

Pre-Romantic/Post-Classical: Jernej Kopitar's Thought in the European Context

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ABSTRACT

Jernej Kopitar (1780-1844) has been described as a “pre-Romantic” or “post-Classical” thinker who straddles the divide between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. However, little attention has been given to what is Romantic about him. In fact, Kopitar can be compared to Isaiah Berlin’s “restrained Romantics”, for whom “life begins with action”.

KEY WORDS

Romanticism, Enlightenment, Slovene Renaissance, Central Europe, Slavic nationalism

IZVLEČEK

Jerneja Kopitarja (1780–1844) so dolgo opisovali kot „predromantičnega“ ali „postklasičnega“ misleca, ki je lovil ravnotežje med razsvetljenstvom in romantiko. Toda raziskovalci so „romantični“ strani Kopitarja posvetili le malo pozornosti. Pravzaprav posrečeno spada v skupino mislecev, ki jih filozof in zgodovinar Isaiah Berlin imenuje „zmerni romantiki“, ki so trdili, da se „življenje začne z dejanjem“.

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romantika, razsvetljenstvo, slovenski prerod, Srednja Evropa, slovanski nacionalizem

What was Jernej Kopitar’s relationship to the Romantic Movement? What was his role in the transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism in Central Europe, and where does he fit in by comparison with the German thinkers who were the prime movers of the new movement? It has long been a given in the scholarly literature that Kopitar was a figure caught between the Enlightenment and Romanticism: he is regularly called “pre-Romantic” or “post-Classical”, and is described as someone whose ideas blend different aspects of both movements. While it has also long been acknowledged that the major formative influences on his thought come out of the 18th century, this has merely begged the question of what, exactly, *is* “Romantic” about him.

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Careful consideration of this question reveals how much we can learn about this sea change in European thought by studying Kopitar's career.

For my background analysis of the transition between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, I will rely on Sir Isaiah Berlin's classic study, *The Roots of Romanticism*.¹ Here, the late Oxford University philosopher elucidates with remarkable clarity, in less than 150 pages, what the Enlightenment was and in what ways the Romantic Movement challenged it, starting from around 1760. His main focus is on Germany, of course, in relation to Enlightenment France. Europe east of Germany is mentioned very briefly on a couple of occasions, usually in discussions of Russian literature.² He never considers specific developments among the Austrian Slavs, and never mentions Jernej Kopitar at all. However, many of the Germans Berlin discusses in depth influenced the latter directly (Herder, Fichte), and/or knew him personally (e.g., Goethe, Jakob Grimm, the Schlegels). Furthermore, some of them are the same kind of transitional figure that he was, and Berlin meticulously spells out the ways the two philosophies come together in their thought. Therefore, Berlin's methodology offers intriguing possibilities for clarifying Kopitar's place within the early history of the Romantic Movement.

Here is not the place to rehash the differences between Enlightenment and Romantic philosophy in detail: this is a familiar (if, perhaps, still controversial) topic that has generated a small library of scholarly and popular writings. Be that as it may, one still finds general agreement about the nature of Enlightenment thought: for Berlin, its three bedrock principles are that all genuine questions have answers; that these answers are "knowable, [and] can be discovered by means which can be learnt and taught to other persons ..."; and that all these answers are compatible with one another, since "[i]t is a logical truth that one true proposition cannot contradict another".³ Taking these precepts further, all this clearly implies that these questions and answers are universally valid for all people; it also suggests that the only way to approach them is through scientific methods of deduction and induction.⁴ Key words that all educated people would associate with the Enlightenment, therefore, include: "reason", "rational", "mathematical", and "universalist". Its aesthetics are connected with "calm grandeur" and "noble simplicity";⁵ or "fixed grandeur, dignity,

¹ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*. The text is based on a series of lectures that Sir Isaiah delivered in Washington, D. C. in 1965.

² See, for instance, Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, pp. 82 (on the "superfluous man" as a Romantic trope); 135 (on Nikolai Gogol's fantastical story, "The Nose"); and 56, 83, 102 (on Dostoevsky).

³ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, pp. 21-22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[and] authority”⁶; its culture is urban,⁷ aristocratic,⁸ and, by and large, elitist.⁹ Regarding language, these elites, generally, were happy to impose French as a “universal language” on the rest of the continent;¹⁰ but they could also declare, with the *abbé* Dubos, that “[w]hat one has felt and thought in one language one can express with equal eloquence in any other.”¹¹ Finally, Barzun¹² writes of the Enlightenment impulse to “enforc[e] [order] upon all things”: that is, it was nothing if not prescriptivist—toward language, as toward society and art and most other things.

In this massive literature there is also a general consensus about the nature of Romanticism. Historians commonly stress how cataclysmic the transition to it was: Berlin calls it “the single greatest shift in the consciousness of the West”¹³ and others use such terms as “the birth of the modern,”¹⁴ and “the age of transformation.”¹⁵ It is consistently described as a full-blown revolt against the Enlightenment—very angry, and very self-conscious: Berlin¹⁶ from around p. 34 feels like a long parade of enraged German and English intellectuals equating French Enlightenment principles with death.¹⁷ Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the salient characteristics of the Romantic Movement are essentially the polar opposites of the ones given for the Enlightenment above. They include strife and energy;¹⁸ action and risk;¹⁹ the rights and initiative of the individual—both the individual person, and the individual national group;²⁰ innovation;²¹ and, above all, emotion and faith.²²

One thing that is manifest from Berlin’s account is that this sea change was *gradual*. What we are studying are not two discrete units (“Enlightenment” vs. “Romantic”), but rather two intersecting continua, one temporal and one spatial: ideas that have their origin in the German Late Enlightenment mature gradually over time as they pass from person to person and spread gradually to other countries, where they are modified by local personalities and cultural conditions. Many of the German luminaries profiled by Berlin as crucial to

⁶ Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁸ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 39.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰ Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 39.

