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Book Review: Roman Koropecy, Adam Mickiewicz: The Life of a Romantic,
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account of how the policies and rationales of colonial administration left their mark on political discourse at home, in the form of a general weakening of former constraints on what might be termed the 'normal operations' of government. She shows how even humanitarian-minded reformers, in their efforts to curb the atrocities sanctioned or ordered by German officials in Africa, came to frame their appeals in the language of racial classifications.

If this volume thus attests to the abiding importance of Arendt's work, it also indicates some of the obstacles to a more fruitful encounter with it. A case in point is the treatment given to Arendt's thesis that racism became a factor in Western politics only in the nineteenth century – and that this might well have been a short-lived aberration, had it not proven so convenient (indeed indispensable) for imperialist schemes near that century's close. The historical specificity of this thesis is severely criticized by a number of contributors to this volume, including its editors, who take her to task for failing to recognize the ubiquity of racism in Western history. This sort of criticism would carry more weight if it dealt more squarely with the fact that Arendt was using the *word* 'racism' in a highly specific sense – the word's original meaning, which indeed was the usual one at the time she was writing. She meant 'racism' in the sense of a formulated doctrine or creed: the explicit denial, as a matter of avowed principle, that there had been, or could ever be, any kinship or commonality among diverse peoples. In suggesting that racism became a factor in Western politics only in the nineteenth century, what she means is that it was only then that such doctrines came to serve as the basis for self-conscious political identification and organization. The best of the essays in this collection, like those of Christopher J. Lee and Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, are the work of scholars who show a similarly nuanced sense for such shifts in political self-understanding, and who welcome the stimulus to further historical inquiry.

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Roman Koropecy, *Adam Mickiewicz: The Life of a Romantic*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca NY, 2008; 560 pp., 30 illus.; 9780801444715, £22.95 (hbk)

In embarking on a biography of Adam Mickiewicz, Roman Koropecy has taken on a formidable task. Presenting in one volume the life of the Lithuanian-born Polish-speaking giant of European literature, one of nineteenth-century Europe's most complex characters, is complicated enough. Doing it in such a way as to be simultaneously intellectually intriguing and to say something new about the man whose life has already been analysed by dozens of Polish works raises this challenge to entirely new levels. Koropecy, however, succeeds splendidly owing to his meticulous research, witty presentation and seemingly detached perspective.

Undoubtedly the key contribution of this book lies in its bringing alive to Western readers, for the first time since 1911, the man and poet whom Pushkin envied, Michelet admired and Poles hailed ever after as a national treasure.

The richness of Mickiewicz's life, taking in exile in Russia, being the darling of aristocratic salons in Moscow and St Petersburg, becoming a spokesman of Polish Messianism in 1830s Paris, joining a mystic sect during his professorship at the Collège de France and becoming a radical politician in 1848, could easily suffice for the existences of a number of ordinary mortals. It is thanks to the quality of Koropecy's work that Mickiewicz emerges at each stage of his career as a human being, with his greatness, but also his follies, self-delusion and displays of arrogance. Unlike many Polish scholars, Koropecy has successfully found the middle way between writing a hagiography of Mickiewicz and 'de-bronzing' (*odbrązowiać*) him, that is, focusing on the less endearing sides of a hero in order to take him from being a 'monument in bronze' back to a real-life figure.

While Koropecy openly aims to liberate Mickiewicz from his exclusively Polish context to present him as a European figure and proclaims to have no ambition to discover new sources regarding the poet, if indeed this is at all possible, his perspective offers refreshing insights for Mickiewicz specialists too. A curious Polish or Lithuanian reader would be particularly enthralled to read about the scale of Mickiewicz's indebtedness and gratitude to his Russian hosts and their role in launching his international literary career. Koropecy shows how the man who still symbolizes the fight against Tsarist oppression tried to join the Russian foreign service and chose a Russian aristocrat as his first son's godmother. Indeed, it is a tribute to the biographer that the object of his study appears more complex and interesting than before.

