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Corbin M.H. Boekhaus Date

THE SCIENCE OF FREEDOM:
GALVANISM AND ORGANISM IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S EARLY THOUGHT

Corbin M.H. Boekhaus

Graduate Division of Religion
Emory University

____
David S. Pacini
Advisor

____
Wendy Farley
Committee Member

____
Andrew J. Mitchell
Committee Member

____
Don E. Saliers
Committee Member

____
Jonathan Strom
Committee Member

Accepted:

____
Lisa A. Tedesco
Dean, James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies
Date:__________________

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Corbin M.H. Boekhaus

Advisor: David Pacini

An Abstract of
A Dissertation submitted to the faculty at Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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in the Laney Graduate School.

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ABSTRACT

THE SCIENCE OF FREEDOM:
GALVANISM AND ORGANISM IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S EARLY THOUGHT
By Corbin M.H. Boekhaus

This study argues that Schleiermacher's system is a form of organicism, which he developed after being exposed to the natural sciences and philosophy of nature early in his career. The story of his organicism originated in the 1780s and when Schleiermacher was fixated on "the question of freedom" and causal determinism. By the time Schleiermacher wrote *On Freedom a*round 1790, one can see his interest shift towards fundamental relations, specifically the intra-personal relations within self-consciousness and the inter-personal relations between individuals in community. There, Schleiermacher conceived of freedom as a dynamic intermeshing between reason and understanding, mind and body, and individual and community. This view of freedom would be further shaped in the 1790s through contact with the natural sciences of his day. Through this research, Schleiermacher would identify certain fundamental forms of relation within the biological and chemical production of electricity that would fund a new way of thinking about individuals and communities as organisms. Further, Schleiermacher's organicism is not merely descriptive, but funds a religious and normative claim of how individuals and communities can better-coordinate and self-organize, trading self-interest for a higher good. As a result, Schleiermacher convincingly argues that only a religious community can enable the increase in one's freedom, rationality, and coherence.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

A. Freedom, and Other Misunderstandings……………………………………………1

B. Life After Freedom……………………………………………………………………5

C. Historical Method for Historical Organisms…………………………………………16

D. Outline…………………………………………………………………………………24

CHAPTER I: "THE CURRENT SITUATION": FREEDOM IN CRISIS…………………31

A. The World of *On Freedom*: 1787-1793………………………………………………31

B. Pantheism Controversy…………………………………………………………………34

C. Kantian Transcendental Idealism………………………………………………………51

CHAPTER II: ON FREEDOM AS RELATION……………………………………………72

A. Writings prior to *On Freedom*…………………………………………………………73

B. *On Freedom* ……………………………………………………………………………79

C. Schleiermacher's Early View: Freedom as Relation……………………………………97

CHAPTER III: THINKING ORGANISM……………………………………………………106

A. Emerging Organism……………………………………………………………………110

B. Schleiermacher in Berlin………………………………………………………………126

C. The Philophysical Revolution: Electricity and Organ…………………………………136

D. Philophysicists in the Jena Orbit………………………………………………………142

E. Linking Nature…………………………………………………………………………167

CHAPTER IV: ORGANICISM IN THE SPEECHES………………………………………170

A. Toward a Chemical Connection, 1798-99………………………………………………172

B. Organs and Organism in *The Speeches*……………………………………………183

C. Toward a Higher Religious Organism: Community………………………………………211

D. Toward Religion, and not a Metaphysics of Nature…………………………………242

CONCLUSION…………………………………………………………………………253

A. Institutional Disenchantment and Social Deconsolidation……………………………256

B. Schleiermacher's Organicism: Rethinking Social Solutions…………………………260

BIBLIOGRAPHY………………………………………………………………………271

INTRODUCTION

A. FREEDOM, AND OTHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Following the publication of *The Christian Faith* in 1821-22, Schleiermacher was puzzled by the vociferous criticism the work engendered. Though he felt much of the criticism could be attributed to simple misunderstandings, to be misunderstood so-widely, and in some cases so-spectacularly, implied some deficiency in his presentation. But no criticism would wound him as deeply as those critics who attacked 'the feeling of absolute dependence,' which was to Schleiermacher the most fundamental aspect of religious consciousness, the centrum around which he would order the entirety of Christian dogma. Critics believed that the affirmation of absolute dependence necessarily contradicted the reality of human freedom, committing Schleiermacher to some form of materialism, determinism, pantheism, Spinozism, or atheism. Schleiermacher was frustrated; clearly this "strange misunderstanding" was not the result of his presentation of the topic. Pondering a second edition, Schleiermacher would ask his friend Friedrich Lücke, "Do you think it might still be worthwhile to add a special section to my original explanations so that no one could still believe that absolute dependence upon God destroys human freedom?"[1]

In affirming both human freedom and absolute dependence, Schleiermacher stood on solid theological ground. For most of Christian history, the theological analogues of freedom and necessity were rarely viewed in such a contradictory fashion; since Augustine at least, theologians had tried to affirm both though a tension always remained. On the one hand, affirming God's all-

[1] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Schleiermachers Sendscheiben Über Seine Glaubenslehre an Lücke* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1908), 18. cf. *On the Glaubenslehre : Two Letters to Dr. Lücke* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 43.

encompassing omnipotence and omniscience implied a form of necessity, because if God foreknows, permits, or ordains our activity, there is a sense in which one could not do otherwise. On the other hand, human freedom was needed to explain the origin of sin (thereby absolving God), and was the justification to keep human beings accountable, through punishment, for *their* sin. Both could be affirmed, but the tension would remain until it burst forth in a fissure in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The catalyst of that fissure was the Enlightenment, especially its demand that reason be rigorously applied to even the most sacred subjects, even theology. No longer the theological affirmation of divine omnipotence, necessity would be understood as a universal and natural law of necessity, which become the presupposition of the ascendent natural sciences. This was total necessity: a universal claim about the necessary connection of all things. If freedom were something truly spontaneous and causally-unconditioned, something irreducible to the law of necessity, then a single instance of freedom would negate all necessity, and enervate the foundation of scientific inquiry. According to the demands of logic, freedom and necessity were together a zero sum game; one either had freedom *or* necessity, but to affirm both was logically contradictory.[2] One seemingly had two options: affirm necessity, deny freedom, and profess naturalism; or affirm freedom, deny necessity, and profess some form of supernaturalism.

[2] That this is indicative of Enlightenment rationalism is best seen in Spinoza's own *Ethics,* I, def. 7: "that thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone. But a thing is called necessary, or rather compelled, which is determined by another to exist and to produce an effect in a certain and determinate manner." See Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 409.

Schleiermacher rejected this line of thinking entirely, regarding it as an 'antinomy' based on inappropriate presumptions. While the law of necessity was indeed necessary for the natural sciences, all too often it was employed metaphysically, resulting in reason's overreach into speculations that it could not ground or justify. Similarly, understanding freedom as something causally-unconditioned was equally lacking in ground or justification. Neither naturalism nor supernaturalism in these senses were tenable; there had to be a third way for theology to navigate through this Scylla and Charybdis. Considering the prevalence of this antinomic thinking, Schleiermacher should not have been surprised at the reception of the *Christian Faith.* Neither should he be surprised that his critics believed that absolute dependence had to "destroy" human freedom; these critics were simply unable to transcend the antinomic thinking that posed the question of freedom and necessity as a zero-sum game of contraries. Schleiermacher had not deficiently presented his material as much as his critics were unable to recognize that their core assumptions could be faulty. He would realize this, writing to Lücke that

> I also believe that further explanation is now even less necessary, since anyone who still thinks that human freedom has to be conceived in such a way as to be irreconcilable with absolute dependence will find that position reflected in the theologian from Wurttemberg whose position I was thinking of previously.[3]

That theologian was Christoph Benjamin Klaiber, who in *Concerning the Concept and Essence of Supernaturalism* [*Über Begriff und Wesen des Supernaturalismus*] was deeply-committed to the irreconcilability of God's omnipotence with human freedom. Given the resulting dilemma, one had to give way to the other; Klaiber concluded that God must undergo self-limitation in order to allow

[3] Schleiermacher, *Schleiermachers Sendscheiben Über Seine Glaubenslehre an Lücke*, 18. cf. *On the Glaubenslehre : Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, 43.

for free, independent beings.[4] To a theologian in the reformed tradition, this claim was a spurious elevation of human beings at the expense of God's power. About theologians like Klaiber, Schleiermacher would write that

> those who imagine a God who performs acts of self-limitation can also flatter themselves into believing in a freedom that raises itself above absolute dependence. Those, however, who cannot reconcile themselves to such acts of God, and I freely confess my inability to do so, should sacrifice the representation of an 'absolute freedom over against absolute dependence'— a representation that I can in no way admit.[5]

Thus, freedom and absolute dependence are not contradictory so long as freedom is properly-understood. Schleiermacher vociferously opposed supernatural understandings of freedom throughout his career, what he called "a freedom based on choice, that is, a freedom grounded in vacillation and uncertainty."[6]

Looking through many of his letters and writings, these mistaken notions of freedom were obviously-irritating to Schleiermacher. But what seems far more irritating is how this antinomic thinking about freedom was sapping the precious and limited intellectual resources of so many great minds. For someone deeply-impressed with the stamp of Kant's critical method, Schleiermacher saw so much quibbling over freedom as a red herring that might sap energy away from more important questions, questions with practical and lived consequences. Whether one affirms an incompatibilist libertarian freedom "to do otherwise" that negates natural causation, or affirms a compatibilist freedom consonant with metaphysical determinism, one can see little practical difference. One cannot 'get behind' subjectivity or objectivity to find out if one is 'really free' or 'really determined:' these determinations are simply beyond the scope of human experience. Even if understood as

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[4] The idea remains a popular one in contemporary works of theology, as a near-universal presumption of open theism and the process theology based on the philosophy of Whitehead and Hartshorne, and also by notable theologians like Jürgen Moltmann, John Sanders, and E. Frank Tupper.

[5] Schleiermacher, *Schleiermachers Sendscheiben Über Seine Glaubenslehre an Lücke*, 18. cf. *On the Glaubenslehre : Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, 43.

[6] Schleiermacher, *Schleiermachers Sendscheiben Über Seine Glaubenslehre an Lücke*, 26. cf. *On the Glaubenslehre : Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, 50.

transcendental conditions, like Kant understood them, Schleiermacher saw them as too-often speculative, reified, and detached. If moral responsibility can be rigorously defended in either view, then 'the question of freedom' remains a philosophical and theological red herring.

B. LIFE AFTER FREEDOM

Instead of obsessing over freedom, one might instead ask questions about relations, beginning with two questions about properly-describing how relations work. First, how do human beings relate to themselves? Whence do desires originate, and how do human beings act on them? How does the body relate to the soul? These are pressing questions about intra-personal relations within consciousness, especially how one determines a moral course of action in the world. Second, how do human beings relate to other human beings? What features attend to social relations? How should human beings interact and coordinate with others? These are pressing questions about inter-personal relations, especially how human beings relate through civil, social, political, and religious association. After describing intra-personal and interpersonal relations, however, one can still investigate further. One might still ask how relations *should* work, about whatever normative claims one might make about those described relations. As we will come to see, Schleiermacher saw both sets of questions as both moral and religious questions. Intra-personally, how should one resolve various representations and desires, including both sensible and ideal content, toward moral or religious ends? Inter-personally, how should one associate with others, resolving various sensible and ideal goals towards a common purpose, potentially a moral or religious transformation of society or the greater world? For Schleiermacher, these are the practically-significant questions that arise as soon as one stops chasing after a metaphysical understanding of freedom and determinism.

Particularly in Schleiermacher's early career, these practically-significant questions drove the development of his thought toward an increasingly comprehensive view of the world. It is also a period marked by unprecedented interaction with some of the greatest minds of the age—people like Kant, Fichte, Goethe, and Schelling—that would provide the nutritive resources for this development. While the philosophical influence of these great minds on Schleiermacher is widely-known and well-attested to by the secondary literature, very little to date has been written on the significance of 'philosophy of nature' [*Naturphilosophie*] on Schleiermacher's development, and even less about what is today called 'natural science' including 'experimental science.' Of course, in Schleiermacher's era philosophy and natural science were not so easily-separable; both were considered rigorously-ordered and methodologically-driven forms of *Wissenschaft*.

While it was not until about 1817 in the German-speaking world that the 'intellectual sciences'" [*Geisteswissenschaften*] would be clearly demarcated from the 'natural sciences' [*Naturwissenschaften*], there is nevertheless a tremendous inertia behind the modern tendency to apply this distinction anachronistically to earlier historical epochs. It is within this context that the experimental science of the day is often considered "bad science," usually for theorizing in directions that could easily be appropriated by metaphysics. It is the same context in which the philosophy of nature is often considered "bad philosophy" for thinking that contingent and falsifiable discoveries of science could ground a comprehensive understanding of reality. Despite these interpretive pitfalls, in recent years philosophy of nature has come to be appreciated as a vibrant field of study, one that transgressed disciplinary boundaries with experiments in physics, chemistry, and biology that often

suggested certain fundamental forms with wider philosophical implications.[7] Marrying the theoretical and empirical, natural philosophy and science sought to achieve a coherent understanding of natural phenomena with extensive explanatory power. In rare but significant cases, this work would even fuel a humanistic drive towards a greater perfection in the world, whether through curing physiological illness or finding the best social or political order. It was within this fecund environment that Schleiermacher would set out to develop a theory of intra- and inter-personal relations in the 1790s, culminating in the 1799 publication of *On Religion: Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers* [*Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*]. As a result, this study will explore Schleiermacher's growing fascination and involvement with natural science and philosophy of nature, and how it became a resource from which his thought could develop in practically-productive, new dimensions. As a result, it will take seriously the words of Schleiermacher's biographer Dilthey—words long ignored by many— that "it is impossible to represent Schleiermacher's system without starting with the philosophy of nature and its historical value, for Schleiermacher's system is founded on the truth of this philosophy of nature."[8]

So what is "Schleiermacher's system," that Dilthey asserts is so deeply indebted to philosophy of nature? This study argues that Schleiermacher's system is a form of organicism, which during Schleiermacher's life was closely connected to natural science and philosophy of nature. More-broadly, organicism is the view that organism is a more primordial form of reality than is

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[7] In important ways, certain theories in contemporary natural sciences are moving in directions quite consonant with the "romantic science" and "philosophy of nature of the 18th and 19th century, insofar as they seek wider, interdisciplinary theories with greater explanatory potential. One preeminent example might be the development of "emergence" theories to explain certain emergent properties or phenomena as non-reductive to a lower-explanatory level, often theoretically integrating physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and—in some cases—even philosophy or theology. Attempts to develop a "grand universal theory" (GUT) to harmonize gravitational and quantum physics are also relevant examples pushing the distinction between philosophy and natural science, eg. "string theory," supersymmetry, or "M theory."

[8] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Lebens Schleiermachers*, ed. Martin Redeker, Vol II, pt. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1966), 451.

mechanism, but this understanding can take many forms. In the West, the idea is fundamentally connected with Plato's *Timaeus,* in which a Demiurge --both intelligent and alive—created the universe. Mirroring this universe-as-organism, all other forms of organism can be considered a kind of distillation or derivation of universal organism. Accordingly, individual organisms relate to this universe-as-organism as microcosm relates to macrocosm. This mirroring of differently-scaled organisms can be understood in myriad ways, running the gamut from theoretical analogy to stronger ontological and metaphysical commitments. It is sufficient to say, there is a great deal of diversity within the framework of 'organicism.' Nevertheless, organicism underwent a revival during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as many notable figures of German romanticism and idealism would look back to classical sources for inspiration in resolving new problems. Philosophers who were in every sense also natural scientists—for example, Goethe and Schelling-- would see in organicism a coherent philosophical viewpoint that could seamlessly-integrate the latest scientific advances in physiology, electrochemistry, and magnetism. These philosophers and scientists of organism would come to understand the world in terms of self-organizing and living organism, rather than reducing organism to a collection of lifeless matter arranged in terms of mechanical relation.

This study proposes that the emergence of Schleiermacher's organicism was critical to helping him reimagine the nature of intra- and inter-personal relations. While his organicism originates in the 1790s, it continues to develop well into the 1830s. In the *Speeches* of 1799, however, Schleiermacher would set out his first full-articulation of organicism in the form and relation of individuals and communities. In it, he would draw on the natural science of his day, most-notably the latest research on the biological and chemical production of electricity, what was

then known as 'galvanism.' Surprisingly, very little scholarly attention has been directed to Schleiermacher's relation to the galvanic science of his day. Not only was Schleiermacher engaged and involved with this burgeoning scientific field in the 1790s, but he continued to exhibit its influence much later in his career. An excellent example is a well-known letter from Schleiermacher to Jacobi, in which galvanism occupies a central role. The letter is undated, but Dilthey attributes it to around 1818, nearly two decades after the first edition of *The Speeches* was published. In it, he argues with Jacobi over how to describe the conflict within self-consciousness between the cognitive faculties of feeling [*Gefühl*] and the understanding, [*Vertstand*] i.e. how consciousness can relate to both the sensible world of objects and the religious world of feeling. In a previous letter, Jacobi asserts an irreconcilable conflict between the faculties of feeling and understanding, which for him corresponds to the rift between religion and philosophy, and the ideal and the real.

Unsurprisingly, Schleiermacher does not view religion and philosophy in such sharp distinction; they are different, to be sure, but nevertheless intrinsically-related. As a result, Jacobi misunderstands how these opposing faculties can be productively-related and unified. Toward this end, Schleiermacher employs various forms of relating what is seemingly-opposed throughout his letter to Jacobi. At one point, Schleiermacher describes his overall method,

> This is my mode of establishing an equilibrium [*Gleichgewicht*] between the two waves [*den beiden Wassern*]; it is in reality, likewise, an alternation of the rising of one and the sinking of the other. But dear friend, why should we not be content with this? Oscillation is, after all, the universal form [*allegemeine Form*] of all finite existence [*alles endlichen Daseins*], and there exists in me at the same time an immediate consciousness [*unmittelbares Bewusstein*] that the wavering [*Schweben*] is, in fact, caused by the two foci of my own ellipse, and that through this wavering [*Schweben*] I enjoy the fulness of earthly life."[9]

[9] Schleiermacher to Jacobi, 1818, Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Aus Schleiermacher's Leben: In Briefen*, 2 ed. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1860), 351. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher as Unfolded in His Autobiography and Letters* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1860), 281-82.

It is significant that Schleiermacher chooses the term equilibrium [*Gleichgewicht*], as it is also the term used in chemistry to describe a completed reaction at rest or equilibrium. This "equilibrium," however, does not imply a state of rest but one of "oscillation,"[10] which he enticingly calls the universal form of all finite existence. A fundamental form of relation is at work here, if it is to be universal for all of finite existence. In addition to "oscillation" Schleiermacher describes this form of relation as a wavering or hovering [*Schweben*], a term that resonates with significance throughout the period. In one of his pre-critical writings from 1755, Kant would describe the stability of the planetary bodies in our solar system as having an equilibrative "hovering" between the force of attraction and orbital momentum,[11] an idea that would carry over into his critical presentation of motion and mechanics in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* [*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*].[12] With great significance, Fichte would apply the term to self-consciousness, wherein the mind tries to resolve the conflict between objective and subjective reflections. Fichte was apparently the first to fully-employ *schweben* as a fundamental concept of relation, writing that "the mind lingers in this conflict and wavers between the two—wavers between the requirement and the impossibility of carrying it out;" this is a positive development for Ficthe,

[10] The term "Oscillation" is borrowed from English, with which Schleiermacher was fluent. In this exact spelling, the term saw its popularity rise considerably from around 1800 to 1830. See "Oscillation, Oszillation, Pendeln," https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Oscillation%2COszillation%2CPendeln%2C&year_start=1700&year_end=2000&corpus=20&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2COscillation%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2COszillation%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CPendeln%3B%2Cc0.

[11] See "Concerning the origin of the planetary system as such and the cause of its motions," in Immanuel Kant, "Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens or Essay on the Constitution and the Mechanical Origin of the Whole Universe According to Newtonian Principles," in *Natural Science*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Emmanuel Kant in Translation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 226-32.

[12] Henrich helpfully describes the term while discussing Fichte: "I do not really know which is the better word, 'wavering' or 'hovering'; it is important that the term covers both elements, this double inclination to the two opposite sides and this moving freely in the air. The German term *schweben* has both meanings—possibly there is no English word that covers it in exactly the same way. One has to have in mind a glider or a sea gull in order to have an image of this process. The word *schweben* associates the sea gull flying against a light wind," Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel : Lectures on German Idealism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 212.

however, because "the entire mechanism of the human mind" follows from this absolute opposition and can thus only be explained in terms of this absolute opposition.[13] Fichte says that imagination "wavers inwardly in the middle between opposites," just as it "wavers in general between object and non-object."[14] The idea of an indeterminate and dynamic "hovering" or "wavering" offered a form with broad explanatory potential, aptly applied to systems as disparate as mechanistic physics and self-consciousness.

Schleiermacher no doubt had this rich meaning of the term in mind when he wrote to Jacobi, but it would be a mistake to attribute it *solely* to that tradition. When Schleiermacher first employs the idea of "hovering" [*Schweben*] to describe self-consciousness, he does so in the context of Jacobi's "two waves" [*zwei Wassern*], which more literally means "two waters." The term references an earlier letter Jacobi wrote to Reinhold, and which Jacobi appended to his letter to Schleiermacher. Jacobi writes of the irreconcilability of his "heathen" understanding and his Christian feeling, writing that "I float between two waters, that will not unite so that they can collectively carry me."[15] In a move that evinces both the breadth and depth of Schleiermacher's thought, I suspect the invocation of "hovering" in the context of waters is also a biblical allusion. In the Luther Bible of 1545, at the inception of God's creation of the heavens and the earth, Luther describes "the spirit of God hovering over the waters" [*der Geist Gottes schwebte auf dem Wasser*]. The spirit of God is the mediator by which God forms the formless void, somewhat-importantly by acts of separation and opposition: light and dark, night and day, but also the separation of the waters

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[13] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Science of Knowledge ; with the First and Second Introductions*, trans. Peter Lauchlan Heath and John Lachs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 201-2.

[14] Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason : German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 214-5.

[15] Jacobi to Reinhold, undated, in *Aus Schleiermacher's Leben: In Briefen*, 349. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 280.

into heavenly and earthly waters. The intent seems clear: while Jacobi may be floating at the juncture of two irreconcilable waters, perhaps there is something that can mediate these two waters, the heavenly and the earthly, feeling and understanding? In the idea of *Schweben,* Schleiermacher offers up a model of *mediated opposition* rather than disjointed opposition. This mediated opposition— which one finds in planetary mechanics all the way to self-consciousness— is not a problem to be solved, but a fundamental fact to be embraced. This is why Schleiermacher offers the observation to Jacobi that "we can in no way escape from the antithesis between the real and the ideal, or however you may choose to designate it."[16]

Consequently, the opposed nature of everything finite is a given fact: what one sees as equilibrative stasis is in fact a tension, a wavering, or an oscillation of two forces or elements held together by some unity. Owing primarily to Fichte, the idea of oscillation or hovering remained significant throughout much of the philosophy of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Nevertheless, it would not remain a tenet of purely transcendental philosophy, as Fichte originally conceived of it. In the 1790s especially, experimental research in electricity became a powerful theoretical accompaniment to Fichte's transcendental idealism, especially the study of galvanism. How can electricity be generated? Is it unique to organic life, or a property of inorganic matter as well? How can it impel muscles to move, and deliver sensory information to the brain? As this study will argue, Schleiermacher was well-acquainted with the scientific research on these questions in the late 1790s, what was then usually called "galvanism" or "galvanic science,' a field which integrated fundamental sciences like physics and chemistry with biological sciences like morphology and physiology.

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[16] Schleiermacher to Jacobi, 1818, *Aus Schleiermacher's Leben: In Briefen*, 352. cf. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 283.

While Schleiermacher employs an idea of "oscillation" or "hovering" quite reminiscent of Fichte, he nevertheless concludes the letter by showing how this relation is confluent with galvanic science, in a way that gestures toward a deeper, more-fundamental relation:

> One word more in reference to your simile of the two waves, the waters of which will not unite in you. In me they also refuse to unite; but while you desire this union, and miss it painfully, I submit cheerfully to the separation. Understanding and feeling in me also remain distinct, **but they contact each other** [*berühren sich*] **and form a galvanic pile** [*galvanische Säule*]. To me it seems that **the innermost life of the spirit** [*das innerste Leben des Geistes*] **consists in the galvanic action** [*galvanischen Operation*] thus produced in the feeling of the understanding and the understanding of the feeling, during which, however, the two poles always remain deflected from each other.[17]

Schleiermacher describes the cognitive faculties of feeling and understanding as relating just as a galvanic pile, what was essentially the first dry-cell battery invented by Alessandro Volta in 1800. In such a battery, two plates made of heterogeneous metals—i.e. metals of different electrical potential— are placed in "contact" via an electrically-conductive media; when properly-organized, this cell produces a "galvanic action," i.e. the production of electricity. This is the most significant point for Schleiermacher: when organized into a proper relation with one another, two heterogeneous and seemingly-opposed elements placed in contact will produce a dynamic force that emerges out of this system, effectively a product irreducible to its constitutive parts. Two important characteristics should be noted about electricity, the product of galvanic action. First, the product is not physical or material in the same sense as the metal plates; electricity is incorporeal and fleeting, and only available to our senses secondarily through its effects on other physical objects that one can perceive and observe. Second, the product is animating, i.e. it is intimately involved in the processes of life. While twenty-first century human beings might think of electricity as a lifeless, material phenomenon, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries electricity was associated with

[17] Schleiermacher to Jacobi, 1818, *Aus Schleiermacher's Leben: In Briefen*, 353. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 284. emphasis added.

life, a context which will be elaborated more-fully in Chapter III. The first galvanic cells were the legs of frogs, which could be brought to the twitching semblance of life under the right conditions. It was common for electricity to be thought of as a "galvanic fluid" that coursed through living nerves in order to actuate muscles and deliver sensory information.

While one might conclude that Schleiermacher intends this example as an important analogy for the relation of feeling and understanding, he says quite-clearly that feeling and understanding "contact each other and form a galvanic pile," not that they *are like* or *analogous* to one. There is a deeper relationship operative, where feeling and understanding *are* a galvanic pile. Whether intended in a metaphysical, ontological, or heuristic sense, Schleiermacher identifies a deeper truth than a mere similarity of outward appearance. Schleiermacher asserts that cognitive faculties of feeling and understanding, through the ebb and flow of their contact, produce "the innermost life of the spirit." As a result, feeling and understanding are united in a common location—spirit, or just as accurately, intellect—and their unity produces "life," an incorporeal, animating, dynamic force that is irreducible to its constitutive parts or faculties. Out of the conflict between feeling and understanding, the ideal and the real, *life emerges*. In describing the relation between feeling, understanding, spirit, and life as a galvanic cell, Schleiermacher demonstrates his commitment to a fundamental and primordial form of relation that undergirds both examples. And yet, what might one call this fundamental relation? I suggest that this fundamental relation would most-accurately be called the 'organ', a concept with origins in neither transcendental philosophy nor galvanic chemistry, but nevertheless one that grew in prominence out of the collaborative work between natural science and philosophy of nature in the 1790s. This particular valence of 'organ' was unique to Schleiermacher's time and place, originating as it did amongst many of Schleiermacher's

close friends and associates in Berlin and Jena. In the idea of 'organ,' two opposed elements, forces, or drives are bound and located in contact with one another, mediating and translating their opposition though the production of a 'third'— a dynamic force irreducible to its constitutive parts. As a result, the form of Fichtean self-consciousness and the form of a galvanic cell similarly-indicated the same fundamentally *organic* relation.

This study will show how organs and organisms came to be critical conceptual forms for Schleiermacher's system, as it will focus specifically on the the galvanic science and philosophy of nature that supported the development in his thought. By the first edition of the *Speeches* in 1799, Schleiermacher's appropriation of organs and organisms are so imbedded in his understanding of relations that it can rightly be described as a form of 'organicism.' This study will also show how this development marked a transition in his intellectual focus. While the young Schleiermacher of the 1780s and 1790s was fixated on "the question of freedom" and how it related to causal determinism, Schleiermacher began to realize that the question was largely a theoretical and speculative red herring. While the 'reality' of transcendental freedom or causal determinism was often tied to the possibility of moral responsibility, in actual practice, one's affirmation had little appreciable effect on how she related to others. Emphasis on freedom and determinism detracts from what *is morally significant*, and Schleiermacher believes that understanding individuals and communities as organismic relations can have a real and moral effect in the world. This is not *just* a description of relations—though it includes a description—but *also* a series of normative claims about how relations can be better-ordered. Additionally, Schleiermacher's distinctly *religious* organicism funds an understanding of how individuals can better-coordinate toward a communal purpose, leaving behind self-interest for a greater, common good. Though many Enlightenment thinkers worried

about heteronomous communities enervating freedom, Schleiermacher shows how a distinctly religious community is actually the only way to increase freedom, rationality, and coherence. But before one considers the development of Schleiermacher's organicism, it is necessary to articulate the kind of historical methodology appropriate for this study.

C. Historical Method for Historical Organisms

While Schleiermacher's organicism develops throughout his career, this study will focus its attention on the first part of this story, surrounding what I call Schleiermacher's "organismic turn" in the 1790s. This will require a careful elucidation of Schleiermacher's understanding of intra- and inter-personal relations during this period, showing both *how* and *why* this understanding developed in more organismic directions. The question of "how" his organicism centers on two significant points in Schleiermacher's early career. The first point emerges around 1790, as best evinced by the extensive but unpublished manuscript *On Freedom* [*Über die Freiheit*], which offers an example of Schleiermacher's pre-organismic understanding of relations. The second point emerges around 1799, as present in the widely-influential *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers,* which will demonstrate Schleiermacher's "organismic turn," wherein he employs a thoroughgoing organicism to understand individuals, communities, and even the universe itself. While a comparison of Schleiermacher's thought in 1790 and 1799 might be a perfectly valid study, it would not yet be an *historical* study. The question of *why* his organicism developed is just as important as the question of *how*, because it can offer insight as to how he approached and conceived of problems, possible resources, and viable solutions. Even more important, the act of conceiving of something as a 'problem,' 'resource,' or 'solution' is already largely-determined by one's particular context, a condition rarely-considered or reflected upon in historiography.

As a result, every historical study should first consider its enlivening methodology. What constitutes good evidence? What kind of rubric or criteria will guide the selection of relevant evidence? Has the historian included a sufficient variety of evidence? What kinds of claims can be made and justified based on that evidence? How do these claims, in turn, affect the rubric or criteria for the selection of evidence? What are the historian's responsibilities, both to the historical material and to the contemporary reader? The process is admittedly circular, but openness about method allows the historian to remain self-reflective and self-critical throughout the process. So while the primary goal of this study is to demonstrate and elucidate Schleiermacher's emerging commitment to organicism in the 1790s, this goal does not preclude secondary objectives,[18] such as considering historical method, especially how historical research and writing *should* proceed. History is not merely the use of historical evidence, i.e. writings from a 'present' now 'past,' something that could be compared just as several contemporaneous texts from the 'present.' In order to avoid the comparison of two de-historicized texts, both the *how* and *why* of Schleiermacher's organicism needs to be contextualized within broader historical movements and developments. Needless to say, it would be both impossible and imprudent to include every figure, idea, and historical event that might be related to Schleiermacher's development; a rubric or several criteria should guide the historian in the selection of enough of the appropriate evidence to support a plausible argument about context, while at the same time not diluting the argument with too many tangentially-connected *relata*. The task is an artful one, and several deficient rubrics should be carefully avoided.

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[18] I have already intimated toward several, including the desire to move the discussion in the secondary literature away from freedom, the hope that Schleiermacher's thought will be better understood within the natural science of his day, and the possibility that Schleiermacher's organicism might have relevance where contemporary natural science is seemingly broadening its theoretical bases and returning to earlier forms.

All too often, the needed parsimony of evidence is obtained by what might be called a magisterial rubric, wherein historical context is somewhat-arbitrarily narrowed to mostly "magisterial" figures or works. In Schleiermacher scholarship, magisterial philosophers like Spinoza,[19] Kant,[20] Leibniz,[21] and Schelling[22] have, in various combinations, been proposed as the hermeneutical key for properly interpreting Schleiermacher's thought. For instance, Julia Lamm sees Spinoza as a powerful corrective in Schleiermacher's thought, calling Schleiermacher a "post-Kantian Spinozist."[23] On the other hand, Jacqueline Mariña asserts the centrality of Leibniz as a corrective for Kant in Schleiermacher's thought, arguing that Schleiermacher's attention to Spinoza was a passing phase.[24] The difference is significant.. On the one hand, scholars like Lamm, Blackwell,[25] and Dole[26]

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[19] See Julia A. Lamm, *The Living God : Schleiermacher's Theological Appropriation of Spinoza* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

[20] See Jacqueline Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," *New Athenaeum* 5 (1998).; Jacqueline Mariña, *Transformation of the Self in the Thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[21] See Jacqueline Mariña, "Where Have All the Monads Gone? Substance and Transcendental Freedom in Schleiermacher," *The Journal of Religion* 95, no. 4 (2015).; *Transformation of the Self* (2008).

[22] See Richard B. Brandt, *The Philosophy of Schleiermacher : The Development of His Theory of Scientific and Religious Knowledge*, First edition ed. (New York: Harper, 1941).; Hermann Süskind, *Der Einfluss Schellings Auf Die Entwicklung Von Schleiermachers System* (Tübingen: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1983).

[23] Lamm writes "it is not enough to say that Schleiermacher was a Kantian, since he went beyond Kant. Nor is it enough to say that Schleiermacher was a post-Kantian, for the same could be said of Reinhold or Fichte, Schleiermacher may be distinguished from other post-Kantians on the basis of his appeal to Spinoza as a way of correcting what he found to be misguided in Kant. For this reason he is best understood as a post-Kantian Spinozist," 14

[24] Mariña writes, "While there is no doubt that the early Schleiermacher was both a Spinozist and a determinist, it has remained an open question whether the mature Schleiermacher continued to espouse Spinozism and the manner of determinism entailed by it. Included in this question is whether the later Schleiermacher thought of the self as a genuine metaphysical substance having real powers of its own, or whether he thought God was the only genuine substance, so that at bottom consciousness of the spontaneity of the self was only an unavoidable illusion. Certainly the later Schleiermacher protested that his theology was decidedly not pantheistic. I have argued elsewhere that the decisive turn in Schleiermacher's thought was his abandonment of Spinozism and his espousal of a modified version of Leibniz's philosophy: the self is a genuine center of power," in "Where Have All the Monads Gone? Substance and Transcendental Freedom in Schleiermacher," 477.

[25] Affirming determinism, Blackwell clarifies that Schleiermacher sees every choice and intention as grounded in a person's character: "What I am determines what I do. Or to put this a little less bluntly, at the moment of choosing, all the incentives in my state of mind are combined, and the vector sum of that combination is my effective intention. The dynamics of combination and counterpoise we call deliberation. The resulting vector sum we call resolution or intention. Choice as Schleiermacher defines it consists of these two taken together." So while "resolution" and "choice" seem to suggest (in their common-sense English usage) a kind of libertarian free will in which one is able to "choose" to do otherwise, taken within the context of Schleiermacher's writings and the philosophy of his day, Blackwell argues that

argue that Schleiermacher is a committed compatibilist and determinist, denying transcendental freedom in favor of freedom as an "absence of constraint." On the other hand, Mariña argues that Schleiermacher is an incompatibilist committed to a Leibnizian understanding of substance that preserves transcendental freedom and denies universal causal determinism.[27]

How can scholars like Lamm and Mariña come to such widely varying positions? There is good reason to suspect not only the foregrounding of certain magisterial figures, but also the foregrounding of different supporting texts. Lamm begins with and draws heavily from Schleiermacher's early works on Spinoza, while Mariña emphasizes the *Soliloquies* as an important turning point in Schleiermacher's thought. Doing so is perfectly appropriate—every argument selects the most pertinent evidence available—but it should be recognized as a significant interpretive issue. One might rightly suspect that the tendency to strongly-foreground magisterial figures and particular supporting texts arbitrarily imposes a foreign way of conceiving relevant problems and

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one cannot help but integrate them into a larger deterministic project. See Albert L. Blackwell, *Schleiermacher's Early Philosophy of Life : Determinism, Freedom, and Phantasy* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 70.

[26] In *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (2010), Andrew Dole argues that Schleiermacher's description of religion treats it as a natural phenomenon, placing the religious individual entirely within a collection of human conditions, practices, and artifacts. Dole stakes out the importance of determinism as a (if not the) central theme of Schleiermacher's writings: "Schleiermacher's determinism constitutes an important parameter for the account of religion that the following chapters present: for over and above specific claims about that phenomenon, Schleiermacher, as I understand him, was committed to the position that everything that occurs within time, and thus every constituent part of the collection of human activities commonly known as religion, is the result of the operation of causes within the natural order, which are potentially knowable," in *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31. Emphasizing determinism is also important for Dole, since it not only buttresses his claim about Schleiermacher's theory of religion, but it defends Schleiermacher from the neo-orthodox critique that sees Schleiermacher's theory of religion as autonomous and quite segregated from cultural, political, or historical life in general.

[27] Regarding Schleiermacher's incompatibilism, Mariña argues that "Like Kant, Schleiermacher held to the transcendental freedom of the subject in relation to the world—that is, Schleiermacher was a source incompatibilist. This source incompatibilism allowed him rightly to resist the reduction of the moral order to the natural order. On the other hand, Schleiermacher rejected Kant's leeway incompatibilism," in Mariña, "Where Have All the Monads Gone? Substance and Transcendental Freedom in Schleiermacher," 505. Regarding Schleiermacher's commitment to transcendental freedom, Mariña states that "In this regard Schleiermacher can be taken to stand in agreement with Leibniz, for whom the monads were completely determined by God in accordance with their complete concept. However, it is important to stress that for Schleiermacher, insofar as a substance is not fully determined through the world outside it, that is, insofar as the substance is determined in accordance with its own internal powers, it is transcendentally free," in ibid., 495.

viable solutions, namely the "question of freedom" and the importance of Schleiermacher's commitment to the metaphysics of freedom and necessity.

These interpretive difficulties do not arise from citing figures like Kant and Spinoza, or particular texts like the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as all are admittedly important to Schleiermacher's development. The problem is more complicated. First, it often assumes a kind of unmediated and ahistorical "influence" by which these disambiguated figures and their ideas came to influence Schleiermacher. How, and in what ways, was Schleiermacher influenced by each figure? What particular books did he read, and when did he read them? With what level of acuity did he read them?[28] Did he read them alongside other works or in conversation with friends? Is there enough evidence to support the claim that this particular work had a demonstrable outcome on his thought? Second, sorting out historical influence is made all the more daunting by the historical entanglement of these figures and ideas. Kant had certainly read and developed his critical philosophy in response to both Leibniz and Spinoza, while Schelling in many ways appropriates all the magisterial figures mentioned above. Can a provenance be attributed to the source or influence of any the above based on mere similarity to Schleiermacher's writings? Further, one still needs to consider those figures who are not as well known today, but were every bit as influential during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: figures like Blumenbach, Reinhold, Ritter, Baader, Steffens, Jacobi, Wizemann, and Schiller to name only a few. These figures were every bit a part of ebb and flow of influence within Schleiermacher's intellectual world, so how can one justify the attribution of a claim

[28] Given Schleiermacher's extensive correspondence, there are often cases where Schleiermacher admits that his initial reading was confused or inadequate, and that sometimes a later reading was more thorough and productive. Naturally this does not mean that either reading was as inadequate or thorough as Schleiermacher described it—humility and ignorance can always murky the waters— but it is usually verifiable with other writings and letters, and thus in special cases can be plausibly demonstrated.

to a "magisterial" figure when other alternatives are just as likely? Consequently, claims based on sheer similarity, or similarity combined with a general sense that a particular figure was influential, are in many cases insufficient grounds for properly-historical claims.[29]

It might be helpful at this juncture to borrow an example from natural science that might better-illustrate how to avoid some of these methodological pitfalls. Within evolutionary biology, there is a phenomenon known as "convergent evolution," which hinges on a distinction concerning the anatomical structures of organisms. When two or more anatomical structures are "analogous," they are functionally similar; when they are "homologous" they have a common origin or descent. Anatomical structures can be both, one or the other, or neither, but one does not imply the other; they are definitionally-distinct. For example, when one considers the wings of pterosaurs, bats, and birds, one sees that these structures are all strongly-analogous, in that their form and function are quite similar. The sleek, low-drag body shapes of predatory mammals like dolphins and a wide array of fish also bear a strongly "analogous" form and function. In both cases, these strongly "analogous" structures are *not* strongly "homologous;" in both examples, they are similar structures developed in highly-unrelated organisms that do not share a recent, common ancestor.

One of the main reasons that strongly "analogous" structures often emerge in totally different genetic lineages and time periods is that these similar structures emerge out of common

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[29] Mariña commits one of the more noticeable examples of this phenomenon in *Transformation of the Self.* She writes that "Schleiermacher's core notion of the feeling of absolute dependence clearly echoes Leibniz. For instance, in his *Discourse on Metaphysics,* Leibniz notes 'in rigorous metaphysical truth, there is no external cause acting on us except God alone, and he alone communicates himself to us immediately in virtue of our continual dependence," *Transformation of Self*, 109-10. Following in a footnote, she nevertheless concedes that "As Robert Adams has pointed out to me in correspondence, Schleiermacher could not have had access to Leibniz's *Discourse,* as it was found in the Royal Library in Hannover only in 1846," ibid. 3f. She defends her use of Leibniz's *Dialogue* by appealing to the fact that it "echoes" texts of Leibniz with which Schleiermacher was acquainted. Though the "echo" of an "echo" is perhaps the faintest claim of similarity possible, it is less convincing when the stated evidence is anachronistic. Schleiermacher's claim of absolute dependence may indeed echo Leibniz but it should be demonstrated from texts or sources available to Schleiermacher with corroborating evidence as to why Leibniz, and not some other common source, should be cause of this historical "echo."

constraints or conditions. Being able to fly often gave pterosaurs, bats, and birds a competitive advantage over other land-bound organisms, but heavier-than-air flight is tightly-constrained by physics. The wing must have a large surface area and be sufficiently-articulated and controllable to take advantage of Bernoulli's principle, which provides lift and makes flight possible. The wings and bones of these organisms must also be extremely light, resulting in thin wing surfaces, and bones that are either hollow (pterosaurs and birds) or very delicate (bats). Being able to swim quickly and efficiently gave dolphins and fish a competitive advantage, whether as predators or prey. Swimming in water is a very high-drag environment, so a streamlined body shape is advantageous. In both cases, similar conditions and problems helped form unrelated organisms into similar solutions. Consequently, functional similarity *cannot solely justify* claims about common ancestry; the evolutionary biologist needs to also find corroborating evidence from the fossil record or other historical sources. Where possible, recent advances in gene sequencing have provided an even more definitive answer about the common ancestry of organisms, or the lack thereof.

I think "convergent evolution" is helpful for thinking about historical method, because many historians fail to distinguish between "analogous" similarity and a "homologous" relationship where one source has influenced or been appropriated by another. As a result, the appearance of similarity is often used as a justification of intellectual descent. It should be conceded that human history is quite unlike evolutionary biology in many respects, not the least of which is problematic nature of plausibly demonstrating a causal relationship between various historical sources, or worse yet, ideas. Without an equivalent of genetic sequencing to prove a "homologous" causal relationship, historians are resigned to make a much more-limited claim about historical influence. Nevertheless, in many cases a stronger argument than mere similarity can be made. With regard to Schleiermacher in

particular, sufficient research into the web of letters, written works, and other historical sources can offer a very detailed picture of his world, which can be used to positively or negatively judge potential claims of historical influence. This demand is highly context-dependent, hinging as it does on the availability of evidence, but where available the historian would be remiss if she were not to investigate as completely as possible. Like the evolutionary biologist, the historian studies first what is empirically available, in this case the historical products of human beings: writings, letters, material culture, which are observable and 'outer' with respect to human agents. The historian also necessarily hypothesizes and theorizes about the 'inner' aspects of these products: what can one reasonably infer about the people involved, and the world in which they originate? How did they frame and conceive problems, resources, and solutions? Admittedly, this hypothetical or theoretical activity is highly-dependent on the given historical evidence, but it is nevertheless the work of every historian.

As a result, this study sets out to identify those figures, ideas, texts, and historical events which can be demonstrably-linked to Schleiermacher through extant historical sources, including his correspondence, notes, major writings, and minor writings. Schleiermacher often mentions particular works: what he has read, is reading, or intends to read; as well as particular conversation partners, the topic of conversation, and even how the topic is being received amongst close friends. All this can be help justify claims of influence, and help direct the historian to the ways in which Schleiermacher received and appropriated influential figures, works, and ideas from his particular context. Take for example Schleiermacher's unfinished manuscript *On Freedom* from 1790. Rather than look at how a generalized understanding of Kant influences Schleiermacher, a careful historian should try to demonstrate not only which of Kant's writings Schleiermacher has read and

understood by 1790, but also look with a wider lens toward Schleiermacher's engagement with those texts and his larger context. By looking at Schleiermacher's correspondence, a reader can see how the "Pantheism Controversy" and the question of freedom shaped his early thought. Similarly, a reference to Reinhold's most recent work in the text of *On Freedom* offers a clue that his understanding of Kant is already being shaped by post-Kantian philosophers like Reinhold. This will not lessen the importance of magisterial figures like Kant and Spinoza, but it will help understand the plural context in which Schleiermacher appropriated many of these ideas. Properly employed, this method will produce richer explanations that draw on an interrelated web of proximal figures and works, and that this method might be one way to work toward resolving such widely-differentiated positions in the secondary literature. These richer explanations might also deemphasize the efforts to constantly frame Schleiermacher's work as wrestling with the "question of freedom," and open a space to consider the centrality of relations. They might also shed a new light on the importance of natural science and the philosophy of nature in the development of his thought.

D. Outline

This study argues that while Schleiermacher's organicism began to take shape definitively in *The Speeches* of 1799, it nevertheless built upon his earliest attempts to understand intra- and inter-personal relations in *On Freedom.* While both *On Freedom* and the *Speeches* are important milestones in Schleiermacher's thought, they are best understood within their particular contexts, which offered up different problems and resources for appropriation. Consequently, this study will alternate between the intellectual resources available to and influential for Schleiermacher (Chapters I and III), followed by the way he draws in and appropriates these resources to produce his own thought, directed toward his own ends (Chapters II and IV). Interestingly, this dual movement—

drawing in and appropriating resources, then coordinating them toward a new, unified purpose—would become the core structure of Schleiermacher's idea of 'organism.' As a result even the structure of this study will be organismic, understanding historical influence less like a mechanistic cause and more like organismic appropriation and coordination.

Chapter I begins by considering how "the question of freedom" shaped Schleiermacher's world and drove his concerns in the 1780s and 1790s. The late eighteenth century brimmed with intellectual life and controversy, of which Schleiermacher was involved in both. Utilizing his earliest writings and letters, this chapter will demonstrate Schleiermacher's careful attention to two important intellectual developments: the "Pantheism Controversy" [*Pantheismusstreit*], and the popularization of Kant's Critical philosophy.[30] Finding a new way to understand the relationship of freedom and necessity figured prominently in both movements. At stake was the need to secure the legitimacy of freedom, morality, and religion, while simultaneously upholding the natural sciences and their necessary postulate of causal necessity. Schleiermacher's attention to these two movements would shape his earliest intellectual curiosity toward "the question of freedom."

Chapter II will show how this historical context was carefully appropriated by the young Schleiermacher into some of his earliest views on freedom. This will require considering several minor writings around 1790, though it will prominently feature the unfinished manuscript *On Freedom.* Taking up Kant's practical reformation of morals, Schleiermacher sought to eliminate the last vestiges of theoretical reason, beginning with a phenomenological description of human willing

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[30] Frederick Beiser points out these monumental shifts, among others, in *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987). Dieter Henrich alternately suggests that the period can be best understood by "three comparable and competing positions that cannot be reduced to each other….the late philosophy of Fichte *and* Hegel's system *and* the late philosophy of Schelling", of which the first two are the most important developments for understanding the period and its historical legacy. See Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism,* David Pacini, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008): 9.

that leads Schleiermacher to a unique conclusion: if one seeks to explain moral obligation without reference to a noumenal realm or transcendental freedom, then the presupposition of the law of necessity is required to preserve the ability to hold others morally accountable. This results in a 'practical determinism' which should be clearly distinguished from the more common speculative or metaphysical forms of determinism. By shifting the question away from metaphysical speculation and toward practical import, Schleiermacher has already begun moving away from the centrality of "the question of freedom." This shift results in Schleiermacher's reconfiguration of freedom *in terms of relation*, describing it as the intermeshing interconnection between soul and body, volition and motion, and the ideal and the real. Though Schleiermacher scintillatingly relates this freedom with the organic interrelation of distinct organs in a unified organism, he leaves the idea unexplored. Regardless, the manuscript remains unfinished and incomplete by the author's proposed outline.[31] This incompleteness may be explicable, however, given precisely *where* the text breaks off: right at the point Schleiermacher transitions from intra-personal relations within the individual to inter-personal relations between individuals in community. While other reasons have been offered for *On Freedom's* incompleteness, a more-enticing possibility is that Schleiermacher lacked the resources to integrate his new emphasis on intra-personal relations into its broader social, cultural, and political implications.

Schleiermacher may have lacked the resources in 1790, but a blossoming of interest in the natural world would soon give Schleiermacher a new way to flesh out this skeletal structure of relation, which is the subject of Chapter III. Within the poetry of Goethe, Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and Schelling's philosophy of nature, 'organism' and 'life' were quickly becoming some of

[31] The manuscript breaks off in Part IV, Section 3, leaving part of section 3 and all of a planned section 4 missing.

the most important modes of understanding the world, which could neither be reduced to mere mechanism nor metaphysically glorified into supernaturalism. This chapter will focus on the developments in natural science and philosophy surrounding both 'galvanism' and 'organism,' which would become the fertile soil upon which Schleiermacher's organicism would grow. Both the galvanic cell and the concept of 'organ' would come to indicate a more fundamental form of relation, in which opposing forces or drives are bound together in a unity that produces a dynamic force. Great scientific and philosophical minds like Humbolt, Ritter, Schelling, Hardenberg, and Friedrich Schlegel would blend experimental science and metaphysics into a new discipline that would be called "philophysics." Through his association with these figures, as culled from his correspondence and notes from the period, this study will show how Schleiermacher was deeply-involved in this new and comprehensive effort, even regularly observing its experiments, reading its important texts, and debating its finer points in Berlin's salons. This study will also contend that Schleiermacher should be considered a scientist just as readily as he is considered a theologian or philosopher. Perhaps even further, it argues that one cannot understand his thought without considering the theoretical and experimental science he has appropriated as the basis of his thought.

Chapter IV demonstrates how Schleiermacher appropriated and shaped these rich resources into a thoroughly organismic way of understanding relations. Organicism would enable him to move beyond "the question of freedom" that impelled his earliest writings, which was ultimately unable to deliver up a consistent viewpoint that could fully-integrate the individual with the individual's relation to community or the world. Rather than consider a full range of organismic forms, Schleiermacher begins instead by articulating a theory of organism with regard to human beings. He begins by describing an individual's mind as nothing more than the product of two

opposed drives. These drives are located in 'organs,' that when considered separately, offer different ways of relating and mediating one's consciousness to the world. One has bodily organs of sense and motion—these organs are most familiar in our modern use of the term—but also spiritual organs that connect consciousness with a more primordial, religious unity: what Schleiermacher calls "the universe." For Schleiermacher, this spiritual drive instantiated in a spiritual organ offers a more rational and coherent way of viewing and understanding the world than viewing it as a sensible assemblage of "things" with mere functional utility. Interestingly, this more rational and coherent way of viewing the world does not engender any moralizing activity in the world, but rather a calm apprehension. Does this commit Schleiermacher to a quietistic religion that denies the power of human activity, driven by religious motivations?

The answer is ultimately no, inasmuch as Schleiermacher's quietism denies the power of religiously-motivated activity to the individual, but not to the community. With a properly-religious orientation, the entire organism is guided not only toward sustaining its own "life," but toward a living purpose that drives the individual organism not to moralizing activity, but to be incorporated with others into a communal organism. Schleiermacher describes this religious, communal organism as guided by the same two drives as individual organisms that lead it to appropriate and transform, but this time it is the profane world being transformed into the true church. The church employs mutual communication to draw in new members, while coordinating them into the organs of a communal organism and directing them toward a communal purpose. This purpose is not the aggregate of individual wills, but the work of the "world spirit" that draws and leads the community to its highest purpose. Consequently, the only moralizing activity that results from religion arises out of these religious communities, and not religious individuals divorced

from community. As a result, the common understanding that Schleiermacher sharply demarcates religion from morals is only half correct; the religious community is the proper location for religious orientation to become transformative action in the world.

Chapter IV will conclude with a brief presentation of how Schleiermacher's organicism was an appropriation, not an uncritical adoption, of the natural science and philosophy of his day. Appropriation implies that something is taken and reworked toward a new purpose or end, and Schleiermacher does not mimetically reproduce the "philophysics" of Schelling, Hardenberg, Ritter, and the Schlegels. The intuition of the universe, and the religious orientation that follows in both individual and communal organisms, is not based in a speculative metaphysics, but rather in this primordial religious apprehension. Schleiermacher expends significant energy in his criticism of "natural religion," a generalized kind of religiously-tinged philosophy trafficking in metaphysics. Schleiermacher maintains that his organicism in *The Speeches* is distinct from these attempts, which he associates especially with Friedrich Schlegel's attempt to establish "philophysics"—a metaphysical chimera of speculative physics and speculative philosophy— as the basis of a comprehensive view of the world, under which even religion would be coordinated as a secondary and derivative phenomenon. As is clear from both Schleiermacher's position in *The Speeches*, and his letters with Schlegel that followed its publication, Schleiermacher saw the primordiality of religion and its orientating character as the centrum around which metaphysics and morals could be arranged, and not the reverse. As a result, Schleiermacher's philosophy and theology of organism should be considered a distinct and unique contribution that might be appreciated alongside the more well-known organismic systems of Goethe and Schelling, and not regarded as a pastiche of these systems.

Ultimately, this study will argue that Schleiermacher's organicism is a helpful frame to understand and interpret his thought as it continues to develop and grow throughout his career. Organicism is a way of viewing the world in terms of living relations, and viewing Schleiermacher's diverse works under the frame of organicism has the potential to sew these somewhat-disparate works together with a living and dynamic thread. While this study only treats Schleiermacher's earliest writings, the organismic interrelation of intra- and inter-personal relations can be quite beneficial in understanding and interpreting his thought. First, it will helpfully shift interpretation away from the limiting frames of a select handful of magisterial figures like Kant and Spinoza, and towards a more complex and dynamic historical environment from which Schleiermacher appropriated. Second, it will shift the frame of discussion away from a preoccupation with the antinomy between freedom and necessity, which is a practical red herring that detracts from Schleiermacher's real emphasis on the nature of relations, which has significant practical implications. Third, it will also shine needed light on the importance that the natural sciences played in Schleiermacher's development, beyond a quick and inadequate nod to Schelling's *Naturphilosophie.* Fourth, and most-important, Schleiermacher's organicism might offer a way of viewing the world that could be productive in rethinking what it means to be human in community, a question as significant at the dawn of the twenty-first century as it was at the sunset of the eighteenth.

I. "THE CURRENT SITUATION": FREEDOM IN CRISIS

A. THE WORLD OF *ON FREEDOM*: 1787-1793

In attempting to understand Schleiermacher's early thought, one is presented with certain difficulties. Most notable among these difficulties, the historian faces a scarcity of material for his early life. The later Schleiermacher was well established as a notable minister, preacher, and scholar, and with that one is afforded a great deal of historical material. For the mature Schleiermacher, one finds published works in multiple revised editions, copious letters to his myriad contacts in an extensive social network, the outlines for his courses, even the notes of his many students. While the task of understanding the young Schleiermacher may be difficult, it is not impossible. One can look to the many extant letters between Schleiermacher—known affectionately to his family as Fritz—and his family, most notably his father Gottlieb Schleiermacher, for a vivid picture of the young Schleiermacher. From these letters, one can see that he is firmly-principled, and stands in his convictions as perhaps only the young can. He is perpetually anxious about his future. The many worn spots on his clothing betray the fact he is not wealthy, or perhaps that he spends his limited income all too often on books instead of clothes; at least, that is the constant worry expressed by his father. He is often ill and frequently-injured, perhaps a bit too like Thales, too absorbed in the world of thought to avoid stumbling in the world of rocks and pits. He is unsure about his vocation as a minister or a scholar, and he worries about committing to one path to the foreclosure of the other. His letters can offer a great deal of insight about the man, his thoughts, and his preoccupations. They can help paint a fuller picture of Schleiermacher's earliest understanding of

freedom and relations by showing his preoccupations, his questions, and even what books are at hand.

