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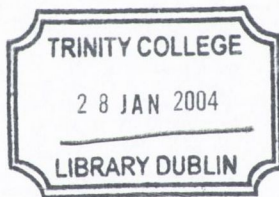
‘...ohne Maaß veränderlich’.
Novalis, Women and Writing.

A thesis submitted to the University of Dublin, Trinity College
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the higher degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD)

October 2002

by James Richard Hodkinson.





THESIS
7869.1

The candidate, James Richard Hodgkinson, hereby declares that this thesis is his own original work, the product of research conducted by him between 1996 and the present.

The candidate further declares that the no part of this thesis has been previously entered for examination at the University of Dublin or any other institution.

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Signed James Hodgkinson

Dated 7th November, 2003

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Summary

This thesis re-examines the treatment of the feminine and of the female literary subject in the works of Hardenberg/Novalis. It contends that, whilst Hardenberg did not approach these themes in a manner wholly revolutionary for his time, his writing did begin to display a more evolving sense of feminine identity and to afford more communicative and creative potential to female subjects than has hitherto been suggested by critics.

The thesis opposes the view that Hardenberg was a man permanently traumatized by the loss of his fiancée Sophie von Kühn. Consequently, his writing about women need not constitute an ongoing attempt to re-create her image in language. Central to the argument is the assertion that Hardenberg's writing on gender can be read as an expression of his own philosophically grounded poetics. His initial proposition that identity is essentially unknowable and ineffable leads him to conclude that such identity has to be mediated aesthetically as a fiction in language. This 'fiction' of identity is not fixed and can, therefore, be manipulated. From these key insights, his poetics evolve into an interdisciplinary system of writing, which assimilates and re-designs pre-existing ideas, models and methods for understanding and articulating the phenomenal world. The thesis tests the extent to which that system is brought to bear on issues of gender, asking to what extent it represents an ongoing attempt to re-think critically eighteenth-century models of femininity. It is argued that, between 1797 and 1801, Hardenberg began to develop an historical awareness of the limitations of writing on gender and also began to challenge consciously certain key aspects of writing on women prevailing at the time across a range of disciplines. On other occasions, however, Hardenberg rather perpetuates the more conservative models of femininity and, consequently, his writing on the theme emerges as a fascinating body of contradictions which is both progressive and conservative.

The thesis also contends that, between 1797 and 1799, Hardenberg critically modified the subjectivism inherent to critical and idealist philosophy and suggests this to have been beneficial for the female subjects within his literary works. Already dissatisfied with the passive and subordinate role of the subject's other in Fichtean thought, Hardenberg re-modelled that other as another subject or 'Du', before going on to develop a system in which that other could be afforded communicative powers and rights. He achieved this by marrying his subjectivism with universal models of co-existence and communication, derived and modified from older para-scientific writing and mystical theosophy, which conceived of the cosmos as a nexus of many different voices or languages spoken by God and allegorized variously as an ensemble of musical players or instruments. The product is Hardenberg's notion of the 'manifold' universe, which is also often articulated through musical allegories and comprises both limitless forms of language and limitless centres of communicative agency. Within that context, all communicative acts are both expressions of the individual's power and right to communicate, but are also governed by the rules of the communicative context: the subject is neither wholly autonomous,

nor wholly subjugated in its communicative endeavours. This means that Hardenberg's ideal model of linguistic and poetic production can be both polyphonic and also inclusively intersubjective. The thesis tests how and to what extent this 'musical' ideal of communication governs the representations of linguistic exchange and poetic creativity within Hardenberg's literary works of 1798-1801, asking in particular to what extent female subjects come to participate. The thesis contends that, whilst these works do not unambiguously afford expressive powers and space to the female subject, they do begin to work towards the realization of that ideal, in a manner quite remarkable for a male writer of the Romantic era.

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Abbreviations of major primary works used in the thesis:

Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis),

Novalis. Schriften. Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs, ed. by Paul Kluckhohn, Richard Samuel, Heinz Ritter, Hans-Joachim Mähl and Gerhard Schulz, 3rd edn, 6 vols (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977-). All quotations from Novalis are expressed in the form (N, volume, page: fragment/entry number).

Friedrich Schlegel,

Kritische-Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe, ed. by Jean-Jacques Anstett, Ernst Behler and Hans Eichner, 35 vols (Paderborn, Vienna, Zurich: Schöningh, 1958-). Form of reference: (S, *Abteilung*, volume, page: fragment/entry number).

Johann Gottlieb Fichte,

Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed. by Reinhard Lauth and others (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1964-). Form of reference: (F, *Abteilung*, volume, page).

INTRODUCTION

1. Wie könnte uns die Entfernung entfernen, da uns die Gegenwart selbst gleichsam zu gegenwärtig ist. Wir müssen ihre verzehrende Glut in Scherzen lindern und kühlen und so ist uns die witzigste unter den Gestalten und Situationen der Freude auch die schönste. Eine unter allen ist die witzigste und die schönste: wenn wir die Rollen vertauschen und mit kindischer Lust wetteifern, wer den andern täuschender nachäffen kann, ob dir die schonende Heftigkeit des Mannes besser gelingt, oder mir die anziehende Hingebung des Weibes. Aber weißt du wohl, daß dieses süße Spiel für mich noch ganz andere Reize hat als seinen eignen? Es ist auch nicht bloß die Wollust der Ermattung oder das Vorgefühl der Rache. Ich sehe hier eine wunderbare sinnreich bedeutende Allegorie auf die Vollendung des Männlichen und Weiblichen zur vollen ganzen Menschheit.

Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde* (1799). (S,I,V,12-13).

2. Doch will ich als ein gebildeter Liebhaber und Schriftsteller versuchen, den rohen Zufall zu bilden und ihn zum Zwecke gestalten. Für mich und für diese Schrift, für meine Liebe zu ihr und für ihre Bildung in sich, ist aber kein Zweck zweckmäßiger, als der, daß ich Anfangs das was wir Ordnung nennen vernichte, weit von ihr entferne und mir das Recht einer reizenden Verwirrung deutlich zueigne und durch die Tat behaupte. Dies ist um so nötiger, da der Stoff, den unser Leben und Lieben meinem Geiste und meiner Feder gibt, so unaufhaltsam progressiv und so unbiegsam systematisch ist [...]. Ich gebrauche also mein unbezweifeltes Verwirrungsrecht und setze oder stelle hier ganz an die unrechte Stelle eines von den vielen zerstreuten Blättern die ich aus Sehnsucht und Ungeduld, wenn ich dich nicht fand wo ich dich am gewissesten zu finden hoffte, in deinem Zimmer auf unserm Sofa, mit der zuletzt von dir gebrauchten Feder, mit den ersten den besten Worten, so jene mir eingegeben, anfüllte oder verdarb, und die du Gute, ohne daß ich es wußte, sorgsam aufbewahrtest.

Friedrich Schlegel, *ibid.* (S,I,V,9).

3. B. [...] Wenn ich das Glück hätte, Vater zu seyn – Kinder könnt ich nicht genug haben – nicht etwa 10 – 12 – hundert wenigstens
A. Nicht auch Frauen, Vielhaber?
B. Nein, nur *Eine*, im vollen Ernste.
A. Welche Bizarre Inconsequenz.
B. Nicht Bizarrer, und nicht mehr Inconsequenz, als nur *Einen Geist* in mir, und nicht Hundert. So wie mein Geist aber sich in Hundert und Millionen Geister verwandeln soll, so meine Frau in soviel Weiber, als es giebt. Jeder Mensch ist ohne Maaß veränderlich. [...]

Novalis, *Dialogen* (1798), (N,II,664).

4. Der Schreiber war ingrimmig fortgegangen.[...] Die kleine Fabel nahm die Feder des Schreibers und fing zu schreiben an. [...] Der Schreiber trat herein [...] jagte die kleine Fabel mit vielen Schmähungen von seinem Sitze, und hatte einige Zeit nöthig seine Sachen in Ordnung zu bringen. Er reichte Sophien die von Fabel vollgeschriebenen Blätter, um sie rein zurück zu erhalten, gerieth aber bald in den äußersten Unwillen, wie Sophie die Schrift völlig glänzend und unversehrt aus der Schaafe zog und sie ihm hinlegte.

Novalis, from 'Klingsohrs Märchen' in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1799-1800), (N,I,295-6).

EARLY ROMANTICISM: EPOCH – GENDER – WRITING

Literary scholars continue to return to the Romantic period, considering it from new perspectives and re-opening older debates. There is a debate on the relationship, both intellectual-historical and aesthetic, between the Romantic epoch as a whole and the earlier Enlightenment, with both continuities and discontinuities between the two being mooted. There is also a debate on the structure of the Romantic epoch itself, such that traditional distinctions between the revolutionary project of the Early Romantics and the sceptical, 'reactionary' tendencies of the Late Romantics, have been in dispute.¹ Such diversity of opinion also characterizes assessments of the Romantic treatment of gender issues. The Romantic tradition of venerating the feminine, traditionally taken at face value, was unmasked by the political feminism of the 1970s as a practice in fact projecting patriarchal ideals and fantasies of women in word and image.² This view was revised by other feminists from the mid 1980s and 1990s who, working in the French gynocentric tradition, sought to re-claim these portrayals of femininity as important sources of female power within canonical literature.³ The discussion of gender in the literary canon was not, however, limited to analyses of the images of femininity within male-authored texts, but has sought to re-construct the position of the female writing subject at the margins of the literary canon. The Romantic period is traditionally thought of as the period in which women wrote in greater quantities and more openly than they had hitherto and, significantly, began to publish. Here too, though, opinion has been divided: Ulrike Prokop,⁴ has challenged the traditional view of Romanticism as a watershed for women writers, insisting that the women of the late eighteenth century represented, with a few notable exceptions, a 'mute' generation of unpublished writers. Again, however, projects such as that of Helga Gallas and Anita Runge, have begun to prove otherwise, attempting to reconstruct bibliographically the apparent proliferation of works published by women in the latter part of the period.⁵

Thus, the intersection of gender and Romanticism offers a complex web for scholars. However, one can disentangle particular thematic strands to do with women and writing around 1800, simplifying these for the sake of discussion into the categories women *in writing* and women *as writers*. These themes will underlie this dissertation as it seeks to consider the position of women within the works of one particular writer of the era: the poet Novalis, by birth Georg Philipp Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801). As we shall see, the history of Novalis scholarship has been a matter of de-mythologizing the poet, of showing his diverse and interdisciplinary writing to be informed by complex and remarkably modern philosophical and aesthetic theory: a process that has uncovered a new writer behind the myth and was reflected not least by the emergence of the poet's birth name from behind his *nom de plume*. Despite these largely favourable reappraisals, evaluations of Hardenberg's treatment of the feminine still remain contentious. For the issue of *women in writing*, the parameters of the discussion hitherto are simple enough: constructions of femininity in his literary, philosophical and political texts have already

been discussed from a number of feminist perspectives and found to represent everything from a typically misogynist relegation of women from the political and intellectual spheres, to a (in psychoanalytical terms) fetishist pursuit of immortalized femininity. This study can add to the discussion by marrying the theoretical with an historical approach. We can test the extent to which Hardenberg's *own* theory, particularly his key insight that identity is an alterable construction in language, allowed him to consciously re-design received models of women's identity and thus liberate them from a range of limited social, intellectual and moral roles – and the extent to which he fails in such an endeavour. Engaging with the category of *women as writers* in Novalis is not quite so straightforward, however. Hardenberg was, of course, a male author and one who never entered into truly collaborative literary projects with women.⁶ The notion of women in Hardenberg's work as artistically productive, as poet, musician or artist must, therefore, be conceived and sought differently. This study offers one possible solution by re-examining the portrayals of women in Novalis as artistic subjects, evaluating quantitatively and qualitatively their utterances, writing, poetry and song. In addition to this, the discussion will move to examine the one area in which Hardenberg's written exchanges with 'real' women are to be found, an area neglected hitherto by critics interested in gender: that of his epistolary exchanges with women. Questions as to the role and position of women in Hardenberg's letters to women and in their letters to him, particularly similarities and contrasts in their self-perception and self-presentation *vis-à-vis* those of the poet, will shape this line of enquiry.

This study has been prefaced with four quotations, in order to refine further our two broader approaches and establish the more specific thematic categories with which we may approach Hardenberg's writings. The first two quotations are taken from Hardenberg's slightly older friend and one-time mentor, the literary critic Friedrich Schlegel, and the final two from the poet himself. These will serve as a starting point for exploring the issues outlined above and will also provide a window on how writers contemporary to Hardenberg compare with him in terms of our topic of interest. All the quotations deal in some way with issues of gender and writing, offering in typically Romantic fashion a rich and ambiguous field of ideas on the subject. The two excerpts from Schlegel are from his novel fragment *Lucinde* (1799), a frank and intimate account of two lovers' intense emotional, intellectual and sexual relationship told through a series of experimental literary fragments. Opinion on the moral implications of *Lucinde* has always been divided. At the time of its publication, it was condemned as libertine, even pornographic – a reputation which followed its author for decades.⁷ Germanists of the early twentieth century, however, found more redeeming qualities in the work – indeed, it became thought of as the flagship of a revolutionary and progressive treatment of gender issues characteristic of the Early Romantic epoch. The novel appeared, for instance, to offer a modern re-thinking of marriage, as Hermann August Korff has noted, by placing new emphasis on the importance of emotional interaction and compatibility in inter-personal relationships.⁸ The novel also appears to re-think

male and female gender characteristics, not placing these in static opposition but rendering them mutually complementary and even interchangeable. Men's and women's sexual differences, so the novel appears to suggest, allow them to connect and complement each other physically, emotionally and intellectually, such that a new interpersonal identity is formed: critics have thus been able to read this as a Romantic contribution to the history of ideas on androgyny.⁹

The first quotation in the preface would appear to be evidence enough that all this is true. Narrated by the male protagonist Julius, the passage opens by affirming the emotional intensity of his relationship to the eponymous heroine. This intensity, he claims, must be diffused, dissipated, cooled even, by channelling it into simulations, games and humour: 'ihre verzehrende Glut in Scherzen lindern und kühlen [...]'. Of these practices, the most gratifying for Julius is the playful exchange of traditionally masculine and feminine roles between the lovers. This takes the form of a game or competition to establish which of the couple can imitate the other, and thereby the other sex, more faithfully: Julius must emulate the feminine quality of compelling surrender, 'anziehende Hingebung', and Lucinde the protective strength 'schonende Heftigkeit' of the masculine. This 'sweet game', however, has for Julius another more serious aim: it is an allegory of the interpersonal and androgynous perfection of humanity, 'eine sinnreich bedeutende Allegorie auf die Vollendung des Männlichen und Weiblichen zur vollen ganzen Menschheit'.

For all its ebullient idealism, however, the passage leaves many questions unanswered. Precisely what effect, for instance, is this ideal model of gender intended to have on the way in which individuals live out their lives as men and women? Is the allegory of androgyny to enable the dissolution of traditional gender boundaries, allowing not only men to exhibit female traits, but also women to adopt traditionally male characteristics and roles? Or is it rather that Schlegel's androgynous, interpersonal ideal actually relies upon there being two *differing* halves to form that whole and requires men and women rather to *adhere* to their traditional gender roles? When he returns later in the text to consider the issue of androgyny, Schlegel's version of the old myth is distinctly unilateral. A man of heightened warmth and sensuality, contends Schlegel, 'liebt nicht mehr bloß wie ein Mann, sondern zugleich wie ein Weib. In ihm ist die Menschheit vollendet, und er hat den Gipfel der Menschheit erstiegen. Denn gewiss ist es, daß Männer von Natur bloß heiß oder kalt sind: zur Wärme müssen sie erst gebildet werden. Aber die Frauen sind von Natur sinnlich und geistig warm und haben Sinn für Wärme jeder Art' (S,I,V,21). It is only men, here, who still need to achieve a balance between the heat of passion and dispassionate cold, who need completing in any sense as individuals by incorporating other characteristics; as warm and sensual beings, women are naturally complete and serve as models for men's sought after wholeness. Yet, typically, behind this surface compliment is the notion that only men have the capacity to change, whilst women remain static. Since the 1970s, the novel's treatment of gender has been subjected generally to scathing re-examinations, which uncovered similar patterns throughout the text.

Whether driven by feminist ideology or conducted in a more historical, text-centred manner, the findings were similar.¹⁰ Behind Julius's apparent praise of the feminine and his self-effacing lamentation over the male condition – he is of course the 'Ungeschickter' of the title – the narrator is also tacitly disenfranchising women from participation in serious intellectual life. Her 'wholeness' grows from her lack of reasoning, reflexive self-consciousness. This means that she not only lacks the Romantic *credentials* for being an artist, but she has *no need* to involve herself in such awkward strivings: 'Wie die weibliche Kleidung vor dem Männlichen hat auch der weibliche Geist den Vorzug, daß man sich da durch eine einzige kühne Kombination über alle Vorurteile der Kultur und bürgerlichen Konventionen wegsetzen und mit einemmale mitten im Stande der Unschuld und im Schoß der Natur befinden kann' (S,I,V,20). Despite all of its protestations, ultimately the novel can be seen to do little to liberate women from the roles and characteristics ascribed to them in the eighteenth century. Nowhere in the text do we find explicit mention of social reform, let alone of women's social-political emancipation.¹¹ In writing about women – and despite his protestations to the contrary – Schlegel renders female identity static: women are children of nature to whom intellect, art and culture are alien.

The issue of the female writing subject arises in the second quotation in the preface, which is an excerpt from Julius's first letter to Lucinde. There, he reflects on issues of authorship, on the difficulties facing him in trying to capture in language the elevated and revelatory experiences given to him by his love for Lucinde. He concludes that he will proceed experimentally, rejecting received literary norms and reserving the right to produce writing of charming confusion, 'reizende Verwirrung', an approach demanded by the radically progressive nature of the subject matter: the lovers' relationship. The close of the passage focuses on the medium of the text's production: Julius is to resume writing using a page upon which he had formerly written, then discarded impatiently on an occasion when he failed to find Lucinde where he had sought her on a sofa in her room. The text he produces is the 'Dithyrambische Fantasie über die schönste Situation', the very text dealing with the intense bond of love between the two and expressing the characteristic reciprocity of their relationship, such as the exchange of gender characteristics cited above. In the light of this, it must surely be significant that, at the moment when Julius begins his most intimate sketch of Lucinde, when he begins to praise the union of two *interacting* lovers, Lucinde herself is conspicuously absent. Indeed, she can be thought of as absent in three senses of the word. Firstly and obviously, she is absent in terms of the narrative plot: she is not in her room. Secondly, she is absent as writing subject, unable to articulate her thoughts or feelings to her lover either orally or in writing and unable to enter into any form of collaborative poetic creativity with him. Thirdly, as he fashions instead an ideal portrait of her she becomes obscured as a real person – ironically by Julius's very attempt to capture her in words. The product is obviously divorced from the reality of Lucinde as subject in her own right, as is shown by his appropriation of her thoughts later in the 'Dithyrambische

Fantasie'. Julius claims to know that her love for him is so intense that she could not bear to outlive him and would therefore 'dem voreiligen Gemahle auch im Sarge folgen, und aus Lust und Liebe in den flammenden Abgrund steigen, in den ein rasendes Gesetz die Indischen Frauen zwingt und die zartesten Heiligtümer der Willkür durch grobe Absicht und Befehl entweiht und zerstört' (S,I,V,11). In this third sense, then, Lucinde is not only absent, but also *abject*, her identity obscured by a male fantasy.¹² Her identity as writing subject is hinted at: there is mention of her having written with her quill, through reference to the 'zuletzt von dir gebrauchten Feder' (S,I,V,9). The quotation ends, however, at the point where Julius resumes musing about *his* role as artist and leaves his reflections on Lucinde behind once more. The final mention of her in the passage places her in an even more auxiliary role, almost as a secretary or filing clerk, who carefully keeps and stores the fragments of art Julius whimsically discards.

The first of Hardenberg's quotations is taken from the first of his *Dialogen*, a series of fictional dialogues written in 1798 and designed to discuss in light-hearted form issues relating to language, writing and poetry. Upon first glance, our excerpt appears not to engage with gender issues. Comprising a sequence of utterances between two imaginary figures 'A' and 'B', the first dialogue centres on issues of literary production, reading habits and literary criticism and interpretation. The stimulus for discussion is the new catalogue from the Leipzig book fair, which 'B' possesses. Now, in broad terms 'A' appears to represent a thinker of reductive/empiricist persuasion, whilst 'B' might be termed a Romantic pluralist; their views on books, reading and writing appear to be in keeping with these intellectual characterizations. Whilst 'A' baulks at the thought of reading the catalogue, of grappling with the dizzying list of new books that it represents to him, 'B' appears quite happy about the yearly increase in publications, as it represents a healthy flow of productive and receptive activity, of reading and writing by authors and the public. 'A' meanwhile remains sceptical as to the value of so many books and so much reading. Such increases in publications do not constitute what he sees as ordered societal/cultural progress, '*Planmäßiger Fortschritt*' (N,II,661), where every book would fulfil a pre-determined and purposeful role. 'A' goes so far as to claim that even the worthiest of books is almost too much for him. In his hands, a *single* good book would become a lifelong occupation and for this reason, he limits himself to a narrow range of books. In the very same way, he limits himself to interacting socially with only a few good and brilliant people. 'B' admits that he too limits himself to discoursing with such people, though only does so because he must – an individual's experience cannot encompass as many possibilities as there are fellow human beings. As with books, though, his ideal of sociability remains the *potentially* infinite interaction with other human beings. It is here that the quotation from our preface begins and the issue of gender arises in the form of male-female relationships.

'B' claims that, were he to be a father, then he would have as many children as he would books: his goal would be to have at least a hundred of each. In typically teasing manner, 'A' asks if he would not also desire the same number of women – implied is a bawdy joke about sexual appetites. It is here that 'B' alters his pluralist stance somewhat: he only ever wants one beloved. 'A' criticizes this answer for its apparent inconsistency with 'B's other utterances. 'B' defends his position by demonstrating that, in a sense, he is a pluralist when it comes to women: in the same way that he has only one mind or spirit, 'Geist', which he can transform into hundred or more forms, so his single beloved can change into any woman '[...] in soviele Weiber, als es giebt'. This vision would seem to limit women to a catalogue of pre-existing feminine norms, were it not further qualified by the claim that every individual is changeable without measure, '...ohne Maaß veränderlich'. The term 'veränderlich' refers here not to fickleness or a lack of personal integrity, but to one's capacity for self-transformation – or for being transformed by others. Thus, the 'Frau' becomes subject to a claimed programme of progressive transformation. And unlike Lucinde, who is touted as a re-invented woman, but ultimately exhibits stereotypically feminine traits, it appears that the 'Frau' is to enjoy potentially *limitless* transformation. Of course, Hardenberg offers only potential development for women here and no concrete models of what they might become: it is at least partly for this reason that he does not trip himself up as Schlegel does. Yet, although his vision of women's development is open-ended, it cannot be deemed non-committal, as it remains resolutely idealistic. It will be the aim of this study to test the conversion of that idealism into the actual presentations of femininity across the range of Hardenberg's writings, be they social-political, scientific, religious or literary.

In that first quotation from Hardenberg, the wife/beloved remains an object. The equation of her identity with his 'Geist' implies that her transformation is to occur within, or be executed by the agency of *his* mind. In the second excerpt Hardenberg re-addresses this issue, however. The excerpt from *Ofterdingen* comes from an early work by Heinrich's first formal tutor in poetry, Klingsohr. It refers allegorically to the inner processes of mind and soul, those of discursive reason, imagination and compassion, and to how these components function together during the process of poetic production. The allegory used is that of a household, complete with father and mother, two children, wet-nurse, priestess and scribe, each of whom also symbolizes one of the inner faculties of the mind.¹³ However symbolic, the characters are also named subjects in their own right, possessed of a distinct gender identity and their own *communicative* and *creative* powers: the tale is, therefore, also relevant for issues of gender and writing. Three figures in particular are central to this reading: the scribe, who represents the restrictions of pure reason, but also a malcontent authoritarian male writer; Fabel, who represents poetic productivity informed by the imagination, but also a female writer seeking and, increasingly, finding opportunities for self expression and Sophie, who is wisdom, and judges which of those texts within the household has poetic merit and which do not. Throughout the first part of the inset

narrative, the scribe tries to record accurately in writing the often complex and quickly changing events of the household. In the final excerpt, he leaves his desk, which allows Fabel to take up his quill and write her own text. Upon his return, of course, he chases her from the desk and, initially, it appears her childish scribbles have had a detrimental effect on his work; he requires 'einige Zeit [...] seine Sachen in Ordnung zu bringen'. When his papers are passed through the waters of Sophie's bowl, however, it is only Fabel's writings that emerge unchanged: his work has, much to his frustration, been erased. The waters of Sophie's bowl are a test and erase all that is not written poetically and, thus, Fabel's works appear more poetic than those of the scribe. Why is this? Only when recognizing their own inability to enclose and disclose absolute truths and, consequently, their own reliance upon imagination and fiction, can texts be truly poetic and recognize their own relativity and instability. It is precisely the scribe's failure to recognize this, precisely his pretence to absolute truth, misinformed by pure reason and uninformed by imagination, that renders his texts static, non-poetic and, ultimately, dispensable. And thus, the female figures appear able to function more successfully as communicative and creative subjects than does this male figure.

At first glance, then, there would appear to be some scope for the presentation of women as autonomously *communicative* and *creative* individuals in Novalis. There also appears to be in his work an ideal model for the transformation of female identity in a very broad sense. This is not to say, however, that Novalis applies that ideal of transformation to his presentation of women in all of his texts and within all of the various thematic contexts, social, moral, scientific or aesthetic, in which he writes. Nor can we say that, when it does occur, this transformation necessarily serves to liberate women from more limiting models of femininity. In the same manner, we ought not to presume that female subjects are presented consistently and unambiguously as autonomous and creative at all points in Novalis's work. In examining his texts more fully, we should remain wary of the dangers we glimpsed in our brief examination of Schlegel: even the most well-intentioned of male writers may still reveal a vision of women that is both limited and limiting, as it fails to conceive of them as genuine subjects and limits their presentation to a series of stereotypical roles. The discussion will have to deal, for instance, with Hardenberg's controversial relationship with his teenage fiancée Sophie von Kühn, whom he lost to tuberculoid inflammation of the liver in March 1797 and for whom he mourned in thought, word and deed for much of that year. In his autobiographical writings on Sophie, Hardenberg opens himself most clearly to charges of a reductive presentation of a woman, by appearing to transform her systematically into a metaphor within his writing, as illness and finally death claimed her.

Thus this study will pursue a critically balanced discussion of both the limiting and liberating tendencies for women throughout the whole of Hardenberg's writing, along the following path: 1. The first chapter will summarize briefly existing scholarship on gender in

Novalis, commenting on the approaches and findings of the critics and building a case for the alternative approach adopted in this study. 2. The second chapter will re-construct the theoretical grounds and methodology of Hardenberg's poetics. If women are indeed transformed progressively in his work, then how does the poet conceive and practise this transformation? The chapter will then also trace the impact this had on his writing about women; beginning with his construction of the feminine in the political and scientific texts between 1795 and 1798-9, focussing particularly on the treatment of Sophie in the autobiographical work around her death in 1797. 3. The third chapter begins the wider search for the *communicative* and *creative* female subject in Hardenberg's work. It begins by seeking in his thought a theoretical basis for upholding the right to self-expression of all individual subjects. Specifically, we shall seek to reconstruct the theory of *inter-subjectivity*, which governs the way in which different subjects recognize each other as such, followed by the theory of *polyphony*, which regulates theoretically the involvement of subjects in communication and creative productivity. As we shall see, Hardenberg appears to have developed such ideas from his reading of philosophical and mystical texts between 1797 and 1800. This will shape our discussion of the female subject, her voice and her writing in the literary texts: there will follow an analysis of the position of the expressive female subject in *Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs*, as this text represents Hardenberg's first attempt at a literary realization of his theories of intersubjective communication. 4. The fourth chapter will examine whether or not that inclusion is realized differently in the later text *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. We shall ask whether the more sophisticated model of inter-subjective communication, developed late in 1799 and early 1800, had an impact upon women's appearance as expressive and creative subjects in *Ofterdingen*. There follows a brief excursus into Hardenberg's letters to women, which asks to what extent these texts show Hardenberg also communicating with the 'real' women of his life as literary and intellectual subjects. 5. The fifth chapter examines Hardenberg's lyrical cycle, *Hymnen an die Nacht*. The study will ask whether the *Hymnen* represent a literary resurrection of Sophie von Kühn and hence a relapse on the part of the author into a veneration of the feminine as a lifeless ideal, or whether they consciously aestheticize images of *both* genders to mediate the divine in a manner which is more sophisticated, as it privileges or excludes neither the masculine nor the feminine. In short, throughout the chapters, the study will ask how successfully Hardenberg treats women as both poetic agents and objects of poetry and ask whether women in Novalis enjoy the poetic privilege of being transformed 'without measure' – and of executing such transformation themselves.

Notes to the Introduction:

¹ For useful overviews of this tendency in research see: Nicholas Saul, 'The Romantic Era' (German Studies): *YWMLA*, vol. 55 (1993/94), 823-27, and vol. 54 (1992/93). On the Enlightenment/Romanticism debate see an early, but exemplary contribution in: Helmut Schanze, *Romantik und Aufklärung. Untersuchungen zu Friedrich Schlegel und Novalis*. 2nd edn, (Nürnberg: Hans Carl Verlag, 1976). An example of the now somewhat antiquated model of Romanticism as an epoch falling into the three distinct and differing sections of *Frühromantik*, *Rhein- or Hochromantik* and *Spätromantik* can be found in: Glyn Tegai Hughes, *Romantic German Literature* (London, 1979), esp. 79ff. More recent studies offer much more sophisticated understandings of the epochal nature of the period. Silvio Vietta (ed), *Die Literarische Frühromantik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1983) offers a useful review of research and a range of essays examining the intellectual-historical and aesthetic relationships between the Enlightenment and Early Romanticism. Lothar Pikulik, *Frühromantik. Epoche - Werke - Wirkung* (München: Beck, 1992), began, without re-establishing a homogenized Romantic macro-epoch, to reconstruct unity within the period's micro-epochs. Pikulik showed, for instance, shared literary techniques, such as the notion of aesthetic experiment and the use of irony, to be common to the works of writers as diverse as Schlegel and Hoffmann. In a similar time frame, H. Kurzke, 'Die Wende von der Frühromantik zur Spätromantik. Fragen und Thesen.' in: *Athenäum*, (2:165-77), attempted to reassert the differences between Early and late Romanticism in terms of writers' different approaches to revolution, these being enthusiasm and sceptical reaction respectively.

² See for example Silvia Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit. Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1979).

³ An example of this tendency is Alice Kuzniar, 'Hearing Women's Voices in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*', in *PMLA* (107: 5, 1992), 1196-1208. A full discussion of her work is presented in chapter 1 of this study.

⁴ Prokop, Ulrike, *Die Illusion vom großen Paar*, (Frankfurt a.M: Fischer: 1991).

⁵ Gallas, Helga and Runge, Anita, *Romane und Erzählungen deutscher Schriftstellerinnen um 1800. Eine Bibliographie mit Standortnachweisen*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993).

⁶ Hardenberg encouraged Caroline Schlegel to write a novel, envisaging a literary collaboration between her and her husband (N,II,281). The Weißenfels poetess Lousie Brachmann appears to have been tutored by Novalis on cultural issues – he also advised her on her poetry and recommended it to Schiller for publication, all of which she recalls in her elegy on the poet after his death (N,IV, 561 ff.). These issues will be dealt with more closely in the excursus following chapter 4 of this study. Explicit references to any collaboration with women writers on literary projects by Hardenberg are not in evidence.

⁷ Novalis also expressed reservations about the novel before its publication, both in terms of his own personal distaste for its frank eroticism and his concerns about its likely public reception (N,IV,277ff).

⁸ Cf. Hermann August Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit. Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*, 2nd ed., 5 vols., (Leipzig, 1949), vol. III, 86-92.

⁹ Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism. Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis and the Metaphysics of Love*, Stanford German Studies, Vol. 18, (Peter Lang: Bern, Frankfurt am Main, New York, 1983).

¹⁰ Cf. Richard Littlejohns, 'The "Bekentnisse eines Ungeschickten" A Re-Examination of the Emancipatory Ideals in Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde*', *MLR* (1977), 605-14. Cf. also Sigrid Weigel, 'Wider die romantische Mode. Zur ästhetischen Funktion des Weiblichen in Friedrich Schlegels *Lucinde*', in *Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. by Sigrid Weigel and Inge Stephan (Berlin, 1983), pp. 67-82.

¹¹ Cf. Littlejohns, *ibid*, p.606.

¹² The term was appropriated from geometry by Julia Kristeva, to refer to the obscuration of the female subject by a construction of femininity meant to represent her, making her present yet absent. On this see: Victor Burgin, 'Geometry and Abjection', pp.115-16 in: John Fletcher (ed), *Abjection, Melancholia and Love. The Work of Julia Kristeva*, (London and New York, 1990).

¹³ See Géza von Molnár, *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context. Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (Minneapolis: UMP, 1987), pp.117-120.

I. GENDER IN NOVALIS. PAST CRITICISM
AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Approaching Criticism

The contemporary debate on Hardenberg's treatment of gender has run for nearly twenty years, though has remained somewhat limited in approach and results. The studies produced have varied both in length and quality, but have exhibited common features. Earlier critics tended to focus critically on what they saw as Hardenberg's reduction of women to static, idealized images, whilst more recent critics have suggested that the very limitation of women to reflect a one-sided set of gender traits means that they signify specifically feminine influence in texts. It is *not* the aim of the following chapter to debate the validity of these and similar approaches. Rather it will aim to show that most critics have overlooked or understated the poet's moves towards emancipating women from more limiting models of femininity, by exposing those as alterable constructions and by allowing them space for development and self-expression. In doing so, this chapter outlines critically the aims, methodologies and findings of individual studies, whilst salient points regarding closer readings of the poet's texts will be dealt with in relevant, subsequent chapters. Those studies dealing with the specific issue of Hardenberg's textual treatment of his teenage fiancée Sophie von Kühn will be dealt with in chapter two. Writing about Sophie was important both for Hardenberg's written treatment of women and in his poetic writing practice in general. However, delaying this discussion will enable us to view Sophie as a part of a progression towards his more sophisticated writing about women, indeed as a vital stage in that development, but one that Hardenberg moved beyond.

I.1 Functionalizing the Feminine: Image and Intermediary.

Many critics have seen in Hardenberg's writings a tendency thought typical of much modern writing by men; that of divorcing femininity from the female subject and appropriating it to serve the aesthetic needs of male writing. Katherine Padilla's doctoral dissertation, 'The Embodiment of the Absolute', looks at constructions of the feminine in three writers, F. Schlegel, Schleiermacher and Hardenberg, and stresses the similarities between them. She contends that the philosophical and aesthetic systems of the three Early Romantics 'necessitate the feminine to embody the Absolute' (Padilla, iii).¹ Padilla re-constructs the fundamentals of Romantic thought, which she sees as a series of diverse though fundamentally similar reactions by young writers to shifts in idealist epistemology (Kant and Fichte), neo-platonic natural philosophy/cosmology (Hemsterhuis) and transcendental anthropology (Wilhelm von Humboldt). These earlier thinkers, runs the argument, not only hand on their philosophical systems to the Romantics, but also bequeath to their successors their treatment of the feminine: Fichte his reduction of women to passively determined object and their consequent legal and social subordination, Humboldt his theory of a universal, neo-Rousseauesque, principle of passive femininity, to name two examples.

Hardenberg, like these other writers, emerged from a dualistic tradition of gender taxonomy, which privileged the masculine and influenced his thinking and writing on women. His particular variation on this tendency, contends Padilla, stems from his own theoretical writings. According to the poet's re-reading of Fichte's philosophy, the male subject conceives of itself as an autonomous agency seeking knowledge of the world, which it regards as a passive object. The subject is, however, unable to access the infinite and absolute identity of objects and thus requires a means of grasping and communicating that knowledge. Hardenberg's solution constitutes a '[...] theory of being and representation which defines the feminine as pure form in opposition to masculine substance. Through his gender-specific definition of *Stoff* and *Form*, Novalis projects onto the substanceless feminine his potentiated self, namely the Absolute.' (ibid, iv). Padilla bases her contentions upon one particular fragment. There, the man is the creature of the rational, who must subordinate his feelings to his will, whilst the woman must allow feelings to dominate and guide her will. A network of gender characteristics is reconstructed throughout this text: male fulfilment consists in the exertion and triumph of his will over the other, female fulfilment in the submission to the male other's will (ibid, 169). Of particular interest, however, is the phrase 'Er ist das Ideal des Inhalts -- sie die Seele der Form' (N,II,260:510). Padilla links this to the earlier entry 'Was ist Stoff und Form? Form ist das notwendige Prädikat. Stoff das Subjekt [...]. Was man allein denken kann, ist Stoff, was man in Beziehung denken muß, Form' (N,II,172:227-230) further concluding that 'Form, the feminine, is thus dependent on masculine substance to achieve definition [...]' (Padilla, 170). Hardenbergian femininity, concludes the argument, is ultimately an expression of male needs, ideas and will; it is the result of dynamically imposed construction, rather than a representation of an actual female subject. In fact, however, the passage to which Padilla refers is isolated and is used all too emphatically to support an ideologized view of Hardenberg's anthropology of the genders.

Claudia Simon-Kuhlendahl's 'Das Frauenbild der Frühromantik' (1991) looks at the functionalization of femininity in the same three writers' works, but adopts a less one-sided approach.² It appears to be Simon-Kuhlendahl's intention not to adhere to an ideology, which would presume *a priori* the oppression of the female in the works examined and thus distort the texts to support ideology. In contrast to Padilla's study, it is the aim of this work 'zu einer Differenzierung beizutragen, die gegründet ist auf der Berücksichtigung eines breiten Schriftmaterials der maßgeblichen Autoren der Frühromantik, die sich in ihren Standpunkten durchaus unterscheiden' (ibid.); her work is to contribute to a 'Geschichte der wechselnden Weiblichkeitsentwürfe' (ibid.,20). *Differing* images and conceptions of the feminine or 'Frauenbilder' are to be investigated and the model of 'Frauenbild' is *not* to reduce the writer's constructions of the feminine to a single, circumscribed image. Rather it is intended as a homogeneous re-construction that maintains a sense of the differences and contradictions to be found between individual texts and between the individual female figures within these.

The study examines the intellectual, social-political, sexual and psychological characteristics ascribed to women by the writers in question. Rather than considering Hardenberg's portrayal of the feminine largely as a product of his poetry, however, it is shown by the critic to be a product of the poet's conception of love, as developed through his critical reception of the Dutch philosopher F. Hemsterhuis. Hemsterhuis believed in an all-pervading force of love, not merely as erotic or amorous feeling between individuals, but as a universal principle ensuring harmonious interaction between all entities in creation. This understanding of love did also have consequences for the poet's understanding and experience of interpersonal love, however; the individual could experience universal love most intensely when focussed into the relationship with a beloved. This idea had a direct bearing on the presentation of women on at least one occasion in the prologue to *Glauben und Liebe*, where Hardenberg conceived of his beloved as an 'abbreviated' form of the universe and, conversely, the universe as an 'extended' expression of his beloved.³ This apparently explains the proliferation of female deities and the depiction of women as the keepers of secrets in the poet's writing. Again, albeit with a different thematic slant, women are functionalized as focal points for the expression of male desire. This often leads to Hardenberg's conscious or unconscious conflation of female roles through feminine imagery, the tendency being to attribute erotic characteristics to otherwise maternal images of women or, conversely, to maternalize erotic, female lovers. Kuhlendahl maintains an open mind to the possibility of a more flexible and less fixed treatment of the feminine, however, which might seem less a simple expression of male needs. Strangely, Hardenberg's conception of marriage is given as an example: there, *both* genders had to develop a flexibility of identity, showing both a solidity of character, 'festen Character', and a certain elastic quality, 'geschmeidig'.⁴ Not only does the critic feel that this text avoids the 'einseitige[r] Zuordnung der Stärke- und Schwächeattribute', but also that it shows more of a sense of the woman's identity as an independent or even autonomous (*eigenständig*) subject within the marital pairing. Whilst, on balance, Simon-Kuhlendahl offers a wide-ranging and sensitive study informed by a self-proclaimed dialectical conception of 'Frauenbild', our discussion must move beyond her reading, as it ultimately conceives of the feminine as a series of static images, however subtle and differentiated those images might be.

I. 2 Crossing Boundaries? Hardenberg and Androgyny

The 1980s also marked the growth of studies seeking more provocative readings of gender in Hardenberg's work, some of which asked to what extent he sought to represent the possibility of crossing gender boundaries. In *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism* (1982), Sara Ann Friedrichsmeyer suggests that Hardenberg's writing re-worked and posited the model of the androgyne to represent totalized personal and universal perfection, as part of the utopian project

of Early Romanticism. Friedrichsmeyer begins by outlining the history of the concept and portrayal of the androgyne (Friedrichsmeyer, 7-39), which found its expression in a wide range of religions, philosophies and sciences,⁵ as well as in para-scientific traditions such as alchemy, where problems of belief, identity and knowledge were conceived of in terms of gendered polarities, their solutions as the (re)production of an allegorically androgynous whole. She shows Hardenberg's writings to stand in these traditions, both structurally, in terms of their utopian teleology, and empirically, in their reception and re-production of androgynous models to figure the ideal *teloi* required. Hardenberg's work is of course intrinsically utopian, as Mähl showed in his major work, *Die Idee des Goldenen Zeitalters im Werk des Novalis*,⁶ to which Friedrichsmeyer alludes. She shows, furthermore, that Hardenberg was well versed in a variety of the discourses, Jacob Böhme's mysticism, Zinzendorf's pietism and alchemy amongst them, which worked with models of androgyny. And, of course, the personal experience of losing Sophie and the supposed graveside experience strengthened in him the belief in the afterlife and hence the possibility of reunion with Sophie, which was in itself a reunion with a lost feminine half, leading to androgynous totality. Various instances of androgynous utopianism can be found in his mature literary work, in *Offerdingen*, in the *Hymnen an die Nacht* and the *Geistliche Lieder*.

Although androgyny is a model apparently geared towards overcoming sexual difference through recombination, it can effectively perpetuate an immutable gender dualism. As we have seen, critics have shown that Early Modern models of androgyny more often than not reproduced the patriarchal models of the genders in opposition and Friedrichsmeyer makes no secret of her assessment of Hardenberg's complicity in this. He trades in images of women as 'non-rational, unthinking, organic nature', a series of limited 'female figures [...] each of whom exists in contrast to an incomplete or fragmented male,' she contends (68), asserting that the ideal of a 'passive, waiting female' (83) consequently pervades Hardenberg's work. Friedrichsmeyer's study was the first major work on gender in Hardenberg and a subtle and creative study. It could not, however, have benefited from more recent scholarship, which has identified Hardenberg's poetics as exhibiting a certain form of deconstruction. As a result she remains unaware of the extent to which Hardenberg mounts a challenge to the building blocks of androgyny, the early modern conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Similarly, her study does not benefit from contemporary discussions of the poet's utopianism, which, whilst being teleological and idealist, was also ironically self-negating: as we shall see in chapter two, Hardenberg's utopianism functions because it recognizes that utopia cannot, as its name suggests, be reached, and only ever offers us fictional models of possible future states. But ideals do still have a purpose, as they hint at the direction in which progress might occur and, as such, represent attempts to intervene in the *status quo*. Friedrichsmeyer's discussion of androgyny does not show how this model intervened in eighteenth-century gender discourse, by requiring a revision of masculinity and femininity within Hardenberg's writing. This study will continue to engage with the notion of

androgyny, but this in order to *question* the apparent irreducibility of gender identity: we shall ask whether the model of androgyny functions as a glibly re-produced ideal, or more as a regulative aesthetic model, designed to bring about the re-invention of the identity of both genders by constantly asserting the possibility of their mutual re-definition.

1.3 The Female Other – Poetic Agency?

The 1980s also saw the emergence of works, which tried to rehabilitate the Early Romantic essentialization of the feminine for contemporary discussions of gender. Friedrich Kittler's psycho- and discourse-analytical reading, primarily of *Klingsobrs Märchen* but later also of *Offerdingen* as a whole, can be seen to have some relevance here, as it attributes a certain influential power to the feminine, largely in terms of its agency in the sexualization and socialization and its position as the locus of poetry. In 'Die Irrwege des Eros und die "absolute Familie"' ⁷ the *Märchen* is read as an example of the Early Romantic textual re-construction of sexuality. The tale begins, contends Kittler, by portraying various familial structures, which are under threat from the potentially misdirected erotic energy concomitant with the socialization and sexualization of its male members, primarily Eros. These energies find their expression in the desire for the Other, the mother in her various guises as experienced by Eros, and the father. In the case of the former, the implications and outcome are incestuous. The prohibition of incest by Sophie actually results in the paradox, says Kittler, of the mother becoming the hidden signified of desire (ibid. 429). Thus incest becomes the subject's imaginary (and ultimately narcissistic) means of compensating for its own sense of lack within itself (ibid. 430). This is a modern Oedipal constellation, believes Kittler, though, unlike traditional psychoanalytical readings of the Oedipal, one which is created by the visible process of ascribing wishes to objects or figures of desire. Erotic anarchy is avoided, however, by the hero castrating Eros symbolically (by cutting off his wings). This allows the formation of loving couples and the apparently successful mediation of desire: this normative mediation, however, still has at its heart the notion of lack, which is held in place, in the Lacanian sense, 'in the name of the father' (ibid. 435-37). The text posits its own solution, contends Kittler, namely through a 'matrilineare Recodierung des Begehrens' (ibid. 437). The new model of the absolute family integrates an absolute mother, signified through the drinking of the ashes, which ensures an ongoing life as an 'ewige Geburt' (ibid.) for its children; their sense of lack is thus overcome. The shift from the patriarchal to the matriarchal allows the restoration of the original mother-child dyad. In parallel, the Lacanian symbolic order is negated, as is represented by the exclusion of the scribe from the new order. This also marks the transition from a patriarchally written system to one that privileges the maternal spoken word. In discourse-analytical terms, this negation of the original negator, the scribe or symbolic order, 'streicht den Signifikanten des durchgestrichenen Anderen und rückt ein universales Signifikat ins Zentrum

der Zeichen' (ibid. 445ff): the mother is destroyed and replaced by a maternal essence, which leads apparently to the completion of the new order. Kittler applies these ideas to the rest of *Offerdingen*, where Heinrich's first dream is nothing more than his first yearning for the completion offered by the sign of the mother, which in turn forms the telos of his journey.

Kittler would appear to ascribe a certain power and influence to the feminine: it is venerated for its ability to replace and neutralize the lack at the heart of patriarchal constructions of identity. Objections to Kittler's work have been raised: Uerlings has pointed out that, despite Kittler's awareness of the modernity of the tale as constituted by the visibility of the ascription of desire, he problematically conflates the signifier and the signified, 'Wort' and 'Bedeutung'; the mother with the absolute. For Uerlings, Romantic poetics do not confuse these distinctions, but function precisely because of the impossibility of their coincidence.⁸ Thus it is out of keeping with the fundamentals of the poet's thinking to conceive of the absolute as essentially feminine: the feminine can be at most a static, aesthetic representation of the absolute. This diverts our attention from the possibility of examining how women might be seen to profit from having their identity subjected to ongoing revisions – as well as eclipsing the potential for the female writing subject. Whilst acknowledging the role of Fabel as the dynamic agent of poetry, Kittler's study focuses rather on the feminine as a static, psycho-semiotic principle.

Parallels were drawn between Novalis's construction of femininity and the new French feminism of Cixous and Irigaray. Marilyn Chapin Massey's study, *Feminine Soul. The Fate of an Ideal*,⁹ began by positioning itself within the feminist debate on the historical and contemporary value of constructions of an essentially feminine soul. Massey notes that, whilst certain political feminists see the feminine soul as a tool of patriarchal oppression, so-called woman-centred feminists have re-evaluated such essentialized constructions. Massey, too, contends that literary constructions of a feminine soul can be re-read as celebrations of women's values and experiences, including their sexual desire and motherhood, which have been devalued within western patriarchal society. For her, this soul is no trans-historical essence of the feminine, no 'metaphysical reality' (ibid, 27). By the same token, though, it is not merely worthless illusion, but a culturally and historically specific suggestion of what women *can* be. Massey contends that an historicized re-engagement with often forgotten or misread instances of the feminine soul can remind us of its empowering potential within a contemporary context. In her closing comments on Novalis, she describes the feminine soul as:

a psycho-biological essence extending on one side to the divine and, on the other, to the female body. On the divine side it becomes the Virgin Mary, Isis, Sophia [...] and then an unrecognizable God the mother [...]. But, in *Henry* [*Offerdingen*], when it reaches into the female body [...] it [...] reaches to female sexual desire (128).

It would appear, then, to constitute not only certain essentially or exclusively female modes of experience, but the elevation of these to the object of worship in religion. The selection of the

female object of worship, be it a deity or more conventionally the Virgin Mary, is not merely intended as ornamental, but is seen as the veneration of a transformative power, which can alter the social, cultural structures and mores of patriarchal society.

In pursuing her investigation, Massey focuses primarily on *Öfterdingen*, where the blue flower in the protagonist's dream symbolizes the feminine soul he must both worship and emulate in becoming a poet. The subsequent episodes of the novel, whether dreams, waking reality or inset narrative, represent different stages in Heinrich's induction into the religion of the feminine, a process which culminates in the final *Märchen*. Massey's is the first study to re-interpret apparently essentialist constructions of femininity, showing that these need not be thought of as limiting women, but as giving them the ability to alter aspects of society: the feminine embodies mutually nurturing, interpersonal relationships which are alternatives to the oppositional relations between individuals in evidence in patriarchy. Massey also first forged the link to contemporary French feminism. However, the definition of 'soul' is at times unhelpful. The incorporation of sexuality, corporeality and motherhood into a *spiritual* definition of the feminine is confusing and approaches implausibility, especially as this concept of 'soul' has been criticized for its complicity in de-valuing the physicality of women and their representation in culture.¹⁰ Furthermore, Massey's theory that the novel promotes the foundation of a specifically matriarchal religion does not take account of Hardenberg's theory of aesthetic or 'mediated' religion, as expressed in the *Blüthenstaub* fragments. There, all things can become mediators of the divine, including both genders and the mediator, regardless of gender, is not confused with the *mediated* - so Hardenberg does not deify the feminine in an exclusive or indeed a literal sense. Finally, in celebrating and promoting this construction of the feminine, Massey, arguably, is reinforcing the limitations of culturally constructed femininity, as the question as to what *else* women can be, how they are to function, write, create and self-determine remains unanswered.

Gail Mercer Newman's doctoral thesis, *The Visible Soul of Poetry*, explored similar themes with a somewhat different approach and findings.¹¹ Her point of departure was a dialectical construction of Romantic thought and aesthetics. Evaluations of Romanticism have, says Newman building on J. Schulte-Sasse's stocktaking essay on the subject, historically shown great divergence.¹² Leaving behind her the traditional view, held by Lukács and dubbed here *linksaufklärerisch*, Newman is more interested in the *links-liberalsystemtheoretisch* thought pioneered by Jürgen Habermas and also the views of critics aligned with the tradition of 1960s political *engagement*, such as Richard Faber, or Frank Wilkening.¹³ Newman wishes to bring a synthesis of these latter readings to the gender debate, examining how women and various principles associated with them can be read both as agents of 'dissolutionary' change, only to be later hijacked and used as models of security and continuity: 'in a process that is both compensatory, as in the Habermasian model, and deconstructive the early Romantics privileged women for their otherness and associated the feminine with the highly valued aesthetic emotional sphere' (ibid, 9).

Newman suggests the synthesis of seeking 'both the Utopian critical potential and the projective ideological content of early Romantic *Frauenbilder*' (ibid, 12) by close attention to Hardenberg's theory and *Ofterdingen*, thus seeking to remain aware of how femininity is the agent of revolutionary transformation but simultaneously 'undermines its own mission' (ibid).

Newman begins by re-constructing the fundamentals of Novalis's thought in socio-economic, philosophical terms: Hardenberg criticized Fichte and pre-Romantic rationalistic thinking for what he saw as their *Eigennutz*, an ontological equivalent of proto-capitalism, which reduces the individual's identity to the equivalent of a material value. Hardenberg's alternative, *Poësie*, becomes for Newman a matter of dissolving the hegemony of 'ossified' reason (ibid, 15) and re-synthesizing a new order, which promotes a loving and familial relationship between individuals – one which is, theoretically, a-hierarchical and non-exploitative, the philosophical formulation is of course the transformation of the Fichtean object, or non-self into 'Du' (N,III,429-430).¹⁴ This model of poetry is related to gender through reference to Novalis's biographical writings, which are shown to associate the conservation and integrity of identity with masculinity and the irrational, imaginative and erotic tendencies – all of which are seen as 'dissolutionary' – with the feminine. Along with this comes Novalis's own ambivalence to both of these gendered dynamics – he is attracted to the revolutionary potential of the feminine, but ultimately wary of its influence, both on him personally and on interpersonal and social relationships in general.¹⁵ Newman tests the extent to which Novalis allowed the feminine to have influence in his theoretical and literary writings and how far that ambivalence hindered this. She reconstructs the intellectual- and social-historical development of starkly polarized, eighteenth-century conceptions of gender,¹⁶ and measures to what extent Novalis breaks with the tradition; the conclusion is that he both struggled against it and perpetuated it (ibid, 54-55). He both promotes the revolutionary feminine, but ultimately privileges the masculine dynamic, by re-establishing order and rendering femininity inert, placing it within the domesticated roles of mother and wife, within the new micro and macro-societal familial structure. It is in terms of the oscillations between these gendered social dynamics that the various episodes of *Ofterdingen* are investigated. The protagonist's first dream represents his awakening to the feminine dynamic of poetry, after which he proceeds through a series of episodes all of which tap into and release feminine power, only to render it inert through the final re-establishment of patriarchal order. By thus gendering the dynamics of *Poësie*, particularly by making the transformative impulse feminine, Newman reduces women to a function of *Poësie*, such that they can neither become the conscious agents of poetry, the poets, nor can they profit by having their social and political roles dissolved and recast in new more flexible forms. Newman ends her analysis with *Klingsobrs Märchen* and thus does not examine the *Paralipomena* and misses the text's ultimately decentering dynamic, which arguably challenges the hegemony of male influence and realizes the poetic ideal of a polyphony inclusive of female voices, as we shall later see.

The most progressive study on femininity in Novalis was offered in 1992 by Alice Kuzniar's essay 'Hearing Women's Voices in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*'. Kuzniar draws together strands of existing scholarship citing, albeit briefly, Newman and Massey and building particularly on the latter's work. As with these earlier critics, it is the very otherness of women in Novalis, which is the source of her influence within the literary texts, though Kuzniar remains more optimistic as to the extent of feminine influence and its fate. She begins where Massey ends; with a topical comparison between 'woman-centred' French feminism and the construction of the female other in Hardenberg's writings. Referring to Cixous and Irigaray, she characterizes female writings as an *écriture féminine*, which embodies a unique proximity between writing and the body/sexual desire. This allows the body's drives more immediate influence on the use of language and disrupts, in turn, the patriarchal linguistic norms of the (post-Lacanian) symbolic order. In *Ofterdingen*, it is not the rhythm and texture of Hardenberg's own language, but his allegories of female utterance that Kuzniar relates to this theoretical framework. Women's identity as idealized others allows them to represent the source of poetic creativity and thus the form of poetic utterance to which Heinrich must aspire in order to become a poet. Kuzniar does not overlook the apparently superior positions held by Heinrich's various male mentor figures, but asserts that 'women are not merely as a result relegated to inspiring male performance' (ibid, 1199). That the constructions of femininity at hand in this text are (literally) man-made, Kuzniar sees as no obstacle. Echoing Adrienne Munich and speaking for female critics in general, she regards the process of re-evaluating these constructions as a matter of reclaiming 'what is half ours anyway' (ibid, 1196). The process by which Heinrich emulates feminine modes of expression need not be seen as his usurpation of those modes, but as testimony to women's influence over men:

A female character may be used not to bolster the identity of a male protagonist, but to question it and perhaps even to undermine binary gender oppositions. Although such a female model remains a male fabrication, it may offer an alternative to a male set of privileged terms (ibid.).

The model of the feminine, however potent, is not allowed to develop, though; it is limited to being the oppositional in the form of the sexual, body-centred other. On occasion, the application of this model is strained and inappropriate, the Princess of Atlantis, for instance, sings with her 'überirdischen Stimme' (N,I,220), which is precisely metaphysical, the other of the body. The linear, subject-centred model of the *Bildungsroman* also remains, furthermore, unchallenged and thus, whilst women may question and influence male development, it is nevertheless male development upon which the text focuses. Although it can be argued that the female subject appears to possess both a faculty of self-expression and the space to self-express, utterances by women can also be seen as idealized models of poetic outpouring, designed to

serve male developmental needs, rather than to signify the right or ability of women to speak and create.

In reading the history of gender criticism on Hardenberg, some of the frailties of existing, often ideologized approaches have started to emerge. Those studies seeking to highlight Hardenberg's exclusion and distortion of female figures tend to overlook apparent instances of female poetic agency; those studies seeking to accentuate that influence have only been able to do so through recourse to idealized constructions of women. Most studies do ask after the extent to which Hardenberg consciously pursued a programme of disrupting and renewing models of femininity within the various contexts and disciplines of his writing. The question as to how far the later literary works present poetry as a genuinely inter-subjective system of communication, in which the female poet may freely create with her own agency, has also been overlooked. This study will explore both issues, seeking those instances where Hardenberg is genuinely progressive in his treatment of female identity and the female subject. The second and following chapter begins with the former issue of constructed femininity. It reconstructs the theoretical starting point of Hardenberg's poetic writing practice through close reference to his critical study of Fichte (1795-96) and then moves to examine the role played by gender within those writings and subsequent theoretical-scientific texts and collections of fragments between 1797 and 1799. The chapter aims to show that, as the theoretical conception of *Poësie* and its application develops, so the poet's construction of femininity becomes more consciously identified as an aesthetic construction. As a result, female identity will be shown to be, on occasion, the object of progressive transformation within poetic language, though equally on other occasions it is not. As we shall see, this makes for a rich and often contradictory corpus of writing about women, produced over half a decade and within a number of scholarly disciplines.

Notes to chapter one:

¹ See Katherine Mary Padilla, 'The Embodiment of the Absolute: Theories of the Feminine in the Works of Schleiermacher, Schlegel and Novalis.' (doctoral dissertation, Princeton: 1988), pp.147-227. Padilla places herself in the context of feminist cultural history, citing the classic position of Simone de Beauvoir, who first exposed patriarchal construction of femininity as a 'material representation of alterity' but failed to examine 'the debt that philosophy - that is the structures of thought - owes to the configuration of gender'. Padilla promises to make good the deficit, p.5.

² See Claudia Simon-Kuhlendahl, 'Das Frauenbild der Frühromantik', (doctoral dissertation, Kiel: 1991).

³ See: (N,II,485:4).

⁴ Cf. (N,III,649:551)

⁵ Friedrichsmeyer traces this tendency to antiquity, where it received its first major theoretical treatment in Plato's *Symposium*. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, certain readings of biblical texts present images of pre-Fall man as androgynous, the Fall constituting his attaining knowledge of sexual difference and consequently division.

⁶ Cf. Hans-Joachim Mähl, *Die Idee des Goldenen Zeitalters im Werk des Novalis. Studien zur Wesensbestimmung der frühromantischen Utopie und zu ihren ideengeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1965), pp.1-3.

⁷ Friedrich A. Kittler, 'Die Irrwege des Eros und die "Absolute Familie"', in: *Psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Literaturinterpretation*, 1981, pp. 421-470.

⁸ See: Herbert Uerlings, *Friedrich von Hardenberg, genannt Novalis. Werk und Forschung* (Metzler: Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 518-19.

⁹ Marilyn Chapin Massey, *Feminine Soul. The Fate of an Ideal*, (Beacon: Boston, 1985).

¹⁰ On occasion this arises from linguistic difficulties; Massey either refers to a poor translation of the *Atlantis* fairy tale, or herself mistranslates parts of the text in such a way that allows the female body to be included in the concept of an idealized female soul. On this see Massey, p.108. There the original 'die sichtbare Seele jener herrlichen Kunst' (N,I,214) is translated as 'the beautiful and embodied soul of poetry.' The use of 'embodied' here, arguably awakens false associations of corporeality.

¹¹ Gail Mercer Newman, *The Visible Soul of Poetry: Women and the Poet in Novalis's 'Heinrich von Ofterdingen'*, Univ. Diss. (University of Minnesota, June 1985).

¹² Newman (pp.1-3) refers to Schulte-Sasse's then unpublished manuscript 'Der Begriff der Literaturkritik in der Romantik', which has since appeared in a different form as the introduction to a translated anthology of Romantic theoretical texts: *Jochen Schulte-Sasse, Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

¹³ In *Die Seele und die Formen*, Lukács saw Romanticism as a withdrawal into a world-shy subjectivism, whereas the *links-liberalsystemtheoretisch* thought pioneered by Jürgen Habermas in works such as 'Der Eintritt in die Postmoderne', diagnosed modern, post-enlightened society as fragmented into three spheres, the political, the economic and the aesthetic-emotional, the latter of which enables the individual to experience through imagination a sense of the totality lost and saw in the Romantic period how the aesthetic sphere was first freed from moral and theoretical considerations and became autonomous, constituting an existential mode in itself. In *Die Phantasie an die Macht*, Richard Faber reconstructed Romantic aesthetics as a system of subversive strategies of dissolution, which are used against otherwise monolithic and impenetrable norms of enlightened culture and society to revolutionary effect, whilst Frank Wilkening showed them to be a matter of generating change by opening differences between experienced reality and aesthetically represented possibility, see: Wilkening, Frank, 'Progression und Regression. Die Geschichtsauffassung Friedrich von Hardenbergs'. Newman is keen to show that Romanticism can be seen as an aesthetic means both to compensating for the fragmentation of human experience and as a means to effecting political change and even as a pre-figuration of deconstruction and a sophisticated form of aesthetic utopianism (Newman, 1-4).

¹⁴ Newman sees how the formula could imply both the ego's recognition of the other's identity and rights, forming the basis for egalitarian, inter-subjective thinking, and the ego's self-serving transformation of the object into a mirror or function of self.

¹⁵ As an example of this, Newman cites Hardenberg's biographical writings. In the *Journal* (N,IV,40) he is shown to associate his own inactivity, imaginative indulgence and erotic arousal with his relationships with and reflections on women, thus making these qualities themselves feminine. This view is reinforced by Hardenberg's letters from around that time, which declare his intention to move away from these tendencies towards active striving, discipline, rigour - all of which are significantly thought of as components of 'Männlichkeit' (N,IV,108).

¹⁶ Newman borrows from Karin Hausen's essay on the subject: "Die Polarisierung der Geschlechtscharaktere" Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben', in Werner and Conze (ed), *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas* (Stuttgart, Klett: 1976), Karin Hausen

describes the collapse of the pre-bourgeois, cohabitant extended family in terms of the rise of the bourgeois classes, the mobilization of men into the public sphere and the domination of the domestic sphere by women. This leads to her domestication and, consequently, to her being theorized and represented as the polar opposite of the masculine in writing on the subject.

II. WRITING ABOUT WOMEN, 1795-99

Before Writing

As with all of the Jena Romantics, it was the reading of philosophy, primarily Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, which formed the theoretical basis of Hardenberg's mature work. Hardenberg met Fichte personally only once – this was also to be his one and only meeting with fellow poet Friedrich Hölderlin – in early summer 1795 in the house of Immanuel Niethammer in Jena. By then Fichte had already won his reputation as a philosopher, having published several treatises in the early 1790s, followed by the first version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* in 1794, and having been awarded a chair at the university of Jena in the same year. By the time of their meeting, Hardenberg had read Kant closely and was becoming increasingly interested in Fichte, having attended his lectures. The two young poets and the philosopher seem to have had much to talk about that evening. An oft-cited passage from Niethammer's diary bears witness to this, there having been 'viel über Religion gesprochen und über Offenbarung und daß für die Philosophie hier noch viele Fragen offen bleiben' (N,II,31). Hardenberg's formal study of Fichte began, perhaps spurred on by the meeting, in November 1795, lasted, in sustained written form, for the best part of a year and was pursued quite remarkably around full-time work as a civil-service secretary in Tennstedt. It is with these studies that our discussion begins.

II.1 The Grounds for Writing: Theory, Practice and 'Poësie' (1795-97)

By 1797, having studied Fichte on and off but intensively for over two years, Hardenberg was able to reflect on what he had learned from the philosopher in one of his 'Logologische Fragmente':

Es wäre wohl möglich, daß Fichte Erfinder einer ganz neuen Art zu denken wäre – für die die Sprache noch keinen Namen hat. Der Erfinder ist vielleicht nicht der fertigste und sinnreichste Künstler auf seinem Instrument – ob ich gleich nicht sage, daß es so sey – Es ist aber wahrscheinlich, daß es Menschen giebt und geben wird – die weit besser Fichtisiren werden, als Fichte. Es können *wunderbare Kunstwerke* hier entstehen – wenn man das Fichtisiren erst artistisch zu treiben beginnt (N,II,524:11).

The extract encapsulates the nature of the poet's relationship to Fichte. He begins by acknowledging his debt to the philosopher. Fichte, he says, has taken some form of first step, by inventing a 'new way of thinking'. But the poet is at once aware of his teacher's limits; there is a sense of his achievement as being incomplete. There is a sense, too, that some form of transformation is required, by which Fichteanism, perhaps even philosophy in general, must give way to art, or at least be practised artistically. Why did Hardenberg see Fichte's project as limited and why did art, or more specifically his particular conception of *Poësie*, provide a means of going beyond Fichte? What is Hardenberg's understanding of *Poësie* in this context? And how does all

this lead to the model of a poetics of transformation exemplified in our introduction? The answers are to be found in Hardenberg's 'Fichte-Studien'.

