

Reinfandt, Christoph, and Lars Eckstein. "The Adventures of William Bloke, or: Romanticism Today and How It Got Here." Lars Eckstein, Christoph Reinfandt, eds. *Romanticism Today: Selected Papers from the Tübingen Conference of the German Society for English Romanticism*. Trier: WVT, 2009: 7-17.

Christoph Bode, Frank Erik Pointner, Christoph Reinfandt (Hg.)

STUDIEN ZUR ENGLISCHEN ROMANTIK

(Neue Folge)

Band 6

Lars Eckstein and Christoph Reinfandt (Eds.)

# Romanticism Today

Selected Papers  
from the Tübingen Conference  
of the German Society for English Romanticism

 Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier

### Romanticism Today:

Selected Papers from the Tübingen Conference  
of the German Society for English Romanticism /  
Lars Eckstein and Christoph Reinfandt (Eds.).-  
WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009  
(Studien zur Englischen Romantik, 6)  
ISBN 978-3-86821-147-4

Umschlagabbildung: William Blake

Umschlaggestaltung: Brigitta Disseldorf

© WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2009  
ISBN 978-3-86821-147-4



Alle Rechte vorbehalten  
Nachdruck oder Vervielfältigung nur mit  
ausdrücklicher Genehmigung des Verlags

WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier  
Postfach 4005, 54230 Trier  
Bergstraße 27, 54295 Trier  
Tel. (0651) 41503, Fax 41504  
Internet: <http://www.wvttrier.de>  
E-Mail: [wvt@wvttrier.de](mailto:wvt@wvttrier.de)

FA  
50A1581

### Contents

<i>Lars Eckstein &amp; Christoph Reinfandt</i> The Adventures of William Blake, or: Romanticism Today and How It Got Here	7
<i>David Simpson</i> At Home with Homelessness: Wordsworth after 1989	19
<i>Mihaela Irimia</i> A Late Modern View of Revolutionary Romanticisms	33
<i>Paul H. Fry</i> Romanticism as Theory	41
<i>Tilottama Rajan</i> The Psychoanalytic Turn of Idealism: Friedrich Schelling's <i>The Ages of the World</i> (1815)	53
<i>Gerold Sedlmayr</i> Albion's Self as Albion's Other: Reading Blake through Ricoeur	69
<i>Rosa Karl</i> Mining the Mind's Cave: The Brain as Emancipative Power Plant in Shelley's <i>Laon and Cythna</i>	81
<i>Ralf Haekel</i> <i>Talking of Mind But Thinking of Brick and Mortar:</i> Romanticism, Materialism, and Neuroscience	93
<i>Sebastian Domsch</i> The Legacy of <i>what if</i> : Welsh Indians, British Pantisocrats, and an Irish Poet	109
<i>Kai Merten</i> Two Men and the Moon: Theatrical Subjectivity in Samuel Beckett and Caspar David Friedrich	121

Roger Lüdeke CUT-UP? PLAYBACK! Media Politics in William S. Burroughs and William Blake	133
Katharina Rennhak Jim Jarmusch, Blake and Don Juan, or: On the Longevity of the Romantic Subject	145
Martin Butler Of Delusional Disorders and Schizophrenic Selves: Renegotiating the 'Creative Imagination' in Jeremy Leven's Film <i>Don Juan DeMarco</i>	159
Stefanie Fricke Constructing 'Jane': Recent Representations of Jane Austen in Popular Culture	169
Evy Varsamopoulou Dying for Art: The Longing for Transcendence in Krzysztof Kieślowski's <i>La Double Vie de Véronique</i>	185
Mirosława Modrzewska The Romantic Myth of Slavdom and Its Current Re-Creation	197
Frank Erik Pointner "Comic Relief": Hunt Emerson's <i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i>	205
Monika Seidl British Fashion and Romanticism Today: Where the Present Dreams the Past Future	215

Lars Eckstein & Christoph Reinfandt (Tübingen)

