

ROMANTIC POETRY IN GERMANY.

AN ATTEMPT TO ADAPT EMOTIONAL REALITIES TO INTELLECTUAL IDEAS.*

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THE idea of "the social soul" was latent in the intellectual life of Germany for half a century prior to its formulation in Romanticism. Klopstock, Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, the poets of the "Storm and Stress," Kant, Schiller, Goethe—these, and many others, contributed the intellectual elements for which Romantic philosophy, Romantic conduct, and Romantic poetry sought a common valuation in social experience. The failure of Romanticism was not due to the new principle of valuation, neither was the Romantic principle disproved, though it was for a time discredited, by the Romantic failure.

With Romanticism the old century closed and with it a new century began in Germany. Henceforth democratic individuality became the watchword. Under the influence of the new postulate of freedom German poets of the nineteenth century sought a new interpretation of the conduct of life. Through their work—whatever its esthetic value—they set forth the moral significance of life in a new light. They attempted more than this. They roused the "drowsy sphinx," and to her brooding query:

"Who'll tell me my secret,
The ages have kept?"

they made bold to reply: "We the modern seers! We the poets of the social soul!" And who shall say that they failed to "tell one of the meanings of the universal dame," or that they did not, in the entirety of their answers, reveal something more of

* The present paper continues the article "The Significance of German Literature of the Eighteenth Century," (*Open Court*, Dec. 1904.) in which article the Romantic principle was discussed at length.

“The fate of the man-child,
The meaning of man.”?

Romanticism as a philosophy of life should not be confused with Romanticism as a method of poetic activity. The philosophy which we call Romanticism and the method of poetic procedure which bears the same name, were two entirely different things. Romantic philosophy postulated a new basis for poetry. Romantic poetics made the poetic realisation of this postulate a most difficult, if not an impossible, task.

Likewise it should be borne in mind that Romanticism, as a philosophy, was in its inception a theory. The Romantic idea of the “social soul” was invented, not experienced. As individual beings the Romanticists were children of their day; they were men of pronounced individualistic temperament. The social impulse was there, but it did not, and it could not, find its corollary in social experience.

The foregoing distinctions are of the greatest importance in the study of the religious life of Romantic poetry, since this life was an artificial composition of the disparate values of philosophical theorising and of individual daily experience. If we were to regard the speculations of Romantic poetry as the only content of Romanticism, we should do a grave injustice to the Romantic philosophy of life. If we were to regard these speculations as the equivalent of the human experience of the men who framed them, we should be identifying a poetic theology and a religious reality. It is true that the Romanticists finally adopted these poetic speculations as their religious reality, but in so doing they were insincere. They deceived themselves, and they paid the penalty in their human experience, in their philosophic speculations, and in their poetic creations.

The poetry of German Romanticism was at no time poetry of the religious life. Even if we judge this poetry by the standards of Romantic philosophy, we shall not escape this conclusion.

Modern thought and modern sentiment have passed through a similar judgment. The poetry of Novalis alone has, in a measure, retained a certain hold on modern life. Some of his *Geistliche Lieder* have been incorporated in every Evangelical hymnal of Germany, and in not a few of America; and they remain to this day warm favorites with the Evangelical church-going populace of Germany. Any one who has heard a German congregation sing the successive stanzas of Novalis's hymn:

“Wenn alle untreu werden,
So bleib' ich dir doch treu” etc.

[My faith to thee I break not,
If all should faithless be.]

will feel small inclination to declare that the hymn is not poetry of the religious life. And yet, it is true that this hymn (and indeed all the poems of Novalis) was not, and is not, what it seems, or professes, to be.

