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Source: *Monatshefte*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Winter, 1978), pp. 399-414

Published by: University of Wisconsin Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30156979>

Accessed: 02-03-2017 01:41 UTC

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF *BILDUNG* FROM AN IMAGE TO AN IDEAL

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Since the *Bildungsroman* is traditionally defined in terms of content rather than form and since there is no consensus on what constitutes that genre,¹ it is curious that *Bildung*, its distinguishing characteristic, is rarely investigated as an historical concept in its relationship to the novel. Instead, we have generally accepted Dilthey's broad formulation of *Bildung* as the process by which a young male hero discovers himself and his social role through the experience of love, friendship, and the hard realities of life.² Although Dilthey was certainly not the first person to speak of *Bildung* in this manner, he broached the topic at a time conducive to its positive reception by a general audience. Consequently, it was recognized as "das allgemein Menschliche an einem Lebenslauf," or as an "Ideal der Humanität,"³ and the *Bildungsroman* could be celebrated as the "Roman der deutschen Dichter und Denker,"⁴ "[der] wie keine andere Dichtungsart entscheidende Wesenszüge des deutschen Charakters zu enthüllen vermag."⁵ Moreover, although Dilthey originally restricts his remarks to certain novels appearing in the Age of Goethe, i.e., to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen*, Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, and Jean Paul's *Hesperus, Titan, and Flegeljahre*,⁶ his definition of *Bildung* is so vague that it could apply to epic works of any literary period. On the one hand, this incongruity has challenged scholars to change Dilthey's designation of the genre (e.g., to *Entwicklungsroman* or *Erziehungsroman*); on the other, it has fostered numerous articles of the ilk: "NV: Doch ein Bildungsroman?"⁷ Unfortunately, such attempts only demonstrate the futility of trying to apply Dilthey's abstract criteria for *Bildung* in a concrete manner. As a result, very few novels, including those of German Romanticism cited by Dilthey, actually meet his high standards. In fact, the only work that has been universally accepted as a *Bildungsroman*, Goethe's *Meister*, has been indicted by Kurt May, who tried in vain to discover the requisite "rein menschliche Bildung zur harmonischen Universalität" in it.⁸ Before dispensing with this genre entirely, however, perhaps we should determine whether *Bildung*

was always such an amorphous concept, or if it had once had a more specific meaning that might prove useful in defining a *Bildungsroman*.

Bildung emerged as a concept with pedagogical connotations during the eighteenth century.⁹ In the Dictionaries of Adelung und Campe the verb *bilden* denoted primarily: “1) Einem Körper seine äußere Gestalt geben, von Bild, so fern dasselbe ehemals Gestalt bedeutete. . . . 2) Die Gestalt einer Sache nachahmen, abbilden.” Nevertheless, they both record a newer, figurative meaning: “Den Fähigkeiten des Geistes und Willens die gehörige Richtung geben.”¹⁰ A noticeable shift from the denotative to the connotative meaning, however, occurs with the noun *Bildung*. Adelung notes in 1774 that it is most often used to designate physical appearance: “und zwar am häufigsten von der Gestalt eines Menschen, besonders von der Gestalt eines Gesichtes.” He does not alter this definition in 1793. But in 1807 Campe records a change; it is now regarded as an intellectual process: “1) Die Handlung des Bildens, meist uneigentlich. Die Bildung des Verstandes.” Since semantic changes of this nature evolve slowly, the explanation for the shift in meaning must be sought earlier in the century, where, we find, the figurative usage did play a role in various forms of Neo-Platonic philosophy.

In the tradition of German mysticism, for example, the verb *bilden* originally signified God’s creation of human beings in His image (*Bild*), until Meister Eckhardt and later mystics appended elements of Plotinus’ philosophy of emanation and reintegration to it.¹¹ They believed that the Universal Spirit (*nous*, *Weltseele*), which emanated from the Creator and was present in all beings, became tainted through its contact with bodily matter and thus had to be purified before it could be reintegrated with the Creator. Plotinus describes the entire process as an “odyssey,” during which an individual must “sculpt away impurities” until the soul becomes a “work of art,” or virtuous by attaining self-recognition (*gnothi seauton*).¹² Referring to this sculpting metaphor, the mystics called such introspection *bilden*.

In the seventeenth century the Pietists equated *bilden* with *lernen* and conceived of it as both an aesthetic and an organic process.¹³ J. Arndt, for example, speaks of God as “der Höchste Künstler” and of *bilden* in such mixed metaphors as: “Das Bild wird besamt, geboren . . . der innere Mensch wächst, wickelt sich heraus; Tugenden werden gepflanzt.”¹⁴ As Pietist texts reached a larger audience through popular works such as Arnold’s *Unpartheysche Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* (1699–1700) and his *Historie und Beschreybung der mystischen Theologie* (1703), *bilden* was associated with a religious, didactic process that was restricted to an individual sphere of activity and that had distinctly aesthetic connotations. Despite this metaphorical usage, however, Pietists like Spener and Francke emphatically censured the actual pursuit of dance, music, theater, or literature, because these interests would distract children from the more pragmatic aspects of their education or their professions.¹⁵

It is therefore in the figurative usage of the noun *Bildung*, which can be traced to the German reception of Shaftesbury's *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), that the aesthetic metaphors of the Neo-Platonic philosophical tradition became an integral part of the didactic process. The Pietists Spalding and Oetinger translated his works into German in the middle of the eighteenth century¹⁶ and rendered the central concepts of his moral philosophy as follows:

inward form	= <i>innere Bildung</i>
formation of a genteel character	= <i>Bildung</i>
good breeding	= <i>Selbstbildung</i> . ¹⁷

This specific usage was generally adopted by later translators, establishing *Bildung* as a technical term. Before we investigate the German concept, we should therefore locate it in the context of Shaftesbury's philosophy.

