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Chapter 4: The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction

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Critical attempts to establish the origins of the Bildungsroman as a significant genre in the history of English-language fiction have in recent years become contentious, for reasons that are now well-documented. The term itself did not appear in literary discourse in Britain until over a century after its first usage in Germany by Karl von Morgenstern in 1803. Though retrospectively viewed as a characteristic form of the nineteenth-century novel, it was not discussed by name in a British context before the beginning of the twentieth century, entering the Encyclopaedia Britannica in 1910.[1] Even when taking into account recognizable English synonyms or proximate terms of nineteenth-century provenance, such as the 'novel of apprenticeship' or 'self-culture', the pursuit of an originary source for the fictional narratives associated with these terms can be deemed problematic. As Susan Fraiman and others have argued, the widespread assumption that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (1795-6) represents an urtext of the genre from which 'an English family of texts [is] seen to descend' can have the effect of distorting or erasing alternative genealogies of eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction in English, particularly in relation to issues of gender.[2] Eschewing the Goethean model of the Bildungsroman, Fraiman traces an alternative tradition of English 'novels of development' produced by women writers back to Frances Burney in the 1770s. Lorna Ellis, in contrast, accepts the critical utility of the German term in describing the work of British female writers but goes even further back into the mid-eighteenth century to find its earliest exponent (Eliza Haywood).[3] For the main chapter on the English Bildungsroman in his well-known study of the European genre, The Way of the World (1987), Franco Moretti chose to include Henry Fielding's Tom Jones (1749)and William Godwin's Caleb Williams (1794) from the eighteenth century alongside Walter Scott's Waverley (1814), and the more familiar examples of Charles Dickens and Charlotte

Brontë. More strikingly, Moretti credits an early-nineteenth century English writer as a co-founder of the genre: the Bildungsroman, he declares, 'originates with Goethe and Jane Austen'.[4] Unlike her contemporary Scott, Austen is not known to have read Wilhelm Meister (which was not translated into English until after her death), so Moretti's statement proposes a parallel cross-cultural generic formation, rather than a direct lineage of cultural transmission. Other theorists of the Bildungsroman, however, have differentiated eighteenth and early-nineteenth century English novelists from the genre, situating them within a broader taxonomy of novelistic forms. Mikhail Bakhtin, most notably, cites Tom Jones as an example of 'biographical' fiction in which the hero remains a fundamentally static figure, unaffected by the 'assimilation of historical time' characteristic of the Bildungsroman.[5] Scott's Waverley, commonly known as the text which instigated the nineteenth-century enthusiasm for the 'historical novel', as well as taking the form of a biographical narrative of individual development, would seem to fit the criteria for the Bildungsroman outlined by Bakhtin and Georg Lukács better, but it is less clear where the novels of Austen sit within this broader taxonomic field.[6] With the exception of Mansfield Park (1814), as Thomas Jeffers has noted, none of Austen's novels present an extended narrative of self-formation.[7] Pride and Prejudice (1813) and Emma (1815), the two novels most commonly cited as Bildungsromane, contain narratives of transformative self-reflection within a much narrower framework, focussing on a relatively discrete sequence of biographical time. Yet Fanny Price, the heroine of Mansfield Park, is, for some readers, notoriously deficient in the narrative agency with which Austen's other female protagonists have been credited. Recently, Laura Green has distinguished 'novels of courtship' in the Austen-Burney tradition from 'novels of formation' in the more modern sense, though she too is sceptical of the term 'Bildungsroman' in the context of 'English and Anglophone literary tradition'.[8]

Despite these associated difficulties and disagreements, there remains a strong case for foregrounding the pivotal significance of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in any account of the nineteenth-century Bildungsroman in Britain. 'Novels of development' written in English in a variety of forms predate or independently coalesce with the late-eighteenth century German Bildungsroman - some of which have indeed been cited as influences on Goethe himself – but if we wish to understand the term 'Bildungsroman' as a more nuanced, differentiated category within the broader narrative field of nineteenth-century fiction Goethe's text still presents a key point of access. Almost all the major nineteenth-century British novelists, from Scott in the first two decades to Thomas Hardy in the 1890s, were familiar with Wilhelm Meister, and some with other important examples of the German Enlightenment and Romantic theorization of Bildung. Some popular writers of fiction such as Scott, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and George Eliot had an extensive knowledge of, and scholarly interest in, German literature, while others, such as Dickens and Charlotte Brontë, had access to translated editions. While it is not the primary aim of this chapter to trace the influence of the German Bildungsroman on the development of nineteenth-century British fiction, such an undertaking need not be confined to seemingly marginal or obscure novels of the period. The list of Victorian novels which directly invoke or appropriate Wilhelm Meister, or which through varying layers of mediation reconfigure specific formal and thematic elements of the Goethean Bildungsroman, includes some of the most recognizable titles, as well as a multitude of less familiar ones (plus some which were widely-known during the period, but whose profile has subsequently diminished). The following discussion encompasses the wide range of nineteenth-century British fiction that can be read in relation to the generic model of the Bildungsroman, recognizing, of course, that like all acts of generic classification the model to which individual texts are aligned is, to some extent, an abstraction composed of a range of elements which are rarely reproduced in their entirety in any concrete instance. At

the same time, and in contrast to some recent critical accounts of the genre, I would emphasize the relative cohesion of a body of Victorian fiction that works through the cultural legacies of the German Bildungsroman, acquiring by the end of the century its own internal momentum and intertextual frame of reference.

Anglicising the Bildungsroman

Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre was first translated into English, under the title Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, by Thomas Carlyle in 1824. Carlyle was not the first British writer to be absorbed by the novel which is widely seen as the 'prototypical' German Bildungsroman; Walter Scott, who also published English translations of Goethe and other German writers, is thought to have been influenced by his reading of Wilhelm Meister when he began drafting the early chapters of Waverley in 1805.[9] The titles of these chapters read as a schematic outline of a biographical narrative of self-formation similar to that unfolded in Goethe's text: 'Waverley-Honour – A Retrospect', 'Education', 'Castle-Building', 'Choice of A Profession'. In its completed form, published a decade later, there is a marked disjunction between the manner of these early chapters and the bulk of the narrative which follows Edward Waverley's journey to the Highlands of Scotland. While, as indicated above, a plausible case can be made for reading Waverley as the first major nineteenth-century Bildungsroman in English, its more established status as a work of historical fiction follows from this uneven structural development. In consequence, Carlyle's role as the primary mediator of Wilhelm Meister and the German Bildungsroman within Victorian literary culture has become an established truth of modern criticism.[10] Though Carlyle found certain aspects of Goethe's novel troubling, and was uncomplimentary towards the title character (describing Wilhelm as a 'milksop, whom, with all his gifts, it takes an effort to avoid despising'), he interpreted its underlying significance as an autobiographical expression of Goethe's spiritual development, and a more mature philosophical statement than his early

work The Sorrows of Young Werther (1774).[11] Carlyle, in other words, projected the narrative form of a Bildungsroman onto Goethe's life and career as a whole, culminating in the verdict which he expressed in an obituary article of 1832 that Goethe was: 'A completed man […] each side of many-sided life receives its due from him'.[12] Carlyle conceived of his relationship to Goethe as that of 'a Disciple to his Master, nay of a Son to his spiritual Father', and was accordingly self-conscious about his role as a cultural mediator: in 1827, following the success of his translation, he wrote to inform Goethe that 'your name and doctrines will ere long be English as well as German'.[13] The process of 'translating' Goethe into English, however, went far beyond a technical act of transliteration. Carlyle helped to fashion a particular interpretation of Goethe's cultural significance for early and mid-Victorian readers, in the process 'Calvinizing and Anglicizing' the form of the Bildungsroman.[14]

Carlyle's only completed work of fiction, Sartor Resartus (1833-4), can itself be described as an exercise in cultural translation, a remediation of Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship beyond its formal status as a novel in translation. The two texts could hardly be more different in their formal and tonal qualities, and yet, to a large extent, Sartor Resartus exists for the purpose of disseminating and recontextualizing the philosophical kernel which Carlyle extracted from Wilhelm Meister. In addition to the book's central figure, the German philosopher of clothes Diogenes von Teufelsdröch, and its use of a hybridised Anglo-Germanic language, Sartor Resartus directly cites its parent-text on numerous occasions. Sandwiched between the English Editor's bemused speculations on the meaning of Teufelsdröch's philosophy, Book 2 of Sartor Resartus contains an autobiographical narrative of self-formation which G. B. Tennyson described as a 'handbook of the Victorian Bildungsroman'.[15] Beginning from the 'Happy season of Childhood' followed by 'the fervid season of youth', Teufelsdröch's autobiography figures a process of 'terrestrial

