

**Changes in the image of  
man from the Enlightenment  
to the age of Romanticism**



# Changes in the image of man from the Enlightenment to the age of Romanticism

Philosophical and scientific  
receptions of (physical) anthropology  
in the 18–19<sup>th</sup> centuries

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# Anthropological aspects of Johann Ludwig Schedius's aesthetics\*

PIROSKA BALOGH

In 1792, the chair of aesthetics was advertised at the Hungarian University of Pest.<sup>1</sup> 22 candidates competed for the position, which is a surprisingly high number compared to the 14 applications for the most important chair, the chair of philosophy, in 1796. The winner of the competition was the young Johann Ludwig Schedius (1768–1847),<sup>2</sup> one of the favourite students of Christian Gottlob Heyne at the University of Göttingen.<sup>3</sup> Schedius came from a German-speaking Hungarian (so called *Hungarus*) Lutheran fam-

\* Research and publication sponsored by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office, Hungary, Project No. 119577.

<sup>1</sup>For details concerning the applications see Szauder, József: Az esztétikai tanszék betöltésére kiírt pályázat és kritikai irányzataink 1791-ben [The Call for Applications for the Chair of Aesthetics and Trends in Criticism in 1791], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 75: 1971/1, 78–106.

<sup>2</sup>Monographs on Schedius' life and works: Doromby, Karola: *Schedius Lajos mint német–magyar kultúrközvetítő [Johann Ludwig Schedius as a Mediator between German and Hungarian Culture]*. Pfeifer, Budapest, 1933; Balogh, Piroska: *Ars scientiae. Közelítések Schedius Lajos János tudományos pályájának dokumentumaihoz [Ars scientiae. Approaches to the Documents of Johann Ludwig Schedius's Scholarly Career]*. Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 2007.

<sup>3</sup>On the connection between Schedius and Heyne see Balogh, Piroska: Heyne és Schedius Lajos. A tudományos interakció modellje a göttingeni paradigmában [Heyne and Johann Ludwig Schedius. The Model of Se Gurka, Dezső (ed.): *Göttingen dimenziói. A göttingeni egyetem szerepe a szaktudományok kialakulásában [The*



ily, and this background was advantageous for him in the political context at the time. He taught aesthetics and ancient Greek until 1843. He wrote a monograph and many articles on aesthetics.<sup>4</sup> But his identity as an aesthetician implied not only studying and teaching aesthetics. According to him, aesthetics means a harmonious and organised endeavour in support of the cultural sphere of human life. His activity as the editor of journals,<sup>5</sup> dramatic advisor to the first Hungarian theatre company,<sup>6</sup> a promoter of clubs and associations,<sup>7</sup> an organiser of public and higher education,<sup>8</sup> and a researcher and propagator of cultural geography in Hungary indicates that he not only taught aesthetics, he but also practiced it. He was a corresponding member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences,<sup>9</sup> a full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and one of the leaders of the Hungarian Lutheran Church.

Schedius presented his ideas on aesthetics in his 1828 monograph entitled *Principia philocaliae seu doctrinae pulchri*, or *The Principles of Philocalia or Science of Beauty*.<sup>10</sup> As the title clearly shows, he

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*Dimensions of Göttingen: the Role of the University of Göttingen in the Development of Scientific Disciplines*. Gondolat, Budapest, 2010, 127–140.

<sup>4</sup> Schedius' monograph: *Principia philocaliae seu doctrinae pulchri*. Hartleben, Pest, 1828. A collection of his writings on aesthetics: Balogh, Piroska (ed., transl.): *Doctrina pulcri. Schedius Lajos János széptani írásai [Doctrina pulcri. Johann Ludwig Schedius's Writings on Aesthetics]*. Kossuth, Debrecen, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Schedius published German-language journals in Pest for the popularisation of aesthetics and criticism: *Literarischer Anzeiger für Ungern* (1798–1799) and *Zeitschrift von und für Ungern, zur Beförderung der vaterländischen Geschichte, Erdkunde und Literatur* (1802–1804).

<sup>6</sup> See Balogh: *Ars scientiae*, 222–237.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 237–261.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 96–164.

<sup>9</sup> For the announcement of Schedius' membership at the Academy of Göttingen see: *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1802, 1910.