### The Adventures of William Bloke, or: Romanticism Today and How It Got Here

After a five-year hiatus in which his son was born, the British singer/songwriter and political activist Billy Bragg returned to the music business in 1996 with an album entitled *William Bloke* (cf. Bragg 1996/2006).<sup>1</sup> Typically for Bragg, this punning reference to William Blake combines an acknowledgement of Blake's oppositional position in his own times with a broader political agenda, which appropriates Blake's singularity for the concerns of the common people at the end of the twentieth century. These two impulses are, however, not quite compatible: Is the appropriation of Blake as a bloke really only a slight modification in line with Blake's legacy or does this change of name indicate a change of identity? While Bragg's notion of 'William Bloke' insists on Romanticism's continuing relevance today, it also points to some unresolved tensions in Romanticism itself and to the fact that Romanticism today is frequently marked by simplification, sentimentality and the dangers of downright misunderstanding and falsification. The latter, however, does not necessarily mean that Romanticism has lost its grip on cultural practices, as a closer look at Bragg's record reveals.

Beyond its title, *William Bloke* is not very explicit about its Blakean pretexts. The most obvious reference comes in the verses of the second track, a rollicking, ska-inspired version of a song called 'Upfield,' propelled by an incessant horn arrangement.<sup>2</sup>

I dreamed I saw a tree full of angels, up on Primrose Hill  
And I flew with them over the Great Wen till I had seen my fill  
Of such poverty and misery sure to tear my soul apart  
I've got a socialism of the heart, I've got a socialism of the heart

The angels asked me how I felt about all I'd seen and heard  
That they spoke to me, a pagan, gave me cause to doubt their word  
But they laughed and said: "It doesn't matter if you'll help us in our art  
You've got a socialism of the heart, you've got a socialism of the heart"

Their faces shone and they were gone and I was left alone  
I walked these ancient empire streets till I came tearful to my home  
And when I woke next morning, I vowed to play my part  
I've got a socialism of the heart, I've got a socialism of the heart

Besides its obvious Blakean references ("tree full of angels," "ancient empire streets"), the song combines a number of typically Romantic elements on a more general level:

<sup>1</sup> On the activism side Bragg has recently come forward with an elaborate reflection on English and British national identities after 9/11 and the London bombings on July 7, 2005 in a book entitled *The Progressive Patriot* (Bragg 2006).

<sup>2</sup> All lyrics are quoted from [www.billybragg.co.uk](http://www.billybragg.co.uk) (accessed 4 March 2009) with slight changes to accommodate the versions actually sung on the album.

a highly subjective speaker position (even to the point of complete idiosyncrasy or madness), a critical attitude to prominent features of the contemporary urban world ("poverty," "misery"), and a longing for redemption and/or transcendence evoked in a synthesis of political and personal terms ("socialism of the heart"), which ultimately culminates in a chorus full of religious imagery.<sup>3</sup>

I'm going upfield, way up on the hillside  
I'm going higher than I've ever been before  
That's where you'll find me, over the horizon  
Wading in the river, reaching for that other shore

And still, the singer seems to remain "a pagan" even after he "vowed to play [his] part" in the wake of his encounter with the angels, and in spite of the song's enthusiasm, 'upfield' seems to have strong connotations of 'uphill' within the confines of this world.<sup>4</sup>

This sceptical reading is strongly encouraged by the fact that "Upfield" is not the album's opening song but rather preceded by the much more muted "From Red to Blue," a kind of soliloquy of the singer carried by a sparse instrumentation of electric guitar and organ without any rhythm section. "From Red to Blue" clearly indicates a shift from politically committed Romanticism ('red') to a more personal, privatised variety ('blue'):

Another day dawns grey, it's enough to make me spit  
But we go on our way, just putting up with it  
And when I try to make my feelings known to you  
You sound like you have changed from red to blue

You're a father now, you see things in different ways  
For every parent will gain perspective on their wilder days  
But that alone does not explain the change I see in you  
The way you've drifted off from red to blue

