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CHAPTER

7 Schleiermacher and the University of Berlin

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes the unique connection between Schleiermacher and the University of Berlin by considering two interlocking aspects of this relationship. On the one hand, Schleiermacher played a major part in the foundation of this institution; on the other hand, his work from 1810 was inextricably intertwined with his professional role as a university teacher and administrator. Beginning from a description of the context in which the foundation of the university took place, the chapter considers Schleiermacher's contribution both to the wider debate about university reform and the more specific question of the future of university theology. It then turns to the ways in which Schleiermacher's activity from 1810 was shaped by his professional duties as a university teacher. It is argued that Schleiermacher strove to embody the professorial ideal envisioned in his theoretical writings about the university.

Keywords: University of Berlin, Prussia, Wilhelm von Humboldt, J. G. Fichte, F. W. J. Schelling, positive science, idea of the university, faculty of theology, theology in the university, Schleiermacher's philosophy

Subject: Christianity, History of Religion, Philosophy of Religion, Religion

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Friedrich Schleiermacher became professor at the University of Berlin when this institution was founded in 1810 and retained the post until his death in 1834. His earliest association with the new university dates back, however, to the previous decade when he published influential reflections on the idea of the university as part of a public debate about the future of higher education. Schleiermacher notably, and successfully, defended the continuing existence of a faculty of theology as part of a modern university, although this was by no means the only purpose of his intervention. He was thus the rare case of a professor appointed in a university whose character he had decisively helped to shape.

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As a professor, Schleiermacher regularly lectured on a wide range of theological and philosophical subjects. Like his colleague and rival, G. W. F. Hegel, Schleiermacher used these courses to develop his own original and creative insights in a variety of directions. His major publications during those years, notably the *Christian Faith* and the *Brief Outline*, grew out of his lecturing activity, but the bulk of his lecture notes was only published posthumously, taking up thirteen volumes in the *Sämmtliche Werke* (1834–1864) and seventeen volumes in the as yet unfinished *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (*KGA*). Thus, a large corpus of Schleiermacher's texts owes its existence to his institutional responsibilities at the University of Berlin.

Any account of Schleiermacher's entanglement with the University of Berlin must reckon with the unusual fact that he both shaped this institution and was, in turn, shaped by it. This chapter shall do justice to this challenge by relating Schleiermacher's ideas about the university to his own work as an academic. In many ways, it will turn out, he modeled his own professional life on the ideal demanded by his own theory. It is therefore legitimate to interpret his views on higher education and his intellectual production at the University of Berlin in close conjunction.

The chapter will begin in the years running up to the foundation of the new institution and sketch Schleiermacher's part in this momentous development. Against this backdrop, the remainder of the chapter will consider Schleiermacher's work as a lecturer and administrator in the university. The chapters findings will be summarized in a brief conclusion.

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7.1 Political Background

The University of Berlin was founded in 1810, but the history of Schleiermacher's relationship with this institution began truly and properly in 1806. In that year, the French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, waged a devastating military campaign against Schleiermacher's native Prussia.[1] On October 14, the French army claimed an easy victory in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstedt. For Prussia, this was more than a military defeat; a country that had aspired to be among the great European powers was profoundly humiliated and faced with seemingly incontrovertible evidence for the utter superiority of its military and political enemy.[2]

Schleiermacher, who had been Professor of Theology at the University of Halle since 1804, was a keen political observer of these events;[3] it was not long until they affected him personally.[4] Only three days after the decisive battles, the victorious French army marched into Halle. The local university, considered a hotbed of political opposition to the French cause, was closed on October 20 by order of the occupying force.[5] Attempts to have it reopened failed, and Schleiermacher not only faced the downfall of his home nation but also professional uncertainty and personal hardship.

In this situation, the theologian decided to relocate to Berlin.[6] This proved an inspired move. Prussia's deep fall, which was completed by the enforced Treaty of Tilsit in July 1807, finally triggered a reform movement that had been overdue. Only days after signing the treaty, the hesitant king, Friedrich William III, appointed the ardent reformer Baron vom Stein (1757–1831) as head of his cabinet. Soon, changes were afoot that laid the groundwork for Prussia's extraordinary rise throughout the nineteenth century.[7]

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7.2 Debates about University Reform

Founding a new university in Berlin had been a favorite idea of vom Stein's predecessor, Carl-Friedrich von Beyme (1765–1838), who had consulted about such a plan from the beginning of the century and initiated
p. 103 the first, serious steps after Prussia's military defeat and ↳ the loss of the University of Halle.[8] When Schleiermacher finally decided to settle in Berlin, in the latter half of 1807, he had already been earmarked as the core appointment in theology.[9] He thus immediately found himself surrounded by a crop of eager and ambitious individuals keen to use the political crisis of these years to combine the advancement of their country with the pursuit of their own visions for a modern university.