The appearance of this difficult and sustained dialogue with Fichte, left by Hardenberg in the form of nearly two hundred pages of hand-written notebooks produced between 1795-6, made modern Novalis scholarship possible, and increasingly sophisticated readings of his work ensued. The 'Fichte-Studien' open with Hardenberg's arresting and highly significant re-reading of the Fichtean proposition of identity, expressed in the formula 'A=A', as proof of that proposition's *inability* to capture the essence of identity: it could merely represent its possibility. Continuing, he wrote: 'Das Wesen der Identität läßt sich nur in einem Scheinsatz aufstellen. Wir verlassen das Identische um es darzustellen' (N,II,104:1). This formulation crystallizes Hardenberg's key insight that the absolute can only be experienced as a representation or *Darstellung*, which does not encapsulate or disclose identity. As Manfred Frank first pointed out, instead of thinking of the absolute as immanent in *any* sense, Hardenberg thinks it as transcendent, as a thing fundamentally eluding consciousness and therefore absent from the structures of cognitive thought and language.¹ The absolute ceases to be knowable in any theoretical sense and, although they will fail to disclose it in essence, thought and language are bound to pursue the possibility of rendering it in some sense communicable.

In the following pages of the 'Fichte-Studien' Hardenberg explores further his notion that knowledge and identity, as objects of consciousness, are merely constructions in language. He offers a complex discussion of the issues of identity raised by the *Wissenschaftslehre* in terms of semiotics. According to Helmut Schanze, Hardenberg's theory of the sign contends that being (*das Bezeichnete*) is mediated to consciousness as a sign (*das Zeichen*) and that the process of mediation occurs within the subject, the signifying agent (*der* or *das Bezeichnende*).² Now for Hardenberg, the activity of this signifying agent may remain free, until the idea of communication with another subject enters the equation. For communication to be possible there must be something common to both subjects, which, in the speaker or writer, assigns the sign to the signified and in the recipient relates the sign back to the signified. Therefore, signification involves a form of 'free necessity' (*freie Nothwendigkeit*) – *free* in that both subjects may choose arbitrarily their signs and *necessary* in that they must choose via a 'schema', common to both of them and brought forth by productive imagination. Hardenberg writes on the subject:

Die Nothwendigkeit der Beziehung eines Zeichens auf ein Bezeichnetes soll in einem Bezeichnenden liegen. In *diesem* aber wird beydes frey gesetzt. Es muß also eine freye Nothwendigkeit der Beziehung beyder im Bezeichnenden vorhanden seyn. Frey soll sie seyn in Rücksicht dieses Bezeichnenden – nothwendig kann sie also nur in Rücksicht *des Bezeichnenden überhaupt* oder d[er] andern Bezeichnenden seyn. Freye Nothwendigkeit könnte man Selbstbestimmung nennen – folglich wäre Selbstbestimmung Character *des Bezeichnenden überhaupt* oder d[er] anderen Bezeichn[enden] [...] Jedes *verständliche* Zeichen also muß in einem *schematischen* Verhältniß zum Bezeichneten stehn (N,II,109:11).

This concept of schematics is, of course, borrowed from Kantian philosophy, where it refers to the cognitive interface between the purely conceptual and empirical intuitions. Schanze believes that the critique of the proposition of identity and this theory of signification constitute Hardenberg's expansion beyond Fichte (Schanze, 2). Given Hardenberg's explicit differentiation between the nature of being, *Sein* and its aesthetic mediation, *Schein*, Schanze feels able to conclude that: 'In seinen 'Fichte-Studien' [...] kritisiert Novalis bereits den obersten Grundsatz des Fichteschen Systems und erweist den gewissesten philosophischen Beginn mit dem Satz der Identität als Fiktion. Er sieht sich so berechtigt, ein philosophisches System gleich einem Kunstwerk zu betrachten' (ibid). Hardenberg begins to reflect on the fact that all knowledge is ultimately a fiction and appears interested in the role played specifically by language in the constitution of knowledge. It was this latter interest that would, as we shall see, forge his path out of conventional philosophy into aesthetic writing practice.

In the passage on semiotics, we find further proof of Hardenberg's dissatisfaction with the parameters and progress offered by conventional idealism. In fact, William Arctander O'Brien has detected an implicit re-reading of Fichte's essay of 1795 on language in Hardenberg's theory, which amounts to an attack on Fichte's teleological-historical contention that philosophy represents the highest medium for disclosing truth and marks Novalis's refutation of the primacy of philosophy and his move into poetry.³ Fichte had presented a narrative reconstruction of the historical development of language in three stages: the development of an original or natural language (*Ursprache*), the development of 'true language', culminating in the emergence of 'philosophical language'. Philosophical language emerged from humanity's burgeoning need to articulate abstract, supersensible concepts, such as being or time. Fichte proposed that signs for these concepts were borrowed from those used by true language to signify the physical world and transposed (*uebertragen*) to the supersensible. Fichte too appropriated the Kantian notion of the schema to make this possible; the schema mediated signs of the physical to the metaphysical. Fichte, though, had been concerned to demonstrate that philosophy could offer the 'truth' about things, so his model of semiotics becomes problematic because signs were transposed from their original context and reconditioned to represent new concepts, all of which implied that these signs could, at best, be metaphorical or even false representations. Fichte got around this, according to O'Brien, by implying that misrepresentation of the truth by signs only occurred, if one failed to comprehend that the sensible sign was no longer representing a sensible object, but in fact a higher concept. O'Brien argues that Fichte implied almost by accident that sensible signs could function in a new way, as 'ideal' or 'philosophical' signs, which, when interpreted properly, allowed for the mediation of higher truths via the finite and sensible units of language (O'Brien, 96). Thus philosophy became the crowning achievement of language, because it offered a means for articulating the truth about the supersensible universe, which neither of the previous phases of language could offer. For Fichte, says O'Brien, this was linguistic-historical proof of

philosophy's ability to articulate absolute truths (ibid, 97). This was not so for Hardenberg. He saw the use of the schema involved in all language, as we have seen from our discussion of Schanze, indeed it is intrinsic to *every* communicative act. O'Brien points out that for Hardenberg: 'all language is metaphorical and figurative – including the language of philosophy' (ibid, 105). In the 'Fichte-Studien' themselves Hardenberg rejects the possibility of philosophy's access, via language, to transcendental truths: 'Nicht transcendente Sprache für die angewandte Philosophie/ Sie widerspricht sich selbst, weil sie ein Widerspruch begründet - eine nothwendige Täuschung' (N,II,138:49). Just like any other discipline, philosophy itself was a fiction fashioned in language. In one sense, then, the 'Fichte-Studien' undermine themselves, as they ultimately point beyond the ontological and epistemological questions from which both Fichte and Hardenberg began; philosophy had reached a point where its own findings blocked its path towards the traditional project of truth disclosure. O'Brien argues that Hardenberg's solution was to move sideways to avoid the impasse, pursuing rather a quest for knowledge and identity through the self-consciously aesthetic process of art.

By late 1796 and the end of the 'Fichte-Studien', Hardenberg was convinced that, as language preceded thought, all known realities were given to consciousness as semiotic constructs and consequently 'began to approach all bodies of systematic knowledge as "sign systems"'.⁴ Given that, in effect, all experienced reality was a fiction generated by consciousness, Hardenberg began in the course of writing the 'Fichte-Studien' to suggest that the fiction we call reality could in fact be re-written. In two adjoining sections towards the end of the 'Fichte-Studien' Hardenberg wrote of the effects language could have:

499. Begriffe, Worte *wirken aufs Entgegengesetzte* – daher die Macht der Worte, und ihr Nutzen.

500. Wo viele Worte sind, müssen auch viel Handlungen seyn – wie mit dem Geldsumlauf (N,II,258).

If we understand the world as a reality mediated through aesthetic constructions, then alterations in those constructions directly or indirectly affect the real objects to which they refer: in this sense, poetry can change the world. Such change, implies the second fragment, should be maximized, particularly in cases when much is said and when there is much to be said. In passages such as these, the 'Fichte-Studien' theorize anew the relationship between language and reality and bring Hardenberg to the brink of what was, in his theory of 1797 and early 1798, to become the practice of *Poësie*.

Further development of the theoretical definitions of *Poësie* as well as the transition to poetic practice can be found in the poet's 'Logologische Fragmente' and 'Vermischte Fragmente' of 1798. In the former, Hardenberg is interested in logology, particularly the logical structure of language, which he calls a 'Grammatik der höhern Sprache oder des Denkens' (N,II,526:16). The logical system relating words or thoughts, is in itself a form of language, but one which never

enters directly into signification, remaining rather inherent in the relationships between signs. But the order of logic does not always prevail within language (O'Brien, 133f). Later in the same collection of fragments, Hardenberg reflects on two opposing tendencies within language: firstly the action of logic, which would seek to 'abolish randomness and diversity' within signification, the use of language, and secondly language's own tendency to promote such change and diversity. Hardenberg personifies these two tendencies as two figures, 'the scholastic' and 'the poet':

Der rohe, diskursive Denker ist der Scholastiker. Der ächte Scholastiker ist ein mystischer Subtilist. Aus logischen Atomen baut er sein Weltall – er vernichtet alle lebendige Natur, um ein Gedankenkunststück an ihre Stelle zu setzen – Sein Ziel ist ein unendliches Automat. Ihm entgegengesetzt ist der rohe, intuitive Dichter. Er ist ein mystischer Macrolog. Er haßt Regel, und feste Gestalt. Ein wildes, gewaltthätiges Leben herrscht in der Natur – Alles ist belebt. Kein Gesetz – Willkühr und Wunder überall. Er ist bloß dynamisch (N,II,524:13).

Here the poet 'proper' is to keep alive the process of change in the world as aesthetic construction by ensuring the presence and activity of his figurative counterpart within language and representational systems. On a figurative level, neither the scholastic nor the poet can ever entirely succeed in their respective tasks of fixing language absolutely or rendering it entirely arbitrary. Therefore, whilst the practice of *Poësie* will tend to promote more the arbitrariness of the *Dichter* (for change is the goal of activity and *Poësie* is intrinsically active) it will not and cannot become entirely a matter of chaotic disruption (ibid, 133-35). Within the 'Vermischte Fragmente', Hardenberg further relates his notion of *Poësie* to change, via his now well-known definition of Romanticization:

Die Welt muß romantisirt werden. So findet man den Urspr[ünglichen] Sinn wieder. Romantisiren ist nichts als eine qualit[ative] Potenzierung. [...] Indem ich dem Gemeinen einen hohen Sinn, dem Gewöhnlichen ein geheimnißvolles Ansehen, dem Bekannten die Würde des Unbekannten, dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Schein gebe so romantisire ich es – Umgekehrt ist die Operation für das Höhere, Unbekannte, Mystische, Unendliche – dies wird durch die Verknüpfung logarithmisirt – Es bekommt einen geläufigen Ausdruck. romantische Philosophie. *Lingua romana*. Wechselerhöhung und Erniedrigung (N,II,545:105).

The essential action of *Poësie* is this model of *Romantisiren* and it involves enacting what Nicholas Saul has called a 'palindromic' movement: this refers to the way in which ideals are created through the potentialization of the mundane, but also interrupted by their reduction to the empirical and finite.⁵ This also allows for both constructivist and, in a specifically Early Romantic sense, deconstructivist impulses to be present within poetic writing practice; *Poësie* interrupts prevailing discourse by exposing it, 'deconstructively', as dealing in fictions, only to construct new alternatives – though these models are *themselves* fictions and subject to subsequent revision (O'Brien, 139).

What is in many ways Hardenberg's remarkably modern awareness of the role of language in the construction of meaning and identity has been argued to be an anticipation of post-structuralist theory. Alice Kuzniar's 1987 study, *Delayed Endings*,⁶ explored one particular way of equating Romantic and post-structuralist thought, focussing on what she saw as the refusal of both standpoints to accept the possibility of fixing a finality of meaning in language. She uses the term 'nonclosure' as a mediating analogy between the two epochs. For poststructuralists, nonclosure awakens various theoretical notions, such as Derridean *différance*, as well as describing a characteristic of the writing practice of various poststructuralist thinkers: 'in as much as their phrasings are subtle displacements of one another, they are means of avoiding conceptual closure' (Kuzniar, 10).⁷ For Romanticism it describes a theoretical and practical consideration. The Romantics embraced a theoretical form of nonclosure, in that they saw the necessity for using language in an attempt to fix meaning within finite structures which, ironically, will fail given that a metaphysical meaning is absent from them. In writing practice this expresses itself both formally and as a strategy; it is reflected in the Romantic *Fragment* and the incomplete state of literary texts, and also appears as a theme in itself where it manifests itself in Early Romantic treatment of the utopian.

Kuzniar shows Hardenberg's engagement with the concept of nonclosure to flow from his reaction to fundamental changes in theories of temporality in the outgoing eighteenth century. The twilight of a century coupled with that other real historical turning point, the French Revolution, brought these issues into sharp focus. Kuzniar concludes that Hardenberg rejected both the Enlightenment view of history as an endless continuity and the apocalyptic view of Pietism, which envisaged an inevitable and irrevocable end to history. Hardenberg's rejection was based upon the poeticized philosophy of the 'Fichte-Studien', which saw that every attempt to enclose or articulate absolutes, be they the essence of an ideal or of the subject, 'resists our cognitive forays' and remains itself 'deviatory' (ibid. 81). This line of thinking, says Kuzniar, intersects with theories of temporality and teleology, when Hardenberg 'categorically rejects teleological beliefs' (ibid. 82). This view translates into the strange practice of writing in the 'future perfect', a mode producing finite structures whilst nevertheless continuously deferring endings, and which both awakens and thwarts our desire for closure. Consequently, Hardenberg deconstructs not only specific visions of utopia but also the ability of language and literature to articulate such ideals.

This correspondence between the post-structuralist model of non-closure/deconstruction and Romantic writing practice is overstated by Kuzniar. Hardenberg's utopianism in fact relies upon the existence of a metaphysical absolute, a thing precluded by post-structuralist thinking. It conceives, though, of that absolute as being absent in any knowable sense from realms of human experience. This leads Hardenberg to renounce the concept of a single given telos for histories and narratives, but to preserve a teleological dynamic that sought

always to present the ideal and move towards it without ever reaching it. Such ideals function as artificial *teloi*, which serve to define the process of change. What is produced then is not a 'non-progressive, unending, and fragmented writing' (Kuzniar, 5), but rather a writing showing a 'Teleologie ohne Telos'.⁸ The renunciation of the 'one telos' means that individual constructions of the utopian or ideal must be in some way withdrawn, rendered visibly inadequate by poetry. There is, therefore, a case for seeing deconstructive impulses within Novalis, but not to the extent implied by Kuzniar: in his stock-taking article 'Novalis und der Postmodernismus',⁹ Neubauer reaches the general conclusion 'Novalis war kein Theoretiker des Postmodernismus "avant la lettre", obwohl man behaupten könnte, daß seine Texte sich selbst dekonstruieren.' (Neubauer, 219f.). Thus Kuzniar's position, whilst highly innovative, turns an illuminating analogy into an overly simple equation.

Hardenberg's teleological-utopian thought is informed by his notion of *Poësie*. In describing this utopianism, Uerlings writes of a 'narrative Konstruktion einer erhofften Tendenz', which involves the dialectical interaction of constructed ideals with the *status quo*, an interaction which hopes to encourage in external reality the teleological developments inherent in texts. This not only highlights the historiographical and utopian function of aesthetic constructions of immanent transcendence, but also points to the centrality of teleological thought to Hardenberg's thought and writing. For Uerlings, Hardenberg's works arise from a project which is *both* idealist *and* self-revising. His study leaves us with a sense of the possibility of reading Hardenberg's texts as self-deconstructing and of the limits of such readings.¹⁰ Hardenberg reserved the poet's right to construct ideals, but saw that he could not achieve them in any real sense. In this way, the poet portrayed to us by the most astute of recent scholars, Uerlings and O'Brien, is not merely an agitator *avant la lettre*, an aesthetic-linguistic subversive, but a deconstructive-constructivist, an ironic idealist, who will go on writing and creating even though his creations are, in a sense, doomed or better *designed* to fail. Hardenberg's intention of 'Fichtecizing better than Fichte' in this way is a goal he shared and indeed sought to practise in parallel with the other Jena Romantics, such as Friedrich Schlegel, whose various definitions of 'Romantische Ironie' exhibited a similar interplay of enthusiasm and negation.¹¹ Like the other members of the Jena circle, Hardenberg saw the poet's task of bringing *Poësie*, in the sense discussed, to bear on our systems of understanding and articulating ourselves and the world about us. This task, when it succeeds, expresses itself as a process of aesthetic transformation that involves a form of deconstruction and demonstrates the artificiality of structures of meaning, but also the *construction* of alternatives which are, given their conscious artificiality, more flexible.

Having followed the development of Hardenberg's poetics to this point, the following sections of this chapter will examine the implications those poetics have for his writing about women and femininity. Given that *Poësie* has been shown to involve a process of presenting, withdrawing, modifying and re-presenting models of identity, this examination will test whether

this enables Hardenberg to re-design feminine identity across a range of his writing. In the first instance this will involve discussing Hardenberg's reactions to models of the feminine pre-existing within the works of other writers and thinkers he knew and read. This requires a brief survey of the debate about gender into which Hardenberg stepped as a young writer, late in 1797. In this way the chapter can test, in subsequent sections, how successful Hardenberg was in distancing himself from more static and limited models of femininity that prevailed at the time, by offering more progressive and evolving alternatives, be that in the 'Fichte-Studien' themselves or in subsequent fragments, aphorisms, political and scientific texts flowing from the theory.

II. 2 *The Context of Writing: Codifications of the Feminine in the Eighteenth Century*

By the time Hardenberg began practising 'poetic' writing, the modern gender debate already had a history. The latter half of the eighteenth century had seen a proliferation of writing on the subject, to which much contemporary scholarship has been devoted; whilst more traditional historians of gender had long since reconstructed in political and socio-economic terms how the dualistic model of man and woman came into being,¹² more recently other historians have widened our understanding of that process on several fronts. Claudia Honegger, for instance, not only examines the codification of gender in terms of the history of anatomical and physiological discourses, but exposes too the complicity of language in the process of codification.¹³ The history of gender, she demonstrates, is also the history of *discourses on gender*, of their inter-relationships and of attempts by those discoursing to advance or retard prevailing tendencies within them. In the following chapter we will outline the contours of that history, in order to reconstruct the parameters within which Hardenberg's writings on gender operated. How, though, might we expect these texts to operate in this context? We have seen that his writing practice, *Poësie*, can be understood as a process of conscious engagement with historical discourses, intended often to modify or disrupt these. On this basis we will seek to read Hardenberg's writings as counter-discursive, as conscious attempts to discontinue conventional modes of theorizing and portraying gender, without losing sight of the occasions on which he fails in this endeavour.

In beginning a survey of this kind, we cannot overlook the profound and lasting influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. To claim that Rousseau invented the modern images of masculinity and femininity is to overstate the case, though he was probably the first to write these down. His ideas were the most influential and enduring and he was certainly the most widely read of all theorists. The standard view of Rousseau's model of women, as accepted by most contemporary scholars, is that he in some sense presumed them to have naturally programmed feminine characteristics. Governed solely by their biological make-up, women were passive and dependent, receptive rather than pro-active or productive, were rational only in a practical and

not a fundamental sense and, perhaps most significantly, limited entirely to this mode of existing: their bodies determined that they would always, inevitably, be female in this sense. This reading, largely reconstructed from passages from book V of *Émile ou de l'éducation* (1762), 'Sophie ou la femme', has held much sway over what critics have written about Rousseau's view of women.

One quite fundamental question has, though, remained disputed: did Rousseau render women entirely powerless? The work of political feminists of the 1970s had contended that it does. Critics such as Susan Okin criticized Rousseau as the instigator of a modern western intellectual-historical tradition, which used the notion of essential and natural difference between the genders to legitimize unequal existential, intellectual and social-political destinies.¹⁴ Silvia Bovenschen's more sustained discussion sees the need to discuss Rousseau's treatment of gender within the context of his entire system of thought. She contends that it was precisely *not* a naturally grounded concept of sexual difference, which formed the basis of the reductive educational programme he intended for women. Whilst for Rousseau gender difference was natural, those differences remained inconsequential in the pre-civilized state of nature, as those inter-personal structures within which equality and inequality came into being and hold meaning – marriage, family, society – do not exist there. This construction of the individual within the state of nature is also designed to represent to civilized citizens an ideal model of personal autarky, the modern equivalent of pre-civilized self-sufficiency. Silvia Bovenschen shows, however, that in *Émile*, the path of women's education is laid down only in reaction to the model of male development and is designed to construct women as inverse complimentary partners for men; passive, submissive and dependent. Whilst Rousseau's model of women does not dictate in any practical sense their inequality within the state of nature, he subsequently foists upon civilized women a set of characteristics, which exclude them from realizing the ideal of personal autarky as represented by the model of nature. They are socially, politically and culturally disenfranchized in the civil state, where they are only ever housewives and mothers.¹⁵

Criticism of these allegedly 'narrow' ideological approaches forms Joel Schwartz's point of departure in *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*,¹⁶ which sought to rehabilitate Rousseau for the context of contemporary gender studies. Schwartz acknowledges the insurmountable fact that, for Rousseau, there is natural difference between the genders springing from corporeality. He conceded too that works such as *Émile* reduce women's public and political roles, but goes on to investigate the philosopher's conception of women's power and influence as historically hidden or implicit quantities, which are nevertheless of considerable magnitude. Schwartz sees Rousseau's politics and sexuality as inextricably linked, as it is sexuality that makes male and female individuals inter-dependent. What is in the state of nature an ephemeral dependency, becomes within civilization a psychological, emotional and consequently social inter-dependence (Schwartz, 33). The sexual act is one of conscious co-operation, which is, though, experienced differently by men and women. Rousseau sees female desire as continuous and spontaneous, in

contrast to the relatively 'weak' and transient nature of male sexuality. Thus sexual relations become a matter of women attracting, exciting and harnessing man's sexual drive; the means to this is their modesty, a cultivated appearance of reluctant and fearful participation in sexual activity. Rousseau does not intend the characteristic of modesty to dilute or depreciate female sexuality, but believes it serves to foster in the male that feeling of dominance and conquest upon sexual consummation, around which male sexuality, he argues, revolves: men seek the esteem of others rather than personal reward. Significantly, though, the fulfilled sexual act only cultivates an *appearance* of male domination, as the woman has manipulated the man to serve her purpose – and this is the key to women's power in a wider sense. Man is not, of course, entirely within women's thrall, as she is also dependent on him for the fulfilment of her desire and simultaneously the object of his explicit political rule. Thus the relationship between the sexes is, in Schwartz's words: 'an expression of their respective desires to rule [...]', although through the role of modesty 'the sexual relationship embodies the alternating rule of each of the sexes, but the absolute and tyrannical rule of neither' (ibid. 37), all of which makes the relationship between the genders akin to 'the Aristotelian definition of the political as the interchange of rule among equals' (ibid. 154).¹⁷

To engage with the debate on the limitation and influence of women in Rousseau is, then, to enter a field of study fraught with controversy. Whether we choose for (admittedly sound) ideological reasons to view Rousseau's women as disadvantaged, because they are excluded from the explicitly public/political sphere or, conversely, to emphasize the fact that precisely that exclusion allows them to be influential in an indirect manner, the fact remains that women's identity in Rousseau remains explicitly *circumscribed*. And in light of the fact that Rousseau's men may in some sense be feminine despite their biology, even if this is a fact that Rousseau himself bemoans, women's reduced role is all the more conspicuous. The reception of the Rousseauesque model of women by later writers continued the reductive tendency in varying ways; this was certainly true of the German context. Rousseau's model of femininity found its way into the German-speaking intellectual world along a number of strands.¹⁸ Kant, a confessed admirer of the earlier philosopher, introduced a neo-Rousseauesque model into philosophy, albeit in a somewhat clandestine fashion. According to Kant's pre-critical treatise, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), nature determines that women's mental anatomy has its own aesthetic character, one of 'beauty' (*schön*), whereas the male psyche is sublime (*erhaben*). The 'sublimity' of the male mind pre-disposes men to great intellectual and artistic endeavours, and limits women to the contemplation of detail. Women are not relegated from categories such as 'Vernunft' and 'Verstand', though their reason and understanding are in some sense determined by their prevailing characteristic of beauty; this makes their reason and understanding different from those of men. Whilst the man may be active and productive, 'sie ist schön und nimmt ein und das ist genug.' In matters aesthetic, Kant

dispenses with women's capacity to bring reasoned reflection or judgement to the processes of producing or appreciating art:

Gefühl vor Schildereien von Ausdruck, und vor die Tonkunst, nicht in so ferne sie Kunst sondern Empfindung äußert, alles dieses verfeinert oder erhebt den Geschmack dieses Geschlechts [...]. Niemals ein kalter und spekulativer Unterricht, jederzeit Empfindungen und zwar die so nahe wie möglich bei ihrem Geschlechterverhältnisse bleiben (Bovenschen, 226).

Here, both women's production and appreciation of art stem from their immediate and unreflecting sensual reaction to surface appearance. Thus, contends Bovenschen, women appear generally ahistorical and disenfranchized in Kant, as they are denied the ability to judge in reasoned and reflective manner and hence participation in his aesthetic discourses *per se*.¹⁹ Kant derives from a norm of natural femininity a circumscribed mental character of women and uses this as *a priori* justification for excluding them from intellectual, artistic spheres: several critics have registered, for example, Kant's lampooning of educated women.²⁰ The influence of Rousseau is quite noticeable – in his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798) Kant adopts a Rousseauesque stance on women in the social and political state: 'Das Weib in jedem Alter wird für bürgerlich-unmündig erklärt; der Ehemann ist ihr natürlicher Kurator': women's citizenship is again negated as they are reduced to dependency and domesticity.

Wilhelm von Humboldt transplanted the Rousseauesque model of the feminine into the territory of natural-philosophical anthropology, in his essay *Über den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluß auf die organische Natur* (1796). There, the natural world is conceived of as driven by two forces or principles, one dynamically active, expansive and productive, the other passive, inert and receptive:

Die zeugende Kraft ist mehr zur Einwirkung, die empfangende Kraft mehr zur Rückwirkung bestimmt. Was von der ersten belebt wird, nennen wir männlich, was die letzere beseelt, weiblich. Alles Männliche zeigt mehr Selbstthätigkeit, alles Weibliche mehr leidende Empfänglichkeit.²¹

These characteristics are shown to find their immediate expression in the male and female genders. In the same year Fichte, too, connected directly with the tradition of Rousseauesque anthropology, defining the two genders of the organic natural world, one active, 'tätig', male, the other passive/receptive, 'leidend', female, in his *Grundriß des Familienrechts*.²² Fichte went on to link this dualistic model to the ontological-epistemological terminology of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Given that he there defines the reasoning subject as an *actively* self-positing ego, Fichte would seem, initially, to prevent women from being subjects at all by implying, through his construction of naturally passive femininity, their failure to meet this criterion. But he does not go quite this far; in §3 of the text, he recognizes that humans must have reason and that total passivity is against reason. Women are of course human and creatures of reason so they cannot allow their passive sexuality to govern them entirely (F,I,4,97). Self-perpetuating nature requires, though, that women fulfil their role and partake in pro-creation. Therefore, they must find some other active

mode of expressing sexuality. Fichte finds a solution in his definition of love. In men, love does not exist prior to sexuality, it grows rather from their sexual relations with women, whereas women's sexuality may only find expression through their capacity to love men. Thus female sexuality becomes moralized through the precedence of love; in §4 Fichte writes: 'Im Weibe erhielt der Geschlechtstrieb eine moralische Gestalt [...].' (F,I,4,100). Not only is women's sexuality passive, but it must be mediated through a non-sexual experience of love, in order that they may both maintain their reasoning humanity and not sink into amorality. Fichte then extends his design to women's interpersonal, social and political status. Within marriage, which Fichte sees not as a legal but as a moral communion and a formalized expression of his model of gender as it is rooted in nature, women achieve a state of harmony as they are entirely subordinated to their men §16, (F,I,4,113). It follows that Fichte disenfranchizes women politically. They may speak in public gatherings, but only as representatives of their husbands; thus, in §35, they lose their own public voice (F,I,4,132). Fichte seems to have intensified Rousseau's position to the point where any trace of female autonomy is destroyed and rendered, through its connection to concepts from the *Wissenschaftslehre*, not only a moral or anthropological construct, but also a philosophically grounded necessity.

Studies and theories on the biological nature of femininity also proliferated in the eighteenth century, including those focussing on the female body: here scholars and scientists claimed to find in women's physicality the empirical justification for the Rousseauesque model. Claudia Honegger (107) reminds us that medicine, anatomy, physiology and anthropology blossomed in the period in question, but also that these disciplines altered in outlook, methodology and status. Honegger notes, for one thing, a shift away from formalized, deductive reasoning towards empirically guided inductive reasoning on the part of Enlightenment thinkers.²³ Particularly the *médecins philosophes* in France but also the anatomists and anthropologists of Germany moved with this shift and thus won new, if often self proclaimed, credibility for their works. The changes in investigative methodology underlying this procedure also contributed: Enlightenment science is thought of as having 'ennobled' mankind's sensory perception and its role in the production of knowledge: educated sensuality became an ideal form of cognitive immediacy. The Enlightenment Rationalists appeared in various ways to be identifying and replacing the apparently uncritical and overly subjective investigative approach of earlier thinkers. Both their works and their ideas seemed more founded in objectivity, more likely to be accurate and, so it seemed, all the more difficult to dispute. Coupled with this came a shift of focus in scientific enquiry, a change in the objects of study undertaken by scientists. The Enlightenment brought a drive towards new knowledge, towards the investigation and systematic codification of the hitherto unknown. Writers and thinkers became fascinated with that which represented 'otherness' or 'difference' to them and women fitted perfectly into this category. The conception of women within the realm of 'otherness' is significant, according to Honegger, for as

they 'discovered', women tended to be attributed characteristics other or opposite to those of men.

Honegger also notes two empirical and related developments; the rational-scientific dissolution of the Cartesian dualism and the emergence of the notion of physical 'organization'. Descartes had felt that he had proved beyond all doubt the fundamental division of human existence into the physical and the mental. Mind and body were separate and, though they interacted intimately – the metaphor he chose was that of a pilot in a ship – each had an entirely different locus. He ascribed their existences to two tangential but essentially separate realms, the physical to *res extensa* and the mental to *res cogitans*. Within this relationship, the body was essentially subordinate, a mere extension of substance into space containing in itself neither an inherent purpose, nor the energies needed to enable it to function; these were supplied by the mind. Later Enlightenment thinkers rejected the model of the dichotomous human and sought, in Honegger's words, to reclaim the entirety of humanity for this earth; to explain in other words all the phenomena, functions and attributes exhibited by man in terms of his physical body. The human body was a discrete unit, possessed in itself of all the energies, materials and systems required for it to function: this was extended to include humanity's mental anatomy. The Cartesian physical-metaphysical dualism was replaced appropriately with the model of 'organization'. Honegger sees the danger of this system for women: a single characteristic could metaphorically permeate this totalized model of the body, producing an increasingly homogenized and one-sided understanding. The production of a limited, one-dimensional understanding of the female body, which purported to characterize women to the core, seemed inevitable.

Honegger examines how these tendencies conspired to produce specific versions of radically reductive, anatomical femininity. She points out how rational science drew on interdisciplinary and at times inter-textual sources for support. In particular this occurred with Rousseau's works. As we have seen, Rousseau had already sought to link the sexual politics of the feminine to the aspects of the female body within a quasi-anthropological context, attempting to establish a correspondence between women's physical and mental/moral anatomies:

L'esprit des femmes répond en ceci parfaitement à leur constitution: loin de rougir de leur foiblesse elles en font gloire; leurs tendres muscles sont sans resistance; elles affectent de ne pouvoir soulever les plus légers fardeaux.²⁴

Later scientists explicitly perpetuated the Rousseauesque model in terms of rational science. The so-called *médecin philosophe* Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis attempted to re-found the philosopher's claims. In his treatise of 1802 *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* Cabanis links Rousseauesque ideas on femininity directly with the prevailing model of organization:

Zur Erreichung dieses letztern Zwecks muß der Mann, wie dieses Rousseau sehr gut gezeigt hat, angreifend, das Weib vertheidigend zu Werke gehen [...].

Der Mann muß stark, kühn, unternehmend, das Weib schwach, furchtsam, verschlagen seyn. So lautet das Gesetz der Natur.

Aus diesem ersten Unterschiede, der sich auf den besonderen Zweck eines jeden von beyden Geschlechtern bezieht, und den die Organisation selbst unmittelbar bestimmt, entsteht der Unterschied ihrer Neigungen und ihrer Gewohnheiten.²⁵

Thus, rationalistic science seemed not only to have proven that Rousseau's more instinctive approach and findings were correct, but to have given them the qualities of validity and immutability associated with the rational sciences and their findings.

However we read Rousseau and the gender theories of writers working in the Rousseauesque tradition, this thesis defines a positive approach to gender as one that seeks always to question the notion that gender identity is given and fixed, to re-invent that aspect of identity and to do so within a communicative forum in which all enjoy the space to contribute freely to that process. Despite certain contradictions, Rousseau's construction of the feminine is ultimately reductive and it is this reductivity towards women that he bequeaths to later generations of patriarchal writers and thinkers. But where does Hardenberg stand in relation to this tradition? As we have seen, the utopian ideal inspiring his writing does not seek to deliver any one fixed model of identity, but rather to cultivate the ongoing and progressive production of differing identities, where the only stipulation is that no construction has absolute authority and other (usually more sophisticated) alternatives must be sought. The Rousseauesque tradition and Hardenberg's project appear, then, to be driven by very different epistemological motors, appear to be aiming for different ideals of truth and identity and, one would expect, therefore, to produce quite different constructions of femininity. The remaining sections of this chapter return to Hardenberg's writings, beginning with his early theory and progressing to later collections of his fragments and scientific notebooks, to seek there evidence of an experimental, evolving construction of the feminine.

II.3 *Hardenberg's Early Writing: Femininity in the 'Fichte-Studien'* (1795-96)

Whilst formal reflections on gender were most likely not at the forefront of his mind, Hardenberg was nevertheless writing explicitly about masculinity and femininity in late 1795 or early 1796: before, that is, he had begun either his major literary projects or even fully developed the aesthetic-theoretical basis of his mature writing practice. References to gender weave in and out of the 'Fichte-Studien'. These writings utilize notions of masculinity and femininity initially as abstract qualities, as metaphor and analogy for the interrelationship between apparently distinct ontological and epistemological categories, including subject and object, *Anschauung* and *Vorstellung*. The text increasingly takes on a more anthropological bent, however, discussing more

concrete male and female attributes, roles and relationships. These entries seem to iterate the genders largely in terms of their difference, at times their diametric opposition and, thus, Hardenberg appears to be operating at least implicitly in a Rousseauesque framework. A closer analysis, though, will reveal that, even at this early stage, things are not quite that simple. The first cluster of entries touching upon issues of gender occurs in the first group of entries, written early in the winter of 1795. In a manner typical of the early part of this text, gender surfaces in an apparently unrelated passage interrogating the classic epistemological triad of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*:

Wo fängt man mit der Synthese – wo mit der Antithese – wo mit der These an [...] Die These, Antithese und Synthese – jedes besteht aus zwei Theilen – darum kann jedes aus seinen 2 entgegengesetzten construiert werden [...]. These ist ein Satz, der auf die Antithese und Synthese bezogen wird – A[nithese] und S[ynthese] haben ein gemeinschaftliches Merckmal, die Beziehung auf die These – zusammengezogen ist dis die These – Gattungsbegriff. Mit d[er] A[nithese] und S[ynthese] ist eben so und wir sehn hieraus 3 Gattungsbegriffe entstehn. Jedes ist der Gattungsbegriff der beyden andern. /Zeugung. Mann und Weib./ (N,II,160-2:164-74).

The passage circles around the three terms, illuminating their mutual referentiality and interdependence, particularly the fact that each only takes on meaning and relevance through its relationship to each of the others. Hardenberg regards each individual unit as comprising elements of the other two parts 'jedes besteht aus zwei Theilen'; each can be constructed from the other two. The thesis, for example, is a proposition, 'Satz', to which both antithesis and synthesis are related and, conversely, antithesis and synthesis have their relationship to the thesis as a characteristic in common. It is at this point that Hardenberg introduces the notion of 'Gattungsbegriff', which can be taken – almost in a literal sense – to mean seminal term. He uses this term to assert that there is an 'original' or 'productive' proposition within the triad, which gives rise to the other two. Hardenberg shows, however, that it is not merely what appears to be 'thesis' which constitutes the productive element – all parts of the triad can adopt this role: 'Jedes ist der Gattungsbegriff der beyden andern' (ibid). In the following entry, Hardenberg takes this a stage further:

Wie sind alle drei zu unterscheiden? Denn hier wären sie eins.
Es muß ein Actus der Freyheit seyn – zur These, A[nithese] oder S[ynthese]
zu machen, was man will. Es kommt darauf an, auf welchen Gattungsbegriff
man reflectire (N,II,162:175).

Hardenberg begins by asking how we can differentiate between all three: their mutual referentiality and co-existence effectively unify them as one. The process by which this is to occur must, according to Hardenberg, be an act of freedom, 'Actus der Freyheit'. Hardenberg de-centres the classical system of argumentative reason, asserting that it is the subject's reflection that determines which of the three potentially seminal concepts is to be which. This notion, typical of the multi-perspectivism of Romantic theoretical, scholarly and scientific writing, might

be summarized in the phrase: what one finds depends, in short, on where one chooses to begin looking.²⁶

How, though, do these abstractions relate to gender? The issue is not introduced until the end of the first fragment, as if as an afterthought. The relationship between the genders is introduced shortly after the notion of seminal concept or 'Gattungsbegriff'. Perhaps it was the notion of (re)production in the preceding discussion that lead Hardenberg to consider the leap of analogy to human intersexual relationships, or perhaps these allusions grew from associations awoken by the cognates of the noun 'Gattung'; there is the term 'Gatte' referring to spouse and the related verb of procreation 'begatten'. Given Hardenberg's leap of analogy, whatever the impulse behind it was, we might read the triad 'Zeugung. Mann und Weib', as existing in analogy to the epistemological triad. Such juxtaposition of this entry with the decentred model of epistemology opens out another potential line of enquiry: if the function and identity of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is relative to the starting point of the reflecting subject, then, by association and implication, gender identity might be seen as a relative concept after the same fashion. Does this mean, then, that gender identity is only relative to the perspective of one reflecting upon it? Such an assertion is at very best implicit, however: it is not clear how direct a link Hardenberg intended between the genders, their act of procreation and the abstract terminology of epistemology discussed earlier. Certainly, the genders are not drawn explicitly into the process of relativization to which the epistemological categories are subjected, so there can be little talk of any 'implicit' process of manipulating gender roles at this stage in Hardenberg's writing.

Explicit reflections on gender resurface in later sections of the 'Studien', written early in the summer of 1796, where they begin to take an anthropological direction:

Der Mann muß seine Natur bezwingen und dem *Individuo* in sich Recht und Herrschaft verschaffen – ihm gebührt Herrschaft des Willens – und Unterthänigkeit der Empfindung. Die Frau muß ihrer Natur gehorchen – ihr Individuum bezwingen – Ihre Empfindung muß den Willen bestimmen. Dort ist die Empfindung das Dienende, hier der Willen – Sie muß einen subordinirten Willen – er eine subordinirte Empfindung haben. (Er vereinfache das Allgemeine – Sie verallgemeinere das Einzelne.) Er und Sie dienen beyde der Vernunft – Er ist das Ideal des Inhalts – Sie die Seele der Form. (N,II,260:510).

We have seen how critics have felt that the closing line of this passage denies women their identity as subjects and also the creative agency to determine their own identity. Padilla notes that, whilst both genders are shown to serve reason, women appear only as either reason's 'Form', here an aesthetic category, or as 'soul', the unconscious and non-reflexive essence of reason; men, conversely, self-consciously determine what reason is and are personified, therefore, as the content of reason (Padilla, 170). We can dispense with Padilla's approach of reading this passage in isolation and using it to theorize the presentation of women in all of the poet's works,

though even when left in context, our passage still appears complicit in the Rousseauesque tradition. Men and women are discussed as both having the dual characteristics of 'Empfindung' (here, emotion or sensibility) and 'Willen' (will), though in each a different characteristic predominates; in men it is will, in women sensibility. This in turn influences their mental frames; men objectify and simplify that which is broad and general, whilst women generalize the individual. Both sexes are thought to represent modes intrinsic to reasoned human behaviour, though each is likened to a different component of it. In a manner typical of the 'Studien', however, Hardenberg hints at the possibility of moving beyond the Rousseauesque dualism. The passage opens with reference to the 'Natur' of both men and women; men are obliged through power of will to subordinate their 'nature', thus ordering and ruling their inner lives, whilst women have to obey their nature, allowing their sensibility to determine their will. The differentiation between the genders appears to be a result of men and women reacting differently to their natures; the man ruling over it, the woman giving in to it. This would at least imply that their natures are similar, both exhibiting sensibility and willed order in something approaching equal measure. More subtle, though, is Hardenberg's use of the modal 'muss', for if men and women simply *did* or *were* as he describes, the need for this form of obligatory language would disappear. Could it be possible that the intellectual-emotional characteristics of men and women develop differently only as a result of social and cultural forces? Such insights are not in evidence in this passage, which explicitly presents the dualistic characters of the genders if not as desirable, then certainly as inevitable and without offering any radical alternative.

The dualistic model returns repeatedly in a string of speculations dealing with gender, written around the same time:

Der Mann folgt sich, als Object – das Weib sich, als Subject. Der Mann muß seine Empfindungen in Begriffe, das Weib ihre Begriffe in Empfindungen verwandeln.
Ihn trägt der Begriff, sie die Empfindung nicht (N,II,261:519).

This entry is located around a page after the one discussed previously. Here, men and women are sharply differentiated in terms of their modes of self-perception. Women are now subjects after all, but they are subjects in *subjective fashion* for they cannot follow their own thoughts and perceptions (i.e. their own subjectivity) objectively. Men, too, are subjects, but perceive their own patterns of thought as an object ('Der Mann folgt sich, als object') and are thus able to *objectify* their subjectivity. Building on this model, male thought processes are shown to function in terms of rational conceptuality, such that men's emotional experience is actively converted into concepts, whereas women emotionalize the conceptual. Again, though, there is the notion that *both* men and women have *both* conceptual *and* emotional-intuitive cognitive faculties and again there is the use of the verb 'müssen', as if the ultimate predomination of either one characteristic is a state of affairs required or desirable, rather than given. The closing sentence does appear to give equal praise to both the female characteristic of knowing through feeling and male

rationality; neither mode of thinking leads to self-deception. Despite his apparent fairness in his assessment of the gender's cognitive faculties, Hardenberg leaves the Rousseauesque dualism unchallenged, as men and women are presented in terms of their mutual complementarity. He continues his reflections with reference to the differing kinds of experiences, which attract, excite and entertain men and women:

Über die verschiedene Art der Unterhaltung beyder Geschlechter.
/Der Mann darf das *Sinnliche* in *vernünftiger* Form, die Frau das *Vernünftige* in
sinnlicher Form begehren./
Das *Beywesen* des Mannes ist das *Hauptwesen* der Frau (N,II,275:577).

Once more, the notion that women experience the rational in a sensual manner and men the sensual rationally, is in evidence. But there is more to criticize. Within this apparently simplistic, complementary model of the genders, women are in fact men's unequal partners. The final sentence explicitly constructs femininity in terms of that which is secondary to masculinity but, significantly, neglects to think that the principal masculine characteristic could be thought of as women's secondary characteristic. Had Hardenberg simply qualified his entry by adding 'und umgekehrt' then a different reading might have been possible. He did not, however, and thus what might appear as an innocent omission might just as well be seen to betray the undiminished virulence of the Rousseauesque strain in Hardenberg's writing at this time; men can be feminine, but women cannot be masculine.

In an earlier section of the 'Studien', written in Spring 1796, Hardenberg had begun to deal more explicitly with the dynamics of physical sexuality in the following passage:

Erhaltung der Einzelheit – Erhaltung der Gattung – dis sind ihre
Naturzwecke bey der Zeugung. Der Erste, der weibliche, der andre d[er]
Männliche.
Die Form der Befriedigung dieses Triebes ist seinerseits oder sein Genuß
besteht in Sieg seines Triebes, seiner Kraft über das Entgegenstehende,
Anziehende. Ihr Genuß besteht in Stillung ihrer Sehnsucht, ihres
Bedürfnisses, durch Kraftgefühl – nicht Kraftempfindung./ Sie will – aber
ihre Empfindung widerstrebt und läßt sich nur durch fremde Kraft einen
Augenblick suspendiren (N,II,260:511).

The language and content of this entry remind us of the Fichtean construction of female sexuality. For both Fichte and Hardenberg, the genders are required to contribute to the perpetuation of the species by procreating and thus fulfilling naturally pre-programmed sexual functions (*Naturzwecke*). Common to both thinkers is the fact that male sexual drive can find immediate expression and fulfilment, thought of as a kind of a victory or triumph, whereas female drive must be mediated through a non-sexual mode of experience: what for Fichte is love, is for Hardenberg 'Sehnsucht'. At this point in his writing, Hardenberg believes that women's fulfilment stems from their being objects of male sexual power, rather than their own immediate experience of sexual pleasure.

In many ways the 'Fichte-Studien' are tantalizing writings. They contain Hardenberg's core insight that knowable identity is a moveable fiction of only relative value, yet they do not in themselves define *Poësie* as a dynamic system of reception and alteration. They seem to hint at the idea that gender identity is culturally (or linguistically) constructed, rather than given by nature, but do not quite begin to redesign the then conventional models of masculinity and femininity. So despite brief glimpses at the possibility of moving beyond the Rousseauesque tradition, they serve rather to continue than to discontinue the dualistic construction of the sexes. But the 'Studien' do not represent all Hardenberg had to say on gender. Having laid the foundations of his theory in 1795-96, Hardenberg would soon go through personal experiences, which would present him with the first opportunity to put theory into practice. Before he began a consciously thematic treatment of historical gender issues, these experiences would bring into sharp focus the connections between language, identity and gender: in 1794 he had met, fallen in love with and become engaged to the teenage Sophie von Kühn. And in 1797 he would lose her.

II.4 Writing about Sophie (1797)

Between 1794 and 1797 Hardenberg had two pivotal experiences, which were to shape the rest of his mature life: these were the study of Fichte and his relationship with and loss of Sophie. The course of his relationship with Sophie can be recounted swiftly and soberly. Hardenberg met Sophie, then twelve years old, in 1794 whilst working in Tennstedt. He fell in love with her and they were unofficially engaged in March 1795. In November of that year, Sophie fell ill and underwent treatment for tuberculoid inflammation of the liver. By summer 1796, her illness returned and eventually ended her life on the 19 March, 1797. Hardenberg entered a period of mourning, initially intense and marked by obsessive and depressive tendencies, which faded towards the end of that year. During the first three months of mourning, Hardenberg kept intermittent diaries, charting the activities of his daily life, but also the emotional, intellectual and at times sexual journey, which constituted his mourning. Of particular significance is the diary entry on 13 May, the legendary day on which Sophie apparently came to him in a vision at her grave in Grüningen. By the end of 1797, however, Hardenberg had re-entered literary and professional life with renewed vigour. In December he took up a place at the renowned mining academy in Freiberg, Saxony and also resumed various literary projects. By January 1798, he had met his future betrothed Julie von Charpentier. In many ways, Hardenberg had recovered from the loss of Sophie by early 1798, though it marked him and his work indelibly for the rest of his short life.

As we have seen, viewing Hardenberg's entire work as a unified expression of the love and loss of Sophie constitutes a defunct approach in Novalis scholarship; equally defunct is the

notion that the study of Fichtean Idealism was disconnected from and ultimately eclipsed by the *Sophienerlebnis*.²⁷ However, we should not overlook the influence of Hardenberg's experiences with Sophie. It was in reaction to her illness and death that he produced his first piece of mature literary 'fiction', which was also his first mature attempt at writing about women.²⁸ There is, therefore, a case for re-focussing on Hardenberg's records of his experiences with Sophie and for examining the impact of these on his conception and literary portrayal of women. Feminist scholars have pursued this line of enquiry exhaustively, looking at the poet's writing on Sophie in a variety of contexts, seeing it either as a unique experiment in idealizing femininity or as a model, which he reproduced obsessively and used to replace individual female subjects in his later work. Such a one-sided reading of the affair with Sophie can be found in Christina von Braun's book of 1989, *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen*.²⁹ Von Braun sites her discussion of Hardenberg in the context of male 'hysteria', the then fashionable tendency for men of the decadent culture of the eighteenth century to exhibit mock emotional and physiological fragility (von Braun, 56-7). Von Braun is, however, keen to emphasize that this 'Kult der Gebrechlichkeit' (ibid) involved a male tendency to ape stereotypically feminine behavioural patterns and by no means signified an interest in women as real female subjects. It was, apparently, in the world of creative artists that male hysteria became most clearly visible: both by stylizing their own behavioural patterns as effeminate and writing about imagined women, male artists in fact sought to construct their own femininity.³⁰ The old-fashioned image of Hardenberg as the wan death-centred youth, fixated on the afterlife and reunion with the dead, can easily be re-cycled to present him as the archetypal hysteric. Sophie, furthermore, offers both a poignant and *literal* example of how women were marginalized to allow the male hysteric to pursue his obsessions. His supposed hysteria went on to infect his theories of aesthetics and aesthetic productivity: von Braun sees Hardenberg's famous definition of 'Romantisiren' as a system that violates human physical existence.³¹ Women suffer particularly within this context, as the hysteric is most anxious to transfigure the feminine within his art. Whilst she was still alive, Hardenberg was already transforming Sophie into a muse, argues von Braun, though only in death was this transformation completed in the famous formulation: 'Xtus und Sophie' (N,IV,48). Hardenberg was accordingly 'sich des Opfers, das diese junge Frau für ihn bringt, durchaus bewußt' (ibid, 63). He is guilty, it appears, of aesthetically re-killing Sophie.³²

Regula Fankhauser's, *Des Dichters Sophia* (1996)³³ unhelpfully privileges the psycho-biographical over the poetic-aesthetic, awarding new primacy to the textual image of Sophie and making it the paradigm of dehumanized femininity in all of Hardenberg's writing. Fankhauser begins by examining psychoanalytically the role played by a series of father and replacement father figures in defining the poet's gender identity and his understanding of femininity. The biological father represents the robust, masculine drive to achievement in career and society and Friedrich Schiller, the *Dichter-Vater*, a similarly masculine devotion to self-cultivation, though one

which makes room for 'feminine' poetic aspirations: a letter to Schiller of 1793 defined the desire to be a poet as an androgynizing act of devotion to a female deity (ibid, 18-19). Hardenberg's mother, of course, represented unquestionable maternal nurturing tendencies. Sophie, in her pre-pubescent innocence and eventually her absence in death, fulfilled a dual role; as well as offering the social necessity of the fiancée, she became the perfect template for the ideal feminine, for a de-eroticized, spiritual icon in art. These models of the masculine selfhood and feminine otherness, particularly the relationship to Sophie, inform what Fankhauser calls Hardenberg's own unique, poetic-bourgeois *Lebensentwurf*. This is designed both to satisfy norms of gender and social identity expected of the young poet (masculinity, marriage, career), but also to modify those norms to allow for new heights of personal and creative fulfilment (androgyny, 'die Verlobung im höhern Sinn,' the vocation as poet) (ibid, 20-23). Within this framework, the feminine is divorced from women as subjects in themselves and reduced to an artificial other designed to bolster the male subject at a crisis point in its developmental history.

In demonstrating that writing about Sophie was intrinsic to the development of *Poësie*, O'Brien's study of 1995 also contends that Hardenberg's writing about his beloved was an increasingly *self-conscious* act of authorship. (O'Brien, 27ff.). His key innovation comes with re-reading of the graveside experience as the point at which Hardenberg's literal belief in Sophie's return was not confirmed, but rather began to crumble. Reading the entry in the 'Journal' of 13 May, he points to the fact that Sophie never appeared, as is evident from Hardenberg's conspicuously subjunctive recollection of the events: '[...] ich glaubte sie solle immer vortreten' (N,IV,36) and from the conclusion to the passage, which seemed remarkably banal for a man who had allegedly just seen a ghost.³⁴ Sophie, says O'Brien, 'never showed up' in the graveyard (ibid. 62). From this point onwards, Hardenberg himself began to realize that she was now rather part of his internal landscape; she appears, reappears and is at times even forgotten, as the poet's moods, memories and desires fluctuate and he slowly returns to his social and professional life (ibid. 59). The meeting and eventual engagement to Julie von Charpentier offered Hardenberg his ultimate solution; O'Brien sees Hardenberg finally re-directing his energies towards a real object of desire; a living woman. Whilst Sophie continued to be of relevance to Hardenberg's later life and work, O'Brien notes that the poet continued to suffer periodically from her loss for months, even years, as is evident from his personal writings (ibid.66), but he remains vague about Sophie's impact on the representation of women in the later works. However, O'Brien's study does have one similarity with the feminist writers considered above; Sophie herself is denied her body, her sexuality, her potential for growth and indeed her identity as a subject. Hardenberg's consciousness of his aestheticization of Sophie, together with his semi-euphoric musings about Sophie's demise, could be seen to make his 'crime' worse. However, it is precisely the notion that the product of mourning is distinct from the object mourned for, that Sophie as text is not Sophie as person, which can allow for a less negative assessment.

This growing authorial consciousness informing Hardenberg's writing about Sophie, as given to us by O'Brien, can be amplified here for our argument. With the growing awareness that Sophie has become merely an image emerges the further distinction that this image is neither Hardenberg's improvement on, nor his replacement for the original, but at most a memorial to her. The conscious distinction between image and person first appears, we shall venture, in 'Klarisse'. The text demonstrates a growing discrepancy between ideal and the real, both in terms of Sophie and women in general. The text lends Sophie a personal quality of a non-reflexive, non-subjective wholeness of being: '*Sie will nichts seyn - sie ist etwas*' (N,IV,24). Then comes a reference to her coldness towards him: 'Meine Liebe drückt sie oft. Sie ist *kalt* durchgehends' (N,IV,25). The line does, however, represent a momentary aestheticization of Sophie, which feminist thinkers might term a 'colonization' and 'petrification' of her body.³⁵ However, the text also offsets the notion of the ideal Sophie with a living and breathing Sophie. It speaks of her 'Freyer Lebensgenuß' and, as well as mentioning her illness and the scar from the operations she had to endure, it refers also to 'Ihr Gesicht - ihre Figure - ihr *Leben*. ihre Gesundheit [...]' (N,IV,24). It is equally her lust for life, her vitality and periods of relative health, which Hardenberg tries to capture here. As elsewhere in the text, there is apparently banal mention of her body, her face and movements, the body's needs and appetites: 'Ihr H auf der Wange. Lieblingsessen - Kräutersuppe - Rindfleisch und Bohnen - Aal' (N,IV,25). 'Klarisse', then, also rescues a sense of the physical woman and posits it as a foil to the 'artificial' woman of male imagination and writing.

The discrepancy between the ideal and real, the physical and imagined Sophie, leads Hardenberg to a level of reflection, which recognizes more generally the artificiality of her image within thought and writing about her. 'Klarisse' also hints, for instance, that there are *other* Sophies, which can be written and thought about – even if these are not pursued here: he writes of 'Ihr Betragen gegen mich, gegen andere' (N,IV,24). As well as referring to Sophie's social conduct towards others, this also shows an awareness that Sophie can, potentially, be viewed from *other* perspectives. Now the emphasis eventually falls on Sophie's significance to the poet, Hardenberg writes again '*Ihr Betragen gegen mich*' (ibid.), where the italicized text indicates his own emphasis. Implicit here, though, is the distinction between constructions of Sophie and Sophie as a person in her own right, existing beyond the inevitable simplifications inherent to writing about her. By contrasting aspects of Sophie's appearance and personality, by offsetting her image as ideal with more mundane images of her and, finally, by pointing to the notion of the 'other' Sophie bound always to elude being captured in writing, the text moves a step closer towards self-conscious fictionality. The textual image of Sophie itself becomes consciously artificial or *diaphanous*. Although this image appears already to have many of the characteristics of a product of *Poësie* – the ironic interplay of the ideal and the mundane and the tendency to demonstrate its own inability to disclose the essential identity of its object – Hardenberg had not, by autumn

1976, theorized his understanding of *Poësie*. At this stage in the poet's mourning and writing, therefore, the diaphanous quality of Sophie's image must still be unwitting and under-developed. The self-consciously fictional quality was, however, to be developed as mourning ran its course throughout the summer of 1797.

In the midst of the grief to be found in the letters of March 1797 and *Journal* entries from April, the diaphanous quality was, at first, lost entirely. Hardenberg's initial reaction to Sophie's absence was to try literally to recall her presence, either by raising himself above earthly existence or by bringing her back down to earth. At first he desired to subsume himself in her omnipresent spirit (N,IV, 206). Yet, slowly, Hardenberg began to slacken his grip on Sophie's memory. As O'Brien has shown from the *Journal*, Hardenberg thinks of her less and less intensely and returns slowly to his routine of daily work – a tendency of which he is aware and which disturbs and frustrates him, as it endangers his project of living only for her and of piously maintaining her presence on Earth until their 're-union'. Hardenberg has doubts about the feasibility of his project of keeping Sophie alive. Only, eleven days after her death he wrote: 'Meine Ideen sind geschäftig – mein Verstand hat eher gewonnen, als verloren – aber die Liebe, die Liebe fehlt – und mit ihr fehlt alles – denn sie giebt Alles – aber Sie nimmt auch alles. Was hilft es mir ein Ideenwebstuhl zu seyn – Für das Lebendige ist kein Ersatz' (N,IV,211). The graveside experience in May, as discussed above, marked the point at which such doubts developed into real disappointment. By the end of his mourning, though, Hardenberg appears to have disentangled Sophie as lost object from Sophie as an image of private, inner significance. The final entry concerning Sophie from the diaries, 29 June 1797 placing Sophie in parallel with Christ, is Hardenberg's attempt at making Sophie permanent in some sense. But whilst the jotting carries fetishistic or cultic overtones, it also implies that Hardenberg saw both Sophie and Jesus as two of the same type - as religious mediators. The assertion becomes more plausible and relevant if we consider a small, apparently insignificant note from the 'Fragmentblatt' of autumn 1797, where the poet writes: 'Ich habe zu Söfchen Religion – nicht Liebe' (N,II,395:56). Not only does this jotting emphasize that Sophie is no longer the object of earthly and sexual desire, but it places her directly in the context of Hardenberg's theory of religiosity, as it is expounded in the 'Vermischte Bemerkungen', also composed largely in the latter part of 1797. There, Hardenberg reflects on the nature of true religion and how it necessitates a mediator between self and divine, which, significantly, should not be confused with that divine - or, in sober semiotic terms, the image is not to be confused with object, the sign with the signified:

Nichts ist zur wahren Religiosität unentbehrlicher als ein Mittelglied – das uns mit der Gottheit verbindet. Unmittelbar kann der Mensch schlechterdings nicht mit derselben in Verhältniß stehn. In der Wahl dieses Mittelglieds muß der Mensch durchaus frey seyn. [...]
Es ist ein Götzendienst im weitem Sinn, wenn ich diesen Mittler für Gott selbst ansehe. [...] Wahre Religion ist, die jenen Mittler als Mittler annimmt [...]. (N,II,440-42:73).

Whether the Sophie now equated with Jesus is to be understood as the mediatrix of the absolute or as a personal connection to the lost beloved, the beloved herself as deceased person is held distinct from the beloved as mediating or (re)connecting function. Hardenberg has re-established the diaphanous image of Sophie, which he had begun to create in 'Klarisse' (IV,24-25).

Whilst the length, range and intensity of his mourning for Sophie remain morbidly problematic, Hardenberg returned to a point from which Sophie was viewed as a consciously fictional work: thought and writing about Sophie did not constitute her invisible presence on Earth, but rather of fictions of her identity. Hardenberg's writing about Sophie, stretching from 'Klarisse' through the letters of 1797 and the diaries, represents a further development in his writing on gender: it is the point at which the poet becomes aware that writing about women, like all writing that seeks to approach and articulate identity, is a self-conscious exercise in producing fictions. After Sophie, then, we need no longer ask whether or not portrayals of female identity are the poet's conscious constructions in language, but rather how he uses those constructions. In the following section, we shall ask that question of a range of Hardenberg's texts and shall seek to establish the extent to which Hardenberg moved beyond his treatment of Sophie. As we shall see in later parts of our discussion, in his later literary works of 1799 and 1800 Hardenberg was still arguably portraying female figures, who were reminiscent of the real life Sophie. Between 1797 and that time, however, Hardenberg wrote much more widely on issues producing constructions of femininity. Did his new self-conscious approach to the construction of female identity in writing lead him to de-stabilize the ethical, scientific and socio-political models of femininity inherited from (post)-Enlightened thought, or even to produce more flexible alternatives? Beginning with Hardenberg's explicit writings on the Rousseauesque tradition and moving then to the fragments and prose of 1797-99, the following section will trace the increasingly self-conscious and thematically specific way in which he dealt with writing about gender. In doing so, we shall ask whether Hardenberg was to treat all women who came under his pen, as he had done Sophie.

II. 5 *Re-writing Women? Continuities and Discontinuities with the Rousseauesque Tradition*

We have come to understand *Poësie* as a writing practice, which exhibited both idealizing and ironic, constructive and deconstructive dynamics. When analyzing *Poësie* in operation, particularly in the context of its application to gender, we must remain alert to both tendencies. Is Hardenberg engaging in an ongoing process of modifying representational models of femininity? On the occasions when he appears to settle for an ideal, what particular values can that ideal be seen to promote? Is it a real or implied process of ongoing transformation, as in the 'Dialogen', or stasis with at best a hint of the possibility of change, as in 'Klarisse'? The location of Hardenberg's most direct intervention in the gender debate is his diverse social-political writing,

which includes fragments, letters and essays. On a number of occasions, these writings deal with issues of gender in terms of the Rousseauesque tradition.

Explicit references to Rousseau are in evidence from the mid-1790s onwards. In the second group of the 'Logologische Fragmente' Hardenberg bemoans the fact that as the new age of Romanticism dawned, there were still many writers

die von der Vorstellungs und Zeichenwelt nichts wissen wollen; das sind die rohsinnlichen Menschen, die alle Unabhängigkeit der Art für sich vernichten, und deren träge, plumpe, knechtische Gesinnung man in neuern Zeiten auch theilweise zum System erhoben hat – (Rousseau, Helvetius, Locke, etc.) ein System, dessen Grunds[atz] zum Theil ziemlich allgemein Mode geworden ist (N,II,550:117).

In the 'Logologische Fragmente', which play a constitutive role in the theory of *Poësie*, Hardenberg criticizes Rousseau for his un-poetic qualities. The criticism begins by striking at the epistemological core of Rousseau's system: as pre-Kantian, pre-Fichtean empiricists, he and others undervalue, even overlook, the role of imagination and signification in the production of knowledge. He was unaware, that is, that all knowledge and systems were actually constellations of signs. This 'oversight' meant, of course, that Rousseau's own theories, based on his readings of nature's plan for humanity, were unconscious of their own relative, fictitious und unstable nature and claim to be apparently objective and inviolable truths. On this basis Hardenberg applies adjectives such as 'träge', 'plump[...]' and 'knechtisch[...]' to Rousseau's 'Gesinnung'. It remains to be seen, however, whether Hardenberg's criticism of Rousseau's thought and writing in general is translated into a critical revision of his portrayal of women.

Some eighteen months after writing the 'Logologische Fragmente', Hardenberg made his first and only direct engagement with the Rousseauesque model of femininity within his scholarly writing, in the fourth and final group of 'Brouillon' entries:

Die Ehe ist für die Politik, was der Hebel für die Maschinenlehre. Der Staat besteht nicht aus einzelnen Menschen, sondern aus Paaren und Gesellschaften. Die Stände der Ehe sind die Stände des Staats – Frau und Mann. Die Frau ist der sog[enannte] *ungebildete* Theil. Es giebt ein Ideal dieses *Standes* – Rousseau sah es ausschließend in seiner Apologie des Naturmenschen. Rousseaus *Philosophemen* sind überhaupt weibliche Philosophie oder Theorie der Weiblichkeit – Ansichten aus dem weiblichen Gesichtspuncte. Jezt ist die Frau Sklavin geworden (N,III,470-71:1106).

Here, society is depicted not as comprising individuals, but the smaller societies of families and couples. Society is likened explicitly to marriage in this entry; both institutions involve unions. As society is a union of cultivated and uncultivated/uneducated groupings, so marriage involves equivalent groups: of these, women form the 'uneducated' part. Hardenberg notes that the wholly educated and uneducated individuals are ideals and, as such, unlikely to be incorporated in any one person. As such, he is placing man and women within a context, whereby they can occupy differing positions along a scale of cultivation. Hardenberg also criticizes the

epistemological foundations of Rousseauesque thinking and, importantly, appears to recognize that gender identity in the social sense can be conceived as a moveable fiction. Yet at the same time, the above passage follows the Rousseauesque tendency of associating men with culture and women with nature. Thus Hardenberg creates a tension between the Rousseauesque tradition and himself. Bearing this tension in mind and recognizing that it may produce accordingly ambivalent models of femininity within the poet's social and political writings, we shall now look more systematically at his individual works and collections of fragments, focussing first on his writing of 1798.

II.6 *Femininity, Society and the Polity in 'Glauben und Liebe' (1797)*

In September 1797, Hardenberg decided to take up studies at the eminent scientific college of the 'Freiberger Bergakademie', with the plan of schooling himself to take on an administrative post within the Saxon salt mining industry. By December of that year, he had followed through with his plans and was resident in Freiberg, Saxony. With intermittent excursions, travels and visits home, he remained there until May 1799. During this period, Hardenberg produced one of the few works of his to be published in his lifetime, *Glauben und Liebe*, sending it to Friedrich Schlegel on 11 May. It contains his blueprint for the ideal political state, an original synthesis of monarchism and republicanism, oscillating between conservatism and revolutionism, between democratic and monarchistic ideals. In the light of this, it is difficult to predict how the presentation of women will fare in the text. Will women remain locked into their conventional roles, given that the text does promote an organic, familial model of society, or will the merely aesthetic function of the monarchy seem to promote the notion that all societal roles are, as one might expect of a poetic state, alterable? The text would appear, on the surface, to promote the Rousseauesque view of social-political women, though without mentioning by name Rousseau or writers in that tradition:

Was sind Orden? Irwische, oder Sternschnuppen. Ein Ordensband sollte eine Milchstraße sein, gewöhnlich ist es nur ein Regenbogen, eine Einfassung des Ungewitters. Ein Brief, ein Bild der Königin; das wären Orden, Auszeichnung der höchsten Art; Auszeichnungen, die zu den ausgezeichnetsten Thaten entzündeten. Auch verdienstvolle Hausfrauen sollten ähnliche Ehrenzeichen bekommen (N,II,491:26).

