

JOHN CLAIBORNE ISBELL



AN OUTLINE OF
ROMANTICISM
IN THE WEST



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3. Romantic Novel and Verse Romance: Is There a Romance Continuum?

You're going to need a bigger boat.
Steven Spielberg, *Jaws* (1975)

0. Prefatory Remarks on Terminology

This chapter is a quest, or if you prefer a hypothesis. It treats two Romantic-era corpuses: the novel and the long poem, arguing for their common debt to the medieval and early modern romance tradition. Two alien objects distort our grasp of Romantic-era production: for prose, two centuries of goal-directed work on the 'realist novel,' and for verse, the much longer epic critical tradition. English usage also severs the novel from the romance, and that prompted this project, bothered as I was to see Friedrich Schlegel's magical ideal, as stated in his 1800 *Brief über den Roman* (Letter on the Romance), translated as *novel* while he cites Shakespeare and Ariosto as models. Retranslate his term as romance, and we can argue that his vision for a new art form was indeed carried out by his contemporaries. This will historicize some lingering positivist historiography and perhaps trace a new continuity between Romanticism and the twentieth century—in particular the history of the modern novel, from Joyce to magical realism.

To begin with, *novel* and *romance*. Spanish and Portuguese, French, Dutch, and German, share the word *novela/nouvelle* and variants, meaning in origin a short fiction presented like a news item. The *Oxford English Dictionary* evokes Boccaccio and cites a source from 1566, a century prior to Littré's first source. Swedish, Danish, Norwegian,

Russian, Serbo-Croatian, and Czech, however, use *roman* and variants for both novel and romance, as Italian uses *romanzo*; their term *romansa/romans/romance* is for ballads and music, a distinction shared by all twelve languages. In short, half of Europe's major languages have no separate term *novel* to distinguish verse from prose in extended narratives. The French and German term *nouvelle/Novelle* is for a minor genre, the short story, though German keeps *Romanze* for verse. England's anomalous 'novel' category and history evidently misrepresent European Romantic production, a distortion that our usage of the term *romance* will avoid. This also seems truer to the history of the genre; the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Large Dictionary of the Italian Language, 1961-, 19 vols) opens with an apt historical review, moving from the Greek *Daphnis kai Chloë* (Daphnis and Chloë) to eleventh-century romance-language narratives, "originally in verse" but shifting to prose in the later Middle Ages, to the sixteenth-century verse of Ariosto, then back to Cervantes and Rabelais presented as a prose "transformation of the epic and heroi-comic poem," to what we might call a refilling of that form with new content in the works of Fielding, Richardson, and Defoe.¹ The verse *Childe Harold. A Romaunt* and *Evgenii Onegin. Roman v stikhakh* (Eugene Onegin. A Romance in Verse) are as much a part of that long romance tradition as are Austen, Dickens, Balzac, or Manzoni—or Scott and Fenimore Cooper, for that matter, who called their works *romances*.

A word on the musical form. Central to Spanish literature is the *romance* or short ballad. The form begins before the *reconquista* as narrative fragments from epic poems, on *The Cid* for instance; the sixteenth-century *romancero* is one of many collections. As Europe rediscovered ballads in the late eighteenth century, France in particular acquired a taste for writing *romances*, borrowed like the word from Spain, sung aloud in Paris salons or embedded in stories where the hero or heroine sing them. The musical fashion, like the word (*romansa*, etc.), reached Europe from France, and Germany and Italy produced famous settings: Beethoven, Rossini, Verdi. Mendelssohn's *Romances sans paroles* (Romances without words) are a paradox Verlaine later exploits in poetry. This short form may seem tangential to our romance vs. novel

1 "originariamente in versi," "trasformazione del poema epico ed eroicomico." *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, ed. Salvatore Battaglia, 19 vols (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1961-), "Romanzo."

investigation—much as a Tasmanian wolf is not a wolf—but it is linked historically, in the breakdown of medieval Spanish ‘epic’ or romance, thematically, as a narrative form whose favored content is love and chivalry, and generically, since romance ballads are frequently embedded in romance fictions by Romantic authors, even in fictions in verse. Again, I posit that the Romantic era perceived a ‘romance continuum’ which has since and regrettably been occluded by critical vocabulary. The very word *romantic*, which derives directly from *romance* (as in Scott’s 1824 *Essay on Romance*), might have warned against that occlusion.

What, then, is a non-musical romance? It seems worth listing some elements, to compare with Schlegel’s list for his *Roman*. The term derives from the Latin *romanice*; a tale in the vernacular. So, it is a tale, a narrative, not a drama or a “How do I love thee?” lyric poem; narrated, it is not an epistolary novel, though those may have romance elements. Since its naming, it has reviewed love and chivalry, or at least courtly etiquette; this also applies to the works of the seventeenth-century *Précieuses* like Mlle de Scudéry, the influential soil from which Defoe and Mme de Lafayette arise, and to the popular romance tradition that continues through the next century alongside canonical male novelists, leading uninterrupted through the 1790s. The romance genre is thus, bizarrely, simultaneously a courtly, popular, and folk tradition: its heroes are courtly, its popular success visibly continues today, and it speaks for a national against a Classical tradition, a sort of people’s voice. Its place in the political spectrum, for a Revolutionary-Imperial Europe, is usefully ambiguous, more complex than that of the ‘bourgeois’ realist novel we have inherited, as it happens, from Champfleury.

Two other themes are wit and imagination. Wit is more than humor; Mlle de Scudéry’s fairly serious romances are full of the embedded narratives and arabesques which represent Friedrich Schlegel’s ideal, which he finds splendidly expressed in Ariosto or Cervantes. The arabesque is pure form, independent of any mimesis; the romance tradition frees art from imitating reality, and we can trace this freedom in some ‘realist novels’ we shall mention. One thinks of Lukács’s argument that Balzac’s realism is based in unreality, or of Baudelaire’s bewilderment that people should ever call Balzac a realist.² As with

2 Georg Lukács, *La Théorie du roman*, tr. Jean Clairevoye (Paris: Denoël, 1968), pp. 104–105, on Balzac: “Le démonisme subjectif et psychologique qui caractérise son

modern magical realism, an art where the real and the ideal cohabit has more scope than straight realism for showing how will and circumstance—or energy and matter—divide the human condition, in a truth self-evident to Europe after 1789.

The remainder of this chapter briefly reviews various Romantic literatures, focusing on the verse-prose frontier and the presence of ‘romance’ in this art. Giving a new entelechy to these creations will sometimes be an act rich in ideological consequences, notably in resituating the artwork’s relations to the imagination and to the European tradition, both literary and historical. This is a global hypothesis, making minimal use of biographical sources, for instance, which offer ground for further remarks.

1. German Lands

In 1800, Friedrich Schlegel, like Wordsworth the same year in his new preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, writes in reaction to “frantic novels” and “outrageous stimulation.” Schlegel’s entire *Brief über den Roman* (Letter on the Romance) addresses a woman who has been reading the wrong novels, and Wordsworth’s parallel reminds us that Gothic romances were Europe’s best-selling fictional genre in the 1790s, and perhaps beyond. Though Schlegel calls her reading *immoral*, this is not a simple stand against a feminized or Gothic reading tradition (contrast Section 2: The British Isles); he instead targets Fielding and the forgotten Lafontaine. Within this didactic space, Schlegel both describes his ideal for the future and anchors it in a past tradition, by means of examples stretching from antiquity to contemporary writing; the whole lies within the larger frame of his *Gespräch über die Poesie* (Talk About Poetry), reminding us that verse and prose are for Schlegel intimately linked.

The text opens with Amalia’s remark that Jean Paul’s works are not romances (or novels) but instead “a bright jumble of sickly wit.”³ The

œuvre constitue pour lui une réalité ultime.” And Baudelaire: “J’ai maintes fois été étonné que la grande gloire de Balzac fût de passer pour un observateur; il m’avait toujours semblé que son principal mérite était d’être visionnaire, et visionnaire passionné.” “Théophile Gautier,” in Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), II, p. 120.