Apprenticeship' which negotiates the central conflicts and crises previously resolved (in Carlyle's view) by Goethe's text.[16] This narrative climaxes in an experience of spiritual conversion by which the philosopher comes to apprehend the wisdom associated with Goethean maxims:

> America is here or nowhere […] Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy ideal […] Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called To-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work. (148-9)

The citation of Lothario's advice to Wilhelm in Goethe's novel ('Here or nowhere is America') is the cornerstone of Teufelsdröch's 'hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement', an epiphany on the value of channelling the imperative of work through the constraints of present circumstance, rather than unfocussed aspiration (148). As critics have often noted, Carlyle's 'Calvinizing' spin on the Goethean dictum emphasizes the core virtue of labour or 'action', a form of praxis which not only shapes the self but saves it from the despair of scepticism and doubt.[17] Carlyle is sometimes criticised for an apparent reluctance or inability to appreciate the 'aesthetic' dimension of Goethe's conception of Bildung, but it should be recognised that work is not conceived in this context as an external imposition on the self, but rather as an intrinsic aspect of its formation. As Teufelsdröch writes: 'A certain inarticulate Self-consciousness dwells dimly in us; which only our Works can render articulate and decisively discernible' (126). The resolution of Teufelsdröch's conversion narrative strikes a balance between self-affirmation and the 'Annihilation of Self' through labour (142): affirmative to the extent that the philosopher has been able to discover his true 'Calling' as a writer, yet not as dogmatically self-certain as might superficially appear to be the case (151). Teufelsdröch's mysterious disappearance and dispersal at the end of the text approximates to the state of pilgrimage or exile which Wilhelm enters at the end of Wilhelm

Meister's Apprenticeship, neither text providing the narrative closure which is sometimes associated with the Bildungsroman.

One of the earliest theorists of the genre, Wilhelm Dilthey, observed in an essay on Sartor Resartus first published in 1891: 'Carlyle's translation of Wilhelm Meister, his Essays, but especially this novel, were effective in transplanting the German Bildungsroman into English soil. It would be interesting to see what effect this Bildungsroman had on the English novel in general'.[18] The most immediate 'effect' of Carlyle's work of cultural translation can be seen in the plethora of 'novels of "apprenticeship"' written in transparent emulation of Wilhelm Meister (and, to a lesser extent, Sartor Resartus) during the 1830s and '40s.[19] This body of fiction was first collectively identified by Susanne Howe in a pioneering critical study of the nineteenth-century English Bildungsroman, Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen (1930), and includes novels by Benjamin Disraeli, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, G. H. Lewes, Geraldine Jewsbury, John Sterling, and F. D. Maurice. Despite criticism by Fraiman for fostering an unhelpful veneration of Wilhelm Meister as an 'originary' text, Howe's study remains a valuable exercise in tracing the direct cultural influence of the Goethean Bildungsroman on early and mid-Victorian culture. Though, inexplicably, Howe chose to omit several of the major British exponents of the genre, including Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, her consequent focus on writers who were already perceived as 'minor' in the early twentieth century and are now largely unread has its benefits. A common motif of the 'apprentice novels' identified by Howe is 'the sane and corrective power of action', a 'moral lesson' which Carlyle had encouraged readers of Wilhelm Meister to embrace, rather than dwelling on the aesthetic dimension of 'harmonious self-development'.[20] At the same time, Howe notes that the dandified, male upper-class protagonists of novels by Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton exhibit an 'apprenticeship de luxe', such that it would be misleading to portray these early-Victorian 'imitators' of Goethe simply as purveying moralistic or

pragmatic reductions of Bildung.[21] Disraeli's Contarini Fleming (1832), for example, takes as its subject 'the development and formation of the poetic character', and ostentatiously depicts the hero's aesthetic education through travel to exotic locations . As his name suggests, the title character of the novel is self-divided by his mixed Latin and Teutonic lineage, a cultural schism which is manifested in the narrative as a series of bewildering oscillations between the pursuit of worldly power and esoteric learning. The advice of Contarini's mentor De Winter is to pursue action ('Act, act, act; act without ceasing, and you will no longer talk of the vanity of life'), yet to the end of the novel it remains ambiguous whether 'action' should be understood as a commitment to external social obligations or as a cover for the solipsistic cultivation of aesthetic experience.[22] Similarly, Bulwer-Lytton's Ernest Maltravers (1837) and its sequel Alice; or, The Mysteries (1838) attempt to reconcile the personal development of the artist with social responsibility. Offering a more cohesive and schematic narrative than Disraeli's, Ernest Maltravers is perhaps the closest that any nineteenth-century novel in English came to a simulation of Wilhelm Meister. In his 1840 Preface to the novel, Bulwer-Lytton explicitly compared the 'moral education or apprenticeship' of his title character with that of Goethe's text, indicating his intention to shift the focus of the narrative of apprenticeship from 'theoretical art' to 'practical life'.[23] Within the novel itself the narrator outlines the shape of his hero's story as one of 'fierce emotions and passionate struggles, through which the Wilhelm Meister of real life must work out his apprenticeship, and attain the Master Rank' (66). Again, the 'real' and 'practical' are privileged terms within the dialectic of self-formation and social order, and the overarching trajectory of the two novels moves from the realm of the 'Ideal' towards a recognition of 'the virtue of Action – the obligations of Genius – and the philosophy that teaches us to confide in the destinies, and labour in the service, of mankind.[24] Nevertheless, the apprenticeship served by Maltravers stages a genuine contest between alternative vocational identities – should he become a 'man

of books' or a 'man of deeds'? – and as in Contarini Fleming the hero oscillates from one extreme to the other (117). The resolution of this debate lies in Bulwer-Lytton's conception of the modern professional author as a figure who steers a median course between commercialized popularity, on the one extreme, and solipsistic detachment from the public sphere on the other. As I have argued elsewhere, the 1830s and '40s saw the publication of many similar narratives of literary apprenticeship, in which the generic template of the Bildungsroman was used to enable and examine the construction of new professional identities, Dickens's David Copperfield (1849-50) being now the most celebrated example of this sub-genre.[25] Professional development, in this narrativized form, is differentiated equally from the self-absorbed interiority of the 'Romantic' artist and a debased accommodation with the market.

Though nowadays little-known, Ernest Maltravers was a remarkably influential text in the mid-nineteenth century, whose presence can be traced directly through a series of subsequent novels in a similar form by the likes of Lewes, Thackeray, and Charles Kingsley. In Jewsbury's The Half Sisters (1848), one of the two female protagonists, Alice Helmsby, is shown reading a copy of Bulwer-Lytton's novel, 'then recently published', and identifying with the situation of a character whose aristocratic self-cultivation does not result in fulfilment. Ironically, the very fact that Alice has sufficient leisure and cultural knowledge to read Ernest Maltravers is a symptom of her 'ennui' and lack of a productive vocation of the kind embodied by her half-sister, the Italian actress Bianca.[26] The Half Sisters is one of the first Victorian Bildungsromane to adopt parallel protagonists and its interest lies partly in its anticipation of more familiar novels by George Eliot. A close family friend of the Carlyles, Jewsbury is the only female writer included in Howe's survey of Wilhelm Meister's 'English Kinsmen'. Yet, significantly, Goethe is not the primary model for The Half Sisters, this role belonging instead to another seminal work of European Romanticism, Madame de Staël's

Corinne, or Italy (1807). Like the renowned singer Corinne, Bianca is a powerful figure of female genius whose artistic talent and vocation are established from the outset of the novel and remain more or less unwavering until near the end. Jewsbury's narrative traces the process of professional development which allows her heroine to achieve artistic and public success, yet with none of the uncertainty and vacillation which characterises apprentice novels predominantly influenced by Wilhelm Meister. As in Sartor Resartus, a commitment to work is deemed pre-requisite for self-realisation, and its enforced absence has tragic consequences for women's lives, as in the case of Bianca's half-sister. Through the obvious counterpoint of her dual protagonists, Jewsbury argues strenuously for the necessity of female vocational opportunities, legitimising the figure of Bianca against the prevailing masculinist 'horror of professional women'. The professional woman participates in a fulfilling though austere life of 'struggle' which, in Carlylean fashion, is exalted over the 'search after happiness' - that is, until the very end of the novel when Bianca undergoes a volte face, abandoning the stage for marriage in a manner which partially prefigures the resolution of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Bildungsroman in verse, Aurora Leigh (1856).[27]

