

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-84891-6 - The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism

Edited by Nicholas Saul

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO  
GERMAN ROMANTICISM

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw an extraordinary flowering of arts and culture in Germany which produced many of the world's finest writers, artists, philosophers and composers. This volume offers students and specialists an authoritative introduction to that dazzling cultural phenomenon, now known collectively as German Romanticism. Individual chapters not only introduce the reader to writers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Eichendorff, Heine, Hoffmann, Kleist, Schiller and Tieck, but also treat key concepts of Romantic music, painting, philosophy, gender and cultural anthropology, science and criticism in concise and lucid language. All German quotations are translated to make this volume fully accessible to a wide audience interested in how Romanticism evolved across Europe. Brief biographies and bibliographies are supplemented by a list of primary and secondary further reading in both English and German.

*A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book*

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'Korrektur' (1986) and *Walter Benjamin: Self-Reference and Religiosity* (2002).

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ANTHONY PHELAN is Professor of German Romantic Literature at Oxford and a Fellow of Keble College. He has written widely on German literature and thought, from Wieland and Goethe to Benjamin and Brecht. His latest book is *Reading Heinrich Heine* (2007).



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AZADE SEYHAN is the Fairbank Professor in the Humanities at Bryn Mawr College. She has lectured and published extensively on German Romanticism, Heinrich Heine, Walter Benjamin, cultural diversity in modern German society and literature and exile in the United States and Europe. She is the author of *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (1992), *Writing Outside the Nation* (2001) and the forthcoming *Tales of Crossed Destinies* (2008).

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## PREFACE

In a way it is odd that German Romantics should feature as the collective subject of a *Cambridge Companion*. This series contains volumes devoted to writers such as Thomas Mann, Goethe and Kafka. But there is no *Companion* to Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), Friedrich Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, Clemens Brentano or Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann. Traditionally scholarship has treated the German Romantics as a collective, so that we implicitly value Hardenberg, Schlegel and the rest less as autonomous creative individuals than as a composite entity greater than the sum of its parts, a cultural and social grouping which is at its most effective and significant when united. And indeed, whilst no one would argue that these gifted individuals do not each merit a volume of their own, it must be conceded that the collective approach both reflects the German Romantics' self-understanding and offers an apt category to capture their achievement – especially for a volume designed to introduce. The Romantics were a heterogeneous collection of individuals, men and women, hailing from metropolitan Berlin (or Vienna or Paris), but also from pious Barby, dull Hanover, remote Eutin, Catholic Cologne, strict Stuttgart and sleepy Bayreuth, from the military or administrative lower aristocracy, from patrician *bürgerlich* and impoverished preaching, teaching or artisan families (if not from the peasantry). They all believed in individual genius. But they also all believed that genius was even more creative when fused 'sympoetically' with another's. Hardenberg had no reservations about asking Schlegel collaboratively to edit his *Fragment* collections or songs, so that scholars today are still uncertain where Schlegel's contribution begins and ends. Clemens Brentano published Sophie Mereau's work under his name, and his under hers. One Romantic novel has four authors, and most present themselves in any case as unauthorized, collaborative continuations of the much-admired and – criticized – *Wilhelm Meister*, Goethe's *Bildungsroman*. Hardenberg, Schlegel and Schleiermacher even held the Bible to be cooperative work in progress down the centuries and seriously considered adding another New

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Testament (or thought they had done so). And the Romantics did tend to collect and collaborate in spontaneously self-constituting bohemian artist colonies, in Jena, Berlin, Heidelberg, Coppet, Munich and Vienna. If they did not quite invent it, they nonetheless institutionalized the received notion of marriage as androgynous dissolution of discrete personal identity in gender exchange. They both elevated reciprocal sociability into a foundational principle and lived it. Above all they propagated collective change: restoral of the overarching totality of the organism and the *Volk*.