3 “ein buntes allerlei von kränklichem Witz.” Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische und theoretische Schriften* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), p. 202.

narrator agrees, calling such *grotesques*—one thinks of Hugo—“the only romantic products of our unromantic age.”⁴ The term *novel* loses both pun and etymology in this famous remark, as in the subsequent “a romance is a romantic book.”⁵ He links sickly wit to the arabesque, stressing Sterne and Diderot but adding Swift, Ariosto, Cervantes, and Shakespeare in his argument that, in an unfantastic and ironic age, nature poetry emerges as playful wit and arabesque. The terms echo those of Schiller’s 1795 *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (On Naive and Sentimental Poetry), which calls modernity divided. Goethe’s “I call the Romantic the sick” also seems apt. Schlegel goes on to praise both the fantastic in art and the ironic reading of bad books as kitsch, the suspension of disbelief or a divided self that winks at its own enthusiasm. He cites the term *Roman*’s history in an apt definition of the *romance*: “that is Romantic which gives us a sentimental content in a fantastic form.”⁶ He compares Petrarch and Tasso with what he calls Ariosto’s *Romanzo*, stating that the spirit of love must be invisibly omnipresent in Romantic poetry. In the visible world, fantasy and wit must intimate the riddle of eternal love. The next words contain Schlegel’s epochal distinction, the first in history, between Classical and Romantic poetry. Romantic or romance poetry pays no attention to “the difference between appearance and reality, between play and seriousness.”⁷ Where the Classics use mythology, Schlegel argues, Romantic poetry rests on history, and romances from the medieval *Roman d’Alexandre* (Romance of Alexander) to *Le Grand Cyrus* (The Great Cyrus) five centuries later are famous precisely for their magical treatment of historical figures. He concludes thus: “I seek and find the Romantic in the older moderns, in Shakespeare, Cervantes, in Italian poetry, in that age of knights, love and fairy tales, whence the thing and the word itself arise [...] As our poetry with the romance, so that of the Greeks began with the epic.”⁸ Visibly,

4 “die einzigen romantischen Erzeugnisse unsers unromantischen Zeitalters” F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, p. 203.

5 “Ein Roman ist ein romantisches Buch.” F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, p. 209.

6 “ist eben das romantisch, was uns einen sentimentalischen Stoff in einer fantastischen Form darstellt.” F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, p. 206.

7 “auf den Unterschied von Schein und Wahrheit, von Spiel und Ernst.” F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, p. 208.

8 “Da suche und finde ich das romantische, bei den ältern Modernen, bei Shakespeare, Cervantes, in der italiänischen Poesie, in jenem Zeitalter der Ritter, der Liebe und der Märchen, aus welchem die Sache und das Wort selbst herkommt [...] Wie unsre

the standard term *novel* will do odd things to this statement. Schlegel opposes this genre to the drama, not an organic whole, and to the epic, lacking wit and an individual's voice. Songs are different: "I can hardly imagine a romance otherwise than mixed with narration, song and other forms."⁹ Any theory of the genre must itself be a romance, he adds, with authors as characters; Novalis will do this with *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (Henry of Ofterdingen, 1801). Romance, Schlegel suggests, should contain the author's quintessence; he praises memoirs and confessions, and values peculiar detail even in the false school of Richardson and Rousseau, so lacking in lived reality. In 'realist' novels' plots, Schlegel values only the closing arabesque where fates are magically tidied. In all this, one thinks of Bakhtin's dialogic imagination.¹⁰

German authors carried out almost all this agenda. Schiller wrote a romance, *Der Geisterseher. Aus den Papieren des Grafen O* (The Ghost-seer, 1787–1789). Schlegel contrasts fairy tale and *Novelle*; Goethe writes one of each, with those titles. Like Voss's *Luise. Ein ländliches Gedicht* (Luise, 1795), Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* (Hermann and Dorothea, 1782) is an idyll rather than a verse romance; *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (The Sorrows of Young Werther, 1774) is epistolary, and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (Elective Affinities, 1809) is closer to Henry James, but *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (William Meister's Apprenticeship Years, 1795–1796) is the first *Bildungsroman*, tracing a child's rejection of bourgeois utility in favor of the theater's illusion, a self-reflexive meditation on art, illusion, and the self. Like *Faust*, it contains embedded songs. Schlegel reviews *Meister*, and Novalis wrote *Ofterdingen* as a non-realist reply: during the Crusades, the dreamy Ofterdingen (a historical *Minnesinger*) travels with merchants and family, finding his own story and face in an ancient romance manuscript, learning of the poetry hidden in all things—war, mining—and of the coming magical transformation of the world. Embedded tales and eighteen embedded poems dissolve borders between poetry and prose, dream and waking, and disperse the framing narrative into a harmonic pattern which ends unfinished.

Dichtkunst mit dem Roman, so fing die der Griechen mit dem Epos an." F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, pp. 208–209.

- 9 "Ja ich kann mir einen Roman kaum anders denken, als gemischt aus Erzählung, Gesang und andern Formen." F. Schlegel, *Schriften*, p. 210.
- 10 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, trans. by M. Holquist and C. Emerson (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).

Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen. Eine altdeutsche Geschichte* (Franz Sternbald's Wanderings, 1798) is a less fantastic reply to *Meister*: it is the artistic wanderings of Dürer's pupil, echoing the delicate meditation on art Tieck co-signed with Wackenroder, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (Heart's Outpourings of an Art-Loving Monk, 1796). Tieck is more ludic and self-reflexive in plays like *Der gestiefelte Kater. Ein Kindermärchen in drei Akten* (Puss in Boots) or *Leben und Tod des heiligen Genoveva. Ein Trauerspiel* (Life and Death of Saint Genevieve), mixing lyric and drama. His later historical romances like the Shakespearean *Dichterleben* (Poets' Lives, 1826) or *Vittoria Accorombona. Ein Roman* (1840, a year after Stendhal) draw on Scott. Hölderlin's *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland* (Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece, 1797–1799) is a poet's epistolary novel, a Werther fighting for Greek independence with his lovely "Song of Fate" near the end. Schlegel wrote his own dullish *Lucinde. Ein Roman* (Lucinde. A Romance, 1799).

Jean Paul's dozen good novels are not full of lyric pieces. *Die unsichtbare Loge. Eine Lebensbeschreibung* (The Invisible Lodge, 1793) and its appendix *Leben des vergnügten Schulmeisterlein Maria Wutz in Auenthal. Eine Art Idylle* (Life of the Contented Schoolmaster Wutz, 1793) were, he said, held together by the binding.¹¹ Von Knör promises his daughter to the man who can beat her at chess; her child is tutored by a man named Jean Paul. *Hesperus* (1795) is narrated by another Jean Paul, a man who lives on a remote island, basing his news on dispatches from his dog. *Blumen-, Frucht- und Dornenstücke oder Ehestand, Tod und Hochzeit des Armenadvokaten F. St. Siebenkäs* (The Marriage, Death and Wedding [...] of the Lawyer Sevencheese, 1796) has the hero, or perhaps his double, writing Jean Paul's *Devil's Papers* for him; we are midway between Sterne and Flann O'Brien. Jean Paul and Siebenkäs reappear in *Titan* (1800–1803), which ends in a wild parody of Fichte. *Des Feldpredigers Schmelzle Reise nach Flätz* (The Field Preacher Schmelzle's Trip to Flätz, 1809) is full of footnotes, "numbered at random and with no reference to anything in the text."¹² A desolate German imitator of Jean Paul, signing himself Bonaventura, produced the brilliant *Nachtwachen* (Night Watches, 1804). So much for Weimar and the Berlin *Frühromantiker*.

