Introduction

I. NATURE AND DISEASE

The view that romanticism represented an irresponsible and pathological escape from the empirical world still lingers on, in spite of efforts to correct the image; in fact, the newly emerging view that romantic poets are "mythmakers" often only reinforces old stereotypes: both the commonplace and the sophisticated view give inadequate attention to the curiosity with which romantic poets approached organic and human nature. The poetic realms of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, or Novalis were created not through the exclusion but the transformation of the empirical world: if they were more intensely poetical than previous creations of the eighteenth century, they were also more directly reflecting the natural world and its newly emerging study, the sciences; if it was frequently felt that nature was a counterpart to the human mind, and science a new mode of thought threatening the primacy of poetic imagination, fear was nevertheless mingled with fascination. The romantics showed consistent efforts to master and humanize the new scientific experience because they recognized that science was to alter radically and permanently all areas of individual and social life.

Hand in hand with the interest in science went a curiosity for the physiologically or psychologically unnatural and the socially unaccepted. After the fall of the "ancien régime" and the failure of the French Revolution to realize the enlightened optimism of

the eighteenth century, hopes for new syntheses seemed to lie only in radical individual efforts subjecting to scrutiny all aspects of the fragmented world—without regard to traditional tabus. These attempts are perhaps most dramatically and representatively expressed in *Faust*, although Goethe himself was clearly unwilling to carry through a radical "transvaluation of all values". Much of his wisdom—and some of his pedantry—may be ascribed to that hard-fought-for and only temporarily achieved balance between the "two souls" of Faust, in which the human mind had deep affinity with a benevolent nature, and the inherent moral qualities of organisms provided a basis for a humanism. To *this* Goethe, any human activity or thought which had no organic attachment to nature, be it Newton's physics, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, or Kleist's metaphysical desperation, appeared fallacious and morbid. He described the romantics as sick because he disliked their irreverence and their unrestrained penetration into life's secrets.

Indeed, the "poète maudit" and Marquis de Sade are faces of romanticism, together with ennui, the addiction to drugs, and morbid introspection. The intent to explore the "dark recesses of the soul" informs Blake's "Sick Rose", Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", as well as Novalis' *Hymnen an die Nacht*. Morbidity is manifest, among other things, in an unusual concern for pathology itself; yet the preoccupation with disease need not always be a sign of decadence and abandon. As in the psychoanalytical theory of Freud—for which the romantics prepared the ground— in the profoundest romantic investigations of disease the clinical-therapeutic and scientific elements more than balanced the rolling "in abysses of despair and ennui".[1] The final aim was not anarchy but the conquest of hitherto uncontrolled forces and the illumination of darkness. As Thomas Mann—who was unable to decide whether to trace nazism to excessive romanticism or those opponents of romantic mentality who demanded mental hygiene—once characteristically stated: "Das Interesse für Tod und Krankheit, für das Pathologische, den Verfall ist nur eine Art von Ausdruck für das Interesse am Leben, am Menschen, wie die humanistische Fakultät der Medizin beweist; wer sich für das Organische, das Leben,

interessiert, der interessiert sich namentlich für den Tod; ... Keine Metamorphose des Geistes ist uns besser vertraut als die, an deren Anfang die Sympathie mit dem Tode, an deren Ende der Entschluß zum Lebensdienste steht."[2]

The passage belongs to the speech "Von deutscher Republik" (1922) in which Thomas Mann defended the Weimar Republic by calling upon the testimony of Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis).[3] Mann, no less than his audience, was surprised to learn that Novalis, this "Träumer von ewiger Brautnacht", had relevant things to say both about German politics and physiology. In the nineteenth century Novalis was remembered only as an ethereal sickly poet who created the symbol of romantic yearning, the "blue flower", who mystically exalted his adolescent fiancée after her death, and died himself a premature romantic death. According to Hegel he was dominated by a noble but unhealthy yearning for the unattainable, Heine classed him with E. T. A. Hoffmann and felt that both wrote morbid poetry, in France he found followers among the purists of poetry, especially Maeterlinck.[4] Yet Novalis remarked towards the end of his life: "Ich bin überzeugt, daß man durch kalten, technischen Verstand, und ruhigen, moralischen Sinn eher zu *wahren Offenbarungen* gelangt, als durch Fantasie, die uns blos ins Gespensterreich, diesem Antipoden des wahren Himmels, zu leiten scheint."[5] Those who come to his works expecting only dark romanticism must be struck by his preoccupation with philosophy, his interest in nature and the natural sciences, and his sober acceptance of everyday life.[6] The exceedingly complex intertwining of scientific and pathological elements, which is unique for Novalis and yet in some way so characteristic of our culture ever since the romantic period, brought me originally to Novalis and prompted the first plans for this book.

