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The emergence of a new theory of literature in the German Romantic period constituted a decisive turning-point in the history of criticism. Prepared by new trends in critical thought during the latter half of the eighteenth century, a view of the literary work and the artistic process developed which diverged sharply from the dominant classicist understanding of aesthetics and poetics. It recognized the infinite changeability of genres, their constant mingling, and the frequent emergence of new literary forms, and asserted the rights of genius and creative imagination. It was also characterized by its intimate connection with the prevailing philosophy of its time, transcendental idealism. Professor Behler provides a new account of this crucial movement, illustrating each theoretical topic with close reference to a characteristic work by a major writer of the period.

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GERMAN ROMANTIC LITERARY THEORY

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Preface

Since its appearance in critical writings of the late eighteenth century, especially through the periodical *Athenaeum* (1798–1800), the early Romantic literary theory of Germany has enjoyed the reputation of having introduced a new manner of thinking about poetry and our approach to literary works in the West. This reputation has manifested itself not only in the appreciation and adoption of a new critical attitude, but also in sharp polemics against its alleged aesthetic absolutism. Such intense scrutiny has resulted in a widespread influence of early German Romantic thought on the critical scene during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as evidenced by its reception by Coleridge, Poe, and Baudelaire, by Scandinavian and Slavic critics, and in the literary thinking of the main Mediterranean countries of Europe. This reception has generally understood the early Romantic literary theory of Germany as a rupture with the system of mimesis and representation that had dominated European aesthetic thought during the previous centuries.

A certain disproportion can be detected between the casual origin of the theory and its actual importance and influence on successive centuries of critical thought. The formation of what we call early Romantic theory actually lasted scarcely more than six years, from about 1795 to 1801, and was the communal product of a group of about six young authors of different backgrounds and orientations who, out of mutual interests and communal literary pursuits, assembled for a few years and were ironically labelled the ‘new school’ or the ‘Romantic school’ by their contemporaries. After the turn of the century the members

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of the group dispersed, each taking his own path. Their manner of collaboration was by no means planned, concerted, or organized, but showed a casual and fluid type of personal interrelationship. For this reason, we should perhaps characterize their work not as a theory of literature in the sense of a doctrine, but rather as an assembly of different views about poetry from the various perspectives of these authors. Nevertheless, the initial impulse for what we consider the Romantic turning-point in the history of criticism and literary theory undoubtedly stems from the collaborative efforts of the members of this group around the end of the eighteenth century.

A phenomenon of such prominence has been the subject of many studies in Germany and other countries. The renewed interest in the origins of our modernity, stimulated by the contemporary debate about modernism and postmodernism, as well as the completion and continued work on some of the major editions of the early Romantics, permits us to take a new look at early Romantic literary theory from the perspective of the late twentieth century. This book does not aim at a systematic presentation of a doctrine containing an objective body of knowledge, but approaches the subject from its genesis, the formation of the theory in progressive stages, and from the diverse points of view of its authors. Plurality, diversity of opinion, and the developmental character of the theory, its 'eternal becoming', are the main objectives. From this perspective, early Romantic literary theory is not so much something which can be encapsulated in a chapter in the history of criticism and literary theory, but a basic reflection on poetry without limit or conclusion.

Special thanks go to Frauke Plummer, our departmental secretary, my research assistants Ann Schmiesing Linda Avraamides, and Eric Ames, but above all to my wife and colleague Diana Behler, with whom I have discussed Romanticism more than with anyone else.

Abbreviations

- ALZ* *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung von Jena*, ed. Christian Gottfried Schütz and Friedrich Justin Bertuch (Jena and Leipzig, 1785–).
- AWS AW* August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Eduard Böcking. 16 vols. (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1846).
- AWS V* August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe der Vorlesungen*, ed. Ernst Behler in collaboration with Frank Jolles. 6 vols. (Paderborn: Schöningh 1989–).
- Translations*
DA August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. John Black; rev. A. J. W. Morrison (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1846). Quoted from the edition of 1883 (London: George Bell, 1883).
- CA* *Caroline. Briefe aus der Frühromantik*, ed. Erich Schmidt. 2 vols. (Leipzig: Insel, 1923).
- CO* Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, trans. June Barraclough (New York: Noonday, 1955).

