

Classical German Philosophy as a theoretical source of modern religious studies

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The author evaluates the contribution made by Classical German Philosophy to religious studies that became a separate discipline. The case of nature and origin of magic is examined.

Immanuel Kant was the first to draw attention to the specific character of magic. The difference between Christianity and early forms of religious consciousness was viewed by him as mere formal, not a matter of principle. According G. W. F. Hegel, the primitive religious stage was the religion of nature. It should be characterized mostly not by fear but by human self-assurance in absolute dominion over nature. The «spirit» (taken as an instrument) was set above matter. G. W. F. Hegel distinguished the stages of direct and mediate sorcery. Objectivation of the universal was the third stage; further development would have made a man an instrument of a higher being. G. W. F. Hegel anticipated scholars' conclusions about instrumental theory of magic (20th C.). It was proposed that magic had been used to supply human actions with primitive tools, because the result was not assured and foreseeable. In the article, G. W. F. Hegel is called a founder of «cognitive religious studies.» There is a view that a primitive man understood cause and effect, natural phenomena incorrectly. The philosopher defined sorcery as the first savage form of religion that should not be virtually called as such, since religion does not imply human power and might. L. Feuerbach concurred with this view and defined magic as «nonreligious form of religion» for in religion itself the power was thought to be transferred to something beyond human beings.



Key words: [religious studies](#), [magic](#), [sorcery](#), [I. Kant](#), [G. W. F. Hegel](#), [L. Feuerbach](#), [J. Frazer](#)

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