The question which Romantic philosophy undertook to answer was this: Can the *individual* fashion his intellectual and his emotional experiences into a religious unit? Or, to put the question in another form: Is the religious life a matter of *individual* experience? Romantic philosophy answered with a very positive No. It held that individualised experience cannot be religious experience. For example, the experiences that Professor James calls “religious” in his *The Varieties of Religious Experience* would have been characterised by Romantic philosophers as “individualised” experiences, and for that reason, as not religious. The Romanticists would have contended that in every case cited by Professor James the individual has failed to realise the source of his emotions, or of his ideas, in so much as he has looked for this source in his individuality. Hence, they would have concluded, the individual has created for himself only a fictitiously religious life. This assertion would have been supported by the following argument: Ideas and emotions are only individual differentials of a universal integral. Every experience, whether emotional or intellectual, is in its very nature an act that impinges on individuality, making it to the extent of this impingement, universal. You do not feel, nor do you think, as an individual. You feel as a personality and you think as another personality. You live the religious life when you feel and think as *one* personality. You can think and you can feel as *one* personality only when you are conscious of a universal, or at least a common source of your emotions and ideas. Manifestly this consciousness is impossible, or at least incapable of development, as long as you insist on the inceptive energy of human individuality. The perfecting of your personality depends wholly on the perfecting of your consciousness of the universal integral, and the more you perfect this consciousness the more nearly you realise universality in personality. Therefore, the moment this consciousness actually is perfected in personality, that moment the universal integral comes into absolute personal existence. All individual differentials have vanished. Individuality has merged completely in universality.

However, since by this last act the universe attains conscious life, it becomes *ipso facto* the absolute personality, and hence the sublime individuality. This was the tremendous paradox of Romantic philosophy: individuality becomes universality, universality becomes individuality.

Now if we look for a moment at the lives of the men who constructed this system of philosophic unity, we have to admit that they typified, on the whole, the exact reverse of that which their philosophy preached. They were as individualistic in their conduct as it was possible to be. Under conditions as they prevailed in Germany toward the close of the eighteenth century, it was an almost impossible task to realise conscious life as the reaction on individuality of social relations. The disintegration of social life very naturally centred the sources of conscious life in the characteristic energy of individuality. All we know of these Romanticists goes to show that they felt themselves cut loose from their day and generation. They went through life as individuals, and the very fact that they endeavored to found a "school" which should be the nucleus of a social life, proves their individualistic temper. They made the most wonderful efforts to live up to their doctrine, and succeeded only in discrediting it by their idiosyncracies. No other conclusion is possible than this: Romantic conduct reduced personal liberty to individual license.

One has but to observe the emotional life of any Romantic individual in order to become thoroughly convinced that this life was abnormal. Any happiness or pain that came to him was straightway hugged to his bosom and coddled, as though it were an experience in which the individual and the individual alone was interested. Its social significance dwindled into infinitesimal proportions, its individual significance waxed beyond all recognition. "Here am I," the Romantic individual seemed to say, "yonder is the universe, yonder all the endless phenomena of nature. Let me drink in all this magnificence, let it fill me. Thus shall I expand into universal being." In the conception of even those ideas, and in the exercise of even those emotions which the veriest tyro recognises as social, these men showed the same curious inability to avoid the purely individualistic attitude. What else than a parody on the social idea of love was the relation between Novalis and Sophie Kühn? When he and she first met she was a mere child of twelve, he a student of twenty-three. There can be no doubt that the charm of Sophie's personality was extraordinary. There can be as little doubt that she made a deep impression on Novalis. But how did

Novalis treat this impression? He magnified it, and kept on magnifying it, until he veritably believed that his love for the child was the love of man for woman. Within a few months he engaged himself to her, or if one desire to be facetious, engaged her to himself. Where is there a more striking instance of the individualistic interpretation of a social idea than this behavior of Novalis. He had heard of "love" and he forthwith gave to love no other content than that which suited his immediately individual experience. He prepared to marry the child, and certainly would have married her without any hesitancy, had his means and her parents permitted. Three years later Sophie died. And then what? Novalis constructed for himself a mystical world in which he sought communion with the dead. He prostrated himself before the idealised image of the departed. Here is an extract from the diary of Novalis, written a month after the death of Sophie Kühn, and dated—as was his wont—from the day of her death: "This evening I passed an hour of sweet, cheerful, and most vivid reminiscence. He who flees pain, no longer cares to love. A lover must keep filling in the gap forever, keep the wound open continually. May God always preserve in me this indiscribably precious pain, this sad memory, this courageous longing, this manly purpose, and this unshakable faith. Without Sophie I am nothing, nothing; with her I am everything!" Sophie died March 19, 1789. In December of the same year Novalis went to Freiberg to study at the mines. Here he met Julia von Charpentier, the daughter of the overseer of the mines. He was engaged to her before the month closed. Spring, summer, and autumn Novalis had passed through an intensely emotional struggle. On the one hand an almost extatic longing to be transported into those spiritual realms where the image of his idealised Sophie abode, on the other the insistent experiences of human life which summoned him back to sane activity and human society. The social experiences of life seemed to prevail. He surrendered to the charms of Julia. But how? Did this new relation supersede the old? Did Novalis interpret this new affection as consciously social beings would interpret it? Not at all! He interpreted it as the realisation of his previous conception of love. His union with Julia became the present actuality of his hypostatic union with Sophie. Is it possible to conceive of a more definite instance of the individualistic interpretation of social emotions than this?