¹¹ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 44.

¹² Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 39.

¹³ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 1.

¹⁴ Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern*.

¹⁵ Leslie, *The Age of Transformation*.

¹⁶ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43, 49, 50.

¹⁸ Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 37.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 97, 98.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 144.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

the development of Romantic thought (e.g., Kant, Goethe, Fichte) did not view themselves as Romantic, and indeed were openly hostile to the new movement.²³ Even that arch-Romantic icon, Lord Byron, wrote “old-fashioned” verse which included “favorite neoclassic type[s]”, and once declared that the Romantics are “all in the wrong, one as much as the other ... upon a wrong revolutionary poetical system, or systems, not worth a damn in itself”.²⁴ This is why, at least in part, defining Romanticism precisely has always been a notoriously difficult task: a “trap”, a “dangerous and confused subject”,²⁵ and even “nothing that need trouble a healthy man”.²⁶ Thus, I believe, it is more helpful in general to consider people active in the period, say, from 1780 to 1850 not as *either* Romantic *or* not-Romantic, but rather as *more or less* Romantic.

This seems to be especially true in East Central Europe and Russia, where Romanticism took very different paths than in the West. For instance, Alexander Pushkin, who for many literary historians is Russia’s preeminent Romantic poet, had a very ambiguous relationship to the new movement: like Byron, his poetics are, in many ways, more of the previous era, and he often presents “Romanticism” as little more than a pose that dandies like to assume.²⁷ When later writers, such as the important critic Vissarion Belinsky, treat Romanticism, it is often precisely as this—a set of cheap, superficial clichés, employed to create an effect.²⁸ As late as 1844, the Romantic Czech-Slovak pan-Slavist Ján Kollár, in the expanded German version of his famous essay “*Über die literarische Wechselseitigkeit zwischen den verschiedenen Stämmen und Mundarten der slawischen Nation*”, can still display hopeless confusion about what Romanticism is and what it is not, and freely mix Enlightenment principles (e.g., “human life is the development of reason”²⁹) with the Romantic (“in literature, the complete nation sets down its spirit’s treasures, the harvest of its life, and its view of the world ...”)³⁰.

It is in this context that we should consider the work of Jernej Kopitar, a man whose life is virtually coterminous with the conventional dates often

²³ “Kant hated Romanticism. He detested every form of extravagance, fantasy, ... any form of exaggeration, mysticism, vagueness, confusion” (Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 68); for Goethe, “... Romanticism is disease, ... classicism is strong, fresh, gay, sound” (*ibid.*, p. 14); meanwhile, “Fichte’s deep respect for the mind as an instrument of logical inquiry ... prevented him from being a true Romantic” (Kelly, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte*, p. ix).

²⁴ See *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, p. 287.

²⁵ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 1.

²⁶ Sir Author Quiller-Couch, quoted in Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 20.

²⁷ For example, Eugene Onegin, the prototype of the Russian “superfluous man” has a portrait of Byron on the wall and a statuette of Napoleon his table, but is described by the narrator as “[j]ust an apparition/a shadow, null and meaningless,/a Muscovite in [Childe] Harold’s dress ...”. See Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, pp. 186-89.

²⁸ See, in particular, Belinsky’s screed against “our romanticists” in his important “Survey of Russian literature of 1847”: Matlaw, *Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov*, pp. 52-57.

²⁹ Kollár, *Reciprocity between the Various Tribes and Dialects of the Slavic Nation*, p. 103.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

given for the Romantic Movement in Europe.³¹ He is repeatedly described in the scholarly literature “as a pivot [in] the transition between old-fashioned and innovative scholarship, between Enlightenment and Romanticism”.³² Pogačnik declares that “[Kopitar] lives in the transition from the rationalist to the romantic scheme of fundamental structure”,³³ and that his ideas combine “enlightenment philosophy ... and the romantic sense for individuality”.³⁴ Similarly, Stanislav Hafner discerns in his early work a “transition from Enlightenment [thought] to the romantic historical way of thinking”,³⁵ and a combination of “the enlightened humanism of *Josephismus*³⁶ and romantic historicism”.³⁷ Rado Lencek, meanwhile, describes him as a rationalist in temperament and a Romantic in philosophy, someone who during his whole life was divided between the reality of the past and a vision of the future.³⁸ Lencek uses such terms as “post-classical” and “early romantic” to describe Kopitar,³⁹ while Pogačnik repeatedly calls him “*predromantični*”.⁴⁰

So, Kopitar seems to fit right in with most of the figures that were active in Europe in the first decades of the 19th century. How exactly does he compare to them? In what ways is he *more* Romantic than his predecessors, and *less* so than those who followed him? In trying to answer these questions, I will key on three men discussed at length in Berlin: ⁴¹ J. G. von Herder,⁴² for Berlin one of the founders of the Romantic Movement; J. G. Fichte,⁴³ at first a “restrained romantic” who later proclaims a more “unbridled Romanticism”;⁴⁴ and Friedrich Schlegel, who is for Sir Isaiah “the greatest harbinger, the greatest herald and

³¹ Kopitar's dates are 1780-1844; in Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 98, the time frame for the heyday of Romanticism in Europe is ca. 1780-1850. Meanwhile, Berlin's dates for the height of the Romantic Movement in Germany are 1760-1832 (Berlin *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 12); and the dates 1798-1832 are given for Romanticism in England in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, p. 1.

³² Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, p. 9.

³³ Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 50.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁵ Hafner, *Jernej Kopitar kot avstroslavist*, p. 28.

³⁶ On the reign of Joseph II, see Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918*, pp. 119-33, *et passim.*; on the significance of the Theresian reforms and *Josephismus* for the Slovenes, see (*inter alia*) Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 133-134, and Luthar, *The land Between*, pp. 236-249.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁸ Lencek, *To Honor Jernej Kopitar*, pp. 65-66.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴⁰ However, according to Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 131-32, Pogačnik was the only Slovene scholar in the 20th century to use this term when discussing the Slovene renaissance. Also see below, footnote 103.

⁴¹ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 57-67.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-97.

⁴⁴ Berlin treats Fichte at the end of Ch. 4, “The Restrained Romantics”, but continues his discussion at the start of Ch. 5, “Unbridled Romanticism”.

prophet of romanticism that ever lived”.⁴⁵ Kopitar himself cites the first as an important influence; refers to the second occasionally in his early writings; and personally knew the third in Vienna.

As already mentioned, scholars agree that the foundation of Kopitar’s thought is straight out of the 18th century. Pogačnik connects virtually all of the people who most influenced the young Kopitar with the late Central European Enlightenment,⁴⁶ including the historian A. L. Schlözer;⁴⁷ the linguist F. J. C. Adelung;⁴⁸ and L. A. Muratori, whom Pogačnik calls the “founder of ... so-called reform Catholicism or the Catholic Enlightenment”,⁴⁹ and therefore “one of the more important spiritual founders of *Josephism*” in the Habsburg Empire.⁵⁰ Kopitar, he declares, conceived of culture “as a logical path which it is possible to define by reason”;⁵¹ his work is guided by a “strict respect for facts, which excludes any working of the imagination”;⁵² and he considered “scientific truth ... the highest value”.⁵³ Furthermore, his was a soul that was “regulated by rationality”.⁵⁴ “Logical”, “reason”, “facts”, “scientific”, “rationality”—these are all buzzwords which are regularly used to characterize the Enlightenment. So is “mathematical”, of course, so it is telling that Pogačnik (following Zois) uses the word “geometrical” at one point to describe Kopitar’s mind.⁵⁵

However, among these influences, Pogačnik includes one of Isaiah Berlin’s “true fathers of Romanticism”, the philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder.⁵⁶ Sir Isaiah rather dramatically declares that the German philosopher “did plunge a most terrible dagger into the body of European rationalism” by rejecting its universalism in favor of what could be called multiculturalism (if it is appropriate to use this modern term to describe his views): “each human group must strive after that which lies in its bones”;⁵⁷ “you can understand other human beings only in terms of [their own unique environment and history]”;⁵⁸ “each man belongs to the group he belongs to [and must] speak the truth as

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 15; also pp. 93, 104-5, 113-14, *et passim*.

⁴⁶ See Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 198; all of his third chapter “*Dejavnost*” (pp. 51-85) concerns Kopitar’s intellectual background.

⁴⁷ Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, pp. 51-55.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 169-70.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 58.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵² Ibid., p. 90.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 209.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 208.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 91; see also Paternu, *Kopitar—Prešeren*, p. 199.

⁵⁶ On Herder as a father of Romanticism, see Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, esp. pp. 57-67; on Herder’s influence on Kopitar, see—*inter alia*—Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, pp. 56-57, 72, *et passim*. Also see Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, esp. pp. 132-134. The German philosopher’s 18th-century pedigree, by contrast, is stressed in Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, pp. ix, 57.

⁵⁷ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 66.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

it appears to him ... [in the words that have been] passed on to him in some kind of inherited stream of traditional images":⁵⁹ i.e., in his own native language, which is "the soul" of the nation he belongs to.⁶⁰ These convictions are the source of what Berlin calls Herder's delight in the vast variety of human cultures,⁶¹ particularly those that are "native", "untouched" —that is, what we would call folk culture. And among the world's bucolic, "uncorrupted" folk cultures, the Prussian sage was particularly fond of the Slavs, whom he apotheosized (*inter alia*) in Book XVI, Ch. 4 of his opus, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.⁶²

While there is some dispute about when Kopitar first encountered Herder—and through what specific works⁶³—he includes a long quote about the Slavs from *Ideen* in the introduction to his first major publication, his 1808/1809 Slovene grammar;⁶⁴ from the first, he was also "deeply influenced [by Herder's] views on the importance of the national language".⁶⁵ His rhapsodic descriptions of the vastness of the Slavic nation (including the inflated population figure of 50,000,000 for which France Prešeren later ridiculed him)⁶⁶ could obviously have been suggested by Herder ("... a vast territory extending from the Don to the Elbe, and from the Adriatic Sea to the Baltic ..."),⁶⁷ although they are also reminiscent of August Schlözer's work.⁶⁸

A "true father of Romanticism" Herder might be (and Berlin is certainly not alone in describing him as such),⁶⁹ but he still remains, at his core, a typical late-Enlightenment humanist. It is as such that Hans Kohn, for example, contrasts him with the Slavic Romantic nationalists whom he inspired, who "often carried national resentments, claims, and exclusivism to an extreme unknown in Herder".⁷⁰ Barnard, too, discusses how the Romantics who fol-

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁶⁰ See Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, p. 95.

