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AN OUTLINE OF ROMANTICISM IN THE WEST

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5. Thoughts on the Romantic Hero, 1776–1848

Il prend envie de marcher à quatre pattes quand on lit votre ouvrage.
Voltaire to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 30 August 1755[1]

Am I not a Man and a Brother?
Josiah Wedgwood, 1787[2]

1. Prelude: Manon Lescaut and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Giacomo Puccini, that specialist in star-crossed lovers, premiered his opera *Manon Lescaut* in 1893, and the work is a large-scale and romantic production. It is instructive, however, to turn from Puccini to his source, Abbé Prévost's 1731 *Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut*—a novel narrated by Des Grieux who, it emerges between the lines, is both a criminal and a liar.[3] The term Jesuitical seems apt in describing a person who blames the weapon for his killing a man. It can be difficult to read Prévost's moral tale without the rose-tinted spectacles handed to us by two centuries of Romantic heroes, but a belief in Des Grieux's virtue—Puccini's position—is increasingly hard to sustain when the actual data of the story are weighed. Romanticism has, rather oddly, colonized the narrative; or perhaps, the original moralist narrative has metastasized

1 François-Marie Arouet [Voltaire] (1694–1778), letter to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), in *The Complete Works of Voltaire: Correspondence and related documents, XVI, March-December 1755*, ed Theodore Besterman (Banbury: The Voltaire Foundation, 1971), p. 259.

2 William Wilberforce (1759–1833) helped inspire Josiah *Wedgwood's* anti-slavery medallion of 1787, in white with a black figure, which reads "Am I not a Man and a Brother?"

3 Abbé Prévost, *Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), pp. 125, 211—Des Grieux murders two people and shifts blame away from himself each time.

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in a later Romantic environment. French has a long tradition of flawed first-person narrators, including Chateaubriand's René and Constant's Adolphe—those two Romantic heroes—and it is thus all the odder to reflect on how easily Prévost's lesson in dishonesty became a love story for his successors. But Romanticism has that cultural weight. Indeed, the Romantic challenge to first-person narration reaches beyond French borders to Foscolo's Jacopo Ortis in Italy and Hogg's justified sinner in Scotland—a text that scandalized its first critics and was available only bowdlerized until recently.[4]

This chapter aims to lay out some common traits of Romantic heroes, and perhaps a sort of biography for them, established as we tour the nations of the West. Over the centuries, there had been historical precedents which Romantic painters and authors later celebrated—in Goethe's 1790 *Torquato Tasso*, for instance, or Schiller's 1804 *Wilhelm Tell*—but as the example of Des Grieux usefully reminds us, this Romantic search for precedents may involve a radical misreading of the person or text in question. Tasso's madness seems unlikely to have been a cause for celebration to his Renaissance contemporaries, while Tell's heroism was largely unmatched by other national revolutionaries before George Washington centuries later. Indeed, it is possible to see a pivot in history occurring in August 1755, as Voltaire takes pen to paper to express his thoughts to Jean-Jacques Rousseau: for that dean of the Enlightenment, Rousseau's text is largely gibberish. Wordsworth famously wrote in 1815 that "every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed."[5] It seems possible that Rousseau, in a series of epochal and best-selling publications, did just that. It matters then that Rousseau was, it seems fair to say, an unusually weird person—for instance, he wrote *Emile*, a detailed and popular treatise on education, while giving his own four children up for adoption to the foundling hospital.

Romantic heroes routinely seem to operate within a value system distinct from the society around them: they are code breakers. This is

4 Ugo Foscolo, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802); James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself* (1824). Scandal: *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 207.

5 William Wordsworth, "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," in *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 750.

the case of the self-created Rousseau, of Goethe's Tasso, and of Schiller's Tell. They are, to an extent, outsiders—Des Grieux and Manon, viewed retrospectively, may thus appear Romantic to us today as they depart from a liminal Parisian existence for the new and rather seedy colony of New Orleans. The heroes sometimes seem elected to a fate larger than themselves: they can be vatic, like Staël's Corinne and Vigny's Moïse, or isolated, like Moïse again, Tasso in his madness, or Ossian—that European success—extemporizing in the Scottish Highlands.[6] They are often in touch with passion, with the night side of human nature, which may be one reason scientists are uncommon as heroes of Romantic texts. Galileo had to wait for Brecht to put him onstage, while Mesmer and Galvani, Lavater and Benjamin Franklin, James Watt and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, also don't appear to have inspired Romantic texts to match their contemporary prestige.[7] Mary Shelley's Frankenstein merits a place in this overview, but it seems reasonable to argue that any urge to favor artists over scientists in the past two centuries has debts to a lingering Romantic value system.

Lastly, the Romantic hero can be perceived as one half of a pole, one which reflects an implicit contract in which the protagonist is engaged. This contract is between the protagonist, exceptional enough to have merited a plot, and the voiceless community they embody, which credits them, and for which they speak. In the Romantic age—one this study brackets by two revolutions, 1776–1848—that community is, by and large, the silent nation. Thus, Goethe's Tasso and Staël's Corinne both speak for the occupied and divided Italians, as indeed Schiller's Tell speaks for the Swiss, the Congress of 1787 spoke for the people of the United States, Petöfi spoke for Hungary, Tegnér for Sweden, and Shevchenko for Ukraine. Actual public success, as Shelley's remark on "*unacknowledged* legislators of the world" makes clear, has little bearing on this contract, though it did perhaps make Stendhal, also no best-seller, dedicate his writing to "the happy few."[8] This sociopolitical realignment—we stand at the birth of nationalism—is significantly threatened by counter-narratives only rarely during the long Romantic period: notably by the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man* in 1789 and

6 "Moïse" in Alfred de Vigny, *Poèmes antiques et modernes* (1826).
7 Bertolt Brecht, *Leben des Galilei* (1943).
8 Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry* (1840; Boston: Ginn & Co., 1890), p. 46.

by Marx's *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, two epochal texts that oppose universalism to nationalism's more tribal values. But the contract's staying power can be seen in Hugo's preface to *Les Contemplations* (1856)—"Ah! insensé, qui crois que je ne suis pas toi!" [Madman, to think I am not you!]—as in Thomas Mann's words from Nazi-era exile: "Wo ich bin, ist deutsche Kultur" [Where I am, is German culture].[9] A contract first elaborated around protagonists in texts and paintings here remakes those works' creators as they live and breathe. Any talk of 'the Romantic individual' is just one-half of the age's new esthetic coupling, a coupling grounded in Protestant credit theory and in the social contract succinctly elaborated by Rousseau.

2. German Lands

It is sometimes maintained that German *Frühromantik* separates itself from the preceding *Sturm und Drang* movement in its self-awareness. What *Sturm und Drang* celebrated naively, early Romantics inflected. This echoes Schiller's 1795 distinction in *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung*, where he sees history marked by a shift in art from the former mode to the latter. In these terms, it is curious to open, say, F. M. Klinger's *Sturm und Drang* tragedy *Die Zwillinge* (1776), in which, as one twin returns home, the second runs to the other window to fire off a pistol.[10] All generations are, one would assume, equally self-aware, and their art reflects that truth. Klinger's energetic hero is not unproblematized; he is ironized in Klinger's very stage directions. *Sturm und Drang* does indeed have raw energy—one might think of Bürger's 1774 ballad "Lenore," with its refrain "Die Toten reiten schnell" [The dead ride quickly]; of Goethe's 1774 novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, with its suicide that enthralled Europe; of Schiller's 1782 *Die Räuber*, where Karl Moor becomes a robber when cheated by his brother Franz of his inheritance. Schiller later panned Bürger to suit his agenda, but just as we still read early Goethe and Schiller—and *Die Räuber* is clearly inferior to Schiller's later plays—so we might continue reading these artists, who opened

9 Victor Hugo, *Les Contemplations*, ed. Léon Cellier (Paris: Garnier, 1969), p. 4.

10 Friedrich Maximilian von Klinger, *Die Zwillinge* [The Twins] (1776; Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977), p. 27.

the door on German Romanticism a little earlier than we are sometimes told.[11]

It seems worthwhile to look at the shift in German literature of which *Sturm und Drang* is a symptom—that is, a move away from French Neoclassicism, the abandonment of the alexandrine, and a new kind of German or *national* hero—and see in this moment a watershed of sorts, with the arrival of the Romantic idea in German lands. It matters that Bürger's "Lenore" is already a ballad, like Brentano, and not alexandrine rhyming couplets; that Karl Moor is, like Nerval's later "El Desdichado," disinherited—indeed, reduced to an outcast life as a robber in the woods; that Karl has a code of ethics we are to admire; that Werther's tragic love story made Goethe's name and launched a European *Wertherfieber*.[12] This may not be *Frühromantik*, but to call it anything other than early Romanticism seems to misrepresent what is happening at the time, both in Germany and in the West. It seems clear that the elements of a German Romantic hero were emerging, if not well established, by the time of *Frühromantik* in 1798–1800, dates of the *Athenäum* journal. Let us describe this hero—who, as yet, seems pretty much male by default—and trace his progenitors.

Here we might recall three figures of the hero presented to the world by German lands during this period: Faust, Don Giovanni, and the (somewhat contested) figure of the philosopher seen in Immanuel Kant. All three predate 1798 and German *Frühromantik*.

The hero of Goethe's *Faust* (the *Urfaust* dates from 1772–1775, and the *Fragment* from 1790) sells his soul to the devil: he is an outsider, with a personal moral code. He is also flawed, indeed criminal, both in his treatment of Gretchen and of her brother Valentin—both die in large part thanks to Faust—but apparently redeemed by love. He is a seeker of the new and strange, and as the subject of a deal between God and the devil, he is elect. His experiences give him insight denied to those around him, which parallels Vigny's Moïse. He is Promethean—perhaps his most fundamental attribute. Ultimately, he is larger than life. It seems implausible for, say, Racine or Voltaire to have written a

11 *Panned:* Roger Paulin, *The Life of August Wilhelm Schlegel. Cosmopolitan of Life and Poetry* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), p. 571. Paulin also notes Heine's (false) claim that A.W. Schlegel attacked Bürger.

12 "El Desdichado" in Gérard de Nerval, *Les Chimères* (1854).

tragedy like this: the play is hard to imagine prior to Europe's Romantic pivot.

Mozart's and Da Ponte's Don Giovanni, in 1787, does not sell his soul, but in the opera's final scene, the stone Commendatore calls him repeatedly to repent, and Don Giovanni refuses. The later German Romantic E.T.A. Hoffmann—who composed an opera himself—argues in 1813 that, at first glance, the libretto offers a vulgar tale of a libertine and *bon vivant*. But he sees in Don Giovanni "all that raises man towards divinity," warped by our fallen world into a Promethean striving for love and passion by means of seduction, and then ending in a Promethean challenge for the stone statue to come dine with him.[13] Certainly, Don Giovanni seems possessed by a force he only partly controls; women find him irresistible; statues walk at his bidding; he defies Heaven in his final moments, as Leporello pleads with him to be less brave. Both Faust and Don Giovanni seem inhabited by life force, an almost electric energy which contributes to the larger-than-life impression they give, and which may well be central to their endurance as myths.