The protagonists of this movement could draw on a debate that had been conducted by leading German intellectuals, including I. Kant, J. G. Fichte, F. W. J. Schelling, H. Steffens, and Schleiermacher himself, for over a decade.[10] At the center of this debate stood the question of the purpose of universities and what future, if any, they should have. Perhaps surprisingly from today's perspective, the idea of entrusting the modernization of a country's higher education to this institution at the time appeared rather counterintuitive to many.[11] In the late eighteenth century, universities were distinctly part of the old order. They were, after all, medieval foundations and, as such, appeared to progressives as outdated as the Holy Roman Empire or the papacy. And, in fact, all these institutions were shaken to their foundations in the French Revolution and its immediate aftermath.

The university's critics could easily point to the fact that the majority of eighteenth-century innovations, whether scientific or philosophical, originated outside the university, whose professorial postholders were largely given over to the production of long-winded, scholastic treatises. England, arguably the most innovative nation during these decades, had not founded a university since the thirteenth century, but led the way by its establishment of the Royal Society in 1660. When France eventually attempted a radical reform of its education system, it put in place its famed system of *grands écoles* rather than relying on reformed universities. Closer to home, the foundation and active development of a number of professional academies in Berlin around the year 1800 indicated that Prussian leaders too could be inclined to follow the French model.[12] Some of the most celebrated intellectual giants of the period, from G. W. Leibniz to G. E. Lessing, and J. W. Goethe, developed their ideas outside the university and were often scathing about the ossified character of that institution and its uninspiring, pedantic postholders.

One reason why reformers were skeptical about the university's capacity for reform was its traditionally close association with the church, expressed through the special status accorded to the faculty of theology. There is but little doubt that the search for alternative institutions facilitating higher education and research was at least partly driven by the attempt to reduce clerical influence over this aspect of society.[13] It
p. 104 is therefore all the more significant that ↳ Prussian reformers not only went against the grain of their time by opting for the foundation of a modern university, but that in doing so they created an institution that, although secular in its statutes, contained a faculty of theology.[14]

This outcome was no foregone conclusion. Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties*, the text that initiated German discussions about university reform, clearly targeted the existing prominence of the so-called higher faculties, not least theology.[15] While Kant stopped short of calling for the abolition of the theological faculty, one could easily conceive of such an argument as an extension of Kant's critique. The latter position was influentially advanced by J. G. Fichte. It says something about the changing political fortunes of the time that, while Kant had to battle political censorship to get his treatise published, Fichte was picked by Beyme on behalf of the Prussian government as part of a small task force spearheading the foundation of the novel university.[16]

It was in response to the solicitation of his advice that the philosopher wrote *Deducirter Plan einer in Berlin zu errichtenden höheren Lehranstalt* (*A Plan, Deduced [from first principles] for an Institution of Higher Learning to*

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Be Established in Berlin, 1807), a remarkable treatise setting out a radical vision for the future of higher education as it was to be realized in Berlin.[17] The omission of the word "university" from the title of this work was hardly accidental, but indicates the author's fundamental objections to the model that had persevered in the West since the Middle Ages.[18] Of the four traditional faculties, Fichte proposed abolishing three, retaining only philosophy. Law, medicine, and theology, he argued, had all arisen from the state's practical need to train lawyers, medics, and priests, not from systematic reflections. Insofar as the university was to be a place dedicated to the cultivation of pure knowledge (*Wissenschaft*), it had to be philosophical in its entirety.[19]

It is well known that Fichte saw no place for theology in his university. As a discipline drawing on insights and principles that were not generally shared knowledge, theology could not, he argued, be part of a public institution of universal learning.[20] At one level, therefore, Fichte, in keeping with the spirit of the *Conflict of Faculties*, demanded that theology should open itself up to critical enquiry if it wished to retain a place within academic debate. Even in a radically modernized form, however, theology could not retain its status as a faculty in Fichte's ideal "university" quite simply because it did not constitute its own field of enquiry. Theology does not constitute a discipline in the way Fichte understood this term, as a body of interconnected ideas deduced from the principle of universal knowledge. Rather, the legitimate topics theologians study would fall under a number of different sciences such as metaphysics, ethics, or the history of languages.[21]

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7.3 Schleiermacher on University Reform

Unlike Fichte, Schleiermacher was not originally invited to contribute to the early discussions about the envisaged university.[22] In fact, there is evidence suggesting that his own contribution to the debate was partly motivated by a sense of being slighted by this oversight.[23] It appears, moreover, that Schleiermacher did not know of Fichte's *Deducirter Plan* until its publication in 1817, if he knew it at all.[24] This is remarkable because to readers of the two opinions it has always seemed "as if each [of the two authors] has been looking into the other's eyes trying to refute him" on account of the "different even contradictory principles, ideas, and results" of their two texts.[25]

