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R E V I E W

Joachim J. Scholz, *Blake and Novalis: A Comparison of Romanticism's High Arguments*

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how they might be expressed. If identification is the appropriate mode of reading, and if it is opposed to logical detachment, then Eaves must believe that Northrop Frye is correct in claiming that *statements* of value judgments are always based on some extra-artistic principle in politics, psychology, or whatever. This similarity to the views of Frye is not the only one in Eaves's book. In the emphasis of the following paragraph, coming at a moment of climactic importance in Eaves's book, the relation to Frye is clear, even though the emphasis at the end sounds, out of context, more Shelleyan than anything else:

In theories that generate a social order from the individual, public is an expression of private, in contrast to a theory like Marxism, in which the true form of the individual is an expression of social need. By defining the individual in terms of imagination, the theory produces a social order of imagination, just as, by defining the individual in terms of economic needs, other theories produce an economic order for "economic man." Under the social contract generated from economic values, individuals are bound one to another by the cash nexus; in the religious and artistic versions the nexus is love or some other strong emotion that conditions all other relationships. (p. 196)

Eaves's view of Blake's theory belongs in the tradition of "symbolic form" criticism with which Frye has strong affinities. The often unrecognized patron saint of that tradition is William Blake. I'm not about to quarrel with this latest expression of that tradition.

Joachim J. Scholz. *Blake and Novalis: A Comparison of Romanticism's High Arguments*. Frankfurt am Main, Bern, Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978. ["European University Papers," Series XVIII: Comparative Literature, vol. 19]. 397 pp., SFr. 64.00

Reviewed by Detlef W. Dörrbecker

This rather expensive book, reproduced photographically from the corrected typescript, contains Joachim Scholz's Ph.D. thesis, written under the guidance of such literary critics as Victor Turner, Manfred Hoppe, and Edith Hartnett at the University of Chicago. A comparative study may investigate the reception and remodeling of one poet's works in the writings of another author, and this is what all the recent publications on Blake's *Milton* have in common, despite their otherwise differing approaches. Or a comparative study may make a parallel investigation of the formal and iconographical concepts of two or more

poets who were contemporaries of each other, and this is what Scholz attempts in *Blake and Novalis*. (The same subject has been dealt with before in a short essay by Jean Wahl, in Jacques Roos's study of Boehme's and Swedenborg's influence on early romanticism, and, more recently, in the dissertations of Susan Skelton and Amala M. Hanke.)

Joachim J. Scholz might have written a rewarding and competent book on either Novalis or Blake. The strictures hinted at in the following notes come in where he tries to write on both of these poets at the same time. Thus where I disagree with the results of his study I deal with more general problems in methodology which by no means are those of Scholz alone. What makes two poets comparable? Is it their biography?—certainly not as long as we try to take poetry as an independent and peculiar mode of gaining knowledge. Is it their subject matter or their style?—though the emphasis is clearly on the former, Scholz sometimes attempts to work both fields. If, nevertheless, I argue that his book fails where he actually compares the German romantic with the London poet and painter, it is because of a "mechanical parallelization" which takes style and subject matter as only loosely connected, and leaves the level of creative method (which initially unifies the realms of style and content) unexamined. Comparability in literature must have to do with similar workings of the poetic imagination, and the use of comparable methods of molding the material which outward experience supplies must be more important than the arbitrary allusions in any two poets' "high arguments."

Knowing what I knew about the subject matter, the imagery, and the style of Blake's and Novalis' major works, I could not imagine that an attempt to compare (for example) the *Hymnen an die Nacht* with the nine "Nächte" of *Vala* would lead to any remarkable new insights. Now, having read Scholz's study, I still cannot see that the actual contrasts in both poetical structure and imagery are outweighed by the rather abstract similarities in content which are brought forward by the author. In addition—and arguing from the stance provided by Blake's own aesthetics—I doubt that there is much critical value in a method which is based on the division or separation of the minute particulars of form from the meaning of a work of art. They then are conceived of in terms of "abstract philosophy," and only as such do they become "intermeasurable" with each other. And yet "Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars / And not in generalizing Demonstrations of the Rational Power" (*Jerusalem* 55:62–63). Even though the latter tendency is perpetually lurking behind the pages of this book, Scholz's work may still serve as an example of both the advantages and the dangers of the comparative method. In his finest moments the author actually succeeds in elucidating one poet's work by confronting it with the other's, and one might argue that, in the end, it

is of secondary importance whether this aim has been achieved by a clarification of the similarities or—though involuntarily—by a presentation of the disparities between the poems under discussion.