Novels of Self-Culture

The popularisation of the Bildungsroman as a novelistic form during the mid-Victorian period was closely related to the emergence of a wider discourse of 'self-culture' and 'self-help'. The two latter terms may appear to connote different, even opposing cultural values: 'self-culture' as an approximate translation of the German idea of Bildung as aesthetic education; 'self-help' as a practical instrument of social mobility popularly associated with lower and middle-class Victorian culture. Yet in fact these terms were used synonymously in many influential writings of the period, and disentangling one from the other is more difficult than is sometimes assumed. Carlyle's Teufelsdröch, for example, wishes to 'acquire for himself the highest of all possessions, that of Self-help', by which he means a capacity for

intellectual development through informal self-education with little discernible effect on his worldly status (88). The most famous of the mid-Victorian exponents of 'self-help', Samuel Smiles, used the term interchangeably with 'self-culture' in his 1859 conduct book, based on a series of lectures on education delivered to working-class men in Leeds during the 1840s. For Smiles, 'The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual', and like Carlyle he educed poverty as the material basis from which growth is most likely to be achieved, precisely on account of the difficulties faced.[28] Self-help is a doctrine which espouses the capacity of individual will to resist and overcome adverse circumstance; at the same time, as the format of Smiles' collective (or group) biography indicates, this doctrine assumes the ordinariness of free will - the capacity for overcoming difficulty is not reserved for exceptional individuals. Smiles' key argument, though, was the mutual reinforcement of physical and mental labour in the work of self-culture. A 'life of manual employment' was not 'incompatible with high mental culture', he believed, and by the same token culture achieved without the discipline of labour was ineffectual. This suggests an inextricable relationship between the material and spiritual dimensions of self-help but it also refutes the suspicion that cultural aspiration is merely a cover for social mobility. Smiles clearly states that '[o]ne way in which self-culture may be degraded is by regarding it too exclusively as a means of "getting on"'.[29]

Dickens is the novelist in whose work this popular contemporary discourse of self-culture is most clearly felt. The two novels by Dickens commonly associated with the Bildungsroman genre – David Copperfield and Great Expectations (1860-1) - both explore ideas prevalent within the writings of Smiles and less familiar names such as G. L. Craik and Edwin Paxton Hood. Critics have noted the broadly affirmative use of the language of self-help running throughout the first of these two novels, sometimes with unease. According to Jerome Buckley, the 'happy ending' of David Copperfield suggests a seamless 'integration of

personality to which the hero in the novel of youth typically aspires', though it is rarely accomplished.[30] Through much of his autobiographical narrative David attributes 'the source of my success' to a 'patient and continuous energy which then began to be matured in me, and which I know to be the strong part of my character'.[31] He draws strength from the traumatic experiences of childhood recounted in his narrative, concluding that 'the endurance of my childish days had done its part to make me what I was' (750). Working in a bottle warehouse in London with 'common men and boys' (157) – an episode based on Dickens's childhood experience of the blacking factory revealed in the unpublished autobiographical fragment which preceded his composition of the novel– becomes a 'painful discipline' from which he can build a stronger self (481). The latter half of David Copperfield recounts David's successful apprenticeship as a professional writer in which his determination '[n]ever to put one hand to anything, on which I could throw my whole self; and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was' both sublimates and redeems the memories of alienated factory labour which he would prefer to forget (560). Robin Gilmour is one of several critics to find the Smilesian ethos of 'prudence and emotional self-discipline' (which applies both to David's personal and professional life) unsatisfactory as the 'official subject' of the novel. He points out the contradictory appeal of David's exorbitant childhood memories and the 'liberating imprudence' of his friend Micawber, both of which work against a narrow interpretation of the economy of self-help. But if Dickens is 'far from single-minded in the presentation of David's successful progress', David Copperfield nonetheless contains a narrative of self-realisation through professional vocation in a strikingly modern sense.[32] Dickens shows David literally labouring on the construction of a self through writing, and while the course of his formative narrative acknowledges that his work is not free from alienation, the professional identity which he creates is met with almost instantaneous recognition and reward in the guise of his 'rising fame and fortune'

(778). Buckley identifies an element of 'wish-fulfilment' in the autobiographical context of the novel, though another way of reading it would be to infer that David is a rather more exceptional figure than the bland democratic everyman suggested by Moretti.[33]

Whereas in David Copperfield Dickens maintains the equivalence between 'self-culture' and 'self-help' which Smiles sought to emphasize – David achieves material success and social mobility only through the self-realization of authorship and literary fame – in Great Expectations this is no longer the case. Pip's determination to 'get on in life' and to be thought 'uncommon' is the expression of his shame at being derided as a 'common labouring-boy' by Estella, but it results not in a dialectical sublation of labour as the source of cultural and economic value (at least not until near the end of the novel), but rather in his complicity with the view that to become a 'gentleman' is to be 'above work'.[34] Once removed from the necessity to work Pip makes little progress in self-cultivation, despite acquiring the educational polish of his newfound middle-class status. The material conditions which are conventionally presumed to enable self-culture (an increase of leisure and economic resources) in fact militate against it; though limited in scope, the self-educational achievements of Biddy and Joe Gargery are given greater textual prominence than any knowledge that Pip gains as a direct result of his social elevation. Pip, of course, is not a figure of 'self-help' in either of the senses exemplified by David Copperfield: he 'know[s] I have done nothing to raise myself in life, and that Fortune alone has raised me' (463). When G. B. Tennyson describes Great Expectations as a distinctive expression of the 'Victorian concept of Bildung', therefore, he does not mean that the hero of the novel directly embodies Smilesian values, rather that '[w]hat Pip undergoes is a self-education that is of necessity painful, but also ultimately spiritually fortifying'.[35] In this case, the pedagogical function of the genre is accomplished more through a stripping away of the subjective illusions which the protagonist has nurtured during the course of his development from childhood to early

adulthood, than through a process of self-affirmation, as in David Copperfield. The difference between these two narratives, however, is relative rather than absolute: just as David's immature perception of the world is also, to some degree, disenchanted in the course of his development, so Pip's mature consciousness must also begin a process of self-reconstruction. The staged progress of Pip's 'Expectations' across the three volumes of the original book publication explicitly frames this narrative of self-education for the benefit of the reader.

Great Expectations draws from Carlyle in its modelling of Pip's self-formation as a process of apprenticeship through which the autobiographical subject learns, eventually, to accept the discipline of labour. Whereas in Wilhelm Meister and Sartor Resartus, however, 'apprenticeship' is a figurative expression for a broader period of learning bounded only by the temporal confines of youth, in Dickens's novel, as in other Victorian realist fiction, the hero's apprenticeship is also a concrete social experience located within a fully articulated system of class and the division of labour. Dickens exposes the painful disjunction between apprenticeship as it is experienced in its traditional context as a form of indentured labour and the new possibilities of cultural aspiration and social mobility which it encompasses within the Bildungsroman. In Wilhelm Meister, as Moretti puts it, '"apprenticeship" is no longer the slow and predictable progress towards one's father's work, but rather an uncertain exploration of social space, which the nineteenth century – through travel and adventure, wandering and getting lost […] – will underline countless times'.[36] In Great Expectations, Dickens presents Pip's dissatisfaction at the circumscribed prospect of his future as an apprentice blacksmith to his surrogate father, Joe. Pip is 'bound apprentice' in a scene which alludes to the threat of penal incarceration overshadowing his childhood: 'Here, in a corner, my indentures were duly signed and attested, and I was "bound," Mr. Pumblechook holding me all the while as if we had looked in on our way to the scaffold, to have these little

preliminaries disposed of' (105). He soon becomes restless with the 'regular routine of apprenticeship-life' and longs to 'be a gentleman' (117). Although from the retrospective maturity of his autobiographical narrative , Pip accuses himself of not valuing his apprenticeship with 'plain contented Joe' sufficiently, the 'restlessly aspiring discontented me' which leads him away from the forge is equally close to the authorial voice of the novel (108). Pip's restless movement and 'inability to settle to anything' (313) aligns him with that aspect of the 'modernity' of youth which Moretti sees symbolically represented by the form of the Bildungsroman.[37] It is important to note that Pip is unable to return to the forge at the end of the novel, even though he has come to value the unchanging social idyll which it evokes.