Though Schleiermacher did not publish during this early period, he often wrote, and found that writing was as essential as reading for the understanding of any subject. Dozens of shorter writings are extant including essays, reviews, and notes, all of which help to show how the young Schleiermacher thought when focused toward an intellectual task. But the centerpiece of the young Schleiermacher's writing from this period is a detailed, 103 page manuscript. It is undated and unfinished, though it is refined, coherent, and as rigorous as any work he would later complete. The manuscript remained in relative obscurity until an abridged version was published in Dilthey's *Leben Schleiermachers* in 1870, upon which Dilthey would add the title *On Freedom*. The full manuscript was not published until 1984, in the critical edition of Schleiermacher's works, the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (*KGA*). The editor of the *KGA,* Günter Meckenstock, attributed the composition to Schleiermacher's stay in Drossen, Berlin, and Schlobitten, roughly from 1789-1793.[32] Meckenstock rightly connects *On Freedom* to two similar albeit shorter works from the period, *On the Highest Good* [*Über das höchste Gut*] and *On the Value of Life* [*Ober den Wert des Lebens*], while pointing to circumstantial references in Schleiermacher's letters to "literary projects," "philosophical investigations," and "philosophical essays" from the period. The work can date no earlier than 1789, as Schleiermacher penned a series of three *Dialogues on Freedom* [*Freiheitsgespräche*] well-attested to in letters to his friend Brinkmann in Halle in July of 1789. Only the third dialogue survives, though both Dilthey and Meckenstock offer evidence that the second dialogue has been reworked into the

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[32] Günter Meckenstock, "Historische Einführung," in *Jugendschriften 1787-1796*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (1984), LV-LVI.

dialogical interlude in Part II of *On Freedom*.[33] Based on the best evidence available, Meckenstock concludes that *On Freedom* was drafted in the last few months in Drossen through the first few months in Schlobitten, primarily in 1790.

That Schleiermacher was consumed by the question of freedom in 1790 is no mere accident or coincidence. The question of freedom was pervasive in the intellectual and cultural fabric of Schleiermacher's world, so much so that even the first sentence of *On Freedom* felt the need to defend its originality: "given the current situation of the philosophical world in Germany, nothing seems less advantageous for an author than to begin a collection of philosophical rhapsodies point-blank with a treatise on this controversial subject."[34] This "current situation" indicative of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a climate of questioning and revision of nearly every conceivable form of freedom. From the French Revolution to the Scientific Revolution, human beings found themselves in an uncanny relationship to an increasingly-unfamiliar world, in which power and authority were drastically reordered. Buoyed by the burgeoning natural sciences and their corresponding commitment to all-encompassing necessity, freedom had seemingly been pushed back on its heels. To a young man who was driven from seminary to university by his own tempestuous inner conflict over the relationship between reason and faith, the question of freedom would be a fertile soil upon which Schleiermacher's early thought would grow in *On Freedom*, what Meckenstock rightly calls "the most comprehensive, imposing, and in truth also the most difficult work in the corpus of his early writings."[35]

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[33] Ibid., XLVI-XLVII.

[34] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," ibid., 219. cf. *On Freedom*, trans. Albert L. Blackwell (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1992), 3.

[35] Günter Meckenstock, *Deterministische Ethik Und Kritische Theologie: Die Auseinandersetzung Des Frühen Schleiermacher Mit Kant Und Spinoza 1789 - 1794* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 52.

As *On Freedom* gives the reader the clearest glimpse into the young Schleiermacher's understanding of freedom, it is naturally the most appropriate starting point for such a journey. But one cannot begin with *On Freedom* without understanding more clearly the "current situation" to which Schleiermacher alludes. A survey of Schleiermacher's letters and writings from the period suggests two primary historical and intellectual events that most clearly shaped the young Schleiermacher's understanding of freedom: (1) the "Pantheism Controversy" centered around Mendelssohn and Jacobi, and (2) the ascension of Kantian Transcendental Idealism as a way out of the controversy.

B. The Pantheism Controversy

1. "Wither pure speculation may lead you…"

In Spring of 1787, Schleiermacher left the Moravian Seminary at Barby and matriculated to the University of Halle. The move reflected an inner development at Barby, in which the young seminarian turned to philosophy and historical criticism to slake his intellectual thirst. The resulting doubt and resentment towards the immature faith of his youth could not help but spill over into full confession with his father, in a letter brimming with emotion:

> Why can we no longer kneel before the same altar and pray to our common Father? Oh, woe is me! As what do you look upon your unhappy son? I entertain doubts regarding the doctrine of the Atonement and the divinity of Christ, and you speak as if I were denying God! And these doubts, moreover, are but the natural consequences of my position. How could I believe on mere assertion, that all the objections raised by our modern theologians, and supported by critical, exegetical, and philosophical reasons, were nought?[36]

His father was devastated, fearing that this doubt would blossom into unbelief. His reply was telling: "My dear much-to-be-pitied son! Your last letter, which I received yesterday, I cannot at present fully answer; but I deplore your delusion, and pray to God that He will not deliver you over

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[36] Letter 59, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, March 1787, Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, ed. Hans Joachim Birkner, vol. V.1, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: de Gruyter, 1985), 63-64. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 57.

to yourself, but that he will show his divine mercy by soon guiding you back to the truth."[37] Though initially reticent, Gottlieb Schleiermacher allowed his son to enroll at the University of Halle by Easter of 1787. It was his ultimate hope that young Fritz could be shepherded back to the faith while living in the home of Schleiermacher's maternal uncle, Samuel Stubenrauch, who was a professor of theology at Halle. Nevertheless, Gottlieb wrote to his son expressing hope that God would bless his time in Halle, even while he also hoped "that the unsatisfactory nature of speculation, and the strength of your own corruption will anew render the crucified God dear to you."[38]

Though one might hastily infer a kind of unlearned dogmatism from Gottlieb Schleiermacher's dislike of speculation, that was not entirely the case. In the very same letter in which he warns against unguarded speculation, Gottlieb suggests a book by which his son's mind might be changed:

> And also that you may learn whither pure speculation may lead you, I would recommend you to read a little book, entitled, *Results of the Philosophy of Jacobi and Mendelssohn,* published by Göschen, of Leipzig, in 1786, and likewise the little pamphlet, the title of which I enclose. If, after reading these, your fatal curiosity should still impel you to attend the exegetical lectures of the modern unbelievers, which are not only contrary to all faith, but also contrary to common sense, I will not forbid your doing so, because I wish to leave you full liberty to act for yourself.[39]

The "little book" suggested by his father is Thomas Wizenmann's *The Results of Jacobi and Mendelssohn's Philosophy, by a Volunteer* [*Die Resultate der Jacobi'schen und Mendelssohn'scben Philosophie, kritisch untersucht von einem Freiwilligen*], which was published anonymously a year earlier in 1786. Far from obscure, Wizenmann's *Results* was a widely read and influential response to the Pantheism Controversy that had earlier unfolded between Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich

[37] Letter 62, Gottlieb Schleyermacher to Schleiermacher, 19 March 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 67. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 62.

[38] Letter 69, Gottlieb Schleyermacher to Schleiermacher, 17 May 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 79. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 65.

[39] Letter 69, Gottlieb Schleyermacher to Schleiermacher, 17 May 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 79. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 65.

Heinrich Jacobi. In fact, the popularity of Wizenmann's work did much to give Jacobi a fair hearing, but its most influential contribution was its welcome abridgment of the Controversy. Frederick Beiser points out that Wizenmann "raised the whole tone of the controversy by ignoring the personal, biographical, and exegetical issues and by concentrating on the philosophical ones,"[40] effectively distilling the important philosophical questions for a popular audience. For readers like Gottlieb with limited resources with which to acquire books, Wizenmann's pamphlet was indeed a good recommendation.

What is most-striking, however, is that in his own son's strivings for intellectual freedom, Gottlieb Schleiermacher heard echoes of the same fundamental questions that drove the Pantheism Controversy only a few years before, and by 1787 had already been tightly-woven into the intellectual and cultural fabric of the German-speaking world. How can one be free in a world governed by the law of necessity? What is left of religion if one denies the supernatural world? How can one be held morally accountable when one is determined by prior states and could not do otherwise?

Because Wizenmann sided with Jacobi's faith over against the inherent rationality of Mendelssohn and the Berlin *Aufklärer,* Gottlieb Schleiermacher thought this "little book" might be the antidote to his son's speculative illness. When Schleiermacher eventually replied to his father's letter, he made no mention of Wizenmann's *Results,* so one is left with no clear determination of whether he had read, or intended to read, his father's recommended book. His reply is instructive, though, because he responds that "…Jacobi's philosophy I do not yet quite understand, on account of the great obscurity and confusion of his philosophical terms; and I must once more read all the

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[40] Beiser, *The Fate of Reason,* 110.

writings interchanged between him and Mendelssohn."[41] This simple remark suggests two things. First, Schleiermacher has read Jacobi's philosophy, and concluded that it is ambiguous and lacking rigor insofar as he does not employ a clear use of its philosophical terms. Schleiermacher seems to ask, why should one be convinced by a poor "volunteer" defending Jacobi in a popular pamphlet, if the properly-philosophical works of Jacobi were unconvincing? Second, Schleiermacher has already read all the writings interchanged between Mendelssohn and Jacobi, likely in Jacobi's own *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza, in Letters to Moses Mendelssohn* [*Über die Lehre des Spinoza, in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn*]. Rather than read a popular abridgment, Schleiermacher has studied the canonical writings of the controversy itself. Gottlieb, it would seem, has underestimated his son. At age nineteen, Schleiermacher was already familiar with the writings of the Pantheism Controversy, the resulting questions about reason and faith, and—most- importantly for the present study—freedom and necessity. This exchange strongly-suggests that the young Schleiermacher was shaped by the Pantheism Controversy, and may help explain his earliest writings on freedom and relations.

The controversy itself was a complex affair, beginning with a tempestuous exchange of letters. What began as a simple contest over Lessing's supposed Spinozism inevitably spun into a larger conversation of the place of reason and faith, and whether philosophy ineluctably leads to the denial of freedom, ending in fatalism and atheism. In a way, it effectively revealed two competing ideologies that were in many ways vying for the loyalty of eighteenth century Prussia. Both Jacobi and Mendelssohn had a markedly-different appraisal of Spinoza and Spinozism, the competence of human reason, and what kind of freedom might be possible in a world bound by necessity.

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[41] Letter 80, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 14 August 1787, Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 92. cf. Ibid., 69.

2. Jacobi: Inexplicable Freedom in the Face of Determinism

While one can easily question the veracity of Jacobi's account of his conversation with Lessing—and Mendelssohn has his doubts—one cannot question that the dialogue sets out Jacobi's unique position in response to a philosophical landscape dominated by rationalism. For all his criticism, Jacobi deeply-admires Spinoza's philosophy; yet he is convinced that if one concedes the suppositions of Spinoza's system, then Spinoza's philosophy is inescapable. Consequently Jacobi does not attack the internal coherence of the system because Spinoza is *the* philosopher *par excellence*, in fact, all philosophy eventually approaches the philosophy of Spinoza. But to follow this philosophy to its logical conclusion is to invite the looming specter of determinism:

> "[Lessing:] there is no other philosophy than the philosophy of Spinoza. [Jacobi]: That might be true. For the determinist, if he wants to be consistent, must become a fatalist: the rest then follows by itself….from fatalism I immediately conclude against fatalism and everything connected with it.—If there are only efficient, but no final, causes, then the only function that the faculty of thought has in the whole of nature is that of observer"[42]

Jacobi asserts that Spinoza's system is causally-deterministic in a way that entails the denial of real human freedom in favor of a mechanistic network of efficient, physical causes. Shockingly, Lessing agrees, and responds, "I note that you would like to have a free will. For my part, I don't crave one. On the whole I am not in the least frightened by what you have just said."[43] And where Spinoza points to a parallelism between thought and extension as the two modes of being, Jacobi suspects the return of Stoic materialism, where thought and its object are "one and the same", so that "it makes no difference under which of the two we consider God."[44] If both thought and extension are the

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[42] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza, in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: Gottlieb Löwe, 1785), 13-14, 18. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill* (Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 187-89.

[43] Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 19. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 189.

[44] Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 132. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 220.

result of the same efficient causes, then libertarian freedom is an illusion. How could one be held morally-accountable for an action if one could not have done otherwise, because that action was caused by previous mental or physical states? The result, Jacobi fears, is fatalism, nihilism, and atheism.

Instead of attempting to break apart the Spinozistic system, Jacobi's strategy is *reductio ad absurdum*. If Spinoza ends in nihilism, then Jacobi affirms the opposite of Spinozism's rationalistic premise, that of faith: "I extricate myself from the problem through a *salto mortale*, and I take it that you are not given to any special pleasure in leaping with your *head down.*"[45] What is a subtle jab at Lessing's rationalism—his reticence to endanger his head in any leap—is Jacobi's solution to escape fatalism. Jacobi credits Spinoza as the philosopher who leads him to believe that some things allow for no rational explication.[46] But what are these inexplicable instances that require belief, conviction, even faith?

While Spinoza was well known for his opposition to final causes, Jacobi asserts the indubitable character of one's subjective experience to the contrary. Jacobi tells Lessing, "I have no concept more intimate than that of the final cause; no conviction more vital than that *I do what I think*, and not, *that I should think what I do*. Truly therefore, I must assume a source of thought and action that remains completely inexplicable to me."[47] Jacobi asserts both the purposiveness of the world and the spontaneous agency of human freedom as core convictions shared by every subject. If Spinoza's system represents all things that can be demonstrated, and these core convictions lie

[45] Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 17. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 189.

[46] Jacobi writes, "I love Spinoza, because he, more than any other philosopher, has led me to the perfect conviction that certain things admit of no explication: one must not therefore keep one's eyes shut to them," in *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 29. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 193.

[47] Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 29. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 193.

outside his system, then they remain mysterious and inexplicable. Given this claim, it is easy to see how Jacobi was often branded a fideist or religious enthusiast. Such attacks however, do not take seriously the philosophical position which undergirds Jacobi's philosophy.

Jacobi's concern is primarily epistemological. How can one be certain unless she is already acquainted with certainty beforehand? In other words, all cognitive mediation requires the certainty of something unmediated, some kind of knowledge that is valid without reference to any other condition. This opposes the classical notion of knowledge as 'justified true belief,' which presumes a particular condition of validity in order for knowledge to obtain.[48] Jacobi is essentially asking that if all knowledge is conditioned, then how can one ever escape the infinite regress of conditions upon conditions? Knowledge continues to slip out of one's grasp the more one attempts to determine its basis. Certainty must be present in advance, a form of "immediate certainty" which excludes all proofs, the perfect agreement between a representation and the object being represented.[49] Immediate certainty is a revelation of the object in perfect representation, which closes off the infinite regress of conditioned knowledge and, quite importantly for Jacobi, reveals the basis of knowledge as faith, not reason. Even conviction based on rational grounds must be founded on faith: one cannot avoid it.[50]

Jacobi's faith challenges rationalistic attempts to ground human knowledge because it points out classical epistemology's inability to explain what certainty is, or explain how one can know

[48] Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 79.

[49] Jacobi asks, "how can we strive for certainty unless we are already acquainted with certainty in advance…this leads to an immediate certainty, which not only needs no proof, but excludes all proofs absolutely, and is simply and solely the representation itself agreeing with the thing being represented," Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 162. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 230.

[50] Jacobi writes, "But if every assent to truth not derived from rational grounds is faith, then conviction based on rational grounds must itself derive from faith, and must receive its force from faith alone," *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 163. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 230.

certainty in an immediate or unconditioned sense while referring to additional justifying conditions that push true belief into the realm of 'justified true belief,' i.e. knowledge. By opening the door to faith, Jacobi likely knew that his conclusions would be amenable to the "enthusiasts" [*Schwärmer*] who often advocated a dogmatic and irrational faith.[51] Therefore he distinguished his idea of epistemologically necessary "faith" from the Christian account of faith, which ambiguously shares the German word for faith, *Glaube*. Jacobi clarifies that the object of Christian faith is the finite nature of humanity, which could never ground a system of knowledge. Jacobi's account of faith instead holds eternal truth as it object.[52] While it is not clear exactly how Jacobi makes this distinction (or how Christian faith is concerned with finite human nature), it is clear *why* he makes this distinction: he believes that this faith is a philosophically-significant idea that exposes the irrational foundation of rationalistic epistemology. Jacobi's anti-foundationalist epistemology became the starting point for his claim that primordial Being was unconditioned and could never be reduced to its relationship with self-consciousness, a hugely-influential idea for the romantic generation that would follow.[53]

3. Mendelssohn: Reason Oriented By Common Sense

In the "Morning Hours" [*Morgenstunden*], Moses Mendelssohn would offer his comprehensive response to Jacobi's presentation of the controversy. Artfully, Mendelssohn did not

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[51] Certain of his statements were ripe for misuse, like the claim that "every proof presupposes something already proven, the principle of which is *Revelation*. Faith is the element of all human cognition and activity," *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 172. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 234. It is important to qualify that Jacobi does not mean "revelation" in exactly the Christian theological sense of the term, however. Whether called immediate certainty, unconditioned knowledge, or revelation, the idea is the same: that the basis of knowledge is not found in reason, but is immediately *felt* as faith.

[52] "the religion of the Christians teaches another faith—but does not command it. It is a faith that has as its object, not eternal truths, but the finite, accidental nature of man," Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 164. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 231.

[53] Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, 57.

address Jacobi directly but rather Spinoza, with the stated task of discovering the errors in Spinoza's philosophy, with particular interest in those claims that lead to pernicious outcomes like the denial of individuality and freedom. If these errors could be corrected, surmised Mendelssohn, one could make a strong case for the possibility of a philosophy that did not entail determinism, fatalism, and atheism. If Mendelssohn could demonstrate that Spinoza was not paradigmatic for all rationalism and philosophy, then he would undercut Jacobi's warrant for a *salto mortale* into faith.

Mendelssohn begins by looking for a common ground that Spinoza and Spinozism[54] share with his rationalistic philosophy, in order to determine the points at which their paths diverge and to better-understand the operative differences between the two systems. Mendelssohn readily concedes that Spinoza's philosophy shares many points with his own, namely that the necessary being thinks itself as necessary, and contingent beings are analyzable into an infinite series and presuppose an infinite series without beginning or end.[55] They differ, however, when Spinoza asserts a single infinite substance, wherein individual things are mere modifications of this infinite substance. Spinoza asserts this because a substance subsists on its own, requiring no other being and therefore being independent. Because no finite being can be independent, no finite being can be substance.[56] The result is that individuality is not substantial or essential, which collapses the individual—and any hope of freedom— into the crushing necessity of a single substance. Mendelssohn adroitly

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[54] Mendelssohn is more nuanced in accounting for the differences between Spinoza's philosophy proper and the many Spinozisms that evolve from it. Jacobi is uninterested in this nuance, as Spinoza and Spinozism are subject to the same fatalistic and amoral conclusions in his account. This difference might also explain why Jacobi is more surprised by Lessing's proximity to Spinozism than Mendelssohn, as Mendelssohn is aware of the many ways in which Spinoza's philosophy might become the "refined pantheism" of Lessing.

[55] Moses Mendelssohn, *Moses Mendelssohn : Writings on Judaism, Christianity, & the Bible* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011), 144.

[56] The Spinozist, however, asserts that there is only a single infinite substance. For [he holds that] a substance must subsist on its own, requiring no other being for its existence, and so must be independent. But since no finite being can be independent, no finite being is a substance," in ibid., 145.

summarizes, "It is true that Spinoza also wants to cancel all freedom in the parts, to hold all choice to be mere illusion, and, as far as their truth is concerned, to subject to unavoidable necessity the voluntary resolve we believe to be dependent on us."[57]

To preserve freedom, Mendelssohn needed to carve out a space for real individuals with real freedom. Mendelssohn looks to language to accomplish this, as he sees the majority of philosophical disputes as fundamentally-verbal disputes or derived from verbal disputes.[58] He surmises that Spinoza's most-pernicious conclusions are the result of arbitrarily-defined terms such as Spinoza's 'substance.' Consequently, Mendelssohn suggests a distinction between 'self-supporting' and 'self-subsisting' as an opportunity to realize the possibility of individual finite substance contra Spinoza. Mendelssohn clarifies that "the self-supporting is independent and requires no other being for its existence. Therefore, it is infinite and necessary. However, the self-subsisting can be dependent in its existence and yet exist as a being separate from the infinite."[59] For Mendelssohn, this distinction can confer individual existence on finite beings, even though they remain dependent on the infinite as the source of their existence. Spinoza can prove that the "One" is self-supporting, but he cannot eliminate the possibility of self-subsisting, finite beings, so his definition is arbitrarily-restrictive. Additionally, Mendelssohn suggests that this interpretation of 'substance' better explains the origin of form and motion, as they cannot originate from a formless and motionless whole, but must emerge from the parts themselves.

Next, Mendelssohn brings this linguistic analysis to bear on to the definitions of 'freedom' and 'necessity.' For Spinoza, freedom was a "perfect indifference" where one was liberated from the

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[57] Mendelssohn, *Morning Hours : Lectures on God's Existence* (New York: Springer, 2011), 78.
[58] Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 104.
[59] *Moses Mendelssohn : Writings on Judaism, Christianity, & the Bible*, 145.

influence of motivations and incentives, which made the subject passive. This dampened the possibility of human freedom, "since then he saw that foreseen motivations and incentives pass their determinateness and inevitability on to the most free of choices, he included every outcome under the wooly term 'necessity,' and said that the choice or power of choice of rational beings is necessary."[60] For Mendelssohn, this negative account of 'freedom' as the absence of constraint, much like 'substance', is arbitrarily and too-narrowly defined. With regard to the finite, Spinoza admitted of good and evil, the desirable and undesirable, and pleasure and displeasure. Mendelssohn thinks that Spinoza should also concede what follows from these ideas, including the determinations of finite things and "alterations of a thinking being." Mendelssohn asserts this as a "freedom that follows upon the knowledge of the good and evil and is determined by what is foreseen to be best," which allows him to further define and split 'necessity' into a 'physical necessity' that flows from the source of knowledge, and an 'ethical necessity' that flows from the source of approval.[61]

The resulting freedom is quite different from the kind of libertarian freedom espoused by Jacobi. Mendelssohn is a determinist, in the sense that he is committed to the principle of sufficient reason and the affirmation that even moral actions are determined by antecedent causes.[62] When he cites an 'ethical necessity' over against a 'physical necessity', he is affirming that agents are free only insofar as they will according to the demands of moral reason, which is an 'ethical necessity.'. Were one to will according to the demands of 'physical necessity,' one would in that case be unfree. As a result, Mendelssohn advocates a compatibilistic understanding of freedom through the compatibility

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[60] Mendelssohn, *Morning Hours : Lectures on God's Existence*, 78.

[61] Ibid.

[62] For an excellent presentation of Mendelssohn's understanding of freedom and commitment to determinism, see Michah Gottlieb, *Faith and Freedom : Moses Mendelssohn's Theological-Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 68.

of ethical necessity and physical necessity. One of the hidden sources of Jacobi's rancor toward Mendelssohn was likely this commitment to compatibilism, which Jacobi called a "miraculous mongrel" of a "fatalism that mixes necessity and freedom, providence and *fatum*, together into one thing."[63] Where Jacobi was committed to the incompatibility of freedom and necessity and consequently affirmed the reality of freedom in a way that undermined necessity, Mendelssohn feared that Jacobi's denial of necessity would undermine science and morality, and leave in its place a religiously-tinged enthusiasm.

Despite Jacobi's conflation of all rationalism, Mendelssohn's rationalism was not the functional equivalent of Spinoza's. Mendelssohn ultimately discounts Spinozism on the grounds that it "deviates far from the general course of common sense."[64] 'Common sense' is critical to Mendelssohn's rationalistic philosophy, which is not simply the expression of human reason run amok, but rather reason 'oriented" by common sense. Whereas Jacobi suspects some kind of Neo-Scholastic metaphysics at play in Mendelssohn's appeals to natural religion, Mendelssohn denies that such demonstrations could produce conviction in any meaningful sense. Mendelssohn instead asserts that

> Whenever my speculation seems to carry me too far off the high road of common sense, I stop and try to orient myself…. experience has taught me that common sense tends to be right in most cases, and that reason must speak quite decisively in favor of speculation if I am to forsake the former and follow the latter.[65]

Speculation can correct common sense, but it is typically the place of common sense to calmly reflect on the situation, and reorient reason when the two go their separate ways. Mendelssohn's hope was likely that common sense would offer a way to temper unrestrained reason without abandoning it

[63] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, "Vorrede," in *Werke* (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer, 1815), 116. cf. "Preface and Also Introduction to the Author's Collected Works," in *The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill* (Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 587.

[64] Mendelssohn, *Moses Mendelssohn : Writings on Judaism, Christianity, & the Bible*, 143.

[65] Ibid.

completely for enthusiasm. Before long, though, Mendelssohn would grow tired of Jacobi's barbs and unwillingness to discuss substantial positions. As it became clear that their positions were too linguistically- or philosophically-incommensurable to continue, Mendelssohn concluded: "I believe that in such circumstances little is to be gained by means of disputation, and that it is best we go our separate ways. Let [Jacobi] return to the faith of his fathers, bring boastful reason to heel through the triumphant power of faith"[66]

4. Jacobi, Mendelssohn, or perhaps Spinoza?

Having clarified some of the issues surrounding the Pantheism Controversy, with which Schleiermacher was familiar as early as 1787 in Barby, what can be said of Schleiermacher's own position on the controversy? Did he closely-identify with either Jacobi or Mendelssohn? Because Schleiermacher's reply to his father roundly-criticized Jacobi's philosophy for lack of clarity and rigor, one might infer a cold reception of Jacobi's spirited defense of a libertarian freedom incompatible with necessity.

But what of Mendelssohn? Looking at Schleiermacher's letters from 1786, one can see references to Mendelssohn scattered among the many books he and his classmates have read or are looking to acquire. In March of 1786, Schleiermacher's uncle Stubenrauch mentions Mendelssohn's recent death, and shares a verse that honored Mendelssohn in the newspaper,

> There is a God. That Moses already taught.
> But the proof he gave to Moses Mendelssohn.

Stubenrauch also included an anonymous parody of the verse,

> The wise man believes Moses only.

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[66] Ibid., 171.

> The Fools proved it to Mendelssohn.[67]

Stubenrauch concluded the letter by asking Schleiermacher for his thoughts on the parody. While Schleiermacher found something quite unseemly in the parody, he did not think too-highly of Mendelssohn's thought, "considered as a philosopher, we have men that can cast him to the side, and in whose deaths not half as much attention will be garnered."[68] Stubenrauch responded, writing that

> Your judgment of Moses Mendelssohn pleases me, and you noticed correctly what was unseemly in that couplet. But it seems to me it's as if you do not do enough justice to Mendelssohn, if you write 'considered as a philosopher, we have men that can cast him to the side, and in whose deaths not half as much attention will be garnered.' For Mendelssohn was more than a philosopher; to him, in fact, we owe a great deal of thanks for our literature, our language itself, and healthy criticism.[69]

Whether well-acquainted with Mendelssohn's philosophy or not, it remains clear that Schleiermacher did not consider Mendelssohn's dogmatic rationalism a viable option to resolve the controversy.

Yet Jacobi and Mendelssohn did not represent the only options available to the young Schleiermacher. In time, Schleiermacher would demonstrate a fascination with Spinozism, represented as it was through the figures of Lessing and even Spinoza himself in *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*. As portrayed by Jacobi, Lessing the Spinozist does not desire a free will because it contradicts the nature of the finite in relation to the infinite. Set in the form of a dialogue, one hears from Spinoza himself the basis for Lessing's denial of human freedom: human beings lack freedom because freedom is defined as acting *solely* according to the laws of one's being. This requires an independence from determining conditions that would make the free subject unconditioned in a way entirely contradictory with finite, conditioned being. An infinite and

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[67] Letter 39, Stubenrauch to Schleiermacher, 14 March 1786, Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 34.
[68] Letter 43, Schleiermacher to Stubenrauch, 15 April 1786, ibid., 38.
[69] Letter 44, Stubenrauch to Schleiermacher, 25 April 1786, ibid.

unconditioned being like God, however, "who acts and can act only on the basis of what he is, and is only through Himself, possesses absolute freedom."[70] In *On Freedom*, Schleiermacher would adopt this very conclusion, where the idea of unconditioned freedom is denied to human subjects and reserved only for "the deity as the undetermined cause of all determined things."[71]

While this and other similarities are striking, Spinoza's influence on Schleiermacher in the years before and after *On Freedom* should not be overstated.[72] When *On Freedom* was drafted in 1790, Schleiermacher knew Spinoza primarily—if not entirely— through his first reading of Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza,* in either 1786 or 1787. One finds little evidence that this initial exposure to Spinoza's philosophy was significant in shaping Schleiermacher's thought during this period, however. By Schleiermacher's own admission, he does not understand Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* due to the "great obscurity and confusion of his philosophical terms."[73] While the reference is primarily to Jacobi's philosophy, the presentation of Spinoza's philosophy therein is not so easily separable. Jacobi presents Spinoza's philosophy according to the terminology and method of Jacobi's day, eschewing Spinoza's geometric form and translating its speculative language into the relevant lexicon and literary forms of the eighteenth century. Jacobi, of course, was not *simply* translating Spinoza; he was presenting *his* Spinoza, who surreptitiously-employed words like 'freedom' and 'parallelism' to conceal a secret materialism that collapsed the attributes of 'thought' into 'extension,' and erased individuality, thought, and freedom. In his second reading of Jacobi's

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[70] Jacobi, *Über Die Lehre Des Spinoza*, 97. cf. "Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza," 212.

[71] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 345. cf. *On Freedom*, 128-29.

[72] The subject of Schleiermacher's appropriation of Spinoza is extensively documented in Lamm.

[73] Letter 80, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 14 August 1787, Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 92. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 69.

Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in 1793-4, Schleiermacher would put a finer point on the difficulty of this hermeneutical task:

> Here I suspect that much is different in Spinoza, as in Jacobi's representation; I suspect that Spinoza may have not said something which justifies this crass demonstration; [e.g.] a speculative discussion was a mere transaction of bodies. I also believe Jacobi, already grasping near to the principle, had a natural tendency to make the fatalism of Spinoza as pronounced as possible; only no such place to escape should be possible (it is understood that I will accuse Jacobi of no deliberate misrepresentation) as where he says: Spinoza admits also of final causes, insofar as they always presuppose acting.[74]

What is admittedly difficult in his second reading was likely even more difficult in his first reading; given the tremendous task of understanding Spinoza through Jacobi, Schleiermacher's admission of "confusion" over the work is understandable, and would have made significant appropriation of Spinoza unlikely until after his second reading of Jacobi in 1793-4.

Other evidence can be inferred from Schleiermacher's Spinozistic turn in 1793-4. In April of 1794 Schleiermacher wrote to his close friend Brinckmann to apologize for holding onto a loan of Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* too long. He declared "the Jacobi thing is complete," but he held on to the copy of Jacobi, teasing Brinckmann, "that I will keep it as long as you should not be surprising, if I tell you I have thereby properly studied Spinoza."[75] Though he eventually returned the work, Schleiermacher nevertheless meticulously copied forty-four paragraphs from *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza* into his essay *Spinozismus,* in order to preserve the paragraphs where Jacobi presents Spinoza's philosophy for his personal use. So if in 1794 Schleiermacher persistently-held on to his only available source of Spinoza's philosophy so that he might "properly" study it, one can reasonably imply that his study of the same work in 1786-7 was less than adequate; so inadequate, in fact, that he felt compelled to copy by hand a significant portion of Jacobi's writing, a task which he

[74] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Spinozistisches System," in *Jugendschriften, 1787-1796*, ed. Günther Meckenstock (New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 580.

[75] Letter 256, Schleiermacher to Brinckmann, April 1794, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 344.

wholly abhorred.[76] Given Schleiermacher's own description of both the 1786-7 and 1793-4 readings of Jacobi's *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza,* it seems quite clear that the influence of Spinoza was not a significant factor in the genesis of *On Freedom* in 1790.

If not Jacobi, Mendelssohn, or Spinoza, how then might one account for Schleiermacher's early work on freedom and relations? Without a doubt, the Pantheism Controversy was influential in concretizing abstract philosophical questions of freedom and necessity in terms that were socially, culturally, and religiously relevant. As a set of conditions and questions, the Pantheism Controversy was like a furnace in which philosophical alternatives to the religiously-tinged enthusiasm of Jacobi *and* the rationalism of Mendelssohn and Spinoza might be forged. Though, strictly speaking, it did not originate within the Pantheism Controversy, the transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant would prove to be a fortuitous amalgam, on the one hand sufficiently-hardened to break the tired stalemate between dogmatism and fideism, and on the other, sufficiently-ductile to adapt to new and unique applications in the natural sciences, morality, and even religion. In Kant's philosophy, one finds the single most significant figure on the young Schleiermacher. One of the reasons that Jacobi and Mendelssohn did not appear viable in 1787 is because Schleiermacher already viewed them through the lens of Kantian critique. Consequently any contextualization of Schleiermacher's thought around 1790 should grapple with the influence of "all crushing" Kant.

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[76] This fact is well attested to by his letters around this period. In 1803, he wrote to his friend Brinckmann that "nothing is so odious to me as to read through a piece of writing right after I have done it. I have had to accustom myself, therefore, to write a piece at the first stroke just as it should be…," translated and quoted in *On Freedom*, iv. A closer example is a letter to his father, wherein Schleiermacher confessed to "a lazy dislike of writing, further increased by bad eyes and various other matters" to explain why he could not produce a single copy of any of his recent sermons. See Letter 209, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 10 February 1793, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 278. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 106.

C. KANTIAN TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

This section will set out two main tasks. First, it will show how Schleiermacher's life in 1787-91 was at every turn marked by the influence of Kant's critical philosophy. Second, it will demonstrate the prominent ways in which Schleiermacher grappled with Kant's philosophy in his writings, especially *On Freedom.*

1. The Age of Kant

By mid-summer 1787, Gottlieb Schleiermacher had still not received a reply to his letter wherein he recommended Thomas Wizenmann's *Results,* the "little book" that concentrated the Pantheism Controversy into its philosophical distillate and threw its weight behind the fideism of Jacobi. Likely fearing that his recommendation was an all too obvious attempt to reform his son's philosophical tendencies, he penned another letter, suggesting that

> As you are now attending Eberhard's lectures on metaphysics, I would recommend you at the same time to study and to weigh maturely Professor Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and also his *Prolegomena of Metaphysics*, so that you may not be adventuring yourself into the boundless desert of transcendental ideas without some safe guide.[77]

If Gottlieb's son was not yet ready to return to faith, then at least he might be protected from the unrestrained flights of speculative reason by Kant's first *Critique*.[78] This makes some sense, as Schleiermacher's father and uncle viewed the certainty of speculative philosophy as the greatest obstacle to the young Schleiermacher's return to the faith. In letters from 1787, both his father and

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[77] Letter 79, Gottlieb Schleyermacher to Schleiermacher, 14 August 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 88. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 66.

[78] Despite his religious orthodoxy, Gottlieb Schleiermacher would remain a great admirer of Kant until his death, even though he admittedly did not understand Kant well (*The Life of Schleiermacher*, 127.). He was employed as a military chaplain, which denied him access to many of the latest and most significant works of the period. He could not buy these works due to his meager pay, and could rarely borrow them as his deployments were not near academic centers. Consequently his letters to his son are littered with questions about various books which Gottlieb has taken interest, many of which are related to Kant. Gottlieb asks about the *Critique of All Revelation* twice (ibid., 104, 13.), which was initially attributed to Kant; and also mentions *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* twice (ibid., 126-9.), of which he has heard many contradictory opinions.

uncle warn Schleiermacher about his nascent interest in mathematics, reminding him not to demand mathematic certainty of his theology.

In a letter dated 14 August, 1787, Schleiermacher would finally respond to his father's suggestions. Building on his brief reply about his familiarity with the Pantheism Controversy,[79] Schleiermacher would be far more-detailed about the suggestion that he read Kant's first *Critique*:

> As for the Kantian philosophy, which you recommend me to study, I have always had a very favorable opinion of it, because it brings back reason from the desert wastes of metaphysics into its true appointed sphere. At Barby, already, I read the *Prolegomena* with two good friends, but I only understood as much as can be understood without a previous knowledge of the Critique of Pure Reason…[80]

We can see that Schleiermacher's first exposure to Kant was reading the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science* [*Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*] among "good friends" at the seminary in Barby, likely in 1785 or 1786.[81] He is self-aware about the limits of his understanding without also having read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* and adds that

> and although, in consequence of my not having been able to get the *Critique*, I have not been in a position, while attending Eberhard's lectures, to compare the Wolffian and the Kantian systems, I shall not fail to do so during the Michaelmas vacations, and with this additional advantage, that my uncle will also then read Kant's writings, in order to learn to know from the fountain-head this, in every respect, so remarkable phenomenon. However, as far as I can as yet understand Kant, he seems to me to leave the judgment free in matters of religion…[82]

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[79] To be clear, Schleiermacher's reply about the the Pantheism Controversy and Kant's philosophy are both treated in one reply, the letter to his father from 14 August, 1787. I have chosen to separate the two sections of the same letter to be able to treat both fully and in their own right, knowing that it risks making them appear unrelated. They are indeed related, but I do not want to implicitly suggest that Kant somehow synthesizes and transcends the controversy and enervates its importance.

[80] Letter 80, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 14 August 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 92. cf. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 68-69.

[81] Access to philosophical books would have been limited at Barby, which we can see from his letters. In March of 1787, Samuel Okely, a fellow member of the "philosophical club" who had just left Barby because of the incompatibility of Moravian piety and Enlightenment philosophy, wrote to Schleiermacher that he would now order all of Kant's works but the Groundwork, which he already owned ("Spinozistisches System."). Whether this was a deciding factor cannot be known, but shortly thereafter Schleiermacher would to leave the seminary for the University of Halle.

[82] Letter 80, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 14 August 1787, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 92. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 68-69.

So Schleiermacher planned on reading the *Critique of Pure Reason* when he arrived at Halle, to be read with his uncle Stubenrauch in Fall of 1787. What is most striking about the letter is its tone. Despite Schleiermacher's limited engagement with Kant, he is effusive, calling Kant "the fountain-head" of a philosophical movement that was "in every respect, so remarkable a phenomenon." Though he may not fully-understand Kant's philosophy— he was by no means the only reader of Kant that lacked understanding in that regard—the young Schleiermacher is entirely-enthusiastic about this new philosophical opportunity.

Schleiermacher's letters and notes do not tell explicitly of how this reading of Kant's first *Critique* went in the Fall of 1787, but to have the object of his philosophical desire was a tremendous motivator for the young Schleiermacher. Two years later in 1789, Schleiermacher would write to his father, "I have gotten through for the second time the greater part of Kant's writings."[83] The admission is striking. After reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* for the first time in the Fall of 1787, Schleiermacher spent the next two years reading the majority of Kant's available works not only once, but twice, and in quick succession. What began as the exuberance of an amateur had, in only a few years time, matured into a deep understanding and appreciation of Kant's philosophy. This extraordinary attention to Kant was, in many ways, a result of Schleiermacher's fortune which would soon change.

This period would become a time of great anxiety in Schleiermacher's life, as he was unable to secure employment that could support his stay at Halle. His father Gottlieb had suggested

[83] Letter 131, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 23 December 1789, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 184. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 81.

tutoring at Halle to fund his son's studies, but by 1789 it was clear that this plan was ill-conceived.[84] Staying in Halle was simply too expensive, now that his uncle Stubenrauch had accepted a ministerial position in Drossen. To have so little hope while preparing for a significant point of transition was crippling for Schleiermacher, who confided to his father that

> The more important that the period is, at which we pass from purely contemplative life into active life— from a life of study into that life where the results of this study are to find their application, and the nearer I draw to this period, the heavier my heart feels; for I have so little prospect of being able to commence it under favorable auspices and with a cheerful look into the future; and the cares of life receive me upon the very threshold in a most dismal form and accompanied by a most disagreeable train. God grant that I may recover my cheerful spirits.[85]

To the young Schleiermacher, Halle had come to represent his freedom. He had been freed from the stultifying confines of the Moravian seminary, and was able to read-widely and think-differently than before. But his situation was grave; there were no foreseeable options in which he could express this new, inner life through activity. With seemingly no alternative, Schleiermacher followed his uncle Stubenrauch to Drossen. There, Schleiermacher would read Kant's works for the second time, while marooned in the academic backwaters of Drossen in 1789. Drossen and nearby Frankfurt were "by no means productive of so many advantages as might be expected," leading Schleiermacher to complain that "upon the whole, we are very badly off in this little place in regard to literary novelties."[86] With his mood soured and his activity diminished, perhaps Schleiermacher read Kant differently this second time.

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[84] There were myriad reasons: a surplus of young scholarly talent looking to tutor in a University city, Schleiermacher's lack of connections or resources to distinguish himself, and Schleiermacher's lack of membership in the more-favorable Lutheran Church. See Letter 108, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 4 March 1789, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 114. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 74.

[85] Letter 108, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 4 March 1789, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 114. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 75.

[86] Letter 131, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 23 December 1789, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 184. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 80.

In Fall of 1789, Schleiermacher would leave Drossen, accepting the position of tutor to the children of the Prussian Count Dohna of Schlobitten.[87] Schleiermacher expressed a great deal of happiness about his new position as tutor, even though he was often too busy for his intellectual pursuits.[88] Perhaps he is simply relieved to have finally found employment. There is another far more-enticing explanation for Schleiermacher's newfound happiness, entirely ignored by the secondary literature. Though Schleiermacher ultimately ended up tutoring the Count Dohna's younger children in Schlobitten until 1793, he initiall- accepted the position on the promise he would accompany the Count's second-eldest son Wilhelm to Königsberg, where he would study political science.[89] To leave Drossen for Königsberg, a city with the resources and advantages of a University, was no doubt enticing on its own; but to take up residence in the same city where the 'sage of Königsberg' Immanuel Kant lived, lectured, and wrote? It seems far more likely that Schleiermacher jumped at the opportunity to better acquaint himself with the "fountain-head" of the philosophy he had poured over repeatedly for two years. On his first visit to Königsberg in the first half of 1791, Schleiermacher sought out Kant specifically, an encounter that resulted in only a brief conversation. He was noticeably-disappointed, writing to his father that

[87] No doubt eager to nudge Schleiermacher out of his home and into gainful employment, Stubenrauch turned to his close friend Friedrich Samuel Gottfried Sack, the well-connected chaplain to the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II, through which he discovered the position in Schlobitten. Writing only a few months later, Schleiermacher's father Gottlieb would see the hand of God's providence guiding this new opportunity, in which his son was "removed from much sorrow and tribulation into a very suitable position, with which, as I see from your letters, you are quite content", Letter 152, Gottlieb Schleyermacher to Schleiermacher, 27 January 1791, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 212-13. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 86-87.

[88] In his *Autobiography*, he would write that "the numerous family occupied me in various ways, so that less time than I might have desired was left to me to pursue my own studies." *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 15.

[89] See "Wilhelm Graf zu Donna (1773-1845)", in *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, XLII.

> I spent a half an hour with Mr. Kant and a few other professors. In consideration of its having been only a half an hour, you will, I am sure, excuse my saying nothing more about them; for what more can one ascertain during so short an interval.[90]

Schleiermacher's hopes were dashed, however, when the Count kept him in Schlobitten to teach his other children after Wilhelm left for university studies in 1791. From Drossen to Schlobitten, it was a period of tumult, where the oscillation of hopelessness and hope seamlessly-merged with an intellectual obsession with Kant's philosophy. It is no coincidence that when he drafted *On Freedom* in 1790, he was grappling with Kant's philosophy, particularly on the subject of freedom.

2. Schleiermacher's Kant: The First Two Critiques

At this point in time, Schleiermacher knew the Kantian system primarily from the two *Critiques*: the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/87) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). Consequently, this study will venture into the aspects of these two works that were most important for Schleiermacher, as he appropriated Kant's philosophy.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant's most comprehensive attempt "to clear and level a ground that was completely overgrown"[91] a way of saying that the speculative pretensions of reason had overgrown and obscured what could be known according to the limits of human cognition. Only then could intractable metaphysical controversy be dispelled as haughty talk exceeding the limits of human knowledge. It is by one account a book concerned with securing 'certainty' for the natural sciences. But it is also a book supremely-concerned with freedom, and how freedom might

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[90] Letter 160, Schleiermacher to Gottlieb Schleyermacher, 15 May 1791, ibid., 218. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 88.

[91] Immanuel Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 1 ed. (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781), xxi. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 105.

be secured as the basis for morality *while simultaneously* affirming causal necessity as the basis of natural science.

He does this through a careful distinction: one has no cognition of things in themselves, but rather one can only cognize objects of sensible intuition—appearances—by subsuming her sensible intuitions under concepts of the understanding, which are the conditions of that make such an appearance possible. If one does not make this distinction,

> then the principle of causality, and hence the mechanism of nature in determining causality, would be valid of all things in general as efficient causes. I would not be able to say of one and the same thing, e.g., the human soul, that its will is free and yet that it is simultaneously subject to natural necessity, i.e., that it is not free, without falling into an obvious contradiction; because in both propositions I would have taken the soul in just the same meaning…[92]

Because the principle of causality only applies to appearances, the soul considered as a thing in itself is not constrained by necessity, and can be thought of as free as long as it contains no inner contradiction. So why affirm freedom if the very idea is "the real stumbling block for philosophy"?[93] Freedom *must* be asserted, because morality necessarily presupposes freedom; without freedom, human actions would be subject to causal determinism, and could not be held morally-accountable for their failures. Freedom is so essential that Kant claims "I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith; and the dogmatism of metaphysicians…is the true source of all unbelief conflicting with morality."[94] In the context of the Pantheism Controversy's quagmire between dogmatic rationalism and enthusiastic fideism, Kant believed his gospel of criticism was aptly suited to "sever the very root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, of freethinking unbelief, of enthusiasm and

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[92] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 2 ed. (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1787), xxvii. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 117.
[93] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 476. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 486.
[94] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, xxx. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 117.

superstition."[95] To the young Schleiermacher, Kant offered an enticing way out of the labyrinth of endless discussion about freedom and necessity.

So freedom pertains to things in themselves (what he elsewhere calls *noumena*) and is necessary for morality, but how is freedom understood by Kant? In the "Third Antinomy," Kant sets out an initial definition: freedom is "an absolutely first beginning of a series of appearances," in which an appearance is determined not by its causal antecedents, but by some other free cause, what he calls transcendental freedom.[96] Because the 'understanding' can admit only empirically conditioned appearances, it must be 'reason' that presupposes transcendental freedom, and only then as a pure transcendental idea, which as a content-less concept contains nothing sensible nor is it able to describe anything in experience.[97] Transcendental freedom is consequently not the freedom attributed to moral agents in the world, but a morally-necessary postulate of reason. Though empty of content, it serves a needed function in organizing human experience. This organizational function of transcendental freedom provides the basis for a more familiar kind of freedom that can be attributed to moral agents, what Kant calls a 'practical' sense of freedom. Practical freedom "is the independence of the power of choice from necessitation by impulses of sensibility."[98] Human beings are unique, Kant thinks, because their choosing is not compelled by sensible impulses.

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[95] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, xxxiv. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 119.

[96] The thesis of the Third Antinomy, asserts this, that "a causality must be assumed through which something happens without its cause being further determined by another previous cause, i.e., an absolute causal spontaneity beginning from itself a series of appearances that runs according to natural laws, hence transcendental freedom…" *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 474. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 484.

[97] Kant describes freedom as "a pure transcendental idea, which, first, contains nothing borrowed from experience, and second, the object of which also cannot be given determinately in any experience, because it is a universal law—even of the possibility of all experience—that everything that happens must have a cause…" *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 561. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 533.

[98] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 562. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 533.

Having construed freedom as both transcendental and practical, Kant still must show how this understanding of freedom can be affirmed alongside causal necessity without contradiction. He does this through a careful distinction: objects can be considered as either appearances or things in themselves, depending upon which cognitive faculty— the understanding or reason, respectively— is employed in considering that object. As appearances are “mere representations” in the understanding, then the lawfulness by which appearances are governed *is also* a contribution of the human mind, though it proves objectively valid for scientific study. Consequently, the understanding can hold necessity in a limited sense, asserting that for every empirical effect there is an empirical cause. Kant’s insight is that this definition cannot preclude the possibility that another kind of cause, an empirically-unconditioned cause, might also cause this empirical effect. This he calls an intelligible cause, which is offered up by reason, allowing that “the effect can therefore be regarded as free in regard to its intelligible cause, and yet simultaneously, in regard to appearances, as their result according to the necessity of nature,” though he admits it “must appear extremely subtle and obscure, but in its application it will be enlightening.”[99] Most importantly, the faculties of reason and the understanding allow every object to be considered in two ways: as noumenon or phenomenon, as having an intelligible or empirical cause, and as having an intelligible or empirical character.

Kant is not merely being “subtle,” however, as this distinction points to a human experience common to all: that sense impressions cannot fully-account for human experience, insofar as human beings know themselves (as pure apperception), act, and deliberate their inner determinations. Therefore there must be another kind of causality, an intelligent causality associated with reason.

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[99] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 565. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 535.

Kant specifically thinks that imperatives, i.e. practical rules one proposes to her powers of execution, attest to this fact because the "ought" implied therein "expresses a species of necessity and a connection with grounds which does not occur anywhere else in the whole of nature."[100] Nature knows only what is, whereas the 'ought' expresses an idea that, according to reason, should be made real in the world of appearances. Reason

> makes its own order according to ideas, to which it fits the empirical conditions and according to which it even declares actions to be necessary that yet have not occurred and perhaps will not occur, nevertheless presupposing of all such actions that reason could have its causality in relation to them; for without that, it would not expect its ideas to have effects in experience.[101]

Once can begin to see how the postulate of transcendental freedom is practically-relevant, as it holds open the possibility that reason can have empirical effects, allowing the 'ought' of morality to influence actions in the world. This is significant because every 'ought' implies that humans motivations can be free from empirical conditions, leading Kant to the famous dictum that 'ought implies can.'[102] What may look *prima facie* like an affirmation of libertarian 'freedom to do otherwise' is in fact posited only practically in order to preserve moral accountability.

Kant gives an example: in every immoral act we want to know how to impute guilt to the agent, and begin by investigating his or her empirical character, upbringing and associates, and character traits as they have appeared. Kant claims that even if we believe the agent to be determined by these empirical conditions, we nonetheless blame the agent because "this deed could be regarded as entirely unconditioned in regard to the previous state, as though with that act the agent had

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[100] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 575. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 540.

[101] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 576. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 541.

[102] Kant claims "that although something has not happened, it nevertheless ought to have happened, and its cause in appearance was thus not so determining that there is not a causality in our power of choice such that, independently of those natural causes and even opposed to their power and influence, it might produce something determined in the temporal order in accord with empirical laws, and hence begin a series of occurrences entirely from itself," *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 562. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 534.

started a series of consequences entirely from himself."[103] Whether or not we are in any real sense free 'to do otherwise' is a question that exceeds the limits of human knowledge. Kant has shown that the idea of a free act, determined-independently of sensibility, can be thought as possible by reason even if this possibility *cannot be proven;* at least by pure reason *a priori* from concepts.[104] But "practical freedom can be proved through experience" because human beings cognize it as the causality of reason at play in the determination of their will.[105] In carefully defining both freedom and necessity, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* established them as compatible but distinct ideas of human consciousness, in effect preserving both faith and science from the overreach of speculative reason.

Naturally, this way of understanding freedom and necessity met a mixed reception. Kant's claim that freedom could not be proven by reason but only by the *experience* of freedom in practical reason was at least inadequately-developed, owing to Kant's reticence to show *how* freedom as reason's causality could be intelligible even while considered empirically.[106] Critics intuited an imbalance: while the understanding enjoyed the objective validity of both empirical intuitions and the *a priori* forms of those empirical intuitions, practical reason could only deliver the subjective validity of freedom as a regulative idea attested to by experience. The result was an imbalance

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[103] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 583. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 544.

[104] "Further, we have not even tried to prove the possibility of freedom; for this would not have succeeded either, because from mere concepts *a priori* we cannot cognize anything about the possibility of any real ground or any causality," *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 586. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 546.

[105] *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 830. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 675.

[106] "The conditions for the exercise of our free choice are empirical, then in that case reason can have none but a regulative use, and can only serve to produce the unity of empirical laws"(*Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 828. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 674.), which lead Kant to state that "the real morality of actions (their merit and guilt), even that of our own conduct, therefore remains entirely hidden from us. Our imputations can be referred only to the empirical character. How much of it is to be ascribed to mere nature and innocent defects of temperament or to its happy constitution (*merito fortunae*) this no one can discover, and hence no one can judge it with complete justice," *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 579f. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 542f.

wherein one could *know* objects, but only *believe* in freedom,[107] or act under the belief *as if* there were freedom. For many, this solution could not dispel the possibility that freedom was really an illusion, a 'noble lie' told by philosophers to preserve the moral order from its chaotic devolution. Kant can be defended, though, as the first *Critique* did not intend to give a full account of *how* freedom works, only *that* freedom could be secured as a postulate of pure practical reason. Detractors of the first *Critique* often assumed that Kant could not explain how freedom functions in willing agents, alongside empirical conditions like desires. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant would set out to do just that.

Published in 1788, the *Critique of Practical Reason* sought to sooth Kant's detractors by demonstrating the reality and importance of freedom. Kant opens the Preface with a salvo:

> Now, the concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, constitutes the keystone of the whole structure of a system of pure reason, even of speculative reason; and all other concepts (those of God and immortality), which as mere ideas remain without support in the latter, now attach themselves to this concept and with it and by means of it get stability and objective reality, that is, their *possibility* is *proved* by this: that freedom is real, for this idea reveals itself through the moral law.[108]

The difference is at first striking; the first *Critique* suggested that subjects could believe— even have conviction— in practical freedom, but this subjective validity was objectively-insufficient for obtaining certainty or knowledge. Freedom was impure, insofar as it was a transcendental idea vouched for in the realm of appearances, and related to empirical conditions. In the second *Critique,*

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[107] Kant writes that "at times, however, we find, or at least we believe we have found, that the ideas of reason have actually proved their causality in regard to the actions of human beings as appearances…" *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 578. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 542. The section on the "Canon of Pure Reason" deals extensively with this distinction between belief and knowledge: "taking something to be true, or the subjective validity of judgment, has the following three stages in relation to conviction (which at the same time is objectively valid): having an opinion, believing, and knowing. Having an opinion is taking something to be true with the consciousness that it is subjectively as well as objectively insufficient. If taking something to be true is only subjectively sufficient and is at the same time held to be objectively insufficient, then it is called believing. Finally, when taking something to be true is both subjectively and objectively sufficient it is called knowing. Subjective sufficiency is called conviction (for myself), objective sufficiency, certainty (for everyone)," *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 852. cf. *Critique of Pure Reason*, 686.

[108] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften I.5* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 3-4. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

however, freedom's involvement in the sensible world invokes a familiar trope:[109] the transcendental idea of freedom deigns itself, taking on the form of appearance in freedom's kenotic act, only to be exalted to the highest place *because* of this involvement, to become the keystone upon which even God and the immortality of the soul derive their validity. Most important, freedom's seemingly subjective validity in the first *Critique* has been resurrected as *objective* validity, even conferring this objective validity onto God and immortality of the soul.

Kant accomplishes this through a clarification: transcendental ideas like God, freedom, and the immortality of the soul do remain only subjectively-valid for the speculative use of pure reason, but this says nothing of their practical use. Whereas transcendental ideas speculatively considered have only subjective validity, practically considered they obtain objective validity insofar as "an object belongs to them, because they are either contained in the necessary determination of the will a priori or else are inseparably connected with the object of its determination."[110] As the only idea that relates directly to objects of experience, freedom becomes the conduit through which the other ideas can obtain their validity through the experience of freedom. Kant's elevation of freedom helps to bring reason into parity with the understanding. For the understanding, space and time are a priori intuitions that have no objective validity on their own without reference to phenomenal appearances. They do however become objectively-valid through their connection with sensible intuitions, which arise only in phenomenal experience. Freedom functions in parallel fashion. For reason, freedom is a transcendental idea that has no objective validity on its own without reference to empirical conditions. It becomes objectively-valid only in its connection with the determination of the will which involves empirical conditions. Therefore, Kant concludes, freedom is as real as one's

[109] Phil 2.

[110] Kant, "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 5. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 5.

knowledge of the world, because one's moral experience is just as well-grounded as one's phenomenal experience.

In short, Kant sets out in the second *Critique* to show how reason can become a determining ground of human willing, to show how unconditioned freedom can come to determine an empirically-conditioned will. Whereas in the first *Critique* Kant called freedom an "absolutely original beginning of a series" or an "uncaused cause", he shuts down his critics who saw this as an arbitrary, libertarian 'freedom to do otherwise'. Through freedom, reason announces itself as an "ought" that "expresses objective necessitation to the action and signifies that if reason completely determined the will the action would without fail take place in accordance with this rule."[111] Reason determines the will through freedom, and one is only free insofar as that determination takes place without being obviated by empirical desires (hedonism) or by consideration of desired effects (consequentialism). When one can withhold these contingent and subjective conditions from the determination of the will by a particular rule, making the volition completely a priori and pure, then the rule is objectively- and universally-valid, i.e. a categorical imperative.[112] As this strips away any representation of an object of desire prior to the formation of the rule, the individuality the agent is irrelevant; the lawful 'form,' as a priori and pure, is universally binding for all.

