

# Introduction



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In the past decade the philosophical tradition of German Idealism has come to be recognized as a rich and complex part of “Theory,” while this field itself has been associated with a fundamentally interdisciplinary way of thinking and range of practices. Yet there has been little intensive consideration of either the disciplinary or interdisciplinary nature of Idealism itself. Nor has much attention been given to the ways in which philosophy—the discipline in which Idealism is anchored—is itself hybridized and de-idealized by its connections with other fields. This volume attempts to rethink the conceptuality and disciplinarity of post-Kantian philosophy across the full range of the long romantic period, from Immanuel Kant and the Schlegels at one end, through the post-Kantian Idealists, to Friedrich Nietzsche.

The volume is thus organized by three interconnected concerns. First, the essays share a sense that it is possible to have an idealism without the totalizing formulas often associated with post-Kantian philosophy, as represented by such concepts (conventionally interpreted) as G. W. F. Hegel’s Absolute Knowledge or J. G. Fichte’s Absolute Ego. The space for this idealism is created by a particular symbiosis between ideality and materiality. Second, this symbiosis often occurs through the contamination or extension of philosophy into other, more “material” disciplines such as psychology, history, or literature. At stake, then, is the very identity of philosophy as the host for a variety of other parasitic discourses that reciprocally reconfigure philosophy itself. In such circumstances it would be easy to read the intellectual tradition studied here through twentieth-century lenses. And indeed the essays all draw on contemporary theory: notably the work of Gilles Deleuze,

Jean-François Lyotard, Martin Heidegger, Paul de Man, Theodor Adorno, Jacques Derrida, and others. Yet in the end the revision of Idealism by materialism explored here results in a uniquely romantic mode of thinking. We suggest, therefore, that Romanticism's particular contribution is "an idealism without absolutes," rather than any kind of absolute materialism or idealism, and that it is this critical idealism that allows thinkers as different as Nietzsche and Hegel to inhabit the same conceptual space. It would also be appropriate (if beyond the parameters of this volume) to read others as belonging to this post-romantic configuration, as Richard Beardsworth intimates with reference to Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud in the final essay. Hence *finally* there is also a timeliness in rearticulating the significance of the Idealism-Romanticism juncture for the modern and postmodern intellectual scene.

To begin with, then, this volume hopes to initiate a rethinking of German Idealism in terms of how it brings materiality into conjunction with ideality (or phenomenality, as what can be made visible or expressible). That materiality is a concern of German Idealism has often been recognized. However, it is often seen—even by certain key representatives of Idealism itself (though against the grain of their most radical thought)—as playing a merely supplementary role in the discourse(s) of philosophy. Materiality is thus often identified with the traditional opposite of Idealism: the materialism of Spinoza or, differently, Marx. By contrast, the aim of this volume is to show the constitutive role of materiality in the work of the figures defining *Idealist* philosophy. In other words we suggest that Idealism is not only reconfigured by materiality but also itself reconstitutes the material: both "materiality" as a concept, and the material with which philosophy deals.

"Materiality" needs to be distinguished from the narrower notion of "materialism," whether it be metaphysical materialism as an idealism of matter, classical Marxism as an idealism of capital or class, or cultural materialism as an absolutism of the empirical. While these associations are important, *materiality* is not inevitably tied to matter or to matters of fact. Instead we use the term to indicate a field of concepts, theoretical and practical effects, and intellectual "events." As an analogue to *différance* or heterogeneity, materiality in this sense disturbs all absolutes: whether those of Idealism or materialism. It thereby proves to be a much more explosive concept than materialism without de-absolutization. Most important, then, materiality refers to a certain mode of the constitution of thought: one that involves a rethinking of conceptuality itself along the lines developed by Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who reconceive the very notion of the "concept" outside of its metaphysical and ideological closure. According to their view a "concept" is not an entity established by a generalization from or idealization of particulars. It is rather an irreducibly complex, multilayered structure: a multicomponent conglomerate of concepts, figures, metaphors, and particular (ungeneralized) elements.<sup>1</sup> Yet this notion of

the concept (as materiality and creativity) is itself irreducibly romantic and idealist, as Arkady Plotnitsky suggests in his exploration of Hegel's use of the term *concept*, and as Tilottama Rajan suggests in her discussion of Kant's and Hegel's use of the term *idea* as a foundation for "Idealism." Hence the most critical materialism, and the most powerful weapon against the "romantic ideology," may paradoxically be Idealism itself, absolved from absolutes. This is true even if a provisional simplification of multiplex "ideas" such as Spirit or Freedom is sometimes necessary for the functioning of the broader aesthetic, ethical, or political visions emerging in Romanticism.<sup>2</sup>