Finally, Immanuel Kant in his three critiques, 1781–1790, established three epochal things.[14] First, that sustained thought could elaborate a unified metaphysics, ethics, and esthetics independent of any established church. Second, that the material of our senses is fundamentally other than, but perhaps parallel to, the universe we inhabit: we may never know the things around us, but we do have their phone numbers, as was later said of subatomic particles. Indeed, a disjunction exists between self and world. And third, that the mind which does this thinking has the potential to achieve a certain celebrity. Prior to the Romantics, by and large, heroes in stories are not given to deep thoughts. It is common thereafter, and Kant's success likely had its part in that. It matters, for instance, that *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* has a chapter on German Romantic thinkers; one thinks of the weight of thought in Wordsworth's long poems or, say, of Coleridge's *Biographia*

13 Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, *Don Juan. Eine fabelhafte Begebenheit, die sich mit einem reisenden Enthusiasten zugetragen* (1813), in *E.T.A. Hoffmanns sämtliche Werke in fünfzehn Bänden*, ed. Eduard Grisebach (Leipzig: Hesse, [n.d.]), I, p. 70: "den Juan stattete die Natur [...] mit alle dem aus, was den Menschen, in näherer Verwandschaft mit dem Göttlichen [...] erhebt."

14 Immanuel Kant, *Critik der reinen Vernunft* [Critique of Pure Reason] (1781); *Critik der praktischen Vernunft* [Critique of Practical Reason] (1788); *Critik der Urtheilskraft* [Critique of Judgment] (1790).

literaria.[15] Moreover, Kant's German successors in philosophy stretch beyond the nineteenth century: in the Romantic era, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer; after that, Nietzsche, Marx, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger. Just as Bach launched German music, so Kant, one may argue, launched German thought. And since Kant, critics have sought out German system in unlikely places—in the thought of Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, that master of the fragment.

Let us now look at other German Romantic heroes. After *Faust*, satanic pacts recur—in Chamisso's 1814 novel *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte*, for instance, where Peter foolishly sells his shadow and regrets it; in Weber's 1821 opera *Der Freischütz*, where Max makes a pact for accursed magic bullets—confirming the staying power of Promethean heroes compelled by circumstance to a liminal existence. Schiller, that Weimar Classicist who ceased correspondence with the mad Hölderlin, has several striking heroes in his tragedies: beside Karl Moor and Wilhelm Tell, fighters for justice and even for an oppressed nation, stand Joan of Arc, Wallenstein, and also Don Karlos, again an outsider to the system of values of his father's royal court.[16] Don Karlos is also a man whose ethics, informed as they are by passion, are presented as superior. There is some overlap between this worldview and that of Goethe in *Torquato Tasso*—about an outsider with a passion-based ethical system—or in *Egmont*, about another fighter for an oppressed and voiceless nation, the Dutch.[17] The great poet Hölderlin's epistolary novel *Hyperion* (1797–1799) describes yet another national struggle, the contemporary Greek struggle for liberation from the Turks. All these characters choose the common people over the elite, much as Faust chooses Gretchen. Nor is this world of alternative, passion-based, outsider ethics alien to, say, Heinrich von Kleist, both in his tales—*Die Marquise von O*, about rape followed by marriage, and *Das Erdbeben in Chile*, about adultery—and in his later suicide. In addition, his play *Die Hermannsschlacht*, written months after Prussia's defeat by Napoleon at Jena, stages the famous defeat of Rome by Hermann at the Teutoburger Wald. Meanwhile, E.T.A. Hoffmann's heroes are almost universally

15 *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, pp. 82–102.

16 Schiller: David Constantine, *Hölderlin* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp. 32–36, 81, 159. Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, *Don Karlos, Infant von Spanien* (1787); *Wallenstein* (1799); *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801).

17 Goethe, *Egmont* (1788).

liminal and weird, from his tales—"Der Sandmann"—to the 1819 novel *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr*, with its tormented violinist narrator, Kreisler. Hoffmann tends to contrast their struggles with contented, not to say fatuous, bourgeois interlocutors, like Tomcat Murr himself in the tomcat's verso-page autobiography.

It seems logical for tragedy to feature a good deal of this sort of conflict. Meanwhile, prose writings of the German Romantic era have other priorities. For instance, this period saw the birth of the *Bildungsroman*: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* invented the genre, while Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* were written in answer.[18] Let us note that all three novels involve the protagonist wandering around the (vanishing) Holy Roman Empire: they are, in that sense, all outsiders, and yet anchored in society because this journeyman experience, still available in German lands around 1800, was an important step in a master craftsman's training. The poet Eichendorff's short novel *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826), whose hero does nothing much to advance a career, is also living a liminal existence, but without the goal-driven plot of a *Bildungsroman*. We might add that Caspar David Friedrich's famous 1819 painting, *Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*, seems perfectly at home in this tradition of liminality, election, and wanderings across German soil.

Many of these Romantic-era heroes, though outsiders, belong by birth to what, for lack of a better word, we may call the establishment: they are familiar with money and power, with deciding things, with being heard. That is emphatically not the case in the Grimm brothers' 1812–1815 fairy tale collections, where popular and juvenile heroes dominate, nor really in Brentano's and Arnim's 1808 edited collection of old German songs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, whose protagonists are also mostly popular. One might add that these two collections of vernacular speech appeared after the French Revolution of 1789, the invasion of the Rhineland in 1795, and the twin German humiliations at Jena and Austerlitz. They appeared in an occupied Germany. It is worth following more closely how every German text after 1789 interacts with French and European events; for now, let us simply note the highly charged political environment, and how French cultural

18 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* [Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship] (*1795–1796*); *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* [Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years] (1821–1829).

hegemony prior to 1789—Frederick the Great published in French—was replaced by military and political hegemony soon afterward.[19] It seems no coincidence that Zacharias Werner's 1808 drama *Attila*, featured in Staël's 1810 *De l'Allemagne*, was read by many, including Napoleon's police, as an attack on the French Emperor.[20]

There is room, in German Romantic writing, for whimsy and the fantastic: this is true of the Grimms' fairy tales, of E.T.A. Hoffmann's heroes, and certainly of the protagonists of Jean Paul's many novels, with their debts to Sterne.[21] This is perhaps that *Arabeske* or free play of the imagination proposed for the novel by Friedrich Schlegel in his 1800 *Brief über den Roman*.[22] Yet German heroes of the Romantic era seem more often earnest than playful. The fantastic in this corpus typically echoes the eerie Gothic novel instead, while the Grimms' heroes tend to be resourceful and resilient, but not playful, even as children; Hoffmann and Jean Paul are unusual in this vein. There is also a certain German dialogue between enthusiasm and despair: comparing the 1797 *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* and the 1804 *Nachtwachen des Bonaventura*, the contrast is glaring, a move from celebration to nihilism.[23]

So, some recurring traits emerge from this thumbnail sketch. German Romantic-era heroes are often outsiders, with a liminal moral code. They often, though not always, belong by birth to the entitled, though their sympathy is with the voiceless. They are sometimes disinherited.

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19 Frederick the Great: *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. J.D.E. Preuss, 31 vols (Berlin: R. Decker, 1846–1857).

20 Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner, *Attila, König der Hunnen, romantische Tragödie* (1808). Compare Aimé Martin, *Le Portrait d'Attila, suivi d'une Epître à M. de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Aimé Martin, 1814), in John Isbell, "Censors, Police, and *De l'Allemagne*'s Lost 1810 Edition: Napoleon Pulps His Enemies," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* CV/2 (1995), p. 168.

21 Johann Paul Friedrich Richter [Jean Paul], *Leben des vergnügten Schulmeisterlein Maria Wutz in Auenthal. Eine Art Idylle* (1790); *Die unsichtbare Loge* (1793); *Hesperus* (1795); *Leben des Quintus Fixlein* (1796); *Siebenkäs* (1796); *Titan* (1800–1803); *Des Feldpredigers Schmelzle Reise nach Flätz* (1809).

22 *Arabeske*: *Brief über den Roman*, in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, 284–362, in *Friedrich Schlegel II: Charakteristiken und Kritiken I* (*1796–1801*), ed. Hans Eichner (1967), p. 331. Friedrich argues that the *Roman* makes no distinction between "Spiel und Ernst" in Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische und theoretische Schriften* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978), p. 208.

23 Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797); Ernst August Friedrich Klingemann, *Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura* (1804).

They are often exceptional—in energy, in passion, in intellect, in genius. They often display disregard for accepted social niceties or received moral codes. And from this place of election, they often work, like say Egmont, or Tell, or Hermann, or Hyperion, to raise up an oppressed and voiceless nation. The philosopher Fichte does so, for instance, in his 1808 *Reden an die deutsche Nation*. It is also worth noting that, almost without exception, similar topoi can be found in the French texts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—who died in 1778.

3. France

In a sense, and with hindsight, everything in France in the years just prior to 1789 is prelude. This is teleology, of course, but it is also true to say that the French eighteenth century, in tandem to an emerging fiscal crisis under Louis XVI, saw increasing pressure to reform the social and political order, pressure for which Rousseau and, curiously, Voltaire are towering emblems. The project of neither makes sense without an awareness that they imagined France, in particular, different than it was, and worked day and night to achieve that goal.

The motto of Voltaire—in no way a Romantic—was "écrasez l'infâme," or *crush the infamous*.[24] His 1759 novel *Candide ou l'optimisme*, sent like a bomb into mid-century Europe, ridicules the inert array of social and religious superstition faced by its hero in his brisk tour of the West. But Voltaire, neither an atheist nor a republican, believed in reason—*les lumières*—to solve all problems, which explains his letter to Rousseau about walking on all fours. Because Rousseau was a very different person. It has been said of Rousseau that he was 'born without a skin,' and indeed his sensitivity to affronts verged on paranoia, as in his dispute with David Hume, who had given him refuge in England when pursued by the law. Rousseau wrote brilliant, seminal political pamphlets (*Du contrat social*, 1762), a best-selling novel of sentiment (*Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, 1761), and quintessentially Romantic productions (*Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, 1782), but perhaps his most telling opus is, in the end, his *Confessions* (1782). It is modeled on

24 Voltaire often uses "écrasez l'infâme" to end a letter—thus, to Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, 28 September 1763, in *Voltaire: Correspondence, XXVI, February-September 1763*, ed. Theodore Besterman (Banbury: The Voltaire Foundation, 1973), p. 420. Percy Bysshe Shelley cites "écrasez l'infâme" as epigraph on *Queen Mab*'s title page.

