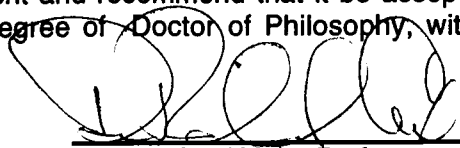


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Susan H. Wood entitled "Clio's Voice Regained: Historical Novels by Four Nineteenth-Century Women." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.



Dr. Don Cox/ Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Walter M. Hasler

Richard Kelly

Harry C. Pittledge

Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of The Graduate School

CLIO'S VOICE REGAINED: HISTORICAL NOVELS BY FOUR NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The University of the Tennessee, Knoxville

Susan H. Wood

August, 1994

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to explore the relationship between history, readers, and the presentation of that history by women authors in four nineteenth-century British historical novels. Applying an idea originally suggested by Joseph Turner about a reader-response approach to historical novels using terminology from Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (organic, reflective, philosophical), four novels were designated "philosophical" historical novels. Having so classified the novels, the ways in which Fanny Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814), Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849), Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), and George Eliot's *Romola* (1862-3) encouraged philosophical reflection about history on the part of their readers were discussed. This philosophical reflection tended to require the readers to revise their assumptions about history, progress, and the role of the reader.

It was concluded that this approach to historical novels, by focusing less on what the history was and more upon what the combined effect of historical elements on the reader might be, changed what might be defined in literary studies as "historical." Women writers, it seems, took the philosophical, rather than the reflective or organic approaches to history because of their less authoritative position (than male authors) with relation to their readers. By writing historical novels, women writers could make themselves purveyors of "truth" while undermining confidence that the foundations of these so-called truths were unquestionable and adequate to explain the never-before-uttered histories that are first given voice in their works. Full proof of this assertion, though, would require a fuller study of nineteenth-century historical novels drawing on the contributions of both male and female authors.

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CHAPTER 1

CLIO'S LATENT VOICE: ARTICULATING HISTORY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

" . . . to judge from the number yearly published, one may presume that there is a great demand for historical romances; and to judge from the quality of those published, one may suppose the readers very good-natured, or very ignorant; or both. We believe they are both."

(George Henry Lewes, 1846)

"The 'historical novel' is a literary hybrid which is apt to offend opposite sides. Either the historian condemns it for its inaccuracy, or the novel-reader complains of its dulness" (Leslie Stephen, 1902)

Rosemary Jann and Dwight Culler, both writing in 1985, point to the Victorian Age as a time of obsessive historical consciousness. In their respective studies of "historical thinkers" or "historians," both survey the project that nineteenth-century writers of history set for themselves. Culler observes the now familiar picture of Victorians desperately trying to connect themselves to a past in the face of a potentially disintegrating future, a device which he designates the Victorian "mirror" of history. The Victorian historical thinkers--Carlyle, Rossetti, Morris, Scott, Macaulay (there are more--all men) engage in mining the past ages for pictures of themselves, as in Culler's unforgettable example of Cardinal Newman's epiphany--"I looked in the mirror, and I was a Monophysite!" Thus, Culler sees Victorians re-integrating themselves into the social world after the self-indulgences of Romanticism. Jann's

approach seems superficially similar, except that no neat trope unifies her discussion. Instead, Jann sees her historians (six men--Thomas Arnold, Carlyle, Macaulay, Froude, John Richard Green, and Edward Freeman) as synthesizers of contemporary conflicting norms of both science and literature (acting as both scientist and philosopher) "to affirm order and value in human society" (Jann xii). Culler and Jann actually see the same thing--that historians are shaping history to their own ends, because the past, at least to some degree, seems a solid entity upon which something stable (in a precarious Victorian society) might be constructed. The nineteenth century had not yet assimilated the idea of truth as relative and historical narrative as metafiction. Yet, without completely destroying the idea of history as stable, the historical novel had, from the earliest part of the nineteenth century, coexisted with and outshone the projects of actual historians.

Jerome Buckley theorizes, in *The Triumph of Time*, that the dominant theory of history in the nineteenth century was that of ever improving progress, but that this idea, in the deepening consciousness of history itself as perhaps not "truth," but a version thereof, gave way to an idea he calls decadence--or the idea that overall, things were becoming worse with the march of time. According to the more subtle theory of Hayden White, these opposing tendencies coexisted throughout the century (38-42). The tension can be perhaps most clearly seen in the rapid proliferation of geological theories to explain mounting evidence in apparent disagreement with Biblically-understood history.¹ The idea of origin, instead of being a given, became a topic requiring scientific proof, a topic of inquiry.

In this climate of inquiry, Sir Walter Scott published his first historical novel, *Waverley*, in July, 1814. As Ina Ferris points out, Sir Walter Scott received respect

¹Gillispie's *Genesis and Geology* is an invaluable source on this topic.

from reviewers apparently because he had changed the pernicious novel-form into something capable of a nobler didactic aim--teaching history. Kerr has suggested, though, that Scott's project goes beyond the accretion of historical detail and rather reinvents the past to suit ideologic aims of his own (Kerr 4). Scott, however, has the revelation of forgotten facts also in mind, so he becomes a synthesizer of reality and romance (Kerr 17). If one accepts the views of these critics, it would begin to appear that the much-touted realism of the nineteenth century is all a humbug, and that everyone used the past to his own purposes in the present. In a sense, though, all historical novelists are plagued by the specter of reconciling realism and romance, and the discussions of historians by Culler and Jann would seem to highlight the same problem.

The historical novel has remained a step-child of the novel form. Rising from the synthesis of the "truth" of history and the "truth" of the realistic novel, the historical novel has too many parents to be considered a pure form, and the critical sensibilities of a large part of the twentieth century found it unclassifiable and therefore embarrassing. Generally, the historical novel has been seen as a non-aesthetic form, a form that because it has allegiance to historical fact, rather than art, cannot be expected to provide the artist with the framework for artistic perfection. Women writers, in writing about history without the sweep to be found in, say, Tolstoy, have been doubly silenced--the conventional wisdom says that historical novels are not to be taken seriously, and women do not "really" write about history.² Such a view has effectively deprecated what important nineteenth-century women writers actually did do with history in their works, and what they tried to say about a process that so seemed to exclude them. Significantly, the male historical thinkers catalogued by

²See Ina Ferris' interesting discussion.

Culler and Jann can practice a reflective approach of discovering themselves in the Victorian mirror of history, but to women writers, historical sources would reflect a darkened glass in place of a familiar countenance. One can hardly imagine even a melodramatic heroine like Cathy Earnshaw, who can see Heathcliff as part of herself, finding a Monophysite particularly self-reflexive. Not having access to the reflective approach to history except through great feats of imagination (evidenced in a work like Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*), women writers had even more reason than their male contemporaries to reforge the historical artifacts used to create historical novels.

Historical novels do not attempt to contain the whole of history, as some histories do, but their allegiances to history automatically seem to distract from the kind of internal connections that people have learned to look for in novels. Historical novels do have their own norms for the reader, but one of the implied definitions of the historical novel reader is someone who does not mind negotiating the unclear road between history and novel. A historical-novel reader, then, has the potential to be less upset by epistemological questions and less anxious to have the difference between historical truth and poetic truth rendered up to him/her by the author. In short, the reader of historical novels is an adventurer. That four well-known British women authors--Fanny Burney, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot--each took up the historical novel once in her career seems significant to me because of my perception of the historical-novel reader. Each of these writers attempted a historical novel in order to have this kind of interaction with the reader--in order to challenge the norms of fictional convention, as well as of patriarchally written history, but to do so without sounding stridently reactionary, without even having to present an opposing view. In these particular historical novels the reader is allowed to perceive history from different perspectives and a synthesis of some sort is usually implied. These

novels tend to focus upon the lives of ordinary people, rather than what Hegel would call "world-historical individuals" and major public historical events. Such a technique tends to have the effect of seeming to marginalize history itself, to the degree that only *Romola*, of the novels I discuss, has consistently been seen as a historical novel, and even it was not considered an excellent or successful example of the form.³ Each female historical novel writer essentially used her novel to reinvent the reader's relationship to past events by foregrounding different situations than those we would read of in official history, or in the novels of a male historical writer.

