

THE RELATION BETWEEN POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY

NOVALIS' *HYMNS* AS AN ILLUSTRATION

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George Steiner's criticism of the triumph of the "secondary" over the "primary" shows that the relationship between poetry and theory becomes problematic whenever dialogue is replaced by hierarchy. The very structure of modern subjectivity is jeopardized whenever the relation between poetry and theory becomes hierarchical or when theory tries to capture the literary text in its entirety. Focusing on Novalis' poetic and philosophical opus, this paper asserts that literary criticism should be aware of hierarchical structures in the methods it uses, and should transform the hierarchical relation between poetry and theory into a dialogic relation.

Keywords: Novalis, romanticizing, self-consciousness, theory of poetry in early German Romanticism

One of the emphases of the comparative literature symposium at Vilenica (Lipica) in 2005 was upon the supposedly problematic relation between theory and literature in contemporary literary studies, whereby the literary text becomes lost in the flow of the secondary – the flow of interpretations. George Steiner sees in this phenomenon a “symptom” of a loss of primacy (Steiner 38–39), of a slip into the “Satanic chaos” (Steiner 44), of the victory of the secondary over the primary, which is henceforth available only as a diminished and inexorably dismembered caricature of itself. The crusade against interpretation, however, leads Steiner onto thin ice. When he undertakes the role of protector of “primacy” and esthetic experience as such, or when he acknowledges reinterpretation by means of some other poetic language as the only legitimate interpretation of a work of art, he loses contact with the role of reflection in modernity. The danger here is not of the loss of something superficial, it is the danger of obliteration of the consciousness of the constitutional function that reflection performs in the dynamics of subjectivity from Romanticism onwards. Descriptive-analytic

attempts to pronounce through the given unsayable establish an unsurpassable gap between the text and the interpretation, which the interpretation or the theory of interpretation should consider from the very beginning¹ if it really wants to follow the basic structural features of subjectivity in modernity. If the interpretation wishes to merge completely with the text or with what keeps slipping away from it in the text and must, due to the very structure of the interpretational act, remain separated from it, the interpretation finds itself in danger of the fatal pretension of a complete capture of the sense of the text, the sense of the author and the reception of the text by the public. The cancer-like metastasizing of interpretations, which gradually fill up the primary text and the primary experience, is therefore the asymptotic, newest form of such pretension.

To a certain extent Steiner's anger is legitimate, but the tone of his speech leads to an unreflective revival of the Romantic conception of poetry as something that only poets can (adequately!) understand. Similar to the cancer-like metastasis of interpretation, Steiner's anger destroys the subtle relation between the interpretation and the text, seeking to overcome the gap between the horizon of interpretation and the horizon of the text. Therefore it is possible to conclude that the parasitizing of theory on arts is a symptom – albeit not of ruin, but of a destroyed relation and a destroyed difference. Similarly problematic to the attempt of a theory that would encompass something infinite with something finite, describe an open system with a sophisticated but closed system, is Steiner's attempt to establish an opposite hierarchy and set poetry above commentary.

It seems that the actual problem is the establishment of a hierarchy. It is possible to clearly describe Steiner's conception in terms of Lacan's reinterpretation of the Hegelian relation between the master (poetry) and the servant (theoretical commentary). In this relation the master is prepared to sacrifice life to gain freedom and unexpectedly also power, while the servant is willing to sacrifice freedom to save life.² According to Lacan, the servant's problem is not the master, but the idea of the infinite enjoyment (*jouissance*) of the latter and the phantasm of a future surplus of enjoyment that the servant would experience in the moment of the death of the master. The parallel with Lacan's reinterpretation of the relation between the servant and the master stops here, because the servant (theoretical commentary) with its immense persistence, according to Steiner, poisons the master and takes his place. Unfortunately, this does not result in the servant appropriating the master's enjoyment. Enjoyment cannot be attained by the servant-master, because the master – while we stay within the hierarchical relation – did not have a body from the very beginning and could not be killed. The master can be eliminated only by assigning him an esthetic body, but by doing so the servant risks having to give up his own limitation and his passion for systematization, which deprives him of freedom, but enables knowledge and therefore life. If the servant wants to stop serving, he has to risk the terror of the withdrawal of life – but would this not make him truly alive? The theory, in short, is pervaded by the terror of dehierarchization and because of this the theoretical commentary wanes each time it attempts

to encompass the literary text as a whole: the commentary basically kills the text instead of bringing it to life. The gap or the difference between the text and the interpretation therefore has to be the opening premise of every discussion about a literary text, and at the same time protection, which prevents hierarchy and its violence.

Against Steiner's position it is possible to place the thinking of the later Heidegger about the proximity of poeticizing and thinking, which move on the same level, both attempting to distinguish Being from existence. Thus the essence of their proximity is not a "garrulous cloudy mixture of two modes of saying" (*geschwätzigten trüben Mischung beider Weisen des Sagens*, and so not the examining of hybrid theoretical-literary genres), but for them each to sense in the speech "a delicate yet luminous difference" (*eine zarte, aber helle Differenz*; Heidegger, *Unterwegs* 184, 185). The ontological difference opened in the circumstances in turn opens the distance between poeticizing and thinking, and directs the clarity of Being to their joint darkness (Heidegger, *Unterwegs* 185). Nevertheless, the difference between poetry and thinking exists: poetry creates and, in the clarity through speech, it discloses the historical truth of existence and the truth of its Being, whereas thinking comprehends this disclosed Being.³ Nonetheless, according to Heidegger, the relation between poetry and thinking is not hierarchical, but is a relation of equality.

The later Heidegger formed his thinking on Being and on speech as a means of disclosing Being, using Hölderlin's poetic, which was unjustifiably "banished" from Jena Romanticism by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy. It is important to emphasize that, if Steiner's thesis refers to the field of meta-thinking of literary studies about itself, then Heidegger's thesis about the relation between theory and literature points to the ontological relation between thinking and poetry. The move from Steiner to Heidegger is the move that dissolves hierarchy into an equality of partners in the dialogue. Behind the thesis about the dialogic relation between poetry and thinking hides a thesis about modern subjectivity as a cooperation of reflection and feeling.

If we think about the problem in the light of modernity, we should not underestimate the role that early German Romanticism (*Frühromantik*) played both in the thinking of the relation between poetry and philosophy as well as in the poetic thematization of this relation. If the credit for Heidegger's inclination towards poetry goes to Hölderlin's poetry, Manfred Frank similarly developed his apology of poetry through the experience of Novalis's poetic and thinking.⁴ As Heidegger had to consider speech and poetry to think of Being more clearly and to be able to wrench his thought from the grip of metaphysics, Frank considered the poetry of early German Romanticism to be able to talk about individuality⁵ as a way out of metaphysics.