St Augustine, but differs from that saint in featuring a moment when Rousseau steals a ribbon and then allows a maid he likes to be fired for it.[25] Rousseau is prepared for a sort of self-laceration which would be alien to Voltaire, but with which the coming century would feel increasingly at home. It seems possible that the man brought something new and strange into the world, which is an almost impossible task. Furthermore, Rousseau pretty clearly wanted a different society—not necessarily the weird dairy-product idyll he presents in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, but at the least a world of authenticity and perhaps empowerment, as *Du contrat social* proposes. And the French Old Regime depended on a series of convenient myths. When those began to be dismantled on the pages of the *philosophes*, it faced a sort of reckoning with a literate bourgeoisie who found ready-made arguments and narratives at hand here for reform, and more fundamentally perhaps with a courtly world that was itself more than prepared to treat these arguments as reasonable. It is no coincidence that on the night of 4 August 1789, the assembled French nobility volunteered to abdicate all their feudal rights; nor, perhaps more tellingly, that Marie-Antoinette, that ultimate check on Louis XVI's temptations to swing left, spent her days dressing as a shepherdess in the little cottage she had built on the grounds of Versailles.

This then is the world Beaumarchais stepped into, and he did so by giving the French, and Europe, an emblematic modern hero in *Le Mariage de Figaro* of 1778.[26] Figaro is, to begin with, powerless: he is a servant, and the count has his eye on Figaro's fiancée. But Figaro plans both to marry and to save the day, and what he does have in abundance is native wit. The play's subtitle is *La Folle Journée*, and it ends, like any good comedy, with Figaro happily married, like his parents (it is a double marriage). Here, we are deep in the French 'Preromantic' weeds, decades before 1830's *bataille d'Hernani*; but viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, it seems hard to view Rousseau as anything other than an early Romantic figure, or Figaro as anything other than a sort of early and happy Rigoletto.

Two dates help to define this early period: 1776 and 1789. Louis XVI, conscious of French defeat in the Seven Years' War, was persuaded to help finance American colonial resistance to the British in the 1770s and

25 The ribbon story closes Section I, Book Two of Rousseau's *Confessions*.

26 Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* [The Mad Day, or The Marriage of Figaro] (1778).

1780s. Funding a people's ousting of a king may seem shortsighted, especially with a king who a decade later was beheaded by his own people, but the French lionized Benjamin Franklin in Paris, and saw in the American war a soft power objective to match the hard power one of removing America from their European rival. The young Marquis de La Fayette crossed the ocean to be George Washington's aide-de-camp, while, like Ben Franklin, Washington provided France with a personal model for republican government and virtue. In fact, a vision of republican virtue developed in France from the 1770s on—as modeled in the new American republic, in the Dutch, Swiss, and Genevan republics, and for instance in the Roman republican paintings of David, such as 1784's *Serment des Horaces*. It contributed to the success of the Genevan Necker, French minister of finance, whose exile on 11 July 1789 was followed three days later by the Fall of the Bastille and his reinstatement. From early in the doomed reign of Louis XVI, there was a republican logic to French political discourse, making it entirely fitting that after three years of royal cohabitation, a republic was declared in 1792. But talk like this has its own momentum. The French Revolutionary army first marched beyond French borders with the battle of Fleurus in 1794, after two full years of desperate struggle to save their new republic from Europe's crowned heads. But those European monarchs were right to view the Revolution as a threat, since it was spread not only by guns and bayonets, but also by verbs and nouns, which are as light as air. The Revolution had sympathizers across the breadth of Europe, not least because it promised a voice, a meal, a fair deal to every subject of those benighted regimes. France spent five years after 1789 declining to proselytize, but that changed after Fleurus. And Europe awaited.

It is worth noting that France itself saw two more revolutions in the next half-century: in 1830 and in 1848. Asked in 1972 what he thought of the French Revolution, Zhou Enlai replied: "It's too early to tell."[27] From 1794 to 1815, France moved to occupy Europe. This was an epochal event, one that lies at the core of the West's Romantic era. What place, then, was there for Romantic art in Revolutionary or Imperial France? In 1790s Paris, the painter David staged *fêtes révolutionnaires* with hundreds of thousands in attendance: it is hard to imagine a more literal enacting of

27 Zhou Enlai famously said this to Henry Kissinger in 1972.

the people's voice in art.[28] In literature, alongside novelists of sentiment like Mme de Genlis or Mme Cottin, or indeed dutiful Neoclassicism like Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anarcharsis*, stands Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, whose novel *Paul et Virginie* (1788) uses exoticism to make us admire an outsider love story, just as his *La Chaumière indienne* (1791) gave the world the Romantic word *pariah*.[29] Germaine de Staël had emerged to fame in 1788 with her *Lettres sur Rousseau*, and she was prolific, though often exiled from France, throughout this period, writing novels like *Corinne ou l'Italie*—a key moment for Romantic social contract theory, as her double title suggests—and treatises like *De l'Allemagne*, which praised occupied Germany over the triumphant French Empire.[30] Her final years brought *Dix années d'exil*, where she used Napoleon's exile order to recreate herself as a mythic figure. Chateaubriand, who had a long subsequent career, in 1801–1802 published *Atala*, with a Native American heroine, and then *René*, whose brooding hero presages Byron's Childe Harold.[31] And Staël's lover Constant—who had all Paris at his funeral in revolutionary 1830—published his tribute to their liaison, the 1816 novel *Adolphe*, starring a hero powerless to act.[32]

It is odd to see how little energy appears in the men in these novels: in Staël's Léonce and Oswald, from *Delphine* (1802) and *Corinne* (1807) respectively, but also in Constant's and Chateaubriand's Adolphe and René, or in, say, Senancour's 1804 Obermann. In the days of Austerlitz and the retreat from Moscow, this French passivity may well surprise. Staël's heroine Corinne, by contrast, is elect and Promethean, much as German heroes are, if not more so. Napoleon for his part personally worked to maintain Classicism in France, with some success; it is only after his death that a Romantic Napoleon emerges, in the 1823 *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*.[33] There is clearly energy in Revolutionary and Imperial

28 David: Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

29 Jean-Jacques Barthélemy, *Voyage du jeune Anarcharsis* (1788); Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie* (1788) and *La Chaumière indienne* (1790).

30 Germaine de Staël, *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807), *De l'Allemagne* (1810–1813), *Dix années d'exil* (1821).

31 François-René de Chateaubriand, *Atala, ou Les Amours de deux sauvages dans le désert* (1801), *René* (1802); George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–1818).

32 1830 funeral: *Benjamin Constant 1767–1830* [exhibition catalogue] (Lausanne: Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, 1967), pp. 108–110.

33 Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné Las Cases, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (1823).

France, but it tends not to reveal itself in contemporary French Romantic texts. For instance, during the Terror, the Girondin Condorcet wrote the brilliant *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1795) while in hiding from the guillotine—broadly an Enlightenment text—while André Chénier wrote fine, rather Neoclassical lyric poetry in an identical situation. Volney's *Les Ruines* is Byronic *avant la lettre*, but, like Mercier's contemporary *Tableau de Paris*, lacks a larger-than-life Byronic hero to front it.[34] Xavier de Maistre's 1794 *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, charming in its philosophical approach to imprisonment, lacks energy almost by definition. Margaret Waller's *The Male Malady* documents this curious French phenomenon, echoing on through Musset's 1836 *Confession d'un enfant du siècle*, which we may oppose to *frénétiques* like Pétrus Borel.[35]

After 1815 and Waterloo, the returning Louis XVIII—younger brother of the guillotined Louis XVI—continued official support for Classical art, while Romantic voices briefly fell silent. Staël died; Constant chose politics; Chateaubriand chose Neoclassicism and politics. Stendhal, who was later to fill his novels—*Le Rouge et le Noir, La Chartreuse de Parme*—with Promethean heroes, was still in Italy.[36] A new generation emerges in the 1820s, the days of *La Muse française*: Lamartine in lyric, then the novel, Hugo and Vigny in lyric, then the theatre and the novel.[37] Dumas too finds stage success in 1829, before his serious work of novel-writing.[38] Alongside these young Romantics are sympathizers—the slippery Nodier, Mérimée, Sainte-Beuve—and some who achieved fame later—Gautier, Nerval. Other successful contemporaries largely eschewed the Romantic debate—Scribe in theatre, Béranger in lyric and song—while

34 Constantin François Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney, *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires* (1791); Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Le Tableau de Paris* (1781–1788).

35 Margaret Waller, *The Male Malady. Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993); see also Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble. A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997). Joseph-Pierre Borel d'Hauterive [Pétrus Borel], *Champavert*, *Contes immoraux* (1833).

36 On Stendhal in Italy, see Chapter Four.

37 *La Muse française* ran 1823–1824. Alphonse de Lamartine, *Les Méditations Poétiques* (1820); Alfred de Vigny, *Poèmes Antiques et Modernes* (1826), then *Cinq-Mars* (1826); Victor Hugo was prolific already before 1830: *Odes et Ballades* (1826), *Hernani* (1830), then *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831).

38 Alexandre Dumas, *Henri III et sa cour* (1829).

some worked in other fields: painters like Géricault, who died young, and Delacroix and Ary Scheffer, or composers like Berlioz. But looking back at French Romanticism's contribution to the world, it seems hard to avoid the conclusion that it is at its peak in the novel, despite warmed-over talk of Realism, and this mostly begins to emerge after a hiatus starting around 1830.

One short novel from the 1820s seems worth recording: Claire de Duras's 1823 *Ourika*, whose heroine is from Africa. Staël had put African heroines in short stories in the 1780s, but there are few other precedents for this step into otherness, this act of empathy and compassion.[39] Victor Hugo had red-haired dwarves as villains in his two early novels *Han d'Islande* and *Bug-Jargal*, while in *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) his hero is a red-haired hunchback: it seems possible that Hugo saw the flaw in his stereotyping there and overcame it.[40] Certainly, Quasimodo is an unusual hero, but then Hugo is an unusual writer. Quasimodo may be Hugo's most mythic creation, more so than Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*. Dumas gave ten-year-olds the world over no less than three mythic heroes, despite his exclusion from the French canon: in *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (1844), *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* (1844), and *Le Masque de fer* (1847–1850).[41] Eugène Sue, on the other hand, did not.[42] Nor, one might suspect, are ten-year-olds' dreams peopled by Stendhal's Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole, by Balzac's Eugène de Rastignac or Lucien de Rubempré, or indeed by colonel Chabert, *père* Goriot, or *cousine* Bette, tremendous characters though they may be.[43]

What is true is that the early nineteenth century in France furnished a considerable array of novels—by Dumas, Balzac, Stendhal, Hugo—which have, since the forgotten Champfleury, often been categorized as 'Realist,' not Romantic, but which are filled with Promethean outsiders engaged in titanic struggle with impersonal social forces: "À nous deux

39 Madame de Staël, *Œuvres de jeunesse*, ed. John Isbell with an introduction by Simone Balayé (Paris: Desjonquères, 1997).

40 Victor Hugo, *Han d'Islande* (1823), *Bug-Jargal* (1826).

41 Alexandre Dumas, *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne: Dix ans après* (1847–1850), the final section of which is titled *L'homme au masque de fer*.

