Research Article

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The Mythology of Reason in "Das älteste Systemprogramm": A Hegelian Project?

Abstract: The paper aims to investigate the thesis of the so-called Neue Mythologie within the fragment entitled "Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus" ["The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism"]. The latter presents a revolutionary project of social pedagogy linked to the use of the aesthetic character of myth and poetry in the formation of the conscience and the intellect of the people. The program, therefore, formulates a fertile dialogue between the emancipatory potential of the Enlightenment and Jena Romanticism, in that it proposes a re-evaluation of feelings and Sinnlichkeit [sensuousness] in connection to modern rationality and freedom. The links between the rational mythology of the program and Hegelian philosophy will be explored, starting from his early writings, which are strictly concerned with the importance of a popular and sensuous religion (Volksreligion). Secondly, the work will retrace the same sensuous externalization of philosophical ideas within the relationships between art, religion and philosophy in the mature system, addressing the problem of Hegel's change of heart regarding art and mythology between the two phases of his thought. In the end the value of symbolical mediation of concepts and idea will be established.

Keywords: aesthetics; mythology; pedagogy; poetry; romanticism

The following investigation has a twofold objective: on the one hand, the presentation of what we may call thesis of the *Neue Mythologie,* which intertwined politics, religion and aesthetics within the circle of the young German Romantics; on the other hand, the analysis of the links between this philosophical project and the work of one of the major players involved, that is the father of modern dialectics G.W.F. Hegel.

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At the centre of my inquiry will be the famous fragment that Franz Rosenzweig found in 1917 in Berlin's *Preußische Staatsbibliotek* [Berlin State Library]. In the same year he published it under the title *Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* [The Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism], recognizing Hegel's handwriting but attributing the content to Schelling. The *Systemprogramm* is, in fact, composed of a couple of pages around which a real philological question has arisen over the course of the twentieth century.[1] At the same time these pages have attracted particular attention due to their themes. The areas and disciplines touched upon are manifold, but we will focus exclusively on the project of the *Neue Mythologie*, that is the political conception of aesthetics, which through poetry and myth was to become a sort of new pedagogy for the people.

Concerning Hegel, we will retrace the aforementioned project within the development of his idealism and in particular the relationship that myth, art and representations entertain with ideas and philosophical concepts. We will address firstly his youthful production, which is evidently tied to the ideas of the *Systemprogramm* that date back to those years, and secondly the more mature reflections, which are strongly concerned with the problem of the "forms" in which truth is expressed.

The task appears arduous, since Hegel changed his attitude towards myth and religion, distancing himself from the intentions of his youth. Despite this, it will be shown how certain fundamental aspects relating to the symbolic function of art, and especially of that "mythical" art present in religion, are maintained or at least intensively considered in the mature system. This not only sheds light on the content of the fragment, but also clarifies interesting aspects of Hegelian philosophy, such as the relations between the three spheres of the absolute Spirit constituted by art, religion and philosophy, and the symbolic mediation that the Spirit requires to be whole.

1 The Program and Its Mythology of Reason

Before going straight to the text, I will spend a few words on the framework within which the ideas of the *Systemprogramm* were developed, and through these contextual characteristics, I will explain the general aim of the project. Herder's intent, and later on also Schelling's and Hegel's, was to overcome the calculating

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1 It is not the intention of this contribution to reconstruct the entire troubled history of the debate around the *Verfasser* of the program, nor to give a definitive answer to the still open question. Suffice it to mention the three most investigated hypotheses: Schelling's authorship (Liebert, 1918), Hölderlin's (Böhm, 1926) and Hegel's (Pöggeler, 1969).

intellect of the Enlightenment. The latter was responsible, as they saw it, for an *Entzauberung* [disenchantment] of reality that shattered the social identity of the people (Jamme, 1991). The young thinkers attempted, as a consequence, to reconstruct the unity of the community through a new mythology. This new language was meant to safeguard the freedom and self-determination of the ego, but above all to educate and reconcile the masses with the Spirit, as in ancient Greece (Jamme, 1984).