⁶¹ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 64.

⁶² See Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, pp. 482-84.

⁶³ For a concise discussion of the question, see Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 100-103.

⁶⁴ Kopitar, *Grammatik der slavischen Sprache*, p. xi. The grammar was already at the publisher's in late 1808, but the date on the title page was 1809; both dates have been used in the scholarly literature.

⁶⁵ Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, p. 99.

⁶⁶ See Kopitar, *Grammatik der slavischen Sprache*, p. iii.

⁶⁷ Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, pp. 482-83.

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Schlözer, *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte*, p. 222: "From Ragusa on the Adriatic to the coast of the North Sea, from Kamchatka near Japan in the east, to the Baltic in the west ..."; Kohn, *Pan-slavism*, p. xi, provides a nearly identical quote from Schlözer's *Nestor* (1802). Merchiers points out that Slovene intellectuals of the period were probably better acquainted with Schlözer than with Herder, and that, in any case, "Herder's ideas did not differ that much from Schlözer's" (Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, p. 13).

⁶⁹ Barzun also seems to include Herder among the early Romantics (Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern*, p. 92); while Merchiers does so most emphatically (Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism*, p. 95).

⁷⁰ Kohn, *Pan-slavism*, p. 10.

lowed Herder often distorted his basic tenets.⁷¹ Berlin, for his part, carefully traces the gradual development of Romantic thought in Germany from Herder through Fichte and Schiller, etc., and onto his “unbridled” Romantics (e.g., the Schegel brothers, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and others).⁷² This begs the question of where Kopitar fits on this schematic historical continuum, namely: Herder → the “restrained” German Romantics → the “unbridled” German Romantics, and onto Ján Kollár and the other Pan-Slav activists that are the subject of Kohn’s work.⁷³ I would like to suggest that Jernej Kopitar is basically an Austrian-Slavic-Catholic equivalent of Berlin’s “restrained” Romantics who occasionally (like, for instance, Fichte) shades into the later, “unbridled” category: like them, he can be seen as starting from Herder, but taking the next logical step forward, away from his Enlightenment roots; like them, he generally sees himself as continuing Enlightenment traditions, and he can get most impatient with the younger generation, who are more likely to identify directly with the Romantic Movement. Of course, “similar” does not mean “identical”: Kopitar’s position as a Slavic peasant living in Catholic, multiethnic Austria naturally differs from that of the mostly Protestant Germans who are the subject of Berlin’s study; this just means, however, that he can be viewed as an interesting local variation of what was clearly an evolutionary process in Central European culture.

Isaiah Berlin contrasts J. G. Fichte’s philosophy to Herder’s in terms of *action* versus *contemplation*: “... Life does not begin with disinterested contemplation of nature or of objects [says Fichte]. Life begins with action. Knowledge is an instrument ... provided by nature for the purpose of effective life, of action; knowledge is knowing ... what to do, knowing how to be, knowing how to adapt things to our use ...”;⁷⁴ later in this same section, he attributes to Fichte the notion that “I am not determined by ends, ends are determined by me”. This, for Berlin, is one of Fichte’s most important contributions to Romantic thought.⁷⁵ This is also something that sets Kopitar apart from his predecessors: throughout his early writings, Kopitar, like Fichte, calls precisely for *action*—and that in a particularly bold way for the time and place.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Barnard, *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, pp. 53-58.

⁷² See Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, Chs. 4 (“The Restrained Romantics”) and 5 (“Unbridled Romanticism”), pp. 68-117.

⁷³ The absolute time frame this formula suggests is ca. 1784 (the initial publishing date of Herder’s *Ideen*), to the late 1790s, to the 1810s (the Schegels’ first years in Vienna) to around 1836 (the publication of the first version of Kollár’s “Reciprocity”, from which Kohn quotes extensively).

⁷⁴ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, pp. 88-89.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁷⁶ Determining exactly how well Kopitar was acquainted with Fichte’s writings is beyond the scope of this paper. It is obvious that he had read him, however: he refers to him parenthetically in *Patriotische Phantasien*; see Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitar’s Kleinere Schriften*, p. 68.

What is more, he does so in a way that indeed suggests the belief that “ends are determined by me”: “When [Kopitar] spoke of his plans as a thirty-year old man in his letters ..., *this was a person who wanted to arrange the world according to his will, and was also convinced that the world wanted this*.”⁷⁷

Still, at the start of his scholarly career, Jernej Kopitar clearly saw himself as continuing the work of his older mentors and influences. He first learned of Herder, Schlözer, et al., through the Baron Sigmund Zois von Edelstein (known to posterity as Žiga Zois; 1747-1819) and Joseph Dobrovský (1753-1829);⁷⁸ Pogačnik, for one, has no problem viewing both of them as “men of the Enlightenment.”⁷⁹ Kopitar called the years he spent serving Zois in Ljubljana as secretary (1803-1808) “among the most pleasant of [his] life”,⁸⁰ and intimated that if not for the Baron, he would have entered the priesthood after graduating from school in 1799.⁸¹ Some have even speculated that he saw the Baron as a surrogate father.⁸² The great Czech philologist Dobrovský, to whom he wrote first in 1808 from Zois’s mansion in Ljubljana, was his “*verehrter Meister*” for the entire span of their relationship. Kopitar meticulously demonstrates his late-Enlightenment academic credentials throughout his celebrated 1809 grammar: there are four footnotes to Schlözer on the first two pages alone; “Herr Abbé Dobrovský” makes his first appearance on p. xix, then again on p. xxviii; there are references to the important contemporary German linguist Adelung throughout, especially in the long section on orthography, where the latter’s injunction, “*schreib, wie du sprichst*” is invoked several times (cf. p. 180, where it is repeated twice); I have already mentioned the long quote from Schlözer that appears in the introduction (p. xi).