Of course, one may be thinking that Scott's importance to the historical novel is that he did reinvent the reader's relationship to past events--that history is depicted as past conflicts between political factions, personal and regional loyalties, and epistemologies. Scott's attitude towards the present, though, tends to be optimistic and positive--the conflicts of the past have resulted in an idyllic present, and, therefore, the nation must be progressing all the time. While this is probably an overly-simplistic reading of Scott and his attitude towards history, it reflects how his enthusiastic contemporaries responded to his novels, and later how many Victorians treated the past (most obviously Macaulay). James Kerr sees Scott as using fiction to establish "a comfortable distance between past and present" (14) because the past contains the tragedy of Scotland's loss of distinct sovereignty (3). Scott's English readers, though, would probably not have grasped this tragedy. Also, as an anonymous author, but also public figure, with roles aligning him with the Tory ruling class, Scott may have stifled his questions about progress, shown through the oddly ambiguous sympathies he has the reader form with that dying/dead "other" culture that

³Rance sees the book as deprecating history's importance, but *The Spectator*, in George Eliot's time, reviewed the work sympathetically. See Chapter 5 of this study.

is Scotland apart from England. Like women, the Scots had been marginalized, but Scott is determined to make the best of it. At least Scotland has a past history to treat elegiacally. The relative lack of progress and integration into British society women had achieved at this time leads to a less optimistic model in their works. While Scott and other historical novelists, including the women writers discussed here, all can be seen as encouraging readers to be philosophers of history, the reader of the male Scott, expecting to be instructed in history, tends to overlook this aspect of his/her role in relation to the text. Ferris suggests in her discussion of "literary authority" that critics privilege male over female writers, and historians over novelists, until the Victorian Age, when the novel gains more legitimacy (42, 75-6, Chapter 7). Therefore, Scott tends to be read as a *historical* novelist by his contemporaries, and later on, when the novel has become the important Victorian form, as a poor formal *novelist*. Women writers, by contrast, tend not to be seen as teachers of history at all, leaving a freer relationship between author and reader.

While Scott was still writing, Alessandro Manzoni, author of the classic Italian historical novel, *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed*) also wrote a treatise *Del romanzo storico* (*On the Historical Novel*). While giving much insight into the hybrid nature of the historical novel, Manzoni insists that "the historical novel does not have a logical purpose of its own" (76) because it tries to tell the truth and be fictive. Manzoni presents the case of the historical novel as though it is a defendant on trial--both lines of evidence result in its condemnation: one cannot distinguish between the historical novel's truths and fictions, therefore it fails to teach history, and there is too much distinction between the real and not-real, resulting in a destruction of artistic unity (Manzoni 63-6). Because the historical novel is a hybrid, as Manzoni suggests, it relies upon a complex series of relationships between the form of fiction, the author's

narrative of history and story, history and the reader. Manzoni seems to believe that these conflicting aims will eventually cause the form's demise, especially since he sees the toleration of the form as connected to the reading public's interest in a particular historical time. From a theoretically artistic and logical perspective, Manzoni makes sense; however, he ignores the reader's position. The reader of a historical novel does not want to learn merely "the facts" of history, but desires to read a work that includes or draws upon real events much as realistic novels do. In fact, the way nineteenth-century historical novels tend to practice realism has led to the assumption that they are the same thing, or that historical novels are corrupt examples of realism (as Matthews says below). Manzoni correctly identifies popular vogues for certain historical times as connected to the readership's interest--but are the readers interested because of the novels they have read, or are they interested because certain history appeals to them? There is no way of knowing, but if the former could be true, then Manzoni's model (historical novels being works of their times--drawing soon-to-be-obsolete parallels between past and present with no longevity or appeal to later audiences) falters. In fact, the continuing popularity of his own novel belies his theory. The internal and inartistic tension Manzoni finds in the historical novel because of its fictiveness warring with realism is no more than an intensification of the epistemological problem of realism itself--a "problem" from which all art aspiring to represent any aspect of reality will suffer.

A fruitful alternative to the thinking of Manzoni which results in a death sentence for the historical novels is the application of Hegel's theory of history to these works' depictions of history. Manzoni's thinking, while logical, makes the historical novel a dead end because, formally, it is a synthesis and should not really exist. Hegel's all-encompassing idealism circumvents this question of form as static. Hegel intended his

theory of history to apply to the stages of history discussed in his 1830-31 lectures, not necessarily to historical novels. Basically, Hegel claims that the course of human history makes logical sense, and that man is capable of discerning what this sense is. Hegel's perceived motives for concluding this vary, since the end result finds his own Prussia at the "end of history" in its apex of development. Even if we find this encouraging end rather suspect upon ideologic grounds, it is easy to see that Hegel's dialectics as a whole encompass and include (in order not to leave disturbingly unaccounted for) antinomies that topple man's faith in a fundamental order and progress to earthly events. In fact, we may recall Rosemary Jann saying something similar with regard to historians, above. One may say that Hegel's dialectical positions merely absorb without explaining the syntheses of oppositions that he mentions, thus circumlocuting some of the real sources of uncertainty of his times in a wayward attempt to preserve reason at all costs. On the other hand, many nineteenth-century people found their dearly-held assumptions about the world challenged by science, precipitating the religious turmoil of the Victorian Age. They also found science inadequate to explain the whole world, or serve as a substitute for faith. Therefore, Hegel's embracing of these two apparently irreconcilable views into a necessary synthesis is an important reaffirmation in favor of the idea that we can embrace the inexplicable as part of a total "Unity" of experience, rather than fearing it as a potential threat to existing knowledge.

In his 1926 *PMLA* article, "The Views of the Great Critics on the Historical Novel," Ernest Bernbaum suggests that these so-called "great critics," such as Coleridge and Hazlitt, fail us when we begin searching for views on the historical novel, and that Hegel's philosophy could help untangle the theoretical labyrinth surrounding the historical novel, which is discussed below. Overall, Bernbaum sees

the failure of criticism to study the historical novel seriously as resulting from "the wide permeation of the presuppositions of naturalistic philosophy" (439). The scientific method, Bernbaum claims, created a climate in which art had to justify its existence as "a copy of that objective reality in which we must struggle to survive" (429). Bernbaum says that the privileging of naturalist philosophy created a hostile climate for all art, but to some degree, the historical novel still labors under the layers of nineteenth-century suppositions detailed above. For the empiricists, historical novels lack fact; for the Modernist they lack art. We should not forget that the nineteenth century was an age that struggled between utilitarianism and aestheticism all the time. Historical novels are a symptom of this constantly divided consciousness and conscience. Trying to reconcile such opposites in a synthetic way in order not to annihilate the past or destroy the future seems to have been a major theme in historical novels from Scott onward in the nineteenth century. If we think about it carefully, we realize that Modernism repudiated the past in a way the nineteenth century could not, and the empiricist project destroyed any vision of a utopian future. Philosophy tends to lie buried, in nineteenth-century novels, beneath a veneer of realism.

