



Schleiermacher's *Geselligkeit*, Henriette Herz, and the 'Convivial Turn'

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Across disciplines and particularly in the field of migration studies, it has become quite popular in recent years to examine constellations of human togetherness and cohabitation through the prism of conviviality. The “convivial turn” grew out of the shortcomings critics identified in conceptualisations of terms such as cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism or diversity, and many began to regard the semantics of conviviality and its theoretical capaciousness as a productive complement or alternative to the normative and essentialist categories associated with concepts like cosmopolitanism.¹ While the primary focus of the contributions collected in this volume is centered on the role of conviviality with regard to contemporary themes and questions, I take a look back and investigate a prominent late eighteenth-century conception and use of the term. Inspired by his regular visits to social gatherings organised by Henriette Herz (1764–1847), one of Berlin's most prominent salonière at that time, the German philosopher and theologian Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher (1768–1834) contributed

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with his “Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen Betragens” [“Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct”] (1799) a principal theory of conviviality that bears interesting and unexplored resemblances to today’s conceptions.²

I bring Schleiermacher’s essay into dialogue with Magdalena Nowicka’s and Tilmann Heil’s “On the analytic and normative dimensions of conviviality and cosmopolitanism”, and by working out common concerns of an eighteenth- and a twenty-first-century theorisation of conviviality, I seek to bring into view a shared historical and cross-disciplinary aspect of this term that has sparked such contested critical debates.³ Both texts, I argue, develop a non-teleological understanding of conviviality that is productive not only for research in contemporary migration studies but also for developing a more nuanced perspective on a unique historical moment in late eighteenth-century Berlin when gatherings at Jewish homes instigated crossings of religious boundaries, social hierarchies and gender roles.

More specifically, I suggest that this dual theoretical focus on the past and present helps unlock facets of Henriette Herz’ writings that otherwise would be overlooked or blended into overarching narratives of acculturation and conversion. Looked at through the lens of Schleiermacher’s definition of conviviality as underwritten by “Zwecklosigkeit” [lack of purpose] and Nowicka’s “analytic conviviality”, Herz’ social engagements appear as brief sparks, sometimes full of potential to unsettle social relations or as moments of shock and surprise that open unexpected possibilities or inspire her to think what had seemed unthinkable.

This brief period when women like Henriette Herz opened their houses to highly diverse groups of people would have been unthinkable without the rise of the Haskalah (from the Hebrew *sekhel*, “reason”, or “intellect”)⁴ or Jewish Enlightenment. With the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) at the center, this time witnessed a broad range of new encounters between Jewish and German culture, and Berlin was the place where the Maskilim, as enlightened Jews referred to each other, instigated a new period in the history of Judaism. Inspired by the tenets of the Enlightenment, and its propagation of reason and religious tolerance, orthodox positions and the rabbinical elite’s monopoly on the exegesis of the Torah came under attack. Publications such as Mendelssohn’s translation of the Pentateuch “brought the sacred language of the synagogue out into the open air of an enlightened public sphere”, propagating that being observant and committed to the Jewish faith may coexist with being a secular citizen of the state.⁵ Mendelssohn and his generation used the contemporary language of reason, humanism, and tolerance to fight discrimination and

exclusion of Berlin's Jewish community from public life and reinterpreted the foundations of their faith through the lens of the enlightened discourse they found themselves inhabiting and engaging. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), famously, created with his drama *Nathan der Weise* [Nathan the Wise] (1779) a lasting memorial for Mendelssohn's commitment to the fostering of a trans-confessional dialogue and the overcoming of religious differences.

Besides journals and book publications, venues of sociability such as bookshops, reading societies, private homes, and various clubs powered the dissemination of these intellectuals' revolutionary take on the theme of Jewish emancipation and religious renewal, and the convivial activities organised by Jewish women played thereby a key role: Rahel Levin Varnhagen (1771–1833), Dorothea Mendelssohn Veit Schlegel (1764–1839), Sarah Itzig (1761–1854), and Henriette Herz, many of them the wives, sisters, and daughters of the Maskilim, opened their houses for formal and informal social gatherings, bringing together people from various social and cultural backgrounds and creating sites crucial for the exchange and proliferation of enlightened ideas: "Men and women, Jews and Christians, noblemen and commoners, professors, poets, scientists and merchants mingled in private houses to discuss art, politics, literature and the sciences, but also to cultivate friendships and love affairs. Jewish women were central to the creation of this new milieu (...)".⁶ Clark's acknowledgement of these private social gatherings as important vehicles for the Haskalah's formation and direction stands out as an exception in the scholarly literature focused on enlightened Judaism.

In *The Jewish Enlightenment*, Feiner turns to Rahel Varnhagen as an example of the group of alienated "young Jews, who aspired to be accepted by the high bourgeois society and break all ties to their Jewish origins".⁷ He introduces the private get-togethers at Henriette Herz' and Dorothea Mendelssohn's homes as social hubs for Berlin's Romantic scene with Schleiermacher and the brothers August and Friedrich Schlegel at the centre but not as nodal points of the Haskalah.⁸ In Moshe's *Haskalah and Beyond: The Reception of Hebrew Enlightenment and the Emergence of Haskalah Judaism* these women are not mentioned at all.⁹ As Schulte has pointed out, women are not recognised as enlightened Jewesses, as Maskila or, in the plural, as Maskilot whose private investment in conviviality is considered as an articulation of and contribution to the Haskalah movement. To date, most of the research on the writings and social activities

of Jewish women happens in the field of *Germanistik* and in studies of Romanticism.¹⁰