II. HARDENBERG: LIFE AND CHARACTER

Friedrich von Hardenberg's life has often been mythologized, though it was relatively uneventful. He was born in 1772 at Oberwiederstedt, the small country estate of his family, near Halle. His father belonged to the prominent old Hardenberg

family, but had himself only moderate means and gained his income from supervising the royal salt mines of Saxony. When he became district director in 1784, the family moved to the middle-sized town of Weissenfels, about twenty miles west of Leipzig.

Novalis entered the university of Jena in 1790 to study law. However, he seemed to bemore interested in Schiller's lectures and the trappings of student life, and finally, as result of parental pressure and perhaps a moderating intervention by Schiller himself, he moved to the University of Leipzig in the autumn of 1791. In Leipzig he made his lasting friendship with Friedrich Schlegel and continued to live a gay student life until in a moment of love-sickness he suddenly decided on a military career and left. However, parental persuasion prevailed once again and Novalis enrolled at the University in Wittenberg. This time he showed his powers and quickly obtained his degree in 1794.

The same year Novalis took a minor job in Tennstedt to gain practical experience, and encountered in the neighboring Grüningen the thirteen-year-old Sophie von Kühn. This proved to be the decisive experience of his life: they got engaged in the spring of 1795, but Sophie soon contracted consumption and she passed away in the spring of 1797. At the end of the same year Novalis went to the School of Mining Technology at Freiberg—near Dresden—and he studied there science and technology till the spring of 1799. Upon return to Weissenfels he worked in the Directorate of the salt-mines of Saxony. He was engaged for a second time when he fell sick, and he died on March 25, 1801 after prolonged sickness.

The only existing picture of him shows a small elongated head where the protruding cheekbones contrast with the long hair femininely curling over his shoulders.[7] In Friedrich Schlegel's first description one finds a similarly curious blend of traits:

> Ein noch sehr junger Mensch—von schlanker guter Bildung, sehr feinem Gesicht mit schwarzen Augen, von herrlichem Ausdruck, wenn er mit Feuer von etwas Schönem redet—unbeschreiblich viel Feuer—

> er redet dreimal mehr und dreimal schneller wie wir andre—die schnellste Fassungskraft und Empfänglichkeit.
> ...Nie sah ich so die Heiterkeit der Jugend. Seine Empfindung hat eine gewisse Keuschheit, die ihren Grund in der Seele hat, nicht in Unerfahrenheit. Denn er ist schon sehr viel in Gesellschaft gewesen (er wird gleich mit jedermann bekannt) ... (IV, 417).

The picture of robust health that emerges from the reminiscences of Tieck is even more surprising since Tieck was largely responsible for the myth of the ethereal poet:

> „Wie er auch am liebsten die Tiefen des Gemütes im Gespräch enthüllte, als begeistert von den Regionen unsichtbarer Welten sprach, so war er doch fröhlich wie ein Kind, scherzte in unbefangener Heiterkeit und gab sich selbst den Scherzen der Gesellschaft hin" (IV, 457). „Er war der gesundeste, frohsinnigste Mensch, der keckste Reiter, unermüdlicher Bergsteiger und Wanderer, schlief fast nicht, indem er praktisch und schreibend immer tätig war—aber freilich starb er, und unerwartet, an der Schwindsucht" (IV, 459).

And finally, Friedericke von Mandelsloh's remark which is in sharp contrast with Tieck's protrayal:

> [Novalis] „war zu aller Zeit körperlich krankhaft und leidend und sein früher Tod vorher zu sehen" (IV, 438).

