

Against Violent Objects: Linguistic Theory and Practice in Novalis

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This study rationally reconstructs Novalis's linguistic theory. It traces Novalis's assessment of earlier linguistic debates, illustrates Novalis's transformation of their central questions and uncovers Novalis's unique methodological proposal. It argues that in his critical engagement with Idealism, particularly regarding problems of representation and regulative positing, Novalis recognizes the need for both a philosophy of language and the artistic language designed to execute it. The paper contextualizes Novalis's linguistic appropriation and repudiation of Kant and explains how, even while Novalis's linguistic theory issues Kantianism such a challenge, it also begins to demonstrate the application of Kantian designs to linguistic philosophy. The modernity and potential of Novalis's proposal is evaluated and its significance for discussions in linguistic philosophy and aesthetics is advocated.

G.F.P. von Hardenberg, better known under his pen name, Novalis, has long been appreciated among the key literary figures of German romanticism; his distinctively modern, philosophical approach to the study of language has received considerably less review. Novalis's exceptional turn to language emerges in hundreds of pages of notes, principally on the thought of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and later labeled the *Fichte-Studien*. With Jane Kneller's recent English translation of the whole of the *Fichte Studies*, Novalis's thought has become accessible to a wide range of readers who might otherwise overlook his contribution not only to literature and to aesthetic theory, but to fundamental issues in the philosophy of language.¹ The following study is an attempt to rationally reconstruct Novalis's linguistic position. It argues that Novalis, in his assessment of earlier debates about the origin and scope of language, transforms the question of linguistic origination, giving it a critical function in his methodological proposal. The introduction, therefore, provides some context for eighteenth century debates about linguistic origination.

More importantly, this paper means to show that in the fastidious notes to himself which can seem so disparate and dizzying to the reader, Novalis is holding Fichte's thought under a Kantian microscope, coming to an ever deepening criticism of its inner workings. It is in his Kantian critique of Fichte, which revolves around an evaluation of *representation* and *regulative ideas*, that we witness Novalis's progressive recognition of the need for a

philosophy of language. Novalis also realizes that, if linguistic philosophy is not to undermine its inmost concerns, a particular kind of language must be designed to execute it. The notes that Novalis begins to make just after penning his *Fichte Studies*, as well as several of his literary works, take up the commission.

Finally, this paper should show that, even while Novalis commandeers Kant's critical philosophy for his analysis of Fichte, the linguistic position that he thereby develops flies in the face of Kant's purposes, and presents a problem to Kantianism which Kant himself endeavors to avoid. The problem arises from the contention that language necessarily mediates thought. Though it may appear straightforward, this contention, pushed to its logical conclusion, undermines the employment of Kant's "Ideas of Reason;" it undermines the Idea of the "unconditioned" in theoretical philosophy as well as the use of moral theology in practical philosophy: in short, it disrupts the mechanism of Kant's system altogether. Yet even while Novalis's linguistic theory issues Kantianism such a challenge, it also begins to demonstrate how Kantian designs can be applied to a philosophy of language. Novalis's admittedly fragmentary attempts at linguistic theory, then, may yet be understood as asking provocative questions of our contemporary discussions in linguistic philosophy, which inevitably return to the question of their Kantian commitments.

Introduction: Eighteenth Century Battles over the Origin of Language

Johann Gottlieb Fichte's Jena lectures and his influence on Novalis and other of the early romantics have occasioned much review.² Novalis famously took up study of Fichte's philosophy after his 1795 meeting with Fichte and Friedrich Hölderlin at Friedrich Niethammer's house in Jena; Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel, the central figure of early German romanticism, just as famously dubbed their philosophical conversations *fichtesieren*. When he met the young Novalis, Fichte was completing his monograph *On the Linguistic Capacity and the Origin of Language* (*Von der Sprachfähigkeit und dem Ursprung der Sprache*). The essay was to be Fichte's contribution—an attempt at a “final word”—to the debates over the origin of language that had animated German scholarship for decades. Fichte's *On the Linguistic Capacity* argues for the human, as opposed to the divine origin of language; the work also stealthily “corrects” several flaws Fichte finds in Kant's critical idealism.³

With his essay on the origin of language, Fichte stakes his claim on a topic of paramount concern for his eighteenth century forebears and contemporaries. The question of the origin and scope of language had been a hot topic in French and German letters since Abbé Etienne Bonnot de Condillac's 1746 *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* established the exclusively natural, human origin of language, as opposed to one supernatural or divinely given. Condillac's essay touched a nerve.⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau took up the question of linguistic origination in his 1755 *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, which was followed by Johann Peter Süßmilch's *Attenmpt at a Proof, that the First Language Originated Not With Human Beings, But Solely With the Creator* (*Versuch eines Beweises, daß die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung nicht von Menschen, sondern allein vom Schöpfer erhalten habe*) of 1766. Then, a set of elliptical missives written by Johann Georg Hamann began to appear, which also claim the divine origin of language, but which contest earlier divine-origin theses on the grounds of their overextended epistemologies. Hamann indicates that only a thorough study of the relationships between the entire nest of rational faculties, including apperception, higher order cognition, speech and writing, could do justice to the epistemic human limitedness that occasions the development of language and that language brings into further relief.⁵

Hamann's appeal was taken up by his friend Johann Gottfried von Herder, in Herder's passionately contested, prize-winning manuscript of 1772, the *Treatise on the Origin of Language*. Though Herder overtly argues for the human origin thesis in his *Treatise*, he capitulates to the Hamannian insistence on the limit restricting our ability to apprehend linguistic origination in anything more than speculative or mythic terms. In any event, the fact that the Berlin Academy of Sciences even posed the question of linguistic origination for the prestigious national prize won by Herder underscores the degree to which, by the later half of the eighteenth century, that question had swelled to urgent proportions.

Although no definitive theory of language found wide support, the greatest philosophical minds of the later eighteenth century continued to use the question of linguistic origination and development to extend their views on human cognition, as well as to deepen their literary theories, with Gotthold Lessing, Friedrich Nicolai, Thomas Abbt and Moses Mendelssohn elaborating their positions through Lessing's periodical, *Letters Concerning Recent Literature*. Immanuel Kant entered the fray with his 1786 *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History*.

Although Kant's implicit confrontation with elements of particularly Herder's linguistic theory play out in both the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant stakes out his position explicitly in the *Conjectures*.⁶ There, Kant retains the suspicion of language characteristic of idealism since Descartes: language, he argues, is merely the sensible vehicle of ideas; it may be discarded whenever ideas become independently clear. Kant, that is, maintains a position in direct opposition to his former student Herder, whose *Treatise* claims that reason and language develop through a mutually dependant process, arising from an initial act of "taking awareness" of an element of an otherwise riotous sensible manifold. One of Herder's greatest innovations, in the *Treatise*, is an argument supporting the theory that the initial, active awareness "taken" by a subject is foremost an expression of the subject's inwardness; one takes awareness of the elements of the world that are most relevant or special to oneself, either out of necessity or curiosity. Mental marks of awareness, in Herder, are the first words; they are also thoroughly subjective, contingent and entrenched in the life situation of the aware being.

