Introduction

People frequently ask why I am fascinated by the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), German philosopher and Protestant theologian. When the question arises, I typically respond that my interest rests on the brilliance and versatility of his achievement in shaping a distinctively modern Protestant Christian thought. But that answer scarcely does justice to the details of his illustrious career or the relevance of his work for today. A founding member of the University of Berlin faculty, Schleiermacher taught philosophy and theology (1809–34) during the initial rise of that university to European prominence. At the time, Schleiermacher was the soul of the theology department. He lectured on every topic of the curriculum (with the exception of the Hebrew Bible), and preached regularly at the Trinity Church. His career mirrors a Berlin that was, in the words of Theodore Ziolkowski, a "rising cultural metropolis,"[1] the intellectual center of the German Enlightenment in Prussia.

The cultural life and political challenges of this city, which grew from 170,000 in 1800 to nearly 500,000 in 1850,[2] form the essential setting for the work of this illustrious scholar. Schleiermacher's Berlin overlaps with the pursuit of German Enlightenment ideals, and a radical questioning of these ideals by a circle of young romantic poets and writers. No passive observer, Schleiermacher played an active role in shaping these movements. Taken as a whole, these essays reflect Schleiermacher's cultural location between Enlightenment and Romanticism, the appellations we give to the intellectual movements that name his cultural worlds. In themselves the labels do not suggest the self-critical consciousness with

1 Theodore Ziolkowski, *Berlin: Aufstieg einer Kulturmetropole* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002).
2 Helga Schultz, *Berlin 1650–1800: Sozialgeschichte einer Residence* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1987), 296–7.

which Schleiermacher stood at the confluence of these movements. But that gets slightly ahead of our story.

Ever since Wilhelm Dilthey's classic, still untranslated, *Life of Schleiermacher* (1870), scholars have believed that Schleiermacher's thought cannot be understood apart from his cultural setting. Of course, some scholarship on Schleiermacher still ignores Dilthey's admonition and treats the father of modern Protestant liberalism's teaching as if it were timeless. Schleiermacher's teachings regarding the significance of religion and the viability of the Christian faith do make claims on persons today. But as one trained in history as well as theology my sympathies are with Dilthey. By insisting that we approach his teaching in its original setting, we are better able to capture the nuances of that teaching, including sets of anxious questions that are unresolved in our own era.

The essays in this book began to appear in 1980. To those originally published in journals, newer studies have been added, which further pursue different issues or convey a more comprehensive view of his legacy. The chapters seek to illuminate Schleiermacher's achievements as theologian, preacher, philosopher of religion, Plato translator, clergyman, and political activist. He was a thoroughly dedicated academic, wholly committed both to the university with its canons of truth and to the church with its historic legacy and socially embodied community. I admit to admiring his work and the mind behind it. But I am suspicious of the "great man" approach to studying the past, where scholars approach their subjects, as it were, on their knees. Schleiermacher's grappling with the basic issues of Christian thought (and related issues in public institutions and personal life) is worthy of our respect, even when we respond with puzzlement or a raised eyebrow.

The model maintained by Schleiermacher as a man of the church as well as the university has become increasingly rare. His practical religious leadership as a pastor and preacher in the Trinity Church (pictured on the book's cover in a Johann Rosenberg engraving) took place a few blocks from Unter den Linden, the main thoroughfare in old Berlin since the days of Friedrich the Great. In his artful hands the sermon was morally uplifting as well as personally illuminating. A gift of unusual powers of concentration enabled him to produce thoughtful addresses from a few words scribbled on a scrap of paper.[3] In his *Letters from Berlin* the Jewish

3 See Wolfgang Trillhaas, "Der Berliner Prediger," in *Friedrich Schleiermacher 1768–1834: Theologe – Philosoph – Pädagoge*, ed. Dietz Lange (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1985), 9–23.

poet Heinrich Heine records the impression the sermons made upon him: "I confess to having no special divinely blessed feelings aroused in me by his preaching; but I find myself in a better sense thereby edified, empowered and whipped up by his caustic language from the soft featherbed of flabby indifference. This man only needs to throw away the black churchly garb and he stands there as a priest of truth."[4] Though he was irenic by nature, Schleiermacher stood near the storm center of sharp theological disputes regarding the status of doctrine, church authority and rituals, church–state relations, relations between Christians and Jews, and the place of theology among the academic disciplines. Officially a Reformed theologian in the line of Calvin, Schleiermacher served a United Protestant church in Berlin that included the legacies of Luther and Calvin.

