

# Symphilosophie

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## Hemsterhuis Studies

*Novalis*

Translated, Annotated, and Introduced by James D. Reid\*

What follows is a complete translation of Novalis's excerpts from and comments upon the writings of the Dutch philosopher François Hemsterhuis (1721-1790), composed in the fall of 1797, as they appear in the second volume of the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* (Zweiter Band: Das philosophische Werk II, 360-378). The collection also includes a few brief excerpts from Gehler's *Physical Dictionary* (on mathematics), Herder's essay *Love and Selfhood*, itself a meditation on Hemsterhuis's views on desire, and A. W. Schlegel's essay on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Novalis's interest in Hemsterhuis can be traced back as far as late 1791, at least by way of epistolary anecdote: Friedrich Schlegel observes to his brother August Wilhelm in a letter written in January 1792 that Plato and Hemsterhuis are his new friend's favorite writers. That Novalis was interested in Hemsterhuis in his late teens is nothing surprising, at least not for a young man in touch with some of the chief intellectual trends and currents of his times. Although not well known today, Hemsterhuis was an important figure in Germany throughout the intense period of intellectual ferment between the *Aufklärung* and *Frühromantik* and across philosophical divides. His work, written in French, influenced Herder and Jacobi, several representatives of German Classicism, as well as Novalis and the Schlegel brothers, Hegel, and others. In the context of his reception in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Hemsterhuis's influence, while not as noisy, is as important as that of Spinoza's, although the thoughts of the younger of the two Dutch thinkers

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fell upon more receptive soil in Germany.<sup>1</sup> His thought brings together interests in modern natural science, concerns about morality and community, the demands of the heart, and the claims of reason in a way that appealed to philosophers invested in the task of thinking about how to find themselves at home in the modern world, at once committed to its enlightened values but searching for deeper sources of significance than reason's abstractions allow. That Hemsterhuis wrote epistles and dialogues rather than philosophical treatises and saw himself as a modern-day Socrates is surely relevant to his reception, too, especially among Romantic thinkers suspicious of the foundationalism of such Kantian philosophers as Reinhold and Fichte.

Hardenberg's interlocking interests in these notes, which will find their first published fruit in 1798 in the collection of fragments called *Pollen*, run the gamut and include, *inter alia*, the interpretation of nature (organic and inorganic and the relationship between the two); the unity of the sciences; the relationship between mind and body, intellect and sensibility, reason and imagination; the being of language and the connection between human thought and signs; the nature of affectivity and feeling and the ostensibly passive sides of human experience; the nature and function of art and genius and their bearing on the course of everyday life; the foundations of morality and politics, including the central problem of political unity that stands at the center of *Faith and Love* and *Christianity or Europe*; the structure and grounds of consciousness and self-consciousness; the nature of philosophy and its history; the problem of education and personal self-cultivation; the nature, scope, and limits of religious belief; and, of course, how all these diverse interests and themes bear upon the quintessentially Romantic quest for an elusive absolute, infinite, or unconditioned. The *Hemsterhuis Studies* are a breeding ground of thoughts on topics central to Hardenberg's work over the course of the next few years, in a line of development and ongoing re-evaluation and interpretation interrupted only by illness and his untimely death in 1801. If the *Fichte Studies* represents Hardenberg's philosophical breakthrough, the *Hemsterhuis Studies* represents his ongoing effort to think through the implications of his fruitful engagement with Fichte in 1795 / 6 and to give his thinking a new direction on issues that stood at the center of

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the reception of Hemsterhuis in Germany, see the informative essay by Laure Cahen-Maurel in the second volume of the recently published collected works of Hemsterhuis: "Philosophical Paths: The Legacy of Hemsterhuis's Dialogues in the Age of German Romanticism", in *The Dialogues of François Hemsterhuis, 1778-1787*, edited and translated by Jacob van Sluis and Daniel Whistler (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), pp. 22-41.

the early reception of Kant and Fichte and that still occupy an important place in contemporary work in the Kantian aftermath.

Most of the issues at stake in the *Hemsterhuis Studies* already show up in some shape in the *Fichte Studies*, and Hardenberg will continue to puzzle over them in the ensuing years, but a few things stand out as marking something of a turning point in or a crystallization of his thinking. It is in these notes on the Dutch thinker that Hardenberg begins to reflect in a more sustained way upon organic phenomena and in a manner that points toward the central role that will come to be assumed by organic paradigms in early German Romantic theories of, e.g., nature and the state and in the organic interpretation of the universe as a whole (in contrast to the mechanical conception inaugurated in its modern form by Descartes). The problem of getting oriented in the whole plays an important part in Hardenberg's subsequent turn (or return) to Kant and is central to almost everything he penned between 1797 and 1800. His emerging views on organs and instruments also bear important relations to his subsequent sketches for a philosophy of what he calls 'magical idealism,' which has too often been saddled with an implausible commitment to wishful thinking. And while Hardenberg continues to view the moral life and philosophy as matters of self-activity, the excerpts and notes translated here reveal an important recognition of the passive and affective dimensions of human existence. One might locate in these reflections the emergence of Hardenberg's longstanding commitment to love (or the affairs of the heart) as the center of our being. To be sure, the experience of passivity and the limits of the self-positing I were already at issue in the *Fichte Studies*, but the lines of thought traced out below reveal a more sustained, if muted, polemic against the one-sided emphasis on the I in Fichtean thought where, in Hardenberg's own subsequent estimation, the phenomenon of love remains homeless. In any event, students of Novalis with interests in his ongoing investment in Fichte's philosophy, and the nature and extent of his disagreement with the same, will find in the *Hemsterhuis Studies* a valuable source of information.