One may assert without much fear of contradiction that the conduct of all the leading Romanticists was of this individualistic type. Ideas were constructed out of individual experience, and then

experience was distorted to sustain these ideas. The individual was the only conscious centre of life. It cannot be said that the Romantics were aware of any insincerity in their conduct. Most of them, it must be admitted, believed themselves sincere. Certainly, no one can impute conscious insincerity to Novalis. Yet, so far as the conduct of Novalis and that of the others was sincere, it was the sincerity of insincerity. And for this paradox the practically avoidless emphasis that fell on individual life in those days and the equally resistless force that was secretly opposing this emphasis in the intellectual life of Germany must be held responsible.

Out of these two opposing factors Romantic poetry was produced, and we shall never understand its true character, particularly not its religious significance, if we persist in identifying the life of this poetry either with Romantic philosophy or with Romantic conduct. In this poetry we have an effort to unite the philosophy and experiences of these men, but an effort which resulted merely in a combination of both. And according to the manner in which this combination was effected, we may distinguish between poetry of the original school with Novalis, Tieck, and the two Schlegels as its principal representatives, and the poetry of their successors, among whom Fouqué, Achim von Arnim, and Clemens Brentano, Schenckendorf, and Kerner are perhaps the most prominent.

It follows from the foregoing, and should be clearly and definitely understood at the outset, that the poetry of these men was not a poetic search for original ideas to match individual experience. It follows likewise, that the poetic presentation of Romantic personality was not attained, or even contemplated effectively. In the case of Novalis, Tieck, and the two Schlegels, we come in contact with poetry which attempted the composition of Romantic personality through adaptation of individual emotions to social (traditional) ideas. In the case of the other poets mentioned, we observe the poetic attempt to compose Romantic personality through the adaptation of social emotions to individual ideas. The shifting of the emphasis from the social nature of ideas to the social nature of emotions caused the distinction between the religious poetry of the Romantic school and the religious poetry of its immediate successors.

The obfuscation of the spiritual vision in the poetry of Romanticism has been overlooked too frequently by students of the spiritual reality which this poetry represented. In the poem of Novalis, "Wenn alle untreu werden," to which reference was made in the foregoing, we have a case in point. The last stanza of this poem runs as follows:

“Ich habe ihn empfunden.
 O, lasse nicht von mir!
 Lass innig mich verbunden
 Auf ewig sein mit dir,
 Einst schauen meine Brüder
 Auch wieder himmelwärts
 Und sinken liebend nieder
 Und fallen dir an's Herz.”

[Thou with thy love hast found me!
 O do not let me go!
 Keep me where thou hast bound me,
 Till one with thee I grow.
 My brothers yet will waken,
 One look to heaven dart—
 Then sink down, love-o'ertaken,
 And fall upon thy heart.]

(Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*, No. 6. Translation by George MacDonald.)

