A Higher Language:
Novalis on Communion with Animals

Around 1800 Philipp Otto Runge fashioned with scissors and paper a dog gazing up at a full moon. Significantly, the dog holds his mouth closed, as if, were he to howl, we might think him a wolf in the wild. Instead he is a domesticated dog, to the point that he even communicates human value: like a true Romantic, he raises his eyes silently to the sky, his chest filled with a longing for transcendence. Art critic Robert Rosenblum has written that the silhouette portrays a “strangely haunting opposition between terrestrial desire and skyborne inaccessibility” (37). A decade before C. D. Friedrich’s nocturnal back figures, Runge creates a dog transfixed by lunar light. This substitution of a dog for this archetypal Romantic pose is fascinating.

How is it that the dog can be emblematic for human longing? Does it mean that animals share in mankind’s intimations of a higher being or immortality? Or is the anthropomorphism more mundane, announcing the sentimentalization of the pet seen later in Victorian England?

Here, the animal undoubtedly represents neither the human trait that Enlightenment thinkers conventionally denied it (i.e., reason), nor does the dog represent the feature that the nineteenth century frequently claimed humans and animals shared (i.e., a baser instinct). The dog is not an animal in a fairy tale waiting to be retransfigured into a human being and thereby saved from a beast’s existence. Nor is he a talking animal who has stepped out of a fable to depict human frailties. Instead the dog possesses a kind of spirituality, a sense of awe. His transfixed gaze suggests a bond with a transcendent world; perhaps his chest breathes in oneness with nature. Even in the sparseness of the silhouette (or perhaps because of the evocative sublimity of its shorthand), Runge points to the mysterious interconnectedness of nature. All of nature is sacred and alive, a unity in which the dog participates.

I should like to argue that this particular substitution of animal for human occurs not insignificantly in Romanticism, and that Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) was a major thinker in realigning the relationship between the two worlds. Of course, much scholarship has been devoted to nature, galvanism, and mineralogy in Novalis’s writings.1 To be sure, there are fewer and less salient references to animals than to plants
and stones in his work. But what passages exist are extraordinary for their contradiction of the Enlightenment delineation of the boundaries between man and animal. If much Enlightenment thought set out to define the essence of man, then his uniqueness was often purported at the expense of non-human creatures. Even in writers such as Condillac and Reimarus who elaborated on the similarities between beast and man, man always crowned the continuity and development from one species to the next.

Novalis, by contrast, conceives of an almost instantaneous, imaginative transformation of man into an animal, plant, or stone. At one stroke, he casts aside the hierarchy that governed the eighteenth-century belief in the Great Chain of Being. The metamorphosis itself signifies a state of higher consciousness that transcends the human. Even more audaciously, Hardenberg asks whether God, since he could become man, could not also become a stone, plant, animal, or element, thereby instating “eine fortwährende Erlösung in der Natur” (2: 826). In short, instead of the animal being the abject Other of Enlightenment thought, it becomes the “Du” of Novalis’s radical pre-Rimbaudian statement: “Ich bin Du” (2:332). The question then arises as to what permits this shift in intellectual history, one that involves philosophy, theology, and science. Could one perhaps search for an answer in central Romantic tenets, even if they appear at first glance to be far removed from the question of what distinguishes man from beast? In other words, do the Romantic theories on the fragment, organicity, chaos, pre-reflexive being, and poiesis pertain or even contribute to this striking shift? Are there other thinkers of the period with whom Novalis can be aligned? Can his uniqueness be claimed by comparison only with Enlightenment writers or also with his contemporaries? These are the questions this essay intends to address.

The 18th-Century Debates on Animals

The arm of Descartes’s judgment on the animal reached far into the Enlightenment. Descartes maintained that animals were natural automata, incapable of thought, language, understanding, and feeling. Although he did not deny them life or sensation, they were supposedly devoid of soul and immune to pain. Their bodies ran like clockwork. Predictably, significant challenges to Descartes’s mechanistic view of animals and defenses of their rights were presented by such important philosophers as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Bentham, who in 1780 rephrased the seminal question as being not whether animals could reason or talk, but whether they could suffer. Yet Enlightenment thinkers repeatedly adhered to the stark Cartesian division of man from animal. Even when Leibniz claimed that they could not, as monads, be denied an eternal soul, Hume that they expressed dedication to each other and to humans, or Locke that they demonstrated some capacity to reason, still a fundamental separation and hierarchy dominated their classifications. Human reason defined the essential difference between species. According to Zedler, for instance, “theile man die Thiere in vernünftige und unvernünftige, oder in Menschen und Vieh” (1334). Ironizing this recurrent eighteenth-century praise of man as animal rationale, Lichtenberg writes that if dogs, wasps, and hornets had been gifted with human reason, they would conquer the world (1:706, no. 360).4

Underscoring the eighteenth-century faith in reason, Kant in the Metaphysik der Sitten repeatedly contrasts “Vernunft” and “moralisches Gefühl” to “Thierheit” (6:216, 387, 435). His use of the word “Thierheit” carries a double meaning: at times it refers to “andere Naturwesen” (6:400) and at times to part of man himself, out of which he must raise himself, as when Kant says, “Es ist [dem Menschen] Pflicht: sich aus der Rohigkeit seiner Natur, aus der Thierheit (quoad
actum), immer mehr zur Menschheit [...] empor zu arbeiten” (6:387), or when he contrasts “Thiermensch” to “Vernunftmensch” (6:435). Masturbation is euphemized as “Befriedigung thierischer Triebe” (6:425), “thierische Neigung” (6:425), or “bloße thierische Lust” (6:424). Yet far from conceptualizing likeness between the species, Kant’s use of such turns of phrase reinforces the differences between man and the lowly beast. According to Kant, animals don’t have “eine Würde (einen absoluten inneren Wert)” (6:435), whereas man is above possessing economic value. When Kant opposed cruelly to animals it was on the grounds that man has a duty to himself (not the animal!), for his sense of morality or of his obligations toward other humans could be diminished and eventually exterminated (6:444). In seeming contrast to Kant’s Cartesian separation of man from beast, Herder begins Über den Ursprung der Sprache with the striking line “Schon als Tier, hat der Mensch Sprache” (697). This original language is one of “Empfindung, die unmittelbares Naturgesetz ist” (698) and one that man shared with animals. Herder, by opening his treatise with a discussion of pain and its expression, whether it be in human or nonhuman beings, is far from Descartes’s mechanistic view of animals and his denial that they experience suffering. But unlike Novalis, who will later envisage a return to an Edenic language common to man and nature, Herder demarcates man’s progression away from an instinctual language: what ultimately distinguishes man is his “Besonnenheit” (722) and capacity for reflection, “daß er erkenne, wolle, und würke” (719).