Equally seminal for this conjunction of ideality and materiality is Leibniz, whose work is formative for Deleuze (in his reading of Kant as much as Leibniz). Indeed as Plotnitsky intimates in his essay, Idealism is just as much post-Leibnizian as post-Kantian. Kant works through separations, boundaries, and distinctions—whether in terms of concepts or at the level of the various disciplines that "contest" philosophy, and that he seeks to keep separate from philosophy. By contrast, Leibniz's thought is interactively constituted in a series of metaphoric transfers and contaminations between physics, biology, mathematics, metaphysics, and theology. Moreover, both Leibniz's materialist idealism, as a counter to Spinoza's materialism, and his specific concepts (in particular his monads), manifest and actively deploy the conceptual materialism described here. Indeed one could offer the "monad" as a figure for the concept as material plurality. Monads are, on the surface, units—and unities—of thought, like concepts in the conventional sense. Yet when considered microscopically, each monad is, arguably, infinitely subdivisible into further monads, smaller conceptual units, and is thus irreducibly nonsimple. Or to put it differently, the monad possesses a certain "architectural" unity, but on closer inspection unfolds into numerous smaller, not necessarily synchronic, rooms, spaces, and closets. Yet the architectural metaphor is itself only a rubric, as these smaller "molecules" do not simply coexist but also interact.

This interference of the "matter" of concepts with their ideality is, we suggest, paralleled on a larger scale through an opening up of philosophy by the subject matters with which it deals. Kant inherited from the medieval university an arrangement in which there were three "higher" faculties (law, medicine, and theology) and a lower (in effect undergraduate) faculty of "philosophy." This faculty—a faculty of "arts" in the older form that included science—taught philosophy in the narrower sense, but also everything else not covered by the professional faculties.<sup>3</sup> The Idealists therefore worked not just on philosophy, but also on aesthetics, ethics, history, anthropology, the natural sciences, psychology, and religion. At the same time the romantic period witnessed a professionalization of philosophy in the German university and a concomitant reflection on what constitutes "science" or knowledge. From this perspective the amorphousness of philosophy was a threat. Thus

F. W. J. Schelling writes that we now have a philosophy of agriculture, will soon have a philosophy of “vehicles,” and that eventually there will be “as many philosophies as there are objects,” so that we risk “los[ing] philosophy itself entirely.” Like Husserl (who traced philosophy’s loss of “rigor” back to Idealism), the early and more conventionally idealist Schelling saw this heterogenization as a “crisis” in the phenomenal identity of philosophy as “science.” Yet the diversity of philosophy was also an opportunity, including for Schelling himself in the *Freedom* essay and in *The Ages of the World*.<sup>4</sup>

In *The Conflict of the Faculties* Kant tried to cope with the amorphousness of his faculty by defining it against the professional faculties as a space for speculation and research (empirical as well as conceptual). He further sought to separate philosophy (in a more restricted sense) from other areas that he taught, such as anthropology and geography. The internal economy of this philosophy is mapped by the three Critiques. In all of these cases Kant dealt with the problem of disciplinarity by using the model of conflict or “contest”: a contest (*Streit*) rather than an intermingling of “faculties” (both administrative and cognitive faculties), and by extension a contest of disciplines. But as Deleuze argues, if Kant’s faculties can “enter into relationships which are variable but regulated by one or other of them,” together they must be “capable of relationships which are free and *unregulated*, where each goes to its own limit.”<sup>5</sup> Hegel, who is the subject of several essays in this volume, in effect pushes these limits by imagining an “encyclopedia” of all of the philosophical sciences, wherein the concepts of individual sciences are recognized “as finite.” Going beyond Kant, who tried to unify the liberal arts under the rubric of philosophy as method, Hegel claimed a greater specificity for philosophy by introducing “Idealism” into “all the sciences.”<sup>6</sup> On one level this project may seem like an imperialism of philosophy, which becomes the macrosystem that contains microsystems of other disciplines as wheels within wheels. But Hegel also builds a profound reflectiveness into his encyclopedia through the doubling of “levels” as “spheres.” In the subsumptive logic of his system each discipline is merely a level in the whole: thus “organics” is a level in the sphere of natural science, which itself is a level leading to the sciences of spirit. But conversely each level is also a sphere in its own right, a monad made up of further units that must be understood on their own terms as spheres. The encyclopedia project thus exemplifies Plotnitsky’s notion of the Hegelian “baroque,” as a constant folding and unfolding of disciplines into each other: a “superfold” that unravels the identity of particular disciplines.<sup>7</sup>