In the *Characteristicks* Shaftesbury transforms Neo-Platonic religious ideas into a secularized religion of aesthetics. The universe for him is a continually changing work of art whose Creator is manifest in formal beauty.¹⁸ Thus human knowledge of moral truth (virtue) must be mediated by aesthetics and transmitted by the moral artist, a young male who has been educated in a non-institutionalized manner and who has been divinely inspired during states of enthusiastic contemplation (*Schwärmen*). Using the metaphors associated with *bilden*, Shaftesbury proposes a plan of education for the moral artist which would prepare him for a didactic role within society.¹⁹ Young men with pronounced aesthetic sensibilities, and of course adequate incomes, should "have seen the World, and inform'd themselves of the Manners and Customs of the several Nations of Europe, search'd into their Antiquities and Records; consider'd their Police, Laws, and Constitutions; observ'd the Situation, Strength, and Amusements; their Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Musick, and their Taste in Poetry, Learning, Language, and Conversation."²⁰ In this manner the moral artist transforms his own life into a work of art and becomes a "virtuoso." At this stage of his development, he must communicate what he has learned through a moral, i.e., philosophical form of art based on the form of the Socratic dialogue, inductive reasoning, and the use of wit and irony. Only in this active role of the artist-philosopher-pedagogue can the virtuoso be honored by society as "a second Maker: a just Prometheus under Jove."²¹

Bildung would therefore signify a continuous process of passive formation and active forming of individuals who would instinctively act in the common interest to preserve the civil liberties necessary for the cultivation of the moral arts.²² In contrast to its purely subjective application in Pietism, Shaftesbury's secular concept stresses the individual's training for an active role in a greater community. Self-recognition is no longer the goal of development, but rather the means of fulfilling one's social responsibilities. Finally, the metaphorical role of the artist has become a real social function: the moral artist must assume responsibility for enlightening humanity through an aesthetic education.

Although Spalding and Oetinger provided the first translations of Shaftesbury's works, Winckelmann and Wieland must be credited with introducing *Bildung* into German intellectual life.²³ Both men equated *Bildung* with the Greek ideal of *kalokagathia*, i.e., with being beautifully formed, well-educated, and morally good. But whereas Winckelmann conceived of *Bildung* as an ideal state of being, such as that immortalized in classical art,²⁴ Wieland interpreted it as a formative process.

In two of his early essays, the "Plan von einer neuen Art von Privat-Unterweisung" (1754) and the "Plan einer Akademie zu Bildung des Verstandes und des Herzens junger Leute" (1755),²⁵ Wieland proposes an alternative mode of primary education through which a chosen group of students would be taught logic, metaphysics, natural theology, ethics, law, politics, rhetoric, mathematics, poetry, and aesthetics by the Socratic method. Aesthetics, however, would be stressed for it is only through art that children develop a sense of moral judgment:

Wir machen also hieraus den Schluß, daß nur diese wichtige Kunst, welche junge Leute lehret, das Gute und Böse, vermittelst des bloßen Geschmacks richtig zu unterscheiden und welche ihre sinnlichen Neigung, mit dem, was wahrhaftig Liebe oder Haß verdienet, noch ehe die Vernunft gereift ist, in ein richtiges Verhältnis setzt, des Namens der Unterweisung oder Bildung der Jugend würdig sey.²⁶

Only through such *Bildung* could the Germans hope to cultivate the modern equivalent of the *kalos kai agathos*, i.e., the virtuoso:

. . . wie es der geistreichste und feinste aller modernen Scribenten Shaftesbury ausdrückt, indem er mit diesem, gleich dem armen Nahmen Poet, sehr mißbrauchten Titel, die gleiche Idee ausdrückt, welche die Griechen in besagtes Wort eingeschlossen, nemlich eines Menschen, den die Musen und Gratien erzogen haben, eines Lebhabs der Natur und Kunst, der die Meisterstücke des menschlichen Wizes und Fleißes kennt, der jede Wissenschaft, jedes Talent zu schätzen weiß, die Welt, die Charakter, Verfassungen, Geseze, Sitten, Religionen, Künste, Erfindungen,—der verschiedenen Völker studiert hat, der in allem diesem weiß, was recht und schön ist.²⁷

Finally, although he advocates an aesthetic education in his proposals, he also realizes that such liberal pedagogical reforms would never be tolerated by the German despots.

Wieland's theses might have passed unnoticed had they not provoked a polemical response from Lessing, who complains in the "10. Literaturbrief" that such an education could only produce "einen hübschen guten Mann," a dilettante who would while away his time with "Lesen und Schreiben, auf der Zither Spielen, Ringen und andere körperliche Übungen." Although Lessing too favors the Socratic method of instruction, he cautions that using it, or art, exclusively would undermine the foundation of religion. Shaftesbury, he warns, is "der gefährlichste Feind der Religion, weil er der feinste ist" ("12. Literatur-

brief"). Herder also enters the dispute in the first of his *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur*. There he finds both positions exaggerated, but registers the fact that through this debate the concepts of *kalokagathia* and *Bildung*, "die den eigentlichen Charakter des Zeitalters ausdrücken," have become a major issue in German intellectual life.