While the reasons for this lack of recognition of the Haskalah's female members are complex, the above quote from Feiner's study points to the main cause: Whatever networks and influences Henriette Herz, Rahel Varnhagen, and other Jewish women with backgrounds and interests similar to theirs might have had at the time, in retrospect their activities are interpreted as having paved a gradual road towards assimilation, culminating in baptism and conversion.¹¹ In "A Dream of Living Together: Jewish Women in Berlin Around 1800", Hahn similarly resumes:

Sooner or later, all the women we will be considering here took the same course, with the exception of the Itzig daughters. It is readily apparent under which pressure Jewish upper-middle class society stood, not merely to acculturate but also to leave behind their distinctive history, culture, and faith. The opening of Jewish houses as an attempt at a common life between Christians and Jews, the rich social life that these women developed, remains—in retrospect—an episode.¹²

To be sure, there is no dispute regarding the turns many of these women's lives took, following this brief yet vibrant period of trans-confessional sociality. But rather than considering their contributions to the Haskalah teleologically, meaning always with an eye towards subsequent conversions or even, as some critics have it, as early indications of an always already malformed relationship between German and Jewish culture, foreshadowing the terrors of the mid-twentieth century, I suggest analysing the experiences they record in letters, billets, and autobiographical writings on their own terms and as expressions of enlightenment thinking in practice.¹³

In the critical literature on Berlin's Jewish salons, the Herz couple's home occupies a distinct status because both partners organised social gatherings for different circles of people in adjacent rooms of the house, and because their so-called "Doppelsalon" is considered the period's original one.¹⁴ Like her father Benjamin de Lemos (1711–1789), her husband Marcus Herz (1747–1803) was a maskil and a doctor. He was Moses Mendelssohn's student and friend and studied with Immanuel Kant in Königsberg before coming to Berlin. By the time his significantly younger wife Henriette joined him in his social activities, his home was already a reputable address for researchers and intellectuals interested in hearing the host lecture on physics and medicine. Friedrich Wilhelms University had not

yet been founded, and meetings such as those at Marcus Herz' home were important venues for the proliferation and exchange over research proceedings. This cursory glance at the format of these meetings and the topics covered should suffice for calling into question the adequacy of labelling the gatherings at the Herz house "salon" or even "Doppelsalon" ["double salon"].

The term raises high-flown associations yet is misleading when considering the concrete historical situation of Berlin's Jewish community and of women especially. Their areas of interaction and spheres of influence were by no means comparable to those of, say, French aristocratic women or upper middle-class English women.¹⁵ Moreover, the hosts never actually used the term themselves to refer to their activities. Reviewing letters, billets, private correspondences, and biographical memories, Lund finds around five different names the two hosts and their guests used to refer to social events and "salon" is not one of them.¹⁶ In the light of such findings, the contributors to the recently published volume *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz (1764–1847)* suggest replacing the term by more descriptive ones such as "convivial formations".¹⁷

This emphasis the latest criticism places on the openness and informal nature of the social events the Herzens hosted or attended resonates with the experiences Henriette's close friend Schleiermacher had during his visits at her house. His essay "Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct" grew out of his regular visits between 1797 and 1802.¹⁸ The fragment was published anonymously in the February issue of the *Berlinisches Archiv der Zeit und ihres Geschmacks* in 1799, and he had planned to complete and publish his text in a future issue yet that never happened. The fragment we have today theorises conviviality or sociability—I use both terms here as synonymous translations of the German "Geselligkeit"—from two vantage points. While the essay's first section develops a set of general assumptions of "freie Geselligkeit" ["free sociability"], the second and longer part details formats and laws for free social interaction in "wirkliche[n] Gesellschaften" (260) ["specific and actual societies", 25]. The rules and regulations for convivial interaction articulated here provide interesting insights into the dynamics of the social world of his time in Berlin, yet for the purpose of unlocking moments of fresh and unconventional thinking in Henriette Herz' writing and for drawing out points of connection between Schleiermacher and contemporary debates on conviviality, the essay's first part is a more productive point of reference.

The essay's opening paragraphs untether conviviality from any purposes:

One of the first and noblest needs insisted upon by all cultured persons is a free sociability that is neither tied to nor determined by any external purpose. Whoever is merely tossed to and fro between the cares of domestic life and the affairs of public life approaches the higher aim of human existence even more slowly the more faithfully one repeats this path. A profession banishes the activity of the mind to a narrow sphere; no matter how noble and praiseworthy it may be, its effect and outlook on the world will always be tied to a single point of view. The highest and most complex of professions, therefore, like the simplest and lowest, produce one-sidedness and limitation. Domestic life places us in contact with only a few individuals and always with the same ones. (20)¹⁹

According to Schleiermacher, the liberating potential of conviviality can unfold only when individuals detach themselves mentally from their professional and domestic responsibilities and objectives. Such acts of distancing oneself are crucial because regardless of how reputable and intellectually stimulating one's engagements might seem, they are per definition specialised and thereby constrict and limit the workings of the mind. Even activities such as dancing inhibit rather than nurture conviviality in Schleiermacher's eyes because a dancer's attention is primarily focused on one person rather than the group (see 259). Similarly, lectures or theatre performances do not actually promote free conviviality but rather various forms of "gebundene Geselligkeit" (258) ["constrained sociality"]. Because such events are underwritten by pedagogical, moral or other objectives and are directed at forming and addressing the audience in one way or another, they countermand free conviviality and fail setting in motion a "frei[es] Spiel" (254) ["free play", 21] of their mental powers. It is this idea of creating a convivial space conducive to setting in motion a free play of the participants' trains of thinking that constitutes one of the most forward-looking and productive aspects of Schleiermacher's theory.

