

The State as a Family

THE FATE OF FAMILIAL SOVEREIGNTY IN GERMAN ROMANTICISM

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WHETHER OR NOT SOVEREIGNTY RESEMBLES, is founded on, or else opposes itself to paternal authority within the confines of the family has been debated (though not always in those terms) in Western political thought from Plato onward. When the issue arose again in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, there was an added wrinkle to this problematic parallel: if the kind of paternalistic authority the revolution had done away with was somehow of one piece with *les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, then what of the family remained salient in a post-revolutionary age? This article charts the answer, or rather the answers, proposed by the German Romantics, who started out as partisans of the French Revolution but insisted right away that some aspect of the family would have to remain instructive for the polity as a whole.

Aristotle famously maintained that although “the city ought to be one as much as possible,” if “the city is contracted too much” by this oneness, “it will no longer be a city, for that necessarily supposes a multitude.” The city thus had to be a heterogeneous affair; too much homogeneity “reduce[d] the city to a family,” since “a family is one in a greater degree than a city.”¹ Sir Thomas More, however, offers the following description of commerce in Utopia: “This is done freely, without any sort of exchange; for, according to their plenty or scarcity, they supply or are supplied from one another, so that indeed the whole island is, as it were, one family.”² More’s

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¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1261b.

² Thomas More, *Utopia* (Mineola: Dover, 1997), 42.



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Hythlodai thought of the island of Utopia as a family in terms of sustenance and commerce. Similarly, Aristotle did not explicate the difference between family and state in terms of political authority. The “political theology” of medieval kingship, however, turned to the question of power to establish what family and state had in common. The Middle Ages tended to treat the state *as* a family—the king’s authority was a form of paternal authority, and the state his extended family. By that time, the doctrine of the king’s two bodies had, as Ernst Kantorowicz argued, refined itself into the early-modern concept of sovereignty.³ In the course of this transition, dynasticism and sovereignty remained linked: the king’s familial or dynastic life sustained that other body, the sovereign body that outlasted the biological individual. As such, royal authority was in close dialogue with the structures of paternity and patrimony.

In *De la république* (1576), Jean Bodin discussed the “difference between a commonwealth and a family” in terms of sovereignty: “La république est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs familles, et de ce qui leur est commun, avec puissance souveraine,” just as “la famille est un droit gouvernement de plusieurs subjects sous l’obéissance d’un chef de famille.” The state was a family of families, and sovereignty nothing but the authority of the *pater familias* raised to the second power: “la famille et le collège sont la véritable image de la république.”⁴ About a century later, Sir Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings* (written much earlier in the seventeenth century but published posthumously in 1680) made this link explicit. For Filmer the “natural power” of the king derived from the fact that the state was nothing but an enlarged family, and the paternal authority in the family naturally transitioned to the more general father, namely the king. Filmer intended this theory as a defense of the divine right of kings against Parliament and ultimately the people.

Filmer claimed, in a move that would run like a red thread through conservative political philosophy about a century later in the wake of the French Revolution, that the attempts to assign sovereignty to the people, who could in turn choose who ought to govern them, rested on the notion that all human beings are equal and free and enter into the state with some degree of volition. Against this, Filmer pointed out that every human being, insofar as he or she is someone else’s son or daughter, persists always already in a subservient and asymmetrical fealty to another. “I see not . . . how the children of Adam, or any man else, can be free from subjection to their parents.” Filmer claimed that “not only Adam, but the succeeding patriarchs had, by right of fatherhood, royal authority over their children,” this natural and ineluctable “subjection of children being the fountain of all regal authority.”⁵

Thomas Hobbes similarly understood familial “generation” as one of the two ways in which “dominion” may be acquired: children owe loyalty to their parents, since “every man is to promise obedience to him in whose power it is to save or destroy him.” Hobbes went so far in his analogy between sovereign and head of family as to explain that children are under the dominion of either mother or father, but not both, “for no man can obey two masters,” explicitly linking this surprisingly modern gender picture to kings, queens, and royal consorts.⁶ And even Rousseau conceded that “the most ancient of all societies and the only one that is natural is the fam-

³ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

⁴ Jean Bodin, *Les six livres de la République* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 1:2, 45.

⁵ Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 140.

ily.”⁷ However, he was at pains to show that a qualitative leap occurs in the historic transition from this natural and most ancient society to a larger commonwealth. After all, he argued, children escape their father’s sovereignty the moment they can fend for themselves, and the father does likewise with respect to his responsibilities. And he was furious in his indictment of the “fallacy” or “Sophism common among royalist politicians” of likening “Civil government . . . to Domestic government, and the Prince to the father of the family.”⁸

Even though heavily indebted to Rousseau, the Young Turks of German philosophy of the 1790s were ready to risk precisely this kind of “sophism.” The categorical difference between family and state that Rousseau had insisted on was softened or dialecticized by them, though they remained mindful of the kinds of theories that Rousseau had attacked in cleaving the two apart in the first place. The generation of German thinkers who came of age in the shadow of the events unfolding in France, and among them particularly those usually grouped as German Idealists or German Romantics, thus stood in an ambivalent relationship to the question of family and sovereignty. On the one hand, their sympathies ran to the Rousseauist end of the sovereignty debate—they regarded sovereignty as dispersed among the populace and expressible only through communal structures. On the other hand, they regarded the French Revolution as an opportunity to mend what they saw as the diremptive aspects of bourgeois modernity—an atomism, particularism, and egoism that had fractured the polity beyond even the “multitude” emphasized by Aristotle. And this part of their program made their political utopias resemble the *polis* that Aristotle had claimed was not one—the family. They wanted the state to resemble the family in central respects (though those respects, as we shall see, were quite different from the constructions of Hobbes and Filmer), but they did not want to understand that resemblance as a straightforward analogy; and they framed this resemblance as characterized by love rather than power, that is to say, by a feeling that has to be mutual in order to be effective rather than one that can be unidirectional and still remain valid.

Their right-wing French contemporaries meanwhile resurrected the thought of Filmer and others and turned to the supposed analogy (or even identity) of state and family as a central fulcrum in their attack on the legitimacy of the French Revolution. German Romanticism began in a position that may seem similar to the French reaction but was in actuality dramatically different; by the 1830s, however, it would—at least when it came to some of its central protagonists—end up in much the same place. The story of familial sovereignty between the 1790s and 1830s is at once the story of how the family was transformed from the tool of a fundamentally progressive critique of the state and of bourgeois civil society into an essentially reactionary one. This transformation proceeded in subtle shifts of emphasis rather than in all-out reversals or repudiations, partly because the resources the young Romantics drew on for their critique were resources they believed they were recovering from the distant past. Although the political demands of early Romanticism in Germany (explicated, e.g., in “The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism,” a brief document ascribed at different times to Schlegel, Hölderlin, or Hegel)⁹ pointed forward, its pronouncements claimed the vantage of a prelapsarian state. Such intrinsic nostalgia made the central legerdemains of Romanticism easy tools of reaction once the

⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁹ In *Miscellaneous Writings of G. W. F. Hegel* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 110.

past that supposedly required recovery had been moved from the ancient world to the medieval one, from the *polis* to the kingdom.

Of course, the Romantics practiced these familiar politics rather than merely discussing them. In tracing the transformation of the German Romantics' deployment of the family, our story will be bookended by two sets of nuptials four decades apart. The first marked the turn away from the position characteristic of the early Romantics described above and inaugurated a period of much greater comfort with unproblematically postulating the family and the polity as parallels. The second marked the moment when the inherently reactionary drift of this equation was made explicit, and when not just the relationship between the two social configurations but those configurations themselves were submitted to sustained critique and ultimate dismissal: yes, the state is like a family—and so much the worse for both state and family. The first of these weddings was that of Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel, two of the central protagonists of the young Romantic circles that congregated in Jena and Berlin in the waning days of the eighteenth century. The second wedding was that of Johann Caspar Schmidt, called Max Stirner; it was his second marriage and it was altogether different from that of the Schlegels.

SCHLEGEL'S CONSERVATIVE TURN AND THE FAMILY

Friedrich Schlegel's reconceptualization of the relationship between state and family took place during his stay in Cologne, the medieval metropolis that had become something of a backwater as it changed hands from one European power to the other. Schlegel came to Cologne from Paris, where he had studied ancient Sanskrit texts, and where as a result the bases of his thinking had undergone fateful changes. In Jena, in Berlin, and in Dresden, among the Romantics and with Goethe and Schiller nearby, the past that Romanticism concerned itself with had by and large been the classical past. Strangely enough, it was only in Paris that Schlegel's past expanded, as it were: here he discovered not only "the language and the wisdom of the Indians" (the title of his eventual book of Sanskrit studies)¹⁰ but also Gothic architecture as a serious topic of thought rather than an unreflected object of vague nostalgia. He also came into contact with the works of a number of thinkers who would guide the reorientation of his philosophy—above all, the French reactionary Louis de Bonald.¹¹ Schlegel's stay in Paris was brief (less than two years altogether), and the inchoate reorientation of his interests affected his written statements on state and family only during his years in Cologne. However, his most explicit statement of the Paris years was made in action rather than words: Friedrich Schlegel, famous as one of Europe's most notorious advocates of free love, got married.

This was particularly surprising because the woman Friedrich married had been his live-in partner for years. The two had cohabited, amid much initial opprobrium, first in Berlin, then in Jena, and later in Dresden. Born Brendel Mendelssohn, Dorothea Veit was the daughter of the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn and the scion of one of Berlin's most prominent Jewish families. She met Schlegel in July 1797 in the home of Henriette Herz, who was married to one of Kant's students, Markus Herz, and hosted one of Berlin's most intellectually significant salons. At the time, Dorothea was married to a wealthy Jewish merchant ten years her senior, whom she had borne four children. Friedrich and Dorothea quickly fell in love and

¹⁰ Friedrich Schlegel, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier: Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumsfunde* (Berlin: Mohr und Zimmer, 1808).

¹¹ Behler in Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1958–), 11:xxxiii (hereafter cited as Schlegel, KSA).

Dorothea asked Veit for a divorce. Initially, according to their hostess and friend, Veit “did not even want to hear about a separation. Given the outwardly entirely peaceable, even amicable relationship between the marital partners, he had no inkling of the inner dissatisfaction his wife was feeling. I was forced to open his eyes to her inside, and this led him to relent at last.”¹²

This incident reflected not just the changing legal and cultural standards surrounding family but also a change in philosophical thinking about what made and sustained a family.¹³ Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s *Foundations of Natural Right*, which had appeared only a year previously, had refused to separate marriage from love: love automatically and spontaneously created a marriage, and the absence of love automatically dissolved a marriage. Married to a Kantian, but a Romantic to the core, Henriette here confronted the realism characteristic of Enlightenment Berlin (Veit’s sense that there was nothing outwardly wrong with his marriage) with another, far stricter standard of love, which relied on intangibles and interiority. Even though their marriage had seemed successful to him, her “inner dissatisfaction” had, as Fichte claimed, turned Dorothea’s marriage to Veit into a sham. What is more, for the Romantics, the burgeoning love between Dorothea and Friedrich was already a marriage, even at a time when outsiders could see only flirtation.

By December 1798, Dorothea had obtained a rabbinical divorce and moved into her own apartment in Berlin’s Ziegelstraße, across the river Spree from what was then the center of Berlin and only blocks away from Schlegel’s and Schleiermacher’s shared apartment. Henriette Herz reports: “I don’t recall whether Schlegel lived with her there, but he ate at her apartment and was almost always with her. His literary activity at the time was quite significant, and he liked working under her eyes, and her counsel.”¹⁴ Their relationship certainly raised eyebrows—Markus Herz asked his wife to stop seeing her friends, which she refused to do. Schleiermacher too remained utterly loyal, not least because of his own theory of marriage: “At the time it was his conviction that such a marriage [as Dorothea had had with Veit] was a desecration of marriage.”¹⁵ Friedrich and Dorothea remained at the center of the Romantic circles first in Berlin and later in Jena, where they crossed paths with the entire *dramatis personae* of early Romanticism. The couple cohabited publicly together in both cities (including in a house with Friedrich’s brother, August Wilhelm, and his wife in Jena), but did not actually marry until after Dorothea’s conversion to Christianity in Paris in 1804. The wedding took place shortly before the Schlegels’ relocation to Cologne, and it appears to have been a small, almost covert affair. Their mutual friend Schleiermacher, Schlegel’s Berlin roommate who had not only tolerated their cohabitation but defended them against gossip and slander, had broken off contact after a falling out with Friedrich and would not find out about the wedding for years, and even then only through third parties.