Kant, however, argues that while rational mastery of nature was necessary for primitive peoples' survival, knowledge itself can be gained and held without linguistic props; indeed, optimally, clear and distinct ideas require no linguistic support. Also against Herder, Kant asserts that the social urge to communicate was the original motive for linguistic utterances, not an individual, inner awareness. The social urge that first occasioned language was primal; but that same urge, Kant writes, "can still be seen in children and thoughtless people who disturb the thinking section of the community by banging, shouting, whistling, singing and other noisy pastimes (and often even by religious devotions)."⁷

Kant does allow for a given, original configuration in human being, and does irrevocably link it to reason: but for Kant that alpha and omega is the moral law. Kant uses the *Conjectures*, as well as his reviews of Herder's *Ideas*, to reclaim the transcendental method that he thinks Herder only half-learned as his student, and that he put to adverse and awkward use in the *Treatise*. Equipped with the finished machinery of his critical system, Kant argues that *only* the moral law is originally "given" and freely elaborated by human beings. For Kant, the establishment and force of the moral law grounds the command of reason and dictates the development of our practical self-determination. Although we may detect the authority of the moral law in its phenomenal effects, it remains the single noumenal truth fully accessible

to human cognition. Kant's moral law should explain how we can be in the world physically while remaining intellectually emancipated from it.

But what Kant knows, long before Herder, is that the validity of his account of morality is threatened by the use of the same, transcendental logic to derive the primacy of language.⁸ Unlike his moral law, Kant sees, language is bound to be sensuous, historical and conditional. Finding language co-original or interdependent with human reason, then, will upset the possibility of purely cognitive judgment.

Further, the positions of both Hamann and Herder involve the intrinsic claim that the route we *must* follow, in our positing of the unconditioned moral law, is necessarily linguistic. Where Kant's critical system revolves around his idealist procedure for arriving at a metaphysical faculty of Reason, whose activities must be practically instituted, the linguistic theories being developed by Hamann and Herder insist that we will never arrive in Reason out of our linguistic context. In short, they hold that the unprovable, unconditioned ground of cognition manifests only *as* language. Any "moral law," then, will materialize as conditioned by linguistic—hence historically and culturally contingent—demands. So what Kant realizes, and what occasions the unusually polemical style of his *Conjectures* and reviews of Herder's *Ideas*, is that accepting any amenability to the epistemic authority of language would lead critical idealism to an array of prospects for rational orientation without *a priori* security, without metaphysical grounding, and thus without the noumenal truth of the moral law.⁹

When Fichte begins his own essay on the origin of language, he still considers himself an idealist defending the basic structure of Kant's program. Though Kant helps Fichte change his mind about that standing, by publicly repudiating Fichte's work (in 1799), in 1795 Fichte still sees his project as an elaboration of critical idealism. The essay Fichte is writing when he meets Novalis, which Novalis seems to have quickly procured, denies that language could have begun with an involuntary "eruption of emotion," as Kant asserts. Instead, Fichte claims to have discovered, in a necessarily rational, intersubjective human nature, the resources requisite for the purposeful invention of language. He promises that his own undertaking will unite all relevant aspects of the earlier debates over linguistic origination by outlining "the history of language *a priori*."

Novalis's Fichte Studies: A Handful of Darkness

The *Fichte Studies* primarily examine Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* (in various of its written and verbally-presented forms); their topic is not Fichte's essay on language, nor does Novalis appear to have any plan to orient his study of Fichte toward a reckoning with language. In reading the *Fichte Studies* though, we trail the project of a thinker steeped in the paramount philosophical systems and artistic endeavors of his age, coming to terms with his own concerns about reason's fundamental powers. Novalis's realization that his critique of Fichte leads to certain unavoidable questions about language appears as a sort of "eureka moment" in his notes, and the reader must follow the articulation of this moment as it gains in clarity and subtly.¹⁰

In the first group of his studies (1-210), written from the fall to winter of 1795, we find Novalis posing questions about meaning, seemingly without any pre-conceived design or program of linguistic study. Only a few pages into his notes (note 11), in questioning the nature of reflective consciousness, Novalis writes: "Theory of the sign or/what can be *true* through the medium of language?" (11/7).¹¹ Thus begins what O'Brien calls the "semiotic fragment" and goes on to read as an intrinsically post-structuralist declaration.¹² Yet here at the outset, Novalis's description of speech and writing is not different from the Kantian picture of language. Indeed, the notion that language is a sensible envelope of ideas, orienting for but ultimately inessential to thought—a notion characteristic of both the way of ideas and of Kantian idealism—is only recapitulated in Novalis' earliest notes. As Novalis continues to reflect, though, he struggles to apply Kantian epistemology to the question he has posed.

Novalis is concerned with mapping the relationship between sign and signified, with getting at how, when two or more agents communicate, their exchange is mediated by a sign. How, precisely, does any sign *work*, Novalis wants to know, whether it involves indexical gesturing, onomatopoetic expressions, or conventionally recognized sounds and graphic signs. Novalis reasons that where a sign is made comprehensible or intelligible to any other mind, what is actually conveyed is the cognitive schema relating the sensible mark and the signified object. Specifically, what is communicated is the schematizing endeavor of subjective consciousness, the form of which is shared by any thinking subject. "Every *comprehensible* sign must therefore stand in a *schematic* relationship to the signified" (§11/9). Communication involves reference, between subjects, to the framework of associations upon

which each subject's consciousness depends. What is shared, when we understand one another, is never just the notice of some thing or concept, but the network of representations which constitutes the thinking mind.

Novalis is not attempting to go beyond a Kantian schematism at this point; he is using Kantian tools straightforwardly to think through the act of signification and the possibility of communication.¹³ As we continue reading his notes, though, we find Novalis testing the range of the Kantian master-trope of *purposiveness*. In schematizing a relationship between sign and signified, Novalis writes, the signifying agent freely proceeds "as if" another agent has the desire and the capacity to similarly represent this relationship (§11/10). Though we can know nothing absolutely about the other mind with whom we want to communicate, we proceed as if our ends were his. The first signifying agent projects himself in his act of reflection; the sign he determines may be recognized by another agent who shares in kind the reflective activity of schematization.