Why, however, one might ask, is a detachment of conviviality from any confines and normative restrictions of such importance to Schleiermacher? A quick glance at his major work *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* [On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers] (1799) illustrates that his vision of creating a free space of convivial interaction grows out of his understanding of how humans generate and proliferate social norms and hierarchies. He was working on *Über die Religion* while

writing the conviviality essay, and both texts suggest that our religious, cultural, and political norms and values are formed through social contact and communication.²⁰ It is therefore logical for him to assume that humans are most likely to try and feel themselves into and comprehend someone else's modes of thinking in a non-constrictive environment. We know from many of his other publications that the experiences he had during his frequent visits to Jewish homes shaped this belief in the transformative power of conviviality.²¹ Most important in this context were his regular conversations with Henriette Herz who also read and discussed his work with him. Hopfner terms her activities a "geistige Undercover-Tätigkeit" ["intellectual undercover job"] common to women of her age.²² The thoughts she shared with him were foundational to his understanding that conviviality should be geared towards unsettling familiar categories formed by one's professional or domestic obligations, and by creating a

(...) condition (...) where the sphere of an individual is present in such a way that it is intersected by the spheres of others as diversely as possible and where one's own outer limits affords one the view into a different and alien world. In this manner, one can come to know all the appearances of humanity little by little, and even the most alien persons and relations can grow familiar and become, as it were, neighbors. This task is accomplished through the free association of rational and mutually-cultivating persons. (20–21)²³

A condition free of pedagogy, prescribed themes and moral ends, Schleiermacher suggests, builds an atmosphere conducive to forming and being formed and reformed by others in a free-flowing exchange of ideas. He refers to the purpose of such processes of reciprocal formation as a moral one: "Dies ist der sittliche Zweck der freien Geselligkeit" (254) ["This is the moral end of free sociability", 21]. It is interesting, however, how he further determines the characteristics of this moral purpose, resulting from a situation of "Wechselwirkung" (259) ["reciprocal action", 25]: What one might expect here is a humanist vision of harmonious understanding, a situation where members of diverse cultural and societal backgrounds not only tolerate their differences but feel emotionally and intellectually connected, viewing themselves as equal members of a global community. But instead of formulating such a pluralistic ideal of sociality, he shifts the focus to the *activity* of conviviality as such:

If we now look at the purpose that is to be attained under this form of thoroughgoing reciprocity, we notice that the predicate of freedom implies that there should be no mention of a single and determinate purpose in free sociality since this conditions and limits the activity in conformity to material and objective rules. There should be no particular action executed communally, no product brought about jointly, nor any judgment methodically acquired. The purpose of society is not at all to be conceived as lying outside it. The action of each individual should be aimed at the activity of the others, and the activity of individuals should be their influence on the others. However, nothing else can be affected in a free being except that it is thereby stimulated to its own activity and that the activity is given an object. By virtue of what was said above, this object in turn can be nothing other than the activity of one invited to participate in society. It can, therefore, be conceived as nothing other than the free play of thoughts and feelings whereby all members mutually stimulate and enliven each other. The reciprocal action accordingly is self-constrained and complete. The form as well as the purpose of social activity is contained in the concept of reciprocal action and this action constitutes the entire essence of society. (24–25)²⁴

Any further determination of the purpose of convivial interaction would imply corseting social activities into a set of rules, geared towards prescribed outcomes, and the objective of the participants' socialising would lie in gaining insights jointly and in steering their energies towards communally executed projects. According to Schleiermacher, however, conviviality is free only when it is based on a structure of "Wechselwirkung", of reciprocity. All members ought to stimulate and energise one another, and this constellation of active moments of "Wechselwirkung" is the *form* as well as the *purpose* of conviviality. His untethering of the term from normative constraints and his emphasis on reciprocal action as the format and objective of social interaction provides contact points for current theorisations of conviviality as well as a productive lens for assessing Henriette Herz' writings.

In their lecture "On the analytic and normative dimensions of conviviality and cosmopolitanism", Nowicka and Heil define conviviality as an "analytic term", and their definition bears conceptual resemblances to Schleiermacher's theory. With his claim that the gearing of social behaviour towards a "particular action" or "product" that ought to be "executed communally" (24) disrupts the freedom of sociability, he highlights a discrepancy between convivial situations and the normative criteria they are measured up against; this divergence also takes centre stage in the essay

by Nowicka and Heil.²⁵ Reviewing critical research on conviviality such as Paul Gilroy's *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*, the two authors draw attention to the term's ties to associations such as "ethnic plurality" that contain "a normative and often idealistic aspiration for peaceful togetherness".²⁶ The predicament of assessing conviviality within such vertical frameworks is that investigations are always focused on tensions between concrete practices of sociability on the one hand and the question to what degree they approximate overarching criteria of togetherness and communication on the other. Nowicka and Heil, by contrast, advocate for an analysis of conviviality premised on the assumption that "the normative is the empirical". Rather than asking to what extent social interactions approximate ideals of ethnic pluralism or further a cosmopolitan mindset, they ask how "minimal sociality [is] possible". "Even within the framework of conflict", they suggest "there are plenty of situations in which people live and/or work together peacefully, obviously beyond their identities, attitudes, solidarities, belongings to different communities and despite their differential positions in social structures".²⁷

With their emphasis on the value of fleeting moments of mutual understanding, Nowicka and Heil conceptualise conviviality as a fragile condition that embraces ongoing tensions and conflicts between people of different sociocultural backgrounds and interests as well as situations where "ad hoc and temporary communalities and similarities and consensus over issues of interest or concern in this moment of time" may develop.²⁸ Over two centuries lie between this analytic and situation-focused notion of conviviality by Nowicka/Heil and Schleiermacher's theory. To be sure, each approach grew out of specific historical, cultural and disciplinary constellations that should by no means be conflated; yet despite their differences, the three authors articulate a strong interest in scrutinising moments of convivial interaction as such, and it is because of this non-judgmental, situation-centred focus that their theories provide a productive lens for identifying and assessing Henriette Herz' practices of sociability.

