

Spirituality and German Romanticism:
The Influence of Jakob Böhme on Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich

by

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Bachelor of Arts (Honours), University of Victoria, 2014

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department Germanic and Slavic Studies, School of Germanic Studies

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This Master's thesis shall attempt to reconcile the notion of the spiritual with that of the aesthetic by focusing on the influence of 16th century German mystic Jakob Böhme, with the 19th century cultural movement of German Romanticism. Böhme's mysticism outlined a spiritual paradigm that fused alchemy with Christianity wherein the properties of nature are inherently led by a spiritual desire towards unity with God. It is through the process of spiritual desire that unity unveils itself. Consequently, Böhme's mysticism influenced later generations of spiritual thought, including German Romanticism. Within Romanticism, Friedrich von Hardenberg, known by his pen name Novalis, developed a philosophy and aesthetic theory that expanded away from the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment. This new philosophy focused on the subjective experience and how revelation of the self was to be experienced through creative introspection, as a consequence of encountering and interacting with the other. Novalis' philosophy incorporated religious motifs and spirituality to assert that it was through creative striving that spiritual revelation was to be achieved from within oneself. Caspar David Friedrich was a Romantic landscape painter whose work focused on the notion of humanity in the face of nature. Friedrich often painted landscapes as an allegory for Christian values and religious inquiry that becomes an existential introspection through nature. Through comparative analysis I shall demonstrate how the ideas and works of Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich correlate with the spiritual mysticism of Böhme that represent the greater discourse that is spirituality itself.

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Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar), 1808 Oil on canvas, 115 x 110 cm.

Figure. 2

Monk by the Sea, (1809) Oil on canvas, 110 x 172 cm.

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Morning in the Riesenbirge, (1810-11) Oil on canvas, 108 x 170cm.

Acknowledgments

I offer my utmost gratitude to those who have been a source of inspiration, the many artists and muses, some of whom are cited and discussed in this thesis. A gesture of thanks goes towards my family first-most, for simply their love, be it emotional as well as financial support, with their words of encouragement to spur me on. An acknowledgement of thanks to my friends for their rallying spirits and much needed levity as they continue to bring me joy from afar. A big thank you to my professors, instructors and teachers who include many, and the supervisory committee for all their encouragement, guidance and words of wisdom in navigating the murky seas of knowledge. This project is in honor of you all: Thank You!

Dedication

I dedicate this work to those who came before, and those who shall arrive thereafter, for we are all on a journey. So, if you are willing, dear reader, let this work take you on a journey, as it has with me. For the muses and spirits are always near, and they know that there is a glorious song, which only you can hear. Perhaps you too, have been waiting for them, as they have been for you.

Introduction

The German Romanticism Aesthetic or Spirituality?

*Looking for a savior in these dirty streets
Looking for a savior beneath these dirty sheets
I've been raising up my hands, drive another nail in
Where are those angels when you need them?
Why do we crucify ourselves, everyday?
- Tori Amos "Crucify"*

Contemporary culture often prioritizes the aesthetic over the spiritual. In his examination of the shift in spiritual agency, particularly through religion within theatre, Mircea Eliade said the following: "There is an immeasurable gulf between those who participate, in a religious spirit, in the sacred mystery of the liturgy, and those who derive a purely aesthetic pleasure from the beauty of its spectacle and the accompanying music" (Eliade 10). The issue of the spiritual's relationship to the aesthetic can be recognized in various forms throughout history, particularly in the context of the German Romantic movement. The importance of such a discussion about spirituality and the aesthetic lies in the extent to which the two notions converge. German Romanticism is known as a cultural movement from the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century, which explored many topics, ranging from the notion of the aesthetic, the conception of poetry, philosophy of the self and the other, the role of women, to the significance of nature. Central to the Romantic discourse were spirituality and religion, explored by various individual thinkers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Friedrich von Hardenberg.

The German Romantics conceived of ideas and concepts that deviated from those of the Enlightenment. The aftermath of the Enlightenment had created a societal

emphasis on rationality, objectivity, with philosophy and emerging sciences paving the way for inquiries about knowledge and nature. During the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, ideas evolved that countered the preconceived societal attitudes towards objectivity, and prioritized subjectivity instead. This growing emphasis on subjectivity led to new discourses in philosophy with regard to knowledge, nature, aesthetics and religion. German Romanticism asserted the importance of subjectivity through an emphasis on a creative process enacted through introspection, self-discovery, and self-reflection. An individual would attain information and thereby create knowledge about themselves and the world around them, which would manifest as a creative process. Within this process, an individual would constantly interact and engage with other aspects, be it the external world, or other individuals as well. The creative process in question was viewed by the Romantics as a state of constant approximation in an infinite state of perfectibility. In other words, an infinite process to a perfectibility (Behler *German Romantic Literary Theory* 69). This fundamental concept was known as infinite perfectibility. Consequently, the notion of a creative process expanded towards an inquiry about religious experiences as well, wherein individuals could attain spiritual revelation by means of creative self-introspection. The Romantics, in other words began to investigate the fusion between religion and the aesthetic through the notion of a subjective spiritual experience.

A key figure who was vital in influencing the Jena Circle's early formation of German Romanticism, was a Christian mystic known as Jakob Böhme. Böhme's theosophy combines concepts from alchemy and Christian mysticism that draw on a connection between God and nature. Böhme was one of the first to attempt to reconcile

esoteric symbolism with the Lutheran denomination of Christianity (Walsh 14). Two primary streams of spiritual thought that inspired Böhme were the transformative experience of grace, which came from the radical pietism that emerged from the Protestant Reformation, and the esoteric religious symbolism of Hermetism, the Kabbalah, and alchemy. In *The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Boehme*, David Walsh explains a key component of Böhme's theosophy:

The spatiotemporal world of nature and of man was portrayed as an evolutionary process in which the world's inner potentialities are successively elaborated and transformed until the whole has become a transparent manifestation of the divine light shining through it; the unfolding innerworldly process can never be completed by its disappearance or annihilation, since it remains forever the indispensable condition for the self-revelation of God reflected within it (15).

Essentially, the search of the divine reveals the divine, and because humanity seeks God, they ultimately find God. There is also the notion of an inherent duality to universe, in that opposition actualizes everything in existence, God included. The process can never be completed, because the completion of being one with God already exists as does the total opposite of disunity. The notion of light that Walsh refers to is a mystical visualization of the recognition of divinity in all things, in that everything enlightens everything. There is continual revelation through the metaphor of a plethora of light, in that each thing is a source of divine light and thereby illuminates the divine light of all other things around it. Böhme incorporated such imagery of light to better convey his metaphysical ideas, which consisted of an internal desire that yearns towards unity with God. There are notable parallels to the German Romantic aesthetic theory in this regard. For instance, the process of a dynamic inner transcendence that is never-ending bears similarity to the German Romantic concept of infinite perfectibility. One is eternally

striving towards inner transcendence (Behler 68-71), which in Böhme's case reflects self-revelation within God, but in the case of German Romanticism, the process itself is inherent to the individual self.

A Romantic who explored the duality of the universe in similar ways to Böhme, was Novalis. Friedrich von Hardenberg, or Novalis, is known for his philosophical and poetic writings and his novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, which served as a paradigm for many core Early German Romantic concepts and ideas. Many of the novel's concepts blend the notions of love, nature and unity together in a manner that articulates the concept of creativity. Novalis' notion of creativity is rooted in the concept of a subjectivity and the philosophical self, which expands Kant's and Fichte's philosophical ideas in an important manner. However, Novalis moves away from the objectivity of Fichte and Kant's philosophies, and instead applies themes of subjectivity onto other fields such as philosophy, religion and spirituality.

Another Romantic who also explored religion was a landscape painter known as Caspar David Friedrich. Caspar David Friedrich explored religious and natural symbolism through landscape painting, and his concepts fused Christian values with nature, by means of allegory expressed through the landscape. Nature itself was for Friedrich a realm for religious contemplation which could lead to a subjective spiritual experience. The religious focus within Friedrich's works resides evidently in the depiction of crosses and crucifixes in his landscape paintings. Additionally, Friedrich's works evoke the concept of the sublime as well. The sublime is an aesthetic reaction as a result from conflicting emotion of awe and terror and will be mentioned much later in the chapter on Friedrich. The importance of this thesis's linkage between Novalis' literature

and Friedrich's art that will be forged in this thesis is that German Romanticism's exploration of religion and spirituality is expressed in both visual and literary art. Many scholars have commented on and argued for correlations between Novalis' concepts with Friedrich's paintings. Roger Cardinal, for example proposed that Friedrich's art is "a painter's realization of Novalis' principle of 'qualitative involution' (Cardinal 70).¹ Introspection is also a dominant theme in Friedrich's own work and similarly invokes religious intent.

Scholars continue to debate on the impact of Jakob Böhme on German Romanticism, as Böhme's contribution is multifaceted. Böhme's influence varies widely among the individual Romantics, from being a direct source of inspiration for some to indirectly influencing ideas of others. In other words, some Romantics studied Böhme's concepts directly while incorporating them into their own work, whereas others took a more general approach to Böhme by discussing him with other members of the Romantic movement. Paola Mayer has examined the extent of Böhme's influence over the Romantics, while also noting Böhme's own image throughout history. Mayer's argument is centered on the extent to which there was direct influence, and how German Romanticism appropriated of Böhme, rather than being inspired directly by his theosophy.

While the existence of Böhme's influence on German Romanticism is agreed upon by scholars, Mayer's article, "Reinventing the Sacred: The Romantic Myth of Jakob

¹ Qualitative involution is the inwardly evolution of the 'self', and is measurable by quality thereby assigning value to personal growth. Roger Cardinal draws on the connection between Caspar David Friedrich and Novalis through with reference to Novalis' fragment: "The world must be romanticized (Novalis, *Novalis Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich Von Hardenbergs* 2: 545).

Böhme”, argues that the extent of Böhme's influence is debatable (247). In her later monograph, *Jena Romanticism and its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, she points out that “[t]he Romantics were not changed by their encounter with Böhme, they were merely pleased to discover a convenient tool for their anticlassicist, anti-rationalist polemics and, later, a source of apt phrases with which Christian idealism might be expounded” (17). In other words, Böhme was a useful figure for the Romantics to appropriate as a means to achieve their own goal, which was to promote the Romantic aesthetic.

However, as I argue in this thesis a close examination of Böhme's overall theosophy reveals how Böhme's ideas align significantly with the spiritual concepts developed by the Romantics, including Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich. I would assert that Jakob Böhme, Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich share a complementary spiritual foundation in that Böhme’s theosophy prefigures central tenets of Romanticism.

Both Novalis and Friedrich explore the connection between God and nature, which drives towards a spiritual framework that evokes Böhme's theosophy, in that all three figures explored an ontological process. Therefore, it is paramount to examine the spiritual concepts in Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich and identify the similarities as well as noticing the differences between them. Whereas Böhme focuses on the metaphysics of nature and God, Novalis examines the spiritual relationship between people as an expression of God through love, creativity and self-discovery. Novalis’ spiritual concepts derive from the paradigm of a dialectical unity that situates God, be it both in the abstract and religious, as being discovered from within the self. In turn, Friedrich's spiritual ideas focus on nature as an affirmation of God, which at times is hopeful as well as despairing.

For Friedrich, God's presence in nature as well humanity's role in the grander scheme of things can be questioned.

There is also the notion of dualism in the universe that sets the foundation within both Böhme's theosophy and the concepts of German Romanticism. Böhme founded his ideas on the duality between things such as good, evil, humanity, and God, wherein duality or division necessitated unity. Romantics, such as Novalis, conceived such division as leading to unity through the reconciliation of man and woman, and in Friedrich's case, humanity and nature. The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that there is in fact a similarity of ideas between Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich.

In order to examine the connection between Böhme's theosophy and the concepts of German Romanticism, it is important to outline briefly how Novalis came into contact with Böhme's thought. Ludwig Tieck was a vital figure in introducing Böhme to other members of the Jena Circle. Upon his discovery of Böhme, Tieck consequently shared his enthusiasm for the mystic with other members (Mayer 55). Novalis first references Böhme in a letter to Friedrich Schlegel in 1798, in which he discusses the merit of forming a new religion with a list of potential sources to derive from, which included Böhme (Mayer 55). The project of founding a new religion within Romanticism was never fully established or realized. In part, the unfinished nature of the project coincided with the movement's emphasis on creativity as being in a constant state of becoming, an unending process of creation (Behler 70). However, because of this correlation with creativity, the spiritual aspect of German Romanticism has been downplayed among scholars and has been dismissed as an aesthetic form of appropriation rather than a spiritual intention. This raises the question as to why the Romantics initially sought to

create a new religion, and why there was a strong interest in religion among its most notable members in the first place. The Romantics' interest in sparking a new religion illustrates how the group's outlook with regard to spirituality and religion is significant. The spiritual attitudes within German Romanticism are not solely to justify its aesthetic theory, but rather a means of expressing a notion of a subjective spirituality that was arising at the time. The Romantics examined subjective experience and consequently became gradually aware of such subjectivity in religion during the nineteenth century as well. Novalis and Friedrich's views on spirituality and religion are of interest because they are deeply subjective, and coincide with Böhme's theosophy in terms of exemplifying a spiritual process underlying Böhme's thought. To reduce the issue to a consequence of Böhme's generalizations and the variety of concepts in his theosophy is to simplify the issue, without really exploring the subtle nuances of the spiritual concepts of Novalis, Friedrich and Böhme. In part, the goal of this thesis is to bring attention to the spiritual dimension of German Romanticism that has been partially neglected.² Romanticism has been deprived of spiritual significance due to a scholarly emphasis which favors the German Romantic aesthetic.

I intend to proceed with such an argument primarily by means of literary and visual art analysis. I will firstly examine Böhme's overall theosophy in order to have a clear understanding of his mysticism and spiritual concepts, as well as his own life and his mentors, such as Paracelsus who influenced him in terms of alchemy. This thesis may

² Scholars have more often emphasized the Romantic aesthetic due to the movement's emphasis on creativity. The aim of this thesis is to reconsider Romanticism's notion of creativity within a spiritual dimension to assert Romanticism's spiritual intention, thereby attempting to balance out the bias within scholarship on German Romanticism.

not do Böhme justice in its examination of his theosophy, as many of his concepts evolved overtime and are greatly complicated as well as contradictory and convoluted. Throughout the thesis, I will be providing biographical information about each respective figure and making comparisons between their ideas to demonstrate the spiritual parallels and distinctions in an attempt to promote a discussion. The thesis examines the primary work of Böhme's *The Clavis*, which is translated as *The 'Key' of Jacob Boehme* by William Law. As a summary of Böhme's theosophy, this text focuses mainly on the seven properties of nature which outline a process of desiring towards unity with God and all things, and it is this very concept that connects with the notion of an infinite creative process in German Romanticism. John Stoudt's biography of Böhme, *Sunrise to Eternity*, David Walsh's book, *The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment*, and Hans Lassen Martensen's *Jacob Bohme*, will be featured prominently for their insights and examinations of Böhme's ideas. Additionally, I will also be making use of, and debating aspects of Paola Mayer's argument, as she discusses the extent to which Böhme was appropriated into German Romanticism.

In addressing Novalis, I will examine his philosophy and spiritual concepts through literary analysis of his works, especially *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, *Hymns to the Night* and excerpts from his *Blütenstaub* (Pollen Fragments), as these works encapsulate his ideas about love, nature and religion. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, is regarded as a paradigm for many of the concepts of early German Romanticism. The notion of creativity is fundamental to the novel, as its episodes outline an introspective creative process as part of the protagonist's journey of becoming a poet. While the novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is in many ways a culmination of Novalis' ideas, the prose poem, *Hymns*

to the Night, has biographical relevance in terms of how Novalis formed his ideas. An issue with these texts is that they are often examined by scholars in a secularized manner that pertains to Novalis' philosophical and aesthetic concepts. Religion and spirituality were equally pivotal themes that Novalis explored, both in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and *Hymns to the Night*, as well as in other works such as *Christendom or Europe* and his *Spiritual Songs*. Upon closer examination, one can see a consistent of a spiritual framework that underpins all of Novalis' work as whole. While Novalis' *Christendom or Europe* and *Spiritual Songs* would be considered more overt in their religious focus, the *Hymns to the Night* and the *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, though being more literary, equally harbour the religious and spiritual resonance of Novalis' more directly religious works.³

This thesis concludes with a chapter on Caspar David Friedrich's techniques and his concepts of art and religion in relation to nature, primarily by means of a visual analysis of three of his paintings: *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* [1808], *Monk by the Sea* [1809], and *Morning in the Riesengebirge* [1810-1811]. Each of these paintings will serve as crucial examples, not only in terms of religious significance, but also as a means of comprehending Friedrich's own ideas. *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, and *Monk by the Sea* are both renowned examples of Friedrich's art and in their time stimulated extensive critical discussion following their exhibition. In turn,

³ Novalis's concepts prioritized spirituality over religious dogma, hence this thesis' focus on his non-religious writings. As will demonstrated in Chapter 2, Novalis' works take a more liberal approach towards religion in the attempt to articulate spirituality.

Morning in the Riesengebirge can effectively be interpreted as a visualization of both Novalis' concepts and Friedrich's own assertion of spiritual unity.

Overall, this thesis will deploy comparative arguments in an attempt to reconcile the extent to which Böhme's theosophy parallels the religious and spiritual concepts of Novalis and Friedrich, while asserting the importance of the spiritual framework of German Romanticism. Böhme's relation to the Romantic movement may seemingly be seen as an appropriated inspiration, but in fact Böhme's theosophy foresaw the central importance of religion and spirituality for the Romantics and their sense of spiritual yearning.

Chapter One:

Jakob Böhme and the Seven properties of Nature as Desire from Within.

*Everything is giving birth to everything,
nothing in the world is as it seems
light upon the water,
that is the light in me
and it's telling me you're not alone*
- Sarah Slean "You're not Alone"

Jakob Böhme's link to the German Romantic movement can be seen in the connection between his alchemical theosophy and the movement's core notion of desire. The notion of desire within a spiritual context is a key component that connects German Romanticism with Böhme's ideas. Both Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich explore the notion of spirituality. For Novalis, spirituality resides in the notion of love between the subject and the other, which is a creative process that strives towards self-revelation. The concept of spirituality is integrated into Friedrich's paintings both overtly with crucifixes, and subtly by way of the aesthetic notion of the sublime.

Prior to Jakob Böhme's time, the concept of macrocosm and microcosm permeated spiritual thought (Stoudt 26). The paradigm of macrocosm and microcosm illustrates how the universe is reflected in smaller components throughout the world. There is a miniature-scaled version of all instances within the universe. The importance of the concept of macrocosm and microcosm is that it presents a spiritual outlook for a wholeness by which all finite things reflect the greater universe. Böhme studied alchemy and mysticism while owing much to his precursors, such as Paracelsus and Valentin Weigel (Mayer *Jena Romanticism* 18). Paracelsus was a physician and thinker who fused

ideas from the Renaissance with the notion of macrocosm and microcosm into a new approach that appealed to German thinkers of his time (Stoudt 26). The Renaissance itself was not only a revival of classical learning, but also a revolution of new spiritual attitudes with regard to how humanity perceived itself (Walsh 3). Older occult ideas were being brought to the intellectual forefront of the era, and humanity was being regarded as “an independent participant within God’s divine work of creation” (3).

Paracelsus saw consciousness as the means to God and imagination itself was the means to the Holy Spirit: “In consciousness we come to God, in faith to Jesus Christ, and through the imagination we receive the Holy Spirit (Stoudt 26). The Holy Spirit is often described as the intangible entity that serves as an instigator or challenger for spiritual growth in Christianity. With Paracelsus’ linking the Holy Spirit to the imagination, one can draw a parallel between Paracelsus and German Romanticism. The German Romantics regarded the creative imagination as the means to transcendence, as the imagination was able to challenge the limitations of logic and reason. Their preference for the imagination over reason was in a great part a reaction against the Enlightenment. Reason often states the impossibility of something; the imagination does the opposite, and envisions the possibility.

Paracelsus’ medical theory implied that nature itself was inherently dualistic, as nature embodied both the diseases and the cure (Stoudt 27). Alchemy was a process where knowledge allowed for the transmutation of nature (27). Paracelsus asserted that by knowing nature that one would come to know God (27). By seeking to understand nature rather than harness it as a resource, one comes to a clearer understanding of God. In his study of Böhme, David Walsh describes the shift in spiritual thought as follows:

"Man is no longer the humble contemplator of God's work in nature, for now he has become an active partner in shaping the meaning and destiny of his own and all other existence" (Walsh 4). While this statement addresses more overtly the notion of self-determinism, it also demonstrates a shift from one of passivity to one of action. Humanity is not merely an observer but also a participant in nature, in that they are a part of a process, by which people can shape their own destiny. It is up to human beings to derive meaning from nature and shape the world according to their own need. John Stoudt articulates this poignantly: "God is hidden in nature and to find him, therein lies man's task" (Stoudt 27). That God is being reflected in nature exemplifies the macrocosm and microcosm, in that nature embodies a likeness to God. All things are akin to God. The notion of nature and God being connected led to immense focus on and reverence for nature. Following Paracelsus, Jakob Böhme upheld the correlation of God and nature and conceptualized nature as a resemblance of God.

Nature may be considered thus: the flash of the Original of fire, is a crack, and salnitrous ground, whence nature goes forth into infinite divisions, that is, into multitudes or varieties of Powers and Virtues; from which the multitude of Angels and Sprits, and their colours and operations, proceeded, also the four Elements in the beginning of time. (Böhme, *The 'Key' of Jacob Boehme* 36)

As will be demonstrated in later chapters, the notion of macrocosm and microcosm becomes and remains fundamental to the spiritual concepts of Jakob Böhme, Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich. Jakob Böhme's notion of nature as resemblance of God is paramount to its appropriation by the movement of German Romanticism as whole, more precisely in the realm of the movement's aesthetics and philosophy. In *Jena Romanticism and its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, Paola Mayer points out that Böhme's "various concepts constantly changed from one work to another", with the result that Böhme's

work is at times contradictory and obscure (19). Naturally, this chapter will provide examples of the contradictions within Böhme's theosophy as they are inescapable upon close examination. However, despite the inconsistencies among Böhme's concepts, they in turn demonstrate the complexity of his theosophy as well as the variety of the concepts he took from preexisting spiritual thought. That said, it is important to explore Jakob Böhme's own life and the spiritual thinkers that influenced him directly, as to better grasp the influence of ideas during his time.

Jakob Böhme was born in Old Seidenberg around April 1575 in a family with a long lineage as farmers. Böhme's family was heavily invested in Seidenberg and owned most of the land in the region. His father was a pillar of the community as both a village leader and a Kirchenvater, (church father) parishioner. In 1589, at age 14, Böhme began his apprenticeship as a cobbler and did his journeyman exam in 1592. Sometime around 1594 to 1595, Böhme went to Görlitz, a trade center in the region. Görlitz itself was a melting pot of various philosophies and religious ideas. Böhme became a shoemaker and then later in 1599 married his wife, Katarina Kuntzschmann. In 1600, Böhme became acquainted with Martin Moller, a priest who had published the religious poetry and prose of mystical writers such as Johannes Tauler. Similar to Tauler, Moller believed that spirituality was a union between believer and inner church, expressed through erotic imagery in the medium of poetry. Moller is considered a crucial influence on Böhme as there are parallels between Moller's hymns and Böhme's book *Aurora*. Moller also created the group "Conventicle of God's Real Servants" that was rooted in the German mystical tradition. Böhme was part of this conventicle, and thus was exposed to Christian mysticism of the medieval period (Stoudt 43-51). In 1610, Böhme began to write down

his thoughts and spiritual experiences. His first work, *Morgenröthe im Aufgang*, titled as *Aurora* in English, was compiled in 1612, and came under the scrutiny of the new Lutheran Pastor, Gregory Richter, who convinced the town council to examine Böhme's works and prohibit him from writing anymore. However, in 1619 Böhme resumed writing until his death in 1624. During this time, followers of Böhme published his *Weg zu Christo*. Böhme's followers were among the Silesian nobility and young educated men, who were dissatisfied with the dogmatism within the Lutheran Church and were interested in a new experimental form of Christianity. The publication of *Weg zu Christo* drew the attention of Richter and the council,⁴ which resulted in Böhme's attempt to appeal to the higher authority of the Elector in Dresden, but he was denied. On his return journey from Dresden, Böhme became feverishly ill and died shortly after his arrival in Görlitz (Walsh 10-11, 24).

Much of Böhme's theosophy is influenced by Moller, and as a consequence it requires some examination. Moller's particular soteriology⁵ was founded on the notion of regeneration over justification (Stoudt 51). Moller's concept of regeneration challenges the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Justification is the notion that one obtains righteousness by means of faith and receives salvation from sin (Dillenberger 11). Moller's theory of regeneration adds another layer to the concept of justification, in that there is the struggle of faith. With faith, belief must be constantly maintained, and to not have belief in God and the Gospel results in condemnation (301). John Dillenberger

⁴ According to Martensen in *Jacob Boehme*, Böhme's work *Weg zu Christo* was met with praise much to the dislike of Richter. Richter would use worship as a means to criticize Böhme, and published a pamphlet attacking Böhme. (12-13) Perhaps Richter did not want to have his spiritual authority challenged?

⁵ Soteriology is the study of religious doctrines of Salvation.

discusses justification in the Lutheran context with reference to Mark 16:16: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved, but one who does not believe shall be condemned” (301). Dillenberger stresses the importance of baptism as a symbol of both death and resurrection (300), and explains that faith itself “is the submersion of the old self and the emersion of the new self” (300). There is a death, a rebirth, and a renewal, in other words. Moller's notion of regeneration is connected to the notion of faith in that there is the doubt of certainty. The passage in Mark 16:16 refers to the news of Jesus' resurrection, and while in the context of the Bible, there were witnesses to Jesus' rebirth. However, later centuries do not have the fortune of having first-hand witnessed the miracles of the Bible. Faith in and of itself is more uncertain. Though one can study the stories of the Bible, belief in them is complicated in that it can be a struggle. The notion of struggle as will be explained later on, is an important factor of Böhme's's own theosophy. Already in Moller's time, there existed the concept of faith that can be challenged within oneself. Thus, Moller's notion of regeneration refers to the renewal of faith itself, and for Dillenberger, faith is a spiritual baptism (302). Salvation and the Holy Spirit are not rewards for belief, but rather the renewal of faith: one is saved in the restoration of one's faith. The renewal of faith unfolds as an internal death and rebirth, and salvation reaffirms the continual renewal of faith. For Moller, spirituality is a cycle, in that the notion of regeneration asserts faith as being temporal. Faith fades and needs to be restored. Furthermore, the process of renewing faith is an internal one, in which one must overcome the struggle of faith and reaffirm one's values and strive towards those values. To a great extent, regeneration occurs internally, as we are creating salvation from within ourselves through struggle. This aspect of spiritual regeneration is something

which carries over into Böhme's ideas as well and consequently the ideas of German Romanticism. As this thesis will demonstrate in later chapters, the Romantics also examined the notion of faith as struggle.

The spiritual notion of faith as a cyclical process also resonates with the concept of infinite perfectibility in German Romanticism. Manfred Frank's explanation on the infinite with regard to Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Schelling aptly sums the notion of infinite perfectibility as follows: "an inhibited striving, one that places transitory limits upon itself in order that it may present itself, and then, for the sake of its infinitude, surpasses these limits." (Frank 121-122). In other words, it is a continual striving in an endless approximation, but the process never entirely completes itself. The idea of an ongoing process that resides in both the Romantic concept of infinite perfectibility, and Moller's view of justification creates the link. However, the key difference for German Romanticism was that the process was striving towards creativity and not renewal of religious faith. Moller's concept of regeneration unfolds in an endless loop, wherein faith is depleted but then restored. However, in order for faith to be restored, meaning must be created out of the loss of faith. There is irony in that there is meaning to be had in the non-meaning. One creates meaning where there is none and thus re-restores faith, which brings forth another parallel with German Romanticism, as the motif of irony was pivotal for their aesthetic theory.

