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THE COSMOLOGY OF PHILIPP OTTO RUNGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HIS INTEREST IN THE GESAMTKUNSTWERK

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA M.A. 1984

THE COSMOLOGY OF PHILIPP OTTO RUNGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HIS INTEREST IN THE GESAMTKUNSTWERK

by

David A. Morgan

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R. M. QUINN
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PREFACE

Problems of Runge Scholarship

Several special factors, which condition any research in the art of Philipp Otto Runge, need at least to be indicated here. First, one must consider the primary literary source of all Runge studies, the Hinterlassene Schriften. This collection of untranslated letters by Runge, ranging from 1797 to his death in 1810, were collected and edited by his older brother Daniel and finally published in 1840 and 1841. In these volumes are letters to any number of notable contemporaries such as Goethe, Schelling, Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Tieck. The tone and language Runge used is generally quite earnest, frequently impassioned as well as mystical, and occasionally unclear.

Unfortunately, the alarming dearth of English and American scholarship on Runge does little to facilitate the problem of reading and interpreting his correspondence. German scholarship, on the other hand, is overwhelming. Runge seems to have become a favorite son since his rise to attention at the end of the nineteenth century. Though somewhat uneven in quality, Runge scholarship in German has produced recent outstanding and enduring studies such as Heinz Matile's Die Farbenlehre Philipp Otto Runges (1973) and Jorg Traeger's Philipp Otto Runge und sein Werk (1975).

These two works have been of particular importance in my own study.

In English only two full-length studies on Runge exist---both of which are to be used with reservation. J. B. C. Grundy's Tieck and Runge (1930) and Rudolf M. Bisanz's German Romanticism and Philipp Otto Runge (1970) transmit a number of misconceptions.[1] Nonetheless, I have found Grundy's work to be of some assistance. What deserves mention as particularly helpful, however, is Otto Georg Von Simson's solid piece of scholarship, "Philip Otto Runge and the Mythology of Landscape."[2]

Any scholarship making considerable use of written correspondence, as this study does, faces some unavoidable obstacles. For instance, the writer must begin by asking to what degree the artist's practice varied from what he wrote. Some Runge studies have overemphasized the distinction between theory and practice.[3] However, I assert that his writing and his art must remain closely bound, and this study will make a strong case for this assertion.

Secondly, one must also ask to what extent Runge expressed all his aesthetic ideas and philosophical thoughts

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1. See Reinhold Heller's review of Bisanz's study, Art Bulletin 58, June 1976, pp. 302-306. Heller himself demonstrated an impressive fluency in Runge scholarship in his review of Bisanz's book.

2. Von Simson, Art Bulletin 24, 1942, pp. 535-550.

3. Heller, ibid., pp. 303-304.

in his letters. Are they comprehensive or exhaustive? Do they represent the sum of his meditations and aspirations? It is my impression from reading the letters that they likely express, more or less comprehensively, what he considered essential to artistic expression. This is suggested not only by the frequency and regularity with which he wrote, but also by the considerable range of themes and feelings expressed within the letters. In addition, nearly every major artistic project of his career was detailed to a greater or lesser degree in his correspondence.

Another problem in working with a collection of letters as a primary source is the inevitable tendency to regard letters written over a period of many years as a single, self-contained expression of the artist's thought. In fact, of course, this is presumptuous. The amount of time and change may not be ignored for the sake of systematic clarity. Inevitably, the scholastic impulse to render the content of the diverse letters into an organic unity asserts itself. The passage of time frequently is ignored in the pursuit of exegesis. For instance, can one assume that every problem in the interpretation of passages from 1810 can be resolved by references to letters as early as 1802? If the text is approached as a harmonized, self-authenticating, and dogmatically sound unit of literature, then we may proceed to set aside not only the elapse of time,

but the fact that, generally speaking, what was written in 1810 probably has not the slightest concern for what was written in 1802, which may have long since faded from the artist's memory.

It is important, however, to understand that Runge presents a special case. He is at once an artist and a thinker who considered it worthwhile, not only to correspond extensively with his acquaintances, family and friends, but also to pursue persistently several themes which are frequently implicit in many of his letters and much of his art.

Reinhold Heller has pointed out correctly that too much emphasis has been placed on the letter of March 9, 1802.[1] We should remember that only five weeks after this letter Runge wrote that he had already found unuseful some ideas of the March 9 letter.[2] However, he also wrote that he had copied the letter over for himself so that he might have it for reference when he received his brother's response to it. A month later he wrote to Daniel that his formulations should not be taken as final, but that such speculation is a necessary part in leading to an ultimate Übersicht[3], or overview, of the entire matter of artistic expression. This all suggests the degree to which Runge valued writing his ideas down in epistolary form as aid in developing his

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1. Op. cit.

2. To Daniel, April 14, 1802.

3. To Daniel, May 15, 1802.

thought. Consequently, his written expression remains as relevant to charting the evolution of his artistic concerns as his actual artistic studies. Final proof for this assertion will be presented in Chapters Four and Five, where it will be demonstrated, first on the basis of literary evidence in Chapter Four and secondly on the basis of visual evidence in Chapter Five, that the Runge of 1802 and the Runge of 1810 are not fundamentally at odds with one another despite the greater technical means and more expanded and arguably more articulate iconography of the artist's work at the time of his death.

One or two other problems yet remain to be mentioned. Because Runge came to art relatively late and died of tuberculosis at the age of only thirty-three, he was unable to produce much in the way of mature work. Consequently, we lack a body of major pieces by which to gauge his achievements and significance accurately. However, the thrust of this study directly requires no such body of work, for it is an investigation of Runge's cosmology (as expressed in the Tageszeiten as well as correspondence) and the influence of this cosmology on his interest in the Gesamtkunstwerk.

A word on the Gesamtkunstwerk is required here. The term itself is not to be found on Runge's lips. In fact, none of his contemporaries seems ever to have used the term. Indeed, it was not coined until 1850 when Richard Wagner wrote Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft. It might reasonably be

asked what sort of study is this, then, that applies a term to Runge's work and thought that he himself did not even know? Actually only the term itself was unknown to him; the concept, as will be seen, was indeed native to his mind.

This study will center on his interest in a Gesamtkunstwerk in relation to his view of the nature of the universe and human existence within that universe. Because this is primarily a literary and philosophical investigation into a man's artistic intentions, I will not concern myself much with the sort of iconographical or formal analysis that links Runge's art with a visual tradition or milieu. This is not to say, however, that iconographical and formal analyses will not play a fundamental role in this investigation. Indeed, this study culminates in such a discussion in order to establish the harmony of Runge's thought and artistic expression directed toward the creation of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

FOREWORD

In order to facilitate reference to the original texts and paintings, I have kept all titles in German. Otherwise, with the exception of key terms, I have translated everything from the German and all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Two appendices appear at the back of this study which are meant to provide sufficient elaboration on those subjects which are necessary for a proper understanding of the discussion in the main text, yet would be inappropriate to include there.

I would like to express special thanks to Professors R. M. Quinn and Elwood C Parry III for their generous assistance in preparing this manuscript.

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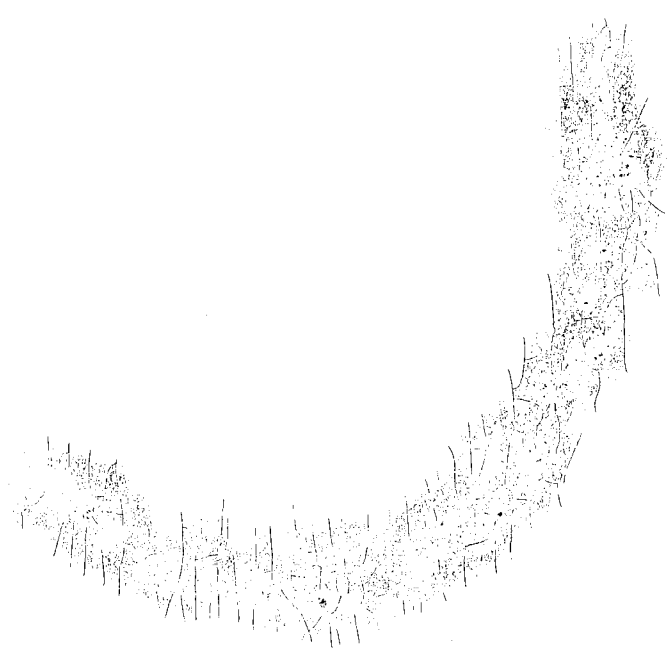

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ABSTRACT

Beginning with an art-historical definition of the Gesamtkunstwerk in Western art, this study attempts to describe the spirituality and cosmology of Philipp Otto Runge and to demonstrate that the major features of his faith and view of nature underlie his interest in the prospect of creating a Gesamtkunstwerk of his own. Topics of concentrated study here are the motif of paradise in the thought of Runge and his contemporaries and the notion of a language of nature. Also treated at length is the influence of Jacob Böhme on Runge's art and thought.

The investigation concludes with stylicsic, iconographical and thematic analyses of Runge's Tageszeiten as a proposed Gesamtkunstwerk. These analyses demonstrate the important function of his religious faith and cosmological views in reaching towards such a form of artistic expression as the Gesamtkunstwerk.

CHAPTER ONE

AN ART HISTORICAL DEFINITION OF THE GESAMTKUNSTWERK

Towards a Definition

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that Runge's cosmology, his view of the order and nature of things as founded in God and the human soul, formed the basis of his interest in realizing a single work of art, a Gesamtkunstwerk. Runge's view of paradise as a symbol of man's primordial unity with God, his belief that nature, in its elements of light, color and design, was capable of revealing God, and his conviction that art could convince the individual of the divine nature of his soul are fundamental characteristics of his cosmology which will receive considerable attention here. Runge longed to create a work able to embody these views. But before proceeding with an investigation of the artist's ideas and his work, it is necessary to establish just what a Gesamtkunstwerk is.

Strictly speaking, the application of the term Gesamtkunstwerk, meaning total art work, has been more or less confined to Baroque church decoration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries[1] and to certain instances thereafter in the nineteenth century, particularly Runge,

Wagner and the Jugendstil.[2] These artists, movements and periods were interested in the artistic prospect of interrelating several media in a single, "total" or "complete" work of art. In a Baroque church interior, organ music, sculpture, painting and architecture were conceived and organized in such a way as to provide the optimum sensuous experience centered around worship. In the case of a Romantic artist like Runge or later artists like Kandinsky and Klee, the concern was to harmonize sound, color, form and space for varying reasons, though always with the intention of creating a singular, unified experience.[3]

Because there exists no study exclusively treating the Gesamtkunstwerk as a visual tradition in the West,[4] I would like to preface this entire investigation with a brief examination of the tendency in the decoration of church interiors in the Gothic era towards a synthesis of the arts which came fully into its own in the Baroque in Italy and late Baroque in Germany. This survey will substantiate the working definition required of the concept of a Gesamtkunstwerk. Such a definition will necessarily need to be broad in order to be applicable to the range of art it has heretofore been associated with (Gothic, Baroque, Romantic and Modern); yet it will also have to be specific enough to remain meaningful. Therefore, I offer four characteristics which will, at least provisionally, serve as criteria for the identification of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

First of all, since a variety of media stimulate the senses of hearing, sight and touch, they more completely involve the viewer in the aesthetic experience. Secondly, such a variety of media is not simply an assemblage or a paratactic arrangement, but rather an integration of media into an overall unity of effect, a harmonized whole or singular experience. As such, thirdly, an integration of media takes place in a physical environment such as a church interior, chapel or a room which will effectually contain the event. And fourthly, the viewer himself participates spatially. This final element is crucial: the viewer is not an extraneous factor, but a very necessary and dynamic element inasmuch as his participation is basic to the effect of the Gesamtkunstwerk, as will be seen. Thus, to reiterate the four essential aspects:

1. Variety of media
2. Unity of effect
3. Physical environment
4. Participation of the viewer

A question which comes immediately to mind is this: how may such a general criterion differentiate meaningfully between a genuine Gesamtkunstwerk and any multi-media work of art? After all, does not every church interior since the Gothic era employ these four aspects? The answer to this is no. Only those works of art which set out to orchestrate formal elements in such a way as to achieve a unity of effect and, in fact, do so, in addition to effecting a sense of

ambience and viewer participation, can be considered Gesamtkunstwerke. The ultimate effect of the Gesamtkunstwerk, as indicated here, is a sense of emotional presence or mood intended to elicit a dimension of human experience generally referred to as "religious"; that is, an ambience conducive to evoking a greater sense of being such as God, the Church, or the ideals of moral conviction. It cannot be said that all church decoration has this as its aim. A Protestant interior of Northern Germany executed in the eighteenth century[5] does not by any means approach, in its characteristically reflective and often ponderous austerity, the sensuous and highly orchestrated experience of a typical Baroque interior from Southern Germany.[6] What underlies this distinction are divergent spiritual attitudes. The rather more iconoclastic Protestant Faith has emphasized the comprehension of the pastor's sermon, whereas the Catholic tradition has always valued the extensive assistance of imagery in worship, particularly in the area of the altar at which each Mass culminated in the celebration of the Eucharist.

It is the particularly spiritual aspirations and cosmological view of Runge that constituted his interest in the prospect of the Gesamtkunstwerk; moreover, it is just these spiritual aspirations which suggest that one go beyond Baroque art in seeking for origins, and continue even

further back in European art in search of earlier visual examples. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will be largely devoted to applying very briefly the four criteria listed above to works of art which lead up to the late Baroque, thereby establishing a view of the tradition which influenced Runge in his conception of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

The presence of the Gesamtkunstwerk in the realm of Gothic art is founded in the purpose the later medieval church interior served. Eleventh-century pilgrimages necessitated, along with voluminous expansion of monastic reforms, the rapid construction of churches which would accommodate mass veneration of a hallowed site or a holy relic. The church interior, as a manifestation of the transcendent, and the entire building, as a shrine of God's presence, grew in ever grander decoration and architectural structure in order to be worthy of its lofty role to house the Divine and to direct the veneration of the devout. After the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 declared the doctrine of transubstantiation to be a necessary article of faith, the believer was increasingly drawn into God's presence by the enlargement of architectural dimensions and the presentation of potent religious objects in side chapels and choirs accessible by perambulation.

Bearing this in mind, the sort of development of the interior from the severity of the Romanesque to the towering

articulation of the Gothic makes perfect sense. Often marked as the first notable Gothic building is the Abbey of St. Denis, whose construction and plan was discussed in 1144 by Abbot Suger who directed the project. It was Suger's primary concern that the church interior should be lavishly decorated for the glory of God. Of the most profound and exalted presence of divinity in the building he wrote: "that every costlier or costliest thing should serve, first and foremost, for the administration of the Holy Eucharist."[7] Unlike St. Bernard, who was very iconoclastic and restrained in his attitudes towards church decoration and who held that secular persons should not participate in worship, Suger, as Panofsky has pointed out, was fundamentally concerned with accommodating "as great a crowd as possible" and therefore required a larger church.[8] Cast in bronze, the main doors of the church were inscribed with the following verse:

> Bright is the noble work; but, being nobly bright,
> the work
> Should brighten the minds, so that they may
> travel through the true lights
> To the true light where Christ is the true door.[9]

Sounding distinctly mystic are the Abbot's words regarding the beauty of gems which decorated altar and reliquary among other things in the church interior:

> Thus, when out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God---the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, in the diversity of the sacred

> virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this interior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.[10]

By "anagogical manner" Suger intended a vision of the celestial, and therefore the upward movement on the Neoplatonic hierarchy emanating from heaven, of which Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite wrote (ca. 500 A. D.) and later John Scot Erigena (ca. 858). Suger knew the writings of both men.

As Panofsky has suggested, Suger was surely cognizant of the new Gothic style's aesthetic difference from the Romanesque.[11] Suger's writing makes one keenly aware of a pre-eminent sense of presence in the church interior of sublime verticality and a "luminous transparency" which pervades the space in the "wonderful and uninterrupted light of most sacred windows."[12] It was just this creation of an ambience, which one enters as a sacred milieu (such as gems, precious metals, polished marbles, carved stone, stained glass) for its richness and unity of effect, that characterized an emerging spirituality and aesthetic in later Medieval art, which in turn continued to be of great importance for Baroque and Romantic art.

The tradition of combining several media, interior setting and the viewer's pious participation in the contemplation of sacred mysteries continued to develop, becoming more sublime in the high Gothic and, interestingly, in

certain instances, more intimate in the Renaissance. In the fifteenth century in Italy, the popular dependency on interceding saints, particularly the Virgin, produced what quickly became an intensely popular theme in painting: the sacre converzatione.[13] In such paintings, placed in side chapels and above altars, the viewer's participation as well as the sense of the saints' and Virgin's physical presence were enhanced by portraying the members of the scene in conversation, as if the viewer were witnessing---and even included in---the dialogue.[14]

Another type of art growing out of the later Medieval emphasis on the adoration of the Eucharist is the decoration of the tabernacle.[15] Even more inherently than the sacre converzatione, the tabernacle of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries drew together paintings as well as sculptural and architectural elements into a frequently highly unified format.[16] As a container of the Sacred Species set upon or behind the altar, the tabernacle invited a diversity of types of decoration.

These Italian forms of church decoration are significant not as Gesamtkunstwerke, but as a link between the original Gothic vision of a decorated environment celebrating God's presence in the sacramental Host, and what in the Baroque is the culmination of church decoration centering about the altar. This culmination appears in the work of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, where characteristically the viewer

was participant in a grand sense of mystery. The relatively humble conversational scenes of intimacy and the tabernacles of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento are prototypes for such works as the Baroque master's St. Theresa in Ecstacy and the monumental tabernacle, the Baldacchino of St. Peter's.

Bernini's integration of sculpture and architecture, and his use of several media, maximized the dramatic effect that light, color and form may attain. The variety of texture, color, scale and forms he employed with the intention of overwhelming the viewer with devotion and awe distinguish Bernini as an unequaled master of the Gesamtkunstwerk. Uncontestably, one of the foremost examples of his ability to harmonize any number of elements into a stunning and unified whole is the Altar of St. Theresa in the Cornaro Chapel in S. Maria della Vittoria in Rome. Light, color and a vast array of forms are melded here into a singular experience in which the living spectators join with those of marble in the theater boxes to either side of the altar to witness the ecstatic vision of the Spanish mystic, St. Theresa (1515-1582). All eyes are drawn upward to the scene which glows with light from an upper window that the sculptor-architect carefully designed.[17] Abbot Suger's anagogic and sublime experience again comes to mind: the depiction of a realm...a realm between the heavenly and the mundane, into which St. Theresa has been ecstatically elevated.

In the Gothic and Baroque eras the intention of a Gesamtkunstwerk was to create an atmosphere of transcendance in which the viewer-participant was aware of a moment or an event rather than confined to an isolated painting or sculpture. The intention was to create an ambience in which the viewer becomes a participant.

Besides glorifying God, a fundamental purpose of Bernini's chapel, as well as Quadrocentto altars and Suger's choir, was, of course, the moral edification of the devout. Dramatic visual experience was utilized in order to stimulate and direct public devotion. What better way to engender devotion, encourage the devout, glorify God and incite reverence for the Church than to bring the company of believers into the Divine presence---a presence clearly suggested by the carefully planned manipulation of space, sight and sound?

Church design of the Baroque and Rococo periods, especially in the Catholic south of Germany, reflected a conception of God as King of His heavenly court. Christ's throne was often glimpsed in the glorious ceiling or vault frescos over nave and altar, a spectacular example of the sort of co-extensive space that asserted a connection between terrestrial and celestial realms. Frequently, architectural details were illusionistically continued from the church structure itself into the design of the painting, thereby affecting a direct link between architecture and painting. The decorative motifs of the interior ornament were also

repeated in the painting to establish this imminence of the divine. The effect is an overwhelming sense of presence and wholeness in which the Church, symbolized by the building itself, is the window or passageway to the beyond. This experience of theophany, achieved by the illusionistic devices in painting and architectural motifs fused with an astonishing array of media into a singular environment, is seen, for example, in the interior of the Wallfahrtskirche St. Maria (1746-1758) in Birnau by Lake Constance (fig. 1). The pastel hues of the pink and beige marble pilasters are repeated in the frescos of the vault and spandrels. The proximity between the painted events and the congregation are not only suggested in this manner, but also by the placement throughout the choir of sculptured cherubs who echo in their precarious and hovering perches the host of cherubs attending to the Virgin as depicted in the vaults of the apse and nave, especially in the latter which was painted in steep perspective in order to render depth in the shallow vault.

In this same church, frescoed angels in concert appear to be singing and playing several instruments, including horns, as they accompany the organ and the church choir in praises to the Virgin. In addition to the sound of the organ, the sculpture, the exquisitely gilded detail, the painting and the engulfing space of the interior, the wafting aroma of liturgical incense and perhaps even the taste of

sacramental Host in Mass (note the cherub on the side altar to the right who eats honey from a beehive) result in the participant's grand and complete immersion through all his or her senses in an experience of divine presence.

The degree to which the viewer may be cognizant of a spatial experience is of critical importance in Baroque architecture. Typically the viewer's sight is carried ever upward and about in the fluid relationship of parts and wholes. Of prevailing importance, therefore, is the oval plan since this shape characterizes the tension between circle and rectangle, incarnating motion and fluidity in its very design. The oval, seen in so many floor plans of Baroque buildings, is quite conducive to a sense of encompassing ambience, expressing a "centralizing effect" used to enhance an experience of community or togetherness.[18] Likewise, pillars and buttresses were designed not to impede the experience of visual unity and atmospheric continuity. Secondary altars were frequently set obliquely in corners to round the corner out for visual effect.

The floor plan of the pilgrimage church at Steinhausen (1727-1733) by Dominikus Zimmermann exemplifies the use of the oval (fig. 2). Contained beneath a single large vault on which The Lost Paradise was depicted---that state of primeval humanity and nature which the Church promised to regain---Steinhausen presented a singular sensation of

towering light and grandeur, a vision into the past and future, supported by ten massive but hardly over-burdened piers which repeat the oval of the walls.

Some Conclusions

What should be clear in this brief view of interior spaces is that no concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk in the context of Gothic and Baroque church decoration is complete without a clear understanding of the spiritual significance of the whole. A Gesamtkunstwerk in these instances is not merely a coordination of media in some space, but rather a unification of color, sound, form and even taste and smell into an event through which the participant is made to turn his or her concentration from the mundane to a dimension of sacred experience. For that reason, the development of a Gesamtkunstwerk cannot be considered within a certain period as a purely formalistic evolution or sequence. Changes in design and program were dependent on underlying spiritual and ecclesiastical motives. For instance, the Gothic emphasis on light and soaring altitude represented the search for symbols of spiritual experience and the need to create an appropriate environment for the Sacred Species; the exploitation of co-extensive space in the Baroque, achieved by illusionistic devices and repetition of media and subject matter throughout the interior, came in response to the ecclesiastical demand for suitable symbols of

divine imminence and spiritual apotheosis. In the Romantic mind of Runge, one encounters a particular need to express the infinite inherent in the finite.

But what of secular monuments where there exists a masterful unity of sculpture, painting and architecture? For instance, the Salon de Guerre at Versailles. Is this a Gesamtkunstwerk? Does the emphasis on spirituality in the definition of the Gesamtkunstwerk given above preclude the classification of this monument as a "total art work?" From a purely formalistic point of view it cannot, for there is nothing inherently spiritualistic about the synthesis of artistic media. However, what is characteristic of such a work of art is the captivating and engaging moment it creates---whether glorifying God as in Bernini's Cornaro Chapel or King Louis and the concept of the French royalty in the Salon de Guerre. Yet, what remains of significance here is recognition of the fact that the Gesamtkunstwerk is firmly based in the tradition of church interiors in Europe---a fact that seems to have impressed Runge.

In this thesis it will be demonstrated that Runge's interest in the Gesamtkunstwerk was to realize an art work that might serve most effectively the spiritual ends to which he dedicated his creative talents. A good deal of self-restraint is called for, however, when examining Runge's spiritual convictions and the attitudes of Romantic Germany towards matters of artistic and spiritual experience. A

distinct tendency among some writers to become preoccupied with a Zeitgeist of wholism and universalism is especially evident in Rudolf Bisanz. In an article on German concepts of the Gesamtkunstwerk in the nineteenth century,[19] Bisanz apparently conceives of the Gesamtkunstwerk as a vast, collective synthesis of everything from philosophy, science and mythology combined with art, and even statesmanship to form some lofty Gesamtweltanschauung---to use his own compound[20]---dedicated to achieving a national and cultural identity. Bisanz's Gesamterei seems like the result of an overly zealous reading of Schelling, Hegel and Wagner. Especially erroneous in his approach is the fact that he almost completely ignores the moment of aesthetic experience for which the Gesamtkunstwerk was designed. Instead he dwells disproportionately on an over-intellectualized teleology, a sort of legendary Kunstwollen or culminating direction to the pluralism of German Romanticism over the course of several generations---including even Modern artists in Germany. I do not agree with Bisanz that Runge takes his place beside Friedrich Schlegel and Richard Wagner in the collective endeavor to act as progenitor and midwife at the rebirth of German culture. This view smacks of a priori historicism. Furthermore, it remains unclear to me exactly what Bisanz means when he writes: "The vast network of romantic Gesamtweltanschauung with its historicism, quasi-pantheism and futurism ramifies into the 'work of total art'

theorem."[21] Does he presuppose that there existed a single unified Romantic world-view that intrinsically sought expression in the Gesamtkunstwerk? Friedrich Schlegel's rejection of Runge's iconographical innovation in the Tageszeiten[22] would suggest otherwise. The thesis advanced here is that a visual precedent exists in European art, one with a distinctly spiritual and religious tradition, which provided Runge with an artistic basis from which to work.[23]

A final word on the Gesamtkunstwerk as it existed before Runge. There are two relatively distinct traditions of Gesamtverzierung, decoration on the scale of the Gesamtkunstwerk which preceded Runge: the visual, as observed, and another: the musical-theatrical or operatic tradition.[24] However, the evidence is clear that church music and interior decoration had a greater impression on Runge than the theater. In a letter of April 6, 1803, to Daniel, Runge spoke of Theater-Musik as derived from church music, and lamented that the spiritual source of it, as well as Haydn's music, was obscured. In the letter of September 1, 1809, Runge called for the development of a "proper opera." As early as August 7, 1801, Runge attended a Catholic service in order to enjoy the music.[25]

Yet another possibility, which has been suggested, is the literary tradition which sought to synthesize the arts.[26] The interest in the fusion of the arts, particularly painting and literary forms such as poetry and Märchen,

appeared in the Stürm und Drang, as exemplified by the later work of Heinse, Ardinghello (1787), which was the first major literary work of the Maler-Dichter type (of which Wackenroder's and Tieck's Herzensergiessungen and Tieck's Franz Sternbald were later examples). However, despite the many synaesthetic references and image-laden prose, these literary efforts no more constituted a Gesamtkunstwerk than Schlegel's notorious Fragment 116 called for one.[27] These examples of literature and Schlegel's theoretical aphorism (calling only for the fusion of literary genres) involved a single medium, the word, and therefore cannot be considered synonymous with or even prototypical of the synthesis of media for which Runge strove. That Tieck's Sternbald influenced Runge is doubtless; but not as a Gesamtkunstwerk itself. Certainly those instances in contemporary literature which encouraged or depicted fictionally the synthesis of artistic media need to be considered. The degree to which Tieck and Novalis influenced Runge's search for the expression of his cosmology as well as perhaps the formation of the cosmology itself, will be examined in this study.