Because the eighteenth-century debate on man’s relation to the brutes is so extensive, it is important to cite some of the more prominent contributors, especially those who strongly opposed Descartes, in order better to situate Novalis’s departure from even these defenders of animals. Georg Friedrich Meier and Hermann Samuel Reimarus were the strongest German apologists. Writing in 1749, Meier ascribed not only the same sensory perceptions to animals as to man but granted them imagination, memory, wit, intelligence, judgment, language, pleasure, and displeasure (45–46). They were capable of love, and their souls lived into eternity, for God cannot destroy anything (48–50). Meier even compares all animals to children who die before they can make use of reason (117). Indeed, through death animals grow in understanding and reason and become “Geister” (118).

By the early 1760s, Reimarus was arguing that the diversity, order, and hierarchy among animals were proof of divine wisdom and providence. He observed purposiveness and perfection in animal nature, and ascribed to the brutes, as did Meier, a degree of imagination, memory, and even what he termed “Kunst-Triebe.” Indeed, the Allge-
meine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere (1760) concludes with the prescription that the animal instinct for art should serve as an impetus to man to become more educated. Reimarus did not deny animals souls, and claimed they shared with man the capacity for happiness. They could, moreover, be happier than man once their appetites are satiated and because they do not worry about the future. However, it is man’s ability to compare past and present and thereby to extrapolate the future that sets him apart from the beast and allows him to strive for betterment. Although the animal world may be perfect, only man envisages perfectibility (Triebe der Thiere 406; Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion 522). Thus, like his contemporaries Kant and Herder, Reimarus ascribed reason solely to man.

Reimarus’s system of a hierarchy of beings follows closely that of E. B. de Condillac. His Traité des animaux (1755) begins by jettisoning Descartes’s mechanism and attacking the inconsistencies that follow from Buffon’s Cartesian line of reasoning. Buffon had argued that animals were sensate but still purely material beings. Condillac counters that beasts not only feel, they also compare, judge, have ideas and memory. He sketches these similarities to man, only to then demonstrate their differences. Man is superior for his knowledge of divinity and consciousness of morality (495) and for his ability to communicate his thoughts (530). His soul is immortal, while the animal spirit dies with it. As the only one to discern the true and beautiful and develop the arts and sciences, man raises himself up to divinity (530). Hastings summarizes: “Beasts feel, act according to their limited ideas, and possess a spiritual but mortal soul which is quite different from man’s. [Condillac’s] opinion predominates during the remainder of the century” (54).

To recapitulate: although “by the end of the eighteenth century absolute and essential superiority of man is rejected” (Hastings 65), most writers, however diverse, still subscribed to the notion of the Great Chain of Being: for all their differences, Leibniz, Reimarus, Bonnet, Condillac, and Kant all believed in the law of continuity and order in the universe. As we shall see, this dictum of continuity was jettisoned by Novalis so that he could freely imagine the interchangeability of rocks, plants, animals, and man. Nor was it a question for him of what qualities animals shared with men, as many apologists, such as Reimarus, argued. A belief in the future life of animal souls (Bonnet, Reimarus, Meier) may have influenced Novalis’s inclusion of animal life in his discussion of metempsychosis, but he did not make a point of arguing, as these writers did, whether animals possessed souls. He was also far removed from the eighteenth-century treatises on how animals, as social creatures, communicated with each other and imagined instead interspecial dialogue. Above all, Novalis remained unconcerned with defining the essence of man by his rational capabilities.

Animal Metamorphosis

If for Descartes the animal body obeyed mechanistic laws, then according to Novalis the mechanistic worldview inaugurated by Descartes had infected, by his own day, even the assessment of man. Comparing Johannes Kepler’s belief in “ein vergeistiges, sittliches Weltall” to the present, Novalis says that today “es für Weisheit gehalten wird—alles zu ertöden, das Hohe zu erniedrigen, statt das Niedre zu erheben—und selber den Geist des Menschen unter die Gesetze des Mechanismus zu beugen” (2:408). Novalis’s first step in releasing man from these laws is to realign him with nature. Rather than elevating man to a position above nature, Novalis in a sense reverses the hierarchy to see nature in a positive light as the reverse image of mankind—as “jenes einzige Gegenbild der Menschheit.” The full passage reads: “[D]ie Natur wäre nicht die Natur, wenn sie keinen Geist hätte, nüt jenes einzige Gegenbild der Menschheit nicht die unentbehrliche
Antwort dieser geheimnißvollen Frage, oder die Frage zu dieser unendlichen Antwort” (1:222) A juxtaposition of these two quotations reorganizes the relation between man and nature so as to attribute mechanization to man (not the natural world) and to attribute spirit in all its mysteriousness to nature (leaving man to ponder her enigma).  

The historical gap separating Kepler’s and Novalis’s times is also invoked by the merchants in Heinrich von Ofterdingen. They speak of earlier times when nature was more alive and meaningful “lebendiger und sinnvoller” (1: 256), when the power of poetry was so in tune with nature that wild animals could be tamed and even stones could be drawn into dance-like movement (1: 257). Here Novalis bears comparison to a strain of Enlightenment thought, found in Rousseau and Herder, that man was no longer close to nature and had lost a sense for the uncomplicated, instinctual truth and confidence that animals display. Rousseau, for instance, saw perfectibility not as an advantage but as the source of frustration and unhappiness in man; beasts were healthier and happier (1:90). Yet, unlike the Enlightenment detractors of civilized man, Novalis does not set out to rob man of his self-importance. He thus can be distinguished yet further from the eighteenth-century rejection of the Cartesian man–beast distinction: it is not his aim to satirize church dogma or narrow-minded moral philosophy on the superiority of man—a critique one finds additionally in Voltaire, La Mettrie (who mockingly spoke of “l’homme machine”) or d’Holbach (who, disgusted with man’s vanity, saw the soul as materialistic). Indeed, the passage cited above on the current mechanistic view of mankind would seem to be directed precisely against the influence of the likes of La Mettrie and d’Holbach. Novalis’s impetus is even further removed from the intent to degrade man by unflattering comparison to the beast (La Mettrie, for instance, notoriously stated that man, like other creatures, came from clay). Instead the Romantic writer seeks to elevate nature (and man with her) by divining in her a vitalism or spirit that responds to a human lack.