The encyclopedia project, in other words, is what Georges Bataille calls a “general economy” in which totality—as Absolute Knowledge—becomes de-absolutization. For while a certain *multidisciplinarity* on the regulated, Kantian model has often characterized philosophy, what is at issue here is

rather an *interdisciplinarity* or intergeneration of discourses. Moreover, the deregulation of philosophy in particular, the move beyond philosophy as a “restricted economy,”<sup>8</sup> occurs because of the more general climate of “Romanticism.”<sup>9</sup> Of relevance here are Friedrich Schlegel’s conception of “Literature,” his hybrid discourses of symphilosophy and sympoetry (as the philosophizing of poetry and the poetizing of philosophy), and Novalis’s (Friedrich von Hardenberg’s) principle of a general “versability” of disciplines that allows for a poetizing of science or even physics and mathematics. In this environment Philosophy (with a capital *P*) becomes itself the deployment of a multicomponent architecture of generals and particulars, rather than an abstract reduction from the particular. Yet the term *architecture* is provisional, as philosophy may also be contained by its components: a philosophy of history generates, in turn, histories of philosophy as Gary Handwerk argues in his essay. “Philosophy,” in other words, comes to signify the general and reciprocal mediation occurring between and among philosophy and other fields of inquiry.

It is through this “folding” of discourses (to borrow Deleuze’s figure) that this volume addresses not just philosophy, but the romanticism of philosophy, as each codefines the other. The essays gathered here thus show how romantic philosophy was engaged with a wide variety of fields from aesthetics, literature, and psychology, to history and histories of philosophy or culture. As important, there are clear analogies—though not identities—between philosophy in the interdisciplinary form explored here and the more recent field of “Theory.” A setting in place of these analogies is a crucial goal of this volume. While the volume, then, hopes to rethink Idealism through its unique conjunction with materiality, these extensions also position the Idealism-Romanticism episteme as one crucial matrix for the historical-philosophical configuration that is our own.

Our first essay, by Jan Plug, focuses on the extension of philosophy “beyond” or “between itself” produced by Romanticism’s invention of *Literature*, in the specific sense this term has from Friedrich Schlegel to Maurice Blanchot. The intimate connection of philosophy to Literature, as seen from both the idealist and romantic ends of the spectrum through Kant and the Schlegels, is one site for philosophy’s opening onto the material. Kant, as suggested, was concerned not only with the relation between pure and practical reason, but also with philosophy’s relation to other disciplines and domains. The very nature of his work in the university constructs philosophy as needing a referent, even if he saw a speculative distance from the empirical as also characterizing its stance. Plug suggests that it is the aesthetic—and the “symbol”—that best mediates this (dis)engagement. Because the symbol is not the material but its *sign*, the aesthetic involves an approach to the material that is idealist in being concerned with its forms and conditions of possibility, yet

thereby critical of any absolutizing of ideas or concepts. At the same time, we should not think of the material as simply the raw material of philosophy. Rather the materiality that enters philosophy through the aesthetic (and Kant's notion of "aesthetic" ideas) continuously reconstitutes thought by deconstructing and reanimating it.

Kant's work discloses an interdisciplinarity at the heart of Idealism, which reworks the task of philosophy through the analogue of the aesthetic, in ways that extend to other forms of critical thinking such as the political. Yet Plug sees a related conjunction at work in "Romanticism." For the Jena Romantics also cross philosophy with the aesthetic, though for them it is more a question of a Literature that is the *theory* of literature, and thus a form of philosophy. That the Schlegels and Novalis gave this self-reflective Literature the prestige of philosophy is what Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy argue in *The Literary Absolute*. But for them Literature, despite and because of its reflexivity, self-contains its own ironies as a form of absolute knowledge. Literature thus simply replaces philosophy as a form of absolute idealism. Arguing for a *literary* absolute rather than a literary *absolute*, Plug suggests instead that Literature is a mode of philosophy and criticism that precisely undermines the absolute in both literature and philosophy.