So ambitious and ambiguous a project, and one conducted in such a style, was from the start open to misprision and manipulation. Schlegel, conscious of genuine affinities between the Classical duo and the Romantics, had included 'classicity' as a gesture to Goethe and Schiller in his most important definition of the Romantic. But that did not prevent Romanticism becoming for Goethe a slogan of artificial ideological division. Nor did the collectivist practice of the Romantics prevent unwitting self-misrepresentation. Hardenberg's fragmentary writings were subjected posthumously to 'sympoetic' editorship by Schlegel and Tieck, with the consequence that – uncontested – a mystical, escapist and politically reactionary light was cast on them for generations. Thus Hardenberg, and with him Romanticism, was cast as the opponent of the French Revolution and legitimist restorer of monarchy, as the apostle of primal Germanness in a threateningly cosmopolitan age, as the enemy of emancipatory Enlightenment and life, and preacher of beautiful morbidity. Before the First World War it took brave scholars – Walter Benjamin and Thomas Mann among them – to dispute these labellings. Against this background, the Romantic writings of Hardenberg and Kleist, Müller and Körner offered easy pickings for nationalist, and finally National Socialist, readings designed to invent a self-serving tradition. Worse, these readings were paradoxically taken over at face value by scholars intending to make a fresh start after the Second World War.

That view of the collective Romantic project has now, thankfully, changed. Post-war editions of all the major German Romantics have surprised us with wholly unfamiliar texts, radically changed the face of once-familiar ones, or reintroduced forgotten central actors (usually women). As a result, in the 1970s, an 'other', radical and anti-establishment Romanticism emerged. Hardenberg's blue flower, once smeared with brown, was said to have been red all along. Far from opposing the Enlightenment, energies prefiguring the political and aesthetic ideas of the alternative thinkers of the left – Adorno, Habermas and the deconstructivists – were discerned. Affinities have been recognized in the Romantics' critical understanding of nation and culture with today's post-colonial theories. In a still later phase, the pendulum has swung back, and a fundamental polyvalence has been detected. Perhaps

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equally important, these newly recognized epistemological dynamics have exposed pioneering, thoroughly modern critiques of established science.

Romanticism, then, has after all come to be recognized as a kind of classic, with something important to say to each generation, and like any classic demands and repays new readings. Our volume seeks, in the briefest of compasses so refreshingly demanded by the *Companion* format, to do justice to the complex phenomenon of this movement in literature, thought, music and art both to introduce new readers to Romantic work, to familiarize them with the movement's chequered history and to sensitize them to today's appreciation of its true richness. The essays which follow focus initially on the origin, nature and progress of the movement. An entire section is devoted to exposition and interpretation of Romantic achievements in the diverse genres of literary writing, including criticism and journalism, writing by women and the troubled relation with Schiller and Goethe. All the contributors have an eye on the European dimension of Romanticism, but a further section focuses on characteristic issues put by our contemporary understanding of the movement, in its relation to cultural alterity and the different otherness of death. Finally, the volume includes essays which recognize the contribution of Romanticism not merely to literature, but also to other spheres of human thought and experience, philosophy and religion, politics and society, science and psychology, fine art and music. An analysis of Romanticism's changing image down the successive generations concludes the volume. Each chapter contains a list of further reading, and the volume also offers a general bibliography.

My thanks go to all the contributors for their energy and perspicuity, and especially to Linda Bree for sound advice and criticism; also to the faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Durham for financial support, and to Janet Starkey for her fine work on the index.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following standard abbreviations are used throughout the book:

- KFSA* Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, eds. Ernst Behler, Hans Eichner and Jean-Jaques Anstett, 35 vols. (Munich, Paderborn, Vienna: Schöningh, 1958–)
- NS* *Novalis: Schriften*, eds. Paul Kluckhohn, Richard Samuel, Hans-Joachim Mähl, Gerhard Schulz, 7 vols. (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1960–)