It is also worth observing that Hardenberg is no slavish disciple of Hemsterhuis, no more than he was a mere follower of Fichte, but engages with the former's work in a critical and self-reflective spirit. His excerpts are often paraphrastic and reflect his own interest in making selective use of Hemsterhuis's ideas and trains of thought for his own philosophical purposes. At the center of Hardenberg's concerns, here and elsewhere, stand such large, fundamental, and intertwined questions as: How do we have a world at all? What sort of reality do we inhabit? What makes being-here worthwhile? And how should we talk about things that matter?

Novalis excerpts from and comments upon several of Hemsterhuis's works, including the *Letter on Sculpture* (1769), the *Letter on the Desires* (1770), the *Letter on Man and His Relations* (1772), *Aristée* (1779), *Alexis* (1787), *Simon* (1787), and the *Letter on Atheism* (1787).<sup>2</sup> Following the format of the *Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, Novalis's comments are in 12-point font, everything else in 10-point font. Editorial additions are given in square brackets, including references to the editions of Hemsterhuis used by Novalis. The numbering of the notes and comments, which begins with #14, follows this edition as well. The *Hemsterhuis-Studien* are preceded by 13 numbered excerpts from Fichte, both of which fall under the heading "Philosophical Studies from the Year 1797," which include subsequent notes on related themes in the work of Kant and the German philosopher and physician Adam Karl August von Eschenmayer (1768-1852).

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that no notes survive on Hemsterhuis's dialogue *Sophylus* (1778).

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14. *Evaporation* is a chemical revolution *around the axis*. Every body revolves.

Are warmth and other forces of matter originally and continuously active and *growing*, and now only *inhibited*, like gravity? Like air – It is in the state of compression.

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From Gehler.<sup>1</sup>

[J. S. T. Gehler, *Physical Dictionary or Attempt at an Explanation of the Most Important Concepts and Technical Terms of the Doctrine of Nature*. Part Three, 1790, p. 158.]

15. Higher mathematics is a mixed science of arithmetic and geometry.

The *calculus of the infinite* discovers the rates at which changing magnitudes change by comparing changing magnitudes / differential calculus / or, conversely, the former by way of the latter / integral calculus. /

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Hemsterhuisiana:

[J. G. Herder, *Love and Selfhood: A Postscript to the Letters of Mr. Hemsterhuis on Longing* (1781). *SW* Bd. XV, pp. 308/317/309.]

16. The more spiritual, the more lasting the enjoyment.

No degree of unification among beings is without fruit.

Body and spirit have been mixed by a kind of voluntary drunkenness.

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<sup>1</sup> Johann Samuel Traugott Gehler (1751-1795) was a German physicist and lawyer. He is the author of a six-part dictionary of the natural sciences. Novalis excerpts here from the third part, published in 1790.

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Ground of the simplicity of the great man.<sup>2</sup>

Schlegel Senior.<sup>3</sup>

[A. W. Schlegel, "On Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliette*." *Die Horen*, 1797, Issue 6, pp. 23/33/43]

17. Did he need an external boundary, perhaps, in order to become conscious of his *free power*?

This superficial similarity between the most common and the highest is the highest triumph of art.

In precisely this way, the poet leads us further into the inwardness of our minds, by lending his characters a more complete organ of communication than [we find] in nature itself.

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Partly by Hemsterhuis, partly by me.

[*Lettre sur la sculpture*, Vol. I, p. 6]

18. The one chief end of art is – given nature.

The opposite – *Not-nature*, or a voluntary nature.

The median end – a mixture of the two.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This last sentence is not taken from Herder's essay but pertains to the following remark in Hemsterhuis's *Simon*: "and this is the reason for that tone of simplicity admired and wondered at in the actions of the truly great man" (*Dialogues, 1778-1787*, 118).

<sup>3</sup> Novalis means August Wilhelm, the elder brother of Friedrich.

<sup>4</sup> These comments pertain to Hemsterhuis's views on art and the imitation of nature. The following passage from the *Letter on Sculpture* is relevant: "The primary goal of all the arts is to imitate nature; the second [is] to enrich nature by producing effects that it does not produce easily, or that it cannot produce" (*Early Writings, 1762-1773*, 61).

*Sur les Desirs* [On the Desires].[*Lettre sur les desirs*, Vol. I, p. 57-85]

19. Without organs, the soul would be permeated by the infinite object *in the instant* – both would become one – and the mutual enjoyment would be complete. [p. 62]

Where it requires organs, as in its entire present state, that ideal of enjoyment remains an unattainable idea [p. 63] – an eternal *attraction*, which it would cease to be through its attainment.

Hence, it is a *subjective* idea that grows just as the soul grows – an *indefinite* task – that can never be solved, because it is solved in infinite ways, always only relatively.

Through the enduring possibility of the expansion of the object – the complete unification remains always futural.