The materiality of the aesthetic that brings life to spirit for Plug is the death of a more absolutely idealistic spirit in Andrzej Warminski's reading of Hegel. Warminski focuses on the duplicity of the *Aesthetics* that narrates two histories: those of art-spirit and absolute spirit. The lectures correspondingly have two high points and two ends. On the one hand, art comes to an end with the dissolution of classicism which, as the adequate embodiment of the Idea and the high point of art-spirit, is inadequate for absolute spirit. On the other hand, the resulting post-art in the romantic, as the impossibility of embodying the Idea, comes to an end in a promise already suspended by the persistent remaindering of art. The problem is intensified by the difficulty of distinguishing one art from another. Only by an interpretive imposition can we say that what ends at the end of art is romantic and not symbolic, post-and not, once again, pre-art; only thus can we even say that the Idea has once been classically embodied rather than symbolically deferred. And insofar as art is a "mirror" in which the philosopher views "the inner essence of his own discipline,"<sup>10</sup> the history of art is also a repetitive allegory of Idealism's inability to attain its end in absolute spirit.

Tilottama Rajan deals with similar ambiguities, not however to deconstruct Idealism but rather to read Hegel beyond himself so as to make the *Aesthetics* an apparatus for the creation of new concepts (in Deleuze's sense). She thus returns to the intertextuality of the aesthetic and the philosophical also discussed by Plug. More specifically, she focuses on the cross-fertilizing of transcendental and cultural philosophy that occurs when Kant's

distinction between the sublime and beautiful is transferred by Hegel into the triad of symbolic, classical, and romantic art. Kant's sublime calls for reflective judgments open to new "ideas" rather than determinant judgments that uphold existing "concepts." By reworking the sublime between the romantic and the symbolic (or oriental), Hegel turns the philosophical category of judgment toward the cultural category of "taste," thus allowing its ideal nature to be unsettled by the material of history. In other words, the *Aesthetics* is subject to a form of cultural materiality, in which philosophy is given a referent that reflects it back to create new determinations of philosophical concepts. Against the grain of his own philosophical taste, Hegel thus introduces new forms of judgment that challenge his classicist norms of aesthetic and philosophical identity. These forms respond to "inadequate" embodiments of the Idea in art, recognizing that every expression of the Idea has its own adequacy. The new forms (of art and judgment itself) also generate a reconceptualizing of such absolutes as beauty, freedom, and identity outside of the philosophical shape imposed on thought by Western culture. For Hegel, through the symbolic and romantic, rethinks not only the judgment of art but also the very nature of Idealism, which becomes a Romanticism associated with "the restless fermentation" by which spirit produces itself as its *nonidentity*.

For Jochen Schulte-Sasse, Hegel's thought is also the occasion for the formation of new epistemic practices, though in this case it is a question not so much of concepts as of cultural institutions that produce a self-critical "modernity." For Schulte-Sasse, then, de-absolutization and materiality result in the modernization, not the romanticization or postmodernization of Idealism. Schulte-Sasse begins with the notion of work in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the process by which consciousness externalizes, reflects on, and comes to know itself. Importantly, *Werk* in Hegel refers not to an activity so much as to the artifacts, the textual products (in a broad sense) that result from this externalization. In this sense Hegel may be said to have invented the domain of "culture" later elaborated by the post-Hegelian sociologist Georg Simmel, as well as the notion of mediality or what Simmel broadly defines as "technology."<sup>11</sup> For culture to progress individual consciousnesses must externalize themselves in readable artifacts and read the precipitates of other consciousnesses. Canons, intellectual histories, or historiographies (whether of art, religion, or philosophy) are thus among the practices that Hegel sees as necessary for the philosophical process of self-reflection. The phenomenology of mind, contrary to Bill Readings's claim that the post-Kantian university instituted philosophy as "pure process . . . the formal art of the use of mental powers,"<sup>12</sup> is mind's reflection on the history of its own work in the form of textual and discursive externalizations. Negativity, as the capacity to rethink the resulting technologies so that they do not ossify, is in part the hermeneutical reworking of culture through this externalization and reflection.