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1749 28 August: birth of Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Frankfurt am Main
- 1759 10 November: birth of Friedrich Schiller, Marbach am Neckar
- 1762 19 May: birth of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Bischofswerda
- 1765 21 March: birth of Jean Paul, Wunsiedel
- 1767 8 September: birth of August Wilhelm Schlegel
- 1768 21 November: birth of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Breslau  
(Wrocław)
- 1770 20 March: birth of Friedrich Hölderlin, Lauff am Neckar  
27 August: birth of Friedrich Hegel, Stuttgart  
16 December: birth of Ludwig van Beethoven, Bonn
- 1772 10 March: birth of Friedrich Schlegel, Hanover  
2 May: birth of Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis),  
Oberwiederstedt
- 1773 2 May: birth of Henrik Steffens, Stavanger  
31 May: birth of Ludwig Tieck, Berlin  
13 July: birth of Wilhelm Wackenroder, Berlin
- 1774 5 September 1774: birth of Caspar David Friedrich, Greifswald
- 1775 27 January: birth of Friedrich Schelling, Leonberg/Württemberg  
4 April: birth of Bettine Brentano, Frankfurt am Main  
Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*
- 1776 Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*
- 1777 23 July: birth of Philipp Otto Runge, Wolgast/Sweden  
10 October: birth of Heinrich von Kleist, Frankfurt an der Oder
- 1778 9 September: birth of Clemens Brentano, Ehrenbreitstein/Coblenz
- 1780 11 February: birth of Karoline von Günderrode, Karlsruhe  
20 November: death of Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresia;  
succeeded by co-regent Joseph II  
Frederick II, *De la littérature allemande*
- 1781 Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*

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- 1786 17 August: death of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, succeeded by Frederick William II  
18 November: birth of Carl Maria von Weber, Eutin
- 1787 Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*
- 1788 First steam engine in operation in Germany (Friedrich-Grube, Silesia)  
10 March: birth of Joseph von Eichendorff, Ratibor
- 1789 Outbreak of the French Revolution, Paris
- 1790 20 February: death of Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, succeeded by Leopold II  
Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
- 1791 5 December: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart dies in Vienna  
Kant: *Kritik der Urteilskraft*
- 1792 1 March: death of Leopold II, Holy Roman Emperor, succeeded by Franz II  
Georg Forster joins the Jacobin Club in Mainz  
First War of Coalition, Austria and Prussia, later Russia and Great Britain against Revolutionary France (–1797)
- 1793 Outbreak of the Terror in Paris under Robespierre
- 1794 Fichte, *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre*  
Fichte takes Chair of Philosophy at Jena University, as does Schelling
- 1795 Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (–1796)  
Schiller, *Ästhetische Briefe*  
Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden*
- 1796 Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*  
F. Schlegel, *Versuch über den Republikanismus*
- 1797 31 January: birth of Franz Schubert, Vienna  
16 November: death of Frederick William II of Prussia, succeeded by Frederick William III  
Tieck/Wackenroder, *Herzensergießungen*  
Tieck, *Der gestiefelte Kater, Shakespeares Behandlung des Wunderbaren*  
F. Schlegel, Georg Forster, *Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie, Fragmente*  
Canonical Shakespeare translation by A. W. Schlegel and Tieck begins
- 1798 13 February: death of Wackenroder, Berlin  
August: Hardenberg, Schelling, Schlegels in Dresden at the *Gemäldegalerie*  
Schlegel brothers, *Athenæum* (–1800)