How then does this universal law apply to a single will? The will is "dependent" on this law, under an "obligation, which signifies a necessitation" to it, and connected to an individual's reason and activity through "duty." While this may sound like the passivity of an external command, it is instead a fully autonomous "lawgiving of its own" [*diese eigene Gesetzgebung*], in which one's reason is practically-cognized as the self-given moral law determining the will. Kant does not want to

[111] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 20. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 18.
[112] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 21. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 19.

introduce heteronomy into this determination by appealing to a source external to the agent's own reason, primarily because the appearance of the moral law is the grounds by which one is objectively-certain to have freedom. Kant asserts that one first experiences freedom through the form of lawfulness,[113] by which the moral law "first *offers* itself to us" and "we become immediately conscious" of its presence, through which it discloses the concept of freedom. One would have never invented so problematic a concept as freedom if the moral law had not "come in and forced this concept upon us" as a synthetic a priori proposition not based on any intuition.[114] The moral law cannot be deduced theoretically or empirically, but it nonetheless proves its reality.

While Kant is careful to preserve the a priori purity of the lawful form of the moral law, he must still show how this form comes to determine the faculty of desire, come in contact with empirical representations, and effect a will towards a particular moral activity. While Kant thinks that the question of *how* the moral law immediately becomes a determining ground of the will is insoluble, he admits that the moral law must become an incentive to the faculty of desire, in short it must have effects. The moral law is first felt negatively, insofar as it infringes and thwarts empirical inclinations, restricts self-love, and strikes down self-conceit. The moral law is then felt positively, insofar as this restriction and striking-down can be manifest as a respect for the moral law, insofar as freedom (as intellectual causality) can be an object of respect and even lead to "intellectual contentment."[115] The moral law lays bare the irrationality of one's sensible propensities, humiliating

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[113] Kant declares that "a will for which the mere lawgiving form of a maxim can alone serve as a law is a free will," "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 29. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 26.

[114] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 30. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 27-28.

[115] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 117-18. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 98.

even as it simultaneously awakens a respect for its purity, even holiness.[116] Contrary to all other forms of feeling, this feeling of respect for the moral law is "not of empirical origin and is cognized a priori,"[117] and forms the basis for Kant's embodiment of reason through freedom in bodily form. The effect is elevating for the moral subject:

> this is how the genuine moral incentive of pure practical reason is constituted; it is nothing other than the pure moral law itself insofar as it lets us discover the sublimity of our own super sensible existence and subjectively effects respect for their higher vocation in human beings, who are at the same time conscious of their sensible existence and of the dependence, connected with it, on their pathologically affected nature.[118]

This elevation allows Kant to offer a description of freedom beyond 'freedom from constraint', what he derisively calls "the freedom of a turnspit" in which freedom is understood as the absence of constraint or external impulse, in which even a clock, a projectile, or turnspit is 'free' insofar as it moves according to its own determining grounds. This is not sufficient for freedom, Kant concludes, because one must at least think of humans as "free because the actions are caused from within, by representations produced by our own powers, whereby desires are evoked on occasion of circumstances and hence actions are produced at our own discretion."[119] Only this understanding of freedom as practically a priori makes the moral law possible, removes the apparent contradiction between the mechanisms of nature and freedom, and demonstrates the objective reality of freedom as the speculatively transcendental made practically immanent. Kant has clarified and elaborated the view of freedom first presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, while grounding it practically and immanently in human experience. Human experience is intrinsically synthetic, what Kant called the immediate feeling of connection between "the starry heavens above me and the

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[116] Kant says that "the moral law is, in other words, for the will of a perfect being a law of *holiness*, but for the will of every finite rational being a law of *duty*, of moral necessitation and of the determination of his actions through *respect* for this law and *reverence* for his duty," "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft," 82. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 70.

[117] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft," 73. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 63.

[118] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft," 88. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 75.

[119] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernunft," 96. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 81.

moral law within me" which typifies human experience as both intellectual and sensible, and maintains both the theoretical possibility and objective necessity of freedom.[120] As Schleiermacher contemplated the meaning of freedom in the late 1780s, Kant's understanding of freedom would be both a constant resource and ever present interlocutor as Schleiermacher began drafting *On Freedom*, in which one finds some of Schleiermacher's earliest views on freedom and relations.

3. Reinhold and the Dawn of Post-Kantianism

While Kant was the preeminent interlocutor for the young Schleiermacher, Kant's disciple Carl Leonhard Reinhold was an alternative source for the new critical philosophy. Reinhold's 'gospel of pure reason' focused on the practical consequences of the critical philosophy and how it was aptly-suited to mediate the conflict between reason and faith that the Pantheism Controversy had made so pronounced in the 1780s. His *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, which began appearing in 1786 were largely responsible for the promulgation of Kant's philosophy, a fact for which Kant was deeply-grateful. Having been propelled into a philosophical chair in Jena by the wide success of the *Letters,* in 1789 Reinhold published an *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation.* This would be the first installment of his 'Elementary Philosophy', which was an attempt to revise and systematize Kant's critical philosophy and address its shortcomings. Looking for affirmation of his revision, Reinhold sent a copy of the treatise to Kant for review. In a letter dated 1 December 1789, Kant replied that

[120] "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 161. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 133.

> your estimable treatise on the faculty of representation, worthiest friend, has arrived safely. I have been able to evaluate it piecemeal, enough to make me believe I have not misunderstood the new paths to full enlightenment in this confusing subject, but not enough to make a judgment of the theory as a whole.[121]

Kant's confusion is understandable, as Reinhold's *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* marks an important step toward the emergence of a distinctly-Postkantian philosophy, arising out of and yet distinct from Kant's own critical project.

As has been discussed, Kant's emphasis on the distinctiveness of the two worlds left him open to the criticism that he could not adequately explain the unity of human moral experience, which experiences moral obligation within one's faculty of desiring and willing. In short, while Kant's position is coherent, a gap remains between reason and desire that fails to articulate how humans are motivated and desire objects. As this question addresses how reason through the moral law comes to necessitate moral action in the world, it is for both Kant and Reinhold a question of freedom. In the third book of the treatise, Reinhold discusses how one's representations come to effect one's desiring. He is still quite sympathetic to Kant in his language and structure: reason is a spontaneity acting without compulsion, and when the representing subject "acts through its self-activity per se, it contains the ground of its action in itself" it acts freely.[122] But Reinhold departs from the Kantian script that quarantines reason from desire, showing how reason can determine desire by denying that desire is entirely empirical and non-moral.

Reinhold's task is to situate the representing subject, and in the third book he moves to connect representations with desire, and show that representation is connected to human desire— a lacuna in Kant's own philosophy. Reinhold held representations to be *intentional*, insofar as there is

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[121] "Kant: Letter to Carl Leonhard Reinhold, December 1, 1789 [Ak. Letter 392]," *The Philosophical Forum* XXXII, no. 4 (2001).

[122] Karl Leonhard Reinhold, *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* (New York: De Gruyter, 2011), 274.

a 'drive' (*Trieb*) to represent objects in terms of their desirability.[123] He asserts that every representing subject has a drive towards representation, which involves both the a priori possibility-- or form-- of a representation and the a posteriori actuality--or material-- of a representation. Desiring is simply the representing subject being determined through this drive towards the production of a representation. Desire is consequently informed by two component drives: the sensory and the rational. Here Reinhold is in agreement with Kant insofar as this empirically-driven desire is considered the 'drive to happiness', a motivation that "must be distinguished from morality."[124] The purely-rational drive, on the other hand, determines the will through the mere action of reason, realizing the moral law by imposing itself on the drive to happiness, through commandment, necessitation, and duty. All this is quite in concert with Kant. Reinhold demurs with regard to the connection of reason and desire; whereas Kant saw all desires as empirical, Reinhold viewed desire as composed of both rational and sensory drives. Even Reinhold's sensory drive is not devoid of reason, as the sensory drive is the conjunction of sensibility, understanding, and reason in the determination of the will. By including reason not only within desire, but within the sensory drive and non-moral motivation itself, Reinhold covers the gap between reason and desire in a significant way.

Furthermore, narrowing this gap changed how Reinhold viewed freedom. Kant viewed freedom as obtaining only where reason through the moral law completely determines the will, irrespective of empirical conditions; one is either free or unfree, either determined by the moral law

[123] Blackwell aptly points outs Schleiermacher's appropriation of this term in *On Freedom*, and that the origin of this term is Kant's own term 'incentive' [*Triebfeder*], "a representation together with its subjective means of influencing our intentions," which for Schleiermacher collapses a very complex psychological process into a single concept. See *On Freedom*, 39.

[124] Reinhold, 278-79.

or by empirical conditions. By placing reason alongside empirical conditions in the 'drive to happiness,' Reinhold allows for a comparative or relative freedom for a subject. As this freedom is relative to the extent that reason and self-activity predominate over affectivity in any sensory drive, one can be more or less relatively-free, which corresponds to human moral experience. Reinhold sees this as reflection of the fundamental unity that undergirds the division between reason and sensibility:

> just as sensibility and reason constitute in their inseparable unity the nature of the human mind insofar as this is representable, so the drive to happiness and the drive to morality constitute in their inseparable unity the *entire drive* of the human mind, and happiness combined with morality the entire complete object of this drive, the *highest good* for the human being.[125]

Morality is not antithetical to happiness, their coincidence is in fact the highest good of human beings. Kant made a similar claim, that the coincidence of virtue and happiness was the highest good of human beings, and an idea that necessarily followed from the moral law. But how virtuous conduct with total disregard to one's own happiness could bring about this highest good was not Kant's concern. As a regulative idea, the highest good need only be presupposed, even without knowing how— or if— it would ever obtain in actuality.

Reinhold goes further in supposing 'how' virtue and happiness should relate:

> Combination of happiness with morality however is only conceivable if the drive to happiness is subordinated *in the subject* to the drive to morality; *in the object* of whole drive if the measure of happiness be determined by the measure of morality, and happiness be determined by the measure of morality, and happiness be desired and attained only insofar as the subject has made itself morally capable of it, i.e., *worthy*.[126]

Morality may be the highest supreme good, but since humans are not only rational but also finite, morality can only be the highest good in combination with the happiness it determines. What for Kant was a regulative idea to be presupposed but never understood or confirmed in experience, for Reinhold was something more. The penultimate section of *The Human Capacity for Representation*

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[125] Ibid., 282.
[126] Ibid.

intimates at precisely why Reinhold is able to make a stronger claim. While Kant distinguishes two worlds, the physical world and the moral world, Reinhold posits a unifying idea that subsumes both under the "intelligible world," "universe," or "absolute community." This is possible for Reinhold because he sees the work of reason in both the sensible world and the moral world, and since "reason brings all multiplicity to unconditioned unity and can only think the totality of conceivable subjects as in thoroughgoing connection, in systematic community," then reason is the primordial unity or "primal being" that ontologically grounds both the physical and the moral.[127] Reinhold breaks off here, though, as a complete development of this idea must be reserved for a higher metaphysics. This assertion of a primordial or primal being as the ontological ground of all distinction would become an important and pervasive theme for Postkantian philosophy. As this study will show, the similarity of Schleiermacher's work in the 1790s to Reinhold's *The Human Capacity for Representation* is not coincidental, as Schleiermacher has read and is familiar with the work. The understanding of two fundamental drives that connect reason with the moral world and the understanding with the world of appearance would become a key component of Schleiermacher's emerging understanding of intra- and inter-personal relations. Additionally, Reinhold's attempt to unify the sensory and material worlds through a comprehensive "universe" would not be lost on the young Schleiermacher, who would employ the term so regularly in his *Speeches* of 1799.

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[127] Ibid., 283.

II. ON FREEDOM AS RELATION

As shown in chapter II, the year 1789 marked Schleiermacher's intense occupation with Kant's critical philosophy. Reading through the majority of Kant's works available to him, including the first two *Critiques,* would provide the stone upon which Schleiermacher would sharpen and develop his early view on freedom. This chapter will seek to describe and situate Schleiermacher's early understanding of intra- and inter-personal relations around 1790. Section A will look at a selection of fragments from 1789-90, many of which were formative for or incorporated into *On Freedom.* This will help demonstrate the tenor and focus of Schleiermacher's research, and help identify the ways in which he viewed Kant's moral philosophy both as the standard for moral reform and yet in need of correction. In this respect, Kant could be seen as a new Luther: a man driven by the principle of moral reform, who did not carry his reforming principle to its completion.

Schleiermacher sets out his proposal for continuing the practical reformation of morals most clearly in *On Freedom,* which will be treated extensively in section B. Schleiermacher argues that a more-practical moral philosophy needed to begin with the human experience of willing, in a complete description of the faculty of desire. This resulted in what might be called Schleiermacher's "practical determinism," in which he argues that the practical presupposition of the law of necessity is needed to preserve moral accountability. As most of Western moral philosophy had argued against necessity, Schleiermacher embarked on a historical survey to show when and how the

mistaken foundations of moral philosophy originated and proliferated, resulting in opposition between

morality and necessity that made the concept of freedom problematic at best. Having articulated a practical understanding of human willing over against mistaken alternatives, Schleiermacher takes up the very concept of freedom. By conceiving of freedom as the intermeshing relationship between contraries, Schleiermacher offers an innovate rethinking that foreshadows his later organismic turn.

A. WRITINGS PRIOR TO *ON FREEDOM*

1. Notes on Kant, 1789

Ever committed to a dialogical understanding of learning, Schleiermacher could not simply read Kant, but he took notes, a few of which have survived and have been published. These include a small collection of notes likely dating from the first half of 1789, in which Schleiermacher sketched out his earliest reaction to Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason.*[128] The notes focus on only a few selections, and almost-entirely on how Kant's postulate of transcendental freedom can be understood as practically-efficacious, as having real, empirical effects on the determination of the will within the faculty of desire. Notably, his first few notes demonstrate marked surprise: "Transcendental freedom: apparently a *power* of causality having no necessary connection with what precedes. Thus, I have certainly not misunderstood him."[129] Like many of the initial readers of the first *Critique,* Schleiermacher was concerned about the apparent dualism between the noumenal and phenomenal. As has been demonstrated, Schleiermacher was aware of his limited initial grasp of Kant's philosophy in the 1780s, so it was likely that Schleiermacher suspected a misunderstanding on his part. The

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[128] It is important to remember that these are the notes of young scholar, albeit an exceptionally gifted one. They are helpful at setting the stage and additional points to help understanding Schleiermacher's development, but they should not be treated as finalized, published work, nor should their arguments be criticized as such.

[129] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 129. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 24.

second *Critique* would dispel this doubt, however. In the preface, Kant concedes that there were two "most considerable objections" to the first *Critique* that demanded a *Critique of Practical Reason* to further clarify. One of these objections centered on this charge of dualism with regard to the subject, what Kant called the "paradoxical requirement to make oneself as subject of freedom a noumenon but at the same, with regard to nature, a phenomenon in one's own empirical consciousness."[130] In response, Schleiermacher noted,

> In that Kant does not present this objection as a misunderstanding here, he proves to me that I understood him…. This is not my objection, but I gladly admit it. I would however, like to know what more definite concept of freedom Kant has put forward so as to make it more plausible.[131]

Somewhat perturbed by this discovery, Schleiermacher is now looking for a more complete account of how Kant's noumenal and phenomenal subjects can be considered together, in the unified experience of an agent's activity.

As he reads on, Schleiermacher continues to probe the connection between freedom and the way one's will is actually determined, empirically, in the faculty of desire. While Kant states that if a feeling of pleasure grounds the determination of the faculty of desire, then the supreme principle of practical philosophy would be empirical, Schleiermacher demurs. Even if one concedes that a feeling of pleasure precedes the emergence of a principle of reason, it "has no influence upon the principle itself…the content of the principle is not changed in any way, because the independence of reason."[132] Because reason need not presuppose anything but itself, it cannot be superseded by any preceding empirical conditions like the feeling of pleasure. Schleiermacher's conclusion is that

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[130] Kant, "Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 6. cf. *Critique of Practical Reason*, 6.

[131] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 129. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 24.

[132] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 130. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 26.

Kant's concern about empirical contamination in pure practical reason is unwarranted, and leads to a false dilemma between his solution and total empirical reductionism. In prematurely closing off possible avenues, Kant has missed an opportunity for a more plausible understanding of freedom, since finding a way to connect the empirical feeling of pleasure with reason and its principles would be precisely the kind of more complete account that Schleiermacher and many early readers sought.

Instead of walling off reason from the feeling of pleasure, Schleiermacher suggests a "precondition that there be a feeling of pleasure, which itself relates to the law and its function without any qualification, and this precondition is given to us in pure self-consciousness."[133] While his point is not entirely clear, Schleiermacher seems to suggest that the unified moral experience of agents implies a connection between one's moral obligations set out by reason, and by the content of those obligations which necessarily involves empirical preconditions. For Schleiermacher, Kant is too ready to sever the lawgiving form of the a priori moral law from the empirical content of one's desires and activity.

Schleiermacher's next note concerns Kant's discussion of how an a priori moral law can actually determine the will, which Kant proposes as his paradoxical 'feeling of respect for the moral law.' Rather than offer a plausible connection between the moral law and desire, Schleiermacher sees the same Kantian duality: on the one hand, an a priori genesis of this feeling in reason must postulated, while on the other hand it must be simultaneously admitted "that practical reason must occasion an effect on feeling."[134] This feeling has an indirect effect insofar as it destroys certain ideas

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[133] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 131. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 26.

[134] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 133. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 28.

and annuls their corresponding feelings as motivations for the will. But even this effect cannot be thought of as a

> particular distinct feeling, for such a feeling cannot at all be thought of as the cause of that annulment even in accordance with Kantian principles, and as a consequence of the same it cannot be understood, at least not a priori. How the positive can be understood a priori is still as empty as before, as is the claim that this feeling distinguishes itself from all others.[135]

How this a priori feeling, a feeling unlike any other, could engender a pathological effect of unpleasantness on feeling, especially when this effect is indistinct and unknowable as to its origin, is for Schleiermacher a wholly unanswered question. The change that results, what Kant calls humiliation, is nothing more than a new state of a pathologically-determined self, which cannot reference a relation to an intelligible cause. Kant has seemingly come no closer to closing the gap between the moral law and how one desires and chooses particular ends, and in the process failed to deliver a more-plausible account of freedom in relation to the determination of the will.

2. The Freedom Dialogues [Freiheitgespräch], 1789

Later that year, Schleiermacher penned three "Dialogues on Freedom," which he referenced in a letter to his close friend Brinkmann dated 22 July 1789. Of the three dialogues, only the third is extant. Schleiermacher described the first dialogue as "rubbish" in a later letter to Brinkman, so its absence is understandable. Schleiermacher's editors Dilthey and Meckenstock both cite ample evidence suggesting that parts of the second dialogue were incorporated into the dramatic interlude in *On Freedom.* Writing to Brinkmann, Schleiermacher described the second dialogue as a conversation in which the interlocutors "will see whether, from the side of sensible motivations to

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[135] Schleiermacher, "Notizen Zu Kant: Kritik Der Praktischen Vernuft," 133. cf. Mariña, "A Critical-Interpretive Analysis of Some Early Writings by Schleiermacher on Kant's Views of Human Nature and Freedom (1789-1799), with Translated Texts.," 28.

morality, we lose if we have to give up the obscure feeling of indeterminable freedom of choice and whether this kind of necessity of one's actions leads to moral quietism."[136] As will become evident, this theme is central to *On Freedom,* so the integration of the second dialogue into the work is entirely plausible.

The third dialogue functions as a bridge between Schleiermacher's notes on Kant and *On Freedom.* Set as a conversation between Kleon the novice, Kritias the Kantian, and Sophron the synthesizer of classical and Kantian ethics, the thematic thread throughout the third dialogue centers on how and if reason is able to affect one's actions. Blackwell adroitly points out that Schleiermacher grows impatient with the dramatic staging of the dialogue, even assuming his own voice near the end.[137] During the exchange, the character Sophron— the character closest to Schleiermacher's own sensibilities— is compelled to abandon Kant's 'feeling of respect for the moral law' in favor of a particular kind of moral sense. In Sophron's new understanding, the sensible world and pleasure are reciprocally related to virtue and perfection:

> You misunderstand this thing still, sensation is that which notifies us of the nature of our pleasure, and that it is only harmony and perfection that can delight us. Armed with these lofty ideas, the imagination springs forth as they pour through our whole being and unite with it. This gives us the lovely foretaste [*Vorgeschmack*] of virtue and fills us with the lovely thought that we ourselves may be the highest and most perfect object of our pleasure.[138]

Reason plays a part in this connection, insofar as it assists in the connection between one's highest ideals and the sensible world, but its role is reflective rather than direct:

> Sensation notifies us that certain ideas [Vorstellungen] please us and others displease us, that some we like and others we do not wish to have. Reason teaches us that, overall, it could not be otherwise once harmony, beauty, and perfection please and captivate us. Instantly these two ideas are inextricably linked by the

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[136] Letter 119, Schleiermacher to Brinckmann, 22 July 1789, *Briefwechsel 1774-1796*, V.1, 140. cf. Schleiermacher, *On Freedom*, xiii.

[137] "Schleiermacher assumes a direct role at the end, taking over the dialogue's conclusion in his own voice, as if he had grown impatient with the laboriousness of dialogical procedure", *On Freedom*, xiv.

[138] "Freiheitsgespräche," 155.

> imagination. When we sense a pleasure, we seek immediately the harmony that lies at the same foundation [*Grund*]…[139]

When presented with a sensation, the human mind rushes immediately to connect that sensation with its relation to pleasure or pain. For a virtuous person, this means a connection to those highest ends which bring the greatest pleasure. This pleasure in the highest ideals is what Schleiermacher means by 'moral sense', and forms the central commitment of the third dialogue. Reason is instrumental to this task of connecting pleasure with one's highest ideals, insofar as only it can identify and judge the worthiness of a connection between pleasure and one's highest ideals:

> Our reason is an everlasting, reliable teacher of the beautiful and perfect insofar as it discovers and judges the connection. We remember darkly [*ahnden*] where it always drives us, a heavenly desire that is the source of infinite attraction, which the truth has for every man that is aware of his reason.[140]

Consequently reason drives the mind to desire these highest ideals, and judges the sensible means by which one might realize them. This task proves to great for reason however, as the onslaught of sensible data present to reason "a problem of effecting the greatest possible containing satisfaction of all inclinations taken together within a subject, a problem that reason will never be in a position to solve."[141] Schleiermacher is certain that reason will never be able to adequately discover and judge every possible connection between pleasure and one's highest ideals, given the intractability of the task.

Schleiermacher's presentation of moral sense in the third dialogue is unique, insofar as it addresses a distinctly Kantian problem—the gap between reason and desire— with a decidedly classical twist; one is pleased by and desires the highest ends of harmony, beauty, and perfection, and consequently becomes more virtuous insofar as she is able to realize them. The Kantian dictum that

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[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 157.
[141] Ibid., 164. cf. *On Freedom*, xvi.

'should implies can' is irrelevant, as one's actual state will never come into complete harmony with the ideal. This does not prevent one from striving, however, toward the highest ideals and growing more virtuous in the process. Simply having respect for the moral law is not enough to motivate: one must *love* the moral law.[142] Reason helps one reflect and evaluate the 'fit' between her conduct and the moral law, but it cannot direct or determine her choices directly, as Kant surmised. Though still nascent, Schleiermacher was beginning to develop an understanding of freedom that worked within the language and structure of Kant's philosophy, but addressed several of its critical failings. Soon after, *On Freedom* would bring this unique view of freedom to the fore with a clarity and depth that far exceeds these earlier writings.

B. *ON FREEDOM*

Like many of Kant's earliest critics, Schleiermacher was troubled by Kant's advocacy of transcendental freedom and the gap left between reason and desire, the intelligible and empirical. Was the presupposition of transcendental freedom in human beings really necessary to uphold moral obligation? By 1790, Schleiermacher openly wondered if this theoretical presupposition was even necessary for moral philosophy, given Kant's own admission that the 'how' of transcendental freedom exceeded the narrow limits of human knowledge. Unsurprisingly, the problem of transcendental freedom was closely linked to the gap between reason and desire; if reason and desire were quite literally two worlds apart, how meaningfully can their connection be articulated? For Schleiermacher, Kant's attempt to connect empirical feeling with the intelligible causation of the moral law through the 'feeling of respect for the moral law' created a conceptually-disastrous

[142] "Freiheitsgespräche," 163.

chimera; an a priori feeling wholly other from every other a posteriori feeling. Perhaps this explains Kant's reticence to further articulate this connection. The question of how the faculty of desire functions, specifically how representations can arise, be judged, and impel the realization of those representations, was a lacuna identified by both Reinhold and Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher saw these problematic, unclear, or unelaborated aspects of Kant's philosophy as an opportunity to articulate a new understanding of freedom, by closely examining the faculty of desire and consequently revising what moral accountability actually demands.

1. The Faculty of Desire and the Determination of the Will

To articulate better how the faculty of desire functions, Schleiermacher begins with a phenomenological account of desire, starting with how one deliberates and resolves to actualize her desires. Doing so assures that his account has a connection to lived moral experience, as truly 'practical' reason. It also allows Schleiermacher to show that the structure of the faculty of desire—that people reflect on their desires and resolve to actualize some and not others—already *implies* a moral structure within desire. Unlike Kant, reason is not sharply-distinguished from empirical desire, nor is there any sharp distinction between moral and nonmoral motivation. Schleiermacher instead sees reason as active within the faculty of desire itself, providing possible ideals that can be desired and actualized.

Schleiermacher's departure is in part an appropriation of Reinhold's *Human Faculty of Representation*, which he openly credits with differentiating between a subject's faculty of representation and a subject's power of representation. Reinhold's distinction between *Vermögen* (faculty, capacity) and *Kraft* (power, force) is closely linked to the difference between possibility and

actuality.[143] He sees the power of representation as the ground of the actuality of a representation, essentially a recognition that part of every representation is the actual world affecting the subject, becoming the actual *in* the subject. The faculty of representation, on the other hand, is the possibility of representation determined a priori, essentially its representability to the subject, that by its form determines and limits the actuality of the representation. Reinhold relates the two through *Trieb* (impulse, drive); desiring is nothing more than being determined through this impulse to the production of a representation, and the faculty of desire is the capacity or faculty of being determined by this impulse. While Reinhold's *Human Capacity for Representation* concludes with this description of the faculty of desire, it would become Schleiermacher's starting point to build his moral philosophy.

Schleiermacher, as has been noted, begins with the distinctiveness of human moral experience, in which

> everyone needs time during which the faculty of desire appears to be at rest, as it were, in order to compare its individual and general activities among themselves, or to judge according to some principle, and this deliberation seldom ends without a resolution. We give some of these activities precedence over others; we decide to postpone this and to actualize that…. we will to make something actual….[144]

The way human beings experience desire is both reflective and deliberative. Human desire is reflective insofar as the faculty of desire reflects on the results of determinations of choice and makes judgments concerning their subordination to improve future attempts to realize its desires. These subordinating judgments become rules of conduct called maxims. Moral experience confirms this. For example, if someone has learned through several experiences that lying produces deleterious social effects, it would be extremely impractical to call up each of these experiences, in all their

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[143] Translators of Reinhold and Schleiermacher often employ different English terms for important terms like *Vermögen, Kraft,* or *Trieb.* I have adopted the practice of identifying the German and several English translations only where helpful and necessary to alert the reader.

[144] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 220-21. cf. *On Freedom*, 5.

particularity and complexity, as part of each new deliberation. Thus maxims are a kind of deliberative shorthand for moral reasoning. Human desire is deliberative insofar as it involves choice, what Schleiermacher calls an “intermediate space” between the appearance of a represented object and the act of desiring it. Far from any libertarian connotations of ‘choosing to do otherwise’, choice “is the faculty of desire that can be determined for one object of impulse only by comparing several.”[145] Human beings do not have or employ choice, rather choice *is* itself the human faculty of desire, because humans are always presented with multiple objects of desire each with a corresponding impulse and maxim. Schleiermacher rightly points out that multiple impulses are a prerequisite of human morality, since the subordination of some maxims to others requires multiple objects and maxims, even if this does not entail an ability to do otherwise.

Following Reinhold’s insight, Schleiermacher reminds the reader that desiring is inseparably linked to representation: one is not affected by objects of desire in themselves, but rather through representations. What seems to be a minor qualification has serious repercussions for understanding human desire, in that representations of the same object can vary widely based on innumerable complicating conditions. Schleiermacher reminds the reader

> that it always depends upon the state of our faculty of representation what variety of internal objects of impulse will arise through the association of ideas occasioned by an external object and, together with that object, simultaneously affect the faculty of desire; that it depends upon the state of our faculty of representation how in any particular case the influence of an appearing object may be modified by knowledge of that object; that it depends upon the state of our faculty of representation whether and how we formulate the maxims under which we believe the particular case to be comprehended; that it rests upon the state of our faculty of representation whether or not we take cognizance of certain external objects of impulse as such.[146]

Though the object may be constant, the representing subject is always particular and often in transition from one state to another. Those things we identify with the representing subject—knowledge, thoughts, or even dispositions at a particular point in time— affects how the subject

[145] "Über Die Freiheit," 225-26. cf. *On Freedom*, 10.
[146] "Über Die Freiheit," 237. cf. *On Freedom*, 22.

represents objects as more or less desirable at any given moment. The effect is that accidental, inessential conditions often play an important role in the determination of will.[147] Significantly, this recognition of a complex confluence of conditions is never akin to the rejection of conditions altogether, which would be entirely-arbitrary and make the will groundless.

This account of the faculty of desire already portends the manner in which Schleiermacher will distinguish his view of freedom from alternative views. First, Schleiermacher wants to distinguish his account from the kind of mechanistic determinism that Kant derided as the 'freedom of the turnspit' in the second *Critique.* Schleiermacher associates mechanistic causation exclusively with animal 'instinct' in which a single object of desire immediately determines an animal's activity to actualize that desire. The inability of animals to distinguish desire from action makes instinct immediate, and necessary as external causes determine the reaction of the animal. Schleiermacher's complex account of multiple impulses is in part intended to distinguish his position from a mechanistic determinism where external objects directly determine human desiring and willing. Schleiermacher thinks that the experienced complexity of human desiring allows one to assert that

> no single object of our faculty of desire, whether internal or external, and thus no combination of several such objects, has a determinative influence, invariable in all cases, either upon the faculty of desire in general or upon its particulars, so that the preponderance of impression requisite for any complete acton of the faculty of desire cannot be grounded in such objects. Therefore nothing remains wherein we could seek this ground except what is thought in our subjective being, insofar as it is not a single object of an impulse.[148]

In saying that human willing is ultimately determined by what is thought in one's subjective being, Schleiermacher locates the determination of the will in the subject itself, though how it works remains to be seen. In any case, this subjective basis of the determination of the will makes a strong

[147] "Even if in some particular case the preponderance of one impulse over others is based in such accidental determinations of the faculty of desire as have been produced through its preceding activities, these in turn have their first ground in the state of the faculty of representation," "Über Die Freiheit," 237. cf. *On Freedom*, 22.

[148] "Über Die Freiheit," 236. cf. *On Freedom*, 21.

case that human willing is distinct from animal instinct or any form of mechanistic determinism. Though animals and humans are both living, desiring beings, human beings exhibit a kind of multifarious activity in proportion to the complexity of their lived experience; both are living, but only humans have life superabundantly.[149]

2. The Limits of Practical Reason Lead to Necessity

The previous section describing the faculty of desire and the determination of the will passed very near to the question of freedom, though it did not directly treat it. Schleiermacher presented a parsimonious definition of 'choice'—as a phenomenal description of the complexity of willing—in order to preserve the practical character of his investigation, which had to be safeguarded from speculative or metaphysical encroachment. But parsimonious definitions often lead to more questions, and in this case one may already be standing at the doorstep of freedom. Though the determination of the will is subjectively-grounded, how does this ground function? Is this ground of the determination of the will itself grounded in antecedent conditions, as Spinoza thought? Or might it originate spontaneously from an unconditioned origin to determine a new series in the phenomenal world, as Kant presupposed? Put succinctly, how does Schleiermacher understand the role of reason in an empirical world bound by necessity, and how does this relate to human freedom?

For Kant, freedom was the necessary presupposition that grounded morality, as it secured the possibility that reason through the moral law could determine the will despite the existence of empirical conditions that could have otherwise determined it. Though Reinhold differs from Kant

[149] This claim interestingly foreshadows the later view and its connection between life and freedom, though only incompletely and nascently stated: "The activities of the faculty of desire change as richly and rapidly as the flux of external things can ever do. In every moment it is filled not simply with life but with superabundant life, multifariously active," "Über Die Freiheit," 238. cf. *On Freedom*, 23.

in allowing for relative or comparative freedom in the faculty of desire, he nevertheless agrees with Kant that the truest form of freedom always implies a rational, non-empirical origin for the determination the will. Schleiermacher believed this view of freedom violated the confines of a purely practical moral philosophy, however. By translating transcendental freedom from the first *Critique* into his second *Critique*, Kant had confused the theoretical validity of the concept of transcendental freedom with its practical necessity for morality. One can affirm the validity of the idea of transcendental freedom— Schleiermacher happily concedes this point in *On Freedom*— without assuming that transcendental freedom is indicative of *freedom itself,* especially related to descriptions of human freedom. Freedom must be investigated and clarified anew, and the role of reason recast in purely-practical terms.

Beginning with a phenomenological account of human willing describes reason as it is experienced in the process of willing. Consequently reason is an impulse like any other impulse available to the faculty of desire,[150] described as both "moral sense" and "respect for the moral law." By including the a priori nature of reason within the a posteriori process of willing, Kant might object that Schleiermacher has enervated reason's place in moral philosophy, when he concedes that even

> reason is aware that it exercises no generally physical and necessary dominion over the faculty of desire. Yet it is at the same time convinced of the possibility that its influence over the faculty of desire, though by its nature indeterminate and accidental, can nevertheless be great enough in any conceivable particular case to actualize whatever is in accord with the law, regardless of all impulses from elsewhere.[151]

But by locating reason as a feeling and an impulse within the faculty of desire, Schleiermacher is able to rescue the intersection of reason and the faculty of desire— namely 'respect for the moral law'—

[150] Schleiermacher asserts that "this impulse must have exactly the same relation to the faculty of desire as every other," "Über Die Freiheit," 233. cf. *On Freedom*, 18.

[151] "Über Die Freiheit," 230. cf. *On Freedom*, 14.

from its conceptual confusion. Feelings are experienced and cannot be a priori, and for Kant to posit a singular and special feeling is not only unnecessary but unhelpful to his moral philosophy. This is why *On Freedom* makes the case that treating reason as a feeling or impulse *strengthens* the idea of moral obligation, because it places reason's influence on similar footing with any other impulses.

In order to preserve freedom from reduction to causal determinism, Kant required the presupposition of transcendental freedom and its uncanny, inter-worldly causation, wherein reason alters appearances in the empirical world. Does not Schleiermacher affirm causal determinism by placing reason amidst the warp and weft of the empirical world? Yes, in part. Schleiermacher was indeed a determinist by his admission. *On Freedom* famously claims determinism when it claims that

> the present author makes no claim that he should be exempted from the general fate of being classified. On the contrary, he is satisfied with the name of determinist, provided only that he is promised that no proposition of any other determinist will be attributed to him that is not clearly contained in what he himself has said or will say.[152]

We must be emphatically-clear that this is not *causal* determinism in a metaphysical sense, however. The difference hinges on the limitations and warrants associated with practical philosophy. Part of Kant's Copernican revolution was his demonstration that presupposing causes is necessary for human beings to order and understand their world. The work of natural science must presuppose universal causation, which allows for objective validity and the establishment of knowledge. With the second *Critique*, however, Schleiermacher suspects that Kant violates the limits of practical philosophy by borrowing speculative concepts like transcendental freedom for practical ends. The idea that reason would *cause* a new empirical series to appear was already specious, given that

[152] "Über Die Freiheit," 244. cf. *On Freedom*, 29.

causality *prompter* only applies to the phenomenal world; for Schleiermacher, a noumenal cause seemed like a glaring conceptual contradiction. Similarly, the respect for the moral law connected this a priori cause with empirical feelings in a way that strengthens or weakens the inclination toward the moral law. In Schleiermacher's judgment, both moves smuggled speculative reason into practical philosophy in order to prop up an untenable and alien view of human freedom that Kant thought necessary for moral accountability.

How might a truly practical philosophy proceed, then? By investigating the concepts that emerge in one's experience of freedom and moral accountability to determine if they are composed of necessary practical concepts or from poorly-grounded sentiments. In practical philosophy, Schleiermacher asserts that moral accountability "is the judgement by which we assign the morality of an action to the person who performed it in such a way that our judgement of the action constitutes part of our judgment concerning the person's worth."[153] Accountability ties together two judgments: one judges an action as moral, and consequently attributes "worth" to the agent, where the measure of "worth" is understood as the law of reason. When one talks about moral accountability, she is simply saying that humans view moral actions as necessarily-linked to an agent who exhibits conformity to the moral law. Schleiermacher argues that this link, this connection between act and agent, is always presupposed when one makes moral judgments and attributions that allow one to hold agents accountable to the moral law. Without this necessary connection, Schleiermacher adds,

> we cannot conclude anything concerning certain characteristics of the soul-- that is, concerning certain relations between impulses and the efficacy of representations, relations that are apparent in all similar cases -

[153] "Über Die Freiheit," 247. cf. *On Freedom*, 33.

> - unless actions are regarded as consequences of certain grounds in the soul, which, so long as they are present, must bring forth the same effects.[154]

Practically-speaking, one is bound to the Kantian "as if": one must hold and presuppose that actions proceed from an agent in order to preserve moral accountability, even though one cannot prove or disprove this connection. Insofar as the link between agents and actions is a practically necessary postulate for moral accountability, Schleiermacher is indeed a determinist, though a practically-limited one.

It is easy to see why *On Freedom* has made many a commentator leery since its publication in the Dilthey's *Lebens Schleiermacher*. The subtle "as if" of necessary presuppositions was equally lost on many of Kant's readers, and were one to miss it the conflation of Schleiermacher's practical determinism with speculative or metaphysical determinism would be an understandable, if inappropriate conclusion. Consider his statement that impulses interact and limit one another "as if by mechanical laws" in a fashion that allows the estimation of unknown aspects of a particular action by the "law of the aspects we already know."[155] If one missed the "as if" and ignored the practical limits of Schleiermacher's claim, misunderstanding would likely result. Schleiermacher is merely pointing out that the lawfulness of impulses is something postulated as practically useful for moral judgment. Impulses *cannot be* actual mechanical laws that underlie the coherence of natural phenomena, but they can and do function in an analogous fashion. The distinction between laws that govern the mind and the natural world is indeed a subtle distinction, but it is nevertheless necessary for understanding Schleiermacher's position. In order to attribute moral praiseworthiness or blameworthiness on a moral agent, one must presume that observable actions are intrinsically

[154] "Über Die Freiheit," 254-55. cf. *On Freedom*, 40.
[155] "Über Die Freiheit," 255. cf. *On Freedom*, 41.

linked to and originate out of that moral agent, "as if" they were a casual relation. This is the core tenet of Schleiermacher's practical determinism, which helpfully distinguishes Schleiermacher's early view from the Kantian soil out of which it grew.

3. The Feeling of Freedom and Indifferentism

As Schleiermacher believes that his practical determinism is necessary to properly establish moral accountability, any position that ignores or contradicts this practical presupposition relies on inappropriate grounding in human 'sentiment'. He spends much of *On Freedom* identifying inappropriate conceptual or linguistic determinations that affect how one understands freedom and moral accountability. What he discovers is that one sentiment in particular has drawn the history of Western thought in inadequately-grounded directions: what he calls the "feeling of freedom."[156] Schleiermacher identifies the feeling of freedom as a sentiment that awakens "as we become expressly conscious of ourselves as moral beings."[157] Consequently it is not pathological, but simply emerges out of the faculty of desire's distinctive character. Because the faculty of desire is not absolutely-determinable by any one object, one experiences a feeling of exercising choice, which one calls the feeling of freedom. Schleiermacher calls this the 'true feeling of freedom,' a sentiment entirely consistent with Schleiermacher's practical determinism. When the faculty of desire considers multiple objects and begins paring them away to only one,

> the resolution we shall reach will depend upon the total connection of this object with all of our inclinations, indeed with the state of our faculty of knowledge also -- will depend upon the way we instruct this process and upon the completeness and conscientiousness with which we will compose our acts. This is what we wish

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[156] That *On Freedom*'s feeling of freedom bears so much similarity to the *Christian Faith's* feeling of relative/comparative freedom is a testament not only to the coherence and continuity of his thought throughout its development, but a helpful way of understanding freedom in the latter text usually omitted from the secondary literature.

[157] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 282. cf. *On Freedom*, 66.

> of our deliberation; this is what is warranted through the feeling of freedom. All of this, moreover, seems to contain a secret admission of necessity - as we have conceived it - more than an apparent contradiction of it.[158]

Schleiermacher believes that if one's actions are to be truly ethical— and thus truly one's own— then they must be connected to who one is: the psychological and physical states of the present, former choices and regret from the past, and the kind of moral conduct one strives for in the future. This is a view that integrates the "whole of morality," not merely a collection of disconnected glimpses of singular actions.[159] In a way that strikingly foreshadows Schleiermacher's later organicism, he claims that the inappropriate use of the feeling of freedom is so pernicious because it "disrupts the interconnectedness of life"[160]

The inappropriate use of the feeling of freedom arises when this universal feeling becomes a universal principle, and the experience of choice becomes the speculative confirmation of the groundlessness of the will, to which morality is hastily hitched. Only when the feeling of freedom is elevated to the level of metaphysical certainty does it then come into conflict with necessity, a position Schleiermacher calls 'indifferentism.'[161] Indifferentism holds that "in the moment of a certain act or resolution I could decide in any conceivable way, and nowhere in the preceding course of the world is there a necessitating ground sufficient to have determined this way to the exclusion of every other."[162] The result is a disconnect between act and agent, insofar as agents remain unconstrained by past choices, present states, and future desires. This disconnect ultimately undermines the "neutrality of the will," the practical principle that a single will is equally capable of

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[158] "Über Die Freiheit," 288. cf. *On Freedom*, 72-73.

[159] "Über Die Freiheit," 295. cf. *On Freedom*, 80.

[160] "Über Die Freiheit," 296. cf. *On Freedom*, 81.

[161] Schleiermacher's *Indifferentismus* should be carefully distinguished from the streams of religious and political indifferentism; in *On Freedom* Schleiermacher explicitly defines any idiosyncratic connotations of his most important terms, including indifferentism.

[162] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 313. cf. *On Freedom*, 98.

adopting ethical or unethical maxims. This principle explains the “two-sidedness” of human moral experience, in that both ethical and unethical conduct could potentially arise out of the same will, depending entirely on a different confluence of conditions in the soul. Indifferentism ignores the practical warrant for this “two-sidedness” and instead elevates it to a human power or capacity; an ethical or unethical action results with total indifference to potentially- different conditions. If ethical actions can issue with indifference to their requisite conditions, then it becomes exceedingly difficult to hold agents morally accountable for their actions: “how can I be accountable for an action when we cannot determine the extent to which it belongs to my soul?”[163]

While this describes the origin of indifferentism within the individual, as a philosophical position it also has a history. Interestingly, the “Historical Survey” in Part III functions primarily to highlight the *theological* origins of indifferentism. While much of the survey is generalized, Schleiermacher suggests that indifferentism develops out of debates over Augustine’s doctrine of grace in the medieval church.[164] Though these debates sought to describe how ethical actions come to be in the soul, their increasing emphasis on depravity and human incapacity to do good forced many to adopt a radically-supernatural doctrine of grace, by which an ethical action could obtain *only* by the infusion of God’s supernatural grace; a claim which effectively severed the tie between an agent and her actions. As the medieval church understood the idea of necessity in solidly-speculative terms, this disconnect was considered desirable insofar as it preserved the supernatural character of ethical actions.

The effect of this radically-supernatural doctrine of grace was a striking reorientation of moral systems, through the development of divine command ethics. Emphasis on absolute human

[163] "Über Die Freiheit," 316. cf. *On Freedom*, 100-01.
[164] See the section on “Medieval Christianity,” "Über Die Freiheit," 307-18. cf. *On Freedom*, 93-103.

depravity "meant that previous moral systems were altogether discarded" along with their principled basis, while "revelation was made the basis for knowledge of these [moral] maxims."[165] One became obliged to moral laws simply on the basis that they were divine commands, from a divine lawgiver "who did not have to look elsewhere for justification."[166] Without the ability to derive the moral law from a common principle, one had to rely on the revelation of the potentially-arbitrary divine will in each particular instance, an impossible task meant to further confirm human incapacity for good. In this system, accountability for one's actions could only be conceived in terms of divine punishment, the supernatural consequence of injury to the divine lawgiver's reputation or sense of justice. Thus supernatural divine punishment became "the main pillar of all morality," and the affirmation of necessity was correspondingly viewed as an attack on morality and its foundation: the legitimacy of divine punishment.[167] With morality and God's legitimacy on the line, it seemed that necessity had to be denied.

This line of thought continues into the Pantheism Controversy, as the idea of necessity was seen as detrimental to morality and religion. Jacobi famously claimed that determinism entailed fatalism, because it left no place for theological commitments. At this point of *On Freedom,* though, Schleiermacher inverts this claim: *it is indifferentism that entails fatalism*, because it inappropriately grounds morality on a contradictory blend of speculative theological commitments.[168] Fatalism results when the theological commitments of indifferentism come into conflict with the doctrine of divine foreknowledge. Divine prescience or foreknowledge entails a most-perfect knowledge that

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[165] "Über Die Freiheit," 309. cf. *On Freedom*, 94.
[166] "Über Die Freiheit," 310. cf. *On Freedom*, 95.
[167] "Über Die Freiheit," 312. cf. *On Freedom*, 97.
[168] In rejecting a moral position that depends upon theological commitments, Schleiermacher echoes Kant's own resistance to grounding morality in theology. Both Kant and Schleiermacher viewed this grounding as a speculative or metaphysical intrusion into the clearly delimited boundaries of practical reason.

precedes experience and manifests the determinations of all that is yet undetermined. Unlike human knowledge, divine foreknowledge connects God's knowing with God's causality as the source of these determinations. The conflict arises, however, from indifferentism's commitment to agents whose wills are determined without respect to prior conditions.

This separates agents and their willing from the interconnectedness of God's causality; since formerly God's causality and knowledge were seen as intrinsically-linked, would this not also remove agents and their willing from God's foreknowledge? If one answered yes, the result was a enervation of the divine attributes and a qualification of divine foreknowledge, and the affirmation of libertarian free will. If one answered no, the only recourse was to explain the unconditioned origin of the will's determination in radically-supernatural terms, where every action becomes a mystical act of the divine will. Unable to know the correct answer or resolve the conflict, the indifferentist must think,

> at the moment I performed this action I was in no way constrained to do so by my preceding actions or by my state, for I was conscious that this bond did not exist, that so far as these grounds were concerned I was free, and that I could always have acted otherwise (so far equilibrism). Indeed it could just as well have been the case that something else could have preceded, different from what actually did so, and I would nevertheless have acted — or rather, would have had to act — in exactly the same way, because the action was precisely so and not otherwise in the plan of the world-governing Being, and in every moment of my activity I am completely dependent on that Being's will, without any intermediate grounds.[169]

Indifferentism undermines agency by severing the determination of the will from the agent's character and being, and potentially re-grounding it in the arbitrary causation of an unknown divine will. Certainly indifferentism results in a poverty of agency, but is any more fatalistic than a speculative or metaphysical determinism?

Historically, Schleiermacher sees three basic strategies to reconciling agency with necessity, which can help elucidate what Schleiermacher means by 'fatalism.' First, one could affirm a universal divine providence, in which a unified purpose completely determines events through their

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[169] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 322. cf. *On Freedom*, 107.

interconnection. Second, one could affirm chance, in which the interconnection of events toward a purpose is denied. Third, one could affirm fate, which holds "that every particular fact, regarded purely in itself, unalterably occurs in accordance with a certain purpose—without respect to what has gone before and what will come after."[170] For Schleiermacher, 'fate' is a chimerical combination of the first two, an unstable amalgam of divine providence and chance. According to this definition of fate, indifferentism does entail fatalism insofar as a particular action obtains regardless of prior conditions; the indifferentist is simply fated to an action entirely indifferent to her past, her hopes, or her moral character.

Despite its significant conceptual and practical shortcomings, indifferentism enjoyed a long renaissance eclipsed only by "the practical ideas we have received only recently from a completely different source," an obvious allusion to Kant's moral philosophy in particular.[171] What resulted was a "reformation of practical ideas" that sought to root out the speculative basis of moral concepts like accountability, obligation, and freedom. Realizing that the practical law had to obtain its obligation from somewhere other than a revelation of the divine will, Kant sought out reason as a means of grounding the moral law and its obligation. In addition, Kant's recognition that sensible objects of perception demanded the law of necessity through the idea of a synthetic a priori judgment effectively rescued necessity from speculative impurity. While all this was essential to moral reform, Kant's reformation was impeded, in Schleiermacher's estimation, by the subordination of practical reason to theoretical reason. Kant was foundational, but had simply not taken reform far enough. As this study has regularly emphasized, Schleiermacher adamantly believed that his system in *On*

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[170] "Über Die Freiheit," 321. cf. *On Freedom*, 105.
[171] "Über Die Freiheit," 325. cf. *On Freedom*, 110.

Freedom is the most consistent expression of Kant's philosophy, and *not* its undoing.[172] At stake was the very soul of Kant's critical philosophy, which Schleiermacher feared would be coopted by indifferentism.

When Schleiermacher claims that Kant unnecessarily subordinates practical reason to theoretical reason, he is merely stating explicitly what has already been discussed implicitly regarding Schleiermacher's appreciation and critique of Kantian moral philosophy. Nearly all instances of this subordination relate to the dual nature of human consciousness and experience that pervades the first two *Critiques*: reality vs. ideality, theoretical vs. practical, a priori vs. a posteriori, reason vs. understanding, noumenal vs. phenomenal, freedom vs. necessity, etc. While Kant sees the balancing of these two worlds as necessary to protect freedom, autonomy, and morality from the extensive necessity demanded by the natural sciences, Schleiermacher identifies a pernicious "double consciousness" at work. Double consciousness arises out of a conflict in reason itself, in which practical and theoretical reason vie for their lawgiving activities and their respective interests: happiness and perfection, respectively. As Kant preferred a reified moral law totally pure of empirical conditions, he naturally subordinated happiness to perfection, and with it, practical reason to theoretical reason.

This subordination also manifested itself in Kant's insistence that reason's causality was unconditioned and unnecessitated with respect to the world of phenomenal appearances. It is important to qualify, however, that Kant did not think that reason's causality was arbitrary or indifferent; Schleiermacher does not equate him with indifferentism. While freedom is indeed free

[172] Very early in *On Freedom,* Schleiermacher identifies the Kantian nature of his project: "Thus we believe that in this respect our investigation, quite apart from the measure of its worth and the correctness of its result, can promise some usefulness in leading us subsequently into a closer elucidation of the Kantian theory of freedom," "Über Die Freiheit," 220. cf. *On Freedom*, 4.

from the empirical laws including the law of necessity, Kant remains adamant that reason *fully determines* the will in accordance with the moral law. Kant's freedom was empirically-unnecessitated, but rationally- and morally-determined. Schleiermacher's description of the feeling of freedom as the feeling of being "equally unnecessitated by ethical and by sensible goods" does not remotely describe Kant's philosophy, nor is it likely that Schleiermacher intended it to.[173]

Schleiermacher clearly prefers the parsimony of a single world where morality can be more-*purely* practical. This tendency is already intimated in Schleiermacher's presentation of the faculty of desire, where he eliminated reliance on theoretical concepts (like transcendental freedom) to establish the efficacy of practical reason. At this juncture, though, one begins to see what Schleiermacher means by reason. Reason becomes more simply "the faculty of comprehending the necessary interconnection of things," a faculty that aids and enables practical reason to effect ethical conduct without requiring an otherworldly necessitation.[174] As a result, Schleiermacher has no need of a chimerical a priori feeling like Kant's 'respect for the moral law', as reason presents the moral law immanently through 'moral sense,' a particular feeling that is not only judging but motivating[175] for human moral conduct. Clearly, the place of reason is a significant distinction between the moral philosophy of Kant and Schleiermacher. Given this distinction, and Kant's tie between freedom and reason, one can rightly surmise that Schleiermacher's view of freedom is equally distinct.

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[173]"Über Die Freiheit," 283. cf. *On Freedom*, 67.

[174] "Über Die Freiheit," 327. cf. *On Freedom*, 111.

[175] Schleiermacher almost certainly made this claim to distinguish moral sense from Kant's feeling of respect for the moral law, which was simply a judging feeling that was not itself an incentive.

C. Schleiermacher's Early View: Freedom as Relation

At this point, we have seen how Schleiermacher conceived of his project in *On Freedom*. In order to carry Kant's moral philosophy to its more rigorous practical conclusions, Schleiermacher has described the faculty of desire in purely practical terms, a description that leads him to the practical presupposition of moral necessity that preserves moral accountability from indifferentism and its speculative principles. One constellation of questions remains, however, concerning freedom. How does Schleiermacher understand freedom? What is freedom? How should human beings understand their freedom, as an inhering faculty or power of the soul? How can human beings understand moral agency, conceived as the connection between willing in the soul and acting in the world? While Schleiermacher has brushed very close to these questions throughout *On Freedom*, in Part IV Schleiermacher investigates freedom itself and offers what practical conclusions one is warranted to make.

At the conclusion of Schleiermacher's description of the faculty of desire, one finds the place of practical reason as a feeling or impulse which helps connect moral maxims and laws with representations of possible actions; consequently, "we have the faculty of acting according to such laws as *reason has acknowledged* and name this faculty freedom, [though] we are not saying that we are compelled to act according to those laws."[176] Practical reason acknowledges these laws, and seeks to connect these laws to possible actions. Freedom, in a very basic sense, is the power to conform one's actions to the moral law without the implication that the moral law necessitates one's conduct irrespective of the representations, feelings, and impulses of the human soul. This understanding points us back to a core methodological commitment. In treating freedom, Schleiermacher's

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[176] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Freiheit," 327. cf. *On Freedom*, 111. emphasis added.

methodology should mirror his treatment of the faculty of desire. If all ideas of necessity are posited by the pure understanding in relation to the conditions of sensibility, as Kant argued, then freedom must be discussed first as it relates to appearances.[177] Consequently, investigating the concept of freedom must begin with empirical occurrences if it is to remain truly-practical.

Schleiermacher first considers freedom as the absence of constraint, which he considers an "indeterminate defining feature" of every concept of freedom, though too minimalistic to offer a "proper definition."[178] Interestingly enough, the most general definition of freedom is said to be Kant's transcendental freedom, a case in which something happens without regard for its character or relationships. Prima facie, the position seems inexplicable given Schleiermacher's previous criticism of transcendental freedom! As a speculative encroachment on the practical description of human willing, transcendental freedom seemed to represent the incompleteness of Kant's moral reformation.

In Part IV, however, the task is defining the concept of freedom, and at this early juncture, Schleiermacher sees no reason to deny the possibility of a speculative idea like transcendental freedom that in itself is not self-contradictory. Though possible, transcendental freedom remains practically-warrantless for human willing, it is a special case of freedom rather than a universal paradigm. While transcendental freedom is an empty or nullified concept with no appearance as object, Schleiermacher points out that an object could be transcendentally free without contradiction if it was both a single individual and lacked a distinction between inner and outer life. As it fulfills both conditions, the concept of deity can potentially be predicated with this kind of freedom:

[177] "Über Die Freiheit," 334-35. cf. *On Freedom*, 119.
[178] "Über Die Freiheit," 335. cf. *On Freedom*, 119.

> we can think in an absolutely natural way of only one action of the deity belonging *a parte post* to the series of occurrences, namely the action through which all occurrences in general began and by virtue of which alone, in a cosmological respect, the concept of the deity as the undetermined cause of all determined things is accepted.[179]

God is the only conceivable instance of an undetermined cause of all determined things. To predicate transcendental freedom of human beings as Kant did would be an inappropriate attribution of a singularly divine attribute to human beings. In short, transcendental freedom predicated to humans is a promethean theft of *creatio ex nihilo.*

While this special case of freedom can be speculatively posited, Schleiermacher's interest remains in *human* freedom. If transcendental freedom is the most general definition of freedom, then it will require additional specification for human freedom. This is accomplished by delimiting freedom to human action: "the concept of freedom relates directly and properly only to actions," even if one can concede that freedom is often predicated of both human situations and cognitive faculties in an indirect sense.[180] By focusing on freedom as predicated to human actions, Schleiermacher is simply applying his practical methodology— and the presupposition of the law of necessity—to the question of freedom and moral action. Whereas indifferentism's unconditioned freedom undermined the lawfulness of morality, Schleiermacher's freedom is bound by lawfulness, in which "belonging to a series is an essential feature of the definition of freedom."[181] As this is a departure from more common understandings of freedom, he needs to articulate exactly *how* freedom relates to the idea of "lawfulness" and "belonging to a series."

There are actually two kinds of series related to human actions. On the one hand, human beings *perceive* actions that occur in the world with a combination of inner and outer sense, and

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[179] "Über Die Freiheit," 345. cf. *On Freedom*, 129.

[180] "Über Die Freiheit," 339-40. cf. *On Freedom*, 124.