Gary Handwerk takes this focus on history as the medium of Idealism's self-reflection in a different direction, by tracing Friedrich Schlegel's work from his histories of classical literature to his later lectures on the histories of literature and philosophy. That philosophy and Idealism are at issue in Schlegel's work, though he may not seem a "philosopher," was already evident in Plug's essay. But by taking up Schlegel's *historiographical* writings, Handwerk reminds us that a key aspect of Romanticism's dialogue with Idealism is the engagement of philosophy with nonphilosophy. Indeed, as Schlegel says, it is through its encyclopedic engagement with *all* the "sciences" that Idealism itself becomes a "*critique of idealism*."<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, since his histories include histories of *philosophy*, Schlegel invites us to rethink philosophy through the empirical problems—including that of history—to which it invisibly responds, however transcendently. Indeed for Schlegel *history* is precisely the site for "transcendental" thinking, given that "transcendental" is whatever "relates to the joining or separating of the ideal and the real."<sup>14</sup>

The problem posed by history for idealist paradigms of "science" is that history does not yield universal patterns or certain knowledge. Withdrawing from metanarrative, the early Schlegel, according to Handwerk, seemingly returns to a *historia magistra vitae* in which the past persists into the present through the mimesis of historical *exempla*. But this is not any kind of straightforward classicism, since what is in these examples is a form of singularity expressed in Schlegel's use of the "Characteristic" as the form for exemplary history. Moreover, the past is a storehouse of *Urbilder*, archetypes, that like Kant's aesthetic ideas were never fully realized, and are contingently transformable into new fragmentary concepts within the infinite horizon of history. In his later work, the conservatism of which is similarly a deferral of absolutes, Schlegel further explores this contingent, nonlinear history open to the past and the future. He increasingly moves away from a grecophile history to an interest in non-European cultures that we have also seen in Hegel. This countermemory which, for example, leads Schlegel to explore the unacknowledged debts of Greek to Indian philosophy, is "determinedly vague." Nevertheless it inscribes cultural and intellectual history within a return and retreat of the origin, appropriately for someone who writes that the "feeling for fragments of the past" is indistinguishable from the "feeling for projects—which one might call fragments of the future."<sup>15</sup>

While Handwerk implicitly opposes Schlegel's work to a more linear dialectic in Hegel, Plotnitsky finds a different complication of science, and specifically mathematics, in the work of Hegel himself. Mathematics, as Derrida argues with regard to Husserl, seems indissociable from a certain ideality. Indeed, historically, the grounding of philosophy in "mathematics" has been a figure for its self-certainty. But as Plotnitsky argues, through notions such as differential calculus (as developed by Leibniz) and the Greek discovery of



irrational magnitudes such as the diagonal of the square, this most ideal of sciences admits its own kind of materiality. Moreover, insofar as mathematics is the model for logic, these notions have a broader *philosophical* import that has a bearing both on the logic and on the architecture of thought.

In tracing these notions in Hegel's thought, Plotnitsky takes as his starting-point the idea of a "mathematical" Hegel, the logic of whose system no longer unfolds in a "Euclidean," homogeneous space. Plotnitsky, furthermore, repositions the mathematical in Hegel by connecting it to Deleuze's reading of Leibniz in *The Fold*, Leibniz himself being an important influence on Hegel. The Baroque fold is defined by Deleuze in terms of the interfold of the material and the conceptual/phenomenal, or in Plotnitsky's terms the trifold of matter, mind, and their interfold. In Hegel's thought the Baroque further acquires temporal, dynamic, and historical dimensions. Plotnitsky links the Baroque fold and the Hegelian Baroque, specifically in their mathematical aspects, to Deleuze and Guattari's view of philosophy as the creation of concepts and to their corresponding reconception of the "concept." Hegel's infinitely self-complicating system is topologically a manifold and temporally a spiral that unfolds and refolds itself through history. In the process it becomes a conglomerate of historico-political practices and conceptual-historical structures (including those of art, religion, and ethics): folds or spaces that are gathered up into a higher-level structure or "superfold." This superfold resembles Absolute Knowledge only in the sense delineated by Deleuze when he writes: "the Baroque invents the infinite work or process. The problem is not how to finish a fold, but how to continue it . . . how to bring it to infinity" in an idealism without absolutes.<sup>16</sup>