Herder's words proved prophetic. In the following decades Mendelssohn, Nicolai, Voss, Hölty, and Eberhardt translated Shaftesbury's works into German;²⁸ there was a general revival of the philosophical dialogue as a literary genre;²⁹ and numerous periodicals adopted titles promising *Bildung* in some form. In contrast to Shaftesbury, however, who was writing from an aristocratic standpoint about the education of young gentlemen, the Germans extended the scope of *Bildung* to include the middle class. As might be expected with such a proliferation of theories, not everybody interpreted it as an aesthetic education, although most Germans did view it as a vehicle for socio-political reforms. Through new pedagogical programs designed either to create educational institutions or to circumvent existing ones, they hoped to adapt the German system to bourgeois needs. Basedow, for example, proposes in his *Elementarwerk* (1774) that schools be developed "für den gemeinen Haufen," "die gesitteten Bürger," and "die Gelehrten," where the children would be taught the value of virtue, bookkeeping, and managing capital. Möser emphasizes individual experience rather than formal schooling as the way to a general "Bildung zum Bürger" or "Bildung zu einem glücklichen, ruhigen Volk."³⁰ Klopstock, in his utopian *Deutsche Gelehrtenrepublik* (1774), envisions *Bildung* as the way of returning to an idealized mercantilistic form of society, in which the division of the populace into "Knechte," "Volk," "Altfranken," and "Zünfte" is governed solely by one's intellectual achievement. And Pestalozzi, in his *Abendstunde eines Einsiedlers* (1780), foresees a return to a pre-feudal, natural society if all citizens could be educated to appreciate their inalienable rights and to accept the responsibilities inherent in them. All of these pedagogical theories would therefore share a utopian dimension predicated upon a belief that social status should be determined by a person's achievement rather than by heredity. Whether that be in the guise of moral excellence, capital gains, intellectual prowess, or a combination of the three, depended on the political bias of the author, but everybody concerned with *Bildung* implies the right of talented children of all classes to equal educational opportunities. Pestalozzi is most adamant in that respect, admonishing regents that the right to *Bildung* was inherent in the social contract and that by abrogating that right, a ruler weakened the foundations of the state and incurred the risk of revolution.³¹ Finally, it can be observed that the more conservative theories tend to focus exclusively on the middle class and to minimize the role of aesthetics, while the more liberal theories posit an aesthetic education as the most effective means of disseminating socio-political ideals derived from the works of Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, or the French Physiocrats.

The most significant modification of *Bildung* in the latter respect was accomplished by Herder in his works: *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784), and the *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-97). Following the lead of Shaftesbury³² and Wieland, he accepts the basic premise of *Bildung* as an aesthetic education through which individuals may develop all of their potential talents and learn to know themselves. In this sense he refers to “die schönen Wissenschaften” (i.e., philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, and history) as “die bildenden Wissenschaften,” assuming that these subjects transmit knowledge about different countries, ages, cultures, political systems, and religions.³³ He continues that such *Bildung* would occur outside of state institutions, because “Kanzel und Schauplatz, Säle der Gerechtigkeit, Bibliotheken, Schulen und . . . Akademien” have been exploited by tyrants and are now only capable of producing machines.³⁴ Instead, Herder advocates a more organic form of education, for along with Rousseau, he conceives of children metaphorically as plants or trees that must be cultivated in a sympathetic climate far removed from the corrupting influences of civilization. Every individual has the potential to bloom; this is a matter of natural ability, not the prerogative of one social class.³⁵ The proper education could result in a peaceful transition to a utopian form of society predicated on the State of Nature and governed in accordance with natural laws. This utopia would still be ruled by a despot or an elite, but the despot would be enlightened and the elite would be recruited from the most talented persons from all social classes. The rulers would therefore maintain a sense of moderate proportions in their endeavors, insuring the inalienable rights of the citizens, and the citizens, in turn, would respect the rights of their fellow persons. Herder reflects the prevailing trends in the concept of *Bildung* when he describes his utopian vision as follows:

Wie jeden aufmerksamen einzelnen Menschen das Gesetz der Natur zur Humanität führt; seine rauhen Ecken werden ihm abgestoßen, er muß sich überwinden, andern nachgeben und seine Kräfte zum Besten anderer gebrauchen lernen: so wirken die verschiedenen Charaktere und Sinnesarten zum Wohl des großen Ganzen. Jeder fühlt die Übel der Welt nach seiner eignen Lage; er hat also die Pflicht auf sich, sich ihrer von dieser Seite anzunehmen, dem Mangelhaften, Schwachen, Gedrückten an dem Theil zu Hilfe zu kommen, da es ihm sein Verstand und sein Herz gebietet. . . . Ist der Staat das, was er seyn soll, das Auge der allgemeinen Vernunft, das Ohr und Herz der allgemeinen Billigkeit und Güthe: so wird er jede dieser Stimmen hören und die Thätigkeit der Menschen nach ihren verschiedenen Neigungen, Empfindbarkeiten, Schwächen und Bedürfnissen aufwecken und ermuntern.³⁶

In this respect Herder views *Bildung* as a medium for developing those qualities like *Vernunft* or *Humanität* that distinguish human beings from animals,³⁷ and he therefore elevates it to the status of an humanitarian ideal comparable to the liberal ideals of freedom and equality. Moreover, he sets that ideal in explicit

opposition to the political status quo, positing it as a peaceful alternative to revolution. Once *Bildung* became established in an ideological sphere, however, it could be regarded as something eternally valid (*allgemein menschlich*) and thereby ignored as an historical concept with specific presuppositions. Thus Herder paved the way for the reception that *Bildung* was to receive in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that was already prefigured in the attitudes of Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

The idea of *Bildung* had always interested Schiller, but it was not until the French Revolution had passed the limits of regicide that he addressed the problem systematically. He had experimented with the concept in his essay: "Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?" (1785) by urging the state to utilize the potential of art to mold public opinion, but he abandoned this moderate approach during the initial stages of the French Revolution. At that time he dissociated *Bildung* from state institutions and made it a function of aesthetics in general, and classical aesthetics in particular. The pivotal role of art in the poems "Die Götter Griechenlands" and "Die Künstler" signals this shift of emphasis. In the following years he developed his own system, which is derivative of the trends mentioned above and which he designated an "ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen."

