

domestic. He argues that every issue had an *Aussen* and *Innen* component as far as the Monarchy was concerned. Hungarian measures against the Romanian population in Transylvania, for instance, would typically elicit protests from Bucharest (or even worse, a fact-finding mission by a Russian Foreign Minister) thus transforming a domestic issue into an international one. Likewise, Russian support for the Pan-Slav cause obviously carried implications for the internal affairs of the Monarchy. Given the overlap between *Innen* and *Aussen*, there can thus be no question of a "primacy of domestic politics" (p. 10).

Unfortunately, having made this important point, Williamson goes on to argue that the decision to go war was determined almost exclusively by foreign policy considerations and by a desire "to settle accounts with Serbia". In fact, study of the July crisis amply reveals the extent to which internal affairs influenced the decision to go to war. Both Sturgkh and Bilinski therefore believed that the security of the annexed provinces was dependent upon the defeat of Serbia, while Tisza was convinced by Burián that the South Slav problem could easily spill over into Transylvania. In his anxiety to demonstrate that Austrian policy-making was different to German, Williamson loses sight of the valuable starting-point of his discussion. In place of the primacy of domestic politics, he argues for the primacy of foreign politics and so does not tease out the continuing close relationship between the two.

Given the new interest in public opinion on the eve of the war, it is to be regretted that Williamson confines his account to high politics. As Clausewitz pointed out, wars are shaped by a trinity of groups: the politicians for whom it is an instrument of policy; the generals for whom it is an exercise in skill, and the people as a whole, whose involvement determines the level of the war's intensity. In August 1914, the call to arms was greeted with enthusiasm across the Monarchy. Given his own background and upbringing, one expects little Dollfuss to stand on tip toe in the recruiting sergeant's office; but Hofmannsthal, Musil, Kokoschka and Wittgenstein also hastened to the front. It is their surprising readiness to participate in the war which best indicates the degree of strength and popular vitality which the old Monarchy still retained.

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ROMANTIC IRONY

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As René Wellek wrote of Friedrich Schlegel: "Irony is his recognition of the fact that the world in its essence is paradoxical and that an ambivalent attitude alone can grasp its contradictory totality. For Schlegel irony is the struggle between the absolute and the relative, the simultaneous consciousness of the impossibility and the necessity of a complete account of reality" (*A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*. Vol 2, *The Romantic Age*, New Haven: Yale UP, 1955). This present volume seeks to trace the new understandings of irony, most strikingly formulated by Schlegel and his contemporaries, that characterized the Romantic movement across Europe as it was expressed in literary and critical works.

Romantic Irony is the first in the five-volume subseries on Romanticism within the multi-volumed *Comparative History of European Literature* sponsored by the International Comparative Literature Association, of which the first volume, *Expressionism*, edited by Ulrich Weisstein, appeared in 1973. It is also the last vol-

ume to be published by Akadémiai Kiadó, the Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; the new publisher of the *Comparative History* is John Benjamins.

It speaks well for the subseries that it should open with an innovative volume — innovative in its choice of subject, far from a conventional “periodization” or generic formulation, and innovative in the fresh comparative material, including readings of particular texts, that it brings before us. There is a sense in which the volume deliberately evades the issue of periodization; the subseries on Romanticism has in any case already sprung the confines of the original plan for the *History*. The evasion is of course also, and more interestingly, an aspect of the nature of its own subject; we may recall that in the old debate between Lovejoy and Wellek on the question of whether a unitary Romanticism could be defined. Abrams (responding to critics who saw his *Natural Supernaturalism* as falling into the “realist” or Wellekian camp) sketched out an “imaginary history” based on the principles of Romantic irony (*Rationality and Imagination in Cultural History: A Reply to Wayne Booth*, *Critical Inquiry* 2 1976, 458). We have the paradox of trying to write a “synthesizing” Wellekian account of European Romantic irony about a phenomenon which by its very definition would deny the possibility of such an account. Some contributors heroically and self-consciously synthesize (Behler), some proceed in a briskly positivist way to chart the phenomenon (Bisztray), others choose a strand or two which they perceive as present in a particular national literature, ignoring the others and the question of whether any of them standing alone can be said to constitute Romantic irony (for example, in Portuguese prose fiction, self-consciousness of fictionality), while one or two deny that any of the single strands can qualify as Romantic Irony, which must be a “complex” — either a synthetic whole, or a congeries of partially self-contradictory tendencies. Or, possibly, it does not exist at all: but this can only be a limiting case, occasionally mooted, in a volume devoted to the phenomenon. The view of it as a ‘congeries’ approaches the deconstructive position on periodization of Hillis Miller, in which every text belongs to (at least) two frames of reference. Romantic Irony then becomes, paradoxically, the most characteristic phenomenon of the “period”, in accordance with the principles of our own critical age.