¹¹ Jean Paul, *Reader*, p. 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Dickens certainly knew of Jean Paul, whom Carlyle translated, and his influence on the arabesques of E.T.A. Hoffmann is marked, as is his mix of sentiment, wit, and magic. In Hoffmann's *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr nebst fragmentarischer Biographie [...] in zufälligen Makularblättern* (Life Insights of Tomcat Murr alongside a Fragmentary Biography, 1819), for instance, the philistine tomcat uses the verso of the violinist Kreisler's tormented memoirs to write his own dull autobiography, and the two stories are published interleaved, both parody and enthusiasm together. *Bleak House* (1852) does something like this, juxtaposing idyllic and ironic chapters. Among Hoffmann's shorter pieces, *Der Sandmann* (The Sandman) opens Offenbach's opera, linking magic and nightmare grotesque as *Nußknacker und Mausekönig* (Nutcracker and Mouse King) does. In Hoffmann's world, heroines are thrown out of windows or bump their heads—*Rat Krespel, Doge und Dogaressa* (Councillor Krespel, Doge and Dogaressa)—in a call to earth from romance. In sum, Jean Paul and Hoffmann fuse the ideal, the real, and the parodic, as Schlegel desired; Hoffmann is rarely self-referential (though his "Don Juan" is), but his tales are full of artists. Chamisso and La Motte Fouqué, fellow Prussian Romantics, produced two more classics in this vein: *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (Peter Schlemihl's Wondrous Story, 1814), in which Schlemihl sells his shadow to the devil, and *Undine* (1811), in which a water sprite weds a mortal, as in Andersen. Two other Berliners: before his 1811 suicide, Kleist presages in his tales another aspect of Hoffmann, the weird combination of deadpan and grotesque, though he lacks the fantastic element; Eichendorff's short *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (From the Life of a Good-for-Nothing, 1826) has fourteen embedded poems in its idyll reminiscent of Jean Paul. Heidelberg meanwhile produced Brentano's folk tale *Geschichte vom braven Kasperl und dem schönen Annerl* (Story of the Good Kasperl and the Fair Annerl, 1817) and *Godwi oder das steinerne Bild der Mutter. Ein verwilderter Roman* (Godwi or the Mother's Stone Image, 1801–1802), whose hero narrates his own death (like the frenetic Pétrus Borel's 1833 *Champavert. Contes immoraux*), and Arnim's *Isabella von Ägypten* (Isabella of Egypt, 1812) and *Die Kronenwächter* (The Crown-Watchers, 1817–1854), two romances: Isabella enchants Charles V, two noblemen guard the last emperor. Arnim's 1817 preface, "Poetry and History," stresses the value of historical romance, after Scott's *Waverley* (1814) but before Fenimore Cooper or Dumas.

Such is German prose narrative, 1780–1830; German has little prominent verse romance in this period, though Bürger’s ballads and Klopstock’s epic *Der Messias* (The Messiah) drew attention. Ironic play and aporia, magic, and historical romance—three elements which are largely anathema in ‘the realist novel’—run throughout this corpus, midway between Sterne and the twentieth century; Fontane’s later realism seems almost a hiccup or diversion. Moreover, this production is routinely seen as the central corpus of the period; even the theater of Schiller draws on elements from this magical tradition (*Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, The Maid of Orleans), as do Goethe and the Romantic dramatists, the great anthologies and translations, and the critical texts. The corpus elaborates a self-conscious German identity, anchored in folk and medievalism in distinction to French classicizing hegemony. The ironic play between will and circumstance seems at its most extreme in Hoffmann, where the sandman’s glasses blind Nathanael, but this only crystallizes a gulf between dream and reality that runs throughout this war-torn society and its productions. It is not the commonsense world of Fielding. It is instead the terrible, post-1793 world of romance. This is no tranquil bourgeois ascendancy, though tranquility may be regretted or desired. Much of this local tradition stayed in Germany, but not all: besides Schlegel’s epochal distinction, *Werther*, Jean Paul, and E.T.A. Hoffmann had a broad influence on world Romanticism, notably in France, Britain, and the United States (compare Mérimée, Gautier, Dickens, and Poe).

2. The British Isles

A growing consensus has traced a continuous, largely female British romance tradition from approximately Lyly to the Brontës, presenting the realist school of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding as a “younger sister,” to quote an author of 1787—linked, rival, and semi-independent.¹³ Williams’s 101 eighteenth-century prefaces, extracts, and reviews realign *post hoc* distinctions, calling Fielding’s *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* a “prose epick composition,” like Fielding’s own preface to

13 Compare Williams, *Novel and Romance*, Kiely, *Romantic*, McDermott, *Novel*, Langbauer, *Women*, Ross, *Falsehood*, Richter, *Progress*, Hoeveler. *Gothic*. Williams, *Novel and Romance*, p. 341.

The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, or reviewing Richardson's romances.¹⁴ Kiely cites Clara Reeve in 1785: "The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it was written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what has never happened nor is likely to," an apt definition of Kiely's twelve 'Romantic novels': Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story* (1764), Beckford's *Vathek. An Arabian Tale* (1786), Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Godwin's *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), Lewis's *The Monk. A Romance* (1796), Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1803), Scott's *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer. A Tale* (1820), Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).¹⁵ Reeve continues: "Romances at this time were quite out of fashion, and the press groaned under the weight of Novels," but her *The Old English Baron* is subtitled *A Gothic Story*.¹⁶ Walpole, Beckford, Lewis, Shelley, and Maturin use magic directly—Vathek, Lewis's monk, and Melmoth all deal with demons—but as Schlegel stated, Romanticism depends from its outset (which might be Walpole?) on doubt and ironic suspension. Hogg's murderer of his older brother may also have made a satanic pact, but we like him cannot be certain—any more than Radcliffe's and Austen's 'silly' heroines are certain about reality, or than Scott's Edward Waverley or Emily Brontë's narrator quite understand events they encounter. As in Kant or Berkeley, there is an epistemological gap between the perceiving self and perceived reality. Here lies the horror of Caleb Williams—discovering Falkland's murder of Tyrrel, he has crossed that gap into a world he cannot present within a *Tom Jones* plot, and his epistemological isolation makes him a hunted pariah. It is curious that Godwin calls this work *Things as they are*, while his *Imogen: A Pastoral Romance* and *St. Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century* are called romances. Even the straightest contemporary heroic romances, like Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), tend to have Gothic elements like prison, torture, and witch trials to them, reflecting the compromising of romance that Schlegel and the Gothic both address. In these terms, Romantic 'parody'

14 Williams, *Novel and Romance*, pp. 126, 437.

15 Kiely, *Romantic*, p. 3.

16 *The Progress of Romance*, p. 1785, in Langbauer, *Women*, p. 64.

has a fantastic, compromising function, less *An Apology for the Life of Mrs Shamela Andrews* than Schlegel. Kiely reflects that view in his inclusion of *Nightmare Abbey*, and we will meet the idea again throughout Europe, from Byron to Stendhal to Pushkin.

If Gothic irony and wit rely on a divided self, this also appears formally in the systematic new use of chapter epigraphs, starting with Radcliffe and Lewis, then followed by countless Romantics—Scott, Shelley, Maturin, Peacock, and Eliot in England, Cooper and Poe in America, Hugo, Mérimée, Vigny, and Stendhal in France, along with Byron and Hemans in poetry. Epigraphs are broadly unknown in the European novel until then. They have countless functions—fetish authenticity for a narrative, a marker for historical continuity (Vigny), a tuning-fork setting for what follows—but three functions closely echo Schlegel. First, ironic play in the Jean Paul tradition, and an invitation to dialectical arabesque; like Scott’s “Old Play” attributions or Hugo’s *Han d’Islande* (Han of Iceland), Stendhal routinely concocts epigraphs, even “Truth, bitter truth” to open *Le Rouge et le Noir. Chronique du XIX^e siècle* (Scarlet and Black).¹⁷ Second, a fracturing, as in Novalis, of linear narrative and the hegemonic self it implies (who *speaks* these epigraphs?). And third, again like Novalis, a breakdown of the borders between poetry and prose, dream and reality. Lewis’s taste for epigraphs from Augustan poets neatly reverses priorities, situating their reason amid his satanic chaos. Despite Genette’s excellent work, there is more to be said here; epigraphs are, after all, the primary means by which lyric interlude punctuates Romantic prose narrative.

Since Scott and Byron shaped world Romanticism and other British authors broadly did not, they merit focus. One reason for this chapter was Scott’s switch in 1814 from best-selling metrical to prose romances, often attributed to Byron’s huge success with *Childe Harold* (1812–1818), and perhaps also reflecting the success of Edgeworth’s novels. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), influenced by Southey, sold 15,000 copies, followed by six other verse romances up to *Harold the Dauntless* (1817)—indeed, Scott wrote verse even after *Waverley*. All sold very well, and as Scott’s biographer Lockhart suggested, he likely switched for esthetic, not financial reasons. Byron, he felt, could reveal “a deeper region of the

17 “La vérité, l’âpre vérité.” Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, epigraph.

soul than his own poetry could stir," an apt verdict that Scott's pooh-poohing of his own poetry supports.¹⁸ Scott's verse narratives seem listless, distracted by form from storytelling, while his twenty-eight prose narratives explode with invention. America and Europe (Cooper, Dumas, Manzoni) followed Scott in using prose romances—*vox populi*—to tell their nations the story of their existence, and the century's historians had equal debts to his work. *Waverley* opens these windows. Whalley's chapter in Eichner traces the rare and contested instances where Britain's major Romantic poets use the term *romantic*, or what you find in a romance. As Pepys wrote, "The whole story of this lady is a romance and all she does is romantic."¹⁹ Kiely finds three instances of the term describing *Waverley*'s initial impressions, each qualified—"almost, not precisely, bordering on"—and concludes that Scott is ironizing an "adolescent fever fed by exotic reading," as do Peacock or Austen.²⁰ Lukács and others thus argue—as they of course would—that Scott is an antiromantic ironist, reclaiming him for the realist novel. Kiely notes instead how the irony diminishes, and the hero's way of seeing things "is quite literally swallowed up by his new environment," until *Waverley* can be led forward by a fair Highland damsel, writes Scott, "like a knight of romance."²¹ Verse and the Gothic are stylized forms that constrain their authors; Scott in *Waverley* has found a bridge to Coleridgean suspension of disbelief by passing through irony at the outset, and this will simplify the task of his successors. Richter likewise argues that Scott's footnote erudition licensed male readers to enjoy the 'female' romance genre, much as his embedded Gothic narratives offset the comparative 'realism' of a still-Gothic plot, like the epistolary *Redgauntlet*.²² In England, Bulwer-Lytton, Disraeli, and Thackeray draw, after 1826, on Scott's innovations.