Notes: Chapter One

1. Harald Keller, Die Kunst des 18. Jahrunderts, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, Band 10, Propyläen Verlag, Berlin, 1971, pp. 24-38.

2. However, one also finds the term in discussions of Gothic art, Peter Kidson, The Medieval World, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967, p. 162; also Keller, ibid, p. 24. Twentieth century applications include such artists as Kandinsky and Klee, see August Wiedmann, Romantic Roots in Modern Art, Great Britain: Gresham Press, 1979, p. 25.

3. Walter Gropius, expressing a common sentiment, wrote of the Bauhaus ideal: "A great, universal, pregnant, intellecual-religious idea was being created by individual groups, which would find expression at last in a universal, great work of art." Quoted in Christian Geelhaar, Paul Klee and the Bauhaus, New York, 1973, p. 19.

4. This is no doubt due to the fact that no where, as far as I know, is it considered to be a visual tradition or even an artistic idea having evolved within the context of the visual arts. Alfred Neumann, (The Evolution of the Gesamtkunstwerk in German Romanticism, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1951) provides an excellent analysis of the roots of the Romantic Gesamtkunstwerk in the operatic tradition of the 18th century and the attitudes of those who counseled the reform of the opera. Pointing out that theater and the visual arts were combined in the Baroque, Neumann pursues the musical tradition leading to German Romanticism. A catalog to a recent exhibition traveling through Europe entitled Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk, surveys artists from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries who were interested in the prospect of a total art work. Runge is well represented. (Aarau und Frankfurt am Main, Verlag Sauerländer, 1983).

5. The culmination of the Protestant approach can be seen in the work of Karl Gotthard Langhans (1732-1808); for example, the Evangelical Church at Reichenback built after his plans from 1795 to 1798 (Alt-Schlesien: Architektur, Raumkunst, Kunstgewerbe, hrsg. und eingeleitet von Richard Konwiarz, Verlag Wolfgang Weidlich, Frankfurt am Main, 1979, pp. 144-145). With three oval tiers stacked on doric columns supporting largely unadorned white surfaces, the building at Reichenbach looks more like a theater or lecture hall than a church. Amidst a dominant mood of restraint, the interior space focuses on the pulpit which is, interestingly enough, set above the altar.

6. See below for more detailed formal discussion of Baroque Catholic interiors.

7. Erwin Panofsky, Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its Art Treasures, Princeton, 1948, p. 65. For subsequent emphasis placed on the Eucharistic elements in liturgy and art, see the second chapter of Maurice E. Cope's The Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament in the Sixteenth Century, Garland: New York and London, 1979.

8. Panofsky, ibid., p. 13.

9. Ibid., pp. 47 ff.

10. Ibid., pp. 63, 65.

11. Ibid., p. 36.

12. Ibid., p. 37.

13. Peter and Linda Murray, The Art of the Renaissance, Oxford Uni. Press, 1963, p. 92.

14. See, for instance, Lippi's Coronation of the Virgin, (Murray, plate 72) in which several of the figures peer out directly at the viewer. One angel's body is even cropped at the waist at the bottom of the picture, suggesting its extension into the real space of the viewer. Typically, these "sacred conversations" depict a single moment in the course of intimate conversation; their perspectival organization also often enhances the illusion of their presence by extending the real space of the viewer into the picture, such as Fra Angelico's Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels (Murray, plate 77).

15. Cope, op. cit., pp. 16-25.

16. Ibid., plates 1-30.

17. In this respect Bernini is the model for the eighteenth century "impressario", who directed every aspect of the church design and decoration in order to attain the effect of the Gesamtkunstwerk. Keller, op. cit., p. 28, notes the influence of Italy on such a Northern impressario as Johann Fischer von Erlach who, among others, traveled to Italy and studied Bernini's work there.

18. The term is John Bourke's, Baroque Churches of Central Europe, London: Faber and Faber, 1958, p. 54.

19. Rudolf Bisanz, "Romantic Synthesis of the Arts: Nineteenth-Century Theories on a Universal Art," Konsthistorik Tidskrift 44. June 1975, pp. 38-46.

20. Particularly obfuscating is his persistent use of such heavy-handed compounds as Gesamtkunstwerkmenschen or Gesamtkunstwerkgestalt.

21. Op. cit., p. 39.

22. Descriptions of Paintings from Paris and the Netherlands, 1801-1804, reprinted in part in Lorenz Eitner, Neoclassicism and Romanticism 1750-1850, Volume II, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970, pp. 29-32.

23. Even Bisanz acknowledges the influence of the Mass on Runge, op. cit., p. 40; Bisanz, German Romanticism and Philipp Otto Runge, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, 1970, pp. 27, 74.

24. Neumann, op. cit.

25. See also letters of September 12, 1801, to Daniel and December 7, 1801, to his father.

26. Eugene Reed, "Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen as a Gesamtkunstwerk," Philological Quarterly 33, 1954, pp. 200-211.

27. As Bisanz suggests, op. cit., p. 39.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SPIRITUALITY OF RUNGE AND ROMANTIC GERMANY

The role of Runge's spirituality in the development of his art and thought cannot be over-emphasized. He asserted early on[1] that, necessarily, the first concern of every artist should be the Ahnung von Gott; that is, the awareness or sensation of God.[2] This magical and recurrent phrase referred to the realization of God's immanence in nature. Runge considered that such an immanence was experienced by the human soul, which he believed originated in God. The soul occupied a chief position in Runge's mind as the liaison between man and God. According to the artist, man's soul constituted "the clearest, most certain awareness of ourselves and our own eternity," and was the medium by which one might experience the feeling of oneself "in the context of the whole."[3]

As a unified experience, Runge's awareness of God and his own feeling of a connection with the entire universe framed his understanding of the purpose of artistic expression. He held that the artist must express the intensity of this experience in "words, tones or images and so stir the same feelings in the breasts of people beside us." He wrote that "The truth of the feeling grasps everyone,

everyone feels himself in this connection, all who praise him praise the only God; and thus originates religion." Although he would later claim that art and religion were not synonymous (to Maria, September 3, 1802), he insisted in the letter of March 9 that

> In my opinion absolutely no artwork may originate if the artist does not proceed from the first moment nor is an artwork otherwise eternal: for the eternity of an artwork is indeed only the connection with the soul of the artist, and through this is an image of the eternal origin of the soul.[4]

Runge conceived of an art based on the cultivation of lofty feeling, the awareness of God through nature and the soul's immediate relationship with everything. The artist's choice of subject was to emerge from feeling and spiritual purity, as Runge brought out in the following lengthy passage:

> We set these words, tones or images in relation to our innermost feeling, our awareness of God, and the sensation of the relation of the whole; that is, we arrange about us these feelings of the most important and most lively being, and, while we determine the characteristic features of this being, that is, these features which agree with our feelings, we depict symbols of our thoughts concerning the great powers of the world, these are the images of God, or of the gods. The more men preserve themselves and their feeling in purity, and exalt this feeling the more certain these will be symbols of God's powers, and the higher will men feel the great almighty power.

Runge believed that a spirit animated nature which excited in humanity a dimension of feeling expressed in truly religious art. A particular sequence or hierarchy

can be discerned in this spiritual and artistic view. Commencing with the awareness of God, the soul experienced its relation to the "all," which in turn was expressed in art that, Runge maintained, presented accordingly "an image of the infinite."

Runge and Romantic Theology

Runge's preoccupation with the experience of the "all" recalls a crucial figure in German Romanticism, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). When Runge asked "Doesn't an artwork originate only in the moment when I clearly perceive a connection with the Universe?",[5] one thinks of the influential Speeches[6] which Schleiermacher published in 1799. In this work the theologian contended for the primacy of experiencing the unity of the universe as an expression of the presence of the eternal God. "The sum total of religion is to feel that, in its highest unity, all that moves us in feeling is one; to feel that aught single and particular is only possible by means of this unity; to feel, that is to say, that our being and living is a being and living in and through God."[7] In the same work he wrote the following:

> The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this out and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life

> and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal.[8]

Schleiermacher thought God to be the "universal, productive, connecting necessity of all thought and existence."[9]

Jörg Traeger has presumed that Runge was at least somewhat familiar with Schleiermacher's views---no doubt through conversation with such intermediaries as Tieck, Fichte, the Schlegels and Schelling among others.[10] Furthermore, as Traeger has suggested, the moment of spiritual conviction Schleiermacher extolled as a feeling of the immanence of the infinite in the finite was the same moment from which Runge's aspirations for the art of landscape emerged in the attempt to express the soul's "connection with the all."[11]

A comparison of the artist and this particular theologian, whose attitudes were both closely parallel and divergent, is instructive in the search for the significance of Runge's views on spirit, religion and art. In particular, such a comparison will be of assistance in determining the uniqueness of Runge's solutions to problems commonly shared by his contemporaries.

The Speeches reveal Schleiermacher's belief in the necessity of the conscious union of art and religion. He claimed that, at present, "Religion and art stand together like kindred beings, whose inner affinity, though mutually unrecognized and unsuspected, appears in various ways."[12]

The cultivation of feeling was foremost in Schleiermacher's mind. "The divine in us," he asserted, "is immediately affected and called forth by the feeling."[13] He insisted that "religion is not knowledge and science, either of the world or of God." He wrote that religion "is a life in the infinite nature of the Whole, in the One and in the All, in God, having and possessing all things in God, and God in all." Moreover, that religion "is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal."[14]

Both Runge and Schleiermacher were ecstatic before the organic sense of unity of the universe, a unity, Runge wrote, by means of which people were sure of "our own immortality." In the first edition of his Speeches (which he deleted from the subsequent editions of 1804 and 1807), Schleiermacher wrote: "Every form, every creature, every occurrence is an action of the Universe upon us, and religion is just the acceptance of each separate thing as a part of the whole, of each limited thing as an exhibition of the Infinite."[15] Elsewhere he wrote that "The universe is ceaselessly active and at every moment is revealing itself to us. Every form it has produced, everything to which, from the fullness of its life, it has given a separate existence, every occurrence scattered from its fertile bosom is an operation of the Universe upon us."[16] This image of teeming fertility reminds one of Runge's depiction of

vegetation in the portrait of the Hülsenbeck children in which each plant exhibits a life of its own, the Quelle und Dichter (fig. 3), the Tageszeiten drawings (figs. 4-7) and the painted Morgen in both small and large versions (figs. 8 and 9). All of these images show nature as a realm of intensely varied activity harmonized into a perpetual sense of wonder, the meeting place of spirit and matter, of infinity and the finite.

The role of the artist according to Runge, and the pious man according to Schleiermacher, was not to divide by rational and scientific means this vast display of forms in nature, but rather to attain to a cosmic unity. This yearning for harmony can be identified as a salient cosmological feature of Runge's thought as well as Schleiermacher's in addition to any number of Romantic thinkers in Germany of the time.

The overwhelming concern for harmony is particularly clear in the subject of love. Love was the primary means of repairing the multiplicity of time and the finitude of objects, particularly love for one's companion of the opposite sex. This theme was treated by Friedrich Schlegel in his scandalously received Lucinde of 1799, which was in large part defended by Schleiermacher in his Vertraute Briefe (1800), where he wrote that the author, whom he called a poet, should be invested "with the garments of a priest of

Love and Wisdom."[17] The role of the female was elevated to one of full participant in relationships (if not set even above the male as a symbol of salvation). Friedrich Schlegel wrote in Lucinde:

> I can no longer say my love or thy love; they are both alike and absolutely one: each gives as much love as he receives in return. It is matrimony, eternal oneness and union of our spirits, not only for what we call this world or the world yonder, but for the one true, indivisible, nameless infinite world, for our entire eternal being and life.[18]

Schleiermacher stated very succinctly in his defense of Lucinde: "I believe in a divine humanity, which was before it assumed the form of man and woman."[19] These thoughts were not without an important place in Runge's mind. He expressed the sentiment of two lovers joining to create a primordial, paradisical unity in a letter to his beloved Pauline of April 1803:

> The word is only the body of our inner feelings... we consist in one of soul and body; the actual ground of both is the living breath (i.e., of God) in us, and when we want to admit it clearly and openly, there is in our soul ever a yearning to break through the barrier which separates us from one another. This yearning and this will in us are merely the inner and the outer; we consist of both, that is, the "I" and the "You," which will not be able to be joined but through death; I mean, will not be fully one as they were in paradise.[20]

The same attitude toward death is found in the early writing of Friedrich Schlegel (whom Runge met in Dresden in 1802): "absolute perfection (Vollendung) is only in death."[21] This yearning, so characteristic of the Romantik, Runge viewed

as the "yearning to bind the "I" and "You," that it may be once again as it was in God. We must love us, must name ourselves "You"...the closer we come to know one another, the thinner the barrier between us will be through love, the more we will yearn for complete unity, that is, for death."[22]

Longing for the deliverance from dualism and the view that death represented final unity and the cultivation of intense feeling derived from an immersion in nature. The prevalence of these themes in Runge's art and thought demonstrate the degree to which Runge was aware of the ideas of the Romantic figures as well as the degree to which he himself was a native Romantic. But, more important, the themes examined in connection with Schleiermacher clarify the basically spiritual view Runge took of art and life and establish a good portion of the foundation of his cosmology. To this foundation one may add two more aspects, to be discussed in later chapters, but worthy of mention here. First, whereas Protestantism in Northern Europe rejected the feminine aspect from its mythology, Romanticism represented in Germany the re-introduction of the prominence of the female. The female form of Virgin (Catholic Christian source), the Earth Mother and the personification of Aurora (non-Christian mythology of Northern and Greco-Roman source) were dominant symbols in German Romanticism, typically associated with nature. Secondly, there is the distinct

influence of Northern European Lichtmetaphysik (metaphysical or mystical view of light and the metaphor of illumination) in Runge, which can be traced, along with many of the mythological and cosmological elements he considered, largely to the mystic Jacob Böhme (1575-1624), to whom will be devoted a section of discussion below. Scholars are quite correct who point to the fundamental importance of Neoplatonism for the formation of the essential cosmological elements embraced by so many of the German Romantik---something which will become clear in the course of this study.[23]

Runge's Faith

The matter of Runge's faith is somewhat paradoxical because of his contradictory statements. Whereas any number of passages from his letters could be marshalled to depict a generally orthodox Christian faith,[24] an equally corvincing group of statements in his correspondence might be assembled to suggest a distinctly unorthodox position. For instance, Runge certainly seemed to express an unorthodox view when he asserted to Daniel in the monumental letter of March 9, 1802, that human religions have continually evolved since a primitive form of animism, when men "worshipped each individual stream, tree, stone, fire, etc." to the present day:

> The Christian religion, I mean the Catholic religion, still needed four persons in the godhead...until this religion diminished. The

> Reformation limited itself to three persons in the godhead, this now appears to have gone to ruin...Now people want only to cling to one God; but when He is lost to them, then indeed there will be no other than for the Day of Judgment to come.

The final thought regarding the Day of Judgment is puzzling: could it represent an orthodox God's judgment on humanity's manifold abuses of the godhead throughout human history? Otherwise, the view of the trinity as only one among the many which, in Runge's view, rise and fall in the course of human civilization, seems unorthodox. There is no doubt that Runge reflected in this letter the influence of his only recently formed friendship with the writer, Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853). The source of the idea of religious evolution itself can be at least partially attributed to Tieck, for Runge wrote that Tieck told him that the art works of a dying culture carry in them the highest spirit of the religion which is itself deteriorating.[25] Therefore, one must be cautious in assigning such an unorthodox idea to Runge, particularly when it is taken into account that only six months later he would write to his sister Maria disassociating himself theologically from those about him---except Tieck---who had no faith in "God and the redemption of the world; and it is indeed true, and I will witness to this before the world, there is no other salvation to achieve which is not come from God and His Son."[26]

Significant also in the letter to Maria just cited is the artist's insistence that God was not confined to nature but, indeed, was much higher than nature. He concluded that "the world is a step to heaven which we must climb, otherwise we could not yearn for the eternal clarity." The distinction of nature and God was also brought out in the earlier letter of March 9: "You can only have an awareness of God behind these golden mountains, but of yourself you are certain, and what you feel in your immortal soul is also immortal---what you create from it, this is intransient; here art must originate if it is to be eternal." God was sensed as behind or underlying the forms of nature and this sensation or awareness was what assured man of his immortality. Because God was not fully disclosed in nature, Runge was apt to speak of him much more in terms of symbols, metaphors, hieroglyphs---in fact, largely in terms of a "language of nature." He wrote Daniel that the virtue of landscape was that, in effect, it was not an image of God, who was beyond representation, but amounted rather to giving form to air, stone, water and fire, the four constitutive elements of most world cosmologies, and thus sought to depict the "highest awareness of our relationship," i.e., to the "all."[27] Accordingly, Runge regarded the world as the necessary stepping stone to heaven: only through the experience of nature does one come to the conviction of his own immortality.

At the same time, Runge was not above suffering the contrast between the two, nature and heaven. He wrote to Daniel on July 11, 1802, concerning the agony he experienced despite his knowledge that the eternity which transcended all phenomenal life was

> higher and more beautiful than all sensuality and desire of the world...yet the inwardly burning point of the living spirit of the world, this fountain out of which all life which is here has its source: I could forget everything, but not this...I cannot separate myself from this world in which this spark, this breath of the almighty God still lives and moves.[28]

And he concluded with the tragic mood typical of the Romantic: "It stops indeed with death, I believe, and until then the time will be long for me." Runge felt himself to be drawn between two opposing forces which paradoxically, however, were both animated by the breath of God. Only death offered their final reconciliation.

Jörg Traeger has pointed to Runge's many comments regarding the role of scripture and nature in the revelation of God as constituting a two-fold system of divine revelation: one in which God spoke of himself in the Bible and the other in which he made himself known through the world itself.[29] For instance, Traeger referred to a letter of February 2, 1810, to the artist's father, in which Runge discussed the theme of revelation in terms of his theory of color illustrated on the color sphere (fig. 10): "since God has revealed himself in nature, as in religion,

likewise there is here an example of this view, that the progression from darkness to light may indicate a graduation." Runge parenthetically referred to this Stufenfolge or graduation as "time," which, he went on to say, "reveals itself in space which originates in the relationship of the colors, as the color sphere shows figuratively."

To understand this initially obscure equation of color with space and time, one must realize that color itself was considered to be of divine origin in Runge's cosmology. In a letter of September 26, 1806, he wrote to Baier in a cryptobiblical manner after having quoted the first fourteen verses of the Gospel of John: "The light shines in the world that it may penetrate the darkness and the emanation of the light is the three colors which praise the Lord from eternity to eternity." Therefore, the progression from the dark pole of the color sphere to the light pole may be seen to represent the illumination of the universe by divine light and the graduated ascent and descent of the universe to and from divinity. The Neoplatonic character of this scheme is quite obvious.

The degree to which Runge invested himself with such metaphysical thought will become clear in later chapters. Suffice it to say that he considered the world to reveal a divine presence via the intermediary and transformative element of light, a metaphor central to the mysticism of his cosmology. Runge viewed the universe as permeated by

divine light and thus spoke of God as the one "in whom we live, move and have our being."[30] Traeger's discussion of the Pietistic origins of this ostensibly pantheistic thought and the significance of the Protestant tradition for German Romanticism in this regard seems correct,[31] though one might also consider German mysticism antedating the Protestant Reformation (such medieval mystic strains as those represented in the Theologia Germanica, ca. 1350) to be of some significance.[32] Moreover, Jacob Böhme was a figure who connected Runge with Lutheran Protestantism as well as Medieval German mysticism and its Neoplatonic influence.

Until his death Runge appears to have remained a more or less orthodox Protestant while simultaneously expressing himself in mystical ideas, sentiments and art. Though the subject could bear greater investigation, the solution to the apparent contradiction in his religious beliefs may be nothing more than his filial desire not to cause concern in his orthodox family, to which he was devotedly attached throughout his life. More plausible, however, is Traeger's suggestion that Runge held natural and biblical revelation to be thoroughly compatible. A similar notion is found in Böhme's thought, the analysis of which may shed light on this subject.

The Influence of Jacob Böhme

The writings of the German mystic, Jacob Böhme, are almost universally regarded today as being of great influence on Runge.[33] Böhme, the "humble shoemaker of Görlitz," wrote profusely and in very imagistic, alchemical and idiomatic terms of the mystic Christian life.[34] He is also seen to have been of considerable influence on any number of Runge's contemporaries, including Goethe, Fichte, Schelling, Tieck, Novalis and Hegel.[35]

It was Ludwig Tieck, whom Runge met in 1801, who introduced Runge to the mystic,[36] though the indirect influence of Böhme can be discerned in Runge as early as 1798 when he read Tieck's Franz Sternbald[37] which abounds with Böhmean thought and imagery.[38] As Traeger has pointed out, Tieck had been familiar with Böhme's work since 1792.

Many possibilities have been advanced by numerous scholars concerning Runge's first-hand knowledge of Böhme's work. Schmidt and Waezoldt have both contended that Runge was familiar with Böhme's most popular work Aurora oder Morgenröte im Aufgang.[39] Traeger has urged the possibility of the artist's knowledge of the mystic's Beschreibung der drey Principien Göttliches Wesens,[40] Möseneder seemed to prefer, among other writings, Drey Principien Göttlicher Offenbarung; Heinz Matile has suggested that those works Runge might have read cannot be indicated with certainty

due to the many repetitions of imagery, theme and motif throughout Böhme's oeuvre, and "that it is partly a question of opinion as to how strongly one wants to emphasize the immediate influence of Böhme on Runge."[41] This view is objectionable, however, for despite a certain degree of indeterminateness and the fact that the milieu of Romantic Germany contained a great many mystical ideas, when closely considered the evidence suggests that Runge knew Böhme's monumental commentary on the book of Genesis, the Mysterium Magnum. It is demonstrable that this work is of considerable importance in a thematic analysis of Runge's cosmology, as expressed in his letters and his art and of particular interest in the emergence of the idea of a Gesamtkunstwerk.

The frequent references to biblical primeval history recorded in the first several chapters of the book of Genesis and the extensive use of quotations drawn from these chapters, suggests the artist's familiarity with Böhme's Mysterium Magnum.[42] Chapter Two of this wide-ranging, synthetic and imaginative commentary dealt exclusively with the mystical relation of the Logos of John's Gospel[43] and the verbum fiat, "let there be...," of the first chapter of Genesis. The fourth chapter of Böhme's work treated the apparent dualism of God's love and anger---a motif expressed in Runge's writing as an elementary cosmological principle:

"inexorable severity and fearsome eternity" contrasted in unending struggle with "sweet, eternal and limitless love."[44]

What clearly substantiates the proposed influence of Böhme in the letters of late 1802, as mentioned above, beyond the artist's great interest in very specific Genesis themes treated by Böhme at length in his commentary, was the appearance of the mystic's name in the letter of November 27 to Daniel. Berefelt[45] noted the influence of Neoplatonism via Böhme in the artist's thought in pointing to this letter in which Runge, speaking of the soul's yearning for light and lamenting its imprisonment in the earth, i.e., matter, wrote: "as Jakob Böhme thinks, the devil burned the earth and now the soul is locked therein..." As he continued, the conjunction of biblical and Neoplatonic views becomes clearer to the modern reader. Of the entrapped soul's rescue Runge wrote:

> ...but the mercy of God endures forever, and God spoke: let there be light! For God was before the light, and is greater than the light, and the light was before the sun, for the light is the nourishment of the sun; and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not comprehend it.

It is significant to note that the extensive use of imagery and verbage from the Gospel of John in Runge is also found in Böhme's commentary. Runge contended that the verbum fiat of "Let there be light" would liberate the soul from its material imprisonment. This essentially Neoplatonic

theme was of overwhelming importance in Runge's color theory and his use of it in the Tageszeiten. The following quotation from Böhme's Mysterium Magnum demonstrates an identical conception of the verbum fiat in its role of defeating the power of the devil over the human soul: "And with the speaking, as God spoke 'Let there be light,' the holy power which was amassed in the wrath, moved itself, and became light in the same essence in the power. And with this coming to light the devil's might and strength was wholly withdrawn from him."[46]

In the letter of November 27, Runge also commented that "the devil strews in the meantime weeds and poisonous, insidious flowers...in which he paints hellish colors..." In Mysterium Magnum Böhme referred to the rebellious Lucifer before God as "a tearing, breaking, stinging, murdering and poisonous burning,"[47] and claimed elsewhere in the same text that "The whole world would have been a mere Paradise, if Lucifer had not corrupted it...For Lucifer poisoned the first Paradise with his false and wicked desire..."[48]

By 1804 Runge personally possessed works by Böhme as a letter from Kosegarten of May 11, 1804 suggests.[49] Finally, in a letter to his brother Gustaf on April 16, 1810, Runge mentioned Böhme and the Swedish mystic, Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), in connection with color theory. Runge attributed the origin of the contemplative (tiefsinnig)

relations of colors ordered in tabular fashion to a mystic tradition he referred to as "Böhme, Swedenborg, etc." This acknowledgement seems significant when one considers that Runge concerned himself with the more than purely formal relations of color; that is, the metaphysical aspects of color.

Though admittedly at times difficult to isolate, Böhme's influence was unmistakably operative in Runge's cosmology. Indeed, all the salient cosmological elements enumerated previously---the longing to escape dualism, the final reconciliation in death, the paradisical realm of primordial unity, nature as the revelation of divinity, the symbolism of these ideas in the female cultic figure, and the transformative power of the metaphor of light and color---all these are to be found in Böhme, and particularly his last comprehensive work, the Mysterium Magnum.