<sup>10</sup> On Schedius' monograph see Balogh, Piroska: Heyne és Schedius Lajos. A tudományos interakció modellje a göttingeni paradigmában [Heyne and Johann Ludwig Schedius. The Model of Scholarly Interaction in the Scientific Paradigm

was proposing a new branch of the sciences, namely *philocalia*. The term was derived from the same Greek root as *philosophia*, which means “love of knowledge,” so the meaning of *philocalia* is “love of beauty.” According to Schedius, not only human perception but the whole human world can be described according to the dynamism of beauty, so *philocalia* is a genuine anthropological science, a kind of “Wissenschaft vom Menschen.”<sup>11</sup> Schedius keenly distinguishes *philocalia* from philosophy, and he proposes its auxiliary sciences: psychology, logic, metaphysics, ethics, natural sciences, physics, physiology, zoology, botany, anthropology,<sup>12</sup> and hermeneutics.

As figure 1 shows, Schedius divided *philocalia* into two subcategories: calleology and aesthetics. The term calleology comes from Krug’s aesthetics,<sup>13</sup> but Schedius changed its meaning. In Schedius’ system, calleology means the object-oriented approach to beauty, while aesthetics is the subject-oriented approach. Schedius’ system is obviously a dual one, and it operates like a coordinate system: it gives us approaches, not determinations. His conceptual approaches create a system of terminology, which is suitable for descriptions of aesthetic phenomena. The system was founded on two basic ideas:

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of Göttingen], in: Gurka, Dezső (ed.): *Göttingen dimenziói. A göttingeni egyetem szerepe a szaktudományok kialakulásában [The Dimensions of Göttingen: the Role of the University of Göttingen in the Development of Scientific Disciplines]*. Gondolat, Budapest, 2010, 127–140. On the Hungarian translation: Balogh: *Doctrina pulcri*, 253–380.

<sup>11</sup> On the interpretation and context of “Wissenschaft vom Menschen” see among others: Bödeker, Hans Erich/ Büttgen, Philippe/ Espagne, Michel (Hrsg.): *Die Wissenschaft vom Menschen in Göttingen um 1800. Wissenschaftliche Praktiken, institutionelle Geographie, europäische Netzwerke*. Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> For the meaning of anthropology in this context see Wellmon, Chad: *Becoming Human. Romantic Anthropology and the Embodiment of Freedom*. Pennsylvania University Press, Philadelphia, 2010, 15–47.

<sup>13</sup> On the interpretation of the term “kalleologie” see Krug, Wilhelm Traugott: *System der theoretischen Philosophie: Geschmackslehre oder Aesthetik*. Bd. I. Härter, Wien, 1818, 31–109.