His commitment to affairs of the Academy was equally prominent. Not only was he an architect of the new University of Berlin (chapter 6), but also a lifelong contributor to the Berlin Academy of Sciences, and university lecturer from 1810 until his death in 1934. The range of those lectures becomes more apparent in the essays that follow.[5] The Academy served as a research institute; he held memberships in its divisions of history and philosophy. Here Schleiermacher contributed papers on Greek philosophy, theories of the state, and aesthetics, among other fields. His nearly complete German translation of Plato was a standard work of German cultural history and continues to be widely read. All these pursuits were held together by a genial intellectual versatility. By hindsight it may be tempting to see his lifework as flowing from a single river. Closer inspection suggests that his many-faceted pursuits were laced with ironic surprises and challenges that could never have been anticipated. Certain of his favorite projects, including his ethics, dialectics, and hermeneutics, had not achieved final form at the time of his death.

BETWEEN ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM

I have chosen to frame these essays for publication by positioning Schleiermacher's work between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.[6]

4 Heinrich Heine, *Sämmtliche Werke*, VI, ed. Jost Hermand (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1973), 30 (from March 16, 1822).

5 Charts showing a complete list of Schleiermacher's works and lecture courses at the university (1788–1834) are given in Dieter Burdorf and Reinhold Schmücker, eds., *Dialogische Wissenschaft: Perspektiven der Philosophie Schleiermachers* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1998), 267–89.

6 In what follows I use upper case (Romantic or Romanticism) for the cultural movement and lower case (romantic or romanticism) for the particular sensibility of the movement's participants.

The tension suggested by the book's subtitle is deliberate. The Enlightenment and Romanticism are hardly uniform categories with crisp edges, and readers deserve a word on how I view Schleiermacher with regard to each of these movements. Details within the essays that follow touch further on the ways that Schleiermacher's intellectual choices relate to these themes.

The received view of the Enlightenment names it as an "age of reason," and there is truth in the label. Kant's "Dare to know" is the intellectual counterpart of the political coming to maturity of the French and American revolutions. Yet even the Enlightenment is far from uniform in its teaching. Since the work of Carl Becker, we have known that its radicality is held in check by an optimism regarding moral progress and education.[7] Kant's call for moral autonomy does not question the prerogatives of the state.[8] When the movement's precursor, Herbert of Cherbury, wrote his tract on deism (1624), he sought to establish belief in God, virtue, and immortality, not to undermine these tenets. Admittedly, theological rationalism was well represented in the previous generation; figures like Schleiermacher's Halle teacher Johann August Eberhard, the popular Berlin preacher Johann Joachim Spalding, and Provost of the Berlin Church, Wilhelm Abraham Teller, come to mind.[9] But even the Enlightenment was not of one mind on its central concerns. We are now more aware than ever that the pietists' emphasis on individual experience is not antithetical to the self-discovering impulses of the *Aufklärer*. It is no accident that Halle, a modern university founded by pietists (1694), hosted the rationalist Christian Wolff in the early eighteenth century.[10] Closer to the end of the century, writers like J. G. Hamann and F. H.

7 Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932).

8 Frederick C. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), writes about Kant's "restricted conception of political change," 53.

9 On Eberhard see Kurt Nowak, *Schleiermacher: Leben, Werk und Wirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2001), 35–9; on Spalding, Albrecht Beutel, "Aufklärer höherer Ordnung? Die Bestimmung der Religion bei Schleiermacher (1799) und Spalding (1797)," in *200 Jahre "Reden über die Religion": Akten des 1. Internationalen Kongresses der Schleiermacher-Gesellschaft Halle, 14.-17 März 1999*, ed. Ulrich Barth and Claus-Dieter Osthövener, 277–310, plus Wolfgang Virmond's response to Beutel, 259–61, and his edition of Spalding's "Religion, an Angelegenheit des Menschen," 939–87; on Teller, Martin Bollacher, "Wilhelm Abraham Teller: Ein Aufklärer der Theologie," in *Über den Prozess der Aufklärung in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker and Ulrich Hermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1987), 39–52.

10 Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 34–5.