[181] On indifferentism's abrogation of the law: "no law at all can exist for that which occurs, since its efficacy in every possible function may be thought of as interrupted," "Über Die Freiheit," 342. cf. *On Freedom*, 127.

these are actions related to the "real." On the other hand, human beings *think* of occurrences in relation and subordination to some inner ground, these are actions related to the "ideal." Real actions are subject to the law of change—and specifically the law of motion in time—which governs all objects of outward sense; ideal actions, conversely, are subject to the law of succession of ideas in time. Each represents a series that relates to action, and consequently to freedom. With this distinction that draws heavily from transcendental idealism, one might object that Schleiermacher has relented to Kant and affirmed distinct phenomenal and noumenal worlds. Schleiermacher, however, employs a different view of freedom to affirm one world: freedom is the dynamic force that unites these two series, and with it, the real and ideal.[182]

When human beings describe freedom, they typically describe the experience of a volition in the soul directing some kind of motion in the empirical world. This kind of freedom is closely associated with agency. Schleiermacher happily concedes that when an ideal act of thinking initiates a real act of motion in the world, therein lies freedom. Formally, this understanding of freedom is consonant with Kant's. Were one to replace Schleiermacher's 'succession of ideas' with Kant's 'moral law,' they would both understand freedom as the ideal determining the real. It was for this reason that Kant lauded the autonomy of a moral agent from the impurity of empirical conditions, as empirical conditions displace duty and reason with happiness and pleasure. If one were to allow objects of sense to determine the will instead, Kant reasoned, the result would be a heteronomous,

[182] Schleiermacher writes, "in one world, in a system of appearances and changes, we are absolutely compelled to distinguish these two laws, the mechanical law of motion and the psychological law of the succession of ideas….So long as this is the case, this idea of freedom is the only conceivable means for combining the effects of the two laws into a whole, since it provides a kind of passage from one of these laws to the other," "Über Die Freiheit," 346. cf. *On Freedom*, 131.

unfree individual. In any moral action, Kant reasoned, it must be the ideal that determines the real, and not the converse.

Yet Schleiermacher rejected Kant's subordination of the real to the ideal, and thus also rejected the view of freedom as *only* agency. Freedom is not only agency, *but also receptivity:*

> just as we are justified in calling an action free that arises according to the law of the succession of ideas and initiates a series according to the law of motion, so too we are correct in calling an acton free that arises according to the law of motion and initiates a series according to the law of the succession of ideas.[183]

The idea that the external world could, through the senses, initiate a new series of ideas is certainly not unusual; humans perceive objects in the world, and these changing perceptions alter and redirect one's thought and volition. Calling this idea freedom, however, is quite novel. Schleiermacher believes that two series, governed by the law of succession of ideas and the law of motion respectively, "continue uninterrupted alongside one another, but through freedom reciprocally intermesh and are brought into connection."[184] In short, freedom is the force that translates one series into another, mediating mental and physical aspects of a single world. By elevating receptivity alongside agency as intrinsic to freedom, Schleiermacher not only makes a bold claim about the interrelatedness of the ideal and real in human actions, but also recognizes the importance of the external world in shaping human beings. Freedom is not an otherworldly reason determining an empirical will, but rather the interaction between the psychological experience of thinking and willing and the physical experience of sensing objects and realizing volitions in the world.

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[183] "Über Die Freiheit," 349. cf. *On Freedom*, 133.
[184] "Über Die Freiheit," 348. cf. *On Freedom*, 133.

Maddeningly, Schleiermacher does not go into depth about the idea of receptivity as intrinsic to freedom,[185] or how moral volition is related to freedom as receptivity.[186]

Nevertheless, this understanding of freedom is quite significant to the later development of Schleiermacher's thought, especially his development of a thoroughgoing organicism that will become the focus of Chapters III and IV. Here he employs the idea of 'freedom' to describe the interconnecting relationship between mind and body, a relationship he alternately describes in terms of an "organ." While discussing freedom, he writes that

> All outward actions of our soul, all effects of our faculty of causation upon external objects are exemplary advocates of this freedom. When we want to change something in the material world, that cannot happen except by motion. Motion is at our disposal in only the outward organ of our soul."

From the text, we can see that this organ is instrumental in connecting the inner soul with outer motion. Schleiermacher continues,

> the motion of the organ through which a person produces change in the material world is just as we perceive it: not the first free member of the series but only the final stage of the organic motions belonging to this action. If moreover, we go back to the nerves or whatever else is the first ground and seat of motions in the human body, we must hit upon a first that has not arisen from any earlier, according to the law of motion, but that rather relates to a volition determined by the succession of ideas in the soul. The freedom of which we are speaking properly corresponds then to this first motion.[187]

The similarity between the function of this "organ" and his description of freedom is quite striking; they both represent the moment of connection and dynamic interrelation between mind and body. Were one to trace a physical motion to its physical origin—for example the "nerves" causing a muscle to contract—one would not find an uncaused beginning, but rather a connection to a

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[185] Schleiermacher believes he has sufficiently demonstrated the idea, concluding, "to what extent and under what restrictions this latter case [freedom as receptivity] may be conceived as possible can be judged from the previous discussion and cannot be further developed here," "Über Die Freiheit," 349. cf. *On Freedom*, 133.

[186] Schleiermacher does suggest that properly moral action originates within the "purely inner" parts of the mind and ends in bodily motion in the world. Theoretical knowledge would function quite similarly, with thought becoming embodied through speaking and writing. These "ideal actions" would originate according to the law of succession of ideas, which is practically necessary but remains unobservable in subjectivity; to an observer, both morality and thinking are processes that appear spontaneous but remain causally constrained. See "Über Die Freiheit," 346-47. cf. *On Freedom*, 131.

[187] "Über Die Freiheit," 347. cf. *On Freedom*, 131.

volition determined by the succession of ideas in the mind, a connection described as "organic motion." While not a fully-developed theory of organicism, it is significant that in 1790 Schleiermacher was already thinking of the connection between body and soul in terms of organic relations.

Given this new understanding of freedom, Schleiermacher moves on to its social implications, essentially how one's freedom relates to other free human beings. This is not merely a question of how the actions of others constrain one's own actions, but rather how one's will and actions come to influence others, or what Schleiermacher calls the human characteristic of "sociality."[188] A collection or aggregate of human beings is not a community or social situation; Schleiermacher claims that "only insofar as this community exists under distinctively characteristic laws as conditions of its possibility do people live in a social situation."[189] The constant refrain that human experience can only be understood thanks to its lawfulness emerges for a third time in *On Freedom* to discuss human sociality. Human communities are subject to a kind of lawfulness that makes them explicable to human understanding, just as the law of succession of ideas undergirds every understanding of human willing, and the law of motion in time undergirds every experience of the world. These laws are the many social and political laws that govern human behavior, and as such, they are impermanent and require modification to promote the betterment of the community in changing circumstances. The social situation is comprised of two parts: the civic situation (the effect of social laws upon an individual's actions) and the political situation (the effects of combined

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[188] Schleiermacher writes, "thus there remains only the restrictions which we cause, insofar as we are not regarded as things of outer nature, through the influence of our will and actions upon the wills and actions of others. The community of people with other people, as choosing, acting beings, is called sociality," "Über Die Freiheit," 356. cf. *On Freedom*, 140.

[189] "Über Die Freiheit," 356. cf. *On Freedom*, 140.

actions upon the community's laws themselves). The social situation consequently governs the behavior of individuals, while the combined actions of individuals can reform and modify the laws to better establish the good of the community.

Schleiermacher enticingly asserts that each of these reciprocal lawgiving and law-following tasks corresponds to civic and political freedom, leading to the question "whether and to what extent actions determined through the law of these situations can be thought of within a series and as initiating a series."[190] Sadly, this is the final line of the unfinished manuscript of *On Freedom.* A few conclusions and inferences might be justifiably drawn, however. Civic and political situations both involve the law, but are distinguished by how the law relates: in civic situations, the law effects an individual's actions, while in political situations the combined actions of individuals affect the law. As both civic and political situations are comprised of two elements, asserting *freedom* of both is a way of demonstrating the dynamic interconnection between the law, an individual, and the combined activity of the community. Additionally, by asking how the law of sociality might initiate a series, Schleiermacher seems to suggest that some kind of 'social freedom' would bond this social law to both the individual psyche and the physical world, and imply the social origin of some human activity. As the even more complex intermeshing of three levels of experience— the psychological, the physical, and the social— this could be considered an an even higher level of freedom indicative of a more dynamic and comprehensive whole. Without further elucidation from Schleiermacher, however, one simply cannot know if he conceived of this additional layer of sociality in the same terms as individual freedom, or whether the soul's "organ" might have a social equivalent. Nevertheless, one sees the nascent budding of an idea that freedom as an intermeshing relation

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[190] "Über Die Freiheit," 356. cf. *On Freedom*, 141.

connects and enlivens human activity, ultimately unifying individuals with an even more comprehensive whole. This would form the basis of Schleiermacher's organismic turn in the late 1790s, the subject of Chapter III.

III. THINKING ORGANISM

The year was 1790. In response to the "Copernican Revolution" precipitated by Kant's first two *Critiques*, Schleiermacher penned *On Freedom,* and in it, advanced a new view of freedom tempered and strengthened by the purifying fires of practical reason. But while Schleiermacher organized and prepared these thoughts in the east Prussian backwater of Schlobitten, unbeknownst to him there was already another revolution afoot. At stake was the idea of lawfulness, which had become essential for how human beings understood themselves and the world in which they lived. A century earlier, the work of Sir Isaac Newton on celestial phenomena established the discipline of 'mechanics,' and with it, the lawfulness of physical phenomena. Following Newton, Kant's first two *Critiques* sought to better ground this lawfulness of natural phenomena in the lawfulness of human cognition, while limiting reason in order to preserve a similar lawfulness for morality. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Schleiermacher saw even less reason than Kant to divide the lawfulness of natural phenomena from morality, preferring to reconfigure freedom as a lawful, intermeshing interaction between will and action. For any science, lawfulness was deemed necessary to be sure that what one observed could be understood, cognized, and reduced into natural or moral laws that could help explain other phenomena.

Newton's discoveries in mechanics proved well-suited to be called 'laws,' insofar as he could reduce complex interactions between mass, motion, and gravity to simpler—and more ideal—mathematical formulas. Because every observed phenomenon appeared to be necessarily bound to

these mathematical formulas, they were considered definitive examples of lawfulness for all other disciplines and sciences to emulate. This emulation would prove difficult if not impossible for other

sciences, however, that treated very different objects. To describe the development of plants in the same way as celestial bodies would require describing the former in terms of the latter, effectively reducing a living organism into a dead mechanism. This presupposition would also introduce a scientific hierarchy: to describe its object adequately, biology would be dependent on chemistry and physics, two 'higher' sciences that would provide it the mathematical certainty it desperately needed to remain a science. Before Newton, Descartes famously mused that the coats and hats passing his window could very well conceal automatons instead of human beings.[191] After Newton, it appeared evermore possible that human beings *were* automatons, soulless aggregates of necessary physical forces.

If this mechanistic worldview represents a kind of *bourgeois* status quo in eighteenth century intellectual life, then it is only appropriate that a revolution should follow. These revolutionaries pointed to the intellectual life and freedom enjoyed by human beings—replete with art, morality, and religion—and denied that mechanism could be extended to cover all of reality. Mechanism, they argued, could not even describe the development of a seemingly-insignificant plant. Even though a plant lacks human reason or will, it nevertheless demonstrates a kind of freedom and purpose, organizing and absorbing nutrients in order to accomplish goals like growth, flowering, and reproduction. This chapter, consequently, centers on the emergence of 'life' and 'organism' as an explanatory alternative to a mechanistic worldview, and as evidenced in the visual art, poetry, writing, philosophy, and science of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This study will argue that this emergence had a profound influence on Schleiermacher, ultimately shaping his early organicism in the *Speeches*.

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[191] Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy : With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, trans. John Cottingham, Rev. ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21.

Demonstrating the 'influence' of a person, work, or movement on someone is undeniably tricky. Influence is a process shrouded in an inaccessible other, made all the more difficult by the passage of time and the passing away of this other person's world. The problem should be a familiar one for this study already, as both Kant and Schleiermacher grappled with the difficulty of determining another person's moral character and motivations when this process is inaccessibly hidden within another person. It seems appropriate, then, to consider influence in terms of the practical determinism of *On Freedom,* wherein a person's moral character develops historically, fortified by freedom as the conscious act of considering and appropriating external conditions. Rather than think of influence in crass deterministic terms, where one's thought is simply redirected by contact with external conditions, this influence is subtle, and often perplexing for those seeking it out. Friedrich Schlegel expressed just such consternation with the subtlety of influence, as he could not readily see the impress of his ideas in Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher would later recognize the subtlety of Schlegel's influence, writing that "I know that he [Schlegel] always looked upon me as being, in my way, already completed and unchangeable." That he was unchanged by Schlegel was just as untrue as the belief among some casual acquaintances who thought that Schleiermacher's association with Schlegel "might eventually affect me injuriously, and might untie my mind and lead to changes in my views." This worry erroneously presumes a crude determinism that misunderstands the process of influence. Given the practical determinism of *On Freedom*, a person like Schleiermacher, "whom they believe to possess any degree of firmness or inner worth,"[192] has a moral and intellectual center that is cultivated and formed over time by the appropriation and influence of

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[192] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1801-1802 (Briefe 1005-1245)*, ed. Andreas Arndt and Wolfgang Virmond, vol. V.5, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: de Gruyter, 1999), 308. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 277.

internal and external conditions. Thus influence is subtle, and often not perceivable until the passage of time makes it all the more clear.

As a result, this chapter will survey significant sources of influence for the development of Schleiermacher's thought during the 1790s. Section A will frame the discussion broadly by pointing to three important figures and works that sought to extend the idea of lawfulness into a fuller understanding of life. These three figures and works would exert influence both on Schleiermacher directly through careful study and indirectly through his closest intellectual associates. Section B will focus on the period 1797-1800 and Schleiermacher's involvement with an emerging intellectual community in Berlin, spearheaded by the poet and literary figure Friedrich Schlegel. As a *de facto* member of the Jena circle in Berlin, Schleiermacher would immerse himself in the newest natural science and nature-philosophy of his day, specifically the forms of relation associated with 'galvanism' and 'organism,' the subject of Section C. Schleiermacher would be exposed to the scientific and philosophical work of the "philophysicists" in the Jena orbit, most notably Alexander von Humbolt, Johann Ritter, Friedrich Schelling, and Friedrich von Hardenberg, whose pertinent work will be outlined in Section D. Lastly, Section E will show how many of these ideas were mediated to Schleiermacher through his friendship with Friedrich Schlegel, who had come to immerse himself in learning this new field of "philosophysics."

A. Emerging Organism

1. Goethe: The Spiritual Ladder of Nature

In the late 1780s, the poet Goethe developed a growing interest in botany and horticulture. While Goethe's interests had always been eclectic, his interest in horticulture grew alongside the plants he tilled and tended in gardens just outside Weimar. In these garden plots, what began as an occasional avocation soon became a more systematic observation and reflection of the nature of plants and their development. Interest would meet opportunity in 1786, as Goethe would famously "slip away" for a restorative journey through Italy that would last until his return in 1788. While there, Goethe would wield comparative analysis to observe and determine the latent lawfulness of plant development, which he hoped would yield the prized *Urpflanze*, or archetype of all plants. As an admirer of Spinoza and Plato, Goethe likely viewed the *Urpflanze* as an 'adequate idea' or form, static and unchanging; but as an observer of nature, Goethe began to doubt the 'adequacy' of such a concept. In notes from late 1788 Goethe writes

> It is very difficult to establish the type of a whole class so that it is appropriate for each sex and every species; for nature can produce only through her genera and species, while the type, which is prescribed for her by universal necessity, is such a Proteus that it escapes the shares comparative sense and can hardly even by partly grasped, and then only, as it were, in contrast.[193]

To gather in and understand the diverse phenomena of nature, Goethe realized that this idea of static lawfulness needed to be understood in terms of a more-dynamic power. These powers of development could be observed and subsumed into idealistic conceptions, as they proceeded

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[193] Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* 3.2:303, quoted in Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life : Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe*, Science and Its Conceptual Foundations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 414-15.

according to a regularity and lawfulness that could be confirmed through comparative analysis. While Goethe's observations did not give up a single *Urpflanze*, they did point toward an archetypal 'organ' of which every plant is composed: the leaf. Not strictly or only what one might describe today as a leaf, Goethe's archetype was a "leaf in its most transcendental sense."[194]

In 1790, Goethe would publish his observations and conceptualizations in a diminutive book called *The Metamorphosis of Plants* [*Versuch die Metamorphose der Pflanzen zu erklärlen*]. While the book bore little resemblance to Kant's revolutionary *Critique of Pure Reason*, it marked both a new development in Goethe's work, and the germination of a far-reaching intellectual revolution that was both natural and philosophical.[195] The very title of the work, focusing on transformation through 'metamorphosis,' is already indicative of Goethe's insight that only dynamic power— and not mechanical laws— could describe life adequately. Goethe's style is intentionally scientific, though his poetic genius cannot be suppressed; he cannot help but describe nature as endowed with agency, as working in its domain purifying, modifying, and gathering. Similar to Schleiermacher's early view of freedom, Goethe understands freedom as an individuating power in harmony with lawful necessity, though the emphasis on nature's agency is unique to Goethe. In a poem also titled "The Metamorphosis of Plants," Goethe further articulates an understanding of freedom formed and guided by nature's hand,

> **Artless the shape that first bursts into light**—
> The plant-child, like unto the human kind—
> Sends forth its rising shoot that gathers limb
> To limb, itself repeating, recreating,
> **In infinite variety**; 'tis plain
> To see, **each leaf elaborates the last**—
> Serrated margins, scalloped fingers, spikes

[194] Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke,* 3.2:306, quoted in ibid., 414.

[195] Robert J. Richards adroitly writes that "the book marked a pivot point in his intellectual life; and through the development of its ideas, he seeded a revolution in thought that would transform biological science during the nineteenth century," in ibid., 407.

> That rested, webbed, within the nether organ—
> At length attaining **preordained fulfillment**.
> Oft the beholder marvels at the wealth
> Of shape and structure shown in succulent surface—
> **The infinite freedom of the growing leaf.**
> **Yet nature bids a halt; her might hands,**
> Gently directing even higher perfection,
> Narrow the vessels, moderate the sap;
> And soon **the form exhibits subtle change**.[196]

In *The Metamorphosis of Plants* Goethe describes how the leaf—as archetypal organ of plant development—undergoes development to produce the staggering biodiversity of plants. Plant development largely follows the same course. First, the plant emerges from the seed with seed leaves (cotyledons). It grows additional sets of leaves as the plant expands, until the highest leaves on the plant (sepals) cease growing and begin to contract into a calyx, a cup-shape organ. In the contracted calyx, flower petals form, then suddenly expand outward into a corolla of flower petals. A few of these flower petals will reverse course and contract inward, emerging as the sexual organs of the plant (stamens and pistils), which through pollination will form highly-contracted seeds, concealing a new and complete organism. During this process, each emerging plant organ represents a higher level of refinement, a "spiritual ladder" which ascends to the highest point of nature, i.e. sexual reproduction. Goethe also describes this process of diremption and union as "anastomosis," a concept in which opposed pairs emerge in their difference, but are reunited and integrated into a network, e.g. the branching and combining veins in a leaf, or the pistils and stamens reintegrated through pollination and reproduction. Anastomosis means that each stage and organ of the plant is integrated into an *organism*, a coherent network of parts working together to nourish the plant so that it might obtain certain ends, like growth and reproduction. Goethe believed that a plant's fluids demonstrated this very process. At first, raw and unrefined fluids would distribute nutrients through

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[196] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, trans. Gordon L. Miller (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 2.

the coarse veins of the stem and leaves, fueling the plant's growth. But as these fluids became more refined through this process, they would produce the calyx, wherein a more delicate network of vessels leading to the sexual organs would appear. More highly-refined fluid, passing through ever more delicate vessels, would be directed to the pollen, which Goethe thought were "just vessels containing a highly-refined juice."[197]

By redefining nature's lawfulness in terms of dynamic power, Goethe offered a compelling and observationally-driven description of living organisms. Even the most-casual observer of nature could observe in plants a collection of differentiated organs integrated-together to advance certain goals of the greater organism, goals like nutrition or reproduction. Without the help of teleological metaphysics, and without reducing life to mere mechanism, Goethe had described an inner, driving purpose that impelled even the most-simple plant. The effect was not lost on the early German romantics, especially those in Jena. To think of life as constituted by opposing forces was not an idea unique to Goethe, but through him it would become a powerful and spiritual concept, infinitely-scalable from the lowest plant to even nature itself.

2. Kant: Matter and Purpose

Around the time Goethe was leaving to explore Italy in 1786, Immanuel Kant published a treatise entitled *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Sciences*. Appearing between the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), the *Metaphysical Foundations* would take up pressing questions about the basic properties of matter, and seek to clarify the metaphysical presuppositions of both natural science and philosophy of nature. The work was most influential in

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[197] Ibid., 55.

offering a "dynamical explication of the concept of matter" in which matter did not fill space through mere existence but rather through moving force, more-specifically a composite of the opposing forces of attraction and repulsion. Though it was unlikely that Goethe had read Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations* when he developed his theory of opposing forces driving plant growth and development, the basic similarity is striking. Kant's insight that matter could only be dynamically explicated would soon be widely-appropriated by thinkers like Joseph Priestley and Friedrich Schelling, and even bear remarkable similarity to later developments in electricity and magnetism by Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell.[198]

It is important, however, to distinguish Kant's dynamism of matter from similar conceptions in Goethe and Schelling. Kant advances the idea of dynamic matter as a metaphysical presupposition necessary for guiding the natural sciences without overstepping the limits of what can be known:

> The concept of matter is reduced to nothing but moving forces, and one could not expect anything else, since no activity or change can be thought in space except mere motion. But who pretends to comprehend the possibility of the fundamental forces? They can only be assumed if they unavoidably belong to a concept that is demonstrably fundamental and not further derivable from any other (like that of the filling of space), and these, in general, are repulsive forces and attractive forces that counteract them. We can indeed certainly judge a priori about the connection and consequences of these forces, whatever relations among them one can think without contradiction, but cannot yet presume to suppose one of them as actual.[199]

This Kantian distinction is a familiar one. In his first *Critique*, Kant described the ideas of God, immortality of the soul, and freedom in similar terms. Chapter II of this study demonstrated how Schleiermacher in *On Freedom* treated the presupposition of determinism in similar, practically-delimited terms. Here, Kant concedes that the dynamic explication of matter need not be actual in

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[198] Immanuel Kant, "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften I.4* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 496-98. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. Michael Friedman, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 33-35, x.

[199] "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," 524. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 63.

matter itself—that would be impossible to know— but only presupposed so that the natural sciences might proceed without veering into the illusory flights of speculative reason.

In concentrating on the dynamic explication of *only* matter, the *Metaphysical Foundations* at first seem rather agnostic to the question of how such a dynamism applies to living organisms. Kant offers a half-hearted attempt to clarify the meaning of "living" and "dead" forces, but seems unconvinced that they hold enough value to be retained. If one had to retain them, Kant concedes, "one could call living forces all mechanical forces, that is, those moving by inherent motion…"[200] A force could be called 'living' then, if it is propelled by an inner motion or drive. In describing inertia, Kant offers additional clarification on this "inherent force" designated by life,

> The inertia of matter is, and means, nothing else than its *lifelessness,* as a matter in itself. *Life* is the faculty of a *substance* to determine itself to act from an *internal principle*, of a *finite substance* to determine itself to act from an *internal principle,* of a *finite substance* to change, and of a *material substance* [to determine itself] to motion or rest, as change of its state.[201]

Kant associates this ability, that a living thing can determine itself to act from an inner principle, with desiring, thinking, feeling, and willing, so his reticence to discuss matter as "living" is understandable; matter is lifeless to one's outer senses. While one could still posit life as an extra-mechanical cause of change in matter, one would "have to seek it forthwith in another substance, different from matter, yet combined with it."[202] One can hear lingering echoes of Kant's compatibilist strategy from the first *Critique,* differing only in that 'freedom' and 'necessity' have been translated into 'life' and 'matter.' The physicist concerned primarily with matter can hold its motion to be lifeless, while the biologist concerned with life can hold the motion of organisms as living, moving by inherent motion. What the biologist cannot do is claim that matter is alive, which

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[200] "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," 539. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 78.
[201] "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," 544. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 83.
[202] "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," 544. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 84.

would lead to the "death of natural philosophy" through hylozoism. In 1786, Kant had effectively tabled any discussion about life and organism for a more-appropriate time.

In 1790, Kant would compose a letter to the physician and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach expressing a deep intellectual debt to Blumenbach in his latest publication, *The Critique of Judgment*:

> I wish to extend my thanks for sending me last year your excellent work on the formative force [*Bildungstrieb*]. I have learned a great deal from your writings. Indeed, in your new work, you unite two principles—the physical-mechanistic and the sheerly teleological mode of explanation of organized nature. These are modes which one would not have thought capable of being united.[203]

Blumenbach's formative force [*Bildungstrieb*] was a widely-known and influential concept in the late eighteenth century. It was conceived as an independent vital agency which provided the formal organization of living matter, directing the formation and interaction of an organism's parts and processes to achieve particular ends. It was a teleological cause, but one that resided in the natural world. As with the causes of Newtonian physics, Blumenbach's formative force was a cause that could only be perceived through its natural effects, which could be studied for the formulation of general laws. Though Kant admitted an intellectual debt to Blumenbach, careful study of the *Critique of Judgment* would reveal Kant's guarded appropriation of this 'formative force.'[204]

In one sense, Kant concedes that organisms are not like watches. Whereas the watch's components are organized according to an external form imposed by the watchmaker, and can be explained adequately in terms of motion and effective causation, living organisms are organized by

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[203] Kant to Blumenbach, 5 August 1790, as quoted in Richards, 231.

[204] Robert J. Richards offers a compelling argument that Kant does not believe that Blumenbach has successfully unified the mechanistic and teleological modes of describing nature, and that (following Phillip Sloan) both Kant and Blumenbach "creatively misunderstood" one another through every attempt to bridge their respective viewpoints.
See Chapter 5, "Early Theories of Development: Blumenbach and Kant," in ibid., 207-37.

an internal "motive power" or "formative power" that guides reproduction, repair, and appropriation of matter. Kant concludes that for living organisms

> each part is conceived as if it exists only through all the others, thus as if existing for the sake of the others and on account of the whole, i.e., as an instrument (organ), which is, however, not sufficient…rather it must be thought of as an organ that produces the other parts (consequently each produces the others reciprocally), which cannot be the case in any instrument of art, but only of nature, which provides all the matter for instruments (even those of art): only then and on that account can such a product, as an organized and self-organized being, be called a natural end.[205]

Kant describes this self-organization of living beings as "purposiveness" [*Zweckmäßigkeit*], though it is carefully employed and restricted. One cannot jump from this empirical observation of purposive organization to an a priori principle governing the purposiveness of organisms; doing so would violate the limits of reason, introduce a new and aberrant causality into natural science, and ultimately lead to what Kant calls 'physical realism.' The purposiveness of organisms can be maintained *only* if understood as a subjectively-valid reflective judgment made by the natural scientist, i.e. a cognitive heuristic that helps one understand life *as if* it were purposive.[206] Though Kant calls this a 'formative force' [*bildende Kraft*], it bears little similarity to the animating, immanent world-spirit of Blumenbach's 'formative force [*Bildungstrieb*].

While conceding that life may be better studied under this presumption, Kant remains committed first and foremost to a conception of natural science that "rests on empirical principles, namely in physics proper."[207] Kant saw in Newtonian physics a scientific paradigm, in which the observation of natural phenomena produced laws with mathematical precision. In the *Metaphysical Foundations*, Kant famously quipped "that in any special doctrine of nature there can be only as

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[205] Immanuel Kant, "Kritik Der Urteilskraft," in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften I.5* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 373-74. cf. *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 245.

[206] "Nevertheless, teleological judging is rightly drawn into our research into nature, at least problematically, but only in order to bring it under principles of observation and research in analogy with causality according to ends, without presuming thereby to explain it," in "Kritik Der Urteilskraft," 360. cf. *The Critique of Judgment*, 234.

[207] "Kritik Der Urteilskraft," 198. cf. *The Critique of Judgment*, 6.

much *proper* science as there is *mathematics* therein…proper natural science , requires a pure part lying at the basis of the empirical part, and resting on a priori cognition of natural things."[208] Insofar as observed objects were found to conform to universal, a priori principles, they were objectively-valid and could be *known*. Teleological principles do not

> seem to belong to natural science, which requires determining and not merely reflecting principles in order to provide objective grounds for natural effects. In fact, nothing is gained for the theory of nature or the mechanical explanation of its phenomena by its efficient causes when they are considered in light of the relation of ends to one another. Strictly speaking, positing ends of nature in its products, insofar as it constitutes a system in accordance with teleological concepts, belongs only to the description of nature… [Consequently] the authorization to seek for a merely mechanical explanation of all natural products is in itself entirely unrestricted.[209]

As a result, the natural scientist should always look first to mechanistic principles to explain natural phenomena. Only when these prove insufficient for particular cases should the natural scientist employ an heuristic 'principle of ends' to further her research, and even then never allowing "the mechanism of nature in its productions to drop out of sight."[210] This minor concession does not equate to a positive claim that life exceeds mechanistic explanation, however, but to a negative claim about the limits of human cognition. Teleological reflective judgments can help the biologist investigate natural objects, to be sure, but they can never be scientific knowledge. Unsurprisingly, because of biology's reliance on observation and systematic description, Kant did not consider biology a natural science [*Naturwissenschaft*], but rather a "doctrine of nature"[*Naturlehre*] within theoretical philosophy.

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* would play an important role as philosophy of nature and natural science developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While Kant is commonly credited with providing a framework for the practice of biological science, his conviction

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208 "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe Der Naturwissenschaft," 470. cf. *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 6.
209 "Kritik Der Urteilskraft," 417. cf. *The Critique of Judgment*, 285-86.
210 "Kritik Der Urteilskraft," 410. cf. *The Critique of Judgment*, 279.

that biology was inferior to *proper* natural sciences required a careful—and often critical—appropriation of his work.[211] Interestingly, by treating both aesthetic and teleological judgments together in the third *Critique,* Kant would endear himself to emerging Romantic circles equally-concerned with artistic genius and the study of nature. This was certainly true of the Jena circle, of which Schleiermacher would become an important contributor, studying, critiquing, and all the while appropriating the conceptuality of life and organism as a unique counterexample to mechanism as the ultimate explanation of phenomena.[212]

3. Fichte: The Organs of Self-Consciousness and Community

As the standard bearer of post-Kantian transcendental philosophy, Johann Gottlieb Fichte would become another important interlocutor for Schleiermacher and his intellectual associates. Fichte and Schleiermacher had an acrimonious relationship, subtly-evident in Schleiermacher's veiled critique of Fichte in the *Speeches* of 1799, and more overtly-evident in Schleiermacher's acerbic review of Fichte's *Vocation of Man* [*Die Bestimmung des Menschen*] in the *Atheneum* in 1800. Yet Fichte's importance long precedes this interaction, beginning in 1792 with his *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* [*Versuch einer Critik aller Offenbarung*], which was published anonymously and initially attributed to Kant. A year later in 1794, Fichte assumed the chair of philosophy in Jena

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[211] Robert Richards ably points to the vast difference between Kant's own work and its adoption by philosophers and scientists: "Those biologists who found something congenial in Kant's third *Critique* either misunderstood his project (Blumenbach and Goethe) or reconstructed certain ideas to have very different consequences from those Kant originally intended (Kielmeyer and Schelling)," in Richards, 229.

[212] Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is rarely referenced in Schleiermacher's letters. One of the first references appears in a letter from Schlegel on December 8, 1800, where he chides Schleiermacher about "the purpose of his purposeless communication" [*dem Zweck der zwecklosen Mittheilung*] an obvious reference to Kant's "purposiveness without purpose" [*Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*]. See Letter 993, Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1800 (Briefe 850-1004)*, ed. Andreas Arndt and Wolfgang Virmond, vol. V.4, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 352.

vacated by Reinhold. In Jena, Fichte's lectures and his influential publication, the *Science of Knowledge* [*Wissenschaftslehre*] would magnify his intellectual footprint through the late 1790s. Yet it would be Fichte's *Foundations of Natural Right* [*Grundlagen des Naturrechts nach Prinzipien der Wissenschaftslehre*], published in 1797, that would become his most influential work for the present study. While Schleiermacher discusses the *Foundations* in a note attributed to early 1800, he may well have read the work prior to writing the *Speeches* in 1799. Given the similarities in the ways that Fichte and Schleiermacher connect individual and community through the use of 'organs,' it seems likely Schleiermacher was well-acquainted with the work.[213]

In the *Foundations of Natural Right*, Fichte translates his transcendental philosophy into the social and political realm, by arguing that principles of right [*Recht*] are necessary conditions for the possibility of self-consciousness. These primordial principles explain not only the emergence of self-conscious, rational individuals, but show how the social and political relationships undertaken by those individuals necessarily follow from the same principles. In this regard, Fichte's *Foundations* is not unlike Schleiermacher's *On Freedom,* as both are attempts to rework Kant's critical philosophy—and its emphasis on the moral, free, and rational individual— in broader social and political directions. In a kind of transcendental deduction, Fichte begins with what is given—the free, rational individual—and looks back, positing the kind of natural principles of right that are necessary conditions for the development of that individual. Just as these natural principles of right ground the individual, they also ground individuals in community, setting out restrictions that

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[213] Schleiermacher may also have been influenced by Fichte's *Foundations* mediately through Hardenberg, who was deeply affected by the political implications of Fichte's doctrine of organs. In either case, Fichte is far more important for the constructive thought of the *Speeches* than either Schleiermacher or his readers may have imagined. For more on how Hardenberg's work appropriated Fichte's *Foundations,* see further, Leif Weatherby, *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ : German Romanticism between Leibniz and Marx*, ed. Stefanos Geroulanos and Todd Meyers, Forms of Living (New York: Fordham, 2016), 245-50.

govern how individuals *should* associate with others. In effect, these natural principles of right ground both individuals and community while pointing toward the best way to inculcate the rational development of individuals and communities.

But Fichte's most significant contribution in the *Foundations* is how he discusses the dynamic relationship between self-consciousness and a material body. In order to freely will, a rational being must have a body that corresponds and embodies this will. The mind generates concepts of causality (alternately "acts of will") that are expressed in a change of the position of the body's parts in relation to one another. Bodily parts can also be conceived at every level of scale, where multiple parts with corresponding concepts of cause can be integrated together into a larger whole with a more-comprehensive concept of causality. This understanding of part-whole relations, wherein every part and whole moves according to its own concept of cause, a kind of purpose or drive, is what Fichte means when he describes the body as "articulated." A rational being can only intuit the world through an articulated body, as an object appears only through the cancellation of that rational being's free activity, wherein an articulated part of the body meets resistance and cannot effectuate its concept of cause. To this end, Fichte writes that "I must posit resistant, solid matter existing outside me that is capable of resisting the free movement of my body; thus—by virtue of this further determination of my body—the sensible world is also further determined."[214] This determination explains how the body can be understood as "sense" [*Sinn*], providing up objects

[214] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Grundlage Des Naturrechts Nach Principien Der Wissenschaftslehre*, vol. I.3, Fichtes Werke (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 68. cf. *Foundations of Natural Right*, trans. Michael Baur (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 64.

irreducible to one's own activity, a passivity that seemingly limits the effectiveness of the will and cancels its agency.[215]

As a result of this phenomenological struggle, Fichte posits a duality in the body's articulation that he calls "a double organ," employing the language of organs as conceptual mediators, a meaning that predominated the late 1790s and early 1800s, and will be studied in further detail below. Within a few years, Fichte's organological framework would become foundational for both Hardenberg and Schleiermacher. This "double organ" is itself comprised of two organs, a "higher organ" and a "lower organ;" both relate self-consciousness to the world, though they do so in two very different respects. The higher organ is the means by which reason through will can affect the world, whereas the lower organ is that "through which the body first enters into relation with objects and rational beings outside of it."[216]

Because of this "double organ," the will is only canceled with respect to the lower organ; though the higher organ does reproduce the modifications of the lower organ, it freely analyzes and represents them in accordance with reason. This is how the subject acts "purposively,"as reason pares down the subject's freedom for the attainment of a goal or end set out by cognition. As a result, the higher organ is the means by which a rational being can analyze and interpret intuitions of the sensible world, freely setting out the goals and ends by which every purposive subject is driven. The higher organ can then effectuate the lower organ, which is an organ of motion and causality with regard to sensible mater. In short, this "double organ" is how rational self-consciousness can shape the matter of the sensible world in accordance with its concepts. Aside from the organological

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[215]"Ficthe writes, "the body is sense only in relation to something present in the body that is the product of an efficacy that could have been the subject's own, but that in the present case is instead the product of the efficacy of a cause outside the subject," *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 65. cf. Ibid., 61-62.

[216] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 66. cf. Ibid., 62.

framework, Fichte's description of willing and desiring bears some similarity to Reinhold in his *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation,* and remarkable similarity to Schleiermacher's *On Freedom.* What makes Fichte distinctive, however, is how he utilizes that organological framework to connect rational individuals in a rational community.

Whether one intuits inanimate objects or rational beings, one first senses only a physically-resistant matter, which in both cases is mediated to self-consciousness through the lower organ and its material body. Given this common initial impression, *how* and *why* do we distinguish between rational, animated beings and inanimate objects? Here Fichte treads similar ground to Kant's discussion of reflective judgements in the third *Critique*, especially how one could make reflective, teleological judgments about organismic wholes from the coordination of their parts. Fichte concedes that, when confronted with an appearance, "I am always driven from individual parts of the appearance to a certain point; and only when I have arrived at this point can I order the parts that I have gathered together and comprehend them all together in a cognitive whole."[217] As one makes judgments about the relation of parts to wholes, several patterns of relation emerge, which Fichte distinguishes by calling them "products of nature" or "products of artifice." [218] In both products of nature and artifice, each part exists for the sake of the other parts, and thus transitively for the whole. With both products, one's faculty of judgment moves from part to whole, oscillating [*schweben*] back and forth until it completes its comprehension of the appearance. But the product of nature goes beyond the product of artifice, insofar as the whole also exists for the sake of the parts; the whole is characterized by an inner formative force [*Bildungstrieb*] that produces these parts in a

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[217] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 77. cf. Ibid., 72.

[218] Fichte's distinction between products of nature and artifice likely influenced his pupil Schelling, who later advanced a distinction between mechanistic and organic products along similar lines.

specific way to accomplish a specific, inner goal. Products of artifice lack this inner formative force, and their parts refer to an end altogether outside the product, i.e. it is an instrument for accomplishing something external to its organization.

Put another way, products of nature are necessary wholes; it is impossible to separate their parts conceptually. It is also dynamic, as it "continually produces itself, and maintains itself precisely insofar as it produces itself…. everything found in it refers back to its organization, and can be fully explained by reference to the purpose of its determinate organization."[219] Unsurprisingly, Fiche asserts that the human body is one such product of nature, driven as it is by its own inner formative force, which sets out goals according to rational ends. When a rational being interacts with another rational being, she initially perceives only a manifold of sensory impressions. Because she is a rational being guided by an inner, rational purpose, she can judge that a similar intelligence must be directing these parts toward a hidden goal. As a result, Fichte adamantly asserts that every rational being is *compelled* to recognize other rational beings, and vice versa; this is the universal legislation that undergirds rational, human community, where "I am supposed to treat certain beings such that I can will that they, in turn, treat me in accordance with the same maxim."[220] Fichte believes that from the very first meeting, human beings did not flee in fear of one another, or try to eat one another, but rather immediately expected reciprocal communication. For him, reciprocal communication requires an independent organ—the higher organ—and even a different kind of material content, what he calls "a finer subtler matter."[221] This "finer matter" can only influence the

[219] Fichte, *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 78. cf. Ibid., 73.

[220] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 80. cf. Ibid., 75.

[221] "Thus the matter that produces this form in the subject's organ is not resistant, solid matter; it is not matter whose parts cannot be separated by the mere will; rather, it is a finer, subtler matter. A subtler matter of this kind must necessarily be posited as a condition of the required influence among rational beings in the sensible world," *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 69-70. cf. Ibid., 65.

higher organ, which remains entirely free in appropriating or rejecting this influence, in stark contrast from the way physical matter influences the lower organ through compulsion and physical determination.[222] In reciprocal communication,

> the influence is supposed to be exercised upon a rational being as rational; thus it must not be exercised through immediate contact with, or restriction of, the rational being's lower organ; rather, it must be exercised upon its higher organ, and thus via the subtler matter. Now it was assumed above that this matter is a medium for the reciprocal influence of rational beings upon one another, since such matter could be modified by the movement of the higher organ itself.[223]

Reciprocal communication is consequently both free and rational, binding a "necessary community of free beings" together. As necessary, this community is not a product that results from self-consciousness and bodily existence, but rather this community is a precondition of self-consciousness itself.[224]

While Fichte asserts that reciprocal communication between rational beings occurs in the higher organ, entirely separate from the lower organ and sensible impressions, the distinction is far less severe in practice. Reciprocal communication between rational beings begins, after all, with the manipulation of physical matter, whether a hand gesture or the production of speech through manipulating vocal chords and facial muscles. One receives this communication through the physical stimuli in the lower organ, but must translate them into not only words, but representations and concepts in the mind, a task for the higher organ. These concepts are a subtler, finer matter that can be freely appropriated or rejected, but are almost always communicated back, translated into the physical movement of the lower organ. In this sense, reciprocal communication between rational

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[222] "The modification of the organ affected by freedom is not supposed to influence the organ affected by compulsion, but is supposed to leave it perfectly and completely free. Thus the finer matter must be able to influence only the former organ, but not the latter…. there must therefore be a kind of matter whose component parts have absolutely no discernible connection to lower sense, i.e. the sense affected by compulsion," *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 70. cf. Ibid., 65.

[223] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 75. cf. Ibid., 70.

[224] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 72-73. cf. Ibid., 68.

beings is the most highly developed form of reflective judgments about part-whole relationships, oscillating as it does between the higher and lower organs, which translate between concepts and sensible intuitions so seamlessly that Fichte says "they are one and the same organ."[225]

While Fichte was only attempting to explain the principles of right that ground both individuals and communities in the *Foundations*, he would have a significant effect on the developing organological framework of both Hardenberg and Schleiermacher. For Schleiermacher, Fichte's "double organ" is the bridge by which Schleiermacher's early view of freedom as an intermeshing relation could be connected with the relations expressed by organs and organisms. Certainly Fichte's organological approach allowed the integration of individual and community in a way Schleiermacher intended for *On Freedom,* but was unable to accomplish. Lastly, the emphasis on reciprocal communication in rational communities would help lay the framework for Schleiermacher's understanding of properly-ordered communities in the *Speeches* of 1799.

B. Schleiermacher in Berlin

Given his tendency for melancholy and his penchant for intellectual endeavors, Schleiermacher would usually limit his associations to a small circle of friends. Though selective, he was highly loyal, writing and visiting those friends and family who withstood the enervating effect of time and distance. Schleiermacher's early life was often in flux, as he peregrinated about chasing education and work. His anchor through this uncertainty was most certainly his close friends and family, whether in physical presence or by the exchange of letters. As demonstrated in Chapter II, Schleiermacher's extant correspondence can offer a unique and highly-descriptive window into

[225] *Grundlage Des Naturrechts* I.3, 64. cf. Ibid., 61.

Schleiermacher's world; one that helps enflesh a written work in a historical process that dissolves the boundary between a text and the world in which it emerged. It is all the more saddening, then, when the historian is presented with a dearth of such correspondence. From 1794 to 1797, there are few extant letters from Schleiermacher's hand, though a handful of letters written to Schleiermacher have survived.[226]

After nearly three years of silence, Schleiermacher's own voice emerges again through a collection of letters sent to his sister Charlotte in the fall of 1797. In his first letter he apologizes for his torpor in letter-writing, which accounts for some of the gap in correspondence. More interestingly he presents himself as a very different man; this Schleiermacher has passed his theological examinations, been ordained, and served as a minister to a parish in the district of Landsberg, in modern-day Poland. Schleiermacher writes these from the intellectually-vibrant city of Berlin, where he was now serving as chaplain to the Charité Hospital. Seemingly trying to make up for past letters never written, Schleiermacher's letters are long and detailed; from his reflections on the deaths of important figures in his life, to descriptions of his daily routine, Schleiermacher seemingly covers the existential and mundane.

His routine is significant for this study, though, as it describes his associations with his brother Carl, who is living with him in Berlin and working as an apothecary or chemist.[227] Like his older brother, Carl had an aversion to his stringent Moravian education, though he saw his training

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[226] Most extant letters from this period were written to Schleiermacher, by either his uncle Stubenrauch or his sister Charlotte, though four short letters by Schleiermacher do survive, including a "poetic letter" to Friederike Eleonore Elisabeth von Aulock near the end of 1796.

[227] Schleiermacher lovingly describes his morning routine with his brother Carl, who is able to breakfast and bathe since he "cannot begin his occupations in the laboratory before seven…and it has procured to us many a happy hour which we should not otherwise have enjoyed," Letter 399, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 18 August 1797, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, ed. Andreas Arndt and Wolfgang Virmond, vol. V.2, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 163. cf. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 151-52.

as an apothecary as an escape from the Brethren. Having completed his training, Carl accepted a position in Berlin where he could live with his brother and have easy access to the laboratory for work. In a new city with few friends, the brothers Schleiermacher looked to each other for friendship and intellectual nourishment. Schleiermacher would write that he and Carl "dressed up our breakfast with a quite understandable reading of a book on Chemistry" that elicited hours of conversation between the two.[228] Though Carl would leave Berlin later that year, Schleiermacher would continue to exhibit a growing interest in natural science while in Berlin. Writing to his sister Charlotte a few years later, Schleiermacher would reassure his sister that he was not growing intellectually lazy: "You must know that even in my old age I attend lectures on all sorts of sciences, which in my youth I was not able to have done thoroughly; among others, on chemistry, because of correspondence I had with Carl, and even continue to have now."[229] While chemistry appears most prominently, the same letters from the fall of 1797 make reference to other natural sciences like astronomy and botany.[230] This burgeoning interest in the natural sciences in the fall of 1797 would coincide with another development in Schleiermacher's life; just as Carl had departed, a new friend

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[228] Letter 399, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 18 August 1797, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 163. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 152.

[229] Letter 862, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 7 June 1800, *Briefwechsel 1800 (Briefe 850-1004)*, V.4, 27.

[230] While not discussing these sciences directly, Schleiermacher's letter from August 24, 1797 employs both astronomy and botany creatively in metaphorical descriptions of other people and their relation to him. Of astronomy: "through the telescope with which you have kindly furnished and continue to furnish my observatory, I am constantly making new discoveries in yon lovely constellations; new perfections disclose themselves to me, as nebulae, not previously seen, sometimes appear within the field of the telescope, and I descry hours of preeminent happiness, just as the astronomer observes the increasing light of certain stars. Why will Zimmermann insist that she is eclipsed?" Of botany: "This glorious tree has, indeed, more summers and winters than other trees; and when it is in midwinter the poor vines suffer. But after all, winter only consists in the withdrawal of the sap into the interior; and if, in consequence of this forced stoppage, the ducts suffer somewhat here and there, and the sap itself is subjected to fermentation, this only renders it the milder and the more fertilizing afterwards; and when summer comes round once more, the vines will again wind themselves up to the farthest points of the revivified branches, and mingle with its delicate leaves." See Letter 399, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 24 August 1797, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 163. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 152-53.

with similar interest in philosophy and the natural sciences would make a pronounced impression on Schleiermacher.

1. A "New Epoch": Friedrich Schlegel and the Jena Circle

The mercurial Friedrich Schlegel was for Schleiermacher both friend and counterpoint, given the similarity of their interests tempered by quite-contrary temperaments. Where one might have expected discordance out of their stark differences, in actuality their distinct individualities produced a harmony of sympathetic tones during their intense but brief friendship. Reflecting on his erstwhile friendship with Schlegel to his sister Charlotte, Schleiermacher would concede that "I will always heartily love him, and gratefully recognize the great influence he has had on me. It has been two years almost to the day that he drew close to me and our closer connection began, and you can easily present the many ways he has influenced me."[231] In Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher would find another brilliant young man with whom he could test and temper his own developing thought.

In Berlin, the setting of Schleiermacher's social and intellectual cultivation would be dominated by his participation in the salons of the city. Still new to Berlin in 1797, Schleiermacher was introduced to the salons of Henriette Herz and Dorothea Veit through a mutual friend, the Count Alexander Dohna, whom Schleiermacher knew well from serving as the Dohna family tutor in Schlobitten. For someone who expressed impatience at the idle talk of large parties, salons offered intimate conversation and expression among a small group of vetted cohorts. The composition of

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[231] Letter 757, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 21 December 1799, *Briefwechsel 1799 (Briefe 553-849)*, ed. Andreas Arndt and Wolfgang Virmond, vol. V.3, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 310.

these gatherings was made even more unique because of their hosts, who were often wealthy Jewish women like Henriette Herz and Dorothea Veit. This was no coincidence, as wealthy and prominent Jews like the Herzes and Veits did not enjoy comparable civic stature to their Christian counterparts. The result was an alternative social world unfettered by the strictures of the church and the demands of the Prussian nobility. In a letter to his sister, Schleiermacher would brush off concerns about his frequent association with Jews in Berlin,[232] informing her

> that young savants and élégants frequently visit the great Jewish houses here, is very natural, for they are by far the richest non-noble families in this city, and almost the only ones that receive company, and in whose circle, owing to their numerous foreign connections, you may meet strangers of all ranks; therefore, whoever likes to mix in good society without much ceremony, gets introduced to these families, where every person of talent, be it even only social talent, is well received.[233]

These prominent Jewish women were themselves people of '"talent," who were highly-educated and intellectually-engaging, and offered a welcome respite from Schleiermacher's ministry at the Charité Hospital.

In 1797, Schleiermacher was a regular participant in Henrietta Herz's literary group known as the 'Wednesday Society,' where Schleiermacher would first meet Friedrich Schlegel. Writing to his sister—who seemed relieved that her brother had not made another female friend—Schleiermacher would describe Schlegel in glowing terms,

> He is about twenty-five, and the extent and variety of his knowledge is almost inconceivable at his age. He possesses, moreover, an originality of intellect which, even here where there is so much intellect and so much talent, far surpasses all others, and in his manner there is an absence of artificiality, a frankness, and a childlike youthfulness…

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[232] In the same letter, Schleiermacher's explains that Rev. Sack, Schleiermacher's mentor and confessor, expressed some concern about his association with Jews. He clarifies that Sack is concerned about how his associations might appear to others and potentially foreclose ministerial opportunities. Sack was a personal friend of Moses Mendelssohn, so Schleiermacher's friendship with Mendelssohn's oldest daughter (Dorothea Veit) was not likely the source of his concern.

[233] Letter 496, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 4 August 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 370. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 178.

Schlegel was already a respected and published literary critic, whose sharp intellect and tempestuous demeanor made quite an impression on Schleiermacher. The effect on Schleiermacher's thinking was both profound and immediate, as "by means of the exhaustless stream of new views and new ideas which is ever flowing into him, much that has been lying dormant in me, is likewise set in motion."[234] Schlegel was passionate and principled; he rejected pecuniary motivations for scholarship, rejecting "bread science" [*Brotwissenschaft*], since "he never condescends, for the sake of money, to bring mediocre wares to market."[235] By December of 1797, Friedrich Schlegel would move in to Schleiermacher's apartment at the *Charité,* which Schleiermacher recognized as the beginning of a new "epoch" in his life.

As both friends and roommates, Schleiermacher's appreciation of Schlegel would begin to deepen as he observed Schlegel's critical and creative mind up close. Friends would jokingly refer to their living arrangements as a 'marriage.' The description would prove prescient, as the attraction of these contrary forces would prove an unstable union. Early in 1798, Schleiermacher would become fast-friends with Henrietta Herz, to the point of spending most of his free time in her company, even vacationing at the Herz's country home. Schlegel's jealousy grew as he perceived that Schleiermacher's attentions were being siphoned away by Herz. Schlegel suspected that this new relationship was poisoning Schleiermacher's appraisal of his character, and thus preventing his full engagement with Schlegel's thought.[236] Around the same time, Schleiermacher summarized the situation for his sister, that

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[234] Letter 402, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 22 October 1797, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 177. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 159.

[235] Letter 402, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, 22 October 1797, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 177. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 159.

[236] In a letter to Schleiermacher from mid 1798, Schlegel denies becoming more oppositional to both Schleiermacher and Herz, while also implying that Schleiermacher's view of him is inaccurate: "Though I have never

> Schlegel, on his side, confessed to me that he was jealous of Henrietta Herz, because my friendship for her had developed itself so rapidly and had attained a point to which he had never been able to bring my affection for him. He was limited to participation in my understanding and my philosophical ideas; to her I opened all my faculties [*Gemüth*]....Schlegel's society I do not, however, often enjoy at present.[237]

If the marriage had not ended, they were at least separated. Friedrich Schlegel was increasingly absent, spending most of his time with his older brother August Wilhelm Schlegel. Wilhelm Schlegel was temporarily residing in Berlin, which afforded the younger Friedrich an opportunity to recruit him to Berlin to join a promising, albeit nascent intellectual community in Berlin. By February 1799, Schleiermacher would be absent, leaving Berlin for a temporary ministerial appointment in Potsdam. When he returned to Berlin in July 1799, Schlegel had just left for Jena, a trip Schleiermacher speculated would last only a few weeks. As often occurred in his absence, Schleiermacher received a letter from Schlegel. In it, Schlegel pointed to the erosion of their friendship, concluding that "since it will happen someday regardless, I take this opportunity to say to you farewell [*Lebewohl*], which has hovered on my lips for months."[238] This farewell verbalized what both suspected, that their close friendship was ultimately doomed to dissolution. The two corresponded for a few more years, and Schlegel visited his former compatriot at least once, but the initial forces of attraction would forever be overwhelmed by the repulsive forces that emerged between them. Schleiermacher would always consider Schlegel a friend, speaking well of him in

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once opposed you nor Herz (on the contrary I was well-disposed toward friendship with her, but against faithfulness—that is to say against the individual, against the microcosm), you have not distinguished me the least bit from a brutish ingénue, and so I will do the same for you, profiting by exchanging "you" for a jackass and with it the sense of cute mischievousness." Schlegel also chides Schleiermacher for critiquing his review of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister as* a mere preface, without being willing to engage in the task of philosophizing together and producing something for publication: "But morality remains my master [*Meister*, a play on Goethe's title]; and if you neither like nor do any "building-together" [συν*construirn*], which is good, then perhaps I can still wish for an "enthusiasm-together" with you. The Godhead wants me to descend to the innermost parts. Apropos the Godhead, your spirit hovers over the waters, and only a weakling bathes in cold water without getting in," Letter 485, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 350-51.

[237] Letter 473, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, June/July 1799, ibid., 321-22. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 170.

[238] Letter 669, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1799, *Briefwechsel 1799 (Briefe 553-849)*, V.3, 138.

correspondence with others. Schlegel was not so magnanimous, effacing all references to his love for Schleiermacher and Schleiermacher's *Speeches* in an 1809 collection of poetry, an act deeply disturbing to Schleiermacher.[239]

Schlegel's influence at a critical juncture of Schleiermacher's development should not be underestimated, but it also must be carefully appraised; too often Schleiermacher is lumped into a crudely-constructed category of 'romanticism' through his association with Schlegel. Schleiermacher readily concedes the formative influence of Schlegel and his Jena compatriots on his development, though the extent and nature of this influence have not been clearly determined for the purposes of this study. One can readily assert that this influence is not the uncritical adoption or mimetic reproduction of Schlegel's thought, given the stark disagreements in their lives and differences in their work. In order to better articulate the influence of Schlegel and his group, one must first identify the kinds of natural science and nature philosophy of interest to the group. What kinds of questions and topics are they reading, writing, and discussing together? Most important, what clues does Schleiermacher provide that he shares these interests, and in what way? While art and aesthetics are often remembered as the driving interests of Schlegel's group, there was also an intense interest in the study of nature. Schleiermacher was no exception; even in May of 1798, Schleiermacher says of his weekly meetings with Henrietta Herz, "we study physics; I impart to her a little of my knowledge of the natural sciences."[240] Schleiermacher had found a compelling, new interest that could break up the monotony of the Charité; from 1798 on, Schleiermacher would be especially interested in

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[239] For an excellent survey of Schleiermacher's time with Schlegel in Berlin, in particular the strain and dissolution of their friendship, see Ruth Richardson, ""The Berlin Circle of Contributors to 'Athenaeum': Friedrich Schlegel, Dorothea Mendelssohn Veit, and Friedrich Schleiermacher," in *200 Jahre "Reden Über Die Religion"*, ed. Ulrich Barth and Claus-Dieter Osthövener (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000).

[240] Letter 473, Schleiermacher to Charlotte Schleiermacher, June/July 1799, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 177. cf. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 170.

physics and chemistry, an interest fueled by his association with Schlegel and the Jena Circle in Berlin.