The motif of irony highlights contradictions from the expected norm. Examples of irony can be often found in the portrayal of the main protagonists in German Romantic literature, in that despite being the main focus, the characters themselves are not proactive, but instead more passive. Their passivity is contrary to the well-known

paradigm of a hero who is consistently active throughout a story. The protagonists are not assertive, yet they consequentially change as if there were asserting the change themselves. Irony was also a part of Novalis' philosophy in his novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Heinrich is set to become a bard and storyteller, yet he is never explicitly informed how to create a story himself. Heinrich is only told stories about other storytellers by other characters. One of his most famous fragments from his work, *Blütenstaub*, expresses this paradox: "Wir suchen, überall das Unbedingte, und finden immer nur Dinge." (*Gesammelte Werke* 10).⁶ Longing for the infinite results in only finding finite things. Essentially one finds the infinite through the finite itself. The irony lies in the apparently contradictory process, as one does not expect to find what one is seeking through its opposite. In the spiritual context of Moller and regeneration, the irony is that faith is renewed through that which would break and challenge it. There is an ironic element to Böhme's theosophy as well, in that the means to unity is actualized in a process of division and separation from unity within Böhme's alchemical conception of nature.

In Böhme's theosophy, nature is an important component to the alchemical concept of the *Mysterium Magnum*, (the "great mystery") (Böhme, *The 'Key'* 24). There are two vital substances that embody the *Mysterium Magnum*. One of the substances is the manifestation of the divine power through both unity and understanding as the outflowing of wisdom (24). In other words, there is inherent wisdom to the universe, as an understanding of and unity with God. Wisdom for Böhme is a knowing of the divine,

⁶ "We seek everywhere 'non-things', and always only find things." All translations albeit rough, are done by me and shall be in the footnotes where necessary throughout this thesis.

and in turn also an understanding and being one with God. However, this is just one piece of the puzzle, as Böhme asserts that the other substance of the *Mysterium Magnum* is nature itself. Nature is not in unity with God but rather has motion to it, an inherent desire (24). There is a dualism to the *Mysterium Magnum*, a unity and knowing on one end, and non-unity and action on the other. The dualistic aspect of the *Mysterium Magnum* further extends to the substance of nature as properties that have their own dualism that embody an aspect of God (24). The properties of fire and light have symbolic importance, since Böhme views fire as natural life that is comprehended and light represents the holy life that manifests as unity (24). In turn, the unity, becomes a love-fire (24). What can be derived from the alchemical symbolism of fire is that life itself is a fire, as Böhme asserts: "This burning Fire is but a manifestation of Life, and of the Divine Love, by which the Divine Love, namely the unity kindles up, and sharpens itself for the fiery working of the power of God" (24-25). The fire symbolism implies that life is expressed as a force that brings both illumination as light, and as a consumptive burning element. In alchemy, fire symbolizes change and for Böhme, fire is a purging change that brings about a rebirth (Stoudt 112). Fire can only burn for a limited amount of time, which emphasizes the notion of temporality and finiteness as well. Böhme describes the duality of fire as also as a duality of a loving merciful God and an angry jealous God (24). Fire brings light and warmth but also burns, and light itself can be blinding in the extreme and creates conflict and strife in that one cannot see around themselves. Strife is an important factor for Böhme in that one aspect cannot be known without the other (Walsh 85). Böhme alternatively calls the *Mysterium Magnum* chaos in that it is the foundation for all things, good, evil, heaven, hell, and the visible and spiritual world (Böhme 25). While the

notion of an inherent chaos within the universe had long been acknowledged as early as the 17th century, Böhme's theosophy actualized the necessity of evil in God's ever-evolving self-revelation (Walsh 84). The necessity of evil lies in its opposition to good. Evil thus functions as a mirror of good (56). The notion of good is only given form and actuality because of the existence of evil. This notion of good and evil defining each other adds a new dimension in the context of Christianity at the time, as it provides a concrete reason for the existence of Hell and the Devil. Heaven and Hell are two parts of the same whole and everything that is conceived out of them counters its opposite in one form or another. Böhme's notion of good and evil, as well as of God and nature, are analogous in that these pairs of opposites are interdependent and interconnected. God is defined and actualized by that which is not God, and likewise good is necessitated through evil. This applies to nature as well, in encompassing the not God.

For Böhme, nature is its own entity, which works through the divine while also embodying the divine (Böhme 26). God works through nature, and nature itself undergoes a process of coming into being (25-26). Each stage of the process is reflected within physical aspects of nature, through seven properties, each reflecting an initial stage of the process itself. Nature's process of self-creation is independent from God, however, and does not come to the same destination as God's own process of self-actualization, despite both embodying the divine (26). God is at the center of divinity and nature is an extension of divinity. God is distinct from nature and for Böhme, nature is akin to a carpenter who builds on the intuitive level: "Nature is like a Carpenter, who builds a House which the mind contrived before in itself; so it is here also to be understood. Whatsoever the Eternal mind figures in the Eternal wisdom of God in the Divine Power,

and brings into an *Idea*, that Nature frames into a Property" (26). Nature follows on an idea that it frames into a property (26). What can be deduced from this analogy is that God works through nature, and nature carries out the process. To be more precise, God plants the idea, which Nature cultivates into physical form. However, the process from God's conception to nature's actualization occurs at nature's discretion. Nature retains independence and is different from God, thus being able to define God. Böhme asserts that Nature has seven properties, that embody the notion of desire, and actualize nature as different from God (26). These properties are not entirely describable in the simplest terms, and more nuanced as stages of an inward process that requires more in-depth analysis. Additionally, nature consists of two substances that exist within each of the properties. Böhme describes the first substance of nature as an "Aching passive Nature", wherein there is a desire to be manifested (28). The force behind the desire is the divine being and will, as well as a unity with God that flows through nature as an eternal love (28). For Böhme, love transforms into an eternal joy and love burns as a fire that inflames nature (28). The substance is inherently complete and desires to manifest and articulate the completion outward. This notion of outwardness reflects nature's embodiment of the divine, as an outward extension of divinity.

The second substance within nature is "Nature's own substance, which is [also] Aching and Passive . . . rests within itself" (28). There is no unity, but rather a separation that acts as an agent of desire and potential for unity (28). The substances of nature are dualistic in that there is both a unity and separation. Böhme poses a notion of desire within nature's substances, where there is a longing that is never whole and yet there is a component within the longing that is already fulfilled. Similarly, Novalis' concept of

nature entails a longing to a unity between humanity and nature that is achieved through his theory of the poet (Becker & Manstetten 109). Caspar David Friedrich similarly views the artist as the mediator between humanity and nature as well. As will be demonstrated later chapters, both Novalis and Friedrich indirectly exemplify Böhme's concept of desire in the historical context, as well through their work which explores the union between humanity, nature and God.

The first property is described by Böhme as a desiring (Böhme 29). The desiring is articulated as a concentration of will that desires to be something, but itself lacks the means to make itself (29). The property is stagnant and Böhme attributes it as a hunger that gives way to harshness embodied as substance, hardness and the cold (26, 29). Desire is a foundation and for Böhme, nature has an inherent longing and this is further reflected in both humanity and God as well. Romantic longing is aimed at a connection with nature, whereas in Böhme's context, nature has a longing and nature's properties reflect the process of becoming. In other words, the desire is towards spiritual unity. As exemplified in Novalis' novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, the protagonist Heinrich has a yearning, but doesn't know what he longs for. He goes on a journey and later happens upon Mathilda, who sates his longing. In more satirical German Romantic literature, desire leads to either nature, women, love or the poetic, but they are irreconcilable. The object longed for in German Romanticism fiction is unknown, and the striving is ongoing. The object only reveals itself over duration of the journey, whereas Böhme asserts strictly a spiritual aim with process' goal, which is about God. Novalis' novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* presents a variety instances of desire, wherein a form of unity occurs. However, Novalis situates such examples both in secular and religious contexts,

which demonstrates a difference in the object of desire as understood by German Romanticism and defined by Böhme's seven properties. This particular distinction between Novalis and Böhme is important in that it highlights the differences in their approach to and expression of mystical concepts. Whereas Böhme outlines a process of a desire that yearns towards unity be it struggling or not, Novalis provides a process of desire that is less anchored to religion yet is still celebrated for the growth of the individual. For Novalis the journey is no less valid in its failure to adhere to a religious context. In many ways these two perspectives of desire are both complimentary to each other, with the Romantics exploring the process in a secular context.

The second property is expressed by Böhme as motion, where the next step of desire takes place. Böhme regards the property of motion as a causation for strife in that there is a sundering and division (*The 'Key'* 29). These aspects of separation and motion allow a thing to gain a new perspective, whether that perspective be of another thing or of itself. Outward experience occurs in conjunction with motion. In the process of self-actualization, the self recognizes itself as different from the other, having moved outwardly. The first property is a compression of desire, a pure idea of longing, and with the presence of motion, there is the beginning of an action (28-29). Böhme explains that this aspect of desire overshadows itself and makes itself as a darkness (29). For Böhme, desire is what gave rise to creation to the world: "Thus we understand that the Desire is the ground of something, so that something may come out of nothing; and thus we may also conceive that the Desire has been the Beginning of this world by which God has brought all things into substance and being; for Desire is that by which God said, *Let there be*" (30). However, through the presence of motion, the separate aspects of the

universe come into form: “The Second Property, that is, the Motion, was in the beginning of this world the Separator, or Divider in the Power and Virtues, by which the Creator, namely the Will of God, brought all things out of the *Mysterium Magnum* into form; for it is the outward moveable world, by which the supernatural God made all things and brought them into form, figure and shape” (30). Through motion, longing has the potential to actualize, and a being can become.

Böhme describes the third property as anguish (30). Here the fire of desire is drawn outward and inward beyond itself causing anguish, which is the foundation for the senses as they are volatile and seek rest (30). Through the senses one property penetrates into the other because the property is able to feel itself (30). The senses have the potential for empathy towards others, in that the perception of the property allows for greater perspective beyond itself. To look inward, is to recognize outward, and Böhme conceives anguish as the root of the mind as well (30). Anguish is as a fire that strives to the unity of God, and while there is a desire to go beyond itself towards unity with God, the anguish can only be (31). However, by means of effluence, the unity comes to the prior properties, and for Böhme "there is a continual conjoining for the manifestation of the Divine will" (31-32). The manifestation of the divine is also represented through alchemy which Böhme refers to alchemical concepts in relation to the properties themselves.

The first three properties are akin to salt, mercury and sulfur, which are symbolic embodiments of desire, motion, separation, and life (32). This is Böhme's appropriation of Paracelsus, who formulated the notion of *tria prima* or three primes, which were basic qualities known as salt, mercury and sulfur (Henderson & Sherwood 18). The importance of Paracelsus' *tria prima* lies in their connection with the prior view of the classical

elements: earth, water, air and fire (18). Salt is linked with the body and earth and remains unaffected by fire (18). Mercury represents the spirit and is akin to water in its fluidity, thus the spirit is unaffected by fire (18). Sulfur, which symbolizes air, is also volatile and flammable, thus changeable by fire (18). Each of the three primes exists in seven alchemical metals, as well as all other substances (18). Böhme's usage of Paracelsus' *tria prima* lies in the symbolism within alchemy, as Böhme's seven properties are not strictly akin to the seven alchemical metals. In *The Clavis*, Böhme emphasizes how salt is akin to desire, the innate longing that serves as the foundation for matter (Böhme, *The 'Key' of Jacob Boehme* 31). Mercury in turn is symbolic of the motion by which things come together but also separate, and because of this, motion creates distinction within all things (31). Sulfur, Böhme's third property, is emblematic of anguish and struggle as well as growth (31). Where Böhme relates Paracelsus' *tria prima* to the properties, he creates a parallel to physics. There is pull and drifting of matter which remains pure within itself, and yet continually interacts through motion and reaction. Böhme further expands on the third property with the notion of growth: "by *Sulphur*, they mean the perceiving [sensible] willing, and growing Life." (31). For Böhme, struggle allows for growth, and he further establishes the notion of anguish as a sharpness and painfulness (31).

The fourth property is a spiritual fire, the manifestation of unity as light, which refers to a glance at the unity of God (32). Böhme describes this unity as a liberty, a soft still tranquility, and states how the prior three properties are sharp, painful and horrible in comparison with the fourth (32). The fourth property could be visualized as the igniting of a flame in a turbulent darkness. For Böhme this property makes apparent the unity of

God, as it creates an internal oscillation between non-unity and unity (32). Upon the realization of unity, the fourth property of fire is further broken down into two principles, the darkness which remains in itself, a compression of a harsh sharp pain that serves as an entity of division, and separation, the absence of unity and light (33). The dark fire represents a painful hunger that exists in its own desire, and for Böhme, the dark notion of fire is akin to the devil and represents an all-destructive consuming force (33). The second principle is light, the unity of God, which brings about mobility and joy (33). The perception of the unity of God is regarded as love that burns throughout all life, and for Böhme the soul of man and angels reside in this aspect (33).

The fifth property is a continuation of the element of fire, and the unity of God as a fire of love where the understanding of the life of man resides (34). The property is akin to lighting a candle wherein all things become manifested out of a singular darkness in which they were grounded (35). The first three properties are in a metaphorical darkness in that they arise from a distant abstract yearning, a desiring will. The properties of light are accompanied by an awareness and understanding of the unity of God and all things: the transitory with the eternal, and the corporeal with the spiritual (35). For Böhme, the mystery of divine power can manifest itself, yet nature remains as it is: “When the Spiritual Fire and Light shall be kindled, which hath indeed burned from Eternity [in itself], then shall also the Mystery of the Divine Power and Knowledge be always made manifested therein; for all properties of the Eternal Nature become spiritual in the Fire, and yet Nature remains as it is, inwardly in itself; and the going forth of the will becomes Spiritual” (35).

For Böhme, the process of the seven properties is a transcendence of spiritual will (35). In the fifth property, three properties form its whole. "The first is the going upwards of the fiery will; the second is the going downwards, or sinking of the watery Spirit, namely the Meekness; and the third is the proceeding forwards of the oily Spirit," (35). Here is a representation of the Holy Trinity, with God at the center (35). The usage of the Trinity with the symbolism of fire, water and oil, is a fusion of alchemical symbolism with a Christian paradigm (36). Fire burns upwards as an inspired will, and then submerges into a fluid state of humility and meekness. The oily spirit can proceed forward, towards God, which Böhme describes as "the fiery flaming Spirit of Love" (35). Due to the oiliness of the spirit, it could ignite. The spiritual significance of this image is that the soul has to be changed, opened up to be receptive, thus like oil, effluent and able to be ablaze spiritually. The process Böhme describes goes upwards then downwards, so there is a canceling out in terms of motion, and then returns to the prior state of the process. That which has gone up and ascended, comes back down from whence it came. However, the difference is that now there is a truth or meaning that has to be recognized. One cannot return to before the journey began, one can only come back to resume the journey itself.

The fifth property represents a spiritual awakening. Böhme's usage of the elements alludes to a state of being, where a glimpse of the manifestation of the unity of God leads to transmutation. Böhme's use of the term meekness implies that one transcends towards God, but returns to a state where the love fire of God is drenched out. The notion of meekness is one of immense humility in that one takes a stance of non-assertion and is paradoxically actively passive in the world. Meekness can be generalized

as a mindfulness of others, in that one does not impose one's power or will over others. Such passivity comes from a state of immense humility that extends beyond one's notion of the self. Meekness in this case is a reaction to having perceived the unity of God's Love. While there is apparent separation and division in the world, all things are whole (35). That which seems incomplete is already complete. Böhme's description of the reactive elemental process is reminiscent of another analogy, where he describes a mystical union as an iron in a fire:

Behold a bright flaming piece of iron which of itself is dark and black, and the fire so penetrates through the iron that it gives light. Now the iron does not cease to be; it is iron still; and the source of iron retains its own property; it [the fire] does not take the iron into it but it penetrates through the iron; and it is iron then as well as before, free in itself; and so also is the source of the fire; in such a manner is the soul set in the Deity; the Deity penetrates through the soul, and dwells in the soul, yet the soul does not comprehend the Deity, but the Deity comprehends the soul. (qtd. in Stoudt 112-113).

As metal becomes soft and malleable through heat, it is then cooled to retain its shape: "if the flaming iron be cast . . . into the water then the property of the fire and the . . . heat which proceeds from it are all quenched together" (qtd. in Stoudt 113). Such softness and malleability work in harmony with the notion of meekness in that it moves with the tide, in unity with love. On the other hand, the statement clearly defines a closure and brevity in that the union is temporary. The metal has cooled and hardened at this point. In the analogy, the fire represents a spiritual union, in that fire has altered the iron. The water that the iron would be placed in within the process of smithing, represents a stepping away from the spiritual, the spiritual fire. In other words, there is a coming back from spiritual union to a non-union. However, the metal has still interacted with the fire. In *The Forge and the Crucible*, Mircea Eliade explains that alchemists and smiths are related (79), in that both were transforming things from one state of matter to another by means

of fire. Eliade further indicates how fire held spiritual significance that placed smiths on the same level of sacredness and respect as shamans in many cultures. (81). Thus, Böhme's notion of fire follows a long line of spiritual thought throughout human history.

For Böhme, the fifth property "is the true spiritual Angelic world of the Divine joy, which is hidden in this visible world." (Böhme, *The 'Key'* 36), and "is the true Soul of Man" (34). Böhme is asserting that the soul of humanity comes out of love, a love that is unifying, and thus a love that is an all-encompassing and always present. Like a fire, it is an all-consuming love that changes a person: "I did not climb up into the Godhead, neither so mean a man as I am do it; but the Godhead climbed up in me, and revealed such to me out of his Love," (Stoudt 61). One can reach inner salvation by way of God's love, which is unconditional and non-discriminatory. If Böhme's fifth property reflects the unity of God's love and the soul of humanity, the soul can nonetheless break itself off from God's love. As a fire without light, the human soul can become a self-serving ravenous force as well. Breaking off from God's love does not only pose a moral question, but also touches on the issue of free will and choice: To what extent do we ourselves turn away from unity, love, and compassion? Böhme expands the notion of the fifth property further and describes nature as an original instance of unity and love (36). "Thus an Heavenly always lies in the Earthly, for the invisible spiritual world came forth with and in the Creation" (32). This cements the notion of the spiritual and the non-spiritual as two parts of the whole.

The sixth property is the sound, voice, or understanding as Böhme puts it (37). This property is a continuation of the fifth in that all properties have come to an understanding with one another; they are in harmony (37). The supernatural knowledge

and divine understanding are made manifest here (37). The five senses work in a spiritual capacity in this property and Böhme explains how the sixth property is akin to the second property of motion (37). Whereas the second property was an abstract dark stirring motion of desire, the sixth property represents a motion of light that is founded on love and unity (30,37).

The seventh property is described as substance (37). There is a blossoming that takes place where all the properties become substantial (37), in that the properties are actualized as the working power of the divine. As Böhme says: "For every Property makes unto itself a Subject or Object, by its own Effluence; and in the seventh, all the Properties are in temperature, as in one only Substance: and as they all proceeded from the unity, so they all return again into one ground." (38). The seven properties of nature are states of a dynamic spiritual process. The overarching theme is that of a yearning towards unity. The process begins from within, and branches out from an abyss of darkness and ignorance, to a state of light and clarity. Another important concept involves proceeding forth in conjunction with a return. There is something paradoxical in Böhme's articulation of unity, in that it is inherently complete, yet incomplete. This is evident by the causation for desire with the notion of separation and division.

With all things drifting out from and back to unity, the process can be like that of an ocean-tide wherein things are in a constant flux, flowing outward in the awareness of individuation, only to be embraced back into unity. For Böhme, the seventh property is where unity simply is. Unity is a state of being, in other words. The properties are interconnected: the first with the seventh, the second with the sixth, and the third with the fifth (38). These three pairings embody the Holy Trinity: The Father, the Son and the

Holy Spirit. (38) The first and the seventh represent desire and the Father, from an innate longing to actualization (38). What was previously an abstract isolated yearning, has become substantial and unified. The second and sixth are bound to the aspect of motion which Böhme associates with divine power and virtue, and the Son (38), that is the motion of desire to act, to mobilize the yearning, and the striving towards unity and understanding. The motion which constitutes the second property can be seen as an inward movement with parts moving within, where-as the sixth property is an outward motion, radiating outwards. The common element between the third and the fifth is the Holy Spirit, which in the third property is as a fiery spirit, and in the fifth, is love manifested (38). The fourth property is the point for division and revelation as a flash of light, a glance of unity (38). As Marie-Louise von Franz explains in her examination of the symbolism of lightning: "Seeing a flash of light means to have insight. It can be into the whole structure of the universe or the structure of the Godhead" (*The Cat* 74). Essentially it is the pivot point, the fork in the road, that moment when the universe throws something your way, be it the recognition of God's love and unity in Böhme's case, and where one has the power to decide. For this reason, the fourth property has no pairing like the other properties. What Böhme's theosophy entails to with the perception of unity, is that there is a choice to be made. The point at which one allows oneself to be open to unity, or break off, with the latter properties being an embrace of the unity. They bleed into one another where they are eternal, without beginning other than the unity of God (38). The properties come out of the unity of God which is eternal, and return to unity, thereby remaining eternal (38). All things are infinite. The properties outline a

transition of yearning for spiritual unity through the aspect of desire. The first three properties embody a struggle, a striving which is a fundamental aspect for Böhme.

The notion of struggle is a key component to Böhme's theosophy. In *Aurora*, he envisages the process of revelation as a climb: "For he must climb through a gruesome deep . . . and . . . hell, and he will have to endure scoffing and mocking . . . In this struggle I had often had to experience it with sad heart; the sun was often eclipsed . . . but it rose again and the more it was eclipsed the brighter and clearer it rose again" (qtd. in Stoudt 61). Böhme describes the climb as a "gruesome deep", which creates an image of a submergence and a descent rather than a climb upwards, suggesting an inward journey.

An encounter with the negative aspects is part of the journey, be they within one's self, within society or life in general. Such encounters shed light on the given situation and one can achieve a moment of clarity. Böhme associates the concept of struggle with the image of an eclipse. The darker and more negative the experience, the brighter the revelation. Böhme utilizes the contrast between dark and light to symbolize the process of revelation. The notion of contrast lies in the paradox of the process towards spiritual revelation, as often spiritual enlightenment gives one a feeling of elation, clarity and a sense of serenity. However, it is only after one has struggled that such clarity reveals itself. For Böhme, the greater the struggle, the greater the revelation. With regard to the general context of study, Böhme writes the following:

But when he reads such Writings, and yet cannot understand them, he must not presently throw them away, and think it is impossible to understand them; no, but he must turn his Mind to God, beseeching him for Grace and Understanding, and read again, and then he shall see more and more in them, till at length he is drawn by the Power of God into the very Depth itself, and so comes into supernatural and supersensual Ground, namely into the Eternal Unity of God; where he shall hear unspeakable and effectual Words of God,

which shall bring him back and outward again, by the Divine Effluence, to the very grossest and meanest Matter of the Earth, and back inwards to God again; then the Spirit of God searches all Things with him and by him, and so is rightly taught and driven by God. (*The 'Key'* 16)

In this passage, Böhme explores the struggle of introspection towards spiritual revelation in the act of study. Often the process of introspection is challenged by self-doubt and uncertainty. In part, such struggle is due to the lack of a visible progress. Anytime we as individuals study a topic intensely, we can come into moments of stagnation and we become stuck in terms of progression and understanding. The Bible itself provokes a plethora of interpretations and while one can fall back to a specific interpretation, one is encouraged and imbued with a faith and conviction that is ultimately derived from within. One still has to look inward and examine the reasons for their own spirituality. Study of the gospel and the Bible's teaching is no exception to the notion of an inward search, and for Böhme it is a fundamental condition for spiritual revelation. Böhme also presents a push-and-pull dynamic in the process, as one comes to God and moves outward again. In essence, revelation is a realization, an enlightenment and then a return. Böhme expresses the return from revelation as also being equally disheartening in that one can experience the worst of the world. Böhme uses the physical as a means of articulating the dichotomy of infinite and finite. God is intangible, not something one can experience in any physical capacity, whereas nature has tangibility. One can only emotionally feel and mentally believe God. In contrast, our own perception of the world and thereby nature, requires sensual stimuli that we can experience physically.

While we understand the biochemical basis for emotions, Böhme's theosophy envisages the emotive process reflected in nature via the seven properties. Böhme's seven properties of Nature, in conjunction with the notions of desire and pain, drive the

properties to or away from the unity of God. The grossest and meanest matter that Böhme talks about is about returning from experiencing unity and thereby a reconciliation with reality, be it rooted in the physical or emotional violence of the world. One is continually tested through their faith in other words. When one has a glimpse of unity, one is shown the absolute unity, which is often described as emotionally validating, serene, and loving. However, the alternative of non-unity becomes more apparent and thus there is awareness of all things, the unified and the non-unified. In turn the awareness of non-unity creates a longing towards God. God is a solace amidst the destruction inherent in nature and one must confront the turmoil both externally and internally to attain peace. One must take in the bitter with the sweet, be it in nature or oneself: "Indeed, the greater the depth of depravity and self-will, the greater the opportunity afforded for manifestation of God's boundless grace and care" (Walsh 56). Another important aspect is temporality within Böhme's usage of matter, which is in part reflected in modern science. Organic life in nature is constantly changing and therefore temporal, be it through death and decay. Additionally, even aspects of the universe as perceived today that are not biological are in a constant flux through physics. Temporal matter is the means to God's own self-revelation (Walsh 13). "Only through such a process of self-revelation is God truly called God." (Walsh 16). God's infiniteness is defined by temporality, which we can attribute to nature and humanity. Essentially, we have the divine version of the philosophical self-contrasted by the other, in that the infinite self-defines itself through the otherness that is the finite.

Böhme's notion of God's involvement in the process of study is important, as God is a guiding force that is simultaneously both all-knowing and ignorant. In Böhme's

theosophy one is drawn through God and to God: “the Spirit of God searches all Things with him and by him” (Böhme, *The ‘Key’* 16). God is the intrapersonal companion alongside the search. Is that to say God is searching too? Böhme's seven properties of nature come into play here in that there is a desire, and so with God, that desire might be an extension of unity. Is that to say that God longs for our own journey to unity? Perhaps Böhme is articulating God's humanness, for if we are made in God's image, God too has a capacity for ignorance and growth? Nature is considered by Böhme to be the original resemblance of God and thereby humanity too, is a part of that ethos.