Jacobi sharply questioned the assumptions of Kant by launching lines of criticism that remain current today.[11]

Having been born in 1768 and become settled in Berlin in the 1790s, Schleiermacher came to maturity in the late German Enlightenment. He was born into a world marked by the ascendency of Kant in philosophy and a tradition of rationalist preachers and thinkers in theology. In this setting it was necessary for him to carve out his own intellectual milieu. He did so through careful study of the moral philosophy of Kant and Aristotle, while steeping himself in the works of Plato. The process was aided through his reading of Jacobi on Kant and Spinoza. The challenge of developing a self-consistent philosophic life that bears on his work is likely to have been the motivation that unites Schleiermacher's endeavors. His penchant for restless criticism and reformulation reflects the original energy of an *Aufklärer* as reformer of traditions. An interest in fostering self-formation or *Bildung*, a consistent ethical existence, and an abiding sense of confidence also mark his roots in the Enlightenment. These elements remain throughout his life, even when he criticizes deism in the name of a turn to history, reflects on reason's acute limitations, and argues that a desire to understand the world and to bend it to utilitarian ends corrupts the human spirit. We have reason to doubt whether there is a typical Enlightenment thinker or uniform way of thinking in the period. Yet it is undeniable that its impulses run deep in his formative work.

If the Enlightenment lacks tidy definition, this is even more true with respect to German Romanticism. In a 1965 article "The Genesis of Romanticism," the distinguished German literary scholar Hans Eichner notes: "Romanticism is an unpleasantly vague term, whose meaning depends only too often on the preoccupations of the person who uses the word."[12] The task was not as difficult for Eichner, who approaches the topic as a thoroughly literary movement. But his words readily apply to much of the received scholarship on Schleiermacher. Theological and philosophical scholars, the usual academic tribes that are drawn to Schleiermacher, are generally not trained in German literature, where the themes and issues raised by early Romanticism had their origin.

11 See Garrett Green, "Modern Culture Comes of Age: Hamann versus Kant on the Root Metaphor of Enlightenment," in *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 291–305; Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), chs. 1–2; and Dale E. Snow, "Jacobi's Critique of the Enlightenment," in *What is Enlightenment?*, ed. Schmidt, 306–16.

12 *Queen's Quarterly* 72 (1965): 213.

Admittedly, Romanticism is diffuse as a movement; Frederick Beiser divides it into the phases of early Romanticism (1797–1802), high Romanticism (1802–15), and late Romanticism (1815–30), each with differing emphases.[13] The received view of romanticism as antirational, communal, and conservative, in opposition to the rationality, individualism, and liberalism of the Enlightenment, does not apply to the work of early German Romantics, from where Schleiermacher took his bearings on the movement.[14] It is little wonder that confusion reigns when we ponder the cultural provenance of Schleiermacher's actual views.

Today the tide has begun to shift towards more sweeping interpretations of Romanticism as especially formative for the rise of historical consciousness and the biological sciences. Theodore Ziolkowski's *Clio the Romantic Muse: Historicizing the Faculties in Germany* (2004) traces this impact through the fields of history, philosophy, theology, law, and medicine, while Darwin scholar Robert J. Richards' *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (2002) sees a confluence between the aesthetic-intuitional impulses of early Romanticism and the tradition of *Naturphilosophie* that stands behind Darwin.[15] Both works associate Schleiermacher with the broad contours of this movement, while recognizing that his romanticism was initially displayed within a narrower compass range.

That Schleiermacher is seriously invested in the circle of early German Romantics in Berlin is not in doubt. His premier youthful work, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799) written while he shared in the production of A. W. Schlegel's and Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenaeum*, testifies to his sensibilities in the late 1790s. Schleiermacher interpretation is secure on that point. The picture becomes murky and arguments tend

13 See Frederick Beiser, "Early Romanticism and the *Aufklärung*," in *What is Enlightenment?*, ed. Schmidt, 318; Hans Dierkes views philosophical romanticism as extending from Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* 1794–95 to the death of Schelling in 1854; he distinguishes between early (1795–1800) and late romanticism (1806–54), which frame a transitional phase from 1800 to 1804 or 1806; see "Philosophie der Romantik," in *Romantik-Handbuch*, ed. Helmut Schanze (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1994), 433–4.

14 See Beiser, "Early Romanticism," 317, and especially the work of Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, tr. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), a version of part 3 of *"Unendliche Annäherung": Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Suhrkamp, 1998); here, as in his other German publications, Frank argues for the philosophic originality of the early Romantics' critique of Idealist philosophies.