Myth, however, had to be rediscovered. The new forms could not come from a distant past because they have to be suited to modernity. Moreover the rediscovery of myth doesn't entail superstitious or dogmatic characters. These elements had suffered the fierce criticism of the Enlightenment and the *Systemprogramm* intends to continue to criticize them. The program, therefore, advocates a recovery of myth and representations to confer aesthetic quality to the criticism and political instances of the Enlightenment, while preserving their emancipatory power.[2] This means that the *Neue Mythologie* was to re-evaluate the well-known factor of the *Sinnlichkeit* [sensuousness] against the rigid intellectualism of the Enlightenment, presenting itself at the same time as equally rational, that is "at the service of ideas", as we shall see.[3]

Let us now get to the text. The first part of the *Systemprogramm* is devoted to a vast set of topics that go from Kantian philosophy to physics and mathematics. We will not dwell on them, since our main focus, as we said, is the thesis of the *Neue Mythologie*, which occupies the second part of the fragment. The introduction to this section is marked by the mention of aesthetics as the promoter of a human and political revolution: the supreme idea, that will regulate the new free society, is the idea of beauty, which encompasses a history that leads from Plato to Schiller.

> I am now convinced that the highest act of reason, which, embracing all ideas, is an aesthetic act, and that truth and goodness are only conjoined in beauty. The philosopher must possess as much aesthetic power as the poet (*SP*, p. 23).

Poetry must become "teacher of mankind" while myth, as we read in the last lines of the fragment, must work as the pedagogical instrument of a social and political revolution that is supposed to elevate the spirits of all members of the community. Myth ought to eliminate, in other words, the distance between philosophers and people, in order to bring "eternal unity". This task is entrusted to a "sensuous

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2 This "liberating potential" and new mythology in general have been largely discussed in contemporary debates both in Germany (Bohrer, 2015) and in France (Barthes, 1957). Amoroso (2007) also gives a good survey on the matter in the introduction to the Italian translation of the program.
3 It must be remembered that the sometimes euphoric tones of the text takes on an almost prophetic character and leaves open the question of the actual realisation of the program, which in its hope of bridging the gap between intellectuals and uneducated people presents itself almost as a utopia (Cometa, 1985).

religion", which presents itself as a "monotheism of reason and of the heart, polytheism of imagination and of art" (*SP*, p. 23).

> First of all, I shall speak here of an idea which, as far as I know, has not yet come to mind – we must have a new mythology, but this mythology must be in the service of ideas, it must become a mythology of reason. […] Thus, at last the enlightened and the unenlightened (*Unaufgeklärte*) must join hands; mythology must become philosophical and the people reasonable, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensuous (*SP*, p. 23).

Philosophy, mythology, aesthetics and social instance mingle in this new sensuous and rational religion that Herder had in a certain sense heralded in his "Iduna oder der Apfel der Verjüngung" ["Iduna, or the Apple of Rejuvenation"]. The same themes echo in the ideas that the young Hegel was to develop in the last decade of the eighteenth century with regard to the so-called *Volksreligion*, which is the reason why Pöggeler recognizes Hegel as the author of the *Systemprogramm* (Pöggeler, 1969).

2 A Hegelian Project?

In the famous Tübingen essay (one of Hegel's early theological writings), which is dated 1793, Hegel makes mention of a particular need, that of a "sensuous" and "popular" religion. This kind of faith was to bind philosophy to the general public, civilizing them spiritually and intellectually. The socio-political project of a philosophical education described by the *Systemprogramm* is here clearly anticipated in the words of the young Hegel, who wishes to liberate the people from the tyranny of the "priests". The same priests were mentioned in the program, where they were described as the ones who placate minds through "fetishistic faith" (*SP*, p. 23).