Byron's solution is different. With *Childe Harold*'s subtitle, *A Romaunt*, Byron works to reclaim the long romance tradition, and highlights the *t* in *romantic*; as in *Sternbald* and *Ofterdingen*, a divided artist encounters Europe, but like Goethe in *Meister* or Chateaubriand in *René*, Byron makes his story contemporary, thus stressing the self-reflexive link

18 Roberts, *Long Poems*, 179ff.

19 McDermott, *Novel*, p. 120.

20 Kiely, *Romantic*, p. 142.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 138–144.

22 Richter, *Progress*, pp. 102–105.

between author and hero, and ironizing the gap between our dreams and prosaic, post-Waterloo reality. In sum: 'straight' Romantic-era verse romance lacks tension and bite, and I say this regretfully of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie* (Mister Thaddeus; or *The Last Foray into Lithuania*), and of Longfellow's best-selling *The Song of Hiawatha*. The form seems to require irony to live. It is fitting that *Don Juan*, like *Beppo: A Venetian Story*, is in the *ottava rima* of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, Italy's three great Renaissance romancers. Just as Ariosto lovingly mocks what Boiardo plays straight, Byron parodies his own Byronic persona.²³ *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* and *The Corsair: A Tale* (both 1813), and even *Mazeppa* (1819), are largely "straight" Eastern romances with a unilinear narrative, though *Mazeppa* concludes, "The king had been an hour asleep;" the narrator of *Don Juan* (1819–1824) is omnipresent, as Friedrich Schlegel desired, conflating his ostensible plot with an encyclopedic, parodic review of existence, art, and the self in one superb, monstrous arabesque, stretching from love to anthropophagy.

Britain's great female romance tradition—Behn, Manley, Haywood, Lennox, Burney, Smith, Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Edgeworth, Owenson, Austen, Shelley, the Brontës—has at its core, Ross implies, a *sensible* female witness, a continuity misread by men insisting in the Gothic on the male villain's primacy, unlike the sentimental novel, and regretting the heroines' search for logic.²⁴ Ross's broader terms show Radcliffe's and Burney's closely related plots and, as she writes, confound "traditional categories such as 'novel of manners', 'sentimental novel', 'didactic novel' and 'Gothic novel'."²⁵ "The life of every Woman is a Romance!" writes Burney, but as Don Quixote explains to Sancho, romance subverts the existing order so that it can re-establish divine distinctions that have been lost.²⁶ It is odd that men should value in their fictions the aping of reality while condemning romance for its freedom—but as Ross remarks, "official truth was merely verisimilitude for women, something lived second hand."²⁷ In these terms, all these women's heroines, Gothic

23 McGann, *Byron*, p. 28, reviews his comic debunking in *Manfred: A Dramatic Poem*, as in *Beppo*.

24 Ross, *Falsehood*, 143ff.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

26 Burney ctd. *Ibid.*, p. 39. See also *ibid.*, p. 98.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

or sentimental, share a Romantic, even a fantastic epistemological enterprise; to identify reason in the romance they inhabit. Haywood, Lennox, and Austen parody, in short, not romance convention, but its reading of reality; Wollstonecraft's Maria, in *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria. A Fragment*, is told by her brutish husband that her sentiments are *romantic*; Radcliffe punctiliously explains each Gothic event she presents; Edgeworth's narrator in *Castle Rackrent* (1800), who cannot read his own stupidity, narrates deadpan a Jewish wife's years of imprisonment by her husband for money; Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) is an apocalypse reconstructed from ancient fragments; *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is narrated through a double veil, as Nelly Dean talks to the male narrator, and Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) goes blind.²⁸ Reality indeed is darkness visible. Yet this is far from all, as Richter reminds us of Lane's Minerva Press, suggesting that roughly 40% of works of fiction published in 1795–1820 “would be classified as Gothic novels.”²⁹

Is this Schlegel's ideal? Love and epistemology are omnipresent in this tradition. Ironic suspension is recurrent, as is his play “between appearance and reality”—compensating for the dearth of formal play between verse and prose, since that formal play is subsumed within a deeper play between mystery and reason, this perhaps even evident in Austen's great studies of mores. Hazlitt and De Quincey, in the *Liber Amoris: or, The New Pygmalion* (1823) and in the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), answer as Hogg does to Schlegel's stress on the possibilities of the confessional genre; Dickens, finally, speaks directly to the romance tradition. As Langbauer illustrates, his “contemporaries and early critics unhesitatingly labeled his work as ‘romance,’” and Dickens says as much himself, in the preface to his weekly journal *Household Words*—“in all familiar things [...] there is Romance enough, if we will find it out”—in the preface to *Bleak House* (1852–1853), which dwells “upon the romantic side of familiar things”—and in *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836–1837)—“there's romance enough at home without going half a mile for it.”³⁰ Dickens does not mix genres, and his two historical novels out of sixteen are set in the recent past: the French Revolution and the Gordon Riots of 1780 (*A Tale of Two Cities*,

28 Langbauer, *Women*, p. 100.

29 Richter, *Progress*, pp. 90, 101.

30 Langbauer, *Women*, pp. 133, 148.

Barnaby Rudge). Only his Christmas stories have supernatural events, as in *A Christmas Carol in Prose. Being a Ghost Story of Christmas* (1843). Yet magic runs all through his production, from the “Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so” wandering up Holborn Hill on the first page of *Bleak House*, to the way in *Great Expectations* (1859) that every new stranger is someone’s lost wife or father, as if in Ariosto. Dickens completes our survey of British novel writing, 1750–1850, and romance has evidently touched every part of it.

Now for the bridge to verse romance. Roberts’s catalog of *Romantic and Victorian Long Poems* reminds us just how neglected this genre has been, despite its evident centrality to the age and its authors, who largely considered their short lyrics as occasional and tangential productions: critics are reclaiming the Big Six here—Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats—but still neglect Southey, Moore, Campbell, Landor, Hemans, and Tighe, among many. One may regret that Roberts misses both Rogers and Crabbe, along with Combe’s lovely *Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1812), that Hudibrastic verso to Childe Harold’s tormented wanderings. Around 1800, the novel’s amorphous critical and empirical heritage makes the border of romance fluid, and a centuries-old tradition suggests revising our criteria. The long poem had much sharper boundaries, and idylls, pastorals, or epics are self-evident poetic vessels which romance will do no more than color. Blake’s long visionary poems for instance—*Vala, or the Four Zoas* (finally published in 1893), or *Milton. A Poem in Two Books* (1810), or *Jerusalem, Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1820)—are not romances *per se*, but theogony, echoing Klopstock’s and Milton’s Christian epics in their lack of human *agon*. As Schlegel said, romance rests on history. Yet Blake’s vision of giants, palaces, and divine order betrayed until triumphant, is that of Novalis or of Cervantes’s *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha* (Don Quixote, 1605); romance, ultimately, inhabits his epic structure. Keats later faces this question in *Endymion: A Poetic Romance* and in *Hyperion. A Fragment* (1818–1820); *Endymion* echoes the Greek shepherd romances of Spenser or Mille de Scudéry, while *Hyperion* adapts that romance pastoral setting to the fall of the Titans before Olympus. Wolfson’s very good chapter on romance in Keats finds the genre central to his project, reviewing his repeated shift from expected “old Romance” to a meta-romance shaped by irony (285): *Isabella, The Eve of St Agnes*, and *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Shelley’s Greece, as in Byron or Hölderlin, is not always antique:

The Revolt of Islam. A Poem (1818), neglected, though twice as long as *Prometheus Unbound. A Lyrical Drama*, is modern romance, following Laon's and Cythna's adventures and struggle against oppression. Coleridge's narratives—*Christabel*, *The Ancient Mariner*—are perhaps romances in the Spanish sense, and certainly both magical and fantastic, but too short for our criterion. Wordsworth's short pieces are similar—"The Idiot Boy" and "The Ruined Cottage"—but his longer poems raise interesting questions. *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind* (published 1850), after considering producing "some old / Romantic tale, by Milton left unsung," instead traces, like *Meister*, the artist's formation from childhood, though it eschews the magic of Tieck or Novalis.³¹ *The Excursion* (1814), a story of long chats with neighbors, also more closely resembles prose narrative than most contemporary poetry—for instance, Wordsworth like Byron favors first-person narration, unusual in long poems, encouraging Keats's calling his art "the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime."³²

The popular poet Rogers did not write romances. Crabbe, who was also quite celebrated, did, and both *The Borough* (1810) and *Tales of the Hall* (1810, 1819) deserve a look from students of Wordsworth's terrible and simple tales. Cooper surely knew Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming or the Pennsylvanian Cottage* (1809), where evil Mohawks kill all but the last Oneida. Landor's *Gebir* (1798), set mainly in ancient Egypt and the underworld, has a good romance plot of love, magic, betrayal, and obstacles. Campbell and Landor have seen, like Wordsworth and Crabbe, that they can versify material which is common in contemporary prose. Southey and Moore likewise draw on prose orientalist romances, such as *Vathek* or the *Livre des Mille et une Nuits* (Book of the 1,001 Nights)—we can observe Southey doing so in the Arab and Indian *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), like Moore in his playful Persian *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1814). Wilkie notes that Southey carefully distinguished these two romances from his three epics.³³ L.E.L.'s *The Improvisatrice* (1824), a response to Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* (Corinne or Italy), features embedded romances improvised by the heroine; Hemans's three long poems *Modern Greece. A Poem*, *The Abencerrage* (a title stolen by Chateaubriand in 1821), and *The Forest*

31 Wordsworth, *Prelude*, I, p. 169.

32 Wolfson, *Presence*, p. 35.

33 Wilkie, *Epic*, p. 36.

Sanctuary (1816–1824) form a curious trio, showing Greece oppressed by Muslims, medieval Spaniards fighting Muslims, and a Spaniard fleeing the Inquisition for the New World. The last two are what Scott called “metrical romances,” while the first is a philosophical poem. Tighe’s *Psyche; or, The Legend of Love* (1805), a Greek or Spenserian romance, influenced Shelley and Keats. In sum, verse romances are a lost planet in Romantic-era British fiction, standing oddly alongside the prose romances of the age and casting new light, it may be, on the canon in verse and prose alike. One thinks of the word *romance* in Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), which does not specify verse or prose: “A military fable of the middle ages; a tale of wild adventures in war and love. [...] A lie; a fiction.”

3. France

The French eighteenth century produced relatively little in the vein of Madeleine de Scudéry. Paralleling the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* (Dictionary of the French Academy) on the word *roman*—“A work ordinarily in prose, containing fictions which represent adventures rare in life, and the complete development of human passions”—Prévost, Marivaux, Rousseau, and the epistolary novel trace human passion, while Voltaire’s tales have rare adventures.³⁴ But despite Voltaire’s ironic play, Schlegel carefully avoids him, and he rejects Rousseau’s *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse. Lettres de deux amants [...] au pied des Alpes* (Julie or The New Héloïse) in favor of his *Les Confessions* (The Confessions). As the century’s verse demonstrates, the age lacked poetry; it lacked dream. To Diderot, who is one of Schlegel’s models, let us add Sade in the 1790s Gothic tradition, though the mission of his heroines is less to interpret than to suffer pain. Bernardin de Saint Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* (Paul and Virginie, 1787) and *La Chaumière indienne* (The Indian Cottage, 1791) gave Europe the term *pariah*; two fine, and very influential, compromised romances, where today’s tropics do not protect man from himself. Barthélemy’s popular *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (Voyage of Young Anacharsis in Greece, 1788) uses a romance frame to present Greek civilization. French eighteenth-century critics stressed

34 “Ouvrage ordinairement en prose, contenant des fictions qui représentent des aventures rares dans la vie, et le développement entier des passions humaines.” *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, 5th edition, 2 vols (Paris: Nicolle, 1813), “Roman.”

believability, a refusal of epistemological crisis (they liked Condillac) which is anathema to our subject, and all these authors but Diderot and Sade present a surface less troubled than Wordsworth. Epistemology, not its crisis, is of course central to authors like Mme de Graffigny in her *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (Letters of a Peruvian Woman, 1747), written in *quipu*, or Laclós, in his splintered *Les Liaisons dangereuses ou Lettres recueillies dans une société* (Dangerous Liaisons, 1782).

Is the French Romantic novel quite different? Staël, Genevan like Rousseau, published in both centuries. She first tells 'romance' stories set in Africa or the West Indies, with embedded sung romances. Moving to longer narratives, she tries letters (*Delphine*, 1802), then later, an exploded form—written alongside Schlegel's older brother—combining lyric interlude, play performance, text copied or read aloud, and diary fragments (*Corinne ou l'Italie*, 1807). Chateaubriand's short romances *Atala* and *René* (1801–1802), set in French Louisiana, are in the *Paul et Virginie* tradition, while *Les Martyrs ou le Triomphe de la religion chrétienne* (The Martyrs, 1809), set in Diocletian's Empire, combines epic catalogs and nations in movement with romance hermits, love, and adventures in what he called a prose epic—seemingly a new creation. Mme Cottin and the equally popular Mme de Genlis, mistress of the duc d'Orléans, wrote historical romances of love and chivalry. *Mathilde* (1805) is set in the Crusades, and *Mademoiselle de Clermont* (1802) in the court of Louis XIV. Critics continue to sever Romantic-era French poetry and prose, a misguided and misleading act given that France's canonical Romantic poets all published novels: Vigny's *Cinq-Mars* (1826) learnedly reviews a key moment in national history, and follows Scott even in using chapter epigraphs (like Hugo, Mérimée, and Stendhal). Also, before Dumas, Mérimée's *Chronique du règne de Charles IX* (Chronicle of the Reign of Charles IX, 1829), with its ending left for the reader to determine, does likewise, as, among other things, does Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris 1482* (Notre-Dame Cathedral, 1831). Vigny also wrote two volumes of tales, *Première Consultation du Docteur-Noir. Stello and Servitude et grandeur militaires* (Stello, Military Servitude and Grandeur), both of which focused on the divided modern self, like Lamartine's *Raphaël. Pages de la vingtième année* and *Graziella* (1849–1852) and Musset's bleak *Confession d'un enfant du siècle* (Confession of a Child of the Age, 1836). But Musset, like Byron, also wrote *Lettres de Dupuis et de Cotonet* (Letters of Dupuis and Cotonet, 1836–1838) and *Histoire d'un merle blanc* (Story

of a White Blackbird, 1842), burlesquing all Romantic cliché. The *Lettres* quite visibly shaped Flaubert's later *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (Bouvard and Pécuchet, 1881). In sum, French Romantic poets combine poetry and prose most directly by writing both. The term *romance* seems applicable to all their above work, and Schlegel's criteria are largely satisfied by their taste for love, (national) history, the self-reflexive growth of a divided self, and the muted presence of irony and formal experimentation—the arabesque. There is also a more frenetic, sentimental-grotesque tradition, seen in Pétrus Borel's *Champavert* (1833) or in Hugo's *Han d'Islande* and *Bug-Jargal* (1823–1826), set in Norway and Haiti, both featuring psychopathic dwarfs who share Quasimodo's red hair. Here Schlegel's arabesque may be more in evidence.