The book opens not with the "comparison of romanticism's high arguments," but with an introductory chapter comparing first the outlines of Blake's and Novalis' biographies, and then the reception of their respective works during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The contrasts, of course, prevail in the lives of the two poets (pp. 1–2). Carlyle's essay on Novalis and Crabb Robinson's article on Blake have something in common and prepare the ground for the first yoking together of the two poets in 1830 (pp. 2–4). Scholz's attacks on the nineteenth-century view of the lives of Novalis and Blake as "more inspiring than [their] poems or paintings" and on the attitude by which "character is saved at the expense of . . . art" (p. 5) are of course fully justified; and yet this similarity in the reception of the two poets' *vitae* does not necessarily imply any peculiar similarity in their poetry. Scholz seems to forget that the interdependent phenomena of "biographism" and the later concept of *l'art pour l'art* dominated aesthetics in the second half of the nineteenth century not just where Blake and Novalis were concerned; in fact, these concerns gained ascendancy in almost every field of historical research during that period.

The argument of this chapter and, in consequence, of the whole book is hampered by another misunderstanding similarly produced by the author's need to establish a parallel between Novalis' and Blake's poetical works. Since Scholz takes no notice of William Blake's activities as a pictorial artist (see pp. 19–20)—a procedure which might seem legitimate in a *literature* study—a mistaken picture of "comparatively brief . . . times of insight and creativity" in Blake's long artistic career evolves. According to Scholz the development of "Novalis' thought and poetry . . . that occurred over just five short years" otherwise could not have been "compared with an artistic career that spanned more than forty years" (p. 16). The "non-creative" years in Blake's life, i.e., all those apart from "the years from 1789 to 1795 and the years from 1802 to 1804" (p. 16), were in fact taken up by the creation of some of the most important prints and paintings ever to be produced by an English artist, and by the creation of Blake's major epics, *Vala*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. (The distinction made by Scholz between the "conception" and the "time-consuming execution" of these works [p. 16] is not only utterly un-Blakean, but contradictory to the bibliographical evidence gained from proofs and finished copies of the illuminated books.)

Serving as Scholz's model is S. Foster Damon's essay on "Blake and Milton" (in *The Divine Vision*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto [London: Victor Gollancz, 1957], pp. 91–96), which provides him with a "methodological ex-

emplar" by "juxtaposing representative works for each given stage" in the development of the two poets' oeuvres. This "developmental comparison," though less "succinct or smooth [than] a thematic approach," "should be rewarded by an increasing ability to elucidate the problems and solutions of one poet through the problems and solutions of the other" (p. 18). That Scholz actually had to combine the chronological with the thematic reading in order to reach his aim is quite evident from his chapter headings ("The Discovery of the Poetic Genius," "Visions of Romantic Politics," "The Encyclopedic Imagination and Its Myth," etc.), as well as from the programmatic contention that "both poets started out from a similar problem: man's divided existence in a divisive and contradictory world" (p. 18), a problem which became a theme for both Novalis and Blake that serves as the starting point for Scholz's detailed analyses. In his third chapter the author discusses the concepts of the poetic genius in Novalis and Blake, and then goes on to deal with their view of "a political utopia," of an "all-encompassing system of creative references" and of "a tradition of visionary progress," of "Romantic criticism [and] the ethical foundation of all creative advancement," and finally of the "poetry of life in which all of us can be poets and all poets are heroes" (all quotations from p. 19).

