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## The Unity of Nature and Mind: Hölderlin, Novalis and Schelling on a New Mythology and the Absolute

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**Abstract.** The authors of the article examine the philosophical heritage of Hölderlin, Novalis and Schelling in order to discover the continuity of ideas and directions for their further development in the work of F. W. J. Schelling. Romantic thought has largely formed the subject field for contemporary trends in philosophy, and in many respects this merit belongs to Schelling, whose early philosophical legacy correlates with the ideas of the romanticists. In particular, this concerns questions about the essence of myth and the problems of the philosophy of art. These concepts were actively used by F. Schlegel in his theoretical works. However, he did so on the material of poetic interpretation of the philosophical content of non-academic romanticists, who figuratively expressed thoughts about the unity of nature and the mind, about the nature of myth and its relationship with art. Schelling subsequently presented similar ideas in “The System of Transcendental Idealism” and “The Philosophy of Art”, significantly improving and expanding the original romantic ideas. This addition to the romantic project led to the formation of a new way of philosophical reflection and became a theoretical basis for the formation of modern philosophy. We will successively discuss the concepts of the unity of nature and mind, the new mythology, and discover the similarities between the ideas of Schelling, Hölderlin and Novalis, as well as identify the way Schelling goes further.

**Keywords:** Romanticism, Schelling, Hölderlin, Novalis, myth, art (cultural studies).

Research area: history of philosophy.

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## Единство разума и мира: Гельдерлин, Новалис и Шеллинг о новой мифологии и понятии Абсолюта

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена рассмотрению философского наследия Гельдерлина, Новалиса и Шеллинга с целью обнаружения преемственности идей и направлений их дальнейшего развития в творчестве Ф. В. Й. Шеллинга. Романтическая мысль в значительной мере сформировала предметное поле для современных направлений философии, и во многом эта заслуга принадлежит именно Шеллингу, раннее философское наследие которого коррелирует с идеями романтиков. В частности, это касается вопросов о сущности мифа и проблематики философии искусства. Так, обозначенные концепты активно используются Ф. Шлегелем в теоретических работах. Однако не менее значимым оказывается материал поэтической интерпретации философского содержания у неакадемических романтиков, которые образно выразили мысли о единстве разума и мира, о природе мифа и его связи с искусством. Впоследствии Шеллинг изложил схожие идеи в «Системе трансцендентального идеализма» и в «Философии искусства», значительно усовершенствовав и расширив первоначальные романтические идеи. Это дополнение романтического проекта привело к становлению нового способа философской рефлексии и стало теоретической базой для становления современной философии. В статье последовательно рассматриваются концепты единства разума и мира, новой мифологии, а также обнаруживаются сходства идей Шеллинга, Гельдерлина и Новалиса, выявляется путь, которым Шеллинг идет дальше.

**Ключевые слова:** романтизм, Шеллинг, Гельдерлин, Новалис, миф, искусства (культурология).

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### Introduction

Romantic intellectual heritage is a heterogeneous material that includes philosophical poetry and poetic philosophy, artistic and theoretical creativity. Starting with romanticism, philosophy is increasingly characterised by a move away from traditional strictly scientific forms of presentation towards literature and creative writing, which is particularly indicative in the existential philosophy of the 20th century,

for example. The phrase ‘philosophical novel’ and ‘philosophical story’ does not surprise the modern reader, but it should be borne in mind that the process of merging the forms of intellectual expression of ideas and feelings was not a one-way process. Rather, it was the result of a worldview revolution in the ranks of the intellectual elite at the end of the 18th century in Germany: values, a way of thinking about the status quo and social processes, understanding

the structure of thinking and strategies for positioning people in the world were revised under the influence of the ideas of the Great French Revolution. Romanticists, for their part, made a spiritual revolution, broadening the understanding of rational to include intellectual intuition, following Kant and Fichte, and thus creating the basis for the emergence of non-classical types of philosophical thinking.

At the same time, there is a strong research tradition associated with the study of romantic heritage and its meaning. On the literature side, the Russian school has been marked by the works of researchers: A. V. Karelsky, M. I. Bent, N. Ya. Berkovsky, A. L. Volsky, V. I. Greshnikh, N. A. Gulyaev and A. S. Dmitriev, A. I. Zherebin, V. M. Zhir-munsky, I. V. Kartashova, E. N. Kornilova, A. V. Mikhailov, S. V. Turaev, F. P. Fedorov.

