

Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity (Post-Contemporary Interventions)

By Michael Löwy, Robert Sayre

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Romanticism is a worldview that finds expression over a whole range of cultural fields—not only in literature and art but in philosophy, theology, political theory, and social movements. In *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity* Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre formulate a theory that defines romanticism as a cultural protest against modern bourgeois industrial civilization and work to reveal the unity that underlies the extraordinary diversity of romanticism from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century.
After critiquing previous conceptions of romanticism and discussing its first European manifestations, Löwy and Sayre propose a typology of the sociopolitical positions held by romantic writers-from “restitutionist” to various revolutionary/utopian forms. In subsequent chapters, they give extended treatment to writers as diverse as Coleridge and Ruskin, Charles Peguy, Ernst Bloch and Christa Wolf. Among other topics, they discuss the complex relationship between Marxism and romanticism before closing with a reflection on more contemporary manifestations of romanticism (for example, surrealism, the events of May 1968, and the ecological movement) as well as its future. Students and scholars of literature, humanities, social sciences, and cultural studies will be interested in this elegant and thoroughly original book.

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Editorial Review

Review
"[T]his well-written book contains informative chapters on a range of topics in Marxists and European thought from the 19th century to the present."
--N. Fruman, "Choice"

"Lowy and Sayre have put together a valuable and insightful re-evaluation of romanticism, saving it from the intellectual dust heap known as conservatism."
--Virginia Quarterly Review

"Lowy and Sayre . . . make important contributions to Marxist theory. . . . [A]n original and powerful intervention in the ongoing, and usually insular, dialogs. . . . The interface of Romanticism and Marxism yields a lively and provocative mixture of literary and social critique - a must read for any serious student of Marxism and/or Romanticism."
--Francesco Crocco, "Science & Society"

Language Notes
Text: English (translation)
Original Language: French

From the Publisher
From reviews of the French edition: “Instead of exploiting the clichés of melancholy, of exhibitionism, and of the langorous ego, Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy follow the path of rebellion.”—Roland Jaccard, Le Monde

“This beautiful and generous book . . . is a marvelous utopian oasis shining on the horizon of the desert of banality and perplexity where we have been lost.”—Isabel Maria Loureiro, Em Tempo (Brazil)

“Solidly argued . . . A lively and alert text.”—Jean Chesnaux, La Quinzaine Littéraire

“A luminous book, whose sociology of culture is at the same time a beautiful phenomenology of the spirit.”—Sophie Ernct, Les Temps Modernes

“This reflection on the various courses of romanticism [is like] a current of fresh air entering by surprise an elegant dining room designed by the most glacial of the fashionable architects, where for a long time the windows had remained closed.”—Enzo Traverso, Ventesimo Secolo

“An ambitious book . . . Sayre and Löwy have not, in this tremendous historical sweep, given us another banal specimen of the professionalized literary study.”—Gerald J. Butler, Recovering Literature

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