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Le Moi, l'histoire: 1789-1848 (review)

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reception, the central figure in the consolidation within a single general principle of the topoi already explored. Drawing upon the pre-existing discursive possibilities, that author becomes ‘un *exemplum* de premier ordre’ of the unified myth. He also inaugurates the period (1770–1840) that Brissette had identified as the historical focal point of his study, but which is largely confined to the second part thereof. Following Rousseau, there are discussions of Julie de Lespinasse, of émigré literature (Chateaubriand, Sénac de Meilhan) and of Romantic avatars of the myth (including Vigny’s *Chatterton* and the *poète-assassin* Lacenaire), which all emphasize its recuperative properties across the literary field. The work concludes on a largely self-contained iconographic study of Hugo in exile in Jersey. A further illustration of the ability of the myth to assimilate contradictory positions to itself, this chapter ultimately highlights as unresolved both the question of the chronological parameters of Brissette’s study and the ongoing terminological drift therein between *malheur* and *malédiction*. However, neither these issues, nor an occasionally over-ebullient demystificatory tone, which emerges as the writing progresses (in contrast to more nuanced understandings established at the outset), seriously undermine this invigoratingly written and wide-ranging discussion of one of literary modernity’s key ideologies.

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*Le Moi, l'histoire: 1789–1848*. Textes réunis par DAMIEN ZANONE avec la collaboration de CHANTAL MASSOL. Grenoble, ELLUG, 2005. 1998 pp. Pb €22.00.

Much of the writing produced during the Romantic period in France was concerned with the articulation of individual destiny and collective life. To a large degree this had to do with the enduring impact of the secular liberalism of the Enlightenment joined with the consequences of the Revolution. The individual self, free but unfulfilled, quested after an external validating power that would be capable investing selfhood with a stable meaning — hence the attempts to root the self in nature, history and in collective entities such as the nation or ‘le peuple’. The period witnessed an explosion of historical writing, generally sympathetic to the political left. It also saw the emergence of the ‘roman personnel’, first-person narratives often strongly tinged with autobiography. This volume contains ten contributions of varying lengths. Apart from a wide-ranging article by Gérard Rannaud, most of the remaining pieces focus on individual authors, Nerval, Michelet, Tocqueville, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Madame de Staël, Chateaubriand, Sand, Stendhal. It is a pleasure to see Rannaud quote from Georges Poulet, whose pioneering work on Romanticism and on the relationship between different forms of temporality no longer seems to receive the attention it deserves. The only article really to step outside the canon is the editor’s own contribution on historical memoirs. This turns out to be a very interesting essay. Booksellers’ lists of the Restoration and the July Monarchy overflowed with historical memoirs — sometimes genuine, sometimes fictitious — but scholars rarely pay these influential works the attention they deserve. Zanone looks at memoirs relating to Napoleon and identifies two main types of writing. In the first, the author’s presence in the

unfolding of events is largely concealed from the reader. In the second, there is an unhappy juxtaposition of self and history. Only with Chateaubriand do we find something radically different. In the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* 'c'est la personne même du mémorialiste qui métaphorise le monde' (p. 36). In his contribution, Jean-Claude Berchet likewise stresses the unique character of the the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, while drawing attention to the neglected *Études historiques*, which defined Chateaubriand's relationship to the new generation of Restoration historians. All the essays in this volume maintain a clear focus on the central problematic. We learn about Staël's treatment of Napoleon, Sand's aspiration to a prophetic form of total history and Tocqueville's analytical reflections on the formative power of events. The volume concludes with an illuminating piece on Michelet. Drawing on the *Journal*, Pettier shows how the historian linked his investigation of social divisions in France to a parallel exploration of inner reality. Understanding and mastering the darker aspects of the self enabled new ways of imagining the resolution of social conflict.

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MARIE DE FLAVIGNY, COMTESSE D'AGOULT: *Correspondance générale*. Tome III: *novembre 1839–1841*. Édition établie et annotée par CHARLES F. DUPÊCHEZ. Paris, Champion, 2005. 677 pp. Hb €110.00.

This correspondance in the scholarly edition by Charles Dupêchez continues to provide valuable information about some leading figures of the Romantic era. This volume covers the difficult years when Marie d'Agoult and Liszt were living apart, amicably at first. Back in Paris with Liszt's daughters after the scandal of her elopement and liaison, the errant countess was not welcomed by her class. Undaunted, she created a salon that attracted a galaxy of stars such as Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Hortense Allart, Eugène Sue and a number of musicians. Her old friend Delphine Gay introduced her to her husband Girardin, and the press magnate soon joined the ranks of her suitors and admirers. He published articles by her in *La Presse*, a first step that led to her future reputation for writings on art and history. Despite her attempts, Marie d'Agoult never got back to friendly relations with George Sand, who had cruelly passed on details of her love life to Balzac, who used them in *Béatrix*. Marie would always regret the end of her once passionate friendship with the leading female writer of her time, and the painter Lehmann was one of those who urged her to forgive and forget. It did not happen, and the two women would engage in a theatrical embrace when they met, but then avoid each other. Lehmann was one of the many who fell under the charm of Marie d'Agoult, and his letters express a friendship close to love. She felt that other members of the intelligentsia, even Chopin and Berlioz, failed to appreciate Liszt, and she attributed this to Parisian vanity. Liszt replied that his friends Chopin and Berlioz could not judge him because they did not really know him. Her letters to Liszt still express deep affection, and the hidden fear that she was bound to lose the struggle in which she was engaged, as the lover of an artist. The musician was condemned to a life of performance in all the cities of Europe, even Plymouth, where he had no audience because he was upstaged by the launching of a ship. Marie believed in the