If Schleiermacher's manifesto can be said to have been written with an opponent in mind, this would instead have been F. W. J. Schelling, whose influential *Lectures on University Studies* he critically reviewed when they were first published.[26] Schelling's lectures were originally delivered in Jena and thus not immediately connected with developments in Berlin. Yet their eager and enthusiastic reception ensured that, like Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties*, they formed part of the wider intellectual context in which the Prussian debate took place. As Zachary Purvis has shown, Schleiermacher thought of his critical engagement with Schelling's proposals as a "quiet war," presumably in distinction from the overt military conflicts happening contemporaneously in the real world.[27]

Like Fichte, Schelling too took his theoretical starting point from the *Conflict of the Faculties*, but he drew from it nearly opposite conclusions for the practical arrangement of the university. Only philosophy was true *Wissenschaft*, but *because of that* it did not need its own faculty. Instead, Schelling's university consisted of the three higher faculties: law, medicine, and theology, each fully informed by philosophical reasoning while dedicated to what Schelling called a "positive science":

> Clearly, theology, as the science in which the innermost nature of philosophy is objectified, must have the first and highest place. Since the ideal is a higher potency or level of the real, it follows that the law faculty has precedence over the medical. As for philosophy, I maintain that there is no

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> such faculty, nor can there be, for that which is all things cannot for that very reason be anything in particular.[28]

While Schelling's proposal, compared to Fichte's, could thus appear more conservative, it was nevertheless inspired by the same desire to reform and renew in the spirit of the age, emphasizing the centrality of
p. 106 philosophy. Theology may very well retain its place as the first ↳ faculty, but the reason for its preeminence has nothing to do with a confessional commitment to Christianity or the church. Rather, it is derived from theology's proximity to philosophy as Schelling understood it. Schelling's program, while not banishing theology from the university, prescribed to it a root-and-branch reform in line with idealist philosophy and early historicism.

There are clear traces of Schelling's argument in Schleiermacher's proposal, published in 1808 as *Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten im deutschen Sinne* (*Occasional Thoughts on Universities in the German Sense*).[29] Especially notable is the reference to "positive sciences" as the term of choice for the disciplines taught in the traditional higher faculties, and the combination of intellectual innovation and institutional conservatism. Yet the overall thrust of Schleiermacher's argument differs from Schelling's as much as from Fichte's. In fact, Schleiermacher effectively conceded to Fichte the argument that theology could not lay claim to its own systematic niche within the totality of human knowledge. While agreeing with Schelling, therefore, that theology must have its place in the modern university, Schleiermacher's justification of this thesis had to proceed in a fundamentally different manner.

Schleiermacher's essay opens with the observation, reminiscent of Aristotle, that *Wissenschaft* (science) is something human beings desire.[30] This goal, however, cannot be achieved by even the most gifted individual, but requires the collaboration of many. Science is not, therefore, an individual but a social pursuit, more specifically it is the pursuit of the group united by a common language, the nation.[31] This makes it similar to the state, but while the latter in order to act must be able to subjugate individual wills, science can thrive only under the condition of freedom. There is therefore reason for the state to support science, but equally, for both sides to mind their respective differences.[32]

Since *Wissenschaft* needs to be both taught and practiced, it is cultivated in several different institutions: schools have the primary purpose of educating and forming young people; academies on the other hand exist as the republic of letters, seeking to unite those who are masters of their fields.[33] The university for Schleiermacher forms a third in between these two. It must exist due to the dynamic nature of the system: science, in order to be advanced by the leading minds of each discipline, needs to be initiated, and this has to happen in a place dedicated to its principles. The purpose of the university, then, is to impart to young people the very idea of *Wissenschaft*, the notion of the unity of knowledge in all its diversity.[34]

Schleiermacher, then, does not diverge from Kant, Schelling, and Fichte on the centrality of the idea of *Wissenschaft* for the university. Moreover, he follows them in identifying science *stricte dictu* with philosophy. His ideal university thus is, once again, at heart a philosophical institution.[35] Yet philosophy, as
p. 107 Schleiermacher understood it, is necessarily ↳ embedded in the cultural contexts from which its reflection emerges and in which it takes place. The center of Schleiermacher's philosophy is ethics, but his ethics culminates in a system of goods or—to use a modern expression—a theory of culture.[36]

This rather original concept of philosophy, which Schleiermacher developed more fully in his later lectures on ethics and dialectic, underlay the defense of the traditional structure of the university he advanced in *Gelegentliche Gedanken*. Theology, law, and medicine, according to Schleiermacher, all benefit from their regular exchange with philosophy, but philosophy itself would be incomplete without those extensions. Philosophical reflection, consequently, could never be conducted in abstraction from the concrete realities of nature and culture. Schleiermacher was deeply skeptical about the ability of the human mind to construct a system of thought capable of explaining reality in its fullness. Knowledge (*Wissen*) and hence science

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(*Wissenschaft*) (in German the two terms are cognates) are fundamentally dependent on communication and exchange; they are always perfectible and never complete.

