguments bear on living issues.

The foregoing arguments for the importance of Schlegel's theoretical writings have the character of a defense. The defense is, of course, against the arguments of those who have dismissed Schlegel's literary theories as unimportant on the grounds that they are only restatements of the ideas of more original thinkers. Condemnation to the near oblivion of being mentioned as a disciple, while his own works are not read, is hardly just. Nevertheless, there is some justification for the charge against Schlegel's originality. In the course of this study we will find a number of elements in Schlegel's theories which are borrowed from Herder, Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel, to mention only the most important influences on Schlegel.

Herder and August Wilhelm Schlegel share many tastes and dislikes and there are many similarities in their writings attributable to unconscious affinities more than to borrowing on Schlegel's part. Schlegel did, however, borrow elements of Herder's theories of language. It seems probable, moreover, that Schlegel's reading of Herder influenced his interest in natural poetry, his

dislike of pseudo-classicism, his repudiation of the traditional doctrines of the dramatic unities and his demand for criticism and theorizing within a historical framework. Schlegel is a follower of Herder in the promotion and actual writing of universal literary history.

Kant's ideas of genius and the sublime (das Erhabene) are the starting places for Schlegel's discussions of these subjects. More important, however, is the fact that Schlegel was influenced by the whole Kantian philosophy. In discussing the content of literature and its being perceived by an audience, Schlegel frequently concerns himself with the forms under which the mind is able to experience art. He deals with the problem of freedom versus necessity both within art and in the artist. Schlegel is often at pains to show the autonomy of art as a subject of philosophical speculation. A constant theme is the problem posed by the idealists of the role of art in man's apprehension of reality. Finally, Schlegel is frequently concerned with the notion of ideality, the union of the spiritual and physical in art and with problems of dialectic in general, how a higher synthesis arises from the union of opposites.

In some respects Kant's influence on Schlegel came through the mediation of Schiller who offered practical examples of how Kant's philosophy could be applied to fundamental problems of poetics. Schiller more often

offers the occasion for Schlegel's speculation rather than a source for his ideas. We will see that the most important borrowing from Schiller is the idea of the struggle of Natur and Geist resolved in art. The idea of play and the free activity of the artist is also from Schiller.

Novalis is rarely mentioned by Schlegel. Perhaps he was influential in the development of Schlegel's ideas of the all-pervasive powers of Poesie in life and of the relationship of literature, philosophy and religion. Schlegel's occasional approaches to a mystic view of poetry seem to reflect Novalis. Other common traits are a reverence for the powers of language and a notion of a poetic world which is governed by its own laws.

More influential among the men of Schlegel's generation were Fichte and Schelling. Fichte's doctrine of the ego's creation of the world is tied to Schlegel's theories of language, the mediator of all consciousness and the medium of Poesie. Through language Fichtean philosophy is related to literature. More will be said of this later. Schelling is of greater importance. Obvious parallels in the writings of Schelling and Schlegel are the identification of Poesie and philosophy, the idea of art as an intuitive mode of cognition, the analogy of natural and artistic creation, the relating of myth to literature and, related to all the foregoing, the idea that art alone can penetrate to the essential nature of the universe. These

are all subjects which will be considered in detail in subsequent chapters of this study.

Parallels in the theories of Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel are countless. An inconclusive collation of the Berlin Lectures with Friedrich's previously published works is given by Minor in his prefaces to the lectures. Friedrich's theories will be discussed at several points in the chapters which follow. August Wilhelm is in general agreement with Friedrich. On many occasions, however, such as his discussions of "Poesie der Poesie" and of the "Potenzierung" of poetic expression, he develops phrases from Friedrich into extended arguments. On several important questions (aestheticism and the role of myth in literature, to mention two examples) August Wilhelm seems to disagree with Friedrich either in principle or in emphasis.

Schlegel quite often declines to mention in his writings the men who obviously influenced his thinking. Kant, it is true, is discussed at some length in the Berlin Lectures. But usually Schlegel's Kantian borrowings are worked into his lectures without commentary on their source. In the case of Kant such a procedure is justified by the assumption that the references were completely obvious to his audience. His failure to mention Herder has less justification. It is probable that Schlegel had no desire to have his own theories associated with those

of Herder and the Stürmer und Dränger. Schlegel criticizes the writers of the Geniezeit on several occasions. The coldness between the Schlegels and Schiller, occasioned largely by Friedrich and Caroline, is a partial explanation for Schlegel's later failure to mention Schiller's name in places where it seems to be called for. In the case of Fichte and Schelling the assumption, as in the case of Kant, seems to be that Schlegel's audience was entirely aware of the philosophical sources of the theories they heard propounded. We should not forget the fact of Schelling's presence in Jena and that of Fichte in both Jena and Berlin during the time of Schlegel's activities in those cities. These men were at the height of their popularity and Schlegel could assume a common knowledge of the source of those elements of transcendental philosophy which he appropriated in his theorizing.

On occasion August Wilhelm even quotes literally from Friedrich Schlegel without mentioning the source. One is led to believe that neither of the brothers had a very strong sense of intellectual property in their relationship to each other. An admirer of August Wilhelm might be led to suspect that many of Friedrich's ideas were borrowed from his brother or perhaps to speculate on the extent to which their ideas were worked out in common. Unfortunately, the documents to support such speculations are lacking, for August Wilhelm's letters to Friedrich

were destroyed and the letters of Friedrich are inconclusive on this point. The loss is especially lamentable for the early formative years when the brothers were separated and all literary and philosophic communication was by means of letters. The unfortunate fact remains that in the case of shared ideas prior publication was usually by Friedrich, and so August Wilhelm forever remains subject to the accusation that he was the commentator on thoughts originated by his brother. The most convincing defense of August Wilhelm in cases where the two are in close agreement seems to be an observation of the way the ideas involved are colored by his own personality. This is the approach of Wellek when he stresses the elder Schlegel's objectivity, sobriety, care in expression and strict consideration of historical and literary evidence.⁸

The accusation of eclecticism cannot be wholly denied. Schlegel's claim to be read in spite of this has been stated previously. Many of his conclusions, as we will see, are original. He arrives at further important formulations based on borrowed premises. His works are of admitted historical importance. Many of his statements, furthermore, are relevant to perennial problems of literary theory and criticism.

The preceding statement of Schlegel's affinities with

⁸A History of Modern Criticism, II, 36-37.

contemporary philosophers is not intended to suggest that he was primarily an aesthetician. Schlegel was a critic and historian as well as a theorist of literature. His theories cannot be taken for an attempt at a systematic revelation of the nature of literature. Rather they are both the foundation and the result of the practical endeavors of judging literature and writing its history.

Schlegel upholds the interrelatedness of theory, history and criticism both in practice and in theory itself. A distinctive feature of his poetic theories is his constant concern for their compatibility with the facts of history and their usefulness in the practice of literary criticism. Although these subjects will be dealt with in more detail later, it will be useful to outline here Schlegel's view of the relationship of history, criticism and theory.

Literary history is vital to both theory and criticism. History gives to theory the objects on which it must base its conclusions. Criticism, Schlegel observes, is largely a matter of judging the merit of one work in comparison with other related works (Berlin, I, 26). History gives to criticism the knowledge it needs of excellent works of all ages.

Literary criticism is related to both theory and history. At one point Schlegel observes, "Die kritische Reflexion ist eigentlich ein beständiges Experimentiren, um auf theoretische Sätze zu kommen" (Berlin, I, 27). On

the other hand, it is only through criticism that works are judged worthy objects of art history and hence of theory.

Theory serves both history and criticism. History without an organizing idea is meaningless. Theory, says Schlegel, gives history the idea of art and thereby makes of it more than a meaningless collection of facts. An important example is seen in the history of ancient and modern literature. Schlegel holds that only theory can reconcile the artistic claims of classic and romantic art (Berlin, I, 22). Finally, critical judgments must be more than mere expressions of opinion. Expression within a convincing system is a means whereby the validity of judgments can be maintained. Theory gives criticism such a system within which its judgments can be expressed.

These statements by Schlegel on the relationship of history, theory and criticism reflect the nature of his own work. Literary history, when written by Schlegel, is never a lifeless chronicle but is uplifted by theoretical statements and critical insights. His criticism is based on a broad knowledge of literary history, and criticism leads to some of Schlegel's most important theoretical statements. Finally, and most important, theory is never wholly separated from history and criticism. Schlegel's most important borrowings are from thinkers more abstract than himself: Kant, Fichte, Schelling and even Friedrich

Schlegel. August Wilhelm Schlegel's achievement lies partly in his original insights and partly in his bringing the insights of others to bear on practical critical and historical problems. The most important of these is the question of modern literature's claim to artistic merit. The success of Schlegel's endeavors will be considered further in this study's concluding chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE SPECULATIVE HISTORY OF POETIC ORIGINS

In his "Briefe über Poesie, Sylbenmaß und Sprache" (1795-96) Schlegel observes, "indem man erklärt, wie die Kunst wurde, zeigt man zugleich auf das einleuchtendste, was sie sein soll" (SW, VII, 107). Herder is Schlegel's model in this approach to the nature of art. It should be noted, however, that Schlegel had some reservations about the value of such a procedure as history. He later admits that there are no historical data to support the ideas which follow and that, in fact, their only proof is a philosophical one. This admission seems to suggest that the "should be" of poetry could just as easily be determined without the intermediate step of history. In fact, the context of the statement quoted above implies that one of the justifications for the pseudo-history which follows is to make art theory more palatable to those who doubt its worth. Historical speculation could convince where a more abstract approach might fail. History is here merely the form of Schlegel's literary theories.

Schlegel is concerned to show Poesie to be a necessary outgrowth of human nature. Man's nature is twofold: physical and spiritual, limited and free. The reconciliation of these two aspects of man occurs in art. This thought

is an outgrowth of Schlegel's reading of Kant and Schiller, but in the "Briefe" the argument is not to be a philosophical one but rather historical and even anthropological, based on the supposed nature of primitive man.

In the "Briefe" Schlegel argues that man's memory causes an accumulation of feelings and passions. The inner tension of emotion brings about the urge toward expression. The most natural means available are vocal tones and movements of the body. But memory allows so great an accumulation of emotion that simple cries and movements are inadequate to express it. Bodily limitations are such that man could exhaust himself, even destroy his body, in an attempt to express himself fully. The way out of the dilemma lies in rhythmic movements and rhythmic articulation of voice. At first this is a matter of necessity rather than of aesthetic intent. The body can work more efficiently if it works rhythmically, and this efficiency is necessary for the expression of man's accumulated emotions without exhausting his body in the process.

Man discovers rhythm in his own breathing and heartbeat and applies the principle to voice and gestures. There results the original form out of which all art grows, an expression of emotion through a combination of song and dance. In the beginning poetry, music and dance were combined. This disciplined exercise of freedom answers the needs of both sides of man's nature and offers the most

striking example of how art is natural to man.

Rhythmic sounds and movements were, then, originally a human necessity. The stages in the development of the necessity into an art are these. At first the expression was of an immediate emotion and was forgotten after it was completed. But in expressing emotions, man sensed a certain mastery over them and so song became a civilizing influence. Songs were worth remembering and passing down from generation to generation. On the other hand, since men were subject to the same environment which occasioned similar emotions in them all, it was only natural that they should express these emotions together. Again it was rhythm which brought out of a chaos of individual expressions the order of communal song and dance. Acting together with other men brought about a more conscious choice of the outer forms of expression. Choice is governed partially by another basic human disposition, that of beautifying the useful with pleasing decoration. This beautifying is fundamental to art:

Im Wohlgefallen an vermeintlich schönem Zierrat, und in dem Vermögen der Einbildungskraft, ihn zu erfinden, liegen die edelsten Künste, die sich je unter geistreichen Völkern bis zur Reife entfaltet haben, wie in ihrem Keime beschloßen. (SW, VII, 151)

When expression became an object of pleasure, its repetition was also pleasant. So man sang and danced even when the emotions, the need which occasioned the expression, were past. The result is this:

Nun erst wurde also Tanz und Gesang als Ergötzung getrieben. Es mußte endlich dahin kommen, daß man sich durch Hülfe der Phantasie freiwillig aus einem ruhigen Zustande in lebhaftere Regungen versetzte. So entstand eigentliche Dichtung; so kam Nachahmung zum Vorschein; denn alles Vorhergehende war reine, unvermischte Wahrheit gewesen. (SW, VII, 152)

The word "Nachahmung" is used here to denote the imitation of emotional expressions when real emotions were no longer present. The subject of mimetic theory will concern us later when Schlegel uses the term in a more traditional sense. Here he is only saying that art was born when an activity which was previously a necessity became free creation and, in Schiller's sense, play.

Originally the arts of poetry, music and dance were combined. If we consider only the poetic element in this combination, it is apparent that the earliest poetry was lyric, that is, the outpoured expression of emotion, at first of emotion occasioned by real circumstances and later also emotion aroused in imaginative re-creation. With the birth of art as a free activity, making poetry gradually became a skill practiced by a gifted few rather than something which all men had to do.

Schlegel's first principle of dividing the arts is based on the Kantian categories of space and time. In the Berlin Lectures he says,

Die Künste treiben ihr Wesen im Reich der Erscheinungen, sie stellen sinnlich dar. Nun giebt es aber zwey Formen der sinnlichen Anschauung, Raum und Zeit. Darnach lassen sich zwey Gattungen von Künsten denken, solche die simultan und die successiv darstellen. (Berlin, I, 112)

Schlegel further classifies according to natural modes of expression. The primary successive arts and their means of expression are music (tones), dance (gestures) and Poesie (language). This leads us to the subject of language.

In the "Briefe" language is a subject of relatively minor importance. There Schlegel sought to find the natural origins of poetry in rhythm. In his lectures in Jena and Berlin, however, he widens his search for natural origins. He is concerned to show how art develops from fundamental human dispositions and Poesie is seen to grow naturally from the original nature of a mode of expression as old as man himself. This is language.

In the "Briefe" Schlegel calls language "die wunderbarste Schöpfung des menschlichen Dichtungsvermögens, gleichsam das große, nie vollendete Gedicht, worin die menschliche Natur sich selbst darstellt . . ." (SW, VII, 104). Here is another perspective on art as the specialization in an ability which originally belonged to all men. Originally all language was by nature poetic. In time it lost that quality. The poet, however, restores poetry to language.

The Jena Lectures state that one aspect of original language which makes it poetic is its use of comparisons: "Die Erweiterung der Sprache setzt eine ununterbrochene Kette von Vergleichen voraus; die früheste Sprache ist

daher im höchsten Grade tropisch und bildlich, d. h. poetisch" (1798, p.23). This thought is found in Rousseau but its development by Schlegel is along more idealistic lines. It is man's understanding which destroyed the essential unity of mind and the senses and it is art which restores that unity. The poetry in Ursprache lies in the fact that there is reflected there the same sort of harmonious working of man's faculties which, according to Kant, occurs in aesthetic experience. This is true, says Schlegel, because the first men who spoke were trying to picture objects and feelings with words. Words were not merely understood but rather evoked mental images like those aroused by the objects to which the words referred. Originally language was not an object of Verstand but rather of imagination in the sense of image-making. "Understanding" words marks a degeneration of language.

Schlegel constantly reminds us that the appeal of Poesie is to imagination. Here we must note the word "image" in imagination, the Bild in Einbildungskraft. An appeal to imagination was also made by original language. This is another evidence of its poetic nature. Prose was a later development wherein words lost their Bildlichkeit and became merely conventional signs which spoke not to the imagination but to understanding. The poet restores the poetic quality to language, a quality which, however, language never completely loses. The restoration of

language's original nature also occurs to some extent in schöne Prosa which, however, is bound to the laws of common usage while Poesie follows only its own laws.

Schlegel makes a distinction between Naturpoesie and Kunstpoesie which, in the Jena Lectures, remains rather poorly defined. Homer seems to be the dividing line, belonging to both categories. But Schlegel adds, "Auch könnte man . . . die ganze griechische Poesie eine Naturpoesie nennen, weil der Trieb, nicht die Kunst in ihr herrscht" (1798, p.29). In the Berlin Lectures he sees the appearance of the genres as the beginning of literary art. As for Naturpoesie, Schlegel sees it in three aspects:

Beim Heranwachsen der Naturpoesie können wir folgende drey Stufen oder Bildungsepochen unterscheiden:
 1) Elementarpoesie in der Gestalt der Ursprache;
 2) Absonderung der poetischen Successionen in unserm Innern von anderweitigen Zuständen durch ein Äußeres Gesetz der Form, nämlich den Rhythmus; 3) Bindung und Zusammenfassung der poetischen Elemente zu einer Ansicht des Weltganzen, Mythologie. (Berlin, I, 268)

In the Berlin Lectures Schlegel still gives his speculations a semi-historical form but he has become more philosophical. He adds to the above discussion of the aspects of Naturpoesie:

Die Sprache ist von ihrer Entstehung an der Urstoff der Poesie; das Sylbenmaß (im weitesten Sinne) die Form ihrer Realität, das Äußerliche Gesetz, unter welchem sie in die Welt der Erscheinungen eintritt; die Mythologie endlich ist gleichsam eine Organisation, welche sich der poetische Geist aus der elementarischen Welt anbildet, und durch dessen Medium, mit dessen Organen er nun alle übrigen Gegenstände anschaut und ergreift. (Berlin, I, 269)

This schematism of Stoff-Form-Organisation goes beyond the historical and anthropological foundations of his earlier writings. Schlegel does not, however, completely forsake the approach through Urgeschichte. He found the problem of Stoff vs. Form formulated by Kant and Schiller but the relation of the problem to historical origins results in the idea that not conscious art but rather myth was the first union of matter and form in an organized view of the world.

Although Schlegel never adopted Fichte's system as a whole, his influence is evident in the speculations on language in the Berlin Lectures. In particular, we find Schlegel identifying original language with man's first formation of the idea of an orderly world apart from the self:

Das selbstthätige Prinzip nun, welches der thierischen Abhängigkeit entgegengesetzt ist, macht sich nur dadurch geltend, daß es Zusammenhang und Einheit in das Daseyn zu bringen sucht. Es vergleicht also die sinnlichen Eindrücke mit einander; um verglichen zu werden, müssen sie coëxistiren, dieß setzt folglich die Fähigkeit voraus, Eindrücke festzuhalten. Darin besteht nun eben das ursprüngliche Sprechen. (Berlin, I, 275)

Later we will find Schlegel even more strongly influenced by Fichte. Here, however, the historical-anthropological approach is more evident. The stress on the importance of memory comes from Hemsterhuis and Herder, as does his argument that in the beginning thinking and speaking were identical. The sign around which experience is organized

does not have to be spoken, although there is an urge toward expression: "Das Sprechen ist . . . zuvörderst eine innerliche Handlung, die sich aber unfehlbar dem Körper mittheilen und als Bewegung zum Vorschein kommen wird" (Berlin, I, 275). Schlegel calls the original function of language its use as "Gedanken-Organ."

At this point Schlegel indulges in further speculations on the psychology of primitive man. According to Schlegel, man first tested words on himself in order to judge their effect on others, whence the use of voice to express the "innerliche Handlung" spoken of above. Voice was the only means of outer expression which man could perceive in its totality and which would thus allow him to judge adequately the success of his attempts. Perhaps gestures originally played a larger role, but eventually voice won the upper hand, for the reason just stated and because it appeared to come from within where the signs man sought to express seemed to lie.

The importance of these thoughts lies in their expansion of the idea of imitation of emotions which we found in the "Briefe." Here it is not just emotion but all of man's mental functions which are expressed. Originally language consisted of natural signs, that is, it was an ~~imitation~~ of something going on inside man. "Die Ursprache . . . wird aus natürlichen Zeichen bestehen, d. h. aus solchen die in einem wesentlichen Zusammenhange

mit dem Bezeichneten stehn: denn sie besteht in Bewegungen der Sprechwerkzeuge welche durch innre Affectionen veranlaßt werden" (Berlin, I, 277). Again Schlegel is far from promoting a traditional mimetic theory. What language expresses is not objective nature but rather man's experience of it. Schlegel calls language "eine umbildende Darstellung" (Berlin, I, 278), by which he means that in portraying something in words it is re-formed by its being experienced by man.

It would seem that language, appealing as it does to the sense of hearing, could form natural signs only for impressions made by things heard. But analogies between sense impressions are felt and these are expressed. Hence the sounds of words can express impressions of sights, things felt, and so on. Schlegel observes,

Die Erweiterung der Sprache setzt also schon in der sinnlichen Region eine ununterbrochne Kette von Vergleichen voraus. Allein der Mensch muß dahin kommen, auch dasjenige durch Sprache bezeichnen zu wollen, was in keiner sinnlichen Anschauung gegeben werden kann. (Berlin, I, 279)

How are such things expressed? Since man always has intimations of the essential inseparableness of mind and body, it is only natural that he should express the abstract, his own non-sensual functions and things never actually experienced by the senses, in physical terms. This forming of words for things not physically experienced is one of the first signs of the birth of Poesie:

Es baut sich nun also in der Sprache über der ersten

Darstellung der Sinnenwelt eine zweyte unsrer unsinnlichen Anschauungen, und das Band zwischen beyden ist die Metapher. Die Bildlichkeit, das Bezeichnen durch Vergleichung, trat zwar schon in jener ersten Sphäre ein, aber hier thut sich erst das volle Bewußtseyn des symbolisirenden Vermögens in uns hervor, durch dessen willkührlichen absichtlichen Gebrauch alsdann aus den poetischen Elementen der Ursprache eigentliche Poesie gebildet wird. (Berlin, I, 280)

As long as man was trying to express immediate experience his words were merely unconscious reflections of that experience. But when the experience was no longer immediate symbols could be found only by conscious effort. Conscious symbolizing, as we will later find Schlegel arguing in more detail, is fundamental to Poesie.

Schlegel sees another aspect of Ursprache in personification. Again his argument is psychological. The ultimate source of personification lies in human nature:

Der Mensch erfindet die Sprache nicht als ein müßig beschauendes Wesen, sondern als ein solches welches unter dem Andrang der physischen Kräfte seine Existenz zu behaupten sucht. Das bewegte, sich verändernde, sichtbar wirkende wird ihn also zuvörderst und weit gewaltiger treffen als das Ruhende. (Berlin, I, 280)

Which leads to this conclusion:

Da nun der menschliche Geist zuerst auf Wirkungen gerichtet ist, und ehe er den Grund irgend einer fremden Wirkung einsieht, den Grund derer, welche er selbst unmittelbar in sich fühlt, so stellt er sich alle Veränderungen unter dem Bilde seiner eignen Wirkungsart vor, d. h. als durch einen Willen bewerkstelligt, als Handlungen. (Berlin, I, 281)

Eventually man anthropomorphizes all nature and this is the basis of mythology.

We are now in a position to survey Schlegel's arguments

concerning the relationship of language to poetry. Language is in essence poetic. By its very nature it involves a close correspondence of sign to what is designated; it deals in tropes and metaphors; it personifies; it is bildlich or "imaginative" in the sense that it expresses and re-creates images. Prose, as we saw, marks a degeneration in language wherein images turn into concepts and words are no longer "imagined" but are merely understood. The correspondence of sound to meaning is lost. And understanding pays less attention to words and their meaning, says Schlegel, than to their combination in logical sequences. The ultimate result is this:

Die Ableitung der Wörter wird durch den Verlauf der Zeit unkenntlich, indem sie selbst sich nach der Bequemlichkeit der Sprechenden richtet, jene Symbolik, jener allgemeine Schematismus der Fantasie, muß den strengeren aber todten Bestimmungen des Verstandes weichen: und so wird im Fortgange der Cultur die Sprache aus einer Einheit lebendiger Bezeichnung in eine Sammlung willkürlicher conventioneller Zeichen verwandelt erscheinen. (Berlin, I, 282)

The process is, however, never complete and there are always traces of Naturpoesie in all language. On the other hand, the degeneration of language is fully reversed only by the conscious effort of pushing back the purposes which reduced it to a mere means to an end. This occurs in schöne Prosa and above all in Kunstpoesie.

The second element of Naturpoesie is rhythm, a basic definition of which is found in the Jena Lectures: "Der Rhythmus ist die Anordnung einer Reihe von Bewegungen in

der Zeit, wodurch Verhältnisse unter derselben wahrgenommen werden können" (1798, p.74). Meter is defined thus:

"Metrum ist das Ganze einer Reihe von Rhythmen, der Rhythmik in der 2. Potenz" (1798, p.75). We have already noted the origin of rhythm in physical necessity. In Schlegel's words,

Die Seele, von der Natur allein erzogen und keine Fesseln gewohnt, forderte Freiheit in ihrer äußern Verkündigung; der Körper bedurfte, um nicht der anhaltenden Heftigkeit derselben zu unterliegen, ein Maß, worauf seine innre Einrichtung ihn fühlbar leitete. Ein geordneter Rhythmus der Bewegungen und Töne vereinigte beides, und darin lag ursprünglich seine wohlthätige Zaubermacht. (SW, VII, 139)

We have already seen that, once discovered, rhythm and its effects were enjoyed, and eventually it was used in the expression of inventions of Phantasie, whence the birth of Dichtung, that is, of poetic fictions.