Brander Matthews gives us a taste of this thinking in an article where he praises Scott's realism, but goes on to praise realistic novels at the expense of historical novels, claiming that direct experience with the subject is impossible in the historical novels, but "really trustworthy historical novels are those which were a-writing while the history was a-making" (18). Matthews prefers pure realism or pure romance, saying, "The historical novel is aureoled with a pseudo-sanctity, in that it purports to be more instructive than a mere story: it claims, or at least the claim is made in its behalf--that it is teaching history. There are those who think it adds

hypocrisy to its other faults" (26). In spite of his bias, Matthews gives us some important impressions here--1) a novel about history, no matter how recent a past, can still be a historical novel; he mentions Harriet Beecher Stowe in conjunction with the first quote, and 2) the impression that a historical novel is "teaching history" has been related by empiricists (whom are mentioned and discussed by Bernbaum) to the quota of reality or fact that it contains. It is not surprising, then, that the foremost historical novel critic, Georg Lukács, uses a historical approach, since other frames of reference do not value the historical novel's concerns.

The most renowned work on the historical novel is Lukács' *The Historical Novel*.⁴ Most theoretical work on historical novels is troubled by the definition of historical novels more than any other question. Lukács' approach, which tries to define the historical novel in relation to the epic and historical drama and then trace its evolution into a novel of "democratic humanism," ignores too many novels (all the ones I will discuss) in its desire to find a general historical trend. Lukács' definitions keep returning to Scott as a model, and while I find Scott's influence on nearly all Victorian historical novelists marked, I would not say that all modeled themselves on him, or even tried to use his approach to history. One would think that the Marxist ideology of Lukács would be opposed to the unconsciously empiricist value-judgments of Leslie Stephen and others criticized by Bernbaum; however, if Stephen is unconscious of how the epistemology of his times has controlled his attitude towards art, Lukács seems unaware how much his consciously implemented ideology fails to explain about British literary history after Scott, and modern attitudes towards the historical novel among readers.⁵

⁴ See David Brown 195-200 for criticism of Lukács' methods.

⁵ Andrew Sanders, in his 1978 book, *The Victorian Historical Novel 1840-1880*, seemingly attempts a partial corrective to Lukács' book by introducing those English

Lukács identifies the French Revolution and subsequent unrest in Europe as the original cause for the historical novel's appearance, due to the new recognition of history as a *mass experience* [italics Lukács']. Taking his Marxist biases into account, we learn something perhaps more significant from Lukács as he elaborates upon this historical moment:

Progress [after the Enlightenment] is no longer seen as essentially unhistorical struggle between humanist reason and feudal-absolutist unreason. According to the new interpretation the reasonableness of human progress develops ever increasingly out of the inner conflict of social forces in history itself. . . . The most important thing here is the increasing historical awareness of the decisive role played in human progress by the struggle of classes in history. (Lukács 27)

True, the French Revolution could leave little doubt as to the disparity between classes as a threat to the old order. To Lukács, progress is a given: class struggle forms an important part of this. To some, though, class struggle was not progress. Having the awareness of history and one's own possible sudden marginalization need not result in the notion that history is progressing. Women historical novelists exhibit ambivalence towards their contemporaries' notions of historical progress. Therefore, while Lukács cites Scott as "fathoming historically the whole of English development to find a 'middle way' for himself between warring extremes," he presupposes that this "middle way" is actually progressive (Lukács 32). At the same time, Lukács insists that the popularity of Scott comes from the epic nature of his works without the epic heroes, in contrast to those he sees as hero-worshipping Romantics (Lukács 35-9).

historical novelists following in the heritage of Scott, most of whom do not fit so well with Lukács' theory. As a more limited study than that of Fleishman (below), Sanders' is able to be more detailed, but the book lacks an overall theoretical position, in addition to sidestepping the definition issue.

To the Marxist Lukács, the progressivism of Scott displays itself in his representation of how historical forces shape the class-experience, and draws attention to it, thereby manifesting progress in a Marxist way.

In a later chapter, "The Crisis of Bourgeois Realism," Lukács declares that after the Revolution of 1848, the bourgeois ideology no longer dominated, causing writers to fear discussing progress as a historical force (Lukács 173-4). Instead, the "history is conceived as a smooth straightforward evolution" (Lukács 174). The element of struggle erased, Lukács apparently finds little to admire. Clearly, all Lukács sees in the development of the historical novel is linked to his Marxist sense of historical progress. It well may be that the events he claims to have begun the popular interest in historical novels (French Revolution, Napoleonic Wars) did indeed have the effect he attributes to them. In every case, however, it is Lukács' supposition that the writer's conscious desire in writing a historical novel ought to be to connect the past and the present, or demonstrate the Marxist notions of progress. Therefore, novels concerned with history for other reasons, or demonstrating the nature of history in a different way, will not seem like successful historical novels to him--and maybe not even historical novels at all--especially in cases such as those I discuss, in which class struggle in history tends to be divided into men's struggles and women's struggles. Lukács' most important contribution is his attempt to identify where the historical novel came from.

The demise of the historical novel is once again declared by Avrom Fleishman in the first book-length modern literary-historical study of the English historical novel, *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* in 1971. His account shows how the historical novel as a viable form has been brought to a self-consciously formal Modern end by Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*. In his aim of being "inclusive

without being exhaustive" (xiv), Fleishman defines historical novel in a completely arbitrary manner--1) the story must be set two generations in the past, 2) it must concern itself with public historical events, and 3) one real historical person must be shown in the story (1-2). Evidently, Fleishman is concerned with limiting the potentially voluminous number of novels in his study, but there is no clear connection between his definition and the assumption that the historical-novel reader "expects historical novels to be true to life" (x). This expectation might be met by novels showing action of ordinary people, one generation in the past and having no contact with actual historical figures, since many ordinary people do not. Baumgarten points out that Fleishman, by considering Conrad (who doesn't fit the model), has proved his own definition inadequate (174).

The head-note to Fleishman's preface is from Yeats--"the rhetorician would deceive his neighbors,/ The sentimentalist himself; while art/ Is but a vision of reality. . ."(ix). Fleishman fails to inform us that this quote comes from the mystical dialogue between Ille and Hic in "Ego Dominus Tuus," thereby undercutting the authority of the statement, "Art is but a vision of reality." Fleishman claims "it is very difficult to fix the belief that historical novels are but works of art,"(ix), and goes on to say that the form of the historical novel tends to make the author into rhetorician and sentimentalist, thereby implying that rhetoric and sentiment cannot be art or reality. When Yeats claims " . . . art/ Is but a vision of reality," he emphasizes the relative, not the absolute nature of the artist's vision. While admitting the subjectivity of the historical novelist, Fleishman says that the aim of such a project is to "contemplate reality." By denying the historical novelist's ability to persuade, Fleishman allows historical novelists less latitude than even realist novelists to create a purpose for their work. In the argument that fiction is not a good medium for

political messages, Fleishman apparently contradicts his earlier statement about the tendency of historical novelists to become rhetorical or sentimental: "There is in it [fiction] a stronger impulse toward contemplation than the rhetorician or the sentimentalist exhibits" (ix). Fleishman's chief difficulty is his conflation of history and reality--his bias suggests that the historical novelist must attempt to be a historian, avoiding the excesses of persuasion common to other forms.⁶ Hence, Fleishman does not recognize that the historical novel does not necessarily contemplate reality, but history, and that the reader, then, rather than looking for The Truth about the Past, may be seeking a way of approaching the past in order to understand the past in relation to himself--or how to find the perception of the past at all.