According to Walsh, Böhme was one of the first thinkers to draw a connection between humanity's free will and indefinable divinity: "The limitless power of man to create his own nature, which has been proclaimed so stridently by modern thought whether in its enthusiastic assertion by Marxism or its pessimistic admission by existentialism, derives from the infinite creative freedom of the indeterminate divinity." (Walsh 16). Through the concept of free will and mysteriousness of the universe, we individuals are given the freedom, or agency, of establishing our own meaning. By not knowing the whole conception of the universe and thereby the notion of the divine, i.e. God, we are given a sense of freedom through our ignorance in order to create and define what the universe is for ourselves. God is in progress, as is our own self-revelation, and is therefore not defined. All the things God created are just as undefined as God is. Therefore, all things are undergoing a process of defining themselves. An individual person is no different in from an ongoing process, as creativity itself has a profound presence within the universe as a whole. Walsh defines the mirroring of creativity as a vital component to God's self-revelation as follows: “For it is through mankind that the

unfolding revelation of the divine ideas in nature is completed and the process as a whole is reflected back to its source; man is the indispensable creature who comprehends the entire creation and thereby provides a mirror in which the revelation of God to himself is eventually completed” (Walsh 19-20). The mirroring process between mankind and God further establishes a connection between them and God. Through creative will, unity is achieved. Therefore, creativity is a necessary component for self-actualization, not only for man but also for God. Through the creative process, one establishes greater meaning in both a subjective and spiritual capacity.

Both Böhme and Moller upheld in the concept of Christ *in us*⁷ rather than Christ *for us* (Stoudt 51). This concept entails that divinity comes from within ourselves and is not exclusive to a supernatural external force. Moller and Böhme would assert that Divinity is made manifest by means of the Holy Spirit, in that it is concurrent with the grace of God. This notion is expanded in later spiritual thought, in that the salvation of humanity is not to be found in a lone individual, but rather all individuals. The power of Christ works through us and in turn we can act as our own Messiahs. That is not to say that people can walk on water. Humanity embodies the spirit of Christ, and it manifests through compassion, empathy and love. Therefore, the notion of an internal Christ sets a foundation for ideals and actions to strive for, and thus Christ is someone that we all can emulate. In other words, one can create heaven on earth. An inner Christ builds an internal foundation of spirituality to be found within oneself, and to become a Christ figure is to become spiritually attuned to the values of Jesus Christ. Böhme asserts that one is responsible for upholding the inward process, wherein one must continually strive

⁷ “for behold the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (*The Holy Bible* LUKE 17:21).

to uphold their Christian values: “There must be a doing . . . a striving against the Devil's will . . . Man must be at war with himself, if he wishes to become a heavenly citizen. He must not be a lazy sleeper . . . Fighting must be his watchword, and not with tongue and sword, but with mind and spirit, and not to give over” (qtd. in Stoudt 120). In this passage, Böhme is talking about the war between good and evil, and for Böhme, humanity also embodies good as well as evil (Stoudt 57). An inner war, where one must struggle between good and evil, points one further to contemplate one's own morality. The fight between good and evil is not based on external forces, but rather one's own being and internal struggle with what is good and what is evil. To strive is to improve and better oneself with effort, and with the notion of striving in relation to being a heavenly citizen, Böhme is urging that one has to strenuously go inward to uphold one's morality and thus one's own salvation. The inner conflict of the soul is ongoing, and thus one must be vigilant and disciplined to uphold one's inner virtue. We can draw on a similar stream of thought between Böhme and German Romanticism, in that the Romantics also explore the theme of struggle.

The notion of upholding one's inner virtue and morality was also a topic of examination and discussion among the Romantics. German Romanticism's stance on ethics is not the first thing that comes to mind when one considers its core philosophy and prioritization of aesthetics, however there are multiple discourses with the notion of morality among individual members of the movement that correlate to Böhme. Both Novalis and Caspar David Friedrich take the question of moral responsibility seriously in their works also. For Novalis, the poet has responsibility of upholding change and the virtue of love in the world. This is demonstrated in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, as the main

character is continually lectured on the importance of poetry and role that the poet must bring about change and harmony into the world, bridging the dissonance between society, humanity and nature (Becker & Manstetten 108-109). For Friedrich, the artist has a moral responsibility in reaffirming of Christian values and being a mediator between humanity and nature. There is a vigilance that one must uphold within themselves by recognizing themselves and God throughout nature which is evident in his paintings such as *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* (Figure.1), as will be explained in the third chapter. It is important to understand Böhme's concept of good and evil as it demonstrates theological differences between Böhme and German Romanticism. In *Jena Romanticism and its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme*, Paola Mayer asserts that the necessity for evil is problematic in Böhme's theosophy: "Reconciling God's omnipotence with the existence of an evil freely chosen by created beings is and has always been a stumbling block, but Böhme's difficulties were complicated by his doctrine that God and creatures were of one essence, the product of the same interaction of the same seven qualities" (23). This, Mayer explains, produced problems among Böhme's admirers, including the Romantics, in that the concepts about evil were not consistent. As examined by Mayer, Böhme's first conception of evil from *Aurora*, was the notion that all things have good and bad qualities: a destructive mode and a life-nurturing mode. However, when they are in unity with God, only the good aspects persist. Böhme's conception of good and evil as qualities of everything, in addition to unity with God bringing out the good in all things, comes across in Mayer's view as a simplification (23). In the general context, the duality in Böhme's theosophy makes sense if we understand it as an attempt to reconcile the notion of 'free will' with the Christian reverence for God as a vessel of unifying love. When

things are in unity, they function in a manner that is harmonious and in turn there is an immense understanding that is collective, which is defined in Christianity through grace.

In Böhme's later works, he explains the notion of evil as a disruption of order wherein the property of desire twists into a self-centered manner, becoming more destructive, thus leading to evil (23). The concept of selfish desires is attributed to Lucifer as a prideful attempt to supersede God's light, resulting in an unforeseeable rebellion against God (23). Mayer argues that this explanation fails to adequately explain evil, as it diminishes God's power. This idea conflicts with the premise of God being the origin of everything (23). Another explanation by Böhme for evil is based on God's process of self-revelation, in that everything, including evil, is necessary for God's self-manifestation (23), a notion that without evil there would be no good. As Mayer puts it: "The inevitable conclusion to be drawn is that God actually needs evil to complete the process of his self-revelation" (25), otherwise if evil served no function then it would not exist (25). Böhme's own words support this idea:

Else if the evil in the contrary will were not profitable. God, viz. the eternal only Good, would not endure it, but annihilate it. But it thus serveth to the manifestation of the glory of God, and the kingdom of rejoicing; and it is an instrument of God, whereby he maketh his Good Conceivable, that the good may be known: for if there were no evil, then the good would not be known. (*Mysterium Magnum* 721)

Mayer takes issue with in Böhme's conception evil, in that it raises more questions than answers: If God is only good, then why is there evil at all? If evil is to define good then where does the root of evil lie? With God? Is there a part of God that is inherently evil? The answers to these questions are still of great importance for discussion today. In Böhme's theosophy, God is the absolute, the unity. Nature and humanity are the non-absolute, the non-unity, but there is the potential to be unified, it not briefly as outlined in

the properties. Böhme does make distinct remarks about an angry zealous and jealous God. (*The 'Key'* 24 & 39), which raises the question about God's character and the question as to why God would withhold revelation and joy from humanity? In *The Devil: A Biography*, Peter Stanford summarizes the general dilemma of God and evil with a quote by David Hume: "Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able to? The he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent, Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?" (qtd. In Stanford 9). If the evilness of God if it were to exist, what would it be? Perhaps the notion of evil lies more solely with humanity's inability to reconcile its own shortcomings as flawed beings created by an imperfect God? One is never perfect and thus there are ideals for one to strive for. We are not the saviors that walked the earth as Christ did, nor are we any closer to God's love than anything else on earth. More often than not humanity is a mess of people who attempt to follow virtue, only to fall short of the ideal. One can contemplate one's potential for love and compassion, but often the reality of one's capacity is severely more limited. Where does the violence lie if not in ourselves? As a storm on the horizon, with only brief time before the thunder and lightning strikes, sparking the trees ablaze into a fire that spreads. If humanity is the embodiment and the expression of evil as well as good, then there is a responsibility to be uphold, both collectively and individually. Böhme in fact asserts this very notion in that an individual is to be aware of their own lives, as the outcome is determined from one's own will:

We are therefore highly to consider our [lives], what we do and be at. We have evil and good in us. The one wherein we draw our will, its essence becomes active in us; and such a property we draw also from without into us. We have the two Mysteries, the divine and the devilish in us, of the two eternal worlds, and also the outer world. What we make of ourselves, that we are; what we awaken in ourselves, that is moving in us. If we lead

ourselves to good, then God's Spirit helps us; but if we lead ourselves to evil, then God's wrath and anger helps us. Whatever we will of that property we obtain a leader, and thereinto we lead ourselves. It is not God's will that we perish but his wrath's and our own will (*Six Theosophic Points* 87-88).

Life is what one makes of it essentially, and for Böhme, humanity has the creative potential to determine their destiny to the extent that God merely facilitates the circumstances of one's own choices. With the notion of perishing, we must consider that the Thirty Years was beginning to occur during Böhme's lifetime and he is perhaps specifically referring to the violence among humanity that results in violent deaths through war and bloodshed. In turn the notion of choice with one's fate allows one to assess their own values and create their own morals to live by.

German Romanticism sought to reconcile the notion of good and evil in Böhme through a dualistic system, and Mayer notes that the Romantic appeal of Böhme's concepts, lies in both its parallels to Fichte's philosophy and in its being an alternative to that system:

It derived everything, matter as well as spirit, from a divine first principle that was dynamic rather than static perfection. Yet at the same time it did not relegate matter to nonbeing, but rather assigned it a vital role in the manifestation of divinity. It made room for feeling as well as intellect by assigning a primary function to will and desire, and it did all of this in language of religion and more or less within the frame of Christian theology (25).

The aspect of feeling was giving equal importance with that of intellect, through the concept of will and desire being at the root of all things, which in turn became of interest to Romantic thinkers such as Schlegel and Schelling (25). Schelling's philosophy has some similar conceptions and even touches on many of the same subjects as Böhme's theosophy, however in Mayer's argument, Böhme was not a direct source of inspiration

(189). The Romantics struggled with the notion of evil in Böhme's theosophy which Mayer discusses by way of Ludwig Tieck as an example: “Böhme, and indeed most mystics, Tieck now feels, accord evil too much power, so that they are unable to subsume it within the good principle. As a result, their systems present an unresolvable dualism instead of a unified organic whole” (68). I would assert that part of the unresolvable dualism is due to a dialectical unity that served as the foundation for Novalis’ philosophy in particular, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Perhaps the answer lies with humanity, which would suggest that one has moral responsibility, if not a moral reconciliation to undergo. Where does the origin and the power of evil lie? Humanity more often observes the consequences of evil occurring amongst each other more than in nature, so then where does the evil exist? Mayer notes that among the German Romanticists, Schelling accounts for the dualism as being encompassed within a greater unity (68 n36), which can be identified as a dialectical unity. I would assert that Böhme came to a similar conclusion, prior to Schelling, with the usage of the properties. Böhme distinguishes the properties as being wholly individual, yet the properties are born out of unity and ultimately return to it. This distinction of individualization, is a kind of fragmentation that again leads to the contradiction of unity and non-unity simultaneously occurring. So, what we have is a contradicting notion of a divided unity.

Another contradiction that exists in Böhme's theosophy is the means to unity itself, in that there more to the process towards revelation. With the concept of evil, there is an entity that must be combated within Christianity. For Böhme evil must be battled from with oneself. In *The Signature of All Things*, Böhme presents another concept as a means of coming closer to God, through surrendering:

A true Christian is a continual champion, and walks wholly in the will and desire in Christ's person . . . He desires to die to the iniquity of death and wrath, and gives himself up to obedience, and arise and live in Christ's obedience in God. Therefore . . . take heed of putting on Christ's purple mantle without a resigned will; the poor sinner without sorrows for his sins, and conversion of the will, does only take it in scorn to Christ; keep you from that doctrine which teaches selfful abilities and words of justification. (qtd. in Stoudt 144)

On one hand one must fight, and yet on the other, being a Christian is not to be had in simply fighting evil, but in surrendering ultimately to God. To surrender, is crucial as it brings forward another facet of spirituality. In *Genius of the Transcendent: Mystical Writings of Jakob Boehme*, Michael L. Birkel and Jeff Baker have noted the significance of *Gelassenheit* within the history of German mysticism (95). The term *Gelassenheit* implies as a letting go and coming to God. (95-96), to step beyond oneself, towards a higher calling and to shed away wickedness, to be in the way of Christ. The death in Böhme's statement is an internal death, where one desires to grow. However, Böhme warns that one must be willing to surrender and not simply be a sinner without a desire for redemption or improvement. To do so hinders the process for one's own personal improvement and faith. The term "resigned will" is notable in that one has to be actively passive and, in this context, one has to be actively and willingly passive. To surrender is to place one's own authority in power of another and in the philosophical context, the self is actively committed to the other in this regard. To an extent, such an act of devotion is all consuming in that one is constantly seeking God's grace as a continual champion.

Böhme also articulates the notion of surrender in the *Mysterium Magnum*: "For we must know, that the greatest power and virtues, together with wonders, doth lie in the humility and lowliness; and how God is so near unto all things, and yet nothing apprehends him, unless it stand still unto him, and give up the own-will; and then he

worketh through all, as the sun [worketh] through the whole world” (*Mysterium Magnum* 457). While this passage also talks about the act of surrender, there is a strong notion of humility and unity. The extremity of such surrender seems more possible than being utterly obedient and disciplined. However, such surrender is depicted with humility, in that there is a bigger picture to behold. Through humility one gains a perspective that one is in fact relatively small within the universe. The analogy of the sun is also relevant in that it creates the mystic visual of a divine light. As Sarah Slean sings in her song, *The Devil and the Dove*: “There is no door to the kingdom, the kingdom is the door”. One in fact opens oneself to God and divine revelation through one's own willingness alone. So paradoxically there is both the notion of a struggle and surrender within Böhme's theosophy. One must struggle and endure hardships and yet on the other hand one need only surrender. Is the struggle itself to surrender? One can visualize such epiphanies as light bulbs floating above the head after a hardship, and perhaps the process for spirituality is no different. Through the self, selflessness is actualized.

The later reception of Böhme within the Enlightenment, as Mayer indicates, had less to do with the actual content and more so as an example of a turgid and overly enthusiastic style of Böhme 's writing (Mayer 45). References of Böhme were less about his theosophy, and more about how Böhme countered the Enlightenment's reverence for rationality (45-46). Mayer asserts how the Enlightenment's reservation with Böhme, impart contributed to the controversial appeal that Böhme later had within the German Romanticist reception (51). However as will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapter, the appeal of Böhme's theosophy with regard to German Romanticism entails something more.

Chapter Two: Novalis, and a Dialectical Unity, Broken, Yet Becoming

You, it's you and me
- Kate Bush "Running Up That Hill"

Friedrich von Hardenberg, also known by his pen-name Novalis, was a pivotal figure in early German Romanticism. Novalis contributed significantly to German Romanticism's aesthetics and theory of creativity while exploring his own philosophy of subjectivity and self-reflection. Novalis' novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is a paradigmatic expression of both early German Romanticism and his own concepts (Behler *German Romantic Literary Theory* 179). The novel itself focuses on the idea of poetry as a means of creative self-revelation, for both the reader and the author in that there is a journey to undertake. The novel's main narrative resides on the notion of a journey that is reflected through Heinrich's own journey at the geographical, poetical and spiritual level. Novalis' notion of subjectivity deviates from that of the Enlightenment in that the notion of the philosophical "self" is developed through introspection and creativity, as opposed to solely logical differentiation and rationalization of experiences. Descartes' famous dictum: "I think, therefore I am" would be for Novalis "I create, therefore I become." Novalis' concept of the self is constantly in flux by means of creativity and continual striving. In other words, Novalis believes in a dynamic self that contrasts with the absolute self of the Enlightenment. However, the dynamic self must step beyond itself in order initiate such change (Frank 164-166). Novalis' concept of self-determining is for him a creative process:

We are related to all parts of the universe- as we are to the future and to the times past. Which relation we establish as the primary one, which one is primarily important- and which is to become effective for us - depends only on the direction and persistence of our

attention. It is probable that a truly scientific method for this process is nothing less than an intervention we have desired for so long - it might indeed be more than this. The human being acts every hour according to the laws of this art and it is undoubtedly possible to find these through highly creative self-observation (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 40).

Novalis' statement visualizes dialectical unity, wherein two opposing elements complete one another, be it through the past and future. The notion of dialectical unity will be later explained in this chapter as it bears particular significance for *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. What is important is that both Novalis' assertion for unity through creative self-observation and his views of the dynamic self challenges the rationalist empirical thinking of the Enlightenment. Both Novalis' *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* are good examples of his concept of creative self-observation. However, Novalis also explored spiritual and religious thought in addition to philosophy and aesthetics. While Novalis wrote spiritual songs and religious poems, the *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* exemplify the core values of Novalis' ideas and theories, in addition to being among his most renowned works. The link between Böhme and Novalis is established by the fact that Novalis was studying Böhme whilst writing the novel, as will be discussed later on. The *Hymns to the Night* captures Novalis's own spiritual ideas, prior to his study of Böhme, and this chapter will examine the extent to which Novalis's concepts resonate with Böhme's by exploring the *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* through close analysis of the texts, as well an examination of some key biographical moments within Novalis' life.

The reception of Böhme within German Romanticism as described by Paola Mayer is one of appropriation rather than inspiration (Mayer *Jena Romanticism* 17). The appropriation of Böhme by the Jena group of German Romantics benefited the cultural

movement in that it bolstered the movement's aim of returning to German mythology as well as promoting reverence for the aesthetic. As Mayer asserts, German Romanticism used Böhme as a means of rooting their own theories in a religious facet of German culture (11). Ludwig Tieck was a notable member of the movement and the first to examine Jakob Böhme (55). Consequently, Tieck introduced Böhme to other members of the Jena Romanticist movement, including Novalis (55).

Tieck is a vital figure when examining Böhme's influence on German Romanticism. Although Tieck was the one to discover Böhme, his attitude towards Böhme changed over time (Mayer 56). Mayer explains that there was no borrowing of Böhme within Tieck's poetic writings: "Tieck borrowed not so much a system of thought as an attitude to God and nature, or at the very least Böhme's language and style, in the form of individual images" (56). From the years of 1799-1802 Tieck's writings were greatly influenced by Böhme. Tieck believed that Böhme was both a great divine prophet and poet, as well as the living embodiment of a fusion between religion and *Poesie* (57). As Mayer argues, Tieck's view figures Böhme as the saint-figure who would be ideal for the Romantics' goal (57). Tieck drew much inspiration from past German culture and history, and Böhme was a part of such history. Additionally, Tieck also admired Böhme's assertion of nature's "unbroken connection with God" (57-58). Consequently, Böhme became an attractive figure not only for Tieck, but also for German Romanticism as well, because nature was for them, symbolic of creativity. Tieck also encouraged his sister to study Böhme, as she would arrive at "a true understanding of God" (57). Mayer notes that Tieck's intense study of Böhme led to his exploring of a darker side of nature.⁸ This

⁸ Mayer does not get into specifics about a darker side of nature in relation to Tieck. However, based on my own examination of Böhme in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it is fair to presume that aspects of Böhme's theosophy,

in turn led Tieck to experience a period of depression; during which he discarded his former interest in mystics, including Böhme (56). Mayer finds that Tieck's later recollections of Böhme serve as an attempt to reconcile his current outlook with that of his former spiritual beliefs (60). Mayer describes Tieck's later reception of Böhme as bearing similarities to religious conversion, in accordance with his teleological narrative style (60). As Mayer explains: "The Böhme episode plays a crucial role in giving the overarching tale of Tieck's life journey the sacral aura in which the promise of fulfillment is grounded" (70). Tieck's later accounts fall in the category of sacred biography, and Mayer argues that Tieck's usage of Böhme is akin to Abraham von Franckenberg's hagiographic biography of Böhme (60). In her article, "Reinventing the Sacred: The Romantic Myth of Jakob Böhme", Mayer notes that Franckenberg was a personal friend and devout follower of Böhme, who wrote a biography about Böhme sometime after his death (257n3). According to her, Franckenberg's account of Böhme verges into the realm of hagiography and consequently has served "as both model and source for the Romantic's hagiographic venture" (248). Both Novalis and Tieck were acquainted with Franckenberg's work (257n3). According to Mayer, Tieck also used the genre of hagiography, which placed emphasis on the fusion between philosophy, religion and *Poesie* (Mayer, *Jena Romanticism* 70). Here Mayer's argument about the appropriation of Böhme raises the question of intent: What motivated the Romantics' interest in Böhme? Can we accept Mayer's argument that the relationship was one of appropriation and not so much religious inspiration? The answer to this question requires further examination,

such as the dichotomy of good and evil and the more destructive properties of nature are potential factors when considering Tieck's exploration of Böhme.

particularly with regard to Novalis, as there is evidence to suggest that there was in fact some inspiration in relation to Böhme as both Tieck and Novalis exchanged their ideas through letter correspondence.

There is no doubt that Tieck recommended Böhme to Novalis, as many Romantics would meet at salons, engage in discussions, and share ideas. Such cross-pollination of ideas through the salons no doubt contributed to Böhme becoming an important figure of discussion. However, in terms of his influence on Novalis, Mayer asserts that Novalis' interest with mysticism and theosophy was already ongoing prior to his discovery of Böhme (*Jena Romanticism* 77). Therefore, the contributions that Böhme could have potentially made seem debatable in terms of direct influence, as Novalis' own religious upbringing was already in line with the Pietistic tradition (78), and Novalis' studies prior to his reading of Böhme had already provided a firm foundation for his ideas (81). However, Mayer notes that Novalis still had an enthusiasm for Böhme, as the mystic who rendered a poetic depiction of nature (82). Mayer explains that there is also little direct reference to Böhme within Novalis' works (83), and that the focus is not on Böhme's concepts or thought, but rather on the figure of Böhme as a mythical figure: “Novalis celebrates, not Böhme's poetry, but rather Böhme the poet, Böhme the religious poet, Böhme the Romantic poet-prophet . . . Böhme was not a model for imitation, but a name to be added to the canon by which the Romantics sought to combat Neoclassicism” (82-83). Mayer's argument resides in her assertion that Böhme was not a spiritual contributor to the Romantic world views but rather a paradigm of the Romantic poet. Böhme served to accentuate the aesthetic vision of German Romanticism.

This raises the question as to why Böhme was chosen out of so many thinkers that the Romantics had examined. One would think a figure who promoted the notion of the aesthetic be more beneficial for the Romantics then. If the aim was to promote the aesthetic, then why focus on a spiritual thinker who would have attributed the defined notion of the aesthetic as the work of a higher power? Unless that is also the goal of Romantics, in that the aesthetic was in fact spiritual. This thesis argues that the notion of the aesthetic and spiritual for German Romanticism are intertwined, and for Novalis the aesthetic and spiritual is indeed interconnected.

As Ernst Behler points out, “Novalis was a true poet among the early Romantics and his poetry, in contrast to that of Tieck, is of a profoundly philosophical, metaphysical and indeed mystical and religious character” (*German Romantic Literary Theory* 182). It is clear from one of Novalis’ letters that he and Tieck corresponded over ideas about Böhme during Novalis’ writing of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Novalis’ letter to Tieck significantly invokes alchemical language and his reading Böhme, which suggests that there was indeed a circulation of ideas:

Auf alles bin ich gespannt – besonders auch auf Dein Gedicht über Böhme . . . Das Ganze soll eine Apotheose der Poësie sezn. Heinrich von Aafterdingen wird im 1sten Theile zum Dichter reif – und im Zweyten, als Dichter verklärt . . . Jacob Böhm les ich jezt im zusammenhange, und fange ihn an zu verstehn, wie er verstanden werden muß. Man sieht durchaus in ihm den gewaltigen Frühling mit seinen quelleden, treibenden, bildenden und mischenden Kräften, die von innen heraus die Welt gebären – Ein ächtes Chaos voll dunkler Begier und wunderbaren Leben – einen wahren auseinandergehenden Microcosmus (*Schriften* 4 321-323).⁹

⁹ This is a rough translation of Novalis’ words: “Of all I am excited – especially for your poem about Böhme . . . The whole should be an apotheosis of the Poësie. Heinrich von Aafterdingen will in the first part ripen as a poet – and in the second part, as poet transfigured . . . Jacob Böhm I now read in relation to and begin to capture him and understand how he must be understood. One absolutely sees in him the mighty Spring with his sources driving, forming and mixing forces, that from within gives birth outwardly to the World. An unruly Chaos full of dark Desire and wonderous Life – a real diverging Microcosm.”

Novalis expresses how he is looking forward to everything, including Tieck's poem about Böhme, and explains how he is writing a novel that would be an apotheosis of poetry. Additionally, Novalis outlines the novel's two stages, the first where Heinrich becomes a poet, and the second where he is transfigured as a poet. As the letter continues, Novalis explains that he is understanding Böhme as he is to be understood, as Spring, an outpouring and mixing, a chaos, a dark desire and wondrous life, a divergent microcosm. Novalis' description of his engagement with Böhme is vital in clarifying that Böhme was an important influence on Novalis and his ideas. Novalis even makes explicit mention of some key aspects of Böhme's theosophy, such as the first property of desire, and the microcosm, both of which were discussed in the previous chapter. The significance of Böhme lies not merely in the extent of the direct influence, as would be evidenced by specific intertextual references in Novalis' works, but more so in the confluence of his ideas with those of Novalis. As this thesis shall demonstrate both Böhme and Novalis share a great deal conceptually and thematically such as alchemy, a dialectical unity, and the concept of an ongoing process. Through literary analysis of *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* I shall clarify how aspects of Böhme's theosophy reflect themselves in Novalis' literary works. However, it is worth briefly examining Novalis' life as a significant number of his philosophical concepts are tied to his education and upbringing.

Novalis was born in Thuringia in the year of 1772, as Georg Friedrich Phillip von Hardenberg. In October of 1790 Novalis went to the University of Jena, where he encountered the ideas of Karl Leohard Reinhold and Friedrich Schiller. Novalis developed a personal relationship with Schiller, who encouraged him to pursue his poetic

interests, so much so that Novalis' father intervened. Novalis was transferred to the University of Leipzig in 1791, where he was to study law (Neubauer 11-12). Some years later, Novalis became acquainted with Johann Gottlieb Fichte (22), who had come to Jena in 1794 (Safranski 40). Fichte was a lecturer at the university of Jena, and many of his students were notable figures of German Romanticism, including Tieck, Hölderlin, Schelling, and the Schlegel brothers as well as Novalis (Keller 134). Fichte had an immense impact on Novalis' concepts of the philosophical self and the other, which Novalis developed over time, as is evidenced in various diary entries and letters from that period. Novalis later compiled his studies into a more substantial work titled *Fichte Studies*. While Novalis was studying Fichte's philosophy, he also met Sophie von Kühn, who would later become his fiancée, an experience that provided inspiration for much of Novalis' philosophical and spiritual ideas. In a letter to Friedrich Schlegel from July 8th of 1796, Novalis describes his two loves at the time; Sophie and philosophy, and fuses the two as the subject of his interest, while making reference to Fichtean concepts (*Schriften* 4 186-188). This demonstrates Novalis' process of thought that would later result into his philosophical and spiritual concepts in *Hymns of the Night* and later his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. It is therefore important to discuss Novalis' relationship with von Kühn.