The achievement of both Blake and Novalis, as seen by Scholz, at the same time becomes the "message" of his analysis: "Blake and Novalis reached a synthesis of such apparent incompatibilities as desire and fulfillment, vision and action, imagination and reality, poet and hero, aesthetics and ethics" (p. 19). "It is certainly wrong to confuse poetry with life; they are quite obviously different. Still, they are also related: poetry not only telling us about life but holding out to us, in the very practice of the poetic process, a crucial pattern, an imaginative figure which, if only writ large, will lead to a creative conduct beyond words" (p. 381). This "mission" (p. 382) of poetry then constitutes the basic similarity between Novalis and Blake. I do not want to enlarge upon my doubts in respect to this assumed ideology, yet I must question the underlying assumption that any such general statement might describe what is related in the work of two specific poets. Scholz is arguing here on a level of "philosophical" abstraction which to me appears to be in closer contact with a bastardized version of modern German aesthetic theories than with the minute particulars of the works from which he says he extracted these thoughts. (Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse et al. in one sense all started out from a critical reevaluation of nineteenth-century aesthetics; in their conclusions, however, they remained much more careful than Scholz and well aware of the dialectics of such an ideology.) This is not to say that I completely disagree with Scholz's positive view of the possible effect of art in post-secularized socie-

ty; on the contrary, I wish I could be as naively optimistic. Still, I ask myself whether or not such a stance can serve as a justification for seeing Blake in a more particular and closer relationship to Hardenberg than, say, to Hölderlin, who shared at least as many "thoughts and concepts" with the British poet-painter as did Novalis. On the other hand we will have to remember that, more or less, Scholz employs the whole system of comparative methodology as a heuristic technique which proves to be legitimate, or disqualifies itself, according to its success. We add to our knowledge most of all by asking new questions; Scholz's study shows that the context of German romanticism's "high arguments" may provide a number of such questions relevant to the study of Blake and vice versa, even though the common denominator of the work of Novalis and Blake appears to be a rather amorphous abstractum.

Interested readers may appreciate the following substitute for the missing index. The body of Scholz's book is devoted to interpretations of Blake's *Poetical Sketches* (pp. 21-24), *An Island in the Moon* (pp. 24-27), *Songs of Innocence* (pp. 27-38), *Tiriell* (pp. 38-39), *The Book of Thel* (pp. 39-41), and the *Songs of Experience* (pp. 41-49), which are compared with Novalis' so-called *Dichterische Jugendarbeiten* (pp. 50-53) and *Fichte-Studien* (pp. 53-72). Next come the *Blüthenstaub* fragments (pp. 84-93), compared with Blake's "Annotations to Lavater" (pp. 95-97), the three *Religion* tracts (pp. 97-103), and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (pp. 103-19). *The French Revolution* (pp. 120-26), *America* (pp. 128-32), *Europe* (pp. 132-37), *Urizen* (pp. 138-42), *Ahania*, *The Book* (and *The Song*) of *Los* (pp. 142-46) are compared with Novalis' political studies of the 1790s (pp. 147-52), his *Blumen* (pp. 153-60), his eulogy on feudalism, entitled *Glauben und Liebe* (pp. 160-68), and the *Politische Aphorismen* (pp. 168-69). This is followed by a comparison of the *Allgemeines Brouillon* (pp. 180-200) with *Vala, or The Four Zoas* (pp. 201-32). *Milton* (pp. 235-66) is discussed as the developmental parallel of *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* (pp. 268-87), the *Geistliche Lieder* (pp. 287-91), and the *Hymnen an die Nacht* (pp. 292-300). Finally, Novalis' novel fragment *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (pp. 312-38) is put side by side with Blake's epic *Jerusalem* (pp. 339-75).

