**Earth, Spirit, Humanity: Community and the Nonhuman in Karoline von Günderrode’s “Idea of the Earth”**

**Abstract**

Karoline von Günderrode (1780–1806) has long enjoyed a reputation as a Romantic poet, but her philosophical contributions have largely been neglected. This paper is one of the first to address Günderrode’s political thought, especially her view of the interrelationship between human society and the broader environment. The paper argues that Günderrode develops resources for reconceiving the relationship of human beings to the nonhuman and to each other that work against an instrumentalizing view of nature and programmatic political ideals. Günderrode’s normative restraint, concept of harmony, and view of human beings as part of and the same in kind as the rest of nature contribute to a vision of sociality, grounded in her metaphysics, that envisions small communities fostering connections between human beings and the nonhuman. On Günderrode’s model, these connections can grow and strengthen and eventually, perhaps, enable the emergence of the single, perfect organism that she calls the “realized idea of the earth.”