However conventional it would be to state that vitalism replaces mechanism, dynamism classification as the operative mode in Romantic thinking, it is important to stress that this shift also applies to the relation between animals and humans. Intimation of the connectedness of beings replaces Enlightenment systemization, with the result that one can sense nature or the exterior world “als ein menschliches Wesen” (2:670). Whereas Kant feared that man might give in to animalistic drives, to the “Thiermensch” in him, Novalis celebrates the return to inclination and feeling, which is not separated from perception and intellect, all words that resonate with his use of the term “Sinne”: “Wir genießen die Natur mit vollen Sinnen, weil sie uns nicht von Sinnen bringt” (1:213). In a late fragment he writes: “Unsere Sinne sind höhere Thiere — Aus Ihnen entsteht ein noch höherer Animalism” (2:825). Given that acute sensorial perception characterizes many animals, Novalis ventures to equate our senses with the animal and thereby to elevate their role. In this inspired alignment, he transforms both the realm of the human senses and what he calls “Animalism,” a word I take to refer both to a heightening of the senses as well as an intensified connection to the animal world.

When Novalis conjoins man and animal in a fragment, it is frequently to imagine their interchangeability, to demonstrate the human potential for the fullness of animal life, rather than the descent into beastliness. “Aus dem Menschen wird ein Thier […] Das Thier ist ein übersättigtes Leben” (2:274). “Wir leben eigentlich in einem Thiere” (2: 710). Similarly, rather than follow a Linnean separation into various genera and species, Novalis hypothesizes: “Die Pflanze ist ein Halbthier” (2:846). He turns animals into dead plants, humans into dead animals in what resembles a theory of metempsychosis: “Sollte nicht jede[r] Pflanze ein Stein, und ein Thier entsprechen?” (2:824). Another enigmatic fragment has the words jotted
down: “Mehrere Thiere—Menschen” (2:795). Since “Wandelbarkeit gerade ein Vorzug höherer Naturen [ist]” (2:677), Novalis, according to his notes on his unfinished novel, planned to transform Heinrich von Ofterdingen into a plant, an animal, a stone, and a star (1:392). In other words, if, for Rousseau, perfectibility was a suspicious ideal, for Novalis, one could only strive for perfectibility via this transformation into other forms of being. Thus the remarkable upshot of the Romantic belief in a vitalism pervading nature is that, for Novalis, it permits interspecial metamorphosis.

Other examples of such metamorphosis populate Hardenberg’s writings. In his marginalia to Friedrich Schlegel’s Ideen (in a passage where Friedrich Schegel defined mankind), Novalis scribbles:

Ich weis nicht warum man immer von einer abgesonderten Menschheit spricht. Gehören Thiere, Pflanzen und Steine, Gestirne und Lüfte nicht auch zur Menschheit […]? Ist sie denn so sehr anders, als die übrigen Naturgeschlechter? (2:725)

The reciprocal move Novalis makes in this passage is both to assimilate the natural world with its animals, plants, and stars into man, as part of him, but also to transform the human into another example of these other natural beings. Such interchangeable metamorphosis is also envisaged by the teacher in Die Lehrlinge zu Sais: “Bald waren ihm die Sterne Menschen, bald die Menschen Sterne, die Steine Thiere, die Wolken Pflanzen, er spielte mit den Kräften und Erscheinungen” (1:202). What is striking about these ongoing transmutations is that they are unforeseeable, arbitrary, and infinite. To return to the passage that opened this essay: in his very late fragments Novalis even extends the principle of metamorphosis to the Godhead: “Wenn Gott Mensch werden konnte, kann er auch Stein, Pflanze[,] Thier und Element werden, und vielleicht giebt es auf diese Art eine fortwährende Erlösung in der Natur” (2:826). It follows that if man, too, could regenerate in another form, then he could resemble divinity. Redemption then occurs via this transformative ideal.12 Theologically speaking, Novalis’s theory of metamorphosis is indebted to a Spinozistic pantheism (Deus sive natura), whereby all of nature is infused with divinity.13 As in Spinoza, it is not an undifferentiated unity of substance that concerns Novalis but multiple concrete individuations. The infinite multiplicity present in each individual and interconnecting them is what comprises the One; an infinity of modifications pervades nature and is identical and extensive with the infinity of God. In the passage quoted above, Novalis borrows this Spinozistic doctrine to whimsically reinterpret the Incarnation.

When Novalis does seem to place humans on a higher plane of development from animals, the distinction is based on a relative, generative scale: for instance, after stating “Alles Leben ist ein überschwänglicher Erneuerungsproceß” (2:345), he says that animals have a doubled life, whereas man has a tripled one (“ein dreysches Leben”) (2:346). Novalis is still far from anticipating a Darwinian notion of evolution; but he is also unlike his contemporary Lamarck, who is often referred to as heralding Darwin for his theory of mutable species. Whereas Lamarck upheld the doctrine of a scale of beings—the infinitely graded series of life from lowest to highest—Novalis envisaged manipulating to the point of jettisoning the species categorization. Although Lamarck, like Novalis, subscribed to the belief that life arose from collected energies of a vital fluid, Novalis’s utilization of such theories comes to very different conclusions. Novalis was not content with letting the presence of a universal life force stand as grounds for mere analogies between plant and animal; it allowed him to envisage the total exchange of plant for animal, animal for human, etc. This difference emphasizes that the transmutations Novalis postulates do not occur as pro-
gression or regression along a series: they are random, alogical, and uncommitted. His term “Erneuerungsproceß” suggests that he is less interested in seeing a unity, totality, or single substance present in nature than in recognizing nature’s dynamism. Striking is the instantaneous quality of the exchange or transformation, as quick as the leap of a capricious fantasy, which suggests that it is involuntary. In fact, metamorphosis arises from the imaginative desire to conjecture odd, accidental resemblances between disparate, fragmented aspects of nature. Thus Novalis describes the teacher at Sais:

Nun fand er überall Bekanntes wieder, nur wunderlich gemischt, gepaart, und auch ordneten sich selbst in ihm oft seltsame Dinge. Er merkte bald auf die Verbindungen in allem, auf Begegnungen, Zusammen treffenungen. (1:202).