The wedding between two people who had shown so little regard for conventional or convenient marriage was something of an about-face, but there was much about this period in their lives that they seemed loath to broadcast too widely. The fact that Friedrich and Dorothea, who had come together in far too public a fashion, now married as a kind of private afterthought seemed to augur a more thorough reconsideration of the philosophical assumptions of their early years, not

¹² Julius Fürst, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben und ihre Erinnerungen* (Berlin: W. Hertz, 1850), 109–10.

¹³ Adrian Daub, *Uncivil Unions: The Metaphysics of Marriage in German Idealism and Jena Romanticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).

¹⁴ Fürst, *Henriette Herz*, 110.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 111. See also Ruth Drucilla Richardson, *The Role of Women in the Life and Thought of the Early Schleiermacher* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 75.

least of all when it came to the philosophy of the family. Cologne, as it turned out, was ideally suited for this reconsideration. The Schlegels arrived in Cologne in May 1804, at the instigation of three young men from the city who had sought out Schlegel at his Montmartre address in Paris in late 1803. The brothers Sulpiz and Melchior Boisserée, scions of a wealthy and strictly Catholic Cologne merchant family, had become mainstays of Cologne's intellectual scene, building up a renowned art collection with the help of their friend Johann Baptist Bertram. It was these three men who, during their stay in Paris, had approached Schlegel about holding lectures, and they seem to have made up much of his audience once he agreed. Before long, Schlegel was persuaded to continue these private lectures in Cologne, a trip that amounted only to a semireturn to Germany, as Cologne was then part of the French Empire. Quiet research and the private lectures were all Schlegel could have expected from the city on the Rhine; a university appointment was out of the question, since the city's university had been dissolved by the French in 1797 (though Friedrich may have had hopes for a post should it be reconstituted).

The Boisserée brothers were particularly interested in medieval and early Renaissance German art, and it was a passion they soon managed to instill in Schlegel as well. Their obsession with the Middle Ages led to what is probably Sulpiz's most lasting legacy: he led the drive to finish the Gothic Cologne Cathedral, which had towered over the city unfinished since the fourteenth century and had remained a dormant construction site since the early sixteenth. In Paris, Sulpiz managed to discover parts of the building's original construction plans, and soon the completion of the edifice became a central project of Romantic politics. The fragmentary cathedral conveniently embodied a German essence supposedly miles apart from all foreign (i.e., French) influences, and it symbolized the German national project in its incompleteness. The demand for the completion of Cologne Cathedral thus managed to combine a nostalgia for the Christian and anti-Enlightenment world of the Middle Ages with a forward-looking demand for German unification and national restoration. While Schlegel's involvement with the brothers' project was limited, it was during his Cologne years that the guiding concepts of the cathedral debate became part of Schlegel's own philosophical program: the Catholic Church, the nation, and restoration.

During this period the Schlegels were in transition—a transition they did not seem eager to involve a wider public in. Both Friedrich and Dorothea anxiously sought to keep the content of his lectures in the salon and off the page—it was only once they converted to Catholicism in 1808 that they began toying with actually publishing the text of the lectures. Unlike the young Schlegel, who had been anything but reluctant to cast a never-ending torrent of writings and fragments into the public sphere, unconcerned if they received a downright toxic reception (as in the case of *Lucinde*), the Cologne Schlegel had become extremely reluctant to allow into print anything that was as yet unformed—which, given his tentative forays into Catholicism, his zig-zag course toward conservatism, and his gradual rapprochement with the Hapsburg monarchy, meant most of his thinking. Only in 1836, seven years after Schlegel's death, was the content of his Cologne lectures published: in an edition by the Cologne professor C. J. H. Windischmann, who drew on the lecture texts themselves, Schlegel's notes, and those of the Boisserée brothers.

These lectures found Schlegel oscillating between a kind of humanism, in which "humanity" held the place of what the pantheistic young Schlegel had called the "absolute," and a nascent fideism, in which said place was held by God and the Catholic Church. The transition in Schlegel's thinking about marriage and the family *post festum* has received much less notice than this more general realignment. Regarding Schlegel's metaphysics of the family, his actual mar-

riage does not, in fact, seem to have provided the most seminal experience of his Paris years. Instead, French counterrevolutionary thought, which he seems to have encountered in Paris for the first time, influenced the new direction that his theory of love and the family took upon his arrival in Cologne.

THE FRENCH REACTION AND THE “SENSE OF FAMILY”

Schlegel’s Paris nuptials coincided with a wholesale political renaissance of marriage and the family among revolutionary France’s sworn enemies. The paladins of the French reaction, Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, as well as their confederates across Europe, began using the family as a battering ram against what they perceived to be the excesses of the French Revolution. As the Revolution degenerated into first terror, then dictatorship and empire, even the Revolution’s erstwhile cheerleaders outside France were listening ever more intently. Of course, Schlegel and his friends had been among its most vociferous cheerleaders in Germany: Schlegel had declared the French Revolution one of the “three great tendencies of the age;”¹⁶ his teacher Fichte had first attracted notice with staunchly prorevolutionary pamphlets; and Schlegel’s friends Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel had gotten in trouble at the Tübingen Stift for a somewhat fuzzy incident involving the public singing of the “Marseillaise.” As events in France slowly tempered their initial enthusiasm, they sought to chart a course that would avoid the pitfalls of the Revolution while holding on to its ideals. It was in this context that they themselves came to deploy the family in ways surprisingly reminiscent of Maistre, Bonald, and the pan-European reaction.

What makes this French philosopheme so interesting is the fact that the German Romantics, even at their most youthful and Jacobin, essentially agreed that the Enlightenment had destroyed, as the Romantic poet Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) put it, the “sense of family” (*Familiensinn*),¹⁷ and that correcting the Revolution’s mistakes would involve restoring such a sense of family to the state. However, the Romantics thought of this restoration as a readjustment, righting a one-sidedness that threatened to doom the revolutionary project; they did not think that the restoration of the family amounted to a wholesale repudiation of the French Revolution. It was therefore inevitable that while they would echo much that was thought about the family among the counterrevolutionaries, they had to prevent their philosophies of the family from lapsing into simple nostalgic calls for return to a prerevolutionary order. Family had to be reemphasized, but it had to be reemphasized in ways markedly different from the familial philosophies of the ancien régime and its contemporary propagandists. Given this double task, it is worthwhile to first examine what reactionary thought about the family looked like around 1800.

This means looking first of all at Joseph de Maistre. Where the Romantics’ conception of the family thrived on the opportunity Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel had had—the possibility of rupturing all previous family ties as illegitimate and coming together in a new, autonomously chosen union—the “experiential content”¹⁸ of Maistre’s thinking about the family was altogether different. Maistre was a senator in the Duchy of Savoy, an outspoken opponent of the French Revolution, and part of a family recently ennobled by the king of Piedmont-Sardinia. The French invasion not only forced him into a long exile but scattered the extended Maistre family all across Europe. Whereas the Romantics, at least in their youth, connected the French Revolu-

¹⁶ See Paul Kluckhohn, *Die deutsche Romantik* (Leipzig: Velhagen und Klasing, 1924), 27.

¹⁷ Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), *Novalis Schriften: Historisch kritische Ausgabe*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), 2:257 (hereafter cited as Novalis, HKA).

¹⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Three Studies on Hegel* (Boston: MIT Press, 1993), 53.

tion to the possibility of forsaking the strictures of a fated match for the freely chosen bonds of true love, Maistre bitterly joked that the French Revolution had blown apart the “one and indivisible Republic” he recognized—his family.¹⁹ For the Romantics, the French Revolution, for all its excesses, represented the possibility of a genuine family divorced from the irrational power structures of the past; for Maistre, the Revolution automatically corroded organically grown family structures.

Unfortunately, while his letters and diaries return to the subject again and again, in his published writings, Maistre had relatively little to say about the family. Still, when Maistre did mention the family, it fulfilled an absolutely central role in his texts; and further, the German Romantics appear to have read family, love, and sexuality into Maistre. Maistre’s reception in Germany seems to have proceeded apace with that of Louis de Bonald. Romantic thinkers like Baader, Haller, and Schlegel rarely mentioned one thinker without the other. And unlike Maistre, Bonald had provided a very detailed theory of the family in his *Du divorce* of 1801, a work very much in line with Maistre’s thinking. Reconstructing Maistre’s and Bonald’s view of the family makes immediately clear that familial generativity and temporal sovereignty were aligned in much the same way in Maistre’s work as they were in several of the theories of what is today called early Romanticism (*Frühromantik*); however, this alignment functioned quite differently on the German side than it did on the French.

As we have seen, in philosophical accounts the link between the family and the state as somehow analogous goes back to at least Aristotle; and the recourse to familial relationships as a model for the organization of a state was a central facet of philosophical justifications of absolutism. But by the turn of the eighteenth century, the straightforward paternalism of Sir Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha* (1680), which had claimed that the relationship between king and subject was like that between father and offspring, was no longer viable. Maistre himself made this clear in *De la souveraineté du peuple*, although he resurrected this parallelism with an interesting new twist: “But to say that sovereignty does not come from God because he uses men to establish it, is to say that he is not man’s creator because we all have a father and a mother.”²⁰ Fatherhood and royalty were not the same thing, except that they structurally resembled one another with respect to Divine Providence. An individual father produces offspring, but the final cause of that offspring is Divine Providence operating through the father; likewise, an earthly authority makes laws and constitutions, but that authority derives from Divine Providence as mediated through the earthly sovereign.

It seems that Maistre stopped short of Filmer’s emphatic parallelism and offered the parallel provenance of man-made legislation and biological offspring simply as a convenient metaphor. Others, however, made that link much more explicit. In 1801, Louis de Bonald, alongside Maistre the most important theorist of the French reaction, wrote *Du divorce*.²¹ In his book, Bonald undertook to critique what he regarded as the deleterious effects of Enlightenment atomism and

¹⁹ Jean-Louis Darcel, “The Roads of Exile, 1792–1817,” in *Joseph de Maistre’s Life, Thought and Influence: Selected Studies*, ed. Richard Lebrun (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 17.

²⁰ Joseph de Maistre, “On the Sovereignty of the People,” in *Against Rousseau: “On the State of Nature” and “On the Sovereignty of the People,”* trans. Richard A. Lebrun (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 46.

²¹ While W. Jay Reedy has most recently warned against overidentifying the thought of Bonald with that of Maistre, their social philosophies seem to overlap to a greater extent than some of the other aspects of their respective oeuvres. See W. Jay Reedy, “Maistre’s Twin? Louis de Bonald,” in Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre’s Life, Thought, and Influence*. What is more, the two thinkers were insistently paired up and even equated in the writings of the German Romantics, although usually to Bonald’s detriment—they seem to have regarded Bonald as essentially Maistre’s stooge.

rationalism on human sociality, singling out Rousseau's philosophy of sexuality. Unlike Maistre's broadsides against Rousseau, which tended to focus on the idea of a social contract, Bonald was concerned in particular with the relationship that furnishes Maistre's metaphor—that between parents and their offspring.

Bonald took as his point of departure the claim that children are somehow missing from Rousseau's account of the sexual relationship. Given that Rousseau devoted an entire book, *Émile*, to *l'éducation* and is generally credited as the inventor of modern notions of childhood, this charge may seem absurd. But Bonald's charge was not that Rousseau neglects children and their role in the family; instead, he claimed that in posing the very question of the sexual relationship between man and woman, Rousseau missed the point of family life ("domestic society," as Bonald called it) altogether. "Fathers and mothers [are] considered by philosophy as males and females,"²² a move that both unduly biologized what was in actual fact a spiritual relation (opposed to mere biology) and neglected the inherent relationality of human life—in speaking of "males" and "females," philosophy thought, to purloin Hegel's terminology of the same period, "abstractly."²³ Only the family made men and women, and it made them men and women as fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. No one "enters" the "domestic society" of the family, just as no one enters society at large through a "social contract"—being human means being always already embedded in both kinds of society.