Heidegger and Frank's dialogue with poetry and a positive evaluation of its cognitive range are no coincidence: they both owe a lot to early German Romanticism.⁶ Both Hölderlin in his fragment *Urtheil und Seyn* (1795)⁷ and Novalis in the collection of fragments *Fichte-Studien* (1795/96)⁸ particularly criticize that feature of German idealism that attempts to find a stable ground in the modern subject, from which the subject would wholly

comprehend itself. Already Fichte realized that philosophical argumentation, *Grundsatzphilosophie*, goes around in circles and that the reflectively pre-supposed subject cannot be wholly encompassed with the intellect; but Fichte could not find a way out of this state.⁹ The search for a stable ground of subjectivity in Hölderlin and Novalis encountered severe criticism: each statement-cognition derived from a stable ground is, for Novalis, only an illusionary statement (*Scheinsatz*, cf. *FSt* #1). This is even more true in the case when the subject, reduced to reflection, sees itself as an object that should be cognized. With these affirmations, however, caution is required. The conclusion that intellectually ascertained truth is not solid truth is not an antirational criticism, but it is a criticism of reductive self-consciousness: in early German Romanticism a “version of epistemological and ontological realism” (Frank, *The Philosophical* 28) is present, which questions the absolute validity of each cognition of the subject and Being, derived exclusively from the reflexive consciousness.

Novalis and Hölderlin consolidated the criticism of self-consciousness reduced to reflexive consciousness with clear a differentiation of two types of consciousness. Apart from differentiating and estimating or reflexive consciousness (*Reflexion*), which according to Hölderlin’s epistemological analysis creates the original cut (*Ur-Teilung*) and causes the split into subject and object, a different type of consciousness exists. Kant and Fichte could not find it because they persisted with the problematic concept of intellectual intuition. This enclosed their understanding of self-consciousness in an “ocular metaphoric,” and with this always into the relation of the subject that looks at the object. Hölderlin also speaks about another type of consciousness that is not (yet) marked by the split into subject and object,¹⁰ but is characterized by some original homeliness with itself (*Vertrautheit mit Sich selbst*), which *has* always *known* without being directed towards the object. Frank calls this type of consciousness “pre-reflexive consciousness,”¹¹ and I myself will use the same notion. There are also other expressions to denote it. Hölderlin names this consciousness, in which the “subject” and the “object” are in the state of a before-split union, Being (*Seyn*), as something that has not yet been touched by the primary judgment/primary cut. On the basis of Jacobis’ philosophy and pietism, Novalis talks about feeling (*Gefühl*) or “feeling of oneself” (*Selbst-Gefühl*). Hölderlin and Novalis’ differentiation between pre-reflexive and reflexive consciousness outdistances Heidegger’s ontological difference by two centuries.¹² This on the other hand means that the very clear differentiation of two types of consciousnesses allows a clear look at Being, which is not only proved in their poetry, but also in their philosophical fragments. Novalis’ philosophical argumentation of the relation and difference between the two types of consciousness is sharper and argumentatively more thorough than Hölderlin’s. The most interesting thing is that *Fichte-Studien* was created before the *Hymns to the Night*. Did the philosophical thinking in this case occur before the poetry?

The problem of self-consciousness is closely connected to the question of the relation between philosophy and poetry, but not only this: the history

of valuation of the cognitive range of poetry shows that the latter is dependent upon the interpretation of self-consciousness. In this essay I will first concentrate on the aspect of *Fichte Studies*, which deals with the problem of self-consciousness and Being,¹³ and then I will show how these ideas are represented in the *Hymns to the Night* and in Novalis' comprehension of transcendental poetry. I have chosen the *Hymns to the Night* for the discussion because I agree with the assessment by Marta B. Helfer, who sees in the *Hymns* the theory and realization of the Romantic lyric, but also an example of realization of the absolute subject (Helfer 106).

Towards an Unreductive Comprehension of Self-consciousness

It is characteristic of reductive self-consciousness, limited to reflexive consciousness, that its apprehensions adopt a form of identity, a closed form. A is identical to A. What escapes reductive self-consciousness is exactly what reflexive consciousness cannot realize, and this is the self itself at the moment of thinking – the self that is before reflection. Therefore opposite to the “self,” which the reflexive consciousness establishes in theoretical cognition, always stands that pre-reflexive self, not given to reflection, which could be named “non-self” from the point of view of reflexive consciousness.¹⁴ For Novalis this results in the following: each assertion about Being, which has the form of a statement or identity (with an idea), is *apparently* real because instead of Being as a whole it apprehends only part of it and what only seems to be Being is called with the name of the whole (cf. *FSt* #1 and #14).¹⁵ The insufficiency of reflexive consciousness is also discussed in the first fragment of Novalis' *Allgemeine Brouillon*: “Everywhere we look for the unconditioned [*das Unbedingte*] and we always find only things [*Dinge*].” Novalis' sophisticated pun points out that the apprehended thing is only a truncation, a fossil of the unconditioned, and not the living, the wholeness that we are really looking for.

In poetry Novalis finds an approach to Being that is cognitively more whole. Thus already in *FSt* #1 he concludes: “We abandon the identical in order to represent it” (*um es darzustellen*). By this he does not allude to the descriptive encompassing of Being, but to the special power of poetic image, which can evoke Being-as-such wholly. Even though the representing of it thus cannot offer the fullness of Being, we believe in the image because of the activity of our imagination – the very belief in the representation activates an occurrence or a qualitative passage from the mere representation of X to something, which *is this itself*: “What *occurs*, already is” (*es geschieht, was schon Ist*). In the esthetic experience the whole Being is given in the manner of instant epiphany – that is, in the leap from everyday-like, indigent time into the time that encompasses all times and is therefore existentially whole. It is not only poetry, however, that leads to the wholeness of Being, but also philosophy when it *pre-sents* (*stellen es ... vor*) Being wholly, using something radical, non-identical – a sign.¹⁶ Later

on Novalis realized how philosophical thought could be corrected in order to comprehend Being as a whole.

To understand Novalis' proposal we should consider two modes of consciousness, reflection (*Reflexion*) and feeling (*Gefühl*);¹⁷ the first one is the ontological modus of philosophy, whereas the kingdom of the ontological modus of poetry begins on the border of philosophy (*FSt* #15).¹⁸ Because philosophy evokes the whole Being, the Romantic esthetic confers upon it the status of the elected or of the highest activity of the human spirit. However, in everyday, indigent¹⁹ time, marked by hunger for Being, and in a state, which works like a clock mechanism²⁰ according to the soulless laws of bureaucracy and common sense, the realization of the whole Being is not possible because there is always the reduction to reflection.

Novalis beautifully compares the reduction of self-consciousness to one sole modus with the attempt to square a circle. This thought in *FSt* #566 is followed by the conclusion about a holistic ideal of self-consciousness as a perpetual motion or oscillating,²¹ in which Novalis recognizes the alchemistic stone of wisdom or negative cognition.²² For a whole Being the realization of both modi of self-consciousness *simultaneously* is therefore crucial, so that the feeling feeds the reflection and simultaneously decomposes its artificial constructs. As analyses in Frank's *The Coming God* show, the early German Romantics were developing the thought of the possibility of a whole Being and a whole self-consciousness along with their reception of the myth of Dionysus as the god of opposites, and the god that is in perpetual transformation, but it is in this very oscillating from one opposite to another that he reaches the wholeness of Being. The arrival of such a god – here, the reception of the myth of Dionysus by the early German Romantics evolves into the myth of Dionysus-Christ – would signify a resumed realization of the wholeness of Being and with this the passage of the gods from the night and the dark (beyond the intellect), where they are forced to live in an indigent time, into the light and the day. The reception of the myth of the arriving god is based on the hope that what now exists only at the level of a mysterious cult will some day become a public ceremony. The mysterious cult, pushed into the underground, is of course poetry, which in the indigent time is the only one to make contact with the “gods.” Without poetry the wholeness of Being in indigent time is possible only as a hope in a future wholeness, placed at the end of time – or as a memory of the past realization of wholeness. Memory and hope, two different forms of hunger for Being,²³ were thematized in the fifth and sixth of Novalis' *Hymns to the Night*.