How are we to correlate these seemingly incompatible observations? Even after allowing for inaccuracies in the recollections—Mandelsloh's were made forty years after the poet's death—and variations in individual judgement, the answer is difficult. For the disagreement on Novalis' features, his social behavior, and his health extends to all aspects of his personality

and life; the volatile poet with an impulse towards the metaphysical was also a careful scholar and a conscientious high official in the Directorate of the salt-mines of Saxony. His sensibility, his exalted love, his physical suffering and early death contrast so much the toughness and discipline with which he applied himself to everyday matters or problems of philosophy that one would be inclined to believe he was among the first of those modern St. Sebastians of whom Thomas Mann has said that their art, born of suffering, represents a triumph over biological frailty and hostile environment. Indeed, if one reads the diary Novalis kept after the death of his fiancée, one is moved by his heroic and touching efforts to transcend everyday life and enter a mystic union with the beloved. And yet, a confrontation between "spirit" and "matter" or "art" and "life", as Schopenhauer later dramatized, is not typical of Novalis, and his letters seldom reveal such an agonizing self-division as is so familiar to us from the writings of Baudelaire, Flaubert, Kafka, Mann, and many others. Novalis is difficult to comprehend because he himself sensed no inconsistency in the diversity of his personality, and his poetry often appears as deceptively simple. The paradoxes of his mind and life are ultimately explainable only in terms of a supple and accommodating spiritual disposition which resolved these conflicts in Novalis himself, but which appears at times as admirable, and at others as inconsistent or naive to the skeptical modern reader.

A critical assessment of Novalis has to start with this paradoxical unity in multiplicity, for whatever aspect of Hardenberg's life or thought one takes under the magnifying glass, one quickly recognizes the outlines of his personality. The stuff of his life—his love, the course of his studies, and his final disease—seems to be incidentally encountered raw bits of experience upon which this personality printed a shape and colour of its own. Carlyle is therefore surely right when he remarks about the Sophie experience: "We cannot but think that some result precisely similar in moral effect might have been attained by many different means; nay, that by one means or another, it would not have failed to be attained."[8] On similar grounds Theodor Haering can assert that in the final analysis Novalis

absorbed only those influences for which there was an a priori basis in his mind.[9] As Novalis had formulated it even more radically: "Jeder geliebte Gegenstand ist der Mittelpunkt eines Paradieses" (II, 433), which means that through the transforming power of love almost any object, event, or person may achieve ultimate significance, or saving grace.[10]

It seems then that the facts of Novalis' life, the nature of his disease, or the list of his readings would be of little value to those who wish to understand the products of his mind: the poetry and the ideas in his writing.[11] Yet, it has become clear in recent years that in the case of Novalis a precise knowledge of biographical circumstances and background material, above all an acquaintance with his readings, is indispensable for unraveling his complex, sometimes cryptic notebooks. As Novalis himself wrote about encounters with other minds. "Man studirt fremde Systeme um sein *eignes System* zu finden" (III, 278); "Ein junger Gelehrter muß mit specieller Kritik anfangen. Am fremden Faden und Gewebe lernt er eigene Ideen entwickeln und zu Fäden und einem vollst[ändigen], regelmäßigen Gewebe auszuspinnen" (III, 380).

Due to Hardenberg's early death, his contacts with other minds seldom crystallized in finished works of his own: apart from an early poem, published in the *Teutscher Merkur* in 1791, only two slim fragment collections, *Blüthenstaub* and *Glauben und Liebe*, and the cycle *Hymnen an die Nacht* were published during his lifetime. The remaining poetry and fiction—including the *Geistliche Lieder*, other poems, and the two novel-fragments: *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*—were posthumously published by Hardenberg's friends, Ludwig Tieck and Friedrich Schlegel. This collected edition also contained fragments from the essay "Die Christenheit oder Europa" and miscellaneous notebook-material selected and arranged by Tieck under such headings as "Philosophie und Physik" or "Ästhetik und Literatur". Tieck entitled the whole last section "Fragmente"—in analogy to the collections published by Novalis himself.

The first steps towards a representative and reliable edition of Hardenberg's works were taken at the beginning of this century

by Jacob Minor and Eduard Havenstein, but only in the first critical edition of 1929 were Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel able to accomplish the task in a satisfactory way by returning to the manuscripts. However, this edition was still selective.

The manuscripts were auctioned by the Hardenberg family in 1930. Some of them went into unknown hands, others disappeared during the war, most of them, however, were bought by Salman Schocken and resold to the *Freies Deutsches Hochstift* in 1960. Through this last sale new possibilities opened up to the editors of the second critical edition: in the second and third volume of this edition all of Hardenberg's known notebooks were printed for the first time, with original orthography and in vastly improved chronological order. The resultant text necessitated an important revision concerning the notion and use of "fragments" in Hardenberg's writing.

