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Culture, Society and Secularization: Literature and Religion in the German-Speaking World 1830-1900

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As the last two chapters have shown, the periods 1700-1770 and 1770-1830 both manifest a process of secularization in German literature which is closely related to the evolution of both religious practice and philosophical theology in the German-speaking lands. However, 'secularization' can mean at least three different things.¹ First, it can mean the general or partial disappearance of religious faith and practice from society and its replacement by modes of consciousness which secular society defines. Second, it can mean the secular expression of ideas and principles which still manifest their origin in religious teaching. Thirdly, it can mean the objective transposition of the logic and dynamic of religious faith into the secular public consciousness, whether or not that transposition is manifest in or to the secular consciousness itself. This third meaning is what Ernst Bloch called 'man's increasing entry into religious mystery', the transfiguration of the world of common experience into the source of ultimate meaning.² German literature between 1700 and 1830 certainly manifests a process of secularization in the second and third senses of the term. However, in the first sense of the term, there was no general process of secularization in the German-speaking world. It will be the thesis of this chapter that the German-speaking world from 1830 to 1900 does undergo a process of secularization in the first and most explicit sense of the term: the gradual replacement of religious modes of consciousness by secular ones in Germany in German culture and society as a whole. However, that process takes a very different form in the literature of nineteenth-century Germany from that which occurs in German theology and religious life at the same time. The difference

¹ For a good overview of the multiple meanings of 'secularization', see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. by Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1983), pp. 13-25.

² Ernst Bloch, *Man on his Own*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 147f.

and the connection between the two kinds of secularization are both equally important for our understanding of German culture and society from 1830 to 1900.

Both religion and literature are what Charles Taylor has called interlocutions of moral space: symbolic languages through which we interrogate and bring to consciousness the human world we inhabit.³ However, like all languages the religious and the literary are always related to and yet different from each other; essential to and yet never identical with the moral world they describe. The religious and literary idioms are both especially closely related and radically different in the culture of nineteenth-century Germany. However, their articulation of the broader cultural process is by no means identical with the process itself. Both the religious and the literary languages enable us to see and to say some things about the human world which they both address. Yet they may also obscure other things about that world and indeed about each other. As modes of human understanding, they require hermeneutic interpretation themselves.

This chapter will argue that the culture of nineteenth-century Germany displays both a real process of secularization in German society and a subjective response to that process in German culture, which occurs in very different ways in both 'literature' and 'religion'. There is a real process of secularization, because the traditional content of Christian theology has in large part objectively been replaced by its modern reinterpretation in terms of secular thought and the needs of the society and culture which that thought reflects. However, religious consciousness is still subjectively present in the consciousness of the members of that society and culture. Germany is perhaps more objectively secularized - that is to say, its religious consciousness is more thoroughly detached from actual experience - than any other society in nineteenth-century Europe. But the subjective presence of that consciousness

³ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 36

remains undiminished. This inverse relationship, I will suggest, is one of the most important themes, and the source of some of the key modes, of German literature between 1830 and 1900. Both the political and the cultural history of Germany suggest the division of our period into three periods: 1830-1848; 1848-1871; and 1871-1900.

I 1830-1848: Desacralization versus Resacralization

The period from 1830 to 1848, often known as the *Vormärz*, begins with the July revolution of 1830 which heralds a constitutional monarchy in France and its limited echoes in the German-speaking world (especially in Berlin, Munich and Vienna) and ends with the abortive attempt to establish a parliament in Frankfurt in 1848 and so the failure to achieve German reunification on a liberal and parliamentary basis. It is characterized both by an increased agitation in favour of parliamentary liberalism and by a corresponding reaction on the part of the state, especially in Prussia and Austria (the Swiss republic exhibits a more progressive political development during this time). In cultural terms, the period from 1830-1848 can roughly be defined in terms of two sharply contrasting reactions to the end of the Romantic movement in German literature: the radical literary movement known as *Junges Deutschland* ('Young Germany'), which harnessed the legacy of German Idealist philosophy and theology in the service of political critique; and the more conservative movement known as *Biedermeier*, stronger in Austria and Switzerland than in Germany, which was informed by a quasi-theological aesthetic and emphasized the ethical truth embodied in the ordinary life of the people. The literature of Young Germany was most strongly represented in the dramatic and essayistic genres; that of *Biedermeier* in poetry and the *Novelle*. Despite their differences, both these movements suggest an analogy between the role of literature and religion in the culture of early nineteenth-century Germany.

Several leading thinkers of the age both identify the time around 1830 as the end of the Romantic period in German literature and link that ending to an analogy between aesthetic and religious consciousness in German culture as a whole. By far the most important philosophical and theological influence on the literature of the age, especially the movement known as Young Germany, was the work of Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel interprets the end of Romanticism to mean both an end of religion and an end of art. For Hegel in his *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Ästhetik* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Fine Art*, 1831) the immediate consciousness of truth, once culturally present in religious form, has now been supplanted—but in the Hegelian idiom still preserved (‘aufgehoben’)—by the fully self-conscious and reflective truth which is the work of philosophy.⁴ This suggests an analogy between the fates of literature and religion in modernity. In his *Vorlesungen Über die Philosophie der Religion* (*Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 1831) Hegel argues that in the modern world, religion, like art, must necessarily be superseded by the fully self-conscious mode of insight which is philosophy. Religion, Hegel argues, communicates truth in the mode of representation (‘Vorstellung’): a form of consciousness which points to a truth *beyond* itself.⁵ His theology is emphatically centred upon the person of Christ, because for Hegel the historical contingency of the Incarnation is the source of both theological and philosophical truth. Philosophy can be the self-consciousness of modernity only because it is the consciousness of Spirit itself which has become really and actually historical in the event of the Incarnation.⁶ But our faith in that event cannot depend on philosophical argument (although of course it may partially be enabled by philosophical insight) nor on the empirical demonstration of particular historical facts. Rather it is the upshot of the belief of the Christian

⁴ G.W.F.Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, 3 vols., in Hegel, *Werke*, ed. by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), vol. XIII, pp. 23-5.

⁵ Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, in *Werke*, vol. XVI, pp. 139-51.

⁶ Hegel, *ibid.*, vol. XVII, p. 274.

community ('Gemeinde') throughout history, who know because of Pentecost that it is *their* Spirit which witnesses to the Spirit of Truth. However, that Spirit, in Hegel's age and that of his readers, will be informed by post-Idealist and therefore Hegelian philosophy as much as by the life of the Church (Hegel's term *Gemeinde* embraces both the whole community of believers and the philosophically informed community of faith).⁷ Therefore the difference, even the conflict, between the self-conscious insight of philosophy and the truth of Christian experience has in modernity become an inescapable moment of faith itself.

This perspective, in the generation after Hegel's death in 1831, gave rise to a powerful radical movement in theology which also had a generic cultural and political influence. The exponents of this movement are often known as the Left (or young) Hegelians and include theologians like Bruno Bauer (1809-1882), Max Stirner (1806-1856) and Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). This group interpreted Hegel's theology as a summons to radical political and social reform. The key theme of these writers is the distance, indeed the contradiction, between the often theologically inflected discourse of German intellectual life in the early-nineteenth century and the actual reality which that discourse claims to reflect. They therefore aim, employing a discourse which itself constantly but ironically invokes the language of theology, to promote the intellectual and practical desacralization of their culture. Karl Gutzkow's (1811-1878) best known novel *Wally die Zweiflerin* (*Wally the Doubter*, 1835) has the most far-fetched of plots but is most relevant to our theme. An aristocratic intellectual woman with a theological and philosophical education (the portrayal of such a character in the Germany of the 1830s was a provocation in itself) is forced into an arranged marriage with the Sardinian ambassador. She eventually leaves her husband after a honeymoon in Paris to be with her erstwhile lover Cäsar, only to

⁷ On this point, see Nicholas Boyle, *Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2004), pp. 61-2.

commit suicide after her lover fails to assuage his religious doubts which are expressed in his fictional treatise *Geständnisse über Religion und Christentum* ('Confessions about Religion and Christianity'). The improbable nature of the plot—which will strike most modern readers as psychologically incredible—reflects the unreality of the world which the novel evokes. However, it is precisely the alienation of the cultural world its characters inhabit from any real world of experience which is the novel's real theme. None of the discourses available to them (whether philosophical, theological, or otherwise) is able to overcome it. The heroine's despair is not the consequence of any new form of theological doubt. Wally records in her diaries her reading of Lessing's *Reimarusfragmente* (*Fragments attributed to Reimarus, 1774*),⁸ published sixty years before Gutzkow's novel and positing the radical distinction between the written content of the Biblical text and theological truth which is the premise of all post-Kantian theology. This distinction finds its classic theological expression in David Friedrich Strauss's (1808-1874) *Das Leben Jesu* (*The Life of Jesus, 1835*),⁹ published in the same year as Gutzkow's novel, which finally ratifies this position with a wealth of Biblical scholarship but does not fundamentally change it. Her lover Cäsar's theological testament in his *Confessions* also adds nothing new to the conclusions of Idealist theology and the source criticism of the Bible, but rather makes explicit their implications. Any attempt to found Christian theology in the historical veracity of the Gospel accounts alone risks making faith itself dependent on a historically contingent and therefore fallible text. The heroine's suicide is not a consequence of her

⁸ These fragments, based on a partial draft of Hermann Samuel Reimarus's *Apologie oder Schutzschrift der Vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (*Apology or Essay in Defence of the Rational Worshippers of God*) and followed by a commentary by Lessing ('Gegensätze des Herausgebers') ('Critical Commentary by the Editor') are the classic post-Enlightenment Protestant expression of the independence of theological interpretation from the literal content of the Biblical text. See Lessing, *Werke*, ed. by Helmut Gröbel et al., 7 vols (München: Carl Hanser, 1976), vol. VII, pp. 312-476, especially p. 458f.

⁹ For a good general survey of the influence of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* in nineteenth-century Germany, especially in relation to Gutzkow's *Wally the Skeptic*, see Marilyn Chaplin Massey, *Christ Unmasked: The Meaning of The Life of Jesus in German Politics* (Chapel Hill, NC and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), pp. 57-80.

introduction to these doctrines themselves. It is the outcome of her reflection about and therefore her reaction to them: that is to say, her attempt to connect them to her life. It is this connection, which neither she nor her culture can make, that provokes in her what Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) called ‘eine kräftige Reaktion von Seiten des Lebens’ (‘a powerful reaction from the side of life’).¹⁰ This is a reaction which in her case leads to despair and ultimately suicide. But it is not theology (neither the fictional theology of the text nor the actual theologies which Gutzkow’s fictional treatise broadly reflects) which produces that reaction. It is the inability of its adherents to connect that theological discourse to life. The last words of the treatise sum up the problem:

Wir werden keinen neuen Himmel und keine neue Erde haben; aber die Brücke zwischen beiden, scheint es, muß von neuem gebaut werden.¹¹

We cannot have a new heaven and a new earth; but it seems as if the bridge between the two must be built anew

Heinrich Heine’s (1797-1856) response to the end of Romanticism and the crisis of faith is more complex and expressed as much in poetry as in cultural critique. For Heine, in *Elementargeister* (*Elemental Spirits*, 1837), a critical account of Germanic and classical mythology, the living religion of paganism ends when the ancient Greek deities are reinterpreted by philosophers as the symbolic personae of myth. For Heine, the same is happening in his time with the historical and philosophical deconstruction of the received content of Christian doctrine. Heine suggests that the secret religion of Germany is pantheism: the aesthetic transposition of the truth once expressed by religion

¹⁰ F.J.W.Schelling, ‘Erste Vorlesung in Berlin, 15 November 1841’ in *Schellings Werke*, 13 vols, ed. by Manfred Schröter (München: C.H.Beck, 1959 [1927]), vol. VI, p. 755.