Nevertheless, from Novalis' reflection on transcendental philosophy it follows that poetry has to “come to the assistance of philosophy when the latter breathes too shallowly” (Frank, *Einführung* 248). Poetry should therefore subvert the dictate of reflexive consciousness and soften its rigid products but, if this were so, reflection could be corrected. However, how to reach, in reflection, the thinking of what is non-given to reflexive consciousness, and what is from the point of view of reflexive consciousness only negatively given? If reflection first has to reach the missing pole,

where only feelings can take it, then it is only possible to approach the cognition of Being from a consistent contemplation of difference – that is to say, from a clear distinction between the two types of consciousness.

The possibility of correction is offered to Novalis by an etymological explanation, in which reflection or reflexive consciousness is always a mirroring (*Spiegelung*). Each reflexive cognition is *like* a mirror image of the world and of Being,²⁴ and this is why this image is the opposite of Being (Frank, *Selbstgefühl* 245).²⁵ Everything that is in the reflexive cognition should be reflected back or inverted, to also obtain, along with what reflexive consciousness encompasses, what it does not encompass. The distortion of Being, which happens in the first act of reflexive consciousness, can be corrected by the second act of reflexive consciousness, which builds another mirror into the reflection and obtains the reflex of the reflex and along with this the “non-given.” Moreover, this is an interesting point: what appears as the “second” act is in fact more primary than the “first” mental act, which inverts Being into illusion (*Sein in Schein verkehrt*). Novalis called the described turn of the inverted *ordo inversus* (Frank, *Selbstgefühl* 245–46).

Along with these two acts of reflection, Novalis also discusses the act of representing as a free act (*FSt #476*), through which Being is given – not analytically as in philosophy, but truly as an unsayable and, to every imagining, fleeing *experience of wholeness*. If self-consciousness cannot be represented analytically, then the problem could be solved by presenting its unrepresentability. This is exactly what poetry does: represents the true Self as unrepresentable (*Darstellung des Undarstellbaren*)²⁶ or represents the spirit, “the entire inner world.”²⁷ Poetry thus realizes the time of the satisfied hunger for Being – the spiritual present, in which both the past and the future dissolve.²⁸ From this Novalis derives a special theory of a visual poetic *Darstellung*, which helps the poet transform language itself and make it so immediate that it could be used in the medium of poetry to represent – even though only negatively – the pure Self.²⁹

Poetry and Dionysus

The earlier thinking about self-consciousness as an oscillation and perpetual movement can symbolically be illustrated by the myth of Dionysus. This addition makes sense because early German Romanticism linked its thinking of the function poetry performs in “indigent” time to the reception of the myth. Poetry is of course only possible where the gods live, and because they have escaped from the light (and spiritual blindness) of the enlightened intellect, the place-time of poetry is the night. Here I would like to be a little more accurate: the night is beyond or outside (indigent) time and place,³⁰ it is outside the linear time of hope and memory, a “parallel” spiritual time belongs to it, which is the time of the fullness of Being. The fullness of Being here presents itself as ex-sistence, because only being outside (of the reduced self-consciousness) means being whole.

When Novalis discusses the poetry of night and dusk,³¹ he does not refer to the theory of poetry as a spiritual and mystical activity, but to the contact with “Dionysus,” who was also held in high esteem by other early German Romantics.³² “Dionysus” of course is a god and at the same time is not a god, but a symbolic representation of whole self-consciousness and ontological fullness.

When poets spring from the common time, marked by hunger for Being and by reductive self-consciousness, into the spiritual time of the “night”, they come into contact with the deity Dionysus. Moreover, in fact, in the kingdom of the night the words of everyday language become ambivalent; what the language says is not the unsayable that it evokes. For poetic language to acquire this performative ability, it is of course necessary to achieve a radical transformation of common, everyday language. Moreover, it is this transformation to which Novalis’ theory of “romanticizing” as a “qualitative intensification,”³³ through which poetic language acquires a secret, hieroglyphic, magical power, transforming all the known and limited into secret and infinite, refers. Such transformation of language happens only in the qualitative passage from everyday time to the time of the night as a wholeness of Being, in which the intellect sinks into sleep to recognize the “truth”. This sleep therefore is not common sleep, but a “holy sleep” (*Heilige Schlaf*, cf. *HN* #2), which metaphorically alludes to death, or the mystical death, which is followed only by a new, full life in “god.”

The poet Novalis does not, however, refer to *unio mystica*,³⁴ but to the level of cognition and knowledge, which is qualitatively higher than arid intellectual cognition, and becomes possible only with “philosophical” death.³⁵ In philosophical death every reduction to the reflexive consciousness dies; the death of the partial (fragmentary) self is thus a real philosophical act and the beginning of real philosophy (*HSt* #35). Only the symbolic descent into the underground and into sleep (as analogue of death)³⁶ allows the true love for the “daughter of the night”³⁷ that will lead the poet into the everlasting “wedding night” (*HN* #1); that is to say, into the eternal cognition of the truth. It is possible then to say that for Novalis philosophical death is indispensable; the reflexively posited “self” has to go through death like Dionysus and Christ for the dust to become pollen and grow into an organism, into a wholeness, into the blue flower from the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. What from the point of view of self-confident reflection is sinking into sleep and into the night, for the poet Novalis is becoming awake.

However, in indigent time fullness of Being and whole self-consciousness can only be something negatively given, a “dark light.” Further, the fullness of Being is only accessible to a handful of initiator-poets, the way the mysterious cults of Dionysus were accessible only to the chosen. This is a major problem and that is why at this point the early Romantic reception of the myth of Dionysus establishes a connection with the myth of Christ. The poetic mystery in indigent time does realize the dark light of Being, but it is with this that it actually prepares and announces the return of the gods to light. Poetry prepares and announces the time when the fullness

of Being will be accessible to all people and the mysterious cult of poetry will become a public religion. However, because Dionysus is a mysterious deity, for Novalis and the Jena school he can only come back as a resurrected Christ-King, in whose kingdom poetry will obtain the position of liturgy,³⁸ which binds people – the citizens of the cosmos, as the early German Romantics would put it – together into a joyful community.³⁹ Moreover, this is exactly what *HN* #6 talks about, when the narrative suddenly shifts into the perspective of a “we,” the future community of “sidereal people.”

The God of Opposites and Transformations in the *Hymns*

With regard to Dionysus, it is important to emphasize two things.⁴⁰ Dionysus is the god of opposites, and each of the forms in which he appears is diametrically opposed to the previous one, in such a way that it also draws attention to what is missing. Dionysus is also a god of transformation: he is constantly dying and being born again in other, always different forms. Each of his forms is only a partial form – a mask of the non-manifested One, which in the wildly rotating (oscillating) sequence of masks can only be negatively given. Dionysus as a divine One is therefore all the manifestations at once; more accurately – Dionysus is a wild rotation.