15 See Theodore Ziolkowski, *Clio the Romantic Muse: Historicizing the Faculties in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

to divide on a series of related questions. Facing these problems some fifteen years ago when translating the original 1799 edition of *On Religion*, I decided that scholarly opinion on Schleiermacher and romanticism falls into three camps. (1) Those who think Schleiermacher is thoroughly infused with romanticism – most literary scholars since Paul Kluckhohn belong here, though philosophical rationalists like Hegel who object to Schleiermacher's views fit in here as well.[16] Among such philosophers, most typically deny that there is an ongoing philosophic impulse and integrity to his work. (2) Those who present romanticism as a passing phase of his thought – most theologians and some literary scholars belong here (e.g., Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Redeker, and Rudolf Haym).[17] The unstated premise of this view is that his youthful poetic mind eventually outgrew its dalliance as he accepted the tasks of a serious theologian. (3) Those who recognize Schleiermacher's affinity with romanticism, but stress his distinctive contribution to a movement that, from its inception, was always heterogeneous (e.g., Jack Forstman, Hans Dierkes, and the late Kurt Nowak in Germany).[18] At the time I placed myself in this third camp as the most coherent way of viewing his work, a position I continue to hold. But I had not yet puzzled out whether or how the elements of Schleiermacher's Romanticism mingle with his roots in the Enlightenment as perennial features of his lifework.

I have subsequently come to see that for Schleiermacher the artistry of poetic insight, the desire to clarify categories, and dialectical turns of reason prominent in the early German Romantics combine to feed his Enlightenment rationality. Indeed, these tools of his reasoning were first hammered into shape in the company of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. In Schleiermacher's work rationality is radicalized, not diminished, by criticism; common moral assumptions are deepened, not eradicated, by individual subjectivity; and institutions are challenged, not overthrown, by a new sense of freedom. Frederick C. Beiser correctly states that "if the [early German] romantics were critics of the *Aufklärung*, they were also its

16 See Hans Dierkes, "Die problematische Poesie: Schleiermachers Beitrag zur Frühromantik," in *Internationaler Schleiermacher-Kongress Berlin 1984*, 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 61–98.

17 See ibid., 66, 87 on Dilthey's "total opposition"; Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 33; Rudolph Haym, *Die romantische Schule: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes* (Berlin: R. Gaertner, 1870).

18 See Jack Forstman, *A Romantic Triangle: Schleiermacher and Early German Romanticism* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 65–94, and Kurt Nowak, *Schleiermacher und die Frühromantik: Eine literaturgeschichtliche Studie zum romantischen Religionsverständnis und Menschenbild* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986), 11–16.

disciples."[19] The more I work on Schleiermacher, the more I am convinced that the lines between the Enlightenment and Romanticism in his thought are blurred. Not all card-carrying early Romantics took the implications of that upheaval in the same directions. Friedrich Schlegel's turn to conservative Catholicism in 1808 was not a harbinger of what must happen with all Romantics. We will not grasp the contours of Schleiermacher's distinctive appropriation of romanticism by fitting him into generalizations that draw from the choices made by other figures within the period.

Other features of Schleiermacher's work exude interests and concerns that are irrevocably linked with the Enlightenment. His advocacy of political rights for Berlin's Jews (chapter 5) and his sympathy with the original aims of the French revolution show how deeply he was in touch with the eighteenth-century ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality. His admiration of the American model of separation of church and state – an ideal far from duplicated in the Enlightenment Prussia of his day – aligns him with the political theory of Thomas Jefferson.[20]

In Germany the Enlightenment stood for the boldness of individual discovery, the autonomy of self-expression, and the demand to produce strictly rational explanations of the human and scientific worlds. Without ceasing to honor these ideas, Schleiermacher became embued with the spirit of early German Romanticism. It provided the mental tools for a mode of rationalty that sought to acknowledge fully the dimensions of unknowability and contingency within human experience. In his world both poetic and scientific experience were highly valued. By hindsight we can see that Schleiermacher's work embraces what we see as a perennial tension between Enlightenment and Romanticist perspectives. By studying the underlying commitments and motivations that inform his thought and his relationship to near and far contemporaries, we can rethink his significance. Like Schleiermacher as writer, scholar, and theologian, Prussia, after Friedrich the Great the most modern state of Germany, was constantly evolving.

19 Beiser, "Early Romanticism," 318: "The young romantics never put themselves in self-conscious opposition against the *Aufklärung* as a whole. If they strongly criticized it in some respects, they also firmly identified themselves with it in others."

20 Commenting in 1821 on his early enthusiasm for the American model, Schleiermacher makes clear that it is not universally applicable; see *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, tr. John Oman (Louisville: Westminster Press/John Knox Press, 1958) (hereafter *OR* (Oman)), 196–8.

