

materials to be collated, this definition of the genre is liable to be as speculative as those reached inductively from the works themselves. But inferring a generic conception from a work and inferring it from critical language are not comparable procedures: in the first case the inference is vertical or "paradigmatic"; one superimposes on the work the missing model or paradigm. In the second it is horizontal or "syntagmatic"; one pieces together, relates, supplies connectives. Instead of contriving an entire text, one has only (though this is no mean task) to restore the integrity of a text which has been passed on in fragments. The first procedure involves uncertain metaphorical leaps; the second, modest synecdochic shuffles. And because he operates on two different textual levels, the historical critic can always check his inferences against the works themselves, a safeguard which is unavailable to the inductivist.

v

The program of research that I have outlined will not bring us an inch closer to understanding the Novel. On the other hand, neither will it do away with the genre once and for all. It aims at a point somewhere between these two extremes. Its intention is to deflect the difficulties attendant upon theorizing about the Novel, while still making possible the generic criticism of novels. The genre critic, or at least this genre critic, is a peculiar creature. He wants to have his cake and eat it too. What I have tried to do is devise a stratagem which will allow him to do just that.

The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations and Lost Illusions

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If the Bildungsroman has been considered a primarily German genre, it has been for reasons that are extra-literary in nature. The Bildungsroman expresses, theorists starting with Wilhelm Dilthey have argued, the individualism and interest in self-cultivation valued by German culture.¹ In contrast, as Thomas Mann points out in a 1923 lecture, the public and political orientation of Western Europe (France and England) has produced the panoramic novel of social criticism.² Such claims, true as they might be, obscure significant formal and thematic links

¹ "So sprechen diese Bildungsromane den Individualismus einer Kultur aus, die auf die Interessensphäre des Privatlebens eingeschränkt ist. Das Machtwirken des Staates in Beamtentum und Militärwesen stand in den deutschen Mittel- und Kleinstaaten dem jungen Geschlecht der Schriftsteller als eine fremde Gewalt gegenüber. Man entzückte und berauschte sich an den Entdeckungen der Dichter in der Welt des Individuums und seiner Selbstbildung." *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, 14th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965), p. 272. See also *Das Leben Schliermachers*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: W. de Gruyter und Co., 1922), I, 317. See also Fritz Martini, "Der Bildungsroman. Zur Geschichte des Wortes und der Theorie," *Dvjs*, 35 (1961), 44-63.

² "The finest characteristic of the typical German, the best-known and also the most flattering to his self-esteem, is his inwardness. It is no accident that it was the Germans who gave to the world the intellectually stimulating and very humane literary form which we call the novel of personal cultivation and development. Western Europe has its novel of social criticism, to which the Germans regard this other type as their own special counterpart; it is at the same time an autobiography, a confession. The inwardness, the culture ('Bildung') of a German implies introspectiveness; an individualistic cultural conscience; consideration for the careful tending, the shaping, deepening and perfecting of one's own personality or, in religious terms, for the salvation and justification of one's own life; subjectivism in the things of the mind. . . ." Quoted in W. H. Bruford, *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. vii.

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among such important novels as Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme*, Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* and *Illusions Perdues*, Austen's *Emma*, Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, Dickens' *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*, as well as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Stifter's *Der Nachsommer*, Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*, to name only a few important examples.

The aim of this paper is twofold: 1) To define a set of categories, thematic and formal, which make it possible to speak of the Bildungsroman as a European, rather than a purely German genre; 2) to describe this European genre in its major historical period, the nineteenth century, distinguishing its two main strands, the German, on the one hand, and the French and English, on the other. The definition of a historical genre of the novel of formation not only provides a useful critical tool for the reading of individual works, but also accounts for the different orientations of German, as opposed to French and English realistic fiction.

The characteristics of the Bildungsroman are derived from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and the eighteenth-century notion of *Bildung*, that of an inner-determined self-development based on a specific *Bildungsidee*: all aspects of the self are formed so as to fulfill one preconceived goal. Wilhelm Meister desires "mich selbst, ganz wie ich da bin, auszubilden" (bk. V, chap. 3). The term Bildungsroman, however, has come to be applied much more broadly and generally and some terminological clarification is needed. Although many critics still use the terms "Bildungsroman," "Entwicklungsroman," and "Erziehungsroman" interchangeably, some distinctions between them have become accepted:³ "Bildungsroman" is limited to those novels that actually illustrate Goethe's conception of *Bildung*; "Erziehungsroman," or novel of education, describes works that deal specifically with problems of schooling or education (Rousseau's *Emile*, for example), rather than more generally with growth and development; "Entwicklungsroman," an umbrella term more broadly applicable within the German tradition, includes those representatives of the genre that, though conscious of Goethe, depart from specific Goethean norms (*Der grüne Heinrich*, *Die Epigonen*, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, for example), and incorporates as well the more specific Bildungsromane (*Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, *Der*

³ Lothar Köhn, *Entwicklungs- und Bildungsroman. Ein Forschungsbericht* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1969), pp. 4-9.

Nachsommer). I maintain these distinctions in this essay, although some of the critics I refer to use "Bildungsroman" for the entire German genre.