Novalis met Sophie von Kühn when he became an apprentice to the district director of Thuringia at the request of his father (Neubauer 14). Novalis met Captain Johan Rudolf von Rockenthien and his family, which included von Kühn (14). The step-daughter, Sophie von Kühn, became a fundamental figure for Novalis, both as a betrothed beloved and a subject or object through whom he could ponder his own philosophical

theories. Novalis' father eventually accepted his son's initial engagement to von Kühn (15), though he was skeptical her family's background (Donehower 38). She was twelve at the time of meeting Novalis, and scholars have noted that based on her own writings in her diaries and letters, von Kühn was not a suitable match when compared to her prospective husband (Neubauer 14-15).¹⁰ Sophie von Kühn later became ill in November of 1795 and died in March of 1797. Her death deeply affected Novalis, and caused him to write diary entries between April to July of 1797 (Neubauer 15&18). The diary encapsulates the process of Novalis' own thoughts and his attempt at deriving a higher meaning out of von Kühn's death, (18) as well as that of his younger brother Erasmus in the same year (Donehower 1). Von Kühn 's death became a cataclysmic moment for Novalis as she became an 'otherly' object to contemplate and formulate his philosophy around. Novalis visited her grave frequently (28), and became particularly inspired during the month of May of 1797 where he began to write *Hymns to the Night* (29-30). The evidence behind this assertion is found in the third hymn, which can be traced to a journal entry dated May 13th of 1797, when he visited Sophie's grave (2). In another letter to Friedrich Schlegel dating back to April of the same year, Novalis also described his family's hardship as a result of the death of his brother. Novalis also distinctly describes his love for von Kühn as a fire that consumes all earthly things (*Schriften* 4 219-220). While the notion of love as a fire is not an uncommon expression, the motif of fire in relation to this thesis brings to mind alchemical notions found in Böhme's theosophy and the seven properties: in that there is an all-consuming fire within the

¹⁰ Scholars acknowledge that Sophie von Kühn was underage, both physically and intellectually. In Bruce Donehower's *The Birth of Novalis*, Sophie von Kühn's diary entries are sparse in general and offer little indication of enthusiasm when listing Novalis' visits (Donehower 51-53), which would suggest that Novalis' love for Sophie might have been more one-sided in reality.

fourth and fifth property. This angle of interpretation becomes even more reinforced by that fact that Novalis continues in the letter to discuss how his spirit is renewed and guarded from that which would do harm:

Eine einfache, mächtige Kraft ist in mir zur Besinnung gekommen. Mein Liebe ist zur Flamme geworden, die alles Irrdische nachgerade verzehrt. Deine hoffnung hat recht gehabt Es ist weit mehr Heilkraft, Ausdauer und Winderstand in meiner Seele, als ich selbst wufte -- eine Heilkraft, die dem Übel die Quelle abgräbt eine Ausdauer, die Stunden nicht messen -- Wilderstand gegen alles was mein Heiligthum entweihen will (*Schriften* 4 219-220).¹¹

Not only does this demonstrate Novalis' spiritual development at the time of the death of Sophie and his brother, but Novalis' phrasing encapsulates aspects of Böhme's seven properties. The fourth property of fire, as we can recall from the previous chapter, has a dualistic nature in that it is a fire of love, yet is all-consuming. It is important to note in this context that while Novalis may not be specifically referring to Böhme, Novalis is using alchemical language to convey his spiritual ideas, and these ideas that first formulated in letters and diaries, would later manifest themselves in works such as *Hymns of the Night* and later *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*

Hymns to the Night has six components that progress from poetic prose to pure versified poetry. The change in structure is suggestive of the text's overall emphasis on a transformative narrative. Gwee Li Sui finds that Novalis' *Hymns of the Night* "is a complex negotiation of Fichteian ideas" (Li Sui 108). A philosophical discourse is manifest within the *Hymns* as Novalis was immersed in Fichte's philosophy at the time. Consequently, this chapter will unpack some of Novalis's concepts such as dialectical

¹¹ "A simple, powerful force has advanced consciousness in me. My love has become aflame, that all earthly is nearly consumed. Your hope was right –There is far more healing force, endurance and resistance in my soul, than I myself knew – a healing force that enduringly digs at the source of evil, not measuring the hours – resisting against all that would desecrate my sanctuary."

unity whilst analyzing the *Hymns* in order to clarify the spiritual dimensions within Novalis' ideas. The text's imagery fuses various elements throughout that evokes a natural flux similar to Böhme's concept of the seven properties. I would argue that Novalis' *Hymns to the Night* is an amalgamation of Novalis' spiritual and philosophical ideas that he continued to explore further in his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. The *Hymns to the Night* thus is a precursor of the spiritual concepts embedded in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Instead of transitioning from a darkened desire to light as was the case in Böhme's theosophy, the *Hymns* begin by depicting a transition from light to dark. The first transition occurs when the narrator outlines the day and the presence of light and how it depicts all things in and of nature:

Who is there that loves not, above all other phenomena of the broad Space about him, the joyous light with its colours, its beams and waves, its supreme omnipresence in the morning of the Day? As if the inmost Soul of Life, it inspires the pauseless starry Heavens and floats dancing in their blue depth; it inspires the sparkling inert Stone, the patient absorbing plant, and the wild burning many-shaped beasts; but above all the Glorious Stranger with the expressive eyes, the wavering motion and tuneful throat. As a king of earthly nature it calls forth each power to countless transformations, knits and dissolves countless alliances, invests every earthly being into heavenly effluence. Its presence alone reveals the magnificence of the Kingdoms of the World." (Novalis *Hymns to the Night* 25).

Immediately daylight is described in its vastness and sense of infiniteness that extends beyond the self to world around all. Light gives everything in nature its wonder and poetic quality, and the light unifies everything in that it is all transmutable. Although things are distinct under the light, they are also interconnected by means of effluence. The figure of the stranger alludes to Novalis' philosophy of the self and the other, with the other being both a mirror and source of knowledge for the self (Wessell 435).

Interestingly enough, as the *Hymns to the Night* unfold, light is given the same transformative power that the night will come to signify. The night is a different

manifestation of light. Through the unifying power of light, similarities to Böhme's concept of light and the properties can be seen in that the light represents spiritual unity. However, for Novalis light exists in order to demonstrate the singularity and distinctness of each object. While light can invoke transformations, none of the objects listed are in unity. The light in this case is a close-up of nature with its various parts working in order, rather than a unifying perspective. The light does not depict the greater perspective of unity, rather the night does. Similarly, we can recall the second property in Böhme's theosophy.

Böhme's second property also highlights the division and separateness within nature much like Novalis, but light for Böhme nonetheless represents the spiritual unifying light that resides within. Hence for Novalis the night becomes something to be revered as the daylight only renders clarity of distinction rather than unity itself. Li Sui finds that Novalis' depiction of light represents the concept of empirical knowledge in Kant's philosophy, wherein the existence of things is proven by the senses (108-109). Novalis' *Hymns to the Night* depart from the philosophy of Kant and more specifically Fichte (109), in that the night represents something greater: "Yet I turn from it away to the Holy, the mysterious ineffable Night. Far lies the World, sunken in a deep abyss, void solitary is its place." (Novalis 25). Night is immeasurable and all-encompassing as the world itself, is in an abyss of darkness. The poem offers immediately opposing images. Whereas light in the earlier passage illuminates individual phenomena, the night by contrast shifts to an abstracted depiction that blurs into feeling and isolation. Following the introduction of night, Novalis gives emotional weight to the notion of night by evoking nostalgia:

The chords of the heart thrill with deep Melancholy. In dewdrops will I dissolve away and mingle with the ashes . . . Old memories, aspirations of youth, dreams of childhood, the whole long life's brief joys and evanescent hopes come gliding in grey garments like evening clouds after the sunset. In other realms are outspread the pavilions of the Light. Should it nevermore return to its children who await with innocent trust (Novalis 25).

This passage expresses a strong sense of loss, as the light is stretched and scattered amidst darkness. One could visualize stars, based on the prior passage is the image of a world in an abyss. Such a sentiment will bear similarities to Friedrich's painting *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* in the next chapter, in that there is a subversive process wherein the focus is on the diminishing light that reconciles the darkness through the night.

It is important to note that the passage above references children and childhood. Children in German Romanticism often served as symbols of a golden age where the relationship between humanity and nature was reconciled through poetry. More precisely, Novalis viewed poetry as a way to bring us adults back to the golden age, in that children are naturally poetic, but as adults we have deviated from our former state of being. Novalis captures this idea in one of his fragments: "Where children are, there is a golden age" (*Philosophical Writings* 41). However, on another level the statement in *Hymns to the Night* asserts that we are still collectively children lost in the dark as the light has passed. In a similar sentiment, Böhme's theosophy expresses an aching and longing through the first couple of properties as there is restless desire towards unity while being aware of separation. The Romantics saw their own time as a time in which unity with nature, and by extension God, had been lost and the image of children in the dark captures that vulnerability. Other Romantics such as Caspar David Friedrich also touch on the notion of loss through the metaphor of light and dark, as will be examined further

in the next chapter of this thesis. The motif of children within the *Hymns to the Night* has a dualistic purpose that transitions and changes from one meaning to another, as with many of the other motifs in the text. Bruce Haywood notes how Novalis sees himself as a child, anxious for the light's return, but who experiences a sudden revelation with the arrival of the night (Haywood 55). The motif of children also has great spiritual emphasis in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, which will be discussed later on in this chapter.

In the second Hymn, light returns with the morning, which prompts the speaker to question it and to make apparent the dichotomy between night and day: “Will the secret sacrifice of Love never eternally burn? Measured was the period of Light; but timeless and spaceless is the Night's dominion . . . The time of Sleep is eternity. Holy Sleep! bless thou often the votaries of the Night in this terrene daywork” (Novalis *Hymns to the Night* 29). Novalis immediately imbues the night with an infinite and spiritual quality. The sacrifice of love that Novalis speaks of has possible connotations to Christianity in that Jesus' sacrifice represents an act of compassion in that Jesus died for one's sins. The sacrifice can also be related to death of Novalis' betrothed, Sophie von Kühn. It was her death that inspired *Hymns to the Night*, which may have been a kind of sacrifice that inspired Novalis to poeticize his experiences and actualize his philosophy.

Additionally, Novalis describes sleep as eternity. Death in and of itself is often commonly poeticized as an 'eternal slumber'. Novalis also describes the sleep as holy and therefore hints at a deeper more spiritual connotation. Sleep is a temporal state for living things, and is also the brief gateway into the realm of night, with votaries to tend to this means of passage. Novalis in fact articulates this next in the *Hymns to the Night*:

They feel thee not in the golden blood of the grape, in the wondrous oil of almond, in the dusky juice of the poppy. They know not that it is thou who hoverest around the maiden's

bosom, making her heart a heaven; they discern not that out of old legends thou advancest unfolding gates of Paradise, bearing the key to habitations of the Blessed, thou silent herald of infinite mysteries (29).

Novalis firstly asserts how there are those who do not partake in feeling the presence of night. Novalis' imagery transforms one thing at face value into another possessing a deeper meaning. Novalis makes explicit mention of discerning from past legends, the advancement of Night and the unfolding gates of Paradise in the second hymn (29). What Novalis means is that one deciphers from the past that which is still immanent and occurring. To an extent, the reverence for the past is a subversion of the chronology of history as it is the past that shaped the current present moment which shall define the future. In other words, the past established the present moment which is still ongoing and thus becoming the future. The importance of creativity would then be that of how the present is able to shape the future, history is a creative process, a story in the making. Additionally, in the passage, the maiden's bosom is on the surface a sensual and erotic image, yet one that goes deeper to the heart and implies a hidden depth: that in a person, it is their heart, their love that is the heavenly realm. Novalis connects love to the spiritual in that love and God are one and the same for him, which will be further discussed in relation to Böhme. Similar to this passage, Böhme expressed through the process of the seven properties that the properties themselves come into the glaze of God's unity and become unified through love (*The 'Key'* 37-38). Secondly, Novalis describes the night as that which is overlooked by humanity, even when night is the missing link or key to the universe.

The *Hymns to the Night* continues to present unity in that in the fourth hymn, the light is no longer discernible from the night, and love is one entity. This unity extends

beyond the notion of light to that of life and death. “The earthly floats above, and is driven back by storms; but that which Love has touched to consecration runs, released, in hidden channels through the realm beyond, where it mingles airlike with dead Lovers” (31). Love for Novalis has a deep and complex philosophical and spiritual relevance. In this statement, lovers reunite in spite of death. This passage can be compared with one of Novalis' fragments, in that there is a mirroring of the beloved that extends into the universe:

One finds what one loves everywhere, and sees similarities everywhere. The greater the love the more extensive and manifold is this similar world. My beloved is the abbreviation of the universe, the universe is the extension of my beloved. To the lover learning, all its branches offer garlands and remembrances for his beloved (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 85).

This fragment outlines the mirroring of the beloved being reflected into the universe and vice versa, as well as the notion of Böhme's microcosm and macrocosm mentioned in the previous chapter. The universe and the beloved are reciprocal in that they both reflect one another, which allows the lover to reflect and revere the beloved as well as the universe. It is evident that the *Hymns to the Night* was Novalis' creative process of remembering von Kühn by connecting her memory to the universe, but also driving the point forward of an all-encompassing unity. The significance of von Kühn was that her death gave Novalis his spiritual realization of unity. The conception of unity wherein the beloved is extended throughout all things is a key perspective that founded much of Novalis' philosophy, in the same way that Böhme conceived of God being so near unto all things (*Mysterium Magnum* 457). While Novalis' context is more intimate and interpersonal, the metaphysical significance is still apparent in that the concept of the microcosm and macrocosm is at play. If God is near unto all things, then God is also connected to the

beloved. Therefore, to be with the beloved is to also be with God, and to be loved by the beloved is to also be loved by God, which is a fundamental concept to *Hymns to the Night* as a whole in that it culminates a key aspect of Novalis' philosophy.

The beloved, in the *Hymns to the Night*, is an extension of the universe and thereby the greater force: the night. The night can be interpreted in a spiritual and religious manner as a metaphor for encountering the divine. However, the philosophical importance behind the *Hymns to the Night* is examined through Novalis' dialectical unity, which is a dualism of opposition within a totalizing unity throughout the universe. In "Novalis' Revolutionary Religion of Death", Leonard Wessell explains how Novalis' conception of religion is founded on a dialectical unity: "A dialectical metaphysics contends that opposition or duality lies at the heart of reality, though this duality is rooted in an all encompassing unity. Thus, all apparently opposed categories are actually one-sided abstractions from a greater overriding totality" (Wessell 429-430). The nature of reality is dualistic and unified, being paradoxical in that it is both incomplete and yet completed. One could in fact regard this concept as stagnant, but for the Romantics it articulated the notion of everything undergoing a process. The dialectical unity is a continuous process wherein there is a continual approximation between the extremes, and that process varies depending on the object and individual. One can draw on the constant motion as akin to the lifespan of a creature and the evolution of a species. What is certain is that the existence of opposing factors presupposes a totality within the extremes (430). Basically, the opposite forces validate themselves by their extreme property, while validating their opposite. While there can be a range between extremities, the extremes are what determine the range of properties in between. Therefore, the totality of the

divine, being God is contrasted by the totality of non-divine being, nature and by extension humanity. Böhme also mentions opposition as the causation, as he discusses his conception of the second property of nature (*The 'Key'* 28-29), as well as his concepts of good and evil being forces that actualize one another. For Novalis, God is indeterminate (Wessell 430). To be determined is to be differentiated and thus divided and not unified (430). Indeterminateness has no apparent division and therefore can be attributed as the absolute, as unity itself. In other words, to be determined is to be specified via property, conceptually or sensorially from everything else, singled out and identified fully. By being indeterminate, God can be everything and thereby infinite as there are no boundaries to determine God (431). Additionally, this would make God incomprehensible as well, which also informs Novalis' conception of God. Wessell explains that "the dialectical structure of absolute reality is also a description of the knowing process of God --the absolute ego" (431). Wessell notes that for Novalis, being and existence must have consciousness (431). Attaining consciousness is done through opposition, so for the self, it would have to encounter and interact with the non-self, the other. Consciousness is to be found through the discourse between opposites, as Wessell explains:

To become conscious, infinite spiritual reality (as absolute thesis) must "other," divide, or posit itself as an endless plenitude of determinateness, finiteness or in short, as absolute ANTHITHESIS in order to have *something* upon which to act. The infinite must *become* finite, pure activity must *become*, so to speak frozen energy (i.e. matter), the self must *become* non-self or God must *become* nature. This act of becoming is nothing else but the generation of division within infinite unity (432).

The act of becoming is a fundamental to all existence, which is summed up as change. States can change in the physical world as in chemistry from one state of matter to the next as well as the motion in physics with the acceleration of time, or in alchemy, the

transmutation of impure substances into purer elements. For Novalis the self and other¹² are aspects of the dialectical unity. However, rather than abstraction of totalizing opposites, Novalis sought to apply the notion of a dialectical unity within varying instances, including humanity and its relationship to nature, as well as human interaction itself. For Novalis, the concept of love facilitated such change and unity by means of self-revelation. The process of self-revelation in relation to a dialectical unity is also present in Böhme.

In *The Mysticism of Innerworldly Fulfillment: A Study of Jacob Boehme*, David Walsh comments on Böhme's theosophy as a dialectical process, in a manner greatly similar to that of Wessell's examination of Novalis' philosophy:

[Böhme's] articulation of the dialectical process of divine revelation provided the means of representing reality as an innerworldly process moving towards its transfiguration in the individual who becomes conscious of it. In this way the Boehmean construction was transformed from the unfolding process of self revelation of God to the emergent manifestation of the universal process, and his still basically Christian mysticism became a secular mysticism without God (Walsh 28).

For Böhme the emphasis still resides with God and the divine, whereas for Novalis, the emphasis on God is through the non-God and non-divine. God for Novalis is more an archetypal abstract idea to nuance the different totalities within the universe. The references to God are not always strictly theological. However, that is not to say that Novalis does not blend religion and spirituality with philosophy. Consciousness also represents an equalization for Novalis (432-433), in that one is aware of the dualism of the universe; therefore, a harmony is achieved. One of Novalis' philosophical fragments helps clarify his usage of God in this context:

¹² Ernst Behler and Manfred Frank both have done ground-breaking studies into the philosophical foundations of German Romanticism. Behler's *German Romantic Literary Theory* and Frank's *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism* are both informative texts on the subject.

The fate which oppresses us is the inertia of our spirit. Through extending and cultivating our activity we shall transform ourselves into fate. Everything seems to stream inward into us, because we do not stream outward. We are negative because we want to be -- the more positive we become, the more negative will the world around us become -- until at last there will be no more negation -- but instead we are all in all.

God wants there to be gods (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 76).

Novalis articulates that the inertia of spirit as that which oppresses humanity. This has a couple of implications in that the inertia of spirit can be reflected as a lack of striving, as well as a lack of spiritual growth. With the notion of God wanting there to be Gods, there is an approximation from divided to unified, singular to plural, a divided community into one, even within God. For Novalis, God wanting there to be gods, is the metaphor for the divine level of the division desiring towards unity with all things, which is an important theme within both *Hymns to the Night* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Through the texts, Novalis reiterates his conception of the dialectical unity, as well as displaying striking similarities to Böhme's theosophy. Böhme's seven properties similarly outline a process of singularity to plurality in that all things, be it the properties themselves, recognize their separateness while undergoing the process of unity with the divine. Böhme also asserted that all things were necessitated by God's own self manifestation (Walsh 17-20). In his examination of Böhme, Hans Lassen Martensen identifies a key component of the relationship between God and humanity: "Man is a microcosm, a little world, an epitome of the great universe; a "microdeus," a little God. Man is created in the image of God, and consists of three principles, soul, spirit and body" (228). With the three properties we can recall the alchemical *tria prima* as well as Böhme's description of the fifth property, with the ascending, descending and proceeding forth. Essentially both Novalis and Böhme support the theological concept of humanity being created in God's image of

which Novalis further expands on through the motif of children, as will be examined later on in relation to *Heinrich Von Ofterdingen*.

Another instance of similar ideas between Böhme and Novalis can be found in the *Hymns to the Night's* fifth hymn. The narrative starts to weave in between poetry and prose and become more mythological in setting. The night as well becomes more theological in that it is a realm of revelation for gods: "The Night became the womb of a mightier revelation, into which the Gods returning died, to come forth again in diviner forms over the altered Earth" (Novalis *Hymns to the Night* 41). The notion of gods dying and coming forth into more divine forms bears striking resemblance to Böhme's understanding of revelation itself. If we recall from the previous chapter, Böhme states the following: "Eternal Unity of God; where he shall hear unspeakable and effectual Words of God, which shall bring him back and outward again, by the Divine Effluence, to the very grossest and meanest Matter of the Earth, and back inwards to God again (*The 'Key'* 16). Both passages imagine an alchemical effluence in relation to the divine. In *Hymns to the Night*, the gods experience death and are reborn into newer more potent forms of the divine, while in Böhme, it is humanity that outpours back and forth to and through God. Consequently, both Böhme and Novalis oscillate between the divine and humanity, and outline a different facet of this division by inverting the dichotomy between God and humanity.

Novalis also outlines in one of his fragments how "[t]he process of approximation is made up of increasing steps forward and backward. Both delay it-both hasten it-both lead to the goal. Thus, in the novel the writer seems now to approach the goal, now to retreat again, and it is never closer than when it seems to be most distant" (*Philosophical*

Writings 41). As shown in the previous chapter, Böhme discusses the process of struggle as an eclipsed sun wherein the more blotted out the sun is, the brighter the sun will be when the eclipse passed (qtd. in Stoudt 61). Novalis' words again bear similarity to Böhme, in that the approximation is evident through the struggle of the process itself. However, it is worth mentioning that whereas Böhme saw unity, Novalis saw the process as 'unifying'. The novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* continues the themes of the *Hymns to the Night*, and represents a creative approximation towards unity through the narrative of a journey.

Heinrich von Ofterdingen is a novel about a young man who goes on a journey and through self-discovery, becomes a poet. A great deal of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* can be summed by one of Novalis' pollen fragments with regard to how the everyday experience can harbour greater meaning:

Alle Zufälle unsers Lebens sind Materialien, aus denen wir machen können, was wir wollen. Wer viel Geist hat, macht viel aus seinem Leben - Jede Bekanntschaft, jeder Vorfall wäre für den durchaus Geistigen - erstes Glied einer unendlichen Reihe - Anfang eines unendlichen Romans (Novalis *Schriften* 2 437-8).¹³

What this statement entails for Novalis is that the everyday experience allows for potential meaning and a truly spiritual person is able to create infinite meaning from their own lives. When approached with a certain mindset be it a spiritual one, every instance can provide a spiritual meaning, which contributes to the formation of the unending novel that is a person's life. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* also instantiates Novalis' fragment on the process of approximation, in that its on-going narrative reiterates themes as well as at

¹³ "All accidents of our lives are material from which we make, what we will. Whoever has much spirit, makes much out of [their] life – each acquaintance, each incident would be for them absolutely spiritual – a first link in an unending line – beginning of an unending novel."

times leaves such themes indeterminate. Behler explains the novel's significance for German Romanticism in the following manner:

Of all the novels of early Romanticism, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is certainly the most ambitious work. Yet, we cannot consider it the greatest literary production of early Romanticism . . . We have only the first part and this part is clearly a torso, since the centre of gravity of the novel evidently lies in its continuation. In its conception, however, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* can indicate what enormous dimensions the early Romantic novel attempted to embrace (*German Romantic Literary Theory* 221).

Behler provides a crucial point in that the breadth of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* lies the complexity of its concepts and themes. Although the novel remains unfinished due to Novalis' death,¹⁴ its main concepts resonate with a spiritual dimension inspired by Böhme, as is the case with *Hymns to the Night* in that the novel develops the notion of striving by means of poetry.

Poetry is among the most important aspect of Novalis' concepts, as well as a pivotal theme in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. In the novel, Klingsohr discusses poetry with the protagonist and argues for a spiritual dimension within the medium. This reflects Novalis' notion of the Romantic aesthetic, in that the purpose of poetry is to bring about introspection:

Poetry . . . wants to be carried on primarily as a rigorous art. As mere enjoyment it ceases to be poetry. A poet must not walk around idly all day in pursuit of images and feelings. That is quite the wrong way. A pure open mind, adroitness in reflection and contemplation, and the ability to transform all one's talents into a mutually quickening activity and to keep them so, these are the requirements of our art (Novalis 110).

Poetry is an openness and introspection that results in an activity. Novalis is advocating poetry not as sensuality and sensibility, but rather as a striving that is a spiritual hastening, be it a creative process and constant motion. The ultimate aim of poetry is the

¹⁴ Novalis had discussed his plans for the novel with both Schlegel and Tieck. Tieck initially wanted to continue the novel, but that idea was vetoed by Schlegel (Behler *German Romantic Literary Theory* 219-122).

internal spiritual subjective growth of the poet. The quickening activity in question hints at a poem as a transitory stasis, a kind of alchemy that also reflects onto the poet as someone who is continually moving and changing, be it introspectively. Poetry is a catalyst for Novalis. Much like Böhme's notion of a struggle, there is a call to action. With this notion, we can recall Böhme's statement regarding the act of striving inwardly: "There must be a doing . . . a striving against the Devil's will . . . Man must be at war with himself, if he wishes to become a heavenly citizen. He must not be a lazy sleeper . . . Fighting must be his watchword, and not with tongue and sword, but with mind and spirit, and not to give over" (qtd. in Stoudt 120). One's will is not asserted objectively in the external realm but rather subjectively inward of oneself. Both Novalis and Böhme advocate for this inward striving. It is also important to note that Klingsohr's words also assert that poetry does not purely aim towards the sensual aesthetic, by being idle and focusing on images and feelings. The aesthetic is a tool by which one reaches something deeper and of more substance, the individual. Therefore, Novalis' definition of poetry in this regard demonstrates that for him, the German Romantic aesthetic has a spiritual and philosophical agency. In turn, the whole narrative of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* can be summarized through Klingsohr's description of poetry in that the novel is itself about a journey and has numerous instances of transformation that occur. Additionally, the protagonist Heinrich has an introspective drive about him that exemplifies aspects of Klingsohr's statement.

In *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Heinrich is not a typical protagonist in that he is extremely passive. In contrast to typical, that is to active protagonists, he listens more to other characters' stories they tell him. Heinrich's passivity is seen in the beginning of the

novel, where he reflects: "Once I liked to dance; now I prefer to meditate on music." (Novalis *Ofterdingen* 15). Heinrich is proactively passive, instead of being proactive. Heinrich himself is very much in the moment with all the events that occur in the novel. Heinrich's own passive nature demonstrates an introspective aspect as well as it lends itself to Böhme's notion of surrender. Heinrich does not resist or challenge what other characters say or offer him, he instead acts like a young student, in that he becomes educated through his experiences and interactions with other characters. Böhme's concept of *Gelassenheit* describes how one surrenders to God, ultimately internalizing what the revelations and knowledge God bestows on the individual. In Böhme's case, one opens oneself up to God, thereby learning from and through God. By analogy, Heinrich opens up to others, and he is asserted upon rather than asserting his own will. While Heinrich is not in direct contact with God, his active passivity can allow for the possible interpretation of *Gelassenheit* because for Novalis, God can also be classified under the category of 'other' in his philosophy, especially when considering the notion of the beloved being an extension of God from *Hymns to the Night*. What is most crucial to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is that Heinrich's active passivity still facilitates learning and spiritual revelation. Heinrich himself is open-minded and self-reflective as an individual much along the lines of Klingsohr's definition of the poet, so there is similar method as *Gelassenheit*, but without explicitly religious or theological implications. Another important example of Heinrich's receptivity is embodied by Heinrich's dream, which contains a scene of spiritual potency.