The relation between an individual manifestation (mask) of Dionysus and the whole is also very important. A mask is an incomplete part of the whole; when it is showing something it is at the same time hiding the whole. With this the mask itself already draws attention to the radical *non-identity* of itself/selfness and the deity. By directing away from itself, the mask alludes to the *real* and unsayable that hides behind it, and only in this moment the mask becomes a direct *representation* of truth. The relation between the mask and the whole is also valid for Novalis’ theory of poetic *Darstellung*, according to which the poetic language, by pointing to the difference between itself and the unsayable, gains the basic secret, hieroglyphic power to call to the unsayable. The poet’s words are magic (*NS* II, 533, #32), which turns the observation of the particular – the masks – into the glaring/staring at the unlimited that hides behind them.

The relation between the unsayable, which poetry evokes, and what poetry discusses is interesting enough for me to examine in the *Hymns to the Night*. To start with, I will concentrate on the poetic thematization of the time of the past fullness of Being through memory and the time of the future fullness of Being through hope/belief. *HN* #5 is, for example, a poetized history of two golden eras: Dionysus’ era and the era of Christ’s first coming. Dionysus here appears as a mad god of destructiveness, but also as a deliverer of order into chaos. Novalis points out this second feature when he links Dionysus with Demeter and with this he refers to that part of the myth of Dionysus in which Dionysus reveals the secrets of agriculture to the barbaric Thracians. Dionysus in *HN* therefore symbolically represents two opposite masks of the One: not only the transformation of the shrunk, rigid substance into formlessness,⁴¹ but also the transformation of the rough

substance into form, through which the deeper and more whole – but not only intellectual – knowledge proper to gods is symbolically revealed.

According to Manfred Frank, Dionysus appears one more time in *HN* #5; the unnamed Hellenic poet that comes to Palestine, offers his heart to the child Christ,⁴² and then goes off to Hindustan with a heart *drunk of love* could be nobody else but the miraculous poet from Lydia from Euripides' *Bacchae*.⁴³ Novalis of course derives this in the spirit of the early Romantic reception of the myth of Dionysus and Christ, when with the offering of the heart and the love drunkenness he merges Dionysus' ecstatic whirling with Christian love. He reinforces the connection between Dionysus and Christ by presenting them both as poets – the ones with *friendly lips*. The inexhaustible word, the gladdest of messages, fell like the sparks of a divine spirit from the *friendly lips* of the poet Christ-Savior.⁴⁴ However, Dionysus appears in the Hymns already in *HN* #1, in the image of the powerful stranger with “sense-filled eyes, with gliding gait and *gently-closed, rich-toned lips* [emphasis mine]” (*der herrliche Fremdling mit sinnvollen Augen, dem schwebenden Gange, und zartgeschlossenen, tonreichen Lippen*). The foreigner's closed, yet rich-toned, lips produce a magnificent sound and build up the image of the powerful man, resembling Dionysus and Christ but with a woman's face. Only in the context of *HN* #1 does it become clear that the friendly lips in *HN* #5 are an epithet for the god-poet.

The stranger/Dionysus/poet is described by one more epithet: his step is *schwebende*, floating. By choosing this term, which he used in *Fichte Studies* when discussing the absolute self,⁴⁵ Novalis alludes to the moving between two opposite poles. In the subtext of the “floating stranger” hides a “staggering” or just a (Dionysian) “whirling stranger, drunk on the blue tide of light. His step joins the opposites into a higher wholeness. Novalis upgrades the effect of whirling into a connection of opposites when, in the second paragraph of *HN* #1, he shifts into the description of the kingdom of the Night. Suddenly the narration in the third person singular, which he used to discuss the “stranger,” becomes first person singular. The stranger is the “self,” who will reach the absolute only in the kingdom of the Night, when he merges and connects all the opposites together in himself.

However, the night is not only the space where the fullness of Being is realized through the poetic memory of the golden age, it is the space of hope for the second coming of the golden era. The end of *HN* #5⁴⁶ and the entire *HN* #6, entitled *Longing for Death* (*Sehnsucht nach dem Tode*), are dedicated to hope. This of course is not a suicidal longing, but the desire for a complete merger with the “Night” – the desire for *hieros gamos* of the pre-reflexive divine “Night” and the reflexive “day.” The center of these images is love.⁴⁷ Such a wedding night, realized in poetry and dreams, represents a jump from indigent time to the vicinity of god. Moreover, this jump is what philosophy would name the realization of the fullness of Being and the wholeness of self-consciousness.

Novalis speaks not only *about* Dionysus: the *Hymns* speak like Dionysus. To say the unsayable, the poetic language here becomes Dionysian, it becomes an oscillation/whirling and it produces oscillation/whirling in the

poet and the reader as well.⁴⁸ Oscillation is not only elevated into the constitutive poetic principle but, according to Novalis, it is also the essence of poetic production (*NS II*, 525, #13).⁴⁹ Only poetry of the highest quality, however, is able to realize through the whirling/oscillation that One that it represents; with this the One becomes approachable without being contemplated by the eye of the intellect.⁵⁰ For Novalis, the poetry of the highest quality is transcendental or organic poetry as a synthesis of philosophy and poetry. The spiritual time of poetry⁵¹ therefore belongs only to transcendental poetry because it is the only one able to realize the whole organism.⁵² We could say that the *Hymns* are a practical realization of Novalis' idea of transcendental poetry.

Poetic Realization of the Full Self-consciousness in the *Hymns*

In *Fichte Studies* Novalis dealt with the realization of the One along with his reflection on the whole self-consciousness, using Fichte's notion of *schweben*. However, to reinterpret this notion into a continuous circular or dialogic movement between two opposite poles, from the very beginning he had to make a distinct difference between the reflexive and pre-reflexive consciousness. He not only thematized the circular movement – this prototype of the whole self-consciousness – in the *Hymns* with the relation between the symbolic day and night and with the figure of Dionysus-Christ, but he interwove it into the very structure of the poetic text. A crucial role for Novalis' realization of self-consciousness in the poetic tissue was played by his theory of “romanticizing,” as discussed in his famous fragment 105 of the collection *Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen*. Romanticizing is an operation that transforms all the common, everyday-like, and limited into the secret, infinite, and unsayable, elevating it to a higher level of quality. However, the qualitative rise does not happen only at the level of the object/world, which needs to be romanticized, but also at the level of the subject itself. In the transformation, the experience of the whole Being, the absolute self, is realized. The absolute self *par excellence* for Novalis is a poet or a genius, who is a romanticized individual, a person to the second power, constituted from several different persons (*NS II*, 645, #466). At the level of poetic tissue, such romanticizing becomes a linguistic practice of making the world foreign, which has a retrospective effect on the poet and the reader,⁵³ who connect all the fragmentary parts with the (missing) remaining part and thus reach the transformation of the partial into the universal.⁵⁴ Novalis even calls the poetry that produces negative knowledge or lack of knowledge the “poetry of the night and dusk” (*AB* #342).⁵⁵ This refers to the poetry of the sublime, which with its indefiniteness enables *more than just* comfort with the determined and the intelligible (*NS II*, 559, #151). The transcendent comfort comes from the poetic realization of full Being. How, therefore, did Novalis reach the realization of full Being by means of the poetic language?