Since it is a European and not a purely German genre that I wish to define here, I have chosen a neutral term, free of prior critical associations, to describe it. I prefer "novel of formation" to its many possible synonyms—novel of development, of education, apprenticeship, initiation, youth—because the "form" in formation conveys something of the "Bild" in Bildung. It is at the same time active and passive, suggesting both the process of education that is depicted in these novels and the product that takes shape (or form) as it grows out of itself and in response to external factors. Thus the Bildungs- and the Entwicklungsroman are the German sources and manifestations of an overarching European genre, the novel of formation, which will be defined below by thematic and formal features.⁴

⁴ Of those few studies that deal with English and French Bildungsromane none offers a rigorous generic definition of a European Bildungsroman genre, nor do they justify using the German term for a non-German tradition. Susanne Howe, *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), is primarily concerned with the influence of *Wilhelm Meister* on the English novel as is Hans Wagner, *Der englische Bildungsroman bis in der Zeit des ersten Weltkrieges* (Bern: Francke, 1951), who includes around 30 novels that deal with a significant development of their protagonist. François Jost, "La Tradition du Bildungsroman," *Comparative Literature*, 21 (1969), 97-115, provides very useful information about the derivation of the term. In his definition, however, he says on the one hand that "Les Allemands semblent tenir le monopole du Bildungsroman," (p. 102); on the other, he includes a number of English novels, as well as Stendhal's *Henri Brulard* in the genre. See also Jost's *Introduction to Comparative Literature* (Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1974). The most recent of these studies, Jerome H. Buckley's *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), offers a number of useful, though exclusively thematic, categories by way of a generic definition: childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation, a working philosophy. For Buckley the Bildungsroman, as he continues to call it even while deploring "the awkwardness of the German term when applied to English literature," is primarily a youth novel, the fictional account of the artist's own youth and therefore a form of autobiographical fiction. His individual interpretations of novels ranging from *David Copperfield* to *Sons and Lovers* and *Of Human Bondage* deal primarily with the relationship between the author's life and the protagonist's. The only German work Buckley mentions is, again, *Wilhelm Meister*. In his recent study on the German genre, *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978), Martin Swales suggests in an Excursus that the Bildungsroman could be viewed as a "taxonomic genre," yet his criteria for including such works as *The Ambassadors*, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, *The Summer before the Dark* are by no means clear and he still takes the German Bildungsroman as model.

"Genres are precisely those relaypoints by which the work assumes a relation with the universe of literature," says Tzvetan Todorov in *The Fantastic*.⁵ Distinguishing between historical genres, based on the observation of actual literary works, and theoretical genres, founded on deductions of an abstract and theoretical nature, Todorov demands that any generic definition oscillate between the description of literary phenomena and abstract theory. In proposing a working definition of the novel of formation genre, I intend neither to circumscribe one structure to which all novels must conform if they are to be called novels of formation, nor to reduce all novels of formation to their *degré zero*. Instead, I shall attempt to account for the preconceptions and expectations with which we read such a novel, what E. D. Hirsch has called "the preliminary generic conception of a text [which] is constitutive of everything that he [the reader] subsequently understands," the notion of the whole that makes every part understandable to the reader.⁶ Claudio Guillén⁷ defines genre as an invitation to form for a writer, yet one might add that a genre is established and perpetuated by the writer who is a reader. When Flaubert entitles his novel *L'Education sentimentale*, he forms certain expectations in his reader about the structure and theme of his novel, expectations which he proceeds to undermine in the course of the work. A generic definition of the novel of formation, like Guillén's definition of the picaresque, can do no more than to establish a central norm against which the individual work can be measured; it serves its purpose if it is flexible enough to account for national and historical change and narrow enough to remain critically useful.

After these brief methodological considerations, I propose the following generic model of the novel of formation:

1. The novel of formation is a novel that focuses on one central character, a *Figurenroman*.⁸ It is the story of a representative individual's *growth and development* within the context of a defined social order.⁹ Although

⁵ Trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve Univ., 1973), p. 8 *et passim*.

⁶ *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), p. 74 *et passim*.

⁷ See *Literature as System* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), especially the essays "Toward a Definition of the Picaresque," "On the Uses of Literary Genre," and "Genre and Counter-Genre."

⁸ Wolfgang Kayser—*Das sprachliche Kunstwerk* (Bern: Francke, 1951)—situates the "Figurenroman" between the "Ereignisroman" and the "Raumroman."

⁹ Georg Lukács defines the novel in general as a problematic individual's journey

he learns and grows, the protagonist is an essentially *passive* character, a plaything of circumstance. Unable to control his destiny actively, he is someone who gives shape to events without actually causing them.¹⁰ The hero's development is explored from various perspectives in the novel of formation which aims at the formation of a *total personality*, physical, emotional, intellectual and moral.