Schlegel also looks at rhythm and meter from the perspective of expression. Summing up his statements on rhythm in the Berlin Lectures, he says,

Wir zeigten nämlich daß dieser, den man als den geordneten Wechsel in der Successionen definiren kann, in der Einen untheilbaren Urkunst, die zugleich Poesie, Musik und Tanz ist, eine Combination des Charakters unsrer willkührlichen Funktionen, und unsrer organischen Verrichtungen, eine Darstellung des Beharrlichen im Wechsel der Vorstellungen sey, und also die successiven Künste zum Ausdruck unsrer gesamten geistigen und körperlichen Natur, des Lebens und der Persönlichkeit mache. (Berlin, I, 315-16)

This is the point of view which allows Schlegel to devote so much time to metrical technicalities, explaining the use and appropriateness of every known metrical device,

every kind of strophe. Some of these technicalities will concern us when we consider the genres.

Later we will examine Schlegel's view of Poesie as a world in itself, a fiction distinguished from ordinary reality. Here let us note that one of the functions of meter is to set Poesie apart from the real world, especially from the time of the real world. Schlegel follows Kant in maintaining the non-teleological nature of art. In Schlegel's speculations this characteristic is related to the fictional nature of Poesie which presents a world complete in itself. In the Berlin Lectures, for example, Schlegel has just noted the tendency of prosaic speech to depart from the musical when he goes on to say,

Das Streben der Poesie ist nun ein gerade entgegengesetztes, und folglich um anzukündigen, daß sie eine Rede sey die ihren Zweck in sich selbst hat, daß sie keinem äußern Geschäfte diene, und so in die anderweitig bestimmte Zeitfolge eingreifen will, muß sie sich ihre Zeitfolge selbst bilden. Nur dadurch wird der Hörer aus der Wirklichkeit entrückt, und in eine imaginative Zeitreihe versetzt, daß er in der Rede selbst eine Gesetzmäßige Eintheilung der Successionen, ein Zeitmaß wahrnimmt; und daher die wunderbare Erscheinung daß die Sprache grade in ihrer freyesten Erscheinung, als bloßes Spiel gebraucht, sich des sonst in ihr herrschenden Charakters der Willkühr freywillig entäußert, und einem ihrem Inhalte scheinbar fremden Gesetze unterwirft. Dieses Gesetz ist das Zeitmaß, der Takt, der Rhythmus, welchen die Poesie in ihrem Ursprunge mit der Musik gemein hat Was nach der bey der weiteren Entwicklung beyder erfolgenden Scheidung dieser Künste in der Form der Poesie zurückbleibt, ist das Sylbenmaß ,
(Berlin, I, 117)

So the metrical form of Poesie was originally what separated it from other linguistic utterances, and meter remains

one of the elements which sets the created world of literary art apart from the real world of ordinary experience.

We now turn to the third element in Schlegel's theory of Naturpoesie. Myth plays a double role in Schlegel's poetic theories. It is the first union of poetic matter (language) and poetic form (meter) into complete poetic structures. Furthermore, myth is a source of inspiration and poetic material for later artists. The subject of a new mythology for modern times is only touched on by Schlegel, and this fact requires some commentary before we proceed.

The hope that poetry might be revitalized by a rebirth of mythology had been expressed before Schlegel, notably by Klopstock, Herder and Schiller. In the light of Friedrich Schlegel's well known views on this subject, it is surprising that August Wilhelm does not lay great stress on the importance of a new mythology. The subject does not, however, go unmentioned. At one point in the Berlin Lectures (III, 86) he seems to take it for granted that all literature must have a mythological basis and that the myths must be more than a dead heritage. In another place in the same lectures, however, he suggests that the absence of myth is characteristic of modern literature. At the end of the first series of Berlin Lectures he speaks of new comedy as the first genre in which mythology was completely absent. This is followed by the

fragmentary note "Anfang des Modernen" (Berlin, I, 355).

Friedrich Schlegel, in his "Gespräch über die Poesie," had earlier characterized modern poetry by its lack of myth:

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. . . . Es fehlt . . . unserer Poesie an einem Mittelpunkt, wie es 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.¹

Friedrich goes on to describe the possibilities for a new mythology. August Wilhelm does not undertake to do this. We sometimes find him wishing for such a modern mythology to replace the ancient myths which are, for us, no longer living. But there seems to be little one can do to further the birth of such myths since, he says, "Eine Mythologie kann ebensowenig die willkürliche Erfindung eines einzelnen sein als eine Sprache; daher auch alle in dieser Art mit so großem Aufwand von Geist und Einbildungskraft gemachten Versuche mißglücken mußten" (1798, p.111). He makes special note of the failure of Klopstock and Milton in this endeavor. At worst, such undertakings degenerate into superficial allegory.

The above passage from Friedrich's "Gespräch über die Poesie" is noteworthy for its stressing the burden imposed

¹Kritische Schriften, ed. Wolf Dietrich Rasch, 2. Aufl. (München, 1964) p.497. Hereafter referred to as Rasch.

on the modern poet by the lack of living myths. We will see that this lack is not so strongly felt by August Wilhelm. Most of his discussions of myth are of its role as Naturpoesie. Myth is a poetic view of the world and as such has many elements which can be borrowed by Kunstpoesie. Literature itself, however, is a poeticizing of the world and it can accomplish this end without the mediation of myth.

For August Wilhelm it is philosophy more than myth which provides a basis for modern poetry's claim to being more than pure subjectivity. He follows Schelling and Novalis in maintaining that philosophy and poetry have the same aim. On the other hand, myth and Poesie are also related through philosophy for Schlegel also takes from Schelling the thought that myth is philosophy in the realm of the objectively real. Insofar as Poesie philosophizes symbolically, it accomplishes in the form of consciously contrived fictions what myth does unconsciously in objective reality. Myth is not art. It can be used by art but evidently does not have to be.

The thought that myth, like art, is a product of creative imagination was a commonplace by Schlegel's time. Fichte's idea of the creative ego allowed a further extension of this thesis. Schlegel states that it is Phantasie which posits the objective and the subjective world and from this thought he proceeds to define myth's position

in a dialectical scheme:

Der ursprünglichste Akt der Fantasie ist derjenige, wodurch unsre eigne Existenz und die ganze Außenwelt für uns Realität gewinnt. Daß diese ein Produkt unsrer eignen Thätigkeit sey, kann jedoch nur durch Speculation dargethan werden, nie ins Bewußtseyn fallen. Das entgegengesetzte Extrem ist die künstlerische Wirksamkeit der Fantasie, die selbstbewußt ist, und mit Absicht geleitet wird. Diese ist in Ansehung ihrer Produkte rein ideell, d. h. sie macht für sie keine Ansprüche auf Wirklichkeit, und bedarf deren nicht. Zwischen obigen beyden liegt nun die, woraus die Mythologie hervorgeht, in der Mitte. Sie giebt folglich ihren Producten eine ideelle Realität; d. h. für den Geist sind sie wirklich, wiewohl sie in der sinnlichen Erfahrung nicht nachgewiesen werden können. (Berlin, I, 329-30)

Schlegel goes on to extend the Fichteian argument into the realm of pre-history. Myth comes from an age when the human spirit was not yet divided, when there was not yet a distinction of Phantasie and Verstand. Phantasie ruled man's life but, without the distinction just mentioned, it did so unconsciously.

The reality of myth and the fiction of Poesie are distinguished. Both are, however, products of Phantasie which acts consciously in poetry and unconsciously in myth. In the following passage myth and poetry are seen to have another quality in common:

Überall wo die menschliche Natur sich mit Nothwendigkeit entwickelt, ohne mögliche Eingriffe einer fehlerhaften Willkühr, kann sie nicht irren. Die Mythologie ist eine im Gange der menschlichen Cultur wesentliche, und unabsichtliche Schöpfung der Fantasie: es muß ihr also Wahrheit zum Grunde liegen. Das Fabelhafte ist also nicht bloß für wahrhaft gehalten worden, sondern es ist in einem gewissen Sinne wahr; ja man kann sagen, daß in dem Geiste Ächter Dichtungen alle Wahrheit beschlossen liegt. (Berlin, I, 330)

Here we see Schelling's influence on Schlegel. "Alle Wahrheit" must be taken literally. Philosophy and poetry express the same truths. Mythology and, as we will see later, history differ from them in the fact that their expressions are in the realm of real events.

Similar to Schlegel's distinction of Poesie and prose is his contrast of a mythic and prosaic view of reality. In the age of myth-making Phantasie ruled without awareness of Verstand. A myth is like a dream: perhaps fragmentary and seemingly incoherent, but the understanding does not doubt the reality of what occurs in it. Verstand, just as it is the source of the prosaic in language, is also the source of a prosaic view of the world, the decline of myth. Poetry is an artistic restoration of the mythical state in the realm of the conscious: "Die Poesie ist eine künstlerische Herstellung jenes mythischen Zustandes, ein freywilliges und waches Träumen" (Berlin, I, 330).

Myths fulfill the demand made by the idealists on art, that it combine the material and the spiritual. Evidence of this is found in myth's use of the means which poetry uses to the same end. The most immediately obvious of these is personification, but to this must be added virtually all the devices of language found in literature, a fact which Schlegel demonstrates in some detail. The following statements exemplify Schlegel's arguments that myths, because of their poetic qualities, are supremely

appropriate for use in poetic art:

Wir sehen . . ., daß in der mythischen Bezeichnung, eben so wohl wie in denen der Ursprache, die Tropen gelten; und durch diese in der Mythologie sehr weit verbreiteten Übertragungen des Sinnlichen auf das Geistige, wird gleich Anfangs der Grund zu ihrer künftigen Vieldeutigkeit, und einer Bildsamkeit, die jeder höheren Forderung Genüge leisten kann, gelegt. Wie die Mythologie eine Umschaffung der Natur ist, so ist sie selbst ins unendliche poetischer Umschaffungen empfänglich. (Berlin, I, 336-37)

Presently we will survey briefly Schlegel's views on the development of Greek mythology. Here we note his observation that myths take on new meanings in the course of time. The resulting wealth of their meanings together with their imagery and their Umschaffungsfähigkeit are qualities which allow their borrowing and reworking in higher, consciously created art.

Schlegel distinguishes two kinds of religions and mythologies according to whether they reflect more strongly man's physical or his spiritual side. He calls these two types realistic and idealistic. The best known realistic mythology is that of the Greeks and it is around this mythology that Schlegel's theories are developed. The opposite idealistic extreme is the Christian religion. But since man's nature is, after all, indivisible, traces of each of these types appear in every religion and mythology.

There are three stages in the development of Greek mythology: the physical, the mystical and the ideal. These stages are not sharply separated from each other and they overlap in time, but they do roughly denote the historical

progress of Greek mythology.

In the physical myths man personifies the powers of nature, that is, he explains the workings of the world in terms of his own activities. These physical powers are, however, essentially unfathomable and are usually immeasurably greater than man's own powers. Their personifications are accordingly not men, but gods. Moreover, this process of personification does not stop with physical nature but is extended to human dispositions, situations, passions: for example, sleep, death, love, war. The symbolic nature of certain gods often shifts in time so that various gods of activities become symbols of the products of these activities, e. g., Bacchus becomes the god not just of the vintage but also of wine itself. Through such processes the gods take on new meanings and more complex relationships among themselves. Schlegel comments,

Auf solche Weise waren die alten Gottheiten nicht Einkleidungen scharf abgeschnittener und erschöpflicher Begriffe, sondern sie entsprachen vollen Massen der Anschauung, die aus einem bestimmten Standpunkte für die Betrachtung der Natur und des Lebens aufgefaßt und unauflöslich zusammengefaßt waren. So haben sie zugleich die allgemeine Gültigkeit von Ideen und die lebendige Gegenwart von Individuen. (Berlin, I, 335-36)

We note again that Schlegel is discussing myth as Naturpoesie which is a historical predecessor of Kunstpoesie.

In myth we can see the birth of a Poesie which is an expression of a complex view of the world. Its qualities are completeness, coherence and vividness. And the gods, we are told, have the validity of ideas and the living

presence of individuals. This is the sense in which poetry as art has both a truth beyond itself and yet a life of its own complete within itself.

While the physical myths portray the world in animate forms, Schlegel rightly denies that they are allegorical in character:

Ob Homers Mythen allegorisch gemeint seyen, diese Frage ist häufig aufgeworfen, und verschieden beantwortet worden. Wenn Allegorie die besonnene und absichtlich erfundene bildliche Einkleidung eines Begriffs bedeutet, so muß man es bestimmt verneinen. Jenen Mythen liegt mehr das Fantasiebild zum Grunde welches dem abstrakten Begriffe vorhergeht. Es sind gegebne Ganze der Anschauung, nicht durch Bestimmungen des Verstandes sonder sinnlich umgränzt. (Berlin, I, 338-39)

This too is true of the highest poetry. It is a way of seeing things, and this seeing is the primary act in its creation. Poetry does not arise from the mere casting of pre-existing concepts into sensuous forms.

The second epoch of myth's development, the mystic, comes with what Schlegel calls the first premonition of the infinite. The mystic disposition tends to concentrate the powers of many gods into one. This stage of mythology deals with secret mysteries and produces gods who stand for all of nature. Little is said about the relationship of these myths to literature.

The third stage of Greek mythology is the ideal, that is, the stage wherein the Greeks formed a mythic ideal of man. This stage produces gods who represent the perfection of human qualities and abilities.

In general, the historical relationship of myth to Poesie is one of borrowing by the latter from mythology.

Der Mythos liefert [der Poesie] einen weit mehr zubereiteten Stoff als die bloße Natur: er ist eine Natur im poetischen Kostüm. Er ist selbst gewissermaßen schon Poesie, kann aber durch eine mit Bewußtseyn freye Behandlung wiederum zum Organ, ja zum bloßen Element herabgesetzt werden. (Berlin, I, 342)

In the 1798 Lectures Schlegel stated the relationship thus:

Der Mythos ist, wie die Sprache, ein allgemeines, ein notwendiges Produkt des menschlichen Dichtungsvermögens, gleichsam eine Urpoesie des Menschengeschlechts. Für die Poesie im höhern Sinne ist er aber nicht Selbstzweck, sondern Mittel zur Erreichung dichterischer Zwecke, Organ und Medium der Darstellung. (1798, pp.97-98)

In myths the poet finds the world already poeticized, and so these can be easily borrowed and used by Kunstpoesie. Myth is not Poesie, that is, it is not a playful fiction of an individual poet but rather a view of man and the world in which the action is symbolic and yet originally was literally true for the nation to which the myths belonged.

Even the use of myths in Poesie by simple borrowing is limited. In the 1798 Lectures Schlegel observes,

Der Mythos kann nur da mit Vorteil in die Dichtung selbst verwebt werden, wo er lebendig und einheimisch ist; sinnbildliche Anspielungen darauf setzen voraus, daß er der Phantasie geläufig als gültig anerkannt sei. (1798, p.110)

The conditions prescribed here exist only in fictions set, for example, in the ancient world if it is the Greek myths which are to be used. Poetry is endangered by inappropriate myths and by lifeless antiquarianism.

The final stage in the birth of literary art is the transition from Naturpoesie to Kunstpoesie. It was seen earlier that the transition is one from the unconscious fulfillment of a need to conscious creation. The earliest form of Poesie, the lyric, is at first the expression of an immediate and pressing emotion. Originally the song died with the emotion. There is a transitional stage in the birth of lyric art where the song is preserved after the emotion has passed away. Finally, songs, later poems, are made which are occasioned not by present feelings but rather by feelings which are created or re-created in imagination. Men who do this are no longer merely obeying a need but are creating art and are doing it in full consciousness of what they are doing.

This chapter set out to survey Schlegel's ideas on the primordial origins of Poesie. In concluding, it should be pointed out that this speculative history hardly goes beyond lyric poetry. The lyric is the only genre of Kunstpoesie whose natural origins are examined, whereas the beginning of literature with character, plot and action is not defined. Schlegel tells us why men first sang, but it is not clear why they first came to write epics or dramas. In the Berlin Lectures the answer is perhaps touched on in the following thoughts on the relationship of myth and Poesie. Schlegel is speaking of the three stages in the development of Greek mythology:

Wir finden auch diese Stufen in den verschiedenen Gattungen der Griechischen Poesie, welche nach der Ordnung ihres Fortschrittes zu einer selbstständigen Kunst auf einander folgten, deutlich bezeichnet. Das Epos ist noch am meisten bloß passive Überlieferung des gegebenen. Das Lyrische Gedicht zeigt seine größere Freyheit in der Wahl der Anspielungen, berührt die Mythen oft nur flüchtig, verknüpft, sehr entfernte u. s. w. Die Tragiker endlich gingen am freyesten mit den Mythen um, und modelten sie ganz nach ihren Zwecken. (Berlin, I, 342-43)

Schlegel's treatment of myth is his first discussion of any sort of poetry in which characters and action appear. Here we find him on the verge of saying that myth was the model for Kunstpoesie in its use of these devices. But the point is not pursued and these matters are discussed outside the context of his speculative history of poetic origins.

In concluding it should be pointed out that Schlegel's view of myth as Naturpoesie is part of a tradition which lives on. In a sense myths are creations of nature, that is, of human nature working unconsciously. Furthermore, the myths are not created by individuals but by mankind collectively, a view elaborated at great length by the scholars of myth and folklore among the later romantics. The terms used above can be compounded to produce the term "collective unconscious" which points out at least one aspect of the romantic view of myth persisting into the twentieth century. August Wilhelm Schlegel, we recall, drew from Fichte and Schelling the foundation of his arguments that poetry and philosophy express truths which myth

expresses unconsciously. The idea of a recapitulation of mankind's psychic development in that of the individual, as theorized in Jungian depth psychology, has aroused new interest in the relationship of myth and literature. As in Schlegel's poetics, the argument is again that myth and poetry are trying to express many of the same things. Schlegel could have made good use of these later theories of myths as archetypal patterns in poetry. He defined three aspects of Naturpoesie: language, rhythm and myth. The first two of these are handed down, transformed and reborn, and so remain a vital part of Kunstpoesie. But myth, in Schlegel's view, is merely used, and with the passing of time even its usefulness decreases. Myths lose their vitality and cannot be re-enlivened or created anew. Schlegel would undoubtedly have welcomed a plausible argument that the third element of his Naturpoesie also lives on as a formal element in literary art.

CHAPTER III

POESIE, GENIUS AND PHANTASIE

This chapter begins a discussion of Poesie in a more purely literary sense. The subject of poetic art is, of course, inseparable from the elements of Naturpoesie which we have just considered. So the present chapter marks a shift in perspective rather than a change of subject. First of all, further definitions of the word Poesie will be sought. The results will then be clarified somewhat by examining the mental conditions of art's creation, namely, human genius and Phantasie. After this, succeeding chapters will discuss the nature of Poesie as finished literary products which can be experienced and criticized and which have a place in literary history.

We might expect a simple definition of Poesie to be arrived at etymologically. But poiesis, says Schlegel, means "schaffende Wirksamkeit der Fantasie" (Berlin, I, 10). He adds that as such it is an element in all the arts. Thus the shortest and most concise definition Schlegel has to offer is problematical. As he uses the word Poesie here, it is far from denoting a mere collection of verbal artifacts which is poetry in the most naive sense. Rather, Poesie is an activity, part of the working of creative imagination, and it is an activity necessary to all of the arts.

In some respects Poesie is perfectly comprehensible and even perceptible. It approaches the concrete through the medium of language. Poesie as an activity and Poesie as specific literary works are tied together by Schlegel's theories of language, a subject which has already concerned us. We recall that Schlegel developed from Herder the thought that language is the mirror of the mind in the process of thought. Furthermore, language not only reflects man's thinking but also the mechanism of his thought processes. In the words of the Berlin Lectures, "Die Sprache ist kein Produkt der Natur, sondern ein Abdruck des menschlichen Geistes, der darin die Entstehung und Verwandtschaft seiner Vorstellungen, und den ganzen Mechanismus seiner Operation niederlegt" (Berlin, I, 261). Thus, we recall, language is a revelation of the truths of transcendental philosophy.

Language is the medium of Poesie: "Poesie ist eine bildende Darstellung der innern Empfindungen und der äußern Gegenstände vermittels der Sprache" (1798, p.16). But language, and with it Poesie, is involved in all thinking and Poesie is therefore an element in all the arts.

Jeder äußern materiellen Darstellung geht eine innre in dem Geiste des Künstlers voran, bey welcher die Sprache immer als Vermittlerin des Bewußtseyns eintritt, und folglich kann man sagen, daß jene jederzeit aus dem Schooße der Poesie hervorgeht. (Berlin, I, 261)

From Schlegel's ramifications on this theme it is not clear

whether or not the poetic-linguistic element in the plastic arts is ever actually expressed in words. The terms of his discussion of literary art tend to suggest that it is not.

Some of Schlegel's most characteristic statements about the nature of literary art arise from the idea that in it the creative process is raised to a higher potential since literature's medium of expression is the same as that of the inner consciousness at the birth of all art, namely, language. So Poesie as literary art reflects back on Poesie as language, the mediator of consciousness. On this point Schlegel speaks lyrically and at length:

Es wird also in der Poesie schon Gebildetes wieder gebildet; und die Bildsamkeit ihres Organs ist eben so grenzenlos, als die Fähigkeit des Geistes zur Rückkehr auf sich selbst durch immer höhere potenzirte Reflexionen. Es ist daher nicht zu verwundern, daß die Erscheinung der menschlichen Natur in der Poesie sich mehr vergeistigen und verklären kann als in den übrigen Künsten, und daß sie bis in mystische geheimnißvolle Regionen eine Bahn zu finden weiß. Sie hat nicht bloß das körperlich wahrnehmbare Universum vor sich, sondern alle Kunstbildungen, ganz besonders alles was Dichtung ist, zieht sie wieder in ihre Natur, die dadurch zu einem schönen Chaos wird, aus welchem Liebe und Haß, oder mit andern Worten Begeisterung, das mächtige beherrschende Gefühl der Sympathieen und Antipathieen, neue harmonische Schöpfungen ausscheidet und hervorruft. Man hat es höchst befremdlich und unverständlich gefunden, daß von Poesie der Poesie gesprochen worden ist; und doch ist es für den, welcher überhaupt von dem innern Organismus des geistigen Daseyns einen Begriff hat, sehr einfach, daß dieselbe Thätigkeit, durch welche zuerst etwas poetisches zu Stande gebracht wird, sich auf ihr Resultat zurückwendet. Ja man kann ohne Übertreibung und Paradoxie sagen, daß eigentlich alle Poesie, Poesie der Poesie sey; denn sie setzt schon die Sprache voraus, deren Erfindung doch der poetischen Anlage angehört, die selbst

ein immer werdendes, sich verwandelndes, nie vollendetes Gedicht des gesamten Menschengeschlechts ist.
(Berlin, I, 261-62)

Without mentioning his name, Schlegel refers here to Friedrich's Athanaeum fragment where the term "Poesie der Poesie" is used in reference to works which reflect their author's self-consciousness in the process of creation.¹ Friedrich also calls this combination of poetry and poetics "Transzendentalpoesie." This term is even more appropriate to August Wilhelm's expansion of the idea of "Poesie der Poesie." His acceptance of a transcendental view of poetry allows him to maintain that all literary art is a "Potenzierung" of the process whereby language, the primordial form of Poesie, first came into existence. In a sense, language itself is poetry and the works of poets are accordingly poetry raised to a higher level, "Poesie der Poesie."

In Schlegel's statements quoted thus far in this chapter lies the germ of the ideas which must be explored next. We found him using the words Bild and anschauen and their derivatives. The best approach to these subjects is through contrasting Poesie and prose, for the latter, in Schlegel's view, is characteristically language stripped of its Bildlichkeit and Anschaulichkeit.

Perhaps the most naive of all definitions of poetry is the simple statement that it is the opposite of prose.

¹ Rasch, p.53.

We find Schlegel using this definition but with subtle qualifications of some importance. Literary art, Poesie in a broad sense, can, of course, be in prose. This, however, is a subject to be discussed along with Schlegel's ideas of romantic poetry, not the least of whose accomplishments was the paradoxical one of raising prose to the level of Poesie.