Sometimes I think to myself  
Should I vote red for my class or green for our children?  
But whatever choice I make  
I will not forsake

So you bought it all, the best your money could buy  
And I watched you sell your soul for their bright shining lie

<sup>3</sup> A demo of the song on the bonus CD of the 2006 edition emphasises this dimension more clearly in an arrangement featuring Cara Tivey on piano, and the Mint Juleps from the London East End as a gospel choir. In fact, the gospel touch of the lyrics is so strong that the 'socialism of the heart' came across as a 'soul sure reason of the heart' for the present writers until the lyrics on the website were consulted – a mishearing which would probably not have occurred to listeners more into Billy Bragg.

<sup>4</sup> One could hear this aspect underlined in the incessantly repetitive arrangement of the horns in the officially published version of the song.

Where are the principles of the friend I thought I knew  
I guess you let them fade from red to blue

I hate the compromises that life forces us to make  
We must all bend a little if we are not to break  
But the ideals you've opted out of, I still hold them to be true  
I guess they weren't so firmly held by you

While at first glance the song seems to suggest that the singer is actually addressing another person, the autobiographical reference to Billy Bragg's recent fatherhood associated with the 'you' in stanza two opens up the possibility of reading the song as an 'internal' negotiation between two sides of the singer's personality which come together in the 'we' of the first and last stanzas. As in this song, where the critical self (I) has the upper hand both in the bridge ("Sometimes ...") and at the end, Bragg would certainly claim a dominance of the critical self for himself while being fully prepared to acknowledge his own 'you'-side of private bliss and consumerism. In fact, this split personality pervades the whole album and thus corroborates such a reading of the opening song. On the one hand there are songs reminiscent of the old activism, like the musically lush allegorical treatment of capitalism as "Sugardaddy" ("Sugardaddy comes with his pockets full of fun / Sugardaddy's blowing kisses from his gun / What will he do and where will he run / When the real world comes to town"), an aggressive incantation of Kipling's "A Pict Song" accompanied by electric guitar only ("For we are the little folk – we! / Too little to love or to hate / Leave us alone and you'll see / That we can bring down the state"), and a paean to a "Northern Industrial Town" set to a traditional folk tune. On the other hand, and these tracks certainly dominate *William Bloke*, there are songs which indicate a shift to the private, such as the Randy Newman-like sarcasms on a failing relationship in "Everybody Loves You Babe" or the intimate "Brickbat" which refutes its own title ("I used to want to plant bombs at the Last Night of the Proms / But now you'll find me with the baby, in the bathroom, / With that big shell, listening for the sound of the sea"), the personally introspective "The Space Race is Over" which deconstructs a traditional Romantic motif ("It's been and it's gone and I'll never get to the moon / [...] / And I can't help but feel we've all grown up too soon"), a pure love song ("The Fourteenth of February"), a religious meditation entitled "King James Version" with only slight political overtones at its end ("Looks like a drift to the Right / For the world we were born in / But the horizon is bright / Yonder comes the morning"), and a satirical take on a certain type of contemporary personality ("Goalhanger").

With this ambivalence, Billy Bragg's *William Bloke* captures the characteristic "Dilemma of the Romantics" that John Berger summed up neatly in a 1959 essay:

Romanticism was a revolutionary movement that rallied round a promise which was bound to be broken: the promise of the success of revolutions deriving their philosophy from the concept of natural man. Romanticism represented and acted out the full predicament of those who created the goddess of liberty, put a flag in her hands and followed her only to find that she led them into ambush: the ambush of reality. It is this predicament which explains the two faces of Romanticism: its exploratory adventurousness and

its morbid self-indulgence. For pure romantics the most unromantic things in the world were firstly to accept life as it was, and secondly to succeed in changing it. (Berger 58-59)