2. The novel of formation's concern is both *biographical* and *social*. Society is the novel's *antagonist* and is viewed as a school of life, a locus for experience. The spirit and values of the social order emerge through the fate of one representative individual. Consequently, the novel of formation does not represent a panorama of society and might thus be distinguished from the panoramic or social novel.¹¹

3. The novel of formation's plot is a version of the quest story;¹² it portrays a search for a meaningful existence within society, for the authentic values which will facilitate the unfolding of inner capacities. The *linear chronological plot*, according to Scholes and Kellogg, represents "a general movement to emphasize character in narrative," since it "allows for free and full character development without interference

toward himself in a contingent world. See *Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1971), pp. 77, 78. It is interesting to note that the German Entwicklungsroman tradition influences considerably Hegel's conception of the novel as well as Lukács' definition and typology. For a discussion of Lukács see David H. Miles, "Portrait of the Marxist as a Young Hegelian: Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*," *PMLA*, 94 (1979), 22-35. I use the term representative to indicate the relationship between the protagonist and the social group of which he or she is a part. Thus one could set up a typology of the novel of formation, based on the protagonist's participation in the social mainstream or his identity as an outsider. Twentieth-century manifestations of the genre seem to explore primarily the fate of outsiders: women, minority groups; artists (i.e. spiritual outsiders).

¹⁰ Goethe defines the novelistic hero in general as a passive figure. See the conversation about novel and drama in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, in *Werke*, 5th ed. (Hamburg: Wegner, 1962), VII, 307.

¹¹ See Hartmut Steinecke, *Romantheorie und Romankritik in Deutschland*, I (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975), for a useful summary of a distinction that marks German critical theory throughout the nineteenth century. The generic concepts contrasted with the Bildungsroman are the historical novel influenced by Scott, the "Zeitroman," the "Sozialroman," the "Roman des Nebeneinander" that Gutzkow opposes to the "Roman des Nacheinander," and the "Vielheitsroman" that Fontane opposes to the "Einheitsroman."

¹² See Thomas Mann's Princeton lecture, "Einführung in den *Zauberberg*," *Gesammelte Werke*, XI (Oldenburg: Fischer), 616, in which he calls the German Bildungsroman a heightened version of the quest romance and the adventure tale: "Und was ist denn wirklich der deutsche Bildungsroman, zu dessen Typ der *Wilhelm Meister* sowohl wie der *Zauberberg* gehören, anderes als die Sublimierung und Vergeistigung des Abenteuerromans?"

from the requirements of a tightly-knit plot."¹³ Growth is a *gradual process* consisting of a number of encounters between subjective needs and an unbending social order. Since it entails the consideration of various alternatives, the growth process necessitates errors and the pursuit of false leads.

4. It is the development of selfhood that is the primary concern of the novel of formation, the events that determine the life of the individual, rather than all the events of that life: this type of novel is a *story of apprenticeship* and not a full biography. *Its projected resolution is an accommodation to the existing society.* While each protagonist has the choice of accepting or rejecting this projected resolution, each novel ends with a precise stand on his part, with *his assessment of himself and his place in society.*

5. The narrative point of view and voice, whether it be the first or the third person, is characterized by *irony* toward the inexperienced protagonist, rather than nostalgia for youth. There is always a distance between the perspective of the narrator and that of the protagonist.

6. The novel's other characters fulfill several fixed functions: *educators* serve as mediators and interpreters between the two confronting forces of self and society; *companions* serve as reflectors on the protagonist, standing for alternative goals and achievements (for example Wilhelm Meister and Lothario, Emma Woodhouse and Jane Fairfax, Lucien de Rubempré and David Séchard); *lovers* provide the opportunity for the education of sentiment. (In the novel of formation these figures are subordinated to the protagonist in contrast to the social novel where a number of characters provide equal centers of interest.)

7. The novel of formation is conceived as a *didactic* novel, one which educates the reader by portraying the education of the protagonist.¹⁴

¹³ *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 236.

¹⁴ See Martini, "Der Bildungsroman," p. 57, for an account of this definition used by early theorists of the Bildungsroman. See also Susan Suleiman, "La structure d'apprentissage: *Bildungsroman* et roman à thèse," *Poétique*, 37 (1979), 24-42, for a structural study of apprenticeship novels which lead either to the acceptance or the rejection of a specific doctrine or "truth." Several theorists of the Bildungsroman, most recently François Jost and Jerome Buckley, have stressed its autobiographical aspect as its prime distinguishing feature. See Jost, p. 100: "Il n'est guère de Bildungsroman qui ne soit, en fait, une sorte d'autobiographie à peine simulée." Although there is undoubtedly some truth in this assertion, I have chosen to ignore the novel of formation's autobiographical element. As it involves biographical considerations external to the works themselves, it is not entirely germane to a generic definition. Moreover, we touch upon another related genre here, that

The definition of a central norm based on the observation of the actual novels' features can be supplemented by a distinction between the novel of formation and two related forms that also focus on a single protagonist, the picaresque novel and the confessional novel. Here again classifications must be made cautiously and with constant attention to the characteristics of the individual work. Although the three genres show separate and distinctive features, some works defy rigid classifications. Moreover, as will be seen later, with some works the novel of formation moves toward one or the other of these related forms.¹⁵

One might distinguish among the picaresque hero who is a social outcast, the *Bildungsheld* who is a representative member of society, and the protagonist of the confessional novel who is a spiritual outsider. Structurally, the picaresque novel is composed of a number of episodes loosely strung together; the novel of formation represents a progression of connected events leading up to a definite denouement; the confessional novel is a retrospective search for a pattern that is often not chronological. The picaresque novel stresses the material side of life and concentrates on actions and adventures, in particular; the novel of formation stresses actions and thoughts equally, attempting to portray a total personality; the confessional novel focuses on thoughts and reflections alone. While the picaresque novel is turned outward toward society and the confessional novel is turned inward toward consciousness, the novel of formation maintains a peculiar balance between the social and the personal and explores their interaction. In contrast to both these related forms, the novel of formation is founded on the belief in progress and the coherence of selfhood.