¹¹ Gutzkow, *Wally die Zweiflerin* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1998; first published 1835), p. 124.

into the symbolic articulation of secular life. However, for Heine, this transposition also means that religious myths and symbols no longer betoken the reality of transcendence, but rather its absence. The ‘truth’ of religion can and must be expressed in the reinterpretation of its symbolic language as a critique of secular life.¹² His two essays on the legacy of German literature and philosophy, *Die romantische Schule* (*The Romantic School*, 1835) and *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (*On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, 1835), argue that the accumulated intellectual energy of German Idealist philosophy (itself predicated on a philosophical reinterpretation of the Christian Revelation) and the symbolic resources of Germanic and Christian mythology can and must now be harnessed in the service of cultural critique and political revolution.

For Heine, it is precisely the distance between the truth once expressed by religion and the Romantic form of art and its actual cultural expression which makes the reinterpretation of religion and art as myth a radical political as well as cultural act. This reinterpretation also means an ending: the end of the Romantic form of art as an integral expression of German culture and therefore the end of religion as an autonomous symbolic language and cultural force, capable of sustaining a popular religious sensibility or an intellectually defensible creed on the part of its cultivated adherents. Much of Heine’s early work suggests an antithesis between the energy of classical mythology and the modern manifestation of Christianity: what in his poem *Die Götter Griechenlands* (*The Gods of Greece*, 1826) (I/I, 417) ‘die neuen, herrschenden, tristen Götter’ (‘the new, ruling, sad gods’) he calls the religion of modernity which has ceased to be a living tradition. However his later work, especially his autobiographical *Geständnisse* (*Confessions*, 1854), suggests a more complex view of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. There Heine suggests that the natural

¹² Heine, *Elementargeister*, in *Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, ed. by Manfred Windfuhr, 16 vols (Hamburg; Hoffmann und Campe, 1979), vol. IX, p. 47f.

consequence of the decay of faith is the transformation of its content into a form of social and political prophecy, which retains the subjective energy whilst negating the objective content of Christian belief. He sees this development as a natural consequence of the fate of Protestantism which is the major cultural idiom of Germany in his time. Because it is the religion of the word, indeed the text, not the symbol or the sacrament, Protestant Christianity for Heine necessarily tends to the deconstruction of its symbolic expression and indeed—because of its dependence on scripture and the cultural centrality of the Lutheran Bible—of its metaphysical expression. In a series of fascinating *aperçus* he relates the German ‘religion of the word’ to the Jewish mistrust of representation which he links to the politically prophetic humanism which his work embodies (XV, 44-47).

The second major literary reaction to the process of secularization in German culture and society between 1830 and 1848 was very different: the movement known as *Biedermeier*. For Heine, the secularization of religion and mythology meant the desacralization of the world. For neo-Romantic philosophers like Friedrich Schlegel, Catholic cultural critics like Joseph Görres (1776-1848) and the classicist and anthropologist Friedrich Creuzer (1771-1858), it meant the opportunity for its resacralization. In his philosophical novel *Lucinde* (1799) Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) had defined modern poetry as one of ‘becoming’, not embodied presence.¹³ But this is the consequence of the disappearance of the ‘mythical’ mode of life and the alienation of human subjectivity which is its consequence. The task of modern art must therefore be to recreate a mythology appropriate to the modern age: a symbolic narrative by which the longing for the transcendent can be realized in the life of the people. For philologists and historians of the folk tradition like Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) Grimm, the very enterprise of philology—the explication

¹³ See Friedrich Schlegel, *Lucinde*, in *Friedrich Schlegel: Kritische Ausgabe seiner Werke*, ed. by Ernst Behler, 35 vols, vol. II, pp. 182-83. See also August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845), ‘Über Literatur, Kunst und Geist des Zeitalters’ (‘On literature, Art and the Spirit of the Age’, 1803) in *Text und Kritik*, 143 (1999), 3-11.

of words and the Word—is grounded in the unity of the real and spiritual worlds to which myths and their symbolism witness. The Grimm brothers attempt to create a new form of popular mythology for the German people through the collection and commentary of folk tales (‘Märchen’), which are concerned with inner psychological, indeed unconscious experience, and yet, it was argued, could together with the retrieval of the symbolism of the ancient Germanic religion contribute to the creation of a kind of national mythology for the German people. For Friedrich Creuzer, professor of Classical Philology at Göttingen, whose *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (*Symbolism and Mythology of the Ancient Peoples*, 1810-12) was highly influential in the fifty years after its publication, there was no intrinsic break between the mythology of ancient Greece and the sacramental symbolism of Christianity: one was the fulfilment of the other. The key medium of religious truth was not the word, but the symbol, the power of which consists in its ability to sum up an entire theology in one potent image. A symbol cannot be invented; it is inherent in the archetypal structure of myth¹⁴.

For this second group, German literature can now become the cultural ally of faith because literature can contribute to the life of faith an immediate relationship to the world of common experience and a capacity to reveal the religious symbolism implicit in that world. For this movement, art is potentially connected to religion not because it reflects the truth of human subjectivity, but because it subordinates reflection to disclosure. This second response to secularization finds its most effective literary expression not in the novel or the drama, but in the poetry of writers like Clemens von Brentano (1778-1842) and Eduard Mörike (1804-1875) and the beginnings of the *Novelle*, which was to become a key form throughout the German-speaking lands by the middle of the nineteenth-century. Some *Biedermeier* poetry, for example the work of the

¹⁴ For a good general survey of this movement, see George Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany. Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 81-120, 121-50.

Catholic poets Clemens von Brentano (1778-1842), especially *Das bittere Leiden unseres Herrn Jesus Christus* (*The Bitter Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1833) and Annette von Droste Hülhoff (1797-1848), especially *Das Geistliche Jahr* (*The Christian Year*, 1820) is overtly devotional. More apposite to our overall theme is the work of Eduard Mörike (a Lutheran pastor trained at the Tübingen theological college known as the *Tübinger Stift* and who corresponded extensively with David Friedrich Strauss), steeped in Biblical symbolism and the intellectual concerns of contemporary Protestant theology.

Mörike's poetry is often focused on the imagery of rural life and the Christian practice of the German peasantry, but often suggests less an external natural order than a symbolic world undermined from within by a distinctly modern doubt, in which subjective consciousness and the objective criteria of truth are only precariously related. However, there is a constant tension in his poetry between the apprehension of a desacralized world and the continued presence of a Christian hope. His great poem *Die Elemente* (*The Elements*, 1838), for example, is prefaced by the Greek text of Romans 8:19:

‘For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God’.

The next two verses are essential to its context:

20: ‘For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope’.

21: ‘Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God’.

The Pauline verses suggest the Christian doctrine of justification freely offered in Christ and to which the Christian response can only be faith as the fruit of

grace. But the verse quoted at the head of the poem and the following one links this affirmation to both the Incarnation and the Fall. For the subjection of the ‘creature’ (the condition of humanity in the unredeemed natural world) is the necessary condition for the free gift of grace: the objective correlative of the real apprehension that redemption can never be the fruit of our fulfilment of the law. The title of the poem also suggests Galatians 4: 3-5, which speak of the childhood of humanity as ‘bondage under the elements of the world’ and mature human freedom as redemption from the law by the coming of Christ and the gift of the spirit. In Mörike’s poem, however, there is no direct reference to redemption from the law or the glorious liberty of the children of God which is its outcome. The first part of the poem introduces a giant (‘der Riese’) who is also ‘master of the elements’ (‘der Elemente Meister’) and ‘Lord of the fatal power’ (‘Herr der tödlichen Gewalt’). Yet this power over nature is given to the Master by a ‘god’:

Er heißt der Elemente Meister,
Heißt Herr der tödtlichen Gewalt;
Ein Gott hat sie ihm übergeben.
Ach!, die schmerzreiche Lust.¹⁵

He is called Master of the elements
Lord of the fatal power
A god has given it to him
Oh! What pleasure full of pain.

¹⁵ Eduard Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Hans-Henrik Krummacher, 24 vols (Stuttgart; Klett-Cotta), 2004, vol. I, p. 213 *et seq.*

The power of the Master suggests both the alien power of natural force or even violence ('Gewalt') and human alienation from the world as the empire of that power:

Die weißen Nebel auf der Wiese
Sind Wassergeister aus dem Meer:
Ihrem Gebieter nachgezogen
Vergiften sie die reine Nacht

The white mists on the meadow
Are water-spirits from the sea
Following their master
They poison the pure night

Only gradually does the poem enter the semantic field of Christianity and then only obliquely, when the giant or the Master is said to follow 'in restless rage' ('rastlos wüthend') the terrible trace of a divinity ('der Gottheit grauenvolle Spur'). The Lord of the elements is said to be both a quasi-divine being in control of nature and to have a noble and implicitly human heart which breaks because it is alienated from the world which it seeks to control:

Da will das edle Herz zerreißen
Da sieht er schrecklich sich allein;
Und doch kann er sich nicht würdig heißen
Mit Göttern ganz ein Gott zu sein (I, 214 *et seq.*)

Then the noble heart would break
In terror he sees himself alone
Yet he cannot call himself worthy

To be a god among gods

The modulation of this state of alienation into a more creative consciousness is heralded by the appearance of one of the most resonant words in the Romantic (and now post-Romantic) vocabulary—‘Sehnsucht’ (‘longing’)—which in its German form also suggests compulsive desire (‘Sucht’). The master’s capacity to feel longing is said to bring down chains from heaven ‘as if they might rescue him’:

Da hängen ungeheure Ketten
Aus finsterem Wolkenraum herab,
Dran er, als müßten sie ihn retten,
Sich zwingt zum Himmel auf und ab

There monstrous chains
Hang down from the firmament
On which, as if they were to rescue him
He forces himself to move between heaven and earth

The monstrous chains let down from heaven seem to promise redemption only in the subjunctive and therefore analogical mode (‘als müssten sie ihn retten’). The possibility becomes real when two angel-like figures appear at the head of the chains:

Dort weilen rosige Gestalten
In heitern Höhen, himmlisch klar,
Und fort am goldnen Ringe halten
Sie schwesterlich das Kettenpaar.

There rose-like forms
Dwell in the blissful heights, clear as heaven
Bearing as if on a golden ring
Like sisters his chains

Their prayer (implicitly for the Master) is said to enable his feeling to release or dissolve itself in a moment of liberation:

Und wie sie im Gebete glühen,
Löst, wie ein Traum, sich sein Gefühl

And as they glow in prayer
His heart, as if in a dream, becomes free

But this release is less a release from the Master's previous condition than a liberation which enables him to assent to it, which the Master is now able to see from a transfigured perspective:

O folge harmlos deiner Weise
Dazu Allvater dich erkor!
Dein Wort von Anfang muß du trauen
In ihm laß deinen Willen sein (I, 215 *et seq.*)

Oh follow, free from harm, your path
For which the Almighty has chosen you
You must trust the Word given you in the beginning
Let your will rest there

The 'redemption' of the Master is more an acceptance of transfiguration than a conversion of his natural being. This insight is indeed the fruit of intercessory prayer ('Gebet') which leads him to an almost Faustian fulfilment of natural knowledge which, however, is the upshot of the longing ('Sehnsucht') produced by alienation from the natural order. After the intercession, and by his intercessor, the Master is addressed as 'Du':

Wirst schauen...

Wie in des Sturmes dunklen Falten
Des Vaters göttlich Wesen schwebt
Den Faden freundlicher Gewalten
Das Band geheimer Eintracht webt

You will see...

How in the dark depths of the storm
Hovers the divine being of the Father
Weaving together the bond of secret harmony

The object of the address shifts to future and more enlightened generations:

Einst wird es kommen, daß auf Erden
Sich höhere Geschlechter freun.

At last the time will come on earth
When transfigured generations will delight

In the last stanza of the poem the elements ('die Elemente') are mentioned for the second time and said to be 'reconciled to God' ('gottversöhnt') and so no longer the object of the Master's domination. Only at the end of the poem does

the Thou ('Du') by which the Master is addressed become the 'we' of an implicitly Christian community who are said to walk in the light and to be the precondition of the Master's new insight:

Mit lichtem Blick steigst Du nach Oben
Denn in der Klarheit wandeln wir.