As many recent publications have tended to point out, it seems that, beyond or behind questions of actual politics, the persistence (Ward) and continuity (Reinfandt) of Romanticism well into postmodernism (cf. Garvin, Larissy) and what is sometimes called 'postmodernity' (cf. Livingston) can most profitably be read as a reaction to and against modernity itself. Even a hands-on guide to analysing Romantic poetry admonishes its readers at the beginning of the twenty-first century that

you need to think of Romantic literature not as escapist in the way the term 'Romantic' sometimes suggests, but as literature that tries passionately to come to terms with the modern world as it emerges through a series of wrenching changes [...] [W]hat we get in the literature of the period is a range of competing, arguing, contending voices rather than a series of common assumptions that all share and that can be neatly summarized. (O'Flinn 3)

With this common denominator in mind, even the time-honoured problem of the great variety of Romanticisms (cf. Lovejoy) can be addressed:

All this variety need not worry us, if we reconceptualise European Romanticism as a *set of responses*, highly differentiated and at times downright contradictory, to a historically specific *challenge*: the challenge of the ever-accelerating modernization of European society. (Bode, "Europe," 127, emphases in the original)

And one can extend this notion to include the Americas and even 'Western' culture at large with its globalising dynamics, which is, as it were, quite literally 'underwritten' by "that unique historical situation in which [...] nothing can be taken for granted any more and in which a reaching out for new (and old) securities is the order of the day." (*ibid.* 135) For this specifically modern state of affairs Romanticism marks the "juncture at which the individual becomes (falteringly or enthusiastically) aware of his or her own range of possibilities" against the "insight that the relationships between language and mind, between sign and meaning [...] are by no means secure and stable but rather precarious, dynamic and evolving" (*ibid.* 135).

Against this background, Romanticism can thus be read as a structural analogy to modernity at large, and, somewhat paradoxically, both modernity and Romanticism are marked by the foundational contingency of their observable features – which have been determined by evolution and are thus necessarily so, but could also have turned out differently. This contingency can either be acknowledged through increasing degrees of reflexivity in (post-)Romantic cultural practices in art and literature and beyond, or ideologically sublimated into seemingly stable securities. Here, the Romantic ambivalence outlined above returns on a more abstract level and can be used for addressing the question implied in the subtitle of this paper: How did Romanticism get from its original historical moment to its present incarnations?

Following Jerome McGann's influential inquiry into *The Romantic Ideology*, two dominant ideological macro-paradigms of modern culture can be identified: on the one hand, an 'analytic' programme of Enlightenment discourse "most notable for its methodological and procedural rigor" but, with regard to its awareness of historical con-

tingency and media conditions, less or even non-reflexive, and, on the other, a 'synthetic' programme of Romantic discourse "whose center has been shifted from rational inquiry to imaginative pursuit" and whose main characteristic is a "double act of reflection – the representation and the self-conscious turn" (cf. McGann 1-17, quotes 10/12). Extending this line of thought by acknowledging the in-built differentiating dynamics of modernity, one can then generate some broad co-ordinates for addressing the continuity of Romanticism in modern culture in various prominent cultural domains, such as, on the one hand, technology (+ analytic/– reflexive) and science (+ analytic/+ reflexive) as opposed to, on the other, art and literature (+ synthetic/+ reflexive) and popular culture (+ synthetic/– reflexive) (cf. Reinfandt 27-52). In spite of the ideological tensions or even clashes implied by these co-ordinates, these alternatives can nevertheless be considered as part of a continuous cultural sphere where, for example, the increasing reflexivity of modern science with regard to its acknowledgement of the cultural framing of its particular understanding of objectivity (cf., for example, Daston/Galison) can be understood as having been partly induced by the 'Romantic' influx of ideas from art and literature through the humanities (hermeneutics, 'theory') and partly as a result of its own internal dynamics in the contexts of evolving modernity. Conversely, the truth claims of art and literature have to position themselves with regard to epistemological trends in the sciences, and the artefacts of art, literature and popular culture acquire their material forms and their communicative functions only on the basis of available technological possibilities, particularly in terms of media history (cf. Thompson).