20. The force of inertia, which restricts the force of attraction, is the excess of the conductive force over the equilibrium of attractions, or the generative forces of the cosmos – This excess is the basis of morality and virtue. [p. 69, note 1]

The human being takes pains to appropriate everything that surrounds him and draws near to him – i.e., to make it *homogeneous* with himself – so that he can combine himself with it more easily – ? ? ? ? [p. 73]

The state is a *particular* combination of several human beings within the great state that humanity already constitutes for itself. [p. 75, note 1]

The *point d'honneur* of the old chivalry is what first introduced that absurd formality between *humans* – etiquette is the death of all free humanity – a mixture of petty Asian slavery and despotic pride – with Christian humility. [p. 77]

The consequence of every dissolution into individuals is a communal existence of parts – Every *community* is the source of relations – hence of inalterable laws. [p. 79-80]

Every object – as stimulus of an organ, *consists* of members.

The impression of the object on the soul is the effect of an activity of the object in relation to the soul.

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This action, like actions in general, is divided into intensity and duration.

The intensity is measured by the number of members that act upon the soul. Duration by the time needed by the organ for the soul to produce a living intuition of the whole or of the substance of the object, insofar as it is analogous to the organ.

Hence, of two equally *intense* objects, the one that is easiest to run through, that most quickly imprints itself is – superior. [pp. 82-3: *Remarque générale*]

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### *Sur l'homme et ses rapports* [On Man and His Relations].

[*Lettre sur l'homme et ses rapports*, Vol. I, pp. 125-245.]

#### 21. *By me*. Introduction.

The most wonderful, the eternal phenomenon, is *our own existence*. The greatest mystery is the human being itself – The solution to this infinite task is *indeed* world history – The history of philosophy, or of science in general, of literature as substance, contains the attempts at an ideal solution to this ideal problem – of this imagined idea.

This stimulus<sup>5</sup> can never cease to be stimulating – unless we ourselves cease to be – both in substance and in idea. Hence, just as world history – being *en gros* – does not cease, neither does philosophizing, or *thinking en gros*.

But what if one had not hitherto philosophized? but only attempted to philosophize? – then the previous history of philosophy would be neither more nor less than a history of the *attempts to discover* philosophizing.

As soon as *philosophizing comes to be* there are also philosophemes [*Philosopheme*]<sup>6</sup> – and the pure natural history (doctrine of nature) of the philosophemes is *philosophy*.

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<sup>5</sup> The German here is *Reitz*, a word that can mean stimulus, incitement, attraction, irritant. I have translated it here as 'stimulus,' but elsewhere as 'incitement.'

<sup>6</sup> A 'philosopheme' is a philosophical statement, thesis, proposition, or conclusion. Novalis seems to be differentiating between the activity of philosophizing and its various products. But as he observes in the following note, a philosopheme is also a proposition or thought



22. As soon as he begins to think, the human being ascribes every affection to another affection.

/ Every thought is, *in relation to its ground* – a philosopheme. For this is to consider a thought *in the whole* – in its relationship to the whole of which it is a member. /

Hence, for the purpose of explaining, he transfers the concept of cause, which he must imagine for every effect, to a being existing outside of himself – although in another respect he feels himself compelled to believe that he only affects himself – but despite its self-evidence from a higher standpoint, this conviction remains incomprehensible from a lower standpoint, i.e., to the mere understanding – and so the philosopher sees himself, with complete presence-of-mind, *judging in a restricted way*. From the standpoint of mere judgment, there is consequently a not-I [*ein Nichtich*].<sup>7</sup> Hence, the mysterious incitement of the power of judgment to explain what is eternally inexplicable in this way persists despite the philosopher's supervision, and must remain so for all eternity, so that the intelligence itself might persist.

The human being accordingly feels *passive* only at the level of mere judgment.

Hence, we will never *grasp* ourselves *completely* – but we will and can do *much more* than grasp ourselves.<sup>8</sup>

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23. Hemsterhuis.

One can regard *signs* – as means of *recollection*, and as means of *communication*. /At *bottom one*. / [p. 134]

By means of signs the human being has objects in his power – he can bring a remote object near to a present one *in the faculty of representation*, and so produce a coexistence –

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brought in relation to its ground in the whole. The term appears to go back no further than the 17th century.

<sup>7</sup> The language of 'I' and 'not-I' was introduced into philosophical discourse by Fichte.

<sup>8</sup> This note was incorporated in the *Assorted Remarks* (fragment 6).

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imaginatively – also actually blend the manifold easily – and assimilate it according to one idea.<sup>9</sup> [p. 135-6]

Hemsterhuis calls the combining faculty of intuition, which deals with signs rather than with objects and coordinates them, *reason*. [p. 136]

An intelligence is all the more perfect the more coexisting ideas it can oversee.

The most perfect intelligence would be able to produce an entire *coexistence* of several or all ideas – The relatively perfect [intelligence would be able] more or less to approach this *perfect coexistence* – They are only more or less *swift* – in the successive overview.

But mere swiftness does not alone constitute perfection, but rather also the clarity and constancy of apperception. [pp. 136-8]

Hemsterhuis's distinction between genius, acumen, understanding, and dullness.

By Dumas.<sup>10</sup>

[*Note de M. Dumas*, pp. 138-141]

[24.] Complete conviction is the feeling of absolute truth.

Absolute truth for us is the identity of the *intuition* and the *essence* of an object.

Every genuine axiom is the expression of such an absolute truth.