With a lighted vision you will rise on high
For we walk in the light

Mörike's work is nourished by two equally potent sources: his poetic creativity and his vocation as a Christian minister. In this poem both energies are undoubtedly present and yet in uneasy tension. The deliverance of the 'creature' alluded to in Mörike's epigraph and the subjection of the creature to vanity which is its theological precondition do indeed lead to that future transfiguration of all human knowledge ('Denn in der Klarheit wandeln wir') which is the Pauline and Christian hope. However, the 'we' of the Christian community or 'Gemeinde' appears only in the poem's last word. The 'Du' addressed by the angelic intercessors is still (albeit transfigured) the natural man who first relates to the world only as Master. He remains the subject of the poetic narrative throughout. His transfiguration does not involve a 'conversion'—a turning away or against—the elements of the natural order, but rather a changed apprehension of those same elements, which at the end of the poem have been reconciled to God. Mörike's Master, like Hegel's Master in the famous section of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of Mind*, 1807) entitled 'Herrschaft und Knechtschaft' ('Lordship and Bondage')¹⁶ learns by experience—especially the experience of alienation and therefore longing

¹⁶ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, vol. III, pp. 145-55 ('Selbstständigkeit und Unselbstständigkeit des Selbstbewußtseins; Herrschaft und Knechtschaft').

(‘Sehnsucht’)—that the dominating consciousness must necessarily alienate itself from the truth of being. But this insight is not in theological terms truly the product of revelation, especially not the Lutheran moment of conversion which implies a total disjunction of natural from theological knowledge. The truly theological ‘Master’ of nature (the ‘Lord of lethal force’ of whom there is no equal in this world) persists until the end of eschatological time, although he has been definitively judged by the Word of God in Christ.¹⁷ In Mörike’s poem it is the Master himself who attains insight: a changed understanding of nature, which remains the locus of truth—not the domain of the Prince of this World—at the end of the poem as it was at the beginning.

For Mörike, neither the orthodox Lutheran insistence on the primacy of scriptural revelation as the vehicle of conversion, nor the actual Christian congregation or ‘Gemeinde’ as the paradigm of Christ’s kingdom on earth, can in themselves be the locus of salvation. Rather, that congregation must be subsumed into the wider community of philosophically aware men and women of goodwill, informed both by the Lutheran tradition of worship and a theological tradition—epitomized by Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*—which insists on the reinterpretation of the received deposit of faith in both historical and philosophical terms. That second community—which is precisely what Hegel meant by the Christian community (‘Gemeinde’) to whom the spirit speaks—is in the public domain only tenuously related to the first. Yet both (as Mörike’s work so powerfully shows) can be immediately present in the experience of a single individual.

These very different reactions by German writers to the end of Romanticism in Germany share one significant common feature. All three relate the fate of art (especially literature) to that of religion in the modern age. All argue that the process through which German and European culture has become radically self-conscious—the undermining of immediate, culturally embodied

¹⁷ Compare the text of Luther’s famous hymn ‘Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott’.

and symbolically represented modes of truth by the fully self-conscious mode of philosophy—both limits and yet emphasizes the truth communicated by both religion and literature. Both religion and literature are now limited because they can no longer communicate the whole truth of human culture in what is perceived to be an intellectually adequate form. At the end of the Romantic age in nineteenth-century Germany, both literature and religion are therefore in a significant sense both partial and opposing expressions of German culture as a whole. However, in that same culture, both religion and literature are also emphasized, because the very dissociation of religious and literary truth from cognitive knowledge betokens a cultural lack: a need for a mode of truth which now cannot be reduced to its conceptual articulation and yet remains necessary for the vitality and integrity of culture as a whole.

This double and dialectical relationship between ‘literary’ and ‘religious’ consciousness in nineteenth-century German writing suggests that any crude distinction between ‘secular’ and ‘religious’ reactions to the legacy of Romanticism in German culture is potentially misleading. A prime example is the work of Georg Büchner (1813-1837) especially his great *Novelle Lenz* (1835), in which the language of Christianity has conflicting and yet often simultaneous meanings. That language both really articulates and yet sometimes obscures the experience of Büchner’s central character. The story is loosely based on the experience of the eighteenth-century writer Jakob Michael Lenz (1751-1792), who seeks refuge during a period of mental distress in the home of Pastor Oberlin, the Lutheran minister in the village of Waldersbach in the Vosges. However, Büchner’s narrative technique—a masterly employment of the technique of free indirect speech, through which the experience of his protagonist is shown from the inside and the outside at once—rapidly transports the reader into the literary, philosophical and theological world of early nineteenth-century Germany of which Büchner was a part. The reader’s initial impression of Lenz is of a literary and philosophical ‘realist’ whose way of

seeing the world is directly related to identification with ordinary people and their concerns. What Lenz most abjures is any form of aesthetic or philosophical dualism: the idea that there is a higher form of truth which might be supposed to transfigure or redeem the truth of ordinary experience. Lenz's aesthetic standpoint is related to a social and theological sensibility: a love for the simplest or most 'prosaic' people under the sun ('die prosaischesten Menschen unter der Sonne') such as the peasant girls he sees around him at Waldersbach.¹⁸ Such people embody infinite beauty ('eine unendliche Schönheit'). This aesthetic sensibility is for Büchner's character Lenz profoundly Christian, as is evidenced by his later reference to two paintings of the Dutch masters: one of Christ meeting the disciples on the road to Emmaus; the other of an elderly woman, unable to attend church, reading the Biblical text at home with the village church visible through an open window (I, 235).¹⁹ For Lenz, this way of seeing reality is inseparable from his way of feeling and acting in it. Both involve identification with the life of the people who embody and communicate both theological and aesthetic truth. It is this identification which leads him to accept Pastor Oberlin's invitation to preach in the church at Waldersbach, an experience which is said to make him at one both with himself and the congregation (I, 231 *et seq.*):

Ein süßes Gefühl unendlichen Wohls beschlich ihn. Er sprach einfach mit den Leuten, sie litten alle mit ihm.

He was overcome by a sweet feeling of infinite wellbeing. He spoke simply with the people, they all suffered with him.

¹⁸ Georg Büchner, *Sämtliche Werke Briefe und Dokumente in zwei Bänden*, ed. by Henri Poschmann, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992), vol. I, p. 234.

¹⁹ The first painting has been identified as Carel von Savoy's 'Christus in Emmaus' that Büchner had seen in Darmstadt in 1833 or 1834; the second (of the woman reading the Bible) is thought to be a painting by Pieter Janssen in the Alte Pinakothek at Munich. See Paul Requadt, 'Zu Büchners Kunstanschauung: Das Niederländische und das Grotteske, Jean Paul und Victor Hugo', in Requadt, *Bildlichkeit der Dichtung. Aufsätze zur deutschen Literatur vom 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1974), pp. 108, 110.

For Büchner's character Lenz, it is the experience of human suffering, not philosophical speculation or political critique, which is the touchstone of theological truth. In the words of the hymn he sings with the congregation at Waldersbach:

Laß in mir die heil'gen Schmerzen,
Tiefe Brunnen ganz aufbrechen;
Leiden sei all mein Gewinnst,
Leiden sei mein Gottesdienst.

Let the blessed pains,
Open deep fountains in me;
Let suffering be all gain,
Suffering my Divine Service.

But Büchner's character Lenz is not the author of Büchner's *Lenz*. Büchner's narrative realism shows us that what, for his character Lenz, is a subjectively real connection between a way of seeing and a way of feeling and acting in the world is not for that reason objectively real. For the mental standpoint which enables him to reject Idealism, which he calls 'die schmachlichste Verachtung der menschlichen Natur' (the most shameful contempt for human nature), is itself, in philosophical and theological terms, profoundly Idealist. The view of the world which Lenz says enables him to capture reality ('Wirklichkeit') is a vision of reality in theological terms, in which all experience is incarnate Being because it is created by God.

Der liebe Gott hat die Welt wohl gemacht wie sie sein soll, und wir können wohl nicht was Besseres klecksen. (I, 234)

God has made the world as it ought to be and we can't improve on his creation.

This conviction, entirely compatible with a theologically and politically 'conservative' reading of Hegelian Idealism, as well as the idea that art can fulfil the role once played by religious symbolism and sacramental faith, is for Lenz the source of both his aesthetic and his theological vision. But it cannot be so for us, Büchner's readers, for whom the truth of Lenz's experience is mediated by Büchner's narrative realism. For what that realism shows us is that this consciousness, which is for Lenz fleetingly real during the church service at Waldersbach, or when he meets the peasants of the Vosges and discusses art with Oberlin's friend Kaufmann, is radically negated by Lenz's experience as a whole. For this total vision, mediated initially by Lenz's experience of fellow feeling with the parishioners at Waldersbach and sustained by his experience of what he sees both among them and in the paintings of the Dutch masters, is shattered almost as soon as it appears. Initially, Lenz's empathy with the congregation in the village church—his identification with the suffering of others—is not incompatible with his own suffering as a particular individual, or even with the existential isolation which his intensely personal vision produces. Indeed, one is the source of the other, because his sudden realization, after the church service, that he is radically alone brings about 'a quiet, deep sympathy with himself' ('ein leises tiefes Mitleid mit sich selbst') (I, 232). The very fact that he can feel the suffering which comes from his isolation is itself the redemption of it:

Er war allein, allein! Da rauschte die Quelle, Ströme brachen aus seinen Augen [...] es war ihm als müsse er sich auflösen, er konnte kein Ende finden der Wollust. (I, 231)

He was alone, alone! Then the well began to flow, floods of tears streamed from his eyes [...] it was as if he could only dissolve himself, his joy could not cease.

However, by the end of the narrative Lenz has ceased to feel at all and his intellectual lucidity does not - as it did in the middle of the story - accompany and sustain his capacities to feel and to act. Indeed it seems to negate both:

Er schien ganz vernünftig, sprach mit den Leuten; er tat Alles wie die Anderen taten, es war aber eine entsetzliche Leere in ihm, er fühlte keine Angst mehr, kein Verlangen; sein Dasein war ihm eine notwendige Last. – So lebte er hin. (I, 250)

He seemed quite reasonable and spoke with the people; he did everything as others did, but there was a terrible emptiness in him, he had no more anxiety, no more desire, his existence was no more than a necessary burden to him. He continued to live like that.

In his finally impoverished condition, his suffering ('Leiden') is no longer real because it is *not* the source of human feeling or religious communion. On the contrary, his capacity for true suffering has become unreal because his real 'suffering' is now his inability to feel anything at all, to the extent that he tries to cause himself physical harm in order to make himself truly suffer ('es war [...] ein Versuch, sich zu sich zu bringen durch physischen Schmerz' (*ibid*)). What had once, for Lenz, been a vision of the world as an aesthetic and theological order, to which he is meaningfully related even in his most extreme isolation, now becomes the opposite: a total dissociation of subjective experience from objective truth.

The power of Büchner's realism in *Lenz* is to show us how this can really happen. In so doing, he shows us what his character Lenz can never perceive.

That is that philosophical and therefore theological Idealism, when dissociated from any real personal or social experience, must necessarily be at odds with any real personal faith: that is to say, a faith which is conscious of the difference as well as the connection between contingent and absolute truth, actual experience and philosophical contemplation. This is the experience of Büchner's whole literary generation, though differently manifested in its conservative and radical wings. In this text, the theological problematic is most manifest when Lenz visits a cottage in the neighbouring village of Fouday where a child has died and Lenz, echoing the biblical story of Christ's resuscitation of a child (Mark 2: 9) attempts to revive the child with the words 'Steh auf und Wandle!' (Stand up and walk!) (I, 242) This episode, which precipitates Lenz's final descent into insanity, is theologically significant in Büchner's text not because of the problem of the historicity of the Gospel narrative which it seems to suggest. It is so because of the way it connects that problem to actual experience. After 1830 German Protestant intellectuals had long since ceased to believe that what Lessing nearly sixty years earlier had called 'zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten' (contingent truths of history) could prove the 'notwendige Vernunftwahrheiten' (necessary rational truths) of Christian doctrine.²⁰ But the necessary consequence of that dissociation—that a faith which has become dependent upon philosophical theology can and must now be borne out only through the witness of personal experience and the actual community of faith in which that experience might arise—has hardly been realized. That is to say, in early nineteenth-century Germany a process of secularization has taken place in philosophical theology which has no real equivalent in the wider society, which remains permeated by the symbolic, semantic and cultural idiom of Christian belief. Büchner's achievement in Lenz is to highlight the consequences of that objective deconstruction of Christian

²⁰ Lessing, *Werke*, vol. VII, pp. 9-14.

belief in the subjective experience of his character Lenz, who is a representative figure of his age.