Like all social events, the gatherings she held or attended were centered on oral communication and thus per definition ephemeral and fleeting. Therefore, all critical attempts to reconstruct the contents and social dynamic of such events always involve a high degree of speculation. In the case of Herz, however, critics deal with an additional layer of complexity having to do with the transmission of her writings. We have letters and her *Jugenderinnerungen* ["Recollections of her Youth"], autobiographical recollections of her youth and first years of marriage, yet the manuscript

breaks off in 1780/1781 and does not cover the period commonly viewed as the high point of her social activities. Her self-proclaimed biographer J. Fürst provides insights into her life and multiple social engagements after this early phase but the reliability and trustworthiness of *Henriette Herz. Ihr Leben und ihre Erinnerungen* from 1850 has always been contested in the critical literature.²⁹ Despite its ambivalent status, however, Fürst's autobiographical text is still a major source for subsequent editions such as Janetzki's edited collection *Henriette Herz. Berliner Salon. Erinnerungen und Portraits*; the texts Janetzki selected and the commentary he provides concentrate specifically on her role as a socialite. To date there is not critical edition of her work and correspondences providing researchers with a reliable text foundation and corrective to Fürst's version.³⁰

In this essay, I refer to her *Jugenderinnerungen*, and I also draw on Fürst's accounts of her life as well as the latest critical research, assessing her social activities. To be sure, these sources cannot compensate for the lack of a critical edition; taken together, however, they provide a good starting point for reexamining socially destabilising and thereby empowering moments in her convivial activities. The accounts of her social life exhibit different instances of what Schleiermacher and Nowicka/Heil describe as unexpected and fleeting moments of a shifting power dynamic: her social engagements of sorts unsettle linguistic power relations, ideas of love and marriage, and debates over literary canon formations.

Herz grew up in an open house with regular visits from family, friends and her father's students. After marrying and moving in with Marcus Herz, the couple continued their families' tradition of hosting—"Alle junge Leute die mein väterliches Haus besuchten und die meistens Studenten waren kamen nun auch zu mir (...)" ["All the young people who came to visit my father's house and who were mostly students also came to visit me"]—and of attending social events.³¹ During their frequent visits to family friends, Henriette met Ewart, a young English officer who became smitten with her and a regular guest at the Herz house. Ewart and Henriette read together, socialised with the Mendelssohn family, and through their conversations and shared readings, Henriette's English improved significantly to the point of surpassing her husband's.³² Because of her linguistic superiority, she then was the one who translated to her husband the love letter sent to her by Ewart, putting her in a position where she decided how and what to translate.³³

Henriette's socialising with Ewart could easily be overlooked, but against the backdrop of the discussed theories of conviviality their

encounter is significant: crucially, their interactions empowered her not only linguistically, but also fundamentally broadened her view of love and marriage with far-reaching effects. She talked over her experiences with Moses Mendelssohn's daughter Dorothea Veit, and through analysing what happened between her and Ewart whom she insisted she never had any true feelings for while feeling flattered by his attention, her perspective on relationships underwent a transformation. It occurred to her for the first time that a married woman could love and be loved by somebody who was not her husband:

Before my acquaintance with E. it had not occurred to me that a married woman could be loved by another man or love someone other than her husband. As in a dream, a veil was gradually lifted from me, and behind it I saw and felt a large new world – I often said that to Dorothea whom I saw once a week; the reading circle at her house gave me the option.³⁴

Dorothea Veit was unhappily married to the merchant and banker Simon Veit, and her interactions with Henriette at the reading circles hosted at her family's house were an important stepping stone towards her decision to get out of her arranged and unfulfilled marriage. Later when Henriette begun hosting her own readings, Dorothea would be a frequent visitor, and the shared readings and conversations had a life-changing effect on her. She fell in love with Friedrich Schlegel, and it was Henriette who talked to her husband and helped arranging her divorce so that she could remarry.

As Schulte points out, most critics consider instances where Jewish women broke with conventions in the context of their future baptism and cultural assimilation, a development that could not have been foreseen by the hosts and visitors of Berlin's reading circles and other social events around the turn of the century. In the light of such assessments, their actions' emancipatory potential fades into the background and what moves into the centre of attention instead is their failure to be Jewish and German at the same time.³⁵ Schleiermacher and Nowicka/Heil, by contrast, suggest evaluating and valuing such moments of convivial interaction when subjects break away from something in and of themselves. So rather than placing those conflict-ridden instances when conventional perspectives get sort of reshuffled within broader historical narratives or normative frameworks, they focus on the convivial activity as such. In following this direction, I closely examine the convivial settings that fostered such

turning points, resulting in alternative life paths or options for women to participate in and contribute to public conversations.