Already a gender dichotomy is in evidence here. The aphorism discusses 'Orden', the medals given to citizens by their heads of state for outstanding achievements. In keeping with the aesthetic utopianism of the text as a whole, Hardenberg highlights the representative function of such honours and the powerful influence exerted by citizens awarded them on the population as a whole. Injecting a note of caution, however, he warns by way of allegory that honours bestowed could be seen as shooting stars, though they might also turn out to be mere

'flibbertigibbets'. Extending the celestial allegory, Hardenberg contends that fitting honours should not function as the attractive but more earthly and transient phenomenon of rainbows. Instead they should behave rather like the Milky Way galaxy, a grouping of 'stars' functioning as the permanent representative of the very highest ideals. Receipt of letters or pictures of the queen would constitute these highest awards and would inspire further excellence. There ought to be similar, though not identical awards for housewives, writes Hardenberg. This is doubly significant, as women are to receive different awards for different forms of (namely domestic) merit and their inclusion is as if as an afterthought. This approach reflects the gender-specific division of labour and fundamentally different gender roles at the core of Hardenberg's social-political programme.

Within the aesthetically constructed ideal of the state, the queen has her own gender-specific function, which conspicuously excludes her from the political life of the state:

Die Königin hat zwar keinen politischen, aber einen häuslichen Wirkungskreis im Großen. Vorzüglich kommt ihr die Erziehung ihres Geschlechts, die Aufsicht über die Kinder des ersten Alters, über die Sitten im Hause, die Verpflegung der Hausarmen und Kranken, besonders der von ihrem Geschlechte, die Geschmackvolle Verzierung des Hauses, die Anordnung der Familienfeste, und die Einrichtung des Hoflebens von rechtswegen zu. Sie sollte ihre eigne Kanzlei haben, und ihr Mann wäre ihr erster Minister, mit dem sie alles überlegte. Zur Erziehung ihres Geschlechtes würde Abschaffung der ausdrücklichen Anstalten seiner Corruption gehören. Sollte der Königin nicht beim Eintritt in eine Stadt schaudern, wo die tiefste Herabwürdigung ihres Geschlechtes ein öffentliches Gewerbe ist? [...] So wenig sich die Regierung in Privatangelegenheiten mischen dürfte, so sollte sie doch jede Beschwerde, jedes öffentliche Skandal, jede Anzeige, oder Klage eines entehrten Gegenstandes auf das strengste untersuchen. Wem steht das Schutzrecht des beleidigten Geschlechts mehr zu, als der Königin? Sie muß für den Aufenthalt in einer Stadt erröthen, die Asyle und Bildungsinstitute der Verworfenheit in sich befaßt.

Ihr Beispiel wird übrigens unendlich viel wirken. Die glücklichen Ehen werden immer häufiger und die Häuslichkeit mehr, als Mode werden. Sie wird zugleich ächtes Muster des weiblichen Anzugs sein (N,II,491-2:27).

By and large, the queen appears as a regal neo-Rousseauesque woman. Her role is to centre largely on family and home: she is to be responsible for the care of (particularly the youngest) children, for the furnishing and decoration of the home and the supervision of the home's social life, defining the customs and manners of the household. Again the maternal role is emphasized, her aesthetic and social aspirations limited to the household. As in Rousseau, though, the queen is not to be entirely without power: she ought, writes Hardenberg, to be furnished with her own chancellery, where her husband, ruler of the political realm, would be only of secondary importance as her first minister, advising her on decisions. Whilst she is to be limited to the domestic sphere, she is ruler within it.³⁶ The queen is to have a public role outside her circumscribed, socio-physical space (the court) though: she is to care for the poor and the sick, particularly those of her own gender.³⁷ Indeed, she is to engage in the universal education of women. One area, in which she most needed to institute reform, would be the corruption and

exploitation of women through prostitution. The question as to how political this makes the figure of the queen is linked to the issue of how she is to exert influence in this matter: is she to be pro-active, offer political intervention, or is she to function passively by representative example? The latter is rather the case – so much is made explicit at the beginning of the second paragraph. Hardenberg calls for the hardest punishment for those ‘selling souls’ – presumably this is directed towards those criminals profiting financially from prostitution and not for the prostitutes themselves. He argues too for the queen’s right to protect the dishonoured women, though says nothing more about how she is to extend her influence than that she is to blush or shudder to register disapproval. There is no mention of her taking on the role of arbiter, campaigner or activist. Similarly, the queen is to contribute to the upkeep of decent sexual mores, though again this is to occur by her exemplification of ideal womanhood through marriage, good deportment and dress sense: the latter according to Hardenberg, was a fair indicator of the ethical climate of a time or place. Thus the queen is hardly an active politician and the mode by which she exerts influence beyond court/ the household – by exemplification and personal aesthetics, rather than any legislative or executive power – reflects her apolitical status.

This evaluation is further born out by aphorism 29, which deals more explicitly with the nature and function of the royal couple and their court and their influence upon the state at large:

[...] Der Hof soll das klassische Privatleben im Großen sein. Die Hausfrau ist die Feder des Hauswesens. So die Königin, die Feder des Hofes. Der Mann furnirt, die Frau ordnet und richtet ein. Ein frivoles Hauswesen ist meistens Schuld der Frau. Daß die Königin durchaus antifrivole ist, weiß jedermann (N,II,492-3:29).

The court is identified explicitly as the ideal household, which serves as a model for all other households within the state. The lives of the royal couple at court also serve as a public representation of a classic way of life, which defines the queen as ‘Feder des Hofes’, the equivalent of the bourgeois housewife, who is the ‘Feder des Hauswesens’. Both are concerned not with the public sphere – this is the male or kingly role – but with the establishment and ordering of their households, such that a household run irresponsibly is shown to be almost always the fault of the woman. Hardenberg is careful to emphasize that Queen Luise herself is by no means irresponsible in this sense, thus both retaining her as a suitable ideal housewife for his text and avoiding offence by the actual historical person. The remainder of this aphorism argues that the queen’s influence might serve to elevate the cultural and aesthetic life of the Prussian court above that of its European counterparts, to a virtual earthly paradise. Hardenberg defines this potential transformation in terms now familiar to us, writing of the ‘endlessly varied’ ways, ‘durch unerschöpfliche Variationen’ (ibid.) in which the court could represent the enjoyment of cultivated living. This is the language usually attached by Hardenberg to the action and products of *Poësie*. Could he be implying that the queen is, in her own context, a poetess of sorts? Unfortunately, the queen does not exhibit original poetic creativity: it is rather her taste that is

brought to bear on court life and even this is mediated through the further figure of 'Ein geistvoller Maitre des Plaisirs' (ibid.) in essence a cultural manager with a fine intellect, an able practitioner of *Poésie* and one who is, significantly, male. The queen herself remains aesthetically quite inert, exercising as in the Kantian tradition, her spontaneous, unreflecting and 'feminine' taste.

Again, *Glauben und Liebe* does not represent a seamless continuation of the Rousseauesque tradition, as it transmits an awareness of the explicitly aesthetic quality of the images it employs. Within the poetic model of the state, the image of the queen announces its own artifice and the subtleties of the language attached to the image are evidence of this. There are a number of references to the queen as an image, as 'Bild', or to the effects achieved through society's reception of this image, implied by 'wirken' and 'entzünden'. There is mention, too, of her sphere of influence or 'Wirkungskreis.' At times, though, the emphasis falls not upon the distinction between the queen and her function as a social ideal, but on the function itself; the effect she is intended to have upon the women of Prussia:

30. Jede gebildete Frau und jede sorgfältige Mutter sollte das Bild der Königin, in ihrem oder ihrer Töchter Wohnzimmer haben. Welche schöne kräftige Erinnerung an das Urbild, das jede zu erreichen sich vorgesetzt hätte. Ähnlichkeit mit der Königin würde der Charakterzug der Neupreußischen Frauen, ihr Nationalzug. Ein liebenswürdiges Wesen unter tausendfachen Gestalten. Mit jeder Trauung ließe sich leicht eine bedeutungsvolle Huldigungszeremonie der Königin einführen; und so sollte man mit dem König und der Königin das gewöhnliche Leben veredeln, wie sonst die Alten es mit ihren Göttern thaten. Dort entstand ächte Religiosität durch diese unaufhörliche Mischung der Götterwelt in das Leben [...] (N,II,493:30).

Here, the initial focus of discussion is the effect the queen has on women through her portrait. Hardenberg recommends that every 'educated' woman – that is every woman educated in adhering to certain norms of womanhood – and every conscientious mother should, quite literally, hang the portrait in her rooms and those of her daughters. The image of the queen is to encourage certain qualities, behavioural patterns and activities in these women, in fact it serves as the ideal of Prussian womanhood and Hardenberg calls for women to model themselves actively upon it. Furthermore, the text seems to deify the royal couple, or at least liken the pair to the gods of antiquity. Specifically, though, it is the relationship the ancient gods had with mortals, which is likened to the relationship between the couple and the population. The text refers to the 'genuine religiosity', which might be experienced by the society through its relationship with the 'godly' pair. Hardenberg's use of the term 'Religiosität' places the whole passage within the context of Hardenberg's aesthetic theory of religion, which again distinguishes between the aesthetic means to communing with divinity and divinity itself. Here, though, the term religiosity appears more dynamic than before, as it refers to the 'Mischung', to the intervention or effect of the royal couple in the everyday lives of the population through the examples they set. In this context, every marriage ceremony in society can be seen also as a tribute to the queen. Given the

emphasis upon Luise's function as an ideal, the aim of this aphorism is, ultimately, to bring women to emulate that ideal and to mimic in their relationships to men the role played by Luise in her own marriage. The text promotes a new generation of matrimonially bound, domestically committed, maternally able and ethically unimpeachable women.

Hardenberg sounds a warning note, however. Aphorism 28 points to the dangers of allowing the royal couple to have too direct and unsophisticated an influence on the state and the populace. The good conduct of the state as a whole, 'Betragen des Staates' (N,I,492:28), depends upon the fundamental convictions held by its citizens 'öffentlichen Gesinnung' (ibid.). No positive reform of the state can occur, therefore, without the ennoblement, 'Veredlung', of these convictions and it is the royal couple who must embody this. However, when the 'intelligence' of the state and the King himself are no longer identical, writes Hardenberg, danger arises and the monarchy ceases to function. Given such risks, Hardenberg appears to espouse a certain critical distance from the influence of the monarchy:

Es würde ein sehr gefährliches Symptom des Neupreußischen Staates sein, wenn man zu stumpf für die wohlthätigen Einflüsse des Königs und der Königin wäre, wenn es in der That an Sinn für dieses klassische Menschenpaar gebräche. Das muß sich im kurzen offenbaren. Wirken diese Genien nichts, so ist die vollkommene Auflösung der modernen Welt gewiß [...] (ibid.)

Hardenberg considers the possibility that the royal couple might fail to effect positive change on new Prussian society, be it because that society lacks sophistication – or be it Hardenberg's veiled criticism of the ideals the couple themselves represent. Whatever the reasons, the failure of the monarchy in this function would lead to the modern world being completely dissolved and recast, for better or for worse. In the light of this, we might contend that Hardenberg meant the particular influence of the queen upon the women of the state also to be regarded more critically. Yet, for the majority of the text, Hardenberg associates a circumscribed set of values to his ideal of womanhood. As if to re-emphasize this, the final aphorism in the collection re-asserts what was to be the didactic role of the queen in the construction of this new model of Prussian womanhood:

Was ich mit vor allen wünschte? [...] eine geistvolle Darstellung der Kinder- und Jugendjahre der Königin. Gewiß im eigentlichsten Sinn, weibliche Lehrjahre. Vielleicht nichts anders, als Nataliens Lehrjahre. Mir kommt Natalie, wie das zufällige Portrait der Königin vor. Ideale müssen sich gleichen (N,I,498:43)

The queen's youth is to be represented publicly, her whole life is to serve as an apprenticeship, 'Lehrjahre', in idealized femininity. Reference is made to Goethe's *Willhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and the ideal of womanhood represented there by Natalie, one of capability and a resolved, selfless devotion to duty, is likened directly to the queen. On balance, then, in this first blueprint for a new society, Hardenberg envisioned women who did not socially evolve, but were rather

determined by a static social-political ideal; he is pursuing, in other words, a poetic of bourgeois *Bildung*, rather than one of emancipatory transformation.

II.7 Other Women in the Fragments of 1798-99

If the early version of Hardenberg's social politics represented in *Glauben und Liebe* failed to deliver a more progressive, transformed treatment of gender roles, then by the first quarter of 1798 such a treatment was starting to emerge, albeit slowly. The fragments produced over the summer and into the latter half of that year began for the first time to focus explicitly on femininity as an issue of interest and, significantly, made explicit the intent to deal with gender poetically. Shortly after Hardenberg sent Schlegel the manuscript for *Glauben und Liebe*, Sophie von Kühn's erstwhile companion Jeanette Danscour died. Hardenberg took the death badly and fell ill. In July 1798, he interrupted his studies in Freiberg and travelled to Teplitz in Bohemia to convalesce. There, despite instructions not to exert himself mentally, he was characteristically productive. During his stay, from July to mid-August, he generated most of the material for the so-called 'Teplitzer Fragmente'. Of his time in Teplitz, Hardenberg wrote that: '[...] die Frauen, die xstliche Religion und das gewöhnliche Leben' were 'die Centralmonaden meiner Meditationen' (N,II,515). Perhaps the loss of another woman dear to Hardenberg, one who had provided him with a living memory or point of contact to his past with Sophie, focussed his thoughts in that direction. However true that might be, no other fragments consider quite so explicitly the relationship between women and *Poësie* or do so along such diverse thematic strands.

The fruits of the preoccupation with women and poetry soon become apparent: it is announced initially by the sub-title 'Sofie, oder über die Frauen' (N,II:598:336/17). Perhaps significantly, the collection contains reflections on the nature and function of titles and headings. Now Hardenberg had written earlier: 'Überschriften zu den Fragmenten. Was soll ein Titel seyn? ein organisches individuelles Wort – oder eine genetische Definition – oder der Plan mit Einem Worte – eine allg[emeine] Formel. Er kann aber noch mehr seyn – und noch etw[as] ganz anders' (N,II,597:328/9). Quite what conclusion Hardenberg reaches remains unclear: were titles organic words in their own right, able to ramify in various ways, or more directive comments in which plan and methodology inhere, or something more than all of these things? Whatever the outcome, Hardenberg was obviously thinking explicitly about the expressive power of the headings he gave to his fragments, when he wrote 'Sofie, oder über die Frauen' and more than likely thinking about the relevance of his particular heading. That it coincided with the name of the deceased beloved will have been part of his intent, of course. He will also have been aware of its Rousseauesque resonance, though: the formulation reminds us equally of the heading of the fifth book of Rousseau's *Émile*, 'Sophie ou la femme', which deals with issues of female

education. Now these two readings of the heading are not mutually exclusive and in fact inform each other. We can take the heading to indicate that, within this collection, Hardenberg would bring the lessons he had learned from his textual mourning for Sophie to bear upon his other writing about women. Having learned that writing about female identity constituted a conscious act of producing fictions of femininity, it appears to be his intention to write about other aspects of femininity, which might embrace women's social position, intellectual and aesthetic capabilities, with the same awareness. The discussion will proceed by examining whether or not Hardenberg exploits the conscious fictionality informing his writing process to alter received models of femininity.

The first entry appears to call for the sheltered, domestic education of young girls, with the aim, it appears, of fostering their naivety and impressionability, so as to maximize the formative and vital influence their future husbands will have on them:

Die eingezogene Erziehung der Mädchen ist für häusliches Leben und Glück darum so vorteilhaft, weil der Mann, mit dem sie nachher in die nächste Verbindung treten, einen desto tiefern und einzigen Eindruck auf sie macht, welches zur Ehe unentbehrlich ist – Der Erste Eindruck ist der Mächtigste und treueste, der immer wiederkommt, wenn er auch eine Zeitlang verwischt scheinen kann (N,II,600:347/28).

Whilst this fragment implies a certain 'plasticity' of feminine identity, this is not presented as women's capacity for ongoing transformation, let alone as their capability for self-determination, but rather as a psychological malleability under the influence of their husbands.

Further reflections on women in this collection begin to offer more hope. There is an explicit reception of other French models of the feminine from literature and populist philosophy, which are criticized again in terms of Hardenberg's poetic expectations. Within the collection, Hardenberg approaches the issue of women in a series of fragments, which refer to women in French:

43.

Les Femmes sind um deswillen der Pol um den sich die Existenz und La Philosophie der Vornehm-Klugen dreht, weil sie zugleich Körper und Seele afficiren. Auch Sie lieben die Ungetheiltheit – und setzen einen unumschränkten Werth auf diesen gemischten Genuß – dieser Geschmack geht auf alles über – das Bett soll weich – und die Form und Stickerey hübsch – das Essen delicat, aber auch animirend seyn und so durchaus.

An den Femmes reibt sich auch ihr schreibender Verstand gern, drum haben sie so viel darüber geschrieben. [...]

Nichts ist *treffender*, als das Bild des Zustandes, zu welchen La philosophie du monde führt, welches unabsichtlich und wahrhaft naiv die consommeren, und consumirten Weltleute von sich und ihrer Denkungsart in ihren Schriften und Reden aufstellen. Tröstlich und anlockend wahrhaftig nicht [...]

La vraie philosophie gehört zu den passiven Wissenschaften des Lebens – Sie ist *eine natürliche antithetische Wirkung* dieses Lebelebens – aber kein freyes Produkt unsrer magischen Erfindungskraft (N,II,603:362/43).

The fragment deals with the predilection of certain French populist philosophers for writing about the nature of women, or 'les Femmes' as Hardenberg refers to them here. It becomes apparent that the phrase 'Vornehm-Klugen', later reformulated as 'Espirits' (N,II,603:364/45) or 'Beauxesprits' (N,II,604:370/51), refers to the French writers Voltaire, de Ligne and Stanislas Chevalier de Boufflers, as scholars have shown.³⁸ These writers saw women as sensual creatures, disposed to pleasure, though this description is not meant to rob them of their capacity for reasoned reflection, but imbues them rather with sensitivity and intuitive wisdom.³⁹ Hardenberg's approach is to criticize the unpoetic qualities of the French writers, striking once more at the epistemological and aesthetic foundations of their writing, before criticizing their particular model of femininity. It is with sarcasm that he declares their works 'treffend', not because they offer objective truths, but because they reflect perfectly the vision and mentality of those writing. The writers of 'La philosophie du monde' reveal themselves to be 'unabsichtlich und wahrhaft naiv'. These unwitting self-betrays of the naïve writing psyche are neither comforting nor appealing for Hardenberg. As with his criticism of Rousseau, he finds these writers and their works to be lacking the vital ingredients for a poetic treatment of the self and the world around it. 'La vraie philosophie', remarks Hardenberg, again with disparaging irony, is too much of a passive discipline, too much an unthinking, reflex response to life as it is lived, rather than a vision of life as it could be lived, as produced by the 'magic' of the poetic imagination.

Having made this criticism, however, Hardenberg reveals further evidence of his own complicity in the Rousseauesque tradition. His discussion of the French literary-philosophical predilection for writing about women, might initially appear to reveal his sympathies with that school of thinking. 'Les Femmes', argues Hardenberg, are so central to the writings and the existence of the 'Vornehm-Klugen', because the aesthetic quality of their feminine souls, one of fragility and sensibility, imprints itself directly on the physical and sensual aspects of their existence. Thus the feel of a bed, the aesthetic quality of needlework, the taste of food must all be in keeping with their essential character. This, according to Hardenberg, is what produces women's quality of totality, the wholeness of their character and it is this 'wholeness', which stimulates the authors in question to write about them. Fragment no. 51 seems to continue the misogynistic tone, seemingly refuting the right of women to complain about the views being propagated by them: 'Les Femmes haben sich nicht über Ungerechtigkeit zu beklagen. Schade, wenn eine Frau dabey war! Die Beauxesprits haben in Rücksicht des Femmes vollkommen recht. Wer wird aber Les Femmes mit den Frauen verwechseln' (N,II,604:370/51). It would indeed be a shame, writes Hardenberg, to find a woman, 'eine Frau', amongst those complaining. Why has Hardenberg reverted to the German here? The full significance of this reversion emerges in the rhetorical question of the fragment's last sentence, which asks disparagingly how one could possibly confuse 'les Femmes' with 'die Frauen'? Indeed it would be unfortunate if 'die Frauen' were to complain about unfair treatment by male writers, because it is 'les Femmes', and not they,

who are being criticized. Hardenberg is distinguishing between two versions of femininity here. What exactly he means by 'die Frauen', is not clear from the passage. The term could represent a general designation for women as they 'really are' *vis-à-vis* the obviously artificial model of 'les Femmes'. Alternatively, and probably more likely, Hardenberg is creating a cross-cultural contrast between the French notion of women as superficial, sensual, pleasure-seekers, viewed with sarcasm, and a more robust notion of German womanhood as dutiful and virtuous. Whilst quite probably substituting one set of patriarchal values for another, Hardenberg is nevertheless showing a growing awareness here that gender identity is a thing made, rather than a thing given, and he is learning to alter it consciously.

A series of 'Ergänzungen' to the Teplitz collection also exists, produced later in the summer of 1798. Within this grouping there exists a series of fragments, considered for reasons of numbering to belong together as the continuation of the original heading 'Sofie, oder über die Frauen'. There, the narrative voice takes on a conspicuously male identity, identifying with and addressing an implicitly male readership, as evidenced by the use of oppositional pronouns, with women designated 'sie' and 'ihr', men referred to as 'wir' and 'uns'. Thus women are, in one sense, alienated from the implied reader and remain objects of speculation, rather than fellow subjects. However, they do become objects of praise. Hardenberg asks rhetorically: 'Sollte nicht für die Superioritaet der Frauen der Umstand sprechen, daß die Extreme ihrer Bildung viel frappanter sind, als die Unsrigen' (N,II,616-17:428/17). In this context he argues for women's superiority over men, taking as his evidence the fact that the extremes of female moral and intellectual cultivation are strikingly disparate in comparison to those of men. There is, supposedly, a far greater chasm between the noblest and most debased of women, than between the noblest and most debased of men. So Hardenberg's 'praise' of women hides what is, at this point in his writing, an insidious ideology on female morality, which measures women against a more demanding and arguably dehumanizing ethical scale than it does men.

However, women are idealized in other more 'poetic' ways in these writings. They are compared in several instances with notions of infinity and wholeness. However, rather than perpetuating the Enlightenment line of thought, which believed women not to be reflecting, reasoning subjects and which had, on that basis, lent her the characteristics of wholeness and undivided permanence, Hardenberg's idealization leads him down a different path:

17.

Haben sie nicht die Aehnlichkeit mit dem Unendlichen, daß sie sich nicht quadriren lassen, sondern nur durch Annäherung finden lassen? Und mit dem Höchsten, daß sie uns absolut nah sind, und doch immer gesucht – daß sie abs[olut] verständlich sind und doch nicht verstanden, daß sie abs[olut] unentbehrlich sind, und doch meistens entbehrt werden, und mit höhern Wesen, daß sie so kindlich, so gewöhnlich, so müßig und so spielend erscheinen? (ibid).

The fragment begins by considering women as objects of a quasi-mathematical process of investigation. Knowledge of women cannot, reads the second portion of text, be obtained through rational processes of quantification – the phrase Hardenberg uses for these is ‘quadriren’, referring to the expression of large numbers as smaller numbers multiplied by factors of themselves. Women can only be ‘found’ by a process of ‘converging approximation’. The phrase ‘Annäherung’ is common to Hardenberg’s theoretical writing, referring variously to epistemology, natural scientific theories of gravitation and, as in this case, to mathematics. The term points to the fact that Hardenberg thought of all organized systems of study and knowledge production as asymptotic, as able to represent the possibility of reaching and representing the truth without actually ever doing so. In the ‘Mathematische Fragmente’ of autumn that year, for instance, the term is used in a series of reflections on the relationship between large and small numbers, on how each can be expressed in terms of each other and on methods for conceptualizing infinite quantities and their relationship to the finite. There, infinity can only be conceived through an asymptotic approximation: ‘Hab ich das Gesetz der *Näherung*, so kenn ich auch die Natur der unendlichen Größe’ (N,III,127); it cannot be known in essence, in other words, but only as represented possibility. In this sense infinity is the absolute and mathematics the speculative representational system seeking to articulate it, but as that articulation is impossible infinity can only be symbolized and maths is, in Hardenberg’s own terms, poetic.³⁹ In the Teplitz material, Hardenberg makes women creatures of the infinite and reflects that they too can be ‘known’ insofar as they are represented, but, again that representation is not the whole of what they are. Thus, they are absolutely near, yet always sought after, absolutely comprehensible, yet never understood. They can only be known as ongoing, endless approximation: in short, they are the perfect objects of poetry. Hardenberg appears less to be sinking into an unreflecting fantasy of the eternal woman and more to be reflecting on what, given the endless complexity of her identity, one can rationally know of her, of the relative and not absolute value of that knowledge.

From this vantage-point Hardenberg is able to begin modifying women’s identity poetically. In the fifth part of no. 17 (N,II,618:17), he begins to reflect on the differing possibilities, which this opens out. From the goddesses of classical Greece to the Madonna, every epoch has its own characteristics for women, he writes, before adding an explicit reference to the poetic presentation of women: ‘Die Frauen in der Poësie’ (ibid). Ambivalence returns in the form of another pair of apparent contradictions: one compliment ‘elevates’ women over men, though is followed by the comment that it is only their characteristic helplessness, ‘Hülfslosigkeit’ (ibid) which elevates them in this way. Again, there is mention of women as consummate slaves, though also mention of their ‘großes Despotentalent’. This formulation grants women power, though only through their ability to influence men from within a circumscribed social role. And thus Hardenberg echoes again Rousseau’s playful but insidious contradiction that women are

simultaneously subjugated to men and rulers of them, 'so sind sie durchaus über uns und unter uns [...]' (N,II,617:428/17).

The 'Ergänzungen' also mark Hardenberg's first engagement with a potentially new forum in which to challenge Enlightenment models of femininity: the female physical body in scientific context. Initially, Hardenberg's view of women's physical make-up within this text continues in the misogynist vein of the poet's predecessors. There are condescending reflections on the charms and virtues of virginity: what makes virgins beautiful is their budding potential, the endlessly deferred promise of sexuality and motherhood, rather than sexuality or motherhood itself, which in turn, makes them the ideal symbol of the future (N,II,618:430/17). But these writings also mark one point of a particular extended allegory, by which Hardenberg could re-invent the female body, and do so in a manner that begins to oppose the misogynistic models of the material anatomists. This text only touches briefly upon the subject, but the section is significant nonetheless: 'Die Holzkohle und Der Diamant sind Ein Stoff – und doch wie verschieden – Sollte es nicht mit Mann und Weib derselbe Fall seyn. Wir sind Thonerde – und die Frauen sind Weltaugen und Sapphyre die ebenfalls aus Thonerde bestehn' (N,II,621:440/17). Having reflected on the fact that the substances charcoal and diamond are both of the same base substance – carbon – yet are structurally and aesthetically different, Hardenberg makes a leap of analogy increasingly typical of his natural scientific writings and begins to talk about gender. Like charcoal and diamonds, men and women are of the same substance, yet are different; men are equivalent to clay, whilst women are far more refined precious stones. This analogy appears to comply with Enlightenment gender paradigms: it emphasizes the differing physical structures of the male and female bodies, it ascribes to women an aesthetic of particular beauty and conceives of them as a merely refined version of an essentially male life substance, making them an ornament or an afterthought in creation. In one sense, though, the entry closes with an open cadence: masculinity and femininity are implied as having some form of common origin; there are ways in which their bodies are in fact similar. It is the poet-scientist's task to explore through the symbolic structures of knowledge where those differences and similarities lie, how significant they are and what consequences they have upon our views of men and women.

The Teplitz collection, then, still operates from a gendered position: writer and implied readership are male, the feminine is the passive alterity upon which they speculate. However, the collection has shown Hardenberg for the first time to reflect on women as the explicit objects of *Poësie*. On several thematic fronts he begins to experiment himself, albeit in limited measure, in a process of altering received views of women. The collection also broaches the topic of the female body in scientific discourse, signalling a new area of thematic interest to watch in the poet's subsequent writings. It is with a particular focus on that area, that we will continue the discussion with Hardenberg's scientific and encyclopaedic writings, produced from 1798 onwards, asking

whether in those texts Hardenberg becomes more or less ambitious in his experimental writing on women.

II. 8 Women and the Natural World: The Feminine in 'Das allgemeine Brouillon'

From early 1798 until the end of his life, Hardenberg's writings show an increasingly intense engagement with natural science. During his studies in Freiberg, he attended the lectures of leading scholars and read extensively in the academy library, producing an array of jottings, plans and fragments, which comprised notes, critical commentaries and some original material. Diverse in format and content, his work embraced maths and geology, physics and botany, as well as philosophical problems. During the latter part of his stay, Hardenberg also began his notes for a Romantic encyclopaedia, 'Das allgemeine Brouillon', which incorporates all of the above disciplines and establishes interdisciplinary connections to yet more disparate fields of study. The theme of femininity is further pursued in the context of the natural sciences during this time. The following section will begin by considering more generally the treatment of the feminine and nature within the encyclopaedic writing, before focussing on the treatment of the female anatomy across the whole range of texts. Throughout, we shall be seeking instances of Hardenberg altering models of femininity prevalent in the scientific discourses of the time and analyzing the alternatives he offers.

'Das allgemeine Brouillon' comprises four bundles of jottings, in all over a thousand individual entries, produced between September 1798 and March 1799 and constitutes a body of material in a process of evolution. In making notes for an encyclopaedia, Hardenberg was connecting with a prestigious Enlightenment tradition: in the 1750s, an encyclopaedia that Hardenberg knew well had been produced by Diderot and d'Alembert. These rationalist thinkers had seen their project not merely as a means of collating information, but of cultivating themselves; they had not been cool rationalist objectivists, but had emphasized the importance of the subject's involvement in the production of new knowledge. In the introduction to his encyclopaedia of 1751, d'Alembert had claimed the individual's sensory perception of the universe to be the key to all secrets. What uncertainties still remained after their careful application, were to be dispelled by the researcher employing a vaguely defined notion of 'instinct', which would lead him to the truth about things. Such recourse to irrationality did not shake the author's belief in the sovereignty of knowledge yielded by his method, however: 'instinct' in fact served as the guarantor of reliable cognition, producing knowledge, which was absolute and immutable. Hardenberg's project was also concerned with the wide-ranging collation of natural scientific knowledge and it reflected, too, on the role the scientific subject played in the process of collation. However his project was informed by a different epistemological outlook and realized as a very different aesthetic. It

comprises a series of ongoing attempts to construct poetically, that is as consciously aesthetic representations or fictions, the models employed to explain the phenomena of the world. Writing, for instance, to F. Schlegel from Teplitz on 20 June 1798, Hardenberg asked his friend: 'Was denkst Du, ob das nicht der rechte Weg ist, die Physik im allgemeinsten Sinn, schlechterdings *Symbolisch* zu behandeln?' (N,IV,255). Early on in the 'Brouillon' itself, Hardenberg made explicit the view that the encyclopaedia ought to function poetically: 'PSYCH[OLOGIE] UND ENCYCLOP[AEDISTIK]. *Deutlich* wird etwas nu[r] [du]rch Repraesentation. [...] /Gott Selbst ist nur durch [Re]praesentation verständlich/' (N,III,246:49). Individual constructions of knowledge recorded within the text are not absolute or fixed, but are relative and symbolic in nature. Language and symbol are, of course, finite and thus the entries of the 'Brouillon' could only ever be transient structures articulating facets of an infinite world. In this text, though, they were only ever *intended* to be transient. Scientific knowledge, too, was a self-consciously evolving, aesthetic experiment.

During his time in Freiberg, Hardenberg was exposed to a wide range of theories, all of which, as Gerhard Schulz noted, sought after '[...] ein einziges Prinzip, einen einzigen Stoff [...], der den vielfältigen, zum Teil neu entdeckten Erscheinungen einzelner Wissenschaften und vielleicht dem Leben überhaupt zugrunde lag' (N,III,6). Consequently, the 'Brouillon' constitutes an ongoing series of poetic constructions of the unity of all phenomena. This probably has the most far-reaching generic and aesthetic implications for the text: it engenders an unorthodox interdisciplinarity. The ultimately inter-connected nature of all phenomena meant that, at some point, all disciplines were also connected. For this reason, Hardenberg seeks to make evident these connections in the text, pursuing what he called an 'Ehe der heterogenen Systeme' (N,III, 278:220). Rather than merely musing on the overlaps between disciplines as a sideline, though, this interdisciplinarity is the epistemological motor driving composition and the aesthetic template guiding its writing: explanatory models from one discipline can be carried by force of the imagination to another and their application tested there. This makes the 'Brouillon' an intentionally scintillating text. Within it, different centres of scientific enquiry (the disciplines) overlap unconventionally *and* individual instances of knowledge remain ephemeral and unstable and are subject to constant revision. The concept of natural phenomena in constant flux, coupled with the aesthetic means for portraying phenomena in this way, might imply a more evolving presentation of women and for this reason, we shall seek in the 'Brouillon' Hardenberg's most 'poetic' treatment of femininity thus far.

However, the construction of the feminine in this text is never unambiguously progressive – far from it, in fact. Issues of gender first surface in the first group of jottings of September/October 1798: 'Die Frauen haben eigentlich einen entschiedenen *Sinn* für das *Äußere* – Es sind geborne Oryktognosten' (N,III,259:101). Hardenberg's teacher in Freiberg, the renowned geologist A.G. Werner, had developed the system of 'Oryktognosie', a method for

classifying geological specimens according to the similarities and differences in their outward characteristics as ascertained through sensory perception of the geologist. Significantly, women are not meant merely to be the objects of the poetic process of classification, but are themselves practitioners of it, or 'Oryktognosten'. From a writer seeking in many ways to emulate his teacher's system, this might count as praise indeed for women. Again, though, Hardenberg betrays his own complicity in patriarchy. Women, he writes, are *born* with this characteristic and do not reach it by reflection of any form. The first sentence of the entry, which claims that women deal with the external appearance of things, equally implies that they interact with the world around them superficially and are thus denied the possibility of being Romantic scientists. They merely happen to embody *unconsciously* certain of those qualities, which male thinkers, poets and scientists, after deep intellectual consideration, *consciously* seek to emulate.

The ambiguity of the poetic treatment of women in 'Brouillon' also applies to the presentation of female sexuality:

PHYSIK. [...] Wie das *Weib* das *höchste sichtbare* Nahrungsmittel ist, das den *Übergang vom Körper zur Seele* macht – So sind auch die Geschlechtsteile die höchsten *äußern* Organe, die den Übergang von sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Organen machen.

Der *Blick* – (die Rede) – die *Händeberührung* – der *Kuß* – die *Busenberührung* – der *Grif an die Geschlechtsteile* – der Act der Umarmung – dis sind die Staffeln der Leiter – auf der die Seele heruntersteigt – dieser entgegengesetzt ist eine Leiter – auf der der Körper heraufsteigt – bis zur Umarmung. *Witterung* – *Beschnüfflung* – Act. Vorbereitung der Seele und d[es] K[örpers] zur Erwachung des Geschlechtstriebes.

Seele und K[örper] *berühren sich* im Act. – *chemisch* – oder galvanisch – oder electrisch – oder *feurig* – Die Seele ißt den K[örper] (und verdaut ihn?) *instantant* – der Körper empfängt die Seele – (und gebiert sie?) *instantant* (N,III,264:126).

Here women are the expendable fuel for male sexual experience, literally the highest visible form of nutrition, 'Nahrungsmittel', though this is not a literally cannibalistic streak in Hardenberg's thinking, as certain critics have contended.⁴⁰ Having begun in this fashion, the excerpt moves to a more sober and less misogynistic mode and discusses the physical and metaphysical dimensions of the sexual act. Hardenberg discusses in detail the process by which sexual arousal and the sexual act are initiated, beginning with the lover's shared gaze, various stages of physical foreplay leading to intercourse itself, in which soul and body are brought to a point of connection and mutual transfiguration. Whilst the passage hardly amounts to a promotion of freely expressed female sexuality, it marks a shift to a less one-sided view of the topic. As well as the obvious male advances towards women, with mention of 'die Busenberührung', there is potentially active female contribution to the escalation of desire: 'der Grif auf die Geschlechtsteile'. In such 'Brouillon' entries, women start to emerge as mosaics of passive and active characteristics.

Hardenberg's most controversial statement on women in the 'Brouillon' is also his most progressive:

N[ATUR]L[EHRE]. Je lebhafter das zu Fressende widersteht, desto lebhafter wird die Flamme des Genußmoments seyn. Anwendung aufs Oxygène./ Nothzucht ist der stärkste Genuß./ Das Weib ist unser Oxygène –./

N[ATUR]L[EHRE]. [...]

Wir fressen die Pflanze, und sie gedeihen in unserm Moder. Was uns das Fressen ist, das ist den Pflanzen die Befruchtung. *Empfangen* ist das weibliche Genießen – Verzehren das Männliche. (Ein Säufer ist einer liederlichen Frau zu vergleichen.) Das Befruchten ist die Folge des Essens – es ist die umgekehrte Operation – dem Befruchten steht das *Gebären*, wie dem Essen, das Empfangen entgegen. /Der Mann ist gewissermaßen auch Weib, so wie das Weib Mann – entsteht etwa hieraus die verschiedene Schamhaftigkeit?/ (N,III,262:117).

Spiralling through the disciplines of chemistry, biology and sexual psychology, the excerpt takes as its central premise the theory that the intensity of all reactions, understood in the broadest sense, is determined by the potency of the ingredients reacting. Thus, in the opening section, the ferocity of combustion is determined by the combustibility of the fuel and, similarly, the growth rate of microbes is greater when fertilized by foods richer in nutritional content. However, the section goes on to draw an alarming analogy between the chemical process of combustion and human sexuality. From the outset, the discussion of combustibility is couched in terms of human experience, with the process of burning referred to as 'Genussmoment'. This is made explicit through a reference to women as being akin to oxygen within the sexual process: they are a vital ingredient to the 'fire' of male sexuality and are, of course, consumed in the process. The entry then explores another avenue: the more strongly an entity resists being consumed, the more brightly the consuming flame must burn, be it literal or metaphorical, in order to complete consumption. It is here that Hardenberg makes explicit the link to sexuality. From the male perspective, rape is the most intensely experienced of sexual pleasures. Not only, then, are women 'consumed' or 'used up' by men in the sexual act, but the more strongly women resist male advances, the greater the energy the man expends in subjugating her and the greater his pleasure in doing so. Hardenberg does not seek to justify rape or portray it as acceptable practice. And it is hardly likely that the same Hardenberg who had proven himself an outspoken critic of prostitution and to have an arguable aversion to the direct and 'vulgar' discussion of sexuality would sing the praises of the sexual degradation of women.⁴¹ Furthermore, Hans-Joachim Mähl made the point that one cannot abstract this comment from its context.⁴² It serves to support and inform the other discourses, those of physics and chemistry, with which it is interwoven; it is not a discrete statement on sexual mores – or the lack thereof. Nevertheless, Hardenberg communicates an objectionably positive view of the male experience of rape, which at very best confirms his view of the passive role of women in the sexual act in general.

However, in this excerpt Hardenberg also begins to redesign the female body in terms of its inner workings. Continuing the discussion of fuel and nutrition central to the entry as a whole, he finally moves to a discussion of the human processes of ingestion, digestion and excretion. He reflects on the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the respiratory and nutritional cycles

of plants and humans. These cycles are each other's complementary inverse, with plant growth fertilized by animal dung and the waste product of plants, oxygen, essential to human life: what humans produce, plants receive, what plants produce, humans receive. Initially, the notion of mutually complementary productivity and receptivity is transposed in bi-polar form to the human genders; the male derives his pleasure from actively consuming, the female from passively receiving. Immediately, however, the entry begins to undermine that very dualism, as Hardenberg explores the bodily functions of both genders through a complex series of analogies. Fertilization can occur only in healthy living humans, a state of affairs requiring humans to ingest and eat food, which is the inverse operation to that of fertilization. Furthermore, having received and been fertilized by the male sperm, women actually become actively productive by gestating and bearing children. Thus, a woman's bearing of children is analogous to the male part in fertilization. This myriad of analogies can be explored along various paths, though here it suffices to say that there is evidence that the roles played by both men and women in procreation are dependent on the complex and complementary interaction of both passive and active functions. It is on this basis that Hardenberg feels moved to make the remark that men are, in a sense, partly female, whilst women are partly male: 'Der Mann ist gewißermaßen auch Weib, so wie das Weib Mann' (ibid.). In the Rousseauesque tradition the woman was always the slave of her biology and could not in any way be male. In writing this, Hardenberg is presenting a direct and fundamental challenge to the Rousseauesque model of femininity. Of course, the comment might have originated from a simplistic discussion of a narrow range of bodily functions, but it opens out possibilities for further enquiry. How far, though, did Hardenberg intend this blurring of gender boundaries to be taken? The final phrase, clause or sentence in a fragment, entry or jotting of Hardenberg's is often open-ended; at the end of a necessarily finite structure, that structure must point to the infinite number of possibilities it implies, but cannot contain. In this case, Hardenberg means that it is yet to be determined exactly to what extent men are feminine and women are masculine and it is the poet's task to investigate.

In the 'Brouillon', Hardenberg begins to work with a *bilateral* model of androgyny, which seeks to expose what were traditionally considered as masculine *and* feminine traits in *both* genders. Uerlings's insightful essay, 'Novalis und die Weimarer Klassik',⁴³ further discussed this topic via reference to the *Märchen* of 'Hyazinth und Rosenblüthchen'. Initially that inset narrative connects with the early Romantic version of the Rousseauesque model of the sexes, which re-asserted their oppositional relationship by thinking of masculinity as mineral, non-organic and femininity as organic, and vegetable (ibid. 28-9). In his text 'Zur Physik' (1798) Schlegel had formulated his position thus: 'Die *weibliche Gestalt* ist ganz Blüte und Frucht - der Blumen und Fruchtkelch herrscht in ihrem Leibe. Die eckigere Organisation d[es] Mannes ist viell[eicht] mehr miner[alisch]' (N,III,87). Initially, Hardenberg appeared to be in agreement, adding in his 'Randbemerkungen' to Schlegel's essay 'Der Mann ist mehr mineralisch - die Frau mehr

vegetabilisch'. Similarly, he wrote in the 'Brouillon' of the 'Pflanzenähnlichkeit der Weiber. Dichtungen auf diese Idee (Blumen sind Gefäße)' (N,III,651:564). In the fairy-tale, though, this is quite different. Uerlings notes how Hardenberg uses names, metaphors and associations to link *both* figures, male and female, to *both* realms of nature, organic and inorganic. Whilst Hyazinth's name is immediately recognizable as the name of a flower, Rosenblüthchen's name is reminiscent of 'Rosenquartz' a mineral mentioned in the story. Again men are partly female, women partly male. By connecting with Schlegel's allegory of the genders, which focussed on the anatomical-physiological organization of bodies, Hardenberg implies that male and female bodies can also exhibit 'mixed' traits in this sense. Uerlings is able to conclude:

Es ist nun in der Tat der Kern von Hardenbergs Geschlechtertheorie, dass es zwar sinnvoll sei, mit Kategorien wie 'männlich' und 'weiblich' zu arbeiten, dass man diese aber nicht unmittelbar auf Männer und Frauen übertragen dürfe. Zwar gebe es so etwas wie einen Geschlechtscharakter, aber das seien nur unterschiedliche Mischungen aus den jeweils gleichen Grundelementen (ibid. 29).

There is provision for the feminine qualities in men and the masculine in women, though in quite what proportion both characteristics are to be found in men and women remains unclear. Hardenberg appears to steer his investigation of gender by the idea that men and women are all to some extent 'androgynous' in this sense. But he is certainly not seeking to design a race of aesthetic hermaphrodites. That is to say, his model of androgyny does not represent a literal belief in the possibility of dissolving gender roles entirely, but rather a fictional transsexuality that serves to question the simple, polarized presentation of the genders in Enlightenment writing. Uerlings does note that, in the Märchen, this changes little with regard to the 'traditionelle [...] Zuordnung der Weiblichkeit zur Passivität und der Männlichkeit zur Aktivität' (ibid. 29, no.4): a glance at the roles undertaken by both figures in the story is proof enough of this. Important here is the fact that both fairy tale and the 'Brouillon' demonstrate how men and women cannot be thought of in terms of a single abiding characteristic. Important, too, is the fact that a fictional ideal of androgyny can ensure a more flexible treatment of gender identity by constantly presenting the possibility of crossing received gender boundaries. Both texts point to the potential for the experimental movement of those boundaries in Hardenberg's writing about the physical body in general. The following section will examine in greater detail how anatomical constructions of the female body are produced in the scientific writing. It will ask, too, whether those constructions constitute significant modifications of received and one-sided models of female corporeality in evidence in Enlightenment science.

II. 9 *Dissolving Dualisms. Poetic Medicine and the Emancipation of Physiology (1798-99)*

Hardenberg's challenge to the materialist anatomists of the Rousseauesque tradition lies mainly in his medical writings. His treatment of the female physiology was not a unified project of 1798-99, there is no evidence of his in-depth, specific criticism of the earlier scientists involved in this tradition and, apparently, no explicit moves on his part to unravel the models of femininity that they produced. The writings pertaining to gender and anatomy are sited largely in the 'Brouillon', though these relate to other collections from the Freiberg series and indeed still earlier works. Their reconstruction here serves, nevertheless, as eloquent proof of the radical innovations characteristic of the poet's later work on women. Like all Hardenberg's mature work, the medical writings involved developing modes of investigation and presentation, which exposed and exploited the mutability of constructed scientific knowledge; in short, they were about poeticizing medical theory and practice. Scholarship has offered us detailed overviews of this area, discussing Hardenberg's theory of disease and his idealist method for improving health and longevity, the 'Lebenskunstlehre'.⁴⁴ Central to the discussions offered by two major contributors, Herbert Uerlings and Hans Sohni, are Hardenberg's anatomical-physiological writings. Sohni gives his own version of Hardenberg's stance on the natural universe and its study.⁴⁵ He sees at the heart of Hardenberg's medical thought the wider vision of the phenomenal world as 'incomplete', as a multitude of apparently disparate phenomena, which scientific investigation must unite in seeking to synthesize 'completion' (Sohni, 49). The process of 'completion' was sought, as Sohni points out, via the Romantic concept of polarity and synthesis. This concept conceived of natural phenomena as existing in polarities, as mutually distinct and isolated, though it did so *precisely in order* that isolation could be transcended by way of synthesis, that the phenomena could be related or combined (ibid, 32ff). The process of investigation had, initially, to conceive of polarities, phenomena as separate, heterogeneous parts of the whole, before presenting the synthesis of those parts as a re-united homogenous whole. This, according to Sohni, both formed the basis of Hardenberg's models of anatomy and physiology and informed his theories of illness and therapy. The body became heterogeneous, an endlessly complex nexus of polarities. These were resolved through syntheses, only to 'un-resolve' themselves and return to a state of transition, or, as a newly synthesized whole, to enter into another polar relationship, to be synthesized into ever more complex macro-structures (ibid. 53).

Often, Hardenberg considers polarities spanning the mental-physical divide, an approach he developed after re-thinking the theory of galvanism that so fascinated him. Galvanism explained the motor functions of the body and its systems in terms of charged electrical sources existing in polar relationships with organic structures. Synthesis of this particular polarity occurred through the discharge of electricity from the source to the structure, which caused the structure, muscle, tendon or limb, to move. What interests Sohni, is the way in which

Hardenberg thought of mind-body interactions as existing in analogy to the galvanic interactions between electrical charge and organ (ibid. 45). In the 'Fragmente und Studien' of 1799-1800, Hardenberg wrote:

Bey der Gedankenbildung scheinen mir alle Theile des Körpers mitzuwircken. Sie scheinen ebenfalls Resultate von Action und Kette – und daher die nothwendige Einwirkung *veränderter Gedankenzüge, fremden Zuspruchs* – treffender Kernsprüche – plötzlicher Einfälle, auf den Zustand des Körpers (N,III,612:351).

For both Sohni and Uerlings, this model is the point of departure for Hardenberg's criticism of the then prevailing model of the homogenous human body, as had been advanced by the influential physiologist of the Scottish Enlightenment, John Brown.⁴⁸ The plurality of galvanic interactions between mind and individual organs and systems of the body further complicates the internal characteristics of the human body, rendering it all the more heterogeneous:

Brown hat nur den großen Irrthum unsrer Medicin rein aufgefaßt und dargestellt – den großen Irrthum auch unserer Politik – den menschlichen Körper, als *ein einfaches Abstractum zu behandeln*. Der K[örper] ist eine unendliche Kette von lauter *Individuen* (N,III,612:353).

This remarkable notion of the body as an endless chain of interrelating but discrete structures, is further complicated by the former of the above two entries: the 'inner' galvanism, which Sohni reconstructs from Hardenberg's writing, works in both directions. Whilst preserving the Cartesian model of mind working with body, Hardenberg removes the hierarchy from this relationship. The mind is no longer the pilot in the otherwise lifeless ship of the body, for physical experience has an impact on the individual's intellectual and emotional state of mind. Not only do sudden thoughts and ideas alter the state of the human *physis*, writes Hardenberg, but all parts of the body take part in the formation of thoughts. The human body, already a complex plurality of systems and functions – each with potentially distinct characteristics – becomes a matter of physical functions and structures engaging in bilateral interactions with their mental equivalents. In making this distinct contribution to the anthropological tradition of the *commercium mentis et corporis*, Hardenberg shows that he does not belong to the tradition of French materialist anatomy. And of course, this infinitely more complex notion of human physiology requires a much more flexible, more poetic method of presentation.

Which aesthetic means did Hardenberg's poetic medicine utilize in its endeavour to conceive, portray and diagnose the human body? Earlier in this chapter, we noted how the French materialist tradition of anatomy had answered this question, replacing the Cartesian model of the mind-body dichotomy with a wholly physicalized (and codifiable) model of organization. An examination of Hardenberg's writings shows that he too uses the term. Given the complexity of his anthropology as discussed above, though, his use of the metaphor of organization had to be more flexible in two ways. Firstly, it had to include the possibility of

thinking of organized structures in mental-physical terms and, secondly, it had to present those structures as existing in a state of flux. In fact, Hardenberg had reflected explicitly on organization as an epistemological tool a year before beginning the 'Brouillon', in his critical reception of the works of Hemsterhuis. The Hemsterhuisian idea of an all-encompassing *love* as a force or principle was evident at both macro- and microscopic levels; it was true, that is, not only of the relationship between man and nature or individual humans, but between the different elements or organs of individual systems within living entities. This also ensured the harmonious interrelation of organs and systems within the biological organization of the human body. Hardenberg deals explicitly with these ideas in his critical engagement with Hemsterhuis's philosophical dialogue *Aristée ou la divinité*. Here, Hardenberg paraphrases Hemsterhuis:

Wo Organisation sichtbar wird – offenbart sich zugleich Zweck – Ziel – Wo ein Ziel erscheint – werden wir auf ein *Ideal*, auf einen *Gedanken* getrieben, der dem Realen, der Ausführung, dem Object, *vorangehe* (N,II,370:30).

Specifically, this passage refers both to the emergence or revelation of organization to the enquiring consciousness and to the manner in which this provokes and defines scientific reflection upon it. At a glance, there might appear to be no difference between Hardenberg's reconstruction of the scientific investigation of organization and the deductive method of investigation pursued by the rationalist scientists of the early Enlightenment. In both cases, single phenomena are taken as the starting point and the enquiry into the nature of the organized entity as a whole proceeds deductively, with each new discovery, rather than pre-supposition, shaping the path of ongoing enquiry. In the same text, however, Hardenberg wrote significantly: 'Weder Ordnung noch Unordnung ist da, wo *keine solche Idee* auf Anzahl und Vertheilung der Dinge Einfluß hat' (ibid.), an entry presented in enlarged print in the HKA, denoting not one of Hardenberg's free translations of Hemsterhuis, but one of his own compositions written by the poet in reaction to a passage from the earlier philosopher (N,II,328). The jotting echoes and emphasizes ideas contained in the previous entry: the observation of organized, physical structures lead the observer to develop notions and theories about the nature of those structures. But these notions are identified as 'ein *Ideal*,' or 'ein[...] *Gedanken* [...], der dem Realen, der Ausführung, dem Object, *vorangehe*.' Thus the metaphor of organization reveals itself as a metaphor, an aesthetic construction distinct from the actual reality or object it seeks to represent. This standpoint becomes clearer from a further entry:

Nur aus Analogie mit *unserer Kunst*, nennen wir die Theile der Natur, die vorzüglich mit ihrer Fortpflanzung und Modification sich zu beschäftigen scheinen – Organe (N,II,370:30)

Here Hardenberg places the model of organization in the realm of *Poésie*: the representation of organization is likened to an 'art' and is dependent on the nomenclative power of language. Thus the very model that served to circumscribe constructions of female biology can be poeticized.

Does this enable Hardenberg to envision and represent new models of female corporeality? It appears reasonable to ask, then, whether the flexibility of these cognitive models might aid in the modification of the neo-Rousseauesque understanding of the female physiology.

This new horizon of possibility leaves other questions unanswered, however. The discussion above has led us to the terms 'flexible' and 'forward looking'. If Hardenberg's writings on female physiology are to be flexible, however, then how does he use that flexibility? If they are to be forward looking, precisely what do they look forward to? In answering the first question we will find that a major part of Hardenberg's poetic re-invention of human physiology appears to have consisted in a rejection of the Brownian model of the homogeneous human body. Within Hardenberg's medical discourse proper, this produces a model of the body as possessing many distinct and differing characteristics. The answer to the second question has already begun to unfold from our discussion above. We saw that Hardenberg's works contained, albeit at a simplified level and in a more literary context, the beginnings of idealized models of androgyny, which hinted at the possibility of masculine and feminine characteristics in both men and women. We also saw that he began to re-model the gendered, physical body. The following discussion examines precisely whether these two factors, the notion of the body as a complex, multi-faceted structure, together with the ideal notion of a trans-gendered body, connect to liberate the female anatomical body from the limitations imposed on it by eighteenth-century patriarchal medicine.

Hardenberg pursued a number of thematic approaches to biological gender as part of his poetic-scientific writing, one of which was his treatment of the dualistic properties of 'sensibility' and 'irritability', which permeated much eighteenth-century medical writing. As early as the 1750s Albrecht von Haller had postulated the existence of these two differing properties of the human *physis*. Irritability referred to the capacity of muscle fibres to react by movement to stimuli, whereas sensibility referred to the capacity of nerve fibres to receive and transmit those stimuli. Honegger points to the fact that these characteristics soon became material for the debate on gender.⁴⁷ The female body, according to the French anatomists, was built entirely for the sole purpose of bearing children. As women were required to endure more pain during childbirth, so sensibility became more important for women, as it enabled pain impulses to be better mediated; examples of this tendency can be found in Pierre Rousell's 'Essai sur la sensibilité' (Honegger, 144). Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis systematically transposed the quality of sensibility onto the entire female body. The whole female body had the quality of the uterus, a greater elasticity and a sponge-like capacity to endure physical force exerted from without, whereas the muscles of the male body were designed to exert such force, possessed as they were of greater irritability (Honegger, 157-8).

It is not the aim of this discussion to pursue the network of references to the terms sensibility and irritability, which are in evidence in Hardenberg's work, but rather to focus on those sections of text where they intersect with issues of gender. The following excerpt from the 'Brouillon' offers such an example: 'Der Samen ist ein Nahrungs- und Reitzungsmittel des Weibes zum Ersatz für die Menstrua. Im eigentlichen Sinn lebt also der Mann für die Frau *mit*. Sollte die Frau *sensibler*, der Mann *reizbarer* seyn?' (N,III,317-8:409). Here, the dualism appears after all to be transposed in polarized fashion onto the two genders. There is little that is revolutionary about this entry, which constructs an idealistic notion of a symbiotic inter-sexual relationship, though does so by re-enforcing the idea that men and women possess largely polarized physical characteristics. The text does, nonetheless, imply that sensibility and irritability are characteristics, which can be in evidence to differing extents, in both genders at different times: 'Sollte die Frau *sensibler*, der Mann *reizbarer* seyn?' A further entry from the 'Brouillon' takes the investigation a stage further:

PHYSIOL[OGIE]. Gehört etwa die Sensibilität schon der Seele an? Reizbarkeit und Sensibilität haben einen sehr bemerklichen Einfluß auf die Organisation – Ein Reizbarer wird mehr Gefäße, zartere Muskeln, und ein mehr sensibler mehr und zartere Nerven haben be[sonders] in den Theilen, die oft afficirt werden. Wo die Reizbarkeit eines Theils sehr erhöht ist, da treiben neue Gefäße und Nerven hervor – der Körper wird gebildeter, aber zärter (N,III,249:55).

The entry appears to set the norm, at least in linguistic terms, as an abstract male figure. This only becomes unorthodox, when that male figure is referred to as being *either* pre-dominantly sensible *or* irritable. The body, furthermore, is shown to react structurally to the shifting proportions of the two qualities within itself. Irritability is not so much the result of muscularity, as more defined muscles are the result of a greater irritability, whilst the nervous system of 'ein mehr sensibler' grows and refines itself to accommodate that characteristic. The dualism of sensibility and irritability, then, appears by implication to uncouple itself from the gender dualism. Here, though, this is only formulated in terms of an (in a limited sense) androgynous male body. There is no attempt to distribute the characteristics evenly between both sexes, with the aim of disrupting those traditional conceptions of biological gender; not in every area of human physiology does Hardenberg free himself effectively from the stereotypes of the materialist anatomists. One area, in which he appears to make progress, though, is in the microscopic investigation of fertilization.

Fertilization, too, has a history that has been written about by scholars of gender. In his book *Making Sex*,⁴⁸ Thomas Laqueur investigated the important and constitutive role played by genital sexuality in the codification of gender, in both ancient and modern epochs. Laqueur presents us with a 'one sex model', which maintains that before the Enlightenment there was only really one biological gender: the masculine. By scouring texts from the Greeks to Freud, Laqueur shows how, for centuries, vagina, womb and ovaries were thought of as an inverse even malformed version of the penis, scrotum and testicles. In fact, it was only during the

Enlightenment that the female reproductive system 'came into being' by entering scientific discourse. Laqueur shows how this is reflected in the scientific nomenclature of the body. It was only in this period, that the ovaries gained their own name and were no longer thought of as imperfect testicles. Of course, the opportunity to re-name the feminine was also an opportunity to re-think it, so it is little wonder that this nascent female physiology was given characteristics opposite to those traditionally associated with the male body. The female genitals, despite now having their own name and character, served as proof that women were merely the passive inverse of men. More specifically, Laqueur investigates how the sexual gametes, sperm and ovum, were presented differently throughout the epochs. In 1672, Regnier de Graaf had discovered the follicle to which he gave his name; that structure on the ovary, which was deemed the storehouse and point of release for the egg. For a short time, notes Laqueur, the ovum was thought to be the actual source of life, until later in the 1670s, at which time Leuwenhoek and Hartsoecker discovered the sperm within semen. Whilst both gametes were thought to contribute in some way to the production of life, it did not take long for scientists to ascribe the ovum a passive, female and subordinate role. Building on Laqueur's arguments, other critics have found texts that presented the egg as a mere holder, incubator or even nourishment for the sperm.⁴⁹ Hardenberg lived, then, in an era in which these cells were relatively new discoveries and their roles and functions hotly disputed. The discussion of Hardenberg's intervention in this debate will culminate with an analysis of his treatment of the seeds of life.

We have already cited a passage, which touches on the relationship between the male and female gametes, which stated: 'Der Samen ist ein Nahrungs und Reitzungsmittel des Weibes zum Ersatz für die Menstrua. Im eigentlichen Sinne lebt also der Mann für die Frau *mit*.' This model appears to project a Rousseauesque theory of the mutual complementarity of the sexes onto this aspect of human physiology. However, in his 'Physicalische Fragmente' Hardenberg writes:

Eigentlich empfängt die Frau nicht, sondern das Ey empfängt. Das Ey ist Secretion des Weibes.[...] Der Mann befruchtet auch eigentlich nicht, sondern er ist nur das *Werkzeug der Befruchtung* – der Saame befruchtet – Ey und Saame sind polare Secretionen. Der Saame macht auch nur die Sollicitierende Potenz. Er *dringt nicht ein* – sondern er weckt bloß die Erregbarkeit. Er hat eine größere Energie als das Ey, und *überwältigt die Erregbarkeit des Ey* – Er *entzündet das Ey* – [...]
(Der Saame ist vielleicht ein flüssiger organischer (künstlicher) Stoff – das Ey – geronnener künstlicher Stoff. Der Saame wird die erste Nahrung des Ey – sobald die Entzündung geschehn ist – es saugt ihn ein – um seine Capacitaet zu vermehren – mit seiner größern Quantität absoluten Wärmestoff (N,III,93).

Here, the sperm is viewed in line with Enlightenment traditions and is accredited greater energy and heat and the egg is seen as the recipient – the term 'empfängt' being reminiscent of conventional notions of the feminine as receptive. Yet the entry also has something of the tendency found by Laqueur in other writers: the relationship between the gametes is depicted as a

miniature of a social or sexual relationship between two people. Significantly, Hardenberg ascribes to the sperm the role of soliciting the egg's interest, of exciting it, without actually attempting to consummate the relationship: these are qualities traditionally associated with women in courtship. The final act of consummation is also not one of penetration by the sperm, but one of engulfment by the egg, which, taking the initiative, swallows and digests the sperm as *its* nourishment. In doing this the ovum takes on an active male role – Hardenberg had written that 'Verzehren [...]' was a masculine pleasure or 'Genießen' (N,III,262:117) – or, perhaps better, it replaces a male act of penetration with a pro-actively 'female' act of engulfment. This unconventional re-distribution of sexual characteristics reveals the notion of a pro-actively sexual female ovum. This will inform the discussion of real, inter-personal relationships later in this study and enable us to test whether Hardenberg allows his female characters their own erotic desires and experiences. For now, the fact that Hardenberg truly breaks with tradition in this respect is proven by the following 'Brouillon' entry:

Die org[anische] Masse wird durch die org[anische] Beschaffenheit der Mutter – und die org[anische] Besch[affenheit] des Vaters und die Verhältnisse dieser beyden Organisationen zu einander bestimmt. Ist dieses Verhältniß ein voll[kommen] Gesundes, so werden auch die Kinder mit vollk[ommen] ges[unden] Anlagen geboren werden. Zufälle in der Schwangerschaft und nachherige Behandl[ung] abgerechnet (N,III,323:437).

This example of 'Mathematische Physiologie' as Hardenberg called it, anticipates in simplistic, quantitative terms the genetic theory of the twentieth century. The entry postulates that the organization of both father and mother determine that of the offspring, a theory that can only be valid if material from *both* cells plays a role at the inception of life, fertilization. At the point where life can be broken down into no simpler terms, Hardenberg is beginning to complicate received views on the biological nature of gender.

We have come a long way since the early jottings of the 'Fichte-Studien'. There, Hardenberg used images of gender as supporting analogies for philosophical arguments and did little to challenge the qualities historically associated with them. Personal experiences and theoretical reflection in 1797 brought the development of the practice of *Poësie* and, as our discussions of the fragments and scientific reflections of that year and the following have shown, a growing awareness that models of gender can be consciously made the objects of poetic speculation. This awareness does not immediately lead Hardenberg to begin modifying or challenging received views of femininity – or to his mounting such challenges systematically. In fact, the political writing of 1797-8 saw him promoting ideals of the feminine designed to limit women's roles within the political state. Whilst his social-political constructions of the feminine are conservative, the anthropological and medical writing on the feminine, to be found in the *Brouillon* and the fragments of 1799-1800, marks what constituted new departures in the history of writing on gender at that time. These texts begin to complicate the notion that such a thing as

a simple and circumscribed feminine identity, derived from the female body, can or should exist. Particularly the anatomical work serves to undermine the presentation of a static and one-sided model of the feminine in Hardenberg's writing and clear him of the charge of being a simplistic reactionary on issues of gender. On balance, then, his writing about women is contradictory and opens a field of tension between reactionary and revolutionary tendencies. This makes it difficult to place Hardenberg, historically speaking, in any fixed position in the debate on gender and equally difficult to deliver consistent ideological criticism of his presentation of gender from the present. There is, though, another test as to the progressive or revolutionary qualities of Hardenberg's treatment of femininity. We shall ask whether or not he allows the autonomous female subject to self-determine and self-express in a range of contexts. Most significantly, we shall ask whether he allows women to aspire to what he sees as the pinnacle of human achievement: *Poësie*. Does he, in short, conceive and realize female poets? Having looked at how Hardenberg writes about women, it remains now to consider whether he allows women to write and to communicate for themselves.

Notes to chapter two:

¹ See: Manfred Frank, 'Die Philosophie des sogenannten "magischen Idealismus"', in: *Euphorion* 63, 1969, 88-116, especially p.94.

² Schanze, 2ff.

³ See: William O'Brien, *Novalis: Signs of Revolution*, (London and Durham: DUP, 1995). O'Brien writes that, whilst the 'Fichte-Studien' point to Hardenberg's favouring poetry over philosophy this does not mark a wholesale detachment from philosophical 'idealism of being', p.89.

⁴ Cf. Ibid, 120f.

⁵ Nicholas Saul, 'The Pursuit of the Subject: Literature as the Critic and Perfector of Philosophy: 1790-1830,' in: Nicholas Saul (ed.), *Modern German Literature and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶ Alice Kuzniar, *Delayed Endings. Nonclosure in Novalis and Hölderlin* (Athens and London: Georgia University Press, 1987).

