

# A TRIPTYCH ON SCHLEIERMACHER'S ON RELIGION★

Erik Borgman, Laurens ten Kate, Bart Philipsen

## Abstract

The following three texts form a triptych in the classic meaning this term has in late medieval painting. They are independent panels with their own themes, arguments and disciplinary background (literary theory, philosophy and theology); and still they 'live' from constant reference to and dependance on one another. They were first presented at the International Society for Religion, Literature and Culture's conference 'Sacred Space' in Stirling, Scotland, October 2006, and later reworked thoroughly.

There common focus is a series of new readings of Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768–1834) famous *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (1799). In the first article, Bart Philipsen explores the intellectual context of this book, especially Schleiermacher's relation to the Early Romanticists, and focuses on the hermeneutical, rhetorical and poetical questions and strategies through which Schleiermacher's *performative* concept of religion is developed. In the second article, Laurens ten Kate treats a key concept in Schleiermacher's account of the meaning of religion in modern culture, that of *intuition*; he investigates the relation between intuition and performativity, and analyses the influence of Kant's philosophy at this point. In the third article, Erik Borgman studies and evaluates the central notion of *melancholy* in Schleiermacher's views on religion, and, comparing these with the thought of Rudolf Otto and Edward Schillebeeckx, he pleads for a new understanding of the way Schleiermacher should be called a *modern* thinker.

## PART I: INOCULATIONS OF THE OTHER: THE RHETORICS AND POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S *ON RELIGION* BY BART PHILIPSEN

SCHLEIERMACHER'S *On Religion* originated in an intellectual context, which was undoubtedly among the most exciting and fruitful of modern European cultural history. Intellectual developments between Jena, Berlin, Weimar and

Dresden continue to influence thinking and writing about the most diverse issues, and not least about the meaning of being ‘modern’.<sup>1</sup> Let us recall that this intellectual activity, known in a generalising way as German Idealism and Romanticism, took shape as a complex and dense texture of intersecting and overlapping *practices of reading and writing* that were moreover extremely *self-reflexive*. Intellectual life in this period and between these symbolic locations was characterised by an intense ‘erotic’-intellectual synergy of listening and speaking, writing and reading subjects who thought and communicated in particular about the medium *itself* of their thoughts and experience, even more than about the various contents of their intellectual exchanges. For the specific community, we will discuss here, known as the Early Romanticists, this *Symphilosophieren* and *Symexistieren* (as they called it themselves) moreover had a ‘religious’ meaning, though it remains a fascinating riddle what the signifier ‘religious’ in the diverse discourses of Schlegel or Novalis—to mention only those two important voices—actually stood for.

This first part of this triptych seeks to adumbrate some general concerns, which were shared by the Early Romanticists and Schleiermacher during the period of his intimacy with, especially, Friedrich Schlegel. Whereas the latter was developing the idea of art ‘as a new religion’, the former seemed to articulate in his *Speeches* a vision on ‘religion as art’—*Kunstreligion*—which is not quite the same and definitely dislocates the chiasmatic reversal of the terms of the comparison (‘as’). One might say that both Schlegel and Schleiermacher developed in their writing new, original concepts of art and religion, which are still ‘unsettling’ and therefore hard to subsume under a general, totalising concept. In what follows, Schleiermacher’s *On Religion* will be read against the background of his intensive, yet critical participation in the groundbreaking concerns and discussions of the Early Romanticist movement. Rather than plumbing the argumentative and conceptual depth of the text from a philosophical and theological point of view (which will be done in the second and third part), we will focus here on its textual status as such, meaning the discursive-hermeneutical dilemma that it both thematises and enacts, as well as the literary, rhetorical and metaphorical dynamics of the text—let us say its textual performativity—through which this hermeneutical ‘drama’ is unfolded. It will hopefully help us to discern the points of convergence and divergence between Schleiermacher’s and Schlegel’s (among others) vision on art and religion. And it might also cast another light on the political-theological consequences of the *Speeches*, on what Schleiermacher’s vision of religious formation—his own interpretation of the central idea of aesthetic *Bildung*—may contribute to the imagination of the Political, without looking at the terrible head of Medusa and being turned into stone.<sup>2</sup>

I. THE PERFORMATIVITY OF *DARSTELLUNG*

In their influential study, *The Literary Absolute* Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy called the early-Romantic movement around the Schlegels (and Friedrich in particular) ‘a brief intense and brilliant moment of writing’ and the moment of ‘the invention of literature’ in the modern sense of the word. ‘More precisely it constitutes the inaugural moment of literature as production of its own theory – and of theory that thinks itself as literature. With this gesture it opens the critical age to which we still belong.’<sup>3</sup> Kant’s transcendental philosophical critiques had opened the chasm of the ‘critical age’, the chasm or irreducible difference between the subject and its self, the subject and the world; and it was Kant too (and partially Fichte) who introduced the concept of *Einbildungskraft* to bridge the gap. In early Romantic discourse, *Einbildungskraft* became the motor of what almost all texts of the period call *Darstellung*.

*Darstellung* is hard to translate in that it does not simply coincide with the doubleness and repetitiveness of a representation. It expresses precisely the ambivalence of any articulation: the fact that no presentation, and hence no experience, knowledge or meaning is possible independently of an act by an historical consciousness, which is also an act of symbolic articulation in time and space. In the sense that *Darstellung* articulates an externalisation as expressed in the spatial-distancing prefix ‘dar’—*Dar-stellung*, literally ‘positing it there’—it cannot really protect itself against the possibility of an alienating displacement and distortion (the expression of that possibility can be found in Hoffmann’s uncanny stories). A second aspect (but one not separable from the first, and perhaps only a different way of saying the same thing) is the temporal: ‘Dar-’ then stands for the non-synchronicity, either the *belatedness* or the *anticipatoriness* of the presentation. The constitutive tension of *Darstellung* ensures that on the one hand the subject of that *Darstellung* is always under way towards itself, this is to say, does not write and speak from the centre of an autarkic self-presence, and on the other the ‘object’ or purpose can never be fully made present, except as an always superseded, incomplete effect of an ‘act’ or as a utopian point of flight.

Though this constitutive tension definitely originated in Kant’s transcendental thinking, I would also like to reformulate it—perhaps too hastily—into *the priority of the performative over the constative*, because the emphasis was more on what words incessantly tried to do (to create and to signify) than on what they actually meant (*designated*). Or, to put it in a different, more accurate way, on the constitutive and irreducible *belatedness* of the constative as against the performative. *Darstellung* thus refers to the *performative* event of *self-formation* in which the subject and the object are themselves always ‘becoming’

and/or—this unresolvability is irreducible—can never fully recuperate themselves. It is no wonder that Baron von Münchhausen—known among other things for pulling himself out of the bottomlessness of a swamp by his own hair—is an emblematic figure of this period, in which the self is trying to posit and ground itself and the world in precarious performative acts.

## II. INCOMPREHENSION AND DIVINATION

All the authors of this period did indeed have a strong sense of crisis and transition, Schleiermacher among them: it suffices to read the penetrating pages in the third speech (of *On Religion*), where he describes the condition of post-revolutionary Europe, Europe after the ‘volcanic eruption’ of 1789 (a then already classic natural metaphor for the historic events of the revolution). He speaks of ‘times of universal confusion and upheaval where nothing among all human things remains unshaken’ (OR 56). But Schleiermacher explicitly does *not* attribute the cause of the problem he is raising—namely the complaint that ‘in these times’ the free expression and communication of ‘the religious feeling’ leaves something to be desired—to historical circumstances, but sees it as a problem fundamentally intrinsic to the transmission and communication of the religious itself: ‘But even in the happiest of times, even with the best intent, where is the person who can arouse through communication the capacity for religion not only where it already is, but also implant it and inculcate it on every path that could lead to it? . . . you can never cause them [other people] to bring forth from themselves those ideas that you wish.’ And he concludes: ‘*You see the contradiction that already cannot be eliminated from the words*’ (OR 57<sup>4</sup>).

This essentially discursive–hermeneutic crux of *Darstellung* could be called typical of the self-reflexive discourse of the *Frühromantik*. Not only were strident controversies engaged in within and between the various locations of the early Romantic discourse, and did moments of extreme conjunction alternate with just as extreme moments of rupture, but ‘*comprehension*’ was for the first time itself addressed as a real problem. It was put on the agenda and not just as a problem to be solved, but as an insoluble but fertile challenge and a *promise* that created the tension-filled space in which thinking, speaking, writing and interpreting took place, and which fundamentally implied ‘incomprehension’. It is no coincidence that one of the most important participants in this complex discourse—Friedrich Schlegel—published an intriguing text ‘Über die Unverständlichkeit’ (*On Incomprehensibility*) in which, using the often misunderstood concept of irony, he again probes the irreducible paradox of the necessity *and* impossibility of complete communication. And in one of his finest theoretical texts—*Monologue*—Novalis writes that ‘proper conversation is a mere play of words’ and ‘it is a wonderful and fertile mystery—that when

someone speaks merely in order to speak, it is precisely then that they express the most splendid and most original truths.<sup>5</sup>

But we do not have to go any further than Schleiermacher's own contribution to the development of a modern hermeneutics. Since the studies of Manfred Frank we can understand Schleiermacher's hermeneutics differently, and more accurately, than was conveyed, for instance, via Dilthey. Dilthey bears responsibility for the fact that everybody thinks of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics in terms of '*Einfühlung*', a sort of immediate intrusion into the other of a self. Schleiermacher on the other hand was himself highly aware of the historical materiality of language, the insurmountable but also necessary obstacle of the signifier that fundamentally denies the hermeneutic subject total control over the process of understanding and problematises the hermeneutical a priori of the identity of thinking and speech—and *has* to do so if there is to be any genuine attempt at an understanding of the other.<sup>6</sup>

The other, often misunderstood key concept of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics—'*Divination*' (which actually means "predicting" as well as the philological act of conjecture)—is given its meaning by this: the hermeneutic act is the response to an *imperative* and a *promise* never fully to be met or redeemed, and thus by definition a 'leap' in the dark beyond the signifiers. At a more fundamental level, this goes back to Schleiermacher's essentially religiously motivated notion that the subject can in any case not govern *over* him- or herself *from* him- or herself and that the deep inner sense of being a self, while it does 'occur *in* the subject', is 'not generated *by* the subject'.