Not only structurally but also historically the novel of formation can be situated between these two genres. While the picaresque novel reaches its prime in Spain, France and England in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, *Wilhelm Meister* is published in 1795 and the novel of formation flourishes throughout the nineteenth century; in the twentieth, it is considerably transformed, either through parody (*Amerika*,

of autobiographical fiction, probably closer to the confessional novel than to the novel of formation. Not all autobiographical novels are novels of formation, although most novels of formation have some autobiographical elements.

¹⁵ David H. Miles—"The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German Bildungsroman," *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 980-92—asserts that picaresque and confessional are two poles of the *Bildungsheld*. I outline the following generic distinction in my response to Miles' article in *PMLA*, 91 (1976), 122.

Die Blechtrommel), or in its function as the most salient genre for the literature of social outsiders, primarily women or minority groups (*Call it Sleep, Lady Oracle*).¹⁶ The confessional novel, i.e., the fictional confession, peaks in the Romantic period (*René, Adolphe, Werther*) and again in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century (*Notes from the Underground, La Nausée, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*). The inward *Bildungsheld* can be seen as the forerunner of the reflective and increasingly alienated protagonist of twentieth-century fiction.

ii

The novel of formation's dual focus, inward toward the self and outward toward society, makes it one of the major fictional types of European realism. In *The Gates of Horn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), Harry Levin defines the realist as a deflated idealist and realism as a process of rectification and disillusionment. The method of realistic fiction is to "undermine a series of preconceptions" (p. 52). As he attempts to suggest the varied implications of this definition of realism, Levin insists that the "negation of the ideal" (Courbet's phrase) need not be seen negatively "if we construe ideals as evanescent Dulcineas who lead men's minds astray. More positively, the novel of disillusionment thus becomes a novel of development, a Bildungsroman." If we accept Levin's definition of realism, then indeed the novel of formation becomes one of the most important forms of the realistic novel,¹⁷ portraying, as it does, the progressive disillusionment of its protagonist in his encounters with the social reality. I propose to use the notion of disillusionment, in both its positive and its negative manifestations, to suggest the differences between the German nineteenth-century Entwicklungsroman and the French and English novels of formation of the same period.

The protagonist of the novel of formation comes to the encounter with

¹⁶ See, for example, Bonnie Hoover Braendlin's recent article, "Alther, Atwood, Ballantyne and Gray: Secular Salvation in the Contemporary Feminist Bildungsroman," *Frontiers*, 4 (1979).

¹⁷ Köhn (p. 88) presents a different view: "Dass der Bildungsroman Ideale verkünden und darstellen, dass er auf verschiedene Art Absolutes erreichen will, trennt ihn vom realistischen Roman." He is thinking only of the German Bildungsroman, however, and he does not define what he means by realism. As Steinecke points out repeatedly, the German critical tradition views the Bildungsroman as a departure from the real to the ideal, from the social to the individual and private. I attempt to demonstrate that all novels of formation are realistic, although a special kind of realism is manifested in the German Entwicklungsroman.

society already in possession of precise values, standards, and expectations. These youthful ideals might stem from a variety of sources: the provincial morality of their modest rural origins defined the values of Balzac's Rastignac and Lucien de Rubempré; readings of Rousseau and Napoleon shape the expectations of Stendhal's Julien Sorel. The child's imaginative vision of universal harmony inspires the values of Keller's Heinrich and Dickens' Pip. The enduring importance of these expectations is suggested by the fact that, in most of these novels, the place of the hero's origin remains an ever-present reminder of purity and integrity. Hence, Heinrich Lee returns to his native village and Fabrice to Lake Como. Lucien's companion figure, David Séchard, remains in Angoulême, thereby asserting his moral superiority, and Frédéric Moreau reflects on the scene of his first disillusionment by saying: "C'est là ce que nous avons eu de meilleur."

The heroes' ideals are necessarily modified in their contact with the sobering forces of reality. One aspect of the youthful vision is its immaturity and hence its false appraisal of self and society. Maturation requires an adjustment of vision and a recognition of personal limitation. Since the integration into society is only earned through suffering, the pain of renunciation (*Entsagung*) constitutes an essential part of maturation. Hegel's following outline of this process of modification and alignment aptly describes the pattern of the German Entwicklungsroman. Hegel, like Dilthey in his 1906 essay on Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, emphasizes the conservative nature of the German Entwicklungsroman tradition with its stress on reconciliation:

Diese Kämpfe sind die Lehrjahre, die Erziehung des Individuums an der vorhandenen Wirklichkeit, und erhalten dadurch ihren wahren Sinn. Denn das Ende solcher Lehrjahre besteht darin, dass sich das Subjekt die Hörner ablauft, mit seinem Wünschen und Meinen sich in die bestehenden Verhältnisse und die Verkettung der Welt eintritt und sich in ihr einen angemessenen Standpunkt erwirbt.¹⁸