This abstraction also entailed a de-ethicized view of the family, as Bonald made clear with respect to nursing habits. Rousseau's emphasis on a state of nature, Bonald claimed, had led mothers to nurse children themselves, as though both mother and child were wild animals. Under the influence of what Bonald regarded as Rousseau's materialism, biological education took the place of spiritual education that, if properly undertaken, would have actually served to divest the relationship between mother and child of its biological component. In Rousseau, in other words, education in accordance with nature leads to ethical education, whereas Bonald claimed that ethical education consisted in canceling out the barbarizing effects of nature. The central point in Bonald's account, however, was that part of this civilizing mission of good parenting was an insistence on hierarchies—for him, the family that raised its children according to the precepts of Rousseau's philosophical anthropology essentially would regress into something like an egalitarian pack of animals.

It seems to have been among the articles of faith of the anti-Rousseauist reaction in both France and Germany that a perverted way of looking theoretically at the family automatically entailed mistreating the family in practical terms. Not only did the Enlightenment think of the family as a disaggregated unit of particulars, but it also necessarily had to live according to this idea. One of Maistre's and Bonald's German confederates, Johann August Freiherr von Starck (1741–1816), made explicit that for the European reactionaries the dissolution of the family was causally connected to the French Revolution. In his book *The Triumph of Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (*Der Triumph der Philosophie im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, 1804), a gossipy, cantankerous, scatter-shot, and frequently ad hominem stocktaking of what the author considered the disastrous influence of Enlightenment philosophy on the eighteenth century, Starck understood the spread of revolutionary ideas as identical with a dissolution of the family.²⁴ Starck was close to being a con-

²² Louis de Bonald, *On Divorce*, trans. Nicholas Davidson (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1992), 21.

²³ G. W. F. Hegel, "Wer denkt abstrakt?" in *Werke* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), 2:575–81.

²⁴ Although Starck's *Triumph der Philosophie* was published after many of Maistre's and Bonald's central texts on revolution and Enlightenment, it drew on a number of his earlier texts and ideas, not least those expressed in his short-

spiracy theorist, trying to discover what had possessed the crowned heads of Europe to bring to their courts the *philosophes* and propagandists of the Enlightenment, “who, as the worst enemies of the state and [the king’s] own person, should have been banished far away.”²⁵

Starck identified women of high birth among the main culprits: “Voltaire’s conspiratorial project” was “pushed above all on women,” who soon began “to fornicate intellectually with philosophism” (*mit dem Philosophismus Geistesunzucht zu treiben*).²⁶ It was precisely the lack of family cohesion that allowed the philosophers to infiltrate the royal courts: Starck remarks that “the lack of faith and the convenient moral theory preached by the philosophers were all too well suited to the tendency to complete independence so prevalent among our higher classes.”²⁷ Social cohesion was a bourgeois experience; the aristocrats of the eighteenth century lived atomized lives, which made them accept atomistic social theories that would have struck the other estates as absurd. And, to hear Starck tell the story, it was not so much the wives of great leaders, kings, and noblemen who fell under philosophism’s spell: since the philosophers “knew the character of the nation, in which the so-called fair sex could accomplish much,” they tried to reach the great men “through their mistresses.”²⁸ Revolution and the dissolution of the family thus went hand in hand—had the European aristocracy cohabited in accordance with bourgeois morality, the catastrophe of revolution might have been averted.

Similarly, the emphasis on hierarchy betrays the fact that Bonald’s critique of Rousseau’s theory of sexuality was intended as a critique of the French Revolution. Once the bonds of the family were severed by the cold, abstracting materialism of the Enlightenment, Bonald argued, “political society was shaken to its very foundations.”²⁹ What allowed him to claim such direct repercussions from “domestic society” to “public society” is the premise that both forms of society are essentially parallel, especially because the family’s relations (and by that he means relations of sovereignty) directly mirror those of the state. Father, mother, child, once stripped of their entanglements with human creatureliness, turned into “power, minister, subject.”³⁰ For Bonald, the family, when properly divested of animality, looked a lot like a state; and the state was, after all, nothing but “a human power, ministers, and subjects who are not fathers, mothers, or children in terms of physical relationship but who . . . present an end similar to that of the family.”³¹

While Maistre did not focus on the question of divorce, his *De la souveraineté du peuple* promulgated a rather similar critique of Rousseau and turned to the family as the central refutation of Enlightenment social philosophy. Just like Bonald, Maistre argued that Rousseau’s notion of a social contract was subtended by a stark social atomism, in which there existed a presocial man, naturally good but perverted by his entrance into society. Maistre, on the other hand, insisted on the always already social nature of human beings, to the point that an extrasocial human being is not really human at all. Human beings are always already inserted into social

lived periodical *Eudämonia, oder Deutsches Volksglück* (1795–98), which pioneered the conspiracy narrative Starck would pursue throughout *Triumph*.

²⁵ Johann August Freiherr von Starck, *Der Triumph der Philosophie im Achtzehnten Jahrhunderte, Erster Theil* (Germantown: Rosenblatt, 1804), 221.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 232.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁹ Bonald, *On Divorce*, 22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

arrangements, even if those arrangements remain as yet “embryonic.” The first and most rudimentary stage of such human embeddedness is the family, an ineluctable horizon of interpersonal dependence and communal life.

More importantly, the family constituted the hinge between the providential sphere of human essence and the political sphere. The Enlightenment’s atomistic view of the origins of society not only was mistaken on epistemological grounds but also misunderstood the role of Divine Providence in human affairs. For it was not just nature that made human beings necessarily social—instead, it was God’s promise that “the earth as a whole is intended for man’s habitation” that gave rise to the need for the “multiplication of man” in procreation. The sociality of the family is divinely decreed, and it institutes the sphere in which sociality takes more or less elective forms. If Enlightenment atomism were correct, Maistre asserted, then sovereignty would be nothing but a human convention, something the individual bought into when “entering” society. If we were to “imagine an isolated man there is no question of laws or government, since he is not a whole man and society does not yet exist.” If we extended the thought experiment and “put this man into contact with his fellowmen: from this moment you suppose a sovereign.”³²

This initial “contact” is, of course, nothing other than the family: “The first man was king of his children; each isolated family was governed in the same way.”³³ The family represented the irreducible hold of sovereignty over human beings, a sovereignty that is ultimately underwritten by God. To abstract from this irreducible sovereignty and place the desocialized individual on a pedestal was the same as to deny a providential element in the human polity. And to treat human beings as abstract individuals, that is, democratically, was nothing other than to reduce them to something less than human—Bonald’s pack of feral beasts. To return to Bonald, what was ultimately at stake in his critique of the reform in family structures in the wake of the French Revolution was nothing other than (a) the organic constitution of the state and (b) the very analogy between the family and the state that provides *le fin* of both: the preservation of human beings, either as family units (the purpose of the state) or as individuals (the purpose of the family). These two “ends” overlapped in the figure of the child—the individual child of the marriage and the subject-child of the sovereign. Divorce one, and you divorce the other.

Maistre’s and Bonald’s theory of the familial polity found its definitive echo in the German-speaking world in the work of the Swiss jurist and political theorist Karl Ludwig von Haller (1768–1854). Haller was a militant enemy of the French Revolution (to the point of being forced to leave his homeland when France invaded Switzerland) and a staunch defender of sovereign royal power, from the Hapsburg emperor to the Bourbon monarchy. While a prolific political commentator and essayist, then as now Haller was mostly identified with a single monumental work, *The Restoration of the Science of the State* (*Restauration der Staats-Wissenschaft*), which became so influential that it gave an entire period its name. Haller wrote the work over an eighteen-year period, from 1816 to 1834, and it became one of the dominant theoretical works of the so-called restoration period after the Congress of Vienna.

Haller’s program is encapsulated in the title of his *chef d’oeuvre*: *The Restoration of the Science of the State, or the Theory of the Natural Social State as Opposed to the Chimera of the Artificial-Bourgeois One*.³⁴ As laborious as the work’s title is, its five volumes in essence sought to simply vin-

³² Maistre, “On the Sovereignty of the People,” 53.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Carl Ludwig von Haller, *Restauration der Staats-Wissenschaft; oder, Theorie des natürlich-geselligen Zustandes, der Chimäre des künstlich-bürgerlichen Entgegengesetzt* (Winterthur: Steinerische Buchhandlung, 1820).

dicating the claim contained in it: “artificial-bourgeois theories,” by which Haller meant largely the Enlightenment’s natural law and Rousseauist social theories, had degraded the traditional social fabric and brought about the French Revolution. Such theories, Haller argued, were invariably founded on a distinction between a state of nature and a state of culture and on a transition from one to the other by means of a social contract or other implicit conventional subscription. Like Maistre and Bonald, Haller insisted instead that human beings continued to live in the state of nature even when they lived in larger communities or states, that society grew naturally out of social instincts present among the savages untouched by culture.³⁵ From this reappraisal, an organic, rather than “artificial,” theory of the state could be generated, by which the traditional state could be “restored” from its twin debasements by Enlightenment and revolution.

Haller’s project coincides with that of the French reaction not just in its general outlines but even down to the details. He followed Maistre and Bonald in rejecting the social contract and in claiming that the theories of the state of nature of the Enlightenment depended on atomized individuals and the disruption of organically grown social structures. Most importantly, however, he turned to the family as the paradigmatic organic structure and insisted that the individual’s a priori insertion into a family indicated that relations of domination were inevitably part of any human polity. However, going beyond Maistre and Bonald, Haller thought that the fact that human beings were born into families proved even more, in particular something that neither Maistre nor Bonald had seized on: since all human organization represented nothing other than outward ripples of families, each human polity, like the family, had an inside and an outside. In this respect Haller was closer to Friedrich Schlegel than to the French reaction.

Rousseau, and the Enlightenment generally, Haller charged, assumed “against all natural observation an impossible independence of *all* human beings.”³⁶ Haller instead insisted on an a priori dependence of human beings, ties that bind any human being no matter how savage and ties that necessarily structure social life hierarchically. What prestructures the human being’s place in the world that he is born into? Just as for Maistre and Bonald, it appears to be power: another’s power over the individual or the individual’s power over another. To some “he is master or fellow master; to others he is servant; to others yet, neither.”³⁷

The bedrock of this irreducible interdependence turned out to be much the same for Haller as it was for Maistre and Bonald. As one pushed universal dependence back in time toward that elusive point “before” the social contract, that interdependence assumed more and more familial features. Haller’s examples came overwhelmingly from the sphere of family and reproduction. “Every human being is from childhood a subject,” he claimed. “Even before birth every child is imprisoned in its mother’s womb for nine months.” Once it successfully escapes, “it has two overlords already, neither of which it has made or endowed, and many subaltern commanders.”³⁸ Even once it outgrows the interdependence of the household, the individual is likely to be drafted into new corporations, associations, and communities—to say nothing of that renewed interdependence entailed by starting a new family: “Should love lead him to marriage, he will be forced to relent often; a thousand new snares bind him.”³⁹ “Family” was thus the name for the

³⁵ Charles Philippe Dijon de Monteton, *Die Entzauberung des Gesellschaftsvertrags* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006).

³⁶ Haller, *Restauration der Staats-Wissenschaft*, 338.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 343.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 339n.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 340n.

universal servitude of human beings, for the fact that they are never as free as Rousseau's natural man. All that human beings manage to do as they age is to precipitate regime changes, shifting from one sort of servitude to another: "In short, man is born into utter dependency, becomes freer with time, changes the nature of his bondage [*wechselt die Bande*], runs through all manner of social situations, patriarchal, military, ecclesiastical authorities, societies or republics, with or without representation."⁴⁰ Even the sovereign, who at first appears beholden to no one, is dependent on the grace of the divine father above.