A Spiritual Art

Like English Romanticism, Romantic painting in Germany can be characterized by its cultivation of landscape, previously considered of second or even third rank in the academic or Neoclassical aesthetic. Certainly, therefore, one reason Runge deserves attention in the history of German painting is his rejection of study in Paris or Rome on the basis of his decision to pursue a wholly distinct form of art.[50] Rejecting the established

procedure of antique study in the south, rejecting the ominous presence in the German mind of such figures as Winckelmann and Mengs, Runge asked in the spirit of Heinse and Herder: "Should Ossian have had it better if he would have studied Homer?"[51] Although Runge avidly studied the Neoclassic idiom, particularly in the early academic years from 1799 to 1801 in Copenhagen,[52] and even though elements of its aesthetic remained in his work until his death, after his move to Dresden in 1801 and his meeting with Tieck there one discerns the emergence of artistic views which progressively diverged from the Neoclassic approach.[53] Upset over the rejection of his drawing of Achill und Skamandros, submitted to the Weimar competition (sponsored by Goethe's Kunstfreunde there) at the end of his stay in Copenhagen, a drawing the judges found lacking in competent academic style, Runge stated in a letter of February 1802 that the exhibition in Weimar "and the entire procedure there really are taking an entirely false path on which it is impossible that anything good be brought forth."[54]

Though the contrast of Romantic and Classic has been overdrawn in Runge studies and though his anger at Goethe was not to last, it is quite clear that Runge became interested at this time in the artistic possibilities of landscape, a topic most Neoclassical painters were not

primarily concerned with. And this came at the expense of further academic study and submission to the Neo-classical style. Believing that history painting culminated in the High Renaissance with Michelangelo's Last Judgment, Runge asked: "Is there not then in this new art, the landscape, if you will, a higher point to be reached which will be perhaps yet more beautiful than the previous?"[55]

The issue of landscape as an alternative to academic art is crucial. Regarding Runge's interest in landscape, there is to consider Tieck's source of inspiration in 1798, Franz Sternbald, the novel of a young painter deeply impressed by nature and the prospect of painting it. Yet Runge's passion with nature probably antedates his reading of Sternbald.[56] This is suggested by his many meticulously cut paper flower silhouettes, a form of folk art taught him by his mother in his youth. Though dating just after his contact with Tieck's novel, Runge wrote his father on August 24, 1798 from Hamburg of his feeling that nature revealed itself to men as friendly and coursing with love---feelings which appear to people "from each flower and each color and from behind all fences and bushes and behind the clouds and in the farthest stars." It appears that Tieck's novel may have provided a mode of articulation for Runge's feelings for nature rather than actually giving birth to them. But one should not ignore the role Tieck continued

to play in the first year or two of their acquaintance. Writing to Tieck on December 1, 1802, Runge said that he believed he understood what Tieck actually meant by the term "landscape." Runge proceeded to contrast it with "historical art." He suggested that, as it looked to him, such art did not present the "individual" to the viewer; that is, the viewer did not perceive himself in the work as he would in a landscape (by Runge's definition). This was, after all, one of Runge's most important concerns: to speak to the viewer as an individual and to establish the right of the artist to do so. In opposition to the laborious and programmatic technique of Neoclassical study from the plaster cast, Runge passionately asked the following questions:

> Who doesn't see spirits in the clouds at sunset? Doesn't the artwork originate only in the moment when I clearly perceive a connection with the universe? Can't I hold onto the vanishing moon as a vanishing shape which awakens in me a thought, and can't either one become an artwork? And what artist who feels this in himself---he whom nature awakens, nature which we see as pure in ourselves, in our love and in the sky---will not grasp the appropriate objects in order to bring this feeling to light?...how absurd, then, the theme (of the Weimar competition).[57]

For both Runge and Tieck nature revealed the divinity.[58] But Runge did not conceive of nature as God himself, whereas Tieck's view is not always so clear. To Runge nature was a form of hieroglyphic mediation. In fact, he used the term "hieroglyph" in connection with the

notion of landscape in a letter to Tieck on December 1, 1802, when he commented that only from "arabesque and hieroglyphs" would the new art of landscape proceed. Believing that images of God could not be made, that God was beyond literal visualization, Runge held that nature pointed to God in the manner of a hieroglyph, that is, as something which referred to something else beyond itself.

As Grundy observed, this use of the term "hieroglyph" can be found in Tieck's Sternbald.[59] The same thought was also expressed in August Wilhem Schlegel's Vorlesungen über schöne Kunst und Literatur (1802-04) where that author defined the beautiful as "a symbolic representation of the infinite."[60] He asserted that the infinite permeated the finite world of nature and formed its basis; but he also asked:

> How then can the infinite be brought to the surface, into appearance? Only symbolically, in pictures and signs...The creation of poetry (taking this phrase in its widest sense to refer to all the arts) is nothing other than an external process of symbolizing: we either seek an external form for the spiritual, or we relate the external to something invisible and inward.[61]

The realm of finite matter, according to Schlegel, would turn the mind to the infinite, meaning the infinite which was in man and was the ground of nature. In consequence, such pictures, signs or hieroglyphs for the Romantic imagination served a distinctly anagogical function as in the case of Abbot Suger by directing the viewer away from this present position in finitude towards the trancendent.

It is important to understand, however, that God was thought to be present in nature according to the hieroglyphic view rather than merely signified, for both A. W. Schlegel and Runge employed the Pauline phrase "leben, weben und sind" when speaking of their relationship to God through nature: being is immersed in God, who is everywhere, though not confinable to any single object.[62] Nature became for the Romantic an immense ambience or temple in which God was present.[63] The Romantic's experience of nature was the product of perceiving a unity of forms drawn together into one spatial event rather than being represented by a single object. Landscape painting held out this possibility to Runge: the capacity to depict this event and experience its spiritual benefits while passing them on to the viewer. The degree to which Runge was moved by the ambience of nature, how it encompassed him and inspired the loftiest feelings in him, is brought out in the following dithyrambic passage:

> When the heavens above me teem with countless stars, when the wind rushes through vast space, when the wave breaks into spray in the distant night, when the aether reddens over the forest and the sun illuminates the world; when the valley steams and I throw myself about in the grass among sparkling drops of dew; when each leaf and blade of grass teem with life, and the earth lives and stirs beneath me and all sounds together in a single chord: then my soul rejoices and soars in the immense space about me; there is no more height or depth, no time, no beginning and no end, I hear and feel the living breath of God which holds and carries the world, in which everything lives and acts: here is the highest of which we are aware: God.[64]

The prospect of encapsulating this experience in landscape painting became Runge's preoccupation and the motive for his further study of color and its expressive value. Moreover, it became the basis of his interest in creating a Gesamtkunstwerk, an environment that would better evoke the numinous meaning of the experience of nature.

Notes: Chapter Two

1. Letter to Daniel, March 9, 1802; unless otherwise specified, all citations on pages 21 and 22 are from this letter.

2. See note 64 below for a discussion of the translation and meaning of Ahnung.

3. Runge's use of the term Zusammenhang lends itself to translation in English, depending on the nuance of the context, to three general possibilities: "connection," "relation" and "context," all of which I variably employ.

4. The "first moment" is the awareness (Ahnung) of God.

5. February 1802.

6. Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion, Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, trans. by John Oman, Harper and Row, 1958.

7. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

8. Ibid., pp. 36.

9. Ibid., pp. 95.

10. Jörg Traeger, Philipp Otto Runge und sein Werk, München: Prestal Verlag, 1975, p. 20. Traeger points to a letter of June 13, 1809 to Hanne Steffens, in which the theologian's name appeared; note 50.

11. Ibid., p. 45.

12. Speeches, p. 140.

13. Ibid., pp. 93-94.

14. Ibid., p. 36.

15. Ibid., p. 279.

16. Ibid., p. 48.

17. Quoted in Robert M. Wernaer, Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany, New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1910, p. 233.

18. In Wernaer, ibid., p. 241.

19. Ibid., p. 237.

20. In the second volume of the Hinterlassene Schriften.

21. Quoted in Christa Karoli, Ideal und Krise, Enthusiastichen Künstlertums in der deutschen Romantik, Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co., Verlag, 1968, p. 72.

22. To Pauline, April 1803.

23. Among others, Oskar Walzel, German Romanticism, trans. Alma Elsie Lussky, New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932, pp. 4ff; Karoli, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

24. Particularly letters to his father, brother Daniel, sister Maria and beloved Pauline---all of which reflect a devout concern for an orthodox confession. Such references profess a faith in Christ as the savior of humanity from sin and belief in the Bible as the source of revealed religion esteemed higher than all forms of human knowledge and experience. Letter to his father, December 31, 1802; to Maria, September 3, 1802; to Pauline, April, 1803, November 15, 1803, December 22, 1803; to his brother Gustaf, September 21, 1804; to Dr. Schildener, August 25, 1810. Noteworthy, however, is that two of these periods, 1803 and 1810, were intense and critical times in Runge's life; the former his courting of Pauline Bassenge and the latter the last months of his ailing life.

25. To Daniel, March 9, 1802.

26. September 3, 1803.

27. November 27, 1802.

28. To Daniel, July 11, 1802.

29. Traeger, op. cit., p. 45.

30. Ibid; the phrase itself is originally St. Paul's in Acts 17:28.

31. Ibid., pp. 45-46. For a discussion of the relationship of mystical thought in medieval Germany, Pietism and the Romantics see the final chapter of F. W. Wentzlaff-Eggebert's Deutsche Mystik zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter und Co., 1969.

32. The friend of Runge and publisher of his Hinterlassene Schriften, Friedrich Perthes, who with Daniel generally opposed the unorthodox character of Runge's faith, wrote nonetheless: "If anyone among the Germans of the last century represents genuine mysticism and theosophy, it is Runge; for in him as in no other were united without external suggestion of the magnificent visions of Jacob Böhme and the mystical, inward love of Suso." (my translation). Quoted in Otto Georg von Simson, "Philipp Otto Runge and the Mythology of Landscape," Art Bulletin 24, December 1942, vol. XXIV, #4, p. 341, n. 28. The subject of Runge's knowledge of Suso (c. 1295-1365) would require further research. It is unclear to me whether Perthes intended an explicit knowledge or only the quality of Suso's mysticism.

33. The first major study demonstrating the degree to which Runge was influenced by Böhme was Siegfried Krebs, Philipp Otto Runges Entwicklung unter dem Einflusse Ludwig Tiecks, Dissertation, Heidelberg, 1909. (Reprinted in Beiträge zur neueren Literatur-geschichte, Band 1, Heft. 4). The most recent study on the subject is by Karl Möseneder, Philipp Otto Runge und Jakob Böhme, Marburg/Lahn: J. G. Herder-Institut, 1981.

34. Jakob Böhme, Sämtliche Schriften, hrsg. Will-Erich Peuckert, Stuttgart; Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1960, 11 Bände (Facsimile of Gichtel's 1730 edition).

35. Möseneder, op. cit., p. 14, Anm. 82; Nicholas Berdyaev, "Unground and Freedom," Introduction to Jacob Boehme, Six Theosophic Points, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1958, p. xxxiii.

36. Traeger, op. cit., p. 204, Anm. 40, earlier than 1798 as Grundy suggested, J. B. C. Grundy, Tieck and Runge: A Study in the Relationship of Literature and Art in the Romantic Period, Strassburg: Heitz, 1930, p. 15. Traeger has also noted that Tieck possessed a complete edition of Böhme's work published by Gichtel in 1730; p. 19.

37. To Besser, June 3, 1798. That Runge continued to hold Tieck's work in high esteem is clear from a letter to Daniel of December 1801, in which Runge enthusiastically wrote of his first meeting with the author, about which he commented that "it served me well that I know his writings so well."

38. Grundy, op. cit. , p. 76.

39. Cited in Traeger, op. cit., p. 19.

40. Ibid.

41. Heinz Matile, Die Farbenlehre Philipp Otto Runges, München-Mittenwald: Mäander Kunstverlag, 1979, p. 131. Though Böhme's Aurora contains much of the content of interest here, nowhere was it so explicitly developed nor systematically arranged as in the Mysterium Magnum.

42. See the following letters: to Daniel, November 7, 1802 and November 27, 1802; and to Tieck, December 1, 1802.

43. John 1:1

44. To Daniel, March 9, 1802; see also Chapter one of Böhme's Aurora.

45. Gunnar Berefelt, Philipp Otto Runge, Zwischen Aufbruch und Opposition, 1777-1802, Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksell, 1971, pp. 34-35. The only passage in Böhme that I have been able to locate that might be the notion Runge referred to appeared in a prayer offered after the Fourth commandment in Der Weg zu Christo (Gichtel edition), Sämtliche Schriften, volume 4, p. 83.

46. Jacob Boehme, Mysterium Magnum, trans. John Sparrow, London: John M. Watkins, 1924, Volume 1, p. 79.

47. Ibid., p. 386.

48. Ibid., p. 112.

49. Christa Franke, Philipp Otto Runge und die Kunstansichten Wackenroders und Tiecks, Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1974, p. 25 Anm. 143; Möseneder, op. cit., p. 14.

50. To Daniel, November 27, 1802.

51. To Daniel, November 7, 1802.

52. Berefelt, op. cit., p. 191 ff.

53. I am not prepared to give as much credit to Tieck for this change as Grundy seems to have been, op. cit., p. 14. Grundy even suggested that Runge was induced to move to Dresden because of Tieck's presence there, p. 8. In opposition to this emphasis Otto Georg von Simson has maintained that Tieck was soon to "come under the spell of the painter's personality," op. cit., p. 336 and note 3.

54. This is an opinion which Runge said he shared with Tieck, letter to Besser, February 1802.

55. Unaddressed letter of February 1802.

56. Von Simson is also of the opinion that Runge's interest in nature preceded his reading of Sternbald, op. cit.

57. Unaddressed letter, Dresden, February 1802.

58. George Henry Danton, The Nature Sense in the Writings of Ludwig Tieck, New York: AMS Press, Inc. 1966 (reprint), pp. 37-44.

59. Grundy, op. cit., p. 61. For instance, in the sixth chapter of the third book of Sternbald when Franz ascended into the wilderness to visit the artist-hermit, during the ascent, he spoke of nature as the sensation or awareness (Ahnung) of the divinity and the hieroglyphs of nature which signified "the highest God" before him attempting to "divest and express itself." One has the feeling that Runge absorbed this entire chapter with its exalted view of art, religion and nature---particularly the definition of art as "allegorical." There is also to consider Friedrich Schlegel's writing on the hieroglyphic or symbolic image first published in 1803 in his periodical, Europa (reprinted in part in Eitner, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 29-30). Interestingly, however, Schlegel appended a note to the text, presumably when it was published again in his Collected Works, 1823, which criticized the apparent opacity of Runge's allegorical drawings (the Tageszeiten) for their "total detachment from time-hallowed traditions," Eitner, op. cit., vol. II, p. 31.

60. In European Romanticism, translated and compiled by Lilian Furst, London and New York: Methuen, 1950, p. 94.

61. Ibid., p. 95.

62. Paul, in Acts 17:28 (Lutherbibel): "Denn in ihm leben, weben und sind wir." A. W. Schlegel: "wir leben, weben und sind im Unendlichen," Furst, ibid.; Runge: "von der Herrlichkeit, in der wir leben, weben und sind." To Baier, September 26, 1806.

63. This is best seen, for instance, in C. D. Friedrich's Klosterfriedhof im Schnee, in which the arrangement of trees replaces the ruined church walls, creating an interior space for the procession of monks.

62. To Daniel, March 9, 1802. The German verb Runge used, which I have translated here as to be aware, is ahnen, whose noun form is Ahnung he used a great deal elsewhere as observed above. His use of the term, I believe, was generally without the sense of "premonition," which it typically connotes: the sensation of an imminent event. Rather, he spoke of sensing God's presence via his overwhelming experience of nature. Because no verb form exists in English for "premonition", and because I am not convinced that Runge specifically meant this, I render ahnen in the sense of "intuit," contending that this expresses what Runge intended. Perhaps Runge used the word ahnen, like most of the Romantics, because of the similar emotional sensation of the intuition of a presence in nature and the premonition of some imminent event. In English this association is etymologically suggested by the word "presentiment." Bisanz, in fact, rendered the sense of "premonition" in translating Ahnung as "presentiment" and also "divination," op. cit., pp. 48-9; Eitner, however, uniformly renders the noun as "awareness," op. cit. Vol I, pp. 147, 149. Reinhold Heller also prefers "awareness," op. cit., p. 305. This is generally my preference as well.

CHAPTER THREE:

PARADISE: THE OBJECT OF ROMANTIC YEARNING

The Motif

At the very beginning of his career as a painter, Runge wrote to his father that in and from behind any number of objects---flowers, fences, shrubs, clouds, stars---people were greeted by the love of God.[1] There are several such passages in the Hinterlassene Schriften which clearly expressed the artist's belief in an iconic nature, one transparent to God who stood beneath or behind it.[2] What is especially fascinating about one such letter is the connection Runge posited between God's revelation in nature and the primal age of God's original creative activity as recorded in the first two chapters of the book of Genesis. It was in the letter of November 7, 1802, to Daniel, that Runge insisted that the landscape would arise as an independent art form only when the "living spirit" was perceived in every flower---that spirit which "the man placed therein." Presumably the "man" he referred to was Adam, for he continued in quoting those verses from Genesis 2 in which Adam named the animals in Eden as God brought them before him. In this respect, Runge believed that the "joy we have

in flowers comes directly from paradise." He went on to propose that the symbol of the trinity lay in flowers, manifested by means of their color as in the sunset: blue representing the Father, red the Son and yellow the Holy Spirit. Runge repeated this idea in reference to the Genesis text in his letter to Tieck three weeks later. Here he spoke of perceiving human characteristics in flowers, which, he said, "must still be here from paradise."

The role of "paradise" was of critical significance in Runge's cosmology, just as its similar and related forms were to Fichte and his concept of the Absolut; to Schelling and his Indifferenzpunkt; to Friedrich Schlegel and his Golden Age; and to Novalis and his call for Utopian rule of the Catholic Church.[3] All of these concepts represented the essentially dualistic view of the Romantic spirit: the yearning to overcome dualism and to merge with the object of one's yearning, e.g., God, the Life-force, the Absolute, infinity, etc. As observed in the previous chapter, this urge towards monism was frequently depicted by the familiar motif of lovers merging into an intimate union which was interpreted as a metaphor of spiritual unity with the divinity. Childhood was also frequently employed by Romantic painters, poets and writers as an image of rebirth into the primeval state of innocence. The letter to Pauline of April 1803 discussed above drew together the motifs of childhood and

lovers, expressive of a longing for unity with God as experienced in paradise:

> As one fragments himself in school into a thousand knowledgeable things, so through love recurs our reunification: this is the old yearning for childhood, for ourselves, for paradise, for God; that is, I mean, the yearning to connect the I and the You that it may be once again as it was in God.

Another symbol of monistic yearning was the flower, in which, according to Runge,[4] humans saw human characteristics as well as an image of God's presence in nature.[5] That the two realities, man and God, were expressed in a single form followed from Runge's view of the soul: the human soul was itself the image (Abbild) of the "living power through which heaven and earth were created."[6] The flower, then, was an especially potent symbol for this artist. And the flower, along with the lovers and childhood, was closely associated with the notion of paradise.

Nearly all the themes and motifs of Runge's cosmology, including the symbol of the trinity in the primary colors, paradise and childhood, were brought together in a single extended and rather difficult passage in a letter to Daniel of March 23, 1802. Here Runge ended an unusually longwinded compilation of clauses with the assertion that the more faith, innocence and childhood were approached, "the closer is man and the world to perfection, to repose, to the lack of suffering, that is, eternity, the kingdom of heaven, paradise."

Taking Runge's theories into consideration, one finds that he intended landscape painting to re-evoke the experience of unity which man had with God in paradise. Runge made this clear in the letter of November 27, 1802. Speaking of the primeval age when God had made man in his own image, Runge proclaimed that the ideal of the art of landscape was to search for and give form to the image of God "in us...the blooming of humanity, this land that we name paradise, which lies within us." Nature was regarded as the vehicle of man's reconciliation with God, for it was to activate man's spiritual life in ecstatic experience. As Berefelt has pointed out, Runge strove to regain in his work the original and innocent state of nature and humanity, that state in which both lay in greater proximity to God.[7] Iconographical analysis of the Tageszeiten in the final chapter below will show that the child and flower motifs were this artist's primary expressive means for suggesting this primal state.

Looking with justification to the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) with which Runge was no doubt familiar,[8] Berefelt has centered his discussion on a correlation of various themes from the great writer's "Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts (1774), with appropriate motifs in Runge's letters and iconography.[9] The notion of God's revelation in nature Herder examined in

depth in Unterricht unter der Morgenröte, the title of a section of his book.[10] Herder's entire treatise was, in fact, an investigation of the first chapters of Genesis in which that author attempted to demonstrate, among other things, that the creation story is a poetic fragment in the guise of dawn.[11] When Runge wrote that no image was greater in the vision of nature, none more convincing of the spiritual life than dawn, one suspects his knowledge of Herder's book,[12] particularly when Runge's teacher in youth, Gotthard Ludwig Kosegarten (1758-1818), had been such an admirer of Herder's writing, as Berefelt pointed out.[13] Furthermore, Berefelt proposed a correlation between the extensive citations of Genesis texts in a number of Runge's letters from 1802 and 1803 and the subject matter of Herder's investigation. However convincing Berefelt's argument may seen at first, in fact, the letters of November and December of 1802, which contain such lengthy Genesis citations and quotations, make no mention of Herder, his book or his ideas; on the other hand, the letter of November 27, 1802, does mention Böhme's name in reference to one of his teachings.[14] Furthermore, Herder criticized on the very first page of his book all those who considered Genesis more than poetic imagery given in inspired fashion to simple men of nature[15] and included both Böhme and Swedenborg[16] in this criticism.

One can certainly discern in Herder's study the motifs already delineated as central to Runge---primeval innocence of humanity in paradise, the imagery of childhood, flowers, light and sunrise.[17] Conversely, however, without denying Runge's familiarity with Herder's basic ideas, it can be argued here that the evidence suggests that he relied more on Böhme's Mysterium Magnum for this basic imagery. Particularly important for Runge may have been Böhme's views on man's original state and the present state of humanity. This can be shown by further investigation of the letter of November 27, 1802. Here Runge considered Lamech, son of Methushael, son of Enoch, son of Cain, to have been the founder of ancient art and that what

> he invented was the best that men without revealed religion had...Shouldn't we also build a new art on this rock? And, you see, this is just what Tieck thinks, and what I also believe, that the artists, and all men, should return to just this single point, that all artistic progress should simply make itself understandable concerning this point: then something would be able to originate.

Why Runge and Tieck would look to Lamech for the origin of art can be derived clearly enough from Genesis 4:21-22, where Lamech's two wives each bore a son: Jubal, who was "the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe"; and Tubal-Cain, who was "the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron."[18] But what remains unclear is why Runge would assign so much significance to this primordial time merely on the basis of scant biblical references. This

problem, however, becomes considerably less perplexing when one turns to Böhme's discussion of these same passages from Genesis in Mysterium Magnum. In this thirteenth chapter he wrote the following exegesis:

> For by Cain's line the arts were brought forth to light, which were a wonder of the divine wisdom, contemplation and formation, viz. of the formed Word through and in nature. And in Seth the Word was brought into a formal life, viz. into a spiritual contemplation, wherein the Word of God did behold itself with the wisdom in a spiritual image; and in Cain's line it beheld itself in a natural formed word; and both serve to set forth the wonderful deeds of God.[19]

Clearly, Böhme here was trying to teach the validity of natural as well as revealed religion---a theme prominent in Runge's mind. Therefore, Runge believed that the spirit of the art of Cain needed to be rediscovered as it revealed God in nature, since he wrote in the same letter of November 27, 1802, that the "highest that art may bring forth is the image of God." Runge believed that the original time of man's creation, when God made man in his own image, was "the noblest and highest that man has ever been." For Runge, like Böhme, this became a most crucial concern, the regaining of original nobility and harmony with God.

Runge's fellow Romantic artists, Novalis and Tieck, also looked for the epiphany of a new age ushered in by the purity of feeling and the cultivation of spiritual values as expressed in art. The association of childhood and paradise was a frequent motif in the Romantik, particularly

in the work of Novalis. For example, in Heinrich von Ofterdingen, begun in 1799 and left unfinished at his death in 1801, Novalis had the young Heinrich make this speech:

> For here (in the garden) we still see the full wealth of endless life, the powerful forces of later times, the glory of the end of the world, and the golden future of all things intimately interwoven and most clearly and palpably undergoing a tender rejuvenation... Deep down, childhood is close to earth, white clouds are perhaps the manifestation of a second, higher childhood, of paradise regained and hence let their showers fall so benevolently on this other childhood.[20]

Heinrich went on to ask his companion when the "need for all fear, all pain, all want and all evil" would be "removed from the universe." "When there is only one power---the power of conscience," was the reply.[21]

Runge, with Novalis, conceived of dualism as the root of evil. To overcome this was to remerge with God into eternal unity, to unite one's own will with the divine will. For this reason, taking a lofty spiritual tone typical of the Romantik, Runge asserted that just as an artwork must be grounded in the artist's own eternal existence, so must man be grounded in God.[22] Without this unity there could be no hope for an art form which might spiritualize, "romanticize" or poeticize the world in an attempt to re-institute the golden age, i.e., unity with God. For Novalis, according to Hughes, the Märchen genre overcame the present order of dualism and re-established "the harmony of the past, the total intermingling of the natural and spiritual worlds and

point(s) the way to that future golden age in which nature would be spiritualized and redeemed."[23]

Novalis also brought out the role of feeling in his Die Lehringe zu Sais, a novel fragment begun in 1798: "through feeling would the old, longed-for time return."[24] Bruce Haywood recently summarized this author's Romantic concern in Lehrlinge:

> The theme of Novalis' symbolic novel, as it has survived in the fragment, is man's attempt to bring back the Golden Age when nature and man were one, a mystic union achieved only through love...There are various levels to which man may attain or through which he may pass in seeking this goal. The highest level, before the final attainment of immortality through the recapture of the Golden Age, is naive, intuitive feeling for nature possessed by artists and children.[25]

The following admonition from Runge to one of his correspondents was, indeed, in perfect accord with this: "We must become children if we desire to attain the best."[26]

The notion of spiritual enlightenment being likened to the state of childhood is not without considerable expression in the writings of Böhme. Böhme claimed that "to those who are illumined by the Spirit their understanding is easy and merely child's play."[27] Of Adam in paradise Böhme wrote in The Threefold Life: "The mind of Adam was innocent like that of a child, playing with the wonders of its father. There was in him no self-knowledge of evil will, no avarice, pride, envy, anger, but a pure enjoyment of love."[28] In the

Mysterium Magnum Böhme asserted that the first man "stood in great beauty, glory, joy and delight, in a child-like mind."[29]

The motif of return to a primeval paradisical state in Böhme had echoed through Romantic thought in Europe since Rousseau. This basic concept concentrated on re-attaining a primitive state of purity that man lost when he became selfish and discontent with simplicity and humility. Runge's relation to Böhme seems more specific yet when one considers another mutual motif, the idea that Adam's original nature was androgynous, that he originally lacked sexual gender, containing both male and female aspects. In The Threefold Life Böhme stated that "Adam was man and wife in one individuality."[30] In Mysterium Magnum he asserted that "Adam was a man and also a woman, and yet none of them (distinctly), but a virgin, full of chastity, modesty and purity, viz. the image of God."[31] And he continued: "Such a man, as Adam was before Eve, shall arise and again enter into, and eternally possess Paradise; not a man, or a woman, but as the Scripture saith, they are virgins, and follow God, and the Lamb, they are also like angels..." As already observed above in the discussion of the theme of Romantic love and the motif of return to paradise, this thought was indeed operative in Runge's mind. His passionate letter to Pauline

it will be recalled, spoke of just this union of male and female in regard to the Urzeit, the primordial age: "the yearning to connect the I and the You that it may be as it once was in God."

