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A Comparative
History of Literatures
in European
Languages

romantic prose fiction

EDITED BY

Gerald Gillespie

Manfred Engel

Bernard Dieterle

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ROMANTIC PROSE FICTION

Edited by

GERALD GILLESPIE

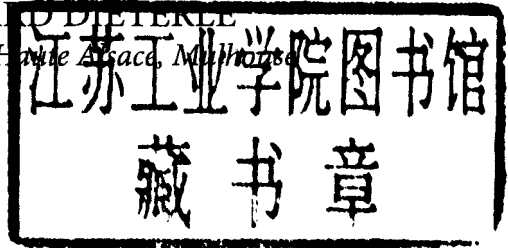
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Preface

In preparing this volume, our editorial team sought to keep a variety of readerships in mind. We wanted the contents to be interesting both to specialists in particular literatures that had experienced their own kind of Romanticism and to literary generalists and comparatists curious about shared characteristics that had surfaced in several traditions. Equally important in our view was that the cross-cultural studies in the three parts of *Romantic Prose Fiction* be more readily accessible also to those readers on all continents who are not primarily pursuing European and Euro-American literatures but nevertheless would like to explore Romanticism because it enjoys a wide reputation as the most significant cultural development immediately antecedent to Modernism. As the Introduction and many of the chapters themselves will set forth, the unfolding status of Romanticism, from its first manifestations down to the present, is a central matter the volume addresses.

While English, the working language here, is familiar as a lingua franca around the globe, some notes on our editorial choices will be helpful toward making this volume more »user-friendly«. Titles and quotations that were originally in English appear unaltered in the main text. Titles from other language streams appear in a conventional short form in the relevant language and are followed by an English version in parentheses. Non-English quotations always appear translated in the main text, and their original wording is given in an attached footnote. Quotations from languages that employ other alphabets or characters are transliterated into roman script.

In the case of Russian, we use a modified version of the Library of Congress transliteration system. In order to avoid confusion in punctuation and indexing, ligatures have been eliminated. The final »soft sign«. (') has been dropped from personal names, while the medial soft sign has been replaced by *i*, except where in Russian this sign is followed by a consonant or an *i*. The soft sign has been retained, however, in transcriptions of Russian titles and in quoted passages of Russian text. Our Index arbitrarily treats the Russian letter *ë* (= *yo*) and *е* (= *ye*) in names by substituting a plain *e*; for example, Fedor (=Fyodor) Dostoevskii (=Dostoyevsky).

The lack of any reference to the provenance of a translation always means that the writer of the chapter or one of the co-editors has furnished the English version. However, if the writer of the chapter draws on a published translation, that will be indicated by a reference interpolated in the main text.

Every chapter carries its own bibliography. Whether a work listed therein pertains to primary or secondary literature or is a published translation, all titles stand in a single alphabetical order. Thus the reader can easily find the fuller bibliographical data for any short-form reference in the main text. The Bibliography of a chapter ordinarily does not carry all titles of works that the contributor may have found to be of some help but does not refer to explicitly or that are referenced in passing as well known classics. Although each Bibliography in general follows Anglo-American norms, it is not strictly »anglicized« in every detail; for example, sometimes the convention of another language may determine an element in an entry (e.g., the form *München* is often used in preference to the normal English form *Munich* as a place of publication).

The Index constitutes a valuable resource for exploring the volume's contents. But because *Romantic Prose Fiction* involves comparative literary history with its attendant rich cultural variegation, the reader is cautioned to expect differences in the naming habits from one language stream or culture to another. These variations, plus differences in the transliteration of names from languages which employ cyrillic letters, may affect the placement of the key element of a name in our alphabetical listing of figures. However, readers will be able to find prominent Russian names in the Index under their conventional American and British forms.