This important modification in *The Christian Belief* is the almost aphoristic summary of Schleiermacher's critical reading of Fichte, which we cannot go into here, but which amounts to this: that the I can never really *posit* itself or at least in its *Setzung* (positing) can never overcome *Gesetzt-sein* (*being posited*) by an alterity. On the other hand, 'it'—the universe, the contemplation/intuition of which *is* in a certain sense religion—'is posited as originally acting upon us' (OR 53). Frank summarises Schleiermacher's opinion very sharply: 'In terms of religious attitude this necessitates a renunciation of the desire to call on the self as the basis for one's sense of being absolutely determined'. It was not Fichte but Spinoza—the Early Romanticists' Spinoza—which seemed to have the last word here.<sup>7</sup>

### III. SCHLEIERMACHER'S REDEFINITION OF RELIGIOUS FEELING

In *On Religion*, all these ideas are already present. Ultimately, Schleiermacher mainly makes clear in his speeches that the religious feeling is an experience of alterity, which as a sort of 'indispensible and necessary third'(OR 23) protects thought (as willing and knowing) and action from a *promethean* arrogance and

blasphemy and confronts the I with its own finitude and limits.<sup>8</sup> In the third speech, in *On Religion* this interrupting, impeding aspect of religious sensibility is formulated as a criticism of post-enlightenment bourgeois society's obsession with utility and activity, 'that must always *accomplish* something'. You could say that it impedes the self-evidence of posited knowledge, as well as the purity (but also the self-will) of a free 'positing', and therefore traces decisive knowledge and action back to what Schleiermacher and his whole generation actually tried to grasp through the complex semantics of *Wechselwirkung*, *Wechselgabe* or even *Wechselgeschenk* (Herder and Schleiermacher), the dialectics of *Ergebenheit* or submissiveness, which implies an active responsiveness to what is given or—to put in Heideggerian terms—to the 'es gibt.'<sup>9</sup>

The hermeneutic-discursive, rhetorical dilemma or 'drama' that arises from this, is the paradoxical condition of possibility and impossibility for Schleiermacher's book: the impossibility of oneself being the sovereign actor and director of a shared religiosity, to *have* others believe through the transfer of one's own religious feeling that essentially coincides with the feeling of being a self, which means for Schleiermacher, with an individuality marked by transcendent determinacy or heteronomy. Such a feeling can never be a purely transmittable, translatable knowledge; not however—as the critical reception keeps saying—as a result of its pure interiority that would inevitably be contaminated by its (exteriorating) expression, but because of the (paradoxically necessary) impossibility of the individual to be the autarkic, undivided, archimedical *self*, where such a feeling would have taken place and had been grasped before handing it on to *others*: the religious feeling is already a feeling at once extremely intimate and exterior or transcendent 'within' the subject. The subject can only *testify* to it, and that creates another, much more complex way of understanding, a way that makes understanding a thoroughly performative act—performative though not in the sense the word has taken since Austin and Searle, that is to say, as an act that arises from and is completely controlled by a self-conscious I, a Fichtian Thesis. It rather refers to the always already being entangled in linguistic acts and communicative situations in which such a thing as 'comprehending' must take place as a transcendent-social event, which constitutes both the self, the other and their mutual relation—but can also *fail*. Believing might therefore be another performative act that accepts the possibility of this failure without giving up its desperate affirmation.<sup>10</sup>

#### IV. THE ARTIST-CLERIC

The ideal or aim of the early Romantic community—'*Symphilosophieren*'—was less the synergetic accumulation and transmission of knowledge or opinion than the sharing of an intellectual and affective experience of

*Humanity*, an event rather than a representable and communicable truth (partaking in rather than imparting), a shared love for Humanity that had no desire to be knowledge in the strict sense of the word. The most widely shared concept of 18th and 19th-century Germany was undoubtedly ‘*Bildung*’, and *Bildung* was also the ideal, but a *Bildung* in Humanity, which could not itself be taught. ‘Humanity’, writes Schlegel, ‘does not allow itself to be inoculated (*kann nicht inokuliert werden*). Nor can virtue be either learned or taught, except through the friendship or love of genuine and capable men, and through familiarity with ourselves, with the god within us.’<sup>11</sup> By analogy with the generative-organic principle of the nature that works on itself from the inside outwards, Humanity too must generate as an *organon*. To solve the problem of an auto-generation that could not be inculcated or inoculated, Schlegel developed a different educational ideal in the *Ideas*, namely that of the pure model, an educator who doesn’t teach, but who exemplifies the process of *Bildung* as auto-formation and incarnates the auto-production of his or her subjectivity, the essence and goal of which is pure humanity, that is: ‘the God within us’. This incarnated ‘auto-formation’ cannot be externally imitated; it is the embodiment in action of an educational ethic that is to initiate in others their own process of self-formation.

Nevertheless, the ‘model’ is identified as an artist who makes himself into a work of art, organising and producing his self like an *organon*. And Schlegel expressly calls this ideal ‘religious’, his concern being to equalise religion and art, in so far as art, the ‘work’ of art, is a ‘Darstellung’ of truth of a sort that purely theoretical-conceptual thought can never achieve. The artist is the absolute mediator who perceives ‘the God within us’ and is charged with revealing, communicating and ‘presenting the divinity of/as humanity to all mankind in his conduct and actions, his words and works.’ It is surely no coincidence that Schlegel apostrophises this ideal model of the artist as ‘cleric’: it is a clear allusion to Schleiermacher’s *On Religion*, which Novalis was to take to an even more radical conclusion in *Christendom or Europe* and expressly introduce Schleiermacher—the ‘Veil-Maker’—as ideal mediator. That Schleiermacher at the end of the fourth Speech evokes religion as *re-ligio*—as a re-collecting (*re-legere*) and/or re-binding (*re-ligare*) performative (active/passive) event—and, as ‘fruit of your labor’, ascribes it to the ‘Academy’ of those ‘pious priests’ who inwardly and outwardly make their lives a ‘priestly *work of art*’, seems very similar to Schlegel’s ideal artist-cleric, whose self-formation collects and binds, but also constantly unbinds and re-collects with an eye to the still fragmentary, ‘progressively’ developing ideal of the absolute work of art. It is essential, however, that Schlegel does not see the figure of the priest as the representative of an already existing religion: ‘To act as representative of a religion is even more blasphemous than to found (a new) one’. Though one doesn’t have to go so far as Lacoue-Labarthe and

Nancy who read the motifs of the Religious in Schlegel's work as signifiers for something that might as well be called utterly a-religious, it cannot be denied that Schleiermacher's ideas on religion as art is not just a dialectical variation on Schlegel's art-as-religion theme, but the expression of a very diverging vision.

#### V. INOCULATIONS

Let us finally take a closer look at some passages from Schleiermacher's *On Religion*, with a particular focus on the third speech and parts of the fourth, which address the crucial dilemma of the communication and the transmission of religious feeling. Religion, according to Schleiermacher at the beginning of the third speech, has no means of 'formation' other than 'that it expresses and imparts itself freely' ('through the natural expressions of its own life'), hoping that this communication 'reaches' the other, who may not be compelled, nor convinced by 'external attraction'. It cannot be 'caused', as Schleiermacher had already said [in the passage, where he addresses the discursive-hermeneutic aporia, the paradox already contained in the expression of the desire for the same ideas and feelings concerning belief to arise in the other as already in yourself: 'But you can never cause them to bring forth from themselves those ideas that you wish' (OR 57)]. And that seems too to anticipate the failure of any instruction:

In brief you can affect the mechanism of the spirit, but you cannot penetrate into its organization, into this holy workshop of the universe, according to your own whim [*Willkür*]. There you are not able to alter or displace some part of it, to delete from [*wegzuschneiden*] or add to it; you can only retard its development and forcibly stunt a part of its growth [*gewaltsam einen Teil des Gewächses verstümmeln*]. [...] Everything that, like religion, is supposed to be a continuum in the human mind lies far beyond the realm of teaching and inculcating [*des Lehrens und anbildens*]. (OR 57)

A persuasive rhetoric which—to use the terminology of Austin and Searle—as an intentional perlocutionary act, intended quasi-causally to bring about an effect, misses its target and is thus an 'infelicity' (a failed speech act). Within the complex tropology of this passage it is equated with a technical intervention trying to determine the 'organization' of the spirit but affecting only its 'mechanical' surface or exterior, unable to 'penetrate' (the interiority of) the *organon* which is the spirit, 'the holy workshop of the universe'. The failed attempt to penetrate and intervene in this holy 'organization' is compared to 'bad' gardening, to wrongly 'deleting' [*wegschneiden*] or 'adding', to violently 'retarding' or 'stunting' [*verstümmeln*] a quasi-natural growth or development.

The organic—in this case botanical—tropology and its counterpart—the metaphor of the mechanical as something ‘external’, something technical and manufacturable—is characteristic of early Romantic, or indeed all Romantic discourse. According to Paul de Man it is an expression of the desire to provide the product of the transcendental *Einbildungskraft*, or—more simply—of consciousness, with the ontological stability and genealogy of a natural object that contrasts with the technically ‘manufactured’, but at the same time has the interiority of the psychic, without however being separated from Nature as a whole, the universe.<sup>12</sup> What is behind this tropological logic seems again Romantic Spinozism, for which the human spirit is both the final cause and the highest degree of Nature’s dynamic self-organisation, its most distinguished locus or ‘holy workshop’.

From this central metaphor of organic Growth [*Gewächs*]*—see too das Gedeihen der Religion/‘the flourishing of Religion’—*other biological and specifically botanical metaphors branch off, metaphors that relate to the product (especially the metaphor of ‘ripe and ripest fruits’, of harvesting as collecting/gathering), but also to propagation and further still to the more problematic activities of cultivation: engrafting, inoculating, pruning, etc. What is at stake in all cases is the problem of *intervention* that recalls the earlier mentioned ideal of *Ergebenheit* or submissiveness, including both activity and receptivity.

The most insistent and also most ambivalent metaphor of the *Speeches* in this respect is certainly the recurrent expression *einimpfen und anbauen/‘implant’* (transl. Crouter) or inoculate (my translation) and ‘inculcate’. Teaching (*anbauen/inculcate*), meaning a sort of imprinted and external addition or intervention in a development (such as the teaching of a correct pronunciation), is explicitly rejected several times (‘religion...lies far beyond the realm of teaching and inculcating [*Lehren und Anbauen*]', OR 57); it is substituted at least once by a metaphor from an utterly different semantic realm: teaching as superficial ‘prescription’ of commentaries and imaginative interpretations that are supposed to arouse religious feelings are compared to (poor) ‘medicine’ (OR 58). Interestingly enough this metaphorical shift corresponds to the semantic ambiguity of the term *einimpfen*, which has exactly the same denotative range as the English *inoculate*: to insert a bud or an ‘eye’ for propagation, to introduce a virus or germ of a disease, in order to render immune; to introduce ideas or attitudes in the mind of others.<sup>13</sup>

*Einimpfen*, however, seems to refer—though not always—to a hypothetical possibility that is not by definition rejected. It is at most currently unthinkable, as in the already cited (rhetorical?) question regarding the ‘person who can arouse through communication the capacity for religion not only where it already is, but also *implant* [*einzuimpfen*] it and *inculcate* it’ (OR 57), or in another hypothetical suggestion: ‘Show me someone in whom you have *inculcated* or

*implanted* the power of judgement, the spirit of observation, aesthetic feeling, or morality and I shall then pledge myself also to teach religion' (OR 58). The underlying idea here is of course the relation of mastership and discipleship, echoed in Schlegel's vision of the artist-cleric, understood as an 'attachment' that has nothing to do with 'blind imitation' but is based on an inspiring and *contagious* example that—literally—sets the feeling of the religious free in others: 'He who by expressing his own religion, has aroused it [*aufgeregt*] in others no longer has it in his power to keep them for himself; their religion is also free as soon as it lives and goes its own way' (OR 58). It spreads like an invisible germ indeed, as Schleiermacher described it himself at the beginning of the fourth speech, but it is an inspiring, life-giving infection, not a deadly one. The exemplary figure of the priest 'steps forth to present his own intuition as the object for the rest, to lead them into the region of religion where he is at home and to *implant* [*einzuimpfen*] his holy feelings in them; he expresses the universe and the community follows his inspired speech in holy silence' (OR 75).