Joseph Turner, in his 1979 article in *Genre*, "The Kinds of Historical Fiction: An Essay in Definition and Methodology," suggests that we take a reader-based approach to the historical novel and use Hegel's three modes of history to identify them--1)The Organic Mode, 2)The Reflective Mode, 3)The Philosophical Mode. In the organic mode, the reader participates in the past through use of pictorial detail and description. In the reflective mode, the narrative gives the reader an opportunity to notice a difference between the present and the past. In the philosophic mode, the reader contemplates the historical process itself. One important problem solved by Turner's

⁶Fleishman's work centers on a notion of the real that seems to privilege the work of the historian over that of the novelist: his first chapter seems largely consumed by what historians say about the telling of history. Thus, Fleishman can only identify two kinds of historical novels--those that tell as many details of history as possible (what Turner calls "organic"), and those which replicate the historian's project of connecting the present to the past (what Turner calls "reflective"). In his own classifications, Fleishman has moved beyond the historian Butterfield, who sees the historian as the conscious connector of past and present (a conviction shared by Lukács), while the novelist only pays attention to creating the past (Fleishman xv). Though Fleishman wants to see the novelist as consciously creating these connections, his preface suggests that a truly artistic novel cannot do anything more persuasive than reflect the real. Fleishman has apparently fallen into the empiricism-trap that Bernbaum spoke of in 1926.

approach is that nearly every theorist of historical novels, from Manzoni on, realizes that the historical novel looks very much like the realistic novel, except for its setting, and cannot think of any significance the setting plays other than contributing to verisimilitude. Using Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* as an example, Turner says that historical novels not only cause the author to practice "historical reconstruction," (since first-hand knowledge, such as that lauded in realism may not be possible), but also may "highlight the problems of historical interpretation" (340). Therefore, the historical novel can serve to put the author and the reader upon a more equal footing as co-re-readers of history. In the reflective mode, the author is supposed to draw connections for the reader explaining how the history is to be interpreted; the assumption of equality is perhaps what drew nineteenth-century women to the philosophic mode. If we apply Turner's categories, we find the historical novelist can give the reader more or less guidance in forming this connection, depending upon whether the organic, reflective, or philosophic mode is employed.

Turner makes the problem of definition his chief point of attack in arguing his case. Whereas Fleishman and other critics, according to Turner, suggest a definition "that revolves around either what fiction shares with history or what fiction claims for itself," Turner defines historical novel from the reader's point of view (Turner 334, 345).⁷ Interestingly, while Turner derives some of his classificatory terms from

⁷David Cowart's 1989 book *History and the Contemporary Novel* opens with an introductory chapter which does an excellent job of explaining the deficiencies of his predecessors (though he seems unaware of Turner), but I find his own model, based on Frye and Jung in form only, as arbitrary as the ones of which he complains. Cowart, rather than probing for a theory that can contain the scope of historical fiction, seems pressed by the more practical concern of justifying what he will omit from his own study. "To evaluate historical fiction adequately, one must devise an analytical approach that will allow the critic at once to generalize and to discriminate" (6). In achieving this end, Cowart categorizes, but the boundaries between and the necessity for these categories remains fuzzy. Cowart posits four types of historical fiction--1) The Way It Was; 2) The Way It Will Be; 3) The Turning Point; 4) The Distant Mirror--careful examination of which reveals that 2 and 4 are really the same thing--in fact, 2 is science fiction. In each case, we focus upon the writer, and

Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, he seems uninterested in Hegel from a philosophical or theoretical perspective. Turner claims that the terms "organic," "reflective," and "philosophical" should not be considered value-laden, yet the reader of Hegel should clearly recall that "philosophical history" is a kind of apex towards which all history is heading. In Hegel's other writings, philosophy itself is to become a kind of new religious experience--therefore, it would seem to me that a philosophical historical novel would have the loftiest aims. If we see organic historical novels as leading us to a curio-laden and fascinatingly escapist past, and the reflective historical novels as providing lessons for "today" in historic costume, the philosophical historical novel is the only type that can transcend the particular interests of the audiences for whom they were originally intended. It is a commonplace now to consider Hegel's idealist philosophy an idea with no progeny, but its transcendent qualities would seem to make it timeless. A similar comment might be made about philosophical historical novels.

In *The Young Hegel*, Lukács claims that Hegel originally despised the Christian disciples and revered the ancients because the followers of Socrates found themselves participating in everyday life, while the disciples were alienated outcasts (55), thus attempting to show Hegel's initial materialist orientation. When Hegel reaches his mature phase, though, he sees the greatest development of freedom and participation in society as arising from the "religious" experience, which in Hegel's writing means the ability to philosophize. In his desire to integrate the alienated and the esoteric with the mundane and common, Hegel's philosophy forms an important parallel to the activities of women writers of historical novels. Being accorded less authority to teach the lessons of the reflective historical novelists--Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Cooper, Reade--

what the writer does with historical perspective in the novel. Cowart seems to realize his schema is more utilitarian than decisive, but for that reason, it cannot theoretically ground any other readings of the historical novel.

women sought the freeing of their readership from the role of mere student and promoted them to the status of fellow-philosophers. The technique used to recreate this relationship with the reader depends upon a use of dialecticism strikingly similar to Hegel's. That they employ dialectics in no way indicates that I find direct Hegelian influences upon any of the writers I discuss; in fact, I find the independent employing of the same technique to comment profoundly upon the entire nineteenth-century attitude towards history.

This attitude towards history can be described as avidly interested, but almost despairing in the realization that the past is gone and we will never really know it all. An example of such a state can be seen in *Middlemarch's* Casaubon, whose *Key to All Mythologies* is a major research effort, but the completion of which is an impossible task. In all Hegel's philosophies, Kain says that "Hegel's political aim is not to change or remake the world, but to reconcile us to it by allowing us to grasp it in thought fully and adequately" (360). "Reconciliation" would appear to be a very conservative aim, and yet Hegel does, in *Philosophy of History*, what historical novels do, but on a grand scale: he takes the past and tells us we are in a position to connect it rationally to the present. Hayden White suggests that the *Philosophy of History* is a grand comedy of the creation of resolution (122), throughout showing us how the pattern of each civilization's rise, decline and collapse has still resulted in a forward or progressive motion of history (123). Hegel gives an example of how history progresses by talking about a blind man who sees the sun for the first time. Initially, the man is awed and unself-conscious, but as the familiarity of the sun causes the man to lose interest, he becomes self-involved, "and thereby the advance is made to the perception of the relations between the two" [man and sun] (103). Eventually, the man creates something out of "his own inner sun," and this creation he values above "the original

exterior sun," because he has reached a point of consciousness, and is therefore free. This is Hegel's model for the development of consciousness in human history. Also, the man stands in the same position with regard to the actual object and his creation as does Hegel to history and *The Philosophy of History*, or a historical novelist to "actual" history and the novel written about the history. The process of achieving and articulating "Spirit" is the history of man, according to Hegel; this "Spirit" arises out of a synthesis of subjective (individual, self-consciousness) and objective (phenomena, material); therefore, to articulate one without the other is not speaking the history of man. By implication, then, recording facts or self (presumably pure history or autobiography without the distance of narration) does not reflect the "history of man," because the conscious connection between author and object is required to find the Spirit which resides only in the synthesis. This defends the authors of both history and historical novels against the claim that they have violated the sanctity of historical facts by interpreting them, or viewing these facts from a subjectivist perspective.