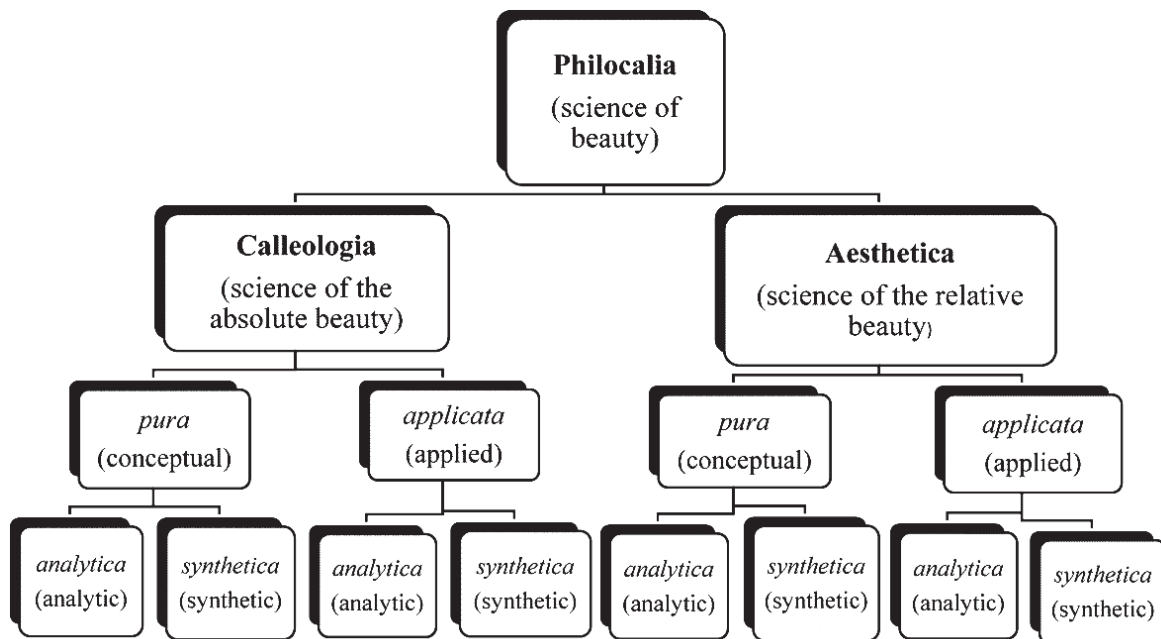


Figure 1: Johann Ludwig Schedius' system of aesthetics

on the force (*vis*), on the material or substance (*materia*), and on various ways in which they are interconnected. The chapters on the applied sciences offer examples of how we can interpret artistic phenomena and factual problems of human life according to the method of aesthetics.

Using Sandra Richter's terms, one could characterise Schedius' aesthetics as a fusion of genetic and logostheological theories,<sup>14</sup> which was a decisive part of anthropological aesthetic theories<sup>15</sup> at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany. Schedius' terms suggest

<sup>14</sup> Richter, Sandra: *A History of Poetics. German Scholarly Aesthetics and Poetics in International Context, 1770–1960*. De Gruyter, Berlin/ New York, 2010, 89–99.

<sup>15</sup> On the term "anthropological aesthetics" see Stöckmann, Ernst: *Anthropologische Ästhetik. Philosophie, Psychologie und ästhetische Theorie der Emotionen im Diskurs der Aufklärung*. Niemeyer, Tübingen, 2009, 9. On the context of anthropological aesthetics see Zelle, Carsten (ed.): *Vernünftige Ärzte. Hallesche Psychomediziner und die Anfänge der Anthropologie in der deutschsprachigen Frühaufklärung*. Niemeyer, Tübingen, 2001; Hermes, Stefan/ Kaufmann, Sebastian (Hrsg.): *Der ganze Mensch*

that beauty remains in the centre of his aesthetics. But this conclusion is misleading, because Schedius' concept of beauty is not a determination of a specific idea. Beauty means here a special type of relationship, the so-called internal organic relationship (*"coniunctio interna organica"*). According to Schedius' approach, the organic relationship signifies every mutual, equal, and interior connection which can appear in any dimension of human life. That is why beauty as an organic relationship can be created or come into existence not only in artistic connections, like creation or perception, but in the context of social organisations as well, as in a liaison of love. This interpretation offers an opportunity to establish an internal organic connection between a hideous or ugly object and an insane subject, for example. And it could explain why we consider a piece of art beautiful on one occasion and, on another, ugly.

In the background of this coordinate system lies a carefully considered rhetoric. The approaches in Schedius' system, are divided into two parts: the first part is a conceptual approach, the second is applied. The conceptual approach builds up a conceptual dictionary, while the applied approach provides examples and experiments using this dictionary. Schedius' research method was formed under the influence of the hermeneutic and scientific theories with which he familiarised himself at the philological seminars held by Heyne at the University of Göttingen.<sup>16</sup> In *Principia*, Schedius adopted an interesting method of commentary, creating a layout by dividing the text into two parts. He parcelled his own theories and proposals

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– *die ganze Menschheit. Völkerkundliche Anthropologie, Literatur und Ästhetik um 1800*. De Gruyter, Berlin/ Boston, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> On the influence of Heyne on Schedius see footnote 4. On Heyne's method of criticism see Marino, Luigi: *Preceptores Germaniae. Göttingen 1770–1820*. Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1995, 267–275. and Scheer, Tanja S.: Heyne und der Griechische Mythos, in Bäbler, Bablina/ Nesselrath, Heinz-Günther (Hrsg.): *Christian Gottlob Heyne. Werk und Leistung nach zweihundert Jahren*. De Gruyter, Berlin/ Boston, 2014, 1–28.

into a strict and logical system of numbered chapters, sub-chapters, and paragraphs. Each paragraph is accompanied by a commentary in small print, which is intended to provide bibliographical background. The nature of these citations is not authoritative, because Schedius opted for a polemic approach by contextualising and separating his own statements from the other theories of aesthetics.

