



Revolutionary Romanticism: A Drunken Boat Anthology

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Revolutionary Romanticism draws on almost two centuries of intertwined traditions of cultural and political subversion. In this rich collection of writings by artists, scholars, and revolutionaries, the transgressions of the past are recaptured and transvalued for the benefit of the struggles of today and tomorrow.

Along the way, new light is shed on the radical sensibilities of Novalis, Friedrich Hölderlin, and Friedrich Schlegel while the poetics of Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, and William Blake are revealed to be profoundly oppositional to the reigning culture. The social romanticism of Jules Michelet, the nineteenth-century historian of the French Revolution, is acclaimed for its visionary, quasi-religious breadth. The Paris Commune is figured by the arch-Romantics Karl Marx, Jules Vallès, and Arthur Rimbaud. The all-but-forgotten Bavarian Council Republic of 1919 is recalled, a milieu steeped in Expressionism and anarchism, the matrix out of which B. Traven, author of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, emerged—by the skin of his teeth. The romantic outlook of Walter Benjamin and Herbert Marcuse, both strongly influenced by Surrealism (“the prehensile tail of Romanticism”) is relocated in their absolute negation of the social order. And, at the end of the twentieth century, there’s Guy Debord and the Situationist International, the passionate *détournement* of the Romantic project.

Max Blechman writes, “When today aesthetic life is increasingly defined by advertising and corporate culture, and democracy has more to do with the power of private interests than the power of the public imagination, the romantic insistence on the liberatory dimension of aesthetics and on radical democracy may yet prove crucial to contemporary efforts to envision a new political freedom.”

Revolutionary Romanticism includes Blechman’s investigation of the German idealist roots of European Romanticism, Annie Le Brun on the possibility of “romantic women,” Peter Marshall on William Blake, Maurice Hindle on the political language of the early English Romantics, Arthur Mitzman on Jules Michelet, Christopher Winks on the Paris Commune, Miguel Abensour on William Morris, Peter Lamborn Wilson on the 1919 Bavarian Workers Council, Michael Löwy on Walter Benjamin and Herbert Marcuse, Marie-Dominique Massoni on Surrealism, and Daniel Blanchard on his youthful friendship with Guy Debord.

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