Clearly thinking of Wilhelm Meister, Hegel defines the growth process by its projected ending, the accommodation to the social order and the recognition of social responsibility. Yet clearly, for Hegel, to conform to a philistine bourgeois world is to sell out to all that is prosaic and foreign to art. Still, the pattern of *Meister* remains the model even down to Keller's Heinrich whose artistic ambitions must be abandoned for

¹⁸ *Ästhetik*, ed. Friedrich Bassenge (Frankfurt, 1965), I, 567 f.

the morally valued social service. In the process of alignment, Heinrich loses an imagination which is essentially misguided and irresponsible. Much more than Goethe, however, Keller dwells on the pain of renunciation, on the waste of Heinrich's youthful enthusiasm. *Meister* remains the model for Stifter's Heinrich, as well, even though his alignment to an artificially fashioned ideal society actually amounts to an internalization, desocialization and isolation of responsibility. No matter how much the writer has to strain to achieve it, the process of maturation is one of self-recognition: the individual discovers his authentic self and realizes his personal destiny in the assumption of social responsibility.

This outline of a growth process that culminates in accommodation defines the German Entwicklungsroman in particular. In the French and English novels, however, the protagonist's initial values might well be immature and in need of correction, but they also incarnate moral virtues and individual spontaneity which are compromised in any accommodation to a profoundly corrupt society. Reality can never measure up to the imaginative richness of the heroes' ideals: when Fabrice del Dongo arrives at the battle he travelled across Europe to attend, he exclaims in bitter disappointment: "Ce n'est que ça?" Even more importantly, the pain of renunciation is excessive in these novels; the protagonists either reach the goal of maturity as diminished and impoverished human beings or withdraw from society altogether. The German Entwicklungsroman presents growth as an accretive process where fantasy is replaced by reality and false hopes by reasonable accomplishments, whereas the French and English novels depict not a formation but a deformation of the individual, the corruption of natural impulses and values. Keller's Heinrich moves from delusion to demystification and truth; Rastignac progresses from moral purity to corruption and thus to a form of delusion.

The nature of the society portrayed is perhaps primarily responsible for the profound differences between the various national traditions of the novel of formation. Wilhelm Meister mentions the fact that only noblemen can enjoy the *Bildung* he desires: the society he ultimately joins is based on aristocratic principles of wealth and leisure, on the ideals, not the realities of Goethe's bourgeois world.¹⁹ The nineteenth-century work closest to *Meister*, *Der Nachsommer*, celebrates a similarly agrarian and aristocratic social structure which hardly reflects the Austria of the first half of the century. Yet the other German Entwicklungsromane also

¹⁹ See Georg Lukács, *Goethe und seine Zeit* (Bern: Francke, 1947), p. 42.

subscribe to the regressive and conservative values of *Wilhelm Meister*. Immermann's *Die Epigonen*, for example, describes, as its title so well indicates, an age of disenchantment; an age which, as Jeffrey Sammons puts it, "is clogged with transmitted culture and with a civilization no longer organically involved with the conditions of life; competing truths and absolutes resound in a cacophony of windy debate."²⁰ This could almost be a description of Dickens' England or Balzac's France, the difference being that Immermann pretends to be able to resolve the conflicts of his age. When the novel's hero inherits the growing industrial complex, he chooses to reverse its progress and return the land to agriculture. He continues a utopian impulse that marks the German Entwicklungsroman from Goethe's *Turmesellschaft*, to the fairytale world of Novalis, the Greece of Hölderlin, the garden world of Stifter, and down to the mountain world of Mann and the Oklahoma nature theater of Kafka. The society of the German novels, even the Switzerland of Keller, has universal and symbolic rather than particular significance. It embodies the ideal experiential field for the growing individual and reflects the utopian tendency to create a separate realm where conflict is removed and the possibility of satisfactory growth is heightened. The German Entwicklungsroman resolves the contradiction between ideal and real in a utopian vision.

In contrast, the French novels make specific reference to contemporary society: *L'Education sentimentale* deals with the events of 1848; the subtitle of *Le Rouge et le noir* is "Chronique de 1830." The political, social and economic backgrounds constitute potent forces in these novels. Society is a field of struggle and conflict, alienation and separation. The heroes' desires are more than irresponsible ideals: they represent reasonable human desires in a world that cannot fulfill them. The ironic discrepancy between the protagonist's positive impulse and the realistic possibility offered by the social structure points out the deficiency and the hostility of the society described in these works.²¹

²⁰ "Karl Immermann," in *Six Essays on the Young German Novel* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 129.