2. The Chemical Revolution

For the philosophically-inclined, physics and chemistry were ideal topics. Both were natural sciences; both had also been made more noble by significant revolutionary purification. Physics had been remade by Newtonian mechanics in the seventeenth century, and chemistry far more recently by Lavoisier in 1789. Both disciplines described fundamental forces of all natural phenomena, which invited more comprehensive integration of these findings into a given theoretical structure or system. During this period, Schleiermacher exhibited an interest in natural science, an interest that would explode in a frenzy of reading, discussion, and writing evidenced through correspondence. In particular, Schleiermacher and Schlegel's voluminous correspondence was an unintended consequence of their tumultuous friendship; though letters were sometimes adversarial, more often than not they proved a congenial avenue for continued friendship and the expression of ideas. As a result, their letters are a valuable historical record that demonstrates the importance of natural philosophy to Schleiermacher's closest friends in Berlin. By his own admission, Schlegel professed "a strong tendency to meddle in chemistry,"[241] much like Schleiermacher. Consequently philosophical discussions about chemistry would figure prominently in the first few years of Schleiermacher's stay in Berlin. Through Schleiermacher's letters, one can begin to trace the interaction between Schleiermacher, Schlegel, and also the poet Friedrich von Hardenberg, who published under the pen

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[241] Letter 482, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 344.

name Novalis. Early in Schleiermacher's stay in Berlin, Schlegel and Hardenberg would be his foremost discussion partners pairing philosophy with the natural sciences.

In mid-1798, Schlegel would offer a little more description of his tendency to meddle in chemistry. In the same letter, he also introduces Schleiermacher to some of Hardenberg's positions on philosophy and science. Knowing that Schleiermacher was interested in chemistry and philosophy, Schlegel thoughtfully described Hardenberg in these terms:

> He has completely the eyes of a spirit-seer, the colorless, straight away glow. Also, he seeks by means of chemistry a medicine against corporality (in the midst of ecstasy), and he still holds on to the beautiful mystery of spiritual touch [*geistigen Berührung*]. Out of my socratic omnipotence, I will suspend my absolute correspondence concerning the 'galvanism of spirit' {*Galvanismus des Geistes*], one of his favorite ideas. How his theory of enchantment touches the galvanism of spirit to the secret of touch, galvanizing and enchanting, that is still my little secret. In the meantime, the 'galvanism of the inner man' is for me, as Kant would say, a wonderful idea, and the rest I hope to - for how would Lafontaine Jean-Paul-Richterize it - experience by Socratic torture.[242]

Hardenberg's "galvanism of spirit" was certainly intriguing to Schlegel, who teases Schleiermacher with the barest of descriptions, knowing Schleiermacher's interest will be piqued. Given Schleiermacher's work on the mind-body relationship in *On Freedom*, as well as his interest in natural science prior to befriending Schlegel, one can safely hold that Schleiermacher was quite interested.

C. The Philophysical Revolution: Electricity and Organ

But what did Hardenberg and Schlegel mean by "galvanism of spirit"? How was Schleiermacher further exposed to this and other ideas, especially those that melded scientific research with philosophical construction? In order to demonstrate Schleiermacher's appropriation of scientific and philosophical ideas about the natural world, one must begin with the scientific and

[242] Letter 482, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, ibid., 343-44.

philosophical context in which Schleiermacher was involved, and was an important component of his intellectual development while in Berlin. This section will sketch two contextually-significant developments in the 1790s: (1) the emerging conflict in electrical theory between Galvani's "animal electricity" and Volta's "contact electricity", and (2) the conceptual development of "organ" and the idea of organicity. Interestingly, both 'galvanism' and organism' are not independent theoretical or conceptual programs, but would converge in search of a deeper and more fundamental form of relation. Both galvanism and organism would become important theoretical *exempla* for the intellectual figures closest to Schleiermacher in the period 1787-99, which will open up the explication of how Schleiermacher engaged and appropriated these ideas into his own understanding of organicism.

1. A Galvanic Prologue: Galvani and Volta

In 1798, Galvanism was a scientific theory that, generally-speaking, sought to relate electricity to physiology and chemical action. Discoveries in the early 1790s pushed galvanism to the forefront of natural science as one of the most exciting subjects for experimental research. By the late 1790s, conflict between emerging theories of galvanism would make it an even more exciting topic of discussion in salons and intellectual communities. Initially, galvanism was narrowly understood by the theory of Luigi Galvani, who had conducted experiments relating electricity to physiology in the 1780s and 90s. While it was already well-known that stored electricity (often from a Leyden jar) could cause the contraction of muscles, in 1791 Galvani published the results of his work where he described a phenomenon by which muscles would contract when they came in contact with certain metals, without the external application of electricity. This stunning discovery

meant that electricity was the driving force in animal motion. He called this motivating force "animal electricity," an unseen, inner force that could manifest itself in the physical motion of the muscle.

Galvani speculated that this animal electricity was carried by a fluid within the tissue's nerves. In dead tissue, it was thought that this fluid transmitted static electricity from a Leyden jar to cause a cadaverous muscle to contract. In living tissue, Galvani surmised, the fluid produced its own electricity that was discharged to produce muscular contractions. Some unique organisms like eels were even able to concentrate and store this fluid in an electrical 'organ,' producing large electrical shocks. Galvani also concluded that 'animal electricity' was qualitatively different from static electricity because it was a unique property of living things; consequently his theory was primarily championed by researchers in life sciences like biology and physiology.

While initially convinced by Galvani's theories, by 1794 the physicist Alessandro Volta had concluded that the metals themselves were the real cause of electricity in Galvani's experiments. He had long been incredulous to Galvani's claims about a distinctly 'animal' form of electricity; for him electricity was simply electricity, and a physical and chemical phenomenon at that. He reached this conclusion after observing that electricity was only generated in muscles when the nerve was exposed to two heterogeneous metals. Volta termed it 'contact electricity,' generated by the difference in potential between the two metals. Muscle was thereby unnecessary for the galvanic process, as any conductive solution between two heterogenous metals would produce the same effect; a 'galvanic chain' was nothing more than two different metal 'linked' by a conductive solution. Consequently Volta believed that electricity was indifferent to the state of its conductor— whether living or dead— opposing Galvani's claim that galvanism was specific to living things. The two sides quickly

became entrenched along these competing theories. On the one hand, Galvani's "animal electricity" strengthened the priority of life in galvanic activity, and correspondingly elevated the place of life sciences. On the other hand, Volta's "contact electricity" was wholly indifferent to organic or inorganic media, and asserted the primacy of 'proper' sciences like physics and chemistry.

In the late 1790s, neither Galvani nor Volta could claim absolute victory on the basis of experimental results. In retrospect, this detente likely resulted from an inability to produce a strong enough electric field to initiate an electric current between nerve and muscle, and consequently demonstrate the internal electrical potential of animal tissue.[243] Volta's invention of the 'Voltaic Pile' in 1800, essentially the first wet-cell battery, would soon enable new experiments through its capacity for storing a greater electrical charge. Alternately known as the 'Galvanic Pile', this battery would also further cement galvanism as a chemical process not unique to living things, slowly tipping the balance of evidentiary support toward Volta. As the explanatory power of Volta's theory grew through continued experiments, the reluctance of Galvani and his followers to acquiesce to new evidence only further damaged the reputation of the biological sciences in contradistinction from physics and chemistry.[244] Yet in the late 1790s, this debate remained open, and drew many great

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[243] K.E. Rothschuh, "Alexander Von Humbolt Und Die Physiologie Seiner Zeit," *Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften* 43, no. 2 (1959): 101-02. As cited in Weatherby, 185.

[244] Johann Wilhelm Ritter, a physicist and admirer of both Galvani and Volta, would write of this development in his "History of Chemistry" that "the cause of the entire result was only an electrical excitement between the heterogeneous metals, or between the different (heterogeneous) bodies applied to the formation of the closing circuit [*Bogen*]. For Galvani, this [argument] remained groundless. Volta now proved through a series of extraordinarily beautiful experiments that this electrical excitation in fact takes place and that the electricity proceeding from it is completely sufficient for success. Galvani could not yet convince himself. Now Volta became annoyed, and brought— so that everyone would have to acknowledge this new kind of electrical production (the kind among mere conductors)— this electricity first to crackling sparks, and when Galvani still did not want to hear about these, ultimately [carried it] through an even more remarkable series of experiments than the prior one, to a point where, without needing another instrument, it even emitted bolts, and strong [ones], so that what one did not want to hear could be felt. Nowhere did scientific wrath have such beautiful consequences as here; Galvani himself, who meanwhile had died, could certainly not feel anything more, but the pile was now invented, namely the one which, in honor of its inventor, will long be known as the Voltaic [pile]," in Johann Wilhelm Ritter and Jocelyn Holland, Key Texts of Johann Wilhelm Ritter (1776-1810)

minds to the study of electricity and galvanism as one of the most open and productive fields in the natural sciences.

2. An Organic Prologue: from Function-Bearer to Transcendental Mediator

Many great scientific minds of the age would find themselves regularly visiting or living in Jena. There in Jena, their ideas would develop in a dynamic intellectual center emerging around Fichte and his lectures on idealism, and the broader project of responding to Kant's transcendental idealism. During this period, the concept of 'organ" became increasingly significant to the study and systematization of the natural world. Especially in the late 1790s, the concept of 'organ' hovered between two prominent definitions: the instrumentalist definition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the predominantly-biological definition which now predominates.[245] When considering the late 1790s, one must consequently bracket the latter, biological definition, and begin with the earlier, instrumentalist definition to establish its change over time. For most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the instrumentalist definition of 'organ'— that organs were mere function-bearers, more akin to dead mechanism than living beings—predominated its use. Sometimes this instrumentalist definition would imply "organs of sense," though even in this sense, organs remain function-bearers, insofar as concepts and perception are required to employ

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on the Science and Art of Nature, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2010), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004183674.i-722. 651.

[245] In *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*, Leif Weatherby exhaustively traces the development of the term 'organ' during this period. He convincingly demonstrates the unique use of 'organ' by the four influential figures relevant to this study, strengthened by Schleiermacher's own use of the term 'organ' in Chapter 5. Weatherby importantly argues that "the term remained caught between its ancient instrumental and modern biological senses well into the nineteenth century. Early German Romanticism (1796-1800) thus occurred in a small window of semantic confusion just before the naming of the discipline 'biology' in 1800. Organs were not merely parts of animals, but also faculties of spirit and instruments of literary and literal production," Weatherby, 23.

instruments.[246] One such example hails from 1777 in the *Grammatical-Critical Dictionary of High-German Speech* [*Grammatisch-kritishes Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart*], in which 'organism' denotes "especially the tolls of the external senses [*die Werkzeuge der äußern Sinne*], of sensation, though in a wider sense also of changes on and in bodies."[247] Despite its inclusion here, the term 'organ' remained unpopular in the German-speaking wold through the 1770s.

'Organ' would not take on a broader, more systematic use in the German-speaking world until the 1780s, primarily through Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder may have appropriated this systematic use of 'organ' from his readings of French natural history like Jean-Baptiste Robinet, who conceived of 'organ' as the prototype of all being, cumulatively combining into an anthropomorphic universal organism. Herder would soon echo Robinet's claim that

> an organ is an elongated hole, a hollowed cylinder, naturally active: the most complicated organized being can be reduced to this simple idea. The human body, the masterpiece of organization, is nothing but a system of entwined folded tubes endowed with an intrinsic force that result from their structure.[248]

The idea of 'force' and 'structure' would become central to Herder's work, through his conception of a "formative force" [*Bildungstrieb*] that enlivens and harmonizes with organs as universal structures. Regardless of its origins, in his publication of *Ideas For the Philosophy of History of Humanity* [*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*], from 1784-91, Herder introduced to the German-speaking world a new and systematic use of 'organ.'[249]

For Herder's system of forces, it "is organs all the way down." Structures as diverse as nerve and muscle or complete animal organisms are organs. As Herder still employed 'organ' in an anthropological sense, human social constructs and even God are not in themselves organs, but they

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[246] Ibid., 5.
[247] Ibid., 62.
[248] Quoted in ibid., 100.
[249] Ibid., 97-98.

are considered complexes of organs. These highly-scalable organs are bound to force, which through "a single principle of life seems to rule in nature: this is the etheric or electric current, which is worked ever finer in the pipes of plants, in the veins and muscles of the animals, finally even in the nerve-structure and finally kindles all the wondrous drive and forces of the soul at which we marvel in animals and humans."[250] This interplay between dynamic force and organic structure would be remarkably-influential for a generation of thinkers. Largely because of Herder, Blumenbach would call the reciprocal causality of organs a "system of organs," and Schelling would expand Herder's organismic worldview with scientific theory to describe the development of organs as a physiological struggle between sensibility and irritability.[251]

By 1790, the instrumentalist definition of 'organ' had already begun to deepen with metaphysical and biological connotations in the German-speaking world. The entry for 'organ' in Gehler's *Physical Dictionary* [*Physikalisches Wörterbuch*] from that year concludes that

> We call organs or tools in general bodies that are but such that certain purposes or effects can be achieved, as e.g. the eye, ear, and the remaining tolls of the senses in the animal body. The vessels in which juices circulate, which serve the nourishment of animals and plants, are thus also organs, and one attributes an organic structure, or an organization, to those natural bodies in which such a circulation of juices through vessels occurs.[252]

While not restricted to the living, the term 'organ' now implies both the structure and purpose of organisms; organs are still tools, but tools *organized* in such a way as to obtain particular ends for larger bodies— *organisms.* For the German-speaking world of the 1790s, organs were functional parts of a greater whole, the organism, while the organism itself was understood as a complex nexus of the mutual determination of its parts, organs.

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[250] Ibid., 181-82.
[251] Ibid., 183.
[252] Ibid., 62.

As the concept 'organ' came to mediate between force and its structural location, organs also became mediators. As mediators they would be applied to one of the most tricky mediating relationships: the body and soul. In 1790, the philosopher and physician Ernst Platner would publish his *New Anthropology for Doctors and Philosophers* [*Neue Anthropologie for Aerzte und Weltweise*], wherein he would declare a "new anthropology" based upon the new use of 'organ.' As the soul cannot produce its own sensible representations nor effect an influence on the phenomenal world, it requires a mediating instrument; "it needed a tool as means [*Mittelwerkzeug*] by which it could partly represent the world according to its relation to it, and partly according to the representations influence that world. *Organ of the soul.*"[253] Platner's "organ of the soul" would be popularized in 1796 by the physiologist Samuel Thomas Soemmerring in *On the Organ of the Soul*, which was widely-read but of particular interest to young romantics like Hardenberg, who appropriated 'organ' to help break self-consciousness out of its solipsism and intrinsically relate it to the world. In the late 1790s 'organ' became not only a mediator of force and location, but a comprehensive and dynamic conceptual structure, that as infinitely-scalable, could describe the world of consciousness as easily as the world of nature. Because the individual mind had to be related to the body to account for intension and perception, the activity and passivity of self-consciousness, 'organ' would eventually become a central concept in Schleiermacher's *Speeches* of 1799.

D. PHILOPHYSICISTS IN THE JENA ORBIT

[253] Ibid., 118.

Both electrical research and a reinvigorated concept of organism would become the hallmarks of a new kind of scientific discipline centered on nature itself, whether considered as the object of experimental research—what modern taxonomy would call 'natural science'—or as the object of philosophical study and construction—what modern taxonomy would call 'philosophy of nature'. Schlegel would later call this new field "philophysics," while Schelling would refer to it as "speculative physics." Whatever the name of this discipline, it was a powerful intellectual force in Jena, whose orbit of influence was opened to Berlin and Schleiermacher through Friedrich Schlegel. This section will consider those prominent philophysicists who are mentioned and discussed in extant writings from Schleiermacher and his Jena associates during his time in Berlin, from roughly 1796 to the publication of his *Speeches* in 1799. Four of these figures, though varying in proximity and influence, are central to Schleiermacher's intellectual development in Berlin: (1) Alexander von Humbolt, (2) Johann Wilhelm Ritter, (3) Friedrich Schelling, and (4) Friedrich von Hardenberg.

1. Humbolt: The Excitable Organ

Alexander von Humboldt was one of these great minds drawn to electrical and galvanic research in the 1790s. He is notable, however, as one of the first to push these experimental findings into philosophically significant directions, seeing in experimental results confirmation of his philosophy about a central "life-force" in nature, and confirmation of the claim that galvanism was unique to living organisms.[254] He is a living reminder, like many of the prominent figures in this

[254] Humbolt's view that the galvanic process was unique to living organisms would reverse later in life, as Galvani's theory began to wane in the light of Volta's theory of electricity. In 1797, however, he was still firmly committed to Galvani's insistence that galvanism was an organic process, even if he was never fully committed to Galvani's specific

chapter, that the late eighteenth century did not so clearly demarcate 'natural scientist' from 'natural philosopher.' For Humbolt it was perfectly natural to develop a philosophical system from experimental research, and his writings from the 1790s consequently flowed between subjects like plant morphology and literature positing a vitalistic "life-force" at play in nature.[255] He conducted myriad experiments with his close friend Goethe,[256] who appropriated Humbolt's idea of life force, the formative drive, as the force that drove the development of the prototypical form, the *Urform.* In 1797 Humbolt published an influential text melding his research on bioelectricity and its wider implications in *On Excited Muscle and Nerve Fibers together with Conjectures on the Chemical Process of Life in the Animal and Plant Kingdoms* [*Über die gereizte Muskel- und Nervenfaser nebst Vermuthungen über den chemischen Process des Lebens in der Thier- und Pflanzenwelt*].

In this work, Humbolt focused his efforts on 'excitability,' a term borrowed from the Scottish physician John Brown's medical terminology and translated into German as *Erregbarkeit.* Humbolt adopted this term as a more general concept of galvanic potential itself; his use was subsequently appropriated by prominent thinkers like Ritter and Schelling. As excitability involved galvanic or electrical activity, Humbolt pondered about the location of this excitability; his answer,

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theory of 'animal electricity.' This portrayal of Humbolt consequently reflects his historically-appropriate position in the late 1790s, which was is the theoretical position relevant to this argument.

[255] Humbolt published a short story titled "Life-Force, or the Genius of Rhodes" [*Die Lebenskraft oder der Rhodische Genius*] in 1795, demonstrating an early commitment to the idea of "life-force" and its relation to organic and inorganic nature. Through a character in the story, Humbolt asserts that "everything strives from the moment of its genesis towards new connections; and only the human's dividing art can present, as if it were uncoupled, what you vainly seek inside the earth and in the dynamic oceans of water and air. there is inert rest in dead anorganic material as long as the bands of relation are not dissolved, as long as no third matter penetrates in order to commingle with those already there," in Alexander von Humbolt, "Life-Force, or the Genius of Rhodes," *Yearbook of Comparative Literature* 58 (2012): 168.

[256] Andrea Wulf extensively describes Goethe's near infatuation with Humbolt, "Humbolt and Goethe went on long walks and dined together. They conducted experiments and inspected the new botanical garden in Jena. An invigorated Goethe moved easily from one topic to another: 'early morning corrected poem, then anatomy of frogs' was a typical entry in his diary during one of Humboldt's visits. Humboldt was making him dizzy with ideas, Goethe told a friend. He had never met anyone so versatile," in Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature : Alexander Von Humboldt's New World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 30.

was the concept of "organ," which was enjoying a renaissance as the prototypical description mediating force and the location of that force. Animal locomotion was entirely organic, as Humbolt believed that neither muscle nor nerve impelled motion, but a separate force, "galvanic fluid." That force is effective only when it interacts with a particular structural nexus, a polarity between nerve and muscle.[257] Consequently Humbolt is not only one of the first figures to combine scientific research with philosophical construction, but he is also one of the first to employ the new sense of 'organ' in describing his bioelectrical research. The importance of this combination simply cannot be understated, as it was widely appropriated (and employed in new directions) by successive thinkers.

2. Ritter: Electricity, Galvanism, and Cosmic Organism

Hardenberg's 'galvanism of spirit' is best understood in connection with the physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter, who was a driving force within Hardenberg's understanding of galvanism.[258] By the time Ritter matriculated to Jena to study medicine in 1796, he was already established as a preeminent scholar of galvanic science, though almost entirely self-taught from the age of fourteen. In Jena, the young savant would endear himself to notable intellectual figures like Herder, Goethe, Schelling, and Hardenberg. On 29 October 1798, Ritter delivered an address to the Society of Natural History in Jena titled "On Galvanism: Some Results from Previous Investigations Concerning it, and as infinite: the Discovery of an Active Principle in All Living and Dead Nature" [*"Über den Galvanismus: einige Resultate aus den bisherigen Untersuchungen darüber, und als endliches: die Entdeckung eines in der ganzen lebenden und todten Natur tätigen Princips"*]. The essay was a

[257] Weatherby, 186-87.

[258] Schelling is no doubt another important figure for Hardenberg. Hardenberg's early study of Schelling's *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797) would not have introduced him to galvanism, however, as Schelling did not add significant discussion on the subject until its revision in 1803. Schelling's *On the World Soul* (1798) would have been another potential early source of galvanic science for Hardenberg, though this will be discussed later.

virtual *status quaestionis* on galvanism, including the most recent galvanic discoveries. Notably featured was Humboldt's claim that an affinity for oxygen in the nerve was responsible for the movement of nerve fluid and the creation of electricity,[259] effectively undercutting Galvani's claim about a special kind of 'animal electricity.' Yet the fundamental question remained: was galvanism an process unique to life, as Galvani and the early Humbolt thought, or an inorganic chemical process of irritability/potentiality, as Volta and the later Humbolt thought? Ritter believed all of these positions to be incomplete, given that the experimental science could not resolve the dispute on phenomenal grounds:

> thus it leaves recently conducted Galvanic experiments still absolutely undecided, as to whether the life of the nerve exists without the irritability of the muscle (under which here I understand the power, or the ability of the same, to become contracted through the entering motion) exists, or vice versa. One can insist, inasmuch as there is no other reagent for irritable muscle fibers than the living nerve (which is organically connected to it), and that for life, there exists no other [reagent] than the still irritable muscle fibers (which are organically connected to it).[260]

This conclusion is striking. Ritter not only asserts that the life of the nerve and the chemical potentiality of the muscle are inseparable, but that this relationship of inseparable difference is a fundamentally *organic* one. Again, Ritter's use of 'organic' is in the sense of 'organ' as a mediating concept of both force and the location of that force; Ritter sees "organic" as describing a structure that relates two disparate elements—in this case nerve processes and chemical processes—in inseparable tension and relation with one another. Just as a galvanic cell is composed of two

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[259] Ritter is intrigued by the possibility that oxidizing reactions, and thus galvanism, could play the crucial role in connecting nerves with muscles. He quotes a critical claim by Humbolt at length: "As it is in one of the latest theories, namely that of Mr. von Humboldt. His above-mentioned work says the following on p. 399: 'As many experiences teach, that by muscle movement oxygen is deposited and latent, or the blood is neutralized, and as the galvanic fluid (as he calls it, what I have called nervous fluid) is the principal agent in the muscle movement; I suspect a similar connection between that fluid and oxygen, as between the latter and electricity, I suppose, that by the admixture of galvanic or nervous fluid connecting the hydrogen and nitrogen (see also the note, p. 400.), oxygen is transported, and that these elements of the fiber thereby move closer to each other, such that the electrical spark expands in an gas-like fashion, by substances that remove one another, like oxygen and nitrogen, or oxygen and hydrogen, in a droplet of nitric acid and a droplet of water are compressed together, etc'," in Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Physisch-Chemische Abhandlungen in Chronologischer Folge*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: C.H. Reclam, 1806), 10.

[260] Ibid., 34.

heterogenous metals connected by a conductive medium, nerve processes and chemical processes are connected in a polar organic relation with one another. To be clear, this is not an analogy for Ritter, organism is not somehow *like* galvanism; rather, *organism and galvanism describe the same fundamental relationship*. Ritter ponders,

> -How? Is the Life-Process a continuous galvanism through countless, interconnected chains?
> -Are life and organization product of the same [galvanism]?
> -All animal parts, which (in the animal body) stand in so many connections, form nothing but closed chains, indeed they are all different conductors for galvanic influence, and all in different degrees!
> -Indeed, it also necessarily must have the same place as the action of the chains, as in my experiments with the dead, still-irritable animal tissue, only to enmesh one another in the infinite manifold of type, the action that modifies these chains one into another, etc. as I see it here!

Alternately referred to as "life-process" or "life-principle," Ritter sees this unifying force and structural relation as the key to great advances in science and human development.[261] Especially in the field of medicine, Ritter believed that his galvanic theory could improve the treatment of disease, which would be seen as a disharmony in the many actions of these galvanic chains that compose the greater organism.[262]

Less than a year later, in 1798 Ritter would publish a groundbreaking work on galvanism in the treatise *Proof that a continuous Galvanism attends the Process of Life in the Animal Kingdom* [*Beweis, daß ein beständiger Galvinismus den Lebensprozeß in dem Tierreich begleite*], wherein Ritter

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[261] "In short, a field opens to vast new research here, and new discoveries for mankind….We now have hope to solve many a problem in physiology, medicine, psychology, plant physiology, physics, chemistry, mineralogy, and geology indeed— even the farmer has to expect new advantages. For everywhere, in all of nature, there is the principle, which now allows me to call on a life-principle [*Lebensprincip*]!," in ibid., 41.

[262] Ritter expends significant thought on the medical implementation of his theory, which has later resonance with Hardenberg's understanding of galvanism. Ritter writes,

-"Health is therefore the purposive harmony of the actions of these chains?

-Disease- disharmony?

-What is different about the art of the physician, other than the restoration of ultimate harmony by increasing or decreasing the action of this or that system of chains?

-If the medicine suffices for the patient, what does it add as it brings that new, efficacious link in the chain, whereby the same action is increased or decreased as required by its purpose? If external mercury, a volatile salve, or a thousand other things are rubbed or applied, what happens different-- what needs to happen differently, once the expressed power of those chains is modified? Are not small quantities of violently active medicines such bodies, which have so much influence on the action in galvanism and their change?," in ibid., 39-40.

restated his claim that galvanism was the "central-phenomenon" of all organic life, supported by his experimental research on the eyes and tongues of frogs. Ritter also mailed copies of the treatise to both Humbolt and Volta, accompanied by sizable letters relating to the work of both preeminent scientists.[263] For the purposes of this investigation, there are two significant and influential claims Ritter advances in the *Proof* and these two letters: first, that nature is fundamentally active, and second, everything in the natural world—even nature itself—is a kind of organism which all exhibit the same inner order and relation.

Ritter roundly asserts that the natural world is entirely active: "never in nature does one find something absolutely still, all is active, only nature is this way."[264] Ritter believes that every galvanic and electrical activity is a process in which two related bodies, through their "contact" [*Berührung*] and mutual interaction with one another, produce some kind of force or activity. Well-known for his impenetrable and esoteric prose, Ritter would assert

> that every operation of nature is reduced to activity, towards the accrual of practical cases. In the second case my thought falls after simple electricity (simple as in the quality of two things) if they conduct electricity, or multiply, indefinitely, and an infinite number of points, touching [berührender] different spatially-distended individuals [*Raumerfüllungs-Individuen*] with the act of settling common boundaries, the contact [Berührung] is changed without both spaces completely devolving into different qualities of the unity of quality, and their order, which was naturally in each of the two bodies, (the opposite of the other, as it had to be afterwards) and the simple chemical process, through touch [Berührung], two different spatially-distended individuals completely pass over into the unity of quality; that one touches the other and the other touches the one, changing so much that they become quite homogeneous…[265]

Through the process of "touch" or "contact" [*Berührung*] two bodies rub together, producing a common boundary that produces activity. In the case of a simple galvanic cell, two different metals "touch" by a conductive medium, a relation through which electricity is produced. The two metals

[263] The letter to Volta in particular is quite illuminating of Ritter's position; he all but admits that he has structured the text in such a way as to not draw the ire of Galvani's supporters. Ritter's personally-held position is closer to Volta's, at least with respect to the claim that galvanism is not a process unique to life, but merely another name for electrical phenomena.

[264] Ritter, 1, 72.

[265] Ibid., 74.

undergo change through oxidation or dissolution, until the cell reaches equilibrium and ceases to function.

Ritter senses a difficulty in this view, however. If every activity ceases when its difference becomes unity, reaching a state of equilibrium, would not the cumulative decline eventually extinguish all activity and produce a resting and lifeless world?[266] This outcome is impossible for the observable world, Ritter surmises, because "the world would probably have long since become a homogenous lump of matter and all action be extinguished." Though often accused by his critics of flights of speculative fancy, Ritter prided himself on his empiricism, in which all theoretical claims were tied to directly experienced and observed phenomena.[267] The phenomenal world points to a dynamic and universal principle or force of life working through galvanic and electrical activity, that ultimately prevents the universe from equilibrating; one can infer it, but not demonstrate it conclusively. Ritter finds additional support in the necessary conditions of perception; if "the truly dynamic proportion of the quality of two individuals is modified by reciprocal influence," producing "the common boundaries of different spatially-distended individuals" perceivable to observation, then Kant's claim from the *Metaphysics* that the duality of matter is a necessary condition for perception can further support the dynamicism that prevents the equilibrative death of the universe.[268]

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[266] Ritter realizes this is the logical conclusion of this initial claim. He writes that "The characteristic of the chemical process is: transition to differing materials, e.g. spaces of differing quality (mediate and immediate sensible conditions) to one of uniform quality, which is the same as those combined, or better yet, located in the middle-point of the difference of the previous qualities. The universal expression of this process is and remains activity, and here we see quite clearly how it proceeds toward a unification of difference, and ends with this acquired identity. Here was complete transformation of visible difference into unity," in ibid., 76.

[267] Writing to Volta, Ritter would assure him that "the *Proof* will absolutely have in its favor its derivation from experience, so it is probably good to show that the only criterion of sound deduction is that which is in accordance with experience, and that we have not shied away from the fundamental question with this answer," in ibid., 90.

[268] Ibid., 77.

Because of its universality, this fundamental organic relationship of two individuals, bodies, or organs that "touch" through reciprocal influence would have lasting impact on the natural science and philosophy of Ritter's day. On one of his most influential points, Ritter is unafraid of extending the concept of 'organ' over both chemical structures and the realm of living organism; like Herder and Humbolt, he sees organs and organismic relations everywhere. Because his research demonstrated that animal tissues could function as galvanic cells without the aid of foreign metals, Ritter supposed that animal organisms could be understood as a series of infinitely-scaled galvanic cells. For example, an animal leg can be subdivided into muscle and nerve that are in constant contact, and through which galvanic fluid flows and galvanism occurs. This continuous galvanism facilitates every and all processes of life in animal organisms.[269] The result is striking: galvanic process is identified with organismic process, and organisms are best understood as interrelated and aggregating galvanic systems at every level. Ritter asks his readers,

> But what else is an animal part, and what about the body to which it belonged? The [animal] is a system of interpenetrating forces, wherein **a part is the animal itself through the whole**, and **the whole is grounded through the parts**; **both are reciprocally means and end**, and the product of every moment flowing into another. Once again, [the animal] is an activity through [its parts]; [the animal] is simply this activity under a new system, wherein the duration of its existence is grounded.[270]

The animal is a comprehensive activity through the interrelated nexus of smaller activities throughout, allowing Ritter to scale the idea of organismic relation from the smallest inorganic galvanic cell up to the largest living organism. He sees very little reason to stop at the boundaries of the animal organism itself, since animals and human beings are themselves interconnected through

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[269] See "1.4 Experimente zum Galvanismus- Novalis und Johann Wilhelm Ritter," in Jürgen Daiber, *Experimentalphysik Des Geistes : Novalis Und Das Romantische Experiment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001).

[270] Johann Wilhelm Ritter, *Beweis, Dass Ein Beständiger Galvanismus Den Lebensprocess in Dem Thierreich Begleite. Nebst Neuen Versuchen Und Bemerkungen Über Den Galvanismus* (Weimar: im Verlage des Industrie-Comptoirs, 1798), 171. Emphasis added.

larger and larger iterations of organic processes. The fundamental galvanic and organic process is a system that

> does not exist by itself, but only insofar as it is part of a higher dynamic, the most complete and yet organic system of nature, and that insofar as it exists at all, it owes its itself to nature. It is the ideal of all organic being, self-determining, self-eternal, and eternally self-identical, abiding and enduring- nature. Earthly bodies are its blood cells, it has Milky Way-like muscles, and heavenly aether flows through its nerves. And what proportion! Only in nature points approach themselves, one-trillion times smaller because those blood cells are the smallest; should these alone express activity under that particular form, the closed chain? Surely! I cannot understand, it is impossible that they do not find every case in nature as a whole! Where is the sun, where is an atom, that is not a part, that does not belong to this organic ALL, living in no particular time, with every time contained in itself? - Where is the difference between the parts of the animal, the plant, the metal and the stone? - Are they not all parts of the great All-Animal, nature? - A formerly unknown universal law of nature appears to shine forth to us! - Indeed, the result might substantiate that it was more than appearance.[271]

Ritter's organicism is comprehensive; nature itself is an "organic ALL" and "All-animal" through which smaller organisms like animals and human beings participate in life and act in the world. One can see just how thrilling Ritter's work would be to the intellectual eclecticism of Schlegel and his Jena associates. In one grand theory, Ritter could weave scientific research about the smallest chemical actions into a comprehensive philosophical system that articulated a living and dynamic view of the world. The effect was almost immediate as Ritter's work circulated in Jena and Berlin, and as Schlegel, Schelling, and Hardenberg would all discover the power of Ritter's work.

3. Schelling: Organicism in On the World Soul

Given its subject matter, which viewed natural science through the lens of a comprehensive nature philosophy, Schelling's *On the World Soul, an Hypothesis of Higher Physics for Explaining Universal Organism* [*Von der Weltseele, eine hypothese der höhern Physik zur Erklärung des allgemeinen Organismus*] was of particular interest to Schlegel and his friends, though it nevertheless met a mixed

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[271] Ibid., 171.

reception. Regardless, *On the World Soul* became an important theoretical contribution to organicist philosophy of nature in the late 1790s, and Schelling himself became a highly-respected and widely-influential figure. A pupil of Fichte at Jena, Friedrich Schelling would soon established himself as a preeminent philosopher of what he would call "speculative physics." During the period between 1797 and 1800, he worked in close quarters with Johann Ritter, simultaneously conducting scientific experiments and projecting their philosophical significance. As a result, their work in this period can only be separated somewhat unnaturally. In Ritter's experimental results, Schelling identified the fundamental processes of nature and adapted his nature philosophy accordingly. In Schelling's vocabulary and philosophical framework, Ritter found a superior way of systematizing his experimental results and applying them in more comprehensive directions.[272]

Consequently, Schelling should be considered alongside Ritter as a significant contributor to the synthesis of galvanic theory and organic structure into a universal organicism of nature. He would take Ritter's conclusion that polarity was the fundamental structure of organs, and extend that claim to describe human consciousness and sensibility by employing an age old concept, the 'world soul.' Schelling's interest in the idea of a 'world soul' dates back as far as 1794, when Schelling was a mere eighteen years old, already in the third year of his theological studies at the *Tübinger Stift.* At the time, Schelling was taking copious notes on Plato's *Timaeus,* with particular interest in how the idea of a world soul would help relate the ideal world as the ground and principle of the empirical world.[273] The idea would culminate in 1798 in his publication of *On the World Soul*. In it, Schelling

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[272] See Robert Michael Brain, R. S. Cohen, and Ole Knudsen, Hans Christian Ørsted and the Romantic Legacy in Science Ideas, Disciplines, Practices, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-2987-5.

[273] See chapter IV.9 "The World Soul in Baader's and Schelling's Conceptions" in Miklós Vassányi, "Anima Mundi: The Rise of the World Soul Theory in Modern German Philosophy" (SpringerTeilw. zugl.: Leuven, 2011).

would offer a decisive attempt to integrate theories and research from the natural sciences into a comprehensive philosophical framework.

Schelling begins with a conundrum: when considering nature as a whole, humans necessarily think antithetically: casting nature as inorganic or organic, organism or mechanism, even positive or negative. The antithesis usually results in the belief that organic nature (and with it organization and life) cannot be explained from natural principles and forces, which are inorganic. Schelling thinks this is absurd, however, as there must be a single principle or ground that organizes this antithesis into a cognizable natural world. In this sense, Schelling is building on Kant's claim in the *Critique of Judgment* that the organization of the natural world is only conceivable as the product of a single, intelligent mind, leading to the heuristic postulation of ideas like self-organizing matter and the original unity of spirit and matter. Schelling transcends Kant's position, however, by arguing that the organization of the natural world— itself a relation of unity-in-opposition—is the necessary precondition of the natural world *as experienced by human beings*, because the human mind must be identically organized in order for phenomena to appear at all.[274] For Schelling, this unifying ground of natural organization is helpfully thought of as the ancient world soul: "These two conflicting forces conceived at the same time in conflict and unity, lead to the idea of an organizing principle, forming the world into a system. Perhaps the ancients wished to intimate this with the world-soul."[275]

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[274] Schelling's claim is rooted in Kant's *Metaphysics;* Schelling writes that "This antithesis is postulated absolutely by natural science. It is not susceptible to an empirical, but only to a transcendental deduction. Its origin is to be sought in the original duplicity of our mind, which only constructs a finite product from opposing forces," Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele: Eine Hypothese Der Höhern Physik Zur Erklárung Des Allgemeinen Organismus," in *Schellings Werke 6*, ed. Hans Michael Baumgartner, et al. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2000), 91. cf. F.W.J. Schelling, "On the World Soul (Extract)," in *Geo/Philosophy*, ed. Robin Mackay, Collapse: Philosophical Research and Development (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93.

[275] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 77; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 74.

In Part I, "On the First Force of Nature," Schelling sets out to articulate how fundamentally-antithetical principles and forces are organized within nature, a task that explores how particular physical and chemical phenomena can be better understood through Schelling's fundamental relationship of organized polarity. In short, he wants to articulate a dynamic concept of matter—so-called "inorganic" nature—as composed of increasingly complex polarities; like Ritter, he wants to show that this fundamental natural organization is infinitely scalable, from the smallest natural entity to the natural world itself. Schelling begins by proposing that

> Every motion that returns to itself presupposes, as the conditions of its possibility, a positive force that (as impulse) initiates motion (turning the starting point, as it were, into a line), and a negative force, that (as attraction), draws the movement back into itself (or prevents it from flattening out into a straight line.[276]

The two forces indicate two underlying principles: a "positive principle" wherein motion strives continuously forward in a straight line, and is only limited and redirected back to its source by a "negative principle." As with Kant's *Metaphysics,* Schelling believes this polarity to be not only necessary for every phenomenal appearance, but inseparable, as "the negative force is aroused only by the positive. Therefore in all nature, neither of these forces exists without the other…. Everything terrestrial has this property in common: that it is opposed to the positive force that radiates to us from the sun. In this original antithesis lies the seed of a universal world organization.[277] Schelling invokes light ("the sun") and gravity ("everything terrestrial") as a crucial example of the positive and negative principles working through natural forces. In his view, light would be repelled from its source unfettered and infinite, were it not for the contractive attraction of gravity to limit and redirect its path back toward its source. Schelling also demonstrates that the same polarity is

[276] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 77; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 73.
[277] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 91; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 92.

operative in both electricity and magnetism, which also require a continuous loop in which positive and negative can circulate.

Schelling's thoroughgoing antithesis additionally provides him with a framework to defend a robust notion of individuality. While Schelling's vision of a world soul bears some similarity to Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*, Spinoza notoriously denied substantial being to individuals, who were properly understood as mere modifications of a single, divine substance. Discarding Spinoza's substance-based monism, Schelling asserted both fundamental unity and real difference, rejecting that one could choose between "providence, or atoms," as Marcus Aurelius famously posed in his *Meditations.* While discussing the fundamental polarity of forces in nature, Schelling concludes that "in our experience, as many individual things (particular spheres, as it were, of the universal forces of nature) arise as there are different degrees in the creation of the negative force."[278] Individuals are said to be "spheres"[279] or even "organs" that are at once an instantiation of the universal forces of nature (the antithesis), and yet still differentiated through differing conditions in the creation of any negative force. Insofar as differing conditions affect this force, differing individuals necessarily emerge. For Schelling, individuality does not arise in opposition to universality, but originates out of universality, insofar as *the antithesis is what is universal*, not homogeneity, e.g. Spinoza's substance.

Schelling does concede that this antithesis contains "a necessary striving to equilibrate," which carried to its logical conclusion would entail a motionless and dead universe.[280] One may

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[278] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 77; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 73.

[279] In calling individuals "spheres," Schelling perhaps evokes Ritter's "spatially-distended individuals," which Ritter interchangeably describes as "spheres."

[280] Schelling writes that "for the opposing forces possess a necessary striving to equilibrate, that is, to set themselves into a relation of minimal reciprocity; consequently, were the forces not unequally distributed throughout the universe, or were the equilibrium not constantly destroyed, all partial motion would ultimately vanish from planets, and only a universal motion would persist, until perhaps finally even the intent, lifeless masses of the planets would collapse into a

recall that Ritter broached a similar objection that galvanic chains tending toward equilibrium would result in universal equilibrium. While Ritter declined to speculate on what kind of force prevented universal equilibration, Schelling more-strongly supposed that there must be a force "destroying" or opposing this equilibrative tendency while preserving an unequal distribution of forces throughout the universe. This anti-equilibrative force, Schelling would conclude, is the life of the universe itself, a life that emerges out of every antinomy in nature. Though every individual antinomy tends toward equilibrative death, nature as a whole never trends away from its fundamental polarity, in which "neither the principle of absolute homogeneity nor that of absolute heterogeneity is the true one; the truth lies in the union of the two."[281] Though individual organs and organisms die and decompose, the force that animates them cannot; Schelling even believes that nature as a living and productive organism is so well organized that it can never die such a death.

Near the beginning of Part II, "On the Origin of the Universal Organism," Schelling poses his fundamental, driving concern that

> there are substances, that through mere contact [*Berührung*] work chemically on one another; but there are also connections and disconnections, which are effected through external means, e.g. an increase of temperature, etc.… Precisely what brings these materials together in animal organization, to arise from the conflict therein the eternal result, animal life? Or which cause forces the conflicting elements together, and separates those things which strive for unification?[282]

Schelling agrees that chemical action through physical contact cannot adequately describe organic life, which must be differentiated from "anorganic" chemical and physical matter without relying on inadequate conceptualizations of life as an "occult quality" added to dead matter.[283] Interestingly,

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single heap, and the entire world sink into inactivity," Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 86; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 86.

[281] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 86; cf. "On the World Soul (Extract)," 86.

[282] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 191.

[283] "The source of animal matter in the life-process is completely random, and so the concept of organization must be random also; a blind work of nature. "the so-called chemical process of life explains to us also only the blinds and dead working of nature, which occur in living bodies as well as dead, not yet how nature itself keeps these deadly effects

Schelling denies the attribution of life to plants; only animals have life, because only animals continuously generate the animating principle of self-organization. This self-organization originates out of the same antinomy of contrary forces in Part I, but here the forces of phlogistic-matter and oxygen are in a state of continual disruption and restoration, e.g. nutrition and breathing, whereby oxygen and phlogistic-matter where drawn in and integrated through life-processes; ultimately, "in animal bodies, nature seeks to continuously preserve equilibrium between oxygen and phlogistic-matter."[284]

In addition, the self-organization of organs in animal organisms preserves both the unity of the organism and the individuality of particular organs or systems within the organism. Every organ is an individual, insofar as every organ originates out of specific limiting conditions acting on the organism, in that "an individual organ is no more than a determined and individual mixture that is connected with this determined form of matter," and that this determined form of matter finds its source in the life-process itself.[285] Consequently unity and diversity are preserved through the positive and negative principles operative in this life-process,

> the positive principle of life must be singular, the negative principle must be manifold. So many possible unifications of this manifold into a whole, so many particular organizations, every one of which represents a particular world. The negative principle of life includes everything composite, namely those things that are conditions but not causes of life; considered as a whole, they are the principles of animal excitability.[286]

Here Schelling employs the term "irritability" or "excitability," which was so essential to the physiological theory of John Brown, as appropriated by Humbolt and Ritter. Schelling is clear that the source and principle of irritability is not oxygen, but rather a principle of direct opposition that

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and blind powers in living being despite having a quasi-will, which it reveals through purposive formation of animal matter, and often only explains it from principle, that which lies outside the sphere of chemical processes, and cannot enter in," Ibid., 204-5.

[284] Schelling, 200.

[285] Ibid., 209-10.

[286] Ibid., 195.

grounds oxygenation and deoxygenation processes.[287] The opposition of positive and negative principles of life on the individual organ results in particularity, as "this very principle will not work the same in all organs, because they do not share the same capacity for oxygen; it will give to every organ a specific capacity: this specific capacity for oxygen is currently what one can call 'specific irritability.'"[288] The inherent opposition of "irritability" also results from the opposition of organs in the same organism, which are "heterogenous," and have a "galvanic action" just like heterogenous metals.[289] Additionally, Schelling identifies sensibility as the "negative" of irritability, suggesting that irritability's role in driving and impelling animals to movement is itself balanced by sensibility's physical inertness and receptivity.[290] Thus sensibility and irritability are seen "in the animal emerging in a higher synthesis, in which the willful and automatic, the random and necessary, are fully united in the animal functions.[291]

Consequently, organization and life do not arise in a homogenous force, but in "the free play of forces" in which contingent, material principles form and generate organism according to determinate content, subject to universal laws. Thus freedom and necessity are bound together in life, because only in freedom can nature "agitate ideas by purposiveness," and only in this agitation can nature itself also be called an organization or organism.[292] As Schelling nears the completion of his argument in Part II, he turns to poetical characterizations of nature as a living and dynamic web,

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[287] Frank, 234.

[288] Schelling, "Von Der Weltseele," 236.

[289] Schelling, 242-44.

[290] "Irritability is the middle point, as it were, by which all organic forces accumulate, discover their causes, and call that the mystery of life be revealed and the veil of nature lifted. If nature is opposed to the animal process of irritability, then [nature] is opposed to the irritability of sensibility. Sensibility is not an absolute property of animal nature, it is only represented as the negative of irritability. Therefore irritability is very little without sensibility, as sensibility is little without irritability," in ibid., 248.

[291] Ibid., 249.

[292] Ibid., 254.

whose interconnections are felt in phenomenal glimpses and shadows that merely point toward their underlying, animating principle,

> If the atmosphere is overloaded with electricity, almost all animals reveal a special apprehension; Galvanic experiments work better and get stronger during thunderstorms, with no consideration that there is no reason to believe that the electricity was the immediate cause of these appearances. The outbreak of large earthquakes has been announced with a color change in the sky, sadness and even the lamentations of some animals, as if the same cause splits the mountains, raises islands out of the sea, and lifts the breathing chest of animals-- experiences that one cannot explain without a universal continuity of all natural causes, and the adoption of a common medium, through which alone all the forces of nature work from sensible being.[293]

Schelling began *On the World Soul* with the necessary postulation of the world's unity as a "world soul," a concept necessitated by the human mind to explain the world's dramatic complexity and interrelation. By its conclusion, Schelling has mapped out precisely how every stage of developmental complexity can be understood in terms of his system; though he cannot scientifically prove that the 'ideal' structures of organization operate in the 'real' levels of development indicated by phenomena, Schelling has offered a powerful and compelling vision of his "theory of everything," from the organization of physical and chemical phenomena to nature itself. Ultimately,

> Since this principle maintains the continuity of the inorganic and the organic world, and connects the whole of nature to a universal organism, we know from what is new in its essence, what the oldest philosophy forebodingly welcomed as the common soul of nature, and that some physicists of that time, in the shaping and forming ether, maintained the One.[294]

4. Hardenberg: Galvanism of Mind and Body

Few people would influence Hardenberg more deeply than Ritter, who remarked to Caroline Schlegel that "Ritter is a knight, and the rest of us are merely squires."[295] Hardenberg was already familiar with Ritter's earliest works on galvanism no later than the fall of 1798; notably he cites both

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[293] Ibid., 256-57.
[294] Ibid., 257.
[295] This is a play on Ritter's name, which is also the word for 'knight.' See Novalis, *Novalis Schriften*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Jena: Diederichs, 1907), 274-76.

Ritter's "On Galvanism" and *Proof that a Continuous Galvanism attends the Process of Life* in later works.[296] In August of 1798, Schlegel would write Hardenberg that he had also taken an interest in Ritter, reminding him to bring his copy of Ritter so that Schlegel could borrow it.[297] More than just scientific content ripe for appropriation, Ritter's ideas even formed the experimental methodology that undergirded Hardenberg's philosophy: "A good physical experiment can serve as a model of an inner experiment, and is itself a good subjective experiment of inner being."[298] It is clear that reading Ritter had a profound effect on Hardenberg, as his writings from around 1798 attest. But how specifically did he appropriate Ritter's broad-reaching work on physics, chemistry, and philosophy?

Like Ritter and Schelling, Hardenberg understands galvanism as a fundamental chemical process that is not in itself a marker of life-processes. Hardenberg concludes that

> all chemical operations and influences to be *generally* uniform in that they modify the excitability [*Erregbarkeit*] and capacity of every kind of matter. Thus, for example, oxygen has this effect in the combustion process. All chemical elements are indirectly in accord…. all this fits very well with galvanism. Chemistry is already galvanism—galvanism of inorganic nature.[299]

Because galvanism is not unique to life, then the lowest chemical reaction exists on a continuum with the most complex life-process, with direct medical implications. Hardenberg sought a "medicine for corporality" by means of chemistry. This seemingly-strange claim makes perfect sense in the context of Ritter's "On Galvanism," wherein he asks "what is different about the art of the physician, other than the restoration of ultimate harmony by increasing or decreasing the action of this or that system of [galvanic] chains?" Ritter claimed that medicines work by adding another link

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[296] Hardenberg mentions Ritter's structure of "triple connectivity" [dreyfach Verbindiung] (III, 83, 91), Ritter's work on the effects of electricity on the eye and tongue (III, 950), and describes the eye as the best liquid-organ, in which light is a galvanic fluid (III, 950), as well as other less obvious references to Ritter's work. See Frederick Burwick, *The Damnation of Newton : Goethe's Color Theory and Romantic Perception*, Quellen Und Forschungen Zur Sprach- Und Kulturgeschichte Der Germanischen Völker (New York: De Gruyter, 1986), 124-25.

[297] Novalis, *Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich Von Hardenbergs*, vol. IV (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1923), 500.

[298] *Das Philosophische Werk I*, vol. II, Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich Von Hardenbergs (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), 386.

[299] *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1997), 115.

in the galvanic chain, and, consequently, by modifying their galvanic activity; doctors need only to diagnose how much this galvanic activity needs to increase or decrease, and select the appropriate medicine.[300] Consequently Hardenberg's quest for a "medicine for corporality" makes significantly more sense in the context of Ritter's work on galvanism. For Hardenberg, seeking a medicine for corporality in galvanic theory was more than just an intellectual interest. Hardenberg suffered from frequent illness, and a quick perusal of his written fragments from 1798 shows a preoccupation with sickness and health, body and soul, intertwined with citations to Ritter's galvanic experiments expanding on their broad implications.[301]

What then separates basic chemical reactions from the complex processes indicative of living organisms, if they exist on the same continuum? Hardenberg believes that life, and its increasing complexity, is distinguished by the extent to which oxygen is involved. Hardenberg would go so far as to claim that "the capacity of material for oxygen (the stuff of organisms) is differentiated; there is therein a ladder of life. Perhaps plants have one-fold, animals have two-fold, and humans have three-fold life, etc."[302] This follows closely to Ritter's proposal that oxygen was the key to understanding galvanic reactions in living tissue (*contra* Galvani's "animal electricity"), moving through the nerve fluid to cause motion in the corresponding muscle. Hardenberg does not equate oxygen with life-process, however. Oxygen is "the stuff of organisms," but one must remember that Hardenberg employs the concept "organ" and its correlative "organism" in a very different sense; he is possibly the most radical figure in universalizing the concept of 'organ' and pushing it in its

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[300] Ritter, *Physisch-Chemische Abhandlungen in Chronologischer Folge*, 1, 39-40.

[301] Not all the fragments date precisely from this period, but they are instructive in how Hardenberg views Ritter's research as the key to understanding the underlying chemical and physical processes of reality. See especially the "physicalische Fragmente" (73-83), 386-88, 621, 655, 662, in Novalis, *Das Philosophische Werk Ii*, vol. III, Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich Von Hardenbergs (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960).

[302] *Das Philosophische Werk I*, II, 556.

practical and political directions.[303] During the late 1790s, Hardenberg attempted to construct a Romantic Encyclopedia, an "organon" of scientific disciplines (which he considered 'organs' in their own right); one entry introduces a new "science of organs", what he calls "organology":

> ORGANOLOGY. The tool cannot be thought at leisure. An organ is, according to its very concept, in movement and thus in connection with its excitation [Reitz] partly immediate, partly mediated through the product. The dead body, thought as dead, will give us no information about the force and its connection with the body. Observe [instead] the living organ and the tool in movement."[304]

Here one sees Hardenberg's use of organ marries and interrelates force with a body or location; thus chemical reactants can be considered organs in organic relationship as easily as nerve and muscle, because an organ relates a force with the location of its expression. Whether one considers chemical reactants organized to produce electricity, or the nerve and muscle complex in a frog leg organized to produce movement, both accord to Hardenberg's conceptualization of organ and organism. Much like Ritter and Schelling, Hardenberg was willing to consider 'galvanism' and 'organism' as mirror descriptions of the same, fundamental activity of relation. Hardenberg believed that galvanism was essential to explaining the interconnected organ processes that together comprise an organism: "Galvanism explains an enormous amount in animal economy, for example, the system of congestions, evacuations—of double excitability."[305]

Consequently, Hardenberg understood both 'galvanism' and 'organism' as relations that could better express the indissoluble link between the human body and mind, soul, and spirit, and offer a remedy for seemingly-intractable philosophical questions. How could an immaterial motive force, e.g. Kant's transcendental freedom, cause physical motion in a causally-conditioned world?

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[303] Weatherby claims that Hardenberg more than any other figure conceives of 'organ' as the form of a universal metaphysics; it is not an image or representation for thinking about things, but rather a substitute for representation itself. See Weatherby, *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ*.

[304] Novalis, *Das Philosophische Werk Ii*, III, 332. cf. Weatherby, 232.

[305] Novalis, "Philosophical Writings," 157.

Schleiermacher's *On Freedom* was driven by this same question in the early 1790s, though he was limited by the Kantian framework available to him at the time. With the help of Ritter and Schelling, Hardenberg was able to synthesize a galvanic and organismic account of the mind-body relationship, one that would prove of great interest to Schleiermacher. When Schlegel wrote of Hardenberg's 'galvanism of spirit' in July of 1798, Schlegel would describe a relationship of "contact/touch" [*Berührung*] between mind and body, a technical term he employs twice. Schlegel relates that Hardenberg "still holds on to the beautiful mystery of spiritual contact/touch" [*geistigen Berührung*], though he remains secretive about "how his theory of enchantment touches the galvanism of spirit to the secret of touch, galvanizing and enchanting."[306] Though Schlegel is intensionally evasive, Hardenberg's description of the body-soul relationship in terms of "contact/touch"[*Berührung*] points to a significant appropriation of both Schelling and Ritter's use of the term.

In the *Proof,* Ritter employs "contact/touch" as part of his terminology describing the relationship between the poles of a galvanic reaction. Ritter describes the location (or embodiment) of galvanic activity in two different "spatially-distended bodies"[*Raumerfüllungs-Individuen*], which when related through "touch"[*Berührung*] produce electrical activity.[307] Hardenberg often employs Ritter's galvanic terminology and structure alongside explorations of the mind-body connection. One clear example of this connection is a fragment wherein Hardenberg considers that "a spatially-distended individual [*Raumerfüllungs-Individuen*] is a body [*Körper*]. A temporally-distended individual is a soul [*Seele*]. (the law of temporal distention.) That makes space, this makes time.

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[306] Letter 482, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 343-44.
[307] Ritter, *Physisch-Chemische Abhandlungen in Chronologischer Folge*, 1, 74.

Time is inner space,— space is external time (synthesis together.)."[308] Hardenberg consequently takes Ritter's galvanic structure and terminology of bodies as "spatially-distended individuals" producing activity through "touch," and translates this galvanic relationship into the soul as a "temporally-distended individual."[309] Hardenberg was also influenced by Schelling's *On the World Soul,* which similarly employed "contact/touch" as the relation between "organs." Hardenberg distilled Schelling's idea of a world soul into three fundamental ideas: "knowledge, touch, mixture" [*Erkenntiss, Berührung, Mischung*]. Hardenberg naturally gravitates to "contact/touch" [*Berührung*] as an important concept for the relation of disparate entities, even going so far as to recast sensibility as "touch-hearing" [*Berührung vernehmen*]. Always a synthetic thinker, Hardenberg combines Schelling's emphasis on "contact/touch" with Schelling's emphasis that sensibility exists in an antinomy with irritability.[310]

As a result, there is good reason to interpret Schlegel's reference to 'galvanism of spirit' in terms of Hardenberg's use of both galvanism and 'organ' to describe the relationship between body and soul. Though Schleiermacher's letter to Schlegel concerning galvanism of spirit is no longer extant, Schlegel's reply from mid-July suggests that Schleiermacher was concerned that Hardenberg's melancholy will lead him to suicide. Schlegel reassures him, "I believe Hardenberg might kill himself, though not for this reason I believe. Certainly, he desires death, and will linger on seeking after the origin of all philosophy. By 'galvanism of spirit' one only discovers what is nerve and muscle in the mind [*Gemüth*] after the fact."[311] Schlegel mentions nerve and muscle— an overt

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[308] Novalis, *Ergänzungs Band*, ed. Bruno Wille, Sämmtliche Werke (Leipzig: Diederichs, 1901), 174.