The initial questions of §11 regarding the requirements of signification and communication lead Novalis to reexamine the deepest question of Fichtean philosophy and of idealism in general: what is *given* to consciousness, or unconditioned; what makes experience and the sense we make of it possible, and how can we examine this first or foundational principle? For Fichte, what is given is the self-identity of thinking consciousness. In his radicalization of Cartesian transcendental argumentation, Fichte makes the *Tathandlung* or first *fact-act* of consciousness a self-positing. Fichtean consciousness is grounded on the primordial, original happening of intellectual intuition; the fact-act is neither represented nor representing, but immediate and absolute, unifying the self as the simultaneous subject and object of consciousness.¹⁴ Fichte argues that in the fact-act, the "I = I" or "A = A," he has arrived at an ultimate ground.¹⁵

In turn, Novalis's criticism of Fichte's grounding fact-act is ironically Fichtean: reflection, if it is to be as Fichte goes on to describe it, must determinedly reflect itself. The *Fichte Studies* open with Novalis's damning charge: Fichte's "A = A," or the very essence of identity, "can only be presented in a *Scheinsatz*"—in an illusory proposition. Novalis charges that Fichte's active essence of identity is put forth in a counterfeited application. "A = A" is a pseudo-suggestion, stating identity while violating it. Identity, Novalis means to emphasize, is sacrificed to every representation of it. Fichte's self-positing fact-act, as an original principle communicated with the formula "A = A" or "I = I," has stepped beyond self-identity as soon as it appears.

Fichte fails to grasp the inmost truth of reflection: it is always animated by representation. We leave our self-identical ground, and have necessarily left the source of consciousness, of experience and of being, in order to represent it. Though this same difficulty appeared at the dawn of Occidental philosophy in the form of Parmenides' henological doctrine, presented in an impossible dialogue within a split, or thinking and representing mind, it is also on display at the core of late eighteenth century idealism. But Novalis follows up on the conclusion of his discovery: reckoning with the nature of reflection, and thus of representation, must be accompanied by the death knell for all foundational philosophy. Human consciousness is reflective; all acts of cognition require representation. What this proves, for Novalis, is that any account of an underlying, absolute unity of subject and object is a sham; the realm of human being begins with a doubling which is always a separation, a splitting and a falsification. We begin thinking already too late for immediate understanding. This consequence clearly in mind, Novalis goes on to write (in Group 5, from the summer of 1796):

Unending free activity in us arises through the free renunciation of the absolute—the only possible absolute that can be given us and that we only find through our inability to attain and know an absolute (§566/169-170).

All grasping at absolute knowledge, whether we call it 'Being' or 'not-being', "just grasps a handful of darkness" (§3/6).

In insisting on the initial disappointment of self-consciousness, Novalis is maintaining that we are indeed groundless, finite and bound by immanence. In this sense, Novalis's thought is paradigmatic of philosophical modernity. Novalis's uniqueness, though, lies in his suggestion of a method of aesthetic discovery and linguistic study based upon this take on consciousness.

Novalis begins his "Undetermined Propositions" (§15) with the statement: "Philosophy should not answer more than it is asked. It can generate nothing. Something has to be given to it." Having rejected the absolute, grounding identity of Fichte's "A = A," Novalis problematizes the Fichtean (and Cartesian) claim that philosophy *can* begin with neutral self-observation. Instead of an evidential deduction of the implicit, *a priori* contents of consciousness, Novalis argues that something is, indeed, *given* for philosophical investigation: *feeling*. By suggesting that philosophy may begin only in

response to a feeling, and that it may proceed *as* a way of conceptualizing intuitions of feeling (§15/12-13), Novalis puts his suspicions about foundational declarations, and about representation, to work. As Novalis has it, philosophy cannot get before or beyond feeling, nor can feeling “feel itself.” Rather, feeling is perceived in reflection and reflection is animated by acts of representation that allow objects to appear for consideration. On the one hand then, feeling is the necessary *condition* for encountering any and all objects; on the other, feeling can *only* be observed in reflection.

Novalis is saying that if sensuous particulars hold any meaning, it is in and through their material distinctiveness. When we encounter an object, it makes a demand upon us: it demands our felt reaction. Reflection, insofar as we desire to understand our feeling, distances itself from the feeling by representing it; in order to come to terms with the representation of a particular object, subjective consciousness places it into a schematism. Even in our highest order cognitions, the felt need for judgment that reflection undergoes proves essential to reflection itself (§19/14-15). The ubiquity of feeling, within thought, proves pivotal in Novalis’s reconsideration of Fichtean consciousness, particularly in its struggle to ground all thinking on the absolute self-identity of a thoughtful action, or the original fact-act.

In order to reconsider the original givenness of Fichte’s fact-act, and to replace it with his notion of feeling, Novalis again appropriates Kantian designs. Novalis has shown that no original fact, or act, can show up immediately; all “origins” are mediated by the representations we use to mark them. Novalis has likewise learned, from the relentless debates over the origin of language which predate him, that every “original” is subjected to representation, and hence a doubling or seconding, as soon as it is referenced. Accounts of the divine origin of language always leave that origin shrouded in mystery, and opposing accounts promising proofs of the exclusively human origin of language either fail to produce the transcendental conditions for language, or begin by assuming the basic cognitive, proto-linguistic composition that they are supposed to be proving. Both Hamann and Herder made similar points, and Novalis appropriates them to think through the “originality” of Fichte’s fact-act.

Novalis, as we saw, also means to replace Fichte’s fact-act with a certain feeling, but he knows he cannot assert the primacy of feeling dogmatically. Here again, Novalis gathers Kantian resources. For Kant gives an account, in the first *Critique*, of how we may think about, or gain the rational orientation necessary to think about, objects beyond our sensible grasp. In

the Kantian framework, these are supersensible objects (such as God or the immortal soul). Kant's prescription for thinking about supersensible objects arises from a portrayal of how we orient ourselves in an empirical domain. Just as one stable point of reference is needed for geographical orientation, reason may prepare a maxim to use in making supersensible judgments, which will provide the one point necessary for reason to orient itself in the enigmatic domain of the supersensible. The maxim reason prepares is relational or analogical; it prompts a disoriented reason ask itself how the relation between a sensible and supersensible object is *like* the relation between some known, sensible objects. For example, in struggling to come to terms with the unavailable, supersensible concept of "God," reason can ask how God's relationship to creation is *like* a parent's relationship to a child.¹⁶ The sort of likeness that reason can then ponder provides it with the point of reference necessary to continue its inquiry. Kant emphasizes that while this procedure affords a much-needed reference point for our inquiries, it *never* substantiates a connection between analogical reasoning and material veracity. The analogical method Kant proposes for making judgments about supersensible objects remains regulative: Kant allows no justification for jumping from logic to ontology. Kant's analogical procedure, instead of speculatively overextending reason into areas it cannot really access, allows reflection to draw from its own resources. In making analogies, reflection refers to the schematic associations that make it what it is, and that allow for reflective judgment of the empirical world. Extending those analogies to matters beyond subjective consciousness involves making no actual claims about anything except for the way that subjective consciousness, with its need for positing regulative ideals, works. Novalis has this Kantian procedure in mind as he continues:

[Reflection] searches through its material and finds nothing but itself and itself alone, unchangeable, as something firm to support it,—that is, without material, mere form of material—but properly understood, its own form, thought, indeed, as without actual matter, but nevertheless, in order to be *its* form, [thought] in essential relation to matter in general (§19/14-15).