For some 200 to 250 years, then, Romantic cultural practices have been largely concerned with the "self and experience in a mediated world" and with the "reinvention of publicness" under these conditions (cf. Thompson 207/235). Individualising impulses are thus counterbalanced by the emergence of new forms of 'collective individuality' (cf. Reinfandt 278), and differentiating impulses such as the increasing difficulty of 'autonomous' modern(ist) art and literature – brought about by the Romantic postulates of originality and innovation – are counterbalanced by typically Romantic semantics of re-integration (nature, the people, the nation, the common reader) and by the audience's persistent insistence on 'reading' modern art and literature in non-specialised terms predicated on subjective experience (authorial intention, everyday relevance). Beyond the specialised sphere of 'autonomous' art and literature, however, the audience's insistence on the primacy of subjective experience has a stronger claim even on the production of artefacts, but even in the multiple registers of popular culture today an asymmetrical relation between the modes of production (marked by a higher degree of reflexivity) and the modes of reception (marked by a longing for authenticity and genuineness in whatever terms) seems to be unavoidable (cf. Reinfandt 69-84).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This is evidently felt by likes of William Bloke. In the field of popular music, "the process of aesthetic production could be labelled 'postmodern' [...] with regard to notions of multiple authorship, the primacy of economic concerns, and the fabrication of simulacrous media identities. [...] [T]he aesthetics reception of clearly continues along 'romantic' lines. As if in a willing suspension of disbelief, audiences of popular music seem to take the subjective depth and integrity of the artist for granted, whose lyrics and music are

All this is compounded by an all-pervasive, media-induced 'aestheticisation of everyday life' at the end of the twentieth century as described by the philosopher Wolfgang Iser. Iser points to 1) a surface aestheticisation of reality in terms of embellishment, animation and experience which inaugurates hedonism as a new cultural matrix and is largely caught up in economic strategies, 2) an aestheticisation 'beneath' the surface in terms of technology, simulation and production which inaugurates a new priority of the aesthetic in material production and is an effect of the inescapable constitution of reality through the media, and 3) the fashioning of identities and forms of life which seems to pave the way for a fully-fledged realisation of humankind as "*homo aestheticus*" (cf. Iser 2-6). These days, that is to say, William Blake finds himself in a world which has in many respects accomplished a programme of total aestheticization well beyond the scope of media politics as envisioned by William Blake which Roger Lüdeke describes in his contribution below. Even so, William Blake does still serve as a beacon of critical awareness and aesthetic possibility in our negotiations with this environment, and the montage on the cover of the present volume tries to capture this idea.

In recent years, the persistence of Romanticism has been traced in literary criticism and theory, in the history of poetry and fiction from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, in theatre and film, in popular culture, in politics and in the sciences (for a recent overview under the heading of "Romantic afterlives" cf. Roe 591-720). As these introductory remarks try to suggest, however, the importance of Romanticism today and ever since the mid-eighteenth century can be claimed on a fundamental cultural level revolving around questions of identity, authorship, authority and authenticity under modern conditions. Even in our supposedly 'postmodern' times of pluralism, relativism and reflexivity the Romantic (and thus contingent, provisional and sometimes downright contradictory) answers to these questions can still provide orientation. As a commentator on the recent fates of PFKAR (i.e. the Period Formerly Known As Romantic) has pointed out, "the Romantic notions that words can bend the world to our being [and] that what we think can be convictions, have not lost their attractions" (Schor), and it would be much too early to assume that they have lost their functional efficiency in people's dealings with the world, either.

Romanticism, then, is a specifically modern way of perceiving the world and making sense of the experience, uneasily hovering between subjectivism and a longing for integration and continuity, between emphatically embracing the world as nature and a retreat into art, and all the while making use of all available media. So *pace* Rüdiger Safranski's history of ideas as formulated in his highly acclaimed recent study of German Romanticism, the Romantic heritage manifests itself not only in Wagner, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the political and moral catastrophe of National Socialism, or in the Marxist counter-narrative of modernity and various youth and protest movements culminating in 1968, or in ambitious modernist and postmodernist