This inventory of subjects shows that the main corpus of both Novalis' and Blake's writings has been taken into account; it fails, however, to demonstrate how Scholz's comparisons actually work. These are primarily concerned with the imagery of the texts and with the "similar ideas" behind them, seldom ever with structural elements such as diction, syntax, rhythm, and meter (which in most cases would have shown fundamental disparities). If this implied demand for formal analysis sounds rather oldfashioned, it is telling to consider that even on his "elevated" level of discussion Scholz misses some important points. Thus, the basic difference be-

tween Blake and Novalis in both their poetic theory and practice goes unobserved. For the German, the romanticization of the world—Blake's "*this* world"—in a sense remains an "artige[r] Kunstgriff" [a pretty artifice] and does *not* mean "much more than a game"; for Hardenberg, it is the "schwärmerische Dichter" [the enraptured poet] himself who actively supplies the finite with an "unendliche[n] Schein" [the semblance of infinity] (pp. 90-91; italics mine), whereas Blake the poet-etcher, "by printing in the infernal method," claims to display the *reality*, not merely a *semblance* of "the infinite which was hid" (MHH 14). Thus, Blake is clearly denying the *Scheincharakter* of art. There are, however, examples of similar imagery by Novalis and Blake in Scholz's book which admittedly are rather breathtaking. Thus Novalis' draft for the ending of his *Ofterdingen* finds a mirror image in the last lines of *Jerusalem*:

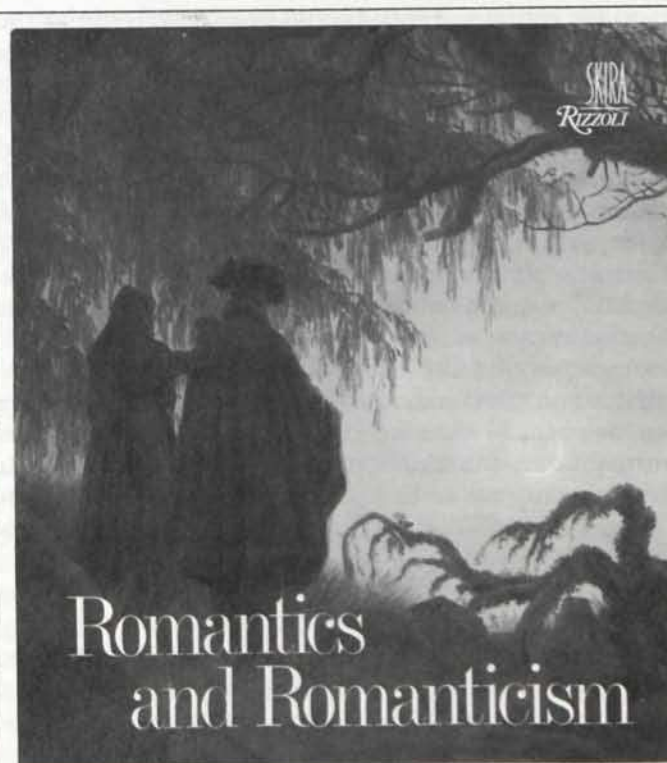
Sketching the end of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Novalis had written: 'Menschen, Tiere, Pflanzen, Steine und Gestirne, Flammen, Töne, Farben müssen hinten zusammen, wie Eine Familie oder Gesellsch[af]t, wie Ein Geschlecht handeln und sprechen.' [Men, animals, plants, stones, and stars, flames, sounds, colors all must be linked together at the end, act and speak like One family or society, like One race]. . . . Blake, who had never heard of his young German companion in vision, fulfilled the promise as he let *Jerusalem* conclude with just such an end in Albion: 'All Human Forms identified, even Tree, Metal, Earth & Stone: all / Human Forms identified, living, going forth & returning wearied / Into the Planetary lives of Years, Months, Days & Hours; reposing, / And then Awakening into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.' (pp. 374-375)

In his notes, Scholz frequently provides a secondary or *meta* level of arguments concerned with methodological discussions of both modern Novalis and Blake scholarship (see, e.g., pp. 119n1, 121n1, 244-45n2, 376-87 and *passim*). The apparatus here not only serves to demonstrate that the author is well versed in the scholarly literature on his subject, but at the same time provides the reader with a valuable commentary on other critics' approaches.