Novalis is also finding, however, that he differs from Kant in his understanding of how reflection's desire to know, or its need for judgment, ties it to materiality. Since feeling appears first and reflection second (§16ff), and since

philosophy schematizes the relation between feeling and thought (§11ff) – providing the material for further reflection—reflection and philosophy are bound not just by subjectivity, but by sense. Novalis finds that we can and do reflect upon our feelings, even while remaining within the bounds of subjective consciousness. Where feeling appears as given, or as a demand made by an object, reason begins to come to terms with inexplicable feelings by drawing them into schematic relations with what is known. Reason thereby comes to better know itself, in its acts of synthetic reflection, while remaining tied to a material world that it has not mastered.

Novalis continues to argue for the application of Kantian critical awareness to all philosophical and artistic endeavors (§661/193; §666/194). Perhaps most vividly though, in working through the later notes spanning 1796, the reader is exposed to Novalis's growing awareness of the force and application of the Kantian notion of the *regulative*. Fichte's "I = I" is found to have "regulative, merely classificatory use—Nothing at all in relation to reality" (§502/156). Regulative ideas, in Novalis as in Kant, allow us to turn our epistemic limits to our own advantage: in positing ends, purposes, goals or systems of comprehensive unity, human reason may judge any phenomenon *as if* its context of meaningfulness were apparent, without committing itself to that context unconditionally. It is only through regulative ideas that reason gains orientation within its own schematism, as we saw, and thus only through regulative ideas that we can make theoretical judgments.

In Kant, judgments about the nature and scope of reason itself—a metaphysical or supersensible faculty—require that we posit a regulative idea about reason's power and purpose in order to scrutinize our own attempts to know. Positing a regulative idea about the principle of reason facilitates our efforts to gain the security and closure of a cohesive, complete explanation, even in the face of the impossibility of achieving absolute knowledge. Likewise in the case of practical activities requiring focus and committed action, regulative ideas (such as a worldwide union of peacefully associated states) serve as models for orienting behavior. When we must know the function of a body-part or a newly discovered organism, regulative ideas allow us to imagine its role within an inclusive framework and thus to speculate with greater accuracy about its concrete operations.

It is with Kant in mind that Novalis returns to the idea of the ostensibly original fact-act, writing that because "every state . . . presupposes another," and because philosophy "cannot realize its ideas but must only represent them": "all quest for the first [action] is nonsense—it is a regulative idea"

(§472/152). Yet this nonsense is not to be dismissed. For as the positing and investigation of the regulative, this nonsense is in fact the whole point of the *Fichte Studies*. Novalis explains: “Representation – genus – *concepts in general* are nothing real – they have only an ideal use. [...] The whole of philosophy is only a science of reason—only of regulative use—exclusively ideal ...” (§479/154). As principles, regulative ideas are worth nothing in and of themselves, but as active guides to the very *forms* of thought, they are indispensable (§497/155).

With the discussion of regulative ideas, then, the reader of the *Fichte Studies* is able to survey Novalis’s emergent comprehension of the impact of his own critique of Fichtean credenda. Novalis has shown that “I=I” is an illusory proposition, insofar as it states identity but requires representation, and he has argued that it may also be posited anew as a kind of regulative idea. Novalis now continues to question the inherence of representation in thought. Specifically, Novalis realizes that, as in the debates on the origin of language that Herder countered in his *Treatise*, a debate about the establishment of representation and the regulative requires a “critical-turn” to representation and regulative positing, that is aware of its own effects on its objects of inquiry.¹⁷ A representing, regulating examination of representation and regulation requires a method that cultivates the distance necessary for thought, even while it critically assesses its own dependence on representation and regulative positing. In other words, Novalis comes to face the question of *how* what he has already shown to be mere semblance—representation itself—can gain and exercise rational authority. It is on this question, finally, that Novalis breaks with the letter of Kantianism, as well as with the tendencies of romanticism.

Earlier debates on the origin of language and reason, as we saw, were in part fueled by the impossibility of conclusively determining the complete set of conditions for language, as well as the futility of distinguishing between those original conditions and language-users’ ongoing dependence upon them. By critiquing the foundational certainty of *any* origin or first principle, Novalis comes to the primacy, for human consciousness, of representation. But unlike Kant, Novalis sees both an essential and an existential connection between representation, as such, and the linguistic sign. Whether something is cognitively marked and left otherwise unexpressed, or articulated in speech or writing, the act of representation is also an act of signification. Likewise, the schematism of analogy, which positions the positing of regulative ideas and which Novalis takes over from Kant, Novalis judges to be a grammati-

cal or semiotic structure. As did Herder, Novalis finds that language, in essentials, exists before and without its material manifestation in sounds and graphic marks. But since Novalis uniquely finds that reflection begins by representing a feeling, and since feeling must always be understood as the consequence of concrete, sensuous demands, Novalis must insist that our desirous and reactive natural being remains inscribed at the hub of reflection. The demands of our material nature are the stuff upon which we first reflect. Reflection and the cognitive framework within which it occurs are a part of the language of nature, however formal or refined our particular languages may become.

Novalis comes, then, to the issue of language via several routes. He is instructed by earlier debates on the origin of language and is thereby alerted to the difficulties of explaining any origin, including Fichte's *fact-act* of consciousness. He finds that his own insistence on the primacy of representation requires a treatment of linguistic signs and the meanings they bear. He likewise realizes that his emphasis on the regulative requires a thorough treatment of the cognitive schematism, or implicitly grammatical structure, within which they work. And finally, Novalis recognizes that whatever he wants to say about consciousness, cognition, or the world, will be said according to the demands of the language he utilizes for that purpose.

Novalis now wants to probe the linguistic issue to which his *Fichte Studies* have led, but he finds that philosophy alone cannot represent the idea of representation, or effectively regulate the regulative. Philosophy, Novalis finds, if it would fulfill its native imperative of critical self-awareness, requires the services of a discipline versed in self-aware representation and imaginative regulation: it requires the stanchion of art. As Frank and others point out, this is Novalis's inherently *philosophical* segue to the necessity of poetics or art.¹⁸

Novalis arrives at his prescription for the poetic presentation of "originary" principles by marrying Kantian and Fichtean positions. Kant's critical idealism, as was said, reclaims the transcendental method with which Herder attempts to derive the linguistic conditions of consciousness, by arguing that whereas language remains bound to material and historical contingencies, only the moral law is originally given to and pragmatically elaborated by free human agents. For Kant, the moral law provides "the unity for which our theoretical reason strives;" yet it remains ultimately "inexplicable," "incomprehensible," "inscrutable"—and a matter of the "highest wonder."¹⁹

Novalis thus weighs in:

Morality must be the core of our existence, if it is to be for us what it wants to be. Its end, its origin, must be the *ideal of being*. An unending *realization of being* would be the vocation of the I. Its striving would be toward ever more being. From 'I am' the path of evil descends, the path of good ascends. The highest philosophy is ethics. Therefore all philosophy begins with 'I am' (§556/165).