In the first sequence of the dream, Heinrich dreams of "immeasurable distances and wild unfamiliar regions . . . He went through a variety of experiences; he died and

came to life again, loved most passionately, and was then separated from his love forever." (Novalis 16). This is a moment of foreshadowing in that much of the story revolves around Heinrich's hearing of various stories that take place in distant locations and in times long before his own. Heinrich also encounters his future beloved Mathilda who later dies in the novel, while the death of the Mother in Klingsohr's tale is also connected thematically to Heinrich's initial dream. His dream is described in clearer detail as it goes on and he enters a cave to find a water basin:

He approached the basin which surged and quivered in endless colors. This fluid, which was not hot but cool, covered the walls of the cave, where it only emitted a faint bluish light. He dipped his hands into the basin and wet his lips. It was though a spirit breathed through him, and he felt deeply refreshed and strengthened. An irresistible longing to bathe seized him; he undressed and stepped down into the basin. It seemed as if a sunset cloud was enveloping him; a heavenly sensation flowed through his soul; with voluptuous delight countless thoughts stove to mingle within him. New images never seen before arose and interfused and became visible beings around him, and every wave clung to him like a tender bosom. The waves appeared to be charming girls dissolved, which momentarily embodied themselves as they touched the youth (Novalis 16-17).

This scene fuses the erotic with the spiritual through a baptism that is embedded within a Romantic aesthetic setting. As Nicholas Saul explains, the motif of baptism could easily be infused with a writer's ideas: "By Novalis's day then, the motif of baptism has become fair game for any writer who wishes to communicate an aesthetic or moral message involving an idea of higher self or community, and who requires a symbolic form in which to cast it. These writers assimilate Christian tradition not in order to break it but because they see it as already broken" (Saul 123). Saul's remark provides important insight into the appropriation of religious motifs in literature during the Romantic era. His observation highlights Mayer's concern's that the spiritual framework within Romanticism did not come from pre-conceived theosophies and religious concepts. I would argue that the importance of religious motif in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is that it

was another means by which Novalis asserted the importance of the spiritual process. By using religious motifs such as baptism, Novalis was able to direct the novel's narrative towards a spiritual discourse.

In a similar manner to *Hymns to the Night*, there are thematic shifts in the imagery, among them a scene in which Heinrich bathes in his dream, which is to suggest an encounter with otherness. The otherness presents itself in different guises for Heinrich in that it takes on a primarily feminine form that later becomes indecipherable in description. The presence of the feminine is visualized by the enclosed and moist cave, that can be analogized as a womb. Once again, the womb imagery refers to *Hymns to the Night* with womb-like settings being places of significance as well as revelation. With the motif of baptism in mind, Luther's own definition of baptism bears relevance to the scene in Heinrich's dream. As Saul explains, Luther's concept of baptism is as follows:

[B]aptism for Luther is mystical union with Christ qua fleshly death and spiritual rebirth: and it is the seal of spirit, initiation into the Christian community which has 'died to the world' and lives in Christ. There are two phases of baptism, by water and by spirit, and of the child and the adult, without there being a rigid equation of the two; and this typological structure of expectation and fulfillment in the daily struggle for faith with Old Adam is the structure of Lutheran Christian's personal development (Saul 110).

There are many aspects in Heinrich's dream that coincide with Luther's definition of baptism as summarized by Saul. Heinrich dying and coming back to life in his dream can also be recalled in Böhme's theosophy with the notion of effluence of revelation and the properties, which stems from Luther's own theology. A further connection resides in Böhme's view of baptism in that he considers a child already baptized by God: "[A] child (as soon as it has life in the womb) is, so far as the divine essence is moving in the heavenly part, already baptized by the Holy Spirit, and attains the incarnation of Christ." (*Six Theosophic Points* 83). Böhme's statements assert that humanity is inherently

baptized by God and therefore is already unified with God by incarnating Jesus Christ from within themselves. Heinrich's dream very much depicts baptism in accordance with both Luther and Böhme in that the baptism is a manifestation of both Heinrich's rebirth and his inherent spiritual wholeness. The womblike setting and erotic description in Heinrich's dream correlates with Böhme, as the scene depicts a birth, which symbolizes creation. In addition to the baptismal symbolism, Heinrich is flushed out of the basin in a manner suggesting that he is literally born: "Intoxicated with rapture and yet conscious of every impression, he swam easily with luminous stream as it flowed out of the basin into the cliff." (Novalis 17). The theme of birth is important in that it announces a beginning and with Heinrich being flushed out, the dream indicates the beginning of his journey that carries on throughout rest of the novel. The spiritual significance of the baptism and birth in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is that of a renewal and rebirth, as well as spiritual unity. While the scene lacks any indication of a unity with Christ and God in the traditional baptismal sense, it asserts a spiritual baptism into nature and the feminine, because for Novalis, there is a spiritual unity through the union of humanity and nature, as well as fusion of masculine and feminine. An important aspect of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is the fusion of masculine and feminine as it is a recurring motif that Novalis explores to assert the creative approximation towards unity.

Scholars such as Mihai Stroe pinpoint that Novalis' emphasis on the fusion of masculine and feminine has its basis in alchemical symbolism which again demonstrates a thematic correlation of Novalis' ideas with that of Böhme's. In his article "The Alchemy of Romanticism in Scientific Context", Stroe examines the extent to which Romanticism follows an alchemical paradigm that was later brought to spiritual fruition

by Carl Jung (Stroe 61). However, unlike alchemy, Romanticism never achieves its desired final stage of alchemy, as it is always undergoing the approximating process towards unity (73). With such non-closure being a recurring theme throughout Romanticism. Stroe asserts that similar to alchemy, Romanticism strives towards transformation:

[R]omanticism works on chaos, transforming it into order, it transforms dualism into monism, it unites contraries into synthesis; on the other hand alchemy operates on matter and on the fallen soul of man in order to obtain perfection and redemption by shortening the period of natural gestation and by spiritual ennoblement, illumination, revelation (71).

The dialectical unity fundamental to Novalis is a poignant example of Stroe's observation, as Novalis himself sought the goal of alchemy through the medium of poetry and the notion of love, in that they both facilitated a perfecting state of the self. The dialectical unity in other words is the structure by which the creative process occurs, from one totality to another, or from non-unity to unity as recognized in Böhme's theosophy. Stroe notes that Novalis was not only interested in alchemy and figures such as Paracelsus and Böhme (69), but also that Novalis saw women as part of the process of striving towards an alchemical unity (65). The binary of masculine and feminine, man and woman has had symbolic and spiritual significance throughout humanity, and as Stroe points out, holds equal importance in alchemy with the two balanced together being a *magnum opus* (65). For Novalis the notion of love serves as the *magnum opus* or catalyst for the Romantic aesthetic and its spiritual dimension.

Heinrich von Ofterdingen, continually references the concept of love, as a pivotal theme embedded in other stories as well as a state of being for the characters of Heinrich and Mathilde. For Novalis each instance of desire that proceeds as love is an example of a philosophical reconciliation between the subjective 'self' and the objective 'other' as

unity and understanding. In the article “Nature as a You”, both Christian Becker and Reiner Manstetten explore how Novalis' concept of love through the philosophical self and other reflects the relationship between humanity and nature in that: “[t]he mystery of love is in a certain sense that it does not attempt to determine the other but accepts him/her in his/her own development” (107). The context of this statement still applies to Novalis' notion of love between two individuals in that they are mutually striving together. Both Heinrich and Mathilde exemplify this idea in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and express their sentiments towards accepting each other's process:

Oh Mathilda! the gift of prophecy comes to me from you alone. Everything I have is yours; your love will lead me into the sanctuaries of life, into the holiest of holies of the heart; you will inspire me to the highest contemplation. Who knows whether our love may not someday turn to wings of flame that will lift us up and carry us to our heavenly home before age and death overtake us (Novalis 118).

Heinrich's beloved Mathilde replies and expresses her loving faith for Heinrich by invoking the aspect of fire that transcends matter: “I too can believe everything now, and I feel so clearly a quiet flame within me; who knows whether it will not transfigure us and gradually dissolve all our earthly ties. Only tell me, Heinrich, whether you too already have that boundless faith in me I have in you.” (118). The language expressed enters the realm of an earnestly faithful love which correlates to Novalis' notion of religious love. As Wessell explains: “True religious love means that an individual loves another not alone for his or her *own* proper finite being but as that through which the infinite appears or shines” (442). The love between Heinrich and Mathilde takes on a transcendental and spiritual quality which asserts the metaphysical aspect of the dialectical unity, as well as an alchemical marriage as indicated by Stroe. This is further supported in that Mathilde and Heinrich do marry later on in the novel with Klingsohr

presenting his tale as a promise to the couple: “Today I promised [Heinrich] I would tell a fairy tale; if it suits you to listen, I am ready.” (Novalis *Ofterdingen* 120). The correlation between Heinrich and Mathilde with Klingsohr’s tale brings important alchemical and spiritual symbolism to the forefront through their marriage. The tale itself portrays a spiritual marriage that will be examined later. The fusion of masculine and feminine, be it through love and marriage, alchemical or literal, also has roots in Böhme’s theosophy through the notion of the androgyne which bears crucial importance when drawing a connection between Novalis and Böhme.

The androgyne in Böhme's theosophy is an expansion of the magus, with the magus being a symbol of a man who could understand and utilize esoteric divine power (Walsh 20). While the role of the magus is primarily assigned to men in Hermetist thought, the all-inclusive nature of the androgyne allows for the potentiality of women to act as magus, in that the androgyne is symbolic of esoteric spiritual knowledge. Walsh explains that “[t]he symbol of the androgyne, which goes back to the earliest mythic conceptions of the divinity, represents the all-inclusive character of the Godhead that contains within itself all the conflicting and contrasting properties of existence, including the most fundamental differentiation of all between the two sexes” (20). For Böhme, the androgyne symbolizes the true nature of humanity by embodying the balance of masculine and feminine, a unity of elements that otherwise conflict and contrast (20), representing an alchemical sacred marriage, where there is a harmonization of dualistic properties. As a result of such harmony the androgyne also has a spiritual body, and the ability to procreate (20). Böhme’s own notion of the androgyne is based on Mary’s own

conception¹⁵ of the child, Jesus Christ, as well as the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve (Martensen 245-248). The wisdom of God is often given the feminine guise of Sophia, and through the figure of the androgyne, it would be regarded as a marriage of mortal humanity with the wisdom of God. Martensen explains that in Böhme theosophy, Sophia was Adam's first wife¹⁶ and that he was unfaithful to her (234). Sophia was of the spiritual dimension, while Eve is of the corporeal realm as is Adam (234). The importance of Sophia, is that Böhme establishes the immediate separateness between humanity and God with Adam, which necessitates the seven properties as a process towards unity, be it a return to both Sophia and God. What can be derived from the symbolism of the androgyne is that it the androgyne represents the wholeness of an individual who has achieved harmony and is married to Christ (Martensen 248). In other words, one married to the Christ from within oneself which is reflected as a balancing of the masculine and feminine within the individual. Martensen also explains that the androgyne is also important with regard to aesthetics: "The doctrine of androgyny has not simply an ethical meaning; it has also significance for poetry and art. The highest beauty must be androgynous . . . But if the masculine or feminine form is to be beautiful in the highest sense of the term, it must rise above the sexual contrast and express a combination of the nature of the man and woman" (248). While Novalis does not outright articulate a fully formed androgyne, he uses the same binary motif of fusing masculine and feminine to assert unity through differentiation which is exactly the symbolism that

¹⁵ Mary's impregnation of Christ is due to her wholeness of being as she was married to God spiritually, despite being a virgin and not having sexual intercourse, according to Christian narrative.

¹⁶ When considering the greater Biblical narrative, perhaps there is a correlation between Sophia and Lilith? However, this inquiry would require further investigation and research.

androgyne represents. In other words, the union between male and female in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* serves as a primary paradigm for the Romantic spiritual aesthetic by which Novalis uses through the Romantic aesthetic and facilitates spiritual unity.

Additionally, Böhme's figure of Sophia has particular relevance to Novalis in that Novalis himself uses the figure of Sophia in his novel quite deliberately. This thesis will demonstrate how the notion of the androgyne and the figure of Sophia have symbolic significance in relation to Novalis, through a close analysis of Klingsohr's tale in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.

Klingsohr's tale is significant because it is an example of Novalis' spiritual vision and imbues mythology with alchemical symbolism. Klingsohr's reading sums up the themes of *Heinrich Von Ofterdingen* expressed earlier throughout the novel. Bruce Haywood highlights how much of the imagery in Klingsohr's tale pertains to alchemy, while the tale itself is not entirely an alchemical allegory, but more as a culmination of many ideas (213). There are many scenes within the tale that depict a transformation, which supplements both alchemy and creativity as themes. At the banquet of Heinrich and Mathilde's wedding day, Klingsohr tells the crowd that he will tell a story.

Klingsohr's tale tells of a kingdom in crisis that overcomes struggle and creates a golden age. Geza von Molnár identifies the characters in Klingsohr's tale as archetypes of the self, in that characters are akin to a metaphorical household that embodies aspects of an individual (117).

Scholars such as Alice Kuzniar have examined extensively the different facets of the Romantic aesthetic expressed in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. In *Delayed Endings*:

Nonclosure in Novalis and Hölderlin, Kuzniar outlines how lack of closure was pivotal to Novalis' work in asserting the notion of an infinite creative process:

[T]he golden age and its related ciphers are not just one theme among many to depict. Instead they form a collective symbol for imaginative, poetic expression. In other words, whenever Novalis borrows from the network of golden-age imagery, he points to the fictive quality of his utterance. He thereby asserts that the closed, self-reflexive realm of poetry is conscious of its illusory characteristics (79).

A metaphor is quite literally a metaphor, and is so consciously according to Kuzniar. In other words, the golden age motif is an idealization and Novalis is aware of this, because of the limitations that are inherent to the subjective experience in relation to the creative process of poetry. By using symbols, Novalis intentionally points out the symbolism and the imaginative connections that he draws upon. As Kuzniar asserts, the symbolism within the Romantic aesthetic cannot be taken literally if the ciphers are to point towards an infinite creative process. To do so is to entrap the Romantic aesthetic into that which is counter to it: stagnation.¹⁷ Kuzniar discusses how Klingsohr's tale continually rearticulates the same stories that had been told earlier in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, in that each story is an incarnation of a prior version, while still aiming for the goal of fulfillment (116). I would argue that the fulfillment that Klingsohr's tale strives for is that of a spiritual one which consequently resonates with the mysticism of Böhme.

The tale begins with a hero journeying through a city to its palace. The description of the city and palace has strong elemental imagery: "In front of all windows were graceful earthen vases filled with the most varied flowers of ice and snow . . . What stood out most was the garden in the large square before the palace, a garden consisting

¹⁷ We can even recall Novalis' fragment on the notion of "the inertia of our spirit." (*Philosophical Writings* 76).

of metal trees and crystal plants, bestrewn with flowers and fruits of sparkling jewels" (121). The fantastical and geological setting situates the tale in a realm of magic wherein the natural elements are harnessed, indicating a unity between society and nature.¹⁸ The existence of a place of metal trees and jewel fruits implies that nature is a source of resources and wealth. The hero enters the palace and encounters a woman:

A voice within called out his name. He leaned against the door which opened with a soft sound, and he entered the hall. He held his shield before his eyes. "Have you not discovered anything yet?" the beautiful daughter of Arcturus said in a wailing voice. She was reclining against silk cushions on a throne artistically made of a mammoth sulfur crystal (121).

The importance of the woman is that she is both an intimidating presence for the hero as well as a figure who poses an inquiry which motivates the hero's own journey. It is revealed that the woman is Freya, who is a goddess in Norse and Germanic mythology. Freya's question can be interpreted as not only directed at the hero, but also as an instance where the author is speaking directly to the reader. For Novalis, poetry is introspective for both the poet and participants alike. The archetype of a hero and a hero's journey is one of discovery and growth through adversity or obstacle, so that the hero discovers a revelation or inner resolve within themselves. The woman's question refers to the idea of self-revelation, for both the reader and through recalling aspects of Böhme's' theosophy. The throne that Freya is sitting on is made of a sulphur crystal, which has alchemical importance in that sulphur is a volatile unstable element and in Böhme, symbolizes the

¹⁸ In *The Forge and the Crucible*, Elliade notes how Mesopotamian culture applied the sexual classification of vegetation to that of ores and minerals (36). The male-female classification of ores permeated within Alchemy, well into the Middle Ages as well (37). The overlapping of such alchemical symbolism with ores and minerals as allegories for others aspects of nature was no doubt recognized by Novalis. An alternative perspective is that the scene represents Novalis' concern for nature with regards to the mining industry as well as his idealism with the profession and his interest in geology. Matt Erlin's chapter "Products of the Imagination: Mining, Luxury and the Romantic Artist in Novalis's Heinrich von Ofterdingen" from his book *Necessary Luxuries* explores this subject further.

third property that embodies anguish and struggle. For Böhme, sulphur represents the will or desire to go beyond one's limitations, to grow and surpass oneself, and embodies the aspect of strife in striving. The notion of sulfur in Böhme's theosophy correlates with the theme of self-revelation in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in that there is struggle in the process of self-revelation. The hero's encounter with Freya refers back to Heinrich's earlier encounter with Zulima,¹⁹ where she states the following in regard to the process of self-revelation:

You meditate and meditate and guess at a meaning now and then and get all the more eager to unravel the profound connection of these primitive inscriptions. The unknown spirit of these arouses uncommon reflection; and even if one leaves without the wished-for revelation, still one has made a thousand remarkable discoveries within oneself (60-61).

Zulima's statement outlines how a truth is derived from the self. The emphasis on a subjective truth relates to the notion of the knowledge of the self. Additionally, it is important to recognize the notion of an ongoing process, in that the process of learning through introspection is infinite, as the outcome of introspection is indefinable. As Zulima states, the revelations can be contrary to one's expectation and desire. In other words, nothing is guaranteed or predicted, making the process abstract, much like the imagination. Novalis's concept of self-revelation is therefore a creative process of continually learning. Zulima's words also resonate with Böhme. Böhme's notion of revelation entails that God reveals things, and there is an inward and then outflowing and then inward motion again (*The 'Key'* 16). In other words, revelation is through effluence with God. Another striking parallel is that while Böhme sees the process as ultimately

¹⁹ In "Genius Beyond Gender" James Hodkinson has an interesting discussion about Zulima as a character, and how she teaches Heinrich hermeneutics, and how one is educated through others (111-112).

succeeding in unity and being driven in accordance with the divine, Novalis' emphasis is working towards the approximation in spite of the struggle. The failure matters not, as each step gets one closer to the destination. In other words, both Böhme and Novalis provide an optimistic embracing of spiritual revelation and its process. After the hero encounters Freya, King Arcturus arrives and requests that the hero hurl his sword away, which has symbolic importance as well.

In his request, King Arcturus also reveals the hero's name: "All will be well. Iron, hurl your sword into the world that they may know where peace lies" (123). The hero Iron represents the primal symbol of the element earth as well as magnetic forces (Haywood 55). Additionally, characters named by alchemical association situate the realm as being comprised of the basic elements of the universe (Haywood 56). The Hero obliges the King and thus sets the narrative into motion (56) by hurling his sword. "The hero snatched his sword from his hip, pointed it toward the sky, and then seized and hurled it through the opened window, over the city and over the sea of ice. It hurled through the air like a comet and appeared to shatter with a high-pitched sound against the circle of mountains, for it fell in a shower of sparks" (Novalis 123).

The King's statement can be interpreted as a commentary on the notion of peace in the universe. The King's initial request assumes that peace may be found through the hurling of the sword. However, the sword's shattering into a shower of sparks indicates that peace is fragmented and is therefore neither achievable, nor recognizable. However, on the other hand, the fragments of the sword reflect the former whole and therefore symbolizes remnants of peace which are scattered throughout, and are thereby potentially more easily found. This inconclusive outcome ties into the greater Romantic aesthetic.

Another important facet of the hurling of the sword is that the sword itself is the hero's own weapon and tool, be it a symbol of justice, action or violence. The Hero has thus given up some aspect of himself by hurling the sword, and Böhme's notion of surrendering into God's grace can be interpreted here, in that hero resigns a part of himself for a greater duty. Böhme's conception of the second property is also relevant here in that the property consists of a sundering and separation, which sets into motion the process towards unity (*The 'Key'* 28-30).

In another component of Klingsohr's tale, the altar itself bears spiritual and alchemical significance as it depicts a process of transcription and transmutation with the high priestess Sophie overseeing the ritual:

Each time she dipped the leaves in the water; and if on taking them out she noticed that some of the script still remained and had become shiny, she gave the page back to the scribe, who fastened it into a large book. He frequently seemed to be disgruntled when his labor was in vain and everything was blotted out (124).

The altar equally provokes a plethora of interpretations, with the Scribe and Sophie being part of the process that the altar initiates. For Novalis, “the ontological *dynamis* of reality” was like water (Wessell 441), in that things are in constant motion. The Scribe handles his work in some manner that suggests a search for affirmation from wisdom itself. Only some of the scribe's writing remains; by means of the altar, his work is exposed to some invisible discerning force.

To an extent, Novalis is attempting to identify the degree to which rationality comes across as needlessly complicated. The scene is also Novalis' commentary about the concept of knowledge itself, and the discrepancy between objectivity and subjectivity. The significance of the ritual is that the script remains indecipherable and therefore reflects an ultimate unfathomability in knowing the entirety of the universe, and

ultimately God. While the scribe and Sophie can represent many things, it is important that they perform a ritual process that is transformative. Much like Zulima's commentary about revelation, the process is beyond one's control. Sophie is the primal figure of wisdom and represents the raw visceral truths that become clearer in the altar's distillation of the scribe's script. Haywood speculates that Böhme's notion of Sophia may have been partially involved in the conception of Sophie, as she is "the mirror of God or the love of God, yet of one substance of God" (113), and within Klingsohr's tale the character equally holds a sacred position as a high priestess. In *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context*, Molnár also sees a connection, with Sophia being aligned with Böhme's ideas, because the high priestess has superiority of knowledge over the Scribe thereby situating the imagination over rationality (117). In his examination of Böhme, Martensen explains: "For as Theosophy so frequently reiterates, Wisdom, the Idea, can at the same time, diffuse itself throughout all created space, can pervade and most subtly permeate all things, and can also concentrate itself, and dwell absolutely in one individual soul" (234). Sophie can therefore be seen as directly representing wisdom in Klingsohr's tale through her association with the water imagery and the process of the ritual itself as well as acting as a magus by Böhme's standards in the tale.

Another alchemically symbolic character is Ginnistan, in that she transforms the iron rod's form and is later transformed herself: "Also taking it into her hands, Ginnistan bent it, pressed it, breathed life on it, and had soon given it the shape of a snake, which suddenly bit its own tail" (Novalis 125). The mythological snake that devours its own tail is known as *Ouroboros*, which is also an alchemical symbol that represents ultimate wisdom, wholeness, and origin (Stroe 66). Novalis also saw the *Ouroboros* as a symbol

encapsulating “the idea that reality is the evolution, the unfolding, of an inner germinal reality into the outer reality” (Stroe 66). This notion brings to mind the concept of the macrocosm and microcosm, but with the distinction that the *Ouroboros* entails a paradox: the serpent is devouring its own tail, but its body is birthed from its own mouth, which embodies an infinite process of death and life. As Novalis asserted: "Death is the Romanticizing principle of our life. Death is minus, life is plus, Life is strengthened through death" (*Philosophical Writings* 154). The *Ouroboros* also embraces a dialectical unity in that both the head, the beginning, and the tail, the end, are in constant flux with one another. There is magnetic motion in the opposites, one does not overpower the other, but rather validates its existence. The *Ouroboros* thus foreshadows the plot of Klingsohr’s tale wherein a new world is born out of an old world. Novalis applies the continuum symbolized by the *Ouroboros* to *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* in that the stories of old reiterate the notion of a new world, while the novel itself is written in the 19th century, but is set in the time of the Crusades, hinting at an ongoing process of transformation throughout humanity. While the *Ouroboros* was not overtly present in Böhme’s theosophy, we can recall Martin Moller’s concept of regeneration in that cyclical renewal of faith very much resonates with the notion of the *Ouroboros*. Böhme’s seven properties when in unity as depicted in the seventh property “make unto itself a Subject or Object, by its own Effluence; and in the seventh, all the Properties are in temperature, as in one only Substance: and as they all proceeded from the unity, so they all return again into one ground” (*The ‘Key’* 38). The properties start from square one as the first property, but do so with the awareness of unison with all things (38). The journey

inwards to God and outwards away from God is a conceptual depiction of the *Ouroboros* within Böhme's theosophy.

The character perhaps most emblematic of alchemical transformation in Klingsohr's tale is the Mother, described in the following passage:

She seemed constantly busy, and always carried out some bit of the furnishings. If the suspicious scribe, who pursued her with spying glances, noticed it, he began a long reprimand, to which however no one paid any attention. Everybody appeared accustomed to his useless upbraiding. For a few moments the mother would give suck to little Fable; but soon she was called away again, and then Ginnistan took the child again. It appeared to prefer to nurse at her breasts (*Heinrich von Ofterdingen* 124-125).

The noteworthy aspect of the Mother's description is that she functions more as an archetype rather than an actual mother to her children, and is not given a name. While she nourishes Fable, a character who is a personification of creativity, she does so only briefly. Even the King is described as having affection for Ginnistan, which again suggest the Mother is more representative of a greater feminine entity. The Mother seems to have an impact through her death, as the sun is destroyed upon her death. The destruction is witnessed by Fable:

The sun hung in the sky, red as fire with anger; the powerful flame sucked at stolen light, and however hard the sun tried to hold its own light, it grew more and more pale and spotty . . . Finally, nothing was left of the sun but a black, burnt out cinder which fell into the sea . . . In a room she heard a frightful racket; the scribe and his fellows had gloated over the mother's death in the flames but were mightily terrified as they became aware of the destruction of the sun (139).

In the context of this scene, the mother's death has cataclysmic consequences in that the sun itself is also destroyed. The sun itself is a source of light and therefore a source for much of life as well, both literally and symbolically. Through the imagery Novalis, establishes a link between the sun and the mother in that he is pointing out a half of a greater whole that is necessary to the universe itself within the tale. The dialectical unity

and the mother and sun are a part of that greater unity. In relation to the mother's death, Böhme also expresses duality with the notion of the fourth property of fire. There is both a loving light aspect of fire and a destructive all-consuming dark aspect of fire (*The 'Key'* 16). The sun being a source of life and necessary for life can be analogized as God in that God is both loving and wrathful for Böhme. The duality of the universe containing good and evil is also applicable in that the scribes enact an evil deed on an otherwise good character and this represents for Novalis, that the loss of the feminine disrupts the balance.

Fable, who represents the aspect of storytelling and creativity itself, acts as a savior by righting the imbalances of the world. With her mother being burned and the destruction of the sun, Fable acts as a hero by restoring order and recollecting the ashes of the mother, with the help of some individuals known as Zinc, Turmaline and Gold. The characters Zinc, Turmaline and Gold add alchemical motifs to Klingsohr's story not only through their names, but also in their profession as gardeners and attendees of Arcturus, who aid in Fable's journey. The combined actions of the attendees with Fable reconciles the struggles within the world by aiding other characters in the tale, such as Atlas. The character's collective effort serves as a reference to alchemy and the purification of base metals into gold (Haywood 126). Zinc and Gold once again combine their abilities through objects that fuse into a mirror (Novalis *Ofterdingen* 144). The coming together of parts and transmuting forms into unified objects also constructs alchemical symbolism of unity out of division, which is also shared in the ritual that takes place at the end of Klingsohr's tale.

At the climax of Klingsohr's tale, a ritual that takes place which contains significant alchemical and religious symbolism, as well as spiritual implications. Sophie's mixing the ashes of the mother with the invigorating water of the altar basin is a union of death and life. The ritual is a coming together of individuals, and continues on the themes with of the marriage of Eros and Freya, and the reuniting of Ginnistan with King Arcturus. The alchemical aspect of the ritual resides in the intermingling of solid and liquid into a concoction, in which everyone partakes:

They all noticed what they had been lacking . . . Sophie said, "The great mystery is revealed to all and remains unfathomable forever. The new world is born out of pain, and in tears the ashes are dissolved into a drink of eternal life. In everyone dwells the heavenly mother in order to give birth to each child forever. Do you feel the sweet birth in beating in your breast?" (144-145).