Schiller defines *Bildung* both as the process of a young man's formative development and as the state of being well-bred. He equates the latter, however, with the Kantian ideal of *Persönlichkeit*, thereby transferring that ideal from a public (*Humanität*) to a primarily private sphere of experience. Compared to the barbarians, well-bred men would indeed develop their natural talents in the interest of the "common good" ("4. Brief"), but the specific nature of that "common good" is left ambiguous. Furthermore, by stressing the aesthetic element of *Bildung*, Schiller grants art a self-sufficiency that even Shaftesbury had denied it. For although art had become the principal means of attaining knowledge of truth and virtue, it had always retained a utilitarian function. Schiller, however, expressly posits that aesthetics should be interchangeable with ethics and politics. Instead of mediating virtue, the pursuit of aesthetics becomes a virtue in itself. Likewise, *Bildung* could be regarded as a moral and political act, even in its most individualistic forms, because it implied opposition to a barbaric political system and because it offered its proponents an alternative to revolution for realizing humanitarian goals. In this context, it is not surprising that Schiller viewed his treatise on an aesthetic education as his "politisches Glaubensbekenntnis"³⁸ or that he introduces that work as his contribution to the creation of the most perfect work of art, the ideal state ("2. Brief").

Schiller runs into unforeseen difficulties, however, when he tries to elucidate this hypothetical relationship between art and politics. Art, he posits, may become a tool of political change precisely because of its totally apolitical nature. It is the only force capable of appealing to the masses that has remained

pure despite the prevailing corruption of civilization (“9. Brief”), because it has consistently avoided the political arena. As a neutral force, art is assigned the task of mediating between the present state of moral corruption and a future utopian state: i.e., it must expose the masses to moral ideals by allowing them to flee from the sordid realities of life into an aesthetic realm. Political art would therefore have to disguise itself in a totally apolitical form, in order to hold the reader’s attention long enough to be effective. In this manner, form becomes the overriding concern of art and would sublimate the didactic content.

After defining the complicated epistemological processes involved in *Bildung*, Schiller resigns himself to the futility of any actual political change. He tries to salvage what he can of his initial reformatory goals, but concludes with a lame compromise: one should make the best of an existing evil and be grateful for the existence of aesthetic realms to which one can always escape:

Hier also, in dem Reich des ästhetischen Scheins, wird das Ideal der Gleichheit erfüllt, welches der Schwärmer so gern auch dem Wesen nach realisiert sehen möchte. . . . und wenn es wahr ist, daß der schöne Ton in der Nähe des Thrones am frühesten und am vollkommensten reift, so müßte man auch hier die gütige Schickung erkennen, die den Menschen oft nur deswegen in der Wirklichkeit einzuschränken scheint, um ihn in eine idealische Welt zu treiben (“27. Brief”).

Consequently, *Bildung*, which Herder has associated with specific political demands, becomes a goal in itself that may or may not be shared communally. The apolitical nature of art, which in a time of revolution had qualified art as a political tool, becomes neutralized as soon as the immediate political provocation disappears and art can then be used to sanction wholly individualistic pursuits, as long as they can be called humanitarian. We can observe just such a development in the philosophy of Schiller’s contemporary Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Humboldt shared the liberal political ideal of an aesthetic education, but he approached it from a more pragmatic standpoint reminiscent of the bourgeois interpretation of *Bildung* earlier in the century. This frame of reference allowed him to resolve the ambiguities of Schiller’s theory into a coherent program of individual development. He proposes that the state design new institutions that would enable an aesthetic education for any citizen, assuming that whatever is good for the individual must also be good for the state. Museums, art galleries, libraries, archives, and concert halls should be created and opened to the general public. In this manner, any youth, regardless of his social origin, could be exposed to the various histories, languages, arts, and cultures of the European nations, as was dictated by the original concept of *Bildung*, without having to leave the German states. Thus members of the middle class could participate in the same formative development once reserved for the aristocracy and they, as well-bred individuals, could become eligible for posts in a reformed, meritocratic civil service within the existing structure of an absolute monarchy. This

would, of course, necessitate the concession of some aristocratic privileges and a certain blending of the upper and middle classes, but by involving the middle class in the government, one would insure the stability of the existing political system.³⁹ For Humboldt, as for Schiller, politics had been subsumed by an aesthetic education, but whereas Schiller had remained ambivalent about locating *Bildung* entirely in a public or a private sphere of experience, Humboldt categorically asserts the primacy of the individual. He stresses repeatedly: “daß nichts auf Erden so wichtig ist, als die Kraft und die vielseitigste Bildung der Individuen, und daß daher der wahren Moral erstes Gesetz ist: bilde Dich selbst, und nur ihr zweites: wirke auf andere durch das, was Du bist.”⁴⁰ Humboldt thus returns to the position of Shaftesbury, but he does so after integrating the principle of social mobility into it.

Since *Bildung* had been dissociated from its historical origins and since the dimension of political opposition had been annulled, Humboldt’s reforms could now be absorbed by the state and implemented as a rigorous humanistic curriculum in accredited institutions of higher learning. The poetic enthusiasts (*Schwärmer*) chosen by the original proponents of *Bildung* were replaced by a much more competitive generation of students who were more prone to achieve than to daydream. Finally, even the role of aesthetics was destined to become peripheral, as the “real sciences” superseded the arts in the curriculum. *Bildung*, as an ideal of the nineteenth or twentieth century, therefore had little in common with the original concept: it had become symbolic of some vague “totality of being” that is used to affirm the status quo. Hence, during times of political or social opposition, such as the periods around 1830 or 1848, *Bildung* was censured by liberal writers; conversely, during periods of restoration or fervent nationalism, it was celebrated as a Germanic ideal.

Since Dilthey’s proposal for a *Bildungsroman* occurred in one of the latter periods, the subsequent apotheosis of the genre should not be surprising. It is curious, however, that such vague definitions have prevailed, for *Bildung* is an historical concept that can be located in the Age of Goethe and that has distinct characteristics. If these were applied to the novel of that period, they should provide us with criteria for eliminating some works from the debate on the *Bildungsroman*, while justifying the inclusion of others. In this manner, a prototypical *Bildungsroman* could be established, from which later forms might have evolved.