- E** *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres* (Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert), 38 vols. (Geneva: Pellet, 1777).
- FDES** Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Hans-Joachim Birkner. 40 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984–).
- Translations and other editions*
- GH** Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. Heinz Kimmerle, trans. James Duke and Jack Forstman (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977).
- OR** Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion. Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- ÜR** Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion, Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1958).
- FI** Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Reinhard Lauth and Hans Jacob (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1964–).
- Translations*
- EPW** Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).
- FS** *Friedrich Schillers Werke und Briefe* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1953–).
- FWJS** Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling 10 vols. (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1861).

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Translations

PA F. W. J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Scott. Foreword by David Simpson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

PI *Philosophy of German Idealism: Fichte, Jacobi, and Schelling*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1987).

GOE Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespräche*, ed. Ernst Beutler (Zurich: Artemis, 1948–71).

HE *Johann Gottfried Herders Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan, 32 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877–1913).

Translations

OL J. G. Herder, *Essay on the Origin of Language, On the Origin of Language. Two Essays by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Gottfried Herder*, trans. John H. Moran and Alexander Gode (New York: Ungar, 1966).

HEG Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986).

Translations

EPO G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1990).

HP G. W. F. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson. 3 vols. (New York: The Humanities Press, 1955).

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List of abbreviations

HEI Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. Klaus Briegleb. 6 vols. (Munich: Hanser, 1968).

Translations

HH Heinrich Heine, *Selected Works*, trans. Helen M. Mustard (New York: Random House, 1973).

KA Immanuel Kant, *Werke*. 9 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968).

Translations

CJ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1951).

CPR Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

PW Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. Ernst Behler with a foreword by René Wellek (New York: Continuum, 1986).

KFSA *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler with the collaboration of Jean-Jacques Anstett, Hans Eichner, and other specialists. 35 vols. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1958–).

Translations

DP Friedrich Schlegel, *Dialogue on Poetry and Literary Aphorisms*, trans. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968).

GM Friedrich Schlegel, *On Goethe's 'Meister'*, trans. Joyce Crick, *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism. The Romantic Ironists and Goethe*, ed. Kathleen Wheeler (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

LF Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde and the Frag-*

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ments, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

NIE Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 15 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980).

Translations

GT Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).

NO *Novalis Schriften. Die Werke Friedrichs von Hardenberg*, ed. by Richard Samuel in collaboration with Hans-Joachim Mähl and Gerhard Schulz. 5 vols. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960–88).

Translations

AF Novalis, *Aphorisms and Fragments*, trans. Alexander Gelley, in *German Romantic Criticism*, ed. A. Leslie Willson with a foreword by Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1982), 62–83.

HN Novalis, *Hymns to the Night and Other Selected Writings (Klingsohr's Fairy-Tale, Christendom or Europe, Selected Aphorisms)* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960).

HO Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen. A Novel*, trans. Palmer Hilty (New York: Ungar, 1964).

MW Novalis, *Miscellaneous Writings*, trans. Joyce Crick, *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism. The Romantic Ironists and Goethe*, ed. Kathleen Wheeler (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 83–111.

TIFS Ludwig Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, ed. Alfred Anger (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1979).

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List of abbreviations

- TI PH* Ludwig Tieck, *Phantasmus*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985).
- TI PhK* *Phantasien über die Kunst, für Freunde der Kunst*, ed. Ludwig Tieck (Hamburg: Perthes, 1799). Re-edition by Jakob Minor (Berlin: Speemann, no date).
- WA* Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, ed. Ernst Benz (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1969).

Translations

- CF* Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Confessions and Fantasies*, trans. Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971).
- OF* Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Outpourings of an Art-Loving Friar*, trans. Edward Mornin (New York: Ungar, 1975).

Chronology of early Romanticism

- 1763 Caroline Michaelis born on 2 September in Göttingen as the daughter of the Orientalist Johann David Michaelis. Educated at home.
- 1764 Dorothea (Brendel) Mendelssohn born on 24 October in Berlin as the daughter of Moses Mendelssohn and his wife Fromet, née Gugenheim. Educated mainly by her father.
- 1767 August Wilhelm Schlegel born on 8 September in Hanover as the son of General Superintendent Johann Adolf Schlegel and his wife Erdmuthe, née Hübsch. High school education in Hanover.
- 1768 Friedrich Schleiermacher born on 21 November in Breslau as the son of the Protestant army chaplain Gottlieb Adolph Schleiermacher. Educated in the Herrenhut schools of Silesia, at the college in Niesky, and at the seminary in Barby (all Herrenhut institutions).
- 1772 Friedrich Schlegel born on 10 March in Hanover. Educated at home, mainly by his brothers, especially August Wilhelm.
- Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) born on 2 May in Oberwiederstädt as the son of the director of the salt-mines, Heinrich Ulrich Erasmus von Harden-