The common herd holds truth to be quantitative – This is absurd – He confuses it with conviction. Conviction is always in an inverse relationship to the length of the path from the *first axiom* to the *thema probandi* [the object of proof].

If one could concentrate the momentary convictions of all the truths one has run through in a single moment, then the conviction of the derived proposition would be as strong as that of the principle.

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<sup>9</sup> Novalis's interest in the nature and power of signs goes back at least as far as his studies of Fichte (1795/6) and runs throughout his brief philosophical career. The idea that signs grant power over objects comes forward in the very first fragment of *Assorted Remarks*.

<sup>10</sup> Charles-Guillaume-Frédéric Dumas (c. 1725-1780) is responsible for editing the work of Hemsterhuis.

The greater and the more complicated the relationship becomes, the more difficult is its apprehension – but where the feeling of the relationship ends – doubt emerges – hence, one must seek to help oneself by giving the penultimate proposition the absolute value of a principle.

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25. By me. / *Understanding* and *reason* express the organs or faculties for relationships /

[26.] Continuation of Hemsterhuis.

Genius gives – great, deep truths – the understanding – *popular* – *universally intelligible* truths – acumen – errors and truths of all sorts mixed together – dullness – dead, unconnected masses.

Vulgar philosophy is the tasteless residue left behind when spirit vanishes. [pp. 141-42]

True logic is that faculty of intuition – so-called logic a miserable palliative.

The sentient being has three natural means – of receiving intuitions.

1. Affection from without.
2. contingent movement of the organ.

/ Dream. Blow to the eye – terror /

3. Affection of the organ through signs. [p. 142]

/ This division does not seem entirely right to me. /

The first is the *clearest*.

The second – the most confused.

The last is the most obscure but thoroughly determined. [p. 143]

Character of the animal faculty of representation. [p. 144]

Instinct is the result of the effect of the faculty of intuition upon a few clear, coexisting ideas. [p. 147]

27. / Hence, instinct and genius would be only quantitatively distinct. /

Everything external that the soul intuits is the point from which it emerges in order to acquire the conviction of its own existence.

Its power of desire gives it to know its existence.

In its counteraction it feels only itself to be active. [p. 155]

With increasing obstacles, the intensity of the power of desire increases.

The individual, particular force of assimilation, or inertia, decreases the more the principle of regularity is weakened – The plant withers if gravity – the *universal* force of *assimilation* – predominates over this particular object. [p. 170]

/ Is this not perhaps also the case with states and individuals? /

Everything in the three kingdoms is composed of *generative mass*. [p. 171]

There must still be a foreign *tendency* toward the whole that hinders the final unification of the members into a single, immeasurable mass – [pp. 171-72]

*Theory of the Moral Organ*. [pp. 176-180]

The *analogous* – the *mimetic* signs.

His hypothesis that primitive language consists of such analogous signs. [pp. 182ff.]

Harmony and melody are one in the end – Melody is *relative* – *successive* harmony – Harmony is the *heard* relationship between 2 or more coexisting tones. [p. 192, note 1]

The organ of feeling has three kinds of sensation.

1. Impenetrability.
2. Warmth.
3. *Pleasant* contact.

The organ of hearing also – three:

1. Rhythm.

2. Tone.
3. Harmony.

The organ of sight, too:

1. Outline – boundary.
2. Color.
3. Beauty.

The moral organ likewise:

1. Longing or motive.
2. Duty.
3. Virtue.

The last four kinds of all 4 organs have a remarkable affinity, as do their opposite sensations.

*Pain – discord –  
Ugliness and vice.* [pp. 192-3]

One should distinguish carefully between the faculty of contemplation and the organ of the heart. The former forms schematic intuitions of the concrete sensations of all the senses. It combines its ideas of duty and longing – into the *product – virtue* – So too its ideas of boundary and color – into the *product – beauty*. In music – tone and rhythm – into harmony – warmth and elasticity into the feeling of pleasure. [p. 193]

*On the Sympathy of the Organs.* [p. 195]

The principal difference between the moral organ and the others – is – that *the I* is co-apprehended among the objects of this organ, too. [p. 196]

There are human beings so tenderly moral, whose conscience perceives such remote relations that they cannot be members of current society. [p. 200]

Hemsterhuis considers the idea of *property* to be as dangerous as it is false. [p. 203]

All legislation relates to physical relationships – seeks to give them an independent roundness and security – and thus makes morality indispensable – and thereby weakens the moral organ entirely.

Human beings have worked quite persistently [*consequent*] to annihilate virtue and religion almost entirely, as our current constitutions show. [pp. 203-4]

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Prayer works like a restorative drug. [p. 208]

*Theory of Revelations*.<sup>11</sup> [p. 209]

Faith requires a true talent. Some people can have far more faith than others.

Organ of faith. [pp. 210-11]

It is so difficult to get to know a religion *purely*. [p. 213]

The *superstitious sciences* arise through the *activity* of the moral organ upon *the other* (lower) *organs*. [p. 216]

The discovery of the laws of the cosmos.

Pythagoras's unconditioned end of the perfection of the moral organ. [p. 218-19]

/ Are there no binoculars for the same?

By me. /

Love of the fatherland / says **Republicanism** / could do a great deal of good. [p. 222]

Our current religion takes us only so far from true bourgeois virtue.