One gets the impression that the tropological ambiguity enables Schleiermacher to hold on to a metaphorical intervention and instruction that leaves the all too 'earthly' ground of the botanical (gardening) metaphors behind and shifts to the more 'spiritual' or invisible metaphors of biomedical processes beyond the 'Willkür' (the whim) of the subject's freedom. The vision of Schleiermacher, thus at first sight seems less radical than that of Schlegel, according to whom 'humanity can never be inoculated'. But what makes Schleiermacher's vision radical is perhaps precisely the originality of an identity given by divine alterity that can never—even ideally—coincide with a self-positing and organically (self-)developing subject, nor even with 'itself' as an absolute subject that creates and recreates the world from nothing—*ex nihilo*—as if by the 'god within us': possibly, Schlegel's ideal. According to Schleiermacher, humans are born with a religious gift (*religiöse Anlage*) that is 'implanted' (*eingepflanzt*) *in* us and that we necessarily have to 'propagate' (*fortplanzen*), this is to say that we have to pass it on and share it in order to be a self, but this action—at the same time—decenters our subjectivity; and thus, we never govern over that 'self'. Those expressions remind us of Schleiermacher's deepest conviction of a religious feeling that is *in* the subject, but not originally created, engendered or propagated *by* it. It is therefore like a strange excess or supplement that was always already there before the subject became a subject but that was also constitutive of the subject's essentially insatiable longing for itself (as a Self).

Thus, this religious feeling is a strange and wonderful implant, a benign 'divine' tumour even, 'the heavenly growth [*das himmlische Gewächs*] in the midst of your plantings' (OR 71), which leads its own life 'without your aid' (*ibid*), an original addition which can and must now only be passed on

‘without plucking’, *fortgeplanzt* (‘propagated’) and *eingepfift* from a ‘belief that comes before seeing’: ‘I resign myself to not seeing, but I believe’ (OR 68). This declaration, deriving from John’s Gospel, could well be another admonition to Schlegel (and Novalis), for it concludes a short passage in which Schleiermacher expressly and perhaps not entirely honestly laments his inability to transform ‘aesthetic sense’ into religion—precisely Schlegel’s project: ‘It is the breach that I feel deeply in my being, *but also treat with respect*’ (OR 68). This breach of an almost Kantian sublime or incomprehension (for he respects what he ‘doesn’t know’, that is, ‘the path’ that leads from art to religion), this rupture can only be overcome by a blind faith, and certainly not in a sovereign poetic act which thinks it can penetrate and ‘work’ in ‘the holy workshop of the universe’, the core of the *organon* ‘according to [its] own *whim*’ (OR 57). The word *whim/Willkür* can only be understood as an allusion to Schlegel’s poetics, the ideal of the absolute revolution as *creatio ex nihilo*: ‘Das Wesen der Moderne besteht in der Schöpfung aus Nichts – ein solches Prinzip lag im Christentum – ein ähnliches in der Revolution, in Fichte’s Philosophie – und desgleichen in der neuen Poesie.’ [‘The essence of modernity lies in the creation from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) – a principle already found in Christendom, and similar to that found in the (French) Revolution, in Fichte’s philosophy, and likewise in the new poetry.’]<sup>14</sup>

#### VI. ORPHEUS’ TASK

For Schleiermacher religion may be inextricably tied to *Darstellung*: ‘It is impossible to express and communicate religion other than verbally with all the effort and artistry of language, while willingly accepting the service of all skills that can assist fleeting and lively speech’ (OR 74). But what takes place in this ‘fleeting and lively speech’—though not without the assistance or service of all skills (*Dienst aller Künste*), that is, *rhetorics* and not *aesthetics*, ‘since all communication of religion cannot be other than rhetorical’ (OR 22)—can only witness to a difference the subject has to partake of him- or herself, *in* him- or herself, in order to become a self and has to share but cannot own or create him- or herself, because it has always already been an arch-inoculation or an engrafting from an different realm. What occurs as a breach or gap in the metaphorical transmission between religious feeling and aesthetic representation is perhaps metaphor itself, a twist within or of the organical master-trope that designates the distinction between language as metaphorical flourishing (one of the oldest metaphors of figural language) and its ‘other’ that can never be grasped or explained by any metaphor: ‘the heavenly growth’ of an utterly other nature that grows ‘in the midst of your plantings’, preventing the latter—our profane, worldly, finite ideas, representations, metaphors—to stunt their growth and relapse into an institutionalised *organon* in which the sacred

place of the incomprehensible Other is colonised by those who will indeed all too eagerly misuse the idea of the poetic *creatio ex nihilo* to legitimate their own devastating totalitarian political ideas or aims.<sup>15</sup>

Schleiermacher's critical reservation *vis-à-vis* the aesthetic as a kind of *Darstellung* of the religious experience, which he respects but does not manage to come to grips with, is only the exemplary expression of a much more fundamental problem with the implications of a radical Fichtean self-positing. Schleiermacher's problem with aesthetics has been wrongly explained as a typical Protestant insistence on interiority. Art as *artwork* would contaminate and exteriorise the purity of inward feeling; it would desubjectivise it in the finite and rigidified objectiveness of the work (of art). Promethean activism seems to be bound to end in a petrifying confrontation with Medusa.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the ideal inwardness of religious feeling would be something like 'art without artwork' as Hegel described the Protestant concept of subjectivity.<sup>17</sup> But Schleiermacher's concept of inwardness is fundamentally at odds with the logic of this argument; inwardness according to Schleiermacher has from the very beginning been 'contaminated' by an otherness that decentres it and alters it. What may be lost in the problematic passage from religion to art is therefore not so much the purity of interiority, but rather this original contamination or inoculation of the Other, which has to be protected both against a too Fichtian subjectivation and an objectivation that would be the result of that, since the religious inoculation would be turned into the object of the I's *creatio ex nihilo*, something present and representable, a frozen product instead of a living trace that can never be retraced to its origin, nor brought (back) to the cold daylight of the present. If religion is bound to express itself artfully, it is only in the language of tropes and figures that mournfully bear the mark of their inability to substitute adequately for what they are trying to transmit. In that sense, the ideal priest is himself obliged to the desperate yet sublime and 'holy' affirmation of a fundamental absence and loss of what has always already been *given*, a realm from which he and all other people have been 'transplanted from' (*versetzt*) into the world of 'earthly aspirations and activity', the world in which we 'must always accomplish something':

As he descends among people who restrict themselves to some earthly aspiration and activity, he easily believes – pardon him for it – he has been transplanted from the company of gods and muses to a race of crude barbarians. He feels himself to be a steward of religion among unbelievers, a missionary among savages. Like a new Orpheus, he hopes to win many among them through heavenly tones. (OR 78)

The priest's task to protect and save religion among unbelievers, 'like a steward of religion' (*als ein Verwalter der Religion*), strangely enough turns him

into a modern disciple of the orphic singer, ‘a new Orpheus’. As Crouter notices, ‘the allusion is ironic in view of Orpheus’ s inability to raise his wife, Eurydice, from the underworld and his dismal end in the traditional Greek tale’ (OR 78, note). But in the light of Schleiermacher’s vision of religious feeling as a divine inoculation that has to be ‘propagated without plucking’, and ‘believed without seeing’, the emblematic figure of Orpheus is far from inappropriate. Though the Orpheus ‘in the traditional Greek tale’ failed, as Crouter points out, the mournful wandering singer that he became afterwards may still be an exemplary figure, since his lyrics kept alive the memory of the lost beloved; even when his body was torn to pieces and the parts dispersed, the broken, fragmented voice kept on singing and became in its turn an emblem of modern art and, in a sense, of modern existence as such. But as the ‘new Orpheus’, the priest may even have learned something more from the fate of his mythological predecessor: the necessity to restrain from the sudden promethean desire to look back and snatch from the gods ‘what in calm certainty he would have been able to ask for and to expect.’<sup>18</sup> His ‘fleeting and lively speech’ should be the poetry of a non-melancholic mourning that performs modern existence by positing and grounding itself and the world in precarious performative acts without getting hold of or even striving to get hold of an all encompassing Presence.<sup>19</sup>

*University of Louvain, Belgium*  
*bart.philipsen@arts.kuleuven.be*

PART II: INTUITIONS OF THE OTHER: AN ANALYSIS  
 OF *ANSCHAUUNG* IN SCHLEIERMACHER’S *ON*  
*RELIGION*—WITH REFERENCES TO KANT,  
 BY LAURENS TEN KATE

In the first part of this triptych on Schleiermacher’s *On Religion*, the logic of *Darstellung* and its performative status, as it plays a key role in Schleiermacher’s text, has been analysed. Bart Philipsen demonstrated that without an understanding of the complex context of the literary experiments and philosophical ideas of the Early Romanticist movement, this logic would remain in the dark.

Now, let us take a closer look at this famous text itself, with a focus on the second speech, and examine the ways in which this logic may be present in the author’s account of religion.

I. *DARSTELLUNG* OF RELIGION, *DARSTELLUNG* AS RELIGION?

One of the remarkable features of *On Religion* is the construction of a new concept of religion—again, in close dialogue with the Early Romanticists,

that is, with the ‘despisers of religion’ who are, according to the subtitle, the addressees of the five speeches. The book opens up a new, modern space for the sacred in which religion, according to the author, should be ‘done’ rather than adhered to; in this sense, the book is not only a theoretical experiment with concepts, but also a performance of them. According to Schleiermacher, a *Darstellung* of religion, as attempted by the author who in this respect commits himself fully to the thoughts and lifestyle of its ‘despisers’, precisely opens up such a sacred space in modern, secular culture. For in a *Darstellung*, one is never simply ‘there’ (*dar-*)—one is not in command and control of oneself as *Darstellende*<sup>20</sup>, nor of the matter to be *dargestellt*<sup>21</sup>. The performative status and structure of *Darstellung* consists in the fact that the subject is decentred in its event and is always looking for itself (‘performing’ itself again and again) without ever finding itself, just as the object (in this case religion) is decentred in the sense that it can never be fully appropriated, but only be ‘there’ in the form of an incomplete effect of performative act. The space of *Darstellung* is a space in which we cannot but expose ourselves to an ‘outside’, to an alterity (the other, the divine, God) which, *in* touching us, escapes us. Hence, one should conclude that, in his speeches, Schleiermacher does not primarily achieve a *Darstellung* of religion; rather, he comes to the remarkable discovery that religion *is* (a space of) *Darstellung*.

The discovery of this logic leads Schleiermacher to quite a fresh, non-dogmatic and non-traditional, and indeed experimental approach to religion, in which, nevertheless, a respectful revaluation of the religious traditions—in particular the Christian ones—is at stake. The new and the old are being brought together here. The author wishes to leave the rather challenging ideas on the ‘essence of religion’—the title of the second speech—well and firmly rooted in the Christian traditions of faith. Religion is being treated from within *as well as* from outside. Schleiermacher takes a Christian *and* a secular stance at the same time, and struggles to combine both. In my view, this double position is exactly why his book has had and still has such an impact on modernity’s self-understanding—a secular ‘self’ that has always been contaminated by its complex relation with religion. *On Religion* is not simply an ‘apology of religion’, despite the title of the first speech; beyond any apologetic strategy, it is an account of who we are today, we secular people. But who are we then, as secular people? In a way, Schleiermacher’s answer is: Christians . . .