Philosophical tradition in Russia has shown a research interest in the field of Romanticism in the works of the following key authors: Yu. L. Arkan, R. M. Gabitova, P. P. Gaidenko, T. I. Lipich, V. V. Lipich, N. N. Misyurov.

Among German-speaking authors it is necessary to mention both the closest contemporaries of Heine G. and Geim R., and researchers of the turn of XX–XXI centuries: Manfred Frank, Gerhart Hoffmeister, Rüdiger Safranski, Gerhard Schulz, Lars-Thade Ulrichs.

As for the philosophical study of Schelling's legacy, it can be recognized not only as more extensive, but also methodologically more organized than research on the philosophy of romanticism. In addition to Russian researchers of the heritage of Schelling (P. S. Popov, M. F. Ovsyannikov, A. V. Gulyga, P. P. Gaidenko, P. V. Rezvykh), it is necessary to indicate foreign historians of philosophy: W. Erhard, H. Fuhrmans, J. Hennigfeld, A. Hutter, W. Kasper, P. Kondylis, T. Leinkauf et al.

However, it should be noted that these personalities do not exhaust the entire body of research on the issues addressed in the article, but it is the material identified that is in the focus of this research.

### **Theoretical framework**

The aim of the study is to identify the relationship and continuity of ideas between the

philosophical views of early German romanticism (Hölderlin, Novalis) and those of Schelling. To achieve this goal, work is being done to establish the type of relationship – is it about synthesis or interpretation? Where do we find similarities and differences in approaches? How do Schelling's ideas correlate with the poetic views of romanticists?

One of the main difficulties in achieving this research aim is the heterogeneity of historiographic material associated with Schelling's heritage. Despite the great popularity of the main works of the thinker, a number of essential handwritten sources have been lost, and most of the extant handwritten sources have not been published. The difficulty is also that many of these texts were probably just Schelling's attempts to get closer to building some kind of holistic system that he never achieved. As P. V. Rezvykh writes, the entire legacy of the philosopher can be seen as an evolution of ideas, trying to reconstruct some intermediate and final results (Rezvykh, 2011). The fragmentariness and incompleteness of the texts resembles Schelling to the romanticists for whom this method of thought design is almost decisive, as it leaves a mystical understatement, on the one hand, and an opportunity to unfold an idea, on the other. Novalis calls the fragments "literary seeds" from which something significant can grow (Novalis, 2014: 111).

However, for the accuracy of the presentation of the material, we will limit ourselves to a range of issues that for the romantics themselves were key in theorizing: 1) on myth and mythology and 2) on the relationship between myth and art and the Absolute.

### **Statement of the problem**

Russian historical and philosophical research shows a methodological trend towards the conceptual separation of Schelling and romanticists. This is rather due to an artificial division into areas of humanitarian research, where Schelling is considered to be a philosopher and romanticists belong to the artistic sphere. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the ideas and concepts of the romantic authors were born in a consonant manner, based on the unity of their biographical and intellectual lines. This kind of disciplinary division of material must

therefore be overcome in philosophical research on romantic heritage. This article undertakes a comparative analysis and identification of the intersection points between Schelling's ideas and early German romanticists on the issue of understanding the myth and its meaning in a broad historical and cultural context.

### Methods

The research objectives of this article involve the use of a comprehensive system methodology. In order to analyse the texts of Hölderlin, Novalis and Schelling, as well as to work with modern research on the declared topics, it is necessary to use various approaches, primarily historical-philosophical, hermeneutic, comparativist methods, as well as methods of structural-typological analysis. The use of these tools enables conceptual synthesis and modeling of the substantive continuity of the ideas of Hölderlin, Novalis and Schelling in the intellectual field of German philosophy.

### Discussion

Thus, it is fair to recognise the artificial division between the fields of humanitarian knowledge as a peculiarity of the study of romanticism. Who are romantics? Are they subtle poets and writers or theorists of a new type of thinking and philosophical reflection on reality? When you look at their work in detail, you can confidently say that such a division into rational and sensual is impossible in their case. This is confirmed by fragments of works that are accepted to be classified as the theoretical legacy of romanticists. In this case we mean Hölderlin's small sketch "Judgment and Being" (1795) and the essay "The Oldest Systematic Programme of German Idealism" (1796) found in Hegel's papers, which obviously spells out part of the "romantic program" of a new type of rationality, a new mythology.