It was this open-ended system of science, for Schleiermacher, that facilitated theology's inclusion in the university. He did not claim that theology was an indispensable part of a system of knowledge nor accept for theology any narrow definition of science as normative. Instead, his argument for the retention of the traditional higher faculties was remarkably pragmatic: this structure had emerged "naturally"[37] and for this reason continued for such a long period of time.

The faculty of theology, in particular, was founded by the church "in order to preserve the wisdom of the Fathers; not to lose for the future what in the past had been achieved in discerning truth from error; to give a historical basis, a sure and certain direction and a common spirit to the further development of doctrine and Church."[38] In other words, theology exists because the church needs clarity about its doctrines and practices, and such clarity is achieved by permitting these issues to be openly debated in permanent exchange with all other areas of human knowledge. Theology is taught in the university because the public has an interest that this is done well, and that church ministers are appropriately trained in the same way that doctors receive a good medical education and judges a proper understanding of the law.

This is how Schleiermacher understood Schelling's term "positive science" (*positive Wissenschaft*): as a discipline constituted not by systematic deduction from the idea of knowledge but by a practical requirement. It is different from a trade because for its proper exercise a solid and permanent exchange with *Wissenschaft* proper, that is philosophy, is vital. A professor of law or of theology therefore, according to Schleiermacher, who does not actively contribute to philosophy—in the wide sense in which it includes not only metaphysics and ethics but also philology and history—deserved to be ridiculed, even excluded from the university.[39]

Schleiermacher's institutional conservatism went well beyond his preference for the retention of the traditional faculties. Many of the organizational and even ceremonial conventions inherited from its long
p. 108 history should, in his view, be preserved in the modern ↳ university.[40] And yet, just as one would be mistaken in interpreting Schelling's affirmation of certain elements of the old university as an opposition to reform, it would be incorrect to overlook the thoroughly modern elements in Schleiermacher's proposal. The latter has, rightly, been described as an "anti-modern modernization" of the German university;[41] its far-reaching impact on the subsequent development of these institutions and, particularly, on the shape and the role of theology in these institutions were not, thus far, accidental.[42]

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7.4 Schleiermacher among the Reformers

Had the foundation of the university happened as smoothly and quickly as hoped by its early proponents, the views Schleiermacher expressed in his *Denkschrift* might well not have exerted much influence. Yet the flurry of wide-ranging political reforms for which Stein's government is noted[43] pushed the plans for a new university to secondary importance. It was only in 1809, after Stein's time in office had abruptly ended, that work on the foundation of the university resumed, under the auspices of the newly appointed Wilhelm von Humboldt.[44] It quickly became clear that Humboldt had little sympathy for Fichte's radical ideas. By contrast, Schleiermacher's reasoning chimed well with the philosophy of the new minister, and while there is not much direct evidence to prove that Humboldt drew on Schleiermacher's *Gelegentliche Gedanken* when writing his own memoranda for the King,[45] there is little doubt that among all the luminaries who wrote publicly in connection with the foundation of the new university, it was Schleiermacher whose thoughts were closest to the eventual political decisions initiated by the minister and endorsed by king.[46] Ultimately, his emphatic endorsement of the traditional structures of the university, his preference for reform over revolution, and his combination of the modernizing principles of *Wissenschaft* with the inherited institutional frame not only proved attractive to Humboldt but provided the formula for the university's subsequent success.[47] As Max Lenz summarised over a hundred years ago, "Schleiermacher's thoughts, as much as he sought to coat them in the venerable glimmer of a dreamed-up past, were in their core the truly vivid and modern ones."[48]

p. 109 In this connection it is worth noting one "vivid and modern" view Schleiermacher held that was not, however, shared by the mainstream of his day and that, consequently, exerted little influence on the original shape of the new university. Unlike most of the Prussian reformers, Schleiermacher was remarkably skeptical toward state intervention in both science and religion. Regarding the latter, his opposition to religious establishment, nearly unique among early nineteenth-century German theologians, was expressed with aplomb in his *Speeches*.[49] *Gelegentliche Gedanken*, noted above, took an analogously categorical position in its attempt to demarcate the place of higher education in the modern state, and this too was at variance with the much more openly statist positions of Fichte and others. It is perhaps unsurprising then that on this particular point Schleiermacher remained a lone voice in the wilderness.[50] The foundation of the University of Berlin, despite following many of the insights Schleiermacher had laid out in his programmatic treatise, established a much closer connection between university and the state than Schleiermacher would have advocated. This decision was to have major consequences, not least for the theologian himself who from 1817 found himself the object of constant harassment by his government, some of it overt and some clandestine.[51]