⁷ See: Kuzniar, pp.2-11, for more detail on her understanding of the model of 'nonclosure', its associations with poststructuralism and its relevance for Early Romanticism. Of course poststructuralist theory and Romantic theory relinquish language's ability to express the metaphysical for different reasons: the former *refutes* its existence, whilst the latter is entirely dependent on its existence, though it recognizes its elusive, transcendental nature.

⁸ Herbert Uerlings, *Friedrich von Hardenberg, genannt Novalis. Werk und Forschung*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), p.622.

⁹ See: John Neubauer, 'Novalis und der Postmodernismus' in: *Geschichtlichkeit und Aktualität*, 1988, pp. 207-220.

¹⁰ Cf. O'Brien's critique of Uerlings (O'Brien, 320-21, footnote 6). Uerlings's model of 'narrative construction' was a term never used by Hardenberg and it arguably homogenizes a group of concepts and terms, which Hardenberg intended to be shifting and diverse and from which he sought to liberate himself by turning from philosophy to *Poësie*.

¹¹ See Friedrich Schlegel's 'Ideen', where he writes that: 'Ironie ist klares Bewußtsein der ewigen Agilität des unendlich vollen Chaos' (S,II,2,323:69). Here, irony is the awareness of the chaotic agility of things to change and mutually undermine each other. This requires the subject to conceptualize and represent ideas in a suitably ironic way, which Schlegel describes, in the *Athenäumsfragment* 51, as the 'steten Wechsel von Selbstschöpfung und Selbstvernichtung'. On this see Ernst Behler, *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Romantik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), pp.36-37.

¹² See: Karin Hausen (1978), pp. 161-194.

¹³ Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter. Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib: 1750-1850*, (Frankfurt a.M, New York: Campus Verlag, 1991).

¹⁴ Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.99.

¹⁵ See: Bovenschen (1979) p.167.

¹⁶ Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

¹⁷ The extent to which Rousseau believes his theoretical definition of inter-sexual relations to be the locus of actual female power can be seen in his appraisal of classical political systems and the positions of the genders within them, (Schwartz, 45ff.). According to Schwartz, Rousseau criticizes as corrupt the societies of modernity, whose social institutions and customs allow for excessive mixing of the genders and cultivate what he sees as an effeminate society. In discussing his diagnoses for modernity, Rousseau is shown to select classical Sparta and Rome as models of civic virtue, because they promoted the separation of the sexes: this allowed men to effectively provide for their families and defend their society as a whole as soldiers. The fact that women were the motivation for male activity bestowed upon them significant influence and was the source, for Schwartz, of their real power.

¹⁸ Cf. Bovenschen, p.181: 'Der Rekurs auf die Rousseauschen Weiblichkeitseinschätzungen ist [...] unumgänglich, weil diese Zuschreibungsmuster einen beträchtlichen Einfluß auf die empfindsamen Frauen-imagines hatte, die in Deutschland in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts virulent waren'(ibid).

¹⁹ Kant's characterization of women's reason as being different to that of men's, effectively excludes her from the later definitions of a subject capable of reasoned judgement, to be found in *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, according to Bovenschen, 234ff

²⁰ Bovenschen cites an example from Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, which claims women display morality as they would wear a dress and demonstrate their intellectual capabilities as they would wear a watch: in both cases, namely, in superficial and tokenistic fashion.

²¹ In: Sigrid Lange (ed), *Ob die Weiber Menschen sind. Geschlechterdebatten um 1800*, (Leipzig: Reclam,1992), p. 293.

²² Cf. (F,I, 4, 95-150).

²³ Honegger builds on Sergio Moravia's investigation of the epistemological shifts underlying the Enlightenment approach to science and cognition to show that the knowledge produced by the new 'Sciences of Man' tended to be seen as absolute and immutable. Cf. Moravia, Sergio, *La scienza dell' uomo nel Settecento: con una appendice di testi*, 2nd edn. (Rome; Bari: Laterza, 1978).

²⁴ Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by B. Gagnebin. (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), vol. IV: *Émile ou l'éducation*, Book V: 'Sophie ou La Femme', p. 696.

²⁵ Quoted from the German translation 'Ueber die Verbindung des Physischen und Moralischen in dem Menschen' (1804) in: Honegger, p. 159.

²⁶ This form of multi-perspectivism can be found across a range of Romantic theoretical, critical and literary texts. In his 'Ideen', for example, F. Schlegel wrote that this ideal of 'Vielseitigkeit' required more than the use of wide-ranging conceptual and representational systems but also a sense of the chaotic (constantly shifting) nature of phenomena: 'Zur Vielseitigkeit gehört nicht allein ein weitumfassendes System, sondern auch Sinn für das Chaos außerhalb dessen [...]' (S,II,2,322f).

²⁷ The view that the *Sophienlebens* was the prime instigator of all of Hardenberg's writings, as put forward by Tieck, Schlegel and Bülow in the editorial comments of various editions of his works between 1802 and 1847 and taken up in later scholarship such as Wilhelm Dilthey's, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), has been dispelled by almost the entire weight of serious, twentieth-century Novalis scholarship, particularly since the publication of the *HK4* in the 1960s.

²⁸ O'Brien reads the written act of mourning, particularly the various sketches of Sophie, as Hardenberg's first consciously constructed fiction, pp.27-73.

²⁹ Christina von Braun, *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen. Zum Verhältnis von Geschlecht und Geschichte*, (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag neue Kritik, 1989), partic. pp.51-64.

³⁰ See von Braun, p.57: 'Es geht dem Hysteriker nicht um die Neubewertung des Weiblichen, sondern um die Aufwertung männlicher Weiblichkeit'. The creative act of male literary figures can be seen as an expression of their hysteria, as von Braun writes: 'Mit der Hysterie erhebt der kreative Mann auch Anspruch auf weibliche Symptombildung, auf die Weiblichkeit schlechthin' (ibid.).

³¹ The 'qualitative Potenzierung' (N,II,545:105) of reality as prescribed in the fragment leads von Braun to conclude that: 'Materie soll in Gedanken verwandelt werden, und Gedanken ihrerseits materielle Form annehmen.' Romantic aesthetics, in other words, destroyed bodies by turning them into metaphors (von Braun, 59).

³² Von Braun's theory that Hardenberg re-kills Sophie is quite inappropriate. The reconstruction of Hardenberg as a male hysteric is a gross simplification. Certainly, Sophie's death caused him a period of depression and this phase of Hardenberg's life might well have been marked by stereotypically 'effeminate' behavioural patterns, though as we have seen, Hardenberg soon re-engaged with the 'masculine' ideals of diligent study and the pursuit of a career. Secondly, von Braun's reading of Hardenberg's definition of 'Romantisieren' is inadequate, as this process does not prescribe the destruction of physical, objective reality by realizing the imagined and destroying the real, but rather the *enrichment* of that reality. The term used to describe exactly how the poet elevates the mundane and trivializes the sublime is 'geben' (N,II,545:105); the poet *supplies* something extra to reality. As the thing supplied is merely 'ein [...] Schein', an appearance of something other, then the object romanticized is hardly destroyed. In the light of this, the notion that the Romantic subject literally 'ingests' reality seems inappropriate and her contention that Hardenberg is in some way 'cannibalistic' and 'murderous' equally so.

³³ Regula Fankhauser, *Des Dichters Sophia. Weiblichkeitsentwürfe im Werk von Novalis*, Literatur – Kultur – Geschlecht, vol. 9, (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 1997). Fankhauser's reading does afford significant space to Hardenberg's philosophical-aesthetic theories, though these are often tailored to fit the argument. Fankhauser reproduces the somewhat dated view, that within the poet's aesthetic-cognitive system, constructions of reality *exclusively* reflect the nature of the intuiting subject and constitute its own unreflecting imprisonment in a wholly narcissistic 'Verdoppelung oder Selbstbespiegelung' (Fankhauser, 36). The world beyond the subject becomes an essentially passive other, an aesthetic form pleasing or functional to the subject (ibid, 36-38). When translated into a practice of portraying gender, this has disastrous consequences: the poet chooses to represent the unknown as an artificial femininity, which was destructive of real women. Thus the idealized Sophie is the poet's first victim: a victim both of the poet's own peculiar vision of life and his dehumanizing poetics (ibid, 62). Other victims, as Fankhauser shows at length, await the poet's pen in the form of the female figures of the later literary works. On these issues cf. also the earlier essay: Regula Fankhauser, 'Das verleugnete Geschlecht der "blauen Blume". Frühromantische Aufklärungskritik und das "combabische" Geschlecht – Zu Novalis's Entwurf eines frühromantischen Dichtersubjekts' in: Corina Caduff und Sigrid Weigel (ed), *Das Geschlecht der Künste*, Literatur – Kultur – Geschlecht, vol. 8, (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), pp. 50-69.

³⁴ Hardenberg writes of his conversations with Sophie's governess, the visit of a certain Niebeker and his reflections on Shakespeare (N,IV,36).

³⁵ Elisabeth Bronfen makes passing comment on this section of 'Klarisse' in her essay of 1990, *Dialogues with the Dead: The Deceased Beloved as Muse*. Bronfen focuses on the line 'she is cold through and through' ('sie ist kalt durchgehends' (N,IV,25)). On the strength of this, she writes that for Hardenberg, Sophie 'never was a living body alterior to himself' (Bronfen, 247-8). Instead the metaphor of permeating coldness is used to portray Sophie as a 'mirror' for his narcissistic reflection. Sophie as body, subject-in-herself, was always consummately abject and always half dead for Hardenberg, an image of 'deathlike perfection' (ibid.).

³⁶ This entry still does not show how the woman's rule within the home might allow her to exercise indirect political power through her influence upon her husband, a quality Schwartz found in Rousseau as we have seen: cf. Schwartz, 154f.

³⁷ I understand the term 'Geschlecht' to refer here to gender, rather than familial genealogy, particularly as it is used later in the paragraph in relation to the queen's defence of prostitutes, where it is obviously a matter of the female gender.

³⁸ Simon-Kuhlendahl believes Hardenberg to have absorbed in the broadest terms the image of women produced in the works of these writers in the following manner: 'Was sowohl an Voltaires als auch Boufflers' Schriften ins Auge fällt, ist ihre häufige Darstellung der Frauen als dem Genuß und der Sinnenfreude sehr zugewandt. Der Tenor dieser Darstellung ist jedoch in keiner Weise herabsetzend. Weder wird den Frauen die Vernunft abgesprochen – im Gegenteil, oft ist von ihrer Weisheit die Rede – noch werden sie als schwach und kraftlos dargestellt. Möglicherweise beziehen sich Novalis' Aussagen auf diese Betonung der Sinnenfreudigkeit der Frauen.' See: Simon-Kuhlendahl, pp.246-47, footnote 129. As chapter 2 of this study shows, however, Hardenberg levelled a good degree of criticism of this model.

³⁹ No quantities are discrete and homogenous, proposes Hardenberg, but comprise sequences of smaller, composite quantities and, equally, are themselves the smaller composite parts of still larger quantities. Infinity is no exception, though is a unique case; there the row is without end. So whilst infinity can be conceived of and figured symbolically (in the language of mathematical symbols as: ∞), it can only be known or obtained in real terms as a process of endless approximation or approach.

⁴⁰ See Fankhauser (1997, 179ff). Critics such as Fankhauser, have identified how the Teplitz collection allegorizes the experiences of love and sociability as processes in which participants spiritually or symbolically 'eat' of one another. In the 'Ergänzungen' Hardenberg did indeed write: 'In der Freundschaft ißt man in der That von seinem Freunde, oder lebt von ihm.' (N,II,620:438/8). This allegory, Fankhauser argues, is derived from Hardenberg's universalized and poeticized rendering of the biblical Last Supper and the Christian rites of Mass or Communion and has graver implications for women in the *Brouillon*, in entries such as that cited in the main text. Also noteworthy and arguably under emphasized by Fankhauser is the self-consciously aesthetic nature of this allegory, with Hardenberg adding: 'Es ist ein ächter Trope den Körper für den Geist zu substituieren' (ibid.) implying that, as well as shocking through his analogy, Hardenberg wished to emphasize that this form of metaphorical-corporeal exchange was not literally destructive of those taking part.

⁴¹ On issues of Hardenberg's sexuality, see also O'Brien. O'Brien sees in Hardenberg's relationship with and writing about Sophie strategies for deferring the sexual act, or thoughts and references of the sexual act, with her (O'Brien, 39ff). O'Brien notes how Sophie's adolescence provided a welcome obstacle to the question of sexual relations, which bespeaks a man less inclined to utterances that literally praise the act of rape.

⁴² See Mähl's comments to this effect (233f), in the transcribed discussion following Gerhard Schulz's article: Gerhard Schulz, 'Novalis' Erotik', in: Herbert Uerlings (ed), *Novalis und die Wissenschaften*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 213-237.

⁴³ Herbert Uerlings, 'Novalis und die Weimarer Klassik' in: *Aurora: Jahrbuch der Eichendorff Gesellschaft*, ed. by H. Koopmann, P.H Neumann and others, vol. 50, 1991, 27-46.

⁴⁴ For such an overview see Uerlings, Herbert, *Friedrich von Hardenberg, genannt Novalis. Werk und Forschung*, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), pp. 166-78.

⁴⁵ See Hans Sohni, *Die Medizin der Frühromantik. Novalis' Bedeutung für den Versuch einer Umwertung der 'Romantischen Medizin'*, (Freiburg i.Br, 1973).

⁴⁶ For other pertinent discussions of Hardenberg's medical writings, including a focus on his critique of John Brown and his theories, see: John Neubauer, *Stimulation Theory of Medicine in the Fragments of Friedrich von Hardenberg* (doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965) and John Neubauer, *Bifocal Vision. Novalis' Philosophy of Nature and Disease*, (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1971).

⁴⁷ Cf. Honegger, 133f.

⁴⁸ Thomas Laqueur: *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1990).

⁴⁹ On this view of the sperm, see: Lesley Sharpe, 'Über den Zusammenhang der tierischen Natur der Frau mit ihrer Geistigen. Zur Anthropologie der Frau um 1800' in: *Anthropologie und Literatur um 1800*, ed. by Jürgen Barkhoff und Eda Sagarra. Publications of the Institute of Germanic Studies, vol. 54. (Munich: iudium, 1992), p.213.

III. MUSIC AND THE MANIFOLD OF VOICES. THE
SUBJECT AND THE THEORY OF POLYPHONY,
1797-99.

As we have seen from our discussion of existing scholarship on gender in Novalis, it is not merely Hardenberg's allegedly reductive presentation of women as lifeless ideals, which has earned him criticism. Also counting against him, it has been contended, is the fact that he prevents the participation of female subjects in the presentations of communicative exchanges and creative productivity depicted in the prose fiction. One way in which critics have lent weight to these arguments is by claiming that, from its theoretical inception, Hardenberg's system is inherently oppressive of women and oppressive of the subject's 'other' in general. There is a case to be made in this area, as Hardenberg places a good deal of emphasis on the individual subject, both as the forum and the driving mechanism for his poetic project. The individual's practice of *Poesie* could be viewed as an unavoidably egocentric endeavour, as the subject appears locked into an insurmountably dualistic relationship with its object(s). So whilst the subject may manipulate the world around it, that 'other' remains a passive bystander and may not actively respond with its own agency. Hardenberg's system appears, in other words, geared to favour the individual (male) poet and reduce and silence the poet's (female) other. If we are to revise this view, then we must ask some fundamental questions. Does Hardenberg's thought require the subject to recognize its others as valid entities in their own right? Also, does the subject co-operate within an intersubjective, communicative forum, thus allowing those others the right to self-determination and the space for self-expression? Briefly departing from our central concern of the position of the female subject in the texts, the following chapter will pursue these questions through Hardenberg's theory, before returning to his literary works. The discussion will be conducted in three stages: 1. We shall first discuss the possibility of finding a system of *recognition* between subjects – that is, are subjects able to recognize others as being equivalent to themselves? Only in the light of such insight can genuine communication occur between two or more entities. Hardenberg first tackled this issue in the context of his reflections on schematic signification early in the *Fichte-Studien*, though he pursued it more fully following his reading of Hemsterhuis's moral cosmology in his theoretical and encyclopaedic writings of 1798-99. We shall pursue these trains of thought, asking how and with which consequences Hardenberg comes to re-think the identity and function of the other, the Fichtean *Nicht-Ich*, as a subject or 'Du'. Central to the discussion will be the issue of whether or not this transformation constitutes a merely superficial operation in which the outer world is changed into a form pleasing or functional to the self, or in fact signals the Romantic subject's conception of a reality *beyond* its own limits that is occupied by other independent selves. 2. In a second section we shall ask whether Hardenberg uses this insight to create a model of intersubjective *communication*. We shall ask particularly how this process was influenced by his reading and incorporation of elements of mysticist thinking, particularly from the works of the Reformation scientist and doctor Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), better known simply as Paracelsus, and Jacob Böhme, the seventeenth-century Silesian theosophist (1575-1624). In the broadest of

terms, both of these earlier thinkers conceived of the universe as a theocentric but also manifold structure. Both thinkers also saw that the cosmos was a collective of many entities, each of which had its own truth or significance to communicate and often the means to enact that communication. Both thinkers differed, though, in how much communicative freedom they attributed to the individual subject and also in the extent to which they viewed that communication as an expression of individual endeavour or as an expression of a higher will determining all subjects. How does Hardenberg incorporate and modify the ideas of these thinkers, each with their different accounts of the individual's powers of communication, into his own thinking? Does he produce a model of communication that somehow strikes a balance between the individual's absolute right to communicate and the limitations imposed on its communication by the laws of the universal whole? Do any limitations imposed upon the 'one' ensure that the 'many' of the universal collective are able to communicate as well? And what aesthetic means, be they allegory, metaphor or motif, does Hardenberg employ when translating these theories into literature? 3. The third and final section tests Hardenberg's first attempt to realize the models of recognition and communication in a literary text, namely *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* (1798). We shall ask how this ideal is represented there and how it relates to the theories underlying it. We shall ask, too, to what extent the ideal upholds the rights of all subjects to self-express and thus we shall re-focus on our central concern of the lot of the female subject. Our findings ought to make us aware of the potential strengths and weaknesses of Hardenberg's treatment of the female subject in the literary texts and inform our discussion of the more substantial text *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1799-1800) in chapter four.

III.1 Rethinking the Subject: The Other and 'das Prinzip der höchsten Mannigfaltigkeit'

The roots of Hardenberg's thinking on this issue lie in the 'Fichte-Studien' themselves, in a general dissatisfaction with the stasis of the subject-object dualism in Critical and Idealist philosophy. As we have seen, the opening pages of the 'Studien' contain Hardenberg's remarkable 'Theorie des Zeichens' (N,II,108). Already, there, he was starting to think of the processes of signification in terms of communication between more than one signifying agent (*der* or *das Bezeichnende*), that is, in intersubjective terms. Alongside this idea, Hardenberg had begun reflecting on the limitations of a subject-centred model of existence. A page before his discussion of signs, he had written:

Was verstehn wir unter Ich?
 Hat Fichte nicht zu willkürlich alles ins Ich hineingelegt? mit welchem
 Befugniß? Kann ein Ich sich als *Ich* setzen, ohne ein anderes Ich oder
 Nichtich – / Wie sind Ich und Nichtich gegensetzbar/ (N,II,107:5).

Hardenberg muses here on exactly what the self is, on whether Fichte attributed too much power

to it and with what authority or justification he did so. He also reflects on the fact that the self must define itself in relationship to other selves or non-selves, though at this point he leaves the question as to the exact nature of that relationship open. In the next entry, he is a little more precise about what he understands by 'Ich': 'Das Ich hat eine hieroglyphische Kraft' (N,II,107:6), reminding himself that the self is merely an approximation of self in language, a sign in the sense he was to discuss a few lines later. Thus he brings his aesthetic study of selfhood and his developing ideas on intersubjective semiotics a step closer to each other. He appears to be moving towards a position whereby the symbolic representation of self in language can only gain its identity in relation to the representation of an other, as is the case with all signs. In the above fragment on the relationship between self and other (N,II,107:5), however, Hardenberg is conspicuously vague on the issue of that other's identity, on the extent to which it is *another* self equivalent to the first, or merely a non-self, 'Ich oder Nichtich'. The possibility of fundamentally re-thinking the other as a self falls by the wayside for the remainder of the 'Fichte-Studien'. The studies concern themselves more with complex anatomies of the *Ich*, examining its ideal and empirical incarnations, how these relate to the other and to the object, which, however, remains a non-reflexive inverse.¹

Throughout the early poetic writings, principally the 'Vermischte Bemerkungen' of 1797, Hardenberg began to theorize the poetic process in such a way as to avoid the trap of solipsism. The sixteenth fragment of Hardenberg's collection, often quoted, would appear to be a manifesto for the poet's withdrawal from objective reality into the fantastic realm of subjectivity:

Die Fantasie setzt die künftige Welt entw[eder] in die Höhe, oder in die Tiefe, oder in der Metempsychose, zu uns. Wir träumen von Reisen durch das Weltall – Ist denn das Weltall nicht *in uns*? Die Tiefen unseres Geistes kennen wir nicht – Nach Innen geht der geheimnißvolle Weg. In uns, oder nirgends ist die Ewigkeit mit ihren Welten – die Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Die Außenwelt ist die Schattenwelt – Sie wirft ihren Schatten in das Lichtreich. Jezt scheint uns freylich innerlich so dunkel, einsam, gestaltdos – Aber wie ganz anders wird es uns dünken – wenn diese Verfinsterung vorbei, und der Schattenkörper hinweggerückt ist – Wir werden mehr genießen als je, denn unser Geist hat entbehrt (N,II,416-418:17).

Not only is the inner world of subjectivity to be our sought-after abode, but once we have overcome our fears, once we have cleared away the metaphorical body of shadows clouding our understanding of the inner self, then that inner self will be to us as a realm of light. Infinite in scope, limited only by the imagination, inhabited by remembered pasts and longed-for futures, the inner world appears infinitely preferable to the world of objects beyond the subject. That outer world exists, conversely, in darkness, only occasionally casting its shadows into the inner realm of light. Thus the notion of moving beyond the self to engage with the outside world and its occupants, appears wholly uninviting. Yet a handful of fragments further on in the collection, Hardenberg seems to site that vital component of existence, the human soul, at a postulated point of intersection between the inner and outer worlds, between subject and object, physical

and metaphysical: 'Der Sitz der Seele ist da, wo sich Innenwelt und Außenwelt berühren. Wo sie sich durchdringen – ist er in jedem Punkte der Durchdringung' (N,II,418:20). Having called for us to revel in the inner world, Hardenberg constructs the soul almost as a mediating agency between that inner world and the outer world he appeared to have forsaken. Several fragments further on again, he offers a further critique of untrammelled subjectivity:

Selbstentäußerung ist die Quelle aller Erniedrigung, sowie im Gegentheil der Grund aller ächten Erhebung. Der erste Schritt wird Blick nach innen – absondernde Beschauung unsres Selbst – Wer hier stehn bleibt geräth nur halb. Der 2te Schritt muß wirksamer Blick nach außen – selbstthätige, gehaltne Beobachtung der Außenwelt seyn (N,II,422:26).

This fragment relates to the operation of *Poësie*, with its alternating dynamics of elevation and abasement, of the presentation and ironic withdrawal of ideals. Referring initially to the process of elevation or idealization, which involves the retreat (a metaphorical 'step') into the inner world of the imagination, Hardenberg notes that this only constitutes half of the poetic process. Whosoever remains at that position will only half succeed, as a second 'step' is necessary, which involves a sobering look back at the empirical world of objects, with which poetic ideals interact. Only in this way will the poet not lose himself in his own ideals and also ensure that those ideals have some bearing on the outer world he occupies. Whilst the world of the imagination is essential to the action and practice of poetry, humanity exists in both the inner and outer worlds; and, as poetic endeavour requires both idealism and irony, vision and sobriety, *Poësie* therefore involves playing one realm of experience off against the other. We must, it appears, live in both inner and outer worlds, moving between the two and not forgetting the importance of either. Slowly, it appears, Hardenberg is evading the danger of a wholly subject-centred model of poetics.

The possibility of intersubjective experience implied by the schematic model of signification is not pursued throughout the 'Fichte-Studien' or the 'Vermischte Bemerkungen'. Ultimately, Hardenberg did not *think* his way out of the problem at all. It was not a matter of philosophy, but rather one of feeling that provided the solution; Hardenberg developed a theory of love. The poet had complained on several occasions about the lack of love in Fichte's system.² What he found lacking in Fichte, however, he found in the Hemsterhuisian notion of universal love discussed earlier. Essential to a 'loving' existence of the sort written about by Hemsterhuis was the awareness of this interconnection of all things and it is thence that the necessarily moral dimension to all relationships grows.³ For the purposes of our discussion the notion of love also allowed for the re-thinking of the other as a subject, the transformation of the 'Nicht-Ich' into a 'Du'. The self in Novalis first experiences that love internally, as the force asserting the connection between its conscious self and the internal image of the other it constructs within itself. Thomas Grosser's study showed that by cultivating a loving relationship with its *internal* representation of others, the self is able to rethink those others as other selves and aspire to an ideal of identity, in which the self comprises a host of many.⁴ This, however, all transpires within

the ego: the many others are still part of the self, so we must move beyond Grosser if we are to reconstruct a model of genuinely intersubjective recognition in Novalis. The studies of the other/women in Novalis undertaken by scholars of gender read the 'Du' as a similarly internal or even a narcissistic phenomenon. Some, Padilla and von Braun for instance, either ignore or are unaware of the 'Du' formula and contend that Hardenberg's subjectivism merely produces an orthodox Fichtean 'Nicht-Ich', with the role of that passive other largely played by women. Fankhauser engages with the formula, but sees it as a pejoratively aesthetic and *illusory* representation of the subject's communion with the other. This forms the basis of her wholesale reading of the literary works, wherein women are displaced and destroyed by artificial images of femininity in various guises.⁵ Kuzniar took the discussion forward, contending that the 'Du' formula makes possible a blurring of gender boundaries and of the individual's identity generally, writing that the subject 'embraces alterity to enhance his or her own capacity for transformation while upholding the other's separateness' (Kuzniar, 1203).⁶ Whilst claiming the formula preserves the integrity of the other's identity, however, Kuzniar undermines her own argument by implying the primary function of represented otherness to be the opening out of developmental possibilities for the original (male) subject.

Géza von Molnár first and most significantly explored how this formula, apparently relating to the modification of the self's inner experience, actually constituted the subject's recognition of the others *beyond* itself and formed the basis of their ensuing relationship. Molnár relates the formula closely to Heinrich's encounter with the blue flower in the first dream in *Offendingen*.⁷ Both in the formula and in the dream Molnár sees a moment of recognition between self and other, derived from the loving relationship between the two: 'The dreamer in the first chapter dreams about himself and discovers the world' (Molnár, 115) or later 'Novalis has Eros forge the bond that links the self to world and world to self. To be sure, that union has not yet been consummated and is still only a promise [...]' (ibid.) In the latter sentence, Molnár points rightly to the fact that this encounter is still only a moment of recognition between the two. Gail Newman's most recent monograph, *Locating the Romantic Subject*, built on Molnár's work, continuing the investigation through the lens of the psychoanalytical theories of David Winnicott.⁸ Winnicotian psychoanalysis sees human identity as a fluid structure, which constantly redefines itself according to ongoing experiments that it conducts in an imagined space between itself and its significant others, referred to as 'transitional phenomena'. Hardenberg's theories are discussed in historically specific terms, though between his theories and those of Winnicott, Newman detects a strong functional analogy: building on the critique of Fichte, the 'Du' is felt to be the Early Romantic equivalent of the 'transitional phenomena' model. Both Winnicott and Hardenberg construct 'a subject who constitutes and dissolves its own boundaries through encounters of various sorts with significant others' (ibid.), in a fashion which allows the subject to both manipulate its vision of those others, but also recognize the significance of their identity

beyond the intermediacy. In both Novalis and Winnicott, this shapes the subject's wider relationship to its environment: 'the young self begins to sense its ambiguous status as both separated from and connected to a nurturant context' (ibid, 25). Newman's illuminating discussion investigates how the 'Du' is not merely a prescription, but actually engenders mutually inclusive self-other relationships in Novalis's works.

Initial readings of the actual texts relating to the 'Du' model might lead us to sympathize with the older view that Hardenberg's theories offer at best a narcissistic illusion of intersubjectivity. His was obviously occupied with ideas of intersubjectivity between late 1798 and early 1800, whilst working on the 'Brouillon' and on his literary works. In the so-called 'Fragmente und Studien' of 1799/1800 he wrote:

Eine wahrhafte *Liebe* zu einer leblosen Sache ist wol gedenkbar – auch zu Pflanzen, Thieren, zur Natur – ja zu sich selbst. Wenn der Mensch erst ein wahrhaft innerliches Du hat – so entsteht ein höchstgeistiger und sinnlicher Umgang und d[ie] heftigste Leidenschaft ist möglich [...] (N,III,577:172).

Here, the emphasis is on the 'Du' as 'innerlich'. However, the notion of the 'höchstgeistiger und sinnlicher Umgang' might also refer to the possibility of a harmonious relationship with others beyond the self (Grosser, 65-66). Hardenberg continues this discussion in a 'Brouillon' entry from late 1798, which goes further to show how the self's relationship to its 'inner others' affects this relationship positively. Hardenberg wrote:

Eigentlich ist der *Kriticism* – (oder d[ie] *Erschöpfungsmethode*, welche d[ie] Umkehrungsmeth[ode] mit begreift), diejenige Lehre, die uns beym Studium der Natur auf uns selbst, auf innre Beobachtung und Versuch, und beym Studium unsrer selbst, auf die Außenwelt, auf äußre Beobachtungen und Versuche verweist – philosophisch betrachtet die fruchtbarste aller *Indicationen*.

Sie läßt uns die Natur, oder *Außenwelt*, als ein menschliches Wesen ahnden – Sie zeigt, daß wir *alles* nur so verstehen können und sollen, wie wir uns selbst und unsre *Geliebten*, uns und *euch* verstehn.

Wir erblicken uns im System, *als Glied* – mithin in auf und absteigender Linie, vom Unendlich kleinen bis zum Unendlich Großen – *Menschen* von unendlichen Variationen. [...]

Jetzt sehn wir die wahren Bande der Verknüpfung von Subject] und Object] – sehn, daß es auch eine Außenwelt in uns giebt, die mit unserm innern in einer analogen Verbindung, wie die Außenwelt außer uns mit unserem Äußern und jene und diese so verbunden sind, wie unser Innres und Äußres [...].

Nun erscheint die sog[ennante] Transscendentalphil[osophie] – die Zurückweisung ans Subject – der *Idealism*, und die Kategorien – der Zusammenh[ang] zwischen Object] und Vorst[ellung] in einem ganz neuen *Lichte*.

Demonstration, warum etwas zur äußern und Innern Natur gehört – Demonstrabilitaet jeder Existenz und ihrer Modification. [...].

Selbstheit ist der Grund aller Erkenntniß – als der Grund der Beharrlichkeit im Veränderlichen – auch das Prinzip der höchsten *Mannichfaltigkeit* – (*Du*) (Statt N[icht] I[ch] – Du.)

D[ie] Gemeinschaft und Eigenthümlichkeit. Alles kann Ich seyn und ist Ich oder soll Ich seyn. (N,III,429-30:820).

This entry confirms that the self is the forum in which all enquiry into the world outside must occur. The process of enquiry into the nature of the world occurs through the transformation of the world or non-self into another self through loving identification ('wie wir uns selbst und unsere Geliebten'), though again, this process appears *internal*. The entry also speaks, however, of how transcendental philosophy's recourse to the subject-object relationship can be seen in 'an entirely new light'. The relationship between the self's *inner* conception of self and others exists in analogy ('in analoger Verbindung') to the relationship between the self as a whole and the *outer* world. Just as the inner self is an individual within a plurality, so the outer self is not a discrete entity, but part of a bigger whole inhabited by other selves. In this context, the internal identification and harmony of self and others becomes the blueprint for the self's engagement with the real world and its inhabitants. It becomes possible for the subject to conceive of itself as a member (*Glied*) within an infinitely diverse, but internally interrelating whole, a microcosm within a macrocosm. So when the entry speaks of a principle of utmost multiplicity, ('Prinzip der höchsten *Mannigfaltigkeit*'), it does not merely refer to a model of an internally fragmented ego, but rather to an inner diversity that enables the subject to regard itself as part of a manifold network of other subjects in the world beyond. In the light of this, the closing sentence of the entry, which reads that all things are or can become 'Ich', is not a manifesto for the self to convert the world around it into a mirror of its own subjectivity, but to regard it as another and distinct self or selves. Although Hardenberg wrote within his entry that 'Selbstheit ist der Grund aller Erkenntniß', reminding us that all discovery is made subjectively, if it is to be a conscious object of reflexion, this does not mean that the ideal of intersubjective recognition cannot guide the individual in its striving for genuine intersubjective communion with others in the objective space beyond the self. We can now test whether Hardenberg translates this theory of intersubjective recognition into a theory of intersubjective communication, which envisages both communicative and creative freedom for the individual, but limits the individual's freedom by affording equal rights to all others.

III. 2. *The Early-Modern Tradition of 'Naturmusik' and Hardenberg's Polyphony (1798-99)*

The above discussion brings the Hardenbergian subject to the threshold of a world inhabited by an infinite number of others like itself. Beyond the network of mutual *recognition* implied by this encounter, though, how are these selves to *communicate* with each other? Are they to remain inertly side by side, to disregard each other? Or, if they are to interact, what is to govern their interaction, both social and communicative? We shall continue our investigation by seeking a model of sociability and discourse that enshrines the spirit of mutual recognition inherent in our reading of the 'Statt N[icht]-I[ch] – Du' in a practicable system, which might be reflected in the communicative exchanges between subjects in the literary texts. To uphold the communicative

rights of all, this system would not only have to regulate interpersonal relations, but also offer models of behaviour and utterance. Within a collective of subjects, the system would have to ensure an apparently paradoxical situation, in which the individual's autonomous and unfettered utterance was allowed, whilst preventing that individual from dominating, determining or speaking for others. Having established these criteria, how and where in Novalis ought we to begin seeking our model? One approach would be to examine how Hardenberg integrates his notion of the subject into a holistic model of universal identity: Herbert Uerlings reminded us that understanding Novalis's work involves tracing the poet's harmonization of mystical-theosophical models of the universe with the post-Fichtean, subjective stance.⁹ Following Uerlings in this matter, we shall look to Hardenberg's engagement with various traditions of holistic thinking for our solution.

There were, in fact, two thinkers from whose works Hardenberg culled ideas that would inform his model of inter-subjective discourse: the aforementioned figures of Paracelsus and Jacob Böhme. Common to both writers was a belief that the divine spirit could be in some way revealed to man through the close speculation of the natural world. A key contribution made by both writers to Novalis in this context was the epistemological insight that the truth about things is inherent *within* those things and could be transmitted or revealed *by* those things themselves. In the works of both thinkers, this sprang from the notion that all things contained a divine essence or signature (*Signatur*), which could in some way be communicated or externalized. This is of particular interest to us, as it leads Hardenberg to a position whereby his subject must recognize that it alone does not generate and ascribe identity and meaning to things and that it is not the sole agent of communication. Consequently it must adopt a more passive-receptive posture towards the world in which it finds itself; it must be willing to read, listen and assimilate meaning constituted elsewhere and by authorities other than itself.

How exactly did Hardenberg assimilate ideas on this theme from the two writers in question? Of the two, he first encountered the ideas of Paracelsus.¹⁰ Hans-Joachim Mähl showed Hardenberg's acquaintance with Paracelsus to have come not from a direct reading of Paracelsus, but from an engagement with a medical-historical work, Kurt Sprengel's *Versuch einer pragmatischen Geschichte der Arzneikunde* (1794), in which 'ungewöhnlich ausführlich die "wahrhaft theosophischen und kabbalistischen Principia" des Paracelsus und seine Lehre von den "Signaturen" abgehandelt werden' (N,III,909:267). According to Mähl, a telling excerpt from Sprengel's work is the following:

Eben dies Emanations-System beruht auf der *allgemeinen Harmonie aller Dinge in der Natur*, auf der Uebereinstimmung vorzüglich der Gestirne mit den sublunarenischen Dingen [...].

Als *Philosoph* erkennt der Arzt die untere Sphäre, oder das Dasein der himmlischen Intelligenzen in den sublunarenischen Dingen; als *Astronom* aber die obere Sphäre, das heisst, er findet die Glieder des menschlichen Körpers in dem Firmanent wieder [...] Ist man nicht im Stande, auf den Körper selbst zu wirken, so wirke man auf seine *astralische Form*, auf sein *syderisches*

Urbild durch Charaktere, durch Beschwörungen und andere theurgische Künste ein [...] Die himmlischen Intelligenzen oder das astralische Leib drückt allen materiellen Körpern gewisse Spuren und Zeichen ein, wodurch man die Herrschaft dieser Intelligenzen über den Menschen erkennen kann. Ein hoher Grad der Theosophie ist es, wann der Magus die Bedeutung dieser Zeichen kennt, und aus diesen *Signaturen* das Wesen, die Natur und die Eigenschaften eines Körpers erkennen kann [...] Adam, der erste Mensch, war mit der Kabbalah sehr vertraut. Er kannte die *Signaturen aller Dinge*, und gab deswegen allen Thieren die passendsten Nahmen. Darum enthält auch die hebräische Sprache die besten Nahmen für alle Thiere, die selbst ihre Natur anzeigen [...]’ (ibid.)

Sprengel reconstructs the Paracelsian view of the universe as an emanation from a central divine source, which in turn implies the harmonious interrelation of all individual objects and phenomena via this common heritage. This means that celestial phenomena relate to the earthly and vice versa: earthly material bodies have their own astral equivalent and it is this ‘astralischer Leib’, which leaves its marks on the physical in the form of the *Signatur*. For Sprengel, reading Paracelsus, an advanced level of theosophical competence is required to read and identify the *Signaturen*: it is only a Magus, a sage or sorcerer, who can attempt this. Of all the Magi, Adam of the Bible’s Old Testament was considered the most adept, given his achievement in recognizing and naming the animals of Eden. Now Mähl has asserted that the following entry from the first section of the ‘Brouillon’ is evidence of Hardenberg’s certain and direct engagement with Sprengel’s work and this passage in particular: ‘Der Mensch spricht nicht allein – auch das Universum *spricht* – alles spricht – unendliche Sprachen. / Lehre von den Signaturen’ (N,III,267-68:143). Mähl’s contention is quite plausible, though, for purposes of our argument, requires qualification: the excerpt from Paracelsus/Sprengel differs from Hardenberg’s own formulation on one crucial point. The former actually concedes little freedom to the self-expressive capacity of things themselves, the articulation of *Signaturen* being dependent on the hermeneutic activity and applied wisdom of conspicuously patriarchal agents: Adam or the Magi. In integrating the *Signaturenlehre* into his own thinking in the ‘Brouillon’ jottings of September/ October 1798, Hardenberg seems to have placed a different emphasis to that in Paracelsus’s original. For the poet the natural world is not only endowed with meaning, but is a nexus of languages and voices, which seem to speak with their own agency. The individual human does not, as Hardenberg puts it, speak alone.

Carl Paschek’s doctoral dissertation of 1967 first explored systematically the full impact upon Novalis of our second theorist of universal communication, Jacob Böhme.¹¹ It was the aim of Paschek’s study to clarify how Hardenberg’s already existing system influenced his reception and incorporation of Böhme’s thinking into his own (Paschek, 11). The editors of the second edition of the *HKA* noted in their introduction to the first volume, that Hardenberg’s first encounter with Böhme also occurred through his reading of Sprengel (N,I,72-73). Working with both Mähl’s essay ‘Novalis und Plotin’ and his commentary on the ‘Brouillon’ in volume three of the *HKA*, however, Paschek contends that Hardenberg had not read Böhme closely until late

1799 or early 1800 (Paschek, *ibid.*): the above 'Brouillon' entry referring to the *Signaturenlehre*, therefore, is to be attributed to the study of Paracelsus via Sprengel and not of Böhme. Both Mähl and Paschek contend that Böhme was not introduced to Hardenberg until after he met Ludwig Tieck in summer 1799, basing their view on a letter from the former to the latter. On 23 February 1800, Hardenberg wrote to Tieck of his reading of Böhme and how pleased he was to have discovered this writer through his new friend:

Jacob Böhm les ich jezt im Zusammenhange, und fange ihn an zu verstehen, wie er verstanden werden muß. Man sieht durchaus in ihm den gewaltigen Frühling mit seinen quellenden, treibenden, bildenden und mischenden Kräften, die von innen heraus die Welt gebären – Ein ächtes Chaos voll dunkler Begier und wunderbaren Leben – einen wahren, auseinandergehenden Microcosmos. Es ist mir sehr lieb, ihn durch Dich kennen gelernt zu haben – Um so besser ist es, daß die Lehrlinge ruhn – die jezt auf eine ganz andere Art erscheinen sollen – Es soll ein ächt-sinnbildlicher, Naturroman werden. Erst muß Heinrich fertig sein – Eins nach dem Andern, sonst wird nichts fertig. [...] So viel ich auch aus Meister gelernt habe und noch lerne, so odios ist doch im Grunde das ganze Buch. [...] Es ist ein Candide gegen die Poësie – ein nobilitirter Roman. [...] Das Buch ist unendlich merkwürdig – aber man freut sich doch herzlich, wenn man von der ängstlichen Peinlichkeit des 4ten Theils erlöst und zum Schluß gekommen ist. Welche heitere Fröhlichkeit herrscht nicht dagegen in Böhme, und diese ist doch allein, in der wir leben, wie der Fisch im Wasser (N,IV,322-23).

The letter might refer to a renewed acquaintance with Böhme and new understanding of a writer already known to the poet, or it might simply refer to Hardenberg's first encounter with Böhme. Either way, a systematic and thorough reading of Böhme's primary texts did not occur until the last quarter of 1799, possibly as late as early 1800. What, though, of the nature and substance of Hardenberg's reading? In this extract, he appears to recant his earlier admiration for Goethe's *Wihlem Meisters Lehrjahre*. In tandem with this criticism of the novel goes a growing appreciation of Böhme's vital sense of nature, not as an object to be mastered or exploited but as a living and diverse organism, within which the individual lives and to which he or she is connected. He also claims to be reading Böhme 'entirely in context', understanding him as he 'ought' to be understood. How, though, *ought* Böhme to be understood and what does Hardenberg mean by this? Like Paracelsus, Böhme offered a theocentric view of the universe, in which all existence was a fragmentary emanation of God. The godly heritage of all things left within them a divine essence, known again as *Signaturen*. The outward, physical forms of objects were thus unable to disclose the inner essence of those objects, which remained unknowable and ineffable. Yet humanity had in some way to strive to know that essence, if it was to know or commune with God; all things had to be interpreted and in some way represented to the mind. So at the heart of Böhme's project is an aesthetico-epistemological endeavour, reminiscent of Early-Romantic *Poësie*. Paschek takes Hardenberg's comment on reading Böhme 'entirely in context' to mean the Romantic is reading his predecessor as a fellow poet or a poeticist of nature. Here, though, we note that Paschek interprets Hardenberg's relationship to Böhme in terms of a subjectivist

poetics common to both. In our discussion, however, we shall return to Böhme to seek ideas on intersubjective communication and ask whether these are bequeathed to and developed by Novalis, seeking evidence of this in works by both.

Of Böhme's works, it is *De signatura rerum* (1622) and Hardenberg's reading of it, which is of particular interest. This work, which Paschek shows Hardenberg to have known (Paschek, 77. no.1), portrays the unfolding universe as a system of signs. Here Böhme sketches his view of the physical universe in terms of the *Signaturenlehre*: 'Ein iedes Ding hat seinen Mund zur Offenbarung. Und das ist die Natur-Sprache, daraus iedes Dings aus seiner Eigenschaft redet, und sich immer selber offenbaret und darstellt [...]'.¹² Each thing in creation appears to be a communicating entity in its own right, equipped with its own metaphorical 'mouth' for self-expression. A twentieth-century namesake of the theosophist, Gernot Böhme, noted in his essay of 1989,¹³ that the *Signaturen* lay buried deep within their objects. They could never be accessed and disclosed in full and had, moreover, to be coaxed forth, to be 'read' actively or intuited by sensually perceptive individuals; all things must be *made* to speak. G. Böhme was also able to show the theosophist to have considered this speculative interaction with the natural world as a 'musical' process. Physical phenomena are thought of as musical instruments, which can be blown upon, strummed, plucked or beaten in order that they give voice to themselves (G.Böhme, 167-68). Despite such emphasis on the role of the subject, it is precisely within this extended musical allegory that Jacob Böhme reveals the ultimately theocentric character of his ideas. It is God who orchestrates the divine ensemble of the cosmos:

13. [...] Ich soll sein Instrument und Saitenspiel seines ausgesprochenen Wortes und Halles seyn; und nicht alleine ich, sondern alle meine Mitglieder in dem herrlichen zugerichteten Instrument Gottes; wir sind alle Saiten in seinem Freudenspiel; der Geist seines Mundes ists, der unsere Saiten seiner Stimme schlaeget.¹⁴

To an extent, this undermines the autonomous nature of human undertaking, be it individual or collective; God gives us the need and the capability to speculate on nature, an endeavour, which expresses our dependence upon Him. Indeed God is seen in this extract as a universally composite instrument, of which individuals are subordinate parts. Thus we have found in Böhme a polyphonic model of the universe, expressed through the allegory of music. Within that allegory, all things and beings have a voice to speak, although Böhme's system emphasizes that, in speaking or playing, all individuals are subject to God's direction. This allegory, as we shall see, will serve as a motif that helps us to trace back to Böhme many of Hardenberg's ideas on the subject of polyphony. In the poet's works, both theoretical and literary, his re-working of this allegory will also grow to be of constitutive importance, as it regulates the sharing of communicative agency between the individual and the collective.

As with Paracelsus, Hardenberg did not absorb Böhme's ideas without modifying them. In engaging with Paracelsus, Hardenberg had encountered a model of the *Signaturenlehre*, in which

the individual was responsible for the de-coding and re-articulation of the essence of things. Böhme's work on *Signaturen* also ascribed to the individual the potential to commune with divinity by speculating on the essence of objects, though he subsumed the individual explicitly in the context of a divine will and agency, such that all speculative endeavour was God's doing. Thus, Hardenberg appeared to be dealing with two versions of the same story, two systems, which expounded similar ideas, but differed in their attribution of communicative agency to the individual subject. How would he resolve this problem? Since the 'Fichte-Studien', his writings had been moving towards a balanced, non-hierarchical relationship between the individual subject and the collective of subjects, the context or 'whole' within which the individual resides. An entry in the 'Fichte-Studien' exemplifies this, albeit within a quite different thematic context. There, the physical body is shown as both unique to the individual, but *also* inseparably part of the universal cycle of matter; it is determined by the individual and the whole *simultaneously*.

Ich finde meinen Körper durch sich und die Weltseele zugleich bestimmt und wirksam. Mein Körper ist ein kleines Ganzes, und hat also auch eine besondere Seele; denn ich nenne Seele, wodurch Alles zu Einem Ganzen wird, das individuelle Princip. – Was die Belebung des besonderen Gliedes betrifft, so finde ich mich in dieser Hinsicht bloß durch mich selbst, und zwar mittelbar durch die allgemeine Belebung bestimmt. Die Belebung selbst aber betreffend, so ist sie nichts anders, als eine Zueignung, eine Identification (N,II,551:118).

Implied in this is the more general idea that the self is simultaneously self-determining and determined from without, it both rules and is ruled over. The human body is presented as an animated quantity of universal matter, which is transfigured by the self to serve as a body: in this way, the 'Belebung des besonderen Gliedes' (the body) is both determined by the individual self, but also, indirectly, by the life force generally inherent in the whole of creation. This tendency of placing importance both on the individual and the individual's universal context continued throughout the theoretical fragments of 1798 and early 1799, with Hardenberg adopting first one position, then the other. In the 'Brouillon' we find the tendency beginning to converge with issues of language and communication. The following extract, expressed through musical imagery, could almost have come directly from Böhme's treatise:

Unermeßliche Mannichfaltigkeit der Windharfen Töne und *Einfachheit* der bewegenden Potenz. So mit dem *Menschen* – der Mensch ist die Harfe, soll die Harfe seyn (N,III,434:855).

Humanity is to become, allegorically, an Æolian harp. Just as a simple breath of wind elicits a multitude of tones from the actual harp, so a simple breath of God will cause manifold actions and reactions within humanity. According to this fragment, then, it seems that humanity's aesthetic and communicative endeavours are merely involuntary and unwitting expressions of the divine will, so the musical allegory does not always ensure models of communication that limit and give freedom to the subject in equal measure. At other points in the writing of the period,

though, Hardenberg strikes a more even balance. In the 'Brouillon', he writes on the human voice, describing it as something that must be consciously developed by individuals: 'Um die Stimme zu bilden, muß der Mensch mehrere Stimmen sich aneignen' (N,III,290:282). This implies, too, that the poet's singular voice is itself *dialogical*, to use Bakhtin's term, composed of many strands, which he has inherited – or here taken – from others. Whilst, furthermore, the poet must cultivate his or her identity through the absorption of other identities '[...] um seine Individualität auszubilden muß er immer mehrere Individualitäten anzunehmen', he or she must also 'sich zu assimilieren wissen' (ibid). In other words the poet must know how to assimilate him or herself within a communicative context, the relevance of which is much wider than the personal development of any one individual. We have already noted that Novalis's theories involve the subject recognizing the other's position and require the subject, therefore, to sacrifice absolute sovereignty in communicative acts. In the light of this, we can read the above notion of assimilation as being inclusive in the intersubjective sense: the poet's voice must not replace the voices it echoes, but integrate itself into a manifold, which preserves the integrity and position of those other voices.

Following Hardenberg's reading of Böhme late in 1799 and early 1800, collections of fragments ensued, which continued exploring models of the self within the universal whole, often with explicit reference to models of polyphonic communication. Furthermore, these are again often expressed through the increasingly important allegory of music. In the *Nachlese*, a collection of fragments believed to originate from summer 1800, Hardenberg discusses the position of the poet in the natural universe in the following terms:

Des Dichters Reich sei die Welt, in den Fokus seiner Zeit gedrängt. Sein Plan und seine Ausführung sei dichterisch, das ist, dichterische Natur. Er kann alles brauchen, er muß es nur mit Geist amalgamieren, er muß ein Ganzes daraus machen. Das Allgemeine, wie das Besondere muß er darstellen – alle Darstellung ist im Entgegengesetzten und seine Freiheit im Verbinden macht ihn unumschränkt. Alle dichterische Natur ist Natur. Ihr gebühren alle Eigenschaften der letzteren. So individuell sie ist, so allgemein interessant doch. Was helfen uns Beschreibungen, die Geist und Herz kalt lassen, leblose Beschreibungen der leblosen Natur – sie müssen wenigstens symbolisch sein, wie die Natur selber, wenn sie auch kein Gemüthszustandsspiel hervorbringen sollen. Entweder muß die Natur Ideenträger, oder das Gemüth Naturträger seyn. Dieses Gesetz muß im Ganzen und im Einzelnen wirksam seyn. Egoist darf der Dichter durchaus nicht erscheinen. Er muß sich selbst Erscheinung sein. Er ist der Vorstellungsprophet der Natur, so wie der Philosoph der Naturprophet der Vorstellung. Jenem ist das Objektive Alles, diesem das Subjektive. Jener ist Stimme des Weltalls, dieser Stimme des einfachsten Eins, des Prinzips, jener Gesang, dieser Rede (N,III,693:705).

The world is to be the poet's kingdom. Poets can draw material for their writing from any part of the natural world, it seems; they need merely to amalgamate the different elements they wish to represent. In the endeavour of apparently 'connecting' phenomena to create holistic visions of nature, the poet is to be entirely free and unfettered. In such poetic activity, furthermore, he or

she is to function as 'Stimme des Weltalls', as a 'voice of the cosmos'. In presenting poets thus, Hardenberg contrasts poets and their voices with those of philosophers. The philosopher's voice is one of simplicity and unity as it seeks to articulate the *a priori* grounds of all poetic endeavour, whilst the poet's voice is pluralized, moving beyond reflection on the theoretical grounds of poetry into the practice of poetry itself. Yet, despite its arguably dialogical or composite quality, there is still the danger that the poet's role as 'voice of the cosmos' is to present nature in a way that smothers nature's own communicative agency. This danger is dealt with, however, in the following: 'Egoist darf der Dichter durchaus nicht erscheinen. Er muß sich selbst Erscheinung sein. Er ist der Vorstellungsprophet der Natur': the poet may not be egotistical, but must be aware of his or her own particular position as a voice within a wider 'vocal' context. When Hardenberg asks rhetorically: 'Was helfen uns Beschreibungen, die Geist und Herz kalt lassen, leblose Beschreibungen der leblosen Natur – sie müssen wenigstens symbolisch sein, wie die Natur selber, wenn sie auch kein Gemüthszustandsspiel hervorbringen sollen. Entweder muß die Natur Ideenträger, oder das Gemüth Naturträger seyn', he demands that, if the poet's descriptions of nature cannot engage the heart and mind as they ideally should, then they should at least function symbolically as does nature itself. Either humanity's psyche must reflect or transmit truths about the natural world, or nature itself must reflect humanity's ideas. It is, therefore, not only true that the poet creates aesthetic representations of the natural world, but also that the natural world functions as an independent aesthetically representing agency. So within this text on the apparent primacy of the poet's voice, Hardenberg makes provision for nature *itself* being endowed with meaning. Significantly, he allegorizes the poet's vocalizations as song, as being musical in nature, in contrast with the prosaic speech of the philosopher. The re-occurrence of musical allegories in this post-Böhmian context not only refers to the aesthetic quality of the individual poet's expressions, however, but also signals that he or she must be aware of the polyphonic whole within which communication occurs. Poets may not simply sing their songs of nature, but must sing consciously within the 'music' of the universal whole.

What bearing do these ideas have on Hardenberg's literary work, however? Are we simply to assert that these were likely to have been in his mind at the time of writing the *Lehrlinge* and *Ofterdingen*? In fact, more concrete evidence is at hand. From late 1799 onwards, Hardenberg had already begun to conceive of his prose fiction in terms of his model of musical polyphony: 'Mann muß schriftstellen, wie Componiren' (N,III,563:55). Perhaps unexpectedly in a list of 'Medizinische Bemerkungen' from the early months of 1800 appears a fragment in a similar vein, which begins by using a musical allegory to reflect on the physical properties of spoken language:

Hat die Sprache nicht ihre Descant und Bass und Tenortöne? Nicht ihren Tact – nicht einen Grundton – nicht mannichfaltige Stimmen und Geschwindigkeiten? Sind die verschiedenen Arten des Styls nicht verschiedene Instrumente? (N,III,617:376).

Again, the notion of the individual voice as a composite of many qualities and dynamics is to be found. The final sentence, however, extends to the stylistic use of language employed in more formally composed spoken or written language. If language is a rich tapestry of sounds and tones, then different styles of writing and speaking, indeed texts themselves, are equivalent to orchestrations produced by a composer who employs different combinations of instruments to effect. In a later fragment from summer 1800, the invention and manipulation of characters in the novel is portrayed within a similarly musical allegory: 'Ächte, poëtische Charactere sind schwierig genug zu erfinden und auszuführen. Es sind gleichsam verschiedne Stimmen und Instrumente' (N,III,688:682). The production of a novel is, then, an act of musical composition. Not only does the use of language constitute a form of composition, but the creation, development and use of characters in prose fiction, the articulation of their voices is tantamount to the orchestration of musical voices and instruments. The speculative 'Berliner Papiere' of autumn 1800, contain jotted plans for the continuation of *Offertdingen*, which also hold specific reference, again in musical terms and images, to Jacob Böhme and to the notion of intersubjective polyphony. The whole of the planned continuation of the novel's second part was, in Hardenberg's own words, to be characterized not by the protagonist's inner fantasy of communing and communicating with others, but by a genuine 'Leichtigkeit zu Dialogiren' (N,III,673:618). In this context he mentions: 'Blumengespräche. Thiere. Heinrich von Afterd[ingen] wird Blume – Thier – Stein – Stern. Nach Jacob Böhm am Schluß des Buchs' (N,III,672:615) and later 'Gespräche der Blumen und Thiere über Menschen, Religion, Natur und Wissenschaften' (N,III,673:617). The final sentence of these plans, possibly the final explicit plans Hardenberg wrote down for his novel, refer to Heinrich's strange metamorphic experiences as mentioned above, noting: 'Während dieser Verwandlungen hört er allerley wunderliche Gespräche' (N,III,678:631). Some of the last thoughts Hardenberg seems to have had on his final, unfinished novel – or at least those he chose to write down – were concerned with an ideal of many voices discoursing.

Hardenberg's speculative writing between late 1797 and 1800, then, shows evidence of two theories of polyphony, which have much in common, though are also different. Both challenge the sovereignty of the subject as the sole arbiter and bestower of meaning, truth and identity. In both systems, the objects of the world beyond consciousness are endowed with their own identity and possess, in differing degrees, their own faculty of expression. In Paracelsus, objects must have their true signatures brought forward by active human endeavour, though in his references to this tradition Hardenberg shifts the emphasis to imply that, in a fashion, objects speak for themselves. In Böhme, it is again human endeavour that brings forth the signatures of identity. In his work, however, there is also a sense that all things speak with an agency beyond that of the poet. However, Böhme achieves this by making *all* discourse ultimately an expression of a divine, macrocosmic will. Hardenberg's solution, it appears, is to mediate the two positions,

creating a system in which all things may communicate of their own volition, but are also limited in their freedom to do so. From 1799 onwards, we have noted a series of musical allegories in Novalis, in which subjects appear collectively as ensembles of voices or musicians. These allegories have more than an ornamental function, however. They serve to link Hardenberg's presentation of communicative occurrences to his post-Böhmian reflections on the issue. Increasingly, too, the notion of music in fact helps to *constitute* Hardenberg's theoretical model of communication and creative productivity, which considers both the role of the individual and the pre-determined whole. The allegory of an ensemble of voices or musicians, in particular, allows individuals to be portrayed as freely performing agents, who must nevertheless surrender unlimited freedom in order to co-operate and combine for the benefit of the other participants – and for the 'performance' as a whole. This amounts to a dialectic of autonomy and limitation, of self-determination and pre-determination from without. The apparent paradox here is precisely what makes Novalis's model of polyphony egalitarian, because it provides for the individual's rights of (apparently unfettered) utterance though prevents the polyphony from degenerating into cacophony: wholly free individuals would speak over and across each other, trampling each other's communicative rights, so exercising the right to discourse within such anarchy could not be expressive of an egalitarian ideal founded in mutual recognition and respect. If the inclusion of all voices is to grow from such recognition and respect, then polyphony must be dependent on some degree of external determination of the individual by the whole, on a loss of his or her absolute freedom and upon his or her willing participation in the system.

Our investigation will continue, in what remains of this chapter and the one following, by seeking in the prose literary works from 1798 until the poet's death an evolution in the presentation of intersubjective communication parallel to that we have found in his theoretical writings. In the aforementioned letter to Tieck of February 1800, Hardenberg mentioned the fact that the *Lehrlinge* were in fact dormant during his reading of Böhme and that, whilst he would return to them to re-work them, he would be concentrating on *Ofterdingen* first: 'Um so besser ist es, daß die Lehrlinge ruhn – die jetzt auf eine ganz andere Art erscheinen sollen – Es soll ein ächtsinnbildlicher, Naturroman werden. Erst muß Heinrich fertig sein – Eins nach dem Andern, sonst wird nichts fertig [...]' As both works were written along an axis of theoretical development resulting in the model of intersubjective polyphony, *Ofterdingen* was written at a time when that model was more developed. It is, therefore, quite possible that there will be a more accomplished literary realization of that model in the epic novel, than in the *Lehrlinge*: one which genuinely represents all subjects' communicative rights. Bearing these facts in mind, we turn firstly to examine the less mature work, examining how the polyphonic model translates into prose. In assessing the realization of polyphony, we shall examine if this benefits the female subject and the articulation of her voice within the text.

III. 3. *The Cosmic Symphony and the Feminine in 'Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs' (1798)*

Hardenberg's prose-fragment *Die Lehrlinge zu Saïs* was produced from late February 1798 onwards and worked on intermittently for over a year, before being put aside in late summer 1799 in favour of other projects. The text was the product partly of the Freiberg scientific studies, followed chronologically the study of Hemsterhuis and ran in parallel with the engagement with Paracelsus. Not surprisingly, then, it deals both with the individual's speculative-poetic investigations of the natural world and his relationship with other speculating selves within an apparently intersubjective debate on nature. Scholars have made other readings, however, which have pointed to the text's exclusion of certain participants from the discourse on nature. Fankhauser links the entirety of Hardenberg's poetic of nature, including its realization, to the alchemical tradition. The *primus motor* of alchemical thought was that all elements could be broken down into a base substance, known variously as 'Jungfernerde' or 'Jungfernmilch', and reconstructed through human endeavour into other more complex or valuable substances. In a range of examples, it becomes clear that the essence of matter is feminine, though the intellect and skill re-shaping it into new forms is masculine. This both mirrored and influenced Hardenberg's treatment of the relationship between nature and poet, or nature and novice, contends Fankhauser. The temple becomes both a discussion forum and a workshop in the alchemical tradition, in which a brotherhood can meet, discuss, draft and produce their own fantasy of feminine nature. This male delusion can be seen to limit women in two ways: by replacing them with static and imagined feminine constructions of nature and excluding them from the discourse of speculation. The list of plans for the continuation of the *Lehrlinge* contains two elements that Fankhauser needs to complete her argument: the ultimate work of para-scientific artifice is placed alongside the ultimate patriarchal construct of feminine nature (Fankhauser, 65ff). Perhaps rightly, then, Fankhauser points out that, even in a text designed to realize intersubjective communication, the female subject can still be understood as thematically and formally excluded. We shall, however, re-examine this text to establish how applicable such criticisms are.

The opening section is both well known and highly revealing:

Mannigfache Wege gehen die Menschen. Wer sie verfolgt und vergleicht, wird wunderliche Figuren entstehen sehn; Figuren, die zu jener großen Chifferschrift zu gehören scheinen, die man überall, auf Flügeln, Eierschalen, in Wolken, im Schnee [...] erblickt. In ihnen ahndet man den Schlüssel dieser Wunderschrift, die Sprachlehre derselben; allein die Ahndung will sich selbst in keine feste Form fügen, und scheint kein höherer Schlüssel werden zu wollen. Ein Alcahest scheint über die Sinne der Menschen ausgegossen zu seyn. Nur augenblicklich scheinen ihre Wünsche, ihre Gedanken sich zu verdichten. So entstehen ihre Ahnungen, aber nach kurzen Zeiten schwimmt alles wieder, wie vorher, von ihren Blicken. Von weitem hört' ich sagen: die Unverständlichkeit sey Folge nur des Unverstandes; dieser suche, was er habe, und also niemals weiter finden

könnte. Man verstehe die Sprache nicht, weil sich die Sprache selber nicht verstehe, nicht verstehen wolle [...].
 Nicht lange darauf sprach einer: Keiner Erklärung bedarf die heilige Schrift. Wer wahrhaft spricht, ist des ewigen Lebens voll, und wunderbar verwandt mit ächten Geheimnissen dünkt uns seine Schrift, denn sie ist ein Accord aus des Weltalls Symphonie (N,I,79).

From the outset the sense of plurality is evident. In speculating on nature, men walk many and multifarious paths. The plurality, however, is not limited to the choices men make or the paths they take in their search for knowledge, but refers too to the diverse sources of meaning that they may consult in nature. The patterns in rock formations, on snow crystals, in clouds and on feathers seem to form the readable script of the natural world. In this first paragraph, it is the subject, who is involved in the reading and interpreting of this script through observation, comparison and contrast. It is through observation, runs the text, that one has an inkling of the key to understanding all nature. Yet, it is at this precise moment, standing before the truth, that our understanding, our thoughts lose integrity, dissolve and, ultimately, the final insight into the nature of nature eludes us. Early in the text, then, the speculation of nature too is shown through the lens of Romantic irony. It is in the light of this that the teacher is able to make his comment, that nature requires no explanation. By this, he does not mean all we individuals can think or say about nature is irrelevant, but rather that no one explanation itself can deliver absolute truth. It is possible to speak 'truth', according to the teacher. The validity of that truth, however, derives from the acknowledgement of its context within a multitude of possible truths, the acknowledgement in other words of its merely relative value. That context is named by the teacher the 'cosmic symphony' of the natural world, the individual truth a chord drawn from it. Thus, the allegory of the symphony appears, through contextualization, to de-privilege the authority of the individual voice and the validity of what that voice has to say.

It is the teacher's insight into this symphonic nature of the universe that makes him an exemplary practitioner of the musical poetry of nature. In the passage following the above excerpt the novice recounts a journey undertaken by his teacher. Whilst travelling, he recognized that natural phenomena hitherto unknown to him were in fact merely re-combinations of phenomena already known to him. This insight allowed him to begin his own speculation. Here, Hardenberg is beginning to represent the communicative-cognitive context within which his subjects functioned in terms of a musical allegory. The teacher's contemplation of nature is presented through an explicitly musical metaphor, which is both *harmonic*, combining experimentally disparate elements of nature and *rhythmical* in the sense outlined above, marking transitions between experimental attempts. The passage reads: ' [...] er [...] griff so selbst in den Saiten nach Tönen und Gängen umher' (ibid, 80). Exploring aspects of the role of musicality in Hardenberg's thinking, Andrew Bowie chose on several occasions to emphasize the poet's notion of rhythm as being of central importance. Because the aesthetic structures of meaning and identity are only of relative value, so we must move between and beyond them. Bowie pointed

out that, for Novalis, language and indeed all representative schemes were like music, in that the transitions between individual components of those schemes were analogous to the operation of rhythm in music.¹⁵ Here again, though, the text makes explicit reference to the *context* of the teacher's endeavour. The image of his investigations into nature portrayed as the striking of chords, reminds us again of the cosmic symphony. The whole, the symphony, is dependent on the contributions of a plurality of voices or players, each choosing freely to play, but each of whom recognizes the importance of the whole and its other individuals, and thus surrenders a degree of absolute autonomy to the pre-determined patterns of the whole. Given our previous discussion, it is unlikely, if not impossible that this model was inherited from Böhme. In 1798, though, Hardenberg appears to be employing this musical model, perhaps instinctively, as an allegorical means of escaping the more subject centred Paracelsian model of polyphony. He uses it as a means of preserving artistic autonomy, whilst effectively limiting the poet's absolute freedom by locating him or her within a forum that upholds the rights of all to speak. And it is the issue of those rights and their realization, which has formal implications for the text as a whole.