42 Eugène Sue wrote serialized novels to great success.

43 Marie-Henri Beyle [Stendhal], *Le Rouge et le Noir: Chronique du XIX^e siècle* (1830) contains both Sorel and La Mole; Honoré de Balzac wrote *Le Père Goriot* (1835) with Rastignac, *Illusions perdues* (1837–1843) with Rubempré, *Le Colonel Chabert* (1829), *Le Père Goriot* (1835), and *La Cousine Bette* (1846).

maintenant!" cries Rastignac to the city of Paris to end *Le Père Goriot*. These novels do a tremendous job of peopling the dreams of those older than ten, who have seen perhaps how life can disappoint.[44] Amputating this corpus from the Romantic project makes little sense, denying as it does a central element of the work itself, not to mention the place of the novel in Romantic art as the French Romantics, and the West, conceived it. It also seems worth noting here the French habit of dating nineteenth-century art from 1830 or thereabouts and the *bataille d'Hernani*. Hence, the rather teleological word *préromantique*, which defines an entire corpus purely in relation to an absent Other, of which it could by definition have no knowledge, and the compendious Musée d'Orsay in Paris, whose vision of the nineteenth century it hosts begins at around that late date, effectively excluding a good third of the century in question—including Géricault, Ingres, Ary Scheffer, and the lion's share of Delacroix.

Finally, let us return to the century's two other French revolutions. We have seen how 1830 has been pivotal to the story of Romantic art in France. It also replaced one king with another, a Bourbon *Roi de France* with his Orleanist cousin, a *Roi des Français*. Yet the year 1848 was to prove perhaps even more of a disappointment. It began with the establishment of a Second Republic, forty-four years after the first one perished. That Second Republic lasted all of four years before Bonaparte's nephew 'Napoléon le Petit,' who had never won a battle, proclaimed a Second Empire with himself at its head.[45] History repeats itself "the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce," as Marx said of this moment.[46] The mood of the 1840s is captured in Balzac's *Illusions perdues* (1837–1843), perhaps his greatest novel; but for an acid description of Paris during this, France's third revolution, there are few more gripping scenes than those of Flaubert in his bleak follow-up to *Madame Bovary* (1856), *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869).[47] Central to the age, in other words, is the image of revolt. It appears in unlikely places—dominating, for instance, Nerval's 1854 lyric sequence *Les Chimères*—but is nowhere more in evidence than in Hugo's 1862 *Les Misérables*.

44 Rastignac's words are on the novel's last page.

45 Victor Hugo, *Napoléon le Petit* [pamphlet] (1852).

46 History repeats itself: Karl Marx, *Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon* (1852).

47 *Illusions perdues* appeared in 1837–1843 but captures this mood. *L'Education sentimentale* in Gustave Flaubert, *Oeuvres*, 2 vols, ed. A. Thibaudet and R. Dumesnil (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), II, pp. 324–352.

Hugo completed the work, one where Jean Valjean steals a loaf of bread and is pursued for it through war and revolution, in self-imposed exile in Guernsey, before returning to France's Third Republic in 1870 as a *député*, not for the monarchist right where he had begun his career a half-century earlier, but for the socialist left. Victor Hugo, equally at ease in verse, in prose, or on the stage, bestrides nineteenth-century French literature as Voltaire did the eighteenth, like a colossus. Voltaire would have found him incomprehensible.

4. The British Isles

There is clear continuity between the Romantic period and what was once unfortunately called the 'Preromantic' period of the late Enlightenment. In these terms, we might open our survey of the British Romantic era with four texts from the 1760s destined for European impact: Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Macpherson's *The Works of Ossian* (1765), Percy's *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), and Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767). Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, which may have been written as a joke, thus launches Europe's Gothic novel, with its horror and its fantastical elements.[48] Macpherson's Ossian, a 'third-century' national epic evidently assembled by Macpherson out of oral fragments—just as the German Wolf in 1795 would argue was the case for Homer, or as Lönnrot later pieced together Finland's *Kalevala*—met similar European success as a northern and sentimental alternative to Homer's precedent.[49] Percy's *Reliques* restored the ballad to establishment approval—making, for instance, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*, Brentano's and Arnim's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and Almeida Garrett's *Romanceiro* possible, while opening the door to Heine and the brothers Grimm.[50] And Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* brought the free play of the arabesque into the novel—that central *motif* in German and indeed European Romanticism—along with a model for digression in plot that may for instance have shaped Byron's *blasé* and witty *Don Juan* in 1819–1824.

48 Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).
49 Friedrich August Wolf, *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795).
50 William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (1798, 1800).

It is hard to separate the Gothic genre, whose Promethean heroes clearly have their own moral code, from the Romantic corpus, leading as it does to productions like Emily Brontë's 1847 *Wuthering Heights*. Heroes in revolt against conventional morality run like a red thread through Gothic novels, as through Romanticism, often opposed to heroines who appear less Promethean than them and more sentimental, indeed more grounded in reality: in Britain, Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) follow this pattern. Mary Shelley's Romantic novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* has such a hero without a prominent heroine. In France, Sade borrows from the Gothic genre in this period for his unpleasant tales, as Lafontaine does in Germany. Byron has learned from the Gothic in productions like *The Giaour* (1813) and *Manfred* (1817), and even in *Childe Harold*. One might also mention his friend Polidori's 1819 *The Vampyre*, the first vampire novel. These heroes, then, are not only outsiders in revolt against things as they are; they are flawed and often criminal, a circumstance which seems less common in the contemporary productions of the Germans, despite their satanic pacts, and of the Revolutionary French. Thus, James Hogg's brilliant *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) tells the first-person story of a man whose companion and mentor may, or may not, be the devil, and whose belief in Presbyterian election and predestination leads him, among other things, to murder his older brother. But flawed outsiders, even outcasts, run throughout the British Romantic corpus: Wordsworth's Idiot Boy and Coleridge's Ancient Mariner; Blake's Chimney Sweeper and Charlotte Brontë's blind Rochester in *Jane Eyre* (1847); De Quincey's opium eater; even, tellingly, Austen's misjudged Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).[51] A touching footnote to this tradition lies in a group of contemporary outsider biographies: Robert Burns, Scotland's folk poet; Thomas Chatterton, the gifted poetic forger who killed himself at seventeen in 1770, earning mention from Wordsworth in 1807's "Resolution and Independence" and a play from Vigny in 1835; John Clare, the farm laborer who wrote "The Badger" and "I Am"—"My friends forsake me like a memory lost"—before his early descent into

51 Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" and Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" both feature in their *Lyrical Ballads*. Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper" appears in his *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794). Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821).

madness.[52] Keats has his place in this story, dying young as leader of the 'Cockney School,' and Shelley and Byron, born into the establishment, also came to live on society's margins and tragically die young, Shelley in a storm at sea and Byron at Missolonghi.

Ossian fits directly into that solitary, melancholy, sentimental outsider narrative, that vision of the expanded Romantic reading public. It matters that he offered Europe's emerging Romantics an alternative canon to the Greeks, becoming for instance Napoleon's favorite author. A great sweep of Europe's Romantic lyric, as we have seen, is meanwhile made possible by Percy's *Reliques*, in which the ballad is fundamental. The tradition reaches across Europe and across the decades from Bürger through Brentano and Arnim, or indeed Hugo's *Odes et ballades*, on to Heine. It seems fair to argue that in, say, the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798–1800, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's narrators are often fellow travelers to their marginal protagonists. Sterne, meanwhile, in his digressive playfulness, opens the door to Jean Paul, to Friedrich Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie*, to Berchet's *Lettera semiseria*, to Pushkin's *Evgenii Onegin*, to Almeida Garrett's prose fiction, perhaps as said above to Byron's *Don Juan*.

Interest in the Other shapes a good number of British long poems of the period, as discussed in Chapter Three: Moore's *Lalla Rookh*; Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*; Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* and *The Curse of Kehama;* Percy Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*; almost anything by Byron.[53] Clearly, there was an appetite for long exotic poems, often with an orientalist subtext. This may be less prevalent in contemporary women poets such as Charlotte Smith, Letitia Landon, or Felicia Hemans, the best-selling poet of her age; British women poets are mostly known for shorter lyric works.[54] It is perhaps instructive to contrast the exotic locations of Gothic and orientalist narrative, verse, and prose, with the British local color favored both in the first-person Jacobin novel of the 1790s—Godwin's brilliant *Caleb Williams* (1794)—and in the anti-Jacobin

52 Alfred de Vigny, *Chatterton* (1835).

53 Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh* (1817); Thomas Campbell, *Gertrude of Wyoming; A Pennsylvanian Tale* (1809); Robert Southey, *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810); P.B. Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam* (1817); Byron *passim*.

54 Felicia Hemans in *British Women Poets of the Romantic Era. An Anthology*, ed. Paula R. Feldman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). But see the female British long poems reviewed in Chapter Three.

or nation-building novels which followed: Maria Edgeworth in her groundbreaking Irish novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800); Jane Austen in England, from *Mansfield Park* (1814) to *Emma* (1815); Sir Walter Scott in his Scottish novels like *Waverley* (1814) or *Kenilworth* (1821).[55] The fundamentally English Charles Dickens follows in this tradition, though his relation to the Jacobin/anti-Jacobin divide is complex: Pip narrates *Great Expectations*, as David narrates *David Copperfield*, but Dickens is hardly a Jacobin author.[56]

Perhaps the British radical tradition, 1789–1832, merits a closer look, given our focus here on compassion and the outsider as we consider the Romantic hero. The movement, with its roots in authors like Milton or Locke, continues in Thomas Paine, author of *Common Sense* (1776) and *The Rights of Man* (1791)—participant in two revolutions—whose funeral just six people attended. In the 1790s, it touches Godwin and Wollstonecraft, but also Charles James Fox in parliament and the young Wordsworth and Coleridge, who later became less revolutionary in sympathies. It touches Blake and it marks the dramatist and novelist Thomas Holcroft. It marks the Utilitarians, James Mill and Jeremy Bentham, who advocate among other things for prison reform and an end to rotten boroughs, part of a campaign eventually leading to the Reform Act in 1832. These are the years of William Wilberforce's campaign against the Atlantic slave trade, which ended in Britain in 1807. As the French Republic became an empire, the British Jacobin threat to the establishment ebbed, but radical thought did not vanish overnight, from John Thelwall and John Horne Tooke, tried for treason in the 1790s by Pitt's edgy government and then acquitted, to William Cobbett, author of *Rural Rides* (1830). There is a continuity to this tradition, which also marks the thought of Britain's second generation of Romantics—Byron and the Shelleys—as indeed it marks the brilliant William Hazlitt, the essayist Charles Lamb, or Leigh Hunt, founder of *The Examiner*. It determines the career of the satirist and bookseller William Hone, who won his battle against government censorship in

55 Jacobin and anti-Jacobin novels: *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, pp. 192–199. William Godwin, *Things as They Are; or The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794). Nation-building: Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), *Kenilworth. A Romance* (1821).

56 Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1861), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850).

1817 in a blow for freedom of the press. All these thinkers share a vision of practical reform, of a better future for all humanity; all are shaped by the events of 1789.