For example, since Shaftesbury’s, Wieland’s, Herder’s, and Schiller’s overriding concern was with the formative development of an adolescent nobleman or bourgeois into an artist or virtuoso, we should logically begin looking for novels treating the “history” of one adolescent gentleman. This focus would immediately exclude picaresque novels like Grimmelshausen’s *Simplicissimus*, which are narrated by heroes from the lower classes, and novels like Pestalozzi’s *Lienhard und Gertrud*, Wezel’s *Herrmann und Ulrike*, Jung-Stilling’s *Lebens-*

geschichte, Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, La Roche's *Fräulein von Sternheim*, or Wobeser's *Elisa*, which portray two central characters, the entire life of the hero, or the fate of a woman.

Moreover, since most proponents of *Bildung* maintained that humans were tainted in some manner, whether in the Neo-Platonic belief that the Universal Spirit was contaminated by matter or in Rousseau's theory that the individual was corrupted by the ills of civilization, we might expect a hero with a mixed-character as opposed to a paragon of virtue.⁴¹ *Bildung* entails the need for a process of purification, be that successful or unsuccessful, which is alien to the virtuous male heroes of didactic novels of the Enlightenment like von Loen's *Redlicher Mann am Hofe* or of sentimental novels like Richardson's *Grandison*, Timme's *Faramond*, J.M. Miller's *Karl von Burgheim*, Dusch's *Carl Ferdiner*, Sintenis' *Waldro*, or Jung-Stilling's *Herr von Morgenthau* and *Florentin von Fahlendorn*. Since this hero was eventually destined for a didactic role in society, however, he could not be totally debauched in the tradition of Lovelace, as were the heroes of novels like Tieck's *William Lovell*; eccentric to the extent of the heroes in novels like Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* or Wezel's *Tobias Knaut*; or intentionally ridiculous like Musäus' *Grandison der Zweite* or J.G. Müller's *Siegfried von Lindenberg*.

In any event, the hero of a *Bildungsroman* would possess pronounced aesthetic sensibilities that would distinguish him from his compatriots, for until the latter half of the eighteenth century artists were regarded as vagabonds by society,⁴² and when they did appear in the novel, it was usually as a stock figure on the periphery of the main action (e.g., "der Hofpoet," "der Spielmann," or the gypsy). Although several bourgeois *Musikerromane* were published around 1700, the heroes were rather unimaginative men who plied their art as a trade and who had little impact on the German novel.⁴³ The sensitive, artistic hero (*Schwärmer*) was introduced to the German novel in Wieland's *Don Sylvio*⁴⁴ and had become popular in many forms of the novel by the end of the century. Not all *Schwärmer*, however, would qualify as heroes of a *Bildungsroman*, for the aesthetic component of *Bildung* also presupposed an element of social criticism and a commitment to changing society that is lacking in the sentimental novels mentioned above,⁴⁵ in gothic novels, or in novels such as Goethe's *Werther*, J.M. Miller's *Sieghart*, Schummel's *Wilhelm von Blumenthal*, or Jacobi's *Allwill* or *Woldemar*.

The artist-hero of a *Bildungsroman* would have to be an earnest young man who finds himself in conscious opposition to existing forms of society or to his particular social class and who therefore embarks on a mission to ameliorate the situation after a period of passive exposure to the world. Such endeavors would probably only be successful insofar as they coincided with the liberal ideals of an aesthetic education. In this respect, more hedonistic works like Meißner's *Alcibiades* or Heine's *Ardinghello* would transcend the limits of a *Bildungsroman*. Moreover, since most German authors concerned with the theoretical

aspect of *Bildung* tended to project their ideals into utopian models, it would seem probable that novelists would do the same, providing the reader with a realistic description of an ideal society that had evolved through the proper pedagogical reforms. Assuming that the hero's discovery of such a utopia would constitute one of the high points of his development, we might expect to find it at a structurally significant point in the novel, such as the middle or the end.⁴⁶ Furthermore, this utopian realm should be governed in accordance with natural laws by an enlightened monarch or by an elite drawn from the most talented individuals from all social classes. This government would be opposed to the corrupt forms of society surrounding it and it would be dedicated to their gradual reform. In this respect, the utopia would have to be located near or even within normal society and the hero could therefore affirm his commitment to society without abandoning his initial opposition to it.⁴⁷ The utopian dimension of a *Bildungsroman* would thus differ from the total renunciation of the world, which is typical of the endings of picaresque novels like Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and of the plot of the early bourgeois utopian novels like Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg* or Sinold's *Faramunds glückseeligste Insel*; from the immediate creation of an ideal realm by the princely hero at the end of courtly Baroque novels such as Barclay's *Argenis* or Buchholtz' *Hercules*; or from the renunciation of the civilized world in favor of a primitive, but utopian state of nature which characterizes the resolution of the plot in novels such as Heinse's *Ardinghella* or Klingner's *Geschichte eines Deutschen der neuesten Zeit*.

Whether the hero does indeed attain self-recognition during his sojourn in the utopian realm would remain a moot point. On the one hand, we would anticipate some form of introspective analysis, possibly in the form of the Pietist confession, at that point, which would indicate that he had attained a new degree of self-awareness; on the other, the attainment of such a goal would be inimical to both the process of continual self-purification and the value placed on sustained achievement in the German concept of *Bildung*. We could therefore posit an ambiguous ending, such as a reunion of lovers not ending in engagement or an engagement not ending in marriage, that would resolve the loose threads of the plot without recourse to a finite happy or tragic ending. Novels that do end in a more traditional manner, either with marriage or death, like Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Goethe's *Werther*, or Hippel's *Lebensläufe in aufsteigender Linie*, would again go beyond the scope of the original concept of *Bildung*.