In the first lines, the Romantic desire for the translation of individuality into universality is distinctly expressed. In the last lines, the individualistic interpretation of social ideas is clearly manifest. It is apparent that the idea of “brother” has no real social significance in these lines. The poetic interpretation of this idea is extra-social. It is individualistic, since the subjective attitude of the man toward the universal so controlled the poet, that he disregarded the value of the idea which he as a social being recognised. If any one feels inclined to doubt this statement, let him turn to the last stanza of another equally well known hymn by Novalis, “Wenn ich ihn nur habe.” Here is the stanza:

“Wo ich ihn nur habe,
 Ist mein Vaterland:
 Und es fällt mir jede Gabe
 Wie ein Erbteil in die Hand:
 Längst *vermisste* Brüder
 Find ich nun in seinen Jüngern wieder.”

[Where I have but him
 Is my fatherland:
 Every gift a precious gem
 Comes to me from his own hand!
 Brethren long deplored,
 Lo, in his disciples all restored.]

(Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*, No. 5. Translation by George MacDonald.)

Do not these words of Novalis assert that brotherly love is an experienced reality only in the common surrender to his mystic conception of the Divinity? Does he not declare that the social

idea of "brethren" has no value save in his own dogmatic reality? The second stanza of the same hymn proclaims even more positively the poetic negation of social ideas. It runs as follows:

"Wenn ich ihn nur habe,
Lass' ich alles gern,
Folg' an meinem Wanderstabe
Treugesinnt nur meinem Herrn;
Lasse still die Andern
Breite, lichte, volle Strassen wandern."

[If I him but have,
Pleased from all I part:
Follow on my pilgrim staff,
None but him with honest heart;
Leave the rest, nought saying,
On broad, bright, and crowded highways straying.]

(Translation by George MacDonald.)

And now, if we revert again to the first hymn, what is it that Novalis tells us in the opening stanza?—This:

"Wenn alle untreu werden,
So bleib' ich dir doch treu,
Dass Dankbarkeit auf Erden
Nicht ausgestorben sei.
Für mich umfing dich Leiden,
Vergingst für mich in Schmerz:
Drum geb' ich dir mit Freuden
Auf ewig dieses Herz."

[My faith to thee I break not,
If all should faithless be,
That gratitude forsake not
The world eternally.
For my sake Death did sting thee
With anguish keen and sore;
Therefore with joy I bring thee
This heart forever more.]

(Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*, No. 6. Translation by George MacDonald.)

First and last the religious life is based on the definite dissociation of the individual from his social relations. It is worthy of notice that the idea of gratitude is treated in these lines in the same individualistic manner as the idea of brotherly love in the last stanza of the poem. A casual glance at the *Geistliche Lieder* of Novalis will convince every fair-minded reader that all ideas are deprived of their social values as soon as they come within the vision of the poet. Grief and joy; desire and fulfilment; love and hatred; peace

and discord; life and death; home and country; wisdom and folly; light and darkness; matter and spirit; past, present, and future—all these ideas are supplied with a purely dogmatic content. To the mystic life which Novalis pictured in these hymns one may apply his own characterisation of the ordinary social relations of life:

“Der Puls des Lebens stocket,
Und stumpf ist jeder Sinn.”

[Life's pulse is flagging listless,
And dull is every sense.]

(Translation by George MacDonald.)

It is difficult to believe that this substitution of dogmatic ideas should produce an unconditional balance. Especially is this the case when we notice that in fourteen out of the fifteen hymns, which make up the collection *Geistliche Lieder*; the religious life is based on a condition not merely implied, but expressed. This condition is the acceptance of traditional Christianity. The conditional conjunction *wenn*, or its equivalents, trails through every poem. It is evident that Novalis attempted to poise the intellectual and the emotional life of his poetry on dogmatic religion.

Novalis's poetry of the religious life was the sweetest and the least disingenuous of the religious poetry of the Romantic school. It certainly would *seem* as if he expressed in his *Hymns to the Night* and in his *Spiritual Songs* precisely that subjective mood which prevailed in his relations to Sophie Kühn and Julia von Charpentier. Apparently the same isolation of his individuality and the same sovereign license in the treatment of ideas and emotions prevails in the life of this poetry. Apparently the poet makes no effort to adapt the conduct of his life to the theory of his philosophy. If this were really so, the poetry of Novalis would base the religious life on a search for original ideas to match individual experience. This is not the case. Isolation of the individual is, indeed, the expressed cause of the religious longing; but it is not treated as the essence of the religious life. Moreover, there is no express mention of that Romantic personality through which individuality was supposed to expand into universality; but this personality is everywhere implied as conditioning the religious reality. In order to partake of this religious reality, the individual must first surrender his intellectual realities to the intellectual realities of theology. He thereby enters a world of spiritual ideas, which means that his individuality is transformed into a spiritual personality. He must

then make the effort to experience in this spiritual state the emotions of individual life.