[309] Hardenberg's claim interestingly echoes Augustine's conclusion in Book XI of *Confessions* about the soul's temporal distention; one interpretation might be that this claim translates Augustinian psychology into Ritterian terminology.

[310] Novalis, *Das Philosophische Werk Ii*, III, 230.

[311] Letter 485, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 350-51.

reference to the galvanic theory of the day—in order to affirm that the mind is an indissoluble unity, though a unity that originates out of its organic constituents. Schlegel mentions this to make a point. Though Schlegel has " already spent a great deal of time with his spirit," Schlegel is unable to penetrate deep into Hardenberg's animating spirit, what Schlegel calls his *Gemüth*.[312] A term utilized by early German romantics like Schlegel, Hardenberg, and Schleiermacher, the term *Gemüth* helpfully reinforces the indissolubility of the mind; Hardenberg seemingly identifies galvanism as *Gemüth*'s underlying chemical relationship, describing psychology in the light of natural science. In 1798 Hardenberg would note that "an organic body in consideration of its inner community - and its principle - all for one and one for all - not entirely in the world - it is a mixed product… Soul and body work galvanically on one another - at least in an analogous manner - but their laws are in a higher region."[313] Therefore when the body and soul are considered in living unity, the human being is best understood as a galvanic or organic community of interrelation.

Galvanism did not stop at descriptions of individual animal organisms, however. Hardenberg regularly echoes Ritter's commitment to galvanism as the key to a grand unified theory of everything, with correspondingly-unlimited potential. Hardenberg, like many early romantics, was driven by the hope of a unified theory that could describe nature as imbued with spirit, unified,

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[312] The term *Gemüth* is a rich and polyvalent term in the late 18th century, often simultaneously connoting spirit, intellect, and feeling. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant understood *Gemüth* as a framework for the interaction of all the transcendental powers or faculties, functioning as both their foundation and source. Kant writes, "Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind [*Gemüth*], the first of which is the reception of representations (the receptivity of impressions), the second the faculty for cognizing an object by means of representations (spontaneity of concepts)" (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 193.). In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant further developed the idea, defining 'spirit' as an aesthetic and purposive impetus: "spirit [*Geist*], in an aesthetic significance, means the animating principle in the mind [*Gemüth*]. That, however, by which this principle animates the soul…is that which purposively sets the mental powers in motion" (*The Critique of Judgment*, 192.) Goethe so famously employed the term that in 1826 he half-jokingly called for a moratorium on its use. See further discussion on both general use and Goethe's use of *Gemüth* in Mark Evan Bonds, *Absolute Music : The History of an Idea* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 150-51.

[313] Novalis, *Das Philosophische Werk I*, II, 555.

and even alive, ultimately upending reductionistic mechanics in favor of a new kind of organicism.[314] In short, Hardenberg saw within Ritter's theory of galvanism the glimmer of a deeper philosophical reality. In the summer of 1798, a particularly harsh illness drove Hardenberg to the spa in Teplitz for treatment, where he would write a series of fragments that would explore the global implications of galvanism. In one entry titled "World Psychology," Hardenberg echoes both Ritter's galvanism and Schelling's organicism,

> It will not be possible to explain the organism without presupposing a world soul, nor the world plan without presupposing a world rational being. If in explaining the organism no attention is paid to the soul and to the mysterious bond between it and the body, not much progress will be made. **Perhaps life is nothing other than the result of this union—the action of this contact** [*Berührung*]. As light results from the friction of steel against stone, sound from touching the bow and the string, vibration from closing and opening the galvanic chain, so perhaps life results from the awakening (penetration) of organic matter.[315]

Just as the unifying "world soul" organically relates to a natural world pervaded by antinomies, Hardenberg believes that body and soul are are organically related through the same"contact," a contact that produces nothing less than the force of life itself.

That is why Hardenberg includes this organic relationship under World-Psychology: individual bodies and souls exist in organic relation just as the world-soul and nature. As 'organs', they mediate both the location of force and the dynamic force itself, i.e. they are organized by the same structure of antinomy or polarity that embodies and produces a dynamic force of life. One should seek the same harmony in both, as "the individual soul should be in agreement with the

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[314] In *Experimentalphysik des Geistes: Novalis und das romantische Experiment*, Jürgen Daiber articulates the appeal of Ritter's dream of a unified theory to Hardenberg, "Like Ritter, Novalis is fascinated by this romantic vision of a grand, unifying theory, a comprehensiveness of nature, that through a single principle all the stages of life appear interconnected. Thus he follows Ritter's intellectual path; "all powers of nature are one power,' he notes at the end of 1799. Already immediately after the release of "Proof that a continuous Galvanism attends the process of life in the animal kingdom," Hardenberg stated in the *Allgemeine Brouillon* a 'reversal of the fundamental principles of mechanics—and excitement theory' and refers to Ritter's galvanic experiments , 103-04.

[315] Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, 113. emphasis added.

world soul. Mastery of the world soul and joint mastery of the individual soul."[316] Both an individual human being and the world itself are organisms; the difference is merely one of scale, as both are living, productive complexes of galvanic chains or organic relations. While Hardenberg's idea of the world-soul is certainly influenced by Schelling, Hardenberg openly attributes the idea of a world-soul to Ritter, whom he believes "sought out completely the original world-soul of nature."[317] Whether in chemical reactions, living animal organisms, or the world-organism itself, Hardenberg wholeheartedly advocated a cosmic organicism, with which Schleiermacher was certainly familiar.

E. LINKING NATURE

Around the middle of 1798, Schlegel's correspondence with Hardenberg increasingly centered on Ritter, Schelling, and Hardenberg's emerging philosophies of relation. They hoped to link new discoveries in the natural sciences with more comprehensive philosophical theories, placing the unity of body and soul, knowing and being, and the real and ideal under a nascent organicism. Seemingly, Schlegel could not help but be dragged into this orbit by so intense a group of minds as Ritter, Schelling, and Hardenberg. In earlier correspondences, Schlegel demonstrates significant incredulity toward Hardenberg's theories, seeing them as easy fodder for his quick wit. In a letter to Schleiermacher from July, Schlegel jokes about threatening Hardenberg "in order to galvanize him" to action, poking at both Hardenberg's torpor and his obsession with galvanic theory.[318] Around the

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[316] Ibid.

[317] Hardenberg's complete reference is that "Ritter sought out completely the original World-soul of nature. He wants to learn to read the visible and ponderable types, and explain the place of the higher mental powers. All external processes are understandable. The incompleteness of this should become the organ responsible for this, and the necessity of adopting the person as the leitmotif of each experiment's results," *Das Philosophische Werk Ii*, III, 655.

[318] Letter 498, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 376.

same time, Schlegel shared a highly-critical appraisal of Schelling's *On The World Soul* with Schleiermacher.[319] Schlegel seems to have taken exception to Schelling's treatment of life, which he thought was reduced to the mathematical language of "pluses and minuses," wherein the uniqueness of life is erased through Schelling's identification of positive and negative principles undergirding every level of reality. For Schlegel, life cannot be so easily demonstrated by mathematical analogy, whether "pluses and minuses" or the kind of quasi-mathematical visual diagrams Schelling offers throughout the work.[320]

In only a month's time, Schlegel's clever deflection would grow into genuine appreciation. In August of 1798, Schlegel would confide in Schleiermacher that his correspondence with Hardenberg had impressed on him the need to learn more about the natural sciences. To that end, Schlegel would be meeting Hardenberg and Schelling for an intensive study session on natural science and philosophy, which he jokingly referred to as a "philosophical convent." Schlegel writes,

> My correspondence with Hardenberg has certainly become very 'physic-al.' I must learn this science, especially given the occasion. I already have books on physics, so very soon I will probably have a physics of my own. I am so far along already, that I hold on to Brown like a righteous Spartan. Meanwhile, something makes me I uneasy while I venture into such a foreign field, in which I will always be a mere guest (with mathematics it would be something else). Therefore I would make good on your title as 'critic,' and appoint you as the historian of our correspondence. Indeed, I fear that some of my visions will charm our magician,

[319] Schelling would write Schleiermacher about his impressions: "I have read Schelling's *World Soul* [*Von der Weltseele*] and *Overview* [*Übersicht der neuesten philosophischen Literatur*]. He becomes increasingly similar to Leibniz in presentation. In the *World Soul,* there is already a conscious negligence, and occasional causes increasingly prevail in his practical literature. Besides, it seems to me his philosophy is completely hyperventilated, and I not only fear consumption [tuberculosis], I see it as come already. His so called energy is quite like the blooming color of such patients. Anyway, there is nothing more vital for him than pluses and minuses." With expected cleverness, Schlegel has taken oxygen (an essential component of galvanic action in both Schelling and Ritter) and cast it as a critical metaphor: Schelling's new work endlessly pushes his theory of oxidation and deoxidation on its readers, causing rather than curing illness," Letter 482, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, July 1798, ibid., 346.

[320] There are quite a few instructive examples of this from *Von der Weltseele.* One of the most fitting for Schlegel's criticism is a description of light in the context of aether theory, wherein one should "conceive the so called acid-matter [*Sauerstoff*] or oxygen as the negative matter of the vital air that in combustion is combined with the body, while the positive goes under the form of light. For brevity's sake we will designate light by +O, but oxygen by itself by -O (provided that we do not thereby think of +E and =E)." At another point, Schelling declares that "all rest in the world is merely apparent, and properly only a minus, but in no way a complete absence, of motion (=0)," in Schelling, 83, 75. Unsurprisingly, Schelling's penchant for esoteric diagrams was no less favored by Ritter.

> and that he will not test me insofar as he cannot see them. Something great, of course, I must write as the representative of reason in this correspondence, otherwise no harmony of tone will be achieved.[321]

Clearly, Schlegel remains reticent to follow Hardenberg's esotericism in full, but he hopes that as the "representative of reason" he can temper and balance Hardenberg's enthusiasm with the light of reason. In any case, Schlegel identifies his ignorance of physics as a serious deficiency that requires immediate redress. "If you were only here!" Schlegel writes, though he hopes that Schleiermacher learns and participates as a "historian" of their exchange. In 1798, Schleiermacher was still quite anxious about his intellectual abilities, especially in the midst of so productive a group. Soon, however, at the prodding of Schlegel and his friends, Schleiermacher would commit his own thoughts to paper with the intent to publish; perhaps in that writing one might find additional signs that Schleiermacher was more than a passive onlooker to this emerging movement that linked natural science with nature-philosophy in a thoroughgoing organicism.

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[321] Letter 510, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, August 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 391-92. The "Brown" referenced by Schlegel is the Scottish doctor John Brown, whose 1780 *Elementa Medicinae* sought a unified theory of disease, and enjoyed a renaissance in the German-speaking world after its translation into German in the mid-1790s.

IV. ORGANICISM IN THE *SPEECHES*

I have spoken much of Ritter, Hardenberg, Schelling, and Schlegel, with regard to this emerging emphasis on the organismic unity of nature, in which everything from the smallest chemical phenomenon all the way to nature itself are understood under the same fundamental form, whether this form is described technically as galvanism or comprehensively as organism. Though the dissolution of Schleiermacher and Schlegel's friendship was unfortunate to those involved, the far greater tragedy might be that Schlegel preserved so few of Schleiermacher's letters. One can infer much about the content of Schleiermacher's letters from Schlegel's letters, as Chapter III has attempted to show. But there is no substitute for Schleiermacher's own words; reconstructions and inferences are indeed helpful, but only insofar as they enliven those words and thoughts that have resisted the decay of time.

In a way, this chapter is an attempt to take seriously Schleiermacher's biographer, Wilhelm Dilthey, when he declared that "it is impossible to represent Schleiermacher's system without starting with the philosophy of nature and its historical value, for Schleiermacher's system is founded on the truth of this philosophy of nature."[322] Consequently this chapter will draw out and elucidate Schleiermacher's appropriation of the forces and figures articulated in Chapter III, and in so doing, demonstrate that Schleiermacher is more than a passive onlooker to the emerging organicism of Schlegel, Hardenberg, Schelling, and Ritter. In arguing for Schleiermacher's 'appropriation' of

[322] Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine, *Romanticism and the Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 72.

natural science and philosophy of nature, this study invokes the multifarious meaning of the term to mean both a "taking" but also the "transformation" of that which is taken and made suitable.

Schleiermacher often describes freedom as appropriation for this very reason. Appropriation is not uncritical adoption, something “mimetically reproduced like alien physiognomies,” to borrow Schleiermacher’s own words, but rather the shepherding of influence, i.e. the free and conscious adoption of that which is suitable to further the process of self-formation.

Section A will begin with Schleiermacher’s minor writings that lead up to the publication of the *Speeches* in 1799. These will show, in Schleiermacher’s own words, how he was already appropriating natural science and philosophy of nature, and formulating a position all his own. That position will become clearly-articulated in the *Speeches,* the subject of Sections B-E. In those sections, it is argued that Schleiermacher developed a thoroughgoing organicism that he presented in the *Speeches,* in which individuals and communities are understood best within the form and function that ‘organism’ entails. Section B will begin by laying out Schleiermacher’s understanding of individual organisms, beginning with his assertion that the mind is nothing more than two competing drives, and showing how these drives are located in both bodily and spiritual organs. Section C will show how the form and function of individual organisms is mirrored in communities. Communities are also organisms with two competing drives and two kinds of organs in which these communal drives are located. It will also be argued that communities are not called organisms as a kind of analogy derived from individual organisms, but that Schleiermacher has a stronger notion of organicism in which communal organism is actually more primordial than any individual organism. Lastly, while Schleiermacher’s organicism draws from and appropriates the conceptuality of ‘galvanism’ and ‘organism’ from many of the influential figures featured in the previous chapter, Section E maintain that he is careful to distinguish his organicism from any attempt at a metaphysics of nature that is not rooted in religion. Schleiermacher’s avowedly rejected natural religion, which

mixes metaphysical and moral systems and falsely derives a religion from them. Natural science and philosophy are no doubt worthwhile and necessary pursuits, but seeking after a metaphysics of nature cannot deliver up the comprehensive "theory of everything" hoped for by Ritter, Schelling, and Hardenberg. Only religion, centered on intuition of the universe, can properly-orient and relate every level of organism, from individual to community.

A. TOWARD A CHEMICAL CONNECTION, 1798-99

In a letter to her friend Schleiermacher in October 1800, Dorothea Veit would recount her birthday celebration only a week before. Her story is insightful in many ways; few images better demonstrate just how thoroughly natural science was intermeshed with poetic imagination amongst this group of close friends. The morning of her birthday, Friedrich Schlegel presented his gift to Veit, a sonnet. She would not yet realize its ultimate significance. Schlegel had written,

> Let noble courage ground the white altar,
> Elevated imagination [*Fantasie*] flickering in purple flames,
> And love you'll soon see in the center,
> Where green the pillars of fire ignite;
>
> Through brown coils the myrtle will wind,
> The friend with golden fruits stands before you,
> The children in flowers then go to you,
> With rose and laurel the sister ties to you.
>
> It was the old painter's good custom,
> The image's meaning with a stroke one says,
> That the chord of colors inverts as it writes;
>
> So like this hymn dare boldly,
> To interpret into the verse an inmost center,
> In colors playing about sweet love.[323]

[323] Letter 972, D. Veit to Schleiermacher, 31 October 1800, *Briefwechsel 1800 (Briefe 850-1004)*, V.4, 310, 11-35f.

That evening, she would unwittingly revisit Schlegel's sonnet. Veit's birthday celebration was set at the home of Heinrich Paulus, the well-known, rationalist professor of theology at Jena, and his wife, a good friend of Veit's. Once in the home, Veit was lead into a dimly-lit room, illumined only by three dancing flames. These were no ordinary flames, produced by combustion in a simple lamp or candle, flames that would easily go unnoticed. Veit's face must have filled with surprise, as she watched these flames leap out a complex electrical apparatus.

This apparatus in particular was a new creation of Ritter's. It produced oxygen and hydrogen gas through the chemical decomposition of water *via* electrolysis. Only seven months earlier, Alessandro Volta had invented the Voltaic pile, the first dry-cell battery, a discovery that allowed greater charges of electricity to be stored than previously possible with Leyden jars. Ritter was one of the first to realize that this stronger electrical charge could break matter into its constituent parts. The apparatus was filled with water, through which stored electricity from a Voltaic pile could be passed; tulip-shaped containers made from blown-glass would catch the volatile gases as they emerged, which were fed through an opening and ignited—quite dramatically—by a spark of electricity. As if the otherworldly origin of these flames was not enough, the flames that illumined the room each cast a different glow: one white, another red, and the last green. Though it may have appeared otherworldly, this was chemistry, not sorcery. Based on his work in experimental chemistry, Ritter had selected and added chemical compounds that produce these colors in the heat of combustion, likely a form of strontium for the red flame, and either copper or borax for the green flame. While no doubt impressive to the audience assembled, owing to its uncanny character, this chemical apparatus would have been a cutting-edge demonstration of some of the latest research in natural science. Yet this chemical explanation of the flames remains incomplete, as each of these

colors carries a deeper meaning and connotation. Ritter had a theory of color, in which white signified purity, innocence, love, and harmony, for example, and red was the color of action and activity.[324] Schlegel and Veit were no doubt aware of his theory, while Veit offers her own gloss, concluding that "these colors have more than one sense; for us they mean faith, love, and hope; in the first one Ritter is signified as the white flame, while the second, red one is Friedrich [Schlegel], and I have the green one signifying hope."[325] Of significant import, a chemical phenomenon—the flames themselves—cannot be seen apart from their moral and aesthetic significance.

As the multihued light from Ritter's electrical apparatus danced about the room, Veit's son Philipp and the Paulus' youngest child appeared, both dressed in colorful and "imaginative" clothes and wearing pendants of orange blossoms and crowns made of myrtle and laurel. The children approached Veit, gracefully adorning her with their crowns and pendants, and handing her a bowl filled with ripened bitter oranges and roses, which Veit recognized as a reference to Friedrich Schlegel's tempestuously blended temperament. In the background, echoing off the walls, was the sound of the Paulus' piano; Ritter was playing an aria from the opera *Erwin und Elmire*, while the Paulus' gave it voice, singing, "with full breaths, I draw nature from you." But as such great joy is accompanied in life by a correspondingly-deep sadness, Schlegel approached Veit, carrying a withered wreath of violets. The violets had been a gift to Auguste Böhmer, the daughter of Caroline Böhmer-Schlegel, who had married Friedrich Schlegel's brother Wilhelm; Auguste had suffered a painful illness, probably typhus, and died only three months earlier. For this small group of close friends, their grief was certainly still palpable as Friedrich recited a poem on their great loss, which Veit reported to be deeply-moving to all present.

[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid., 310.

All in all, Veit deemed the celebration to be beautiful and unreal; "it was like in a dream, in which one dreams that one is dreaming." Veit suddenly realized the significance of Schlegel's sonnet for the evening's performance: "only when it was completely assembled did I realize that it was the sonnet."[326] Veit offers a a dramatic rendition of one of the core characteristics of the Jena circle: a belief in overarching unity, a unity of knowledge—natural, aesthetic, and moral—with lived and embodied human experience. A cutting-edge scientific apparatus produced multicolored light, while lyric poetry, music, and singing resounded off the walls, and the smell of ripe fruit and fresh blossoms lingered in the air. Life and joy were celebrated, but so too were death and sadness; all were recognized as intrinsic to human life. During his time in Berlin, Schleiermacher would be deeply-impressed by this sense of unity, and it would continue to mark his work throughout his life, not the least of which one might find in the *Speeches* of 1799.

1. Schleiermacher's Letters to Herz 1798-99

After moving to Berlin in 1797, Schleiermacher developed many unique friendships that would be influential for his development; Dorothea Veit was certainly one of these friends, but one of her childhood friends, Henrietta Herz, would become the young Schleiermacher's closest friend and companion while his relations with Schlegel cooled. Schleiermacher's letters to Herz are an important and early resource that demonstrates this influence of natural science and philosophy on his thinking immediately prior to *The Speeches* in 1799. In some important respects,

[326] Ibid., 311.

Schleiermacher's correspondence with Herz lacked the philosophical and literary sparring of his letters with Schlegel. Notably, Schleiermacher's friendship with Herz was a regular irritant to Schlegel, who worried that Herz would waste Schleiermacher's intellect on banal pursuits, e.g. translating travel books or learning Italian. In retrospect, Schleiermacher understood this relation to Herz quite differently; he had opened *both* his heart and mind to Herz, while only opening his mind to Schlegel. This special relationship with Herz gives us an important window to Schleiermacher's thinking in late 1798 and early 1799.

In September 1798, Herz had just returned from Lanke, a small lakeside retreat just outside Berlin. Responding to an earlier letter from Herz, Schleiermacher would tease Herz that

> you were only a very short time in Lanke, and yet you have been charged up by ecstasy, and even the bad weather did not act as a lightning rod to dissipate your electrical abundance. Pray, initiate me into the mysteries of your unsatisfied wishes. We must really invent something to prevent these electrical charges from piling up and striking us somewhere.[327]

Schleiermacher's thoroughgoing electrical metaphor is quite clever: she is "charged up" with "electrical exuberance," which Schleiermacher fears will "pile up"[328] and lead to an untimely shock. The metaphor is even more clever given its context, however. Schleiermacher is no doubt aware that Lanke is home to an impressive electrical apparatus, which at the time drew scientifically-curious onlookers to witness its demonstrations. Even Schleiermacher concedes interest in the machine, admitting that "next year I will 'physic-ally' journey to see the great electrifying machine in Lanke. Punish me if you are able, I will withstand every shock from that machine (including all its Leyden Jars) and not from you…"[329] Veiled in humor, Schleiermacher's reference nevertheless demonstrates

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[327] Letter 522, Schleiermacher to H. Herz, 6 September 1798, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 408. cf. Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 181-82.

[328] In the same sense that the first dry-cell battery, invented by Volta one year later in 1799, would be called a "Voltaic pile" or "galvanic pile."

[329] Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 409. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 182.

a deeper understanding of electrical phenomena in general, and specific understanding of the operative theory and construction of the electrical machine in Lanke.

In the same letter, Schleiermacher eventually transitions to more serious matters. In a previous letter, Herz has seemingly emphasized the priority and importance of the natural world over the intellectual world, and the effect that the natural world exercises on human beings.[330] Herz is perhaps in good company here, as Schelling would track a similar path towards the priority of nature, inverting the initial Fichtean tendencies of his earliest work. Schleiermacher's response is quite telling, and displays an extraordinary commitment to idealism in his reply:

> In reality, there is no greater object of activity than the mind [*Gemüth*]— indeed there is simply no other— does it not act in you? Oh, you fertile spirit, you ever active being, you are a true Ceres in the inner world, and yet **you place so great a stress on the activity of the outer world, which is only a means towards other ends,** a place where humanity is absorbed in the universal mechanism, in which little contributes to the attainment of the purpose and goal of all activity, which gets lost a thousand times more while underway.[331]

Certainly this is a powerful defense of the priority of the mind over nature, made only more powerful through its identification of the natural world with the enervation of human purpose. After a terse reading, one might conclude that nature is ostensibly portrayed as distracting and misleading for human intellectual life.

This appraisal is shortsighted, however, for several reasons. First, whether Schleiermacher intends it or not, the claim is at least consonant with his theological heritage, and should be considered in this context. Protestant theology often held the belief that sin had erased human ability to know God through nature; consequently nature was a distraction because only the revelation of God through the written word could enact an inner transformation of human beings.

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[330] Schleiermacher writes, "I do not in the least understand the impression that the country produces upon you, nor why it causes this impression. Are we not something in that great activity?" *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 410. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 183.

[331] *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 410., emphasis added.

Second, Schleiermacher employs the holistic and romantic term *Gemüth* for mind, which incorporates more than mere intellect: it is the indissoluble interrelation of reason, understanding, and feeling; in short, the inner life of the human being. Third, and likely most important, Schleiermacher may overstate his case to Herz in the interest of establishing a more-balanced understanding of inner and outer life of the human being, not unlike the way Schlegel hoped to be the "representative of reason" in his conversations with Hardenberg, where he hoped to assert reason in the interest of balancing Hardenberg's supposed enthusiasm.

In a letter to Herz dated three days later, Schleiermacher would clarify that the mind's priority did not erase the significance of nature. He comforts Herz that the chemical processes of aging and eventually dying are only one aspect of bodies; one should instead exercise freedom in improving the quality of one's life, enacting a new "golden age" with "the satisfaction and merit of having created it ourselves." This exercise of freedom is not opposed to nature, but a natural act of creation; Schleiermacher closes, saying "there will always be a wide difference between a body that is produced chemically and one that nature creates," a striking association of natural freedom with a force that exceeds mere chemical or physical explanation.[332] These letters presage the balance he later strikes in the *Speeches:* Schleiermacher demonstrates interest in natural science and philosophy, while nonetheless resisting a metaphysicalization of nature at the expense of inner experience; in place of metaphysics, religion will organize self-consciousness and its relationships to the world.

2. Schleiermacher's Written Notes: the "Ideas"

[332] Ibid., 411. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 184.

Many of Schleiermacher's notes from the period attest to his continued engagement with prominent works and ideas from the natural science and philosophy of his day. These notebooks, published in the *KGA* as *Gedanken*—'ideas' or 'thoughts'— offer distinct snapshots of Schleiermacher's attention to a variety of themes and topics. As these notes were for private use and reflection, they are often direct and contentious, while others are more idiosyncratic. This section will treat Schleiermacher's notes from late 1798 to early 1799, while Schleiermacher was actively reading Schlegel's correspondence with other philophysicists like Ritter, Schelling, and Hardenberg.

Firstly, these notes show that Schleiermacher continued to read and discuss prominent works of natural science. One note from the period critiques John Brown's physiological theory— the same theory which proved so seminal for Humbolt, Ritter, Schelling, and Schlegel alike—which suggests some familiarity with Brown's system.[333] During this period, Schleiermacher also picked up significant works like Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and Schelling's *On the World Soul*. Schlegel, in fact, considered Schleiermacher's study of Schelling's *On the World Soul* sufficiently-thorough to ask for his notes on the work, while offering him the task of reviewing the work for the *Athenaeum*. Schleiermacher's notes more clearly show his careful engagement and critique of Schelling's positions in *On the World Soul*. One entry suggests that

> Hypotheses in physics that locate substances [*Stoffe*] as representations of purely physical ideas, and that locate laws as explanations of appearances, have a very different rank in science, and in relation to that fact must be treated differently. Schelling treats [hypotheses] of the first kind as if they were [hypotheses] of the second kind.[334]

Schleiermacher suggests that Schelling conflates different kinds of physical hypotheses, which should differentiate practically-necessary hypotheses from more-speculative ones. The criticism echoes back

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[333] Schleiermacher writes, "To want to remove mathematics from physics (the doctrine on the quality of force) is just as bad as Brown removing the theory of specific irritation from physiology," Note 80, "Gedanken I," *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1796 - 1799*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 24.

[334] Note 111, "Gedanken I," ibid., 29.

toward *On Freedom* and his longstanding commitment to Kant, who preferred the efficacious use of practical reason over the metaphysical flights of speculative reason, while at the same time pointing forward to the demotion of metaphysical conceptions of nature in favor of religious intuitions of the universe. Another note questions the efficacy or completeness of Schelling's argument, asking

> If transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature should be perpetually opposed and yet entirely corresponding viewpoints, then transcendental philosophy must explain the outer world as the reality for the 'I', just as philosophy of nature must explain the reality of the 'I' for the outer world. Schelling strove toward this in his *Wold Soul,* but has he also achieved it?[335]

Schelling's attempt to relate self and world through the interdependence of transcendental- and nature-philosophy was not ultimately satisfying for Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher felt a new approach was needed, one that would combine the best combinatory concepts of the period with a new point of orientation, religion.

Other notes prominently feature the language and conceptuality of natural science. In one note, Schleiermacher writes that "there are human beings that have spirit [*Geist*], but it is tied up with so much heat-matter [*Wärmestoff*] that it never appears differently in vapor form, and that one cannot locate it without neutralizing it."[336] The idea of heat-matter is likely a reference to the philophysicist Franz Xaver von Baader, whom Ritter included in the "transcendental triumvirate" alongside himself and Schelling.[337] For Baader, heat-matter was an alternative to the mechanistic-atomistic explanation that heat was the vibration of particles; for Baader, heat was produced chemically by a reaction with a universal, imperceptible material substance called heat-matter. This heat-matter additionally represented God in the form of a "world-soul" [*Weltseele*].

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[335] Note 71, "Gedanken V," *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1800-1802*, ed. Hans Joachim Birkner, vol. I.3ibid. (1988), 300.The note itself likely dates from after the publication of the Speeches around 1800-1802, but it is helpful in understanding Schleiermacher's reception of the work.

[336] Note 28, "Gedanken I,“ *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1796 - 1799*ibid. (1984), 13.

[337] Walter D. Wetzels, *Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Physik Im Wirkungsfeld Der Deutschen Romantik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973), 44.

Methodologically, Baader's 1786 treatise *On Warm-matter* [*Vom Wärmestoff*] also followed other philosophysicists by positing the inherent conceptual unity of empirical science and metaphysics, transferring the conceptuality of science into more comprehensive philosophical uses.[338] Schelling also discusses heat-matter prominently in *On the World Soul;* regardless of its source, Schleiermacher is clearly thinking about the broader conceptual applications of natural scientific terms.

Meteorology, and especially the idea of "atmosphere"—prominently featured in the works of both Ritter and Schelling—also appears several times. In "atmosphere," Schleiermacher employs a distinctly-scientific term as a more widely-applicable concept of relation: "every system has its atmosphere, e.g. its circuit of elements from which it assimilates and in which it reduces as well as any worldly body [*Weltkörper*]."[339] As a reciprocal circuit of appropriated elements and reduced products, atmosphere could even be pressed into service describing human nature. To that effect he writes that "some human beings draw from the atmosphere that which does not surround them, mixing/preparing [*ansetzen*, a term from galvanic chemistry] their water the same way they precipitate out [*absetzen*] mineral alkali; others restrain themselves in the manner of vegetables: they want to bring it in, they only attract water."[340] This note employs the technical language of galvanic chemistry to describe how some humans draw in and "prepare" themselves with a wide range of resources, while other products "precipitate out."

Schleiermacher's use of scientific terminology demonstrates just how prominently the natural science and philosophy of his day had already made its impress on his thinking. As in Ritter or Schelling, the conceptual structure or fundamental relation undergirding each phenomenon is the

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[338] See further "Baader's Theory of Heat Matter as the Soul of the World," Chapter 9, Vassányi.

[339] Note 94, "Gedanken I," Schleiermacher, "Spinozistisches System," 26.

[340] Note 29, "Gedanken I," *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1796 - 1799. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Hans Joachim Birkner, et al., vol. I.2, Kristische Gesamtausgabe (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 13.

same, regardless of whether one is describing a human being or a chemical reaction. Consequently, Schleiermacher can speak of disagreements between two people with the language of chemical reactions: "disputes comport themselves to illiberality as salt-acidic heavy-earth [*salzsäure Schwererde*] comports to vitriolic acid [*Vitriolsäure*]."[341] Whether vitriolic worlds or vitriolic acid, the acerbic effect is the same.

Schleiermacher's notes also point to his use of "organ" and organic relation as fundamental concepts that translate easily from chemical to metaphysical realms. In one note he mentions, almost in passing, "the organs [*die Organe*] of community,"[342] while describing how human beings remain necessarily social and yet struggle to relate to others. Two other references are far more substantial, however. In entry 93, Schleiermacher considers that

> Matter occurs in three forms: as element (free substance [*Stoffe*]), as mass (bound and in specific form), and as system (in bodies, e.g. in organic wholes [*organischen Ganzen*]). One cannot deny of the second form a certain organism and the first is in the strongest sense only imaginary because it should never be accepted that something is absolutely [*schlechthin*] element. Leibniz had observed something similar. The element is his swimming pool.[343]

Schleiermacher seems to consider "matter as element" to be "imaginary" because it cannot exist without a relation to a phenomenal appearance. "Matter as mass" is determinate in form, and thus phenomenal. "Matter as system" is related to bodies, which he calls "organic wholes". What results is a thoroughly organic understanding of matter. For every "organic whole" there must be

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[341] Note 41, "Gedanken I," "Spinozistisches System," 15.

[342] Die Organe can also be translated as "institutions" in a communal context, but it nevertheless carries the idea of organic relation insofar as institutions can be seen as organs instantiating larger social movements or communities. The full note reads:

> 7. The way of human beings is not the way of community. In this every settled point is filled the same again, and the organs [die Organe] of community notice the difference that develops therein at rare intervals. Human beings die off with every part of their being that dies off. The communications of human beings are chords; to those that lack the root note, once there is no longer that which elicits, they will remain forever silent. It lingers in the mind as a remembrance of harmony, that no longer sounds. So we die little by little. Those many who have already died have no more harmonies to lose, and once it dies off this way you are simply severed from the changed root note. A few humans have died this way, but every better man is killed," Note 7, "Gedanken I," ibid., 7-8.

[343] Note 93, "Gedanken I," ibid., 26.

constituent organs that integrate together into a "system", a relation that produces a "body." When Schleiermacher asserts that "matter as mass" cannot be denied "a certain organism," it is likely because these discrete, material forms can only be understood as the organic parts of an organic whole. The resulting conclusion is that matter can be rightly conceived *only* as the reciprocal interaction between part and whole, component and system, even organ and organism. This view seems to be confirmed by another note, where Schleiermacher concludes that "it probably only happens with organic products that two different substances [*Stoffe*] connect themselves in different quantitatively-nuanced relationships."[344] In organic relation, disparate and distinct parts are held together in systematic integration, though that integration entails as many kinds of relationships as there are distinct parts. Though these notes do not amount to a systematic presentation, they are enticing signposts for the kind of development that emerges in the *Speeches*.

B. ORGANS AND ORGANISM IN THE *SPEECHES*

Considering the depth and breadth of theoretical synthesis exercised by these philophysicists, the lack of substantial engagement with the topic of 'religion' can be considered a surprising lacuna. While this emerging amalgam of philosophy and physics would describe human beings in terms of fundamental-organic structures, religion— in all its theoretical and historical messiness—remained virtually unexplored within this new conceptuality. Hardenberg noticed this lacuna in July of 1798, writing to Schlegel that

> in my philosophy of everyday life, I have arrived at the idea of a moral (in Hemsterhuis' sense) astronomy, and have made the interesting discovery of a religion of the visible universe. You would not believe how far it

[344] Note 107, "Gedanken I," ibid., 28.

> reaches. For this, I think I will skim over Schelling. What do you think? Is this not the right way, that physics in a universal sense be treated in an absolutely symbolic fashion?[345]

Hardenberg's reference to Schelling is unsurprising given the content of *On the World Soul,* though Schelling was reticent to explore the religious implications of his "world soul." As was previously discussed, Hardenberg had a well-known predilection for taking discoveries in the natural sciences as symbols of a deeper philosophical truth, and recasting them into more comprehensive descriptions of reality. Religion, Hardenberg surmises, should not be preserved from this symbolic extension. Seemingly leery of Hardenberg's claims, Schlegel would concede to Schleiermacher that "it's Hardenburg's turn to stir religion and physics together. That will be some interesting scrambled eggs."[346] But it would be Schleiermacher, not Hardenberg, who would become the more influential writer on religion. In November of 1798, under pressure from Schlegel and other friends at his birthday celebration, Schleiermacher would commit to write and publish a substantive new work in the coming year. Quite naturally for a seasoned, young minister, Schleiermacher would take up the topic of religion, and in so doing, take his hand at subtly stirring religion with his newly-appropriated interest in natural science.

The 1799 publication of *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultivated Among its Despisers* [*Über die Religion: reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern*] was a watershed moment that propelled Schleiermacher to the forefront of German intellectual life. The work is accurately portrayed as a polemical and apologetic defense of true religion, rhetorically crafted for his close friends and intellectual companions from the Berlin salons. Many of these friends saw the confederacy of German protestant churches and the Prussian state as an impediment to both rational enlightenment

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[345] Novalis: *Schriften* 4, 255, as quoted in *Briefwechsel 1796-1798 (Briefe 327-552)*, V.2, 363f.

[346] Letter 495, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, 20 July 1798, ibid., 363.

and political liberation. Through a grounding of religion in both individual and human sociality, Schleiermacher aims squarely at this pernicious church-state relationship, no doubt increasing the enjoyment and agreement of his audience. While much of this traditional understanding of the *Speeches* is correct, it is, nevertheless, incomplete.

While Enlightenment irreligion and revolutionary republicanism certainly explain much of his audience's incredulity toward religion, little attention is given to how the proliferation of "popular science" in salon culture in the late eighteenth century may have also played a part in the objections of religion's "despisers." Certainly for Schleiermacher's closest friends like Schlegel, Hardenberg, and Herz, the natural sciences represented the growing power of reason to know and explain the natural world without appeals to religious doctrine. Put simply, for Schlegel and his Jena compatriots, to be "cultivated" already required engagement with natural science. To ignore this fundamental commitment held by the intended audience of the *Speeches* is a puzzling and yet pervasive lacuna.[347] Consequently this study will argue that Schleiermacher proudly wields the language and theory of natural science and philosophy, even while he challenges the metaphysical

[347] In Richard Crouter's "Introduction" to his 1996 English translation of *The Speeches,* he tacitly agrees with Paul de Man's assessment that "a preference for organic metaphors exemplifies the Romantics' 'nostalgia for the natural object,'" ignoring the influence of natural science in favor of a historically-dubious emphasis on Romantic nostalgia and sentimentalism about nature. See further, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxx. Others are not so dismissive, but nevertheless fail to pursue the connection. Keith W. Clement's terse description in "Schleiermacher in Context" helpfully points to the significance of natural science to Schleiermacher's intended audience, but only describes Schleiermacher's position as negatively related with religion, insofar as religion is *not* science, nor does it compete with science in the realm of knowledge: "Now the cultured despisers did not constitute a homogenous group, and in the Speeches Schleiermacher was fighting on several fronts at once for the distinctiveness and fundamental human significance of religion. The Enlightenment had greatly elevated the stature of natural science as a form of knowledge. Religion was not to be rejected on scientific grounds, according to Schleiermacher, as if religion claimed to be a theory about the causal structure of the world in completion with the scientific view," in Friedrich Schleiermacher and K. W. Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher : Pioneer of Modern Theology*, 1st Fortress Press ed., The Making of Modern Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 23. Others point out the connection between Schelling and Schleiermacher's "intuition" and "feeling," but these arguments ignore the natural science of the day in favor of a more "purely" philosophical discussion, while invoking texts with no demonstrable historical connection to Schleiermacher (e.g., Schelling's *Ich-Schrift*) or that anachronistically date after the Speeches (e.g., Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*). See further, Süskind, 100-34.

foundations of philophysical theory by establishing religious intuition as the primary connection between self-consciousness and the natural world.

Schleiermacher's *Speeches* are well-known for their rich language. Insofar as primordial religion exceeds a linguistic description, he is forced into poetic description and multifarious metaphor, in many ways like Hardenberg's poetic casting of sensibility as a "touch-hearing," Schleiermacher famously locates religion as "the sensibility and taste for the infinite."[348] Many commentators have focused on the prevalence of artistic metaphor to describe religion, especially music; Schleiermacher believes that "religious feelings should accompany every human deed like a holy music," while the language of "tones" and "harmony" prevail elsewhere.[349] Yet even more often, Schleiermacher consistently employs the language and conceptuality of natural science and nature-philosophy to describe religion. Though this practice occurs in each of the five speeches, Schleiermacher openly and plainly admits to the practice in the fourth speech: "If I may use an illustration from science, from which I like best to borrow expressions in matters of religion…"[350]

At points in the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher openly praises natural scientists and philosophers who are able to "penetrate deeper into nature's interior." Mirroring a sentiment held by many, physics and chemistry are said to be fundamental sciences, because the phenomena they describe "are the phenomena in which we intuit the universe most clearly and in a most holy manner." Like the philophysicists, Schleiermacher agrees that the conceptual framework employed by empirical science

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[348] Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion: Reden an Die Gebildeten Unter Ihren Berachtern," in *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1796-1799*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (New York: de Gruyter, 1984), 212. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 23.

[349] "Über Die Religion," 219. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 30.

[350] "Über Die Religion," 274. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 79.

can and should be translated into a more comprehensive description of reality. In a dithyramb directed at Schelling in particular, Schleiermacher would write that

> Physics will boldly put into the center of nature a person who looks around himself in order to perceive the universe, and will no longer tolerate his amusing himself fruitlessly and dwelling upon individual, small features. He will only pursue the play of nature's forces into the most secret territory, from the inadequate storehouses of immoveable matter to the artistic workshops of organic life; he will grasp nature's power from the limits of space that gives birth to worlds to the center of his own self, and will find himself everywhere in eternal conflict and in the most indissoluble union with it, and his own being as its innermost center and its outermost boundary. Appearance will have fled, and being will be attained.[351]

The sense that physics provides the conceptual means by which one can move from "immoveable matter" to "the artistic workshops of organic life" was a most promising attribute of this new physics, embodied in the young Schelling's dedication to empirical *and* speculative physics. Schleiermacher had certainly paid attention to this advantageous connectivity, and sought to employ it to the study of religion in the *Speeches.*

As I previously mentioned, Schleiermacher, in the fourth Speech, openly asks his audience "If I may use an illustration from science," in order to press forward an understanding of the nature of religion. Specifically, he attempts to illumine the communal aspects of religion by employing the form and language of a scientific description of a chemical system. He describes negative elements being drawn to positive elements; the negative elements ultimately fail to assimilate this positive, which then escapes into the atmosphere. This idea of two contrary charges or principles—the positive and the negative—reacting in a system that itself draws and expels into a surrounding "atmosphere," is indeed a properly-scientific form that, as will soon be explicated, Schleiermacher employs regularly in the speeches. The idea of two opposing elements being held in unifying tension by some force was a prominent *leitmotif* of the age. As has been demonstrated, Kant's descriptions of the duality of matter in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural*

[351] "Über Die Religion," 264. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 70.

Science worked its way into many of the philosophies of the age. Whether in Fichte, Herder, Goethe, Schelling, Ritter, or Hardenberg, this duality came to describe a fundamental form and relationship of all reality, including consciousness itself.

Schleiermacher was no exception, and in the *Speeches,* he framed his understanding of both the natural world and consciousness in terms of this duality. In the beginning of his first Speech, Schleiermacher asserts that a unified deity "has compelled itself to divide its great work endlessly, to fuse together each definite being only out of two opposing forces, and to realize each of its eternal thoughts in twin forms that are hostile to each other yet exist inseparably only through each other." Considering his immediate audience—and their philophysical commitments—Schleiermacher would continue, "this whole corporeal world, penetration into whose interior is the highest goal of your investigations, appears to the best informed and most thoughtful among you only as an eternally prolonged play of opposing forces."[352] Flattery aside, Schleiermacher has made an important rhetorical connection with his audience; he is to be counted among those not only interested in natural science and nature-philosophy, but committed to the fundamental duality of opposing forces. In the second Speech, Schleiermacher is even clearer about the nature of these opposing forces, when he implores his audience to "see how attraction and repulsion determine everything and are uninterruptedly active everywhere, how all diversity and opposition are only apparent and relative, and all individuality is merely an empty name."[353] These statements bear an uncanny resemblance to the natural science and nature-philosophy this study has already considered. Here, two opposing forces are held together in a tension that produces an activity or force, a relationship quite similar to the structure of galvanic activity that the philophysicists applied in

[352] "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.
[353] "Über Die Religion," 227. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 36.

comprehensive metaphysical directions. But Schleiermacher would turn first to self-consciousness to express the significance of this duality.

1. Consciousness: Two Drives, Two Faculties

In order to even make these claims about the duality of nature, Schleiermacher posited that there must be a dual-structure within the human mind that corresponds with the duality of nature. This claim was a central tenet of Schelling's *On the World-Soul,* in which the principle of 'like knows like' demanded that the mind share a common form with any possible objects of perception. Schleiermacher does not begin with a philosophical justification, however, but rather begins with something more common and visceral—life itself. He writes that "every life is only the result of a continuous appropriation and repulsion; everything has its determinate being only by virtue of the way in which it uniquely combines and retains the two primal forces of nature: the thirsty attraction and the expansion of the active and living self."[354] Human life, marked as it is by appropriation and repulsion, already implies not only a duality of consciousness, but also a duality of possible relations of that consciousness to the world. As human beings live their lives, in a stream of interaction between consciousness and the world, they find themselves driven in two directions by two opposing forces, attraction and repulsion. Formally, this conclusion echoes the philophysical conception of a galvanic or organic form: contraries held in unity, producing a force or activity. For Schleiermacher, the activity of life emerges out of the play of opposing forces in one's interaction with the world.

[354] "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.

In what seems like a drastically-reductive move, Schleiermacher claims that what is known as 'mind' is nothing more than "merely a product of two opposing drives."[355] The first "attractive" drive strives to draw into itself everything that surrounds it, ensnaring it in its own life and, if possible, appropriating and absorbing it wholly into its being. This drive is sensualistic, in that it orients self-consciousness toward enjoyment and striving after individual things. Opposed to the first, the second "repulsive" drive

> despises enjoyment and only goes on to ever-increasing and heightened activity; it overlooks individual things and manifestations just because it penetrates them and finds everywhere only the forces and entities on which its own force breaks; it wants to penetrate and to fill everything with reason and freedom, and thus it proceeds directly to the infinite and at all times seeks and produces freedom and coherence, power and law, right and suitability.[356]

Because of its connection to ideality and universality, Schleiermacher alternately calls this drive the "spiritual penetration drive." It expresses a common sentiment found in early German romanticism, one well-demonstrated by Hardenberg's famous fragment that "everywhere we seek the unconditioned [*das Unbedingte*], but find only things [*Dinge*]."[357] In a way, each drive pushes consciousness toward different ways of viewing or relating to the world; one either views the world as an assemblage of real objects available to the senses, or one considers it in terms of its ideal and rational unity. Furthermore, both ways of viewing or relating to the world are good and necessary for consciousness; though they are opposed, these drives are always simultaneously present and joined by "a common bond of consciousness." In turn, this bond can be more-highly ordered or disordered depending on the individual, as the quality of consciousness depends on the ordered relationship between these two opposed drives and not the predominance of one drive over the other. As a result, this view rejects a totally-speculative idealism, in which the spiritual penetration drive would

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[355] "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.
[356] "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.
[357] Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, 24.

overpower the attractive drive and undermine the goodness of embodied existence and necessity of worldly interaction to support life. The view equally rejects an embrace of hedonism, in which the pursuit of worldly pleasure and individual things through the attractive drive would enervate the spiritual penetration drive and deemphasize reason, freedom, and unity. Ultimately, one's activity can only be improved through the proper ordering or relating of these two drives.

Both drives are necessary, and both drives commit one to a kind of relationship to the world. But do both these drives function identically? Schleiermacher gives one good reason to think that they are quite different in function, given the nature of 'drives.' Drives are not simply a passive way of viewing the world, but a way of viewing that entails an active relation to the world. Perception is not a purely passive act: the senses provide consciousness with an appearance, which is then formed into a representation. As was mentioned earlier, Schleiermacher appropriated this understanding of drive from Reinhold and ensconced it in *On Freedom:* representations are not value-neutral as they already imply the desirability of representation. If the drive is sufficient for a resolution in consciousness, the desire can proceed to its actuation in the world. The attractive and repulsive drives are ultimately responsible for mediating consciousness and the world. How can a force like a drive come to connect mind with its body and world? Given Schleiermacher's use of organic conceptuality throughout the *Speeches*, the answer is most certainly organs. The attractive and repulsive drives can each be located in a different kind of organ, appropriate for their differing relations. The attractive drive, concerned as it is with sensual pursuit of individual objects, is appropriately located in bodily organs that sense and move. The repulsive drive, focused as it is on reason, freedom, and unity, must be located in different kind of organ, one that relates to the universe as a whole; what might be called an 'organ of spirit.'

Aside from these two drives, human consciousness can also be thought of in terms of its constitutive faculties or powers: feeling [*Gefühl*] and intuition [*Anschauung*]. Feeling and intuition are indissolubly unified, emerging as they do from a common unity predating subject and object. Regardless of this origin, in human experience, they become distinct. Evoking the language of chemical contact in describing appearances, Schleiermacher asserts that "immediately upon this contact [*Berührung*] the simplest matter separates itself into two opposing elements," feeling and intuition. With respect to the world of sense, appearances begin with some physical object or objects affecting some bodily sense organ or organs, which then communicate this appearance to consciousness through intuition, an initial apprehension. In consciousness, this appearance is then formed by feeling, which grasps, apprehends, and conceives the intuition in accordance with one's individual nature."[358] Reconfiguring an old Kantian dictum, Schleiermacher would assert that "intuition without feeling is nothing and can have neither the proper origin nor the proper force; feeling without intuition is also nothing."[359] At this point the reader might be justified in asking. is this just Kant's faculty of 'understanding' in a new guise? Certainly the way that feeling grasps and conceptualizes intuitions in Schleiermacher's account sounds oddly similar to Kant's account of appearances being subsumed under concepts.

What distinguishes Schleiermacher from Kant is his emphasis on 'drives'[*Trieben*]. Drives recognize that human representation already implies value and desirability, and not simply the correct application of conceptual forms to the content of experience. Drives necessitate the

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[358] Schleiermacher's use of intuition in particular is generally in agreement with Kant's use of the term: "Intuition proceeds from an influence of the intuited on the one who intuits, from an independent action of the former, which is then grasped, apprehended, and conceived by the latter according to one's own nature," Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 213-14. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 24-25.

[359] In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant famously wrote that "thoughts without content are empty, intuition without concepts are blind," Kant, *Kritik Der Reinen Vernuft*, 75. cf. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 31.

reciprocal relationship between consciousness and the world, transgressing back and forth on any distinction between form and content, mental and physical. Consequently much of *On Freedom* was dedicated to understanding how various 'drives'—both empirical and intellectual in origin—came to determine the faculty of desire, moving from sense to representation, desire, and action. In a sense, *On Freedom* and the *Speeches* both struggle with a similar question: how should one understand the connection between mind and body, especially sensibility and intentional action? In the *Speeches*, drives require that human consciousness be engaged with the world, while structuring consciousness as both feeling and intuition differentiates both an active and passive relationship *to that world.* Given all the abstract talk about consciousness relating to the world, one might forget an important point: consciousness never relates directly to the world, but rather is mediated through bodily organs. Consequently, one should look at how these drives and faculties are instantiated or located in organs, which might offer clues on the form and structure of 'organism.'

2. Bodily Organs: Locating the Attractive Drive

The attractive drive, concerned as it is with drawing in, absorbing, and appropriating its environment, is "sensualistic" in that it relates the world of sense to the parts of consciousness concerned with sensible desires. Corresponding to feeling and intuition, the attractive drive instantiates in two kinds of bodily organs: organs of sense and organs of motion. Sensory organs are one of the most apparent ways that human consciousness relates to the world, if only for the reason that contemporary English retains the use of 'organ' in descriptions of human senses. Sense organs are essential for translating physical stimuli into nerve impulses which, by some means, become intuitions, i.e. psychical appearances; Schleiermacher reminds that "if the smallest parts of the body,

the tips of your fingers, were not mechanically or chemically affected…you would intuit nothing and perceive nothing."[360] Schleiermacher understands that sense organs must translate physical affectivity into intuition, a mental state. This appearance of an object in intuition also serves to demarcate the limits of consciousness from the world, as one's fingers translate physical resistance into an idea of an object that imposes limits on what is "I" from what is "not-I."[361] Consequently organs of sense are essential for the attractive drive, insofar as they enable representation and desire by providing content to the mind.

But that initial content must be represented by the mind, a task Schleiermacher reserves for feeling. Schleiermacher describes this process, saying that "your sense [organs][362] mediate the connection between the object and yourselves; the same influence of the object, which reveals its existence to you, must stimulate [*erregen*] them in various ways and produce a change in your inner consciousness."[363] Sense organs translate physical objects into mental appearances. These unalloyed mental appearances are then shaped into mental representations by feeling. Interestingly, Schleiermacher describes feeling as being "stimulated" [*erregen*] by appearances in intuition.

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[360] "Über Die Religion," 214. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 25.

[361] "Über Die Religion," 214. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 25.

[362] Though Richard Crouter's 1996 English translation of *The Speeches* is an excellent translation, its readable prose often comes at the expense of obscuring important connotations of particular terms, many of which have important connections with scientific terminology and conceptuality from the period. In this quotation in particular, Crouter translates *Organe* as "senses", which is certainly appropriate given the use of the term in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. But is it the best way to understand this use of 'organs' in particular? In *Transplanting the Metaphysical Organ,* Leif Weatherby has convincingly argued for the productive ambiguity of the term 'organ' around 1800, as well as its novel and well-attested use by Hardenberg, Schlegel, Schelling, and Schleiermacher, a use I have described above. Consequently, Schleiermacher's *Organe* should here be translated, at the very least, as "sense organs." Schleiermacher's use of other specific terms related to "sense" in the same few paragraphs further suggest a more specific meaning than simple "sense." Only a few lines later, Schleiermacher uses the term *Sinn,* which Crouter also translates as "sense." From context, it is clear that Schleiermacher intends this use of *Organe* as "sense organs", the actual organs of sensation, while this use of *Sinn* describes the cognitive faculty of "sense." Both are related to the act of intuiting, but only *Organe* supports a philosophical form of relation between mind and body. Schleiermacher's use of the English word "sensation" in the same discussion further emphasizes his intent to clearly distinguish different faculties, forces, and functions related to sense. Crouter seems uninterested in preserving these distinctions, and the deeply-rooted 'organicity' of the text is smoothed over and forgotten.

[363] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 29.

Significantly, the verb *erregen* carries an electro-chemical connotation during this period, as it commonly describes the electrical stimulation of a nerve that causes a muscle to contract. John Brown's physiology, which was so influential to the German-speaking world during the 1790s, centered on the state of 'irritability," as the potentiality of a nerve-muscle system; the term was translated into German as *Erregbarkeit,* and it is derived from the verb *erregen,* "to stimulate or arouse."

While the term *erregen* has more general connotations, there is good reason to think Schleiermacher has its electrical and physiological signification in mind while discussing how physical objects can "stimulate" psychical states like feeling. In the passage, just as a nerve stimulates a muscle to move, intuition is said to stimulate feeling toward its task of representing and conceptualizing the appearance. At first, this seems like a simple analogy; both have a similar structure of stimulation. Then Schleiermacher describes a special case where

> this feeling, of which you are frequently scarcely aware, can in other cases grow to such intensity that you forget both the object and yourselves because of it; your whole nervous system can be so permeated by it that for a long time that sensation [*Sensation*] alone dominates and resounds and resists the effect of other impressions.[364]

By citing a case where feeling can grow in intensity until one's entire nervous system is permeated, one can see how strongly Schleiermacher intends the connection between mind and body. Feeling is a psychical faculty of representation and intelligibility, but it has real physiological effects, i.e. it permeates the whole nervous system, shutting out new "impressions" or intuitions from one's bodily, sensory organs. If feeling can dominate the nervous system and lock out the body's sense organs, both of which function through electrical stimulation, then feeling seemingly must work on the

[364] "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 29.

same physiological level that produces electrical impulses. Consequently, an intensification of feeling is both a psychical *and* a physiological event.

Schleiermacher stops short, however, of describing how feeling can become a motive force in the body; this description of feeling overriding the nervous system and sensation is the closest link he offers. Why the curious absence? The answer could be quite simple: as speeches *On Religion,* Schleiermacher has emphatically insisted that religion is distinct from morality, where morality demonstrates the "desire to continue the universe's development and perfect it by the power of freedom."[365] To make an idea or representation the motive force for action in the world is firmly within the realm of morals, not religion, as "religious feelings should accompany every human deed like a holy music; one should do everything with religion, nothing because of religion."[366] This does not deny the fact that humans are necessarily active, and that their representations drive their desires and activities in a world of bodies and motion. Insofar as feeling represents an object as desirable, it can determine a decision for the actualization of that object. In this case, feeling would be the first cognitive step towards forming a desire and actualizing it in the world. In *On Freedom*, this case was described as an "organ of the soul," which translated a mental resolution in the faculty of desire into the bodily motions necessary to fulfill that desire. Though the *Speeches* are dedicated to religion and not morality, Schleiermacher nevertheless concedes that such 'organs of motion' exist in the realm of morality and everyday human activity.

3. Toward a Theory of Organism

[365] "Über Die Religion," 214. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 22.
[366] "Über Die Religion," 211. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 30.

