


about analogy in new ways if we are to produce the new knowledge necessary to live into that future (p. 259).

Bookending his book with chapters about men who constructed and recorded theories of life that were shaped and reshaped by the imaginative literature, and that shaped and reshaped imaginative literature makes Griffiths's book itself a work of analogy. Analogy shows us how things are like one another, and in doing so doesn't only show the nature of the thing or the relations between them, but produces insights that wouldn't otherwise be available. New insights are produced over time, which recasts how we understand previous insights, as yesterday shapes tomorrow and tomorrow is shaped by how we see yesterday. Our future may be 'no-analog' but we are also still between. 

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Paul Hamilton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), xvii + 838pp. ISBN 978-0-1996-9638-3; £95 (hb).

BEGINNING IN GERMANY IN THE 1770S with the *Sturm und Drang* movement, by the 1820s Romanticism had swept through Europe conquering the French, Italian and Spanish literary worlds, and then from the West to Eastern Europe. The development of a new Romantic European culture highlighted some profound links and affinities between various nation states: in particular, a shared concern with the modern concept of nationhood; debates about rights, liberty and freedom; and a human longing for infinitude. This illustrates to the reader social worlds that are deeply interconnected through the shared experience of the revolutionary context and the political culture of the eighteenth century.

Paul Hamilton's well-thought-through and well-planned collection of essays in *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* surveys the work of key Romantic authors from across Europe thus enabling comparisons between different languages and cultures. Although the volume vindicates both Arthur O. Lovejoy's claim that diversity is a distinctive feature of Romanticism and René Wellek's argument for the essential unity of European Romanticism (p. 1), through a variety of subjects and chapters it also aims to address what Hamilton calls the 'transferable skill or formative impulse in response to historical circumstance' (p. 2). In other words, Hamilton is very clear in his intent: the *Handbook* was produced in response to key historical and political developments

such as the failure of the French Revolution, the Peninsular and Napoleonic wars, Napoleon's fall from power and the 1815 Congress of Vienna. The editor points out that even though Lovejoy and Wellek in the 1940s wrote about Europe, New Historicists have tended thus far to write almost exclusively about British Romanticism. Interdisciplinarity and comparativism contribute to the book's distinctive flavour and the collaboration between scholars from across Europe enables comparisons between varieties of Romanticisms.

There is no explicit reference through the pages of the book of revisionist approaches to debates about European Romanticism that have replaced a focus on national contexts with a new interest in trans-European phenomena, such as studies by Remak (1961), Furst (1969), Bone (1995), Breckman (2015) and others. Nonetheless, the book implicitly challenges Lilian R. Furst's claim in the second edition of *Romanticism in Perspective: A Comparative Study of Aspects of Romantic Movements in England, France, and Germany* that 'it is evidently erroneous to compare these Romanticisms as if they were based on an agreed definition, as if they meant the same thing'.<sup>1</sup> Rather, this volume demonstrates that Romantic authors of Europe are inextricably connected and in relation to not only ideas about nature, the self, the function of art and the artist, and the role of imagination, but especially in their commitment to political, historical and national causes.

In his general Introduction to the book, Hamilton discusses the main editorial decisions he had to face in preparation for this Herculean task, which are around geography and discipline, but with the particular intent of wanting 'to observe divisions with relation to languages rather than places' (p. 4). For this purpose, the *Handbook* is thus organised under the two headings of 'Languages' (Part I)—whose intent is to extract and develop interactions especially between French, German and Italian Romanticism (though Hamilton is sharp in suggesting that 'writing which is interdisciplinary and comparative does not necessarily create cosy agreements about synergies' [p. 6])—and 'Discourses' (Part II). This rich collection of essays brings the echo of Romanticism's voice closer to the present with resonant clarity and Hamilton is explicit in suggesting that this volume opens up new questions around 'what are borders for? What is a nation? What do we still have in common despite political difference? What is Europe's "other"?' (p. 8). This link between Romantic identities and the contemporary ideas of what it means to be European, particularly in terms of how present-day societal dynamics are challenging Romantic concepts of Europeaness, is even more significant if we think that references to British Romanticism feature only in small part in the volume.