Hegel's philosophy, then, could have provided an important counter to the widely-held ideas that historical novels had to address the details of history in a certain way--either as organic or reflective. Since I find women historical novelists consistently operating in the philosophic mode, I am led to believe that this choice was prompted by circumstances such as not having antiquarian or teacher status with readers, or that women writers, in choosing the historical novel, more self-consciously regarded themselves in relation to the history about which they wrote and encouraged their readers to do the same.

Let us review Joseph Turner's (and Hegel's) categories again--this time I am giving my own idea of the reader's relation to the history/story related by the author.

An organic historical novel would add to the reader's knowledge about the curios of history; momentarily, it would allow one to enter and "live" in a recreated past. The novels of W. H. Ainsworth might be seen in this light, as might Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel*. Hegel has four classifications of reflective history: Universal, Pragmatic, Critical, and Conceptual. According to White, the reflective historian seeks to bridge the gap between past and present (99). Universal histories attempt exhaustive knowledge, an attempt I cannot see many novelists bothering with. Pragmatic histories, in an effort "to serve the present" (White 99), reduce something vast to a manageable series of analogies. Bulwer does this in *Rienzi*, emphasizing the moral failings that caused Rienzi's downfall. In "Critical" history, historians survey and critique other sources, in an attempt to get at the truth. Scott parodies this method at times, and some modern journalist-novelists use the technique, but it would appear to be too scientific for most nineteenth-century novelists. "Conceptual histories" choose a particular topic on which to focus. Since nearly all novels are characterized by particularity, it would seem to me that this is how most reflective historical novels are written. An implied effect of the reflective historical novel, as opposed to what Hegel actually theorizes about reflective history, is didacticism, which Turner identifies as the attempt to relate past to present. This effect would mean that reflective historical novels had the audience of the authors' own times in mind for the "lesson" about history, as opposed to a more open audience of "philosophers" encouraged by the philosophical historical novel. As Hegel says himself, "In regard to *Philosophy*, on the other hand, we have to do with that which (strictly speaking) is neither past nor future, but with that which *is*, which has an external existence--with Reason. . ." (Hegel *Philosophy of History* 87).

While it appears to me Hegel has identified an important element here differentiating between histories that take the curio, the lesson, or the philosophy as their foci, it is easy to agree with Harry E. Shaw's criticism of Turner's categories of historical fiction derived from this concept. As Shaw says, "a valid differentiation between historiography and historical fiction would require an exhaustive typology of subclasses of the two kinds of works. Even then, the complex set of resulting distinctions would almost certainly have to exist at a high level of generality, involving such matters as the cognitive claims of art and the truth of value statements in different kinds of discourse" (24). Clearly, it is possible for historical novels to overlap the categories posed by Turner, and it does appear that his theory has classification as a primary goal, rather than the importance of identifying these differences. On the other hand, Shaw overlooks the differences in the author-reader relationship created by varying uses and depictions of history by various authors of historical novels.⁸

If we assume that authors make a conscious choice in the selection of setting, and that authors of historical novels develop incident within this setting for a particular purpose, it would seem to follow that the incorporation of history into a historical novel would have a definitely predetermined effect upon the reader. It has been assumed that the selection of the historical novel form itself puts in place a set of

⁸ Shaw, while criticizing Turner, makes up his own categories that seem to resemble Turner's Hegelian-designated ones. Shaw sees three uses of history in the historical novel: 1) "an ideological screen onto which the preoccupations of the present can be projected for clarification and solution," called "history as pastoral," which resembles Turner's "reflective" historical novel; 2) "a source of dramatic energy" sounds like the backgrounds in the "organic" historical novel, and 3) "subject of historical novels," which would seem to mirror the "philosophical" mode that we will be discussing here (52). Shaw's own definition: "Historical novels. . . are works in which historical probability reaches a certain level of structural prominence" (22), is, by his own admission, vague. Because he manages to reflect Turner without attempting to do so, I think I can claim that Turner's theory has more merit than Shaw seems to think.

reading conventions for the reader, and thus comparisons to historiography or excessive investigation into the motives of the writers are invalid. In accepting, though, that there might be more than one "form" of the historical novel, we essentially say that the author might have more than one kind of desired effect upon the reader by selecting the form. My hypothesis in this dissertation has been that these four women writers--Fanny Burney, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot--selected the historical novel in the philosophical mode, and did so in order to help readers--not just their contemporary readers, but readers for all times--contemplate history as a process, not just as an already formed and understood artifact or as a lesson book. In choosing to depict history as a process, I believe all the women writers reflect an appreciation for a dialectical approach to the idea of progress, much as Hegel did.

In her 1814 book, *The Wanderer*, published several months before Sir Walter Scott's sensation-producing *Waverley*, Burney creates a French Revolutionary period setting in England. Removed from the horrific events in France, the heroine has other "Female Difficulties" (the book's subtitle) on British soil. While distancing the heroine from the possible "historic" scenes in France, Burney ridicules the violent clashes between advocates and opponents of the Revolution. The "solution" to these polemical debates would appear to be the erasure of all extreme positions into a stagnant middle-ground. Still, Burney does not seem to favor the idea that nothing should change at all, since her satire against the British upper class is very pointed, and the form of her novel, and its heroine, entirely unconventional. Thus, we might see Burney as addressing the issue of a developing self-consciousness, without being able to resolve the debate about what role women really play in history, ultimately.

Charlotte Brontë followed the phenomenal success of *Jane Eyre* with her own foray into the world of the historical novel, *Shirley*, in 1849. While Brontë's novel has been seen as posing a nonprogressive view of history, or giving a "romance" attitude towards life in general, various forces in novel are forced to conflict and compromise, change being generated out of crises of conscience more than outward conflict, which we might see as corresponding to the more advanced stages of Hegel's dialectic in the use of art.

Elizabeth Gaskell, by the 1863 publication of *Sylvia's Lovers*, had already published several shorter works set in the past: *Sylvia's Lovers*, though, approaches the process of history as a major theme. Gaskell shows a struggle between time's relentless process and man's desire to stop it. A productive synthesis can only occur when people allow themselves and their world to be transformed by time, thus becoming part of the eternal, or Absolute Spirit, themselves.

George Eliot, while frequently using historical settings, seriously approaches the subject on a conscious artistic level in *Romola*, set in late fifteenth-century Florence and published in 1862-1863. George Eliot sets up a plethora of conflicting tropes, characters, and factions which have led to many overly-simplistic readings of the novel. More than in the other historical novels by women, public figures and historic events are central to *Romola*'s plot. On several levels, *Romola*'s thematic concerns all relate back to the historic setting: pagan versus Christian, egotism versus submission, private versus public, cipher versus icon, utility versus loyalty, patriarchal versus matriarchal. Conflicting readings of *Romola* see Eliot as endorsing opposing views. The overall approach of Eliot towards history in *Romola*, however, is progress through synthesis with the reader playing the role of philosophic synthesizer, just as the individual in Hegel's philosophy aspires to a philosophic state.

While it is easy to speculate about women's appropriation of what I here call the "philosophical historical novel," it really may not be possible to prove that women used this form more or better than male historical novelists of the nineteenth century without surveying the works of all those authors and posing some kind of comparison. In fact, it may be that the philosophical historical novel was an extraordinarily dominant form in the nineteenth century. From what I do know, however, I surmise that the impression that "historical novels teach history" was strong enough for nineteenth-century readers to see the author as teacher, whether the author selected that role for himself or not. I do not say "herself," because the only woman author in the nineteenth century often accorded such a sage-role is George Eliot, and her use of history in *Romola* had the effect of alienating the broad readership her earlier works had found. While minute historical recreations by Scott and Bulwer-Lytton had been tolerated, either George Eliot was writing a historical novel too late, or readers were unwilling to accept "instruction" from her--especially if the book were constructed not to teach one lesson, but to promote the philosophy of history through synthesis on the part of individual readers.