Romanticism in its own way comprehends many of today's intellectual processes and offers an original perspective on science, religion, art and philosophy. Romantic thinking has a significant share of syncretism and tries not to separate thinking from feeling, but to realise what is divided in its unity: nature and man, subject and object.

This approach is assumed to be the opposite to the thinking tradition that existed until then in philosophy, going from Descartes to Hegel, namely, drawing the line between thinking and being, cognising being by identifying the thinking subject and contrasting his or her being. Romanticism, on the other hand, funds the inviolability of the unity of nature and mind, which is expressed in the concept of the Absolute. This idea was formulated by Hölderlin in a small essay in 1795, and a few years later, in 1800, it was greatly expanded and clarified in "System of transcendental idealism" by Schelling. This is precisely the fact that researcher Luke Fisher points out in the book "Hölderlin's Philosophy of Nature" (Fisher, 2020: 144).

Let us dwell on this point in more detail and draw attention to specific ideas that correlate between the two authors.

The biographies of Schelling and Hölderlin indicate that both were brought up in an identical intellectual tradition, studying at the University of Tübingen at the same time. The friendly relationship and the unity of the intellectual context had an undeniable influence on the formation of thinkers in a symphilosophical way. And even though Hölderlin's life was shaped in such a way that practice-oriented activities dominated his life (home education as well as literary activities), his ideas and authority had a significant impact on the formation of romantic theory, including through Schelling's philosophical efforts.

### *Unity of Nature and Mind*

The project "New Letters on Aesthetic Education" conceived by Hölderlin<sup>1</sup> was intended to significantly broaden Schiller's view of what he called a well-known and similar work. The result of the project was to establish the final unity of the Absolute by merging subject and object through a movement from philosophy (from rational) to poetry, then to religion (to aesthetics) and by revealing the connection between poetry and religion, aspects of sensuality that by then had been left out of due philosophical reflection.

<sup>1</sup> Incomplete project, the main ideas of which can be restored only from the letters and texts of Hölderlin.

In his essay “Judgement and Being” (1795), Hölderlin writes that “identity is not a unification of object and subject that takes place absolutely, therefore identity is not equivalent to Absolute Being”<sup>2</sup> (Hölderlin, 1988: 261). The unity of the subject and object cannot be understood in the form of self-consciousness, because it a priori presupposes that the Self goes beyond the original integrity and is totally contradictory to the idea of unity. Similar thoughts are found in a fragment by Novalis, who states: “We will understand the world if we understand ourselves, for we and the world are the two halves without which the whole does not exist.” (Novalis, 2014: 154) The unity of the parts is important for understanding the romantic philosophical attitude, where “the principle of the whole has a character of analogy, and thus it is closely and directly related to the direct and absolute knowledge of the part”. (Novalis, 2014: 155).

Hölderlin argues with Fichte’s philosophical concept, which involves separating the conscious Self from the material non-Self and further understanding of unity through the necessary contrast. According to Hölderlin, the divided loses the original unity and will never be able to return to it, so the Absolute cannot be divided, it contradicts the essence of its absolute being. At the same time, he realises that such separation is necessary for self-awareness; it manifests itself only in the opposition of the self to myself. So, according to Hölderlin, it turns out that it is impossible to cognise the Absolute using the philosophical method. It should be remembered that until the end of the 18th century, New Age philosophy used a scientifically rational approach in research and used the categories of identity and difference. Therefore, the question of the possibility of cognising the Absolute in another way becomes relevant. Here Hölderlin uses the concept of intellectual intuition<sup>3</sup>, which is capable of “grasping” the desired unity of subject and

object. Thus, the irrational principle comes to the fore in cognitive activity, which is further actualised in the philosophy of early German romantics. Through the intellectual intuition, Hölderlin finds it possible to comprehend the unity of the Absolute aesthetically. It is in the experience of the beautiful that the unity of the Absolute is manifested, while practical reason is only able to infinitely approximate the unity of being, but never to achieve it. This turns out to be dictated by the property of practical reason, which consists in the separation of the thinking subject and object.