Ironically, Haller's critique of Rousseau seems to draw on a thinker who, much more so than Rousseau, embodied the *Staats-Wissenschaft* of the Enlightenment Haller so adamantly opposed. In the early eighteenth century the philosopher Samuel Pufendorf had argued against Hobbes that, since human beings were already immersed in a familial or communal context, it "makes no sense to say that, without the social state, human beings in the beginning of things would have been enemies with one another." Haller turned this against Rousseau by claiming that such familial contexts commit human beings not to equality but to original inequality. Pufendorf had suggested that there was "a state of nature, which, once human beings multiplied, could no longer contain them in one society."⁴¹ This meant that the state of nature had consisted, not of "nasty, solitary, brutish" individuals roaming the jungle, but rather of an all-encompassing family that had grown and fractured into opposing families rather than individuals. Similarly, Haller opined that such a fracturing is inevitable and irreversible as the human race grows: "It is entirely impossible that all human beings live in a community [*Gesellschaft*] with all others; just as impossible that they live outside such a community with any others."⁴²

Although connected by the figure of Madame de Staël, who had hosted Maistre during his flight from the French and Bonald later in life and who would meet the Schlegel brothers during her German travels, it is not quite clear whether or not the protagonists of early Romanticism were aware of the French reaction. Even if they had not read Maistre's early writings, they would most likely have been aware of the existence of positions like his (especially since they drew on much earlier positions such as Filmer's). Maistre, Bonald, and Haller remain significant for the Romantics because they founded the correspondence between family and state on the premise that patriarchal power was like state power. This notion, born of the experience of the upheavals of the revolutionary period, was something the young German thinkers, drawing on a very different view of the Revolution and the changes it had wrought, sought to avoid. Bonald and Maistre identified a central feature in analogistic thinking about family and state that haunted Romantic thought about the family at least during its first decade. Setting up a straightforward analogy, as Bonald did, between *société domestique* and *société publique* meant casting the domestic unit's children in direct correspondence to the subjects of a sovereign.

The Romantics' relationship to this analogy is complicated by the fact that, even at their most Jacobin, they would have wholeheartedly granted Bonald's point that there was something reductive and overly abstract in the Enlightenment's treatment of family (and, by extension, social) cohesion. German Romantic theories of family, love, and marriage attempted precisely to forestall a picture of sexuality that breaks down into atomized units that precede their relation to one another. Thinkers like Novalis looked for ways of using the family to critique not just famil-

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Samuel Pufendorf, *De Iure Naturae et Gentium Libro Octo* (Frankfurt: Friedrich Knoche, 1716), 161: "Status autem naturalis inde emersit, quod multiplicati homines una societate non amplius continerentur."

⁴² Haller, *Restauration der Staats-Wissenschaft*, 343.

ial but also social atomism more widely by analogizing family and society *without* subscribing to the corresponding analogy of child and royal subject. How, in other words, to follow the first part of Bonald's critique without slipping into the second part? Or, somewhat schematically, how to critique the social effects of Enlightenment without sacrificing the French Revolution?

As we shall see, it was this problem that occasions the semiotic turn in Novalis's marital philosophy: Novalis wanted to draw on an analogy between family and state, *macroanthropos* and *anthropos*, but he was leery of letting such analogies ground relationships of dominance characteristic of the absolutist state. In other words, Novalis seemed quite aware that the language of the family had usually been introduced into theories of the state to justify a paternalistic regime. To forestall this possibility, he introduced semiotic relationships that disperse sovereignty as a straightforward analogy of the power of the pater familias and of the absolute monarch. Averting this possibility dominated Novalis's reflections on loving couples and their kingdoms in his fairy tales, which work through an increasingly dizzying calculus aimed at upsetting traditional structures of dominance, opting for confusion rather than hierarchization. Just as love represented a chaotic indistinction of the lovers, the state that love builds was based on semiotic relationships irreducible to simple unilateral assertions of power.

“FAITH AND LOVE”—EARLY ROMANTICISM AND THE FAMILY

When considering the role of love and family in the philosophy of Friedrich Schlegel, few would turn to his Cologne lectures as their *pièce de résistance*, let alone the writings and lectures that appeared still later. Love, marriage, and family, the conventional wisdom goes, were topics of Schlegel's early philosophy, the philosophy he began to turn away from rather dramatically upon his arrival in Cologne. And indeed, Schlegel's early work was infamously preoccupied with questions of love and family. His first novel, *Lucinde* (1799), was written while he cohabited with Dorothea, who had only just divorced her husband. Not for nothing was the novel widely considered to be simply a retelling of their illicit romance. But even in his copious fragmentary writings of the time, published in the journal *Athenäum*, which he edited with his brother, August Wilhelm, erotic matters were a consistent, often-unifying presence.

In his later philosophy Schlegel is usually taken to have abandoned this focus on sex, love, and family and to have turned to a new set of concerns that had been absent in his early work: those embodied in the Boisserée brothers' concern for the Cologne Cathedral—nation, church, life, and revelation. As my discussion has already indicated, this view is by and large correct; however, the precipitous influx of new concepts should not obscure the fact that love and family remained part of Schlegel's philosophy alongside these new additions. And while love and family no longer had the centrality accorded them in Schlegel's writings of the 1790s, they were nevertheless important to his philosophy well into maturity. Their systematic context had fundamentally changed, but more importantly so had the views of love and family themselves: instead of seeking to preserve the critique of the Enlightenment without subscribing to the family politics of the French reaction, his views largely dovetailed with reactionary thought.

Whereas the Cologne lectures emerged from a period of newfound doubt and reticence when it came to disseminating his ideas, the young Schlegel had known few such qualms. *Lucinde* was thrust into the public alongside a torrent of texts written or edited by Schlegel, including large notebooks, many of which, while consisting mostly of fragments, were published even before Schlegel reached Cologne. The novel's theory of love and the family thus was in dialogue with the huge masses of fragments, essays, and poems produced by its author, to say noth-

ing of the many fragments published by the author's friends (often without attribution) in the collaborative projects of what Schlegel had termed Romantic "symphilosophy." Given their refusal to draw firm lines between poesy and philosophy, it is perhaps not surprising that this novel has a fairly sustained theory of the family; in fact, some parts of it read much more like a theory than a novel. While some of *Lucinde's* plot seems to borrow from the tropes of the *Bildungsroman*, the novel "does not present just an individual but, as much as possible, a family; the communal religion of this family is poetry."⁴³

In its fragmentary vignettes, *Lucinde* elaborates perhaps the most sustained theory of love and family in early German Romanticism. At its most basic, Schlegel's text presents a very unconventional conjugation of a particular concept of "family," which for Schlegel seems to have meant a pair of lovers. To be sure, that philosophy of marriage was not very much concerned with the actual transactions of family life or with the married partners' position within the wider society, though that omission was deliberate. For Schlegel, love returns human beings to a state before the wanton imposition of dichotomies by confusing to the point of indistinction the particulars until the world of objects and concepts is transcended. Society, conventional morality, and the state are precisely such particular and imposed objects and concepts that true love dissolves into a primordial confusion Schlegel calls "chaos."

Lucinde is both a political and an apolitical marriage novel. It resolutely refuses to connect the family to the wider *polis*, and this refusal is to be understood as an indictment of the *polis*, its categories, and its modes of operation. There is an unbridgeable gap between the "true" family and society as a whole, or at least society as it presents itself in modernity. Just like the French reactionaries, Schlegel wanted to "restore" a kind of organic unity that Enlightenment atomism had rent asunder; but Schlegel traced this organic unity to the concept of the couple rather than to Bonald's, Maistre's, and Haller's family. The difference is clear: Schlegel understood human beings as always already embedded in a couple—that is to say, in an elective, bilateral, and horizontal love relation. He sidelined those aspects that would serve to preintegrate the individual into diachronic relations of dominance—paternity, dynasticity, and tradition.

Just as Schlegel's marriage to Dorothea had disrupted traditional familial diachronicity in favor of the autonomous synchronicity of what Goethe would eventually dub the "elective affinity" of two lovers, so *Lucinde's* marriage theory celebrates only the family's synchronic powers of integration. Just as in Aristophanes's famous story in Plato's *Symposium*, the unification of the couple is simply the re-creation of an antecedent greater whole: the lovers can be unified in love because they "really" were always already one. But this oneness precedes them only metaphysically; its antecedence cannot found any claims of sovereignty. Nor can that oneness ground claims of sovereignty over its offspring: the couple's child expresses their love in its totality only insofar as it is androgynous and, in Schlegel's telling terminology, "undetermined" and "innocent." If their offspring were to be their "subject" (as Haller would have it), it would no longer be their child. The totality of the family into which one is inserted according to Bonald, Maistre, and Haller compels the individual to act a certain way. For Schlegel that totality (of the couple) has no such power. Instead, the totality is simply identical with our inclinations: the couple's totality is the reason for, or is identical with, their attraction to each other.

While this focus on the couple of Schlegel's novel might seem to be owed simply to the myopia of youth, one of Schlegel's collaborators presented a much more elaborate philosophy of the family around the same time, a philosophy that both agreed with Schlegel on the central

⁴³ Schlegel, *Fragmente zur Poesie und Literatur*, in KSA, 16:233 (8:30).

points and managed to push the significance of the family into much more overtly political territory. Novalis shared Schlegel's aversion to large families with clear and natural hierarchical structures and thus similarly tended to condense the family into the loving couple. But in his novelistic and political output of the last years of the eighteenth century, the poet managed to expand the apotheosis of the couple into the organization of a polity—a state organized by coupledom, familial without being hierarchical, complexly structured but thoroughly unnatural and even antinatural. In short, this was a state in every way the opposite of the world of natural hierarchy and paternal authority that Maistre and Bonald had spoken of—and certainly anything but the all-engulfing family of Haller's "patrimonial state."

Novalis was the pen name chosen by Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772–1801), who was the scion of a prominent noble family and had met the Schlegel brothers (as well as Fichte, Goethe, and Schiller) during the last years of his university studies in Jena. After Jena, Novalis worked in a number of administrative positions in the provinces, where under the impression of Jena's intellectual effervescence, he produced some of the definitive texts of early German Romanticism, as well as a staggering corpus of notebooks and fragment collections. However, Novalis lived to see only very few of these works published, as he died from tuberculosis in 1801 at the age of twenty-eight. One of the central strands running through his diverse oeuvre was an abiding fascination with the interrelation and interaction between the intimate and the political, which Novalis elaborates in his two fragmentary novels, his poetry, but above all in his collections of fragments and aphorisms. Although much of his thought on natural science, critical philosophy, and art was published only after his death (and even then only in bowdlerized and truncated form), Novalis's political oeuvre was at least partly available during the poet's lifetime. In 1798 he published a set of aphorisms entitled *Faith and Love (Glauben und Liebe)* and wrote *Political Aphorisms (Politische Aphorismen)* shortly thereafter, which, alongside the famous essay *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, was published only after his death. *Faith and Love* presents a political theory of the family that is clearly inspired by Schlegel's "symphilosophy" and in dialogue with the familial philosophy of the European reaction.

Faith and Love was written in early 1798 and published in July of the same year, at a time when Novalis was struggling to elaborate his own philosophy both out of and against Fichte's metaphysics and political philosophy. It attempts to describe a polity based not on the constraint of the selfish individual (as theories in the natural law tradition would) but rather on the outward ripples of voluntary self-limitation. In this attempt, Novalis drew from Fichte a number of philosophemes that would become characteristic of the philosophy of nascent Romanticism—and that resembled the social philosophy of the Enlightenment even less than that of Maistre and Bonald did. Novalis insisted on the organic nature of the ideal state, postulated a desire for a reconciliation of particular and universal, and rejected social atomism and eudaimonism. What makes Novalis's text distinctive, however, is the fact that it deploys what appears to be a straightforwardly monarchist model for ends that seem entirely opposed to those that Bonald and Maistre were developing simultaneously. Although the subtitle of *Faith and Love* is *The King and the Queen*, the two monarchs by their very twoness (and especially by their coupledom) seem designed to forestall the kinds of conclusions that the French reaction drew from similar ideas about the royal family and its relation to the state.