A Principle of Mythic Thought

The notion of returning to a primeval state set outside of the normal space and time of human experience, whether by the love of a companion or the purity of a child-like heart, and existing in a form of mythic time, a Utopia, a golden age or the Urzeit, is something which clearly infused the thought of Runge and his contemporaries. This notion, in turn, will be of central importance in the discussion of the Gesamtkunstwerk in the final chapter. However, before one can understand fully why this motif remains so significant for the appreciation of Runge's Tageszeiten, it is important to learn more about it in terms of the nature of religious ideas.

The Rumanian writer who has worked most extensively with the concept of mythic time in the oral and written myths and rituals of world religions is Mircea Eliade (b. 1907). To Eliade's way of thinking the function of myth and that of ritual activity associated with it are a re-enactment of the mythical time or age which myths preserve for a culture. Often such myths are cosmogonic, dealing with the origin of the universe. The recounting of a myth,

accompanied by ritual re-enactment, serves to confirm the defining lines of a group as well as the individual by connecting the hearer with the primordial age, with the beginning of things, with the super-real as the basis of the real, and therefore, of course, with the proper order of things. Eliade has written that religious man thirsts for this super-real: "By every means at his disposal, he seeks to reside at the very source of primordial reality, when the world was 'in statu nascendi' (in the state of being born)."[32] This amounts to the suspension of profane time and the return to an age of greater power. Eliade has written elsewhere:

> Through each beloved ritual and therefore also through each significant activity (hunting, fishing, etc.) the primitive places himself in the mythic time...this period is creative, for at this time, in illo tempore, the creation and the ordering of the cosmos took place...In illo tempore,in this mythical epoch, (when) everything was possible. The ways were not yet firmly determined and the forms were fluid.[33]

What seems important here with regard to Runge is the possibility of the German artist's intention to conceive an art form the experience of which might entail the evocation of the mythic time in accord with his desire to regain that mode of being which existed in illo tempore, that is, when God made man in his own image in the beginning. Eliade observed that "among the primitives as among the Christians, it is always a paradoxical return in illus

tempus, a 'leap backwards' abolishing time and history, that constitutes the mystical re-entry into Paradise."[34] Could Runge have been attempting to create such an aesthetic-spiritual experience by which the observer might leave profane time and enter into the sacred? The artist did speak of the ecstatic experience of nature in which he lost all sense of time and space, when "there is no more height or depth, no time, no beginning, no end...," when he could sense the "living breath of God which holds and carries the world," when he might be, one imagines, as close to God as Adam was when he received God's life-giving breath. It has already been shown that Runge regarded primeval time to have been an age in which God was especially manifest and that he considered the state of childhood to be a potent metaphor of this former time.[35] Interestingly enough, Eliade speaks of the same motif in the mind of the "man of archaic society" who is "trying to transport himself back to the beginning of the world in order to re-absorb the initial plenitude and recover, intact, the reserves of energy in the new-born babe."[36]

There was an element in Runge's cosmology, however, which distinguished him from his contemporaries. Although he concurred with Novalis, Tieck and the Schlegels in the belief that oneness was the spiritual goal beyond the present dualism and that paradise represented this goal, his view was demythologized since he could say that paradise

"lies within us." Runge did not consider paradise to be within the realm of social or ecclesiastical accomplishment, as Friedrich Schlegel or Novalis believed. As Wentzlaff-Eggeburt has observed, salvation (Erlösung) for Novalis was not a final mystical apotheosis or escape from space and time, but "the constant and progressive incarnation of the divine in the entire human and creaturely realm."[37] Whereas a progressive transformation of reality by light was by no means foreign to Runge (see chapters four and five), Runge never embraced the quasi-millenial notion set forth so passionately in Novalis' Christenheit oder Europa (1799). Here Novalis yearned for a lasting unification of Christendom into a final reign centered in Europe, and spear-headed by Germany, to which the rest of the world waited to join itself "and become fellow citizens of the kingdom of heaven."[38] Although this should not be taken as the poet's explicit political program, it reflects a distinctly different view of time and understanding of redemption than found in Runge.

Instead of attempting to create an ideal social order, Runge lamented the fact that the final phase of human history, the age of "destruction" (Vernichtung), represented by the Nacht of his Tageszeiten (fig. 7), was about to follow the present age of the world, Herbst.[39] His vision was apocalyptic without a trace of Utopianism.

Paradise was a mythic symbol otherwise only literally achieved after death, beyond time. In general, one could say that Runge's dualism resisted transformation to monism under the humanist influence of the Enlightenment. For him, yearning received no rest; and art, in the final analysis, could only accentuate man's longing for eternity,

Runge's vision remained essentially biblical inasmuch as time proceeded in a linear fashion and the cycle of the Tageszeiten, as a visualization of human history, progresses irreversibly from birth (Morgen) to death (Nacht). Observing the correspondence of the Tageszeiten with the annual seasons and the ages of the world, Runge claimed in the letter to Schildener of March 1806 in the style of the Beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount: "blessed (is) he who will rise from it," that is, the final age of apocalyptic destruction.

As a unified visual experience, the Tageszeiten were to lead the viewer to an awareness of the fragmentary nature of his and time's existence and his consequential need for reunification. Thus, Morgen, "the time of blooming," may be seen in the linear scheme as paradise, as a mythic symbol for Runge, which, as an anagogic device, articulated the experience of upward striving, and provided a glimpse of final and utter divestment of profane time. While he preferred the morning (Morgen) or spring

(Frühling), Runge conceded, nonetheless, that death was inescapable and made this eminently clear in his group of images which were to have occupied as paintings the four walls of a single architectural space. He intended to place paradise before the viewer in Morgen, but he insisted as well on integrating it into an entire set of images whose context clarified the significance of paradise. As an object of yearning, the paradise of Morgen depicts (see Chapter Five) the ancient proximity of divine and human lost in the genesis of duality. But Morgen was also only the first step in a progression that culminated in Nacht: the realm of sleep, death and reunification.

Notes: Chapter Three

1. August 24, 1798.

2. To Besser, June 2, 1798; to Tieck, December 1, 1802; to his mother, December 18, 1802.

3. Schelling and Fichte, see George J. Seidel, Activity and Ground, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976; Josiah Royce, The Spirit of Modern Philosophy, Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920; Walzel, German Romanticism, p. 54 et passim; and Paul Kluckhohn, Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, Verlag, 1961, pp. 24-25. For Schlegel, Glyn Tegai Hughes, Romantic German Literature, Edward Arnold, 1979. pp. 54, 58. For Novalis, Hughes,p. 63, 69, 71; see also Novalis' Die Christenheit oder Europa, 1799.

4. To Daniel, November 7, 1802; to Tieck, December 1, 1802.

5. Curt Grützmacher, Novalis und Philipp Otto Runge, München: Eidos Verlag, 1964, p. 32.

6. To his father, August 24, 1798; to Daniel, March 23, 1803.

7. Gunnar Berefelt, "Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis Philipp Otto Runges zu Johann Gottfried Herder," Zeitschrift für Ostforschung 9, 1960, p. 25.

8. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

9. Johann Gottfried Herder, Sämtliche Werke, Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1967, Bände 6 and 7.

10. Ibid., Band 6, pp. 265-277.

11. Robert T. Clark, Jr., Herder: His Life and Thought, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955,p. 164-171.

12. To Baier, September 26, 1806.

13. Op. cit., p. 20.

14. The suggestion made by Berefelt that Runge's use of the Hebrew name Jahweh in Morgen of 1803 (fig. 4) came from Herder is inconclusive because the Hebrew name spelled as Jahweh in Hebrew script appears in Chapter One of Böhme's Mysterium Magnum.

15. Clark, op. cit., p. 169.

16. And again only pages later, op. cit., Band 6, p. 208.

17. See, for instance, Herder's poem of 1773, Die Schöpfung, Ein Morgengesant, ibid., p. 188-192.

18. Revised Standard Version.

19. Op. cit., p. 272. Emphasis mine.

20. Novalis, Henry von Ofterdingen, translated by Palmar Hilty, New York: E. Ungar Publishing Co., 1964, pp. 163-4.

21. Ibid., p. 164.

22. To Daniel, March 9, 1802.

23. Op. cit., p. 73.

24. Quoted in Bruce Haywood, Novalis: The Veil of Imagery, The Hague: Morton and Co., 1959, p. 44. Hughes, op. cit., p. 63, points out that Novalis was influenced by his reading of the Dutchman Hemsterhuis (1721-1790), whose dialog Alexis, ou de l'âge d'or spoke of a former golden age "when man had direct intuitive rapport with the universe through the senses." This faculty had since atrophied and complete unity would be attained only in death. Hughes also points to a similar notion in Fr. Schlegel's Utopianism: a final golden age like the original one in which "God was thought and felt" innately by humanity, p. 58.

25. Ibid., p. 48.

26. February 1802.

27. From Letters, quoted in Franz Hartmann, The Life and Doctrines of Jacob Boehme, New York: Macoy Publishing Company, 1929, p. 64.

28. Quoted in Hartmann, ibid., p. 152.

29. Op cit., p. 124.

30. In Hartmann, op. cit., p. 196.

31. Op. cit., p. 121; also p. 124.

32. Mircea Eliade, Myths, Rites and Symbols, ed. by Wendell C. Beane and William G. Doty, New York: Harper and Row, 1975, 1976, p. 44.

33. Mircea Eliade, Die Religionen und Das Heilige, translated by M. Rassam and I. Höck, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgessellschaft, 1976, pp. 446-7.

34. Myths, Rites and Symbols, p. 74.

35. Böhme wrote at great length on the nature of the world before the Fall in Mysterium Magnum; see particularly Chapter 18: "Of the Paradisical State: showing how it should have been if Adam had not fallen." Also: Hartmann, op. cit., p. 153 ff, 196; and Hermann Vetterling, The Illuminate of Görlitz, Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1978, pp. 368-371.

36. Op. cit., p. 221.

37. Op cit., p. 244.

38. Novalis, Werke, hrsg. und kommentiert von Gerhard Schulz, München: C. H. Beck, 1969, p. 517.

39. To Schildener, March 1806.

CHAPTER FOUR

RUNGE AND THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE

The Language of Nature

In the second part of Heinrich von Ofterdingen Novalis wrote in verse about the unity of Heinrich and Mathilda in "one image," and this was followed by the epiphany of a new world in which "what was before the everyday/ shines now strange and wonderful./ One in all and all in one/ God's image in plants and stones/ God's spirit in men and beasts,/ this must bring one home./ No more order according to space and time/ but now the future in the past."[1] This verse suggests the manner in which the primeval unity of man, God and nature was exhibited in paradise: God's image being imbedded in nature as well as in the human soul. Runge, Novalis and Tieck all appear to have subscribed to an idea taught by Böhme throughout his writing that God's image in nature manifested itself in a variety of "signatures" and that these signatures composed a language called the Natursprache or language of nature.

This pervasive belief that nature was the means by which one's own soul might become the temple of God, that

nature assisted fundamentally in the manifestation of the divine in one's own feeling, no doubt led Runge with great interest to that aspect of the writings of Böhme as well as Tieck and Novalis which dealt with the Natursprache.

Runge expressed his intense feelings for the revelatory quality of nature most systematically throughout 1802, often repeating the same themes in successive letters to several different people. He contended in the already-quoted letter of November 7, 1802, that the new art of landscape would arise only in a new relationship with nature. He rejected what he called "historical composition" on the basis of its anthropocentrism, identifying Michelangelo's Last Judgment as the greatest example of this view: a mural composed of nearly four hundred human figures with only the merest allusions to landscape in the lowest level of the fresco. Of this artistic tendency he wrote that "stones became the human figure and the trees, flowers and water were demolished." The elements of landscape were excessively subjugated to the extreme humanism of classical and neoclassical views. However, Runge suggested that contemporary circumstances were different:

> Now the taste falls more on the opposite. As even the philosophers maintain, that one only imagines everything from out of oneself, so we see, or should see, in each flower the living spirit which man puts therein and by means of which the landscape will originate, for all animals and flowers are only half there, as soon as man does not do his best with them;

> so man presses his own feelings into the objects about him and thereby everything achieves meaning and language.

Runge then turned to scripture for a theological substantiation of this assertion: "That the forms outside of us are nothing I will explain to you:"

> 'Then the Lord God made the man out of a clump of earth, and he blew into his nose the living breath. And thus, the man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden toward the East and set the man he had made therein.' And farther on: 'For when the Lord God had made from the earth all kinds of animals of the field and all kinds of birds among the heavens, he brought them to the man that he might see how he would name them, for as the man would name every kind of living beast, so should they be called.' (Genesis 2:7-8, 19)

These two passages seem to express three essential ideas behind Runge's art: man as the image of God; the purity of Eden as man's rightful abode; and man's knowledge of a language originally founded in nature and originally in harmony with God. The third of these ideas Runge pursued after the Genesis citation:

> The joy we have in flowers remains from paradise. Inwardly, we always connect a meaning with the flower, even a human shape, and that is the proper flower which we joyfully intend. When we see only our life in the entire nature, it is clear that not until then will the proper landscape originate as fully opposed to the human or historical composition.

In the letter to Tieck of December 1, 1802, Runge further differentiated historical painting from landscape. "Now the landscape," he wrote,

> would consist in the contrary, that the people would see themselves, their characteristics and their passions in all flowers and plants and in all natural phenomena; it is becoming especially clear and ever more certain to me how a certain human spirit and idea or feeling resides in each flower and tree; and it becomes so clear to me that this must be here from paradise; it is as such the purest of what remains in the world and in which we are able to recognize God, or his image, namely, what God named man at the time when he created him.

Runge's notion of the landscape was founded on the belief that, contrary to "historical composition," people must learn to see themselves in nature, particularly in flowers, rather than reduce all nature to human form. This amounts to projecting oneself into nature as opposed to subjugating nature to humanity. The art of landscape for Runge would allow the viewer to rediscover that primeval unity which existed when Adam named creation.

In this same letter to Tieck, he counseled the investigation (erforschen) of flowers in order to determine "what kind of a name lies therein." That he considered these names to constitute a form of language is clear in numerous other letters. In a letter assigned by Daniel to a group of letters sent to Pauline in 1802, Runge recalled that after coming through a severe illness in his youth and led back to life by his mother's intense love, it seemed to him "as if all bushes and flowers could understand me." In a letter of November 27, 1802, to Daniel, the artist conceived of "our dear mother in the earth: who greets us in each flower, and

we recognize her and listen to her voice, and as revealed religion opens the trinity to us, so she reveals the trinity of color..." In the letter to Tieck quoted above, December 1, 1802, Runge spoke of flowers as "very understandable creations" which, throughout his life, he would like to make more understood by others. Speaking to Tieck of the idea of a painting of the Quelle or spring, Runge expressed the desire to make the image of all known flowers composed of the meaning they have "when we only look at them properly." He continued by saying that he would seek to express in this "composition of flowers" every idea from the first origin onwards.

The language of nature and its vocabulary can be better understood when the artist's ideas about color are also taken into consideration. After presenting his thoughts about paradise, man's naming and the meaning man attaches to flowers, Runge wrote in the November 7th letter: "The flowers, trees and shapes will open to us and we will have taken a step closer to color! Color is the final art and is ever mystical to us and must remain so, something we understand once again in a wonderfully intuitive (ahnende) way in flowers." Since he went on to discuss the symbolism of the trinity in the colors of nature, it is clear that color was the basis of Runge's Natursprache, and its manipulation the basic vocabulary of nature's own expression. Before pursuing this subject further, however, it is instructive

to examine, albeit briefly, the tradition of the Natursprache itself in Europe and its presence in the ideas of Runge's contemporaries.

The notion of such a language of nature predates the Romantic period by several centuries. The sixteenth century writer Paracelsus (1493?-1541) conceived of a "doctrine of signatures" inherent in all objects of nature which could be read according to a vocabulary of external shape, color and form, among other qualities.[2] Concerning Paracelsus' thought, Wilhelm Emmrich has written that

> Each natural phenomenon also has some kind of relation to man, to his passions, virtues, personality traits, feelings and destiny, so that it now becomes understandable why metaphor bloomed so in Baroque poetry, the illustration of the most varied types of natural phenomena with the most varied types of spiritual, psychic and moral meanings.[3]

Images were viewed as potently suffused with meaning. The very old notion of the human form as a microcosm of the universe may explain the degree to which correspondences or analogies were drawn between the human constitution (physical, emotional, intellectual) and nature. The scheme of the microcosm played a key role in such Renaissance and Baroque figures as Bruno Giordano, Paracelsus, Robert Fludd and Böhme---four men who represent a distinct trend of thought in regard to the language of nature. In one sense this penchant for correspondence between man and nature may be seen to culminate in the Romantic period in the literary and

artistic device of the so-called pathetic fallacy. In any event, the idea of a harmony or correspondence between man and nature can be found deeply imbedded in Runge's mind.

Since imagery from nature carried such rich connotations of meaning in the 16th century, Paracelsus applied his Signaturlehre to art, poetry and even language. Emmrich has written that art and poetry had "the task to name, designate and make visible those qualities which inhere to, originate and are innate in each phenomenon."[4] The interest in language was of considerable influence on Böhme.[5]

The Signaturlehre or doctrine of signatures occupied such an important place in Böhme's thought that he wrote an entire book on the matter called Signatura Rerum or The Signature of All Things in which he presented his idea that all things proceeded from seven archetypal forms or properties by which God brought forth existence. "The whole outward, visible world with all its being is a signature, or figure of the inward spiritual world..."[6] He spoke of his doctrine of signatures as the "manifestation of the Deity through nature,"[7] though Böhme was careful to point out that God himself transcended nature.

This doctrine was by no means confined to the Signatura Rerum but can also be found in abundant detail in the Aurora and the Mysterium Magnum. In fact, Böhme opened the commentary on Genesis with the following words:

> When we consider the visible world with its essence, and consider the life of the creatures, then we find therein the likeness of the invisible spiritual world, which is hidden in the visible world, as the soul in the body; and see thereby that the hidden God is nigh unto all, and through all; and yet wholly hidden to the visible universe.

Böhme taught that the seven qualities were the means by which creation was generated from the preceding void, the divine abyss or Ungrund, as he called it. It was these seven which formed the basic vocabulary of the language of nature, or the signature of all things.[8] In general, Böhme held that the outward features of an object in nature, as well as the pronunciation of its name, corresponded to the object's spiritual content; that is, the particular constellation of the seven properties. Spiritual, emotional and physical balance or wholeness were to be attained by the proper knowledge and use of the signatures.

As Karl Möseneder has pointed out, Böhme believed that Adam spoke this language of nature when he named the animals in Eden; therefore the name of each thing was the expression of its essence.[9] This idea is found in Mysterium Magnum:

> Now it plainly appears that Adam stood in the divine image, and not in the bestial, for he knew the property of all creatures, and gave names to all creatures for their essence, form and property. He understood the Language of Nature, viz. the manifested and formed Word in every one's essence, for thence the name of every creature is arisen.[10]

Emmrich has noted that Robert Fludd, the Rosecrucian (1574-1607), taught that Adam spoke a mystical, cabbalistic language of nature in paradise, but Emmrich also drew an important contrast between Fludd's verbal language and Paracelsus' conception of signatures or signs. Paracelsus discovered the signature of things through more empirical means of research of natural phenomena than the highly speculative and theoretical nature of Fludd's esoteric doctrine.[11]

Böhme, reflecting both traditions, pursued the determination of verbal and physical forms of the Natursprache. Whether spoken or perceived, for Böhme, the seven qualities expressed the essence of the things. He was concerned with recovering a complete understanding of this language in order to enter into deeper harmony with the divine that Böhme taught was manifested in nature via these seven qualities. Nature was filled with the divinity and waited to reveal itself to humanity in the mystical language of signatures. Böhme wrote that in all things of nature "there is a fixity hidden," a fixity or unity which remained from paradise hidden or latent in all things, or a concealment which "may be opened by understanding and art, so that the first virtue may overcome the enflamed malignity."[12]

Böhme's idea of signs in nature constituting a lost language can be found in Tieck's Franz Sternbald and in Novalis' Lehrlinge zu Sais. In Sternbald, the protagonist

ascended a mountain to visit the hermit-painter who tells him of his work: "Now in quiet age...nature is my most preferable study. I find everywhere wonderful significance and mysterious signs. Each flower, each mussel tells me a story, just as I have told you one." Earlier the recluse said:

> So the all-powerful creator has revealed himself in secret and child-like fashion through his nature to our weak senses, he is not it himself, who speaks to us, because we are currently too weak to understand him; but he hints of himself to us, and in every moss, in each stone a secret cipher is concealed which is never written down, never completely divined, but which we constantly believe to observe.[13]

Both Tieck and Novalis also held that the artist's mission was, as Tieck wrote in Sternbald, to permit "the magical rays to play through the crystal of art in the direction of others."[14] Novalis considered that "Only an artist can divine the meaning of life."[15] He believed that artist and priest were originally identical: "Poets and priests were in the beginning one, and only later ages have separated them. But the true poet has always remained a poet. And should not the future restore the old state of affairs?"[16] Novalis maintained that it was the mission of the artist-priest to reveal to humanity what lies hidden in nature, to enable mankind to recapture his lost state. Runge's view of the artist was hardly less priestly---in an unaddressed letter of 1807 or 1808 he wrote of art as a "pure, heavenly

realm to which few are entirely raised," and he asserted that "he who lives in the pure region of art sees the secret life and the breath of God has breathed on him that no vulgarity can cling to him."

Runge's Language of Color

Several essays and numerous letters exist, as well as the many paintings, in which it is certainly clear that Runge considered color to be the artist's means of speaking after the manner of nature in such a way that art, like nature, might convince the viewer of his immortality and provoke the awareness of God. Runge researched and meditated on color with an interest very similar to Novalis' investigations into geological forms. For both figures, the principles underlying the phenomena of color mixture and crystal formation "spoke" of a higher reality.

Möseneder correctly observed that the intention of Runge's own research into color as the language of nature was to establish the means by which an artist might create a "second work of nature."[17] In his essay Die Elemente der Farben (1806), Runge wrote that the artist should penetrate to the essence of the manifold phenomena of nature and discern those fundamental principles which govern all natural activity. If pursued carefully, the result would be a "second nature." He contended that the means the

artist employed to create this second nature "are the same living powers which are at work in nature and that a necessary order therein must produce the same effect. Thus the manner of bringing forth will be one with that which is brought forth." By this means a second nature emerges which might have a similar effect on the viewer as the original. Yet it is crucial for the modern observer to understand that Runge was not interested in the reproduction of nature in the sense of an indifferent, impersonal realism. On the contrary, in fact, there appears nowhere in his work "objective realism" in the sense of present-day hyper- or super-realism. Instead, close attention to detail, to the study of the luminousity of light, and to the basic physics of color mixture and harmony were the chief expressive and subjective concerns of Runge. His main interest was to extract from nature the "language" of form and color which, as an artist, he might use in turn to achieve his ends.

The importance of going back to or of regaining the lost paradisical relation to God and nature was at the base of Runge's, Böhme's and Novalis' preoccupation with a language of nature. Runge viewed color as the vocabulary of this language; Böhme's interest in color was pharmaceutical. Both saw color as intimately associated with botanical forms. Bengt Sørensen has pointed to the common usage of the lily by Böhme and Runge as the symbol of light, i.e.,

that pure light from which the universe proceeds and which reveals itself as truth, in other words, the logos.[18] Runge wrote his mother that "In flowers our soul still feels love and harmony despite all the opposition in the world."[19] The trinity itself was symbolized in flowers, as in the sunset, by means of color---what Runge called the "final art," which is ever mystical to us and must remain so."[20] Heinz Matile has summarized the basis of Runge's concern with color as follows:

> If the colors are to be understood as the revelation of sunlight nourished by the spiritual light, and, therefore in the final analysis as divine in origin, then Runge as a painter attains, at least ideally, the possibility to find his way back to this divine origin through the corresponding use of color in his pictures. He acquires the means with whose help he can make visible in the work of art the connection of nature and man with God, die Ahnung von Gott.[21]

However, in the Symposium on Runge held at the Kunsthalle in Hamburg in 1978, Matile pointed out that the essay entitled Farbenkugel, published in the year of the artist's death, contained nothing of Runge's previous notions on the metaphysical dimension of color dating to 1802 and 1803.[22] In the discussion following Matile's presentation, however, Jens Christian Jensen proposed that Runge's published work is restrained in its presentation of the metaphysical dimensions of color theory because the artist feared possible misunderstanding and even rejection of his thoughts on the spiritual associations of color.[23] Runge himself made it

clear in a letter to Schelling early in 1810 that what contemporary painters needed most was the greater association of scientific ideas and the practice of art.[24] That Runge did not reject his earlier view of color as revelation, however, seems quite certain in regarding his masterwork, Der Grosse Morgen (fig. 9), begun in 1808 and left unfinished at his death, which depicts the luminousity of nature and the penetration of matter by a light that is by no means merely representative of sunlight.[25] This work will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

Runge postulated that color itself contained some basic properties of order and harmony expressive of several key spiritual notions. Matile has pointed out importantly, nonetheless, that one should not expect fo find a rigorous, scientifically explicit color theory to express the sort of metaphysical orientation identified in Runge's views.[26] Runge sought an understanding of the structure of color that would express an underlying unity which the artist could use in pursuing the art of landscape dedicated to assisting man in his spiritual quest.[27] For that reason---and without in any way diminishing the practical achievement and application of his Farbenkugel---it seems appropriate to focus in the remainder of this chapter on an examination of the metaphysical implications of Runge's color theory as found primarily in essays, letters, fragments and rubrics proposed to

accompany his paintings. Generally, the spiritual inspiration remained constant despite the high intensity of theoretical thought accorded to the purely formal characteristics of color.