II Religion and the Emergence of German Realism 1850-1871

Büchner's *Lenz* is an exceptionally revealing case of a paradox implicit in much of early nineteenth-century literature in the German-speaking world. The religious dimension in that literature can express both a distance from what are normally considered the social and cultural attributes of the modern world and—by the same token—an especially acute critique of some of the characteristics of modernity which German literature remarkably anticipates. That paradoxical capacity also means that literary realism—especially the realist novel—emerges in the German-speaking world later and in a different way from the rest of Europe. In the mid-nineteenth narrative realism first develops in the German-speaking world not in the realist novel, but in the shorter but often most powerful form of the *Novelle*, especially outside Germany in Austria and Switzerland (the outstanding German exceptions are Mörike, Annette von Droste Hülshoff and Büchner).

In the work of the Austrian Catholic Adalbert Stifter (1805-68) a profoundly religious sensibility combines with a remarkable modernity of theme and technique. In his aesthetic theory, Stifter combines an Idealist aesthetic with a theological ontology to suggest that the purpose of art is to act as the aesthetic vehicle of Revelation. He asserts that the purpose of art is at once aesthetic and theological: to disclose, or enable the reader to see, the most truly 'real' form of reality: 'die wirklichste Wirklichkeit'.²¹ Stifter introduces his best-known collection of *Novellen*, *Bunte Steine* (*Bright Stones*, 1853), with

²¹ Adalbert Stifter, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by K.Steffen (Basel and Stuttgart, 1972), p. 381.

a preface in which he argues that there is a gentle law ('sanftes Gesetz')²² which recognizes and protects the rights of the individual in an ethically ordered community. This, together with Stifter's preference for rural, provincial and historical themes and a marked absence of dramatic action in his narratives, has led some critics to see his work as an apology for a static order in politics as in art. Many of Stifter's Novellen—for example *Bergkristall* (*Mountain Crystal*), about two children rescued from an Austrian mountainside on Christmas Eve, and *Kalkstein* (*Limestone*), about the selfless service in a remote country district of an impoverished parish priest—do indeed outwardly suggest an agrarian society held together by the practice and cultural expression of the Catholic faith and a psychological and social realism which reflects the operation of a 'gentle law' in human life.'

However, Stifter's apparently simple narratives can have challenging, even disturbing depths; the moral and theological vision they embody is often far from monolithic, and far from reassuring. In *Limestone*, for example, an impoverished and saintly priest, once destined for an academic career, dedicates his life to work in the deprived and desolate limestone region known as the *Steinkar*. In one of Stifter's characteristic *Rahmenerzählungen* ('framework narrations') a scientifically trained surveyor meets the priest at a dinner in a more prosperous vicarage, notices some marked oddities in his behaviour and then encounters him again on a scientific expedition to the limestone district. It transpires that the priest's most obviously neurotic, indeed infantile, symptom (the wearing of fine linen next to his body when he can scarcely afford normal clothing, and an obsessive pushing back of his undershirt under the cuffs of his threadbare jacket) betokens an unrequited adolescent love for the daughter of a neighbouring laundress who was similarly obsessed with the purity of the linen she washes. The self-mastery which the priest achieves and sublimates into a

²² Adalbert Stifter, 'Vorrede', in *Werke*, ed. by Fritz Krökel and Karl Pornbacher 5 vols. (München; Winkler, 1985), vol. I, p.10. All subsequent references to Stifter's works follow this edition.

life of charitable public service—in a central passage he is portrayed carrying children on his shoulders through the icy waters of a flood, an act which foreshadows the legacy of his life savings for the construction of a school—has been achieved at a terrible price. Self-suppression is not necessarily equal to renunciation, nor can the sublimation it seeks be anything more than fractured and partial. Neither, the actual course of Stifter's narrative suggests, can the religious and ethical foundation on which civilization rests be anything more. Characteristically, however, the psychological realism and symbolism of the internal narration (the surveyor's account of his encounter with the priest) is partially eclipsed by the external narrative framework, which consists of an initial discussion among friends about the relationship between the 'higher' and 'lower' gifts of the soul (*die Gaben der Seele*) (I, 55) and an ending which suggests that the origin of the 'higher' activity of the priest in the suppression of his 'lower' energies does not detract from his moral greatness. For that connection—the real story behind the single cross in the churchyard by which the priest is remembered—cannot be articulated (or, literally, seen) in actual life. It can only be shown by the power of Stifter's realism because it can only be silently revealed in what we call reality.

Stifter's Novelle *Turmalin (Jet)* is more complex and directly questions the relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical (which in this case is implicitly also the religious) mode of consciousness. *Jet* differs from the other stories in the *Bright Stones* collection both in its context and its theme: the urban world of mid-nineteenth-century Vienna and a case of mental disturbance and the neglect and abuse of a child. This story, apparently so different from the others in the *Bright Stones* collection in its concern with the social and psychological conditions of modern life, does in fact directly address one of the central preoccupations of Stifter's work: the truth embodied in ordinary human relationships and its capacity to redeem (the meaning here is both theological and social) someone alienated from the 'normal' life of society.

The external context of the *Novelle*—the story of an eccentric Viennese rentier (‘Rentherr’)) deserted by his wife and living in a cellar with his mentally handicapped child—suggests an almost naturalistic concern with milieu. The beginning of the story, however, evokes a dark truth which is distant and unremembered not because it is distant in time or forgotten in the multiplicity of the urban space, but because it is the dark side of the soul. It is the mental alienation which occurs when subjectivity becomes detached from the commonly human world:

Wie weit der Mensch kömmt, wenn er das Licht seiner Vernunft trübt [...] sich unbedingt der Innigkeit seiner Freuden und Schmerzen hingibt, den Halt verliert, und in Zustände gerät, die wir uns kaum zu enträtseln wissen. (I, 119)

How far a man can stray when he obscures the light of his reason [...] abandons himself unconditionally to the pains and pleasures of his inner self, loses all restraint and falls into a condition which we can hardly fathom.

The first part of the narrative is in the third person and describes the isolated life of a cultivated man of private means, whose dissociation from the world of productive work leads to a voluntary but then compulsive withdrawal from normal human interaction. The man has a mediocre talent in all the arts— music and poetry no less than painting—but his main occupation consists in looking at images and fantasizing about what they represent. His walls are occupied from top to bottom with the portraits of famous men, which he can observe from any angle with the aid of furniture fitted with rollers. The description of this state of affairs is suddenly interrupted by reference to the man’s wife and child, whose apparent normality heighten the reader’s sense of the rentier’s alienation. The description of the wife’s room closes with the first evocation in the story of an

image with generally intelligible human significance, that of the Madonna and child.

Soon the next key character is introduced: the actor Dall, who rapidly becomes the rentier's friend. He is distinguished as an actor by the ability to project himself wholly into his roles, so that he becomes the character he is supposed to represent and the distinction between reality and its representation becomes blurred. By the same token, he never takes roles into which he cannot adequately project himself. This apparently total authenticity of aesthetic imagination is however matched by an equally total inability to commit himself fully to any person or social group. His lively imagination means that he is able to give to any human society a heightened sentimental tone. But he quits a social group as soon as it requires actual human commitment. He is therefore said to live in situations ('Zuständen') rather than relationships and to change them as soon as the fancy takes him ('er lebte daher in Zuständen und verließ sie, wie es ihm beliebte' (I, 124)). Eventually the actor seduces the rentier's wife and soon afterwards leaves him alone with his daughter. It is his wife who first confesses the affair and the actor is said to have anticipated her conscience ('Gewissen') in doing so (I, 125). After an initial outbreak of rage he appears to be reconciled to the loss of his wife and to fall into an outwardly calm state ('er sass ruhig und sinnend' (I, 126)). Eventually he leaves his dwelling without legal formality and it is opened by the authorities: all is the same including the image of the Madonna, except that his own child has disappeared from its crib.

This is the turning point of the *Novelle*, at which the story of the rentier is said to be forgotten before it is taken up several years later by a second internal narrator, a married woman who eventually discovers the whereabouts of the rentier and then cares for his child after his death. The rentier's presence is first signalled to the woman by his playing of the flute which is as musically untutored as it is emotionally intense. Eventually she discovers that the man has been living in the cellar, and the building long since demolished, with his now

physically handicapped daughter who is forced to care for him at home and whom he fails to educate. The rentier hangs himself, leaving the encephalitic daughter behind, whom the woman discovers to be—like her father—both formally intelligent and profoundly disturbed. Eventually the woman wins the trust of the child, who begins to recount the details of her dysfunctional existence with her father. Her relationship with her father, like her father's own relationship with the images which constitute his world, seems to consist in a kind of looking without seeing. He repeatedly requires of her that she should describe the moment when he lies dead and buried in his coffin and when and how his wife will commit suicide in despair:

Beschreibe den Augenblick, wenn ich tot auf der Bahre legen werde und wenn sie mich begraben [...] wie deine Mutter von ihrem Herzen gepeinigt [...] und wie sie in der Verzweiflung ihrem Leben ein Ende macht. (I, 152)

Describe the moment when I will lie dead in my coffin and they bury me [...] how your mother will suffer in her heart [...] and how she will take her own life in despair.

His consciousness of himself as really being in the world—like his consciousness of the world and of other—depends upon his representation of it. As he believes the world to be the object of his own representation, he must himself be represented—narrated—in order to be.

The second half of this Novelle—perhaps Stifter's greatest—is indeed concerned with the manifestation of that gentle law of humanity which is expressed in both love and knowledge. Through integration into the woman's family and both practical and religious education the orphan girl enters into a life both normal and humane, eventually caring for herself as she has been cared

for. But how are we to interpret the story as a whole? The transition from the first to the second half of the story might be described as a movement from an aesthetic to an ethical mode of consciousness, in which a morbid subjectivity, which equates representation with being and so becomes estranged from the social and human world, is redeemed (at least in the next generation) by integration into a loving family and the dignity of simple, productive labour. The rentier's false inwardness of self-contemplation and self-projection, in which he 'abandons himself unconditionally to the pains and pleasures of his inner self' ('sich unbedingt der Innigkeit seiner Freuden und Schmerzen hingibt') (I, 119) is succeeded in his daughter's redeemed adulthood by a true inwardness and a stable personality, true to itself and yet integrated with others. The power of Stifter's narrative certainly consists at least partially in its portrayal of this moral truth. Stifter's narrative vision, it can be argued, is indeed one which sees, and sees through, a false world of subjective representation to a true phenomenology of experience: the embodiment of truth in everyday life.

But what kind of truth—what 'most truly real' form of reality—is actually involved? At the level of actual experience the rentier's life is certainly as real as that of the uneventful if virtuous and affectionate life of the conventional bourgeois family that cares for his daughter. The real question the posed by this *Novelle* is about the truth which is implicit in each mode of reality. Each mode of being can on its own terms be as coherent as the other. Stifter's story does not depict any actual choice between them, but only the consequences of an implicit one in the rentier's previous life. The two halves of the story show us two kinds of attitude to experience, but not the transition between them in a single self (the rentier's daughter, who is prevented by her father from becoming a 'self', enters into self-conscious experience only in the second part of the story). It is therefore fitting that the only constant feature common to both halves is not a character but a symbol which can be seen: the

image, both aesthetic and religious in import, of the Madonna and child, which is transferred from the child's mother's room in the rentier's apartment into the child's new home with the woman who cares for her. For Stifter, the Austrian Catholic, faith is not a subjective passion but an objective truth: a truth manifest in human society as well as nature which we can only recognize, not choose. The force of Stifter's narrative therefore consists in its power to see and to show that truth, not as the consequence of inner decision but as embodied in ordinary experience: a truth which (as *Jet* shows so powerfully) is that of a fallen world: at one and the same time the context for both alienation and redemption.