In order to do this and make reason universal and communicable, Hegel invokes the need for a "sensuous guise" (form), which has to involve feelings and heart and thus the aesthetic side of life. This popular religion, in fact, must possess, in order to be better conveyed and understood by all, a *sinnliche Hülle* [sensuous shell], which Hegel traces in myth.

> Any religion purporting to be a folk religion must be so constituted that it engages the heart and imagination. Even the purest religion of reason must become incarnate in the souls of individuals, and all the more so in the people as a whole. In order that our fantasy be given a proper outlet, one orienting it onto a path it can decorate with its beautiful flowers without drifting off into romantic extravagances, it would be best to tie myths to the religion itself from the very outset (*TE*, p. 52).

Mythology must therefore be at the service of ideas, it must become rational, so that the people could become rational too. At the same time, however, religion must change from objective to subjective and thus be experienced through sensitivity, not only by the people who receive rational ideas through myths and fantasy, but also by the philosopher himself, who must makes himself "sensuous". In short, the philosopher and the entire educated class need to go back to *Sinnlichkeit*: after the happy conciliation constituted by the Greek utopia and its mythology, modernity needs a new poetry, a new myth, to regain that state of peace and unity.

In the fragment known as "The Positivity of the Christian Religion", which appeared around the time of the *Systemprogramm*, Hegel laments, in fact, that the rigidity of Christianity "has depopulated Valhalla" and deprived the people of a mythology in which they could recognize themselves. At the same time he does not nostalgically call for a revival of the old classical or Teutonic myths, but rather suggests the foundation of a new rational mythology, which would be more suited to moderns: "In the sphere of imaginative ideas [*Vorstellungen*] which would be common to both the educated and the vulgar among us, i.e. the story of our religion, there are certain obstacles to that poetic adaptation which might be a means of refining our people" (*PCR*, p. 148).

Hegel, however, seems here quite sceptical, because he is aware that the uneducated were still too entangled in blind fideism, while the educated were too disillusioned with modern reason. He also focuses more on the criticism of Christianity rather than on the aesthetic project, even if it is precisely Christian religion that could have provided the "imaginative ideas" that the new rational modernity needed. This road will be paradoxically pursued in Hegel's mature philosophy of religion, which in fact proposes a sort of rationalized Christianity, that is a Christian religion read through the lens of the concept. One of our aims was to retrace, in Hegel's mature system, the *Systemprogramm*'s project of using art and myth as a vehicle for rational ideas. We will try to find this correspondence in the relationship between the artistic-religious symbols of Christian religion (representations) and philosophy (concepts).

Before approaching the mature Hegel, we must point out that many supporters of the Hegelian authorship, including Pöggeler, believe that Hegel's adherence to the project of the *Neue Mythologie* is exhausted in the early writings' concept of *Volksreligion*. Others deny Hegel's involvement even in these writings.[4] The problem

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4 Fortugno (1978) maintains that the Hegel of the *Volksreligion* considered myth as a mere pedagogical device, which might have worked for the reconciled world of the Greeks, but not for the split world of Christian modernity. In the *Systemprogramm,* on the contrary, the aesthetic revolution uses myth in a foundational and universal manner. This philosophical conception is much more present in Schelling than Hegel. Similarly, Fortugno also rejects Trede's thesis (1982), according to which the

arises, as we said, from the fact that Hegel changes his idea on myths and their pedagogical function. Already at the end of the Frankfurt period, he denies his previous thesis of the *Volksreligion*, by questioning the possibility of a religious education made up of myths and poetry that could work like the artistic and political religion of the Greeks.

This is why Schelling and his modern *epos* may seem to fit more accurately in the *Systemprogramm*'s project. It is important to consider Schelling's involvement as well, in order to clarify the philosophical background of the program and its complex connection to Hegel's thought. Rosenzweig's original hypothesis, in fact, cannot be easily set aside, as Schelling undeniably constitutes a voice that emerges potently from the lines about poetry and mythology (Rosenzweig, 1917).

