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Doctoral Dissertations, 2011-2026 Comparative Literature

2017

Beyond the Bildungsroman Illusion: Representations of Intellectual Development In the Works of George Eliot and G.W.F. Hegel

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Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

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BEYOND THE *BILDUNGSROMAN* ILLUSION:
REPRESENTATIONS OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT
IN THE WORKS OF GEORGE ELIOT AND G.W.F. HEGEL

Eduardo Lerro

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Adviser: Claudia Brodsky

November 2017

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Abstract

Virtually any piece of literature from any time period can and has been subsumed to a *Bildungsroman* concept; and nearly every type of novel, or sub-group of novels, has been read as a kind of *Bildungsroman*. Although these claims appear to be anchored in the history of a certain literary form, they often have little in common aside from the assumption that the process of intellectual development that the *Bildungsroman* describes remains categorically stable and un-problematically meaningful across otherwise distinct spheres of culture, language, and genre. Beginning with an analysis of eighteenth-century English and German exchanges of language that demonstrates the origins and limitations of *Bildungsroman* discourse, this dissertation dissevers Hegel's and Eliot's works from the *Bildungsroman* concept and establishes the foundation for a theory of intellectual development capable of reflecting nuances that *Bildungsroman* discourse ignores. By closely reading Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity" and *Phenomenology* against Eliot's *Romola* and its Proem, we argue that Hegel and Eliot share a commitment to integrating socially mediated processes of historical consciousness with subjective processes of intellectual change. These integrated conceptual processes, because they transform the developing subject's understanding of herself and therefore find themselves reflected in the world within and through which the subject conceives herself, describe representations of intellectual development that complicate the naive conceptualizations of intellectual change upon which so many contemporary accounts of the *Bildungsroman* rely. But if Hegel and Eliot agree on the importance of conceptual knowledge, they differ in respect to conceptual priority: whereas Hegel's phenomenological holism demands a rigorous philosophical impartiality, Eliot openly privileges the production of ethical concepts over all other representational priorities. Departing from critics of literary realism who describe Eliot's

aesthetic contribution through a narrow focus on descriptive representations of the natural world, we conclude that Eliot's ethically motivated representations of intellectual development demand a revision to received narratives of the English realist novel: as metaphysical as it is real, the world undergirding Eliot's morality-driven realism relies on a theory of intellectual development that subordinates the representation of the natural world to the ethical concepts through which that world attains its moral purpose.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been made possible by many acts of generosity and kindness, both institutional and personal, for which I would like to express my gratitude.

Without Claudia Brodsky, whose intellectual brilliance is matched only by her own strength of character, this dissertation and its writer would not exist in anything like their current forms. Claudia's dedication to her students and the world we inhabit is peerless in my experience, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and I look to her as a personal and professional example. The countless hours I have spent in conversation with Claudia, on and off the page, in and out of the classroom, have transformed me from a student to a scholar and improved me as a man. In short, I am better for having known her, and I can think of no higher praise than that.

April Alliston is responsible for teaching me the significance of subject mastery, which, given the nature of our calling, as well as the limitations of my temperament, has been no unimportant feat. Whether in class, in writing, or in person, April's pointed intellect and deep knowledge of every aspect of the European novel and its history have kept me on my toes, illuminated my understanding of my chosen subject, and helped me to anchor myself confidently among my peers. It is common for students to admire their teachers for their erudition and intelligence. In April's case, however, the sentiment transcends the platitude, and I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with her.

If Russ Leo were nothing more than the profoundly generous person that he is, he would already have exceeded even the most ambitious academic ideal. But, in addition to being a kind and giving teacher, he also possesses a host of other virtues from which I have happily benefitted, not the least of which being his truly ecumenical intellect. At every stage of my

writing and research, Russ has been both enthusiastic supporter and broad-minded critic, pushing me in unexpected directions that have always deepened my knowledge, expanded my understanding, and improved my research and writing. My chapters on George Eliot especially owe a considerable debt to his helpful guidance.

Michael Wood joined my dissertation committee much later than its other three members, but his presence is not for that reason any less important. I appreciate Michael's willingness to join the project *in medias res*; his knowledge of and insight into English literature has added necessary ballast to my reasoning, especially in the sections of the dissertation that deal with Eliot and Fielding. I am especially grateful, too, for Michael's flexibility and openness, qualities as refreshing as they are rare in our circles. I only wish I had started working with him sooner.

For reasons that my departmental peers will certainly understand and endorse, Wendy Belcher has become a kind of practical hero for me. In addition to her role as a reader, Wendy has been steadfast in her practical support of my scholarship and my future. When I have been stymied, frustrated, or simply exhausted by the perennial pitfalls of academia, Wendy has encouraged me with the kindest version of the truth, reminding me always that scholarship, if we are doing it correctly, will always make demands that seem impossible to meet. Always a realist but ever mindful of the stakes, Wendy has been essential to the production of this dissertation.

I have often heard that every graduate student ends up regretting where he or she chooses to go to graduate school. But I am happy to say that I do not share this sentiment. Since arriving at Princeton, I have been met with the most generous support. Tom Hare and Ben Baer, as Directors of Graduate Studies, as well as Leonard Barkan and Eileen Reeves, as Department Chairs, together helped me acclimate to and thrive in Princeton's peculiar microclimate, offering much needed advice in challenging moments. Valerie Kanka, our Graduate Administrator, has

also marshaled a great deal of tact, helpfulness, and institutional knowledge on my behalf. Princeton's Department of Comparative Literature has unflaggingly encouraged my scholarship, funding many ambitious scholarly endeavors, domestic and abroad, as well as countless local opportunities. I am fortunate to have spent five years here.

I have also received a great deal of University support from outside my Department. In addition to the five-year fellowship that made possible the regular course of my doctoral training, I have received generous additional support, including a PIIRS Summer Research Fellowship, the Eugene Bradford Fellowship, the Joseph E. Croft Fellowship, the Procter Honorific Fellowship, and the Dean's Completion/PGRA Fellowship. Without this institutional support, it would obviously have been impossible for me to complete – much less to envision – this dissertation. Princeton has been nothing but extraordinarily supportive and generous, and I am better for having been a student here. I hope that my life after Princeton will allow me the opportunity to pay my gratitude forward.

I would also like to extend my warmest thanks to Rhonda Garelick, for generously providing career guidance, letters of recommendation, and professional referrals after only knowing me a short period of time; Felicia Bonaparte, for teaching me how to read and insisting that I follow my gut; Paul Oppenheimer, Joshua Wilner, Paul Dolan, and Susan Besse, for believing in me; Ala Fink, for her matchless patience and friendship; and my parents and family, for everything.

Modified versions of the Introduction to this dissertation were presented at the Harvard University Department of German as part of the Germanic Circle series on October 20, 2016, and at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism Annual Conference on August 11, 2017.

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Preface

The word *Bildungsroman* is now used across the academy to describe virtually any intellectual change over time. Just since 2005, for example, physician Howard Rockman has claimed that "the history of peer review is a bildungsroman"; theologian Rhodri Hayward has described David Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* (*The Life of Jesus*) as a "Messianic *bildungsroman*"; and scholars of language and literature have used the term to describe everything from Dante's *Comedy* and Augustine's *Confessions* to the book of Job, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and novels of every imaginable period, language, and culture. And though these usages often have little in common aside from the ubiquitous phrases "novel of education" or "narrative of development," most of them do share at least one additional trait: few approach intellectual development as a representational problem, assuming instead that, like a simple adjective, the intellectual process that the *Bildungsroman* describes remains categorically stable, universally meaningful, and un-problematically applicable to any literary object capable of reflecting change. They have thus asserted without proving a reductive, universal sameness among varyingly complex and otherwise radically different conceptualizations of intellectual development, consequently obscuring the need for a more nuanced theory of that concept as it is represented in philosophy and literature more broadly.

The Introduction to this dissertation addresses critical limitations imposed by *Bildungsroman* discourse while productively disclosing their constitutive and continued links to English and German intellectual exchanges of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. German literary critic Fritz Martini long ago demonstrated two important facts about the *Bildungsroman*: that it was Karl Morgenstern, as opposed to Wilhelm Dilthey, who first used the word; and that

Morgenstern's neologism relies on simplified concepts borrowed from Friedrich von Blanckenburg's seminal work, *Versuch Über den Roman* (*Theory of the Novel*), written several decades earlier. And while the former observation has been widely embraced by many scholars, much less has been made of the latter. As a result, since Martini, we have witnessed an enormous expansion of scholarship relating the English novel to Morgenstern's simplifying neologism and the novel at its center, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. But there has been no sustained, comparative study linking Blanckenburg's *Theory* and Morgenstern's Germanizing recapitulation of its focus to English conceptualizations of the novel from the same period. Building on the work of Martini and Robert Dye, as well as Susan Cocalis, Peter Damrau, and Cheryl Nixon, the Introduction to this dissertation closes this critical lacuna by demonstrating that the central concepts Morgenstern borrows from Blanckenburg and then applies to Goethe's novel – such as a special focus on human interiority; the privileging of what we now call a realist literary aesthetic; an explicit emphasis on progressively represented intellectual development; a didactic concentration on the moral education of subject and society; and a guiding concern with the moral and social function of what we now call the novel – are not unique either to German novels or to German-language theories of the novel, but are rather shared with such English authors as Shaftesbury, Henry Fielding, William Craig, and others. The contemporary reduction of the *Bildungsroman* concept to a banal "narrative of development" or "novel of education," indelibly linked to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and endowed with the capacity to accommodate almost any piece of literature, should thus be understood as only the most recent manifestation of an apparently inherent conceptual tendency. From its inception in Morgenstern's oversimplifying theory, the so-called *Bildungsroman* has stated much by proving little, and it continues to do so.

Following the Introduction, the first section of this dissertation, which consists of three chapters devoted specifically to Hegel and his critics, directly addresses this problem by setting aside both Morgenstern and *Wilhelm Meister* and theorizing the existence of two alternative modes of representing intellectual development. We develop these alternative modes in contrast to what we are calling the "naive" conceptualization of intellectual development presented by Morgenstern and his peers and followers, described above. The first of these alternative forms, "complex intellectual development," we derive from a close reading of Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity" essay; and the second, "self-conscious intellectual development," we derive from a close reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Departing from Josiah Royce, Walter Kaufmann, and M.H. Abrams, all of whom draw analogies from the *Phenomenology* to *Wilhelm Meister* or the so-called *Bildungsroman*, we demonstrate in Chapters II and III that these Hegelian representations of intellectual development share a number of distinct philosophical commitments that distinguish them definitively from the "naive" conceptualization of intellectual development advanced by Morgenstern and his peers and followers, up to and including Royce, Abrams, and Kaufmann. Whereas "naive" intellectual development makes little or no distinction between an ordinary course of intellectual development and a historically implicated or formally self-conscious one, Hegel's "complex" and "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development both insist that that development must necessarily be mediated by social and historical processes that transform both the cognizing subject's relation to herself and the world within and through which that relation occurs.

This is not to say, however, that Hegel's "complex" and "self-conscious" conceptualizations of intellectual development present the same developmental processes. For they are, in fact, quite different, which observation is important for us here because it indicates

that, like most of the subjects that his philosophy treats, Hegel's conceptualization of intellectual development itself develops and matures over his lifetime, affecting and reflecting advancements made in other areas of his thinking. And while "complex" and "self-conscious" intellectual development certainly share Hegelian commitments, the "self-conscious" representation of intellectual development that Hegel advances in the *Phenomenology* attains to a level of philosophical sophistication that the "complex" form presented in the earlier "Spirit of Christianity" essay only implies.

This finding leads straightforwardly to the related conclusion that many of the well-known features of Hegel's more mature *Phenomenology* will not find themselves reflected in the representation of intellectual development that our close reading extracts from the earlier "Spirit of Christianity" essay. The most significant – but, for close readers of Hegel, ultimately unsurprising – differences between "complex" and "self-conscious" intellectual development are two: that the former is neither fully dialectical nor historically self-conscious in the formal senses that the *Phenomenology* so insistently requires. And these facts in their turn describe what we hope our peers will agree is another of this dissertation's most significant findings: when the tendentious critical analogy linking the *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* is stripped away from Hegel's thinking and the representation of intellectual development within his works is analyzed rigorously and objectively, we find not only that the analogy is patently false and misleading, but also that Hegel's works offer competing ways of presenting that concept. The analogy linking the *Phenomenology* to the so-called *Bildungsroman* thus distorts the representation of intellectual development that the *Phenomenology* actually presents at the same time as it prevents intellectual development from becoming visible as a distinct and variable category of content within Hegel's philosophical corpus.

Because equating the *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* amounts, in fact, to little more that calling the *Phenomenology* a kind of novel, another way to express the failure of Morgenstern's "naive" conceptualization to capture the philosophical complexity of Hegel's representations of intellectual development would be to say that the long history of *Bildungsroman* criticism, as it relates to Hegel, reflects a deeper problem with novel criticism in general, a conclusion that the first chapter of Section II makes apparent. That chapter (IV) deals closely with two critics, Franco Moretti and György Lukács, whose influential and widely cited theses, like those of Kaufmann and Abrams, implicate Hegel while discussing the *Bildungsroman*, this time in reference to the history and theory of the European novel. Of the two authors, Moretti's usage is the more egregious by a wide margin, relying throughout on imprecise conceptualizations, poor scholarship, and a profoundly reductive misrepresentation of the language and logic of Lukács's authoritative *Theory of the Novel*. But Moretti and Lukács nonetheless share a number of tendencies, an understanding of which is essential to the task of decoupling the critical language of the *Bildungsroman* from the concept of intellectual development that it disfigures. Both authors rely on simplifying and largely unjustified conceptualizations of a *Bildungsroman*-related concept that still follow the Morgenstern blueprint; both authors, like Abrams and Kaufmann, misrepresent Hegel while making broad claims about European literature; and neither author treats the English novel particularly seriously while doing so. The unfortunate result is a pair of widely cited and, at least in the case of Lukács, enduringly influential theses whose respective presentations of the novel worsen the most regrettable tendencies of Morgenstern's theory by applying them so broadly as to subsume the entire history of the European novel but not accurately enough to do so without glossing over

the particular qualities of the English novel, even though, for both authors, the English novel occupies a prominent place within the authoritative and aesthetic scope of that history.

In order to retrieve the English novel from this regrettable embarrassment, we next turn our attention, in the remaining chapters of Section II, to George Eliot, and for several reasons. To begin with, though the critical record indicates that the *Bildungsroman* analogy can be applied to any novel, so long as that novel represents some kind of perceptible intellectual change over time – in other words, to any kind of novel – the analogy is especially consuming in Eliot's case, due to her well-known affinity for Goethe and many other German authors. And here, again, Franco Moretti becomes unfortunately emblematic of the larger problem when he draws a direct line from *Wilhelm Meister* to *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, via an extended visit to Stendhal and Balzac in France, and begins his treatment of Eliot, which comes near the end of his book, by claiming that her work brings Goethe's epoch-defining *Bildungsroman* "to its natural conclusion." So that one of the most influential figures in English literary history, who happens also to be among the most intellectually gifted authors of the European nineteenth century, finds herself in the awkward (but, for female authors, still all too familiar) position of having her mature works used merely to sop up the aesthetic mess left in the wake of a much more important, but oh so terribly untidy, transformative German male. And this problem extends far beyond Eliot's relation to the so-called *Bildungsroman*: despite her abundant gifts, Eliot's mature works, the complexity and subtlety of which certainly rival the works of any literary figure, are still consistently framed as either passive vehicles for the reproduction of others' ideas or as merely parroting conduits for more dominant philosophies and intellectual trends.

In terms of subject matter, perhaps nowhere is this problem more acute and, consequently, more misleading, than it is for Eliot's conceptualization of history. And here, too,

Eliot's perceived creative capacity suffers under the burden of her intellectual interests. Her well-known acquaintance with a wide variety of authors whose works had a significant impact on conceptualizations of history in the nineteenth century, such as Schiller, Vico, Riehl, and especially Comte, to name only a few, as well as her essays and groundbreaking translations of Feuerbach and Strauss, have produced a vast body of scholarship wherein Eliot's thoughts on history and other subjects are determined by first establishing the content of a supposedly more dominant figure's thinking and then showing that Eliot's works passively demonstrate some evidence of its supposed "influence" upon her. So that, despite the extensive formal and creative fixation on the subject and theory of history that Eliot's novels – especially *Romola*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda* – so insistently demonstrate, no serious attempt has yet been made either to identify a distinct, independent theory of history implicit within those novels or to reconcile the representation of intellectual development within them to such a theory.

Eliot and Hegel, then, might be said to suffer from a similar problem. For both authors, the disfiguring effect of the *Bildungsroman* analogy expresses itself most clearly when the representation of intellectual development is viewed from the perspective of the historical processes within and through which that development manifests itself in their respective works. Chapters V and VI of this dissertation are thus devoted to a close analysis of the representations of intellectual development that Eliot's only historical novel, *Romola*, and the Proem that precedes it each constructs. As was the case with Hegel's "complex" and "self-conscious" forms, Eliot's "conscious" and "self-aware" representations of intellectual development differ from each other as well as from the "naive" conceptualization advanced by Morgenstern and his peers. Eliot also shows some striking similarities to Hegel: both authors privilege historical knowledge above other kinds of knowledge; both authors argue that that historical knowledge is socially

mediated; and, as a result, both authors also insist that the represented subject's intellectual development must necessarily take shape within historical processes that transform the developing subject's understanding of herself, thereby contributing to constitutive changes in the socially and historically mediated world within and through which the developing subject conceives herself.

We do not wish to argue, however, that Hegel's works have necessarily influenced Eliot's, or that she somehow follows or expresses ultimately Hegelian representational or historical formulas. Indeed, though Eliot and Hegel share similar views to the constructive role that history plays within the variously mediated processes that define the intellectual development of the subjects whose cognitive changes their works represent, our findings also demonstrate that Eliot and Hegel are in many ways as different as they are similar: both the "Spirit of Christianity" essay and the *Phenomenology* directly express philosophical claims using argumentative language, whereas the fictional language of *Romola* and its Proem constructs its claims only implicitly; and where Hegel's *Phenomenology* insists that the historical awareness through which knowledge is constructed can only ever be fully understood as knowledge when the subject comprehends it self-consciously, neither of Eliot's "conscious" or "self-aware" representations of intellectual development relies or insists upon the philosophical necessity of formally constructed historical self-knowledge so rigorously. Close analysis thus demonstrates that, while Hegel and Eliot certainly share a similar position towards the developing subject's relation to history, neither Eliot's representations of intellectual development nor the conceptualizations of history that they partially construct can or should be subsumed to those of Hegel.

Much more importantly, however, *Romola* and its Proem privilege the representation and construction of ethics in a way that openly works against the *Phenomenology*'s steadfast commitment to phenomenological holism, a distinction that describes a sharp difference between the two authors' representational priorities at the same time as it demands a reassessment of the categorical construction of the English realist novel and Eliot's place within its formal history. Among the authors whose works we discuss in this dissertation, a dominating concern with ethics and morality is certainly not unique to Eliot. For Hegel's ethical constructions continue to factor centrally in a number of influential critical discourses, and our Introduction demonstrates that the critical language surrounding the emerging novel in the eighteenth century, which Morgenstern's theory of the *Bildungsroman* merely rephrases, comes together within a religiously and pedagogically inflected philological history that features ethical discourse as a core element. And the same is true for the language of realism: though Eliot's works are commonly understood as paragons of English literary realism, Morgenstern's recapitulation of Shaftesbury's early eighteenth-century concern with the aesthetics of "real *Life*" finds itself closely reflected within the longer history of *Bildungsroman* criticism; and Hegel is rightly understood by his most insightful critics as "the severest of realists." But the historically mediated relation of the developing subject's ethical consciousness to the representation of reality that *Romola* and its Proem construct contrast distinctly with the works of Hegel as well as the longer critical history of the *Bildungsroman*. Whereas the "naive" representations of intellectual development advanced by Morgenstern and his peers avoid historical self-consciousness altogether, and Hegel's "complex" and "self-conscious" representations present ethics as only one among many constitutive elements of the developing consciousness's historically and socially mediated intellectual content, Eliot's "conscious" and "self-aware"

representations of intellectual development both subordinate the representation of "real *Life"* to the active production of ethical concepts. The production of ethical concepts thus assumes the highest position in George Eliot's representational aesthetic, thoroughly subordinating both the representation of reality and the subject's historically and socially mediated intellectual development within it to practical moral priorities. For Eliot, ethics describe the privileged condition of possibility underwriting any adequate literary representation of human reality.

If it is true, however, that the historically and socially mediated conceptualizations of reality that Eliot's ethically motivated representations of intellectual development construct describes an aesthetic effect distinct from that produced by the "naive," "complex," and "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development respectively advanced by Morgenstern et al. and Hegel, it follows that the representation of intellectual development describes a distinct representational category whose contours vary significantly from author to author and from text to text. Earlier in this Preface, we claimed that the disfiguring analogy linking Hegel's *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* prevents the distinct process of intellectual development that Hegel presents there from becoming legible as a distinct category of content. We can now extend that claim to Eliot's novels and the novel in general: the analogy linking Eliot's novels to the *Bildungsroman* prevents the distinct processes of intellectual development that Eliot presents in those novels from becoming fully visible as such, thereby occluding the presence of a representational category whose particular functions and features distinguish those novels from each other as well as from the novels of her peers. If the extent of the *Bildungsroman* illusion is any indication of the importance of the representation of intellectual development for creators and scholars of literature alike, we hope that the following chapters convincingly demonstrate the

need for a still closer examination of this rich but, until now, still largely unexamined representational category.

Introduction

The *Bildungsroman* Problem:

Or, The History of an Illusion

The term *Bildungsroman* has become essential to contemporary critical discourse on the English novel and its history, as well as a central *topos* of development operating within a diverse number of literary,[1] philosophical, and related academic fields and sub-disciplines.[2]

[1] Among scholars of literature, excluding critics of the novel, the word *Bildungsroman* is now used to describe any period and genre of literature. For a description of Dante's *Comedy* as "the *Bildungsroman* of a poetic genius," see Dante Alighieri, *Dante's Purgatorio*, adapted by Sandow Birk and Marcus Sanders (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005), ix – x. Thomas Docherty similarly claims that Augustine's *Confessions*, written in the fourth century CE, represents "the original *Bildungsroman*," as it depicts Augustine moving "towards truth from falsehood or deception.*"* See Docherty, *Confessions: The Philosophy of Transparency* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 33 – 34. Discussing what he calls Milton's "self-authorship," Marshall Grossman cautions that, though "*Paradise Lost* is not a *bildungsroman*," it nonetheless "sketches the *bildungsroman* on the horizon." See Grossman, *Milton and the Revelation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 15. For Julia Lupton's assertion that "the *Henriad* is Shakespeare's royal *Bildungsroman*, charting the education of Hal from prentice prince to successful sovereign," see Lupton, "Hamlet, Prince: Tragedy, Citizenship, and Political Theology," in *Alternative Shakespeares 3*, ed. Diana Henderson (New York: Routledge, 2008), 181. For a discussion of the biblical book of Job as a "*Bildungsroman* of the moral imagination," see Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26. Susan Niditch, writing on myth and biblical folklore, similarly describes the story of Joseph as "the Joseph *Bildungsroman*," in Niditch, *A Prelude to Biblical Folklore*: *Underdogs and Tricksters* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 18. William Kolbrener asserts that a "*bildungsroman* – the coming of age novel of Moses" "is encapsulated in a single verse in Exodus." See Kolbrener, *Open Minded Torah: Of Irony, Fundamentalism and Love* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 105 – 106. For the claim that *The Autobiography of Malcolm X "*might be presented as a *bildungsroman*" or "story of personal development," see Laura Dubek, "*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and the African American Quest for Freedom and Literacy," in *Prison Narratives from Boethius to Zana*, ed. Philip Phillips (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 199. For a "*Bildungsroman ante litteram*" located in a series of medieval sermons that depict their writer's "long journey from novice to expert," see Yoko Kimura, "The *Bildungsroman* of an Anonymous Franciscan Preacher in Late Medieval Italy (Biblioteca Comunale di Foligno, MS C. 85)," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 58 (2014): 47. Following a similar interpretive logic, Gregory Vargo selects a subset of four stories from within Victorian writer Thomas Cooper's *Wise Saws and Modern Instances* and reads them as a single, unified narrative, arguing that "taken together," they "might comprehend a life" that "gives expression to a working-class revision of the classical *Bildungsroman.*" See Vargo, "A Life in Fragments: Thomas Cooper's Chartist *Bildungsroman*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011): 167 – 169.

Recent and contemporary usage of the term among scholars of the novel generally veers between two well-established critical poles: theoretical conceptualizations so vague as to be meaningless; and historicized conceptualizations so limited as to have little relevance for those who are not either historians of German literature or Germanic language philologists.[3] Virtually any piece of literature from any time period can and has been subsumed to a *Bildungsroman* concept; and

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[2] Aside from philosophical and philosophically related usages, which we will deal with in Chapters I and IV, critical discourse outside literary fields demonstrates that the term can be used to describe virtually any kind of observable change over time, whether that change is said to take place in an author, a character, a reader, a concept, a reading public, some other kind of subject, or virtually any combination thereof. William Gartner asserts that his own journal article, which seeks to clarify the knowledge necessary to conceptualizing entrepreneurship by means of his own attainment to it, is inspired by Goethe and written retrospectively "in the style of a 'bildungsroman,' a fictional autobiographical 'coming of age story.'" Following a similarly autobiographical method, artist Dan Slavinsky describes a series of drawings pertaining to his own philosophy of architecture as a "Bildungsroman series of drawings" "drawn to chart early roots of knowledge, inspiration, a long journey of self-discovery, and a final period of reflection on the maturity gained." Theologian Rhodri Hayward faults David Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* because its "arrangement of the Gospel material into a synthetic narrative transformed Christ into a . . . literary hero pursuing a Messianic *bildungsroman*." David Ford volleys a similar claim against theologian Karl Barth, accusing him of unconsciously adopting the *Bildungsroman* as a distorting way of reading. Megan Laverty, writing on pedagogy, argues that Thomas Hardy's "A Mere Interlude" is a *Bildungsroman* and that it exemplifies a way of understanding education that teachers should ideally duplicate in their work today. And Howard Rockman, writing on the history of peer review, states that he is "struck" by the "creative genius" of Charles Dickens "and by the parallel between the intellectual development of his protagonists and the evolution of peer review." He goes on to conclude that, "the history of peer review is a bildungsroman." See Gartner, "Variations in Entrepreneurship," *Small Business Economics* 31, no. 4 (2008): 351; Slavinsky, "Bildungsroman Series: Architectural Daring for the 21st Century," *Architectural Design* 83, no. 5 (2013): 121 – 122; Hayward, *Resisting History: Religious Transcendence and the Invention of the Unconscious*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 11; Ford, "Barth and God's Story: Biblical Narrative and the Theological Method of Karl Barth in the Church Dogmatics," in *Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums*, vol. 27 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1981); Laverty, "As Luck Would Have It: Thomas Hardy's Bildungsroman on Leading a Human Life," *Studies on Philosophy of Education* 33, no. 6 (2014): 635 – 646; and Rockman, "Great Expectations," *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* 122, no. 4 (2012): 1133.

[3] James Hardin laments, in 1991, that, among American critics, "hardly any other term is applied more frequently to a novelistic form and scarcely any is used more imprecisely." He goes on to call Jerome Buckley's widely cited usage both "careless" and "naive." Sadly, the situation since then may actually have worsened, as Tobias Boes sums up nicely in 2006, writing that, "The term is sometimes – especially within English departments – used so broadly that seemingly any novel . . . might be subsumed by it. Specialists of German literature, on the other hand, have shown an almost masochistic glee in decimating their own canon, on occasion disqualifying even such seemingly incontestable examples as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*." See Hardin, ed., *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), ix – xxvii; and Boes, "Modernist Studies and the *Bildungsroman*: A Historical Survey of Critical Trends," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 2 (2006): 230.

virtually every type of novel,[4] or sub-group of novels, has been read as a kind or genre of *Bildungsroman*.[5] Contemporary critical usage of the term thus conceals that many of what are now considered the *Bildungsroman*'s most definitive conceptual characteristics are rooted in German and English intellectual exchanges that long precede Karl Morgenstern's creation and application of the word in the early nineteenth century. Close examination of these exchanges leads to several instructive conclusions: that many of the features supposedly unique to Morgenstern's lectures on the *Bildungsroman* were borrowed from Friedrich von Blanckenburg's *Versuch über den Roman*, published several decades prior; that many of the central concepts underwriting Blanckenburg's essay are in turn either borrowed from or shared by important English novelists and literary critics of the eighteenth century; and that Morgenstern's opaque and coopting recapitulation of those concepts at once establishes and codifies a series of foundational oversimplifications, seemingly inherent to the *Bildungsroman* concept, that have dogged the genre since its inception. And they continue to do so.

[4] To mention just a few examples, novels as diverse as the Marquis d'Argens's eighteenth-century pornographic fiction *Thérèse Philosophe*, Frederick Marryat's nineteenth-century naval adventure *Mr Midshipman Easy*, Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, and Ntozake Shange's novella depicting aspects of African-American life at mid-century, *Betsey Brown*, have all been referred to as a *Bildungsroman*, even though, except that each work presents a central character that changes perceptibly over the course of a narrative, the works share virtually nothing in common. See Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 100; Geta LeSeur, *Ten is the Age of Darkness: The Black Bildungsroman* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 1 – 17, 101 – 148; and Marryat, *Mr Midshipman Easy* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1998), vii – xv.

[5] Contemporary discourse has grown to include numerous studies on a wide variety of *Bildungsroman* traditions. For more on the Black *Bildungsroman*, see LeSeur, *Darkness* (1995); and Mark Stein, *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004). For instructive examples of colonial and post-colonial *Bildungsroman* discourse, see Maria Lima, "Decolonizing Genre: Jamaica Kincaid and the *Bildungsroman*," *Genre* 26, no. 4 (1993): 431 – 459; and, more recently, Joshua Esty, "The Colonial Bildungsroman: 'The Story of an African Farm' and the Ghost of Goethe," *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 3 (2007): 407 – 430. For recent work on the "Queer Bildungsroman," see Eddie Whyte, "(Un)Manacled Sexuality! Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night* as a Queer Bildungsroman?," *Journal of West Indian Literature* 19, no. 2 (2011): 85 – 100. And for an intelligent recent article on the African *Bildungsroman*, see Ralph Austen, "Struggling with the African Bildungsroman," *Research in African Literatures* 46, no. 3 (2015): 214 – 231.

Among the most emblematic, if not the most significant, more recent examples of the problems engendered by oversimplified critical approaches to the *Bildungsroman* can be found in Sarah Maier's 2007 article, "Portraits of the Girl-Child: Female *Bildungsroman* in Victorian Fiction." After briefly stating its purpose, Maier writes that, "The German term *bildungsroman* has been used to designate a genre of novel (*roman*) which demonstrates the formation (*bildung*) of a character." From here, she goes on to elaborate what that might mean, jumping from "self-development" to Morgenstern to Dilthey to contemporary literary criticism within the space of a single paragraph, only to conclude that, though "most" "of the qualifying factors of the *bildungsroman* . . . are unavailable to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary female protagonists," the "female *bildungsroman*" nonetheless "does exist," if only as "a radical extension of the traditional *bildungsroman* first located in Goëthe's [sic] text." As has so often been the case, particularly among feminist critics,[6] nowhere does Maier more deeply attempt to define any specific conceptual meanings for *Bildung*, the *Bildungsroman*, or the idea of "self-development" that she employs within her own book.[7]

To this set of critical problems we must, unfortunately, add another. The time period during which Karl Morgenstern coins the term *Bildungsroman* occurs shortly following the historical period Ian Watt and those writing in his wake have canonized as the period of the so-called "rise of the novel."[8] Setting aside the immense degree to which Watt's topos of rising and

[6] Referring to *The Voyage In*, a widely cited collection of feminist essays on the *Bildungsroman* circa 1983, James Hardin remarks that, "The inclusion" in that volume "of essays on 'a variant of the novel of development, the lesbian coming-out story' (17) and on contemporary fairy tales revised so as to 'reverse gender biases inherent in the tales' (17) strains the link with the Bildungsroman to the breaking point and again provides an illustration of what I would argue is needlessly cavalier application of what, used with more care, could be a useful literary term." See Hardin, *Reflection and Action*, xviii.

[7] Maier, "Portraits of the Girl-Child: Female *Bildungsroman* in Victorian Fiction," *Literature Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006): 317 – 320.

[8] As is well known to scholars of the novel and the *Bildungsroman*, Fritz Martini established in his famous 1961 essay that, contrary to scholarly convention at that time, which had credited the term's

falling literary forms has been adopted by critics, Watt's initial conception is already problematic on its face, largely because the anthropologically psychologized modes of justification he uses to support it both rely on and perpetuate a kind of cultural super-conflation to which nearly any conceivable trait can be added or subtracted without ever having to be accounted for.[9] In Watt's

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origins to Wilhelm Dilthey, Karl Morgenstern invented the term and first used it publicly in a series of lectures in 1818 – 19. See: Martini, "Der Bildungsroman. Zur Geschichte des Wortes und der Theorie," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 35, no. 1 (1961): 44 – 63. For an excellent English translation of the same, to which all subsequent English references to Martini in this essay will refer, accompanied by a fine collection of essays on the *Bildungsroman*, see Fritz Martini, "Bildungsroman – Term and Theory," in *Reflection and Action*, ed. James Hardin (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 1 – 25.

[9] Watt begins his influential argument by asking, "Is the novel a new literary form? And if we assume, as is commonly done, that it is, and that it was begun by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, how does it differ from the prose fiction of the past, from that of Greece, for example, or that of the Middle Ages, or of seventeenth-century France?" After conceding that such questions are likely too difficult to answer, he responds to his own question by asserting that, "The present inquiry therefore takes another direction: assuming that the appearance of our first three novelists within a single generation was probably not sheer accident, and that their geniuses could not have created the new form unless the conditions of the time had also been favorable, it attempts to discover what these favorable conditions in the literary and social situation were, and in what ways Defoe, Richardson and Fielding were its beneficiaries."

Prima facie, there is nothing particularly egregious or exceptional in Watt's rather boilerplate method of reasoning, and the enduring functional value of his work serves, at the very least, as a testament to the basic intelligence of his interpretation. However, in practice, Watt's *topos* of the rising form, which presents his conception of the novel as a more or less established form from which definitive traits can be deduced and then back-reasoned into essential aspects of the "culture" or "conditions" from which the same established form emerged, represents a less than rigorous method for conducting both analyses of culture and theorizations of form. To demonstrate one of the numerous problems to which this method leads, consider the following excerpt, taken from an extended discussion of *Tom Jones*:

> This emotional artificiality is very general in *Tom Jones* . . . The fact that Fielding's characters do not have a convincing inner life means that their possibilities of psychological development are very limited. Tom Jones's character . . . exhibits some development, but it is of a very general kind. Tom's early imprudences, his youthful lack of worldly wisdom, and his healthy animality . . . lead to his disgrace, his expulsion from the Allworthy household, his subsequent difficulties on the road and in London, and his apparently irrecoverable loss of Sophia's love. At the same time his good qualities, his courage, honour and benevolence . . . eventually combine to extricate . . . and restore him to the love and respect of those who surround him. But although different qualities come to the fore at different times they have all been present from the beginning, and we have not been taken close enough to Tom's mind to be able to do anything but take on trust Fielding's implication, which is that his hero will be able to control his weaknesses by the wisdom he has learned of experience.

Though he offers it as a benchmark for both historical significance and literary content, Watt does not attempt to explain to his readers how he has determined by what standard Tom's "animality" should

defense, one might argue that he is not alone in adopting the "rise" *topos* and that, even if he were, such an approach is anyway effective in accounting for the gradual appearance of something thought to be historically new. Indeed, as Cheryl Nixon has amply demonstrated and even a passing familiarity with early discourse on the emerging novel clearly shows, Watt's *topos* itself was far from innovative when he articulated it in the mid-twentieth century: the "rise of the novel" narrative itself arose in tandem with the novel and its accompanying criticism in the eighteenth century. And it has been yoked to the form since that time.[10] The problem for us here is that, when an over-simplified conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* meets the rhetoric of rising under the altar of academic specialization, a kind of discourse entirely dissevered from either a careful consideration of the form of the novel or a critical understanding of *Bildung* or the *Bildungsroman* emerges from the union. Thus Ellen McWilliams, in her 2009 book, *Margaret Atwood and the Female Bildungsroman*, can, only a few sentences after citing *The Rise of the Novel*, un-problematically frame Atwood's now both "Canadian" and "feminist" *Bildungsroman* as being organically related to a set of traits whose "emergence" and "rise" begin somewhere long ago in a distant eighteenth century whose formal and conceptual concerns she

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be understood to be "healthy," or how he has determined which of Tom's thoughts and actions – some of which are quite damaging to others, particularly women – are examples of "courage, honour and benevolence," and which not. In other words, Watt rather thoughtlessly applies arbitrary standards (his own?) of mental health and "healthy" male "animality" to Tom without critically mediating them in any way, perhaps assuming that such traits are eternal or essential and thus unchanging across generations of human males. Setting aside the fact that any historical consideration that lacks such an awareness of the problems of conceptual change relative to the passage of time puts tremendous pressure on its own status as a truly historical analysis, it should be obvious that the task Watt performs here could be performed with nearly any banal observation and that conceivably any trait could quite easily be attributed to Tom – or to the form of the novel – without having to be accounted for any more rigorously than simply observing it and then attributing that observation to a vaguely conceived idea of "culture." And it is, of course, only a short step from Tom's mind and its origins in said English "culture" to a theory of the English novel, as Watt's own statement of purpose attests. See Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 9, 274.

[10] Cheryl Nixon, ed., *Novel Definitions: An Anthology of Commentary on the Novel, 1688 – 1815* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 36 – 37.

does not feel the need to elaborate any further than is necessary to establish the simple analogy to Atwood, upon which she confidently rests her book's entire conceptual apparatus.[11]

Yet, as Susan Cocalis has clearly established, the word "Bildung" and the term "Bildungsroman" that emerges from it in fact originate and develop within a complex and historically specific matrix of German and English exchanges of language and literature closely tied to the Protestant Reformation and the German Enlightenment. Cocalis anchors her argument in a rigorous philological examination of the word *Bildung* within the dictionaries of Adelung and Campe, opposing those that refer to physical form and appearance to those that refer to a spiritually inflected intellectual process.[12] She calls the latter "figurative" and demonstrates its partial origins in the German reception of Shaftesbury's 1711 *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, which the "Pietists Spalding and Oetinger translated . . . into German in the middle of the eighteenth century," thereby "establishing *Bildung*" and several of its cognates as discrete "technical" terms that go on to enjoy widespread usage: "inward form," which gets translated as "innere Bildung"; "formation of a genteel character," which gets translated as "Bildung"; and "good breeding," which gets translated as "Selbstbildung."[13]

These terms, which represent Shaftesbury's interpretation of what Cocalis calls the "aesthetic metaphors of the Neo-Platonic philosophical tradition," became, through their

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[11] McWilliams begins the section of her Introduction entitled, "The Tradition in English: History and Critical Reception," by stating that, "What is missing from the above sketch of a genre, of course, is an acknowledgement of the powerful ways in which writers in English appropriated the Bildungsroman, particularly in the nineteenth century: many points of contact and contrast have been noted between *the emergence of the Bildungsroman* in Germany in the eighteenth century and *the rise of the English novel* . . . In his important study . . . *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957), Ian Watt describes how the privileging of individual experience emerged as a distinctive feature of the novel (13). While critics such as Michael McKeon have since reconsidered and suggested modifications to Watt's model, it remains, nevertheless, very compatible with the prime interests of the Bildungsroman" (emphases added). McWilliams, *Margaret Atwood and the Female Bildungsroman* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 12.

[12] Susan Cocalis, "The Transformation of 'Bildung' from an Image to an Ideal," *Monatshefte* 70, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 401.

[13] Ibid.

reception by a well developed post-Reformation German intellectual community that Peter Damrau has shown was already highly attuned to English Puritan concerns with introspective self-reflection and right conduct,[14] "an integral part of the didactic process" advanced by the German Pietists. That process, as Jonathan Sheehan has demonstrated, goes on to enjoy great influence in German and English culture, both in the eighteenth century and beyond.[15] From the English Puritans, German mystics, Meister Eckhart, Spalding, and Oetinger to Shaftesbury, Wieland, Winckelmann, Herder, Schiller, Humboldt, and Dilthey, the foundational concepts underwriting *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* are inseparably bound to English and German religious metaphors that describe the internal development of a presumably educable human intellect or spirit capable of reflecting and reflecting upon intellectual change.

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[14] Writing against several dominant critical trends concerning the possible origins of Pietist concerns with *Innerlichkeit* (inwardness) and self-examination, which have since the nineteenth century been linked by mainly German theologians to the German mystics, Damrau convincingly establishes, through close examination of German translations of popular English Puritan devotional literature and their channels of distribution on the Continent, that close examination of "what has" heretofore "been perceived as the 'German Pietist language' reveals that the style of writing characteristic of the Pietists existed before Philipp Jakob Spener even started this Protestant movement. Inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*) and sentimental language (*Gefühlssprache*) of the eighteenth century can be traced to the reception of English literature, not only to the reception of the works of English sentimentalism, which had its origins in the 1750s, but also to the translation of Puritan literature over a century earlier. The same can be said for the important Pietist method of introspection and self-analysis, as these were deeply influenced by the Calvinist content of these British books." See especially the Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2, and the Conclusion. Damrau, *The Reception of English Puritan Literature in Germany* (London: Maney Publishing, 2006), 2.

[15] Though in the conclusion to his book Sheehan follows the critical trends against which Damrau positions his thesis when he states that the "insistence on 'interiority'" as a "basic definition of religion" is fundamentally "German," the first chapter in his otherwise superb treatment of what he calls the "Enlightenment Bible" concludes with the following summary comment that nonetheless supports the spirit of Damrau's thesis regarding the German Pietists and English scholars of the Bible as well as what we have adopted of Cocalis's related claim: "The Enlightenment Bible began . . . in an entirely different place in Germany than in England . . . in Germany, the Bible was pushed outside its safely fortified territory not by frightened defenders of a text against the importunities of atheists, deists, and Catholics, but rather by confident aggressors in a religious confrontation between the insurgent Pietist movement and the powerfully established Lutheran orthodoxy . . . And this initial difference of position allowed the Enlightenment Bible to thrive in Germany, thrive to such an extent that the enormous outflow of intellectual energy from England to Germany in the early eighteenth century was, by century's end, completely reversed, as Germany became the center of a vibrant biblical scholarship the envy of Protestant nations across Europe." Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 30, 256.

And though neither Cocalis nor Damrau mentions him, a closer examination of Karl Morgenstern's neologism, or rather of its sources, suggests that he, too, was deeply influenced by these "aesthetic metaphors." In the 1961 article in which he famously reveals that, contrary to critical consensus at the time, it was Karl Morgenstern, as opposed to Wilhelm Dilthey, who invented the term *Bildungsroman* and first applied it to the novel, Fritz Martini makes a number of additional observations that, although less dramatic, are in many ways more significant. Three of those observations are central to our discussion here. The first is that the general "idea of cultivation [*Bildung*]" or training of an individual youth "through a harmony of aesthetic, moral, rational, and scientific education [*Erziehung*] had long been" the "common property [*Gemeingut*] of Enlightenment thought,"[16] an observation supported by both Cocalis and Sheehan. The second is that, while this common concept does, in fact, attain exceptional significance for German Enlightenment thinkers of all types, Morgenstern's specific preoccupation with "the presentation of universal cultivation (*Bildung*), the doctrine of a well-rounded cultural attitude, and an ideal of education concerned with the exercise of reason and feeling aimed at the whole person" largely follows a long and well-worn pedagogical "tradition going back to Cicero and Quintilian."[17] The third and most important for our purposes is that, though Morgenstern must technically be credited with the neologism, the texts and university lectures in which he coins it constitute in many respects a less sophisticated and only modestly revised restatement of several important ideas already set forth in Friedrich von Blanckenburg's seminal essay on the novel, *Versuch über den Roman*, published several decades prior, in 1774. Indeed, as Martini demonstrates, "Blanckenburg had" not only "already done considerable groundwork" in laying the conceptual

[16] Martini, "Term and Theory," 5; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 47.
[17] Martini, "Term and Theory," 7; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 48.

foundation for Morgenstern's theory, he had also already come "very close to coining the term Bildungsroman" itself, advancing its most important ideas in all but name.[18]

Blanckenburg's book-length essay is extensive, leaves untreated virtually no aspect of the novel contemporary to him, and treats many of the themes that will go on to dominate discourse on the novel well into the twentieth century.[19] And though a full accounting of Blanckenburg's enormous practical and conceptual influence on Morgenstern would take us far beyond the scope of this project,[20] Morgenstern's conceptual debt to Blanckenburg is important for us here in a number of ways. The first is structural. Following Blanckenburg, who "first placed the novel as the 'modern' form on an equal footing with the classical epos," Morgenstern organizes his most significant and coherent *Bildungsroman* lecture around the now familiar idea that the epic "deals with the fate of peoples," "finds its historical position in the naive...'heroic epoch of a nation,'" and "presupposes openness to wonder, fantasy" and "enthusiasm." Whereas the novel, equal to the epic in stature and significance but different in terms of form and content, "appears as the narrative form of the enlightened modern period of history," wherein "miracles finally disappear," "reality reigns," "the law of causality announces itself loudly and clearly," and "'feelings, attitudes, [and] actions are those of the real world in educated (gebildet) society."[21] Cleaving closely to Blanckenburg's "first lengthy legitimation" of the novel "as the narrative

[18] Martini, "Term and Theory," 19 – 21; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 59 – 60.
[19] Robert Dye's article, published shortly after the *Versuch*'s 1965 rediscovery, provides an excellent summary and analysis of its "most interesting features." Dye delineates a number of ideas – such as point of view, the distinction between flat and round characters, and a particular concern with "das Innre des Menschen"– that, though they are often supposed to have been contributed by later critics, are already postulated in Blanckenburg's text as essential qualities of the early novel. Robert E. Dye, "Friedrich von Blanckenburg's Theory of the Novel," *Monatshefte* 60, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 113 – 140.
[20] Both Fritz Martini and Robert Dye, the latter citing the former favorably, mention the particulars of Blanckenburg's influence on Morgenstern. Both conclude, to varying degrees, that a significant portion of Morgenstern's ideas in the *Bildungsroman* materials, particularly the contents of Morgenstern's second lecture, is deeply indebted to Blanckenburg's essay. Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 124; Martini, "Term and Theory," 12 – 21; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 52 – 60.
[21] Martini, "Term and Theory," 15 – 16; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 56 – 57.

form of the modern era *vis-à-vis* the ancient epic,"[22] which goes on to be adopted and adapted much more famously by authors such as Schiller, Hegel, and Lukács, Morgenstern presents the novel as the literary form that both defines and reflects the quintessence of a "modern" period that he describes as the culmination or negated maturation of a universalized history of civilization, doubling as a history of literature, that begins in ancient Greece and continues into his own present day.

Blanckenburg and Morgenstern, echoing Shaftesbury and the Pietists' concern with inward education, also agree on the importance of what Blanckenburg calls "das Innre des Menschen" (the interior of man) to the form of the novel, another theme early developed by Blanckenburg that goes on to become central to later criticism and theory. Indeed, as Robert Dye has already noted and the first few pages of the *Versuch* establish, though many "aestheticians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Thomas Mann, E.M. Forster, and, of course, Morgenstern, "have emphasized the inner life as the novel's special province," Blanckenburg is "very near" the German "source" of that idea when he asserts the historical significance of *das Innre* and its "special pertinence" to the form of the novel.[23]

The concept of *das Innre* is central to Blanckenburg's thinking and he refers to it with some urgency throughout the essay, though he does not develop a complete theory or conceptual representation of the term, perhaps assuming that such would be self-evident to his contemporaries. Nevertheless, a functional understanding of the term's meaning within his text can be reconstructed by examining his language. Early in the essay's first section, Blanckenburg delineates his view of the differences between the epic (*Epopee*) and the novel (*Roman*). Using Fielding's *Tom Jones* as his example, he observes the following:

[22] Martini, "Term and Theory," 19; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 58.
[23] Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 121.

> So wie aber vorzüglich in der Epopee die **Thaten** des Bürgers, in Betracht kommen: so scheint in dem Roman das **Seyn** des Menschen, sein **innrer Zustand** das Hauptwerk zu seyn . . . Aber wohl kann uns **das Innre** des Menschen sehr angenehm beschäftigen. – Bey einer gewonnenen Schlacht ists nicht das Innre des Feldherrn, um das wir uns bekümmern; die Sache selbst hat ihren Reiz für uns; aber bey den Begebenheiten unsrer Mitmenschen, ist es der Zustand ihrer Empfindung, der uns, bey Erzählung ihrer Vorfälle, mehr oder weniger Theil daran nehmen läßt. Dies lehrt Jeden die Erfahrung. Sind es **Thaten** und **Begebenheiten**, die uns so sehr angenehm im Tom Jones unterhalten; oder ist es nicht vielmehr dieser Jones selbst, dieser Mensch mit seinem Seyn und seinen Empfindungen? Er thut nichts, wenigstens sehr wenig, das wir nur gut heißen können, und doch lieben wir ihn herzlich, und nehmen deßwegen sehr viel Theil an seinen Begebenheiten.[24]

My translation reads as follows:

> But just as the actions principally of citizens are considered in the epic, so in the novel the existence of man, his inner condition appears to be the primary value. . . The interior of a man can occupy us very pleasantly. – In a hard-won battle, it is not the Commander's interior that we care for; the thing itself has its attraction for us. But in the events of our fellow men, it is the state of their feelings that allows us, through the narration of incidents, to participate to a greater or lesser degree. This [participation in feeling]

[24] The emphases are Blanckenburg's. Friedrich von Blanckenburg, *Versuch über den Roman* (Berlin: Berliner Ausgabe, 2013), 16.

> teaches each the experience. Is it actions and events that so pleasantly entertain us in *Tom Jones*; or is it not much more Tom Jones himself, this man with his existence and his feelings? He does nothing, at least very little, that we could call only good, but we love him heartily all the same and for that reason participate very much in his [life] events.

Chief among Blanckenburg's revealing rhetorical dyads (*Bürger* vs. *Mensch*; *Feldherrn* vs. *Mitmensch*; *Taten* vs. *Begebenheiten*) is that which he establishes between "das Innre des Menschen" (the interior of [a] man) and "das Innre des Feldherrn" (the interior of a Commander). Contrary to the sense implicit in recent and contemporary understandings of the human interior, which we have recently established elsewhere,[25] we do not see in these usages of the term *das Innre* any strict antithesis between radically personalized interiors and their conceptually opposite exteriors, or between a personally enclosed psychological space and a set of strictly exterior conditions said to influence it. He rather establishes, similar to what Lukács will do more than a century and a half later in his classic essay "Narrate or Describe,"[26] a much subtler contrast between two methods of representing human events and conditions,[27] one putatively more indicative of genuine human significance than the other: "das Innre des Fedherrn" (the interior of the Commander), which Blanckenburg likens to "die Thaten des Bürgers" (the actions of citizens) does not elicit empathy in the reader and thus cannot represent

[25] We argue elsewhere that conceptualizations of interiority have shifted significantly since the eighteenth century, becoming increasingly personalized and spatialized, especially since the beginning of the twentieth century. Eduardo Lerro, "Some Dark Interiority: A Brief Conceptual History," in *Inventing Agency: Essays on the Literary and Philosophical Production of the Modern Subject*, ed. Claudia Brodsky and Eloy Labrada (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 28 – 50.

[26] Within a general discussion of the representation of action in narrative fiction, Lukács, while comparing the racing scenes in *Anna Karenina* and *Nana*, famously claims that, "In Zola the race is *described* from the standpoint of an observer; in Tolstoy it is *narrated* from the standpoint of a participant." Lukács, *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, ed. Arthur Kahn (London: Merlin Press, 1970), 111.

[27] For more on Lukács's relation to Blanckenburg, see Rüdiger Campe, "Form and Life in the Theory of the Novel, *Constellations* 18, no. 1 (2011): 53 – 66.

the genuine “Reiz“ (attraction) inherent in “die Sache selbst“ (the thing [of interest] itself). That power Blanckenburg reserves for “das Innre des Menschen“ (the interior of [a] man), which he likens to the “Begebenheiten unsrer Mitmenschen“ (the events of our fellow men) and which, he claims, are better capable of revealing to the reader the “Zustand ihrer Empfindung“ (the state of their [fellow men’s] feelings) by way of empathetic “Erzählung“ (narration). In turn, these affairs, the reading of which Blanckenburg describes as participatory in nature, are, as they will be for Morgenstern and many others, also necessarily didactic: the act of reading a novel is also an act of “Theil” “nehmen“ (participation) that “lehrt“ (teaches) each reader “die Erfahrung“ (the experience) of the exemplary “Mensch” (person), in this case Tom Jones, about whom he or she is reading.

For Blanckenburg, then, “das Innre des Menschen” refers to the cumulative effects of the novelist’s comprehensive representation of the affecting and conditioning context of human affairs, inside which a novel’s characters function, with which a novel’s readers can identify, and from which those same readers can empathetically learn while reading. One name that Blanckenburg gives for the comprehensive narrative construction of this effect, which Morgenstern will go on to rename and recapitulate without foundationally re-conceptualizing, and which marks the third important area of agreement between Blanckenburg and Morgenstern for our discussion here, is *Ausbildung*, or “education.” Blanckenburg uses this term throughout his essay, both directly and in numerous cognate and synonymous forms (*Bildung*, *Verbildung*, *Entwicklung*, *Erziehung*, *Formung*, etc.) when describing the significance of the novel. Later in the *Versuch*, towards the middle of its second half, when discussing how the novel differs from the Shakespearean drama, Blanckenburg makes the following brief but revealing observation:

> Hierinn liegt auch der eigentliche Unterschied zwischen Drama und Roman. So wie jenes die Personen braucht, damit eine Begebenheit ihr Daseyn erhalte, weil, wenn wir Shakespears historische Schauspiele ausnehmen, nur **eine** Begebenheit der eigentliche Innhalt desselben ist, eben so hat der Roman mehrere und besondere Begebenheit, die sich in einem größern Umfange von Zeit zutragen, mit einander zu verbinden; und diese Verbindung kann nun nicht anders, als natürlich durch die Formung und Ausbildung, oder **innre** Geschichte eines Charakters erhalten werden.[28]

My translation reads as follows:

> Herein also lies the real difference between the drama and the novel. Just as the drama requires persons, from whom an event receives its life – for if we exempt Shakespeare's historical plays, the actual content of a drama is only a single event – so the novel must unite with one another various and particular event[s], which take place within a greater scope of time; and this connection cannot well be maintained other than naturally through the formation and education, or inner history of a character.

As we saw with the comparison he draws between the epic and the novel, Blanckenburg's interpretive emphasis here remains on events. This time, however, his focus has moved from the empathetic and didactic content of those events to the temporal structure undergirding them. Any drama, of course, regardless of its author, must necessarily consist of many types of individual actions and scenes of varying significance, with actors coming and going, changing costumes, speaking their lines, moving about the stage, gesticulating, etc. But

[28] Blanckenburg, *Versuch*, 188.

these more functional actions and movements do not qualify as "Begebenheiten" (events) for Blanckenburg and should be understood to function here more like "die Thaten des Bürgers" (actions of citizens), against which he contrasts the "Thaten und Begebenheiten" (actions and events) depicted in *Tom Jones* when comparing the novel to the epic. For Blanckenburg, all dramas, with the sole exception of Shakespeare's historical plays, ultimately consist of only a single significant event. Whereas the novel distributes the potential for significance over a greater period of time and focuses it within the development of a single character, whose "Formung und Ausbildung, oder innre Geschichte" (formation and education, or inner history) provide a stabilizing narrative "Verbindung" (connection).

The most important element undergirding Blanckenburg's implicit theory of event here is no doubt his conceptualization of a novel's central character, which he credits with nothing less than maintaining (*erhalten*) the capacity to represent multiple events and their respective moments of significance. This capacity in turn functions for Blanckenburg as the definitive constitutive difference between the drama and the novel. In order to establish the content of this genre-defining trait, Blanckenburg makes use of a striking summary analogy, in which he conflates the nouns *Formung* (formation), *Ausbildung* (education), and *innere Geschichte* (inner history). Grammatically speaking, within the clause they describe, the words *Formung* and *Ausbildung* together form the compound subject of the prepositional phrase beginning with the word *durch* (through). The phrase *innre Geschichte* (inner history) functions as an appositive for that compound subject, establishing a grammatical analogy among the three terms, so that their meaning becomes functionally synonymous within this usage. And though the genitive construction *eines Charakters* (of a character) must be rendered in English as a prepositional phrase and thus expresses a different sense in an English translation than it does in

Blanckenburg's more deeply inflected German, it remains clear in both languages that its ultimate function is to attribute the qualities of the now conflated nouns to his conceptualization of a character, which in turn holds together his conceptualizations of time and genre.

Though the words *Formung*, *Ausbildung*, and *innre Geschichte* should not ordinarily be thought of as synonymous, they do share at least one common element that, when applied to the concept of a literary character, takes on interesting significance. Namely, they all necessary function under the rubric of temporality: nothing can be formed, educated, or occur historically outside of a time horizon within which that thing – in this case, the significant "events" that describe a character's temporal progress – can be said to unfold. Each of the three words thus necessarily presupposes a temporal structure. Blanckenburg implicitly acknowledges this fact when, early in the second half of the long sentence in which he contrasts the drama to the novel, his thinking moves directly from the word *Begebenheit* (event) to the *Umfange von Zeit* (scope of time) in which such an event or series of events must be said to occur, describing it as *größern* (greater) in the novel than in the drama. It is of course also true of the drama that its constitutive events – or, for Blanckenburg, its single significant constitutive event – must be said to take place over a period of time, as it must be true for all objects of aesthetic experience. But again, the focus for Blanckenburg here is not on the passage of time or temporality itself, but rather their potential contents: the novel distinguishes itself from the drama through its principal character, whose *Formung und Ausbildung, oder innre Geschichte* (formation and education, or inner history) form a *Verbindung* (connection) with the novel's *Begebenheiten* (events), which together in turn form the novel's expanded *Umfange von Zeit* (scope of time).

Blanckenburg's argument is elliptical and could be parsed according to any number of interpretive priorities, but the underlying facts of his usage remain the same: his theory, as it is

represented in this excerpt, rests first on the conflation of events with time; then on the conflation of time with character; then on the conflation of character with the synonymous concepts of formation, education, and inner history; and, finally, on the self-reflexive conflation of those now functionally metonymic terms with the assumptions undergirding the formal definition of the novel with which he begins. The representation of a novel's principal character's progressive development is thus indistinguishable from the events that comprise that development's temporal progress, and the conceptual foundation for the literary form that he deduces from that fact is itself indistinguishable from the scope of time within which those events represented within it are said to occur. For Blanckenburg, whose theory establishes a structural pattern from which conceptualizations of the *Bildungsroman* still seldom depart, and whose conflation of *Formung*, (formation) *Ausbildung* (education) and *innre Geschichte eines Charakters* (inner history of a character) so closely mirrors the form and content of the German translations of Shaftesbury's "inward form" (*innere Bildung*), "formation of a genteel character" (*Bildung*), and "good breeding" (*Selbstbildung*), the implied contents of that conflation have become synonymous not only with each other, but also with the functions of time and the theoretical form of the novel.

More importantly, however, Blanckenburg's failure actually to articulate the term *Bildungsroman* is itself not without its significance and marks an important difference between him and Morgenstern that links both authors to the longer critical history of the English novel. Though Morgenstern's most important lecture closely follows Blanckenburg's general concern with the modern form of the novel when set against the classical epic and other categories of literature, Blanckenburg's concern with genre is far more general. Writing several decades after Blanckenburg, during a period in which the number of novels and novelists in Europe expanded

explosively,[29] Morgenstern's essentially taxonomic task consists primarily of distinguishing one among many proliferating kinds of novel. Conversely, Blanckenburg, though he does develop important new generic terms,[30] remains in many ways more closely in line with discourse on the novel prevalent in early- and mid-eighteenth century England, which speaks of the novel much more broadly and as an emergent, rather than established, literary form. The concepts that Morgenstern borrows from Blanckenburg's theory and translates into the term *Bildungsroman* thus reflect and borrow from ideas already partially developed in England, both prior and contemporary to the appearance of Blanckenburg's theory.

It was a commonplace of early and middle eighteenth-century English novel criticism, for example, as Cheryl Nixon has shown, to rely on "pre-existing literary genres and modes," with many critics "calling the novel a romance, history, biography, epic, fable, story, or tale. The novel is variously considered" throughout the Enlightenment period "to be one of these many forms, a mixture of these forms, or a contrast to these forms."[31] Historical or moral justifications for or conceptualizations of the novel linking it developmentally to the medieval romance, which Blanckenburg also presents in the first section of his theory,[32] are also not uncommon,[33] though Blanckenburg's conceptualization of historical significance is centered more on German literature than that of his English peers,[34] among whom the romance is more generally

[29] Nixon, *Definitions*, 19 – 21; Martini, "Term and Theory," 18; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 57.
[30] Martini credits Blanckenburg with the invention of the term *Innerlichkeitsroman* (novel of inwardness), which he then links to German novels as late as those of Thomas Mann. Martini, "Term and Theory," 21; Martini, "Bildungsroman," 60.
[31] Nixon, *Definitions*, 40.
[32] After mentioning classical sources and possible connections to contemporary forms, he cites Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Le Roman de La Rose* as the first modern usage of the term "Roman" before moving on to German literature. Blanckenburg, *Versuch*, 9 – 10.
[33] Nixon, *Definitions*, 40 – 41.
[34] Blanckenburg refers to Wolfram von Eschenbach as "der älteste Romanendichter" "unter uns Deutschen" (the earliest novelist among us Germans), a point that Robert Dye also emphasizes in his summary. Blanckenburg, *Versuch*, 10; Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 120.

considered to be "French" in origin.[35] Also fairly standard throughout the period are Blanckenburg's concern with the greater degree of character individualization seemingly inherent to the novel genre;[36] with the moral duty of the novel, following the Horatian dictum to please and instruct (or, in Blanckenburg's words, "Durch das Vergnügen zu unterrichten");[37] with the presentation of an "organically ordered" and "unified whole" (or what Blanckenburg, in the first section of his essay, calls "ein vollkomen dichterisches Ganzes");[38] and with the legible and rational representation of cause and effect with respect to the motives and actions of those characters."[39]

Relative to the question of the *Bildungsroman* and its supposed origins, however, the most important particular similarity among Blanckenburg and his English peers is their mutual concern with what Blanckenburg ultimately calls *Formung* (formation), *Ausbildung* (education), and *innre Geschichte*, (inner history). For we find that, although they operate differently within the works of English novelists and critics, and although they ultimately come together according to a different set of intellectual priorities, a roughly synonymous understanding of these terms also partially undergirds some of eighteenth-century England's most revealing conceptualizations of the emerging novel, a detail of novel history we already partially uncovered during our discussion of Shaftesbury.

For Henry Fielding, whose general importance for critics of the novel cannot be overstated, and whose particular importance for Blanckenburg has already been demonstrated, the "history" of his characters is also of the utmost significance. Fielding uses the word or

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[35] Nixon, *Definitions*, 41.
[36] Nixon, *Definitions*, 47 – 52; Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 125.
[37] Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 114 – 120; Nixon, *Definitions*, 21 – 22, 53.
[38] Ultimately following ideas set forth by Aristotle, the idea of the novel as a whole poetic unity is a major concern for Blanckenburg throughout the essay, as it is throughout English criticism of the period. Nixon, *Definitions*, 47 – 52; Blanckenburg, *Versuch*, 12.
[39] Dye, "Blanckenburg's Theory," 128 – 132.

cognates of it more than two hundred times just within *Tom Jones*, beginning with the novel's complete title: *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*. In the novel's introductory dedication to "George Lyttleton, Esq," the word appears five times, all in reference to "this history" of Tom Jones itself,[40] establishing early and clearly that Fielding wishes to distinguish if from prior literary forms. He in fact goes to considerable lengths to demonstrate the essential importance of this aspect of his book, referring to the "novel," which he mentions a total of only eight times, and the "romance," which he mentions a total of only fourteen times, merely as negations or counterexamples of the "new province of writing," of which he considers himself the "founder" and for which he claims *Tom Jones* should function as the consummate example.[41] As in Blanckenburg's overtly periodized theory of the "modern" novel, Fielding's implicit theory of genre is built upon and becomes essentially indistinguishable from an elliptical conceptualization of "history" that simultaneously describes a theory of character. So that genre, character, and "history" become unified under the rubric of a single, multivalent term. *The* "history" *of Tom Jones*, the book, is the first and best example of a new genre of literature, distinct from both the novel and the romance, which both represents a "new province" in the "history" of literary forms and describes what Fielding, closing the circle, calls the "history" of Tom Jones the character.