The first great realist novel in the German language—Gottfried Keller's (1819-1890) *Der grüne Heinrich* (*Green Henry*, 1854)—was not written in Germany or Austria but in Switzerland. In German-speaking Switzerland the political self-definition of the citizens of a liberal republic is matched by a largely Protestant religious culture, closely linked through the Swiss tradition of popular education and political participation to engagement in the political public realm. In Switzerland too religious difference between Calvinist and Lutheran Protestantism and Catholicism is linked to an acceptance of religious pluralism and its expression in social and political terms. Gottfried Keller was closely familiar with the ideas of David Friedrich Strauss (the critical assimilation of the Biblical text in the light of modern historical and philosophical knowledge) and Ludwig Feuerbach (the understanding of religious belief as the projection of human feeling and relationships onto a spiritual realm, apparently but not really separate from that of human society).²³ However, for Keller, unlike his metropolitan German counterparts, those ideas offer a real and not just notional critique of the society of which he is a part: not just the critique of a discourse, but the exposure of a link between that discourse and the reality which it claims to represent. Keller's reaction to the end of

²³ See Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Werner Schuffenhauer, 20 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973), vol. V, p. 30f.

Romanticism is neither ‘deconstructionist’—the attempt of the writers of Young Germany to use the Romantic discourse of religion as an ironic critique of the political and social reality which it claims to endorse—nor ‘reconstructionist’—the attempt of the Biedermeier writers to recover in poetic form the content of religious symbolism now largely absent from actual practice. Realism, for Keller, is neither the negation nor the preservation of the Romantic mode, but its real poetic and critical successor.

For Keller, both art and religion are modes of human consciousness which are to be understood primarily in social terms. Neither art nor religion can communicate an absolutely autonomous form of truth, higher or more significant than that expressed in human society. On the contrary, both art and religion, each in its own way, expresses the truth of society itself. The function of art—also in relation to religion—is both poetic and critical. It enables us imaginatively to understand religion as a social and cultural force, embodied and expressed in the life of the people. In Keller’s understanding, Feuerbach’s social and psychological view of religion is not reductive but imaginative—a kind of critical consciousness which imaginatively understands, without intellectually endorsing, religion as a mode of human experience. In a letter to his friend Wilhelm Baumgartner from Heidelberg in 1849, Keller remarks that what most impresses him is Feuerbach’s social and psychological critique of religion and its immediacy of empathetic understanding:

Für mich ist die Hauptfrage die: Wird die Welt, wird das Leben prosaischer und gemeiner nach Feuerbach? Bis jetzt muß ich antworten: Nein! Im Gegenteil, es wird alles klarer, strenger, aber auch glühender und sinnlicher.²⁴

²⁴ Keller, *Briefe*, ed. by Carl Helbling (Zurich: Benteli, 1940), p. 89f.

For me the real question is this: Does the world, does life become baser and more prosaic after Feuerbach? So far I can only answer; No! On the contrary, everything will be clearer, more rigorous, but also brighter and more sensuous.

This empathetic understanding is what connects Feuerbach's theology to Keller's art. In *Green Henry* it is manifest in Keller's narrative of the growth of the young Heinrich Lee to social and psychological maturity. Heinrich imbibes the liberal-minded Protestantism of his father, which echoes the political and intellectual narrative of the Swiss Republic in its rejection at once of ultramontane Catholicism and the intolerant orthodoxy of the Reformed Church. He therefore willingly and even enthusiastically allows himself to be confirmed because of this connection but at the same time—at the moment of receiving communion—rejects any supernatural equivalent. His participation in the service and his rejection, on leaving the church, of its transcendental object, both reflect and enact the process of his growing up.

This sense of the social objectivity of religious life, which in Keller's work frequently finds expression in interior monologue or dialogue between characters, is thus accompanied by an equally effective psychological realism. It is highly significant that between the first (1854) and the final (1874) version of *Green Henry* Keller changes from the use in the earlier version of a mixed first and third-person to a single first-person narrative—'Ich'—in which a reflective narrative subject and the imaginary actual subject of Keller's novel are combined. This enables Keller to combine a vision of reality from the standpoint of an individual consciousness growing to maturity and that of one who sees that individual consciousness against the broader canvas of a whole society. The adult narrator who discovers the Feuerbachian critique of religion as a student—and introduces some of the terms of that critique into the narration—is the same person as the boy Heinrich Lee, who comes to psychological and therefore spiritual adulthood in the particular environment of

a Swiss village, mourning the death of his father and yet growing to maturity through intellectual and social intercourse with his fellows. What is most relevant to Keller's narrator is not the abstractly objective truth of the growing boy's developing consciousness of the religious sphere, but the dialectical truth of the interaction between the boy's imagination and his environment. The child learns about God first from his mother's spontaneous attempts to teach her son prayer, and then by association, when he hears the church bells at twilight and identifies the 'Spirit' of which his mother speaks with the weathercock on the church tower. He then rejects the cold abstraction of the school catechism in favour of his own inner life, in which nature around him and not the idea of God becomes the focus of his poetic imagination:

Das Leben, die sinnliche Natur waren merkwürdigerweise mein Märchen, in dem ich meine Freude suchte, während Gott für mich zu der notwendigen, aber nüchternen und schulmeisterlichen Wirklichkeit wurde [...] mit der ich so schnell fertig zu werden suchte als möglich.²⁵

Strangely enough life itself and sensuous nature was the fairy tale in which I sought delight, whilst God became for me the necessary, but sober and pedantic reality [...] which I tried to handle as quickly as possible.

Ultimately the reflective narrator concludes that his younger self did not truly love God, but needed the idea of God as a necessary stage in his psychological development:

²⁵ Keller, *Der grüne Heinrich*, in *Sämtliche Werke in sieben Bänden*, ed. by Thomas Boning et al., 7 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1996), vol. VII, pp. 691-92.

Denn wenn ich recht scharf in jenen vergangenen dämmerhaften Seelenzustand zurückzudringen versuche, so entdecke ich noch wohl, daß ich den Gott meiner Kindheit nicht liebte, sondern nur brauchte. (*Ibid.*)

For when I try to see as clearly as possible back into the dawning spiritual state of the child I was, I can see very well that I did not love the God of my childhood, but only made use of Him.

In Keller's Switzerland, where a republican polity was matched by an educational culture of which public theology was a crucial component, the dialectical relationship between politics, culture and society was often articulated in theological terms. This is the culture which Keller's realism imaginatively analyses. Switzerland produces in Keller the first great social realist of the German-speaking world, in whose work narrative realism combines with a philosophically and theologically informed imagination to produce a kind of critical realism comparable in scope and distinction to that of George Eliot in England.

This kind of realism never develops in mid-nineteenth century Germany; especially, there is at mid-century no German realist novel with a comparable treatment of the relationship between social and religious consciousness. However, after 1871 a specific form of literary realism develops in nineteenth-century German literature which has a remarkably modern inflection and anticipates some of the insights of both Naturalism and Modernism. What gives to that literature its truly European stature is that, whilst it remains centrally concerned with the discourse of late nineteenth-century German society, which continues to be decisively influenced by the language of faith, it is also a literature of critical realism: one in which the relationship between discourse and experience is not just reflected, but analysed and exposed.

II 1871-1900: The Theological Context of Late German Realism

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that both the difference and the similarity between the functions of literature and religion in the culture of German-speaking Europe between 1830 and 1900 are the product of a process of secularization. That process was expressed at least as much by the evolution of subjective consciousness as it was by the objective development of German society. The two kinds of development were by no mean synchronized. Indeed, as we have seen, an objective process of secularization was often accompanied by a subjective discourse, expressed not least in the literature of the age, which continued to be strongly influenced by religion in its idiom and expression.

The key philosophical—and, in the wider culture, theological—influence in late nineteenth-century Germany was the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Nietzsche's influence on Christian theology both inside and outside Germany has of course been immense, not least because of the particular account of the aftermath of Christian civilization which his cultural and psychological critique of Christian belief suggests. However, it is not Nietzsche's arguments against Christianity but the generic effect of his thought on German culture which is most relevant to the relationship between religion and literature in late nineteenth-century Germany and warrants some extended treatment. What, then, is really theologically or culturally new about Nietzsche's thought? It is that, when Nietzsche writes of the 'Death of God', he really means it. That is to say, he means it in a way incompatible with the continuation of Christian tradition in any sense which German theology or culture is able to define. Nietzsche's affirmation is real because it is made self-consciously and deliberately not within the terms of his culture but against them. Of course, we as his readers in the early twenty-first century can and must reinterpret his words in terms of the difference between his time and our own. But the actual impact of those words depends on how they are addressed to, and how they are received by, Nietzsche's contemporaries. Let us look in detail at

the key paragraph in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*, 1882). The madman ('der tolle Mensch') who is the mouthpiece of Nietzsche's utterance is really looking for God. What is less certain for Nietzsche's readers, it seems, is the existence of the speaker himself. His narrator has to challenge them into believing in the man's existence:

Habt ihr nicht von jenem tollen Menschen gehört, der am hellen Vormittage eine Laterne anzündete, auf dem Markt lief und unaufhörlich schrie: 'Ich suche Gott! Ich suche Gott!'²⁶

Have you never heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the broad light of morning and run into the market square, crying repeatedly 'I'm looking for God! I'm looking for God!'

It is *not* the Death of God which Nietzsche's madman first announces, but the fact that we have killed Him:

'Wohin ist Gott?' rief er, 'ich will es euch sagen! Wir haben ihn *getödtet* – ihr und ich! Wir alle sind seine Mörder!' (III, 481)

'Where has God gone?' he cried, 'I want to tell you! We have *killed* him – you and me! We are all his murderers!'

It is a real, not an impersonal 'we'—you and I—who have killed Him. It is the realization of this stupendous fact which prompts the proliferation of extraordinary images which follow in Nietzsche's text. The fact—the consequence of a deed which has already been committed—is a secret which

²⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die frohliche Wissenschaft*, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari, 14 vols. (Walter de Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 1988), vol. III, p. 480.

must be revealed by a madman. He can only disclose it—and therefore say for the first time that ‘God is dead’ (‘Gott ist todt’)—by pointing to its consequences of which the perpetrators are ignorant:

‘Hören wir noch Nichts von dem Lärm der Todtengräber, welche Gott begraben? Riechen wir noch nichts von der göttlichen Verwesung – auch Götter verwesen! Gott ist todt! Gott bleibt todt! Und wir haben ihn getödtet!’ (III, 481)

‘Do we still not hear the sound of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we still smell nothing of the divine decay? – Even gods decay! God is dead! God will stay dead! And we have killed him!

This deed is the source of the greatest possible guilt because it is the greatest possible deed (the meaning of the word ‘great’ in Nietzsche’s text is beyond any ethical reference) which is the turning point of history, after which all those born into history will be born into a history higher than any of the past:

‘Es gab nie eine größere That, - und wer nur immer nach uns geboren wird, gehört um dieser That willen in eine höhere Geschichte, als alle Geschichte bisher war!’(III, 481)

‘There was never a greater deed than this, - and whoever will be born after us will enter because of this deed into a form of history higher than all of history before’.

The madman can only alienate and confound his listeners because the secret he discloses not only has not but cannot be revealed to them; the ‘deed is further from them than the farthest star, but it is they who have committed it’ (‘Diese That ist ihnen noch ferner, als die fernsten Gestirne, - und doch haben sie

dieselbe gethan' (III, 481-2). The madman is said to have entered several churches on the same day and to have said a Requiem for the eternal God. When questioned he remarks that it is the churches which are the tombs and funeral monuments of God:

'Was sind denn diese Kirchen noch, wenn sie nicht die Gräfte und Grabmäler Gottes sind?' (III, 482)

'What then are these churches if not the burial chambers and memorials of God?'