This volume is an appropriate “opener” for the Romanticism subseries; for no straightforward, seamless chronological history organized by periods and styles can go unchallenged in our time, indeed, no such history can be written. It will be interesting to see how the succeeding volumes, on *Romantic Drama*, *Romantic Poetry*, *Romantic Fiction*, and finally *Criticism*, will deal with this issue. It has already been determined in the case of *Poetry and Fiction* to use a “hermeneutic” approach which will take soundings of the state of reception of the Romantic phenomena at particular periods down to the present. Interpretations of Romanticism have of course figured prominently in the critical debates of the last twenty years.

Garber’s Preface rightly calls attention to the surge of interest in the topic of Romantic Irony in recent years. Yet, as he points out, “much of the material on individual nations and areas has never been available to English-speaking readers”. Moreover, the volume breaks new ground in that for several of the areas (for example, that of the Southern Slavs) the essays contained in the volume “initiate the history of Romantic irony”. Until recently, it was looked upon as a topic confined to German Romanticism, and the Germans rightly remain at the centre of the treatment, with Friedrich Schlegel and Tieck as the main theorist and practitioner, respectively; to a large extent, as Wellek wrote in the already quoted volume 2 of his *History of Literary Criticism*, the theory of Romanticism in general was largely formulated by the Germans, and German Romantic Irony for long seemed one of its most distinctive contributions, not represented elsewhere. The essays offer considerable evidence that the dissemination of Romantic Irony in Europe also started largely from German materials. To some extent, of course, since all the contributors have set out with the German model in hand their formulations of what is taking place in other literatures will conform to that pattern or one of its several versions. The more recent the critical search for the phenomena is, the less divergence in national critical traditions can have played a role in developing distinctive types of Romantic Irony, the more likely this artificial superimposition is. At times, the volume seems to stop short of displaying recent divergences. To take just one example (perhaps owing to editorial modesty): The recognition of Romantic Irony in English Romanticism is very recent, yet has gained ground steadily, starting from Byron’s *Don Juan* and extended gradually to other works. Garber himself has contributed ably to this process, with his *Self, Text, and Romantic Irony: The Example of Byron* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), focussing not on *Don Juan* alone but on the Oriental tales. His contention in that work is that for Byron “the great western fable”,

that is, "the idea of an original unity, implying a self already made, one that comes to be divided, and seeks to repair that primal fracture", is not operative, and it is the artifice of the construction of a self from the process of "moving along in the world, seeking, to possess the world" that Byron illustrates. Thus Garber is continuing the now well-advanced process of anglicizing Romantic irony: he explicitly rejects Fichte's idealist version of "the great fable" (Schlegel's source); and he makes Byron the champion of "the post-modern condition" in which we no longer give credence to the "great Western fables".