In his advocacy of the freedom of radical transformation, Novalis strikingly heralds Gille Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of “becoming-animal,” first mentioned in Deleuze’s Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature and then more fully developed in their A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Their own stipulations equally apply to Novalis and help articulate that Novalis, too, is concerned not with identifying with the animal but becoming it, not in a totality or unity of substance but in accidental forms and haecceities: “Not following a logical order, but following alogical consistencies or compatibilities, […] because no one, not even God, can say in advance whether two borderlines will string together” (250). What for Novalis is a response to Enlightenment categorization is for Deleuze and Guattari a response to structuralism: “Serialism and structuralism either graduate characteristics according to their resemblances, or order them according to their differences. Animal characteristics can be mythic or scientific. But we are not interested in characteristics: what interests us are modes of expansion, propagation” (239).

But what were Novalis’s contemporary sources of reference? The theory of a vital natural force, a secret matter, or subtle fluids underlying organic and inorganic life was disseminated by such thinkers as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Friedrich Anton Mesmer, Johann Wilhelm Ritter, and Johann Christian Reil. The German late eighteenth century also saw the influence of the Scotsman John Brown on excitation and irritability in the body. Whether this substance be electricity (in the theories of magnetism and galvanism) or oxygen (the air of life), whether this process was chemical or physical, it was seen to organically structure the world. The theories on galvanism, in particular, involved animating seemingly inert matter. Ritter believed in the “Metamorphose alles Endlichen” (Oersted 2:19) through this principle of galvanism. Novalis was very familiar with his 1798 treatise Beweis, daß ein beständiger Galvanismus den Lebensproceß im Thierreich begleite (he possessed two copies). Novalis himself wrote: “Der Galv[anism] scheint die allgemeine Ursache der Natur” (2:793, no. 252). Ritter’s experiments included finding that the mimosa responded to electrical current, which led him to refer to this flower as a “Pflanzengestalt” (“Elektrische Versuche” 354) or as “das umgekehrte Thier” (356). Although this study was published in 1811, already in the Beweis, Ritter voiced the conviction that the plant world would respond to galvanism. It is not inconceivable that Novalis’s own postulation that rocks, plants, and animals were interchangeable could have inspired his friend Ritter to further pursue his investigations. Ritter’s metaphor of nature being an “All-Thier” (Beweis 171), in the sense that it was animate or “quick” in all its manifestations, strikingly resembles not only Novalis’s dynamic view of nature but also the role he assigns the animal as embodying this vitality. Novalis, in fact, connected the terms “Reitz,” “Stärke,” and “Energie” to (male) animal beauty (2:639). Far from being mechanistic, the animal now represents the life force that governs the world.

In sum, we can see Novalis rejecting mechanistic laws governing nature, inspired
by both a Spinozistic pantheism and by contemporary scientific investigations into galvanism as a dynamic vital force inhabiting and interconnecting all of nature. The result of this union is a reconceptualization of the relation between human and animal which is radical for the eighteenth century. Another element fuelling this epistemic shift is a literary one. Clearly, the traditions of Ovid’s Metamorphosis and such fairy-tale transformations as frog into prince inform Novalis’s thought. Yet the issue is less one of influence than of how Novalis’s poetics uniquely motivates the metamorphoses he envisages. In addition the question arises of not only what enables this imaginative interchange but also what inhibits it. By contemplating the limits of language Novalis explores what would hinder communication between man and beast.

A Zooicentric Poetics

In a letter dated January 12, 1798, to August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis describes poetry: “Sie ist von Natur Flüssig—allbildsam—und unbeschränkt—Jeder Reitz bewegt sie nach allen Seiten […]. Sie wird gleichsam ein organisches Wesen—dessen ganzer Bau seine Entstehung aus dem Flüssigen, seine ursprünglich elastische Natur, seine Unbeschränktheit, seine Allfähigkeit verrath” (1: 656–57). The galvanistic references to fluidity and stimulus, as well as to poetry’s elasticity, limitlessness, mutability, and organicity link Novalis’s concept of poetry to a kind of animal-life dynamism. Reciprocally, his very fantasizing of interspecial metamorphosis issues from his theory of chaotic, dream-like poetic production, in the sense that its transgression of empirical reality follows the freedom of association that governs dreams, fairy tales, and poetic license in general. By imagining striking combinations, the poet transmutes the world. Moreover, insofar as Novalis prescribes the ideal poetic nature as “eine vielseitige Empfänglichkeit nöthig” (1:385) and depicts his novel’s hero with a perceptive openness to the world, he is also describing the receptivity that bonds man to nature. Thus, in Die Lehrlinge zu Sais Novalis warns that one will not grasp nature unless one recognizes her everywhere, feels a diverse kinship with all bodies, comings with all natural beings, and can “sich gleichsam in sie hineinfühlen” (1: 229).

The Romantics’ understanding of the fragment as the discrete and disjunct relaying to an infinite whole resembles their perception of nature: each part of nature evokes its diversified entirety, and this connection permits the transmutation into different life forms as well as communication between them. The unforeseeable associations that the fragment conjures, the arbitrariness of the relations it establishes, and the wittiness of its unusual juxtapositions also characterize the imaginative leap of the interspecial metamorphosis that Novalis postulated. It is thus no wonder that Friedrich Schlegel’s famous metaphor of the fragment comes from the animal kingdom: “Ein Fragment muß gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel” (2: 197). The hedgehog is hermetic and enigmatic (closed into itself and fending off intrusion by its stout spines), yet its very roundness calls forth the plenitude of nature of which it is both part and microcosm. Moreover, the comparison of the quintessential Romantic form to the animal links poetic enthusiasm with animal life force. In addition, in its very clever inspiration, Schlegel’s Athenäum fragment 206 exemplifies imaginative transfiguration. The animal/fragment represents the essence of the Romantics’ constant permutation of the world.

