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TO THE QUESTION OF THE HIGHEST FORMS OF COGNITIVE ACTIVITY  
IN GERMAN IDEALISM OF THE XIX CENTURY

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**Abstract.** The problem of intellectual contemplation is considered in the context of the study of human cognitive abilities in German philosophy of the XIXth century, primarily the studies of Schelling. The influence of the aesthetic world view on the understanding of this phenomenon among German romanticists is emphasized. It is analyzed the views of Fr. Schleiermacher, where from his viewpoint contemplation is “given” not in poetry, but in religion, it is distinguished the criticism of the aesthetic intuition of the romanticists by Hegel, as well as his discrepancy with Schelling regarding the place and role of intellectual contemplation in the structure of cognitive activity.

**Keywords:** cognition; contemplation; intellectual contemplation; aesthetic world view; direct and indirect.

Considering the problem of intellectual contemplation in the history of German philosophy of the XIX century, it is impossible to bypass the ideas of Schelling, romanticists, and Hegel about this phenomenon.

As for intuition, Schelling considers it to be a form of an adequate comprehension of the Absolute. “Intellectual contemplation arises when we cease to be an object for ourselves, when the contemplating Self, having closed in itself, becomes identical with the contemplated Self” [7, p. 69]. Like Fichte, Schelling understands intuition as an active ability. But the discrepancy between the two thinkers on this issue is still there: “Fichte,” he writes, “turned to intellectual contemplation in order to prove the existence of the “I”... But I ... do not speak about “I” as directly reliable – as it appears in intellectual co-reflection, but on what has been obtained in intellectual contemplation ..., on the subject *drawn* from intellectual contemplation, that is, on the universal, devoid of definition of the subject – the object. ... This is not

about being at all, but only about pure content, about the essence of what was contained in intellectual contemplation” [8, p. 515].

The universal content of which Schelling speaks has no visual form. It is given in “inner feeling.” “It really is about what it is: – however, this the thing that should be found. It doesn’t even exist as something conceivable” [8, p. 516].

It should be mentioned that the problem of intuition was popular in the philosophical environment of that time. There was an opinion that contemplation or intuition is self-sufficient and does not need any mediation. This approach is characteristic of F. G. Jacobi and many representatives of romanticism. As for Schelling, the pronounced tendency to oppose the intuitive and discursive is characteristic mainly of the late period of his works, although it manifests itself already in the early period of creativity and is associated with aestheticism peculiar to it. Let's stop at this point.

Distinctive features of aestheticism or aesthetic world-view is the exaggeration of the role and importance of art as compared to other areas of activity, the cult of artistic genius, imagination, feelings in the structure of knowledge, etc. [7, p. 476]. Aesthetic world-view led Schelling to rethink the relationship between art and philosophy. Science and art set for themselves the same task – the knowledge of the Absolute. However, for “science, this task due to the method of its solution remains infinite” [7, p. 481]. As for philosophy, being a science, it is akin to art. The difference between them is that the artist overcomes the contradictions of the conscious and unconscious, of freedom and nature, so that this coincidence manifests itself objectively, realistically, i.e. accessible to external contemplation, while the philosopher contemplates the coincidence of these two activities in the act of intellectual intuition, i.e. subjectively [7, p. 86].

To explain the relationship between art and philosophy, Schelling introduces the category of "aesthetic contemplation" into his teaching. If the initial act of intellectual intuition is the beginning of philosophy, and the whole further dialectical process of logical justifications is nothing but the gradual realization that in a single absolute synthesis (the initial act of intuition) it is supposed to be simultaneous and immediate. In its perfect ordered form, philosophy, according to Schelling, is found "only in the totality of all potencies" [9, p. 62], so the higher act of the mind, covering all of the ideas (potency), should be aesthetic. "Aesthetic contemplation is the intellectual contemplation that has become objective" [7, p. 482]. The proof of the possibility of such contemplation is a work of art [4].

Thus, according to Schelling, philosophy should proceed from the principle of absolute identity, which can be comprehended only in direct contemplation. As for the nature of this intellectual intuition, Schelling speaks of it as a kind of "poetic gift" or "creative ability", which is inherent only to the chosen, geniuses.

The teachings of Schelling on intellectual contemplation in general and aesthetic, in particular, caused a noticeable reaction among the philosophers and artists of that time. Most of the representatives of the romantic movement – A. and Fr. Schlegel, Novalis, F. Gelderlin and others - fully supported the aestheticism of the philosopher, shared his view of intuition. So, Fr. Holderlin also considers poetry, art to be the most profound expression of the inner essence of the life process. He emphasizes that the Absolute is revealed, it becomes available only "aesthetically, in intellectual contemplation" [3, p. 480]. In the "theory" (that is, scientific knowledge), this is possible "only in an infinite approximation, like the square is approximated to a circle" [3, p. 480].