The volume opens with a very thin section on "Tradition and Background", consisting of two items only, Lowry Nelson's excellent discussion of Cervantes, fitting a broad topic with many ramifications compactly into the space; and Garber's own treatment of Sterne, which provides an essential basis for the many allusions to the seminal *Tristram Shandy* throughout the volume. Gerald Gillespie's wide-ranging treatment of the grotesque, from the final section of the book, amplifying and enriching Wolfgang Kayser's classic account with earlier baroque examples, can profitably be read with these two essays. But even including Gillespie's essay, one would have liked to see a much more extensive section here, for one of the main interests of Romantic Irony is its gradual emergence from a number of different sources. Garber points to the centrality of Cervantes, Diderot and Sterne in Schlegel's writings on irony, and elsewhere, as models; but there is no chapter on Diderot, and he is barely mentioned even in *Bourgeois*; Lilian Furst's use of his *Jacques le Fataliste* as a major example, illuminating as it is, does not altogether make up the omission. Crucial to the development of new techniques is the subtle use of shifting irony to convey dangerously critical views of religious texts, dogmas, and church-backed scientific shibboleths. One very obvious topic would be the history of Socrates in the eighteenth century: the shift of his reputation from a model for stoic death, to that of a political rebel and a deist, and then to a religious model for a subterranean anti-Enlightenment protest. As such he also provides several of the genres most characteristic of Romantic Irony: the dialogue, and the fragment (as in Hamann's *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten*). Hamann receives only three glancing references in the book (the page number of the first incorrectly given in the index), and there is no mention of *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten*. The separation of the views of Socrates and Plato, further elaborated by Schleiermacher, served the differentiation of different kinds of irony that came to its head in Kierkegaard's *Concept of Irony*. (Behler does treat Socrates in a subsection of his paper on Schlegel; and Thorlby treats Kierkegaard's *Concept of Irony* as a source of useful definitions in the chapter on English Romantic Poetry; the Scandinavian chapter points to Kierkegaard's practice of Romantic Irony throughout his writing, but makes no reference to Socrates.) Another clear source of Romantic irony is the French *conte*, especially in its exotic, proto-romantic "oriental" forms, and the reception in England, by William Beckford and others; Beckford himself deserves a chapter. The plays of Gozzi, so important for their combination of *commedia dell'arte* and fairy-tale as critique of Goldoni's realism, receive only the barest of passing mentions, as there is no chapter on Italian literature; fortunately, we can expect Gozzi to be treated in the next volume of the series, *Romantic Drama*, edited by Gerald Gillespie. To enumerate what might well have found a place here, however, is no criticism of the editor, for the field is still expanding and he has made a signal contribution to it in this volume, bringing together what is known (itself a heroic task), drawing a map, and starting new directions. One of the purposes of the volume is to stimulate further research and comment, and it admirably fulfills it.

The bulk of the volume is taken up with thirteen essays on "National Manifestations", beginning with two essays on German Romanticism, on the theory, by Ernst Behler, and the practice, by Raymond Immerwahr; on France, by René Bourgeois, followed by "The ironic *récit* in Portuguese Romanticism", by Maria de Lourdes Ferraz and Jacinto do Prado Coelho, and "Imagination and Irony in English Romantic Poetry", by Anthony Thorlby (English fiction is untouched, except for Sterne). There are essays on "Thorbecke and the Resistance to Irony in the Netherlands", by Wim Van den Berg and Joost Kloek; on Scandinavia, by George Bizstray; on "Irony and World-Creation" in the work of the Romanian poet, Mihai Eminescu, by Vera Calin; on "Romantic Irony in Nineteenth-century Hungarian Literature", by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák; "Romantic Irony in Polish Literature and Criticism", by Edward Mozejko and Milan V. Dimić; "Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol: Ironic Modes in Russian Romanticism", by Roman S. Struc; "Romantic Irony and the Southern Slavs", by Milian Dimić; and finally, "The Development of Romantic Irony in the United States", by G. R. Thompson. There are no chapters on Italy or Spain.

The volume concludes with a section entitled "Syntheses", comprising five articles, including a "Coda"

by the editor on "Ironies, Domestic and Cosmopolitan": Lilian Furst, "Romantic Irony and Narrative Stance", Jean-Pierre Barricelli, "Musical Forms of Romantic Irony", and two articles by Gerald Gillespie, "Romantic Irony and the Grotesque", and "Romantic Irony in Modern Anti-Theatre".

There is a very brief, one-page Bibliography; one of the major disappointments of the volume is the failure of the publisher, the Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences, Budapest, to include the extensive bibliography which the editor and his collaborators had prepared during the years they worked on this project: this would have been an invaluable aid in itself, and worth the price of the volume. Presumably because of the expectation that the comprehensive Bibliography would be published, individual contributors' references have not been gathered together in Bibliographies at the end of their articles, but left buried in their footnotes, or omitted. There are exceptions to this. Bourgeois has appended a separate Bibliography, while some contributors (Behler, and Mozejko and Dimič) provide particularly rich footnotes. One misses especially information about available translations of at least the major works discussed. It is a pity too that the Index is only of names, not of concepts; for Romantic Irony is an amalgam of related concepts.