All the characters experience spiritual revelation, yet Sophie's statement is paradoxical in light of it, in that she denounces the idea of a complete revelation. Sophie termed the revelation as revealing itself earlier and in other words the mystery is still unfolding and revealing itself, be it unfathomably. The notion of pain is particularly important, in that it highlights the vital spiritual concept of growth that we can recall from Böhme, as Wessell explains: "For Novalis, religious joy, like all forms of joy is only possible when intermingled with pain . . . so too is spiritual love set ablaze when such love encounters the painful resistance caused by the consciousness of death" (Wessell 442-443). The pain from all the tears and ashes, be they metaphors for grief and death, is fundamental to not only eternal life but eternal living. Sophie's statement encapsulates the reality of the human experience with pain and grief. Haywood notes that the ritual represents a union between the self and other and there is the notion of "[r]enewal through bereavement

[which reflects] Novalis's own experience" (119-120). Much like Böhme, there cannot be joy without sorrow.

Another significant aspect of Sophie's statement resides in assertion of a heavenly mother who resides in everyone. In part, this notion constitutes the sacred feminine, which is crucial when considering the novel's overall arc of a journey in that it is an internal one. Much like the baptism in Heinrich's dream, the drinking of the ashes is an encounter with the divine through the feminine, be it through the act of Christian communion. In her later article "Hearing Women's Voices" Kuzniar examines that the drinking of the ashes, also refers to Christian communion (1200), and even the myth of Orpheus (1202). Kuzniar significantly identifies the communion as important in that it situates women as the eucharist body of Christ through the mother, while also giving the male characters the ability to give birth (1200). Kuzniar notes that Novalis even discusses this aspect in one of his fragments: "Der Mann ist gewisser-maaßen auch Weib so wie das Weib Mann"²⁰ (qtd in Kuzniar 1202). Through this statement, Novalis states that there is already an inherent fusion of masculine and feminine within everyone and the importance of this binary is that it asserts an equalizing internal unity in that men and women ultimately are a part of each other. The notion of men having a birthing mother within them as stated by Sophie, evokes an androgynous trait which we can recall from Böhme's theosophy in that the communion with the Mother in Klingsohr's tale represents the act of perfecting that which comes from within oneself. In Christianity it is by internalizing the body and blood of Christ through bread and the wine, a fermented 'spirit' that we are symbolically reminded of the Christ that resides within ourselves as

²⁰ "To a certain measure Man is Woman just like how Woman is Man."

we are the children of God. In Böhme's theosophy, the concept of the androgyne is the symbolization of the sacred alchemical marriage of masculine and feminine, and thereby a marriage of the divine with humanity. As Martensen sees it:

In marriage, the united ones are not simply to propagate themselves and to continue to beget children, are not to continue to bring unsolved problems into the world,-every child is an unsolved problem-while they absolutely fail to solve their own problem, but remain unchangeable what they are. But marriage is to produce in them this transformation, that they assist one another to beget child of God in themselves, to become themselves regenerated as children of God, and for their higher form of existence. Every human being is destined to become androgynous and can be developed into this even in the unwedded state, if he or she is married to Christ, in whom the ideal existence of the man and woman is combined . . . Christ will make us perfect and complete men. But a combination of the essence of the man and of the woman is necessary for human perfection (Martensen 247-248).

In relation to Martensen's examination of marriage and its transformative function of the Christ within, Sophie's words during the ritual point out the same assertion of unity, in that through the inner birth of the heavenly mother, there is the enactment of a process towards God. Novalis's language in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* at this part of the novel strikes significant parallels with the final verses of his earlier *Hymns to the Night*, in that there is the ultimate return to God's bosom:

Down, down, unto the sweetest Bride,
In Jesus fall asleep!
Fear not! the gloaming comes to hide
All loving Hearts that weep.
A dream dissolves our long arrest,
And sinks us in the Father's breast. (Novalis *Hymns to the Night* 53).

The importance of the androgyne in Böhme's theosophy is that it fuses the notion of man and woman as symbol towards unity from within and resonates with Novalis' philosophical concept of a dialectical unity, as Novalis also refers to the fusion and union of masculine and feminine, in that the components form a greater whole that is the individual themselves. This is further apparent in that even the women themselves in

Klingsohr's tale drink of the Mother who represents a sacred albeit heightened feminine archetype, and therefore are also exemplifying the notion of spiritual revelation from within. The concept of spiritual revelation from within is further reinforced in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* by the song Fable sings at the end of Klingsohr's tale, which represents the golden age itself:

The kingdom of eternity is founded,
 By love and peace all strife has been impounded,
 The dreams of pain are gone, to plague us never,
 Sophie is priestess of all hearts forever (Novalis *Ofterdingen* 148).

The importance of Fable's song is that she describes a waking world in that the dreams of pain are no more, and there is the divine archetype of wisdom within everyone. What this ultimately means is that through the Romantic aesthetic Novalis is intentionally using religious and spiritual symbolism to assert spirituality itself, exactly as Böhme did. When examining the process and spiritual fulfillment that Böhme's theosophy strives towards, Walsh clarifies that:

The confusion of opposing forces, which has caused the pain and misery of the temporal existence, will not be overcome; evil will be separated from good and made wholly subordinate to it. The divine light will penetrate through all things and its transforming presence will be manifest in all creatures. Reality as a whole will become transparent for its ideal in divine Wisdom, and the material world will lose its coarseness to become a radiant spiritual corporality . . . This endpoint will be reached not in the passing away of all corruptible existence but in its perfection as the quiescent instrument for the revelation of divine light through the spiritualization of all material reality, Its emergence constitutes the fulfillment of the modern aspiration for the innerworldly transfiguration in which the true meaning and purpose of all things can be directly intuited by all men (20).

In other words, the spiritual process is about transcending ourselves, not beyond reality, but towards reality in that we ourselves are the creators of our own spiritual reality.

Through Fable, the guise of creativity itself in Klingsohr's tale, Novalis asserts that everyone is married to divine wisdom of God and therein lies the creative potential to

actualize our spiritual vision. As Heinrich says to Mathilde in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* says: “the higher world is nearer to us than we commonly think. We are already living it here, and we perceive it most intimately interwoven with earthly nature” (118). With regard to Novalis, the spiritual vision of Romanticism can be clarified by Luke 17:21 from *The Holy Bible*: “for behold the kingdom of God is in the midst of you”. As shall be demonstrated in the next chapter of this thesis, similar spiritual ideas can be recognized in Caspar David Friedrich in that his art shares many spiritual concepts with Böhme and Novalis.

Chapter Three: Caspar David Friedrich, Humanity and Nature.

*And when he knew for certain
Only drowning men could see him
He said: "All men will be sailors then
Until the sea shall free them"*
- Leonard Cohen "Suzanne"

Caspar David Friedrich is a renowned landscape painter from the Romantic era. Much of his work is recognized for its invocation of the sublime, as well as his exploration of Christianity in relation to nature. The goal of this thesis is to examine the circulation of ideas that illustrate the confluence with Böhme's theosophy and the Romantic aestheticization of spirituality. The spiritual concepts explored by Novalis, and consequently the religious implications of Jakob Böhme, find their visual expression in the paintings of Friedrich. Friedrich locates himself between Böhme and Novalis in that his paintings not only express Romantic concepts, but also share a Christian perspective. Böhme's theosophy was deeply rooted in Christianity despite its alchemical symbolism, whereas Novalis more loosely explored spirituality in relation to philosophy, which is secular in its expression.

While Novalis used Christian themes and symbolism, the spiritual concepts he explored are not purely founded on Christian dogma. By contrast, Friedrich's paintings visually used Christian symbols, and affirm German Romanticism's spiritual framework. As a result, his paintings embody concepts from both Böhme and Novalis. In *Caspar David Friedrich*, Werner Hofmann discusses the basis of Friedrich's artistic and religious outlook:

Friedrich's writings contain some important insights into both his own art and that of his contemporaries. They show that both his subjectivity and religious ethos were based on

the self-reliance which Hamann, Herder, Lessing and Kant all granted the creative artist as his right and duty. Friedrich knew that no single person is the 'yardstick for all'; that there are no rules for beauty; that 'judges of art' move along only well-trodden paths; that every natural phenomenon can become art and that the noble human being finds God in everything (17).

Hofmann's description of Friedrich's views immediately brings to mind both Böhme and Novalis, as well as Paracelsus, to the extent that they all articulate a spiritual unity.

The connection between Novalis and Friedrich lies in their shared view that the subjective experience provides meaning, be it in the philosophical or spiritual context. For Friedrich, the subjective experience in the presence of nature led to spiritual revelation and an affirmation of Christian values. This view has become a recognized interpretation of Friedrich's paintings, an example being that fir trees in his paintings often symbolize the notion of eternal life in Christianity (Börsch-Supan 94). However, the depiction of nature is at times at odds with the individual spiritual experience in that Friedrich also portrays a crisis with the affirmation of God in the face of reality through nature's rawness. As much as Friedrich's work visualizes the spiritual concepts of Novalis and Böhme, his paintings also capture some of the key issues for German Romanticism, such as humanity's relationship to nature and the crisis of meaning that defines modernity²¹ (Behler *Irony and the Discourse on Modernity* 62-65). This chapter shall examine how Friedrich contributes to the spiritual discourse within Romanticism in relation to Novalis and Böhme, by means of visually analyzing three of his paintings: *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* [1808], *Monk by the Sea* [1809], and *Morning in the Riesengebirge* [1810-1811]. This chapter will argue for a confluence of ideas, rather

²¹ Ernst Behler's *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity* has a substantial discussion on the notion of modernity in relation to the Romantics. Behler also discusses modernity in his book, *German Romantic Literary Theory*, where he explains modernity as the realization of the unfulfilled ideals of the past. In other words, the modern age cannot claim the past perfections and ideals, but must create new ideals and standards of its own to strive towards (105).

than purely a direct influence. However, it is necessary to examine Friedrich's life and the religious and spiritual concepts behind his work as to pinpoint the extent at which his ideas correlate with Böhme and Novalis.

Caspar David Friedrich was born in 1774 in the city of Greifswald. Friedrich's father was a soap-boiler and chandler (Börsch-Supan 10), who was also considered a strict Lutheran and advocated his notion of Christianity among the family. Friedrich's mother died in 1781, and later in 1787, his brother drowned when rescuing Caspar, after he had fallen through ice. His sister also died from typhus in 1791 (Wolf 17). The trauma of the death of Friedrich's brother is perhaps expressed to an extent in Friedrich's painting *Sea of Ice*, as the painting depicts a shipwreck amidst the ice. The father hired a housekeeper to help look after the children, and they were taught by a tutor, who instilled a strong focus on Latin in them. The tutor also cultivated an appreciation for poetry and music in the children (Börsch-Supan 11). In 1790, Friedrich was instructed in drawing by Johann Gottfried Quistorp at the local university of Greifswald, who initially sparked Friedrich's passion for natural landscape art. As part of his training, Friedrich learned architectural drawing as well, which he would later utilize in other projects. With his training at the university, Friedrich also came in contact with Thomas Thorild, a Swedish professor of literature and aesthetics. Regarding his aesthetic outlook, Thorild was particularly noteworthy for his emphasis on the distinction between the physical (outer) eye and that of the spiritual (inner) eye (Wolf 17). In 1794 Friedrich enrolled at the Copenhagen Academy of Art (Koerner 80), the atmosphere of which contributed significantly to Friedrich's paintings, with regard to cultural nationalism and the politics of Friedrich's own lifetime. While both Dresden and Vienna had more renowned

academies, Copenhagen was the centre known for the "Renaissance of the North", where there was revival of interest in Nordic and Germanic history (80). Equally important during his time in Copenhagen, Friedrich came across the theological concepts of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, whose poetry emphasized that the Church was symbolized through nature (Wolf 18). Helmut Börsch-Supan highlights how Friedrich's later paintings embody a fusion of such concepts, in that some works have both Christian symbolism and political allegory (94), and this fusion continues to be embedded in nature.

Friedrich later moved to Dresden in 1798, where he had frequent exhibitions with a positive reception that expanded into other cities, such as Weimar, which was the capital of German Classicism (Wolf 18-19). While in Dresden, Friedrich became acquainted with fellow painter Phillip Otte Runge (Börsch-Supan 64), and later the writer Ludwig Tieck (Siegel 201), an encounter that I shall discuss later. In the year of 1806, Dresden was occupied by Napoleon's army (Wolf 94-95), which was reflected in Friedrich's work²² during the later years of the Napoleonic Wars. Friedrich also assisted in offering supplies to volunteers during the Wars of Liberation (37). In 1808 Friedrich exhibited his work *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, which brought a certain amount of prominence to his career. The painting attracted both praise and criticism, as the art-piece took a radical approach in terms of subject and composition within landscape painting. Within the following year Friedrich's father died and later in 1810, *The Abbey in the Oakwood* and *Monk by the Sea* were exhibited, which brought Friedrich

²² The paintings *Rock Valley (The Tomb of Arminius)*, *Tombs of the Fallen in the Fight for Independence (Tombs of Ancient Heroes)*, and *The Chasseur in the Woods* are noted for overtly embodying Friedrich's opposition to the French occupation of Germany during Napoleon's time (Wolf 37-40).

more success as a painter (95). Painted as a pair, *Monk by the Sea* and *The Abbey in the Oakwood* were exhibited at the Berlin Academy in 1810 and later bought by Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia (Börsch-Supan 79).

Friedrich eventually was elected as a member of the Dresden Academy in 1816. In 1824, Friedrich applied to be the chair in the department of landscape painting, but was denied the post and instead given a position as an Associate Professor. During this time Friedrich married Caroline Bommer in 1818, and they had three children (Wolf 95). Bommer served as a muse in many of his works such as *Woman before Rising/Setting Sun* and *Woman at the Window* (Koerner 235). During the 1830's Friedrich grew more withdrawn, only sharing his work among family members and close friends, as he felt his work no longer spoke to the general public (Wolf 79). Friedrich relied greatly on patrons to finance his work, such as the Prussian monarchy in his early career and the Russian royal family later on (Kroeber 402). As consequence of such reliance on patronage, Friedrich's career saw a general decline overall, as royal patronage and commissions for his works became less frequent (Kroeber 402). Perhaps another contributing factor in Friedrich's career was his particular style of landscape painting as whole, in that the aristocracy and general public craved new trends and ideas.²³ Friedrich wrote some of his theories about art around 1830 (Cahen-Maurel 190), some of which will be discussed in relation to the sublime. In his final years, he suffered from a stroke in 1835 that limited the mobility of his limbs and in 1840 he passed away.

²³ Friedrich's subject matter is acknowledged by scholar for its immense religious and spiritual focus, which could suggest that his own time saw the rise of secularism, hence his work falling out of fashion within art community of his own time.

Friedrich was much admired by many key figures of German Romanticism. Tieck is of particular importance, as it was Tieck who shared his findings on Böhme with the Romantics, including Novalis, and possibly Friedrich. Both Tieck and Friedrich shared great admiration for each other's work. For example, Friedrich was particularly inspired by Tieck's *Franz Sternbald* (Siegel 201). However, the extent of the relationship between them does not seem to extend much beyond mutual respect (Börsch-Supan 64). When it comes to overall influence, there is no documentation existing or surviving to verify whether or not Tieck shared his enthusiasm for Jakob Böhme with Friedrich. While some scholars such as Norbert Wolf do make general mentions of such correlations (*Caspar David Friedrich* 35), they do not fully examine them. Additionally, scholars equally struggle to find any direct influence on Friedrich from philosophers such as Hamann, Herder, Lessing and Kant (Hofmann 17). What scholars such as Hofmann do assert, however, is that while there may be no outright evidence, there still remains the confluence of such ideas within Friedrich's work (17), and the same can be said of the similarities between himself and Böhme. Additionally, much like Böhme, Friedrich was also influenced by the ideas of a pastor, Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten, in Rügen.

Many of Friedrich's concepts were influenced Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten at the island Rügen, which Friedrich visited frequently (Wolf 20). As a pastor, Kosegarten "preached a particular theology of the heart, in which the subjective experience of nature's primal, and therefore divinely created, beauty leads to a direct experience of God" (Koerner 77). Essentially it is in the beauty of nature that one finds God, which is a notion that Novalis endorsed in his own philosophy. Kosegarten expressed his faith by means of his *Uferpredigten*, known as 'shore-sermons' (77), which he set on the beaches

of Rügen (78). Koerner clarifies that it was common in Christian worship to utilize the elements of nature as symbols (77-78). Jakob Böhme more or less did this with the properties of nature being symbolic of an alchemical process towards the unity of God. What distinguishes Kosegarten from Böhme, is that Kosegarten takes the relationship between the presence and absence of God and nature a step further into paradoxical territory. Koerner explains that: “Kosegarten’s shore-sermons stand close to Friedrich’s art, both in their specific settings and characteristics turn of thought which at once affirms and negates God’s immanence in nature” (78). One particular shore-sermon opens with a story about creation with God infusing into the sun, being attributed as a hidden father whose light blinds all that approach it (78). The notion of God being a blinding light is not an uncommon expression among mystics and theologians, but it is nonetheless important because it alludes to the paradoxical nature of spirituality while being a truthful observation about the spiritual process itself in that one is not always receptive to God. The analogy of God as source of light was present in Böhme’s imagery, and eventually took prominence as a theme in Friedrich’s painting, *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* as well. One of Kosegarten’s sermons, according to Koerner, shies away from full pantheism in that its closing statement asserts that nature is a reflection of the spiritual, not an equal:

Look to on high, you loved ones! Not on the colorful
 Blossoming clod of earth that feeds you, limiting your gaze. In the vapours
 Of clammy sludge let not the wings of spirit dwell. (78)

Kosegarten's words are a call to recognize the spiritual world rather than focus only on the physical world. Instead one is to remain conscious of the greater picture, much like Böhme, in that God is to not be found exclusively through the physical world despite

being reflected in it. Another similarity to Böhme is that Kosegarten does not deny God's hierarchy or vast intangibility, but rather sees that God is reflected in nature, despite not wholly residing in nature. Nature is a mirror of God and perhaps the mirror for humanity as well. Kosegarten and Friedrich both articulate the thought of both the affirmation and negation of God's presence throughout nature (78). Through the distant image of God, one can conceive of God. But then why is it only through images? Why does God manifest through that which is not God? Such questions permeate Friedrich's work wherein the affirmation of God through nature teeters on the edge of uncertainty. For Böhme, God is continually affirmed in nature as nature is an extension of God, wherein the spiritual process is reliant on the individual and God's own intention to reveal it (Böhme, *The 'Key' of Jacob Boehme* 17). Within Friedrich's time however, the extent of God's presence is expressed more inconclusively, in that through nature the notion of God is at times unattainable or that God is absent altogether.

For Friedrich, the subject of God in nature goes into the realm of modernity in that there is the crisis of confirmation as to what actually affirms and what negates God. Friedrich's work often oscillates between both optimism for the affirmation of God and the pessimism due to the lack thereof God. However, the paradoxical nature of spirituality, as is recognizable in Böhme, would clarify that through God's absence, God manifests and is revealed. I would assert that Friedrich's paintings use a similar means of irony albeit through the Romantic aesthetic to articulate spiritual struggles, of which I shall later discuss. As with Tieck and his inspiration from Böhme, ideas and intentions can change. In Friedrich's case, some artworks align more clearly with Romantic ideals, whereas other paintings depart from such concepts. What is certain, however, is that there

was a shift in spiritual thought in Friedrich's time. During the transition from the 18th to the 19th century, theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher expressed a desire for a revival of religion (Hofmann 49-50). Hofmann explains this transition as follows:

Schleiermacher wanted to disentangle religion from theology's patterns of abstract thought and renew it through the act of seeing. For him, the essence of religion was 'neither thinking nor doing but seeing and feeling'. What counted was the individual approach, not the general concept: 'Seeing is and remains something individual'. This meant necessarily, limiting oneself to specifics. 'Each of us must be aware that his [religion] is only part of the whole, that there are other opinions about the same objects that bind him to religion: opinions which are equally devout and yet differ entirely from his, and seeing and feeling may spring from other elements of religion which perhaps mean nothing at all to him'(50).

The subjective religious experience became more crucial than merely adhering to the religious doctrines and dogma (50). Schleiermacher is advocating for subjective spirituality, in that everyone has a distinctly subjective view on religion, and consequently spirituality in both the religious and secular context. Hofmann's comment on Schleiermacher clarifies that religious experience was to be sensed and perceived in the present moment. However, in the act of doing so, one is bound to one's own subjectivity. Therefore, one must have an awareness of the different perceptions of spirituality, which would relate the Romantic notion of the self and the other as recognized in Novalis. Earlier in England, William Blake advocated a similar idea: "All Religions are One" (50). Hofmann notes that like Blake, Schleiermacher also emphasized a spiritual unity in that one's own subjective spirituality was but a part of a greater whole that was spirituality itself. The emphasis on unity and subjectivity with regard to religion further demonstrates the extent to which Romanticism sought the means of expressing such concerns through nature, in that the church was no longer a system that could solely be relied on when it came to the spiritual experience of an

individual. Hofmann draws similarities between Schleiermacher and Friedrich in that they both sought freedom from the confines established by the traditions and institutions of their respective disciplines (50). Böhme does discuss the act of seeing and feeling the presence of God, and that experience or glance of unity as he termed it, then elevates the notion of spiritual desire towards a higher calling wherein one is in harmony with the divine.²⁴ This is not to say that Böhme would have supported Schleiermacher's view per se, but rather that Böhme's theosophy also addresses the individual subjective experience as practiced in different institutional contexts.

There is some disagreement among scholars about Friedrich's views on art. In part, it is a difficult task in that our access to Friedrich's views are limited by what little surviving documentation there is. However, there is evidence that Friedrich's art had an immense focus on religion and spirituality through one of his statements. For Friedrich, art was that which could mediate between humanity and nature:

Die Kunst tritt als Mittlerin zwischen die Natur und den Menschen. Das Urbild ist der Menge zu groß, zu erhaben, um es erfassen zu können. Das Abbild als Menschenwerk liegt näher den Schwachen und so erklärt sich auch wohl die öfter gehörte Äußerung, daß das Abbild mehr gefalle als die Natur (Die Wirklichkeit) Oder auch die Redensart: es ist so schön als wenn es gemahlt wäre; statt von einem Gemählde zu sagen es sei so schön als wenn es Natur wäre (Caspar David Friedrich qtd. in Emmrich 17).²⁵

Art according to Friedrich, is the bridge between the people and nature. Friedrich also asserts that such a role for art is too vast for the public to fully grasp, and when nature is depicted through art, little credit is given to nature itself. Art takes priority of praise of

²⁴ As discussed in the first chapter, Böhme states: "A true Christian is a continual champion, and walks wholly in the will and desire in Christ's person . . . He desires to die to the iniquity of death and wrath, and gives himself up to obedience, and arise and live in Christ's obedience in God" (qtd. in Stoudt 144). One strives to be as Christ on earth.

²⁵ "The artist steps in as the mediator between Nature and the people. The archetype is for the crowd too big, too sublime, to be able to grasp it. The image as human-work lies near the weak and so well explains the often heard expression, that the image is more appealing than Nature (Reality) Or also the saying: it is so beautiful as if it were painted; instead of saying to a painting it is as beautiful as if it were Nature."

and over nature. One issue that Friedrich is attempting to highlight concerns the role of the art. Art strives towards a greater role beyond the aesthetic. That is not to say Friedrich is opposed to the Romantic emphasis on the aesthetic representation, but that Friedrich is critical of prioritizing of the aesthetic over nature. In his own paintings, he utilizes the aesthetic and to a further degree the depiction of nature to portray religious themes. By being the mediator between nature and humanity, art communicates between the two. As we can recall with *Kosegarten*, nature according to Friedrich is the spiritual intermediary for God, much like how according to his statement art mediates between humanity and nature. However, Friedrich does not conflate art with nature as a spiritual equivalent in mediating with God. Again, nature is able to both reflect God's presence and God's absence. Art is a tool for articulating nature as the intermediary between humanity and God. When the presence and absence are simultaneous, the sublime plays an important role as an aesthetic tool in Friedrich's paintings to reflect this discourse.

Scholars²⁶ generally understand the concept of the sublime as a pivotal aspect of Friedrich's work. Friedrich's notion of the sublime and views on art are particularly crucial in terms of how he articulated his ideas of art's relation to nature and religion. Friedrich's paintings *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* and *Monk by the Sea* are particularly evocative of the sublime in that they entail spiritual contemplation, while striking similarities to both Böhme and Novalis. For Friedrich, art was an "elevation of spirit and religious inspiration" (Wolf 19), in that art was an expression of spirituality and

²⁶ Some scholarly publications on Caspar David Friedrich that came to attention late in my process of this thesis:

Amstutz, Nina. "Caspar David Friedrich and the Anatomy of Nature." *Art History*. Vol. 37, No. 3 (June 2014): 454-481.

---. *Caspar David Friedrich: Nature and the Self*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020. Print.
Grave, Johannes. *Caspar David Friedrich*. New York: Prestel Publications, 2017. Print.

aimed towards it. Put concisely, the sublime is defined as a response to an aesthetic experience that contains both awe and terror. This aesthetic concept has been explored by various philosophers such as Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant (Boyd-Whyte 138-139), and the emotions of awe and terror were also brought into both philosophical and spiritual discourses in Romanticism. In her essay “The Simplicity of the Sublime: A New Picturing of Nature in Caspar David Friedrich”, Laure Cahen-Maurel²⁷ explores the concept of the sublime within Kant's philosophy and how the notion itself is problematic in its applicability to Friedrich's work, in that Kant's definition of the sublime is inconclusive with regard to the philosophical reception of Friedrich's work (188). Cahen-Maurel notes that Friedrich's own views and writings conflict with Kant's concept of the sublime (189), because Friedrich regards the Kantian sublime as but one definition out of many when invoking the sublime (191).

Cahen-Maurel summarizes Kant's definition of the sublime as an experience of limits, where the imagination itself is:

confronted with the supersensible or metaphysical—the realm par excellence of reason and the unlimited . . . As analyzed in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790), the sublime brings to light a limit that is both ‘mathematical’ and ‘dynamic,’ that is, theoretical and practical, concerning the capacity of the human being to directly access whatever surpasses the sensible world (188).

The mathematical aspect, Cahen-Maurel notes, can be visually encapsulated by

Friedrich's use of space, in that the work itself suggests infinity, such as through the vastness of the sky in *Monk by the Sea* (188). The dynamic sublime is an expansion of the

²⁷ Laure Cahen-Maurel has also done several recent publications on Caspar David Friedrich that unfortunately also came to my attention quite late in the process of this thesis: Cahen-Maurel, Laure. “Le détail révélateur: Caspar David Friedrich, Hegel, Novalis.” Paris: Editions Hermann, 2019.

---. *L'art de romantiser le monde. La peinture de Caspar David Friedrich et la philosophie romantique de Novalis*. “Ideal & Real. Aspekte und Perspektiven des Deutschen Idealismus”. LIT Verlag. February 2017. 339 pages.

mathematical in that the notion lends itself to contemplation of one's finitude in the presence of nature, through a rational perception (188). Koerner also defines Kant's notion of the sublime as an experience that demonstrates a limit as well: "For Immanuel Kant as for his Romantic heirs, sublimity in art occurs at the moment of representation's collapse, when the mind seeking to comprehend its object, fails, and attains thereby an intuition of a transcendental order" (Koerner 100). The contemplation of the sublime is a thought-provoking experience that has one reflecting on the existence of a higher power. However, while it may seem that both Kant and Friedrich share in the notion of the sublime provoking higher contemplation. Kant's emphasis lies with pure rationality, whereas Friedrich saw equal applicability of the sublime through aesthetic representation.