The piece's subtitle referred to a very real and very well known royal couple. Friedrich Wilhelm III acceded to the Prussian throne on November 16, 1797, an event that was greeted with great expectations among the Prussian populace and intelligentsia. This was partly due to Frie-

drich Wilhelm's more bourgeois values and affect, at least when measured against his father, a hard-living carouser, but it was in particular his marriage to his beautiful wife, Luise, that inflamed enthusiasm all around. At least part of the fascination with the young royal couple was due to the fact that theirs was a love match rather than a purely dynastic one. Novalis picked up on their mystique in *Faith and Love*, which Schlegel helped him place with the newly founded *Yearbooks of the Prussian Monarchy* (*Jahrbücher der preußischen Monarchie*). Novalis intended this collection of fragments as a sort of intervention at a time when the old Prussian monarchy, which Novalis criticized as a "machine-like administration,"⁴⁴ seemed capable of renewal and re-invention—the text's program was to reform this "mechanical state" via a "chemical marriage." However, its reception seems to have been puzzled rather than inspired. The *Political Aphorisms*, which Novalis had intended as the follow-up to *Faith and Love*, never appeared in the journal—it seems on the king's own orders.

As the title of Novalis's *Faith and Love* makes clear, it turned to love as its central engine, and indeed it was love that largely replaced Maistre's and Bonald's sovereign power in (a) internally uniting both state and family and (b) making one more like the other. Novalis went a step further, however, by making love the faculty by which the parallel between state and family becomes visible in the first place. Maistre and Bonald had argued that there is a mystery at the heart of the family, something that cannot be penetrated by the reason of Enlightenment social theory. The very ground of the analogy of state and family (sovereign power) was providential and inaccessible to reason. Novalis agreed, but he attempted to identify what kind of faculty could claim access to this ground. What made his solution so ingenious and distinctive was the fact that this faculty turns out to be nothing other than love itself. While Bonald seems to have regarded the family as safeguarding the ends of the state, and Maistre regarded the state as an evolutionary development of the family, Novalis turned to no external factors but rather explained the interrelation of both institutions in terms of their centripetal force itself.

The result of this deployment of love came in for its fair share of persiflage and ridicule (most immediately perhaps from his friend and colleague F. W. J. Schelling, himself no stranger to arcane speculation),⁴⁵ but juxtaposing it to the theories of the French counterrevolution reveals quite clearly what Romantic political theories of the family sought to accomplish: to reject both the excesses of the French Revolution (which they, like Maistre and Bonald, regarded as outgrowths of Enlightenment ideology) and the apologia for absolutist monarchy. Novalis did this by emphasizing the inherent relationality of political cohesion—while the state he envisions in *Faith and Love* is no rationalist "machine-state," it is nevertheless internally differentiated and vests sovereign power in an irreducible multiplicity of actors rather than in a single executive. Novalis created this multiplicity by sidestepping the solution offered by Bonald and Maistre. He eliminated children from the picture (as Bonald charged Rousseau with doing) but kept the irreducible relationality of the marriage relation, and he substituted a semiotic relationship for the filial relationship—the bond between parents and children became that between signifier and signified. Love and marriage are significant for the state as a whole, not so much for the love/marital partners themselves.

The royal couple thus functioned as both paradigm and symbol in *Faith and Love*. "A true royal couple is for the whole human being what a constitution is for the mere understanding";⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Novalis, *HKA*, 2:494–95, no. 36.

⁴⁵ F. W. J. Schelling, "Epikurisch Glaubensbekenntnis Heinz Widerporstens," in *Materialien zu Schellings philosophischen Anfängen*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975), 145–53.

⁴⁶ Novalis, *HKA*, 2:292.

only their love could bring love to the state at large.⁴⁷ What was it that “a constitution” did “for the mere understanding,” and by analogy, what exactly was it that “a true royal couple” did “for the whole human being”? “Constitution” and “true royal couple” represented two different ways of thinking the relationship of individual and universal. In a constitution the understanding could grasp itself only as an accidental variable in a system of abstract rules and formulas, whereas all human faculties could apprehend their relation to the whole *as symbolized* or embodied by the royal couple. The “mystical sovereignty” of the poetic state was something one could encounter only in symbolized form in the guise of “a human being deserving love.”

But this single “human being” is not enough. Because the dead “letter” of the constitution must be animated by “family life,” the sovereign must be (in) a couple that is visibly structured and held together by love. It is clear that Novalis did not think of king and queen as a *model* which the citizenry was to emulate directly. Rather, the royal couple was the symbol or the appearance (*Darstellung*) of something that was always already visible to the right kind of intuition, namely the oneness of the state.⁴⁸ This intuition could understand the loving unity of the royal couple as a figure of the overarching (and harder to perceive) unification of the state. But this correspondence was itself visible only to an intuition colored by love; love allowed the individual to become a trope for the universal, and the universal a trope for the individual. But they stand in for each other; they remain distinct from each other. In love, the “I” both projects its own subjectivity onto an object *and* becomes receptive to that object’s alterity. This is not only what Novalis’s text asks of its readers with respect to the royal couple but even the way he asks them to read his own text.

In a letter to Friedrich Schlegel (May 5, 1798), Novalis remarked of *Faith and Love* that “one cannot read it without faith and love.”⁴⁹ And “reading” is indeed central to the text’s argument, which wants to educate its readers such that they can understand the love that unites “the king and queen” as a sign for their own relation to the state. Novalis thus proposes an erotic semiotics: love, marriage, and family are ways of coding and decoding that provide richer access to the outside world than do the mechanistic determinations of propositional judgment or constitutional provision. In his model, Novalis referred to the concept of “love” in three different ways. First, love made it possible to read and/or constitute the couple “king/queen” as a model for the universal in the first place—the very correspondence between the royal marriage and the larger polity had as its condition of possibility nothing other than love. Second, this marriage and national politics were themselves internally constituted in and through love—what we learn through love is again nothing other than love. Third, the sense we gain through this learning process insofar as it corresponds to an *Allheit* (all of existence rather than those aspects accessible to the understanding, the whole human being rather than the understanding) is itself called love.⁵⁰

The most important feature of the structural transfer from family to state in Maistre and Bonald was the link between paternal power and sovereignty. This is of course impossible in a metaphysics of (equitable) coupledom. It is almost as though the French reaction and the early Romantics were looking at a reversible figure when envisioning the family: Novalis and his fel-

⁴⁷ Hans Wolfgang Kuhn, *Der Apokalyptiker und die Politik: Studien zur Staatsphilosophie des Novalis* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1960), 123.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁹ Novalis, *HKA*, 2:253.

⁵⁰ Similarly, according to n. 50 of the *Allgemeine Brouillon*: “Love is the end of *world history*—the *unum* of the universe” (*Die Liebe ist der Endzweck der Weltgeschichte—das Unum des Universums*). “Love” is thus the name of both the underlying substrate of the universe and the faculty of its cognition (Novalis, *HKA*, 2:248).

low Jena Romantics insisted on emphasizing the equitable aspect of the family (the couple) over the inherently inequitable one (paternity); Maistre and Bonald ignored the relation of husband to wife, acting as though families consisted only of fathers and their children, while the Romantics gave the children short shrift, reducing the family to the couple constituted naturally not through authority but through attraction. This is the point where the difference from the French counterrevolutionaries becomes clearest: if marriage/family/love unite only couples, then the family's relationship to the state cannot be as straightforward as Bonald and Maistre make it.

But Novalis went a step further yet: only love allowed for the analogization of state and family in the first place. And since analogy was itself an "*air de famille*,"⁵¹ family and representation were inextricably linked. The family, far from being an unproblematic natural resource for claims about the wider polity, was in fact a highly complex and itself relationally constituted sign. Only because love, family, and coupledness were essentially coterminous could the royal couple furnish all three—the ground of analogy, that analogy itself, and the ability to read phenomena in terms of analogy. Only by reining in the family genealogically (leaving out the royal couple's children, for instance) can the family become as semiotically versatile as Novalis demands. For Novalis, the elements of the family, as well as the family and the state, relate to each other as signs and only as signs. He understands lovers as *Wechselrepräsentationen*, two particulars that can each represent the other because they are identical with respect to the absolute. Once again, there is something irreducibly dual and equal in Novalis's model family—the *oikos* models not sovereignty and hierarchy but equality and plurality.

Novalis consigned the most thorough exploration of these issues to the realm of fiction, most prominently his fairy tales, which are symbolically charged and highly complex stories that almost invariably play out at the boundary between a state (often a utopian state) and a family (often a royal family). Perhaps the most infamously complicated of these, told as the conclusion to the author's only novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, exemplifies the way in which Novalis the poet attempted to forestall the kind of facile parallelisms between state and family that Novalis the philosopher knew only too well. This dizzying story tells of the disaggregation and reshuffling of three sets of families, charts the free radicals' movements vis-à-vis one another through several configurations, and finally ends with the arrangement having settled into a stable new order. That order, however, is highly peculiar. A mother figure has died and her ashes are imbibed by the members of three intergenerational couples, who bask in her love. The three couples are each crowned before a cheering crowd, and it is clear that their love (and the dead mother's love) correlates directly to the love that is to organize their state.

However, Novalis leaves it deliberately unclear which couple is "the" royal couple—instead, one couple appears to become divine, symbolizing terrestrial unity in a Beyond; one couple appears to be the "real" royal couple in the sense of *Faith and Love*; and the third couple appears to become the other couples' "representatives." In this arrangement, Novalis established, on the one hand, that familial and state structures are homologous and that a harmonized family structure radiates outward into the state as a whole. But, on the other hand, the poet provided his readers not with *one* family that is to function as the state's analogue but instead with three interlocking families. All three of these families are related to each other, and each of them seems to stand in for the others without it being clear which family occupies which position and which family is primary. When Novalis depicts his ideal state as a family, he turns from analogy

⁵¹ Novalis, *HKA*, 2:540: "Das Air de Famille nennt man Analogie."

and microcosm to the structure of signification. The three families behave like sign and referent, except that it is impossible to tell which is which.

It is clear that the straightforward paternalistic conclusions that Maistre and Bonald drew from the analogy between state and family lost all usefulness when confronted with such an elusive structure. In the decades following Novalis's death, however, his friend and ally Friedrich Schlegel, who had initially turned to similarly complex methods to forestall an oversimplified analogy between state and family, gradually came to endorse the version of the analogy preferred by Maistre and Bonald. Even in Novalis's *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, a text that attained a certain infamy as supposed evidence of Novalis's reactionary turn toward the end of his life, the indivisible Christian church Novalis envisions is entirely divested of the paternal and the patrimonial: it is a lateral, all-enveloping community radically separated from the dynastic, from tradition, from received authority.

“POSITIVE” PHILOSOPHIES OF THE FAMILY

Friedrich Schlegel's Cologne lectures are significant not least because they abandon the dialectical niceties with which the early Romantics had sought to prevent family and state from settling into a straightforward analogy with one another. While the young Schlegel and his friend Novalis had turned to the family to furnish the structure of the state, they were insistent, and downright byzantine, in their attempts to make the state something more than just an engorged family. Because for them it was love rather than authority that gave the family its distinctive structure and unity, they were able to locate an irreducible duality at the heart of the community and state: for it to be unified, it had to be double, relational rather than monolithic. By his Cologne years, Schlegel had begun to erode this idea: love, as we saw, became less important, and the relationship between state and family became rather less complicated. The mediating concept that allowed for this rapprochement was identified by the poet Heinrich Heine some twenty years later as follows: “Friedrich Schlegel surveys all of literature [in these lectures] from an elevated standpoint, but that elevated standpoint is nothing other than the bell tower of a Catholic church. And in everything that Schlegel says you can hear the bells ringing.”⁵²

These incessantly ringing bells and the simplification of the relationship between *polis* and *oikos* paradoxically combined to enhance the stature of the family within Schlegel's system. Put simply, for Schlegel the church reintegrated family and state. The young Schlegel had thought of the family (in essence, the amorous couple with some optional offspring) as at base an extension of the subject; the mature Schlegel tended to regard the family as a middle term, ushering subjects into quasi-political arenas and ultimately into the state itself. In fact, just as in Fichte's social philosophy of the early 1800s (above all, in *Addresses to the German Nation*), in Schlegel's later thought the family became the smallest subsidiary of the state. That state, however, itself looked increasingly like a family. Picking up on his late friend Novalis's suggestion, the “true” state had the character of a family, transcending the mere machinery of the constitution.

