

HUMANITIES 4:

LECTURE 23

NOVALIS, FAITH AND LOVE, FRAGMENTS FROM THE NOTEBOOKS

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY



- 1772-1801
- GEORG FRIEDRICH VON HARDENBERG (NOVALIS)
- STUDIED LAW, PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY IN JENA
- WORKED IN MINING ADMIN.
- FRIENDS WITH SCHILLER, SCHLEGELS, MET GOETHE, INFLUENCED BY SCHLEIERMACH.
- HYMNS TO THE NIGHT
- DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- EARLIER KINGS: FREDERICK I, FREDERICK WILHELM I (=SOLDIER KING), FREDERICK II (=FREDERICK THE GREAT, PRO-ENLIGHTENMENT)
- KING FREDERICK WILHELM II (1786-1797)
 - ANTI-ENLIGHTENMENT
 - ESP. IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS
 - DEPLETED ECONOMIC & MILITARY STRENGTHS (E.G., WITH EXTRAVAGANT COURT) ON EVE OF NAPOLEONIC ERA
- KING FREDERICK WILHELM III (1797-1840)
 - MARRIED LOUISE OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ
 - TALENTED AND ARMED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT UNLUCKY IN EXECUTION/TIMING

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

CENTRAL FEATURES OF GR

- THE INFINITE
 - ANTI-SYSTEMATIC, ANTI-RATIONAL, INCOMPLETE
 - SYMBOLISM AS REQUISITE FORM OF EXPRESSION
- IMAGINATION AND SUBJECTIVITY
 - POETIC CREATIVITY
 - REJECTION OF CONVENTIONAL NORMS
- IDEALIZATION OF NATURE
 - UNSPOILED
 - RURAL VS. CIVILIZED PEOPLE
- THE EXOTIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

NOVALIS ON ROMANTICISM

- NOVALIS' SELF-UNDERSTANDING OF ROMANTICISM:
“THE WORLD MUST BE ROMANTICIZED.... WHEN I
GIVE THE COMMONPLACE A HIGHER MEANING, THE
CUSTOMARY A MYSTERIOUS APPEARANCE, THE
KNOWN THE DIGNITY OF THE UNKNOWN, THE FINITE
THE ILLUSION OF THE INFINITE, I ROMANTICIZE
IT” (FR. #105).
- THE INFINITE, SYMBOLISM, ANTI-RATIONAL,
INCOMPLETENESS, REJECTION OF CONVENTIONS.

NOVALIS' POLITICS

- NOVALIS' VIEW OF FREDERICK WILLIAM III & LOUISE
 - THEIR LOVE/UNION IS FUNDAMENTAL AND REPRESENTS A RECOMMENDATION FOR RELATIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT THEY GOVERN.
 - "THE COURT IS THE TRUE MODEL FOR A HOUSEHOLD. THE HIGHER HOUSEHOLDS OF THE STATE ARE MODELED AFTER IT, AND THE LOWER HOUSEHOLDS AFTER THESE HIGHER ONES, AND SO ON" (#29).
 - "THE KING AND QUEEN PROTECT THE MONARCHY MORE THAN 200,000 TROOPS [DO]" (#34).
- WHY IS "FAITH AND LOVE" CALLED "FAITH AND LOVE"?

NOVALIS' POLITICAL THEORY (I)

- REJECTION OF ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM
 - STATE IS AKIN TO “FACTORY” WITH MECHANICAL ADMINISTRATION, PROSPEROUS BUT TOO LIMITED.
 - LIKE “SQUARING THE CIRCLE” SINCE RAW SELF-INTEREST IS NOT TRULY LIMITED THEREBY AND LEADS TO REVOLUTION. (#36)
- REJECTION OF LIBERALISM
 - EXAGGERATED VALUE OF FREEDOM
 - ASOCIAL (OR INDIVIDUALISTIC) CONCEPTION OF MAN; INSUFFICIENT SENSE OF COMMUNITY.
- BOTH ENL. ABS. AND LIB. LACK INTERMEDIARY ENTITIES (E.G., GUILDS, COUNCILS) THAT COULD BUFFER POWER AND CREATE SOCIAL IDENTITIES.

NOVALIS' POLITICAL THEORY (II)

- PROPOSAL: ORGANIC CONCEPTION OF STATE
 - STATE IS LIKE A LIVING BEING, A PERSON (FR. #421 & 122)
 - PLURALITY OF PARTS THAT FORM A WHOLE
 - WORK TOGETHER ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS
 - SENSITIVE TO EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES & POETIC!
 - ALLOWS FOR COMMUNITY AND TRADITION, WITHOUT SACRIFICING LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.
 - INDIVIDUALS CAN DEFINE THEMSELVES ONLY THROUGH SOCIAL INTERACTION, SO COMMUNITY IS NECESSARY FOR FREEDOM.
 - LOVE (IN A COMMUNITY) IS MORE POWERFUL THAN SELF-INTEREST.
 - LOVE, NOT LAW, IS THE BASIS OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE.
 - “WHAT IS A POLITICAL UNION BUT A MARRIAGE?” (#36)

NOVALIS' METHOD

- SERIES OF SENTENCES, TYPICALLY NO MORE THAN ONE PARAGRAPH
 - NOT ESSAYS, LETTERS, OR OTHER CONTINUOUS METHOD OF EXPLICATION.
- SPECIAL LANGUAGE: METAPHORIC, CRYPTIC, VERNACULAR, BUT STILL MYSTERIOUS, EVEN MYSTICAL. (#1-3).
- EMPHASIS ON POETRY