Friedrich had a different concept of the sublime from Kant (Cahen-Maurel 191). In his writings,²⁸ that were published posthumously in 1840 (190-191), Friedrich outlines the extent to which art through the sublime mediates between nature and man (Cahen-Maurel 193). Recalling his statement of the artist as an intermediary, the sublime for Friedrich is a tool, just as art is. The issue that Friedrich recognizes in relation to the prioritization of the aesthetic over nature, is that the sublime in the Kant's terms runs the risk of not contemplating God or its goal of rationality altogether. In other words, one can be hung up on the experience of the sublime rather than reconcile the sublime's implications, be they spiritual or not (188). For Friedrich however, the sublime should bring one into the realm of spiritual contemplation through an apotheosis of the aesthetic rather than purely the sensual (191). While Kant's notion of the sublime aims to achieve a

²⁸ *Äußerungen bei Betrachtung einer Sammlung von Gemälden von größtentheils noch lebenden und unlängst verstorbenen Künstlern*, (Considerations while contemplating a collection of paintings by artists who are for the most part still living or recently deceased).

transition towards transcendence, I would argue that Friedrich balances the notion of sensibility and the sublime in that one can recognize nature, and yet can still reflect on nature and God together. In other words, the sublime by Kant's definition overwhelms one's sensibility, whereas Friedrich's work through the aesthetic retains the sensation of nature by subverting it in a manner where one contemplates God and nature, thus mediating between the two. If the artist is an intermediary between humanity and nature, the issue that becomes apparent for Friedrich is that humanity has prioritized the aesthetic over nature. This in turn, also reflects also as a prioritization of humanity's own creativity over that of God's. Perhaps Friedrich was striving to reconcile such prioritization through art by means of spirituality? What is important, is that Friedrich's emphasis on the aesthetic does not prioritize it over spirituality. This idea is also shared with Novalis through Klingsohr's statement on poetry in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Another facet shared between Novalis and Friedrich is the notion of Romantic irony.

In consideration of the paradoxical nature of spirituality in line with Romantic irony, Friedrich's work asserts spirituality by depicting both religious presence as well as its absence in nature. By lingering on the boundary and depicting both sides, Friedrich argues at the very least for the spiritual potency through art, which is a vast subjective universe also. However, I would assert that much like Böhme and Novalis, Friedrich emphasizes on the inward spiritual journey. A fragment of Novalis' bears relevance to Friedrich's own words, especially when one considers the intense subjectivity that both Romantics explored:

The imagination places the world of the future either far above us or far below, or in a relation of metempsychosis to ourselves. We dream of traveling through the universe- but is not the universe *within ourselves*? The depth of our spirit is unknown to us- the

mysterious way leads inwards. Eternity with its worlds- the past and future- is in ourselves or nowhere (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 25). The notion of an inwardly subjective search is integral to both Novalis' spirituality and Böhme's theosophy. Friedrich's statement also makes clear there is a vastness in conceptualizing the role of the artist subjectively, which reflects the inwardly spiritual search of both a religious and a secular nature. However again, Friedrich's view would be more orientated towards Christianity, as will be seen through an analysis of his painting *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*.

Aside from this painting, Friedrich's own words share another commonality with Novalis' concept of nature, in that nature was often an "object of human consciousness" rather than its own entity (Becker & Manstetten 105). A crucial aspect shared between Friedrich and Novalis, is that Novalis also posits a mediator in the religious context: "Nothing is more indispensable for true religious feeling than an intermediary which connects us to the godhead." (Novalis, *Philosophical Writings* 35). Both Novalis and Friedrich emphasize the role of an intermediary in relation to nature. As Novalis further explains "True religion is that which accepts that mediator as a mediator- considers him as it were the instrument of the godhead as its [representation] . . . Every object can be a temple for the religious person, in the sense of the augurs." (35-36). For Novalis, art can be thus an intermediary between humanity and God, and would justify the Romantic's strong emphasis on the aesthetic. Another distinction with Novalis is that he also situates the notion of a religious intermediary in subjectivity, in that one is able to choose the intermediary. The quality of the connection correlates to one's own independence and freedom of being:

He must be wholly free in the choice of this intermediary . . . The more independent the human being becomes, the more the quantity of the intermediary is diminished, the

quality is refined -- and his relations to it become more diverse and more cultivated -- fetishes -- stars --animals --heroes -- idols -- gods -- *one* God-man. One soon sees how relative these choices are and one is driven imperceptibly to the idea -- that the essence of religion does not in fact depend on the nature of the mediator, but consists purely in the way he is regarded, in the relations that exist with him (*Philosophical Writings* 35). Much like Schleiermacher, Novalis advocates for a subjective spirituality, wherein what matters is the person's own derived meaning from the intermediary. Friedrich's own words also fall in line with the emphasis on subjectivity, but they situate his notion of the intermediary through art towards nature, which asserts that the subjective experience with nature affirms God. Böhme also discussed the role of the artist in relation to God:

This comes to pass also in the philosophical work: The artist will see how the heaven separates itself from the earth, and how the heaven does sink again into the earth, and changes the earth into a heavenly colour; he will see how Mercury purifies the matter and how the purified colours will appear in antimony in their property, and how the wonder proceeds (Böhme, *The Signature of All Things* 126).

For Böhme, the artist observes the constant flux of unity with God, which embodies both a separation and unification. Since Mercury is an analogy for the Holy Spirit, Böhme sees the artist as someone who recognizes the unity between God and the universe. This view is similar to Friedrich's stance on art being a bridge between humanity and nature and to Novalis' assertion that the poet is able to reconcile the connection between humanity and the universe. Friedrich more visually explores these ideas of Böhme, Schleiermacher and Novalis, especially in his painting, *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*.

Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar) (Appendix, Figure 1.) received significant attention in 1808 (Wolf 95). The painting sparked the indignation of the art critic Friedrich W. Basil Ramdohr (Koerner 49), who stated: "It is true presumption when landscape painting wants to slink into the church and creep on to the altars"(49). Many friends and supporters of Friedrich challenged this statement by publishing their own

accounts of the painting in aesthetic journals (49). While Ramdohr appreciated the painting's radical approach, he felt that the darkness of the landscape depicted in *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, represented the end of the Enlightenment, in favour of a new era based on irrationality and the imagination (56). Ramdohr's main issue with the painting is that he felt it deprived landscape painting of its essence (56). Joseph Koerner explains Ramdohr's definition of landscape painting in the following:

Its essential dimension is the horizontal, the ground plane as it recedes evenly and coherently into depth. Rather than establishing boundaries around a principal body, landscape's task is to establish continuities between bodies, to harness the manifold [of nature] into a unified whole. In place of figure painting's unity of the body, landscape substitutes the constructed coherence of the viewer's visual field through devices of linear perspective and of the layering of space into foreground, midground and background (97).

Those who disagreed, saw Ramdohr's notion of landscape painting as being based on principles of a pre-established ideal, and therefore a reorientation of art criticism would be required in order to assess *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* on fairer terms (57). However, Ramdohr was aligned with the traditional style of the Neo-Classical aesthetic (97), so those calling for new structures of art criticism demonstrated a changing attitude within the art-culture of the time. *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, embodies the early nineteenth century confrontation between universalist and subjective aesthetics, in that the rhetoric of Classicism was being challenged by the concept of individual artistic genius (57). Traditional landscape painting was based on a premise of unification, in that the earth and sky were unified with the presence of light (100). In other words, the tradition of landscape painting was based on a certain kind of uniformity. *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* defied the cohesion of traditional

landscape painting by blocking out the sun, thus creating an ambiguity. (100). Another factor that contributes to this rejection of norms was the painting's shape.

The painting has unique shape due to it being part of an altarpiece. The altar was to be located in the home of Count Franz Anton von Thun-Hohenstein and his wife, Countess Maria Theresa von Thun-Hohenstein, in Tetschen Castle in northern Bohemia, where the painting remained from 1809 up until 1912 (Koerner 47-46). Koerner asserts that by being a component in an altar, the painting and frame both serve a function within Christian ritual and links the work to the sacred art traditions of the fourteenth century (47). The frame itself was designed by Friedrich and sculpted by Gottlieb Christian Kühn (Wolf 17). On both sides of the frame, there are narrow columns with bundles of palms at the top forming an arch over the painting. Alongside the top arch, there are five cherubs peeking out of the palm leaves. On the bottom section of the frame there is a bundle of wheat on the left and a grape vine on the right. The frame has Eucharistic symbols represented by the grapevine and wheat, as well as the cherubs amidst the palm leaves (Börsch-Supan 78). The wheat and grapevine are symbols of Christ's life and resurrection (Koerner 122). In between the wheat and grape vine, is a triangle with an eye with rays shining out, which is the "eye of God" or "Eye of Providence" symbol (47). Börsch-Supan notes some correlations between the gold gilt frame and the gold cross in the painting, as well as the number of cherubs matching up to the rays of light (78).

The painting itself has a triangular composition due to the landscape being depicted in the foreground. The viewer's eyes lead to the center in a very natural manner. The landscape is a mountainous scene adorned with evergreen trees. The top of the mountain is the site of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. In the background, rays of light are

emanating from behind the mountains. The sky has shifting tones where the top of the painting has the darkest and the bottom contains significantly lighter tones. The sky and the landscape contrast each other, with the trees and the mountains being a silhouette in comparison to the softness of the sky. Why is such a contrast present? Does the sky represent heaven and suggest that earth is in a perpetual darkness of sorts?

The imagery of darkness within *Cross in the Mountain* blurs boundaries with regard to the various details that are noticeable within the mountain, thereby creating true obscurity. The darkness has an opaqueness which distorts the world that the painting depicts. This particular issue sheds light on Ramdohr's criticism in that as Koerner explains, "Ramdohr's deepest objection to the pictorial manner of *Cross in the Mountain*, stems from such ambiguities, such shifts between the visible and the invisible, and between the part and the whole" (Koerner 101). Koerner's explanation of Ramdohr aptly describes a key facet of German Romanticism, as well the ambiguity that exists within spirituality. The mountain seems to absorb the details, while at the same time making them apparent upon closer inspection, which has a subversive nature in that the contrast of light and dark portrays a struggle. Among the arguments against Ramdohr's critique, Friedrich himself replied with a statement explaining his work:

Jesus Christ, nailed to the tree, is turned here towards the sinking sun, the image of the eternal life-giving father. With Jesus' teaching an old world dies - that time when God the Father moved directly on the earth. This sun sank and the earth was not able to grasp the departing light any longer. There shines forth in the gold evening light the purest, noblest metal of the Saviour's figure on the cross, which thus reflects on earth in a softened glow. The cross stands erected on a rock, unshakably firm like our faith in Jesus Christ. The firs stand around the cross, evergreen, enduring through all ages, like the hopes of man in Him, the crucified (qtd. in Börsch-Supan 78).

Friedrich's own words convey the spiritual symbolism within nature as religious allegory, as well as a dying world and a departing God. Much like Kosegarten, Friedrich assigns

spiritual importance to nature through similes. The rocks and trees represent the faith and hope of humanity. On the one hand the simile of the rock representing humanity's faith in Jesus Christ is an apt observation of religion in general, in that faith is the foundation of any religion. The trees representing hope of humanity in turn has a deep connotation of growth, in that hope is something that grows. Trees also root themselves in the earth and Friedrich's simile is pointing out how hope is ultimately rooted in faith. One has hope because one has faith, be it faith in God, faith in others, faith in oneself. Again, like a tree with many boughs, hope has many facets and applications that extend beyond religion. When a plant has strong roots, it has a greater capacity to grow. Friedrich's specific usage of the evergreen further establishes hope as being something that can withstand even the most difficult of environments and can endure without diminishing. Evergreens are trees that survive the winter, which is the darker time of year. The link between God and light that Friedrich explores further reiterates the connotation between evergreen and hope. The evergreen endures the darkest time, and in essence humanity must have hope and hold on to what little light is within the world.

Friedrich's statement posits a correlation between humanity and hope as a reflection of Christ; humanity redefines itself towards Christ through faith. Faith in Christ is what will bring the light amidst a darkening world. The connection between light and God is reminiscent of Böhme's own theosophy. Much like Böhme, Friedrich puts forward the Christian value of finding the light within. In Böhme the notion of light within was by means of a revelation through love as depicted through the seven properties, whereas for Friedrich it is through the conviction of one's faith between one's self and God. However, the mountain obstructs the light due to the rays of light peering outward behind it. This

may be a possible counter to Friedrich's initial statement because the rocky mountain is obscuring the light. If the rock represents one's firm and unshakable faith, then why would the light be refracted away from the cross and more importantly from the viewer? This question provides potential insight into Friedrich's questioning of faith in that there is not one but many ways to interpret such symbolism. The rock as faith could also represent an institutionalized faith in that there are multiple degrees of faith, some of which are only systematically political and not spiritual at all. To a great extent religion can conflict with spiritual matters and deviate from its original intent. What is undeniable is that through his statement, it is apparent that Friedrich strove to reconcile spiritual matters through his art.

The sinking sun, an old world dying, and a god who no longer walks the world, could imply that Friedrich's words are a precursory thought to Nietzsche's renowned statement in the *Gay Science*: "God is dead"²⁹ (*Joyful Wisdom* 151). However, the notion of a declining presence of God does not entail a lack of God but rather a world that cannot reconcile itself, with God's departure.³⁰ This raises the question as to how we can reconcile with God's departure. Is God a wanderer, moving from world to world in search of something just as we are? Perhaps Ramdohr's criticism is a concern of the painting's theological implications in that there are questions raised towards the viewer with regards

²⁹ "After Buddha was dead people showed his shadow for centuries in cave, -- an immense frightful shadow. God is dead: but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for millenniums yet, in which people show his shadow. -- And we -- we have still to overcome his shadow!" (Trans. Thomas Common 151). The notion of humanity overcoming God's shadow, bears striking resemblance to Friedrich's statement about humanity reconciling God's departure, however such a correlation would require further inquiry and research in order to better compare the theological implications behind both statements. Additionally, Nietzsche's also talks about God's death in relation to the madman, and how we ourselves have murdered God. (167 -169).

³⁰ Tieck also expresses the same sentiment in *Runenberg* with the lady's song:

Where do the old ones bide,
Why do they not reply? (60).

to their own spirituality. Koerner finds that Ramdohr 's remarks reflect as part of his greater criticism against the Romantic aesthetic (Koerner 57), and that with *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, “Friedrich makes explicit and therefore reanimates the historical link between religious and aesthetic signs” (141). Friedrich's notion of an old world dying as consequence of Jesus' teachings brings forth the concept of a coming of age for the world, in that the departure of God is as a parent leaving a child to its own devices. The child is left in the dark so to speak, a sentiment that was also expressed in Novalis' *Hymns to the Night*. Friedrich's notion of the world not being able to grasp the departing light, brings forth a component to his statement in that it relates both to Böhme and Novalis.

The symbolism of light and dark in *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* encapsulates aspects of both Böhme and Novalis. The dark foreboding mountain recalls Böhme's definition of the first property wherein desire exists as a darkness that desires from within itself (*The 'Key* 29). The darkness can be recognized as a lack of unity as the latter properties pertain to light in the paradigm of the seven properties. Böhme similarly outlines a concept of hope, in that the fourth property is at the point where one has a choice to strive towards the light of God or to break off from the glimpse of light and to continue into darkness with a self-devouring consumptive hunger. I would argue that this painting *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* depicts an aspect of choice in the spiritual context similar to the one posed by Böhme. The viewers themselves have a choice. Koerner also supports the painting's emphasis for the viewer in that “Friedrich allows nature to speak directly to the viewer, without any intervening allegory... [and that there are] potential symbols for Christ even outside of their idealization in the

predella's Trinity emblem" (Koerner 142). In a manner of speaking, as Koerner points out, Friedrich's art allows the viewer to enact their own process of how they see the painting. One can look at the painting and see the details within an obscured dark mountain or take a step back and recognize the rays of lighting glimmering behind it. Ultimately there is no interpretation set in stone for the viewer to abide by, the painting is simply offering the viewer an opportunity to think about God, hence its direct crucifix imagery. Regardless of one's own spiritual beliefs, the painting evokes God and Christ as a glimmer of light, which Böhme also did with his conception of the seven properties. The imagery of God as light is a universal concept that appears in various faiths from a variety of cultures. In the context of both Friedrich and Böhme, the imagery of light reflects the presence of God, and as articulated by Böhme there is choice that one must undertake with regards to revelation: to recognize the light and thereby seek unity with God, to be unable to recognize it, or to turn away from God completely. Friedrich's statement indicates a similar stance of allowing for choice, in that through the presence of light there is choice to reconcile its temporality. However, Friedrich asserts that the world has not grasped the light, be it both in the light's passing and its full-on departure.

In Friedrich's statement, the setting sun in *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* can also embody temporality. The painting is ironically itself a static object rendering a process of time, which suggests an existence of in-between, which in the spiritual context would be a dissonance from God. The correlation between Friedrich and Novalis resides in one of Novalis' sentiments on how humanity has lost its comprehension of God:

Everything we experience is a *communication*. Thus the world is indeed a *communication*--a revelation of the spirit. The age has passed when the spirit of God

could be understood. The meaning of the world is lost. We have stopped at the letter. As a result of the appearance we have lost that which is appearing. Formulary beings (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 81).

For Novalis, humanity has to start again when it comes to understanding God and communicating with the universe. When Novalis discusses the notion of appearance, he is referring to humanity's predicament that has resulted from focusing too much on the loss of understanding God, that one no longer recognizes the process itself of understanding God, which is very similar to Friedrich's statement about how the earth was not able to grasp such temporality with the light's departure. Creativity, according to Novalis, is the foundation for communication and a connection with God. For Friedrich, the artist is the intermediary between humanity and nature. While bearing in mind, Novalis's assertion of the imagination and there being a universe within oneself, Novalis also sees a deprivation of spirit through the imagery of a shadow realm:

The external world is the world of shadows – it throws its shadow into the realm of light. At present this realm certainly seems to us so dark inside, lonely, shapeless. But how entirely different it will seem to us – when this gloom is past, and the past, and the body of shadows has moved away. We will experience greater enjoyment than ever, for our spirit has been deprived (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 25).

Cross in the Mountain seemingly visualizes Novalis' sentiment. The darkened state for humanity is articulated also as an urging to strive forward, in that the dark time is only passing. Novalis also states that there is a spiritual deprivation, which again resonates with Friedrich's assertion that humanity cannot grasp the parting light. In times of darkness there remains an inner light which is to be found.

As the sun sets and rises, so too does the spirit of humanity, as it enters a state of regeneration and renewal through adversity. If one cannot find the light, then one need only look inwardly. An inner faith is also to be recalled from Böhme, as it was a pivotal concept expressed by Martin Moller's idea of an inner Christ. Furthermore, Böhme's own

theosophy points towards the properties as entering from a darkened state of desire towards the light of unity. In essence what is to be the darkest moment for humanity is also the moment when humanity is able to become the greatest source of light. Böhme expressed this sentiment by way of struggle, in that “the sun was often eclipsed ... but it rose again and the more it was eclipsed the brighter and clearer it rose again.” (qtd. in Stoudt 61). The seven properties in Böhme's theosophy emulate the notion of coming out of darkness towards the light, and thus there arises a relationship between Böhme, Friedrich and Novalis that is expressed through Christian symbolism towards a spiritual steadfastness. But again, the distinction between Böhme and Romanticism would be that the Romantics perceived the departure of unity as not only a temporal spiritual state, but also as the reality during their own time. However, Friedrich's *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* seems to fall more appropriately into the matter of an all-encompassing unity, in that hope always remains, and much like Böhme's theosophy, all things come into light. For in darkness one must reconcile with oneself, whereas the light can bring about an obscurity in the world around oneself to the point of it taking precedence over an individual. Much like Novalis' *Hymns to the Night*, it is through an ironic presence of darkness that light is recognized. Just as with the drinking of the mother's ashes in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, what is lost is to be internalized and restored from within. The light of day is brief, but so too is its departure, in that night is equally only passing through, much like God in his continual departure and return. In other words, out of the darkness the light shall return, which is where the emphasis of Friedrich's statement lies in *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*. However, *Monk by the Sea*

depicts a drastically different set of ideas, while utilizing a similar symbolic language of darkness and a foreboding atmosphere.

The painting *Monk by the Sea* (Appendix, Figure. 2), is one of Friedrich's most notable paintings. Roughly three quarters of the canvas is a vast sky in the background that evokes a steady uneasiness. One could imagine a storm enveloping the figure in the foreground of the painting. Friedrich deploys a gradual tonality throughout the sky, where the tops of the clouds are one of the lightest areas of the painting. The tonality creates contrast with the foreground, at the lower bottom of the painting, where one sees a desolate shoreline with a lone figure facing away from the viewer. Many people saw the work while Friedrich worked on it, and it was Goethe's friend, Karl Friedrich Frommann, who noted that the monk was a self-portrait of the painter himself due to the resemblance (Börsch-Supan 79). Frommann described the painting as a night scene, which becomes evident in the layering of paint with paler tones being on top of the former darker tones (82). Hofmann emphasizes how the monk is a self-portrait, and that the painting reflects Friedrich's own tragic upbringing regarding his deceased brother, as well Friedrich's own serious and depressive demeanour (Hofmann 57). Koerner finds that: "For what the artist represents in this canvas, as in all his works which combine fragment and system, is not quite the structure of transcendence, but rather transcendence as the dissolution of structure" (Koerner 120). A great deal of Koerner's remark has to do with the concept of the sublime as represented in *Monk by the Sea*, in that the painting evokes something unsettling with regards to the self: "In *Monk by the Sea*, Friedrich disrupts the illusion of a world continuous with the self not only through 'contrastive' compositional strategies, but also through shifts within his painterly manner" (121). Koerner also refers to

Friedrich's work process which required that the painting undergo many renditions rather than reside as a preconceived image (121). When the finished painting was first exhibited, it received critical acclaim and would become Friedrich's 'breakthrough' into the art scene of the time (Hofmann 53).

Heinrich von Kleist was among the many who saw the painting's first exhibition, and commented on it (Börsch-Supan 82). He published an essay, 'Empfindungen vor Friedrichs Seelandschaft' (Feelings occasioned by Friedrich's Seascape) which highlighted his own thoughts and echoed key points from Clemens Brenato's own review (82). Kleist's subjective account highlights the notion of the sublime within the painting as well as the painting's overall atmosphere:

How wonderful it is to sit completely alone by the sea under an overcast sky, gazing out over the endless expanse of water. It is essential that one has come there just for this reason, and that one has to return. That one would like to go over the sea but cannot; that one misses any sign of life, and yet one senses the voice of life in the rush of the water, in the blowing of the wind, in the drifting clouds, in the lonely cries of the birds. But in order to experience this, the picture must appeal to one's heart and one's natural prejudices. In front of this painting, that is an impossibility. Instead of finding this reaction in the picture itself, I sensed it between me and the picture, so that I found myself identifying with the monk. All I saw of the picture was sand dunes. The sea towards which I should have been gazing, was simply not there. No situation in the world could be more sad and eerie than this - as the only spark of life in the wide realm of death, a lonely centre in a lonely circle (82).

Kleist's reaction is one that emphasizes loneliness and a dark desolate world, with the lone monk at the center of the experience. The monk is the role that the viewer steps when gazing at the painting. Kleist's account has a bearing that relates to this thesis, in that he emphasizes the subjective manner that Friedrich himself was aware of with *Monk by the Sea* and its depiction of an isolating world. Kleist even describes the painting as having "a truly Ossianic or Kosegarten-like quality" (82). Kleist's comments about *Monk*

by the Sea validate a correlation between Friedrich and Kosegarten, in that even during the time of the Romantics, such connections were recognizable in Friedrich's work.

The coast within *Monk by the Sea* appears to be the edge of a cliff or a steep elevation as there are no waves to be seen where the water meets the land. One can only see the ripples of waves in the distance in the heavy dark ocean. There is little grass on the coast so one could perhaps envision the weather to be perpetually turbulent. The darkness of the water invokes a stormy atmosphere. The horizon itself is barely visible as the harsh clouds or lighten more as they ascend higher in the sky. The panting harbours an intensity, as if the coast is at the edge of the world itself. One is at the mercy of nature and could be consumed should a storm take place. The lone figure facing a large vastness of sky contributes to an uneasy sense of isolation that is both humbling and disconcerting. But as with Kleist's remark, one can recall Kosegarten's notion that God's being is both reflected and negated in nature, as the painting *Monk by the Sea* renders a possible absence of God in relation to the monk, as the isolative atmosphere within the painting is dominant. Then again, the monk remains in the painting for an unknown reason. Perhaps the monk embodies an aspect of Böhme's concept of *Gelassenheit* in that the monk is surrendering to God and thereby the elements of nature? Perhaps the monk is a representation of humanity as a whole, in that man is no match for the might of nature no matter how devout he feels? Perhaps the monk is disposable for God? While we can recall similar ideas with Kosegarten, the painting still directs itself towards the subjective perspective that provokes questions within the viewer. The monk is both potentially in crisis, and on the other hand remains steadfast in his faith in spite of uncertainty, which to a great extent is recognizable from *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)* as well.

Monk by the Sea is an introspective and consequently spiritual painting as it suggests a looking within one's own self in relation to the world around them. Existentially we are at the mercy of our own beliefs, be they as fragile as twigs in a stormy breeze, or the rocks being bombarded and eroded by the waves of the sea. An important aspect of the painting resides in the under-drawing of *Monk by the Sea*, which provides insight into Friedrich's original conceptions.

A significant aspect in the creation process of *Monk by the Sea* is that there were originally sailing boats in the under-drawing of the painting (79). The significance of Friedrich's eventual exclusion of the ships, is that he gives more agency to nature and forces the viewer to contemplate the monk and the landscape more intensely. The presence of sailing vessels could have greatly changed the painting's atmosphere and even outright shifted its meaning for some viewers. The presence of manned ships would have created more societal focus upon a first glance at the painting. If sailing boats were included, the atmosphere of the painting could seem less tense or isolated, and the nature depicted would be that of a tamed or familiar sea that has been explored by humanity rather than an obscure black volatile sea. Some of Friedrich's seascapes such as *Sea of Ice* are inhospitable and depict shipwrecks, which would suggest that while nature is a religious allegory, it is also cruel and hostile towards humanity. For Friedrich, sailing vessels often symbolized "the transcendental quality of the human soul" with the mast and spars of the ships resembling crucifixes in some of his other paintings (Siegel 199). In other words, sailing for Friedrich symbolized one's journey on earth and how one's existence is at the mercy of the forces of nature (196). The significance of sailing in relation to *Monk by the Sea* is that it serves as subtext to Friedrich's overall intention.

Although Friedrich painted over the drawing, it is still an aspect of the painting, be it a hidden layer of which is inversely nuanced further by the monk's presence, rather than the ships' absence. At another level, the symbolism of sailing also facilitates the incompleteness of the Romantic process in that a ship is constantly embarking on voyages and going from one port to another, yet never remaining ashore and settled.