The case for an ambiguous ending of a *Bildungsroman* would also be supported by the secularized context of *Bildung*: i.e., reason and flaws in character, rather than any form of transcendental powers, would prove to be the motivating force behind the novel's events, so that a tragic fate, good fortune and misfortune, or the manifestations of Divine Providence would become superfluous in the resolution of the plot and the author could tailor the ending to the individual case. Although the hero may be deceived by appearances during the

course of the novel, the author would eventually expose storms, sudden attacks, accidental meetings, or occult happenings as human machinations or literary conventions, thereby reducing “transcendental” elements to a mechanical level. In any case, this secularization would exclude many works written prior to the eighteenth century, such as courtly epics like Wolfram’s *Parzival* or Hartmann’s *Armer Heinrich*, which were conceived in a distinctly religious context, or courtly Baroque novels like Barclay’s *Argenis* or von Lohenstein’s *Arminius*, which were predicated on a belief in Divine Providence, from the debate on the *Bildungsroman*. The early bourgeois utopian novels and the sentimental novels mentioned above would also fall into the latter category.

Finally, according to the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Wieland, a *Bildungsroman* would probably rely on a heavier use of direct discourse than other novels, especially in the form of the Socratic dialogue. Although many contemporary novels also used direct speech, its function was to dramatize the action and to sustain the forward momentum of the plot.⁴⁸ The Socratic dialogue, however, tended to retard the external action by shifting the focus of the novel onto a highly theoretical level. In a *Bildungsroman* the conflict would therefore become primarily ideological as the characters debated the themes of *Bildung* such as the progress of the hero’s development; criteria of aesthetic judgment; the nature of education, the laws, morals and political systems; utopian social reforms; or woman’s role in society. Moreover, because Socratic irony would require one or several third-person narrative frames in which the actual dialogue could be set, it would probably be integrated into a novel told in the third person by an omniscient, detached narrator. Although this form of dialogue could also appear in more subjective forms of the novel, the narrator would have to be capable of reflecting upon the events and of treating them in an ironic manner. Since the salient characteristic of most first-person narratives is, however, their immediacy, we would tend to disqualify them as potential *Bildungsromane*. Therefore, the sentimental novels mentioned above, digressive novels like Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, psychological novels like Moritz’ *Anton Reiser*, novels written almost entirely in dialogue form such as Engel’s *Lorenz Stark*, Hase’s *Gustav Aldermann*, Meißner’s *Alcibiades*, or Wieland’s *Agathodämon*, or novels portraying a philosophical *Bildungsreise* such as Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* or Nicolai’s *Sebalduß Nothanker*, would all diverge from the structural framework best suited for the Socratic dialogue in a *Bildungsroman*.

In fact, the only novels that do meet all of the criteria derived from the contemporary concept of *Bildung* would be works appearing after 1790 that were regarded as innovative, serious novels of education. They would include the third, revised version of Wieland’s *Agathon*, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and Jean Paul’s *Titan*. These works not only meet the above demands, but they also share many other thematic, structural, and formal characteristics which could eventually serve as the basis for defining a model *Bildungsroman*.⁴⁹

Although spatial limitations preclude delineating such characteristics here, they do exist and would justify the existence of the genre, if only as an historical phenomenon of the Age of Goethe. The question, of course, remains, how to approach novels of subsequent literary periods that were either critical of the original concept of *Bildung* or that had evolved their own standards for it, if we have such a limited model for a prototypical *Bildungsroman*. The Romantic writers, for example, reintroduced a transcendental dimension into their concept of *Bildung*, interpreted the laws of nature as the physical laws of natural science, and regarded the hero as a *poet-vates* who could converse with all natural phenomena and who was destined to usher in a new Golden Age, so that the criteria used above would no longer be valid.⁵⁰ If, however, we could observe that the Romantic principle of *Bildung* evolved in response to the original concept and that the novels embodying this new principle were written in direct reference to the original *Bildungsroman*, we could construct a broader framework of potential thematic, structural, and stylistic characteristics for this genre.⁵¹ The novels of this period that would come into question could then be related to the original *Bildungsroman* as follows: 1) novels that utilize similar conventions, but which redistribute the structural emphasis of the original, as in Hölderlin's *Hyperion* or Dorothea Schlegel's *Florentin*, which are written from the standpoint of the hero's final written self-analysis; 2) novels that adhere to a similar pattern of *Bildung*, but at a later date when the original presuppositions have changed, so that the hero's odyssey now ends in tragedy, as in Mörike's *Maler Nolten*, or resignation, as in Tieck's *Junger Tischlermeister*; 3) novels that imitate the conventions of the original *Bildungsroman*, but in a noticeably different ideological context, as in the historical or religious framework of Tieck's *Sternbald* or Eichendorff's *Ahnung und Gegenwart*; 4) novels that distinctly refer to the conventions in order to refute them and to replace them with more Romantic concepts, as in Novalis' *Ofterdingen*, Arnim's *Kronenwächter*, or Hoffmann's *Goldner Topf*; and 5) novels that appear to be conscious travesties of the original *Bildungsroman* as in Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre* or Immermann's *Epigonen*.

Once an original form and potential variations on it have been established—and again, the similarities or points of reference extend far beyond those mentioned in this paper—it would seem justifiable to speak in terms of a *Bildungsroman* as a specific type of novel. This genre may or may not manifest the humanitarian ideals attributed to it in the twentieth century, that being a matter of ideological preference and therefore a value-judgment, but it does exist as an historical literary phenomenon and perhaps it should be acknowledged as such within its own inherent limitations.

¹ Cf. Lothar Köhn, "Entwicklungs- und Bildungsroman," *DVjs*, 42 (1968), 590–632.

² W. Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung: Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), p. 272.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 272–73.

⁴F.W. Schröder, *Wielands Agathon und die Anfänge des modernen Bildungsromans*, Diss. (Königsberg, 1904), p. 25.

⁵H.H. Borchardt, "Bildungsroman," *Reallexikon der deutschen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (1958).