The double position challenging us here is especially present and ‘active’ in the first, adventurous 1799 edition of the *Reden über die Religion*. The radicality of this edition—in the sense that it looks for the rhizomatic and ambivalent ‘roots’ (Lat. *radix*) of speech and language—has resulted in an unresolved discourse: the double position is not brought to a synthesis, but left open, as

a wound stinging between the words. Maybe this vulnerability of the first edition has caused its being left aside, forgotten (by its readers, by its author) in favour of later modified editions, until it was brought to life again more than a hundred years later by Rudolf Otto.<sup>22</sup>

The new concept of religion mentioned earlier, as developed by Schleiermacher, once and for all clears the way for a new understanding of *religious experience*. The author wants to redefine religious experience, and in the first part of this triptych this redefinition was formulated as follows:

- (1) religious experience is an experience of *alterity* that, as a third element, as an 'indispensable and necessary third' (OR 23), interrupts human thinking and acting and confronts both with their limits and finitude; in this way, this experience protects us from the *hubris* of the modern subject—a subject that has the opposite experience of a closed self-presence without otherness;
- (2) religious experience realises this interruptive, confronting and protecting gesture by referring thinking and acting back to their unstable ground: that of the undecidable intertwining of constative and performative speech acts. In other words, it leads thinking and acting back to the complex practice of *Darstellung*. And ultimately, religion *is* this *Darstellung*—seen as a space or 'counterspace' in modern culture.

## II. INTUITION AS A KEY CONCEPT IN *ON RELIGION*

However, starting from the second speech entitled 'On the Essence of Religion', Schleiermacher adds to the concept of feeling a second one, and only by thinking the coherence as well as the tension between the two, the broader phenomenon of religious experience can, according to the author, be taken seriously. It turns out that, throughout the text of *On Religion*, this second concept will serve as Schleiermacher's key instrument: *Anschauung*.

The German word *Anschauung*, usually translated here into the English word 'intuition', is sometimes used by Schleiermacher as a twin term with feeling (*Gefühl*), but it is never a simple synonym. In OR 31, for example, after having described several forms of religious experience, the author mentions both terms in the same breath: 'But before I lead you into the particulars of these intuitions and feelings . . .'. Not long before this passage, he treats intuition as a separate concept: 'I entreat you become familiar with this concept: intuition of the universe' (OR 24). A bit further on in OR 31, Schleiermacher speaks about the 'separation' of feeling and intuition that would be crucial to religion.

But the use of the term intuition is not as unstable as it could appear from these quotations. Schleiermacher specifies its meaning by the addition 'of the universe'. Intuition opens the senses to a *space* called universe (often this space is also called '[the] divine' or '[the] holy'). This space, analysed above as a sacred space of *Darstellung*, is a *topos* of performative event vital to religion; or, more precisely, it designates, as an unexpected trace<sup>23</sup> in modern secular culture, a performative structure vital to religious experience. We will deal with this performativity of intuition shortly. Let us first follow Schleiermacher's thought process, leading to this specified meaning of intuition.

As Crouter shows in the Introduction to his edition of *On Religion* (OR xxxi), when analysing the rhetorical structure of the second speech, Schleiermacher, looking for the 'essence of religion', first distinguishes manifest activity (thinking, doing) from inactivity (feeling, intuition). So initially, religious experience belongs to the 'force' of inactivity, that 'opposes' the force of activity. But then Schleiermacher proceeds towards a resolution of this opposition of two 'forces' or two 'drives'<sup>24</sup> (OR 5), by introducing, in his second speech, the *other*, more focused meaning of intuition. Schleiermacher, in Crouter's view, considers *intuition of the universe* as a higher level of religious experience that *mediates* between the two forces, installing an always temporary 'equilibrium' (OR 6; *Gleichgewicht*) rather than a resolution—for it leaves the tension between the extremes intact.<sup>25</sup> In the first speech, the term *mediator* (*Mittler*) had already been used to indicate those people who share in religious experience, for they would mediate 'between limited man' (OR 7) and 'the infinite' (OR 6). In the second speech, the focus shifts from the mediators to mediation itself: it is *intuition of the universe* that concerns Schleiermacher in his effort to define religion.

Schleiermacher indeed posits this term as a dynamics between a series of fixed, opposing terms. First of all intuition mediates between activity and inactivity, as just shown. This is the opposition between receptivity or passivity and activity, and it is often identical—in the language of *On Religion*—with 'inward' and 'outward': that is, the inward enjoyment of the world in a 'total absorption of everything surrounding you into your innermost being' on the one hand, and the outgoing strive for action in order to influence and change the world (see OR 5). From there, it mediates between the limited, finite 'I' of a thinking and working human being (let us say of everyday existence) and on the other hand the unlimited, infinite universe, understood as a divine force, a trace that traverses our 'I'. Furthermore, intuition mediates between feeling and reason (*Gefühl* and *Vernunft*), the latter being described in different terms more often, such as *reflection*, *consciousness* or *metaphysics*. Later, in the third, fourth and fifth speech, Schleiermacher extends the mediatory function

of intuition to the important opposition between ethics and morality (belonging to ‘activity’), and religion (being the ‘practice of inactivity’<sup>26</sup>). ‘True’ religion mediates between religious experience and moral action, without reconciling them.<sup>27</sup>

*Intuition, mediation, performativity*

This mediatory structure of intuition brings us back to its performative status. For a performative act (in thinking, speaking or doing), it always *performs* the dynamic between activity and inactivity or passivity, or—in an analogous way—between reason and feeling, or between the subject and its ‘other’ and its ‘outside’. Between, that is, the purity of feeling in which the subject loses itself in order to be taken over by the universe (radical receptivity, radical heteronomy) and the purity of reason in which the subject controls itself and the universe (radical activity, radical autonomy), intuition *mediates*, without coinciding with these opposite poles.

However, if the mediatory act does not coincide with what is mediated, if it is not simply a function between the latter, what ‘is’ it then? Does this act still belong to the order of being? ‘Is’ it something by itself? At this point, Schleiermacher is quite certain of his cause. Intuition as a performative act *creates* something—an image of, a truth about, a contact with alterity—that is immediately lost. It acts and makes, and lets go at the same time, bringing together action and passion, reason and feeling or in other words ethics and religion or mysticism, without synthesising them: the togetherness is only their for a second. We will see that, particularly in his second speech, Schleiermacher defines religion on the basis of this split second, this elusive moment *in between*. This means that intuition ‘is’ this spatial–temporal *event* (rather than a subjective feeling—the ‘I’ can never ‘have’ an intuition) in which creation and destruction, gift and loss meet. Intuition ‘is’ the *space* and *time* of religion, interrupting any ontology of presence and being. It becomes clear now that the decentering logic of *Darstellung*<sup>28</sup> is recaptured by Schleiermacher, in order to think and define religion.<sup>29</sup>

In the beginning of the second speech one finds a series of fundamental remarks on the meaning of intuition, and each time the *interplay* between the one who intuits and the intuited is stressed. It is an interplay between an ‘I’ and its other, in this case the universe, and both the *relata* of this relation work on one another, as in a performative act.

All intuition proceeds from an influence of the intuited on the one who intuits, from an original and independent action of the former, which is then grasped, apprehended, and conceived by the latter according to one’s own nature. (OR 24/25)

Although the other comes first, is 'original' or primordial, it is only through the response, the 'apprehension' of the 'I' that the intuitive event is set in motion. The structure of a *between* that 'happens' between a subject and an object, immediately problematising this opposition—e.g. the object, the universe, is no longer object, but is portrayed as an 'independent' subject—is present here, and this dynamic *in between* forms a key feature of performativity.<sup>30</sup>

### III. INTUITION IN THE SECOND SPEECH—THE 'LOVE SCENE'

However, after the remarks of the beginning of the second speech, the most intense and radical account of intuition is offered further on, in a famous and exceptional paragraph, that is usually named the 'love scene' by scholars of *On Religion*.

Schleiermacher interrupts his reflection on the meaning of intuition by trying to evoke, enact, perform the concept. Here, the style of the speech shifts suddenly, as in a lapse or a slip of the pen, from argumentation to the pathos of mystical narrative. It is worth quoting this long passage in its entirety:

But before I lead you into the particulars of these intuitions and feelings, which must certainly be my next business with you, permit me first for a moment to mourn the fact that I cannot speak of both other than separately. The finest spirit of religion is thereby lost for my speech, and I can disclose its innermost secret only unsteadily and uncertainly. But reflection necessarily separates both; and who can speak about something that belongs to consciousness without first going through this medium? Not only when we communicate an inner action of the mind, but even when we merely turn it into material for contemplation within ourselves and wish to raise it to lucid consciousness, this unavoidable separation immediately occurs. This state of affairs intermingles with the original consciousness of our dual activity, what predominates and functions outward and what is merely sketching and reproducing, which seems rather to serve things. Immediately upon this contact the simplest matter separates itself into two opposing elements, the one group combining into an image of an object, the other penetrating to the center of our being, there to effervesce with our original drives and to develop a transient feeling. We cannot escape this fate even with the innermost creation of the religious sense; we cannot call up its products to the surface again and communicate them except in this separate form. Only do not think – for this is one of the most dangerous errors – that in the first stirring of the mind religious intuitions and feelings may originally be as divided as we must unfortunately consider them here. Intuition without feeling is nothing and can have neither the proper origin nor the proper force; feeling without intuition is also nothing; both are therefore something only when and because they are originally one and unseparated.

That first mysterious moment that occurs in every sensory perception, before intuition and feeling have separated, where sense and its objects have, as it were,

flowed into one another and become one, before both turn back to their original position – I know how indescribable it is and how quickly it passes away. But I wish that you were able to hold on to it and also to recognize it again in the higher and divine religious activity of the mind. Would that I could and might express it, at least indicate it, without having to desecrate it! It is as fleeting and transparent as the first scent with which the dew gently caresses the waking flowers, as modest and delicate as a maiden's kiss, as holy and fruitful as a nuptial embrace; indeed, not *like* these, but it *is itself* all of these. A manifestation, an event develops quickly and magically into an image of the universe. Even as the beloved and ever-sought for form fashions itself, my soul flees toward it; I embrace it, not as a shadow, but as the holy essence itself. 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.

With the slightest trembling the holy embrace is dispersed, and now for the first time the intuition stands before me as a separate form; I survey it, and it mirrors itself in my open soul like the image of the vanishing beloved in the awakened eye of a youth; now for the first time the feeling works its way up from inside and diffuses itself like the blush of shame and desire on his cheek. This moment is the highest flowering of religion. If I could create it in you, I would be a god; may holy fate only forgive me that I have had to disclose more than the Eleusinian mysteries.

This is the natal hour of everything living in religion. (OR 31/32)

The author wishes to let us *feel* how intuition 'works'. Initially, intuition is a 'feeling'—both terms seems synonymous—expressed by a holistic, fusing experience, a 'mysterious moment'. The scene described in the second paragraph of the quote then aims to evoke this euphoric experience in quite erotic terms: the 'caresses' of the dew, quickly transformed into the 'delicacy of a maiden's kiss', then again into a 'nuptial embrace' and finally the contact with the universe is articulated as a 'penetration' of bodies. The mystical narrative traditions of a fusion with Christ or God (Hildegard von Bingen, Theresa of Avila for e.g.) are rephrased here in the language of modern secular literature. Earlier, in the first paragraph, this fusional, ecstatic 'element' of the experience had already described as a 'penetration to the centre of our being, there to effervesce with our original drives and to develop a transient feeling'.