Generally, names have been assimilated to Anglo-American conventions; in some few instances, however, the conventions of another language may be used to place the name. Another factor to keep in mind while searching the Index is that the naming conventions have shifted in many languages over the centuries. One of the most striking examples of this is the co-extant, sometimes variable use of personal names and of family names for figures in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance; these habits became fixed by custom and survived to our times in English (and, in addition, may vary among modern European languages). Hence Michelangelo Buonarroti is alphabetized under the letter M, while François Rabelais appears under the letter R. In the case of anonymous authors and pen-names, the probable or well-known »actual« name will ordinarily be shown in parentheses in the Index. As an extra aid, such names will frequently be cross-referenced.

To achieve a desirable uniformity in punctuation, treatment of titles, footnoting, and bibliography, these were adjusted to conform to a recognized American standard, but not in every particular. For example, contemporary British treatment of the placement of quotation marks has been observed, while the quotation marks themselves are a widespread French and German kind. Whenever a contributor consistently employs British spelling (e.g., *favour*, *levelled*, *harmonise*, *centre*, *gaol*, as against *favor*, *leveled*, *harmonize*, *center*, *jail*), that original orthography has been preserved. In certain cases, the spelling of a name or proper noun has been normalized to the form commonly used in English. But while the transcription of names (or other locutions) into roman characters ordinarily follows a consistent system, the original version used in the particular chapter may be preserved in some cases for its special value.

The process of communicating with colleagues from many nations in order to produce a collaborative, cross-cultural study of so multifarious a literary realm as Romanticism is far too complicated to describe here. We have incurred numerous debts in the course of our efforts. We have benefited from the advice of dozens of scholars, of members of ICLA's Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, and of the two outside experts, Angela Esterhammer (University of Western Ontario) and Fridrun Rinner (Université d'Aix en Provence), appointed to vet the results and suggest final touches. Special thanks are due to Dr. Uwe Spörl, who created our original webpage at the FernUniversität Hagen, and to the crew there who undertook the first major round of electronic »norming« of a diverse set of chapters, especially Sonja Zimmermann. The editors also express their gratitude to persons at the project's second home, the Universität des Saarlandes in Saarbrücken, who assisted with further formatting and other technical help, especially Dr. Dorothea Lauterbach. Dr. Johannes Birgfeld, Kerstin Lauer, Hannah Löken, and Kathrin Reichart have earned our thanks for assembling the some forty parts of the completed volume manuscript in the form of a through-paginated electronic file and working out the initial version of the Index

at Saarbrücken. Dr. Katja Brunkhorst, too, kindly offered various expert help in early stages. Marie Louise Wasmeier helped in the production of authors' first proofs and in implementing the emendations needed in various chapters, as well as in preparation of the volume's Index. Mary Shields Franklin, Marc Petersdorff and Benjamin Specht helped in reading the proofs and compiling the final version of the Index. The professional staff of Green Library at Stanford University have been of constant help throughout this endeavor. Stanford's Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages and School of Humanities and Sciences have generously given grants in support of Gerald Gillespie's research and editorial efforts in the final stages of the project. The Coordinating Committee of ICLA has contributed welcome support toward checking citations and bibliographic details. At Stanford, William Leidy assisted the editors in checking transliterations from Cyrillic into roman characters and in general proof-reading. Gerald Gillespie is grateful to the former and current administrative assistants in the German Studies Department at Stanford, Linda Judd and Kate Steilen, for all their help with bureaucratic and practical chores in support of this project.

Naturally, English was not the first working language of many experts who contributed to the volume, and we are grateful to them both for their patience in responding to our communications, often couched in English, and for their generous efforts to get their texts translated into English. André Lorant wishes to thank Alan Raitt (Oxford University) for assistance in checking the English text of his chapter. Our main contacts at John Benjamins Publishing, notably Isja Conen, have been very helpful to us in readying the volume for press.

We feel fortunate in having attracted so many fine comparatists to participate in this project as either counselors or contributors. Yet, far more important than the numbers involved is the quality of the collaboration we have been privileged to experience. It has been heartening to discover the enthusiasm with which international comparatists will rally to a team project of great complexity when each individual knows his or her contribution must, by definition, exhibit the natural limits of any single topic, thesis, or approach. For this collegial spirit, sharing in a task that only a team can hope to manage and then can accomplish only in part, we express our sincere indebtedness. One purpose of a volume like *Romantic Prose Fiction* is to stimulate in the minds of the finest connoisseurs a sense of what remains to be done (an ideal agenda which, as the Conclusion will reiterate, constantly has nagged our thoughts). Of course, for those gaps, lapses and imperfections in the completed text which have somehow escaped our attention, we alone, not our collaborators, bear the responsibility.