Self-culture and social mobility can thus be conceived as the dual imperatives of the mid-Victorian Bildungsroman – ideally aligned in mutual support, but where this relationship breaks down generating friction productive for social critique. Despite the intrinsic difficulties which both of these imperatives posed for contemporary narratives of female development, as numerous feminist critics have shown, they are equally evident in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Jane Eyre (1847) has long held an anomalous position within modern critical accounts of the 'female Bildungsroman': its very prominence as an iconic text of proto-feminist self-expression – which renders it almost obligatory to include in such accounts - makes it unrepresentative of nineteenth-century novels of female development more broadly, and thereby puts it at risk of becoming strangely invisible. Ellis sums up the established view of Jane Eyre when she describes it as 'the quintessential female Bildungsroman',[38] and yet for others, including Fraiman and the editors of The Voyage In (1983), the Bildungsroman is not the 'quintessential' narrative form of female development.[39] Most critics are agreed on the narrative features which make Jane Eyre seem an exceptional novel of female development for the mid-nineteenth century, and by extension make it

comparable to the contemporary male Bildungsroman. Jane's 'independence as a wanderer who must make her own way in the world' allows her to achieve a type of 'Bildung defined as social mobility' which, to some degree, resembles that of David Copperfield.[40] The fluid spatial movement and temporal retrospection of the protagonist, her drive to fulfil autonomous creative, professional, and spiritual needs, and her eventual reintegration within an established social hierarchy through marriage to Rochester, all have resonance in Dickens's novel. Like Dickens too, Brontë's overarching narrative template for the biographical novel was a secularized adaptation of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (1678), an 'insistence on life as a pilgrimage' in which the hero/ine undergoes the trials of worldly experience on their route to salvation;[41] likewise, in the contemporary novels of Thackeray the gentleman hero must find his 'way through the world'.[42] Brontë's treatment of this archetypal narrative design retains more of its original spiritual fervour than is evident in the novels of Dickens or Thackeray, and Barry Qualls has suggested a direct link to the 'Calvinized Bildungsroman' model established in Sartor Resartus, as well as to earlier Protestant spiritual autobiographies. In Brontë's fiction, as in Carlyle, the achievement of self-formation hinges on a commitment to its apparent opposite: 'self-annihilation and renunciation, the exaltation of work as alone giving the human being purpose and identity'.[43] In Jane Eyre, this religious impulse to chasten the individual's desire for self-fulfilment is tempered by an equally strong Romantic impulse of self-assertion, resulting in what Kelsey Bennett has described as a 'healthy reconciliation of propensity with principle'.[44] In plot terms, Jane's two acts of resistance to the men who seek to shape her identity through marriage appear to cancel each other out: her decision to leave Rochester at Thornfield leads her in the direction of renunciation (sacrificing the propensity of her desire for moral principle), but her subsequent decision not to follow St. John Rivers to India is based on a reversal of priorities (self-sacrifice in an extreme and self-conscious form is abandoned at the

prompting of a natural impulse). Though the ending of Jane Eyre is endlessly disputed in its details, it seems clear that some kind of balance between opposing energies has been established, however precarious its foundation.

As Qualls and others have suggested, Brontë's final novel Villette (1853) presents a more austere and unsettling version of the heroine's internal conflict between self-realization and the renunciation of self.[45] In some ways, Lucy Snowe's autonomy and latent aspiration to determine her own life exceed that of Jane Eyre, leading her into social environments more challenging than Thornfield. Her solitary journey to London (the 'Babylon' of Victorian imagination) en route to Villette (a city whose language and religion are entirely alien to her, but where she manages to secure a foothold as an English tutor in Madame Beck's Pensionnat) offers, for the 1850s, an extraordinary depiction of female agency outside the domestic sphere. Lucy modestly declares: 'I know not that I was of a self-reliant or active nature; but self-reliance and exertion were forced upon me by circumstances, as they are upon thousands besides', apparently anxious to disavow any suggestion of personal ambition with professions of indecision and lack of will.[46] Of her teaching career, she remarks: 'I felt I was getting on; not lying the stagnant prey of mould and rust, but polishing my faculties and whetting them to a keen edge with constant use', while also 'perceiving well that, as far as my own mind was concerned, God had limited its powers and its action - thankful, I trust, for the gift bestowed, but unambitious of higher endowments, not restlessly eager after higher culture' (145, 313). These carefully balanced self-assessments of her capacity for independent thought and action express both an affinity for and suspicion of the practice of self-culture. Inasmuch as this practice was conceived as a form of labour or discipline performed on the self, it represents a legitimate aspiration for the subject shaped by Protestant belief, yet it always runs the risk of detaching the self from higher obligations to God and the

service of other human lives. Lucy exhorts herself to 'be content to labour for independence until you have proved, by winning that prize, your right to look higher':

> But afterwards, is there nothing more for me in life – no true home – nothing to be dearer to me than myself, and by its paramount preciousness, to draw from me better things than I care to culture for myself only? Nothing, at whose feet I can willingly lay down the whole burden of human egotism, and gloriously take up the noble charge of labouring and living for others? (450)

The suspicion of 'egotism', then, clouds Lucy's desire 'to culture' the self, the unfamiliar predicate form of the word emphasizing the sense of internalized organic growth which it also held for Matthew Arnold. Like Smiles and Carlyle, Lucy considers self-culture in relation to a broad range of mental faculties, rather than in narrowly aesthetic terms, and this includes the 'cultivation' of happiness which – like Teufelsdröch – she considers a dubious goal: 'Happiness is not a potato, to be planted in mould and tilled with manure. Happiness is a glory shining far down upon us out of Heaven' (330). At the same time, there is no point in her narrative at which Lucy definitively relinquishes the desire to lead a self-fulfilled independent life. The ending of Villette, which confirms Lucy's professional identity as a teacher while suggesting its dependency on the romantic attachment of her male benefactor, M. Paul, and a future contingent on his fortunes, maintains its profoundly ambivalent treatment of the discourse of self-help. While there is clearly a significant gendered dimension to Brontë's ambivalence, given the prevailing cultural, economic, and legal impediments to female self-development, it should be noted that the suspicion towards self-culture grounded in religious belief was shared by some male writers of the period. Charles Kingsley, for example, wrote a series of novels concerned with 'self-development' during the late 1840s and 1850s, most notably Alton Locke (1850), a Bildungsroman which charts the failed literary and political apprenticeship of a working-class poet and Chartist who seeks to

'educate myself and rise in life'.[47] Kingsley similarly sympathises with and delimits the aspiration for self-improvement, especially on the part of the working classes, and he specifically critiques Goethe's 'aesthetic' ideal of cultivating the self as a form of intellectual solipsism harmful to social solidarity and religious obligation.

Historical Time and the Laws of Development

Franco Moretti divides the long nineteenth-century of the European Bildungsroman into two halves: the first half, 1789-1848, is a period of 'balance between the constraints of modern socialization, and its benefits', but in the second half, from mid-century, 'the atmosphere darkens, and a gloomy downward trajectory begins'.[48] Notwithstanding the larger cultural field of observation, and the fact that Moretti's generally dismissive view of the English Bildungsroman makes it appear unrepresentative of the genre's trajectory as a whole, this remains a useful rough distinction within the more limited cultural and historical framework of this chapter. It is often argued, in fact, that the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a shift away from the 'socially integrative', broadly optimistic narratives of self-formation produced during the Regency and early to mid-Victorian periods (the novels of Austen and Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and Brontë) and towards a more pessimistic 'plot of disillusionment and alienation' (the novels of Meredith, Gissing, and Hardy).[49] Where critics have tended to disagree is on whether this shift marks a mutation within the boundaries of the genre, or whether it leads beyond the genre to the production of something else: an 'Anti' or 'failed' Bildungsroman. Moretti, for example, offers a very unequal treatment of the two halves of his historical period since the latter half is considered to witness the fundamental demise of the genre.[50] Within this broad schema , of course, much of the fine detail gets lost. Just as there are examples of 'failed' development in the English tradition from relatively early in the century (Kingsley's Alton Locke ends in the death of its eponymous hero, Thackeray's Pendennis (1848-50) is as much a 'novel of disillusionment' in the Lukácsian

sense as the work of Balzac and Flaubert),[51] so not every Bildungsroman of the late nineteenth century adopts a tragic form or abandons the attempt to reconcile the maturation of the hero with social integration (Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Robert Elsmere (1888), arguably the most popular Bildungsroman of the Victorian period, does neither).