²¹ My distinction between national manifestations of one genre, the novel of formation, is in part inspired by Georg Lukács' historical typology of the novel form outlined in Part II of *Theory of the Novel*. Thus Lukács' distinction between the novel of disillusionment, with *L'Education sentimentale* as its prototype, which is characterized by the struggle between a rich inner and an impoverished outer world, and *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, which represents a synthesis between individual and world through an idealization of some aspects of empirical reality, corresponds in part to my distinction between the French and English novels of

The source of the utopian impulse in the German *Entwicklungsroman* might be found in a conflict that seems to inform German novelistic theory and practice of the nineteenth century: the goal, on the one hand, to represent "die Prosa des wirklichen Lebens," and the yearning, on the other, for poetry, for a harmonious imagined, rather than a fragmented real world. In this tradition it is the individual private realm that is the locus for poetry, imagination and true art. This might explain why the *Entwicklungsroman*, a form that focuses on the individual, predominates in the German realistic tradition, rather than the panoramic social novel. Steinecke very concisely sums up the dilemma between a democratic, socially conscious aesthetic and the classical vision furthered by such theorists as Hegel, Vischer, and Schopenhauer (p. 162):

1. Der Roman muss sich der Wirklichkeit in allen ihren Erscheinungsformen—der politischen, gesellschaftlichen, sozialen Wirklichkeit—öffnen und sie in getreuer Schilderung widerspiegeln. Daher muss er auch die sozialen Schattenseiten zeigen, die einen grossen Teil der gegenwärtigen Wirklichkeit ausmachen.
2. Der Roman muss jedoch darüber hinaus, wie jede Dichtung, idealisieren: er muss die Ideen sichtbar machen, die diese Wirklichkeit durchwalten, er muss eine ausgewogene, harmonische Darstellung geben, er muss "versöhnen."

The German *Entwicklungsroman* resolves the conflict between the need for realism and the yearning for harmony, through the creation of an idealized utopian reality to which the individual can conform without compromising private values. Social criticism is almost totally avoided in these works.

Country estates, villages and inns constitute the arenas of learning in the German novels of formation; Stifter's dominant image for Heinrich's environment is the garden (the forest is carefully kept out of Risach's property), but Balzac calls his Paris a jungle where the strong devour the weak. Balzac and Flaubert's Paris, Dickens' London have no equivalent in the German *Entwicklungsroman*.

The spatial layout of the novel of formation is directly linked to its temporal progression. Goethe's theory of *Bildung* is organicist; like that of a plant, the individual's growth is an even unfolding of innate capaci-

formation and the German *Entwicklungsroman*. Whereas for Lukács these novels represent different forms of fiction in a general sense, for me they are merely different manifestations of one genre.

ties. Developing this notion, Stifter establishes regularity and repetition as supreme values. The protagonists of *Der Nachsommer* celebrate the sameness of everyday ritual. Their principle of "Ruhe in der Bewegung" invades even the novel's sentence structure; in the narration all is on one level, ever-present; nothing is passed over. In the French and English novels, the travel from country to city creates a temporal compression, a quickening of crisis. Instead of making gradual adjustments, the hero must learn to cope on the spot. The rhythm of these works is characterized by a series of crises, a number of disillusioning encounters with society. Each encounter is the scene of the demise of one or more of the hero's expectations. The city speeds up the maturing process and prevents a gradual unfolding.

The novel of formation's temporal structure is sequential and chronological, determined by the conception of life as a process. The events of the hero's life are chronologically and causally connected, portraying an individual process of becoming.²² Whereas that process is accretive in the German novels, i.e., some form of learning takes place, it is diminishing in the French and English works; the only learning that occurs is negative, involving a denial of either self (*Père Goriot*) or society (*Le Rouge et le Noir*, *La Chartreuse de Parme*). Moreover, the French and English novels of formation begin to undermine the teleological sense of development to which the German works still adhere. In *L'Éducation sentimentale*, Flaubert frustrates the reader's expectations of learning, his need for progress. The protagonist's failure brings with it no understanding from either character or reader. According to Jonathan Culler in *Flaubert* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), even the cruel social machinery of Balzac's novels is preferable to the lack of causality in Flaubert, where the novel's penultimate scene contains a "lesson" in no way based on the characters' previous experience (p. 150). In contrast to most of the German works, the end of *L'Éducation sentimentale* is directed backwards toward a childhood sheltered from the contingencies of adult experience. It is, however, a childhood that is misunderstood and idealized; even years later Frédéric and Deslauriers fail to perceive the irony of bringing flowers to a brothel.

The characters of the German novels progress along a plot line that has what Scholes and Kellogg in *The Nature of Narrative* call an "ethical basis" (p. 169): its temporal sequence, "developmental" and "exemplary,"

²² See Günther Müller, "Aufbauformen des Romans. Dargelegt an den Entwicklungsroman Gottfried Kellers and Adalbert Stifters," *Neophilologus*, 37 (1953), 1-14.

is determined by its end point, in this case, integration into society. The same might be said of *Emma* and other female novels of formation where marriage is the accepted goal. Such a progression entails the narrator's ironic superiority; only he knows the significance of each episode as it occurs. The reader's knowledge grows in retrospect, after the total plan is revealed. The plots of the Balzac and Flaubert novels have a temporal basis and their characterization is "mimetic" or "chronological," and to an extent this is also true of Stendhal and Dickens. The distinction between the "developmental," "exemplary" plot, on the one hand, and the "mimetic," "chronological" one, on the other, goes back to E. M. Forster's differentiation between "life by values" and "life by time." The fulfillment of the ethical plot, however, cannot take place in the context of a realistic social portrayal; rather, it depends on the German Entwicklungsroman's utopian resolution of conflict.