When Marcus Herz married Henriette De Lemos in 1779, his house, where he had been giving lectures on Kant and physics for four years, was already a well-known centre of enlightenment thinking. Very aware of her wit and beauty, Henriette saw her chance to gather her own circle:

[almost] every known intellectual foreigner (...) visited [our house] - Herz attracted people because of his intellect and fame as a doctor, and I because of my beauty and my sense for all intellectual endeavors; there was hardly an intellectual field of inquiry that I did not feel pretty much at home in, and some I pursued seriously – such as physics and later several languages.³⁶

Seventeen years younger than her husband, she attracted a younger and socially more diverse group of men and women, Jews and Germans, writers, aristocrats, and visitors to Berlin interested in reading and socialising together. The events organised by her husband were targeted at men interested in scientific research and philosophy such as the young Humboldt brothers. Soon, however, Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt became more interested in his wife and her circle than his lectures³⁷:

Early on the Humboldt brothers distinguished themselves by intellect and knowledge; they were lively, funny, well-behaved and very endearing – and I often saw them at our house – and definitely one evening every week in a reading society that had been arranged and that consisted of the smartest and most distinguished people of the time. Dohm, Engel, Klein, H. Zöllner and us women - – K. u. and H.s [Kunth and the Humboldts] were there too. During the summer we would be in the Bauers' garden, and during the winter at the castle – We young people played all kinds of games outside, and sometime the older ones would join us. We also read shorter and longer essays as well as theater pieces together every time. And we women read as well, and because I was beautiful people found that I also read beautifully. In the winter we danced after dinner and Alexander von Humbltd taught me how to dance a Minuet a la Reine. We lived very happily that way for a year, and everyone gained intellectually from this. I took note of the impression I had left on W. [Wilhelm von Humboldt], and we also wrote to each other.³⁸

These convivial events where intellectual debates went hand in hand with flirtation and amorous friendships like the one between Henriette and Wilhelm opened new perspectives for all participants, and especially for women.

Weissberg emphasises that their shared readings of texts such as Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* or Goethe's *Werther* inspired women to envision life as a path of self-development, centred on *Bildung* and its notion of the subject's continuous unfolding—an effect that certainly was not intended let alone approved by all.³⁹

While shaking the foundations of commonly held views of love, marriage and female role models, these social gatherings also influenced the directions of the public literary discourse. Henriette and her guests read and critically discussed modern literature, and the hostess was well aware that these readings, celebrating subjective feelings and sentiments, marked a “Wendepunkt in der schönen Literatur” [“turning point in classical literature”], and she remarks on her husband's critical attitude towards the arrival of Romanticism:

My husband, who was older than I and friends with Lessing (...), rejected everything even in classical literature that had not been written with the clarity and transparency he knew from Lessing's writings (...). With the beginnings of the Romantic school my aesthetic suffering increased. Everything here was false and incomprehensible for Herz.⁴⁰

While Marcus, surrounded by enlightened men, would stick to the lecture format, Henriette's diverse group would engage in open discussions over literary texts, artworks and theatre plays, promoting an aesthetics of feeling. Surely, social hierarchies did not become irrelevant here but certainly more permeable and less restrictive by virtue of this new mode of horizontal interaction.⁴¹ Moreover, new options for participating in and shaping the directions of the reception of literary works opened up:

People sought to comprehensively familiarize themselves with German literature, and by good fortune its first flourishing began right back then. The master works of German literature matured with us. It is something special to witness the emergence of a great literary epoch; you develop an interest and an understanding of the works, and you contribute to forming first judgements about them in ways different from someone who encounters these same works of literature as completed ones, finalized judgements about them included.⁴²

Henriette gestures at the role her social group had in forming the literary canon and cultural historical discourse, and the authority of their critical judgments was also well known among her contemporaries. Wilhelm von

Humboldt, for instance, came to meetings to find out about the reception of Friedrich Schiller's work. He viewed the discussions taking place at her house as representative for what the reading public thought of his friend's works.⁴³

This cursory glance at convivial gatherings that took place at the Herz couple's home and beyond gives a first impression of how important these get-togethers were for temporarily destabilising social hierarchies and power relations, and for giving women a voice in intellectual debates of their time. Taking my cue from what I find to be a shared transhistorical and cross-disciplinary concern in debates over the significance of conviviality, I argued that we need to assess the social interactions among members of the Herz circle non-teleologically, meaning not always habitually with an eye towards subsequent tensions and failures of relations between Jews and Germans but as momentary situations, testifying to the unpredictable and unintended power of forms of conviviality to unravel and remap traditional constellations and gender divisions in the domains of marriage, love, language, and literature. It was the vibrant social life that set in motion what Schleiermacher describes as free interactions centred on stimulations untethered from existing forms that had significant feedback effects on individuals.

To be sure, I sidelined some of the twists and turns in the second part of Schleiermacher's fragment that would have complicated the comparison with Nowicka's and Heil's theory and would have called for a more in-depth analysis. A comprehensive examination, including a historical survey of Schleiermacher's work on the topic of conviviality, however, was not my goal. My goal was to zero in on a crucial argumentative aspect that connects a past and present theory of conviviality; this intellectual historical perspective highlights the term's usefulness as a theoretical lens across different cultures and historical contexts. Both texts refrain from corseting conviviality into normative and essentialising frames. Instead, they propagate a situation-focused approach, a delving into the messiness of human social interaction full of volatile tensions, social cohesion and dissent. Living together and interacting might now, later or not at all contribute to a better live where the members of a community or shared space agree that more equality, mutual respect and support are beneficial for all.