Novalis already romanticizes in *HN #3*, which the traditional interpreters (wrongly) see as the embodiment of the poet's own mystical experience.⁵⁶ On a hill-grave the lyrical subject mourns the loss of his beloved (Sophie von Kühn); he contemplates the meaningless of life, which had been optimistic and happy until these notions *were ruined* by the death of his beloved. The descent into the underground, into death (intellectually optimistic), foretells the "twilight spectacle" (*Dämmerungschauer*), but the spectacle is coming from blue distances, from the sky, and has a paradoxical effect. Similar to the "pouring" of the light at the beginning of *HN #1*, the downpour of the night opens up Light's chain (*des Lichtes Fessel*) and cuts the birth bond (*das Band der Geburt*), which links/enchains the lyrical self to a partial existence, limited only to the reflexive consciousness. The spirit of the individual is thus reborn in its wholeness: he floats or oscillates (*schwebte*) like Dionysus in *HN #1* and in this state they are filled with the visionary cognition of the true meaning of "the night." Two transformations, realized at the linguistic level, prove that this is truly a "philosophical death" and the passage to the whole, oscillating self-consciousness. The initial sadness is transformed into the drink of the night,⁵⁷ which inebriates the lyrical self, while the hill-grave is transformed into the transparent cloud of dust, in which the lyrical self sees the *glorified features of his beloved* (Sophie as Wisdom).

The image is quite complex because the cloud of dust on the one hand keeps the connotation of transitoriness (dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return), on the other hand through the experience of death the dead lover becomes beloved Wisdom, with infinity resting in her eyes. It is this lover that already in *HN #1* the lyrical self asks to transform him, so that he can mix with her and the wedding night may last forever (*ewig die Brautnacht währt*). The reference to the *Song of Songs* undoubtedly alludes to the *unio mystica* with Wisdom-Sophie; but this – if we read the poem on the basis of *Fichte Studies* – is a dynamic merging with the whole self-consciousness, and not a union with godhead. The desire for *unio* with One and the whole self in *HN #1* becomes a visionary representation in *HN #3*⁵⁸ to be brought to effect in *HN #5* and #6.

The transformation in *HN #3* is thus a visionary announcement of the transformation into wholeness: the Night as the One-and-at-one-time-double floods the lyrical subject, the "night rapture" (*Nachtbegeisterung*)⁵⁹ inebriates him. On the other hand, the Light's chains change into a "glittering and unrippable bond" (*funkelndes unzerreißliches Band*), through which – platonically speaking – everything connects with everything else. The romanticizing thus destroys one "mask" (the Light's chains) to evoke under the veil of another "mask," which at the same time is a delightful apparition *and* the representation of the highest truth, the imageless One. One is the glittering and unrippable bond between the opposites (earth and sky in *HN #3*, day and light in *HN #1*), through which the ideal of a whole organism is realized. The romanticizing here becomes the trademark of transcendental poetry – the poetry, which realizes the organic unity of the individual and the cosmos, and in *HN #6* also of human society. The consequences of the

romanticizing in *HN* #3 are in complete accord with philosophical fragments: the lyrical self, in fact, jumps out of the indigent time into the “spiritual present” (*eine geistige Gegenwart*) of poetry (*NS* II, 461, #109) and ex-sists in it: “Millenniums have sailed off to the distances like a storm.”

Love is even more strongly linked to romanticizing; it is actually the bearer of romanticizing. We have seen that Sophia/Wisdom unties the chains of reflexive consciousness⁶⁰ and interweaves the “glittering and unrippable bond” between the night and man. The “glittering and unrippable bond” does not enslave love, but it *mediates* between reflexive and pre-reflexive consciousness and eventually links them into one. This way love in the *Hymns* automatically gains a dynamic, oscillating force; it becomes one of the variations of Christ – god, who *is* love (John 4:7). Would Novalis like to convince us that love in the *Hymns* is actually a mystical love, the one discussed in the allegorical interpretations of the *Song of Songs*?⁶¹

In *HN* #4 love becomes “creational/creative love” (*schaffende Liebe*) and the “daughter of the Night.” Both epithets (masks) refer to *HN* #1, where Novalis mentions the “tender lover” (*zarte Geliebte*), sent by the Night, and the “Night’s lovely sun” (*liebliche Sonne der Nacht*). The tender lover has creational power because, out of the lyrical self (*mich zum Menschen gemacht*), she creates man – she forms the absolute self, the whole self-consciousness. In *HN* #5 the analogues of love become even more numerous: love is the love of Christ, the poet-prophet of the new life, and Mary. In the end, love literally floods people, it inebriates them with the golden (Dionysian) wine of life,⁶² and it finally transforms them into stars, into divine beings. This way the divinized humanity turns into a clear manifestation of what is given only through the mystery of poetry. At the end of *HN* #5 love as an “eternal poem” becomes the triumphant realization of the “wedding night” from the *Song of Songs*.

This means that love or love-poetry in the *Hymns* is the force that causes the romanticizing of the text, the world, and the reader/poet themselves. However, at the same time this love itself is subject to transformation: the “daughter of the Night” eventually becomes the “Night” itself; she returns to the “womb” or to the eternal wedding night. The end of *HN* #5⁶³ can thus be read in the connection with *FSt* #555, where oscillation as the origin of the symbolic *Darstellung* is actually the “mother of all reality, reality itself.”

Novalis illustrates the dynamically whirling process of uniting in the very structure of the poetic text, when he constantly enriches the symbolic field of love by means of the “magic stick” of analogy, adding new symbolic layers to it. “Love” thus sucks in everything it touches: it is Sophia, it is Christ, it is the unknown poet that inebriated by love runs to Hindustan, it is Mary. This layering of analogies leads to a surprising effect. Everything in the poetic tissue is transformed through love and every mask is the analogy of the same. The web of varieties changes through the poetic text into the net, in which the analogies connect everything with everything else, and the final or whole meaning remains unsayable,⁶⁴ but can be felt.

The romanticizing and the piling up of analogies in the *Hymns* thus evokes this all-One in the very instant when the piling up of analogies

overcomes the critical point and the poetic text explodes. Such macro-romanticizing can be explained by means of the regression of imagination in the mathematical sublime in Kant. When the piling up of the “bricks”/ analogies reaches the outermost limit of the representable, the feeling of the sublime appears, in which there is a union of frustration – because the representational consciousness cannot represent something that surpasses it – and the feeling of comfort because the “beyond” is given *per negationem*, as a feeling of something that has broken into reflexive consciousness like Dionysus and flooded it.⁶⁵

The Relation between Philosophy and Poetry

Novalis brought the relation between philosophy and poetry to the level of a fundamental problem, when he linked it to the problem of self-consciousness and to the fundamental structure of subjectivity in modernity. What derives from this is that the hierarchizing of the relation between poetry and philosophy is against the essence of subjectivity in modernity. The principle of full self-consciousness and absolute subjectivity is revealed to Novalis in the Dionysian “whirling,” in the continuous dialogic movement of two types of consciousness, one of which aims at steadiness and tries to reach it by forming cognitions about objects, while the other softens the pretensions and conveys the real, original food for its cognitions. The most original wholeness, and along with it the highest form of self-consciousness for Novalis is being constantly produced – and is negatively given – by means of the esthetic experience.

Frank thinks that Novalis’ reflection about the structure of subjectivity is also challenging and important for a contemporary reflection on this problem. From Novalis’ perspective, Steiner’s criticism of the “secondary” is problematic: if, on the one hand, he legitimately criticizes the predominance of the “secondary” over the primary and at the same time he points out the danger of forgetting the primary, he cannot convincingly dig out the primary because he himself falls into a snare of hierarchizing poetry and theory. Steiner does not return the secondary to the place it deserves in the structure of modern subjectivity. The exit from the crisis, which Steiner discusses so passionately, without being able to disentangle himself from, therefore is not possible until we perpetuate the relation of static hierarchy (of the servant and master) instead of turning it into the relation of dynamic dialogue between thinking and poetry. Inasmuch as commentary and theory are winning over literature, literary studies are falling into a cognitive crisis in which they adopt the optic of reductive self-consciousness and the violence of technology as *their* optic, which (against the basic structure of modern subjectivity) cannot thematize and in advance include the gap between the literary text and the interpretation.