The term "fragment" was defined by Friedrich Schlegel in the course of "Symphilosophieren"—a joint venture of the friends to establish a set of guidelines for the romantic artistic credo: "Ein Fragment muß gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel."[12] However, Schlegel's definition is not very applicable to Hardenberg's *Blüthenstaub* or *Glauben und Liebe*: the individual pieces in these collections are seldom self-contained, their structure is dialectical and discontinuous, while their ending is open and suggestive.[13]

More important, the term "fragment" cannot be applied at all to the rest of the material in Hardenberg's notebooks—with the exception of a half-finished collection usually referred to as "Teplitzer Fragmente" (II, 596-622). These notebooks, especially the ones on science, are filled with excerpts from books or notes on them, interspersed with sketches, brief memos, or even plans for reading and daily activity. The return to the original manuscripts has made it evident that many of Hardenberg's cryptic "fragments" were artificially manufactured by Tieck, who tore passages from their context, thereby masking their origin and giving them a semblance of self-contained finality. That many of these notes become illuminated by the underlying

foreign text was conclusively demonstrated by Professor Mähl, who discovered important sources for Novalis' notes and was thereby able to characterize the way in which Hardenberg's mind seized upon seemingly unimportant matters and extracted from them what it needed.[14]

With the exceptions mentioned then, Hardenberg's notebooks contain no "fragments", and one should rather refer to the material as notes being at various stages between raw material and finished product. In particular, the meaning of individual notes on science and their interrelation can only be explored by giving attention to the works and the ideas that stimulated the poet's mind: Hardenberg's natural philosophy has to be pieced together from the comments he makes on the scientific theories and practices of his day.

III. THE VALUE OF HARDENBERG'S NOTES ON SCIENCE

What may one expect from studying the scientific notes of a romantic poet? I assumed that Novalis' natural philosophy will be of interest to historians of science as well as students of literature, that his thoughts on science have an intrinsic value beyond the aid they might provide to understand his poetry. This is by no means obvious and could hardly have been defended on the basis of earlier unsatisfactory editions. Wilhelm Dilthey, an admirable critic of Novalis who was first to claim that his "fragments" were not merely confused aggregates of contradictory remarks, treasured the notebooks for those metaphysical and humanistic ideas that he found still alive and important from the point of view of his own philosophy. But he saw no intrinsic value in Novalis' scientific writings. Even in retrospect, when Dilthey included the essay in his volume *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, he defended this position: "Und auch dabei muß ich bleiben, daß ich mit meiner Abschätzung des wissenschaftlichen Wertes der Fragmente damals das Richtige getroffen habe.... In den metaphysischen und geisteswissenschaftlichen Fragmenten sah ich die Bedeutung des Nachlasses. Meine Absicht war, zu zeigen, welchen Wert die letzteren auch noch für die heutigen Geisteswissenschaften haben."[15] In fact,

Dilthey felt vindicated by the first study of Hardenberg's notes on science, a dissertation by W. Olshausen which appeared in 1905.[16] Although Olshausen differed from Dilthey on specific points of interpretation, he agreed with him that Hardenberg's scientific studies were erratic and chaotic, and therefore worthless from a scientific point of view.[17]

Both Dilthey and Olshausen had to rely on very incomplete editions of Novalis' works which were particularly misleading in the presentation of the scientific material. Olshausen's contentions have been challenged on that account in several studies,[18] but only now, with the publication of all the scientific notes, a better chronological ordering, and a clearer delineation of context, can the validity of Olshausen's findings be judged. I believe that Novalis' studies were on the whole thorough and consistent and one should not judge them on the ground of occasional excentric speculations. He had a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary views and achievements in medicine and science, and his selective attention in the notebooks was not a sign of insufficient information, but a critique he applied. In emphasizing the breadth of his readings and the contemporary scientific context I kept, as far as was possible, the discussion of Novalis' conception of disease in terms of contemporary thought on pathology, physiology, and philosophy, and not, as for instance in the works of R. Unger and W. Rehm,[19] in terms of the theology and metaphysics of romanticism.