#### *From holism to aporia*

However, at the same time Schleiermacher problematises the ecstasy in which feeling and intuition are one in an ideal, phantasmatic event (the 'moment'), by opposing it with another 'element' of the *same* experience: that of

'reflection' that combines the experience 'into an image of an object'. With this second element, feeling and intuition become 'separated', the 'holy embrace' dispersed, and intuition is suddenly defined as something of its own. It still is a 'moment', but not a fusing, fulfilling one anymore; Schleiermacher's holistic language shifts to an aporetic language. The moment of intuition separates itself from the continuity of ecstatic feeling, but it has, on the other hand, not yet been transferred to the realm of rational knowledge. It is located *in between* feeling and reason, losing both modes at the same time. Here, the mediatory function of intuition comes to the fore. It is the mediation of an 'image that stands before me', leaving the 'I' in a state of embarrassment and *aporia*—even of 'shame'. The performative creation of this 'image' simultaneously 'awakens' me from the sleep of feeling and thus *gives* to me what I was not aware of, *and* robs me of this feeling.

... and now for the first time the intuition stands before me as a separate form; I survey it, and it mirrors itself in my open soul like the image of the vanishing beloved in the awakened eye of a youth; now for the first time the feeling works its way up from inside and diffuses itself like the blush of shame and desire on his cheek. (OR, 32)

This image is neither rational (it is not a concept by which one could grasp, understand and control the situation, but an alterity 'standing before me') nor irrational (it is not the ecstasy in which one is one with the universe), but is like an event that mediates between the two. It *stellt sich dar* between both, and it is the strangeness and impossibility of this *dar*, this *topos* and *kairos* of intuition,<sup>31</sup> which interests Schleiermacher most.

It is the impossibility of this performative act that seems to be the only thing performed. The sensibility for this impossible act is then, towards the end of the paragraph, identified more or less with 'the natal hour of everything living in religion.' We saw that the passage opens with a lamentation: 'The finest spirit of religion is lost for my speech, and I can disclose its innermost secret only unsteadily and uncertainly.' But then, towards the end, the 'blush of shame' produced by this impossible disclosure appears to be the moment of intuition itself, and, as such, the 'highest flowering of religion'. The experience of loss is a key characteristic of the religious experience, for in intuition, we separate ourselves from the 'bosom of the infinite world' that nourished our ecstatic feeling. But Schleiermacher tends to dislodge his concept of religion from this ecstasy, just as he disconnected it earlier in the 2nd speech from the 'mania for system' characteristic of reason. Schleiermacher mourns over this loss, but refertilises it at the same time, naming it a 'flowering'. To this paradox, religion opens us up between 'shame and desire'.

IV. INTUITION IN KANT'S FIRST *CRITIQUE*—A CONCLUDING REFERENCE

I mentioned the fact that intuition is a translation of the German *Anschauung*. But this concept has a very precise source: here, Kant's concept of *Anschauung* in his *Critique of Pure Reason* or 'first *Critique*', has inspired Schleiermacher deeply.<sup>32</sup>

Schleiermacher follows Kant's insight that there are no pure, immediate empirical perceptions that humans simply 'receive' from reality; every perception is always already mixed with concepts (*Begriffe*; B 147/48) that reason adds to them, thus recreating the perceived partially. The analysis of *Anschauung*, which starts off immediately in the opening pages of the first *Critique* (B 33–36) is one of Kant's solutions to the deadlock between a rigorous empiricism, advocating the receptivity of the senses as our prime source of knowledge, and an even rigorous idealism, advocating the activity of reason and its set of instruments (concepts, ideas) as the prime source of knowledge, reality being nothing more than an extension of our mind. For in an *Anschauung*, humans perceive phenomena in such a way that they receive them while at the same time conceiving them. In *Anschauung*, we are caught up in a fundamentally relational event, in which the world of *phenomena* 'does' something to and with us, just as we 'do' something to and with the world of *phenomena*. Knowledge is defined primarily as this constant reciprocal exposure and contamination between the 'I' and the world; knowledge 'lives' out of the gap between these two, instead of being focused on bridging it, let alone filling it up. The 'real' things, true reality (*das Ding an sich*) will always remain lost in this interplay (B 59/60), but the awareness of this loss is precisely the essence of *Anschauung*.

In sum, for Kant, *Anschauung* is neither straightforward perception nor feeling (*Empfindung*<sup>33</sup> [e.g. B 33 and 207–218] and sometimes *Wahrnehmung* [B 160/61] in Kant's vocabulary), nor straightforward reasoning (*Denken* [e.g. B 93/94]; *Verstand* [e.g. B 310–312]). It perceives things by connecting them to a concept developed or a memory stored already by our reason, thus creating something out of what is given to us: Kant usually calls this 'something' an image (*Vorstellung*; e.g. B 104). It is this image that is intuited in *Anschauung*; without this *Schauen* of 'something' that is outside me and inside me, which is 'mine' and the other's at the same time,<sup>34</sup> no knowledge is possible, according to Kant. *Anschauung* is the mediatory term for that which relates feeling and reason without fusing them.

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their

functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of the other; rather is it a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other. We therefore distinguish the science of the rules of sensibility in general, that is, aesthetic, from the science of the rules of the understanding in general, that is, logic. (B 75/76<sup>35</sup>)

The limits of human *Vernunft* (which in Kant's language is reason in a broader and existential sense), as explored critically in Kant's three *Critique's*, come to light in this tension between *Empfindung* and *Verstand* (being reason in the strict sense, as the faculty of rational thinking), mediated by *Anschauung*. In the end, human *Vernunft* simply *is* this structure of tension.

Now, the creation of a *Vorstellung* by the dynamic of *Anschauung* is summarised by Kant as *Einbildungskraft*: the 'power of imagination'.<sup>36</sup> This synthesising concept, covering the entire complexity of the 'knowledge act' Kant investigates in his first *Critique*, will later return in his aesthetics, the third *Critique*, in a much more elaborate way. Remarkably enough, Schleiermacher appears not to have read this work.

Kant's further concepts of apprehension (*Apprehension*) and apperception (*Apperzeption*), which after Kant will play an important role in 20th century phenomenology starting with Husserl's work, fit within this intricate network of mediatory terms between feeling and reason. For they double the meaning of perception by proclaiming that every perception is also a form of self-perception (see e.g. B 68).

This should not be misunderstood: in the apperception as a general feature of intuition, the subject does not perceive itself before it perceives the object; on the contrary, self-perception indicates for Kant the fact that every perceiving act is primarily self-oriented: what one sees in an *Anschauung* is the dynamics of perception itself, located between subject and object. What one sees is one's own perceiving *as a problem*, divided as this perceiving act is between receiving and conceiving.

#### *In love with Anschauung . . .*

Taking the concept of *Anschauung* out of the confines of Kant's epistemological discussion and applying it freely to his own understanding of religion,<sup>37</sup> Schleiermacher turns out to be a passionate adherent of Kant's transcendental criticism, as laid out in his first *Critique*.<sup>38</sup> In a way, it seems he fell in love with the dynamic and relational meaning of intuition developed by Kant. Surely, he thought that this was also the key to a new concept of religion, which could reconcile religion with the modern secularism of his friends, the addressees of his speeches. By introducing Kant's *Anschauung*

as the basis for a performative concept of religion, Schleiermacher wishes to convince its ‘despisers’ that their reservations with regard to religion are misguided: for religion is a key experience of *Darstellung*. It performs the unperformable, it enacts alterity by *losing* it, and in its narrative, symbolic and ritual traditions religion sets the rich stage for this ongoing drama between humans and the divine: the drama of a gift of loss.

*University of Utrecht, The Netherlands*  
*ltk@uw.nl*

PART III: THE RELIGION OF MELANCHOLY?  
 CHRISTIANITY AND MODERNITY IN  
 SCHLEIERMACHER’S *ON RELIGION*,  
 BY ERIK BORGMAN

It has often been said that Schleiermacher is the first modern theologian.<sup>39</sup> Mostly, however, for superficial and sometimes even for wrong reasons. Schleiermacher is not a modern theologian simply because he starts with religious experience, with the human subject instead of with the tradition to which one supposedly has to submit in order to be a true believer. Starting with an isolated subject and its experience makes one definitely modern, but it does not make one a modern *theologian*, or, to put it differently, does not make one’s theology typically modern. On the other hand, pre-modern theology starts with tradition not in order to submit human beings to an *Unmündigkeit* (immaturity) that is *selbstverschuldet* (self-incurred), as Kant’s view of the Enlightenment would have it, but because it sees human beings as always already part of what these traditions speak of. Therefore, that tradition is the true *space* to think. One of the major factors that make for Schleiermachers theological greatness is that he understood this. He saw that the traditional way of being part of traditions had disappeared and that it had become fundamentally impossible to restore it, but that is was at the same time indispensable. Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics can be read as an attempt to deal with the fact that ‘we moderns’ are paradoxically situated in a tradition of which we are no longer part.

Now, this is a clue to what makes Schleiermacher truly modern: he understands his own situation as impossible but real, as a space of understanding that needs itself to be understood. In order to understand our situation, we need the instruments and thoughts handed onto us from the past, but these will unavoidably present themselves as outdated, as not really enabling us to understand our situation, as even keeping us from understanding our situation as totally and completely ours. Hermeneutics in the Schleiermachian sense is not bridging this gap so that it ceases to exist. It is dealing with this unavoidable gap and difference.<sup>40</sup>

According to Michel Foucault, it is distinctively modern to try not to understand the eternal truth, but the specifics of one's own situation.<sup>41</sup> What makes Schleiermacher a truly modern *theologian* is that he understands this situation, in which understanding is in and by itself a form of estrangement and of not fully belonging where one is located, in theological terms. One could compare it to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's famous adage: we live and have to live *etsi deus non daretur*, as though God were not, but we have to live this situation before God.<sup>42</sup> This makes our modern situation a theological space, a *locus theologicus* in the full sense of the phrase. In the way Melchior Cano (1509–1560) made this expression a classical one in his posthumously published *De locis theologicis* (1562), theological *loci* are 'places' within the tradition, where discrete bits of theological truths can be found. Schleiermacher is maybe the first theologian to use the theological tradition to qualify the place where one is located theologically. Or better still: to read this place as a space that *is* qualified theologically.

This at least is the reading I will present in this third part of the tryptich of the passage in Schleiermacher's *On Religion* on what could be called the melancholic nature of the Christian religion. At the end of my article, I will contest this melancholy and suggest another way of performing modernity in a Christian way.