I should also add to this an aporetic second ending. What if Steiner does think deeply enough? What if his reflection about the relation between poetry and theory does not remain in the grasp of hierarchy because of the

lost connection with modernity, but because in modernity after modernism a basic change is happening? With this question I leave discussion to start speculation, which sees in theory, celebrating itself as the bringer of safety and stability, a reaction to softening – but which softening? It is difficult or impossible to differentiate between pre-reflexive consciousness, which softens the rigid products of reflexive consciousness, and the softening of modernity itself. I will illustrate the answer with the help of the question about the extent to which romanticizing, transforming the limited into the infinite, is still an interesting poetic strategy for contemporary poetry.

In the 1980s and 1990s contemporary Slovenian poetry started to concentrate on the reality of the concrete world and on the experience of everyday life (e.g., Debeljak, Zupan, Semolič).⁶⁶ In recent years it is possible to detect elements of narration (e.g., Zupan, Semolič, Mozetič) and special strategies of organizing the poetic tissue, which function as a protection of the brittle and unstable lyrical self. More than evoking the unsayable in the modern sense, a poem here becomes the evocation of the unpronounced brittleness of the lyrical self. An ambivalent example, in which the poem is the bearer of both the unsayable and the unpronounced brittleness, is the poem *Accords* by Primož Čučnik. The image of a recreational ice-skater opens into the image of a man that – aware of the possibility of slipping – skates on Being. However, the ice-skater only reaches the fullness of Being if and when he adopts the completely everyday-like image of a recreational ice-skater; only this limited and consciously banal image allows a playful and at the same time serious catching of the balance between the experience of conscious brittleness and the experience of unsayable fullness.⁶⁷ Čučnik's poem creates the whirling that Novalis places as the postulate of full self-consciousness. Further analyses and a larger corpus of work are necessary to establish whether contemporary poetry still uses the “whirling” technique in the sense of Novalis' romanticizing. Perhaps instead of romanticizing, contemporary poets transform the un-known and mysterious into something that in fact is very well known, even banal. In fragment #105 (*VF*), Novalis gives a special name to this technique: he calls it logarithmizing.

Translated by Teja Pribac Brooks

NOTES

¹ This position is advocated by Frank in his theory of interpretation, based on Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and textual theory.

² Regarding the relation between the master and the servant in Lacan, I have used Dolar, 31–38.

³ Cf. Hribar, 176–184.

⁴ Frank's position on poetry on the other hand owes a lot to the later Heidegger (Frank, *Einführung* 22–29). For a fairly severe criticism of Frank's reference to Heidegger, cf. Beiser (66). The later Heidegger is supposed to be the reason for Frank's neglect of the role of platonic intellect in early German Romanticism, and

his injection of “an unnecessary element of obscurantism into *Frühromantik*, which makes it vulnerable to all the old charges of antirationalism.”

⁵ The notion is analogous to Vattimo’s weak subjectivity (*il soggetto debole*).

⁶ The eschatological or redeeming function, applied to poetry by 19th-century middle class society, derives from the same origin; cf. Gadamer (83–84) and Iser (6–7).

⁷ Published in Frank (*Selbstbewußtseinstheorien* 26–27).

⁸ The key pieces about self-consciousness are published in Frank (*Selbstbewußtseinstheorien* 56–69). Unless otherwise stated, I quote Novalis’ philosophical fragments from the English translation by Jane Keller; cf. Novalis, *Fichte*.

⁹ For more about this, cf. Frank (*Introduction*).

¹⁰ Cf. Frank (*Selbstbewußtseinstheorien* 26).

¹¹ Frank adopts this notion from Sartre’s essay *Conscience de soi et connaissance de soi*, which differentiates between “cogito cartésien” and “un ‘cogito’ pré-réflexif” as a condition for the first; cf. Sartre (368).

¹² Frank points out that problems of self-consciousness, subjectivity, and Being are actually varieties of the same problem and that in Novalis’ thinking about self-consciousness there is always a parallel to the thinking of Being; cf. Frank (*Einführung* 252).

¹³ Twenty years ago Novalis was either still completely unknown as a philosopher (Frank, *Einführung* 257) or was considered, as by Henrich, an average philosopher. At this point Frank criticizes Henrich and states that *Fichte Studies* is one of the most difficult texts in German philosophy; cf. Frank (*Einführung* 248).

¹⁴ The same thought could also be found in Hölderlin, cf. Frank (*Selbstbewußtseinstheorien* 26): “Within the notion of judgment/division there has always been present the notion of an interdependent relation between the subject and the object, which stand opposite to one another, while at the same time a wholeness is necessarily presupposed, which the subject and the object are part of. ‘The self is the self’ is the most convenient example of this primary division as a theoretical primary division because in a practical primary division the Self is opposed to the non-Self and not to the Self itself” (»Im Begriffe der Theilung liegt schon der Begriff der gegenseitigen Beziehung des Objekts und Subjekts aufeinander, und die nothwendige Voraussetzung eines Ganzen wovon Object und Subject die Theile sind. ‘Ich bin Ich’ ist das passendste Beispiel zu diesem Begriffe der Urtheilung, als Theoretischer Urthelung, denn in der praktischen Urthelung setzt es sich dem Nichtthich, nicht sich selbst entgegen«).

¹⁵ *FSt* #1: “The essence of identity can only be presented as an illusory proposition” (»Das Wesen der Identität läßt sich nur in einen Scheinsatz aufstellen,« in *NS* II, 104, *FSt* #1); cf. also *NS* II, 179–180, *FSt* #234. Cf. Novalis, *Fichte* 77–78: “Truth is the whole – illusion [*Schein*] only the fracture – the half that seems to be the whole and is not – the former [truth] [is] the positive, the latter the negative quantity.... Representation without intuition is illusion and vice versa. There are concepts and ideas but no mere representations.... The illusion in our cognition arises from the elevation of the half to the whole – or from the halving of the indivisible, of that thing whose *being just consists in* the composition, from the unnatural (immanence and transcendence), or from rounding off and division.”

¹⁶ *NS* II, 104, *FSt* #1: »Oder wir stellen es durch sein Nichtseyn, durch ein Nichtidentisches vor – Zeichen – ein bestimmtes für ein gleichförmig bestimmendes ...« Cf. Novalis *Fichte*, 3: “Or we represent it through its ‘non-Being’ [what is not], through a non-identical [what is not identical to it] – a sign – [using] a determined thing for an isomorphic determining thing.”

¹⁷ With regard to the feeling of oneself (*Selbst-Gefühl*) as the origin of self in Novalis, Frank emphasizes that this is not a result of the direct reflex of some self-

operation, but a result of the effecting of Being (*Wirkung des Seins*), which is not understood as an unconsciously created work of the “absolute self” anymore. The cognition of Being is only possible through feeling; cf. Frank, *Selbstgefühl* 39–40.

