The Romantic Conception of Life

Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe

Robert J. Richards

Contents

Illustrations xiii Acknowledgments xv Prologue xvii

1

Introduction: A Most Happy Encounter

	The Historical Meaning of Naturphilosophie and Romantic Biology 6	
	Part One	
	The Early Romantic Movement in Literature,	
	Philosophy, and Science	
2	The Early Romantic Movement	17
-	Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel 23	-,
	Novalis: The Romantic Personality 25	
	Caroline Böhmer and the Mainz Revolution 36	
	The Schlegels in Jena: The Break with Schiller and the Politics	
	of Romanticism 45	
	Fichte, the Philosopher of Freedom 59	
	The Salons of Berlin 91	
	Friedrich Schleiermacher: The Poetics and Erotics of Religion 94	
	Friedrich Schlegel's Aesthetic Theory 105	
3	Schelling: The Poetry of Nature	114
7	Schelling's Early Life 116	
	Naturphilosophie 128	
	Schelling in Jena 147	
	Transcendental Idealism and Poetic Construction 151	
	Schelling's Affair with Caroline and the Tragedy of Auguste 166	
	Schelling's Identity Philosophy 176	
4	Denouement: Farewell to Jena	193
·	The Meaning of Romanticism 199	,,
	Part Two	
	Scientific Foundations of the	
		
	ROMANTIC CONCEPTION OF LIFE	
5	Early Theories of Development: Blumenbach and Kant	207
	Embryology and Theories of Descent in the Seventeenth and	
	Eighteenth Centuries 211	

Co	NI T	EN	TTO
	I V	C D	123

x		Contents
	Blumenbach's Theory of the Bildungstrieb 216 Kanı's Theory of Biological Explanation 229	
6	Kielmeyer and the Organic Powers of Nature Lecture on Organic Forces 241 Theory of Species Origin and Transformation 246 Critique of Kant and the Idealists 248	238
7	Johann Christian Reil's Romantic Theories of Life and Mind, or Rhapsodies on a Cat-Piano Early Training and Practice 253 Lebenskraft 255 Studies of Mental Illness 261 The Romantic Movement in Halle 273 The Romantic Naturphilosoph 278 Final Years: War and Romance 282	252
8	Schelling's Dynamic Evolutionism Biological Treatises 291 Critical Analysis of the Biological Theories of Contemporaries 292 Nature as a Dynamically Shifting Balance of Forces 294 Theory of Dynamic Evolution 298	289
9	Conclusion: Mechanism, Teleology, and Evolution Appendix: Theories of Irritability, Sensibility, and Vital Force from Haller to Humboldt 313	307
	Part Three Goethe, a Genius for Poetry, Morphology, and Women	
10	The Erotic Authority of Nature Growing Up in Frankfurt 330 University Education 334 The Law, Herder, and Lotte 339 The Weimar Councillor and the Frustrated Lover 355 The Science of Goethe's First Weimar Period 365 The Unity of Biological Nature: Goethe's Discovery of the Zwischenktefer in Human Beings 367 The Impact of Spinoza 376 Goethe's Italian Journey: Art, Nature, and the Female 382 Conclusion 404	325
11	Goethe's Scientific Revolution Homecoming 409 The Foundations of Morphology 413	407

Contents xi

	Friendship with Schiller and Induction into the Kantian Philosophy 421	
	The Science of Morphology 434	
	The Romantic Circle and Schelling 457	
	Zur Morphologie 471	
	The Vertebral Theory of the Skull: Goethe's Dispute with Oken and the Truth of Memory 491	
12	Conclusion: The History of a Life in Art and Science	503
	Part Four	
	Epilogue	
13	The Romantic Conception of Life	511
14	Darwin's Romantic Biology	514
_	The Romantic Movement 516	
	Darwin's Romantic Conception of Nature 522	
	Romantic Nature in the Origin of Species 526	
	Darwin's Theory of Morals 540	
	Conclusion 552	
	Bibliography 555	

Index 573