Our starting point is a passage in the Berlin Lectures where Schlegel asks,

Wodurch kommt denn nun das Prosaische in die Sprache? Dadurch daß sich der Verstand der Zeichen bemächtigt, welche die Einbildungskraft ursprünglich erschaffen hat. Es liegt nämlich im Wesen der Sprache diese Zweydeutigkeit, daß eben das Zeichen was zuerst ein Bild war, sich in einen Begriff verwandelt, je nachdem die bezeichnete Vorstellung auf die Einbildungskraft oder auf den Verstand bezogen wird. (Berlin, I, 282)

The loss of language's depictive nature is, however, a process which is never completed. Language, says Schlegel, can never become completely unpoetic. Poetic elements are always there even if they may be well hidden. And, he adds, "die Rückkehr zur Anschaulichkeit, Belebtheit und Bildlichkeit muß immer gefunden werden können" (Berlin, I, 282). This rediscovery is a characteristic activity of Poesie.

Language is in essence poetic, that is, it is vivid, lively and presents concrete images. Prose is a deterioration of language which arises from conceptualization and stifles the poetic qualities of language by making it sub-

servient not to imagination but to the goal-directed understanding. All language was poetic before this process began and in Poesie as art (Kunstpoesie) the poetic in language is rediscovered or even, as he puts it on one occasion, created anew.

Of the three qualities of Poesie as distinguished from prose which Schlegel mentions, it is Bildlichkeit which is the most important. This quality, in fact, includes the others. Poesie presents concrete images. A number of speculations on this theme are central to an understanding of what is involved in Schlegel's idea of poetic art. When his discussions of poetry and poetic language are considered together, we see that he uses the words Bild and anschaulich together with their derivatives so often that the very idea of Poesie almost becomes a plastic image.

This definition from the 1798 Lectures was cited previously: "Poesie ist eine bildende Darstellung der innern Empfindungen und der Äußern Gegenstände vermittels der Sprache." Taking into account Schlegel's ideas on the nature of language, we might rephrase the ending of this statement as "vermittels der bildlich darstellenden Sprache" which is to say, "vermittels der Poesie." The purpose of tracing this circle is to point out that Bildlichkeit as a quality of language is inseparable from the same quality in "poems," that is to say, individual instances of Poesie. Poesie dwells hidden in language and it is Poesie which is able to bring it back into sight.

Returning for a moment to Schlegel's speculations on Ursprache, we recall his saying that the earliest language is "im höchsten Grade tropisch und bildlich, d. h. poetisch" (1798, p.23). Language originally presented nothing but images, and in its earliest form it did so by means of sounds which corresponded to the feelings aroused in man by objects and their qualities. It is not necessary to discuss here the linguistic merits of such a theory. The essential point is that Schlegel is saying that Poesie, unlike everyday prosaic language, deals in words which are profoundly appropriate to the things they refer to. This is because they somehow present (darstellen) the objects to our very senses, as it were, by arousing in us feelings similar to those which are aroused in an act of perception.

The following passage is an example of how intimately connected are Schlegel's somewhat over-philosophic linguistics and his poetics. It is from the same page where the germ of the ideas set down in the preceding paragraph is presented and is a good example of the rather disconnected revelatory style of the 1798 Lectures. The passage is included here mainly for the context of one of the more interesting of Schlegel's pronouncements on Poesie:

Die Zeichen der Sprache haben mit dem Hörbaren eine unmittelbare Ähnlichkeit. Da das sich Bewegende auch meistens hörbar ist, so geht die Bezeichnung vom Hörbaren aus. Weil aber der Mensch mit der Sprache

immerfort darzustellen strebt, so muß er, was in andere Sinne fällt, durch übertragene Ähnlichkeit anderer Sinne bezeichnen.

Die Erweiterung der Sprache setzt eine ununterbrochene Kette von Vergleichen voraus; die früheste Sprache ist daher im höchsten Grade tropisch und bildlich, d. h. poetisch. Poesie ist bildlich anschauender Gedankenausdruck. (1798, pp.22-23)

Poetic language is bildlich and in a statement quoted earlier it was also described as anschaulich. These are objective qualities of poetic language and hence of poetry. More subjectively considered, Poesie is bildlich anschauend.

All this talk of concreteness, the plasticity of Poesie, leads one to reflect on the last word of the passage just quoted: Gedankenausdruck. To anyone who has considered the preponderance of abstractions in the expression of our thoughts, it would seem that if Poesie is above all bildlich, then it is severely limited as a means of such expression. Schlegel denies such limitation and, in fact, maintains just the opposite. Echoing Schelling and Novalis, he says that Poesie is the highest speculation. It is philosophy cast in plastic images.

We have seen that language spans the cleft between the material and the intellectual. It confirms our intuition that body and mind are essentially inseparable. Moreover, in case we lose sight of the fact that Poesie can express a whole view of the world, we have only to look back to the Greeks who expressed the highest philosophical and religious insights by means of vivid physical

images in their mythology. Kunstpoesie can do the same and it does so not, as many naively suppose, by merely giving ideas a contrived allegorical clothing. Rather, Poesie is immediate to the things of which it speaks, for it is itself a way of looking at man and the world. Schlegel says in the Berlin Lectures, "Die Poesie ist, wenn ich so sagen darf, Speculation der Fantasie . . ." (Berlin, I, 292). The philosophical justification of this statement is derived from Schelling. The same conclusion is stated often by Novalis whose view of the identical aims of poet and philosopher are reflected in the following passage. Schlegel is explaining Aristotle's rejection of Empedocles as a poet when he says,

Allein außer seinen Vorurtheilen von der Nachahmung rührt dieß wohl weniger von der Strenge her, womit er die Rechte der Poesie handhaben wollte, als davon, daß ihm die Idee echter Speculation verlohren gegangen war, und der logischen Reflexion Platz gemacht hatte. Deswegen konnte er nicht einsehen, wie das Streben der Poesie und Philosophie seiner innersten Natur nach eins ist, so daß jene eine exoterische Philosophie, diese eine esoterische Poesie genannt werden kann. (Berlin, II, 291)

In these passages the word "speculation" takes on a good deal of its etymological meaning of observation. Poesie, through Phantasie, actually sees the workings of man and the world. The presentations of what Poesie sees are vivid images. We recall the definition cited earlier: "Poesie ist bildlich anschauender Gedankenausdruck."

The source of poetry's expressive power is poetic language. Philosophical idealism raises this observation

above the level of the superficially obvious. In the second series of Berlin Lectures Schlegel says,

[Die übrigen Künste] sind mehr oder weniger durch ihre besondern Mittel der Darstellung auf gewisse Gegenstände beschränkt: der Poesie allein ist es gegeben, das gesamte Gemüth des Menschen auszusprechen, sein ganzes Äußeres und inneres Daseyn abzuschildern. (Berlin, II, 6)

We need only recall Schlegel's observation that poetry's medium of expression is the same as that whereby we are first able to form conscious ideas of things in order to understand why it is so apt a means of expression. Poesie is both language and literature, both a means of apprehending the world and the product of that apprehending expressed in words. All Poesie is Poesie der Poesie, as Schlegel puts it, and its expressive powers achieved through heightening by self-reflection are limitless.

Schlegel says on several occasions that the limit to what can be called Poesie is hard to determine since poetry is latent in all language. Poesie is an element in language no matter how prosaic a goal it serves. At the other extreme, however, is literature, where the elementary form of Poesie is concentrated in poetic structures. Our next concern is with the qualities of mind necessary for the conscious production of such structures.

One of the qualities of mind most often attributed to creators of fine art is genius. The word is part of Schlegel's theoretical vocabulary. It is not, however, used as often as we might expect or as precisely as we might

hope. The word comes up most often in his arguments with other theorists and is defined largely by way of pointing out the inadequacies of earlier definitions.

Schlegel's most coherent discussion of genius develops from his criticism of Kant's Kritik der Urteilkraft. Here are the quotations he makes of Kant and the starting point of his own argument:

"Das Genie kann nur reichen Stoff zu Produktion der schönen Kunst hergeben, die Verarbeitung desselben und die Form erfordert ein durch die Schule gebildetes Talent." Ferner: "Der Geschmack, die Disziplin oder Zucht des Genie's, beschneidet diesem sehr die Flügel, und macht es gesittet oder geschliffen." An und für sich wäre das Genie folglich ungesittet und ungeschliffen. (Berlin, I, 82)

The denial of the conclusion in the last sentence contains the essence of Schlegel's idea of genius. It is not the mere raw product of nature which has to be disciplined by an outside force. This is not, however, to say that genius is not disciplined, rather that discipline is part of the nature of genius, not something forced on it. This is nowhere brought out more clearly than in the Vienna Lectures where, in discussing Shakespeare, the whole Sturm und Drang idea of wild and extravagant genius is attacked:

Die Thätigkeit des Genies ist zwar ihm eine natürliche und in gewissem Sinne bewußtlose, wovon also der, welcher sie ausübt, nicht immer Augenblicklich Rechenschaft wird ablegen können; es ist aber keineswegs eine solche, woran die denkende Kraft nicht einen grossen Antheil hätte. Eben die Schnelligkeit und Sicherheit der Geisteswirkung, die höchste Klarheit des Verstandes macht, daß das Denken bei'm Dichten nicht als etwas Abgesondertes wahrgenommen

wird, nicht als Nachdenken erscheint. Jener Begriff von der poetischen Begeisterung, den manche lyrische Dichter in Umlauf gebracht haben, als wären sie außer sich, und ertheilten wie die Pythia, von einer fremden Gottheit ergriffen, ihnen selbst unverständliche Orakelsprüche: jener Begriff (selbst nur eine lyrische Erdichtung) paßt am allerwenigsten auf die dramatische Composition, eine der besonnensten Hervorbringungen des menschlichen Geistes. (SW, VI, 183)

Genius seems to be a quality of mind and properly enough has both its conscious and unconscious sides which, moreover, Schlegel sees as essentially inseparable. At times, however, he is willing to separate the two for the purpose of examination. In a number of passages, for example, he stresses the unconscious working of genius. Early in the Berlin Lectures, in speaking of the difficulties facing art history, he remarks, "Weil das Genie zum Theil bewußtlos handelt, so können selbst die ausdrücklichsten Äußerungen vom Urheber eines Werkes über die Absicht und Bedeutung derselben irre leiten" (Berlin, I, 20). Earlier he countered the argument that genius is a mere freak of nature by attributing it to all of mankind as a mass:

Eben dieser Genius ist es auch, der das Poetische im Leben hervorbringt, was sich nicht selbst im Kunstwerke concentrirt, aber auf den Charakter von Kunstwerken Einfluß hat, von der rohesten Mythologie an bis zur gebildetsten Sitte; alle die mannichfaltigen Phänomene, wo die Menschheit in Masse zu dichten scheint. (Berlin, I, 19)

Thus the idea of genius is expanded to fit in with Schlegel's idealist view of history which we will examine

later. In his final refutation of Kant's suggestion that genius must be tamed by taste, Schlegel did not, however, have to lean very heavily on his new philosophical mentors. His argument is that creative genius involves a harmony of man's faculties similar to that which Kant himself maintained was present in aesthetic judgment. This is Schlegel's most elaborate attempt at defining genius, but it is short enough to be quoted in full:

Vielmehr so untrennbar wie in einem ächten Kunstwerke das, was man das poetische, und was man das künstliche nennen kann, sind, so untrennbar ist auch der wahre Geschmack vom wahren Genie. Dieses ist eben die innigste Vereinigung der bewußtlosen und der selbstbewußten Thätigkeit im menschlichen Geiste, des Instinktes und der Absicht, der Freyheit und der Nothwendigkeit. Deswegen, weil in ihm die ursprüngliche Entzweyung sich aufhebt, worin der Mensch als ein endliches Wesen sich endlos befangen sieht, erscheint es uns auch als etwas Übermenschliches, als eine göttliche Kraft, und seine Mittheilungen als wahre Offenbarungen. Darum ist auch zum Genie große Eminenz der auf Erkenntniß gerichteten Geisteskräfte, Einbildungskraft und Verstand, die Kant als seine Bestandtheile anliebt, nicht hinreichend, sondern es umfaßt den ganzen innern Menschen, und kann in nichts geringerem bestehen, als in der Energie und innigsten Eintracht dessen was sowohl in der Sinnlichkeit als in der Geistigkeit des Menschen das selbstständige und unbeschränkte Vermögen ist, also der Fantasie (die man in diesem Sinne noch von der Einbildungskraft unterscheiden kann) und der Vernunft. (Berlin, I, 83-84)

In discussing genius at this point the purpose has been to introduce Schlegel's views on the origin of a work of art. What we have learned so far is first, that art is the product of genius and, secondly, that the working of genius is both conscious and unconscious, rational and imaginative. The first of each of these two sets of terms require

no elaborate explanation and, in fact, Schlegel is satisfied merely to assert and show by example (Shakespeare, among others) that there is a conscious and rational side to the working of genius. Its unconscious and imaginative sides are, however, more problematical. Our starting point in examining Schlegel's views here is the word Phantasie appearing in the long passage just quoted.

In discussing mythology Schlegel makes his most revealing statement about Phantasie. The question he faces is that of the nature of myth's claim to truth:

Es läßt sich nur daraus erklären, daß wir einsehen, Fantasie sey die Grundkraft des menschlichen Geistes. . . . Der ursprünglichste Akt der Fantasie ist derjenige, wodurch unsre eigne Existenz und die ganze Außenwelt für uns Realität gewinnt. Daß diese ein Produkt unsrer eignen Thätigkeit sey, kann jedoch nur durch Speculation dargethan werden, nie ins Bewußtseyn fallen. Das entgegengesetzte Extrem ist die künstlerische Wirksamkeit der Fantasie, die selbstbewußt ist und mit Absicht geleitet wird. Diese ist in Ansehung ihrer Produkte rein ideell, d. h. sie macht für sie keine Ansprüche auf Wirklichkeit, und bedarf deren nicht. (Berlin, I, 329)

These statements and their Fichtean basis were considered earlier when we saw that the activity of Phantasie which produces myth lies between the extremes and gives to myth an ideal reality. Here we are concerned with what Schlegel is saying about Phantasie.

Phantasie is, then, the mental faculty both of man's perception of objective reality and of his creation of an artistic reality. For the most part Schlegel leaves the first aspect of Phantasie to the philosophers, but on

its artistic activity he has more to say. In the Vienna Lectures we read, "In aller Kunst und Poesie, vornehmlich aber in der romantischen, macht die Phantasie als eine unabhängige Seelenkraft, die sich nach eignen Gesetzen regiert, ihre Ansprüche geltend" (SW, VI, 185-86). But while Phantasie is independent and follows its own laws, its activity is sometimes considered by Schlegel to be analogous to that of other mental faculties, of understanding, for example. Here is a further statement on the theme from Schelling and Novalis that poetry and philosophy strive toward similar goals: "Die Poesie ist, wenn ich so sagen darf, Speculation der Fantasie; und wie die philosophische Speculation die Fähigkeit zu abstrahiren dem Verstande zumuthet, so die poetische der Fantasie" (Berlin, I, 292). This correspondence of art and philosophy in the idea of speculation points to a further qualification of the independence of Phantasie. While it is free and follows only its own laws, we must nevertheless recall that it is a faculty of the mind and as such is a means of apprehending reality, with which it does not lose contact. Schlegel tells us,

Wenn man . . . das Wort Natur . . . bis zum Inbegriff aller Dinge erweitert, so leuchtet freylich ein, daß die Kunst aus dem Gebiete der Natur ihre Gegenstände hernehmen muß, denn es giebt alsdann eben nichts anders. Die Fantasie kann in ihren kühnen Flügen zwar übernatürlich aber niemals außernatürlich werden: die Elemente ihrer Schöpfungen, wie sie auch durch ihre wunderbare Thätigkeit verwandelt seyn mögen, müssen immer aus einer vorhandenen Wirklichkeit entlehnt seyn. (Berlin, I, 100)

Imagination borrows the objects of its activity from nature, yet that activity can somehow be übernatürlich and is spoken of in terms of flights and transformations.

Phantasie is necessary for the production of art.

When it weakens, art declines and when it is absent, there is no art. Many examples could be cited but two will suffice. Speaking of poetic images getting out of hand, Schlegel says,

Nur auf eine solche Verschwendung von Bildern, welcher kein wahrer Schwung der Fantasie zum Grunde liegt, die also ein bloß erborgter überladener Schmuck ist, paßt die Benennung des Schwulstes, oder des Bombastes, wenn die Fantasie sich aus den heitern Regionen schöner Anschaulichkeit in das Verworrene und Sinnlose verliert. (Berlin, I, 292)

This passage also contains an implied denial of any suggestion that Phantasie deals in mere luxuriant or narcissistic phantasies. The derogatory connotations of the English word "phantasy" point to just those qualities of mind and of false art which Schlegel denies belonging to Phantasie and its productions. Furthermore, just as Phantasie is stifled by mere luxuriance for its own sake, so too it is stifled by bringing it down to earth. So, in the Vienna Lectures, Schlegel justifies the artistic worth of comedy by saying,

Die alte Komödie ist aber ein eben so unabhängige und ursprüngliche Dichtart als die Tragödie, sie steht auf derselben Höhe mit ihr, das heißt, sie geht eben so weit über eine bedingte Wirklichkeit in das Gebiet der frei schaffenden Phantasie hinaus. (SW, V, 181)

Phantasie hovers somewhere between the fantastic, in the

bad sense, and "bedingte Wirklichkeit." Just where this is we will see when we take a close look at the subject matter and mode of existence of poetry.

Poesie and poetisch are terms of very broad application in Schlegel's poetics. It should be noted here that wherever Poesie is part of life, Phantasie is there too. Mythology is an example, and so is religion in general (Berlin, I, 350-51). The 1797 essay "Über Shakespeares Romeo und Julia" dwells on the romantic theme "Liebe ist die Poesie des Lebens." The context of this statement concerns us here:

Allein die Bewunderung, die Vergötterung des geliebten Wesens kann nicht bildlos sprechen; sie muß sich zu den kühnsten Vergleichen aufschwingen. Mit dem Zauberschlage, der das Eine, was ihr vorschwebt, aussondert und über die ganze übrige Welt erhebt, hat sie den Maßstab des Wirklichen verloren, und kann bis an die Gränze der Dinge schwärmen, so weit die Flügel der Phantasie sie nur tragen wollen, ohne sich einer Verirrung bewußt zu werden. Liebe ist die Poesie des Lebens: wie sollte sie über ihren Gegenstand nicht dichten? (SW, VII, 94)

And so it is only to be expected that Romeo and Juliet speak in poetry, a good example of Übernatürlichkeit without Außernatürlichkeit.

This whole discussion of genius and Phantasie has been handicapped by the lack of precise definitions. Rather Schlegel has defined by noting some of the spheres and modes of their activity. The subject is not exhausted here. Phantasie will be considered again later in connection with the experience of Poesie. But now

the subject at hand is an important aspect of the nature of finished works of literary art.

CHAPTER IV

THE POETIC WORLD

Numerous statements by Schlegel elaborate the theme that Poesie and, in fact, all art is fiction. It is fiction in the sense that it is something fashioned by man rather than something merely discoverable in the real world. Art is also fiction in the sense that it is not literally true. Art, specifically Poesie, is its own world, obeys its own laws, even sets up its own standards of truth. The relationship of the poetic world to the real world may be such that we will use the word "true" to describe what it communicates to us, but this is truth expressed in the form of a fiction. For the moment it is this fiction which must concern us.

In discussing mythology Schlegel makes the distinction between myth, which at one time claimed to be literally true, and the products of "die künstlerische Wirksamkeit der Fantasie." He adds, "Diese ist in Ansehung ihrer Produkte rein ideell, d. h. sie macht für sie keine Ansprüche auf Wirklichkeit, und bedarf deren nicht" (Berlin, I, 329). Later, in his lectures on the drama, Schlegel carries this thought further by stating that it is a fault in a play if it deceives us into thinking that its action is real rather than fictional. The statement just quoted from the Berlin Lectures was more

general and included all the arts. In a sense they are all fictions rather than realities.

But perhaps a better expression than "fiction" is "poetic reality." Art is certainly something real, but its reality is of a different order than that of the material world. An appropriate point at which to begin defining this difference is Schlegel's idea of mimesis. Schlegel lays special stress on the fact that whatever passes from reality into art is transformed by man in the process. In a quarrel with the followers of Aristotle he says of art,

Wir läugnen nicht, daß wirklich ein nachahmendes Element in ihr sey, aber das macht sie noch nicht zur schönen Kunst; vielmehr liegt dieß eben in einer Umbildung des Nachgeahmten nach Gesetzen unsers Geistes, in einem Handeln der Phantasie ohne äußerliches Vorbild. (Berlin, I, 44)

This "Umbildung . . . in einem Handeln der Phantasie" is, as we have seen, first of all a poetic-linguistic process of imagining, that is, forming an image of, the work of art. In the case of literary art, this transformation assumes a remarkable character since language, the mediator of consciousness, is also the form of the further transformation into the work of art. Whence, we recall, the formula "Poesie der Poesie."

The foregoing has put the problem of art as fiction in the terms of art's creation, its coming into being. When, however, Schlegel looks beyond the creative act to the created product he maintains this point of view and

sees Poesie as something separate and finely distinguished from reality. An often used image is that of a world, one which follows different laws than those of the real world. In the course of a lengthy argument against overstrict doctrines of verisimilitude Schlegel says, "Es kommt nur darauf an, daß ein Dichter uns durch den Zauber der Darstellung in eine fremde Welt zu versetzen weiß, so kann er alsdann in ihr nach seinen eignen Gesetzen schalten" (Berlin, I, 98). We are drawn into a foreign world by Poesie and are not to be deceived into believing that it is the real world. In speaking of the poetic element in all the arts Schlegel says,

Dasjenige in den Darstellungen der übrigen Künste, was uns über die gewöhnliche Wirklichkeit in eine Welt der Fantasie erhebt, nennt man das Poetische in ihnen; Poesie bezeichnet also in diesem Sinne überhaupt die künstlerische Erfindung, den wunderbaren Akt, wodurch dieselbe die Natur bereichert; wie der Name aussagt, eine wahre Schöpfung und Hervorbringung. (Berlin, I, 261)

Here the two aspects of the poetic fiction are brought together: it is something created by man and it is a world of its own into which the audience is drawn. It was at this point that Schlegel went on to say that the birth of art occurs in two stages, the first in the mind of the artist and the second its rendering in perceptible form. The peculiarity of Poesie is that language is the medium of both.

If art is nature transformed through man, it would seem that the form it takes depends entirely on the

individual. Schlegel counters this idea with an argument in Kantian form. It is true that we are individuals and our individual personalities determine our view of the world. But we are also men and share with humanity certain common features, among them the sense of beauty and a sense for the appropriateness of certain forms of expression. The quality of poor art which reflects the purely individual determination of its content is manner. How does one rise above mannerism? Schlegel's answer is this:

So wie die Sittlichkeit von uns fodert, unsern Egoismus aus Gehorsam gegen ein höheres Gesetz zu bezähmen, so wird die künstlerische Tugend . . . darin bestehen, daß sich der Künstler, den Gesetzen des Schönen und der Darstellung zu lieb, seiner Individualität zu entäußern weiß, daß er sich seinem Werke gleichsam unterwirft . . . (Berlin, I, 106)

The influence of Kant and Schiller is evident in this whole discussion of willful submission to a higher law. Thus Schlegel distinguishes manner and style, and defines the latter as "eine Verwandlung der individuellen unvermeidlichen Beschränktheit in freywillige Beschränkung nach einem Kunstprinzip" (Berlin, I, 107). The Kunstprinzip which rules art is not fixed but rather varies. Art, says Schlegel, is an infinite whole, an idea, and no one person ever grasps it completely. Style is governed by this idea of art, yet it expresses an individual's conception of it. So there can be many styles. They are the expressions not only of individuals but also of the various kinds of art, the various genres within these and

of the various stages in the historical development of an art.

The application of these thoughts on manner and style to the idea of art as fiction is as follows:

Zwischen der Kunst und der Natur steht also nothwendig etwas mitten inne, was sie aus einander hält. Dieses heißt Manier, wenn es ein gefärbtes oder trübes Medium ist, welches auf alle dargestellten Gegenstände einen falschen Schein wirft; Styl, wenn es den Rechten von Beyden, der Kunst und der Natur nicht zu nahe tritt, welches nicht anders möglich ist, als durch die dem Werke selbst gleichsam eingeprägte Erklärung, es sey nicht Natur, und wolle sich nicht dafür ausgeben. (Berlin, I, 107)

Style is thus one of the means whereby it is made clear that what is before us is not nature but rather art.

There are other means which establish this separation.