In the centre of Schedius's special coordinate system we can find the highest spiritual organism, which is the human being. His aesthetic was based on anthropology, as he wrote: "The mutual, equal and interior connection between force and substance creates the beauty in the objects, and human nature, i.e. humanity in the subjects. By that context humanity, which has many denotations, means interior, or subjective beauty, and the beauty generated in objects we have to denominate as objective beauty. On the base of humanity are the sciences built up, so their boundaries are wider than one can suppose."<sup>17</sup>

Schedius delineated his concept of organic systems in a Latin tractate, namely *De notione atque indole organismi* (*About denotation and characteristics of organism*).<sup>18</sup> By his ontological principle, as mentioned, substantial being is derived from two elements: from the force and from the material. Schedius confirms his principle by prestigious and considerable quotations, partly from Kant, partly from Greek philosophers such as Thales, Anaximandtos, Anaxagoras, Parmenides and Pythagoras. Schedius added that the materialist thinkers did not consider material as a single element of substantial being, but they supposed a somewhat immaterial element besides. After the corroboration of principle Schedius describes an ontological structure, as follows:

<sup>17</sup> Schedius, *Principia*, § 5, i.e. Balogh: *Doctrina pulcri*, 259–260.

<sup>18</sup> *De notione atque indole organismi* [*About the Denotation and Characteristics of Organism*]. Typ. Univ., Buda 1830.



Transcendental ideas: pure conceptual force and pure conceptual material. These ideas do not exist in the region of empiricism, one cannot experience them through the senses.

The empirical word: empirical beings are generated from the connection between pure material and pure force. The external connection is artistic, the internal connection is natural. Differences among empirical beings depend on the quality of forces – forces could be unidirectional or multidirectional, with strong, weak, or alternate intensity. Connection between force and material could be equal or non-equal. An equal connection becomes external if an external force generates it: that is the way to generate a mechanism. The leader force of an equal internal connection does not dominate the other forces: these forces voluntarily support the leader and help it to maintain the right direction. That is the main feature of organism. In a physical organism that main feature is completed by three accidental ones, namely: by organic movement, by organic unity with strong lines of demarcation, and by specific individual organic character. That is the model of the vegetative organism, as organisms of flora and fauna.

Higher or psychic organism comes into existence if several lower organisms set themselves together as organs. When the leading force of that higher organism is self-reflexive and self-conscious, that generates psychic organism, which has got psychic life, psychic unity and psychic organic character, that is conscience. Sometimes an organism has both physical and psychic character as well: for instance, human organism, or human-made organisms like matrimony, societies, nations, or the whole of mankind.

How could a state as political body turn into an undiminished and perfect organism? The state has to take on the characteristics of both physical and psychic organism for that purpose, that means internal and equal connections among the organs (citizens). Equal connection in a state has to be realised as the monarchic principle. The monarchic principle means that all organs of the state-organ-

ism are directed equally by a singular force to preserve and support each other. The monarchic principle does not produce a monarchy (as state organisation) necessarily. That principle reminds us of the biblical notion of the organic body (the church as *Corpus Christi*), which was delineated as *concordia corporis* in St. Paul's letters;<sup>19</sup> or of Leonardo da Vinci's famous picture entitled *Vitruvian Man*.<sup>20</sup> Internal connection in a state has to be generated by natural ties, as nationality/national spirit/nationalism, which means a common collective origin of the community. The perfect state therefore is a national state directed by a common leading force, which could be materialised as a corporation or as a monarch as well. Permanency of that leading force is a key issue for the durable balance of state-organism, wrote Schedius.

Let us see the context of Schedius's theory on human organisms. Schedius's approaches are clearly connected with Schelling's system of natural philosophy,<sup>21</sup> especially with his writings *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* (1797) and *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800), which are quoted many times by Schedius.<sup>22</sup> Schedius corroborates that connection by using terminology of natural sci-

<sup>19</sup> Romans 12,5; 1Cor 10, 17; 12,27; Ephesians 1,23; 2,16; 3,23–30; Colossians 1,18–24; 2,19; 3,15; 1Cor 12,12–24. On the *corpus Christi* model see: Lee, James K: *Augustine and the Mystery of the Church*. Fortress, Minneapolis, 2017, 27–56, (“The Church as Body of Christ”).