I strongly agree with Scholz's belief that criticism cannot do without value judgments, even though these are necessarily subject to ideological prejudices (see Scholz's chapter of "Conclusions"). On the other hand, Scholz himself tends to develop his criteria in what appears to me to be a rather arbitrary procedure. He does not start out from the task as faced by each poet under certain historical conditions (which themselves need interpretation) and its counterpart in our own present-day attitude towards the relevance of the poet's problem and its "solution"; rather, Scholz works from a perspective that is offered by the critic's own evaluation of the *other* poet's work, which by chance he believes to offer the correct correlative. To me, at least, it is neither self-evident, nor following from my appreciation of Novalis' aphorisms that Blake's *Marriage* has to be considered a "failure," filled with "not particularly successful" allegories which, in addition, are to be understood as offering a reactionary apology for "the managers, the exploiters of the human

mind," and thus forming an "ominous anticlimax" (pp. 115-16)! Since for me there is a qualitative difference between the satiric mocker and the satirized mocked, I cannot follow Scholz's logic when he states that Blake's "Memorable Fancies" as a whole do not differ "from Swedenborg's predestinarian theology" (p. 117). If this critique of Blake's concept of contraries in the *Marriage* is to be justified by reference to his later doctrine of the forgiveness of sins (which of course is an anti-doctrinal idea), Scholz would not only violate his "developmental approach," but at the very same time misinterpret both ideas: error has to be cast out, not less so in *Jerusalem* than in Blake's early works such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "Blake, for one," as Scholz himself states, "did not hesitate about where he wanted to belong" (p. 119). Similarly, Blake's prophetic books of the Lambeth period hardly provide the criteria to evaluate Novalis' *Glauben und Liebe*. Written under widely different political and social conditions, the respective "vision of romantic politics" had to be as different, and we ought to be careful not to reproach poets with the historical situation which to a certain extent determines their production.

It may well be that other readers of this book will find all the shortcomings I have tried to point out rather irrelevant when compared with the many interesting and erudite interpretations the book certainly contains. Yet, as Scholz himself puts it in a passage related to Novalis' fragments, the "quest towards truth demands an endless progression in which every step has to be exceeded and every gain has to remain a mere approximation" (p. 90). This review, then, is simply intended to supply the Blakean contrary which is necessary for such a progression. "Reflection must sooner or later begin to stagnate because it relates 'nur unter dem Gleichen' . . . ; poetry can progress because it relates what is unlike and unlikely. Only from such unlikely marriages, such incongruous crossbreeding, can we expect any new and promising offspring" (p. 92). Though (or because?) Novalis and Blake remain an unlikely marriage, this last quotation may well legitimate the procedure chosen by Joachim J. Scholz. He has written a provocative book, well worth the attention of any literary critic dealing with the international phenomenon of romanticism and its "high arguments."



Michel Le Bris. *Romantics and Romanticism*, trans. by Barbara Bray and Bernard C. Swift. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1981. 224 pp., 214 illus. \$85.00.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Read

This is a book divided against itself. On the one hand, it is a richly illustrated coffee table book, with nearly half its 214 reproductions in full color and all of them printed on heavy paper stock. It is a book that practically dictates a certain ambience: the coffee table, certainly, along with the warm glow of logs burning in a fireplace, a magnum of Perrier-Jouët chilling in an ice bucket, and a tray of caviar and toast. A man and a woman, each with champagne glass in hand, bend over the Rizzoli *Romantics and Romanticism*, slowly turning the pages and admiring the paintings. "Ah, yes," the woman says languorously to the man. "We saw that one in the Rouen Musée des Beaux-Arts in 1978." She turns her head to look deep into his eyes. "Do you remember?"

They have a lavish selection of reproductions to linger over. Included in the volume are works of artists from Germany (Carstens, Friedrich, Pforr, Runge, Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Schwind), France (Boulanger, Daumier, David, Delacroix, Fragonard, Géricault, Gros, Ingres, Millet), Spain (Goya), and England (Blake, Calvert, Constable, Flaxman, Fuseli, Linnell, Martin, Palmer, Turner, Wright of Derby). Practically every page