History frames a good deal of this Romantic-era production. The British eighteenth century saw Hanoverian ascendancy interrupted by two Jacobite incursions and the loss of the Thirteen Colonies. Initial enthusiasm for the French Revolution, challenged early by Burke, then dropped sharply after the declaration of the French Republic, the execution of Louis XVI, and British war with France.[57] This war lasted almost without interruption until 1815, financed in Britain by national credit and made sustainable by Britain's control of the seas, particularly after victory at Trafalgar in 1805, which ended the ongoing threat of French invasion. Against this backdrop, the anti-Jacobin novel plays out. Simultaneously, the industrial revolution and the enclosure movement were reshaping the British countryside: Blake the Londoner was not wrong to see "dark satanic mills" there.[58] The Nottinghamshire Luddite movement of 1811–1816 smashed the new machinery; protesters at St Peter's Fields in Manchester, 1819, were ridden down by mounted troops at "Peterloo." France went into the Revolution as the wealthiest state in Europe, yet the twenty-year war that followed made clear that Britain had access via credit to funds successive French states were denied, while the Industrial Revolution made Britain the most advanced country in Europe, if not the world, in technology and economics. Few are the British Romantics who celebrate these developments.

British Romantic painting, finally, has kept a certain cachet, from Constable and Turner to Fuseli and Blake. There is a gulf between the formal revolution of Blake and that of Turner, but it is worthwhile to compare them both with the work of a cartoonist like Gillray, who is closer to the Augustan tradition that Hogarth exemplifies. As in France with Ingres and Delacroix, as in Germany with Friedrich and Runge, it seems futile to say that either clear line or its absence defines European Romantic painting.

57 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

58 *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Bloomsbury: Nonesuch, 1927), p. 464: verse prologue to *Milton*.

5. The Italian Peninsula

Italian Romanticism is in essence a Lombard phenomenon—outside Lombardy, there is Leopardi in the Papal *Marche*, but he began his career by publishing in Milan. It has been argued that Italian Romanticism does not exist—*Il Romanticismo italiano non esiste*, runs Gina Martegiani's arresting 1908 book title.[59] And in fact, the constellation radiating out from the Milanese journal *Il Conciliatore* produced a remarkably small, if impressive, body of significant work: two major novels, a few historical tragedies, a prison memoir, a short, brilliant volume of lyric poems.[60] Also, some elegant and important treatises. One reason for this dearth is Austria. Italy's Milan Romantics agitated for national independence from Metternich's Austrian repression, and in consequence were exiled or imprisoned, almost to a man: Pellico, Borsieri, Berchet, even Gabriele Rossetti, father of Dante Gabriel. By 1820, Foscolo, who was older, had already left for London, and Breme, at whose box at La Scala the Romantics met, died young. Not many Romantic movements have been more comprehensively killed in their cradle.

Let us look at this textual corpus and the circumstances surrounding it. In Foscolo's 1802 novel, *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis*, the narrator and protagonist runs over and kills a man, conceals the crime, and then accepts thanks from the victim's family, fitting the Romantic pattern of flawed first-person narrators that runs like a red thread from Des Grieux through René, Adolphe, and Hogg's justified sinner.[61] Manzoni's later *I promessi sposi* belongs, like the novels of Vigny or Mérimée in France, or Cooper in America, to the quite different tradition of historical novels deriving from Sir Walter Scott's European success: it concerns Lombards under the Spanish yoke in the plague-ridden seventeenth century, with Spain standing in for the Austrians that Garibaldi was soon to eject from the peninsula.[62] These are two splendid novels, though *Ortis* raises interesting questions in ethics. Manzoni also wrote two historical tragedies, *Il Conte di Carmagnola* (1820) and *Adelchi* (1822), both set in

59 Gina Martegiani, *Il Romanticismo italiano non esiste* (Florence: Seeber, 1908).

60 *Il Conciliatore:* Isbell, "Staël and the Italians" reviews this milieu.

61 *Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* in Ugo Foscolo, *Opere*, ed. Mario Puppo (Milan: Mursia, 1966), p. 391.

62 Alfred de Vigny, *Cinq-Mars, ou Une Conjuration sous Louis XIII* (1826); Prosper Mérimée, *Chronique du règne de Charles IX* (1829).

the Italian past and concerning heroic, but flawed, characters, like the proud count of Carmagnola starting work for the Venetian Republic, and various treatises. The prison memoir is Pellico's *Le mie prigioni*, describing his time in different Austrian prisons and quite moving in his faith-based acceptance of unchangeable circumstance. He also wrote four historical tragedies, including *Francesca da Rimini* (1818), based on Dante. And the chiseled lyric poems are Leopardi's, written and revised over two decades and published shortly before his early death. Leopardi also wrote considerable amounts of prose, notably the Pascalian *Zibaldone* (1898).[63] Foscolo and Manzoni put flawed heroes into their art, but in his memoir Pellico is himself very much an outsider—indeed, a prisoner, like Dumas's count of Monte-Cristo or Man in the Iron Mask. It takes a leap of compassion to visit here, and it is a leap largely unseen before the Romantic era. A generation earlier, Casanova's Venetian prison reminiscences, for one, are rather different in tone.

Other Italian figures left less behind for posterity—Giordani, Breme, and Berchet who wrote the lively *Lettera semiseria*—but it seems reasonable to argue that Austrian intervention had its part in this silence. Two foreigners also played roles in this Italian tale: Staël's 1816 article in the *Biblioteca italiana* is routinely cited as the launching point for the Italian Romantic movement, while Stendhal (the young Henri Beyle) came to know several of these Italians and tried in vain to publish with them. We might also mention Manzoni's *Lettre à M. Chauvet* (1820/1823) as we review seminal Italian Romantic texts. The text had its impact in France where it was first published, both in its own right and when plagiarized in Stendhal's *Racine et Shakespeare*.[64]

Finally, the bystanders. The poet Monti, slightly older, less tied to the group, and something of a political trimmer, features on occasion in modern lists of Italian Romantics, a reminder of how Romanticism and Neoclassicism intersect. The two playwrights Gozzi and Alfieri do not feature, and that seems a pity: the charming Venetian *commedia dell'arte* playwright Gozzi, author notably of *Turandot* (1762), was known in Germany and figures in A.W. Schlegel's lectures on drama, an exemplar of the free play of the imagination that Schlegel values in comedy. He became important to Stendhal for a similar reason. The

63 Giacomo Leopardi, *Canti* (1835), *Zibaldone* (1898).
64 On Stendhal, see Chapter Four.

severe Piedmontese tragedian Alfieri, a little older, is Neoclassical much as David is in painting, belatedly and in terms of Roman republican virtue. The sculptor Canova, who enjoyed European fame, is similarly Neoclassical in a way alien to the Rococo, while in music it is hard to describe Rossini as anything but a Romantic composer. The same is true of the great Verdi, of course, but that is later.

6. Eastern and Northern Europe

The map of Eastern Europe, in the long century between the final Partition of Poland in 1795 and the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, was simple. Broadly, except for Serbia and Greece—independent after 1817 and 1832 respectively—the region was divided between Prussia, Austria, and Russia to the North and the Ottoman Empire to the South. Hungary gained equal status in the Austro-Hungarian Empire after 1867, while other nationalities and language groups of Eastern Europe—the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Romanians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, the various Baltic peoples, and the Finns—were voiceless. This is the backdrop to Eastern European Romanticism, a *national* art almost by definition. Let us review the silent and unrepresented peoples first, then the speakers for nations which had a voice.

The Slovak Ján Kollár published his groundbreaking *Reciprocity between the Various Tribes and Dialects of the Slavic Nation* in German in 1836, but he also published Czech fairy tales and 615 Czech sonnets, while Karel Hynek Mácha, who died young, wrote lyric poetry. Mácha's well-wrought long poem *Máj*, also 1836, was judged to be too bleak, however—prison, parricide, dismemberment—to suit Czech national tastes. Mickiewicz, born in Lithuania, published his epic *Pan Tadeusz*—the Poles' national epic—in Parisian exile in 1834, alongside his fellow-exile Chopin. He wrote the short epic poem *Konrad Wallenrod* in earlier Russian exile, and the drama *Dziady*, completed after Poland's November insurrection in 1830–1831. In Serbia, the philologist Vuk Karadžić collected and reformed the Serbian vernacular, paving the way for a group of Romantic Serbian-language authors. Ljudevit Gaj did similar work on the Croatian language, followed in 1846 by Mažuranić's Croatian national epic *Smrt Smail-age Čengića*, about the Montenegrin war for independence. Romanticism in Romania arrived after 1848; but

in Ukraine, the national poet Taras Shevchenko, who began life as a serf, published his first book of Ukrainian poems in 1840 and his Ukrainian epic *Haidamaky* the following year.

Bulgarian Romanticism between 1762 and 1878—the date of independence from Turkey—conforms to this book's revolutionary and national theses, featuring two saints who published in Bulgarian followed before 1850 by a lexicographer, Nayden Gerov, a folklorist and poet, Petko Slaveykov, and a revolutionary poet, Dobri Chintulov, who survived an assassination attempt and had to burn his manuscripts twice.

Petöfi and Vörösmarty faced different circumstances. Hungary already had a certain autonomy within the Habsburg Austrian Empire, though the Magyar language was contested—it seems that just 42% of the Hungarian kingdom spoke Hungarian in 1804.[65] Yet the two follow a similar path, with Petöfi publishing *János Vitéz* in 1845, a folk epic about plain John's love, exile, and tall tales, while Vörösmarty, in his 1825 epic *Zalán futása*, draws on Hungarian history for his matter.

Turning north to Denmark, beside the Romantic playwright Oehlenschläger—who appears in Staël's *De l'Allemagne*—stands Hans Christian Andersen. Andersen's fairy tales, like the Grimms', commonly feature resourceful children as heroes, who face an amount of suffering that may seem gratuitous—a Victorian plea for genteel compassion—until we recall that Andersen was sent off to a school for the poor by his mother at the age of eleven. In Bernadotte's new Sweden, which took Norway from Denmark in 1814, Tegnér's 1825 *Frithiofs Saga*, based on an Old Norse original, presents a Norwegian hero denied his bride by the king and sent to Orkney while the king burns down his home. Tegnér's metrical virtuosity—the 24 books each have a different meter—is offset by a certain sentimentalism and lack of depth in character, but Frithiof's dilemma is well realized, and he is an outsider hero in the best Romantic vein, a man in revolt—he burns down Baldur's temple—and with his own code of ethics. Goethe admired this much-translated poem.[66] In

65 42%: *European Romanticism. A Reader*, ed. Stephen Prickett, Simon Haines (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 41.

66 See *Goethes sämtliche Werke*, 20 vols (Leipzig: Insel, [n.d.]), XIII, pp. 115–116, "Frithiofs Saga" in *Über Kunst und Altertum*, on Tegnér's "alte, kräftige, gigantisch-barbarische Dichtart […]."