However, from the very first there is a difference in tone and overall approach that sets Kopitar’s work apart from that of his “masters”. Neither Zois nor Dobrovský could be accused of engaging solely in idle contemplation: Zois guided the work of a circle of gifted amateur writers and scholars for nearly 40 years,⁸³ while Dobrovský essentially created the field of Slavic studies out of whole cloth through a series of vitally important publications starting in the

⁷⁷ Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 49; my italics.

⁷⁸ For basic biographical information on Zois, see Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 15-26; on Dobrovský’s life and career, see Jagić, *Istorija slavjanskoj filologiji*, pp. 100-137.

⁷⁹ On Zois, see Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, pp. 17-20, 130-42, *et passim*.; on Dobrovský, pp. 55-56, 60, *et passim*. For a much more nuanced consideration of Zois’s relationship to the Enlightenment, see Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 43-74, *et passim*. The relationship of Zois and Dobrovský to pre-Romanticism is beyond the scope of this paper, although there is ample reason to place them on the historical continuum between Herder and Kopitar.

⁸⁰ From his *Selbstbiographie* of 1839. See Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 5.

⁸¹ Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 7.

⁸² Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 154.

⁸³ On the general history of the Zois circle, see Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, especially pp. 19-26.

1790s. But Kopitar's plans were far more ambitious, ranging from establishing Slovene-language chairs in Inner Austrian seminaries to transforming the entire Habsburg Empire into a kind of federation in which its sizeable Slavic population enjoyed a status equal to the Germans and Hungarians. What is more, he takes on these grandiose projects with a surfeit of energy, daring, and presumption that at times alarms his mentors.

Kopitar's work even *looks* different in print—full of exclamation points and italics, which Lencek connects with his “ebullience”,⁸⁴ Kopitar also had a “powerful personality”,⁸⁵ and combined deep learning with passion and malicious wit: “[he possessed] erudition, ... [and] remarkable critical facilities, but also a passionate, impetuous nature that easily descended to intolerance”⁸⁶ (here Jagić specifically contrasts Kopitar with Dobrovský, who, he says, was “calmer, more equitable.”) In and of itself, this reminds us of what Berlin has to say about another important Romantic precursor, Jan Jacques Rousseau: “The actual substance of what Rousseau said was not so very different from the official enlightenment doctrine of the eighteenth century. What was different was the manner; what was different was the temperament”.⁸⁷

This difference in temperament was remarked at the time—and by Dobrovský himself, who at times seems abashed by Kopitar's tone. In his important 1810 piece, “*Patriotische Phantasien eines Slaven*”,⁸⁸ for instance, Kopitar refers to the Salzburg missionaries who first Christianized the Pannonian Slavs as “tithe-grubbers ... who had been too lazy to learn their language”,⁸⁹ and later declares that Austria needs to “prevent the cultivation of [Church Slavonic] from falling into the depraved hands of the Russians”.⁹⁰ The *Meister* in Prague could not let either of these *bon mots* pass without comment: in his letter to Kopitar of 7 August 1810, which contains a balanced assessment of “*Phantasien*”, he remarks curtly: “You should not have said anything about the depraved hands of the Russians. And I really must advise you not to provoke the Germans ...”.⁹¹ Interestingly, Dobrovský calls his Slovene acolyte a “fiery young man” in an 1811 letter,⁹² using a phrase that would now be considered redolent of Romantic cliché.

Kopitar's bold plans were sometimes more than Dobrovský could take. Early in his career, for example, the Slovene scholar called for the foundation

⁸⁴ Lencek, *The Modern Slovene Language Question*, p. 316, note 4.

⁸⁵ Bonazza, *The Correspondence between Josef Fesl and Augustin Theiner*, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Jagić, *Pis'ma Dobrovskago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, pp. viii, ix.

⁸⁷ Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, p. 53.

⁸⁸ *Vaterländische Blätter*, Jahrg. III., pp. 87-93; reprinted in Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 61-70; and in Lencek, *To Honor Jernej Kopitar*, pp. 195-215 (English translation), and pp. 215-21 (a facsimile of the original edition).

⁸⁹ Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 62.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁹¹ Jagić, *Pis'ma Dobrovskago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, p. 157.

⁹² See Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 7.

of a Slavic academy in Vienna, which, to him, was the “center of activity [*der Tummelplatz*] of all Slavs, “from the South and North, the West and East“.⁹³ He first expands on the idea to Dobrovský in his letter of 1-5 February 1810: it would be very desirable (he writes) if Slavic scholars, scattered geographically and often working at cross purposes, acquired a “choirmaster” (*Chorführer*) and a *point de railllement*; the best thing to do would be to found an *Académie Slave* in Vienna. Existing Slavic academies in Prague, Warsaw, and St. Petersburg (as well as all future academies in other Slavic countries) would become affiliates (*Faktoryen*) of this central one.⁹⁴ A bit later in this same letter, after holding forth on other topics, he comes back to the idea, asserting that this new institution would be able to restore the Cyrillic translation of the Bible before still-extant old Church Slavonic manuscripts rot in Turkish and Russian monasteries. “One [can] just imagine the *Académie slave*”, he muses. “Your Honor [i.e., Dobrovský] the president, ... other Czechs, Poles, the more impartial Russians (sic; *Russorum aequiores*) ... etc., etc., as members!”⁹⁵ However, the putative president of the future Slav academy is skeptical: in his response of 6 March, Dobrovský weaves a humorous scene in which members of the hypothetical body squabble over what letters to include in a common Slavic alphabet, and “... after a few [such] sessions, ... the academy would dissolve”.⁹⁶