During the 1860s and 1870s, in particular, neither of the alternative models of the Bildungsroman which critics have tended to construct seems predominant. The work of George Eliot and George Meredith, for instance, encompasses novels which can be positioned on either – and in some cases both – side(s) of Moretti's historical divide. Eliot's The Mill on the Floss (1860) might be viewed as one of the earliest examples of the later nineteenth-century Bildungsroman, and it has been widely discussed as a novel which stretches the boundaries of the 'classical' genre in various respects. As a reworking of the Goethean paradigm – with which Eliot was as familiar as Carlyle and Bulwer-Lytton – the development of Maggie Tulliver has been likened by Marianne Hirsch to the inset female narrative of the 'Beautiful Soul' rather than to the main story of Wilhelm Meister. In contrast to Wilhelm's picaresque travels through social space, the process of Maggie's formation is introspective, 'located in the inner self', and spatially immobile or circular, 'culminating in death'.[52] Fraiman similarly characterizes The Mill on the Floss as a 'failed appropriation of the Bildungsroman that is finally a critique of this genre and its values', specifically in revealing the masculinist assumptions underpinning the conventional pattern of the hero's development from apprenticeship to 'mastery' through encounters with the social world beyond the domestic sphere. Like other critics, Fraiman observes the poignant juxtaposition of Maggie's experience with that of her brother Tom, who undergoes a parallel, but markedly different, and in terms of practical outcome more successful, education, closer in some respects to the Smilesian image of industrious self-help (though, in fact, neither character manages to unify bodily and mental culture in the way that Smiles recommended). The tragic

ending of the novel, in which both siblings are drowned, represents, for Fraiman, 'a moment when their narratives collide for the last time, and now Tom's upward-bound Bildungsroman is fatally assimilated to Maggie's downward spiral'.[53] In Eliot's representation of their reconciliation through death, Maggie and Tom are symbolically returned to childhood, reinforcing the sense of their arrested development, which can also be viewed as a type of evolutionary failure. More so than in earlier Victorian fiction, Eliot ascribes the frustration and disenchantment of her protagonist's aspirations to external forces beyond the control of individual will: the collective weight of provincial society's narrow views on the forms of education appropriate for women and the determining influence of biologically inherited characteristics through successive generations. Maggie's project of self-culture fails in large measure because, for Eliot (unlike in Jane Eyre), the individual self can no longer be viewed as separate from the organic milieu which it wishes either to master or escape.

Meredith's early novel, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859) offers a similarly complex appropriation of and resistance to the established conventions of the mid-Victorian Bildungsroman. Though not culminating in death, the hero's development from childhood, fostered by his father's pseudo-scientific educational theories, ends in a 'permanently arrested' state of incompletion, as Buckley notes.[54] In the final chapter of the novel, Lady Blandish concludes of the damaging effect of Sir Austin's 'System' on his son's emotional wellbeing: 'Richard will never be what he promised'.[55] According to Tennyson, Meredith 'represents a second generation of the English Bildungsroman' in which 'the optimism and drive of the earlier Victorians has been supplanted by a scepticism that borders at times on the cynical, and the Romantic and early Victorian organicism has been transmuted into an impersonal, almost mechanical life-force evolutionism'.[56] The language of organic growth is prevalent throughout The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, but in a form which makes it difficult to say whether it is merely the debased currency of Sir Austin's book of educational aphorisms,

The Pilgrim's Scrip, or an authentic model for understanding psychological and sexual development within adolescence. One of the problems with Sir Austin's 'System' is that it attempts to regulate organic development through external cultivation and monitoring, rather than allowing for the contingencies of self-culture. As such, his organicism is itself mechanistic, conceiving of Richard as 'an organism opening to the set mechanic diurnal round' which needs to be 'fit for what machinal duties he may have to perform'.[57] Meredith opposes the unavoidable influence of 'Nature' on Richard's maturation to his father's scientific modelling of the organic to often ambiguous effect.

In her later novels, George Eliot produced narratives of self-formation which largely avoid or moderate the 'downward trajectory' towards catastrophic endings and cultural pessimism. Eliot's commitment to the ideal of 'vocation', discussed by several critics, provides a normative orientation to Middlemarch (1871) and Daniel Deronda (1876) within the established framework of the post-Goethean Bildungsroman. Eliot continued to use the novel of apprenticeship to chart the professional development and integration of young men within middle-class society, as in the novels of Dickens and Thackeray, but to this she adds a recognition of what Dorothea Barrett terms the 'negative space of female vocation', as well as proposing a more exalted conception of what professional vocation might achieve.[58] Alan Mintz argues that, for Eliot, 'professional work might be in itself a significant means of self-realization and of contributing to the progress of humankind'.[59] Both motivations of the vocational plot can be found in Daniel Deronda, as can the unequal access to this narrative for men and women. The two central figures of the novel, Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen Harleth, occupy parallel narratives, as in The Mill on the Floss, whose divergence and ultimate incompatibility reveal gender divisions within contemporary discourses of self-formation, professional apprenticeship, and even historical development. Gwendolen recognizes these discrepancies from an early point in the novel: 'We women can't go in

search of adventures […] We must stay where we grow, or where the gardeners like to transplant us'.[60] Though not as culturally or geographically restricted as Maggie Tulliver, Gwendolen has limited opportunities for self-culture and independent social mobility. Rejecting the path taken by Jane Eyre, the modest self-reliant role of governess and the hope/fantasy of attaining self-fulfilment through marriage, she desires to achieve personal distinction and power over others, yet lacks the artistic talent and discipline to succeed as a professional singer/actress in the manner of Jewsbury's Bianca. Eliot presents Gwendolen's frustrated ambition as akin to that of 'male contemporaries […] when they felt a profession too narrow for their powers', or in darker moods as a 'general disenchantment with the world – nay, with herself, since it appeared that she was not made for easy pre-eminence' (321, 333-4). By contrast, the difficulty of Daniel's search for a vocation arises from having too much freedom of choice, and the consequent risk of not committing to any particular course of action, a problem discussed in Sartor Resartus. Daniel's characteristic deferral of vocational choice is in part conditioned by his privileged social upbringing – unlike David Copperfield, he is not forced by economic necessity into the work which comes to define him – but it is also an instinct which reflects his understanding of the nature of vocation. Commenting on his dissatisfaction with the experience of formal education at Cambridge University, Eliot envisages Daniel's 'inward bent towards comprehension and thoroughness diverging more and more from the track marked out by the standards of examination': 'He longed now to have the sort of apprenticeship of life which would not shape him too definitely, and rob him of that choice that might come from a free growth' (220). Daniel recognizes that a premature adoption of a career may undermine the basis on which a vocation subsists, namely that it be a freely chosen commitment to self-realization through work. He prefers to take the indefinite course of the Bildungsroman hero whose 'apprenticeship of life' is left deliberately vague (the Carlylean-sounding phrase is borrowed

directly from the title of an unfinished novel by Eliot's partner, Lewes, himself a biographer of Goethe).[61] Like Teufelsdröch, Daniel's cultivation of passivity leads him in time to face the opposite dilemma:

> His early-widened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action […] A too reflective and diffusive sympathy was in danger of paralyzing in him that indignation against wrong and that selectness of fellowship which are the conditions of moral force […] what he most longed for was either some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy'. (412-13)

In Daniel Deronda, then, Eliot explicitly returns to the dialectic of 'reflection' and 'action' which earlier Victorians, such as Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton, had derived from Goethe, and which modern scholars have identified as a key component of the 'classical' Bildungsroman.[62]