The other reason Hardenberg’s philosophy of nature ties into poesis is that he conceives the language of nature as a kind of higher poetry. Nature sings and its languages are diverse. “Der Mensch spricht nicht allein—auch das Universum spricht—alles spricht—unendliche Sprachen” (2:500). In a similar evocation of this heterogeneity,
Heinrich von Ofterdingen dreams of a cathedral into which all manner of creatures enter and express their inner nature “in einer eigentümlichen Mundart” (1:299).²⁰ Billy O’Brien has observed that, for Hardenberg, nature babbles (210), which suggests that not only does nature evoke the multiplicity of Babel but that her foreign languages are incoherent. In the fairy tale “Hyacinth und Rosenblüthe,” for instance, nature speaks in both familiar cadences and gibberish. Toward the end of his journey, the flowers and crystal spring greet Hyacinth “freundlich mit bekannten Worten” (1:217). Yet their smiles could betoken either friendliness or a tinge of mockery. Earlier Hyacinth is mentioned as chattering constantly with animals, birds, trees, and cliffs, and the narrator ironically adds that, of course, it was all nonsense: communication with nature is either the fantasy of a silly boy or, less cynically, a type of free, non-goal-oriented language.

If nature’s language is not always so familiar, then as Heinrich von Ofterdingen suggests, reading her will be an unending process: “Ewig wird er lesen und sich nicht satt lesen und täglich neue Bedeutungen, neue entzückendere Offenbarungen der liebenden Natur gewahr werden” (1:377). Clearly, if nature speaks, then she must be interpreted. At times, Novalis refers to the enigmatic, hieroglyphic language of nature that, as the Lehrlinge so beautifully puts it, can be discerned in eggshells, clouds, and snow but that can’t be decoded (1:201). One of the Sais apprentices says that man improvises (“fantasiren”) on nature as on an instrument, yet he cannot understand her (1:222). Novalis urges comprehension when he observes that the aim of stones, trees and animals talking is “um den Menschen sich selbst fühlen, sich selbst besinnen zu machen” (2:360). If Novalis in his uncompleted novel planned to turn Heinrich into a tree, it was not insignificantly into a “klingenden Baum” (1:398–99): in his process of “Bildung” man must become not only a part of nature but a nature that speaks. In other words, Novalis sees the language of nature not as self-contained—the vocal but nonsignifying chatter that Hyacinth carries on with the animals and birds—but as purposive: it is a language that communicates to man, which is why it is so important for Novalis that it be understood.

Not only does nature utter a language ideally comprehensible to man, but man also intimately addresses nature. Her capacity for listening serves as a model to humans. From his earliest writing on, Hardenberg reveals an interest in the myth of Orpheus. In a 1789 poem entitled “Geschichte der Poesie,” he notes how animals, birds, and even palm branches bend in amazement before the voice of poetry (1:56). And a verse epic of the same year on “Orpheus” presents the birds and shy animals as harkening to Orpheus’s lyre (1:69). The first tale in Heinrich von Ofterdingen, the so-called Arion-legend, doubly evokes the Orphic myth: the singer possesses Orpheus’s gift of moving the wild beast and he likewise ascends from the clutches of death. When he breaks out in voice, all of nature, including the ship’s timber and the waves, resonate in sympathy. Rescuing him from the ocean is a sea creature, whom Novalis evocatively names an “Unthier,” who receives as thanks for his mission another air. And when the poet sings about the loss of his jewels, the creature returns them. Song is thus a form of communication understood and appreciated by animals. Perhaps the dolphin-like beast, in his capacity for gratitude and response to human need, is unjustly categorized as an animal, and thus called an “Unthier.” Or, the designation “Unthier” could mark the animal par excellence—that which must be cast out of the human category; it is abject and monstrous (interchangeable with “Ungeheuer”). Like the singer himself, the animal is unfairly excluded from human society.

Novalis transforms the radically Other into a familiar being through the Orphic address across the human to other forms of nature: “Wird nicht der Fels ein eigentümliches Du, eben wenn ich ihn anrede?” And by continuing “Und war ich anders, als
der Strom?” (1:224), he reverses the transformation by becoming the Other himself. Alluding to Novalis’s exchange of the Fichte

tean “NichtIch” to a “Du,” Dennis Mahoney characterizes this reciprocity as an “I–Thou” relationship, and, in reference to the fairy
tale of Hyacinth and Rosebud, states that nature’s language can be unveiled “because hu-
man beings are themselves part of nature” (7). I would agree, though want to stress that
Novalis envisages a radical metamorphosis into the consciousness of organic and inor-
ganic nature. Although mankind is part of nature, nature is respected for its status as 
sheer otherness, something man can only be-
gin to fathom by taking leave of his own li-

mitations.

In an earlier article on self-reflexivity in Novalis, I noted how he pries open Fichte-

tan ego philosophy to characterize the return to 
the self as an eccentric path that entails leav-
ing the self (“Reassessing Romantic Reflex-

ivity”). Hardenberg’s notion of “sich selbst Überspringen” (2:345, no. 134) and travel-
ling “zu sich selbst wieder heraus” (2:244, 
no. 43) calls for a form of self-alienation, what 
he terms “Selbstfremdmachung—Selbst-
veränderung—Selbstbeobachtung” (2:670).21
This exercise in self-negation not only has 
far-reaching implications for how one as-
sesses Idealist philosophy and “Bildung.”22 It 
also impacts what we would call today an 
ecologically minded respect for nature’s un-
queness and, particularly, for how we 
treat animals as separate yet integral beings 
unto themselves. In other words, we find in 
Novalis an intense desire to comprehend the 
diverse languages of nature combined with a 
keen consciousness of the inaccessibility of 
these languages if man does not try to escape 
the confines of his familiar, anthropocen-
tric worldview.

Once creation can be valued independ-
ently of human interests and animals treat-
ed as ends in themselves (which Novalis’s views imply), then the next step would be to 
grant animals freedom from human utiliza-
tion (say, as food sources or for medical ex-
perimentation). Novalis does not address an-
imal rights, but the question is: does he pro-
vide a path that would lead there? At the very least one can analyze the implications for 
animal rights in the contrast between a 
Novalisian and Kantian philosophy. In an 
essay on “Ethical Theory and Animals,” ani-
mal rights activist Tom Regan observes that, 
although Kant recognizes only indirect, not 
direct duties to animals, advocates of animal 
righ
ts follow a Kantian lead: “[T]he funda-
mental principle of the rights view (the res-
pect principle) is Kantian in spirit: we are to 
treat individuals [including individual non-
human animals] who exist as ends in them-
selves (those who have inherent value) 
av
al ways as ends, never merely as means” (17). 
What Regan sees as Kantian can thus be 
aligned with Novalis’s reverence for nature’s 
aptness. Yet it is also true that Novalis re-

sponds, as it were, to Kant on animals: if 
Kant elevates man above the beasts by vir-
tue of his possessing the representation “I,”
then it follows that by transcending the pre-
occupation with self-awareness (through the 
act of “sich selbst Überspringen”), man’s re-

lationship to animals moves to a different 
plane and hence becomes open to the ex-
change Novalis envisions.