However, Kopitar did not let the matter rest here; and, significantly, he did not confine himself to an epistolary debate with his mentor in Prague, but made the matter public in at least two of the articles he published in *Vaterländische Blätter* in that same year 1810. In the first,⁹⁷ he takes a German writer to task in the name of “the future Slavic academy” for ignorant comments made about the Slavs in an 1809 article.⁹⁸ (In his typically irrepressible style, he claims in this article that the Russian Slavs of Novgorod were more cultured than the Norsemen who forcibly united them in the Middle Ages, and declares that German travelers to Russia find the Russian peasant superior to their own “in regard to [both their] spiritual and physical agility”)⁹⁹ He raises the stakes even higher when he returns to the subject later that year, at the end of “*Patriotische Phantasien*”: here, Kopitar seems to be addressing not fellow philologists or journalists, but the highest ranks of the Austrian government itself! He claims that founding a chair of Church Slavonic in Vienna (the

⁹³ From his letter to Dobrovský of 15-17 May 1810; Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 149.

⁹⁴ Jagić, *Pis'ma Dobrovskago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, p. 91.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

⁹⁷ *Vaterländische Blätter*, Jahrg. II, pp. 411-14.

⁹⁸ The full title of the article is “*Adresse der künftigen slavischen Akademie an den Verfasser des Aufsatzes: 'Das vormalige und das künftige Illyrien' im Decemberhefte der von Arch-enholzischen Minerva 1809*”; it is reprinted in Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 34-39.

⁹⁹ Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 38.

first step toward establishing a Slavic academy) would make the millions of Serbs now living in Austria rejoice to see the Habsburgs take their “sacred language” so seriously: “Psychological obstacles [to the Serbs becoming loyal citizens] would be removed by psychological remedies, with love for love”. Furthermore, the move would draw the Serbs still languishing under Turkish misrule into Vienna’s orbit and away from their “linguistic and religious kin to the north” (i.e., Russia) to whom they are attracted “because they think that the [Austrian emperor] does not appear to concern himself with them”.¹⁰⁰ Now, this would be a rather audacious comment for *any* Austrian writer to make in 1810—during wartime, no less—but especially a 30-year-old Slav of peasant origin working in the Imperial Library who has been living in the capital for less than two years. Petrovskij also points out that simply calling for an all-Slavic academy at all was bold for the time: after all, there was not yet even a *German* academy in Austria.¹⁰¹ Characteristically, the recognized dean of Slavic studies, Dobrovský, is not ready for such a bold step: he takes Kopitar to task over this putative Slavic academy in the same sentence in which he criticizes him for “the depraved hands of the Russians”.¹⁰²

Jernej Kopitar never disputed Baron Zois’s place as the leader of the “Slovene enlightenment”,¹⁰³ but Vidmar demonstrates how, in fact, effective control of the Zois circle’s activities quietly passed to him around 1810, after he had gotten established in Vienna.¹⁰⁴ Vidmar’s choice of words is interesting in light of Berlin’s terminology: “After 1809, Zois and Kopitar agreed to share leadership [of the circle]: [Kopitar] became the *vita activa*, and the baron the *vita contemplativa* of the Slovene renaissance”.¹⁰⁵ What this meant in practice, basically, was that Zois took on the role of “senior advisor” as Kopitar expanded and internationalized the scope of the group’s activities,¹⁰⁶ although Vidmar suggests that the younger man also started telling the baron from Vienna how to handle the members still living in Ljubljana.¹⁰⁷

Let us now consider another project from the 1810s that illustrates the

¹⁰⁰ Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, p. 70.

¹⁰¹ Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel’nosti V. Kopitarja*, pp. 258-59.

¹⁰² See Jagić, *Pis’ma Dobrovskago I Kopitara v povremenom porjadke*, pp. viii, ix, p. 157. When Kopitar published a revised and expanded version of this article in 1813 as “*Blick auf die Slavischen Mundarten, ihre Literatur, und die Hülfsmittel sie zu studieren*”, he did, in fact, leave out all discussion of the Slavic academy and “the depraved hands”, and changed “tithe-grubbers” to “missionaries”; see notes to the translation in Lencek, *To Honor Jernej Kopitar*, particularly nos. 9 (p. 208) and 76 (p. 214); there is also a facsimile of the original edition of “*Blick*” on pp. 222-28.

¹⁰³ See Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 130-132 on the terminology used by Slovene scholars to describe this period in Slovene cultural history: they use “enlightenment” in very different sense than I (following Isaiah Berlin) employ it in this article.