NOTES

1. For overviews of how conviviality has been theorised and used to replace, refine or complement other prominent terms like cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism or diversity, see Magdalena Nowicka and Steven Vertovec, "Comparing Convivialities: Dreams and Realities of Living-with-Difference," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 4 (2014): 341–356; Linda Lapina, "Besides Conviviality: Paradoxes in Being 'At Ease' with Diversity in a Copenhagen District," *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 6, no. 1 (2016): 33–41. On the shift from a normative debate centred on cosmopolitanism to the "quotidian practices of everyday interactions" associated with conviviality, see Ulrike Freitag, "'Cosmopolitanism' and 'Conviviality'? Some Conceptual Considerations Concerning the Late Ottoman Empire," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 4 (2014): 375–391.
2. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen Betragens," in *Studien, Materialien, Register*, ed. Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert, and Rahel E. Steine (München: Matthes & Steitz, 1983), 253–279. Translations are cited from "Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct," in *Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct' and Essays on Its Intellectual-Cultural Context*, ed. Ruth Drucilla Richardson, transl. Jeffrey Hoover (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1995), 20–39.
3. In a multi-step argument and through engaging with how cosmopolitanism has been defined and employed by critics such as Paul Gilroy, Magdalena Nowicka and Tilmann Heil discuss in their lecture "On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism," why conviviality is a more productive term. The lecture also provides an overview of recent scholarly contributions to theories of conviviality. "On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism," Humboldt University, June 25, 2015, 1–20, accessed May 10, 2019, https://www.euroethno.hu-berlin.de/de/forschung/labore/migration/nowicka-heil_on-the-analytical-and-normative-dimensions-of-conviviality.pdf.
4. "Hascala: Judaic Movement," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed May 10, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Haskala>.
5. Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 261.
6. Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 264.
7. Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 260.
8. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 303.
9. Moshe Pelli, *Haskalah and Beyond: The Reception of the Hebrew Enlightenment and the Emergence of Haskalah Judaism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010).

10. Christoph Schulte, “Die Töchter der Haskala – Die jüdischen Salonièren aus der Perspektive der jüdischen Aufklärung,” in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz (1764–1847)*, ed. Hannah Lotte Lund, Ulrike Schneider, and Ulrike Wels (Göttingen: V&R unipress), 57–70.
11. For an overview, see Schulte, “Die Töchter der Haskala,” 58–60.
12. Barbara Hahn, “A Dream of Living Together: Jewish Women in Berlin Around 1800,” in *Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation*, ed. Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun (New York: Jewish Museum Under the Auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 149–150.
13. While discussing a number of reasons for why scholars of the Haskalah have not attributed a central role to the social activities of Jewish women, Schulte also advocates for a non-teleological approach for assessing their contribution to the formation and development of the Haskalah movement in “Töchter der Haskala”: “Es stellt sich also die Frage, warum die jüdischen Salons zwischen 1780 und 1806 nicht einmal völlig unteleologisch, also ohne Projektion auf spätere Taufen und vermeintliche Assimilation, welche ja 1782 oder 1799 noch nicht vorherzusehen war und nur mit dem nachträglichen Wissen der Historiker in die Historiographie jener Jahre eingetragen wurde, untersucht werden. Warum also sind die jüdischen Salons auch von der Haskala-Forschung nicht als ein Resultat, ein Symptom, eine Instanz oder eine Begleiterscheinung der Haskala, mitten in und mitten aus dem maskilischen Milieu, betrachtet und analysiert worden?” (60). On the German *Sonderweg*, or special path, debate that some have seen leading up to the gates of Auschwitz, see Clark’s introduction to *Iron Kingdom* where he points to the discussion as a construction based on hindsight, and as a kind of falsifying historical projection that distorts the complexities of German-Jewish relations (xii–xviii).
14. Hannah Lotte Lund, “‘ich habe so viele sonderbare Menschen hier’ – Vergesellschaftungsformen im Hause Herz der 1790er Jahre,” in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 29.
15. See preface to *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 14.
16. “(...) mehrere Quellen deuten darauf hin, dass es im Hause Herz in den frühen 1790er Jahren vier bis fünf ineinander übergehende Geselligkeitsformen gegeben haben könnte. Neben den in den Erinnerungen erwähnten ‚Collegia‘ gab es nachmittäglichen Tee und Abendessen (...). Als Beispiel für den fließenden Übergang zwischen verschiedenen Geselligkeitsformen in diesen Häusern muss viertens ein ‚Damentee‘ erwähnt werden, auch ‚Kränzchen‘ genannt, da sich Anfang der 1790er Jahre regelmäßig und *unter anderem* bei Henriette Herz traf,” Lund, “Vergesellschaftungsformen im Hause Herz,” 39–40.

17. The volume editors of *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz* point out that the term "Jüdischer Salon" is misleading in a two-fold way: "Nach bisherigem Forschungsstand weist er erstens einer zahlenmäßig sehr kleinen Gruppe von neun bis zwölf Frauen den Status einer Institution zu, den sie zu Lebzeiten so nicht besaßen. Zweitens sagt er, nicht nur angesichts der Konversionen und Identitätsüberschneidungen, nichts über das Selbstverständnis der beteiligten Frauen und Männer aus. Wir plädieren daher dafür, den Begriff des ‚Salons‘ in der Forschung längerfristig abzulösen und z.B. durch ‚gesellige Formationen‘, Kommunikations-, Wissens- oder Handlungsräume zu ersetzen, weil diese Bezeichnungen die unterschiedlichen Formen, in denen solche Geselligkeit gelebt wurde, offener abbilden," 12–13.
18. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Versuch einer Theorie des geselligen Betragens," in *Studien, Materialien, Register*, ed. Konrad Feilchenfeldt, Uwe Schweikert, and Rahel E. Steine (München: Matthes & Steitz, 1983), 253–279. Translations are cited from "Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct," in *Friedrich Schleiermacher's 'Toward a Theory of Sociable Conduct' and Essays on Its Intellectual-Cultural Context*, ed. Ruth Drucilla Richardson, transl. Jeffrey Hoover (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1995), 20–39.
19. Freie, durch keinen äußeren Zweck gebundene und bestimmte Geselligkeit wird von allen gebildeten Menschen als eins ihrer ersten und edelsten Bedürfnisse laut gefordert. Wer nur zwischen den Sorgen des häuslichen Lebens hin und her geworfen wird, nähert sich, je treuer er diesen Weg wiederholt, nur um desto langsamer dem höheren Ziel des menschlichen Daseins. Der Beruf bannet die Thätigkeit des Geistes in einen engen Kreis: wie edel und achtungswerth er auch sey, immer hält er Wirkung auf die Welt und Beschauung der Welt auf einem Standpunkt fest, und so bringt der einfachste und niedrigste, Einseitigkeit und Beschränkung hervor. Das häusliche Leben setzt uns nur mit Wenigen, und immer mit denselben in Berührung (253).
20. The key text addressing the interdependence of religion and the social is the fourth speech "Über das Gesellige in der Religion oder über Kirche und Priesterthum" of Schleiermacher's "Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern," *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 12, ed. Günter Meckenstock (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1995). Referring to a letter by Schleiermacher to Henriette Herz, Hoover points out in the introduction to his translation that it was because of his work on "Über die Religion" that Schleiermacher's conviviality essay remained a fragment: "Schleiermacher had intended to offer a continuation of this essay in future issues, but he never returned to the project once it was interrupted by his work on *Über die Religion* (...) Schleiermacher gives evidence of this interruption in a letter to Henriette Herz (...)," Hoover, 9–10.