Further points of comparison between Daniel Deronda and Wilhelm Meister can be adduced, including Daniel's eventual choice of vocation through his discovery of belonging to a larger social body which has, seemingly, guided his development through the narrative with the effect of a teleological design. Daniel's Jewish heritage and incipient Zionism provide him with a collective identity and sense of purpose in which 'vocation' is viewed simultaneously as a means of inner self-realization and a 'renunciation of the demands of self' (866). The latter formulation is Daniel's advice to Gwendolen at the moment of their final parting, but also the ethical kernel of his own search for 'some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude – some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize' (819). It is another

adaptation of Lothario's motto 'Here or nowhere is America', since Daniel's realization is that 'duty' lies in a self-renouncing commitment to others, but primarily to those others with whom he feels most immediate kinship, a practice which he presumably wishes Gwendolen to adopt within her own, separate sphere of action. The implication of this message may be troubling in its cultural politics, but as in Middlemarch Eliot's wider philosophical ambition is to demonstrate the interconnection of individual lives and the broader processes of historical and organic development: in Bakhtin's terms, the confluence of biographical and historical time. The narrator observes in relation to Daniel and Gwendolen: 'I like to mark the time, and connect the course of individual lives with the historic stream, for all classes of thinkers' (121-2). Where Daniel notably differs from the likes of Gwendolen and Dorothea Brooke is in the immediacy of the connection between individual and historical narratives of development which the discovery of his Jewish identity permits. The conversation involving Daniel and his Jewish mentor Mordecai in 'The Philosophers' club in Book 6 explicitly broaches the 'laws of development' in respect of social progress and the formation of national consciousness, as well as the scope for individual agency within these broader trajectories. Mordecai's organic theory of national development emphasizes both the significance of hereditary characteristics for Daniel's self-formation and its progressive orientation towards the future: 'The life of a people grows' (585). By aligning his own apprenticeship so directly with that of 'his people', Daniel comes close to fulfilling the Hegelian role of 'world-historical individual', a quasi-Messianic figure far removed from the quotidian world of the Bildungsroman hero as often described.[63]

Published in the same year as Daniel Deronda, Meredith's Beauchamp's Career (1876) makes for an interesting comparison in its handling of political vocation and contemporary scientific discourses of historical development. Like Daniel, Neville Beauchamp develops a compelling sense of mission beyond the fulfilment of personal ability

or desire; starting from a Quixotic love of country his ethos of self-sacrifice expands to encompass sympathy with 'humanity' and 'the poor', committing him to the cause of radical political reform.[64] His aim is to 'work to the end of his time', subordinating individual/biographical life to a vision of collective societal advancement, sometimes at the cost of insensitivity to personal ties (216). Neville's mentor, the Radical politician Dr. Shrapnel, plays a similar role to Mordecai in his adherence to a grand narrative of social progress, in this case comprising a quasi-Marxian account of the historical development of class struggle and the defeat of 'egoism' in the forthcoming accession of the 'workman's era' (284). A more combative, conventionally 'heroic' but less reflective figure than Daniel, Neville embodies similar but perhaps more acute questions for the Bildungsroman form in a period when the pursuit of self-culture confronts seemingly uncontrollable historical forces. While Daniel's future cultivation of his Jewish 'destiny' is envisaged by Eliot as entailing a state of voluntary exile from English society, the terms of this rupture remain relatively benign on both sides of the cultural divide. In contrast, Neville's Radical political allegiance results in a more antagonistic posture towards the established social order. His shift from patriotic military hero to social ostracism remains unbridged at the end of the novel: for his Tory admirer Cecilia, Neville is 'solitary in the adverse rank to the world; - to his countrymen especially' (474). The ending of Beauchamp's Career disallows any comforting resolution of this ideological conflict on either side of the question. In the final chapter, Neville's marriage to Dr. Shrapnel's daughter Jenny is considered a possible threat to the continuation of his political 'career'; the indolence of their honeymoon cruise along the Iberian coast implies the 'delusion of happiness', according to Shrapnel, and a wavering commitment to the labour of vocation (542). Both Neville and Shrapnel view women in misogynistic terms as obstacles to social progress, coding them in evolutionary discourse as agents of a 'primal' force 'perpetually pulling us backward on the march' (537). But then Neville's life is abruptly

ended in ‘mid career’ (535) when he drowns attempting to rescue two lower-class boys from a river, saving one ‘insignificant bit of mudbank life’ in the process (547). As Margaret Harris notes, the imagery of this scene places Neville’s ‘career’ in the wider context of evolutionary time, suggesting both the possibility of the random extinction of life (as in the ending of The Mill on the Floss) and the ongoing replacement of one life by another.[65] Neville’s action is characteristically heroic and self-sacrificial, yet it results in the curtailment of both his political aspirations and romantic self-fulfilment. Whether the ending of the novel celebrates the achievement or reveals the futility of Neville’s moral progress – the success or failure of his ‘career’ - is open to question.

Aesthetic Education and the Late-Victorian Bildungsroman

Although the Bildungsroman of the late-Victorian period has been characterized as disrupting or inverting the traditional ‘integrative’ form of the genre, some of the leading intellectual influences on British culture during this period were committed to disseminating the idea of Bildung in something approaching its original German form. John Stuart Mill approvingly quoted Humboldt’s ideas on self-cultivation and personal development in outlining his philosophy of liberal individualism in On Liberty (1859). Matthew Arnold in Culture and Anarchy (1868) defined the ideal of ‘culture’ in organicist terms: ‘Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it’.[66] The Goethean attachment to ‘Hellenism’ with which Arnold associated culture, as opposed to Hebraic (Judaeo-Christian) morality, was shared by Walter Pater whose ‘Conclusion’ to The Renaissance (1873) justified the practice of self-cultivation in relation to the ‘love of art for its own sake’, paving the way for late-Victorian aestheticism.[67] While the successful attainment of self-culture may have grown more difficult to envisage in fiction of the final two decades of the century, this is not because it was replaced by a fundamentally different aspiration for individual development. In Pater especially, however, the ideal of self-

cultivation is often distinguished from 'work' in its pragmatic, socially-recognized forms . The eponymous hero of Pater's historical Bildungsroman, Marius the Epicurean (1885), displays traits of passivity and contemplative detachment reminiscent of Sartor Resartus, but what is missing is their rhetorical framing in relation to the instrumental labour of self-formation. Whereas the reflective self-absorption of Teufelsdröch and other earlier protagonists is intended to serve as a preparation for future action and social engagement, even when these outcomes are projected beyond the text itself, the trajectory of Marius's narrative is one of sustained internalization and solipsistic withdrawal from worldly concerns. From boyhood Marius is 'more given to contemplation than to action', Pater emphasizing his 'natural Epicureanism, already prompting him to conceive of himself as but the passive spectator of the world around him'.[68] Marius's self-conscious pursuit of an '"aesthetic" education, as it might now be termed' (117) insists on the primacy of the visual sense in responding to the phenomenal world:

> Revelation, vision, the discovery of a vision, the seeing of a perfect humanity, in a perfect world – through all his alternations of mind, by some dominant instinct, determined by the original necessities of his own nature and character, he had always set that above the having, or even the doing, of anything. For, such vision, if received with due attitude on his part, was, in reality, the being something[.] (293)

Here, the equivalence between 'seeing' and 'being' affects a twofold negation of the aims of self-culture, as conceived by earlier Victorian writers. Not only is Pater concerned to differentiate self-culture from material accumulation or social mobility (having), but also, it appears, from any form of praxis which would translate 'vision' into 'action' within the social world (doing).

This is not to suggest that Pater's aestheticism is altogether removed from the sphere of work or that it lacks an 'ethical' dimension. Written in response to precisely such criticism of his 'Conclusion' to The Renaissance, Marius the Epicurean reformulates self-culture as neither irresponsible hedonism nor an outward-looking engagement with the world, but rather what amounts to an immanent labour of the self. Marius's encounter with the classical philosophies of Epicureanism and Cyrenaicism teaches him to accept the temporal constraints of his subjective, visual experience of the world, an intensified apprehension of the present moment from which 'regret and desire' are excluded (113). Pater does not shrink from drawing anachronistic comparison with the situation of Wilhelm Meister ('America is here and now – here, or nowhere' (113)) and even acknowledges Carlyle's interpretation of Goethe's text. The narrowing scope of Marius's sensory/aesthetic experience is the condition which enables him to discover a sense of purpose within time: 'his scheme is not that of a trifler, but rather of one who gives a meaning of his own, yet a very real one, to those old words – Let us work while it is day!' (187). Pater seeks to represent the life of the true aesthete as 'a life of industry, of industrious study, only possible through healthy rule, keeping clear the eye alike of body and soul' (122), thus obliquely continuing the tradition of Victorian self-improvement which he appears to dismiss .