<sup>20</sup> Kurdziałek, Marian: Mediaeval Doctrines on Man as Image of the World, *Roczniki Filozoficzne/ Annales de Philosophie/ Annals of Philosophy* 62: 2014/4, 205–246.

<sup>21</sup> To Schelling's system see Gurka, Dezső: *A schellingi természetfilozófia és a korabeli természettudományok kölcsönhatásai [The Interactions between Schelling's Natural Philosophy and Contemporary Natural Sciences]*. Gondolat, Budapest, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> About Schedius's several quotations from Schelling's works see Jánosi, Béla: *Schedius Lajos esztetikai elmélete [Ludwig Schedius' Aesthetic Theory]*. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest, 1916, 46–48.

ences and physiology.<sup>23</sup> One can find the pantheism of Schelling's model in the universal and gradually extended system of Schedius, which defines everything from microorganism to the universe with the same organic characteristics. Schedius's works allude to Schelling in their opposition between mechanism and organism as well. The negative connotation of mechanism is a new tendency in the Hungarian political discourse at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the social contract theories of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the state was often represented as a perfect mechanism, e.g. an excellent clockwork.<sup>24</sup> Romanticism re-interpreted the metaphor of mechanism in a negative sense: as related equally to the individuals, society and state, the mechanistic character represents an exhausted, obtrusive, dictatorial system. For example, in Hegel's *Alttesten Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus* (1797) mechanism indicates the state-system, which stands opposite to individual freedom, one of the most important social values.<sup>25</sup>

One should take into consideration that Schedius's organic concept of society was based on the same model and terminology of organism as his aesthetics. Unity of social and aesthetic theory is not unusual at that time. In his social theory, Adam Müller invoked his own aesthetic theory.<sup>26</sup> Similar to Schedius, Müller built his model on the distinction between the physical and psychic organism,<sup>27</sup> however his association of ideas are far more direct, than the Hungarian professor's: for instance Müller identifies the polarity be-

<sup>23</sup> On the context of this connection see Helfferich, Adolph: *Der Organismus der Wissenschaft und die Philosophie der Geschichte*. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1856.

<sup>24</sup> Schwering, Markus: Der Staat als Organismus, in Schanze, Helmut (Hrsg.): *Romantik-Handbuch*. Kröner, Stuttgart, 1994, 521–523.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 518.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 525–526; Von Busse, Gisela: *Die Lehre vom Staat als Organismus. Kritische Untersuchungen zur Staatsphilosophie Adam Müllers*. Junker, Berlin, 1928, 55–60.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 49–52.



tween citizens and nobility as the polarity between beauty and sublime, which is far removed from Schedius's method.<sup>28</sup> In *Principia philocaliae* Schedius declares that absolute empirical beauty could be materialised as an absolute perfect psychic organism, among others as anthropological organisms. The sequence of Schedius's ideas strongly resembles the thesis of Hegel, with whom Schedius was in correspondence:<sup>29</sup> "When several subjects accompany each other on the basis of their common human nature, if they depend on the same external and internal circumstances, and if they stand at the same scale of culture, and if they are inspired by the same spirit, then they constitute a psychic organism. That organism one could consider to be a subject of higher quality, namely *public* or *audience (publicum)*. Public, as a human being, develops; the larger it is, the slower it grows up and becomes mature. Intensity of its development depends on its spiritual nutrition; some media of culture helping or retarding progress. The more intensive internal life that an organism has, the more productive it is, and the more excellent fruits of humanity it can produce."<sup>30</sup>

The main problem of romantic social theories is to find a balance between the individual and the social spheres and interests. In the 1820s, a change occurs: the organic models abduct these theories from the radical individualist toward the emphasising of integrity, and the social, common interest becomes more and more dominant.<sup>31</sup> Schedius's tractate *De notione atque indole organismi* does not

<sup>28</sup> Schwering: *Der Staat*, 526.