The implied intellectual content of Fielding's new genre also partially links to Blanckenburg. Early in the same dedication, Fielding makes the following remarks in tribute to a benefactor and a friend, ultimately praising them on the grounds that they resemble Tom Jones:

> Notwithstanding your constant refusal, when I have asked leave to prefix your name to this dedication, I must still insist on my right to desire your protection of this work. / To

[40] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3 – 6.
[41] Ibid., 67 – 69.

> you, sir, it is owing that this history was ever begun. . .without your assistance this history had never been completed. Be not startled at the assertion. I do not intend to draw on you the suspicion of being a romance writer. I mean no more than that I partly owe to you my existence during great part of the time which I have employed in composing it . . . If there be in this work, as some have been pleased to say, a stronger picture of a truly benevolent mind than is to be found in any other, who that knows you, and a particular acquaintance of yours, will doubt whence that benevolence hath been copied? The world will not, I believe, make me the compliment of thinking I took it from myself. I care not: this they shall own, that the two persons from whom I have taken it, that is to say, two of the best and worthiest men in the world, are strongly and zealously my friends. [42]

Although Fielding's always brilliant sense of formal irony certainly underscores the better part of his comic language here, there are no doubt some misogynistic undertones to his insistence that, in crediting his male friend with helping him to create his "history," he does not mean to impute to him the "suspicion" of being a "romance writer," which here amounts to something little better than an emasculating insult and thus illuminates a gendered substructure to Fielding's historicized genre distinction that echoes throughout the text, as well as Fielding's view of literary history: defective males and immoral women write "false," "counterfeit," and "monstrous" novels and romances that contribute to "scandal," "calumny," and other moral hazards; whereas righteous and aesthetically upright males, such as Fielding and his male friends, exemplify and reproduce a serious, "genuine," and "historic kind of writing" that is also

[42] Ibid., 3.

morally improving.[43] Moreover, and more central to our discussion here, the substance of that exemplification, which in turn supplies the material for the new form of "history," terminates for Fielding, as it does for Blanckenburg, in a verbally represented "picture" of internal content, in this case the corresponding "mind[s]" of Tom Jones, George Lyttleton, and Fielding's benefactor, the capacity to represent which is supposedly "stronger" in Fielding's new form of "history" than in "any other" literary "work" produced so far. *Tom Jones* describes for Fielding a historically significant improvement upon prior literary forms in part because it also describes an advancement in representing the "mind," or what Blanckenburg, when referring to the significant *Begebenheiten* (events) that comprise the temporal course of the same novel, clearly echoing Shaftesbury, calls *das Innre* (the interior).

The word "history" necessarily implies diachrony. And though Fielding does not conflate, as Blanckenburg does, the "education" (*Ausbildung*) of Tom Jones's "interior" (*Innre*) with the "events" (*Begebenheiten*) that make up his "history" (*Geschichte*), nor asserts a causal

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[43] For example, in Book IX, Fielding writes, likely with Richardson in mind, that, "Among other good uses for which I have thought proper to institute these several introductory chapters, I have considered them as a kind of mark or stamp, which may hereafter enable a very indifferent reader to distinguish what is true and genuine, in this historic kind of writing, from what is false and counterfeit. Indeed, it seems likely that some such mark may shortly become necessary, since the favourable reception which two or three authors have lately procured for their works of this nature from the public will probably serve as an encouragement to many others to undertake the like. Thus a swarm of foolish novels and monstrous romances will be produced, either to the great impoverishment of booksellers, or to the great loss of time and depravation of morals in the reader; nay, often to the spreading of scandal and calumny, and to the prejudice of the characters of many worthy and honest people."

Contrast this to Book X, wherein we find the foolish and grasping "Irish gentleman" reading "Mrs Behn's novels" and confusing them for "good literature": "Next to the lady's chamber was deposited the body of an Irish gentleman who arrived too late at the inn to have been mentioned before. This gentleman was one of those whom the Irish call a calabalaro, or cavalier. He was a younger brother of a good family, and, having no fortune at home, was obliged to look abroad in order to get one; for which purpose he was proceeding to the Bath, to try his luck with cards and the women. / This young fellow lay in bed reading one of Mrs Behn's novels; for he had been instructed by a friend that he would find no more effectual method of recommending himself to the ladies than the improving his understanding, and filling his mind with good literature. He no sooner, therefore, heard the violent uproar in the next room than he leapt from his bolster, and, taking his sword in one hand, and the candle which burnt by him in the other, he went directly to Mrs Waters's chamber." Ibid., 422, 457 – 458.

connection between the diachronic representation of what he calls the "mind" and the consecutive events that make up the course of his "new" form of "history," later eighteenth-century English literary critics come much closer to endorsing this central tenet of Blanckenburg's view. In May of 1779, five years after the publication of Blanckenburg's *Versuch*, English critic William Craig writes a revealing essay in *The Mirror* concerning "the two methods by which a character may be delineated." Using Theophrastus and La Bruyere as his respective examples of the finest ancient and modern "authors who have excelled in" the art of "drawing characters," he concludes the essay's opening paragraph with the general observation that, "beside those who have professedly confined themselves to the delineation of character, every historian who relates events, and who describes the disposition and qualities of the persons engaged in them, is to be considered as a writer of characters."

A character can, according to Craig, be "delineated" according to two general methods: either by "describing the internal feelings of the mind" and "relating the qualities with which the person is endowed," as La Brueye does; or, following Theophrastus, by giving "an account" of a character's "external conduct, of his behavior on this or that occasion, and how he was affected by that event," "without mentioning in general the internal qualities which he possesses."[44] Each method has its "peculiar advantages" and shortcomings for Craig, as have each of the different styles of writing. But it is to "novel-writers" who "attend more to the story and to the circumstances they relate, than to giving new and just views of the character of the person they present" that Craig directs the severest censure. Before concluding that Richardson and Fielding are two among only a small number of "novel-writers" able, "in place of relying upon the mere force of incident," to "bring the characters of their personages fully before us, paint all their

[44] William Craig, "Of the Art of Drawing Characters in Writing," in *The Mirror. A Periodical Paper Published at Edinburgh in the Years 1779 and 1780* (London: A. Strahan, T. Cadell, and W. Creech, 1779 – 1780), 1: 211 – 213, https://archive.org/stream/mirrorperiodical01mackiala#page/216/mode/1up.

shades and attitudes, and by making us, as it were, intimately acquainted with them, deeply engage our hearts in every circumstance which can affect them,"[45] Craig dilates at some length upon the negative aesthetic effects of comparatively lesser novelists' abilities, claiming that:

> The great error. . . into which novel-writers [other than Richardson and Fielding] commonly fall, is, that they attend more to the story and to the circumstances they relate, than to giving new and just views of the character of the person they present. Their general method is to affix names to certain personages, whom they introduce to their readers, whom they lead through dangers and distresses, or exhibit in circumstances of ridicule, without having it in view to illustrate any one predominant or leading principle of the human heart; without making their readers one bit better acquainted with the characteristic features of those persons at the end of the story than at the beginning.[46]

Writing two decades after the publication of *Tom Jones*, following what Cheryl Nixon has aptly called the "immediate canonization" of "Richardson and Fielding" as "preeminent" "fathers of the novel" in England,[47] Craig's text reflects a more stable understanding of what we now call the novel and the novelist: we do not find here as thorough a conflation of the form of the novel with the form of history, though their respective contents and modes of representation for Craig still clearly overlap; nor does Craig hesitate to call Fielding a novelist and his product a novel, though Fielding ironically rejects both terms. The historical substructure shared by Fielding and Blanckenburg has not, however, been entirely abandoned, a fact made apparent by Craig's failure, while framing the content of his essay, to distinguish between "those who have

[45] Ibid., 213 – 215.
[46] Ibid., 215 – 216.
[47] Nixon, *Definitions*, 46.

professedly confined themselves to the delineation of character" and "every historian who relates events, and who describes the disposition and qualities of the persons engaged in them." Like it does for Blanckenburg and Fielding, the concept of "history" continues to underwrite Craig's representation of the most basic attributes of the novel and the novelist, though the emphasis for Craig is much more firmly centered on function: "writers" in general, be they ancient or modern, who "delineate" or "describe" the "disposition" and "qualities" of "persons" engaged in "events" are, for Craig, "to be considered" "writer[s] of characters," irrespective of what they write.

Craig's representation of the methodological "delineation of character," similar in principle to Blanckenburg's reverberating distinction between less and more meaningful events, differs from Fielding's claims regarding the power of the new form to represent the "mind" in that it cleaves more closely to an explicit comparative binary when distinguishing between the "internal feelings of the [character's] mind" and the character's "external conduct" and "behavior on this or that occasion." And the purpose of Craig's distinction admittedly differs from both Blanckenburg's and Fielding's: Craig uses the distinction in order to separate good from bad novels, but he does not claim that bad novels are not novels; whereas Fielding and Blanckenburg, as well as Morgenstern, make the focus on interiors a constitutive and exclusive element of the genre itself. All three authors are in agreement, however, in claiming that the finest novels – particularly *Tom Jones*, of which they all approve – focus on or achieve the convincing representation of a kind of internal content. Though for different reasons and with varying levels of emphasis, Blanckenburg, Fielding, and Craig agree that what each respectively calls "das Innre," the "mind," and "internal feeling" describes an essential characteristic of good novels, something a novel either cannot do without or cannot exist without.

Yet, the primary purpose of Craig's distinction between the "internal" and the "external" is not the distinction itself, but rather what that distinction signifies relative to a novel's capacity to represent meaningful change over time. For Craig, attending "more to the story and" "circumstances" "without having it in view to illustrate any one predominant or leading principle of the human heart" is a "great error" principally because doing so prevents a writer from "making" his or her "readers one bit better acquainted with the characteristic features of those persons at the end of the story than at the beginning." Merely "to affix names to certain personages" and "lead them through dangers and distresses" is not enough for Craig, who, echoing Blanckenburg's focus on progressive temporal development as well as his insistence that the novel achieve its most definitive effect by means of a more comprehensive representation of meaningful context than can be achieved through the simple description of "circumstances," insists that the novel's reader ought to be "better acquainted" with the "human heart" and "features" of a character's "mind" "at the end of the story than at its beginning." In order for a novel to qualify as a novel of any real value, for Blanckenburg and Morgenstern as much as for Craig, its readers must be able to recognize that its "personages" have over its course developed *internally*, that they have within a discrete period of time done something more than merely move through random or purposeless "exterior" "events" or merely entertaining "circumstances" that do not "deeply engage" their readers' "hearts in every circumstance which can affect them."

To "engage the heart" of a reader in the service of illustrating the internal development of a character is necessarily to imply the possibility of a direct internal connection between the contents of the novel containing that character and the person reading it, a function of rhetoric made literal by Craig's failure to distinguish between fictional "personages" and actual persons, both in the final sentence of the longer citation above and throughout his essay. Again redolent

of Blanckenburg, for whom the act of reading a novel has already been shown to be an essentially participatory activity endowed with the capacity to "teach" (*lehren*) the "experience" (*Erfahrung*) of a "person" (*Mensch*) to its readers, Craig's representation of the internal development of a character relies above all on an unstated pedagogical theory whose contents still closely resemble Shaftesbury's resonating "aesthetic metaphors": what Shaftesbury might call the "inward form" of both character and reader are mutually implicated in a reflective and reflexive act of development, wherein the "formation" of both parties' "character" occurs simultaneously over a discrete period of time and results in visible, mutually interdependent growth. The "experience" of the novel forms and "teaches" the reader as much as the reader "teaches" and forms the "experience" of the novel.

On this point, Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Fielding, and Craig all agree. And though Shaftesbury does not write on the novel in the form that it existed for Fielding and those writing in his wake, his conceptualization of the power of literature and art more generally to reflect and transform its readers' "sentiment" clearly expresses a strong conceptual resemblance to these later views. In Part IV, Section II of the essay "*Sensus Communis*: An Essay On the Freedom of *Wit* and *Humour*," which forms the second chapter of the first volume of the *Characteristicks,* Shaftesbury makes the following set of observations on the "engaging and pathetick" "Beautys" that "*Artists*" of "whatever kind" create:

> Of all other Beautys which *Virtuosos* pursue, *Poets* celebrate, *Musicians* sing, and *Architects* or *Artists,* of whatever kind, describe or form; the most delightful, the most engaging and pathetick, is that which is drawn from real *Life,* and from the *Passions.* Nothing affects the Heart like that which is purely *from it-self,* and *of its*

own nature; such as *the Beauty of Sentiments, the Grace of Actions, the Turn of Characters,* and *the Proportions and Features of a human Mind.* This Lesson of Philosophy, even a Romance, a Poem, or a Play may teach us . . . Let Poets, or the Men of Harmony, deny, if they can, this Force of *Nature,* or withstand this *moral Magick.* They, for their parts, carry a double portion of this Charm about 'em. For in the first place, the very Passion which inspires 'em, is it-self *the Love of Numbers, Decency and Proportion;* and this too, not in a narrow sense, or after a *selfish* way, (for who of them composes for *himself?*) but in a friendly social View; for the Pleasure and Good of others; even down to Posterity, and future Ages. And in the next place, 'tis evident in these Performers, that their chief Theme and Subject, that which raises their Genius the most, and by which they so effectually move others, is purely *Manners,* and the *moral Part.* For this is the Effect, and this the Beauty of their Art; "in vocal Measures of Syllables, and Sounds, to express the Harmony and Numbers of an inward kind; and represent the Beautys of a human Soul, by proper Foils, and Contrarietys, which serve as Graces in this Limning, and render this Musick of the Passions more powerful and enchanting."[48]

Shaftesbury's 1711 work, whose elemental importance for the philological history of *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* has already been demonstrated, is immediately recognizable as the product of an earlier era than the rest of the works we have examined here. And though the concern with the moral function of the novel demonstrated by Fielding, Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, and Craig obviously finds an antecedent corollary in Shaftesbury's language of

[48] Anthony A. Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* ed. Douglas den Uyl (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 1: 85 – 86, http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/811#lf5987_mnt022.

"*Manners*" and "the *moral part*," the later writers have abandoned the rationally inflected mathematical rhetoric undergirding his *"Love of Numbers, Decency*," "*Proportion*, " and "Harmony," as well as his language of "Graces" and "Beautys." The later writers are also much more concerned with genre, mostly eschewing expansive statements about art in general in favor of arguments that privilege specific traits and attribute them to the novel or novels.

Nevertheless, aside from the ubiquitous Horatian dictum, which Shaftesbury does not make explicit in this citation but which makes itself apparent in his approval of "the moral part" of "manners" that are also "enchanting" and created "for the Pleasure and Good of others," we find several additional similarities whose explication is essential to understanding the relevant connections among these authors. The first is that the most important content, for art in general or for the novel in particular, has primarily to do with what Shaftesbury calls the "inward part," and what we have already demonstrated that Blanckenburg calls "das Innre," Fielding calls the "mind," and Craig calls the "mind" and "human heart." And though Blanckenburg's treatment of the concept is certainly intensive and insistent, none of our authors attempts self-consciously to account for or theorize this inward content. Yet, each of their theories nonetheless privileges a similarly focused inward orientation, making its representation, or lack thereof, an essential criterion for forming historical, ethical or aesthetic evaluations of various forms of art and literature, as well as the periods and peoples that create them.

All of our authors also share a central concern with what is now called realism, or what Shaftesbury calls the "Beautys" "drawn from real *Life*, and from the *Passions.*" An implicit bias in favor of such a "real *Life*" aesthetic criterion is evident in the preferential distinction that Fielding makes between the "novel" and the "romance" when set against his "new" mode of fictional "history," in which, according to the famous 1742 Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, which

echoes statements made about the emerging form of the novel dating back at least to the 1688 preface to Aphra Behn's *Oronooko,*[49] Fielding states that "every thing" in his book "is copied from the Book of Nature, and scarce a Character or Action" is "produced" within it "which I have not taken from my own Observations and Experience."[50] Following Fielding, Craig's inclusion of traditional historians among those writers who "delineate character" and thus have a responsibility to learn how convincingly to do so, as well as his general concern with characters whose ideal manifestations would plausibly balance "circumstances" and "mind" into well developed representations of "persons," also clearly betrays the same bias, as do Blanckenburg's concern with the legible representation of teachable human experience (*Erfahrung*) and the several analogies he makes linking the contents of the novel to sympathetically represented events (*Begebenheiten*), most of which Morgenstern adopts more or less undiluted.

All are also in agreement that a, if not the, central function of art, and most especially literature and the novel, is to "express" this "real *Life*" content by way of a direct connection allegedly tying affectively anthropomorphized events and experiences supposedly represented in literature to the apparently analogous experience of reading it. So that the "interior" content of literature is more or less understood to "teach" or communicate itself to the "inward part," "mind," or "heart" of the reader via the aesthetic "experience" of reading putatively mimetic literary representations. None of the authors we are discussing here uses such language to describe their respective formulations, but the singular implication of all of their works in this respect is clear and univocal. For Blanckenburg, and consequently for Morgenstern, the very distinction between less and more meaningful *Begebenheiten* (events), which also functions as a historical and aesthetic benchmark for measuring the form and content of the novel, is predicated

[49] Nixon, *Definitions*, 63 – 65.
[50] Ibid., 86.

upon the greater capacity of some anthropomorphically mimetic events over others to communicate a character's *innre Geschichte* (inner history) to a novel's reader and thus better to facilitate the sympathetic *Theil nehmen* (participation) of the reader's *Innre* (interior) in that character's corresponding inner history. For Fielding, his own new form of "history" inherently carries within it the capacity to represent to the reader a "stronger picture" of a human "mind" "copied" from his own "Experience" and "Observations," all linked together, through the processes of reading and writing, by a presumed mimetic correspondence linking the "mind[s]" of Fielding, Lyttleton, Tom Jones, and the reader. For the admirably economical Craig, in whose essay we find no real or figural distinction between fictional characters and actual persons, the primary function of "the character of the person" mimetically represented in the novel is to convey its own content directly to a novel's reader by making him or her "better acquainted" with its "human heart" "at the end of the story than at the beginning," thereby communicating a progressively developed "leading principle" directly from the "mind" of the character to the "mind" of the sympathetic reader over the course of that novel. And for Shaftesbury, that content of art which is "drawn from real *Life*, and from the *Passions*" "affects the Heart" of its audience or reader more than other kinds of content precisely because it is "purely *from it-self*, and *of its own nature*" and can reflect "in vocal Measures of Syllables, and Sounds" "the Harmony and Numbers of an inward kind" and therefore "represent the Beautys" of one "human Soul" to another, thus demonstrating another vital symmetry between Shaftesbury's "aesthetic metaphors" – so important to the Pietist translators of his work and their creation of the technical vocabulary of *Bildung* – and the foundational conceptual vocabulary of the *Bildungsroman*.

When taken together, these deep formal and conceptual symmetries among the works of Shaftesbury, Blanckenburg, Fielding, Craig, and Morgenstern force us to reconsider the

significance of Morgenstern's neologism at the same time as they provide a new way of interpreting contemporary approaches to the *Bildungsroman*. Karl Morgenstern's lectures, by virtue of the fact that within them he first definitively asserts the word *Bildungsroman* and thereby focuses what had been more general observations about art, literature or the novel into a discrete, if still vaguely defined, term, firmly established several traits of *Bildungsroman* discourse that have gone on to become its canonical features: a primary concern with *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* over other novels as the ultimate example of the genre; a closer argumentative association of this sub-genre with German, as opposed to English, French or other national literatures;[51] and, departing from Blanckenburg, whose principal concerns reflect observations about the form of the novel in general, an intensified alignment of the *Bildungsroman* with the claim that it represents a special kind of development, analogical to the educative acquisition of knowledge, better than other novels have done or are capable of doing.

Yet, as we have seen, other than the fixation on Goethe and German literature more generally, none of these traits is necessarily unique to Morgenstern's thesis and those that were not borrowed all but directly from Blanckenburg can also be found reflected in the fictional and critical work of Shaftesbury, Fielding, and Craig: the historical and formal concern with interiors; the advancement of a "real *Life*" aesthetic regime as the most effective mode of representing and communicating the content of those interiors; the prioritization of progressively represented diachronic development; the formal focus on didacticism and education; the deep

[51] Though Dilthey and Thomas Mann will bring this trend to its apotheosis in the early twentieth century (see footnotes fifty-two and fifty-three, this chapter), the specific association of the kind of novel that becomes the *Bildungsroman* with German literature is already present in Blanckenburg's selection of Wieland's *Agathon* as the narrative most representative of the form. Following critical convention at the time, *Tom Jones* also becomes a crucial historical marker for Blanckenburg, as has been shown. But the finest example of the form for Blanckenburg is nevertheless Wieland's. Morgenstern, too, discusses Wieland as an exemplary model, but he ultimately endorses *Wilhelm Meister* as the ideal representation of the genre, a judgment that both Dilthey and Mann will later adopt and advance more forcefully. Blanckenburg, *Versuch*, 11 – 12.

concern with the moral and social content and function of literature and the novel – all of these traits are also emphasized, to varying degrees, by all of the authors we have examined here.

Another way of stating Morgenstern's significance in light of these conclusions, then, would perhaps be to say that he takes what were for Shaftesbury, Fielding, Craig, and especially Blanckenburg the most important constitutive elements of art, literature or the novel, generally conceived, and recapitulates them as the most important constitutive elements of a single, narrowly conceived subgenre of German novels. In so doing, however, Morgenstern establishes a series of enduring historical and theoretical oversimplifications concerning the representation of intellectual development from which criticism on the novel has yet to recover. Morgenstern does not cite Blanckenburg and thereby creates the still lasting impression that the ideas underwriting his neologism are also original to it. Much of this undoubtedly has to do with obvious changes in scholarly expectations since the eighteenth century, as well as with the fact that the term was publicly coined in a series of university lectures, as opposed to a piece of scholarly writing or criticism. The general effect described, however, is not mitigated by these qualifications: Morgenstern does not acknowledge Blanckenburg and thus obfuscates his conceptual and historical debts to him to such a degree that, though Morgenstern is often mentioned in passing as the creator of the term, as he is in Sarah Maier's gloss cited above, Blanckenburg's name almost never appears in English-language resources and the *Versuch über den Roman* has never been translated into English.

Morgenstern's transformation of Blanckenburg's concern with the progressive internal education of a protagonist from a distinctive, general function of all modern novels into a special task reserved for a particular subgenre of German novels best exemplified by Wieland's *Agathon* or Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* has also occluded the fact that the representation of

intellectual development – what Shaftesbury calls "inward form" and "formation of a genteel character," Fielding and Craig call "heart" and "mind," Blanckenburg calls *Ausbildung*, and Morgenstern calls *Bildung* – is a central concern for many important English novelists and theorists, and that that concern predates Morgenstern's neologism by at least one hundred years. Much of this is certainly less Morgenstern or Blanckenburg's fault than it is Dilthey's, since the latter's more chauvinistic reconceptualization and widespread dissemination of the term, which in its turn leaves Morgenstern and Blanckenburg un-acknowledged, only intensifies Morgenstern's concern with Goethe, as well as Blanckenburg's already narrowing focus on German literature and its supposed link to a particularly German inwardness.[52] But insofar as the origin of the problem first becomes apparent in a term that Morgenstern invents and whose contents Dilthey merely rephrases, the cause of the problem, if not necessarily the greater part of its effect, must fairly be attributed to Morgenstern.[53]

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[52] After failing to come up with any nineteenth-century German novels that meet the putative criteria for inclusion within the prevailing definition of the *Bildungsroman*, Jeffrey Sammons in 1981 poses the following rhetorical question: "How can it have occurred that a phantom genre has been proclaimed as predominant and characteristic, while the broader and more commonplace genre that did exist has disappeared from our range of vision?" He answers the question by demonstrating that what he calls the "*Bildungsroman* legend" is intimately linked to nationalistic impulses in the Wilhelmine period, during which Dilthey re-introduced Morgenstern's term to modern critical usage. The traits chosen for inclusion within this "phantom genre" were, according to Sammons, deduced from novels that had in fact already been chosen for the purposes of establishing an essentially German canon of literature. So that the German novel canon as it emerged in the early twentieth century consists of those things that cleaved most closely to the nationalist standard. The dominant authors of this canon are Goethe and the German Romantics. Sammons mentions early Thomas Mann – who in 1916 claims that there is a "variety of the novel that is German, typically German, legitimately national, and this is just the autobiographically filled *Bildungsroman* or *Entwicklungsroman*" – as chiefly important in the establishment of this nationalizing legend. Mann later recants many of these views and radically alters his views of the novel and Germany, for obvious reasons. Yet many of the fundamental traits added by Dilthey to Morgenstern's term nonetheless persist, as we have seen. Sammons, "The Mystery of the Missing Bildungsroman, or: What Happened to Wilhelm Meister's Legacy?," *Genre* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1981): 239.

[53] Though he uses the word *Bildungsroman* in a number of places, the most often cited sentences from Dilthey's definition, which reflect the clearest articulation of its meaning for him and his many followers, read as follows: "Beginning with *Wilhelm Meister* and *Hesperus*, they [*Bildungsromane*] all portray a young man of their time: how he enters life in a happy state of naivete [sic] seeking kindred souls, finds friendship and love, how he comes into conflict with the hard realities of the world, how he

And finally, Morgenstern's unclear and un-rigorous application of the already loaded term *Bildung* to the equally Gordian term *Roman* has lent to the longer history of his neologism a rebarbative haziness that, even among some of recent history's most adept and respected critics, exceeds the tolerances of even the most flexible standards of scholarly rigor. Critics writing on the *Bildungsroman* in Morgenstern's wake have generally assumed without proving a universal similarity among variously complex theories and representations of intellectual development that encompasses, with little objection, works as diverse as Dante's *Inferno* and the biblical story of Joseph to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*,[54] George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, [55] and Hegel's *Phenomenology*.[56] And though the fact of these usages is interesting in its own right for any number of things that it might suggest about the state of critical standards, its significance here can be summed up succinctly by observing that, if it is true that the representation of intellectual

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grows to maturity through diverse life experiences, finds himself, and attains certainty about his purpose in the world."

Dilthey goes on to mention several other important factors, including "individualism," the "universally human," "personal" and "law-like" "development," and the progressive movement from one "level" of experience to the next. Dilthey does not spend as much time on the *Bildungsroman* as Morgenstern does and, like Morgenstern, most of what he advances is not new to him. Like the other authors we have discussed, he also fails to develop a more explicit idea of the content of the *Bildungsroman*, relying instead on the highly charged field of possible meaning surrounding the word *Bildung* to do that part of the work for him. Dilthey is also more concerned with perceptible levels, or identifiably significant moments of experience, than either Morgenstern or Blanckenburg is, though the distinction may be merely nominal, especially given Blanckenburg's concern with the cumulative effects of discretely represented events. The significant difference is that Dilthey names them. Aside from this, though his name is so often associated with the term, Dilthey's representation is generally less critical than Blanckenburg's theory and does not add much to Morgenstern's paraphrase of Blanckenburg. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works Volume 5: Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 334 – 350.

[54] For more on the *Inferno* and the biblical story of Joseph, see footnote one, this chapter.

[55] It has become a critical commonplace to claim that George Eliot, following Goethe, wrote *Bildungsromane.* By far the most often cited recent critic to make this claim is Franco Moretti, whom we will deal with at length in Chapter IV. Prior to Moretti's book, the most often cited scholarly treatment of the *Bildungsroman* in English was Jerome Buckley's 1974 *Seasons of Youth*. Buckley also spends some time on Eliot and her supposed *Bildungsromane*, though he does not attribute to her the ultimate formal significance that Moretti does. See Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 1987), 214 – 228; and Buckley, *Seasons of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 92 – 115.

[56] The subgroup of philosophers that has claimed or implied that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a *Bildungsroman* will occupy our investigation in Chapter I.

development is as important a topic for scholars of language and literature as the sheer scope of *Bildungsroman* discourse should rationally lead us to believe, it cannot also be true that such a historically, thematically, and generically diverse group of works, written by an equally diverse number of authors and containing many of the most original pieces of literature and philosophy, could possibly represent that concept similarly enough to warrant the use of a single term. The time is therefore long overdue for the un-rigorous *Bildungsroman* concept to be dissevered from the various representations of intellectual development whose existence it conceals.

Section I

Hegel and the *Bildungsroman*

Chapter I

Uses and Abuses of the *Bildungsroman* Analogy, Part I:

Walter Kaufmann, M.H. Abrams, and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Philosophical and philosophically related critical discourse involving the *Bildungsroman* can generally be divided into four sub-groups: that which draws an analogy from the *Bildungsroman* to Hegel's *Phenomenology* in order to explain the contents of the *Phenomenology*;[1] that which draws an analogy from the *Bildungsroman* to Hegel's *Phenomenology* in order to explain works or literary phenomena other than Hegel's *Phenomenology*;[2] that which represents the *Bildungsroman* not as a literary form but rather as a disfiguring or tendentious style of reading that ends in predictably poor interpretations;[3] and that

[1] The subgroup of philosophers that has claimed or implied that the *Phenomenology* is a *Bildungsroman* includes some of the twentieth century's most pre-eminent and influential interpreters of Hegel. They include Josiah Royce, Jean Hyppolite, Walter Kaufmann, and their numerous respective followers. All three of these authors, to varying degrees, discuss Hegel's work within the literary, philosophical, and social contexts of Hegel's own time and place. They also introduce the conceptual analogy from the *Bildungsroman* to the *Phenomenology* in order to illuminate the narrative structure of Hegel's work and to establish thematic and historical continuities among Hegel and his peers, predecessors, and followers. Moreover, all three justify their respective employments of a *Bildungsroman* concept by referring directly to *Wilhelm Meister* (or to other works by Goethe) and Hegel's own use of the word *Bildung* within the *Phenomenology*. See Hyppolite, *Genesis and structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Cherniak and Heckman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 11 – 19; Kaufmann, *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1965), 20 – 27; Kaufmann, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1965), 1, 34; Royce, *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), 147 – 156.

[2] For a more recent example than Abrams's, see John Kadvany, who refers to the *Phenomenology* as an "appropriation" of Goethe's "very first *Bildungsroman*." From that somewhat shaky foundation, he nevertheless rather brilliantly argues that the work of Imra Lakatos, the renowned philosopher of mathematics, amounts to a "mathematical *Bildungsroman*" that "has its most proximate ancestor in Hegel's" *Phenomenology*, the "great *Bildungsroman* of Western philosophy." See Kadvany, "A Mathematical Bildungsroman," *History and Theory* 28, no. 1 (1989): 33.

[3] For a typical example, see Alberto Medina, who criticizes thinkers such as philosopher Jürgen Habermas and theologian Gianni Vattimo for reading the events surrounding Spain's "transition to democracy" too much like a *Bildungsroman* and thus both misunderstanding and misrepresenting its

which relates to theories of *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* but does not involve itself significantly with Hegel.[4] Taken together, these four groups include the works of several highly influential interpreters of literature and philosophy. And though all of them are in some way relevant and illuminating with respect to the discourse on the *Bildungsroman* in opposition to which our thesis positions itself, we will focus in this chapter mainly on two authors, M.H. Abrams and Walter Kaufmann, whose influential but problematic conceptualizations of the *Phenomenology* offer the clearest insight into the rhetorical functions and internal logic of the *Bildungsroman* analogy as it applies to Hegel's thinking. Close analysis of these conceptualizations demonstrates that Kaufmann's and Abrams's arguments share a set of functions that run contrary to the method of interpretation upon which Hegel rests his theories of knowledge and consciousness. By falsely equating the representation of intellectual development presented in the *Phenomenology* to a vaguely conceived *Bildungsroman* concept, these re-appropriations of Hegelian thinking supplant Hegel's exacting philosophical method with alternately "romantic" or ideological analogies that effectively reduce Hegel's philosophy to an un-rigorous critical meta-narrative. In so doing, Kaufmann and Abrams misrepresent Hegel's conceptualization of intellectual development in the *Phenomenology* while also obscuring its differences from and relation to other representations of that concept. Their works thereby distort the legacy of Hegel's philosophy, strain the legitimacy of their own stated links to it, and demand

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potential and significance. Rhodri Hayward's objection to Strauss, as well as Ford's to Barth, both detailed above (Introduction, footnote 2), might also be included in this group, though they are more directly theological than philosophical in nature. See footnote two, chapter one; and Medina, "Over a Young Dead Body: The Spanish Transition as Bildungsroman," *MLN* 130, no. 2 (2015): 298 – 315.

[4] For recent examples, see Brendan Boyle, who relates the work of the philosopher John McDowell to the "novel of education," and Helena Feder, who places the term within the context of eco-criticism. See Boyle, "The *Bildungsroman* after McDowell: Mind, World, and Moral Education," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 2 (2011): 173; and Feder, *Ecocriticism and the Idea of Culture: Biology and the Bildungsroman* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).

a closer reconsideration of Hegel's actual representations of intellectual development, which we will perform in Chapters II and III.

In his classic, 1971 work on Romanticism, *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams includes his treatment of Hegel's *Phenomenology* within a wider discussion of Romantic preoccupations, best exemplified by Friedrich Schiller, with what Abrams calls an "overall view of the history and destiny of mankind" through which the "modern" period is presented as one of decline and "malaise." This condition is characterized by its concerns with a so-called "paradox of civilization" that imagines contemporary existence as constitutively conflicted by the reactionary nostalgia for "a unified life in which man is in complete harmony with himself and with other men." This conflict has been engendered by the attenuating burdens of assimilating emergent understandings of "progress" and knowledge to antecedent authoritative norms. Citing the especial – and now familiar – influences of the German Pietsts, Oetinger, Herder, Rousseau, and Kant on Schiller, in addition to the more general influences of Schiller, Lessing, Pascal, Fichte, Schelling, and "the Neoplatonic tradition" on European Romanticism more generally, Abrams introduces his treatment of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, in a section entitled "Romantic Philosophy and High Romantic Argument," by placing it at the "intersection" of three characteristic phenomena: "some English examples of a distinctive Romantic genre, the life story of the poet or creative spirit in his painful growth toward maturity and poetic power"; "the self-generating systems of subject-object philosophy" pioneered largely by Fichte; and "the contemporary [to Hegel] form of 'universal history,' which represented the history of mankind as an educational process in which the unitary self falls into suffering self-consciousness, on its circuitous way back toward a unification of its fragmented being."[5]

[5] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), 199 – 225.

Abrams next draws attention to the *Phenomenology*'s literary qualities, focusing particularly on Hegel's own insistence, in its Preface and Introduction, that "it is organized primarily in accordance with literary principles of structure, and persistently deploys typically literary devices." Before concluding, by way of yet another literary analogy, this time to Wordsworth's *Prelude*, that Hegel's "self-implicative puzzle-book" is also a "representative biography of a spiritual education" that, when "taken as a literary form, is thus one of the earliest, yet at the same time the most intricate and extreme, of modern involuted works of the imagination,"[6] Abrams then fashions his version of the link between the *Bildungsroman* and the *Phenomenology* as follows:

> Josiah Royce passingly remarked a half-century ago that Hegel's *Phenomenology* was akin to the contemporary *Bildungsroman.* We can be more precise and more circumstantial. By a remarkable feat of invention, Hegel composed the *Phenomenology as a Bildungsbiographie* which is in a literal sense a spiritual history. It is, in other words, a biography of the 'general spirit,' representing the consciousness of each man and Everyman, the course of whose life is a painfully progressive self-education, rendered in the plot-form of a circuitous journey from an initial self-division and departure, through diverse reconciliations and ever renewing estrangements, conflicts, reversals, and crises of spiritual death and rebirth. This plot turns out to be the unwitting quest of the spirit to redeem itself by repossessing its own lost and sundered self, in an ultimate recognition of its own identity whereby, as Hegel says in his concluding section, it can be "at home with itself in its otherness" (p. 549; B., 790).[7]

[6] Ibid., 228 – 236.
[7] Ibid., 229 – 230.

That Abrams's characterization subtly replicates a number of rhetorical tendencies latent within *Bildungsroman* criticism already detailed in the previous chapter – such as the focus on intellectual change, the emphasis on education, the Pietist language of self-examination and restorative reflection, and the link between the *Bildungsroman* and what Abrams is calling a "spiritual history" – should be obvious. More significant, however, is the movement of Abrams's thinking as he demonstrates them. Abrams begins the chapter on Hegel by placing him within the wider "Romantic" context detailed above, accounting for Hegel's particular concerns by ascribing or relating them to various tendencies of the so-called Romantic period: Schiller's recapitulation of Rousseau's morbid declension narrative; the related concerns of Herder, Lessing, and Schiller with *Universalgeschichte*; Fichte's language of the "absolute" or "pure Ego"; the desire generally to represent the *Bildung* of various conceptual entities for various "Romantic" or other reasons, etc. All of these phenomena, though presented brilliantly and historicized with perhaps unmatched acumen and erudition, are woven so tightly into Abrams's presentation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* that, while Abrams does not go so far as to denude Hegel's work of either its originality or its significance, a close reader of Hegel cannot help notice that the historicized representation of analogical correspondences through which Abrams conceptualizes and contextualizes its contents never actually addresses the internal logic of Hegel's reasoning. Though Abrams's astute and admirably concise description of the *Phenomenology* indeed accounts for its basic structure and contents while also displaying great respect for its formal complexity, nowhere does Abrams seek to ask why, aside from the fact that other figures in the period share some of Hegel's concerns, Hegel's phenomenological account

of those concerns and their theoretical relationship to human consciousness should have to take the form of something that finds itself so easily analogized to a kind of novel.

Instead, Abrams merely extends the metaphor: just within the few sentences cited here so far, we see direct generic comparisons to a "puzzle-book," a "spiritual history," a "life story," a "*Bildungsroman*," and a "*Bildungsbiographie*," to say nothing of the rest of the chapter. Indeed, throughout the book, which spans thousands of years of literature written in numerous languages and from the perspectives of widely dispersed cultures, Abrams's interpretive logic persistently relies on the unstated assumption that comparisons between and among otherwise dissimilar literary forms and rhetorical conventions should constitute the preferred grounds from which to postulate putatively stable shared categories of content. Thus Abrams has no trouble prefacing his presentation of the *Phenomenology* with historicized analogies to broad tendencies in Romantic literature and philosophy and then concluding it with an analogy to the *Bildungsroman*, relying upon the selectively pre-determined contents of his own analogies to over-determine the possible content of Hegel's thinking. Consequently, the analogy between Hegel's *Phenomenology* and the *Bildungsroman*, which fits into a much wider argument that itself also depends upon tendentious, content-driven analogies in order to determine an essentially "Romantic" content powerful enough to transcend any formal or historical limitation, does not, because it cannot, ever answer for the specific functions and strategies of Hegel's careful reasoning. Abrams's analysis rather begins by presuming that the *Phenomenology*'s contents are comparable to many other forms of supposedly "Romantic" literature, only to repackage those contents under the guise of another form of literature, to which Hegel's work is then linked by yet another formal analogy, *ad infinitum*. Such an analysis has the potential to tell us a great deal about how Hegel's work is similar to those other things Abrams has decided are

"Romantic," as well as the content and function of Romantic literature within Abrams's critical apparatus. But it tells us very little about how the *Phenomenology* might, when viewed independently, differ from either those "Romantic" historical tendencies to which Abrams dissolves its contents or those generic literary analogies through which its formal potential has been selectively circumscribed.

While establishing support for his analogy from the *Bildungsroman* to the *Phenomenology*, Abrams cites Josiah Royce's *Lectures on Modern Idealism*, which were delivered at Johns Hopkins University in 1906 and published posthumously in written form in 1919.[8] In a brief footnote to the same sentence in which he mentions Royce, which has not been reduplicated here with the rest of the citation for practical reasons, Abrams also mentions Walter Kaufmann's 1965 book, *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, as another support for his claim.[9] In the former case, Abrams's citation is slightly inaccurate; Royce does indeed compare the *Phenomenology* to *Wilhelm Meister* and *Sartor Resartus*; and he also describes a number of ways that those novels might help one better to understand the *Phenomenology*. But Royce never in fact uses the word *Bildungsroman*.[10] Nevertheless, Royce's comment is, as Abrams rightly notes, a merely passing one of relatively little significance to the larger point of Royce's lecture.[11] It does, however, retain some relevance for our discussion here insofar as it helps to illuminate a recurrent theme among works that link the *Phenomenology* to the novel in general or the *Bildungsroman* in particular: like Abrams's usage, Royce's comparison, which is the earliest that

[8] Royce, *Modern Idealism*, vii.
[9] Abrams, *Supernaturalism*, 510.
[10] Royce, *Modern Idealism*, 147 – 156.
[11] This is not to say, however, that they are not of some significance with respect to Royce's discussion of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Quite the opposite: of the roughly seventy-seven pages that Royce devotes to that book, nine deal with the comparison between it and "a type of romance" that "Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* had made prominent at that time." Royce draws the analogy in order to explain the *Phenomenology*'s "structure." Kaufmann and Abrams both repeat much of what Royce writes of Hegel in that chapter and their debt to him is substantial, references notwithstanding. Ibid., 136 – 212; 147.

we have been able to find in English that draws a direct comparison linking the *Phenomenology* to a novel,[12] is employed for the purposes of relating the form and content of the *Phenomenology* to a broader audience and thus serves the functional aim of teaching difficult and perhaps unfamiliar philosophical subject matter by means of a simplified and thus presumably more comprehensible analogy.

Kaufmann employs a similarly didactic strategy to Royce's, but he departs from Abrams insofar as his analysis remains fixed on explaining the *Phenomenology*, as opposed to a literary form or phenomenon external to it. Nonetheless, Kaufmann's presentation breaks down along similarly unsatisfactory lines, albeit for somewhat different reasons. Like Abrams, Kaufmann spends a great deal of time relating Hegel to his historical context, linking the contents of the *Phenomenology* to any number of external events and phenomena, some of them quite detailed and often quite far from the subject matter of Hegel's writing, such as the extended treatment of Hegel's illegitimate son that Kaufmann works into the chapter devoted to the *Phenomenology* in *Hegel: An Interpretation*,[13] or the later chapter in the same book, entitled "The Logic," in which Kaufmann devotes more than twenty-five of its only fifty-three pages to detailing German university politics and Hegel's relationships with and reception among his peers and followers.[14] The cumulative effect of these encumbrances is functionally similar to Abrams's dissipation of Hegel's distinctness to the demands of his synthetic "Romantic" thesis: Hegel the philosopher is effectively dissolved to Kaufmann's almost baroque presentation of Hegel's life, period, and

[12] We cannot, of course, be absolutely certain that Royce was the first to draw the analogy. But H.S. Harris also claims in *Hegel's Ladder I* – which may be the most carefully researched historical treatment of the *Phenomenology* ever to be written, matched in its knowledge of the secondary literature on Hegel only by Harris's other immensely well researched two-volume treatment, *Hegel's Development*, which deals with Hegel's intellectual biography – that the analogy was, in fact, first "popularized by Royce." See Harris, *Hegel's Ladder I: The Pilgrimage of Reason* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 18, 29.
[13] Kaufmann, *A Reinterpretation*, 87 – 92.
[14] Ibid., 163 – 215.

peers. To be sure, much of what Kaufmann covers in these materials, which include detailed publication and manuscript history, as well as Kaufmann's translation, which itself must be counted as an important scholarly achievement in its own right, represents revealing, disciplined scholarship. Nevertheless, though Kaufmann presents the work to which Abrams refers as a "reinterpretation" of Hegel, it contains more historical and personal re-contextualization of Hegel's life and period than it does substantive interpretation, much less reinterpretation, of Hegel's philosophy, a philosophical strategy that Hegel himself would likely object to.[15]

Moreover, much of what Kaufmann calls his interpretation often evades some of the more intricate technical problems that Hegel presents in his work. Much of the reason for this is undoubtedly attributable to Kaufmann's didactic purposes, which, like those of Royce and Abrams, sometimes evade complexity in favor of explanatory simplicity. Some of that evasion, however, irrespective of its cause or intent, is considerably more disfiguring than a mere instructional oversimplification and suggests some fundamental problems with Kaufmann's representation of Hegel's thinking. This is particularly true in relation to some of Hegel's more subtle formal concerns, which Kaufmann (and many other critics) consistently repackages as abstract doctrinal or ideological problems, rather than as concrete technical ones.[16]

Kaufmann presents his book specifically focused on the *Phenomenology*, entitled, *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*, as a translation of the *Phenomenology*'s Preface and Introduction set beside a facing page interpretive commentary. As is well known, the *Phenomenology*'s Preface

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[15] In the introductory remarks to his *Hegel Dictionary*, Michael Inwood rightly remarks that, "An introduction to a philosopher is usually felt to require an account of his life. But to introduce Hegel in this way might seem inappropriate. Not only was Hegel's life . . . relatively uneventful . . . Hegel himself was disinclined, both by temperament and by conviction, to allow the peculiarities of his life and personality to intrude into his philosophical thought". Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 19.

[16] Even among the most significant of Hegel's many commentators, such as Marx and Engels, the tendency to avoid engaging in detailed criticism of Hegel's technical thinking, particularly when to do so would weaken one's polemic, is widespread, as Andrew Cole has recently demonstrated. See Cole, *The Birth of Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), IX – XIX, 24 – 61, 65 – 103.

and Introduction, akin in many respects to Kant's *Prolegomena*, are of immense significance for scholars of Hegel and represent in condensed form many of the principles that Hegel will spend much of his later work defending and developing.[17] Early in the Preface, after making the now familiarly Hegelian observation that "Philosophy deals essentially with the general in which the particular is subsumed," Hegel draws an analogy between philosophy and the other sciences, stating that, "people do not suppose that the general idea of, say, the nature of anatomy – perhaps as the knowledge of the parts of the body, considered *qua* their lifeless existence – automatically furnishes us with the subject matter [of the science of anatomy] itself. Everybody realizes that, if we want possession of the contents of this science, we must also exert ourselves to master the particulars, the detail."[18] Yet, Hegel also claims in the following paragraph that, "such an aggregate of information" as those minute details would represent "really has no right to the name of science; and any discussion of its aim and other such generalities is usually no different from the manner in which the content – i.e., the nerves, the muscles, etc. – is discussed, too: in both cases, the manner is equally historical and void of Concepts."[19] A mere agglomeration of discrete, scientific data about the body's component parts, in other words, is as unhistorical and "void of Concepts" as is a merely conceptual, "general idea" of "the nature of anatomy" without any deeper consideration of the body's component parts. For Hegel, either aspect alone is useless in terms of revealing knowledge.

Hegel goes on in the following paragraphs to proffer his famous methodological solution to the philosophical version of this problem, which he draws by extending the disciplinary metaphor from the science of anatomy to the study of philosophy. This consists in the idea that

[17] Already in 1906, Royce writes that the *Phenomenology*'s preface "has become famous as the first formal statement of the programme of the coming Hegelian system of philosophy." Royce, *Lectures*, 156.
[18] Kaufmann, *Texts and Commentary*, 6
[19] Ibid.

all knowledge, in order to qualify as knowledge, can never be the product of a mere comparison between a putatively stable and universal idea of truth against which this or that thing can be compared once and for all. Knowledge for Hegel, speaking very generally and in terms relevant to explicating this citation, can rather only ever be the product of a rigorous methodological consideration of three criteria: a general disciplinary concept (anatomy, philosophy, etc.); the discrete details that make up the particular subject matter of that discrete discipline (the nerves and muscles in the case of anatomy, etc.); and what we would now call a historicized understanding of the ways in which changes in the relationships between that general disciplinary concept and its particular subject matter, when set against broader advances or conceptual changes in knowledge in other fields and in general, have over time described fundamental, transformative, and often contradictory changes in all three.[20]

To follow such a method, however, is immediately to involve oneself in the difficult problem of reconciling apparently contradictory competing claims to and definitions of the truth. "And the consciousness that is confronted with this opposition," according to Hegel, "usually does not know how to liberate" one putatively negating opposing claim "from its" own "one-sidedness," since that very one-sided claim necessarily entails the falseness of all other competing claims, whether they be made naively, from the perspective of a particularly one-sided subjective "consciousness," or from the perspective of someone attempting objectively to reconcile competing one-sided claims. Hegel's solution to this problem lies in what he calls the "fluid nature" of the competing claims themselves when viewed as part of a larger historical growth of knowledge, which "makes them, at the same time, elements of an organic unity in

[20] Ibid., 6 – 8.

which they not only do not conflict, but in which one is as necessary as the other; and it is only this equal necessity that constitutes the life of the whole."[21]

Hegel opposes this "whole"-istic approach to what he sees as an unfortunate but widespread tendency among his peers to become distracted by the smaller conflicts and contradictions engendered by the competing claims themselves and consequently to mistake the act of merely noticing that discord for the acquisition of real knowledge about the disciplines and concepts that engender those contradictory claims. Hegel mentions three ways in which this type of mistaken knowledge is conceived by and presented to posterity as both convincing and authentic: by explanations of "aims" or purposes; by explanations of "results" or effects; and by means of determining the mere "differences" among supposedly conflicting works. Such incomplete approaches are all problematic for Hegel because, "in stead of dealing with the subject matter, such talk is always outside it; instead of abiding in the subject matter and forgetting itself in it, such knowledge always reaches out for something else and really remains preoccupied with itself instead of sticking to, and devoting itself to, the subject matter."[22]

Up until this point, with some minor differences, our interpretation of Hegel does not significantly depart from that which Kaufmann presents in his footnote commentary. Our main objection to his mode of explaining Hegel's position comes from the commentary appended to the quotation from Hegel with which our preceding paragraph concludes. Kaufmann's footnote to that sentence reads as follows: "What is wanted is devotion. The philosopher, like a scientist, should devote himself to, and immerse himself in, his subject instead of trying to be interesting and different. Or as Hegel puts it later, what is wanted is 'the seriousness of the Concept.'[23]

[21] Ibid., 8 – 9.
[22] Ibid., 9 – 10.
[23] Ibid., 11.

It is in many ways true that Hegel, here and elsewhere, aims his work at what one might call the problem of scholarly "devotion" and thus attributes at least some of the problems he has with the definitions and conceptualizations of knowledge against which he is writing to failures of scholarly diligence, intellectual training, or character.[24] And it is also true that, to some extent, Hegel's historicizing revision to previous conceptualizations of knowledge hinges centrally on immersion in the kind of factual details that Kaufmann mentions and employs. But to conclude from this that the *primary* purpose of Hegel's statement here is to chastise his reader for not displaying enough "devotion" to his or her subject – the devotion of a "scientist," according to Kaufmann – is surely to miss the more subtle philosophical problem Hegel poses here.

The idea that Kaufmann's footnote seeks to illuminate actually consists of three related claims, two explicit and one implicit: that "such talk" that does not follow Hegel's method remains "outside" its own "subject matter"; that in so doing it also "remains preoccupied with itself"; and that it consequently misperceives or misrepresents what knowledge is. The referential locus of this problem for Hegel, however, is not the moral or doctrinal position of the scholar, as Kaufmann's "want of devotion" would have it, but rather the way of thinking *about thinking itself* that leads otherwise intelligent and capable persons to believe that mere elaborations of "aims," "results," and "differences" describe the content of knowledge. When Hegel claims that "such talk" remains "preoccupied with itself" and thereby evades both its own subject matter and real knowledge, he is describing, in order to object to, an un-self conscious way of thinking that begins and ends within the confines of the same "consciousness" without ever having departed from its own limiting assumptions, consistently leading the thinking subject back to the thinking

[24] In addition to what he writes here, Hegel also spends time excoriating various kinds of bad thinking and scholarship in a number of other places, including the infamous Introduction to the *Logic*. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 3 – 11.

subject herself and thus describing a closed circle. For Hegel, "such talk" has the capacity to reveal much about "itself," as well as the person doing the talking, but it can never arrive at true knowledge of its intended subject.

The nature of the problem Hegel describes here requires closer examination, as it is not necessarily apparent, *prima facie*, why what he calls "aims," "results," and "differences" should not in themselves describe the contents of knowledge, a fact that even Hegel acknowledges when making the claim. Kaufmann's translation of the section wherein Hegel sketches the skeleton of his reasoning on this subject, which in Kaufmann's text immediately precedes the footnoted sentence we have excerpted above, reads as follows:

> Where could one hope for a better expression of the core of a philosophical work than in its aims and results? And how can these be determined better than by noting their difference from that which the age generally produces in the same sphere? But when this procedure is taken for more than the beginning of knowledge, when it is mistaken for knowledge itself, then we must indeed count it among the devices for bypassing the real subject matter, while combining the semblance of seriousness and exertion with a dispensation from both. / For the subject matter is not exhausted by any aim, but only by the way in which things are worked out in detail; nor is the result the actual whole, but only the result together with its becoming. The aim, taken by itself, is a lifeless generality; the tendency is a mere drift which still lacks actuality; and the naked result is the corpse which has left the tendency behind. / In the same way, the difference is really the limit of the subject matter: it indicates where the subject matter ceases, or it is what the subject matter is not. Such exertions concerning the aim, the results, the differences

that may exist in this respect, or the critical judgments of aim and results, are therefore easier work than they may seem to be.[25]

The first sentences of this citation, which present the problem that Hegel is attempting to solve in the form of two rhetorical questions, notably intermix "aims," "results" and "difference" within a single temporal process. The first position within that process, however, is not the position from which the particular "consciousness" has already determined the "aims" and "results" of a particular work, but rather from the position of the rhetorical question itself, or rather from Hegel's need to ask it: Hegel's argument against the conclusion to which he objects begins before the "aims" and "results" themselves, and even before the question of any possible "difference" between that conclusion and another, with the formative assumption that descriptions of "aims" and "results" *should* finally express "the core of a philosophical work" in the first place. The rhetorical questions with which Hegel introduces his problem thus function as the conceptual place-marker for an implied set of widely held methodological assumptions about philosophy as a discipline that, according to Hegel, disfigure and foreshorten the possibilities of knowledge *in advance* of its articulation, at the level of the assumptions through which the work in question is conceived by its interpreting reader. Hegel's methodological revision to these assumptions, which he already identifies as a central problem for philosophy within these first few paragraphs, aims entirely to revise the way in which philosophers think about thinking itself.

Another way of saying this would be to say that the subject of the problem Hegel seeks to solve by posing the rhetorical questions at all is the *processes of thought* through which the validity of "aims" and "results" themselves is conceived. Thinking about the significance – or what Hegel here calls the "core" – of a particular philosophical work merely in terms of how its

[25] Kaufmann, *Texts and Commentary*, 8 – 10.

variously conceived "aims" (those of its author, for example) or "results" (those of its reception, for example) "differ" from the "aims" and "results" of works contemporary to it cannot lead to knowledge of those works because "aims" and "results" form only the "beginning" or conceptual starting point "of knowledge" about them. Calling the cognitive product derived from the processes that assume the opposite "must indeed count" for Hegel "among the devices for bypassing the real subject matter" and mistaking it "for knowledge itself" because, by offering "aims" and "results" as definitions of philosophical knowledge instead of as two among many possible pieces of data from which to construct a complete and unified description of a whole work, they end their discussion just where Hegel argues they should begin it. The cognitive act of applying "difference" as a metric for determining a work's "aims" or "results" relative to the "aims" and "results" of other works, and then calling the necessarily partial result of that analysis "knowledge," is a problem for Hegel because it represents an elliptical and erroneous method of thinking. Its product therefore describes an incomplete definition of knowledge.

And while it may be true that some measure of "devotion" is required to understand and satisfy Hegel's strict methodological demands, "devotion" itself is not the principal focus of Hegel's concern. Nor is it the most important prerequisite for avoiding the pitfalls of bad thinking. For if it were true that "devotion" to one's subject matter or immersion in the historical details of an author's period were in itself enough to avoid the problem Hegel is talking about here, we should expect in the place of a *Phenomenology* perhaps to find a moral treatise on education or a description of how to perform and catalog archival research. We rather find a text that anchors its entire historical argument from beginning to end in allusion, almost never clearly or definitively stating which event, historical fact, or significant figure its rhetorical gestures refer to. In direct opposition to the kind of factually encumbered analyses that Kaufmann,

Abrams, and many others have given us about him and his work, when Hegel himself discusses the persons or events whose thoughts or rational consequences he perceives to be significant, such details are resoundingly absent. In rigorous keeping with the stated goals and implied consequences of his own theory, Hegel spends almost no time presenting the kinds of detailed empirical information that Kaufmann and others offer us about Hegel. He prefers instead to derive his ideas and theories of historical significance from the consideration of rational thinking about thinking itself, and to present the results of that thinking according to the formal requirements of that method.

This is not necessarily to say that what Kaufmann claims, here or elsewhere, is factually or otherwise false, only that his evasion of a more precise expression of Hegel's thinking in favor of what we might call abstract generalities – the moral focus on "devotion" in place of a formal focus on the functions of thought within Hegel's larger argument, in the present case – enables the evasion of a more nuanced discussion of the concrete functions and therefore the precise contents of Hegel's reasoning. It thereby oversimplifies and misrepresents some of Hegel's most salient philosophical thinking. The pattern is a decisive and recurrent one for Kaufmann and he replicates it when drawing the analogy between the *Phenomenology* and the *Bildungsroman*.

Kaufmann refers three times to a putative conceptual relationship between Hegel and the *Bildungsroman* within the two books we are discussing here, once in *Hegel: Texts and Commentary*, twice in *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*. All three uses reveal similar tendencies, but the most illustrative comes in the introductory paragraph to section thirty-four of the latter book, sub-titled "Hegel's terminology," in which Kaufmann sets out a series of explanations for some of Hegel's more obscure uses of language. The paragraph reads as follows:

> Hegel himself, in his later years, called the *Phenomenology* his voyage of discovery. But in the preface he suggests that it is the odyssey of the world spirit. He himself does not refer to Odysseus or use this image, and in connection with something he does say I have suggested in the commentary (I.3.4) that the *Phenomenology* is the *Bildungsroman* of the *Weltgeist*, the story of its development and education. But a comparison with the Odyssey is no less suggestive than this comparison with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. In its search for a homeland where it can dwell in peace, the human spirit is shipwrecked again and again, has all kinds of adventures, many of them fantastic, and does not by any means seem to be making progress at every turn.[26]

Kaufmann's language here reflects some part of every critical objection we are making to the analytical position that the *Bildungsroman* has come to assume in critical discourse. It also shines a still brighter light on the historical problems detailed in the preceding chapter. Like Abrams does in support of his "Romantic" interpretation of Hegel while framing his conceptualization of the *Phenomenology*, Kaufmann moves fluidly among several literary conventions in order to determine a kind of quintessential conceptual function expressed by otherwise diverse generic exempla: the Homeric epic, the *Bildungsroman*, and the *Phenomenology* each essentially represents a "story" of the "development and education" of a central character, and this shared essential function necessarily implies a shared essential content. Following Royce, Abrams's and Kaufmann's arguments both also employ the analogy between the *Phenomenology* and the *Bildungsroman* as a didactic introductory frame; the analogy comes early in all three arguments and is presented as a conceptual framework into which one might fit the interpretation to follow. And, following Morgenstern and Dilthey, Royce, Abrams, and

[26] Kaufmann, *Reinterpretation*, 143.

Kaufmann each also names Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as the referential *Ur*-form of the *Bildungsroman* – or, in Royce's case, of an unnamed but nonetheless specific German subgenre of "romance" best exemplified by that novel – and relies on it to stand in for what that form has come to represent: all three authors follow the generally co-opting critical trend from Morgenstern onward, which re-casts the representation of what Kaufmann here calls "spiritual" "development and education" as a particular concern of German literature and philosophy best represented either by Goethe's exemplary novel or those works to which it can be analogically linked, which have now grown to include the *Phenomenology*.

More importantly, Royce, Abrams, and Kaufmann all rely on a commitment to the "real *Life*" aesthetic advanced nominally by Shaftesbury and implicitly shared among all of the authors whose work we have discussed. For all three alike, the conceptual analogy linking the *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* is based fundamentally on the idea that the verbal representation of what Kaufmann is calling "development and education" is essentially a mimetic representation of the functions and contents of the human intellect reflected in a piece of literature or philosophy. Kaufmann pushes the idea to its historicizing extreme, however, by grounding his use of the analogy in a string of interchangeable synonyms that entirely blurs any distinction between Hegel's mind, the contents of the *Phenomenology*, and the potential contents of anything to which the *Phenomenology* can be analogically linked. Similar in function to Fielding's representation of his own new form of "history," which reaches its apotheosis in a legible verbal "picture" of the corresponding minds of George Lyttleton, Fielding's benefactor, and Tom Jones the character, Kaufmann's representation of the *Bildungsroman* links Hegel's *Phenomenology* to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and Homer's *Odyssey* through the functions of the Weltgeist: Odysseus, Wilhelm Meister, and the "world spirit" each supposedly participates in a

"fantastic" transformational "odyssey" essentially similar in nature to the apocryphal "voyage of discovery" Hegel himself undergoes while writing the *Phenomenology*. Thus Kaufmann can unproblematically imply that Homer's epic, Goethe's novel, and Hegel's philosophy represent essentially the same mimetic "story" of intellectual "development and education."

Kaufmann's, Abrams's, and Royce's oversimplifying and abstract analogical linkages of Hegel's *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* lead, then, to the same place that we have already shown criticism on the *Bildungsroman* in the first chapter also to lead. And though Abrams and Kaufmann in particular clarify many important aspects of Hegel's work, their explanatory representations of the *Phenomenology* ultimately cannot escape the conceptually foreclosing power of the shared analogy through which they conceive them. For Kaufmann, Royce, and Abrams as much as for Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Fielding, Shaftesbury, and Craig, intellectual development is an essentially stable, verbally representable conceptual entity whose ownership changes but whose content and function remain fundamentally the same. Indeed, as Kaufmann's and Fielding's usages demonstrate particularly well when considered side-by-side, the internal logic of the analogy itself follows a naively realist line of reasoning that moves unquestioningly from the author's mind, to the text, to the reader's mind, then back to the mind of the author out of which it sprung. At each point in this process, the structure of the "history" or "story" being transmitted is presumed by all parties to remain the same, so that Odysseus, Hegel, Wilhelm, Tom Jones, the Weltgeist, and any given reader are all presumed to undergo, or at least to have the capacity to undergo , the same "naive" process of intellectual development.

Though Hegel is indeed "the severest of realists,"[27] even a reader relatively unfamiliar with the *Phenomenology* will by this point be able to recognize that, if what we have established

[27] H.S Harris rightly defends Hegel's commitment to realism and convincingly endorses the possibility of an ongoing Hegelian understanding of philosophy and history able to reconcile itself to contemporary

earlier in this chapter about Hegel's problem with the unsatisfactory epistemological methods of his peers is true, we cannot help conclude that this very method of reasoning, through which Kaufmann and Abrams conceive and present the analogy linking the *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman*, cannot comport with the methodological requirements for knowledge production, so essential to Hegel's motives and reasoning, which we have detailed above. For it is the very method of thinking through which Kaufmann and Abrams present the *Phenomenology* against which Hegel aims him polemic. And though Hegel's approach to knowledge is certainly not the only one available to those who wish to criticize his writings, in order to gain a complete picture of Hegel's representations of intellectual development and their actual differences from those presented by others, we must attempt to account for his methods when constructing our understanding of those differences.

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conditions. Contra Marx and theoreticians in his wake, who criticize Hegel for being too spiritual and abstract, Andrew Cole also stresses Hegel's often overlooked but nonetheless deep commitment to criticizing the "contemporary conditions" of his time and place. See Harris, "Would Hegel Be a Hegelian Today?," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 3, no. 2.3 (July 2007): 5 – 15; and Cole, *Theory*, IX – XIX.

Chapter II

Complex Intellectual Development:

"The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate"

Hegel's concern with what one might call the correct way of thinking about thinking finds consistent expression throughout the full range of his writings, from his earliest unpublished essays to his final published masterpieces.[1] This is certainly not to say that the contents of his intellectual concerns remain entirely stable. For, as numerous scholars have noted and a serious acquaintance with Hegel's writing demonstrates, Hegel's early works are characterized by an abiding concern with theology and religion that, though always of importance to Hegel, cedes its centrality to an intensified focus on philosophy and aesthetics as his thinking matures.[2] Several of these early essays are primarily concerned with the historical and intellectual significance of Jesus and the Christian religion and reveal in nascent form several concepts that will go on to become essential to Hegel's fully developed philosophical thinking.[3] Among these essays, as Charles Taylor has noted, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its

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[1] For a witty but accurate assessment of the importance of methodology within Hegel's thinking, see the section entitled "Intellectual Intuition" in Walter Cerf's introduction to Hegel's *Differenzschrift*. See Cerf, introduction to *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, by G.W.F. Hegel, translated by H.S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), *xxiv – xxxv*.