These are the two conditions on which the poetry of Novalis would base the religious life. Observe, for example, how the transformation of the rational individual into Romantic personality and of Romantic personality into emotional individuality, is inferentially the essential motif of the following lines:

“Wenige wissen
 Das Geheimnis der Liebe,
 Fühlen Unersättlichkeit
 Und ewigen Durst.
 Des Abendmahls
 Göttliche Bedeutung
 Ist den irdischen Sinnen Rätsel;
 Aber wer jemals
 Von heissen, geliebten Lippen
 Athem des Lebens sog,
 Wem heilige Glut
 In zitternden Wellen das Herz schmolz,
 Wem das Auge aufging,
 Dass er des Himmels
 Unergründliche Tiefe mass,
 Wird essen von seinem Leibe
 Und trinken von seinem Blute
 Ewiglich.”

[Few understand
 The mystery of Love,
 Know unsatiableness,
 And thirst eternal.
 Of the Last Supper
 The divine meaning
 Is to the earthly sense a riddle;
 But he that ever
 From warm, beloved lips,
 Drew breath of life:
 In whom the holy glow
 Ever melted the heart in trembling waves;
 Whose eyes ever opened so
 As to fathom
 The bottomless deeps of heaven—
 Will eat of his body
 And drink of his blood
 Everlastingly.]

(Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*. Opening lines of No. 7.

Translation by George MacDonald.)

In these lines the sexual emotion which we call love, is poetically treated as a satisfying reality only when, in its enjoyment, we

are conscious of being more than our individual self, and are conscious of that divine significance of our conduct which is expressed in the doctrine of the transubstantiation. Our individual idea of love must, therefore, first give way to the divine idea as interpreted by traditional Christianity. Controlled by this interpretation—which control Novalis identifies with Romantic personality—we are enabled to spiritualise our physical experience. Under these conditions love is infinite even in the finite.

“Nie endet das süsse Mahl,
 Nie sättigt die Liebe sich:
 Nicht innig, nicht eigen genug,
 Kann sie haben den Geliebten.
 Von immer zärteren Lippen
 Verwandelt wird das Genossene,
 Inniglicher und näher.
 Heissere Wollust
 Durchbebet die Seele,
 Durstiger und hungrier
 Wird das Herz:
 Und so währet der Liebe Genuss
 Von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit.”

[Never endeth the sweet repast;
 Never doth Love satisfy itself:
 Never close enough, never enough its own
 Can it have the beloved!
 By ever tenderer lips
 Transformed, the partaken
 Goes deeper, grows nearer.
 Passion more ardent
 Thrills through the soul;
 Thirstier and hungrier
 Becomes the heart;
 And so endureth Love's delight
 From everlasting to everlasting.]

(Novalis's *Spiritual Songs*, No. 7. Translation by George MacDonald.)

Now the difference between the mystic process in the poetic activity of Novalis and the mystic process in the conduct of the man himself was simply this. As a man, Novalis did not surrender his reason into the keeping of traditional dogmatism, and then fit his emotions to this dogmatic faith. Out of his experiences, which were treated as facts of his individual life, he constructed, so to speak, his own theology. He believed that this theology was original with him,—which of course it was not. As a poet, however, Novalis did adopt traditional religion. Since this poetic adoption disagreed with his conduct it was insincere. It was, however, sincere as an