One may, however, wonder whether the book would not have benefited from its author employing his formidable skills to shed light on some of the more controversial parts of Mickiewicz's career. Intriguingly, Koropecy does not shy away from hinting at or passing judgements regarding less important aspects of Mickiewicz's behaviour, such as the supposedly hidden agenda behind elevating his fellow exiles in Russia as national martyrs or the 'real' reasons for ending his affair with the aunt of Mikhail Bakunin. However, the author does not offer his interpretation of the most complex and fascinating questions. Mickiewicz's failure to join the anti-Russian uprising of 1830, his relationship with his poetic arch-rival Juliusz Słowacki, and, finally, his decision to join and persistently participate in the mystic sect of Andrzej Towiański, are either sketched or described in great detail, yet nowhere can the reader actually gauge what Koropecy thinks drove Mickiewicz to act the way he did. If it was the author's modesty or his determination to see Mickiewicz outside his Polish 'parish' that was responsible for his reserving judgement on such crucial issues, it surely came at a cost to the reader's experience with his book. One might also ask whether Koropecy's decision to write about Mickiewicz's poetry 'only insofar as it exemplifies or clarifies the life [of the poet]' does not diminish the impact of his work. It may well be beyond the scope of a biography, let alone a one-volume one, to present the nature of Mickiewicz's literature and its importance for his contemporaries and for posterity; yet, reading page after page alternating between Mickiewicz's popularity and his personal difficulties, one is sometimes left wondering what actually was great about

this man. Without exploring the impact of Mickiewicz's poetry in greater depth than, for example, claiming that his poem *Konrad Wallenrod* helped to cause the uprising of 1830, it is difficult to answer such a question.

It is obviously a matter of a reader's preference as to how much of the author's judgement he wants to see in a biography and whether he is interested more in the life of its protagonist or in his works. It is, however, beyond doubt that Koropeczyj brilliantly succeeds in his task of introducing to Western audiences one of the most important personalities of the nineteenth century. Beautifully written, exhaustively researched and, indeed, successfully Europeanizing Mickiewicz away from Polish parochialism, this biography will probably remain a leading study of this great Polish-Lithuanian for many years to come.

Przemysław Milewicz, *University of Cambridge*

Ludger Kühnhardt, ed., *Crises in European Integration: Challenges and Responses, 1945–2005*, Berghahn: New York and Oxford, 2009, 167 pp., 9781845454418, £30.00 (hbk)

Many conferences took place in 2007, and resulting books have come out or are in print, to take stock of (or in some cases, more to celebrate) 50 years of European integration since the signing and ratification of the Rome Treaties in 1957. At first sight, this book appears to be an exception to the rule. Instead of discussing the achievements of the present-day European Union, of which there are no doubt many, contrary to the popular belief of the British tabloid press, it focuses on its crises, of which there have been at least as many according to the contributors to this book. As the editor outlines in his introduction, crises in EU politics may be one way of understanding the character of European integration as a 'process' and in particular, under what conditions major treaty reforms or policy changes eventually succeeded in deepening institutional integration or strengthening the EU's internal cohesion or external role in global politics. Ludger Kühnhardt regards these 'new dynamics' as part and parcel of 'dialectical processes' in which crises as 'turning points' (2–3) often have unintended consequences which facilitate further integration. He also believes that crises in western European politics have been linked 'to adaptation crises in transatlantic relations' (8), although – with the exception of the chapters by Manfred Görtemaker on the failure of the European Defence Community in 1954 and by Mathias Jopp and Udo Diedrichs on the evolution of the EU's foreign, security and defence policy in the aftermath of the bloody wars (not 'crisis', as in their chapter title!) in the former Yugoslavia – none of the chapters in this book actually discuss any such transatlantic dimension.

However, the introduction fails to develop an analytical framework and suitable categories which the authors of the subsequent chapters could have drawn upon to identify full-blown 'crises' as opposed to political disagreements, delays in legislation or similar everyday events in any polity, and to analyse them and their (unintended) consequences in diachronic perspective. Thus, Wilfried Loth in his chapter (for good