Schlegel's critique of the natural law tradition seems to hearken back to his friend's *Faith and Love* in central respects: Schlegel maintained that traditional natural law theories, which tended to deduce the justification for the state from such practical considerations as the safeguarding of property and the prevention of lawlessness and war, determine the state only “negatively.” This was because such theories told the individual to limit his or her actions in order not

⁵² Heinrich Heine, *Die Romantische Schule* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1836), 121.

to have certain things happen. “Positive” determinations of the role of the state were instead based on the morality (*Sittlichkeit*) that inspires the individual to a “self-limiting out of freedom and love.”⁵³ Such a positive determination, Schlegel claimed, was not the job of philosophy, nor could such a “self-limiting out of freedom and love” be imposed on, coaxed out of, or taught to the state’s citizenry—it is accessible only through faith. “The positive side of the state,” Schlegel argued, “can be founded only on the church.”⁵⁴ Unlike Novalis, whose *Europa* envisioned the continent’s postrevolutionary rebirth as a church that would transcend the state and turn into a self-motivated and spontaneous community, Schlegel understands the church as an aspect of state sovereignty, as an institution that demands assent and enforces rules.

It was at this point that Maistre and Bonald became so influential for Schlegel’s thought: Schlegel seems to have taken Maistre as essentially a philosopher of religion or, more precisely, a theoretician of the relation between philosophy and revelation. Accordingly, his various remarks on Maistre tend to focus on *Considérations sur la France* (1797) and later *Du pape* (1819). In Schlegel’s *Lectures on the History of Literature*, published in 1815 and dedicated to Metternich, Schlegel praises Maistre as a defender of religious revelation over and against the encroachments of corrosive Enlightenment reason. A critique of such encroachments had been part and parcel of the Romantic project from the very beginning—an inheritance from Rousseau’s Savoyard Vicar and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi’s fideism. But where in *Lucinde* the “positive” side was occupied only by the loving family, and the state was by its very nature negative, Schlegel, under the influence of Maistre and Bonald, now identified a part of the state that was family-like and, like the family, positive.

The state’s “negative side” was founded on the “law of reason,” and its commandments were predicated on the presumption that “immoral behavior” (*Unsittlichkeit*)⁵⁵ rather than moral behavior comes naturally to human beings. The fewer of these laws a nation has, Schlegel claimed, the better. By itself, reason could devise only rules pervaded by pessimism, suspicion, and negativity. Reason could not but treat the individual as debased and potentially criminal, precisely because it could not actually see the individual in any other way. Just as in Novalis’s *Faith and Love*, the limitations of a purely law-bound constitution were due to the fact that reason was profoundly skewed and one-sided in its perception of human social life.

Drawing on his own earlier critique of abstract or pure understanding, Schlegel claimed that philosophy by itself could not answer the most foundational questions of human existence. However, he gave this critique a decidedly fideistic turn that was lacking in the early Romantic positions of his years in Jena and Berlin. By the time he began to give the lectures published as the *Philosophical Lectures* (immediately after his arrival in Cologne; that is, prior to his conversion to Catholicism), Schlegel had already made this central transition. Rather than giving moral law a basis in the absolute, it now had a basis in religion, and “morality cannot be science [*Wissenschaft*] in a restricted sense, because its principle, the moral law, as the will of God is accessible to faith alone and can only partially be cognized philosophically.”⁵⁶

For the Schlegel who arrived in Cologne, the law thus rested on two separate bases, each accessible to one kind of faculty and not the other: namely, faith and reason. The individual prescriptions of the law may well be accessible to, and arranged in accordance with, reason; but this

⁵³ Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1804 bis 1806* (Bonn: Weber, 1836), 2:354.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

reasonable edifice rested on a foundation that was, by its very nature, inaccessible to reason. When looking at some aspects of state, society, and law, this foundation could be hidden, whereas in others it could be perfectly obvious. One prime locus where the two commingled was the family, in particular, marriage, where “positive law is not supposed to cancel out [*aufheben*] the law of nature [*Naturrecht*] but instead just modify it.”⁵⁷ The young Schlegel had looked upon this problem altogether differently: the “law of nature,” by which he does not mean natural law but rather our instinctual inclinations, was primary, and any attempt to bend it into whatever the morals *du jour* dictated was necessarily to render it perverse. The fact that marriage cannot be a matter of positive law itself but inevitably involves our inclinations and desires was not lost on the Schlegel of 1804 either. However, the way human nature (and by this Schlegel seems to mean divinely ordained human nature) and positive law met had changed significantly vis-à-vis his own earlier writings.

Most importantly, however, Schlegel understood the coherence of the state within its territory (its sovereignty, although he eschewed the term itself) to rest, not on the totality of laws accessible to reason, but rather on the totality of morals, which were fixed but inaccessible to common sense. The completion and concretion of the state have nothing to do with the institutions of a country and everything to do with a shared yet binding horizon of “morals.” And it is not the capacity but the fixity of this moral framework that determines the degree of perfection of the state: “The more determinate, fixed morals a nation has, the more complete is the state. For the state is nothing but a larger moral individual.”⁵⁸ Schlegel thus explicitly opposed Aristotle’s treatment of the family in the *Politics*. For Aristotle, the state should never be “nothing but” an engorged moral individual, or a bloated family (for the exact reason that Schlegel believed they should, namely unity): “A family is one in a greater degree than a city, and a single person than a family; so that if this end could be obtained, it should never be put in practice, as it would annihilate the city.”⁵⁹

In his *Philosophical Lectures*, Schlegel was concerned with morality rather than politics and followed his late friend Novalis in essentially reducing the family to the married couple. Unlike Novalis, however, Schlegel divvied up the two features that Novalis had attributed to his royal couple—they “become one” but yet are relational and differentiated—handing the unification aspect to the “law of nature” and the division to “the artificial and complicated conditions of bourgeois life.”⁶⁰ While Schlegel’s lectures were primarily concerned with questions of law and property rather than the heady metaphysics of *Faith and Love*, this divvying up hints at the fact that for Schlegel it was modern bourgeois life that created differentiation, whereas religion is (in the etymology of Schlegel’s erstwhile roommate Schleiermacher) a *re-ligio*, a reconnecting or mending of such divisions. After all, what Schlegel called the “law of nature” in this dichotomy turned out again and again to be in fact a divine command. For instance, he repeated a notorious assertion of his late friend and colleague Johann Gottlieb Fichte: that philosophy can divine no legal ground from which to prohibit incestuous unions. However, he added an un-Fichtean point: this was true only of philosophy. Here “ethical and religious grounds” intervened and prohibited something philosophy was powerless to stop.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 350.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 354.

⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1261b.

⁶⁰ Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen*, 2:353.

As the example of incest makes clear, Schlegel is fully explicit about the fact that much of moral law is very accessible to reason, even if its ultimate ground or license is not. It is in delimiting this “partial cognition” of the moral law by philosophy that Schlegel turns to Maistre. In Lecture 14, Schlegel holds up Maistre as precisely sidestepping Haller’s straightforward opposition of (philosophical) “science” (what Haller would call *Philosophismus*) and religious revelation. Schlegel points out that this blunt juxtaposition was characteristic not just of theological thinkers but of their targets as well. Kant, after all, attempted to “base the law of faith on the annihilation of all science” by locating the ground of ethics outside the purview of the categories of the understanding, except he did so “from a metaphysical point of view” rather than a religious one.⁶¹ Maistre, Schlegel asserts, “is nearer to the goal,” which is nothing short of a reconciliation of reason and religion; moreover, Maistre recognizes that this means conceiving of reason and philosophy differently (“sound philosophy”),⁶² something Bonald fails to do because “he altogether desires to subject Christianity to the reasoning and argumentative faculties.”⁶³

What is striking about both this characterization and the evaluation of different currents of counterrevolutionary thought is their continuity with the socially revolutionary writings of the young Romantics in the 1790s. There is the emphasis on a unity of philosophy, on some kind of preexisting ground and the attack on any kind of philosophy that relies on an organizing “dualism.” Doctrinaire, unabashedly one-sided, Maistre’s thought is the very definition of what the Idealists derided as “standpoint philosophy” (though the term itself is a somewhat later Hegelian coinage)—philosophy that chooses its principle and posits it as beyond either critique or vindication. And yet Schlegel here turns Maistre into a philosopher of unity and totality. In that respect, it is fascinating to see Haller come in (however implicitly) for the same criticism as Kant—it seems difficult to imagine two less compatible thinkers. And yet Schlegel faults both equally for undialectically opposing reason and faith, albeit for very different reasons. The aim of philosophy is to comprehend both at once, and neither at the exclusion of the other.

For Schlegel, Maistre is thus a philosopher of unification. Just as the theological foundation of marriage, Maistre’s thought effects a *re-ligio*, bringing together what was sundered during the Enlightenment: reason and faith. It is precisely such a reunification that the concept of “nation” performs in the same lectures: through it, “positive law returns [*zurückkehrt*] to natural law” like a prodigal son. To achieve such a “highest unity,” the mixed form of the family must be expanded in much the same way that Maistre proposes: the “absolute unity” of the family has a tendency to seclude the family from other families, which is a “telluric imperfection” that must be overcome as the family “transcends [*its*] narrow circle.” In principle, the nation “is an all-encompassing family,”⁶⁴ and its *telos* in removing the residual membranes of the individual families is complete universality. While the Schlegel of 1806 still regards the attempt to “blend together different nations in one state” by fiat as against nature, only a few years later, he hails the project of the Hapsburg Empire precisely as an instance of an “all-encompassing” unity that no longer knows any outside.

Novalis had inscribed doubleness and relationality into the very heart of the “absolute” (rather than absolutist) state. The family, far from being the metaphor that guided the concentration of power in the monarch, provided the model for a sovereign that could never be at one

⁶¹ Friedrich Schlegel, *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern* (London: Bell and Sons, 1896), 323.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 325.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 328.

⁶⁴ Schlegel, *Philosophische Vorlesungen*, 2:357.

with itself and whose self-relation modeled the relationship to his citizens. In Schlegel's early writings, such as his novel *Lucinde*, he had deployed the family (or, more specifically, the married couple) in much the same way. By 1806, Schlegel was well on his way to a different understanding—the “transcendence” of family into state involves ever-greater unification. The bipolarity of Novalis's poetic kingdom is nowhere to be found. The shift coincides with Schlegel's reception of Maistre (and, to a lesser extent, Bonald). Friedrich Schlegel's path to Vienna, it turned out, went through St. Petersburg.

Just how much Schlegel had begun to rely on the narrative about familial sovereignty and the French Revolution first suggested by Bonald, Maistre, Haller, and even Starck is made clear in what are widely regarded as the most definitive philosophical lectures of his last decade: the fifteen lectures published as *The Philosophy of Life (Philosophie des Lebens)*, which he gave in Vienna in 1828. Here, Schlegel made explicit that the family's significance does not lie in producing and educating citizens, but that instead familial love (and he seems to mean marital love once again) provides the germ for all other kinds of love, which radiate outward from the family into all other kinds of ethical life. The “soulful bonds of love [*Seelenbände der Liebe*], which found the family [*Familienverein*], produce all the other kinds of beautiful bonds of mother-love, filial piety, fraternal friendship between siblings and relatives,” which ultimately constitute “the inner nervous fluid [*inneren Nervensaft*] of human society.”⁶⁵ How integral Schlegel considered this nervous fluid is evidenced by the fact that he regarded all patriotism to be ultimately derived from familial love. Novalis had once noted that “gamism is the basis of patriotism”⁶⁶ (i.e., connubial love is a connection to a larger civic whole), but Schlegel seems to assert that all patriotism is “gamism.”