#### I. THE 'HOLY SADNESS' OF CHRISTIANITY

It is the explicit intention of Schleiermacher's *On Religion* to defend religion in general and Christianity in particular before 'its cultured despisers'. This makes it strange, at least on first sight, to imagine Christianity, which is the ultimate form of religion according to Schleiermacher, as an expression of a 'holy sadness'—*heilige Wehmut*, as Schleiermacher describes this in his final, fifth speech (OR 119). It is a feeling not of satisfaction because one is redeemed, a feeling not of unbroken presence of the Divine liberating us exactly from this melancholic feeling of sadness, as Christianity, and religion in general disguised as 'spirituality', are currently often presented. It is, on the contrary, as Schleiermacher puts it, 'the feeling of an unsatisfied longing that is directed towards a great object and of whose infinity you are conscious', but this holy object can only be found 'intimately mixed with the profane, the sublime with the lowly and the transitory' (OR 119). In other words, the holy, sublime and eternal that are searched for can only be found and are found intermingled with what the searcher wants to leave behind. One is pointed back to what one wishes to leave. The 'holy sadness' Schleiermacher speaks of is *sadness* exactly because this longing is not satisfied and because it is clear that, as long as we are finite human beings, it will not be satisfied. It is *holy* sadness because it is a form of contact with the holy, the sublime and the eternal. Here,

Schleiermacher's way of reasoning clearly shows a kinship with the medieval tradition of negative—*apophatic*—theology, which has left so many traces in modern Christianity and Christian theology. There is, however, also a major difference. In most forms of negative theology, the denial of everything finite is the way to reach the Divine infinity. In Schleiermacher, it is clear that the finite is also what we must hold on to, not to reach the infinite, but to have an awareness of its Presence—its 'weak' Presence, Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo would probably say<sup>43</sup>—through the feeling of sadness in our situation of being bound to the finite. Schleiermacher does not want to escape the ambivalence that witnesses to a brokenness supposedly unworthy of God, as in the case of most traditions of negative theology, but to hold on to that ambivalence.<sup>44</sup>

Religion intuits the world as thoroughly ambivalent, says Schleiermacher. In comparison to other religious traditions—I am leaving aside the anti-Judaistic way in which Schleiermacher treats Judaism as a 'long since dead religion' (OR 113) immediately prior to his piece on Christianity<sup>45</sup>—Christianity is the summit of this ambivalence. Its original intuition is, writes Schleiermacher, 'none other than the intuition of the universal straining of everything finite against the unity of the whole and of the way in which the deity handles this striving, how it reconciles the enmity directed against it and sets bounds to the ever-greater distance by scattering over the whole individual points that are at once finite and infinite, at once human and divine' (OR 115). This is not an attempt to summarise ultra-briefly the essential content of Christianity, a *Kurzformel* of the Christian belief in the sense of Karl Rahner.<sup>46</sup> Rather, in Schleiermacher's view it expresses what one could call the poetics of Christianity. 'Corruption and redemption, enmity and mediation are two sides of this – that are inseparably bound to each other, and the shape of all religious material in Christianity and its whole form are determined through them' (OR 115). This has its consequences, not only in Christianity's vision of the world, but also in its view on religion.

As a religion, Christianity is not simply one, according to Schleiermacher. It is not a unified worldview to which one either belongs and submits or from which one is excluded. In a remarkable phrase, Schleiermacher writes: 'The fact that Christianity . . . treats religion itself as material for religion and thus is, as it were, raised to a higher power of religion, makes up its most distinctive character and determines its whole form' (OR 116). Here, he does not just imply that Christianity is polemical against the world, against other religions and against its own forms if they have become inadequate: Paul Tillich's 'Protestant principle'.<sup>47</sup> He is also not just implying that Christianity is a creative tradition, bound to what is realised but always going ahead of itself, finding new forms and creating new expressions—in the way the poet according to Romantic theory is not a person who has produced poetics texts,

but is the genius engaged in an ongoing process of creatively producing ever new unanticipated poetic texts. Schleiermacher does imply these things, but the central point is that being polemical is at the core and the heart of Christianity as an original intuition. Polemics against the situation in which one lives and to which one belongs is a performative movement that embodies the core of the Christian tradition.<sup>48</sup> Being Christian is to polemicalise. It treats 'religion itself as material for religion' (OR 116): it has to struggle ever again, in order to conquer what is truly Christian, even from its own realised forms.

This *heilige Wehmut*, this holy sadness of never being where one longs to be, makes Christianity, according to Schleiermacher, particularly 'worthy of adult humanity'. It makes it the exemplary case of what a century later William James would call 'twice born religion': a religion not simply ignoring or denying the ambivalences of the world, of human history and of religion itself to preach its salvific message, but accepting the situation of ambivalence as the space in which religious salvation is present.<sup>49</sup> By consequence, this Presence itself is sadly ambivalent, but at the same time this sadness becomes an ambivalent sign of divine Presence.

## II. THE HOLY AGAINST MODERNITY—RUDOLF OTTO

The German theologian and philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) is highly influenced by Schleiermacher's *On Religion*. He re-published the first edition of this book a century after it was released, making it the authentic version and suggesting that the subsequent editions became more and more estranged from Schleiermacher's original intuition. Otto made *On Religion* the classic of modern theology it is to this day.<sup>50</sup> In Otto's own classic, *Das Heilige* (*The Idea of the Holy*), Schleiermacher's view on religion as Otto saw it is almost omnipresent.<sup>51</sup> Otto uses Schleiermacher to break religion free from what he straightforwardly calls the rational. In fact, Otto polemicalises against the modern version of rationality analysed by the sociologist and philosopher Max Weber.

According to Max Weber, modernisation and rationalisation are almost equivalent. And rationalisation in the Weberian sense means that modern people tend to think about everything—their lives, social and personal realisations, acts, things in the world—in terms of means towards an end, and not as valuable in themselves. This has brought us unprecedented prosperity, as it greatly enhanced the efficiency to reach the ends we want through a clever and efficient use of means. However, it also reshaped our world into a space that is thoroughly and fundamentally profane, not just in the sense that there is nothing sacred in this world, but ultimately because there is nothing of true value. The fundamental threat to modernity is, according to Weber, that it

changes the world to an endless amount of means—literally endless: means without end and to no end.<sup>52</sup> In Otto's conception of it, the Holy is exactly the opposite of this modern meaninglessness of the world as an endless pile of means without end. The Holy is the presence of a superabundance of value, an excess of meaning, independent of all structures of meaning and representation. In the famous opening of chapter III of *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto encourages his readers to meditate upon a moment of possibly strong religious emotion and to isolate it as much as possible from everything social and ethical. This is because, Otto simply claims, the religious, like the aesthetic, breaks through every attempt to discipline it, including theories claiming to make it understandable and a means to a rational defensible end—such as social cohesion, or ethical life.

In Otto's view, religion is in fact the presence of the pre-modern—or better still: the un-modern—in modernity. The abundance of meaning present in the religious experience of the Holy is fundamental to all human life, also in modernity, but modernity tends to forget and suppress this. For Weber, the marginalising of religion is an *effect* of modernisation understood as rationalisation. For Otto, however, the marginalising of religion is the *cause* of the fact that modernity develops as a space of secularisation and disenchantment, and makes the world into an amount of valueless means. This is a threat to modernity itself in the sense that it empties modernity from the value and the meaning that enable human beings to live. Where Weber sees modern secularisation as something unavoidable and understands the growing trust people put in irrational experiences as aspects of this rationalisation—as he sees it, the experiences of sense and meaning can only be cultivated in an irrational 'niche', because rationalisation banned them from public presence<sup>53</sup>—Otto thinks it his mission to rescue religion in order to save modern society.

Schleiermacher's theory of religion as *intuition* (*Anschauung*<sup>54</sup>) makes it possible, in Otto's view, to disconnect religion from its clearly outdated forms and its traditional content that have lost credibility. This is because it makes clear that religion consists not so much in a belief with a clear content presented with authority and shared by a community, but in an expression of faith as subjective experience. It transforms the modern world one lives in from a collection of meaningless means to a meaningful and valuable whole. Religion is the subjective experience that after all the world makes sense—not in itself, but in the religious experience of the religious person.<sup>55</sup>

### III. THE ABSENT PRESENCE OF HOLINESS IN MODERNITY

Ironically, this is *not* Schleiermacher's position, although Otto reads this position into Schleiermacher's oeuvre. What Schleiermacher calls in his

*Glaubenslehre* the *schlechthinnige Abhängigkeitsgefühl*, the feeling of total dependence, is not ‘feeling’ in the psychological sense; this, in Schleiermacher’s language, would be *Empfindung. Gefühl*, ‘feeling’ in the higher sense, is the awareness to one’s relatedness to the world before the split in subject and object, and before the distinction between knowledge and will. It is the experience of oneself as being part of the universe, which is the starting point of knowing oneself, knowing the universe and acting upon it.<sup>56</sup> This ‘immediate self-consciousness’ (*unmittelbares Selbstbewusstsein*), as Schleiermacher also calls it, in which one experiences total dependence on a encompassing whole, is the core of religion.<sup>57</sup> This core can have different colour and tone. The specific Christian colour and tone are, according to Schleiermacher, what I analysed above as *heiliger Wehmut*, ‘holy sadness’, in which the holy is irreparably intermingled with the profane, but always in the process of criticising the profanation that comes with it. In the feeling of sadness, one is aware of dependence on something that is present in what is, but is in the process of breaking away from it.

Ultimately, this is a strategy towards modernity that is totally opposite to Otto’s. Otto criticises modernity for the loss of meaning and of the awareness of value. He wants to restore religious experience to counter this tendency. Schleiermacher for his part embraces this loss of feeling for the presence of meaning as truly Christian. Christianity installs the experience that everything, including Christianity itself, has to be criticised, in order to finally reach the God the Christian tradition speaks about. This God is never reached in the purity of His indisputable and infinite Presence, because we as human beings are not pure and infinite. Given this, the ongoing disillusion that this or that finite expression or effect cannot really embody God’s presence is the sign that the infinite is still hidden, and weakly present and working. To restore the fullness of meaning amidst the experience of modern meaninglessness, as the experience of the Holy does according to Otto, is impossible. Thus, the typically modern experience of what in late Romanticism is called *spleen*—the mood of which Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) was the self-appointed cartographer<sup>58</sup>—is not something that can and shall be overcome by religious experience. It is itself a religious experience.

This suggests that the specificity of Christianity is not the way it breaks away from modernity, criticising it or developing alternatives to it. This is still the common understanding, both among theologians and believers who consider themselves progressives and liberals and those who consider themselves conservatives and orthodox, of the supposed ‘critical’ aspect of the Christian tradition. Schleiermacher’s approach, however, suggest that the specificity of Christianity is to be located in the way it performs modernity: the typical experience of not being at home and the typical modern gesture of not belonging where one belongs. Our world is not our

world, what is unavoidably the space we live in is not the place where we belong, but exactly this not-belonging is where we belong. It is the space in which we are at home. In my view, a truly modern theology is the systematic exploration of what this could imply. Such an exploration would entail both—empirical and descriptive—research on how people in fact perform this homelessness and deal with it, and hermeneutical research and systematic debate on how we could and should perform it to be both in continuity with the Christian tradition and true to the concrete features of contemporary experience.