21. See Deborah Hertz, "Henriette Herz as Jew, Henriette Herz as Christian—Relationships, Conversion, Antisemitism," in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 123.
22. "Fragt man nun aber konkret nach dem Einfluss, den Henriette Herz auf Schleiermachers wissenschaftliches Denken und speziell auf seine Pädagogik hatte, so stößt man auf ein Phänomen, das man als geistige 'Undercover-Tätigkeit' von Frauen in der bzw. für die Wissenschaft bezeichnen könnte. Denn oft wirken Frauen im Verborgenen, regen Gedanken an und bringen ihre Ideen in Gespräche ein, motivieren explizit oder implizit zu wissenschaftlichen Werken, beurteilen die produzierten Texte kritisch oder lesen – in Anführungszeichen – ‚nur' Korrektur. (...) Die Beziehung zwischen Henriette Herz und Friedrich Schleiermacher ist geradezu exemplarisch für das theoriegeschichtliche Phänomen solcher Frauen, die im Schatten männlicher Gelehrter oder großer Pädagogen stehen oder – auch das gilt es zu bedenken – sich ganz bewusst in deren Schatten stellen," Johanna Hopfer, "Zwischen Kanzel und Salon. Friedrich Schleiermacher und Henriette Herz. Ein Beispiel für den weiblichen Einfluss auf die Pädagogik," *Vierteljahresschrift für die wissenschaftliche Pädagogik* 76, no. 4 (2000): 533, cited in Ulrike Wels, "Überschreitungen *in nuance* – Überlegungen zum religiösen Selbstverständnis der Henriette Herz," in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 194.
23. (...) Zustand (...) der die Sphären eines Individui in die Lage bringt, daß sie von den Sphären Anderer so mannigfaltig als möglich durchschnitten werde, und jeder seiner eignen Grenzpunkte ihm die Aussicht in eine andere und fremde Welt gewähre, so daß alle Erscheinungen der Menschheit ihm nach und nach bekannt, und auch die fremdesten Gemüther und Verhältnisse ihm befreundet und gleichsam nachbarlich werden können. Diese Aufgabe wird durch den freien Umgang vernünftiger sich unter einander bildender Menschen gelöst (253–254).
24. Sehen wir nun auf den Zweck, der unter dieser Form der durchgängigen Wechselwirkung erreicht werden soll, so fällt in die Augen, denn es liegt in dem Prädikat der Freiheit, daß hier von einem einzelnen und bestimmten Zweck gar nicht die Rede seyn soll; denn dieser bestimmt und beschränkt auch die Thätigkeit nach materiellen und objektiven Regeln. Es soll keine bestimmte Handlung gemeinschaftlich verrichtet, kein Werk vereinigt zu Stande gebracht, keine Einsicht methodisch erworben werden. Der Zweck der Gesellschaft wird gar nicht außer ihr liegend gedacht; die Wirkung eines Jeden soll gehen auf die Thätigkeit der übrigen, und die Thätigkeit eines Jeden soll seyn seine Einwirkung auf die andern. Nun aber kann auf ein freies Wesen nicht anders eingewirkt werden, als dadurch, daß es zur eigenen Thätigkeit aufgeregt, und ihr ein Objekt darbegoten wird; und dieses Objekt kann wiederum zufolge des obigen nichts anderes seyn, als die Thätigkeit