[2] The observation is a critical commonplace. For cogent supportive summaries of Hegel's works and their internal development, see: Ibid, *xi – xxxvi*; Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 51 – 75; Richard Kroner, introduction to *Early Theological Writings*, by G.W.F. Hegel, translated by T.M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 1 – 66; and H.B. Acton, introduction to *Natural Law: The Scientific Ways of Treating Natural Law, Its Place in Moral Philosophy, and Its Relation to the Positive Sciences of Law*, by G.W.F. Hegel, translated by T.M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 9 – 47.

[3] Writing against two dominant ways of interpreting Hegel, which he calls the "anti-theological Hegel" and the "non-metaphysical and/or neo-pragmatic Hegel," Graham Ward argues convincingly in his recent article that Hegel's early Christological writings establish "the model for the logic of all mediation" in Hegel's subsequent thinking. Ward, "How Hegel became a philosopher: Logos and the economy of logic," *Critical Research on Religion* 1, no. 3 (December 2013): 270 – 292.

Fate" (*Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*) marks a significant intellectual turning point for Hegel, a kind of conceptual mid-point between his theologically and religiously focused youthful writings and the broader concern with philosophy first made completely visible in the *Phenomenology*.[4]

The "Spirit of Christianity" differs markedly from the *Phenomenology* in terms of size, complexity, and scope. But its representation of the content and function of the Spirit's (*Geist*) historically transformative thought processes nevertheless already presents a definitive outline of the conceptual relationship between processes of thinking and historical change that so distinctly characterizes Hegel's mature thinking. This chapter will demonstrate that close attention to the language and function of the Spirit within Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity" essay illuminates Hegel's early conceptual differences from standard *Bildungsroman* discourse at the same time as it points to the mature representation of intellectual development expressed in the later *Phenomenology*. More logically dependent and historically self-aware than the works of Morgenstern and his peers and followers, but not yet historically self-conscious or explicitly dialectical, what we are calling the "complex" representation of intellectual development presented in Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity" essay describes a conceptual midpoint between the "naive" representation of intellectual development presented by standard *Bildungsroman* discourse and the "self-conscious" representation of intellectual development presented in the *Phenomenology*, which will form the subject of the following chapter.

Though the nominal concern of "The Spirit of Christianity" is the religion named in its title, much of the essay's subject matter actually deals with Hegel's interpretation of the longer history of Judaism and its conceptual relation to the variously conceived circumstances of the Jewish people just before, during, and after the time when Jesus is supposed to have lived.

[4] Taylor, *Hegel*, 64 – 75.

We find a similar pattern in Hegel's other early religious essays, such as "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" (*Die Positivität der christlichen Religion*) and "The Life of Jesus" (*Das Leben Jesu*). This is, of course, for what should be obvious reasons, a standard approach to understanding and explaining the emergence of Christianity and its position relative to other religions, particularly for Hegel and his historically fixated peers.[5] Nevertheless, "The Spirit of Christianity" reflects several distinct characteristics whose significance is essential to framing our analysis here: it remains one of Hegel's longest and most sophisticated early essays on Christianity;[6] it opens with an extended treatment of Judaism that takes up nearly one fifth of its total content; and it does not begin to deal with the significance of either Christianity or Jesus until after it has thoroughly accounted for that of "Abraham," whom Hegel calls the "progenitor [*Stammvater*] of the Jews" and whose Spirit Hegel identifies as "the unity, the soul, regulating the entire fate of" Abraham's "posterity" (*Nachkommenschaft*).[7] For Hegel, the spiritual

[5] As Albert Schweitzer's classic work already demonstrated in 1906, the so-called "search for the Jesus of history" was already well developed by the time Hegel wrote his early essays, having begun in earnest with Lessing's serial publication, in the late 1770s, of Reimarus's writings on the subject. Hegel's essay was not published in his lifetime. But the work of his student, David Friedrich Strauss, which George Eliot was the first to translate into English, was deeply influenced by Hegel and marked an epoch in theological treatments of Jesus's life. The genre and the dramas attendant to it continue today, as the controversy surrounding Reza Aslan's recent reinterpretation of Jesus's life, as well as John P. Maier's "epic" late twentieth-century scholarly re-examination of the "historical Jesus," by which Aslan claims to have been influenced, amply demonstrate. See Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 1 – 47, 68 – 69; and Aslan, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Random House, 2014), *xvii – xxxi*, 219 – 221. For more on the historical Jesus within the context of more general changes in biblical interpretation and scholarship, see Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, 27 – 53, 227 – 260.

[6] Herman Nohl, a student of Dilthey, presented a group of Hegel's early theological writings in 1907 under the title, *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften*. An edited collection of these essays was translated and published by T.M. Knox and Richard Kroner under the title, *Early Theological Writings*, in 1948. All German and English references herein refer to these two volumes. For a brief publication history, see Knox's "Prefatory Note" to the former. Hegel, *Theological Writings*, v – viii.

[7] "Mit Abraham, dem wahren Stammvater der Juden, beginnt die Geschichte dieses Volks, das heißt, sein Geist ist die Einheit, die Seele, die alle Schicksale seiner Nachkommenschaft regierte." Hegel, *Hegels Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Herman Nohl (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1907), 243; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 182.

"essence" (*Wesen*) of Christianity is necessarily tied to the negated spiritual "essence" of Judaism, with which it has a definitive and unbreakable internal bond.

Hegel does not divide his essay into named and titled sections, but the divisions that Knox and Kroner made at the time of their respective English translations of Nohl's initial publication of Hegel's manuscripts provide a helpful roadmap for understanding the rhetorical dynamic of this bond. Knox titles the sections as follows: (i) "The Spirit of Judaism"; (ii) "The Moral Teaching of Jesus: The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics"; (iii) "The Moral Teaching of Jesus: Love as the Transcendence of Penal Justice and the Reconciliation of Fate"; (iv) "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; and (v) "The Fate of Jesus and His Church."[8] When set beside what we have already discussed of the essay, we can see that Hegel conceives of the general essences or spirits of Judaism and Christianity as capable of being distilled within and represented by particular persons. So that, over the course of the essay, the "spirit of Judaism" (*der Geist des Judentums*) retains the capacity to move legibly from the ancient Israelites to Jesus and the Christian Church without posing any problems for the internal logic of Hegel's essay. The contents of Abraham's and Jesus's minds and characters thus simultaneously describe the spiritual identities of their respective religions while also composing the content of historical significance and providing a rational pathway into which Hegel's historical argument can be fitted. The transformation of Abraham's Judaism into Jesus's Christianity thus at once provides a description of the content of both religions, a rational explanation for their historical connection, and a spiritual biography of two figures that also operates as a cultural biography of those religions' respective followers.[9]

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[8] Hegel, *Theological Writings*, x.

[9] As Nathan Rotenstreich has noted, Hegel conflates the Jewish religion to the Jewish people in the early writings. We would add that, in effect, the conflation is also true for Christians and Christianity, though Hegel's thinking in the "Spirit" essay remains undoubtedly fixated on Judaism. Rotenstreich, *The*

In keeping with the religiously inflected ideological structure of several of his other early essays, Hegel, drawing upon the distinction between the spirit and the letter of the law emphasized by the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Romans and elsewhere,[10] characterizes the content of this transformation from Judaism to Christianity as a spiritual movement from legalism to transcendence.[11] And though he admits that the Spirit of Judaism "appears in a different guise after every one of its battles against different forces or after becoming sullied by adopting an alien nature as a result of succumbing to might or seduction,"[12] the most important aspect of the Jewish Spirit for Hegel, the unifying fact of its internal construction, is what he many times calls an implacable conceptual "slavery" (*Sklaverei*) to the Mosaic law.[13]

Recurring Pattern: Studies in Anti-Judaism in Modern Thought (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963), 48 – 62.

[10] The distinction between merely adhering to the external form or language of a law, as opposed to its intent or inner meaning, is of course not new to the Pauline epistles and appears a number of times in the Old Testament. The idea is often associated there with the language of circumcision, such as at Jeremiah 4:4 (KJV), where readers are advised to "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart." Jesus also draws on this distinction on a number of occasions, several of which Hegel interprets in the later sections of the "Spirit" essay. But it is actually Paul who literally and figuratively yokes the much older concept to the spirit/letter dyad, at Romans 2:29 (KJV), which reads, "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." For related Old Testament examples, see Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 9: 25. For related New Testament examples, see John 5:44,12:43; Romans 3:1, 7:6; 1 Corinthians 4:5, 7:19; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 10:18; Philippians 3:3; and Colossians 2:11.

[11] In addition to what we have already shown, Hegel's early work demonstrates a deep debt to the Pauline epistles. For more on the specific function of the Pauline opposition of love and law *vis-à-vis* Hegel's "critique of juridicism" within "The Spirit of Christianity," see Daniel Loick, "Terribly Upright: The Young Hegel's Critique of Juridicism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40, no. 10 (2014): 933 – 956.

[12] "er [der Geist] erscheint in verschiedener Gestalt, je nachdem er gegen verschiedene Kräfte kämpfte, oder, wenn er durch Gewalt oder Verführung unterlag, durch Ausnahme eines fremdartigen Wesens sich verureinigte." Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 243; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 182.

[13] Hegel uses the word "slavery" (*Sklaverei*), or cognates and compounds of it that must for practical purposes be translated into English using the word "slavery" (*Sklavenhandwerk*, for example, which Knox renders insightfully as "mechanical slavery") in reference to the Jewish people three times within "The Spirit of Christianity," six times within "The Positivity of the Christian Religion." The word "slave" and its cognates appear twice as often, sixteen additional times between the two essays, always in association with the conceptual relationship of the Jewish people to their laws. The language and imagery also appear in *The Life of Jesus* and *The Tübingen Essay*, among other places. The diminishing effect is unavoidable in both languages. Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 11, 69, 80, 88, 89, 115, 148, 157, 158, 163, 171, 178, 178, 180, 189, 191, 193, 196, 205, 206, 211, 217, 224, 229, 238; and Hegel, *Three Essays*, *1793 – 1795* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 47, 127.

Hegel does not spend a great deal of time on what we might today call the material conditions of Jewish persons contemporary to him, but the single time within this essay where he does mention the fact of modern Jewry, as a group, is nevertheless revealing. In the essay's first section, the purpose of which is to elaborate the content and significance to Christianity of the Jewish Spirit that Jesus inherited and then transformed, Hegel writes the following:

> The subsequent circumstances of the Jewish people up to the mean, abject, wretched circumstances in which they still are today, have all of them been simply consequences and elaborations of their original fate. By this fate – an infinite power which they set over against themselves and could never conquer – they have been maltreated and will continue to be maltreated until they appease it by the spirit of beauty and so annul it by reconciliation.[14]

The "infinite power" (*unendlichen Macht*) that Hegel refers to here is, of course, the relationship between the Jewish people and their written covenants and laws, which he presents throughout his commentary as a form of inescapable intellectual bondage that has condemned and must continue to condemn them merely to move continually between what Hegel describes, in the essay's first paragraph, as two diametrically opposed but essentially static states of being: a state of "arms and conflict" set against a state of "submission to the fetters of the stronger."[15]

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[14] "Alle folgenden Zustände des jüdischen Volks, bis auf den schäbigten, niederträchtigen, lausigten Zustand, in dem es sich noch heutigtags befindet, sind weiter nichts als Folgen und Entwicklungen ihres unsprünglichen Schicksals, von dem – einer unendlichen Macht, die sie sich unüberwindlich gegenübersetzen – sie mishandelt wurden, und so lang mishandelt werden, bis sie es durch den Geist der Schönheit aussöhnen und so durch die Versöhnung aufheben." Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 256; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 199 – 200.

[15] "in verschiedener Form der Waffenrüstung und des Streits, oder der Art, wie er Fesseln des Stärkern trägt." Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 243; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 182.

The external "power" of law is "infinite" for Hegel because the Jewish people have placed it "against themselves" as an absolute force to which they are in perpetual servitude.[16] This continual state of submission to an externally authoritative concept of law both defines and delimits them, because it keeps them forever simply moving back and forth between repetitious but never improving conditions of conflict and submission, consuming vast amounts of energy while still remaining "mean, abject," and "wretched." Hegel's ancient Hebrews are dynamic and significant, insofar as their historical narrative, as Hegel liberally abstracts it from the Old Testament, is filled with definitive actions and their many "consequences and elaborations" (*Folgen und Entwicklungen*). But that same dynamism is the very trait through which, in an uncharacteristically literal moment for Hegel, the Jewish people appear to have earned their status as a persecuted people: as if the drama of the Exodus were being played out beneath his window, Hegel's "Jewish people" "are today" still suffering through the same legalistic anguish that all of their ancestors since Abraham have supposedly suffered.[17] The eternally unaltered position of Hegel's "Jewish people" does, indeed, move actively through time, but its essentially vegetative Spirit can never alter or be altered by it.

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[16] Hegel is insistent on this point, both in this essay and in "The Positivity of the Christian Religion." And though much of what he writes here and elsewhere about the Jewish people is either explicitly or implicitly anti-Semitic, his reasoning about the Jewish people is, as always, much more nuanced than can be explained in terms of a simple bias, however deep. For our purposes, it suffices to observe that, at this point in Hegel's thinking, the Jewish people, which he conceives as a monolithic group from which only Jesus has emerged as a complete exception, make themselves and their own spiritual needs subordinate to an oppressive, metaphysical preoccupation with their own ethnic community and a precise adherence to the written law supplied to that community by its exclusive God. Hegel unsurprisingly refers to this subordination of the spirit to the law, which for Hegel is always linked to the suppression of basic human needs, as a kind of "slavery" to something "external." Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 182 – 197; Loick, "Terribly Upright," 936.

[17] In the words of Daniel Loick, "Hegel regards 'the Jews' as 'a people' uniting in themselves all the flaws of a sociality constituted entirely in terms of the law. Accordingly, his analysis consistently goes beyond theoretical contents to blend theological-philosophical arguments with claims in the style of a historical sociology of religion; the historical fate of Judaism, Hegel suggests, is a direct result of its wholly erroneous ethical theory and practice." Loick, "Terribly Upright," 935.

"Over against" this regrettable condition, Hegel places Jesus, whose most definitive and important trait is his complete alteration of the Jewish people's conceptual bondage to the Mosaic Law. Hegel elaborates the content of this modification by way of an extended consideration of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Near the beginning of the essay's second section, Hegel establishes the basic structure of the conceptual difference between Jesus and his fellow Jews by stating that,

> Over against commands which required a bare service of the Lord, a direct slavery, an obedience without joy, without pleasure or love, i.e., the commands in connection with the service of God, Jesus set their precise opposite, a human urge and so a human need. Religious practice is the most holy, the most beautiful, of all things; it is our endeavor to unify the discords necessitated by our development and our attempt to exhibit the unification in the *ideal* as fully *existent*, as no longer opposed to reality, and thus to express and confirm it in a deed. It follows that, if that spirit of beauty be lacking in religious actions, they are the most empty of all; they are the most senseless bondage, demanding a consciousness of one's annihilation, or deeds in which man expresses his nullity, his passivity. The satisfaction of the commonest human want rises superior to actions like these, because there lies directly in such a want the sensing or the preserving of a human being, no matter how empty his being may be.[18]

[18] ""Geboten, die einen bloβen Dienst des Herrn, eine unmittelbare Knechtschaft, einen Gehorsam ohne Freude, ohne Luft und Liebe verlangten, d.h. den gottesdienstlichen Geboten stellte Jesus das ihnen gerade Entgegensetzte, einen Trieb, sogar ein Bedürfnis des Menschen gegenüber. Da religiöse Handlungen das Geistigste, das Schönste, dasjenige sind, was auch die durch die Entwicklung notwendigen Trennungen noch zu vereinigen strebt, und die Vereinigung im Ideal als völlig seiend, der Wirklichkeit nicht mehr entgegengesetzt darzustellen, also in einem Tun sie auszudrücken, zu besfrästigen sucht, so sind religiöse Handlungen, wenn ihnen jener Geist der Schönheit mangelt, die leersten; die sinnloseste Knechtschaft, die ein Bewuβtsein seiner Vernichtigung fordert; ein Tun, in dem

The content of Hegel's claim here is important for us for several reasons, most of which will be in some way familiar to readers who are already well acquainted with the Gospels and Pauline epistles.[19] As opposed to what Daniel Loick has called a "servile subjection" to the merely categorical form of law embodied by the Jewish people,[20] Hegel's interpretation of Jesus's commandment demands both intellectual consent and alignment with what he calls a "human urge" (*Trieb*) and "need" (*Bedürfnis*). And though he does not in this citation employ the language of internal life as explicitly as the authors we discussed in our preceding chapter do, insofar as this consent would ideally come in the form of a "religious practice" (*religiöse Handlungen*) that could potentially "unify the discords necessitated by our development [*Entwicklung*]," it must at some level be a conscious consent and therefore reflect some kind of "inner belief."[21] In other words, the Mosaic Law, to which the existence of Jesus posits a "precise opposite" (*Entgegensetzte*), attains to its limiting status in part by virtue of its authoritative externality: "bare" conformity to the law demands "obedience without joy," "pleasure" or "love." It has thereby repressed indefinitely the "consciousness" (*Bewußtsein*) of the "Jewish people," who have made themselves unbendingly subject to it.

Insofar as Hegel conceives the "position" of the ancient Israelites as vegetative and static while he presents Jesus as the change-inducing "opposite" of that condition, it follows that Jesus must also be understood as the key to understanding the intellectual development that blind

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der Mensch sein Nichtssein, seine Passivität ausdrückt; und über diese ist die Befriedigung des gemeinsten menschlichen Bedürfnisses erhaben, weil in ihm unmittelbar doch das Gefühl oder die Erhaltung eines wenn auch leeren Seins liegt." Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 262; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 206 – 207.

[19] Loick, "Terribly Upright," 939 – 943.

[20] Following Loick, I use the term "categorical" here rhetorically to capture Hegel's association of the Mosaic Law with the moral philosophies of Kant and Fichte. Loick's analysis and summary are also admirably concise and clear. Ibid., 935 – 943.

[21] Ibid., 938.

"servitude" to the Law has, since ancient times, supposedly prevented Hegel's "Jewish people" from attaining. Jesus forms the comparative developmental difference through which Hegel is able to conceive that the Jewish people, distinct among groups even until his own time, has remained unaltered, while other groups, most notably Christians, have productively changed. Indeed, though Hegel does conclude, in both "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" and "The Life of Jesus," that Christianity has essentially reified within its own authoritative structure the legalistic bias of the Jewish culture into which Jesus and thus Christianity itself were born,[22] among the most striking, unstated implications of Hegel's representation of the ancient Israelites' internal connection with Christianity is the degree to which Hegel's "Jewish people" must remain unchanging in order that Christianity can attain to its characteristic momentum. As opposed to the Jewish people, whose continued servitude to Abraham's oppressive Spirit has condemned them to eternal intellectual stasis, Jesus has released a repressed "human urge" and "human need," at least within the confines of Christianity. The release from this repression in turn enables Christianity to "unify the discords necessitated by our development" and "attempt to exhibit the unification in the *ideal* as fully *existent*, as no longer opposed to reality." Judaism remains fractious and static, Christianity becomes unified and progressive, and an only pseudo-Jewish Jesus performs and instantiates the conceptual mediation between these opposed ways of being. Never fully one of his own people but always already among them, Hegel's Jesus is at once a Jewish person and the "exact opposite" of all other Jewish persons. And his transcending and transforming image becomes the lens through which Hegel concludes that the legalistic "slavery" under which Jews have suffered is the natural result of a collective religious "consciousness" whose most distinct effect is a perpetually ongoing retardation of intellectual "development," a "senseless" but nonetheless rationally legible intellectual "bondage."

[22] Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 118 – 129.

Moreover, and for our purposes more importantly, Hegel does not confine the developmental asymmetry between Judaism and Christianity to issues of religion. He rather extends it metaphorically to history, philosophy, and ethical law, under the guise of a metric for diagnosing logical problems related to thinking in general. Hegel does not yet make out of this asymmetry a fully dialectical historical argument, but the seeds of his later thinking are already present in the internal logic of his reasoning.[23] Jesus, whose emergence is the result of historical necessity rather than accident or divine fiat,[24] attains to his exceptional position because he alters the conceptual underpinnings of antecedent modes of thought and in so doing alters the structure of that which is subsequently thinkable. We can therefore call him a historical figure in two senses, which run parallel to Hegel's representation of his Jewish and Christian identities: literally, insofar as his putatively actual existence, at a specific moment within the longer history of the Jewish people, alters the course of that history in supposedly real historical time and gives birth to a new sect of Judaism that becomes in turn a new religion; and figuratively, insofar as Hegel interprets the contents of Jesus's thinking at that particular point in time to be representative of a universal change in the intellectual possibilities for all subsequent persons, up

[23] Contra Lukács, Graham Ward argues, and we obviously agree, that Hegel's early writing both shows many signs of his later dialectical thinking and that many of Hegel's later concepts rely heavily on the religious and theological constructions through which he frames that early writing. Ward's technically argued theological claim – that the "later dialectic is a working out of a Christological and philosophical principle" – is beyond the scope of our argument here. But he is right to emphasize the early presence of what will become dialectical thinking in Hegel's early religious writing. In a similar vein, Daniel Loick (following Lukács in *The Young Hegel*) also notes that the basic functions of Hegel's concept of *Aufheben* are already apparent in "The Spirit of Christianity," which we shall discuss in greater detail later in this chapter. See Ward, "How Hegel became a philosopher," 275; Loick, "Terribly Upright," 941; and György Lukács*, The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations Between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976), 99.

[24] The idea that Jesus appeared in history as a result of historical necessity is central to Hegel's thinking in both "The Spirit of Christianity" and "The Positivity of the Christian Religion." He is insistent that historical events, such as Rome's occupation of Palestine, play the essential role in providing the "inner fermentation" necessary for the emergence of Jesus's historically and culturally specific message. It could only have happened under the specific conditions in which it did, in fact, happen, and those conditions are the event's "necessary" conditions. See Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 158 – 164, 205.

to and including those who might only be able to attain to the full benefit of those possibilities by "reconciliation" (read: conversion) to them.[25] Hegel's Jesus thus both represents the historically necessary apotheosis of Judaism's governing logic and creates the historical possibility for an enduring Christian logic whose most definitive trait is a steadfast negation of its own antecedent form of thinking. As he will do in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel places the locus of historical change, as well as its figurative possibilities, within a single but still multivalent, world-altering consciousness whose way of thinking describes the positive advancement of history just as it transforms history's potential and terms. Jesus's historical revolution is above all the product of a transformation in *thought*, reflected most legibly in Jesus's cognitive liberation from the cognitive "slavery" of his peers and progenitors.

Hegel's metaphorical extension of the developmental asymmetry between Judaism and Christianity from the religious figure of Jesus to the idea of universal moral law is made much more explicit. Later in the same section of "The Spirit of Christianity," just before comparing Jesus's moral commandment to Kant's moral philosophy, Hegel observes the following:

> The Spirit of Jesus, a spirit raised above morality, is visible, directly attacking laws, in the Sermon on the Mount, which is an attempt, elaborated in numerous examples, to strip the laws of legality, of their legal form. The sermon does not teach reverence for the laws; on the contrary, it exhibits that which fulfils [sic] the law but annuls it as law and so is something higher than obedience to law and makes law superfluous. Since the commands of duty presuppose a cleavage [between reason and inclination] and since the

[25] The term Hegel uses is *Versöhnung*, which can also translate to "confession" or "penance" in English and has the same overtly religious connotation in German, particularly when applied to the "Jewish people" in this context, which Daniel Loick discusses in greater detail. For the full German citation, see footnote ninety-nine, above. Loick, "Terribly Upright," 944.

> domination of the concept declares itself in a "thou shalt," that which is raised above this contrast is by contrast an "is," a modification of life . . . When Jesus expresses in terms of commands what he sets against and above the laws (think not that I wish to destroy the law; let your word be; I tell you not to resist, etc.; love God and your neighbor), this turn of phrase is a command in a sense quite different from that of the "shalt" of a moral imperative. It is only the sequel to the fact that, when life is conceived in thought or given expression, it acquires a *form* alien to it, a conceptual form, while, on the other hand, the moral imperative is, as a universal, in *essence* a concept. [26]

Betraying the early presence of what will in his later works become another typically Hegelian *topos* of reasoning, Hegel here selects two at first apparently identical concepts – Jesus's "commands" (*Flichtgebot*) and the "'shalt' of a moral imperative" (*Sollen*) – and recapitulates them as conceptual opposites by deconstructing and then reframing their significance in terms of an opposition of form to content. The content of the imperative differs from that of the command first because the principal and most important difference between them is historical: Moses's Old Testament Ten Commandments vs. Jesus's New Testament Sermon on the Mount. But the terms of the historical difference are distinct from those we have emphasized so far, in that Hegel's

[26] "Unmittelbar gegen Gesetze gekehrt zeigt sich dieser über Moralität erhabene Geist Jesu in der Bergpredigt, die ein an mehreren Beispielen von Gesetzen durchgeführter Versuch ist, den Gesetzen das Gesetzliche, die Form von Gesetzen zu benehmen, der nicht Achtung für dieselben predigt, sondern dasjenige aufzeigt, was sie erfüllt, aber als Gesetze aufhebt, und also etwas höheres ist, als der Gehorsam gegen dieselben und sie entbehrlich macht. Da die Flichtgebote eine Trennung voraussetzen, und die Herrschaft des Begriffs in einem Sollen sich ankündigt, so ist dagegen dasjenige, was über diese Trennung erhaben ist, ein Sein, eine Modifikation des Lebens . . . Wenn Jesus auch das, was er den Gesetzen entgegen und über sie setzt, als Gebote ausdrückt (Meinet nicht; ich wolle das Gesetz aufheben; Euer Wort sei; Ich sage nicht zu widerstehen usw.; Liebe Gott und deinen Nächsten) so ist diese Wendung in einem ganz andern Sinne Gebot, als das Sollen des Flichtgebots; sie ist nur die Folge davon, daβ das Lebendige gedacht, ausgesprochen, in der ihm fremden Form des Begriffs gegeben wird; da hingegen das Flichtgebot seinem Wesen nach als ein Allgemeines ein Begriff ist." Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 266 – 267; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 212 – 213.

focus here is on the content of Jesus's intellectual products when set against the content of the Mosaic Law, as opposed to the more specific historical or cultural significance of Jesus the man. Nonetheless, as will remain the case for Hegel, the foundation for the comparative difference between the form and content of the respective moral systems only attains to its broader significance through a greater understanding of it its historical value.

However, to assert that the meaning of Hegel's point here concerns a difference between the comparative contents of the two legal systems is in some ways a misrepresentation of the finer points of Hegel's reasoning, since what Hegel is actually saying is that the formal imperative embodied in the Mosaic Law really *is* its content. Or, said differently, perhaps more in line with familiar Hegelian language, the content of the Mosaic Law is purely formal, because the "cleavage" (*Trennung*) "between reason and inclination" that it "presupposes" (*voraussetzen*) entails the suppression of thought on the part of those who are subject to it, or what Hegel refers to in our previous citation as the suppression of "a human urge and so a human need." The Mosaic Law is purely formal for Hegel because to follow it according to its own terms, which provide no reason or rationale other than the naked appeal to God's absolute authority, both requires no thought and negates any possibility for critical thinking: thou shalt obey, but thou may not think. The content of the moral imperative is the form of imperative itself.

The substructure of Hegel's position here is built upon the reverberating Pauline assertion, made in the second letter to the Corinthians, that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,"[27] upon which Hegel grafts an interlocking series of opposing dyads: the Jewish people vs. Christianity; the Spirit of Jesus vs. the Spirit of Abraham; the Mosaic Law vs. the Sermon on the Mount; obedience vs. "something higher than obedience"; "domination" vs. consent; form vs.

[27] The full verse reads as follows: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." 2 Corinthians, 6 (KJV).

content; death vs. life, etc. But it is not enough for Hegel that the Spirit of Jesus be merely the historically necessary conceptual opposite of the Spirit of Abraham, or that Jesus's Sermon express a pure, answering content to its empty, antecedent Mosaic form: Hegel is emphatic when he states that Jesus at once "fulfills" the law and "annuls it as law," thereby making "law superfluous [*entbehrlich*]." Yet, Hegel's more logically focused historical concerns obviously depart from Paul's doctrine: it should be obvious to any intelligent reader, as it is to Hegel, that to say that Jesus's command makes law "superfluous" generates a straightforward logical contradiction, insofar as Jesus's command, because it comes in the form of a rule and presumably relies upon Jesus's own authority, must itself be understood as a law. And how could any particular instantiation of a law retain any of the authority inherent in the general concept of law if the primary assertion of the former were that law itself is superfluous? Logically speaking, a law cannot nullify law – at least not for the always logically rigorous Hegel.[28]

In the most difficult section of this passage, Hegel resolves this apparent contradiction by asserting yet another opposing dyad, this time of conceptual "form" (*Begriff*) to conceptual "essence" (*Wesen*), a thorough and precise grasp of which is essential to understanding Hegel's argumentative strategies and their relation to the representation of intellectual development that this essay constructs. The metaphorical structure of Hegel's Judaism remains the same throughout and the Jewish people's laws are here predictably linked to a formal legalism, which Hegel claims "presuppose[s]" a cleavage between reason and inclination through a "domination of the concept" (*Herrschaft des Begriffs*) that "declares itself in a 'thou shalt." As was the case

[28] Though he does not link the structure of Paul's distinction between the spirit and the letter of the law directly to the functions of Hegel's concept of Aufheben, our argument regarding the internal logic of Paul's interpretation closely follows that set forth in the third section of Erich Auerbach's seminal essay, "Figura." See Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes From the Drama of European Literature* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), 11 – 76.

with the objection Hegel makes to his peers' methods of thinking, discussed in the previous chapter, the most important distinction here is captured by the word "presuppose," which defines a starting point from which to rationalize and reconstruct the contents of Hegel's reasoning: the "cleavage" between reason and inclination precedes all other moments in the movement of this argument. So that those moments that follow it must be understood as consequences of this foundational presupposition. Hegel analogically links this presupposed "cleavage" to "the domination of the concept," providing an immediate description of its significance: to demonstrate a cleavage or division between reason and inclination, as the Jewish people do, *means* to be dominated by a concept, the "concept" being in this case their understanding of the law. But this concept – which, as we have just demonstrated, is metaphorical to the cleavage – is itself for Hegel not a form, but rather describes the content of that form.

In this instance, Hegel conceives of "form" quite concretely and his example comes in the verbal example of the phrase "thou shalt" (*Sollen*). Again typical of Hegel throughout his writings, the example he chooses can be understood (and must be understood in order to capture the fullest meaning of his thinking) as a particular example, a general example, and a polyvalent verbal structure that includes both categorizations and therefore functions conceptually as a third term: grammatically speaking, the phrase "thou shalt" is written in the indicative mood and represents the grammatical form of a command; within the context of this citation, it refers directly to the Mosaic Law, specifically the Decalogue; but because it refers to both things and those things together constitute a particular instance of a command at the same time as they describe the imperative grammatical mood through which commands must come, the phrase must also be understood to refer to all commands, or commands in a general sense.[29] The phrase

[29] The subtlety of Hegel's thinking here is more evident in the German citation at footnote 113, in the last long clause of which Hegel actually refers to both types of command using the term "Begriff" and the

"thou shalt" reflexively contains a description of the form and content of the "cleavage" between reason and inclination that the "domination of the concept" "presupposes."

Opposed to this is Jesus's Spirit, which Hegel makes functionally analogical to Jesus's moral teaching. Both rise "above" the entities against which they are compared: whereas the effect of its unthinking submission to the law causes the "subservient" Jewish Spirit to remain stagnant and experience a temporal trajectory characterized by a strictly horizontal, earth-bound movement over the course of which participants do not gain in knowledge, Jesus's conversely elevated Spirit effects a "rise" among his followers, who, like Jesus, exhibit vertical as well as horizontal movement and thereby attain to more meaningful change. But, as was the case with the idea to which Jesus and his teachings are compared, Jesus's moral and spiritual altitude is presupposed: having already been *modified* (by the adjectivally functioning passive particle) and *raised* "above morality" (by the circumstances of the Jewish people and their particular historical needs), the Spirit of Jesus becomes "visible, directly attacking laws" through the "Sermon on the Mount." Part passive receptacle for the historical circumstances and needs of the Jewish people into whose collective "life" he is born, part elevating Spirit whose intellectual product induces a new religion to "rise" "above" the low position of its progenitor faith, Jesus's bifurcated Spirit, like the "cleavage" that "commands" "presuppose," assumes in advance the capacity for the transformation it claims as its effect.

Another way to say this would be to say that conceptual "form" and conceptual "essence" each proves the internal consistency of its own presuppositions as it demonstrates the logical outcomes of those presuppositions. Hegel's reader can therefore articulate a rational consistency between the assumptions upon which each concept is predicated and those assumptions'

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difference between the one and the other clearly follows from the fact that Jesus's *Flichtgebot* "seinem Wesen nach als ein Allgemeines ein Begriff ist" – or, "according to its essence, *as a universal*, is a concept" (my emphasis).

respective intellectual products, which for Hegel can come in many forms. The important part of the distinction here, however, is neither the presupposition itself nor the fact that both arguments point back to their own assumptions; as we shall see in the following chapter, both of these phenomena are in some sense inherent to logical thought for Hegel. The important issue is rather the relative content of those respective presuppositions. The Mosaic Law posits absolute subservience to law as a description of morality at the level of its foundational assumptions and thus presupposes the pure form of law – "thou shalt" – as its concept. Contrary to this, Jesus's Law presupposes the possibility of a legal concept that would require its subjects to distinguish legality from morality. The latter thereby introduces the possibility for positive content – the intellectual act of distinguishing – into the prior understanding of law, where there had previously been no such possibility. It thereby both alters the meaning of the concept "law" and reveals the formal structure of that concept's own prior assumptions and limitations. Because it creates the rational possibility for a reinterpretation of the former conceptualization of law, Jesus's commandment, forever yoked to the rational structures of its conceptual antecedents and historical contexts, alters the conceptual basis of law itself, revealing its conceptual "essence" by negating its prior conceptual "form."

Directly following the point in Hegel's text where our last citation ends, Hegel expands Jesus's intellectual significance to include the study of philosophy by extending the comparison of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount to Kant's ethics, ultimately concluding that Kant's "moral imperative" represents a "profound reduction" of ethics that is altogether inadequate when compared to the principle of love advanced by Jesus.[30] Love is a central topic in Hegel's early work and even a superficial discussion of its importance would exceed our purposes. It suffices for us here to say only that, at this point in Hegel's thinking, the concept of love "makes" the

[30] Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 213 – 224.

former conceptualization of "law" "totally superfluous" because, in the human "reconcilability" that universal "love" implies, "the concept [of law] is replaced by life," thus overcoming the structural limitations inherent in Judaism by healing the disfiguring "cleavage" so characteristic of the Mosaic Law.[31] Hegel supports this claim with his reinterpretations of a selection of Jesus's words and actions, grounding his argument throughout in an in-depth consideration of the larger significance of Jesus's language when set beside the language of the Mosaic Law.[32]

Insofar as Hegel portrays Jesus as having made a positive advancement in thought that describes the superior nature of Christian concepts relative to those Jewish ones that precede them, as well as a positive corrective to the philosophical system of ethics espoused by Kant, it becomes even more obvious that Hegel's endorsement of Jesus's intellectual products represents an endorsement of the superior *processes of thought* that Jesus follows in order to attain to them. This fact is further underscored by the elegant conceptual chiasmus underwriting the logic of Hegel's representation of Jesus's now universalized revolution in thinking. Before Jesus, the law was characterized by a "cleavage" between reason and inclination, whereas after Jesus, the law is stripped of its formal "legality" and moves toward unification. The historical trajectory of the Jewish people themselves, however, follows this course in reverse: before Jesus, the Jewish people were unified as a single, albeit divisive, group, whereas after Jesus, they have been riven into factions that can never again be made whole. Jesus's transformation of the concept of law brings potential unity at the cost of disunity, sowing insoluble discord for Judaism just as is reaps hopeful concord for Christianity.

It is in many ways unfortunate that Hegel chooses to frame his early thinking about Judaism so mercenarily. But this conceptual chiasmus nonetheless describes the process of

[31] Ibid., 215.
[32] Ibid., 214 – 224.

reasoning that Hegel's argument here must be said implicitly to endorse. Three components of that process are important for us here. First, when viewed alongside what we established in the previous chapter about the ideal method of thinking endorsed in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel's analysis of the flaws in the Jewish people's thinking in "The Spirit of Christianity" looks strikingly similar to his analysis of the flaws in the thinking of those lesser philosophers whose work, because it focuses merely on "aims," "results," and "differences," remains forever elliptically "preoccupied with itself" and thus empty of real knowledge. Like the long, anti-progressive intellectual journey of Hegel's Jewish people, which redounds constantly upon its own assumptions and in so doing describes a structural limitation that dooms them forever to remain enslaved by the Mosaic Law, "such talk" as those philosophers engage in begins its search for knowledge with a false conception of what knowledge is and therefore prevents itself from ever attaining to it, or even from grasping the nature of its own "subject matter." Both the Jewish people of "The Spirit of Christianity" and the lesser philosophers of the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* are doomed, because they begin with related false premises, to remain forever outside the realm of true knowledge, irrespective of the discipline from within which that so-called knowledge is conceived. Just as Hegel begins his attack upon contemporary philosophers by criticizing the assumptions upon which they base their conception of philosophy, so he attacks the legal doctrines of the Jewish people by criticizing the assumptions upon which they have constructed their conception of law.

The second component pertains to the conceptual interrelation of the figures whose identities comprise the chiasmus just discussed. Though Hegel does not yet attempt dialectically to account for the mediating historical and linguistic apparatus through which he conceives and articulates the form and content of historical significance, which he will do to great effect in the

Phenomenology and subsequent works, the implicit theory of history he offers here nonetheless hinges on a multilayered interrelationship whose internal structure prefigures his later concerns with complex processes of mediation and change. The interrelationship concerns three figures: Abraham, Jesus, and the Spirit that links them. Spirit functions within the temporal trajectory of their transformative interrelation as both its unifying principle and its locomotive force: the Spirit of Hegel's Jesus induces change from within the culturally and historically conditioned Spirit of Abraham just as it simultaneously describes the transformed conceptual content of the Christian religion, which begins in the same historically conditioned moment and continues until Hegel's time. And though Jesus and Christianity are the nominal focus of Hegel's argument, it is in fact Spirit that provides the rational and temporal structure for the single, intellectually constituted historical arc – from Abraham to Jesus to Hegel – that the essay's interpretive logic describes.

Moreover, Jesus provides the only significant moment of transformation along that developmental arc, and his intellectual product, the Sermon on the Mount, which negates Abraham and the Mosaic Law, describes notable changes for philosophy and ethics, transforms the nature of law itself, creates a new religion, and alters the terms and course of history. This positive content of Jesus's intellect, which derives its meaning from the pre-Christian content of Judaism that it negates, must therefore also be understood implicitly to function as a generalizable benchmark for thought itself, insofar as Hegel un-problematically employs it as a standard of measurement when determining the value of all kinds of content at all points along the essay's temporal arc, from Abraham and the Mosaic Law to Protestantism and Kant's moral philosophy.

Hegel's Jesus, then, is at once a negative and a positive figure: positive in the sense that the content of his intellect has the capacity to describe the improving content and movement of

thought; negative in the sense that this new positive content necessarily negates the value of the thought that it supplants. Jesus, at once the most and least Jewish person, inherits his Spirit from Abraham and the Jewish people only to negate it. He therefore represents the positive continuation of Abraham's Jewish Spirit as well as its permanent Christian negation, Jesus's mediating identity demarcating the symbolically polyvalent difference between Judaism and Christianity – which comes to represent all significant kinds of difference – just as it contains both sides of that difference within itself. And though Hegel does not yet make the argument explicit, this representation of Jesus's mediation of Spirit already foreshadows the importance for Hegel of a kind of generalized history whose content is causally linked to specific historical and cultural conditions, whose significance is nonetheless articulated in primarily intellectual terms, and whose "form" is understood to take the shape of a malleable intellectual entity capable of reflecting polyvalent change while retaining an undergirding substance of spiritual content.

The third component of Hegel's thought process central to our discussion here bridges the logical gap between the first two and thereby provides a way for us to rationalize how all three components might be brought together under the rubric of a single *modus operandi*. In order to understand it more fully, we must take a still closer look at Hegel's use of language within a single sentence of the longer excerpt already cited above. The sentence, once again, reads as follows:

> The Sermon does not teach reverence for the laws; on the contrary, it exhibits that which fulfils [sic] the law but annuls it as law and so is something higher than obedience to law and makes law superfluous.[33]

[33] Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 212.

In the German text, the contents of this citation do not describe a complete, single sentence, but rather one part of a much longer and more grammatically complex one. The section that concerns us here, which leaves out some of the text for convenience's sake, reads as follows:

> . . . die Bergpredigt. . . nicht Achtung für dieselben [Gesetze] predigt, sondern dasjenige aufzeigt, was sie erfüllt, aber als Gesetze aufhebt, und also etwas höheres ist, als der Gehorsam gegen dieselben und sie entbehrlich macht.[34]

The three words of central significance for us to begin with are "aufzeigt," "erfüllt," and "aufhebt," which Knox translates as "exhibits," "fulfills," and "annuls," respectively. The German verb "erfüllen" corresponds perfectly to the English verb "fulfill" and we find no issues there. The verb "to exhibit," however, carries in today's English a somewhat more evidentiary connotation than the verb "aufzeigen" does in German. Therefore a better English rendering of "aufzeigen," one that would capture its referential function but better denote a less juridical tone, would be "to demonstrate." The difference is important because the morphologically identical word "exhibit" in English is also a noun – an exhibit, as in a piece of evidence presented in support of an argument, especially at trial – and thus lends an objective or material tone to the English translation where the German text carries little or no such connotation. The legal context within which the usage appears certainly justifies Knox's decision to render the word as he does, but the objectifying bias inherent in "exhibit" somewhat alters the tone of Hegel's argument and is therefore partially misleading. The principal focus for Hegel when determining significance here remains on function: the important thing is what the Sermon *does*, not what it *is*.

[34] Hegel, *theologische Jugendschriften*, 266.

The word "aufhebt" is the third person singular indicative active form of the verb "aufheben," which, as those familiar with Hegelian technical terminology are aware, is a central concept of Hegelian thought. Knox translates the verb as "annuls." A more common translation today, more reflective of the recently intensified emphasis on Hegel's technical terminology,[35] would be "sublates," which in English simply means to subsume or assimilate a given unit or object into a presumably greater one. Part of the reason for Knox's decision not to use the more technical term may have to do with the date of the text he is translating;[36] though Hegel is already using the word in partial accordance with the technical definition he will develop more fully in his later works, he does not define his own technical meaning of the word within this text. We will therefore leave a more robust description of Hegel's technical usage of *Aufheben* to the following chapter. For now, it is important to keep in mind two central ideas, both of which are crucial to Hegel's conceptualization of *Aufheben*, both here and in the later texts: the double meaning of the term, which is often said by translators and commentators of Hegel simultaneously to express the ideas communicated by the English verbs "to cancel" and "to preserve";[37] and the subsuming function of the term, which, in both English and German, highlights a kind of change that negates but also leaves recognizably intact the content of the thing or concept undergoing that change.

Charles Taylor straightforwardly communicates a legible meaning of *Aufheben*'s conceptual *double entendre* when he refers to it as simply the "idea of a duality which is overcome without being abolished."[38] The "duality" Taylor refers to here can perhaps best be

[35] The Knox translation was first published in 1948. It should go without saying that the intervening decades have brought a more intensive focus to bear on the technical points of Hegel's terminology. Hegel, *Theological Writings*, *iv – viii*.
[36] Ibid., *vii – viii*.
[37] B.C. Birchall, "On Hegel's Critique of Formal Logic." *Clio* 9, no. 2 (1980): 283 – 296.
[38] Taylor, *Hegel*, 119.

understood by referring back to our own argument, the internal logic of which directly points to – and in fact hinges on – the rhetorical functions of this verb. Jesus's Sermon on the Mount "does" *not* "teach reverence for the laws," so must be understood at the most simple level to represent the positive form of a negation of the Mosaic Law's content: it *is* that thing that does *not* teach reverence for the laws and therefore negates them. "On the contrary," Hegel claims, the Sermon rather demonstrates (*aufzeigt*) two quite different concepts: that which "fulfills the law," as well as that which sublates (*aufhebt*) it. One significant meaning is quite clear, particularly when the passage is read alongside Jesus's language, at Matthew 5:17 – "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (KJV) – which it obviously echoes: we can readily surmise from both that Hegel is addressing the continued legitimacy of the Sermon's pronouncements relative to the Mosaic Law, whose authority it supposedly negates but also extends. Like the Abraham/Jesus and Judaism/Christianity dyads already discussed, Hegel organizes the Law/Sermon dyad around a conceptual chiasmus whose transformative movement requires both continuity and discontinuity at the level of content: Jesus is *both* Jewish and non-Jewish; he *both* retains Abraham's Spirit and alters it; and the Sermon on the Mount *both* "fulfills" the Mosaic Law and replaces it.[39]

It would appear, then, that, because the verb "to annul" in English implies a permanent negation, or even a total erasure of what had formerly been, Knox's choice of that verb here falsely renders Hegel's fluidly transformative chiastic process into an abruptly linear one punctuated by a stably negative moment. We might even say that "annuls" turns out to be among the worst renderings possible in a more technical sense, in that the rest of the sentence, even according to Knox's own translation, plainly states that the moment of sublation is followed by

[39] Auerbach, "Figura," 49 – 60.

an additional transformation into "something higher than obedience to law" that in turn "makes law superfluous." And something that has been annulled cannot continue to transform.

The importance of the disjunction between our interpretation and Knox's translation lies in a different understanding of Hegel's logical emphasis. Knox's translation makes sense and can be said to maintain the "duality" that Taylor so aptly emphasizes, but only if we understand the duality here to take shape around the terms "fulfills" and "annuls." Such an interpretation would then read the object "something higher than obedience to law" as an effect of the intellectual conflict engendered by attempting to imagine Jesus's Sermon as something that contradictorily "fulfills" and "annuls," an interpretation that at first makes sense. The subject of Hegel's sentence, however, is "the Sermon" itself, and the principal conflict being elaborated here is the basic difference between what the Sermon's content does or does not do. And Hegel sets the conflict up quite clearly by organizing his sentence around a sharp distinction between what he claims the Sermon "does not teach" and what it positively demonstrates (*aufzeigt*).

But Hegel also emphasizes the rhetorical locus of the sentence through linguistic means that cannot become apparent in any English translation. The German word for the Sermon on the Mount is *Bergpredigt*, which is a simple compound substantive composed of two nouns. It literally translates to "mountain" (*Berg*) "sermon" (*Predigt*) in English. The German verb that Knox translates here as "teaches" is "predigt," which obviously shares a direct morphological relationship with its correlate substantive, *Predigt* (sermon), and means nothing other than "to preach." The conceptual conflict at the heart of this sentence, which Hegel characteristically emphasizes through the subtly composed verbal irony that his choice of words embodies, hinges on the division of the Sermon on the Mount into two parts: that which the Sermon (*Predigt*) does not explicitly preach (*predigt*), and that which it implicitly demonstrates (*aufzeigt*). Rhetorically

cleaving the negated content of preaching from the form of the sermon and leaving the positive presence of only that which it implicitly demonstrates, Hegel's formally ironic rendering of Jesus's *Berg*/*predigt* achieves its positive significance through what its content implies, rather than what its form explicitly states.

This structure should by now be quite familiar to us, but aside from the general importance of Hegel's almost uncannily consistent and rhetorically sensitive processes of thought, which only become more sensitive and perceptive as he matures, the distinction he draws here is important because it reveals a clearer picture of cause and effect relative to *Aufheben*. The duality that Knox's translation suggests to be the cause of the transformative action in this vital process – namely, the conflict between fulfillment (*erfüllen*) and sublation (*aufheben*) that yields "something higher" – is itself actually the effect of the more foundational conflict between what the law demonstrates (*aufzeigt*) implicitly but does not preach (*predigt*) explicitly. "Erfüllt "(*fulfills*) must therefore be understood as the third term in a four term verbal sequence – [*predigt* (preaches), *aufzeigt* (demonstrates), *erfüllt* (fulfills), *aufhebt* (sublates)] – that begins by negating the formal content of the law and ends by sublating the altered content of that law into "something" that retains its identity as law but also reaches "higher than obedience to law" itself. The conceptual dissonance underwriting the first two terms of this sequence provides the content of fulfillment and the possibility of its being "overcome without being abolished" via the moment of sublation.

This same conceptual dissonance, or rather the striking resemblance that Hegel's interpretation of Jesus's general significance across categories of thinking shows to Jesus's interpretation of the Mosaic Law, also provides a concrete, if somewhat abstract, endorsement of the dialectical method that, as we have already shown, the *Phenomenology* insists is essential to

proper philosophical reasoning. Hegel's interpretation of Jesus's Sermon, insofar as it begins with a formal negation of the law derived from the law's own content and then repositions that content as a sublated "duality" that both negates and maintains its prior form, echoes the function of the numerous dyads that we have already discussed, all of which center around Jesus and his variously conceived identity in some substantial way. At the same time, Jesus's transformation of Judaism, along with all of its myriad symbolic and cultural accouterments, is consistently presented as a historic intellectual and ethical benchmark. But Hegel also insists that the difference between Jesus and his forebears is necessitated by specific historical and cultural conditions, a fact that makes Hegel's failure to historicize his own distance from Jesus all the more striking. Indeed, one of the more blatant theoretical shortcomings demonstrated by "The Spirit of Christianity," which the dialectical method of the *Phenomenology* will permanently remedy, is the almost total lack of daylight between himself and Jesus within it, both historically and rhetorically: Hegel does not attempt earnestly to account for any distance between himself and Jesus, either in intellectual or historical terms, so that Jesus's mind, its products, or something representative of them functions throughout the essay as a universal conceptual standard for history and religion as much as for Kant's moral philosophy and Hegel's own processes of thought. Aside from establishing the relative historical significance of Jesus's thinking to Judaism and Christianity by virtue of the biblical narratives themselves, Hegel never properly explains, as he will do in the *Phenomenology*, why that thinking should necessarily function as a universal standard for all intellectual products and functions.

Hegel's failure to establish a justification for his own universal standard certainly leaves a reader who is more familiar with Hegel's later writings with a distinctly un-Hegelian impression. But his failure to justify himself here, or rather the tacit assumptions that his lack of

justification reveals, is itself quite illustrative. Hegel does not say so explicitly in this essay, but we can easily deduce from the universalized function of Jesus's intellect here, as well as in "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" and "The Life of Jesus," that, at least ideally, as one would expect from a German philosopher writing in the early years of the nineteenth century and which we already discussed in relation to Karl Morgenstern and others in the period, all thought is essentially governed by the same set of rules for Hegel. Thus the qualitative intellectual differences between kinds of thinking, such as that demonstrated by the difference between the Jewish people and Jesus, or between good and bad philosophers, is generally a matter of rhetorical function, with less than ideal thinking more or less representing potentially good thinking that has somehow strayed from the standard simply by following it incorrectly.

Hegel left the "Spirit of Christianity" essay unpublished and wrote it when studying at a Christian religious institution,[40] so one should not extend the significance of its unstated assumptions too far. But another important conclusion we can derive from Hegel's unjustified use of Jesus's intellect as a universal standard is that the standard itself is so central to Hegel's thinking that he does not even feel the need to justify it. This is particularly significant in relation to "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," wherein Hegel's argument against his peers becomes so reliant upon the standard set by Jesus's intellect over against the negated mindset of the Jewish people that he comes close to accusing his "positive" contemporaries of simply thinking too Jewish-ly, or at the very least of not being sufficiently Christian.[41] Hegel does not

[40] Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 8 – 10.

[41] Within "The Spirit of Christianity," this tendency becomes particularly visible in Hegel's comparison of Jesus's moral law to Kant's, as discussed above. However, his tone there is quite muted in comparison to "The Life of Jesus" and "The Positivity of the Christian Religion," where what is merely suggested in the former text is fully stated in the latter. For example, in "The Life of Jesus," Hegel writes: "When his disciples asked why he couched his teachings to the people in the form of parables, his answer was this: 'Perhaps you are capable of higher ideas concerning the kingdom of God and the morality that affords free access to it. But experience has taught me that words about these are lost on the Jews. Even while

explicitly state this conclusion, of course, but the implication is clear enough: Hegel and Jesus follow similar thought processes and thereby describe the positive form of interpretation, whereas "the Jewish people" and lesser philosophers follow a different process and thereby describe a degraded counterexample.

Nathan Rotenstreich and Reinhardt Sonnenschmidt have amply demonstrated that the implicit anti-Semitism evidenced here is not unique to this essay.[42] But it is only necessary for our argument because of what it finally establishes about Hegel's early processes of thought:[43] even in his earliest works – and this remains true for followers of his (adapted) methods until today – any particular person's or people's process of thinking, as well as the products yielded by those processes, describe one essential component of a complete description of that person's or people's identity that necessarily participates in some way with every other trait ascribable to them. The specific historical and cultural necessity that gives birth to Jesus and his transformative message could only have been produced at the particular moment that it was produced, by the particular people that produced it, and by no other group of people at any other

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they insist on hearing something from my lips, their deep-seated prejudices prevent the naked truth from penetrating to their hearts. Whoever is in the least predisposed to internalize something better can profit from my teaching. But those who lack this disposition will derive no use from what little knowledge of the good they already have. They have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. This is why I address them only in parable. But I will explain it to you.'" Hegel*, Essays*, 121; Hegel, *Theological Writings*, 67 – 90.

[42] In addition to what we have shown (only coincidentally using some of the same citations that we have cited in this chapter), Sonnenschmidt demonstrates within a number of Hegel's works the presence of a prevailing anti-Semitism, upon which rely many of Hegel's most important and necessary distinctions and conceptual formulations, such as the *Herr-Knecht Dialektik*. The effect of the numerous collected citations within a single article is, in Sonnenschmidt's own words, quite "harsch" (harsh) and supports his ultimate conclusion that, "der Antisemitismus, entweder unbewußt (aus Unkenntnis) oder unerwähnt (aus Berechnung) blieb" [anti-Semitism remained either unconscious (out of ignorance) or unmentioned (out of calculation)]. My translation. See Sonnenschmidt, "Zum philosophischen Antisemitismus bei G.W.F. Hegel," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 44, no. 4 (1992): 289 – 301.

[43] Rotenstreich places Hegel alongside Kant and Toynbee within a wider, but by no means exhaustive, criticism of philosophical anti-Judaism, broadly conceived. Rotenstreich is a superbly well-grounded and original interpreter of Hegel, and his argument, which claims that each of the "various stages" of Hegel's philosophy demonstrates anti-Semitism deep enough that Hegel's changes in thought over time can in fact be tracked by it, is both provocative and convincing. Rotenstreich, *The Recurring Pattern*, 48 – 75.

moment in time. Such a sentence probably reads as a platitude to many of today's critical readers, but we must stress the point nonetheless, if for no other reason than to establish clearly and from direct textual interpretation of Hegel's own language that, even before he is able or willing to justify himself technically, his view of history is based on a deductive logic that reasons its way backward from given cultural products to the representation of a cultural whole by means of that whole's own spirit, or socially constituted internal logic.[44]

As Paul de Man long ago noted and both Andrew Cole and Hassanaly Ladha have recently reaffirmed, most of us are quite Hegelian in our thinking now, whether or not we are able or willing to accept that fact.[45] Too often, however, even those who openly admit to Hegel's

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[44] Harris distills the concept nicely when he says of the *Phenomenology* that, spirit is "the development of the political community." Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology and System* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 61.

[45] Ladha's argument – which begins by asserting that, "The persistence in Hegel studies of reductive and non-dialectical readings of a few sweeping claims made in his lectures on art and history – notably that 'art . . . is and remains for us a thing of the past'; that illiterate peoples, in spite of their achievements in the realm of linguistic development, do not possess a history'; and that 'world-history progresses from East to West, for Europe is *absolutely* the end of history, Asia the beginning...[In the West] the sun of self-consciousness rises, spreading a superior luminosity' – have resulted in serious distortions in the interpretation of Hegel's corpus." – is as necessary as it is incisive and convincing. In defending this claim, Ladha cites the following excerpt from de Man: "Whether we know it, or like it, or not, most of us are Hegelians and quite orthodox ones at that. We are Hegelian when we reflect on literary history in terms of an articulation between the Hellenic and the Christian Era or between the Hebraic and Hellenic world. We are Hegelian when we try to systematize the relationships between the various art forms or genres according to different modes of representations or when we try to conceive of historical periodization as a development, progressive or regressive, of a collective or individual consciousness. Not that such concerns belong exclusively to Hegel; far from it. But the name 'Hegel' stands here for an all-encompassing vessel in which so many currents have gathered and been preserved that one is likely to find there almost any idea one knows to have been gathered from elsewhere or hopes to have invented oneself. Few thinkers have so many disciples who never read a word of their master's writing." We follow de Man here in all but one point: our own analysis of Blanckenburg's *Versuch über den Roman* demonstrates that Hegel is borrowing from well established themes when he, in de Man's words, "reflect[s] on literary history in terms of an articulation between the Hellenic and the Christian Era or between the Hebraic and Hellenic world." De Man explicitly acknowledges that Hegel is not alone here, but the distinction between Blanckenburg and Hegel in terms of their overlapping conceptual formulations is important for us insofar as it specifies one significant predecessor and must therefore be distinguished. Cole's different but related thesis hinges on the desire to disclose the Hegelian origins of "theory" via Hegel's re-articulation of "medieval dialectics." See Ladha, "Hegel's *Werkmeister*: Architecture, Architectonics, and the Theory of History," *October Magazine* 139, (Winter 2012): 15 – 38; de Man, "Sign and Symbol in Hegel's Aesthetics," in *Aesthetic Ideology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 92 – 93; and Cole, *Theory*, IX – XIX.

influence unfortunately neglect to consider the scope and practical implications of his thought, a fact that necessitates a still closer explication of the last point, lest its importance be overlooked and our argument be misunderstood. Analogically to what he will do by beginning the *Phenomenology*'s main argument with a section called "Consciousness,"[46] Hegel begins "The Spirit of Christianity" with a discussion of what he calls Abraham's Spirit, and the discussion throughout the first section of that essay, which seldom departs from the Old Testament text out of which it extracts the content for that discussion, always leads the reader logically back to that Spirit. Hegel does not attempt to account for his own assumptions anywhere in "The Spirit of Christianity," but we can deduce from our foregoing analysis that he must at the very least assume that the Old Testament is governed by an internal logic through which a critical reader can make sense of the people that produced it. His entire argument in fact relies on the possibility to do just that. From this assumption, Hegel proceeds to use that same text to demonstrate, through argument, what that internal logic *is*, or how it rationally coheres for its reader into something legible and self-consistent. A central condition of possibility for Hegel's interpretation itself, then, is the interpreter's presumption of a whole entity that can be made legible by deduction and comparison to its own content and creators.

This process of making a text or other cultural object legible in part by rationalizing it to its makers is absolutely central to Hegel's thinking here. It also provides a practical explanation for why, as we began to discuss in the prior section, Hegel becomes so concerned with the exclusion of "something outside" the object of his historical interpretation: any given moment in time, if it is to be understood as discrete from antecedent and subsequent moments, must be understood and reconstructed as a finite entity from the inside out, through as complete an

[46] Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 59.

apprehension as possible of the processes of thinking its intellectual products demonstrate. The historically and culturally mediated spirit of a people reveals itself through the interpretive disclosure of its constitutive links with its own intellectual products' internal logic, and anything "outside" of that for Hegel, as we have already shown when discussing Abrams and Kaufmann, can only ever be concerned with "itself." The spirit of a people is a whole and self-consistent entity that finds a mirror of its own content in the internal logic of its cultural products, which are likewise conceived as analogically self-consistent wholes.

In the case of the biblical narrative, Hegel's task of discerning that whole is accomplished quite easily for him by the interpretive apparatus already long appended to Judaism and Christianity, which he adapts to his own purposes:[47] the Old Testament and the New Testament together describe for Hegel a stable narrative whole that simultaneously entails the contents and course of history, a theory of necessity, and the intellectual development of a single Spirit. That development begins with Adam, reaches its earliest full expression in the Spirit of the "Jewish people" as embodied in Abraham, and culminates its transformative apotheosis in the Spirit of Jesus. Insofar as the distinct periods that characterize that Spirit's discrete moments are distinguished by intellectual change, we can also understand the progress of that narrative as the intellectual development of a single spiritual entity. So that the significant moments that mark the stages of its transformation also function as significant moments in the braided histories of Judaism and Christianity as they unfold over the course of the biblical narrative that Hegel reinterprets. But it is also clear that the moments of intellectual change that mark the

[47] For example, the idea of continuity between Judaism and Christianity is already stressed with some vigor in many of the New Testament texts. This is particularly true of the book of Acts, which begins with Christ's resurrection and details the providentially guided transformation of a locally focused Judaism into a universally focused Christianity. The emphasis on the Jewish origins of the Christian religion is maintained through such episodes as Peter's appearance before the Sanhedrin, as well as the detailed genealogy at the beginning of the book of Matthew. Acts 4: 5 – 22; Matthew 1: 1- 25. (KJV).

transformation from one developmental stage of Spirit to the next are also the result of a culturally conditioned historical necessity. This in turn implies that the intellectual development of the Spirit, which doubles as the content and course of Jewish and Christian religious history, also functions as the principal means by which cultural and historical necessity are *measured*; Hegel's historical Jesus was above all things an actual historical man, capable of being made subject to the terrestrial limitations of historical time and geographical place. The narrative movement of Hegel's Spirit through the Old Testament to the New thus both describes the development of a putatively actual substratum of history and represents the intellectual development of a single entity that functions as the means by which historical and cultural necessity are made measurable: the "Spirit of Christianity," the universalized history of a religion, and the terms of historical necessity have been collapsed into the single, polyvalent representation of the Spirit's intellectual development from its origins in the Old Testament to its culmination in the New.

Though it will undergo its own transformation in the *Phenomenology*, it is in any case clear that Hegel's representation of intellectual development in "The Spirit of Christianity," just described, is already significantly more elaborate than the critical descriptions of the *Bildungsroman* elucidated in the earlier sections of this study. But there are also many similarities. Like those of Morgenstern, Blanckenburg, Shaftesbury, Fielding, and Craig, Hegel's representation of intellectual development in the "Spirit" essay remains focused primarily on the development of what our previous authors described using the language of interiors, which Hegel calls "Spirit"; privileges the thematic representation of that content over other potential modes of representing change; understands alterations in the representation of those spiritual concepts to be at least partly historical; relies on a commitment to a "real *Life*" aesthetic similar to those

espoused by Shaftesbury and his peers for its justification of content; and maintains a highly didactic focus on education, in this case the teachings of Jesus, reiterated as Hegel's own potential corrective to religion and philosophy. As one would expect, for many obvious reasons that we have already discussed and which Hegel's own theory of history would likely endorse, much of Hegel's representation of intellectual development in the "Spirit" essay looks very much like the early discourse on the novel and the *Bildungsroman*.

Yet Hegel's differences from that discourse are also resounding. For our purposes, these differences can be categorized by their comparative complexity, and for that reason we can now differentiate the representation of intellectual development presented in Hegel's "Spirit" essay from that presented by standard *Bildungsroman* discourse by referring to the latter as "naive intellectual development" and the former as "complex intellectual development." This is not to say that any of the novels or critical works implicated in "naive" *Bildungsroman* discourse is necessarily simple, for many of them are not. It is rather only to say that the representations of intellectual development they present are not as "complex" as that presented in Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity," and for three main reasons. First, the intellectual development that the Spirit undergoes within the latter entails an explicit transformation at the level of universal or world history and therefore includes within it a greater content than any of the theories or novel characters discussed so far. Even Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Wieland's *Agathon*, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, whose capacious and historically embedded narratives respectively encompass enormous fields of action and undergo sometimes profound transitions, cannot compare to Spirit in this respect, whose transformation over the course of Hegel's argument comes to represent within the confines of a single figure the accumulated contents of history, religion, and philosophy. So that its intellectual change both causes and affects transformations that alter both

history and the means by which historical change can be conceived and measured. Hegel's representation of intellectual development in the "Spirit" essay, still only a fragment of what he will present in the *Phenomenology*, describes a transformation so complete that it entails a historical alteration in the very terms through which its own development can be conceived. Many of the canonical novels of the so-called *Bildungsroman* tradition include many points of contact with diverse critical topics, including history, religion, and philosophy. But Hegel's "complex" representation of intellectual development in the "Spirit" essay represents a historically inflected cognitive change that altogether exceeds the conceptual bounds of "naive" *Bildungsroman* discourse.