It is strange that no legislator has attempted the *absolute identification* of divinity and fatherland. [p. 223]

Our current written characters were originally kinds of *notes* – longer or shorter strings, or images taken from the wind instruments – especially *the vowels* – for the purpose of reproducing these tones for the reader.

1. Object script – mimetic script.
2. Representative script.
3. Cipher script. [p. 225-26]

The first cognitions are *isolated* – they contain only disconnected objects.

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<sup>11</sup> These notes would be worth comparing with Novalis's subsequent essays in politics and religion (*Faith and Love* and *Christianity or Europe*).

The second arise out of the relative coexistence of the first – they are relational cognitions.

The totality of our cognitions, or science in the main, consists accordingly of the sum of the preserved and acquired cognitions – for all relational ideas are the *work* of the human being.

The magnitude of human science is accordingly determined by the sum of the primitive ideas multiplied by the sum of the secondary ideas. [p. 227-28]

The sciences are separated only from a lack of genius and acumen – the relationships between them are too intricate and remote from each other for the understanding and dullness.

We owe the greatest truths of our day to such combinations of the long-separated members of the complete science.

In mathematics, object and idea or intuition are one. [p. 230]

The human spirit revolves around the sun – it has its perihelia and its aphelia.

In every perihelion, a certain spirit sets the tone.

The spirit of taste and morality among the Greeks –  
The spirit of calculus among us.

The first perihelion grasped the spirit of the wonderful.

The perfection of our sciences is judged according to their capacity for mathematics. [pp. 230-31]

The all-too-swift increase in ideas of relation results in addiction to combination and application. The person who developed too quickly is still no match for this great task – the *sense* fades and becomes dull – no firm distinction between the true and the false henceforth – accretion of illusions – *frivolity* – *indifferentism* – bagatelle – fatigue – indolence. [pp. 233-34]

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/ *Germes of future organs* – perfectibility of the organs. How can something be made into an organ?<sup>12</sup> /

By Dumas.

[*Note de M. Dumas*, pp. 234-35]

[28.] The universal spirit of each perihelion arises out of the first relational ideas that arise in its *withdrawal* from the aphelion of barbarism.

The determinate condition of the aphelion determines these first expressions of the reaction [*Reaction*] whereby culture as such begins.

Deep ignorance prompts scientific experiments – the strangest things become coupled *coexistents* – the superstitious – the miraculous sciences emerge here. Herein the breeze, the spirit of the miraculous is produced.

Slavery and emigrations lead to political institutions – property – political virtues.

The spirit of politics and morality, and along with it the spirit of taste, comes to predominate.

Out of the monastic spirit, chivalry, and indolence come – / revolutionary – progressive ideas / speculative spirit in everything – preeminent training of the understanding.

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## 29. Hemsterhuis.

The will is in itself infinite – bound to determine laws by way of its organs – restricted.

The theoretical and moral sense follows the soul beyond the grave, too.

The soul seems formed not for knowledge – but for enjoyment and intuition.

This world consists of the *actual* and *possible* – both arise out of a single principle *and are one before God*. Only the human being distinguishes between the actual and the possible.

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<sup>12</sup> Questions concerning the development and acquisition of organs, as the tools (Greek, *organon*) with which we are able to alter our surroundings, will prove to be important in the development of what Novalis comes to call ‘magical idealism.’



Before God there is nothing evil. [pp. 237-39]

/ The world – as we now see it, is the sum of our current, from our side *passive* relationships with God. /

The arts have indeed arisen through the excessive expansion and development of the lower faculties – but the most essential organ – *the heart*, has lost?

The development of this organ is reserved for a future existence – the development of this organ is the character of our genuine perfectibility.

Do we know – what discoveries have been reserved for us on this side – ? The moral side of the cosmos is even more unknown and immeasurable than the space of heaven.

/ Moral Arts. /

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*Aristée.*

[*Aristée ou de la Divinité* (Aristée or on the Divinity), Vol. II, pp. 5-106]

30. If there is order in the cosmos, then it is not perceptible, at least not for those who are not masters of the cosmos.

It is relative – It serves only the representation of several objects at once or combined in a series. Objects that have common marks or *common media* (as, e.g., those in *a series*), are capable of order. [pp. 16-19]

Regularity of the relational ideas produces order. [p. 22]

Every being discovers order only the works *of its arts*, only in the productions of its kind that are based on relations of the genus. [p. 23]

Order in general is the *distribution* of things according to the *idea of a determinate* whole – Disorder is an enumeration and distribution of things that does not correspond to the preestablished idea. [pp. 26-27]

/ Neither order nor disorder is there where *no such idea* has an influence on the enumeration and distribution of objects. /

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One can consider the universe from 6 different sides –

1. from the physical.
2. as organic;
3. *active* and *counteractive*.
4. from the intellectual side.
5. from the side of morality.
6. in light of the relationships of its members and the natural laws that arise therefrom. [p. 36]

An organ is an instrument – means to a determinate end.

The work of every finite being

/ Every finite being is an instrument /

is an *organ* – means to a determinate *end*.

A substance produces no limited being. / of course. / [p. 37]

Only by way of analogy with *our art* do we call the parts of nature that seem to occupy themselves preeminently with their reproduction and modification – organs. [p. 38]

Where organization becomes visible – an end is revealed at the same time – a *goal* – Where a *goal* appears – we are driven to an *ideal*, to a *thought* that *precedes* the real, the execution, the object.