*Schleiermacher and Schillebeeckx*

Without reference to Schleiermacher, such a project is conceived and partially performed in the last three decades of the last century by the Flemish-Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx.<sup>59</sup> To understand the then strong movement of protest against the *status quo* not only in line with modernity's strive for freedom and autonomy for as many people as possible, but also in line with the Christian tradition, Schillebeeckx introduces the concept of '(negative) contrast experience'.<sup>60</sup> A '(negative) contrast experience' is an experience in which one knows that in the actual situation things are not the way they should be. Protest is required, not because an individual or a collective wants to leave its traces in world history, but by the injustice of the situation. At the same time, according to Schillebeeckx's analyses of it, in the 'contrast experience' and in the protest in which it results, a direction and a horizon are present, an intuitive vision of a situation, which we can wholeheartedly endorse as being good. This protest and this perspective do not come from the Christian tradition, but are present in the common reality in which people with different views and kinds of behavior 'live and move and have their being' (cf. Acts 19: 28). All kinds of people have 'contrast experiences' all the time—Schillebeeckx even claims that it is a universal human experience—but it is the Christian tradition that sees in the experience that reality contrasts with the way it should be, and in the action that results from it, a hidden and weak presence of God's promise of a future in which the 'good life' is real. This is the situation that Jesus called 'Kingdom of God' or 'Kingdom of Heaven', according to the Synoptic Gospels.

As a consequence Schleiermacher's and Schillebeeckx's way of doing theology is not locked up in the subject, as is most modern theology, restricting the sacred to the limited space modernity leaves open to cultivate meaning and sense: individual or collective religious subjectivity. Schleiermacher and Schillebeeckx reveal the modern situation itself as religiously and theologically significant. Therefore, not just reading the sources of one's own tradition, but also analysing the contemporary situation is part of the theologian's task. This makes theology fully a partner in the

debates on how to analyse and evaluate the contemporary situation, what is at stake in it and how we should deal with it.<sup>61</sup> It breaks away from the eternal temptation of religious traditions to hold on to the presumption that fundamentally all important questions are already answered and holding on to the treasures of one's past is ultimately all that is needed. Without the debate, without the questions in the debate and the confrontations with the other who attempts to answer them, we do not yet know what the Christian tradition is and is saying. The tradition grows from new contrast experiences, from new interpretations of the religious heritage they make possible and from new experiences with the world that are opened up by these interpretations.<sup>62</sup>

#### IV. MELANCHOLY OR OPTIMISM?

Nevertheless, for Schillebeeckx the Christian tradition adds something to the situation. According to Schleiermacher, the Christian tradition has its own logic, which should be related to the common logic of all rational and cultured individuals. What is proper to Christianity is to be found in the way the Church, the community confessing the Christian belief, thinks about itself.<sup>63</sup> According to Schillebeeckx, the Christian tradition confesses a trust in the deep structure of contrast experience as a typically modern experience. It does not add this deep structure, but Christians entrust themselves to the deep structure, confessing to its trustworthiness. Their tradition teaches them to believe that the trust in the future, which the protest against an unjust situation requires, is justified. This means that the identification with the perspective on the 'good life' present in the protest is realistic, ultimately more realistic than entrusting oneself to the way things are. This visionary, performative logic is clearly articulated in the Psalms and it is what the *kerygma* preaching the resurrection of the Crucified One means, according to Schillebeeckx. God's perspective, present in the Creation from the beginning and affirmed in Jesus' life of giving the blind their sight again, making the lame walk, cleaning the lepers, letting the deaf hear, raising up the dead and preaching good news to the poor (Matthew 11: 5; Luke 4: 18–19; cf. Isaiah 29: 18; 35: 5; 61: 1), is in the end stronger than death and destruction.<sup>64</sup>

This gives Schillebeeckx's theology ultimately an optimistic, not a melancholic character. This is not simply due to the differences in *Zeitgeist* between the final year of the eighteenth century and the last decennia of the twentieth, and between the different assessments of modernity in which these result. Schillebeeckx's view is founded in the Christian confession of God as creator and redeemer, who has shown his ultimate face in the history of Jesus. From there he stresses, with the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the hope that is present in the modern, critical understanding and

styling of life and thought.<sup>65</sup> Schleiermacher stresses the melancholy of modernity that comes from the experience that the ultimate happiness we expect and hope for is never fully present. For him, performing Christianity is performing this melancholy. Schillebeeckx argues that this end is present in a *sacramental* way: in performances of fragmented, finite signs of real, graceful liberation. He sees being faithful to the Christian tradition as a way of performing modern life as the space were these signs are present and call for an answer.

All this is just another way of saying that how to perform modernity is a theological issue far from settled. Here, I just wanted to argue that it is the major theological issue in modern culture. To neglect and avoid it means to condemn the Christian tradition to imprisonment in nostalgic reminiscence of better times definitively gone, or in resentment to the loss of power—which is in fact nostalgia turned militant.<sup>66</sup> Both ultimately deny God as creator and sustainer of the universe and its history.

*Department for Religious Studies and Theology, University of Tilburg,  
The Netherlands*  
*E.P.N.M.Borgman@uvt.nl*

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- \* We use throughout this triptych the edition by Richard Crouter: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, ed. and trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Abbreviated as OR. This edition uses, as is common practice nowadays, the first text of the *Speeches* dating from 1799. On this see also the third part of the triptych, section II.
- <sup>1</sup> For an insightful survey see Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1860. The legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- <sup>2</sup> In his excellent monography on Schleiermacher, Crouter claims that the easily missed ‘rich political analysis of political life of its [Schleiermacher’s OR] third and fourth speech presents a theory of modernity as inimicable to the book’s claims about religion.’ See Richard Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 46. The reference to Medusa can be found in the fourth speech, where Schleiermacher warns of the problematic intertwining of political and religious institutions: OR 86. For another illuminating analysis of the intricate relation between religion and politics in Early Romanticism, see the last chapter in Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative. The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003; pbk. 2006), pp. 171–186 (‘Religion and Politics in *Frühromantik*’).
- <sup>3</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (New York: SUNY 1988), p. xxii.
- <sup>4</sup> My italics.
- <sup>5</sup> Novalis, *Werke, Tagebücher und Briefe Friedrich von Hardenberghs*, Hans-Joachim Mähl and

Richard Samuel (ed.) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), pp. 438–39, quotation p. 438. My translation.

- <sup>6</sup> See among other books and articles on Schleiermacher and the *Frühromantik*: Manfred Frank (ed.), *Friedrich Schleiermacher – Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977); Manfred Frank, *Das Individuelle Allgemeine. Textstrukturierung und Textinterpretation nach Schleiermacher* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977); Manfred Frank, 'The Text and Its style. Schleiermacher's Hermeneutic Theory of Language', *Boundary 2* 11 (Spring 1983) 11–28. For the importance of Schleiermacher's New Testament exegesis for his growing insight into the materiality and heterogeneity of texts and therefore for the necessary critical dimension within the hermeneutical process, see also Stefan Weidner, 'Noch einmal Hermeneutik und Kritik', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 80 (2007), 1, 21–46.
- <sup>7</sup> In *The Romantic Imperative* (see above, note 2) Frederick C. Beiser reconstructs the Early Romantics' search for a dialectical synthesis between the antithetical philosophies of Fichte (which stands for activism, radical subjectivity, freedom, humanism) and Spinoza (standing for pantheism, determinism and necessity, religion, quietism, etc.); the basis of this synthesis was laid by Herder's vitalistic, organic reinterpretation of Spinoza, which integrated Fichte within the Spinozist system (as reformulated by Herder and the other Romantics): 'Fichte was indeed right in placing self-consciousness at the center of all things, as the basis to explain all nature, for self-consciousness is the purpose of nature, the highest degree of organization and development of *all* its living powers. Where Fichte went astray, however, was in interpreting the *final* cause as a *first* cause' (p. 184). Manfred Frank, 'The Text and Its Style' (see above note 6), p. 16.
- <sup>8</sup> 'To want to have speculation and praxis without religion is rash arrogance. It is insolent enmity against the gods; it is the unholy sense of Prometheus, who cowardly stole what in calm certainty he would have been able to ask for and to expect. Man has merely stolen the feeling of his infinity and godlikeness, and as an unjust possession it cannot thrive for him if he is also conscious of his limitedness, the contingency of his whole form, the silence disappearance of his whole existence in the immeasurable' (OR 23).
- <sup>9</sup> On the semantics of *Wechselwirkung* in German Idealism and in Schleiermacher in particular, see Sarah Schmidt, *Die Konstruktion des Endlichen. Schleiermachers Philosophie der Wechselwirkung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005). On Heidegger's tracing back the meaning of *Setzung* (positing) to the original Greek meaning of Thesis, i.e. donation (gift, *Gabe*) in his *On the Origin of the Work of Art*, see Rodolphe Gasché, 'Setzung and Übersetzung: Notes on Paul de Man', *Diacritics* 11 (Winter 1981), 36–57, 54.
- <sup>10</sup> See on this theme of 'desperate affirmation' within the context of a discussion on the meaning of performativity also E. Borgman, L. ten Kate, B. Philipsen, 'Desperate Affirmation: On the Aporetic Performativity of *Memoria* and Testimony, in the Light of W.G. Sebald's Story 'Max Ferber' – with a Theological Response', in *Literature and Theology* 19(3) (2005) 200–220.
- <sup>11</sup> 'Wenn man aber jemand *zum Menschen* bilden will, das kömmt mir grade so vor, als wenn einer sagte, er gebe Stunden in der Gottähnlichkeit. Die Menschheit lässt sich nicht inokulieren, und die Tugend lässt sich nicht lehren und lernen, ausser durch Freundschaft und Liebe mit tüchtigen und wahren Menschen und durch Umgang mit uns selbst, mit den Göttern in uns.' Friedrich Schlegel, 'Über die Philosophie. An Dorothea', in *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (KSA), Band 8 (München/Paderborn/Wien: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh; Zürich: Thomas, 1975), pp. 44–45.

- <sup>12</sup> 'Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image', in Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 1–17.
- <sup>13</sup> Inoculation in its medical sense was practiced in Germany for the first time in the middle of the 18th century.
- <sup>14</sup> Schlegel, KSA, Band 8, 315.
- <sup>15</sup> It would take another paper to investigate whether there is a logical continuity between Schlegel's early poetical theory and his later engagement for Metternich.
- <sup>16</sup> See above, note 2.
- <sup>17</sup> See Ernst Müller, 'Religion als "Kunst ohne Kunstwerk"'. Schleiermacher 'Über die Religion', in Wolfgang Braungart, Gotthard Fuchs, Manfred Koch (eds.), *Ästhetische and religiöse Erfahrungen der Jahrhundertwenden. I: um 1800* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997).
- <sup>18</sup> See above, note 8.
- <sup>19</sup> For an extensive elaboration of this idea, see also Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997; orig. French 1993).
- <sup>20</sup> 'He/she who represents something'.
- <sup>21</sup> 'Represented'.
- <sup>22</sup> On Otto's indebtedness to Schleiermacher and his plea for rereading and reevaluating the 1799 edition, see the third part of this triptych, esp. Section II. Nowadays, this first edition is seen by most scholars as the central text again.
- <sup>23</sup> The 'universe' as Schleiermacher uses the term is not so much the object of intuition ('intuition of the universe'), but its movement proper—its space as a trace traversing Modernity, interrupting it, challenging it, etc. Universe is not a realm but a force, not a world separate from, e.g. the individual world, or the profane world, but a trace that is suddenly felt, always as and in a 'moment' (OR 31/32), only to retreat again into the imperceptible.
- <sup>24</sup> Indeed, even inactivity is seen by Schleiermacher as a 'drive', for it has nothing to do with leisure time or even vanity. It pinpoints a modality of existence that opposes activity (thinking, doing, reasoning and working) in the narrow, modern sense; this modality of inactivity which is religion may well be very active in a wider sense.
- <sup>25</sup> The term 'resolution' is Crouter's. It seems to me that the 'mediation' Schleiermacher looks for is something different, which would render Crouter's choice ('resolution') in his Introduction problematic.
- <sup>26</sup> See above, note 24.
- <sup>27</sup> The way Schleiermacher passionately tries to avoid a reduction of religion to ethics forms the core of his criticism of Kant's theory of religion, as laid out in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1795), a book to which *On Religion* obviously is an implicit response. The plea against a reductionist, 'ethicizing' approach to religion is also present in his discussion with his audience: the direct addressees of the speeches, i.e. the Early Romanticists.
- <sup>28</sup> See above, Section I of this second part.
- <sup>29</sup> A small sidestep to etymology, inspired by the philosophy of deconstruction and its microscopic love for words and their inexplicable history: this double bind of intuition is actually better represented in the English word than in the German original, *Anschaung*. Intuition comes from the Latin verb *intueri*, meaning to watch, to behold, also in the more figurative sense of to contemplate. It is one of these strange verbs that only Latin grammar seems to know, and that express an activity in the passive mode; *intueor* would be rendered not as 'I behold' but as 'I am beheld beholding' or something equivalent. The beholding is defined here as a being beheld (by who? by the other? by the beholder him/herself?), and vice versa. In the end, the opposition of activity versus passivity is undermined by a strategy of equation: right *in* performing the verbal act ('to behold') the act is being performed on me. In other words, *intueor* evokes an action in the passive mode, as well as a 'passion' in the active mode. Moreover, *intueri* in turn comes from *tueri*, meaning to watch, to