Nietzsche's madman speaks of the 'Death of God' as 'this tremendous event which is still coming and in motion' ('diess ungeheure Ereignis ist noch unterwegs und wandert'). It has still not reached human ears ('es ist noch nicht bis zu den Ohren der Menschen gedrungen'), because just as 'thunder and lightning and the light of the stars need time to reach us, so deeds, after they have happened, need time before they can be seen and heard'. 'Blitz und Donner brauchen Zeit, das Licht der Gestirne brauchen Zeit, Thaten brauchen Zeit, auch nachdem sie geschehen sind, um gesehen und gehört zu werden' (III, 481). But how can this be if those addressed have themselves committed the deed?

The 'real' event to which Nietzsche's text alludes is predicated on the unreal consciousness by which that event is denied. The truth Nietzsche communicates is one which can only be recognized, not demonstrated. That is why Nietzsche's text must necessarily be in the narrative mode: one in which a truth which is always 'coming' and 'moving' can only be expressed in the fictional history of an embodied person. The visual and sensory immediacy of Nietzsche's imagery certainly suggests that his madman is such a person, indeed that the God whose death he announces has a real body, which can decay, even smell of

putrefaction. But in what sense, if any, is it a realist narrative? It cannot be said to refer to or interpret a commonly shared ‘real’ world of human experience. What is however made real by Nietzsche’s writing is the absence of such a world in the culture of those he addresses: a culture which is defined not by what it *is*, but by what it *is not*. This consciousness of an encompassing and determining absence is changed by Nietzsche’s prose from a historical and psychological judgement into an immediate and irreducible fact of experience. Consider the following passage:

‘Wer gab uns den Schwamm, um den ganzen Horizont wegzuwischen? Was thaten wir, als wir diese Erde von ihrer Sonne losketteten? Wohin bewegt sie sich nun? Wohin bewegen wir uns? Fort von allen Sonnen? [...] Haucht uns der leere Raum an? Ist es nicht kälter geworden? Kommt nicht immerfort die Nacht und mehr Nacht? Müssen nicht Laternen am Vormittage angezündet werden?’
(III, 481)

‘Who gave us the cloth to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosed this earth from its sun? Where does it go now? Where are we going? Will we be far from any sun? Does not empty space breathe at us? Has it not got colder? Is not night and ever more night to come? Do not the lights have to be lit in the morning?’

Nietzsche’s images cannot be called similes or metaphors; nor (at least in this passage) part of a recognizable pattern of allegory. Rather, Nietzsche’s discourse is the objective correlative of a world in which all allegory has become impossible, because all culturally mediated tradition is experienced as the absence, not the presence, of truth. It is the most adequate expression of what might be called a manifest secret—the real but unrecognized truth—which lies behind Nietzsche’s critique of both Christianity and culture. That is that

European, especially German, culture is informed neither by the reality, nor (by the same token) any credible cultural expression of Christian belief. The remarkable power of Nietzsche's 'Death of God' narrative lies in its capacity to enable the recognition of this truth. It can do that precisely because Nietzsche in this discourse does not address his readers, just as his madman does not address his listeners, in historical or psychological—that is to say in cultural—terms. For, in the culture which Nietzsche addresses, such terms are likely to prevent, not enable, the insight he is most concerned to convey. However, in the broader sense, Nietzsche's theological critique is also a critique of the German culture of his age, and one which has a direct relevance to the modulation of German literary realism after 1871. The text in which the link between Nietzsche's theological and cultural critique is most apparent is the first of his *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen (Untimely Meditations, 1873)* which is a polemic against Strauss, especially Strauss's book *Der alte und der neue Glaube (The Old and the New Faith, 1872)*.

In his tract on Strauss Nietzsche analyses the cultural consciousness of his age, first in historical and aesthetic categories, then in the theological ones which he perceives to underlie them. What Nietzsche most attacks in his culture is a false concept of the real ('das Wirkliche') which is identified with the truth and taken as the basis not only for aesthetic and cultural, but also ethical and theological, judgement. This idea of the real, Nietzsche suggests, is nothing more than an abstraction derived from the experience of what he calls the 'cultured Philistine' ('Bildungsphilister') (I, 165). Such a character treats his own 'reality' as the criterion for judging the adequacy of his experience of truth or reason (I, 170). In a clear allusion to Hegelian Idealism, Nietzsche suggests that the Philistine masks the inadequacy of his cultural judgement with philosophy, especially one which appeals to the rationality of the real (*ibid.*). This is a culture in which a discourse of the real leads to an avoidance of reality and an intense public preoccupation with history leads to an alienation of the

present from any real connection to the past. For Nietzsche, this false historical realism is also the source of Strauss's attempt in *The Old and the New Faith* to expound the doctrine of a new post-Christian religion whilst denying that he is doing anything of the kind. Strauss can therefore claim to offer 'a catechism of modern ideas' ('Katechismus der modernen Ideen') and to build the 'world-highway of the future' ('Weltstrasse der Zukunft') (I, 175) whilst conceding that the time has not yet come to destroy the Church or to create a new one. He is simply a 'new believer' ('neuer Gläubiger') with a 'new kind of faith' ('neuen Glauben'). But the word 'faith' must (if Strauss's argument is to make sense at all) retain its old and therefore implicitly Christian meaning. According to Strauss's logic, his new doctrine ('neuer Glaube') must express a real truth because it expresses the actual truth of the modern world. It must therefore inspire as much piety for the universe as the old believers had for their God: 'Wir fordern für unser Universum dieselbe Pietät, wie der Fromme alten Stils für Gott' (I, 189) ('We claim for our universe the same reverence which the old-style believer had for God').

Nietzsche's polemical strategy is not to attack any of the doctrines of Strauss's 'new faith' but to expose the absurdity of a discourse about the 'reality' of 'faith' which has no coherent idea of the meaning of either term. In particular, he suggests, the four questions with which Strauss heads the sections of his book are neither answered nor convincingly linked by Strauss's argument (I, 210). Strauss, Nietzsche argues, has no coherent 'Christian' theology at all and therefore no idea of how such a theology might relate to any intellectually defensible idea of either 'religion' as such or the contemporary world. The first question asked in Strauss's text - 'What is our conception of the world?' ('Wie begreifen wir die Welt?') - is a question about the relationship of faith to conceptual thought and therefore the possibility of rational faith. This had been the chief preoccupation of German philosophical theology at least since Kant. However, in Strauss's work it is simply ignored, because the results of that

theology are taken for granted and assumed to be expressed in the liberal Protestant Christianity of late nineteenth-century Germany. The second question 'How do we order our life?' ('Wie ordnen wir unser Leben?') addresses the relationship of both faith and reason to moral choice and ethical action. This question, Nietzsche argues, is similarly elided because the answer is supposed to be apparent in the 'real'—that is to say, the historically actual—cultural achievements of the age. His critique is as apposite to literary as it is to theological realism. For Nietzsche, Strauss's thought is defined by the combination of an uncritical assent to 'reality' and an equally arbitrary withdrawal from it: an apparently indiscriminate affirmation of the truth of modernity which always retains the option of withdrawal into the inner domain of a truth supposedly superior to the truth of the 'real' world. This pseudo-theology licenses any number of attitudes to contemporary events (I, 199): an admiration for Bismarck, Moltke and the aristocratic spirit as much as a notional concern with social progress; a scientific admiration for Darwin as well as the recommendation of an inner religion of feeling. Nietzsche savagely remarks that Strauss neglects to tell us whether the new believer reads the Pietist works of Spener or the Prussian *Nationalzeitung* over his morning coffee (I, 179). The satire is instructive because it both imitates and debunks what Nietzsche identifies as the characteristic style of his opponent. Nietzsche remarks that Strauss's obsession with the value and significance of the modern moment - the 'time now' ('Jetztzeit') (I, 221) leads to a proliferation of metaphors taken from the actuality of the modern world (I, 222-3) - railways, the telegraph, the stock exchange or the theory of evolution - applied indiscriminately to an unlimited variety of objects. Such a style must necessarily fail in its apparent intention - really to evoke the immediacy of actual experience - because it mistakenly assumes that what is 'modern' is really new. This kind of style is both reflected and sometimes subjected to radical critique in the work of the greatest late nineteenth-century German realists and their

naturalist successors. Nietzsche's emphasis on Strauss's style is entirely apt. For Strauss's 'style' is the literary expression of a form of aesthetic consciousness which, although it masquerades as the expression of moral or even theological truth, is essentially disengaged from the worlds it surveys: in Kierkegaard's terms, a consciousness which is aesthetically interested whilst ethically disinterested in experience.²⁷

This is the opposite of Nietzsche's understanding of the true meaning of the aesthetic. Nietzsche does indeed remark in his essay *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (On the Birth of Tragedy from the *Spirit of Music*, 1871) that the world is eternally justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon (I, 47). But this affirmation must be seen in the context of an analysis of the birth of tragedy from the non-representational art of music. In late nineteenth-century Germany, the other great exponent of the relationship between aesthetic and religious experience was Richard Wagner (1813-1883). The aesthetic, for Nietzsche like Schopenhauer but unlike Wagner, can be a mode of truth only because it is *not* a representation of the truth but the image of the ultimate energy of the will. That is why Nietzsche, once strongly influenced by Wagner, later sharply rejects the work of Wagner whom he describes in his essay *Der Fall Wagner* (*The Case of Wagner*, 1888) as 'the artist of decadence' ('der Künstler der Decadence' (VI, 21))—when Wagner implicitly presents his music as the vehicle of a new quasi-religious myth of German culture.²⁸ Nietzsche (as his essay on Wagner makes clear) emphatically rejects any attempt to replace theology with aesthetics. The emphasis in Nietzsche's work most relevant to our theme is his concern, at least as relevant to literature as it is to religion and philosophy, with how ultimate truth is to be *represented*, when neither the self-conscious insight of philosophy nor the culturally embodied

²⁷ See Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, ed. and trans. by Walter Lowrie, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1944), vol. II, pp. 218-20.

²⁸ Wagner, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Briefe*, ed. by Alfred Lorenz, 2 vols. (Berlin: Bernhard Hahnfeld, 1938), vol. I, p. 201.

practice of religion are adequate to the task. The next section will consider the relevance of that concern to the practice of German realism in the work of the two greatest German narrative realists after 1871: Theodor Fontane (1819-1898) and Wilhelm Raabe (1831-1910).

The realism of Theodor Fontane is concerned above all with the representation of discourse in a society where a theologically and philosophically tinged semantics decisively affects the public understanding of social and political problems. The key medium of this critique of discourse in Fontane is the representation of dialogue, of which Fontane more than any other nineteenth-century German novelist was a master.²⁹ Fontane emphasizes the plane of discourse precisely in order to lay bare the distance between that plane and the ‘real’—the word here has a meaning which only literature can give to it—world of human experience and action. That narrative disclosure also reveals the inadequacy of ideological attempts to bridge the gap, indeed to pretend that the difference does not exist. The tendency to transpose real moral conflicts onto the plane of discourse is not invented by Fontane’s realism. It is a central feature of the culture which that realism represents and one which raises questions about the cultural function of ‘religion’ as much as ‘literature’. What really matters in Fontane’s portrayal of religion is not the critique or endorsement of any particular theological doctrine but his exploration of the implicit and explicit contradictions between a theologically inflected discourse and the real political and social context—and therefore the moral choices—which such theological language serves to legitimate.

One of the most impressive of Fontane’s dialogic sequences comes in the latter part of his late novel *Der Stechlin* (*Stechlin*, 1898). Here especially Fontane’s portrayal of dialogue satirizes the false identification of a theologically incoherent and practically ineffectual cultural Protestantism with the

²⁹ See Norbert Mecklenburg, *Theodor Fontane. Romankunst der Vielstimmigkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1998), especially pp. 59-120.

glorification of technical progress—even a certain rhetoric of political and social equality – which dominate the public rhetoric of the age. Some of his dialogues seem to echo Nietzsche’s savage satire of the ‘modern believer’ as he or she is represented in Strauss’s *The Old and the New Faith*. A particular target is the figure of Pastor Lorenzen who attempts to combine theological orthodoxy with respect for the limited programme of social progress espoused by the anti-Semitic Christian-Social movement of *Hofprediger* (‘Court Chaplain’) Adolf Stöcker and incongruously cites the Portuguese social missionary Joao de Deus as an exemplar of Christian commitment:

‘Dieser Joao de Deus’, so etwa waren seine Worte, ‘war genau *das*, was ich wohl sein möchte, wonach ich suche, seit ich zu leben, *wirklich* zu leben angefangen, und wovon es beständig draußen in der Welt heißt, es gäbe dergleichen nicht mehr. Aber es gibt dergleichen noch, es muß dergleichen geben oder doch *wieder* geben’.³⁰

‘This Joao de Deus’, he said in so many words, ‘was exactly that which I would like to be, what I’ve been looking for ever since I’ve been *really* alive. It’s something which the world says no longer exists. But people like that do still live; they must still live or at least live *again*’.