Bernard Dieterle (Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse)

Manfred Engel (Oxford University)

Gerald Gillespie (Stanford University)

Introduction

1. The Romanticism subseries

Romantic Prose Fiction rounds out a subseries in the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages. The present volume is preceded by *Romantic Irony* (1988), *Romantic Drama* (1994), *Romantic Poetry* (2002), and *Nonfictional Romantic Prose* (2003). The five volumes in the Romanticism sub-series are the products of collaboration by separately recruited teams of comparatists from many nations; each volume is thus an independent work, with its own distinct Introduction, and employs approaches appropriate to its subject matter and task. However, from the start the sub-series has benefited from the interest of a core advisory and editorial group, and certain decisions taken early on set the main channels through which these volumes gradually acquired the character of an interrelated group. In addition, a significant number of Romanticists contributed chapters to more than one volume, and their ability to treat particular topics compactly and to set them against an implicit larger background greatly strengthened the whole sub-series and helped profile important congruities and continuities within it, as well as to recognize significant divergences and special situations obtaining from one cultural territory to another.

Thus we encourage readers to take advantage of the Appendix which carries the tables of contents of the earlier volumes in the Romanticism sub-series. The listing of chapters there can serve as a useful guide for exploring some topics across our generic divisions and for finding supplemental materials. There are several further volumes in the CHLEL series which naturally intersect with ours and which readers may also wish to consult. As its title indicates, *Le tournant du siècle des Lumières 1760–1820: Les genres en vers des Lumières au Romantisme* (The Turning Point of the Enlightenment Century: Genres in Verse from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, 1760–1820; 1982), edited by the late György M. Vajda, treats the very important decades which carry us readers to the Romantic threshold in lyrical, dramatic, and narrative poetry. And once that threshold has been crossed, the volume looks back at cultural indebtedness to, and disjuncture from, the Enlightenment era, including predecessor sentimentalism and “pre-Romantic” stirrings. The companion volume *Die Wende von der Aufklärung zur Romantik 1760–1820* (The Turn from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, 1760–1820; 2001), edited by Horst Albert Glaser and György M. Vajda, explores discourses of the revolutionary age, cultural, religious, and philosophic currents, tendencies in the sciences, and aesthetic and poetic theories over the same span. Although the largest part of the two volumes of the *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (2004, 2006), edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, is dedicated to more recent political history and discourses, their project offers valuable avenues for supplementing the Romanticism sub-series. First and foremost, it amplifies attention to the huge set of regions that tend not to receive adequate care in studies by comparatists whose expertise hitherto has tended to be more concentrated in Western European areas. In addition, it picks up on a range of social, philosophical, and literary discourses that flow beyond Romanticism and into Modernism.

The idea of creating a Romanticism sub-series was championed by Henry H.H. Remak, one of the founders and an early chair of the Coordinating Committee, the self-renewing editorial council the International Comparative Literature Association placed in charge of supervising the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages, the »super-series«. The first shaping moment for the projects on Romanticism occurred in the course of preparing the volume on *Romantic Irony*, under the editorship of Frederick Garber. Garber led the effort to appreciate Romantic creativity in terms of one of the major tendencies that had appeared in many different artistic media and literary genres, yet not to lose sight of the historical dimensions of the phenomena under examination or of crucial facts of variability — the relative prominence, weakness, or absence — of Romantic characteristics across a wide assortment of cultures. The contributors to *Romantic Irony* sought to avoid replicating any rigid concept of a single-minded stylistic period or dominant intellectual coding; rather, their aim was to present the evidence of new cultural impulses and currents that surfaced in the European »polyphony« of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, traits that came to be understood, often in retrospect, as characteristically Romantic. Another goal was to identify the persistence of these impulses and currents as factors in later phases of European literary culture and its extensions in the New World.