The references seem to be linked to Schelling's early philosophy of art, which is contained in "The System of Transcendental Idealism" and in "The Philosophy of Art" (the lectures delivered in Jena in 1802-3 and in Würzburg in 1804-5). There is no doubt that Schelling treated aesthetics, and poetry in particular, as regulative ideals of the world and of the rest of philosophy. In "The System of Transcendental Idealism", for instance, Schelling says that philosophy has to flow into the "ocean of poetry", that is to return to that "teacher of humanity" referred to in the program (*SP*, p. 23).

His relationship with myth, although long and liable to significant change, is also mostly in accordance with that of the *Systemprogramm*. It will suffice here to recall how the aforementioned philosophy of art also centred on the formulation of a new mythology. The latter would have to express the so-called intellectual intuition on an objective and universally communicable plane, making ideas sensuous through poetry. Moreover, in Schelling's view, art and *Neue Mythologie* can reach this result in a different and more conciliating manner than philosophy: art can bind form and content without philosophy offering a scientific explanation of meanings and concepts. There is no arbitrary connection or fracture between image and idea, but rather "absolute identity" (Bowie, 1990).

Against Schelling's modern *epos*, Hegel, on the contrary, argues that the conflicted nature of modernity can no longer benefit by finding unity in a mythology. Modern times have become too rational for the sensuous and intuitive form of myth and art to reach the Absolute, he thinks. Schelling's absolute identity of art, therefore, is no longer adequate to express the truth and what Hegel defines as art's immediacy, that is the aforementioned "unmediated" identity, must go through the laceration of modern religion and later on the comprehension of philosophy. In other words, the conceptual nature of truth is now in need of philosophical reason to be fully manifested.

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concepts of the program are contained in the first draft of Jena's system, again in relation to popular religion.

For Hegel too, the intuitive form of mythological art characterized the harmonious identity of Greek artistic religion. The latter, however, occupies a phenomenological level that is less developed than revealed religion. Modern Christianity, in fact, makes use of a more rational form of knowledge, representation,[5] which by revealing already conceptual content (the Spirit as it is), even if still in sensuous form, is closer to philosophical thought. The fracture between form and content, which Greek myths didn't entail,[6] is a necessary requirement in the manifestation of the Spirit, which, as we said, has to be "mediated" by revealed religion before gaining unity again in philosophy.

I will try to show, however, how the division between intuition and representation is not as definitive as it appears, and likewise how the region of thought and philosophy is not detached from them: the famous tripartition of the absolute Spirit, in other words, is not a rigid one-way progression (Gadamer, 1986), meaning that the symbolical images that we find in art and mythology still play a role in Christian representative religion. These "concrete representations" can, in fact, "exemplify" logical categories and rational concepts, just as poetry and myths did in the subversive project of the program.

3 Representations and Concepts: Hegel's Own Mythologization of Reason

The "concrete representations" are provided by the sensible component that both art and religion share: representation, being structured as the mediation between intuition and thought, possesses elements of both, and is characterized in particular,

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5 "Hegel's express attitude to mythology varies. Early on he could speak of realizing a 'mythology of reason' as the goal of philosophy in the modern world, an 'idea' that echoes through the entire Jena period. But in the (arguably authoritative) Berlin lectures on the philosophy of religion, myth appears to be demoted to the rank of 'image' (*Bild*), below 'representation' (*Vorstellung*) and 'thought' or the 'concept'; compared to religion proper it belongs to art, as mere 'sensuous intuition' or story-telling" (Donougho, 1992, p. 60).

