

## The economy of the *Bildungstrieb* in Goethe's comparative anatomy

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In this paper I argue that Goethe's presentation of the *Bildungstrieb* as the governing power of the natural economy consolidated several divergent lines of research in late-eighteenth century physiology in such a way that would prove significant for the development of comparative physiology. I begin by examining Goethe's search for a typological norm in his early writings on botany, culminating in *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790). I then turn to his early account of morphology in 'Outline for a General Introduction to Comparative Anatomy' (1795), in which Goethe calls on Blumenbach's notion of the *Bildungstrieb* to integrate his earlier work on typology with morphological considerations. While Goethe's conception of the *Trieb* draws from Blumenbach and Humboldt, I argue that his presentation of the *Bildungstrieb* as the economic coordination of specific living forces builds on Kiehmeyer's dynamic account of the *Lebenskräfte*. In the final section I examine the impact of Goethe's collaboration with Schelling on his treatment of the *Bildungstrieb* in the final years of the eighteenth century. By employing the *Bildungstrieb* to unite typological form with transformative morphology, Goethe provided an intuitive synthesis of the primary issues in the life sciences at the turn of the nineteenth century, offering not so much a working model as a source of inspiration for those searching for unified programme of comparative physiology.