7.5 Schleiermacher and the Faculty of Theology

In the end, the University of Berlin came into being in October 1810, and it included a faculty of theology. In the run-up to its foundation, Schleiermacher was one of the most influential players as vice president of a founding committee (*Einrichtungskomission*), though in practice often in sole charge of its operation.[52] Accordingly, his influence on the shape of his own faculty was particularly momentous. In May, he submitted two pertinent memoranda, one "On the Constitution of the Faculty of Theology," the other "On the Introduction of University Worship."[53]

The former of those is evidently based on the *Gelegentliche Gedanken* as well as his *Brief Outline to the Study of Theology*. Here, Schleiermacher wastes no time in justifying the existence of a faculty of theology whose existence, he claims, was queried by some merely "in jest" (*scherzweise*).[54] As long as the state recognizes a legitimate concern for religious matters, theology has a right to its own faculty. Such a faculty must

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represent the four major areas of the subject: exegetical, historical, doctrinal, and practical. Since the
p. 110 contest of ideas is vital ↳ for academic life, each of those subjects should be represented by more than one professor. Yet Schleiermacher did not think this required eight chairs; in fact, he believed that three was a sufficient number as any qualified scholar would be competent and indeed eager to contribute to at least two of these areas. As long, therefore, as appointments aim for complementarity, there will be enough diversity even with a relatively small number of professors.[55]

These reflections might be considered idealistic even for the time, but it is arguable that, with the appointment of Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780–1849), Philipp Marheineke (1780–1846), and August Neander (1789–1850)—"the nineteenth century's greatest department of theology," as it has been called[56]—the Berlin faculty in its early years came close to realizing Schleiermacher's ideal.[57] As for practical theology, he advised against a separate chair in "a city as rich in preachers [*Kanzelrednern*] as Berlin,"[58] many of whom would be willing to contribute to the faculty's teaching provision.

Throughout his memorandum, Schleiermacher's commitment to *scientific* theology is evident. He scoffs at the idea that professors should be appointed on a confessional basis as, within Protestantism at least, differences between individual scholars were often more significant than those between their churches.[59] As long as students were taught about the different confessional texts, it should be left to the ecclesiastical examination boards to ensure that their candidates conform to their respective orthodoxies. Equally notable is his distaste for the award of higher degrees to ecclesiastical dignitaries. The theological doctorate can only be awarded on the basis of "a learned theological work … of recognized merit," which, Schleiermacher pointedly added, "ought to be mentioned on the certificate."[60] To compensate for this rigidity, Schleiermacher proposed a second, lower degree, the licentiate obtained through "a *specimen eruditionis* and a public examination."[61]

Schleiermacher's memorandum became in practice, if not in law, the basis for the faculty's work. When proper statutes were adopted in the 1830s, they closely followed his ideas.[62] By contrast, his attempt to introduce a university-wide academic service bore fruit only years after his death, in 1847, and even then not necessarily in the way Schleiermacher had hoped.[63]

7.6 Schleiermacher as a Professor

The foundation of the University of Berlin undoubtedly marked a cesura in Schleiermacher's life and career. He was one of its most distinguished members and immediately appointed Dean of the Faculty of Theology,
p. 111 an office he held for the first year of the institution's ↳ existence (1810/1811) and subsequently again on three further occasions.[64] He was also, in 1810, one of four professors in charge of the new university's statutes. In fact, the latter document—adopted only in 1817—follows in its central parts the ideas first developed in Schleiermacher's *Gelegentliche Gedanken*.[65] In 1815/1816 Schleiermacher also served as the university's rector.[66]

His day-to-day activity was largely taken up by his lecturing, which was extraordinarily broad even by the standards of the time. Schleiermacher usually offered between three and five lecture courses per semester, which would be presented in three to five- hour-long lectures each week.[67] There were some exceptions to this; notably, in 1827/1828, Schleiermacher presented "The Christian Doctrine of Faith" in ten lectures per week but offered no other courses.[68] In most semesters, however, his total weekly lecturing added up to around fifteen hours. This burden did not abate until his final semester in the winter of 1833/1834, during which he offered three courses, each given in five units per week. His last lectures for all three courses are recorded for February 3. Schleiermacher died nine days later.[69]