- des Auffordernden; es kann also auf nichts anders abgesehen seyn, als auf ein freies Spiel der Gedanken und Empfindungen, wodurch alle Mitglieder einander gegenseitig aufregen und beleben. Die Wechselwirkung ist sonach in sich selbst zurückgehend und vollendet; in dem Begriff derselben ist sowohl die Form als der Zweck der geselligen Thätigkeit enthalten, und sie macht das ganze Wesen der Gesellschaft aus (259–260).
25. Magdalena Nowicka and Tilmann Heil, “On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism,” Humboldt University, June 25, 2015, 1–20, accessed May 10, 2019, https://www.euroethno.hu-berlin.de/de/forschung/labore/migration/nowicka-heil_on-the-analytical-and-normative-dimensions-of-conviviality.pdf.
 26. Nowicka and Heil, “On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism,” 6; Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
 27. Nowicka and Heil, “On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism,” 7, 12.
 28. Nowicka and Heil, “On the Analytical and Normative Dimensions of Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism,” 12.
 29. Henriette Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen von Henriette Herz*, in *Mittheilungen aus dem Litteraturarchive in Berlin* 5 (1896): 141–184, accessed March 27, 2018, <http://sophie.byu.edu/texts/henriette-herz-ihre-erinnerungen-autobiography-1850>; J. Fürst, *Henriette Herz. Ihr Leben und ihre Erinnerungen* (Berlin: 1850), available from: <http://sophie.byu.edu/texts/henriette-herz-ihre-erinnerungen-autobiography-1850>, accessed March 27, 2018. For an overview and review of the different editions of Herz’ writings and the philological challenges they pose, see Lund, Schneider, and Wels, “Einleitung: Zehn Thesen – für Henriette Herz – gegen den ‘Salon’”, in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 9–11.
 30. Ulrich Janetzki, ed., *Henriette Herz. Berliner Salon. Erinnerungen und Portraits* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1984).
 31. Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 164–165. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations are my own.
 32. Compare Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 175.
 33. “Der Umgang mit E. hatte mir eine ziemliche Fertigkeit im Verstehen des Englischen gegeben, wir lasen viel mit einander u. daher ist es kein Wunder dass ich mehr wusste als H. ich musste ihm daher den Brief wörtlich übersetzen (...),” Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 176.
 34. Vor meiner Bekanntschaft mit E. hatte ich nie die Möglichkeit gedacht dass eine verheirathete Frau von einem anderen als von ihrem Manne geliebt werden, oder einen anderen lieben als ihn lieben könnte. Wie durch einen allmählichen Zauber ward mir langsam ein Vorhang weggezogen hinter welchem ich eine neue grosse Welt erblickte u. fühlte – oft sagte ich das zu

- D-a Dorothea die ich jede Woche Ein Mal sah, wozu eine in ihrem Hause eingerichtete Lesegesellschaft Gelegenheit gab. Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 177.
35. Schulte, "Die Töchter der Haskala," 60.
 36. [fast] jeder an Geist bedeutende Fremde (...) besuchte unser Haus - Herz zog durch seinen Geist u. als berühmter Arzt die Leute an sich, ich durch meine Schönheit u. durch den Sinn den ich für alles Wissenschaftliche hatte, denn es gab kaum eine in der ich mich nicht einigermaßen umgesehen hätte u. einige trieb ich ernstlich – so Physic u. später mehrere Sprachen. Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 183.
 37. On Herz' lectures on experimental philosophy and his guests, see *Jugenderinnerungen von Henriette Herz*, in *Mittheilungen aus dem Literaturarchive in Berlin* 5 (1896): 181–182, accessed March 27, 2018, <http://sophie.byu.edu/texts/henriette-herz-ihr-leben-und-ihre-erinnerungen-autobiography-1850>. To prepare Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt for their studies at the Prussian University in Frankfurt/Oder, their private tutor Johann Christian Kunth introduced them to Marcus Herz.
 38. Schon sehr früh zeichneten sie sich the Humboldt brothers durch Geist u. Kenntnisse aus, sie waren lebendig, witzig, artig u. sehr liebenswürdig – u. ich sah sie sehr oft bei uns – u. gewiss in jeder Woche einen Abend in einer Lesegesellschaft die eingerichtet ward u. die aus den damals gescheidesten, ausgezeichnetsten Leuten bestand. Dohm, Engel, Klein, H. Zöllner u. wir dazu gehörigen Frauen – K. u. die H.s Kunth and the Humboldts waren auch dabei. Im Sommer waren wir im Bauerschen Garten, im Winter auf dem Schloss – Wir jüngeren Leute spielten allerlei Spiele im Freien, zu denen sich indess auch oft die Älteren gesellten, doch aber ward auch jedesmal gelesen, kleinere und grössere Aufsätze, theatralische Sachen u.s.w. auch wir Frauen lasen u. weil ich schön war fand man auch dass ich schön las. Im Winter tanzten wir nach dem Abendessen u. Alex. H. lehrte mich die Menuet a la Reine. So lebten wir ein ganzes Jahr auf hoch vergnügliche Weise mit einander, von manchem geistigen Nutzen für alle. Der Eindruck den ich auf W. Wilhelm von Humboldt gemacht entging mir nicht, auch schrieben wir einander. Herz, *Jugenderinnerungen*, 182.
 39. Liliane Weissberg, "Lehrjahre des Gefühls – Wilhelm von Humboldt befreundet sich mit Henriette Herz," in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 147.
 40. Mein Mann, älter, mit Lessing persönlich befreundet (...) wies selbst in der schönen Literatur alles zurück, was nicht mit Lessingscher Klarheit und Durchsichtigkeit geschrieben war (...). Mit dem Auftauchen der romantischen Schule steigerten sich nun vollends meine ästhetischen Leiden. Hier war für Herz alles unwahr oder unverständlich. Ulrich Janetzki, ed., *Henriette Herz. Berliner Salon: Erinnerungen und Portraits* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1984), 39–40.

41. Anne Baillot, "Das Netzwerk als Kunstwerk," *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 47.
42. Man suchte sich mit der deutschen schönen Literatur in ihrem ganzen Umfange bekanntzumachen, und eine besondere Gunst des Geschickes wollte, dass die Blütezeit derselben eben damals begann. Ihre Meisterwerke wurden mit uns, und es ist etwas anderes, eine große Literaturepoche zu erleben, schon was das Interesse an ihren Erzeugnissen und das Verständnis derselben betrifft, und an dem ersten Urteil über die letzteren mitzuarbeiten, als wenn sie als ein Abgeschlossenes nebst den fertigen Urteilen über sie und ihre Werke überkommen. Henriette Herz, *Berliner Salon*, 47.
43. Hannah Lotte Lund, "'ich habe so viele sonderbare Menschen hier' - Vergesellschaftungsformen im Hause Herz der 1790er Jahre," in *Die Kommunikations-, Wissens- und Handlungsräume der Henriette Herz*, 37.

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