The scientific and philosophical value of Novalis' natural philosophy has been a particularly vexing question to German historians of medicine who felt torn between their scientific credo and their attachment to the cultural tradition of romanticism.[20] In the compromise which seems to be generally accepted now, Novalis' stature is vindicated by the claim that "Romantic Medicine"—a peculiar chapter in the history of German medicine covering the first decades of the nineteenth century—was decisively shaped by Hardenberg's thoughts on the nature of disease and the art of healing. Yet, this argument can hardly be construed as a compliment since to many historians of medicine the romantic period was merely an aberration from the forward march of science. As P. Diepgen put it: "Mit dem

diffusen Reizbegriff ließ sich schön spekulieren. Das haben denn auch Schelling, der ihm nahestehende... Andreas Roeschlaub ... und der Dichter (!) [sic] Novalis ... gründlich getan, nicht ohne zahlreiche Anhänger zu gewinnen, aber ohne die wissenschaftliche Medizin auch nur im leisesten zu fördern."[21] There is no concrete evidence that Novalis had authority among doctors of medicine and we have to assume that whatever Novalis shared with the doctor-philosophers of the succeeding generation was derived from common sources and the general intellectual atmosphere of the age.

At any rate, even from a historical and scientific point of view what is at issue is not Novalis' contribution to cumulative knowledge but the consistency and reasonableness of his ideas in terms of eighteenth-century science. Historians of science recognize the inadequacy of the assumption that science develops through the gradual and uninterrupted accumulation of facts, or that it is historically possible to separate neatly discoveries from "errors" or "myths". Wrong theories might contain partial truths, valuable discoveries might result from incorrect hypotheses, and even complete errors may serve as stimuli for constructive efforts. As Professor T. S. Kuhn remarks, one ought to examine scientific attitudes in the context of their age and ask about their inner coherence and integrity: "Out-of-date theories are not in principle unscientific because they have been discarded."[22]

IV. THE VARIETY IN HARDENBERG'S SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

It has often been asserted that romanticism represents pure organicism, anthropomorphically directed among the sciences towards biology and anthropology since these define man and his position in nature. It has even been suggested by Professor Gillispie that romanticism may be defined by its preference for biology over physics and mathematics: "... we may be in a position to venture that consistent account of romanticism which eludes us in the history of politics, philosophy, and the arts. Romanticism began as a moral revolt against physics,

expressed in moving, sad, and sometimes angry attempts to defend a qualitative science, in which nature can be congruent with man, against a measuring, numbering science which alienates the creator of science from his own creation by total objectification of nature. For physics romanticism would substitute biology at the heart of science."[23]

Professor Gillispie's remark may be applied to Blake and Goethe, both of whom had a long-standing quarrel with Newtonian science, and to a lesser extent to Wordsworth and Schelling who were organicists uninterested in mathematical thinking. But Novalis' conception of mathematics was more complex. He did, of course, look for an organic and personal relationship with nature. But if he wrote a little poem which anticipates a future where poetry and fables will take the place of numbers and figures (I, 344 and 360), he also remarked that letters ought to become numbers and languages mathematics (III, 50). In fact, to Novalis mathematics did not consist merely of numbers. As Käte Hamburger has shown, his idea of mathematics was related to Kant's interpretation of it, and his concepts anticipated such modern terms as function and continuity. From Kant he accepted that mathematical operations were *a priori* synthetic judgments and that consequently all the sciences should become mathematics (III, 50 and 593). In the search of unity, coherence, and certainty in knowledge, mathematics showed to him how, from a few basic principles, a universally applicable system may be constructed.

From Kant Novalis differed, however, in the interpretation he gave to synthetic judgments. If such judgments always were beyond empirical proofs, mathematical knowledge required an affirmation of faith: "In allem Wissen ist Glauben". He felt the need for reinforcing mathematics with "Glauben und Liebe" and followed the Pythagorean tradition of raising it to a mystic and divine science.