attempt to realise in his poetry the principle of his Romantic philosophy. In the traditions of life the Romantic poets recognised a social interpretation of life. They were quite aware that traditional religion is not necessarily the equivalent of the religious life. They knew that a generation which apparently submits to the intellectual rule of tradition may have advanced, or retrograded, to a point where tradition loses its spiritualising energy. Moreover, they recognised the fact that the intellectual content of the traditional religion in their day was out of keeping with its intellectual temper. Nevertheless the Romantic school of religious poetry made the effort to vitalise traditional religion, and this for two reasons. In the first place, the Romantic principle demanded that the poetic consciousness identify itself with social individuality. In the second place, these poets were unable to discover any evidence of social individuality in the Germany of their day except in the traditional forms of faith. Accordingly they adopted these forms as the only available expression or manifestation of the "social soul," and then adapted their individual experiences to this adopted reality. Under the circumstances this act individualised tradition, not in the sense that a general social experience was vitalised for the individual, but in the sense that the forms of traditional religion were used as allegorical interpretations of individual speculation. This peculiar tergiversation characterises the only song of Novalis's *Geistliche Lieder* which does not expressly condition the religious life on the acceptance of tradition. This poem is the last one of the series. The subjective interpretation of the dogma of the Virgin Mother is its theme.

"Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern,
 Maria, lieblich ausgedrückt,
 Doch keins von allen kann dich schildern,
 Wie meine Seele dich erblickt.
 Ich weiss nur, dass der Welt Getümmel
 Seitdem mir wie ein Traum verweht,
 Und ein unnennbar süsser Himmel
 Mir ewig im Gemüte steht."

[In countless pictures I behold thee,
 O Mary, lovelily expressed,
 But of them all none can unfold thee
 As I have seen thee in my breast!
 I only know the world's loud splendor
 Since then is like a dream o'erblown:
 And that a heaven, for words too tender,
 My quieted spirit fills alone.]

(Translation by George MacDonald.)

It is, of course, hardly necessary to point out that Novalis voiced in this doctrinal allegory the adoration of his deceased and idealised Sophie. Somewhere in his diary, Novalis remarks: "I must endeavor to live more and more for her sake. I exist only for her, not for myself, not for any one else. She is the highest, the only one. The first purpose of my life should be to place everything in relation to the *idea* of her." Novalis's *Hymns to the Night* and his *Spiritual Songs* were written during the spring, summer, and fall of 1798, at the time when he was jotting down a record of his emotional life in his diary. A careful comparison of this record with its poetic counterpart establishes the fact that the idea of Sophie, i. e., Novalis's subjective idealisation of her being, was translated into poetic life by means of the dogmatic ideas of tradition. The man's mystical adoration of Sophie became the poet's mystical adoration of Jesus. In the dogma of the Redemption the poet incased, as it were, the thought of conscious perfection through intimate communion with his spiritualised Sophie. Novalis's poem "To Julie" was only the logical application to a new experience of this process of adoption and adaptation. The vinculum that unites the lovers in this poem is not the man's subjective idea of Sophie, but the poet's dogmatic idea of Christ.

All that has been said of Novalis leads inevitably to the inference that the religious life of his poetry was not the religious life of his daily experience, and also not the religious life of his Romantic philosophy. His poetry was a peculiar combination of both, in that social ideas—for as such the ideas of traditional religion were treated—took the place of speculative ideas, and were then in turn metamorphosed into speculative ideas through the individualistic temperament of the writer. If this is true of the sweetest and most genuine singer of Romanticism, how much more true must it be of his contemporary Romanticists? They were perhaps no more insincere in their poetic efforts than Novalis, but their insincerity was more apparent, and this for the reason that their conduct stood in no such intimate relation to their poetic dogmatism as that of Novalis. Z. Werner came to lead a dual life. He grovelled in the dust alternately before the dogma in which he sought his poetic imagery, and before the licentious passions which controlled his reason. The mysteries of dogma were not merely transubstantiated in the religious rodomontades of Werner; they became carnal realities in which the heated imagination of the poet revelled in carnal lust. His poetic insincerity was, however, of the same type as that of Novalis. Both poets adopted the intellectual product

of a past religious life as the emotional content of present religious life. Any one who can regard the familiar lines in some of our own hymnals:

“There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains”—

as poetry of the religious life, and not as poetical, or rather versified, theology, will of course look upon much of the poetry of Novalis as sincerely and genuinely religious. He should do the same with the poetry of Werner. But since he finds that Werner chose as the touchstone of the religious life the specifically Evangelical dogma not of the Protestant Church, but of the Roman Catholic Church, he refuses to regard this poetry as poetry of the religious life. And precisely the same view will he entertain of the poetry of Novalis whenever the doctrinal allegory of this poetry departs from the beaten track of the critic’s dogmatic views. The Protestant Evangelical admirer of Novalis will always reject the setting which Novalis gave to the religious life in all those poems that seemingly glorify the Madonna.

The writings of Novalis and of Werner marked the two extremes of that phase of Romantic poetry which strove to vitalise experience through dogmatic thought. The poetry of Novalis was not without its appeal to the religious instincts of his readers, but it did not, and could not, satisfy these instincts. It intensified the longing of the soul, but freed this longing of none of its vagueness. That magnificent little story, the parable of “Rosenblütchen and Hyacinth,” a perfect gem of Novalis’s poetic art, is pre-eminently of this character. The fanatical outpourings of Werner made, and could make, no appeal, unless it was to the curiosity of the metaphysician. They disgusted where they purposed to allure. Negative pleasure and positive displeasure; between these two extremes the poetic adaptation of emotions to traditional ideas moved back and forth.

In a vague sort of way, we can feel in all this earlier Romantic literature the presence of that pantheistic experience which modern science has made the common privilege of all. But when we follow the indistinct traces of this pantheistic sentiment we nowhere meet with its poetic reality. The pantheistic temper of the authors developed none of that robustness which only a healthy interest in scientific realities can impart; and it never acquired that power of poetic concentration which is possible only when the emotional and

the intellectual experiences of the individual find their balance and come to rest in the social experience of his age.

The seeming disregard on the part of Lessing, and other earnest rationalists, of the spiritual force in life had become actual denial in the materialistic rationalism of men like Nicolai. Accordingly, the distinctively modern spirit in Rationalism was not realised by the Romantic opposition to the soulless materialism of degenerate Rationalism. No discrimination was made between that which Lessing, Kant, and Schiller stood for, and the fortuitous spread of materialism. Rationalism unfettered the impulse to substitute *living experience* for traditional authority. Materialism struck out the word "living" and treated experience as a mere sequence of physical facts. The revolt of the first Romanticists was directed against this materialistic development of Rationalism, but it expressed itself, as we have seen, in a manner that enthroned traditional authority over living experience. The poetry of Romanticism stultified the instinctive modernity of the men who wrote it. Passage upon passage, drama upon drama, poem upon poem, gives evidence of the pantheistic temper of the writers. But there is hardly an instance in which this temper is not poetically perverted to the glorification of dogmatic conceptions. Here is a passage taken from Tieck's *Leben und Tod der heiligen Genoveva*. It is characteristic of the peculiar Romantic subversion that left its stamp on the whole drama. It is also generally representative of the Romantic manner. The words are spoken by Genoveva (the canonised saint) just previous to her death.

“Wohin ich blickte, sah ich Blüten prangen,
 Aus Strahlen wuchsen Himmelsblumen auf.
 Am Trone sprosstes Glauben und Verlangen
 Und rankten sich wie Edelstein hinauf.
 Gebete blühend in den Himmel drangen,
 Zu Füßen aller goldnen Sterne Lauf,
 Und die Natur in tausendfachen Weisen,
 Den dreimal heil'gen Gott, Sohn, Geist zu preisen.

“Gebete stiegen auf, herab der Segen
 Zur Erde nieder durch das Firmament,
 Die Sterne kamen Gottes Lieb entgegen
 Und drungen in das ird'sche Element,
 Verschlungen all in tausendfachen Wegen,
 Dass Himmel, Erd' in einer Liebe brennt,
 Und tief hinab in Pflanz', in Erzgestalten
 Des Vaters Kräfte im Abyssus walten.