The text opens with the pronouncements of a single narrative voice. That voice appears both omnipresent and omniscient, though is in fact neither. We have seen above that even the novice's teacher does not claim to have an omniscient perspective on the natural world. And slowly, the first voice begins to locate itself within a spatial and temporal reality populated by other voices and is thus de-centred on several counts: it is neither alone nor is it sole arbiter of the text's content. Within the passage quoted above two further voices emerge. Firstly there is a (spatially) distant voice: 'Von weitem hört' ich sagen' (ibid.). Explicit here is the fact that the presence of this voice is enough to reduce the first speaker to silence and to the passive activity of listening. Secondly, after the passage of time, comes the voice of the teacher: 'Nicht lange darauf sprach einer' (ibid.). Now the original voice re-asserts itself to tell the teacher's tale in his own words, and so the polyphony is lost for the remainder of the first part. Indeed, the first section appears to end with a return to the single subjective perspective, to the inner life of the original (character-) narrator:

Auch ich bin ungeschickter als die Andern, und minder gern scheinen sich die Schätze der Natur von mir finden zu lassen. Doch ist der Lehrer mir gewogen, und läßt mich in Gedanken sitzen, wenn die Andern suchen gehn. So wie dem Lehrer ist mir nie gewesen. Mich führt alles in mich selbst zurück. Was einmal die zweite Stimme sagte, habe ich wohl verstanden. Mich freuen die wunderlichen Haufen und Figuren in den Sälen, allein mir ist, als wären sie nur Bilder, Hüllen, Zierden, versammelt um ein göttlich Wunderbild, und dieses liegt mir immer in Gedanken. Sie such' ich nicht, in ihnen such' ich oft. Es ist, als sollten sie den Weg mir zeigen, wo in tiefem Schlaf die Jungfrau steht, nach der mein Geist sich sehnt. (N,I,81).

The narrator muses on natural phenomena, though he is less outwardly pragmatic than his fellow novices; he admits that all things lead him back to his inner self. He also occupies himself with

the hermeneutic endeavour of reading and interpreting the hieroglyphs on the temple walls, which do not themselves, he feels, contain the truth, but point as signposts to a deeper lying secret. Thus, his manner is more overtly poetic than that of his contemporaries. His secret desire is, nevertheless, to access immediately the knowledge of nature by raising the veil of the Goddess Isis and it is on this sentiment that the section closes. He is still very much occupied with finding his own way, fulfilling his own desire and is thus occupied with himself. For the first time, the feminine is introduced into the text in the form of the veiled Goddess, the keeper of nature's secrets (N,I,82). At the close of the first section, however, she, like the rest of the novices, is silent.

In the second part of the *Lehrlinge* the voices of the novices again emerge into polyphony, in fact they are drawn into an increasingly animated debate. They argue about individual interpretations of natural phenomena, as well as the methodologies by which they can be reached. The section opens again with the intonations of our 'authoritative' narrative voice, which tells a potted, speculative history of the relationship between humanity and nature (N,I,82ff.), culminating in a description of how that relationship is changing in the modern (Romantic) era (N,I,86). Quite inconspicuously the voice of narrative agency and the point of narrative focalization begin to fragment. Initially, the central voice decenters itself through the subjunctive report of another perspective on natural scientific endeavour: 'Nun dünkt es Einigen, es sey der Mühe gar nicht werth, den endlosen Zerspaltungen der Natur nachzugehn, und überdem ein gefährliches Unternehmen, ohne Frucht und Ausgang' (N,I,87-88). This sceptical line of thinking contends the potentially endless activity of investigating the natural world to be potentially destructive of humanity's well-being and sanity. More outspoken voices then emerge, this time speaking explicitly with their own agency: 'Wohl, sagen Muthigere, laßt unser Geschlecht einen langsamen, wohldurchdachten Zerstörungskrieg mit dieser Natur führen' (N,I,89). These individuals amplify the ideas of the first speaker(s) and call for a war against the destructive elements in nature, such that man becomes master over it in almost biblical terminology: 'Euch unterthänig muß sie werden' (ibid.). Further opinions are voiced: 'Sie haben recht, sprechen Mehrere; hier oder nirgends liegt der Talisman. Am Quell der Freiheit sitzen wir und spähn [...]. Was brauchen wir die trübe Welt der sichtbaren Dinge mühsam zu durchwandern? Die reinere Welt liegt ja in uns, in diesem Quell' (ibid.). Here a retreat into the inner world of the mind is called for; the recognition of only a few signs from the outside world is required, after which begins the inward task of decoding the 'große Schrift, wozu wir den Schlüssel haben'. In ramifying thus, the voices of the text eventually turn to contradict themselves: 'Die Andern reden irre, sagt ein ernster Mann zu diesen. Erkennen sie in der Natur nicht den treuen Abdruck ihrer Selbst? Sie selbst verzehren sich in wilder Gedankenlosigkeit' (N,I,90). For this speaker, the natural world is neither a chaos threatening destruction, nor the mere play thing of our poetically active egos, but something in between: a distinct entity in its

own right, which resembles us and can be influenced by us. He calls for a less fearful and confrontational approach to the relationship with nature. And whilst he maintains that the sober, waking individual 'fühlt sich Herr der Welt' and that 'sein Ich schwebt mächtig über diesen Abgrund, und wird in Ewigkeiten über diesem endlosen Wandel erhaben schweben', he also notes that 'Der Sinn der Welt ist die Vernunft' (ibid.). Reason makes possible a moral relationship with nature and, consequently, the speaker asserts:

Wer also zur Kenntniß der Natur gelangen will, übe seinen sittlichen Sinn, handle und bilde dem edlen Kerne seines Innern gemäß, und wie von selbst wird die Natur sich vor ihm öffnen. Sittliches Handeln ist jener große und einzige Versuch, in welchem alle Räthsel der mannichfaltigsten Erscheinungen sich lösen. Wer ihn versteht, und in strengen Gedankenfolgen ihn zu zerlegen weiß, ist ewiger Meister der Natur (ibid.).

The monologue ends again with an emphasis on the individual's inner processing of knowledge gained from nature, a process that will make him the eternal master of nature. Yet this is not quite as hierarchical as it might seem. 'Mastery' cannot be achieved before that individual has pursued a 'moral' relationship with nature and allowed it to reveal itself: 'wie von selbst wird die Natur sich vor ihm öffnen' (ibid.). It is in the manifold self-revelations of the world, claims the speaker, that nature offers us the solution to its puzzles. Thus, the final speaker embraces something of the polyphonic communicative ideal for governing the human relationship with nature, recognizing that his insight into it, his pronouncements upon it, are dependent on his allowing its many voices to speak for themselves, whilst asserting his mastery over it.

The discussion has turned into a debate of voices, many in number and diverse in opinion. It is with trepidation that one novice sits and beholds the 'sich kreuzenden Stimmen' (N,I,91). As the voices abate, the novice is approached by one of his peers and chastized for his inward-looking reflection, his failure to join the discussion and to participate in the 'Stimmung der Natur'. He continues:

Nur unter Menschen wird er einheimisch, der Geist, der sich mit tausend bunten Farben in all deine Sinne drängt, der wie eine unsichtbare Geliebte dich umgiebt. Bey unseren Festen löst sich seine Zunge, er sitzt oben an und stimmt Lieder des fröhlichsten Lebens an. Du hast noch nicht geliebt, du Armer; beim ersten Kuß wird eine neue Welt dir aufgethan, mit ihm fährt Leben in tausend Strahlen in dein entzücktes Herz. Ein Märchen will ich dir erzählen, horche wohl (N,I,91).

Here nature begins to emerge as a communicative entity in its own right and, significantly, at the meetings and celebrations of the novices, his tongue is loosened and he appears as a minstrel-like figure accompanying the proceedings. Again, the allegory of music should not go unnoticed, as it refers back to the polyphonic ideal of discourse. Simultaneously, the speaker remarks that it is only in human company that nature becomes animated in this way, so once more there is a measure of tension between the polyphonic ideal of the cosmic symphony and its formal and thematic realization in the text. In this excerpt, nature is again present in the form of the

feminine, as well as in the masculine form of 'Geist' or the musician: feminine nature encircles and embraces the individual as would a lover, claims the novice's friend. Conspicuously, though *she* remains invisible. And neither does she play in the symphony, or sing her 'Lieder'.

At this point the 'muntrer Gespiele' tells the tale of Hyacinth and Rosenblüthchen. In chapter two we encountered Herbert Uerlings's idea that the interruption of the Isis fantasy by the emergence of Rosenblüthe from behind the veil relativized the fantasy of the absolute woman. In contrast to suggested interpretations,¹⁶ the two women are not identical: Rosenblüthchen's re-appearance replaces an eternal ideal with a finite reality, the metaphysical with the physical without conflating the two. If the feminine is taken to represent nature here, then this narrative is the teacher's instruction to his pupils on the fact that no one absolute construction of nature is accessed or expressed by the individual. In seeking the truth about things, then, each must remember that the truth will elude him. This means that no one individual, operating within the context of poetic awareness, has any better means to gain access to the truth of nature. Although each must follow his own path of enquiry, he must also remember that his is only one of many paths, walked by one of many initiates. Having heard this tale and its message, the novices embrace each other and leave the hall. It is then that a multitude of voices and languages can be heard, though it is nature itself that speaks: [...] das wunderbare Gespräch in zahllosen Sprachen unter den tausendfaltigen Naturen, die in diesen Sälen zusammengebracht und in mannichfaltigen Ordnungen aufgestellt waren, dauerte fort (N,I,95). The voices of nature have been gathered here by the teachers and novices of nature, though it is in the absence of humanity that they speak. It is significant that these natural speech-acts strive for free self-expression, yearning explicitly for mutual reconnection and bewailing humanity's failure to grasp their essential (and musical) unity: 'Ihre innern Kräfte spielten gegen einander. Sie strebten in ihre Freiheit, in ihre alten Verhältnisse zurück. [...] O! daß der Mensch, sagten sie, die innre Musik der Natur verstände, und einen Sinn für äußere Harmonie hätte' (ibid.). Long before humanity artificially separated the voices of nature, nature was a harmonious polyphony, a nexus of many voices, which were distinct but unified. Collectively, these voices constituted neither monotony nor cacophony, but harmony, which refers to the peaceful co-existence of a variety of voices acting with free will and agency but choosing to respect each other's rights of utterance. We shall now ask whether or not the text presents humanity as allowing nature to re-establish that unity for itself, to speak with its own agency. This will have a bearing on the extent to which women may become communicative agents within the text.

In the absence of the novices another conversation develops amongst a group of travelling students of nature, who enter the temple: 'Man hörte Menschenstimmen in der Nähe...' (N,I,96). Again, a series of voices unfolds, each of which expounds a theory. Notably, there is less contradiction and argument between the speakers than in the original debate between the novices. This is not because the travellers are merely Hardenberg's mouthpieces, all

proclaiming the same opinions on his behalf to create some naïve ideal of polyphony. Rather this is a result of a greater flexibility of thought on their part, and of a greater receptivity to the ideas of others. This is noticeable initially from the phrases Hardenberg uses to introduce the statements of each. After the theories of the first, who describes with ebullience the ironic cognitive process of *Poesie* and how it can come to mimic, represent and understand nature in the form of 'Naturgedanken' and 'Naturcompositionen' (N,I,98), the second speaker claims these ideas to be daring, 'viel gewagt', as the nature of the universe is doubtless more complicated than any representative scheme or agent can reflect. A third voice then synthesizes the viewpoints, agreeing the theories of the first to be daring, but calling for that daring approach to be adopted. Returning once more to the musical-allegorical representation of the cosmos, this third speaker notes that the individual may speculate freely and daringly, despite never grasping the nature of the whole within which he functions: 'Der eigentliche Chiffriert wird vielleicht dahin kommen, mehrere Naturkräfte zugleich zu Hervorbringung herrlicher und nützlicher Erscheinung in Bewegung zu setzen, er wird auf der Natur, wie auf einem großen Instrument fantasiren können, und doch wird er die Natur nicht verstehn' (N,I,99).¹⁷ This allegory, again musical in nature, illustrates the ideal of communication developing in Hardenberg's theory, re-emphasizing the necessary balance between the importance of the individual's voice and the limitations imposed upon him by his context. Here, the individual speculates upon nature and articulates his ideas as if upon an instrument, though he never wholly grasps and is, therefore, partly subsumed and determined by the whole. As the traveller's conversation concludes, the novices and their teacher return. In conversation with the teacher, the travellers recall the quest that has brought them to Saïs. They have gone in search of the 'Urvolk', the common ancestors of all contemporary humanity: humanity, in fact, constitutes the ruins, remains or fragments of those ancestors. The language of those forbears was of a particular quality:

Ihre Aussprache war ein wunderbarer Gesang, dessen unwiderstehliche Töne tief in das Innere jeder Natur eindringen und sie zerlegten. Jeder ihrer Namen schien das Loosungswort für die Seele jedes Naturkörpers. Mit schöpferischer Gewalt erregten diese Schwingungen alle Bilder der Welterscheinungen, und von ihnen konnte man mit Recht sagen, daß das Leben des Universums ein ewiges tausendstimmiges Gespräch sey; denn in ihrem Sprechen schienen alle Kräfte, alle Arten der Thätigkeit auf das Unbegreiflichste vereinigt zu seyn. Die Trümmer dieser Sprache, wenigstens alle Nachrichten von ihr, aufzusuchen, war ein Hauptzweck ihrer Reise gewesen, und der Ruf des Altherthums hatte sie nach Saïs gezogen (N,I,106-7).

Intrinsic to the pursuit of this people's history has thus been the attempt to re-create their language. This language itself has musico-poetical quality; individual nouns appeared to be a 'Loosungswort', the secret name or even password for accessing the 'soul' of the natural body to which it is ascribed. This can be read as Hardenberg's own version of the Paracelsian model of the natural speculator freeing the 'Signatur', the essence of the object and re-articulating it. Though, perhaps more significant for us is the explicitly rendered model of polyphony. In

practice, the 'Urvolk' language appeared as an eternal conversation of a thousand voices, which seemed inexplicably to unify the energies and processes of the natural world. If modern life and modern language are fragments, ruins of what was, then the travellers have come to Saïs to rebuild.

As a text, the *Lehrlinge zu Saïs* is itself a fragment. It concludes with the single voice of the teacher. Despite reverting to this narrative technique, however, Novalis does not seek in this passage to re-establish the primacy of a single subject over the natural world. The teacher reflects on what it means to be a 'Verkündiger der Natur' and on the kinds of teachers that initiated students of nature will seek out:

[...] wer eine innige Sehnsucht nach der Natur spürt, wer in ihr alles sucht, und gleichsam ein empfindliches Werkzeug ihres geheimen Thuns ist, der wird nur den für seinen Lehrer und für den Vertrauten der Natur erkennen, der mit Andacht und Glauben von ihr spricht, dessen Reden die wunderbare, unnachahmliche Eindringlichkeit und Unzertrennlichkeit haben, durch die sich wahre Evangelia, wahre Eingebungen ankündigen. Die ursprünglich günstige Anlage eines solchen natürlichen Gemüths muß durch unablässigen Fleiß von Jugend auf, durch Einsamkeit und Stillschweigen, weil vieles Reden sich nicht mit der steten Aufmerksamkeit verträgt, die ein solcher anwenden muß, durch kindliches, bescheidnes Wesen und unermüdliche Geduld unterstützt und ausgebildet seyn (N,I,107-08).

Here the teacher notes that whoever feels truly drawn to nature will only choose a particular kind of teacher – one who speaks with devotion and belief and whose speeches have something of the inimitable qualities of nature about them: wonderfully penetrating and indivisible. Such teachers must themselves have honed certain innate tendencies; this involves the active cultivation of passive qualities through a specific form of education: they must spend time in silence and isolation and must be attentive to the surrounding world. Similarly, the pupils seeking to follow such teachers will themselves be both active in their attempts to seek the truth about nature, though also become a tool of its secret labours, 'ein empfindliches Werkzeug ihres geheimen Thuns'. At the close of the text's main torso, the poetic subject of nature, whether teacher or student, must be an active seeker, but also accept that all individuals exist in the context of nature as a whole and are themselves determined by that context. What, though, of the position of women at Saïs? To answer this question we shall have to examine the *Paralipomena* to the main text.

The HKA also provides us with *Paralipomena* to the text, most notably a list of occurrences that Hardenberg seems to have planned for the completion of the text:

Verwandlung des Tempels zu Saïs

Erscheinung der Isis.
Tod des Lehrers.
Träume im Tempel.
Werkstatt des Archaeus.

Ankunft der Griechischen Götter.
 Einweihung der Geheimnisse.
 Bilds[äule] des Memnons.
 Reise zu den Pyramiden.
 Das Kind und sein Johannes. Der Messias der Natur.
Neues Testament – und neue Natur – als *neues Jerusalem*. (N,I,111-12).

The list refers to the appearance of various Gods and prophets. First and foremost is Isis herself, keeper of the secrets of nature. Quite what Hardenberg referred to as her 'Erscheinung' is not certain here, though the term does hold connotations of appearance vis-à-vis actual presence and thus this is most likely a reference to a vision of her. In addition to Isis arrive the Greek Gods, who appear to be present in person. It is quite possible that Hardenberg was envisaging the representation of a process by which the secrets of the natural universe were mediated through iconic figures in a para-religious mode: there is mention of another New Testament and a new Jerusalem. The religious figures, though, are drawn from a variety of religions and, establishing this new polycultural relationship to nature, the temple-goers also choose divine figures of both genders. The list also contains reference to the pillar of Memnon, which was a wondrous technological invention that sang when exposed to sunlight, and was taken as proof of the unlimited capabilities of human artifice. As such, the pillar might appear as a further allegory of the polyphonic music of nature. The pillar, however, is a work of human artifice and that fact allows Fankhauser to place the text speculatively in the alchemical tradition, which excluded the notion of female intellectual and aesthetic agency. This, in turn, allows her to contend that whilst women would have become present in Saïs, this would only have occurred in the form of a patriarchal construction of female divinity (Fankhauser, 77-8): like the pillar, this femininity is merely a 'product' of male speculation.

By the end of the text, various polyphonies have been established. The many voices of the novices and their many modes of discoursing on nature have found articulation and the text has begun to employ a range of musical allegories to present these polyphonies. The text has also presented nature's own voices, but presented them as unheeded in the passage following the *Märchen*. Hardenberg seems to have intended to dramatize the fact that the human speculative forum on nature does not actually recognize or include nature's own voices, even if it does not wholly displace them and they do, on occasion, find space to articulate themselves. Now we have seen that the text tends to construct nature as feminine, be it in the form of feminized nature, or female deities. Even in this idealized form, though, the text does not explicitly include the female voices, as the voices of nature only come to the fore in limited passages of text, in the absence of the temple's inhabitants. And there, nature's voices are of indistinct gender as it is. In multiple ways, then, the text fragment dramatizes patriarchy's failure to allow female figures to communicate for themselves, be they as idealized femininity or female subjects. Female initiates are absent from the discussions in the temple and, when Hyacinth is led back to the real woman behind his delusion, this does little to alter the fact that Rosenblüthe too remains conspicuously

silent, invisible, absent or inactive. Thus the *Lehrlinge* represent Hardenberg working towards a formal and thematic realization of his polyphonic ideal, which is allegorized musically in the form of the cosmic symphony, though that symphony remains, in several senses of the word, unfinished.

Following our discussion of the *Lehrlinge*, we can turn our attention to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in the following chapter. The *Lehrlinge* had begun to organize and represent intersubjective communication as musical in various forms, though this occurs, as we saw, in the pre-Böhmian context. By the time *Ofterdingen* had been written, Hardenberg had read Böhme, whose model of polyphony shifts the emphasis back onto the intersubjective rules binding and limiting communicative agency. In Hardenberg's later work, then, we can seek again occurrences of 'musical' polyphony, though we might also expect these to strike a more effective balance between the subject's free expression and expressive limitation and to realize more fully, therefore, the ideal of inclusively intersubjective communication. Hardenberg's version of the *Bildungsroman* takes his protagonist not into a temple, but on a geographical and allegorical journey; this journey will give him the opportunity not merely to theorize about the voices of his world, but to encounter, listen and respond to them. *Ofterdingen* has the potential to incorporate a wider range of subjects, all of whom might benefit from that ideal. The discussion, however, will proceed critically and in five sections. 1. The chapter begins by discussing the full implications of the model of polyphony for a genre traditionally associated with the developmental history of a single subject: we shall ask to what extent the model of polyphony is articulated in the text and also how great are the communicative opportunities afforded to the male protagonists and their (often female) others. 2. The second section follows on from this discussion, asking whether the social roles Novalis ascribes to his female subjects limit or undermine their ability to function as communicative and creative agents. 3. As we have seen, the Early Romantic model of polyphony complicates not only the issue of communicative agency, but of what constitutes communication *per se*. Polyphony allows us to conceive of all organic and inorganic matter, including the (human) physical body, as a potentially communicative agency, with its own meaning to transmit and its own power of transmission. In the light of this, the chapter's third section asks to what extent the communicative ideal allows for the physical body to function as means of communication and whether the female subject may communicate via those means. This is an important part of the search for a more positive treatment of the female subject in Novalis, as it would challenge existing feminist contentions that women's reduction to the play-things of the male imagination leads to their portrayal as de-corporealized and de-sexualized within the poet's works. 4. Turning from women's bodies to their minds, the fourth section examines the cultural and intellectual significance of women's communicative endeavours within the text. Do women engage in high poetic discourse or do they make less ambitious contributions? Are women, for instance, capable of acts of genius according to Hardenberg's own understanding of the term, and are they given

opportunity to fulfil this potential? 5. The fifth and final section explores the second section of the novel and the notes for the novel's completion that Hardenberg left behind him. We shall ask whether the fantastic portrayals of reality Hardenberg envisaged for the ending of the novel allow for a wholly inclusive presentation of the intersubjective communicative ideal and ask to what extent, if any, the female subject benefits from this new narrative mode.

Notes to chapter three:

- ¹ Hardenberg reflects, for example, on the notion of individuation, on the process by which the empirical, reflexive self, through its experience of 'Trieb', differentiates itself from the non-reflexive absolute self (N,II,126-27:32).
- ² See: for example his letter to F.Schlegel (08.07.1796), (N,IV,188: lines 10-28).
- ³ See: Uerlings's concise but full overview of the *Hemsterhuis-Studien*, Uerlings (1991), pp.120-123.
- ⁴ Thomas Grosser, *Identität und Rolle. Kontext, Konzept und Wirkungsgeschichte der Genieästhetik bei Novalis* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991), 63ff.
- ⁵ Cf. Fankhauser (1997), 36ff.
- ⁶ See: Kuzniar, 'Hearing Women's Voices in Heinrich von Ofterdingen' in: *PMLA* (107: 5, 1992), 1196-1208.
- ⁷ See: Géza von Molnár, *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context. Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (Minneapolis: UMP, 1987).
- ⁸ Gail Newman, *Locating the Romantic Subject. Novalis with Winnicott*, (Detroit: WSUP, 1997).
- ⁹ Cf. Uerlings, 113f.
- ¹⁰ H.J.Mähl made this contention, which is accepted as the standard view: (N,III,227ff).
- ¹¹ Carl Paschek, *Der Einfluß Jacob Böhmes auf das Werk Friedrich von Hardenbergs (Novalis)*, Univ. Diss. (Bonn, 1967).
- ¹² See: Jacob Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften. Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe von 1730*, 11 vols, ed. by W.E. Peuckert (Stuttgart: Frommanns Verlag, 1957), here: vol 6, book XIV, ch. 1, 16-17.
- ¹³ See: Gernot Böhme, 'Jacob Böhme', in: Gernot Böhme (ed), *Klassiker der Naturphilosophie. Von den Vorsokratikern bis zur Kopenhagener Schule* (München: Beck,1989), pp.158-71.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Böhme, vol. 6, book XIV, ch.12, p.169.
- ¹⁵ In the relevant chapter of *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), Andrew Bowie shows how, for Novalis, music represents the ideal system for speculating on the relationships between things. Within music it is rhythm, which allows for the points of transition between differing melodic and harmonic structures and thus constitutes the speculative dimension of the medium. Bowie shows Novalis also to have conceived of an allegorical sense of rhythm operating within language and other semantically bound systems of knowledge. Other scholars have looked in varying detail and contexts at Novalis's conception of music and its relationship to this definition of *Poësie*. Carl Dahlhaus made first mention of comparisons between wordless, instrumental music and the poetic quality in Novalis's understanding of mathematics: both represent a medium for speculating the shifting relationships between things in an internally self-referential manner, without having to refer to empirical reality. See: *The Idea of Absolute Music*, translated by Roger Lustig, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 54, 70, 72 and particularly pp.142-145. In: *Musikalisches Ideen-Instrument' Das Musikalische in Poetik und Sprachtheorie der Frühromantik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), Barbara Naumann also focuses on how musical concepts and metaphors help to constitute Hardenberg's conceptions of language, his theory of *Poësie* and his understanding of the relationship between scholarly disciplines. She argues that notions of musicality can be shown to inform Novalis's semiotic epistemology and his scholarly and literary writing practice. She refers to a theory of a dissonant 'Keim', (N,II,581:242) taken from the 'Anekdoten' of 1798. Here Hardenberg reflects upon the activity of the poet in the interpretation of art. The poet must find a starting point, a first 'Moment', to begin his creative-interpretative endeavours. This starting point is, however an aesthetically generated attempt to articulate meaning of an object and, therefore, inadequate. Hardenberg describes this through his notion of a 'dissonance', which implies that these 'beginnings' of poetic speculation are inherently unstable and liable to break down: the poet's job is in fact to encourage this. Thus the leap Novalis made from his model of identity as an aesthetic proposition, 'Scheinsatz', to his notion of *Poësie* as a mobile, self-relativizing and self-renewing vehicle for speculating the meaning of things, was partially constituted by musical allegory. Naumann goes on to show how models of musicality form the interdisciplinary basis of the poet's writing, because music counted as the ideal '*ars combinatoria*', also providing a model for the speculative leaps between expressive forms, disciplines and genres. Hardenberg tried to make within his writing (Naumann, 178f). However, Naumann's study disregards explicitly the models of *Naturmusik* Novalis inherited from the holistic cosmologies of Christian theosophy and mysticism (ibid.158), contending instead: '[...] Novalis setzt das Ich nicht als passives, in den kosmologischen Zusammenhang geworfenes Subject, sondern definiert, gemäß Fichtes Akt der autonomen Setzungshandlung, für das Ich den Zugang zur Welt als Aufgabe; die Konstruktion der Welt mit Hilfe einer (am Ende gänzlich poetischen) "Erfindungskunst"', (ibid.159).
- ¹⁶ There are two readings of this moment of the fairy tale, which contend that it represents a simple conflation of the Goddess icon with the image of Rosenblüthe. Fankhauser (1997, 71f) suggests that, for Hyazinth the narcissist, the two images of femininity 'überblenden sich zu einem Bild'. A similar view is held

by Padilla (1985, p.199), who sees the moment as an exertion of masculine will to 'potentiate the virginal feminine into the Absolute'.

¹⁷ The image of a poetic figure speculating 'musically' within the language of nature is reminiscent of Hardenberg's treatise 'Monolog'. There, Hardenberg portrays the ideal use of language generally in musical terms: 'So ist es mit der Sprache – wer ein feines Gefühl ihrer Applicatur, ihres Taktes, ihres musikalischen Geistes hat, wer [...] danach seine Zunge oder Hand bewegt, der wird ein Prophet sein' (N,II,672). In 'Monolog', the individual must realize that, like music, language in fact concerns itself with itself alone 'sich bloß um sich selbst bekümmert' (ibid.). Only those with this insight will be able to speak with truly musical or poetical voices, as they relinquish the goal of fixing meaning in language and revel in manipulating its autonomous self-referentiality.

IV FROM MUSIC TO METAMORPHOSIS. WOMEN'S ROLE AND
WRITING IN 'HEINRICH VON OFTERDINGEN', 1798-1801

Like the *Lehrlinge*, *Ofterdingen* was incomplete when Hardenberg died. Posterity was left with the novel's apparently complete first half, an incomplete second half, a declaration of the intent to re-write both, reported at second hand, and a score of drafts, jottings and plans for its continuation. Begun towards the end of November 1799, the novel was continued in two main bursts during 1800, initially through the year's first quarter with the first half finished in early April, then again over the summer months between July and September. During the latter half of 1800, Hardenberg's consumption developed apace; by January 1801 his condition had deteriorated considerably and he returned to Weissenfels to be nursed at home. Remarkably at this time he was full of hope for the future. Though he could write little he continued reading and thinking, made plans for the novel's continuation and even, according to F. Schlegel, began to plan for its complete alteration (N,I, 187). What such changes might have entailed is almost entirely a matter of speculation and contemporary scholars can only continue to work with the texts at their disposal. In the following, then, we will begin to consider ways and means of testing what we have of the novel against the model of intersubjective polyphony discussed in the last chapter. This will include not only an examination of the novel's main torso, but also scouring the notes for its continuation (*Paralipomena*), for evidence that the text might have developed 'polyphonic' characteristics. Hardenberg appears to have been aware, in his reflections on the genre, that novels never realize a perfected or complete rendering of the ideas which underlie them:

Der Roman [...] enthält kein bestimmtes Resultat – er ist nicht Bild und Factum eines Satzes. Er ist anschauliche Ausführung – Realisirung einer Idee. Aber eine Idee läßt sich nicht, in einem Satz fassen. Eine Idee ist eine unendliche Reihe von Sätzen – eine irrationale GröÙe – unsetzbar (musik[alisch]) – incommensurabel. (Sollte nicht alle Irrationalität relativ seyn?) Das Gesetz ihrer Fortschreitung läßt sich aber aufstellen – und nach diesem ist ein Roman zu kritisiren (N,II, 570:212).

Hardenberg writes that a text could never really be a 'finished result'. It is rather a visible execution, the realization of an 'idea'. Significantly, though, ideas cannot be captured by one sentence; they comprise an infinite sequence of sentences and, in their entirety, cannot be posited or presented: they are 'unsetzbar.' It is this quality of ineffability that Hardenberg calls 'musical' in this extract. Novels, in other words, move towards the presentation of ideals, which are infinite in scope and (here) allegorically musical in nature, although they will never be able to realize those ideals in textual form. The fact that Hardenberg presents the novel's ideal as musical raises the question as to whether he was aiming to use his particular intersubjective, polyphonic ideal as a formal or thematic template for *Ofterdingen*, even if he was thinking in terms of his novel's inability to embody that ideal fully. These reflections are, however, qualified by Hardenberg's closing remarks in the anecdote: despite its own inherent limitations, a novel may be judged critically on its success or failure in progressing towards the realization of its own ideas. According to his own criteria, then, Hardenberg cannot excuse himself from continuing to strive for ideal communicative situations within his text; situations which are increasingly inclusive of

all subjects. We shall pursue these issues further in this section, asking how far the text manages to go towards representing the musical-polyphonic ideal and what the consequences are for the female subject and her voice. These questions, as it turns out, connect instantly with issues central to the novel's critical appraisal by scholars: in seeking the formal or thematic polyphony in the text, we must also consider the novel's relationship to a literary genre with which it has traditionally been associated: the *Bildungsroman*. This is of central importance to our discussion, as works belonging to this tradition have by definition focussed on the development of an individual subject, not a collective. Building on the work of Jochen Hörisch¹ and others, Gail Newman has remarked on this issue: 'In the traditional developmental journey story, the young man leaves the mother-dominated home to enter the father's sphere of psychological autonomy and instrumental rationality' (Newman, 51). If there are traits of the subjectivist individualism of the *Bildungsroman* in *Ofterdingen*, this would certainly have a bearing on our discussion of the presentation of the intersubjective communicative ideal in the novel.

However, the text does not fit seamlessly into the generic definition of the *Bildungsroman* – far from it, in fact. Herbert Uerlings provides us with a critical summary of scholarship on *Ofterdingen's* relationship to the genre. Focussing on the novel's relationship to the paradigmatic *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Uerlings points out one fundamental characteristic of *Ofterdingen* that marks its difference from Goethe's work:

Das primäre Thema des Romans ist nicht die Entwicklung eines Individuums, sondern der Entwurf einer universalen Erlösungsutopie. Daß dies dargestellt wird als Entwicklung einer Hauptgestalt zum Dichter und der Roman dadurch Züge eines Bildungsromans erhält, ist ein Sekundäreffekt. Heinrich ist in erster Linie nicht das realistisch gemeinte Abbild eines jungen Mannes, der im Verlaufe seiner Sozialisation lernen muß, sich mit der äußeren Welt auseinanderzusetzen, sondern ist zunächst mal eine Kunstfigur, an der die Funktion der Poesie entwickelt werden soll, er ist "das Organ des Dichters im Roman" (N,III, 639:510) (Uerlings, 451).

Whilst recognizing that the novel is likely to place an initial focus on the single, male subject and his development, we shall ask whether the text really does progress away from and ultimately abandon the subject-centred, realistic mode of the *Bildungsroman*. In other words, we shall examine whether the novel's primary goal really is the depiction of what Uerlings refers to as a utopian 'release' or 'salvation'. We shall also be testing the nature of that 'release' or 'salvation', asking whether it involves realizing intersubjective polyphony in formal and thematic terms, in a manner that relativizes the influence of the male subject and includes the female subject in moments of significant communication. In the section immediately following, we shall begin to examine whether or not the male protagonist modifies his own initially subjective perspective such that he begins to recognize and communicate with other subjects, including the women he encounters.

IV.1 Dream – Awakening – Journey – Discourse

The novel's first chapter begins at an ending, specifically at the end of a day. The industrious endeavours of Heinrich's father, a craftsman, have been laid aside and darkness has fallen. Both the parents are asleep, but the protagonist lies restless, thinking of an encounter he had that day with a travelling stranger. The stranger has obviously told him stories of his travels, of distant lands, of riches to be found and adventures to be had. We learn that Heinrich's life hitherto has been entirely provincial (N,I, 203). Whilst he has heard tales from afar before, the stranger and his reported narrative mark a particularly potent incursion of otherness into his life: the stranger has told him of the mysterious blue flower. It is thoughts of this flower and not of material treasures that figure so prominently in Heinrich's thoughts and keep him from sleep; it appears perpetually before his mind's eye: 'Sie liegt mir unaufhörlich im Sinn' (N,I, 195). The blue flower, possibly the most widely known of Hardenberg's creations, has been read in various ways by critics. Coloured blue, as it is, it has been shown to represent transcendence as imagined or symbolized by the poetic consciousness.² Similarly, it has been thought to represent Heinrich's imagined first object of erotic-amorous desire; the flower does change its appearance anthropomorphically to reveal a face later to be identified with Heinrich's beloved. This beloved other has been shown as one to which Heinrich relates both successfully, as another subject, and one which is ultimately a narcissistic reflection of himself, which he superimposes destructively over the real figures he meets along his journey.³ In true Romantic fashion, the flower can mean all of these things and more. For the purposes of our argument, we will translate the flower as representing the subject's represented other in the broadest sense, the 'Nicht-Ich' remodelled as the 'wahrhaft innerliches Du'. At this stage it need not have any specific gender or identity; Heinrich himself does not and cannot place any determinate meaning upon the flower. Two points are notable for our argument here: firstly, this other is an 'innerliches Du', modelled within Heinrich's imagination and, secondly, it is waiting to speak for itself, albeit within the context of the dream.

Soon after the novel's opening, the protagonist slumbers and begins to dream. In dreaming, he moves between the various allegorized strata of consciousness represented there. Even before the dream begins these contrasting levels are anticipated and reflected in the description of the physical surroundings. There is the infinite, changing and unknown exterior, the windswept night with its moon periodically casting light inwards and the interior, a room bound spatially by its walls and temporally by the ticking clock, secure, familiar and measured. The dream itself has three sections, in the first of which Heinrich experiences 'ein unendlich buntes Leben' (N,I,196), a rapid and fantastic account of this imagined life, in which Heinrich explores unknown lands, lives alongside all manner of people and animals, experiences wars and hardship, but also moments of silence and introspection, loves and loses his lover. In the next phase of the dream, however, he enters a cave and finds an iridescent fountain gushing into a

pool. Géza von Molnár has identified this moment as Heinrich's conscious discovery of the unconscious creative faculty of his inner self.⁴ Heinrich is captivated. The image of the young man at the pool-side is at once reminiscent of Narcissus, the youth of antique legend, who fell in love with his reflection in water and drowned in trying to be at one with it. From that tale, of course, we derive the term narcissism, which serves as a warning of the destructive consequences of an overly egocentric and introspective way of life. Heinrich approaches the allegorical waters of his subjectivity very differently, however, and with ultimately different consequences. Trustingly, he drinks from the pool, is seized by irresistible urges, undresses and bathes. Significantly, he does not drown; unlike Narcissus, he is not trapped in the destructive endeavour of trying to grasp the unknowable essence of himself. Although his experience is interior (he is, after all, exploring an allegory of his ego within his own dream), his is an exploration of the expanding world of otherness as imagined and represented within his own consciousness. Consequently, he discovers a group of 'others' whilst exploring: from the water appear vague 'sichtbare[n] Wesen', who take on the form of a torrent of maidens. Sited in this narcissistic and self-gratificatory phase of the dream, these figures represent a plurality of indistinct, corporeal women and can be read as direct expressions of Heinrich's sexual fantasy.⁵ This first encounter with imagined others then, does not constitute a moment of mutual recognition between Heinrich and other, like subjects, let alone any obvious form of communication: in short, as the pure products of male desire and imagination, the nymphs do little to represent female subjects.

In the final phase of the dream, and now quite unlike the classical Narcissus, Heinrich emerges from the fluid and returns to the more familiar realm of organic nature, where he encounters the blue flower. This phase appears quite different from the previous one. Indeed, there is an explicit sense of transition from the second to the final stage. Towards the end of the second stage, he had slept and experienced dreams within the dream as a whole (N,I,197). Now the change to the final phase of the dream proper is a moment of awakening within sleep, one which is also a transition in the nature of his reflections: it is 'eine andere Erleuchtung' that awakens him, implying not only the physical illumination of different surroundings but also a higher state of waking consciousness (ibid.). Thus, within the traditionally egocentric realm of dreams we find images of Heinrich moving beyond egotism. In the light of this, the encounter with the flower does not have to represent Heinrich's engagement with another non-self, but with a 'Du', a represented, other self.⁶ Sitting in silent wonderment, he looks on as the flower goes through an anthropomorphic transformation, a 'sonderbare[...] Verwandlung' (ibid.). The blue flower does not need to be revealed as a subjective being; it reveals itself as such, dispelling Heinrich's limiting understanding of it as a beautiful but insentient object of nature. This moment is a crucial pre-figuration of later incidents in the text, where the poetic subject must listen, watch, be passive and allow its others to speak: this anticipates the eventual de-centering of a subject-centred model of discourse. From this point onward, Heinrich begins to learn that the

self must take into account the other's discourse of self-representation. This still occurs in the context of the dream, where that other is 'innerlich': that dream, though, is a kind of self-reflexive text, for it has offered instruction in the nature and role of dreams in Early Romantic thought. Whilst they unlock his desires, release and explore imagination, Hardenberg's dreams contextualize themselves *as* dreams, as fictions offering visions of alternate realities, but also offer pathways out of themselves, in order that we may re-engage with reality and work there to realize the envisioned. The dream of the blue flower offers such a path and, in doing so, reminds us of the fragment from the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, with its similar play between metaphors of interiority and exteriority, its requirement for us to move dialectically between the subjective imagination and objective reality, not merely inhabiting one: 'Der 2te Schritt muß wirksamer Blick nach außen – selbstthätige, gehaltne Beobachtung der Außenwelt seyn' (N,II,422:26). The subject must engage with others in the waking world in the manner implied by the dream. And after seeing the blue flower, Heinrich is about to wake up for real.

Heinrich greets his father, who thinks little of his son's sleeping late. He chides his son as a 'Langschläfer'. He decries the value of dreams: they are useless, dangerous and destructive to modern man and his way of life. Only in Biblical times did humanity have the ability to discern truths from dreams. In defence of dreams, Heinrich declares that they interrupt our sense of mundane reality, embody hopes that we may strive for and that they serve as a 'Schutzwehr gegen die Regelmäßigkeit und Gewöhnlichkeit des Lebens' (N,I, 199). He already seems aware that his dream will lead him on a journey; he chooses the metaphor of a giant wheel meshing with his life and driving it forward with great force (*ibid.*). The father explains the passionate and imaginative character of his son in terms of the Italian wine that enlivened his own wedding night and doubtless runs in his son's veins. This father's remarks about how he came to drink that wine are quite revealing, however. He brought this back from his journey to Rome, when he admits to having been 'noch ein anderer Kerl', one who had been thawed out by his time in the warm and pleasant south (*ibid.*). Whilst in Italy, the father in fact had his own dream, that also occurred after an encounter with a stranger, who is well-versed in matters of history, art and poetry. Staying one night at this man's home, the father dreams of a journey out from his own 'interior', his hometown and into the Harz mountains, where, after passing through caves and caverns, he too glimpses a blue flower surrounded by fountains. It is here that we begin to notice the emergence of our key theme of intersubjective communication: the father's experience has the character of intersubjective polyphony about it, illustrated through a musical metaphor:

Ich war darauf im Traume unter den herrlichsten Gestalten und Menschen, und unendliche Zeiten gaukelten mit mannichfaltigen Veränderungen vor meinen Augen vorüber. Wie gelöst war meine Zunge, und was ich sprach, klang wie Musik (N,I, 202).

Not only does he witness manifold, changing visions, but he finds himself within a multitude of other beings. His speech flowed freely and, significantly, sounded like music. Around this point in the dream, a further patriarchal figure promises him an explanation of this dream if he returns, having plucked the flower, on St John the Baptist's day. The dream ends, however, before the father can receive such an explanation. He wakes and interprets the blue flower in his own terms, reading it as his own beloved: Heinrich's mother. He returns to Augsburg to be with her, without hearing the father figure's explanation. The owner of the house in which he slept bids him farewell and bids him also to return for frequent visits. The father revisits neither him, nor that place, however. By the time Heinrich tells of his experiences, the father's dream is something he had all but forgotten, such that even the colour of the flower had faded in his memory (N,I, 201-202).

The father, together with his dream, his way of life and the values they represent have been looked upon in various ways by critics. He is the failed acolyte of a matriarchal religion; one to which he was once drawn, but later forsook.⁷ He is also the bourgeois craftsman, who has failed to comprehend and master the logico-imaginative mechanics of *Poësie*, has embraced the belief that identity, meaning and truth are static and unalterable and has hence become a skilled artisan, but not an artist. Given our reading of Heinrich's dream, he represents something more. Thus fixed in significance, the 'flower' cannot function as a sign or ideal of universal otherness, which would set the teleology of the father's life as an ongoing quest to engage or discourse with that other, or others. As we saw, part of the epiphanic phase of his dream saw him sited within a musical allegory of polyphony – one which he will never re-discover. In forgetting his dream and belittling the value of dreams in general, he not only belittles the value of subjective poetics, but closes his ears to the intersubjective and polyphonic context within which poets function. This study will read him a figure, who has not merely lived a monotonous life, but one who lives, thinks and speaks in a monophonic mode. Ironically, then, the father delivers an implicit and unwitting manifesto in favour of dreams. Whilst he maintains that the re-telling of his dream does not invalidate his earlier critique of dreams in general, he reveals his own failure to realize the potential of the vision he had. He recounts his leaving Rome, at least in part, in negative terms: his departure is 'impetuous' ('ungestüm') (N,I, 202), his promise to re-visit his host broken (ibid.). The effect of this 'manifesto' on Heinrich is obvious enough: the co-incidence of there being blue flowers in the dreams of both father and son is enough to evoke in him a 'seltsame Heftigkeit' (N,I, 201), though one that goes unnoticed by the father (ibid.). The father achieves the opposite of his goal, though he did not manage this without help from the third figure within the familial triad, the mother.

The mother exhibits different behavioural patterns, represents different beliefs and values to those of her husband, and these become central to Heinrich's development. He is awoken from his first dream by her voice. She interrupts Heinrich's sleep, though she does not do so in a

reprimanding manner, which de-values the experience of the dream. Indeed the dream blends almost imperceptibly with waking reality. The blue flower begins to transform itself into a face 'als ihn plötzlich die Stimme seiner Mutter weckte, und er sich in der elterlichen Stube fand, die schon die Morgensonne vergoldete. Er war zu entzückt, um unwillig über diese Störung zu sein; vielmehr bot er seiner Mutter freundlich guten Morgen und erwiderte ihre herzliche Umarmung' (N,I,197). Within the dream, of course, there had only been a fiction of receptivity, but it was one that offered a blueprint, an ideal for relationships with other selves in the waking world. Thus, the return to the waking world is not only an interruption but also a re-direction of Heinrich's act of receptivity towards his real other. At first, though, the father's critique of dreams serves indirectly as a foil to those ideals. It is the mother, who negotiates and influences the outcome of the debate between father and son. It is she, who reminds the father that he too once had his own dream (N,I, 199-200). Though saying little, it is she who steers the dialogue in such a way as to illustrate the value of dreams. She engineers a warning against forgetting the value of dreams and the messages contained within them and thus inspires and galvanizes her son for the journey that awaits him, filled with opportunities to speak and to listen. And it is she who plays the biggest role in shaping the goal, course and outcomes of that journey.

Again, critics have read this journey into the mother's homeland variously as an experimental quest for matriarchy, as a pilgrimage to pay homage to a new religion of the feminine, or as the male protagonist's narcissistic/erotic retreat into the illusion of a maternal origin.⁸ The journey has more to say, however, about the protagonist's social relationship to other subjects and about the manner in which he communicates with them: in both areas, the mother is of central importance. When it begins, the journey has a two-fold dynamic which at first appears paradoxical. For Heinrich, who has never left the confines of his hometown, the journey to her home in Augsburg is one into the unknown and promises a potential series of encounters with others. Augsburg, however, is the birth town of the mother, location of the house of Heinrich's grandfather and, as such, a sort of second or original home. This makes possible the description, recurring throughout the text and quoted by critics *ad infinitum*, of the journey outward leading ever homeward, 'immer nach Hause'. The journey brings separation from his father, which does not occur without difficulty or pain (N,I,204) though, significantly, Heinrich's mother accompanies her son and thus he is able to take an aspect of his parental home with him, making the journey in another sense both strange and familiar.

Die Nähe seiner Mutter tröstete den Jüngling sehr. Die alte Welt schien noch nicht ganz verlohren, und er umfaßte sie mit verdoppelter Innigkeit. Es war früh am Tage, als die Reisenden aus den Thoren von Eisenach forttritten, und die Dämmerung begünstigte Heinrichs gerührte Stimmung. Je heller es ward, desto bemerklicher wurden ihm die neuen unbekannten Gegenden; und als auf einer Anhöhe die verlassene Landschaft von der aufgehenden Sonne auf einmal erleuchtet wurde, so fielen dem überraschten Jüngling alte Melodien seines Innern in den trüben Wechsel seiner Gedanken ein. Er sah sich an der Schwelle der Ferne, in die er oft vergebens

von den nahen Bergen geschaut, und die er sich mit sonderbaren Farben
ausgemahlt hatte (N,I, 204-05).

The mother represents both his origin (his home life hitherto) and his goal (Augsburg, her home). Through her presence, the journey can be one of discovery, but also one leading towards familiarity; it promotes Heinrich's independent self-development, but situates that development in a pre-established context. For this study, we will adopt something akin to Gail Newman's reading: in comparing Hardenberg to Winnicott she is able to contend that both writers dramatize 'the point at which the young self begins to sense its ambiguous status as both separated from and connected to a nurturant context' (Newman, 25).⁹ We can assert that, from the point at which she wakes her son, the mother has sought to promote the value of mutual recognition and receptivity towards the other subject, either implicitly, by embodying those values herself, or explicitly, by extolling the virtues of the dream and its message. By waking Heinrich at the point she does, she ensures that his return to waking reality and subsequent journey have as their goal an outward movement, but one which allows for receptivity towards the others encountered along that journey. By accompanying him, the mother is assuring that he both continues to develop, but does so towards a particular goal, Augsburg, and in a particular manner, by cultivating this receptivity as well as his powers of expression. She represents a synthesis of active and passive qualities, both forward movement and restraint, a drive to self-development that also makes provision for others' rights and a drive to self-expression that is tempered by the willingness to listen to others. She is a guide along a developmental journey, in which her son develops his poetic voice, but also learns to speak and sing alongside others within a polyphonic context.

This is evident as early as the passage detailing his initial departure, quoted above. Upon glimpsing the dawn illuminating the surroundings, 'so fielen dem überraschten Jüngling alte Melodien seines Innern in den trüben Wechsel seiner Gedanken ein. Er sah sich an der Schwelle der Ferne, in die er oft vergebens von den nahen Bergen geschaut, und die er sich mit sonderbaren Farben ausgemahlt hatte' (N,I, 205). The gloomy thoughts are enlivened by old melodies, though these, conspicuously, are internal: this is merely his growing awareness of the possibility of existing within a polyphonic context. Whilst sunk in these thoughts, Heinrich's first interaction with a collective of voices is approaching, as his travelling companions begin to wake up and begin telling stories:

Die Gesellschaft, die anfänglich aus ähnlichen Ursachen still gewesen war, fing nach gerade an aufzuwachen, und sich mit allerhand Gesprächen und Erzählungen die Zeit zu verkürzen. Heinrichs Mutter glaubte ihren Sohn aus den Träumereien reißen zu müssen, in denen sie ihn versunken sah, und fing an ihm von ihrem Vaterlande zu erzählen, von dem Hause ihres Vaters und dem fröhlichen Leben in Schwaben. Die Kaufleute stimmten mit ein, und bekräftigten die mütterlichen Erzählungen [...] (ibid).

Here he has his first inkling of the musico-polyphonic structure of poetic discourse, a real polyphony is forming around Heinrich. Again, his mother who wakens him, though this time only from daydreams, and draws him into the dialogue with herself and the merchants. As Heinrich becomes an autonomous poet, practised at both creating poetically and listening, the mother is phased out of the narrative. In these first stages of the journey, though, she still has this role to play.

The dialogue, into which Heinrich enters, deals with issues of education, personal development and of differing careers and vocations, including the life and works of poets. The merchants continue in the vein of the mother, praising the culture and people of Swabia, whose main virtue appears to be their 'Fleiß', their diligent and conscientious productivity in all areas of human endeavour. Thus, their region is rich in the arts, prospers economically and it is also true that: 'Nirgends hört man so anmuthige Sänger, findet so herrliche Mahler, und nirgends sieht man auf den Tanzsälen leichtere Bewegungen und lieblichere Gestalten. Die Nachbarschaft von Wälschland zeigt sich in dem ungezwungenen Betragen und den einnehmenden Gesprächen' (N,I, 206). Heinrich's geographical goal, it appears, is a place whose culture rejoices in music, dance and diverse conversation. This, contend the merchants, will have consequences for Heinrich's socialization, particularly as it will bring him into contact with young women: 'in der klaren warmen Luft des südlichen Deutschlands werdet ihr eure ernste Schüchternheit wohl ablegen; die fröhlichen Mädchen werden euch wohl geschmeidig und gesprächig machen' (ibid). Heinrich's first steps into the realm of Eros will, it is claimed, be rich in communicative exchange, so the young poet appears bound to be socialized and his education completed in a polyphonic environment.

The merchants are not poets themselves, a fact that they admit freely when recounting stories to Heinrich and, as such, they may give imperfect renditions of stories they have heard and may not fully comprehend the meaning of what they tell. Nevertheless, Heinrich is still only a fledgling poet at this stage in the novel; he has only ever heard tell of poems from his teacher and has never had first hand experience of them (N,I, 208) and it is the merchants, who awaken his interest in poets and their songs and engage him in discussions on the nature of poetry. One issue arising from these discussions takes us straight to the polyphonic nature of poetry, via a comparison between it and music. The merchants assert the two art forms, poetry and music, to be fundamentally different. Music is reduced to an almost mechanical skill, a matter of plucking strings, not requiring the activity of the productive imagination:

Auch sind die andern Künste gar sehr davon unterschieden, und lassen sich weit eher begreifen. Bey den Malern und Tonkünstlern kann man leicht einsehn, wie es zugeht, und mit Fleiß und Geduld läßt sich beydes lernen. Die Töne liegen schon in den Saiten, und es gehört nur eine Fertigkeit dazu, diese zu bewegen um jene in einer reizenden Folge aufzuwecken (N,I, 209).

Heinrich contradicts this view, believing that poetry '[...] sey noch mit andern verlohrengegangenen herrlichen Künsten verschwistert gewesen. Die Sänger hätte göttliche Gunst hoch geehrt, so daß sie begeistert durch unsichtbaren Umgang, himmlische Weisheit auf Erden in lieblichen Tönen verkündigen können' (ibid). Whilst Heinrich's model of musicality implies that poets alone have divinely bestowed powers of communication, it also implies the power of music to articulate truth in a way other forms could not. Heinrich also mentions the relationship between music and other forms of expression, calling them sibling forms and implying, in turn, the 'musical' quality inherent in all art forms and the 'musical' context within which all art is created. At this stage in the dialogue, Heinrich's first 'teachers', the merchants, do not appear to be offering him insight into the musical context of poetic communication and so the ideal of polyphony is not, it appears, to be part of this first lesson.

Heinrich becomes impatient with debate on the nature of *Poësie* and is anxious to hear the works of poets at first hand (N,I, 210). It is within the context of his growing willingness or desire to listen, that Heinrich hears his first example of poetry in action: again it is the merchants, who recount to him the tale of Arion, in fact Hardenberg's own reworking of Herodotus's classical tale (N,I, 23.f). Hardenberg's version tells of a gifted poet, who could charm the natural world with his music and undertakes a quest overseas, but is robbed of his possessions and forced overboard by the sailors transporting him. Refused a reprieve by his assailants, the poet is granted the last request of singing a final song. As he plays, the ship, the ocean and its animals sing with him and, as he springs into the water, he is saved by a dolphin, who carries him safely to shore. Shortly thereafter, his treasures are returned to him, the sailors having fallen into a violent squabble over their booty, their ship having sunk. Arion's poetry, which is ultimately his saviour, has a musical and polyphonic character about it. Reaching this point in their tale, the merchants revise their viewpoint on the poetry-music dichotomy, even abandoning the distinctions between musician and poet:

In diesen Zeiten hat es sich unter andern einmal zugetragen, daß einer jener sonderbaren Dichter oder mehr Tonkünstler – wiewohl Musik und Poësie ziemlich eins seyn mögen und vielleicht eben so zusammen gehören, wie Mund und Ohr, da der erste nur ein bewegliches und antwortendes Ohr ist – daß also dieser Tonkünstler übers Meer in ein Fremdes Land reisen wollte (N,I, 211).

This not only represents a first explicit lesson in the nature of polyphonic poetry, but also lends him insight into the fact that the poet's lot involves both productivity and receptivity, speaking and listening. Here, both music and poetry involve listening - an act which involves, of course, the physical organ of the ears. However, the physical organ of the mouth, the organ for the articulation of thought, music and song, is *both* active and passive: it is itself a metaphorical ear, which both receives and responds. However aware or unaware the merchants are of the consequences of what they say, they demonstrate that the poetic voice is *dialogical*, it is not merely

active-expressive, but also passive-receptive. Poetic speech involves receptivity and listening. The single poetic voice is situated within a diverse *dialogue*, comprising many communicating agents that likewise speak and listen.

With the mother now silent and demure, Heinrich is told about poetry and tales of poets by the male figures of the merchants. Until the end of the second chapter it has been exclusively men, who lead the debate on the nature of poetry, who engage in the act of creating or telling poetically. Within the third chapter, however, he is told a second and more substantial tale by the merchants, the fairy tale of Atlantis, which represents his next formal lesson. It, too, includes the ideal polyphonic context in which poets operate, but deals for the first time explicitly both with women's social and cultural place and the position of their voices within that ideal.

IV. 2. The Woman's Place and the Woman's Voice

Along his geographical, developmental and allegorical journey Heinrich encounters a variety of female figures, be they situated along the temporal and spatial path he follows, or the yet more idealized figures within the narratives he hears. In tracing this journey, these encounters and inset narratives, we will become aware of how important the notion of polyphony is to the text's structure and composition and of how far this ideal is used to free women's voices – or not to free them. We have seen that Hardenberg tended to perpetuate the tradition of a passive, non-intellectual, irrational and socially excluded femininity, stretching back to the writings of Rousseau. We also became aware of a tension in the work, which placed a progressive treatment of gender at odds with more reactionary tendencies. In examining *Ofterdingen*, we shall not be forgetting that tension. Neither shall we be asserting uncritically the predominance of the polyphonic model of discourse in the text, nor using it to paint a comfortable image of the socially and poetically included female subject. Rather we shall examine critically the place of women in the various familial and societal contexts between which Heinrich moves. Are they limited by socially prescribed roles of mother and domestic servant, by being the social and material enabler of men's well being, which allows those men to develop into bigger and greater things? Are they nevertheless granted some form of tokenistic voice within the polyphony of *Poesie*? If so, does this serve to obscure and make more insidious their underlying limitation, or does it generate a genuine tension between progressive and reactionary treatments of women in the work? In constructing a new reading of women's place within the novel we will not fail to query the nature of that place and ask if it is compatible with their being or becoming poets.

We might begin these deliberations by recalling Heinrich's mother. As do various female figures in the novel, the mother acts as a domestic support, only fetching breakfast during the first conversation between father and son. Conspicuously, she does not take part in the conversations on poetry and remains silent for lengthy passages of the text. Yet it is she who

recognizes the power of dreams and steers the father's attention in that direction in the first chapter; it was Schwartz who reminded us via his reading of Rousseau, that women's historical influence can be quantified in terms of how they influence men to fulfil their will. But the mother goes further than this; it is she who makes the firm decision to take Heinrich to Augsburg, 'Da faßte die Mutter den Entschluß [...]' (N,I, 203). It is she who judges her son's state of mind, mostly astutely, and she who guides him out from adolescent awkwardness towards ideals of sociability and communicative exchanges with others, accompanying him on his journey. Yet, once Augsburg is reached, her function is fulfilled and we never hear of her again within the text. The only trace of her is perhaps the allegorical figure of the mother within Klingsohr's Märchen, who is sacrificed in an even more violent manner. The mother is no naïve child of nature and is wise to the ways of the world, equipped with an opinion of her own, though she is also a highly functionalized character and is in many ways limited by the functions she fulfils. To the charge that she is, therefore, an artificial figure, one might make useful reference to a 'Brouillon' quotation: Heinrich is 'das Organ des Dichters im Roman' (N,III, 639:510). Heinrich is, like the mother and other figures, a passive construct, a 'tool' or 'organ' for the realization of the author's ideas. Being a functionalized figure alone, does not exclude characters from meaningful participation in the novel *per se*. Neither, however, is the mother a wholly autonomous and active figure free to make copious (poetic) utterances. Although she remains in many ways a facilitator and not a practitioner of *Poésie*, the mother is not the only woman in the novel.

The third chapter is constituted entirely by the *Atlantis Märchen*, told by the merchants. It depicts a royal court, in which a king lives with his daughter. The court is at once a forum for many voices:

Weit und breit strömten Menschen herzu, um Theil an der Herrlichkeit seines Lebens zu haben, und es gebrach weder den täglichen Festen an Überfluß köstlicher Waaren des Gaume[n]s, noch an Musik, prächtigen Verzierungen und Trachten, und tausend abwechselnden Schauspielen und Zeitvertreiben, noch endlich an sinnreicher Anordnung, an klugen, gefälligen und unterrichteten Männern zur Unterhaltung und Beseelung der Gespräche, und an schöner, anmuthiger Jugend von beyden Geschlechtern, die die eigentliche Seele reizender Feste ausmachen (N,I, 213).

There are members of both genders present at the celebrations, though there is no explicit mention of female participation in poetic or intellectual discourse. Poetry is in abundance at court; of particular value to the king is his chorus of poets, which he had been assembling since his youth and, of course, which represents a musical multitude of voices (N,I, 214). The poets are both protected by and protectors of this apparently utopian state. Their music contributes to the well being of the court, kingdom and its people. The only things excluded from this appear to be negative passions, which are driven away from the harmonious environment like discordant notes, 'wie Mißtöne von der sanften harmonischen Stimmung verscheucht wurden' (ibid). Indeed, women are present within the musical polyphony, though more as its product than its producer, more a song than a singer. The princess is referred to thus: 'Seine Tochter war unter

Gesängen aufgewachsen, und ihre ganze Seele war ein zartes Lied geworden, ein einfacher Ausdruck der Wehmuth und Sehnsucht' (ibid.). She is also the silent muse who, by appearing as 'die sichtbare Seele jener herrlichen Kunst' (ibid.), remains the object and inspiration of art rather than an artistic subject: she only ever appreciates the poet's songs 'mit tiefstem Lauschen', instead of singing her own (ibid.). But things do not remain thus.

Beyond the palace confines is a natural realm, occupied by the naturalist and his son. This realm is characterized by its contrast to the musicality of the court, its silence or 'Stille' (N,I, 216). The youth appears to exhibit the dual characteristics needed to be a poet, both the quality of his voice in speech and song with reference made to his 'eindringende Stimme und seine anmuthige Gabe zu sprechen' (ibid.), and his ability to listen and be receptive; he accepts instruction readily from his father and nature willingly reveals its secrets to him (ibid.). It is into this other realm that the princess strays and there that she begins to reveal some poetic ability and emerge as a subject in her own right. The silence of the natural realm attracts her, for there she can unfold her imagination and sing her songs (ibid.). It is with an almost song-like quality, that she makes her request of the youth's father, with reference made to her 'wie Geistergesang tönende Bitte' (ibid.). Conversely, the princess also exhibits the ability and willingness to receive and listen to other discourses; she asks to return to participate in further 'Gespräche,' exchanges of ideas with the naturalist (N,I, 217). The experience of moving into this new realm, of hearing new voices and unfolding her own voice allows the princess to emerge as a communicating subject in her own right. The point of narrative focalization shifts to her perspective and we are given insight into her thoughts and feelings:

Ein magischer Schleyer dehnte sich in weiten Falten um ihr klares Bewußtseyn. Es war ihr, als würde sie sich, wenn er aufgeschlagen würde, in einer überirdischen Welt befinden. Die Erinnerung an die Dichtkunst, die bisher ihre ganze Seele beschäftigt hatte, war zu einem fernen Gesange geworden, der ihren seltsam lieblichen Traum mit den ehemaligen Zeiten verband (N,I, 217-18).

Upon meeting her young lover-to-be in the forest, she is allowed to unfold her own creative talents. His poetic receptivity to the song not only opens out a space within which she can communicate and create – she sings with her 'celestial voice' – but actually enables her to offer the youth tuition in the art of music:

Sie ward bald einheimisch in dem wunderbaren Hause; und wenn sie dem Alten und dem Sohne, der zu ihren Füßen saß, auf ihrer Laute reizende Lieder mit einer überirdischen Stimme vorsang, und letzteren in dieser lieblichen Kunst unterrichtete: so erfuhr sie dagegen von seinen begeisterten Lippen die Enträthselung der überall verbreiteten Naturgeheimnisse. Er lehrte ihr, wie durch wundervolle Sympathie die Welt entstanden sey, und die Gestirne sich zu melodischen Reigen vereinigt hatten. Die Geschichte der Vorwelt ging durch seine heiligen Erzählungen in ihrem Gemüth auf; und wie entzückt war sie, wenn ihr Schüler, in der Fülle seiner Eingebungen, die Laute ergriff und mit unglaublicher Gelehrigkeit in die wundervollsten Gesänge ausbrach (N,I,220-221).

His descriptions of natural history, offered to her by way of exchange, seem to portray the cosmos as a constellation of musical melodies. Between them, the two figures master and exchange insight and skills in matters of both the individual poetic voice and the poetic context of polyphony. She, in particular, fulfils the promise of universal polyphony by emerging from her silence into song, making the transition from muse to musician. Or does she? Her final return to the court is illuminating in this respect.

During her second and prolonged absence from the court, the King and courtiers miss the princess deeply. The only thing that comes anywhere near replacing her are the songs of the poets, sung to console the king during an evening:

Nur wenn Abends seine Sänger vor ihn kamen und schöne Lieder mitbrachten, war es, als ließe sich die alte Freude vor ihm blicken; seine Tochter dünkte ihm nah, und er schöpfte Hofnung, sie bald wieder zu sehen. War er aber wieder allein, so zerriß ihm vom neuen das Herz und er weinte laut. Dann gedachte er bey sich selbst: Was hilft mir nun alle die Herrlichkeit, und meine hohe Geburt. Nun bin ich doch elender als die andern Menschen. Meine Tochter kann mir nichts ersetzen. Ohne sie sind auch die Gesänge nichts, als leere Worte und Blendwerk (N,I, 223).

Here, however, the king begins to disentangle two things, which had hitherto been utterly entangled: his daughter as a subject and being in her own right, and his daughter as an image, a function, as an object or product of art. Her identity is not constituted by the songs that are sung about her, neither are those songs any replacement for her: at best they serve to commemorate her, though in a way which underscores her absence. Does this train of thought allow both king and patriarchal court to reassess; to see that their past veneration of her in fact overlooked her identity as subject, constituting a hidden practice of exclusion? When the couple return to the palace a year later with their newly-born child, it is the young poet, rather than the poetess, who sings his songs in the presence of the court: she is led before her father by the naturalist with child in arm. When the court poets sing their final song of thanks that the princess has returned unharmed, she appears in the final tableau to have taken on the Romantic, neo-Rousseauesque role of the demure and silent mother. By temporarily including the female as poet, but ultimately excluding her from the new order of things, the tale represents an imperfect or incomplete polyphony. The tale is told, as we saw, by the merchants, the self-confessed imperfect tellers of tales. As such the narrative can equally be seen as the imperfect rendering of a perfect model. Either way, this does not constitute Heinrich's last lesson on the nature of poetry, nor does it lead him astray on his quest for the polyphonic ideal.