Norwegian Romantic nationalism, again rather characteristically, after independence from Denmark in 1814, folklorists between 1840 and 1867 collected fairy tales in the Grimms' footsteps (Peter Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe), folk songs (Magnus Landstad and Olea Crøger), folk tunes (Ludvig Lindeman), and later, folk artifacts, while the linguist Ivar Aasen codified Nynorsk, a national language largely independent of Danish influence, from the speech patterns of Western Norway. Finnish national poetry opened with Lönnrot's reconstitution of the vernacular oral epic *Kalevala* (1835–1849), while in Estonia, Kreutzwald published his version of the related Estonian epic *Kalevipoeg* in 1853–1862. Common to these national traditions is a Romantic fondness for folk epic with folk heroes—*the people's voice*—and also a focus on the philological work involved in creating, like a Dante or Chaucer, a working national vernacular suitable for high art. This is a quintessentially Romantic enterprise; it is no coincidence that many Eastern European Romantics were polyglot.

Pushkin's splendid *Evgenii Onegin* features earlier in this book, but Gogol and Lermontov also deserve a moment. Gogol is often presented as a 'Realist' author—Soviet scholarship used the term somewhat indiscriminately—but that will not explain his tale where a man meets his nose in Kazan Cathedral and argues with it as it refuses to return to his face.[67] Gogol was not averse to the fantastic, not to say the macabre, and like Balzac, his 'Realist' texts such as the novel *Mertvye dushi* (Dead Souls, 1842) gain weight and clarity when seen to open onto a world of energy, free will, and consequence. Finally, Lermontov's brilliant Pechorin, that Hero for Our Time, leaves the bitter aftertaste that one expects from antiheroes or 'superfluous people,' as the Russian saying went. Like Onegin, he kills his friend in a duel; he is killed; Lermontov wonders if we might ask his opinion of the man, and says, "My answer is the title of this book."[68]

67 Nikolai Vasil'evich Gogol (1809–1852), "The Nose" (1836). "The Terrible Vengeance," in Nikolai V. Gogol, *The Overcoat and Other Tales of Good and Evil*, trans. by David Magarshack (New York: Norton, 1957/1965), p. 50; *Mertvye dushi* [Dead Souls] (1842).

68 Mikhail Iurevich Lermontov, *Geroi nashego vremeni* [A Hero of Our Time] (1840), trans. by Vladimir and Dmitri Nabokov (New York: Knopf, 1992), p. 68.

7. Iberia and the Low Countries

Turning to Spanish Romanticism, this study has argued that Goya's place in Romantic civilization may be more significant than that of, say, Rivas, Larra, Espronceda, or Zorrilla under Spain's Bourbon Restoration. But they deserve a look. Rivas's 1835 *Don Alvaro*, the Spanish *Hernani*, stars the child of a Spanish viceroy and an Inca princess, a hero born in prison, who successively kills all his beloved's male family; it gave Verdi *La Forza del destino*. Larra's 1835 *Articulos de Costumbre*, before his early suicide, reviews customs and aspects of Spanish daily life. It is both full of local color and national in its attention to what is characteristic in the folk. Espronceda's 1840 *El Estudiante de Salamanca*, a retelling of the Don Juan legend combining lyric poetry and dramatic dialogue, is Romantic both in its Promethean revolt and in its eclectic meter, reminiscent of Tegnér or Hugo; and we might add the reactionary Zorrilla's *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844), a drama which again retells the Don Juan legend. Both retellings have their debts to Mozart and Da Ponte. Espronceda had manned the Paris barricades in July 1830; meanwhile, Ferdinand VII's absolutist regime misread A.W. Schlegel in his Vienna lectures as reactionary and Catholic—he was neither—and extended its official *aegis* over this somewhat misconstrued Romantic vision.

Portugal's Almeida Garrett receives a section here on the prose memoir *Viagens na minha terra* (1846). He published earlier Romantic texts, including numerous plays and his *Romanceiro*—a collection of folk poems and ballads, both his own and traditional, in the tradition of Percy's *Reliques*—after his stay in liberal exile in France.[69] From the Low Countries, Conscience receives a section on the Flemish *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen* (1838), one of the hundred-odd novels and novellas he produced. In the young Kingdom of the Netherlands—no longer a republic after 1806—Romantic reference points include the woman author and historical novelist Geertruida Bosboom-Toussaint, the poet Willem Bilderdijk, who had tutored the French Emperor's brother King Louis in Dutch, Hiëronymus van Alphen, who wrote verses for children that are still taught in kindergartens all over the country, and Hendrik

69 João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett (1799–1854), *Romanceiro e Cancioneiro Geral* (1843).

Tollens, who celebrated the deeds of Dutch history in a series of verse romances.

8. The Americas

In the new United States, Romantics seem to turn up in the northern half of the thirteen original colonies: Boston, Baltimore, upstate New York. Their work ranges from whimsical and folksy—Washington Irving—socially conscious—Nathaniel Hawthorne—nation-building and epic—James Fenimore Cooper—or solitary and freethinking—Henry David Thoreau—to grotesque and macabre—Edgar Allan Poe. Emerson shaped the New England Renaissance primarily as an essayist, though he wrote a good deal of verse, while Longfellow, like Melville, published later. There are debts to be mentioned—in Cooper, to Scott; in Thoreau, perhaps to Rousseau; in Poe, to E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Gothic—but Irving and Hawthorne seem in many ways quintessentially American. The United States was lucky not just in its founding fathers, but also in its first generation of canonical authors. They are a diverse bunch, as dead white males go, but united in establishing an American mode of speaking that would hold good over the next two centuries. It is then worth noting the delay faced by poetry in speaking with the same authority: Emerson's poetry does not, to my mind, match his fine essayistic prose; Longfellow is, in 1855's canonical *Song of Hiawatha*, perhaps more well-intentioned than stimulating for a modern reader; Poe as a poet is memorable but somewhat overripe and not prolific. The country had to wait for Dickinson and Whitman to find the same authoritative American voice in poetry it had found in prose a half-century earlier.

Latin America and the Caribbean parallel this story. The years between 1791 and 1826 saw the independence—under Bolívar, San Martín, Toussaint Louverture—of Haiti and all the region's mainland colonies, and indeed, in the ensuing decades, a variety of authors emerged promoting a national discourse in terms familiar to Europe. However, Latin America's Romantic authors mostly published after 1850, just as with Longfellow's *Hiawatha* or Melville's *Moby-Dick* to their north. Prior to that date, Latin American Romantic texts appear in Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, but not apparently in any other Caribbean or Latin American country. Cuban anti-slavery tales include Gertrudis Gómez

de Avellaneda's bleak novel Sab in 1841 (not published in Cuba until 1914), about a noble slave in love with a mistress who marries a lesser man, and Anselmo Suárez y Romero's *Francisco*, written in manuscript between 1839–1840, though also published much later, while José María Heredia y Heredia was outspoken in exile. In newly independent Brazil, meanwhile, a Romantic movement began in 1836, promoted by the expatriate poet Gonçalves de Magalhães. Other Brazilian poets such as Casimiro de Abreu started experimenting with national and Romantic topoi soon afterward, as, after 1840, did novelists like Joaquim Manuel de Macedo (*A Moreninha*, 1844), Manuel Antônio de Almeida (*Memórias de um Sargento de Milícias*, 1852–1853), and José de Alencar (*O Guarani*, 1857). In Argentina, Esteban Echeverría returned from Paris in the 1830s as a promoter of democracy and Romantic literature, which he helped launch there. He died in exile in Uruguay. The leading figure in mid-nineteenth-century Argentine literature was probably Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, later President of Argentina, notably in 1845's *Civilización y barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga*, a vehement attack from exile on *caudillos* and the Rosas regime.

9. The Drama

Throughout much of Western Europe, though less so outside it, the stage became a battleground on which champions of Classical and Romantic art faced off. This largely reflects the continued prestige of French Classical drama—from Racine, Corneille, and Molière to Voltaire—as a vehicle of French cultural hegemony prior to Revolution, Napoleonic invasion, and the discovery of Shakespeare and (to a lesser extent) the Spanish *siglo de oro* of Lope de Vega and Calderón. This is true early in Germany and in England (where Shakespeare remained a model), later in Italy and Spain—all countries influenced by French Classicism—and in France itself, culminating legendarily in France's 1830 *bataille d'Hernani* between Classics and Romantics.

German objections to French models roll on from Lessing in his theater—from his *bürgerliches Trauerspiel*, *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) to *Nathan der Weise* (1779), a parable about tolerance—and also in his influential treatise, the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767–1769), through *Sturm und Drang* dramas with their array of outsider and even criminal heroes—Klinger's *Die Zwillinge* (1776), Wagner's *Die Kindermörderin*

(1777), Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *Urfaust* (1772–1775), Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1782)—to the Romantics. A.W. Schlegel, in particular, is a brilliant translator of Shakespeare and theorist of the drama, notably in his 1809 *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*. But it seems arguable that German Romantic theater did not live up to these expectations, though it had high points, for example Tieck's dreamlike *Leben und Tod des heiligen Genoveva* (1799) and Brentano's sweeping *Die Gründung Prags* (1814). For gripping German drama, 1800–1850, one might look beyond the Romantic canon to Kleist in Berlin (*Die Hermannsschlacht*, 1808), to Werner's dynamic *Martin Luther, oder die Weihe der Kraft* (1807) and *Attila, König der Hunnen* (1808), or his wrenching Fate tragedy *Der vierundzwanzigste Februar* (1815)—later borrowed wholesale by Camus in *Le Malentendu*—to Grillparzer's fine Shakespearean tragedies like *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* (1823), Büchner's later and edgy *Woyzeck* (1836–1837), or of course the corpus of great historical tragedies—*Egmont, Don Karlos*—by Goethe and Schiller in their *Weimarer Klassik* period. Indeed, German-language opera in these years is equally pivotal, from Mozart—*Die Zauberflöte* (1791)—through to Beethoven's 1805 *Fidelio*, about freedom, Weber's 1821 *Der Freischütz*, about a satanic pact, and the works of Wagner after 1840. In sum, German dramatic output, 1750–1850, though memorable, does not seem to be found primarily within the established Romantic canon.

In the British Isles, Shakespeare never really disappeared, though Johnson did help to burnish his reputation with his 1765 edition and preface.[70] The late eighteenth-century theater still performed today—Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775)—tends, however, to be Neoclassical in structure. Other significant Regency dramatists include Elizabeth Inchbald and Joanna Baillie, the critically acclaimed author of the *Plays on the Passions* (1798–1812). Among the male Romantics, meanwhile, Blake produced no drama; Wordsworth wrote *The Borderers* in 1796; Coleridge wrote four plays, 1794–1817, notably *Remorse* (1813); Keats wrote *Otho the Great* (1819), which was a critical failure; but Shelley completed two very stageable and rather different dramas, *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), while Byron wrote several verse dramas, among them *Manfred* (1816–1817), *Cain* (1821), *Marino Faliero* (1821), and *Sardanapalus* (1821). In

70 Samuel Johnson, *The Plays of William Shakspeare* (1765).

short, it seems fair to say that canonical British Romantic drama pivots around Byron and Shelley, with their rebel, criminal, or outsider heroes.