In our next essay, David Farrell Krell begins with an obvious difficulty: the Romantics and Idealists seem to elevate, not critique, the absolute. Krell takes up this problem by exploring the "ends" of the absolute in Schelling, Friedrich Hölderlin, and Novalis. Drawing on the multiple meanings of "end" as goal, termination, and deconstruction, he explores three subversions of the absolute: absolute inhibition, absolute separation, and absolute density. The de-absolutization of Idealism occurs because all three thinkers are as absolute in their commitment to the negative as to the positive elements of their thought. Moreover, in all three cases thought is unfolded by its unthought: by *Naturphilosophie* in Schelling, tragedy in Hölderlin, and chemistry in Novalis.

Krell begins with Schelling's development of the proto-Freudian concept of inhibition (*Hemmung*). Crucial here is one of the many materializations of philosophical ideas seen in this volume: in this case, the transfer of Fichte's dialectic of the I and Not-I from pure philosophy to nature, and thus to the realm of disease, sexuality, and death. De-absolutization occurs through a process of *absolutizing* not just the I but also its infinite inhibition. Indeed this paradox explains what is romantic in Schelling's *Destruktion* of Idealism

through the infinitizing of *all* its elements. Krell finds a similar process in the work of Hölderlin and Novalis. Novalis conceives God as the absolute density of the in-itself: “infinitely compact metal—the most corporeal . . . of all beings.” By pushing absolute identity to its limit, he allows the very concept of “god” to implode, seeking to access the materiality of some other life beyond the dead matter of spirit.

Krell discloses in Idealism a psychoanalytic materiality that is more centrally the focus of Joel Faflak’s essay, which focuses on Arthur Schopenhauer’s revisiting of Kant’s missed encounter with the unseen/scene of reason. *The World as Will and Representation* subverts Kant’s idealism by introducing into its own system the psychology of the philosophical subject, the “knower” who never actually knows itself. That Schopenhauer anticipates Freud is often noted. But less commonly discussed is the deconstruction of his philosophical corpus—even as deconstruction—by its own will. Faflak therefore does not stop at a reading that deals with the infiltration of philosophy by psychoanalysis through the *concepts* of representation and will. Such a reading would simply install Schopenhauer within an inverted Kantianism, an absolute nihilism or materialism. Instead Faflak reads the text as its own “autobiography”: a conflicted process in which the explicit unsettling of Idealism is itself displaced by a resistance to this cognitive nihilism. The rationality of philosophy’s complete telling of itself (albeit as absolute nihilism) is thus haunted by a further affective materiality, which Faflak calls the “telling *body* of philosophy.” This body is both the corporealized will that discloses the unconscious of philosophy, *and* the philosophical corpus that repetitively speaks its own unconscious. The primal scene of Kantian Reason turns out to be Schopenhauer’s missed encounter as well, leading to the trauma of a materialism without absolution. Thus even as he struggles to mourn it constructively, Schopenhauer is afflicted by an endless melancholy for the death of Idealism. This trauma is indeed written into the form of the text as an “analysis interminable”: an analysis that repeats itself from book to book, and then through the years in Schopenhauer’s revisiting and compulsive supplementation of his 1818 text (reissued in 1856).

The final three essays take up the persistence of the idealist problematic beyond Romanticism strictly defined, thus reflecting on the “futures of spirit.” Reading between the work of Søren Kierkegaard and that of Adorno on Kierkegaard, John Smyth analyzes how the former, despite its putative anti-Hegelianism, still holds the possibility of an idealism without absolutes. Smyth unsettles the conventional positioning of the religious in Kierkegaard’s corpus—and the field of Romanticism—as a form of metaphysics; instead he argues that by formulating the absolute as religious paradox, Kierkegaard avoids affirming it philosophically as a concept or dogma. The ethical and aesthetic, often opposed in discussions of Kierkegaard’s corpus, thus prove to