Traeger has aptly written that the color sphere represents the "iconological completion" of the development since Rembrandt of the mystical function of dark and light in expressing the structure of the cosmos.[28] Runge's essay entitled Farbenkugel (1810) ranged color and value over the surface of a globe (fig. 10) as a means of visualizing both formal and metaphysical concerns. The cosmological nature of his color sphere was brought out when he wrote: "As light and darkness are both infinite powers which devour all appearance, so do all things live in the same eternal begetting and disintegration."[29] Matile pointed to a passage in Böhme's Tabula Principiorum (the sort of passage one finds throughout the mystic's writings) which expresses the same dialectical principle of polarity based on the contrast of dark and light:

> But in eternity there is eternal light and darkness in one another. The darkness is the ground of the kingdom of nature and the light is the ground of the kingdom of the joy of divine revelation: thus is the dark world, as the ground of the properties of its own craving and will, the first principle...and the light, which is revealed in fire, in which the unity of God's outpouring of love is understood, called the other principle...[30]

These two principles are visualized in the mystical Erste Figur der Schöpfung (see fig. 4 and Appendix B) and occupy the position of northern and southern poles on the color sphere. The principles of light and dark were conceived by Runge as constituting the basis of God's original creative act: darkness as the chaotic, desolate abyss and light as the proclamation of order and the manifestation of God's identity. These two are in constant struggle and are ever in the progressive action depicted over the surface of the sphere, over which Runge visualized the production of color: "Where the sphere expands through the air in space" is begotten "the flower of existence," color. Runge was very concerned to maintain the distinction of value and color as he made clear in a letter to Daniel in which color was seen as a symbol of the trinity in flowers in contrast to black and white: "light or white and dark or black are not colors; the light is the good and the darkness is the evil (I refer again to creation)."[31]

John Gage has observed that, even though Runge used Newton's seven color scheme and carried on an active dialog with Goethe on the subject of color, nonetheless, he never commited himself to a specific notion of the origin of color in optical theory---largely, no doubt, because of his practical interests.[32] However, this does not deny that Runge was concerned about the origin of color; indeed, he wrote of

it in several instances---though never as a scientist, but rather as a cosmologist. Color, represented by the three primaries, had its origin, according to Runge, in a hieratic generation from the Urlicht, the logos, and was therefore a means of divine revelation.[33] In one of his most mystically revealing letters, Runge wrote to Baier on September 26, 1806, concerning the origin of color: "The light shines in the world that it may penetrate the darkness and the three colors are the emanation (Ausfluss) of the light which praise the Lord from eternity to eternity." The motif of light and dark in this letter were drawn explicitly from the Gospel of John and the logos concept. And once again Runge's reading of Böhme proves to be of great significance. In a treatise of 1620, Böhme spoke of the logos of John 1 and the origin of color among other things: "Thus the emanation (Ausfluss) flows out of God, and the outflow is wisdom, the beginning and cause of all powers, colors, virtues and properties."[34] Striking is that Runge used even the same term, Ausfluss, in the same context as Böhme.

Heinz Matile has pointed out the similarities and contrasts between the color theories of Runge and Goethe.[35] It is clear that the two were thinking similarly when the following passage from Goethe's Farbenlehre (1810) is compared to Runge's thought: "To divide the unified, to unify the divided, this is the life of nature; this is the eternal

systole and diastole, the eternal syncrisis and diacrisis, the inhaling and exhaling of the world in which we live, move and have our being."[36] Nonetheless, Goethe's Spinozean pantheism was distinct from Runge's belief that nature revealed a God beyond itself.

Although Matile has correctly seen the considerable distinction between Runge and Goethe with regard to the former's spiritual interpretation of the dark/light polarity, it remains ambiguous whether Runge's assignation of dark as evil was related to Goethe's understanding of darkness as a positive agent in the production of color as Matile has suggested. In 1802 Runge emphasized that both black and white were not colors, that they were fundamentally distinct from the existence of color which itself proceeded from the light, the Word, the image of God within man.[37] He referred to this same theological notion in the Fragment of February 2, 1808, where he said that when terrestrial color (irdische Farbe) was cognizant of its role as mediator, "it becomes the medium of the revelation of the light in the creature," that is, he who was created: man. Over and over again Runge referred to the "five parts" of the color sphere, insisting that there were five basic ingredients: black, white and the three primary colors. This appears to stand in contrast to Goethe's view that color was the result of the interaction of light and dark: the polar organization

from which the two pure, original hues emerge---yellow as light and blue as dark---to produce the rest of the spectrum in their modifications.[38] But whereas Goethe did not speak of the interaction of black and white, but rather dark and light, Runge wrote in a Fragment of February 2, 1808, that light appeared as white, and that darkness appeared as black. If this represented an adaptation of Goethe's idea of the interaction of light and dark to the surface of the color sphere, it remained essentially incomplete, for Runge continued to speak of the three primaries as the basis for all color mixtures.[39] In fact, near the end of his life Runge stated that he considered the optical theories of both Goethe and Newton of limited utility for the practising artist.[40] And he went beyond Goethe inasmuch as he believed that color performed the mediatory function of revelation as the dominant language of nature the painter employed.

This cosmological dimension underlying Runge's interest in color cannot be disregarded without doing great injustice to his thought as expressed throughout the Hinterlassene Schriften as well as in the paintings and drawings themselves. John Gage has observed that Runge's formalistic thoughts on color evolved steadily,[41] while others have seen a drastic difference in the Runge of 1802 and the Runge after this date.[42] It can be argued here, however, that throughout such theoretical change and experimentation Runge consistenly

maintained his faith in the revelatory function of color in connection with the art of landscape painting. This can be clearly ascertained by surveying both his letters and his art from 1802 to 1810. These parallel forms of expression provide unmistakable evidence that his cosmological view of color and the role of art remained essentially the same.

Leaving the Tageszeiten drawings of 1803 and the Morgen paintings of 1808 through 1810 to be examined in detail in the final chapter, it seems sufficient here to discuss a painting of 1805-6, Ruhe auf der Flucht (fig. 11), to demonstrate visually the constancy of Runge's world view despite the progression of his style, iconography and formal theory. Ruhe auf der Flucht depicts the Holy Family at rest on their flight to Egypt in order to escape Herod's maniacal attempt to destroy the new born Christ who threatened his sovereignty. The painting shows Joseph shrouded in shadow, isolated from the Virgin and Child by a strong diagonal. Silhouetted against the morning sky, he tends the dying fire---a crude and man-made device---while the Virgin and Child are illuminated by the rising sun. This differentiation is paralleled by the juxtaposition of blooming flowers, trees and sumptuous vegetation on the right half of the picture as opposed to the thistles, ivy (symbol of the night) and weeds about Joseph on the left. Traeger has suggested that the blooming tree may represent the tree of paradise,

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a symbol in Böhme, Novalis and Runge of nature's and man's origin.[44] Moreoever, the emphasis on the feminine aspect and nature, animated by the angels hailing the advent of dawn, suggests the reconciliation of man and nature.[45] Schrade has suggested that the idyllic landscape revealed by the dawn between Joseph and Mary may be a presentiment of the paradisical destination of the fleeing party.[46] The Christ-child awakens to the dawn, his hand, translucent in its light, reaches with his eyes for the tree above him, the symbol of the paradisical state. In May of 1805 Runge conceived of this image as a companion piece to Quelle und Dichter (fig. 3)---the latter constituting an Abend des Abendlandes, the former a Morgen des Morgenlandes. In a letter to Schildener of May 10, 1805, he said the composition of Ruhe auf der Flucht was to focus on the center where the "most stirring and lively moment of the picture" was: the Christ-child lying at the base of a parabolic curve formed by Joseph and his staff and Mary's shroud. The moment depicted in Runge's work is the genesis of a new age---a genesis whose symbols were light, childhood, landscape and the female aspect. Clearly, nothing of Runge's cosmology has given way here to empirical science. His observation of natural phenomena was progressively detailed but not in the least merely objective. Each leaf and petal is luminous with the new sun, glowing in an atmosphere of delicate

mystery and awe. The sun, while not seen directly, appears incarnate in the incandescent flesh of Christ. Never before this had Runge achieved such a superb quality of light within a landscape which is so convincingly symbolic and cosmologically expressive.

Turning to the literary evidence, in the letter of November 7, 1802, already referred to several times, Runge stated that the trinity was revealed in the colors of the sunset. In the letter of two weeks later he referred to the light which was "before the sun," the light which is "the nourishment of the sun." The relationship of the trinity, the sun and this Urlicht (presumably the light God called forth in Genesis 1:3 before he made the sun), which Runge described in language used in John 1:5 concerning the logos, became more clear in a letter to Pauline in April of 1803: "The simple symbol of God's trinity is the symbol of the highest light, as the simple symbol of the three colors is that of the sun's light." The sun and its three color structure proceeded, according to Runge, ultimately from that greater light which created the entire universe. Runge also wrote in this letter:

> The three colors are refracted a thousandfold in the world and we learn to understand the colors only when we do not tire to find the pure colors in all the refractions---just as we learn to comprehend the trinity more and more through the movements of our soul and the world.

This is in accord with his concern to replicate the Totaleindruck of nature by grasping the essential principles or parts of nature from which its diversity is generated. In the letter to Baier of September 26, 1806, Runge wrote that the "Gesamteindruck which we receive through our eyes from creation is grasped in the parts which make it up and outside of which no parts are visible." Then he spent nearly the remainder of the letter discussing color theory, prefaced by the following line already cited above: "The light shines in the world that it may penetrate the darkness and the emanation of the light is the three colors which praise the Lord from eternity to eternity." The colors, red, yellow and blue, constituting the basis of all possible color mixtures he proceeded to discuss, were, therefore, the essential "parts" which God had created in order that he might be revealed therein. Runge even went so far in this letter as to contend that "we require no witness from men" concerning this light shining in the darkness, which "through the sun inflames the world." Nature appears to have had as much potential for revealing the divine as inspired scripture.

Appended to the long, unaddressed letter of 1807 or 1808, dealing extensively with color optics, order and harmony, was a brief note in which Runge discussed what he considered his failure to achieve correspondence between nature and the artsitic means of expressing impressions of

nature. He made the following observations concerning the dynamic nature of color:

> As everything from youth on...has pressed and presses itself to this inner knowledge,[47] so every creature yearns and pushes itself to light and the spiritualization of their creaturely property. This happens now on the part of color, that the colored material substances loosen themselves from the coarse, bodily property; and such are, when they reach this stage, illuminated by the light of the sun and receive a power of life in their inflammation through the sun to propagate themselves and in greater multiplication conquer and ever decrease the raw, unuseful part of the earthly.

In each of the instances cited above (to Baier, 1806 and the unaddressed letter of 1807 or 1808) mention was made of the Totaleindruck: the approximation in the painting of the complete expression of nature. Though his formal means became increasingly sophisticated, Runge was consistently dedicated to obtaining a metaphysical effect with his new art. Nature was never seen positivistically, but as the arena of divine revelation.

Runge's metaphysical concerns remained just as explicit during and after 1808. In the Rubriken zu Abhandlungen, presumably written in 1808, he set out four groups of four characteristics. The first two groups pertained to the formal aspects of color; the second two to the cosmological scheme. Number nine of group three states: "Light and space as the first spiritual existence of the world." By "space" Runge meant darkness in contrast to

light,[48] the first creative act of God in Genesis. Number ten, however, is to be seen as the next step in Runge's cosmology, which certainly followed Böhme's: The emergence of the bodily or corporeal: "Black and white (are) the divestment of their eternal nature and the appearance of things." This process Runge found analogous to his observations of color mixture: when black or white were added to a color, the color became "bodily," that is, it lost its original purity and transparency, becoming opaque. Number thirteen of the fourth group reads: "The fear of hell in the nothingness of the bodily color." Runge found the fear of hell in that aspect of existence which had fallen from its original purity and was opaque to the light which would otherwise pass through it and illuminate it. This is a distinctly Neoplatonic image of the metaphysical quality of light as a metaphor for liberation from the realm of imprisoning, inanimate matter.

Number fourteen touches on the opposite aspect of opacity---transparency---in rather classically mystic terms: "Death and life, birth and grave, as one in the clear deep." Pure color, transparent rather than corporeal, led to the depths of eternity perceived as the coincidentia oppisitorum, the eternal union of all opposites. It is from this realm, according to Runge, that the logos emerged and manifested itself as color. This brings Böhme to mind since he also spoke of such an origin of color and of God as the original

abyss, the depths of which were pure indifference, the complete unity of all oppositions.[49]

In a letter to his father of February 2, 1810, including a copy of his essay Farbenkugel, Runge stated that black and white figuratively formed time. Thus, the universe of time and corporeality were the result of the interaction of the two poles: "the way from the darkness to the light may indicate a graduation (time)." Such an upward graduation would involve the "spiritualization" of matter, as mentioned above; whereas the opposite motion constituted a descent into matter, a materialization. Significantly, Runge explained this to his father by means of the color sphere.

However, as Matile rightly observed, Runge found that the color sphere as an abstraction was insufficient in enabling the artist to render his Totaleindruck.[50] This failure was evident to him when he wrote in his essay Von der Doppelheit der Farbe:

> When we want to imitate the phenomena in nature, however, we find that these five parts, neither in these phenomena or in our material, may suffice as the final elements and that we surpass the same limits and powers in seeing as in work. We must therefore search further and more carefully to succeed in the knowledge of the elements of the total impression (Totaleindruck), which we receive through our eyes...

In this essay Runge offered the distinction of transparent and opaque color which would fulfill the needs of his color

theory for pure hue, untainted by admixture of black or weakened by the addition of white. As designed, the color sphere allowed only for color progressively modified by the bands of white and black. Runge wrote Tieck in March of 1805 that: "All colors are actually transparent; they become bodily, however, through white or black."

The medium of watercolor is perhaps the medium in which this phenomenon is most apparent. Accordingly, Traeger has pointed out that it was the ideal medium for Runge to explain his concept of transparent and opaque color.[52] In watercolor all hues become opaque and less intense when mixed with black or white, which block out the white paper over which the color is applied. When pure watercolor hue is laid over paper it remains transparent. For this reason, Runge used the medium in executing his diagrams of the color sphere (fig. 10). In regard to transparency Runge used the terms "bright and dark" rather than white or black, for a transparent color's brightness or darkness is determined not by the content of white or black, of which there is none, but rather by the light content, that is, the amount of light penetrating the substance and manifesting the hue.[53] In his letter to Goethe of July 3, 1806, Runge spoke, therefore, of the "structure of the body to which the color is bound" as the determining factor of transparency, while using such examples as paper, glass, water, sky gems,

clouds and flowers there and elsewhere in reference to the nature of transparent color.[54] The thickness of these materials and the strength of the light source determine the brightness or darkness of such color.

But Runge did not stop with merely indicating the formal aspects of this duality of color. Traeger has found that the "teaching of the duality permits itself to be bound seamlessly with the theology of light."[55] This was indeed the case. Runge was concerned with creating a model that might more completely represent his view of the universe. Without the metaphysical distinction between opaque and transparent color, the essence of his cosmology---the revelation of the divine in nature as well as the divestment of matter and the return to the paradisical condition---would have remained unexpressed. The transparent colors represented the penetrating presence of the Divine illuminating or spiritualizing the universe. Such forms as flowers, gems and atmospheric effects in the landscape with their ethereal quality transcended in Runge's mind---as in the minds of Tieck, Novalis and many others---the mundane realm of lifeless matter. Opaque color could reveal nothing of the inner presence of light, of its immanent, penetrating spirituality. Runge spoke of these colors as "bodily," "firm, hard, impenetrable."[56] He suggested that transparent and opaque maintained a relation which may be referred to as the ideal versus the real.[57] This

distinction, Neoplatonic in nature---though probably taken from Böhme, who also differentiated between ethereal and mundane with respect to the fall into sin[58]---followed the notion of essence versus embodiment. The following is from a group of fragments probably written in 1806, which, according to Daniel, "appear to be sketches for introductions to a treatise on color:"

> Color is so friendly an appearance that I see with ever new delight how in all its tones as with spirits of light it clings to everything embodied and penetrates it in order to recommend more and more the heavenly fatherland to it, so that also the more spiritual and transparent is the substance of the body, the deeper and more inward it is united with color and penetrated by light.

Runge also wrote elsewhere of this transformative effect:

> The effect and the living fire of light presses into and absorbs deeper and deeper the dark bodies of our earth, which likewise yearn for salvation from their fear as we ourselves yearn to be free from the weakness of our bodies. Just as the sun rises in its glory, so the vegetation sets itself afire in transparent flowers in the water of the earth, (flowers) which unfold their fruit to new life and bring forth greater benefit through the transitory bodies, so that earth becomes capable to bear higher and more beautiful colors...[59]

Runge looked for the virtual revivication of reality in its penetration and transformation by light and in the manifestation of color effects which revealed the divine element pervading creation.

In addition to the metaphysical necessity of a distinction between opaque and transparent color, one has to consider the necessity of a formal distinction between

the two types of color in regard to Runge's desire to create a "second nature" in the work of art. How could a work of art approximate the effects of nature for the viewer without the transparency of color? Without the distinction of opaque and transparent, an art which might evoke the spiritual experience of nature would be unfeasible--- particularly an art of landscape.

If opaque and transparent color were metaphors of spiritual death and rebirth, other dimensions of color, namely, color harmony and order, carried potent metaphorical value for Runge as well. For instance, the motif of re-uniting opposites was so basic to Runge that one is tempted to see it when the artist arranged complementary colors into their respective pairs. This temptation seems fully justified when one reads number fourteen in the appendix to his Farbenkugel where Runge wrote of the combination of red and green "which destroy themselves through their unification in gray." Such pairings Runge called "harmonious." Those color pairs, such as red and orange, according to point fifteen, "which draw and incline toward one another," he called "monotonous." Matile pointed out that in determining these principles, Runge was thinking not only of the world of color but also of those polar oppositions he discussed in the letter of March 9, 1802, concerning the violent struggle between "an inexorable severity and a sweet and limitless love."[60]

The terminology Runge used in speaking of such color relationships supports the assertion that he was simultaneously thinking at a far more metaphysical level. He spoke several times of gray as the Indifferenzpunkt.[61] This brings Schelling's concept of Absolute Identity to mind, in which nature and mind were symmetrically arranged and unified ultimately in a "point of indifference."[62] That Runge saw more in gray than the cancellation of complementaries or the equal mixture of primaries or secondaries is hinted at by his characterization of such cancellations as death. His repeated use of the term "death" to express the resolution of the opposition between colors as well as the manner in which the "I" and "You" were ultimately reconciled supports the thesis that a metaphysics lied at the center of Runge's thinking.[63]

It is clear, therefore, that throughout Runge's short career color was a primary means of expressing a particular cosmological view of nature and human experience and that any analysis of Runge's art which excludes or downplays the role of this cosmology is fundamentally in error. Indeed, even when Runge dwelt on the optics of color, one is led to believe in view of the artist's vision of the transformative, dematerializing power of light and color that he was only pursuing for himself what so many other Romantic figures longed to pursue: the

spiritualization or "romanticization" of nature. Color as the key to his doctrine of the language of nature was the means Runge proposed to achieve this end. Such a spiritualization was at the heart of adherents to the Romantic view of nature such as Novalis, Johann Wilhelm Ritter, Friedrich Schlegel, Schelling and Runge's own friend, Henrik Steffens. Friedrich Schlegel expressed the pervasive fascination with the metamorphosis of nature as well as humanity in his Lyceums-Fragment 115 where he wrote that "All art should become science, and all science art."[64] Nowhere did the transformative function of light and color reach such a consummate state as in the Morgen paintings (figs. 8 and 9). There, and in the proposed group of the Tageszeiten and their prospective organization into a Gesamtkunstwerk, Runge's cosmology and attendant use of color were of the utmost importance.

Notes: Chapter Four

1. Novalis, Werke, p. 260.

2. Wilhelm Emmrich, Deutsche Literatur der Barockzeit, Königstein: Athenäum, 1981, p. 59.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Traeger, op. cit., p. 19, note 4, points to the letter to Pauline of December 22, 1803, as evidence of Runge's knowledge of the poet Paul Fleming (1606-1640), who was influenced by Paracelsus' thinking and particularly Böhme's work.

6. Jacob Boehme, The Signature of All Things and Other Writings, translated by William Law, Cambridge and London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 91.

7. Ibid., p. 22.

8. In Appendix A will be found a brief summary of Böhme's doctrine which will facilitate the discussion.

9. Op cit., pp. 36-37.

10. Mysterium Magnum, p. 134. Von Simson, op. cit., p. 344, considered it odd that Runge would quote Genesis 2 after his discussion of man naming creation. This citation in Böhme suggests otherwise.

11. Op. cit., p. 60.

12. The Signature of All Things, p. 174.

13. Ludwig Tieck, Frühe Erzählungen und Romane, München: Winkler-Verlag, volume 1, 1963, p. 890.

14. Ibid.

15. Lilian Furst, op. cit., p. 70.

16. Ibid., p. 69.

17. Op. cit., p. 39.

18. Bengt Algot Sørensen, Symbol und Symbolismus, Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963, p. 221.

19. June 15, 1803.

20. To Daniel, November 7, 1802.

21. Matile, op. cit., p. 133. Also Matile, "Runges Farbenordnung und die 'unendliche Kugel,'"Runge: Fragen und Antworten, München: Prestal Verlag, 1978, p. 66.

22. Runge: Fragen und Antworten, p. 67.

23. Ibid., p. 75. John Gage suggested at the same symposium that Henrik Steffens, who, in his essay appended to the Farbenkugel, embraced the "wild fantasies" of color, may have reflected Runge's own repressed views, ibid., p. 64. That Runge would have exercised restraint in this matter is not surprising when one considers his sensitivity as expressed to his father (January 13, 1803) regarding the need gradually to prepare the public for his art.

24. Gage, ibid., p. 65.

25. Von Simson, op. cit., p. 345, saw no deletion of mysticism in Runge's interest in color. Referring to the artist's view of nature and God, Von Simson wrote: "As his work on the Tageszeiten advanced, light and color became more and more the revelation of the mystic conception of identity."

26. Die Farbenlehre Philipp Otto Runges, p. 145.

27. This is the emphasis that I maintain should be placed on the "infinite diversity and motion" of nature and the artist's need to "discover and separate the simple parts... and to determine the order of rhythm" in which all phenomena exist. See Matile, Runge: Fragen und Antworten, p. 67, and Die Farbenlehre Philipp Otto Runges, p. 145. My thesis is that the motif of unity in the face of multiplicity remained constant in Runge despite his more empirical means of approach after 1803.

28. Op. cit., p. 60.

29. Essay about 1809: "Ueber den Grund der Harmonie und der Disharmonie in der Naturerscheinungen, und wie die Dissonanzen bey der Bearbeitung eines Gegenstandes zulösen sind."

30. Quoted in Die Farbenlehre Philipp Otto Runges, p. 131; my translation.

31. November 7, 1802.

32. Runge: Fragen und Antworten, p. 62; Gage correctly pointed out that Runge was more interested in the effect of color than in its physics. See Farbenkugel, paragraph 4.

33. To Daniel, March 23, 1803; to Tieck, about April 1803.

34. Böhme's treatise entitled "Die hochtheure Pforte von Göttlicher Beschaulichkeit" was published by Gichtel in the collection of treatises under the title of Der Weg zu Christo, volume IV, p. 187, Sämtliche Schriften.

35. Op. cit., pp. 224-228.

36. Quoted in Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 14.

37. To Daniel, November 7, 1802.

38. G. H. Lewis, The Life and Works of Goethe, E. R. Dutton and Co., 1916, pp. 340-353; and Rudolf Steiner, Goethe's Conception of the World, New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973 (reprint), pp. 139-168. Lewis summarized Goethe's color theory: "There are but two pure colors, blue and yellow, both of which have a tendency to become red and purple. Every other color is a degree of one of these, or is impure. Colours originate in the modification of light by outward circumstances. They are not developed out of light, but by it. For the phenomenon of Colour, there is demanded Light and Darkness. Nearest light appears a colour we name yellow; nearest the Darkness, a colour we name blue. p. 344.

39. See Rubriken zu Abhandlungen, number 1; and Von der Doppelheit der Farbe. At another point, Runge made reference to yellow as the brightest color, though not so bright as white, and blue as the darkest color, though not so dark as black: letter of 1807 or 1808. Once again this suggests Goethe's influence, but not a careful understanding of his theory.

40. See unaddressed letter of 1807 or 1808 referring to errors "which gained such an authority through Newton." Runge found Newton's theory impractical because the colors could not be mixed to equal the white light that Newton taught colors composed. See also Farbenkugel, paragraph 1. In an early draft of a letter to Schelling of February 1, 1810, Runge anticipated Goethe's color to be capable, but expected nothing useful for the artist's needs.

41. Runge: Fragen und Antworten, p. 65.

42. For instance, Bengt Sørensen, op. cit., pp. 228-9 has contrasted the early mystical Runge and the late "scientific" Runge. His early and later attitudes, however, were not at all incompatible.

43. Hanna Hohl, Runge in seiner Zeit , hrsg. von Werner Hoffman, München und Hamburger Kunsthalle: Prestal-Verlag, 1977, p. 176.

44. Op. cit., p. 130.

45. Coincidentally (?), the cult of the goddess Isis at Sais, where the young man was apprenticed in Novalis Lehringe zu Sais, was in Egypt.

46. Hubert Schrade, "Die Romantische Idee von der Landschaft als höchsten Gegenstande christlicher Kunst," Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher, 1931, p. 63.

47. That is, the "inner knowledge" of unity with God via the divestment of one's earthly being.

48. See letter to Steffens, March 1809, where Runge differentiated between "point and space, or light and darkness."

49. Mysterium Magnum, page one: "When I consider what God is, then I say, He is the One; in reference to the creature, as an eternal Nothing; he hath neither foundation, beginning, nor abode; he possesseth nothing, save only himself; he is the will of the abyss; he is in himself only one..."