The leading names in Italian eighteenth-century theater are Metastasio and Alfieri. The prolific Metastasio, dramatist and librettist for *opera seria*, did little to challenge Neoclassical orthodoxy, while Alfieri did—his tragedies more closely resemble the republican Neoclassicism of David or Canova. Besides opera and Neoclassical tragedy, the Italian stage also saw popular fare like the French melodrama or vaudeville and the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. The Venetian, Gozzi, was a champion of this last genre and a master of whimsical farce, as in *L'Amore delle tre melarance* (1761), which like his *Turandot* (1762) was later adapted into opera. Mozart's and Rossini's Italian operas—*Don Giovanni* (1787), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1816)—also were enjoying European success just as Italian Romantic playwrights began to challenge Italy's Neoclassical orthodoxy, from Foscolo's three Alfierian tragedies (the anti-French *Aiace* of 1811 got him exiled from Padua) to Pellico's four historical tragedies and Manzoni's two, where the influence of Shakespeare is apparent, as so very often.

In Eastern and Northern Europe, new Romantic-era drama seems thin on the ground, with four major exceptions: Mickiewicz, Pushkin, Gogol, and Oehlenschläger. In Poland, Mickiewicz wrote the splendid *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve) from 1823 to 1832. In Russia, Pushkin wrote the brilliant but unstageable *Boris Godunov* (1831)—there are horses onstage—and Gogol the evergreen comedy *The Government Inspector* (1836). In Denmark, Oehlenschläger, who is hard to find in English, had a career as a Romantic tragedian, and Hans Christian Andersen also saw success onstage. After 1830, Spain produced two new Romantic versions of the Don Juan legend, by Espronceda and Zorrilla, as we have seen, while Rivas in 1835 staged his epochal Romantic drama, *Don Alvaro*. In Portugal, Almeida Garrett wrote numerous plays; apparently no prominent work appeared in the Low Countries. Meanwhile, reviewing the Americas, it seems, somewhat remarkably, that not one major Romantic drama appeared there in the years 1800–1850. Not in the United States, not in the new Latin American and Caribbean republics. The stage does not appear to have been a locus of debate and activity anywhere throughout the formerly colonial New World, whose Romantic authors evidently had other priorities.

Finally, in France, the Neoclassical (or Classical) epicenter, things played out at their own pace. Though Shakespeare appeared in French in the 1770s, he had little impact, and the only prestigious counter-models to Racine and his successor Voltaire seem to be Diderot, in his brilliant novelistic dialogues like *Jacques le fataliste et son maître* (1785), and Beaumarchais in *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1778). Some early Romantics do experiment—Staël, for instance, moves between the 1790s and the 1810s from quite good Voltairean tragedies to Gozzian comedy, and to prose drama inspired, perhaps, by Tieck. Meanwhile, on the boulevards, vaudeville and melodrama draw audiences, and authors outside the Romantic ambit—like Scribe, both dramatist and librettist—have sustained success. We might note here the tradition of grand opera—Scribe and Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* (1836), for instance—which also has its part in shaping the Parisian Romantic-era stage. The 1820s prepare a sort of theatrical coup, with Ladvocat's 25-volume *Chefs-d'oeuvre des théâtres étrangers* (1822–1824) and broadsides like Stendhal's *Racine et Shakespeare* (1823–1825) or Mérimée's unstageable and quirky medley, the *Théâtre de Clara Gazul* (1825). The coup, commemorated in countless historiographies, was planned and executed in 1830, year of France's July Revolution, for the premiere of Hugo's Shakespearean tragedy, *Hernani*. Hugo's own *Cromwell* dates from 1827, and Dumas's *Henri III et sa cour* from 1829, but institutions matter, and the Parisian stage fell at *Hernani*'s opening night. Let us add that Vigny—*La Maréchale d'Ancre* (1830)—is a good dramatist, and the young Musset—*Spectacle dans un fauteuil* (1832), that fresh twist on a Romantic cliché, and *Lorenzaccio* (1834), that unsettling tragicomedy—a remarkably good one. *Hernani* rode on others' shoulders, which is only natural.

10. Romantic Women Writers: The State of the Field

Talk of the Romantic hero should not blind us to the 50% of the Romantic population who lacked a Y chromosome but produced their fair, though occulted, share of its art. While it is true that the role of women Romantics varies across nations during the period, it is also true that much brush-clearing remains to be done, in a variety of languages and traditions; compare the story of British Romantic studies over the past few decades, since the publication of *The Madwoman in the Attic*

and *Romanticism & Gender*.[71] In the late 1950s, the Comtesse de Pange, President of the *Société staëlienne*, was informed by the series publisher that Staël would never appear in a *Pléiade* edition. Well, now she has. Other French women authors of the era—Olympe de Gouges, who went to the guillotine, Adélaïde de Souza, Sophie Cottin, Sophie Gay and her daughter Delphine de Girardin, Hortense Allart, Claire de Duras (the duchess who wrote *Ourika*), Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Félicité de Genlis, the Swiss Isabelle de Charrière, the Franco-Peruvian Flora Tristan, Marie d'Agoult who went by the pen name Daniel Stern, and even the great George Sand—another pen name—continue to await sustained attention, and often even modern editions of their works. At present, there is, for instance, not one monograph in any language devoted to French women Romantics as a group. The German situation is similar, while beyond these three national traditions, the state of play is lamentable. Margaret Fuller is name-checked in America, but other American names before Emily Dickinson are hard to come by; and thus far, my research has turned up not one other canonical woman Romantic across Europe or the Americas, apart from Geertruida Bosboom-Toussaint in the Netherlands, who wrote historical romances, and the incisive and rather neglected Cuban abolitionist novelist Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. Flora Tristan, socialist author of *Pérégrinations d'une paria* (1833–1834), published in French and in France. Researchers will never find, clearly, what they have not gone looking for.

For Britain, as noted, much brush-clearing has happened. Researchers have a better and fuller sense of the role of traditional figures—Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, the three Brontë sisters—with new editions of neglected works; Shelley's for instance. We have rediscovered Felicia Hemans, the best-selling lyric poet of her age, alongside Hannah More, whose *Cheap Repository Tracts* sold in great numbers in 1795–1798, or Ann Radcliffe, that master of the Gothic, or Fanny Burney, precursor of Austen and author of *Evelina* (1778), or Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson, who helped to create in Ireland—with *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806)—the 'nation-building' novel in which Sir Walter Scott later achieved glory, or indeed Charlotte Smith, who

71 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism & Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993).

helped relaunch the English sonnet with her *Elegiac Sonnets* in 1784, just in time for the male Romantics. This labor has radically redrawn the map of British Romantic discourse, reminding readers of what actually sold in the period—women's novels, for instance—and of their themes: a certain sensibility, for one thing, and good sense, something of the world long tied to Austen's Elizabeth Bennet, in opposition perhaps to Darcy, that more 'Romantic' character she comes to love. We have, in short, discovered a missing half of the British Romantic universe.

This labor of discovery and documentation has yet to be done for France, despite the names here proffered. What ties Duras to Sand or to Tristan, Staël to Cottin or to Desbordes-Valmore? The question is fundamental and has yet to be answered. Genlis for instance detested Staël, her younger rival. The group is not without its sentimental romances, but that is hardly definitional of it: Gay is witty, Desbordes-Valmore a gifted poet; Duras is in her own way revolutionary; Staël like Tristan is revolutionary to her core, living in exile and among the small handful of Romantics anywhere to enjoy international fame.[72] Sand moved over the years and over her substantial output from novels of revolt—*Indiana*, *Lélia*—to subtle, symphonic work anchored, like Thomas Hardy's in Wessex, in the Berry countryside she knew and loved—like *Les Maîtres-sonneurs*, where the hero may, once again, have sold his soul to the devil.[73] The French critical tradition frankly has not been without its sexism; Staël now appears in a *Pléiade* volume, but other important French women Romantics still feature on my shelves—Sophie Cottin, Adélaïde de Souza, Delphine de Girardin—in worn old Second Empire editions.

In German lands, the situation is more complicated. For some time now, scholarship has name-checked women Romantic authors who played second fiddle to men in one way or another: Rahel Varnhagen hosted a salon, like many others; Bettina von Arnim made her name by publishing an edited version of her correspondence with Goethe in whose title she calls herself "ein Kind," *a child*.[74] Other German women Romantics deserve sustained attention: Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, Dorothea von Schlegel, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Sophie Mereau,

72 See my monograph *The First European: Staël, Romanticism, and Revolution, 1786–1830*, forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.

73 George Sand, *Les Maîtres Sonneurs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), pp. 160–161.

74 Bettina von Arnim, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (1835).

Karoline von Günderrode, and the prolific Caroline de La Motte-Fouqué. This substantial group remains understudied, compared, say, with the excellent multivolume critical editions of their male counterparts.

As noted, the only other canonical women Romantics I have identified, across Europe and the Americas, are Margaret Fuller—'the Yankee Corinna'—the Dutch novelist Geertruida Bosboom-Toussaint, and the Cuban abolitionist writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. There are surely others, Flora Tristan for instance (who wrote in French). Certainly, there are memoirists deserving attention, like France's Adèle de Boigne or Henriette-Lucy de La Tour du Pin; they are doubtless common throughout the West, since, like correspondence or translation, this genre was for centuries acceptable female discourse. Pushkin's Tatiana thus famously writes Onegin a letter.[75] Similarly, the memoirs of Marie-Antoinette exist, and many others will be awaiting study. Fanny Burney's memoirs describe her reading Staël's *De l'Allemagne*: these are very interesting moments, both in Romantic reader-response theory and in women's studies.[76] It may be trite to say there is much to be done, but after two centuries of largely uninterrupted male conversation, in a variety of languages, it seems *à propos* to hand over the microphone.

Finally, what legacy might women Romantics set alongside that of the men who, as yet, continue to be foregrounded? For one, Anne Mellor might argue for a legacy of common sense tempered by sensibility, as in the evergreen Jane Austen. There is also a sort of Heathcliff-Rochester counter-tradition, rooted in Radcliffe and the Brontës, which leads directly to modern romance novels, or 'bodice-rippers' as they have been called, which sell in their millions. This tradition is radically different, but each has its place in our twenty-first century. It seems clear that while the Romantic era is not short of larger-than-life heroines created by women—one thinks of Staël's Corinne, who is all Italy—still, any view we form about silence and societal pressure, for instance, shaping female Romantic discourse, will, for the time being, be necessarily provisional. The multivolume Belknap *History of Private Life* finds ways

75 Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin. A Novel in Verse*, trans. by Babette Deutsch (New York: Dover, 1943/1998), pp. 53–55.

76 Fanny Burney: *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay* [Fanny Burney], ed. C. Barrett, rev. A. Dobson, 6 vols (London 1904–1905), VI, p. 98: "Such acuteness of thought, such vivacity of ideas, and such brilliancy of expression, I know not where I have met before. I often lay the book down to enjoy for a considerable time a single sentence."

to make this point, as does modern scholarship on women's contested place in the French Revolution. The story is waiting, across the Western world, in letters, memoirs, and texts intended for and often having seen publication, though later buried by received opinion and prejudice, and now unfortunately neglected or forgotten. That story should be told.[77]

11. Conclusion

As we consider the various 'Romantic heroes' who peopled the West, the first thing to say is perhaps this: in a world where Des Grieux or Rousseau, for instance, can serve as arbiters of a higher moral code, our moral compass is visibly defective. And so, the question is: how did this happen? Or failing that, what is the evolutionary payoff for this sad state of affairs?