Several critics suggest that George Eliot realized *Romola* would have less appeal than her other works, and yet she still thought it her best work. What makes it the best, and her own proudest achievement, is, I think, the less heavy-handed control she has over the reader. Note that she keeps this approach alive in later works, as well, but *Romola* has the added benefit of copious research, a lofty theme, and intricately planned structure. In spite of all this planning, the reader of *Romola* has free consciousness to draw conclusions or morals at the end--much as Romola is free to choose her own future at the end of the novel, and Lillo beyond her. This idea of the

reader's free consciousness is extremely important in differentiating the historical novel from other forms of the novel and its conventions in the nineteenth century.

While Murray Baumgarten's article "The Historical Novel: Some Postulates" reinscribes the idea of the reflective historical novel, the article also extends beyond this to questions of consciousness which seem particularly important in defending the historical novel against the charges of insufficient realism and insufficient art. Baumgarten suggests the bridging of past and present (as Lukács does) to be a primary goal of the historical novel, and chronicles the need for the consciousness as having arisen in 1789 French Revolution's turmoil and challenge to norms. By approaching the question of consciousness, however, Baumgarten deserts the primarily reflective state of comparing the present to the past and makes a case for the philosophical reading of historical novels. A direct quotation of Baumgarten's three concluding postulates will help explain some of the bases for this study:

4. To interpret a novel is to participate in its space-time and encounter it in a dialogue mediated by the other possible conversations in which it may function. Interpretation is thus in part constitutive of the world of the interpreter; the moment of valuation occurs not in the course of the discussion but prior to it at the point of choosing the angle through which the work(s) is refracted.
5. Historical novels raise the questions of consciousness and value at the intersection of public and private realms in a unique way because they explore the possible unities of a discourse hinged upon temporal experience. They ask: how is it possible to speak of and in the world?
6. To interpret historical novels is to bear witness to the value of

struggling to *make as well as grasp meanings* in and of a contingent realm. (Baumgarten 182) [Italics mine]

Baumgarten describes for us the role of reader/interpreter/critic of a historical novel, and it is apparent from his description that he sees the interpretive act of the reader as the primary *value* of the historical novel (as opposed to historical verisimilitude or artistic perfection). We can connect Baumgarten to Hegel here, because Hegel concludes that consciousness is an important value to humans in everything, if we recall his parable about the man and his vision of the sun. Therefore, it would appear that the hybrid nature of the historical novel actually contributes to this freedom of consciousness, even while it may appear formally suspect.

The purpose of pursuing the reader-response approach to the historical novels of nineteenth century women is to explore the relationship between women writers, readers, and the volatile and surprisingly amorphous text of history, which allowed women writers access to something usually preserved for learned male historians. This study attempts to show methods and strategies employed by women writers to make readers see history from new frames of reference. The women authors frequently offer oblique challenges to dominant ideologies of their times; history is no exception. In many ways the efforts of women writers to expand what might be regarded as historical or of historical interest, in addition to the contemplation of the process of history itself, prefigures concerns of modern historiographers. Burney, Brontë, Gaskell, and Eliot wrote philosophical historical novels, asking their readers to revise their assumptions about history, progress, and their own roles as readers because they sought to destabilize the notions of history, women, progress, reading and other ossifying norms in order to make the reader philosophically independent to

understand and create meaning as a full participant in what Hegel would call "Freedom," rather than having ideas dictated by that absolute and God-like authority, the omniscient narrator.

The premises of this study are as follows: 1) Women writers tend to regard history differently and write about different topics in their exploration of the historical, from male writers. 2) Because the definition of "historical novel" has been shaped around the works of Scott, women's contributions, about a less public face of history, have been ignored as historical by both their contemporaries and modern critics. 3) Women in the nineteenth century adopted a philosophic approach to history that depends more heavily than other approaches upon the reader's willingness to question/ ponder the values and ideologies underlying historical change. 4) The reader-response approach allows us to study the narrator's relationship to implied readers and infer what questions about history are being raised for these readers about perceiving history. 5) This reader-response model is more useful than defining the excellence or shortcomings of form, ideology, structure or historical reconstruction because it allows us to study the text as a plan by which the writer brings the reader into a new experience of history. From my perspective, if we insist upon the factual rather than the imaginative, we are practicing "organic" as opposed to "philosophic" criticism. We can infer much from what the texts actually *do* and *say* about the authors' intention for the readers' response without committing intentional fallacies indiscriminately. In the overall context of the nineteenth century, novels by women authors are important documents of how the society saw women, the past, and what particular authors thought their readers needed to understand about that past.

The reader of a philosophical historical novel has a broader role than the reader of other kinds of historical novels because while the organic mode generally requires

attentiveness to the details of history presented, and the reflective mode demands an ability to see enough of the present to relate it to the past that the novelist has created, the philosophical mode demands a suspension of common beliefs about a particular time, to desert the stereotype and embrace the specific. In this way, the reader's role as discoverer of logic in narrative parallels Hegel's own discovery of history's rational development in the *Philosophy of History*. We may see the reader of historical novels as an adventurer, and all the novels I will discuss, I argue, are written in the philosophical mode, challenging the reader to inquire beyond the bounds of contemporary norms and triumph as an individual in making true the historical and novelistic.

CHAPTER 2

BURNEY'S *THE WANDERER* : NEGOTIATING A NEW IDEA OF HISTORY

Most commentaries on Burney's *The Wanderer* have focused upon technical departures from her earlier works, or upon whether she can be construed as a feminist or not. This tendency reveals two important aspects of Burney criticism-- (1) most critics attempt to judge Burney in terms of the eighteenth or the twentieth centuries, rather than attempting to see her final work in the context of the Romantic Age in which it was written, and (2) Burney's novel, therefore, has not been considered as a nineteenth-century historical novel. *The Wanderer* appeared in March 1814, four months before the sensation of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*. Burney's differences in technique, compared to her famous contemporary, Scott, whose creations more or less have come to define the historical novel, and her resolute non-articulation of a feminist or non-feminist moral clearly correlate to her program of writing a historical novel. In her introduction to *The Wanderer*, Burney says she took care to privilege neither side in the political discord, and to retreat from politics generally, giving no hint as to where her own sympathies lay. Perhaps the more enthusiastic reception of Scott's novel can be related to no already-known author's name being attached to the new form; conversely, perhaps the expectations of Burney's well-established audience made them even less receptive to a departure from her earlier techniques.

Burney's apparently non-committal point of view has allowed her critics to see her alternately as feminist and as conservative anti-feminist.¹ Both sets of critics seem

¹ Among recent works, Cutting-Gray's book, *Woman as Nobody in the Novels of Fanny Burney*, depicts Burney as feminist in orientation, whereas Katharine Rogers' *Frances*

inclined to malign Burney when she does not fit into the mold they are making for her. I think the obvious answer to understanding Burney's point of view, especially in *The Wanderer*, is that one situated as Burney was could not endorse any extremist positions. Burney, having lived at court, but also having married a French immigrant, brings an acute awareness of extremism's dangers to her writing. The manner in which *The Wanderer* is written forces the reader to participate in the experience of a marginalized character. At the same time, the narrator conceals the personal history of the Wanderer that would help the reader feel included in an individual's interactions with history, thus allying the reader uneasily with the Wanderer's victimizers, who hold that concealed histories are suspect histories. Towards the end of the novel one begins to realize how the dual-identity of Juliet as French and English does not allow her to embrace wholeheartedly any extremist positions.