Few readers are likely to read straight through this book; all will have their own special interests. To find a highroad through it, they are advised to begin with Lilian Furst's article (if they have not already read it in her book, *Fictions of Romantic Irony*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), which sets off from "stable irony" as normally understood, and through a series of central examples shows how Romantic irony differs from it. From here they are urged to proceed to Behler's admirable treatment of the central theoretical development, presenting the at first bewildering variety of Friedrich Schlegel's seminal claims for Romantic Irony, and the way it burgeoned still further in the hands of his contemporaries into the related concepts of Tragic irony (Adam Müller, Solger, and A. W. Schlegel) and World irony (Hegel), as well as the later contributions of Nietzsche, Dilthey and post-Wittgensteinian philosophy. Infinite self-reflection, perspectivism, and the power of caprice opened onto vistas of pessimism, melancholy, and a sense of absurdity. Behler has written on all these matters elsewhere, including a more recent book, *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity* (University of Washington Press, 1990); but this is a little masterpiece of compression. If they then pass to Szegedy-Maszák's essay, readers will find a persuasive account of Romantic irony in its existential form (nowhere else to be found in the volume, except in passing references to Kierkegaard), with an absorbing analysis of the sustained example, the novel *Phantom Visions on the Soul's Horizon*, by Zsigmond Kemény.

The other essays in the "National Manifestations" section are more guarded or cautious in their handling of the topic. Immerwahr, treating "The Practice of Irony in Early German Romanticism", begins with yet another version of Schlegel and a series of caveats: Friedrich Schlegel used the term "irony" and only rarely qualified it as "romantic"; when he did so, it applied to Shakespeare and Petrarch, and to "the fusion of the sentimental and the fantastic which in Schlegel's usage constitutes the romantic in a typological sense." (82) This specialized definition of Romantic Irony has been lost, and the term applied to the more general and sweeping use of irony. Although Romantic Irony has often been identified with the dramatic breaking of illusion typified by Tieck's *Der gestiefelte Kater*, Schlegel was cool towards the play. Immerwahr treats Friedrich Schlegel's own novel *Lucinde*, Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* (the first imitator of Sterne in Germany), Tieck's fantastic comedies, and the novels Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and Brentano's *Godwi*. He points out too that many of the fictional techniques later associated with Romantic Irony, especially the shifts in narrative level, were first described by Schlegel under the heading of "arabesque" (the subject of Polheim's excellent book of that name). The differences in view and emphasis in Behler and Immerwahr convey the density, scope, and suggestiveness of German thinking on Romantic Irony, and will, one hopes, send readers back to Friedrich Schlegel himself, now admirably edited by Behler in the *Kritische Ausgabe*, and to the detailed explications of his thought now available.

René Bourgeois, drawing on his own previous work, treats a number of French examples, which he holds were carried out without any awareness of the theory of Romantic Irony; only in the 1930's did it begin to be discussed consciously. The main meaning of "irony" remained (Voltairean) rhetorical irony. Mme de Staël in *De l'Allemagne* in this as in so much else German, brought across the first description of the aesthetics of irony, as the technique of rupturing illusions, located in Goethe and the new comedy of Tieck. The major figure was Hoffman; who as Bourgeois showed in his book on Romantic Irony in France, provided in *Prin-*

zessin *Brambilla* (translated into French in 1830) a direct discussion of irony, as well as an example of it. But "the French had a rather nebulous image of Romantic irony, formed solely by the example of texts which, by their very disparity, could not suffice for the formation of a true aesthetic". (101) He goes on to outline techniques which served to bring the fictional quality of the work of art to the reader's conscious notice; most interesting is the discussion of the problem of evil as handled by Romantic irony (113–15). The artist who describes violence and evil makes them element of a game which renders them partially ineffective, and finally even the difference between life and death is erased. His examples are Jules Janin, *L'Ane mort* and Petrus Borel, as well as Quinet, *Ahasverus* and *Merlin l'Enchanteur*. Bourgeois concludes that in French literature Romantic irony is unable to give rise to other than marginal works, because, he thinks, of their ambiguity: if they are based on a sense of the game they are difficult to take seriously. (119) Yet isn't it typical of the way Romantic irony has come to our attention that it is first located in a single atypical or fringe work, and then is discovered in more and more central places? Moreover, critical concepts have the power to make the marginal work central; the canon shifts. In English an example is Hazlitt's partly fictional, partly autobiographical *Liber Amoris* — previously an embarrassing anomaly in his *oeuvre*, now moving steadily toward the centre. *Don Juan* now seems central — but much work had to be done to make it so. In French too there has been a complete revision of the canon: one might take the example of Lautréamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror*, a fringe work which the surrealists brought to centre stage, and which still more recently became the key work in the alternate canon of Barthes and Sollers, marking the beginning of the "open text". Is this a case of Bourgeois lagging well behind the current of contemporary criticism? Nowhere in the volume is one so convinced that the whole subject needs rethinking as in the crucial instance of French literature. Finally, these meditations lead one to suspect that the reader is not getting an account of the differences in Romantic irony as it manifested itself in different countries, but accounts of different cultures in which the absorption and application of the idea are at different stages of critical development.