<sup>29</sup> On the correspondence between Schedius and Hegel see Vieweg, Klaus: *Kis elbeszélések és „gondolkodó megemlékezés” – Hegel kapcsolatai Magyarországgal [Small Narratives and “Thoughtful Commemoration” – Hegel’s Connections to Hungary]*, *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* 37: 1994/3–4, 563–574; Vieweg, Klaus: „Az ön érdekes hazája.” Hegel levele Schedius Lajoshoz [“Your interesting country” – Hegel’s Letter to Ludwig Schedius], *Gond* 5: 1996/2, 109–113.

<sup>30</sup> Schedius: *Principia*, 226. §.

<sup>31</sup> Schwering: *Der Staat*, 508–516.; Von Busse, *Die Lehre*, 28–30.

determine the individuals comprising a society as an impersonal multitude. On the contrary, Schedius identifies them as autonomous organisms, who cooperate with each other voluntarily and by their own internal inspiration; and their leading force (which could be a monarch or a spirit of nationalism as well) only coordinates, not dominates them. As the quotation above clearly shows, the aesthetic society, that is the public, consists of autonomous aesthetic subjects, who can receive the absolute empirical beauty of their organism, therefore they operate the self-reflexion of their public-organism. We can say that Schedius's theory was close to achieving the balance of social and individual powers.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the resemblance to biblical *concordia corporis*. Schedius chose a quotation from Augustine as a motto of his own tractate: "Do not we see that nature gives power to the most excellent ones for the benefit of subordinates? Why does God order men, why does the soul order the body, why does the mind order the cupidity, the anger and the other guilty inclinations?"<sup>32</sup> These questions parallel the order of nature with the order of God and with the order of body. In the Augustinian motto, can we suppose that the biblical model of *concordia corporis* was mediated for Schedius by the tradition of biblical hermeneutics? Some facts make this hypothesis very feasible. Schedius arrived at Georgia Augusta of Göttingen as a student of theology. Besides aesthetics he studied theology very thoroughly, as his first tractate<sup>33</sup> proves, one which made him the winner of a theological application at the university. As its title shows, Schedius deals with problems

<sup>32</sup> Augustinus: *Contra Iulianum*, VI, 12, 61. Augustinus quotes this sentence from Marcus Tullius Cicero: *De re publica*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Commentatio de sacris opertis veterum christianorum sive de disciplina, quam vocant arcani. A venerab. Ordine theologorum in certamine literario civium Academiae Georgiae Augustae die IV. Junii MDCCXC. Praemio a M. Britanniae Rege Aug. constituto ornata. Quam conscripsit Joannes Ludovicus Schedius Jaurino-Hungarus. Typis Jo. Christ. Dietrich, Göttingen, 1790.*

and questions of the Paleochristian epoch in humanist hermeneutic methodology. In addition, Schedius wrote his first Hungarian essay about the connection between religion and aesthetics,<sup>34</sup> under the strong influence of Pietist thinkers, who emphasised the individual side of religion.<sup>35</sup>

Nonetheless, it is obvious that Schedius's theory of aesthetics contains well elaborated anthropological aspects. These aspects are based on an organic model of human life, which determines both human aesthetics and human society as well. Schedius's organic model has several connections to natural sciences and natural philosophy, to social theories of German romanticism, and to the tradition of biblical hermeneutics. Schedius's special and original concept of aesthetics clearly proves that at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries "anthropology was treated in all parts and relationships and in all manners. Everywhere one demanded that philosophy be conducted for life: the attention to natural history, philosophy of history, history of humanity, aesthetics and pedagogy was part fruit, part impetus of a practical spirit in philosophy that became even more universal, and emboldened the philosopher to search everywhere for new objects of inquiry with which one could enrich their science and make it useful for life."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Schedius, Lajos: A' Vallás' Szeretetre-méltó-volta [The Beauty of Religion], *Uránia* 1: 1794/1, 1–14.

<sup>35</sup> Kluckhohn, Paul: *Persönlichkeit und Gemeinschaft. Studien zur Staatsauffassung der Deutschen Romantik*. Niemeyer, Halle (Saale), 1925, 25–47.

<sup>36</sup> Fülleborn, Georg Gustav: Abriss einer Geschichte und Literatur der Physiognomik, in: Fülleborn, Georg Gustav (Hrsg.): *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie* 8. Zürich, 1797, 1–188, 155.