Does Novalis, however, truly attempt to 
imagine the consciousness or fullness of the 
animal Other? How tangible are his conjec-
tures? Do his mediations on metamorphosis 
signify merely the inaccessibility of the 
Other—the unattainable desire to be the 
creature that does not experience the defi-
ciency of self but lives in the self-reliance of 
its own being? Does the animal represent a 
certain presence à soi, a prereflexive ground of 
being in the here and now, inaccessible to 
us, yet visible through the materiality of its 
strange body? Were we able to answer such 
questions we would come closer to discern-
ing Novalis’s position on the individuality of 
animals and hence their rights. Yet would he 
even allow one to make a distinction between 
animals, plants, and stones? In other words, 
would he allow only animals such rights (and 
not stones)? Given Novalis’s philosophy of 
their interchangeability, this problem is a
priori one neither he nor we can solve. Undeniably, all the references in Hardenberg’s work are to animals in the abstract, not to particular creatures, despite the crucial reference to the “[u]ndecidable Individualität dieser Wesen” (2:761). Nor are there depictions of their suffering.

Nonetheless, although Novalis does not address animals in their particularity (including their distinction from the rest of nature), he does consistently resist anthropomorphism, in other words, having the term of reference or measurement be the human and human consciousness. He refuses to make the animal relative to man, a comparison which inevitably entails its inferior position on the Great Chain of Being. In opposition to the Enlightenment, Novalis acknowledges that one needs to look beyond human life and its limitations while still remaining in the phenomenal world. The implications of this recognition of nonhuman sentience and consciousness are not insignificant for problems facing ethics and the environment today. In fact, perhaps it is not an issue of rights (i.e., reciprocity) at all, but rather a respectful acknowledgement of the asymmetry between man and animal. Novalis retains their difference in order to recognize how “eigentlich” this “Du” is. Once again, the metamorphosis occurs not on the basis of equality between species but because man abandons seeing the Other in his own terms and takes leave of himself.

Thus I would argue that the imaginative metamorphosis, literally the “Selbstveränderung” (2:670), that Novalis promotes is not a colonization or appropriation of nature by man. Instead Novalis advocates the abandonment of humanness in order to become the stone, flower, or animal. In addition, because of this desire for communion, the Novalian poet cannot be seen as the isolated hermit, self-absorbed in his own relation to nature. He is involved in a social, communal endeavor, as in fact Die Lehrlinge zu Sais intimates by bringing several apprentices and their teacher together to try to decipher nature. Moreover, in addition to man addressing nature and reading her language, conversely, in a witty turn of affairs, nature converses about man, mirroring this joint discussion. It is not solely that man possesses the active intelligence to reflect on nature, but nature too can reflect on man. In the remnants to Heinrich von Ofterdingen Novalis imagines the conversations flowers and animals have about humans, religion, nature, and science (1:393)! If “Kant believed brutes were capable of pain and pleasure, but incapable of happiness or despair” (Nargon 13), how different, then, is Novalis, whose animals seem not just happy but joyous!

Despite the bucolic world in which Novalis’s flowers and creatures seem to dwell, all is not perfect in his vision. Novalis criticizes the spiritless mechanization of his age by transferring the time in which animals spoke or could be comprehended into either a golden-age past or a chiliaric future. The novelty of his project for its time and consequently its utopian dimension is stressed by the fact that Novalis repeatedly bemoans how the ability to understand the languages of nature has disappeared. Although the world is for Novalis “eine Mittheilung,” its meaning has been lost: “Wir sind beym Buchstaben stehn geblieben” (2:383). In his notes Hardenberg refers to a time when birds, animals, and trees spoke (2:510). Likewise he begins Heinrich von Ofterdingen with the protagonist recalling reference to such a past. And Klingsor’s fairy tale begins by describing the present as cast in a deep, icy spell in which nature remains mute; it is not the idealized Other. Then, in a late poem, he projects Edenic language into a future kingdom, where “Der Baum nimmt thierische Gebehrden / Das Thier soll gar zum Menschen werden” (1:139). Klingsor’s fairy tale concludes with animals approaching men with friendly greetings (1:362). In his poem “Der Mensch,” Hölderlin more poignantly expresses the separation from the animal that characterizes man’s present state:
The question of the role temporality plays in Novalis’s utopia is thus crucial. Its urgency marks a desire for the presentness that animals themselves feel. This longing for permanence and a sense of grounding lends a certain fragility to Novalis. A precariousness hovers over all his writings, mirrored in the slender form of the fragment. To be able to commune with nature would thus entail recovering something lost and signify regaining a native place or abode. Hence the pilgrim Heinrich turns to nature, and the novel was to continue with his metamorphosis into a plant, animal, star, etc., after the death of his beloved Mathilde. In other words, her absence sparks the desire for the fullness that nature represents and for intimate communion with her. Not insignificantly, the famous lines from the novel, “Wo gehn wir denn hin? Immer nach Hause” (1:373) hail from the second part and can be interpreted as vocalizing this aspiration for a closer bond with nature.

Yet, although a deep sense of mutability pervades Novalis’s thinking, there is always the possibility that the Golden Age could arrive immanently, even immediately. This prospect means that one could extrapolate the behavior of fairy-tale animals to real-world animals. Heinrich thus muses that, although he had heard of the days when animals spoke to man, he senses as if these times could start “allaugenblicklich” (1:240) and as if he could see by looking at animals what they wanted to say. This moment of communion is sublime precisely because it is so tenuous. Is there a grammar for understanding animals? Or is it a sense for rhythm, harmony, or another form of musical command that one requires? Are there new senses that one needs to develop in order to communicate with nature? Heinrich says to Mathilde: “die höhere Welt ist uns näher, als wir gewöhnlich denken. Schon hier leben wir in ihr, und wir erblicken sie auf das Innigste mit der irdischen Natur verwebt” (1:337). The passage indicates that a higher world is now present and visible in nature, but we don’t realize it. Or, to slightly vary the predicament, perhaps it is our inability to articulate the communion we do sense. Thus earlier Heinrich says: “daß man gerade wenn man am innigsten mit der Natur vertraut ist am wenigsten von ihr sagen könnte und möchte” (1:328). Here the union with nature is ineffable, but Jean Paul suggests it is actually our own linguistic deficiency that makes it so: “Sprache. Aus der Unmöglichkeit, die Thierstimme in Worte zu bringen, seh’ ich die Armut an Buchstaben” (173, no. 355).