Thus the volume *Romantic Irony* deliberately reached out in several directions. It acknowledged Romanticism's own important literary and philosophical debts, as well as the facts both of cultural variability and of cross-cultural stimulation; and it stipulated that a fuller literary history would consider a wealth of reactions for and against Romanticism over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — a task subsequent volumes have sought to engage again in more detail.

While national peculiarities were by no means neglected, *Romantic Irony* clearly suggested a new kind of framework for viewing literature as part of cultural life. The volume brought together the discussion of Romantic theory and the facts of Romantic innovation in treating generic expectations, especially in narrative and theater, and considered the inroads of Romantic attitudes in painting and music and other realms. Several understandings guided this first venture. The editorial group working with Frederick Garber believed that a literary history written in the late twentieth century had to go beyond »merely« giving an objective account of Romantic views at the time of their emergence and in the context of that past moment. Two centuries had passed since the main tide of Romanticism had begun to rise, and at least one century had elapsed since later authors had witnessed both its main receding and then its reappearances in a series of secondary waves. The editorial group believed that, unless contributors were explicitly embracing specific tenets as components of their own world view, they should not assume that positions key in the Romantic age were »correct« or »self-evident«. By the same token, contributors whose task was to exposit the positions taken by later generations of writers, artists, and critics vis-à-vis the Romantics were obligated to label their own agreements if they felt rapport with some historically nearer cultural moment in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. It was considered important to distinguish between one's own intellectual predilections and the act of recognizing factors in a dynamic succession of historical moments. Not to acknowledge »point of view« (even if only by »shorthand« indicators, in the economy of available space) would seriously diminish the value of the volume as a literary history for

the non-specialist and for non-European readers whom it was also meant to serve, and would cloud issues even for specialists in specific literatures or topics.

The initial team (principally Frederick Garber, Milan Dimić, Gerald Gillespie, and Virgil Nemoianu) also regarded the various nations and regions to be not fixed essences, but products of complicated historical processes which had to be appreciated, although that might occur for the most part tacitly (again for very pragmatic reasons of space). The latter-day »nations« of Europe were considered, within the particular temporal framework under examination, as constituting relatively stronger and weaker focal points of Romantic art, as being sometimes only minimally or partially interactive, and sometimes dynamically influential or receptive, — and as belonging to the bigger system of a polycentric civilization, a system that in fact had already extended itself in a variety of ways to other areas of the world beyond Europe. While many newer immigrant nations had evolved further since the Renaissance phase of overseas colonization, and in the course of their development had acquired their own distinct systemic coherences and complexities, literary relations of New World countries to the older homelands and the European super-system often were closer and more relevant two centuries earlier in key ways. Hence the Romanticism projects had to remain open to the possibility that artists in territories outside Europe might sometimes share certain important traits with primary Romantic creators in Europe, perhaps more so than did some nearer neighbors on the old continent.

The editorial group also grappled with the challenge that the scope of the proposed sub-series posed. Two perennial subjects recurred at conferences which the sub-series supporters sponsored (too many to cite here): recognition of how enormous and variegated was the literature to be addressed, and the question how to »inventory« it in a meaningful way without descending into taxonomic fragmentation. A red thread running through the earliest discussions was the desire not to reject any coherent approach, whether genetic, formal, or final, and to avoid erecting artificial divisions among kinds of literary art. A consensus emerged that it was necessary to explain to readers the rationale for divisions which purely organizational pressures imposed, and that a great deal of crosshatching between volumes should be permitted as a way to overcome natural limitations. The editorial group hoped, by inaugurating the sub-series with the volume *Romantic Irony*, to break the mould of expectations which older »positivistic« (and usually »national«) histories of literature had established. The cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives of the first volume could then be extrapolated for use in further volumes that were to be loosely structured around older generic divisions for organizational purposes.