Heinrich is exposed to ever more sophisticated lessons, and grows in his ability to extract messages and meanings from them. He exhibits a growing ability and willingness to function within the polyphony of *Poésie*, through his interaction with 'real' women outside the inset narratives. In the fourth chapter, he encounters the Christian crusaders, who tell their stories and sing their own songs: 'Heinrich hörte mit großer Aufmerksamkeit den neuen Erzählungen zu'

(N,I, 230). The words of their song, however, depict the Muslims occupying Jerusalem, referring to them as 'wilde Heyden', defiling Christ's grave (N,I,231). The Christian songs appear to allow no space for the voices of other religions or ethnic groups. The first strophe of their song, in fact, personifies the grave as an individual possessed of its own voice, though one all but drowned out by the mocking voices of the heathens: 'Es klagt heraus mit dumpfer Stimme: Wer rettet mich von diesem Grimme!' (ibid.). Part of the crusaders' quest, then, will be to free that voice – but also to silence others. Others are in fact excluded from the musical-narratorial act of singing: the crusaders already hold a female Muslim slave captive outside the castle and she is unable to partake in the singing. Heinrich withdraws from the company of the knights, however. His withdrawal from the castle betrays something of a desire to move beyond the songs, behaviour and politics of the crusaders: the mother, for some reason saddened, calls Heinrich away from the knights. In her quieter company, Heinrich is drawn out of the castle's confines by the evening outside; he leaves 'von der goldenen Ferne gelockt' (N,I, 233). It is there, in his search for something other than the knights, their song and their outlook, that he meets Zulima.

As with the young poet and his princess in the previous chapter, Heinrich's receptivity opens a space into which she can sing her song, a space denied her by her captors. The words of her song conjure the memory of an earlier, 'poetic' life in her homeland:

Hier, wo um krystallne Quellen
 Liebend sich der Himmel legt,
 Und mit heißen Balsamwellen
 Um den Hayn zusammenschlägt,
 Der in seinen Lustgebieten,
 Unter Früchten, unter Blüten
 Tausend bunte Sänger hegt. (N,I, 234-35)

Zulima's memories of her homeland are inhabited by a multitude of a thousand singers; a polyphony of voices. Ripped from her homeland by her Christian slavers, she now sings alone, only able to remember those songs, whilst the knights sing their own apparently polyphonic song in the castle halls nearby, one which, ironically, excludes her voice. After her song is complete, Zulima bids Heinrich come closer and begins to tell him of her homeland. Significantly, a contrast develops between Christianity and Islam within her narrative, which shows the latter religion and its culture to be more accepting of other creeds:

Wie ruhig hätten die Christen das heilige Grab besuchen können, ohne nöthig zu haben, einen fürchterlichen, unnützen Krieg anzufangen der [...] auf immer das Morgenland von Europa getrennt hat [...]. Unsere Fürsten ehrten andachtsvoll das Grab eures Heiligen, den auch wir für einen göttlichen Profeten halten (N,I,237).

Her culture is conceived of as pluralist in its acceptance of various religious prophets; Islam, in contrast to the Crusader's Christianity, accepts not only Mohammed but also Christ, the prophet of its *apparent* enemy, as its own, other prophet. From his encounter with Zulima, Heinrich not

only hears another song, different to those he has heard hitherto, but learns again that poets in general must listen to and allow space for others' voices. In leaving the castle, withdrawing from the crusader's songs, Heinrich offers Zulima the space to sing hers. In returning to the castle, he experiences the strange need to become in some way her saviour, though he is unsure of how he is to achieve this: 'Er suchte die sinkende Hoffnung seiner Begleiterinn, ihr Vaterland dereinst wieder zu sehn, zu beleben, indem er innerlich einen heftigen Beruf fühlte, ihr Retter zu seyn, ohne zu wissen, auf welche Art es geschehen könne' (N,I, 238). It seems, here, that Heinrich is embracing more passionately the belief in allowing others the space for self-representation and this is again reflected in the portrayal of his parting from Zulima. In approaching her for the first time, Heinrich had wished that he had his own lute. In parting, though, Heinrich will not accept her lute, which she offers as a gift, insisting that she keep the means by which she produces her song. Amongst other exchanges, the mother, representing since the end of the first dream a principle of active acceptance, embraces Zulima.

The fifth chapter deals with the travellers' arrival in the village and entry to an inn. The social tableau in the inn has an explicitly polyphonic character and, accordingly, the travellers integrate themselves into the dialogues: 'Das Wirthshaus war reinlich, die Leute bereitwillig, und eine Menge Menschen, theils Reisende, theils bloße Trinkgäste, saßen in der Stube, und unterhielten sich von allerhand Dingen. Unsre Reisenden gesellten sich zu ihnen, und mischten sich in die Gespräche' (N,I, 239). Initially, the dialogue actually becomes more of a monologue, with the ageing miner recounting the story of his life and profession. After the first instalment of this narrative, however, the miner pauses and his silence gives room for others, referred to as his attentive listeners, 'seine aufmerksamen Zuhörer,' to interact in the conversation, to put questions and unfold their own narratives (N,I,243). Hardenberg is careful to point out the dynamics of communication, through his explicit reference to the acts of narration and listening such as 'Erzählung' and 'Zuhörer', but also through the more dialogical term 'Gespräch' and through reference to how those present 'unterhielten sich' (ibid.). Heinrich enters into this genuinely dialogical pattern, asking questions and conversing with the narrator. As a result of these exchanges, he begins to establish connections between the work of the miner and that of the poet, pursuing this endeavour along the thematic strand of musicality:

Es fehlt euch gewiß nicht, sagte Heinrich, an ermunternden Liedern. Ich sollte meinen, daß euch euer Beruf unwillkürlich zu Gesängen begeistern und die Musik eine willkommne Begleiterin der Bergleute seyn müßte. Da habt ihr wahr gesprochen, erwiederte der Alte; Gesang und Zitherspiel gehört zum Leben des Bergmanns, und kein Stand kann mit mehr Vergnügen die Reize derselben genießen, als der unsrige. Musik und Tanz sind eigentliche Freuden des Bergmanns; sie sind wie ein fröhliches Gebet und die Erinnerungen und Hofnungen desselben helfen die mühsame Arbeit erleichtern und die lange Einsamkeit verkürzen (N,I, 246-47).

The miner agrees that music is central to the life of his fellow workers; it is both recreational and informs and accompanies his work. For the first time in the novel, however, another quality of

music is discussed, namely its power to escape the confines of linear time, to embody, seemingly, the present; the past that is lost to us and the future that is yet to come.

In the 'Brouillon', Hardenberg had reflected on various aspects of music in an extended passage (N,III,283:245), dealing with music as an acoustical phenomenon and with the way in which musical instruments create sounds. Primarily in the passage, he also reflects on the relationship between music and language: 'Über die all[gemeine] *n Sprache* der Musik. Der Geist wird frey, *unbestimmt* angeregt – das thut ihm so wohl – das dünkt ihm so bekannt, so vaterländisch – er ist auf diese kurzen Augenblicke in seiner indischen Heymath. Alles Liebe – und Gute, Zukunft und Vergangenheit regt sich in ihm – Hoffnung und Sehnsucht [...]' (ibid.). Music itself is a form of language, though is a 'general' language that embodies no content and is non-referential. In this form, music can function as an ideal to which the more semantically determinate forms of written and spoken language can aspire: music's non-referentiality allows for the ease and mobility with which its internal structures (notes, phrases, harmonies) move, as they are not bound by the laws of grammar or pre-determined meaning. Whilst semantic language cannot wholly reflect this, it ought to remain more mobile, the meaning and associations of words ought not to become static, but to evolve and allow themselves to be manipulated. Thus, when Hardenberg says of language 'Sie muß wieder *Gesang* werden' (N,III,284:245) he is not calling for an acoustic ornamentation of spoken language, but for its evolution into the freer expressive form discussed above. However, Hardenberg also makes an aside about the effect that music can have upon the human subject: during the experience of music, the mind becomes 'free', stimulated but in a non-determinate manner. This experience allows for a feeling of being at home, but also, momentarily, of transcending linear time by experiencing, in a sense, both future and past. Music does not, however, allow some mystical experience, enabling the subject to step literally outside of time; Hardenberg emphasizes that these experiences are both transient and subjective: they amount, rather, to hoped for futures and longed for pasts and occur within the mind 'in ihm' (N,II,283:245). Thus the experience of music creates a *fictional* unity of past, present and future. Hardenberg's fictions, of course, are not intended as a means to escape from reality, but as a means of becoming involved with it; music, too, can interact with and shape reality as it is lived. By *appearing* to unify past, present and future, music can encourage us to retrieve or recreate what we have lost for the benefit of our present, to envision ideal futures without understanding these as necessarily excluding what has come before. The miner's comments on music remind us of the aside in Hardenberg's 'Brouillon' entry through their mention of 'hopes' and 'longing'. Both passages show music to be polyphonic in what we will think of as a fictionally *trans-historical* sense; it encourages us to shape our lives in a way which conserves the past, enriches the present and brings both forward, inclusively, into the future. The miner lays the groundwork for music's growing influence in this new sense throughout the text. Part of the poet's task, then, will not only

be to raise awareness of the many voices speaking around us, but to offer reminders of voices that have sung and spoken in the past – and may be allowed to sing and speak again.

The journey undertaken by Heinrich, the old miner and a selection of the merchants and locals, takes them into the caverns near the village, where they meet Graf von Hohenzollern. The journey into his realm has been seen variously as the pursuit of a quasi-erotic fantasy, exploring the inner workings of feminized nature, though also as a journey through nature's documentation of its own history.¹⁰ Between these self-evident themes, perhaps more subtly than in previous chapters, we can find our themes of poetry, voice and music. Moving through the caverns, past animal bones and fossils, the explorers are initially attracted to the hermit by his song, which drifts almost acorporeally from a distant cavern (N,I,254). The words of the song tell of a self that has gladly withdrawn from the light of day into darkness, who stands literally at death's door, though stands there intoxicated, having drunk from a metaphorical goblet of love brought to him every day. He fears, there, no pain, having been assured the devotion of the Queen of all women, 'Königinn der Frauen' (ibid.). From the ensuing discussions between the hermit and the explorers, the meaning of these utterances becomes clearer. In their dialogue the old miner and Hohenzollern reflect on nature and on the processes by which speculators come to know it:

Mag es seyn, daß die Natur nicht mehr so fruchtbar ist, daß heut zu Tage keine Metalle und Edelsteine, keine Felsen und Berge mehr entstehen, daß Pflanzen und Thiere nicht mehr zu so erstaunlichen Größen und Kräften aufquellen; je mehr sich ihre erzeugende Kraft erschöpft hat, desto mehr haben ihre bildenden, veredelnden und geselligen Kräfte zugenommen, ihr Gemüth ist empfänglicher und zarter, ihre Fantasie mannichfaltiger und sinnbildlicher, ihre Hand leichter und kunstreicher geworden. Sie nähert sich dem Menschen, und wenn wie ehemals ein wildgebährender Fels war, so ist sie jetzt eine stille, treibende Pflanze, eine stumme menschliche Künstlerinn (N,I, 262).

These words of the old miner intersect with a particular interest of the 'Einsiedler', namely history and the historiographical process. Where the old miner tells the history of nature, the 'Einsiedler' reflects more generally on the nature of history:

Der eigentliche Sinn für die Geschichten der Menschen entwickelt sich erst spät, und mehr unter den stillen Einflüssen der Erinnerung, als unter den gewaltsameren Eindrücken der Gegenwart. Die nächsten Ereignisse scheinen nur locker verknüpft, aber sie sympathisiren desto wunderbarer mit entfernteren; und nur dann, wenn man im Stande ist, eine lange Reihe zu übersehn und weder alles buchstäblich zu nehmen, noch auch mit muthwilligen Träumen die eigentliche Ordnung zu verwirren, bemerkt man die geheime Verkettung des Ehemaligen und Künftigen, und lernt die Geschichte aus Hoffnung und Erinnerung zusammensetzen (N,I,257-58).

The hermit's reflections on the nature of history and historiography, reveal his belief that all historical writing is a construction of sorts, but one in which individual events should be written about within a holistic framework of historical development; the codification of those events is informed by an awareness of their position within an overarching vision of historical

development.¹¹ As the historian consciously produces fictions of what was, what is and what will be, these fictions are also trans-historical. This philosophy is reflected in the manner Hohenzollern has chosen to live his life. He appears to exist in a time zone that one might call the 'extratemporal present'.¹² There, he is able to construct and reconstruct the apparently disconnected temporal zones of past and future. By creating and, in a sense, enacting the ongoing fiction of temporal transcendence, he is able to heal the wounds dealt to him by time and exist in bliss. The wounds he has received are considerable: his wife and children, the self-confessed focus of all his love, have passed away. Strangely, though, it was such a loss that enabled him to universalize his love, focussing it on all things across time and space. To this extent, he can be seen to represent the 'self of selves',¹³ the completed ego preserved from the inadequacies of mortal subjectivity and for this reason he stands for ever before death's door with no trepidation, as his first song showed. He claims neither to have fled the difficulties of the real world and nor does he seek to deny the passage of time, but has found a way to compensate for both. However, Hardenberg's fictions are not designed to support stasis, be it stasis of the self or its static relationship with the world; this allows for a more critical reading of the hermit's role. Fankhauser shows his fiction to derive from an intersection of discourses, which effectively 'mutate' the woman/nature/other triad into an aesthetic construction serving that fantasy and filling various voids (ethical, ontological and epistemological) left open in the male subject (Fankhauser, 85-93). There is something to be said for this reading. Between them, the hermit and old miner construct their own static fantasies of the feminine. The miner imagines nature as a poetess, possessed of all the qualities needed in a poet: receptivity, the ironized and flexible sense of identity. All that she lacks is her own voice, as she is a mute female artist. Similarly, the grave, the effigies upon them and the ongoing devotion to the 'Queen of all women', represent Hohenzollern's fetishist fantasy of woman. It seems that the two figures resemble the initiates at Saïs, in that they have much to say about nature and women, but little time for what either has to say for themselves. In both cases, the communion with the apparent female other is both occasioned by and dependent upon that other's absence and silence and represents merely an empty fantasy. However, that sort of fantasy, one which insists on an imagined presence obscuring an actual absence, is one that Hardenberg left behind him with Sophie and one that he will not allow to detract from his protagonist's progress.¹⁴

Heinrich and his companions leave the hermit to his reflections. Whilst in the cavern, Heinrich had perused the hermit's subterranean library. The book that caught his attention also dealt with historiographical issues. Amazingly, it seemed to be an alternate version of his own story, depicting him, his companions and his experiences in a slightly different context. The book

hatte keinen Titel, doch fand er noch beym Suchen einige Bilder. Sie dünkten ihm ganz wunderbar bekannt, und wie er recht zusah entdeckte er seine eigene Gestalt ziemlich kenntlich unter den Figuren. Er erschreck und glaubte zu träumen, aber beym wiederholten Ansehn konnte er nicht mehr

an der vollkommenen Ähnlichkeit zweifeln. Er traute kaum seinen Sinnen, als er bald auf einem Bilde die Höhle, den Einsiedler und den Alten neben sich entdeckte. Allmählich fand er auf den andern Bildern die Morgenländerinn, seine Eltern, den Landgrafen und die Landgräfinn von Thüringen, seinen Freund den Hofkaplan, und manche Andere seiner Bekannten; doch waren ihre Kleidungen verändert und schienen aus einer andern Zeit zu seyn. Eine große Menge Figuren wußte er nicht zu nennen, doch däuchten sie ihm bekannt. Er sah sein Ebenbild in verschiedenen Lagen. Gegen das Ende kam er sich größer und edler vor. Die Guitarre ruhte in seinen Armen [...]. Er sah sich am kayserlichen Hofe, zu Schiffe, in trauter Umarmung mit einem schlanken lieblichen Mädchen, in einem Kampfe mit wildaussehenden Männern, und in freundlichen Gesprächen mit Sarazenen und Mohren. [...] Die letzten Bilder waren dunkel und unverständlich; doch überraschten ihn einige Gestalten seines Traumes mit dem innigsten Entzücken; der Schluß des Buches schien zu fehlen. Heinrich war sehr bekümmert, und wünschte nichts sehnlicher, als das Buch lesen zu können, und vollständig zu besitzen (N,I, 264-65).

Like written histories and like the music described by the old miner, the text embraces past, present, as well as possible futures. The novel is shown to reflect in some form Heinrich's journey so far, his experiences, though also, to an extent, his future development. After portraying Heinrich's current circumstances, the images go on to pre-figure later scenes from *Opferdingen*. Increasingly, the images become indistinct and at the close of the book the pages are blank, the end of the story unwritten and unillustrated. Of pivotal significance in this sequence is the image of Heinrich as a fully-fledged poet, holding a guitar. Portrayed as having mastered the 'music' of poetry, this imagined, future version of Heinrich begins to function in an increasingly polyphonic context: he engages for instance in conversation with members of other cultures, Moors and Saracens like Zulima. The empirical content, the specific events of that future become increasingly indeterminate, as told by the blank pages towards the book's end. One matter is determined, however: Heinrich's progress towards that future is to be determined by the polyphony of poetry, it is to embrace and include the voices of others. Unlike the 'Einsiedler', Heinrich can remain neither in the physical and allegorical seclusion of his own underground realm, nor in his own fantasy of communion with others. The hermit's book is a fiction, but it implies that Heinrich should follow a real path, leading to encounters with *real* others; others, that is, in the world beyond books and the imagination. It also implies that in these encounters he will engage in genuine acts of sociability and communication with those others. Given that this chapter has also shown music to recall past events, to offer in the sense discussed a *trans-historical* polyphony, Heinrich's allegorical 'musicianship' might furthermore seem to imply that figures from his past, together with their voices and songs, might return to inhabit the final pages of the book. The hermit himself is satisfied with remaining in his own fiction of temporal transcendence and interpersonal communion. Thus he loses sight of the need to keep searching for ideals of communication and sociability espoused by his own book: he confesses to having read the book long ago and since forgotten its content (N,I,265).

Finally, in chapter six, Heinrich reaches his mother's hometown and the geographical end of the journey, Augsburg. Before his arrival, the narrative reflects on the nature of poets and how they differ from other more 'worldly' individuals. The contrast is between individuals, on the one hand, who are born to be active from the outset of their lives, the merchants for example, who busy themselves with the affairs of the material world about them and, on the other hand, the poets. The latter, runs the narrative, are those: 'ruhigen, unbekannten Menschen, deren Welt ihr Gemüth, deren Thätigkeit die Betrachtung, deren Leben ein leises Bilden ihrer innern Kräfte ist' (N,I, 266). Whilst this description of a quiet, passive individual appears consistent with the model of the poet as receptive, as listener, it still portrays a discrete, self-absorbed form of subjectivity, not greatly concerned with the events of the outside world. This begins to change, however, when Heinrich himself enters the equation. The narrative is unambiguous about his belonging to the caste of poets: 'Heinrich war von Natur zum Dichter geboren' (N,I, 267). Additionally, he exhibits the requisite openness and receptivity, which Hardenberg conveys through one of his most engaging metaphors: 'Alles was er sah und hörte schien nur neue Riegel in ihm wegzuschieben, und neue Fenster ihm zu öffnen. Er sah die Welt in ihren großen und abwechselnden Verhältnissen vor sich liegen' (N,I, 268). However, Heinrich still only stands on the threshold of *Poésie*. The narrative makes explicit that for him the 'soul' of that world, conversation, was still mute: 'Noch war sie aber stumm, und ihre Seele, das Gespräch, noch nicht erwacht' (ibid.). Significantly, the vocal realization of this 'world-soul', is not to occur as his monologue, not as a simple unilateral outpouring of Heinrich's thoughts and feelings, but rather in dialogical fashion, as an exchange between his and other diverse voices. The final step in his education is described thus: 'Schon nahte sich ein Dichter, ein liebliches Mädchen an der Hand, um durch Laute der Muttersprache und durch Berührung eines süßen, zärtlichen Mundes, die blöden Lippen aufzuschließen, und den einfachen Accord in unendliche Melodien zu entfalten' (N,I, 268). Heinrich's final step, then, will involve him beginning his own musical production; his dumb lips will be opened and his simplistic mode of speech, allegorized as a simple chord, will be unfolded into endless melodies. Responsible for this will be the two figures, a fully-fledged poet and the loveable maiden on his arm, the former his mentor-to-be, Klingsohr, the other his future lover, Klingsohr's daughter Mathilde. The former will tutor him in the technicalities of poetry, the latter introduce him to a significant other, providing him with the opportunity and inspiration to enter into dialogue. Significantly, Klingsohr's role is described in terms of his talking to Heinrich in his 'Muttersprache', his mother tongue. The phrase holds dual connotations. Not only is it the dialect of the Swabian south, of his maternal family and therefore, in a sense his native tongue, but it is also the language of the mother, the receptive mode of communicating represented by her from the time she awoke him from his first dream. That mode, as we know, involves both the production and reception of language and is thus genuinely communicative.

Heinrich arrives first in the house of Schwaning, his grandfather, in the midst of the festival. Again the environment is characterized by music, dance, singing and conversation: 'Das Haus des alten Schwaning fanden sie erleuchtet, und eine lustige Musik tönte ihnen entgegen' (N,I, 268). Greeting Heinrich and the mother warmly, Schwaning whisks the pair inside to be introduced to the guests (N,I, 269). The music pauses, but Heinrich and his mother are immediately overwhelmed by Swabian sociability, well-wishes, greetings and questions; the pair are effectively choreographed into the polyphonic constellation, where thousands of calls, comments and dialogues pass literally from mouth to mouth. Heinrich's initial reaction is to withdraw, say little and remain abashed. He appears particularly in awe of Klingsohr, whom he recognizes as the serious-faced mentor from the hermit's book. To his future teacher, too, he says nothing, although 'Es lag so viel Zutrauliches in seiner Stimme, daß Heinrich bald ein Herz faßte und sich freymüthig mit ihm unterhielt' (N,I, 270). It is on this occasion that Heinrich meets Mathilde. From the outset she, too, says and speaks little. She asks him if he cares to dance 'mit kaum hörbaren, leisen Worten' (ibid.). After the dance, Heinrich has a chance to engage in conversation with others: 'Eine junge Verwandte setzte sich zu seiner Linken, und Klingsohr saß ihm gerade gegenüber. So wenig Mathilde sprach, so gesprächig war Veronika, seine andere Nachbarin. Sie that gleich mit ihm vertraut und machte ihn in kurzem mit allen Anwesenden bekannt. Heinrich verhörte manches. Er war noch bey seiner Tänzerin, und hätte sich gern öfters rechts gewandt' (N,I, 271). Despite the attention he receives from and is obliged to bestow upon others, Heinrich has found another of greater significance and it is her conversation and song with which he is most concerned. She is conspicuously taciturn; a state of affairs, which he seeks to change. She shies away from Heinrich's attempts to coerce her to teach him the guitar, for example:

Mathilde erzählte ihm, daß sie Gitarre spiele. Ach! sagte Heinrich, von euch möchte ich sie lernen. Ich habe mich lange darnach geseht. – Mein Vater hat mich unterrichtet, Er spielt sie unvergleichlich, sagte sie erröthend. – Ich glaube doch, erwiderte Heinrich, daß ich sie schneller bey euch lerne. Wie freue ich mich euren Gesang zu hören – Stellt euch nicht zu viel vor. – O! sagte Heinrich, was sollte ich nicht erwarten können, da eure bloße Rede schon Gesang ist, und eure Gestalt eine himmlische Musik verkündigt (N,I, 276).

Here, Heinrich appears convinced that Mathilde would be a more appropriate or even more able teacher and appears willing to learn from her. However, when Mathilde presents herself as a less capable musician than her father and warns Heinrich not to expect great things of her playing, Heinrich's contradiction is complimentary; how could she not be a great player or teacher, when her voice is a song and her very body music. Here, then, Heinrich is showing his growing awareness of polyphony in one sense of the word; he perceives all aspects of the world, including the vocality and physicality of others, as acoustical voices. Yet, in another sense, the polyphony remains incomplete, as Heinrich is 'poeticizing' Mathilde and she is not yet producing her own poetry. Significantly, at the very moment when Heinrich pays these compliments, Mathilde falls

silent and Klingsohr engages him in conversation: 'Mathilde schwieg. Ihr Vater fing ein Gespräch mit ihm an, in welchem Heinrich mit der lebhaftesten Begeisterung sprach. Die Nächsten wunderten sich über des Jünglings Beredsamkeit, über die Fülle seiner bildlichen Gedanken. Mathilde sah ihn mit stiller Aufmerksamkeit an' (N,I, 276). Mathilde is in danger, as was the princess in Atlantis, of becoming art rather than artist, becoming muse rather than musician.

Of course, Heinrich's growing love for Mathilde is an inspiration for his songs. In the solitude of his bedchamber that night he expresses his rapture and desire for Mathilde, but also begins to reflect on the wider relevance of his meeting with her in the context of his development as a poet:

Ist mir nicht zu Muthe wie in jenem Traume, beym Anblick der blauen Blume?
Welcher sonderbare Zusammenhang ist zwischen Mathilden und dieser Blume?
Jenes Gesicht, das aus dem Kelche sich mir entgegenneigte, es war Mathildens
himmliches Gesicht, und nun erinnere ich mich auch, es in jenem Buche gesehn
zu haben. [...] O! eie ist der sichtbare Geist des Gesangs, eine würdige Tochter
ihres Vaters. Sie wird mich in Musik auflösen. Sie wird meine innerste Seele, die
Hüterin meines heiligen Feuers seyn. [...] Gehört nicht ein eigenes ungetheiltes
Daseyn zu ihrer Anschauung und Anbetung? und bin ich der Glückliche, dessen
Wesen das Echo, der Spiegel des ihrigen seyn darf? Es war kein Zufall, daß ich
sie am Ende meiner Reise sah, daß ein seliges Fest den höchsten Augenblick
meines Lebens umgab. Es konnte nicht anders seyn; macht ihre Gegenwart
nicht alles festlich?
Er trat ans Fenster. Das Chor der Gestirne stand am dunkeln Himmel [...]'
(N,I, 277).

Amidst his adulations, his virtual deification of Mathilde, Heinrich begins to connect her explicitly to the image of his beloved other in Hohenzollern's book and the blue flower of his first dream. Thus he makes her not only his ideal, his erotically desired other and the telos of his life, but places her in the context of his own growing receptivity to the other as an actively communicative subject. These reflections are placed amidst idealizations of her, which make her as much object as she is subject: she becomes the embodiment of song, the realization of her father's spirit and the catalyst to Heinrich's own musical outpourings. As such, she is a male-authored construction, the product in particular of her father and muse to her new found beloved. Yet in that capacity Mathilde begins to transcend the boundaries of static objectivity. Having made her his ideal, it is Heinrich, who is to devote an undivided existence to her worship, in such a way that he becomes a mirror of her being, an echo of her song. Perhaps covertly, Hardenberg intends Heinrich to begin constructing Mathilde as a poetically creative agent. This tendency is continued in Heinrich's dream of that night. There, Mathilde sits on a boat, singing her 'einfaches Lied' (N,I, 278), only to be pulled under water by a whirlpool. Diving to save her, he finds himself alive in a subaquatic realm. Again, fountains are present, this time chiming like bells, and he hears again a simple song, which he follows. He finds himself with Mathilde, likewise undrowned, who speaks to him in a highly revealing manner: 'Sie sagte ihm ein wunderbares geheimes Wort in seinen Mund' (N,I, 279). Again, this could be seen as a conventional image of the muse breathing the breath of inspiration into the poet. There are

complications to this reading, however. Rather than breathing into his mouth, inspiring or enabling him to speak the word, it is she that speaks into his mouth, and speaks a 'word' that eludes his memory, understanding and articulative faculty. As a poet, Heinrich ought to specialize in articulating the ineffable, so why can he not repeat this word? It is not because he is not yet poet enough, but rather because the word itself has no meaning in the conventional sense. This does not mean it is meaningless, but that its meaning lies purely in the fact that it is said by Mathilde and not Heinrich. Heinrich cannot repeat the word, as it is the result of the one thing that even a poet cannot do with language: speak *authentically* with the voice of another. Thus the dream can equally be read as a pre-figuration of Mathilde's forthcoming autonomous participation in poetic discourse, or better, the point at which Heinrich begins to practise truly polyphonic poetry by allowing space for her voice.

At first, the ideal of Mathilde as poetic subject seems distant. Klingsohr wakens Heinrich the next morning, without chiding him for his dreams or his sleeping, as his father had. Breakfasting on a pleasant hill overlooking the town, Heinrich is given his first lesson on the nature of poetry by his new teacher. The discussion is wide-ranging, embracing the relationship between man and nature and the necessity for the poet to expand actively his knowledge and skills and not wait idly for inspiration. Whilst Klingsohr describes how a poet must be a flexible, receptive individual, noting in particular: 'Zur wahren melodischen Gesprächigkeit gehört ein weiter, aufmerksamer und ruhiger Sinn' (N,I, 281) and stating, furthermore: 'Ihr könnt Mathildens Lehrstunden theilen, und sie wird euch gern die Guitarre spielen lehren' (N,I, 282-3), Mathilde remains silent throughout. She brings breakfast, speaks only to confirm her desire to be married to Heinrich and is largely absent from the discussion on *Poësie*. Heinrich's lessons continue with the notoriously complex text 'Klingsohrs Märchen'.

As implied in the introduction to this study, we can read the tale in terms of women's vocal and lyrical participation in poetic discourse, with the scribe attempting throughout to marginalize their voices. He attempts initially to record the various events in the tale's allegorical household in reductive written language and maintain absolute authority over his text and, subsequently, to dominate the royal household entirely. He seeks to impose his authority, by fixing identity and meaning, which in turn involves limiting the imagination, silencing the musical language of *Poësie* and its practitioners. But the child Fabel refuses to be silenced. Initially she manages to elude the scribe and descends into the underworld, where she meets the three fates. There she is condemned to sit and spin, though as she does she sees 'das Sternbild des Phönixes. Froh über das glückliche Zeichen fing sie an lustig zu spinnen, ließ die Kammerthür ein wenig offen und sang halbleise [...]' (N,I, 302). Banned from singing by the fates and their master the scribe (N,I, 303), Fabel is sent on a quest to gather materials for the oil required by the fates. She calls at Arctur's court, where she is given a lyre. Continuing on her way, she begins to play and sing more freely than before:

Sie glitt in reizenden Bogenschwüngen über das Eismeer, indem sie fröhliche Musik aus den Saiten lockte.

Das Eis gab unter ihren Tritten die herrlichsten Töne von sich. Der Felsen der Trauer hielt sie für Stimmen seiner suchenden rückkehrenden Kinder, und antwortete in einem tausendfachen Echo (N,I, 304-5).

Meanwhile, Fabel's twin brother Eros has been taken on a quest by Ginnistan. Whilst visiting the castle of her father, the moon, she is allowed the key to his 'Schatzkammer', an allegorical space in which the imagination runs riot. Ginnistan brings order to this creative chaos and brings forth a vision for Eros, significantly of a flower, upon which figures of both genders are presented, intertwined in androgynous forms. Her act is one of artistic expression and one that anticipates aspects of the tale's resolution: both genders are to be significant figures in the future, according to this epiphany, indeed the female Fabel is pictured as a supreme poetic figure, playing a harp and singing 'die süßesten Lieder' (N,I, 300). Is this vision to be realized? If so, what becomes of Fabel? In fact, the ideal is brought about: within Arctur's renewed kingdom Fabel has the role of artist at court, the scribe having been vanquished. She is to assist the moon in performing plays in the now vacant underworld domain of the fates, spins a golden thread from her body, which is simultaneously a kind of wordless music (N,I, 314) and even ends the tale with a song, singing 'mit lauter Stimme' (N,I, 315).

This narrative is Heinrich's final formal lesson in matters of *Poësie*. In this utopian vision of a new kingdom, women have been allowed to unfold their song and poetry, even taking on the role of court poet. On the threshold of becoming a poet, Heinrich learns yet again that women's voices must speak autonomously. Of course, this tale does not mark the end of the novel: eventually Heinrich moves beyond his time with Klingsohr and Mathilde, indeed beyond linear time itself. At this point, though, we have established that the novel represents a series of imperfect but ever improving attempts at establishing a communicative polyphony, presented through musical allegories, and inclusive of women's voices in the conventional sense of voice as vocal utterance. As we noted earlier, however, the ideal of polyphonic communication not only pluralizes the centres of agency involved in communication, but also opens out differing *modes* of communication. In the light of this, we shall return to discuss the novel's first half from the perspective of those *other* forms of discourse implied by the model of polyphony, examining women's participation in those. The novel's conclusion, its eventual transition into the ideal and the position of Heinrich and the female poetic subject in that ideal will then follow to complete the reading of *Ofterdingen*.

IV. 3 *Writing and the Female Body*

One of the most significant tectonic shifts in the modern study of literature has been the decentering of the notion of 'mind' or the 'mental', 'Geist', as the necessary agent of literary production and the paradigm of literary criticism. In other words, literature can no longer be seen as a thing simply created by the mind and read in terms of ideas, as it also articulates and signifies the mind's opposite other, the body, and should also be read in terms of corporeality.¹⁵ This

notion of the body's traditional suppression has been a major point of departure for feminist cultural-historical writing. Sigrid Weigel¹⁶ showed how corporeality, particularly the female body, became one of the great lacunae in the history of histories. She pointed out that, when the female body *did* enter discourse, it was all too often overlaid with a male-authored aesthetic construction of body or *Zeichenkörper*. Elisabeth Bronfen¹⁷ produced a study of the absence of the body in terms of portrayals of women's death: the morbid nineteenth century required the medium to represent the theme that most fascinated it – death. The notion of the beautiful, female corpse was chosen as that mask and thus, increasingly, women were presented in terms of their deaths – though the very beauty of the corpse constituted a sanitized representation of death, which even at the end of their lives denied women the physical reality of their demise. More conventionally feminist scholars argue that Hardenberg's works typify this treatment of the female body. The later literary and theoretical works are believed to represent an ongoing attempt to re-create Sophie von Kühn, which results in a series of acorporeal muses or dehumanized, aesthetic representations, one might say *Zeichenkörper*. On the other hand, scholars such as Massey and Kuzniar argue that precisely the stereotypical roles of mother and lover allow the female body to become an important locus of women's identity, social influence and self expression within the fiction. This approach is problematic, as it restricts women in several senses: having women adhere to body-centred modes of being and expressing implies a particular congruence between women and the body, without allowing them the capacity for intellectual progression. Also, methodologically, the recourse to modern theory as a means to re-interpreting the female body in Novalis overlooks how Hardenberg himself engaged with historical discourses of the body and modified these so as to privilege (female) corporeality in a meaningful way. Firstly, the following section will discuss the discourses of the body that Hardenberg knew and absorbed. It will place particular emphasis on how he adapted these to produce a model of the body both endowed with its own meaning and the capacity to generate meaning: potentially the body becomes both a readable sign and also an autonomously communicating entity. Secondly, we will analyze the manner in which these theories are translated into literary practice in *Öfterdingen*. The articulation of the female body within the text is complicated by the fact that the body can be both sign and agent, both the thing written and the thing writing. As agent, the body could be a means to represent aspects of the female self, but as sign it could also become the aesthetic play-thing of the onlooking male poet. We must remain aware of which figures are dealing poetically with images of the female body and what values and meanings they are attaching to it. In particular we shall be asking whether the female body is presented in a manner which underlines the presence of the female subject as a physical, sexual being in her own right, or whether it is used to reduce her to a non-corporeal, de-sexualized product of male imagination.

Hardenberg's poetics evolved from the idealist philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a tradition that repressed and devalued the body. Was the poet

nevertheless able to treat the body differently through his model of universal polyphony developed from Paracelsus and Jacob Böhme? Hardenberg's theoretical writing shows evidence of explicit reflection on the nature of the physical universe and how it can be thought to embody and transmit meaning, reflections which come from a variety of sources. He engaged with the natural-philosophical tradition as it was emerging in the works of F.W.J. Schelling. In *Von der Weltseele*, published in 1798 and studied by Hardenberg in his 'Philosophische Hefte', Schelling contended that the universe was pervaded by a spirit or *Weltseele*, which was seeking constantly to realize itself as an absolute identity. The *Weltseele* expressed itself through two opposing forces, one of expansion and the other of contraction. Where these forces collided, matter was produced. The universe was an ongoing process of collisions *ad infinitum*, which produced an increasingly complex system of matter and spirit. Creation was an evolutionary scale or spectrum, with the mineral as its base, followed by the vegetable and then the animal, with humanity at its peak. What, though, drove this process of complex diversification and, regardless of how simple or complex matter might be, how did meaning come to inhere within it? These questions have been addressed by Stephan Grätzel in *Die philosophische Wiederentdeckung des Leibes*.¹⁸ According to Grätzel, Schelling thought of nature as having its own, absolute and independent reality, seeing in nature both of Spinoza's models *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, nature is both product and productive agency, matter and spirit, object and subject. The unfolding of increasingly complex matter, then, was an expression of the spirit as it sought to articulate itself and, as such, it need not be *ascribed* meaning, but was inherently *meaningful in itself*. But in Schelling, writes Grätzel, the meaning of the material was determined by the teleological context, which sees the material as one stage in a developmental process, ending in spirit begetting spirit; the *Weltseele* finding its highest expression in humanity's intellectually informed, aesthetic production. Forms of matter, indeed each material body, can only ever express a *failed* attempt to be something metaphysical. The human body is a sign, but its significance points to an unrealized absolute, which it is striving to emulate. In this sense, Schelling presents the human body as aesthetically and ontologically self-negating.

In contrast, Grätzel has shown how Novalis produced his own notions on the meaningfulness of human corporeality in his natural philosophical fragments and encyclopaedic writings from 1798 onwards. There, Novalis thought of the living human material body as a point of connection between matter and the individual spirit, which animates the material. The human spirit draws upon the matter of the world, crystallizing it to articulate its own identity. In the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*, he wrote: 'Jeder Mensch belebt einen individuellen Keim im Betrachtenden. [...] Indem wir uns selbst betrachten – beleben wir uns selbst' (N,II,460:102). This notion of 'beleben', is perhaps better described as one of awakening or appropriating of the material: matter is not dead before it becomes part of the body, it is merely stimulated and given new meaning by its new context. Thus the body, in a sense, becomes 'Geist' as it bestows

meaning upon its material self and, inversely, 'Geist' takes on a physical form in becoming body. In a way, living as a body involves a synthesis of living and dying, which involves the body elevating its physical self to spiritual significance. This death, though, is not to be confused with actual physical death, but is rather part of the process of ongoing mutual transfiguration of 'Geist' and 'Leib': 'Ein Mensch, der Geist wird – ist zugleich ein Geist, der Körper wird. Diese höhere Art von Tod [...] hat mit dem gemeinen Tod nichts zu schaffen – es wird etwas seyn, was wir *Verklärung* nennen können' (N,III,62). The mutuality of this transfiguration reflects the fact that Hardenberg was not thinking in terms of subordinating the physical to the spiritual. Although it is the mental that initiates and activates the material as another mode of the self's realization, the physical and mental then exist as bilaterally interactive equivalences. Thus it can be true that there is a 'nothwendige Einwirkung *veränderter Gedankenzüge, fremden Zuspruchs* - treffender Kernsprüche - plötzlicher Einfälle, auf den Zustand des Körpers' (N,III,612:351), which, on occasion, makes possible a heightened mutual transfiguration of mind and body: 'Seele und K[örper] *berühren sich* im Act. – *chemisch* – oder galvanisch – oder electrisch – oder *feurig* – Die Seele ißt den K[örper] (und verdaut ihn?) *instantant* – der Körper empfängt die Seele – (und gebiert sie?) *instantant*' (N,III,264:126). Of greatest significance for our discussion is the fact that the body is not subjugated to an externally determined teleological process, as in Schelling. Grätzel formulates this thus: 'Der Sinn des Individuums ist sein Werkzeug und dies ist sein Körper' (Grätzel, 92). The human body is not merely a determinate object in the great subject of nature, but a uniquely individuated, self-determining and materialized expression of self. Now the body is not the sole property of the self and therefore not entirely self-determining. As we have seen, Hardenberg believed it true to assert that: 'Ich finde meinen Körper durch sich und die Weltseele zugleich bestimmt und wirksam [...]' (N,II,551:118). Corporeality is still dependent on its inheritance of material from the whole of nature. Nevertheless, the potential is there for the body to construct and transmit meaning in a way that affirms and expresses the nature of self, though in his natural philosophical writings Hardenberg does not explicitly theorize such a discourse of the body: for that we must look elsewhere in his work, in his reception of the works of another great thinker on the expressive power of body, Johann Caspar Lavater.

Amidst his studies in Freiberg in 1798, Hardenberg wrote a letter to Caroline Just detailing serious concerns that his life of bookish learning was diverting him from more profitable, more vital pursuits:

Was hilfts, daß ich mich bis zur höchsten Ermüdung bey Buchstaben aufhalte – verliere ich darüber nicht die lehrreichste Schrift, die Menschengestalt, aus den Augen? Ich kehre am Ende immer zu Einem zurück – und dieses Eine ist der Geist des Menschen – von dem am Ende alles Ausfluß und Offenbarung ist – und warum dieses Eine gerade in dem todten Zeichen, und nicht in lebendiger Anschauung suchen (N,IV,249:115).

This is not a wholesale critique of learning, but rather an assertion that the human mind or spirit could be better read and researched from the living signs of the human form. Where had these ideas come from? It was Hardenberg's reading and re-formulation of Johann Caspar Lavater's works, which informed his ideas on freeing and articulating the expressive power of the human body. Ulrich Stadler has already re-constructed Hardenberg's reading of Lavater and the impact the latter had on the former's work.¹⁹ Whilst Hardenberg had obviously known Lavater since the early 1790s, Stadler notes several jottings from Novalis's theoretical fragments of 1798-99, in which he uses the words 'höhere' or 'poetische' in conjunction with 'Physiognomik'. Such explicit references imply that a consciously critical transformation of Lavater's thinking has occurred. Stadler first points to the similarities between the two. Novalis took from Lavater the notion that the inner life of humanity, the mental and spiritual, the intellectual and the moral, is directly linked to the material-corporeal. Our physical bodies correspond to our metaphysical selves and the nature of this correspondence can become the object of human speculation. There, though, the similarities between the physiognomist and the poet appear to end. Lavater sought to deliver an empirical catalogue of the human form and, simultaneously, built this into his own Christian utopianism, taking the ideal of the human form to be that of Christ and reading all other human forms as imperfect attempts to emulate it. In Hardenberg, the Corpus Christi is not presented as the ideal human form – indeed there is no empirical ideal of the body whatsoever in his thinking. Instead, he absorbed and reworked the Lavaterian notion of a divine essence or 'higher' body (*Lichtgestalt*) in all things: Stadler sees in Novalis the idea that all things had their *own* ideal physical form and it was the imaginative, synthesizing power of *Poësie*, which could bring this to the fore and articulate it. In practice, this does not merely become a matter of expressing the one essential character of any one body, but of producing an ongoing series of consciously aesthetic interpretations of it. These renderings cannot remain fixed or permanent, however, as that which is wholly ideal remains ineffable, so no one attempt has absolute validity. In Novalis, the material becomes endowed with meaning, which can be abstracted from the world of physical objects. In his post-Lavaterian, Romantic physiognomy, the human face and body take on an especial role; they become the poet's self-renewing canvas and the act of physiognomic reading is not one of passive observation, but of creative artistic activity: 'Der ächte Beobachter ist *Künstler* – er *abndet* das *Bedeutende* und weiß aus dem seltsamen, vorüberstreichenden Gemisch von Erscheinungen die Wichtigsten herauszufühlen' (N,III, 179).

Hardenberg begins to translate these theories into practice in the theoretical writings. In the 'Brouillon' he wrote:

POËT[ISCHE] PHYSIOL[OGIE]. Unsre Lippen haben oft viel Aehnlichkeit mit den beyden Irrlichtern im Märchen. Die Augen sind das höhere Geschwisterpaar der Lippen – Sie schließen und öffnen eine heiligere Grotte, als den Mund. Die Ohren sind die Schlange, die das begierig verschluckt, was die Irrlichter fallen lassen. Mund und Augen haben eine

ähnliche Form. Die Wimpern sind die Lippen. Der Apfel die Zunge und d[er] Gaum und der Stern die Kehle.
Die Nase ist die Stirn des Mundes – und die Stirn die Nase der Augen. Jedes Auge hat *sein Kinn am Wangenknochen* (N,III,321-22:435).

Hardenberg thought of the body as a thing that must be the object of experimentation and, therefore, constantly demanded revised understandings. The entry above shows him reading the human facial features experimentally, interestingly comparing the eyes and mouth. A further significant observation can be made from this comparison, however: the body was not a passive object to be speculated upon and hence the normally receptive organs of the eyes are thought of as mouths and thus gain an actively communicative faculty. These ideas are further developed in one of the 'Teplitzer Fragmente':

405. Das Augenspiel gestattet einen äußerst mannichfaltigen Ausdruck. Die übrigen Gesichtstgeberden, oder Minen, sind nur die Consonanten zu den Augenvocalen. Physiognomie ist also die Geberdensprache des Gesichts. Er hat viel Physiognomie heißt – Sein Gesicht ist ein *fertiges, treffendes, und idealisierendes* Sprachorgan. Die Frauen haben vorzüglich eine idealisierende Physiognomie – Sie vermögen die *Empfindungen* nicht bloß wahr, sondern auch reizend, und Schön, idealisch auszudrücken. Langer Umgang lehrt einen die Gesichtssprache verstehn. Die Vollkommenste Physiognomie muß *allg[emein]* und *abs[olut]* verständlich seyn. Man könnte die Augen ein *Lichtklavier* nennen. Das Auge drückt sich auf eine ähnliche Weise, wie die Kehle, durch höhere und tiefere Töne, die Vocale/ durch schwächere und stärkere Leuchtungen aus. Sollten die Farben nicht die Lichtconsonanten seyn? (N,II, 611:86).

Here physiognomy is mentioned by name, though it is obviously Hardenberg's poeticized practice of that discipline that is in evidence. Now the physical features are more explicitly referred to in terms of their communicative faculty, indeed they become the components of an allegorical, physical language, representing variously the 'vowels' and 'consonants' of the face; the eyes in particular are shown to be best endowed with a communicative faculty. Hardenberg also refers to the means by which the eyes communicate through different levels and shades of light, though in writing this he speculates about calling the eyes a form of optical piano, 'Lichtklavier'. As well as suggesting in this fragment that the eyes speak metaphorically through a range of musical tones, he compares their expressive powers to that of the voice via a further acoustical metaphor. The eyes are like the throat, in that both express themselves through a range of 'lighter' and 'darker' tones, be they the sounds of the vowels or the levels of light released by the eyes. This is significant, as it provides a link to the musical model of polyphony and opens out the possibility that Hardenberg was beginning to think explicitly about making the human physical form into a meaningful discourse within that context. The notion of the eye expressing itself 'musically' is also of relevance: although Hardenberg is experimenting with his own physiognomic practice, constructing his own vision of the human face, he is doing so in such a way as to endow the physical its own expressive power. The above passage also begins to relate physiognomic issues to

those of gender. Women, writes Hardenberg, are most adept at expressing themselves through the language of the eyes, face and body; not only does their physiognomy express sensations truthfully, but it does so in a charming, beautiful and ideal manner. In making them such ideal speakers of body language, Hardenberg effectively falls back into the old Kantian trap of trivializing or prettifying what women have to communicate, reducing the content of their communicative attempts almost to an expression of the ornamental.

Where do these readings lead us in our understanding of gender and the body in Novalis? We have established that the individual subject may read the body via post-Lavaterian physiognomy, but must also allow the body to speak for itself and, moreover, be prepared for the physical body to modify those readings. We have seen how, in 1797, Hardenberg dramatized this writing practice by attempting to cling to Sophie through literature in *Klarisse*. There, his own attempts to maintain Sophie's permanence through idealizing her as literature were undermined by the text itself, as the reality of her physical existence, both her vitality and her ultimate frailty, reasserted themselves against the ideals ascribed to them. Throughout 1798 Hardenberg began to think of the body as a communicative as well as a communicable entity and so, potentially, the female body in Novalis is not merely a thing passively written about, but one that can that actively write itself. However, his first attempts to construct the gendered body as 'communicative', whilst seeming to lend women the capacity to speak through the body, in fact trivialize their communicative attempts and are more concerned to attribute fixed and limiting values to them via their bodies. We see then, that Hardenberg's polyphony opens out a dialectic of body discourses, in which both the poet's own idealizations of the body and the body's own self-articulation participate in a form of dialogue. We have seen, too, that Hardenberg's first attempts at practising Romantic physiognomy in a gendered context did not produce an image of woman as an empowered communicator. With these thoughts in mind we shall turn to *Offendingen*, asking how much scope is given to the female body's self-articulation in the text and whether that articulation has a role to play in affirming the presence of women as freely physical and sexual beings.

In Heinrich's first dream, corporeality plays an important role and begins to reveal itself as a communicative medium in its own right. Molnár has noted that the sense of touch is emphasized in the dream (Molnár, 108). Heinrich wets his lips with the fluid from the pool and, before bathing, he undresses and exposes his body to new experiences and sensations. As he bathes, there appear from the water vague 'sichtbare[n] Wesen' but also female 'others' in the form of a torrent of nymph-like maidens. As Nicholas Saul has noted, this is presented as a highly erotic experience.²⁰ Indeed, the waves of fluid do caress him 'lovingly' and the maidens embody ('verkörpern') themselves 'on' or 'around' his naked body. However, there is more to Heinrich's body than sexuality. Its presence within the fluid triggers the appearance of the maidens. How and why does this occur? As Molnár shows, the pool and fountain present an objectified vision of the

imaginative faculty producing knowledge and identity in Hardenberg's poetics (Molnár, 108f). These images give us several insights into the interaction between the mind-centred faculty of imagination and the physical body. Heinrich's finite, physical body in the water resists the endless flow of his imagination. This notion of empirical reality, of physical objects, indeed of the human body *interrupting* and relativizing the productive imagination will be of growing significance for our reading of the text. If the body halts the imaginative process, functioning as the 'wircksamer Blick nach außen' of the 'Vermischte Bemerkungen', then it proves itself to be more than the slave of the mental, indeed to be an equal and, at times, opposite force. Ironically, however, Heinrich's engagement with his own imagination triggers the appearance of the nymphs, so imagination also *produces* other overtly physical, female bodies, though at this stage, admittedly, as part of a self-gratificatory fantasy. If we take the dream to hold the germ of ideas that are to unfold later in the text, then bodies stand to become the objects of fantasy, imagination and poetic elaboration. However, the dream also shows that the reality of the physical body can serve to disrupt fantasies, the poetic creativity of imagination, so the existence of women as bodies independent of male perception and imagination may also serve to limit, even dispel male-authored images of femininity. In other words, the female body can be part of a poetic discourse written by men, or, conversely, it is *itself* a discourse written by women with the ends of self-determination and self-affirmation. The latter is in evidence at the dream's end, when Heinrich witnesses the blue flower's transformation. Initially, he views the flower as an object of nature, which pleases and attracts him:

Was ihn aber mit voller Macht anzog, war eine hohe lichtblaue Blume, die zunächst an der Quelle stand, und ihn mit breiten, glänzenden Blättern berührte. Rund um sie her standen unzählige Blumen von allen Farben, und der köstliche Geruch erfüllte die Luft. Er sah nichts als die blaue Blume, und betrachtete sie lange mit unennbarer Zärtlichkeit. Endlich wollte er sich ihr nähern, als sie auf einmal sich zu bewegen und zu verändern anfang; die Blätter wurden glänzender und schmiegt sich an den wachsenden Stengel, die Blume neigte sich nach ihm zu, und die Blütenblätter zeigten einen blauen ausgebreiteten Kragen, in welchem ein zartes Gesicht schwebte. Sein süßes Staunen wuchs mit der sonderbaren Verwandlung [...] (N,I, 197).

It is the emergence of the face amidst the petals that reveals the full significance of the other's body here. Heinrich's view of the flower is fixed in two regards; he is mesmerized by it, but he is also mesmerized by what he believes the flower to be, namely an unusual, incredibly beautiful, but ultimately insentient object of nature. It is through its face that the flower re-writes its identity, and transcends the role of object to become a subject; Heinrich's recognition of this fact is the equivalent in corporeal terms of his seeing the flower as a 'Du' and not merely as a 'Nicht-Ich'.²¹ In short, the first example of the poet's other presenting itself with its own agency is, amongst other things, an act of poetic physiognomy. This is significant as it shows that from early on in the novel Hardenberg was thinking of using the body as a device by which the other can affirm its presence in the text, be this as a physical being independent of the interpretations and desires

projected by the self. This, in turn, poses the question as to whether more of the poet's others, amongst them women, also present themselves within the text in corporeal terms and thus affirm their presence as independent subjects or even as sexual beings.

It is in the 'Atlantis Märchen' that the female body next 'speaks' significantly. We have seen that the princess begins the tale in silence, only later unfolding her vocal talents as a poetess. This is an expression of her more general reduction to an object of art at her father's court, where she appears partly as the creation of *Poësie* and partly as its inspiration. Both of these roles are also reductive of her identity as a physical woman. In fact, the Princess is described initially in explicitly *decorporealized* terms, either as the product of the imagination of the spirits of music, literally a *sign* of their gratitude to the King: 'Es schien, als hätten die Geister des Gesanges ihrem Beschützer kein lieblicheres Zeichen der Dankbarkeit geben können, als seine Tochter, die alles besaß, was die süßeste Einbildungskraft nur in der zarten Gestalt eines Mädchens vereinigen konnte' (N,I, 214), or as art's own visible *soul*, 'die sichtbare Seele jener herrlichen Kunst' (ibid). Both 'sign' and 'soul', are of course non-corporeal categories, one metaphysical, the other aesthetic. Now, the lack of the suitor for her marriage weighs on the king increasingly as the princess is of marrying age. She is described as 'aufblühend [...]' (ibid) and, on occasion, she blushes at the songs of the poets: her body begins to assert itself, the sexual woman to emerge from behind the construction of virginal purity. In the realm of nature beyond the palace, the notion of art and artifice are less in evidence and physical forms allowed to speak more for themselves and the princess begins to explore this new dimension of her existence. In describing the youth, firstly, the narrator not only focusses on his receptive nature and his voice, but also his physical form, particularly his face: 'Die Gestalt des jungen Menschen schien gewöhnlich und unbedeutend, wenn man nicht einen höhern Sinn für die geheimere Bildung seines edlen Gesichts und die ungewöhnliche Klarheit seiner Augen mitbrachte. Je länger man ihn ansah, desto anziehender ward er [...]' (N,I, 216). Initially the princess appears very alien in this natural environment. Upon her appearance, she is almost deified by the youth and he perceives her in quite *decorporealized* terms: 'Der Sohn war gegenwärtig, und erschreck beynah über diese zauberhafte Erscheinung eines majestätischen weiblichen Wesens, das mit allen Reizen der Jugend und Schönheit geschmückt, und von einer unbeschreiblich anziehenden Durchsichtigkeit der zartesten, unschuldigsten und edelsten Seele beynah vergöttlicht wurde' (ibid). Here again, she is soul and not body, virginally innocent and not sexual, magical and not earthly, godlike and not mortal. Again, upon their meeting, however, the princess gives that tell-tale sign that assures us of her real physicality: she blushes.

The princess continues to evolve into a subject, as she returns to the palace and feels herself alien in her own homeland. She notices she has lost the precious stone from her necklace during her visit in the forest. The notion of her 'losing' something precious, something significant of her time at court is not merely a plotting device, but pre-figures the sexual impropriety which

she will display in her union with the youth: as O'Brien notes, (O'Brien, p.295), the loss effectively estranges her from her hitherto virtuous self: 'Dieser Verlust befremdete sie' (N,I,129). Significantly, the journey out to recover the stone is another stage in her self-discovery, one which is recounted as if to affirm her identity as a living body: 'Mit dem Tage ging sie durch den Garten nach dem Walde, und weil sie eilfertiger ging als gewöhnlich, so fand sie es ganz natürlich, daß ihr das Herz lebhaft schlug, und ihr die Brust beklomm' (ibid.). After a series of meetings, and on the night of the first kiss, the pair are forced to take refuge in a cave, where they make love and the princess conceives the child she is to bear. Her pregnancy occurs in secret, hidden by the naturalist and after the birth of the child, she returns to court with her lover and the father. It is the youth who leads the party of reconciliation, singing a song to prepare as he enters the throne room. One section of a stanza from that song is significant for our theme:

Die Liebe drückt sie fest zusammen
Der Klang der Panzer treibt sie fort;
Sie lodern auf in süßen Flammen,
Im nächtlich stillen Zufluchtsort (N,I, 227-28).

Driven from the palace by the fear of armoured guards, but bound together by mutual love, sings the youth, the two blaze in sweet flames of passion in the seclusion of their night-time hideaway. The song tells of the lovers' first act of love together, recounting this in terms of the 'fire' of passion. This is more than a coincidental metaphor: as we saw from our discussion of entry 117 in the 'Brouillon', that the act of physical love is analogous – or for Hardenberg even homologous – to an act of combustion: '117. N[ATUR]L[EHRE]. Je lebhafter das zu Fressende widersteht, desto lebhafter wird die Flamme des Genußmoments seyn. Anwendung aufs Oxygène./ Notzucht ist der stärkste Genuß./ Das Weib ist unser Oxygène' (N,III,262:117). We noted, too, that this presentation of women was highly degrading of their sexuality. In the above excerpt from the youth's lyric, however, *both* expire in the flames of passion, described as sweet in nature 'Sie lodern auf in süßern Flammen' (N,I,228). This serves to affirm the princess is present as a physical body in the text and is exploring the corporeal aspects of her identity.

The princess's most telling physical transfiguration is, of course, her pregnancy and the child, brought with the couple to the reconciliation at the king's court. The princess is led into the throne room beneath a veil, which is raised by the youth, revealing mother and child. The King is thus presented with his daughter's body, but her body as an expression of her flesh-and-blood, sexual and maternal identity, which, in the process, dispels formally the dehumanized notions of the princess as soul, song, image or sign. The king's acceptance of the union and the child is not only, as O'Brien has said, a tacit confession that all political legitimacy is ultimately founded on a fiction (O'Brien, 296), but also the point at which the public discourse of the court recognizes this hitherto suppressed dimension of the princess's identity. If, though, the Atlantis tale is an affirmation of womanhood as body, is it also empowering of women? It was, of course, the princess who taught her lover the art of poetry, but as we saw, she appears to retreat to the non-

poetical role of mother at this point in the text. To begin with, she is led into the chamber by the youth and it is he who unveils her, so in a sense the act of 're-writing' is his. The notion that she has exchanged biological productivity for aesthetic-intellectual productivity perhaps resembles the following fragment from late 1799/early 1800 (a time of intense work on the *Offerdingen* manuscript): '97. Sollte sich eine Inspiration bey einer Frau nicht durch eine Schwangerschaft äußern können? Konnte ein Römischer Soldat Vater Jesu seyn? Über die heilige Geschichte überhaupt – ihre Poësie, ihre innre Evidenz' (N,III,569:97). Hardenberg might mean two things here: the second question might imply that Christ could not possibly be a product of an illegitimate union between the Virgin Mary and a Roman soldier and that, in some mystical sense, the power of inspiration can cause pregnancy in women: the use of the word 'nicht' in the first question is perhaps a rhetorical amplification suggesting that this *could* be the case. Much more likely, though, is that Hardenberg sees it as quite possible for a Roman soldier to have fathered Christ and that the inspiration on Mary's part was her invention of an explanation – the immaculate conception – which went on to be the basis of a major world religion.²² This would be doubly significant given the supposed identity of the soldier as an illegitimate fornicator and a heathen: he fathers the child that goes on to found the religion taken up by his own empire. However we read this irreverently progressive stance towards the Bible, Hardenberg appears to have been thinking that women tended to express creative inspiration and effect political and social change through the bearing of children. In the fairy tale, too, it is the illegitimate son of an unsuitable foreigner who transforms the Kingdom – this time by providing it with an heir and securing the succession.²³ So whilst women are not entirely disenfranchised, their poetry, politics and power are mediated here through physical procreation. This is the stuff of Rousseau. Having won back her body, in this tale that body then serves to circumscribe her social-political and intellectual identity; women's bodies are, in one sense, their prisons. Having adopted the mother role, the princess is no more the eternal virgin and thus she must become subject to the morally unimpeachable ethics of domesticated femininity: her sexuality is released, then submerged again. This tale, told imperfectly by non-poets, allows the female body to speak, only to silence it once more.

Entering the crusaders' castle, it is first Heinrich who becomes the object of Romantic physiognomy:

Der junge Offerdingen ward von Rittersn und Frauen wegen seiner Bescheidenheit und seines ungezwungenen milden Betragens gepriesen, und die letzteren verweilten gern auf seiner einnehmenden Gestalt, die wie das einfache Wort eines Unbekannten war, das man fast überhört, bis längst nach seinem Abschiede es seine tiefe unscheinbare Knospe immer mehr aufthut, und endlich eine herrliche Blume in allem Farbenglanze dichtverschlungener Blätter zeigt, so daß man es nie vergißt, nicht müde wird es zu wiederholen, und einen unversieglichen immer gegenwärtigen Schatz daran hat (N,I, 229-30).

Here, Heinrich's body is given a linguistic-communicative faculty, though its meaning also appears to germinate and grow with an organic quality in the minds of those who reflect upon his appearance. The physical side to Zulima's existence is perhaps unique in the novel. She is, of course, a slave won by the sword as one knight boasts to Heinrich: 'Du kannst bey mir ein morgenländisches Mädchen sehn. Sie dünken uns Abendländern gar anmüthig, und wenn du das Schwerdt gut zu führen verstehst, so kann es dir an schönen Gefangenen nicht fehlen' (N,I, 231). As a slave, she is the property of the knight and, as such, her body is literally owned by him. The trauma of slavery and possible abuse have taken their toll on that body, as Zulima appears as 'ein bleiches, abgehärmtes Mädchen' (N,I, 236). Zulima herself speaks the discourse of Romantic physiognomy, as we see from her initial reaction to Heinrich's appearance:

Ihr habt wohl meinen Gesang gehört, sagte sie freundlich. Euer Gesicht dünkt mir bekannt, laßt mich besinnen – Mein Gedächtniß ist schwach geworden, aber euer Anblick erweckt in mir eine sonderbare Erinnerung aus frohen Zeiten. O! mir ist, als glicht ihr einem meiner Brüder, der noch vor unsrem Unglück von uns schied, und nach Persien zu einem berühmten Dichter zog (ibid.)

She too recognizes the 'open' facial features of the poet that she once noted in her brother and that are characteristic of many poets' faces in Novalis. Zulima also becomes the object of Heinrich's physiognomic poetics, although this occurs, arguably, in a positive sense. We saw that, as Heinrich returned to the castle with Zulima, he was filled with the need to act as her saviour. It is not in his power to bridge the cultural gap between East and West, to alter fundamentally the crusaders' outlook on their slaves. For now, he accepts her golden hair-band as a reminder of her and, in exchange, has his mother give her a veil. In the cases of Rosenblüthe and the Atlantis princess, the act of unveiling was a moment of transfiguration, equivalent to an act of re-writing or re-inventing women's identity as corporeal immanence *vis-à-vis* imagined transcendence. The veil that Zulima places over herself as her last act in this chapter makes her, conversely, the object of the idealizing tendency of *Poesie*. The act of veiling is not, however, meant to devalue her body, but to obscure it positively, as an autonomous statement, a reminder that body does not constitute the whole of women's existence and ought to be the property of no-one but women themselves. Heinrich not only offers Zulima space to sing her song, but offers her the means and space to illustrate that there is more to her existence than the identity imposed on her by the crusaders.

Heinrich's nascent poetic-physiognomic abilities again come to the fore in Augsburg. Initially it is Klingsohr whose face and form Heinrich attempts to read, deducing this to be the figure that he saw in Hohenzollern's book. In Klingsohr's countenance he discerns both fatherly and masculine qualities, but again the open features of the poet (N,I, 269-70). Shortly after, he is introduced to Mathilde, who is to become the primary object of his corporeal poetics. Almost immediately, the pair begin, in a sense, to celebrate the body through dance:

Heinrich wünschte den Tanz nie zu endigen. Mit innigem Wohlgefallen ruhte sein Auge auf den Rosen seiner Tänzerinn. Ihr unschuldiges Auge vermied ihn nicht. Sie schien der Geist ihres Vaters in der lieblichsten Verkleidung. Aus ihren großen ruhigen Augen sprach ewige Jugend. Auf einem lichthimmelblauen Grunde lag der milde Glanz der braunen Sterne. Stirn und Nase senkten sich zierlich um sie her. Eine nach der aufgehenden Sonne geneigte Lilie war ihr Gesicht, und von dem schlanken, weißen Halse schlängelten sich blaue Adern in reizenden Windungen um die zarten Wangen. Ihre Stimme war wie ein fernes Echo, und das braune lockige Köpfchen schien über der leichten Gestalt nur zu schweben (N,I, 271).

Whilst this passage serves as a physiognomic articulation of the female face, we must note that it occurs from Heinrich's perspective and that, consequently, he is constructing her body poetically to carry certain of *his* values. Mathilde's face, in particular, is likened to a lily, the flower most closely associated with virginity. In addition to this is the paleness of her complexion, the veins visible in her neck, which contribute a sense of physical slightness bordering on illness or fragility. The notion of her head almost floating over her body endows her with a grace that is almost otherworldly. Only from her eyes do we get a sense of her body as a communicative medium, over which she exerts influence. Her eyes literally speak to Heinrich, though we should again note what it is that they say: they speak of eternal youth. These images are less than empowering for the autonomous female subject. Mathilde's body is allowed to speak in order that physicality and sexuality are safely contained; she appears a charming but almost wraith-like figure, with none of those physical features, strength and clarity combined with openness, that Hardenberg associates with figures who are or are to become poets. Earlier, however, Mathilde and Heinrich had blushed in the build up to their dance, embarrassed at Schwaning's attempts at matchmaking for the pair. So her body is also presented as overtly physical, in that she displays the sign of humility when attention is drawn to her own nascent sexuality. At this stage in the text, Mathilde's body is ambiguously portrayed: it is both an affirmation of her physicality and it becomes a communicating agent, though precisely as such an agent it communicates values that de-sexualize her and imply limits on her future development.