Schlegel notes the role of rhythm in differentiating the real world and the poetic world:

. . . um anzukündigen, daß [Poesie] eine Rede sey die ihren Zweck in sich selbst hat, daß sie keinem äußern Geschäfte dienen, und so in die anderweitig bestimmte Zeitfolge eingreifen will, muß sie sich ihre Zeitfolge selbst bilden. Nur dadurch wird der Hörer aus der Wirklichkeit entrückt, und in eine imaginative Zeitreihe versetzt, daß er in der Rede selbst eine gesetzmäßige Eintheilung der Successionen, ein Zeitmaß wahrnimmt . . . (Berlin, I, 117)

Poesie is separated from the real world in having its own time. This is true both of its language and its action. The obvious application of this to the traditional idea of unity of time in drama will be considered later.

Comparing the epithet and the simile, Schlegel says,
Die Vergleichung ist eine noch stärkere Anforderung

an die Fantasie als das Beywort, sich die Sache sinnlich vorzustellen, und durch Zusammenstellung mit dem weiter entlegnen gewinnt das Dargestellte an Größe und Würde, und wird aus der Sphäre der gemeinen Wirklichkeit herausgehoben, wo die Anschauung ihrer Alltäglichkeit wegen keinen Werth mehr für uns hat . . . (Berlin, I, 290)

Even in the case of the most obvious borrowing from objective reality, the sensuous image, the object is drawn up into another world.

Thus far in this chapter we have seen Schlegel laying great stress on the separation of Poesie and reality. Poesie forms a world of its own, separate from the real world and above it. Presently we must examine the relationship between the two worlds, which involves the whole question of meaning in literature. But first there remains to be discussed a final aspect of Poesie as distinguished from the rest of the world, namely, poetic form. Here Schlegel eventually shifts his metaphors, for Poesie is spoken of not as a world but as an organism, a unified whole whose outer form reflects its essential nature. Schlegel began, however, with a less complex view of form, and this must be examined first.

A number of statements suggest that at times Schlegel considered form something which could be dealt with apart from matter. The "Briefe über Poesie, Sylbenmaß und Sprache" argue that at the very birth of art sound and words had to be articulated. Before there could be Poesie and music there had to be a law of outer form, namely,

rhythm (SW, VI, 122). Rhythm can, of course, still be part of organic form. It should be determined by the nature of the work itself. In an Athanaeum fragment of 1798 Schlegel in effect criticizes outer form which is not innerly determined when he speaks of "geistlose Regelmäßigkeit . . . 'Vernünftig aber dumm'" (SW, VIII, 4). Later Schlegel's idea of form becomes so involved in the organic concept that matter and form are indistinguishable. Here in his early work he has distinguished a formal element which definitely can be considered apart from a specific content.

In the Jena Lectures Schlegel again speaks of rhythm in terms of form:

Beim Wohlklange ist zu unterscheiden die Beschaffenheit der Laute und ihre Bewegung: Euphonie und Eurhythmie; in beiden findet etwas Sinnliches, Wohlgefälliges, Angenehmes und etwas eigentümlich Schönes und Bedeutendes statt. Eurhythmie bestimmt mehr die Verhältnisse der Bewegung, die Form; die Euphonie mehr die Materie, die Annehmlichkeit der Wörter.
(1798, p.44)

However hazy it may be, a distinction of matter and form is still considered possible. The connection of form with relationships of movements is noteworthy, for later we find the idea of form so bound up in the notion of an organic whole that all thought of movement is set aside.

Further examples of Schlegel's speaking of form as something which can be discussed apart from content can be cited. In the Jena Lectures Schlegel speaks of "Formen der Einkleidung" of the ode (1798, p.141). In comedy not only what is presented but also the form of

presentation must be scherzhaft (1798, p.190). Part of the effect of comedy is a contrast of matter and form (1798, p.191). In discussing satire he goes so far as to suggest that "Nur muß an den Satiren, wenn sie poetisch sein sollen, die Form einen unbedingten Wert haben" (1798, p.205). This is what raises them above being mere means to some destructive end:

Bei den Neuern hat man den Namen Satire auf jede ernsthafte oder spottende Verfolgung der Christen oder Torheiten ausgedehnt, bei der man doch erst die Form und Behandlung unterscheiden muß, ob sie zur Poesie gehören soll, oder nicht. (1798, pp. 203-204)

Later Schlegel makes a similar statement about architecture. Whether it is art or not depends on whether its form is governed by aesthetic or utilitarian principles. If the former, then it is art even though it does serve a purpose.

In another early work Schlegel makes rather extensive use of a non-organic view of form. In his "Betrachtungen über Metrik" he writes,

Ueberhaupt beruht die Form immer auf Verhältnissen. Der äußere Sinn empfängt einzelne Eindrücke-- nur der Reflexion des inneren Sinnes ist es gegeben, Vergleichen unter ihnen anzustellen, und mehrere als ein Ganzes zu betrachten. In der Sprache also, sofern sie als etwas Hörbares betrachtet wird, machen die Bestandtheile der Silben die Materie aus, ihre prosodischen und rhythmischen Verhältnisse die Form. (SW, VII, 158)

Soon he adds to this, saying,

Die Bestandtheile der Silben, sagte ich oben, sind die Materie der Sprache, in so fern sie etwas Hörbares ist. Allein in einer andern Hinsicht

sind diese Bestandtheile auch Form-- nämlich in so fern sie etwas bedeuten. Denn hier ist ein Verhältniß zwischen Bedeutung und Laut; der innre Sinn vergnügt sich daran, Analogien zu suchen und zu finden. (SW, VII, 161)

Form, he says, consists in relationships which, however, are not perceptible by the senses but by an inner sense which is able to see wholes and compare parts. Here and in his other early works Schlegel considers rhythm to be a formal element. He even goes so far as to consider syllables a formal element insofar as they make us aware of a relationship, namely, that of the sounds to their meanings. Again the form is perceptible only to the inner sense.

There is a missing middle step in Schlegel's speculations on form. Although it is never explicitly stated, at some point he must have considered the fact that if form consists of relationships then the total form of a work of art must consist in the totality of all its relationships, inner and outer. Eventually he speaks of form only as the form of whole works.

It is in the course of his discussion of figures of speech that Schlegel warns against seeing the essence of poetry in its parts. He states the fact,

daß man niemals dahin gelangen wird ein schönes Ganze aus vermeintlich schönen Elementen zusammen zu stücken, sondern das Ganze muß erst absolut gesetzt, und daraus das Einzelne entwickelt werden. (Berlin, I, 291)

Earlier Schlegel had expressed the idea that Poesie is a

unified whole but noted the difficulties in apprehending it as such:

Man wird finden, daß die meisten Menschen an einem Kunstwerke nur das einzelne loben oder tadeln: von dieser oder jener Schönheit daran, wie man es zu nennen pflegt, sind sie ergriffen; das Ganze als solches aber ist für sie eigentlich nicht vorhanden, besonders wenn es von bedeutendem Umfange ist.
(Berlin, I, 25)

He goes on to contrast atomistic with organic criticism, saying that only the latter really grasps the true nature of the work. Presently we will find Schlegel suggesting that form is an attribute of the whole work. Problems arise, however, from a fact that he himself has noted, that the material of Poesie is presented successively in time. The difficulties this poses for the inept critic, whom Schlegel has just characterized, unfortunately are difficulties which he himself never quite overcomes in his theorizing on form.

The most emphatic pronouncement on the subject of form comes in the Vienna Lectures. Works of literary art must obey rules which arise from their own nature:

Formlos zu sein darf also den Werken des Genius auf keine Weise gestattet werden, allein es hat damit auch keine Gefahr. Um dem Vorwurfe der Formlosigkeit zu begegnen, verständige man sich nur über den Begriff der Form, der von den Meisten, namentlich von jenen Kunstrichtern, welche vor allem auf steife Regelmäßigkeit dringen, nur mechanisch, und nicht, wie er sollte, organisch gefaßt wird. Mechanisch ist die Form, wenn sie durch äußere Einwirkung irgend einem Stoffe bloß als zufällige Zuthat, ohne Beziehung auf dessen Beschaffenheit ertheilt wird, wie man z. B. einer weichen Masse eine beliebige Gestalt giebt, damit sie solche nach der Erhärtung beibehalte. Die organische Form hingegen ist eingeboren,

sie bildet von innen heraus, und erreicht ihre Bestimmtheit zugleich mit der vollständigen Entwicklung des Keimes. Solche Formen entdecken wir in der Natur überall, wo sich lebendige Kräfte regen, von der Krystallisation der Salze und Mineralien an bis zur Pflanze und Blume und von dieser bis zur menschlichen Gesichtsbildung hinauf. Auch in der schönen Kunst, wie im Gebiete der Natur, der höchsten Künstlerin, sind alle ächten Formen organisch, d. h. durch den Gehalt des Kunstwerkes bestimmt. Mit Einem Worte, die Form ist nichts anders, als ein bedeutsames Aeußeres, die sprechende, durch keine störenden Zufälligkeiten entstellte Physiognomie jedes Dinges, die von dessen verborgnem Wesen ein wahrhaftes Zeugniß ablegt. (SW, VI, 157-58)

We can see traces of Schelling's influence in this equation of natural form and artistic form. Schlegel's purpose is a practical one. He wants to provide a basis for critical judgment of poetic form. He seems to assume, however, that form can really be discussed only in bad poetry where it is something which can be distinguished from content. In the best art the distinction vanishes. Literary form is determined by the content. It is essential to the work in the same way that the form of an organism is essential to its nature.

In criticizing people who imagine that poems are written by drafting them in prose and then casting them into verse, Schlegel says,

Solche Menschen haben freylich keinen Begriff, wie die Form vielmehr Werkzeug, Organ für den Dichter ist, und gleich bey der ersten Empfängniß eines Gedichts, Gehalt und Form wie Seele und Leib unzertrennlich ist. (Berlin, III, 209)

It is this and similar statements which occasion Wellek's comment that if content and form are indistinguishable

then for practical purposes the terms are rather useless.¹ He goes on to show that in practice Schlegel was forced to make the distinction.

The problems in Schlegel's view of form arise from the comparative isolation in his writings of the various general statements about the nature of fictional structures. The important ideas have already been discussed: Poesie is an art displayed in successive moments in time; a poem (that is, a literary work) is a world in itself, a fictional world obeying its own laws; a poem is a unified whole: nothing can be added, taken away or properly considered in isolation; a poem is organic in form in the sense just considered.

On several occasions Schlegel uses the adjective "organic" without speaking specifically of form. In the Jena Lectures, for example, the subject is the unity of tragedy:

Jene Einheit aber ist das Wesen, ist organisch, und das Ganze ist wie aus einem einzigen Keim gewachsen. Die tragische Einheit ist das Höchste in der Poesie; sie macht Ansprüche auf unbedingte Totalität, für die Vernunft und für die Einbildung, insofern sich alles schön rundet. (1798, p.169)

We note that Vernunft and Einbildung seem to be involved in the perception of tragedy as an organic, unified whole. In the Berlin Lectures Schlegel attacks the critics who look only at the various parts of works:

Man könnte dieß die atomistische Kritik nennen . . . , indem sie ein Kunstwerk wie eine Mosaik, wie eine mühsame Zusammenfügung todter Parikelchen, betrachtet;

¹See A History of Modern Criticism, II, 48-50.

da doch jedes, welches den Namen verdient, organischer Natur ist, worin das Einzelne nur vermittelst des Ganzen existirt. (Berlin, I, 25)

This statement completes the discussion mentioned above where Schlegel deals with the difficulty of seeing a successive art work as a unified whole. Wherever this organic metaphor is used there is the implication that the organism is perceptible only to the most sensible reader, that is, to the right kind of critic who is able to see the whole work simultaneously.

Schlegel has said that Poesie is a successive art, that is, one which is presented in successive moments in time. Yet it seems that only the elements of content appear successively since form belongs to the whole which is grasped only by the exceptional reader and then only after the entire presentation is complete. He insists, moreover, that we must see the work as a whole, namely, at a time when all the content except that immediately before us is a memory.

The central difficulty in using the organic metaphor to describe form faces us here. In the Vienna Lectures Schlegel spoke of physiognomy, of significant exterior, but he failed to state there that, while the exterior of organic forms can be grasped in a single act of perception, that of Poesie involves many such acts which must somehow be synthesized before one can perceive the form of the whole. It is as if we could see a painting only a square

inch at a time, while the whole could be reconstructed only mentally. In a sense it is even more complicated than this since if we ask "How do the pieces fit together?" the answer is not simply "side by side" but rather "interlocking, overlapping, mutually reflecting," and so on. If Schlegel will see poems as wholes, it is not surprising that form becomes indistinguishable from content. By the time the whole is seen, all content elements are no longer sensibly present but are memories organized not in a succession in time but rather simultaneously as form.

In the discussion of Kant in the Berlin Lectures, Schlegel reaches an extreme formulation in attempting to define das Ideal. Schlegel takes the position that it consists in the perfect combination of man's animal and rational natures. The implication for art is this:

So kann man auch ein Gedicht oder sonst ein Kunstwerk mit Recht idealisch nennen, wenn sich in ihm Stoff und Form, Buchstabe und Geist bis zur völligen Ununterscheidbarkeit gegenseitig durchdrungen haben. (Berlin, I, 79-80)

Here too the discussion turns to physiognomy, how structure is expressive and expression in turn determines structure. As we have seen, it takes only the two further dicta, that poems must be seen whole and that their form is organic, to make the idea of form a useless abstraction. It is as if an anatomist were allowed to speak of no form smaller than that of the whole body.

But we have seen that Schlegel himself has spoken

of form without pressing the organic aspect. He has discussed it in terms of relationships and of movement. He has also distinguished at least one formal element in the articulation of the material which goes into a poem, namely, rhythm. Schlegel's most dogmatic statements on form maintain that it is organic and belongs to the art work as a whole. There are, however, evidences of organization in smaller parts of the work. Occasionally he speaks of the latter in terms of form but never reconciles the term used in this sense with his more resolute definitions.

CHAPTER V

ART AND NATURE

The autonomy of Poesie, in Schlegel's view, is a real one, for poetry accomplishes its goals in its own ways without restrictions from the outside. Yet Schlegel is far from holding that art exists only for its own sake. Art is related to the whole of man's experience because it says something about man and the world. Meaning, however, is paradoxically not something which occurs either by accident or by contrivance. Meaning arises simultaneously with the symbols whereby it is expressed. A discussion of how and why this is true involves Schlegel's whole view of the world, of Poesie and of the relationship between the two.

We saw earlier that Schlegel's idea of imitation was one in which nature is transformed by man in the process of its becoming art. There is a mimetic element in art, but it is far from being a mere copying of something in the real world. With this idea of transformation of nature in art Schlegel associates another sense of the word Nachahmung. In the essay "Etwas über William Shakespeare bei Gelegenheit Wilhelm Meisters" he has occasion to speak of the evils of obscurity and confusion in bad art. He says,

Hingegen ist Klarheit eben [so] sehr wie Fülle und Kraft ein unterscheidendes Merkmal des Genius, und folglich kann in seinen Schöpfungen nicht wohl eine

andere Art von Dunkelheit stattfinden, als die Unergründlichkeit der schaffenden Natur, deren Ebenbild er im Kleinen ist. (SW, VII, 30)

This thought in the essay of 1796 is later elaborated in the Berlin Lectures. There Schlegel gives full credit to Karl Philipp Moritz for the idea that art is modelled on nature in its striving for the infinite and for inner perfection. Art is not just an imitation of physical nature but of nature's creativity, Schlegel concludes. In developing this point he draws philosophical support from many sources. He echoes the Neo-Platonists in maintaining that every atom of the universe reflects the whole universe. But only in man is this reflection self-conscious. So it is in man himself that the model for nature's creativity is found. Nature is organic development and as a self-conscious organism we alone are in a position to realize that fact. Schlegel follows Schelling in maintaining that nature is intelligence in the process of becoming. Only when we consider nature as intelligence can we speak of art as an imitation of nature:

Wird nun Natur in dieser würdigsten Bedeutung genommen, nicht als eine Masse von Produkten, sondern als das Producirende selbst, und der Ausdruck Nachahmung ebenfalls in dem edleren Sinne, wo es nicht heißt, die Äußerlichkeiten eines Menschen nachahmen, sondern sich die Maximen seines Handelns zu eigen machen, so ist nichts mehr gegen den Grundsatz einzuwenden, noch zu ihm hinzuzufügen: die Kunst soll die Natur nachahmen. (Berlin, I, 102)

Art, then, imitates creative nature, nature in the process of becoming.

The thought that every part of nature mirrors every

other part is repeated often by Schlegel, as it is by Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. August Wilhelm's argument that this is so is also related to his theories of language:

Die gegenseitige Verkettung aller Dinge durch ein ununterbrochnes Symbolisiren, worauf die erste Bildung der Sprache sich gründet, soll ja in der Wiederschöpfung der Sprache, der Poesie, hergestellt werden; und sie ist nicht ein bloßer Nothbehelf unsers noch kindischen Geistes, sie wäre seine höchste Anschauung, wenn er je vollständig zu ihr gelangen könnte. Denn jedes Ding stellt zuvörderst sich selbst dar, d. h. es offenbart sein Inneres durch sein Äußeres, sein Wesen durch die Erscheinung (es ist also Symbol für sich selbst); demnächst das, womit es in näheren Verhältnissen steht und Einwirkungen davon erfährt; endlich ist es ein Spiegel des Universums. In jenen schrankenlosen Übertragungen des poetischen Styls liegt also, der ~~Annäherung~~ ^{Annäherung} und Anforderung nach, die große Wahrheit daß eins alles und alles eins ist. Die Wirklichkeit liegt zwischen ihr und uns, und zieht uns unaufhörlich davon ab; die Fantasie räumt diese störende Medium hinweg und versenkt uns in das Universum, indem sie es als ein Zauberreich ewiger Verwandlungen, worin nichts isolirt besteht, sondern alles aus allem durch die wunderbarste Schöpfung wird, in uns sich bewegen läßt. (Berlin, I, 93)

We see that art is like nature not just in its activity but also in its meaningfulness. Indeed art is a revelation of the fact that nature does have meaning. The difference between nature and art is again seen to lie in self-consciousness:

Der Mensch ist . . . das erste uns bekannte Wesen, das nicht bloß für eine fremde Intelligenz Spiegel des Universums wäre, sondern weil seine Thätigkeit in sich zurückgeht, es auch für sich selbst seyn kann. Die Klarheit nun, die Energie, die Fülle, die Allseitigkeit womit sich das Universum in einem menschlichen Geiste abspiegelt, und womit sich wiederum dieses Abspiegeln in ihm spiegelt, bestimmt den Grad seiner Künstlerischen Genialität, und setzt ihn in

den Stand eine Welt in der Welt zu bilden. (Berlin, I, 103)

Here Schlegel suggests more strongly that art is not just an analogue of creative nature, but actually is itself a mirror of the world. Art is a product of man's own self-conscious reflection of the universe.

Schlegel later carries this argument a step further by saying that nature creates symbolically (sinnbildlich). "Die Natur schafft durchaus sinnbildlich, sie offenbart immer das Innere durch das Aeußere . . ." (SW, XII, 346). Art consists in imitating nature, here in its symbolizing aspect. An example of where such thoughts can lead is found in the second series of the Berlin Lectures where the matter being discussed is descriptive poetry: "Das einzige Mittel, das schildernde Gedicht in eine höhere Sphäre zu heben, und es wahrhaft zu poetisieren bleibt wohl die symbolische und mystische Ansicht der Natur" (Berlin, II, 315). He goes on to say that a more profound view of things sees nature as meaningful. The implication is that the significance of the things depicted in this kind of poem is simply their meaning in the world. Schlegel doesn't tell us the extent to which this is true in all poems. Usually the objects drawn up into poetry are considered to have been given their meanings in the poetic act. The appropriateness of the symbols chosen is determined by their role in the poem rather than by their meaning as part of nature.

In Schlegel's theorizing, nature can, from man's

point of view, share certain qualities with art. Nature can appeal to Phantasie; our experience of nature involves language; nature can be poetic; it can be beautiful.

What, then, is left to Kunstpoesie? The answer has been given before: nature is reality, art is fiction. This seemingly naive statement is of the utmost importance, for a fiction is something consciously created by man, and man is that part of nature which is self-consciously reflective. Poesie is man's self-conscious use of language in a way which most adequately expresses his reflection of the world.

We must examine in more detail the nature of the transformation of the world in poetic art. Poesie uses objects from the real world, but uses them in such a way that they are poeticized and thus raised above the world. The transformation in the case of Poesie occurs through the medium of language, so once again this subject comes up, now to be considered in its role as a number of means to achieve a poetic end.

The first requirement of all poetic devices is that they set Poesie apart from ordinary reality. To do this, poetic language must be above that of ordinary usage:

Es ist . . . für die Poesie . . . äusserst wichtig und vortheilhaft, wenn sie in der Sprache Mittel vorfindet, ihren Ausdruck so viel möglich von dem des gewöhnlichen Lebens zu unterscheiden. Sie kündigt damit sogleich an, daß sie sich über die gemeine Wirklichkeit erheben will, und der Hörer erfährt, daß er sich unter der Botmäßigkeit einer andern Seelenkraft befindet, als der, welche gewöhnlich die Rede beherrscht. (Berlin, I, 284-85)

One means to this end we have already noted, namely, meter. Meter sets the poem in a time-sequence of its own. The poem must be experienced in successive moments determined by its own rhythm. But the demand that poetic language differ from ordinary speech is not satisfied by rhythm alone. In addition, poetry can use certain words of its own, such as archaic words, colloquialisms or neologisms. Poetry can have its own inflections of words and there can be poetic constructions and word order.

Unlike ordinary language which appeals to Verstand, poetic language evokes vivid images in Phantasie. While there can be synonyms in everyday usage, they do not exist in poetry. Each word has its own sound and makes a unique impression. As Schlegel sums up this point, "es giebt logische Synonyme aber keine poetische" (Berlin, I, 287).

The epithet (schmückendes Beiwort) serves to arouse vivid images. Seeming redundancy in the nature of this device is excused as an efficient means to this end. Schlegel observes, "Bey sonst gleichen Bedingungen ist das bedeutsamste das schönste" (Berlin, I, 288). In the epithet a complex of associated ideas and images is evoked by means of a single word or phrase. The great beauty of the device lies in a compactness of meanings expressed in a few words.

Comparison is a means for raising something out of ordinary reality into a higher realm:

Die Vergleichung ist eine noch stärkere Anforderung an die Fantasie als das Beywort, sich die Sache sinnlich vorzustellen; und durch Zusammenstellung mit dem weiter entlegnen gewinnt das Dargestellte an Größe und Würde, und wird aus der Sphäre der gemeinen Wirklichkeit herausgehoben, wo die Anschauung ihrer Alltäglichkeit wegen keinen Werth mehr für uns hat, sondern wir uns begnügen, die Beschaffenheit oder den Erfolg nur begriffsmäßig herauszuheben. (Berlin, I, 290)

Schlegel distinguishes between Vergleichung (simple comparison) and Gleichnis (simile):

Die Vergleichung weiter ausgeführt, heißt ein Gleichniß. Alsdann will sie nicht mehr bloß den Gegenstand anschaulich machen, sondern die Betrachtung mehr auf sich selbst ziehen, und in seinem Verhältnisse zu jenem gefallen. (Berlin, I, 290)

The simile demands a certain ingenuity which raises it above a more prosaic comparison of two things which are obviously similar.

Schlegel's definition of metaphor is not unusual:

Sie besteht darin, daß man das Verglichene ganz verschwinden, und das Bild, womit es verglichen wird an seine Stelle treten läßt, wodurch also nicht mehr Ähnlichkeit sondern völlige Gleichheit angedeutet wird. (Berlin, I, 291)

Metaphor results from a flight of Phantasie and is more than a mere decoration of the prosaic. Nor is prosaic understanding allowed to criticize the bold identifications made by metaphor.

To this list of linguistic means for achieving artistic ends Schlegel adds personification, another aid to evoking vivid images. Its lowest use is contrived

allegory. In myth we have seen the heights to which it can rise.

The tropes we have discussed here do not come under detailed consideration in Schlegel's writings. They are treated rather briefly under the heading of "poetische Sprache." Figures of speech reflect all those poetic qualities of language which were the subject of an earlier chapter in this study. The devices just discussed are, of course, beautiful as well as meaningful. As we are about to see, moreover, Schlegel considers meaningfulness itself as a necessary attribute of beauty. His definition of the term contradicts all arguments that Poesie, or art in any of its forms, appeals only to the senses.