SCOPE AND INTEREST

During the last two decades my interest in and approaches to Schleiermacher have shifted. Part of that shift lies in the configuration I have just sketched. But the aim of analyzing his religious, theological, and social teaching within the nooks and crannies of his career has remained constant. An interest in his romanticism culminated in the first English-language translation of the 1799 edition of his *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1988), which reflects his relationship to Friedrich Schlegel and the Berlin romantic circle. Even then, however, I was becoming aware of Schleiermacher as political actor and agent of Prussian reform. While revisiting the earlier essays in this collection, I have occasionally added a nuance to an argument, either on stylistic or on substantive grounds. But I have not attempted to intervene and recast the fundamental views that are represented in those earlier essays. That would be tantamount to altering the record and disallowing readers from forming their own conclusions about a body of work. Similarly with regard to the earlier essays: in addition to citing the new critical Schleiermacher edition, where it is now available, I have updated much of the secondary literature in English and in German sources. I hope neither to have ignored nor to have overemphasized the possibility that readers will see a degree of thematic coherence and overlapping interests in this set of Schleiermacher essays.

Two features of the book deserve a further word. First, the availability of texts in the new German critical edition of Schleiermacher (Walter de Gruyter) has gone hand in hand with a predilection for viewing the world historically that dates from my student days at Occidental College. My work owes much to the publication of the German critical edition (hereafter cited as *KGA*) and the painstaking philological and historical work of its editors.[21] The historian in me is committed to the task of locating religious debates and questions within the complex details of personal, social, and institutional history. At meetings of the Ernst-Troeltsch-Gesellschaft in Berlin in February 2004, a panel discussion was held on the significance of critical editions for the future of

21 Notes that follow use the German citation form, e.g., *KGA* I/7, 1: 23–42 = volume 7, part 1, of the first division (Writings and Sketches), pages 23–42. Though most volumes in division I have appeared, and some in II (Lectures), volumes in III (Sermons) and IV (Translations) have yet to be published. Division V (Correspondence) now extends to 1802 (in five volumes).

Protestantism.[22] American scholars present at that gathering tended to smile at the arcane-sounding topic. Jonathan Edwards is the only bona fide theologian for whom we have such an edition. Yet whatever one may think of the formulation, critical editions are crucial tools for the future of Protestant *scholarship*. Only when the complex stakes in a debate are made clear does the motivating power of history become alive in ways that illuminate Schleiermacher's choices, as well as point to equally complex parallels today.

Second, my predilection for viewing the world of religious and philosophical reflection through an historical lense has already been mentioned. In support of this orientation I can only paraphrase Cicero to the effect that not to know any history is to forever remain a child.[23] The lesson that historical understanding humanizes the enterprise and tasks of theology was learned years ago at the feet of Wilhelm Pauck, who had gained this insight directly from Troeltsch and Harnack. A number of these essays approach Schleiermacher in a comparativist manner. This is obvious in chapters that ask how Schleiermacher relates to Mendelssohn, to Hegel, or to Kierkegaard. The tendency is also evident in chapters that treat *On Religion*, the *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, and *The Christian Faith* in the light of Schleiermacher's own revisions. The comparative dimension of that task is ignored at our peril, even if the received wisdom that we should take a work in its most mature formulation still has merit. Such inquiries constitute an intertextual comparison of Schleiermacher's habits of mind within his own corpus. Even where his alterations of prior editions seem minor, they increase our understanding of how Schleiermacher's thinking adapted and expressed itself over time. Readers will note that certain of these essays draw less from historical settings and concentrate directly on textual analysis, abstracted from the lives and passions that produced them. When dealing with a body of complex teaching, such a systematic approach is often required. I harbor the old-fashioned idea that authors' intentions matter. These essays were written from the belief that we grasp authors best when we are able to retrace their thought through the questions, contexts, and contingencies that originally informed their work.

22 "Geschichte durch Geschichte überwinden," *Ernst Troetsch in Berlin. 8. Internationaler Kongress der Ernst-Troeltsch Gesellschaft, 26. bis 29. Februar 2004*, with a podium discussion "Erinnerungsarbeit durch Klassikeredition: Die Bedeutung akademischer Selbsthistorisierung für die Zukunft des Protestantismus."

23 See Cicero, *Orator*, xxxiv.120 (London: Heinemann, 1962): "To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child."