- xviii *Chronology of early Romanticism*
- berg, and his wife Auguste Bernhardina, née von Bölzig. Education at home by tutors.
- 1773 Ludwig Tieck born on 31 May in Berlin as the son of a rope-maker.
 Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder born in Berlin as the son of a high city official in the municipal administration.
- 1782 Beginning of Tieck's and Wackenroder's education at the high school Friedrichs Werd.
- 1783 Marriage of Dorothea Mendelssohn to the Berlin banker Simon Veit.
- 1784 On 15 June, marriage of Caroline Michaelis to the Clausthal physician Johann Franz Wilhelm Böhmer.
- 1786 A. W. Schlegel's immatriculation at the University of Göttingen for the study of ancient and modern literature; his friendship with Gottfried August Bürger starts; publications in the Göttingen *Musen Almanach* (*Almanac of the Muses*).
- 1787 Schleiermacher's immatriculation at the University of Halle for the study of theology and philosophy.
- 1788 Caroline Böhmer's return to her home in Göttingen after the early death of her husband. Acquaintance with A. W. Schlegel who courts her.
 Friedrich Schlegel's apprenticeship at the Schlemm Bank in Leipzig; sudden return to his home in Hanover and preparation for university study under the tutelage of A. W. Schlegel; brief visits to his sister Charlotte in Dresden and frequenting of the gallery of antiquities.

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- 1789 Schleiermacher in Drossen to prepare for his first examination in theology.
 Publications by A. W. Schlegel in the *Göttingen Journal of Learned Subjects*.
- 1790 Novalis' immatriculation at the University of Jena for the study of law.
 Friedrich Schlegel's immatriculation at the University of Göttingen for the study of law.
 Schleiermacher as tutor in the house of Count Dohna in Schlobitten (West Prussia).
 A. W. Schlegel's graduation as a *Rat* (MA).
- 1791 A. W. Schlegel as tutor in the house of the Amsterdam banker Henry Muilman; correspondence with Caroline Böhmer.
 Friedrich Schlegel's immatriculation at the University of Leipzig for the study of law (and literature).
 Novalis' immatriculation at the University of Leipzig for the study of law.
- 1792 Beginning of the friendship between Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis in January; expensive love affairs on the part of the two friends (August 1792 to Easter 1793).
 Tieck's immatriculation at the University of Halle for the study of theology (and classical literature).
 Wackenroder's preparation for the study of law in Berlin.
 A. W. Schlegel collaborates with the *Göttingen Almanac of the Muses*.
 Tieck's immatriculation at the University of Göttingen for the study of literature.

- Caroline Böhmer settles in Mainz in the house of Georg and Therese Forster. Surrender of the fortress of Mainz to the French revolutionary army (October). Caroline's activity as a 'Clubmist' of the Republic of Mainz.
- 1793 Novalis' immatriculation at the University of Wittenberg (April).
 Friedrich Schlegel's decision to devote himself to a theory of literature (end of May).
 Tieck's and Wackenroder's immatriculation at the University of Erlangen, Tieck for the study of modern literature and Wackenroder for the study of law; communal visits to Nuremberg, Bamberg and Pommersfelden to inspect works of art.
 Caroline's imprisonment at Fort Königstein following the surrender of the Republic of Mainz to the Prussian army; temporary settlement at the village of Lucka, near Leipzig, with the help of A. W. Schlegel; close contact with Friedrich Schlegel.
- 1794 Friedrich Schlegel assumes his private study of Greek literature in Dresden (January).
 A. W. Schlegel's collaboration with Schiller's *Horae* and *Almanac of the Muses*.
 Tieck and Wackenroder return to Berlin (autumn), Wackenroder as lawyer in the city administration and Tieck as a freelance writer.
 Novalis obtains his law degree and assumes an administrative position in Tennstedt; acquaintance with Sophie von Kühn (15 March).
 A. W. Schlegel's return to Germany (July), to Hanover and Brunswick, and assumption of a metrical translation of Shakespeare.