Schlegel's lectures embedded their theory of marriage and the family in a more general discussion of the role of the imagination in human affairs—love, enthusiasm (such as patriotism), and yearning are not based on a “real” state of affairs, or at least not one that is capable of being measured or causally construed. Nevertheless, according to Schlegel, love, enthusiasm, and yearning can have their own truth content. Whether or not the state really *was* a family, or brotherly love within the polity really *was* similar to that between spouses, Schlegel seemed to say, the imagination *ought* to treat them as analogous in order to feel true faith or patriotism—to enter that sphere “where the merely mathematical basic formulas of ethical life do not suffice.”⁶⁷ Construing “gamism” and patriotism as analogous would thus be a “speculative” move—something that cannot be vindicated by “mathematical formulas.”

It was a decline in this “gamism,” or in familial love more generally, that had led to the undoing of the cohesive forces of society in the wake of the French Revolution. Schlegel agreed with Bonald and Maistre that a historic process of “degeneration” necessarily asserts itself first within the boundaries of the family and then goes on to contaminate the entire state. “Especially in a dangerous age,” he writes, “an age of already readily apparent degeneration, it is often not recognized very clearly just how much human and civil society rests on this foundation of family bonds.”⁶⁸ While Schlegel did not mention the French Revolution specifically, it is rather obvious what made Schlegel's own age so “dangerous.” A revolution within the small polity of the family is the first stage of an all-encompassing disaggregation of interpersonal bonds. Where the young Schlegel had peppered his writings with calls for this (usually poetic) “revolution” or that, the

⁶⁵ Schlegel, *KSA*, 10:30.

⁶⁶ Novalis, *HKA*, 2:471, no. 1109: “Gamism ist die Grundlage zum Patriotism.”

⁶⁷ Schlegel, *KSA*, 10:35.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

fifty-six-year-old Schlegel treated the term almost as a dirty word. “Always and everywhere the revolution of morals has started out in the interior of the family, before the more universal anarchy breaks out openly, and confuses the countries, and shakes the order of the states.”⁶⁹ Domestic society (as Bonald would have called it) was the microcosmic analogue of the wider commonwealth, and disturbing its careful calibration of love and respect necessarily disturbed the world outside.

Just how far Schlegel went in endorsing the familial-origin story of the French Revolution peddled by Starck and Bonald can be gleaned from his treatment of a tangentially related topic: secret societies such as the Masons and the Rosicrucians. Even as early as his Cologne period, Schlegel’s notebooks find him obsessing over the danger posed by secret societies. Given that they were a defining form of sociality of the Enlightenment era, in particular among the more educated classes, this may not be altogether surprising, but Schlegel turned rather abruptly from regarding himself and his friends as something of a secret society to regarding secret societies as highly deleterious. In his notebooks from 1806 he calls Freemasons “the natural enemies of the church,” “the same as the Muslims.”⁷⁰ In both his early approbation and his later invectives, Schlegel noticeably overestimated the likely actual impact of such secret societies, but empirical effects were not what he was after. After all, while his railing against Freemasonry at times seems to almost echo Starck’s obsessive invectives, Schlegel had himself been a partisan of the Revolution and was thus quite aware that the Revolution was not started or sustained by some insidious cabal.

Instead, what seems to have concerned Schlegel was the very nature of a cabal rather than its intentions or its reach. In “the most degenerate peoples,” writes Schlegel, “secret societies could play their games”; but among the ancient Germans “societies were public—this is the character of the nation.”⁷¹ There is something about a proper nation (or a properly German nation at any rate) that cannot abide a kind of communal life that is private at the expense of public life. The family for Schlegel operates in the exact reverse direction, that is, a private life that constitutes public life as its more complex analogue. The secret society, precisely because it seeks, not to reproduce in the outside world the feelings and the bond that bind its members together within, but instead to withhold those very feelings and that very bond, thus amounts to the anti-family par excellence, a kind of parody of the “ethical shrine of earthly life,” as Schlegel characterizes the family in *Philosophy of Life*. In a more philosophically sophisticated diagnosis than that of Starck, Schlegel similarly lays the blame for the French Revolution at the feet of the wrong kind of privacy. As Schlegel’s early remark about Freemasonry as the “natural enemy” of the church makes clear, the church is in this regard essentially a more capacious family: its members are held together by a special bond, but that bond is visible to the outside and to some extent directed toward the outside. Any church wants (at least potentially) to have the entire world partake of its congregation. A secret society cannot if it is to remain either secret or a society.

REJECTING THE STATE THAT LOVE BUILT: MAX STIRNER AND THE FAMILY

Schlegel died on January 12, 1829, at fifty-six years of age, when the ideology of the family-state had become woven into the very fabric of the restoration period. “Love,” a concept wielded as a

⁶⁹ Ibid., 31.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 19:195 (5:333).

⁷¹ Ibid., 19:195 (5:331).

tool of critique by the early Romantic and Idealist thinkers in Germany, became an appeal to political and social cohesion under authoritarian rule. Those Romantics and Idealists who refused or were at least uncomfortable with the rightward lurch, such as Hegel, tended to give the concept a wide berth. It was from Hegel's orbit that one of the most trenchant critiques of the love ideology would emerge, one that accepted Schlegel's structural equation of state and family but turned it against both institutions. The originator of this critique was Johann Caspar Schmidt (who published as Max Stirner; 1806–56), an eternally hard-up curmudgeon who had studied occasionally with Hegel and circulated mostly among Berlin's left-wing literati. As it happens, like Schlegel, before Stirner made his theory of the family explicit in writing, he elaborated it in action—by getting married.

It was a betrothal, as Stirner's first biographer noted, "talked about more than the entire rest of his life."⁷² On the morning of October 21, 1843, Stirner convened his groomsmen in his small room in Berlin Neukölln (which was then a separate town). Rumors later claimed that the throng had been pulled from a nearby bar in an untoward state of inebriation given the hour of day. The best men were Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Buhl. Even Stirner's biographer, while generally intent on dispelling the more salacious details that the scuttlebutt had attached to the morning's events over time, gives credence to the fact that Buhl was barely dressed and the men were putting away playing cards when the parson arrived. There was no veil, a Bible could not be found, and Bauer is alleged to have fashioned the couple's rings from his purse, though later versions of the story claimed that they had been curtain rings. Overall, Stirner's biographer remarks that the whole affair was pervaded by an air of "complete indifference on the part of the people involved during a purely external exercise, which in their eyes had no further importance, and which was performed only for external, unavoidable considerations."⁷³

What made this farcical ceremony such a lightning rod for rumor and scandal in 1843 Berlin was that Stirner was not just anyone, nor were his guests and his groomsmen, especially the ingenious fashioner of rings. Buhl, Bauer, and Stirner were among Berlin's most infamous political radicals, left-wing students of the recently deceased Hegel. Many of these radicals had been dismissed from their teaching posts, and many of their writings had been censored or banned outright. Several of their more famous friends were in exile. Although Stirner's farcical wedding ceremony owed as much to his own penury and squalid lifestyle as to any attempt to *épater le bourgeois*, it seems unlikely that Berlin's citizenry and Prussian officials were altogether mistaken in imputing to the proceedings a political point. While it is clear that the details of the ceremony, exaggerated to ever greater outrageousness by Berlin's rumor mill, were intended to scandalize the kingdom's establishment, there lay behind it a serious philosophical point, one that emerged clearly in the groom's writings at the time.

As did Schlegel in his writings of the 1790s and early 1800s, Stirner pursued a point far beyond the actual terms of intimacy between two lovers, penetrating instead to the very nature of the state and the kind of common life we live within it. The Schlegels' marriage was a rather quiet affair following the furor attending their initial liaison, and the reasons for this seem to have lain in the trajectory of the Romantic movement itself. Stirner's marriage was public to the point of spectacle, and it appears that its gleeful flaunting of bourgeois propriety was bound up with a schism within one of Romanticism's more far-flung descendants, Hegelianism. The split within the Hegelian school was precipitated primarily by debates over how to read Hegel and

⁷² John Henry Mackay, *Max Stirner: Sein Leben und sein Werk* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1898), 123.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 125.

what political conclusions to draw from his teachings, but behind this debate lay another issue, more mundane but also more central. Fanned by Schelling, Baader, and others, the whispers that the impenetrable Hegel was in point of fact nothing but a covert atheist had never entirely gone away since Hegel's more radical beginnings, and Hegel, reluctant to follow his predecessor Fichte into a full-blown atheism scandal and eventual dismissal, encouraged a certain amount of ambiguity about the politics behind his philosophy. It was in the shadow of this ambiguity that his immediate followers (the so-called *Freundesverein*, comprising such men as Heinrich Gustav Hotho, Philipp Konrad Marheineke, and Karl Rosenkranz) had made their careers, careers that would have been immediately threatened if the man whose philosophy they had set out to further and continue should turn out to be an antimonarchist or even an atheist.

The fact that the so-called Young Hegelians were, well, young is thus actually quite central to their political positions.⁷⁴ They had not been able to reap the academic windfall of Hegelianism's dominance of the universities in the 1830s, and they therefore did not have much to lose by making explicit what was already implicit in Hegel's philosophical system: that religion was misunderstood (or half-understood) philosophy and that states that were governed by the unreasonable vestiges of merely given traditions would necessarily give way to different, more thought-through states. In a way, these Young Turks, passed over in the rightward drift of the Prussian state and university system, got their revenge by gleefully spilling the dirty family secret their more established compatriots sought to repress at all costs. The mischievous glee with which the Neukölln wedding party seemed to parrot and parody in particular the religious elements of marriage was part and parcel of a general project to make explicit the atheism that the Young Hegelians found in Hegel's systematic philosophy.

The main battlefield in their campaign had always been religion and, by extension, the political system that depended on religious license. The family was often rather distant from their concerns—perhaps not unjustifiably, since the topic had drifted from the center of their master's philosophy to the margins with time. But given the way in which reactionary thought in Germany had sought to entangle state, family, and nation, this nexus proved too tempting a target to pass up. Hegel himself had been noticeably hesitant with regard to this nexus; while love and the family had been central categories of Hegel's early philosophy (roughly before his move to Jena in 1801), the mature Hegelian system gave both concepts comparatively short shrift. Rather than aiming squarely at Hegel, the Young Hegelians deployed Hegel against the Romantic concept of love, which at least Stirner tended to regard as essentially a tool of European reaction.⁷⁵

In Stirner's magnum opus (which also remained, with minimal exceptions, his only opus), *The Ego and Its Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*), he frames the critique of the family as a critique of theologies of the family. Stirner's book, an assemblage of philosophical observations not always connected by a thoroughgoing argument, emerged from a salon and reading group that he and several other young thinkers from the Young Hegelian orbit held regularly at Hippel's wine bar on Berlin's Friedrichsstraße. To the likely shock of the other members of the circle, *The Ego and Its Own* emerged as a blistering attack on Young Hegelianism, but while his explicit target was the orthodoxy of the self-styled Young Hegelian heterodoxy, his real targets lay in the

⁷⁴ There is some fuzziness to this division, of course. Although Carl Friedrich Göschel, Philipp Konrad Marheineke, Georg Andreas Gabler, and Johannes Schulze were children of the 1780s, and none of their more left-wing counterparts were born before 1800, Karl Rosenkranz, the youngest among the Hegelian Old Guard, was in fact younger than both Arnold Ruge and Ludwig Feuerbach, two of the central figures among the Young Hegelians.

⁷⁵ Max Stirner, *Max Stirners kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1898), 405.

Idealist and, in particular, Hegelian philosophy that dominated, even suffocated, their outlook. *The Ego and Its Own* lacks a coherent thesis; the closest it comes to one is the statement that “our atheists are pious people.”⁷⁶ Stirner generally seems to have seen the task of his book as cleansing philosophy of untoward theological imports—these consist, in particular, of suprasubjective entities such as “spirit,” “the absolute,” and “being” and of secular institutions that philosophy renders sacred again through mystification.