What then does the language of animals resemble, if one were to try to characterize it? To begin, it is marked by its untranslatability: as for Walter Benjamin, such a poetic language would be defined by our not being able to translate it into ordinary discourse. Instead, intuition would be key to making it signify. If in the “Monolog,” Novalis identifies language as pure articulation and a structure of differentiation with its own inner coherence, then perhaps, too, the language of animals would be sheer utterance. Indeed, it would be rhythmic and harmonious, similar to music or the plastic arts. Hence the language of the golden age, the time when one can commune with animals, is when words are used musically and plastically: “Das wird die goldne Zeit seyn, wenn alle Worte—Figurenworte—Mythen—und alle Figuren—Sprachfiguren—Hieroglyphen seyn werden—wenn man Figuren sprechen und schreiben—und Worte vollkommen plastisiren, und Musiciren lernt” (2:458). Angelika Rauch’s characterization of Novalis’s definition of language would be appropriate here: “In its nonreferential or pre-representational function, language exposes its material literariness” (133).

Novalis clearly sees the need to cultivate one’s language, for its mastery opens up the world and initiates poetry:
Die Sprache, sagte Heinrich, ist wirklich
eine kleine Welt in Zeichen und Tönen.
Wie der Mensch sie beherrscht, so möchte
er gern die große Welt beherrschen, und
sich frey darinn ausdrücken können.
(1:335)

But how does one vault from the micro-
cosm of language ("eine kleine Welt") to
the macrocosm of the actual world ("die
große Welt")? Animals, it would seem, do
not know such a gap, i.e., the one that fig-
ural language opens up: they read the
world materially or literally, to borrow
from Angelika Rauch’s terminology. Yet,
perhaps the imaginative leap that bridges
this gulf in metaphor (from the Greek
meta—beyond, over + pherein—to carry)
could conceivably serve as a pattern ac-
cording to which one could also perform
the leap between species. In metaphor the
word becomes what it symbolizes. Accord-
ing to this paradigm of metaphoricity, to
address an animal would mean becoming
one. Performative language thus has the
potential to lead to metamorphosis. "Wird
nicht der Fels ein eigenthümliches Du,
eben wenn ich ihn anrede? Und was bin ich
anders, als der Strom?" (1:224). Language
is not merely a naming or classification but
a performative address. Similarly, once you
actually speak to an animal, you imagine
yourself already on the same plane—you
speak as an animal—it acquires the face of
a "Du" and communication arises. The
"Unthier" of the Arion-legend was thus
saluted in the form of a song thanking it.
Such, then, are the possibilities Novalis
opens regarding the nature of language
and the language of nature.25

Longing for Paradise

Milan Kundera writes in The Unbearable
Lightness of Being that the longing for Para-
dise is man’s longing not to be man and that
dogs were never expelled from Paradise.
Kundera comes strikingly close to Novalis’s
notion that man longs to escape “aus sich
heraus” and that this escape involves recon-
ceptualizing the divide between human and
animal. The Czech writer further muses:
“No one can give anyone else the gift of the
idyll; [...] The love between dog and man is
idyllic. It knows no conflicts, no hair-raising
scenes; it knows no development. Karenin
[the dog] surrounded Tereza and Tomas
with a life based on repetition, and he ex-
pected the same from them. [...] Human
time does not turn in a circle; it runs ahead in
a straight line. That is why man cannot be
happy: happiness is the longing for repeti-
tion” (298). Kundera’s insight was not one
well learned by the character Bertha in Lud-
wig Tieck’s tale Der blonde Eckbert. Had
Bertha not left behind the dog Strohmian
and her home, had she not strangled her bird
that had the human voice, she would have
been happy and stayed in her idyllic sur-
rounds that knew no storms and no mea-
surable passage of time—"So morgen wie
heut/In ewger Zeit" (2:14), as the bird sings.
Bertha’s story would have ended, the old
woman remarks at the close, “gut und schön”
(2:26). The British Romantic writer, William
Hazlitt, too, appreciated the goodness and
comfort offered by the eternal face of Na-
ture: “Nature is a kind of universal home,
and every object it presents to us an old ac-
quaintance with unaltered looks” (4:20).

Novalis knew with Hazlitt and Kundera
that Bertha was wrong. Old acquaintances
do not need to be uncanny in their familiar-
ity. On the contrary, Novalis, like Kundera,
precisely links infinite repetition to love:
Heinrich says to Mathilde, “die Liebe ist eine
endlose Wiederholung” (1:338). When No-
valis wrote, “Wohin gehn wir denn hin? Im-
mer nach Hause” (1:373), he suggested that
one desires a return to the same, to a (uni-
versal) home with its Edenic implications. The
longing may be unending and the goal for-
ever beyond our reach. As Kundera says, we
still long for Paradise, for time for us does not
turn in a circle. But to long means to hold to
the promise of happiness, which would in-
clude a dwelling among animals. To com-
minate with them, to hear them sing in
words, like Tieck’s bird, is the dream of Romanticism and it would suddenly, unforeseeably, and accidentally land us in Paradise.