To »manage« the overwhelming treasury of Romantic writings, and to do so from comparative perspectives, was the daunting proposition. The general plan that was favored struck a compromise between reverting to generic models inherited from Renaissance and Enlightenment poetics and employing new ways to evaluate formal properties of literary art, to explicate themes across a body of works, and to detect epochal congruencies and breaks. It was thought that a volume on *Romantic Drama*, under my editorship, would be a productive way to follow upon the initiative of the volume on *Romantic Irony*. This allowed a re-beginning with a body of works that was relatively well-defined and less voluminous, yet exhibited some of the most pronounced examples of Romantic experimentation and innovation. An extra incentive was that the team's views regarding the vitality of Romantic drama ran counter to the commonplace verdict

about this period in many literary histories written within a national framework. The drama volume's twenty-six chapters, gathered into four parts, underscored the combination of diachronic and synchronic evaluation. Part 1, »Renewal and Innovation«, dealt with Romantic debts and creative breakthroughs. Part 2, »Themes, Styles, and Structures«, compared primary dramatic concepts and phenomena of Romanticism across a range of cultures under topical headings. Part 3, »Affinity, Dissemination, Reception«, looked at the appearance or adoption of Romantic traits in several cultures in northern, eastern, and southern Europe and in the Americas, which ordinarily were neglected in studies that concentrated on the Romantic »golden triangle« of Britain, France, and Germany. Part 4, »The Romantic Legacy«, examined the consequences of Romantic innovation and vision in dramatic literature reaching down to the present.

Angela Esterhammer next designed and carried to completion the volume *Romantic Poetry*. Esterhammer's division of the volume into four parts exhibits a logic extensively similar to that of *Romantic Drama*. Part 1, »The Evolution of Sensibility and Representation«, deals with the emergence of symptomatic attitudes and themes in lyrical writing, with some attention to structure. Part 2 looks at the favored generic types and in a number of cases relates them to pronounced Romantic interests (idealist philosophy, mythology, religion, etc.). Part 3, »Romantic Poetry and National Projects«, examines how poets across Europe and North America contributed quite directly to refurbishing or creating meta-narratives of cultural origin and identity. Part 4, »Interpretations, Re-creations, and Performances of Romantic Poetry«, considers the oft-times delayed play-through of Romantic concepts and forms and the uses made of Romanticism by later poets and critics as recipients in the cultural stream. *Romantic Poetry* strives for methodological variety of approach, but one can describe its results in the aggregate as striking a balance between scrutiny of issues of periodization and attention to the particularity of regional aspects of poetry.

2. The prose projects

Toward the end of the 1990s, the editorial team (now principally led by Gillespie and Nemoianu) turned its energies to devising a plan concerned with prose writings. The experience of the first three volumes had brought home forcefully the lesson that it was important to contextualize literary works not only on a »horizontal« axis of comparison, but on a »vertical« axis of historical moments and flows. The editorial team was keenly aware of the dilemma posed by the sheer bulk of prose writings, their extraordinary generic variety, and their metamorphoses and fortunes over time — not to speak of foundational, yet contested, definitions of narrativity, of fiction, and related issues. It seemed foolhardy to attempt to encompass the whole range of prose under a single cover in a colossal volume. That would mean joining comparative studies of particular forms considered high literary art, for example, the novella, with studies of such forms as the essay, the philosophic treatise, expositions of scientific theories, historiography, the diary, biography, newspaper accounts, political tracts, sermons, and much more. To be sure, it would be possible to discriminate habitual themes common across the board or to trace formalistic attributes common both to fictional narratives and to discursive prose. Many topics could legitimately be invoked as the collective rubrics under which to locate the most disparate

kinds of prose. Proposals by some of the most dynamic Romantic theoreticians to dissolve the boundaries among genres, to marry the critical principle with the artistic (F. Schlegel), to make prose poetic (Novalis), to create a »Gesamtkunstwerk« embracing all the arts (F. Schlegel, Hugo, Wagner), might be cited to justify a new literary history that straddled the universe of prose.