While speaking of euphony in the Jena Lectures, Schlegel makes a distinction between the pleasant and the beautiful. While the former is merely pleasing to the senses, the latter has meaning. "Töne, die nichts sagen, finden wir höchstens angenehm, aber nicht schön" (1798, p.52). The sounds of poetry, however, are both:

Das, was dem Sinne an sich wohltut, ist auch durch die symbolische Bedeutung des Klanges wohlgefällig. Beide, das Angenehme und das Schöne, treffen also hier in uns zusammen. Der Klang hat mannigfaltige Beziehungen zu körperliche und geistige Eigenschaften, dadurch wird er schön. (1798, p.53)

Obviously there can be meaningful statements which are not beautiful, but these are not art. An early essay of Schlegel's, his "Betrachtungen über die Metrik, " is prefaced by an argument that what is displeasing to the

senses cannot really appeal to the aesthetic sense:

Bloß sinnliche Eindrücke sind stärker als die feinem ästhetischen. Daher wird unfehlbar ästhetische Lust durch sinnliches Mißvergnügen zerstört; oder mit andern Worten: eine unangenehme Materie läßt sich keine gefallende Form geben. (SW, VII, 157).

By matter and form he means here the sounds of language and their metrical arrangement. But in all art the requirements for beauty are the same, a dual appeal to the senses and to the mind. Beauty is pleasant and meaningful. In the Berlin Lectures Schlegel remarks that beauty is always "eine bedeutsame symbolische Erscheinung" (Berlin, I, 118). Later, in the same lectures, he adds, "Bei sonst gleichen Bedingungen ist das bedeutsamste das schönste" (Berlin, I, 288).

Nature can also be beautiful but its beauty lies in man's experience of it. Schlegel holds that beauty is found in nature only after the disposition toward art had begun to develop. Natural beauty is not a model for beauty in art. At the end of his discussion of Kant in the Berlin Lectures he states,

Immer wenn man mit der Natur anfängt, wird die Existenz des Schönen als bloß zufällig erscheinen; seine Nothwendigkeit kann nur daraus hergeleitet werden, daß es seyn soll, nämlich durch menschliche Kunst. Die Anlage zu dieser treibt den Menschen erst in der Natur Schönheit zu suchen und zu finden. Wenn man die Naturschönheit und Kunstschönheit sich unter dem Bilde zweyer Schwestern denkt, so ist diese, gegen die herrschende Meynung, die erstgebohrne. Erst da konnte es Schönheit in der Natur geben, als die Anlage zur Kunst schon angefangen hatte sich zu entwickeln. (Berlin, I, 88-89)

Considering Schlegel's idea of beauty in general, it seems

that beauty in nature must also be both pleasant and meaningful. Is there a difference between the beauties of art and nature? Schlegel does not deal with this problem systematically, but the answer to the question is implied in many statements on the nature of art. The essential difference, according to Schlegel, lies in the fact that beauty in art is a conscious human invention.

We return at this point to Schlegel's poetic cosmology. Nature is coherent and meaningful in the sense that each part is a reflection of every other part. But in man the reflection is self-conscious. Thus in man's activity meaning, something every atom is considered to be capable of, is raised to a higher level (potenziert). Artistic beauty is the pleasant and the meaningful contrived by man and for man. Beauty in art is man's own reflection of the universe. It is the highest of all such reflections because man is conscious of the process.

Schlegel is rather disappointing in his reluctance to use the whole idea of beauty in his theoretical formulations. The two aspects of beauty are, however, considered separately at some length. The sensuous aspect of poetry is the object of long excursions into the subjects of the qualities of sounds, of the letters of the alphabet and of the phonetic systems of the major European languages. Euphony and eurhythm are the objects of similar technical discussions. Of course, meaning is never wholly separable from sounds (whence the formal aspect

of sounds discussed earlier), but Schlegel's treatment of the ways Poesie expresses meaning is centered in his discussions of other matters, including genre, criticism and poetic language. Some of the linguistic means to poetic ends have already been considered. A final poetic device, one which actually includes the others, remains to be discussed, namely, symbolism.

An extreme statement of the nature of beauty arises from Schlegel's consideration of Schelling's definition of beauty as "das Unendliche endlich dargestellt." Schlegel adds,

Hiermit bin ich vollkommen einverstanden, nur möchte ich den Ausdruck lieber so bestimmen: Das Schöne ist eine symbolische Darstellung des Unendlichen; weil alsdann zugleich klar wird, wie das Unendliche im Endlichen zur Erscheinung kommen kann. (Berlin, I, 90)

Wellek dismisses such statements as borrowed flirtations with mysticism and maintains that these thoughts are peripheral to Schlegel's poetics.¹ It should be remembered, however, that in Schlegel's view Poesie is unlimited in its expressive ability. If the imagination is able to grasp the infinite, poetry can certainly find the symbols to express the experience. Nevertheless, it is true that even for beauty Schlegel is usually satisfied with the more modest claims that it merely be pleasing and meaningful.

¹ A History of Modern Criticism, II, 43.

The passage just quoted concerns us here because it leads to the matter of symbolism. Following the above discussion of Schelling's definition of beauty, Schlegel occupies himself with the question of how the infinite can be expressed. The answer is, of course, through symbolism:

Wie kann nun das Unendliche auf die Oberfläche, zur Erscheinung gebracht werden? Nur symbolisch, in Bildern und Zeichen. Die unpoetische Ansicht der Dinge ist die, welche mit den Wahrnehmungen der Sinne und den Bestimmungen des Verstandes alles an ihnen für abgethan hält; die poetische, welche sie immerfort deutet und eine figürliche Unerschöpflichkeit in ihnen sieht. . . . Dadurch wird erst alles für uns lebendig. Dichten (im weitesten Sinne für das poetische allen Künsten zum Grunde liegende genommen) ist nichts anderes als ein ewiges symbolisieren: wir suchen entweder für etwas Geistiges eine äußere Hülle, oder wir beziehen ein Äußeres auf ein unsichtbares Innres. (Berlin, I, 91)

Schlegel goes on to repeat his earlier argument that symbolizing of the non-substantial is possible because of our intuition of the essential unity of mind and matter, soul and body.

The above passage implies that Poesie is a way of seeing the world. This point is approachable within Schlegel's poetics from another direction since we have seen that language is present in every act of cognition. We have just found Schlegel saying that language has not lost this function when it is used poetically. "Dichten ist nichts anderes als ein ewiges Symbolisieren," Schlegel says, but it is clear that he means by symbolizing not the invention of arbitrary signs, but rather an actual intuition of what the thing used as a sign must necessarily

mean. Whence his speaking of a poetic view of things in which they are constantly clarified and seen in a figurative inexhaustibility.

Schlegel never really makes it clear whether or not a poetic view of things is ever manifested in anything but Poesie itself. Meaningfulness in nature may be apparent to intuition, but actual meanings seem to be expressed only in Poesie which, as we have seen, is a fictional world. The problem has a Kantian aspect. The poetic, the meaningful in nature, is postulated by Poesie somewhat as the thing-in-itself is postulated by philosophy. But actual experience of meaning is not immediate. Rather there is first a transformation into language through the medium of a mental faculty, Phantasie. A world within the world is created. While, just as in the case of philosophy, this world is felt to contain valid truths about our experience of things, it can express only intuitions of what is beyond that experience.

In the real world, Schlegel tells us, everything is a mirror of the universe, which is to say that everything has a meaning. This is not, however, immediately and manifestly apparent. It is made apparent by Phantasie. A mystic view of things may claim that the meaning of objects is immediately perceptible, but the perception in fact finds expression only in poetry which is no longer the real world but rather is nature transformed, humanized and, in

a word, poeticized.

Another world of which Schlegel speaks is the mythical world. It is a poetic transformation of the real world, but we recall that at some time it is considered to be objectively real. Unlike the real world, it is manifestly full of meaning, yet unlike poetry (which it resembles in that respect), its objects are believed to exist.

The world of Poesie is fictional. Schlegel says that it makes no claim to reality and we are not to be deceived into believing that its objects and actions are real. He is aware of a problem here. Meaning in the real world and in the mythical world was considered to be a part of the essential nature of the objects in those worlds. If the world of Poesie is an invented one, then it would seem that the meanings are invented along with it. In any statement, even a hypothetical one, about the way things really are, there is felt an objective and undeniable necessity which is somehow lacking when we speak of fictions. Yet Schlegel claims the same appropriateness of symbol to the symbolized which at one time or another he has claimed for nature and myth. When this condition is not met, art has failed.

A brief summary of some of the ways Schlegel has discussed poetry will reveal his justification for the demand just mentioned. Poesie is a world. It is not the real world yet it has an inner coherence and meaning comparable

to that of nature. Within this world things exist and they have, to use Schlegel's term, a physiognomy which reveals their essence. Ultimately they reflect the whole universe of which they are a part as well as that from which they are taken.

Here we encounter a new significance of the fact that Schlegel sees Poesie as a world and as an organism. We recall his argument that everything in the real world has a physiognomy and the statement that everything is, first of all, a symbol of itself since it reveals its essence through its appearance. This is also true of things within the poetic world. Everything must have its own reality, it must be itself. At this point we should consider another of Schlegel's statements that symbolism cannot be contrived. In the Vienna Lectures Schlegel writes,

Allegorie ist die Personification eines Begriffes, eine lediglich in dieser Absicht vorgenommene Dichtung; symbolisch aber ist das, was die Einbildungskraft zwar auf andre Veranlassungen gedichtet, oder was sonst eine von dem Begriff unabhängige Wirklichkeit hat, was aber dennoch einer sinnbildlichen Auslegung sich willig füget, ja sie von selbst darbietet. (SW, V, 101)

The reality of poetry's objects is obviously reality within a fiction, but reality it must have. If an element in Poesie is merely contrived to express a meaning, it fails as poetic art. Poetry's meaning is absolutely essential to its very nature, but that nature must be established before this fact can be apparent.

Sometimes Schlegel is overzealous in his desire to

see reality established before meaning. He never goes so far as to deny that art is fictional, but he does on occasion suggest that the meanings of poetry's objects are the meanings which are actually part of their nature in the real world. We have seen that this is a problematical thesis and usually Schlegel does not insist on it. At one point his desire to impart a higher reality to poetry takes the form of an insistence on a more vital role for myth. These two tendencies come together in one of the latest of Schlegel's poetic pronouncements, his 1812 review of Winckelmann's works. This serves as a text for the conclusion of this chapter on art, nature and meaning. Schlegel must be allowed to speak at some length:

Man hat im Deutschen das vortreffliche Wort 'Sinnbild'. Keineswegs möchten wir der Kunst die Allegorie zum allgemeinen Gesetz machen, wie es W. zu beabsichtigen scheint; aber wohl kann man sagen, alle Kunst soll sinnbildlich sein, d. h. sie soll bedeutsame Bilder aufstellen. Die Natur schafft durchaus sinnbildlich, sie offenbart immer das Innere durch das Äußere; jedes Ding hat seine Physiognomie, und dieses gilt von den leblosesten Erzeugnissen, den geometrisch begränzten Körpern an, durch die Pflanzen- und Thier-Welt bis zu den beseeltesten Geschöpfen hinauf. Diese Physiognomie der Dinge soll der Künstler hervorheben, er soll dem Betrachter seinen Sinn für die Durchdringung des Innern leihen. Da aber die Kunst nicht bei Abbildung des einzelnen Wirklichen stehen bleiben darf, wenn sie ihren höchsten Flug nehmen soll, so ist es das Wünschenswertheste, wenn ihr Urbilder gegeben sind, an deren Wirklichkeit geglaubt wird, und die zugleich sinnliche oder geistige Eigenschaften, Triebe, Bedürfnisse uns Ahnungen des menschlichen Gemüths ausdrücken. Solche Urbilder kann nur eine geheiligte Ueberlieferung darbieten. Auf der unauflöselichen Verschmelzung eines wirklichen Daseins mit einer allgemeinen, für alle Menschen Eines Zeitalters, Eines Stammes, Eines Glaubens gültigen Bedeutung beruht alle über-

natürliche und überhaupt alle wahrhafte Dichtung. Es ist aus damit, sobald der Glaube an jene Urbilder und der Sinn dafür verloren geht. Als- dann pflegt die eigentliche mit Freiheit und oft mit Willkür erfundene Allegorie an deren Stelle zu treten. Aber umsonst: Dichten ist schaffen [poiein] und der Verstand ist ohnmächtig zum Schaf- fen; er kann seinen Finkleidungen nackter Begriffe keine lebendige Seele einhauchen. (SW, XIII, 346-47)

This passage ties together a number of threads in the fabric of Schlegel's poetics. Once again he speaks of physiognomy, the way in which everything is a symbol for itself. Each object has an exterior which reflects its essence. The artist brings out the meanings in things or, at least, the fact that things can have a meaning. Else- where we have considered Schlegel's conviction that things not only point to their own inner essence but are, in fact, inexhaustible in their reflections of things outside them- selves. The extreme statement of this position holds that every atom reflects the whole universe. In the passage just quoted, however, Schlegel seems to recognize the practical difficulties facing a mystical view of Poesie.

No matter how meaningful the universe and all its parts may be, its meanings are apparent only through Poesie. The artist, says Schlegel, should express his own intuition of the symbolic nature of things. Perhaps the ultimate such intuition is that each thing symbolizes every other thing; but art presents images whose meanings must be seen as limited, even though their meaningfulness is infinite. All of nature may be symbolic, but litera-

ture deals in individual symbols used for more or less definable purposes.

Schlegel's mention of Urbilder here is a final pointing to myth as a model for what he means by the literary symbol. The mythical gods were originally considered objectively real yet intrinsically meaningful for man. A national literature is fortunate when it has such a ready-made poetic transformation of the world for its use. Such a world is one in which there is no problem in establishing the reality of its objects since they are already thought of as being objectively real. The task of poetic creation is made more difficult and, from the point of view of the argument in the Winckelmann review, nearly impossible by the absence of such Urbilder. This is the closest Schlegel comes to his brother's insistence on the necessity of a modern mythology. We note, however, that Schlegel still centers his arguments around Schelling's view of the mythic world's reality. The requirements for true poetry are the combination of a real and effective existence with a generally valid meaning. Poetic invention is the creation of a world whose objects are borrowed from the real world and put into a fictional world where they have a fictional but, nevertheless, consistent and convincing reality. Finally, these objects are presented in such a way that they are seen to have meanings.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUDIENCE'S EXPERIENCE OF POESIE

The present chapter will consider the role of the audience in Schlegel's literary theory. More particularly, it will deal with how the literary work is experienced. Literature is written to be heard or read. In a fundamental sense, it is a series of signs used to arouse a response. Poetry causes something to happen in the mind of its audience. This is, of course, true of all linguistic utterances. The difference between the experience of prosaic statements and poems will first be considered negatively. Schlegel notes a number of ways in which good literature does not appeal to its audience. Most of these are either suggested or implied in what has gone before, and so require little elaboration.

Poesie does not appeal to the understanding but rather to imagination. Accordingly, it does not properly have the purpose of teaching or persuading. The didactic poem is truly poetry only when it manages to rise above its prosaic purpose. Voltaire is severely criticized in the Vienna Lectures for his attempt to make art into propaganda (SW, VI, 70-73). Earlier Schlegel had occasion to remark that while Poesie is indeed philosophical, looking for philosophy in a poem destroys it.

Schlegel's statements on ways Poesie should not affect its audience are scattered through his works. The

common denominator of all these warnings is the idea that Poesie must appeal to nothing less than Phantasie. Schlegel usually sees the appeal to the audience's lower nature as deliberate and attributable to a striving for mere effect by the author. Euripides is criticized for this fault:

Ueberall bringt er im Ueberfluß jene bloß körperlichen Reize an, welche Winckelmann eine Schmeichelei des groben Äußeren Sinnes nennt; alles was anregt, auffällt, mit einem Worte lebhaft wirkt, ohne wahren Gehalt für den Geist und das Gefühl. Er arbeitet auf die Wirkung in einem Grade, wie es auch dem dramatischen Dichter nicht verstattet werden kann. (SW, V, 138)

Schlegel notes especially a blatant appeal to the emotions by Euripides. Poesie must do more than titillate or merely entertain. Poetry which seems to be concerned primarily with striving for effect is always criticized. Further examples in the Vienna Lectures are Voltaire and Beaumont and Fletcher.

Poetry must not impress us as being reality. The greatest danger of this happening is in drama, but the principle is applicable to all Poesie. This point is made throughout Schlegel's writings. There is no need to elaborate it here since it was part of previous considerations of mimesis and the fictional world of Poesie. There is, however, a related problem which remains to be discussed, that of the nature of the feelings which literature arouses.

Granted that the action of Poesie is fictional and not real, are the emotions aroused the same as those aroused by similar events occurring before us in reality? Schlegel's

answer is that the emotions are similar in many respects, and we necessarily use the same language to describe them both. Nevertheless, the experience of these two kinds of emotions is qualitatively different. Again, it is a matter of Potenzierung, a raising to a higher level through an act of reflection. Schlegel says in the Berlin Lectures,

Schon in der bloßen Sinnesempfindung ist das Gemüth ursprünglich verloren; daß sie zum Bewußtseyn kommt, heißt eben, daß der Geist mit freyer Thätigkeit über sie hinausgeht, und über sein eignes Verlorenseyn in der Empfindung reflectirt. Eben dieser Akt wird nun bey der Betrachtung des Schönen nur nach einem größeren Maßstabe, gleichsam in einer höheren Potenz erneuert. Es soll und darf nichts an unserm Gefühle selbst mit Willkühr verändert werden, sondern wir müssen nur frey darüber reflectiren, unsre Empfänglichkeit selbst zum Gegenstande unsrer Selbstthätigkeit machen. (Berlin, I, 24)

So the emotions felt before art are real, but they are raised to a higher level by reflection, by a heightened consciousness of what is going on in the experience.

Later Schlegel speaks of the emotions involved in music and the lyric as being softened. They are less of a call to action than ordinary emotions:

Das Wesen der musikalischen Stimmung besteht darin, daß wir irgendeine Regung, sei sie nun an sich erfreulich oder schmerzlich, mit Wohlgefallen festzuhalten, ja innerlich zu verewigen suchen. Die Empfindung muß also schon in dem Grade gemildert sein, daß sie uns nicht durch Streben nach der Lust oder Flucht vor dem Schmerz über sich selbst hinausreißen, sondern daß wir, unbekümmert um den Wechsel, welchen die Zeit herbeiführt, in einem einzelnen Augenblick unsers Daseins einheimisch werden wollen. (SW, V, 39)

Here too we see that the emotions aroused by art (as well as those which inspire it) exist on a different level than

those aroused by the real world. The thought is introduced that the former are weakened before there can be a desire to preserve them in art. On the other hand, they are not subject to the rising and falling in time of ordinary emotions, but rather are preserved at a constant level in the work of poetic art.

Schlegel does not treat this problem with each individual genre, but his answer does seem to be slightly different in the case of the drama. Speaking of the vivid presentations of the dramatic poet, he says,

Er ruft alle Regungen hervor, die bei dem Anblick der Handlungen und Schicksale wirklicher Menschen in uns wirksam sind, und will diese Regungen erst durch die Gesamtheit der hervorgebrachten Eindrücke in die Befriedigung einer harmonischen Stimmung auflösen. (SW, V, 40)

Although Schlegel does not make the point, it might be remarked that even here he is speaking of emotions somewhat remote from our own existence. Seeing someone murdered undoubtedly arouses different emotions than those present when one faces an attack on himself. In any case, even in the drama the emotions of the audience are raised to another level by the context of their experience, that is, the drama as a whole. As we saw when discussing form, the experience of Poesie as more than a succession of words requires a synthetic critical act. Here Schlegel speaks of the whole as something posited by the poet. We conclude that if, for example, a drama leaves us terrified and nothing more, then we are either witnessing bad

drama or else we failed as it audience to rise to the higher level of emotional experience which was demanded of us.

When we now look at the positive side of Schlegel's ideas on how Poesie is experienced, we are brought back to the subject of Phantasie. Earlier it was seen that for Schlegel Phantasie is the faculty whereby we first consciously experience ourselves and the world. It is the source both of myth and of Poesie. Now we will see that Phantasie is also the faculty through which Poesie is experienced.

The idea that Phantasie is set in motion by poetry has been touched on many times in the preceding chapters of this study. This was the principal subject of the discussion of language, for there we saw that Ursprache spoke directly to Phantasie, calling up images through sounds which correspond closely to man's own experience of the things he sought to communicate. Poesie, says Schlegel, restores this quality to language. In the words of the Berlin Lectures, "Mit dem Verstande angesehen bezeichnet die Sprache bloß Begriffe; die Poesie will aber darstellen, Bilder in unsrer Fantasie hervorrufen, so viel an ihr ist wahre Anschauung geben" (Berlin, I, 287). Poesie is both a creation of Phantasie and an experience of Phantasie for its audience.

On several occasions Schlegel speaks of the audience being lifted into a world of Phantasie, for example in the

Berlin Lectures: "Dasjenige in den Darstellungen der übrigen Künste, was uns über die gewöhnliche Wirklichkeit in eine Welt der Fantasie erhebt, nennt man das Poetische in ihnen . . ." (Berlin, I, 261). In such passages it appears that the real activity of Phantasie was that of the poet, whereas that of the hearer is merely set into motion or else, as it is put here, the hearer is raised above ordinary reality into an imaginative world. We saw earlier that the audience ideally performs an act of synthesis, whereby a succession of words is seen as a whole, as a unified work of art. The role Phantasie plays in this process is somewhat obscure.

When Schlegel mentions the ability to see the literary work as a whole he seems to be speaking merely of a mental skill and hardly of Phantasie. In the Berlin Lectures the quality of mind which makes this possible is on one occasion spoken of simply as attentiveness (Berlin, I, 25). Later, in speaking of the epic, he uses the term Fassungskraft but goes on to say,

Die epische Einheit besteht bloß in einer solchen Zusammenfassung harmonischer Bestandtheile, durch welche sich die schöne Fülle des Stoffes in leichte und klare Umrissse für die Fantasie gefällig rundet. (Berlin, I, 363)

Here he comes close to saying that the unification of the epic into a whole occurs in the audience's imagination. Usually, however, this is the business of the more prosaic procedures of criticism. The subject will come up again when our attention is turned to the role of the literary

critic.

Whenever Schlegel speaks of the mind's activity on a work of art, the subject being discussed is usually criticism, which requires an analytical point of view. But when the matter under consideration is the immediate experience of poetry, Schlegel speaks of Phantasie being set in motion, and the audience's mental state seems to be passive rather than active. Thus in the Vienna Lectures Schlegel says, "die theatralische Täuschung, wie jede poetische, ist eine wache Träumerei, der man sich freiwillig hingiebt" (SW, VI, 24). Next we must study the process of criticism which begins when the "dream" is over and one must give an account of what has happened in it. The immediate experience of literature occupies Schlegel's attention surprisingly little. This experience is, however, fundamental to all of Schlegel's critical reflections on Poesie.

CHAPTER VII

LITERARY CRITICISM

In this chapter we are entering an area of more prosaic and sober answers to less philosophical problems than those which have been considered earlier. Criticism is far more easily defined than Poesie. It is a practical undertaking and we can almost say that it is outside the realm of literary theory. It does, however, border on theoretical matters at several points and a brief discussion of Schlegel's views on the subject is therefore in order.

In the light of Schlegel's view of Poesie it is hardly surprising that at times he derides the defiling of poetry with the prosaic. In an Athataeum fragment, for example, he remarks that notes on a poem are like anatomical notes on a roast (SW, VIII, 12). In a more serious mood he tells us in the Berlin Lectures that much more than mere understanding is needed to fathom a work of art:

Das Wesen aller ächten Kunst und Poesie kann nicht mit dem vernünftelnden Verstande ergründet werden: sie nimmt das ganze Gemüth in Anspruch, sie kommt aus dem Innersten auserwählter Menschen, und so muß man sich ihr auch in seinem Innersten mit Ernst und Liebe hingeben, um in ihr Heiligthum eingelassen zu werden. (Berlin, III, 4)

If one is to comment usefully on a work of art, he must first penetrate to its essence. The full and immediate experience of the work, which we considered in the

preceding chapter, cannot be bypassed. We saw there that Schlegel discussed this experience in rather passive terms, as something which is caused to happen in Phantasie. Criticism, however, is carried out with more conscious purpose and Schlegel discusses even its preliminary steps in more active terms. The "sich hingeben" of the above passage is a borderline case. In his early (1795) commentaries on Dante he speaks of "eindringen" and "sich hineinträumen" (SW, 200, 202).