As for Schelling, his early reflections on the role of art and philosophy are tied to a similar concept, which in the “System of Transcendental Idealism” the philosopher, following the Kantian-Fichte tradition, calls intellectual contemplation (*die intellektuelle Anschauung*): “Philosophy, like art, is based on the ability to produce, and the difference between them lies only in the different directions of the producing power. For while in art it is directed outwards to subject the unconscious to reflexion through its products, in philosophy it is directed inwards to subject the unconscious to reflexion through intellectual contemplation. Therefore, the real feeling through which this kind of philosophy should be understood is an aesthetic feeling and that is why art philosophy is the true organ of philosophy” (Schelling, 1987: 242).

### *A New Mythology*

A considerable amount of theoretical research by romantics is devoted to the issue of myth and to understanding its role in history and culture. An understanding of the historical purpose of the German nation and an awareness of historical continuity – a much-needed idea for the realization of national unity during the Napoleonic Wars – are built on the perception of mythology. An indicative and fundamental work in this direction is Jacob Grimm’s work “German Mythology”, which uses multilingual material from the cultural heritage that has influenced the formation of the historical world view of the German people.

In this context, it is necessary to elaborate on the issue of mythology in Schelling and early German romanticism, which is closely related

<sup>2</sup> The English text of the quote is translated by Jacqueline Mariña.

<sup>3</sup> In the introductory article to Schelling’s collection of works, A. Gulyga also uses the term “intuition”, while in the translation of the “System of Transcendental Idealism” into Russian in the 1987 edition, the German word *die Anschauung* is translated as contemplation.

to reflection on the nature of creativity and the role of art. The idea of ancient artistic creation as the highest expression of unity, to which philosophy should return, makes Hölderlin's position close to Schelling. They both considered ancient art to be an example of the most harmonious synthesis of the absolute and the relative, the general and the particular, the objective and the subjective, nature and spirit, necessity and freedom, eternal and transitory. At the same time, the later art of the Christian era was perceived as emphasizing differences rather than establishing unity (Scarfo, 2017: 107).

The idea of art as an organ of philosophy and the need for the latter, in essence, to become a new mythology and poetry is present in the already mentioned "Oldest Systematic Programme of German Idealism": "The philosopher must possess as much aesthetic power as the poet. People without an aesthetic sense are only philosophers of the letter. The philosophy of the spirit is an aesthetic philosophy. One cannot have spirit in anything, one cannot even reason in an inspired way about history, without aesthetic sense <...> In this manner poetry will gain a higher dignity and it will again become at the end what it was at the beginning – the teacher of humanity. For there is no more philosophy, no more history, poetry alone will outlive all other sciences and arts" (Anon., 1996: 4).

In the above excerpt, not only the theme of art as a kind of model for philosophy is interesting, but also a remark about aesthetic sense (*der ästhetische Sinn*). The authors of the Programme argue that a person may not have an aesthetic sense, which is identical to literally misunderstanding ideas. In other words, it is not so much a question of borrowing the philosophy of art's "methodology" as of a fundamentally different way of relating people to the world.

We find a reflection of this thought in *The System of Transcendental Idealism*, where Schelling seeks to discover the relationship between art and philosophical science. The thinker separately emphasises that it is philosophy that must follow art, and not vice versa: "For although science, in its higher function, sets itself the same task as art, for science this task remains endless because of the way it is done; this gives reason to assert that art is the proto-

type of science, that it has achieved something that science has yet to achieve" (Schelling, 1987: 480–481).

Finally, in Schelling's "Philosophy of Art", this point is repeatedly commented in connection with the special role of Homer: "The ancients themselves characterise mythology and – since the latter coincides with Homer for them – Homeric poems as the common root of poetry, history and philosophy. For poetry, mythology is the primal matter from which everything came, the Ocean (to use the image of the ancients), from which all streams flow, just as they return to it again" (Schelling, 1966: 115).

In "The System of Transcendental Idealism", Schelling argues that there are no geniuses in science, because mechanical solutions are available for science (Schelling, 1987: 481), but the motive of the "sensible philosopher" given in the "Oldest Systematic Programme" also appears here, when Schelling proclaims, on the one hand, the fundamental possibility of genius solutions to scientific problems (Schelling, 1987: 481), and, on the other, saying that certain results are available only to geniuses (Schelling, 1987: 482).

The problem of the special role of a genius who finds himself at the junction of the finite and the infinite is revealed by Schelling through his analysis of mythology. It is a genius, an artist, who is able to express the infinite Absolute in the finite form of a work of art. At the same time, a true work of art is distinguished from a worthless painting by the beauty that the artist puts into it through the myth. Schelling repeatedly points to the exceptional nature of this artistic ability in "The Philosophy of Art".