---

expected to transport a genuine message relating to genuine feelings or biographical experience. The products of the mainstream popular music industry are, one could argue on these grounds, to a large extent carefully calculated postmodern simulations of the romantic authenticity which the market demands" (Eckstein 4).

literary and artistic movements. It can also be found in the spheres of popular culture such as, for example, rock music (cf. Keightley, Meisel, Pattison) and the programmatic self-descriptions of heavy metal bands (who seem to be the last vestige of undiluted Romanticism these days) or in dystopian horror movies like *28 Days Later* (2003), which replaced its original bleak ending, in which the hero dies of injuries he received while fleeing from the virus-infected hyper-violent zombies spreading all over England, with an idyllic and very Wordsworthian escape to the Lake District where the three survivors signal to a military jet with big letters made of sheets which read 'HELL' until the final 'O' is attached (cf. Korte 318-20).

Against this background, the Tübingen conference of the German Society for English Romanticism took up the challenge of addressing the contemporaneity of Romanticism by inviting contributions from a great variety of angles, ranging from current readings of Romantic texts, reflecting upon present institutional and private contexts, to Romantic readings of current texts, reflecting upon historical continuities and differences. This volume accordingly sets out with contributions which highlight the ongoing currency of Romantic ideas in current social, political, theoretical and technological debates. The opening essay by **David Simpson** seminally reevaluates William Wordsworth's poetic investigation of man's 'homelessness' and its conceptual relevance in the new global order after the collapse of the Soviet empire and the terrorist attacks of September 2001. **Michaela Irimia** then discusses the longevity of "revolutionary Romanticisms" across the globe in various manifestations of political ideology and popular culture, before **Paul H. Fry** takes us to "Romanticism as Theory." Resisting an all too easy equation of terms, he succinctly highlights the Romantic quality of critical theory (with its insistence on linguistic worldmaking and the progressive iteration of reading), yet also locates the theoretical core of Romanticism in the ultimate negation of positive knowledge. Fry's insights are subsequently enlarged upon in two exemplary case studies – first, by **Tilottama Rajan**, who thoroughly explores the anticipations of psychoanalytic thought in Friedrich Schelling's *Ages of the World*, and then by **Gerold Sedlmayr**, who ventures upon "Reading Blake through Ricoeur" and meticulously traces how their philosophies of self resonate with each other. **Rosa Karl** and **Ralf Haekel** finally take us from theory and philosophy to technology and the sciences: Rosa Karl revisits Shelley's *Laon and Cyntha*, highlighting its elaborate yoking together of revolutionary thought and the new scientific discourse on electricity; Ralf Haekel in turn looks into Romantic prefigurations of the neurosciences, stressing the continuing relevance of Romantic ideology as a corrective to materialist accounts of human consciousness.

From here, the contributions in this volume move on to address a whole range of individual cultural practices and contemporary works of art in various media, all of which testify to the larger validity of Romanticism today. **Sebastian Domsch** proposes a reading of Paul Muldoon's 1990 book-length poem *Madoc: A Mystery* as palimpsest, as a text parodying a whole range of pretexts (most notably Robert Southey's epic *Madoc*) in a way that negates closure and affirms the Romantic "legacy of *what if*." **Kai Merten** juxtaposes the stage design and configuration of some of Samuel Beckett's productions with select paintings by Caspar David Friedrich, and manages to succinctly trace Beckett's "theatrical anthropology" to the Romantic age; he con-

sequently encourages us not only to historicise Beckett's representations of apocalyptic alienation, but also to acknowledge a degree of theatricality and immanence in the drama of Romantic subjectivity. In a similar vein, **Roger Lüdeke** fruitfully compares the media politics of William Blake and William S. Burroughs. Arguing against the mediahistorical determinism of Friedrich Kittler, Lüdeke highlights the complementary importance of (Romantic) aesthetic strategies, which enable both Blake and Burroughs to disclose, transform and transcend media hegemonies in their time.