6 Greek gods, as Schelling sustained, do not "mean" something else, they simply "are" what they "are", and in this "absolute identity" they are symbolic. Hegel, like Schelling, believed that in Greek mythology form and content coincided, but this is because their identity was still immediate and, on the opposite, not symbolic. Myths can be however considered symbolic (according to the Hegelian definition of symbol that we will soon approach) when we recognize in them a speculative content that differs from their sensuous form. Christian religion contains symbolic myths in this sense, offering a sort of "new" figurative expression (a new mythology?) to ideas. Then again Hegel accepts Creuzer's suggestion and in his lectures on the philosophy of art tries to consider symbolism even in Greek art/religion (D'Angelo, 1989).

as we said, by a split between a form that remains connected to the spatial and temporal aspects of intuitive art, and a universal content that already pertains to the conceptual realm (Clark, 1971). Similarly, art, the realm of intuition, enters in a certain sense the sphere of representation, because through the same *sinnliche Hülle* [sensuous shell] it too has the capacity to express spiritual content.

In his philosophy of art, Hegel calls this figurative expression of spiritual content "symbol". The symbol is also split between a universal and conceptual meaning and a representational and pictorial expression. Its structure is recalled in the *Vorstellung* section of the Encyclopaedic Psychology, where fantasy is described as "symbolising, allegorising and *poetising* imagination" (*Enc.*, §456, my trad.). What should find systematization in the sphere of art, therefore, permeates the sphere of representation and vice versa (Mooren, 2018).

Not only "artistic religions" but Christian religion as well, in fact, contains several images that are produced by the "symbolising and allegorizing", and thus artistic, intellect: it is what we find in the narratives of the scriptures, in myths such as the one of the tree of knowledge and even in Christian historical events. Likewise art rises to the capacity of expressing religious and spiritual content through the symbolising imagination that we find especially in poetry, that is the most mature stage of art's evolution.

> Now of course this unity [of concept and individual appearance] achieved in art is achieved not only in sensuous externality but also in the sphere of imagination [*Vorstellung*], especially in poetry […] On the other hand, religion makes use of art often enough to bring religious truth home to people's feelings or to symbolize it for the imagination, and in that event of course art stands in the service of a sphere different from itself (*LFAI*, pp. 101–102).

It is precisely poetry, the *Lehrerin der Menschheit* [teacher of mankind] of the *Systemprogramm*, that acts as a middle ground between art and religion: with its use of language, poetry surpasses the far too sensuous artistic forms and achieves the spirituality of representation. This means that poetic symbols are still sensuous, as symbols usually are according to Hegel, but work in a much more conceptual way than other artistic images, stretching to the area of thought. Also representation remains characterized by an oscillation between what Hegel defines as symbol (sensitivity) and what instead rises to the level of sign (thought).[7] This enables both poetry and religion to transmit philosophical content by using figurative and yet

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7 Magnus (2001) believes that representation is mostly symbolical, in that it works through sensuous images that offer symbolic mediation to the Spirit. Her work shows how art and religion share this fundamental function of expressing logical concepts and it presents Christianity as a space where reason manifests itself in myths and images. Other interpreters, such as Lauer (1970), think that Christian representations are instead leaning towards signs and thought, thus distancing their status from art and other religions.

conceptual enough *Beispiele* [examples]. The "examples" save logic and philosophy from abstraction and most importantly help them to reach a wider public.

We pointed out, in fact, that the link between the fragment and the mature Hegel lies in the understanding of the relationship between intuitions, representations and concepts: religious representations, and in particular the symbolic elements they share with art and the world of sensuous intuition, play the role of the "flesh" of the concept, that is the exteriorization that gives concreteness and communicability to logical ideas (Caramelli, 2016). Let us consider, in this regard, the concept of *Beispiel* that Hegel elaborated in his 1824 lectures on the philosophy of religion (Valenza, 2017). In its connotation of "example" and "metaphor" of philosophical concepts, religious representation replays that demonstrative and conveying function that the *Systemprogramm* intended to attribute to the new rational mythology.

> What is wanted here is an intuition or a representation of the thought-category, an example (*Beispiel*) or an accompaniment (*ein Beiherspielendes*) of the content that has so far only been given in thought. Our expression "example" contains the representation and intuition of this already. If we find a thought-content of this kind difficult, the difficulty lies in the fact that we have no representation of it. It becomes clear to us through the example, and [we] say that now we know what such a thought-content means. Spirit is thus for the first time present to itself in this content. (*LPRI*, pp. 118–119).