⁶W. Dilthey, *Das Leben Schleiermachers*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Teubner, 1922), I, 317; Dilthey, *Erlebnis*, p. 272.

⁷Cf. Köhn, *passim*.

⁸Kurt May, "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre: Ein Bildungsroman?" *DVjs*, 31 (1957), 1-37.

⁹Hans Weil, *Die Entstehung des deutschen Bildungsprinzips* (Bonn: Cohen, 1930); Ilse Schaarschmidt, "Der Bedeutungswandel der Begriffe 'Bildung' und 'bilden' in der Literaturepoche von Gottsched bis Herder," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bildungsbegriffs*, ed. W. Klafki (Weinheim: Beltz, 1965); F. Rauhut, "Die Herkunft der Worte und Begriffe 'Kultur,' 'civilisation' und 'Bildung,'" in Klafki; E. Lichtenstein, *Zur Entwicklung des Bildungsbegriffs von Meister Eckhardt bis Hegel* (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1966).

¹⁰J.C. Adelung, *Grammatisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1793). (This version agrees with the text of the first edition of 1774.) Cf. J.H. Campe, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Braunschweig, 1807).

¹¹Lichtenstein, p. 5.

¹²Plotinus, *Enneads* I, vi, 8 and I, vi, 9. Cf. Plato, *Republic* II, 377c and 500d.

¹³Lichtenstein, pp. 9-11, and Rauhut, p. 11.

¹⁴Cited by Schaarschmidt, p. 33.

¹⁵A.H. Francke, "Entwurf der Gesamten Anstalten, Welche zu Glaucha an Halle durch Gottes sonderbaren Segen teils zur Erziehung der Jugend, teils zur Verpflegung der Armen gemacht sind, wie sich's damit verhält im Monat Decembri 1698," in *Das Zeitalter des Pietismus*, ed. M. Schmidt and W. Jannasch (Bremen, 1965), pp. 93 ff.; A.H. Francke, "Vernehmung an zwölf nach Livland reisende Studenten" (1722), in Schmidt/Jannasch, pp. 108 ff.; and A.H. Francke, "Regeln zur Bewahrung des Gewissens und guter Ordnung in der Konversation oder Gesellschaft" (1689), in Schmidt/Jannasch, pp. 82 ff.

¹⁶[J.J. Spalding], *Die Sittenlehrer: oder Erzählung philosophischer Gespräche* (Berlin: Haude & Spener, 1747), and F.C. Oetinger, tr., *Aus den Anton Ulrich Grafen von Shaftesbury Characteristicks* (Tübingen, 1753).

¹⁷Weil, p. 31; Lichtenstein, p. 12; and Rauhut, p. 19.

¹⁸Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, "The Moralists," III, 2, in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 3 vols (London, 1749), II, 264.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, "Miscellaneous Reflections," III, 2.

²¹*Ibid.*, "Advice to an Author," I, 3.

²²*Ibid.*, "Moralists," II, 2.

²³Cf. C. Justi, *Winckelmann und seine Zeitgenossen*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1943), I, 258-66; E. Ermatinger, *Die Weltanschauung des jungen Wieland* (Frauenfeld: Huber, 1907), pp. 106-38; O. Walzel, "Shaftesbury und das deutsche Geistesleben des 18. Jahrhunderts," *GRM*, 1 (1909), 416-37; or F. Sengle, *Wieland* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1949), pp. 115-17.

²⁴J.J. Winckelmann, "Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst," in *Kleine Schriften und Briefe*, ed. W. Senff (Weimar: Böhlau, 1969), pp. 29-127.

²⁵C.M. Wieland, *Prosaische Jugendwerke*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. F. Homeyer and H. Bieber (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916), vol. I, 4, pp. 176-206.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 180.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 188.

²⁸Cf. L.M. Price, *English Literature in Germany* (Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1953), pp. 85-102; Walzel; or C.F. Weiser, *Shaftesbury und das deutsche Geistesleben* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1916).

²⁹Statistically, I recorded 261 dialogues published in journals or as books during the period from 1750 to 1793. Of these, 80% appeared after 1770; 64% could be classified as

theological, philosophical, pedagogical, or aesthetic dialogues; and between 60% and 90% were published in Protestant centers of the Enlightenment.

³⁰Cited by Schaarschmidt, pp. 56–67.

³¹J.H. Pestalozzi, "Die Abendstunde eines Einsiedlers," in *Grundlehren über Mensch, Staat und Erziehung: Pestalozzi's Werke im Auswahl*, ed. H. Barth (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1956), pp. 7–27.

³²Herder remained an admirer of Shaftesbury throughout his life. Cf. his letter to Hamann (early January, 1767) or the 33. "Humanitätsbrief" (1794).

³³J.G. Herder, "Vom Begriff der schönen Wissenschaften," in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin, 1877ff.), XXX, 177–82.

³⁴*Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, in *Werke*, V, 539–40.

³⁵Cf. *Werke*, VIII, 215–16, 224–26; *Werke*, VI, p. 152; or Weil, pp. 39, 44–49.

³⁶*Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, in *Werke*, XVII, 121–22.

³⁷*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, in *Werke*, XII, 145–47.

³⁸H. Koopmann, *Friedrich Schiller* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1966), II, 11.

³⁹Cf. Weil, pp. 144–45, 135.

⁴⁰Brief an Georg Forster, cited by Weil, p. 86.

⁴¹Cf. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, III, 260ff.; H. Fielding, *The History of Joseph Andrews* "Author's Preface"; F. von Blanckenburg, *Versuch über den Roman: Faksimileausgabe der Originalausgabe von 1774*, ed. E. Lämmert (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965), pp. 42–61; or C.M. Wieland, *Geschichte des Agathon*, 3rd ed., vol. III, XI. Buch, 6. Kap. for a definition of this concept

⁴²Cf. L. Schücking, *Soziologie der literarischen Geschmacksbildung*, 3rd ed. (Bern/München: Francke, 1961), pp. 24–35 or W.H. Bruford, *Germany in the 18th Century* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 271–327.