Things soon begin to change, however. During Heinrich's dream after the festival, Mathilde speaks the mysterious, ineffable word into his mouth. The erotic and the linguistic combine in this image:

Bleiben wir zusammen? – Ewig, versetzte sie, indem sie ihre Lippen an die seinigen drückte, und ihn so umschloß, daß sie nicht wieder von ihm konnte. Sie sagte ihm ein wunderbares geheimes Wort in den Mund, was sein ganzes Wesen durchklang. Er wollte es wiederholen, als sein Großvater rief, und er aufwachte. Er hätte sein ganzes Leben darum geben mögen, das Wort noch zu wissen (N,I, 279).

The effect the word has on Heinrich is more internal, metaphysical even. It resonates into the unknown depths of his self in such a way that he cannot repeat it. Yet the moment of utterance is overtly physical and highly erotic. Mathilde wraps herself around him in such a way that she becomes inseparable from him. The communicative act is one of voice, but also of physical touch: she presses her lips to his and we are reminded, almost, of the female egg absorbing and

fertilizing the male sperm in Hardenberg's medical writings discussed in chapter two. Heinrich is envisioning Mathilde as a being whose body is not just there to be read and imagined, but which can speak and write itself. Although she is being imagined or dreamed about here, the acorporeal muse Mathilde is actually quite physical:

O könntest du durch meine Augen in mein Gemüth sehn! aber du liebst mich und so glaubst du mir auch. Ich begreife das nicht, was man von der Vergänglichkeit der Reitze sagt. O! sie sind unverwelklich. Was mich so unzertrennlich zu dir zieht, was ein ewiges Verlangen in mir geweckt hat, das ist nicht aus dieser Zeit. Könntest du nur sehn, wie du mir erscheinst, welches wunderbare Bild deine Gestalt durchdringt und mir überall entgegen leuchtet, du würdest kein Alter fürchten. Deine irdische Gestalt ist nur ein Schatten dieses Bildes. Die irdischen Kräfte ringen und quellen um es festzuhalten, aber die Natur ist noch unreif; das Bild ist ein ewiges Urbild, ein Theil der unbekannten heiligen Welt. – Ich verstehe dich, lieber Heinrich, denn ich sehe etwas Ähnliches, wenn ich dich anschau (N,I, 288-89).

Here Heinrich focusses on Hardenberg's version of Lavater's *Lichtgestalt*, the higher body that is not body, but is a metaphysical blueprint of it. The *Lichtgestalt* is eternal, hence the adjective 'ewig' and Heinrich's desire that Mathilde should not fear transience or old age. It is this essential image or 'Urbild' that the poet seeks to realize when speaking the body, taking that as his ideal, though for that reason never able fully to perceive or express it. This moment is perhaps the most concrete evidence that Heinrich is starting not only to embrace, but also understand Hardenberg's own Romantic physiognomics. Significantly, although she expresses it in simple terms, Mathilde sees something similar, 'etwas Ähnliches', when regarding Heinrich's body. Although Heinrich's formulation reduces Mathilde's actual, earthly body to a 'mere shadow' of her higher body, it is only in terms of the 'irdischen Kräfte', be they those of organic nature or the finite structures of mortal consciousness, that Heinrich can conceive and express her body: language can neither enclose or disclose his presentiment of her metaphysical form. This, however, is merely an insight into the metaphysical premises of Romantic physiognomy and does not mean that Heinrich's poetic activity will continue to focus on this *Urbild* of body, devaluing earthly corporeality in the process. He rather seeks to elaborate on earthly bodies as expressions of that higher self, unfolding his own readings of these in the process. Also significant in the above extract is the fact that the body enters into discourse with its own agency, presenting itself as if illuminated to Heinrich: 'mir überall entgegen leuchtet' (ibid). Increasingly, subjects in the novel are beginning to discourse on the body, but increasingly the body comes to speak itself.

'Klingsohrs Märchen' is in many ways the story of the rejuvenation of social structures, such as the family and the political state, as well as a metaphor for the triumph of the poetic consciousness over the merely reasoning consciousness. Both the processes of dissolution and re-establishment involved in the transformations have been read by Newman as an implicit if transient triumph on the part of the feminine, which expresses its influence through sexualized

feminine identity.²⁴ This emphasis on women as the devices of social change perhaps overlooks the question as to how far their bodies are also communicative in their own right and in a manner which affirms the presence of women as autonomous and sexual beings. At times readings such as Newman's are appropriate. At the beginning of the tale, for instance, there is a great emphasis on the body, with many images of physical and even erotic interaction between characters. Freya's corporeality is presented as that which initiates the rejuvenation of Arctur's kingdom. Her body is the medium through which she effects change and, when she first appears, it is her body that receives attention. As her body is transfigured, giving off light, she touches the hero's body in a manner which not only causes sexual arousal, but infuses his body with energy (N,I, 291-92). This allows the hero to fling his sword over the city, issuing forth a sign, which sets in motion the development of Eros and other events in the household of the story, leading to the utopian conclusion.

However, the narrative also presents the female body in other ways. Within the household, corporeality is again significant, though it represents more of a communicative faculty. The scribe, of course, represents the purely rational discourse of written language and tries, to no avail, to encode the exchanges of 'body language' that he witnesses. Sophie, for instance, does not write, but sprinkles fluid from her fingers, which collide with objects, including the bodies of Ginnistan and the children, and transform themselves into scintillating images. Drinking from Sophie's bowl, Eros too finds his body transfigured, rather like the youth in Atlantis, and within moments grows to reach early adulthood. Ginnistan has the function of re-directing Eros's misplaced incestuous desires for the mother, whom he still wishes to embrace. For this reason she adopts the physical form of the mother, to accompany him on his journey. Both she and Sophie effect changes in male development, as they influence Eros on his path to maturity, whilst keeping his sexual energies channelled within structures acceptable to them and the family. Thus, in the ideal realm of fairy tale these women determine a man's sexual identity, becoming the agents in an idealized physiognomic discourse.²⁵ Fabel, as well as proving her success in playing music, shows herself adept in speaking the language of the body, as she demonstrates in the final tableau: 'Perseus wandte sich zu Fabeln, und gab ihr die Spindel. In deinen Händen wird diese Spindel uns ewig erfreuen, und aus dir selbst wirst du uns einen goldnen unzerreißlichen Faden spinnen. [...] Sie sang ein himmlisches lied, und fing zu spinnen an, indem der Faden aus ihrer Brust sich hervorzuwinden schien' (N,I, 314). The model of women's positive inclusion within the discourse of the body is valid for the whole tale, with one exception: the mother is destroyed by the scribe and her body burned on the funeral pyre. The scribe is, though, a negative figure, and one who is subsequently banished. The mother's body is, in a sense, venerated by having its ashes dissolved in Sophie's bowl and drunk by the other figures as part of a Romantic re-thinking of Christian communion. When Sophie contends 'Die Mutter ist unter uns, ihre Gegenwart wird uns ewig beglücken' (N,I,315), there can be no pretending that the mother is alive in a real sense,

but rather that she is rendered permanent through an act of remembrance, like the image of Sophie von Kühn, rendered permanent in language by Hardenberg in 1797. Significantly, it is the body of the mother which becomes the mediator, the aesthetic focus for remembering her. This means, however, that the mother's body is aesthetic in nature. The ashes cannot affirm the presence of the mother and now only serve those left alive through their symbolic function: as a means for remembrance. As Hardenberg himself wrote of his dead beloved: 'Für das Lebendige ist kein Ersatz' (N,IV, 211). Despite this, the tale represents not only the victory of *Poësie* over *Unpoësie*, song over silence, but also the paradigm of body as communicative medium over the logocentric paradigm of mind-centred reason and written language. At the forefront of this discourse are the female figures, with Fabel as the arch-practitioner of corporeal poetics, included in the redemptive vision of the future. In discussing the close of the novel in the section after next of this chapter, we shall test amongst other things whether or not both Heinrich and the female figures maintain this level of body discourse in a manner empowering for all. In the section immediately following, however, we shall pursue another line of investigation, examining the intellectual and poetic significance of women's creative endeavours within the text. There, the leading questions will ask how Hardenberg conceived of the term genius and whether or not Hardenberg presents women as aspiring to such heights in *Offerdingen*.

IV. 4. *Shapeshifting and Female Genius*

Having established that Hardenberg's work both recognizes the female subject and provides for her autonomous participation in a spectrum of differing discourses, this penultimate section of chapter four will examine that *participation* in qualitative terms. What, for instance, of women's high intellectual achievement? Are they not, in this novel of poetry, to emerge unambiguously as poets themselves? In the following section, we examine a cultural-historical paradigm, which around 1800 signified the pinnacle of the intellectual; the debate on the nature of genius. This was a discussion with which Hardenberg engaged. If he can be shown to open that paradigm to women, in both theory and in the literary work of *Offerdingen* itself, then it will help support the argument that women emerge as poetic subjects, not merely as the subject of poetry. We shall move forward by offering a brief history of the term, then locating Hardenberg's own ideas on genius within that context and seeking their literary realization in the novel at hand.

Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, 'genius' had been the term attached by successive generations of writers and thinkers to the pinnacle of human aesthetic endeavour. Much scholarship has been devoted to the topic: Jochen Schmidt's *Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur, Philosophie und Politik 1750-1945*, for instance, offers an interdisciplinary catalogue of the concept from the Enlightenment to the post-war period,²⁶ whilst Günther Blamberger's more selective and dynamic study *Das Geheimnis des Schöpferischen*

oder: *Ingenium est ineffabile?* provides more than a narrative history of the idea, placing greater emphasis on the *Goethezeit* as a transitional period in which the idea of genius as a supernatural or divine contribution to mortal affairs was supplanted by the early modern concept of subject-centred creativity.²⁷ The eighteenth century saw just such a shift, with Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) praising humanity's own innate and unpredictable creative faculty, which produced original works; the genius tapped into this creativity and did not conform to received aesthetics.²⁸ Herder similarly rejected aesthetic norms but presented the subject's genius in a wider context; as an expression of a natural creativity, *natura naturans*, latent in the cosmos as a whole.²⁹ He transmitted these ideas to the young *Sturm und Drang* writers, who produced a gallery of images of natural creativity in their lyrical poetry. In his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* Kant redefined genius as the *a priori* regulator of aesthetic production, which functions as one aspect of the transcendental mechanics of the subject, providing a non-normative faculty of taste, which both tempers the creator's imagination and is a means by which others were to judge the value of his works within a socio-cultural context.³⁰

More often than not, theories of genius allowed men to have the monopoly on that gift, although scholarship on this was slow to emerge. It was not until Christine Battersby's *Gender and Genius. Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* that the sexism of models of genius became explicit.³¹ Battersby's study both acknowledges the presence of women artists within the cultural canon and notes that, particularly in the course of the eighteenth century, genius was given feminine features. Here, though, Battersby is careful to distinguish between the 'feminine' as a construction of femininity in culture and the 'female' as the physical reality of women's bodies. This makes possible her central thesis that, whilst genius was couched in feminine imagery, it was understood as requiring the energies and drives of the male body to find its full expression. Thus men could cultivate their feminine creativity, whilst women themselves were often, if not always, thought to lack those masculine traits necessary for genius.³² Other studies have approached the topic differently, pointing to the existence of a term antipodal to genius – *dilettantism* – that offered a name for women's disadvantaged position in the cultural sphere and further marginalized them within the category of genius. In the late 1790s, the major cultural figures of Weimar classicism, particularly Friedrich Schiller, were involved in a debate on the nature of dilettantism. His essay 'Über den Dilettantismus' (1796) defined the phenomenon thus: 'Überhaupt will der Dilettant in seiner Selbstverkennung das Passive an die Stelle des Aktiven setzen, und weil er auf eine lebhaftige Weise Wirkungen erleidet, so glaubt er mit diesen erlittenen Wirkungen wirken zu können.'³³ Though Schiller refers to a (linguistically) male dilettante, this only makes the gender bias of his definition more insidious. Christa Bürger exposed the parallels between Schiller's definition of *dilettantism* and anthropological models of femininity with which he was acquainted. There is more than a passing resemblance between Schiller's dilettante and the definition of the passive feminine in the Rousseauesque tradition, particularly Humboldt's

‘Über den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluß auf die organische Natur’, discussed in chapter two of this study and with which Schiller was well acquainted: as an editor he published it. Such criticism shows us that we should no longer read the history of the term as a philosophical, anthropological and aesthetic abstraction: the implicit and explicit exclusions of women from the category of genius, together with their confinement to the realm of amateurism, should be taken into account.

Where, though, does Hardenberg stand in this new horizon of appraisal? Only Katherine Padilla’s thesis deals collectively with genius and gender. She argues that Hardenberg constructs an active masculine subject and reduces women to the passive objects of his will: it is the exertion of this will that ascribes form and meaning to shapeless femininity and constitutes the (exclusively male) attribute of genius (Padilla, 180). Padilla’s study, however, does not take the entirety of Hardenberg’s writings on genius into account. Not until 1991 did Thomas Grosser offer a full reconstruction. As we saw earlier, Hardenberg’s definition of genius, according to Grosser, is constituted by nothing other than what we have understood as *Poësie*, though *Poësie* practised at its optimum, seeking to generate through an ongoing process of transformation as many differing constructions of self as possible (Grosser, 63). Grosser’s reconstruction begins by presenting the first step towards attaining genius as the subject’s self-conscious poeticization. The genius accepts no one version of its own identity as sovereign, seeing each rather as a permeable and endlessly changeable construction: ‘Das erste Genie, das sich selbst durchdrang, fand hier den typischen Keim einer unermeßlichen Welt’ (N,II,455:94). From this starting point, the genius creates many coexistent identities, be they those of the self: ‘[...] Eine ächt *synthetische* Person ist eine Person, die mehrere Personen zugleich ist – ein Genie. Jede Person ist der Keim zu einem *unendlichen Genie*’ (N,III,250:63), or experimental explanatory models for the phenomena of the natural world beyond the self: ‘Der ächte Naturliebhaber zeichnet sich eben durch seine Fertigkeit die Experimente zu vervielfältigen [...] aus. [...] Auch Experimentator ist nur das Genie’ (N,III,256:89), the term ‘vervielfältigen’ pointing to the sense of plurality. The genius is not, however, concerned with merely cloning existing identities, but seeks rather to produce *differing* constructions of being, effectively to change the shape of existence; when redesigning itself, the ego or ‘Ich’ takes as its template an image of alterity which it constructs within itself and conceives of as another potential but ‘different’ self: the ‘Du’. Each act of self-reinvention aims at creating a new, as yet unrealized self. Similarly, when exploring the endless possible identities of the outside world, it is the hitherto untried and untested models which are sought after, this skill of the scientific genius is a ‘Combinations und Variationsfertigkeit’ (N,III,527:213), the term ‘Variation’ implying differentiation. In contrast to Padilla’s argument, Hardenberg’s geniuses do not concern themselves with fixing identity, but with unfolding it. This constitutes a new departure in the history of the term, certainly within the German context, and one of which Hardenberg himself was aware.³⁴ Grosser does not deal with issues of gender,

however, so the question arises as to women's relationship to Hardenberg's concept. Gone are the analogies between creative genius and patriarchal divinity or mythology so prevalent in the *Sturm und Drang* period; moreover, Hardenberg's definition of genius does not appear gender-specific. Can we, therefore, use Grosser's reconstruction as the basis for seeking a radically new correlation between the term and issues of gender? Do women, in other words, contribute to the cosmic symphony with works of genius?

Nowhere does the term 'Genie' occur explicitly in the *Ofterdingen*, but Hardenberg's theoretical definition of the term, we shall suggest, is allegorized there: the genius's ability to reconstruct identity appears there as images of what can be called *shapeshifting*. This is depicted either as the self's ability to step from one identity to another, to unfold or to allow to unfold the infinitely varying forms of the natural world or to produce signs and symbols in text or speech, which themselves appear to be in a state of on-going, living flux:³⁵ in short, the act of re-shaping the identities constructed by consciousness and the acceptance that the things outside consciousness also alter their own shape. This finds its initial expression in the first dream, as we note from closer inspection of the cave's description. A single jet of water bursts forth from the fountain, only to be checked by the roof of the cave and divided into a multiplicity of individuated sparks: these, then, gather together and flow back into the basin. As well as representing the creative faculties of the self, the allegory can be taken further to represent specifically the Romantic process of *Poësie*, and eventually, genius. The pool itself is the totality or absolute being from which all self-consciousness flows and the torrent is the unified, emergent drive towards such consciousness or perpetual creative activity. The roof marks the ego's self-imposed limits, the finitude by which all creativity and, therefore, identity are bound and the droplets or sparks are the result of this limitation: an endless number of singular, possible identities. As the droplets gather and return to the unified source, the creative mechanics that give rise to identity are portrayed as an endless cycle of creation and destruction – a process of perpetual self-reinvention. Heinrich's entry into the cave marks his conscious engagement with the imaginative-rational faculty of symbolization, which produces his experience of self and world and his first step towards attaining genius:

Er tauchte seine Hand in das Becken und benetzte seine Lippen. Es war, als durchdränge ihn ein geistiger Hauch, und er fühlte sich innigst gestärkt und erfrischt. Ein unwiderstehliches Verlangen ergriff ihn sich zu baden, er entkleidete sich und stieg in das Becken. Es dünkte ihn, als umflösse ihn eine Wolke des Abendroths; eine himmlische Empfindung überströmte sein Inneres; mit inniger Wollust strebten unzählbare Gedanken in ihm sich zu vermischen; neue, niegesehene Bilder entstanden, die auch in einander flossen und zu sichtbaren Wesen um ihn wurden, und jede Welle des lieblichen Elements schmiegte sich wie ein zarter Busen an ihn. Die Flut schien eine Auflösung reizender Mädchen, die an dem Jünglinge sich augenblicklich verkörperten (N,I,196-7).

His first contact with the fluid is akin to being 'permeated' by a spiritual breath. This imagery can be seen as Heinrich's first step towards attaining genius – the genius of Hardenberg's theory also

uncovered an infinite 'world' of potential identity beyond the empirical ego, after (s)he 'permeated' this less sophisticated version of the self: 'sich selbst durchdrang' (N,II,455:94). The terms 'geistig' and 'himmlisch' need not imply that genius is a divine gift originating outside consciousness because, as he is within his own dream, Heinrich is exploring the self and it is his self's energies which empower him there. As he continues to bathe, Heinrich immerses himself in his own limitless, potential identity. From the water appear the vague 'sichtbare[n] Wesen' and the torrent of maidens. We saw that the physical body in the fluid caused the appearance of other physical bodies, but we can also read the body's presence in the water as an alteration of the unified, endless flow of *self-identity*, which realizes other (female) selves. These selves are limited in type – a plurality of indistinct, eroticized women – but this is nevertheless Heinrich's first, if self-centred act of shapeshifting. Heinrich has further experiences of this phenomenon in his encounter with the flower itself, where they take on an inter-subjective significance, however. The flower's anthropomorphic transformation not only represents the beginnings of a discourse of the body: as a 'sonderbare[...] Verwandlung' (N,I,197), the blue flower practises a Romantic poetic of altering identity, or shapeshifting and simultaneously, reveals itself as a poetic subject. Heinrich's dream has defined a typological metaphor that will help us to identify genius later in the text: we should note the imagery of manifold sparks or water droplets, which transform their appearance. It has also enabled him to dabble in, but not yet to master, the art of shapeshifting. Perhaps most significantly, the dream has alerted us to the possibility of other subjects exhibiting autonomous acts and works of genius within the polyphonic ideal of communication.

In the fourth chapter, the crusaders demonize Moslems as 'wilde[n] Heyden' (N,I, 231) and seem unable to progress beyond this undialectical image of their foes. In doing this they conceive of an entire ethnic and religious group merely as the negative of the Christian self. Through their fixed and reductive conception of alterity, the crusaders exhibit the antithesis of genius. Heinrich's preference for Zulima's company offers her a chance to demonstrate her own shapeshifting abilities. The very character of her culture appears to have something of genius about it:

Vorzüglich hielt sie sich bei dem Lobe ihrer Landsleute und ihres Vaterlandes auf. Sie schilderte den Edelmuth derselben, und ihre reine starke Empfänglichkeit für die Poesie des Lebens [...] Ihr würdet mit Verwunderung, sagte sie, die buntfarbigen, hellen, seltsamen Züge und Bilder auf den alten Steinplatten sehen. [...] Man sinnt und sinnt, einzelne Bedeutungen ahnet man, und wird um so begieriger, den tiefsinnigen Zusammenhang dieser uralten Schrift zu errathen. Der unbekannte Geist derselben erregt ein ungewöhnliches Nachdenken, und wenn man auch ohne den gewünschten Fund von dannen geht, so hat man doch tausend merkwürdige Entdeckungen in sich selbst gemacht, die dem Leben einen neuen Glanz und dem Gemüth eine lange, belohnende Beschäftigung geben. [...] Die Natur scheint dort menschlicher und verständlicher geworden, eine dunkle Erinnerung unter der durchsichtigen Gegenwart wirft die Bilder der Welt mit scharfen Umrissen zurück, und so genießt man eine doppelte Welt, die eben dadurch das Schwere und Gewaltsame verliert und die zauberische Dichtung und Fabel unserer Sinne wird (N,I, 236-7).

But Zulima is no mere representative of her culture; she displays genius herself. She teaches Heinrich her shapeshifting hermeneutics, a technique of reading hieroglyphs, which does not presume to deliver a single, reductive interpretation, but rather revels in the process of unfolding the many different meanings of the texts. This, in turn, offers the individual a new and more varied approach to his or her own identity: 'So hat man tausend merkwürdige Entdeckungen in sich selbst gemacht'. Zulima also speaks of her poetic perception of nature. She does not remain bound to one fixed view of the natural world and, like Heinrich in his encounter with the blue flower, she is receptive to the idea of nature itself as a communicating subject, which imparts to her a plurality of self-images, 'Bilder der Welt'. By allowing nature to speak for itself, she experiences a multitude of its possible identities, which she also refers to as its higher aspect or 'doppelte Welt'. Having discovered nature's own genius, Zulima mimics this in her own discourse, where she makes nature the object of her poetic experimentation and it loses its characteristics of weight and stasis, becoming the plaything of her own shapeshifting abilities. Thus, she demonstrates the art of genius to Heinrich, how to change the shape of the objects of perception, but also shows him how to recognize this quality in the outside world, the genius of nature. Perhaps most significantly, she genius within academic disciplines traditionally monopolized by men: hermeneutics and natural philosophy.

We have seen that *Klingsohrs Märchen* depicts discourses of writing or sign-making influenced alternately by men and women as a field of gender conflict. The priestess Sophie demonstrates this, splashing water from her bowl onto the objects and members of the household, with the following effect:

Die Frau wandte sich zu Zeiten gegen Ginnistan und die Kinder, tauchte den Finger in die Schale, und spritzte einige Tropfen auf sie hin, die, sobald sie die Amme, das Kind, oder die Wiege berührten, in einen blauen Dunst zerrannen, der tausend seltsame Bilder zeigte, und beständig um sie herzog und sich veränderte (N,I,294).

With this we are reminded of the dream of the blue flower: the imagery of water droplets is typologically reminiscent of the original image of creative genius in the novel, the fountain in the cave. The moment at which the droplets collide with certain people or objects, namely Ginnistan and the child Fabel, or the crib in which young Eros lies, they are transformed into a vapour, which reveals manifold and *changing* pictures. This allegory of sign making would again seem to reflect Hardenberg's concept of genius, in that the figures constantly re-configure themselves, shifting their own shape. On occasion Sophie's water hits the malcontent scribe, though significantly the symbols he produces are not living and changing, but fixed in nature (N,I, 295). The images created by the droplets seem to signify those characters who are capable of genius – and those who are not. Further reading of the tale bears this out: the scribe attempts to record a fixed textual account of the events of the household, but when his written papers are washed in the water of Sophie's bowl, the test of genius, they emerge erased (N,I,295-6). Fabel's taking up

of the quill and writing during the scribe's absence is also an assertion of female genius. When her texts emerge unscathed from Sophie's bowl, this is proof that her works do not seek to fix meaning, but are products of writing practice, which seeks constantly to reinvent the object of its study in language, to keep its identity as fluid as the water in the bowl. In the fairy-tale personal identity also becomes the object of female genius. Ginnistan's adoption of the mother's form: 'Ginnistan tauschte ihre Gestalt mit der Mutter' (N,I, 296), is not merely part of a poetic discourse of body but evidence of her ability to take on another identity. This reminds us of the genius who is, according to Hardenberg, a 'Person, die aus Personen besteht.' She – and by implication the mother with whom she exchanges appearances – is able to transform her shape entirely. If anything, then, the women of the fairy-tale appear more capable of shapeshifting than do the men. The Schreiber's attempt to take over the household – an act tantamount to fixing or suppressing the activity of genius within his rigid representational system – ends in failure and he is stung by a tarantula, causing him to dance uncontrollably, accompanied mockingly by Fabel's music; he ends the tale by being forced to parody involuntarily the very art of shapeshifting that he tried to overcome. Within the novel as a whole, this inset narrative also represents a man's ideas that women ought not to be marginalized from poetic discourse, but should own a place in it to demonstrate their own poetic genius.

IV. 5 *Women, Writing and the Ideal*

Thus far we have traced the relationship between the male protagonist and his female others along various thematic strands. When we left Heinrich, Klingsohr had just completed a rendition of his fairy tale. That narrative, together with Heinrich's dream on the night of the festival and the word spoken into his mouth, raise the question as to whether Mathilde, like Fabel of the fairy tale, will find multiple modes of expression, through voice, body and possibly poetry. As we progress into the second part of the novel, however, we become aware that Mathilde's position as a communicating subject is at risk: when, sometime between the novel's first and second parts, Mathilde dies, there arises the danger that the polyphony will again be an imperfect one. For Mathilde to return as a communicating subject, indeed as a subject at all, the novel will have to alter its relationship to reality in one of two ways: it needs either to focus entirely on the subjective experiences of the protagonist, allowing his memories, fantasies and imagination to recreate Mathilde triumphantly, or it needs to depict an external and ideal reality that sheds the laws of time and space, allowing all subjects to return, to be present to each other and able to communicate freely within that communion. Were the former to be true, then any return by Mathilde would be nothing more than a male fantasy of femininity and the old model of a deceased woman, resurrected by the pining male poet, would apply to the novel after all. If the latter be true, however, then Hardenberg is making a broader statement, not to the effect that death can literally be overcome, but rather that ideals of intersubjective communication

interaction must be universally inclusive and seek to include those voices apparently beyond their scope. The following section examines the fragmentary second part of the novel, asking which of these two models applies: does Heinrich turn in on himself to embrace a delusion of universal polyphony, or does the fiction allow him to partake in a genuinely intersubjective ideal, in which women participate meaningfully? In doing so, we shall pay particular attention, therefore, to the text's movements along the axis of the real and the ideal.

Heinrich begins the second part of the novel as the nameless figure of the pilgrim. He appears to have left the pleasant fields and hills around Augsburg behind him; he wanders aimlessly through an indistinct, desolate landscape blasted by strong winds. Nature speaks here with manifold voices:

Ein starker Wind sauste durch die blaue Luft. Seine dumpfen mannichfaltigen Stimmen verlohren sich, wie sie kamen. War er vielleicht durch die Gegenden der Kindheit geflogen? Oder durch andre redende Länder? Es waren Stimmen, deren Echo nach im Innersten klang und dennoch schien sie der Pilgrim nicht zu kennen (N,I, 319-20).

Although the voices appear to resonate within him, as have so many other significant words he has heard along his journey, Heinrich neither recognizes the voices nor appears to understand what they say. Out of desperation, he attempts to draw solace from the world around him, to find other selves with whom he can commune. Momentarily, he feels at one with the forest that shelters him from the storm and seems to communicate with him:

Der ungeheure Wald bog sich mit tröstlichem Ernst zu dem Wanderer – das gezackte Gebürg ruhte so bedeutend über der Ebene und beyde schienen zu sagen: Eile nur Strom, du entfliehst uns nicht – Ich will dir folgen mit geflügelten Schiffen. Ich will dich brechen und halten und dich verschlucken in meinen Schoos. Vertraue du uns Pilgrim, es ist auch unser Feind, den wir selbst erzeugten – Laß ihn eilen, mit seinem Raub, er entflieht uns nicht. Der arme Pilgrim gedachte der alten Zeiten, und ihrer unsäglichen Entzückungen – Aber wie matt gingen diese köstlichen Erinnerungen vorüber. Der breite Hut verdeckte ein jugendliches Gesicht. Es war bleich, wie eine Nachtblume [...]. In ein fahles Aschgrau waren alle seine Farben verschossen (N,I,320).

The comfort is passing, as Heinrich is unable to cling to the thoughts he has, becoming once again alienated from the natural world. His own physiognomy here, youthful but careworn, pale and colourless like a night flower, tells of his mental and emotional anguish. He tries again to make out familiar forms in nature and believes he sees the Hofkaplan, his old teacher from Eisenach, though this turns out to be a tree trunk: he misreads the world around him. In the wake of Mathilde's death, with the central focus of his loving relationship to nature gone, Heinrich appears to have become deaf and dumb to the many voices and languages of his world and illiterate in its expressive forms.

It is at this point that Heinrich experiences an epiphanic manifestation of Mathilde. The tree that he mistook for his teacher begins to shake, and voices emanate from it, singing a song

about a female figure, holding a child lovingly. Subsequently, a further voice speaks, promising him that, if he sings a song in her honour, she will send him a young child in remembrance of her. This girl will comfort him during his remaining time on earth and, when he dies, he will join her: she is, she assures him, with him at all times and has, together with her child, lived beyond death (N,I, 321). Heinrich realizes, or at least believes this to be Mathilde's voice. A shaft of light pierces through the branches of the trees, reaches his eyes and reveals to him a wondrous vision: images of noble figures, pillars, temples, carpets and landscapes of stunning beauty. As part of the vision, he notices a joyous throng that appears utterly sociable. Amongst them is Mathilde:

Es waren die schönsten menschlichen Gestalten, die dazwischen umhergingen und sich über die Maaßen freundlich und holdselig gegeneinander erzeugten. Ganz vorn stand die Geliebte des Pilgers und hatt' es das Ansehen, als wolle sie mit ihm sprechen. Doch war nichts zu hören und betrachtete der Pilger nur mit tiefer Sehnsucht ihre anmuthigen Züge und wie sie so freundlich und lächelnd ihm zuwinkte, und die Hand auf ihre linke Brust legte (N,I, 322).

What Heinrich witnesses here is an ideal both of communion and communication between subjects, with the intersubjective aspect emphasized through the presence of Mathilde, Heinrich's significant other, his 'Du' *par excellence*. Thus the ideal is also polyphonic, though it is still elusive: Mathilde makes as if to speak to Heinrich, though he cannot hear her words. As such, we shall contend, this passage represents neither an actual polyphony, nor Mathilde's actual presence. It is a vision or an ideal promising that somewhere, at some time and in some way, she may again be present and endowed with voice.³⁶

The experience of the vision is for Heinrich fictional and, as ever, Hardenberg's fictions are designed to have an effect. The first effect is to re-establish Heinrich's relationship to the polyphony of his immediate temporal and spatial surroundings:

Stimme und Sprache waren wieder lebendig bey ihm geworden und es dünkte ihm nunmehr alles viel bekannter und weissagender, als ehemals, so daß ihm der Tod, wie eine höhere Offenbarung des Lebens, erschien, und er sein eigenes, schnellvorübergehendes Daseyn mit kindlicher, heitrrer Rührung betrachtete. Zukunft und Vergangenheit hatten sich in ihm berührt und einen innigen Verein geschlossen. Er stand weit außer der Gegenwart [...] (N,I, 322).

The vision has reminded him of the context he had lost; the voices and languages of his world are once again intelligible to him, indeed more so than ever. But the vision has another effect; by representing to him another stratum of existence, the revelation presents a promised future, which both manifests itself in the present and contains figures thought lost to the past; as such, the vision transcends the single moment within a linear system of time. Past, present and future fuse within him, runs the extract, such that he stands far outside any particular moment. Heinrich's return to a fulfilled and purposeful life, therefore, is founded on a belief that he will

eventually transcend the boundaries of that life. In seeking to perpetuate this moment outside all moments, Heinrich does as the voice from the tree instructed him; he takes up his lute and sings. Recalling the old miner and Hardenberg's theoretical definition of music, we note that music is the poet's own means of fictionally overcoming the limitations of linear time. The final strophe of the song reflects its intended purpose, its function as an antidote to loss of the past, inadequacies of the present and fears for the future:

Alte Wunder, künftige Zeiten
 Seltsamkeiten,
 Weichet nie aus meinem Herzen.
 Unvergänglich sey die Stelle,
 Wo des Lichtes heilige Quelle
 Weggespült den Traum der Schmerzen (N,I, 324).

The effect of the song is, as promised, the appearance of a young girl, Zyane.

Zyane leads Heinrich to the father-like figure of Sylvester. Sylvester initially reminds Heinrich of the old miner from the fifth chapter, but turns out to be the figure who offered his father accommodation, instruction and in whose house the father had his own dream of the blue flower. Sylvester recounts this to Heinrich, confirming the view of the father as a skilled artisan, who never became a poet (N,I, 326). Sylvester turns out to be a gardener, though one who has a very particular relationship to the flowers of his garden:

Nur sagt mir noch vorher, wie euch meine Einsiedeley und mein Garten gefällt, denn diese Blumen sind meine Freundinnen. Mein Herz ist in diesen Garten. Ihr seht nichts, was mich nicht liebt, und von mir nicht zärtlich geliebt wird. Ich bin hier mitten unter meinen Kindern und komme mir vor, wie ein alter Baum, aus dessen Wurzeln diese muntre Jugend ausgeschlagen sey (N,I, 327).

Whilst the old gardener does not live in quite so morbid surroundings as the caves filled with fossils and bones, Sylvester has been shown to represent a figure parallel to that of Hohenzollern, cultivating a garden through a loving relationship to nature, he both loves and is loved by his flora, regarding them variously as his friends and children (Fankhauser, 179ff). Indeed, he sees himself as the source of their life. However, in the alchemical tradition the alchemist allegorically maintained the role of male pro-creator and usurped the role of mother and midwife; to this tradition belongs Sylvester. He is both master and mistress, procreator and nurturer and, thus, Fankhauser can contend that he displaces yet again the presence of real women in the novel, this time by stealing their roles, as well as replacing them as child and lover by attributing those roles to the natural world in an aesthetic illusion of compensation. It is at this point that Heinrich poses the question, that Fankhauser and critics like her would like to have answered: 'Glücklicher Vater [...] euer Garten ist die Welt. Ruinen sind die Mütter dieser blühenden Kinder. Die bunte, lebendige Schöpfung zieht ihre Nahrung aus den Trümmern vergangener Zeiten. Aber mußte die Mutter sterben, daß die Kinder gedeihen können, und bleibt der Vater zu ewigen Thränen allein

an ihrem Grabe sitzen?' (N,I, 327). All that Sylvester can do is to comfort the young poet and, as compensation, offer him a flower, a forgetmenot designed to replace that which he has lost. Soon, though, it becomes apparent that the question as to the loss of the female other, and the consequent destruction of her body, the absence of her voice and her poetical works ceases to be of relevance. This is not because these things are no longer important, but rather because the framework narrative itself begins to move beyond a purely realistic mode in a way that allows the female other to return as a subject that can self-express in a variety of communicative modes.

One possible reading of the episode with Zyane and Sylvester, which might contradict our suggested approach, would place Heinrich in retreat from reality and allow him to imagine Zyane as Mathilde's avatar. However, the entire episode can also represent fundamental change in the novel's relationship to reality: in the plethora of questions exchanged between Zyane and Heinrich shortly after their meeting, Heinrich is able to ask: 'Seit wann bist du hier?', and she may answer 'Seitdem ich aus dem Grabe gekommen bin?' (N,I, 325). Similarly, when Heinrich asks who is Zyane's father, she answers that it is Hohenzollern. When Heinrich says that he, too, knows Hohenzollern, Zyane says that indeed he should, as he is Heinrich's father. To Heinrich's objection that he has a father in Eisenach, she answers 'Du hast mehr Eltern' (ibid.). In the second part of the novel, figures and identities both male and female begin to blur, lose and regain their distinctions and integrity. These changes *in themselves* are not of direct significance for the position of women in the text. They mark, however, a further transition away from a relatively realistic portrayal of a human life, towards the ideal that will come to include women's voices. Until this point there has still been something of the classical *Bildungsroman* about Heinrich's 'journey': he appears to move along a linear path of self-development through time and space, leaving behind the various women he has encountered. In the plans he left behind for the novel's completion he arguably depicts the 'geistige Gegenwart', that utopian state of immanent-transcendent being discussed earlier, in which linear time apparently ceases to exist. Now experience of the 'geistige Gegenwart' itself can be read as the subject's own ability to fuse the otherwise disconnected temporal zones of past, present and future.³⁷ Arguably, though, the spiritual present can be read differently, namely as a narrative representation of genuinely *intersubjective* experience, which, in the plans for the end of the novel, also allows for all figures from the text's 'past', 'present' and 'future' to be present to each other and interact as subjects in their own right. The relationship between the novel's two parts would seem to point to this. Hardenberg did not intend the two parts of the novel to follow on from each other as part of a realistic time line, writing in the 'Berliner Papiere' that there should be: 'Kein rechter historischer Übergang [...] nach dem 2ten Theile' (N,I,341) or, similarly, in the letter to Friedrich Schlegel of 5 April 1800, which announced the most advanced plans to date for the continuation of *Ofterdingen*: 'Der Roman soll allmählich in Märchen übergehn' (N,IV,330).³⁸ As we shall see, there is rather a

transition from the (relatively) realistic spatio-temporal level of the first part to an increasingly idealized level of being in the second.

In the ideal of the 'geistige Gegenwart', the pluralist mode of being and speaking that has episodically emerged in the text as an elusive ideal, can finally be realized in the fictional fusion of the ideal and the real. This enables a variety of subjects to return and participate in a variety of communicative forms. To what extent, though, may female subjects become part of this ideal? Given that Hardenberg wrote 'Das ganze Menschengeschlecht wird am Ende poëtisch. Neue goldne Zeit' (N,I,347), we might suppose that women are to be included: and the texts bear this out. It was in the 'Berliner Papiere', that Hardenberg made notes for how the unwritten parts of the novel would continue. In the first section of these writings, the linear plot, focussing on Heinrich as developing subject, appears to be retained. It is planned, for instance, that Heinrich will travel to Switzerland, there to establish himself as a bourgeois merchant, following which he becomes a military leader, who leads campaigns in Greece, North Africa and Italy (N,I,340-41). Shortly after this, however, Hardenberg writes of the 'Erzählung des Mädchens der blauen Blume' (ibid.) and thus the symbol of the subject's significant, communicative and creative other is re-introduced. Subsequently, Hardenberg planned for 'Offenbarung der Poësie auf Erden – lebendige Weissagung. Afterdingens Apotheose' (ibid.). Increasingly, he appears to have made provision for poeticized depictions of reality and the subjects participating in it. The temporal, past, present and future, was to become increasingly unified, as indicated by his plans for an allegorical 'Vermählung der Jahreszeiten' (ibid.), which was later realized as a scene in loose verse form (N,I,355), where Hardenberg wrote of an allegorical journey 'zur Jugend, zum Alter. Zur Vergangenheit Zur Zukunft'.

Increasingly, figures from all parts of the novel can come together, their identities even overlap or fuse. This not only enables figures from temporally disconnected episodes, but also those from different levels of reality, from inset and framework narratives, from dream and waking existence, to come together and commune. Thus it can be true that 'Klingsohr ist König von Atlantis. Heinrichs Mutter ist Fantasie. [...] Schwaning ist der Mond [...]' (N,I, 342). It also becomes apparent that this communion of hitherto disparate characters is presented in terms of a 'blurring' of their identities.³⁹ Whilst figures of both genders are presented in this manner, the first section of Hardenberg's 'Berliner Papiere' presents three women in particular as being, in fact, one: 'Die Morgenländerinn ist auch die Poësie. Dreyeiniges Mädchen' (N,I,342). Kuzniar (1992) sees this immanent-transcendent model of unified identity as an example of women experimenting poetically with their own metamorphosis (Kuzniar, 1202). In the quotation, though, Zulima *is* poetry, rather than poetry's practitioner; she is an object rather than a subject. Furthermore, the conspicuous phrase 'Dreyeiniges Mädchen' possibly points to a male fantasy of femininity, which reduces women to non-subjective objects. The three women, taken to be Zyane, Mathilde and Zulima,⁴⁰ might be linked in that they represent similar qualities or ideals.

They may even serve as proof that Hardenberg's male subject is not required to know or communicate with female subjects: instead he may disregard women as subjects and attribute his own significance to them, such that the distinctions between different women are meaningless. The 'Berliner Papiere' do not leave things thus, however.

As it unfolds in the notes, the spiritual present allows all figures to be present as subjects who, gradually, may speak as the polyphony unfolds. Heinrich does not languish in solipsism in this part of the novel, but is to be prepared through a series of encounters with others for the reunion with his most significant other. Again the allegory is one of flowers, the blue flower and others: 'Heinrich muß erst von Blumen für die blaue Blume empfänglich gemacht werden' (ibid.). Accompanying his development is the return of polyphony in various forms: there follow 'Gespräche der Blumen und Thiere über Menschen, Religion, Natur und Wissenschaften' (N,I, 343); indeed the whole second section appears to be characterized by what Hardenberg calls explicitly a 'Leichtigkeit zu Dialogiren' (ibid.). Slowly, Heinrich encounters a range of others, who are subjects as they enter genuinely communicative dialogues with him. When he meets the 'Hirtenmädchen', who recounts the story of her survival by escaping being buried alive, the two speak of many things, recounting narratives to each other (ibid.). Heinrich also begins to communicate in other modes, including a form of metamorphic physiognomy: 'Heinrich wird im Wahnsinn Stein – [...] klingender Baum – goldner Widder' (N,I,344). In this game he is the communicating agent consciously and playfully reinventing his own identity, for his madness is actually voluntary: 'Sein freiwilliger Wahnsinn' (ibid.). These transformations go beyond what has come before in the text, for the figures take on the form of animals, plant-life and inorganic matter of nature. This ongoing process of rewriting, of shifting between different identities not only shows Heinrich to be 'speaking' poetically, but to be doing so as the consummate genius, in that he is shapeshifting. But what, again, of women?

In the second section of the 'Berline Papiere' women also come to the fore as expressive poetic subjects. There, Hardenberg writes: 'Die Morgenländerinn [...] opfert sich an seinem Steine, er wird ein klingender Baum. Das Hirtenmädchen haut den Baum um und <er> verbrennt sich mit ihm. Er wird ein goldner Widder' (N,I,348), in which Zulima appears to sacrifice herself in order that Heinrich might progress to another form of being. Hardenberg appears to have considered having Heinrich, the 'er' of the following line, willingly sacrifice himself in the flames, though the manuscript shows the poet to have crossed this pronoun out at a later date, so it is the 'Hirtenmädchen' who is self-sacrificing. It might appear, then, that even at this later stage of the novel, women have to sacrifice themselves to further the development. In the 'geistige Gegenwart', though, death does not mean a real end for the figures of the novel. The apparent deaths they suffer mark rather autonomous transitions from one identity to another, so the female figures do not literally die. Neither are women limited to the fate of deaths, allegorical or otherwise, as their part within the experimentation with identity. In fact, Mathilde becomes a

more active agent of poetry, so the criticism that she is merely a token, acolyte figure is also inadequate. Towards the end of the 'Berliner Papiere', Hardenberg notes: 'Die Geschichte des Orpheus – der Psyche etc.' (N,I, 347) referring to the classical myth of the bard Orpheus, who must rescue his beloved from the underworld. In the closing page of the notes on the novel, Mathilde appears to be sleeping in an underground cavern, which Heinrich enters. After a conversation with a child, who is presented as Mathilde and Heinrich's daughter, Mathilde awakens. It might appear then, that through this modern re-casting of the antique myth, Heinrich is associated with Orpheus, Mathilde with the passive heroine Eurydice. These motifs return in variations, however. Earlier, Hardenberg had written:

Heinrich geräth unter Bacchantinnen – Sie tödten ihn – der Hebrus tönt
von der schwimmenden Leyer. Umgekehrtes Märchen. Mathilde steigt in die
Untervelt und holt ihn (N,I, 345).

Thus, within the ideal realm, Heinrich too dies, becoming the victim of (female) Bacchantes and, furthermore, Mathilde plays the active agent of the story and is the poetess who rescues her beloved from the underworld in this explicitly 'inverted' fairytale.

Mathilde and other female figures go on to engage in the explicitly poetic task of dissolving and recasting Heinrich's identity and, thus, take on the role of genius as discussed earlier. Before sacrificing herself to the flames, the Hirtenmädchen 'fells' Heinrich in the form of a tree. Significantly, Mathilde appears to redesign him from fragments of his own songs: '<Mathilde kommt und macht ihn durch seine eignen Lieder>' (N,I,348). She appears both to reconstruct his identity in a physical and metaphysical way, writing a poetic of identity, altering his shape as does the genius, and writing a poetic of the body. Here, Mathilde might appear to be merely a catalyst for the re-establishment of male identity, rather than an inventor. If we bear in mind the Romantic notion of authorship, however, we see that Mathilde represents something more. In the *Lehrlinge*, the figure of the teacher appeared as the consummate poetic naturalist, though his poetic speculation on nature *also* involved recognizing that unfamiliar phenomena are often merely re-combinations of familiar phenomena (N,I,80). For him the poetic treatment of nature became a matter of playing with and manipulating, dividing and re-combining phenomena to expressive and insightful effect. *Poésie* does not merely entail calling something new into being, but manipulating and reforming new aesthetic forms from existing components, which inevitably pre-exist anything the poet chooses to do with them. For Hardenberg, then, art is not wholly the achievement of the individual and is not, therefore, wholly his or her property: there is, though, something unique about each work that is at least partly the author's alone. And, thus, Mathilde's reconstruction of Heinrich from *his* songs is indeed a re-establishment of his self. But it is also *her* re-establishment of him, partly a re-invention of his self and partly her own act of poetic genius. Given that the allegory of Mathilde's creativity here is itself musical, implying again the link to the ideal of polyphony, why, as the editor's marks '<...>' show, did Hardenberg later cross out this

line? He appears to have retracted this image of female creativity during a re-working of the manuscript, but does this signify his desire to re-strict women's participation in this area, or merely a less self-conscious experimentation with images of poetic activity? Further images of female poetic endeavour are in evidence: towards the end of the manuscript in question, Hardenberg inserted the proposal '「Edda oder Mathilde」 muß ihn opfern. Er wird ein Mensch' (ibid). In this ideal mode, Hardenberg begins to allow the co-authorship of women geniuses within the strange allegorical process of re-writing the male protagonist's identity, though simultaneously excludes them from more conventional images of poetic creativity. At the planned climax of the novel women, too, begin taking on the roles of productive subjects, poets and geniuses and, thus, the polyphonic ideal begins to include all subjects and all forms of communication. In typical fashion, however, this does not occur without contradiction: as poetic subjects, Hardenberg's women, it seems, are ambiguous to the end.

Our approach to this novel has allowed us to look at the text as a progression, a series of formal and thematic experiments in constructing a polyphonic ideal as an alternative to the realistic, linear and egocentric depiction of reality traditionally associated with the *genre* of the *Bildungsroman*. As we had seen, Hardenberg's ideal was the product of his careful counterbalancing of ideas taken from holistic models of the universe found in the mysticist traditions of Paracelsus and Böhme. The model produced allowed for the subject's free communication, though limited that freedom by placing it in a pre-defined polyphonic context, in which all other entities within creation were themselves communicating agents: polyphony provides for the communicative rights of other subjects. Polyphony also draws on other traditions, however, namely Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and Lavater's physiognomy, to re-think all material objects as endowed with meaning: potentially, there is a plurality of communicative forms, as there is communicating agents. Increasingly, the polyphonic ideal finds itself expressed metaphorically as a musical ensemble or composition. This is an apt metaphor as it implies both the free participation of individual voices in communicative endeavour, though prevents those individuals from using that freedom to deny others their rights and prevents communicative anarchy by demanding that all participants consider the pre-defined context. In *Ofterdingen* the employment of musical metaphors in the text accompanies and supports Hardenberg's attempts to present various forms of polyphony along Heinrich's journey. It was only towards the end of *Ofterdingen*, written in the second half of 1800, that this ideal began to have formal and thematic consequences for the presentation of the female subject. Nevertheless, the inclusively intersubjective nature of the ideal allows us to begin reading the apparently consummate Romantic *Bildungsroman* as a work that does not wholly privilege self over other or man over woman. Towards its end, the text begins to present subjects of both genders, albeit with ambiguity, as autonomous communicative agents, who start to self-express and engage in dialogue through a variety of forms.

The first of these is the fact that the...
...the second is the fact that the...
...the third is the fact that the...
...the fourth is the fact that the...
...the fifth is the fact that the...
...the sixth is the fact that the...
...the seventh is the fact that the...
...the eighth is the fact that the...
...the ninth is the fact that the...
...the tenth is the fact that the...
...the eleventh is the fact that the...
...the twelfth is the fact that the...
...the thirteenth is the fact that the...
...the fourteenth is the fact that the...
...the fifteenth is the fact that the...
...the sixteenth is the fact that the...
...the seventeenth is the fact that the...
...the eighteenth is the fact that the...
...the nineteenth is the fact that the...
...the twentieth is the fact that the...
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...the twenty-second is the fact that the...
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...the thirtieth is the fact that the...
...the thirty-first is the fact that the...
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...the thirty-ninth is the fact that the...
...the fortieth is the fact that the...
...the forty-first is the fact that the...
...the forty-second is the fact that the...
...the forty-third is the fact that the...
...the forty-fourth is the fact that the...
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...the forty-ninth is the fact that the...
...the fiftieth is the fact that the...
...the fifty-first is the fact that the...
...the fifty-second is the fact that the...
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...the fifty-ninth is the fact that the...
...the sixtieth is the fact that the...
...the sixty-first is the fact that the...
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...the sixty-fourth is the fact that the...
...the sixty-fifth is the fact that the...
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...the sixty-eighth is the fact that the...
...the sixty-ninth is the fact that the...
...the seventieth is the fact that the...
...the seventy-first is the fact that the...
...the seventy-second is the fact that the...
...the seventy-third is the fact that the...
...the seventy-fourth is the fact that the...
...the seventy-fifth is the fact that the...
...the seventy-sixth is the fact that the...
...the seventy-seventh is the fact that the...
...the seventy-eighth is the fact that the...
...the seventy-ninth is the fact that the...
...the eightieth is the fact that the...
...the eighty-first is the fact that the...
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...the ninetieth is the fact that the...
...the ninety-first is the fact that the...
...the ninety-second is the fact that the...
...the ninety-third is the fact that the...
...the ninety-fourth is the fact that the...
...the ninety-fifth is the fact that the...
...the ninety-sixth is the fact that the...
...the ninety-seventh is the fact that the...
...the ninety-eighth is the fact that the...
...the ninety-ninth is the fact that the...
...the hundredth is the fact that the...

Notes to chapter four:

¹ Cf. Jochen Hörisch, "‘Übergang zum Endlichen:’ Zur Modernität des ‘Heinrich von Ofterdingen,’" afterword to: Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1982).

² See Géza von Molnár, *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context. Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (Minneapolis: UMP, 1987), 107f.

³ See Fankhauser (151f). Fankhauser points to the correspondence between Mathilde, referred to by Heinrich as a sapphire, and to the blue of the flower. Both flower, mineral and Mathilde are linked allegorically by colour, reflecting the fact that all are aesthetic productions of the self-deluding male poet.

⁴ Cf. Molnár (ibid.), 106ff.

⁵ See Nicholas Saul, 'The Motif of Baptism in Three Eighteenth-Century Novels: Secularization or Sacralization?', in *GLL*, New Series, 39, (1986), 107-133.

⁶ Molnár has also made a complex reading of this passage: the flower is a 'messenger to the field of light', a symbol of the other reaching into the metaphorical light of conscious reflexion from the metaphorical darkness, the unknown the absolute, whence Heinrich too has come (Molnár, 114). The meeting between Heinrich and the flower is a representation of the point 'where the dualism of the self's subjective and objective moments is suspended' (ibid.). In Molnár's terms, too, the flower is representation of the other to the self and its movement towards Heinrich is as equivalent to its making the statement 'I am you' (ibid.). Kenneth Scott Calhoun, *Fatherland: Novalis, Freud and the Discipline of Romance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 78-79, offers a different Freudian reading of Heinrich's first dream. The dream reflects what Freud called the developmental stage of primary narcissism, in which 'sexual drive is as yet indistinct from the drive for self-preservation [...]. The child's only sexual objects at this point are itself and its mother, and because the mother is also a part of the child, the self is at once source and sole receptacle of libidinal energy' (Calhoun, 78). Thus Calhoun sees the blue flower not only as establishing 'a metonymic relationship between the mother and other erotic objects [...], but it also reveals one of those objects to be the self [...]' (ibid. 79).

⁷ Cf. Massey, 103f.

⁸ Cf. Massey, ibid. Cf. also Fankhauser, pp.173-178.

⁹ Here Newman agrees with Molnár's findings: 'A journey into the world would then simultaneously be a journey to the self, or rather a progression into world-consciousness would also be a progression in self-consciousness, until both reveal themselves to be one', cf. Molnár (1987, p.121).

¹⁰ Cf. Fankhauser, pp.79-90. Fankhauser refers to the exploration of the caves as a search for 'Erkenntnisse im Innern von Mutter Natur' (ibid.), which only culminates in the illusion of personal, intellectual and emotional fulfilment.

¹¹ Still highly pertinent is Saul's analysis of the fifth chapter in: Nicholas Saul, *History and Poetry in Novalis in the Tradition of the German Enlightenment*, Bithell Series of Dissertations, 8, (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984).

¹² The term originates from Molnár (1987), p.146.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ If the poet does experience a 'lack' or 'absence', then it is conceived to keep him experimenting and moving. The hermit's interests are wide, but his vision and aspirations fixed.

¹⁵ For an overview of changing critical perspectives on the body in German literature see: Nicholas Saul, 'Introduction. From "Ideendichtung" to the *Commercium Mentis et Corporis*: The Body in German Literature Around 1800', 1999.

¹⁶ Sigrid Weigel, *Topographien der Geschlechter: kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Literatur* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990).

¹⁷ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her Dead Body. Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: MUP, 1992).

¹⁸ Stephan Grätzel, *Die philosophische Entdeckung des Leibes*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989), pp. 88-98.

¹⁹ See Ulrich Stadler, 'Novalis und Lavater: Hardenbergs "höhere Physiognomie" im "Heinrich von Ofterdingen"', 1994, and Ulrich Stadler, 'Der Leib als lehrreichste Schrift und als Tempel. Die Deutung der menschlichen Gestalt durch Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis)', 1993.

²⁰ Again, see Nicholas Saul (1986), 107-133.

²¹ For Calhoun, the physicalized representation of the other is still part of a narcissistic, phallic and masturbatory fantasy: as the flower changes, the image of the leaves growing shinier and rubbing themselves against the swelling stem is a mirror image of Heinrich's own arousal and is, therefore, 'something resembling onanism' (Calhoun, 79). The blue flower, then, cannot be seen solely as a prefiguration of the other's body discourse within Calhoun's approach.

²² Hardenberg did not regard the scripture as a literalist historical account of the miracles of Christianity, but as a poetic means for revealing new truths, hence his comment on the fact that the scripture must be an object of critical interpretation: 'im Wachsen begriffen Seyn' (N,II,569:97).

²³ For O'Brien the transformation of the kingdom stems from the son's acceptance as heir despite his illegitimacy, which undermines the 'divine right' premise which had apparently grounded the monarchy. The monarchy is retained, though is exposed poetically as a form of government, rather than an absolute expression of authority emanating from God: political legitimacy is a fiction, albeit a necessary one (O'Brien, 296ff).

²⁴ Cf. Newman (1985), 161. ff.

²⁵ Not surprisingly, the integrity of the early modern familial structure, together with women's roles within it, is not ultimately called into question by the tale. This is with the notable exception of Fabel, the female poet. This does not, however, alter the fact that women are influencing male identity through their own participation in a poetics of the corporeal.

²⁶ Jochen Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur, Philosophie und Politik 1750-1945*, 2 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985).

²⁷ Günter Blamberger, *Das Geheimnis des Schöpferischen oder: Ingenium est ineffabile?* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991).

²⁸ Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition* (Leeds: The Scolar Press, 1966), pp 51-57.

²⁹ Herder's definition is best exemplified by his description of Shakespeare's literary genius in his essay 'Shakespear'. Here the dramatist is presented as writing from his own natural energies in the manner of a godlike creator figure; for Herder the act of genius was an act of unleashing power and thus the individual became thought of as a *Kraftgenie*. See J.G Herder *Werke*, ed. by Günther Arnold, 10 vols, (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985 -), vol. 2, *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Literatur 1767-1781*, ed. by Gunther E. Grimm (1993), 515.

³⁰ Blamberger shows that, for Kant, works of genius had to be recognized as such by cultured society, not in terms of a normative aesthetics, but by other minds making informed judgements based upon reasoned reflection, pp.65-71.

³¹ Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (London: The Women's Press, 1989).

³² Cf. *ibid.* 88f, for Battersby's discussion of the necessity for coupling the feminized conception of genius with the male physiology.

³³ See Friedrich Schiller, *Über den Dilettantismus* in: *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*, ed. by J. Petersen and others, 43 vols, (Weimar: Böhlau 1963 -), vol. 21, *Philosophische Schriften Zweiter Teil*, ed. by Benno von Weise (1963), 60.

³⁴ Novalis wrote: 'Beynah alles Genie war bisher einseitig [...]. Das erste Genie, das sich selbst durchdrang [...] machte eine Entdeckung, die die merkwürdigste in der Welt seyn mußte, denn es beginnt damit eine ganz neue Epoche der Menschheit' (N,II,455:94).

³⁵ The notion of genius as a manipulator of signs can be found in Novalis's mathematical notebooks of 1798. When his or her talents are applied to the concept of signification in the abstract, the genius is able to imbue all forms or 'Figuren' with a communicative quality thus creating 'Figurenworde', but is also able to alter the meaning conveyed by existing signs whose function had appeared fixed: 'Der Fantasie, die die Figurenworde bildet, kommt daher das Praedicat Genie vorzüglich zu. Das wird die goldne Zeit seyn, wenn alle Worde - Figurenworde - Mythen - und alle Figuren - Sprachfiguren - Hieroglyphen seyn werden - wenn man Figuren sprechen und schreiben - und Worde vollkommen plastisiren, und Musiciren lernt' (N,III,123-4).

³⁶ See Elisabeth Stopp, '“Übergang vom Roman zur Mythologie” Formal Aspects of the Opening Chapter of Hardenberg's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Part II', in: *DVJS*, 48 (1974), 319-41. Stopp sees the pilgrim's vision as a representation of a version of communicative sociability, which encourages his own communicative endeavours. And, as it is less a conventional afterlife and more a higher level of reality, the vision hints at its own realization as the novel makes the transition to the mythical.

³⁷ Cf. Nicholas Saul, *History and Poetry in Novalis in the Tradition of the German Enlightenment*, Bithell Series of Dissertations, 8 (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, 1984), p.92.

³⁸ Elisabeth Stopp has also made a convincing case for reading the novel's second part as being formally and stylistically different to the first, drawing on Novalis's own letters to Schlegel of June 1800 where the poet states to his friend: 'Der 2te Theil wird schon in der Form weit poetischer, als der Erste' (N,IV,333:163).

³⁹ This view is held by Elisabeth Stopp (p.333), who saw in entries such as this and in the novel's second part in general the Romantic reworking of the myth of the migration of souls, 'metempsychosis'. Concurring with Stopp on this quality of the novel's second part is also Anthony Phelan, '“Das Centrum das Symbol des Goldes”: Analogy and Money in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*', in: *German Life and Letters*, 37:4, July 1984, 307-321. See particularly pp.312-313.

⁴⁰ This view was put forward by Dennis Mahoney in: 'The Myth of Death and Resurrection in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*', *South Atlantic Review*, 48 (1983), 52-66, esp. 60-63.

EXCURSUS: WOMEN OF LETTERS

In writing about women, Hardenberg was not merely concerned with the creation of models of femininity in his autobiographical, scientific and literary texts. He also pursued the practice of communicating to women through written language, in a form that we can still reflect upon today: he wrote them letters. The following section offers a brief excursus into Hardenberg's epistolary exchanges with women. The rationale behind this survey is to perform a further test as to whether or not Hardenberg developed strategies in writing for dealing with women as literary subjects in their own right. The discussion will begin by looking at the cultural-historical significance of letter writing in general and in particular between the genders around 1800. After looking briefly at a number of examples of letter exchanges between other male authors and women significant to them, the focus then shifts to look at Hardenberg's letters to and from a number of women. It will evaluate the roles and attitudes adopted by both parties, asking whether or not Hardenberg opens a genuine channel of communication with women as intellectual and literary beings, seeking their opinions and ideas on intellectual and cultural matters and encouraging their own literary productivity.

In reflecting upon letters in the final part of the eighteenth century, we must bear in mind that the nature and status of epistolary writing changed during this time. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the Romantics ceased treating letters simply as vessels for ideas or as mere opportunities for recording autobiographical data: increasingly letters took on a range of (at times stylized) literary qualities. A tradition of scholarship exists on this genre-in-transition, with a most notable contribution to be found in Karl Heinz Bohrer's *Der romantische Brief* (1985).¹ Here Bohrer outlines how letter writing contributed to the specifically Romantic phenomenon of (often self-consciously) aesthetic subjectivity, which provided an important new version of selfhood existing in opposition to socio-economic and philosophical-theoretical categories (Bohrer, 9ff). The phenomenon expresses itself through different forms of and strategies for self-reflexive writing: the study explores how conscious processes of self-discovery, self-reinvention and even pessimistic self-negation all unfolded within the letters of male and female writers of the Romantic period. Given the important role played by letters in the re-constitution of subjectivity as a literary-aesthetic phenomenon around 1800, and given, too, that letters often remained unpublished – in contrast to novels, dramas and lyrical poetry – this genre came to be of particular importance for one particular group of literary aspirants who found themselves often lacking the space and experience to develop as writing subjects and still largely excluded from publication within more conventional literary genres: these were, of course, women writers. In chapters two and four, we saw that cultural theory at the end of the eighteenth century disadvantaged women and favoured men: the model of dilettantism conspired with

anthropological definitions of femininity to imply a universal tendency in women to be intellectually and aesthetically amateurish, whilst models of genius tended to resemble those of masculinity. Women of the period were not entirely absent from the cultural scene; one need only think of published writers such as Dorothea and Caroline Schlegel and Sophie Tieck. As Gallas and Runge have noted, however, between 1771 and 1810 there were only 396 publications in the German language by women, whilst in 1800 alone there were a total of 4012 publications: female-authored texts made up only a fraction of the book market around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.² But this did not mean that women did not write, and letters played an important part in providing textual opportunities for women to engage in literary productivity. On several occasions, Becker-Cantarino has pointed out that letter writing was an important medium for unpublished authors, particularly women, to develop writing skills, either by including lyrical poetry and excerpts from drafts of novels, in letters to friends and critics, or by expanding the genre of the letter to explore a more literary writing style, rich in metaphor, diverse in content and covering a wide range of themes. Since the seventeenth century, the letter had been, according to Becker-Cantarino 'die Schule der schreibenden Frauen'.³

Given that letter writing was an important genre for the development of the female literary subject, we must ask what letters meant to male writers and, furthermore, how did they interact with women within epistolary exchanges? Nicholas Saul has shown that behind his apparent games of gender deconstruction, Clemens Brentano is more an 'unreconstructed, at best unconsciously hypocritical patriarch' than he is a 'progressive poet who wants co-operatively to construct an inter-gender identity'.⁴ When considering Brentano's literary works as a whole, he can be seen to offer an 'impoverished spectrum of possibilities for the representation of femininity in literature', a situation which can be seen in seminal form in his letters to women. Telling examples can be found in the letters between him and his first wife Sophie Mereau: '[...] wäre ich eine Nonne, die Du verführen könntest, mir könnte das Herz nicht so pochen', or later 'Du bist mein Gatte, ich bin Dein Weib, Du nimmst mich, beherrschest mich, gibst mir ein Los, eine Geschichte'.⁵ These extracts actually come from Brentano's letters to his wife and appear to represent a game of gender confusion, in which the poet ascribes to Sophie the traditionally male behavioural trait of dominance, the active sexual role of seducer, whilst himself taking on the traditionally feminine roles of the coyly seduced and passively determined partner in the relationship. Saul has shown that Mereau joined in the games, exhibiting mock male jealousy at an imaginary male interloper admiring his mock female beloved. Rightly, however, Saul alludes to Bohrer's work and to a study by Herta Schwarz, both of which see in Brentano's letters to Sophie the reassertion of traditional gender roles through attempts to negate women as literary subjects and as editors,⁶ an example being the famous retort to her rejection of his poetry for publication: '[...] ich hatte gehofft, unter Ihren Auspizien würde etwas besseres zustande kommen. *Es ist für ein Weib sehr gefährlich zu dichten, noch gefährlicher einen Musenalmanach herauszugeben*' (Gersdorff, 104).