Nodier, Mérimée, Balzac, and Gautier continue this mood in the French Romantic short story, a fantastic genre still neglected in favor of the 'realist' canon. Nodier has explicit magical events, as in his vampire tale *Smarra* (1821). Mérimée prefers fantastic irresolution, as in *La Vénus d'Ille* (The Ille Venus, 1837), where a statue apparently comes alive to kill someone, or *Lokis manuscrit du professeur Wittembach* (Lokis, 1873), whose hero may be both man and bear. This doubt is a good handle on 'realist' tales like *Carmen* (1845), whose events are less simple than they seem to their naïve narrators. Balzac, for his part, wrote Gothic novels in the 1820s, such as *La Peau de chagrin* (The Shagreen Skin, 1831) which sucks its Parisian owner's life with each wish it grants, and *La Fille aux yeux d'or* (The Girl with Gold Eyes, 1833), which hides Sadean crime in contemporary Paris. Balzac and Mérimée are not the canonical realists they have been labelled. In Balzac's superhuman output of eighty-eight novels for his *Human Comedy*, as in Dickens, a magical thread runs throughout a realist universe—not only in the philosophical studies, which feature *Melmoth réconcilié* (Melmoth Reconciled, 1835), but in modern Paris, as we have seen. Balzac avoids historical novels, but his world is filled with the lost past. *Le Colonel Chabert* (Colonel Chabert, 1832) returns from the Napoleonic wars to find himself written out of history, and the senile Baron Hulot in *La Cousine Bette* (Cousin Bette, 1837) calmly sets up shop with his pubescent mistress Atala—an acid nod to Chateaubriand!—in ghetto Paris as if in Tahiti, while his desperate family searches for him. These are magnificent novels, where reality is transformed by poetry and savage irony, and the price of existence is marked.

Sainte-Beuve's *Vie, poésies et pensées de Joseph Delorme* (Joseph Delorme, 1829), often seen as a lyric anthology, is perhaps France's closest link to the Germans in its fusion of a *Bildungsroman* prose frame and extensive lyric interlude. *Volupté* (Delight, 1834) has another self-reflexive, divided narrator. The poets Gautier and Nerval, two other Romantics of 1830, also wrote novels, as did all the French canon. Gautier's large and diverse oeuvre includes three historical novels, notably *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), whose heroine cross-dresses, with its famous art for art's sake preface attacking the bourgeoisie. Nerval's *Sylvie. Souvenirs du Valois* (Sylvie, 1852) is perhaps the romance Schlegel wanted: a love story full of illusion and occult meaning at the urbane Romantic narrator and hero's expense, constantly undercut by irony, both playful and tragic, and with the present filled by the generations of the past.

Like Nerval, Sand inflects the pastoral, though realist critics have read her uninflected. *La Mare au diable* (The Devil's Pool, 1846) and *La Petite Fadette* (Little Fadette or Little Fairy, 1848) show folk reality always edging on the magical, as in her masterpiece *Les Maîtres Sonneurs* (The Master Pipers, 1852), where Joset may well have sold his soul to the devil. We cannot know, as we found in Mérimée or Hogg. Sexist critics have understandably preferred these 'domesticated' pastorals to Sand's novels of revolt—*Indiana*, *Lélia*, *Mauprat* (1831–1837). In those texts, Sand's idealism is more patent. Schor has argued that a realist canon served male critics who chose to exclude magic from the ledger. Sand's more than twenty novels are her data, but even Stendhal is, splendidly, not what he has seemed: in the realist classic *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), for instance, Julien Sorel finds a newspaper clipping with his own name in anagram (Louis Jenrel) and the story of his eventual execution. This precisely matches what Offerdingen encountered. Stendhal's irony, like Mérimée's or Nerval's, reads differently when set alongside Schlegel's divided self. *La Chartreuse de Parme* (The Charterhouse of Parma, 1839) also pulls between irony and romance idyll, between will and circumstance, and with another alienated hero escaping oppression through a devoted lady. Stendhal has simply tilted the scales of compromised romance: his Promethean heroes retreat into isolation, then die, leaving poetry defeated or ridiculed—as Mathilde rides off on the final page with Julien Sorel's severed head in her lap.

Dumas wrote more than Balzac, including eighty historical novels, but three famous novels will serve: Milady ends *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (The Three Musketeers, 1844) beheaded by her first lover, now a public executioner; in *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* (The Count of Monte-Cristo, 1844–1845), a man betrayed, but made fabulously wealthy by a prison confidence, wreaks his opium-calmed revenge upon society; *La Reine Margot* (Queen Margot, 1845) saves La Mole's severed head, just as La Mole's descendant Mathilde saved Julien's. These texts are anchored in French history, as Schlegel desired, even *Monte-Cristo* depending on Napoleon and Waterloo, and Dumas can indeed be read as serious national history. Dumas's avowed aim was to offer France a living heritage: accused of violating French history, Dumas said, but look at the children I have given her. His history is transformed by romance at every step, far more so than in Scott; *Rob Roy* is not *The Three Musketeers*. This chapter uses Schlegel to explain and justify its search for Romantic era European romance; Dumas is very far from Schlegel, but romance is the core of his enterprise. This also seems the moment to name Eugène Sue, who wrote serialized popular historical novels—*Mathilde* (1841)—and Gothic novels—*Les Mystères de Paris* (The Mysteries of Paris, 1842–1843), *Le Juif errant* (The Wandering Jew, 1844–1845)—to immense and now-neglected success.

Unlike Britain or Germany, France produced almost no extended verse romance in this period. Hugo, Vigny, Musset, Sainte-Beuve, and Nerval wrote none; Lamartine wrote *Dernier chant de pèlerinage d'Harold* (The Last Song of Harold's Pilgrimage, 1825), after Byron, and *Jocelyn. Épisode* and *La Chute d'un ange. Épisode* (An Angel's Fall, 1835–1838), two fragments of a Christian epic with romance elements—love, disguises, obstacles—set at first during the French Revolution, then before the Flood. Gautier wrote *Albertus ou L'Âme et le péché. Légende théologique* (Albertus or the Soul and Sin, 1832), a Faustian parody where the devil sneezes, the poet says bless you, and a witches' sabbath disappears. The poet's mutilated corpse, ending the poem, evokes 'Monk' Lewis. Gautier's *La Comédie de la mort* (The Comedy of Death, 1838) also combines magic and burlesque. In our redrawn Romantic-era corpus, with its new focus on the fantastic, on the night side of reality, and on the arabesque, Gautier's romance work may seem more central than it has, a production considerably larger than his canonical *Émaux et camées*

(*Enamels and Cameos*, 1852), often billed as anti-Romantic. France's dearth of Romantic-era verse romances, and the 'novels' produced by every canonical French Romantic poet (unlike the English, for instance, who wrote none), suggest that these poets found aspects of French verse constricting, and were more able to complete their extended narratives in prose, benefitting from the same amorphousness that attracted Schlegel. This in turn suggests that their novels, or *romances*, deserve more careful study in future reviews of French Romantic poetry, much as in theater these same authors routinely abandoned the Paris stage in favor of closet drama, a *Spectacle dans un fauteuil*, as Musset put it. In this context, the verse-prose overlap, and other resonances of the term *romance*, again seem more useful than a simplistic division between two warring canons, 'the realist novel and the Romantic lyric.'

4. The Italian Peninsula

Italy's Romantic authors—Monti, Foscolo, Manzoni, Leopardi, Pellico—wrote dramas or (Monti) epics, but no verse romances. In their large prose output, three novels are remembered: Foscolo's *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (*Last Letters of Jacopo Ortis*, 1802), a fragmentary epistolary novel indebted to *Werther*, whose 'saintly' hero runs over a stranger, pays off the family without confessing, and accepts their praise; Pellico's *Le mie prigioni* (*My Prisons*, 1832), wisdom memoirs about ten years of prison which influenced Primo Levi; and Manzoni's *I promessi sposi, storia milanese del secolo XVII scoperta e rifatta* (*The Betrothed*, 1827), set in plague-stricken Spanish Lombardy in the 1630s. Foscolo and Pellico reflect the vogue for first-person narration that Schlegel favored. Manzoni's *Betrothed* (a Scott title from 1825) is Italy's most famous novel, using Scott better than Vigny or Mérimée do to make past history a national statement, even to its Milanese dialect. In post-Waterloo Europe, all of Scott's imitators offer veiled political manifestos. Vigny the aristocrat condemns emergent royal despotism, while Scott the Tory values a paternalist establishment; using history allows claims about the nation's true identity. Manzoni's Spaniards stand for the Austrians of 1820, as he appeals for national liberation. This nationalist discourse is absolutely central to the Scottian romance vogue throughout Europe and the Americas. Writing in answer to *Ivanhoe*, Manzoni, like the historian Thierry, focusses on the humble, rejecting historical figures. He went

on to write a history of the French Revolution and condemn romance's mix of fact and fiction in *Del romanzo storico* (The Historical Novel, 1850). Foscolo wrote two more novels, *Hypercalypseos liber singularis* (Hypercalypseos a Singular Book, 1815) and *Viaggio sentimentale di Yorick lungo la Francia e l'Italia* (Yorick's Sentimental Journey, 1817), being a satire in the language of Dante's *La vita nuova* (The New Life, 1294) and an imitation of Sterne.