Burroughs's filmic experiments lead us to Romanticism in contemporary film and cinema. The first contribution, here, is a nuanced reading of Jim Jarmusch's recourse to Blakean and Byronic pretexts in his films *Dead Man* (1996) and *Broken Flowers* (2005) by **Katharina Rennhak**, while **Martin Butler** turns to Jeremy Leven's film *Don Juan DeMarco* (1995), which he reads as a postmodern adaptation of Byron's epic that successfully translates the concerns of Romantic epistemology into our times. **Stephanie Fricke** in turn analyses the transformations that Jane Austen underwent as a popular icon on the way to an outright 'Austenmania' in the 1990s and 2000s, looking particularly into Stephanie Barron's *Jane Austen Mystery* novels (which feature Austen as amateur-detective), and into the 2007 film *Becoming Jane* (imagining a tragic love affair in Austen's early years that sparked her later novels). The section on cinema closes with **Evy Varsamopoulou's** discussion of Krzysztof Kieślowski's film *La Double Vie de Véronique* (1991) and its obvious debt to the Romantic artist narrative and variations of the *doppelgänger* motif.

The volume closes, finally, with three contributions on further medial manifestations of Romanticism today. Turning to Romantic afterlives in the field of literary studies, **Mirslawa Modrzewska** analyses two volumes of Romanticist criticism and their entanglement in current re-creations of the myth of Slavdom in Polish popular culture; **Frank Erik Pointner** takes us to the world of comic books and investigates the transformation of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* into Hunt Emerson's hilarious and intelligent 1989 comic book adaptation; and last but not least, **Monika Seidl** interrogates the particular notion of Romanticism in contemporary British fashion lines.

The Tübingen conference of the German Society for English Romanticism profited greatly from its Romantic setting. The opening of the conference took place at the Hölderlinturm and was centred around an atmospheric reading by the eminent poet and Hölderlin translator David Constantine. Hölderlin, who is, at least outside of Germany, generally considered to be a Romantic poet, spent the last 36 years of his life, from 1807 to 1843, in this tower, writing bits and pieces of poetry which he signed, variously, as 'Scardanelli', 'Killalusimeno' or 'Buonarotti', before he vanished, as Rüdiger Safranski puts it, into the images he had created in his work and which at some point lost touch with reality in his experience (cf. Safranski 171). His host at the tower, the carpenter Zimmer, saw this quite clearly even while Hölderlin was still alive when he pointed out that "it was [Hölderlin's] enthusiasm for pure paganism which made him crack up. With all his ideas he remained fixated on one point, around

which he is still revolving...."<sup>6</sup> It was exactly this point around which the conference revolved, too, if one reads Zimmer's 'pure paganism' not as a personal fault or a pathological affliction, but rather as a symptom of emerging modernity, no longer centred around God, but rather around subjectivity and individuality, for which Romanticism at long last established a mode of cultural existence, as it were. In this fundamental sense, Romanticism was not a 'German affair' at all, or a 'German obsession with European consequences,' as Rüdiger Safranski has it in his subtitle and on the back cover of his book with an eye on the German book market, even if one would have to grant that some aspects were addressed earlier and on a more thorough theoretical note in Germany than elsewhere (as the saying goes: "Germans dive deeper, but come up muddier").

The rest of the conference took place at the *Fürstenzimmer* in Hohentübingen Castle above the old town, including bats at nightfall and all. One of the highpoints was the official launch of a book called *Faustus: From the German of Goethe Translated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by James McKusick and Fred Burwick, the honorary member of our society who painstakingly unearthed sufficient proof for this identification and thus provided a very special example for the rubric 'current readings of Romantic texts' (Burwick/McKusick).<sup>7</sup> This book launch was framed by a reception sponsored by Oxford UP, and further thanks along these lines go to the German Research Foundation, the Unibund Tübingen and the English Department, who also contributed to our financial resources. We would also like to thank Claudia Schubert, Katharina Musiol and Achim Binder for their part in letting the conference run smoothly, and last but by no means least: Eva Maria Rettner for being her usual cheerful self in co-ordinating *all* these efforts. She deserves the greatest thanks of all.