Novalis allows that the original, given fact is the moral law. Yet in renouncing *a priori* security and the capitulation of reflection to any Absolute, Novalis dissociates immediacy and self-reference. The ground that we find in the moral law and are yet reflecting upon in "morality as the core of our existence," is itself a representation, a semblance and a symbol for the whole, which cannot be enfolded into discursive thought. The unending realization of moral being progresses in the striving to articulate its equivocal possibilities, while remaining enclosed in a schema that never settles into absolute immediacy. Though Fichte too argues for the strivings of our moral being, Novalis alone maintains that our strivings for morality only happen within a semiotic structure. Rather than declaring that a choice be made between cognitive aesthetics and the primacy of practical reason—rather than opting *either* for a radical reading of the third *Critique* as an antidote to Kantian reason, *or* preferring Fichte's theory of self-creation—Novalis asks us to *hover* between a feeling for objects and the otherness with which the natural world appears to us, and the systematization of knowledge.

In struggling to articulate this "hovering" [*Schweben*], which threatens to be one of the vaguer notions presented in the *Fichte Studies*, Novalis asks for a reckoning with our ideas about selfhood, together with a careful inquiry into a consciousness that remains bound to representation and regulative positing. Admittedly, Novalis's presentation of the act of hovering remains undeveloped; the topic was one he was then in the process of thinking through in his conversations with Schlegel. A precise formulation of the equivocal nature of this hovering was never sufficiently articulated by either of thinker. Nevertheless, we can appreciate Novalis's serious attempt, in these notes, to describe the productive imagination, in its free reflection on the "I and not-I," or "Being and not-Being," oscillating between those extremes. Where the reflective I, striving for orientation or self-identity, cannot ground itself, it reflects upon the not-I, or feeling. This act of reflection

also relies upon, and must therefore question, the not-Being of the signs it utilizes for reflection. Reflection requires both feeling and the representation of feeling—it requires sense and negation – in order to encounter itself, or to first think the “I.”

Novalis envisions reflection hovering between its reckoning with sense and negation and its determined self-consciousness (its thought of “I”). Such “hovering,” Novalis argues, cannot be effectively conveyed with traditional philosophical concepts; a description (like this one) of the hovering merely objectifies it, posing as though an uninvolved observer could accomplish its neutral delineation. Yet where philosophizing about the nature of cognition runs aground on the problems of self-identity and representation, poeticizing *can* convey the nature of these problems, and its own attempts to address them. Romantic poetry, Novalis insists, in taking on philosophical ideas, *can* express its construction as a medium composed for their self-aware presentation. To do so, romantic poetry must put forward concepts and visions as well as the designs marshaled to accommodate them. Novalis thus begins to emphasize the need for a self-aware utilization of media. At the same time, Novalis knows that the *argument* for critical attentiveness to media is one comprehensively philosophical; he knows that our encounter with the demands of media arises from a *failure* of philosophy and likewise returns us to the *need* for philosophy.

Violent Objects

Having established our philosophical need for the “art of the writer” (§633/182; §639/183; §647/186), which he closely associates with “romantic writing,” Novalis begins to envisage the romantic writer’s moral duties. On account of his privileged insight into the nature of cognition, the romantic writer’s chief task is to prevent the reader’s capitulation to any fixed ideas, mistakenly granted objective power. The chief way that the writer can fulfill this commission is by alerting us to the pervasiveness of such objectification—in abstract language. The writer must point the way forward for subjective consciousness, by reclaiming abstract language in a manner openly communicative of his own subjective freedom to do so. Novalis writes: “Objects must not do violence to us. They must not hem us in, not rule [*bestimmen*] beyond the *borders*. An object is an object, even if it is God” (§647/186).

Violent objects are those we have lost the vigor or the recall to actively represent; they appear as fully “objective”: mechanical, authoritative, absolute and substantive. Violent objects are those we are unconscious of presenting to ourselves; they appear to impose themselves immediately, as do the “absolute I” or “God,” determining thought without being constrained by a medium. “This is only to suggest,” Novalis writes in §633, “that it is not the object as such but rather *the I*, as ground of activity, that should determine activity. The artwork thereby acquires a free, independent, ideal character—and imposing spirit ...”

The art of the writer, Novalis argues, can dislodge the violent reign of objects precisely in its self-analysis, that is, in its involved genealogy of language. What the writer understands—and herein lies the focal point of the linguistic insight that Novalis has just garnered from his own critique of Fichte—is that an object which appears substantive, and indeed, substance itself, is a regulative idea. In the case of religion, the objective significance granted God cuts off both spirit and sense. Novalis’s remedy involves connecting the object-God to the medium that presents it. Whether God, morality, or substance is the object that makes commanding claims, all are represented by the human subject and all require the medium of language. Precisely by returning to the world of objects that are presented as determinate, active reflection may grasp its own activity in their presentation, and may thereby make explicit its own formative power (§647/186). With the art of the writer, creative power approaches the world as a linguistic repository of ascribed meaning. The writer’s art encounters the world as demandingly *other* and as invitingly expressive of our deepest subjectivity.

Yet language, Novalis implies, is both a different sort of object and a different sort of medium than has yet been appreciated. While his insight into the cognitive necessity of representation occasions Novalis’s turn to language, the idea of critiquing abstract language while exhibiting the subjective force of the very language used to do so is hardly an independent, value-neutral activity. Substance, Novalis declares, can no longer make substantive claims upon us (§648), but, he conjectures, “to what extent *must* a person live in *obedience*. (To God and men?) (character of language—universal language—whence the variety of languages—prophesy of the future—thousand-year Reich. New religion.)” (§648/187). Novalis comes to realize that in freeing ourselves of the authority of “absolute objects,” we have not pulled free of the demands of language. Indeed, the “critical turn” to our own necessary utilization of language places us in a particular relation to the conditions of possibility of representation, symbolization and to any ascription of value.

Novalis's conclusions about language, however embryonic, bring him to just the place that Kant feared would follow from an appropriation of his epistemology for linguistic theory.²⁰ Novalis is led by the logic of his most fundamental claims to conclude that a properly executed study of consciousness must offer myriad points of rational orientation without guaranteeing their *a priori* ground and without affirming their connection to one overarching metaphysical faculty. Against Kant, Novalis is dislodging foundational certainty, the metaphysical faculty of reason, and the moral law it secures. By holding that representation is necessary for consciousness, and that consciousness advances in a way that cannot be divorced from language, Novalis is insisting that reason and morality remain bound to materiality and circumstance. This does not mean that reason and morality are simply relative; it means that they "show up" as embedded in a structure of norms and practices whose effects on reason and morality cannot be discounted. Novalis must therefore face the sort of immanence, finitude and difference that his "new religion" is prepared to handle. And he does:

[Philosophy] contains only laws of orientation and absolutely no content or its form in the ordinary sense—It is neither formal nor material [...] Our sensation excludes and includes—but does not determine—In its totality it is the unconscious intuition of the world of spirit—we sense an objective whole—and with every determination of the faculty of knowledge we sense a certain right or wrong, without being able, without special activity of the imagination, etc., to state it. This relationship gives much excellent material to the faculty of judgment (§649/188).