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- Meeting between Novalis, Fichte, and Hölderlin in the Jena house of the philosopher Niethammer.
- Onset of Sophie von Kühn's ailment in November.
- Novalis is appointed to the administration of the salt-mines in Weißenfels (30 December).
- 1796 Schleiermacher's appointment as preacher at the Charité in Berlin.
- A. W. Schlegel's visit to his brother Friedrich in Dresden (April).
- A. W. Schlegel's marriage to Caroline Böhmer (1 July); the couple settle in Jena.
- Beginning of Friedrich Schlegel's collaboration with Johann Friedrich Reichardt's journal *Deutschland*; publication of his review of Schiller's *Horae* in this journal; move to Jena (beginning of August) and renewal of his friendship with Novalis; close relationship with Fichte.
- Sophie von Kühn receives medical treatment in Jena and returns to Grüningen in December.
- 1797 Appearance of the first volume of A. W. Schlegel's Shakespeare translation (*Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*).
- Schiller breaks with the Schlegel brothers (31 May).
- Friedrich Schlegel moves to Berlin (15 July) and frequents the salon of Henriette Herz where he meets Dorothea Veit and Schleiermacher; beginning of the friendship with Schleiermacher; Dorothea assumes a love relationship with Friedrich Schlegel and leaves her family.
- Sophie von Kühn's death (19 March).
- Beginning of Wackenroder's illness.

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- 1798 Wackenroder's death on 17 February.
 Appearance of the first issue of the *Athenaeum* in May.
 Sojourn of the early Romantics (A. W. Schlegel, Friedrich Schlegel, Caroline, Novalis, Fichte, and Schelling) in Dresden to inspect the art galleries.
 Novalis' engagement to Julie von Charpentier (December).
 A. W. Schlegel lectures on the philosophical doctrine of art at the University of Jena (winter semester).
- 1799 Dorothea's divorce from Simon Veit (January).
 Publication of Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinde*.
 Appearance of Tieck's translation of *Don Quixote*.
 Tieck's marriage to Amalie Alberti.
 Friedrich Schlegel returns to Jena in September where the group of the early Romantics (A. W. and Friedrich Schlegel, Caroline, Dorothea, Tieck, Novalis, Schelling), with the exception of Schleiermacher, has gathered.
 Acquaintance between Tieck and Novalis (17 July).
- 1800 Breakdown of A. W. and Caroline Schlegel's marriage and move of A. W. Schlegel to Berlin. Friedrich Schlegel obtains the doctorate and the *venia legendi* (*Habilitation*) at the University of Jena and assumes his lectures on transcendental philosophy (winter semester).
 Appearance of the last issue of the *Athenaeum*.
 Deterioration of Novalis' health.

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- 1801 Novalis' death (25 March).
 Friedrich Schlegel's move to Berlin; close friendship with Rahel Levin.
 A. W. Schlegel's public Berlin lectures on literature and art.
- 1802 Schleiermacher as Court Preacher in Stolp (spring); beginning of his Plato translation.
 Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel's move to Dresden (17 January); beginning of their journey to Paris (May) via Leipzig (book fair) and Weimar (première of Friedrich Schlegel's *Alarcos* at the court theatre, staged by Goethe). In Paris, Schlegel assumes lectures on German literature and philosophy.
 During the winter of 1802–3, A. W. Schlegel's public Berlin lectures on literature (mainly of Greek and Latin literature).
- 1803 Divorce of Caroline from A. W. Schlegel and marriage to Schelling (26 June); move of Caroline and Schelling to Würzburg.
 Appearance of the first issue of Friedrich Schlegel's Paris journal *Europa*, containing his descriptions of paintings in the Louvre; from November, private lectures for the Boisserée brothers on ancient and modern literature.
 During the winter of 1803–4, A. W. Schlegel's public Berlin lectures on Romantic literature.
- 1804 Schleiermacher's appointment as professor of theology at the University of Halle, including the position of University Preacher.
 Friedrich Schlegel's marriage to Dorothea on 6 April in Paris; move to Cologne in the company of the

Boisserée brothers via northern France and Belgium;
beginning of the period of the Cologne lectures on
philosophy.

In April, A. W. Schlegel makes the acquaintance of
Madame de Staël in Berlin and moves with her to the
Château Coppet on Lake Geneva.