The answer, I think, lies in empathy. Empathy requires us to step out of our comfort zone and see others in their difference: Pellico in prison, Quasimodo in his cathedral, Clare in his struggles up from farm work and down again into madness. It is quite in keeping for Goethe to devote a play to the mad Tasso, and Vigny to the suicidal Chatterton. The Enlightenment, we may argue, found comfort in encountering others similar to ourselves; the Romantics, recognizing perhaps the relativity of taste, made allowances for others to be quite different, even outcasts, like the Cuban Sab—and then made heroes and role models of them. It is curious, in that era of somewhat tribal national art, to find this drumbeat of empathy running through the canonical texts, but it seems hard to see a better explanation for the troubled heroes who recur endlessly from Ossian to Jean Valjean. Stretching from Russia to Argentina, these figures somehow stand outside the social order—Karl Moor, Egmont, and Faust; Corinne, Adolphe, Julien Sorel and Rastignac, Monte-Cristo and Quasimodo; Childe Harold, Frankenstein and his creature, Percy Shelley's Prometheus, even Austen's Darcy; Jacopo Ortis, Carmagnola,

77 *A History of Private Life. From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, ed. by Michelle Perrot, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1990). *Women in Revolutionary Paris 1789–1795*, ed. and trans. by Darlene Gay Levy, Harriet Branson Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the Limits of Citizenship in the French Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); *Rebel Daughters. Women and the French Revolution*, ed. Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Pellico himself; Pechorin and Onegin; Frithiof, Almeida Garrett, Natty Bumppo, and Hester Prynne. In that space of exile, they rely on a personal and different moral code to guide their actions. They are, profoundly, individuals and unique. Furthermore, in order to present characters from outside the social pale, it is convenient to present them as somehow criminal—actually criminal, like Jean Valjean and Pellico, or allegedly so, like Caleb Williams and Frankenstein, or indeed born in prison, like Rivas's Don Alvaro. And thereby the social order that condemns these heroes is held up to judgment.

Beyond the myriad of local national traditions, a handful of pan-Western models stand out. After all, only a few Romantics achieved success beyond their national borders. Rousseau with *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; Macpherson with Ossian; Goethe with *Werther*; Staël with *Corinne*; Byron with *Childe Harold*; Scott with *Waverley*—it is a short list. In this short list, certain themes recur: authenticity and melancholy; national identity; a certain compromising of the hero. It is thus common to find heroes who are in some way flawed or failed: René, Obermann, Ortis; Hogg's justified sinner; Onegin, Pechorin, the narrators of Hoffmann or Poe. And this theme, somewhat notoriously, runs through a series of Romantic biographies: Byron, Shelley, Keats; De Quincey and Coleridge; the Brontës; Rousseau and Nerval; Hölderlin, Kleist, Schiller, Hoffmann; Heine; Breme, Leopardi, Pellico; Poe; Pushkin and Lermontov—all these authors faced drugs, madness, scandal, and/or an early death. Multiple Romantics met with scandal or rejection, and others chose exile—Foscolo, Hugo, Heine, Byron—or endured it—Pushkin, Mickiewicz, Staël, Almeida Garrett, Echeverría, Sarmiento. It seems unsurprising that such lives would produce such art, with empathy as a red thread running through it, from Blake or Wordsworth to Hugo or Longfellow. This is the world of Wedgwood's famous abolitionist medallion— "Am I not a Man and a Brother?"—as of Duras's short African novel *Ourika*, duchess that she was. In France, Napoleon and Chateaubriand are conveniently written *post hoc* into this Romantic narrative of suffering and compassion, Napoleon in Las Cases's 1823 *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, and Chateaubriand, by the man himself, in his 1848 *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*.

What does it mean to see these figures as Romantic? The term is perhaps irrelevant; but beyond its function as coin of the realm—with precisely the value that any coin has—we may note its etymology

in romance and in vernacular or popular speech, two elements fundamental to what this study calls Romantic art. So then, as a genre, romance differs from epic in having more scope for love and sentiment; in having protagonists who are less grandiose; in its closeness to song. Unlike epic, it favors stanzaic meters, as in Petöfi, Byron, or Pushkin. Several Romantic 'folk epics' have romance elements, such as the love story told in Tegnér's modernized Old Norse *Frithiofs Saga*. And use of the vernacular—Croatian, Estonian, Flemish—is fundamental to almost all Romantics: throughout occupied Eastern and Northern Europe, through Russia and the nations of the West, throughout the new republics of the Americas. It seems reasonable to describe that as a definitional Romantic enterprise.

But Romanticism means more and does more, and several other topoi have appeared in these pages. Above all stands the nation-contract described above. Our study is bracketed by two dates, 1776 and 1848: the dates of two major revolutions, but also of two watershed texts, the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Communist Manifesto*. Jefferson's brave new world of national self-determination, built as it is on a vision of the represented people, yields seventy-two years later to a different vision, one anchored in a class war which partitions each nation from within and seeks to tie foreigners together in class solidarity. But if communism looks to supersede Jefferson's holistic national vision, Romanticism instead conveys it to posterity. Text after text shows an exceptional figure—the Romantic hero, let us call him—speaking on behalf of the masses. He or she represents them, as in the preamble to the United States Constitution: "We, the People [...]." Put simply, Romantic art from Russia to Latin America presents itself as the (perhaps rather bourgeois) people's voice. This is evident in the then-unrepresented people of Europe's East and North, that concert of silent nations. It is fundamental to, say, Conscience in Flanders, Cooper in the United States, and Gonçalves de Magalhães in the new Empire of Brazil. It is there in the very title of Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie*, which sold across the West. It is why Romantics collected vernacular ballads, fairy tales, oral epics—from Percy and Macpherson, through the Grimms to Almeida Garrett and Lönnrot, Kreutzwald and Tegnér, and all through the Slavic lands. Ongoing focus on the Romantic individual, in sum, is one half of the Romantic plot. That 'unique creative genius' we like to call Romantic derives its weight from the hitherto silent nation David assembled *en*

masse for his *fêtes révolutionnaires*, from the national bargain or indeed *contrat social* that the Romantics saw at work across this vast area's string of new republics, and which they sought to emulate in song and story. "Poets," we have heard say, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." And this new representation depends on credit: without credit to back it up, the coin mentioned above is just a lump of nickel. Credit was a fairly new topic in this period—it won the Napoleonic Wars for Britain and lost them for France—and only a few Romantic authors saw its value. Staël, daughter of the finance minister Necker, anchors her pivotal 1818 *Considérations sur la Révolution française* in credit theory.[78] This bargain, frankly, is why there are statues to Romantic authors from Buenos Aires to Moscow. It elects our representatives and pays our celebrities. It is omnipresent in the modern world.

Romantic art, we have seen, has a way of colonizing figures who were not Romantic to begin with, much as Frankenstein's creature long ago colonized his own creator. Or, put another way, Romanticism tends to metastasize, as we saw with Manon and Des Grieux, as we can observe happening to Napoleon—that man who had sought to end Romanticism, who had pulped Staël's *De l'Allemagne*—in the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*. The movement is happy to roam through the centuries looking for figures to recuperate, from Wilhelm Tell to the tragic Chatterton. Similarly, non-writers can acquire a Romantic tinge—America's Founding Fathers; Simón Bolívar; Toussaint Louverture. Few figures seem more Romantic than Thomas Paine, La Fayette, or Garibaldi, all three of whom fought in multiple revolutions. Offered control of Paris in July 1830—La Fayette's third revolution—the old general, much vilified by later Jacobin historians, remarked, "my conduct at seventy-three will be what it was at thirty-two;" he then climbed to the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville to hand over power to Louis-Philippe.[79]

Lastly, there is the question of empire. The Romantic era saw Spain and Portugal lose their American empires, while Britain, which did the

78 On credit in *Staël's Considérations sur la Révolution française*, see my forthcoming monograph with Cambridge University Press, *The First European: Staël, Romanticism, and Revolution, 1786–1830*.

79 "ma conduite sera à soixante-treize ans ce qu'elle a été à trente-deux." Lafayette, 29 July 1830, in *Mémoires, correspondance et manuscrits du général Lafayette, publiés par sa famille*, 6 vols (Paris: Fournier, 1837–1838), VI, p. 389. See Laurent Zecchini, *Lafayette héraut de la liberté* (Paris: Fayard, 2019), pp. 458–461, on Lafayette during the *Trois glorieuses*.

same, acquired a new one to the East. The French Republic abolished slavery in 1794; Napoleon, whose wife Joséphine was a Martinican planter's daughter, sent troops to Haiti to try to reintroduce it. That is the reason why Wordsworth has a sonnet dedicated to Toussaint Louverture in his cold Pyrenean prison.[80] Staël and Constant fought the slave trade, while Chateaubriand's grand Breton château was bought with proceeds from that evil business.[81] Bristol, where the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, was a slave port; Austen's *Mansfield Park* has slavery discreetly hidden in its narrative. Britain abolished the trade in 1807, and the practice in 1834; France finally followed suit once more in 1848, under the short-lived Second Republic. Duras's 1823 *Ourika* is part of that struggle. It seems fitting that none of the United States' early Romantics came from the Southern slave states, while Cuba's early Romantics in their turn were abolitionists. Back in Russia, Pushkin's African ancestors did not mean exclusion for him from the canon, while in France, Dumas's similar background evidently did. French scholarship still seems at ease not taking Dumas seriously as an author, despite his lasting and indeed global success. These are of course blind spots, and the Romantic relation to the Other in fact does pose fundamental questions. In 1837, the liberal Echeverría has bloodthirsty Indians kidnap his *Cautiva*; even without such blatancy, much Romantic orientalism deserves weighing as to appropriation or what we might term tourism. But here, let us return to Ourika, to Pellico, to Quasimodo for that matter; empathy goes a long way, and many Romantics evidently found a way to do this more deeply than their predecessors had. Indeed, this seems, to some extent, definitional for the movement, and both its biggest flaw—Heathcliff a hero? Really?—and also perhaps its greatest achievement. Today, and at least since the 1920s, this contract with the silent remains the core appeal of nativist demagogues around the globe. But it is born earlier, in hope and expansion of the heart, in empathy for the poor, the outcast, the downtrodden, the wretched of the Earth. That may be its two-edged legacy to the West.

80 Wordsworth, *Works*, p. 242.

81 On Staël, Constant, Chateaubriand, and slavery, see my "Voices Lost? Staël and Slavery, 1786–1830," in *Slavery in the Francophone Caribbean World. Distant Voices, Forgotten Acts, Forged Identities*, ed. Doris Y. Kadish (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000), pp. 39–52.