Just as there are echoes of the esoteric Sartor Resartus in the more mainstream mid-Victorian fiction of Dickens and Brontë, so Marius the Epicurean presents in rarefied philosophical language a narrative template for the interests and anxieties of more recognized late-Victorian novelists, including Henry James and Thomas Hardy. The choice of 'aesthetic education' as a specific form of personal development, though by no means new to the English Bildungsroman as I have shown, became more prevalent during the 1880s and 1890s.[69] In James's The Princess Casamassima (1887), for example, the hero Hyacinth Robinson, an orphan of mixed working-class and aristocratic parentage but raised in the

lower echelons of class society, is apprenticed as a book-binder where he is able to cultivate a Morrisean artistic sensibility: 'the delicate, charming character of the work he did […] was a kind of education of the taste, trained him in the finest discriminations, in the perception of beauty and the hatred of ugliness'.[70] Unlike some of the apprentice heroes of earlier novels, Hyacinth rejects the prospect of 'rising in the world' through the exercise of his talent, instead defining the value of his artistic work in its own terms (266). Ostensibly at least, the Smilesian equivalence between self-culture and self-help is split apart. In its place, James stages an internal conflict between Hyacinth's capacity for refined aesthetic experience and creative work, on the one hand, and his class consciousness which motivates the desire to redress social injustice on the other. In Paterian terms, The Princess Casamassima is a novel of apprenticeship which explores the fissures between the incompatible demands of being, having, and doing. Less content than Marius with an elevated state of aesthetic consciousness, Hyacinth is equally unable to commit to action on behalf of the revolutionary cause which he intermittently espouses, and all the while he appears to define 'culture' as the possession of symbolic capital and the commodified objects which he conspicuously lacks. Hyacinth's frustrated call for action amongst the discontented labourers and Radical agitators gathered at the Sun and Moon public house, 'in God's name, why don't we do something?' (295), suggests a form of paralysis and indecision similar to Marius's reluctance to commit to one single version of philosophical or religious truth in Pater's text. Both novels significantly end with the protagonist's death, figured as an act of self-sacrifice which effectively forestalls the capacity to choose a determinate course of action or belief, ironically idealizing the state of uncertainty before decision.

According to George Levine, Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895) might be seen as the last Victorian Bildungsroman, 'a kind of reversal of and elegy for the form and its essentially optimistic implications'.[71] Certainly, Hardy absorbs and reconfigures narrative and thematic

elements from many of the texts discussed in this chapter, looking back at the distinctive nineteenth-century genre of the apprentice novel as much as he looks forward to early-Modernist fiction.[72] Jude Fawley follows in the tradition of the working-class autodidact whose feats of self-education whilst employed in manual labour were recounted in the numerous exhortatory collective biographies of Smiles and his contemporaries, and more critically depicted in the novels of Dickens and Kingsley. Jude's pursuit of intellectual self-improvement draws most obviously on Arnold's conception of 'culture' embodied in his eulogy of Oxford (fictionalized as Christminster in the novel) as the 'Beautiful city' whose 'ineffable charm keeps ever calling us to the true goal of all of us , to the ideal, to perfection'.[73] Like Hyacinth Robinson, Jude seeks to maintain the purity of his aesthetic education by insisting on its separateness from vulgar social aspiration: the narrator styles him as 'a species of Dick Whittington, whose spirit was touched to finer issues than a mere material gain' (113). Yet Hardy reveals the difficulty of disentangling the mixed motivations of self-culture, just as it proved difficult to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between them. After the collapse of his ambition to study at the University, Jude berates himself for having constructed a falsely disinterested cultural ideal:

> The old fancy which had led on to the culminating vision of the bishopric had not been an ethical or theological enthusiasm at all, but a mundane ambition masquerading in a surplice. He feared that his whole scheme had degenerated to, even though it might not have originated in, a social unrest which had no foundation in the nobler instincts; which was purely an artificial product of civilization. There were thousands of young men on the same self-seeking track at the present moment'. (162)

Having acted with an apparent inner conviction of his calling to a scholarly vocation, Jude now discovers that he is merely an exemplary figure of working-class self-improvement, one

of ‘thousands’ bent on social mobility. As in Great Expectations, but in a more complex and overdetermined form, Hardy’s protagonist is divided between his emotional attachment to the values of cultural tradition and an impulsive, dissatisfied individualism symptomatic of modernity. Jude’s inability to remain content in his trade as an artisan stonemason figures one type of ‘apprenticeship’ in the prescriptive terms of an inherited class identity, yet, ironically, the path of self-culture which he perceives as a progressive emancipation of the individual (an ‘apprenticeship of life’ in the more informal sense) leads further into a claustrophobic, socially-stratified past. It remains a moot question whether Jude’s artisan craftsmanship would not have offered him greater opportunity for creative fulfilment than a life of classical scholarship; both practices recycle a material knowledge of the past, and Jude is at first willing to acknowledge that the mason’s yard represents a ‘centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges’ (120). Once more, perhaps, the underlying problem is an inability to reconcile the work of the hand with that of the mind, bridging the division of social labour in a way which influential contemporaries such as John Ruskin and William Morris urged was necessary. Sue Bridehead quotes Mill’s On Liberty in justification of her decision to elope with Jude: s/he ‘who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation’ (255-6). The liberty of self-development, though, is from another perspective the ‘modern vice of unrest’ (120), as both Jude and Sue come to profess as the novel unfolds. In Sue’s case, this process of disillusionment leads to the now familiar solution of renunciation (‘Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road’ (373)), whereas for Jude it results in a similar impasse to the ending of The Princess Casamassima, in which neither side of the dispute can be chosen. Hardy’s characterization of Jude the Obscure as a ‘tragedy of unfulfilled aims’ in his 1895 ‘Preface’ to the novel can be applied to both figures (38).

By the final two decades of the nineteenth century, however, new opportunities of professional employment for women helped to establish the social conditions for a new form of 'female Bildungsroman', distinctively different from the novels of Brontë and Eliot. Associated with, but not restricted to, the 'New Woman' figure of the 1890s, this new fiction of female self-development was also centrally concerned with the relationship between work, culture, and aesthetic education. Examples such as Charlotte Riddell's A Struggle for Fame (1883) and Ella Hepworth Dixon's The Story of a Modern Woman (1894) represent women whose narratives of formation do not culminate in either domestic fulfilment or self-abnegation, but rather in a determination to 'struggle and labour, to see whether she was really fit for any work, and if so, for what'.[74] In some respects, these novels may be seen as a belated counterpart of the narratives of professional development featuring male protagonists which flourished from the 1840s, often in the form of a specifically literary apprenticeship. The emphasis on work as a kind of liberating constraint in shaping the cohesion of a mature self recalls the rhetoric of Dickens and Carlyle, which now appears more openly available to women writers. The heroine of Hepworth Dixon's novel, Mary Erle, for example, is positioned as an exemplary figure of the 'modern woman' through her desire to 'do something, to live', which makes her, according to her suitor Vincent Hemming, an embodiment of the 'modern craze for work'.[75] Work is not presented in the novel as a source of immediate pleasure or creative fulfilment, but rather as a personal compulsion which finds its rationale in economic necessity: 'One works […] because one must', she tells Vincent (181). Mary's initial aspiration to train as a professional artist proves disillusioning in its revelation of the commodification of art, and her subsequent drift into writing popular fiction and journalism echoes the satirical thrust of George Gissing's contemporary New Grub Street (1891). Nevertheless, literary work is not merely experienced as alienated labour by Mary (as it is in Gissing's text) since it contributes indirectly to the formulation of her identity.

Unable to remain satisfied within the domestic sphere, work is the necessary medium of her self-development, no matter how negative or empty its content.