Schlegel's most thorough theoretical treatment of criticism occurs early in the Berlin Lectures. The problem he deals with there is fundamental to all criticism. Art strives for the immediate impression on our feelings. But feeling and judging seem to be irreconcilable opposites:

Empfinden ist . . . gerade das entgegengesetzte, von beurtheilen; jenes drückt ein passives, dieses ein actives Verhältniß gegen den Gegenstand aus. Es fragt sich also: wie ist Kritik überhaupt möglich? (Berlin, I, 23)

How can we criticize without destroying the feelings art arouses? The answer is found in Schlegel's Fichtean view of the human mind. Animals and young children are lost in their feelings, but reflection brings feelings in men to consciousness and raises them to a higher level:

Wir müssen uns hier an das ganze Geheimniß unsers geistigen Daseyns erinnern, welches nichts anders ist als ein beständiges Pulsiren zwischen einer nach außen hin sich verbreitenden und einer in sich selbst zurückkehrenden Thätigkeit. Schon in

der bloßen Sinnesempfindung ist das Gemüth ursprünglich verloren; daß sie zum Bewußtweyn kommt, heißt eben, daß der Geist mit freyer Thätigkeit über sie hinausgeht, und über sein eignes Verlorenseyn in der Empfindung reflectirt. Eben dieser Akt wird nun bey der Betrachtung des Schönen nur nach einem größeren Maßstabe, gleichsam in einer höheren Potenz erneuert. (Berlin, I, 24)

There is no need to alter the feelings aroused in the immediate experience of art. Criticism is made possible by free reflection on these feelings.

Schlegel's concise definition of criticism is that it is the skill of judging works of art (Berlin, I, 23). He combines this definition with the ideas discussed in the preceding paragraph and observes that judgment itself consists essentially in making comparisons and distinctions:

Der Eindruck bey der ersten Bekanntschaft mit [schönen] Gegenständen ist ein frohes aber gänzlich unbestimmtes Erstaunen, wie jeder Mensch sich aus seiner Kindheit wird zu erinnern wissen; erst durch häufige Übung daran bekommt die freye Thätigkeit im Gemüthe die Oberhand, und es lernt vergleichen und unterscheiden, also urtheilen, indem dieß ja nichts andres ist. (Berlin, I, 24)

He goes on to say that judgment requires the ability to synthesize, to draw together a whole series of impressions into one unified impression of the art work. These thoughts were considered earlier in the chapter which dealt with form. In the case of the arts which make their presentations in successive moments in time, the formation of a unified impression of the whole may be extremely difficult, but it is nevertheless essential that this be done. Works of art are, in fact, unified

wholes and the failure to see this can lead only to bad criticism. The criticism of "correctness" is Schlegel's prime example. This kind of criticism deals only with the smallest parts of the work and Schlegel accordingly calls it atomistic criticism:

Man könnte dieß die atomistische Kritik nennen . . . indem sie ein Kunstwerk wie eine Mosaik, wie eine mühsame Zusammenfügung tochter Partikelchen, betrachtet; da doch jedes, welches den Namen verdient, organischer Natur ist, worin das Einzelne nur vermittelt des Ganzen existirt. (Berlin, I, 25)

Criticism must, then, see the poem as organic if its judgments are to be valid ones.

Schlegel next considers the problem of how literary judgments can be more than subjective. The answer is basically twofold: the critic must be conscious of the purely subjective element in his experience of a work; and he must be in a position to make appropriate comparisons between the work and things outside it.

When we read a poem, for example, we may be influenced by a mood which will affect our experience. This does not, however, necessarily preclude the possibility of objective judgments:

Man erhebt sich über die Stimmung gewissermaßen schon dadurch, daß man sich ihrer bewußt ist; denn alsdann kann man sichs klar machen, wie etwas in einer andern Stimmung ungefähr auf uns gewirkt haben würde. (Berlin, I, 26)

Consciousness of the subjective allows the critic to see beyond it.

Schlegel continually reminds us that objective judgment is possible only for those who have a knowledge of many works of art. Only by comparing such works can we judge the excellence of one of them. The objects of comparison must be appropriate ones:

Objectiv, über unsre Person hinaus gültig, kann [das Urtheil] nur dadurch werden, daß die Vergleichung mit solchen Gegenständen angestellt worden, die wirklich dazu gehören, und einen wahren Maßstab der Vollkommenheit abgeben können, welches denn keine andre sind, als die vortrefflichsten Werke derselben Kunst in verwandten Gattungen. (Berlin, I, 26)

Here we see the importance of literary history for literary criticism. The former provides us with points of comparison, evidence of similar influences and with knowledge of literary schools. The critic must have a knowledge of philology and of history in general, the latter in order to show the place of the work in the history of mankind's progress. In Schlegel's preface to the 1828 edition of his Kritische Schriften he says,

Wie die schöpferische Wirksamkeit des Genius immer von einem gewissen Unbewußtsein begleitet ist, so fällt es auch der begeisterten Bewunderung schwer und, je ächter sie ist, um so schwerer, zu besonnener Klarheit über sich zu gelangen. Am besten wird es damit gelingen, wenn die Betrachtung nicht vereinzelt wird, sonder vielmehr den menschlichen Geist in den Stufengänge seiner Entwicklung bis zu den Gipfel hinauf begleitet. Mit einem Worte, die Kunstkritik muß sich, um ihren großen Zwecke zu leisten, mit der Geschichte, und, so fern sie sich auf Poesie und Literatur bezieht, auch mit der Philologie verbünden. (SW, VII, xxx)

Theory also plays its part in criticism, for critical statements can be clearly expressed only when they are part of a

system which, however, does not necessarily have to be expressed. Theory, criticism and history are intimately related. Criticism produces theory: "Die kritische Reflexion ist eigentlich ein beständiges Experimentiren, um auf theoretische Sätze zu kommen" (Berlin, I, 27). Criticism is further vital to both art history and art theory because only in criticism do works of art become objects for these studies, "denn beyde haben es ja nicht mit den Kunstwerken zu thun, in so fern sie eine äußerliche Masse in der Sinnenwelt ausmachen, sondern mit ihrem Geiste, den wir nur in uns selbst erforschen können" (Berlin, I, 27).

In spite of the critic's best efforts his criticism is always partially subjective. Accordingly, he must make his personality apparent to his readers. Schlegel's dictum on this point is: what of necessity must be essentially individual, let it also be so in form (Berlin, I, 28). This statement is the basis of Schlegel's criticism of the anonymity which was usual for the reviews of his day, in his essay "Über kritische Zeitschriften" (SW, XII, 8-9).

The individuality of criticism leads to many different statements about the work of art. This diversity might produce skepticism about the validity of critical judgments. But Schlegel does not share such skepticism. Rather, he says, different men look at a work from different points on a circle, as it were. They describe different radii but

but they can nevertheless all have the common center in view.

In the Berlin Lectures (I, 28-29) Schlegel denies that the connoisseur of art has to be an artist. The critic cannot be reproached with his inability to write a poem better than the author. He can, however, demonstrate in general that the poem could in fact have been better written. On the other hand, the artist does not have to be a connoisseur, although judgment cannot be entirely lacking if his work is not to degenerate into eccentricity and extravagance. Schlegel's highest demand of the good critic is genuine Kennerschaft, which demands universality of knowledge and interest:

Eigentliche Kennerschaft geht immer auf Universalität aus, indem sie zur größeren Genauigkeit ihres Maßstabes alles Vergleichbare so viel möglich vollständig zu kennen sucht: so wird sie von einem Werke auf alle übrigen desselben Charakters, derselben Gattung, dann der ganzen Kunst, welcher jenes angehört, wo möglich auch verschiedner Künste hingeführt, und das Studium des Kenners hat in seinem Umfange keine Gränzen. (Berlin, I, 29)

This quality is not demanded of the practicing artist who must of necessity concentrate his attention on the work at hand.

A further requirement for being a good critic is enthusiasm. This is actually a repetition of Schlegel's statement that art must be experienced immediately before it can be criticized. The cold critic betrays a lack of feeling for the work of art:

Was mit dem Gefühl nicht aufgefaßt wird, ist in dem Kunstwerke für uns nicht vorhanden; Empfänglichkeit ist also das eine wesentliche Erforderniß zum Kenner, und in so fern ist der wärmste Kritiker auch der beste. (Berlin, I, 30)

Schlegel suggests Winckelmann as an example of the warm and enthusiastic critic. The cold, purely intellectual critic is, for Schlegel, exemplified by Lessing.

Taste is defined by Schlegel as the ability to judge the beautiful. This definition prompts him to stress again the theoretical nature of criticism: "Kritik müßte denn etwa im Sinne der kritischen Philosophie genommen seyn, dann hieße es: eine Untersuchung über die Gültigkeit der vom Geschmack abhängigen Urtheile" (Berlin, I, 31). He goes on to speculate on the reasons why we use the word "taste" rather than, say, hearing or sight to describe our receptivity for art. He concludes that the term is appropriate because tasting is so inward and its objects are combined with ourselves in the experience:

Es erfolgt dabey wirklich eine chemische Auflösung und Verbindung des Gegenstandes mit dem aufnehmenden Organ, und dadurch unsrer ganzen Organisation. Hierin liegt also die Ähnlichkeit mit dem innern Sinn für das Schöne. (Berlin, I, 32)

Schlegel also remarks that physical and artistic taste are further similar in that for both we have relatively few words to describe their subtle nuances.

Schlegel recognizes the fact that taste, as most people use the term, can mean little more than a cultivated sense for certain superficial elements in art. At its lowest level it becomes mere fashion and changes with

the times.

We have already examined Schlegel's views on the role of criticism in the triad history-criticism-theory. A statement in the Vienna Lectures states its mediating role concisely. Criticism is the connecting link between history and theory. "Die Kritik ist es, welche die Geschichte der Künste aufklärt, und ihre Theorie fruchtbar macht" (SW, V, 4). If, however, we inquire beyond this circle of approaches to the study of literature, we find another object of criticism in its raising less gifted members of art's audience to the point of view of the critic. This is expressed best in the essay on Shakespeare and Wilhelm Meister:

Der Genuß edler Geisteswerke ist unabhängig von [der Kritik], denn er muß ihr vorangehn; sie kann ihn eigentlich nicht erhöhen, wohl aber ihm Vieles abziehen, auf's höchste ihn zergliedern und erklären. Ihr rühmlichstes Geschäft ist es, den großen Sinn, den ein schöpferischer Genius in seine Werke legt, den er oft im Innersten ihrer Zusammensetzung aufbewahrt, rein, vollständig, mit scharfer Bestimmtheit zu fassen und zu deuten, und dadurch weniger selbstständige, aber empfängliche Betrachter auf die Höhe des richtigen Standpunktes zu heben. (SW, VII, 26)

Schlegel adds that criticism's possibilities are seldom fully realized. It almost takes an artist to express adequately what is experienced, as distinguished from what is merely thought out. Of course, Schlegel is here concerned with Goethe writing on Shakespeare. Elsewhere the highest requirement of the critic is not creativity so much as it is universal knowledge.

Much of what we call historical criticism is allowable within Schlegel's concept of criticism, for he is always concerned with the place of the work in the history of literature and with the value of the work in comparison with others of its kind. Biographical criticism is, however, another matter. In his own criticism Schlegel rarely deals with biography, and in his theoretical writings he ~~denies~~ its importance in principle. In his essay on Bürger he says that a poem is as much separated from the poet as fruit from a tree, implying that the enjoyment of each is independent of any knowledge of its origin (SW, VIII, 70).

Schlegel does speak of the meaning put into a work by its author, for example in the passage from the Shakespeare-Meister essay quoted above. To this might be added a similar statement in his 1797 review of Wackenroder's Herzensergießungen: "Es ist gewiß, man ist nicht eher befugt zu richten, bis man ein Kunstwerk ganz versteht, bis man tief in seinen und seines Urhebers Sinn eingedrungen ist" (SW, X, 364). But he goes on to suggest that this is accomplished through a quality of the critic's mind, above all, his receptivity for what is there.

If one admits the significance of the author's intention, the only way to deny the relevance of biography is to claim that intention is revealed completely in the work

itself. This is implied but not explicitly stated by Schlegel in his theorizing on criticism. On the other hand, his denial of biography's importance is consistent with his view that Poesie is a complete and coherent world in itself.

In the essay on Shakespeare and Wilhelm Meister Schlegel has occasion to compare confused attempts at literary art with the productions of true genius. The former are muddy streams, the latter clear and still waters into which each man can look as deeply as he is able:

Jene entweder in der Ausführung verfehlten, oder schon in der Anlage verworrenen Darstellungen, wovon ich oben sprach, könnte man mit trüben Strömen vergleichen, worin das schärfste Gesicht so wenig etwas unterscheiden kann, als das blödeste; die Werke des ächten Genius hingegen mit einem reinen und stillen Wasser von unermesslicher Tiefe. Sollte auch kein Auge ganz bis auf den Boden dringen, so findet doch jedes für seine Sehkraft Befriedigung: denn so weit diese reicht, erblickt es die in dem flüssigen Elemente enthaltenen Gegenstände vollkommen deutlich und unentstellt. Nur der ist durch eigne Schuld irrigen Vorstellungen ausgesetzt, der sich einbildet oder anmaßt, tiefer zu sehen, als er wirklich sieht. (SW, VII, 31)

To this should be added the fact that the critic can aid the less vigilant to see deeper. But even the critic is subject to the final admonition: only error can result from imagining that one sees deeper than he actually does.

In conclusion we should note that (although it is justified in theory) very little of Schlegel's own criticism deals with explications of literary works. Rather,

it reflects his idea of criticism as the mediator between history and theory. Criticism is judging, determining the worth of a poem in relationship to others of its kind. Criticism both uses history and adds to it a new chapter. So it is too in the case of theory: criticism uses theory as a framework for its statements and new theoretical premises arise out of criticism.

CHAPTER VIII

THEORY OF GENRES

To survey all Schlegel has said on the subject of genre would necessitate examining his critical works in some detail, for it is there that he develops most of his ideas on what the genres should be. Since our subject here is literary theory and not literary criticism as such, there is no need to digest this huge amount of material. We are not concerned so much with the problem of what characterizes the individual genres as with the problem of how the idea of genre fits into Schlegel's poetics. Even so, this is hardly possible without an examination of the main classic and romantic literary types. In this chapter the subject will be treated in a survey of Schlegel's thoughts on the epic, lyric and drama. Later, in a chapter on romanticism, his statements on the romantic genres will be examined for the light they shed both on the subject of genre and that of romanticism.

In the Jena Lectures Schlegel remarks that the philosophical derivation of the genres seems to be the highest task of strictly scientific poetics (1798, p.111). He goes on to say that he will take the easier way and derive them historically. By this he means that he will characterize the genres according to known examples, beginning with the three basic classical types and

proceeding to those which are compounds or derivatives of these. In the Berlin Lectures he indulges briefly in a more philosophical approach. He speaks dialectically of epic, lyric and drama as thesis, antithesis and synthesis and suggests their relationship to the Kantian categories. The three genres are characterized as "Leichte Fülle, energische Einzelheit, harmonische Vollständigkeit und Ganzheit" (Berlin, I, 357). He adds these remarks: "Das Epische das rein objective im menschlichen Geiste. Das Lyrische das rein subjective. Das Dramatische die Durchdringung von beyden" (Berlin, I, 357). Outside of a few such scattered speculations, Schlegel's approach to genre is descriptive and historical.

We recall that Schlegel's principle of division for the arts in general is twofold, according to the way they present their objects in time (simultaneously or successively) and according to their mode of expression. Poesie, for example, is distinguished from the other arts by its use of language for its presentations and it is further distinguished from sculpture and painting by the fact that it must present objects successively. There are no such easy ways to distinguish the poetic genres. Sometimes Schlegel speaks of mood, often of content and often, too, of metric form. But all these aspects of a specific genre are interdependent, and definitions here consist of lengthy descriptions.

According to Schlegel's speculative history of Poesie,

the genres appear at the time of transition from Naturpoesie to Kunstpoesie. Whenever poetry becomes consciously produced art, it falls into one of the three basic categories. The creation of art is a free activity, but this freedom is always exercised within certain restrictions, and one of these is genre. Without boundaries art falls into confusion (Berlin, III, 183). In the Berlin Lectures Schlegel tells us that organization is, in fact, a condition of free individuality:

Allgemein betrachtet, ist ein gewisses Gesetz der Form sogar Bedingung freyer Individualität in der Kunst wie in der Natur, denn was zu keiner Gattung von Organisation gehört, ist monstros. (Berlin, III, 69)

Necessity of form is no restriction on the poet's freedom, nor is the categorization of the finished work a denial of its individuality.

The genres multiply in time. At first there were only the three basic types, with the added distinction of tragedy and comedy within the dramatic. But later new genres were added to answer new needs for expression. Often it is difficult to decide whether the new ones are genuine or are merely monstrous hybrids. In general, Schlegel insists on purity of genre and criticizes any admixture of inappropriate elements. Romantic art, however, is a case in itself and we must consider its mixed genres separately in a later chapter.

Schlegel begins his discussion of the epic in the Berlin Lectures with the definition which appeared

earlier in his Hermann und Dorothea essay and in the Jena Lectures. The epic is "eine ruhige Darstellung des Fortschreitenden" (Berlin, I, 358). The epic point of view is purely objective. The epic poet is calm and impartial. His objective view of his material is completely unclouded by emotion.

These thoughts lead Schlegel immediately to the question of the relationship of Poesie to movement. Poesie, we recall, is successive. Schlegel holds the essentially Kantian view that the succession in time of movements which we perceive is a mode of perception, something added by the mind to external reality. Poesie is admirably suited for portraying such experience since language can follow, step by step, the mind's ordering of the world into a series of events in time. Since the epic strives to be as objective as possible, it prefers to deal with movement, with things which are perceived in just the order that the poem will record them.

Schlegel next deals with the problem posed by Lessing, of how Poesie can deal with things at rest. Since Poesie is successive, there is felt an incongruity of matter and form when it deals with motionless objects. Mere description is generally unsatisfactory since it is limited by the audience's ability to reconstruct the picture out of a number of parts. In Schlegel's view there are two ways poetry can portray things at rest, both of them being compromises. First, the poet can describe feelings about the object since

these emotions are successive in time. In doing this, however, the object becomes of secondary importance and the emotions themselves the matter of primary concern. This is to say that such a poem is by nature lyric. The second way of portraying rest is to transform it into motion. This is the way of the epic. Schlegel credits Lessing with this observation but criticizes him for saying that it is the only way in which Poesie can depict (Berlin, I, 359).

Out of these thoughts comes the interesting observation that the didactic poem is properly a subgenre of the epic. In a sense the lesson in such a poem is a whole which is at rest, but it is turned into a succession of ideas when it is made into a poem (Berlin, I, 360). At its best it should also have the calm and objectivity of the epic.

Since the epic always deals with objective events in time, its form is always narrative. This narration, moreover, is characteristically epic:

Es giebt leidenschaftliche, rhetorische und mimische Erzählungen; die epische hingegen ist unparteyisch, und von keinen Äußerungen der Theilnahme unterbrochen; sie sucht durch Anschaulichkeit aber nicht durch Verstärkung und Übertreibung zu wirken, und endlich nimmt sie zwar die Reden der handelnden Personen in sich auf, aber nicht so daß der Erzähler sich ganz in diese versetze und sich selbst darüber verlöre, sondern er bildet sie zur Gleichartigkeit mit den übrigen Theilen der Erzählung um. (Berlin, I, 361)

Thus the manner of narration must never violate the nature of the genre which lies in its calm and objectivity.

This objectivity leads Schlegel to say that in the epic everything must have the appearance of chance. Necessity is, as he puts it, a "Construction aus Gesetzen unsers Geistes" (Berlin, I, 361) and hence subjective.¹ Here the epic is contrasted to tragedy whose subject is the polarity of freedom and necessity and wherein nothing happens by chance. The chance events of the epic easily accommodate the appearance of the gods and the miraculous in general, the very denial of causality. The epic is more at home in an age when men do not have a strong sense of causality and determination. Men appear in the epic like seemingly accidental physical powers of nature.

There is no real unity of action in the epic. As Schlegel explains,

Nur durch einen Akt der Freyheit kann etwas aus der unendlichen Reihe von Naturereignissen herausgerissen, und das aus jenem herfließende, die Handlung, zu einem in sich beschlossenen Ganzen gemacht werden; und ein solcher Akt der Freyheit liegt jenseits der Außenwelt, welche das Epos schildert. (Berlin, I, 363)

The material of the epic is more a plurality than a unity. Each of its parts seems to be a part of a larger whole and each is also divisible into smaller parts. There are no fixed boundaries to the epic. The story could be added to, and the only limit on such expansion

¹This is a rather specious bit of pseudo-Kantianism. Succession in time is at least as "subjective" as causality, but Schlegel makes of the former the very essence of the epic.

is the audience's powers of comprehension. The only unity of the epic is in the Phantasie of the audience:

Die epische Einheit besteht bloß in einer solchen Zusammenfassung harmonischer Bestandtheile, durch welche sich die schöne Fülle des Stoffes in leichte und klare Umrisse für die Fantasie gefällig rundet. (Berlin, I, 363)

Even so, each part of the epic seems to be a whole in itself. Unlike other genres in which expectation and its satisfaction are part of a unified progression, these are, in the epic, spread equally over the whole. All parts are equal and the epic could begin or end at almost any point. Its order of events seems quite natural, although it is not necessarily bound to objective time. Rather, the epic is quite often episodic, jumping back and forth in time. Epic calm demands of the poet such a mastery over his material that the various parts are actually of indifferent value to him. Accordingly, he does not try to lend a false heightened reality to past events. He tells of them as if they were present.

The epic creates a poetic reality for us. An epic poem lingers on details. Its actions pass before our eyes undisturbed by the subjectivity of the poet. Its time sequence is poetic. We can even say that its time structure is characteristically epic. Things which last in the real world can take only a moment in the epic, whereas it can linger over the transitory. Everything is appropriate to the genre. There is never a lack of motion

and never an inappropriate hurrying over things. Every moment seems to have its own value:

Der Snger verweilt bey jedem Punkte der Vergangenheit mit so ungetheilter Seele, als ob demselben nichts vorhergegangen wre und auch nichts darauf folgen sollte, wodurch das Erquickliche einer lebendigen Gegenwart berall gleichmig verbreitet wird. (Berlin, I, 366)

In short, in each of its parts and at all times the epic reflects its characteristic nature. This is also true of its speeches, for they are neither like those of ordinary reality nor those of the drama. They are not to be judged by standards from other provinces. Here, too, there is no striving for a goal. In fact, all the epic traits are found in its dialog:

jedes, wodurch das Folgende vorbereitet wird, scheint dennoch nur um sein selbst willen da zu stehn: ganz das verweilende Fortschreiten, die sinnlich belebende Umstndlichkeit, die besonnene Anordnung, die leichte Folge, die lose Verknpfung, wie im Epos berhaupt. (Berlin, I, 367)

This consistency of each part with the nature of the whole is seen in the smallest parts, in the speeches, the episodes, even in literary devices such as the simile (Berlin, I, 367; SW, XI, 194). Schlegel shows that the hexameter is profoundly appropriate to the epic since this verse form reflects a lack of direction, the epic's easy transitions, its unhurried progress, its calm (SW, XI, 192-93; Berlin, I, 370).

The lyric is the musical expression of emotions by means of language. This definition is followed in the Vienna Lectures with the statement that the emotions preserved in

the lyric are softened. The lyric presupposes pleasure in the preservation, but for this to be the case the emotions must no longer be strong enough to cause us to seek the pleasure or to flee from the pain which brings them about (SW, V, 39).

In the Berlin Lectures (II, 231) the lyric is characterized as being, in almost all respects, the very opposite of the epic. The latter is universal, expansive, outwardly directed, objective, and by means of presenting objects it reveals a calm observing mind. The lyric is particular, concentrated, inwardly directed, subjective, and in it the outer world appears through the medium of an emotional spirit ("eines bewegten Gemüths") which is itself presented in the poem. A noteworthy characteristic of the lyric is its individuality, but Schlegel tells us that it can not be completely subjective if it is to be art. He uses the idea of style which he developed earlier, that it is freedom exercised within the bounds of an art principle.

It is, at first sight, remarkable that the shortest of the major literary types has the most complicated verse forms. Schlegel explains that this is so because of the individuality of the emotional states which are portrayed. The multiplicity of possible verse forms is accompanied by a much greater strictness within the forms. The lyric permits fewer deviations from the strict metrical

and strophic successions which the mood of the individual poem has determined.

Subjectivity and individuality are as fundamental to the lyric as objectivity and universality are to the epic. In addition to those just considered, there are further results of this fact. The boundlessness of the emotions permits the boldest use of language. The lyric has the greatest freedom of all the genres to use unusual words, constructions and figures of speech. The language used is colored by the emotions involved and by the individuality of the poet.

The lyric is not, however, completely without limitations. We have already seen two of its limitations in the above discussions of style and meter. In general, the only bonds placed upon it arise from the demands of art. As art, it must be beautiful and, in Schlegel's view, this rules out its portrayal of contradictory or discordant emotions. Just as in music, the only dissonances allowed are those which can be and in fact are resolved within the work (1798, p.134).

Finally, the unity of the lyric is in its prevailing tone (1798, p.136). Emotions are rarely simple but rather are usually complex feelings pointing in many different directions. Similar and related emotions set the tone of the lyric poem and others must be subordinated to these. By this means the lyricist lends his emotions

an artistic unity.