There is not one destination but many that must be undertaken. The spiritual journey with oneself is no different in this regard as demonstrated through Böhme's theosophy in that there are seven properties which are approximations of a desire towards unity. Friedrich's decision to exclude ships in the case of *Monk by the Sea* demonstrates the extent to which he wanted to emphasize the immense dissonance there can be between an individual and the world. The focus of the painting becomes more intimate in that the painting presents the conflict between nature and the individual. The fact that there are ships in the under-drawing of *Monk by the Sea*, only supplements Friedrich's intention for the painting to be about contemplation of the self. The constant journey within the lone individual occurs as the light fades, and it is a much darker world depicted than that of *Cross in the Mountains* (*Tetschen Altar*).

Monk by the Sea can be thought of as a continuation of *Cross in the Mountains* in that the departure of the light in Friedrich's altar paintings has to an extent taken place. The darkness emerges from the sea, seeping out upwards to within the clouds overwhelming the sky. God has gone, and only the monk remains. We are alone. What is God then? A quiet apathetic observer? Or is there a God? Are "we merely passing figures in a godless universe"? (*A Passage to India* Perf. Peggy Ashcroft). The answers to such questions are indeterminate and cannot be comprehended by rational means alone. In

"Being and Knowing: Spiritualist Epistemology and Anthropology from Schwenckfeld to Böhme", Russell Hvolbek explains that the issue, which Böhme attempts to address, is "no longer to attain salvation in a comprehensible cosmos, but how to comprehend an incomprehensible cosmos and man's and God's place in this cosmos" (108). The same issue of incomprehensible cosmos also arises for the German Romantics. However, for the Romantics the issue was recognized in the division between man and nature. Koerner describes Friedrich's work in a similar manner: "Friedrich empties his canvas in order to imagine, through invocation of the void, an infinite, unrepresentable God" (Koerner 16). An incomprehensible cosmos and an intangible God raise the question as to what is the means of attaining an understanding of the universe and recognizing God. *Monk by the Sea* is perhaps Friedrich's attempt at depicting such thoughts.

Monk by the Sea situates itself within an incomprehensible cosmos, and also relates to the sublime in that the painting depicts a crisis. While one cannot presume to know Friedrich's intentions with *Monk by the Sea*, the painting encourages thoughtful discourse. I would argue that the questioning and uncertainty embodied by *Monk by the Sea*, are reflected through Böhme's theosophy in relation to the second and third property, of the seven properties, as a part of the natural process towards unity (*The 'Key'* 29-30). For in the midst of such suffering, Böhme's notion of struggle can be reflected on, in that it is through struggle that one comes to revelation. The second and third property correlate with pain, loneliness and anguish in that they are initial symptoms of the desire that strives towards unity. The properties become aware of themselves and see themselves as isolated and in turn are in pain and anguish because of such awareness (29-30). Böhme also asserts the unknowable, in that the mysteries of the universe are

ultimately at the mercy of God's divine authority, as it is God who reveals their mysteries to humanity (17). However, Böhme's assertion is perhaps too simple when considering the weight of the spiritual implications of *Monk by the Sea*. Why does God keep things hidden from humanity? Friedrich asserted that the world was not able to grasp the light's departure and in part the *Monk by the Sea* portrays such a departure, not only from a reassurance in God as depicted in *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, with the landscape, but also a departure from the security of one's own subjective reality, as expressed with Kleist's description of the painting's lonely and desolate atmosphere.

When considering the aspect of Friedrich's under drawing in *Monk by the Sea*, it perhaps becomes a possibility that Friedrich saw the transcendental soul of humanity at odds with itself in the wake of self-awareness with one's own subjectivity. The individual is at a point within an ever-widening circle of differences. Börsch-Supan points this idea out as well in that "[the] originality of *Monk by the Sea* lies in the tension created by the void: both the monk and viewer are confronted with an infinite space... Man is unable to orient himself in the infinity that confronts him and makes him painfully aware of his own insignificance and powerlessness." (Börsch-Supan 83). Therefore, the solution is to search within one's self. Novalis is relevant here in that he emphasized subjectivity as well as the journey of the self through creative self-introspection. The journey in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* is inward, in that the protagonist undergoes experiences that he is encouraged to contemplate and consider while he undergoes a creative process. As summed up by the themes in Klingsohr's tale, Novalis' emphasis lies in the spirit of the individual's creative potential. "The highest task of education is- to take command of one's transcendental self- to be at once the I of its I. It is all the less to

be wondered at that we lack complete insight and understanding for others. Without perfect self-understanding one will never truly understand others” (Novalis *Philosophical Writings* 28). For Novalis the transcendental journey begins from within, and as consequence, facilitates an empathy for and understanding of others residing outside of oneself. Novalis argues for an embracing of the self as well as introspection that brings forth the spiritual power within an individual. As asserted by the priestess Sophia in Klingsohr’s tale, there is a birthing mother that resides within. I would assert that the painting *Monk by the Sea*’s spiritual potency resides in the notion of Romantic irony in that it expresses the potential for the steadfastness of one’s own self rather than one’s faith. It is through isolation that one ultimately reconciles with oneself. Böhme’s notion of the fourth property becomes relevant in that the viewer has a choice again in how to view the painting. The fourth property from Böhme’s theosophy discusses the duality of revelation through fire in that there is both a light which illuminates and reveals knowledge, and a dark side to fire where it continues to consume self destructively (*The ‘Key’ of Jacob Boehme* 33). What does *Monk by the Sea* mean for the viewer and how does such meaning reflect viewer’s own outlook on the universe and life? Only the viewer themselves can decide. Furthermore, Novalis’ notion of a dialectical unity is also significant in that the painting *Monk by the Sea* provides a different perspective and extremity when considering the spiritual implications. The painting may potentially counter the spiritual dimension of Romanticism, in that it embodies a feeling of being at odds with the world, not in unison with the universe, but rather divided and alone.

The aesthetic potency of the painting *Monk by the Sea* lies in the viewer's own capacity to contemplate the spiritual and existential. The monk stands alone, and this is a

true aspect of the universe in that everyone is alone when it comes to the notion of life and death. With all of God's greatness and majesty, humanity is only left with questions and the ongoing contemplation of God's presence or lack thereof. Thus, the spiritual journey in modernity becomes a constant and lonely one. There are only the methodologies of organized religion, which were ultimately constructed by society and humanity, so then the evidence that God communicates within such communities is questionable. One enters the realm of this reality, and departs from it, alone. Yet there is something joyous in such loneliness amidst the vastness. There is a freedom, an abstract liberty, an invitation for the potential to grow, to branch out and to partake. To be an explorer within the world around us, as well as ourselves, and to be alive, in the here and the now. What emptiness there is in the world can be filled with what one creates. One strives not towards revelation, but creates the journey for themselves, experiencing it all first-hand. However, as Novalis asserts, by looking within oneself, one can come to know of others, something of which is embodied in Friedrich's painting *Morning in the Riesengebirge*.

Friedrich's painting *Morning in the Riesengebirge* (Appendix, Figure. 3), is one of his larger works and was painted sometime after Friedrich's trip to Riesengebirg with his friend, Georg Friedrich Kersting (Wolf 35). The painting was later bought by the King of Prussia (35). The painting itself has a lightness due to the vast sky of pastel colours. In the foreground we have the rugged earthy mountains that continue into the background as they wash out in color to where they nearly blend in with the light tones of the sky on the horizon. The mountains themselves seem to be covered in a combination of snow and mist, appearing almost like waves in the distance, which creates both a ruggedness and

softness in the landscape. Off centre to the right is a mountain in the foreground, with a cross and figures climbing up towards it. Upon further inspection, one can see that the cross is a crucifix and that the figures are a woman clad in white and man dressed in dark clothes. The woman has both her arms extended. One is holding onto the crucifix, while the other arm is extended to the man, offering support for him to climb further. Friedrich had consistently painted his wife Caroline, as she was his muse for many of his works, so it is not unlikely that this woman is inspired by her, and as Wolf points out, the man could be potentially Friedrich himself (36). Perhaps Friedrich is acknowledging the support and strength that his wife provides? What is key about the man and woman is the subtle hierarchy between them. The woman is higher up on the mountain and is closest to the cross, even touching it, which would raise some questions. Is Friedrich highlighting or reaffirming women and consequently the feminine in Christianity? Often paintings prior to the nineteenth century had religious themes that portrayed women as angels or figures from the Bible. The woman herself has an angelic quality, dressed in white, but then again, upon closer inspection we can see her foot bracing among the rocks so there is a more down-to-earth if not enigmatic quality to her. Wolf explains how the painting is a continuation both thematically and chronically of *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, and he notes how many scholars have presented a variety of opinions on the painting of *Morning in the Riesengebirge*, reading it as either patriotic or religious, with variations in between (36). One can recognize the similarity to the cross with *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, but it is depicted from the opposite angle, as to perhaps indicate that *Morning in the Riesengebirge* is another perspective of *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*. The landscape, however, is devoid of trees and the rather

than the sun setting, it is mid-day. The woman is often read as an “allegory of faith beneath the sign of the cross and in front of the salvation promised on the horizon” (36). An important theme within German Romanticism, is that women are often given a spiritual power, and within the painting, *Morning in the Riesengebirge*, this is visualized to an extent in that she is helping the man. Novalis' philosophy is deeply relevant when drawing on the notion of gender in German Romanticism. As was discussed earlier, Novalis' concepts and philosophy were deeply rooted in the notion of dialectical unity. For Novalis, love was the symbolic act of unity. *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* provides a plethora of examples of how a man and woman are in mutual fealty and become unified by means of their love and faith in each other. As Mihai Stroe stated in regard to Romanticism, an alchemical marriage is at play (Stroe 65). The man and woman of Friedrich's *Morning in the Riesengebirge* illustrate aspects of a greater dialectic unity. All instances of the feminine in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* lend themselves to greater spiritual concepts in part due to the micro-macrocosmic structure that Novalis employs throughout the novel. The various female characters in the novel embody something greater than themselves, be it through nature, creativity, or as symbol of spiritual importance. I would argue that Friedrich's *Morning in the Riesengebirge*, envisions Novalis' philosophical and spiritual concepts in that the image itself is very intimate, and very rich in its interpretative potential. The woman can be interpreted as both the poet and the muse within Novalis' philosophy, wherein the muse inspires the poet, who serves as a bridge between the divine, nature, humanity's relationship, and each other.

This painting bears many similarities to the paintings *Cross in the Mountains* (*Tetschen Altar*) and *Monk by the Sea*, but instead of embodying individualistic

perceptions of nature, with the departure and absence of God, the painting aligns itself with a collective idea. As consequence of the element of intimacy in the painting, this work is greatly receptive to the more collective vision within Romanticism, wherein the relationship between nature and humanity, is actually about humanity relationship with God. While much of Friedrich's own faith was founded on the concept of the subjective experience with nature, and thereby God, a great extent of this agency was to assert a greater collective approximation towards the dialectical unity. Throughout much of Friedrich's work, intimacy unfolds between the viewer and nature. Figures in the paintings are enigmatic vessels for the viewers to project themselves or ideas into the painting. The quantity of figures in Friedrich's paintings rarely becomes a massive crowd, it is always just a group of people or a close-knitted community. In the case of this particular painting, as with some of Friedrich's other works, the female figure assists the male figure with a certain access to nature, which is in alignment with German Romanticism as a whole. Women are the gatekeepers to the unknown, and the woman in *Morning in the Riesengebirge* offers her hand to the man as she looks onto him. The painting raises theological questions about gender as well as questions about spirituality. Are women closer to God than men? Or perhaps the path to God is found through a mutually shared journey as it is individually? One can suggest that yes, women are close to God, but they are a part of the whole in that regard, and that the journey towards God is ultimately shared, as has been clarified by both Böhme and Novalis.

By showing how the woman offers to help and uplift the man, the figures articulate compassion as well as communication and trust. The importance of gender in *Morning in the Riesengebirge* lies in its archetypal potency, as the coming together of

opposites: man, woman, black, white, earthly and ethereal, the unknown and known. The union of opposites is inherently alchemical, and strives towards an aspect of spiritual harmony and unity which is equally resonate in both Böhme's theosophy and Novalis' concept of the dialectical unity. *Morning in the Riesengebirge* seemingly captures a coming together, of an idea from Böhme's theosophy that relates to the notion of the androgyne as Martessen explains:

It means that man and woman, in their relation to love, are to aid one another in becoming whole and complete human beings, seeing that each of them apart is only semi-human. The man is to assist the woman by liberating her from one-sided womanhood, and she is to assist him by liberating him from one-sided manhood, both of which are swayed by egoism and egoistic lusts (Martessen 247).

In other words, we are to aid one another, man to woman, self to other, individual to another, and it is through compassion and ultimately love that we complete each other. A great deal of Martessen's explanation on the androgyne in the context of Böhme's theosophy resonates with Novalis' conception of dialectical unity, and in turn with Friedrich we have a visualization of the same assertion for unity. The importance of the figures in *Morning in the Riesengebirge*, lie not only in their gender, but that they are making the climb together. Novalis believed that unity and understanding could be achieved, through love be it with nature and each other. Böhme also asserted that love is where the true spirit of humanity resides (*The 'Key' of Jacob Boehme* 34), in that the properties are a process of reconnecting with such love, be it from God through unity. Love in of itself is a trust that extends beyond oneself, to another. Novalis' philosophy of the self and other is vital in this regard in that there is philosophical and spiritual interaction between the two different spheres, as it is with individuals. For Novalis such intimacy was to be strived for with nature and another person, in this case be it

represented through a woman. In turn, the intimacy between a man and a woman in Martessen's explanation encompasses the intimacy of between all things, which is visualized by the painting *Morning in the Riesengebirge*. In other words, we as the viewers become the figures in the painting, both the man and woman. We are both that which is in need of support, the lone monk by the sea as in *Monk by the Sea*, and able to offer strength as the woman in *Morning in the Riesengebirge*. Novalis's core beliefs advocated for an engagement between individuals in humanity. Through the concept of dialectical unity with self and the other, he identified some of ways in which such a paradigm expressed itself, just as Böhme had asserted. That everything and everyone desires connection, be it in all forms of Nature. Additionally, if we consider Friedrich's usage of sailing in relation to the painting: a ship's voyage is reliant on its crew of sailors, as well as its captain in that the transcendental spiritual journey towards God takes a collective effort. While the symbolism behind Friederich's notion of sailing is to a greater degree applied to the individual, the concept of sailing devotes itself aptly to a communal aspect of Christianity, in that the focus turns ultimately to humanity and to God. A ship is nothing without the sea it treads through, and it is not entirely up to one alone to wrestle its waves. Through an analysis of *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, *Monk by the Sea*, and *Morning in the Riesengebirge* one can establish a confluence of spiritual ideas and moral arguments between Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich. Additionally, all three paintings reflect Friedrich's own exploration of a processual ontology, a subject which is also shared with Böhme and Novalis. Friedrich's paintings reflect concepts of a spiritual calling in that one is ultimately responsible for their own spiritual journey, and this idea in turn asserts that we have a responsibility to

aid one another in each other's spiritual striving and betterment, in that it is through our shared struggles with which we are all individually at mercy with, that we at the very least find each other.

Chapter Four: Not A Conclusion, But A Journey Ongoing . . .

*And even as I'm climbing up
the stairs I know there's Heaven there and then
Empty arms that comes
with the Morning Star*

- Tori Amos, "Mrs. Jesus"

There is a resonant connection between the concepts of Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich to justify a discussion about their ideas which consequently nuances towards a greater discourse that is spirituality itself. Throughout Böhme's theosophy, we can recognize a spiritual longing through the alchemical properties in that there is something to behold and strive towards through the natural world in relation to God. A journey to undertake, which in part was perhaps attempted by the Romantics, with the idolization and reverence of nature. For the Romantics, humanity was a part of their core focus, and nature was the metaphor for unity in both the communitive and the spiritual sense, particularly for Novalis and Friedrich. Whether or not there is an arguable evolution of ideas between Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich, what remains important is that the concepts themselves coincide greatly with each other and all assert a certain idealism that is inherit within humanity.

David Walsh recognizes that a crucial importance of Böhme's theosophy resides in that:

Boehme's symbolic elaboration contains a real kernel of truth in its recognition of the essential structure of revelation. The enduring influence of his dialectical speculation arises from its insight into the conjunction of fundamental forces that constitute all reality; the realization that "it is only in overcoming there is joy" or that only in darkness

is light revealed are universal ingredients of experience that make every differentiation possible (Walsh 110-111).

A great deal of German Romanticism explored the aspect of truth through opposition by means of irony. As Novalis said, we go seeking 'non-things' and find only 'things', which again demonstrates that there is a similar stream of thought between Novalis and Böhme. Both Böhme's and Novalis's concepts equally reside in the notion of a truth through opposition, with Friedrich's paintings depicting a visual exploration of such ideas, be it through the irony of nature and our own struggle to reconcile our own ideals with reality itself.

Within Böhme's theosophy, the desire that strives to unity with God is manifested through seven properties of nature. Them all being stages of the greater spiritual approximation to unity and through the process, the properties realize themselves. For Novalis, he also saw spiritual unity as the ultimate goal for humanity, through all aspects of life. A unity in discussion, the dialectical unity through the self and the other. In other words, one's own growth towards spiritual wisdom throughout the world, be it as it may, a struggling creative process. Poetry, for Novalis was an alchemy that reflected this process of change. As Klingsohr had expressed in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, poetry was a quickening, a hastening activity. Mircea Eliade articulates on the subject of alchemy that: "the alchemist takes up and perfects the work of Nature, while at the same time working to 'make' himself" (*The Forge and the Crucible* 47). In a manner of speaking, alchemy sought to hasten nature's work, in other-words aid in her goal (50). For Novalis, poetry is another means of this same intent. While alchemy articulates the physical transformation, it can be recognized that both Böhme Novalis sought alchemical symbolism in the spiritual sense in that one's soul also underwent a spiritual process of

refinement. Poetry for Novalis was akin to alchemy in that Novalis drew on the role of the poet, much like of; “the alchemist as the brotherly saviour of Nature. He assists Nature to fulfil her final goal, to attain her ‘ideal’ which is the perfection of its progeny—be it mineral, animal or human” (Eliade 52).

Another important aspect is that both Novalis and Friedrich asserted for the importance of art not as a mere medium of aestheticism, but as a means to reinforce and discuss spirituality and religious concepts. Art is not to be exclusively beautiful but to delve deeply and reflect the human condition and its spirit. I would assert that Novalis and Friedrich, sought to articulate the spiritual through the aesthetic, in that their works greatly explored spirituality, while utilizing their own notions of the aesthetic as a means of clarifying their own conceptions of religion and spirituality. Böhme also noted that such spiritual unity is recognized aesthetically: “The artist will see how the heaven separates itself from the earth, and how the heaven does sink again into the earth, and changes the earth into a heavenly colour” (*The Signature of All Things* 126). I would clarify that unlike Novalis or Friedrich, the notions of the aesthetic, religion, and spirituality were less undifferentiated during Böhme’s time. The highest form of beauty was attributed to the divine and was seen as an extension of the spiritual and ultimately a reflection of God. The aesthetic and the spiritual are one and the same for Böhme, and perhaps also for Novalis and Friedrich. Much of art during the later 16th century was still commissioned by religious institutions, and as such a relationship between art and religion began to gradually grew more dissonant by the time, German Romanticism began to examine the correlation between spirituality and the aesthetic. Novalis and Friedrich recognized that in their time such correlation between the aesthetic and spiritual

was already becoming differentiated as a consequence of changing attitudes. Perhaps it was the growing dissonance between the spiritual and art that was an aspect which partially motivated Novalis' and Friedrich's work. Art is that which inspires and is the determining voice that says: keep going. For what does it all mean, if one does not create meaning? What is certain is that German Romanticism has a dimension that is indeed spiritual, and resonates greatly with the theosophy of Böhme.

With Caspar David Friedrich, the notion of spiritual longing shared between him, Böhme, and Novalis, is an apparent in that there is a desire towards the spiritual experience within nature as a whole by means of the aesthetic. Much like Böhme, Friedrich's work primarily remained within the subject of Christianity, while being akin to Novalis in that there is the binary of humanity and God depicted through nature. For Friedrich, striving towards God was to be done through an engagement with nature through religious & subjective introspection. Through succumbing to the presence of nature through both its splendor and ferocity one recognizes that nature is the cathedral itself. The place where one recognizes our connection with the sacred and divine, as well as with each other. But as depicted with Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea*, there is a conflict that can arise in that unity is not always apparent and there is no guarantee that one will find solace in the spiritual undertaking, as it is a struggle and ultimately unknowable. The question arises as to why risk it then? The answer partially resides in Walsh's explanation of Böhme's theosophy:

No penetration is possible beyond the limits of our perspective as participants within reality. No absolute knowledge can be obtained concerning the poles of existence as they are in themselves, apart from our experience of their tension. All that can be known is confined to the vision of the Whole, which emerges by extrapolation from the theophanic event and remains an essentially partial, provisional, and indirect account of the totality it

describes. Nevertheless, we have not been compelled to carry on this exploration in collective isolation, for the revelatory attraction from the Beyond is already an invitation to share in its divine truth (112).

As Walsh clarifies there is a certain unfathomability and yet there is an irony with regards to spirituality, in that the mystery itself is what fuels the musing, and that in of itself is the invitation for one to partake in the ongoing spiritual creative process. An inquiry about God is an inquiry about ourselves. It is through the embracing of such a process of unity that the inherent spiritual process manifests itself and it is by surrendering oneself to this reality that such revelations reveal themselves. To an extent one can recognize the ways in which Novalis' ideas expand Böhme's concepts, as in accordance with the dialectical unity, the process of revelation, particularly with humanity's predicament, cannot help but be an ongoing process, as it is through division that one is able to recognize unity. If we are already one, then why do we yearn? We yearn, because we are one.

Evolution, chemistry and biodiversity are some of the many scientific exemplifications of unity, in that the physical world and our theories of the universe validates what was always there; it is all connected. Therefore, there is a responsibility that we as consciousness beings should adhere to. We must remind ourselves that we always are a part of the universe. With much awe, there is an equal terror, in that there is always a responsibility with the spiritual path as indicted by Böhme (Stoudt 120), and much of Friedrich's work reflects the crisis of the contradictory reality in that one feels both the wrath and joy of God through nature as well as God's presence and ultimate absence. This line of thought, as was explored in the previous chapter, begs the questioning and yearning as to how can we reconcile with God's departure? The answer resides in the notion that God has not departed away from us, but rather that we ourselves

have departed from God. In *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, we are the mountain itself that obscures the light in the painting. We ourselves are that which hinders our own spiritual process and communication with God. The theological implications of this idea, as reflected in Friedrich's paintings *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*, *Monk by the Sea*, and *Morning in the Riesenberge* reveal that what is inherent in nature, is also inherent within ourselves. As with the concepts of good and evil that were explored in Böhme's theosophy, it becomes apparent that we ourselves embody such things, in that there is equal magnificence and terror inherent to our own lives. As is in accordance with the dialectical unity of Novalis' conception, we are able to be both negative and positive, loving and destructive, predator and prey, light and dark, saint and sinner, the constant wound and its healing dissonance. But where does the balance between these extremes reside? Again, as asserted by Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich we need only look within to ourselves.

Many of the issues that the German Romantics were discussing, are still ongoing to this day, despite the historical dissonance. Within our time of supposed technological advances and scientific discoveries, there is still a concern over humanity's relationship with nature, as well as the belief of our power over nature, the equality of rights among people in society, the discourse between women and men as equals, and most of all the yearning for an authentic spiritual connection. For better and for worse as recognized throughout history, the problem of a unified community remains permeant throughout much of human society to this day, and if such struggles are still being recognized during our own times, then what does that say about the history of humanity as a whole? Perhaps, the Romantics were all too aware of such repetition in that history is always

ongoing, and as consequence everything undergoing a constant process. Much like the individual, so too is society on a journey of spiritual approximation, and self-discovery, with all things being expressions of the variances of a dialectical unity that manifests itself before us. The idealisms of our time are not things that will necessarily be achieved nor actualized, but what is an inevitable truth, is also a reassurance in that it is as Novalis articulated: “We shall never entirely comprehend ourselves, but we will and can do much more than comprehend ourselves” (*Philosophical Writings* 23). As with Novalis, so too did Böhme express a similar reassurance about the process of revelation with regard to his own time:

But none need stumble at it; for when God reveals his, mysteries to any Man, he then also brings him into a Mind and Capacity how to express them, as God knows to be most necessary and profitable in every Age, for the setting the confused Tongues and Opinions upon true Ground again: Men must not think that it comes to Chance, and is done by human Reason (Böhme *The ‘Key’ of Jacob Boehme* 17).

There is strong parallel between the two when one considers the Romantic opposition to the extremity on rationality and objectivity of their own time with the Enlightenment. Mayer’s assertion for the appropriation of Böhme is correct in this regard in that the Romantics sought to counter an extreme within their own time. When it comes to a question of intent however, I would assert that both Novalis and Friedrich earnestly strived in a manner to what Böhme’s theosophy aimed for: a truth about God and the whole universe, which ultimately reflects as a spiritual truth about humanity. We can only discover the truth for ourselves, whatever that truth may be. Perhaps as Böhme and Novalis would assert, it is by the means of love that humanity ultimately comes to an understanding about God and their mysteries.

The importance of the connection between Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich, is that they all pushed for spiritual change. For if one does not delve into matters that are close to the heart, one cannot expect to get to the heart of what really matters. For within our own lives, in all our strivings, aspirations, and dreams; though we may fail in our pursuits and be distraught with struggle, a questioning, and full of doubts from others, as well as ourselves. We are always one step closer than before in the universe's unfolding. As Novalis asserts in a fragment: "Our *whole life is divine service*" (*Philosophical Writings* 108). For if we consider spirituality at its core, it is the desire to grow, much like how nature does, and a part of humanity is the belief that we are always able to grow. No matter the struggle, life is the opportunity to learn and love. As Gerald May explains in his book, *Will and Spirit*:

All this may sound like a very complex undertaking, and in terms of understanding, it is. In attempting to comprehend what the spiritual life is about, we must make it complex. Yet in actuality, in "practice" it is a matter of utter simplicity. It involves relaxing into each moment, breathing deeply, and waking up. It involves a simple noticing of one's existence without meddling with it. Essentially this is nothing more than a willingness to be who one is, in God, in every situation. In itself, this simplicity implies that one has surrendered, that one has willingly accepted the truth of being in and of God (243).

As Böhme had expressed throughout the seven properties, we all will come to know of spiritual unity, in our own way, because as Novalis would argue, the poetry that is life is always unfolding before us, and as Friedrich has visualized; we are always in the midst of an uncertain reality. Everyone is capable of so much, and therein lies our creative potential to strive all the more, if at the very least, towards each other. Everyone is the artist of the art that is their own lives, and as any artist should strive for, they put passion and love into the work they create. Perhaps Böhme, Novalis and Friedrich all regarded God as such; an artist, in that everything and everyone is art and art in the making. We

are of the earth and the earth is a part of us. As was established with Böhme and Novalis, we are all connected to God, and spiritual unity is inherently in us. Perhaps we need only tread over the water that is our own tears to recognize that. But it is also a struggle, because it is a self-created process. As painted by Friedrich, it is ‘that’ struggle which manifests itself throughout nature. Making itself apparent towards us through every day, every event of our lives, and thus it is all a continuation of the unending novel as Novalis termed it. That is our spiritual process, and it is to remind ourselves of our connection with all things, and our purpose in this world, in order to strive towards our higher ideals and recognize the same process in each other. But what do such thoughts entail to? I can only answer for myself and there are so many things that could be said. For in the spiritual process one discovers something inevitably more. As Novalis poeticized: “[You’ll see] wonders of wonders – [Yourself]” (*Philosophical Writings* 76).

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