¹⁸ NS II, 113–14, *FSt* #15: »Die Philosophie ist ursprünglich ein Gefühl. Die Anschauungen dieses Gefühls begreifen die philosophischen Wissenschaften.... Die Grenzen des Gefühls sind die Grenzen der Philosophie. Das Gefühl kann sich nicht selber fühlen.... Was ist denn ein Gefühl? Es läßt sich nur in der Reflexion betrachten – der Geist des Gefühls ist da heraus.« Novalis, *Fichte*, 13: “Philosophy is originally a feeling. The philosophical sciences conceptualize the intuitions of this feeling.... The borders of feeling are the borders of philosophy.... What then is a feeling? It can only be observed in reflection – the spirit of feeling is then gone.”

¹⁹ These are the epithets that the early German Romantics used to denote the period of illumination and middle class, profit-oriented society.

²⁰ The metaphor of the mechanism was used by Kant in his first Critique to describe the operation of pure reason. In his *Letters upon the Esthetic Education of Man*, Schiller transferred it to the criticism of the bureaucratic state, where the legal adopts the image of a soulless mechanic functioning without having been legitimized by the citizens. The legalistic state suppresses the instincts of individuals by means of the laws, and therefore its citizens are not free people. On the other hand, a person ruled by instincts is not a free person either. In esthetic education or the arts Schiller sees the means to realize a full and free individuality, in which instincts and respect for the laws of the intellect would achieve development/education (*Bildung*) of an individual into a whole person. The metaphor of mechanism is also used by Novalis in his essay *Christianity or Europe*, when he discusses the mill (*eine Mühle an sich*) that grinds itself and has transformed the infinite creational music of the cosmos into a monotone creaking; cf. Novalis (*Novalis Werke* 508).

²¹ NS II, 266, *FSt* #555. Cf. Novalis, *Fichte* 164–165: “All being, being in general, is nothing but being free – *oscillating* between extremes that necessarily are to be united and necessarily are to be separated.... I-ness or productive power of imagination, the *oscillating* – determine, produce the extremes between which oscillation occurs – This is a deception, but only in the realm of ordinary understanding. Otherwise it is something thoroughly real, because the oscillating, its cause, is the source, the mother of all reality, [is] reality itself.”

²² NS II, 270, *FSt* #566. Cf. Novalis, *Fichte* 167–168: “Unending free activity in us arises through our inability to attain and know an absolute. This absolute that is given to us can only be known negatively, insofar as we act and find that what we seek cannot be attained through action. This could be called an absolute postulate. All searching for a single principle would be like the attempt to square the circle. / Perpetual motion. Philosophers’ stone./ (Negative knowledge).”

²³ Cf. Frank, *Einführung* 264–265.

²⁴ NS II, 112, *FSt* #14: »Was die Reflexion findet, scheint schon da zu seyn – Eigenschaft eines freyen Actus;« cf. Novalis (*Fichte* 12): “What reflection *finds*, *appears* already to be there – a property of a free act.”

²⁵ NS II, 142, *FSt* #63; Novalis, *Fichte* 40: “The image is always the inversion of Being. What is to the right of the person is to the left in the image.” This is similar in NS II, 153, *FSt* #107, quoting Novalis (*Fichte* 50); cf. also Frank, *Einführung* 253.

²⁶ NS III, 685, *Fragmente und Studien* 1799–1800 [FS], #671.

²⁷ NS III, 650, *FSt* #553: »Pöesie ist *Darstellung des Gemüths* – der *innern Welt in ihrer Gesamtheit*;« similarly in NS II, 283, #637.

²⁸ *Blüthenstaub* (Ätheum, I, May 1798) [B1], #109. NS II, 461.

²⁹ Cf. Helfer, 83–84.

³⁰ The number beside the sign *Hymns to the Night* [HN] refers to individual hymns. Cf. *HN* #2: »aber zeitlos und raumlos ist der Nacht Herrschaft.«

³¹ Allgemeines Brouillon [AB], #342. »Poësie der Nacht und Dämmerung« *NS* III, 302.

³² Cf. Frank, *Der kommende* 21–22, 245–342.

³³ *NS* II, 545, *Vorarbeiten zu verschiedenen Fragmentsammlungen* [VF], #105. Cf. also *NS* II, 568, *VF* #207, *NS* II, 575, *VF* #230; *NS* II, 590, #278: Novalis does not use the notion of romanticizing here, but he discusses exactly this process. Cf. also *NS* II, 685, *FSt* #688 and *NS* II, 650, *FSt* #533, where Novalis discusses poetry as a *Darstellung* of the inner world in its wholeness: »Poësie ist Darstellung des Gemüths – der Innern Welt in ihrer Gesamtheit.«

³⁴ Mystical death means the death of everything that stands between the soul and godhead; for the mystics, kenosis is the necessary condition for the complete cognition of god.

³⁵ Novalis II, 374, *Hemsterhuis-Studien* (1797) [*HSt*], #35.

³⁶ On the analogy of death and sleep cf. *NS* II, 622, *VF* #442. Death-sleep has an invigorating or refreshing effect. With this Novalis alludes to real life, to the realization of the whole self, which becomes realized in the death-sleep of the self-mask.

³⁷ *HN* #3: »Es war der erste, einzige Traum – und erst seitdem fühl ich ewigen, unwandelbaren Glauben an den Himmel der Nacht und sein Licht, die Geliebte.« The daughter of the Night here is obviously Sophia as Wisdom; this is also the adequate consequence of the thought in *HSt* #35 about self-execution as a real philosophical act, which enables true *philosophia*, or love of wisdom.

³⁸ I owe all of this to Frank's analyses; cf. Frank, *Der kommende* 17–21.

³⁹ It is to this brotherhood that the secret adoption of the first person plural in *HN* #6 refers. It serves Novalis to appeal to the realization of the holistic ideal not only at the level of an individual but also at the level of human society/state, nature and cosmos as an "organism." On the influence of *Naturphilosophie* on early German Romanticism, cf. Beiser (*The Romantic*). However, could poetry as a public state religion still be poetry with an esthetic purpose? The question is not directly connected to the problem I discuss in the essay; in a rough way, the theoretical directions are given by Jauss in *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, when he discusses the ideological conquest of the esthetic experience.

⁴⁰ The story is provided by Frank, *Der kommende* 17–21. For Nonnus' story about Dionysus-Zagreus, cf. Vrečko 184–185.

⁴¹ The parts of *HN* (especially *HN* #1–#3) that discuss the divine passage into the night, sleep, the underground, are devoted to this.

⁴² *HN* #5: »unter Hellas heiterm Himmel geboren, kam ein Sänger nach Palestina und ergab sein ganzes Herz dem Wunderkinde.«

⁴³ Frank, *Der kommende*, 9–10.

⁴⁴ *HN* #5: »Unerschöpfliche Worte ... fielen wie Funken eines göttlichen Geistes von seinen freundlichen Lippen.«

⁴⁵ *FSt* #555 and #566.

⁴⁶ *NS* I, 151, *HN* #5: »Zur Hochzeit ruft der Tod – / Die Lampen brennen helle – / Die Jungfrauen sind zur Stelle – / Um Oel ist keine Noth – / Erklänge doch die Ferne / Von deinem Zuge schon, / Und ruften uns die Sterne / Mit Menschenzug' und Ton« ("Death summons to the wedding, / The lamps burn brightly – / The virgins stand in place – / There's no need for oil – / If the distance would only sound / With your procession – / And the stars would only call to us / With human tongues and tone"). The references to death and the wedding night in the quote and the last stanza of *HN* #5 must be read in relation to *NS* I, 133, *HN* #1: »du hast die Nacht mir zum Leben verkündet – mich zum Menschen gemacht – zehre mit Geisterglut meinen Leib, daß ich luftig mit dir inniger mich mische und dann ewig die Brautnacht währst« ("you called the Night to life for me, – humanized me – tear my body with spirit fire, so I can mix with you more inwardly, airily, and then the wedding night will last forever).