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- Hardenberg, *Glauben und Liebe, oder der König und die Königin*  
 Tieck, *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*  
 Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der reinen Vernunft*  
 C. D. Friedrich, *Wrack im Eismeer*
- 1799 Second War of Coalition (–1802)  
 Peace of Lunéville: de facto dissolution of Holy Roman Empire;  
 Germany loses left bank of Rhine (occupied since 1794) to France  
 First steam engine in Berlin  
 11–14 November: first ‘summit’ meeting of Early Romantics  
 (Hardenberg, Ritter, Schelling, Schlegels, Tieck), Jena  
*Atheismusstreit*; Fichte loses Chair of Philosophy at Jena  
 Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion; Versuch einer Theorie des  
 geselligen Betragens*  
 Hardenberg, *Die Christenheit oder Europa* (unpublished)  
 F. Schlegel, *Lucinde*  
 Tieck/Wackenroder, *Phantasien über die Kunst*  
 Schiller, *Wallenstein* (–1800)
- 1800 Hardenberg, *Hymnen an die Nacht, Heinrich von Ofterdingen*  
 C. Brentano, *Godwi*
- 1801 25 March: death of Friedrich von Hardenberg, Weißenfels
- 1803 *Reichsdeputationshauptschluß*: German ecclesiastical states and  
 property secularized  
 Schelling moves to Chair of Philosophy at Würzburg  
 Runge, *Die Zeiten* (drawings)  
 Werner, *Die Söhne des Thals* (–1804)  
 Jean Paul, *Titan*  
 F. Schlegel, *Europa*
- 1804 Napoleon Buonaparte crowned as Emperor of France  
*Heidelberger Romantik*, centred on Arnim, Brentano, Creuzer,  
 Görres  
 Günderrode (‘Tian’), *Gedichte und Phantasien*
- 1805 Third War of Coalition  
 Battle of Trafalgar and Continental Blockade  
 9 May: death of Friedrich Schiller, Weimar  
 11 September: Hölderlin admitted to psychiatric clinic, Tübingen  
 Klingemann, *Nachtwachen von Bonaventura*  
 Arnim, *Zeitung für Einsiedler*
- 1806 Fourth War of Coalition (–1807) ends in catastrophic defeat of  
 Prussia at Jena-Auerstädt and French occupation  
 Fichte, *Reden an die deutsche Nation*



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- Arnim/Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*  
Juridical abolition of Holy Roman Empire; Federation of the Rhine constituted  
26 July 1806: death of Günderrode, Winkel am Rhein
- 1807 Edict on Emancipation of the Peasants  
Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*  
Kleist/Müller, *Phöbus*
- 1808 Hoffmann *Kapellmeister* in Bamberg  
Kleist, *Die Hermannsschlacht*  
G. H. Schubert, *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*  
F. Schlegel, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*
- 1809 Fifth War of Coalition  
Failed insurrection in Austria (Andreas Hofer)  
Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (-1810)  
Adam Müller, *Elemente der Staatskunst*  
A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*
- 1810 Karl August von Hardenberg becomes Prussian Chancellor, introduces radical reforms  
Foundation of Berlin University (today: Humboldt University); W. von Humboldt, Fichte, Savigny, Schleiermacher join  
Kleist, *Das Erdbeben in Chili*, *Berliner Abendblätter*  
Arnim, *Gräfin Dolores*  
2 December: death of Runge, Hamburg  
C. D. Friedrich, *Der Mönch am Meer*
- 1811 Edict on Freedom of Trade; Edict on Landowners' and Peasants' Relations (abolition of feudalism)  
Kleist, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*  
21 November: death of Kleist, Wannsee/Berlin
- 1812 Edict on the Civil Relations of the Jews (emancipation of the Jews)  
Christlich-teutsche Tischgesellschaft, Berlin
- 1813 Frederick William III institutes the Iron Cross  
Prussia declares war on France  
Wars of Liberation (-1815)  
16-18 October, Leipzig, Battle of the Nations; collapse of Napoleonic system  
Theodor Körner, *Leyer und Schwert*
- 1814 29 January 1814: death of Fichte, Berlin  
Hoffmann resumes legal career in Berlin  
Beethoven, *Fidelio*  
Hoffmann, *Undine* (opera after Fouqué)