This implies the second major difference between "naive" and "complex" intellectual development; namely, that Hegel's understanding of what an interior is already encompasses a sphere of meaning more expansive than that implied by a simple interior/exterior binary. Of course, the mere concept of an interior implies an exterior,[48] and in this respect Hegel's representation of the interior/exterior binary does not differ from anyone else's. And, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, the eighteenth-century works under consideration here, particularly Blanckenburg's, do not posit the hard distinction between interior and exterior spaces more typical of today's spatially psychologized language of "interiority."[49] A more helpful way of stating Hegel's significant difference relative to the concept of interiority would therefore be to say that, for Hegel, the interior/exterior dyad, upon which the general concept of an interior relies, functions more actively than it does in any of the conceptions we have discussed here. For Shaftesbury and Blanckenburg as much as for Morgenstern, Fielding, and Craig, the conceptual core of what Blanckenburg so presciently calls *das Innre* remains stable and, as we have shown,

[48] Seán Hand, "Working Out Interiority: Locations and Locutions of Ipseity," *Literature and Theology* 17, no. 4 (December 2003), 422 – 423.
[49] Lerro, "Some Dark Interiority," 28 – 50.

functions as a generic and transparent human attribute. Blanckenburg especially is clear that the emergence of the representation of *das Innre* within the burgeoning form of the novel is an historical novelty. Yet, he does not argue that the modern novel's central characters invented *das Innre*. Not quite so for Hegel, who makes it as clear as anyone could that Jesus's transformative arrival expanded the constitutive possibilities of spiritual or interior capacity itself, altering its core qualitative potential. Taken alongside his insistence that the arrival of Jesus was also a result of historical and cultural conditions specific to a precise time and place, it follows quite logically that the interior or intellectual capacity that Hegel describes is in fact not entirely distinct from the exterior conditions of time and place upon which it depends and with which it is representationally interdependent. The interior and exterior spheres are, indeed, distinct ideas for Hegel. But, as we have seen, their dynamic, dyadic operation describes a functional relation (rather than an oppositional dyad) whose dynamic constituent elements develop together and cannot be told fully apart, as opposed to two distinct concepts yoked together only by the difference supposedly inherent within their conceptual opposition.

The longer one contemplates it, then, the more apparent it becomes that the very object at the center of intellectual development in the "Sprit" essay, the *Geist* whose transformation Hegel's historical apparatus exists in order to constitute and track, looks less and less like the kind of simple *Innre* about which *Bildungsroman* discourse has since its inception predominantly concerned itself. This fact points to the third and final important difference between "naive" and "complex" intellectual development: because the Spirit of the "Spirit" essay instantiates an interior/exterior conceptualization that alters the relative boundaries and potential contents of interiority and exteriority; and because it does so by representing a transformation that entails a durable change in the terms of conceptual thought through which that interior/exterior concept is

understood, Hegel's representation of intellectual development must also be said to represent the development of a fundamentally different kind of subject than has been or can be convincingly accounted for by "naive" *Bildungsroman* discourse. Hegel's historically constituting Spirit, both anthropomorphic and anthropogenic, both transcends simply conceived binaries of subjectivity and becomes the locus for a kind of subject capable of both positing and measuring the relative value of the terms by which subjectivity itself is constituted. Like the consciousness of the *Phenomenology* will do on a much wider, historically dialectical scale, the Spirit of "The Spirit of Christianity," which culminates in the world-altering figure of Jesus, develops the intellectual capacity to evaluate itself. In so doing, Spirit recognizes in its own later form – Jesus – not just a change in itself, but also a change that both constitutes and affects all of human history. And though many fine novels of the *Bildungsroman* tradition demonstrate historically mediated processes that at first look similar to this process, or narrate historically related changes or transformations that seem to include or imply some or even most of what Hegel achieves here, we do not believe that any prior representation of intellectual development presents that development as consciously or complexly as Hegel's does. We might even go so far as to say that Hegel positions his work against the very representations of intellectual development to which his work is so often analogically linked and to which its particular character has been so heedlessly subsumed.

Chapter III

Self-Conscious Intellectual Development:

The Phenomenology of Spirit

The general impression, conveyed to and repeated by so many critics, that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a *Bildungsroman*, or that it should be understood as a philosophical translation or representation of an intellectual process sometimes called *Bildung*, is at least in part the result of Hegel's own words; that Hegel supposedly referred to his experience of writing the *Phenomenology* as his own "voyage of discovery" is well known and often repeated.[1] Hegel's own language in several important places within the *Phenomenology* also seems to support the claim. Particularly in the Introduction (*Einleitung*), Hegel's use of simplifying developmental analogies is less technical than in other places and contains some remarks that, if taken out of context, lends to this superficial impression. A closer examination of a number of Hegel's more typical usages, when comprehended alongside the complete course of development that the *Phenomenology*'s progress describes, however, reveals that, while Hegel is indeed concerned with educative processes that he explicitly links to the word *Bildung* and its cognates, the process of intellectual development that he actually represents in the *Phenomenology* radically complicates any simple or straightforward understanding of what those educative processes should be taken to mean. Like other significant concepts within the *Phenomenology*,

[1] The quote apparently originated with Hegel's student, Karl Ludwig Michelet, who claimed that Hegel used the phrase to describe the experience of writing the *Phenomenology*. And though the phrase appears a probably uncountable number of times within the critical literature on Hegel, we have yet to discover any confirmable printed source linking the statement directly to either Michelet or Hegel. In addition to Kaufmann's usage, cited above, see Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 203; Simon Glendinning, ed., *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 57; and Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, 3.

Hegel's conceptualization of intellectual change attains to its highest meaning only when it becomes fully self-conscious to the developing subject. Hegel's representation of intellectual development in the *Phenomenology* thus describes not only the relatively simple process of intellectual development, or *Bildung*, in general, but also the process of that intellectual development itself becoming fully self-conscious to the developing subject as such. It thereby marks a distinct conceptual difference from both "complex" and "naive" intellectual development. When applied to a novelistic reading of the *Phenomenology*, this conceptual difference, which finds its clearest expression in the dialectical moment of *Aufheben* during which its definitive expression occurs, describes a theoretical alteration in the form and content of the novel deep enough to warrant the use of a new conceptual language.

The word *Bildung*, like so many other German technical terms, cannot without some understanding of the German language and intellectual history be rendered into English with any real precision. English words often used in its place, such as "education," "development," "formation" or "culture" individually lack the ideological and historical gravity that *Bildung* denotes,[2] especially for native speakers of German, even though, as we discussed in our

[2] Raymond Geuss provides a concise theory of the distinctions among the terms "Kultur," "Bildung," and "Geist," all of which can be and have been translated into English using the single term "culture." He marks his understanding of those distinctions as follows: "In German there are three words that are used in place of our 'culture': *Kultur*, *Bildung*, and *Geist*. The first two of these terms have 'shadows,' that is, terms that are semantically closely related to the original ones, but which gradually become more and more sharply distinguished from the original term until finally a contrasting pair arises. In the case of *Kultur* the shadow is *Zivilisation*. *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* start at no great distance from one another and even have a range of more or less overlapping usage, but by the beginning of the twentieth century the two terms have begun to be used as members of a contrasting pair: *Zivilisation* has a mildly pejorative connotation and was used to refer to the external trappings, artifacts, and amenities of an industrially highly advanced society and also to the overly formalistic and calculating habits and attitudes that were thought to be characteristic of such societies. / *Kultur* was then used to refer to positively valorized habits, attitudes, and properties. During the period immediately before and during World War I the contrast became a staple of German journalism: The French and British have *Zivilisation*, Germans have *Kultur*. In the strongest versions of this view *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* are actually considered *opposites*. / *Bildung* has as its shadow *Erziehung*. Both *Bildung* and *Erziehung* (and their associated linguistic forms) refer to processes of training, education, or formation. One linguistic difference between the two terms is that

Introduction, many important English authors played a significant role in establishing the foundational language underwriting that gravity.[3] This problem of pinning down the meaning of *Bildung*, however, is not confined to English. In addition to works such as that of Susan Cocalis, which we have discussed at length, Rebekka Horlacher's more recent contribution, itself a conscious part of the long tradition of German academic discourse on *Bildung* dating back to the German reception of Shaftesbury,[4] has demonstrated six distinct interpretive pathways within the longer history of German thought that the term has taken since that time, up to and including contemporary discussions of pedagogy. As with the term *Bildungsroman*, though none of us can say exactly what the word *Bildung* means, we can all agree that it has been and remains both highly significant and vexingly vague.[5]

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while *Erziehung* is used only to refer to the process of education or training, *Bildung* can be used to refer either to a process of formation or to the form imparted in such a process. A further difference is that *Erziehung* is generally used of a process that one person or group inflicts on another; thus a parent would be said to train a child to conform to certain social expectations and observers would speak of the child's *Erziehung*. *Bilden*, the verb from which *Bildung* is derived, can also be used in cases in which one person imposes a form on another, but increasingly *Bildung* as a noun comes to be used for processes of *self*-cultivation (and their results)." Geuss, "*Kultur*, *Bildung*, *Geist*," *History and Theory* 35, no. 2 (May, 1996): 153 – 154.

[3] Writing on the philosophy of education, Rebekka Horlacher notes that "Alternatives" to *Bildung*, such as "*Erziehung* (education) or *Unterricht* (instruction, teaching), do not really catch on, as they cannot rival the grandness and splendor that lies in the concept of *Bildung*. When related to the concept of *Bildung* . . . the school becomes elevated into the high winds of the spiritual, so to speak . . . whereby this ideal concept generally refers to perfecting the person's 'true nature,' or 'higher self.'" Rebekka Horlacher, "*Bildung* – A Construction of a History of Philosophy of Education," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23, (2004): 409 – 410.

[4] Horlacher does not mention Cocalis, but she links the emergence of *Bildung* discourse to the same German translations of Shaftesbury that Cocalis discusses. Ibid., 410.

[5] Horlacher summarizes the state of critical affairs nicely as follows: "Since the 18th century, there have been ever-new versions of the discourse on *Bildung*. Most recently, the debate variously regrets the loss of *Bildung* (Fuhrmann, 2002), attempts to capture the essence of *Bildung* in encyclopedic fashion (Schwanitz, 1999), or radically rejects (Oelkers, 2002) or affirms its connection to the school (von Hentig, 1996). In a comprehensive study of *Bildung und Schule*, Dohmen concludes in 1964 that the concept of '*Bildung'* is one of the most ambiguous and vague fundamental concepts of German pedagogy (Dohmen, 1964, p. 15). Indeed, it is typical of the lack of clarity of the concept that in the discussion on school reform, it is used by conservatives and reformers alike." Ibid., 409.

We can also agree that, whatever else may be true about their overlapping histories, contents, and discourses, the terms *Bildung* and *Bildungsroman* revolve around an anthropomorphically constructed subject endowed with the capacity to undergo visible and meaningful spiritual, intellectual, or otherwise *Geist*-like change. Indeed, though we have already seen that contemporary discourse, particularly that relating to the *Bildungsroman*, has in recent years learned to apply the term much more flexibly, the link between *Bildung*'s contemporary meaning and early modern religious rhetoric demonstrates that a universally conceived human intellectual capacity, or something analogical to it, has been at the heart of the concept since its inception: from ideal religious instruction and aesthetic theory to novel discourse and pedagogy, *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* rely for their content first and foremost on the presumption of a stable, anthropomorphic concept of mind capable of receiving educative impressions and reflecting their transforming effects to an external interpreter. And in both of these senses, like the works of Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Fielding, and Craig, Hegel's *Phenomenology* is typical of the wider discourse on *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman* whose conceptual structure it partially constructs: Hegel's *Phenomenology* privileges as it describes the intellectual development of an anthropomorphic subject whose meaningful intellectual change relies upon without explicitly justifying the nuanced metaphorical valence and history of the term *Bildung*, whose multivalent competing meanings it both relies upon and co-creates.

Yet, Hegel is also clear, even during those relatively less disciplined analogical moments that lend themselves so easily to the oversimplification of his thinking, that, whatever *Bildung* may be for his readers, the transformative effect of the *Phenomenology* will fundamentally alter it. Early in the book's Introduction (*Einleitung*), Hegel provides a condensed description of the path the *Phenomenology* will describe over its course, from which a general outline of the book's

representation of intellectual development can be interpretively extracted. Miller's translation reads as follows:

> Now, because it has only phenomenal knowledge for its object, this exposition seems not to be Science, free and self-moving in its own peculiar shape; yet from this standpoint it can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge; or as the way of the Soul which journeys through the series of its own configurations as though they were the stations appointed for it by its own nature, so that it may purify itself for the life of the Spirit, and achieve finally, through a completed experience of itself, the awareness of what it really is in itself. / Natural consciousness will show itself to be only the Notion of knowledge, or in other words, not to be real knowledge. But since it directly takes itself to be real knowledge, this path has a negative significance for it, and what is in fact the realization of the Notion, counts for it rather as the loss of its own self; for it does lose its truth on this path. The road can therefore be regarded as the pathway of *doubt*, or more precisely as the way of despair. For what happens on it is not what is ordinarily understood when the word 'doubt' is used: shilly-shallying about this or that presumed truth, followed by a return to that truth again, after the doubt has been appropriately dispelled – so that at the end of the process the matter is taken to be what it was in the first place. On the contrary, this path is the conscious insight into the untruth of phenomenal knowledge, for which the supreme reality is what is in truth only the unrealized Notion. Therefore this thoroughgoing skepticism is also not the scepticism with which an earnest zeal for truth and Science fancies it has prepared and equipped itself in their service: the *resolve*, in Science, not to give oneself over to the

> thoughts of others, upon mere authority, but to examine everything for oneself and follow one's own conviction, or better still, to produce everything oneself, and accept only one's own deed as what is true. / The series of configurations which consciousness goes through along this road is, in reality, the detailed history of the *education* of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science.[6]

Obviously, the phrases "path [*Weg*] of the natural consciousness," "way [*Weg*] of the Soul [*Seele*] which journeys," and "history [*Geschichte*] of the *education* [*Bildung*] of consciousness" sound very much like Hegel's apocryphally self-described "voyage of discovery." The language is also similar to many of the other descriptions of the *Bildungsroman* we have already encountered. Moreover, when these three phrases are set side-by-side, Hegel's metaphorical linkage of the temporal progression over which *Bildung* occurs to the spatial language of a

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[6] "Weil nun diese Darstellung nur das erscheinende Wissen zum Gegenstande hat, so scheint sie selbst nicht die freie, in ihrer eigentümlichen Gestalt sich bewegende Wissenschaft zu sein, sondern sie kann von diesem Standpunkte aus als der Weg des natürlichen Bewußtseins, das zum wahren Wissen dringt, genommen werden, oder als der Weg der Seele, welche die Reihe ihrer Gestaltungen, als durch ihre Natur ihr vorgesteckter Stationen, durchwandert, daß sie sich zum Geiste läutere, indem sie durch die vollständige Erfahrung ihrer selbst zur Kenntnis desjenigen gelangt, was sie an sich selbst ist. / Das natürliche Bewußtsein wird sich erweisen, nur Begriff des Wissens, oder nicht reales Wissen zu sein. Indem es aber unmittelbar sich vielmehr für das reale Wissen hält, so hat dieser Weg für es negative Bedeutung, und ihm gilt das vielmehr für Verlust seiner selbst, was die Realisierung des Begriffs ist; denn es verliert auf diesem Wege seine Wahrheit. Er kann deswegen als der Weg des *Zweifels* angesehen werden, oder eigentlicher als Weg der Verzweiflung; auf ihm geschieht nämlich nicht das, was unter Zweifeln verstanden zu werden pflegt, ein Rütteln an dieser oder jener vermeinten Wahrheit, auf welches ein gehöriges Wiederverschwinden des Zweifels und eine Rückkehr zu jener Wahrheit erfolgt, so daß am Ende die Sache genommen wird wie vorher. Sondern er ist die bewußte Einsicht in die Unwahrheit des erscheinenden Wissens, dem dasjenige das Reellste ist, was in Wahrheit vielmehr nur der nichtrealisierte Begriff ist. Dieser sich vollbringende Skeptizismus ist darum auch nicht dasjenige, womit wohl der ernsthafte Eifer um Wahrheit und Wissenschaft sich für diese fertig gemacht und ausgerüstet zu haben wähnt; nämlich mit dem *Vorsatze*, in der Wissenschaft auf die Autorität sich den Gedanken anderer nicht zu ergeben, sondern alles selbst zu prüfen und nur der eigenen Überzeugung zu folgen, oder besser noch, alles selbst zu produzieren und nur die eigne Tat für das Wahre zu halten. Die Reihe seiner Gestaltungen, welche das Bewußtsein auf diesem Wege durchläuft, ist vielmehr die ausführliche Geschichte der *Bildung* des Bewußtseins selbst zur Wissenschaft."[6] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 49 – 50; Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), 66 – 67.

physical journey – i.e., the single German word "Weg" (way) which Miller translates here using the terms "way," "path," "pathway," and "road" – also makes itself apparent, as does a conceptual linkage, *à la* Fielding, of that same progression to the concept of "history" (*Geschichte*). Hegel's abundant rhetorical usage of the language of naturalness, experience, and accessibility – i.e., the German word "erscheinende," which Miller translates as "phenomenal" but more literally means "appearing" or "apparent"; and the German words "natürlich" (natural) and "Erfahrung" (experience) – is also quite clear. Conspicuous, too, still echoing Shaftesbury and Blanckenburg, is the strong preference for spiritual, intellectual or otherwise cognitive – i.e., the German words "Wissen" (knowledge), "Bewußtsein" (consciousness), "Seele" (soul), and "Geist" (spirit) – ways of conceiving, valuing, and evaluating developmental significance. All of this language straightforwardly reflects much of the *Bildungsroman* discourse we have discussed in our preceding chapters, from both primary and secondary sources.

Yet, when his language is parsed more closely, several distinctly Hegelian differences also make themselves apparent, most of which relate closely to the form and conceptual content of "The Spirit of Christianity" already elucidated in the previous chapter. The first is rather obvious, if somewhat disarming: the endpoint of the "history" that Hegel's book will unfold has a distinct and singular destination, which Hegel calls "the *education* of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science" (*Bildung des Bewußtseins selbst zur Wissenschaft*). Despite the copious critical analogies suggesting the contrary, Hegel states early and clearly that we are not dealing with a book that has a plot in the traditional sense, wherein the actions and decisions of characters in infinitely variable circumstances can, at least theoretically, unfold in an infinite number of ways. "Anything," in other words, is exactly what *cannot* happen over the course of the *Phenomenology*'s progress. Quite the opposite: the course of events that Hegel's book

describes concludes in a single outcome for its consciousness-protagonist, and the "stations" (*Stationen*) it passes through on its way to that outcome are constitutively tied to its nature as subjective consciousness: the definitive lesson that the consciousness-protagonist will learn over the course of its development is that what it once believed to be knowledge (*Wissen*) is not "real knowledge" (*reales Wissen*) at all, and that only what it has learned at the conclusion of its development attains to that definition of knowledge. The name for the position from which the subject cognizes this fact is what Hegel importantly calls "Wissenschaft," or "Science."

At first blush, some readers may not appreciate why the necessarily singular outcome of the *Phenomenology* makes it significantly different from any given novel, particularly if, as is so often the case with those among us who have read enough European novels to be able to predict, with at least a measure of educated certainty, how their plots are likely to unfold; at times, it would appear that "anything" is also just what *cannot* happen in many of the most widely read novels, particularly in regard to those deeply ingrained tropes and *topoi*, such as constructs of religion, race, and sex-gender, that have taken on such enormous significance for modern critics. After all, is a measure of increased knowledge not what any ordinary protagonist attains over the course of a novel, particularly the protagonist of a so-called *Bildungsroman*? And is it not also true that the course of almost any protagonist's actions and circumstances, if so interpreted, necessarily engages itself on some level with something like "experience" and "awareness?" Is Hegel not merely describing the essential character of the *Roman* already set forth by Blanckenburg and his peers?

In short, the answer to all of these questions is no, and for relatively simple reasons that we do not need Hegel's help to construct. If it were true that structurally embedded tropes or *topoi* (i.e., the so-called marriage plot), the statistical probability of any given representational

relation (i.e., the likelihood of a ne'er-do-well banker in a late Victorian novel being Jewish, *pace* Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*), or a taxonomy of critical expectations for a genre (i.e., that a protagonist should glean something called knowledge from something called experience) were enough to foreclose or describe the potential content of any novel, the concept of interpreted content itself would have no meaning, since all of these determinations, though formal in nature, depend upon the possibility of interpretation for their respective contents, even if that interpretation is applied only to a critical description of form. And though Hegel is not arguing that his book cannot be interpreted, or that it should correspond to a single meaning, he is saying that its outcome is fixed and logically necessary in a very real sense, much more deeply than the fickle expectations of a genre or the functions of what are ultimately changeable *topoi*. Despite the plethora of formal knowledge that has been generated about the novel, whatever the novel may be, none of that knowledge has yet been able to determine any necessary or specific course that the novel in general, or any given novel in particular, must take or had to take. Not so for Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which states openly and repeatedly that its development can and will lead only to one, highly specific, historically necessary *Standpunkt*, which Hegel calls the "standpoint of Science."

Within this citation, Hegel gestures towards the developmentally attained content of this standpoint, both in respect to its course and ultimate conclusion, in several subtle but significant ways. The first has to do with the multivalent form of the *Weg* that Hegel's consciousness-protagonist must travel. Miller's decision to use four separate terms – "road," "way," "path," and "pathway" – to translate the German word *Weg* is a good one; each of the words he chooses achieves fitting English renderings of its context-specific meaning. The downside to this decision, however, is that the reader of the English translation loses the sense, so apparent in the

German, that Hegel's polyvalent framings of the *Weg* itself are only partly rhetorical and almost never guided by the demands of belletristic style. Hegel's German text represents a single developmental *Weg* and calls it by the single name *Weg*, so that what looks like a figurative or literary use of language in Miller's translation is, in fact, much more focused and literal in Hegel's own text. Hegel's use of the word *Weg* here thus makes explicit what Miller's translation only implies: that the *Phenomenology*'s course of development traces a single, unified path with multivalent but distinct facets of meaning, as opposed to many different courses or kinds of development that come together haphazardly to form developmentally metaphorical traits. It is essential for Hegel that these transformations all occur on the same path; they construct, in a very real sense, the same – and only – *Weg*.

This distinction is significant, because the unity of the developmental course that Hegel's consciousness-protagonist must travel is deeply linked to the multivalent contents of these individual facets, each of which has a distinct character. In a footnote appended to the phrase ending with the words "its own nature" in the English translation, Miller describes the preceding sentence as an "allusion perhaps to the Stations of the Cross."[7] The comment is both insightful and apt, as Hegel's tone and language are not accidental: the *Via Dolorosa*, which details the fourteen "stations" (in German, *Kreuzwegstationen*, in which compound we can readily discern the German words *Weg* and *Station*) of Jesus's final moments of passion, beginning with his condemnation by Pontius Pilate and ending with his entombment, is generally expressed in German using the terms *Kreuzweg* and *Weg des Kreuzes*. All of this subtext undergirds Hegel's choice of the word *Weg* here and supports Miller's claim that Hegel's language establishes an analogical connection between the Stations of the Cross and the developmental path that Hegel's consciousness-protagonist must travel in order to arrive at its final "standpoint." As was the case

[7] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 49.

for the Spirit in the "The Spirit of Christianity" essay, the consciousness-protagonist of Hegel's *Phenomenology* undergoes a change in consciousness that both represents and entails, at least in part, a religious transformation. Hegel goes to great lengths to make this point clear to the *Phenomenology*'s reader, overtly and regularly advancing rich, religiously inflected structural and metaphorical analogies.[8]

The language that Hegel uses to characterize the ethical content of the *Weg* should also already be familiar to us from our treatment of the earlier essays: the change that the consciousness-protagonist undergoes in the *Phenomenology*, characterized as it is by the learned or trained rejection of "mere authority [*Autorität*]," is described in language almost identical in tone to that which Hegel uses to describe the transformation of Judaism's Spirit through the intervention of Jesus. Hegel adds a rich language of psychological affect to the *Phenomenology*'s reiteration of this transformation, describing a "way of despair," over the course of which the consciousness "lose[s] its truth" (*Kenntnis*), as the dramatic concomitant loss of "its own self" (*sich selbst*). The movement away from external authority and imposed structures of thinking that opens the door to Christian freedom from the letter of the law in the "Spirit" essay has become in the *Phenomenology* the "resolve" (*Vorsatz*) "not to give oneself over to the thoughts of others, upon mere authority, but to examine everything for oneself and follow one's own conviction." Jesus's ethical freedom from external domination by the Mosaic Law has grown to include a deeper and much more distinctly articulated affective and psychological dimension.[9]

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[8] This aspect of the *Phenomenology* is well known and well documented, particularly among the critics of Hegel who remain sensitive to the book's more overtly religious content. For a helpful and illustrative example, see H.S. Harris's discussion of Hegel's concept of Spirit, during which Harris explains how the "world of Faith is simply the dogma of the Trinity transformed into abstract concepts." Harris, *Phenomenology and System*, 69.

[9] Rotenstreich, too, emphasizes the affective element underwriting Hegel's conceptualization of religion, dividing his discussion of Hegel's anti-Judaism into affective and philosophical headings. Rotenstreich, *The Recurring Pattern*, 48 – 53.

As Hegel's language of "truth," "knowledge," and "self" suggests, the consciousness-protagonist of the *Phenomenology* also undergoes a didactic or educative transformation while traversing its affectively intensified *Weg*, which Hegel is again careful to construct with great attention to his use of language. In the first sentence of the above citation, Hegel uses the term "erscheinende Wissen" to describe the kind of knowledge of the object (*Gedenstand*) that the consciousness possesses at the beginning of its journey, a journey that Hegel claims will lead to "reales Wissen" (real knowledge). Hegel then, near the end of the paragraph, when describing its transformed epistemological endpoint, renames "reales Wissen" as "Wissenschaft." The word *Wissenschaft*, as Denise Phillips has recently reminded us, is fraught with historical nuance and has – as we have seen with *Bildung*, *Bildungsroman*, and *Innerlichkeit* – played a significant role in constructing polarizing attitudes about the nature and content of national differences, particularly among English and German audiences, who have sometimes used the term to enable competing ideas and ideals of national spirit and character.[10] The longer history of this verbal phenomenon is beyond the scope of our purposes here. However, the important facts of Williams's recent research for our discussion here are two: that, contrary to many years of mainly ideological claims to the contrary, prior to the 1860s, German and English audiences are generally in agreement that what the English call "science" and what the Germans call "Wissenschaft" refer to the same thing;[11] and, that the general meaning of these terms for both groups, until the 1860s, corresponds to what Williams calls "all academic knowledge," inclusive of what we now call "the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities."[12] English has lost this sense of the word, whereas German has retained it; "science" in English now refers

[10] Denise Phillips, "Francis Bacon and the Germans: Stories from when 'science' meant '*Wissenschaft*,'" *History of Science* 53, no. 4 (2015): 379 – 381.
[11] Ibid., 378 – 380.
[12] Ibid, 378.

exclusively to the natural sciences and related empirical disciplines, whereas German has developed specific terms, mostly *Wissenschaft* compounds – such as *Naturwissenschaft* (natural science) and *Geisteswissenschaften* ("spiritual" sciences, or the humanities) – to distinguish among the many different types of disciplinary knowledge.[13] Yet all of them remain kinds of *Wissenschaft* in German, and the term has not lost this fundamental meaning. For Hegel and his English and German-speaking contemporaries, then, the education from *Wissen* to *Wissenschaft*, or from "natural consciousness" to the "standpoint of Science," is not necessarily an education or training to science in the sense of scientific experimentation, but rather to the "conscious insight" that all forms of knowledge, from philosophy to physics, in order collectively to be called knowledge at all, must share a common form. Hegel's conceptualization of "Science," in other words, describes the conceptual condition of possibility for "Wissenschaft" itself.

This conclusion will likely still pose some fundamental problems of understanding for those readers unfamiliar with Hegel's philosophy and methods. Jean Hyppolite many years ago described Hegel's understanding of *Wissenschaft* as an attainment to "philosophical knowledge," which he, like Hegel, links to "knowledge of the absolute."[14] This description is useful for us here because it helps us further to clarify two essential aspects of the "standpoint" to which Hegel aims the *Phenomenology*'s developmental conclusion. The first can be simply extracted from Hyppolite's descriptive claim: to arrive at the "standpoint of Science" means to attain to true philosophical knowledge. For Hegel, the two positions are essentially the same position. As Lukács, who writes extensively on both Goethe and Hegel but never conflates their representations of history or intellectual development and in fact makes a point of asserting their

[13] Ibid., 387 – 390.
[14] Hyppolite, *Genesis*, 4.

differences,[15] cannily notes: "the project" that Hegel "set himself in the *Phenomenology* was to provide ordinary consciousness with a ladder with which to ascend to the standpoint of philosophy."[16] We should not interpret this to mean, however, that our understanding of science or *Wissenschaft* in either the contemporary or historical English or German senses, or in the sense intended by empirical or academic disciplines other than philosophy, necessarily cannot or actually does not describe knowledge. Quite the opposite: as Harris has reiterated, although Hegel's claim involves a technical critique of practical, critical, empirical, scientific, and common-sense philosophies, as well as their attendant methods and descriptions of philosophy and knowledge, Hegel's "radical criticism . . . does not invalidate any of them; on the contrary, it justifies and validates them. After it is finished, all of them are free to proceed much as before."[17] Hegel's understanding of science and knowledge thus does "not inhibit the pursuit of finite knowledge in any of its forms, either empirical or philosophical."[18] It can therefore be described as "absolute" by Hegel because the possibility for all other kinds of justified knowledge is implicitly contained within it: "Science" is the standpoint, or *conscious position*, from which properly to conceive the possibility for knowledge in all of its various forms. And though Hegel's rhetorical opprobrium in individual cases is always incisive and often harsh,[19] the thrust of his methodological criticism supports rather than weakens the idea of scientific methods in the broadest sense.

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[15] Within the "Faust Studies," under the sub-section entitled "The Drama of the Human Species," Lukács describes Hegel's conceptualization of "history," which, according to Lukács, describes "the historical progress of the individual" as a culminating synthesis of three contemporary conceptualizations of history that the *Phenomenology* fundamentally alters. Lukács, *Goethe and His Age: A Major Critical Revaluation of Germany's Greatest Poet*, trans. Robert Anchor (New York: Universal Library, 1969), 175 – 177.
[16] Lukács*, The Young Hegel*, 468 – 469.
[17] Harris, *Phenomenology and System*, 1 – 2.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Kaufmann mentions a biting but still humorous exchange between Hegel and Fichte in which an exasperated Fichte asks Hegel, "Why is it that you cannot communicate yourself without insulting?" Kaufmann, *Reinterpretation*, 108.

As one would expect, then, the medium for the intellectual development that Hegel's *Phenomenology* describes also comes in an intellectual form: what Hegel calls the "Begriff," whose movement describes the philosophical valence of the consciousness-protagonist's transformative *Weg*. In the citation above and throughout his translation, Miller renders the term using the word "Notion," though "concept," according to Michael Inwood, offers a better indication of the term's meaning for contemporary speakers of English. In his excellent book, *A Hegel Dictionary*, a generous and indispensable resource for experts and beginners alike, Inwood offers a brief description of what the concept of the Concept means for Hegel.[20] Like all Hegelian terminology, the word remains polyvalent as a matter of principle,[21] ultimately resisting fixed definitions and easy interpretation.[22] Nevertheless, with the whole scope of Hegel's works in view, Inwood insightfully isolates three definitive traits that, while certainly not exhaustive, describe the most salient and stable features of the term for Hegel: (1) that "concepts are not sharply distinct from the I" that posits them; (2) that "concepts are not sharply distinct from objects"; and, (3) that "concepts are not sharply distinct from each other."[23]

Within the same entry, Inwood also claims that Hegel's use of the term undergoes a change in meaning over the course of his writings, particularly following "The Spirit of Christianity" essay.[24] And in terms of self-conscious complexity, this is certainly true: the

[20] To avoid confusion, we will use the capitalized word "Concept" to denote Hegel's term *Begriff*, and the un-capitalized word "concept" to denote our own usage.
[21] Kaufmann, *Reinterpretation*, 143 – 148.
[22] At the conclusion of this entry, while contrasting the views of M.J. Petry and K. Hartmann to a Hegelian interpretive "tradition of Neoplatonism," Inwood states that, "These differences reflect the ambiguity and complexity intrinsic to Hegel's thought." The word "intrinsic" is important here, in that it emphasizes the degree to which a measure of opacity is built into all of Hegel's writings as a matter of principle. Walter Kaufmann makes a similar observation. Inwood, *Hegel Dictionary*, 61.
[23] Ibid., 59 – 60.
[24] Inwood writes that, "In early works, especially *SCF* ["The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate"], Hegel contrasts the ABSTRACT concept with LIFE and love, and regards it as expressing only the common features of things, not their inner essence. But in Jena he came to believe that philosophy must be

"Spirit" essay does not employ any of the famous Hegelian terminology as a distinct or defined philosophical vocabulary, and Hegel's language within the *Phenomenology* is undoubtedly much more technical and precise than it is in his preceding works.[25] Nevertheless, we can already discern a prefiguration of Inwood's helpful description of Hegel's later attitude toward the Concept in the "Spirit" essay's representation of the relationship among the Spirit of Abraham, the Spirit of Jesus, and the historicized hypothetical world in which their interrelation is made manifest: neither Abraham nor Jesus is distinct from the historically necessary conditions that constitute their respective spiritual contents; both figures are dependent upon the material facts of the objective world for the functions of their identities; and their respective intellectual contents are constitutively intertwined with that history and identity in such a way as to be mutually inextricable. In "The Spirit of Christianity" and the *Phenomenology* alike, complex interrelation lies at the heart of Hegel's representation of concepts and their potential meanings, even if the Concept, as he will later define it, has not yet been fully articulated in technical terms.

Yet, Inwood is right to emphasize the difference between the *Phenomenology* and the writings that precede it. For in the former, Hegel's previous understanding of conceptual content is, indeed, in Inwood's words, "reflectively developed or sublated" into something far more

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conceptual, rather than intuitive or impassioned. He declared this belief in the Preface to *PS* [*Phenomenology of Spirit*] and never abandoned it." Ibid., 58.

[25] Relative to the development of Hegel's technical vocabulary, the relationship between the *Phenomenology* on one hand and the later *Wissenschaft Logic* and *Encyclopedia Logic* on the other is long, contentious, and difficult to classify, with some scholars insisting that the *Phenomenology* can be read on its own terms and others claiming that Hegel's technical language within the *Phenomenology* cannot be fully comprehended without a solid understanding of the complete logical system that Hegel presents in these later works. For example, Kaufmann claims that the *Phenomenology* demonstrates some internal inconsistencies and does not achieve the full "totality" that Hegel sought, while Hyppolite claims that Hegel's intent was that the *Phenomenology* should form the coherent necessary first part of a larger system followed by a logic. Without wishing to enter into this conflict, we have sought here to confine ourselves to the *Phenomenology* for both practical and technical reasons. Practically, even a superficial treatment of a small portion of Hegel's terminology is far beyond the scope of our project; and technically, such a treatment is neither necessary nor particularly helpful for our purposes. See Kaufmann, *Reinterpretation*, 158; and Hyppolite*, Genesis and Structure*, 573 – 606.

complexly structured.[26] To achieve a more thorough understanding of that structure as it relates to the multivalent *Weg* through which the consciousness-protagonist travels, which is bound to the conceptualization and function of history along that same temporal trajectory, we must first examine a rather lengthy but highly educative excerpt. Jean Hyppolite uses a portion of the same excerpt to summarize the content of the section of his still singularly brilliant commentary on the *Phenomenology*, aptly subtitled "A History of Individual Consciousness."[27] In the twelfth paragraph of the *Phenomenology*'s Preface (*Vorrede*), which precedes the Introduction but was in fact written after the entire *Phenomenology* was complete and was, according to Harris, "obviously intended as an initial presentation of the 'System of Science' as a whole,"[28] Hegel offers a rich description of the conceptual relationship among the Concept, the Weg, and the actively cognizing consciousness that subjectively unites them, which he sets alongside an illustrative prevision of what their productive interrelation will eventually achieve:

> Besides, it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past, and in the labor of its own transformation. Spirit is indeed never at rest but always engaged in moving forward. But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of merely quantitative growth – there is a qualitative leap, and the child is born – so likewise the Spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms. The frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague

[26] Inwood, *Hegel Dictionary,* 58.
[27] Hyppolite*, Genesis and Structure*, 39 – 45.
[28] Harris, *Hegel's Ladder I*, 30.

foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change. The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which, in one flash, illuminates the features of the new world. / But this new world is no more a complete actuality than is a new-born child; it is essential to bear this in mind. It comes on the scene for the first time in its immediacy or its Notion. Just as little as a building is finished when its foundation has been laid, so little is the achieved Notion of the whole the whole itself. When we wish to see an oak with its massive trunk and spreading branches and foliage, we are not content to be shown an acorn instead. So too, Science, the crown of a world of Spirit, is not complete in its beginnings. The onset of a new spirit is the product of a widespread upheaval in various forms of culture, the prize at the end of a complicated, tortuous path and of just as variegated and strenuous an effort. It is the whole which, having traversed its content in time and space, has returned into itself, and is the resultant *simple Notion* of the whole. But the actuality of this simple whole consists in those various shapes and forms which have become its moments, and which now develop and take shape afresh, this time in their new element, in their newly acquired meaning. / While the initial appearance of the new world is, to begin with, only the whole veiled in its *simplicity*, or the general foundation of the whole, the wealth of previous existence is still present to consciousness in memory. Consciousness misses in the newly emerging shape its former range and specificity of content, and even more the articulation of form whereby distinctions are securely defined, and stand arrayed in their fixed relations. Without such articulation, Science lacks universal intelligibility, and gives the appearance of being the esoteric possession of a few individuals: an esoteric possession, since its undiffused manifestation makes its existence something singular.

Only what is completely determined is at once exoteric, comprehensible, and capable of being learned and appropriated by all. The intelligible form of Science is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness as it approaches Science justly demands that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding; for the understanding is thought, the pure 'I' as such; and what is intelligible is what is already familiar and common to Science and the unscientific consciousness alike, the latter through its having afforded direct access to the former.[29]

[29] "Es ist übrigens nicht schwer, zu sehen, daß unsre Zeit eine Zeit der Geburt und des Übergangs zu einer neuen Periode ist. Der Geist hat mit der bisherigen Welt seines Daseins und Vorstellens gebrochen und steht im Begriffe, es in die Vergangenheit hinab zu versenken, und in der Arbeit seiner Umgestaltung. Zwar ist er nie in Ruhe, sondern in immer fortschreitender Bewegung begriffen. Aber wie beim Kinde nach langer stiller Ernährung der erste Atemzug jene Allmählichkeit des nur vermehrenden Fortgangs abbricht – ein qualitativer Sprung, – und jetzt das Kind geboren ist, so reift der sich bildende Geist langsam und stille der neuen Gestalt entgegen, löst ein Teilchen des Baues seiner vorgehenden Welt nach dem andern auf, ihr Wanken wird nur durch einzelne Symptome angedeutet; der Leichtsinn wie die Langeweile, die im Bestehenden einreißen, die unbestimmte Ahnung eines Unbekannten sind Vorboten, daß etwas anderes im Anzuge ist. Dies allmähliche Zerbröckeln, das die Physiognomie des Ganzen nicht veränderte, wird durch den Aufgang unterbrochen, der, ein Blitz, in einem Male das Gebilde der neuen Welt hinstellt. / Allein eine vollkommene Wirklichkeit hat dies Neue so wenig als das eben geborene Kind; und dies ist wesentlich nicht außer acht zu lassen. Das erste Auftreten ist erst seine Unmittelbarkeit oder sein Begriff. So wenig ein Gebäude fertig ist, wenn sein Grund gelegt worden, so wenig ist der erreichte Begriff des Ganzen das Ganze selbst. Wo wir eine Eiche in der Kraft ihres Stammes und in der Ausbreitung ihrer Äste und den Massen ihrer Belaubung zu sehen wünschen, sind wir nicht zufrieden, wenn uns an dieser Stelle eine Eichel gezeigt wird. So ist die Wissenschaft, die Krone einer Welt des Geistes, nicht in ihrem Anfange vollendet. Der Anfang des neuen Geistes ist das Produkt einer weitläufigen Umwälzung von mannigfaltigen Bildungsformen, der Preis eines vielfach verschlungnen Weges und ebenso vielfacher Anstrengung und Bemühung. Er ist das aus der Sukzession wie aus seiner Ausdehnung in sich zurückgegangene Ganze, der gewordne *einfache Begriff* desselben. Die Wirklichkeit dieses einfachen Ganzen aber besteht darin, daß jene zu Momenten gewordnen Gestaltungen sich wieder von neuem, aber in ihrem neuen Elemente, in dem gewordenen Sinne entwickeln und Gestaltung geben. / Indem einerseits die erste Erscheinung der neuen Welt nur erst das in seine *Einfachheit* verhüllte Ganze oder sein allgemeiner Grund ist, so ist dem Bewußtsein dagegen der Reichtum des vorhergehenden Daseins noch in der Erinnerung gegenwärtig. Es vermißt an der neu erscheinenden Gestalt die Ausbreitung und Besonderung des Inhalts; noch mehr aber vermißt es die Ausbildung der Form, wodurch die Unterschiede mit Sicherheit bestimmt und in ihre festen Verhältnisse geordnet werden. Ohne diese Ausbildung entbehrt die Wissenschaft der allgemeinen *Verständlichkeit* und hat den Schein, ein esoterisches Besitztum einiger Einzelnen zu sein; – ein esoterisches Besitztum: denn sie ist nur erst in ihrem Begriffe oder ihr Innres vorhanden; einiger Einzelnen: denn ihre unausgebreitete Erscheinung macht ihr Dasein zum Einzelnen. Erst was vollkommen bestimmt ist, ist zugleich exoterisch, begreiflich, und fähig, gelernt und das Eigentum Aller zu sein. Die verständige Form der Wissenschaft ist der Allen dargebotene und für Alle gleichgemachte Weg zu ihr, und durch den Verstand zum vernünftigen Wissen

We can immediately determine a sharp and quintessential difference between this description of historical change and that presented in the "Spirit" essay. Where there was formerly no daylight between Hegel's own intellectual position and the putatively superior methods of thinking embodied in Jesus's life and intellectual products, Hegel has opened his method onto a "sunburst" that "illuminates a new world." Beginning with a reflection on the philosophical and historical status of his own moment in time, Hegel's *Phenomenology* forever closes the door on naive conceptualizations of philosophy, including that which Hegel himself formerly possessed. The distance between Hegel and the Spirit has been mediated by the presence of a methodologically complicating figure. That figure, of course, is the fully developed concept of dialectical historical change, the self-conscious awareness of which forms the rhetorical position from which Hegel embarks upon his description of the *Phenomenology*'s developmental trajectory.

Many scholars have observed that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a product of its time and thus read the historical allusions in this and other passages to the French Revolution, which was dramatically unfolding around Hegel as he attempted to compete the book, as having a "romantic" or otherwise less than rigorously philosophical content.[30] Such comments are often mentioned alongside equally tedious reiterations of Hegel's early affection for the writings of

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zu gelangen, ist die gerechte Forderung des Bewußtseins, das zur Wissenschaft hinzutritt; denn der Verstand ist das Denken, das reine Ich überhaupt; und das Verständige ist das schon Bekannte und das Gemeinschaftliche der Wissenschaft und des unwissenschaftlichen Bewußtseins, wodurch dieses unmittelbar in jene einzutreten vermag." Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 6 – 8; Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, 15 – 16.

[30] For one familiar example, see the discussion of Abrams in Chapter Two, above. Harris also details the connection, noting that Hegel was at one point known around campus as a "Jacobin." Harris, *Hegel's Ladder I*, 1 – 3.

Rousseau.[31] Whatever one thinks of these linkages, it is important also to note that whatever "romantic" means or Rousseau suggests for this or that reader, Hegel is here and everywhere a consummately rational thinker, and the historical nature of his claim is based in a rigorous line of reasoning that privileges logic and the functions of language above all things.[32] The tumultuous and dynamic (read: superficially romantic) "era" from which he is writing is indeed a "birth-time and a period of transition to a new era." But it is only one among many such eras: Hegel is clear that Spirit "is indeed *never* at rest but *always* engaged in moving forward." Tumult and dynamism therefore cannot be confined to the era from which Hegel is writing, but rather describe a constitutive element of time itself. All historical stages for Hegel, including but not limited to the one he occupies, as well as the internal changes that each of them entails, are connected in a creatively destructive cycle of birth, growth, and death that, Hegel apparently believes, functions analogically to the dynamic life cycle of a human being or a tree.

The attainment to the "standpoint of Science," then, is the distinct trait that Hegel believes is unique to the particular era from which he is writing; the arrival to that position is the unique project of his own historical era, as it were, the *fait accompli* that he seeks retrospectively to account for and historicize. As readers more familiar with the internal logic of Hegel's later lectures in aesthetics would expect, Hegel presents the dissolution of the era antecedent to his own as "dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world." This metaphor of dissolving forms is not strictly limited to the era prior to Hegel's own, however, but, again, rather describes

[31] Dieter Henrich, for example, boldly claims that Hegel, like Rousseau, "wanted to get rid of all chains." Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 94.

[32] Many of the more philosophically or technically oriented scholars of Hegel's work are quick to point this out. Lukács and Harris, for example, state their arguments accessibly while also taking Hegel's historical and philosophical claims seriously, resisting the temptation to dissolve his thinking to such "romantic" platitudes. See Harris, *Phenomenology and System*, 61 – 80; and Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, 466 – 472.

the nature of historical change in general: the "slowly and "quietly" maturing Spirit is characterized by recurring periods of death and rebirth, each of them in some way resembling a "new-born child," an "acorn," or a freshly laid "foundation."

The difference between the acorn and the child on the one hand and the foundation on the other, however, importantly marks an essential methodological distinction between active and passive action. Hegel expands this distinction by linking the "foundation" of a given era's new "Notion," or Concept, to the "various shapes and forms which have become its moments." The child and the acorn, as observed objects, develop without cognitive intervention, whereas the "Notion," which begins from a necessary "general foundation" and only attains to the "whole" status of a legible "building" after "strenuous effort," relies on the dissolved remnants of the "previous" era's "structure" to provide for it the raw material that will then attain to a "newly acquired meaning." The development of the "Notion" from within the particular period Hegel is writing will thus describe the maturation or attainment to wholeness of "Science," the *Weg* that must be traveled by the consciousness, as well as the "Notion," in order for them to arrive at their completed "standpoint."

Hegel also describes the "shapes and forms" of the "era" whose "structure" has dissolved into his own – and thereby self-consciously provides the necessary "general foundation" upon which he is himself standing – as "the wealth of previous existence," which he claims "is still present to consciousness in memory." Though Hegel's thinking on this point is undoubtedly more nuanced than can be respectfully paraphrased here or, perhaps, anywhere, the most obvious referent for these antecedent "shapes," "forms," and "structure[s]" is the totalized contents of history, by which Hegel means "all of man's history up to the present."[33] While discussing the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*, Lukács provides a typically incisive and economical

[33] Lukács, *The Young Hegel*, 470.

way of understanding Hegel's point here when he states summarily that the ascent to the "standpoint of Science" that Hegel's *Phenomenology* describes, or what Lukács, in line with Hyppolite, also calls the standpoint of "philosophy," "is to be understood not abstractly but concretely and historically: the road which each individual must traverse is at the same time the road of human evolution in general; it is the abbreviated synthesis of all the experience of the human race and as such it may stand for the historical process itself."[34] As one might expect, Lukács spends less time contemplating the religious aspect of Hegel's thinking than Harris does. Nonetheless, when Lukács's insightful summary is set alongside what we have already demonstrated, a larger point makes itself clear: the totalized contents of the entire course of human history are available in advance to the consciousness of Hegel's era and describe the "foundation[al]" presuppositions undergirding its growth and development, thus describing its conditions of possibility.

In the previous chapter, we established that the internal structure of Jesus's partly passive and partly active historical position, which mirrored but altered the intellectual cleavage dividing the Jewish people from their own intellectual development, had to assume the capacity for the change it advanced as its effect. This was later linked to Hegel's lack of distance from the intellectual method he ascribed to Jesus. We can perceive a similar structure of thinking embedded in Hegel's idea of historical change in the *Phenomenology*: as the acorn already contains the possibility and, under the right circumstances, the inevitability of the tree, so the inherited "foundation" of "shapes," "forms," and "structure[s]" contains the possibility and potential inevitability of the standpoint or position that will mark its maturity. The contents of the mature standpoint are already organically present within the inherited content from which they derive their possibility and historical continuity.

[34] Ibid., 468.

Yet, we can also discern in those same developmental metaphors a legible difference from the "Spirit" essay that also represents an advance in Hegel's historical thinking. It would be easy to dismiss Hegel's organic language as uncritical, superficially romantic, or naive, but Lukács is thankfully more generous, if perhaps also too driven by materialist dogma, when he astutely observes that Hegel's point here is best understood when comprehended alongside theories of scientific evolution that followed and were in part derived from it: the "foundation[ally]" historical "human evolution" in a "general" sense that the developing consciousness attains to in the *Phenomenology* is nothing other than the knowledge of what has been "created by men together" over the course of their mutual existence.[35] As an object of thought, like an evolving species, the dynamic contents of socially mediated history must be said on some level to stay the same while always adaptively changing; an altered thing is necessarily the same thing, despite the alteration. The organic metaphors, in other words, are simply a means through which to present a kind of change, similar to that which we already discussed in relation to *Aufheben*, whose results describe only a partial alteration; but the metaphors themselves represent neither the method nor its significance.

Stated in the most simple terms, Hegel's principal and innovative point here is that, at any given moment in human history, in order to cognize the past in rationally legible terms, it will always be necessary to deal with one's own distance from the object of observation. But to do so necessarily means that the observer will first have to recognize that, if the period under consideration is different from the present one, which it must always be in order to be a different period at all, the content of the prior unit of time must first consist in its difference from the present one. The intellectual act of recognizing that difference is the beginning of any possible historical content: the past, above all things, is first and always not the present, and any given

[35] Ibid., 470.

unit of time must be *posited* in order to become an object to which any content – above all its own temporal boundary, which will describe what it is as a distinct unit of time – could possibly be predicated. Yet, this positing must always happen in the present: every observer is always operating from within a temporal moment that must, in order for the concept of time to attain to its functional meaning, necessarily be understood as organically connected to all other moments in time. The past for Hegel is thus always constitutive of the present at the level of its possible form and content, because the words "past," "present," and "future" are human intellectual products that *presuppose* a temporal unity whose particular conceptual elements they describe in language only as the product of experience. And that very fact logically lends to Hegel's organic metaphors some underappreciated aptness, the importance of which is not lost on Lukács. For if it is true that any prior historical period, in order to be a distinct object of observation, must first be postulated by way of its difference from the present and from all the other units of time which it is not, then it is also true that its contents must always contain both the positive and negatively maintained, or sublated, result of that postulation. This in turn means that the intellectual act of positing any given historical knowledge results in a positive content, an intellectual product gained by the present as a result of an intellectual act. This positive content, however, is more than just a product. It is also a new point of comparison that must be assimilated by the observer and, insofar as that positive content describes an addition to the present gained by contemplating the past, it also necessarily describes a more mature or developed position than the point in the past from which its content was derived, for the simple reason that the observer has used the self-posited contents of history as an instrument with which to add knowledge to the present. And it is this positive content – the content of the intellectual product gained by and assimilated to any given subject through that subject's own intellectual act of positing and contemplating the

potential content of the historical past in its relation to the present – that Hegel is attempting to account for here.

This fact both marks another distinct difference between the Hegel of the "Spirit" essay and the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* and returns us to our discussion of the Concept. Whereas the Spirit of the "Spirit" essay was social primarily insofar as the sacred literature of the Jewish people was used instrumentally to determine a relatively narrow theological point about Christianity that Hegel interpreted to have causal significance for all other aspects of human history, the consciousness of the *Phenomenology* is influenced by and takes shape within a consciously demarcated totality that necessarily allows for the possible inclusion of all kinds of significance, so that the sacred religious texts are only part, albeit a large one, of the overall interrelation of cause and effect to potential significance. Hegel's ideas about Christianity remain absolutely central to the developmental course and conclusion of the *Phenomenology*, as they were for the "Spirit" essay, but the historical "foundation" from which the consciousness of the *Phenomenology* develops must now be said to include any potential historical input. The concept of history, in other words, must now be able to account for the possible theoretical inclusion of everything capable of being posited by a subject and interpreted historically.

Within the confines of the *Phenomenology*, then, it seems right to add to Inwood's description of the Concept that, in addition to never being "sharply distinct from the I" that posits it, from objects, or from other concepts, that it is also *always historical*. Indeed, over the course of our analysis of the two preceding passages, we have seen that Spirit, consciousness, the totalized "experience of the human race," and the Notion are all traveling on the same rhetorical *Weg*, which has now come to represent "the historical process itself" and all of its potential contents over the course of the consciousness-protagonist's approach to the standpoint of

science/philosophy: “Natural consciousness” becomes “only the Notion of knowledge, or in other words, not” “real knowledge”; “the realization of the Notion counts for” the natural consciousness as “the loss of its own self” and the loss of its “truth”; the *Weg* that the Notion travels leads to “the untruth of phenomenal knowledge”; and the “new world” of a dawning historical era, which “is no more a complete actuality than is a new-born child,” “comes on the scene for the first time in its immediacy or its Notion,” only to learn that “just as little as a building is finished when its foundation has been laid, so little is the achieved Notion of the whole the whole itself.” So that “the onset of a new spirit is the product of a widespread upheaval in various forms of culture . . . the whole which, having traversed its content in time and space, has returned into itself, and is the resultant *simple Notion* of the whole.”

When these descriptions of the “Notion” are examined side-by-side, two structurally essential aspects of its function within the *Phenomenology*’s larger apparatus become apparent. The first is that, in technical terms, the given “era” during which observable change occurs consistently moves *from* an immediate or “natural” conceptualization of the “Notion” *to* a more distanced and complete conceptualization of the “Notion,” so that the “resultant whole” of the prior era’s Notion becomes the “immediate” or “natural” Notion with which the following era begins. Hegel also characterizes this development as a movement from truth to untruth; or, perhaps stated more accurately, as a movement from the false belief in “Natural consciousness” to the awareness of the truth of the “untruth” of that same “phenomenal knowledge.” At the simplest level of interpretation, the best way to explain this second level of meaning would be to revert to Hegel’s own natural metaphors. The progress from “natural consciousness” to its failure in the “loss” of “phenomenal knowledge” can be understood to represent a simplified process of human maturation, over the course of which one naturally or customarily learns to question the

absolute certainty of his or her own experientially or sensibly gained knowledge; the "new-born" child gradually becomes a self-conscious adult. The historical maturation of the "Notion" thus establishes a definition of becoming an adult that parallels the realization that knowledge is both socially and historically constructed.

Insofar as the necessary sociality and historicity of knowledge are the definitive characteristics of Hegel's own philosophical innovation, about which fact he is very aware, we must also understand from the references to sense-certainty as a definition of knowledge an implicit attack on variously empiricist and "skeptical" conceptions and definitions of knowledge, which find their justification in exclusively material or sensory modes of reasoning. So that, at the same time as the maturation of the "Notion" mirrors the development of the individual consciousness from new-born to adult, it also mirrors movements or historical moments in philosophical discourse whose changes from one period to the next Hegel understands as an organically connected historical progression from lesser to greater knowledge. Some of the larger issue here we already discussed when determining the function of Hegel's organic metaphors: the critical consideration of the past necessarily generates a positive content and thus an addition to or growth of knowledge in the present. But that does not account for the entirety of the change Hegel captures here. Positive growth as the result of unimpeded natural processes is important, as is the positive product necessarily engendered by the creative intellectual act. But those facts are meaningless for Hegel without their conceptual mirror at the level of philosophy, which discovers its own highest content only when comprehended by consciousness as a history of the totality of the social world that both describes the history of the species and mirrors the natural processes through which the consciousness must cognize the historically conditioned contents of its own consciousness.

One could rephrase or paraphrase this summary in any number of ways and still capture the main thrust of Hegel's message. One could say, for example, that the history of philosophy finds its developmental mirror in the social history of the species that articulates it; or that the development of human consciousness describes the course of social history at the same time as it presents an implied history of philosophy; or that the social development of the human species conceptually parallels the development of philosophy. Within the confines of Hegel's reasoning, these statements amount to saying the same thing. And that fact is only the ultimate consequence of Hegel's "radical historicization of philosophy," which, according to Lukács, assumes that all content is "always historically conditioned," argues that "everything in the course of human history" must be comprehended "as the product of this history," and therefore comprehends and explains everything "in terms of" that history.[36] In order to attain to the standpoint of science/philosophy, the individual consciousness must necessarily and always come to the self-conscious realization of the socially mediated historical conditioned-ness of its own consciousness.

This implies, however, that the arrival to the standpoint of science/philosophy is potentially universal and essentially interpretive. Hegel signals the former possibility when, contrary to what one might expect from a standpoint that appears to presume so much and so exacting an education, he states, in the final sentences of the longer citation above, that "Science is the way open and equally accessible to everyone, and consciousness as it approaches Science justly demands that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding . . . and what is intelligible is what is already familiar and common to Science and the unscientific consciousness alike, the latter through its having afforded direct access to the former." Again, Hegel is speaking here in descriptive terms about his own time: "Science" is

[36] Ibid., 466 – 467.

"open" and available to all persons in Hegel's era because the historical development of the Spirit has brought itself to that possibility. This is the historical "foundation" upon which his era is built and, as we have demonstrated, its latent possibility must come as a result of the totalized, accumulated contents of human history until that point. But, in addition to this foundational development, which has brought Hegel's time to the modern moment, wherein the "unscientific" or "common" consciousness has developed the capacity to "demand[s]" "that it be able to attain to rational knowledge by way of the ordinary understanding," there exists also a secondary or logically higher order of development available to those in Hegel's period who would fully attain to the standpoint of science/philosophy. The two groups are distinguished from one another through what, upon inspection, reveals itself to be an historically apt intellectual hierarchy quite familiar to Enlightenment thinking: the fundamentally democratic and egalitarian base or foundational position of the era is defined by its capacity to make the universal demand that "rational knowledge" be attainable by the "ordinary understanding" of all "common" persons. But this foundational position turns out to be only the nascent modal capacity through which any "unscientific consciousness" has become historically able to transform that which "is already familiar and common to Science and the unscientific consciousness alike" into the practically "intelligible" attainment to the position of science/philosophy, an intellectual lowest common denominator, as it were, that describes a minimum for all persons living in that era. At least hypothetically, everyone can attain to the ultimate position, but, as a practical matter, not everybody does.

Those who do attain to the standpoint of science/philosophy, then, are, like Jesus in the "Spirit" essay, those who are able to make *explicit* that which is already and inherently *implicit* in the inherited "structure" of their own "era," those who become able to interpret the higher

order of logic implicitly present within their own time and place, thereby making it "intelligible" to themselves and communicable to others. Yet, we have already seen that there is for Hegel a foundational and necessary relationship between the observing consciousness and its era, so that the development of history describes a progressively improving evolution for human society just as it describes a positive growth in knowledge.[37] Taken alongside the interpretive character of the developmental process through which one attains to the "standpoint of Science," it follows, as Nathan Rotenstreich has noted, that the concept of *development itself*, or the general idea of positive change over time, actually describes for Hegel two concurrent conceptual processes within the same linear systemic movement: the process of explication through which the consciousness identifies and moves its own understanding; and the temporal process that unites the discrete but interconnected "structure" of historical moments.[38]

Functionally speaking, however, the interpretive and temporal processes, both here and elsewhere, are unified within the intellectual action of the consciousness itself, which fact Rotenstreich underscores when he writes that, throughout Hegel's "presentation, doing amounts to development, the latter connoting not only conceptual explication but also temporal process – and this indeed is a recurrent theme in the system and its variations."[39] Beginning with a consideration of Hegel's statement that "a system of philosophy is its result," Rotenstreich's study concerns itself with the various ways that Hegel makes legible, implicitly or explicitly, the conceptual movement "from substance to subject." These "various renderings" of that movement "exemplify" for Rotenstreich "the status of the result as first principle."[40] Rotenstreich develops

[37] In the concise words of Nathan Rotenstreich: "there is both development and accumulation in Hegel's system." Rotenstreich, *From Substance to Subject: Studies in Hegel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 24.
[38] Ibid., 36.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., ix.

seven conceptual "renderings" of the movement from substance to subject in Hegel's thinking, which he calls, respectively, "Correlation and Totality," "The Beginning and the Result," "Potentiality and Actuality," "Necessity and Freedom," "The Process and the System," "The First and the second Synthesis," and "Abstraction and Concreteness."[41] Between the sixth and seventh renderings, Rotenstrich devotes an interpretive "Excursus" to the relationship between "Concept and Time."

Rotenstreich's analysis involves all of Hegel's writings, dealing more with the later writings on logic than with the *Phenomenology*, so it is in a number ways deeper and broader than what we are attempting to do here. It is also aimed specifically at professional philosophers with detailed, technical knowledge of Hegel's thinking and writing. Without disfiguring the subtleties of his larger thesis, one relatively simple way to understand what Rotenstreich means when he writes that "the status of the result as first principle" is to return, again, to Hegel's always revealing natural metaphors and consider them against what we have talked about in relation to the era: the mature contents of an era are already implicitly present within it, like the tree is already implicitly present in the acorn, or the adult is already implicitly present in the baby. The "result" of the maturation, in Rotenstreich's phrase, which is derived from a quotation taken from Hegel, is already present as a "first principle" at the time of its putative beginning. Rotenstreich's argument hinges on the idea that, in order for this to be true, Hegel should first have to prove that "concept" and "time," in the technical sense, have some kind of necessary conceptual or structural relation, aside from Hegel's analogy, that could justify Hegel's decision to implicate them within the kind of necessary inter-development that he represents. In his own words, Rotenstreich ultimately does not believe that Hegel proves or establishes fully enough an "isomorphic structure" or "homology" that would "permit[s] *prima facie*" the organizing

[41] Ibid., vii.

"assumption that concept and time are capable of identity."[42] According to Rotenstreich, Hegel never properly justifies the assumption that concept and time are theoretically capable of being made developmentally or otherwise analogous in the first place, despite the fact that their analogical identity structurally undergirds the basic assumptions of Hegel's thinking, as we have seen. We are not satisfied that Rotenstreich has sufficiently proved this claim,[43] but several of the conclusions that he draws about the larger structures and rhythms of Hegel's system can nonetheless help us to establish several constructive facts. The first we have already noted: practically speaking, because "doing amounts to development" in Hegel's thinking, "development" connotes "not only conceptual explication but also temporal process." The active development of the consciousness doubles as the active movement of time.

Secondly, because "conceptual explication" and the "temporal process" have been joined under the rubric of "development" in a general sense, Hegel is further able seamlessly to include within the same general "development" the *contents* of that explication, which appear throughout as the various forms of "history." Rotenstreich focuses mainly on Hegel's treatment of religion,[44] but he is right when he claims that the structure in part undergirds all of the historical and conceptual content whose development or maturation Hegel presents scientifically. So that, in addition to "conceptual explication" and "temporal process," we must also say that Hegel's representation of development also includes the formerly implicit but now explicated *content of history*.

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[42] Ibid., 98.
[43] Rotenstreich's argument is indeed brilliant and closely argued, and his grasp of Hegel's entire range of writings is impressive. But his demand that Hegel's logic should exhibit an "isomorphic structure" or "homology" between the concept and time is itself never justified and thus seems artificial and arbitrary as a means by which to measure Hegel's thinking.
[44] Ibid., 102 – 105.

And thirdly, if it is true, as we have just argued, that the same course of development describes "conceptual explication," the "temporal process," and the explicated content of history; and it is also true that the active "doing" of the interpreting "consciousness" unites them into a single, legible course – or, what Hegel refers to in the *Phenomenology*'s Introduction as the multivalent *Weg* – then it must also be true that the acting consciousness carries within itself a criterion by which to *judge* the explicating process whose "action" describes the conceptual unity of the *Weg* itself.

The obvious parallels here to the "Spirit" essay are again striking: just as the universalized, intertwined histories of Judaism and Christianity were collapsed into a single, historically necessary representation of the Spirit's intellectual development from Abraham to Jesus that implicitly provided the standard for its own historical and cultural content, so too does the *Phenomenology*'s active consciousness provide for itself the means by which to measure its own development. The major difference between the two criteria – and it is a major difference, whose importance cannot be overstated – is that the criterion by which the consciousness of the *Phenomenology* evaluates itself *has been mediated by its own historical awareness*, whereas the Spirit of the "Spirit" essay demonstrates no such mediating knowledge. As we have shown, this increased awareness includes the self-conscious recognition of the socially and historically mediated nature of knowledge. But it also contains much more.