Notes

1 Most recently, see Bark.
2 For an excellent overview of the Enlightenment discussions on animals see Meyer.
3 For more on Lichtenberg and animals see Simon.
4 For more on Kant and animals see Naragon and Wood and O’Neill.
5 Rousseau similarly saw the child becoming a man through pity for a dying animal; yet sympathy operates differently for Rousseau than for Kant. Rousseau writes in Emile: Pour deviner sensible et pitoyable if faut que l’enfant sache qu’il y a des êtres semblables à lui, qui souffrent ce qu’il a souffert, qui sentent les douleurs qui il a senties, et d’autres dont il doit avoir l’idée comme pouvant les sentir aussi. In effet, comment nous laissons-nous émouvoir à la pitié, si ce n’est en nous transportant hors de nous et nous identifiant avec le même souffrant? en quittant pour ainsi dire notre être pour prendre le sien?“ (4:505). What marks Rousseau’s difference is this gesture of escaping oneself, so unlike Kant’s return to the human: although Rousseau sees the birth of compassion in the recognition of similarity (the child sees “des êtres semblables à lui”) he also acknowledges that one needs to leave out of “nôtre être pour prendre le sien.” This theorizing otherness becomes central to Novalis’s relation to the animal world, though, unfortunately, not in specific reference to animal suffering. Rousseau was unique in advocating that animals be protected under natural law, although they could not understand or acknowledge it themselves. Knigge opposed cruelty towards animals for the same reason as Kant, namely, “daß Grausamkeit gegen unvernünftige Wesen uns merklich zur Härte und Grausamkeit gegen unsre vernünftigen Nebenge- schöpfe führt” (743). See also Schopenhauer’s biting response to Kant: “Also bloß zur Übung soll man mit Tieren Mitleid haben, und sie sind gleichsam das pathologische Phantom zur Übung des Mitleids mit Menschen” (691).

The prevalence of this concern for animal welfare by the end of the eighteenth century is discernable from Adolph Freiherr Knigge’s 1796 moralistic compendium, Über den Umgang mit Menschen, where a chapter is devoted the treatment of animals. Knigge writes, “daß ein Thier eben so schmerzhaft Mishandlung, barbarischen Mißbrauch größerer Stärke und Wehe fühlt, wie wir, und vielleicht noch lebhafter, da seine ganze Existenz auf sinnlichen Empfindungen beruht” (743). On various positions for and against animal experimentation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Maahe. For a compendium of eighteenth-century British texts advocating animal welfare, see Garrett.

7 Cf. Schopenhauer’s response to this passage in Kant: “so beleidigt die echte Moral der Satz, daß die vernunftlosen Wesen (also die Tiere) Sachen wären und daher auch bloß als Mittel, die nicht zugleich Zweck sind, behandelt werden dürften” (690).

8 For more on the discussion in France, see the study by Hester Hastings and the introduction by François Dagonet to Condillac, Traité des animaux.

9 Meier also noted that spiders accomplish works of art (91).

10 The full title of this study is telling: Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere, hauptsächlich über ihre Kunst-Triebe: zum Erkenntnisse des Zusammenhanges der Welt, des Schöpfers und unser Selbst.


12 Krell would point out that death underlies this transformation: “Novalis sees the hierarchy of forms in nature as marked by death—the death of the stone being the life of the plant, the death of the plant the life of the animal” (163).

13 Novalis writes: “Auch im Spinotza lebt schon dieser göttlicher Funken des Naturverstandes” (2:171) and “Spinotza ist ein gottrunkener Mensch” (2:812).

14 In contrast to the Novalisian instantaneous leap into another form of being, in his poems on the metamorphosis of plants and animals Goethe prefers metaphors of gradual generation and concatenation (“die geordnete Bildung” [1:202] and “Glieder an Glieder gestußt” [1:200]).

15 Note that Alexander von Humboldt wrote a
mythical story about vital energies entitled “Die Lebenskraft oder der Rhodische Genuis” (1795). On Romantic science and its theory of a vital force see Wetzels, Gode-von Aesch, Ritter-bush, and Durner, Moiso, and Jantzen. The notion that we are made of the same elements and that a common breath permeates us all and can be traced back to Pythagorus and Sextus, respectively. See Sorabji 131.

Schelling also hypothesized a cosmic unity of life is in his philosophy of nature, which posited the identity of man with life, in other words, the inseparability of subject and object. Schelling, however, says surprisingly little about animals, and when he does, upholds the eighteenth-century distinction between man and animal. In System des transzendentalen Idealismus, for instance, in the section “Deduktion des Organischen,” he assigns animals a less developed form of organization than man (2:492-93). In Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur he states that one cannot know whether animals have souls (1:703). See also Aus den Jahrbüchern der Medizin als Wissenschaft: “es wäre zu wünschen, daß die Verderbtheit im Menschen nur bis zur Thierwerdung ginge; leider aber könne der Mensch nur unter oder über dem Thiere stehen” (4:254). An excellent guide in the history of chemistry, magnetism, electricity, galvanism, and physiology (including theories on a vital life force) leading up to Schelling can be found in lengthy articles by Manfred Durner, Fransesco Moiso, and Jörg Jantzen in Schelling, Ergänzungsband.

For more on this study see Wetzels, Ritter 55. On late eighteenth-century explanations of plant physiology and its irritability see Johann Friedrich Gmelin (1748–1804). In England, George Bell and Thomas Percival of Manchester postulated that the irritability in plants resembled the sensibility of animals, and in 1782 Soame Jenyns compared sensitive plants and lower animals in a work entitled “On the Chain of Universal Being.” These speculative theories began to be rejected in the early nineteenth century by such biologists as Sir Humphrey Davy.

Wetzels considers the term “All-Thier” to embody the essence of Ritter’s view of nature (Ritter 125).

See the fragments from Das Allgemeine Brouillon: 2:692, no. 953: “die ganze Poesie beruht auf thätiger Ideénassociation—auf selstthätiger, absichtlicher, idealischer Zu-


In the novel see also: “Die Gewächse sind so die unmittelbarste Sprache des Bodens” (1:377) and where the music from the wind in the trees becomes louder, “so daß zuweilen die Endsylen und einzelne Worte einer ‘unbekannten’ menschlichen Sprache hervorzutönen schienen” (1:391).


See also my article “Hearing Women’s Voices” where I suggest that Heinrich von Ofterdingen’s “Bildung” involves the palingenesis into a woman.


By late Romanticism, this idealization of nature and the belief in the ability of animals to speak is parodied in E. T. A. Hoffmann. Kater Murr is a cat who writes in hackneyed Romantic verse. When the novel opens the cat intones, “O Natur, heilige hehre Natur! Wie durcheinander all deine Wonne, all dein Entzücken meine bewegte Brust” (5:18). Obviously, nature fills his breast with a joy different from Runge’s dog: Hoffmann’s feline is contemplating catching a bird. When he fails, Murr parodies the Romantic pose in his lament: “Wie selten ist doch in dieser dürftigen, verstockten, liebeleeren Zeit wahre Sympathie der Seelen” (5:19).

Works Cited


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