The concept of 'Nachsommer' could be used to define this utopian and uchronian quality of the German Entwicklungsromane. Absent from Frye's "Theory of Mythos," yet concordant to it, the period of Indian summer must be seen in relation to the glory of the summer which precedes it and to the sadness of the fall which inevitably follows. Its unique quality is a feeling of timelessness, of time stopped within its very flux so as to enable us to relive the bliss of summer, even if only for a short time. Rather than depicting an atmosphere of imminent decline, as have Dickens and Balzac, Stifter creates a last moment of magnificence and harmony, and his social criticism is at its best indirect:

Ich habe wahrscheinlich das Werk der Schlechtigkeit willen gemacht, die im Allgemeinen . . . in den Staatsverhältnissen der Welt, in dem sittlichen Leben derselben und in der Dichtkunst herrscht. Ich habe eine grosse einfache sittliche Kraft der elenden Verkommenheit gegenüberstellen wollen.²³

Stifter thus transforms his own society into an optimum world in which each individual can grow and develop. He posits an exemplary pure humanity which approaches the harmony of the natural order, sacrificing quotidian reality to what he considers essential values amid a world of flux. The individual and society are attuned to each other; the physical and social environment reflects the qualities of the inner self and helps to bring them out (*educere*).

²³ *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gustav Wilhelm (Reichenberg: Sudetendeutscher Verlag, 1929), XIX, 93.

In his essay "In Search of Goethe from Within," Ortega y Gasset shows the necessary relationship between Goethe's organicism and this kind of utopianism: "The vegetable is the organic being which does not struggle with its surroundings. Hence it cannot live except in a favorable environment, except coddled by its environment."²⁴ Stifter's garden world is precisely the kind of place that fosters individual self-fulfillment. As Heinrich's youthful ideals are unlearned, his true self emerges and beautifully fits into the environment fashioned by Risach and Mathilde who, having suffered and sacrificed in the world, withdraw into the security of their "Rosenhaus," determined to keep their children from suffering. *Der grüne Heinrich* is at once less utopian and more muted. Heinrich leaves the count's aristocratic retreat to return to his native village as a civil servant. While Goethe and Stifter create an artificial social structure for the individual to conform to, Keller's redemptive social service is to the real community of contemporary Switzerland. But even Lukács, who sees the novel as the portrayal of the education of a citizen, admits that Keller's Switzerland is idealized.²⁵ What it offers, moreover, is strangely disproportionate to the waste and suffering of Heinrich's youth. The novel stresses the individual's blindness, his irresponsible imagination, not the deficiency of the social structure. In the novel's first version, Heinrich dies in a paroxysm of grief and guilt. Keller wrote the second version to achieve a resolution, yet it is hardly a satisfactory one. The problem Keller portrays is as symbolic as that of Stifter, Novalis or Goethe—it concerns the confrontation of the human imagination and reality, more than that of a young man with a particular social reality.²⁶ Each of these novels has fashioned the reality the hero encounters in such a way as to make conformity possible. Accommodation and conformity are morally valued as commensurate with maturity.

In terms of their social structure, the German Entwicklungsromane surround their protagonists with what Ortega calls "conditions of abnormal security" and thus tone down the specific conflict between individual and society which informs the novels of Balzac, Dickens and Flaubert. Whereas social commentary, analysis and criticism are con-

²⁴ In *The Dehumanization of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 171.

²⁵ See "Gottfried Keller" in *Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bern: Francke, 1941), pp. 147-230.

²⁶ A similar view is expressed by Wolfgang Preisendanz in "Der grüne Heinrich" in *Der deutsche Roman vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Benno von Wiese (Düsseldorf: A Bagel, 1963), II, 76-127.

crete and direct in the French works, they are more veiled in the novels of Austen, Dickens and Eliot. Even though Austen, for example, fails to depict the working world of which Jane Fairfax is so afraid, most of the English writers, especially Dickens, Butler and D. H. Lawrence, do call the social order into question by demonstrating, if not political fact, then its effects on the life of the individual. In the German works, on the other hand, economic and political forces are quiescent and the protagonist invariably manages to find a realm where it is possible to grow and develop.

The symbolic nature of the German *Entwicklungsroman* corresponds to Goethe's notion of the "Urleben," a state of limitless potentiality and availability which never enters into particulars to become actual and individual. In the French and English novels which are grounded in the particular, the meaning of self-discovery and self-fulfillment changes radically. Let us take the example of *Great Expectations* which seems to follow the pattern of *Der grüne Heinrich*. Initially, Pip has an erroneous vision of himself and his chances, a vision which is not inwardly developed but is imposed from the outside by the manipulative Miss Havisham and Magwitch. Ultimately he comes to realize the true Pip and to abandon social values for natural ones, as he accepts the dark Magwitch for his second father. Discovering his responsibility, he is ready to sacrifice fantasy to reality, yet the cost of a broader vision acquired after a long process of renunciation is so enormous that the maturity he finally reaches leaves him dehumanized and even more disinherited than we find him in the novel's first scene. Both novels portray loss and pain; while capitulation is explicit in Dickens, however, an attempt at redemption is made in Keller. Pip grows beyond the fairytale; Heinrich and the other German protagonists remain within it.