Knowledge and epistemology, per se, do not appear as explicit subjects in the "Spirit" essay, but the link between the Spirit's self-generating criterion and the historically mediated consciousness of the *Phenomenology* already suggest that knowledge for Hegel will always be relational, never static; the kind of knowledge Hegel describes can never denote the fixed or known knowledge of an object, but rather knowledge *of the relation* between the cognizing

subject and its object of thought or perception. But just as knowledge of an object presumes the presence of an object and a subject of knowledge, the relation that Hegel postulates between a cognizing subject and its object of perception presumes what Kenneth Westphal, in his excellent article on Hegel's solution to "the dilemma of the criterion," calls "some sort of prima facie cognitive abilities and terminology for analyzing these abilities."[45] Westphal makes a number of additional observations about Hegel's approach to the concept of knowledge, three of which are important for us here. The first is that these cognitive abilities and terminologies are relationally interwoven with a set of rational principles that, when understood as a complete entity, reveal the internal logic of the their own interrelation. Every episteme, as it were, must, at the very minimum, be logical to itself, and this epistemic logic cannot be complete, for Hegel, unless it also accounts for the ontological principle or condition of being of the subject or consciousness that conceives it. Secondly, Hegel's term for any given relationship among principle, cognitive ability, and terminology, when the three are understood as a whole and self-contained system of epistemic/ontological relations, is a "form of consciousness."[46]

When taken together, these forms of consciousness can be understood as nothing other than "variations on" "the historical epochs and extant philosophies" that Hegel details in the *Phenomenology*, which Westphal also explicitly links to the famous "way of the soul" citation that we have excerpted above,[47] and which, as we have already shown, Hegel refers to as the "structure" of "forms" that each "era" inherits from its predecessor. Most of this should be self-evident to us from what we have already discussed, but its consequences are far-reaching, which leads to Westphal's third point of important for us. After introducing his view of the nature of

[45] Kenneth Westphal, "Hegel's Solution to the Dilemma of the Criterion," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (April 1988), 175.
[46] Ibid., 175.
[47] Ibid., 176.

Hegel's epistemological problem, which he frames as Hegel's answer to Sextus Empiricus's skeptical attacks on knowledge,[48] Westphal claims that, "Hegel begins explaining how a form of consciousness can provide and revise its own criterion or standard of knowledge by refining a common sense notion of knowledge as a relation between subject and object."[49] He goes on to describe this revision as consisting of "eight elements," which together describe Hegel's representation of "knowledge as a relation." Westphal's argument, anchored in a subtle and attentive reading of Hegel's usage of the dative and accusative grammatical cases when employing the technical term ordinarily translated into English as "in-itself," is instructive and convincing. But, aside from the attention necessary to parse one of its concluding claims, the technical features of these eight elements, as well as the finer details of Westphal's supporting argument, are not necessary for our discussion. Before concluding his article with a short consideration of the plausibility of Hegel's epistemology, Westphal writes the following:

> Now it may seem that if these elements are all consciousness can work with, then its criterion of knowledge must be hopelessly subjective, in that the relevant standard would be "the object itself" and not just what consciousness takes it to be. This objection misses the main insight . . . : Because the world for consciousness and knowledge for consciousness (elements 2 and B) result from consciousness' application of its conceptions of the world and of knowledge (elements 1 and A) to the world itself and to knowledge itself (elements 4 and D), the world itself and knowledge itself figure centrally into the world and knowledge for consciousness (element 2 and B).[50]

[48] Ibid., 173 – 175.
[49] Ibid., 178.
[50] Ibid., 182.

Importantly, and in keeping with Rotenstreich's emphasis on action, Westphal begins by emphasizing "application" and by describing the "world for consciousness and knowledge for consciousness" as the "result" or transformed product of intellectual activity. The tool being used by the active consciousness in order to effect this result is what Westphal calls "its conceptions of the world of knowledge," which it applies "to the world itself and to knowledge itself." The familiar logical structure linking the concept, the consciousness, and the developing whole is also apparent here: the consciousness begins with conceptions of the world and of knowledge, which it applies to knowledge and the world, which in turn result in the "world for consciousness and knowledge for consciousness." The structure itself, however, is synthetic and thus replicates the logic of Hegel's organic metaphors at the level of content. Its content is therefore both the same and different at each stage of its logical movement: the conceptions with which the consciousness begins are simply the historically given or inherited definitions or conceptualizations of what knowledge and the world are, which the consciousness reconciles to learned or emergent definitions or conceptualizations of what knowledge and the world might be, in order to arrive at a revised or improved understanding of what knowledge and the world become as a result of the subject's own intellectual action. Westphal is careful to note that this logical movement is closely linked to a result from which it cannot be separated: "because" of the logical relation, "the world itself and knowledge itself figure centrally into the world and knowledge for consciousness." The "world itself" and "knowledge itself," in other words, are inseparably linked *through* the cognizing consciousness whose intellectual action conjoins them at the level of its capacity to "figure" their contents. "Knowledge," "consciousness," and "world" are relationally interdependent to such a degree that the boundary between the cognizing

"consciousness" and the "world" of which its "knowledge" is the object cannot fully be told apart. A change in one will therefore always generate and demonstrate a change in the others.

The status of the criterion in the *Phenomenology* thus only makes explicit two facts that have been implicit in Hegel's historical reasoning since at least the "Spirit" essay. We will deal with the simplest first: if the constitutively interwoven development of the "world itself" and "knowledge" itself provides for itself its own content and the standard by which that content can be judged, then it follows that the consciousness that emerges within the matrix of that development must appeal to no outside authority for its standards and is thus self-generating at the level of value. The second is in some ways related to the first and, as Seán Hand notes, was observed long ago by no less a thinker than Kierkegaard:[51] Hegel's historicism, which postulates a constitutively interdependent relationship among the "consciousness," the "world," and its ontology-generating episteme, effectively dissolves any clear conceptual boundary between the inherited "forms" and "structures" through which the "consciousness" cognizes the historically conditioned "world" that becomes its own object of interpretation. In Kierkegaard's words: "Hegelian philosophy culminates in the thesis that the outer is the inner and the inner is the outer."[52] For Kierkegaard, this dissolution describes an unfortunate loss, and the criticism comes as only one part of a thorough rejection of Hegel's dialectical method and its ethical implications.[53] Yet, it is also possible to view Hegel's dissolution of this boundary as a gain: where formerly the development of the spiritual life had been confined to a narrowly conceived or simply binary interior, Hegel's historicized conceptualization has expanded the spiritual realm

[51] Hand, "Working Out Interiority," 428 – 430.
[52] Ibid., 429.
[53] The Kierkegaard quote that Hand cites comes from a footnote within Kierkegaard's "Concluding Unscientific Postscript." For more on Kierkegaard's various disagreements with Hegel, see Hand, "Working out Interiority"; and the chapter entitled "Kierkegaard versus Hegel" in, Niels Thulstrup, *Commentary on Kierkegaard's "Concluding Unscientific Postscript"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 91 – 101.

to include anything that might possibly become an object of thought and thereby participate in the development of the human intellectual structure whose development Hegel's *Phenomenology* describes. This expansion includes but cannot be limited to the natural world, which, before Hegel, was not provided with any way to figure within the developmental content of the human spiritual realm, except as its opposite. Kierkegaard laments the loss of a privileged Christian interior, but philosophy enjoys the gain.

And though we have seen that Hegel's presentation of the relationship between interiors and exteriors in the "Spirit" essay is, to borrow a contemporary form of speech derived from Hegel's own pioneering language, much less formally self-conscious than it becomes in the *Phenomenology*, one cannot but notice the structural similarity between what Hegel's unstated theory of historical necessity implies in the "Spirit" essay and what the logic of Hegel's self-consciously historical consciousness makes explicit in the *Phenomenology*. The root of that structural similarity, which also points to a crucial structural difference, lies in the variant functions of the term *Aufheben* within each of these two works. We began our discussion of *Aufheben* in the previous chapter with Charles Taylor's helpfully concise definition of the term as the "idea of a duality which is overcome without being abolished," which many scholars of Hegel interpret to mean simultaneous cancellation and preservation. We then determined, by way of a discussion of Hegel's representation of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, that the Law/Sermon dyad underwriting Hegel's use of *Aufheben* within the "Spirit" essay was just one part of a much larger chiastic structure, best exemplified by Jesus himself, wherein transformative temporal movement in general was shown to rely upon the maintenance of continuity and discontinuity at the level of content. We can obviously see that, throughout all of the subject matter that we have discusses in this chapter, the chiastic structure of *Aufheben* remains central to Hegel's thinking in

the *Phenomenology*: the movement away from "authority" to "truth"; the "way of the soul" as it traverses the loss of its "own self"; the progress from "reales Wissen" to "Wissenschaft"; the development of an era's Concept from dissolved historical structure to fully developed, present content; Hegel's organic metaphors of intellectual historical evolution; the interpretive transformation of the implicit into the explicit; and the interdependent relationship linking the "consciousness" to its "knowledge" of a "world" that mirrors its own internal structure – all of these conceptual movements replicate or reflect, to varying degrees, the chiastic structure through which Hegel presents the Spirit's variously sublating actions and modes of significance in the "Spirit" essay.

This deep similarity should not, however, cause us to lose sight of the enormous distance Hegel's thinking has travelled. A better picture of that distance can be extracted through a closer consideration of some of the *Phenomenology*'s more general traits when set alongside those of the "Spirit" essay. The first difference is simple, but nonetheless illuminating: though specific historical events and persons figure largely in the *Phenomenology*'s primary subject matter, almost none of them is actually mentioned by name. For example, while Christianity is of enormous importance to Hegel's argument, the name "Jesus" never appears. Nor do Isaac or Abraham. Like other figures of putative historical significance, such as Napoleon or Luther, Jesus and his biblical peers are alluded to in the *Phenomenology* but never named. This is not to say that Hegel never refers directly to any important figures; he mentions Anaxagoras once,[54] Kant once,[55] and Descartes once,[56] as well as a few others.[57] But for a lengthy text whose purposes are so explicitly historical, the lack of historical reference is striking. Moreover, apart

[54] Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 34.
[55] Ibid., 29.
[56] Ibid., 352.
[57] For example, Hegel mentions well-known literary characters, such as Antigone and Hamlet, in several places. Ibid., 261, 284; 201.

from its publication and bibliographical information, the *Phenomenology* also lacks a single reference to any historical date. Many diligent scholars have as a result of these facts spent a great deal of time cataloging Hegel's many allusions and, in so doing, have revealed the presence of an almost breathtakingly complex valence (allegory?) of reference undergirding Hegel's use of language.[58] Any consideration of this submerged content would take us quite far afield of our subject, other than to note that, relative to the "Spirit" essay, which seeks to embody its Spirit within the named forms of Judeo-Christian religious history, the *Phenomenology* carries out a structurally similar historical discourse by avoiding named embodiment altogether.

One way to understand the difference between these two positions is to grasp it as a movement from the literal to the figurative at the level of Hegel's own thinking about history. Not that Hegel was ever literal in the hard sense; we have already seen that, though his theory of historicized knowledge terminates in the momentary dissolution of the distinction between the inner and outer worlds, even in his earliest writings, Hegel objects deeply to any kind of simple materialist or positivist thinking. The difference we are trying to capture is subtler and deeper than an ideological difference of this kind, and is perhaps best explained by taking a comprehensive view to Hegel's philosophy of history. In one of the last articles he would write, H.S. Harris writes the following of Hegel's historical philosophy:

> The solution to the problem of how time finally can be transcended is simpler than one expects . . . First, to 'comprehend a time' involves comprehending the way in which all previous times are relevant to it. Thus there is at all times a *common structure* in the

[58] The best and most exhaustive recent example of this is Harris's *Hegel's Ladder*, which, in a two-volume commentary of over 1,500 pages that took thirty years to write, comes as close to anything could to accounting for every possible allusion in the *Phenomenology*'s primary text. Many others have framed their arguments with similar, if not as extensive, gestures, including Walter Kaufmann and Dieter Henrich, whom we have already discussed above.

> endeavor to comprehend one's time; and any effort to comprehend a previous time that is known to one is peculiarly relevant to one's own effort in this time. Everything that counts for one as such is 'philosophy'; and in virtue of the fact that it only qualifies as philosophy so far as one can (and has) successfully related it to one's own effort, one must always be able to speak of philosophy as 'perennial' . . . (or as being one and the same at all times). Secondly, Hegel's time is 'ripe' because it is *now* that this comprehension of what philosophy is has been reached. Hegel can be sure that it could not have been reached earlier – no previous time could have reached it – because his concept of spirit as the community of rational inquirers, or as the continuing dialogue of those who are striving to grasp how humanity structures its life-world in its ambiguous pursuit of natural satisfaction 'happiness' and self-expression for contemplative appreciation ('freedom'), presupposed Kant's Copernican revolution – i.e. it presupposes the recognition that real, objective, scientific cognition does not tell us the way things are 'in themselves' but the way they are 'for us.' Because of this *subjective* structure of all finite cognition, the absolute of what [*is*] is 'in and for itself', not the direct or intuitive awareness of what is in itself.'[59]

With the word "transcendent," Harris answers the question of how Hegel's historical understanding of philosophy can continue to remain relevant or methodologically justified today; or, put differently, how we might understand it as a method at once in time and out of time. He then proceeds to explain what he means in his first point, over the course of which explanation he endorses several important facts that we have already established: that understanding what Hegel called an "era" in our previous citation necessarily involves appreciating its differences

[59] Harris, "Hegelian Today," 8 – 9.

and similarities to all other eras; that the very fact of this comparative capacity demonstrates a common structure at the level of the persons performing the act; that this act will always be conditioned by the particular present in which one performs it; that to perform this act with this awareness in mind is what Hegel calls philosophy; and that this philosophy thus always involves the same set of acts, or "perennial" methodology, which will not change from era to era.

Harris then, in his second point, gets to the heart of the matter concerning Hegel's relationship to history and the changed function of *Aufheben* when he correctly states that, in order for Hegel to satisfy his own methodological claim, he first had to come to terms with his own position as a philosopher. As Kant was and remains far and away the most significant pre-Hegelian philosopher of the period, the first and most important thing that any historically based philosophy of that period would have to do, then, would be to historicize Kant to its own methodology. In practical terms, this would mean assimilating Kant's most significant discovery – what Harris calls Kant's "Copernican revolution" and defines as "the subjective structure of all finite cognition" – into its own form and content. Hegel achieves this by essentially splitting the difference between his own idea of collective or spiritual history and Kant's idea of subjective knowledge: by redefining the cognizing subject as a socially constituted and historically mediated consciousness and placing it in the *a priori* position of Kant's transcendental subject. So that Kant's distinction between what things are "in themselves" (*an sich*) and the way things are "for us" is assimilated into Hegel's philosophy of history as a presupposition, or established philosophical truth, which Hegel's own philosophical moment must incorporate into itself. The methodological requirements of Hegel's philosophy, in other words, necessitate that he must *sublate* the content of Kant's philosophy into the assumptions of his own.

As we already know from our extensive discussions of *Aufheben* so far, and which Harris's summary confirms, this will require that Kant's philosophy retain a presence in Hegel's philosophy as a category of content that has been both cancelled and preserved. The full extent of Hegel's historicization of Kant cannot be accounted for in a work of this size.[60] The important thing to note here is that Hegel's *Phenomenology* must, above all things, and as a condition of its own possibility, be read as a product of Hegel's internalization *and* externalization of his own method. As an internalization, we can use the differences we have already established between the "Spirit" essay and the *Phenomenology* as our standard of measure: in the "Spirit" essay, Hegel is aware of Jesus as a historical figure; he is aware of Jesus as a socially and historically necessitated and mediated figure; and he is also aware of the potential for Jesus's significance to radiate beyond a narrowly conceived religious meaning. But he is not yet aware of his own later method, insofar as Hegel has not yet applied it to *himself*, which fact we have already discussed when detailing Hegel's failure to achieve any mediated distance between his own methods of thinking and those he ascribes to Jesus.

As an externalization, in a nod to today's critical language that, we hope, will make the point easier to understand, we can comprehend the *Phenomenology* as a pedagogical document

[60] Though numerous scholars have mentioned the obvious fact that Hegel must, in order to satisfy the demands of his own methods, historicize Kant's philosophy to himself, Claudia Brodsky helpfully demonstrates the concrete relationship between that historicization and the actual content of Hegel's philosophy. Brodsky parallels Hegel's "identification of architecture with the dialectical origin of art" to his "identification of Kant's *Critique* with the origin of dialectical aesthetics," arguing that this relationship is "foundational" in an "oppositional, negative sense" and that "building" in Hegel's *Aesthetics* "is a transitory phenomenon" "precisely because it is the most enduring, and comprehensive, in intention. This paradox, which serves ultimately to link architecture to the end of all art for Hegel, romantic poetry, is directly related in the *Aesthetics* to earlier conceptions of the aesthetic Hegel sets out to refute." The finer points of Brodsky's argument are not germane to our discussion here, but the article amply demonstrates the degree to which Hegel's philosophy – in this case, the *Aesthetics* – is impossible without the historicization of Kant's philosophy, which, in the case of the architectonic structure Brodsky develops, describes the possibility for its contents both literally and figuratively. Brodsky Lacour, "From the Pyramids to Romantic Poetry: Housing the Spirit in Hegel," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistic* 47, (2000): 327 – 366.

that performs its own lesson. Simply put, the *Phenomenology* teaches to its reader the lesson that Hegel internalized when self-consciously applying the full implications of his own method to himself and thus coming to understand the "perennial" and "transcendent" truth of philosophy that Harris describes in the first half of the citation above. In practical terms that should be very familiar to us now, this should bring the *Phenomenology*'s reader on an intellectual journey similar to that which Hegel underwent when he moved from the historically un-self conscious historicism of the "Spirit" essay to the historically self-conscious historicism of the *Phenomenology*. Those scholars who have used the "voyage of discovery" metaphor to describe the *Phenomenology* are thus at least half right. But the analogy misses the larger part of Hegel's innovation, insofar as a direct link between Hegel's own mind and the mind of his reader cannot account for the most important difference between the two standpoints *vis-à-vis* Hegel's representation of intellectual development itself; namely, that Hegel's *Phenomenology* does not represent simple development or *Bildung* or any other straightforward "voyage of discovery," but rather represents *the self-conscious development of that development itself*; or, borrowing from the oversimplification for a moment, what we might call the *Bildung* of *Bildung*, or even meta-*Bildung*.

The actual "voyage" that the *Phenomenology* describes, then, must be understood not as a simple intellectual development, but rather as the making of historical development itself self-conscious to the developing subject. This fact is rather obvious when one again considers the logical consequences of Hegel's understanding of an "era": the contents of each era, which consist of the dissolved forms and structures of previous eras, are already implicit within and available to the cognizing consciousness of any present era and, as Hegel's distinction between "common" and "scientific" consciousness demonstrates, this knowledge is available irrespective

of any specific kind of education. Hypothetically speaking, then, all persons in any given era are already presumed always to be undergoing the development inherent in the ordinary passage of time, the contents of which would necessarily capture and describe the "common" world of everyday life for the developing subject of that era. The course of learning that the would-be "scientific" consciousness undergoes, however, would have to include the knowledge contained in the *Phenomenology*. This course of learning, which allows for entry into what Harris so aptly paraphrases above as "the community of rational inquirers, or" "the continuing dialogue of those who are striving to grasp how humanity structures its life-world," therefore depends upon the "common" course of development as its condition of possibility at the same time as it opens the door to a self-conscious understanding of development that both includes and transcends (read: sublates) the "common" form of development from which it departs.

The knowledge that the *Phenomenology* itself seeks to describe therefore depends upon a two-tiered regime of developmental representation: a "common" level of development whose course describes the ordinary process of development that any given consciousness undergoes over the everyday passage of time; and a "scientific" level of development over the course of which the "common" consciousness transforms itself by *sublating* the "common" understanding of development into a "scientific" or self-conscious redefinition of its own status as a developing consciousness. The "scientific" consciousness thus contains the "common" consciousness as the sublated knowledge of its former self: the "common" consciousness has been both cancelled and preserved within the memory of the "scientific" consciousness.

When these findings are viewed from the perspective of the analogy linking the *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman*, with which we began our discussion of Hegel, several important observations come immediately to the foreground. The first is self-evident: the

Phenomenology does, indeed, describe *a* trajectory of development that looks something like what has been described as a "novel of development," insofar as the representation of development – in this case, the philosophical problem of historical development relative to the development of a socially and historically mediated anthropomorphic consciousness – describes the book's main subject matter. Secondly, while we reject out of hand any unqualified application of the word *Bildungsroman* to the *Phenomenology*, we must nonetheless observe that the "common" level of consciousness upon which the "scientific" level of consciousness depends for its sublated content looks very similar to the relatively banal descriptions of the *Bildungsroman* advanced by Blanckenburg, his peers, and those writing in their wake. And thirdly, that the kind of development that the "scientific" consciousness undergoes in the *Phenomenology*, which has sublated and thus surpassed the ordinary course of intellectual development often called *Bildung*, departs dramatically from both the "naive" and "complex" representations developed at the end of the last chapter.

It would appear, then, that, though the representation of intellectual development has never been examined taxonomically and we do not wish to develop a systematized taxonomy here, we can now, as a result of the foregoing analysis, easily discern the helpful outlines of at least three distinct ways of representing intellectual development: that exemplified by Blanckenburg, his peers, and their followers, which we have named "naive intellectual development"; that exemplified by Hegel in the "Spirit" essay, which we have named "complex intellectual development"; and that exemplified by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*, which we will now call "self-conscious intellectual development." Though each is distinct, their common denominator is a shared, general concern with the representation or discussion of intellectual change. In the case of the authors whose writings comprise the body of works exemplifying

"naive" intellectual development, though their discussions are in many cases highly astute, they make little or no distinction in their works between an ordinary course of human intellectual development and a historically mediated or self-conscious one: the category of intellectual development in this group of writings, often described using analogies to *Bildung* or the *Bildungsroman*, never becomes a historical or philosophical problem and is generally presumed to be unproblematic and thus to remain stable.

The "complex" intellectual development of Hegel's "Spirit" essay complicates but does not transcend Blanckenburg and his peers: like "naive" intellectual development, "complex" intellectual development neither makes the problem of intellectual development itself a stated topic nor makes explicit its own formal distance from the problem; unlike "naive" intellectual development, "complex" intellectual development begins to view intellectual development itself as a historical problem, resulting in a representation of intellectual development that puts pressure on the conceptual boundaries between interior and exterior realms at the same time as it implicates intellectual change in spiritual, philosophical, and historical outcomes.

The "self-conscious" intellectual development of Hegel's *Phenomenology* synthesizes "naive" and "complex" intellectual development into a sublated form that both contains and moves beyond both: "naive" intellectual development is retained within "self-conscious" intellectual development as a substrate or foundational form of development that runs concurrent to the ordinary passage of time and functions conceptually as the "common" course of historical development that the "scientific" consciousness sublates as it attains to the "standpoint of Science." When the consciousness arrives at this standpoint, that which was only implicitly gestured toward in the "Spirit" essay is finally made completely self-conscious and explicit: the developing consciousness has made its own intellectual development fully present to itself as a

category of content; has learned that its own development is the product of an historically mediated social development that relies upon the changing objects of its own thought for its intellectual content; has learned thereby that its intellectual structure cannot ever be made fully distinct from the historically mediated world within and through which that structure attains to its meaning for that consciousness; and has become able to recognize that, because of these facts, any change in the conceptual structure of its socially mediated objects of thought will entail a corresponding change in the structure of its own consciousness, so that, at the level of its own conscious thought, changes at the level of universal or shared history become visible as changes to the cognizing consciousness itself.

Perhaps a better way to understand the *Phenomenology* as a kind of novel, then, would be to derive from its contents the kind of novel it would be if it were one, instead of foreclosing the possibility for that derivation through the conceptual straightjacket of the *Bildungsroman* analogy. Indeed, as the foregoing provisional taxonomy and the analysis from which it derives should readily demonstrate, though the representations of intellectual development we have delineated here share a common foundation in "naive" intellectual development, the analogy indicates something true about the *Phenomenology* just as it masks a fuller truth: insofar as Hegel's *Phenomenology* reveals the very fact of "naive" intellectual development's naiveté by sublating its un-self conscious contents and recapitulating them as the synthesized self-knowledge of its own development, a better way of stating the connection between the two would be to say that the *Phenomenology* resembles Hegel's dialectical, if not historical, conclusion of the *Bildungsroman* form, as opposed to a stage in its "development."

In other words, if we want to understand Hegel's *Phenomenology* as a kind of novel in order to describe it, which seems not only plausible but perhaps necessary, given Hegel's

obvious concern with development and education, as well as the long history of scholarly fixation with that concern as it variously manifests itself among Hegel and his peers and followers, we must do so by means of its own content and genre. What kind of novel would Hegel's *Phenomenology* be, if it were one? Judging by the analysis of the forms of development that we have presented here, it would have to demonstrate four main traits. First, the conceptual focus of the Hegelian novel would privilege sociality over individuality, so that the mutually mediating inter-relation between the novel's social world and a central character or protagonist would have to take a central position: the protagonist of the Hegelian novel would in some senses be indistinguishable from the social world in which it exists. Second, the theme of development in general would have to form a central *purpose* of the Hegelian novel, but that development would have to be self-conscious in the sense captured by the gesture toward taxonomy described above. We choose the word "purpose" here in order to avoid either ourselves falling into or our argument being confused with the un-critical analogical conflation of the simple passage of a merely conscious entity through time with the purposive development of a self-conscious entity within time: the Hegelian novel would have to represent intellectual or spiritual development as an ordinary event or occurrence, but the developing social consciousness undergoing the novel's central thematic development would have to overcome this "common" consciousness and attain to something analogical or comparable to the *Phenomenology*'s "scientific" consciousness, via a purposive act of its own will. The kind of development we are talking about here will be characterized by what Rotenstreich calls "action" and Harris calls "one's own effort"; it will not just *happen*. Thirdly, the attainment to the educated or "scientific" position or standpoint will entail a complete transformation in all structural aspects undergirding the relation between the protagonist and his or her social milieu,

so that the social world, the socially mediated consciousness, and the criteria by which they are judged will all reflect a visible, transformative change: the novel's progress will change the protagonist and that change will be reflected within the world that the protagonist inhabits. And finally, the Hegelian novel will always be both explicitly *and* implicitly historical, featuring parallel historical change as the medium through which the foregoing traits make themselves visible: awareness of history will describe the condition of possibility for all other awareness. With this in mind, let us now turn our discussion to the novel.

Section II

George Eliot and the *Bildungsroman*

Chapter IV

Uses and Abuses of the *Bildungsroman* Analogy, Part II: György Lukács, Franco Moretti, and the Novel

By far the most often cited, contemporary English-language monograph written specifically on the subject of the *Bildungsroman* is Franco Moretti's 1987 *The Way of the World*: *The Bildungsroman in European Culture.* Moretti claims that his theory of the *Bildungsroman* articulates the contents of a "symbolic shift," epitomized by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, that affected all of European literature and culture. But his methods demonstrate that, though he cites Hegel and Lukács's extensively, his theory both fails convincingly to describe historical knowledge in Hegelian terms and misrepresents Lukács's interpretation of the representation of intellectual development within *Wilhelm Meister*. A critical reading of this misrepresentation reveals three important facts: that it implicitly attributes to Lukács a misleading use of language; that it simplifies Lukács's conceptualization of temporality; and that these simplifications in turn rely on a still deeper misconstruction of Hegelian reasoning that echoes the work of Abrams and Kaufmann. When Lukács's theory of temporality is retrieved from these interpretive misrepresentations, it becomes clear that, despite Moretti's extensive reliance upon both Lukács and Hegel, Lukács's conceptualizations of the novel and the function of temporality within it are more dialectical and historically conscious than Moretti's recapitulation of them implies. Lukács's heightened methodological awareness of historical consciousness and its link to dialectical reasoning in turn indicate that, when recast in light of the provisional taxonomy established in the previous chapter, Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* most closely resembles Hegel's

"Spirit of Christianity" essay and therefore roughly corresponds to "complex" intellectual development, as opposed to Moretti's *Way of the World*, which remains "naive." Lukács's elevated place within the provisional taxonomy, however, both reflects the exceptional nature of his theory and describes that theory's limits: Lukács shares with Moretti, Abrams, and Kaufmann the tendency to conflate intellectual development in general with the *Bildungsroman* and its familiar cognate concepts, thereby effacing intellectual development as a representational problem. Moreover, Moretti and Lukács share a tendency to ignore or reduce the importance of the English novel within their respective theories. Consequently, though Lukács's *Theory* certainly describes a subtler and more attentive understanding of the theoretical representation of intellectual development within the novel than any of the works we have discussed here so far, that theory neither takes English novels seriously nor comprehends the historically "self-conscious" version of intellectual development that Hegel achieves in the *Phenomenology*, thus necessitating a still closer examination of the English novel and its relation to the representation of intellectual development.

As its ambitious title already begins to suggest, Moretti's monograph aims to describe a literary phenomenon powerful enough to find itself reflected in a monolithically conceived "European Culture." And though Moretti does not acknowledge them, he follows Jerome Buckley's 1974 *Seasons of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* and Susanne Howe's 1930 *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen: Apprentices to Life* in organizing his consideration of the *Bildungsroman* around the representation of young people. Both of the former monographs focus specifically on an English *Bildungsroman* tradition and enjoyed some prominence before the publication of Moretti's book. Moretti takes his youthful argument considerably further than Buckley and Howe's comparatively modest theses do, however, by

anchoring it in the remarkable claim that the essential difference between the heroes of the "classical epic" – "Achilles, Hector, Ulysses" – and "the first enigmatic hero of modern times" – "Hamlet" – is that "*our* culture, in choosing Hamlet as its first decisive hero, has 'forgotten' his age, or rather has had to alter it, and picture the Prince of Denmark as a young man."[1] For Moretti, who grounds his conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* in its capacity to articulate a "decisive" distinction between the classical and modern periods, the *Bildungsroman*'s supposedly intensified focus on the representation of youth both indicates that genre's most essential terms and describes a universal alteration in representational priorities discoverable within and applicable to all of "European culture."

Methodologically akin to Shaftesbury, Blanckenburg, and Morgenstern – among whom Moretti mentions only Morgenstern, and then only indirectly, via a footnoted citation to Martin Swales's 1978 *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*, which considers Morgenstern and Blanckenburg much more thoroughly[2] – Moretti continues his argument by applying a generalized, qualitative observation concerning the difference between the classical and modern periods to the hypothetical content of the novel, stating that, "The decisive thrust in this respect was made by Goethe; and it takes shape, symptomatically, precisely in the work that codifies the new paradigm and sees *youth* as the most meaningful part of life: *Wilhelm Meister*." Moretti continues in this vein, claiming that, "This novel [*Wilhelm Meister*] marks simultaneously the birth of the *Bildungsroman* (the form which will dominate or, more precisely, make possible the Golden Century of Western narrative), and of a new hero: Wilhelm Meister, followed by Elizabeth Bennet and Julien Sorel, Rastignac and Frédéric Moreau and Bel Ami,

[1] Moretti, *Way of the World*, 3.
[2] Ibid., 56, 235.

Waverley and David Copperfield, Renzo Tramaglino, Eugene Onegin, Dorothea Brooke."[3] Moretti's immensely significant *Wilhelm Meister* contains in one book the "decisive thrust" of modernity, the invention of a new genre, the emblematic "new hero" of the modern novel, and the latent possibility for the advent of a supposedly "Golden Century of Western narrative."

Moretti's argument next moves from these bold opening generalizations, which together take up only a few short paragraphs, directly into an even broader statement of his thesis and plan, which reads as follows:

> Youth is both a necessary and sufficient definition of these heroes. Aeschylus's Orestes was also young, but his youth was incidental and subordinate to other much more meaningful characteristics – such as being the son of Agamemnon, for instance. But at the end of the eighteenth century the priorities are reversed, and what makes Wilhelm Meister and his successors representative and interesting is, to a large extent, youth as such. Youth, or rather the European novel's numerous versions of youth, becomes for our modern culture the age which holds the 'meaning of life': it is the first gift Mephisto offers Faust. In this study I hope to illuminate the causes, features and consequences of this symbolic shift.[4]

Read alongside the two short paragraphs that precede it and the chapter that follows it, we can already see in the language of this brief citation the outline of a series of interrelated problems that undermine his book's conceptual stability and erode the internal logical of his now widely popular thesis. We have already gestured toward the first: Moretti's argument credits Goethe's

[3] Ibid., 3.
[4] Ibid., 4.

novel with an almost mystically dominating influence that, aside from merely pointing to obvious similarities between the contents of Goethe's novel and the contents of subsequent novels and then extending the resultant correspondence to an also vaguely conceived language of "culture," Moretti does not seriously attempt to justify.

For example, let us consider for a moment Moretti's conceptualization of "youth," the central concept of his thesis. Unlike his more recent work, in which the rhetoric of mathematics plays the dominant role, Moretti chooses not give us a number here. But it is clear that we are not to understand the term figuratively; Moretti is obviously talking about the mimetic representation of persons whose brains and bodies are chronologically young, at least in relative terms. And while the widespread popularity of Moretti's book may suggest that our objection here may be perceived as mincing, Moretti's lack of specificity on this point is a much larger problem than it would at first appear. Take *David Copperfield*. It is, indeed, true, as Moretti claims, that "youth as such" is important in *Copperfield*; the novel begins with the recollections of childhood, explores them with extraordinary depth and insight, then unfolds them into a vast narrative of retrospective significance. However, the pensive tone and perspective of the novel's narrator are not at all youthful, and the first chapter's famous title – "I am born" – is, at least according to Dickens's conceit, penned by David as an adult. In Moretti's literal sense, then, *David Copperfield* certainly can be considered one of many literary "versions of youth," insofar as the representation of a young person forms an essential element of its structure. But Moretti's argumentative leap from the representation of "youth" to a generalized "meaning of life" capable of being attributed to all or most of "*our*" "modern culture" is specious at best, at least in the case of *Copperfield*, and for a simple reason: although the representation of his youth is important to David's autobiographical narrative, the language of adulthood is the vehicle for that

representation and, long after David has finished telling us what his life was like when he was young, his stable voice of mature experience remains, suggesting that the novel's organizing principles have more to do with the reflective language of maturity than they do with "youth as such," a truism of the nineteenth-century novel towards which Lukács also gestures.[5]

Viewed from the perspective of the narrator, in other words, what Moretti calls *Copperfield*'s "version of youth" is actually a representation of maturity *contemplating* youth, which, as those of us who have lived long enough to discern the difference must admit, is an altogether different sort of thing. To borrow Moretti's phrase, a better way to describe *Copperfield* relative to the functions of age within it would thus be to call it a "version of maturity," in which the contemplation of youth becomes a generically definitive element.

In a sense, one could argue that our own counterargument on this point only affirms Moretti's thesis. After all, Moretti is careful to note that "youth" "becomes for our modern culture the age which holds the 'meaning of life'" and, insofar as we have just demonstrated that David's youth becomes a primary object of his own later reflection, our objection does nothing to disprove the general significance of youth to Dickens's novel. For maturity contemplating youth is still the contemplation of youth, even if Moretti does not note the difference. But to argue this would be to miss a much larger critical problem. Namely, that, if the vehicle for the representation of Copperfield's youth is the language of his own maturity, how does one determine which of the two ages is more significant to Dickens's Victorian "culture?" Is the

[5] The point is a central one for Lukács. In a particularly revealing moment, when discussing the "historico-philosophical conditioning of the novel," he writes that, "The novel is the form of mature virility: its author has lost the poet's radiant youthful faith 'that destiny and soul are twin names for a single concept' (Novalis); and the deeper and more painful his need to set this most essential creed of all literature as a demand against life, the more deeply and painfully he must learn to understand that it is only a demand and not an effective reality." György Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature,* trans. Anna Bostock (London: Merlin Press, 2006), 84 – 85.

primary focus of *David Copperfield* the literal representation of youth, as Moretti would have it, or the figural representation of youth as an idealized object of adult interpretation? Which age is more significant for Dickens and "*our*" "culture," that which is being idealized or that which is doing the idealizing? Although he does spend a fair bit of time describing what he thinks are the sadly un-childlike qualities of youth as he finds it represented in English novels, Moretti never offers a feasible explanation for his decision to privilege literal over figural interpretation when determining his own conceptualization of cultural significance. Inversely proportional to its scope, which seeks to explain a turning point in the history of an entire continent's supposed "culture," Moretti's literal understanding of representation cannot account for even the simplest functions of the aesthetic objects it seeks to interpret, despite his lofty claims.

Moretti's suppression of figural language links his literal conceptualization of "youth" to a series of larger theoretical problems relating to his conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* and the longer history of literature in which he places it. Moretti writes above that, "at the end of the eighteenth century the priorities are reversed" and that, with *Wilhelm Meister* in the lead, "youth" "becomes for our modern culture the age which holds the 'meaning of life.'" "Becomes" is the essential word here; as we have seen, in his book's first paragraph, Moretti sets Shakespeare's Hamlet and Goethe's Wilhelm against the great heroes of classical literature, anchoring his argument in an explicitly historical claim similar to those of Blanckenburg and Morgenstern, et al. Yet, aside from merely reverting to a literal conceptualization of age derived from a literal interpretation of *Wilhelm Meister* and then applying that to a literally conceived theoretical history of the European novel, Moretti does not describe anything specific about the ages of those characters in literary history against which "our" peculiarly "modern" preoccupation with "youth" can be compared. In fact, other than a few parenthetical asides and the nod to *Hamlet*,

Moretti does not account seriously for any literature between the classical period and *Wilhelm Meister*. And though he claims that Goethe's so-called *Bildungsroman* represents a "symbolic shift" of epochal proportions, he makes no attempt to describe the history within which he places that shift. For characters like Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses, this is hardly a problem, since Moretti's critical audience is familiar enough with those characters to know without being told that they are more or less mature adult males of their respective periods, patriarchal figures in commanding possession of the commensurate privileges and responsibilities. But the almost entire omission of literary history between Homer and Goethe is, within a supposedly historical accounting, much more difficult to understand.

As one would expect, the aesthetic claim to which Moretti attaches this omission is also problematic. In his intelligent 1983 article, dedicated to what he calls the "classic" *Bildungsroman*, François Jost begins his analysis by reminding us that, "Goethe's Wilhelm enjoyed the education that an upper-class bourgeois businessman of the second half of the eighteenth century was able and willing to provide for his progeny. He is twenty when he enters the stage of the novel. Advice and support other than financial is barely needed."[6] Younger than Hamlet and Moretti's classical heroes, Wilhelm is already a young adult in the novel's first scene and, like David Copperfield, indulges in lengthy and sometimes saccharine remembrances of his youth. But he is not a child. Moreover – and here is the important detail for Moretti, youth being, after all, a relative term – he is more or less the same age as any number of antecedent literary heroes of equal or greater importance. To cite only a few, in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, Milton, echoing the ancient language of the Yahwist, describes Adam and Eve's pre-lapsarian

[6] François Jost, "Variations of a Species: The Bildungsroman," *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literatures* 37, no. 2 (1983): 125.

relationship as a "youthful dalliance as beseems/fair couple, linkt in happie nuptial league."[7] Also like Goethe's Wilhelm, Milton's Adam and Eve are young adults whose father has provided them adequate material conditions and a fitting education, which, again like Wilhelm, they choose freely to disregard. And though Hamlet is thirty, Shakespeare's Juliet is only fourteen; and in the folkloric and other material from which Shakespeare adapted his play, she and Romeo are of conventionally marriageable age.[8] Following the already well established chivalric tradition, Robert de Boron alternately describes the young King Arthur as a "child," a "boy," and "a fine and handsome youth" at the time he pulls the sword from the stone, but he is nonetheless old enough to be advised by the Archbishop that he must now "turn" his "thoughts to being a worthy man" and become "determined from this time forward to be a good king." Moreover, this significant moment in Arthur's life comes only after careful preparation; as with Wilhelm and Adam and Eve, Arthur's adventure departs from a scene of domestic stability provided by Merlin's quasi-paternal machinations, only to be disrupted at a crucial moment that also functions as a narrative portal into a series of portentous adventures that, over their course, describe Arthur's progressive attunement to a more socially aware, if not necessarily more plausible, adulthood.[9] Behn's exemplary proto-novel, *Oroonoko*, too revolves around a "handsome young" couple, "an absolute *Idea* of the first State of Innocence, before *Man* knew how to sin," whose tragic adventures also begin from a place of relative ease and comfort.[10] And though Jesus is thirty when he begins his ministry, some scholars have argued that his students, the Apostles, would have ranged from their late teens to mid twenties – old enough to work but

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[7] John Milton, *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: The Modern Library, 2007), 395.
[8] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 32 – 42.
[9] de Boron, *Merlin and the Grail,* trans. Nigel Bryant (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 105 – 109.
[10] Behn, *Oroonoko: Or, The Royal Slave. A True History* (New York: Norton, 1997), 3.

not yet married.[11] In short, the mimetic representation of youth, in the literal sense that Moretti describes it, has for some time been presented in Western literature as a, or the, most consequential period in a human life, and a brief consideration of only a few key pieces of literature written long before either *Hamlet* or *Wilhelm Meister* readily attests to that fact. And this is only a cursory analysis; a closer examination would no doubt reveal many more, and equally significant, examples.

All of this is to say that, though Moretti presents his version of the *Bildungsroman* as an historic account of a symbolic transformation, what he actually delivers is a literal representation of a his own ahistorical observation. This is important for our discussion for two reasons, one relating to the foundational language of the *Bildungsroman* discussed in the preceding chapters, another relating more generally to critical discourse on the English novel. As to the former, Moretti's remarkable similarities to both Blanckenburg and Morgenstern demonstrate without a doubt the consistency and durability of Morgenstern's original re-conceptualization of Blanckenburg's theory. Like Morgenstern especially, Moretti's intense but still vague focus on Goethe as a transformative literary figure Germanizes the *Bildungsroman* concept even more thoroughly than Morgenstern's did: what was for Morgenstern a relatively modest proposal has become for Moretti a world-transformative literary blockbuster. Following Blanckenburg, Moretti also anchors his supposedly historical argument in an arbitrary set of judgments derived from a combination of mostly unexamined critical conventions, to which he appends his own observations of literature. And, like every critic we discussed in the Introduction, Moretti also conceives of intellectual development monolithically, presenting it as a stable, universally present human trait existing somewhere outside the symbolically anchored historical

[11] Otis Cary and Frank Cary, "How Old Were Christ's Disciples?," *The Biblical World* 50, no. 1 (July 1917): 3 – 12.

transformation his theory seeks to describe, despite his argument's reliance upon the rhetoric of historical justification.

This is not to say that Moretti's discourse accords entirely with that of his peers. Moretti's rhetoric (to say nothing of his practice) is much more assertively empirical than any of the authors we have discussed so far, as his unconvincing language of "necessary and sufficient definition[s]" and repetitious references to social science literature make clear. He also shows markedly less interest in figural language than any of the scholars that we have treated so far, including Abrams and Kaufmann. And he has suppressed his peers' formerly dominating concerns with ethics and interiors in favor of an externalized and blankly scientized rhetoric of objective cause and effect, in spite of his attempts directly to address his theory to Hegel's philosophy, with which, as we shall soon see, it accords only nominally. Taken together, these facts signal several important rhetorical and historical differences between Moretti and the longer tradition of *Bildungsroman* scholarship in which we have placed him. But the fact remains that, behind the rhetoric, Moretti's book is no more rigorous or critically self-conscious – indeed, considerably less so – than any of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century critical works that we have discussed so far. And though Moretti packages his thesis in terms perhaps more attractive to today's scholarly community, his work clearly relies upon the same problematic and uncritical assumptions that have plagued the *Bildungsroman* concept since Morgenstern first recapitulated Blanckenburg's theory in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Moretti's thesis altering Morgenstern's simplification only to make it even more superficial.

Relative to the longer history of novel criticism, Moretti's problems are even more acute. We have already established the ahistorical tendency of the methods through which Moretti frames his discourse. From these introductory comments, Moretti moves into an extended

discussion of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which, along with Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, he considers the "classical *Bildungsroman*." Moretti chooses not to examine seriously Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, or any of the rich conceptual subject matter relating to the rhetorical or philological dimensions of *Bildung* or the *Bildungsroman*; he prefers instead to start his discussion *in medias res*, with the familiar, cursory reference to Dilthey. We do not have time here for a full elucidation of Moretti's methods and their effects. But his use of Dilthey in the book's first sections establishes a recurrent and problematic pattern: he begins his section on Goethe and the "classical *Bildungsroman*" by fitting his conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* into Dilthey's already conventionally established one, never bothering to problematize either Dilthey's selection criteria or his own.[12] The problem is a decisive one for Moretti and he returns to it many times throughout his book: adhering to no apparent organizing criterion aside from his own arbitrary process of selection, Moretti's theoretical framework, like those that Hegel so presciently derides in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, remains concerned primarily "with itself," never articulating any convincing knowledge of its own stated object of study.[13]

This unfortunately does not stop Moretti from making generous use of Hegel throughout his book. In fact, despite the gaping chasm separating their methods and worldviews, Moretti

[12] Moretti, *Way of the World*, 15 – 22.

[13] Though Moretti employs a broad array of interdisciplinary references in support of his thesis, none is less convincing than those he makes to such authors as Simmel, whose theory was already long outmoded at the time Moretti first published *The Way of the World*. Even if that were not the case, Moretti never justifies theoretically, or even superficially, his application of certain citations from the work of Simmel and other sociologists, which appear to have been chosen at random, to his conceptualizations of the novel or the *Bildungsroman*. One is thus seldom sure whether Moretti is advancing a theory of sociology, a theory of the novel, or a theory of a still unnamed social science. For one telling example, see the discussion of "personality," in Chapter One. It begins with a long citation by controversial French historian Philippe Ariès that Moretti applies more or less directly to Elizabeth Bennett, as if she were a person. He then moves on, only one page later, to an even longer citation from Simmel, which he applies, with almost no interpretation – as if its meaning should be self-evident to any reader – to Lukács's *Theory of the Novel*, at which point he then sets all three authors against Max Weber. And all of this unfolds in less than four pages, inclusive of the lengthy citations themselves. Ibid., 38 – 42.

refers to Hegel a total of twenty-one times, more than any author of secondary works except Lukács, to whom he refers a total of twenty-six times. In all, Moretti mentions six different works written by Lukács: *Soul and Form*; *Goethe and His Age*, specifically the studies on Faust; the *Aesthetics*; the essay "Narrate or Describe"; and, above all, *The Theory of the Novel*. In keeping with the method just delineated, Moretti never attempts to reconstruct Lukács's theory of the *Bildungsroman*, preferring instead to use arbitrarily selected citations to support and construct his own argument. Of course, some of this is standard scholarly practice and is therefore to be expected, particularly in the case of Lukács, whose immeasurable influence on novel criticism often begs his mention; one cannot reconstruct the implicit theory of every important theoretician one deals with. In this case, however, Moretti's failure to deal more generously with Lukács's thinking leads him to yet another critical problem that still further erodes the credibility of his theory of the *Bildungsroman*; namely, that, while he relies on Lukács's thinking more than that of any other scholar, he does so only superficially, choosing to apply imprecise and misleading reductions of Lukács's dialectical reasoning to a theory with which it has very little in common and to which it may even be ideologically opposed. For any attentive reader of Lukács, this problem only underscores Moretti's failure to delineate any definitive or convincing conceptual boundary to his own object of study. Indeed, perhaps the most vexing problem with *The Way of the World*, a tendency that consistently undercuts the value of Moretti's often insightful observations of the European novel, is his haphazardly constructed comparative method, which (and here we have another telling resemblance to Morgenstern) never adequately articulates any clear or convincing distinction between European novels in general and the *Bildungsroman* in particular, consistently describing the latter using terms equally applicable to the former. What might have been a productive study of the

representation of youth in European novels of the nineteenth century has been swallowed whole by the carelessly constructed method through which Moretti strains to attach it to his own un-rigorous conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman*.

A more careful examination of Lukács's writings at several points, however, reveals that his work demonstrates a much more sensitive and illuminating understanding of the so-called *Bildungsroman*, as well as the concept of intellectual development in general, than Moretti's thesis comprehends. Near the end of his book's first section, when presenting his interpretation of Lukács's typology of the novel, Moretti writes that,

> The third type – the classical *Bildungsroman* – Lukács tends to define as an '*attempt* at synthesis' or a 'problematic *compromise*': but after what has been said here, these definitions appear all too hesitant. We can speak of compromise when conflicting principles have indeed reached an accord, but without having lost their diversity. They remain heterogeneous, and the agreement intrinsically precarious. In the temporal rhetoric of the classical *Bildungsroman*, on the other hand, the subjective yearning for meaning is entirely satisfied by, and subsumed under the objective legislation of causality. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that 'meaning' is appropriated by the heroes only thanks to those 'causal connections' which according to Lukács ought to hinder their quest. It is only after having reconstructed with legal precision the causal sequence that links Darcy to Bingley, Jane and Wickham that Elizabeth Bennet can grasp the ultimate meaning of the personality of others and of her own feelings. It is only after he has connected all the principal episodes of his life to the corresponding interventions

> of the Tower that Wilhelm finally understands the direction of his quest, and 'acknowledges' the aim to which it had tended from the start.[14]

In several respects, Moretti's comments here contain much to recommend them. He is right to focus on the reconstructive and re-collective nature of meaning in Goethe and Austen's texts relative to the functions of plot; "meaning" is indeed "appropriated," or at the very least made visible, by the "heroes" of those novels via ratiocinated "causal connections"; and Lukács does, in fact, dwell on issues of "compromise" and "attempt" when presenting the third novel in his typology. It is also true that the ultimate accomplishment of a long-postponed objective, such as marriage or Wilhelm's encounter with the *Turmgesellschaft*, provides a teleological key to interpreting the internal structure of *Wilhelm Meister*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and many other exemplary nineteenth-century novels.

Moretti's interpretation of the finer points of Lukács's reasoning is less credible. To begin with, it is certainly true, as Moretti says, that Lukács presents *Wilhelm Meister* as a synthetic form. But Lukács never uses the word *Bildungsroman* anywhere in *The Theory of the Novel*. He rather uses the word *Erziehungsroman*. The translation that Moretti cites when referring to Lukács's *Theory*, by Anna Bostock, uses the phrase "novel of education" in all renderings of that word. This is a standard translation and reveals no problems with Bostock's work. The issue is Moretti's. As he notes in his now famous 1962 preface, Lukács originally wrote what would become *The Theory of the Novel* in 1914-15. It was then published by Max Dessoir, in journal form, in 1916, and then finally as a book, by P. Cassirer, in 1920.[15] As is also well known, Dilthey first resuscitated the term *Bildungsroman* in 1870, but it did not become

[14] Moretti, *Way of the World*, 71 – 72.
[15] Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 11.

critically widespread until after his second usage, in his classic 1905 book *Das Erlebnis und Die Dichtung* (*Poetry and Experience*). Just a few years after the publication of Lukács's *Theory* in book form, Melitta Gerhard published the still excellent 1926 book, *Der Deutsche Entwicklungsroman bis zu Goethes Wilhelm Meister* (*The German Entwicklungsroman up to Goethe's Wilhelm Meister*). Another distant kin to Blanckenburg's *Theory*, Gerhard's treatment begins with Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* and articulates three distinct kinds of developmental narrative within German literary history. Gerhard thereby establishes an insightful critical taxonomy that was adapted to the English novel as soon as 1930, by Susanne Howe,[16] and is still in use today: the *Entwicklungsroman*, or "novel of development"; the *Erziehungsroman*, or "pedagogical novel"; and the *Bildungsroman*. According to this taxonomy, the most general form is the *Entwicklungsroman*, which deals broadly with a protagonist's progressive maturation within and acculturation to an often oppositionally framed wider world. The *Erziehungsroman* Gerhard describes as a limited, principally didactic form that deals with "pedagogical problems" in a topical sense. And the *Bildungsroman*, which Gerhard classifies as a sub-genre of the *Entwicklungsroman*, refers to those German narratives, such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, that were written in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[17]

Parsed closely, these developments suggest that, in 1914-15, when Lukács wrote *The Theory of the Novel*, the word *Bildungsroman* had not yet become a word capable of being applied as broadly as Moretti would have it: Dilthey reconstitutes the term in 1905; Lukács finishes his *Theory* roughly ten years later; and Gerhard answers an early need for conceptual clarity ten years after that. Lukács cites Dilthey a total of 4 times in the *Theory*, all of them in the book's preface, which was not written until 1962, nearly fifty years after the theory's initial

[16] Susanne Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen: Apprentices to Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 1 – 15.
[17] James Hardin, *Reflection and Action*, *xvi*.

publication.[18] And though he does claim that Dilthey's *Das Erlebnis und Die Dichtung* affected his thinking at that time, Lukács does not go into the specific details of Dilthey's influence on his conceptualization of the *Erziehungsroman* within *The Theory of the Novel* proper.[19] It is, of course, possible, and perhaps even likely, that, at the time of the *Theory*'s initial publication, Lukács had Dilthey's conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* from *Das Erlebnis und Die Dichtung* in mind when he used the word *Erziehungsroman* to classify *Wilhelm Meister*. It is also possible that Lukács intentionally used a different term than Dilthey used because he wished not to identify his conceptualization of Goethe's novel too closely with Dilthey. He does not say. Regardless, it remains in any case clear that, given its date of publication and the obvious instability of critical nomenclature that these three uses together demonstrate, Lukács's *Erziehungsroman* cannot be said to refer to the same historically stable and universally understood "classical *Bildungsroman*" that Moretti's thesis does. Lukács and Moretti are certainly discussing the same novel in similar terms, but Lukács's conceptualization does not correspond as cleanly to Moretti's sweeping *Bildungsroman* narrative as his misleading enlistment of Lukács's authority would have his reader believe.

This likelihood is further supported by a closer examination of Lukács's use of language in the brief section he devotes primarily to *Wilhelm Meister* in *The Theory of the Novel*. Lukács uses the word *Erziehungsroman* a total of three times in the German version of the *Theory*,[20] all of which appear in the third chapter of section two, entitled, "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre als Veruch einer Synthese," which Bostock translates nicely as "Wilhelm Meister's Years of

[18] Ibid., 11 – 23.
[19] Of the influence of Dilthey's sweeping method upon literary-historical and generic classification, Lukács writes the following: "It became the fashion to form general synthetic concepts on the basis of only a few characteristics – in most cases only intuitively grasped – of a school, of a period, etc., then to proceed by deduction from these generalizations to the analysis of individual phenomena, and in that way to arrive at what we claimed to be a comprehensive overall view." Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 13.
[20] Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans* (Hamburg: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 117 – 128.

Apprenticeship as an attempted synthesis." All three of these uses appear within the space of only two paragraphs, and all refer primarily to *Wilhelm Meister* or novels resembling it. Lukács begins the third chapter by claiming that, "*Wilhelm Meister* stands aesthetically and historico-philosophically between these two types of novel. Its theme is the reconciliation of the problematic individual, guided by his lived experience of the ideal with concrete reality."[21] The two types of novel that Lukács refers to here are what he calls the novel of "abstract idealism" (*Roman des abstrakten Idealismus*) and the novel of "romantic disillusionment" (*Desillusionsroman*). Lukács expands at some length on both forms, which are linked by a constitutive "incommensurability" (*Unangemessenheit*) between "soul and work, of interiority and adventure" (*von Seele und Werk, von Innerlichkeit und Abenteuer*) that, for Lukács, necessarily "manifests itself" (*zeigt sich*) in all modern novels. Lukács identifies the novel of abstract idealism with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and those he inspired, such as Sterne, and claims that it represents a soul that is "narrower" (*schmäler*) than the world that forms "the substratum of its actions" (*Substrat ihrer Taten*). This is an active, quest-oriented form characterized by naiveté and repetitious adventure. And, though its hero undoubtedly recognizes that the world he inhabits is not what it should be, the hero of this novel form still believes that it can be made right, either by "finding a magic password" (*das Finden des lösenden Wortes*) or "courageously fighting the evil forces" (*multige Bekämpfen der Zaubermächte*) causing its corruption.[22]

The novel of romantic disillusionment, which Lukács associates with Balzac and Flaubert, is similar to the novel of abstract idealism but represents an inverted soul/world relation: the soul of romantic disillusionment is both "wider and larger than the destinies that life

[21] "»Wilhelm Meister« steht ästhetisch wie geschichtsphilosophisch zwischen diesen beiden Typen der Gestaltung: sein Thema ist die Versöhnung des problematischen, vom erlebten Ideal geführten Individuums mit der konkreten, gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit." Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 117; Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 132.
[22] Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 97 – 111; Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 83 – 98.

has to offer it" (*breiter und weiter angelegt ist als die Schicksale, die ihr das Leben zu bieten vermag*) and more passive than the novel of abstract idealism. This form is still adventurous in nature, insofar as its hero consciously seeks to realize the largeness of her soul in a concrete reality that cannot accommodate it. But she does not undertake an externalized, heroic quest of the purely quixotic sort, and for two reasons: the interior life of the romantic hero is both more intensified and more capacious, precluding her *a priori* from even desiring the kind of naive reconciliation typified by Cervantes's less reflective hero, since achieving it would spell the loss of the internally focused content that defines her modern identity; and because, in the novel of romantic disillusionment, the concrete world of social relations has diminished in relative importance just as the hero's interior space has grown, so that any simple solution to a problem in the world of externalized, concrete reality could only be just that – the solution to a mostly external problem that cannot address the problematic cleavage between interior and exterior worlds that typifies the personality of the romantic hero. Such a potential solution would, in fact, only serve to reify that cleavage: above all, the novel of romantic disillusionment exemplifies "a purely interior reality which is full of content and more or less complete in itself" that "enters into competition with the reality of the outside world, leads a rich and animated life of its own and, with spontaneous self-confidence, regards itself as the only true reality, the essence of the world: and the failure of every attempt to realise this equality is the subject of the work."[23]

[23] "Der entscheidende Strukturunterschied, der sich daraus ergibt, ist, daß es sich hier nicht um ein abstraktes Apriori dem Leben gegenüber handelt, das sich in Taten realisieren will und dessen Konflikte mit der Außenwelt die Fabel ergeben, sondern um eine in sich mehr oder weniger vollendete, inhaltlich erfüllte, rein innerliche Wirklichkeit, die mit der äußeren in Wettbewerb tritt, ein eigenes, reiches und bewegtes Leben hat, das sich in spontaner Selbstsicherheit für die einzig wahre Realität, für die Essenz der Welt hält, und dessen gescheiterter Versuch diese Gleichsetzung zu verwirklichen den Gegenstand der Dichtung abgibt." Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 98; 98 – 117; Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 112; 112 – 131.

Though the pages in which Lukács makes these claims remain among the richest and most rewarding novel criticism penned to date, for our purposes here, the best way to summarize the difference between the two forms would be to say that, whereas the consciousness of the hero of the novel of abstract idealism retains a substratum of naive faithfulness that is reflected both in the world around him and the capacity of his actions to influence and relate to it, the consciousness of the hero of the novel of romantic disillusionment has abandoned any sense of naive faith in a malleable external world and replaced it with an inwardly oriented subjective focus capable of attaining to faith only by the light of its own internal endorsement. Both heroes find that the world of their experience reflects, to varying degrees, their own internal composition. But the structure of that reflected relation is fundamentally different between them, as are the forms of subjective consciousness doing the reflecting.

The aesthetic conflict engendered by the difference between the romantic and idealist novels delivers the content for the synthesis that *Wilhelm Meister* performs within Lukács's longer history of the novel. From the opening comments excerpted above, Lukács moves on to describe the contents of this synthetic form, foremost among which, as Moretti notes, is a kind of "compromise": "The type of personality and the structure of the plot," Lukács writes, "are determined by the necessary condition that a reconciliation between interiority and reality, although problematic, is nevertheless possible; that it has to be sought in hard struggles and dangerous adventures, yet is ultimately possible to achieve."[24] Less naive than the quixotic hero but more externally focused than Balzac's disillusioned romantic, Goethe's compromising

[24] "Menschentypus und Handlungsstruktur sind also hier von der formalen Notwendigkeit bedingt, daß die Versöhnung von Innerlichkeit und Welt problematisch aber möglich ist; daß sie in schweren Kämpfen und Irrfahrten gesucht werden muß, aber doch gefunden werden kann." Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 132; Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 117.

Erziehungsroman hero recognizes the problem of his own incommensurability but seeks earnestly to solve it anyway.

In keeping with the longer tradition from within which he is writing, the compromise enacted by the *Erziehungsroman* is realized through what Lukács calls a "process of education" (*Erziehungsprozess*) that terminates in "a maturity attained by struggle and effort" (*eine errungene und erkämpfte Reife*).[25] In the only paragraph wherein he applies the word *Erziehungsroman* exclusively and directly to *Wilhelm Meister*, Lukács describes the form and function of this *Erziehungsprozess* as follows:

> Here, however, the philosophical basis of the relativity of the hero's position is the possibility of success of aspirations aimed at a common goal; the individual characters are closely linked together by this community of destiny, whereas in the novel of [romantic] disillusionment the parallelism of their lives had only to enhance their loneliness. / This is why Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister* steers a middle course between abstract idealism, which concentrates on pure action, and Romanticism, which interiorizes action and reduces it to contemplation. Humanism, the fundamental attitude of this type of work, demands a balance between activity and contemplation, between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive toward it. This form has been called the 'novel of education' [*Erziehungsroman*] – rightly, because its action has to be a conscious, controlled process aimed at a certain goal: the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and

[25] Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 118; Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 133.

> circumstances; whilst the goal thus attained is in itself formative and encouraging to others – is itself a means of education.[26]

Here and elsewhere, Lukács's discussion of the *Erziehingsroman* obviously in part overlaps with the language used by Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, and their peers to describe the modern novel and the *Bildungsroman*: the evaluation of the novel by means of a metric anchored in classical literature; the focus on interiors as a definitive locus of modernity; the emphasis on character and personality as determining traits of the novel form; and, very much redolent especially of Blanckenburg, the greater capacity of some novels over others to both represent and perform pedagogical functions, internally and externally. Lukács shares all of these critical themes with his predecessors. And while Moretti gets some important aspects of Lukács's thinking right, several more obvious differences between what Lukács states and what Moretti implies immediately make themselves apparent here.

The first difference relates to Moretti's language of "compromise." Moretti states, contra Lukács's supposed claim that the *Bildungsroman* can be defined by an "*attempt* at synthesis" or "problematic *compromise*," that Lukács is "all too hesitant" in his description, since, according to Moretti, the "classical *Bildungsroman*" actually transcends this "heterogeneous" compromise

[26] "Hier jedoch ist die weltanschauliche Grundlage dieser Relativität das Gelingenkönnen der auf ein gemeinsames Ziel gerichteten Bestrebungen; die einzelnen Gestalten werden durch diese Gemeinschaft des Schicksals innig miteinander verbunden, während im Desillusionsroman die Parallelität der Lebenskurve die Einsamkeit der Menschen nur noch steigern mußte. / Darum wird hier auch zwischen dem ganz auf das Handeln Gerichtetsein des abstrakten Idealismus und der zur Kontemplation gewordenen, rein inneren Handlung der Romantik ein Mittelweg gesucht. Die Humanität, als Grundgesinnung dieses Gestaltungstypus, erfordert ein Gleichgewicht von Aktivität und Kontemplation, von Einwirkenwollen auf die Welt und Aufnahmefähigkeit ihr gegenüber. Man hat diese Form Erziehungsroman genannt. Mit Recht, denn seine Handlung muß ein auf ein bestimmtes Ziel gerichteter, bewußter und geleiteter Prozeß sein, die Entwicklung von Eigenschaften in den Menschen, die ohne ein derartiges, tätiges Eingreifen von Menschen und glücklichen Zufällen, niemals in ihnen zur Blüte gekommen wären; denn das auf diese Weise Erreichte ist selbst etwas für andere Bildendes und Förderndes, selbst ein Erziehungsmittel." Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 134 – 135; *Die Theorie des Romans*, 119 – 120.

when "'meaning' is appropriated" by a novel's hero and she has "reconstructed" the "ultimate meaning of the personality of others and of her own feelings." That this claim falls somewhat far from the mark of Lukács's reasoning should be reasonably apparent, given what we have established above in regard to Lukács's priorities: for Lukács, the form of the *Erziehungsroman* is the form of compromise itself when expressed in novelistic terms, the aesthetic product of what Lukács calls a "historico-philosophical" (*geschichtsphilosophisch*) set of conditions that come together most clearly in the form's compulsion to represent the need for compromise as a recurrent theme. In other words, the termination of the *Erziehungsroman*'s plot is of less concern to Lukács than it is to Moretti because, for Lukács, the significance of the form is determined by its historical need to represent the movement toward compromise as a constitutive element, irrespective of its resolution. Moreover, because significance in *The Theory of the Novel* always relates to the "historico-philosophical" dimension of aesthetics, by denuding Lukács's synthesizing *Erziehungsroman* of the historically engendered aesthetic conflict by which it attains to its significance as an object of thought within Lukács's theory, Moretti's conceptualization robs that theory of the very terms by which Moretti seeks to claim it as a referential authority: the elimination of "compromise" and "synthesis" from Lukács's conceptualization of the *Erziehungsroman* would spell the eradication of the aesthetic, philosophical, and historical terms of the *Erziehungsroman* itself, rending meaningless its difference from the aesthetic forms against which Lukács derives its comparative significance.