A somewhat different stage is displayed in Thorlby's treatment of English Romantic irony. Behler still insists on the fundamental difference between German and English conceptions (53), while recent English critics scamper to bring the English Romantics into the fold of Romantic Irony. Thorlby, however, is still cautious. "Irony is not a quality that is likely to strike English readers immediately as being typical of Romantic poetry or prose writing in their own country", he begins. (131) Nevertheless, he moves directly into the traditional centre of English Romanticism and finds Romantic irony there. Thorlby suggests there is a "potentially ironic structure" to Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry, in the partial contradiction of "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" on the one hand, and "recollection in tranquillity" on the other. "Recognition of contradiction" begins to "show itself as a familiar feature of Romantic writing", particularly where its more or less philosophical pronouncements are concerned, the theoretical formulations of Coleridge (influenced by Schelling). Keats he finds grounded in the same set of contradictions as Wordsworth's *Preface*. He then turns to Shelley and finally Byron (though not to *Don Juan*), thus deliberately reversing the order in which critics in the past decade (none of them footnoted) have discovered Romantic irony in English poetry, starting with *Don Juan*. There is a certain vagueness in his procedure, as he does not work via Coleridge's well documented knowledge of Solger, Müller, and both Schlegels as well as Tieck. Nor, while mining Kierkegaard for definitions, does he indicate the shared existential territory between Coleridge and Kierkegaard. Nor (most surprisingly) does he mention Shakespeare and dramatic irony, a vital context for Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey (these four are not mentioned) and Thirlwall. The latter is a particularly significant omission. Only the two articles on German criticism mention Thirlwall; in English the whole context of Thirlwall's essay on tragic irony has yet to be expounded. Blake, especially *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, not treated by Thorlby, is interpolated by both Gillespie and Garber into their contributions. The rich field of English fiction is not broached. American fiction comes off much better, through George Thompson's piece on Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville (culminating in the *Confidence-Man*), and Furst's treatment of Saul Bellow.

Wim van den Berg and Joost Kloek, "Thorbecke and the Resistance to Irony in the Netherlands" offer the most negative and sceptical account in the book. This is valuable not simply historically, as an account of Dutch attitudes to Romanticism, but in its searching inspection of the current claims being made for Romantic Irony, not least by this volume. The Dutch play devil's advocate: They show the hostility of the Dutch

to German idealism; only in one case — which has been explored neither in Dutch nor in German — that of J. R. Thorbecke, the liberal statesman, was there a knowledge of Romantic irony. (165) He studied in Germany 1820–24 and made contact with a number of literati and philosophers. Solger's widow showed him her husband's papers. He began to draft philosophical dialogues. In the end, he did not write on the *Nachlass* as intended but on Solger's important dialogue *Erwin*. The authors conclude that the usual inclusion of Holland in the European movement of Romanticism is in need of rescrutiny: its right to inclusion could only be asserted by omitting all mention of the missing Romantic irony. The editor, for his part, welcomes the discovery of Thorbecke as a major addition to our knowledge of the reception of Romantic irony.

Bisztray also finds Romantic irony a rare concept in Scandinavian criticism, which when it is found usually means "the breaking of illusion" common to much dramatic literature and not necessarily Romantic irony; yet — as several contributors find — it is more widespread in the literature than this rarity in criticism would lead one to expect. (178) His examples are primarily Danish, such as Oehlenschläger's play *Midsummer Night's Play*, and Hans Christian Andersen's story, "The Galoshes of Fortune", and others, "kaleidoscopic stories with constant and rapid interchanges of two confronted levels of existence" (182), and, of course, the whole *oeuvre* of Kierkegaard (not simply his dissertation, *The Concept of Irony*, or the first part of *Either/Or*). Moreover, while Romanticism is imported from Germany nevertheless the objective social conditions obtained for its acclimatization: the disastrous instability in which Denmark went bankrupt (1813) and lost Norway. He suggests, however, that the "subjective recognition" that "everything could happen" triggered the cult of Romantic irony everywhere in Europe. (187) It is not clear whether he would claim that this subjective recognition is in each region grounded in the objective experience of disaster; or that Denmark had the "objective conditions" lacking in other places that merely borrowed or imitated the German technique. Only Bisztray and Szegedy-Maszák address themselves to the political and social conditions in which Romantic irony flourished.