50. Op. cit., p. 166.

51. They are: yellow, red, blue, white and black---the five components of the color sphere.

52. Op. cit., p. 57.

53. To Steffens, March 1809.

54. See also his essay Von der Doppelheit der Farbe and the unaddressed letter of 1807 or 1808.

55. Op. cit. , p. 57.

56. To Steffens, March 1809.

57. Unaddressed, December 2, 1809.

58. Mysterium Magnum, p. 104 ff.

59. To Baier, September 26, 1806.

60. Op. cit., p. 174.

61. To Goethe, July 3, 1806; and Runge's essay "Ueber den Grund der Harmonie und der Disharmonie..."

62. Josiah Royce, op. cit., p. 193, referred to Schelling's "Indifference of Subject and Object" and "Unity of Nature and Spirit." See also Royce's Lectures on Modern Idealism, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919, p 133.

63. See his Über Zusammenstellungen in Beziehung auf Harmonie, also quoted in Matile, op. cit., pp. 174-175; letter to Goethe, op. cit.; and Runge's Rubriken zu Abhandlungen, number four.

64. Friedrich Schlegel, Kritische Ausgabe, München: Verlag Ferdinand Schönigh, 1967, Band II, p. 161. See also Walzel, op. cit., pp. 63-70, for further discussion of what Steffens called the "Schlegelizing of the natural sciences."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TAGESZEITEN AS A GESAMTKUNSTWERK

The Elements of Art and their Synthesis

The course of discussion has led from the consideration of Runge's spiritual view of nature and art to the present point where his primary artistic project preoccupying his attention off-and-on from late in 1802 until his death, the Tageszeiten, will now be examined as an embodiment of his intentions.

Despite the fact that his interests in formal theory increased, that early on he recognized the character of learning as process, and that he rejected viewing the letter of March 9, 1802, as any sort of binding creed,[1] I have contended that the cosmological content and purpose of artistic expression never diminished in Runge's outlook. In the last chapter, the literary evidence in support of this assertion was examined in addition to the visual evidence of his Ruhe auf der Flucht; in this final chapter, in demonstrating the cosmological function and content of the Tageszeiten and Morgen paintings, it will be shown that Runge's metaphysics became more articulate and approached a cumulative expression in the proposed Gesamtkunstwerk, the painted Tageszeiten.

On the basis of the analysis of Runge's cosmology and aesthetic ideas, a few explicit and fundamental principles can be assigned to the artist's faith and art during the last eight years of his life. These are as follows:

1. Nature provoked in man an awareness of God.
2. The goal of life was to return to the primordial spiritual unity symbolized by Adam and Eve in Eden.
3. The experience of color in light effects, the element of line and certain natural forms, particularly vegetative forms, elicited, as a type of nature language, a dimension of experience that could convince one of the divine presence and one's own immortality.
4. Landscape painting provided the artistic basis for all of the above.

If these conclusions are generally accurate, there are finally to consider Runge's plans for a type of artwork which might pull his concerns together into a singular expression. This art form would take advantage of a synthesis of art media, particularly music, poetry and painting---all of which Runge repeatedly referred to as the "elements of art." From the beginning of his theoretical writing on art, Runge spoke of words, tones (musical) and images together as the means of expressing the intense feelings of the experience of nature: "We express these thoughts in words, tones and images and so excite the same feelings in the breast of the person beside us."[2] In the spring of 1803 he wrote to Tieck that the "light and life" (the

logos or light of John 1) divided itself into three: "in mathematics, in colors and in words; in music lines, words and colors flow together; in such manner are will, love and longing united in faith: these are the pure ingredients of man as God first created him." Also in the spring of 1803, he wrote to Daniel that music must be in all beautiful poetry, pictures and architecture or anything "expressed through line."[3] Line, the basis of the arabesque motif so important to Runge (as well as Friedrich Schlegel among others), was associated with music. The lyric effect of sinuous and curved lines such as those in the frames of Morgen (fig. 4) has been seen as visual evidence of Runge's "synaesthesia."[4] In numerous instances Runge not only associated line and music but color as well---the treatment of each medium suggesting the quality of another in such paintings as the Morgen canvases, as will be seen shortly.

What is particularly crucial to understand in the case of Runge is his more than merely formal interest in the bringing together of the arts of music, painting, architecture and poetry. In a letter of April 6, 1803, he spoke of the experience of church music as that through which the world was recreated, enabled to begin again "as an innocent child." Music was said to be "what we call harmony and calm in all three other arts." Music tied the

three arts of painting, poetry and architecture into one.[5] Thus, he wrote most significantly for this investigation: "Therefore, I think that the sustenance of the Spirit of love, paradise, lies in the symbolism, poetry, musical or mystical view of the three arts."[6] Incidentally, his essential connection of these three arts with landscape is implied forcefully in his subsequent assertion that nothing would come of the modern view if artists persisted in using "the old forms, the pagan gods and the allegorical personages." In fact, Runge criticized the Weimarer Kunstfreunde for their reductionism in media and formal intent in art, especially their ignoring of music.[7]

Runge's experience of the church interior as an ambience created by the unification of artistic media is of central significance in the discussion of the place of the Gesamtkunstwerk in his mind. His interest in synthesizing the arts based on the underlying element of music and in creating a distinct spatial experience of especially spiritual character developed from the preceding tradition of the church interior outlined in Chapter One. In June of 1803 he visited a Gothic cathedral in Meissen with the younger brother of Novalis and was quite impressed by the experience. He wrote to his brother Daniel on June 12, 1803, that he wanted to work and even live in such a building. He said the visit brought him to himself again,

and that "we could achieve a great simplicity if we would only remain true in penetrating to the one point in us..." The incident impressed upon him the possibility of an artistic form which might facilitate the advent of this "great simplicity," for he wrote that the church struck him as a suitable setting for his four pictures. Whereas at the beginning of 1803 he had conceived of the relation of the four images as symphonic,[8] perhaps inspired by his appreciation of opera and symphonic music, now the four images were integrated into a religious environment. The concern for spiritual transformation remained constant, but now such transformation was stimulated by the church interior of unified artistic media---something which certainly brings Abbot Suger to mind. Runge, like Suger, perceived the Gothic form, with its emphasis on lightness, line and color---particularly the transparent color of gems and glass---as the preferable aesthetic. He concluded the letter to Daniel by claiming that he wanted to invent a new architecture "which would be more a continuation of the Gothic than the Greek." He wrote that he desired a commission for a chapel which might be built "by my own hand." Expressing the same wish to his mother in a letter of a few days later, he regretted that Gothic churches were no longer built and hoped they might someday reappear.[9] The thought of placing his Tageszeiten in an architectural setting with spiritual

intentions, though with no reference to specifically religious architecture, had appeared as early as February of 1803 when Runge wrote that his four pictures were to be "an abstract,picturesque, fantastic-musical poem with choirs, a composition for all three arts together, for which architecture should erect an entirely suitable building."[10] However, as the letter to Daniel of June 12 cited above testifies, by early summer of that year Runge conceived of constructing a chapel somewhere in the churchyard of a parish of Hamburg. Clearly, then the project moved closer and closer to the model of the ecclesiastical interior, suggesting Runge's link with a much older tradition.

Iconographical and stylistic analyses of the Tageszeiten in their drawn and partially painted states will bring out very specifically Runge's pursuit of a Gesamtkunstwerk ideal: the synthesis of artistic media designed to carry the viewer to a higher level of experience, a level at which he or she would have been compelled to reflect on his or her relation to God.

The Tageszeiten

Between Christmas of 1802 and July of 1803, Runge was occupied with drawing the Zeiten[11] in Dresden. Later in 1803 the drawings were brought out as engravings. In the four drawn images Morgen, Tag, Abend and Nacht (figs. 4-7),

there appears the crystallization of Runge's vocabulary which, though it continually evolved and became more refined, still maintained its devotion to symmetry, graceful arabesque, clarity of line and attention to vegetative detail. Nowhere had Runge's belief in the divine transparency of flower and child been so highly developed.

The formal character of the Tageszeiten may be consistently designated as "arabesque," to use a then-popular term. The arabesque form, the graceful curvilinear motif derived in the visual arts from the Baroque and Rococo decorative and allegorical traditions, was especially important in Runge's work for it served both the function of form and content. The Romantics considered that the arabesque expressed not only formal grace, but also constituted a hieroglyph, a type of "nature writing" which stimulated the viewer's imagination. The element of line itself, indicative rather than literal or complete by its very nature, was considered more abstract in its treatment of form than modelling or chiaroscuro. Runge wrote Tieck in December of 1802, just before the beginning work on the Tageszeiten, that from the arabesque and the hieroglyph the "landscape must go forth." A. W. Schlegel, in Athenäum of 1799, likened the widely circulated linear engravings of John Flaxman to poetry which was equally allusive.[12] As William Vaughan has recently pointed out, the German Romantics were encouraged

by this observation to view contour drawing as symbolic of something which defied explicit or literal rendering.[13]

Runge's use of this linear aesthetic is obvious in his numerous studies for the Tageszeiten. The elements of line and symmetry dominate, though in such a way as to achieve a masterful balance between extensive texture and detail and economy of means or restraint. For instance, their varied textures and sensitively delineated shapes, do not become overbearing because of the counter-balancing effect of openness in the background left largely untreated, and the ever-present symmetry and repetition of arching shapes. The result is a unified whole in each work and as an ensemble.

Runge's interest in the Natursprache took essentially two forms, linear structure and color. In fact, the "vocabulary" of line and composition in the objects of nature was as indispensable to the artist as was the concept of color in his letters and essays. Symmetry and structure in organic form set out in regular geometrical forms such as triangles, circles and hexagons express in Platonic fashion a deeper, more universal truth in nature and Runge's search for this purity immanent in the forms of nature, particularly in flowers, is evident.[14] Flowers "spoke" with their color and shape to Runge of something infinite within their finite being. His schematic study of the Kornblume (fig. 13) demonstrates the language of structure which Runge sought in

the organic character of flowers. This is an image of underlying order in nature. The symmetry and modular organization reminiscent of a Gothic rose window bespeak a desire to penetrate to the idea incarnate within the material. Indeed, if the flower were painted in Runge's transparent, luminous color, it would remind one all the more of Gothic stained glass. Interestingly, just as its Gothic counterpart illuminated the interior of cathedrals with diffuse and mystical color, hallowing the space as a divine presence, so Runge's use of similar linear organization and color in the proposed paintings of the Tageszeiten would have created a sacred atmosphere in their architectural setting which was to have been more Gothic than Greek.

Despite Friedrich Schlegel's accusation of obscurity,[15] the Tageszeiten do not strike one as unintelligible or impenetrable. Indeed, a glance at their organization reveals a great deal of meaning with even the most elementary knowledge of Runge's intentions and the precepts of German Romanticism.

Beginning with the drawings, in Morgen (fig. 4) the central lily blooms just beneath the celestial host gathered about a Hebrew inscription spelling Jahweh. Four genii accompany this blooming with their musical instruments while roses (the symbol of earthly love) fall from the four downward turned closed lilies (the symbol of heavenly love).

This action, the generation of earthly or temporal love from heavenly or eternal love takes place metaphorically in the dawn---something Runge was to pursue much more specifically in the painted versions of Morgen. In the outer frame a narrative account is depicted beginning below and culminating at the top. In the bottom frame two figures with the wings of Psyche, one male and the other female, fly apart from one another, separated by a snake, here the symbol of eternity, encircling two downward-turned torches. Recalling Runge's letter to Pauline of April 1803, written during the execution of the drawings of the Tageszeiten, wherein Runge spoke of the original split of "I and You" into male and female, the lower register of Morgen depicts the primordial division of the human soul into Adam and Eve, man and woman, as Böhme taught, in addition to suggesting the Fall into sexual awareness. The outward force then turns upward, facilitated by the genii in either lower corner, and continues upward in the flowers, through the genii at midway and finally terminates in the angelic personages having bloomed in lilies, adoring the celestial inscription. The downward motion of roses in the central frame, in effect, enables the ascent to heavenly glory represented in the outer frame.

In the image of Tag (fig. 5) the notion of the Fall and subsequent sexual alienation was treated again. The angel in the lower register carries a sword and occupies a

separate realm of flowers outside of which the figures in either corner are depicted as working or toiling, notably with tares of wheat. This, no doubt, represents the events following the expulsion from Eden: the placing of the cherubim and the flaming sword at the entrance of Eden and man's toil in attending to his livelihood.[16] Once again the upward motion is depicted as well as the distinction of sex: to either side of the central maternal figure is a male group (to her left) and a female group (to her right). However, the two sexes are brought together in the Earth Mother, as Runge called her,[17] who embraces both male and female children (note the meeting of flowers held by the two standing children at the womb of the mother). Runge has placed wheat on the side of the male sex and flax on the side of the female. These two large plants are bound by vines to the two blooming forget-me-nots which "express the separation," as he wrote.[18] Above these blooms and the Earth Mother, the central lily of Morgen blooms, penetrating a ring of flowers into the presence of the trinity in the outer frame expressed by the circle inscribed in the triangle.

In the Abend (fig. 6) the upward motion ceases as the cloak of night descends above the lily image of Morgen, sinking beneath the terrestrial globe. The mood of resignation is achieved visually in the drooping flowers and synaesthetically in the somber, deep notes of the horns

played by the genii to either side of the female figure personifying the night (Nyx?). Two genii seated to the right and left of the chalice and cross in the lower register are possessed by melancholic contemplation of the reality of Christ's sacrifice: the death which ultimately re-establishes the unity of God and man.

In the fourth image, Die Nacht (fig. 7), there is nowhere the sense of upward or downward motion, diastole and systole---but rather stasis. The gentle arch of the eight genii and their perches is countered by the curve of the angels, overturned leaves and the inverted triangular shape of the vegetative configuration. No figures are pictured in the outer frame, save the motionless psyche in the top corners, who adore the dove of the Holy Spirit. Eight genii with stars above them form a vault to the nocturnal scene, personifying the heavens. The children "speak" in silent gestures just as the mystery of the night sky "speaks" of the Almighty. A quiet Luna rules benevolently over the night ir which the male and female figures are finally united in sleep. If sleep and night are taken as symbols of death, here the two sexes have regained their original unity at last, as Runge suggested they would in his letter to Pauline cited above. Interestingly, the plant upon which the eight genii and Luna rest is a poppy: the source of opiate-induced dreams, gateway to the unconscious, the fantastic or the purely imaginative.

The Tageszeiten are bound together not only in formal treatment, but in theme as well. There is a programmatic unity in the four pictures "worked out like a symphony." This is evident in the frames, which Runge told Schildener in March of 1806 were "transitions from one picture to the next." In the top frame of each picture there is an image indicating the Christian trinity: in Morgen there is the Hebrew inscription referring to Jahweh; in Tag the trinity itself is symbolized; in Abend a young male figure with a lamb---clearly a reference to the incarnation and Paschal lamb of the sacrifice; and in Nacht appears the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit. The association of times of day and the members of the trinity is by no means arbitrary. Runge said in the letters of January 30, 1803, and the earlier one of November 7, 1802, that the times of day correspond to the members of the trinity by color. In the morning the blue sky inspires the reverence of the Father. The lack of color during the day suggests the trinity itself which cannot be grasped by reason, just as the eye cannot bear looking directly at the sun during the day. In the evening the sun is manifested as red, the color of mediation and Christ's blood. At night the moon's yellow illumination comforts humanity in the darkness as the Holy Spirit is the Comforter (John 14:16).[19]

Beyond the aspect of color, the thematic element of the group draws the Tageszeiten into a singular visual experience. Daniel commented in the Hinterlassene Schriften on five levels of meaning, most of which deal with the periodic motif. He suggested that the drawings simultaneously depicted:[20]

1. the times of day
2. the times of the year
3. the times of life
4. the ages of the world
5. time and eternity

The final point concerns the realization of two orders in human experience: the temporal and the infinite. Humanity exists both in a dimension of finite growth and exhaustion and in an eternal dimension in its relationship with God. To be discussed further below is that the Tageszeiten invite several levels of interpretation and, impressively, operate fluently on each. The universality of Runge's theme as well as the unity of the four images was brought out when he likened the Tageszeiten to the times of the year using an organic metaphor: "blooming, producing, bearing and destroying."[21] In August of 1807 he jotted down four rubrics to accompany his paintings:

> The Morgen is the limitless illumination of the universe.
> The Tag is the limitless formation of the creature who completes the universe
> The Abend is the limitless destruction of existence in the origin of the universe.
> The Nacht is the limitless depth of the knowledge of undifferentiated existence in God.[22]

These rubrics illustrate clearly the preceding analysis of the iconography of the Tageszeiten: with the ascension of the morning sun in Morgen comes light and the generation of love; in Tag the scene is teeming with lush vegetation, fertility and communal life; resignation to the passing of the light and lily rules in Abend; and the depths of oneness in sleep or death dominate in the silent darkness of Nacht.

Viewing the completed cycle of drawings and bearing in mind Runge's constant desire for an art that would convince the soul of its divine source, it becomes certain that he sought to express a cosmology in the Tageszeiten. In representing the cycle of times in which man is immersed and finds his being, Runge attempted to depict a view of the nature of the universe and human experience: of man's origin, life and death in God.

Central to the meaning of Runge's proposed Gesamtkunstwerk was the nature of time depicted in the Tageszeiten. One must ask if the four images represent a constant cycle ever renewing itself, or, as the evidence suggests, if the four images represent a nonrepetitive linear progression. This question is significant inasmuch as it was the experience of time itself which Runge considered to the be the purpose of his Tageszeiten. His concept of time remained integrally linked with his cosmology. An important visual clue to the problem appears at the top of each image in the outer frame: the symbols of the persons of the trinity.

The progression is from the revered Hebrew inscription representing Jahweh in Morgen, followed by the triangle suggesting the trinity in Tag, to the paschal lamb and child symbolizing Christ and his sacrifice in Abend and ending with the Holy Spirit indicated by the dove in Nacht. The progressive character of this group of symbols is visually and thematically suggested by the successive times of day and the action depicted in the surrounding frames as discussed above. The linear aspect of time's passage, however, was even more explicitly indicated in Runge's oft-quoted letter to Daniel of March 9, 1802. At the end of this letter, influenced by a discussion with Tieck on the nature of historical process traced in works of art, Runge contended that there were four successive historical categories beginning with the ancient world when "the first men revered each individual spring, tree, stone, fire and so forth." This period was followed by the era of Roman Catholicism that "needed four persons in the Godhead," the fourth person being the Virgin. The Reformation, the third age, "limited itself to three persons in the Godhead." In the final period, the present one in Runge's view, "people cling to only one God." After this comes the Last Judgment---a belief that confirms Runge's essentially biblical and linear view of human history.

If this scheme is applied to the Tageszeiten, which were drawn less than a year after Runge's letter to Daniel of March 9, 1802, the correspondence is striking. An airy, celestial pantheism appears in Morgen, primeval in the use of the ancient Hebrew writing. Tag stresses the trinity above and the Virgin-figure below who nurses and caresses the children in the fashion of Mary. The sacrifice of Christ, the central message of Reformation theology, prevails in Abend. And the dove of the Holy Spirit, the basis of oneness and unity, rules over the Nacht image.

Already in 1803 one reads of the Tageszeiten as painted images.[23] Runge wrote to Gottfried Quistorp, an instructor of drawing in Greifswald, in June of 1807 that it was his first and most important concern to execute the Tageszeiten in paint. Although he was never to paint the complete cycle, and thus never able to realize his Gesamtkunstwerk, he was able to pursue his ideas as far as a completed small version of Morgen (fig. 8) and an unfinished large Morgen (fig. 9). A clear degree of evolution can be discerned in the comparison of the drawn Morgen (fig. 4) and the Kleine Morgen, begun in the summer of 1808 and finished by October of that year.[24] Traeger reports that in the second half of 1806 Runge decided not to paint the Tageszeiten strictly after the drawings.[25] It is quite clear that he diverged from the earlier work, particularly in

subject matter and setting: the scene no longer takes place above the earth amidst clouds, but is now set in a landscape drenched with morning light. A female form, Aurora, the personification of dawn, also appears in studies of late 1806,[26] studies which show that this is the first major change from the drawn state. At the end of 1807 studies of the landscape appear and the child recumbent in the meadow.[27]

Another important change, the last one, dating to 1808,[28] took place in the outer frame. While the motif of metamorphosis from lower center to the upper corners is consistent, the snake motif is replaced by what appear to be two spheres, a dark one in front of a light one. Vaughan has suggested this is the burnt earth behind which is the sun, symbol of the divine light, the logos which liberates man from the earth,[29] which, as Runge wrote, Böhme taught the devil burnt and in which he locked the human soul.[30] The remainder of the frame depicts the ascent of the soul from the cage-like roots of the amaryllis, through its blooming in red, the color of earthly love and Christ-like mediation, to its final blooming in the white lily, symbol of the resurrection and of heavenly love. In this upper realm the two angels adore a heavenly host whose luminous corporeality steadily decreases until it is consumed by the pure light of divinity.

This progression---facilitated by the use of color and greater use of light---and particularly the iconography of the burnt earth and genii imprisoned in the amaryllis roots very significantly suggest a resurgence of the influence of Böhme, with whose ideas Runge was already vitally concerned in 1802. Yet another subject also suggests the influence of Böhme: the female figure, who may be equally regarded as Aurora, Venus, the Virgin or perhaps, one wonders, Böhme's Sophie, the female personification of wisdom, the mirror of God in the beginning through whom all creation was brought forth. A study for Morgen dating to late 1807 or early 1808 depicts the female figure, still without the landscape setting, set above a globe, which, due to reflection, would appear to be water. Naturally, the element of water, the star above and the mussel shells the children carry roses in, suggest the birth of Venus.[31] However, as an image of creation in which the spirit of God "moved over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2), Böhme's personification does not seem unlikely. Yet these pluralistic interpretations are by no means mutually exclusive (see below).[32]

As these observations show, the entire work evolved only gradually in Runge's mind over the course of two to three years. Why did he decide to modify the original designs upon which he had worked so diligently to express his "entire world of ideas?"[33] It is known first of all that he acquired for himself works by Böhme in 1804.[34]

Perhaps his reading of this material rekindled his interest in the mystic's thought. Insofar as the painted child is concerned, Traeger reminds us that Runge's own second child was born in the early summer of 1807.[35] Hohl has noted that Daniel Runge considered that the lecture on the Zeiten by Görres, an architect friend of Runge, which appeared in 1808 stimulated Runge's redesign of Morgen. Traeger has observed, however, that many of Runge's changes had already taken place by then.[36] Nonetheless, I concur with Hohl that the lecture, composed before the completion of Kleine Morgen, reads almost like a description of the painting.

Waezoldt has pointed out that what was set forth as "landscape" in 1802 is reasserted in the painted versions of Morgen.[37] This "landscape," it will be recalled was perspicuous, transparent to divine presence. It seems most certain that, after his extensive study of the properties of color, and particularly after his differentiation of transparent and opaque color, Runge would naturally have been interested in rendering a landscape which would have depicted the relationship of divine and terrestrial. Hohl has gone so far as to maintain that the basic trinitarian color symbolism set out in 1802 "can be read as the authentic program of the entire cycle."[38] In fact, Runge informed Tieck as early as March 29, 1805, that he wanted to indicate in the Tageszeiten the "wonderful difference of the invisible color from the visible, or the transparent from the opaque."[39]

What better occasion to do this and employ the symbols of the trinity than a landscape, particularly when Runge saw such symbolic color as rooted in the landscape itself, e.g., dawn, dusk?

The importance of the metaphor of light is central to Runge's oeuvre. Vegetation is drenched in light, and exudes, to use Robert Rosenblum's words, a "magic plasm."[40] Not only is the transformation of vegetation by the penetration of celestial light of potent meaning, but the inexhaustible and teeming vegetation (checked by a consistent symmetry and ordered regression in planes parallel to the picture plane) in both Morgen versions is also indicative of divinity by virtue of its fertile animism. As Traeger pointed out, the emerging aesthetic was one of "becoming," rather than one of eternal or absolute fixity, and Runge expressed this outlook in his Morgen paintings, realizing, Traeger observed, what Friedrich Schlegel wrote in the Athenäum of 1800: "Beautiful is that which reminds us of nature and thus excites the feeling of the infinite fullness of life. Nature is organic and the highest beauty therefore eternal and always vegetative..."[41]

After finishing Kleiner Morgen in October of 1808, Runge wrote to this brother that he was starting on Der Grosse Morgen (fig. 9). He continued to work until the next summer, ceased for a time, and then picked up work again in August and September. Daniel reported that at the death of

the artist the underpainting was completed and the over-painting partially done in the upper part of the work---the three angels beholding the morning star.[42] The outerframe was never begun.

The image was to be the first of four which might have decorated an interior built especially for them. The collocation of the paintings is, of course, impossible to reconstruct because such a building was never built, nor ever designed that is known, although the projected dimensions of 24 x 18 feet for each image are recorded in the Hinterlassene Schriften in "Masse in den Tageszeiten." One wonders if the architectural structure would have echoed the construction of the paintings themselves. This seems quite likely considering the extensive use of arch and triangle in Runge's composition, both so basic to Gothic vaulting. Henrik Steffens, the physicist who appended an essay on the symbolism of color in nature to Runge's Farbenkugel, pointed to "something architectonic" about the Zeiten.[43] Runge's sense for architectonic structure informed even his investigation of a flower bloom (fig. 13). Indeed, he counseled the painter Klinkowström to discern and study architectonic form in plants.[44] Even in the fragmented and unfinished large version of Morgen, when one's view is facilitated by the Kleine Morgen, one can experience at least something of what the artist intended spatially:

composed or arching forces, constructed in a vertical fashion and emanating a light akin to the translucency of a Gothic window, there is evoked something of an interior space unquestionably more Gothic than Greek.

The synaesthetic unity of sensations that Runge achieved in both Morgen versions is the result of the masterful synthesis of iconography, composition and formal treatment. For instance, the delicate and ephemeral manner in which in Grosser Morgen the angels emerge from the blooming lily to the left and right above Aurora (fig. 9) is in perfect accord with the ethereal music they play on their tiny instruments. The gentle vault they form is countered by the more progressively corporeal inverted curve of four genii and recumbent child, suggesting, perhaps, the absorption of the concert into matter.

In another respect, one sees in the small version (fig. 8) what presumably would have been completed in the later painting: a strong element of sculptural form in the outer frame in contrast to the atmospheric quality of light and music in the inner image. Set as they are against a plain, darkened background, the vertical panels of amaryllis root, bulb and lily bloom appear to be sculpture in high relief. In addition to this very tactile sensation there is the inner frame itself, made of carved wood in the Grosse Morgen,with its darkly silhouetted angel-vegetation motif in either upper corner. The sensory result of all this,

supplemented by the architectural space itself, by musical accompaniment and by the poetic rubrics of each picture,[45] is the viewer's immersion into a complete or total experience of the times of day, year, history, life and universe.

