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Die "schöne Seele". Begriffserkundungen mit Fokus auf Friedrich Schillers philosophischer Schrift "Über Anmut und Würde"

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Abstract (English)

The concept of the "beautiful soul", shaped by fundamental Christian-Platonic convictions and the classical ideal of kalokagathia, served as a manifestation of the ideal human being and the highest expression of human virtue, morality and moral beauty: the concept of the character and human type of the "beautiful soul" transcended national, cultural, ideological and gender boundaries and developed into a central concept in the Western world. In the 18th century, with the further development of the concepts of beauty and morality in Friedrich Schiller's essay *On Grace and Dignity* (1793), it took on its true form as an educational goal and its clearest theoretical shape. With his concept, Schiller reacted to various tendencies and discourses, took up elements of secularization, pedagogization and criticism of rational reason and turned against Kantian rigorism. He saw the "beautiful soul" and its outward appearance, grace, as an expression of a harmonious unity of sensuality and reason as well as duty and inclination. The "beautiful soul" rose to become the ethical ideal of the Enlightenment, while at the same time 166 the concept began to slowly decline. One aspect that is addressed in current debates regarding the "beautiful soul" is the question of whether it is specifically female and was imposed on women as an ideal. The aim of this master's thesis is to explore the "beautiful soul" - as a literary, theological, philosophical and social phenomenon. Chronologically, the history of the term and the change in meaning are presented in detail and illustrated using literary works by leading poets and thinkers of German, French and English classicism and idealism. It examines what constitutes a "beautiful soul", how it can be achieved, whether beauty of soul is gender specific and what modernity potential it possesses. Overall, it is argued that Schiller's conception can be seen as a turning point in the history of the great educational ideal of the "beautiful soul". The results of this work show that the "beautiful soul" appears unsystematic and multifaceted in nature and can hardly be grasped conceptually. Beauty of the soul is neither an exclusively gender-specific, psychological nor theological concept, but rather a habitus. The problematic relationship between the aesthetic and moral realms further weighs down the concept. Even the most ardent advocates of the "beautiful soul" have to admit that it cannot be an ethical postulate, as it is unattainable for mere good will and can only ever be realized by approximation.