In the same respect, a fragment from the philosopher's speech "On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature" delivered at the Munich Academy of Arts in 1807 is interesting: "Everything is preceded by an eternal concept, delineated in an infinite mind; however, how does this concept translate into reality and into embodiment? It is only through creating knowledge, which is as necessary connected to an infinite mind as in an artist the essence that comprehends the idea of insensible beauty is connected to what sensually embodies it" (Schelling, 1989: 60).

In Novalis' fragments we find similar thoughts about the poet's attempts to unite the absolute and separated, eternal and transient through his prophetic nature. For the poet in the romantic worldview is a mediator between the sensual and supersensible worlds. Therefore, the essence of the poet is similar to the essence of the ancient hero, which is a synthesis of demigod and half-human (Vasineva, 2013). At the same time, in the poet's activity there is an intuitive moment of randomness of what is happening: "The poet uses things and words as keys, and all poetry is based on an active association of ideas – on an independent, deliberate, ideal production of chances (random, that is, free formation of clutches)" (Novalis, 2014: 250). Thus, Novalis introduces a playful moment, pointing out the irrational nature of the creation of a work of art.

The romantic and Schellingian projects of reformation of philosophy did not imply any significant revision of the scientific methodology, but rather a transformation of the very essence of philosophy itself. It is the philosopher who must acquire the very creative spirit that Schelling talked about at the Munich Academy of Arts. And if at first Schelling raises the question of understanding the creative spirit in the context of art (especially ancient art), then the evolution of this thought in particular and of mythology in general leads the thinker to the idea of the religious content of mythology, and his understanding of the functions of philosophy shifts from aesthetic to religious. At this point, the common thesis about the significant internal contradiction of the Schelling's philosophical path does not seem to be indisputable, the thinker remains true to the idea of the special status of mythology, philosophy and the unique role of the philosopher – regardless of the methodology within which this dramaturgy unfolds.

Of considerable interest for understanding this internal continuity of Schelling's ideas is the well-known text of I. V. Kireevsky entitled "Schelling's Speech" – an article compiled, according to the author, from excerpts from journal publications and notes of the philosopher's lectures given in Berlin and Munich.

Kireevskiy begins by pointing to the familiar division of religion "into the revealed

(positive) and natural (derived by the mind from its concepts)" (Kireevskiy, 2001: 218). Schelling, on the other hand, sees the need to introduce a third element into this system: "On the one hand, a religion attributing its origin to revelation is the same as history in relation to the mind; on the other hand, religion is natural as philosophy" (Kireevskiy, 2001: 218). For both the revealed and the "science-born" religion, we do not have a special way of knowing, and such a religion is essentially no different from anything else.

In order to discover a specific religious foundation in a person, it is necessary first to understand how such a foundation, on the one hand, can be independent of any a priori and a posteriori knowledge, and on the other hand, how it can reflect not only an ideal relationship to God, but also a real relationship, then there is not only mental, but also active, essential.

Schelling points out that in addition to the revealed (according to Schelling – supernatural) and rational religion (born by philosophy and speculation), it is necessary to keep in mind the third kind, which turns out to be a truly natural religion, namely mythology. "The answer lies in the fact that man's previous religious existence, his previous beliefs, i.e. mythology, can neither be understood nor explained otherwise than through such a God's essential beginning <...> Not only is religion born in science, but it is also a natural religion, which is mythology" (Kireevskiy, 2001: 218–219).

At this point, it is possible to discern the motives of the "Philosophy of Art", where the idea of returning from the united to the united through mythology was considered in the context of creating a work of art. However, now mythology is presented as a religion, namely as a natural religion, which previously was not included in the system of religious cognition in this sense. Without mythology as a natural religion it is impossible to understand and accept the revelation, without mythology it is detached from the essence of the relationship between God and man. In addition, this position of late Schelling can be associated with the romantic period – if then mythology was the only force capable of communicating to science the true content of the absolute, found in

poetry, now in this formula, poetry as if gives way to revelation. Revelation must rely on the real relationship between God and man, and such a relationship is possible only on the basis of self-originating religion, that is, mythology.