Vera Calin contributes a study of the leading Rumanian Romantic writer, "Irony and World-Creation in the work of Mihai Eminescu", finding Romantic irony especially well illustrated in his prose. His use of the technique is rooted in philosophical idealism. Romantic irony is defined as the tendency toward the re-creation and re-dimensioning of the universe. Since the world viewed as a projection of the spirit can be annihilated, overturned, reshaped by it, irony can become the instrument of such a destruction or new creation". (190) Ironic fairy-tales that subvert the folk-tale genre such as "Tear-born Prince Charming", and the poem *Calin (Leaves from a Fairy Tale)* provide the main examples. Hoffmann's *Kater Murr* is suggested as a direct influence; other names invoked are Solger, and Jean Paul, but there is no account of Eminescu's acquaintance with the European materials of Romantic irony; nor are the original dates of the works given.

Mihály Szegedy-Maszák gives an absorbing account of the phase of Romantic irony in Hungarian literature from its emergence in the 1820's to the death of Madách. It based itself on German aesthetics, rather than any native theorists. The major literary influence in the first half of the century was Jean Paul. A parallel is drawn between Széchenyi and Kierkegaard as existentialists, who lived in the mode of Romantic irony. Another genre important for the development of Romantic irony is explored through Széchenyi's *journal intime*, in which he spoke of himself in the third person, and recorded fierce debates between his two selves. He ended in suicide; as Kierkegaard had said: "Irony is an abnormal growth, like the abnormally large liver of the Strassburg goose it ends by killing the individual." The late Vörösmarty, and the major writers of the 1850's, showed the powerful traces of Romantic irony: Arany, Kemény, and Madách. This flowering is laid at the door of the defeat of the Hungarian revolution. (209) Pride of place here goes to *Phantom Visions on the Soul's Horizon* (1853), by Kemény, an admirer of Sterne, in which irony is a state of mind, denying any alternative to an ironic world-view. The world-view (as opposed to the technical devices) of Romantic irony leads to a variety of moods of melancholy, *accidie*, despair, spleen, and *ennui*, which most readers will associate with Baudelaire, yet in the account of Romantic irony in France only Baudelaire's homage to Hoffmann in *De l'Essence de rire* is invoked. Madách's *Tragedy of Man* — "the last great Hungarian ironist" — is treated briefly. In this rich account, the variety of forms of Romantic irony are to be found in works described at sufficient length to convey their flavour to the reader unfamiliar with them. The tone of an existential irony is constructed by skillful allusion to major European writers who provide the parameters of the discussion, as well as by reference to the Hungarian works under discussion. One begins to inhabit a Dos-

toevskian world (a writer who is mentioned only once in the volume, by Lilian Furst). Again we miss a bibliography that might provide information about available translations of the works that this account whets the appetite for. This reviewer would very much like to read the story described thus: "Of his two selves one exists only for a single night in a dream inspired by a liar's Mesmeric influence." (213) Surely one of the aims of a comparative work of this scope is precisely this, to lead readers to unfamiliar writers, not merely to give a mechanical headcount of writers and works that can be claimed on the mere say-so of the critic to display 'Romantic irony'.

Edward Mozejko and Milan V. Dimič, in "Romantic Irony in Polish Literature and Criticism", report that in Slavic literature and criticism there has been almost no mention of Romantic irony. The Dutch critics' claim that if Romantic Irony is not there, the place of a national literature in European Romanticism must be challenged, cannot hold good, for Polish Romanticism is undoubtedly one of the most important in Europe. Why was there no Romantic irony? Or was there Romantic irony, not recognized as such? On closer examination, the authors find, the writers did indeed employ Romantic irony and were conscious of their fore-runners, and at least some critics have discussed Romantic irony in the leading Polish Romantics, Słowacki and Kraśinski, whereas other critics have used other, more negative terms such as "chaotic composition", or "frequent digression" (228). Słowacki was aware of the full range of previous examples, and could be called a Byronist. Not only some of his poetry, especially the epic *Beniowska* (1843), but his dramas have the characteristics of Romantic irony, especially *Balladyna* (1839) and *Fantazy*, and were recognized as such at the time of writing. Ariosto, important to Friedrich Schlegel, is taken up here (and nowhere else in the volume): for Schlegel, folklore, Shakespearean tragedy, and what Schlegel called "Ariosto's smile", that is, a capricious imagination which constantly plays with the plot and the presentation of the protagonists, inhabit the same universe. (234) Kraśinski experimented with prose; "almost all of his important narratives grow out of the premises of Romantic irony" (235). Yet there has been little discussion of it in criticism. The authors conclude that they have shown only the merest tip of the iceberg, and that a great deal of work needs to be done. In particular, it would seem, the types of Romantic irony present in these writers need more subtle discrimination; the stage of mere assertion that it is there recedes, with this volume, into the past. Dimič's inquiry into Romantic irony among the Southern Slavs indicates that to an even greater extent than in Polish its presence has not been a critical issue, and has passed largely unnoticed.