Organization is that driving force of the parts – to produce substances. [p. 38-39]

Hemsterhuis considers the material to be absolutely *inert* – without its own principle of motion. [p. 41]

As an intelligence that is *willing*, hence able to overcome its inertia, the human being can form an imaginary universe out of relationships he has within his own power. [pp. 44-45]

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31. No activity without direction – No direction without a faculty of desire. [p. 45]

/ Finite and infinite attraction – Both are opposed to each other. The former is imperfect – *exchange* – *alteration* is its character – The latter is complete – It is *une et indivisible* – One could say that it is characterized by *fidelity*. / [pp. 55-56]

Legislation has occasioned the mixture of these heterogeneous principles of attraction – Out of this mixture arose *shame*, regret, fear. [p. 57]

Morality is the sum-total of the laws of that infinite principle. [p. 58]

The productions of the willing intelligence *prompt* or incite the moral organ – *maxims* are the basis of moral actions. [pp. 58-59]

Hemsterhuis speaks of *saturation* with moral vital-force – and its relativity – a proportion of its capacity. [p. 59]

He assumes four *special* faculties of soul – imagination – whereby he understands mere capacity as such and the faculty of preservation. / Sensibility and memory. /

2. *Understanding*<sup>13</sup> – or the power of judgment – the synthetic and analytic faculties – / The imagination is its supplier /

3. Will – faculty of desire – the faculty of being able *to will* and to act / much tautology. /

4. The moral principle – which is passive and active.  
/ pathetic and sympathetic – *active* and *coactive*. /

It is active when it identifies with *its I* – judges itself in itself – duties to self, etc. – It is coactive when it identifies with the I of another, adapts the actions of its own I in accordance with this identification – and judges them according to this principle – *duties to others*. [pp. 60-61, note 2]

/ Hence, the inward, sublime gratification of beneficence and virtue – are explicable according to the laws of a *higher physics* / of metaphysics. /

Sensible conviction – intelligible conviction – their alternation. [p. 62]

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<sup>13</sup>The context gives us good reason to think that the imagination is the first of the four special faculties of the soul.

## NOVALIS

The universe is in the state of a taut spring. [p. 63]

The understanding makes of the *universal* will / a direction toward all sides /, which on that account *wills nothing* – a determinate, submissive will, since it is by nature absolutely inflexible. [pp. 67-68]

Axioms rest upon *sensible* conviction. The artificial, contrived conviction stems from the axiom. The latter [conviction] has suppressed the former – It is so sharply defined – the former [conviction], on the other hand, is as simple as possible – but for this reason so *inconspicuous* – It is also communicable, while the former is not. [pp. 87-88]

Hemsterhuis believes that in the first 2 moments of a perception, the soul is *passive*, in the third, *passive* and *active at once*, and in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> active. The imagination receives. 1. /The heart / which Hemsterhuis here takes as a feeling of pleasure and displeasure – as sensibility – / desires or detests. 2. / The heart determines our conduct. 3. / The understanding reasons about moral sensation. – 4. / The power of the will expresses itself. 5. / [p. 97]

Difference between achieved greatness and high harmony – Themistocles and Socrates.

For the latter [Socrates] happiness does not seem to be the result of favorable circumstances, but rather a true emanation of his essence – *Misfortune becomes good luck through his own touch*. [p. 100]

It is not enough to know that we are capable in this life of beginning a flight that death does not interrupt but rather accelerates, since its continuation depends solely upon the unalterable direction of our free will. [p. 103]

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*Alexis.*

[*Alexis ou de l'âge d'or* (Alexis or the Golden Age<sup>14</sup>), Vol. II, pp. 107-185]

32. When the sensation of a need and its object coincide – are mixed – when the drive is saturated by the object – perfect enjoyment is present [*da*]. [p. 121]

Every overwhelming idea or sensation acts like instinct, for instinct is nothing but this. [p. 123]

The less instinct, the *wiser* – The tendency toward wisdom is opposed to instinct. Where wisdom is – equilibrium is – isonomy. [pp. 125-26]

*Prejudice* is an incompatible, *baseless* – hindering idea – arbitrarily posited – and all the more powerful the more it touches these predicates – The most invincible – will be the *craziest*. [pp. 127-31]

The principle of personality is the *highest principle* in us. The measure of independence and the strength of the same is the measure of wisdom. [p. 132]

One must seek wisdom on this side of the grave not in *génie* but in *moderation*. Combined with genius – it is *epoch*-making – it performs miracles. [p. 132]

Socrates's end was the education of everyone. Pythagoras cared only about a small number of chosen ones. [p. 137]

History – philosophy – poetry – The first gathers – the second orders and explains – [p. 153]  
/ The third elevates each individual through choice contrasts with the remaining whole, and when philosophy makes *perfect* poetry possible by the formation of the external whole, or through *legislation*, then poetry is, so to speak, the end of the same, through which it first gains significance and graceful life – for poetry cultivates *beautiful* society, or *the inner whole* – the world-family – the beautiful household of the universe – Just as philosophy, through system and state, combines *the powers* of the individual with the *powers* of the cosmos and the rest of humanity, and strengthens it – and makes the whole into the organ of the individual and the individual an organ of the whole – So too poetry – in *relation to enjoyment* – The whole is the object of

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<sup>14</sup> The idea of the Golden Age is an important one in Novalis's developing thought. This is, I believe, one of the earliest occurrences of the term in the literary remains.