behold and to contemplate as well, but which has a far more active meaning too, namely to protect, to guard, hence to feed, to take care of. From this unexpected meaning derives the English 'tutor', 'tutorial', 'tutorship'. So we might well risk the conclusion that intuition, because of its grammatical (an active/passive verb) and semantic source (beholding as receiving *and* maintaining something, even representing, recreating, feeding it), is a striking rephrasing of the performative character of *Darstellung*.

<sup>30</sup> Within the limitations of this article, it is impossible to explore the important question of how the concept of intuition functions in Schleiermacher's later works, e.g. the later editions of the speeches and the *Glaubenslehre*. Clearly, a comparison between the complex of feeling/image/intuition, as this dominates *On Religion*, and the later concept of the *schlechthinnige Abhängigkeitsgefühl*, would be a first priority here. See for a critical view on the meaning of the latter concept also the third part of this triptych, Section III.

<sup>31</sup> Place/space as well as time: the spatial-temporal mode is vital to the way intuition is thought.

<sup>32</sup> I will follow common practice and refer to the original German 1787 edition of this work (the so-called B-edition): *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, J. Timmermann (ed.) (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Kant does not distinguish between *Gefühl* and *Empfindung*, as Schleiermacher does (see on this the third part of this triptych, Section III). However, Schleiermacher takes Kant's concept of *Empfindung* in relation to *Anschauung*, and simply equates Kant's *Empfindung* with what Schleiermacher designates as feeling (*Gefühl*) as opposed to *Empfindung*.

<sup>34</sup> The image that intuition creates is, strangely enough, simultaneously that on which intuition is dependent: in this interplay it remains undecided which comes first. Important for Kant—and for Schleiermacher—is only the observation

that no immediate knowledge nor feeling of reality (the world, the universe) is possible. It is not enough to say that one intuits the universe; for what is intuited is always an image of the universe, and the complexity of the 'gesture', the 'event' of intuition structuring our knowledge, consists in the fact that this image is given to us by the universe *and* created by us in response to (the feeling of) the universe.

<sup>35</sup> Translation Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan 1970).

<sup>36</sup> See on the importance of this concept of *Einbildungskraft* in the Early Romanticist movement also the first part of this triptych, Section I.

<sup>37</sup> In a note to the text of *On Religion*, Crouter formulates the typical way in which Schleiermacher 'borrows' the concept of intuition from Kant and reshapes it partially, as follows: 'The universality, necessity, independence and nonconceptual nature of Schleiermacher's notion of intuition are commensurate with Kant's use of intuition, even if Schleiermacher's broad, all-encompassing notion of intuition and its intimate association with religion are notably unlike Kant' (OR 25, note).

<sup>38</sup> In this sense, Schleiermacher's work can be located 'between Enlightenment and Romanticism'; the historical and textual details of this double relation are analysed beautifully by Richard Crouter in his *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism*.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. for instance B.A. Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church: Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 1984); K. Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology*, (London: Collins, 1987).

<sup>40</sup> For this understanding of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, cf. Manfred Frank, 'Einleitung des Herausgebers', in Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik, mit einem Anhang sprachphilosophischer Texte Schleiermachers*, M. Frank (ed.) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 1–68;

- M. Frank, *Das individuelle Allgemeine: Textstrukturierung und -interpretation nach Schleiermacher* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977). On Schleiermacher's hermeneutics and Frank's study of it see also the first part of this triptych, Section II.
- <sup>41</sup> Michel Foucault, *Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?*, in *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 562–578, esp. 568–570. For a critical confrontation between Schleiermacher and Foucault, see Craig C. Stein, *Schleiermacher's Construction of the Subject in the Introduction to The Christian Faith: In Light of M. Foucault's Critique of Modern Knowledge*, (Lewiston: Mellen, 2001).
- <sup>42</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der Haft*, Neuausgabe, E. Bethge (ed.) (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1977), pp. 392–394.
- <sup>43</sup> Gianni Vattimo's view on religion seems clearly to be influenced by Schleiermacher; see esp. 'La trace de la trace', in *La religion: Séminaire de Capri*, Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (eds.) (Paris: Seuil, 1996), pp. 87–104. Vattimo wrote extensively on Schleiermacher in *Schleiermacher, filosofo dell'interpretazione* (Milan: Mursia, 1968).
- <sup>44</sup> For a philosophical evaluation of the traditions of negative theology and their modern 'legacy', see also Ilse N. Bulhof, Laurens ten Kate (eds.), *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).
- <sup>45</sup> Crouter gives the biographical references to the discussion about Schleiermacher's position *vis-à-vis* Judaism and the Jews in OR 113, note.
- <sup>46</sup> Cf. esp. Karl Rahner, 'Die Forderung nach einer "Kurzformel" des christlichen Glaubens', in *Schriften zur Theologie* 8 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1967), pp. 153–164; Karl Rahner, 'Reflexionen zur Problematik einer Kurzformel des Glaubens', in *Schriften zur Theologie* 9 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1970), pp. 242–256.
- <sup>47</sup> Cf. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 161–181.
- <sup>48</sup> For the meaning of 'performative' here, cf. the preceding parts of this triptych.
- <sup>49</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1985; orig. 1902), p. 139; 289; 385, note 2.
- <sup>50</sup> Otto's edition, with his introduction, dating from 1899, was reprinted until 1991 in a popular cheap paperback edition (Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht). In its introduction Otto explains why in his view *On Religion* is still an important book, thus influencing generations of general readers. Cf. also Otto 'Der neue Aufbruch des Sensus Numinis bei Schleiermacher' (1903), in: id., *Sünde und Urschuld, und andere Aufsätze zur Theologie*, München: C. H. Beck 1932, pp. 123–139.
- <sup>51</sup> Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier 1917); English transl. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (New York: Galaxy Book 1958 (1923)). For Otto's thought on the Holy, cf. T.A. Gooch, *The Numinous and Modernity: An Interpretation of Rudolf Otto's Philosophy of Religion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000); S. Ballard, *Rudolf Otto and the Synthesis of the Rational and the Non-rational in the Idea of the Holy: Some Encounters in Theory and Practice*, (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2000).
- <sup>52</sup> Max Weber, 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus' (1904–05), in: id., *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr 1988), pp. 17–206, here 203–206.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>54</sup> See on this also the second part of this triptych, Section II–IV.
- <sup>55</sup> Cf. A. Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

- <sup>56</sup> On the meaning of feeling in OR, and Kant's influence on Schleiermacher in this respect, see also the second part of this triptych, esp. Section II–IV.
- <sup>57</sup> Vgl. Shin-Hann Choi, Vermitteltes und unmittelbares Selbstbewusstsein: Zum Verhältnis von Philosophie und Religion bei Hegel und Schleiermacher (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1991), pp. 117–219.
- <sup>58</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Le spleen de Paris: Petits poèmes en prose* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1979; first published in 1869). Cf. S. Murphy, *Logiques du dernier Baudelaire: Lectures du 'Spleen de Paris'* (Paris: Champion, 2003); M.C. Scott, *Baudelaire's Le spleen de Paris: Shifting perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
- <sup>59</sup> For the way Schillebeeckx's project is rooted in the history of Catholic theology in the twentieth century, and especially builds on the intuitions of Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990), see my *Edward Schillebeeckx: a Theologian in his History. I: A Catholic Theology of Culture (1914–1965)* (London/New York: Continuum, 2003).
- <sup>60</sup> Most articles in which Schillebeeckx developed the concept of 'contrast experience' are not translated. See on this K.A. McManus, *Unbroken Communion: The Place and Meaning of Suffering in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 26–27; 95–104; 127–135; E. Borgman, 'Theology as the Art of Liberation: Edward Schillebeeckx's Response to the Theologies of the EAT-WOT', *Exchange* 32 (2003) 98–108; A. Rego, *Suffering and Salvation: The Salvific Meaning of Suffering in the Later Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), pp. 169–177.
- <sup>61</sup> Both Schleiermacher and Schillebeeckx discussed the idea of the university and the practical consequences following from it. For Schleiermacher, see T.A. Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For Schillebeeckx, see *Katholieke Universiteit? Kritische reflectie over eigen karakter en functie van de Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen*, Edward Schillebeeckx et al. (Bussum: Paul Brand, 1971); Edward Schillebeeckx, 'Het project Katholieke Universiteit: Geen stok om te slaan maar een staf om te gaan', in *Democratisering en identiteit: Beschouwingen over de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen 1968–1983* (Baarn: Gooi & Sticht, 1983), pp. 11–23. For an impression of his views in English, see his 'Problems and Promise', in N.G. McCluskey (ed.), *The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal* (London: Notre Dame, 1970), pp. 58–73.
- <sup>62</sup> This is the key point of his *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).
- <sup>63</sup> This is his position in *Der christliche Glaube* from 1821–1822, which has as its subtitle *...nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (... presented in cohesion according to the principles of the evangelical Church).
- <sup>64</sup> See E. Schillebeeckx, 'I Believe in Jesus of Nazareth', in *Interim Report on the Books Jesus & Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 125–139.
- <sup>65</sup> This—I argue—is still the most fruitful approach to the modern world, and has nothing to do with naïve liberal optimism, as is currently often suggested. Cf. my 'The Rediscovery of Truth as a Religious Category: The Enduring Legacy of the Second Vatican Council', in *Bulletin ET: Journal for Theology in Europe* 17 (2) (2006) 53–66.
- <sup>66</sup> This nostalgia turned militant is dominant in Joseph Ratzinger's critique of contemporary culture. Cf. his *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (New York: Crossroad Press, 2005); J. Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006); J. Ratzinger and M. Pera. *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), pp. 51–80; J. Ratzinger and J. Habermas, *The Dialectic of Secularism: On Reason and Religion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007).