Schlegel also called for a theory of the novel (or romance) in novel form, something more than the eighteenth century's routine use of a thin narrative frame for didacticism. Europe's romances focus repeatedly and self-reflexively on artistic creation, as we have seen. Straight criticism mixed with creative play is rarer but extant, from Byron or Hazlitt to Gautier, and to the Milan 1816 debate—notably Berchet's *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo* (Grisostomo's Semiserious Letter to His Son), which ends with a damaged statue of Italy wheeled out to unite opposing parties. In this Romantic genre, criticism is romanced, much as history is in the age's historical novels. Romantic parodies deserve further study in that light.

5. Northern and Eastern Europe

I started this chapter thinking about Europe's and America's foundational Romantic narratives, struck by their deep resemblances, though in verse or prose depending on the country. What Scott, Dumas, and Cooper build in a series of prose romances, Pushkin and Mickiewicz, Shevchenko and Vörösmarty build in extended verse. Without the word *romance*, we chop this phenomenon in half.

We might call Mickiewicz's twelve-book *Pan Tadeusz* (1834) a folk epic with fantastic elements, a genre rare in Western Europe, though one is reminded of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*. In fact, Mickiewicz began his poem with Goethe in mind, then found Scott to be a better model. Between 1795 and 1918, with a brief Napoleonic interlude, 'Poland' did not exist. Westerners, even Germans and Italians, easily lose sight of what Romantic narratives meant for Slavic countries in particular, with no national map or language. Set in Lithuania under Napoleon, *Pan Tadeusz*, like *The Betrothed*, avoids great names in favor of a feud-inflected love story complete with speeches, village battles, and comic interludes. War here brings order to a disharmonious peace.

Norway apparently produced little Romantic romance, though it has fairy tales. Sweden has Tegnér's highly successful *Frithiofs saga* (1820–1825), adapted from the Old Norse, combining metrical virtuosity, sentiment, and thin characterization. Denmark has, besides Andersen, the poet and dramatist Oehlenschläger—who wrote *Vaulundurs saga* (1812) for instance—Grundtvig's long poems, and Hauch's and Ingemann's imitations of Scott. In what was then Russia, Estonia has Kreutzwald's folk epic *Kalevipoeg* (1857–1861), as Finland has Lönnrot's reconstituted oral epic, the *Kalevala* (1835–1849). Latvia and Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Albania have national stirrings in the period pre-1850, but no romances that I have come across. Greece's Solomos is mainly a lyric poet. Ukraine has Shevchenko's nationalistic Cossack verse, such as the national folk epic *Haidamaki* (1841). Serbia and Croatia have at least two folk epics, Petrović's *Gorski vijenac* (The Mountain Wreath, 1847) and Mažuranić's *Smrt Smail-Aga Čengića* (The Death of Smail-Aga Čengić, 1846), both about the Montenegrin struggle against the Turks. Czech has Kollár's expanding sonnet cycle *Slávy Dcera* (The Daughter of Sláva, 1824–1852), narrating love and national sentiment, Hanka's folk forgeries, influenced by Macpherson and Chatterton, and the very young Mácha's *Máj* (May, 1836), a Byronic verse romance, both nationalist and nihilist, about a murderer awaiting execution. Hungary has folk epics—Kisfaludy, Vörösmarty's *Zalán futása* (1825)—and Jósika's novel *Abafi* (1836), indebted to Scott. Let us simply note the extensive use of folk epics in Northern and Eastern European nationalism, whereas the West favors prose. These folk epics resemble medieval romance.

Pushkin's bitter, joyous *Evgenii Onegin* (1823–1831) surpasses Byron in its fusion of pathos and burlesque. The urbane narrator gently mocks Lensky, his heart "all but crushed with pain," moments before Lensky's best friend Onegin kills him in a duel for after all no reason.³⁵ Even in English (see bibliography for all translations from the Russian), the poetry is stunning—Lensky "early found both death and glory / In such a year, at such an age"—as Pushkin shifts in dazzling arabesque between sublime and parodic mode, insisting on a discord in reality,

35 "V nem serdtse, polnoe toskoi." A.S. Pushkin, *Evgenii Onegin. Roman v stikhakh* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo ATRIUM, 1991), p. 162 (6.xix).

whose pain the choice of simple irony would negate.³⁶ Pushkin's narrator invokes his Muse in Chapter Seven; he reads Apuleius, while Tatyana (he regrets her vulgar name) reads Byron, Nodier, Stendhal, and Lafontaine. Pushkin, suffused with European authors, and Mickiewicz contrast well; Pushkin's is the hard way to construct the 'free romance' he wanted (Deutsch viii), keeping a universe of antinomies in suspension until the closing line: "As, my Onegin, I drop you."³⁷ *Ruslan i Liudmila* (Ruslan and Liudmila, 1820) is a mildly parodic, magical folk epic. Pushkin's splendid prose lacks this tension between poetry and bathetic reality, though his *Istoriia sela Goriukhina* (History of the Village of Goriukhino, 1837) contains a wonderful seven-line history of poetry in the narrator's series of attempts to poeticize the village, moving from an epic "abandoned on the third verse" to the portrait he decides on.³⁸ Like Mérimée, Pushkin also enjoys fantastic tales, somewhere between reality and magic: *Vystrel* (The Shot, 1831), say, or *Pikovaia dama* (The Queen of Spades, 1834).

The Ukrainian Gogol's tales share Pushkin's play between poetry and reality, though his tension is grotesque, less elegant than violent, and closer to Hugo or E.T.A. Hoffmann. *Strashnaya mest* (The Terrible Vengeance, 1832) has a sorcerer, a murdered baby, and a woman saying of her husband: "He was buried alive, you know. Oh, it did make me laugh."³⁹ *Nos* (The Nose, 1836) has a minor functionary lose his nose and converse humbly with it, now disguised as a State Councilor, in Kazan Cathedral—the nose refuses to return. *Portret* (The Portrait, 1835) has a soul caught on a canvas, presaging *Dorian Grey*, while *Shinel* (The Overcoat, 1842), with another minor functionary, foreshadows Dostoevsky and Kafka. Gogol's novel *Mertvye dushi* (Dead Souls, 1842) continues his grotesque realism but eschews the fantastic, contributing to a reputation which has, somewhat one-sidedly, praised Gogol's realism in neglect of his magic. Lermontov's verse romances like

36 "Pogibshii rano smert'yu smelykh,/ V takoi-to god, takikh-to let." Pushkin, *Evgenii Onegin*, p. 180 (7.vi).

37 "Kak ia s Oneginym moim." Pushkin, *Evgenii Onegin*, p. 286 (8.li).

38 "i ia brosil ee na tret'em stikhe." A.S. Pushkin, *Sochineniia*, 3 vols (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Khudozestvennaia literatura," 1964), "Istoriia sela Goriukhno," III, p. 287.

39 "Ved' ego zhivogo pogrebli ... kakoi smekh zabiral menia." N.V. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moskva: Akademia Nauk S.S.S.R., 1940), "Strashnaia mest'," I, p. 273.