## NOVALIS

individual enjoyment, and the individual is the object of total enjoyment. Through *poetry* the highest sympathy and coactivity – the most intimate, the most glorious society becomes actual. / Through philosophy – it becomes possible.

Everything is transformed into a *thrilling pleasure* – to be sure, this pleasure is not pleasure in the usual sense.

Genuine poetic enjoyment – strengthens – instead of weakening, as common enjoyment does – /

*By me.*

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33. The power of the imagination to condense, to concentrate is the power to produce the beautiful and the sublime. [pp. 157-58]

Genius and divine inspiration work in the same way – they often seem mixed. / Enthusiasm is light and warmth – But there is also light without heat. / The spirit of poetry is the morning light that makes the statue of Memnon resound. [p. 158]

A swift apperception is *tact* [Tact] in the uncommon sense. [p. 161]

[34.] Wishes and desires are wings – There are wishes and desires – that are so poorly fitted to the state of our earthly life that we can safely infer a state where they become pinions that will elevate them into an element of their own, and an island where they can settle. [cf. pp. 164-65]

[35.] Hemsterhuis has a glorious passage here on the spirit and the letter in philosophy [p. 168]. According to him, the letter is only an *aid* to philosophical communication – the authentic essence of which consists in thinking things *through* [*Nachdenken*]. The speaker only guides the course of thought in the hearer – and in this way it becomes true thought. *He thinks* – and the *other thinks along* [*denkt nach*]. Words are an unreliable medium of forethought [*Vordenkens*]. The genuine truth must by nature *show the way* [*wegweisend*]. It is meant, therefore, only to bring someone onto the right path, or, better, to give him a definite direction toward the truth. He arrives at the place and position, then, on his own, if he is otherwise *active* and *desires* to arrive at the truth. The presentation of philosophy consists accordingly of palpable themes, starting-points – differentiating propositions – determinate

*prodding* propositions [Stoßsätzen] – It [philosophy] is only present for the active, for the lover of truth – the *analytical* exposition of the theme is only for the lazy or *unpracticed* – who must first learn to flee his *mother* and to maintain a definite direction for himself.

Every attentiveness to an object, or every definite direction (the two are one) – produces *a real relationship* – For along with this distinction, we simultaneously sense the *object's force of attraction*, or the individual force of striving, begin to preponderate – which we surrender to and do not lose the sentiment of, but rather hold firmly in view – bringing us happily to the aim of our longing.

Hence, genuinely complete philosophizing [*Gesamtphilosophieren*] is a shared movement toward a beloved world – in which we mutually detach ourselves from our preeminent posts that demand the greatest exertion (which we renounce) against the antagonistic element. We follow the sun and tear ourselves loose from the position that, according to the laws of the movement of our planet, conceals a long era in cold night and mist. / Dying is a genuinely philosophical act. / by me.

36. Certain restraints are like the fingerings of a flute-player, who, in order to bring forth different tones – stops now this hole, now that – and who seems to make the most arbitrary combinations of sounding and silent holes. By me.

Synthesis of colors in white light.

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*Simon.*

[*Simon or des facultés de l'âme* (Simon or on the Faculties of the soul), Vol. II, pp. 187-277]

37. Art has two branches – it has in part the end of serving, entertaining, / and perfecting by means of enjoyment / *the body* – in part, the preserving, amusing / and graceful cultivation of / *the soul*. [p. 216-17]

/ Is there not also the use, enjoyment, and agreeable progression of *the whole* human being? /

## NOVALIS

Hemsterhuis calls the arts of civility, war, and ship-building mixed arts – and all the arts of the first sort [are mixed], insofar as they are capable of a certain *ornamentation*.

The two principal means of the 2<sup>nd</sup> sort are – affection through the objects or *their seeming* itself – or through signs, by means of which they demand that the reader or listener produce within himself the signified objects themselves. The poet and rhetorician commonly employ the latter means, the other artists the former. Still, they also employ *the notes* as well as the *dramatic* theme – that of the former means. [pp. 271-18]

/ Much more remains to be said on this score. /

Everything is matter that comes to us by means of the organs.

Difference between *vehicle* and *organ* – Air, light, etc. are vehicles. The capacity of vehicles is extremely different – as are the proportional relations of their mixtures. So, e.g., air is much slower than light – and water again slower than air. [p. 229]

/ Is air a dense or a fluid material – likewise the ether? The ether seems to me still much denser than air – because ether *travels* so *quickly*. /

If Orion were the only *visible* object – But its light, thanks to the brevity of its emergence and its tremendous breadth, would not have reached us; we would be blind and would not know that we had such an organ as the eye. [pp. 229-30]

/fiat applicatio. /

[38.] The will is neither a *means* nor an *organ*. [p. 233]

Passive and active parts of the moral organ – They behave like imagination and the power of judgment. [p. 234]

A common human being deserves neither praise nor blame – Society does not punish him – it merely keeps itself secure from him. [p. 236]

A person with great sensitivity of the moral organ, but without activity of the same – is equally capable of virtue and vice.