“Der Sohn war recht des Vaters Herz und Liebe,
 Der Vater schaffende Allgegenwart,
 Der Geist im unerforschlichen Getriebe,
 Das ew'ge Wort, das immerfort beharrt;
 Und alles wechselnd, nichts im Tode bliebe,
 Indes der Vater wirkt die Form und Art,
 So Lieb und Kraft und Wort in eins verschlungen
 In ewiger Liebesglut von sich durchdrungen.

“Wie Strahlen gingen Engel aus und ein,
 Entzückt in der Dreieinigkeit zu spielen,
 Sich niedertauchend in der Gottheit Schein,
 Die volle Séligkeit beherzt zu fühlen,
 Sie durften in der Kraft und Gnade sein,
 Die Sehnsucht in der grossen Liebe kühlen,
 Auch meine Seel' muss sich dem Tod entringen
 Und in dem Lebensmeer als Welle klingen.”

[And I beheld luxuriant vegetation,
 Saw rays of light break into heavenly flowers,
 Saw by the throne grow faith and aspiration
 And twine along its sides in jewelled bowers,
 In Heaven blossom human supplication,
 The stars beneath me course in golden showers,
 And Nature in her multinomial lays
 The Triune God, Love, Spirit praise.

Prayers upward rose, and down the heavenly blessing
 Descended earthward through the firmament,
 The stars toward Love Divine were closer pressing
 And entered in the earthly element,
 Their many courses merging, ever lessening,
 'Til Heaven and Earth to one great Love were bent,
 And in each plant, in all metallic form
 The Father's Will was the abysmal norm.

The Son made Father-Love reality,
 The Father was the omnipresent cause,
 The Spirit in mysterious activity,
 The Word Eternal without let or pause:
 A constant change robbed death of victory,
 Meanwhile the Father ruled in forms and laws;
 And Love and Cause and Word, in one united,
 The Passion Infinite thus mutually ignited.

And angels came and went, rays gleaming bright,
 Enraptured in the Trinity to play,
 And low they dipped them in the Godhead's light
 And delved in perfect bliss without dismay.
 For they could dwell in Grace Divine and Might,

Their longing now in Love Supreme allay.
 With death my soul must also end its strife
 And sing its wave-song in the Sea of Life.]

(Translation by J. F. C.)

It goes without saying that the pantheistic theology of Romanticism not only lacked, but often purposely neglected that robustness of scientific experience which the enlightened thought of Germany was demanding and which we find at its best in the writings of Goethe. This was true of Romantic conduct in its earlier stages, as well as of Romantic poetry. It was true also of the speculative theology of these men. In his *Reden über die Religion* and his *Monologen* Schleiermacher, to be sure, proclaimed the base of religion to be pantheistic. He heralded the fact that conscious life is full of the longing for an immanent God, and that the insistent aspiration of this life is for infinity in the finite and for immortality in the mortal. But Schleiermacher was in one respect less progressive than the poets Novalis, Tieck, or Heine. These at least acknowledged the irrepressible impulse which has never, in the whole history of the religious life of mankind, permitted human beings to rest content with the mere feeling of their immortal and infinite essence. Schleiermacher upheld the sufficiency of this feeling. Despite the assertion of Schleiermacher, impartial students of religious history will admit that the mere feeling of unity in all life has always been accompanied by the effort to see that which was felt. They will also admit that this effort has been quickly followed by some image, some icon, which revealed to the intellectual vision, in some form, however imperfect, the content of the great aspiration. Modern life has not eradicated this tendency. It was as strong in Rationalism as it was in Romanticism, and it is as active in scientific Realism as it was in Romanticism. This only must be borne in mind: the *method* of meeting the intellectual demand of every stage of religious experience varies with the ages. Novalis and his fellow poets clung to the imagery of a past religious experience. Schleiermacher rejected iconography and the attempt at intellectual representation. He, however, paid his tribute to the modern spirit when he preached the community of feeling as the determinant of the religious reality of the individual. Modern life, in turn, demanded in those days and still continues to demand, something more than personification and something more than community of feeling. It demanded, and demands to-day, a community of scientific experience and the presentment of the infinite reality in terms of this common experience.