But true knowledge does not end with the religion of revelation, which is based on the mythological “religion of numb”. Revelation is only a liberation from the darkness of mythological belief, a liberation from this daze and a path to the development of positive philosophy – the concept of later Schelling, under the influence of which he probably planned to significantly expand, among other things, the scope of understanding the philosophy of art, but, fortunately, did not do so, which follows Hartmann and points out P. S. Popov in his program introductory article to the 1966 edition of “Philosophy of Art” (Popov, 1966: 8).

Relatively strict philosophical concept of Schelling is interesting thoughts of Hölderlin on the nature of the myth, according to which the sphere of religion, combining the unity of opposites (finite and infinite) can be represented in the form of a myth. It combines what can be distinguished in other dimensions (for example, rational and sensual). He calls the myth “intellectual-historical”.

Myth is the basis of all that exists, combining the principles of unity and historicity of being. The new mythology is called to be a connecting link for philosophy, art and religion. Therefore, the system of ideas in philosophy is directly related to mythological ideas about the gods. According to Hölderlin, the mythology of the reason is designed to unite the divided, to reconcile spirit and nature through its essential principle of syncretism, thus the new mythology can surpass philosophy. This point we find similar to Schelling’s reflections in *Art Philosophy*, where the philosopher writes about the unity of God and ideas: “But the absolute is exactly what the opposite of an idea and a concrete one does not exist at all, in relation to something that is concrete or special in things, in turn there is an essence or a common one (not a negation), so that God cannot have any other existence but the existence of his idea” (Schelling, 1966: 75). It is the mythological gods who combine the unity of the divided: on the one hand, they are different

(express a different set, specific personalities), and on the other hand, they express the idea of an archetype, a single, distinct set in itself.

Hölderlin needs the myth as a living historical basis for the affirmation of the modern German spirit and the demonstration of the historical connection between generations. Nevertheless, with this approach, two levels of understanding of the myth arise: “The myth of the ‘inner path’ and the myth of the three-part historical model. The first myth fulfills its function in synchronization, as it implies the antithesis of Germany (spiritual) – France (material), which is relevant for the time of Hölderlin. The second myth contrasts Germany and Europe in general with ancient Greece as imperfect but potentially infinite modernity to the limited perfection of the past. Having originated in the philosophical discourse of German modernism, these myths influenced other aspects of German life up to political” (Volskiy, 2016). Thus, the myth is positioned not only as a material, but also as a tool for interpreting the meaning of historical processes and forming cultural patterns of modernity.

Myth in Hölderlin’s understanding is closely intertwined with poetic art. Rising up to the majesty of Ancient Greece, the romantic sees the historical source of science and philosophy in poetry. And it is in poetry that they can be combined again in the form of a new mythology. Mythology in its turn was a source of philosophy. The new mythology is capable to give people rational beginning from philosophy, and philosophy itself to give sensual aspect as mythology surpasses possibilities of philosophy itself. The new mythology is able to enrich philosophy and unite people and philosophers. Philosophy begins to be thought of as the philosophy of life<sup>4</sup> first by romanticists: “Philosophy of life is the science of independent life, which I myself created and submitted to his authority, and belongs to the doctrine of the art of living or a system of instructions for the arrangement of such a life” (Novalis, 2014: 169).

Researcher Gerhard Schulz, summarizing a romantic approach to understanding mythol-

<sup>4</sup> Schlegel’s course of lectures *The Philosophy of Life* anticipated a whole trend in modern philosophy, if not in content, then certainly in the problematization of the topic.



ogy, writes that “mythology is a means of dealing with everything that is outside of concepts. This is the basis of their relationship to the field of religion and art. The idea of romantic culture in Christian Europe was both religious and aesthetic, and the philosophy of the proper rights of people and nations based on the ideas of the Enlightenment opened up new perspectives” (Schulz, 2008: 31). The merit of romantics can be considered that they made myth the basis of aesthetic creativity. This technique was later spread in the activities of the symbolists and modernists.