We have seen how Schleiermacher describes bodily organs systematically connecting human beings with their world. One might rightly ask, is this a systematic account of what an 'organism' is? At least two important obstacles remain for explicating Schleiermacher's theory of organism. First, Schleiermacher's description is limited to human beings, and not a wider account. Could he intend that the consciousness that humans enjoy is essential to the idea of organism? The answer is almost certainly no, given Schleiermacher's unwavering consideration of the intellection and activity of non-human life, from "instinct" in *On Freedom* to the "animal-grade consciousness" he mentions in the *Christian Faith.* Again, one must not confuse Schleiermacher's stated focus in the *Speeches*—human religion—with an arbitrary delimitation of organicity to humanity. Second, Schleiermacher never explicitly uses the term 'organism'[*Organismus*] in the *Speeches,* though his use of 'organ' is widespread. Nevertheless, his description of human beings, their 'organs,' and they way those organs are organized can tell us a great deal about what constitutes an organism.

We know that human beings are composed of certain organs, which mediate between consciousness and the world. Because consciousness is dual and comprised of both intuition and feeling, consciousness must relate to the world through similarly-distinct kinds of organs. With respect to the attractive drive, which governs consciousness of the sensible world, these organs are sensory and motive. Together, they comprise a coordinated and complex interaction between consciousness and the world. This interaction primarily involves organs like nerves, the eyes, ears, and skin, and muscle groups; in turn, these organs rely on other systems and organs like blood vessels, the stomach, the heart, and lungs. Consequently, human beings are not merely an aggregate or disorganized collection of organs, but a highly-organized complex of organs that not only serve

the smaller purposes of these individual organs, but from which a structure for the organism as a whole emerges. Schleiermacher knowingly presses this point, as certainly

> one can break down the fluids of an organic body into its constituent parts; but now take these separated elements, mix them in every proportion, treat them in every way. Will you be able to make life's blood out of them again? Will what was once dead be able to move again in a living body and become one with it?[367]

The order and relation of organic parts cannot be restored mechanically or artificially once destroyed, as their relation is not merely a mixing of elements in the right proportion. Organisms exhibit an irreducible structure, some kind of quality that is an emergent property of organisms. But what is this property that makes organisms distinct?

Schleiermacher's answer is, quite rightly, life. An organism's unique structure of interrelation results in a higher-order activity that exceeds the purpose of each individual organ; an organic body is not the mere sum of its parts, insofar as it is alive. Schleiermacher implores his audience to

> see how everything living nourishes itself and and forcibly draws dead matter into its life, how on all sides there presses in upon us the stored-up supply for everything living, which does not lie there dead but is itself living and everywhere reproduces itself anew, how with all the multiplicity of the forms of life and the prodigious mass of material each form consumes in turn, each nevertheless has enough to run through the cycle of its existence, and each is subordinated to an inner fate and not an external scarcity.[368]

Organisms intuit, select, and consume parts of their environment in order to accomplish internal goals and purposes—"an inner fate"—that is not reducible to external circumstance, though it depends on those circumstances. Recall that Schleiermacher's starting point for the two drives of consciousness was life itself; out of lived-experience, two ways of relating to the world arise. Life is essential to understanding the irreducible character of organisms; organisms are living, and their organs are coordinated to support life in all its activities and receptivities. This is merely another

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[367] "Über Die Religion," 222. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 33.
[368] "Über Die Religion," 226. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 36.

way of saying that an organism integrates the drives emerging out of life with the bodily organs that locate those drives.

Organisms are living, and in that life, they exhibit both openness and purposiveness in their relation to the world. Because organisms are actively engaged with the world through their drives, they are open and purposive, in that they are oriented towards some kind of appropriate and desirable relation to the world. Organisms determine which objects of desire should be pursued *and* govern their actuation through bodily interaction in the world. Structurally, organisms are complexes of organs that support and enable the organism's life. For example, every organism exhibits nutritive drives such as collecting sunlight, eating, drinking, or breathing, in order to provide the energy required for life. Is this anything less than Schleiermacher's attractive drive, which seeks to draw in and appropriate from its environment? Correspondingly, an organism's nutritive drives rely on a complex network of organs, many of which are themselves complex systems of interrelated organs. In order for these nutritive drives to be actuated, organisms require organs like photosynthetic components, digestive systems, respiratory systems, circulatory systems, hearts, lungs, stomachs, etc. Consequently, organisms are distinct in two ways: they must be open to their environments in order to receive intuitional content about their world, while also being able to organize and represent that content as capable of fulfilling organismic goals or purposes.

This openness and purposiveness of organisms is similar in some respects to Schelling's understanding of sensibility and irritability, which reciprocally related consciousness and its environment. Schleiermacher does not employ Schelling's term *Erregbarkeit* here, but instead opts for its correlative *Reizbarkeit.* Schleiermacher marvels at the unparalleled openness of human organisms, and

> the way in which they differ from one another through the most varied levels of receptivity for the attraction [*Reiz*] of the same object, through the greatest variety that is operative in them, through the manifoldness of tone that the decisive superiority of one or the other type of feeling brings forth, and through all sorts of idiosyncrasies of sensitivity [*Reizbarkeit*] and peculiarities of temperament inasmuch as each soon has his own situation.[369]

Human beings especially have a varied and complex attenuation to sensible stimuli, even a unique sensitivity or temperament through which the same object will appear differently in the feeling experienced by different individuals. Though plants and animals may not share this level of openness, every organism must exhibit some form of openness to its environment to be able to perceive and desire that which is necessary for its life, and able to support its organismic purpose or life.

Schleiermacher also frequently talks of an organism's environment as an 'atmosphere.' This is significant for two reasons: it both reinforces his use of scientific language—meteorology was a popular topic for philophysicists like Ritter and Schelling—and further describes the systematic connection of an organism with its environment. Schleiermacher describes the individuality of human beings being shaped by difficult 'atmospheric' conditions like "want of a vivifying and unifying warmth, the hardness of the earthly material," and "an atmosphere that is too violently agitated."[370] Schleiermacher's use of 'contact' [*Berührung*] in describing the connection of organism with an atmosphere also echoes philosophysicists like Ritter and Schelling, who considered atmosphere in terms of galvanic and chemical systems. The complexity of human organisms even forces Schleiermacher to describe "prevailing opinions and epidemic feelings" as part of the atmosphere of human beings, just as one would describe a plant drawing water from its roots. Schleiermacher likens these opinions to

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[369] "Über Die Religion," 307-8. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 107.

[370] "Über Die Religion," 230. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 40.

> an atmosphere filled with dissolving and magnetic forces, this circle fuses and unites everything and, through a lively diffusion, places even what is most distant in active contact [*Berührung*]; it busily scatters the emanations of those in whom light and truth dwell independently so that they penetrate some people and illuminate the surface of others in a brilliant and striking manner. That is the harmony of the universe, the wondrous and great unity in its eternal work of art.[371]

Consequently, an atmosphere systematically connects an organism with its world. The question remains, however, do human organisms relate to their atmospheres differently than other organisms?

Schleiermacher certainly seems to think that this relation differs depending on the nature of the organism. Schleiermacher describes the atmosphere of human beings as placing "what is most distant in active contact." While plants have an atmosphere limited by their stasis, human beings draw from a richer and more diverse atmosphere. Even among human beings there is a potential for greater contact with diverse environments, while some human beings remain more plant-like through a self-limitation of their atmosphere.[372] While the ability to be in contact with a diverse atmosphere is a property of highly-developed organisms, human organisms are generally-distinguished from other animal organisms by an additional property of their atmospheres. Human beings enjoy an atmosphere comprised not only of physical nutrients, but also ideas, language, culture, and history. The prevailing opinions and epidemic feelings mentioned as 'atmospheric' conditions are in that sense unique to human beings. This aspect of human atmosphere also opens human beings to other atmospheric possibilities, potentially even religion.

4. Vistas to the Infinite

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[371] "Über Die Religion," 230. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 40.

[372] Recall Schleiermacher's note, quoted above, that "some human beings draw from the atmosphere that which does not surround them, mixing/preparing [*ansetzen*, a term from galvanic chemistry] their water the same way they precipitate out [*absetzen*] mineral alkali; others restrain themselves in the manner of vegetables: they want to bring it in, they only attract water," Note 29, "Gedanken I," *Schriften Aus Der Berliner Zeit, 1796 - 1799*, 13.

When talking about ideas, language, culture, and history as important components of the 'atmosphere' in which human beings live, one is likely talking about aspects of experience unique to human organisms in the way they transcend the physical world. Consequently, human organisms cannot be thought of solely in terms of their sensual connection to a world of objects which can be perceived, desired, and appropriated to support the organism and its life functions. In discussing the uniqueness of human consciousness, Schleiermacher begins with a pattern of thought deeply-embedded in his thinking: transcendental idealism. One of Kant's greatest contributions was his systematic integration of empiricism and idealism; experience is simultaneously dependent on the empirical content of appearances and the ideal subsumption of this content under concepts. But experience also depends on that which is not derived from experience, like a priori forms of sensible intuition like space and time, which do not originate out of sensible experience itself. Kant also preserves the necessary ideality of ideas with no empirical content like God, freedom, and the immortality of the soul, though they are restricted to a regulative and heuristic use.

This necessary ideality of human consciousness appears at several points in the *Speeches,* notably his assertion that "space and mass do not make up the world."[373] In the *Speeches,* the lawfulness and regularity of the world point to an ideality that exceeds empirical content. Schleiermacher believes that "what actually appeals to the religious sense in the external world is not its masses, but its laws. Raise yourselves to the view of how these laws embrace everything, the largest and the smallest, the world systems and the small mote of dust that flutters about restlessly in the air." Even the simplest human being perceives "the order in which all movements return to heaven and on earth, the definite course of the stars and the uniform coming and going of all organic

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[373] "Über Die Religion," 225. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 35.

forces [*organische Kräfte*], the perpetual uniformity in the striving of malleable nature."[374] Schleiermacher is careful to say that this intuiting of order is not religion, agreeing with Kant's rejection of natural theology and specifically the cosmological argument for God's existence.

Yet Schleiermacher and Kant are likely drawing from a common and ancient source, the apostle Paul. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul asserts a kind of intuition of God from the order and majesty of the world: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made."[375] Despite this, Paul asserts that this intuition of God is effaced and ineffective because of the presence of sin, leading human beings to turn their gaze toward creaturely things.[376] Schleiermacher's treatment of this pre-religious condition mirrors this Pauline assertion. Common human beings are caught up in everyday life, as "they gain concepts from ordinary things, and without regard for what they lack, are handed more and more of what they already have too abundantly;"[377] this condition results in a focus on the banal activities of life, which prevents them from lifting their thought to anything higher. One might say that these common human beings are absorbed in the attractive drive, wherein their every attention is focused on perceiving and desiring material goods. Schleiermacher associates this common life with bourgeois Prussian society, for whom "the what and the how are too remote for them, for they suppose understanding exists only in the whither and the wherefore in which they eternally rotate. This is their great goal, the place an object occupies in the series of

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[374] "Über Die Religion," 225. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 35.

[375] Rom. 1:19-20 NRSV.

[376] "for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles," in Rom. 1:21-23 NRSV.

[377] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 253. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 60.

appearances."[378] Consequently these common, everyday people have arbitrarily delimited the scope of their perception to a sensible world driven by prudential concerns. For Schleiermacher, "they mutilate everything with their shears and they would not even like to have an original appearance occur that could become a phenomenon for religion."[379]

Contrary to this common bourgeois understanding, perception is not limited to individual appearances, just as one's purpose in life is not limited to the acquisition of individual goods. Schleiermacher believes that the drive or impulse to religion begins in and with the sensible world, but it should not end there. Schleiermacher goes even further and asserts that the structure of the human mind, in all of its sensory receptivity, has a functional openness to religion. He writes that

> in order to protect the sensory receptivity to a certain extent against the pretensions of the other faculties, there is implanted in each person his own drive [*Trieb*] to allow every other activity to rest for a time and only to open all sense organs [*Organe*] in order to let himself be penetrated by every impression.[380]

Schleiermacher has in mind a kind of quiet and submissive contemplation, though he is clear that this is not a disconnected, abstract intellection, but a contemplation that is focused on intuition and the external world. Schleiermacher alternately calls this condition an "abundance of sense" [*Überfluß an Sinn*][381] which appears to be an inversion of the special case considered above wherein feeling dominated consciousness and blocked out sensory perception.

Furthermore, this drive toward a total openness of sensory perception is at its greatest intensity "when universal life reveals itself," suggesting that this pre-religious openness is associated with life, directing and potentially orienting one's purpose and activity in the world. Only this wider notion of "sense" perception can connect human beings with a higher direction for their lives,

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[378] "Über Die Religion," 254. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 61.
[379] "Über Die Religion," 255. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 62.
[380] "Über Die Religion," 253. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 60.
[381] "Über Die Religion," 254. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 61.

and only when this contemplation and sensory openness leads them to intuit something greater than individual objects. One must intuit the world as an undivided whole, which Schleiermacher calls the "universe."[382] The transition from a world of objects to an undivided universe is precarious but ultimately necessary; Schleiermacher writes that

> In our relationship to this world there are certain transitions into the infinite, vistas that are hewn through, before which each person is led so that this sense [*Sinn*] might find the way to the universe and upon whose sight feelings are stimulated [*erregt werden*] that, to be sure, are not immediately religion, but are, if I may say so, a schematism [of religion].[383]

Though the universe is not one among other individual objects, this pre-religious perception functions quite similarly to ordinary sensible intuitions. Like the gleam of a delighting view through a narrow crack, made all the more impressive by its difficulty in viewing, sense can similarly peer through the preponderant masses of individual objects, only to view and intuit the universe.

Analogical language aside, what can be said about these moments that lead to the intuition of the universe? These moments of lucidity in which sense can intuit the universe, what Schleiermacher calls transitions or vistas to the infinite, are not entirely joyful or ecstatic moments. Their connection to "universal life" is far more existential, as

> Being born and dying are such points, when they are perceived, at which it cannot escape us how our own self is universally surrounded by the infinite and which always arouse [*erregen*] a quiet longing and a holy awe. The immeasurability of sensible intuition is, after all, also at least a hint at a different and higher infinity.[384]

Life, in this sense, is most palpable when its fragility is exposed. To finite human beings, the experience of the infinite is a terrifying reminder that one is born and dies, and is bounded by non-existence both before and after one's short life. This realization does not lead to nihilistic despair,

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[382] Schleiermacher writes that "without our faculty of sense no universe is found. Sense strives to grasp the undivided impression of something whole. It wants to perceive what and how something is for itself and to recognize each in its unique character," "Über Die Religion," 254. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 61.

[383] "Über Die Religion," 256. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 62.

[384] "Über Die Religion," 256. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 63.

however, but forces one to consider not only the purpose of one's life but also "universal life." Consequently this intuition does affect a real change in consciousness, though a very different kind of affect. Like an individual object of sense, the infinite is said to "stimulate" [*erregen*] conscious. Unlike an individual object of sense, this stimulation does not produce a concrete feeling that represents the object as desirable for actualization, but rather results in a sense of awe and a quiet longing for something that transcends this finality. This disposition, marked as it is by awe and longing, is the nascent heartbeat of a truly-purposive life, in which one hopes to transcend the material and sensual existence that predominates nearly every living organism, including the crushing majority of human beings.

5. Organs of Spirit: Locating the Spiritual Penetration Drive

So far, this study has treated how the attractive drive is located within bodily organs, and how that relationship defines Schleiermacher's theory of organism. It has then considered whether the attractive drive and its corresponding organs can sufficiently account for religion in human beings; ultimately, it cannot. Though Schleiermacher describes sensory organs leading to "vistas" of the infinite, a kind of pre-religious drive, he carefully maintains that this is not a properly-religious intuition. These "vistas" are crucial, however, for the awakening of religious intuition, because only in life's most existential moments can human finitude press us towards the idea of an infinite and coherent whole, the universe. Nevertheless, these vistas to the infinite remain bound to the attractive drive, bodily organs, and sensible intuition. Consequently, when one considers religion one must look elsewhere. Fortunately, Schleiermacher posited two drives that constitute human consciousness through their interaction. The other drive, which Schleiermacher called both the "repulsive drive"

and "spiritual penetration drive," was identified as the drive that "despises enjoyment," "overlooks individual things and manifestation," and instead "proceeds directly to the infinite."[385] Given its rejection of sensible and finite things in favor of reason, freedom, and the infinite, the spiritual penetration drive appears far more amenable—if not tailor-made—for religion.

Just like the attractive drive, the spiritual penetration drive can be described in terms of intuition and feeling, though they must be carefully distinguished. While all intuition shares the same form—an influence of that which is intuited on one that intuits—Schleiermacher posits another kind of intuition, one suggested by the inadequacy of sensible intuition in moments of existential discernment, which has just been considered. This different kind of intuition is an "intuition of the universe." The universe is not apprehended by sensible intuition, whereby a finite object or a collection of all finite objects comes into view. Rather, the universe is apprehended in its activity that reveals itself to one in every moment, which allows one to view individual things as parts of a comprehensive whole that grounds every finite object.[386] As with all intuition, this intuition of the universe is connected with a feeling, which joined together, reflect the individual character of each consciousness and account for different apprehensions of the universe and the uniqueness of individual religion. Feeling "determines the degree of religiousness," so a greater clarity of apprehension provided by a more robust feeling will ultimately lead to a "more persistent drive to grasp the infinite."[387] In religion, intuition and feeling are most-strongly bound, and "its feelings are supposed to possess us, and we should express, maintain, and portray them."[388] Unlike bodily

[385] "Über Die Religion," 191-92. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.

[386] "Über Die Religion," 214. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 24-25.

[387] "The same actions of the universe through which it reveals itself to you in the finite also bring it into a new relationship to your mind and your condition; in the act of intuiting it, you must necessarily be seized by various feelings," "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 29.

[388] "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 29.

feeling, however, this feeling does not connect consciousness to the world through physical motion; Schleiermacher asserts that "by their very nature religious feelings inhibit the strength of our action and invite us to calm." Thus one should not rashly consider translating religious feeling into an action in the world, which would be a moralization of religion; instead, "Man must first master himself and his pious feelings before they press actions out of him."[389] Specifically, religion should form consciousness to be "always oriented toward the whole….to have a soul full of religion while performing a calm action that must proceed from its own source, that is the goal of the pious."[390]

Though the cognitive faculties that compose the spiritual penetration drive are formally similar to those in the attractive drive, their different content—the universe as a whole, and as individual objects, respectively—necessitates a unique location for this drive, quite apart from bodily organs of sense and motion. In order to locate a "spiritual" drive, one would have to propose a kind of spiritual organ that could apprehend and respond to the activity of the universe. Schleiermacher certainly has this in mind when he affirms the formal similarities of bodily organs and spiritual organs, asking "is it really a miracle if the eternal world affects the [organs] of our spirit [*die Organe unseres Geistes*] as the sun affects our eyes?"[391] Like the chemical actions of bodily organs, spiritual organs exhibit an openness or "irritability" with respect to the universe. When religion emerges in one's consciousness, it "penetrates his mind with such force that his [organ] for the universe [*Organ fürs Universum*] is brought to life through a singular stimulation [*Reiz*] and is now forevermore set in motion."[392] Again invoking the language of chemical reaction, Schleiermacher describes how a properly pious consciousness "proudly disdains every external [stimulus] [*Reiz*]…calmed [*beruhigt*]

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[389] "Über Die Religion," 219. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 30.
[390] "Über Die Religion," 219. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 30-31.
[391] "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 29.
[392] "Über Die Religion," 305. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 106.

in the conviction that the hour is not yet present…" for an intuition of the universe, if the stimulus is not there.[393] Certainly, Schleiermacher describes this "organ for the universe" as formally akin to bodily organs in that both kinds of organ are stimulated by stimuli and become the conduit for the response of consciousness to that stimulus.[394]

In the "Third Speech," Schleiermacher intentionally describes this stimulation in chemical terms, where religion

> expects to penetrate to the innermost being of every individual who breathes its atmosphere. Every homogenous particle will be touched [*berührt werden*] and, seized by the same vibration, the awaiting ear of a seeker will rejoice upon attaining consciousness of its existence through an answering, kindred tone. Only in this way, through the natural expressions of its own life, does religion wish to arouse [*aufregen*] what is similar.[395]

Religion too has an atmosphere, which places receptive human beings in "contact" with similarly religious particles circulated by that atmosphere. The arousal of religion is likened to a frequency, that once sounded, vibrates only those particles which share religion's resonant frequency. Religion's frequency, of course, is apprehended by one's spiritual organ, which connects consciousness to the universe. At the moment when one's consciousness comes into contact with the universe, Schleiermacher believes that one can say that "I am its soul, for I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own; and its innermost nerves move according to my sense [*Sinn*] and my presentiment as my own."[396] While this last passage seemingly mixes science and mysticism, it nonetheless emphasizes the way religion organically relates human consciousness to the universe as a whole, just

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[393] "Über Die Religion," 248. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 55. Aside from a general meaning of "calming," the German *beruhigt* also refers to the process of deoxidization; for example, steel can be "calmed" and stabilized through the removal of oxygen.

[394] This viewpoint of consciousness' "reciprocal action with the world" distinguishes Schleiermacher's thought from the idealism of Fichte, who turns "his gaze steadfastly to his own spirit in order to seek the universe there," and as a result, "should miss the mark and pine in poverty and need," "Über Die Religion," 264. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 70.

[395] "Über Die Religion," 248. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 55.

[396] "Über Die Religion," 221. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 32.

as a soul and body connect through nerves. Schleiermacher also describes how spiritual organs, like bodily organs, draw in the nutrients of decomposition from this atmosphere to create new life,

> just as vegetable nature, through the decline of whole species and from the ruins of whole generations of plants, brings forth and nourishes new ones, so you also see here how spiritual nature, from the ruins of a splendid and beautiful human world, produces a new one, that absorbs its first life force from the decomposed and wonderfully transformed elements of the former.[397]

One does not climb from the sensible world to the religious universe, but sensible experience of one's world, through the decomposition of everything finite, provides the spiritual compost by which religion can transform that detritus into a new world.

Even more important, then, is that this connection of one's spirit with the universe facilitated by spiritual organs must remain distinct from the kind of connection offered by bodily organs. Though viewing every individual object as part of an undivided whole implies and even requires organs of sense and motion, spiritual organs remain distinct, and at times, appear to conflict with bodily organs. The dual drives of consciousness and their respective organs must be harmoniously ordered, after all. Schleiermacher is emphatic that initially, spiritual organs cannot function where bodily organs predominate consciousness; spiritual organs require a restful and contemplative state for religion to emerge and grow. Recall Schleiermacher's critique of the busy, bourgeois pragmatism of his day, which viewed rest and contemplation as laziness. Their lack of palpable religion resulted from their predominant attention to the sensible world as the means for human ends. Religion begins in the quiet and rest of consciousness, wherein the intuition of the universe can emerge in all its fullness. Interestingly, Schleiermacher concedes that this requires an amount of leisure by which one is able to rest and contemplate. Consequently, he pines for a state—

[397] "Über Die Religion," 233. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 43.

eerily similar to the technologically-rich world of the twenty-first century— in which automation strengthens religion by offering up more time to leisure,

> where the god of the earth needs only to utter a magic word or to press a button to have his commands done. Then, for the first time, everyone will be freeborn…and all people will have peace and leisure to contemplate the world in themselves. Only for the unfortunates who lacked this leisure, whose [organs] were deprived of their powers, whose muscles had to be expended unceasingly on a taskmaster's service.[398]

Because of the necessity of leisure, Schleiermacher also concludes that spiritual organs are often suppressed by the dominance of pragmatic and sensual concern. The question remains, however, if spiritual organs exhibit a natural openness to the universe, how does that suppression occur? In the *Speeches*, Schleiermacher regularly blames human social institutions, particularly church and state, for closing off human consciousness from true religion. Spiritual organs do indeed connect one's consciousness to the universe, but that initial moment of religion is always deeply-imbedded in the sociality of human beings. No one comes to religion in isolation, as no human being forever lives in isolation. Only within a properly-religious community can religion emerge, grow, and transform; as a result, *individual religion* is already embedded within *communal religion*, which will push the idea of organicity and organism to even greater levels of complexity.

C. Toward a Higher Religious Organism: Community

In the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher considers religion to be necessarily social-- that much is readily conceded. It is the contention of this study, however, that the *Speeches* also consider this sociality in terms of the same conceptuality of organs and organism he explicitly employs to describe individuals. In employing the conceptuality of organs and organisms as a highly-sophisticated

[398] "Über Die Religion," 289. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 93.

description of coordination and interrelation that is (at least potentially) infinitely-scalable, Schleiermacher can be rightly-associated with a form of organicism as early as 1799. In order to make a compelling case, the communal organism will need to be explicated as having the same form and relation as individual organisms. Let us recall the structure of individual organisms, as evidenced by Schleiermacher's description of the form and function of human beings. In humans, one finds a consciousness that connects and relates to the world through two drives, the attractive drive and the repulsive drive. Those drives are located in corresponding organs, which mediate consciousness to the sensible world. These organs are also parts of complex networks of interrelation, which coordinate and work together for the organism, supporting a common organismic purpose. Though these organs give up a kind of independence through this integration, they become capable of a far greater level of agency through their coordination with other organs in a much larger and complex organism. As an organism, community functions identically, with the difference that individual *organisms* become communal *organs.* In short, people come together in community to coordinate and work with others toward a common, communal purpose. Though religious individuals give up a kind of independence through this integration, they become capable of a far greater level of agency through their coordination with other individuals in a much larger and more complex organism.

It is fitting then, that Schleiermacher begins his "Fourth Speech" on the sociality of religion by describing his audience's fears of religious community, appropriately in terms of the physiological disease an organism might experience. His audience worries about the pathology of this religious

contagion, seeking after "purposive treatments"[*zwekmässige Behandlung*],[399] which include both a metaphorical "diet" intended to counteract the "inflammation" caused by religion, and a strategy of targeting the most "contagious" forms of religion and rendering them harmless. Despite these treatments, Schleiermacher's friends "fear the evil will become far more devastating and accompanied by the most dangerous symptoms, if each individual's disease is fostered and intensified by too close proximity to others."[400] Here, Schleiermacher has taken an old fear of religious dogmatism, and wrapped it in the language of John Brown's system of medicine—well-known to his audience—wherein disease was considered a galvanic imbalance in "excitability," treatable through diet and carefully-crafted medicine that promoted electrical balance. Just as the disease of a body part or organ spreads its imbalance throughout the organism, so too can it infect other organisms and spread in community. In this respect, both religion and disease can spread through both individual and communal organisms. The example demonstrates that Schleiermacher's audience *already considers* community in terms of organism, where its health or pathology can be spread between organ and organism, or in this case individual and community. He does takes issue, however, with the identification of religion as a kind of communal disease or pathology; quite contrary to disease, Schleiermacher asserts that religion is the sign of health and balance in an organismic community. Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate *how* this is the case, that religion is more like health than disease, one must consider precisely what form and function this organismic understanding of community entails.

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[399] While the German "*zwekmässige*" describes this treatment as guided toward a specific purpose of health, it nevertheless invokes the idea of purpose and purposiveness [*Zweckmassigkeit*]; in a way, the despisers see the problem of religious community as a pathology of purpose, bending religious individuals toward heteronomous goals and aims, when they should be directed toward the free use of their reason and creativity.

[400] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 266. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 72.

1. The Communicative Drive

For an individual organism, the attractive drive was associated with appropriation and absorption of available resources, which were often sensibly perceived and physically pursued. With communities, one sees a similar drive to incorporate new individuals from the environment, where individuals are perceived and pursued by means of human language and culture. Because this communal attractive drive relates human beings to one another through communication, it can appropriately be called a 'communicative drive.' Because the most effective and active drives in human life originate from one's innermost being, namely religion, the term 'religious communicative drive' even better describes the healthy expression of this communal drive.[401] As I will discuss later, Schleiermacher associates healthy communal function with a decidedly-religious orientation, a health which is not equally shared by secular forms of community. Nevertheless, the 'communicative drive' in both religious and secular communities share two distinct features, which Schleiermacher happily borrows from natural science: an 'atmosphere' or environment from which community can draw ideas and opinions, and the idea of communication as mirroring chemical "contact" in social relations.

Mirroring individual organisms, communities have an "atmosphere" from which they draw in and appropriate. Whereas individual organisms draw in food, water, and other nutrients, communities draw from an atmosphere full of new individuals, what could equally be called a

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[401] "But everything that belongs to a truly human life and that should be an ever more active and effective drive in us must proceed from the innermost part of our constitution. Religion is of this nature. In the mind in which it dwells it is uninterruptedly active and living…", "Über Die Religion," 250. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 57.

'cultural atmosphere.' Individuals are embedded in and surrounded by a dynamic social environment, wherein

> the magic circle of prevailing opinions and epidemic feelings encompasses and plays upon everything. Like an atmosphere filled with dissolving and magnetic forces, this circle fuses and unites everything and, through a lively diffusion, places even what is most distant in active contact [*Berührung*].[402]

Human beings are enveloped in a rich atmosphere of opinions, feelings, and other cultural particulates shared by other human beings, which, through a vigorous circulation, brings even the most distant ideas in contact. Using the language of atmosphere, Schleiermacher recognizes that his audience likely conceives of religion as part of "a gloomy and oppressive atmosphere,"[403] where "the whole atmosphere will be poisoned" by the circulating opinions of even a few religious individuals.[404] Nevertheless, he considers the *Speeches* a part of "a greater and more versatile atmosphere" that might effect a greater spiritual awakening, though he fears his ideas might recirculate back to him through the very same atmosphere, without having been absorbed or understood.[405]

Furthermore, this circulating atmosphere of new ideas makes communication possible, and Schleiermacher employs the term "contact" [*Berührung*] to describe this communicative act. Recall the attractive drive, in which an individual organism is receptive to an atmosphere of sensible objects. This organism must be "open" and receptive to the sensible world, which can only be perceived through "contact," a chemical act or reaction. For example, light reflecting off a nutritious fruit makes its way to the eye, which chemically and electrically translates this physical stimulus into a psychical appearance in consciousness; these sensible intuitions are grasped and apprehended by feeling, which identifies the fruit as something desirable and potentially needed to sustain the

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[402] "Über Die Religion," 231. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 41.
[403] "Über Die Religion," 199. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 12.
[404] "Über Die Religion," 274. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 79.
[405] "Über Die Religion," 248. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 56.

organism. In one sense, the communicative drive functions quite similarly, as a communal organism puts itself into contact with potentially new ideas and members that it might desire to bring into fellowship, and further sustain the community. It is different, however, because these potential new members are not mere objects for appropriation; they are organisms in their own right, with their own needs, drives, and purposes. Both members within and without the community must be receptive and open to the communication; in short, it must be voluntary. Consequently this communal drive is not *consumptive and coercive*, but *communicative and free*.

Thus, one can say that communication requires receptivity. To hear a communication one must be open to be affected by someone else. Schleiermacher says that this is why religious communication functions as the exemplar of all communication, because human beings find themselves most passive in relation to religious ideas. One cannot help but feel her own activity all but disappear while intuiting the universe and all its activity; religion strikes deeply and inwardly. Paradoxically, this deep sense of dependency and receptivity does not well up in the soul; it bursts forth in the form of speech. Where a religious view has come into an individual's mind, she seeks to communicate the vibrations of her mind to other human beings; religious human beings necessarily speak.[406] Consequently, communication can only be reciprocal: "this is how mutual communication organizes itself; thus speaking and hearing are equally indispensable for everyone."[407] This is why Schleiermacher believes that the most appropriate content for communication is found within religious feeling and intuition, which through greater activity and passivity manifest themselves more strongly than in other forms of communication.[408] Because the domain of religion refers to the

[406] "Über Die Religion," 268. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 73.
[407] "Über Die Religion," 268. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 74.
[408] "Über Die Religion," 267-68. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 73.

infinite universe, it is an inexhaustible resource for human religion. Each finite individual can apprehend only a small part of that object, so individuals are compelled to speak and listen so that they might apprehend more clearly. This form of religious communication even between two people is already a form of religious community, in accordance with the church tradition that "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."[409]

Two questions remain, however: do all ostensibly religious communities practice this form of religious communication, which is always mutual? And what distinguishes religious communication from less exemplary forms of communication? The two questions are intrinsically related. While religion is by its nature social, Schleiermacher asserts that few individuals or communities practice "true" religion, whereby an individual's organ of spirit intuits the universe and religious feeling ineluctably follows. Where religion enlivens community, religious feeling becomes embodied in the individual's speech, with is received by others in religious community. In turn, those other members speak and the individual will listen and be affected by their speech, and the cycle will begin anew. Religious communication is undoubtedly mutual communication. Schleiermacher is certain, however, that most religious communities lack this mutual communication, and practice a deficient mode of communication. If one observes most ostensibly religious communities, one would see that most people seek, believe, and practice what amounts to a *sensible* religion, or better yet a "religious sensibility." It cannot really be religion, because as purely-sensible, it represents a disordered and disoriented consciousness in which sense dominates spirit, giving precedence to bodily organs and drives. In this religious sensibility, sense organs mistake physical content—e.g. the written scriptures, or the preaching of a sermon—as something to be mimetically copied into the mind and duplicated

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[409] Mat 18:20, NRSV.

onto the world through one's bodily organs of motion, including language or bodily movement. This sensible religion entirely misses what should be the enlivening religious intuition; a text or a sermon should awaken the response of an original, pious feeling in one's soul, not serve as an "object" for religious sensibility to reproduce. Such sensible objects are the final product of genuine religion and the last step of religious communication; religious sensibility mistakenly seeks them out as a "stimulant" [*Reizmittel*] for religion, when such historical objects should follow after genuine religion.[410] Schleiermacher inveighs against the ostensibly religious and their "religious sensibility":

> You fools and slow of heart! Do you know that all those things, which your own reflection would have had to make, are only dissolutions of religious sensibility [*Zersezungen des religiösen Sinnes*]....You have memory and imitation, but no religion. You have not produced the intuitions for which you know the formulas, but have learned them by heart and preserved them, and your feelings are mimetically reproduced like alien physiognomies, and for just that reason are caricatures.

Not unlike the infamous Dr. Frankenstein, religious sensibility attempts to construct an empirical religion out of decomposing parts and fluids, while true religion is an organic and living nature, a union of body and spirit.[411]

In turn, communities built on this "religious sensibility" are not truly religious communities. By mimetically reproducing sensible religious "objects," these communities are deemed to be a kind of vacuum where no counter-effect on others is found.[412] Religious sensibility produces a disordered "amalgamation" of people merely seeking religion, who have no effect on one another as sensible objects are mindlessly copied and reproduced. It is in describing these deficient religious

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[410] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 267-68. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 81.

[411] "Über Die Religion," 267-68. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 32-33.

[412] "for if what dwells in them were in fact religion, it would demonstrate some type of action upon others, for this is in its nature. They produce no countereffect because they are capable of none, and they can only be incapable of one for the reason that no religion dwells in them," "Über Die Religion," 274. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 79. In the same passage, Schleiermacher employs a chemical and meteorological example to explain this phenomenon, underscoring his appropriation of scientific conceptuality in describing human beings and social systems.

communities where Schleiermacher borrows "an illustration from science," which further cements his understanding of social relations in fundamentally chemical terms. Schleiermacher writes that

> they are negatively religious and press in great crowds toward the few points where they surmise the positive principle of religion in order to unite with this principle. But having assimilated this into themselves, they again lack the capacity to retain the new product; their finer element [*der feine Stoff*] that, as it were, was able merely to hover around their atmosphere escapes them, and they now proceed for a while with a certain feeling of emptiness until they have again filled themselves up negatively.[413]

The language is strongly evocative of Schelling's *On The World-Soul,* where the "positive principle" of religion magnetically attracts the negatively-charged masses of religious seekers. They are driven by their attractive drives, which seek out the glimmer of religion, and when spotted, seek to consume and appropriate it like any other nutrient, be it oxygen, water, or food. Religion is not a sensible object available to the attractive drive, however, and it cannot be consumed and appropriated like other objects. Consequently the "finer element"[414] of religion escapes into them back into the atmosphere, leaving them negatively-charged and empty. The failure of these ostensibly religious communities, filled with those who seek after religion, further underscores Schleiermacher's key claim: only through the communicative drive can religion be stimulated, in a back-and-forth loop of mutual communication, where the feeling and intuition of individuals intermeshes into the feeling and intuition of an even greater communal organism.

2. Locating the Communicative Drive: Organs of Religion

As I have mentioned, Schleiermacher is convinced that very few people can attain religion without significant help. Simply being in an ostensibly religious community is not enough; one has

[413] "Über Die Religion," 274. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 79.

[414] Interestingly, the second edition of the *Speeches* in 1806 replaced *der feine Stoff* with the more galvanically- and organically-charged *Erregung*.

to be integrated into *the right kind* of religious community, wherein the individual consciousness becomes *rightly-ordered.* This religious consciousness is evidenced by a healthy equilibrium of drives and organs, where the repulsive drive properly balances the attractive drive. This prevents sensibility from predominating and resulting in "religious sensibility." How does one come to this state, however? Communication certainly plays an important role, as the dynamic force that enlivens religious community. Nevertheless, this force has not been properly-located in an organ. Schleiermacher posits a new kind of organ, a social organ, which connects others with the animating power of religion. Schleiermacher calls this social organ an "organ of religion" and a "mediator;" essentially, it is an individual who can help awaken the intuitive power of other individuals, and help them open and tune their dormant spiritual organs to more-fully apprehend the universe. Because of the inherent tendency of humankind to fall into religious sensibility, the deity has appointed a new organ that might "open the eyes of those who are not yet capable of intuiting the universe, for every one who sees is a new priest, a new mediator [*Mittler*], a new mouthpiece [*Organ*]."[415]

But how can such a mediator help others to see? Schleiermacher asserts that this "spokesman of religion" [*Organ der Religion*] will communicate individual intuitions with precision and clarity to those in need; consequently, clear communication of religious intuitions and feelings is the means of a successful mediation.[416] Clear communication is all the more necessary because human communication is fraught with difficulty and misunderstanding. To ply Schleiermacher's atmospheric description further, a rich and diverse cultural atmosphere whipping about can be as

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[415] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 218. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 28. Crouter's translation of *Organ* as "mouthpiece" is somewhat helpful, as a mouthpiece is a location that unifies two things: a source of its pronouncements, and its actual pronouncements. Consequently "mouthpiece" mirrors the form of an organ, though this specific translation loses its connectivity with other uses of *Organ.*

[416] "Über Die Religion," 276. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 81.

disorienting and overwhelming as a fierce rainstorm. Nevertheless, a rainstorm brings that which can nourish an organism, things like water or lightning (which is essential for nitrogen-formation in the soil), though a rainstorm can just as easily flood and drown an organism. Thus a dynamic atmosphere can either sustain life, or lead to death, depending on how the organism goes about appropriating from this atmosphere. The cultural atmosphere is equally-complex and ambivalent, as the circular currents of cultural expression enliven some, but leave others undernourished. For this reason it is incumbent upon mediators to communicate their religious intuitions into this circular current, helping to nourish and illuminate others.[417] Where this communication awakens a sympathetic or harmonious response, then religion begins to blossom and a new individual has been incorporated into the religious community.

True religion requires a reciprocal relation between individual and community, where the idea of "organs of religion" underscores the potential that religious community become a priesthood of all believers, where all individuals can one day become mutually communicative "organs of religion." This point is ensconced in the very title of the fourth speech: "On the Social Element in Religion; or, On Church and Priesthood," where mediating "priests" take on an essential role in initially building and sustaining a religious community that becomes increasingly-mutual and collaborative. Mediating organs of religion begin as the "true priests" in every congregation, who reflect the Redeemer himself, (the preeminent organ of religion), who is further mediated to the people by both scripture and the Holy Spirt.[418] These mediators are initially-distributed in a sparse

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[417] The cultural current "busily scatters the emanations of those in whom light and truth dwell independently so that they penetrate some people and illumine the surface of others in a brilliant and striking manner. That is the harmony of the universe, the wondrous and great unity in its eternal work of art," "Über Die Religion," 231. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 41.

[418] "Thus holy scripture, in which the divine nature dwelt in its own manner, was very soon considered a logical mediator for the knowledge of the divine to the finite and corrupted nature of the understanding, and the Holy Spirit,

but wise manner, beginning similarly to "the hidden points in space from which supple primal matter expands in all directions.," a likely reference to Schelling's *Ursache.*[419] As these organs of religion incorporate new individuals into religious community, the community not only grows, but through mutual interaction, becomes increasingly-predominated by organs of religion. Schleiermacher longingly hopes for a time when the community is entirely-comprised of organs of religion, and all human mediation will cease.[420]

Despite this, two substantial obstacles stand in the way of this eschatological vision of religious community. The first is in the form of education or *Bildung* that predominated Schleiermacher's world, as it directed pupils towards religious sensibility and bourgeois civil life. Schleiermacher rails against the schools and their outmoded understanding of education, concluding that "the schools, which are nothing but the habitations and nurseries of the dead letter, for the spirit lets itself neither be bound in academies, nor be poured successively into eager skulls; it usually evaporates on the way from the first mouth to the first ear."[421] Religious communication requires *a new mode of education.* Schleiermacher concedes that "we cannot teach them to intuit. We cannot transfer from ourselves to them the power and knack of absorbing everywhere the original light of

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was considered an ethical mediator for approaching the divine in practice," "Über Die Religion," 322. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 121.

[419] Crouter identifies the resonance that this passage holds with the natural philosophy of Schleiermacher's day, and even cites Schleiermacher's "preoccupation" with natural philosophy. Nevertheless, Crouter's diminution of Schelling's early work as "nonsystematic" is telling of his overall position; Schelling was well known for developing and revising his systems, but this is a far cry from being "unsystematic." Crouter writes that "like his contemporaries, Fichte, Schelling, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher's early work reflects a preoccupation with natural philosophy and physical speculation in the wake of the teaching of Leibniz (1646-1716) and Kant (1724-1804)….By 1799 Schleiermacher had read the earliest nonsystematic, natural philosophical works of Schelling (1775-1854)," *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 8f.

[420] Schleiermacher writes, "may it yet happen that this office of mediator should cease and the priesthood of humanity receive lovelier definition! May the time come that an ancient prophecy describes when no one will need a teacher because all will be taught by God!" "Über Die Religion," 194. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 8.

[421] "Über Die Religion," 200. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 14.

the universe into our [organs], no matter which objects we nevertheless find before ourselves."[422] Through new forms of education, wielded by the mutually-communicative powers of these organs of religion, "the intuitive power will take possession of its whole domain, every sense [organ] will open itself [*aufthun sich*] and objects will be able to place themselves in [contact, *Berührung*] with humanity in [every] way."[423] This return to the idea of "contact" points again to the galvanic and organic form of Schleiermacher's thought. While "contact" with ideas sounds quite abstract, it naturally refers to communication, as a religious individual places a religious idea in contact with someone inside or outside the religious communion. More broadly, contact is what links one individual with those nearby, who are themselves in contact with other individuals; much like an infinite galvanic chain through which each individual is indissolubly linked to a greater whole.[424] Whether one intuits the universe in a groundless mysticism or as a "physicist of religion" makes little difference; the intuition of the universe binds them all. When its excess spills out of the inner depths of the soul, it emerges as religious communication with others, which is mutual and reciprocal and forms the basis of religious community.

The second obstacle to religious communication—and thus religious community— is the irreligious meddling of the Prussian state. Whereas priestly "organs of religion" should arise and call others to religious community through free communication, "the state at present selects, according to its own wishes, those who are now the leaders and teachers in this society…who are oriented more toward the furtherance of the extraneous affairs to which the state has bound this institution."[425] In

[422] "Über Die Religion," 250. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 57.
[423] "Über Die Religion," 260. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 67.
[424] "Insofar as everyone stands only in contact [*Berührung*] with the closest person, but also has a closest person on all sides and in all directions, each is, in fact, inseparably bound up with the whole," "Über Die Religion," 271. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 77.
[425] "Über Die Religion," 285. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 88.

short, the state appoints ministers to advance its own ends, which are entirely at odds with the properly-religious orientation. These so-called ministers are prone to remain at the level of "religious sensibility," mimetically reproducing sensible religious objects without the enlivening power of religious intuition. Additionally, the state marries the church to a residential parish system, which militates against the free association of religious communications and relationships.[426] Schleiermacher ultimately believes that every religious communication should be voluntary: "master and disciple must be allowed to seek out and choose one another in perfect freedom."[427] Consequently, the state has no business in structuring the church or its relationships, nor the authority to appoint organs of religion that inevitably-arise through free communication between religious individuals. Freed from the constraints of state control, and empowered with a new understanding of education, organs of religion can help the community properly-instantiate the communicative drive, seeking out and incorporating new members into its growing communion.

3. The Communal Coordination Drive, or, the World Spirit

Schleiermacher's description of the connection between religious communication and religious community is not only theoretically plausible, but also seemingly accords with religion as experienced. If one concedes Schleiermacher's precise definition of religion, then the communicative drive necessarily follows: truly-religious communities are made up of truly-religious individuals, whose religious intuitions and feelings so exceed the finite self that religious communication bursts

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[426] Crouter notes that "the age-old German practice of registering one's domicile with local police authorities, which is akin to basing the church on a residential parish system, is contrasted with Schleiermacher's idea of religious community as consisting of freely selected, mutual relationships," in *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 89f.

[427] "Über Die Religion," 285. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 89.

forth, seeking to draw other individuals into communication, and correspondingly incorporating new members. Two important objections might be levied at this point, however. First, is this community anything more than a collection of individuals that communicate novel and interesting religious ideas amongst one another? This would be more a religious collective than community, precisely equal to the sum of its parts. What is it, if anything, that makes this community worthwhile or really effective in the world?

Second, does this valued contribution surmised of religious community actually match one's experience of real religious individuals and communities? With individual organisms, one is almost required to concede the value of religion, given Schleiermacher's carefully-demarcated definition of religion as a harmonious ordering of opposed drives and organs. In this respect, he offered an understanding of individual religion likely quite palatable for his audience given their interest in the harmony of a properly-ordered mind and body, and the galvanic and organic conceptuality employed to describe it. But what about religion makes religious communities valuable? One can almost hear his audience of cultured despisers sneering at the very thought, that things like freedom and reason can grow best in the fecund soil of the church? To many, religious community was the very pinnacle of freedom-draining heteronomy. They would argue that experience shows us that the real, historical church is predominated by those still seeking religion, and are fixated on the sensible world and mimetic reproduction. If religion is grounded in individual intuition, doesn't the continuing influence of community threaten to poison this precious, inner fount of religion, and debilitate an individual's agency? In short, community could never add something valuable to religion, because the predominance of religious sensibility remains an ever-present threat to true religion as experienced by an individual.

Whether religious community adds anything of value to religious individuals is an important question, made even more important by an outdated interpretation of Schleiermacher that favors a dauntless individualism while passing over the importance of community. It is the contention of this study that Schleiermacher's organicism is the key for understanding his argument that religious community is both *efficacious* and *worthwhile*. As demonstrated above, there are significant formal and functional similarities between individual and communal organisms, such as how the attractive and communicative drives mirror one another as appropriative drives for individuals and communities. One can also presume that communal organisms have another drive opposed to the communicative drive, and that communal organisms should exhibit a balance or proper proportion between its two drives. The question remains, however: what might be the equivalent of the "repulsive" or "spiritual attraction drive" in communities?

A good starting point might be the function and characteristics of the repulsive drive in individual organisms for clues as to its communal counterpart. Schleiermacher describes the repulsive drive as being associated with increase and enlargement. One can describe an increase in domain or an enlargement of self, as this drive strives "to extend its own inner self ever further, thereby permeating and imparting to everything from within." One can also describe an increase and heightening of activity. One could also describe the repulsive drive as increasing the domain of freedom, reason, and coherence.[428] All of these increases are mutually-implied effects of the repulsive drive, which in a religious individual help to temper the usual predominance of the attractive drive. In addition, each of these increases in self, agency, and freedom stems from a corresponding diminution of desire for sensible objects and enjoyment, which have the tendency to enervate human

[428] "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 5.

freedom and agency by steering the openness of human organs toward immediate, sensible concerns. Consequently, individual organisms see an increase in agency and freedom as the repulsive drive grows into a harmonious balance with the attractive drive.

This increase in agency is the direct result of the nature of organisms. Organisms are a system or complex of organs, coordinated together to support the life and purpose of the organism. Human beings, for instance, have organs of sense (e.g. eyes, fingertips, tastebuds, nerves), and organs of motion (eg. muscles, bones, nerves). One can also consider the human body divided up in organs like the stomach, heart, and brain, which are themselves both sensing and moving, i.e. the stomach "senses" an influx of food which is transmitted to the brain, which responds to the stomach by initiating the release of enzymes and contracting muscles to break up and absorb food. The stomach is itself part of a complex of organs, the digestive system, though this system is not itself an organism, as the digestive system requires myriad other systems in order to function, e.g. circulatory, nervous, lymphatic, respiratory, etc. Consequently, an organism is essentially the point where all these organs and systems of organs coordinate to support a singular end: the life and purpose of a unified organism.

Communal organisms are also a system or complex of organs, coordinated together to support the life and purpose of the community. Schleiermacher's "organs of religion" are networked into a complex communicative relationship with individuals both inside and outside the communal organism. These mediators are individual organisms in their own right, but they become organs with respect to a much larger, communal organism. What makes this community an organism is that these individual organisms deign themselves—almost kenotically—to become organs. What seems like a diminution of agency is actually an increase: individuals are able to accomplish far

greater goals through a coordination with one another; consequently, the repulsive drive at the level of community can be called the "coordination drive," as individuals coordinate toward a common, organismic purpose. As with the communicative drive, the coordination drive is also strongest when it pertains to the coordination that occurs in religious communities. As a result, a *religious* coordination drive is not merely a special case of a more general and original communicative drive, but quite the opposite: a religious coordination drive is primordial [*ursprünglich*][429] and original, and hence exemplary and associated with the greatest increase in agency.

In Schleiermacher's understanding, religious communities can better maintain this singular and unified purpose because of religion's singular and unified content. Schleiermacher describes this singular and unified purpose that coordinates religious communities in many ways, but his description of this purpose in terms of a "world spirit" is one of the most theologically-provocative. Early in the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher boldly proclaims that "to love the world spirit and joyfully observe its work is the goal of our religion,"[430] though why this is significant does not become apparent until he fleshes out the world in which this world spirit enlivens religious community. When an individual becomes a member of a religious community, Schleiermacher says that she becomes coordinated in pursuit of the "work of the eternal and all-fashioning world spirit."[431] The term is incredibly significant for community-as-organism. This religious purpose is not the vector sum of individual purposes, a mere aggregate of individual wills used to determine the inclination of the community. Religious purpose originates out of and belongs to a a dynamic force, *the world spirit*, which is an agential and spiritual force that enlivens the communal organism.

[429] "Über Die Religion," 282. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 87.
[430] "Über Die Religion," 224. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 34.
[431] "Über Die Religion," 294. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 96.

To be clear, the world spirit is not simply a Christianized "world soul;"[432] in all likelihood, choosing "world spirit" was likely Schleiermacher's way of distancing himself from the use of "world soul"[433] in the works of Schelling and Baader in particular. Additionally, the idea of world spirit is also not a clever, philosophical disguise for an otherwise traditional notion of God. In Schleiermacher's view, the world spirit connects the divine and worldly; in a way, it articulates in novel terms the religious affirmation that God has kenotically emptied God's self in the incarnation. This is a "God who has become flesh" and offered a religion which "has divested itself of its infinity, and appeared, often in paltry form, among human beings."[434] Rather than represent impurity in the divine life, the incarnation becomes the cornerstone of redemptive history, as God's spirit continues to guide the church. Individuals who are integrated into religious community undergo a similar kenotic act, in which they "freely surrender" themselves, and that in surrendering part of their individuality they will care "nothing for the renown of free choice or the exclusive possession of [their] innermost uniqueness."[435] Individual purpose, typified as it is by "free choice," is ultimately rejected in favor of true freedom, imparted by participation in the divine power available most appropriately in community.[436] Schleiermacher asks his readers, "if you then compare the isolated striving of the individual…with the calm and uniform progress of the whole, you see how the lofty

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[432] Nevertheless, Schleiermacher controversially associated the idea with Spinoza, saying that "the high world spirit permeated him, the infinite was his beginning and end, the universe his only and eternal love," "Über Die Religion," 213. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 24.

[433] Julia Lamm plausibly argues that "Schleiermacher also rejects an understanding of pantheism based on the notion of a world soul," though his critics suspected it was an operative principle. Lamm also argues that "in response, Schleiermacher explains that there is a difference between what is usually meant by world soul and what he intends by world spirit. Whereas the former implies a reciprocal relationship between God and world, or a certain independence of the world from God, the latter denotes 'the object of pious adoration in a way that would include all different forms and stages of religion' (Epl. 2.12; Oman, 111). Evidenced here is a more systematic treatment of the God-world relationship and a certain distancing from the neo-Spinozism of the 1780s and 1790s," in *The Living God*, 99-100.

[434] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 294. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 96.

[435] "Über Die Religion," 294. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 96.

[436] *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 96. This distinction echoes Schleiermacher's criticism of free choice in *On Freedom,* and more generally echoes Augustinian free will.

world spirit smiling strides across all that tumultuously opposes it."[437] In turn, each individual instantiates and mirrors this common will in their own desires and activity.[438] Nevertheless, for the communal organism, this religious purpose offers up "a goal [*Zwek*] toward which you will soon work with united powers."[439] If like the individual organism, the communal organism is driven by a singular purpose [*Zweck*], it would seem fitting to attribute purposiveness [*Zweckmässigkeit*] to both individual *and* communal organisms.

Unfortunately, this highest religious sense of communal purpose does not enliven all communities. Whether ostensibly-religious or admittedly-secular, these communities may be ordered around a common will, but it will be more like the vector sum or aggregate of individual wills. This results because without a world-spirit to provide a central point for the community's coordination, its communal purpose will less-perfectly reflect religion's orientation toward unity and infinity. As a result, secular communities cannot bind as strongly or offer as significant an increase in agency as religious communities. Without religious coordination, secular communities slide back toward a sensible existence, and become increasingly preoccupied with individual and discrete objects. As this manifold of sensible concerns grows, it weakens the unity of communal purpose, like a single beam of light which is refracted and scattered into multiplicity and particularity. Consequently the efforts of secular communities are ultimately Sisyphean, as the weight of their senses inevitably drags them back down into disordered relations. One instructive example appears when Schleiermacher considers educational patterns hostile to religious communication, concluding that "improvements of instruction have gone the way all revolutions go that were not begun from

[437] "Über Die Religion," 234. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 43.

[438] "you see that in regard to this society, our wishes are completely identical," "Über Die Religion," 287. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 91.

[439] "Über Die Religion," 260. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 66.

the highest principles; they have gradually slid back again into the old course of things."[440] It matters not whether one is talking about education or politics, because every revolutionary reform will ultimately slide back down the craggy slopes of the *Akrokorinth* if not directed by the highest principles and purpose, which can *only* be found in a genuinely-religious community directed by the world spirit.

This is also precisely why Schleiermacher opposes the union of church and state, because the state—a secular and sensibly-driven social unit—drags the church and its singular purpose into a myriad of sensible concerns regarding domestic and civil affairs. This is a deleterious and unnatural arrangement for both church and state; Schleiermacher writes that "neither for the true church to which they belong nor for the greater society they are supposed to lead can they comprehend what they are now to do with the houses and lands they can acquire and with the riches they are able to possess, or how that is supposed to help them toward their goal [or purpose, *Zwek*]."[441] The state's purpose is not inherently bad in own right, but it is nevertheless a sensibly-driven purpose, and thus incommensurable with the singular and unified purpose of the church. Even where church and state appear to have a common interest—e.g., marriage, which can be seen as both religiously and politically advantageous—there is still the tendency toward moral and political references, and "everything is diverted from its original purpose and concept [*ursprünglichen Zwek und Begrif*]."[442] This diversion into sensibility is deleterious to the freedom indicative of religious community, requiring "that it gives up its high and noble purpose [*hohen und erhabnen Zwek*] in order to pursue

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[440] "Über Die Religion," 260. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 66-67.
[441] "Über Die Religion," 282. cf. Lamm, 86.
[442] "Über Die Religion," 283. cf. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 87.

things that lie completely off its path," and can no longer be a religious community with a "definite aim [*bestimmtes Streben*]."[443]

Schleiermacher also describes the disordering effects of sensible concerns in terminology borrowed from chemistry and physics, describing the corruptive amalgamation of secular and religious community like a chemical system, where

> at best a few particles [*Partikeln*] of [actual religious community] were intermingled with it and overwhelmed by external elements, and that the whole, in order to absorb the first substance [*ersten Stoff*] of this immeasurable corruption, already had to be in a state of unhealthy ferment [*Zustande krankhafter Gährung*] in which the few sound parts soon completely disappeared.[444]

True religious community cannot absorb or react with that which is foreign to it; to react with "external elements" is already a sign that the church is in a "state of unhealthy ferment." Here the idea of communal pathology and disease returns, but with the opposite effect. While the truly-religious community communicates with individuals outside the church, it only admits those in whom religious intuition has been stimulated and in whom religion has begun to grow. Like a chemical reaction, the church takes individuals outside the church—its reagents— and converts them into members of the church—its products. If those merely seeking religion are admitted, Schleiermacher seems to suggest that this foreign corruption will eventually result in a reversible chemical reaction, whereby the "few particles" of actual religious community are converted back into irreligion, and thus disappear. Another possibility is that these truly religious "particles" will exit the corrupt chemical system entirely. Schleiermacher suggests as much when he employs an analogy from practical chemistry: "Pour liquids of different weights and densities that have little internal attraction to one another into a container, shake them most vigorously together so that all appear to be one, and you will see how, if you only let it stand, everything gradually separates again and only

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[443] "Über Die Religion," 284. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 87-88.
[444] "Über Die Religion," 284. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 88.

like associated with like."[445] Without a common attractive force, liquids with different densities and weights will necessarily separate; without a common attractive force, religious individuals will necessarily separate from irreligious individuals. Again, Schleiermacher reinforces that the same fundamental relations undergird both chemistry and human social relations.