According to this exemplifying mechanism, the logic that describes man's emancipation from nature and the formation of self-consciousness must necessarily take on the sensuous and figurative guise of the myth of the tree of knowledge. Likewise the ultimate truth of both Christianity and philosophy must necessarily be presented in a temporal and mundane event such as that of the generation of a son. Only through the myth and the concrete person of Jesus, that is the *Beispiel* of humanity, does conceptual truth come to manifestation for itself and for mankind (Samonà, 1987). This means that this truth is of course adequately expressed by its corresponding form, that of the philosophical concept, but at the same time must once again descend into intuitions and representations (symbols) to become concrete and comprehensible.

This also means that poetry in particular seems to evade that problem, attributed to art, of being an inadequate mode of expressing truth. The artistic form was in fact considered too sensuous for a rational modernity and this inadequacy determined the reason why mythology as a vehicle of ideas and concepts, which was effective in the Greek world, could no longer be employed in the case of Christianity, its being a religion in need of a more rational expression. Sensitivity, however, constitutes not only a limit, but also a fruitful resource. The rational expression that was apparently guaranteed by the superior form of the *Vorstellung*, as we have seen, finds home in allegories, myths and poetic figures. Christian representations still convey meanings,

in other words, through those sensuous images that poetry also employs. In this way they could constitute a sort of new mythology for the people.

It is interesting in this regard to consider the thesis of David James, who in relation to the *Neue Mythologie* project of the *Systemprogramm*, suggests that the unity between art and religion of Greek art can be replicated in the combination of Romantic art (especially poetry) and Christianity. This thesis accepts the assumption that the boundaries between art, religion and philosophy are mobile, taking it to such extremes that Hegel is blamed for failing to clearly distinguish representation from poetry.[8] This "poetic Christianity", being both free of the more material sensitivity and at the same time still sensuous and "mythical" in its use of symbols and images, would essentially be able to carry out the same task as the *Systemprogramm*'s mythology of reason, namely that of offering a sensitive manifestation to the ideas of thought.

We may perhaps question the success of the pedagogical project of universalising knowledge, since the prophetic and utopian tones of the program arguably resolve here, in the mature Hegel, into a form of pessimistic elitism.[9] Nonetheless, this is questioned by one of his most famous pupils, David Friedrich Strauss, who tried to make religious representations "rational" in order to teach philosophical truths to the people of his church. Strauss is the one who canonized the division between Right and Left Hegelians after he published the infamous "Life of Jesus" (1833), which was influenced both by Hegel's religious hermeneutics and the historical critique of the so-called mythical school (Sandberger, 1972). In this work Strauss interpreted Hegel's *Vorstellungen* as myths that carry concepts: the religious representations of Christianity, especially the evangelical ones, suffer therefore the critique of philosophy, for their representational form lacks the clarity of the concept, but are also reinstituted as a much needed mythology that philosophy should render rational and use as an informative tool.[10]

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8 "Romantic works of art that rely on the spoken or written word alone, such as poetry, for Hegel have representational thought as their element. This implies that the view that art and the revealed religion differ in virtue of their forms (i.e. intuition and representational thought), and thus also differ with respect to the type of content they are capable of bringing to consciousness, is no longer tenable. If this point can be established, Hegel's claim that religion is, in virtue of its form, a more suitable vehicle than art for bringing the Christian conception of the divine to consciousness looks rather dubious" (James, 2007, p. 278).

9 In the manuscript of the lectures on the philosophy of religion, Hegel admits that the rational understanding of religion and philosophical knowledge in general are only accessible to a few, so much so that he defines philosophers as "an isolated order of priests – a sanctuary – [who are] untroubled about how it goes with the world" (*LPRIII*, p. 162).