Having begun with a straightforwardly Kantian distinction between thought and language, Novalis concludes with the radically immanent mediation of all thought by language. The self-critical, poetic-philosophical strategy that Novalis will attempt to practice should be a *logos* of the *logos* of meaning, feeling and representation; it should address these themes while confessing its own conditions of possibility. Late in 1797, Novalis calls a set of his notebook entries *logological* (*logologisch*), and begins to elaborate this undertaking.

Logology: The Resisting Element Within Which We Are Flying

Compared to the *Fichte-Studien*, the notes of 1797-1798 that came to be known as the *Logological Fragments I and II* have the character of a manifesto. Novalis writes, "As earlier philosophies are to logology, so earlier forms of poetry are to the poetry that is to come" (I.37).²¹ Where poetry and philosophy have been "dynamic," by which Novalis means active without purpose, they will come to be "transcendental and organic": geared to embrace and exhibit their own conditions of possibility. Novalis envisions poetry and philosophy finally grasping the potential of their enterprises, their natural comprehensiveness, or what he will also call their "vivification." Under logological directives, poetry will present Being in its opposition to presentation, and philosophy will treat its own structures of examination and explication, its systems, as elements of a veiled whole—the overarching "language of nature." Novalis pledges that "logology will necessarily bring about this revolution."

Novalis first formulates his logological project in these notes; he never completes it. The logological fragments are thus as tantalizing as the *Fichte Studies*; they are as promising, that is, as they are perplexing. The key logological fragment, though, is §72, presenting a conceptual outline to which other sections add content. It begins: "On *nonsensory* or *immediate* knowledge. All meaning is *representative*—*symbolic*—a medium." The thought is familiar from the *Fichte Studies*. But here Novalis adds that the more abstract, nonrepresentational and specific the idea of an object becomes, the more detached from its object it is. As the meaning of some thing is refined, clarified, and made distinct, its own existence is circumscribed.

At the same time, language may get in the way of distinct ideas; as a resistant medium, language threatens to destabilize the thoughts it conveys. In fragment 2, Novalis writes:

Words are a deceptive medium for what is already thought—unreliable vehicles of a particular, specific stimulus. [...] True *collaboration in philosophy* then is a common movement toward a beloved world—whereby we relieve each other in the most advanced outpost, a movement that demands the greatest effort against the resisting element within which we are flying (I.2).

Flying in the resistant medium does not mean making the constructed appear as natural, or imbuing the greatest effort with the character of effortlessness. It is fraught and requiring of assistance, collaboration and relief. We may fail to achieve understanding or may misunderstand one another with disastrous results. Yet precisely in his notion of the resistant linguistic element within which we may fly, Novalis continues to see the prospect of a method that would facilitate real knowledge of cognition and its objects. The method he has in mind shows up in relief against the earlier efforts of the thinkers Novalis has also been praising.

In *Logological Fragment* I.38, Novalis mentions that Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is an exemplary drama of transformation: as an artwork, *Philoctetes* perfectly represents dissolution by presenting the development of order from chance, its completion as an organic form, and its disappearance again into chance. With this example in mind, Novalis argues against Lessing's celebrated analysis of the *Laocoön*.²² Lessing uses the Laocoön drama to compare sculptural and linguistic media, asserting that the sculpture depicting Laocoön and his sons being overwhelmed by a sea serpent perfectly depicts the "pregnant moment" before their tragic demise. Laocoön is shown, sculpturally, at his heroic, doomed best. The sculpture allows for imaginative free play, in Lessing's analysis, as do the poetic, textual descriptions that present the death of Laocoön in horrific narrative detail, allowing the reader to envision Laocoön's devastation for her- or himself. Both forms, sculptural and epic, succeed in being beautiful by doing justice to the constraints of their media. Accordingly, Lessing argues that understated text would fail to move readers and violently graphic sculpture would render our imaginations powerless. In a separate notebook kept as he was writing the *Logological Fragments*, Novalis counters:

Does not a more comprehensive, quicker, more intense moment of the Laocoön drama in the antique sculpture require contemplation? Perhaps it is the moment in which the greatest pain turns into intoxication, resistance into surrender, when the highest life transforms into stone. —Ought the sculptor not always grasp and seek out the moment of petrification [*den Moment der Petrefaktion*] depicting it and also being able to depict only it?—The greatest works of art are generally not pleasing. They are ideals that can only, and ought only, approximate pleasing us; aesthetic imperatives.²³

Lessing is wrong, Novalis thinks, to argue that the beauty of a sculpture requires a representation of subtler emotional states. Not because a grimace or contortion of awful suffering is more beautiful, but because beauty should not be the artist's objective. A "more comprehensive and intense" art would represent the moment or element of the whole at which opposition—a particular event portrayed in the artwork or the act of representation itself—is overcome and revealed. When "pain becomes intoxication" and "resistance surrender," the artwork as a form of *petrification* reaches its highest power by representing both the petrified and itself as petrifying. Contra Lessing, Novalis insists that this is just the way that art overcomes caricature and ineffectualness. Itself the site of non-Being or representation, art lives up to its aesthetic imperative where it represents vitality disintegrating, and chaos becoming organized and dissolving again.

But just as Lessing juxtaposes the sculpted and poetic drama of *Laocoön* to draw out the difference between the two artistic media, and to argue for the precedence of poetry, with its artful manipulation of the arbitrary, Novalis wants to apply to language the argument for a sculptural depiction of petrification. The thinker of the *Logological Fragments* is always also the artist, and the advances of philosophy—its development into logology—are to be matched by the advances of the poet. What the logological philosopher must do, in separating and vivifying the chosen element of the whole, is to grasp, depict, represent and *explain* the moment of its petrification. For Novalis, the element in question is the unit of meaningful language (or the speech act, in another parlance); the first step of its logological analysis involves singling it out for study.

Two crucial elements converge in the proposed analysis. First, this turn to language is considered indigenous to philosophy, and "all philosophy begins where philosophizing philosophizes itself—that is where it consumes (determines, compels) and renews again (does not determine, releases)" (I.79). Novalis's "romantic" proposal is not a matter of some easily "anti-" or "counter-Enlightenment" position and it does not simply repudiate critical idealism. At the same time, the development of a specialized, self-reflective language that is geared toward self-analysis requires the poet's imaginative art and the incorporation of regulative ideals, since actual, "ideal speech is part of the realization of the ideal world" (I.93). And now Novalis suggests that we single out, as *the* element for our understanding of the ideal world, the origin of philosophy and its originary force as language. Where the *Fichte Studies* began to suggest a study of reified abstract language, Novalis focuses

his analytic domain, in the *Logological Fragments*, to a particular and often metaphysical kind of language: enlightenment philosophy.