Brentano does, however, represent an extreme case. Within the circle of the Jena Romantics, a different culture of gender was beginning to emerge, in which women were already being regarded as, indeed functioning as able literary subjects and productive artists. Much about this can be illustrated through the stylized literary dialogue on the fine arts 'Die Gemälde. Gespräch', which appeared in the Schlegel brothers' journal *Das Athenäum* in 1799. The text is a formalized, literary version of conversations conducted by the Schlegel brothers, Hardenberg, Henrik Steffens and Caroline Schlegel during a visit to the 'Gemäldegalerie Alter Meister' in Dresden in summer 1798. Critics have noted that, together with August Wilhelm, Caroline was responsible for a significant amount of authorial input in the writing of this text, even if she was never publicly acknowledged as co-author or co-editor.⁷ Within the dialogue three figures are depicted: Waller, who can be taken largely to represent A.W. Schlegel, Louise, taken as the only woman to represent Caroline, and Reinhold, who gives voice to the comments of Hardenberg and the other figures present during that visit in Dresden. The work is not only relevant in terms of its being a product of partly female authorship, but also in its portrayal of dialogue between the genders on subjects of high cultural interest. Now, initially and on certain later occasions, Louise does tend towards levity, even flippancy: when in the opening section, Waller attempts to explain the silent, pensive demeanour that Louise has noticed about him, she remarks jokingly: 'Es ist der Nachahmungstrieb, lieber Freund; Sie wollen selbst zur Bildsäule werden' (*Athenäum*, II, p.39). Whereas Waller tends to present theses on art, derived from philosophical and historical reflection, Louise adopts a somewhat dismissive view of the deeper philosophical concepts spoken about in relation to works of fine art and the role of the artist in their production. In response to a typically Romantic assertion of Waller's, for instance, in which he contends that all sculpture is either organic or mathematical, 'organisch oder mathematisch', in that it produces either a unity infused with soul 'beseelte Einheit' or represents accurately a series of quantifiable proportions, as in architecture, (ibid. p.42), Louise complains 'Sie gerathen mir in die Metaphysik der Künste hinein, womit ich nichts zu thun habe' (ibid.). Such aversions to abstract and terminologically driven philosophizing on art is not, however, limited to Louise: the figure of Reinhold, who first appears as a would-be artist sketching in the gallery, responds to similarly weighty reflections by Waller on the role of subjectivity in the appreciation of art: 'Ihre philosophischen Sätze verstehe ich nicht zu prüfen' (ibid. p.47). Such aversions do not, then, automatically bespeak a specifically female deficiency on Louise's part in the high philosophical discourse of aesthetics. On various occasions, she does contribute ideas on the productive processes of fine art, saying, for instance that the weight and inertia of the materials involved in sculpture requires that this expressive form depicts a living subject matter, in order that the genre does not deal metaphorically in dead forms: ' [...] da die Bildhauerkunst in einer so schweren Masse arbeitet, so muß sie sich allerdings an das Lebendige halten, sonst würden die Todten ihre Todten begraben' (ibid. 41-42). She also adds her views on individual works of art, commenting

in response to Waller's remarks 'Es giebt den Statuen ein kontemplatives Ansehen: sie halten den Zuschauern durch ihr Beyspiel vor, wie sie genossen zu werden verlangen (ibid.), though she follows her observation with a somewhat fickle change of interest: 'Ich bin aber heute gar nicht kontemplativ gestimmt, sondern gesellig und zum plaudern' (ibid.). However, such irreverence does not represent a complete detachment from the discourse on aesthetics – and might equally serve as a foil to the, at times, ponderous theorizing of Waller. Louise does reflect on high aesthetics, giving voice to important Romantic ideas on the intermediality inherent in the relationship between letters, the fine arts and the performing arts: 'Und so sollte man die Künste einander nähren und Uebergänge aus einer in die andre suchen. Bildsäulen belebten sich vielleicht zu Gemälden [...] Gemälde würden zu Gedichten, Gedichte zu Musiken; und wer weiß? so eine feyerliche Kirchenmusik stiege auf einmal als ein Tempel in die Luft' (ibid. 49-50). Within the text, then, Louise is an artistically reflecting subject: she is an able critic, who favours her own sometimes impressionistic, though individualistic and by no means superficial methodology and terminology of artistic interpretation. She encourages and supports the literary endeavour of male writers, though never comes to produce art of her own: Reinhold produces his own sketches (if not to his own satisfaction) (ibid. p.44) and Waller recites his poems (actually sonnets by August Wilhelm) inspired by the works of art (ibid. 142ff), whilst Louise's 'performances' are limited rather to the reading aloud of extended commentaries on portraits during the tour of the gallery (ibid. 56ff). Louise is, in short, present as literary subject, though is not quite as fully involved as the two males in the processes of artistic production and appreciation. In some ways, this reflects the position Caroline adopted within the Jena circle, particularly with regard to her work on the *Athenäum* (although in that context Caroline did create and edit fragments and have authorial input). This notion of a woman as a literary subject, who was not *quite* as literary as her male counterparts, is perhaps characteristic of the role Caroline adopted in her epistolary exchanges with men such as Friedrich Schlegel and, in turn, how she was viewed by the men to whom she wrote.

A culture of letter writing that was correspondingly more inclusive of women as literary subjects began to emerge between writers of the two sexes within the Jena circle, particularly during the period of the *Athenäum* (1797-1800). In a letter to his brother August Wilhelm from Berlin on 18 December 1797, Friedrich Schlegel appears to have been concerned with procuring and editing suitable material for the ongoing publications of the *Athenäum*. In the letter, which contains detailed outlines of material Friedrich was intending for the forthcoming number, he refers most approvingly to Caroline's reported literary production. Addressing his own editorial concerns, he appears anxious to ensure that he is provided with sufficient *Fragmente* for the forthcoming publication, writing to Caroline more directly:

Auch Car.[oline] muß ich bitten, heute mit meinen freundlichsten Grüßen vorlieb zu nehmen – noch mehr aber, aus Ihren, aus Deinen, aus meinen, aus Hardenbergs [Briefen], woher sie will, aus Himmel und Erde

Fragmente zu excerpieren. Denn wenn sie gleich keine Fragmente machen kann d.h. will, so weiß doch gewiß niemand besser, Fr.[agmente] auszuschmecken. – Ferner bitte ich um Ihren Beytrag, (zu einem Fragment) über Fr. Richter (– das humanste sind die Frucht-Blumen- und Dornenstücke? besonders der zweyte Theil) und William Lovell (S,III,XXIV,67:41).

Friedrich's preference, it seems, would be to have Caroline write her own fragments. Failing this though, he asks her to collate and select not only further examples of her own fragments, but of fragments by male authors – including Hardenberg and himself – be these from letters or other sources. There could be no better person, writes Friedrich, to 'mull over' the best or most suitable fragments. Not only does he regard Caroline as a writer in her own right, but as a tasteful and discerning critic, to whom the editorship of male-authored texts may be entrusted. Even if he is, at this point, seeking to delegate work to Caroline during a hectic period and may, in the light of this, be engaging in more than a little flattery of her, Friedrich's act constitutes a degree of surrender of editorial authority to a woman: he asks too for her critical contributions on male authored texts, such as Tieck's *William Lovell*.

Friedrich's positive opinion of Caroline's productive, editorial and literary-critical abilities seems also to have been reflected in his direct correspondence with her: they entered into critical discussions on the merits of newly published literature, including Friedrich's own. In March 1799, during another period of feverish writing activity for all concerned, he wrote to Caroline after reading her comments on his *Lucinde*: 'Mit Ihrem Antheil und Urtheil über die Lucinde bin ich sehr zufrieden, und ich will Ihnen unter uns sagen, daß mir vor der Hand Ihr Beyfall mehr als W[ilhelm]s am Herzen lag' (S,III,V,254:115). However, a different view of women writers in general is also in evidence in the plans he mentions for his forthcoming publications. Whilst part of *Lucinde* is entitled 'Lehrjahre der Männlichkeit', further publications are to include what he entitled 'Weibliche Ansichten'. These, he reports, are to be

vielseitige Briefe von Frauen und Mädchen verschiedener Art über die gute und schlechte Gesellschaft. Darstellung der Gegenwart, denn Bekenntnisse über die Vergangenheit scheinen mir weniger weiblich, und ich zweifle, ob es Lehrjahre der Weiblichkeit giebt. Ich würde mir so lange übel mitspielen, bis ich auch in Styl und Farbe der Darstellung einen deutlichen Anstrich von Weiblichkeit herausbrächte; indessen muß die Kunst hier immer gegen die Natur stark zurückbleiben (ibid.).

Schlegel recognizes the letter explicitly as a form of communication between women. He intends, too, to publish letters from different types of women and girls. The very inclusion of this range of writing by women might appear to be a radical espousal of female authorship. Yet, if this were so, why do women not write literature for Schlegel? Why can they not reflect over the past? Why are they to limit themselves to writing on issues of polite society? And, most significantly, why is he talking of how he intends to strive against nature and imitate what he sees as female style? Why is he planning to colonize female authorship, including his own fake letters from women alongside those of female authors? In this excerpt, he appears still to be working with a limiting

model of femininity, one which appears to exclude or impinge on women's capacity for autonomous writing. As such, there can be no 'Lehrjahre der Weiblichkeit' (ibid.) as Schlegel sees it, for women do not learn to be reflecting, literary subjects; they are simply determined by nature to be unreflecting, with their writing reflecting their status. Whilst Schlegel's letters often explicitly praise women's literary faculties and seem keen to involve them – in Caroline's case, at least – in the processes of literary criticism and publication, he reveals another more insidious viewpoint, smuggling into the letters a more general model of women as ill-equipped for serious authorship.

From this brief survey, we can conclude that, as well as there being an overt tendency amongst some Romantic male authors to belittle and limit women as literary subjects, other male authors sought in their letters to women to open channels of communication and to appear to use that dialogical context to dismantle the prevailing gender stereotypes of women as aliterary, inviting them to adopt active roles in writing and publishing culture. Even in such cases, however, explicitly progressive stances towards women writers and critics can belie patterns of conscious and unconscious misogynistic scepticism about the merits of the female writing subject. We must now consider where to place Hardenberg in relation to these trends. Does he, in letters to women writers, adopt the role of the reactionary patriarch Brentano, does he emerge as his more progressive though not unambiguous friend, Friedrich Schlegel, or did he take a different approach? Bohrer (pp.213-14) refers to Hardenberg's contention 'Der wahre Brief ist, seiner Natur nach, *poëtisch*' (N,II,434:56) and links this with his notion of 'geistige Gegenwart', thus claiming that the poet's letters are attempts at participating in intersubjective communication. We shall, in the following, test to what extent there is such a utopian model of communication informing our poet's letters to women.⁸

Hardenberg wrote letters to a range of women throughout his life: there were letters sent to his sisters and mother, to Sophie von Kühn, and to her family and friends. There were letters to the circle of female acquaintances he made whilst studying administration under Kreisamtmann Just in Tennstedt, particularly Just's niece Caroline, and also to the women involved in the circle of the Jena Romantics, particularly Caroline Schlegel. The following investigation will not look at all these texts, but concentrate on the letters written during the period of Hardenberg's mature theoretical and literary work, from late 1794 onwards until the ends of his life. The large bulk of the correspondence with Hardenberg's significant female other, Sophie von Kühn, has been lost to scholarship. Whilst this loss is great, it has less impact on our particular discussion; however poetic Hardenberg's treatment of Sophie, he never really regarded Sophie as a poetic subject anyway, as we saw from our discussion of *Klarisse*. Lost, too, are the majority of the letters to Julie von Charpentier. However, Hardenberg had extended exchanges of letters with a range of more

mature and, in certain cases, educated women, from which a range of telling letters remains; it will be on these exchanges that the study will focus.

Caroline Just was some four years older than Hardenberg, around twenty six when they met in November 1794. She was reputedly a practical, independently minded, if not academically educated woman, who was keeping house for her uncle. Hardenberg appears to have considered her a good and generous friend, a great support to him during his time training, and someone whom he regarded with great affection, though without amorous intent. Hardenberg's letters begin towards the end of the month in which he met her. The first letter mentions issues of tiredness and ill health, which Hardenberg seems to have put down to his own overactive imagination or 'Fantasie', worsened by the complex balancing-act between his administrative duties and his social life, particularly the emotional awakening of his love for Sophie. In the letter, Hardenberg refers to Caroline as the one true friend he has made in Tennstedt:

Soviel Entzückendes auf Einmal, Sophie, Ihre in der That einzige Freundschaft, und die unendliche Aussicht, die mir sich hier auf einmal so *bestimmt* für mein Leben und meine Bestimmung öffnete – dis alles bestürmte meine ohnedieß reizbare Fantasie, die eine zeitlang müßig gelegen hatte, auf einmal *so*, daß ich am Ende dabey leiden *mußte* (N,IV,148:52).

The wholesome and platonic quality of the friendship, as Hardenberg saw it, actually betrays more of the poet's opinions than he makes explicit. Hardenberg appears to request her consent to spend some time each evening in the circle of the Kreisamtmann's home, specifically with Justen, for the good it will do him. Rather than stimulating his fantasy, this contact is designed to help him learn to restrain that faculty:

Sie erhalten mich, ohne daß Sie es wissen, durch ihre bloße Nähe, aufrecht. Von körperlicher Stärkung, Zerstreuung, wobey ich sehr auf Sie rechne, und sogar den Onkel deshalb um die Erlaubniß mit *Ihrer Genehmigung* bitten will, bey Ihnen alle Abende eine Stunde zubringen zu dürfen – hoff ich Alles. Vielleicht lehrt mir Ihr Umgang Mittel eine gar zu heftige Reizbarkeit meiner Fantasie abzuschleifen und jene glückliche, unentbehrliche Ruhe zu gewinnen, mit der man trübe, einfache Stunden leicht erträgt und schönen, glücklichen Stunden entgegensehn muß, um nicht die Erwartung der letztern in die ärgste Qual zu verwandeln, die ein empfindendes Wesen leiden kann (N,IV,148-49:52).

Whilst Hardenberg appears here to extol the virtues of quiet, dutiful bourgeois life, painting it as preferable to the emotional and imaginative experiences that more bohemian poets tended to seek out, his contention that contact with Caroline would teach him those virtues reveals, simultaneously, his own estimation of her character. For him she embodied duty and stability and the physical and mental well-being those qualities brought with them – all things for which he longed at that time. He appears not to have associated creativity, imagination and revolutionary qualities with this woman. A letter to Caroline, the following March (1795), informing her that he had been snowed in at Grüningen and for that reason was not come to Tennstedt, reveals a growing warmth on his part for her; he opens the letter humorously, as if it were a mock plea for

leniency (N,IV,149:53). Again, there is an expression of gratitude, though this comes in the form of more striking lines:

Geben und Nehmen.

Eins von beyden ist jedes Menschen Bestimmung. Sie gehören zu dem Ersteren, ich zu dem letzteren vor der Hand. Ich hoffe auf die Zeit, wo wir unsre Rollen tauschen können (N,IV, 150:53).

The language appears to connect with many of the debates touched upon in this study: passivity and activity, productivity and reception and, most importantly, the exchange of roles between male and female: in the final line of the excerpt Hardenberg makes explicit his desire to exchange roles with Caroline. On what level is this comment to be taken, however? If one regards the context of the rest of the letter, which is an expression of thanks for, amongst other things, her good taste, her friendship and even a nightshirt she obviously presented to him, then it appears less likely that Hardenberg is playing the cross-gendering games that Schlegel had tried to play in *Lucinde* and more likely that he is alluding to a time when he would be able to offer the material and practical support in like kind, becoming the 'giver' in the relationship.

In February 1796, Hardenberg writes again and familiar themes emerge: there are many messages for Caroline's uncle, protestations of friendship, again *explicitly* differentiated from love (N,IV,170:66), but nevertheless intimate and enduring: Hardenberg compares himself and Caroline with two watches beating with perfect synchronicity, such that, when they are separated and later re-united, both still show the same time (ibid). Towards the end of the letter, though we again see something new. Hardenberg recommends reading material:

Zuletzt empfehle ich Ihnen und dem Onkel noch 2 Bücher, die des Kaufgeldes vollkommen wehrt sind.
Leben und Thaten des Herrn Barons Quinctius Heymeran von Flaming.
Montaignes Versuche üb[er]s[etzt] von Bode.

Beyde Bücher sind besonders auf die Bedürfnisse des Onkels calculirt – nichts weniger, als angreifend und doch so herzlich interessant, so geistvoll. Das Letztere kann man zu allen Stunden, zu allen Jahreszeiten, in allen Lebensaltern mit Vergnügen lesen und wiederlesen. Der Erstere ist unter den mir bekannten komischen Romanen fast der Matador, weil er das Niedrigkomische so ganz aus seinem Plan gelassen hat und in seiner Caricatur so nahe an der Natur vorbeystreift, daß es scheint, als habe er ihr gerade das Beste, die Oberfläche entführt – Auch die Empfindung hat manches herrliche Ruheplätzchen in dieser Kunstanlage (N,IV,170-71:66).

The novel and essays do not belong to what Hardenberg regarded as the highest of culture, yet his letter reviews the texts positively and even contains meta-reflections on the nature of subtlety in comic prose. The novel appears intended for both uncle and niece, yet it is specifically calculated for the former – and it is in Hardenberg's phrase that they are suited to his *uncle's* needs, that the novel is termed 'geistvoll'. Again, however, the texts are to be read by Caroline and are mentioned in a letter to her. Both books are recommended with a practical bourgeois eye

to their cost – both are, writes Hardenberg, worth the money. Hardenberg was obviously interested in Justen as a reading subject, though whether he regarded her as a reader capable of dealing with the highest grade of texts (he was studying Fichte when he wrote this letter) seems very unlikely. A letter written by Hardenberg some two weeks later to Caroline, in mid to late March 1796, seems concerned with Caroline's limited personal horizons and periodic suffering. Rather than seeking to expand these horizons and alleviate that suffering, though, Hardenberg seems content to portray Caroline as a model of patient endurance; one which serves him conveniently as a *telos* for his own behaviour in comparable situations: 'Sie können mir ein Vorbild in stiller Ertragung einer eingeschränkten Bestimmung seyn' (N,IV,173-74:69). The letter returns to this theme of personal limitation and Hardenberg adds more detail to his notion of Caroline's limitations, writing: 'Auch Sie leiden an jener Eingeschränktheit, Unvermögenheit so thätig, edel, mittheilend und hülfreich zu seyn als Sie können und von Ihrer Natur getrieben werden. Nicht ganz das seyn zu dürfen, was man von Natur ist, das ist die Quelle unsers Misbehagens auf diesem Planeten' (ibid). Whilst the second sentence of this excerpt appears to bewail the limitations of all human existence, the particular context for his reflections has already been fixed by the preceding comment. Translated: it is a tragedy that we cannot wholly realize our nature and Caroline's nature would lead her to be actively helpful and giving, if duty and material circumstance did not limit her ability to be so. The limitations which Hardenberg sees imposed upon Caroline are not, then, the moral and social codes binding women to non-intellectual domesticity, repressed sexuality and motherhood, but rather the material circumstances that prevent her from embracing yet further noble, self-sacrificing philanthropy.

It was in April of that year, 1796, that Hardenberg wrote to Caroline from Weissenfels, sending her a lyrical poem, which marks the end of the most intense period of correspondence, or at least the end of the letters we still possess. The lyric is entitled 'Antwort: An Carolinen', though exactly what this was an answer to, remains unclear. Whatever hints there might have been that more than platonic friendship were possible between Hardenberg and Caroline, the final stanza envisions a fixed future for the couple: after a lifetime of steady platonic friendship the pair are placed at a table together, each with his or her respective partner, in love, married and rewarded for having navigated the wild ocean of youth, now free of sorrows and anxieties – whatever these might have been.:

Einst, wenn zum vollen Tisch, am Mittag ihres Lebens,
Vereint ein Doppelpaar von Glücklichen sich setzt –
 Dann denken wir zurück den Vormittag – an *Jetzt* –
 "Wer hätte das geträumt? – Nie seufzt das Herz vergebens!"
 (N,IV,183:74).

Caroline Just remained an intermittent correspondent, writing frequently during Hardenberg's mourning for Sophie. Their relationship never amounted to anything more than friendship and, admittedly, Hardenberg tended to objectify and limit his own notion of Caroline's personality

and capabilities, seeing her as a reliable and virtuous bourgeois lady – though he was often admiring of these qualities. In a later letter of 5 February 1798, Hardenberg writes of his time amongst the Charpentier family in Freiberg, describing an evening on which he sat before Julie and others in the manner of an ‘Eleusinischer Priester’. There he spoke on his ideas about the future, human existence and the world of nature and was enthralled by Julie’s active participation, ‘thätigen Teilnahme’, in the discussion. Caroline would have seen how well he was faring in this social circle, writes Hardenberg, had she been present as a ‘stille Zuschauerin’ (N,IV,250:115); even in the subjunctive, he fails to portray her as more than a bourgeois domestic, looking on in awe at his intellectual endeavour. Here, as elsewhere, Hardenberg does not appear to have thought her a serious candidate for a female poetic subject and, consequently, did not write to her as if she were one.

Despite the stasis of Caroline’s role in this exchange, Hardenberg did, as we saw, engage in the rhetoric of exchanging roles and transcending personal boundaries. Much the same is true of Wilhelmine von Thümmel née von Kühn, one year older than Caroline Just and the sister of Sophie. Hardenberg wrote letters to ‘Minchen’ or ‘Dümmelchen’ principally between February 1796 and the time of Sophie’s illness and death, when their correspondence reached its peak, before dropping away in the second half of 1797. Hardenberg appears to have taken Wilhelmine quite seriously as an individual: she would later become a lady-in-waiting at the court of Sondershausen. Again, we find Hardenberg expressing in his letters to her the desire to learn from a female figure, this time requesting Wilhelmine explicitly to be his teacher:

Das Bedürfniß einer Mittheilung an eine feingebildete, weibliche Seele ist für mich so dringend, so wolthätig, so natürlich, daß ich es als einen sehr bestimmten Zug meines Lebens ansehe, daß ich Liebe und Freundschaft zugleich fand – und so beyde durch diese Vereinigung gewannen. In der Freundschaft muß ein Funken Liebe – in der Liebe eine Ader von Freundschaft seyn – In Mischungen solcher Art wohnt die Seele des Genusses. Ich fordre Sie zu der wohlthätigsten Bestimmung auf – Ihr Geschlecht empfing von der Natur die unauslöschliche Sehnsucht – wolzuthun – Seyn Sie meine Bildnerinn – meine Rathgeberinn, meine Freundin – und erlauben Sie mir dann alle Bürgerkränze Ihnen zu Füßen zu legen, die ich dann verdienen muß. Ruhe – verständiger Sinn – Geschmack und Aufheiterung – das hoffe ich in Ihrer Schule zu lernen – Mehr aber noch, als dies, ich hoffe dabey von Ihnen zu lernen wolthätig zu seyn ohne Dank zu verlangen, ohne Erwiderung voraussehen zu können (N,IV,166:64).

She is to be Hardenberg’s teacher, his advisor, his friend and his educator. But what is he to learn? In her ‘school’ it is again a certain quietness or placidity, good taste and, above all, selflessness. Hardenberg’s view of what this woman has to offer him stems from a view of femininity as intrinsically equipped and impelled to do good, to have a healing or harmonising effect – usually on the torn male ego, a view conspicuously reminiscent of the Schillerian model. If Minchen is to be Hardenberg’s teacher, then the curriculum she is permitted to offer is decidedly narrow. Little changes in the subsequent letters he writes to Wilhelmine. The prose

warms in tone throughout the year, with Hardenberg becoming more playful, even a little flirtatious, though without transgressing the borders of taste or acceptability as he had done with countless women during his student years, and also without altering his view of Wilhelmine's capacity as an intellectual or literary subject. This can be illustrated anecdotally from a letter of the 1 April 1796, which Hardenberg begins by reflecting on the character and relevance of that day. This gives the letter a somewhat oblique opening, which Hardenberg acknowledges and for which he apologizes:

Sie verzeihen mir diese Digression ohne die Sie schwerlich heute um einen Brief reicher von mir geworden wären, und wenn besagter Brief leserlich wird, so hat der 1ste April daran seinen guten Theil, denn wo käme mir sonst die gute Laune her Ihren schönen, schwarzen A[ugen] gegenüber so ruhig zu filosofiren, als blätterte ich auf meinem Sofa in dem großen Buche der Natur, und holte mir Erläuterungen aus den vieldeutigen Gypsbärten um mich her (N,IV,177:72)

Here Hardenberg imagines a meeting between himself and Wilhelmine. The two are seated on the sofa, as he reads from the 'book of nature', surrounded by plaster busts of the philosophers, although she is reduced to the role of the charming onlooker, with beautiful black eyes and marvelling at Hardenberg's philosophical genius. Later in the letter, Hardenberg puts a series of questions to Minchen, asking her if she can guess what it is that can tell the future perfectly, determine what will happen each day, teach one the movement of the celestial bodies, that enables one to become all powerful, all knowing and extremely rich. This emerges to be nothing other than the calender, rather than the philosophical answer the questions seemed to be expecting; the whole exercise was a riddle, rather than an attempt to engage. The bulk of Hardenberg's correspondence contains reports about Sophie's illness, her death and his mourning for her: of Minchen's replies, we have only one from July 1796, which also enquires after Sophie's health. In writing to this slightly more mature, worldly-wise and, most likely, quite conservative woman, it is perhaps not surprising that Hardenberg does not seek to challenge the boundaries of existing feminine roles. Perhaps a fairer test of whether or not Hardenberg aspires to and succeeds in such undertakings, would be to analyze his correspondence with a more recognizably intellectual woman.

In contrast to the other of Hardenberg's female correspondents considered, Caroline Schlegel cut a formidable figure on the cultural landscape of the late eighteenth century, as we have already begun to note. She regarded herself as a cool realist: Katja Behrens notes how well Caroline knew what was expected of a woman socially and how little intellectually. Not only was she intelligent and reflective, but also fiercely independent and quite outspoken.⁹ She was married in turn to both A.W Schlegel and Schelling. She was a mother, though she also wrote, translated and mixed with the Forsters in Mainz during the French occupation, where she developed republican sympathies; all characteristics, which went against the grain of late-eighteenth-century womanhood. In her, we have the few of Hardenberg's female correspondents whose letters back

to the poet are available for study in relative completion. The first letter of the exchange is from Hardenberg to Caroline, written in September 1798 (N,IV,260-62:123). The letter to Caroline, who was nearly a decade his senior, is instantly recognizable as something different from those Hardenberg had written to other women. In scope it embraces both issues of poetic composition and the poet's critique of Schelling's *Von der Weltseele*. It obviously enclosed a composition of Hardenberg's, which he offered somewhat modestly for her judgement: 'Der Brief über die Antiken wird umgeschmolzen. Sie erhalten stattdessen ein romantisches Fragment – der Antikenbesuch – nebst einer Archaeologischen Beylage. Ich hoffe beynah mit Zuversicht auf Ihr Interesse' (ibid). There is discussion of works by the Schlegel brothers: the Jena Romantics frankly criticized and praised their own and each other's works in equal measure as part of their symphilosophical culture, and the exchanges between Hardenberg and Caroline were no exception. The letter closes with a reference to the self-consciously dialogical, literary-critical letter exchanges in which Friedrich Schlegel and Hardenberg were engaged:

Fridrichs petillanter Geist hat wunderbare Mischungen und Entmischungen im physicalischen Chaos zuwegegebracht. Seine Papiere sind durchaus *genialisch* – voll genialischer Treffer und Fehler. Schreiben Sie ihm – mein Brief würde durchaus *neu* – nur wenig aus den alten Papieren. Ich hoffe unser Briefwechsel soll wahrhafte fermenta cognitionis in Fülle begreifen und mehr, als eine Lavoisiersche Revolution entzünden. Mir ist jezt, als säß ich im Comité du Salut universel (ibid).

Hardenberg continues the discussion of Friedrich's work, but also imagines the exchange of letters in itself as spawning intellectual offspring, igniting a new higher form of revolution, than had the French chemist Lavoisier. Does the possessive 'unser' include Caroline? Is the reference equally applicable to the ensuing epistolary exchange between himself and Caroline? Possibly not at this stage, though he does tell Caroline to write to Friedrich herself. If a revolution is to come, it is certain here that Hardenberg invites Caroline to participate and be part of the committee for the salvation of society, of which he imagines himself a part. Perhaps most striking about the letter is the absence of explicit reference to issues of gender; not only does Hardenberg not grapple with issues of womanhood, but he does not let the gender of his addressee determine the content of the letter. The only difference between this letter and those he wrote to men, was that here Hardenberg is consciously and explicitly asking Caroline to join a discourse of which she was not yet part.

The first letter we have from Caroline to Hardenberg is dated 15 November and refers to two missing letters written by Hardenberg in the first week of that month. The letter commiserates and advises over Julie von Charpentier's facial neuralgia, then apologizes for not constituting an adequate answer to the poet's writings (N,IV,502-3:151). She discusses Goethe's *Propyläen*, his review of Schiller's *Wallensteins Lager* in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* and also allows herself a certain criticism of the latter's remaining creative potential: 'Was sonst im Almanach von

Schiller steht, zeigt aber, daß er sich hieran erschöpft hat.' (ibid). Caroline also speaks with authority on issues of publication: she complains that the continued publication of the *Athenäum* by Johann Friedrich Vieweg of Berlin was endangered, as the publisher had marketed the journal poorly, allowing printing costs to soar by ordering too large a print run and using overpriced materials. She then continues her judgement that the journal was a misconceived plan on the part of the brothers Schlegel: 'Meine Meinung ist, sie, nämlich die Brüder, hätten kein Journal sich auf den Hals laden, und W[ilhelm] nicht Profeßor werden sollen' (ibid). She ends her writing with a flippant reference to 'der trotzige Schelling' (ibid), which directly contradicts Hardenberg's more charitable view of the natural philosopher as a thinker and a man; on this Caroline was to change her opinion. Hardenberg appears to have begun a correspondence with a woman in many senses on a par with him, certainly in terms of intellect and strength of personality. We should now examine how he deals with this in the ensuing letters.

In the new year of 1799, Hardenberg wrote to Caroline from Freiberg. At times the responsibility of his particular course of study and training, designed to prepare him for his bourgeois career as a mining administrator, appears to have weighed heavily upon the young poet, especially when writing to this radical and idealistic friend. He shows no qualms about admitting the fallibility of his creative and productive faculties as a poet: 'Seit 2 Monaten ist alles bey mir ins Stocken gerathen, was zum liberalen Wesen gehört. Nicht 3 gute Ideen habe ich in dieser geraumen Zeit gehabt' (N,IV,275:131), though he adds that he is merely biding his time: 'Jetzt leb ich ganz in der *Technik*, weil meine Lehrjahre zu Ende gehn, und mir das bürgerliche Leben mit manchen Anforderungen immer näher tritt. Für künftige Pläne sammle ich nur jezt und gedenke vielleicht diesen Sommer manches Angefangene oder Entworfenne zu vollenden' (ibid). In reflecting on the plans he is collecting, Hardenberg continues the letter by unfolding a massive range of ideas and opinions on works, thinkers and writers spanning several centuries: there are the contemporaries Ritter, Schelling and Tieck: there are earlier moderns such as Hemsterhuis, Goethe and Leibniz as well as Plato and Plotinus (N,IV,275-276:131). Particularly praiseworthy is Goethe, in Hardenberg's opinion, as he is the modern embodiment of Plotinus, with both figures being able to conceive of the physical universe in the context of an invisible and all-pervasive spirit, making physics almost a matter of religion: 'Göthe soll der *Liturg* dieser Physik werden – er versteht vollkommen den Dienst im Tempel' (ibid). Hardenberg interrupts his reflections: 'Aber genug – behalten Sie mich nur ein bisschen lieb, und bleiben Sie in der magischen Atmosphäre, die sie umgiebt' (ibid). Having wandered into highly intellectual territory in a letter to a woman, Hardenberg perhaps retreats a little. Does his idealized view of Caroline, which portrays her as dwelling in a magical atmosphere, signify the re-surfacing of a more general ideal of women as loveable and loving, rather than thinking, or is Hardenberg merely restraining himself from a flight of fantasy; from getting ahead of himself in a period of his life that required

dedicated study and less poetry? Either way, the change is temporary and does not mark a change in his estimation of Caroline as an intellectual subject, or in the way in which he writes to her.

Caroline's reply of 4 February 1799 (N,IV,518-20:162) admits a certain puzzlement over the cogency of Hardenberg's literary and career plans, describing him as, at times, unfathomable. She seems confused as to whether his projects are chiefly about constructing literary works that are to be published, or more about constructing himself and his life as a form of idealized aesthetic – she appears to encourage him to pursue the former. She seems less inclined to the notion of *Poësie* as embracing all disciplines, including science – she refers with some critical disdain to Ritter's constant ordering of fresh frogs for experiments (ibid). She sees poetic activity, if not in a philistine or amateurish way, then certainly as more vocational: 'Ich weiß im Grunde doch von nichts etwas als von der sittlichen Menschheit und der poetischen Kunst' (ibid), though she seems entranced if bemused by Romanticism's radical interdisciplinarity, as practised by Hardenberg and the Schlegel brothers: 'Was ihr da alle zusammen schaffet, ist mir ein rechter Zauberkessel' (ibid). Later in the same month, Hardenberg writes his most substantial and, from our point of view, most significant letter to Caroline. Dated 27 February 1799 the letter contains Hardenberg's honest views on the merits and flaws inherent in Schlegel's *Lucinde*. He finds the novel intoxicating and Romantic in the truest sense of the word, but fears it will be misunderstood by a reading public not yet ready for such groundbreaking ideas. As we saw in the introduction, *Lucinde* declares its heroine an autonomous, creative individual, though as it shifts towards its utopian vision of androgyny, she reverts to a non-emancipated, non-literary subject. In praising the novel, Hardenberg might seem to be supporting its message. So by writing this in a letter to Caroline, herself an independent, literary-minded woman, he might be attempting to re-address that message in a way which might have some effect upon, even elicit approval from her. The letter contains, furthermore, Hardenberg's only explicit utterances to Caroline on issues of gender in a passage closely resembling the 'Brouillon' entry discussed in chapter two (pp. 50-51):

Rousseau hat die Weiblichkeit ausschließlich verstanden und alle seine Philosophemen sind aus einer nachdenkenden weiblichen Seele entstanden – Seine Apologie des Naturstandes gehört in die Frauenphilosophie – die Frau ist der eigentliche Naturmensch – die wahre Frau das Ideal des Naturmenschen – sowie der wahre Mann das Ideal des Kunstmenschen –

Naturmensch und Kunstmensch sind die eigentlichen *ursprünglichen Stände*. Stände sind die Bestandteile der *Gesellschaft*. Die Ehe ist die einfache Gesellschaft – wie der Hebel die einfache Maschine. In der Ehe trifft man die beyden Stände. Das Kind ist in der Ehe, was der Künstler in der Gesellschaft ist – ein Nichtstand – der die innige Vereinigung – den wahren Genuß beyder Stände befördert.

Die große Ehe, der Staat, besteht aus einem weiblichen und männlichen Stand – die man halb richtig, halb unrichtig – den ungebildeten und gebildeten Stand nennt. Die Frau des gebildeten Standes, ist der Ungebildete.

Leider ist bey uns der Ungebildete weit hinter den *Gebildeten* zurückgeblieben – Er ist zur *Sklavin* geworden – O! daß er wieder Frau würde! (N,IV,278-279).

Scholars have contended that Hardenberg adopts the Rousseauesque position on women's education and position in society, excluding them from the social and political sphere on the grounds of their naturally constituted roles.¹⁰ Such a reading could be quite plausible. There is a complex intersection of metaphors in these texts, those of 'gebildet' vis-à-vis 'ungebildet' and 'Naturmensch' vis-à-vis 'Kunstmensch' and thus, to begin with, Hardenberg seems to revert to a dualistic model of the sexes. Women are natural, men cultural beings and in their purest forms, both genders represent the ideals of these differing models of identity. Hardenberg then introduces a multifaceted notion of 'Bildung'. In his examination of marriage, he refers to women as existing in the 'Naturstand', implying their non-societal and (academically) uneducated status, whilst men exist as 'Kunstmensch', being socially integrated and educated for the life beyond the home. The text makes apparent Hardenberg's model of society as a form of 'marriage' between the ruling classes and the subjects. This, in turn, allows him to think of the ruling classes as analogous to the 'male' (and thereby educated) party in marriage, but of the subjects as the female and uneducated party. Thus the educated women of the upper echelons of society are, in a sense, 'male', both in terms of Hardenberg's metaphoric and in terms of Rousseauesque thinking, which considered academic education for women and female participation in cultural circles to be defeminizing. There is, though, a further layer to Hardenberg's imagery. In writing 'Die große Ehe, der Staat, besteht aus einem weiblichen und männlichen Stand – die man halb richtig, halb unrichtig – den ungebildeten und gebildeten Stand nennt. Die Frau des gebildeten Standes, ist der Ungebildete', he implies that the educated women of higher social groupings are in another sense uneducated. There must, therefore, be some *other* notion of education in operation. Hardenberg sees educated women as in fact 'uneducated', in the new sense of the word, because being equidistant between the ideals of 'Kunstmensch' and 'Naturmensch', they are too far removed from the state nature originally intended for them. Held in this limbo, they are slaves, never able to be men, but neither to be proper women. For this reason Hardenberg can conceive their 'emancipation' from 'slavery' as a return to being feminine, 'O! daß er wieder Frau würde!' In this way, Hardenberg seems to comply with the Rousseauesque tradition here.

Yet, the passage opens with an apparent criticism of Rousseau. Hardenberg complains that Rousseau thought of femininity as a thing in some way excluded, 'ausschliesslich', although his apologia for the state of nature was, quite obviously, the product of a 'feminine' leaning towards nature. Indeed, in both of the extracts cited above Hardenberg describes Rousseau's thought as feminine, be it as 'weibliche Philosophie', or the product of a 'weiblich nachdenkende[n] Seele'. Despite joining Rousseau in calling for sharply differentiated ideals of masculinity and femininity, particularly for a 're-feminization' of women, Hardenberg's text appears to acknowledge tacitly that gender identity is on a sliding scale between two ideals. Now Rousseau himself thought it quite possible that men could become feminine and women

masculine, though he sought to combat the mutual contamination of one sex by the other, through his programme of sexual education in *Émile*. On the surface, Hardenberg's letter appears to agree with Rousseau, yet it is not orthodox Rousseauianism, as it complains simultaneously about his need to re-establish his masculinity by in some way denying what are his 'feminine' traits: furthermore, the letter ends with the most striking comments of all: 'Möchten doch auch Sie die Hände ausstrecken nach einem Roman? Wilhelm müßte die Poësie dazu besorgen. Es könnte ein schönes Doppelwerk werden' (N,IV,281). The language in which this question is couched might, on the one hand, appear as a tentative suggestion that Caroline write a novel. On the other hand it might read as condescending, with Caroline's efforts in producing the text reduced to the leisurely stretching out of her hand, with a man, August Wilhelm, producing the *Poësie* required. Does Hardenberg simply mean the elder Schlegel was to produce the lyrical verse required to augment Caroline's prose? What role was Caroline to play: a *laissez-faire* co-ordinator of the project, an editor but not a poet? Or was she to be the tutee, presided over by the male master poet? Caroline's role as poetess is not unambiguous here, but this excerpt marks an end to the chain of letters we have between the friends and, if endings are significant, then Hardenberg's last words in print are an unambiguous invitation for Caroline to write. At the high point of his epistolary career, Hardenberg is moving towards recognizing women as productive literary subjects.

Hardenberg never engaged in a collaborative literary project with a woman. Yet he did encourage women to write and, in one case, was successful in his undertakings. Luise Brachmann, daughter of a Weissenfels commissar, was a budding young poetess some five years Hardenberg's junior. In July 1798, Hardenberg wrote to Schiller from his *Kur* in Teplitz, recommending her works for publication in the *Almanach*, noting that:

Meine Schwester hat mir die Gedichte, die ihre Freundinn, durch Ihren gütigen Brief aufgemuntert, zur Auswahl für den diesjährigen Almanach, Ihnen zusenden will, nebst einem dazugehörigen Briefe, zur Beförderung überschickt. Einige freundschaftliche Bemerkungen, die ich über Ihr Talent und seine Ausbildung hatte fallen lassen, waren der Anlaß Ihres Zutrauns zu meinem vorläufigen Urtheil, ob die Gedichte verdienten an Sie geschickt zu werden. [...] Ihre Aufnahme kann mehr Eifer zur Vollendung schaffen, als hundert privat Bemerkungen (N,IV,256:120).

Schiller and Goethe had been involved in the tuition, promotion and publication of female writers, though, as we saw in chapter four, this did not prevent them from holding condescending views about the general ability of women to write. Given what we have seen of Hardenberg, given his growing recognition of the female literary subject and the consequences for femininity in his literary work, we can view his promotion of Luise Brachmann's poetry in a different light. This tendency is further reflected in a text written by Luise in 1815 on the impact that Novalis had upon her literary life. Partially inflamed by the growing myth surrounding

Novalis, as constructed by his posthumous editors, the text is nevertheless telling for our discussion. It had been Novalis, wrote Brachmann, 'der zuerst meinen Eintritt in die künstlerische Laufbahn begünstigte' (N,IV,561:4). She writes further: 'Er kam oft in unser Haus; seine aufmunternde Freundlichkeit, die Aufmerksamkeit und der Beifall, den er schon den frühesten meiner dichterischen Versuche schenkte, trugen sehr viel dazu bei, mein schüchternes Talent zu heben' (N,IV,562:4). Whilst she describes herself with virtual self-deprecation, she does not portray Hardenberg as having done so: 'Novalis vergaß auch in der Entfernung [...] seine kleinen ästhetischen Schülerinnen nicht' (ibid).

All of this is not to suggest that Hardenberg was responsible for women becoming writers; he did not bestow upon women the role of poet with condescending magnanimity. Neither did Hardenberg write to all women as if they too were poets: his letters to his mother, to Sophie's friends Jeanette Danscour and Friederike von Mandesloh are largely to do with the social niceties, inter-personal relationships and family issues one would expect in letters between Hardenberg and conventionally bourgeois women. Yet, in writing to women of talent and intellect, Hardenberg's letters begin to address women as cultural and intellectual subjects. On occasion, this was done within a framework of awareness that the female correspondent was being invited into a discourse in which women had not traditionally participated: discussions on philosophy, aesthetics, science and even the literary practice of novel writing. On other occasions, these topics were dealt with less consciously, with certain passages in Hardenberg's letters reading as if the author had written them to intellectual men of the period.

Notes to the Excursus:

¹ Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Der romantische Brief. Die Entstehung ästhetischer Subjektivität*, (Munich: 1987).

² See: Helena Gallas and Anita Runge, *Romane und Schriftstellerinnen um 1800. Eine Bibliographie mit Standortnachweisen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993).

³ Barbara Becker-Cantarino, 'Leben als Text. Briefe als Ausdrucks- und Verständigungsmittel in der Briefkultur und Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts', in: Hiltrud Gnüg und Renate Möhrmann (ed), *Frauen – Literatur – Geschichte. Schreibende Frauen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), this quotation: p.85. See also: Barbara Becker-Cantarino: *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik. Epoche – Werke – Wirkung* (Arbeitsbücher zur Literaturgeschichte), (Munich C. H. Beck, 2000), for a more detailed study about how women's letter writing informed their developing prose writing.

⁴ Nicholas Saul, 'Clemens and the Women. Gender, Genre and Madness in Brentano', in: *PEGS*, LXIV – LXV, 1993-5, 161-81.

⁵ Dagmar von Gersdorff, *Lebe der Liebe und liebe das Leben. Der Briefwechsel von Clemens Brentano und Sophie Mereau*, (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1983). See Brentano's letters to Mereau, June 1803 (Weimar), p.193, and 24 October (Frankfurt am Main), p.276.

⁶ Cf Bohrer, 65ff. See also Herta Schwartz, 'Poesie und Poesiekritik im Briefwechsel zwischen Clemens Brentano und Sophie Mereau' in: Anita Runge and Lieselotte Steinbrügge (ed), *Die Frau im Dialog. Studien zu Theorie und Geschichte des Briefs* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990), 33-50.

⁷ See Ernst Behler, *Die Zeitschriften der Brüder Schlegel. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Romantik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), esp. p.30.

⁸ Certainly there is a characteristically Romantic awareness of letters as a new literary genre in Hardenberg's writing: he places letters, for example, amongst other genres, at a point between 'essai' and 'Abhandlung' (N,III,251:68). He also refers to letter writing as 'practische schriftstellerische Arbeiten' (N,III,465:1069).

⁹ Katja Behrens (ed.), *Frauen der Romantik. Porträts in Briefen mit zeitgenössischen Abbildungen* (Frankfurt a.M: Insel, 1981), p.249.

¹⁰ Cf. Simon-Kuhlendahl, 247ff.

V. 'FREYES FABELTHUM': THE POETIC CONSTRUCTION OF
GENDER IN HARDENBERG'S RELIGIOUS WRITING

Hardenberg never really escaped the presence of death after 1797. After Sophie died, the death of his brother Erasmus followed in April of the same year. In 1798, Jeanette Danscour died and, when Hardenberg took his convalescence in Teplitz, he did so most likely because he had himself been diagnosed with tuberculosis – a fatal disease in the eighteenth century. Then there was his strange desire to die. During his mourning for Sophie, he expressed in speech or writing the idea that he no longer belonged in the world of the living, that his destiny lay ‘elsewhere’ and, simply, that whilst he was still alive, he would rather be dead. Even in 1799, after expounding a whirl of plans for his future life and career, feeling loved, as he put it, as he never had been before, he felt nevertheless moved to write: ‘Ein sehr interessantes Leben scheint auf mich zu warten – indeß aufrichtig wär ich doch lieber todt’ (N,IV,273:130). In late 1799 and early 1800 Hardenberg gave one final literary performance of Sophie’s death and did so in the only work that he successfully published in his lifetime: the *Hymnen an die Nacht*. This has been fuel on the fire of the Novalis myth, against which modern critics have had to fight. Yet in considering Hardenberg’s treatment of femininity, having contended the experience with Sophie was not only something that he moved beyond, but something that taught him, even empowered him to write about women’s identity as evolving fictions, we must address the question as to why, nearly three years after her death, engaged to another woman, he was still writing about wanting to die and about Sophie’s death and how it had changed his view of life – and, possibly, the afterlife. Did the *Hymnen* see Hardenberg haunted once again by an idealized fantasy of the feminine? Was Sophie the ghost guilty of this, or did she rather represent a Goddess with the keys to Elysium? The following and final section of our study addresses these and related issues. 1. Firstly, it considers the *Hymnen an die Nacht* within the context of Hardenberg’s theories of Romantic religion. 2. Secondly, it considers the treatment of gender in those works, before concluding with general remarks concerning Hardenberg’s treatment of femininity as a whole within his work. To consider one of Hardenberg’s most famous works almost as an afterthought might appear somewhat perverse, but there are reasons for this approach. In the previous chapter we tested Hardenberg’s texts, examining the extent to which they presented women as communicative and creative subjects: this he began to do in the second part of *Ofterdingen*. The *Hymnen* treat more introspective issues, focussing on the personal religious experience of an apparently male narrating subject. As such, Hardenberg’s treatment of femininity within this work might seem to have more to do with his written (and potentially idealized) constructions of the feminine, rather than with his treatment of women as subjects. As they offer an account of the subject’s personal relationship to the divine, the hymns are unlikely to represent a genuinely *intersubjective* inclusion of women in the way that *Ofterdingen* began to do. Yet the *Hymnen* appear to demand a unique position in our methodological framework. They are subjective texts that treat once again the difficult issue of Sophie’s idealization, though they are produced at a time when Hardenberg was beginning to write texts that were arguably polyphonic in our sense of the word and had begun to present

women as communicative and creative subjects. We shall ask, therefore, to what extent the hymns offer a vision of personal and religious experience as informed by the polyphonic ideals of *Poësie*. Potentially, the texts embody a new ideal of religious practice, in which both genders are in some way venerated and participant, worshipper and worshipped – a reading that ought to count as a significant departure in gender-orientated readings of the text.¹

V.1 *Ghosts, Gods and Goddesses. From Sophie to Polyphony in the 'Hymnen an die Nacht', (1800)*

The *Hymnen* are now thought to have been derived from plans made as early as autumn 1797, with work beginning on the text's final versions from spring of 1799 onwards and being completed in January 1800 (N,I,115-17). They sprang partly from Hardenberg's model of religion as universalized practice of aesthetically mediating the divine and the mortal, the infinite and the finite and partly from his memory of the experiences with Sophie, all of which we touched upon in chapter two. We can recall the fragment so central to these theories, where Hardenberg wrote that in true religions, a mediating aesthetic was to be neither absent nor confused with the represented divine. Whilst the mediator was indispensable, it was true that: 'In der Wahl dieses Mittelglieds muß der Mensch durchaus frey seyn' (N,II,442:73). The *Hymnen* not only begin to realize a form of worship based on these theories, but they tell a psychological-aesthetic history, partly allegorical and partly autobiographical, which recalls how a single subject translates personal revelation into the free and universalized practice of Romantic religion. In doing this, the text not only engenders a plurality of iconic mediating figures, but also widens the spectrum of behaviour or of acts that may constitute worship. The first hymn begins famously with a sensuous description of the natural world by day, phrased as a rhetorical question: 'Welcher Lebendige, Sinnbegabte, liebt nicht vor allen Wundererscheinungen des verbreiteten Raums um ihn, das allerfreuliche Licht – mit seinen Farben, seinen Stralen und Wogen; seiner milden Allgegenwart, als weckender Tag' (N,I, 131). The forum here is physical space and waking reality and the most wondrous of all phenomena is the light of day, which illuminates colours and physical shapes. All things breathe and blossom in this environment, continues the narrative voice, the stones and the landscapes, plant and animal life, though above all: 'der herrliche Fremdling mit den sinnvollen Augen, dem schwebenden Gange, und den zartgeschlossenen, tonreichen Lippen' (ibid). This is an attempt by the lyrical voice of the poem to portray itself corporeally. He appears as the consummate poet, his lips pursed gently, but nevertheless rich in potential voice. 'Seine Gegenwart allein offenbart die Wunderherrlichkeit der Reiche der Welt' (ibid), continues the text: it is only poetry that can fully reveal the wonders of this world. This does not, however, mean that the *Hymnen* are wholly concerned with the intellectual and emotional experience of a single subject.

In the following section the poet figure has become the narrative voice, referring to itself in the first person. Here the tone of melancholy is injected and night has fallen. Having been privileged in the first paragraph in the form of the eyes, the lips, the gait, the senses and the sensuous appreciation of the world, corporeality is seemingly destroyed or lowered in value: the 'Ich' wishes to negate its own existence 'In Thautropfen will ich hinuntersinken und mit der Asche mich vermischen' (N,I, 131). Soon after this, however, the realm of night is re-figured, not as the absence of daylight, but as a significant time in itself, which is personified as another, 'du'. 'Was quillt auf einmal so ahndungsvoll unterm Herzen, und verschluckt der Wehmuth weiche Luft?' The mood changes to one of excited anticipation, the 'Ich' desiring to know what it is that night holds beneath its cloak. Night is indistinct and hidden or, better, it is hiding something. From its hand drip the delicious but intoxicating balsam and poppy. Night, though is not about oblivion and retreat; slowly things become more distinct in this nocturnal scene. Night reveals to the 'Ich' 'ein erstes Antlitz', which looks on softly and with piety, taking on, eventually, maternal characteristics 'unter unendlich verschlungenen Locken der Mutter liebe Jugend zeigt' (N,I, 133). Night itself is transfigured into a regal figure, which returns the narrator's beloved to him as a further focal point for his devotion: 'Preis der Weltköniginn, der hohen Verkündigerinn heiliger Welten, der Pflegerinn seliger Liebe – sie sendet mir dich – zarte Geliebte – liebliche Sonne der Nacht [...]' (ibid). Not surprisingly, perhaps, the night has usually been seen as *being* feminine, though in many ways this is too simplistic a view. The night represents that time when feeling and presentiments supersede reasoned reflexion and lends itself to communion with the absolute, which can only occur through feeling beyond reason. In Romantic religion, the absolute still requires aesthetic mediation and it is as such a mediator that the night reveals itself as a benevolent mother figure, as a queen of the world, a revealer of secrets. Significantly, Hardenberg not only presents night as feminine; he also presents the process of revelation, here one of poetic construction, by which the night is *made as feminine*.

It is in the famous third hymn that the self's truly revelatory experience is had, one which brings the text close to Hardenberg's biographical experiences, particularly the 'vision' of Sophie in Grünigen, May 1797. The 'Ich' is again on a desolate landscape, standing on a mound or hill which conceals what he refers to as 'die Gestalt meines Lebens'. It is here that 'die Geliebte' returns, transcending time, space and death to be with him once more. At the end of the third hymn there follows, however, a line that is often overlooked: 'Es war der erste, einzige Traum – und erst seitdem fühl ich ewigen, unwandelbaren Glauben an den Himmel der Nacht und sein Licht, die Geliebte' (N,I, 135). The whole experience is altered in the reader's eyes by being identified as a dream: the 'Geliebte' is, in other words, identified as a consciously figurative woman. Her fictionality is clear from her association with the permanence of the absolute: there is reference to her 'verklärte[...] Züge' and to the fact that 'In ihren Augen ruhte die Ewigkeit' (ibid). She cannot really be seen, touched or made love to, only felt in a manner beyond reason.

For the beloved to be seen or visualized in the way that she is, the 'Ich' has to move in the realm of dream. However, by announcing that very fact he wakes from the dream and reveals the whole experience, including the beloved, as a fiction. O'Brien contends that, at the graveside in Grüningen, Sophie never showed up in a literal sense. Here, the beloved does appear, but only in a consciously identified dream. This makes the object of the *Hymnen* the establishment of a poeticized religion, concerned to mediate the divine consciously through aesthetics, not one seeking to found a mystical religion of the feminine. The appearance of the beloved does not constitute the simple revelation on earth of a female lover-goddess, or the ghost of a dead beloved, but rather begins to reveal a process by which the absolute, the divine, is presented *as if it were* feminine.

Throughout the first three hymns, we have begun to touch on the notion of the body as a thing involved in the mediation of divinity and expression of devotion. Towards the end of the first hymn, the beloved is sent as a harbinger of divinity, a focus for devotion. Addressing the beloved directly, the 'Ich' both affirms that she has strengthened his identity and bodily existence, but seemingly wishes it dissolved by her in a *unio mystica*: 'du hast die Nacht mir zum Leben verkundet – mich zum Menschen gemacht – zehre mit Geisterglut meinen Leib, daß ich luftig mit dir inniger mich mische und dann ewig die Brautnacht währt' (N,I, 133). The 'Ich' appears to desire the para-erotic dissolution of the physical by the spiritual glow radiated by the beloved, such that he may fuse himself with her, and eternally consummate their wedding night (*ibid*). Fankhauser was able to read this and other instances in the *Hymnen* as the destructive and ultimately meaningless dissolution of self and other, as part of a questionable vision of eroticism and devotionism based on a form of physical/metaphysical oral-sadism (Fankhauser, 179ff). Instead, we can see the hymns as celebrating corporeality, not destroying it. The notion of consumption is not, for instance, to be taken literally, nor is it to be seen as destructive. As we have seen, in the *Ergänzungen zu den Teplitzer Fragmenten* Hardenberg had engaged in a discussion of spiritual significance of eating, contending that every meal can be as a last supper, and that all sociable communion can be thought of in terms of the subject's strictly allegorical consumption of the other's body (N,II,620:439). We saw, too, in chapter four of this study that even the literal transfiguration of the corporeal in the act of love was merely an intensification of the process of living. Oddly, living itself was a synthesis of both dying and living. At times of heightened experience, such as in love, the body is transfigured. This transfiguration is equivalent to the death of the physical, though only as part of a renewing cycle of physical expiry and rejuvenation. The same is true of this erotic-devotional moment in the first hymn: it is in spiritual glow, 'Geisterglut', that the body is to be consumed, though this need not be seen as a literally self-destructive tendency. The hymn can be seen equally to express devotion in terms of a heightening of the body's significance, which is only destructive of corporeality in a self-consciously symbolic sense. In this sense the 'Ich' makes the assertion 'denn ich bin Dein und

Mein' (N,I, 133). The phrase can be understood as a declaration that the narrator's body is in some sense to be appropriated, owned and consumed by his lover, though that his body is, in some other sense, still his own. In fact it is both his and not his; it is physically part of him and metaphysically significant within the wider context of religious devotion. The dual significance of the body, the notion that it is to die only in a higher sense, points to the fact that corporeal demise is not desired literally, but in the tropological sense suggested. The hymns begin to realize poetic religion as a form of polyphony in two senses of the word: not only can all *things* become the *objects* of devotion, but all that we do can become an *act* of worship.

If the third hymn sites the transcendental experience of the beloved within the realm of dreams, then the fourth places that dream tantalizingly beyond the horizon of waking existence, one day to be made permanent in death and longed for until that time. But what is meant by death here? We have seen that Hardenberg has a notion of death as the simple, physical demise of a body, but also that within the process of living as a mortal there are many, 'higher' deaths. The fourth hymn proceeds by contrasting the realm of light, locked forever into a relationship of mutual limitation with the night. From the perspective of the day, the subject's longing is for the night, which represents his demise. The lyrical close of the hymn reflects this:

Ich fühle des Todes
 Verjüngende Flut,
 Zu Balsam und Aether
 Verwandelt mein Blut –
 Ich lebe bey Tage
 Voll Glauben und Muth
 Und sterbe die Nächte
 In heiliger Glut (N,I, 139).

This death is again part of a cycle of living; the self lives by day and dies repeatedly by night, only to live again and so on: this is emphasized by the fact that a plurality of nights are referred to. The moment of death, part erotic, part devotional, is the same death desired at the end of the first hymn, representing the highest mortal experience, a transfiguration of the earthly self or, to coin a phrase, a 'little death', as opposed to an actual, physical death. Significantly, though, the eroticized longing for dissolution here is addressed to a male figure: 'O! sauge, Geliebter, Gewaltig mich an, Daß ich entschlummern, und lieben kann' (ibid). The manuscript version identifies this male figure as Christ: 'Er saugt an mir. 5. Xtus' (N,I, 134). The apparently erotic contact between the male subject and male deity has been explained variously. For instance, Christ can be seen as drawn to the female soul of the male mortal narrator, the soul being the bride of Christ in Pietist thinking.² O'Brien, however, has asserted the proximity of erotic and religious devotion and claimed, consequently, that the polyphonic nature of Hardenberg's writing leads here to its polysexual, specifically homoerotic expression (O'Brien, 354-55). For our purposes, this is the first confirmation that Hardenberg is unfolding a consciously aestheticized

practice of religion in which figures of *both* genders appear both as worshippers and as the mediators required for worship.

It is the fifth hymn that opens out the widest spectrum of possibilities for religious mediation. It takes the form of an archaeology of different religious mediators. Firstly there are classical Gods and Goddesses: there are implicit references to Atlas, Eros, Bacchus/Dionysus and Venus/Aphrodite amongst others (N,I, 142-43). The vision of religion in the classical world is described as 'Ein entsetzliches Traumbild' (ibid). Throughout the first phase of this final hymn, the classical world is described as existing under the yolk of a heavy iron chain or binding. Again, the amorphous night is constructed as feminine, this time as a maternal womb, reaccepting the forms of the old Gods that had been constructed to articulate the divine (N,I, 145). The dawn of a new world and a new religion is heralded by the birth of Christ and the advent of Christianity. This is not to say that Hardenberg makes Christ the only mediator of Romantic religion; he is the most important however, because he reveals mediators for what they are. O'Brien (268-69) notes as evidence of this, the Christ child's gaze, cast back along generations of former deities and then towards the future: 'Mit vergötternder Inbrunst schaute das weissagende Auge des blühenden Kindes auf die Tage der Zukunft, nach seinen Geliebten, den Sprossen seines Götterstamms, unbekümmert über seiner Tage irdisches Schicksal' (N,I, 145-47). The iron chain was the delusion under which humanity laboured, by which they understood their Gods as literal figures, confusing their representations with the divinity they represented, failing to inform their religious practice with poetry – all of which Hardenberg called a 'Götzendienst'. With the tyranny of literalism gone, humanity is free to choose its own mediator. The lyrical ending to the hymn confirms this view, with humanity free to express love and devotion to whom it chooses and in the manner of its choice. Although Hardenberg chooses a conventionally patriarchal image of the Christian God, religion is referred to as an eternal poem, 'ein ewiges Gedicht' (N,I, 152): worship is henceforth to be a matter of poetry. This is confirmed by the final verse of the sixth hymn, which gathers several mediating images into one:

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 Schooß (N,I, 157).

The final hymn, 'Sehnsucht nach dem Tode', could be read as a literal longing for death. It could also be read as a longing for an ongoing series of 'higher' deaths within life, deaths of the sort that religious experiences entail. The end of this particular life, as shown above, reunites the mortal being with a female bride, with the beloved Jesus and, ultimately, returns him to the father's lap. Critics who have read the *Hymnen* as a fetishist veneration of the feminine have found difficulty in interpreting this closing. It has been read as everything from an attempt to

renew the values and aesthetics of patriarchal Christianity through the incorporation of the mother/other/lover triad as objects of veneration, to the male poet's metaphorical theft of the female womb (Fankhauser, 1997: 194f). In truth, the final line places emphasis on the physical attributes of a male patriarchal God, though does so in a text where religious experience was first experienced through feminine mediators derived from the poet's personal experience. Given Hardenberg's theory of religion, and given the wealth of religious mediators portrayed within the text itself, surely the hymn's end must be taken to mean that, within the eternal poem of religion, both genders may serve to mediate the divine and all modes of experience, erotic, devotional and emotional, may serve as a means to worship.

Thus the *Hymnen* unfold a universalized and relativized approach to religion. In this text, Sophie and the feminine in general are part of a consciously constructed history of religion, which is part autobiographical and psychological, part cultural-historical and aesthetico-philosophical. The experience with Sophie made a vital contribution to Hardenberg's first experience of Romantic religion and his theoretical definition of it. Whilst the *Hymnen* remind us of this, they also document how far Hardenberg had moved beyond that experience, both psychologically and poetically, since 1797. When he wrote this text, he was not still labouring under a literal belief in Sophie as the keeper of the afterlife and neither was he pursuing a fetishistic relationship to an idealized femininity, but rather propounding a modern and non-dogmatic view of religion which, in turn, ensures that *all* dimensions of *both* genders' existence, man and woman, mind, body and soul, are worthy of celebration and expression and have a central part to play in the practice of religion. As Hardenberg himself wrote in a fragment of 1800:

Über die mögliche Mythologie (Freyes Fabelthum) des Xstenthums, und seine Verwandlungen auf Erden. Gott, als Arzt, als Geistlicher, als Frau, Freund etc. [...]. In jedem Menschen kann mir Gott erscheinen. Am Xstenthum hat man Ewigkeiten zu studiren – Es wird einem immer höher, und mannichfacher und herrlicher (N,III,666:604).

Notes to chapter five:

¹ Critics have tended to read the hymns as an example of the male poet indulging in private fantasy of union with an imagined female other, be it as a utopian vision of androgynous self-fulfilment as with Friedrichsmeyer (Friedrichsmeyer, 91ff), or more critically as yet another attempt by the male ego to enter into a permanent loving relationship with the fantasy of a female other, though one which actually excludes the real female other and traps the male subject in a mere illusion of loving communion, as in Fankhauser (Fankhauser, 1996: pp.188-195).

² See on this Nicholas Saul, "Prediger aus der neuen romantischen Clique". Zur Interaktion von Romantik und Homiletik um 1800 (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1999), 11ff.

CONCLUSION: PROGRESSION, REACTION AND TENSION IN HARDENBERG'S GENDER WRITING

In discussing *Glauben und Liebe* in his address *Von deutscher Republik*, Thomas Mann referred to Novalis as a conservative figure who nevertheless served future progress (Mann, 829-30).¹ Here Mann aptly characterizes Hardenberg's own optimistic view of his ability to synthesize tradition and progression through poetry, though he also points to the fascinating and complex tensions which are present in the poet's work. Certainly, such contradictory impulses are present in Hardenberg's treatment of gender. His model of *Poësie* demonstrates remarkably modern insights into the nature of identity as a thing constructed in language and, therefore, also alterable through the *use* of language. And from the events of 1797, particularly from his writing about the loss of Sophie, Hardenberg gained an awareness that writing about women was also a matter of creating fictions in language. But he did not use this awareness as a basis for *systematically* altering all of the models of gender he encountered in enlightened thought and writing of the eighteenth century. Whether for reasons of his provincial, quasi-bourgeois experience of family, whether he found merit in the works of largely reactionary writers on gender such as Rousseau, Kant and Fichte, Hardenberg's letters, jottings and fragments evince a socially and politically conservative treatment of women. In many of his political writings, certainly in those preceding 1798, he writes on issues such as women's place in society and their intellectual faculties in a manner that does little to challenge the then conventional models of femininity. Yet there is a tension between this conservatism and an often less explicit, though more progressive tendency. In the scientific writings produced from 1798 onwards, particularly the anatomical and physiological texts, he did begin to challenge the traditional Enlightenment view of the female body as homogenously passive in nature, thereby suggesting that women were not destined by their bodies to exhibit inferior moral, intellectual and aesthetic faculties.

The most progressive aspect of Hardenberg's treatment of women derives from his own universalized model of poetic discourse, which is made universal by virtue of its intersubjective, polyphonic understanding of communication. This model, inspired by visions from older mystical and theosophical writing of the universe as an acoustic-vocal ensemble, both provides the individual subject with the right and space to communicate and create freely, but limits that freedom so as to preserve those same rights for other subjects. Potentially, the female literary subject also enjoys these rights. Hardenberg's literary prose from 1798 is increasingly informed by this ideal and more mature works such as *Offerdingen* begin to open out windows of opportunity for women: when the novel finally abandons the linear narrative mode of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, it begins to represent the polyphonic ideal of poetry in both formal and thematic terms and the female subject comes to the fore as a creative and influential participant. However we are only offered a glimpse of this ideal and our discussion has had to be based on

Hardenberg's fragmentary plans for the completion of this incomplete work. When, on 25 March 1801, Hardenberg finally became a victim of the tuberculosis that had dogged him for over two years, a literary project was halted which was beginning to realize new possibilities for women: Novalis's women, it appears, had begun a journey which they were not able to complete.

The title of this study, '...onhe maaß veränderlich' seemed to point to the possibility of feminine identity enjoying endless and emancipating transformations in the works of a benevolent and idealistic male poet. Although aspects of Hardenberg's writing did not allow women to enjoy such transformation, his work can no longer be seen merely to present a crassly reductive vision of women. His presentation of women is, in short, *both* revolutionary *and* reactionary; both evolving and static; it is, in short, most ambivalent. Perhaps for reasons of this ambivalence Hardenberg's writings on gender continue to be both a source of insight into issues of gender: they attract both praise and criticism; they enthuse us and frustrate us; they are writings that spawn, it should be noted, the very kind of controversial debate of which the poet himself would have approved.

Notes:

¹ Mann, Thomas, 'Von deutscher Republik' in: Mann, Thomas, *Gesammelte Werke*, 12 vols, (Frankfurt a. M, Fischer, 1960), 829-30.

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