have a common structure in which Idealism, because it is dependent on a leap of faith, becomes subject to a deconstructive wager. Smyth then traces these deconstructive forces through the darker recesses of Kierkegaard's religious psychology in *The Concept of Dread*, which has as its primary focus a number of sacrificial aberrations and pathologies. Focusing on the anthropological ramifications of Kierkegaard's philosophy of the sacred, he raises the question of whether *The Concept of Dread* can generate a historical dialectic capable of reconciling Idealism and its psychic material, or whether its conception of history "leads down a more radical path indicated by de Man's reading of Schlegelian Romanticism." Smyth's response to this question, which sees dread as defining a space for speculation, makes the displacement of Idealism into religion and then the mediation or refraction of religion through psychology into the basis for a form of negative dialectics. This dialectic, generated by reading Kierkegaard through the resistances to/of his idealism, is more radical than Adorno's own dialectic, and thus discernible in the sacrificial logic of Adorno's aesthetic theory rather than in *Negative Dialectics* itself.

The sacrificial demands of what Hegel calls "Objective" Spirit and the dialectical unrest provoked by the pathologies of spirit are, differently, the subject of Rebecca Gagan's essay. Beginning with the university, which after Kant was conceived under the aegis of "philosophy," Gagan asks how philosophy is affected by the romanticism of the "university," conceived not just as an institution but also as the subject's relation to knowledge. Does the romantic university become a "sign" for the future, or should it be placed within the closure of metaphysics? To explore this question, Gagan takes up Bill Readings's account of the post-Kantian university as a university of "spirit" (in the conventional sense) and of a certain *Bildung* or "aesthetic education" accomplished through philosophy. Focusing on Hegel (rather than, as Readings does, on Fichte and Humboldt), Gagan suggests that the intellectual work of which this *idealist* university is an institutional image finds itself troubled by a more *romantic* relation of the community-subject to knowledge played out in Hegel's actual relation to the "work" of philosophy. Gagan returns to the question of discursive externalizations raised by Schulte-Sasse in his discussion of Hegel. Unlike Schulte-Sasse, she suggests that the work thus embodied as always vanishing, even if Hegel sees the need for a certain habit/habitus to facilitate this work. The work of art is perhaps the form of mediality that most (in)adequately embodies this work. The work of philosophy, of the university, can likewise be seen as aesthetic, given all the ambiguities that attend the discourse of the aesthetic in Hegel's own *Aesthetics*.

In our final essay, Richard Beardsworth also concludes by turning to the space of the university. Taking up a different position from Gagan's, that of the public intellectual, Beardsworth asks how the work of the university

might be transformed by recovering the cultural and ethical potential of an idealism that we should not too readily relegate to the closure of metaphysics. He starts with a near axiomatic opposition between Hegel as the philosopher of Reason, system, and teleology, and Nietzsche as a thinker of force, antisystem, and contingency. The ensuing construction of Nietzsche contra Hegel as the father of Theory has led to a dismissal of the idealism of "Reason" through a refusal to credit it with an *ethical*, as distinct from epistemological, sensitivity to difference. The result has been a loss of contact, in our own time, with the project of critical philosophy, and an impoverishment of materialist thought, especially in its emphasis on economics. Yet through a reading of Hegel's early *Spirit of Christianity*, Beardsworth shows that the "differential alterity" of the gift and death (in Derrida and Levinas) can be found at the heart of "spirit." Beardsworth's disclosure of an ethical core in critical philosophy itself involves a profoundly ethical reading of Idealism beyond metaphysics: a demythologizing of Hegel's early theological writings that tries to get at their "spirit." This spirit, Beardsworth argues, then becomes the basis, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, for "the 'speculative' nature of thought" itself, in the self-difference of its responsibility to "the manifold unity" of life.

Building on this transvaluation of Idealism, Beardsworth then discloses a greater proximity than we assume between Hegel's idealism of reason and Nietzsche's materialist genealogy which, among other things, involves a progressive spiritualization of force from the biological to the sovereign. He nevertheless sees an "aporia" between the two, which compels us to think not just with but also between Hegel and Nietzsche, and then beyond them to Marx and Freud, who must themselves be rethought and re complicated between Nietzsche and Hegel. Beardsworth stages these differences in the form of dialectic as described by Julia Kristeva, who insists on the necessity of marshaling "'terms,' 'dichotomies,' and 'oppositions,'" so as not to lose the force of the critical project in the grammatological movement of traces.<sup>17</sup> Yet the condition of possibility for this strategy is a continuous differencing of the dialectic, through a "spiral of complexification" that proceeds forward by returning to the past. According to this logic, which is similar to Plotnitsky's superfold, different thinkers, historico-political practices, and conceptual-historical structures fold into, unfold, and refold each other. The resulting epistemic realignments open up new possibilities for a culturally engaged and interdisciplinary philosophy that finds an enabling ground in Idealism's implicit practice of philosophy as "general economy."<sup>18</sup> Which is to say, as other essays in this volume argue albeit with different interdisciplinary stakes, that it is now time to think of Idealism romantically as its own future rather than poststructurally as the past.

## Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 11–12, 16, 24.

2. Julia Kristeva points to this role of Idealism in materialism when she re-introduces G. W. F. Hegel into the postmodern, by arguing that the microtextual movement of traces in grammatology “absorbs . . . the ‘terms’ and ‘dichotomies’” that Hegel “reactivates, and generates” (Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller [New York: Columbia University Press, 1984], 141). While Kristeva is arguing against Derrida here, grammatology arguably reabsorbs the Hegelian dynamic so as to deploy rather than dissolve or “reduce” it.

3. Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 35, 43. According to Kant, the “philosophy faculty consists of two departments: a department of *historical knowledge*” and one of “*pure, rational knowledge*” (45).

4. F. W. J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 14; Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper, 1965), 77. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters*, trans. Priscilla Hayden-Roy, in *Philosophy of German Idealism* (New York: Continuum, 1987), 217–84; Schelling, *Ages of the World*, trans. Jason M. Wirth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).

5. Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xi–xii.

6. G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*, ed. Ernst Behler, trans. Steven A. Taubeneck (New York: Continuum, 1990), 54. The project of introducing idealism into all the sciences is articulated by Schelling in *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 272 n.

7. I develop these points further in Tilottama Rajan, “System and Singularity from Herder to Hegel,” *European Romantic Review* 11:2 (2000); 137–49; Rajan, “(In)digestible Material: Disease and Dialectic in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature*,” in *Eating Romanticism: Cultures of Taste/Theories of Appetite*, ed. Timothy Morton (New York: Palgrave, forthcoming); and in Rajan, “In the Wake of Cultural Studies: Globalization, Theory and the University” (*Diacritics*, forthcoming). In using the term *encyclopedia project* here, I mean to indicate an encyclopedic reorganizing of the disciplines (e.g., in the *Aesthetics*) that exceeds and complicates, in its details, the more limiting and totalizing digest actually presented in the three volumes of the work titled *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (and consisting of the *Logic*, *The Philosophy of Nature* and *The Philosophy of Mind*).

8. I refer here to Georges Bataille’s distinction between “general” and “restricted” economies in *The Accursed Share*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1991). Restricted economy studies “*particular systems . . . in terms of particular operations with limited ends*” (22). By contrast, general economy has two

aspects: (1) a radical organicism wherein an individual phenomenon or discipline cannot be studied as “an isolatable system of operation” (19); and (2) a disseminative “energy” arising from this interconnectedness, the result of which is an excess “used for the growth of a system” (21).

9. I use “Idealism” to denote a specifically philosophical movement committed to dialectical totalization, identity, and system. However, “Romanticism” is the larger literary-cum-philosophical context within which Idealism emerges as no more than an “idea” continually put under erasure by the exposure of Spirit to its body. For further discussion of this *différance* see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 39–40, 122–23; and Ernest Rubinstein, *An Episode of Jewish Romanticism: Franz Rosenzweig’s The Star of Redemption* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 8–12, 18–19.

10. Schelling, *Philosophy of Art*, 8.

11. Georg Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, trans. Helmut Loiskandl et. al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 3–4.

12. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 67.

13. Friedrich Schlegel, “Introduction to the Transcendental Philosophy,” in *Theory as Practice: A Critical Anthology of Early German Romantic Writings*, ed. Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 255.

14. Schlegel, *Athenum Fragments*, in *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 21.

15. Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments*, 21.

16. Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 34.

17. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 141. See also note 2.

18. Richard Beardsworth’s criticisms of the current narrowed emphasis on economics clearly evoke Bataille’s project of thinking this discipline in particular within a more expansive framework (Bataille, *Accursed Share*, 19–26).