¹⁰⁴ Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 139.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-141.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

difference, not only between Kopitar and Zois, but also between both of them and the next generation that had moved even further from Enlightenment values. This case, in fact, demonstrates what it meant to be a “restrained Romantic” in practice at a time when European thought was in a volatile state of flux. One of the important goals the young Kopitar proselytized was to have chairs in the Slovene language established at seminaries in the Inner Austrian provinces. He makes this case already in his 1809 grammar: “... *aside from all this*—a permanent chair of Slovenes *among the theologians* ... would be a good way to fight evil!”¹⁰⁸ The italics (in the original), the exclamation point, and the overheated rhetoric are, of course, characteristic, and serve to contrast Kopitar’s approach with his mentor’s: while education had been part of the Zois circle’s program from the very first, their efforts were largely confined to producing “a philosophical-critical grammar and dictionary”¹⁰⁹ along with “useful works ... for the common people (almanacs, translations of Holy Scripture, and technical manuals)”¹¹⁰ Kopitar’s more aggressive call for action helped produce concrete results: the Austrian emperor approved the creation of a Slovene chair at the seminary in Graz in the summer of 1811,¹¹¹ and the first occupant, Janez Nepomuk Primic (a law student at the local university) started teaching the following year.¹¹² Kopitar himself was actively involved in the selection process and read the applications for the post.¹¹³ Zois, too, is obviously invested in this process, but it is Kopitar who is being proactive. Primic also used Kopitar’s Slovene grammar as his textbook.¹¹⁴

Primic had been a student of Valentin Vodnik’s at the Ljubljana *Gymnasium*.¹¹⁵ Kopitar had known him since at least 1809, when he first mentions him in a letter to Zois.¹¹⁶ In 1810, he still thought highly enough of Primic to call him “my comrade from the country and fellow Slavist [*sodeležan in soslavist*]”¹¹⁷ but by 1811, their relationship had soured; Kopitar even opposed his candidacy for the Graz position for awhile, until it became obvious that he was the most qualified applicant.¹¹⁸ There certainly could be uncomplicated psychological reasons for this clash: Vidmar, for instance, suggests that Kopitar

¹⁰⁸ See Miklosich, *Bartholomäus Kopitars Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁰⁹ From Zois’s earliest preserved letter to Valentin Vodnik (20 March 1794); see Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 138, and Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 135).

¹¹⁰ Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 21.

¹¹¹ Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, p. 214.

¹¹² On Primic and the Graz chair, see Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, pp. 205-208, 210-211, 213-219; and Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 177-182).

¹¹³ Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, pp. 178-179; see also Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, 215.

¹¹⁴ Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, p. 208.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 206.

¹¹⁶ Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 177.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

was envious of Primic's rapid professional progress;¹¹⁹ and Petrovskij shows how Primic resented Kopitar's attempts to micromanage his work from Vienna, complaining of his "haughtiness and stubbornness ... Kopitar, whom no one can please ...".¹²⁰ However, it is just as clear that there is also an important generational difference here: even though Primic is only five years younger than Kopitar, he is far more "unbridled" in his Romanticism than the latter. His bristling at the Vienna Slavist's "guidance" bespeaks a Romantic sense of individualism, as does his "democratic" declaration that "a variety of opinions is not necessarily bad for the development of the [Slovene] renaissance".¹²¹ This statement in particular horrified both Zois and Kopitar: the former called Primic a "turncoat"¹²² and the latter wrote indignantly that "the lad has a bad character".¹²³ Even more significant, perhaps, is the fact that for the older men Primic's "Slavic enthusiasm" is too "loud":¹²⁴ that is, his sense of nationalism is more emotional and particularist, and therefore more Romantic. It is deeply ironic that Jernej Kopitar, whose comments about "Teutonic tithe-grubbers" had so appalled Joseph Dobrovský just months before, felt obliged to warn Primic and his friends about "poorly thought out expressions of patriotism" that could offend German sensibilities in Graz.¹²⁵

Kopitar's position as a restrained Romantic comes into even clearer focus when one considers his relationship with two of Isaiah Berlin's "unbridled" Romantics: the brothers August Wilhelm and (especially) Friedrich Schlegel, who also arrived in Vienna in 1808, only months before Kopitar himself.¹²⁶ Lencek once speculated that we "cannot but wonder ... why [Kopitar] did not absorb the contemporary wave of ideas" on language and literature that emanated (*inter alia*) from the brothers' circle in Vienna, implying that he was, in fact, largely closed to them.¹²⁷ However, Hafner¹²⁸ paints a somewhat more complex picture: to be sure, Kopitar often comes across here as a man uncom-

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹²⁰ Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, p. 217.

¹²¹ Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 180.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 180; this last phrase is particularly telling: Kopitar makes it sound like the age difference between him and Primic was far greater than it was.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹²⁵ Petrovskij, *Pervye gody dejatel'nosti V. Kopitarja*, p. 210; also Vidmar, *Zoisova literarna republika*, p. 182.

¹²⁶ Kopitar arrived in November, 1808, while A. W. Schlegel had come in the spring of that year, and Friedrich in August; according to Hafner, their Vienna circle was in full swing by October 31: Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, p. 9.

¹²⁷ Lencek, *The Modern Slovene Language Question*, p. 299. This article focuses on two younger Slovenes who were very open to the Schlegels' influence: Matija Čop and France Prešeren. It is significant that Kopitar opposed their conception of literary Slovene and Slovene literature so violently: this fact alone helps fix Kopitar's place within Central European cultural history, and is reminiscent of Fichte's relationship to the German Romantics. See *ibid.*, esp. pp. 301ff.

¹²⁸ Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik.

fortably seeking a comfortable *modus vivendi* with the younger generation, but Hafner still indicates some intriguing points of agreement between them.

