

LEDDA, SYLVAIN, et FRANK LESTRINGANT, éd. *Musset: un romantique né classique*. Toulouse: PU du Mirail, 2009. ISBN 978-2-8107-0076-9. Pp. 244. 23 €.

The purpose of this issue of *Littératures* devoted to Musset (marking the bicentennial of his birth on 11 December 1810) is to oppose the long-prevailing image of Musset as the archetypal suffering romantic with a more synthetic understanding of his œuvre. In their "Présentation," Ledda and Lestringant offer an overview of critical perspectives which nuances Musset's relationship to Romanticism in its various guises, drawing particular attention to the poet's personal chronology; never quite in step with the major Romantic figures, Musset was always the "enfant terrible du romantisme" (10). By appropriating the epithet of Arvède Barine in their subtitle, they evoke an œuvre which concomitantly expresses and reconciles Romanticism and Classicism through the use of humor and revolt, lyricism and skepticism, interiority and distance.

As frequently occurs with similar collections, the volume includes a number of essays of a comparative nature: "Musset *et...*" (Voltaire, Sand, Gautier, France, Molière). Happily, the focus remains firmly on Musset; contributors exploit the comparison to illuminate his work, either by suggesting the ambiguity of influence, as in the case of Valentina Ponzetto's "Musset et Voltaire," or by exploring the insight of posterity, as Patrick Berthier demonstrates in "Musset poète vu par Anatole France," where he emphasizes the anti-Romantic Frenchness of Musset. "Perdican et 'la fleur nommée héliotrope,'" by Esther Pinon, proposes a reading of Musset's play *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* through the prism of Molière to suggest how Romantic writers shift the foundation of values from institutions to individuals; the consequence for Musset is the cult of love and youth. Françoise Court-Pérez's comparison of Gautier's short story "Celle-ci et celle-là" with Musset's "Les deux maîtresses" emphasizes, although somewhat diffusely, the ways in which each author uses both irony and a nostalgically libertine protagonist to distance himself from the reigning esthetic of Romanticism, portraying the narrator as the true dandy-hero. Olivier Bara's article on Musset and Sand disrupts the biographical, romantico-dolorist cliché of their infamous love affair to shed light instead on the creative and ludic complicity that characterizes their work during the summer and fall of 1833 and that prepares—for both writers—a more vigorous critique of Romanticism after 1836.

In "Musset et la voix du chœur," Laure Pineau examines Musset's use of the dramatic chorus, reminiscent of that of classical Antiquity. She convincingly demonstrates that it is neither classical Antiquity nor French Classicism, but rather Romantic opera that provides the decisive influence in the choruses of Musset's theater. The two strongest essays of the collection, "La confession d'un enfant du siècle: un romantisme de façade" (Gilles Castagnès) and "Le poète déchu: autopsie et testament d'un romantique" (Ledda) offer compelling readings of two defining texts of Musset's career. By analyzing Octave's behavior as obsessional jealousy, Castagnès proposes a solution to the apparent contradiction in the narrator's claim to represent a collective malady while writing a personal narrative: Musset applies *a posteriori* the breakdown of the paternal Law in his own case to that of a whole generation. For Ledda, the auto-fictional fragment *Le poète déchu* disavows Romanticism within a paradoxically Romantic frame, employs a prose narrative to discredit prose in favor of verse, and champions not freedom but subservience to form. The only constant for Musset is not an esthetic, but rather the affirmation of the role of the artist. An interview with Lestringant concludes the collection, exploring questions that both underlie and broaden the

themes of the essays. Although some traits defined as "Classical" in this volume apply to Romantic authors other than Musset, the collection certainly succeeds in complicating and reconfiguring Musset's relationship to Romanticism, and individual articles provide fine analyses of his work. This book is recommended for graduate libraries.

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LONGCHAMP, SÉBASTIEN. *Anecdotes sur la vie privée de Monsieur de Voltaire*. Éd. Frédéric S. Eigeldinger et Raymond Trousson. Paris: Champion, 2009. ISBN 978-2-7253-1861-9. Pp. 339. 60 €.

In 1978, W.H. Barber published an article showing that Decroix's version of Longchamp's published "Mémoires" (1826) was at variance with the only manuscript version of that work preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and which, in fact, has only recently been discovered. Barber proved that the overzealous Decroix rewrote Longchamp's modest "Anecdotes," creating a more coherent work he called Longchamp's "Mémoires." In the process, Decroix deformed several passages relating to Voltaire. Eigeldinger and Trousson's new edition of both Longchamp's original "Anecdotes" and Decroix's "Mémoires" sets the record straight. For the first time, it is possible to compare Longchamp's own words with Decroix's fanciful redaction. Longchamp was hired in 1746 as Émilie Du Châtelet's footman. Once in the Châtelet household, Longchamp made himself useful by assisting Voltaire's secretary copy out some of his master's manuscripts. Voltaire, who might have taken umbrage, noted Longchamp's neat hand. Later that same year, when his private secretary fell ill, Voltaire remembered Longchamp's skills and took him to Fontainebleau as his private secretary-valet, a post he occupied until 1750, at which date Voltaire quit France for Berlin.

Longchamp's education was modest. He does not rank therefore alongside Voltaire's more famous private secretaries, Collini and Wagnière. Late in life, when the Kehl edition was being printed, Longchamp provided the editors (one of whom was Decroix) with an important and hitherto unpublished manuscript: Voltaire's *Traité de métaphysique* (1734). He then consigned to the same editors his personal recollections. These "Mémoires" were finally published in 1826; they quickly became celebrated as providing a unique *aperçu* into the domestic life of one of the eighteenth century's most intriguing couples. Through Longchamp, for example, it has come down that the divine Émilie was in the habit of undressing in front of her male servants and that on at least one occasion she went so far as to expose herself in the bath without the slightest hint of embarrassment. Longchamp naturally gives a unique account of Voltaire's relationship with the tempestuous Émilie and a number of anecdotes he records figure prominently in the standard biographies. For example, Longchamp is the only known source of the story that Voltaire tried to curb Émilie's gambling by whispering in English at the Queen's table (where she had accumulated losses of 80,000 *livres*) that she was "playing with a pack of cheats" (56). That incident, and its implied insult to the queen, precipitated the couple's midnight flight from Fontainebleau and their sojourn at Sceaux under the protection of the duchesse du Maine. Also, according to Decroix, it was for the diminutive Duchess's amusement that Voltaire composed *Babouc*, *Memnon*, *Scarmentado*, *Micromégas*, and *Zadig*. Longchamp, we now