No doubt, Burney's attempt to expand the reader's understanding of history through the experience of victimization is one reason that the novel had such a lack of critical success. The *Quarterly Review* bewails the departure of *The Wanderer* from Burney's earlier works, and suggests that the novel shows a pro-Napoleonic bias (*Journals* VII: 564). Hazlitt, with characteristic asperity, has very little good to say of any works by Burney, indicating that "Female Difficulties" are really not worth writing about (*Journals* VII: 564). The favorable review of the *Gentleman's Magazine* sees Elinor as a negative example and Harleigh as a good one (*Journals* VII: 565). Judging from the scope of responses, it would seem that there has been a consistent attempt to simplify *The Wanderer's* historical/political message, and to connect this perceived moral to the reviewer's enjoyment or lack of enjoyment in the novel.²

Burney: *The World of "Female Difficulties,"* portrays Burney as an essentially conservative writer, especially regarding women's status.

²Margaret Anne Doody discusses revolution, the rights of women, and Stonehenge in her chapter on *The Wanderer*. She says: "*The Wanderer* is determined not to evade history"

If, as indicated above, the novel actively alienates the reader for the purpose of showing something other than an extremist position, then creation of this experience for the reader causes Burney to break with many of the techniques she had used earlier in her career. These techniques include first-person narration, comedy, and an ingenue-heroine. Departing from these techniques in *The Wanderer*, which uses third-person omniscient narration, a mix of melodrama and satire, and an older, married heroine, has led critics such as Tracy Edgar Daugherty and Eugene White to conclude that Burney had forgotten these methods, was unaware of their effects, or was trying to write in a style that she could not sufficiently command. In the following discussion, I will examine the techniques by which Burney victimizes her readers, and will explore the significance of this method of writing a historical novel.

Near the conclusion of *The Wanderer*, Elinor and Harleigh, throughout the novel associated with Romantic Revolutionary fervor and conservative *laissez-faire* respectively, indulge in a sixteen-page discussion of the immortality of the soul, while our heroine stands by, silently passive. The scene is a central metaphor for the treatment of history in the whole book, for emblematically, we see the stasis of rhetoric (Elinor and Harleigh voicing the polemical positions) silencing and marginalizing the more flexible, less doctrinaire, Wanderer. Although her society requires that the Wanderer's experience be marginalized or denied altogether, she is freed by experience to abandon the stultifying theorizing of the extremists. By forcing us to follow the Wanderer's road, which tends to be of imprecise destination and dictated by powers seeking to claim and immobilize her, Burney forces the reader into a newly experienced perspective with regard to the history she treats. The reader is

(319), and emphasizes the book's unusual structure (319). She also mentions that the book contains elements of both the revolutionary and anti-revolutionary novel (325). I have found this the most useful discussion of *The Wanderer* and it has proved a point of departure for many of my own ideas.

asked to follow a heroine who comes from the alien French culture, about whom little is told, and whose life in England seems very far from the sensational history of Robespierre that Burney's contemporaries desired.

The new consciousness Burney pushes the reader to achieve may be paralleled to the developing states of consciousness with regard to history discussed by Hegel. Near the end of the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel distinguishes between his own ideas of freedom and Kant's. For Kant, Hegel says, "self-consciousness . . . constitutes absolutely independent Freedom" (443). Hegel then uses the French Revolution as the testing ground for this theory. The self-consciousness of *The Wanderer's* readers and characters does not result in "absolute Freedom" due to their context. According to Hegel, the individual's desires will necessarily be qualified by "law" (what we might call rights) and government (447). In *The Wanderer*, we see the promise of "natural" rights trammelled by both the Robespierre regime and by the well-regulated English society. Burney's novel shows us various contexts in which the Hegelian ideal cannot work because individual desire has grown too strong, the "rights" of man are not applied to women, or to the lower classes, and the government does not accord everyone equal freedoms. Juliet keeps breaking social codes because the allegiance demanded by them denies her existence; freedom is impossible if historical forces deny one's existence. Mere self-consciousness is not enough. *The Wanderer* puts the reader into the position of acknowledging this disconcerting truth.

Since *The Wanderer* was only recently reprinted (1988 Oxford) and the 1814 version is a rare book in most libraries, I will give a short synopsis. A boat leaving France during the Reign of Terror takes up a disheveled passenger with a dark complexion. While grateful to have received passage, she does not respond to the curious queries of her fellow travelers about her identity. These fellow-travelers

reappear throughout the novel to torment/assist the nameless woman, who is our heroine, the Wanderer. The Admiral of the ship first assists the Wanderer when her purse is stolen. Elinor Joddrell, a passenger, invites the Wanderer to stay with her family as a house guest. Albert Harleigh, another passenger, visits because his brother is Elinor's fiance, but Elinor has fallen in love with Albert, while Harleigh himself is becoming fascinated by the Wanderer, who distinguishes herself in music and in amateur theatricals. During this time, the Wanderer befriends Lady Aurora Granville and her brother, Lord Melbury. The companion of Lady Aurora investigates the Wanderer and deems her an adventuress, forbidding Lady Aurora to have any more to do with her. Such gossip drives the Wanderer to seek an independent existence, as a music teacher, professional musician, milliner, and companion. Meanwhile, Elinor has become jealous of Harleigh's attraction to the Wanderer, and stages a suicide attempt in the middle of a subscription concert the Wanderer had decided to play to relieve her economic hardships. Reunited with her French friend, Gabriella, "Miss Ellis" (as the Wanderer becomes erroneously known) and her friend open a shop. Sir Jaspar Herrington finds them, and finally he and the reader learn the true story of the Wanderer from Gabriella--that "Miss Ellis" is Juliet, the unacknowledged daughter of a secret marriage between Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora's late father and a woman deemed socially unacceptable by his family. Mr. Riley, of the ship, too, has located the Wanderer (now Juliet), and he has told someone that Juliet fears, so she flees to Salisbury and the New Forest for a time. It turns out this much-feared individual pursuing Juliet is her French husband, a Commissary in the Robespierre government whom she has been blackmailed into marrying because he heard of her promissory note for 6,000 pounds with which Lord Denmeath (Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora's guardian) has purchased the silence of Juliet's French connections. Juliet accidentally

encounters her husband, Harleigh, and Sir Jaspar at the same inn. Juliet's marriage had taken place to protect her guardian, the Bishop. The Commissary suddenly is arrested and deported as an illegal alien, and Sir Jaspar "rescues" Juliet, taking her ostensibly to her half-sister, but actually seeking her company on a trek to Wilton and Stonehenge. Realizing Sir Jaspar has not been directed by Lady Aurora to bring her, Juliet makes him leave her near Milton Abbey Heath, where Harleigh and Elinor arrive and hold a long discussion on the afterlife. Juliet decides to rejoin Gabriella and return to France, accepting the offer of Lord Denmeath to give her the money in exchange for her permanent return to France. Failing to meet Gabriella as expected, she encounters instead Lady Aurora and the Admiral, to whom she confides her scheme of going back to France. The Admiral, we discover, is Juliet's uncle. As she is about to embark, Lord Melbury arrives, suggesting he provide the money and that they send Harleigh as agent to pay the money and retrieve the Bishop. Also, Harleigh has asked Lord Melbury to extend a marriage proposal to Juliet on his own behalf. Suddenly, Harleigh arrives, with news that the Commissary is dead. The Bishop then appears on the beach, having just landed from France. An engagement party is held, and Harleigh and Juliet marry and live happily.