Novalis realizes that philosophical language is a deposit-bed of information about how meanings are made and how they change; he thus takes it on as a special object of study for two related reasons. In the first place, he finds the structure of meaningful language in general to be akin to the structure of philosophy in particular. For Novalis, language has capacities for meaningfulness that we would now call designative, expressive and communicative. Words really refer to things and may do so correctly or incorrectly; they also evoke what is singular and special to their user, such that each person actually has in some regard her own language; and, they are refined in ongoing exchanges between people that require agreement and command. Novalis here synthesizes insights from Herder and Fichte. Yet Novalis also adds a thought about language's capacity for meaning not taken up since the work of Hamann, and which Novalis probably elaborated after his reading of the mystical thinker Jacob Böhme: words also form a body of their own which, without designating, expressing or communicating anything external, hold hidden significance and potential as sensuous objects that seem to be imbued with an unknown, divine sense. Extraordinarily, Novalis argues that signs are not exclusively arbitrary in nature; hence no further argument for the superiority of language can be exclusively based on their arbitrariness. As the Socrates of Plato's *Cratylus* insinuates, and as Hamann in his *Socratic Memorabilia* and *Aesthetica in Nuce* insists, signs also have *essential* relationships, both to things and to each other. Though the essential designations of words are lost to us, we feel compelled—in the special moments when language seems to truly and uniquely speak to us—to make the most of their ever-immanent manifestations. The romantic writer's goal is to pique this feeling, and to provide the form of expression necessary for notice of its representation, elaboration and communication in language.

Novalis thus proposes to record the way that languages of both religion and metaphysics, in struggling to get at transcendent truths they cannot actually convey, use their material references to give analogical expression to less tangible ideas. In such abstract languages both the designative and the expressive powers of language can be seen in action, evoking what cannot otherwise be expressed, by referring analogically to actual entities or phenomena and to phenomena that might be like them. Intentionally or not, the language of enlightenment philosophy, a paradigm case of the abstract

languages of religion and metaphysics in general, utilizes a schematism of analogy to express and convey its deepest insights.

Such abstract language, then, even as it *seems* to move away from being a sensuous medium (as when we focus on following the significance of its arguments straightforwardly and find ourselves grasping their intellectual referents), can actually best present the demands of language as a medium. Indeed, in analyzing abstract language, we may scrutinize the linguistic constitution of meaningful utterances as such; for abstract meaning, whether of a religious or metaphysical sort, refers not to any thing in the world, but to its own construction, as a language, from references to things in the world. “God the Father,” for example, becomes meaningful insofar as it expresses a *likeness* to earthy paternal relationships. The phrase is both designative and expressive in character, with its ability to convey a new meaning built from its own material, its references to certain earthly relationships. Should the concept of “God the Father” become a violent, reified object, then according to Novalis’s earlier suggestion, the romantic writer will need to re-present it as an embedded, regulative term; one whose power comes from the linguistic schematism within which it was placed. Inaugurating a tradition carried on by otherwise diverse romanticisms, Novalis often describes this method of reevaluation as a “raising and lowering in turns.”

Although Novalis returns to the possibility of genuine religious sentiment, and although he thinks that language is potentially infinite in its capacity for diverse forms and meanings, he judges that it has reached an apex, requiring of a distinctively philosophical critique: “through civilization, through a rising level of development and vivification, language is formed into the most profound expression of the idea of organism, into the system of philosophy.” The climax of language—when its resistance gives way to surrender—is systematic philosophy. An artistic seizure of the language of philosophy, which has become requisite, should depict it in just this state of petrification. Should philosophy be renewed and vivified, should it transcend itself again, a philosophical explanation of its petrified state is imperative. Logology is to be this seizure, depiction and explanation.

Novalis’s proposal is thus to examine the nature of the symbolic, and to treat philosophy, no less than poetry, as a collection of analogies, metaphors and symbols (such as the “God the Father” example demonstrates). The logological study of symbolism for which Novalis calls must move in two simultaneous and opposing directions. It must examine what is *already* available in symbolic constructions and it must *freely produce* its own im-

ages, in the role of symbols of themselves, in order to articulate the spiritual world that materializes through them. Novalis's literary undertakings, from *The Novices of Sais* to the celebrated *Monologue* (or *Soliloquy*) must be understood as practices of this logological directive.²⁴ But as divine as Novalis is willing to say that language, or nature, or existence may be—and he often and enthusiastically conjures this divinity—he returns ever again to the position that our encounter with the potentially divine world remains sensuous and immanent. The divine speaks to us always with the force of the regulative, which means that we encounter divinity only as our own willful positing and our own need for symbolic orientation. By emphasizing the mystifying spirituality of this encounter, Novalis underscores the degree to which it remains arrantly compelling for us. To posit the regulative and to rely upon representation are not simply options toward which we can remain indifferent or with which we can become content, for our regulative posits and representations are induced by our incessant desire for transcendence—whether into the mysterious world of nature or into the inscrutable kingdom of God. Likewise for Novalis, though the immanence of romantic writing and critique is non-negotiable, it is also the condition for authentic religiosity, which may return in the feeling that cognition struggles newly to represent.

Novalis proposes, in the *Logological Fragments*, to depict, study and explain how language could come as far as systematic philosophy only to stall on its own resistance. Again, systematic philosophy is marked for the first subject of logological elucidation because Novalis takes it to be the highest form of language. And Novalis holds that systematic philosophy is embodied in a particular, historical subject that cannot be discounted in the logological analysis. The *Aufklärung* itself, with the contests of reason and faith, science and art, philosophy and poetry that it includes, must be studied as the scene in which systematic philosophical language has petrified. The reason that Novalis thinks we *can* so study systematic, enlightened philosophy, is that its terms have ceased to *mean* anything they were meant to mean. Novalis's contribution to the so-called "counter-Enlightenment" involves the suggestion that the languages of enlightenment philosophy and poetry be dissected as if cadavers, whose remains are still useful for study and for transplantation. The logological directive fulfills the demand for a self-critical medium that Novalis began developing in the *Fichte Studies*, by proposing to analytically distance itself from reified, abstract terms, while appreciating its own genealogical inheritance, as a philosophical language, of those same terms.

But if this linguistic turn foremost proposes a critical study of philosophical language, it is also designed to be synthetic and creative. Though he regularly depicts human language and the language of nature or “creation” as divine, inspired, even magical, it is with care that Novalis evokes a view of language incapable of inhabiting the position of the Absolute it has displaced. Symbolic language is meant to position the human being for communion with what is beyond the human, by pointing beyond itself, to something greater than itself, even while it openly returns us to our own subjective, reflective constraints—and to our notice of the kind of language to which we remain bound.

Novalis marked many of his logological notes with reminders to return to certain ideas later, for a fuller elaboration, which he was unable to accomplish before he died at the age of twenty-nine. Although Novalis’s notes are fragmentary and hermeneutically challenging, they serve to distinguish his thought from Schlegelian romanticism and to provoke questions about the renewed possibility of Novalis’s linguistic enterprise. Whether it remains forever embryonic or whether it is again taken up, Novalis’s linguistic initiative, at its theoretical core, will insist that consciousness remains bound to both representation and to the need for schematized, regulative positing. It insists that conscious remains bound to language, and to language’s material demands. Finished or fragmentary, the character of Novalis’s linguistic initiative continues to insist that, qua reflective, human beings will posit transcendence and interminably represent the limited character of the enterprise.