Lurking behind Moretti's simplifying restatement of Lukács's *Erziehungsroman* is really a simplifying restatement of Lukács methods, which relates to a second and far more significant difference between Moretti and Lukács that links both authors to Hegel. Though Moretti, Abrams, and Kaufmann – especially Kaufmann – discuss Hegel at some length, Lukács is the

only major critic we have evaluated here that perceptibly follows Hegel's methods. Lukács spends some time in the *Theory*'s preface discussing its position in relation to Hegel, claiming that, while writing it, he was "then in process of turning from Kant to Hegel, without, however, changing any aspect of my attitude towards the so-called 'intellectual sciences' school, an attitude based essentially on my youthful enthusiasm for the work of Dilthey, Simmel and Max Weber."[27] Though he states that this intellectual school, as well as the aspects of his own youthful *Theory* that cleaved to it, "scarcely succeeded in surmounting positivism" (*wie wenig diese neue Methode den Positivismus wirklich überwunden hatte*), Hegel's methodological imprint upon Lukács's *Theory* nonetheless shines through.

That imprint is deep and could be delineated at many points, but we will confine ourselves only to two, both of which relate specifically to Moretti's reductive retelling of Lukács's thesis. The first follows from a still closer analysis of Moretti's language of "compromise" and "synthesis." In the citation above, after describing the limits of what Lukács's approach "tends" to do and announcing his desire to go beyond them, Moretti writes that, "after what has been said here, these definitions appear all too hesitant. We can speak of compromise when conflicting principles have indeed reached an accord, but without having lost their diversity. They remain heterogeneous, and the agreement intrinsically precarious." To an extent, Moretti's description of Lukács's idea of compromise here is well put; Lukács stresses the idea that the consciousness of the *Erziehungsroman* hero retains an awareness of the motivating conflict that provides the meaning for the content of his education once it has been completed and its "causal sequence" has been reflected upon. And Moretti is also correct that Lukács

[27] "Ich befand mich damals im Prozess des Übergangs von Kant zu Hegel, ohne aber an meinem Verhältnis zu den sogenannten geisteswissenschaftlichen Methoden etwas zu ändern; dieses Verhältnis gründete sich wesentlich auf meine Jugendeindrücke, die ich von den Arbeiten Diltheys, Simmels und Max Webers erhielt." Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 6 -7; Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 12 – 13.

nowhere goes so far as to postulate the idea that the "appropriation" of meaning implied in this retrospective moment can in any way go beyond this fact. But, as is often the case, Lukács's logic is based on an underlying Hegelian reasoning that should, when read alongside the careful delineation of Hegel's concept of *Aufheben* and the role it plays in determining the structure and method of "The Spirit of Christianity" and the *Phenomenology*, by now be very familiar to us: just as Jesus's Sermon on the Mount both cancels and preserves the former content of the Mosaic Law within its own sublated form, so the heroic modern personality of Lukács's synthesizing *Erziehungsroman* must negate while retaining the content of the form-defining conflict that engendered its motivating pedagogical journey, even (especially?) after the narrative moment of clarity during which its significance makes itself clear has occurred. One might even go so far as to say that the pedagogical principle undergirding Lukács's theory relies upon the impossibility of the hero's sense of internal conflict ever becoming "entirely satisfied by" and "subsumed under the objective legislation of causality," as Moretti claims, since the capacity for the *Erziehungsroman* to teach, as Lukács insists it must, is predicated on the need for a lesson. For Lukács, as for Hegel, the content of that lesson can never be abolished, but rather remains present within its ratiocinated solution as the sublated conceptual problem that gave rise to the need for a solution in the first place and thus describes an essential element of its conceptual form – just as Jesus at once retains the highest expression of his Jewish genealogy at the very moment he transcends it in favor of a Messianic identity. Or, as Lukács, in a sentence that might as well have been written by Hegel and whose sentiment Lukács reiterates with some insistence, writes: "The structure of the characters and destinies in *Wilhelm Meister* determines the structure of the social world around them."[28] Which is to say that the cause of Elizabeth's and Wilhelm's

[28] "Die Struktur der Menschen und Schicksale im »Wilhelm Meister« bestimmt den Aufbau ihrer sozialen Umwelt." Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 137; Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 122.

"historico-philosophical" problem of heterogeneous incommensurability, to which the form of Lukács's modern novel is indelibly bound, can only be provisionally re-inscribed, never resolved, by its putative solution. For even after each of the respective novel heroes has attained to its own ideological solution within this or that novel, the general "historico-philosophical" "structure of the social world" that engendered the creation of those novels, as well as the "characters and destinies" that reflect it, will remain.

The second pertinent instance of Moretti's evasion of Lukács's method relates to the relationship between what Moretti calls the "temporal rhetoric" of the "classical *Bildungsroman*" and its "causal sequence." Lukács does not address temporality at length in the chapter of the *Theory* devoted to *Wilhelm Meister* and the *Erziehungsroman*. But he does address it in the two preceding chapters, which deal with the novel of abstract idealism and the novel of romantic disillusionment, respectively. The lengthiest and most fertile treatment comes from the latter, wherein, while contrasting the novel to the epic, drama, and lyric, Lukács writes the following:

> Herein lies the essentially epic quality of memory. In the drama (and the epic) the past either does not exist or is completely present. Because these forms know nothing of the passage of time, they allow of no qualitative difference between the experiencing of past and present; time has no power of transformation, it neither intensifies nor diminishes the meaning of anything. This is the formal meaning of the typical scenes of revelation and recognition which Aristotle shows us; something that was pragmatically unknown to the heroes of the drama enters their field of vision and, in the world thus altered, they have to act otherwise than they might wish to act. But the force of the newly introduced factor is not diminished by a time perspective, it is absolutely homogenous with and equivalent to

> the present. Similarly, the passage of time alters nothing in the epic . . . Only in the novel and in certain forms resembling the novel does memory occur as a creative force affecting the object and transforming it. The genuinely epic quality of such memory is the affirmative experience of the life process. The duality of interiority and the outside world can be abolished for the subject if he (the subject) glimpses the organic unity of his whole life through the process by which his living present has grown from the stream of his past life dammed up within his memory. The surmounting of duality – that is to say the successful mastering and integration of the object – makes this experience into an element of authentically epic form.[29]

The issue of temporality in *the Theory on the Novel* is a problematic one, and it links to a more general rhetorical tendency within the book that sometimes makes Lukács's thinking challenging to interpret. Stated most simply, Lukács's uses of the words "novel," (*Roman*), "epic" (*Epopöe*), and *Erziehungsroman* make blurry the specifics of his formal and historical distinctions. For example, it is clear that, in the second part of this last citation, Lukács is speaking about the

[29] "Das ist das wesentlich epische dieses Gedächtnisses. Im Drama (und in der Epopöe) existiert das Vergangene nicht oder ist vollkommen gegenwärtig. Da diese Formen den Zeitablauf nicht kennen, gibt es in ihnen keinen Qualitätsunterschied des Erlebens zwischen Vergangenem und Gegenwärtigem; die Zeit besitzt keine wandelschaffende Macht, nichts wird von ihr in seiner Bedeutung verstärkt oder abgeschwächt. Das ist der formelle Sinn der von Aristoteles aufgezeigten, typischen Szenen der Enthüllungen und der Erkennungen: etwas ist den Helden des Dramas pragmatisch unbekannt, nun tritt es in ihren Gesichtskreis ein und sie müssen in der dadurch veränderten Welt anders handeln, als sie es wollten. Aber das neu Hinzutretende ist durch keine Zeitperspektive blasser geworden, es ist dem gegenwärtigen völlig gleichartig und gleichwertig. So verändert der Zeitablauf auch in der Epopöe nichts . . . Nur in dem Roman und in einzelnen, ihm angenäherten, epischen Formen kommt eine schöpferische, den Gegenstand treffende und ihn umwandelnde Erinnerung vor. Das echt Epische dieses Gedächtnisses ist die erlebende Bejahung des Lebensprozesses. Die Dualität von Innerlichkeit und Außenwelt kann hier für das Subjekt aufgehoben werden, wenn es die organische Einheit seines ganzen Lebens als das Gewachsensein seiner lebendigen Gegenwart aus dem in der Erinnerung zusammengedrängten, vergangenen Lebensstrome erblickt. Die Überwindung der Dualität, also das Treffen und Einbeziehen des Objekts, macht dieses Erlebnis zum Element einer echt epischen Form." Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*,113; Lukács, *Theory of the Novel* 126 – 127.

temporal qualities of "the novel." But the section in which we find the citation directly pertains not to the novel in general but rather to the novel of romantic disillusionment in particular, which makes it challenging to draw a clear picture of the scope of Lukács's description. Moreover, one of the primary purposes of his book, following in the long interpretive tradition that we have already established, is to demonstrate in philosophical terms how and why the novel is the epic of the modern period. So that, at the same time as it is often unclear what kind of novel Lukács is dealing with at any given moment (i.e., the novel of abstract idealism, the novel of romantic disillusionment, the *Erziehungsroman*, or the novel in general), it is also sometimes difficult to know, when he describes the epic, whether he means the novel when understood as the modern epic or the classical epic against which the modern novel is being compared and contrasted. In most cases, a very close analysis can solve this problem, which is what will be required in order for us to interpret this difficult but illuminating citation.

The sharp contrast between the epic and the drama on one hand and the novel on the other, which Lukács draws in the first part of the citation, suggests that, at least at the beginning of the second half, he is speaking in general terms about the modern novel and attributing to it an "epic" function of memory that "occur[s] as a creative force affecting the object and transforming it." Importantly, however, he does not contrast this to the kind of memory we find in the classical epic and the drama. He rather implies that the latter forms have none; the concept of "time" within the classical epic and the drama remains either nonexistent or completely present and therefore never becomes "creative" or possessed of the power to transform "the object." The "quality" of "such memory" in turn becomes – in language that Shaftesbury, Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Fielding, and Craig would undoubtedly endorse – "the affirmative experience of the life process" itself.

For Lukács, the entity around which this temporally structuring narrative memory comes together is what he calls "the object," which demonstrates the effects of memory as the entity affected and transformed by it. Exactly what Lukács means by "the object" here remains unclear. But one textually consistent way of interpreting its meaning would be to understand it as the narrative version of the "something" that "enters" into the "field of vision" of the "typical scenes of revelation and recognition" in Aristotle that, though it changes the conditions of the world, remains homogenous to that world and "alter[s] nothing" fundamental about it. When this same "something," which becomes an "object" in the second half of the citation, enters into the world of the novel, the organizing function of memory now present in that modern novel has an effect on this "something" and is thus able to transform it. The function of memory, in other words, is the attribute that grants to the novel the power to transform the random "something[s]" of classical epic and drama into fully formed, temporally sophisticated "objects" *capable* of being transformed and affected by the functions of the hero's processes of thought. This capacity thus reciprocally provides the novel with the power to represent "the affirmative experience of the life process" so essential to this and other theories of the novel.

The next sentence in the citation is slightly more difficult to deal with. As we have already shown, the *Erziehungsroman* represents for Lukács a compromise between the novel of abstract idealism and the novel of romantic disillusionment. Among its principal attributes is its hero's ability to move beyond the polarizing tendencies of the "incommensurability" represented in the prior forms and attempt a resolution to this modern conflict. It is therefore not possible for the next sentence to be dealing in general terms with the generic form of the modern novel, since Lukács claims in it that "the duality of interiority and the outside world can be abolished for the subject if" the subject "glimpses the organic unity of his whole life through the process by which

his living present has grown from the stream of his past life dammed up within his memory." Insofar as Lukács's conceptualization of the *Erziehungsroman* is contingent upon the idea that only the *Erziehungsroman* and novels like it can perform this reconciling function, and that the romantic and idealist novel forms, in order to be what they are formally and historically, absolutely cannot attain to this moment of realization, one can only conclude that, between the beginning and the end of the second half of the citation, Lukács's direct referent has changed from the modern novel in general to the *Erziehungsroman* in particular.

This gradual, unmarked change in focus, when comprehended alongside Lukács's tendency imperceptibly to lapse into generalized theoretical conclusions from within the more limited language of the particular – a tendency he shares with Hegel – indicates that, though Lukács delivers these observations while discussing the novel of romantic disillusionment, they are partially true of all three novel forms: modern novels in general, whose foundational reality is defined by an incommensurable "duality" between interior and exterior worlds, prioritize the functions of memory and thereby achieve the representation of temporality that the *Erziehungsroman* attempts to surmount. None of the forms is able fully to transcend this conflict, as it is endemic to the aesthetic, philosophical, and historical nature of the novel in all of its manifestations. This conflict therefore remains present within the historical substructure of the novel as a conflict that defines a condition of possibility for the form itself, but one that only the *Erziehungsroman* can attempt to resolve. The emergence of the *Erziehungsroman* is, in fact, the aesthetic manifestation of the need for a solution to this very problem.

Moretti does not delve particularly deeply into the history of the novel or the *Bildungsroman*, and the thing he is referring to when he uses the phrase "temporal rhetoric of the classical *Bildungsroman*" remains unclear and underdeveloped within his theory; in the citation

above, he does not say whether he is referring to his own theory of the "temporal rhetoric of the classical *Bildungsroman*" or to what his view to Lukács's theory of that same rhetoric might be. Moreover, though he mentions temporality several times in his book, he nowhere constructs anything substantial enough to be called a "temporal rhetoric." It is nonetheless possible to arrive at several productive conclusions based on what he have just established regarding Lukács's conceptualization of time when set against Moretti's comments on temporality. The first and most obvious is that, insofar as the method through which he conceives of the *Bildungsroman* both strips Lukács's reasoning of its critical rigor and recapitulates the simplified product in terms similar to those of Morgenstern, we can, for the limited purposes of our argument here, place Moretti as a point on the same line as we have placed Abrams and Kaufmann. The latter authors are no doubt more attentive in their representations of Hegelian thinking than Moretti is. But, for all three, the oversimplified representation of intellectual development relies upon an oversimplified representation of the *Bildungsroman* that ultimately has its roots in an oversimplification of Hegelian reasoning, which is more demanding and critically self-aware than any of their theories can accommodate. All three authors rely, in fact, on the methodological suppression of Hegelian reasoning as a central function of their respective theories, though to varying degrees and for different reasons.

Secondly, though Lukács's Preface self-consciously positions his book at a point between Kant and Hegel, his *Theory* nonetheless retains a primarily Hegelian elective affinity. It is true that Hegel does not describe such overtly literary-theoretical constructs as the "epic quality of narrative," at least not in the way that Lukács does. Nor does Hegel privilege distinct aesthetic forms to the degree that Lukács's *Theory* does; though aesthetics remain a clear focus for Hegel, alongside philosophy, history, and religion, he never deals with anything as local as

the discrete theory of a single literary form. Nevertheless, their similarities outweigh their differences: both authors anchor their discussions in classical aesthetic forms whose changing qualities are presumed best to describe the significant contents of human history; both authors privilege that same concept of history when describing the conditions of and justifications for formal composition and aesthetic content; both authors present the intellectual content of anthropomorphically conceived literary figures – Hegel's Jesus and Lukács's various characters, for example – as essentially linked to the philosophical, aesthetic, and historical contents of the cultures that created them; both authors therefore rely on theoretical frameworks that attempt to account for changes at all levels of those figures' contents, so that, in a remarkable and highly instructive parallel, both Lukács and Hegel present the dissolution of the traditionally conceived boundary between the interior and exterior dimensions of subjectivity as a principal effect of modernity; and, consequently, both authors perceive modernity as a period exemplified by the self-conscious subjective awareness of a determinate intellectual conflict that compels modern subjects to take ameliorative actions but ironically precludes them from the full accomplishment of those actions' intended effects.

However, relative to the larger scope of our thesis, Lukács's representation of intellectual development within *The Theory of the Novel* clearly does not achieve the scope that Hegel attains in the *Phenomenology*. The reasons for this are several, but are for our limited purposes best expressed by observing that, though Lukács's theory of memory *vis-à-vis* romantic and abstract novels, when set against the *Erziehungsroman*, mirrors the functions of *Aufheben* within "The Spirit of Christianity," Lukács's representation of the hero of the modern novel, like Hegel's representation of Jesus in the "Spirit" essay, never achieves the *formal awareness* of history or society as mediating functions of its own thought that the historically and socially

mediated consciousness-protagonist of Hegel's *Phenomenology* has already been shown to require. Indeed, though Lukács's theory is explicitly historical and his theory of irony reflects self-consciousness at the level of the protagonist's thought, *The Theory of the Novel* does not present a complete theory of a formally self-conscious, historically and socially mediated consciousness such as Hegel presents in the *Phenomenology*. Or, stated in terms of the provisional taxonomy developed in the preceding chapters, we can say that Lukács's *Theory* – more capacious than "naive" conceptualizations of intellectual development but not "self-conscious" at the level of the cognizing subject to the extent that Hegel's *Phenomenology* becomes – roughly corresponds to the model of intellectual development that Hegel advances in "The Spirit of Christianity." It can thus be provisionally classified alongside that essay as another example of "complex intellectual development."

Speaking in terms of the same taxonomy, if Lukács's theory can be classified as "complex," Moretti's theory, which recapitulates Lukács only to strip his thinking of its complexity, must therefore be classified as "naive." This fact alone, however, is not as significant as what can be drawn from it when considered more generally. First, though they arrive within this shared intellectual space for different reasons, Moretti and Lukács attain to their respective positions within the taxonomy because neither author makes the concept and function of history within his own theory self conscious to that theory itself, as we argue that Hegel does in the *Phenomenology*. Unlike Lukács, whose Preface admits that the overly generalizing theory of his youth lacks sufficient critical self-consciousness, therein both describing an unfortunate limitation to its potential scope and ironically representing his own intellectual development as a kind of *Erziehungsroman* that Moretti's thesis cannot comprehend, Moretti's problem stems from his inability to admit of any limitation at all: Moretti's failure to

achieve the critical distance necessary to take his own methods into account when thinking about the object of his own discourse lends to his enterprising theory a tone of immodest overreach that plagues it from beginning to end.

Secondly, though both Lukács and Moretti mention authors whose works deal thematically with the problem of history or have been called "historical novels," such as Thomas Carlyle and Sir Walter Scott, neither Lukács nor Moretti deals extensively with history as a subject when theorizing the intellectual contents that the hero of the modern novel or *Bildungsroman* synthesizes over the course of its intellectual development. To his credit, Moretti recognizes the importance of history as a content-determining theme in the nineteenth-century European novel and makes a number of instructive conclusions about that fact.[30] And the dissolution of the distinction between interior and exterior worlds that Lukács's *Theory* asserts comes very close to endorsing what we have argued is one of the key effects of Hegel's theory of modernity. But a clear articulation of the concept of a formally self-conscious subject necessarily tied to the self-generating, historically mediated production of its own changing understanding of communally experienced reality remains outside the scope of either thesis.

Thirdly, though Lukács's theory does not hinge on the *Bildungsroman* and, as we have shown, only mentions the related word *Erziehungsroman* three times, it becomes abundantly clear upon inspection of Moretti's recapitulation of Lukács's theory that Moretti is merely re-asserting a problem he shares with Lukács. We do not mention this in order to attribute blame or to argue for or against any kind of influence, but rather more generally to reiterate two essential facts: that both authors rely on an unclear conceptualization of intellectual development within their putative histories of the novel; and that those conceptualizations fail convincingly to demarcate any real difference between the kind of intellectual development that the novel

[30] Moretti*, Way of the World*, 75 – 127.

represents and the kind of intellectual development that the *Erziehungsroman* or *Bildungsroman* should supposedly represent. For Lukács, this problem is less pronounced than it is for Moretti, insofar as Lukács's *Erziehungsroman* is presented as a synthesis of content that, while explicitly determined by "historico-philosophical" linkages, does not become as clearly definitive of an entire European epoch in the way that the *Bildungsroman* does for Moretti, a fact made plain by observing that the publication of Goethe's synthesizing *Erziehungsroman*, *Wilhelm Meister*, predates the publication of the mature novels of romantic disillusionment, penned by Balzac and Flaubert, that supposedly form half of the content for the aesthetic synthesis that the *Erziehungsroman* performs. Lukács admits that his theory's fuzzy conceptualization of form relative to history and temporality generates the potential for such problems of clarity when he drolly suggests, long after the *Theory*'s fame had eclipsed such a possibility, that one healthy response to it would be to "reject it root and branch" (*richtigerweise zur schroffsten Ablehnung*).[31] Gratefully, that suggestion has not stopped Lukács's theory from attaining to perhaps unparalleled prominence within twentieth-century novel criticism. Much of that interest has cooled in recent years, but the fact remains that Moretti's book, which remains in print and continues to be cited as a major contribution to *Bildungsroman* criticism almost a century after the initial publication of Lukács's *Theory*, merely reiterates Lukács's apparent, if not intentional, conflation of the novel and the *Erziehungsroman*, which problem itself undoubtedly continues to echo Morgenstern's same conflation of the novel with what he calls the *Bildungsroman.*

And lastly, Lukács's *Theory* shares one final problematic trait with Moretti's *Way of the World* that both describes a critical limit and returns us to the larger aims of this chapter. That is, that both authors demonstrate a comparative lack of concern with England and the English novel within their respective theories. This is not to say that neither author deals with England or

[31] Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 23; Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 17.

English novels, only that, in comparative terms, neither author makes them a priority. For Lukács, the problem is one of omission. Alongside a host of French and German authors of all kinds, he mentions a total of only nine English, Scotch, or Irish authors who wrote and published in English – R. Browning, Byron, Carlyle, Cobbett, Defoe, Dickens, Fielding, Joyce, and Sterne. Of these, Lukács refers only to Browning, Byron, Dickens, and Sterne within the body of the original published text, with the rest added only in the 1962 preface. This means that, within the body of the original text itself, Lukács presents a theory intended to apply to the entire European novel but that makes reference to only *two* English novelists, Sterne and Dickens, both of whom he mentions only in passing and to whose works he collectively devotes the partial content of only four sentences, all of which could be omitted from the book without inflicting any perceptible damage to its thesis.[32]

That such an omission should lead to a theory of the novel that does not comprehend the finer points of English literature goes without saying, a lack of clarity that makes itself apparent with some frequency in Lukács's book, such as when he states, while discussing the novel of romantic disillusionment, that, "Everything that happens may be meaningless, fragmentary, and sad, but it is always irradiated by hope or memory."[33] The two authors whose work Lukács presents as the most exemplary of the novel of romantic disillusionment are Balzac and Flaubert. Most readers who are generally familiar with the nineteenth-century European novel can see that the kind of *ennui* that Lukács describes here certainly applies well to those authors' works, particularly the latter's: the shattering, melodramatic disappointment Emma Bovary feels after her naively glittering evening at the Marquis d'Andervilliers's ball; or the long, listless

[32] For references to Sterne and Dickens in the German edition, see: Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 45, 93. For the same in English, see: Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 54, 107.
[33] "alles was geschieht ist sinnlos, brüchig und trauervoll, es ist aber immer durchstrahlt von der Hoffnung oder von der Erinnerung." Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, 126; Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans*, 112.

disenchantment that Frédéric's bruising encounter with Paris describes, are both captured well by Lukács's description. But that such a sentiment – particularly its insistence on a meaningless and fragmentary interpretation of unfortunate or tragic events, against which interpretive conclusion so many English novels fight so strenuously – cannot describe the most representative nineteenth-century English novels is just as apparent, an overstated difference between the French and English novel traditions that even a glancing contrast of Sydney Carton's final moments to Emma Bovary's should suffice to punctuate.

Moretti's representation of English novels is both better and worse. Better in the sense that he discusses them more thoroughly (which is to say, he actually discusses them), worse in the sense that the contempt he shows while doing so leads him to some questionable conclusions. Like it does for Lukács, German and French literature forms the backbone of Moretti's thesis. And though, as we have seen, he mentions Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a historical benchmark while presenting his narrative, and though he creatively equates Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* when describing the qualities of the "classical *Bildungsroman*" and then uses both novels side-by-side throughout his argument as sometimes interchangeable examples of the same form,[34] Moretti's thesis is nonetheless anchored firmly in Goethe's Germany and spends most (and undoubtedly the best) of its time contemplating the aesthetic and cultural physiognomy of nineteenth-century French novels. Consequently, by the time Moretti gets to the book's final chapter – its only section, merely 47 pages long, devoted principally to English novels – the intellectual apparatus to which he assimilates those novels has already been overdetermined by its reliance on a set of aesthetic criteria, derived almost exclusively from French and German literature, that provides little purchase on the English novels he brings under its purview.

[34] Moretti, *Way of the World*, 16 – 73.

This problem expresses itself pervasively, but the best and most easily articulated example of its unfortunate effects becomes apparent quite early. Moretti begins the English chapter by observing in its introductory paragraph that, when taking "a fairly broad historical cross-section of exemplary novels – from *Tom Jones* (1749) to *Great Expectation* (1861)," he is "struck by the stability of the narrative conventions and basic cultural assumptions" that they display. Moretti does not tell us whether it is the "broad" nature of his own critical perspective or the character of the novels that become its object that gives rise to this perception, but we assume he means the latter. What is clear is that, for Moretti, the English novel is not a particularly dynamic form. From these opening statements, Moretti adds a panoply of additional, general traits to his theory of the English novel/*Bildungsroman* (it is never completely clear which he means), claiming, among other things, that the moral seriousness of its young persons represents "a drastic *devaluation of youth*"; that *Waverly*, *Great Expectations*, *Jane Eyre*, *David Copperfield*, and *Tom Jones* are all essentially conformist novels, suitable to be read by children, and "deep down" correspond to Bettelheim's definition of the "fairy tale" better than other European novels do; and that the English novel/*Bildungsroman*, when compared to *Wilhelm Meister* and the great French novels, seems comparatively "dull and colorless."

By the time Moretti's discussion of the *Bildungsroman* finally makes its way to George Eliot's novels, the results are predictably poor. Moretti underscores this problem in the first words he devotes to her: "George Eliot . . . and everything changes. Together with Jane Austen, she was the only novelist to dismiss the judicial-fairy-tale model and deal with the issues characteristic of the continental *Bildungsroman*: going so far, in fact, as to bring this genre to its natural conclusion." Moretti makes many more observations of Eliot's work over the course of his argument, some of which are more reliable. To mention a few examples, he draws attention

to Eliot's innovations in terms of representing what he calls "intellectual physiognomy." He makes note of the particular and subtle importance of vocation for Eliot. He rightly hones in on Eliot's concern with failure as an intellectual and aesthetic problem. He astutely observes that, as opposed to the French novel, "which outlines modernity's *internal* contradictions," Eliot "surveys instead the conflict *between modernity and tradition*," which takes shape in her exploration of "urban culture and provincial life," "*Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*," and "abstract vocation and everyday viscosity." And he correctly aligns Eliot with modernist innovations conventionally credited to such authors as Henry James and T.S. Eliot, as opposed to limiting her significance to the late Victorian era over which her mature aesthetic reigned so dominantly.[35] In the final analysis, however, Moretti's thesis is unable to escape the weight of its foundational problems. His methodologically un-historical representation of the English novel tradition of which Eliot is, in his eyes, the finest nineteenth-century example,[36] never becomes a living tradition for Moretti and is thus easily reframed as the mere continuation of an aesthetic trajectory begun in Germany, carried to France, and then brought to its demise in a highly receptive but essentially dull and un-creative England. As a result, the already tenuous conceptualization of the *Bildungsroman* through which he frames his thesis becomes even more unstable once it reaches Eliot and the English novel. What was already a nebulous form thus devolves into a mere adjective in Moretti's ultimate chapter, eventually becoming indistinguishable from the novel, which has itself suffered a similarly dissolving fate. And, as the sentence at the head of this paragraph amply demonstrates, the demands of Moretti's hungry thesis necessitate a conclusion that effectively argues that George Eliot, literary lady helpmeet, merely brings Goethe's manly creation to its natural conclusion, performing a tidying domestic

[35] Ibid., 214 – 223.
[36] Ibid., 216.

function within aesthetic history, as well as within Moretti's thesis, that casts Eliot in a role similar to that which England performs for Europe: highly intelligent and receptive, but comparatively passive and aesthetically un-creative.

Yet, none of these particular differences is as significant for the representation of intellectual development more generally as is their combined effect. For both authors, the English novel is an afterthought and even the best English novelists are seen as marginal or aesthetically inferior figures. And in this sense, Moretti's and Lukács's theories prove themselves distinct from those of Abrams and Kaufmann. Kaufmann's comparatively modest, historicized conceptualization of Hegel's milieu ensures that his theory stays local; and Abrams, though his ambitious thesis reaches much farther than those of Moretti, Kaufmann, and even Lukács, retains throughout an admirably ecumenical focus and method, despite that method's sometimes tendentious effects. Nevertheless, all four authors' shared tendency to conflate otherwise different forms of intellectual development comes together most lucidly around the shared methodological suppression of historically self-conscious intellectual development. This is not to say that history, as a theme or content, is unimportant to any of these scholars. Quite the contrary: all four claim the mantle of history, and Kaufmann and Lukács in particular espouse didactic ideologies of it, either in the works we have cited or elsewhere. But none of these four authors moves beyond "complex" intellectual development, practically or theoretically. Within their respective theories, this fact does not define a problem; insofar as the erasure of self-conscious intellectual development via analogies to the words *Bildungsroman* or *Erziehungsroman* within all four theories respectively captures the conceptualizations of intellectual change necessary for the articulation of each of those theories, all four must in fact be said to rely on it. In our previous chapters on Hegel, we have shown how a similar conceptual

reliance has had the effect of foreclosing the possibility for theorizing the existence of alternative representations of intellectual development within "The Spirit of Christianity" and the *Phenomenology*. Let us now turn our attention to George Eliot, for whom we will perform the same task.

Chapter V

Conscious Intellectual Development:

Romola's Proem

Numerous scholars have attempted to account for the meaning or content of George Eliot's historical thinking by linking her works analogically to those she is known to have read or thought to have endorsed, in whole or in part. These include the writings of such notable authors as Riehl, Spinoza, Feuerbach, Hegel, Vico, Comte, Mill, Schiller, and others.[1] And though Eliot

[1] Knowledge of Eliot's affinity for Comte is ubiquitous. For a concise, recent presentation of his supposed relation to Eliot's specific works, see Avrom Fleishman, *George Eliot's Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1 – 71, 140 – 190, 218 – 251. Eliot's fondness for Mill is also well documented; for a brilliant, if not un-controversial, representation of their philosophical sympathies, see George Levine's still relevant article, "Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot," *PMLA* 77, no. 3 (June 1962): 268 – 279. For a classic presentation of Eliot's relation to Feuerbach, see Uli Knoepflmacher, "George Eliot, Feuerbach, and the Question of Criticism," *Victorian Studies* 7, no. 3 (March 1964): 306 – 309; and Knoepflmacher, *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3 – 148. The former makes a particularly strong case. For an insightful consideration of Eliot and Spinoza, see Moira Gatens, "The Curious Empiricism of George Eliot's Literary Experiments," *Philosophy Today* 53, (2009): 19 – 27; and Gatens, "The Art and Philosophy of George Eliot," *Philosophy and Literature* 33, no. 1 (April 2009): 73 – 90. For an interesting consideration of Eliot's supposed relation to Vico, see Felicia Bonaparte, "George Henry Lewes, George Eliot, and Vico: The Shaping of a Modern Creed," *New Vico Studies* 2 (1984): 93 – 102. For an intelligent discussion of Eliot and Schiller, see Robert E. Norton, "The Aesthetic Education of Humanity: George Eliot's 'Romola' and Schiller's Theory of Tragedy" *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 3 – 20. For a discussion of Riehl's influence on what she calls Eliot's "artistic creed," see Gisela Argyle, *German Elements in the Fiction of George Eliot, Gissing, and Meredith* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter D. Lang, 1979), 2 – 37. Sarah Moore Putzell's work, which presents Eliot's corpus as an Hegelian historical and intellectual progress in microcosm, represents the most fully developed Hegelian treatment of Eliot's writing. And though her work is interpretively precise, formally unique, and exceptionally well grounded in a thorough appreciation of Hegel's historical philosophy and its literary potential for Eliot, her argument is sometimes leading and eventually buries Eliot's novels under the weight of Hegel's apparatus. See Sarah Moore Putzell, "The Search for a Higher Rule: Spiritual Progress in the Novels of George Eliot," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47, no. 3 (September 1979): 389 – 407. Eminent Hegel scholar H.S. Harris, whom we discussed at length in Section I, also believes that Eliot's work shows deep ties to Hegel. Writing on Hegel's recapitulation of Christian mythology, he claims that George Eliot's "every written word had the educational realization of absolute spirit in mind." See H.S. Harris, "Hegel and Adam's Rib," *The European Legacy* 2, no. 3 (1997): 573. And for a deeply insightful and well-framed interpretation of Eliot's historical reasoning in relation

wrote a carefully constructed historical novel, *Romola*, to which some of these comparisons refer, no serious attempt has yet been made to reconstruct Eliot's own theory or philosophy of history, explicit or implicit, from the contents of that novel. Like Moretti, the majority of scholars has instead preferred to present Eliot's thinking, in history and other subjects, as either a passive vehicle for the reproduction of someone else's subject matter or as a merely parroting conduit for her period's supposedly more dominant philosophies and ideas,[2] even though the philosophies of history represented by these figures are substantially divergent and, particularly in the case of Comte and Hegel,[3] generally understood to be in open ideological hostility to one

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to several of these figures, including Feuerbach, Strauss, and Hegel, see Michael Carignan, "Fiction as History or History as Fiction? George Eliot, Hayden White, and Nineteenth-Century Historicism," *Clio* 29, no. 4 (2000): 395 – 415; and Carignan, "Analogical Reasoning in Victorian Historical Epistemology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, no. 3 (2003): 445 – 464.

[2] Avrom Fleishman leads the introduction of his treatment of Eliot's "intellectual life" with a rhetorical question and answer that best exemplify the simplistic and tautological reasoning involved in many of these accounts: "Where did she get her ideas? Many were self-generated, of course, in response to encounters with people and things. She read the newspapers, often minutely, and commented on political and other events as we all do. But most of her ideas were stimulated by books and review-articles in the periodical literature of her day. To tell the story of how her life and writings were shaped by ideas we must follow the course of her reading as well as her more outgoing experiences." For a less obvious but still emblematic example, though she states explicitly that she wishes to construct a picture of Eliot's own aesthetic philosophy by treating "her literature and her philosophy as a genuinely *integrated* whole," Moira Gatens begins that attempted reconstruction with extended discussions of Spinoza and Feuerbach, into which she fits Eliot's thinking only after making such statements as, "Adopting aspects of Spinoza's and Feuerbach's philosophies, Eliot treats the imagination as a source of knowledge," and "The influence of both Spinoza and Feuerbach can be seen in Eliot's synthetic conception of the parts that imagination, feeling and intellect should play in life," and, most problematically, "it is worthwhile to reiterate five important conclusions from the philosophies of Spinoza and Feuerbach that provide the premises for Eliot's experiments in life." See Gatens, "The Art and Philosophy of George Eliot," 79 – 81; and Fleishman, *Intellectual Life*, 4.

[3] Comte's positivist philosophy of history is regularly presented as the ideological opposite of Hegel's phenomenological philosophy of history, and both men have been linked to Eliot. Yet, some more radically inclined thinkers on the right and the left have helpfully observed that Comte and Hegel in fact share a number of abiding philosophical commitments. For two accounts of their similarities that could themselves scarcely be more different, at least in ideological terms, see Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), 323 – 360; and Friedrich A. Hayek, "Comte and Hegel," in *The Collected Works of F.A. Hayek: Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason: Texts and Documents*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 13: 285 – 304.

another.[4] Through a close, progressive reading of three important passages of *Romola*'s Proem, however, this chapter will reveal the presence of a distinct, if not necessary explicit, conceptualization of history that becomes the foundation for ethical knowledge and ameliorating social action. Undergirded by a universalized anthropomorphism that links and sorts otherwise different cognizing entities according to their intellectual capacities, this critical conceptualization of history finds its clearest expression through the cognitive hierarchy that its representative figures together construct. Because the essay's narrator, who sits atop this hierarchy, also presents the functions and contents of history through it, the discrete cognitive capacities of the hierarchy's individual members, when read as a qualitative sequence, can also be understood as a historically mediated and socially constructed representation of intellectual development that, though it cannot be brought fully into accord with Hegel's "complex" or "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development, nonetheless revealingly overlaps with both. This "conscious" form of intellectual development in turn provides the rational substructure for the more fully developed representation of intellectual development that Eliot achieves in the novel following the Proem, which we will examine more closely in the following chapter.

[4] This is not true in all cases. Suzanne Graver's reconstruction of Eliot's conceptualization of community, though it perhaps relies too much on Tönnies, certainly leaves ample room for a generous accounting of Eliot's philosophical position. And though we do not endorse his methods or all of his conclusions, M.C. Henberg's account of Eliot's ethically driven realism asserts a strong claim for Eliot as a philosopher in her own right; Henberg even equates her significance as a moral philosopher to Aristotle's. K.M. Newton's treatment of Eliot as a "philosophical novelist" is insightful and focused. And Peter Garratt's recent book, though not focused primarily on Eliot, treats her respectfully and interprets the philosophical content of her work with insight and care. See Graver, *George Eliot and Community: A Study in Social Theory and Fictional Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Henberg, "Determinism and Responsibility"; Newton, *George Eliot, Romantic Humanist: A Study of the Philosophical Structure of Her Novels* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1981); and Garratt, *Victorian Empiricism: Self, Knowledge, and Reality in Ruskin, Bain, Lewes, Spencer, and George Eliot* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2010).

All of Eliot's fiction is in some way historical, but *Romola* is Eliot's only historical novel in any conventional sense. *Romola* takes place in the last decade of the fifteenth century, farther back in time than any of her other novels; *Romola* is the only novel in Eliot's corpus set entirely in a foreign country; *Romola* is Eliot's only novel to transform once-living, historically significant persons, such as Savonarola and Machiavelli, into fully embodied, central characters who retain their names and literal identities within its text; and, as is well known, in order to write the book, Eliot expended a personally unprecedented amount of energy performing enough research to satisfy her exacting historical standards.[5] Moreover, while many of her texts include prefaces, mottoes, or epigraphs of varying lengths whose content is always revealing and often essential to their internal construction, *Romola* is Eliot's only novel whose first chapter is preceded by an overtly philosophizing essay of any considerable length whose subject is explicitly historical. That essay, or "Proem," consists of twelve paragraphs spread over seven pages in the current Penguin edition. Its first paragraph reads as follows:

> More than three centuries and a half ago, in the mid spring-time of 1492, we are sure that the angel of the dawn, as he travelled with broad slow wing from the Levant to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the summits of the Causacus across all the snowy Alpine ridges to the dark nakedness of the western isles, saw nearly the same outline of firm land and unstable sea – saw the same great mountain shadows on the same valleys as he has seen today – saw olive mounts, and pine forests, and the broad plains green with young corn or rain-freshened grass – saw the domes and spires of cities rising by the river-sides or mingled with the sedge-like masts on the many-curved sea-coast, in the same spots where

[5] Gordon Haight's chapter on *Romola* in his still essential biography of Eliot gives the authoritative account of her sometimes intense preoccupation with researching and writing that novel. Gordon Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 343 – 373.

> they rise today. And as the faint light of his course pierced into the dwellings of men, it fell, as now, on the rosy warmth of nestling children; on the haggard waking of sorrow and sickness; on the hasty uprising of the hard-handed labourer; and on the late sleep of the night student, who had been questioning the stars or the sages, or his own soul, for that hidden knowledge which would break through the barrier of man's brief life, and show its dark path, that seemed to bend no whither, to be an arc in an immeasurable circle of light and glory. The great river courses that have shaped the life of men have hardly changed; and those other streams, the life-currents that ebb and flow in human hearts, pulsate to the same great needs, the same great loves and terrors. As our thought follows close in the slow wake of the dawn, we are impressed with the broad sameness of the human lot, which never alters in the main headings of its history – hunger and labour, seed-time and harvest, love and death.[6]

This passage at first appears to articulate little more than the standard narrative one might expect from a philosophically sophisticated novelist aiming to advance a conventional historical novel. As Scott so famously does when he begins *Waverly; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* on a specific date (November 1, 1745) and then describes it in terms of the distance between that date and the date of the novel's publication ("*Tis Sixty Years Since*"),[7] Eliot's opening sentence both provides a precise year (1492) and describes the historical scope of her project ("more than three centuries and a half"). She thus provides a historical point of departure and a delimited standard of measure by which to triangulate, compare, and judge both moments. Also like Scott, Eliot advances the fact of continuity at the level of the human species across vast expanses of time as

[6] George Eliot, *Romola* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 1.
[7] Walter Scott, *Waverly; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.

the condition of possibility for the novel's narrative cohesion. She thereby draws the reader's attention to the unstated precondition undergirding the derivation of meaning from the narration of a reconstructed past: a fundamental and self-evident sameness among persons and conditions both undergirds historical change and provides the foundation for the aesthetic relation of the things that have not changed to those that have. And, in keeping with the well documented but often overstated commitments supposedly advanced in the famous seventeenth chapter of *Adam Bede*,[8] Eliot's consideration, like those of Shaftesbury, Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Fielding, and Craig, moves briskly to what Shaftesbury calls "real *Life*" and Craig links so emphatically to the language of the "heart": the activities of "nestling children," the "hard-handed labourer," and similarly ordinary "human hearts" whose quotidian struggles at once lend significance to the "human lot" and describe the essentially unchanging "main headings of history."

The structure undergirding the relationship among the interiors of a character, a reader, and an author advanced by Blanckenburg et al. also closely mirrors the structure undergirding the historical conceit shared by Scott and Eliot. For the latter two authors, the distinction between the present and the past is engendered by the reader's ability to triangulate a comparative difference (between herself and two moments in time) that is itself reliant upon the presupposed sameness of all human beings (across the moments that constitute the span of time); whereas, for the former authors, the capacity for the novelistic representation of human events is predicated upon the ability of the reader to recognize meaningful intellectual change over a

[8] It would be difficult to overstate the degree to which the language employed in the seventeenth chapter of *Adam Bede*, over the course of which the novel's narrator compares literary representation to early modern Dutch realist painting, has been offered as a paraphrase or representation of Eliot's thoughts on representation in general. This chapter is sometimes read alongside her journals and letters, sometimes alongside the writings of apparently sympathetic philosophers, such as J.S. Mill, and sometimes against the works of apparently less sympathetic authors, such as Hegel. For one intelligent recent treatment, see Sarah Gould, "Adam Bede's Dutch Realism and the Novelist's Point of View," *Philosophy and Literature* 36, no. 2 (October 2012): 404 – 423.

discrete period of time, thus establishing a durable link between the author, the character, and the reader. And though these structures differ, both rely above all on the subordination of content production and temporality to the more fundamental act of anthropomorphic identification. For Blanckenburg and his peers, this reliance engenders the possibility for the meaningful representation of intellectual change; while for Eliot and Scott it engenders the possibility for the production of a stable historical narrative that connects the conjectured historical past to the reader's present. But within both frameworks, the respective subordination of content production and temporality to the act of anthropomorphic identification is absolutely central.

Within the scope of this framework, Eliot denominates in the essay's first paragraph four distinct anthropomorphic figures – the narratorial "we"; the "angel of the dawn"; the "night-student"; and "men" in a general sense – whose intellectual differences establish the foundational contours of a functional intellectual hierarchy. Aside from the former two figures, the night student is the only subject represented in this paragraph to whom Eliot grants any higher order cognitive functions. After having surveyed civilization "from the Levant" to "the western isles" and described the broadest contours of what the angel discerns of its physiognomy, the narratorial "we" moves in the paragraph's second sentence into a series of short descriptions of persons, among whom only the night student possesses the power to question the world around him and in so doing to seek knowledge. Interestingly, and much more significantly, however, one aspect of the student's (so far) unsuccessful query addresses one part of the same natural landscape – "the stars" – about which the narratorial "we" and the angel seem so certain. This difference in interpretive capacity marks a distinction between the angel and the "we" *vis-à-vis* the putatively human occupants of the stable world that they perceive: the angel and the

narratorial "we" can interpret the natural world straightforwardly; the night student is attempting to do so; and the rest of the "men" mentioned are provided no interpretive opportunities.

Similar in principle to that which Hegel establishes when differentiating the universal knowledge available to all persons in a particular era and the critical knowledge available to those who achieve self-conscious historical insight, this interpretive difference marks a hierarchical distinction for Eliot in two ways. The night student sits atop the hierarchy of "men," because he has executed his power to question the natural world and thereby to seek knowledge. But he sits on the bottom of the wider cognitive hierarchy because his questions, unlike those of the narratorial "we" and the angel, have not yet yielded him the "hidden knowledge" that he seeks. The confident assertion of universal anthropomorphic identification undergirding the identity of the narratorial "we" therefore functions as a description of the night student's capacity just as it describes that capacity's present limit: "we" can recognize that the night student's search for knowledge has not yet yielded him the ability to "break through" to an answer, but only because "we" have already broken through to it. Distinct from but equal to both his less curious human peers and his wiser but more distant observers, the night student sits at the center of a hierarchy that places the attainment of knowledge at its core.

Again like Hegel, particularly in the *Phenomenology*, Eliot implies here that the only kind of knowledge that can lead to such an outcome must necessarily be at least in part historical. But she is careful not to do so before planting seeds of uncertainty beneath the stability of that same historical knowledge: "We are sure that" the course of human history has "shaped the life of men"; and that "those other streams . . . that ebb and flow in human hearts, pulsate to the same great needs" "today" as they did "more than three centuries and a half ago." But "we" seem also to be aware of a pervasive difference within this sameness: the "outline of firm land and unstable

sea" is "*nearly* the same" "today" as in 1492; "the great river courses that have shaped the life of men have *hardly* changed" from then until now; and, as "our thought follows close in the slow wake of the dawn, we are impressed with the *broad sameness* of the human lot" at the same time as "we" are convinced that it "never alters in the main headings of its history."

As our added emphases suggest, the key words here are "nearly," "hardly," and "broad sameness." For, contrary to what scholars such as Neil McCaw have attempted to show,[9] we believe they best indicate the increasingly unstable epistemological position that Eliot unfolds as the essay develops and the narrator's historical perspective grows increasingly attuned to narrower, more quotidian details. In the essay's second paragraph, directly following that excerpted above, Eliot pivots the narrative away from this broadness and "pauses on a certain historical spot" in order to "see a world famous city, which has hardly changed since the days of Columbus, seeming to stand as an almost unviolated symbol, amidst the flux of human things, to remind us that we still resemble the men of the past more than we differ from them, as the great

[9] Despite what we will argue in this chapter is abundant textual evidence to the contrary, many scholars have claimed that Eliot's historical philosophy endorses the idea of an essential human nature that does not change over time. We will mention only a few germane examples from among the many. Citing the same excerpt from *Romola* that we have chosen and addressing *Theophrastus Such* and the issue of religious prejudice against Jews, Neil McCaw writes that, "George Eliot's objective here [in *Theophrastus Such*] is thus to focus on cultural and historical similarities rather than on differences, to view history as a unified and unifying totality . . . It is an intention akin to that stated, but also qualified, in *Romola*, in which she notes how 'we are impressed with the broad sameness of the human lot, which never alters in the main headings of its history.' This concentration on similarity across historical divides, an effective collapsing of difference and diversity into an ironed-out, present-centered narrative, is characteristic of Whig historiography." Also writing on *Romola*, Chris Greenwood writes that, "Throughout the novel a series of fleeting reactions, taken together, act to ground George Eliot's description of human nature as something not immediately visible in its entirety but, nevertheless, when submitted to the action of disinterested and prolonged scrutiny, wholly present in the human scene, across all of time." Greenwood goes on to say that this "human nature," which concept he never clarifies, remains "ahistorical" and "present to the attentive seeker, across the whole of time." Writing on classical reception in Victorian England, Richard Jenkyns makes a similar, albeit more conservative, claim. See McCaw, *George Eliot and Victorian Historiography: Imagining the National Past* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 54; Greenwood, "'An Imperceptible Start': The Sight of Humanity in *Romola*," in *From Author to Text: Re-Reading George Eliot's Romola*, ed. Caroline Levine and Mark W. Turner (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 166 – 167; and Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 95.

mechanical principles on which those domes and towers were raised must make a likeness in human building that will be broader and deeper than all possible change." Eliot then presents a new figure, "a Florentine citizen, whose eyes closed for the last time while Columbus was still waiting and arguing for the three poor vessels with which he was to set sail." As the tenuous nature of the text's inaugural language of "nearly the same" and "hardly changed" "broad" historical "sameness" has already begun to suggest, this "Spirit," whose trans-temporal identity permits him to subtend a historical perspective that collapses the present day of Eliot's reader and the past of 1492 Florence within a single line of historical re-vision, further erodes that tenuous certainty as soon as he begins more closely to survey his native Florence.

This process of certainty-deconstruction commences in earnest in the essay's fifth paragraph, which begins with the Proem's first report of what the Spirit "thinks" as he reflects upon the physical description of the city offered in paragraph four. "'Surely,' he thinks, "'Florence can still ring her bells with the solemn hammer-sound that used to beat on the hearts of her citizens and strike out the fire there." This feigned thought of certainty comes just before a reflection on several architectural differences between the Florence of the Spirit's time and "today" that leads him, in the sixth paragraph, after noticing the radically altered architecture of Santa Croce, to "sigh" as he "lets his eyes travel on to the city walls," where he "dwells on the change there with wonder at these modern times."[10] Establishing a dialogical pattern that will last throughout the Proem and *Romola*, Eliot presents the almost imperceptible but profoundly ironic transition from one conceptual position to another – in this case, from the initial certainty that Florence has "hardly changed" over the course of its history to open "wonder at" how different "these modern times," with their late cultural and architectural advancements, are from Florence as it was in 1492 – as the product of a rhetorical question: "But what architect," the

[10] Eliot, *Romola*, 3.

Spirit marvels as he contemplates the altered Santa Croce, "can the Frati Minori have employed to build that spire for them?"

This rhetorical question is the *Proem*'s first direct question of any kind. Like any question worth asking, however, and as the night student's interrogative quest for knowledge suggests, as soon as its answer begins to unfold, it only raises more – and more destabilizing – questions. As the narratorial "we" expands her description of the Spirit's view to Florence after registering the latter's "wonder," these questions, as well as the Spirit's internal dialog about them, come at a steady pace, providing the narrative rhythm and content for the paragraphs to follow. Shifting from a heightened generality to a land-focused particularity, like the narratorial "we" as she contemplates the "wing[ed]" angel of the dawn, the Sprit's line of vision moves from the dome of Santa Croce, to the changed "city walls," to Florence's now "closed" "gates," and then on to its "levelled towers," asking himself as his eye moves, in a question that registers his continued amazement just as it alludes to the historical conflict over the course of which *Romola* will unfold, "Is the world become so peaceful, then, and do Florentines dwell in such harmony, that there are no longer conspiracies to bring ambitious exiles home again with armed bands at their back?"[11]

The narratorial "we" helpfully provides a leading answer to this query – "These are difficult questions: it is easier and pleasanter to recognize the old than to account for the new" – just before the Spirit's eye moves even closer to street level and he begins to consider his own role in the political life of Florence during his lifetime. Following these contemplations, which in paragraph six begin to focus increasingly on the Spirit's belief system and its relation to his own political life, the narrator in paragraphs seven and eight observes the following:

[11] Ibid.

It was his pride besides, that he was duly tinctured with the learning of his age, and judged not altogether with the vulgar, but in harmony with the ancients: he, too, in his prime, had been eager for the most correct manuscripts, and had paid many florins for antique vases and for disinterred busts of the ancient immortals . . . and in his old age he had made haste to look at the first sheets of that fine Homer which was among the early glories of the Florentine press. But he had not, for all that, neglected to hang up a waxen image or double of himself under the protection of the Madonna Annunziata, or to do penance for his sins in large gifts to the shrines of saints whose lives had not been modelled on the study of the classics; he had not even neglected making liberal bequests towards buildings for the Frati, against whom he had levelled many a jest. / For the Unseen Powers were mighty. Who knew – who was sure – that there was any name given to them behind which there was no angry force to be appeased, no intercessory pity to be won? Were not gems medicinal, though they only pressed the finger? Were not all things charged with occult virtues? Lucretius might be right – he was an ancient, and a great poet; Luigi Pulci, too, who was suspected of not believing anything from the roof upward (*dal tetto in su*), had very much the air of being right over the supper-table, when the wine and jests were circulating fast, though he was only a poet in the vulgar tongue. There were even learned personages who maintained that Aristotle, wisest of men (unless, indeed, Plato were wiser?) was a thoroughly irreligious philosopher; and a liberal scholar must entertain all speculations. But the negatives might, after all, prove false; nay, seemed manifestly false, as the circling hours swept past him, and turned round with graver faces. For had not the world become Christian? Had he not been baptised in San Giovanni, where the dome is awful with the symbols of coming judgment, and where the

> altar bears a crucified Image disturbing to perfect complacency in one's self and the world? Our resuscitated Spirit was not a pagan philosopher, nor a philosophizing pagan poet, but a man of the fifteenth century, inheriting its strange web of belief and unbelief, of Epicurean levity and fetichistic dread; of pedantic impossible ethics uttered by rote, and crude passions acted out with childish impulsiveness; of inclination towards a self-indulgent paganism, and inevitable subjection to that human conscience which, in the unrest of a new growth, was filling the air with strange prophecies and presentiments.[12]

From the first sentence of paragraph seven to its middle, the narratorial "we" appears directly to report the Spirit's thoughts and feelings straightforwardly to the reader in the third person. At the beginning of paragraph eight, however, it becomes increasingly clear, following the cryptically timeless first sentence and another set of rhetorical questions, that this report is in actuality anything but direct. It is rather being twice filtered, once by the narrator's act of observing judgment and then again through the narrator's reflection upon the content of that judgment when conceptualized historically. As was the case in the preceding paragraphs, these rhetorical questions undo the putative stability that precedes them, launching paragraph eight into an extended reflection on a set of historical problems that begins with the contents of the Spirit's thoughts and feelings and ends with the extraordinary meta-historical implications of the cited paragraph's concluding phrase.

Before unpacking those historical implications, we must first more closely examine the rational process through which the rhetorical questions that give rise to them emerge as problem-generating entities within this text. We have already mentioned the destabilizing role that the rhetorical question plays within the essay. But this citation allows us to comprehend that

[12] Ibid., 5 – 6.

destabilizing role much more explicitly. Paragraph nine begins with the Spirit's self-confident subjective assertion of "pride" tempered by a pragmatic but still jocose worldliness; then proceeds to unravel that conviction as the Spirit speculates that the "Unseen Powers" are beyond his certainty; then brings that suspicion to a conclusion as the narrator recapitulates the apparent internal contradictions engendered by the Spirit's "strange" thoughts as a kind of historical evidence. Namely, that the Spirit is merely "a man of the fifteenth century." Just as the certainty undergirding the knowledge of history expressed by the narratorial "we" in the essay's first paragraph begins to collapse as soon as the Spirit's encounter with the observed historical record presents him with a difference that cannot be assimilated to his body of knowledge, the Spirit's witty self-certainty falls apart when measured against the possibility that the "Unseen Powers" which his "self-indulgent paganism" exists in order to contain may, in fact, exceed the superstitious devices designed to control them.

The effects of the rhetorical questions are best understood when the Spirit is viewed in relation to the night student. We can begin by making the following observations of the Spirit, all of which follow straightforwardly from what we established when analyzing the essay's first paragraph: that the Spirit must be included within the narrator's universal "we" and therefore understood to represent another link in the chain of universal anthropomorphic identification; that he must be acknowledged as another textual figure whose human likeness supports the text's temporal and geographical unity; and, because he exhibits the same qualities that distinguish the night student from other figures, that he must be placed on a continuum with the night student inside the essay's implied cognitive hierarchy. Indeed, though he is not a young man and Eliot never explicitly links them, the best way to understand the relation of the two figures within the hierarchy would be to comprehend the Spirit as a more individuated and historically situated

representation of the vaguely conceived night student found in the essay's first paragraph – the shadowy "night student" made into narrative flesh, as it were.

When this figural linkage is read closely against a detailed examination of the eighth paragraph's rhetorical questions and concluding statements, the Proem's larger historical function begins to move more clearly into view. Including the question-fragment contained within sentence six – "(unless, indeed, Plato were wiser?)" – paragraph eight contains a total of six questions. These questions can be subdivided into three distinct groups. The first (Question Group One, or "QG1") consists of three questions, which immediately follow the paragraph's first sentence. The second (Question Group Two, or "QG2") stands alone, forming one part of a subordinate clause within a longer declarative statement. The third (Question Group Three, or "QG3") consists of two questions followed by the two declarative sentences that conclude the paragraph (Declarative Group Four, or "DG4"). Comprehended as a single entity consisting of alternating groups of interrogative and declarative sentences, paragraph eight can thus be said to contain seven distinct parts: three groups of questions (QG1 – QG3) surrounded by four groups of declarative sentences (Declarative Groups One through Four, or "DG 1 – 4").

Speaking in a general sense, it is important to note here that this alternating sentential structure makes plain what we already began to imply of Eliot's process of historical examination in our discussion of historical certainty above. This is, that the rhetorical questions function here as a means through which the narratorial "we" calls historical certainty into question and thereby creates the possibility for the historical knowledge that the narrator's own narrative seeks to establish in its place. The position of Eliot's narrator must therefore be understood as both fundamentally "critical" and revisionist: revisionist in the sense that the narrator creates the possibility for its own historical authority by first establishing the uncertainty

of historical narrative in general; and critical in the sense that, in the typically efficient and incisive words of Herbert Marcuse, Eliot's conceptualization of history, like Hegel's conceptualization of logic, begins by questioning, as opposed to merely describing or assuming, the basic nature of a simply "given" or completely "finished" material world.[13] We will return at length to both of these tendencies throughout this and the following chapter. For now, the important thing for us to observe is that the discursive rhythm of paragraph eight, as the text moves dialogically from statement to question in seven distinct parts that alternately establish and dis-establish the potential contents of history, represents in microcosm a narrative structure that Eliot employs consistently throughout the Proem and *Romola*. For Eliot, certainty is never fully certain, the given is never simply given, and history is never conclusively written.

Returning to paragraph eight, we can see immediately that its dialogical structure turns the essay's historical concerns toward a more critical, speculative horizon. The first two parts of the paragraph, DG1 and QG2, together consist of one declarative sentence followed by three questions. The latter come in answer to the statement, "For the Unseen Powers were mighty." They thus in part illuminate the terms of those Powers' ability and invisibility relative to the Spirit. He is not "sure" that there is not an "angry force" "behind them" that must be "appeased," although he suspects that "gems" are "medicinal" if "pressed" to "the finger" and that "all things" are "charged with occult virtues." But the same questions also point beyond the Spirit, toward a more inclusive register. Whereas the references to medicinal gems and objects charged with virtue certainly represent the narrator's gentle mocking of a belief system whose time has

[13] Citing Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Marcuse writes: "Sufficient notice has not been given to the fact that Hegel himself introduces his logic as primarily a critical instrument. It is, first of all, critical of the view that 'the material of knowledge exists in and for itself in the shape of a finished world apart from Thinking,' that it exists as 'something in itself finished and complete, something which, as far as reality is concerned, could entirely dispense with thought.'" Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, 122. See pp. 323 – 360 for more on criticism and its relation to the concept of the given.

passed, the "angry force to be appeased" unfortunately cannot be confined to the gods of fifteenth-century Florence, either "Christian" or "pagan," and can thus also be understood as a veiled reference to an enduring theme within Judeo-Christian ethical discourse by which Eliot's readers, then and now, continue to be touched. This in turn indicates that the rhetorical questions themselves, though they appear to be directed principally at what the Spirit believes of the "Unseen Powers" that animate his perception of the observed world, also contain within them an implicit address to a reader contemporary to the time of the Proem's production.

Eliot subtly expands the scope and content of this address as the rest of the paragraph's rhetorical questions unfold. The section just explicated comes just before a longer section consisting of three parts, two declarative sections (DG2 and DG3) divided by a single parenthetical question (QG2). The latter – "unless, indeed, Plato were the wiser?" – accomplishes far less than the three questions that make up QG1, insofar as it generates little content. It therefore functions less overtly than the rest of the questions in the paragraph. The philosophical problem attributed to Aristotle and Plato here – the question of who is or is not a "thoroughly irreligious philosopher" and what an answer to that question might signify – has become perennial, as has the idea of the two philosophers' supposed philosophical opposition to one another. Like the idea of a vengeful and angry god in need of appeasing veneration, it thus actively extends the relevance of the Spirit's thought contents far beyond the scope of his own historical moment. More importantly, the doubt engendered by such "liberal" "speculations" only gives rise to a deeper kind of uncertainty that, though it begins to look distinctly modern, certainly cannot, when read alongside the reference to Plato and Aristotle, be given a limiting date. "As the circling hours" of his spiritual "speculation" sweep "past him," the Spirit returns to the reflexive comfort from which his query began, deciding, near the middle of the paragraph,

that “the negatives” engendered by such “speculation” “might, after all, prove false,” thereby producing a truth and further validating his superstitions. At once universal and particular, the Spirit’s classically inflected philosophical problems cannot but include the reader within their frame of reference.

Following DG3, the text is interrupted by QG3, which consists of the paragraph’s final two questions, both of which relate specifically to Christianity. Like the questions that precede it, and still reflecting the language of universal anthropomorphic identification embodied by the narratorial “we,” the first question in this sequence – “For had not the world become Christian?” – speaks to a wider historical audience than that of fifteenth-century Florence. Although the particular moment at which the “world” became “Christian” occurred long before the fifteenth century and cannot be said to describe the kind of event that the Spirit could have witnessed in his lifetime, that event cannot be confined to the Spirit’s consciousness alone. Like those that make reference to Plato and Aristotle, this question takes for its referent an historical event or concept, anchored in a particular moment in the past, at the same times as it indicates a process that either continues to unfold or retains its descriptive purchase on conceptualizations of the present long after the anchor has slipped from its historical origins.

But it also signifies a transition, the nature of which is best indicated by noting that, whereas the grammatical subject of the sentence just preceding it, which took world-historical religious change as its theme, is “the world,” the grammatical subject of this sentence, which expresses the specific manifestations of that religious change as functions of the Spirit’s subjective personal narrative, is “he.” This grammatical shift expresses itself as content here in several ways. In the most general sense, we can understand the change in applied terms, or as the practical application of a world historical narrative to a personal historical narrative. As we have

seen several times already, especially in the essay's first paragraph, which begins by asserting a conceptually panoptic certainty that the Spirit's experientially focused rhetorical questions peremptorily deconstruct, Eliot's text achieves the transition from the general to the particular here by reiterating the subject matter stated in the general as a detail or predicate of the particular. So that, as Eliot demonstrates here quite clearly, a world historical process ("the world become Christian") finds its reflection in the particular life of the Spirit (the experience and place of his baptism) that the second question's three clauses then go on to describe. As it was for Hegel, the relation between Eliot's generalized narrative of history (at the level of the world or a civilization) and the details of history through which that narrative finds human expression (at the level of the described or experienced objective world) are as inseparable as Eliot's grammatical transition from "the world" to the "he" here is subtle. For Eliot, the history of a civilization is best expressed by describing the relation of particular historical details to the universal concepts or principles whose significance they in turn establish and reflect.

Relative to the conceptualization of history that all of this works together to construct, however, the most important point presently to observe is the essay's subordination of both historical conditions and "human conscience" to more powerful historical forces that find their most concise expression in organic metaphors such as "new growth." Eliot's naturalizing language does not yet go so far as Hegel's, but the metaphorical linkage of human history to an organic growth cycle is nonetheless apparent. Moreover, relative to the cognitive hierarchy, the privileged historical status that organically conceived forces enjoy relative to beliefs and conditions links the collective voice through which the narrator thinks and speaks to the "new growth" that its own vision of the Florentine historical record witnesses and describes; insofar as both the narratorial "we" and the organic forces of historical change sit atop the essay's

respective hierarchies, the former's collective perspective and the latter's subsuming force find their mirror image in each other. And though the two concepts appear heterogeneous to one another, we should not let such an external asymmetry distract us from observing the obvious fact that each concept implicitly describes a kind of universal rule or principle that the narrator's omniscient perspective both constructs and is constructed by. For Eliot, at least within the confines of this essay, anthropomorphic entities, inclusive of such figures as angels and spirits, are linked within a hierarchy of cognitive ability atop which the narrator sits; even the most consequential historical forces and agents are in part subsumed to the organic forces driving historical change; and the figure of the narratorial "we" produces and reflects both paradigms.