4. Locating the World Spirit: The Communal Organism as "Mediating Institution"

As with all drives, the communal coordination drive, or "world spirit," is located within a mediating organ. Additionally, just as the individual repulsive drive was located in an individual organism with a unified and religious purpose, so also is the communal coordination drive located in a communal organism with a unified and religious purpose. As has already been intimated, the communal organism being considered is a rightly-ordered religious community, what Schleiermacher calls the "church." The term "church" can be quite ambiguous; does he mean the true church comprised of truly religious individuals, or perhaps the mixed community comprised of both the true church and the false church, which his audience sees everywhere? For Schleiermacher, the distinction implied in this question is an unfortunate reflection of the political realities of late eighteenth century Prussia, where the state church unnaturally binds the "true church" in an unholy matrimony with the false and ostensibly religious church. In the real world, however, it remains an important distinction. If church is considered as organism, however, the antinomic thinking implied in this distinction can be dissolved in favor of a more productive organismic relation.

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[445] "Über Die Religion," 279-80. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 84.

Though he has just described the admixture of the true and false church in terms of liquids that necessarily separate, Schleiermacher nevertheless recognizes that even two separated liquids remain in contact with one another; they are two distinct parts of what remains a single chemical and social system. He rightly asks,

> But if there is supposed to be a mediating institution [*vermittelnde Anstalt*] through which the true church comes into a certain contact [*Berührung*] with the profane world with which it has nothing to do directly, an atmosphere, as it were, through which it simultaneously purifies itself and also draws to itself and shapes new material, what form shall this society then take, and how might it be freed from the corruption it has absorbed?[446]

Again employing chemical terminology for social relations, Schleiermacher recognizes two aspects of social life in opposition to one another: the "true church" on the one hand, and the "profane world," a kind of social "atmosphere," on the other. There must be some kind of "mediating institution" which remains in "contact" with both, he surmises, something that embodies the world spirit and allows the true church to "draw to itself" and "shape new material." Those two functions should look quite familiar at this point; the former is nothing less than a communal attraction drive, more-appropriately called the communicative drive, while the latter is a communal repulsive drive, more-appropriately called the coordination drive. Following this logic, the communicative drive is located in individual "organs of religion," while the communal coordination drive is located in a unified communal organism. While Schleiermacher does not explicitly refer to this location of the coordination drive as an 'organ' or 'organism,' by describing it as a "mediating institution" he nevertheless references the primary function of organs: mediation, the bringing together of the seemingly opposed, in a way that is dynamically productive.

Consequently, the "contact" implied by this communal organism means that the true church is always interacting with the profane world; first by drawing in and incorporating the profane world

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[446] "Über Die Religion," 284. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 88.

through the attraction of new members, accomplished by religious communication, and second by transforming and appropriating these new members, by coordinating them toward a singular communal purpose. In so doing, the communal organism gradually transforms the profane world into the true church, allowing this communal organism to grow and expand, all the while coordinating an increasing number of individuals around a growing sense of universality, reason, and freedom.[447] Consequently, the communal organism is an organism whose "inner fate" or purpose is to transform the profane world into the true church. One could say that the driving purpose of this communal organization is nothing other than the sacred transformation of the world.

Whereas the purpose arising in individual organism drives it to connect and balance attraction and repulsion in support of individual "life," the purpose of communal organism drives it to connect and balance attraction and repulsion in support of communal life, something more commonly called "history." Consider that an individual organism requires some temporal, spatial, and spiritual 'space' to pursue its ends, to embody its purpose; one might call this space enjoyed by an individual organism "life." So too does a communal organism require temporal, spatial, and spiritual 'space' to pursue its ends; on a longer timeline and with a larger spatiality, one can easily call this communal space "history." Returning to the galvanic and organic form that underlies his thought, Schleiermacher goes so far as to say that "the whole of history" is "an abiding interchange between this attraction [*Reiz*] and repulsion [*Gegenwirkung*]."[448] History is important to Schleiermacher's in many ways. Individuals are historically particular, just as "positive religions" are

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[447] "The external society of religion will be brought closer to the universal freedom and the majestic unity of the true church only by becoming a flowing mass where there are no outlines, where each part is found, now here and now there, while all mingle peacefully with one another," "Über Die Religion," 288. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 91.

[448] "Über Die Religion," 307. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 114.

historically particular; in this way, history can be understood as a necessary particularity of everything experienced in the world. But history "in the most proper sense, is the highest object of religion," because it *observes and perceives* the progress wrought by humanity *as* "one of the great actions of the universe." It is only in this sense that he can argue that all true history has a religious purpose and unfolds out of religious principles; any "secular" history would merely be a deficient form of this primordial, religious history.[449] As a result, the process by which communal organism transforms the profane world into the true church is ultimately an *historical* process, whereby

> the vulgar, the barbaric, the misshapen shall be **engulfed and transformed in an organic development** [*organische Bildung*]. Nothing shall be a dead mass that is moved only by dead impact and resists only by unconscious friction. **Everything shall be its own assembled, much intertwined, and elevated life**. Blind instinct, unthinkable habit, dead obedience, everything indolent and passive— all these sad symptoms of the **asphyxia of freedom and humanity shall be annihilated.**[450]

Here it is evident that *historical development* is nothing less than *organic development,* and the church as communal organism is the location of the historical and organic process by which the world spirit transforms the profane world.

It is also quite apparent that Schleiermacher sees the life of individuals and the history of communities in similar patterns of relation, insofar as they are both organisms. As the organic and historical development of the world proceeds, it elevates life and ushers in true freedom for both individual and community. One key difference, however, attends the distinction between life and history. The individual organism lives a relatively-short life in comparison to a community with a history; individual organisms are fragile and finite, and even those properly-oriented toward religion face a short life and immanent death. Schleiermacher intimates, however, that an individual's participation in communal history might be one way of reimagining embodied immortality. While

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[449] "Über Die Religion," 233. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 42.
[450] "Über Die Religion," 234. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 43. emphasis added.

comparing the inadequacy of an isolated individual's agency with the certain transformative power of communal agency through the world spirit, Schleiermacher suggests, "if you finally want to grasp the actual character of all the changes and all the advances of humanity, religion shows you how the living gods hate nothing as much as death, how nothing but it shall be pursued and overthrown, the first and last enemy of humanity."[451] While the individual organism may still be menaced by death, through her coordination and subsumption in religious community, she participates in an organic and historical development that exceeds the boundedness of a finite life. Here Schleiermacher seems to be echoing the Apostle Paul, when Paul asserts that

> this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:
> 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'
> 'Where, O death, is your victory?
> Where, O death, is your sting?' [452]

5. Toward a Stronger Organicism

A necessary distinction must be struck, however, that this understanding of communal organism as mirroring individual organism is not a merely an analogy between two distinct entities—the individual and community—considered under a unifying concept—organism. Schleiermacher's organicism makes a much stronger claim: that when an individual organism deigns itself to become a mere organ of a greater communal organism, it places one organism within another, whereby organism is not so much an infinitely scaleable concept applied to distinct entities, but a single, unifying relation. Further, organismic individuals should not be thought of as the

[451] "Über Die Religion," 234. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 43.
[452] 1 Cor 15:53-55, NRSV.

primordial building-blocks out of which organismic community is assembled, but rather the reverse; organismic communities are primordial and original, and can only be thought of as organismic individuals in a derivative sense. The fact that individuals may join new communities is irrelevant; everyone is born into sociality and community, and is always already incorporated into some kind of communal organism that predates their existence. Even the birth of a single human being already presumes a more primordial community responsible for conception; community is both primordial and inescapable.

Going a step further, Schleiermacher asserts that even these religious, organismic communities are themselves derivative, as they are reflections of that which is even more primordial than community, what Schleiermacher refers to alternatively as the "universe," the "infinite," or the "whole." In this, Schleiermacher inverts our ordinary understanding of the world, wherein one sees individuality as primordial, and sees individual things that only afterward can be combined to make larger things like individuals, who can only then be combined together to make even larger things like communities. In Schleiermacher's understanding, the universe is primordial and original; only out of this unified origin do particular communities condense and form, and only then out of these communities can individuals be separated and distinguished. Consequently, as this primordial origin is the source of freedom, reason, and coherence, each movement away from this unity and toward particularity represents a corresponding loss of freedom, reason, and coherence. That human beings quite naturally begin with individual things already speaks to the irreligious and sensible reality in which human beings live out their average everyday existence. One can rediscover and reconnect with this primordial unity, however, but *only* by means of mutual religious communication in *religious* communities. The common interpretation of Schleiermacher—that a

context-free individual, free of all human sociality, could not only intuit the universe but interpret that intuition productively for religion—is wholly incompatible with his organicism, which asserts the priority of sociality, from which individuality is merely derivative. One must rediscover and reunite with community before it is even possible to rediscover and reunite with the primordial unity of religion.

Additionally, the primordiality of community over individuals is not unique to one or two passages, but appears throughout the *Speeches*. Speaking of both "mystics and physicists of religion"[*Mystiker und Physiker in der Religion*][453] that have reached this moment of religious apprehension, Schleiermacher boldly asserts that "one bond encloses them all, and they can only be separated forcibly and arbitrarily; each act of individual union is merely a flowing, integrating part of the whole that loses itself to the indefinite outlines of the whole and perceives itself only in this manner."[454] Much like a chemical bond or a galvanic cell, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Were one to forcibly separate a galvanic cell or a religious community, one would lose the dynamic product of that whole, e.g. electricity or the world spirit, respectively. Schleiermacher more strongly employs the chemical form of religious union elsewhere, when he concludes,

> I see nothing except that all is one and that all distinctions that really exist in religion flow smoothly into one another through the social association…take whichever you wish of these substances [*Elementen*] that

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[453] Crouter translates *Physiker* as "empiricist," which is especially strange given Schleiermacher's context in Berlin in 1799. Schleiermacher's exposure to physics through his Jena associates would likely have impressed upon him the dual nature of physics as a discipline, a well-known distinction advanced by Schelling. In this view, physics is divided into two sub-disciplines: empirical or experimental physics, and speculative physics. Just a year later in 1800, Schelling would help found the "Journal of Speculative Physics" [*Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik*] to further institutionalize this distinction, of which Schleiermacher was certainly well aware. Translating the term as "physicist" reclaims for the English reader the straightforward reference to natural science in the German text, while additionally emphasizing the possibility that one might be a "physicist of religion" as easily as a mystic. As a result, religion is not confined to its traditional roles—mysticism and supernaturalism come immediately to mind—but even has value for those scientists who study the natural world.

[454] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 271. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 77.

> individually form themselves chemically [*die sich einzeln chemisch bilden*]; if you do not forcibly isolate them through some mechanical [*mechanische*] operation, none will be a true individual.[455]

This passage clearly underscores Schleiermacher's distinctive organicism, wherein one can reconnect with religious unity ("all is one") only in a religious and organismic community. Religious and organismic community empowers one to perceive all distinctions dissolving into unity; in contradistinction, one only perceives individuals through diseased community, where religious life struggles to rid itself of dead mechanism. In particular, Schleiermacher spends significant energy trying to distinguish the organicity of religious community from the specifically "mechanical" aggregation of anorganic parts or elements. Unsurprisingly, Schelling's *On The World Soul* makes strikingly-similar claims about the primordiality of the organic and organismic, and that the anorganic or mechanistic is merely a derivative or deficient form of the organic and organismic.

In another passage, which is often attributed –mistakenly-- to Romantic or mystical excess, Schleiermacher is more likely describing this stronger form of organicism, specifically affirming the primordiality of the universe over community, and the primordiality of the religious community over the individual. At first, Schleiermacher appears to be describing nothing more than an individual's intuition of the universe:

> I lie on the bosom of the infinite world. At this moment **I am its soul**, for **I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own**; at this moment **it is my body**, for **I penetrate its muscles and its limbs as my own, and its innermost nerves move according to my sense and my presentiment as my own**.[456]

What makes the passage easily mistakable for Romantic or mystical excess is that it is, at least in some respects, quite foreign to our individual experience. The idea that an individual is able to intuit the activity of the infinite universe, and feel receptively open to and connected with the universe as a whole certainly seems plausible. Many common religious experiences might fit this

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[455] "Über Die Religion," 271. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 76.

[456] "Über Die Religion," 221. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 32. emphasis added

description. But to suggest that this religious intuition would be followed by an activity, whereby one becomes the soul that moves the very world as one's body, seems *prima facie* ridiculous. As described, this would amount to telekinesis, whereby the mind is able to control and move parts of nature.

It is not ridiculous, however, when one considers how such a religious intuition can only arise in a religious community. In religious community, the world spirit offers up a religious purpose—a communal soul—which results in the activity of the communal organism—a communal body— that takes in and transforms the profane world. When Schleiermacher describes how one can become a motive force issuing in worldly change, in effect becoming a "soul" to the world's "body," a more likely possibility is that *he did not* intend it as a claim about *individual organisms*. Recall Schleiermacher's seemingly-vacuous descriptions about an individual's religious feeling that results from religious intuition. While bodily feelings drive consciousness into the world through strong and apparent physical motions, individual religious feelings do the opposite, and are said to inhibit any drive to action, resulting instead in calm and contemplation. Schleiermacher believes that "Man must first master himself and his pious feelings before they press actions out of him,"[457] as religion should not immediately issue in moralizing action in the world. This quietistic comportment seems entirely at odds with Schleiermacher's claim that in religion, one can be the "soul" that moves the world's "body."

Considered within the discussion of how religious, communal organisms are the proper means by which religion can transform the world, the passage can become entirely-consistent. One can agree with Schleiermacher's reticence to empower individuals into "moralizing religion," because

[457] "Über Die Religion," 219. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 30.

his organicism dictates that individual organisms can become the motive force for the world *only* when they become communal organisms. If an individual organism loses herself in a communal organism, and becomes enlivened and guided by a common world spirit, one can indeed become the force moving the sinews, nerves and muscles of the world. Schleiermacher was careful to point out that religion should not *immediately* empower an *individual* to moralizing action in the world; regardless, this warning leaves open the possibility that religion might *mediately* empower an individual to action, where the all-important mediation is provided *through incorporation into religious community.* Given his description of a communal organism which seeks to transform the entire world into the true church, one can rightly assume that the *only* proper place for religiously-inspired activity, and the *only* proper place that can grow and encourages this free activity, is through incorporation into religious community. This is the most important point reinforced by Schleiermacher's organicism in the *Speeches*, one that underscores just how far from religious individualism or "emotivism" Schleiermacher really stands. The religious community, understood as organism, is the only proper place for religiously-motivated activity in the world.

D. Toward Religion, and not a Metaphysics of Nature

It seems clear that, while writing the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher has consumed and appropriated a significant quantity of the natural science and philosophy of his day. Through the conceptuality of galvanism and organism in particular, Schleiermacher has found a comprehensive formal framework within which he can better understand how individuals and communities can become more rightly-ordered through religion. As has been demonstrated, that process of religious transformation should be understood as a reconnection with more primordial forms of unity, beginning first and foremost

with community. An important question remains, however: does Schleiermacher consider his thoroughgoing organicism as metaphysics, or even go so far as advocating a metaphysics of religion? Schleiermacher most certainly did not, given his well-known assertion that religion is something more primordial than either metaphysics or morals. Early in the Second Speech, Schleiermacher addresses this possibility,

> I ask you therefore, what does your metaphysics do—or if you want to have nothing to do with the outmoded name that is too historical for you, your transcendental philosophy? It classifies the universe and divides it into this being and that, seeks out the reasons for what exists, and deduces the necessity of what is real while spinning the reality of the world and its laws out of itself. Into this realm, therefore, relying must not venture too far.[458]

Addressing both metaphysics in general and Fichte in particular, Schleiermacher decries them as trying to create the world through their consciousness and ratiocinations, deciding what is real and necessary without considering the universe at all. Metaphysics seeks to classify and divide the unity of the universe; the universe, however, is primordial, and religion that considers the universe is thus more primordial than metaphysics.

So by his own admission, Schleiermacher is not doing metaphysics. The problem remains though, because the natural philosophy of his day, from which his organicism draws and appropriates, was often understood by its authors to be a form of metaphysics. Admittedly, not all the natural science or natural philosophy is definitively metaphysics. Much of the experimental science in galvanic chemistry performed by Ritter and Schelling would be considered, by modern standards, a form of natural science and not metaphysics. These experiments would be preceded by hypothesizing, and followed by theorizing about the experimental results. At what point, however, does speculative theory become speculative metaphysics? A definitive answer to this question lies beyond the scope of this study, as the question remains a dynamic and contentious debate within

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[458] "Über Die Religion," 208. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 19-20.

contemporary philosophy of science and the natural sciences themselves.[459] Nevertheless, Schleiermacher exhibits a self-understanding that his organicism is not a form of metaphysics, despite its similarities to metaphysical formulations of his day.

1. The Rejection of "Nature" and "Natural Religion" in the *Speeches*

The claim that Schleiermacher's organicism is not a metaphysics of religion turns on the difference between a metaphysics concerned with "nature," like much of the philosophy of nature, and a religion concerned with "the universe," which Schleiermacher advocates. For both Schleiermacher and the great metaphysicians and transcendental philosophers of his day, nature was considered external, the result of antinomic thinking that divides the inner sense of consciousness from the outer sense of the physical world, that which is "material" and "corporeal."[460] During the late 1790s, the question of how philosophy of nature related to transcendental philosophy, or how "nature" related to "self-consciousness," was an important and contentious question. During this period, the heyday of transcendental philosophy, Fichte's most promising student was a young Friedrich Schelling, who over time viewed the philosophy of nature as an equal counterpart to transcendental philosophy, seeking a balance between "nature" and "self-consciousness." For this reason and others, philosophy of nature enjoyed a vibrant if brief renaissance in the early part of the nineteenth century. Where intellectual life was evermore drawn to how philosophy and metaphysics

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[459] One such contemporary debate surrounds theoretical attempts to unify physics, like string theory or supersymmetry. The theories are empirically falsifiable and testable *in theory*, but their claims could only be verified on extremely small subatomic levels which current observational technology is unable to match, making these claims presently untestable. There is discussion, however, about whether or not a "beautiful" or "elegant" theory might be good science even if not presently falsifiable.

[460] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 222. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 33.

could relate nature to the mind, Schleiermacher saw an opening. The answer to many of these questions was not to be found in metaphysics, but it religion; not in nature, but in the universe. In the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher intentionally sets out a different path from the metaphysical speculations of nature philosophy. Like any organism, he draws in his sources and nutrients, but appropriates and transforms them to serve his own purpose.

This general interest in philosophy of nature was part of a larger cultural movement recognizing, valorizing, and even divinizing nature, as has been discussed. Schleiermacher knew that his readers even exhibited a tendency to divinize nature, and so he set out to de-divinize nature to clear a space for genuine religion. Schleiermacher tells his audience that nature is nothing more than the “forecourt of religion,” not the temple itself.[461] These claims are consistent with Schleiermacher’s description of sensible intuition, which can lead one as far as the “vistas” of religion, but not deliver up religion itself. This makes more sense when one considers that different kinds of intuition are unique to different kinds of organs; namely, that religious intuition relies on organs of spirit, while sensible intuition relies on organs of sense. Schleiermacher pushes the point further, asking his audience,

> But what are love and resistance? What are individuality and oneness? Did you get these concepts, by means of which nature first actually becomes for you an intuition of the world, from nature? Do they not derive originally from the interior of the mind, and are they not first directed from there to nature?

This question would have resulted in a rather uncontroversial “yes,” as it basically restates Kant’s insight that experience brings together the mind’s organization and concepts with sensible intuitions from the world. Schleiermacher continues,

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[461] "Über Die Religion," 223. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 33.

> Therefore, it is also the mind to which religion actually looks and from which it takes intuitions of the world; the universe is portrayed in the inner life, and only through the internal is the external comprehensible. But even the mind, if it is to produce and sustain religion, must be intuited in a world."[462]

A good Kantian would read this passage and conclude that religion and its content, the universe, are part of the mind's inner life, as are sensible intuitions of the world. That is not exactly what Schleiermacher says, however, it is *religion* looking at the mind and taking sensible intuitions from it, not the reverse. The mind is not primordial, considering the universe within and nature without. The universe and its religion is primordial, preexisting and exceeding the mind, which is derivative and "must be intuited in the a world," a world of sense and meaning, in order to support religion. In religion, the mind participates in something prior and more-exemplary than itself, the universe. As a result, the difference between the universe and nature could not be more striking: the universe is a singular, and primordial origin—what some romantics called Being—while nature is a collection of derivative, physical, material things and products. When religion considers nature, it cares nothing for its masses and densities, but instead seeks out the primordial law and order that underlies this physical reality, what he calls "the uniform coming and going of all organic forces, the perpetual uniformity in the striving of malleable nature."[463]

Given this absolute difference between nature and the universe, one could easily associate Schleiermacher's criticism of "natural religion" as a criticism of its natural object, "nature," which is inappropriate for religion because it is derivative and multiple, not primordial and unified. Yet in critiquing "natural religion," Schleiermacher does not target those divinizers of nature; he instead

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[462] "Über Die Religion," 227. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 37.

[463] The quotation in full reads: "what actually appeals to the religious sense in the external world is not its masses but its laws. Raise yourselves to the view of how these laws embrace everything, the largest and the smallest, the world systems and the small mote of dust that flutters about restlessly on the air, and then say whether you do not intuit the divine unity and the eternal immutability of the world. What the common eye first perceives of these laws in this intuition of the universe is precisely the least: the order in which all movements return in heaven and on earth, the definite course of the stars and the uniform coming and going of all organic forces, the perpetual uniformity in the striving of malleable nature," "Über Die Religion," 225. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 35.

says that "so-called natural religion is usually so refined and has such philosophical and moral manners that it allows little of the unique character of religion to shine through," so much so that one could say that natural religion "actually consists wholly in the negation of everything positive and characteristic in religion and in the most violent polemic against it."[464] Natural religion is not bound by nature so much as reason; as a result, natural religion is a generalized and rationalized religion purified of its historical content, including religion's writings, doctrines, creeds, and communities. That historical content was seen as heteronomous, and a genuine threat to the autonomous reason of the individual; freed of these heteronomous chains, natural religion supposedly offered the individual even more freedom than positive religion. Schleiermacher eviscerates this claim, pointing out that this "freedom" is merely "the freedom to remain unformed, the freedom from every compulsion to be, to see, and to feel something even remotely specific."[465] In a way, natural religion is the inverse of Schleiermacher's understanding of genuine "positive" religion. All positive religions can be subsumed under a single idea of 'religion' because they are each bound by a central religious intuition of the universe. Each religious community has a different intuition of the universe, insofar as each intuiting community is itself different, historical, and particular. Natural religion has no unifying religious intuition, so lacking a direction to direct its gaze, it inevitably wanders into metaphysics and morals. While not explicitly directed at the metaphysical constructions regarding nature one finds in some philosophy of nature, any attempts to borrow and employ a metaphysics of nature in the realm of religion would, in Schleiermacher's eyes, be yet another form of natural religion. Consequently, Schleiermacher cannot be said to be employing metaphysics borrowed from philosophy of nature; his appropriation, as with all

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[464] "Über Die Religion," 296, 310. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 98, 110).

[465] "Über Die Religion," 308. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 108.

appropriation, is both a "taking in" and a "transforming" of that material into something consonant to one's purpose.

2. Schleiermacher's rejection of 'Philophysics'

Schleiermacher's appreciation and dependence on philosophy of nature would not be undone by this criticism, but it had to be placed in its proper sphere, whether that be experimental science or a metaphysics of nature. Schleiermacher would remain engaged with natural science and philosophy throughout his stay in Berlin and beyond. One helpful example comes from 1800, when Schleiermacher would review Fichte's *The Vocation of Man* [*Die Bestimmung des Menschen*], a work intended to take his transcendental philosophy to a popular audience. Schleiermacher certainly carried his animosity towards Fichte's philosophy over from the *Speeches* to this review, where he defended philosophy of nature against the Fichtean primacy of self-consciousness over nature. Schleiermacher believes that philosophy of nature, and even a metaphysics of nature, have their time and place, as well as their proper application and value. Similarly, Schleiermacher would defend the idea of nature in its own terms in his correspondence with Henrietta Herz. After Herz wrote that art, and not nature, offers the most sublime beauty, Schleiermacher replies that "I am somewhat surprised to see that Art has won so complete a victory over Nature in your mind, that you even speak with a certain indifference of that sublime natural scenery which you looked forward to with so much delight."[466] Evoking Kant's third *Critique,* however, Schleiermacher reminds Herz that this beauty was not itself actually in nature, but in the distinct emotions and otherworldly experiences

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[466] Letter 665, Schleiermacher to H. Herz, 20 June 1799, *Briefwechsel 1799 (Briefe 553-849)*, V.3, 127. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 219.

that the sublime evokes. This sentiment is consistent with the *Speeches*, in that religion seeks in nature not individual things but the hidden order and lawfulness that permeates the natural world.

Schleiermacher also continued to study and grapple with natural science and philosophy in his correspondence with Friedrich Schlegel. The publication of the *Speeches,* however, showed Schlegel just how far Schleiermacher really stood from his position, and further cemented their brewing split. In July of 1799, Schleiermacher would lament the increasing incongruity with Schlegel that arose from the *Speeches,*

> Friedrich says in his notice of the *Speeches on Religion,* that whenever I approach the subject of nature my irreligion reveals itself as a deficiency. He has peculiar ideas about nature, which I as yet do not comprehend; but my mode of treating it I understand very well. That which you have so often interpreted as mere controversy, viz., my assertion of the infinitude of chemical action, is my bitter earnest, although, in consequence of this conviction, I lose many an enjoyment…[467]

Interestingly, while Schlegel has his "peculiar ideas about nature," Schleiermacher mentions one of his own views which seems peculiar amongst his Jena contacts, "the infinitude of chemical action." While it is not entirely clear what Schleiermacher means by this enigmatic term, one can nevertheless make two significant conclusions. First, Schleiermacher did not just uncritically adopt natural science and philosophy, but made it his own, even if it set him at odds with his dear friend Schlegel. Second, Schleiermacher continues to develop his particular interest in chemistry, even developing a unique theory about "the infinitude of chemical action," whereby one might surmise that a theory about experimental chemical interactions might become the basis of a much broader theory. It may even describe something like a metaphysics of nature, perhaps the extension of his religious organicism into a separate discipline, metaphysics. If religious organicism issues in a moralizing purpose in the world, as has been argued above, it would be just as fitting to see that religious

[467] Letter 668, Schleiermacher to H. Herz, 1 July 1799, *Briefwechsel 1799 (Briefe 553-849)*, V.3, 136-37. cf. *The Life of Schleiermacher*, 221.

organicism extended into the realm of metaphysics. The evidence suggests—based on Schleiermacher's later writings—that he was already contemplating and outlining this move in the late 1790s.

Nevertheless, Schleiermacher remained wary of any attempt to construct a metaphysics of nature that did not arise out of religion. Meanwhile, Schlegel had found common cause with Ritter, Hardenberg, Schelling, and Veit in constructing a new kind kind of metaphysics of nature. As he was quite skilled at crafting neologisms, Schlegel named this proposed field "philophysics" [*Philophysik*], which sought to reunite natural science, nature philosophy, and—to Schleiermacher's disappointment—even religion under their primordial origin: a living and deified conception of nature. Given Schleiermacher's shared interest in natural science and nature-philosophy, Schlegel seems to have assumed that Schleiermacher would join the ranks of fellow philophysicists like Ritter, Hardenberg, Veit, and himself. Though much of their correspondence on philophysics is missing, one can nevertheless infer Schleiermacher's reticence to identify with another one of Schlegel's newly-proposed movements. In February of 1800, Schlegel would respond to Schleiermacher's now-missing letter, chiding him that

> It is shameful, that you do not want a philophysics even in the present. It is on to the so-called theoretical fields, while [philophysics] is the only thing that has life; the preeminent sign of the times. You yourself said as much, and now you cover yourself in your old silence; from the vantage point of your knowledge of chemistry, you are so very opposed to us poor thieves. I greatly lack this viewpoint. If I made it this far through my association with Schelling, Ritter, and Hardenberg, and even if I came to understand this unity through these others, then nevertheless this great deficiency pushes me and I must soon act and rectify with that fact.[468]

Schlegel clearly worries that Schleiermacher has traded a more-comprehensive vision of the whole for something provincial. Additionally, Schlegel seems to see this comprehensive vision only in the central concept of 'nature,' as studied by a philosophical or speculative physics, fearing that

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[468] Letter 791, F. Schlegel to Schleiermacher, 3 February 1800, *Briefwechsel 1799 (Briefe 553-849)*, V.3, 380-81.

Schleiermacher's inclination to study a theoretically-driven field like chemistry would be tantamount to giving up on such a comprehensive vision.

While somewhat resentful of the fact, Schlegel also admits that his knowledge of chemistry is deficient in comparison to Schleiermacher's. While corroborating evidence considered above seems to support this belief, any attentive reader of the *Speeches* will recognize the source of Schleiermacher's reticence about philophysics, and it is not his selective attention toward chemistry. Schleiermacher is reticent to affirm it because philophysics places nature where only the universe could be a primordial unity, and as a result demotes religion into its status as a derivative discipline, that emerges out of a more primordial *ur*-discipline, i.e. philophysics. Schlegel is mistaken in assuming that Schleiermacher's interest and agreement about the conclusions and theories of natural science and philosophy also commits him to religion's subordinate status. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher remains committed to Schlegel's drive toward a comprehensive vision, in which it is not so unusual that speculative physics and poetry might converge along the way to some unifying ground.[469] Despite his temperamental letter, Schlegel continued to recognize a significant common ground between Schleiermacher and himself. For example, when Schlegel proposed to turn his proposed discipline of philophysics into a critical journal in 1800, he enlisted his brother Wilhelm, Jena's "usual suspects" of nature philosophy, notably Hardenberg, Ritter, and Schelling, but also

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[469] In the letter, Schlegel would describe his idea of philophysics in greater detail, as well as its varied reception among friends and associates. In this letter, one finds a great deal that would have drawn Schleiermacher's interest and agreement. Schlegel wrote that "Tieck was already reading my dialogues full of philophysics; However, the "philo" had too great a predominance to him. Wilhelm [Schlegel, his brother], however, takes it quite strictly and scientifically. Meanwhile, the study of physics would be better received, if it maintained the manner of speech of a filled-to-the-brim poet, so that we might also go along with Ritter into this school of thought. In fact, my speech about mythology has made a big impression on him. For me, physics is almost the only source of poetry and incitement to visions. I certainly have conjectures concerning that which is scientific, but before I shall bring them to purity, I will have to take mathematics also. — However, Schelling's philosophy of nature goes well with mine, and so I will probably withdraw this requirement," ibid.

Schleiermacher. Despite the spreading cracks in their friendship and their disagreement about the place of religion, Schlegel still recognized Schleiermacher's continuing research and theorizing regarding natural science and philosophy of nature. In a panic about the new project, Dorothea Veit would write Schleiermacher, bemoaning that

> Wilhelm [Schlegel] is quite at ease with the fact that the Annalen will be going the same way as many other such projects; Friedrich wishes nothing more than precisely that; Ritter is beside himself with delight; and you, my friend? Why the haste with these Annalen? Do you have nothing better to do? Think instead about your novel, about Plato— let Friedrich [Schlegel] think about Plato, Greek poetry, and *Lucinde*, and Wilhelm about Shakespeare and *Tristan*— look, those are different things; I remain very apprehensive about this critical journal. Leave criticism at home, it is an poor trade in poor hands; and you should not soil one more finger with it, because you do not learn from your criticism, and the others [you critique] simply say 'thank you very much.'[470]

The journal itself would never materialize, but one can nevertheless see that Schleiermacher remained an integral part of this community of original, young minds, in rethinking the ways in which human beings understand the world and the principles and forms that enliven it. His relationship to natural science and philosophy of nature would remain strong; he would neither be a zealous and uncritical disciple of the movement, nor its dogmatic critic. Through the publication of the the *Speeches,* which were read and well-received by notable figures like Goethe, Ritter, and Schelling, Schleiermacher offered his own contribution to the emerging philosophy of nature at the turn of the nineteenth century, an unabashed defense of a religiously-rooted organicism that would come to determine his thought for years to come.

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[470] Letter 971, D. Veit to Schleiermacher, *Briefwechsel 1800 (Briefe 850-1004)*, V.4, 311-12.

CONCLUSION: ON SCHLEIERMACHER'S ORGANICISM

While much of this study has been devoted to elucidating the earliest development of Schleiermacher's organicism in the 1790s, this descriptive task is not without relevance. Certainly one of the key drivers of Schleiermacher's development of an organismic understanding of relation was his realization that the so-called "question of freedom" was a quixotic pursuit, even a philosophical red herring. From ancient philosophy all the way forward, the question of freedom remained mired in insolubility, resulting in little practical difference whether one was—in reality—radically free or hopelessly determined. Parallel to this diminution of the question of freedom, Schleiermacher became increasingly attentive to the nature of relations, both within the subject and in the subject's relation to the world. Freedom was not otherworldly and noumenal, but rather described the immanent intermeshing of one's mind and body through the activities of life. His intense involvement with many of the figures of the Jena circle would expose him to the literary and scientific vanguard of late eighteenth-century Prussia, with whom he would read, discuss, and investigate the natural world. This unique confluence of forces would help crystalize Schleiermacher's nascent understanding of intra- and inter-personal relations into a vibrant and distinct organicism. This organicism was unique and differentiated from the natural philosophy of his peers insofar as it defended the centrality of religion in the organismic development of individuals, communities, and nature as a whole.

For the most part, this has been a descriptive account of Schleiermacher's unique development and use of organicism. If this study has been convincingly argued, the reader might readily concede the importance of organicism in the development of Schleiermacher's thought. Nevertheless, the same reader might be perfectly justified in asking: to what end? Why is Schleiermacher's commitment to organicism significant? Questions of relevance are never be far from the surface of historical exposition, though the extent of their significance or relevance differs widely. Some historians are more comfortable with the descriptive task of history, which is nonetheless relevant in that it affects the way the reader views the object of historical study, often illuminating unforeseen blind-spots, faulty assumptions, and new ways of thinking. Other historians seek to take this descriptive task further, viewing it as a starting point for a more significant interaction between the historical object and the contemporary reader. In this sense, history is seen as helping to shape the way human beings view themselves and their world, and consequently project new possibilities for the future. Sometimes contact with this foreign, historical world, separated as it is by historical distance and even incommensurability, can nevertheless help readers to reflect and work toward a projected and desired future. History should not be forced or awkwardly bent toward normativity, but alternately it should not be insulated from prescriptive significance for the present and future.

The majority of this study has been committed to the first, more-descriptive task of historical research, seeking to present the historical evidence in hopes that it will offer productive ways of viewing Schleiermacher and his organicism. One elucidating example concerns the debate over Schleiermacher's commitment to freedom or determinism, regularly-debated in the secondary literature. When some interpreters describe Schleiermacher as a compatibilist committed to

determinism, while others describe him as an incompatibilist committed to transcendental freedom, it behooves the observer to take a step back and reevaluate the frame in which Schleiermacher is being interpreted. Both camps offer coherent arguments utilizing the historical sources at hand, and yet fail to reconcile very disparate positions. This study has argued that oftentimes this irreconcilability results from viewing Schleiermacher's work through an interpretive lens that becomes increasingly foreign to Schleiermacher's thinking as his thought develops; the so-called "question of freedom" seemingly functions as just such an interpretive lens for many of Schleiermacher's interpreters. As discussed early in this study, the opposition between freedom and necessity was intellectually and culturally relevant in the 1790s largely because of the Pantheism Controversy, a relevance sustained through Reinhold's appropriation and presentation of Kant's philosophy. As I argued in Chapter I, the question of freedom firmly-grasped Schleiermacher's attention in the late 1780s, and continued to frame much of the discussion in *On Freedom,* as discussed in Chapter II. Yet the frame is seemingly less-adequate as Schleiermacher begins to develop an organismic understanding of relations in the 1790s. By the *Speeches,* Schleiermacher is far less interested in the metaphysical or regulative necessity of freedom, and far more interested in how fundamental, organismic relations help elucidate the connections within self-consciousness, the individual's mind and body, and individuals together in community. Reading the *Speeches* through the lens of organicism clarifies Schleiermacher's real interest, and often helps explain otherwise confusing or contradictory passages, like reconciling the initial ethical quietism of the religious individual with the understanding that religion does have necessary and practical effects in shaping the world, though only in religious community.

If this study offers potential readers and interpreters a productive way of looking at and understanding Schleiermacher, then it has already offered at least one reason why Schleiermacher's organicism is significant and relevant. Yet it might also be helpful to highlight the enduring strengths of Schleiermacher's early organicism, especially given the historical context in which Schleiermacher lived and wrote. The 1790s were a time of political, intellectual, and cultural tumult, and one of Schleiermacher's pressing concerns was the defense of religion in an age where traditional institutions were losing the faith and commitment of their adherents. In this context, Schleiermacher's organicism offers three distinctive features with potential relevance: the centrality of religion for all communities, the openness demanded by the incompleteness of every religious apprehension, and the affirmation of human sociality as necessary for human flourishing. Section A will begin by outlining some of the issues posed by rising disenchantment with social institutions in Schleiermacher's day, while Section B will show how Schleiermacher's organicism sought to offer specific solutions to this state of disenchantment, or at the very least redirect human efforts in the most-productive fashion.

A. The Problem of Institutional Disenchantment

As a regular feature of the Enlightenment's lasting contribution, growing disenchantment with established institutions was well-known to Schleiermacher. To his credit, Schleiermacher recognized both the opportunities and dangers posed by this dramatic shift in human sociality. For example, Schleiermacher advocated a more-secular Prussian state throughout the *Speeches,* because a truly-religious community was not possible as long as the state continued to meddle in religious

communities and dilute religious authenticity. The state is bound to expediency and temporal concerns, the church is bound by religious concerns, and so criticism of both the historical church and state was warranted. It was for this reason that Schleiermacher wrote directly to the "cultured despisers" through the *Speeches,* as these despisers often saw religion as an irrational holdover from a bygone era, a vestigial limb no longer warranted in an increasingly rational and free world. For this reason, many of Schleiermacher's closest friends in Berlin threw their efforts into advocating state reform, so that the state could go out and reform the world. In the near term, this process of political reform resulted in two contrary forces. On the one hand, democratic and republican movements sought to assert the will and rights of the individual, though this necessarily resulted in a greater level of political fragmentation through revolution and new systems of order. As a result, this movement posed the threat of a world that was less-cooperative, unpredictable, and driven-back to native tribalisms and authoritarian control. On the other hand, one saw a movement towards increasing political consolidation, whether under the sword of Napoleon or in response to it, often as part of the rising tide of nationalism. One movement represents rising disenchantment with traditional institutions, and the other represents an attempt to trenchant traditional institutions with a new spirit and purpose. Fortunately, both are entirely explicable in terms of Schleiermacher's organicism.

One helpful way for thinking about this dual movement of disregard and renewal for established institutions might be found in Max Weber's sociological analysis. Employing the term "disenchantment" [*Entzauberung*], Weber described the declining value and explanatory power of that which is mystical and mysterious, especially with regard to modernity in the West. One could see disenchantment at work when polytheisms gave way to forms of monotheism, whose emphasis

on the unity of God were characterized by more-clearly unified systems of meaning-value. These monotheistic systems would undergo further disenchantment during and after the Enlightenment, where they would often be supplanted and replaced with a new center: modern science. Certainly for many in Schleiermacher's day, meaning-value was no longer supplied by religious systems but by a naturalistic and scientific worldview, which offered a seemingly universal worldview dictated by the universality of reason.

The irony for Weber is that the dogged deconstruction of other systems of value construction is eventually turned on reason and science itself. As every scientific achievement is destined to be invalidated, the supposed meaningfulness science gives way to the "Götterdämmerung of all evaluative perspectives,"[471] and a collapse into a plurality of incommensurable value-systems. Universal value systems, based on either religious or scientific grounds, could not support an ethical vision for the individual, let alone an eschatological dream of religious or scientific progress. While Weber's critique cannot be fully enumerated here, it should be noted that the final stage of this disenchantment centers on the demystification of reason as a universal ground for ethical conduct and historical progress. Kant famously supposed his "kingdom of ends" as a regulatively-necessary idea of moral progress through the growth of reason, while in the third *Critique* he outlined the role of "culture" in inculcating and developing reason towards a greater and more rational future. In effect, one has to presume "as if" moral progress can be made, in order to set it out as an ideal to be striven for. Yet the question remains: if moral progress under the purview of reason does not actually obtain in the real world, why should one continue presupposing it? This is the point whereby Weber brushes by the Nietzschean "Death of God;' Weber's process of disenchantment

[471] Max Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy," in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, ed. E.A. Shils (New York: Free Press, 1949), 86.

results from the failure of Kant's ideal presuppositions, a process that ends in a "re-enchantment" through the plurality of systems of meaning-value.

Established institutions can survive this collapse into subjective plurality and incommensurable value through re-enchantment, whereby some new belief or presupposition offers stronger cohesion for institutions than reason or traditional religion. While scientific reason could not universally-ground a system of meaning-value, perhaps another center could hold where reason failed? Despite their contrary positions, Kant and Weber would seemingly agree on one point: assent to some form of transcendence is necessary for social cohesion. In order to be rational and moral, Kant believed that one had to presuppose ideas like God, freedom, and the immortality of the soul regardless of whether or not they referred to real entities or conditions. In order for communities to become increasingly rational and moral, one had to presuppose that human beings were ends in themselves, and that the perfect community of human beings would be a "kingdom of ends." Weber simply described what happened when these regulative ideas lost their mystical power to reinforce individual and communal moral conduct, and projected the inevitable state of decoherence in which multiple systems of meaning-value would proliferate.

The problem of decoherence in communities is further exacerbated by scale. As communities grow larger and more-complex, the number of individuals and processes multiply rapidly, resulting in numerous forces that threaten to dissipate and disorganize the community. As a result, larger groups demand a stronger gravitational centrum to counteract and balance these entropic forces. For example, one might risk death for something as existentially-significant as a religion or a nation-state, but the same person might be far less-likely to so for a local civic association. In the process of disenchantment, however, the religion or nation-state is imbued with

no more significance or value than the civic association. To the disenchanted, both might appear as groups that proclaim lofty ideals —the demand for sacrificing self-interest for the sake of a common good—but this nevertheless conceals the ambivalent moral value of both; they are mere collections of competing self-interest and selfishness, reducible to the logic of power relations. To counteract this disenchantment, a new center is needed, and it can be neither of the already-failed centers, traditional religion and reason. This is the point at which Schleiermacher's organicism can be quite instructive.

B. Schleiermacher's Organicism: Rethinking Social Solutions

First, Schleiermacher's organicism identifies the need for a transcendent and compelling center that can assure the cohesion of communities, what Schleiermacher calls religion. The idea of a transcendent center need not be contentious; every group comes together to accomplish some goal or purpose beyond the capabilities of individuals, often to the point where communities can be said to have a 'common will' or 'common purpose.' If we accept the organismic form of community, then this process can be described as the coordination of organs and drives toward an organismic purpose transcending individual organs. Everything must be in balance: drives and their locating organs, mind and body, individual and community. Considering the entropic forces experienced by complex organs and organismic processes within human beings or human communities, this balance requires a strong, centripetal force that can offset the many centrifugal forces threatening total decoherence of the organism.

Schleiermacher's organicism is unique, however, because of the normative status of religious communities as the most well-ordered communities. For Schleiermacher, religion is the harmonious

and balanced force that orders opposing drives and their constitutive organs into a unified and purposive organism. Religious intuition and feeling underscore the primordial coherence and unity of all individual things, allowing individual human beings see their own needs and desires fall into balance with new desires in accord with their cohering apprehension of the world. On the one hand, the religious organism is spiritual, and apprehends the unity and coherence of the universe. On the other hand, the religious organism is embodied, and continues to perceive and desire individual things that are deemed necessary for the maintenance of life.

So when Schleiermacher asserts religion as the centering force of individual and communal organisms, he does not intend to spirit late eighteenth-century Prussian protestantism into his understanding of relations, but to affirm the unifying and cohering role that religion plays within organisms. So when religious community is said to be normative, one could mean any human association that meets Schleiermacher's criteria of a religious community: free association, voluntary and reciprocal communication, and a common will that embodies the "religious" impulse toward a more coherent, rational, and unifying vision of the universe. It is not difficult to imagine seemingly 'secular' groups (e.g. charitable non-governmental organizations) that might be properly-religious in Schleiermacher's sense. While one might initially scoff at the idea that religion is the *élan vital* of community, in Schleiermacher's carefully delineated understanding 'religion' is not so easily dismissed. So while the central place of religion in Schleiermacher's organismic community may be more readily amenable to theologically-inclined readers, it nevertheless offers far broader implications.

Second, insofar as Schleiermacher's organicism mediates the universal whole to finite, particular individuals, it resists two extremes: the universal objectification of meaning claims, and the

universal reduction of meaning claims to subjective preference. In this respect, Schleiermacher's organicism retains an epistemological humility about universality, while simultaneously denying the irreconcilability of competing claims. This results from the very nature of religion, as it is apprehended by individuals and communities. While a single universe is available to religious intuition, religious intuition is always represented by religious feeling, which varies according to the individuality of the apprehending individual or community. As a result, religious apprehension is always shaped by human finitude, which allows for very narrow perceptual limits to what can be known and perceived. This incomplete apprehension of religion is not a discredit to religion, however, but a strength insofar as it forces organisms into a state of radical openness and interaction with others. Religious individuals are compelled to communicate with others in community, sharing their apprehensions and learning from others in a reciprocal unity. Together, this community can offer a richer communal apprehension, but even this communal apprehension is finite and limited in comparison to the the infinite object of religion, and the so this religious community is driven outwards into free association with those outside the community. Thus epistemological incompleteness drives organismic openness, because the cycle of intuition and feeling cannot deliver up the kind of epistemic certainty demanded by scientific knowledge. In this sense, religious intuition and feeling of the universe cannot undergo the same kind of disenchantment as did reason and science, because religion makes no attempt to ground a universal system of meaning-value. In the language of the *Speeches*, metaphysics is too often inappropriately pressed into the work of grounding and deriving morals, and the end result is bad for both metaphysics and morals. Much of Schleiermacher's critique of "natural religion" in the *Speeches* attacked this admixture of metaphysics

and morals, along with the vainglorious dream that steady moral progress could be achieved through a single, rational religion.[472]

Counterintuitively, Schleiermacher appears to be on the side of disenchantment, at least with regards to the impossibility of establishing a universal system of meaning-value. Accordingly, Weber's prophecy that disenchantment might result in 're-enchantment' through a "polytheism" of incommensurable value-systems seems acceptable to Schleiermacher, in part. Because individuals and communities are plural and distinct, and the task of describing the infinite universe exceeds the finite limits of individuals and communities, the plurality of religions and various systems of value-meaning is inevitable, and even productive insofar as this plurality undermines and disenchants any claim to a single and universal religion. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher's position cannot concede *the incommensurability* of meaning-value between these communities. Because these communities are all bound by their apprehension of a single universe, they must be—at least in principle—commensurable, insofar as they are all intuiting and feeling the same universe. Certainly the more that communities stray from this unifying intuition, the more incommensurable they can appear.

Yet Schleiermacher's organicism undermines the very idea of incommensurability, by describing the intra- and inter-personal relations of individuals and communities as operating under *the same* organismic form and activity. Organisms, by their very nature, are interactive with the world and other organisms. Consequently, groups may adhere to competing value-systems that make communication and interaction quite difficult, but that is not at all the same as being *unable* to communicate. Even a seemingly unproductive communication between two parties can already

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[472] Schleiermacher chides the cultured despisers and their dream of a universal, natural religion: "if you want to intuit these even with religion as a work of the world spirit progressing to infinity—then you must abandon your vain and futile wish that there might be only one religion," Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 296. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 97-98.

be fruitful, because reciprocal and voluntary communication promotes empathy and critical reflection in those communicating, reinforcing the religious impulse for communication.[473] As long as no one has certain knowledge that can ground a universal system of meaning-value, reciprocal communication will remain a necessary and productive possibility for communities. Not surprisingly, where one party claims to possess a universal system of meaning-value, reciprocal communication is often undermined, and isolation or violence can often result.

Thirdly, Schleiermacher's organicism makes a compelling case that human sociality is more primordial than human individuality, and that human flourishing presupposes and depends on social interaction. Because organisms are composed of coordinated organs and organic processes, the relative health or disorder of this coordination can significantly affect the organism's ability to represent, desire, and actuate goods. Thus ordered individuals can accomplish more than disordered individuals, while ordered communities can accomplish more than even the most ordered individual. For Schleiermacher, this rather banal assertion strongly suggests the necessity and primordiality of human social relations, where individual flourishing is not diminished by participation in community, but rather empowered through it. As was mentioned earlier, religious community follows necessarily from the incompleteness of individual religious apprehension; in community, individuals are challenged to think about a larger world than their immediate sphere of concern. This community does not exist to correct or supplement individual religious apprehension, however, but to foster coordination and compel action towards higher goals and ends together. To this end, Schleiermacher sees the role of religious community as a kind of incubator for altruism, where outward-focus and widening concern is translated into effective action for the greater good. Though

[473] After all, organismic communication is not an abstract discourse where reified ideas are mysteriously transmitted, but an embodied discourse, emerging from embodied organisms, who live in and desire aspects of an embodied world.

religion replaces some individual desires with greater communal desires, this transformation is not compelled or a restriction of human freedom, because a religious impulse can never be compelled without dissolving into irreligion. The communal will, formed as it is solely through voluntary communication, should not be viewed as a loss but a gain, because individuals are empowered to accomplish far greater ends through coordination in community.

Furthermore, the primordiality of sociality demands the translation of religious apprehension into embodied religious action. Whereas Schleiermacher was reticent to force moral action out of an individual's religious feeling, he points to religious community as the proper sphere for the moralizing effects of religion. The translation of the communal will into communal action is the ultimate act of religious embodiment, as the world-spirit deigns itself to bodily form in the outworking of religious community. Every action undertaken by the community in the world is both physical and spiritual, whereby the actions of community continually refer back to the centering, religious force that drives these actions. For this reason, one might call this communal action a kind of extra-communal communication to the world. Perhaps the most important aspect of Schleiermacher's organismic vision of community is that religion drives individuals into communities just as it drives communities into action in the world. Religious communities most-clearly perceive the stark contrast between a coherent and unified universe on the one hand, and the broken and fragmentary world of everyday experience on the other. As a result of this dual consciousness, religious community is driven into and empowered to transform the world into something more coherent, rational, and free.

Because religious community is the appropriate sphere for transformative activity in the world, one should avoid trying to press this moral transformation out of other communities or

institutions. For example, one should not expect a nation-state to usher in the moral transformation of the world, as this is a task reserved for a properly-ordered—that is, religious—community. Nation-states are absorbed in temporal and earthly pursuits and activities, often effectuating change through violence or the implicit threat of violence. This kind of coercion may obtain compliance, but the resulting agglomeration of individuals is quite unlike a genuine, religious community, in which individuals are voluntarily-coordinated together toward a common purpose. Scale also plays an important role in the efficacy of religious communities, because large, complex, and abstract social units demand a stronger cohesive force to overcome the greater entropic potential of a larger system with more constitutive organs. This is why so many political movements project a pseudo-religious character, whether valorizing self-sacrifice for the greater national good, invoking a mythology of past perfection or original sin, or projecting an eschatology of future perfection formed through human efforts. In Schleiermacher's understanding, these political forces can never be religion, nor can they deliver up religion's orienting power toward moral progress.

Following this line of thought, should one conclude that secular institutions like the state are necessarily opposed to religion? Schleiermacher did not reject the legitimacy of the political realm. He was an early if cautious supporter of republicanism following the French Revolution, and like many Prussians, hoped for a transition toward a constitutional monarchy. Hardenberg, who was influential in the development of Schleiermacher's organicism, employed organicism in his political theory, specifically an organismic relationship between Prussia and a larger German state. Whether a monarchy, democracy, or republic, Hardenberg insisted that the people "must attempt to organize

their nation as an organic whole," a sentiment quite at home in Schleiermacher's organicism.[474] Schleiermacher was undeniably political, and his political commitments grew throughout his career. Several works, notably Johannes Bauer's *Schleiermacher as Political Preacher* [*Schleiermacher als politische Prediger*] and Jerry F. Dawson's *Friedrich Schleiermacher: The Evolution of a Nationalist* argue that Schleiermacher was an avowed and influential nationalist from both the pulpit and lectern. Dawson goes so far as to argue that Schleiermacher "possessed that kernel of nationalism, a faith in the traditions of a national group,"[475] which sounds a great deal like Schleiermacher's description of religious community. When considering opposition between the church and state in the *Speeches,* though, Dawson's argument is unconvincing and likely the result of both wooden typologizing and a bit of anachronism.

So how should one understand religious community in relation to the state or other institutions? Though Schleiermacher argues that moral progress is only accomplishable through religious community, one can nevertheless believe that some political and economic institutions are more amenable to this moral progress than others. While these political and economic institutions cannot effectuate moral transformation alone, they can perhaps enable it through policies that allow greater liberty for individuals and communities. Civil liberties alone cannot make an individual or society into a moral one, but they could make way for religious communities to grow and fill secular society and its institutions with moral individuals. In an economic system that functions primarily through competing self-interest, a community of moral individuals could value the good of the many over naked self-interest, and still act freely and in accordance with moral duty. Practically speaking,

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[474] Jerry F. Dawson, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: The Evolution of a Nationalist* (Austin,: University of Texas Press, 1966), 24. Dawson is careful, however, to assert that "Novalis was not the father of Schleiermacher's basic belief concerning the organic nature of the state," 24.

[475] Ibid.

however, political and economic institutions regularly find themselves engrossed in everyday, temporal concerns, so one should not tie hope of moral progress to these institutions. When the people become disenchanted with the perceived failure of human institutions, one must ask: is this the result of broken institutions, or the result of inappropriate expectations for those institutions? Should one replace these supposedly-broken institutions without addressing the moral state of its members, will anyone be surprised when the new institutions exhibit the same depraved features of the old institutions?

Broadly considered, Schleiermacher's organicism offers a unique corrective for disenchantment with traditional institutions, insofar as it offers a coherent force that draws individuals into community, coordinates them toward a common purpose, and propels them together to seek the transformation of the world. Significantly, however, it does so non-coercively and communicatively, based on the understanding that no single religious community can claim total knowledge of the universe, or anything close to a universal system of meaning-value. It champions the disenchantment of every claim to a single, universal religion, while simultaneously recognizing that the multiplicity of religious communities and their religious intuitions points towards intuition of a single universe. In short, it denies a totalizing synthesis or crushing homogeneity without conceding a groundless subjectivism of incommensurable individuality.

So if an individual or community seeks the moral transformation of the world, Schleiermacher might redirect their efforts toward coordinating with a community that is strongly-oriented by a religious impulse. As a practical matter, these strongly-cohering communities are more likely to be local and embodied, as communication is most-properly an embodied act, where one's

humanity is made present in face-to-face interaction.[476] These communities should reject coercion and violence, because moral progress simply cannot be compelled. These communities will seek out and communicate with others because their religion is so great that it wells up within them and must be expressed and shared. Perhaps most importantly, they will remain humbly aware of the limited horizon afforded by their finite perception, and as a result remain radically open to new interactions and communications.

Whether or not these communities are traditional religious institutions matters far less than the kind of religious spirit that flows through them. It would be prudent for those traditional religious institutions to evaluate whether they more closely mirror Schleiermacher's truly religious community, or if they capitulate to temporal concerns and look more like the political and economic institutions already discussed. If the latter, they should not surprised to be supplanted by a new religious community, which, filled with the breath of the world-spirit, sprouts forth from the detritus of now-decomposing institutions into new life. Schleiermacher would describe this playful, mysterious, and providential activity adeptly,

> Therefore at all times the deity sends people here and there in whom both [the attractive and repulsive] tendencies are combined in a more fruitful manner, equips them with wondrous gifts, prepares their way with an all-powerful word, and employs them as translators of its will and its works and as mediators of what would otherwise remain eternally separated.[477]

The death of institutions, like all organisms, is a natural process and should not be met with anxiety or fear, because immortality is not found in the body—the institution itself—but in the spirit that brings the institution life, the spirit that is ever-changing and accommodating according to need and

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[476] One might wonder if new digital technology (e.g. social media) is feeding the decoherence of social groups through the disembodiment and dehumanization of communication. Recent studies strongly suggest that increasing use of mobile phones and the internet have fed perceived social isolation and the decreasing size of networks of interaction.

[477] Schleiermacher, "Über Die Religion," 191. cf. *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 6.

condition. Whether one is able to reinvigorate a formerly-diseased religious institution with this enlivening spirit, or whether that institution passes into memory, it is a reassuring thought that a living God deigns itself into communion with the world, always adapting, approaching, and mediating this infinite difference.

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