But the editorial team had faced this question before, when choosing to organize volumes around two generic cores, drama and poetry. The analysis of Romantic innovations, in dismantling dramatic conventions, erasing the boundary of theatrical illusion, and anticipating modern anti-theater and theater of the absurd, did not abolish the accrued repertory of European theater and the persisting constants in the construction of plays, or consciousness of the larger saga of dramatic literature and of theater. The fact that dramas were sometimes written in verse, sometimes in prose, or that they often were mainly narratives, even epical or cosmic in scope, did not abolish the perceived survival of distinct modes of literary art which were principally poetic expression or prose narrative, and not drama. The fact that writers might cross over back and forth between standard forms of prose fiction and dramatic dialogue (Diderot), or internalize poems inside prose tales (Eichendorff), or create prose-poems (Baudelaire), or pen lyrical moments in prose that might include rhapsodic philosophical utterance (Novalis), did not abolish the separate polarities of drama and prose and poetry as ordinary readers and listeners in the several cultures recognized them.

The editorial team was also already pledged not to write a literary history about Romanticism in subservience to Romantic theorizing, even though we regarded its influence as fascinating and virtually inescapable, as built into the general heritage; and likewise we were obligated not to endorse later brands of theory recycled or heavily derivative from the Romantic thinkers, at least not without making a clear avowal of our personal agreement and dependency. Hence our discussions behind the scene included pondering the place of critical modes such as »deconstruction«, which we agreed was in many respects an epigonal derivative of a negative drift in Romantic theory and inherently a-historical, thus methodologically unsuitable for use in a literary history — yet certainly worth notice as a subject matter in our kind of effort to follow the repercussions of Romanticism. Chapters in our volumes dealing with prose might report on the kind of relationship »deconstruction« bore to Romanticism or how key »deconstructionists« construed Romantic writings, but it turned out that no individual contributors volunteered to espouse markedly post-Romantic views as convictions they themselves held personally.

Our conscious effort to distance ourselves from the Romantics, while attempting to respect their views in their own right, seemed to present the hardest problem. Yet the obstacles fell that might have inhibited taking the practical organizational step of pulling apart two vast realms of writing: one which on balance more obviously consisted of fictional narratives in prose and one which primarily consisted of discursive statements in prose. We did not feel ourselves bound intellectually by such events as attempts on the part of certain Romantics to »dissolve« generic boundaries, any more than we would feel bound by pre- or post-Romantic attitudes about genre. We nonetheless often felt regrets over making distinctions in borderline cases — for example, by placing biographical writing inside the frontiers of discursive prose, when in so many instances it so clearly spilled over into the territory of fiction. The main point, and partial consolation, was for editors and contributors to remain as conscious as possible of how specific works might fit under more than one register and »belong« to more than one volume.

A certain amount of internal negotiation ensued as the co-editors of *Nonfictional Romantic Prose* (Nemoianu and Steven Sondrup, with Gillespie as associate) weighed the appropriateness of topics and subgenres, with a weather eye on the expected future design of *Romantic Prose Fiction* (to which I would eventually turn). In anticipation of these efforts, Esterhammer and the prose team agreed on some inherently arbitrary placements of topics. The prose poem could just as well have been assigned to *Romantic Poetry*, but for purely organizational convenience it was conceded to *Romantic Prose Fiction*. Similarly, it was decided to treat the long verse narrative in the latter volume in connection with Romantic fascination for »romance« forms of story-telling in prose as well as verse, in distinction to the »novel«. And the editorial group felt it was natural and desirable that a number of subject matters should be addressed on both sides of the fiction-discourse ledger with emphases appropriate to each volume — for example, the tensions and relationships between history and romance, between mythological shaping and historical consciousness of culture, and the like.

