

comprendere il valore che la *Romantik* può avere ancora oggi nella discussione filosofica.

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Michael Forster, Johannes Korngiebel, Klaus Vieweg (eds.), *Idealismus und Romantik in Jena: Figuren und Konzepte zwischen 1794 und 1807*, Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2018, 342 pp. ISBN 978-3-7705-6296-1.

This book contains fifteen essays by some of the leading specialists of classical German philosophy, ranging from up and coming researchers to established and renowned experts; thirteen of the articles are in German, and two in English. As the title indicates, the time-frame covered particularly concerns the period of roughly a dozen years from 1794 up to 1807, and takes the university and town of *Jena* as its chief intellectual and geographical focal point. The book is divided into four main sections. Section I concerns the early romantic constellation around Fichte (especially Novalis). Section II treats Schelling (article by Markus Gabriel) and A. W. Schlegel; and concludes with a lovely and detailed overview of Schleiermacher's Plato translation (by François Thomas). Section III above all examines in three essays the intellectual relationship between Friedrich Schlegel and Hegel; as well as including two thought-provoking and impassioned defences of Hegel's philosophy of consciousness (Klaus Vieweg) and theory of absolute idealism (Sebastian Stein). The final Section IV of the volume is highly original, with essays on the later reception of important figures and issues that are often overlooked in the research on classical German philosophy, including the decisive thinker K. W. F. Solger (Francesco Campana); the relatively neglected constellation between Henry Crabb Robinson and Madame de Staël (James Vigus); the topic of the "given absolute" (Andrew Bowie); and romanticism and conflicts and modernity (Helmut Hühn). This short book review naturally cannot cover every essay in the volume, but will single out and confine itself to a few influential issues and concepts in the intersections between the currents of German idealism and philosophical romanticism around 1800. These intersections were in fact the primary motivation for an international conference originally held in Jena in 2017, and this volume is the expanded result of those proceedings.

Andreas Schmidt's original paper "Fichtes Begriff der 'Einbildungskraft' und seine Maimonschen Ursprünge" seeks to find an answer to the question: what are some of the historical sources of Fichte's conception of the imagination insofar as it hovers between two extremes or apparently contradictory elements that initially are irreconcilable? Schmidt convincingly argues that besides Kant one highly plausible yet little-noticed origin is the

philosopher Maimon; and from the work of Maimon, he then extends the genealogy back to the mathematical thought of Leibniz and Galileo (p. 13). Schmidt maintains that a central publication by Maimon in this respect is his 1794 *Versuch einer neuen Logik*, as well as several of his earlier texts, including the autobiography. Like in Fichte but unlike in Kant, Maimon puts forward a theory of the imagination in conjunction with apparent and real contradictions on the one hand, and as a universalizing faculty related to the mathematical method of fictions, calculus and infinity on the other, issues similarly discussed in Leibniz and Galileo (15-20). Schmidt had commenced his article by noting the reception of the Fichtean hovering of the imagination in Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel (11-12), and concludes it by posing a further intriguing research problem for Novalis research: could it be that the latter's notes on mathematics and the imagination also indicate that he was aware of this mathematical legacy in the philosophy of the imagination (23)?

Suzanne Dürr's contribution, "Fichtes Theorie der Subjektivität", furnishes an outline of Fichte's theory of consciousness in both the 1794/95 *Grundlage* and 1797/98 *New Presentation of the Wissenschaftslehre*. Her reading has at its core the question whether Fichte's model of subjectivity is truly aporetic or not, and if the early romantic alternative is therefore necessary (25). She first analyses the Kantian background to Fichte's theory of absolute I in his 1794/95 *Grundlage*, to the extent it is a self-positing, unified acting and generative agent, and compares it with Fichte's second later exposition in the *New Presentation*, particularly with respect to the issues of circularity and infinite regress, and Dieter Henrich's influential reading (28-33). Her concluding remarks touch on the claim that consciousness in Hölderlin and Novalis must be grounded in a form of pre-reflexive identity, and their view that Fichte's theory of self-consciousness only supplied a partial and incomplete form of this identity (38).

The articles of Marco Aurélio Werle and Kristin Gjesdal respectively examine the aesthetics and philosophy of art of August Wilhelm Schlegel. Werle strives to reconstruct the original idea of A. W. Schlegel's *Kunstlehre*, and to classify it as romantic aesthetics or "philosophy of art with systematic intentions" (73), not to mention to provide an exposition of A. W. Schlegel's "genuine obsession" with the *idea of an origin* (81), and its relation to mythology, language and phantasy (83-85). All these classifications, Werle notes, are not without difficulty, partly on account of issues like August Wilhelm's own brother Friedrich Schlegel's opposition to the idea of an aesthetics, and hence whether it still fits within the overall project of early romanticism (71-72). Werle also points out the natural-philosophical connection of A. W. Schlegel's *Kunstlehre* in the framework of the famous problems of the imitation of nature, manner and style. Not surprisingly, predecessors are Goethe's and K. P. Moritz's seminal essays on these same topics, with A. W. Schlegel, according to Werle, particularly defending an

organic theory of nature and a new understanding of imitation in the domain of art, one which becomes more and more internalized with regard to the outer objects of nature (76).