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Schleiermacher lectured from early in the morning. In the summer, his first lectures would be scheduled at 6.00 a.m., and even in the winter he would regularly start at 8.00 a.m. His lectures were well attended, roughly on a par with those of his famous rival, G. W. F. Hegel. In the winter of 1829/1830, Schleiermacher's lectures on "The Life of Jesus" attracted 251 students;[70] in the summer of 1830, his lectures on "The Doctrine of the Soul" (delivered in the Faculty of Philosophy) were attended by 229 students.[71] These numbers are all the more remarkable considering that the total number of students in the university at the time was below 2,000.[72]

Schleiermacher was famous for his unique lecturing style. He spoke from few notes. This was for him more than a matter of presentation. He believed in the virtue of sharing ideas with his hearers as he developed them. According to David Friedrich Strauss, his "method was exclusively dialectical … [presenting to his hearers] nothing in the form of a dead note, but everything as a problem whose solution they now jointly try to find."[73] While testifying to the "deep and lasting inspiration" of Schleiermacher's talks, however, Strauss
p. 112 also expressed ↳ his frustration with a method that made it difficult to follow the lecturer's train of thought.[74] As for the task of writing down the lectures thus delivered, this was, Strauss opined, as impossible as "photographing a dancer in full movement."[75]

In what follows, an overview will be given of Schleiermacher's lecture courses. Its main purpose is to convey a sense of the intimate bond between Schleiermacher's intellectual work and his duties as a university teacher. Schleiermacher strove to be the paradigmatic professor of his own, ideal university whose teaching and scholarly production was constantly informed by his broader intellectual concerns as much as his professorial duties gave rise to and shaped his scholarly production. For more detailed information on specific lectures, the reader may want to consult relevant chapters elsewhere in this *Handbook*.

7.7 The Theological Lecture Courses

Pride of place must belong to Schleiermacher's famed lectures on "Theological Encyclopedia."[76] This course of lectures, which he first delivered in Halle and which almost immediately led to the publication of the *Brief Outline of the Study of Theology* (1811; 2nd ed. 1830), can be seen as flowing directly from the broader institutional reflections developed in *Gelegentliche Gedanken*.

Central, once again, is the notion of theology as a positive science whose disciplinary unity is constituted by its relationship to the Christian church, without which, consequently, the subject would disintegrate.[77] The teaching of theology, then, is inseparable from the training of church ministers. From this definition, Schleiermacher deduces a threefold division of the subject into philosophical, historical, and practical theology. Of these, he writes, "historical theology is the actual corpus of theological study, which corpus is interconnected with science, as such, by means of philosophical theology and is interconnected with the active Christian life by means of practical theology."[78]

Despite his considerable philosophical interest, Schleiermacher never lectured on philosophical theology directly, although he discussed aspects of it in his lectures on dogmatics.[79] "Lectures on historical theology," which included not only church history, but also biblical studies and dogmatics, formed the backbone of Schleiermacher's lecturing activity. Apart from the Old Testament, he covered all its fields of study: New Testament, church history, dogmatics (*Glaubenslehre*), Christian ethics (*Christliche Sittenlehre*), and ecclesiastical statistics. He also lectured on practical theology.

Perhaps counterintuitively, the largest number of his lecture courses fell into New Testament studies. Matthew and John were the subject of full courses, as were the major Pauline epistles. Shorter parts of the canon were more summarily treated. Schleiermacher also lectured on "The Life of Jesus," a highly original
p. 113 endeavor at the time.[80] Only a few years ↳ after his death, however, his views seemed so thoroughly

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discredited by the more recent debate initiated by David Friedrich Strauss' *Das Leben Jesu* (1835/1836) that his students held back these lectures from publication in his *Sämmtliche Werke* until 1864 when, as Albert Schweitzer dryly noted, they were "brought forth to view like an embalmed corpse [, and] Strauss accorded to the dead work of the great theologian a dignified and striking funeral oration."[81]

Schleiermacher's most significant courses, naturally, were those on dogmatics, as from those lectures emerged his *Der christliche Glaube* (1821/1822, 2nd ed. 1830/1831), one of the most important treatments of the Christian doctrine of faith in the Protestant tradition. Like the medieval *Summae* and the early modern *Loci*, this book grew from the practice of teaching theology in the university. Schleiermacher conceived it as a textbook for his lectures and, once published, he regularly used it for precisely this purpose.[82]

It would be wrong to see Schleiermacher's extensive lecturing activity as a (failed) attempt at a comprehensive theological system. His understanding of theology as developed in *Brief Outline* would not have allowed for such a project. Yet Schleiermacher's ambition would be equally misunderstood if taken as a mere expression of polymathy. Rather, in line with the *Encyclopedia*, the "distinct formation of God-consciousness" in Christianity provided a center from which his theological thought flew and an organic unity towards which it was constantly aimed.[83]

7.8 The Philosophical Lectures

Schleiermacher's lecturing was, moreover, not limited to the Faculty of Theology. Among modern theologians, the author of the *Christian Faith* was arguably unique in the seriousness with which he applied himself to philosophy. Schleiermacher could claim to be a professional philosopher, although he never attained the kind of recognition in this capacity that has always been accorded to him as a theologian.