Roman Struc, in "Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol: Ironic Modes in Russian Romanticism" is essentially sceptical about the presence of Romantic irony in Russian literature. Schlegel's was a programme, he holds, that was not realized until the twentieth century in writers such as Mann, Joyce and Kafka. The dearth of discussion of this topic in Russian criticism is partly the result of the ideological caution of Soviet critics about using any current critical terms; indeed, irony itself is not a category that appears in most of their writing about Russian Romanticism. Romanticism itself has been minimized and seen as a passing, immature phase that at best saw some slight beginnings of realism.

Nevertheless, Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol, who represent the three generations of Romantics, do show traces of Romantic Irony where literature, its production and strategy, becomes the subject-matter of literature; and when the writer enters the fabric of his own making and destroys the illusion he has created. (243) Pushkin exhibits the kind of ironic attitude Schlegel claimed to find in *Wilhelm Meister*: he seems to "smile from the heights of his spirit upon his masterwork". His irony is gentle, pervasive. *Evgeny Onegin* plays with the clash of incommensurate genres. The prose *Tales of Belkin*, each told by a different narrator, with Belkin as a kind of editor-in-chief and himself as a noncommittal publisher, complement, contradict and obliquely mirror each other. (246-7) In Lermontov the ironic stance is only occasional and incidental; "progressive pessimism is unrelieved by irony or self-irony". (247) Gogol's irony brings him close to Hoffmann, and he had demonstrable acquaintance with German Romanticism, yet his irony is more often a form of grotesque. (247-9) A few other writers are mentioned but not discussed.

The second section concludes, somewhat anomalously, with Romantic irony in America; the *Comparative History of European Literature* has taken on the extended task of charting the presence of European literature abroad, and a rich instance this turns out to be.

The third section, "Syntheses", has some of the most interesting material in the book, though it, like the

opening section, is somewhat haphazard in its coverage. Barricelli's speculative essay on musical examples ranges far into the twentieth century; only Gillespie on the grotesque treats any examples from the visual arts. Gillespie's second article might better have been kept for the next volume in the series, *Romantic Drama*. Garber's coda meditates on what his authors have brought, shifting the emphasis here and there, and giving us more on Heine, and on Byron, and still others. As he concludes, Romantic irony is not an anomaly: "the inner life of Romantic irony is a version of one of the essential rhythms of Romanticism, indeed a synecdoche for it". (380)

Small points, but that make for comfort of reading: careful editing has delivered a volume that despite its great range of linguistic reference is largely free from misprints. There are some unhappy translations, especially in the Portuguese contribution, which may not be attributable to the printing-house; and some unfortunate mistakes: an extra "word" in a quotation from Northrop Frye garbles it (201); Abrahams for M. H. Abrams (226); two errors in a quotation from *Middlemarch* (296); and two dozen or so more minor slips. Other readers will no doubt discover other slips, according to their expertise. The ample quotations are, pleasingly, in the same size typeface as the body of the text; and the originals are to be found in footnotes on the same page, for the most part: in fact, not all German passages are translated in Immerwahr; in the Dutch chapter while Dutch is translated into English, the most important citations are left in the German of Thorbecke, and no French is translated, presumably because French is an official language of the ICLA.

If, finally, the volume draws attention to its omissions and imbalances by its very ambition of encyclopaedic comparative coverage, it has made a very substantial contribution indeed to our knowledge and understanding of this subject. It is a worthy successor to René Wellek's treatment of European Romanticism in his *History of Literary Criticism*, and to Hans Eichner (ed.), *Romantic and its Cognates: the European History of a Word*.

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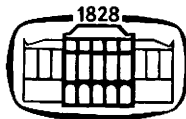
HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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