Insofar as the viewer's involvement is concerned, an iconographical analysis of the Morgen paintings will demonstrate Runge's desire to orchestrate a particular aesthetic moment not unlike those church interiors which exemplify the Gesamtkunstwerk ideal. Such an analysis will concomitantly reveal the influence of Runge's cosmological views on his interest in achieving a Gesamteffekt.

Perhaps the most striking light effect in the painted Morgen versions is the transition from ephemeral light in the upper canvas to steadily more corporeal light in the lower. Traeger has observed that the more the atmosphere of earth is penetrated by light, the more the celestial beings are dissolved into sunlight.[46] This is nothing less than an act of sacrifice by the celestial: the state of purity and infinity is exchanged for the state of corporeality and finitude. If viewed in this soteriological respect one thinks of St. Paul's words of Christ's descent: "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likenss of men."[47] So read, the recumbent child, the result of this

transformation, may be the Christ-child, still glowing, as it were, from the divestment of its former being in light.

Traeger also has pointed to the color sphere as the analogue of this organization of light and dark, transparent and opaque.[48] In fact, the sphere itself can be discerned in the circular scheme of angels and genii, the former forming the upper edge of the sphere in their transparent, luminous character, while the latter compose the lower half and southern pole of the sphere. Aurora and the genii distributing roses to either side of her form the equator.[49] The manner in which the celestial figures recede in space behind the lower figures who advance to the picture plane enhances the three-dimensionality of the circular scheme into a sphere.

At the upper pole of the sphere there is the lily, over which hover the three genii about a star. Runge referred to the lily as "the light" and the three groups of figures seated in the lily bloom as relating to the trinity.[50] The star may be taken as the morning star, Venus, if the female figure is Venus or Aurora. It might also be considered the star of Bethlehem placed above Christ's birth.[51] Hohl has pointed out that the identity of Venus in the Morgen paintings and the similarity to Botticelli's Birth of Venus is strengthened by the fact that Botticelli's Venus already presented a close connection of Christian and Neoplatonic

themes.[52] Runge referred to his figure as both Venus and Aurora.[53] Daniel called her Mary. Waezoldt has reported a tradition in Mediéval and Baroque poetry about the association of Mary and Aurora.[54] What begins to impress us about Runge's iconography is its harmony of several levels of meaning. For instance, if the female figure is Venus, the child would be Eros.[55] If the female is Mary, the infant would be Christ; if she is Aurora or the dawn of mystical enlightenment, the child may represent the moment of spiritual birth; if she is Sophie, Böhme's personification of wisdom, the child would be the human soul who awaits to suck at her breasts of knowledge. Early on Runge himself refused to make explicit the meaning of the Tageszeiten; though he considered accompanying inscriptions a necessary part of the "total impression,"[56] they would not limit interpretation, be exhaustive or mutually exclusive.

On April 19, 1808, he described the foreground of the Kleine Morgen, reflecting the notion of the Natursprache discussed previously in connection with Böhme and Novalis: "The earth opens itself up in the flowers and from these the child looks out into the sunrise, without expecting anything, as (he) himself (is) the image of the sunrise."[57] Runge viewed nature as a means of revelation. Nature produces the child who then beholds what he himself is: the sunrise, the image of his own birth. This idea closely parallels the

Naturphilosophie of Schelling, whom Runge knew personally in the last year of his life. In his early publication entitled Naturphilosophie (1799), Schelling considered humanity to represent nature finally becoming conscious of itself.

The early color symbolism based on natural phenomena was almost systematically pursued in both versions of Morgen. The color of blue extends from the heavenly host of the outer frame---formerly occupied by the Hebrew inscription associated with Jahweh of the Old Testament, the creator and first person of the trinity---into the upper sky of the inner scene. The blue becomes yellow in superb nuance, the color of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Beneath the yellow is the red (and violet) horizon and cloud bank, the color of the Mediator, the Savior. In the outer frame on both sides the amaryllis blooms in an intense red, producing the upward striving genii between the imprisoned genii surrounded by darkness below and the angelic genii above blooming in white lilies in adoration of the heavenly source.

What can finally be said of Runge's Morgen? What does this symphony of color and light and form finally mean? Jörg Traeger concluded that the painting "depicts the return of the soul to its home in an earthly paradise."[59] This, I suspect, is the essence of Runge's work. The fact that children as genii, psyche and angels always appear in the Tageszeiten as well as in several other works---and always

in connection with nature viewed as a fertile and intimate realm---suggests that the two together, child and nature, express a state of being Runge considered most worthy of pursuit. Because he believed that men must become children in order to achieve their best,[60] viewing childhood as a metaphor for the soul's desired state of purity and innocence as well as harmony with God and nature, it appears that Runge held the child motif to be, as Grützmacher has suggested,[61] the representation of the paradisical state: the state of complete harmony and humanity's basis in the infinite rather than the finite. It will be recalled that Runge himself substantiated this in writing to Pauline: "...this is the old yearning for childhood, for ourselves, for paradise, for God---that is, I mean, yearning to connect the I and the You that it may be once again as it was in God." Thus, to depict the infant as the center of focus, Runge would have the viewer regard his magnum opus as a symphonic presentation of this cosmological view, for he believed that art was a form of language "if only men would see the world as children."[62] One witnesses the transformation of matter from inanimate opacity to vibrating and translucent energy by means of divine sacrifice in the light of the rising sun, the ancient regenerative principle which enables spiritual rebirth. It is a moment of grace: "Let there be light..." and is therefore a proclamation of hope for those weary of bondage to the temporal and finite. Kleiner and Grosser

Morgen are images of the paradisical beginning of humanity and, as the cyclical rebirth of nature, are timeless icons of salvation---images which secure faith by presenting to the viewer the infinite good and power and glory of the Creator. Each dawn becomes a return to paradise, the birth of each child a return to unity and innocence. This is all the more significant when one realizes that Runge intended to place the paintings in a chapel situated in a churchyard, which was also a graveyard. What more poignant way was there to express the theme of rebirth, the resurrection of Aurora from her descent in the evening and entombment at night? The entire cycle would have been magnificently arrayed in an architectural milieu which would have by virtue of its spiritual connotation in Western culture evoked in the viewer intense self-examination, meditation on the nature of human experience and the assurance of the immortality of one's soul.

Conclusion: Runge's Soteriology

What was so striking in Suger's account of his mystical experience in the decorated interior of St. Denis was his elevation above the mundane: transport from the material to the immaterial. A very similar idea is found in Runge. In a footnote to his letter to Goethe of July 3, 1806, on color, Runge wrote: "One would like to say that, if we view the elements of color as being in the process of

embodiment, transparency would be the fourth dimension which dissolves our notion of the body, or surpasses it."[63] This Lichtmetaphysik pervades much of Western mysticism, no doubt largely due to the generally Neoplatonic element in much of Christian mysticism, and in Runge performed a distinctly soteriological function; that is, it served as a basic symbol of salvation. In a letter to Tieck of March 29, 1805, he organized vertically the elements of "bright and dark," intersecting the horizontal "white and black" to form a cross. He added that all colors were transparent until they were mixed with black and white when they became bodily. He told Tieck that the world was saved from death and hell by Christ's death on the cross and "through the cross the light of heaven is made known to us in faith..." Then he posited that Christ's splendor was mirrored in nature for humanity and that he had desired to indicate the distinction of transparent and opaque color in his Tageszeiten.

Earlier in this same letter he conceded that the "wonderful essence of the three pure colors will not be able to perfect anything (for us), save only in the abstract, since this paradise is locked-up to us." As an artistic symbol, paradise for Runge was not a primordial event to be literally achieved in this world, but rather a state of inward being,[64] accessible through the passionate experience of one's own immortality. Runge believed that the human

soul was God's purest image in the world. Therefore, to cultivate this image in spiritual experience in nature and art represented a return---in spirit if not in body---to the harmony of man and God in Eden.

One suspects, therefore, that the ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk played a fundamental role in regaining an Ahnung or sensation of this primordial unity. In order to re-enter the paradisical state of complete harmony, one must surpass the world of multiplicity and fragmentation into which mankind was originally expelled. As pointed out at the close of Chapter Three, the Morgen image was only one of four images which belonged together as a whole. Consequently, if it depicts the first stage in the cosmological process of existence, it represents the entrance of spirit into matter. But as such it is a message of hope inasmuch as it proclaims the incarnation. The result, had Runge completed his group, would have been a new art of landscape based primarily on color depicting the Stufenfolge or graduation from spirit to matter (ideal to real) and matter to spirit (real to ideal).

The passage from Runge's letter of March 9, 1802, to Daniel quoted at the close of Chapter Two revealed a personality impassioned by the experience of nature. Immersed in nature's immense space, overwhelmed by its inexhaustible richness, Runge depicted his soul as elevated into mystical rapture beyond the normal bounds of space and time. Indeed,

he stated immediately following this profusion that the deep awareness of the soul enabled one to "see how everything originated, was and is gone, how everything originates, is present and passes about us, and how all will originate, will be and will again pass away." He described this experience of transcendance, which clarified to him the fleeting nature of time and matter, as "the clearest and most certain consciousness of ourselves and our own immortality."

This supreme awareness of the passage of time expresses what Runge depicted visually in the Tageszeiten: the temporal nature of reality and the soul's immersion therein. Clearly, the result of viewing the Tageszeiten was to have been no different than Runge's ecstatic experience of nature recorded in the letter of March 9, 1802. Runge sought to create a moment above or beyond time which would produce an awareness of the viewer's own immortality. This Runge could accomplish best by creating an environment which would separate the viewer from the mundane world. His imagery would depict the course of physical events beginning with the birth of the soul in the entrance of spirit into matter and culminating in the death of the body and the return of the soul to its former state. The painted images of Morgen represented to Runge a primordial state of nature's luminous character---a state that had since been lost, i.e., through the Fall into sin. As such, Der Grosse and Kleine

Morgen functioned as anagogic devices disclosing a vision of the primordial relationship of God and man and what it was that awaited humanity beyond the progression of time. Because Runge regretted that his own age was not the age depicted in Der Morgen, it seems clear that the next three images represent the progression towards death; yet, also a regaining of the original androgyny of the soul which signified infinite oneness or unity as opposed to finite fragmentation or multiplicity. There remains no doubt, therefore, that the Tageszeiten were an allegory of the biblical paradigm of paradise, fall and reconciliation in Runge's mind.

It has been demonstrated that Runge sought to direct the viewer of the Tageszeiten towards an experience of the transience of time and the immortality of the soul. To this end Runge hoped to regain the condition of humanity in illo tempore. Furthermore, believing that nature could reveal God's presence, Runge held that the art of landscape should regain the attitude of the primeval age when the soul stood in greater proximity to God through a transparent nature. That Runge would have chosen the model of the Gothic church interior and sought to synthesize a number of aural, visual and tactile media to express these basic cosmological views was quite appropriate for he conceived of the Ahnung von

Gott (awareness of God) as an event when the viewer entered into the presence of God.

The experience of the Tageszeiten displayed in a self-contained environment accompanied by music and poetry would have indeed been a sacred moment for Runge. As discussed in the first chapter, in the Western tradition the liturgical presentation of the most Sacred, the sacramental Host, motivated the development of an art form combining media into a unity of effect creating an ambience in which the viewer became participant, drawn into the divine presence. Therefore, it seems likely that Runge would have found an excellent model for his Gesamtkunstwerk in the highly orchestrated church interiors designed to enhance the celebration of the moment of transubstantiation and the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice. In the character of such a Mass in which all the senses of the participant were intensely involved in the event of God's manifestation in the sacramental host and, in the case of a Baroque interior, was surrounded by a celestial epiphany descending from the painted vault above and breaking forth from the undulating walls and towering altar about and before him, on the basis of the experience of this ambience of divine presence and departure from profane time, Runge pursued his "total art work" which might have depicted in fuller and more convincing array what the painted Morgen versions only begin to. He would have

employed in his complete group the elements of nature to express how time moves towards ultimate reconciliation in God through death. Nature was to speak in its color and form of an original unity, a fragmentation and the progression towards reunification. Just as the Catholic priest celebrated in the Mass the sublime transubstantiation of matter into the Host, so Runge longed to express the incarnation of spirit and complementary transubstantiation of matter in the form of landscape. In so doing, the viewer would be elevated in the contemplation of spirit, experience his own immortality and receive the proclamation of his salvation in mystical rebirth into harmony with the Divinity.

Notes: Chapter Five

1. As Reinhold Heller has pointed out---see Preface.

2. Letter of March 9, 1802.

3. April 6, 1803.

4. Alfred R. Neumann, "Philipp Otto Runge and Music," Germanic Review 27, 1952, pp. 165-172.

5. Linda Siegel, "Synaesthesia and the Paintings of Caspar David Friedrich," Art Journal 33, Spring 1974, pp. 196-204, a rambling but informative discussion---particularly on the subject of music and German Romanticism, see especially pp. 202-203.

6. To Daniel, April 6, 1803.

7. To Schildener, July 11, 1805.

8. To Daniel, January 30, 1803: "For all four pictures belong closely together and I have completely worked them out like a symphony."

9. June 15, 1803.

10. To Daniel, February 22, 1803.

11. Also called Tageszeiten.

12. William Vaughan, German Romantic Painting, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 47.

13. Ibid.

14. See Werner Hoffmann's two essays in Runge in seiner Zeit: "Runges Versuch, das verlorene Paradies aus seiner Notwendigkeit zu rekonstruieren," pp. 31-45; "Geometrie und Farbe," pp. 136-140 for discussion of Runge's geometrical compositions.

15. In Lorenz Eitner, op. cit., p. 3.

16. Hanna Hohl, Runge in seiner Zeit, p. 190 refers to the angel's habitat as a "paradise of flowers," a realm set-off from the labor of the two figures.

17. To Daniel, February 22, 1803.

18. Ibid.

19. Runge uses the noun Tröster after Luther's translation of the John text.

20. Hohl's list, Runge in seiner Zeit, p. 188.

21. To Schildener, March 1806.

22. Originally Runge had entreated Tieck to compose a text for the images; to Pauline, March 9, 1803. See also Traeger, op. cit., p. 132.

23. To Daniel, January 30, 1803; also Traeger, op. cit., p. 156.

24. Traeger, ibid., p. 433.

25. Ibid., p. 418.

26. Ibid.

27. Whereas Waezoldt discerns four stages of development (child preceding landscape), Traeger, ibid., prefers three: Aurora followed by landscape and child, after which a final phase consisted in pulling all the elements into a successful compositional scheme.

28. See Catalog no. 385, Traeger, ibid., which shows an intermediate stage.

29. Op. cit., p. 63.

30. To Daniel, November 27, 1802; Hohl, Runge in seiner Zeit, p. 204, note 6, cites von Mahltzahn in regard to the artist's own description of the two spheres as sun and earth.

31. Traeger points this out, op. cit., p. 420; catalog no. 384, p. 419.

32. This study does not allow for the sort of extensive iconographical analysis which would trace down the images which influenced Runge from a purely formal point of view. Suffice it to say, therefore, that many scholars have pointed to the similarity of Botticelli's figure of Truth from Calumny of Apelles, Uffizi, in Traeger, op. cit., figure 30 and page 160, and the same artist's Birth of Venus, in Hohl, op. cit., p. 205. An image reproduced here that I am not aware anyone has suggested as influential is Dürer's wood-cut, The Elevation of St. Mary Magdalen (fig. 14).

Considering Runge's intense admiration for the German master and the similarity of the figures---the gesture, long hair, attending cherubs and the integration into a landscape of Dürer's figure---it may be that the woodcut served as a visual source.

33. To Quistorp, June 26, 1807.

34. Francke, op. cit.

35. Op. cit., p. 158.

36. Hohl, op. cit., pp. 204-205; see note 9 for part of Görres text.

37. In Traeger, op. cit.

38. That is, the Tageszeiten; op. cit., p. 189.

39. See the letter to Baier, September 26, 1806, for the explicit relationship Runge intended between transparent color, landscape elements and spiritual ascent.

40. Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p. 53.

41. Op. cit., p. 54.

42. Traeger, ibid., pp. 466-467.

43. Ibid., p. 133.

44. June 13, 1809.

45. See Traeger, op. cit., p. 152, on the subject of literary and musical accompaniment.

46. Op. cit., p. 166.

47. Philippians 2:6-7, R.S.V.

48. Op. cit., pp. 163, 166.

49. Recall the letter to his father of February 2, 1810, cited earlier, in which the notion of a progression from dark to light was regarded as the revelation of God in nature as depicted on Runge's colorsphere.

50. To Daniel, January 30, 1803.

51. Hohl, op. cit., p. 205.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., p. 204.

54. In Traeger, op. cit., note 482, p. 224.

55. Ibid., p. 160.

56. To Daniel, June 26, 1803.

57. Traeger, op. cit., p. 159.

58. Though these remarks are based on the Kleine Morgen, finished studies of the outer frame for the large Morgen make it clear that Runge intended essentially for the same design for the second version. See catalog numbers 502-504 in Traeger, op. cit.; also number 506/I for a reproduction of a photomontage by Stubbe of the studies around the inner image.

59. Op. cit., p. 164.

60. To Daniel, February, 1802.

61. Curt Grützmacher, op. cit., p. 52.

62. June 10, 1803.

63. The ninth footnote in this long letter.

64. "...paradise....lies within us...." To Daniel, November 7, 1802.