To claim that the narratorial "we" is the first among equal anthropomorphic figures at the same time as she constructs an organic concept of history that subsumes even the most commanding human agents to her organic power is obviously to state a logical contradiction. For how could the narrator possess the capacity to represent the operations of an organic force whose power to subsume the human will necessarily exceed the bounds of her own stated ability? Instead of perceiving this contradiction as an aesthetic failure or trying to solve it, we might understand it as an alternative means of production, the dynamic internal tension – between the capacity of the narratorial "we" to represent organic historical forces, which is necessary to the text's status as a historical novel; and the power of those historical forces to exceed the bounds of representation, which is necessary to the concept of history that this particular historical novel aims to represent – that lends motility to the novel's historical and philosophical narratives.

Stated in terms more in keeping with the interrogative functions of the Proem discussed at length above, we might thus rephrase this internal conflict as an implicit rhetorical question – "How is it possible to represent historical change?" Or, more to the point, "Why is it necessary to

represent historical change anyway?" – that governs *Romola* and its Proem. It follows quite logically from this that Eliot should open the door to those questions at the end of the paragraph before which Savonarola, the novel's most significant historical figure and its only major character to bridge the gap between the Proem and the novel by being represented in both, first appears by name. That paragraph, the Proem's ninth, immediately follows the paragraph that we have just spent so much time discussing and begins with the Spirit casting doubt upon the "simple folk" who in his lifetime talked of "Pope Angelico, who was to come by-and-by and bring in a new order of things, to purify the Church from simony, and the lives of the clergy from scandal – a state of affairs too different from what existed under Innocent the Eighth for a shrewd merchant and politician to regard the prospect as worthy of entering into his calculations." The reference to Pope Angelico is not a reference to a specific pope, but rather to a common hope among the faithful for a morally upright papal leader. Later in the same paragraph, the narrator links this latent hope expressly to Savonarola, as well as to the receptive "subjection" to "human conscience" described in the prior paragraph, by recalling that, when the Spirit himself heard Savonarola speak at San Lorenzo in 1492, he did so "not without a mixture of satisfaction" for "the preaching of a Dominican Friar . . . who denounced with a rare boldness the worldliness and vicious habits of the clergy, and insisted on the duty of Christian men not to live for their own ease when wrong was triumphing in high places, and not to spend their wealth in outward pomp even in the churches, when their fellow men were suffering from want and sickness." Read as a response to the rhetorical questions implied by the contradiction engendered in paragraph eight, we can therefore understand Savonarola's emergence in paragraph nine as a provisional answer that points the Proem toward a set of concerns that will no doubt be much more familiar to those already acquainted with Eliot's literary corpus: Why is it necessary to

represent historical change despite the contradictions that this attempt to do so naturally engenders? Because the representation of historical change opens a privileged window onto the representation of ethical conflict, which constitutes for *Romola* – and for Eliot – a much more important kind of problem.[14]

Befitting such a representational priority, the rest of the Proem is dominated by the ethical crisis generated by the Spirit's consideration of the specific historical moment that the narratorial "we" approaches through his eyes. Following the Spirit's endorsement of the better side of Savonarola's pastoral intentions, he observes (as quoted internal speech) in paragraphs nine and ten that, in addition to accomplishing some good, the "Frate had" perhaps "carried his doctrine rather too far," but that, even so, his methods may have been necessary, given the scale of the corruption that he sought to eradicate: "But a Frate Predicatore who wanted to move the people – how could he be moderate?" From here, the rest of paragraph ten delves more deeply into the political details of Florence during the Spirit's former lifetime, by way of references and allusions to figures such as Lorenzo de' Medici, "the great Turk" (Sultan Muhammad II), the "Regno" (the Kingdom of Naples), and others, as well as a set of leading questions similar to the one just cited. Referring specifically to one aspect of the historical conflict whose events will inform so much of *Romola*'s plot but that the Spirit here approaches without actually penetrating, the Spirit concludes the paragraph by asking himself whether "our wiser heads" are "leaning towards alliance with the Pope and the Regno, or . . . inclining their ears to the orators of France and of Milan?" In answer to his own question, the Spirit makes a decision to which the narratorial "we" issues a sharp rejoinder. This exchange makes up the Proem's penultimate and ultimate paragraphs and reads as follows:

[14] Ibid., 5 – 6.

> ‘There is knowledge of these things to be had in the streets below, on the beloved *marmi* in front of the churches, and under the sheltering loggie, where surely our citizens have still their gossip and debates, their bitter and merry jests of old. For are not the well-remembered buildings all there? The changes have not been so great in those uncounted years. I will go down and hear – I will tread the familiar pavement, and hear once again the speech of Florentines.’ / Go not down, good Spirit! for the changes are great and the speech of Florentines would sound as a riddle in your ears. Or, if you go, mingle with no politicians on the *marmi*, or elsewhere; ask no questions about trade in the Calimala; confuse yourself with no inquiries into scholarship, official or monastic. Only look at the sunlight and shadows on the grand walls that were built solidly, and have endured in their grandeur; look at the faces of the little children, making another sunlight amid the shadows of age; look, if you will, into the churches, and hear the same chants, see the same images as of old – the images of willing anguish for a great end, of beneficent love and ascending glory; see upturned living faces, and lips moving to the old prayers for help. These things have not changed. The sunlight and shadows bring their old beauty and waken the old heart-strains at morning, noon, and eventide; the little children are still the symbol of the eternal marriage between love and duty; and men still yearn for the reign of peace and righteousness – still own *that* life to be the highest which is a conscious voluntary service. For the Pope Angelico is not yet come.[15]

Though the narrator states in passing over the course of the essay’s second paragraph that the Spirit’s “eyes were closed for the last time while Columbus was still waiting and arguing” for his ships, the specific moment of the Spirit’s earthly death does not achieve any purposive clarity

[15] Ibid., 7 – 8; 597.

until now: he lived long enough to hear Savonarola preach and therefore to understand the stated purpose of Savonarola's reforming mission, but not long enough to bear witness to that mission's – or Savonarola's – ultimate conclusion. He therefore does not know most of the factual details of Florentine history pertinent to *Romola*, a typically subtle detail that qualifies the authority that the Spirit's experienced vision lends to the narrator's panoptic perspective: the Spirit notices the most apparent ways that Florence has changed since he was living, and he can say that these changes are significant, but he cannot fully say *how* they are significant. In other words, he cannot interpret them. The narrator thus re-inscribes her own interpretive authority within the confines of the Spirit's knowledge just as she draws on the Spirit's experience to validate her own view to the Spirit's particular historical moment.

In one sense, one could say that this observation is trivial; Eliot is writing a historical novel recounted by an omniscient narrator, not a biography of the Spirit or a history of Florence. In practical terms, the Spirit's perspective is therefore of only limited value. Read alongside the sharp rebuke that comes at the beginning of paragraph twelve, however, the limit describes a two-fold interpretive benchmark. The rebuke begins in the imperative mood with a strong command – "Go not down, good Spirit!" – that comes in answer to the Spirit's desire to find out more about Savonarola's outcome by descending to present-day Florence and speaking to its modern citizens. Thus the narrator's belief that "the changes have not been so great in those uncounted years," equal to his insistence that the knowledge he seeks must now be available "in the streets below," just as it was when he was living, finds its limit in the relatively greater knowledge underwriting the command that stays him: the narrator demands that he "go not down" because she knows that he cannot find the answers that he seeks there. This implies, however, that the experiential knowledge that provides the authority that that Spirit lends to the

narrator's historical vision does not supersede the narrator's own creative knowledge. The Spirit's lack of knowledge can thus be read both figuratively and literally: literally, in the sense that the Spirit did not live long enough to witness the full arc of Savonarola's actions and therefore does not have any experiential or empirical knowledge of their fullest outcomes; and figuratively, in the sense that the empirical and experiential knowledge that typify him are not sufficient to provide the kind of answer that either he or the narrator seeks.

The answer that the narrator seeks, which she announces in the essay's final paragraph, comes in four distinct parts. To begin with, as should be clear from what he have just demonstrated, the answer will call upon a comprehensive conceptualization of knowledge, encompassing the kind of broadly panoptic, mythically and religiously inflected view to historical change invoked by the angel, as well as the more experientially and empirically focused, close visual observation demonstrated by the Spirit. For lack of a better set of terms, we will call these "metaphysical" and "experiential" modes of knowledge, respectively. As the narrator's practical command of the angel and the Spirit informs us, however, neither of these modes of knowledge is sufficient in itself. Indeed, among the things that the Proem most effectively communicates is the insufficiency of both of these perspectives, the metaphysical perspective alone engendering a remote certainty instantly undone by close observation, and the experiential perspective terminating in an apparent familiarity that, having convinced itself that Florence "surely" has not changed that much over the course of "three centuries and a half," forgets the fact of historical change altogether. And though neither the angel nor the Spirit sees things completely in either one of these ways, Eliot is clear that neither perspective alone is sufficient to generate historical knowledge.

To the extent that the hierarchically privileged narratorial "we" employs the points of view of the angel and the Spirit and therefore subsumes as she recapitulates their more limited modes of knowledge as subordinate aspects of her own, the narrator's perspective must also be said to be creative. But, as the essay's final paragraphs remind us, the creative synthesis that the narrator's perspective performs always produces purposively. Within the final paragraph, this fact is plainly underscored in its first and last sentences. After warning the Spirit not to descend to street level, the narrator states that, if he were to do so, he would find that "the changes are great and the speech of Florentines would sound as a riddle in your ears," implying that the narrator's creative capacity is nothing if not oriented toward solutions. At the end of the paragraph, however, the narrator reminds us that even this intellectual capacity is not enough unless it is aimed at "*that* life" which "is a conscious voluntary service." The kind of answer that the narrator seeks is indeed creative. But, in a gesture that only reiterates Eliot's commitment to the representation of ethical conflict, the question's most important effect is the "life" of "conscious voluntary service" towards which its answer will lead: the answer that the narrator seeks will always be *ethically* productive.

Another way to say this would be to say that the Proem's narrator takes metaphysical and experiential modes of knowledge and constructively recapitulates them as fodder for ethical concepts. Earlier in this chapter, when discussing the functions of the essay's rhetorical questions, we mentioned in passing that, because her representation of historical authority is predicated upon the instability of dominant historical narratives and her conceptualization of history begins by questioning the status of the given instead of assuming it, the Proem's narrator could be understood as both revisionist and critical. Relative to what we have subsequently established concerning the essay's implicit rhetorical questions ("How is it possible to represent

historical change?" and "Why is it necessary to represent historical change anyway?") and the provisional answer that we have posed to those questions ("Because the representation of historical change opens a privileged window onto the representation of ethical conflict."), we can now see more clearly that the answer which the narrator seeks to produce as the essay's conclusion unfolds shares a common denominator with the text's conceptualization of history as well as its position toward ethical value: significance is consistently justified in functional terms, but the value of those functions and their constructive relation to one another are uniformly underwritten by a deeper commitment to the production of conceptual knowledge. For Eliot, historical, ethical, and epistemological functions rely first upon the textual production of the concepts that determine the possibility for and delimit the content of those functions. The kind of answer that Eliot's narrator seeks thus begins by questioning the substructure of the given just as it both relies upon and reproduces the conceptual knowledge out of which the power to question emerges.

In addition to endorsing a comprehensive and synthetic idea of knowledge, orienting itself toward ethical productivity, and privileging the critical production and recapitulation of conceptual knowledge, the answer that the narrator seeks will also always be mediated by language, or what Eliot's narrator calls "speech" and draws into the essay's conceptual hierarchy in the middle of this last paragraph. As we have seen, after the Spirit in the seventh paragraph declares his interest in going "down" into the streets of Florence to "hear" the "gossip and debates" in order that he might learn the outcome of Savonarola's moral crusade, the narrator admonishes that he not do so, warning him that, contrary to what the Spirit believes, "the changes" in Florence since his lifetime are too "great" for him to comprehend. Interestingly, the first and most important reason that the narrator provides for her belief that the Spirit will not

find what he seeks in today's Florence relates to aural, rather than visual, comprehension. "Go not down," the narrator warns, "for the changes are great and the *speech* of Florentines would *sound* as a riddle in your ears." The narrator then takes great care to emphasize the idea that language will fail the Spirit, stating in the sentence following the warning that, "Or, if you go, mingle with no politicians on the *marmi*, or elsewhere; ask no questions about trade in the Calimala; confuse yourself with no inquiries into scholarship, official or monastic." This series of interdictions is followed by a countervailing command that also marks a return to the visual dimension: the "speech" of contemporary Florentines may "sound a riddle" to the Spirit of the fifteenth century, but if he were "only" to "look," he would not encounter the same problem. The Spirit understands what "has not changed" about nineteenth-century Florence simply by "look"-ing at it, but the power to apprehend what has changed, by means of "questions," "inquiries," and "speech," will elude him.

In terms of the higher capacity to understand historical change that these powers of speech and interrogation grant to the narratorial "we," a more precise way to understand their significance would be to describe their combined effect as the power of interpretation; or, more specifically, as the power of *historical* interpretation, a task that only the Proem's narrator can perform. This is not to say that the Spirit cannot interpret; for, at least to a degree, he certainly can, which his ample descriptions of various kinds of change repeatedly demonstrate. But the limits of his ability only demonstrate the relatively greater power of the narrator's historical knowledge that much more clearly. The narratorial "we" leans on the Spirit's eyewitness authority in order to establish essential details of Florence's history and culture. And many of these facts, such as the architectural changes that the Spirit witnesses as he peruses the now modern landscape of Florence, are rooted in observations that require at least enough interpretive

acuity to recognize that the description of a change is something different from the more basic observation of simple difference upon which any description of change depends. For the observation of historical difference does not, on its own, capture the significance of historical change. But, as the narrator already demonstrated while passing pointed judgment on the Spirit's "strange web of belief and unbelief" in paragraph eight, which verdict the narrator's sharp delimitation of the Spirit's interpretive power here in paragraph twelve merely reasserts, only the narrator can adequately reveal the significance of those changes.

The hierarchy of cognizing anthropomorphic figures atop which the narrator sits, then, is populated by five distinct figures, each in possession of distinct but overlapping cognitive capacities. When read sequentially, these capacities can be understood as a representation of intellectual development. The first entity in the hierarchy is comprised of the various figures whose cognitive landscape is either left undeveloped or depicted as static (Level A). These figures appear prominently in the essay's first and last paragraphs. In the first paragraph, they take the form of "nestling children," "the hard-handed labourer," and the other "men" that Eliot constructs using primarily physical or sensory descriptors: "rosy warmth," "sorrow and sickness," "hasty uprising," etc. These find their correlate in the figures through whom the narrator embodies the visual limit of the Spirit's interpretive power in the Proem's final paragraph: the "little children" and other "upturned living faces" who utter "the same chants . . . as of old," "yearn for the reign of peace and righteousness," and so on. This group is positively characterized by labor, duty, religious credulity, and childlikeness. Unlike the Spirit, however, the intellectual limits that these figures demonstrate do not meet with condemnatory judgment. The members of Level A communicate their simple nature to the observer more or less directly; they "waken the old heart-strains" and, according to language repeated in both paragraphs, do

not “change” very much over time. They are specific to the era in which they live, insofar as apprehension of their modern speech is as unavailable to the ear of the Spirit as is that of the politician. But the core of their meaning can be interpreted without access to their speech; their “old beauty” is, at least in part, “eternal.” To the extent that these figures, when viewed as a unit, comprise a facet of human existence that largely defies the transformative power of history, they can also be understood as a conceptual foundation from which historical change can be abstracted, a stable and less changing substratum of human existence, analogous to the “Jewish people” in Hegel’s “Spirit of Christianity” essay, that reflects the facts of historical conditioned-ness while retaining a meaning that extensively resists the pressure of historical change.

The second position (Level B) within the cognitive order is made up of only one figure, the night-student of the essay’s opening paragraph. The first and most obvious clue to his significance can be found within the social context of his singularity. Though he is mentioned alongside the many “men” who together compose Group A, he stands alone among them in possessing a denominated intellectual function; namely, the power to question. And though the figures of Level A represent a diversity of ages, Eliot’s emphasis on children in the essay’s first and last paragraphs lends a youthful simplicity to the bottommost cohort that the night-student’s implied age and innocent search suggest that he shares: he is old enough to be “questioning the stars or the sages,” but still young enough to believe that they will at some point provide him a certain answer to his questions. The night-student also possesses the power of language, insofar as the capacity to question the world around him that distinguishes his mind from other “men” is constitutively linked to speech. But the night-student’s verbal power is limited: he does not speak for himself, as the Spirit and the narrator do; the narrator delimits his intellectual capacity by presenting her own knowledge as encompassing his; and the attempt to break through the

"barrier of man's brief life" that characterizes his power to question remains only implicit. Moreover, the images through which the narrator presents his efforts – particularly the "dark path" and the "immeasurable circle of light and glory" – retain a descriptive purchase that links him to the essay's larger historical purposes without necessarily submitting him to those purposes' effects: he exhibits the potential for motility and reflexivity that characterize the essay's interlocking representations of question, language, and history, but his potential remains just that – potential. The night-student therefore both comports with and defies the stable historical substratum that he occupies with other "men": his distinctly human intellectual power links him to that which "has hardly changed," and his awareness of and willingness to exercise that power contain his implied potential *eventually* to recognize and interpret what has.

The "angel of the dawn" occupies the order's third position (Level C), though in some senses he is equivalent to the figures immediately above and below him. The most important difference between the angel and the figures that occupy levels A and B is that, whereas the night-student and other "men" are reported upon, the angel and all figures positioned above him are doing the reporting. This difference is well demonstrated by the altitude of the angel's approach in the Proem's first paragraph, which begins historically and geographically afar and moves closer to the particulars of fifteenth-century Florence only after having made a panoptic and mythically inflected survey of the whole of Western civilization. And though the angel is similar to the night-student, because he is never called upon to speak for himself, he differs from the night-student in terms of his relative wisdom and authority: "we are sure" that the angel of the dawn sees as the narrator sees and interprets as the narrator would interpret, and this is just what the night-student's limited ability dictates that he cannot yet do. The angel's capacity to observe the night-student and other "men" in such a way that comports with and validates the

narrator's heightened interpretive ability thus marks a clear intellectual difference between the angel and the night-student, the angel having achieved some of the knowledge that the night-student only begins to seek. Conversely, the angel remains deeply tinctured by the rhetoric of eternality that characterizes the "men" whom he and his peers observe, in the sense that the narrator calls upon the angel's authority to validate the aspects of human life that do *not* change. At once historical and eternal, the "angel of the dawn" does not speak for himself, but the metaphysical contents of his panoptic historical perspective become essential to those that do.

The obvious occupant of the fourth position (Level D) is the Spirit, whose more highly developed intellectual capacities both encompass and transcend those of the figures occupying levels A, B, and C. Despite his name, the Spirit is a distinctly human figure – the Spirit of a once living man – and therefore finds his most natural companions among the "men" who occupy the lowest two positions within the hierarchy. Like the occupants of Level A, the Spirit is partly associated with duty and retains at least some of his religious credulity, even if both are motivated by a skeptically cultured fear. And while he obviously surpasses it, the Spirit's intellectual capacity, characterized as it is by mobility and questioning, is similar in principle to that demonstrated by the night-student. The Spirit's humanness thus links him to the stable historical substratum that undergirds the figures whose intellectual identity comprises the hierarchy's base, even if his link to it is even weaker than the night-student's. More in line with the expected connotations of his name, the Spirit also shares much in common with the angel of the dawn: both figures are able to observe the less cognitively able "men" who occupy the lowest two tiers of the hierarchy; both exhibit far greater knowledge than those "men" within their respectively metaphysical and empirical spheres of knowledge; and each is called upon by the narrator as an authoritative witness to the field of knowledge that his capacity best represents.

Unlike the angel of the dawn, the night-student, and the various "men" who comprise the lower orders of the essay's intellectual hierarchy, however, the Spirit can and does speak for himself. This speech comes in two distinct forms, both ultimately emanating from the narrator. The first, which we will call "indirect reported intellectual content," refers to thought content that the narrator ascribes to the Spirit's intellect but which is not set apart by quotation marks or other kinds of punctuation. Indirect reported intellectual content differs from the kind of intellectual content that the angel demonstrates in that the narrator makes it the property of the Spirit himself: "we are sure" that the "angel of the dawn" saw in 1492 what "we" see today. However, aside from describing what "we" continue to see "three centuries and a half" later, the narrator does not ascribe anything unique or distinctly limiting to the angel's vision. What the angel sees is therefore neither made discrete from what the narrator sees nor shown to contain any of the angel's own reflection. The indirect reported intellectual content through which the narrator presents the content of the Spirit's thought, on the other hand, does both: though the narrator reports it and therefore also sees and owns it, the Spirit's unquoted speech emanates from a distinct, thinking personality that the narrator links to a precisely situated historical moment that itself becomes the object of the Spirit's own reflection. The contents of the Spirit's reflective thinking, even when they are not set apart from the text by means of punctuation, therefore belong to him in a way that differentiates his intellectual identity and its products from those of the angel, whose thinking, though present, never becomes distinct from the narrator's re-appropriating force.

The second kind of thought attributed to the narrator, which we will call "direct reported intellectual content," distinguishes itself from indirect reported intellectual content first in

mechanical terms, insofar as it is set apart by quotation marks. And though the kinds of things that the narrator presents by means of direct reported intellectual content do not differ markedly from those presented by means of indirect reported intellectual content, the distinction between the two forms is nonetheless vital to the function of Eliot's intellectual hierarchy, and for three interrelated reasons. The first is obvious. The quotation marks denote the product of an internal precinct, distinct to the Spirit's own intellect, that, at least hypothetically, the narrator presents to the reader without embellishment. Secondly, other than the narratorial "we," who constructs and commands all other figures, the Spirit is the only entity within the Proem whose intellectual content is important enough to warrant being represented using more than one kind of reported speech. Insofar as their mere existence and sole application to the Spirit ascribe a greater degree of linguistic complexity to his characterization, the quotation marks that demarcate the limits of the Spirit's thought concretely embody the implicit hierarchy that we have attempted to disclose here at the same time as they provide the most convincing evidence for the Spirit's relative importance within it. But, thirdly, they also establish a mutually binding rational limitation that, when read alongside the Spirit's role as the experiential and empirical validator of the narrator's historical authority, reveals the larger signifying function of the narrator's comparatively superior, speech-centered power of interpretation: while the Spirit can express his own thought via quoted internal speech, *only the narrator can fully interpret its historical significance*; and while only the narrator can fully interpret the Spirit's quoted internal speech, *that interpretation relies upon the Spirit's experiential and empirical authority for its historical validity*.

Relative to the concepts of direct and indirect reported intellectual content and the mutually binding rational limitation that they illuminate, the most helpful way to understand the fifth position in the essay's cognitive hierarchy (Level E) would be to present it in terms of the

unique function that it performs within that structure: the fifth position in the hierarchy brings the power of speech and the capacity for its interpretation together in the figure of the narratorial "we," whose ability to *reflect upon the products of reflection* describes the hierarchy's highest intellectual stage. The conspicuously privileged and privileging tool that the narrator uses to construct this reflective ability is the faculty of speech, command of which describes the most important aspect of the narrator's similarities and differences to the entire range of figures that together comprise the Proem's cognitive spectrum. Indeed, as we have seen, the capacity to generate, control, and interpret human speech is the most reliable predictor of any particular figure's precise position within the essay's cognitive order. But, as our extended consideration of this order and its constitutive elements has already begun to disclose, the power of speech itself within the essay's structure is not as important as its practical effects. The power to question, the capacity to understand historical change, and the ability to interpret that change are interdependently linked to the narrator's comparatively greater verbal capacity in such a way that they operate almost synonymously within it and thus cannot be discretely differentiated from the narrator's cognitive figuration. They are, in a very real sense, inseparable, both from each other and from the narrator's self-presentation. This is not to say that the narrator is alone in possessing any of these traits. For we have also seen that, at least to a degree, none of these capacities belongs exclusively to her. But the narratorial "we" is alone in possessing the power to reflect upon reflection.

Given that the reflection upon which the narrator reflects is not entirely the narrator's own, but rather the Spirit's, however, a more precise way to articulate this observation would be to say that only the narrator possesses the power to reflect upon the intellectual contents within the minds of the figures beneath herself in the essay's cognitive hierarchy. Because any

omniscient narrator by definition possesses the capacity to report upon and judge its characters' intellectual contents, the capacity of the Proem's narrator to reflect upon the Spirit's reflection may at first appear tautological to the narrator's perspective and therefore inconsequential. And while it is certainly true that the Proem's narrator is omniscient in a conventional sense, the reflective act that the narratorial "we" performs when presenting the intellectual contents of the essay's subordinate figures takes on a peculiar meaning within the specific context of this essay. That meaning comes together around the content of history and its relation to the social world through which the reflection produced by the Spirit becomes available to the narrator as a product of reflection.

We will focus closely on one additional characteristic of this content, which links Eliot's progressive intellectual hierarchy to Hegel's representation of intellectual development and directs us to the conclusion of our discussion of *Romola*'s Proem. Eliot, of course, is not alone among great novelists in marshaling the theoretical power of the third-person omniscient narrator, particularly among her formidable nineteenth-century peers. And even a brief consideration of this fact would far exceed the scope of our point here. For our local purposes, it is enough to say of the Proem's narrator that, although all third-person omniscient narrators by definition possess the capacity to gain access to the minds of their characters, the Proem's narratorial "we" surpasses this necessarily given skill by calling upon the contents of those characters' minds to construct and justify the intellectual contents of her own. We are not dealing with an omniscient narrative figure that merely observes and reports upon the figures she constructs, but rather one whose perspective and authority are also *constructed and justified by those figures*. From the essay's first sentence to its last, Eliot's narrator not only creates and observes but also relies upon the hypothetical intellectual contents of her subordinates to justify

the existence, veracity, and limits of her own. Both *Romola* and the Proem are rife with the effects of this narrative phenomenon, which we have discussed at length above. It bears repeating in summary here, however, that the historical authority that Eliot's narrator claims in this essay, which permits the narratorial "we" to present and defend history as a form of knowledge, would be inconceivable without the angel and the Spirit, whose respectively metaphysical and empirical realms of authority lend to the narrator her capacity to present her own history of fifteenth-century Florence in the mythic and experiential terms that constitute and justify it. To the degree that her status as the Proem's narrator formally demands that the narrator's representational capacity exceed that of the figures she observes, Eliot's narrator is indeed plainly omniscient in the conventional sense. But Eliot's omniscient narrator is also dependent upon those same observed figures for the historical authority through which she claims her own trans-temporal omniscience. Said omniscience is therefore mediated by the intellectual contents of the figures whose perspectives the narrator uses as tools to construct the foundational terms of her own thought.

We can describe this mediation in three interconnected ways. The first is *historical*. As we have just shown, the narrator's capacity to present the novel's historical content as legitimately historical is mediated by the metaphysical and experiential modes of authority provided by the angel and the Spirit, which together describe the scope of the narrator's capacity to claim historical and epistemological veracity. Insofar as the narrator uses the historically mediating content provided by the angel and the Spirit to construct the content of her own intellect, however, it follows that that same intellectual content does not properly belong to the narrator alone. It is rather shared with the figures whose intellectual content in part contributes to it, and it can thus also be described as *socially mediated*. Yet, because the angel, the Spirit, and

the narrator sit atop a clearly delineated intellectual hierarchy that relies upon a deeper structure of universal anthropomorphic identification for the omniscient authority that the angel and the Spirit lend to the narrator, we must also say that, in addition to being historically and socially mediated, the narrator's intellectual content is also *socially constructed*.

The narratorial "we," who brings these functions together under the aegis of her own unified intellectual action, thus functions simultaneously as a methodological standard for the production of historical knowledge as well as an idealized representation of human intellectual development that, though distinct from those that Hegel presents in "The Spirit of Christianity" and the *Phenomenology*, shares structural affinities with both. That the narratorial "we" functions as a methodological standard for the production of historical knowledge is easily deduced from what we have discussed in detail above. Having mastered the use of language and enlisted the authority of the angel and the Spirit, her Victorian Muses, the narrator examines a chosen moment in the historical record by means of empirical and metaphysical constructs. The product of this examination yields a difference between the historical moment being observed and that of the narrator. This difference is in turn measured against the narrator's own period by means of a subjective interpretation informed and justified by the empirical and metaphysical knowledge that enabled the interrogation to begin with. This interpretation is then expressed as historical knowledge in the form of the narrator's language. Like the substratum of "men" that it relies upon and echoes, this interpretive method remains "eternal," in the sense that the narrator could apply it to any given moment in the historical record and expect it to produce justifiable knowledge of that period, at least in principle.

The process through which any given anthropomorphic entity must go in order to attain to the capacity to *implement* this method can be described as a process of intellectual

development and just as easily deduced from what we have already established. This process begins with the "men" that occupy the hierarchy at Level A, then moves on to the night-student, the angel of the dawn, the Spirit, and the narratorial "we," who occupy Levels B – E, respectively. We have already analyzed the specifics of each of these stages at length and do not need to repeat that information here. The important details for us to reiterate summarily are only two: that Eliot's process of intellectual development begins more or less pre-critically, or from an eternally-oriented temporal perspective that asks no questions, does not demonstrate mastery of speech, shows no ability to interpret historical change, and does not exhibit the capacity to reflect upon that change; and that it ends critically, or from a change-oriented temporal perspective that identifies and asks questions, demonstrates keen mastery of speech, ably interprets the facts of historical change, and self-consciously reflects upon the significance that those interpretations engender. In so doing, the agent of the process creates historical knowledge. And while each of the stages of this intellectual development is important, the crucial fact of the middle stages for us here is that the endpoint to which they bring us must be achieved incrementally and progressively: the "eternal" foundation of un-questioning "men" with which he is partially associated is essential to the night-student's individuated cognitive ability, just as the night-student's less sophisticated but still relatively active intellectual capacity is essential to his difference from the Spirit, who demonstrates far greater capacity than any figure beneath him but who lacks the knowledge and verbal skills necessary to reflect upon the significance of his own thought.

It follows straightforwardly from this that the representation of intellectual development that *Romola*'s Proem describes, because its cognitive hierarchy relies for its meaning upon a set of distinctions among kinds of intellectual development that roughly correspond to the "naive"

(Levels A and B), "complex" (Levels C and D), and "self-conscious" (Level E) forms of intellectual development delineated in the taxonomy developed in our previous chapters, cannot be classed alongside Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, Moretti, and their peers as "naive." Unlike those authors, the Proem's representation of intellectual development distinguishes among competing forms of intellectual development, presents those competing forms as constitutively unstable, and makes intellectual development itself into a historical problem.

Because it shares significant traits in common with both, the Proem's representation of intellectual development sits between the "complex" and "self-conscious" forms. In several important respects, Eliot's Proem represents the process of intellectual development in terms similar to the "complex" form represented in the "Spirit" essay. Both depart radically from the naive notion that human intellectual development is simple, univocal, or unmediated. Both Hegel's Jesus and Eliot's Spirit sit atop conceptual structures that, if quite different in purpose and scope, nevertheless present history and the intellectual act of interpreting it as essentially problematic. And both essays, to the extent that their subjects' intellectual contents cannot be distinguished from the facts of their respective historical periods, begin to exert some pressure on a firm conceptual distinction between interior and exterior spheres. But it also shares much in common with Hegel's "self-conscious" form. Like the developing subject that Hegel's *Phenomenology* describes, the narratorial "we" demonstrates that her own intellectual development is historically mediated and socially constructed; that therefore the structure of her own thought is constitutively linked to the objects of the social world that allow the knowledge produced by those processes to become available to her as knowledge; and that, as a result, perceptible changes in the conceptual structure of those social objects entail related alterations in the structure of the narrator's own thinking.

Eliot's narrative Proem of only twelve paragraphs, of course, does not approach the scope or rigor of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Speaking solely in term of the concept of intellectual development and its relation to the Proem's intellectual hierarchy, just two of those differences are important for us here, both of which relate to Hegel's terms of self-consciousness. First, though Eliot's narratorial "we" demonstrates a legible and self-consistent conceptualization of history undergirded by similarly legible verbal and epistemological commitments, the Proem does not demonstrate any categorical awareness of this knowledge. Much of this has to do with the fact that Eliot's representation of intellectual development, unlike either of Hegel's, which take shape within explicit arguments that take the philosophical content of history as a stated theme, never declares itself as an argument and therefore remains predominantly implicit. Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology* places spiritual development at its center and sequentially leads its reader through the individuated stages of that development. We have seen that one of Hegel's pedagogical purposes in writing his book was to bring his reader to a kind of historical knowledge that Hegel himself, having already undergone the process that the book describes, already possesses. He thus begins the *Phenomenology* from the perspective of having already achieved the knowledge that his argument seeks to teach. The narrator of Eliot's Proem also writes from the perspective of having already completed the process of intellectual development that the Proem's hierarchy implicitly unfolds, which she alone possesses the matured intellectual capacity to complete. But she does not do so explicitly or self-consciously in the sense that Hegel does. Eliot's narratorial "we" thus never directly expresses any identifiable awareness of her own historical knowledge as a unique category of intellectual content with distinct features and philosophical requirements of its own. Moreover, aside from implying that the historically

mediated and socially constructed knowledge to which interrogation of the historical record leads is contingent upon a mastery of speech, Eliot's narrator never shows the Proem's reader *how* she has attained to that knowledge. We therefore cannot say that Eliot's text is historically self-conscious in the sense that Hegel describes, despite the fact that the process of intellectual development it represents can be described as loosely "Hegelian."

The second important difference relates to the mechanics of this process. One of the cardinal features of Hegel's "self-conscious" intellectual development is that it synthesizes "naive" and "complex" intellectual development into a sublated form that retains while transcending the content of both. Within that form, "naive" intellectual development is retained as a substrate that operates conceptually as the "common" course of history that the "scientific" consciousness must sublate in order to arrive at the "standpoint of Science." After arriving at this position, Hegel's fully self-conscious subject has attained those attributes described at length in Chapter III. We have already demonstrated the various important ways that Eliot's hierarchy mirrors this process. But the narratorial "we" of Eliot's Proem does not undergo that process in the explicit or "scientific" sense that the consciousness-protagonist of Hegel's *Phenomenology* does. Indeed, among the most telling differences between the *Phenomenology* and Eliot's Proem is the latter's almost total suppression of the kinds of explicitly enumerated processes that characterize the *Phenomenology*. Eliot's narrator begins with an assumed historical knowledge that the text implies is available to those who would have it. And the narrator states the interrogative and linguistic requirements of that knowledge quite clearly. But the narratorial "we" never explicitly distinguishes it as a self-conscious, "scientific" process by naming or formally organizing it.

Because the Proem's representation of intellectual development clearly surpasses "naive" intellectual development and attains to the greater part of the complexity expressed in "complex" intellectual development without attaining to the degree of functional or formal self-consciousness characteristic of Hegel's "self-conscious" form, perhaps the best way to categorize it would therefore be to place it between the "complex" and "self-conscious" positions and simply call it "conscious." This "conscious" form of intellectual development, and the conceptualization of history that it constructs, is distinguished from both of Hegel's representations of intellectual development above all by its lack of explicit formal self-consciousness. Within the confines of each author's respective writings, however, the Proem's relation to *Romola* is analogical to the "Spirit" essay's relation to the *Phenomenology*, to the extent that neither the "Spirit" essay nor the Proem represents its respective author's fullest expression of those contents and functions. And though Eliot nowhere articulates either a formally self-conscious theory of intellectual development or a systematic philosophy of history comparable to those that Hegel presents, the novel that follows the Proem significantly complicates "conscious" intellectual development in ways that continue to echo Hegel's philosophy and describe yet another distinct representation of intellectual development. Let us now turn to that novel.

Chapter VI

Self-Aware Intellectual Development:

Romola

We concluded the previous chapter by characterizing the principal difference between the "self-conscious" form of intellectual development presented in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and the "conscious" form of intellectual development presented in Eliot's Proem as analogical to the conceptual difference between an implicit and an explicit argument; Hegel's argumentative text explicates what Eliot's narrative text only implies. Eliot's novel never fully overcomes this probably insoluble modal difference, but a legible representation of intellectual development nevertheless makes itself explicit to a much greater degree in *Romola*'s body than it does in the Proem that precedes it. The principal vehicle for this explication is the relation between *Romola*'s titular character, Romola di Bardi, and each of the novel's principal influences on her intellect: her father, Bardo di Bardi; reforming Dominican friar, Fra Girolamo Savonarola; and her husband, Tito Melema. The narrative of Romola's relations to these figures unfolds along three distinct but mutually constitutive channels of intellectual content: political, historical, and, most importantly, ethical. These three channels together provide the mediating social content that Romola's subjective consciousness progressively synthesizes over the novel's course. The form of intellectual development that this synthetic intellectual movement describes, which we will call "self-aware intellectual development," complicates Eliot's "conscious" form of intellectual development to the extent that it entails a more self-conscious transformation of subjective consciousness than the "conscious" form presented in the Proem. Yet, because Romola never

becomes perceptibly aware of the political, historical, and ethical contents of her own mind *as* political, historical, and ethical content, Eliot's "self-aware" form of intellectual development advances a less reflective representation of intellectual development than Hegel's *Phenomenology* achieves.

The allusive name of Eliot's novel indicates that, while Romola di Bardi is certainly its central character, she constitutes only one small part of a much larger social whole whose potentially "epic" totality reaches far beyond the individual and gestures toward all of Western civilization.[1] We have already glimpsed some of this tendency in the Proem, which overtly gestures toward a panoptic Western narrative, privileges the finer points of historical context over individuated characterization, and introduces Romola's historical moment without ever mentioning her. Eliot is also careful to situate Romola within an extensive network of intricately interdependent events and characters, both fictitious and historically reconstructed, whose importance in many ways eclipses Romola's own; as we observed in the previous chapter, the only major character to bridge the gap between the Proem and the body of the novel by appearing in both is Savonarola, a fact that comports well with the suggested origins of Eliot's novel.[2] Eliot continues to mitigate the importance of her titular character in the body of the novel as well, which begins with a conversation between Tito, Romola's future husband, and Bratti Ferravecchi, a street merchant, on the morning of April 9th, 1492, and does not introduce Romola until the fifth chapter.[3] Romola is undoubtedly the novel's central character. But, like so many

[1] Citing a letter between Eliot and Thomas Main, Felicia Bonaparte demonstrates that Eliot adapted Romola's name from "Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome." Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross: The Central Myths of George Eliot's Poetic Imagination* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 20, 1- 33.
[2] George Henry Lewes's suggestion that Eliot might find the "life and times" of Savonarola an interesting topic for an "historical romance" "caught her with enthusiasm" and inspired the novel's undertaking. Ibid., 14.
[3] Eliot, *Romola*, 1 – 44.

Victorian authors, particularly those concerned with the "condition of England," Eliot hastens to demonstrate that Romola the individual is subordinate to the interlocking relation of persons and contexts that together comprise the novel's much more important, historically situated, communal whole.[4]

To understand Romola's intellectual development, or rather the synthetic intellectual transformation effected by the social relations within which her mediated existence takes shape, we must therefore begin by tracking the movement of that development as it reflects the changes wrought upon it by her principal intellectual influences. These are, in ascending order of importance, her father, Tito, and Savonarola. We will deal with them in that order. Romola's father is now blind; he lost his sight around 1477, fifteen years before the novel begins. Yet he remains a passionate classical scholar. His wife, Romola's mother, died an unspecified number of years ago. Dino, his son and Romola's older brother, has abandoned his family to follow Savonarola. Bardi has responded to Dino's decision by disowning him. Bardi now lives a cloistered existence with his daughter, working primarily on his classical scholarship. Having been instructed by her father in the Greek and Latin languages and literatures, Romola is the sole

[4] The Victorian social novel, or "Condition of England" novel, is a well-documented nineteenth-century literary phenomenon. Since Louis Cazamian's classic 1903 *Le Roman social en Angleterre*, the form has been associated with the years 1830-1850 and the novels of Dickens, Gaskell, Disraeli, and Kingsley. And though Cazamian and those writing after him are right to focus closely on the emergence of the distinct features of the social novels produced by these four authors during those years, it is certainly fair to say that a concern with social regeneration within the Victorian novel tradition certainly cannot be confined to either. The works of the Brontë sisters, Maria Edgeworth, Thackeray, Worboise, Carlyle and even Morris are just a few obvious Victorian examples. See Louis Cazamian, *The Social Novel in England*, trans. Martin Fido (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), ix – 13; 292 – 306. For more on Eliot's views of community and social ethics, see the helpful introduction to Graver*, George Eliot and Community*, 1 – 28. For insight into the particular role of Victorian women writers of social narratives and protest fiction, see Joseph Kestner, *Protest & Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827 – 1867* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and, more recently, Rebecca Styler, *Literary Theology by Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). From a different but related perspective, for an excellent discussion of Victorian "medievalism" and the general yearning for social and moral "order" that it reflects, see Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970.

assistant to his sometimes-pedantic scholarship. She thus spends most days serving his scholarly demands, acting as his physical aid and amanuensis. Although the Bardi family was once rich and retains a reputable position among Florence's well-born elite, their pecuniary fortunes have fallen and their only major asset now consists of Bardi's extraordinary collection of books and antiquities, among which he and Romola live with Maso, their single servant.[5]

Bardi's role in the novel is relatively small and his characterization is somewhat limited. He retains a fixed personality and presents no significant internal alterations, except, of course, ordinary displays of feeling and his misplaced affection for Tito. He remains largely unmoved by any of the political and social tumult roiling Florence, including the return of his son. Bardi also dies relatively early in the novel, at the end of the first of three books and before the most piqued political drama beings to unfold. So that, other than the extensive filial sway he holds over his daughter's thoughts after his death, his influence on her intellectual development ultimately remains associated with simpler and comparatively happy years, before the disastrous marriage to Tito that dominates her domestic life for the last two-thirds of the novel. Bardi's influence on his daughter is foundational and formative, providing an identifiable place of origin. But it marks only the simple starting point of her fraught intellectual journey.

As is so often the case with Eliot, especially when she adopts well-known literary tropes, which she never exploits uncritically, the larger significance of Bardi's blindness is intimately related to his fixedness, if only ironically. Bardo is now physically blind, but he began life as a sighted person. The course of his life therefore describes a development, albeit a regressive one. However, Eliot does not, as one might expect, compensate for Bardi's loss of external sight with

[5] The Bardis were an actual Florentine family, whose recorded history Eliot studied and into which she weaves her fictional narrative. Ibid., 45 – 58; 601 – 602.

a corresponding increase in internal vision. She instead does just the opposite.[6] Aside from his learnedness and blindness, Bardi's most pervasive personality trait is his interpersonal myopia, which manifests itself in all of his parent-child relationships. In addition to having gone to the extreme step of disowning his son for mainly ideological reasons, Bardi rushes into a paternal relationship with Tito, recklessly welcoming the stranger into his home and ushering him into the place that Bardi's own son would have taken had he not run away to follow his religious calling. Tito's philological and rhetorical skills, especially his command of Greek, obviously exceed Romola's; nevertheless, Eliot's text establishes clearly that Romola possesses many of the intellectual skills necessary to perform her brother's role to potentially great effect, if she were given the chance. But her father stubbornly insists that her sex poses an inherent limitation to her intellect. He thus prevents her from advancing beyond relatively menial tasks. And Romola is keenly aware that her father's bias is based primarily on his misperceptions of her sex.[7]

Bardi's inability to recognize Romola's basic capacities, despite having lived in dependent proximity to her for many years, consequently leads Tito from Bardi's library directly into his daughter's heart, even though Bardi knows little about Tito except that he has an excellent command of Greek and Latin and has visited Athens and several other significant ancient sites, thus making him an excellent fit for Bardi's own scholarly needs. Much of Bardi's feeling for Tito is certainly made possible by Tito's preternatural cunning, which reveals a predator's instinct for identifying weakness and gulls many Florentines with more to lose than Bardi. But several people within Bardi's orbit, including Romola's own godfather, Bernardo del

[6] The first visual Eliot provides of Bardi finds Romola reading Politian's Latin account of Teiresias's blinding. In recompense for having blinded him with her beauty, Pallas endows him "with prophecy and length of days, and even caused his prudence and wisdom to continue after he had entered among the shades, so that an oracle spake from his tomb." Bardi goes blind, but he gains no "prophecy" by doing so. Ibid., 49; 602.
[7] Ibid., 45 – 74.

Nero, voice strong reservations about Tito that Bardi does not heed. Moreover, Eliot's text suggests at their first meeting that part of the reason Romola falls in love with Tito so quickly is because she has been sheltered from all other suitors; despite her good breeding and renowned beauty, Romola's lonely life spent serving her father's curdled ambitions has left her with no ability to manage Tito's masculine charms. Possessed of great knowledge but little insight, Bardi is blind both literally and figuratively.[8]

As his scholarly need for Tito's knowledge of Greek suggests, however, Bardi is also blind to some of his own knowledge. Or, stated perhaps more accurately, he remains largely ignorant of its Greek half. Numerous scholars have debated the general significance or particular meaning of Greek and Latin texts within Eliot's oeuvre, but everyone agrees that Eliot's knowledge of Latin and Greek literature was extensive and that this knowledge manifests itself prominently throughout her work.[9] Felicia Bonaparte is correct in observing, however, that, as is often the case with Victorian writers, who often call upon their characters symbolically to represent entire historical periods or cultures, Tito is best understood as a figural representation of ancient Greek "civilization."[10] Indeed, in what will certainly never be mistaken for Eliot's

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[8] Ibid., 41 – 80.

[9] As Joseph Wiesenfarth noted in 1982, Vernon Rendall in 1947 – 48 wrote the first articles on Eliot's "use of the classics in her novels and supplied the first tentative list of authors she saw acquainted with." The list is extensive. Gordon Haight's publication of Eliot's letters, from 1954 – 1978, added to this knowledge, as have Thomas Pinney, Felicia Bonaparte, Gerhard Joseph, and Wiesenfarth himself. Since then, Laura McClure has contributed a helpful article on the importance of Greek for Eliot, and numerous scholars, including Kathryn Bigger Kruger in 2013, have commented on Eliot's relation to the Antigone myth. Wiesenfarth, "The Greeks, the Germans, and George Eliot," *Browning Institute Studies* 10 (1982): 91; McClure, "On Knowing Greek: George Eliot and the Classical Tradition," *Classical and Modern Literature* 13, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 139 – 156; Kruger, "'The Antigone and Its Moral': George Eliot's Antigonean Considerations," *The George Eliot Review* 44 (2013): 68 – 79.

[10] While discussing the triptych that Tito commissions Piero di Cosimo to paint for his betrothal to Romola, Bonaparte writes that the triptych represents "a pictorial synopsis of the history of Western civilization" that has its "beginnings in the Graeco-Roman world" of her young life with Bardo. Bonaparte further claims that, over the course of her maturation, "Romola has been awaiting the arrival of Dionysus, of Bacchus, and it is as Bacchus that Eliot identifies Tito from the very beginning." Numerous other scholars have also noted that this way of writing, wherein a character comes to represent ancient

most subtle symbolic construction, she spells out Tito's Greek-ness in absolutely unmistakable terms, missing no opportunity to drive the message of his mythic identity home to her reader. The full extent of this message far exceeds the scope of our study and has in any case largely been accounted for by Bonaparte. Only two features of Tito's Greek-ness are important for us here: that Tito's knowledge of Greek provides the pretext for his entree into Bardi's library and consequently into Romola's life and Florentine society; and that that same knowledge, when read alongside Bardi's knowledge of Latin, describes a flawed but complete classical point of origin from which Romola's intellectual development must depart.

The first feature we have already mentioned but needs to be elaborated on several points. When the street merchant, Bratti Ferravecchi, finds Tito lying on the street in the second paragraph of the novel's first chapter, he remarks first on Tito's unusual jewels and garments. He then begins to persuade Tito to allow him to buy the garments, for refurbishment and resale, and

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Greece or Rome, is standard practice among civilization-conscious Victorian authors, whose social structures were profoundly influenced by classical Greek and Roman models. Writing on Victorians and their relation to "Greek Antiquity," for example, Frank Turner observes that, "The appeal to the affinity between the Victorian and the Greek experience was rarely made in a casual manner . . . authors who made these uses of Greek culture and those who appealed to Greek antiquity for other polemical purposes usually believed their analysis appropriate because of one of four general philosophical approaches to the past . . . From the viewpoint of Christian providential history, the Greeks had played an important linguistic and philosophical role in preparing the world for the Gospel. Christian writers also often regarded the Greeks as having displayed the highest moral character that human nature could assume without the light of the Gospel. The second theory . . . was a version of Viconian cycles in which certain ages of Greek history (usually the fifth century B.C.) were seen as analogous to certain periods of modern history – and thus subject to the drawing of relevant parallels . . . A third idea . . . was August Comte's law of the three stages of intellectual development. Adherents to this theory . . . tended to conceive Greek religious and philosophical life as a microcosm of the Comtean pattern of development . . . Finally, Hegel's concept of the historical development of Greek philosophy also suggested that Greek thought and culture held particular relevance for the Victorian experience." And this kind of figuration is hardly limited to ancient Greece: citing Dorothea's honeymoon in Rome, Duncan Kennedy gets to the point with admirable brevity when he writes that, "Rome not only has a history but is identified with History, and Rome visited is always in some sense History revisited." See Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross*, 37 – 71; Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 11 – 12; and Kennedy, "A sense of place: Rome, history, and empire revisited," in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789 – 1945*, ed. Catherine Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20. For more on classical reception in Victorian England, see also Norman Vance, *The Victorians and Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997); and Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*.

then to introduce him to more affluent men who might like to buy the better jewels, which Tito acquired during his travels with the adoptive father, Baldassare, whom Tito has since abandoned. In other words, Bratti, who comically echoes the fickle and insistently self-serving ethos of Renaissance Florence already alluded to in the Proem, greets Tito approvingly because he perceives that Tito has something he wants and is thus personally valuable to him. Perhaps in part because he is kind, but also because he is instinctively opportunistic, Bratti then brings Tito – whom the narrator is now calling "the Greek" – to Nello, the barber, in whose shop many of the most important men in Florence gather for grooming and gossip. Nello, whose desire for social knowledge is no less thirsty than Bardi's pedantry, Tito's ambition, or Bratti's opportunism, then further connects Tito to Bardo di Bardi and Menico Cennini, who in turn advance him incrementally higher into Florentine society.[11]

Eliot's attention to detail as all of this unfolds is almost breathtaking in its thoroughness and subtlety and, perhaps even more than *Middlemarch* does, *Romola* richly rewards the careful reader. For truly everything in this novel is significant and, despite its bulk and the sometimes-vertiginous sensation that Eliot's cosmopolitan intellect produces as it chafes against the representational demands of her Victorian ethics, *Romola* remains the most efficient of Eliot's major works and wastes no words. For example, just as Nello, whom Tito has just met, floridly over-describes Tito's skills to the potentially useful Cennini and "the artist" who enters the barbershop alongside him, "the artist" says, after observing Tito for only a moment, "Young man, I am painting a picture of Sinon deceiving old Priam, and I should be glad of your face for my Sinon, if you'd give me a sitting."[12] "The artist" in question is a young Piero di Cosimo, the same man who in life trained Andrea del Sarto, the painter immortalized to Victorian England in

[11] Eliot, *Romola*, 29 – 44.
[12] Ibid., 42.

the famous Robert Browning poem that takes his name and whom Vasari so amusingly lampoons in the *Lives* (*Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri*), which Eliot alludes to.[13] Recent exhibitions and scholarly reassessments have drawn di Cosimo's works into a more favorable spotlight,[14] but the complete record of his production remains unclear and we cannot say with any real certainty whether he actually painted a scene corresponding to the one that Tito's face inspires.[15] Even if hypothetical, however, which it probably is, the painting's subject certainly signifies within Eliot's narrative.

Piero's comparison, of course, refers to the second book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, wherein Sinon, a Greek captive, elaborately deceives Priam and his fellow Trojans into allowing the horse full of Greek soldiers beyond the city walls, thus effecting the loss of Troy and Aeneas's epic journey. Like Bardi, "old Priam" is warned of the risks posed by the voluble stranger but chooses to disregard them; in one of the Aeneid's most well known and ingeniously adapted scenes, Laocoön warns Priam of the potential danger posed by the Trojan horse, even going so far as to speculate that it might be full of enemy soldiers. But Priam famously ignores him.[16] The similarities between Bardi and Priam are striking: like Lear, both are aged and ineffectual leaders whose poor judgment exacts a heavy toll from them and their respective nations. Di Cosimo's hypothetical picture of "old Priam" being deceived by a young "Greek" can thus be understood as a relatively straightforward, if highly learned, allegory foreshadowing Tito's impending relationship with Bardi, which, as we shall see, launches its own epic journey.

Yet, there is also much more to the image. Among the most striking aspects of Tito's life in Florence is his lubricious rise through its otherwise exclusive social hierarchy, which

[13] Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross*, 35; 103.
[14] Paula Nuttall, "Reassessing Piero di Cosimo," *Art History* 39, no. 3 (June 2016): 600 – 603.
[15] Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross*, 102 – 103.
[16] Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1990), 34 – 35.

eventually earns him a clerical position very near the pinnacle of power, an exceptionally fine outcome for a young man with no known history, no connections, and no hereditary stake in the outcomes of Florentine politics. As we have seen, the enabling cause of Tito's momentum is what one might generously call a certain functional willingness among Florentine males to close one eye while keeping the other keenly trained on personal interest. And in this sense, di Cosimo's reference to Sinon could not be more misplaced. In the Aeneid, Sinon is a loyal Greek soldier who allows himself to be captured by the Trojans in order to produce for his party the precise outcome that he in fact produces: deceive the Trojans, get the horse inside the gate, and bring victory to the Greeks. From the perspective of Aeneas and the Trojans, his actions naturally describe a calamitous deception worthy of scorn. But from the perspective of the Greeks, the same actions describe the virtuous fulfillment of a soldier's duty. Tito, by contrast, never appears honestly to anyone and shows no willingness to adhere to something as rigorously binding as Aeneas or Sinon's principles of epic national fidelity. More serpent than soldier, Tito's way of being Greek is only a shadow of Sinon's. And Even di Cosimo, who instantly recognizes "the Greek" as the very picture of a deceiver, fails to perceive the deeper truth of Tito's cunning. More to the point, and in perfect accord with the *laissez-faire* ethos of Renaissance Florence, di Cosimo fails to act on his inspired suspicion and instead later accepts a handsome commission from Tito to paint a portentous mythical triptych representing Tito and Romola as Bacchus and Ariadne, which Tito presents to Romola as a gift at their betrothal. Tito is a "Greek," but not quite "Greek." And nobody in Florence is truly Greek or Roman.

Underpinning the unfolding of these events is the reader's knowledge, relayed parenthetically by Eliot's narrator, that Tito is not being entirely honest about himself or anything else. But it is important to note that, until much later in the novel, when his unwieldy

ambitions finally become so perilous that he cannot avoid it, Tito – again quite unlike Sinon, who misleads with an inspired purpose – seldom explicitly lies, preferring instead either to deceive by omission or passively to allow others to believe what they want to believe, so long as he gains by their believing it. Tito wants above all for life to be comfortable and easy, and therefore maintains an "unconquerable aversion to anything unpleasant." This trait is fundamental to Tito's moral physiognomy and Eliot takes great care to communicate it to her reader; like Bardi's progressive movement from sight to double blindness, Tito's progression from passive to active lying over the novel's course describes an unfavorable but comparatively essential depiction of intellectual development that contrasts sharply to that of Romola, who experiences a kind of progress antithetical to that of her father and husband.[17]

Also fundamental, however, is the obvious kinship that Tito's and Bardi's regressive developmental similarities imply. As is typically the case with Eliot, although she borrows liberally from a variety of sources and makes generous textual use of her vast interdisciplinary learning, the specific values that each of her figures comes to represent in *Romola* are in large part constructed within the novel itself, through intricate patterns of contrasting characterization. Without question, Eliot's characters' most important value and meaning are determined in social relation to one another, regardless of the historical or symbolic origin of a character's name or identity. Tito and Bardi's relation to one another, as well as to Romola and, in turn, to Savonarola, is no exception. When viewed as a pair, Tito and Bardi's characterizations both obviously share a great deal in common: both develop anti-progressively, exhibiting powerful examples of ways that intellectual development can go wrong; both are associated with aspects of Romola's earliest life; and both are linked with classical learning. Yet, we have also seen that

[17] Eliot, *Romola*, 109; 102 – 117.

neither figure presents a truly positive or complete picture of that classical knowledge: Tito, having mastered Sinon's language but discarded his martial ethic, remains "the Greek" in name only; and Bardi, whose likeness to Trojan Priam only underscores the eventual costs of his intellectual feebleness, retains a deep knowledge of the Romans' language while discarding a disciplined sense of judgment. At once knowledgeable of classical antiquity and morally blind to its contents, Tito and Bardi manage to be both too classical and not classical enough.

Understood as two points on the same narrative line whose arc describes the complete course of development that Romola's intellect travels from the beginning of the novel to its end, Romola's contact with Bardi and Tito thus describes two distinct but related moments in that development: the earliest and most naive years of her life; and her formative contact with Greek and Latin learning. The third point on this line, of course, is Savonarola. Aside from Romola, he is undoubtedly the novel's most important character and the figure from whom Romola inherits the ethical purpose that defines the most important terms of her intellectual development. Because Romola is a highly active figure whose most characteristic feature is her capacity to absorb and then reflect influence in terms of transformative change, the most helpful way to understand Romola's development relative to Savonarola is by chronologically examining several important points of contact between them.

We will examine three such moments, one from each of the novel's three books. The first comes from Book I. The essential background of the citation is as follows. Tito has successfully sold the garments and jewels, thereby finding some financial stability; he has advanced into Bardi's home and is now working regularly with him on his classical studies; Romola and Tito are known to be matched, but not yet officially betrothed; and Tito has begun to advance himself politically. By this time, however, the reader has also learned that, in order to possess the jewels

in the first place, Tito has abandoned his adopted father, Baldassare, whom he believes may have been abducted but for whom he cannot be bothered to search. Romola's brother, Dino, whose monastic name is Fra Luca, has recently come to Florence from Corinth in order to deliver a letter from Baldassare; Baldassare learns that Tito is in Florence when he sees a man wearing a distinctive ring, which was among the jewels that Tito sold, and asks him where he got it. Baldassare sends Dino/Luca as his emissary to Florence because, since he is a captive, he cannot come to Florence himself. We learn this from the simple contents of the letter Baldassare sends to Tito through Dino/Luca, which reads as follows: "I am sold for a slave. I think they are going to take me to Antioch. The gems alone will serve to ransom me."[18]

The point in the novel when the below citation occurs, then, comes between two critical meetings: Dino/Luca has delivered Baldassare's letter to Tito, but Tito and Dino/Luca have not yet had a chance to meet and discuss how Tito will respond. Dino/Luca admits during their meeting that he has not read the letter. But he also admits to having surmised that Tito's father is alive. He therefore naturally assumes that Tito will ransom him. However, Dino/Luca does not actually know Tito or the details of his life in Florence, as he has only just arrived from Cornith. He therefore does not know that Tito long ago decided not to search for his father, that he has already sold everything, and that he put the money gained from the sale out to interest. Tito's primary concern, expressed most vividly as a silent wish for Dino/Luca's death,[19] is therefore to keep Dino/Luca from communicating to Romola what he thinks Dino/Luca knows about his past. In the meantime, Dino/Luca, who happens to be very ill and near to death, has sent for Romola, for the purposes of relating an unknown message to her.[20] Before they meet, the reader does not

[18] Ibid., 113.
[19] Ibid., 129.
[20] Ibid., 75 – 151.

know what the subject of their meeting will be, but the contents of the letter seem the likeliest subject. When Romola goes to meet him, the following exchange takes place:

> Romola's mind recoiled strongly from listening to this vision. Her indignation had subsided, but it was only because she had felt the distance between her brother and herself widening. But while Fra Luca was speaking, the figure of another monk had entered, and again stood on the other side of the bed, with the cowl drawn over his head. / 'Kneel, my daughter, for the Angel of Death is present, and waits while the message of heaven is delivered: bend thy pride before it is bent for thee by a yoke of iron,' said a strong rich voice, startlingly in contrast with Fra Luca's. / The tone was not that of imperious command, but of quiet self-possession and assurance of the right, blended with benignity. Romola, vibrating to the sound, looked round at the figure on the opposite side of the bed. His face was hardly discernible under the shadow of the cowl, and her eyes fell at once on his hands, which were folded across his breast and lay in relief on the edge of his black mantle. They had a marked physiognomy which enforced the influence of the voice: they were very beautiful and almost of transparent delicacy. Romola's disposition to rebel against command, doubly active in the presence of monks, whom she had been taught to despise, would have fixed itself on any repulsive detail as a point of support. But the face was hidden, and the hands seemed to have an appeal in them against all hardness. The next moment the right-hand took the crucifix to relieve the fatigued grasp of Fra Luca, and the left touched his lips with a wet sponge which lay near. In the act of bending, the cowl was pushed back, and the features of the monk had the full light of the tapers on them. They were very marked features, such as lend themselves to popular

> description. There was the high arched nose, the prominent under-lip, the coronet of thick dark hair above the brow, all seeming to tell of energy and passion; there were the blue-grey eyes, shining mildly under auburn eyelashes, seeming, like the hands, to tell of acute sensitiveness. Romola felt certain they were the features of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, the Prior of San Marco, whom she had chiefly thought of as more offensive than other monks, because he was more noisy. Her rebellion was rising against the first impression, which had almost forced her to bend her knees. / 'Kneel, my daughter,' the penetrating voice said again, 'the pride of the body is a barrier against the gifts that purify the soul.' / He was looking at her with mild fixedness while he spoke, and again she felt that subtle mysterious influence of a personality by which it has been given to some rare men to move their fellows. / Slowly Romola fell to her knees, and in the very act a tremor came over her; in the renunciation of her proud erectness, her mental attitude seemed changed, and she found herself in a new state of passiveness.[21]

Fra/Luca's stated purpose for meeting Romola is to relay the contents of a different "vision," which he believes is a message sent by God to himself warning Romola not to marry Tito. But the "vision" referred to in the first sentence of this citation corresponds to a defense that Dino/Luca has just advanced concerning his relationship with their father, wherein Dino/Luca reiterates the nature and importance of his decision to leave the family and follow his religious passion. As we can see from the lines that follow, however, Romola remains unmoved by his exhortations. Apparently recognizing this, and perhaps also wishing to return the conversation to the more important "vision," the "figure" "on the other side of the bed," who Romola soon learns is Savonarola, commandingly returns the conversation to his intended purpose.

[21] Ibid., 156 – 157.

Before Dino/Luca can achieve that purpose, however, the narrator spends approximately 250 words detailing one of the novel's most compact representations of intellectual change. As we have argued and this citation only further demonstrates, by the time Romola first meets Savonarola, her oppositional stance toward religion had been firmly set by what and "whom" "she had been taught" by her father "to despise." And though the lengthy pleas of her own brother have not moved her from this position, she is instantly affected by Savonarola's presence, which contradicts everything she "has been taught" about monks and the religion they represent: what she had expected to be "noisy" turns out to be "quiet self-possession"; what she had expected to be "imperious" turns out to be "assurance of the right"; what she had expected to be "repulsive" turns out to be "beautiful," and so on. Moreover, Romola becomes so overwhelmed by the "subtle mysterious influence of a personality by which it has been given to some rare men to move their fellows" that, despite her "rising" "rebellion" against his "first impression" upon her, she finds herself deciding to fall "to her knees" and obey him.

The larger picture of Romola's character that these images of her first contact with Savonarola describe links to those of her first contact with Tito: though the first glimpse of her Dionysian future suitor seem "like a wreath of spring, dropped into Romola's young but wintry life" and cause "a pink flush" involuntarily to "overspread her face," her "imperious will" forces the flash of feeling to "vanish once again," returning her to the "queenly" attitude of "proud self-dependence and determination" that normally characterizes "the attitude of her mind towards strangers."[22] Aside from indicating yet another contrasting distinction between the values underwriting Tito's and Savonarola's respective characterizations, these competing images together mark a vital difference in the register of Romola's responses to each man: both figures elicit instinctive reactions from Romola; and both of these responses entail physical and

[22] Ibid., 59 – 60.

intellectual components; but only Savonarola's "rare" "power" "to move" his "fellows" is capable of inspiring Romola to any recognizably *moral action*. Romola's brief but intensely meaningful first contact with Savonarola plants the seed for the "changed" "mental attitude" that will become necessary to Romola's own project of moral and social restoration.

