



# Uncivil Unions: The Metaphysics of Marriage in German Idealism and Romanticism

*Adrian Daub*

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“What a strange invention marriage is!” wrote Kierkegaard. “Is it the expression of that inexplicable erotic sentiment, that concordant elective affinity of souls, or is it a duty or a partnership . . . or is it a little of all that?”

Like Kierkegaard a few decades later, many of Germany’s most influential thinkers at the turn of the eighteenth century wondered about the nature of marriage but rejected the easy answers provided by biology and theology. In *Uncivil Unions*, Adrian Daub presents a truly interdisciplinary look at the story of a generation of philosophers, poets, and intellectuals who turned away from theology, reason, common sense, and empirical observation to provide a purely metaphysical justification of marriage.

Through close readings of philosophers like Fichte and Schlegel, and novelists like Sophie Mereau and Jean Paul, Daub charts the development of this new concept of marriage with an insightful blend of philosophy, cultural studies, and theory. The author delves deeply into the lives and work of the romantic and idealist poets and thinkers whose beliefs about marriage continue to shape ideas about gender, marriage, and sex to the present day.

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