



Hymns to the Night

Novalis

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Hymns to the Night - A Poetic Complementary Alternative to Reason and Logic

Hymns to the Night is one of the best, as well as the last works of Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg - also known through the pseudonym Novalis.

Hymns to the Night is a heartfelt, poetic work that stands at the boundary between the Age of Enlightenment and the early era of Germanic and English Romanticism, depicting and even addressing the "dark side" that resides in us all through a set of short romantic letters that Novalis masterfully crafts by taking us beyond the realms of rational thought.

It may come as a surprise to know, for anyone who has read Hymns to the Night, that Novalis was a remarkable rational thinker and philosopher, even becoming successful by managing his own salt mine. The lure of the supernatural, however, captivated him as the premise of this great work was the existence of a dark side to everything we encounter in life, in which clearly defined shapes and intentions gradually lose their definition, and are not only blurred, but seem to take on an obscure life independent through its purpose from our own daily pursuits.

Novalis bridged the gap between the enlightened and romantic era by accepting reason as part of life and recognizing its value, but also accepting its limitations and realizing that an added component is required in order to fully understand life in all its intricate, majestic beauty.

The poetic tone, deep metaphors and intense, often fantastical picture painted through Hymns to the Night aims to depict this fact like no other work presented by other philosophers during Novalis' lifetime, and the book is considered a true work of art by many modern thinkers as well, seen as portraying a young man's personal mythology of light and darkness, as he is attempting to rationalize his fiancé's untimely death.

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Nancy Smith:

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