Kristin Gjesdal's insightful text, "Das Gedankenspiel – A. W. Schlegel zum modernen Drama und romantischer Kritik", firstly recalls the contrast between the incredible general European resonance of A. W. Schlegel's 1808 lectures *On Dramatic Art and Literature*, and their less than enthusiastic reception in academic philosophy. Gjesdal argues for the continuing importance of these 1808 lectures due to their aesthetic methodology, viewing them in relation to the dramas of William Shakespeare, whom A. W. Schlegel felt was a kindred romantic creator, even designating him as a "proto-romantic spirit". A. W. Schlegel of course became greatly admired precisely on account of his own uncanny talent for inhabiting in return Shakespeare's mind and translating his dramas into German. Gjesdal presents Schlegel's efforts to ultimately move beyond an Aristotelian dramatic heritage to develop a new comprehension of romantic drama and a philosophical concept of romantic critique. Here Schlegel's view of "romantic" drama as such is defined as any genuinely modern one that emerges from contemporary modern culture, and has its roots not in the French tradition of theatre (therefore agreeing with Lessing and Herder), but rather the Spanish and English Elizabethan traditions (85-88). Gjesdal also provides an analysis of the three key aesthetic categories of genius, genre and (organic) form found in Schlegel's theory of romantic drama, and particularly sees the latter two as still relevant and useful today (89-96).

Section III of the book contains three essays that directly compare the philosophical thought of Friedrich Schlegel and Hegel. I'll start with the last two essays, before concluding with Michael Forster's. Johannes Korngiebel's essay focuses on one particular year of the Schlegel-Hegel debate – the year 1801, when the two thinkers were both together teaching at the university of Jena. It provides an illuminating and entertaining introduction (181-189) to all the people, theories, philosophies, events and controversies of the year in Jena, including the difficult project of the romantic circle to realise a symphilosophy (187), the clashes between Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel on the one side, and seeds of the later conflict between Schlegel and Hegel on the other. The body of his essay is an extensive discussion of the lasting impact on Hegel of Schlegel's lectures on transcendental philosophy (190-208).

Folko Zander's valuable article "Hegels Kritik am Formalismus Kants und Friedrich Schlegels" undertakes an analysis of Hegel's criticisms and charges of formalism in Kant's practical philosophy and in Friedrich Schlegel's theory of romantic irony, in which formalism signifies for Hegel a specific conceptual deficiency (249). With regard to Friedrich Schlegel, aspects of Hegel's formalism criticism of irony take place in connection with

his critique of Fichte's absolute I (256), as well as in relation to the philosophy of right, where Hegel considers Schlegel's concept of irony as tending not to a genuine ethics or a fruitful understanding of duty but to subjectivism and "empty formalism" (257). Zander concludes with a section on Hegel's response to Friedrich Schlegel and the problem of formalism, in which Hegel's strategy is to lead the philosophical reader from these apparently "dead forms" to a "living unity" by means of the logical methodology and argumentative structure of his own system (258-263).

For Michael Forster, "Friedrich Schlegel was the real genius of German Romanticism" (139). One can perfectly understand that sentiment, particularly when Forster lists all the impressive achievements of Schlegel in the fields of linguistics and hermeneutics, but one could reasonably ask, if Schlegel might not have preferred to give that title to either his brother August Wilhelm or perhaps even more so to Novalis. Forster's highly engaging and sovereign contribution goes to the heart of Hegel's notorious critique of romanticism, and inverts the customary line of influence to show instead Schlegel's impact on Hegel, arguing for a number of anticipations in Schlegel's work of Hegel's later system, including among others: elements of the philosophy of absolute idealism; the synthesis of Spinoza's substance and Fichte's principle of consciousness; the reasons why the infinite substance had to become finite; philosophical thoughts on the whole and the idea of an encyclopaedia (140-142); and an impact with regard to his theory of tragedy (171-180). Forster greatly develops the thesis (143-155) that Friedrich Schlegel's early lectures in Jena from 1800-1801 on transcendental philosophy "introduced three important ideas concerning skepticism and its relation to philosophy which Hegel likewise took over and developed, which similarly came to play central roles in his own philosophy, and which are, moreover, of great intrinsic value" (155). Finally, the centre of Forster's essay contains a long discussion of Schlegel and Hegel in relation to logical principles, syllogistic reasoning, and the logic of C. G. Bardili (also an opponent of Fichte in 1801) that is exceedingly rare in the English-language literature (156-168).

This volume of fifteen essays is an important and stimulating addition to the burgeoning literature on the conjunctions and intersections between the streams of German idealism and philosophical romanticism. Yet the volume still manages to tackle these well-known currents from fresh and neglected angles, furnishing some of the most up-to-date and critical scholarship on this fascinating period in the history of philosophy.

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