Demon. Vostochnaia poviaist (The Demon, 1839) face neglect beside his bleak, superb *Geroi nashego vremeni* (A Hero of Our Time, 1840), five interwoven and embedded tales about or by the bored, fatalist Pechorin, who meets smugglers, kidnaps a Circassian girl, and later kills and is killed at random: "Perhaps some readers will want to know my opinion of Pechorin's character. My answer is the title of this book."⁴⁰

6. Iberia and the Low Countries

Portuguese Romanticism begins with the elegant Almeida Garrett's verse romances *Camões* and *Dona Branca* (1825–1826), about the national poet Camoëns and about a Christian princess in love with a Moor, both published in exile in Paris. His later prose recalls both Sterne and Scott, and his *Romanceiro* (1843) parallels Spanish work collecting the *Romancers* in 1828–1832. Spain produced mainly drama, but Espronceda's dramatic poems *El estudiante de Salamanca* (The Student of Salamanca, 1839) and *El diablo mundo* (The Devil-World, 1841) use *Romanceiro* format to mix lyric and dramatic forms, magic, and reality, much as Schlegel wanted. *The Student* retells the Don Juan story. Scott also influenced Rivas's twelve-canto romance *El moro expósito* (The Exposed Moor, 1834), based on a medieval legend. The Flemish van Duyse writes mainly lyrics, while Ledeganck writes national tales in verse. Conscience's hundred-odd novels or romances include *De leeuw van Vlaanderen* (The Lion of Flanders, 1838), a violent thirteenth-century romance again indebted to Scott, populist but without Scott's self-aware narrator, and giving prestige to Flemish eight years after the creation of Belgium. In Dutch, Drost's also Scott-influenced *Hermingard van de Eikenterpen* (1832) and Geertruida Bosboom-Toussaint's national romances from *Het Huis Lauernesse* (The Lauernesse House, 1840) onward are famous. Having read Espronceda, Rivas, Garrett, and Conscience, the link between romance and emergent nationalism remains striking, if unsurprising, since romance speaks to medieval locality—what the Germans call *Kleinstaaterei*—in answer to the imperialist neoclassical universalism Napoleon had encouraged, a contrast Scott, writing from the Scottish

40 "Mozhet byt, nekotorie chitateli zakhotiat uznat' moe mnenie o kharaktere Pechorina? Moi otvet—zaglavie etoi knigi." M.I. Lermontov, *Geroi nashego vremeni*, ed. D.J. Richards (Letchworth: Bradda, 1969), p. 74.

borders, aptly represents. There is also some contemporary work in this romance vein in Breton and Occitan, though perhaps not in Erse or Catalan.

7. The Two Americas

All mainland Latin America achieved independence in the years 1806–1826. Romance, though, is scarce: in Argentina, Echeverría's *Elvira o la novia del Plata* (Elvira, 1832) and Mármol's *Cantos del peregrino* (Songs of the Pilgrim, 1846) are Byronic verse romances. Hernández's later *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (Martin Fierro, 1872) is Argentina's national poem. For his part, Nélot lists no Romantic novels in South America or the Caribbean, where most Romantic texts do in fact seem to postdate 1850. Let us however briefly mention Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's fine Cuban novel *Sab*, written in 1841, about a noble slave in love with his mistress, and the novels produced mid-century in Brazil—Joaquim Manuel de Macedo's romance *A Moreninha* in 1844, Manuel Antônio de Almeida's *Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias*, published in serial form in 1852–1853, José de Alencar's indianizing *O Guarani* from 1857—and in Argentina: Sarmiento's *Civilización y barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845), an attack from exile on the Rosas regime. In its turn, Anglophone America had little verse romance; Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), in the *Kalevala*'s loose trochaic tetrameter, is a rare major example.

Porte's *The Romance in America* (1969) opens, "the rise and growth of fiction in this country is dominated by our authors' conscious adherence to a tradition of non-realistic romance sharply at variance with the broadly novelistic mainstream of English writing."⁴¹ His focus is Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne; let us add Irving. Cooper's moments of national crisis, Porte suggests in a key insight, "could not be dealt with in the realistic novel as he knew it."⁴² Nation and individual emerge as symbiotic concepts in the Romantic era, and authors shaping nations from Argentina to Estonia—an activity unknown before 1776—do so in the footsteps of Scott. Fielding's hermetic world allows no bridge

41 Porte, *Romance*, p. ix.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

between feminine private destiny, the *oikos*, and the *polis*, between the clerks and the masses, making it droll that ivory-tower critics later rejected Europe's historical romances as escapist, instead reserving their praise for the Fielding tradition. As Frye writes, "There is a strongly conservative element at the core of realism, an acceptance of society in its present structure."⁴³ Porte cites Simms in 1835: "the modern Romance is the substitute which the people of the present day offer for the ancient epic."⁴⁴ This of course also perfectly fits the criteria of Europe's Romantic-Classical distinction.

Of Cooper's fifty-odd romances, the five *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823–1841) gave him international fame. Like Scott, he shows tribal structures dissolving before a larger nationhood, and uses systematic verse epigraphs to multiple effect. But there is an epic tone here which refuses Scott's irony, plus a new insight into local color, and into the alienness even of those who seem very close: the Christian Hawk-eye in *The Deerslayer: or, The First War-Path* (1841) believes chess pieces must be idols. Cooper rejects magic in his preface to *The Pioneers, or the Sources of the Susquehanna* (1823), and refuses comparison with Homer. But his forest is full of romance, though compromised by 'civilization,' and Hawk-eye is a true hero, unerring in virtue as in battle. *The Last of the Mohicans; A Narrative of 1757* (1826) opens with this same careful distinction between "an imaginary and romantic picture of things which never had an existence" and "the business of a writer of fiction," which is "to approach, as near as his powers will allow, to poetry" (Cooper also curiously links Native Americans and the Orient). Hawk-eye is a fiction, but he is possible. Hawthorne's ironic prefaces, by contrast, stress the radical divide between a novel's probability and a romance's exposure to the "truth of the human heart." As Porte notes, he "entitled or subtitled all of his four major fictions *romances*" (95–96). Hawthorne wants to build, says his preface to *The Blithedale Romance*, in art's neutral territory, "Fairy Land." The elf-child Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter. A Romance* (1850) perhaps cannot cross streams. A wolf greets her, "but here the tale has surely lapsed into the improbable" (Chapter XVIII); we fear an evil spirit, and in walks the Dickensian Roger Chillingworth, just as chilling as his name. As often in the fantastic mode, heuristic problems

43 Frye, *Scripture*, p. 164.

44 Porte, *Romance*, p. 39.

produce a divided narrator or, as in *The Blithedale Romance* and in *The Marble Faun* or, *The Romance of Monte Beni* (1852–1860), increasing focus on heroes struggling with art and illusion. Like almost all of Europe's fantastic writers, Hawthorne refuses to resolve heuristic irresolution into magical certainty. Irving plays likewise between doubt and burlesque: *Rip van Winkle. A Posthumous Writing of Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1819) and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Found Among the Papers of the Late Diedrich Knickerbocker* (1820), which gave him international fame, are folk legends about a man who sleeps for twenty years and about a headless horseman respectively, encountered by narrators as urbane as those of Byron, Pushkin, or Nerval. It is apt that Irving began his career with a burlesque history of New York, and *The Alhambra* (1831) sets orientalist Moorish legends within a similarly urbane arabesque.

If Cooper, Hawthorne, and Irving delicately explore the limits of belief, leaning increasingly toward magic, then Poe completes this series. His narrators are urbane, but so are vampires; he is *there* first-person for Hop-Frog's appalling revenge, and for the House of Usher's fall into the lake. He is in the pit as the pendulum swings, he himself rips his beloved Berenice's teeth from her entombed body, though still alive, and he personally walls Fortunato up alive in *The Cask of Amontillado*—"Yes [...] for the love of God." Surveying the world's Romantics, what is amazing is not their magic, but their almost total refusal to do what Poe does; to stop flirting with magic—or suspending their disbelief—and step wide-eyed into what Schubert calls the Night Side of reality (*Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*). Poe, Novalis, Hoffmann, and yes, the 'realist' Gogol, are almost alone in doing so. The power of the Enlightenment had waned to this extent.

8. Conclusion

Two primary facts emerge from this study: first, that the Romantic border between poetry and prose is less formal than epistemological, a truth the age repeatedly stresses, and second, that romance allows writers a nation-building enterprise that the realist novel cannot make room for. Its folkish tales echo an *oral* form, fitting the folk agenda of Warton, Percy, Goerres, and the Grimms. The age addressed these two agendas, answering to the political and epistemological crises it faced,

in two main types of romance, a global term that may be more apt and useful than 'novel' or 'long poem:' the ironic/magical and the national/historical. It chose verse, prose, or both according to circumstance, showing national and individual variation: Slavic and Scandinavian folk epics, Scott, the French Romantics. We might place British women authors in my first, heuristic category; there is of course massive overlap, and narrators throughout this corpus show a divided self, torn between inside and outside, and between Schopenhauer's contemporary will and representation. Recording this crisis in narrative, which is a fictional entity alien to the self, invites parallel self-reflexive meditations on art's role in forming events and perceived reality. *Romance* is a superb tool with which to examine this problem: it is, as Samuel Johnson writes, "a lie," a claim that parallel to our phenomenal world of objects is the observer/narrator's world of thoughts and memories, with its own pull on the present. *Waverley* and Keats *expect* romance, and they are not alone; it seems likely that all Europe heard romance in the word romantic, as Pepys or Scott did, with its sense that we have all grown up with stories and they influence what we do, for better or worse, but that without them, reality would be an arid and narrow place. This is why romance caused them problems, and why children love Hugo or Dumas.