Kopitar first brought Friedrich Schlegel to Dobrovský's attention in his letter of 19 February 1812.¹²⁹ This brief mention is actually rather shockingly dismissive: the Croats have epic songs just as marvellous as those of the Norsemen "which Schlegel and friends are rightly making such a fuss about" ("... *soviel Aufhebens machen*").¹³⁰ Numerous other references in letters of the 1810s and '20s suggest that Kopitar saw Friedrich Schlegel primarily as a source of information about Sanskrit and Indian literature.¹³¹ He was comfortable occasionally publishing in Schlegel's journal *Deutsches Museum*.¹³² However, Hafner points out that Kopitar was decidedly *not* comfortable with the journalistic polemics of the age: when he briefly fills in as editor on the *Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur* in 1824, he writes Dobrovský that one of his goals would be "to give the reader a little rest from theology, polemics, etc."¹³³ He also had no use for the Catholic restoration that was such an important part of the *Wiener Romantik*: he refers to Schlegel and other members of the Hofbauer circle as "the fantastic Catholics",¹³⁴ and to their spirituality as "*Altweiberkatholizismus in höchster Form*".¹³⁵ Finally, Hafner points out that Kopitar's name has never appeared in any of the published memoir literature from the period, and that he apparently never visited any of the numerous literary salons and societies of the era—not even those frequented by such acquaintances as Jakob Grimm.¹³⁶

Still, there are fascinating connections between Kopitar and the Schlegels that suggest that the Slovene philologist was not entirely closed to their brand of Romanticism. Hafner and Lencek both see a similarity between Kopitar's prose style in German and that of both Schlegels.¹³⁷ In particular, he invokes a "typical Romantic triad"—Antiquity, Genuineness, Native—in formulating his plan to have Austria purchase old Slavic manuscripts from monasteries on Mt. Athos in the '20s.¹³⁸ And Kopitar's famous weekly gatherings at his favorite inn *Zum weißen Wolf* can be compared to the other *Tischgesellschaften* of the *Wiener Romantik* that he allegedly avoids; indeed, the guest list there for Kopitar's birthday celebration on 23 August 1827 reads like a veritable "who's

¹²⁹ Jagić, *Pis'ma Dobrovškago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, pp. 232-237; Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, p. 17.

¹³⁰ Jagić *Pis'ma Dobrovškago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, p. 234.

¹³¹ Cf. Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, pp. 11, 18.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹³³ Jagić, *Pis'ma Dobrovškago I Kopitara v povremennom porjadke*, p. 502; Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, p. 21.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹³⁷ See Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, p. 23, and Lencek, *The Modern Slovene Language Question*, pp. 300-301.

¹³⁸ Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, pp. 25-26.

who” of Austrian Slavic Romanticism: P. J. Šafarík, Václav Hanka, František Palacký, Vuk Karadžić.¹³⁹ Could his avoidance of the more famous Romantic salons in Vienna have less to do with ideological disagreements, and more with Austro-Slavic patriotism? Perhaps he was not so much *avoiding* them as wishing to *compete* with them.

In conclusion, Jernej Kopitar can thus be seen as a typical Central European “restrained Romantic“, to use Isaiah Berlin’s terminology. He can be compared to the German philosopher J. G. Fichte: the latter also started from J. G. von Herder, called for direct action (as opposed to mere contemplation), and had little patience for younger people influenced by him but prepared to take his ideas farther than he was willing to go himself. Like Fichte, we can see that Kopitar develops only so far in the direction of full-blown Romanticism, but then stops. Alas, in the history of the Slavic Renaissance in the first half of the 19th century, this makes his position very lonely indeed: he is nearly 30 years younger than the Enlightenment forefather of the Renaissance (Dobrovský), but himself considerably older than all of the men who brought it to fruition, for whom (as often as not) he was a *monstrum scientiarum*,¹⁴⁰ if not “the enemy of all Slavdom”.¹⁴¹

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¹³⁹ Hafner, Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der Wiener Romantik, p. 24; other guests included Vienna publisher Josef Hormayr, the German historian Leopold Ranke, and Joseph Dobrovský.

¹⁴⁰ See Pogačnik, *Jernej Kopitar*, p. 174.

¹⁴¹ Vaclav Hanka calls Kopitar this in at least two letters to Russian officials after his death in 1844; see Francev, *Pis'ma k Vjačeslavu Ganke iz slavjanskix zemel'*, pp. 178-79, 1,142.

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Predromantično/postklasično: misel Jerneja Kopitarja v evropskem kontekstu

Povzetek

Jerneja Kopitarja (1780–1844) so dolgo opisovali kot »predromantičnega« misleca, ki je lovil ravnotežje med razsvetljenstvom in romantiko. Očitno je, da temelji njegova misel še v 18. stoletju. Kot je poudaril Jože Pogačnik v obeh monografijah o Kopitarju, so bili tako rekoč vsi ljudje, ki so pomembno vplivali na njegovo izoblikovanje, povezani z načeli poznega srednjeevropskega razsvetljenstva, tako njegov mentor Žiga Zois, nemški jezikoslovci, pa tudi A. L. Schlözer in patriarh slavistike Josef Dobrovský. Malo pozornosti pa so raziskovalci posvetili »romantični« strani Kopitarja, in to kljub temu, da je bilo od nekdaj znano, kako veliko dolguje Herderju, ki je bil po Isaiahu Berlinu eden od »resničnih očetov romantike«. Pravzaprav Kopitar precej posrečeno spada v Berlinovo skupino »zmernih romantikov«, ki so trdili, da se »življenje začne z dejanjem«. Vsekakor pa bi morali v njem prepoznati ključno osebnost v srcu intelektualnega vrtinca, ki je preoblikoval srednjeevropsko misel v zgodnjem 19. stoletju.