Figure 1. Wallfahrtskirche St. Marie

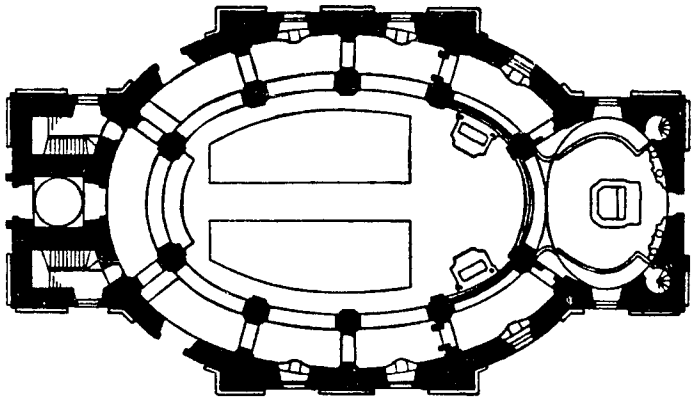

Figure 2. Floorplan of the Wallfahrtskirche Steinhausen

Figure 3. Quelle und Dichter

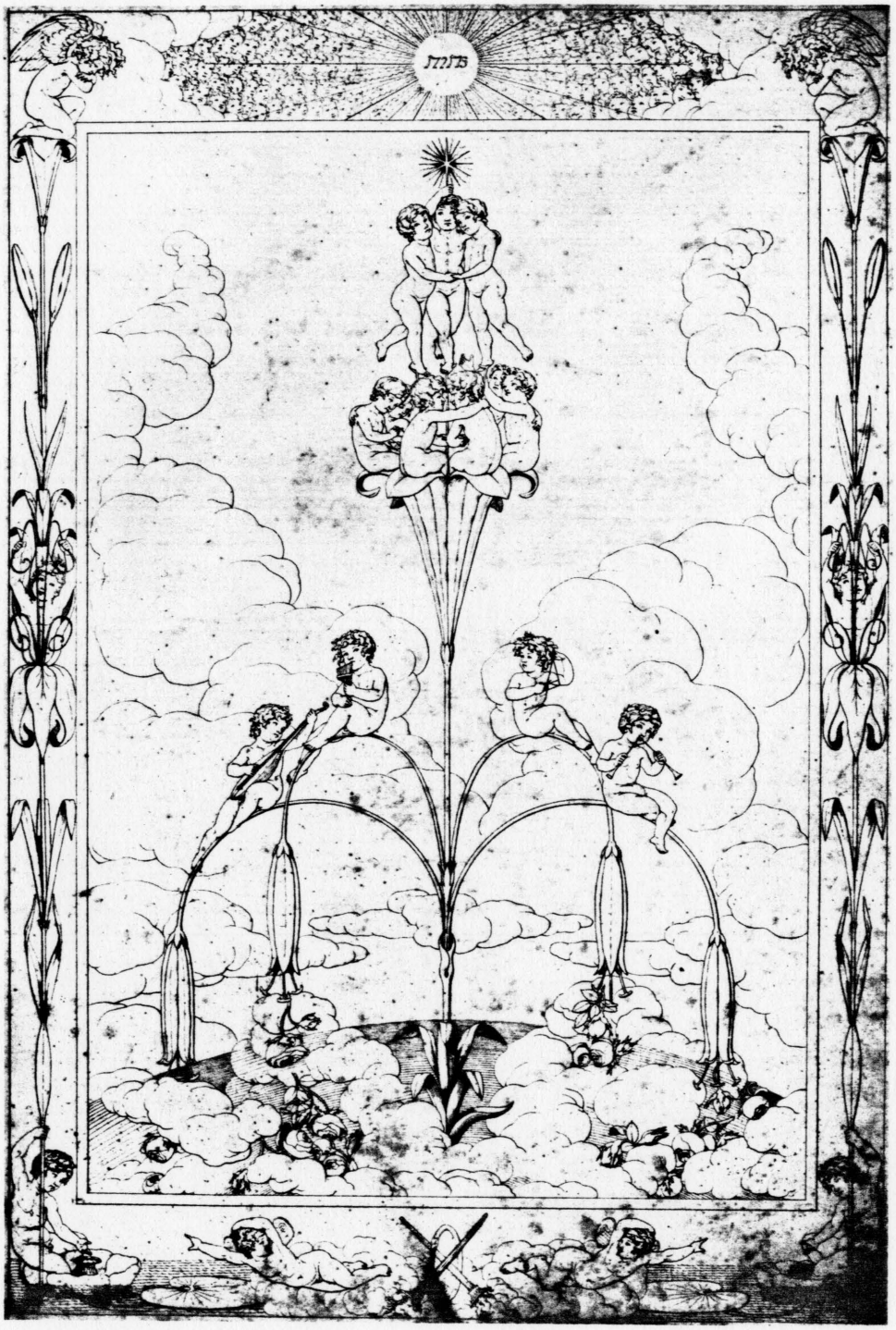

Figure 4. Der Morgen

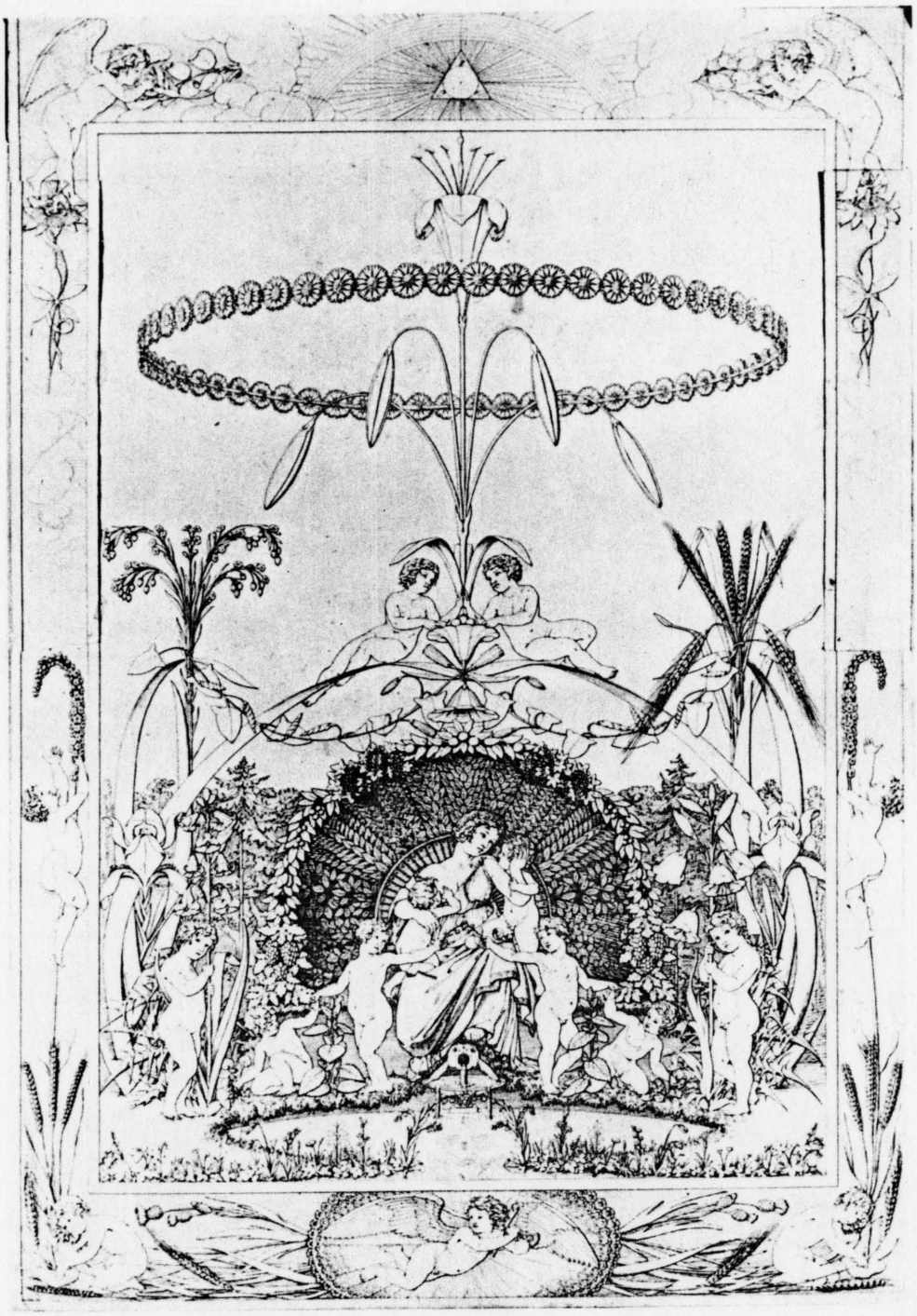

Figure 5. Der Tag

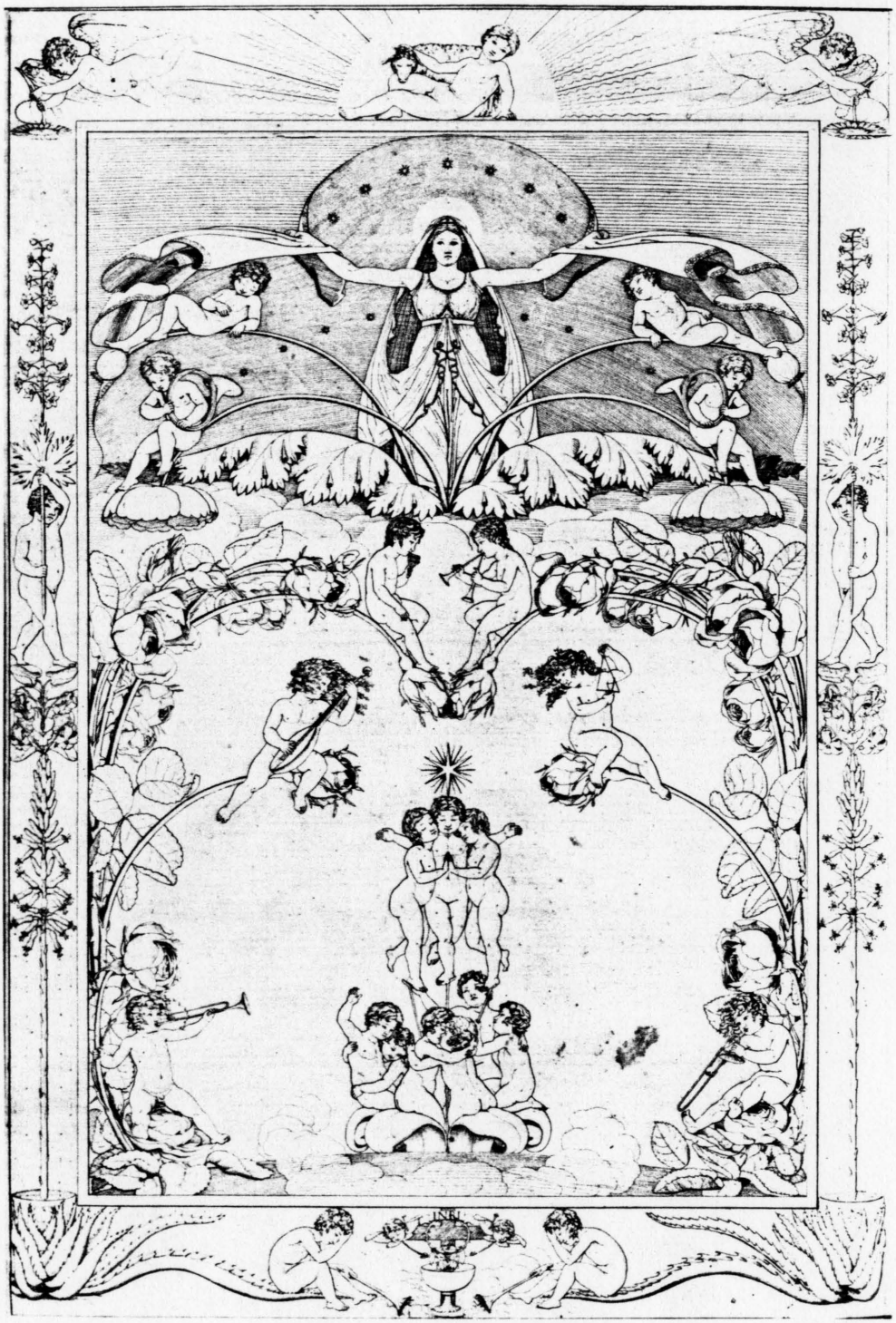

Figure 6. Der Abend

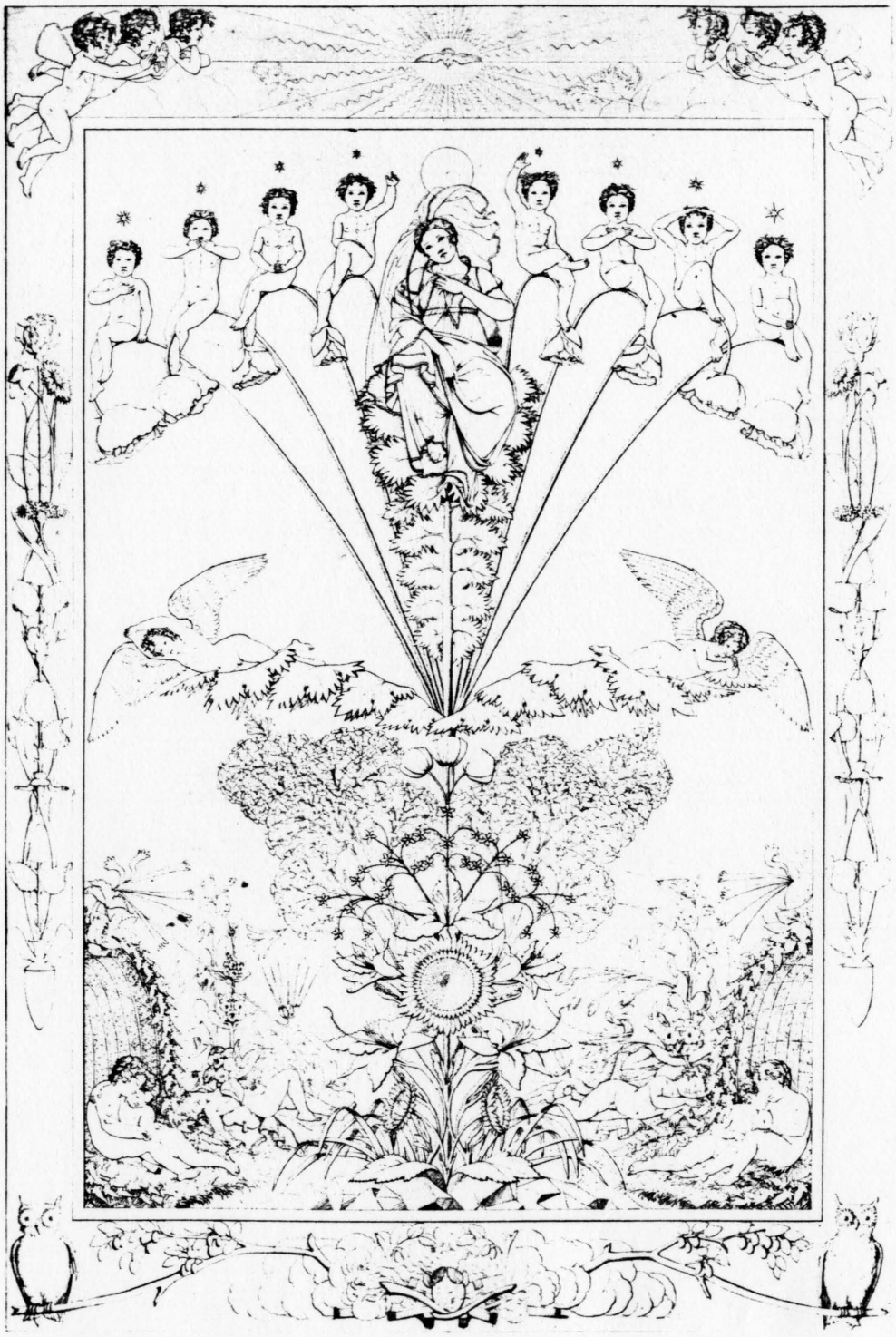

Figure 7. Die Nacht

Figure 8. Der Kleine Morgen

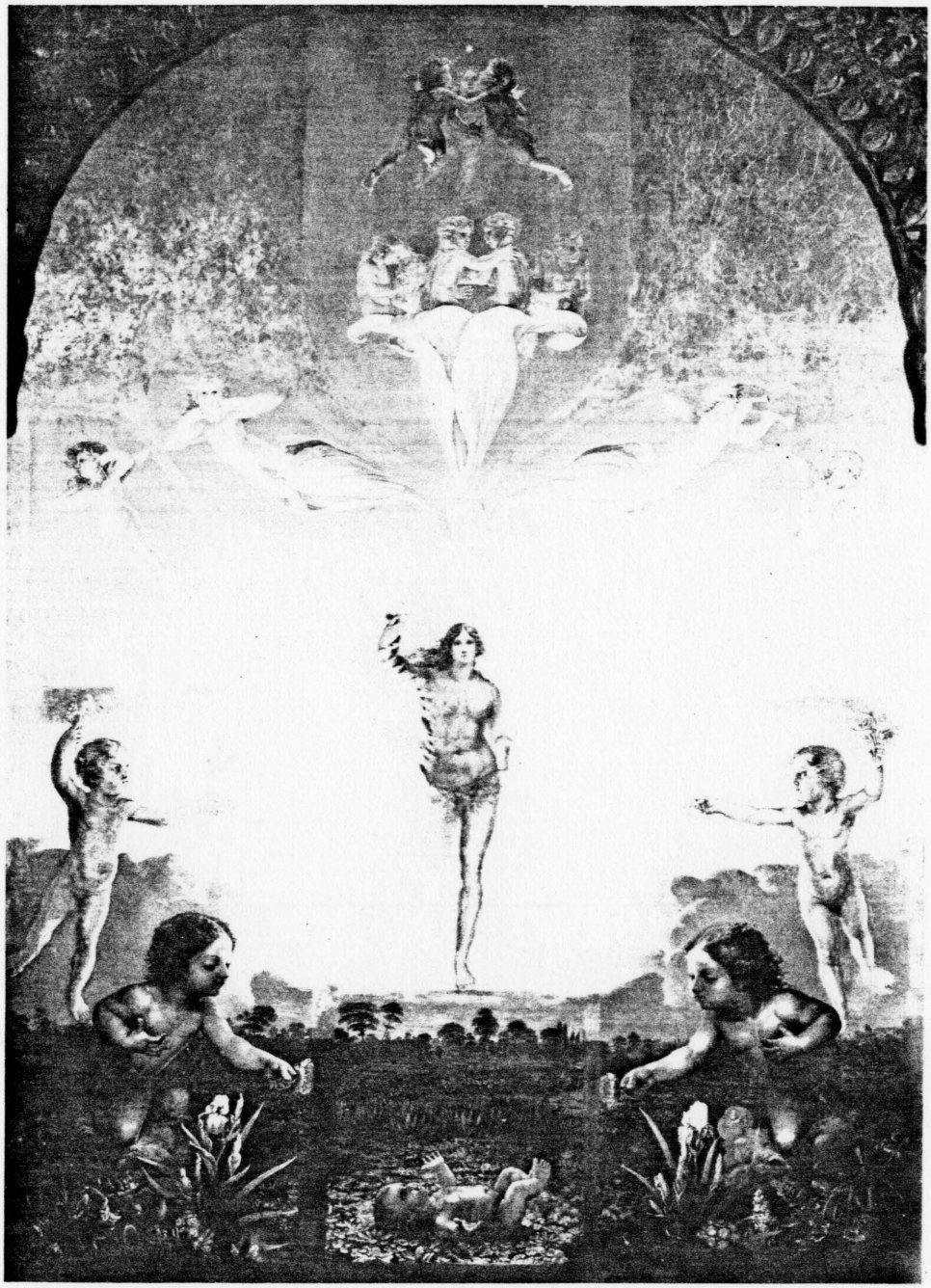

Figure 9. Der Grosse Morgen

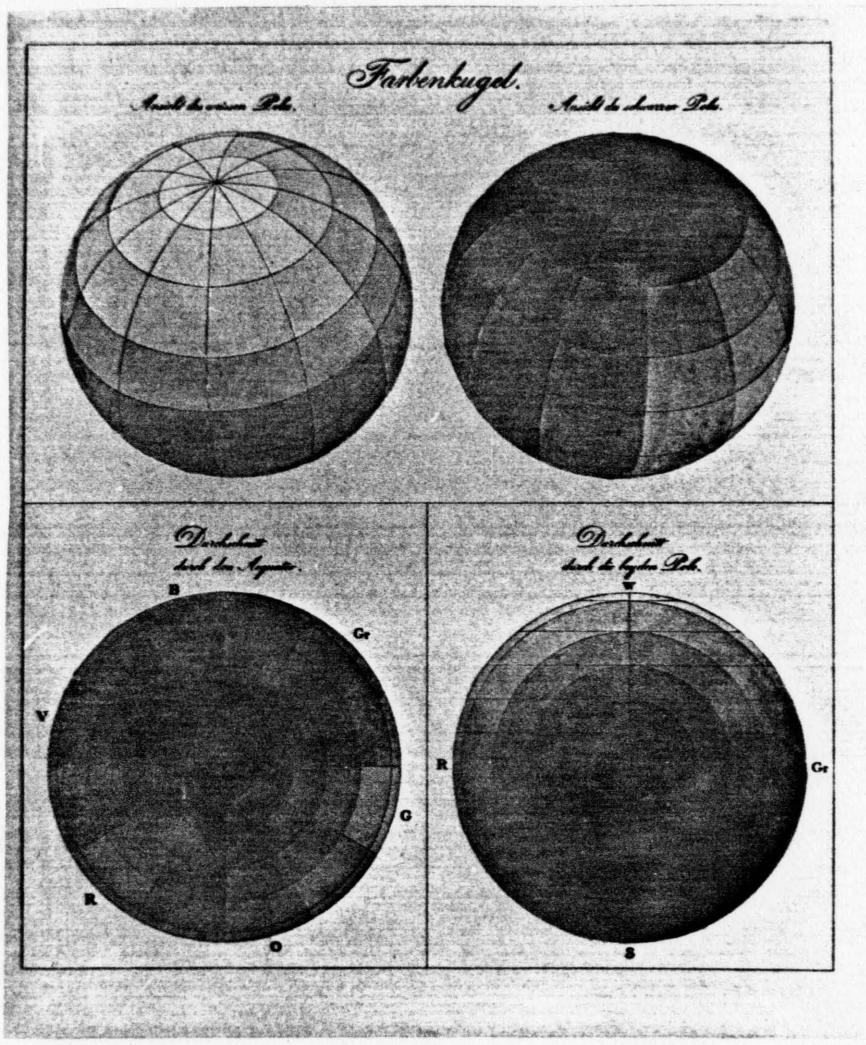

Figure 10. Color Sphere

Figure 11. Die Ruhe auf der Flucht

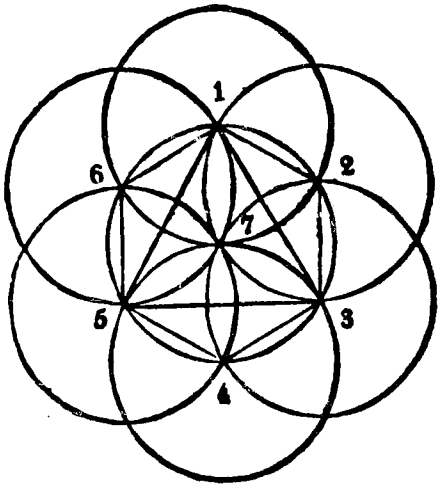

Figure 12. Die erste Figur der Schöpfung

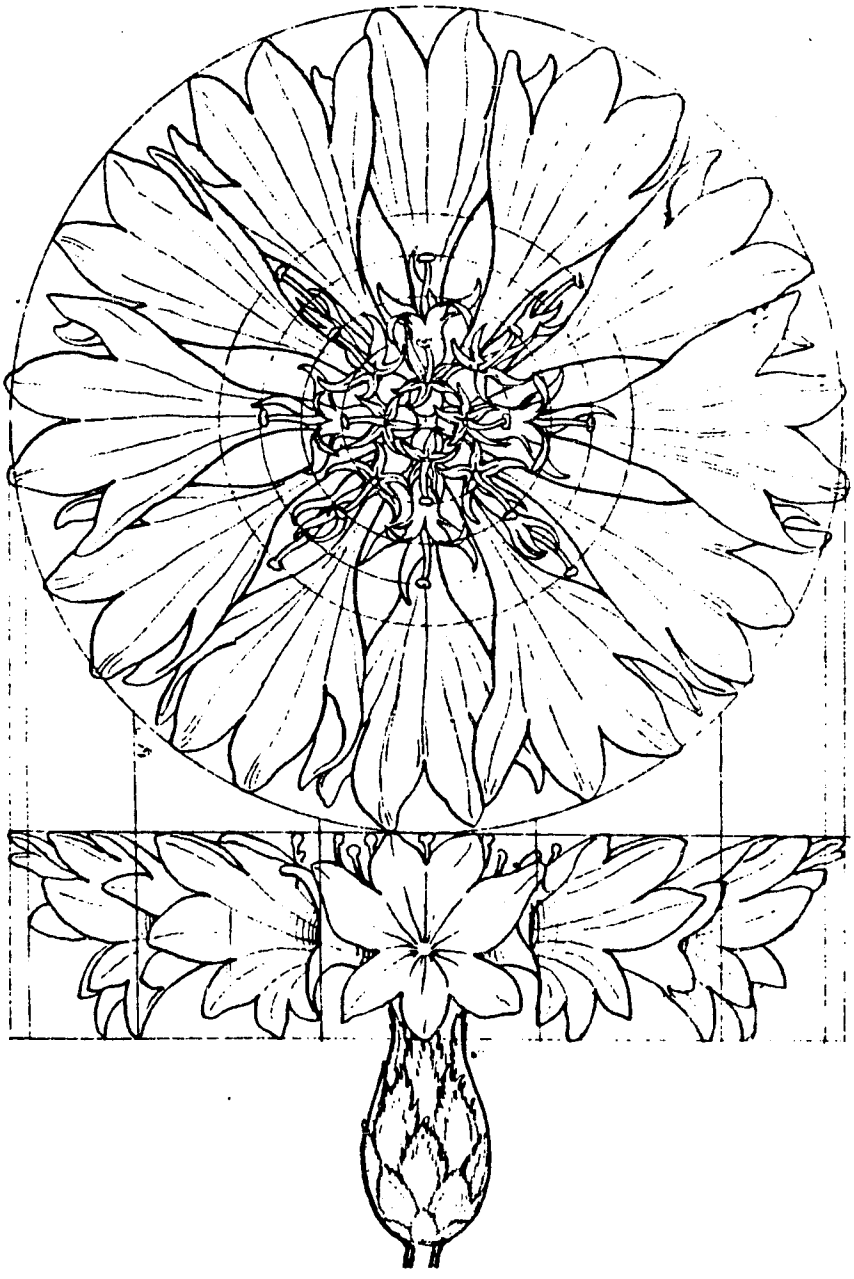

Figure 13. Die Kornblume

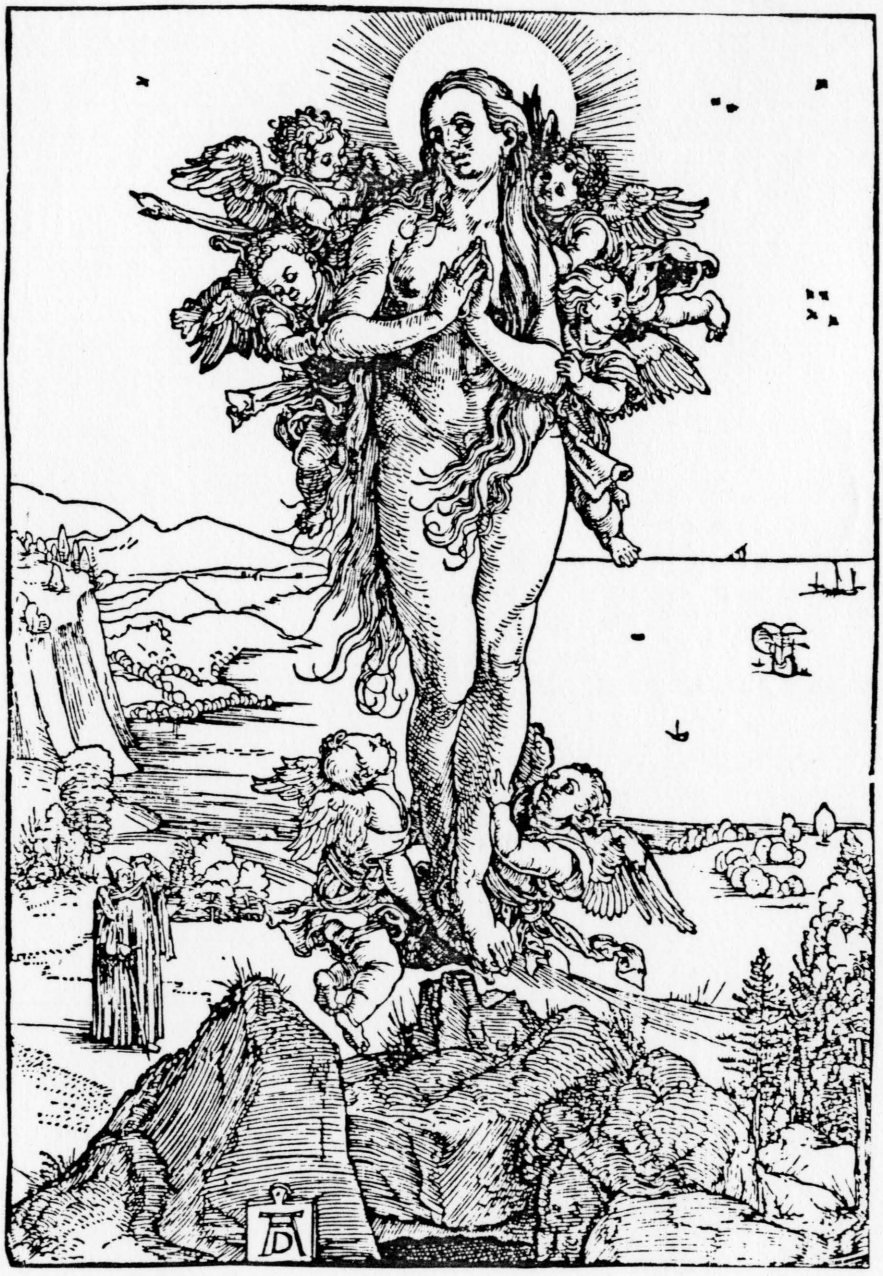

Figure 14. Elevation of St. Mary Magdalen, Albrecht Dürer

APPENDIX A

BÖHME'S DOCTRINE OF THE SEVEN PROPERTIES

Böhme designated the seven properties, in accord with antique philosophy, as the seven celestial bodies: Saturn, Mercury, Mars, Sol, Venus, Jupiter and Luna.[1] The first form, Saturn, is described as that harsh, hardening, astringent force in nature which is turned inward and selfish. Saturn contrasts with the second form, Mercury, which is an aggressive, expansive force. Mars is produced by the opposition of the former two and is thus described as an anguished quality. Sol, the fourth quality, is characterized as an explosive and flaming property in things. Venus is harmonious and associated with the binding effect of love. The sixth quality is Jupiter, which is regarded as the "jovial" expression of the preceding "venetian harmony." Finally, there is Luna, considered to be the mother of all things and the embodiment of qualities one through six.

Böhme wrote that these properties generate one another as a whole system and not merely in a linear fashion.

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1. The Signature of All Things, p. 92.

For this reason he maintained that all seven are in each thing and that the generation is constant and without end. He also divided the seven into two triads which represent two basic principles of God's manifestation (who originally created these principles from his undifferentiated Ungrund that existence or reality might emerge): the dark and the light, God's wrathful anger and God's soothing love. Of the dark aspect are Saturn, Mercury and Mars; of the light aspect are Luna, Jupiter and Venus (note general male versus female scheme). Furthermore, these two sets of three are paired off respectively leaving Sol (#4) in the center to represent the point of symmetry between the pairing and to constitute their mediation or balance: Saturn (1)---Luna (7); Mercury (2)---Jupiter (6); Mars (3)---Venus (5).

In order to make it clear how such properties are "read" in nature and what the value of this is, we can take a brief look at some passages from the Signatura Rerum. Here Böhme spoke of the manifestations of the properties in medicinal plants used to effect the cure of bodily disorders, which were themselves considered to be specific imbalances of the seven properties. Charles A. Muses writes: "the signature of anything...is the precise configuration of the differing representation, in relative strengths, of each of the basic properties therein."[1]

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1. Charles A. Muses, Illumination on Jacob Boehme: The Work of Dionysius Andreas Freher, King's Crown Press: New York, 1951, p. 136.

Balance or health is regained by taking appropriate measures of material containing the required properties. In the first passages Böhme discussed the identification of signatures; in the last one he discussed their medical application:

> If the Saturnine property be predominant, and chief in a thing, then it is of a black, greyish color, hard and spare, sharp, sour or salt in taste; it gets a long, lean body (stalk or blossom), grey in the eyes (or whitish buds in vegetables), or a dark blue, of a very slender body, but of hard touch, though the property of Saturn is very seldom alone master in a thing; for he soon awakens Mars with his hard impression, who makes his property bending and crooked, full of knots, and hinders the body from growing high, but is full of branches and rugged, as is to be seen in oak-shrubs, and the like trees.[1]

If Venus is involved, however, the result will be a "tall body; for it gives sweetness into Saturn's impression..."

> But if Jupiter be next to him (Saturn) in the property of Venus, so that Jupiter is stronger in Saturn than Venus, and Mars under Venus, then it falls out to be a very excellent, fair body, full of virtue and power; also a good taste.[2]

Böhme then discussed the curative process:

> Mars belongs to the core of every Mars-like sickness, which is of heat, and pricking pangs: But let the physician know that he must first correct and qualify Mars, which he intends to administer, with Jupiter and Venus, that the wrath of Mars may be changed into joy, and then he will also change the sickness in the body into joy.[3]

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1. The Signature of All Things

2. Ibid., p. 98.

3. Ibid., p. 101.

APPENDIX B

RUNGE'S ERSTE FIGUR DER SCHÖPFUNG

In a letter to Tieck in the spring of 1803, Runge discussed the original generation of the elements of art in connection with a diagram he called die erste Figur der Schöpfung (First Figure of Creation---fig. 12). He explained that this figure depicts the generation of certain original events in accord with the six days of creation and the seventh day as that in which "everything is united again; which is the Almighty." Runge saw this self-generating as the formation of a multiplicity representing the forces of darkness which are expansive in opposition to that force which is cohesive and longs for unity. This diagram represents the fragmentation of the primordial unity. He wrote

> The world has divided itself into "I" and "You," in circle and line...In the soul man gathers the rays together, in science (Wissenschaft) they fly apart from one another; the rays split, man loses himself in the immense space, the innocence of the soul is lost like a grain of sand...

This motif is repeated in the 1806 Elemente der Farben in his discussion of reducing the "diversity and motion" of nature.[1]

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1. See note 27, Chapter Four above.

The character of self-generation, the number of seven aspects, the connection with the Genesis text and account of creation, the archetypal contrast of dark and light and the salient motifs of unity and fragmentation into multiplicity suggest that Runge's diagram might be seen as an adaptation of Böhme's scheme of the seven qualities (see Appendix A). Both cosmogonies express both thinkers' views of the spiritual aspiration of man and his relationship to God.[1]

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1. For further discussion of the erste Figur see Werner Hoffmann's Runge in seiner Zeit, pp. 31-45; 136-140. Also: Runge: Fragen und Antworten, Matile, pp. 66-77.

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