Nonfictional Romantic Prose presented its contents within an innovative framework that utilized multiple categories for grouping discursive modes. Following the General Introduction as Part 1, Part 2 on Romantic Theoretical and Critical Writing has the place of honor and is the volume's largest section. Part 3, *Expansions in Time*, treats approaches to history and myth, while Part 4, *Expansions in Space*, follows Romanticism in travel literature and in new nations overseas. Part 5, *Expansions of the Self*, examines genres that deal with identity formation. Part 6, *Generic Expansions*, is concerned with the peculiarly Romantic aspects of essay writing, periodicals, almanacs, and more. The chief emphases of Part 7, *Intersections: Scientific and Artistic Discourse in the Romantic Age*, are the rise of modern psychology, and renewal of art and music criticism. Part 7, *Intimations of Transcendence*, explores spirituality and belief as major factors in the Romantic world view and aesthetic expression. Part 9, or the Conclusion: *The Explosion of Romanticism: Centrifugal Energies*, is a synthesizing tour de force, which weaves a suggestive larger picture of the age's dynamics.

3. *Romantic Prose Fiction*

I agreed to serve as lead editor of the prose fiction project with Manfred Engel and Bernard Dieterle as co-editors. A well-attended workshop on Romantic prose fiction at the Sixteenth Congress of ICLA at Pretoria, South Africa, in August 2000, permitted several dozen Romantics to confer there in person on pertinent questions. In the course of implementing the project, the editors conferred, mainly by e-mail, with some two hundred scholars who expressed interest in participating and submitted suggestions, sketches, and drafts in several languages. Out of this gratifyingly large set of proposals, some forty were selected for their appropriateness to the project as comparative studies and most were carried to completion, while in a couple of cases multiple proposals by the same author were merged to produce broader chapters.

The reader now holds in hand the results of this international collaboration by comparative literature scholars. While we hope *Romantic Prose Fiction* will be of service for many decades to further generations of readers who find themselves attracted to aspects of Romanticism, the sheer variety and magnitude of the rich fare of Romantic literature dictates that other scholars

must supplement and renew our efforts. There must and will be future venues for this moveable feast, and we are confident newer banqueters will eventually »re-digest« the heritage. Our concluding remarks will evaluate what has been achieved under the main headings and will suggest some desiderata which future international comparatists might profitably consider addressing. I shall confine myself here to describing the structure of the volume in general terms as it evolved out of several intensive years of discoursing with dozens of Romanticists from many nations as well as in internal consultations among our editorial group and the Coordinating Committee.

We regarded Part 1, »Characteristic Themes«, to be an indispensable general platform, and this heading was the most popular insofar as the number of proposals sent in by prospective contributors showed. However, this omnium gatherum rubric raised a number of obvious reservations in our minds. It is difficult to set limits in tracing themes and motifs, as many move through the centuries in some guise or other and can be deemed »universal« to that extent. And by their nature many themes immediately suggest related themes, and one is naturally tempted to expand to surrounding matter. One task is to perceive when a cluster of themes burgeons with particular implications so that one can detect in its prominence some clue as to the character of the then contemporary interest during a cultural period. Another task is to measure the intensity of a theme and/or its penetration crossing over the terrains of several or many cultures, so as to recognize that it clearly qualifies as a leading indicator. In view of the fact that we wanted *Romantic Prose Fiction* to acknowledge the indebtedness of Romantics to their own past, and not just to identify Romantic contributions or virtual inventions, it was only logical that we had to mix some thematic chapters that had a stronger diachronic side with some that were more decidedly synchronic in approach.

There is a healthy, expected, considerable overlap among the volume's parts. Part 2, the rather complex middle part, is caught in a natural field of tension between Parts 1 and 3. Similarly, it is divided into sections that reflect this interplay and tension. Section A of Part 2 moves to the level of »Generic Types and Representative Texts« and attempts to draw attention more formalistically to the shaping of literary works by Romantics and to their predilection for certain genres and text types, but it necessarily includes significant thematic materials, on the one hand, and discursive features, on the other. Section B of Part 2, »Modes of Discourse and Narrative Structures«, straddles the territory with a pronounced emphasis on discursivity within works of fiction. This includes artists' manner of address, various habits of treating consciousness, society, the world, and the appearance of structuring forces as if from some interiority of the age. Part 2 is resolutely focused on what the Romantics accomplish. But it can come as no surprise that these accomplishments, and aspects of Romantic vision, have had multiple repercussions and summoned later commentators to ponder them.

