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Review

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(over 150 pages of even smaller script) which often take the form of small essays. All this is a shame, because George knows Hölderlin very well and has much to say that is interesting and helpful, such as his insistence that 'poetic form arises from personal form' (p. 250, the guiding light of Part 4 of the book) or his reading of line 61 of the third draft, 'Die Sachen auch bestellt er von jedem', as to do with agriculture. But such points, though many, are marooned. George has gone for 'inclusiveness' (p. 23), but the problem with his book is that he has been unable to exclude.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

CHARLIE LOUTH

*Sprachreflexion der deutschen Frühromantik. Konzepte zwischen Universalpoesie und Grammatischem Kosmopolitismus. Mit lexikographischem Anhang.* By JOCHEN A. BÄR. Ed. by STEFAN SONDEREGGER and OSKAR REICHMANN. (Studia Linguistica Germanica, 50) Berlin and New York: de Gruyter. 1999. ix + 582 pp. DM 248.

For German Romantic philosophers and writers alike, language constituted the very core of their intellectual activity; yet relatively few critical studies have acknowledge the centrality of early Romantic language theory. The first groundbreaking study by Eva Fiesel, *Die Sprachphilosophie der deutschen Romantik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1927), although an exceedingly authoritative source book, is technically flawed in its failure to provide consistent and systematic bibliographical referencing. Even as late as 1991 Ernst Behler, the doyen of German Romantic literary criticism, conceded: '[Wir] wissen über die frühromantische Sprachtheorie noch zu wenig' (*Athenäum*, 1 (1991), 38).

Fiesel identifies a fundamental problem of approach: the difficulty of marrying the disciplines of philosophy and linguistics in a study of this kind. While she offers no apology for eschewing the latter, Jochen Bär in his 518-page monograph goes some considerable way towards redressing this methodological shortcoming. On the one hand, we are presented with an historiography of critical language theory that establishes affinities between language reflection and other early Romantic intellectual discourses such as transcendental philosophy, natural philosophy, religion and art. Bär's preoccupation with linguistics, on the other hand, encompasses a routine historical overview of early Romantic comparative (Indo-European) philology and translation theory, as well as a more 'scientifically' oriented semantic analysis of key philosophical terms such as *Organismus*, *Poesie*, *romantisch* and *Volk* ('Anhang II: Exemplarische Wortuntersuchungen', pp. 343–513).

Bär, who, judging by his list of publications (p. 561), is no stranger to the field of research, is to be commended for his concentrated appraisal under a single cover of the language reflections of twenty-one authors within the period from about 1797 to about 1805. An appendix provides an invaluable inventory of sources, both empirical and literary. While the main focus of the work is a critical evaluation of A. W. Schlegel's and Schelling's language philosophy (pp. 100–169) in the wider context of art, aesthetics and *Identitätsphilosophie*, the text corpus of other writers is drawn upon to illustrate the diversity and profundity of the language theories espoused by the celebrated Jena and Berlin circles of Romantics. Bär has succeeded in extrapolating from the extensive primary material at his disposal a comprehensive typology predicated on authorial pronouncements about such programmatic concerns as the origins and nature of language, the cognitive and communicative parameters of language, language scepticism, and the aesthetics and poetics of language and semiology. Although it lies beyond the scope of Bär's investigation to assess early Romantic language theory as an ongoing, evolutionary phenomenon,

Herder's influential late Enlightenment thinking on language is referred to and cited contrastively.

Bär may well be forgiven for not drawing any significant inferences about possible gender-specificity in female language theory and language usage solely on the basis of the reflections of Sophie Mereau-Brentano (pp. 71–72), Caroline Schlegel-Schelling (pp. 77–73) and Sophie Tieck-Bernhardi (pp. 82–83), the three female authors included in the study. Indeed, the net would need to be cast more widely within the German Romantic Movement as a whole to obtain a clearer picture of gender-based differences of conceptual and poetological emphasis.

A surprising omission is the essential interrelatedness of language and music for the early Romantics. A. W. Schlegel's defence of a 'Poetizität der Sprache' (pp. 105–10), it seems to me, is no less pivotal than Tieck's and Wackenroder's conception of the intrinsic musicality of words. Incidentally, Bär has failed to do justice to a vital dimension of Tieck's language theory, namely language scepticism, by not taking into account his epistolary novel *Geschichte des Herrn William Lovell* (1795–96) in which this aspect is underscored.

Both of the above are relatively minor cavils over a piece of highly competent scholarship, an obvious labour of love painstakingly researched and executed. Reading histories of language philosophy can prove rather ponderous, especially for the uninitiated, but Bär offers the academic traveller timely rest places along the way in the form of sectional reprises, culminating in a substantive set of conclusions at journey's end ('Ergebnisse', pp. 318–42). The monograph is lucidly written and is mercifully free of jargon and typographical errors.

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*Women of Letters. A Study of Self and Genre in the Personal Writing of Caroline Schlegel-Schelling, Rahel Levin Varnhagen, and Bettina von Arnim.* By MARGARETMARY DALEY. Columbia, SC: Camden House. 1998. xii + 135 pp. \$55.

This slender volume is devoted to the published letters of three women from the German Romantic period, Caroline Schlegel-Schelling (1763–1809), Rahel Varnhagen (1771–1833) and Bettina von Arnim (1785–1859), all of whom shared a significant association with the intellectual life of the literary salon. Thus the titular 'women of letters' is an appropriate pun.

The field is by no means unploughed, yet the approach here is different. Instead of reading the letters as socio-cultural documents or as sources of biographical information, Margaretmary Daley focuses upon epistolary writing both as a literary genre and as a gender-specific discovery of self. As part of her investigative rationale she sets out to contest the patriarchal assumption that 'the personal letters by women are less serious than the high art of the traditional male canon' (p. 3). Three well-known collections of letters have been carefully selected with a view to highlighting the considerable diversity of female self-exploration. The relative lack of prescribed convention for published correspondences, Daley contends, gave letter-writers freedom to innovate and to stretch the limits of self-expression (p. 13). Schelling's edited correspondence, *Briefe an ihre Tochter Auguste, die Familie Gotter, F. L. W. Meyer, A. W. and Fr. Schlegel u.a.* (1871), chronicles her life 'from girlhood through her marriages with August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling [. . .] and her struggle to define herself as a woman intellectual against the backdrop of the French Revolution' (p. x). Rahel Varnhagen's letters, *Rahel: Ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde* (1833), are, as the title suggests, more publicly self-conscious than Schlegel-Schelling's. They furnish a vivid account of her life as a