The figure Lorenzen here invokes as the inspiration of his real being, even the fruit of a kind of evangelical conversion (‘seit ich [...] *wirklich* zu leben angefangen’) (‘since I’ve been *really* alive’) is the supposedly renewed presence of authentic Christianity in modern society. However what is ‘real’ (‘*wirklich*’) is here understood neither culturally nor theologically as what is embodied or expressed in actual experience, but as something which must be *made* real by an

³⁰ Theodor Fontane, *Der Stechlin*, in *Werke*, ed. by Walter Keitel, 20 vols. (München; Cal Hanser, 1969), vol. V, p. 158.

act of existential commitment: that ethic of inner commitment which Max Weber (1864-1920) in his essay *Politik und Beruf* (*Politics as a Vocation*, 1920) calls *Gesinnungsethik* and sharply distinguishes from the ethic of political responsibility (*Verantwortungsethik*).³¹ In this society, the theological equivalent of this distinction is the ‘two kingdoms’ (‘zwei Reiche’) doctrine of classical Lutheranism³² which distinguishes between the right to spiritual freedom and the obligation to obey the secular power in worldly affairs. At the time Fontane was writing in 1898, no less than when Weber wrote twenty two years later, that doctrine frequently avoided responsible political application. When the ageing Junker Dubslav von Stechlin calls for an actual example of modern heroism (‘Heldentum’), Lorenzen’s response is crucially revealing. He tells an anecdote about the American polar explorer Lieutenant Greeley who is acquitted of murder, having shot without trial one of his party who steals food from his fellows. Lorenzen approves of Greeley’s conduct, but when asked for his criterion of judgement can appeal only to the idea of inner conviction (‘die Gesinnung entscheidet’) or even of a uniquely personal idea or decision (‘Echtes Heldentum [...] steht immer im Dienst einer Eigenidee, eines allereigensten Entschlusses’) (V, 342). Most remarkably, it is the closeness of such a decision to crime (‘wenn dieser Entschluß schon das Verbrechen streift’) which in Greeley’s eyes appears to recommend it, or even to turn what is base into what is highest (‘ein Niedrigstes als Höchstes’). What concretely is approved is the fact that Greeley did *not* sacrifice himself and did *not* follow the imperative of his own conscience:

‘Greeley, statt zu tun, was er tat, hätte zu den Gefährten sagen können [...] “unser Exempel wird falsch [...] sterben wir also alle”. [...] Aber es handelte

³¹ See Max Weber’s distinction between *Gesinnungsethik* (‘the ethic of inner conviction’) and *Verantwortungsethik* (‘the ethic of responsibility’) in his essay ‘Politik und Beruf’ (‘Politics and Vocation’) in Weber, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Horst Baier et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), vol. I, 17, p. 265f.

³² Luther, ‘Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen’ (‘On the Freedom of the Christian’), in Luther, *Studienausgabe*, ed. by Hans-Ulrich Delius (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), vol II., p. 265f.

sich nicht nur um ihn, er hatte die Führer- und die Befehlshaberrolle [...] und hatte die Majorität von drei gegen eine Minorität zu schützen.’ (V, 343)

‘Instead of doing what he did, Greeley could have said to his comrades: “Our conduct is no longer exemplary [...] so we have all got to die”. [...] But he wasn’t the only man there, he had the task of leading and giving orders [...] and had to defend a majority of three against a minority of one.’

Thus extrajudicial murder is justified on the basis of a majority vote, but assent to it is praised by this Lutheran minister as an act of true courage (‘der wahre Mut’) and yet described as a ‘fearful something’ to be justified only by the imperatives of the moment and which contradicts ‘all divine commandments, all law and all honour’ (‘ein fürchtbares Etwas [...] das [...] allem göttlichen Gebot, allem Gesetz und aller Ehre widerspricht.’) (V, 344)

One of the most quoted sentences of *Stechlin*—Dubslav von Stechlin’s ‘Wenn ich das Gegenteil gesagt hätte wäre es ebenso richtig’ (‘If I had said the opposite it would also be true’) V, 27)—could equally be applied to the exchange about the discussion of Lieutenant Greeley’s responsibility for his acts. In fact, Dubslav’s comment is made in an earlier dialogue (V, 26-27) about the significance of modern inventions like the telegraph, which immediately reports events such as the Paris Commune of 1871 but is said to lack ‘reliability’ (‘Verbindlichkeit’) and to report such events so indiscriminately that one might be confused with another. What is apparent in this apparently incidental exchange—and what relates it to the much more serious one just quoted—is a disengaged attitude to real historical facts which makes any attitude to them seem equally plausible. When this attitude acquires the cultural sanction of theology—indeed when it is falsely represented as the expression of Christian conscience—the consequences are indeed disturbing: the endorsement of inhumanity by a consciousness which, because it is never humanly engaged

by the experience about which it reflects, remains pure because free from contamination by the consequences of the acts to which it directly leads.³³

In Wilhelm Raabe's late and possibly greatest novel *Die Akten des Vogelsangs* (*Chronicles of the Vogelsang*, 1896) the contrast between discourse and reality is even starker, precisely because it is not masked by cultural convention but revealed by the experience of a profoundly alienated central character who lives on the margins of culture itself. In *Vogelsang* an internal narrator, Karl Krumhardt, chronicles the decline into insanity of his childhood friend Andres Velten. Velten, a literal as well as metaphorical orphan, never knows his father and is brought up by a mentally unstable mother and befriended during his adolescence by his childhood sweetheart Helene Trotzendorff as well as Karl and his family. After briefly studying medicine in Berlin, where he lodges with the French Huguenot family of Leonie des Beaux, he follows his sweetheart Helene to America where she abandons him to marry the dollar millionaire Mungo before returning to the Vogelsang district after his death. Krumhardt's chronicling of this process is also the record of the decline of the Vogelsang district which is transformed by industrialization from a semi-rural enclave into an industrial suburb. Crucially it is also the third-person narrative of a process which is also narrated in the first person by Velten himself. That is Velten's withdrawal into social isolation and eventual mental disintegration, in which he first burns the furniture of his beloved childhood home for firewood and then destroys that home itself, inviting passers-by to plunder its contents.

Karl Krumhardt, Raabe's fictional narrator, town clerk and author of the 'documents', reflects on whether he can represent what he has to describe at all; the descent into mental illness and then the death of his childhood friend:

³³ Fontane characterized the leading articles of the *Kreuzzeitung* (from which he resigned as a correspondent in 1870) as the expression of just such a notionally "Christian" rhetoric which disguises real brutality. See Fontane's letter to his wife of 11 May 1870, in Fontane, *Geliebte Ungeduld: Der Ehebriefwechsel 1857-1871*, ed. by Gotthard and Therese Erler (Berlin: Aufbau 1990), pp. 475-6

Was kann ich heute an seinem Grabhügel anders sein als sein nüchterner Protokollführer in seinem siegreich gewonnenen Prozeß gegen meine, gegen *unsre* Welt?³⁴

Standing at his grave today what else can I be but a sober recorder of the case which he brought and won against my world, against *ours*?

What can he be, Krumhardt asks himself, but the ‘court clerk’ or ‘taker of minutes’ (‘Protokollführer’) at the trial in which that friend has brought a lawsuit against the world. In this novel Velten is not a particular eccentric but its central character. He has indeed triumphantly won (‘siegreich gewonnen’) the suit he has brought against the world, which Krumhardt acknowledges as ‘my own’ (‘meine’) and ‘our’ (‘unsere’) shared world. For what Velten has destroyed in his own and his fellows’ actually existing world is the possibility of living in any world which we can experience or interpret together and therefore make our own: what Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) in the *Duineser Elegien* (*The Duino Elegies*, 1922) was to call ‘the interpreted world’ (‘die gedeutete Welt’).³⁵ His destruction of things is really the destruction of any context in which human beings can recognize—that is to say, in which they can represent (‘vorstellen’)—themselves. This action is also the destruction of himself, because it is the destruction of that recognition of human selfhood in an objective world which is the precondition of what we call experience. This is what Velten describes as ‘an outward clearing out to match the inner one’ (‘ein äußerliches Aufräumen zu dem Innerlichen’) (XIX, 370). It is entirely fitting therefore that he is said to pronounce the word ‘Habseligkeiten’ (‘belongings’) in an alienated fashion which is not common in everyday speech (XIX, 371).

³⁴ Wilhelm Raabe, *Die Akten des Vogelsangs*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Hoppe, 20 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau und Braunschweig: Hermann Klemm, 1953), vol. XIX, p. 295.

³⁵ Rilke, ‘Die erste Elegie’, in *Werke*, 4 vols., ed. by Manfred Engel et al., vol. II, p. 201.

For the German word makes manifest the link which is broken by his action; the connection between ‘having’ (‘haben’) things and belonging to a human world (the German word unmistakably suggests ‘blessed’ (‘selig’) and ‘blessedness’ (‘Seligkeit’)).

The most important allusion in this text to the inherited repertoire of German culture is the verse from Goethe which Velten chalks on the wall of his deathroom and which is alluded to several times in the text:

Sei gefühllos
Ein leichtbewegtes Herz
Ist ein elend Gut
Auf der wankenden Erde (XIX, 352)

Be without feeling!
A feeling heart
Is a burden
In this inconstant world

Velten is not really interested in Goethe. Nor (as his dialogue with Krumhardt makes clear) does he take seriously the German idea of *Gemütlichkeit* (‘emotional warmth’) to which he often ironically refers. He introduces the verse as just another cultural tag he has heard in his childhood at Frau Trotzendorff’s salon and parodies the eighteen-year old Goethe who authored the verse as an eighteenth-century dandy (‘ein frühreifer Lebensheld in Ruder, Kniehose, seidenen Strumpfen und Schnallenschuhen’) (‘a precocious man about town in a powdered wig, knickerbockers, silk stockings and buckled shoes’) (XIX, 352). Raabe’s fictional character Velten has no real relationship to the literary past for the same reason that he has no real relationship to the present: because he cannot connect the experience which ‘literary history’

(Literaturgeschichte') might offer to anything in his own experience (XIX, 370). His deliberate breaking of any connection to the German cultural tradition is articulated through literary allusions which are steeped in that tradition. However, his desire absolutely to break with the past derives from a consciousness of all objective tradition as inauthentic and therefore as a threat to the authentic self. That is the perception that his tradition, because its meaning has been comprehensively deconstructed by reflective critique, cannot command real assent, but only notional obedience.³⁶ However, his consciousness of that deconstruction, because its terms remain defined by the tradition to which he is still bound, can never be a source of liberation. Rather, his consciousness of his own alienation can only be the radically self-reinforcing one which Hegel called 'the unhappy consciousness' ('das unglückliche Bewusstsein').³⁷ The literary as well as the religious history of nineteenth-century Germany amply supports Hegel's judgement that such alienation has implicitly theological roots.

What matters in this text is not any subjective affirmation of cultural allegiance its hero might make but its objective consequences. The world of *Vogelsang* is one in which the legacy of Idealism in German literature and philosophy remains present only in a series of self-negating literary and philosophical allusions. Its real context is the post-Nietzschean world in which the word 'truth', if it means anything at all, means the truth of natural science; not religion, theology or metaphysical philosophy. It is fitting that the one character whom Raabe's hero Velten admits to the home he is destroying (apart from his friend Leonie des Beaux) is the circus performer Herr German Fell

³⁶ John Henry Newman's distinction between "real" assent—the apprehension of a truth that is really experienced—and "notional" assent—the entertainment in the mind of a truth imagined only as *possible*—is directly relevant to the culture which both Raabe's novel and Nietzsche's philosophy reflect. Of course, Newman's vocabulary has an explicitly theological reference lacking in Raabe's and Nietzsche's texts, but which is no less relevant to the secularization of religious consciousness in nineteenth-century German literature. See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, ed. by Nicholas Lash (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 86-92 ('Notional and Real Assents Contrasted').