A person whose will easily *disintegrates into determinate willings*, or whose will is easily mixed with the remaining senses, with *specific* objects, whose moral organ is deficient, or suppressed by arbitrariness, so that the individual willings of the same are not assessed according to the idea of justice and injustice – whose understanding is richly endowed and well-practiced,



whose imagination is lively and unabating – this is a truly evil person – The more perfect his remaining senses, the more evil.

*A perfectly harmoniously cultured* human being with equally energetic dispositions.

In such a one, all the senses act and perceive almost simultaneously and in the most glorious congruence. [p. 236-238]

6 classes – the thoroughly immature – the poor in spirit, the mediocre, the tremendously imperfect – the genuine villains – the genuinely wise. [p. 240]

/ Conclusiveness – inconclusiveness.<sup>15</sup> /

With *inconclusive* willpower, one must not seek to enrich – the imagination that will be the *guide* of the same. One ought to observe a rigorous *ordering* and *selection* among the objects with which one mixes it – and to give the understanding the *greatest education possible* – so that the imagination, as the highest cause, although poor, still acts *regularly*.

Where a prominent *power of moral judgment* reveals itself, one should turn all one's labor to the equally strong education of the remaining faculties of the mind.

Impetuous desires and lively representations among weak hearts make the weakening of all organs necessary in order to prevent the outbreak of ruinous power, or one should at least put unbroken and unexpected obstacles in the way of the passions, while simultaneously occupying the understanding, in order to accustom the imagination to necessity and law.

The faculty of determining, or the will, cannot really be strengthened or weakened; but through motives that one draws partly from the imagination, partly from the heart, its expressions can be made more frequent or rarer – namely, if one *exercises* it more or less.

/ The more one stimulates or assumes them. / [p. 243]

/ Don't age and fate necessarily alter our relationships and forces?  
Shouldn't the long, strenuous employment of each organ more or less  
exhaust it and rob it of its sensibility and activity? /

By me.

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<sup>15</sup> The German means 'conclusiveness,' but the context makes it clear that Novalis means it in a practical sense, not a merely logical one, something more like 'resoluteness.'

## NOVALIS

The moral sense / the sensible side of the heart / is the most beautiful, but also the most dangerous side of our essence.

Its too-great vitality easily induces illusions. An all-too-great pliability toward the same, whereby one is easily misled by the incipient tendency to many good things – gradually gives rise in him to the dominance of habit – His sharpened sensibility, his freer leeway makes him the most dangerous despot, who is just as strongly affected by immoral affects too, and who sits around all the more firmly, since through seemingly virtuous actions the person is brought down to the deepest hypocrisy against himself – Without connection to the active heart, the power of moral judgment and the understanding, it may never be – it requires a sharper supervision than the most lively imagination, because it rules the will much more despotically – Only in that connection does it become an eternal source of pure happiness – the grace of wisdom.

Through the *selection* of purposive *stimulants* of the moral sense / which one could call the rational imagination or *sensibility* / and, through the sustained employment of the same, *practical reason*, the power of moral judgment, is posited in *secure*, sustained activity – In just this way, the understanding or theoretical reason is formed through continuous exercise, / i.e., *the constant, widespread attention* to this kind of functioning of *the organ of the soul in general*, and the accompanying striving to reproduce this function and to modify or apply it in manifold ways, gives to the instruments of the same such a facility that afterwards every stimulus, even the mildest, the *most indirect*, and the remotest, be it directed to whatever special organ it will, sets these tools into a congruent activity. / The imagination partly forms vital intuition – *praxis* – through *enrichment*, partly the understanding, through a suitable direction – / whereby, in the end, it becomes a skillful, *understanding* servant of the same and lightens its work – while it already *grasps thing understandingly*. / [p. 244]

The thoroughly free soul becomes, in the end, a *perfect organ*.

Our organs are now separate – In future, the spaces between the senses will be filled in with other sensations – All sensations unify themselves and constitute only appearances of one organ. [p. 248]

*Lettre sur L'Athéism* [Letter on Atheism].[*Lettre de Dioclès à Diotime, sur l'athéisme*, Vol. II, pp. 279-295]

39. / Religions are the first attempts at philosophy. God is at the same time the first cause of all things. Multiplication of causes. *Seeking out* the *how* of this causality. Wars of the gods. *Homogène – Oxigène*. / [pp. 282-285]

The human being searches everywhere *outside of himself* for that which is *most appropriate to himself* – the I – the agent of each thing.

The human being searched prematurely for the cause of the cosmos. [p. 285] The expression of this law required, in order to be *intelligible*, a spirit that could make the universe and made it actual *in himself* – / *potentia*. / Hemsterhuis believes that the human being must be satisfied with external, symptomatic cognition of the structure of the cosmos. [p. 286]

/ Solution to a problem – A problem is thus a solid, synthetic mass that one – dissects – by means of the *penetrating* power of thought. So, conversely, fire is that power of thought in nature – and each *body* a problem. /

/ Dynamic chemistry. /

*We only know* insofar as *we make*.

/ God creates in no other way than we do. He only composes. [*Aristée*, Vol. II, p. 96] Is creation his work? Then we are also *his work* – We can only come to *know* creation as his work to the extent that we *ourselves* are *world* – cognition is advancing – when we become more divine. Does God know himself? That is absurd. The higher point of view stands against the lower or the inferior. The transcendental point of view is divided into these two kinds.

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