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- Schubert, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Erlkönig*  
 G. H. Schubert, *Symbolik des Traumes*
- 1815 18 June: Battle of Waterloo  
 Congress of Vienna brings restoration, legitimism, balance of power, Holy Alliance  
 German Federation (–1866) Creates thirty-nine states, Frankfurt Parliament  
 Clemens Prince Metternich becomes Austrian Chancellor  
 Hegel elected to Chair of Philosophy at Berlin  
 Neo-Pietist *Erweckungsbewegung* arrives in North Germany  
 First German *Burschenschaften* (student clubs)  
 Brentano, *Die Schachtel mit der Friedenspuppe*, *Die Gründung Prags*  
 Hoffmann, *Die Elixiere des Teufels*  
 Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart*
- 1816 *Berliner Romantik* centres on the *salon* of Rahel Levin-Varnhagen (Brentano, Fouqué, Hoffmann)
- 1817 18 October: Wartburg Festival, student clubs against Metternich's repressive system  
 Brentano, *Die mehreren Wehmüller und ungarischen Nationalgesichter*  
 Arnim, *Die Kronenwächter*  
 Karl Ludwig von Haller, *Restauration der Staatswissenschaft* (–1825); book burned at Wartburgfest  
 Union of Protestant Churches in Prussia to form Evangelical Church
- 1819 Murder of August von Kotzebue, popular writer and diplomat, prompts Carlsbad Decrees, intensifying censorship and ban on student clubs  
 Görres: *Teutschland und die Revolution*  
 Brentano retires to obscurity in Westphalia, tending visionary nun Anna Katharina Emmerick (–1825)
- 1820 Schelling takes Chair of Philosophy at Erlangen  
 Hoffmann, *Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr* (–1822)
- 1821 Weber, *Der Freischütz*
- 1822 Hoffmann embroiled in legal difficulty and controversy when he defends civil rights against repression  
 22 June: death of Hoffmann
- 1823 Beethoven, 9th Symphony
- 1825 14 November: death of Jean Paul, Bayreuth  
 Tieck Dramaturge of Court Theatre, Dresden

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- 1826 5 June: death of Weber, London  
Görres to Chair at Munich University
- 1827 Schelling moves to Chair of Philosophy at Munich  
26 March: death of Beethoven, Vienna  
Heine, *Buch der Lieder*
- 1828 19 November: death of Schubert, Vienna
- 1829 12 January: death of Friedrich Schlegel, Dresden
- 1830 July Revolution in Paris  
Stockton to Darlington railway
- 1831 14 November: death of Hegel, Berlin  
Bettine Brentano, *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*
- 1832 22 March: death of Goethe, Weimar  
Goethe, *Faust: Zweiter Teil*
- 1833 Heine, *Die romantische Schule*
- 1834 North German Customs Union  
12 February: death of Schleiermacher, Berlin  
Eichendorff, *Dichter und ihre Gesellen*
- 1835 First German railway Nuremberg–Fürth
- 1837 Protest of the ‘Göttingen Seven’
- 1840 7 June: death of Frederick William III of Prussia; successor  
Frederick William IV  
608 steam engines now operating in Germany  
7 May 1840: death of C. D. Friedrich
- 1841 Schelling called to Chair of Philosophy at Berlin
- 1842 28 July: death of Clemens Brentano, Aschaffenburg  
Tieck as Dramaturge in Berlin
- 1843 7 June: death of Hölderlin, Tübingen
- 1844 Heine, *Die Weber, Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen*
- 1845 13 February: death of Henrik Steffens, Berlin  
12 May: death of August Wilhelm Schlegel, Bonn
- 1848 March: Protest and Revolution in Mannheim, Frankfurt am Main,  
Munich and finally across all Germany and Austria
- 1853 28 April: death of Tieck, Berlin
- 1854 20 August: death of Schelling, Bad Ragaz
- 1857 26 November: death of Eichendorff, Neisse
- 1859 20 January: death of Bettine Brentano, Berlin