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# Restricted individuality. Individuals and supra-individual order in German Naturphilosophie

Susanne Lettow\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Susanne Lettow (SL) – private: Mussehlstrasse 21, 12101 Berlin, Germany

## Abstract

Within the historiography of the cell theory the question of how the relation of primordial, elementary living beings to supra-individual orders has been conceived, has been widely discussed. In particular, the political articulations of the relations of individuals to a higher order' have been scrutinized. With regard to theories that pre-dated the cell theory, Georges Canguilhem has compared Buffon's theory of organic molecules' that form an organism by association to Lorenz Oken's hierarchical view that borrowed much from the *Naturphilosophie* of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. In my presentation I will discuss different articulations of the relation of living individuals to supra-individual orders within German *Naturphilosophie*. In addition to Oken, I will focus on Schelling and Carl Friedrich Kielmeyer who proposed a multi-level model of the integration of individuals to the life of the species' and the life of the organic world'. In contrast to Schelling and Oken who presupposed a homogeneous circular time, Kielmeyer conceived of an interaction of different forms of temporality. In addition, he avoided an overtly sexualisation of living beings whereas Schelling and Oken – albeit in different ways – were heavily preoccupied with sexual difference. Schelling's and Oken's understandings of sexual difference and temporality, I argue, contributed much to an epistemic fascination with 'higher order' and the subordination of the individual – which in Schellings words is 'contested' by Nature.

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\*Speaker