While the sciences were in need of an *a priori* mathematical structure which the pattern of the mind would supply, the study of the mind, and the body in general, necessitated the development of biology, physiology, anatomy, psychology, and the other life sciences. Medicine, as the most humane and inclusive

of the sciences, was therefore of central importance to many of the romantics. As Schelling stated in the Introduction to the *Jahrbücher der Medicin als Wissenschaft*, medicine was the crown of all the sciences, because it studied man who was himself the center and image of the universe. Discussing Novalis' "Naturphilosophie", one has to devote therefore greatest attention to his notes on medicine, physiology, and psychology. These were indeed the sciences that concerned him most: physics and chemistry were important to him for their practical value in the technology of salt mining and for what they revealed of the method of science in general, but in the formation of his philosophy they had relatively little significance. The phenomena of galvanism and magnetism form an exception, because it was believed that these constituted a link between physical and psychic forces.

V. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It might be asked whether the picture of Novalis emerging from this study of his notebooks will be representative, since I shall neither discuss his best-known poetic works nor even all aspects of his theoretical writings. Although the ideas of Hardenberg's natural philosophy do enter into his poetry and fiction, one has to admit that these works do not center on science and medicine, and an exclusively scientific analysis would damage their poetic fabric. Nevertheless, the notes on science do play an important role in Hardenberg's intellectual development. In spite of some older views, Novalis achieved no genuine and lasting synthesis during his life, and very likely he had no illusions about realizing one in general—except in an eschatological future. Not only did he believe that there can be no unique and universal mode in which men perfect themselves, but he also saw man's crucial relation to nature from several different angles. His earliest philosphical studies in 1794-96 centered on the works of Fichte, where nature was reduced to a mere not-I. Emerging from, but never fully rejecting Fichte's exaltation of the self, Novalis turned to the sciences and for a while he inclined to agree with Schelling that nature and mind,

subject and object were corresponding to each other. The stay in Freiberg vastly enlarged his understanding of the empirical sciences, but, paradoxically, it also brought his differences from Schelling in sharper relief: philosophically he moved away from empiricism and theories of correspondence. The attempt at an encyclopedia, "Das allgemeine Brouillon", and, briefly afterwards, *Die Lehrlinge* were Novalis' attempts to construct a synthesis, to give a poetic, moral, and religious meaning to the empirical world and to its systematic explanation—science. The incompleteness of both, as well as the shift from the encyclopedic form in the "Brouillon" to the poetic form in *Die Lehrlinge*, indicates that Novalis was dissatisfied with his attempts and moved towards a more consistently poetic view of the world. In the discussion of *Die Lehrlinge* I attempt to show that the ironies and ambiguities in this work issue from a clash between contradictory states of mind. After this unsuccessful attempt the polar forces clearly separated and remained active only in a realm of their own: the empirical and scientific talents of Novalis, no longer employed in the construction of scientific philosophies, found an outlet in his technical-professional work, while his poetic and visionary self became actively engaged in the writing of poetry. The late poetic works, above all *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, do not encompass the empirical world as the "Brouillon" or *Die Lehrlinge* set out to do: they are primarily a synthesis within a delicately woven poetic structure, incorporating, perhaps by necessity, only linguistic reminiscences of science.

It is possible to look upon this development from a different angle, and describe it not in terms of change but as a single undulating interaction of radical philosophical and historical positions. In connection with Hardenberg's reading of Schelling I attempt to show that already during his early study of Fichte there appears a pantheistic strain in his thought. According to this there is an organic unity between man and the universe, and the human mind is not radically separated from the realm of nature. Hardenberg's later preoccupation with the interaction of polarities, with the nature of organisms, and with the relationship between parts and the whole indicate that he was in search of a

theory of correspondences and a holistic view of the universe. Yet, Fichte's (and Schiller's) notion that nature will have to be overcome through the assertion of human freedom never disappears from Hardenberg's thought: it dominates the "Brouillon" and his crowning poetic works. There is no unanimity in these works as to what human forces ought to propell this transformation. At times it appears as a purely ethical task, as the assertion of practical reason only, at others as a work of the imagination, of man's creative powers. Neither of these positions is consistently upheld in Hardenberg's works: he repeatedly questions the guiding power of the imagination, and towards the end of his life he becomes convinced that moral development can only result from an exposure to sin.

A complete treatment of what has been sketched here is beyond the scope of my book, even though I have tried to stress throughout Hardenberg's "bifocality". Too often in the past critics tended to overemphasize the unity of his thought, by giving exclusive attention to only one aspect of it. I hope to illuminate the variety in him, those tensions and hesitations between mind and nature or ethics and aesthetics that make him a poet of our problems too.