The corrupt values of a society that fosters the unnatural parent-child relationships of Magwitch and Estella, of Goriot and his daughters, invade the realm of the individual and contaminate all that he could oppose to such values. Even desires and goals are dictated by social values of material wealth, power and recognition and the true self is more and more difficult to define.

The German *Entwicklungsromane* subscribe to the Goethean ideal of totality and concentrate on each aspect of the hero's personality that can be cultivated. Education becomes more limited in the French and English works. The isolation of the emotional side of one hero and the moral of another leads to distortion and emptiness.

The individual occupies the central position in the German *Entwicklungsroman*. Money, if mentioned, is at most a means of survival, never an object of value in itself. Objects, in *Der Nachsommer* for example, are venerated for their beauty and perfection of form, not their material value. In the French and English novels, the human is reduced and shattered by the dominant capitalist and materialist forces. Dickens' Jaggers is no more than a factotum of the business world. Pip himself becomes the instrument of both Magwitch and Miss Havisham, who command him to play as if he were a wind-up top. The pursuit of wealth and success justifies the use of people as means to attain those ends. People as well as objects are measured by their exchange value: "Paris, on y vend tout, on y fabrique tout, même le succès" (*Illusions perdues*). The prevalent image of prostitution aptly expresses the reduction of the human to the level of object.²⁷ When Rastignac takes on the city on its own terms with the challenge "A nous deux maintenant!" he is on his way to prostitute himself at the dinner of the despised Delphine. In a world where the self is but an object to be bought and sold, the notion of self-discovery and self-fulfillment becomes meaningless. *Bildung* can only be the response to the external forces which profoundly distort inner capabilities. Thus, in the words of Arnold Weinstein, "Père Goriot . . . focuses . . . on the dynamics of selling out, the transition from depth to surface. . . . Rastignac will learn to be a man without depth."²⁸

Whereas the German novels of formation focus primarily on the individual and his unfolding, the French and English novels directly engage the social problems that impinge on that unfolding, deforming and distorting it. Yet "Wirklichkeitsflucht" and utopia, on the one hand, and the narration of corruption and decline on the other, are but two different literary responses to a similarly disillusioning social reality. The discrimination between national traditions within the novel of formation reveals the German novels as more desperately conservative responses to the chaotic openness, the social disintegration that threatens to violate the unity of selfhood on which the realistic novel is based. With its echoes of Goethe and classical harmony, the *Bildungsroman* and its more flexible avatar, the *Entwicklungsroman*, are the forms in which disappearing values, inwardness, individualism, idealism, are sought by

²⁷ See Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), pp. 47-65.

²⁸ *Vision and Response in Modern Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1974), p. 32.

German nineteenth-century writers. The same novelistic genre leads away from those values in France and Germany. Confronting the individual and society, the French and English novels of formation tend to represent the defeat of the individual.

A profoundly disturbing conclusion about the nature of Bildung itself is suggested by the juxtaposition of German *Entwicklungsromane* and French and English novels of formation. We know since Adam that learning involves pain and loss, yet for that loss we have come to expect adequate compensation. Whereas the German novels still uphold the inviolacy of the individual by insisting on this kind of equilibrium, the French and English novels suggest the devastatingly destructive potential of education: the loss of self through the excessive involvement in opposing and corrupt social values. The criminal *Trompe-la-Mort*, who survives by repeatedly changing his personality, is a constant warning to Rastignac and Lucien, and here the novel of formation leans toward the picaresque. It is no longer a question of the fragmentation of self, nor of accretion and diminution, when identity threatens to dissolve and character to explode. In this context the German *Entwicklungsromane* appear as attempts to assert the cohesion of what is already disintegrating. Their artistic weakness, moreover, lies precisely in the didactic and utopian sections that forcefully transcend an unavoidable conflict.

The tensions and incongruities in the German works reveal the strain that such a forced imposition of cohesion creates. Scholes and Kellogg assert that in "developmental" characterization "the character's personal traits are attenuated so as to clarify his progress along a plot line that has an ethical basis" (p. 169). Stifter's utopia is bought at the cost of individuality and the conflict it breeds. Rastignac and Lucien become empty puppets capable only of playing their social roles; Frédéric was devoid of depth to begin with. Yet Wilhelm, Heinrich and Hermann have no more fullness than their French counterparts. The conformity and harmony they achieve are based on the denial of guilt and the refusal of passion. As every action is stylized and ritualized, every individual moment replaced by timelessness, we come to feel that Stifter succeeded better than Flaubert in writing a book about nothing.

The unwillingness to admit what Balzac and Dickens assert is the cause of at least some of the artistic incongruities in *Die Epigonen* and *Der grüne Heinrich*: their conciliatory endings refuse to deal with the disturbing questions the novels raise and fail to constitute more than formal resolutions. These internal tensions and gaps, these artistic short-

comings not only call into question the values of progress, activity, regularity and rationality established by the novels, but also bring the German novels of formation closer to the spirit of their French and English counterparts.*

* This paper was originally delivered, in abbreviated form, at the 1975 convention of the Modern Language Association.