Schlegel's theory and criticism of the drama can only be dealt with here in broad outline. Schlegel studied the drama in greater depth and breadth than any of the other genres and he devoted an entire series of lectures to this subject alone. Our purpose here is to survey the resulting theories and to see what they contribute to the idea of genre.

Discussion of the classic drama is complicated by the fact that it is actually divided into two sub-genres, the tragic and the comic. Furthermore, even in classical times the latter changed in character and became an essentially new genre. Insofar as the drama as a whole can be characterized, we can only speak of form and external appearances. Drama presents actions by means of dialog, and it must be suitable to be played on the stage. The events presented are given a greater appearance of vividness and reality and the emotions drama excites in its audience are stronger and more immediate than those of the lyric. The dramatic poet is, moreover, far from being the objective observer of the epic. He is far from indifferent toward his characters and he must assume a definite attitude toward human life. He brings his audience to participate in the same attitude (SW, V, 40).

When we come to the distinction between tragic and comic, we find that these dramatic types impose strict

limitations on content. Whereas the province of the epic is the whole objective world and that of the lyric the whole range of human emotions, tragedy deals only with the problem of man's nature, specifically with the problem of freedom versus necessity. Schlegel's definition of tragedy in the Jena Lectures is this: "Die Tragödie ist die unmittelbare Darstellung einer Handlung, in welcher der Streit zwischen der Menschheit und dem Schicksale in Harmonie aufgelöst wird" (1798, p.161). Subsequently he relates the idea of action to that of freedom by saying, "Handlung im strengen Sinne ist Richtung der Kraft durch Freiheit" (1798, p.163).

As in the case of the other genres, in tragedy every detail is influenced by the general purpose. Freedom is seen in man's self-determined action, and necessity is determination above and beyond man. In sharp contrast to the epic, nothing happens by chance in a tragedy. All is governed by the will of man or of fate. In the epic the gods are drawn into the human world. There man can struggle with them even physically. But in tragedy they are either instruments of destiny or are themselves in a struggle with a necessity higher than themselves (Berlin, II, 318). In the epic the miraculous is charming, in tragedy it is awesome.

Schlegel also states the role of tragedy as that of establishing the claims of the mind to divinity: "die

Ansprüche des Gemüths auf innre Göttlichkeit zu behaupten" (Berlin, II, 318). All limitations of man's lower nature are overcome. The sublime spectacle is of the highest dignity, and this is reflected throughout the tragedy. Men must be of the greatest strength and human worth commensurate with their role in the drama.

A word should be said about the traditional dramatic unities. Let us reverse the order in which Schlegel deals with the unities in the Vienna Lectures and consider time and place first. Schlegel disposes of these quickly on the grounds that they are not essential to Poesie in general. Poetry is fiction, a waking dream. Poesie does not deceive us that it is literally true, and a poetic fiction does not follow the laws of the objective world but rather its own laws which are those of imagination. Our thoughts very easily jump over distances of time and space and it is a completely artificial limitation on the mind and on Poesie itself to deny them this prerogative.

The only one of the unities which deserves to be called the true unity of the drama is unity of action. Schlegel shows the inadequacy of the naive definition of action as simply something that takes place. A better definition of Handlung is that it is an activity dependent on man's will:

Im höheren eigentlichen Sinne ist Handlung eine von dem Willen des Menschen abhängige Thätigkeit. Ihre Einheit wird in der Richtung auf ein einziges Ziel bestehen; zu ihrer Vollständigkeit gehört

alles was zwischen dem ersten Entschlusse und der Vollbringung der That liegt. (SW, VI, 14-15)

Even when action is so defined, however, it is obvious that drama could portray a disconnected series of such events. For action to be unified, it must strive without deviation toward the end which is the essence of the drama. In tragedy this essence lies in the idea of freedom, the assertion of free will and the ultimate recognition of necessity:

Wir haben in dieser Beziehung auf eine höhere Idee allerdings die Einheit und Ganzheit der Tragödie im Sinne der Alten gesucht: nämlich ihr absoluter Anfang ist die Bewährung der Freiheit, die Anerkennung der Nothwendigkeit ihr absolutes Ende. (SW, VI, 17)

We see that Schlegel has described not just unity in general, but a unity appropriate to a particular genre. Here it consists in the subordination of all action to a single idea.

Schlegel also considers dramatic unity from a subjective point of view, for which he borrows from the French critic De la Motte the term unity of interest. Properly defined, this term is the most suitable for drama's unity:

Falls man das Wort nicht auf die Theilnahme an den Schicksalen einer einzigen Person beschränkt, sondern wenn Interesse überhaupt die Richtung des Gemüths bei'm Anblick einer Begebenheit bedeuten soll, so möchte ich diese Erklärung die befriedigendste und der Wahrheit am nächsten kommende finden. (SW, VI, 19)

Schlegel goes on to remark that the idea of a whole does

not come from experience but rather from the activity of the mind. Considering the matter of unity, again from a more objective point of view, it consists, negatively speaking, in the absence of disruptive elements which would prohibit understanding, imagination and feeling, all working together, from perceiving the work as a whole. This implies the necessity for tragedy, bound as it is to an idea, of a logical connection of its parts.

Schlegel's definition of comedy in the Jena Lectures is that it is "die unmittelbare scherzhafte Darstellung menschlicher Charaktere in einer Handlung" (1798, p.179). In contrast to tragedy, comedy has the appearance of capricious play directed to no definite end. No appearance of seriousness, logical order or verisimilitude is required. Even the laws of dramatic presentation may be set aside. The poet can even appear on the stage and address the audience in his own person.

In the Vienna Lectures there is an elaborately drawn contrast between the tragic and the comic mood, between Ernst and Scherz (SW, V, 41-43). The former is the state of mind resulting from a deep sense of tension between man's many human limitations and his divine nature. Scherz, on the other hand, is the forgetting of all seriousness in a present sense of well being. Man's limitations are no longer the object of lamentation but rather of laughter, though it is a sublime laughter. Comedy entertains the mind and pleases Phantasie. Although an element of

earnestness was later mixed with comedy, in its earliest form it was pure sport and in complete contrast to Greek tragedy.

In most of his theorizing on comedy Schlegel speaks of Greek Old Comedy. It is the opposite counterpart of tragedy. Purposeless fun and unrestrained caprice set the mood. Yet it is still art. It still extends just as far beyond the limits of reality into the realm of free creative Phantasie as does tragedy (SW, V, 147). Comedy portrays humorously the domination of man by his lower nature. In a sense it is a parody of tragedy. This parody is made complete by the use of the chorus, the ideal spectator in tragedy. The parody of tragic form is also seen in the destruction of dramatic illusion by drawing the audience into the play (SW, V, 150).

New Comedy is an impure genre. It mixes earnestness with sport. Verisimilitude is again required. New Comedy is earnest in form and is realistic. It has coherence which, however, is derived by reference to reality rather than to an idea, as in tragedy. Still, it is art insofar as it is formed into a fictional whole, follows theatrical laws, excludes the superfluous and assumes a more distinct appearance than the vague outlines of everyday reality. Schlegel summarizes these points by saying that it is poetic in form but prosaic in content (SW, V, 179).

Schlegel elaborates all these theories in great detail. As is his usual procedure, he develops his ideas from

criticism of actual works.

We have already noted that one way a new genre can develop is through the parody of another one. Other genres are also developed to fulfill different needs for expression. Schlegel considers all the lesser classic genres as subtypes of the basic three, which they resemble in varying degrees. By the time we reach modern times, however, the relation of the new genres to their classic archetypes becomes less clear, and the best way to explain their origin is to point to the new poetic needs which they satisfy. This, however, is the subject of a later chapter.

From all that has been said here, it is apparent that for Schlegel the poetic world must be manifested in definite forms. The idea of genre is, in fact, close to his idea of organic form, for within each genre every part and every exterior feature reflects an inner essence. When he is defining the various literary types, Schlegel continually uses the word "wesentlich." It is taken for granted that each genre does have an essential nature which is definable. Sometimes the definition is arrived at speculatively, but usually it is the result of the process whereby theory is produced by criticism.

What is appropriate to a work within a genre? Schlegel always relates this question to the essential nature of the genre. What violates that nature is excluded. All else is permitted, provided that it does not contradict the higher claims of art.

Critical terminology takes on new meanings in dealing with various literary types. Dialog is something different in the lyric, drama and epic. Poetic unity means something different in each case. Certain metric forms and poetic devices are appropriate only for one genre. In any case, language down to its minute details is colored by the genre for which it is used.

For the most part Schlegel develops his theories from actual critical examinations of literary works. Once a genre is defined, however, Schlegel feels qualified to criticize a failure to fulfill its demands. He criticizes Euripides for the degeneration of tragedy at his hands. In the case of the epic, the whole essay on Hermann und Dorothea is essentially an attempt to show how well Goethe was able to write a classical epic in modern times. Still, as we will see in dealing with romanticism, Schlegel is far from holding that the genres are fixed for all time. New ages require new genres. These too can be defined after examination, and the success of individual poets can in turn be judged by the degree to which their works reflect the mood of the genre as this is determined in the great works which are its models.

CHAPTER IX

LITERARY HISTORY

We have already touched on two aspects of history in Schlegel's poetics. One is the idea of natural history or speculative history of poetic origins. Schlegel's point of view here is that by explaining a thing's origins one explains what it is, or what it should be (SW, VII, 107). It was remarked before that such speculative history was a favorite occupation of Schlegel's day, and he himself justifies it on one occasion as a popular form for speculative poetics. As history, such speculations are of little value. The possibilities for sentimental error are enormous. Still, Schlegel can properly maintain that such "history" is a fitting form for expressing speculations about the nature of Poesie.

The other aspect of history which has been touched on is history in a more conventional sense: the record of verifiable events, including artistic events, of the past. Schlegel's view of history in this sense must now be examined further.

In the Berlin Lectures (I, 11-12) Schlegel points out that history as a mere chronicle of events is meaningless. Writing history requires a choice of the events which will be recorded in it. Schlegel adopts the idealist view of history. The idea which governs the choice of events to

go into any written history is properly that of mankind's progress toward absolute goals. All history is "Bildungsgeschichte der Menschheit zu dem was für sich Zweck an sich ist, dem sittlich guten, dem wahren und schönen" (Berlin, I, 13). The influence of Schelling is evident here, as it is in Schlegel's identification of the goals of history and philosophical theory:

So wie die Philosophie eine Geschichte des innern Menschen, so ist die Geschichte eine Philosophie des gesamten Menschengeschlechts. Es ist dieselbe Evolution des menschlichen Geistes, welche der Philosoph in der ursprünglichsten Handlung desselben als eins und untheilbar begriffen aufsucht und ihre Gesetze darlegt, und die der Historiker von Zeitbedingungen abhängig und in einem unendlichen Progreß realisirt, vorstellt. (Berlin, I, 14)

This thought is applicable to art history. Furthermore, art theory cannot be carried out in a vacuum, but must be constantly referred to realities which history brings forward for its consideration.

Schlegel considers next how we can reconcile the idea of progress with the perfection we demand of a work of art. An artist works under the limitations of his time, says Schlegel. A work of art does not have to achieve an absolute perfection, only the highest perfection possible under the circumstances. In this sense a work can be both perfect and part of the chain of progress (Berlin, I, 17). To reckon with genius, Schlegel adds that art works are always objectively necessary but subjectively accidental. The genius of mankind is the source of all Poesie, and the individual in which it is manifested is

a historical accident.

Art history is not bound to chronological time to the same degree that political history is. Artistic affinities may stretch across millenia. Goethe's Hermann und Dorothea, for example, has to be considered alongside the Homeric epic (Berlin, I, 20).

The writing of art history is made difficult by the lack of sufficient examples in many periods. Furthermore, since genius acts, at least in part, unconsciously, the words of the artists themselves cannot always be believed. Art history is also difficult because of the objects it deals with. It should be, as Schlegel puts it, a "Poesie in der zweyten Potenz" (Berlin, I, 20).

The relationship of history to criticism has been considered previously. It should be added here that Schlegel stresses the relevance of history to art. Not just art history, but also history in general must be part of the critic's store of knowledge. To those who maintain that a work of art is a free invention of an individual artist, Schlegel replies that it is, nevertheless, true that the artist's environment and education influence what goes into the work (Berlin, III, 9-10). These influences on the artist include not only the spirit of his own age but also the whole history of art before his time. And since matter and form are mutually determinative, we may say that the whole work is profoundly influenced by

the age in which it is written. Everything relevant must be discovered and related to the work. This is the task of the literary historian.

This brief survey of Schlegel's ideas on history has been included as an introduction to the following chapter on the distinction of classic and romantic. It should be clear that Schlegel has a deep sense of the significance of history for man and of its relevance to literature and art in general. National literatures can only be understood when the nations themselves are understood. Furthermore, the literatures of great historical epochs must differ just as profoundly as the epochs themselves. The two great epochs of western history are the ancient and modern and out of these come two strikingly different literary types.

CHAPTER X

CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC

Wherever Schlegel uses the term "romantisch," it describes artistic works from the middle ages to his own times. He thought of his own circle of literary friends as being more romantic than classic in spirit, but Schlegel never defines a programmatic movement with this term. Friedrich Schlegel's tendencies to do this are ignored in August Wilhelm's published writings. He seems to follow Friedrich's definitions of "romantic" as an aesthetic and historical category. It should be remembered, moreover, that the term was invented by neither of the Schlegels and was, in fact, employed to describe many of the literary events for which they used it long before there was a Romantic movement. There is very little in Schlegel's works about Romanticism, but there is a great deal about the nature of "romantische Poesie."

Schlegel is aware of the origins of the term "romantisch" in "romance" in its linguistic sense and its use to describe a specific literary genre. Romance is the adjective describing the languages arising from the mixture of Latin with the dialects from the north. Whence, Schlegel tells us in the Berlin Lectures (Berlin, III, 17), poems written in these languages were called Romane, and from this comes the adjective "romantic." The word suggests a fusing

of old German cultural elements with the late christianized Roman. Presently we will see that one of romantic poetry's traits is its mixing of contrasting elements. Schlegel observes, in connection with his etymologizing on romantisch, that modern civilization is itself a mixture of northern traits and fragments of antiquity, whereas ancient civilization was more nearly unified (SW, V, 9-10).

For Schlegel there are only two great historical epochs in western Europe, the ancient and the modern. The dividing line between the two is indistinct, but modern seems to begin in the middle ages with the first great cultural products of the fusion of Teutonic and Roman-Christian in chivalry. With certain qualifications to be discussed shortly, romantic and modern are equivalent terms and in the Berlin Lectures Schlegel remarks that the romantic has its foundations in the chivalric age:

Die Ältere romantische Poesie schreibt sich aus diesem Zeitraume her, und die spätere ist wahrlich nicht dadurch romantisch, daß sie in die neue Zeit fällt, sondern vielmehr, weil sie sich an die Gesinnung der ritterlichen Zeit anschließt, und ein Nachklang jener mächtigen Naturlaute ist. (Berlin, III, 11-12)

Schlegel sees the Greeks' highest achievement in a refined and ennobled sensuality. After the golden age of Greek art there is a spiritual decadence which is overcome by the Christian religion and by Germanic vigor. The two come together to produce chivalry. The first romantic poetry is in the form of Naturpoesie, the

chivalric mythology.

Schlegel is at pains to maintain that the peculiarly modern has as great a claim to art as does the classic. In the Vienna Lectures he points out that Gothic architecture is a complete and finished system. A cathedral is to a Greek temple as Shakespeare is to Sophocles (SW, V, 11). In the Berlin Lectures he says the romantic is art because it is a unified purposeful whole (Berlin, III, 8). He speaks of a Romantic School of poetry in the south (Berlin, III, 18). Later we will consider how prose was raised by the moderns to the level of romantic art.

Before going on to a more precise characterization of the romantic, it should be noted that not everything modern is romantic. Schlegel's discussion of the subject always includes a defense of the romantic against neo-classicism which would deny that the romantic is art. This modern classicism is usually considered to be empty and artless. In the Vienna Lectures Schlegel divides the whole history of drama into the ancients, their modern imitators and those moderns who pursued an original course (SW, V, 18). The possibility of a genuine neo-classicism is not completely excluded (we should remember his admiration and praise for Hermann und Dorothea) but greater value is placed on the genuinely modern, the romantic. Of course Schlegel recognizes, as he must, that the history of modern literature is largely one of imitation of the

ancients. In the Berlin Lectures he remarks that there is practically no romantic art in Germany until the recent rebirth of feeling for genuine poetry and the contemporary striving for a new style of romantic art (Berlin, III, 20-21).

Schlegel characterizes romantic art above all by contrasting it to classic art. We have already touched on the historical dichotomy ancient-modern. We will now deal with several more such contrasting ideas with the aim of defining the romantic. First, however, a word should be said about Schlegel's originality in these matters. Schlegel himself points out in the Vienna Lectures (SW, V, 10) that others before him sought to define by contrast the difference between ancient and modern. He mentions Rousseau and Hemsterhuis. He should have mentioned Schiller as well, although it should be remembered that in 1794, before Schiller spoke of naiv and sentimentalisch, Friedrich Schlegel was writing of die schöne Poesie and die interessante Poesie, categories which are really the classic and romantic in Friedrich's early formulation of the contrast.¹ In the same year, at a time when Friedrich still held the classic to be the superior form of art, he mentions in a letter to August

¹See A. O. Lovejoy, "The Meaning of 'Romantic' in Early German Romanticism," MLN, XXXI (1916), 385-96, XXXII (1917), 65-77, especially pp. 66-67. Reprinted in his Essays in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948) pp. 183-206.

Wilhelm the latter's plan to write a history of romantic poetry.² The loss of August Wilhelm's letters to Friedrich, however, makes the priority of their thoughts difficult to determine. Unfortunately for August Wilhelm's claim to originality, the thoughts which follow were not included in his 1798 lectures and by the time of the Berlin and Vienna lectures Friedrich had covered much of the same ground, though less thoroughly, in published writings, notably the "Gespräch über die Poesie" (1799).

The most striking of the distinctions between classic and modern is that of plastic and picturesque, a contrast suggested by Hemsterhuis but elaborated at some length by Schlegel. It is touched on in the first series of Berlin Lectures where he discusses rhyme. He suggests that rhyme is essentially romantic and in contrast to the plastic isolation of classic poetic lines. This thought is carried much further in the Vienna Lectures. The spirit of ancient poetry is plastic, that of romantic picturesque. In sculpture our attention is directed to an isolated group, whereas painting presents the surroundings of its main objects. Painting includes minor details and gives a perspective into an unlimited background (SW, VI, 32-33). Contrasting classic and romantic drama, Schlegel observes that the latter does not separate

² Friedrich Schlegels Briefe an seinen Bruder August Wilhelm, ed. Oskar Walzel (Berlin, 1890), p.170.

its action from life but rather embraces all of life. Its objects seem to be accidentally brought together, yet the romantic drama satisfies better the unconscious demands of Phantasie, and it gives a soul to its objects:

[Es befriedigt] die unbewußten Forderungen der Phantasie, vertieft uns in Betrachtungen über die unaussprechliche Bedeutung des durch Anordnung, Nähe und Ferne, Kolorit und Beleuchtung harmonisch gewordenen Scheines, und leiht gleichsam der Aussicht eine Seele. (SW, VI, 163)

We will see that the expressive capabilities of romantic poetry are boundless.

Schlegel also formulates the contrast idealisch-mystisch, whereby he tries to explain the classic drama's closer approach to unity of place and time. In the classic drama space and time are subjected to the activity of the mind. In the romantic they are honored as incomprehensible essences, supernatural powers in which there is something divine (SW, VI, 33).

Schlegel points out a further contrast which is reflected in the Christian element in the modern. The Greeks aspired to the perfection of human powers on this earth. The Christian view is that the paradise of man's highest achievement is forever lost and can only be sought after in this world. It can never be regained by purely human powers. For Christian man, says Schlegel, "die Anschauung des Unendlichen hat das Endliche vernichtet" (SW, V, 16). Christianity leaves man with the melancholy feeling that nothing on this earth can fully

satisfy his desires. Hence Schlegel's observation that the poetry of the ancients was the poetry of enjoyment, while the romantic is the poetry of desire. Of course there are elements of both points of view in all literature but, says Schlegel, the feeling of the moderns is on the whole more inward, their Phantasie more incorporeal and their thoughts more contemplative (SW, V, 16).

Related to this is the fact that the Greeks sought a natural harmonious working of all human powers. The moderns, however, are always conscious of an internal discord between body and mind. Romantic poetry tries to resolve this discord:

Die sinnlichen Eindrücke sollen durch ihr geheimnißvolles Bündniß mit höheren Gefühlen gleichsam geheiligt werden, der Geist hingegen will seine Ahnungen oder unnennbaren Anschauungen vom Unendlichen in der sinnlichen Erscheinung sinnbildlich niederlegen. (SW, V, 17)

This contrast seems to be reflected in the unconscious unity of matter and form in Greek art, whereas romantic art reveals a struggle between the two. The Greeks accomplished their goals with perfection, whereas the romantic strives after the infinite only by approximation. Schlegel says romantic art is in danger of being undervalued because of the resulting appearance of imperfection (SW, V, 17).

Ancient art, says Schlegel, separated things which were not similar. Romantic art delights in mixtures, the more paradoxical the better. All opposites, nature and

art, poetry and prose, seriousness and jest, memory and anticipation, spirituality and sensuality, the earthly and the divine, life and death, are all blended together (SW, VI, 161). A mixture of diverse poetic elements is characteristic of the romantic genres. In the Berlin Lectures where this point is made, Schlegel goes on to say that those who overlook the beauties of romantic art have no sense for chaos, which is, from a higher point of view, the nature of the universe. In a fragmentary note, reminding us of Friedrich Schlegel's progressive Universalpoesie, he remarks that the striving for the infinite in romantic poetry is expressed not only in individual works but also in the whole course of art. Romantic poetry is "Gränzenlose Progressivität" (Berlin, I, 357).

In the Vienna Lectures, too, Schlegel says that ancient art is bound to order, while romantic art loves chaos:

[Die gesamte alte Poesie und Kunst ist] gleichsam ein rhythmischer Nomos, eine harmonische Verkündigung der auf immer festgestellten Gesetzgebung einer schön geordneten und die ewigen Urbilder der Dinge in sich abspiegelnden Welt. Die romantische hingegen ist der Ausdruck des geheimen Zuges zu dem immerfort nach neuen und wundervollen Geburten ringenden Chaos, welches unter der geordneten Schöpfung, ja in ihrem Schooße sich verbirgt (SW, VI, 161)

As a result, ancient art tends to produce perfected works of art, but the romantic comes closer to expressing the secrets of the universe.

We have considered these dichotomies: plastic-

picturesque, ideal-mystic, enjoyment-desire, harmony-discord, unity-struggle to unite, perfection-approximation, distinction-mixture, law-chaos. Considering that the classic and romantic are so profoundly different, it is hardly surprising that the poetic genres for each also differ in a fundamental way. As a preliminary to the study of these genres, we must consider one more dichotomy which leads directly to the subject: poetry-prose.

An important characteristic of romantic literature is its use of prose. Almost without exception, what was written in prose in ancient times was by nature prosaic. The ancients often used verse for prosaic purposes but rarely tried to achieve a poetic end in prose. The beginning of romantic Poesie in prose comes with Boccaccio. The superiority of his prose over that of his predecessors and contemporaries is explained in the Berlin Lectures. There Schlegel contrasts Boccaccio's prose to that of the early French chivalric novels which cannot claim to be poetic representations by means of prose but rather are mere prosaic reports (Berlin, III, 239). Boccaccio was the first whose prose had a style. We recall that for Schlegel this means creation limited by an art principle. He goes on to say that prose before Boccaccio was not a product of a pure art drive. True romantic prose, moreover, is "wahrhaft darstellende und beredte" (Berlin, III, 240). Schlegel also calls it "die neuere Poesie."

The boundaries of the romantic genres are somewhat vague. The lyric appears in some form within all the other genres. By Schlegel's definition, history (in a special sense) is the subject of the novella, but it is also to a degree the subject of the novel and of some plays. Petrarc's collected lyrics are spoken of as a lyric novel (Berlin, III, 204). The romantic drama often uses material suitable for, or even adapted from, the novella. Furthermore, the novel is the central romantic genre, and Schlegel tells us that the whole form of the drama must be judged according to its principles (Berlin, III, 241).