It is worth noting that at this stage there was no strict separation between the concepts of myth and symbol, they were thought rather in a consonant manner: one naturally was a continuation of the other, “mythology in general and any mythological legend separately should be understood not schematically and not allegorically, but symbolically” (Schelling, 1966: 110). This principle is most clearly seen in the work of Novalis. Behind each symbol in the romantic literature hides a mythological plot. The blue flower in the book “Heinrich von Ofterdingen” by Novalis is a symbol of yearning for the ideal and the desire for knowledge. Subsequently, the blue flower became the symbol of all German romantic poetry. Novalis himself believed that “interpretations of myths are stylistically the highest. They represent the pure, perfect character of an individual artistic creation. They are not a real artistic creation, but the ideal of such a creation. And such an interpretation is still necessary to create, it does not exist, “there needs a mindset in which the poetic and philosophical spirit would be fully penetrated into each other. Greek mythology is partly such an interpretation of national religion” (Novalis, 2014: 99). Thus, it becomes clear that Novalis thought of his novel as an expanded myth.

As for the theoretical views of Novalis on the nature of myth, we will not find a coherent theoretical concept in him, despite his significant contribution to the development of the theory of myth. We have to build a theory piece by piece, taken from sketches, fragments, literary texts. Nevertheless, such fragmentation is able to give a complete picture of the role of myth in the views of Novalis. In many places

he talks about the spirit and the individual self, for example, calling a person “the perfect trope of the spirit” (Novalis, 2014: 158), or elsewhere he writes that “when the spirit dies, it becomes a person. When a person dies, he becomes a spirit” (Novalis, 2014: 192). These reflections are largely due to his philosophical interests and the intellectual tradition of the time when Fichte’s philosophy was gaining popularity among enlightened youth.

The philosophy of the spirit is closely intertwined in the work of Novalis with the doctrine of magical idealism and notions of the free creative function of the self-stopping self. The personality of Novalis is not initially defined, but becomes in the process of acquiring its own self, in other words, through self-education and self-establishment, where the highest goal of education is “mastering its transcendental self – Self of myself” (Novalis, 2014: 91). Sensuality plays an important role in the concept of romanticist and is not thought of as the biological ability of the senses to respond to external stimuli, but rather as the ability of the individual to resonate with changes in the external world, in other words, it can be called sensual thinking or “power thinking ability” (Novalis, 2014: 252). This magical ability of feeling and transforming the world is subject only to the poet, who can see the glimpses of the Absolute in the frozen material world.

Summarizing the above, seeing the world in the unity of the universe and man is the mythological way of being and knowing. The romantic premise is to return the ability of man to look at the world mythologically. The poetic spirit is capable of this. As we see, Novalis’s special view of the relationship between nature and man as a whole is similar to Hölderlin’s ideas about the initial unity of subject and object. The mystical in Novalis’s views is connected with mythological and symbolic levels, the boundary between which is not clearly defined at this stage. Behind each symbol in the works of Novalis is a myth containing the idea of an infinite.

## Conclusion

Despite significant differences in the content of philosophical thought between the early Schelling of the romantic period and the late

theosophical period, the problem of finding the true foundations of philosophical science in art, mythology, and religion, as defined in the “Programme of German Idealism”, accompanies the work of a thinker throughout life. The development of Schelling’s views can be considered progressive or regressive, but it is hardly possible to deny that after the romanticists and in many ways together with the romanticists he stands at the origins of a new rationality and of a way of philosophical reflection, which has been developed both in the main trends of modern foreign philosophy and in the views of Russian thinkers, in particular, society of lyubomudriye.

As a result of the analysis of a number of Schelling’s texts and early German romanticists, it is fair to say that Hölderlin’s idea of the unity of nature and mind, expressed in the concept of the Absolute, was formulated, considerably refined and expanded by Schelling in “The System of Transcendental Idealism”. Related to this is the fact that Schelling in “The System of Transcendental Idealism” emphasizes

in a romantic way that it is philosophy that should follow art, not vice versa. Both Hölderlin and Schelling believed that ancient art was the example of the most harmonious synthesis of absolute and relative, universal and particular, objective and subjective, nature and spirit, necessity and freedom, eternal and transient. In this context, Schelling’s idea about the creation of a work of art as an action of creative knowledge, that is, the realization of genuine artistic ability, turn out to be legitimate.

However, despite the fact that the romantic project and Schelling’s ideas regarding the role of philosophy proceeded from a single setting – the need to transform the essence of philosophy, Schelling goes beyond this original idea to understand the philosopher as a carrier of creative spirit, first in the context of the mythology of art, and then in the context of religious understanding of mythology. At the same time, the functions of philosophy shift from aesthetic to religious ones. At this point Schelling goes beyond romanticists, not denying, but rather developing initially romantic attitudes.

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