⁴³Cf. A. Hirsch, *Bürgertum und Barock im deutschen Roman* (Frankfurt/M: Baer, 1934), pp. 70–88 or H.F. Menck, *Der Musiker im Roman: Zur vorromantischen Erzählliteratur* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1931).

⁴⁴Cf. V. Lange, "Zur Gestalt des Schwärmers im deutschen Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Festschrift für Richard Alewyn*, ed. H. Singer and Benno v. Wiese (Köln: Böhlau, 1967), pp. 151–64. The term *Schwärmer* was originally used to designate members of a dissident religious minority and it still had connotations of political or social opposition in the second half of the eighteenth century.

⁴⁵Cf. Eva D. Becker, *Der Roman um 1780* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1963), pp. 73–77.

⁴⁶Cf. G. Röder, *Glück und glückliches Ende im dts Bildungsroman: Eine Studie zu Goethes Wilhelm Meister* (München: Hueber, 1968); Köhn, "Bildungsroman," p. 625; K. Reichert, "Utopie und Staatsroman: Ein Forschungsbericht," *DVjs*, 39 (1965), 259–87; H.-J. Mähl, *Die Idee des Goldenen Zeitalters im Werke des Novalis* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1965); or G. Lukács, *Goethe und seine Zeit*, in *Werke*, vol. VII: *Deutsche Literatur in zwei Jahrhunderten* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1964), pp. 76–77.

⁴⁷Cf. Lukács, pp. 76–77.

⁴⁸Cf. Blanckenburg, pp. 515–16, 499–500, 107–08, 355ff., 366; J.J. Engel, *Über Handlung, Gespräch, und Erzählung: Faksimiledruck der Originalausgabe von 1774*, ed. E.T. Voß (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1964); Becker, pp. 60–62; or H.-G. Winter, *Dialog und Dialogroman in der Aufklärung: Mit einer Analyse von J.J. Engels Gesprächstheorie* (Darmstadt: Thesen Verlag, 1974).

⁴⁹I have tried to treat this subject more thoroughly in my forthcoming book on the *Bildungsroman* in the Age of Goethe.

⁵⁰Cf. Novalis, *Schriften: Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, ed. P. Kluckhohn and R. Samuel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), vol. II, pp. 20, 313–14, 372–73, vol. III, p. 150; Friedrich Schlegel, *Seine prosaischen Jugendschriften 1794–1802*, ed. J. Minor (Wien, 1882), II, 239 (Athenäumsfragment # 222); P. Kluckhohn, *Persönlichkeit und Gemeinschaft: Studien zur Staatsauffassung der Romantik* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1925); Mähl; R. Samuel, *Die poetische Staats- und Geschichtsauffassung von Novalis* (Frankfurt/M., 1925).

⁵¹For the influence of novels like *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* on the Romantic novel, cf. J.O.E. Donner, *Der Einfluß Wilhelm Meisters auf den Roman der Romantik* (Helsingfors:

Frenckell, 1893); K.F. Gille, *Wilhelm Meister" im Urteil der Zeitgenossen* (Assen: van Gorkum, 1971); C. Heselshaus, "Die Wilhelm Meister-Kritik der Romantiker und die romantische Romantheorie," in *Nachahmung und Illusion*, ed. H.R. Jauss (München: Eidos, 1964), pp. 113-27; E. Mc Innes, "Zwischen 'Wilhelm Meister' und 'Die Ritter vom Geist,'" *DVjs*, 43 (1969), 487-514; or P. Scheidweiler, *Der Roman der Romantik* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1916).

HUGO KUHN: IN MEMORIAM

On October 5, 1978 Hugo Kuhn, Professor Emeritus of the University of Munich, died after a long illness. Born on July 20, 1909 in Thaleischweiler (Pfalz), Kuhn studied at the universities of Breslau and Tübingen, where he became an *außerplanmäßiger Professor* in 1947. From 1954 until his retirement he occupied the Carl von Kraus chair in Munich.

From the beginning Kuhn was an individualist in his scholarly work, refusing to be carried along by one tide or another. His book *Minnesangs Wende* (1952) brought about a change in the evaluation of post-classical *Minnesang*, freeing it from the negative epigone designation and bringing to light the conscious formal experimentation of the later poets. But it was through the medium of the essay that Kuhn emitted the impulses which were to be decisive for the progress of *Altgermanistik*. Each one of his essays is marked by an adherence to the text and its structure as demonstrated by his classic *Erec* study (1948). It was Kuhn who, years before it became fashionable, called for the inclusion of sociology within the critical method of medievalists (1952). For the past several years Kuhn moved more and more toward developing a "Theory of Medieval Literature" in breathtaking analyses spanning centuries, dealing not only with individual works but also with generic and stylistic problems. The most seminal of these essays have been collected into two volumes, *Dichtung und Welt im Mittelalter* (1959, 2nd. ed. 1969) and *Text und Theorie* (1969). Kuhn was also active as editor: from 1949 on he was co-editor of the *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift*, and in 1951 he became the editor of the *Altdeutsche Textbibliothek*.

For American Germanists Kuhn's death means more than the loss of a brilliant scholar; it also means the loss of a good friend. More than many of his contemporaries Kuhn always supported the strivings of Germanists in this country. He visited and lectured in the United States on several occasions and together with his co-editor, Richard Brinkmann, opened up the pages of the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift* to Americans writing in their own language. Kuhn always found time to sponsor foreign academics who wished to do research under his aegis in Munich, a practice which he continued in this, the last year of his life. Although he may be gone from our midst, the impulses generated through his work and personal contacts will remain and continue to be fertile.

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—Francis G. Gentry