A significant part of the necessity for that transformative action stems from Romola's decision to marry Tito despite Dino/Luca's warning, which, as he says it will do, brings Romola great trouble indeed: shortly after they marry, Tito deceives Romola and violates her father's wishes by dividing and selling Bardi's valuable collection of antiquities, causing a rupture in their marriage that only widens as Tito's behavior worsens. But another part is provided by Savonarola himself, whose inspired but misguided moral crusade brings him to flagrant ruin, imperils the safety of Florence, and, eventually, costs Romola's godfather his life. Indeed, though Eliot's repetitious reiteration of Savonarola's moral value makes it obvious that his sometimes outrageous and destructive actions deserve to be scrutinized with an eye toward giving him the benefit of the doubt, the straitening psychological circumstances of Romola's life spent married to a blossoming scoundrel in an unstable and increasingly hostile Florence find little succor in Savonarola's religious severity. Romola loses her father and brother on the cusp of her marriage to Tito, and the circumstances of Romola's adulthood subsequent to a poor decision – like those of Gwendolyn Harleth, Hetty Sorel, and Tertius Lydgate – bring her only disappointment and painfully increasing suffering.

Romola twice attempts to escape her suffering. The first attempt, which we will examine shortly, comes near the middle of the novel's second book and more fully demonstrates exactly what kind of transformative effect will be demanded of her. The first half of the novel's second book differs from the rest of the novel principally in terms of its temporal scope; excluding the

Epilogue, the novel from beginning to end spans six years, but the first half of the second book details a period of only thirty-seven days in 1494, from November 17th to December 24th.[23] During this period, as is typical in Eliot's always carefully constructed novels, all of the individual strands of the novel's plot come together and the novel reaches its dramatic apex. Two basic thematic aspects of this dramatic synthesis will be important for us to keep in mind as we go forward: that the intricate political crisis entangling Florence, France, Rome, and the rest of the Italian states reaches its political apotheosis during this period, when the French King, Charles VIII, along with his troops and emissaries, enters Florence after Piero de Medici, following the destabilizing death of his father, Lorenzo de Medici, has been stripped of power and exiled from the city; and that, during the same period, Romola finally learns that Tito has sold her father's library without consulting her.

Said differently, the most important feature of the novel's two dominant plot-themes – the larger Florentine political crisis and Romola's more local domestic crisis – are their effects, which serve unmistakably to intertwine the fates of Tito and Romola with the political fates of Savonarola, Florence, and the whole of Italy. Eliot signals the importance of this widening focus early in Book II, when, again borrowing Hegel's organic metaphor, Eliot reminds her reader that, "Since that Easter" eighteen months ago when Tito and Romola were married, "a great change had come over the prospects of Florence; and as in the tree that bears a myriad of blossoms, each single bud with its fruit is dependent on the primary circulation of the sap, so the fortunes of Tito and Romola were dependent on certain grand political and social conditions which made an epoch in the history of Italy."[24]

[23] Ibid., 205, 365.
[24] Ibid., 205.

Over the course of Book II, Tito and Romola's "dependent" "fortunes" become increasingly divided. Which is to say that, as the plot's increasingly complicated themes progress, Tito and Romola move increasingly away from a shared "fortune" toward individual fortunes of his and her own. Eliot constructs two important images whose significance concretely reflects the meaning of that fractured dependence. A brief analysis of these images will lead us to Romola's second influential moment of contact with Savonarola. The first is a suit of chain mail that Tito purchases in the novel's twenty-sixth chapter. Entitled, "The Garment of Fear," that chapter carefully delineates the state of Tito's mind on the evening of November 17th, 1494. This is the day that Charles VIII and his entourage enter Florence. But this is also the day when several other crucial events occur, all of which become the subject of Tito's reflection as that chapter develops: Charles VIII's arrival in Florence is greeted with a noticeable hostility by the Florentine people, signaling that any uncontested transition of power will be unlikely; many well-born supporters of the exiled Piero de Medici, who still largely control the Florentine levers of power, remain loyal to Medici rule, in opposition to the occupying French; Tito, who before Piero de Medici's exile had aligned himself with the traditional structures of power and influence afforded him by his relationship to Romola's and her family's connections to the Medicis, immediately begins to curry favor with Charles VIII's emissaries, thus beginning in earnest the process of disloyal double-dealing that will only become more intricate as the novel's political drama unfolds; Savonarola's populist campaign against civic and Church corruption places him in support of the usurping French King and thus in opposition to both the Medicis and Rome, an opposition which he punctuates that very day by delivering a prophetically impassioned public sermon (one of his now famous Lenten Discourses) in favor of Charles VIII's occupation; and Tito has been publicly confronted on the steps of the Duomo by his adoptive father, Baldassare,

whom French soldiers have brought to Florence as their captive but who evades their grasp in a public tussle. When confronted, Tito denies him, calling him a "madman" and pushing him away, thus provoking Baldassare's outrage and obsession with vengeance. The events of the day preceding the evening on which Tito purchases his "garment of fear" thus place him squarely at the intersection of political calculation, social instability, and personal danger.[25]

As the title of the chapter indicates, however, the significance of the garment has more to do with the fractured condition of the conscience motivating the garment's purchase than it does with the prudent nature of Tito's decision to protect himself by wearing it: given his personal circumstances, self-protection seems a sensible course of action. And, even if he had not denied his father and thereby invited a potentially lethal physical threat, such a scheme of self-protection seems more than justified in a city teetering on the edge of civil unrest. But only Romola's prodding makes clear the moral stakes of Tito's decision. While embracing him upon his return from the portentous day just described, Romola discovers, "after laying her arm on his chest while she put his hair back caressingly," that he wears "chain-armour" under his tunic. Following Tito's obfuscating defense of his practical need to wear it and just after the narrator informs the reader that "Romola was unable to repel the idea of a degrading fear in Tito," Romola expresses her dislike of the garment, claiming that it will make Tito "wretched." She then exclaims that, "This fear – this heavy armour. I can't help shuddering as I feel it under my arm. I could fancy it a story of enchantment – that some malignant fiend had changed your sensitive human skin into a hard shell. It seems so unlike my bright, light-hearted Tito!"[26]

As she predicts, Tito's "enchantment" by the "malignant fiend" of fear does indeed end up "degrading" him: on November 26th, just nine days later, shortly after making a public speech

[25] Ibid., 205 – 235.
[26] Ibid., 242 – 252.

that dramatically furthers his political rise, Tito finalizes the private sale of Bardi's library. The following day, he informs Romola of his actions, provoking an acrimonious scene of marital strife that begins with a manipulative and dishonest preemptive justification from Tito and ends as Romola "bursts into sobs" in outrage and shame after accusing Tito of being a "faithless man" who violated her and her father's "trust." As the intrigue of Book II progresses, Tito advances politically and financially, but only because he becomes increasingly beholden to the "degrading" and "malignant" influence that his motivation to purchase the morally signifying "garment of fear" comes to represent.

Subsequent to the shock received by Tito's revelation, Romola, too, undergoes a moral transformation, albeit one quite different to Tito's and represented by a different kind of garment: seizing an opportunity provided by Tito's diplomatic departure for Siena, she decides to flee Florence on foot, disguised in the "grey serge dress of a sister belonging to the third order of St Francis."[27] Her servant, Maso, accompanies her at a short distance with provisions and mules. Just beyond the city, she encounters Savonarola, also on foot, who recognizes and addresses her, claiming that he carries "a command from God to stop" her from leaving Florence. As Romola presses him to defend this assertion, Savonarola condemns her for falsely donning the garments of a religious order with "no religious purpose,"[28] at which point the two argue until Romola, feeling defeated but also moved by Savonarola's message, exclaims that Savonarola "cannot know the reasons which compel me to go. None can know them but myself. None can judge for me. I have been driven by great sorrow. I am resolved to go."[29]

Beginning with Savonarola's response to those statements, their subsequent conversation – their longest continuous exchange of language – proceeds as follows:

[27] Ibid., 318.
[28] Ibid., 355.
[29] Ibid., 357.

> "I know enough, my daughter: my mind has been so far illuminated concerning you, that I know enough. You are not happy in your married life; but I am not a confessor, and I seek to know nothing that should be reserved for the seal of confession . . . You were warned by a message from heaven, delivered in my presence – you were warned before marriage, when you might still have lawfully chosen to be free from the marriage-bond. But you chose the bond; and in willfully breaking it – I speak to you as a pagan, if the holy mystery of matrimony is not sacred to you – you are breaking a pledge . . . This, then, is the wisdom you have gained by scorning the mysteries of the Church? – not to see the bare duty of integrity, where the Church would have taught you to see, not integrity only, but religion."[30]

Romola, "shaken by the suggestion in the Frate's words of a possible affinity between her own conduct and Tito's," then admits that she "should never have quitted Florence . . . as long as there was any hope of my fulfilling a duty to my father there." Savonarola responds:

> "And do you own no tie but that of a child to her father in the flesh? Your life has been spent in blindness, my daughter. You have lived with those who sit on a hill aloof, and look down on the life of their fellow-men . . . There is hunger and misery in our streets, yet you say, 'I care not; I have my own sorrows; I will go away, if peradventure I can ease them.' The servants of God are struggling after a law of justice, peace, and charity, that the hundred thousand citizens among whom you were born may be governed

[30] Ibid.

> righteously; but you think no more of this than if you were a bird, that may spread its wings and fly whither it will in search of food to its liking."[31]

Again moved, but still struggling, Romola defends herself. Savonarola answers by "pointing to the cord round Romola's neck" and asking her to "draw it forth, and look at it." Seeing at the end of the cord the crucifix that Dino/Luca gave to Romola when Savonarola last saw her, he says:

> "There . . . is the image of a Supreme Offering, made by Supreme Love, because the need of man was great . . . Conform your life to that image . . . make your sorrow an offering; and when the fire of divine charity burns within you, and you behold the need of your fellow-men by the light of that flame, you will not call your offering great . . . See, then, my daughter, how you are below the life of the believer who worships that image of the Supreme Offering, and feels the glow of a common life with the lost multitude for whom that offering was made, and beholds the history of the world as the history of a great redemption in which he is himself a fellow-worker, in his own place and among his own people! . . . every bond of your life is a debt: the right lies in the payment of that debt; it can lie nowhere else."[32]

The most important function of the foregoing exchange is obviously ethical in two ways: Savonarola's unremitting attack on the logic of her decision to flee ultimately reduces to the claim that, if she were to leave, she would be in dereliction of her civic and marital duties. In keeping with what one might expect from the kind of man who would press such a claim under

[31] Ibid., 358.
[32] Ibid., 359 – 360.

these circumstances, Savonarola's argument does not address Romola's assertion that her married life is miserable, but rather emphasizes her decision to enter the "bond" to begin with, even after she was "warned" not to do so "by a message from heaven, delivered in" Savonarola's "presence." Having entered the marriage in full knowledge of its potentially disastrous consequences, Savonarola argues that Romola is responsible for honoring her "pledge" to Tito even if she is "not happy."

As any good teacher must, however, Savonarola frames his argument in terms of what his student already knows, coupling the obvious failure of Romola's anti-Christian ethics with the suggestion, so abhorrent to Romola, that her careless position toward the marital bond hypocritically resembles the overstated flaws in Tito's moral character that she is attempting to flee. Less obviously, but in many ways more importantly, Savonarola then deepens his argument – and strengthens Romola's implied moral likeness to Tito – by claiming that, marital duties notwithstanding, Romola's decision to flee during Florence's time of greatest need amounts to a repudiation of the conditions of possibility for her own existence. Again impugning the anti-Church classicism inherited from her father, this time with an accusation of an "aloof" "blindness" that begins to look hereditary, Savonarola charges Romola with caring only for her own "sorrows" and the self-involved search to ameliorate them, all the while giving little thought to either the "hunger and misery" in the streets of Florence or the search for "a law of justice, peace, and charity, that the hundred thousand citizens among whom" Romola was "born" have undertaken in order to find a way to "be governed righteously."

Still more pointedly, Savonarola then meets Romola's continued struggle with a direct comparison to Christ's passion that sharply punctuates the ethical purpose of their chance encounter. Savonarola's function as a representative of Christian values is as fraught as one

would expect of an Italian Renaissance figure whose open rebellion against simony and papal corruption gave flower to a brief, if deeply flawed, experiment in republican government that terminated less than two decades before Martin Luther penned his *Ninety-five Theses*. Nevertheless, the simplest interpretation of his function within this melodramatic scene is in many ways clearly the right one: as we shall see, one of Savonarola's principal roles within the novel is to transmit Christian values from himself to Romola.[33] Eliot emphasizes this aspect of

[33] Scholarly opinions differ on exactly what kind of Christian content Savonarola represents. But nearly everyone agrees that he stands for some aspect of Christianity and that one of his chief roles within the novel is to transmit to Romola the Christian value that corresponds to that aspect. Felicia Bonaparte, in language that echoes the Victorians themselves, writes that, "It is, in a sense, Savonarola's tragedy that he is a Protestant without knowing it, that he is a figure in an age of transition through whom history changes its course." Writing, in 1997, on Eliot's *Romola* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Agnes of Sorrento*, which were serialized consecutively in *Cornhill Magazine* and both feature Savonarola as a central character, Robin Sheets claims that, "Although both novelists adhered to the historiographical tradition which saw Savonarola as a great precursor to the Protestant Reformation – an 'Italian Luther,' as Stowe calls him, neither made Savonarola the central figure of her novel." Sheets does not cite any source to justify this claim, leaving the "historiographical tradition" to which she refers somewhat difficult to engage with. Some years earlier, however, in 1984, two respected Victorian scholars, Mary Wilson Carpenter and George Landow, had already convincingly established a clear trajectory for the interpretation of Savonarola's significance that Sheets assumes without sourcing. Citing an article printed in *The Times* on November 9, 1859, Carpenter and Landow delineate three "schools of apocalyptic exposition" contemporary to Eliot: the "Praeterist School," the "Futurist School," and "the continuous school." According to Carpenter and Landow, the latter group, which held that "the Apocalypse is a continuous prospective history of Christendom" and supposedly "considered Savonarola" to be an "'early Protestant,'" exhibits the exegetical method that most closely resembles the narrative structure of Eliot's *Romola*. Jerome Bump, on the other hand, delineates, in 1975, a more aesthetic trajectory that links Savonarola's "union of religion and art" to the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. He argues that, "Despite his barely pre-Raphaelite dates (1452 – 1498) Savonarola was perceived by the nineteenth century as one of those 'great men' who 'plainly resisted their age,' as [Gerard Manley] Hopkins put it, a representative of the Middle Ages protesting against the Renaissance." Bump also notes that Hopkins, too, equates Savonarola to Luther. More recently, Miriam Elizabeth Burstein has convincingly demonstrated that Savonarola's reception in Victorian England was surprisingly rich and far from univocal, with some, like Stowe, claiming him as a proto-Protestant; some claiming him as a heretical Catholic; others claiming him as a heroic reforming Catholic; and still others claiming him as a religious prefiguration of the Italian *Risorgimento*, which momentous event was, for many English of the Victorian period, rife with millennially inflected Protestant overtones, as Carpenter and Landow have also noted.

We have chosen to refer to Savonarola's influence on Romola as simply "Christian" because, though Savonarola does appear to have been understood by many Victorians as a proto-Protestant figure, we agree with Burstein that Eliot's representation of him, which, as we shall demonstrate in the following pages, alludes to Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* much more clearly than it does to Luther, remains far too ambivalent to be assimilated as tidily to a specific religious (or historical) affiliation as Bonaparte, Sheets, or Carpenter and Landow would have it. See Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross*, 226; Sheets, "History and Romance: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Agnes of Sorrento* and George Eliot's

Romola's relation to Savonarola throughout the novel. But the implication finally becomes fully explicit here as Savonarola demands, after asking Romola to burnish Dino/Luca's crucifix from beneath her now spiritually supercharged habit, that Romola "conform" her "life to" the "image" of the cross and "make" her "sorrow an offering." He then claims that, if she were to do so, she would arrive at the point where, "the fire of divine charity" having begun to burn "within" her as a result of her embrace of Christian values, she will "behold the need of" her "fellow-men by the light of that flame" of "charity" and understand that what is being asked of her will "not," in the doing, be as "great" or as difficult as she now believes. Moreover, before the end of their encounter, Eliot's narrator overtly indicates that Romola has internalized the message: after another lengthy argumentative exchange, the narrator remarks that, "Romola's mind was still torn by conflict. She foresaw that she should obey Savonarola and go back; his words had come to her as if they were an interpretation of that revulsion from self-satisfied ease, and of that new fellowship with suffering, which had already been awakened in her."[34] The message is clear: Savonarola is the agent of an ameliorative, socially-focused Christianity, charged with encouraging Romola to follow the Christian admonitions to humility, duty, and a "common life," so that she might join her fellows in their search for an improved society governed by "justice, peace, and charity."

Romola," *Clio* 26, no. 3 (1997): 323 – 324; Wilson and Landow, "Ambiguous revelations: the Apocalypse and Victorian literature," in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance thought and literature: patterns, antecedents, and repercussions*, ed. C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 299 – 322; Bump, "Art and Religion: Hopkins and Savonarola," *Thought* 50, no. 197 (June 1975): 134 – 135; and Burstein, *Victorian Reformations: Historical Fiction and Religious Controversy, 1820 – 1900* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 203 – 217. For helpful insights into the sometimes-counterintuitive links among Eliot, Savonarola, and the *Risorgimento*, see also Andrew Thompson, *George Eliot and Italy: Literary, Cultural and Political Influences from Dante to the Risorgimento* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 6 – 28; 68 – 83.

[34] Eliot, *Romola*, 361.

The passage also indicates, however, that Savonarola's transmission of value becomes much more ambitious than a simple religious conversion and instead involves "the history of the world" when understood "as the history of a great redemption." We will focus on two main aspects of Savonarola's converting effect on Romola as it relates to that "history of the world." The first links Savonarola to Bardi and Tito. We have already shown that the latter figures stand in for the principles of classical Greece and Rome at the same time as they fall far short of those principles' more stringent ethical demands. Insofar as Savonarola explicitly delivers to Romola a moral requirement that he intends – in his own words – should supplement the moral failure engendered by her influential contact with these two figures' "pagan" values, his effect on Romola can be understood as a correcting historical completion of the Greek and Roman ethics that neither Tito nor Bardi actually reflects: Savonarola sees through Bardi and Tito's moral shortcomings, mocking their reflection in Romola's urge to flee from her marital duty and civic responsibility, implying as he does so that Romola does not even comprehend the comparatively weak moral message of the classical doctrine that she clings to in ignorant spite of the much more demanding tenets of Christianity. Savonarola thus identifies for Romola the ethical limitations of the classical system of values bequeathed to her by her father and offers her in its place a morally improved alternative that compels her *consciously to participate* in a world-historical process of social transformation – or, according to Savonarola, "the history of a great redemption" – that he has charged her to effect in the present day.

More than that, however, as several scholars have noted, Romola's ethical transformation also signals the transition from the pre-modern to modern historical "epochs."[35] A thorough

[35] Referring to Romola's flight by sea from Florence near the end of the novel, which the narrator refers to as Romola's "baptism," Felicia Bonaparte writes that "Romola's baptism in this sense is the historical birth of modern man . . . the history of mankind." We obviously disagree with Bonaparte's description of Comte's role in Eliot's representation of Romola's intellectual development, as does Burnstein. But

understanding of this dialectical transformation is essential to our knowledge of this novel as well as Eliot's relation to Hegel. We will therefore examine it closely in terms of both function and content, in that order. When discussing the mechanics of Hegel's representations of intellectual development in "The Spirit of Christianity" essay and the *Phenomenology*, we described *Aufheben*, or sublation, as a moment in the Hegelian dialectic. We saw over the course of our argument that the motivating operation of *Aufheben* animated both texts and could be typified according to two related traits: its double meaning, often described as the simultaneous cancellation and preservation, or affirmation and negation, of irreconcilable claims; and its subsuming function, which describes a change in knowledge or intellectual capacity that negates while leaving perceptibly intact the content of the changing concept. One telling example that we have returned to repeatedly throughout this dissertation is Hegel's representation of Jesus in the "Spirit" essay: both consummately Jewish and anti-Jewish, Jesus must at once cancel and preserve the terms of his own conceptual identity, which at once straddles and constructs the historicized boundary between the pre-Christian and Christian epochs.

Relative to what we have already discussed, Romola's intellectual link to *Aufheben*'s double meaning and subsuming function is relatively clear and unproblematic: having been introduced to Christian principles whose meanings correct without discarding classical doctrines that Romola once believed to be complete, Romola's transformed intellect now navigates an identity somewhere between the classical one that she inherits and the Christian one towards which Savonarola impels her to move. Savonarola's message thus demands that she retain the essential aspects of classical principles – which he goes so far as to translate for her by speaking

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Bonaparte is certainly right to emphasize Romola as a figure for modernity. David Carroll makes a similar point when he writes that, "the events" of Eliot's "Florence are presented as the birth of modern civilization." For more, see Bonaparte, *The Triptych and the Cross*, 237 – 239; Carroll, "George Eliot Martyrologist," in *From Author to Text: Re-Reading George Eliot's Romola*, ed. Caroline Levine and Mark W. Turner (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 109; and Burnstein, *Victorian Reformations*, 261.

to her "as a pagan" – while subsuming them to Christian doctrines that ask her to discard her previous understanding of those same classical principles. Her embrace of Savonarola's ameliorating mission thus indicates that her inherited conceptualization of classical ideas subtends the newly Christianized world-view that supplants it, just as Christ's identity as man and savior retains the inherited reality of Jesus's Jewish identity.

More complex than Hegel's representation of Jesus, however, which deals with only the single historical transition from Judaism to Christianity, Eliot's representation of the "epoch"-al moment of change in Romola's intellectual development involves a historically mediated transition whose functions involve a four-figure dialectical synthesis of intellectual content. We already know three of these figures: the classical Greek and Roman influence represented most clearly by Tito and Bardi; the ameliorating Christian influence represented predominantly by Savonarola; and Romola, the figure at the epicenter of their influence, whose intellect performs the transformative synthesis of content. The fourth figure, of course, is Renaissance Florence, which binds all four together and provides the specific conditions of possibility for that dialectical synthesis. Those conditions are extensive and, as we have learned, comprise an outsize proportion of the novel's content. We saw in our discussion of the Proem that Eliot's narrator characterized Florence in 1492 in part by its dynamism and fecundity – or what Eliot calls the "unrest of a new growth" – within which the competing influences that comprise the possible content of the Spirit's state of mind exist. These influences were represented most graphically in the Proem by the Spirit's louche religious commitments, easily corruptible ethical standards, and superstitious intellectual marriage of an unreformed Catholicism to an equally un-rigorous classicism. The Spirit's intellect thus represents a microcosm of many of the novel's important themes; quintessential man "of his age," the Spirit communicates an essentialized

version of Florence's historical content at the time of the Italian Renaissance. To the extent that Romola's intellect, too, exists in the same rigorously binding historical milieu that the Spirit's occupies, she also counts as a person "of his age." Romola differs from him sharply, however, in two major respects: because the historical events through which she lives produce a transformative change to her intellect; and because that change represents the negating dialectical curative for the moral failures of the "epoch" that she, the Spirit, and their peers together comprise. Eliot demonstrates the practical effects of these differences in the Epilogue, which contains our third and final point of contact between Savonarola and Romola, during which Eliot's four-figure dialectic comes fully into view.

The Epilogue begins in May of 1509, exactly eleven years after Savonarola is finally tortured, hanged, and burned, following his trial by "Papal Commissaries" who demanded his death. In short, all of his prophecies have failed to manifest, guaranteeing his spectacular downfall: the French have abandoned the attempted takeover of Florence; the promised political transformation of the city by Christo-populist *fiat* has failed; plague has wreaked havoc in the city; and, having run afoul of every political power remaining in Italy, Savonarola is blamed for Florence's condition and finally sentenced to death.[36] Tito is also dead: Baldassare finally achieves his revenge and drowns him, causing his own death in the process. Their bodies are found poetically entangled on the banks of the Arno, into which Tito had leapt in order to escape a mob. His need to escape the mob in the first place is due, of course, to his treachery, which can be summarized simply by stating that he overplays his hand and eventually ends up with all parties against him; the mob was hunting specifically for Tito.[37] In between the moment captured in the Epilogue and the last time we last saw her, Romola has become completely focused on

[36] Eliot, *Romola*, 576 – 579.
[37] Ibid., 543 – 549.

Florence and its people's needs; jarred out of her aloofness by Savonarola, Romola now spends most of her days tending to the poor, who are beset by the consequences of the political crisis and a recently arrived plague. She has also discovered that Tito was unfaithful to her with a simple but good-hearted peasant woman named Tessa and was secretly supporting her and their two children. Romola has decided to commit her life to their care, using for their maintenance money left to her at Tito's death.

The Epilogue joins this oddly composed family in a moment of highly charged domestic interest. As is so often the case with Eliot's writing, which, as the Proem does to such great effect, tends to approach significant moments with a widely angled narrative lens that draws the reader's attention to the terms of significance only as its perspective moves nearer to the actions and events that compose the story's drama, this final scene opens with a panoptic view of the room on the "Borgo Pinti" where Romola and her adopted family now live. Tellingly, that perspective begins with the view of an "archway opening into a narrow inner room, hardly more than a recess, where the light fell from above on a small altar covered with fair white linen." Narrowing further, the narrator continues:

> Over the altar was a picture, discernible at the distance where the little party sat only as the small full-length portrait of a Dominican Brother. For it was shaded from the light above by overhanging branches and wreaths of flowers, and the fresh tapers below it were unlit. But it seemed that the decoration of the altar and its recess was not complete. For part of the floor was strewn with a confusion of flowers and green boughs, and among them sat a delicate blue-eyed girl of thirteen, tossing her long light-brown hair out

of her eyes, as she made selections for the wreaths she was weaving, or looked up at her mother's work in the same kind, and told her how to do it with a little air of instruction.[38]

We soon learn that Romola and her family are gathered for the purpose of completing the construction of this altar. Romola, whose "eager life had left" noticeable "marks upon her," now owns "a placidity" that "never belonged" to her "in youth," for it "is but once that we can know our worst sorrows, and Romola had known them while life was new." As the mature Romola sits with "her eyes" "fixed absently on the distant mountains," Lillo, Tito's son by Tessa, "got close to her and lodged his chin on her knee."[39] Their exchange continues as follows:

> "What is it, Lillo?" said Romola . . . "Mamma Romola, what am I to be?" he said . . . "What should you like to be, Lillo? You might be a scholar. My father was a scholar, you know, and taught me a great deal. That is the reason why I can teach you." / "Yes," said Lillo" . . . "But he is old and blind in the picture. Did he get a great deal of glory?" / "Not much, Lillo. The world was not very kind to him, and he saw meaner men than himself put into higher places, because they could flatter and say what was false. And then his dear son thought it right to leave him and become a monk; and after that, my father, being blind and lonely, felt unable to do the things that would have made his learning of greater use to men, so that he might still have lived in his works after he was in his grave." / "I should not like that sort of life," said Lillo. "I should like to be something that would make me a great man, and very happy besides – something that would not hinder me from having a good deal of pleasure." / "That is not easy, my Lillo. It is only a poor sort

[38] Ibid., 580.
[39] Ibid., 580 – 581.

of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures . . . There are so many things wrong and difficult in the world, that no man can be great – he can hardly keep himself from wickedness – unless he gives up thinking much about pleasure or rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful. My father had the greatness that belongs to integrity; he chose poverty and obscurity rather than falsehood. And there was Fra Girolamo – you know why I keep tomorrow sacred: *he* had the greatness which belongs to a life spent in struggling against powerful wrong, and in trying to raise men to the highest deeds they are capable of." . . . She had taken Lillo's cheeks between her hands, and his young eyes were meeting hers. "There was a man to whom I was very near . . . who made almost every one fond of him, for he was young, and clever, and beautiful, and his manners to all were gentle and kind. I believe, when I first knew him, he never thought of anything cruel or base. But because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared for nothing else so much as his own safety, he came at last to commit some of the basest deeds – such as make men infamous. He denied his father, and left him to misery; he betrayed every trust that was reposed in him, that he might keep himself safe and get rich and prosperous. Yet calamity overtook him." / Again Romola paused. Her voice was unsteady, and Lillo was looking up at her with awed wonder. / "Another time, my Lillo – I will tell you another time. See, there are our old Piero di Cosimo and Nello coming up the Borgo Pinti, bringing us their flowers. Let us go and wave our hands to them, that they may know we see them." / "How queer old Piero is!" said Lillo, as they stood at the corner of the loggia, watching the advancing figures. "He abuses you for dressing the altar, and thinking so much of Fra Girolamo, and yet he brings you the flowers." / "Never mind," said Romola. "There are many good

people who did not love Fra Girolamo. Perhaps I should never have learned to love him if he had not helped me when I was in great need."[40]

It is in many ways remarkable – and certainly not accidental – that, after having expended so much energy developing the novel's extensive historical apparatus, Eliot should conclude *Romola* so modestly; like the equally ambitious but more fully realized *Middlemarch*, which concludes by reminding us that Dorothea's "effect" "on those around her was incalculably diffusive" and that "the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs,"[41] *Romola*'s closing sentences remind us that, for Eliot, the most meaningful change is above all local and, for that reason, always partly "unhistoric."

For Eliot, in other words, historical persons and events, such as Savonarola and the Reform Bill, as well as the smaller events that compose the matter of a fictional character's representation of life, do not become positively meaningful until they are locally interpreted – or, more to the point, until they are made "unhistoric" through an act of subjective interpretation. And this is certainly true here. Bardi's practical life as a "scholar" becomes both meaningful and practical in the present because it both allows Romola to "teach" Lillo and provides her the opportunity to enfold her father's obvious failures of judgment into a glossy "greatness" that she defines by his disposition to choose "poverty and obscurity rather than falsehood." Savonarola's formerly misguided zeal for political and religious reform now translates to a "greatness which belongs to a life spent in struggling against powerful wrong, and in trying to raise men to the

[40] Ibid., 582 – 583.
[41] George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 785.

highest deeds they are capable of." And Tito's "infamous" crimes, which were in fact reflected in and enabled by the reciprocating actions of many Florentine citizens, reduces to a set of base "deeds" that Tito commits "because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared for nothing else so much as his own safety."

It goes without saying that the better part of Romola's simplifying optimism here stems from the intellectual needs of her audience. For just as Savonarola was once forced to speak to Romola "as a pagan" in order to communicate the essence of Christian principles to her, so must Romola speak in simplifying tones to communicate her interpretation of that message to Tito's young child. But, as we have seen numerous times, Romola's version of moral action is always more effective than its nearest relation: emphatically unlike Savonarola, Romola's transmission of Savonarola's positively inflected ethical essence to Lillo reflects just the kind of nuanced and multifaceted interpretive flexibility that he lacks.

The prominently featured image through which Eliot conveys the fuller meaning of this multifaceted interpretive skill is the "altar" that the family has come together to construct on this eleventh anniversary of Savonarola's death, an object that, like the destabilizing rhetorical questions of the Proem, marks the historical contents of Romola's synthesizing ethical dexterity. Those historical contents are marked here in terms of two internally opposed conceptual dyads whose intertwined function provides another concrete example of sublation at work in Eliot's novel: presence/continuity and absence/discontinuity. We will begin with the latter. Over the course of our discussion of the Proem and the novel, we have had the occasion to witness a number of concrete images whose presence in the text performed figurative functions: the dome of Santa Croce, which indicated the Christian religion as well as the fact of historical change; the hypothetical painting of Sinon deceiving Priam, which ironically indicated Tito's moral character

and foreshadowed his relationship with Bardi; the triptych of Bacchus and Ariadne, which represented in Greek mythological terms Tito's betrothal to Romola; the suit of chain mail, or "garment of fear," which represented the degenerative effect of Tito's choices on his own conscience; the religious habit that Romola first wears falsely but eventually grows into as she embraces the spirit of Savonarola's reforming message; and the crucifix that Dino/Luca presents to Romola and that plays such an important visual role in Savonarola's conversion of Romola. In direct opposition to the visual richness of these symbols, the "altar" that Romola erects to commemorate the anniversary of Savonarola's death is decidedly absent of any social, religious, or mythological features that are not also personal: stripped to just "fair white linen," the "picture" "of a Dominican Brother," "fresh tapers," "green boughs," and the arrangement of "flowers" that Piero is on his way to contribute, the altar lacks any concretely religious object – such as a cross, Bible, or icon – that might clearly demarcate a specifically limited tradition or concept to which a religious content or meaning could be assigned or subsumed.

As Ully Knoepflmacher long ago noted, one obvious reason for this absence of distinctly recognizable religious imagery is Eliot's endorsement of Feuerbach's *The Spirit of Christianity* (*Das Wesen des Christentums*), which, among other things, advocates for the elimination of religious dogma from Christian practice.[42] Feuerbach's effect on Eliot's creative and intellectual

[42] In short, Feuerbach claims that the true essence of religion is not God, but humanity, whose awareness of God is nothing more than self-consciousness projected onto a non-existent object, which is in itself merely humanity's misapprehension of the basic form of its own self-consciousness. As a result, Feuerbach's idea of religion is firmly secured within material human existence and draws its practical meaning from humankind's behavior toward itself, as opposed to theological abstractions and dogmas. The love that theology claims humanity to receive from God is thus merely a clerical perversion of the love humanity freely and naturally feels, or ought to feel, for itself. When the Christian religion is stripped of these and other constraints, humankind will be free to express the true essence (*Wesen*) of religion, which is humanism, or love of humanity by and for itself.

lives was particularly significant,[43] and Knopflmacher has shown the outsize role his thinking plays in many of Eliot's novels,[44] often as a tool through which she constructs characters, plot structures, and values.[45] And it seems obvious that at least some of the intellectually essentializing and visually reductive language of this final altar scene reflects a textually visible intellectual continuity between Feuerbach and Eliot, his first and still most important English translator: Romola has stripped Christianity of Savonarola's dogmatic fanaticism as well as the oppressive images through which he communicated it, retaining only the universal human essence that she transmits to Lillo. Likewise with the moral failures that characterize her father and Tito's not-quite-classical classicism – all of this is visually absent from the minimized altar, indicating a morally inflected intellectual disjunction between Romola and her principal influences that echoes Feuerbach's essentializing admonishment to secularization.

For the purposes of comprehending the full course and content of Romola's intellectual development, however, the continuity that Romola creates with this disjunction is much more important than the disjunction itself. That continuity comes together around the novel's two important concluding images; namely, Lillo and the flowers that Romola will place on the altar. That Lillo, who proves his parenting by exclaiming in words nearly identical to his father's that he should like to do "something" with his life "that would not hinder" him "from having a good deal of pleasure," represents the most immediate object of Romola's ongoing moral restoration of Florence is made clear by the admittedly heavy-handed content of the cited passage. To the extent that Romola corrects Lillo's moral shortcomings by carefully delineating the essentialized

[43] Eliot's translation of the book was a watershed in her thought. Aside from having famously stated, "With the ideas of Feuerbach I everywhere agree," she validates this enthusiasm by proudly noting in a letter to Sara Hennel that the book is considered, "*the* book of the age" in Germany. Gordon Haight, ed., *The George Eliot Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954 – 1978), 2:154, 138.
[44] Knoepflmacher, "George Eliot," 306 – 309.
[45] Knoepflmacher, *Religious Humanism*, 24 – 148.

moral content of Tito, Bardi, and, most importantly, Savonarola's respective messages, he represents the novel's first and most important indirect recipient of that content, which Romola, like Savonarola, delivers verbally. By synthesizing and then translating that verbal content to the illegitimate child born of the woman her morally bankrupt husband was having an affair with, Romola performs the self-abnegating and socially ameliorating action that Savonarola's message demands. She thereby both proves her allegiance to the spirit of his principles and visibly works to ensure those principles' continued life.

That continued life is reflected in turn by the "flowers" with which Romola adorns the "altar" she builds in his memory. Like many meaningful rituals, the adornment of Savonarola's altar takes place annually: Romola "keep[s] to-morrow sacred" every year, in honor of "the greatness" of Savonarola's "life spent in struggling against powerful wrong, and in trying to raise men to the highest deeds they are capable of." In the act of annually adorning the religiously denuded altar with an organic object whose life cycles repeat unceasingly, Romola indicates that the struggle of "trying to raise men to the highest deeds they are capable of," which she enacts through Lillo's moral education, comports with a duty that, like a flower, must be tended to perennially. Organic kin to the "tree" of "myriad" "blossoms" that finds itself "dependent on the primary circulation of the sap" for its sustenance, which image Eliot employs early in Book II to describe the intertwined "fortunes of Tito and Romola" on the cusp of Florence's historic political change, the "flowers" that adorn Savonarola's altar remind Eliot's reader that an interconnected social life relies above all on the regular maintenance of its "dependent" parts. Having stripped Christianity and classicism of their respectively disfiguring limitations, Romola is now free to address herself to the improving mission that her sublated internalization of the Christian message demands: tending to the ethical "flower" of Florentine youth.

When viewed alongside the rest of the novel's characters, then, Lillo represents a fourth and final stage in Romola's intellectual development that fully clarifies the historical functions of that development. As we have seen, Romola's progress begins with Bardi and Tito's classical Greek and Latin influences, moves next to Savonarola's Christianizing influence, and terminates in Romola's sublating act of values transmission. In order to enable that transition, Romola's intellect has undergone a profound transformation that contains within it a compressed history of Western civilization as well as an idealized social ethic derived from the synthesized content of the classical and Christian cultures whose modes of knowledge compose that history. Moreover, Eliot's placement of the novel within this tumultuous moment in the history of Renaissance Italy obviously provides the necessary conditions of possibility for just such a transformation: Savonarola's transformative conflict with Florence and Rome finds its mirror within the confines of Romola's mind, which absorbs the specific ethical crisis that only this historical moment could engender and translates its contents into the future by means of a child in the full "flower" of his youth, Romola's intellectual change finally becoming an allegory for the historical transformation that Eliot's representation of the Renaissance "epoch" depicts.

In other words, like the self-conscious, cognizing entity of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the change that Romola's intellect undergoes over the course of her development is organically tied to the social world within which her consciousness develops, so that the two effectively undergo mutually interdependent, parallel processes of development. It follows from this that, to the extent that Florence's historical transition and Romola's intellectual transformation are constitutively linked through historical necessity and narrative function, the representation of intellectual development that *Romola* represents blurs any absolute distinction between interior and exterior spheres; Romola's intellectual change and Florence's historical change depend on

each other for both function and meaning, and one would be hard pressed to tell them apart. Again like Hegel, especially the Hegel of the *Phenomenology*, the representation of intellectual development that Eliot presents in *Romola* is both historically mediated and socially constructed.

Indeed, the representations of intellectual development presented in *Romola* and the *Phenomenology* are deeply similar in a number of ways: both present a developing consciousness that becomes aware of its own intellectual development as a category of content; both demonstrate that the intellectual development of an individual intellect is the effortful product of an historically mediated social development that relies upon changes in the objects of thought (i.e. Romola's changing conceptualization of Christianity) for its intellectual content; both show that the intellectual structure of the cognizing subject can thus never be made completely distinct from the historically mediated social world within and because of which that structure becomes meaningful; and both establish that, consequently, significant changes in the conceptual structure of the subject's historically and socially mediated objects of thought will imply corresponding changes in the subject who apprehends those objects. So that larger historical and social changes become self-consciously visible to the subject as changes to the subject herself. In all of these ways, the representations of intellectual development presented in the *Phenomenology* and the body of *Romola* are quite plainly analogous.

The two representations, however, are not identical. For in some ways, the importance of their differences overshadows their structural similarities, however deep and compelling those similarities might be. For our limited purposes, just two of those differences are important, both of which we already touched upon in relation to the Proem. The first relates to the formal difference between the two texts: by virtue of the fact that *Romola* is a piece of literature predicated upon the artifice of its own status as a work of fiction, one cannot say that it

constructs a set of claims in the sense that Hegel's expressly argumentative, non-fiction philosophical texts aim to do. And though many authors have tried (and will unfortunately continue to try) to ascribe this or that argument to any one of Eliot's novels by pointing to superficial similarities that that novel might share with this or that (even tangentially) related book, the figural richness of literary language itself suggests that such attempts are likely to remain unconvincing at best, as Paul de Man long ago demonstrated.

And secondly, though Romola's subtly rendered and carefully constructed consciousness significantly complicates the representation of intellectual development presented in the Proem, Romola does not attain to the level of self-consciousness that the developing consciousness of Hegel's *Phenomenology* achieves. The relevant nature of this difference can be summarized by observing that, with one obvious exception, though the novel *Romola* obviously marshals tremendous intellectual resources for the purposes of demonstrating the development of a historically and socially mediated consciousness, the character Romola never demonstrates that she understands these mediating concepts *as* historical or social. And this is quite different from the consciousness of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, whose attainment to the "standpoint of Science" requires not only a constitutive advance in philosophical and historical knowledge but also an explicated awareness of that philosophical and historical knowledge *as such*.

The one conceptual exception, of course, is the ethical component of Romola's intellectual transformation, which she certainly comprehends in at least partially self-conscious terms *as* an explicitly ethical change. Romola understands that this change entails a corresponding transformation in the social structure of her formerly held belief systems, a knowledge reflected to the reader through the altar, whose symbolically denuded status demonstrates that belief in visual terms. And, to the extent that Florence's historical and ethical

changes must work together to provide the conditions of possibility for the essentializing ethical transformation that Romola effects, that transformation is certainly self-conscious at the level of the novel's text; the intricately represented historical setting would lack all meaning if that were not the case. Nevertheless, relative to the *Phenomenology*, Eliot's representation of Romola's intellectual development, despite the explicitly self-conscious nature of her ethical transformation and its implicit "dependence" upon historical and political content for its socially constructed wholeness, Romola's intellectual development still does not attain what the *Phenomenology* achieves: much of Romola's own transformation remains opaque to her, notwithstanding her exceptional moral clarity.

Relative to the provisional taxonomy of intellectual development sketched over the course of the preceding chapters, then, the representation of intellectual development presented in *Romola* therefore deserves to be placed above those of the "Spirit of Christianity" essay and the Proem but below that of the *Phenomenology*. This fifth form of intellectual development, which we will call "self-aware intellectual development," is essentially literary in nature: necessarily fictional, *Romola* does not make argumentative philosophical claims in the sense that either of Hegel's texts does. "Self-aware" intellectual development is further distinguished from "self-conscious" intellectual development by the failure of its subject to achieve full self-consciousness of the individual facets of its own knowledge in the "scientific" sense that Hegel articulates. Conversely, "self-aware" intellectual development differs most clearly from the "conscious" form of intellectual development presented in the Proem by the presence of Romola, whose fully personified characterization provides a durable literary vehicle through which the historically and socially mediated ethical development only alluded to in the Proem's intellectual hierarchy can be personified and represented narratively: *Romola* holds a mirror to the Proem's

implicit claims and expresses them in the form of a figure whose intellectual physiognomy represents them by means of a fully realized character that fundamentally alters herself and society over time.

When developing our provisional taxonomy of intellectual development, we stated that, based on our view of the *Phenomenology* and the "self-conscious" representation of intellectual development that it advances, the hypothetical Hegelian novel would demonstrate four main traits. It would: privilege sociality over individuality, so that the protagonist of a Hegelian novel would in some respects become indistinguishable from the social world in which she exists; feature progressive development as a principal *purpose* by means of a central character whose intellectual development would overcome a "common" course of consciousness and attain to a higher level of development similar to what Hegel describes as "scientific" in the *Phenomenology*; represent a central character whose intellectual development would find itself reflected in a corresponding change to the world around her; and remain throughout both explicitly and implicitly historical, advancing parallel historical change as the medium through which these traits would make themselves visible, thereby implying history as the condition of possibility for all other awareness. In light of the foregoing analysis, it has become clear that, though *Romola* privileges ethics over all other contents and fails to achieve the strictly "scientific" standpoint that the historical dialectic of Hegel's *Phenomenology* requires, the courses of intellectual development that each book constructs describe similarities of content and structure deep enough that those courses of development can be considered roughly analogous. Within the confines of this standard, Eliot's *Romola* perhaps comes as close as any novel could to being a truly Hegelian novel.

Just as importantly, the same analysis has made it equally clear that both books far exceed the level of complexity described by the "naive" form of intellectual development that the word *Bildungsroman* has come to indicate. Far more than banal narratives of development or novels of education, *Romola* and the *Phenomenology* in fact represent carefully delineated processes of intellectual development whose most important contribution to the representation of meaningful human intellectual change obtains in their mutual insistence that such development can never be as simple as "naive" usages of the word *Bildungsroman* have for so long implied.

Conclusion

This dissertation began, in the Introduction, with a philological analysis of the term *Bildungsroman* and its accompanying critical language. This analysis led us to argue that the now ubiquitous critical distinction between the so-called *Bildungsroman* and the novel has been, since Karl Morgenstern first appropriated Friedrich von Blanckenburg's critical language in order to make it, largely chimerical: none of the principal qualities that Blanckenburg's *Versuch über den Roman* establishes and Morgenstern's lectures on the so-called *Bildungsroman* recapitulates is unique to German fiction or literary criticism. And the most important among those qualities – such as the special focus on interiors; the privileging of a "real *Life*" literary aesthetic; the emphasis on progressive intellectual development; the didactic concentration on education; and the primary concern with the moral and social function of the novel – either find themselves clearly articulated in the earlier eighteenth-century works of Shaftesbury, Craig, Fielding, and others, or can be un-controversially traced to German and English exchanges of language from even earlier periods. The much-vaunted generic distinction between the novel and the *Bildungsroman* amounts to a distinction without a difference.

This observation in turn led, in Chapter I, to a detailed analysis of several significant critical works – M.H. Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism* and Walter Kaufmann's *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* and *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* – whose influential authors draw far-reaching analogies equating the process of intellectual development depicted in Hegel's *Phenomenology* to that supposedly represented in the so-called *Bildungsroman.* These alternately "romantic" or ideological analogies, though derived from divergent critical methods and yoked to different conclusions, employ a common group of over-simplifying functions that controvert the method of interpretation through which Hegel constructs the theories of knowledge and

consciousness that underwrite the *Phenomenology*. The false equation upon which these re-appropriating analogies rely, we argued, effectively reduces Hegel's philosophy to an un-rigorous critical meta-narrative that both misrepresents the conceptualization of intellectual development that Hegel advances in the *Phenomenology* and obscures the significance of its relation to competing representations of that same concept. The over-determined critical analogy linking Hegel's *Phenomenology* to the *Bildungsroman* profoundly distorts the methods through which Hegel builds the rigorously structured processes of intellectual development that sit at the center of so many of his writings.

This conclusion necessitated a closer examination of those writings, which occupied the remaining chapters of Section I. Taken together, these analyses, which were narrowly focused on determining the precise conceptual representations of intellectual development within "The Spirit of Christianity" essay and the *Phenomenology*, revealed several instructive facts: that Hegel's representation of intellectual development grows more formally self-conscious as his philosophy matures; that therefore intellectual development cannot be said to be represented monolithically throughout Hegel's philosophical corpus; and that, while the concerns that underwrite Hegel's various representations of intellectual development certainly overlap with those of Morgenstern, Blanckenburg, Shaftesbury, Fielding, Craig, and the many critics of the *Bildungsroman* writing in their wake, both the "Spirit of Christianity" essay and the *Phenomenology* represent intellectual development more intricately and intentionally than any of those authors does.

The essential difference between Hegel's representations of intellectual development and that presented by Morgenstern and his peers comes together around Hegel's concern with the developing subject's relation to the conceptual processes of history. This is not to say that the former authors do not share Hegel's general interest in history. For we have seen that competing

conceptualizations of that concept play an important role in all of the works we have analyzed here, particularly those written before the generic distinctions between the novel and other genres of literature assume their modern outlines. Hegel's attempts to reconcile the developing subject's consciousness with the historical processes that it conceives, however, obviously exceed the less rigorous historical concerns of Blanckenburg, Morgenstern, and their peers, a fact made clear when we demonstrated, by way of the comparative provisional taxonomy of representations of intellectual development, that Hegel's intensified concern with history manifests in what we called "complex" and "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development.

These "complex" and "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development, we argued, substantively differ from the "naive" representation advanced by Morgenstern and his peers and followers. "Naive" intellectual development never seriously problematizes the developing subject's relation to history and thus makes little or no distinction between an ordinary course of intellectual maturation and an historically mediated or formally self-conscious one, whereas the "complex" representation of intellectual development advanced in the "Spirit of Christianity" essay complicates the developing subject's relation to history by causally implicating the Spirit's intellectual change in religious, philosophical, and historical outcomes that reach far beyond the realm of the individual subject and gesture toward world-transformative significance. And the *Phenomenology* only raises these stakes even higher: "self-conscious" intellectual development synthesizes the "naive" and "complex" conceptualizations of intellectual development into a sublated form that retains "naive" intellectual development as a foundational stratum that runs concurrent to the passage of time and functions conceptually as the common course of history that Hegel's "scientific" consciousness must sublate before it can attain to the "standpoint of Science." When the developing subject arrives at this standpoint, we

argued, that subject becomes "self-conscious": the subject has now made its own intellectual development present to itself as a category of content; now recognizes that this development is the product of an historically mediated social development; has now learned that its own intellectual structure therefore cannot be made fully distinct from the historically mediated social world that partially constructs that structure; and now recognizes that, consequently, historical changes must be reflected as changes within the consciousness of the subject herself. Hegel's historically and socially interdependent representations of intellectual development thus depart significantly from conceptualizations of the *Bildungsroman* as it has been conventionally understood since Morgenstern's neologism. The word *Bildungsroman* therefore cannot be used to describe the "Spirit of Christianity" essay, the *Phenomenology*, or any of Hegel's other writings without stripping them of their philosophical rigor – without, in other words, completely misrepresenting their most essential content.

We next turned our attention, in the first chapter of Section II, to another pair of authors, György Lukács and Franco Moretti, whose works continue to echo Morgenstern et al., and have played a major role in constructing contemporary critical understandings of the *Bildungsroman* and the role it plays within contemporary approaches to the history and theory of the European novel. Our analysis showed that the widely adopted thesis that Moretti advances in *The Way of the World*, which liberally enlists Lukács's authoritative *Theory* as it places a vaguely conceived *Bildungsroman* at the center of a "symbolic shift" that affects all of European "culture," profoundly misrepresents Lukács's thinking as well as the English novel. We argued that close analysis of this misrepresentation, which oversimplifies Lukács's reasoning and attributes to him a misleading use of language, in turn relies upon a still deeper misconstruction of Hegel's dialectical reasoning that echoes the similarly oversimplifying reasoning that Abrams and

Kaufmann employ. In the final analysis, however, we determined that Lukács's exceptional theory, despite his expansive historical and cultural claims, neither treats the representation of intellectual development seriously nor accounts for the English novel adequately: like Moretti, Abrams, and Kaufmann, Lukács conflates the representation of intellectual development in general with the *Bildungsroman* and its cognate concepts; and, like Moretti but to a much greater extent, Lukács advances a generic theory that seeks to account for all of European literary history but largely ignores the place of the English novel within that history. Lukács's theory is significantly more rigorous and sensitive than Moretti's re-appropriation suggests, but both authors ultimately rely on analogies and oversimplifications that variously disfigure their objects of theoretical consideration.

That such an influential and widely cited pair of theses should necessitate a closer analysis of the representation of intellectual development as it is presented in the English novel should go without saying, a task to which we turned our attention in Chapters V and VI, where we closely analyzed George Eliot's novel *Romola* and the Proem that precedes it. We argued that, like Hegel's, Eliot's representation of intellectual development is neither stable nor analogous to "naive" *Bildungsroman* discourse, but rather manifests itself differently throughout her work. And though Eliot and Hegel share a thoroughgoing concern with the developing subject's relation to history and represent subjects whose intellectual development is socially mediated and socially constructed, Eliot's "conscious" and "self-aware" representations of intellectual development remain distinct and cannot be assimilated to Hegel's "complex" or "self-conscious" representations of the same.

The important differences between Eliot's representations of intellectual development and those of Hegel, we argued, are several, all of which are deeply tied to their similarities. As

was the case with Hegel, Eliot's "conscious" and "self-aware" representations of intellectual development differ widely from "naive" ones: where the latter avoid problematizing the subject's relation to history and therefore make no distinction between an ordinary course of intellectual maturation and an historically mediated or formally self-conscious one, the former two present conceptualizations of intellectual development wherein the developing subject and the historically mediated social world within which that subject develops cannot effectively be told apart, just as Hegel does. This leads naturally to a subject whose thought structures are constitutively linked to the objects of the social world through which knowledge becomes available to that subject and whose consciousness, as a result, perceptibly reflects changes in the conceptual structure of those social objects. And here again, we argued that Eliot maintains a deep similarity to Hegel: all of these traits find their respective corollaries in Hegel's "complex" and "self-conscious" representations of intellectual development.

Eliot and Hegel part, however, in three significant ways. The first, we demonstrated, is generic: both *Romola* and the Proem are fictional prose works whose figural contents cannot be assimilated to the argumentative, non-fiction philosophical texts that Hegel's "Spirit of Christianity" essay and *Phenomenology* represent. And this generic difference presents, in our view, an insoluble distinction that renders the representations of intellectual development presented within these two groups of texts constitutively different. Secondly, neither Romola the character nor the narratorial "we" of the Proem attains to historical self-consciousness in the sense that Hegel describes in the *Phenomenology*: Hegel is clear that the developing subject at the center of the *Phenomenology* attains to the "standpoint of Science" only after that subject has gained the requisite philosophical and historical knowledge *and* explicitly recognized that philosophical and historical knowledge self-consciously. Romola and the narratorial "we"

certainly maintain essential intellectual differences from their peers, but neither figure attains to fully self-conscious historical knowledge in this Hegelian sense.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Eliot's works privilege the representation of ethics to an extent that far surpasses either the "Spirit" essay or the *Phenomenology*. This is not to say that Hegel does not spend a great deal of time on ethics or that the subject is in any way less than primary for him; the *Herr*/*Knecht* dialectic, his comments on Sophocles's *Antigone*, and Jesus's world-transformative ethical realization are just three examples of Hegelian ethical arguments found within these two texts whose reverberations continue to be felt today. But Eliot's texts are far less ecumenical, philosophically speaking, than Hegel's are, and she misses no opportunity to elevate ethical development over other kinds of development in such a way that openly defies Hegel's phenomenological holism. And *Romola*, though it attempts to represent a thoroughly researched and therefore putatively realistic picture of late fifteenth-century Florence, privileges ethics to a degree that preempts even the novel's famously unwieldy historical apparatus, resulting in a representation of Renaissance Florence that, for some, feels suspiciously Victorian and therefore historically false.

In a critical sense, this attribute describes an aesthetic failure, insofar as it violates conventional expectations for supposedly realist, supposedly historical novels. A more productive way of understanding this trait, however, would perhaps be to understand it as the most obvious marker for an alternative mode of realism, one that privileges ethical and other metaphysical constructions over material or visual ones, as opposed to a flaw within a representational paradigm that seeks above all to represent the material world with microscopically visual rigor.

There is no doubt that Eliot's novels fit quite squarely – perhaps peerlessly – within a European literary tradition concerned with what Shaftesbury so succinctly calls a "real *Life*" aesthetic, Blanckenburg and other theorists name an essential element of the emerging novel genre, and Morgenstern places near the center of his co-opting theory of the *Bildungsroman*. And, as we passingly mentioned while discussing *Romola*'s Proem, much of the reason for the outsize attention critics have paid to Eliot's role in the realist literary phenomenon comes from her own writings, most especially the seventeenth chapter of *Adam Bede*, which at first appears to endorse the idea that a finely detailed, written representation of the closely observed natural world constitutes the most verisimilitudinous representation of human experience.

In that chapter, Eliot's narrator, who claims to have "gathered" details for the novel directly "from Adam Bede, to whom I talked of these matters in his old age," employs a number of analogies that lend apparent credence to this oft-attributed claim, stating in the chapter's second paragraph that he has exerted the "strongest effort" "to avoid any" "arbitrary picture" and offer instead "a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind . . . as if I were in the witness-box, narrating my experience on oath." Later in the same chapter, the narrator pushes this rhetoric even further, famously enlisting the supposed ethos of "Dutch paintings" in support of the essay's representational priorities, when he claims to be "content to tell" the novel's "simple story without trying to make things seem better than they were; dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity, which, in spite of one's best efforts, there is reason to dread. Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. Examine your words well, and you will find that even when you have no motive to be false, it is a very hard thing to say the exact truth, even

about your own immediate feelings – much harder than to say something fine about them which is not the exact truth."[1]

We do not have time here to recapitulate either the long and contentious critical history of European literary realism or the place of either George Eliot or *Adam Bede*'s seventeenth chapter within it. We can, however, extract two helpful insights from Eliot's language here that will help us better to understand one aspect of the relation between the representation of reality and the representation of intellectual development in Eliot's writing. In keeping with a great many popular English authors since at least the seventeenth century, Eliot's earnest, supposedly eyewitness narrator, who stands ready to swear "on oath" as to the veracity of his own "real *Life*" reportage, represents little more than a Victorian version of a longstanding and widely popular literary conceit preceded by numerous prominent examples. Like the Spirit of *Romola*'s Proem or the narrator of Behn's *Oroonoko*, *Adam Bede*'s narrator lends testimonial authority to the novel's representations of life in the novel's given historical setting. And the narrator's views, though they may comport with those of authors Eliot is known to have read of with ideas Eliot supposedly expresses elsewhere in her own writings, should neither be attributed to Eliot herself nor treated as her representational mantra, lest the content of Eliot's intellect and art be reduced to the functions of the literary devices in their employ.

Secondly, it should already be obvious from this brief citation, when read alongside what we established in Chapters V and VI, that a faithful rendering of the observed natural world is not, in itself, of much particular value for Eliot, but rather only attains to its extraordinary importance because it contributes to the construction of a larger concept or principle – in this case, what the narrator of *Adam Bede* calls "truth." The "faithful" representation of reality, in other words, is only significant for the narrator of *Adam Bede* because accurate representation is

[1] George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 159 – 160.

essential to the concept of truth that the language of that representation constructs. And this commitment is only made clearer later in the chapter, when the narrator claims, while arguing in favor of depicting "common coarse people, who have no picturesque sentimental wretchedness," that, "It is so needful we should remember their existence, else we may happen to leave them quite out of our religion and philosophy and frame lofty theories which only fit a world of extremes." For the narrator of *Adam Bede*, the "faithful" representation of the "common" world of experience is itself only a vehicle for the "faithful" construction of "our religion and philosophy."[2]

This conclusion is important for us here in a number ways. First, because it makes absolutely clear that the representation of reality and the representation of intellectual development are, at least for the George Eliot of *Adam Bede* and *Romola*, underwritten by a similar set of representational priorities. These priorities, which assume a critical rather than a merely descriptive posture toward representation in general, privilege the active production of religious and ethical concepts over all other representational concerns. Yet, it is also clear that, within this critical novelistic paradigm, all concepts are not created equal: as Romola's historically mediated ethical development implies and *Adam Bede*'s morally inflected aesthetic admonishment makes fully explicit, the construction of ethical concepts describes the highest of George Eliot's representational priorities, and neither the observed natural world nor the subject's intellectual development within it would exist in anything like their present forms if that were not the case.

It follows logically from this that, for Eliot, the natural world itself does not represent anything like a conceptually neutral, ideologically secular, or scientifically objective descriptive

[2] Ibid., 158.

landscape, a conclusion that comports well with a once influential view of Victorian England that, though in some ways outdated, still retains much to recommend it. In 1903, Louis Cazamian made the still remarkable claim that "the social novel *implanted* realism in English thinking" and "showed a direct way *from experience to principle*" (emphases added).[3] Since then, critics such as Michael McKeon and Ian Watt, in keeping with anthropologically and psychologically oriented conceptualizations of knowledge much more common to the scientifically-minded twentieth century, have shifted the focus of critical discourse on realism many years backwards, to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively. And while much of what these and subsequent critics have argued is true, Cazamian's now largely forgotten thesis, which correctly links the ethically motivated impulse underwriting the emergence of the social novel with the aesthetic advent of literary realism, expresses, in our view, the truest and most concise understanding of the representational stakes of realist fiction for George Eliot and many other Victorians. For Eliot and her ideological peers, the representation of ethics and the representation of reality describe a single representational event whose constitutive elements are inseparable, and the world of human experience that they together describe continually subordinates empirical and experiential knowledge to religious and ethical concerns.

As was the case with Hegel, then, Eliot's externalized social world does not describe a physically or materially stable "real" world against which an immaterial interior opposite can be simply juxtaposed. Quite the contrary: as Kierkegaard long ago noted, Hegel's historical philosophy effectively dissolves the possibility for any clear distinction between a subject's interior and exterior, making impossible any such naive conceptualization of reality. And what is true of Hegel is, in this case, even truer of Eliot: it is no accident that, in a period and nation in which historically unprecedented economic and social change becomes an almost obsessional

[3] Cazamian, *Social Novel*, 6.

literary focus, Eliot holds a central position among her peers as both the subtlest of moralists and the most committed of realists. And, as Cazamian's pithy assertion so elegantly captures, these commitments are in fact one in the same, tandem effects of Eliot's philosophical precision and moral clarity. For Eliot's representation of reality, in *Romola* and beyond, is only moral because it can be real, and it is real only because it can first be moral.

If it is true, however, as we have been arguing, that, because Eliot's representation of reality is underwritten by the same representational priorities as the representation of intellectual development with which it is constitutively interwoven, it follows that, for Eliot, the representation of intellectual development, too, must attain to its claim on reality through the ethical or moral concepts that it progressively constructs. Indeed, the second section of this dissertation was largely spent establishing and justifying the basis for this very claim. Relative to what we have established regarding the critical problem of the *Bildungsroman* with which we began this dissertation, however, the claim takes on new meaning, which we will now briefly examine in two parts.

Eliot's representations of intellectual development are indeed tied to the representation of reality in such a way that they overlap with both Hegel's phenomenological philosophy and the ethically focused social realism of her English Victorian peers. However, it should by now be obvious that the "conscious" and "self-aware" representations of intellectual development that Eliot offers in *Romola* and the Proem are distinct and therefore limited to the specific works that we have analyzed here. These representations of intellectual development share a number of commitments, but remain, as we have demonstrated at length in Chapters V and VI, nonetheless distinct from each other. It follows from this fact that, though future scholarship may find that the representations of intellectual development presented in such novels as *Adam Bede* and

Middlemarch present that concept analogously to either the "conscious" or "self-aware" forms, such a determination would have to come as a result of a close, rhetorical analysis of each of those works. And the same is undoubtedly true for Hegel: "complex" and "self-conscious" intellectual development share much in common with each other, as well as with Eliot's "conscious" and "self-aware" forms, but it does not follow from this that the rest of Hegel's works or the works of his contemporaries should necessarily contain the same representation of intellectual development. Apparently similar works, such as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* or Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, for example, would therefore have to be analyzed closely and compared rigorously to Hegel's works on an individual basis in order to determine whether and how the respective representations of intellectual development presented within them are, indeed, truly analogous. And for both Eliot and Hegel, such a task would have to amount to something much more formally and rhetorically significant than merely demonstrating what books each of them read, relaying what may or may not have been happening in their respective nations or personal lives, mining yet again the contents of their many letters, or un-rigorously applying still another obfuscating critical analogy (other than the hackneyed *Bildungsroman*) to their respective intellectual creations.

Moreover, we hope that we have convincingly demonstrated that the same truth applies for authors other than Eliot and Hegel. The perhaps unmatched application of the *Bildungsroman* analogy to works of such obviously different period, language, genre, and internal construction obviously communicates the central importance that the representation of intellectual development holds within the current and historical academies. And we have demonstrated at length that this concern both long predates Morgenstern's co-opting neologism (and its many subsequent reiterations) and finds itself reflected in some of the most significant and influential

texts in the English and German literary and theoretical canons. When the *Bildungsroman* analogy is finally stripped away from this history and set beside our findings in the foregoing chapters, what remains in its place appears to be a critical category – which we are calling intellectual development – whose existence has been hiding in plain sight. Beyond the five types that we have outlined here (naive, complex, self-conscious, conscious, and self-aware intellectual development), the critical delineation and extension of this category, whose multiform features and probably innumerable iterations have been concealed beneath the *Bildungsroman* illusion for far too long, will, if the ubiquity and flexibility of that analogy signify anything at all, likely occupy us for some time to come.

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