An important feature of the *Handbook* is its structure. Preceded by an erudite outline Introduction, the two main parts comprise forty-one chapters in total. Yet, these forty-one chapters appear somehow disproportionately distributed. The essays of Part I (Languages), thirty-one in total, are organised in nine uneven subsections. While the first subchapter on French Romanticism includes eight essays, the one on German ten and the one on Italian five, the sections on

Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, Scandinavian and Greek Romanticism only feature one essay each. Although this might be a necessary choice dictated by scarce and outdated critical and theoretical research conducted in the field, and the virtual absence of English-language translations of the actual texts, it nonetheless leaves the organisation of the book a little unbalanced. Furthermore, although this editorial choice might be necessary for most of the languages mentioned here above, it seems quite unusual that the section on Spanish also includes one essay only. Indeed, scholarly work on Spanish Romanticism has now for long been heavily influenced by the views propounded by the British Hispanist Edgar Allison Peers in his monumental *History of the Romantic Movement in Spain* (1940), through the more fresh research work produced and published in recent years by scholars such as Diego Saglia, Susan Valladares and Ian Haywood.

In order to rectify this imbalance in the organisation of the book, I wonder whether the essay on Balzac and Alexander Dumas by Bradley Stephens (Chapter 5) should appear perhaps in an Afterword, as both Balzac and Dumas belong, strictly speaking, to French Realism? Furthermore, it would have been more useful, I think, to avoid repetition of material as in the two chapters on Goethe (Chapters 16 and 17) and Leopardi (Chapters 21 and 22) to allow for more variety in terms of authors and themes discussed. On a more positive note, with such wide-ranging views to present, the inclusion of the sections on Eastern Europe establishes a coherent framework for the interconnectedness of European Romanticisms. This interconnected structure is central to Hamilton's goal: to trace new lines of scholarly work in understanding the ideas and legacy of Romanticism. The essays of Part II (Discourses), ten in total, explore themes such as political thinking, science, religion, the theatre, celebrity culture and theories of languages, to then conclude with an essay on Europe's discussions of Britain. Although Hamilton suggests that Part II 'fills out and develops the comparative logic' of 'the largely author-based language studies' (p. 4) in Part I, I wonder whether it would have been perhaps more beneficial to open the book's organisation with 'Discourses' as Part I? This option would have helped readers to engage in European Romanticism's general thematic preoccupations before moving to a discussion of more specific studies on languages.

Ordinarily, a review of an essay collection highlights the general features of the book rather than a detailed analysis of all chapters. Yet some of the essays in this collection deserve special mention, not least because of their impact—for instance, on the contemporaneity of Romanticism. To start with, Biancamaria Fontana's chapter on Germaine de Staël's notion of Europe (Chapter 2) reconnects discourses on the emergence of Europeanhood then and now. In particular, Fontana perceptively argues for Germaine de Staël's 'novel intuitions about modern society, about the politics, morals, and aesthetics of a new age' (p. 33); many of these values are also pertinent to European society today. On a similar note, the essay by Jean-Marie Roulin (Chapter 3) explores the modernity of Chateaubriand's work by focusing on discourses of migrations, revolutions and exile, and opens up new avenues of investigation around the legacy of French

Romanticism for our own time. As Roulin makes clear, characters such as René and Atala are migrants who ‘in the back and forth between exile and return, abandonment and reintegration’ (p. 54) yearn for a new beginning—though often the return is of an impossible nature. Like Chateaubriand, who ‘often felt himself to be on the margins’ (p. 53), his characters move from native France to England, Italy, America and the **Orient**. As real ‘citizens of the world’, they hope for a world that values multiple perspectives; yet their sense of a more global knowledge improves the development of their own national identity and social individuality. Finally, Patrick Vincent begins the concluding essay (Chapter 41) by suggesting that ‘long before the creation of the EU, Europeans were strongly divided regarding British exceptionalism and the place of Britain within European civilisation’ (p. 807), to then appropriately and sharply review images of Britain in European discourses and their productive relation to Romanticism between 1750 and 1850.

With its many voices and many views, *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism* is a much-needed volume, which presents an extensive range of interpretations and implications on the interplay between current social, political, economic and linguistic issues all arising from the work of European Romantics. European Romanticism’s questions are still relevant yet possibly unanswerable. This remarkable collection of essays, each tracking distinct yet related lines of inquiry from two hundred years ago to the present, serves as a reminder that the past is never past, that Romanticism is still contemporary and that ‘Languages’ and ‘Discourses’ seldom have boundaries. This volume shows how Romanticism can still teach us to read and see. It breathes enthusiasm and scholarly care in a way that appeals to a wide range of readers. The choice of contributors is harmonious and refreshing. Containing useful, reader-friendly features such as suggestions for further reading, this clear and engaging *Handbook* is an invaluable resource for anyone who intends to study and research the complexity and diversity of the Romantic period, as well as the historical conditions that produced it—thereby appealing to a genuinely interdisciplinary audience. 

## NOTES

1. Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective: A Comparative Study of Aspects of Romantic Movements in England, France, and Germany*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 22.

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