Notes

¹ Novalis. *Fichte Studies*. Trans./Ed. Jane Kneller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

² Relevant recent literature includes: Seyhan, Azade. *Representation and its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992. Frank, Manfred. *Einführung in die frühromantische Ästhetik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989. von Molnár, Géza. *Romantic Vision, Ethical Context: Novalis and Artistic Autonomy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. Beiser, Fredrick C. *The Fate of Reason*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1987. Beiser, Fredrick C. *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. Beiser, Fredrick C. *German Idealism*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002.

³ An English translation of “On the Linguistic Capacity and the Origin of Language” is available in *Language and German Idealism: Fichte’s Linguistic Philosophy*. Trans./Ed. Jere Paul Surber. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996.

⁴ Available in English as *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*. Condillac, A.E.B., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Important recent works on Condillac's *Essay* include Hans Aarsleff's "The Tradition of Condillac: The Problem of the Origin of Language in the Eighteenth Century and the Debate in the Berlin Academy before Herder" In *Studies in the History of Linguistics*. Ed Dell Hymes, 93-156. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974; and Charles Taylor's *Human Agency and Language*. Philosophical Papers I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

⁵ On Hamann's theory of language, see my "Language and Immanence in Hamann" *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* Vol.27; 2, November 2006. For further analysis of other of the figures mentioned here, see my *The Immanent Word: The Turn to Language in German Philosophy, 1759-1801*. New York: Routledge, 2007. English translations of a number of Hamann's essays are available in Gwen Griffith Dickson's *Johann Georg Hamann's Relational Metacriticism*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995.

⁶ Herder was a former student of both Hamann and Kant. For an analysis of their complex relationship and its theoretical consequence, see John H. Zammito's *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. Also of importance is Zammito's *Kant, Herder and the Birth of Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. See also Beiser (1987).

⁷ *Kant: Political Writings*. Ed. Hans Reiss. Trans. H.B. Hisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 222.

⁸ Zammito provides a noteworthy examination of Kant's repossession of his transcendental tools and of Kant's own view that his polemic against Herder *was* just that (1992).

⁹ Hamann, unlike the young Herder, was well aware of the threat linguistic theory posed to Kant's system and drew that threat to Kant's attention on every possible occasion. Several of Hamann's essays make this clear, e.g., *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*, available in English in Gwen Griffith Dickson (1995).

¹⁰ Elements of the following argument are taken from my (2007) and are reprinted here with the permission of the publisher.

¹¹ I am following the arrangement into six groups that the editors of the *Novalis: Schriften* distinguished; these are primarily based upon the handwriting and textual analysis that allowed for Eduard Havenstein's 1909 edition, expanded in Paul Kluckhohn's 1929 edition, and chronologically revised in Richard Samuel's and Hans-Joachim Mäh's 1965 second edition of Kluckhohn's work. This format is also followed by Jane Kneller in her 2003 English translation and edition. All further references to and quotes from the *Fichte Studies* will be taken from the Kneller edition, referenced with the traditional section number followed by the page number in Kneller.

¹² O'Brien, William Arctander. *Novalis: Signs of Revolution*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.

¹³ Recall §9 of Kant's third *Critique*: "Thus it is the universal capacity for the communication of the state of mind in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgment of taste, must serve as its ground and have the pleasure in the object as a consequence. Nothing, however, can be universally communicated except cognition and representation so far as it belongs to cognition. For only so far is the latter objective, and only thereby does it have a universal point of relation with which everyone's faculty of representation is compelled to agree" (5:217). *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹⁴ As Kneller points out in her Introduction to the *Fichte Studies*, Fichte's later revisions to his deduction of representation and selfhood may be better defended against, or altogether exempt from, Novalis's criticisms. Since such defense is extraneous to an account of Novalis's developing position on language in the *Fichte Studies*, it will not be taken up here. For further elaboration of Fichte's potentially defensible position, see too the work of Breazeale (in his Introduction to *Fichte: Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy (Wissenschaftslehre) Nova Methodo (1796/99)*). Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

¹⁵ Fichte flags his deduction of the fact-act with characteristic self-assurance in §5 of the *Wissenschaftslehre*: "The *Wissenschaftslehre* provides the following, superior explication of the Kantian proposition that our concepts refer only to objects of experience: experience refers to acting. Concepts originate through acting and exist only for the sake of acting; only acting is absolute. Kant does not maintain that experience is absolute; he insists upon the primacy of practical reason, but he has failed to show decisively that the practical is the source of the theoretical. [...] Those who claim that human beings can be representing subjects without also being active ones propound a groundless philosophy." (Breazeale translation.)

¹⁶ For an elaboration of Kant's analogical method in the first *Critique*, see Ess and Gulick's "Kant and Analogy: Categories of Analogical Equivocals" in *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 17:2, 93-98, June, 1994. Zammito's analyses (1992, 2002) also closely follow Kant's analogical procedure, and I rely on them here.

¹⁷ Richard Samuel, Novalis's German editor, found the inventory list of the young Novalis's library, on which Herder's *Treatise* was included (*Novalis: Schriften* IV, 687ff.). Samuel also records that Novalis probably met Herder in Jena, as early as 1790-1; Novalis definitely brought Tieck to visit Herder in 1799. For the argument that Novalis's early essay *Von der Begeisterung (On Inspiration)* was written under the influence of Herder's *Treatise*, see Kristen Pfefferkorn's *Novalis: A Romantic's Theory of Language and Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. In any case, it is likely that Novalis was aware of Herder's *Treatise* and of its unique critique of "originary" accounts by the time he began his *Fichte Studies*, though he does not refer to the *Treatise* directly in them.

¹⁸ Frank (1989) and *Das Problem "Zeit" in der deutschen Romantik*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1990; Kneller (2003); and Shulte-Sasse, et al. *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

¹⁹ See, e.g., *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* in *Religion and Rational Theology* (especially 6:32; 6:43; 6:50; 6:51). Trans./Ed. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

²⁰ Again, Kant reacted against Herder's work for closely associated reasons, which are elaborated by Zammito (1992, 2002).

²¹ All quotations from the *Logological Fragments I and II* are taken from the Stoljar translation and edition and follow its numeration: *Novalis: Philosophical Writings*. Trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

²² In the Introduction to his edition of seminal aesthetic texts, Jay M. Bernstein explains the consequence of Lessing's discussions of media for aesthetic theory, focusing particularly in the *Laocoön*. *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²³ My translation. Available in *Werke, Fragmente und Studien 1789-1798* (§745). Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1984.

²⁴ In a letter to Ludwig Tieck written in February of 1800, Novalis says that he is rewriting the *The Novices of Sais* with his newfound reading of Jacob Böhme in mind, and plans to make the work “a genuinely symbolic novel of nature.” He probably did not finish making the changes he refers to in this letter (*Werke* IV, 323,2-5 §152).