

# Romancing Fascism: Modernity and Allegory in Benjamin, de Man, Shelley

Kathleen Kerr-Koch



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Romancing Fascism argues that intellectual responsibility can only be safeguarded if criticism is mobilised both as a poetic and as a critically enlightened endeavour. In this analysis of allegory as a function of modernity, what is made clear is the difficulty, if not impossibility, of definitively determining the genealogical antecedents of intellectual trends, particularly those considered pernicious to clear thinking.

Thus Kerr-Koch takes a wide-ranging approach to the analysis of allegory as it is treated by three controversial writers whose works flank the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the middle and late periods of what we call modernity?Walter Benjamin, Paul de Man and Percy Bysshe Shelley. These three writers have been chosen because they have been at some point recuperated for a theory of 'postmodernism', a term that for some theorists represents liberal free play, and for others represents a lack of rigour and a pernicious corruption of thought.

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