10 We can retrace a deeply heartfelt need of educating the masses in Strauss' letters to his friend Christian Märklin (1830). As they were both offering service as pastors in the South of Germany, they debated about using Christian representations to free the people from superstition and introduce

It has been rightly argued that Strauss was only applying Hegel's scheme of rationalization, that is the translation that religious representations undergo in the transition to philosophy (Wach, 1929). According to this translation, Christianity as much as other religions is built by myths, symbols and practices regardless of the historical character of the events of the scriptures.[11] These symbols, both for Hegel and the young Strauss, are means to convey the truth, which is to say that they are "at the service of ideas". Even if he will later end up in an extreme Feuerbachian stance,[12] Strauss is therefore proof that Hegel's reading of Christian religion can be associated to mythology, or better yet to a *Neue Mythologie*. This is not only the opinion of James, but also of Harris, who states that the historicity of the scriptures counts as much as that of Achilles.[13] The Hegelian philosopher, according to Harris, continues to be a poet in the manner of the *Systemprogramm* insofar as he is in control, through the use of reason, of the mythical images that religion employs to render speculative truth *sinnlich* [sensuous].

In conclusion, if the thesis regarding Romantic poetry and Hegel's mythologization of Christianity is perhaps too far-fetched,[14] we cannot deny that the reciprocity between ideas and their symbolic expression, which is invoked by the mythology of reason of the *Systemprogramm*, is a fundamental requirement of Hegelian philosophy in Berlin as well. There is surely a strong gap between the *Volksreligion* of the young Hegel and his mature account of Christian religion, but the symbolic mediation is still necessary to knowledge and truth. What I suggest is that

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them to philosophical reason. In the spirit of the *Systemprogramm*'s democratization of knowledge, Strauss and Märklin wanted thus to employ what they considered myths to communicate rational truths to their religious community.

11 This constitutes a huge difference from Schelling's account of myth, which was distinguished from Christianity: the former is a product of creative imagination alone, while the latter rests on a historical basis (Dupré, 2007). Strauss criticized Schelling's point of view and maintained that the historicity of Christian *Vorstellungen* could not be proved neither by philosophers nor by historians. Therefore the aforementioned representations are mythical as the rest of the other sensuous images or narrations.

12 In "On the Christian Doctrine" (1840) he will deny the possibility of a rational Christianity, that is the connection between representations and concepts that entails a sensuous expression of philosophical ideas. In more Hegelian words, Strauss will deny that religion and philosophy share the same content.

13 "Everything in the Christian Creed is still a myth, except the 'Crucifixion under Pontius Pilate'; and the historic Crucifixion is at most a symbol of the truth – a symbol which must be resolved into a myth, before the true religion of Reason can finally be born" (Harris, 1981, p. 308).

14 We need to acknowledge, for instance, that poetry does differ at some point from Christian representation, in that art, even at its finest, remains tied to an individual will which is still too subjective. The poet and their artworks don't reach the crucial level of religious community, where representations really start to blend into concepts.

the *Beiherspielendes* function of myths remains a constant in Hegel's philosophy (in the form of intuitions and representations). The possibility of making them rational in order to educate the masses and free them from superstition and dogmas can still be considered open.

Abbreviations

LFAI   G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics*, vol. 1, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford University Press 1975).
LPRI   G.W.F. Hegel. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1, trans. P. Hodgson and J.M. Stewart (University of California Press 1984).
LPRIII   G.W.F. Hegel. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 3, trans. P. Hodgson and J.M. Stewart (Oxford University Press 2007).
PCR   G.W.F. Hegel, The positivity of Christian Religion, in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T.M. Knox (University of Pennsylvania Press 1975).
SP   *Oldest Systematic Program of German Idealism*, trans. D.F. Ferrer (Kuhn von Verden Verlag 2021).
TE   G.W.F. Hegel. The Tübingen Essay, in *Three Essays, 1793–1795*, trans. P. Fuss and J. Dobbins (University of Notre Dame Press 1984).

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