Paying tribute to this postlude or aftermath is the job of Part 3, for which our team saw a potentially broad and diverse portfolio. The basic activity would consist in viewing Romantic prose writings from perspectives established over time, and at special moments of critical intervention posterior to Romanticism proper; and in considering not just the metamorphoses and self-questionings of Romanticism in its heyday, but attacks upon and/or open or veiled co-optations of Romanticism. For example, it seemed legitimate to include material that examined Romantic writings in the light of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophies of culture

(e.g., Positivism, Marxism, Jungian analysis, Foucaultian »archaeology of knowledge«, etc.), and of various stylistic or critical waves or movements after Romanticism (e.g., Decadence, Modernism, Expressionism, Postmodernism, etc.).

Part 3 was also conceived as the principal place to house chapters on the uses of Romanticism as a cultural resource and on its territorial diffusions, receptions, and assimilations; to consider how Romanticism became built into successor cultural repertoires as a legendary element (just as the Romantics themselves had earlier been attracted to recapturing the European past and speculating on human culture beyond Europe). Naturally, we anticipated that, to examine Romantic writing in its original and subsequent contexts, some potential contributors might draw on more formalistic approaches — for example, semiotic analysis or polysystem theory — pitched at various levels of complexity for dealing both with phenomena within defined cultural streams and with interactions among cultural streams. It stood to reason that investigations in Part 3 of features of genre, innovation, context, cross-influences among media (painting, music, architecture, etc.), tie-ins with social systems and technologies, and so forth, might revisit issues which made their initial appearance especially in Part 2 (and, naturally, might have surfaced also somewhere in the volume *Nonfictional Romantic Prose* and other volumes of the sub-series). It likewise stood to reason that some contributors might venture in Part 3 farther afield from »mere« discourse analysis, grounded on the known history, into the creative realm of »final« criticism, that is, to stake out their philosophical understanding of the bigger picture. Our team stood ready to accept »final« statements, if they were openly made in Part 3 (or indeed, if such statements were advanced at an appropriate point in Parts 1 or 2). After all, our kind of literary history proposed to examine not just »synchronic« slices of writers' practices and ideas in a European grid, but also »diachronic« flows of practices and ideas. Clearly labeled attempts to synthesize »our« collective experience of Romanticism as of the opening decade of the new millennium would not be out of place.

Thus our »history« of Romantic prose fiction is »comparative« in several regards. It routinely crosses linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries, and it deliberately re-contextualizes Romanticism in multiple generic strands and at many historical-cultural junctures. The present volume does not limit itself to monumentalizing Romantic imaginative writing and discourse as something marooned in the past, even though the peculiarities of its »pastness« are important in several chapters. Rather, the volume provides, at least in the form of a sketch or outline, a sense of how certain powerful moments or factors in culture — here in the instance of Romanticism — become built-in as active elements of the cultural repertory, maintain a certain discursive potency, inspire new imaginative writing, and serve as motivation or pretext for attempts to veer away in new directions.

That is, the kind of literary history we seek to practice here, collectively, involves the combination of synchronic and diachronic analyses, and an openness to systemic aspects of literary culture as a living flow. At the same time, it requires an »anthropological« appreciation of deeply rooted human impulses that find expression in the arts. Our literary history acknowledges approximate temporal boundaries to the main wave of Romanticism in Europe at large and to its local appearances. But it also acknowledges the afterlife of Romanticism down to our own moment, and it does so without bowing to any ideological construct of our moment as an easy way of explanation (at least, does not tolerate bowing as an evasion, that is, any bowing without

careful weighing of final principles). This particular literary history acquires a relevance and vitality by dealing with Romanticism with a sense of respect, a respect that involves consciousness of indebtedness but also rests on a sense of our own scholarly independence and participation in a different cultural moment. It does not attempt to overwhelm what seem like long-enduring facts of human activity connected with our research object: most notably, the frequently manifested attraction and appeal of Romantic imagination, thought, and writing.

Gerald Gillespie

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