The intentional exemplarity of The Story of a Modern Woman calls to mind Moretti's characterisation of the Bildungsroman as 'the symbolic form of modernity', and by the 1890s it is clear that the generic architecture of this form was well established.[76] The narrator's retrospective account of Mary's childhood reading singles out Brontë's Villette, Dickens' David Copperfield, and, perhaps predictably, Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, as formative texts. A 'revelation in the possibilities of life' (53), such books provide Mary with knowledge of suffering, sexuality, and presumably work. In addition, the novel contains unmistakeable allusions to Thackeray's Pendennis and Barrett Browning's Aurora Leigh (Mary is seemingly named after the character Marian Erle). Hepworth Dixon thus self-consciously positions her representative heroine within an intertextual lineage which crosses boundaries of language and gender. The narrative carefully differentiates Mary's late-nineteenth century historical experience from that of her predecessors – she is not a mid-Victorian figure of suffering fortitude nor a 'fallen woman' - yet at the same time her 'story' of apprenticeship and (failed) vocation is an extension of theirs. While it remains important to exercise care and a due degree of rigour in applying the term 'Bildungsroman' beyond its immediate cultural and historical contexts, the extent to which British writers recognised and engaged with this genre through a distinctive body of narrative texts produced over the course of the nineteenth century has yet to be fully understood.

Notes

[1] See Kelsey L. Bennett, Principle and Propensity: Experience and Religion in the Nineteenth-Century British and American Bildungsroman (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), p. 8.

[2] Susan Fraiman, Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 4.

[3] Lorna Ellis, Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750-1850 (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999).

[4] Franco Moretti, The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture (London: Verso, 1987, rev. 2000), p. 12.

[5] M.M. Bakhtin, 'The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)' in Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, tr. Vern W. McGee and ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), pp. 16-18.

[6] See Georg Lukács, The Historical Novel, tr. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), pp. 30-63.

[7] Thomas L. Jeffers, Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman From Goethe To Santayana (New York and Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 109.

[8] Laura Green, Literary Identification from Charlotte Brontë to Tsitsi Dangaremba (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), pp. 2-5.

[9] See Gerlinde Röder-Bolton, George Eliot and Goethe: An Elective Affinity (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 12-14.

[10] See, for example, Rosemary Ashton, The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800-1860 (London: Libris, 1994), p. 80; and G. B. Tennyson, 'The Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century English Literature' in Medieval Epic To The

Epic Theater of Brecht, ed. Rosario Armato and John M. Spalek (University of South Carolina Press, 1968), p. 139.

[11] Thomas Carlyle, 'Translator's Preface To The First Edition of Meister's Apprenticeship' in Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels. Translated From The German of Goethe [3 Vols.] (London: Chapman & Hall, 1888), vi.

[12] Thomas Carlyle, 'Death of Goethe' in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays [Vol. 3] (London: Chapman & Hall, 1888), p. 111.

[13] Correspondence Between Goethe and Carlyle, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (London: Macmillan, 1887), p. 7.

[14] See Barry V. Qualls, The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction: The Novel as Book of Life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 10-11.

[15] Tennyson, 'The Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century English Literature', p. 143.

[16] Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, ed. Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 70, 89, 76. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[17] See, for example, Charles Frederick Harrold, Carlyle and German Thought: 1819-1834 (Hamden and London: Archon Books, 1963), pp. 6, 204-7

[18] Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Sartor Resartus: Philosophical Conflict, Positive and Negative Eras, and Personal Resolution', Clio, 1 (3), 1972, p. 60.

[19] Ashton, The German Idea, p. 22.

[20] Susanne Howe, Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen: Apprentices To Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 10.

[21] Ibid., p. 203.

[22] Benjamin Disraeli, Contarini Fleming: A Psychological Romance (London: Peter Davies, 1927), ix, p. 361.

[23] Lord Lytton, Ernest Maltravers (London: Routledge, 1873), pp. 7-8. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[24] Lord Lytton, Alice; or, The Mysteries (London: Routledge, 1873), p. 265.

[25] See Richard Salmon, The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[26] Geraldine Jewsbury, The Half Sisters, ed. Joanne Wilkes (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 186.

[27] Ibid., pp. 214, 224-5.

[28] Samuel Smiles, Self-Help; With Illustrations of Character, Conduct, and Perseverance, ed. Peter W. Sinnema (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 17.

[29] Ibid., pp. 38, 273.

[30] Jerome Buckley, Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 23, 42.

[31] Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, ed. Jeremy Tambling (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), p. 560. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[32] Robin Gilmour, 'Memory in David Copperfield', Dickensian, 75, 1975, pp. 30, 39.

[33] See Buckley, Season of Youth, p. 42; and Moretti, The Way of the World, pp. 189-92.

[34] Charles Dickens, Great Expectations, ed. Charlotte Mitchell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), pp. 74-5, 60, 319. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[35] Tennyson, 'The Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century English Literature', p. 144.

[36] Moretti, The Way of the World, p. 4.

[37] Ibid., p. 5. I would argue that David Copperfield exhibits another side of modernity in his commitment to rationalized labour and autonomous self-formation.

[38] Ellis, Appearing To Diminish, p. 161.

[39] See Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, p. 13; and Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, eds., The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1983), p. 19.

[40] Karen E. Rowe, '"Fairy-born and human-bred": Jane Eyre's Education in Romance' in The Voyage In, ed. Abel et al., p. 76; and Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, p. 118.

[41] See Qualls, The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction, p. 83.

[42] See, especially, The History of Pendennis (1848-50) and The Adventures of Philip (1861-2).

[43] Qualls, The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction, pp. 43, 83.

[44] Bennett, Principle and Propensity, p. 71.

[45] See Qualls, The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction, p. 83.

[46] Charlotte Brontë, Villette, ed. Mark Lilly (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 95. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[47] Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, ed. Elizabeth A. Cripps (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 38.

[48] Moretti, 'Preface' to the revised edition of The Way of the World (2000), vii

[49] The phrases in quotation are taken from Jed Esty, 'The Colonial Bildungsroman: The Story of an African Farm and the Ghost of Goethe', Victorian Studies, 49 (3), 2007, p. 410, but the specific groupings of early and late-nineteenth century authors are based on my own sense of how these writers are generally positioned.

[50] George Eliot is chronologically the last English (and European) writer to be discussed in detail by Moretti before an Appendix which briefly covers the period 1898 to 1914.

[51] See Georg Lukács, The Theory of the Novel: A historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature, tr. Anna Bostock (London: Merlin Press, 1971), pp. 112-31.

[52] See Marianne Hirsch, 'Spiritual Bildung: The Beautiful Soul as Paradigm' in The Voyage In, ed. Abel et al., pp. 33, 37.

[53] Fraiman, Unbecoming Women, pp. 31, 141; see also Buckley, Season of Youth, p. 97.

[54] Buckley, Season of Youth, p. 81.

[55] George Meredith, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, ed. Edward Mendelson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), p. 492.

[56] Tennyson, 'The Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century English Literature', p. 142.

[57] Meredith, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, p. 139.

[58] Dorothea Barrett, Vocation and Desire: George Eliot's Heroines (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 18.

[59] Alan Mintz, George Eliot and the Novel of Vocation (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 6.

[60] George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, ed. Barbara Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 171. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[61] See G. H. Lewes, 'The Apprenticeship of Life', The Leader, 1 (1), March 1850 – (2), June 1850.

[62] See James Hardin, ed., Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

[63] See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, The Philosophy of History, tr. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), pp. 29-33.

[64] George Meredith, Beauchamp's Career, ed. Margaret Harris (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 18, 33. Subsequent references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[65] See Margaret Harris, 'Introduction' to Beauchamp's Career, xvii.

[66] Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 62.

[67] Walter Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 153.

[68] Walter Pater, Marius The Epicurean, ed. Michael Levey (London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 49, 106. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[69] Gregory Castle argues that the revival of interest in aesthetic education during this period heralds a specifically 'Modernist' recuperation of the eighteenth-century ideal of Bildung: see Reading The Modernist Bildungsroman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp. 1-4.

[70] Henry James, The Princess Casamassima, ed. Derek Brewer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 157. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[71] George Levine, How to Read the Victorian Novel (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p. 88.

[72] See Castle, Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman for an account of Jude The Obscure from the opposite historical perspective (77-100).

[73] Thomas Hardy, Jude The Obscure, ed. Cedric Watts (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1999), p. 116. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[74] Charlotte Riddell, A Struggle For Fame: A Novel [3 Vols.] (London: Richard Bentley, 1883), I, p. 225.

[75] Ella Hepworth Dixon, The Story of a Modern Woman, ed. Steve Farmer (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2004), p. 80. Further references to this edition occur parenthetically.

[76] Moretti, The Way of The World, p. 5.