

Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies

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Call for Papers

Idealism Revisited

Guest editor

Justin Prystash (National Taiwan Normal University)

Deadline for Submissions: June 30, 2020

Idealism is the philosophy of the immaterial: ideas and forms (Plato's *eidos*), but also consciousness, reason, experience, will, *élan vital*, spirit, soul, and mind. Since the rise of analytic philosophy in the early twentieth century, idealism has often been unfairly presented as advocating a dualism that exults the immaterial (and unverifiable) over the material. But during the past few decades there has been a flowering of interest in idealisms that attempt to reconcile or explain the nonhierarchical relation between the ideal and material. For instance, a number of contemporary philosophers, including Galen Strawson, Timothy Sprigge, Steven Shaviro, and Freya Mathews, have advocated for panpsychism—the position that all things, even stones and electrons, must have some rudimentary mind or experience. In addition, idealism may be found in seemingly unlikely places: the influential theoretical approach of “new materialism” argues—in the words of Diana Coole and Samantha Frost—that “there is no definitive break between sentient and nonsentient entities or between material and spiritual phenomena.” Thus, Elizabeth Grosz writes in her book *The Incorporeal* that “[w]ith the rise of so-called new materialism, it is perhaps necessary to simultaneously call into being a new idealism . . . that refuses to separate materiality from or subordinate it to ideality, resisting any reduction of the qualities and attributes of each to the operations of the other.” Whether we call it materialism or idealism, the recent attempt to think through the non-binary relation between the immaterial and material is an exciting development that promises to change the way we understand mind and matter.

It also promises to unfold new approaches to understanding literature. Idealism has long been a touchstone in explicating literature, from the impact of German Idealism on Romanticism to the impact of British Idealism on modernism. More recently, scholars have explored Victorian iconoclast Samuel Butler's panpsychism and the influence May Sinclair's idealism had on her Edwardian and modernist novels. As these examples

suggest, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe were particularly steeped in idealism (not to mention the American Transcendentalists), but how did idealist philosophies affect, and become affected by, literature in other periods and other cultures? For this issue of *Concentric*, we invite submissions that explore any aspect of idealism in philosophy and/or literature. Are we currently witnessing an “idealist turn” in philosophy? Which idealist philosophers deserve a reconsideration or can be placed in genealogical relation to current developments? What are the historical and conceptual relationships between British and American idealisms? Or Western and Eastern idealisms? In what ways are particular literary works idealist? How are idealist philosophical treatises literary? What is the role of literature in—and what are its techniques for—presenting the inner experience of humans, nonhumans, and material things? Are particular genres suited to this task? How are spirituality and mysticism depicted in and communicated through philosophy and literature?

Please send complete papers of 6,000-10,000 words, 5-8 keywords, and a brief biography to concentric.lit@deps.ntnu.edu.tw by June 30, 2020. Manuscripts should follow the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Except for footnotes, which should be single-spaced, manuscripts must be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman. Please consult our style guide at <http://www.concentric-literature.url.tw/submissions.php>.

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