The present volume was finally put together with the help of Claudia Schubert, Joseph Twomey and Britta Fietzke. Their patience in formatting and proof-reading was admirable as usual and ultimately indispensable. The editors' thanks go to them and to all contributors for their conviviality (both intellectual and social) during the conference and their amiable cooperation during the editing process. May this volume serve as a reminder of a productive conference and as an inspiring contribution to the ongoing debate about the persistence of Romanticism and its topicality today.

<sup>6</sup> The Swabian original: "*Bei ihm ischt es die Schwärmerei für das blanke Heidentum gewesen, das ihn hat überschnappen lasse. Und mit all seine Gedanke ischt er bei Ein'm Punkt stehe gebliebe, und um den dreht er sich noch immer...*" Quoted in Safranski 170 (our translation; original italics).

<sup>7</sup> Fred Burwick first announced his findings on the 2005 Munich conference of the German Society for English Romanticism (cf. Bode, "Introduction" 9-10, Burwick).



## Works Cited

- Berger, John. "The Dilemma of the Romantics." 1959. *Selected Essays*. Ed. Geoff Dyer. New York: Vintage, 2002. 58-60.
- Bode, Christoph. "Europe." *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Nicholas Roe. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. 126-136.
- Bode, Christoph. "By Way of Introduction: Towards a Re-definition of European Romanticism." *British and European Romanticisms: Selected Papers from the Munich Conference of the German Society for English Romanticism*. Ed. Christoph Bode and Sebastian Domsch. Trier: WVT, 2007. 7-17.
- Bragg, Billy. *William Bloke*. 1996. Special Issue Bonus Edition. Cooking Vinyl, 2006. CD.
- . *The Progressive Patriot: A Search for Belonging*. London: Bantam Press, 2006.
- Burwick, Frederick. "Coleridge's Translation of Goethe's *Faust*." *British and European Romanticisms: Selected Papers from the Munich Conference of the German Society for English Romanticism*. Ed. Christoph Bode and Sebastian Domsch. Trier: WVT, 2007. 19-36.
- Burwick, Frederick and James McKusick, eds. *Faustus. From the German of Goethe. Translated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2007.
- Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
- Eckstein, Lars. "Torpedoing the Authorship of Popular Music: A Reading of Gorillaz' 'Feel Good Inc.'" *Popular Music* 28.2 (2009): 1-17.
- Garvin, Harry R., ed. *Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1980.
- Keightley, Keir. "Reconsidering Rock." *The Cambridge Companion of Rock and Pop*. Ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw and John Street. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 109-142.
- Korte, Barbara. "Envisioning a Black Tomorrow? Black Mother Figures and the Issue of Representation in *28 Days Later* (2003) and *Children of Men* (2006)." *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*. Ed. Lars Eckstein, Barbara Korte, Eva Ulrike Pirker and Christoph Reinfandt. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008. 315-325.
- Larissy, Edward, ed. *Romanticism and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Livingstone, Ira. *Arrow of Chaos: Romanticism and Postmodernity*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Lovejoy, A.O. "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms." *PMLA* 39 (1924): 229-253.
- Meisel, Perry. *The Cowboy and the Dandy: Crossing Over from Romanticism to Rock and Roll*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.
- O'Flinn, Paul. *How to Study Romantic Poetry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
- Pattison, Robert. *The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.
- Reinfandt, Christoph. *Romantische Kommunikation: Zur Kontinuität der Romantik in der Kultur der Moderne*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2003.
- Roe, Nicholas. *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*. München: Hanser, 2007.
- Schor, Esther. "Clinging to the Wreckage." *Times Literary Supplement* Dec 24 (1999). 23.
- Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity: A Social History of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
- Ward, Geoff. "The Persistence of Romanticism." *A Guide to Romantic Literature: 1780-1830*. London: Bloomsbury, 1993. 1-24.
- Welsch, Wolfgang. *Undoing Aesthetics*. London: Sage, 1997.