In part 1 of *The Ego and Its Own*, Stirner tried to show that what to the Hegelian philosopher seemed like a slow “sublation” (i.e., ultimately a supersession) of religion into other forms of social life were in fact nothing but transformations of religious topoi that left the individual, if anything, less free. He particularly fastened on to the Reformation as one specific moment in which the Left Hegelians liked to see a movement toward greater freedom. In fact, Stirner claimed, Protestantism had dissolved the previously separate spheres of the sacred and the profane, turning everyday “sensuous” life into an incarnation of the “spirit” and thus effectively rendering sacred every aspect of human life. Hegelian philosophy, as Stirner saw it, simply dressed up this usurpation in more secular clothing, declaring that family, marriage, the state, and selfhood were emanations of the “spirit” rather than of something explicitly divine.

Stirner attacked Feuerbach for following Protestant doctrine in asserting that, rather than requiring sacerdotal sanction, institutions such as marriage, the state, and so on derive their dignity out of themselves. “The Catholic Church removed marriage from the sphere of the sacred [*geweihten Stande*] and removed her servants from all worldly family; the Protestant Church declared marriage and family themselves holy and therefore appropriate for clergymen.”⁷⁷ The spiritual bond supposedly shared by the family thus constituted a holdover from religion, designed to enslave rather than liberate the individual. By relying on variations of what Hegel called “subjective spirit,” Feuerbach and the rest of the Left Hegelians had simply replaced the structures by which religion dominates the individual with a crypto-religious analogue. The new entity no longer comes with an explicitly Christian label attached, but as far as the individual subject is concerned, the ideal human “Spirit” confronts the *Einzigsten* in much the same way that religious stricture did previously: an “essence above me . . . a super-me” (*ein Wesen über Mir . . . ein Übermeiniges*).⁷⁸

It was in this context that the concept of love made an unexpected return from the margins of philosophical discourse. The young Hegel had made love a central motor of his philosophy, but this focus was abandoned early in his Jena period in favor of other concepts that could mediate between individuals. In his *Philosophy of Right*, love had at best a cameo role in the section on the family, only to be immediately transposed into “the family.” However brief its appearance, the function Hegel assigned to love had to make the concept central for Stirner’s critique: for Hegel, the family had constituted “the immediate substantiality of the Spirit,” and love was Spirit “feeling its own unity” through the attraction of the particular family members (§158). For Stirner, Hegel’s family was thus the most primary and fundamental “essence above me,” and love was in fact a form of self-subjugation: “Love may be the last and most beautiful suppression of the self, the most glorious form of self-destruction and sacrifice, the most pleasurable victory over selfishness; but by breaking the willfulness” of the individual, “it also prevents the will from

⁷⁶ Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1882), 189.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

emerging, which alone endows the human being with the dignity of autonomy.”⁷⁹ Love was nothing but submission and heteronomy in their seemingly most pleasurable guise. The family was thus not based on some glowing feeling that could radiate forth into the wider *polis*; instead, it was deeply political in that its love relations were really camouflaged relations of dominance.

Stirner outlined the political ramifications of this critique of the family in a short essay entitled “Some Preliminaries about the State of Love” (“Einiges Vorläufige vom Liebesstaat”). Ludwig Buhl, one of Stirner’s friends from Hippel’s wine bar, had put together a periodical called the *Berliner Monatsschrift* and had recruited Stirner to write an essay for the inaugural issue. However, perhaps not surprisingly, given its editor and the authors collected in it, that inaugural issue was to remain its only one. Not only did the *Monatsschrift* fail to live up to its ambition of being a monthly periodical, but it did not even manage to be published in Berlin: its single issue was eyed so suspiciously by the Prussian censors that it had to be self-published in faraway Mannheim. The mission of the *Monatsschrift*, according to Buhl, was to elaborate the concept of the “one and universal freedom” and to proceed from it “to the foundation of pure and absolute self-determination.”⁸⁰ As Buhl made clear in his introduction to the volume, the initiators of the volume were not surprised by its chilly reception in Prussia: “We knew,” he wrote, “that the kind of power that rests on an authority cannot tolerate a process of dissolution of all present-day conditions [*bestehenden Verhältnisse*].”⁸¹

Given its general thrust, the fact that the *Monatsschrift* failed to appear in Prussia was not surprising. And Stirner’s contribution to the volume was probably neither one of the more incendiary pieces (e.g., an article on the German national movement) nor one of the more innocuous (e.g., a long piece about gymnastics by F. A. Märcker, which was nevertheless censored). And yet Stirner’s seemingly abstract title belied the fact that his text struck at the ideological heart of the Prussian state and its “present-day conditions”—the *Liebesstaat* of the title was nothing other than the restored monarchy of the post-Vienna era. Buhl had declared it the task of the *Monatsschrift* to “analyze the buttresses, the smoke screens of this violence: state, law, right, rule of law, legal progress, religion, nationality, patriotism, and whatever other names they may go by.”⁸² Stirner’s description of the *Liebesstaat* sought to add the family to that list. His text took as its point of departure a missive written by Baron Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein (1757–1831). After Prussia’s disastrous defeat at the hands of Napoleon’s armies at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806, Stein and Karl August Fürst von Hardenberg were tasked by the Crown with a series of reforms, which came to be known simply as the Prussian Reforms. Stein circulated a letter among Prussia’s highest administrative authorities in late 1808 in which he outlined the changes he deemed necessary for a new constitution.

By the time Stirner decided to pick a fight with the baron, Stein had been dead for over ten years and had long been discredited; precious few of the reforms suggested in his letter had been implemented. In the wake of the Vienna Conference, the kingdom of Prussia had fallen far behind with respect to even the timid and incremental reforms proposed by Stein and Hardenberg. And that was to some extent Stirner’s point. In the 1840s Prussia was so reactionary that Stein’s reforms, informed by the Enlightenment, political economy, and German Idealist philosophy, had become objects of nostalgia, a testament to the political power the ideas of the Idealists and the

⁷⁹ Stirner, *Max Stirners kleinere Schriften*, 78.

⁸⁰ Ludwig Buhl, ed., *Berliner Monatsschrift* (Mannheim: L. Buhl, 1844), 29.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸² *Ibid.*

Romantics supposedly might have had, had history given them a chance. This was what worried and outraged Stirner—that timid, incremental reforms, pursued with vague reference to German Idealist philosophy and Romantic sentiment, could come to be regarded as a moment of liberalism, “which, after lasting only a short while, fell into a sleep lasting well into the present day.”⁸³

Stirner instead wanted to show the connection “between Stein’s liberalism and the later so-called reaction.”⁸⁴ And this connection turned out to be nothing other than the family model of social organization. As Stirner read Stein, Stein’s liberalism consisted in familiarizing, as it were, the ideals of the French Revolution. Equality, liberty, and fraternity are well and good, but they can feel awfully cold and alienating—each *citoyen* is an island alongside others, equal in rights and bound only by the elective bonds of civil society. Stein’s prescription called for more love in this arrangement, not the love between brothers but the more intimate and more codependent bond of paternal-filial love. It cannot have been lost on Stirner that this had been very much the theme of the political philosophy of the German Idealists, in particular their early work. While it is unlikely that Stirner knew Hegel’s own early writings on the subject (which were rediscovered only in the early twentieth century), he was likely aware of the importance of love as a political concept for Hegel’s fellow Idealists—Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Schelling, and Novalis, among others.

In telling the story of Stein’s sly transformation of revolutionary ideals, Stirner thus meant to provide an account of what had gone wrong with the German philosophical systems that had been inspired in no small part by revolutionary fervor, systems that, in Stirner’s own day, had become academic pillars of the edifice of Prussian autocracy. And what had gone wrong, to hear Stirner tell it, was nothing other than love. “No matter how much of what was Christian had fallen away under the blows of the Revolution, love—the innermost essence of Christianity—had become stuck in the bosom of revolutionary freedom.” For Stirner, the story of the concept of love was thus essentially the story of what went wrong with the French Revolution. Revolutionary freedom nursed her enemy in her own breast, he claimed, “which is why she had to lose to her, once she came from the outside as an enemy.”⁸⁵

But how was this feat accomplished? And how would one go about imbuing the ideals of the French Revolution with love? As Stirner read Stein, this was done by restoring the king’s paternal relationship to all subjects but equalizing all subjects in their filial relationship to the monarch. Stein’s missive centrally insisted on the abolition of “hereditary subjugation” (*Erbuntertänigkeit*), the system by which the feudal state was hierarchized into different levels of fealty, where the lowest rungs of the social ladder were dependent on any number of lords, who were each beholden to others above them. Stein proposed replacing this patchwork family with the subjugation of all under one. “No subject of the king,” as Stirner encapsulated Stein’s point, “was to be a subject of another subject.”⁸⁶ Whereas the French Revolution demanded the equality of citizens, Stein called for “the equality of subjects, an equal degree of subjection.”⁸⁷

Stirner claimed that another one of the French Revolution’s programmatic demands was perverted in Stein’s letter, namely the demand for liberty. Stein, too, emblazoned this word on his banners, but by this liberty he meant something few would recognize by that name: the “moral”

⁸³ Stirner, *Max Stirners kleinere Schriften*, 71.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

freedom to follow one's duty, in particular the duty to feel "love for God, king, and fatherland." Stein's letter did not describe this "moral" freedom in much detail, but it is clear that what he had in mind was a direct analogue to Schlegel's distinction between the "negative" understanding (which is privative, i.e., is characterized by the mere absence of an outside force) and the "positive" understanding of freedom, in which freedom is exercised within traditional institutions and customs. And indeed Stein framed his call for "moral" freedom not in terms of encroachments on individual liberties but rather in terms of social cohesion and harmonic integration of the entire state: "The point was to remove the disharmony that persists among the people, the war between the classes."⁸⁸ Stirner seems to level at Stein the same objection that Aristotle levels at Socrates: state and family ought not to be the same; to demand of the former the kind of integration and harmony characteristic of the latter was fantasy at best and strong-arming at worst. Stirner was probably quite right to discern in this point an echo of Idealist conceptions of freedom: the mere individual ability to do as one pleased was nothing but Willkür, utter childish arbitrariness; true "positive" freedom was always mediated through the whole of society or the state.

"Moral" freedom thus meant something like a voluntary submission, a freedom to choose commitments that one can then follow slavishly. This was at least how Stirner, an individualist to the point of obsession and a frankly anarchist thinker to boot, conceived of it. What name did one give to the freely chosen submission to another's whims? How did one sweeten this bitter pill? One turned to love. Love, Stirner claimed, "smites thunderously from her sovereign throne" that "very thing which makes the human being human." Love was for Stirner the paradigm of a voluntarily chosen heteronomy, which was then reasoned to be actually an exercise of autonomy. In truth, the *Liebesstaat* combines two absolutely analogous operations: both love and the state require their citizens to "autonomously" consent to heteronomy and then praise this process as an exercise (or, in the case of Hegel, the apogee) of human freedom. "Raised high above slave shoulders," Stirner wrote, love "proclaims the solitary rule of—will-lessness."⁸⁹ And those curmudgeons who would dare assail love and accuse her of advocating human unfreedom are singled out for being—unromantic. "Because unanimity is the essence of love, since princes and peoples are joined in love, they must drive out what would weaken their loving bond: the discontents."⁹⁰

Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* and his diagnosis of the *Liebesstaat* thus interestingly enough agree with Schlegel's Cologne lectures in a central respect: the state and the family resembled each other; there was no qualitative difference between them. But for Stirner this parallelism did not legitimate either state or family; instead, it delegitimated both. Both the *Liebesstaat* and the Hegelian family might claim to be organized by love, but behind that love Stirner diagnosed a force that oppressed and brutalized the individual. Once again, Stirner cannily played with the philosophical tradition of familial sovereignty: where the Romantics believed themselves to have made a dramatic turn, basing the analogy of state and family on relations of love rather than authority, Stirner diagnosed simple mystification. The Romantics, Stirner claimed, simply dressed up sovereignty in a new garb. Turning the state into a family turns the family into a state, and a repressive one at that. [A]

⁸⁸ Cited in Carl Rotteck and Carl Welcker, *Das Staats-Lexikon: Encyclopädie der sämtlichen Staatswissenschaften* (Altona: Hammerich, 1848), 11:86.

⁸⁹ Stirner, *Max Stirners kleinere Schriften*, 79.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.