³⁷ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, III, 163f. Hegel's analysis here is strikingly relevant to the psychology of Raabe's character Andreas Velten.

who pretends to be the ‘missing link’ of evolutionary theory and acts the part of an ape. The effect of Fell’s act depends upon the fact that he can let fall ‘the dull fetters of the beast’ (‘der Tierheit dumpfe Schranke’) and suddenly become human again:

Er stieg, sozusagen, aus dem Pavian oder Gorilla heraus, die geschmeidigen Muskeln steiften sich und – Menschheit trat auf die entwölkte Stirn. (XIX, 380)

He climbed, so to speak, out of the form of a baboon or gorilla, his flexible muscles stiffened and – humanity appeared on his unclouded countenance.

This character, whose value is conferred on him only by science and its great contemporary exponents, says that he is attractive to Velten because of this kind of authenticity: because he can step out of his own skin, instead of (like the majority) only leaving it behind at death:

‘Siehe da’, habe ich mir gesagt, ‘auch einmal wieder einer, der aus seiner Haut steigt, während die übrigen nur daraus fahren möchten!’ (XIX, 381)

‘Look’, I said to myself, ‘there’s another one who can step out of his skin, whilst others would dearly like to leave it behind!’

Yet this supposed capacity, which only a theatrical performer can appreciate, does not bring Velten closer to humanity; it makes him resemble its opposite. Raabe’s hero has severed the connection which links him not to a particular world of experience (nor to any particular religion or its secular surrogate) but to Being itself. What places Raabe’s realism in this text on the border between literary and theological discourse is not that Raabe proposes any answer to the question of the ultimate meaning of existence. It is that he poses the question at

all, and shows it to underlie every other question which is posed in the text about the interpretation of experience. By the same token Raabe's work represents the end of one strand of classical realism in the German speaking world and its modulation into modernism.

However, late nineteenth-century Germany produces another form which is equally relevant to our theme: the naturalist drama, of which the greatest exponent is Gerhard Hauptmann (1862-1946). Drama rather than the novel is in many ways the form most appropriate to the representation of discourse, both because of its focus on oral speech and dialogue and because it is distinguished by the autonomy and immediacy of its form.³⁸ In his major dramas Hauptmann exploits to the full these characteristics of dramatic form in works of social realism, several of which offer a complex account of the presence of Christianity in German society, which is often expressed through a dialogic presentation of Christian language in relation to other modes of discourse in the same social context. In his late play *Die Ratten* (*The Rats*, 1911), for instance, Hauptmann offers a dramatic portrayal of the inhabitants of a Berlin slum, several under the influence of drugs, drink or mental degeneration, which in its quasi-scientific precision of detail and authenticity of dialogue rivals the work of Zola. The down-at-heel theatre director and slum landlord Hanno Hassenreuter lives from the rents paid by the inhabitants of a Berlin tenement in which he retains a theatrical wardrobe on the top floor. His tenants include the morphine addict Frau Knobbe, the pregnant Polish servant girl Pauline Pipperkarcka, Frau John, the wife of an itinerant building worker and charlady for Hassenreuter and the former theological student, pastor's son and would-be actor Spitta. The last character is the most interesting, not because he has or has not lost his faith, but because of the way he introduces a theological discourse into a world which is permeated by the language of the theatre and therefore a discourse about representation.

³⁸ See Peter Szondi, *Theorie des modernen Dramas* (Frankfurt a.M; Suhrkamp, 1959), pp. 12-13.

Spitta abandons his studies and trains as an actor with Hassenreuter because his strictly Lutheran father has thrown his sister out of the family home after she is seduced and (it is implied) made pregnant by the scion of an aristocratic family for whom she is working as a governess.³⁹ Disgusted with what he sees as the false piety of his upbringing he seeks refuge in the modern theatre, but his worst fears are confirmed when he discovers that the training he is offered is of the ‘unnatural Schillerian, Goethean, Weimar school’ (‘Schiller-Goethisch-Weimarische Schule der Unnatur’) (IV, 446). The aspiring young actor is disappointed because his would-be tutor openly declares himself to be the epigone of a dead tradition. A tragi-comic parody of a disillusioned cleric seeking salvation in art, Spitta declares that German drama must be rejuvenated in the spirit of the young Lessing, Goethe and Schiller (IV, 477). Spitta appeals to the dramatic theory of Lessing, which he says contains ‘axioms adapted to the fullness of art and the riches of life and are adequate to nature itself’ (‘dort stehen Sätze, die der Fülle der Kunst und dem Reichtum des Lebens, die der Natur gewachsen sind’) IV, 477). Hassenreuter responds by calling him a ‘rat’ (IV, 478) and arguing that there is a ‘plague of rats’ (‘Rattenplage’) undermining ‘idealism’ in both German art and German society.

This is a tragi-comedy indeed, for whilst the eccentric theatre director and the earnest ex-theologian are debating the conditions for the successful continuation of German classical tragedy, a real tragedy of child abduction, teenage pregnancy and murder is unfolding around them. Pastor Spitta, Lutheran minister and Erich Spitta’s father, arrives on the scene and opines that ‘so-called scientific theology which flirts with every heathen philosopher’ (die sogenannte wissenschaftliche Theologie, die mit allen heidnischen Philosophen liebaügelt’) (IV, 484) is no less responsible than the fleshpots of Berlin for his son’s decision to abandon his studies just before his theological finals. The father’s judgement is credible, for his son really does have a social conscience

³⁹ Gerhard Hauptmann, *Die Ratten*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, 6 vols. (Berlin; S.Fischer, 1912), vol. IV, p. 463.

and espouses a social gospel which he sees as the antithesis of his father's established Church (IV, 508). However, the kind of theology to which his son would have been exposed in a German university at the end of the nineteenth century would not be any radical social gospel, but the *Kulturprotestantismus* ('Protestant theology of culture') of theologians like Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) and Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) which dominated the German theological schools of the day and preached a form of liberal historicist Christianity largely indistinguishable from a Kantian ethic of moral self-respect and social progress.⁴⁰ Hassenreuter aptly remarks (IV, 484-5) that Erich is not the first theologian to desert their calling for literature and the stage: Lessing and Herder did so too. The irony, of course, lies on both sides of the equation. Given the actual environment—a tenement in *fin de siècle* Berlin—in which the question is posed, the question of the ability of organized religion to perpetuate the legacy of actual faith can only appear comic, if also tragic. For what is largely absent in the society in which the drama is set is any credible doctrine of the relevance of either 'religion' or 'art' to the modern world. The achievement of Hauptmann's drama is to show us this by the juxtaposition of aesthetic and religious discourses with the social facts they both claim to articulate. Hauptmann's drama can be described as 'naturalist' because of its minute portrayal of environment and recording of ordinary speech, not because of any suggestion that consciousness itself can be reduced to environment. What matters is the way different modes of consciousness can or cannot authentically interpret experience. Hauptmann is far from endorsing the thesis that tragedy, because of its supposed metaphysical presuppositions, can no longer express the truth of modernity. The real question posed in this play, which is relevant to 'literature' and 'religion' alike, is not whether but how the idea of tragedy—the

⁴⁰ See e.g. Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, mit einem Geleitwort von Wolfgang Trillhaas (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1985[1900]), pp. 92-4 ('Das Evangelium und die Lehre, oder die Frage nach dem Bekenntnis').

public articulation of the meaning of human suffering—can continue to be relevant in the modern world.

As the century draws to an end, both naturalism and realism give way to a concern with the limits of language, narrative and representation which is equally relevant to the discourses of literature and religion. In the German-speaking world, that concern will be expressed primarily in Austria and German-speaking central Europe in the work of writers like Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), whose seminal essay *Brief an Lord Chandos* (*Letter to Lord Chandos*, 1902) was published at the beginning of the twentieth century and above all by Rilke and Kafka. The work of the greatest German realist of all, Thomas Mann (1875-1950) reaches into the twentieth century and in crucial ways defines German literature's presence in it. The anticipation of the work of Thomas Mann—one of the most 'secular' of German writers but one for whom the social and cultural meaning of secularization is a central concern—is therefore an appropriate way to conclude this chapter.

In his best known novel *Buddenbrooks*, published on the very threshold of the twentieth century in 1900, the connection between aesthetic and religious consciousness is constantly thematized. Both the informing presence and the gradual waning of the influence of North German Protestantism, especially its ethic of civic duty and the subordination of the private to the public realm, are central to the process of the decay of a family which the novel chronicles. One of its central episodes—Thomas Buddenbrook's reading of Schopenhauer shortly before his death—represents both the dissolution of the stern Protestant ethic which had governed his youth and its replacement, all the more poignant because it is an illusion based on a misinterpretation, by a supposedly aesthetic alternative. Buddenbrook, plagued by his increasing perception of the hollowness of his inherited work ethic and the suspected infidelity of his wife, reads the section of Schopenhauer's (1788-1860) *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1818) entitled 'Vom Tod in

seinem Verhältnis zur Unzerstörbarkeit unsers Wesens an sich' ('Concerning Death in Relation to the Indestructibility of our Being in Itself').⁴¹ The effect is one of liberation:

Die Mauern seiner Vaterstadt, in denen er sich mit Willen und Bewußtsein eingeschlossen, taten sich auf und erschlossen seinem Blicke die Welt, die ganze Welt, von der er in jungen Jahren dies und jenes Stückchen gesehen, und die der Tod ihm ganz und gar zu schenken versprach.⁴²

The walls of his ancestral city, in which his will and consciousness had confined him, opened up and let him see the world, the world as a whole, of which in his youth he had seen this or that particular part and which death now simply offered him as a gift.

Yet the upshot of this reading is the opposite of Schopenhauer's philosophical import. Thomas does not understand what Schopenhauer means: that the affirmation of the will must give way to an act of resignation which can be motivated and understood not in voluntary or intellectual but only in *aesthetic* terms. Instead, he interprets the passage to mean that we *can* know the ultimate significance of what Schopenhauer calls 'the world as will'. That, in Thomas's understanding, is that the ultimate meaning of the moral life of the individual consists in an essential 'will' that transcends it, one which is manifest in all of humanity but not to be grasped from the standpoint of the individual. Thomas believes that his own life, now coming to an end, will be reborn in all those who in future will say 'I', especially those who say it most confidently and

⁴¹ The relevant section is in Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, ed. by Arthur Hübscher, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1972), vol. I, pp. 528-34.

⁴² Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks. Verfall einer Familie*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Peter de Mendelsohn (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981), p. 671.

authentically. He associates this idea with the future of his son, Hanno, who in reality will die in pain from typhus at the age of sixteen.

This tragic misunderstanding, and a great novelist's interpretation of it, surely bespeaks a truth as relevant to 'religion' as it is to 'literature' in nineteenth-century German culture and its sequel. In the German-speaking world between 1830 and 1900 both literature and religion – sometimes in different ways, sometimes in strikingly similar ones – are at odds with the culture and society in which they are engaged. However, precisely that distance can be a remarkable source of insight, because it tells us as much about the culture and society of the German-speaking world as it does about the ways literature and religion are present within it. The link between literature and religion in our period does not uncritically reflect what Terry Eagleton called an 'ideology of the aesthetic'.⁴³ Rather it suggests a way in which literature can reveal in that culture contradictions between actual experience and its intellectual articulation. What we call "religion" and "literature" are always more than social facts or sources of doctrine, although of course they include both. They are forms of human life. Both can embody an immediacy of communication – a capacity to show, not tell – which are especially relevant to a culture, like much of German-speaking Europe between 1830 and 1900, in which the life of the mind has become separated, sometimes productively but often with disabling effect, from the life of society. The 'literature' and 'religion' we have considered are certainly products of that culture; but they can also illuminate, transcend and critically understand it.

⁴³ See Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).