Formally, Schleiermacher's entitlement to lecture in the Faculty of Philosophy was due to his membership in Prussia's Royal Academy of Sciences, into which he was elected in 1810.[84] His eagerness to contribute to philosophy, however, ultimately derives from the principles presented in *Gelegentliche Gedanken*, according to which positive sciences, such as theology, must be included in the university because they cannot be conducted without permanent exchange with science proper, that is, philosophy. By the same token, Schleiermacher had stipulated that every professor of theology had a duty to contribute to the teaching of philosophy,[85] and he clearly strove to model himself on his own ideal.

Yet the connection between *Gelegentliche Gedanken* and his philosophical project runs deeper still. As noted
p. 114 above, Schleiermacher's argument in his *Denkschrift* relied on a ↳ particular conception of philosophy as embedded in its cultural contexts. The contours of his philosophical system, as they become apparent from his various lecture courses, clearly correspond to precisely this kind of philosophy.

Three courses were central to this endeavor: dialectic, ethics, and hermeneutics. In his lectures on dialectics, Schleiermacher sought to develop his own systematic foundation of knowledge in evident competition with both Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and Hegel's *Science of Logic*. His own estimation of the importance of these lectures is indicated by the fact that their publication was the last major project on which Schleiermacher worked, though at the time of his death only the "Introduction" existed in fully revised form.[86]

Like dialectic, Schleiermacher conceived of ethics as a "pure" (*reine*) science: whereas the former dealt with human thought, the latter treated human practice. Hermeneutics by contrast was a technical discipline, yet for Schleiermacher it held fundamental importance for all communication, philosophical as well as theological. While these three lecture courses developed the principles of what one might call a philosophy of human sociality and culture, its concrete details were explored in a number of applied courses that, in

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today's university, would no longer be included in philosophy. They were political theory (*Staatslehre*), educational theory, aesthetics, and theoretical psychology. Finally, Schleiermacher also lectured on the history of philosophy.

In its execution, Schleiermacher's philosophy remained fragmentary at the time of his death. Apart from his Academy lectures, he did not publish philosophical works after his appointment at Halle. It was thus in and through his lectures that he continued to pursue his ambitious philosophical project, a project whose principles corresponded closely with the philosophical vision that underlay his proposals in *Gelegentliche Gedanken*. Such facts again underline the intimate connection between the development of Schleiermacher's ideas in his mature period and the institutional structure of the university.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined Schleiermacher's relationship with the University of Berlin. Given his reputation as a leading albeit controversial theologian, it is conventional to focus in this connection on his role in, and his significance for, the Faculty of Theology. His contribution is usually summarized in the statement that Schleiermacher secured for the modern (German) university the continued presence of a faculty of theology. To this the claim is sometimes added—approvingly or disapprovingly—that he required theology to modernize in order to adapt to the modern research university emerging at the time. It should by now be clear that, while not altogether wrong, such an assessment represents a considerable simplification of a more complex reality.

Schleiermacher's contribution to the foundation of the University of Berlin proved so influential precisely because it was inspired by a comprehensive vision of the university and, ultimately, the generation and transmission of human knowledge in general. This vision in its turn was built on a phil\osophical conception of human knowledge and agency, which Schleiermacher concurrently developed and to which he was firmly committed.

p. 115 Moreover, Schleiermacher's view of theology as a positive science, which grew out of and was justified by his overall conception of university education, was in fact rather elastic insofar as it resisted the notion that the discipline had to conform to a set of systematic principles. The inherently practical foundation of theology as constituted by its relationship with the Christian church permitted a wide range of approaches to its study as long as its practitioners retained an organic connection with the overall principles of *Wissenschaft*.

There was, admittedly, a tension between these two relationships that Schleiermacher stipulated for theology. As posterity has shown, theology could be challenged by science more than he had anticipated, and its scientific character could bring it into serious conflict with the church. While clearly aware of these dangers in principle, Schleiermacher arguably underestimated the extent to which developments in historical criticism in particular would radically call into question central elements of traditional Christianity only years after his death.

Whatever the final verdict on Schleiermacher's legacy, however, any investigation of his role in the University of Berlin cannot but note the exemplary way in which the theologian modeled his own existence as a professor on the ideal of his own theory. His teaching was constantly informed not only by his specialist scholarship but by his vision of the coherence of his own discipline, theology, and its place within the broader context of *Wissenschaft*. His philosophical lectures followed the same principles. At the same time, his scholarly productions flew from, and were shaped by, his professorial lecturing duties he fulfilled punctiliously. From this vantage point, the personal admiration in which he was almost universally held is easily understandable.