The romantic lyric, like the classic, deals with emotions. But feelings differ in the romantic age, and the lyric reflects man's contemplation of infinity, rhapsodic transformation of life through love, the charm of life's riddles and eternal secrets. It also deals with many more sides of life than did the classic lyric. Friendship, the inclination to Poesie, patriotism, political interests, even divine anger find a place (Berlin, III, 205). To express these things, new poetic means were required. Rhyme has already been mentioned. It involves memory and expectation, and so connects parts of the poem together, at the same time separating the joined parts from other elements in the poem. Rhyme aids in expressing the romantic love of the seemingly paradoxical

but highly meaningful connections of things. New verse forms arise: canzone, ballad, sonnet. Especially in the sonnet are the connecting and dividing functions of rhyme used in the most complex and meaningful way. The romantic lyric types are the subject of long technical discussions by Schlegel.

One of the peculiarities of modern poetry is the fact that it makes use of history as subject matter. According to Schlegel, the novella is the genre which always has as its subject matters from history which, although they are not important enough to get into history books, are nevertheless interesting (Berlin, III, 242). Since its subject material is prosaic reality, its essential form is prose. The writer's model is the social storyteller. Still, the novella rises above nature's model. It can have all sorts of moods, from tragic to trivial, but it must be at home in the real world. The novella's action is quick and to the point, wherein it stands in contrast to the gradual progress and slow changes which take place in the novel.

Schlegel does not speak of romantic tragedy and comedy, but rather of romantic drama (Schauspiel). The main point of difference lies in the ancients' limited purpose and means as contrasted to the moderns' universality and their mixture of poetic means. Shakespeare is the prime example of the mixture of tragic and comic elements

within a single play. In the Jena Lectures Schlegel lists the characteristics of Shakespeare's dramas which are those of the romantic drama in general (1798, pp.217-19). As in the case of the novel, the romantic drama is a mixed genre which combines tragedy and comedy, verse and prose. It utilizes contrasts of matter and form. Romantic drama often presents problems for which there can be no solutions. The characters individually determine their fate. The romantic drama can use themes from history. The techniques and mechanics of the drama are more lax than in ancient tragedy. There is a mixture of styles and verse forms within the drama. It strives for manifoldness and universality. Far from being evidences of artistic degeneration, these qualities in romantic drama are true poetic beauties.

In the Jena Lectures Schlegel remarks that the novel is a collection and mixture of characters brought together without a definite purpose, and he adds that it should have no didactic purpose (1798, p.215). He criticizes the realistic and sentimental novel. In the Berlin Lectures he expresses the opinion that there is nothing worthy of the name in the time between Don Quixote and Wilhelm Meister (Berlin, III, 241). In his praise of the latter work in the Jena Lectures Schlegel indicates what the novel can be. It is prosaic in many respects, but it forms a symphonic whole. The novel contains lyric and

dramatic admixtures. Its prose is poeticized by rhythm and poetic detail. The novel deals with all of life and its smallest detail is meaningful and symbolic. In contrast to the epic, it is subjective (1798, p.216).

In the Berlin Lectures Schlegel remarks that the essence of the novel is the comprehension of the poetic in life. It is a sort of biography (Berlin, III, 204). Commenting on the late Roman prose works, Schlegel says,

Sie sind . . . meistens schlecht oder gar abgeschmackt, statt daß die Neueren Mittel gefunden haben, solchen Compositionen eine Welt von innern Beziehungen zu geben und die feinste Eigenthümlichkeit und gebildetste Übersicht der menschlichen Dinge darin auszusprechen. (Berlin, III, 240)

In general, the novel is the most romantic of the genres, for it embraces all of human life and, in doing so, all the paradoxes, dichotomies and approaches to the world's intimate mysteries which are all characteristic of romantische Poesie. Schlegel calls the novel the genre which represents the whole of romantic poetry (Berlin, III, 241).

In a discussion of the romantic genres, Dante deserves special mention. Schlegel praises the Divine Comedy as an allegorical representation of the universe (Berlin, III, 193). It is characteristically romantic in its glimpses of infinity and in its universality. The Divine Comedy combines theology, philosophy, mythology and even natural science to achieve its goal. What interests us here, however, is the fact that Schlegel felt there is nothing

in all of literature which is quite comparable to it. The Divine Comedy belongs to no genre and is, as Schlegel calls it, an absolute individuality (Berlin, III, 238). Although he does not develop the thought, it seems that his earlier statement, that what does not belong to a species of organization is monstrous, must be modified in the case of romantic art.

The concluding chapter of this study will go beyond the romantic art considered here, which is essentially that of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Dante, Cervantes, Calderon and Shakespeare. There we will consider scholarly opinion on Schlegel's theories and attempt to characterize the role of the theories in the history of the German Romantic movement.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Scholarly treatment of August Wilhelm Schlegel ranges upward from the extremely critical portrait of a small minded man by Ricarda Huch¹ to extremes of praise by uncritical admirers. The accepted view of Schlegel is, however, more nearly balanced. Schlegel is considered to be a failure as a poet, a genius at translation, a master of the art of literary criticism, and, in both his criticism and his theoretical writings, a man of little originality but of great popularity and moderate influence in his own day. A number of scholarly evaluations of Schlegel's theoretical writings must be viewed here in more detail.

The usual beginning of any discussion of Schlegel is an apology for his shortcomings. Walter Schirmer begins his lectures on Schlegel with the observation, "ihm fehlte die Tiefe und Originalität des Denkens, die Maßlosigkeit des Erlebens und die völlige dichterische Hingabe, die Glück und Fluch seiner romantischen Mitkämpfer waren."² Schirmer goes on to maintain that Schlegel's faults were

¹Die Romantik, 5. Aufl. (Leipzig, 1913), I, 1-11.

²"August Wilhelm Schlegel, Drei Vorträge gehalten an der Universität London, November, 1938," in his Kleine Schriften (Tübingen, 1950), p.153.

what allowed him to play his influential role as romantic theorist and mediator:

Weil er feinstes dichterisches Fühlen besaß ohne die Gabe schöpferischer Aussprache konnte und mußte er das System einer umwälzend neuen Kunstkritik aufstellen, die bis heute europäischer Besitz geblieben ist. Und weil er die kühnen Gedanken und poetischen Träume seiner romantischen Genossen herabebnete und gleichsam klassisch rationalisierte, konnte er ihnen das Ohr der Welt verschaffen.³

Schlegel's sobriety and his lack of creative ability thus, according to Schirmer, suited him for the role of a romantic propagandist. Schirmer sees Schlegel's criticism as the most important means for his making romantic ideas popular. Schlegel's role in history may not be as enviable as that of some of his contemporaries. But, says Schirmer, Schlegel's importance is profound. It lies in his raising romantic criticism above mere speculation, in two ways:

1) Er allein unter den Romantikern entgeht der Gefahr einer in anschauungslose Abstraktion sich verlierenden Kunsttheorie und Ästhetik. Wodurch? Durch die Eingliederung der Theorie in die historische Darstellung 2) Er allein unter den Romantikern entgeht der Gefahr bei dieser Lehre von dem nachfühlenden Erkennen jeglich Wertung über Bord zu werfen, allverstehend aber eben darum directionslos auf dem uferlosen Gebiet der Dichtung umherzutreiben. Wodurch? Durch Gliederung in einen Rahmen, in ein System, wenn man will.⁴

It should be remarked that Schirmer's statements imply

³Schirmer, p.153

⁴Schirmer, p.177.

that the theories are the servants of Schlegel's criticism. To a large extent this is true and we have seen that Schlegel sees the two as inseparable. The connection of criticism and theory is noteworthy in that it lends support to the claim that Schlegel was a popularizer. Criticism has a far wider contemporary audience than do aesthetic systems. On the other hand, if criticism is to carry conviction, it must be supported by a rational foundation, as Schlegel himself maintains.

Emil Staiger has stated more strongly the greater importance of Schlegel's criticism as compared to his theories. Staiger calls Schlegel "ein durchaus unphilosophischer Kopf" and goes on to explain,

er bedient sich der philosophischen Errungenschaften nur, um einen Text zu charakterisieren, unbekümmert darum, ob seine Begriffe wirklich zusammenstimmen oder unvereinbar und verschiedenartigster Herkunft sind. Wer seine Schriften auf ihren philosophischen Wert hin untersucht, wird finden, er habe es mit einem vagen Eklektiker zu tun.⁵

With certain qualifications, Staiger nevertheless feels that Schlegel's rather shaky poetic theorizing was no hindrance to worthwhile and influential criticism.

Another scholar who has dwelled on the importance of Schlegel's criticism is René Wellek. His conclusions have been considered at a number of points in this study. A summary of his views is required here. Wellek, like

⁵ From Staiger's edition of Schlegel's Kritische Schriften (Zürich, 1962), p.24.

Schirmer, considers Schlegel's shortcomings as a romantic poet to be advantages for the romantic critic. In particular, Schlegel's critical virtues are sobriety, concreteness and attention to relevant detail. Since Wellek's subject is criticism rather than theory alone, he is not concerned with Schlegel's writings as a system of poetics. Wellek is more charitable than Staiger inasmuch as he does not describe Schlegel as completely unphilosophical or as a mere eclectic. But the outlook of both Staiger and Wellek is essentially the same: Schlegel's theories need not be examined as a philosophical system but rather only as the substantiation of his literary judgments.

In his criticism of Schlegel Staiger has, it appears, separated criticism and theory and concluded that the latter was done rather poorly. Schirmer and Wellek come closer to agreeing with Schlegel's own dictum that the two endeavors are inseparable. Criticism produces theory and theory substantiates criticism. One important study of Schlegel, however, considers the merits of Schlegel's theoretical system as such. This is Rudolf Haym's Die romantische Schule.⁶

Haym examines Schlegel's early critical works in great detail. He points out Schlegel's dependence on Kant, Schiller and Goethe. Schlegel is portrayed, in his pre-

⁶3. Aufl., ed. Oskar Walzel (Berlin, 1914).

Jena period, as a man of educated taste but with little originality except, perhaps, in his theories of translation. Haym sums up Schlegel's early critical works with the statement, "fürwahr, einen besseren Apostel und Dolmetscher konnte sich der Goethe-Schillersche Klassizismus nicht wünschen!"⁷ Schlegel's turn toward romanticism came only after his acquaintance with Tieck and his closer relationship to Friedrich after 1796. Thereafter Haym sees Schlegel as the practical representative of the romantic point of view:

Den eigentlich praktischen Sinn, den Sinn für Verwaltung und Regierung, für Krieg- und Geschäftsführung, für Verhandlung und Repräsentation hatte unter all den verbündeten doch nur August Wilhelm Schlegel. Er war das organisatorische, das durchaus formale Talent des ganzen Kreises. Wohl fehlte ihm die Erfindsamkeit des Bruders, aber was ihm in dieser Beziehung abging, ersetzte er durch Fleiß, Geschmack und Ordnungssinn.

Schlegel is here portrayed as something of a public relations expert for the Romantics. The means he used were mentioned earlier: essays, reviews, criticism, satire and, above all, his lectures. Schlegel's lectures are discussed by Haym under the heading "Vorlesungen als Mittel der romantischen Propaganda."

The following passage will serve as a summary of Haym's mixed praise and criticism of Schlegel's lectures in Jena and Berlin:

⁷ Haym, p.181.

⁸ Haym, p.762.

Durch [die Vorlesungen] tritt W. Schlegel in diesem letzten Stadium der Entstehungsgeschichte der Romantischen Schule entschieden vor all den übrigen Genossen in den Vordergrund. Sie erst sind es, die uns, ganz anders noch als das schellingsche System und ganz anders als das Gespräch über die Poesie, einen vollen Überblick über Inhalt und Umfang der Bestrebungen der neuen Schule gewähren. Erst hier, bei dem Apostel der Romantik, haben wir die Romantik ganz und als ein Ganzes. In der ersten Linie . . . erscheint er als der Ausführer und Dolmetscher der Gedanken seines Bruders. Zugleich indes als der geschickteste Ordner und Systematiker.⁹

On the one hand we find in Haym a thorough argument that there is very little that is original in Schlegel's poetics. On the other hand, Haym goes beyond the view that Schlegel's theories are subservient to his criticism. Haym speaks of the lectures as a system.

The views of the four scholars discussed above present the main problems in an evaluation of Schlegel's poetic theories. These are: 1) the relative importance of Schlegel's criticism and his theories; 2) the question of Schlegel's originality and its bearing on his claim to be read; 3) Schlegel's position in the Romantic movement.

It should be stressed once more that the union of history, theory and criticism recommended by Schlegel in theory is fulfilled in practice. Neither theory nor criticism is subjugated to the other. It might be argued that the Vienna Lectures are Schlegel's most influential work, but we can hardly call it a purely theoretical work. History, theory and criticism are interdependent aspects

⁹ Haym, p.829.

of the lectures and cannot be wholly separated. Haym himself suggests that this is true of the Berlin Lectures when he says, "Kritik und Polemik [ist] die Seele des Ganzen."¹⁰ And we must remember that two of the three series of lectures delivered in Berlin deal with the history of classic and romantic literature. On the other hand, Schlegel's criticism is based on history and is presented within a theoretical framework. In short, if we speak of a theoretical system by Schlegel, it must be extracted from works whose subjects are broader than theory alone. Both the influence and the intrinsic merit of Schlegel's criticism and his theories must be considered together.

The matter of Schlegel's originality was dealt with in the introduction to this study. It must be admitted that the majority of Schlegel's statements find parallels in the works of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. It was suggested earlier that Schlegel's accomplishment was that of the scholar rather than the philosophical innovator. This is essentially the view of Haym when he calls Schlegel the systematizer of the Romantic school. Schlegel's historical importance lies in his closeness to the literary movement of whose ideas he was the systematizer.

Haym's evaluation of Schlegel is typical of scholarly

¹⁰ Haym, p.830.

opinion on his theories. Schlegel's originality, it is argued, lies not in the content but in the formal qualities of his works. Schlegel's virtues, we recall Haym saying, are industry, taste and a sense of order. The main virtue of his theories is that they are systematic. To this should be added another quality which has been stressed often in this study, his union of history, theory and criticism. Again the accomplishment is not so much a matter of original insight (although this is far from being entirely lacking) as of skillful and, we may say, original organization of relevant facts and theories.

In stressing Schlegel's systematizing role Haym becomes rather extravagant in his praise of Schlegel:

Schlegel überhaupt war der erste der, nach dem Allerhand von halbwahren und wunderlichen, Poesie und Kunst betreffenden Einfällen, wie sein Bruder sie ausstreute, und nach dem einstweilen ganz im allgemeinen gebliebenen Unternehmen Schellings, die Kant-Schillerschen Gedanken in die form des transzendenten Idealismus zu gießen, ein auf diesem Standpunkt sich aufbauendes wirkliches System der Ästhetik vollendete.¹¹

There is a good deal of truth in this statement, especially in its stressing August Wilhelm's organized approach as compared to that of his brother. Nevertheless, Haym's praise must be tempered with a bit of Staiger's skepticism about Schlegel's philosophical talents. Schlegel's theories hardly form a system of aesthetics. Although he draws philosophical support from many sources, he has not con-

¹¹ Haym, p.837.

structed a philosophical system. His theories are proved not by their irrefutable logical coherence but rather by their pragmatic value in explaining literary facts. Again it should be repeated that Schlegel's theories are best characterized by their union with criticism and history.

The relationship of Schlegel to the Romantic movement has been touched on already. Schlegel, it has been suggested, was the circle's systematizer and its popularizer. He was also, as Körner has shown in his Die Botschaft der deutschen Romantik an Europa, the mediator between German Romanticism and the rest of Europe. With some qualifications concerning Schlegel's systematizing, these roles are all characteristic of his theoretical labors. There is, however, some question as to the extent to which Schlegel is really a true representative of romantic poetics.

There are many respects in which Schlegel's literary theories are romantic. His theory and criticism is to a large degree directed toward upholding the artistic claims of modern literature, especially of the romantische Poesie of the early modern period. Schlegel's description of romantic poetry's qualities is typical. These qualities are, furthermore, considered to be properly those of literature after the Renaissance insofar as it is distinctively modern and not inspired by an anachronistic classicism.

Schlegel's definitions of Poesie are essentially

romantic. Poesie is not just literature. It is an intuition and revelation of the nature of things. Poesie reveals in plastic images the truths of transcendental philosophy. It is a natural outgrowth of human nature. Poesie appears in non-aesthetic forms (Naturpoesie) but it is also the highest artistic product of man's self-conscious activity. The expressive capabilities of Poesie are considered to be limitless.

There are many such romantic formulations by Schlegel. There are also a number of deviations from the poetic theories of Schelling, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel. The principal non-romantic tendencies in Schlegel's theories must be noted.

First of all, it should be observed that Schlegel's descriptions of romantische Poesie reflect less personal involvement than do the theoretical statements of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. The concept of romantic poetry remains more a historical and critical one. Romantic poetry is something given by history which the critic must deal with. The concept is not broadened to include all Poesie as, for example, in Friedrich's statement, "Die romantische Dichtart ist die einzige, die mehr als Art und gleichsam die Dichtkunst selbst ist; denn in einem gewissen Sinn ist oder soll alle Poesie romantisch sein."¹²

¹²Rasch, p.39.

At times Schlegel comes close to agreeing with this statement insofar as it is applied to the literature of the future. But his own theoretical statements are usually based on a higher idea of Poesie which embraces both classic and romantic. His theories of romantische Poesie are not, however, a program for the future but rather a basis for judging a literary type found in history. To a far greater extent than for his contemporaries, romantische Poesie for Schlegel means the writings of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Cervantes, Calderon and Shakespeare.

H. A. Korff describes an important aspect of romantic literary theory with the formula "Relativierung des Werkes." By this he means the poet's rising above his works and, as he puts it, the "Erlösung der in dem Gegenstande gleichsam verzauberten Poesie."¹³ The "Relativierung des Werkes" may be an important part of the experience of the romantic poet but not so for August Wilhelm Schlegel, the romantic critic. Korff is, of course, speaking of Friedrich Schlegel's theories of romantic irony. The subject is virtually unmentioned in August Wilhelm's writings. We have seen that his idea of Poesie does go far beyond the naive idea of "poems", that is, specific literary works. For the critic and literary technician, however, works are not "relativiert." Schlegel views works of both classic and romantic

¹³Geist der Goethezeit, 2. unveränderter Nachdruck der 3. durchges. Aufl. (Leipzig, 1959), III, 268.

art not as an artist conscious of the irony of casting a magical Poesie into mere words, but as a critic who must explain the content and form of given verbal structures.

Another departure from romantic poetics is Schlegel's failure to deal with what Korff calls its "Märchenideal" as it was formulated, above all, by Novalis. Korff sees the philosophic justification for the romantic preoccupation with dream and fairy tale in transcendental philosophy. He contrasts Schiller and the romantics in their appropriations of transcendentalism:

Durch Schiller kam in die deutsche Dichtung erst die ethische Aspekt der Transzendentalphilosophie: der gewaltige Kampf von Natur und Geist. Von der größten Entdeckung der Transzendentalphilosophie dagegen, der Unterscheidung der beiden Welten, oder anders gesprochen von der Verwandlung der natürlichen Welt in eine rätselhafte Erscheinungswelt, spürt man in Schillers Dichtung nichts. Von diesem "romantischen" Motive bleibt sie noch völlig unberührt. Die romantische Dichtung entspringt gerade diesem Motive der Transzendentalphilosophie. Ja sie ist nach ihrem letzten Wesen nichts anderes als die dichterische Frucht der neuen Metaphysik.¹⁴

Sometimes Schlegel too speaks of the world as a riddle, but Poesie is its solution, not just a further riddle. It is true that Schlegel speaks of romantic poetry as an approximation toward expressing the infinite. But when he speaks of actual literary works his general statements on the nature of poetry come closer to the ideals of German Classicism. The struggle between Natur and Geist must be resolved. Content and form become one united whole. Tran-

¹⁴ Korff, III, 280.

scendental philosophy, for Schlegel, points not to the chaotic nature of the world so much as to the orderliness of man's experience of it. And this order is revealed, above all, in the highest literary art. Again it seems evident that Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel speak of Poesie as a personal experience, whereas August Wilhelm Schlegel speaks from his characteristic historical-theoretical-critical standpoint. Poesie is not a personal problem of adequately expressing a puzzling world. Rather it is, in most of his statements, something already accomplished: artistic works appearing within a historical framework and there to be evaluated critically within a theoretical system adequate to them.

Another departure from romantic poetics is in Schlegel's refusal to adopt any extreme doctrine of aestheticism. Friedrich Schlegel's famous Athenaeum fragment on romantische Poesie states "[Die romantische Dichtart] allein ist unendlich, wie sie allein frei ist und das als ihr erstes Gesetz anerkennt, daß die Willkür des Dichters kein Gesetz über sich leide."¹⁵ For August Wilhelm Schlegel, however, aestheticism remains more problematical. He follows Kant and Schiller in their freeing art from all external goals. But he does not go far beyond the position that art requires a willful submission to aesthetic laws.

¹⁵Rasch, p.39.

Art, including romantic art, must be beautiful and this implies that it must be meaningful. Art never degenerates into riddles whose meanings are virtually the exclusive property of a completely autonomous poet.

This discussion of Schlegel's romanticism began by pointing out that his point of view is in fact largely romantic. The subsequent qualifications are not intended to deny Schlegel's romantic inclinations. Rather the purpose was to suggest that the critic's theories do not always reach the extremes of those of the poets. Schlegel cannot be called merely the systematizer of views formulated by his more talented contemporaries.

There are romantic elements in Schlegel's theories but they hardly constitute a systematization of romantic aesthetic theory. The word "popularization" suits Schlegel's romantic theorizing somewhat better. His lectures were popular and, in their printed form, widely read, as Körner has demonstrated in some detail in the case of the Vienna Lectures. Insofar as Schlegel's works had a deeper influence, it was not as an aesthetic system. The only writer of major importance who was influenced by Schlegel was Coleridge who borrowed a number of details from the Vienna Lectures.¹⁶ Later theorists pass over Schlegel.

¹⁶In particular, Coleridge adopted Schlegel's contrast of plastic and picturesque, the idea of mechanical and organic form, Schlegel's theories on dramatic unity and the idea of Naturpoesie and the foundation of poetry in basic human nature. In addition, Coleridge borrowed much of Schlegel's

He is not mentioned in most histories of aesthetics. Neglect in such works is, in spite of Haym's argument, not entirely unjust, for Schlegel's works do not constitute the romantic aesthetic system Haym sees in them. It is entirely appropriate that the most recent evaluation of Schlegel's theories, that of Wellek, is in a work entitled A History of Modern Criticism.

Although Schlegel's theories are not a systematic romantic poetics, they are not lacking in coherence. The unifying themes are: 1) the relationship of literature to primordial poetry in its three forms, language, rhythm and myth; 2) the relationship of literature to the theory of language; 3) the relationship of literature to the philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Schelling. In the case of Fichte and Schelling this is done largely through the subject of language, which is both the mediator of consciousness and the medium of Poesie. 4) a number of recurrent related themes: poetry as a higher (potenzierte) mode of expression; the connection of poetry and philosophical speculation; art as a fictional world; the essential nature of the poetic genres; the classical themes of the reconciliation of Natur and Geist and the harmony of

criticism of Greek drama and of Shakespeare. Although Schlegel's influence is clearly demonstrable, Coleridge denied it. See Phelan, Anna Augusta (Helmholz), The Indebtedness of Samuel Taylor Coleridge to August Wilhelm Schlegel (Madison, 1907), especially pp. 355-62 where her conclusions are summarized. See also Wellek, II, 154-59, on Coleridge and Schlegel.

matter and form in art; the attempt to justify the artistic claims of romantic art; 5) finally, and most important, the unity of history, criticism and theory.

The unified approach to literature through history, criticism and theory remains the most important characteristic of Schlegel's writings. As admirable as this approach may be, it would seem that in it lies part of the reason why Schlegel is so little read today. The philosophically inclined reader of Schlegel's lectures will find them lacking in systematic plan and logical execution. The historian will find Schlegel's views antiquated in some respects and, perhaps, too theoretical. Those interested in Schlegel's criticism will be more likely to turn to the shorter works where theory is more in the background. This study, which has sought to clarify Schlegel's theories by extracting them from the history and criticism, should properly end with the hope that the reader will examine the theories in the works in which they appear. Schlegel's poetic theories gain in persuasion by their setting in their original historical and critical context. The major interest in Schlegel will undoubtedly continue to be that of scholars of German Romanticism. Many of the problems he discusses, however, are still with us and his statements on myth, symbolism, organic form, meaning in literature and, in general, the nature of the relationship of the fictional world of poetry to the real world around us are still relevant even when they are not completely satisfying.

Hopefully the recent republication of Schlegel's critical works and the Berlin Lectures¹⁷ (in what professes to be a more popular than scholarly edition) will help Schlegel regain the wider attention he deserves.

¹⁷The edition mentioned here, that of Edgar Lohner, is discussed in the bibliography which follows.

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