⁴⁷ NS I, 157, HN #6: »Hinunter zu der süßen Braut, / Zu Jesus, dem Geliebten – / Getrost, die Abenddämmerung graut/ Den Liebenden, Betrübten. / Ein Traum bricht unsre Banden los/ Und senkt uns in des Vaters Schoß« (“Down now to the sweet bride, on / To Jesus, to the beloved – Comfort, evening’s darkling greys / To the loving, to the grieving. / A dream will break our fetters off, / And sink us forever in our Father’s lap”).

⁴⁸ Here Novalis adopts Fichte’s comprehension of oscillation but he reinterprets it and transfers it to the field of artistic creation, which helps him to overcome some mistaken elements in Fichte’s thought. Cf. Novalis, *Opera* 452, with an essay by Moretti.

⁴⁹ Synonyms for oscillation are also metaphors linked to the flow, flux. Cf. NS II, 575–76, VF, #231, where life is referred to as a stream (*Strom*). In NS II, 621, VF #441 poetry is referred to also as a *flowing soul* (*eine flüssige Seele*).

⁵⁰ The addition is very important. With such a negatively given One, the absolute and whole self is accessible to itself even before the positioning act of the reflexive conscience. This “wholeness” is accessible through “feeling” – or pre-reflexively, in the *Vertrautheit* with itself, as Manfred Frank would put it. It is in this shift from ocular metaphors that Novalis essentially differs from Fichte. From this point of view, it would be possible to criticize Helfer, who insists that Novalis’ theory *Darstellung* preserves ocular metaphors and does not shift at all from Fichte’s *Schweben*; cf. Helfer 113–114.

⁵¹ On the spiritual time of poetry, cf. *Blüthenstaub* in NS II, 461, Bl #109.

⁵² NS II, 535, VF #43; NS II, 536, #47 and #48. Here we can find the definition of transcendental poetry as organic poetry: Such poetry thus realizes a wholeness, an organism. Indirectly NS II, 533 and VF #32 also refer to transcendental poetry: »Wenn der Philosoph nur alles ordnet, alles stellt, so löbte der Dichter alle Bande auf« (“While the philosopher limits himself to editing and arranging, the poet unveils each bond”). The same also applies for NS II, 534, VF #40; NS II, 535, VF #42; NS II, 581, #242, 30–36.

⁵³ With this Novalis anticipates Iser’s conclusion that the constitution of the meaning of the text reflexively also works as a constitution of the subject, in which the inaccessible contents of subjectivity are also shown on the surface; cf. Iser, 157–159.

⁵⁴ NS II, 533, VF #31.

⁵⁵ NS III, 302, AB #342. In this fragment Novalis applies Nicholas of Cusa’s *docta ignorantia* to the realization of the absolute self, thus transforming negative theology into the poetry of night. The difference between mystical and poetic negative cognition of the wholeness is hermeneutic; it is roughly described by the opposition between the super-essential (*hyperousios*) and the absolute self.

⁵⁶ Cf., e.g., Haywood 52–77. For more on this topic, cf. Helfer 194, fn. 16.

⁵⁷ Here I would like to recall again the definition of poetry as a fluid soul, which could be used to become inebriated; cf. NS II, 621, VF #441.

⁵⁸ Helfer points out that *Klingsohr’s story* is both prophetic *Darstellung* and necessary *Darstellung* (Helfer 92–93) because it announces the realization of the truth in the second part of Heinrich von Ofterdingen, where each thing represents itself (Helfer 103). The extension of prophetic *Darstellung* can also be found in the *Hymns*.

⁵⁹ This potion is announced by both the first and the second hymn; cf. NS I, 131, HN #1: »Hast auch du ein Gefallen an uns, dunkle Nacht?... Köstlicher Balsam träuft aus deiner Hand, aus dem Bündel Mohn« (“Do you stupefy us too, dark night?... Stupefying balsam is dropping off your hand, off the bunch of poppies;” cf. NS I, 133, HN #2: »Sie fühlen dich nicht in der goldenen Flut der Trauben – in des Mandelbaums Wunderöl, und dem braunen Safte des Mohns« (They don’t feel you in the grapes’ golden flood – in almonds’ wonder oil – in poppies’ brown juice”). NS

I, 137 and 139, *HN #4* reads as follows: »Trägt nicht alles, was uns begeistert, die Farbe der Nacht?... Noch wenig Zeiten, / So bin ich los, / und liege trunken / Der Lieb' im Schoß. /... / O! sauge, Geliebter / Gewaltig mich an, / Daß ich entschlummern / Und liebe kann./ Ich fühle des Todes / Verjüngende Flut, / Zu Balsam und Äther/ Verwindelt mein Blut« (Doesn't all that inspires us wear the colors of the Night? /... / For ever so little time / I have been free, / And lie drunk / In Love's lap. /... / O! Breathe me, Love / Ravish me, / So I can pass on to sleep / And to love. / I feel death's / Renovating tide / Transform my blood / To balm and ether”).

⁶⁰ “but what became holy through the touch of love, that runs freed through hidden channels where it, like breezes, mixes with loves that have passed on to sleep;” cf. also *NS I*, 137, *HN #4*.

⁶¹ On this Ricoeur and LaCocque 263–303, 235–363.

⁶² Here we have a net of references that weaves a bond between the golden juice of the grapes (*HN #2*), Dionysus (*ein Gott in den Trauben*, *NS I*, 143, *HN #5*), and the liturgical celebration with the blood of Christ in the act of donation of the heart to the child-Jesus (*NS I*, 147, *HN #5*).

⁶³ *HN #5*: “The love is freely given, / There's no dividing left. / The whole life billows on / Like an endless sea. / Just one night of ecstasy – / An eternal poem – / and all our sun's / God's face;” cf. *NS I*, 153, *HN #5*.

⁶⁴ If we read Novalis' fragments as a uniform corpus the effect is similar: Novalis builds a thick net of analogies (the masks of One), by means of which the text or corpus of fragments becomes the connection of everything-in-One. A fragment for Novalis is the poetical form of philosophic thinking; it is a reproduction – a piece of dust, which draws attention to its incompleteness. However, in the instant when dust dies it becomes pollen: it starts the oscillation of imagination and an organism develops out of it – the blue flower of the sky; cf. *NS III*, 301, AB #339: “Alle Asche ist Blütenstaub – der Kelch ist der Himmel.”

⁶⁵ On the analysis of the regression of imagination in Kant, cf. Makkreel. Also, Helfer points out that Novalis' theory on negative *Darstellung* – the way he practically develops it in the *Hymns* on the basis of a previous reflection in *Fichte Studies* – is similar to the Kantian theory of the sublime: “the Hymns' ‘representation of the unrepresentable’ is an implicit instantiation of the negative *Darstellung* of the Kantian sublime poesy, a poesy of the Infinite...” (Helfer 116).

⁶⁶ On this cf. Kos 191–192.

⁶⁷ Cf. Čučnik 7–12.

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