Unlike Holderlin, Fr. Schleiermacher believed that contemplation was "set" not in poetry, but in religion. Schleiermacher contrasts his new understanding of religion with, on the one hand, "rational theology," and with another, "moral theology." Religion, from the point of view of Schleiermacher, "must nevertheless be something else, and not indicated by a mixture of opinions about God and the world and the commandments for this or that life", not a "confusion" of "metaphysical and moral crumbs" [10, p. 31]. Religion is "a necessary and inevitable third beginning, supplementing the first two, as their natural opposite, having no less dignity and greatness than any of them" [10, p. 38]. It must be admitted that Schleiermacher not only affirms religion in the sphere of consciousness as one of the three areas, but also gives it a dominant position in the system of spiritual culture [10, p. 40].

The essence of religion is religious "contemplation" (intuition) and the feeling of the infinite. In contrast to scientific knowledge, to which Schleiermacher assigns an active role, in religious contemplation man is "childishly passive." The universe itself is active. Human is only the object of its influence. All he has to do is "allow" the universe to influence him.

Unlike Schelling, for whom the ability of intuition is an extremely rare ability, marking the seal of a genius, for Schleiermacher every person with a developed sense of the infinite may have religious contemplation. The spiritual state that arose at the time of "immersion" in the infinite (eternal) is almost beyond description, it is difficult, even impossible to talk about. The only reaction of the individual consciousness, the "response" of the subject is feeling. "In feeling," writes the philosopher, "beautiful and fragrant flowers of religion are growing" [10, p. 67]. Hence, the characteristic for Schleiermacher connection between religious feeling and the personal, individual side of consciousness becomes clear. Religion, he believes, should be a manifestation of a person's "own," individual feeling, his "initial personal wealth" [10, p. 51–52].

Hegel was the one who had a different view on intuition. In contrast to Schelling, he criticized a number of attitudes of German romanticists. First of all, he spoke out against "poetry" in philosophy. According to Hegel, it is not art, but science (that is, speculative philosophy) that in its system of concepts represents an objective and universal image of the highest integrity, the integrity of the Absolute. It was a kind of verdict to the aesthetic world view and the romantic cult of genius, elitism.

Hegelian criticism has also spread to the concept of intuition in its romantic understanding. From the point of view of the philosopher, the fact that in most cases it is presented as true is only a subjective "assurance", feeling and consequently only a single and random fact. The one and the random, according to Hegel's firm conviction, cannot meet the requirement of validity and objectivity. Knowledge, according to Hegel, is always thinking, and thinking is a process, a movement. Cognition is completed in "pure thinking", and only by reaching this point does true intellectual contemplation become possible. "Completed knowledge is the property of an exceptionally pure thinking, under-

standing the mind; and only he who has been elevated to this thinking, acquires quite definite true contemplation; for him contemplation constitutes only the most appropriate form, in which his already fully developed knowledge is again concentrated" [2, p. 252].

This "spiritualized, true contemplation," which "embraces the substance of the object in its entirety" [2, p. 251], in recognition of the philosopher himself, in a sense, coincides with Schelling's intellectual intuition. Without denying the possibility of such contemplation, Hegel denies the immediate nature of the knowledge that is in it.

Unlike Schelling, in Hegel's philosophy, intellectual contemplation plays a subordinate role in relation to conceptual (pure) thinking. In this case, Hegel criticizes any attempt to abandon the method, logic, and therefore falls upon Jacobi, criticizes the romantic aestheticism and the views of Schelling. But if in relation to Jacobi, Fr. Helderlin, Fr. Schleiermacher, Hegelian criticism is fully substantiated and understood, it is far less valid, in our opinion, in relation to Schelling's early philosophical views. Hegel did not notice (or did not want to notice) that the immediacy of knowledge according to Schelling is not at all absolute. It is, strictly speaking, awareness, and awareness is a process, and a dialectical process. At the same time, Hegel of course "much stronger than Schelling, stressed the dialectic of the mediation itself, the genesis of mediated knowledge in the study of the unity of spontaneity and mediation" [1, p. 98]. Another thing is Schelling's late philosophy. Here the differences with Hegel are of a fundamental nature. "The Philosophy of Revelation" – such a name was received later by Schelling's teachings [5]. The principle of rationality – the leading principle of the whole philosophical structure of Hegel, is subjected here to harsh criticism. According to Schelling, thinking is accessible only to the possible, (the infinite potency of being), but not real being, which it is claiming to know and reveals its powerlessness.

Reality, according to Schelling, becomes an accessible philosophy when it is guided not by what is given in thinking or sensory perception, but by what is given in supersensible contemplation, "mystical experience." The position defended by Schelling was called "positive philosophy" as opposed to "negative", by which the philosopher now implies its former philosophy of identity. Schelling, drawing a line between discursive and intuitive knowledge, lays the foundation for irrationalism in modern philosophy in his later teachings.

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