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Notes

1 On the historical background, cf. Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics: 1763–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), chs. 5 and 6; Karen Hagemann, *Revisiting Prussia’s Wars against Napoleon: History, Culture, and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Alexander Mikerabidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), ch. 10.

2 Kurt Nowak, *Schleiermacher: Leben, Werk und Wirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), p. 175.

3 Ibid., pp. 177.

4 Ibid., pp. 175–177.

5 Ibid., pp. 176–177.

6 Ibid., pp. 177, 180.

7 Ibid., pp. 179–180.

8 Max Lenz, *Geschichte der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin,* vol. 1 (Halle/S.: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1910), pp. 24–36, 71–130; Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 143–148.

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9 Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, p. 181: "halb und halb berufen."
10 On this debate, see Howard, *Protestant Theology*, pp. 156–177; Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 89–102. Key texts are collected in Ernst Anrich, ed., *Die Idee der deutschen Universität: Die fünf Grundschriften aus der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung durch klassischen Idealismus und romantischen Realismus* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1956).
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12 Lenz, *Geschichte*, pp. 39–46.
13 Ibid., p. 85.
14 Ibid., pp. 130–131.
15 Cf. Werner L. Euler, "Der Streit zwischen der theologischen und der philosophischen Fakultät in Kants Schrift 'Der Streit der Fakultäten'," *Ruch Filozoficzny* 72 (2016), pp. 7–25.
16 On Kant's own context, cf. Howard, *Protestant Theology*, p. 124; on Fichte's involvement, see p. 150.
17 Anrich, *Die Idee*, pp. 125–218. Cf. Howard, *Protestant Theology*, pp. 160–166.
18 Ibid., p. 161.
19 Anrich, *Die Idee*, p. 155.
20 Ibid., pp. 154–155.
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22 Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, p. 181.
23 Ibid., p. 182.
24 Lenz, *Geschichte*, p. 124.
25 Ibid.
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27 Ibid., p. 107.
28 Schelling, *Vorlesungen*, pp. 283f.; English translation: *On University Studies*, translated by Ella S. Morgan, ed. Norbert Guterman (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1966), p. 79.
29 On this text in general, cf. Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, pp. 181–186; Howard, *Protestant Theology*, pp. 166–172.
30 Anrich, *Die Idee*, p. 223; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, ed. Werner Jaeger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), A1.
31 Anrich, *Die Idee.*, pp. 225–226.
32 Ibid., pp. 228–232.
33 Ibid., p. 233.
34 Ibid., pp. 237–241.
35 Ibid., pp. 258–259.
36 Cf. *OHG*.
37 Anrich, *Die Idee*, p. 257.
38 Ibid., p. 258, my translation.
39 Ibid., p. 261.
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42 Cf. Lenz, *Geschichte*, p. 130; Howard, *Protestant Theology*, p. 156.
43 Cf. Marion Gray, *Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 76/1 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1986).
44 Lenz, *Geschichte*, pp. 156–157; Howard, *Protestant Theology*, pp. 152–155; Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, pp. 215–216.
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46 Cf. Thomas Becker, "Diversifizierung eines Modells? Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universitäten 1810, 1811, 1818," in *Die Berliner Universität im Kontext der deutschen Universitätslandschaft nach 1800, um 1860 und um 1910,* ed. Rüdiger vom Bruch and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner, Schriften des Historisches Kollegs: Kolloquien 46 (München: Oldenbourg, 2010), p. 45; Howard, *Protestant Theology*, p. 155.
47 Lenz, *Geschichte*, pp. 129–130.
48 Lenz, *Geschichte*, pp. 129–130.
49 *Speeches*[1], pp. 85–86.
50 Lenz, *Geschichte*, pp. 187–188; Howard, *Protestant Theology*, p. 172.

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54 Schleiermacher, "Über die Einrichtung," p. 211.
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58 Schleiermacher, "Über die Einrichtung," p. 212.
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62 Howard, *Protestant Theology*, p. 183.
63 Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, p. 221.
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67 For what follows, cf. the full list of Schleiermacher's lecture announcements printed in Andreas Arndt and Wolfgang Viermond, eds., *Schleiermachers Briefwechsel (Verzeichnis) nebst einer Liste seiner Vorlesungen* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1992), pp. 305–330.
68 Ibid., p. 324.
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72 Köpke, *Die Gründung*, p. 298.
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74 Ibid., p. 7.
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76 On "Theological Encyclopedia" in general cf. Purvis, *Theology and the University*.
77 *BO*, p. 3 (§§5–6).
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79 Cf. *CF (1928)*, pp. 52–76. Nowak, *Schleiermacher*, pp. 251–252.
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