The Wanderer is designed to give the reader a new perspective on history. Without mentioning history specifically, Burney gives the following description of her plans for the book in the introduction:

Divest, for a moment, the title of Novel from its stationary standard of insignificance, and say: What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? It is, or it ought to be, a picture of supposed, but natural and probable human existence. It holds, therefore, in its hands, our best affections; it

exercises our imaginations; it points out the path of honour; and gives to juvenile credulity knowledge of the world, without ruin, or repentance; and the lessons of experience, without its tears. And is not a Novel, permit me, also, to ask, in common with every other literary work, entitled to receive its stamp as useful, mischievous, or nugatory, from its execution? not necessarily, and in its changeless state, to be branded as a mere vehicle for frivolous, or seductive amusement? If many may turn aside from all but mere entertainment presented under this form, many, also, may, unconsciously, be allured by it into reading the severest truths, who would not even open any work of a graver denomination. (7)

While we may read this as a statement of Burney's intent, notice that she suggests a didactic purpose without saying that the "useful precepts" or "lessons of experience" have to be proved with logical argument, but that the novel's very strength lies in its ability to "allure unconsciously." Therefore, the novelist's goal is to educate the reader without seeming to do so. By not telling us exactly how to interpret the history/story Burney gives us, she replicates the difficulties of actual experience, as well as allowing different readers to draw different conclusions about their own reading experiences. The result is a multiplicity of interpretations of this novel in particular. Burney tends to conceal her own opinions in her fiction, and she characteristically fears censure and ridicule. Surprisingly, then, Burney in a letter to her sister about a journey, (this was the same journey, in 1791, during which Burney visited Stonehenge and met her first French refugees from the Reign of Terror) has an apparent disagreement with her sister Susan and the Locks:

Ah!--is THIS LIBERTY!--where one side alone predominates thus fiercely? Liberty! the first, best noblest gift for Mankind, is mutual, reciprocal, for *all* parties,--alas--in France, it seems to *me* but a change of despotism. I rejoice with my whole Heart to see those redressed who have been injured--but I feel horror, not joy, to see those oppressed who are guiltless. I have much, I own, to learn, ere I can account for the predilection I see taken for a demolition of tyranny by tyranny in bosoms so pure as my Susan's & Mr. & Mrs. Lock's. They say I have but heard one side: it appears to Me they think there is one side: My mind revolts at differing essentially from the THREE MINDS I *most revere*---. (*Journals I*: 17)

Burney, as we see here, characteristically evades extreme views, although apparently her favorite sister and good friends were in favor of some of the revolutionary actions in France. From the passage, it sounds as though Susan Burney Phillips and the Locks found Burney conservative in her condemnation of the revolution, but here Burney declares herself horrified by both extremes of de-individualizing political creeds. Burney's own "*mind revolts*" (italics mine) at being in conflict with others, but she is willing to take this stand because she is confident that extremism is wrong, even though the excesses of 1791 are mild compared to later occurrences in France.

What Burney points out to us in *The Wanderer* is the incompleteness of any single narrative of history. Juliet's unknown history causes her persistent problems throughout the novel, and it is a problem to the reader as well--not knowing her background, it is difficult to interpret her. At the same time, her absence of personal history is a limitation, a lack of the definitions that people look for in order to interpret from an absolute standard, discounting any personal uniqueness. The trouble

that most of the novel's characters have in perceiving the "Other" point of view is sharply delineated throughout the book. The Admiral really does not understand the French, and his knowledge of them is a mass of stereotypes; Elinor spouts revolutionary rhetoric, while not being in any position to put her "beliefs" into practice; Harleigh fails to comprehend that Juliet's position as a woman does not permit her to trust him--nor does he understand that she might have greater responsibilities than her own well-being; Mrs. Ireton does not know or care about the feelings of her oppressed and abused servants; Giles Arbe does not see how his ingenuousness embarrasses people; and Sir Jaspar, one of the book's most pleasant characters, has a hard time seeing women as more than earthly manifestations of sylphs, nymphs, or fairies. All the emphasis upon private history in the book might make some people say that the book really has nothing to say about public history. One of Burney's points seems to be that public history really *is* private history, magnified much in light of one particular kind of interpretation. If any of the characters I have named were writing a history of the French Revolution, it would be a product of their own biased views, and perhaps for this reason, Burney does not choose to write the Gibbon-style account, (student and explicator of history), thus assuming responsibility for the slant of her material.

Even what the representation of history in *The Wanderer* really means is subject to some debate because while the narrator is bracingly telling us about how Juliet, the "Female Robinson Crusoe" has overcome all her difficulties, the reader is aware that her adversities were overcome more through the revelation of her identity than through her individual virtues, and that paradoxically, the revelation of her name cancels her status as an independent entity. Once her identity is stabilized by a name and family connections, Juliet's role in history as a hero is erased. Her *lack* of identity

at times makes her a subject in the context of a class structure in England which seeks to *classify* by type, rather than see individuals. As an unclassifiable anomaly, Juliet must be seen as something, even if that something is a question mark. Burney's radical non-naming of the heroine for volume after volume draws attention not only to the power of a name, but the utter arbitrariness and inconsequentiality of one (Cutting-Gray 85, 90, 96). Burney questions the adequacy of language, while at the same time being forced to use it. Maxims, as a function of language, cannot satisfy the reader when the novel itself gives Burney the power of representation. We, like Juliet, have to experience marginalization and victimization, and as such, in *The Wanderer* we get to live from the "other" point of view. Thus, the idea of history Burney gives us is that history has been limited in all we have read. Four practices, especially, lead to the reader's feeling of dislocation--1) the rather unsatisfactorily unauthoritarian omniscient narrative voice, 2) the restless persecution motif of Juliet, a character the reader cannot fully identify with because of her unrevealed past, 3) the translation of time into spatial form, and 4) the quirky blend of genres that keeps requiring a revised set of expectations upon the part of the reader, while the constant violation of these norms causes a constant reassessment of the genre of *The Wanderer* itself.

1) The Narrative Voice

The narrator is responsible for the slant that we see in *The Wanderer*. Daugherty laments Burney's clumsiness with third-person narration, and points out how much better she controlled the first-person narratives of *Evelina* and *Cecelia*. Complaints are made about the omniscient narrator because sometimes this narrator seems less than omniscient, not admitting us into Juliet's consciousness of her past. Daugherty says that many conversations reveal information to the reader that might have just as

easily been told us by the omniscient narrator (173). Critics particularly dislike the fact that Juliet's story is finally told to us and Sir Jaspar by Gabriella. Daugherty suggests Juliet might somehow have told us her own story, or flashback could have been employed (170). The answer to all these charges is that our narrative voice is not omniscient in a traditional sense (and thus formalists will consider the technique flawed)--it is limited in its complete knowledge of the "Other." When the narrator speaks, he/she seldom makes sweeping statements about what the story means, but describes a series of events: Burney prefers showing to telling. Her narrative technique in *The Wanderer* usually serves to set up a long passage of dialogue. In keeping with this dramaturgic method, the narrator seems to be omniscient, telling us what each character is thinking. However, the narrator lacks the omniscience of knowing the contents of all minds at all times. Rather, the narrator may be able to describe a present state of mind, but generally does not probe the characters' consciousness of past and present. In other words, the narrative voice is profoundly a-historical. The narrative voice is only omniscient in the present, as though the dramatist is giving stage directions. While this technique may seem odd to the reader, the narrative voice serves two functions--1) to be as close to drama as fiction can get, for which one might expect the Modernist proponents of showing versus telling to have rewarded Burney, and 2) to make the reader acutely conscious of and curious about the history of which no one can make Juliet, or the narrator, speak.

Chapter 10 gives us an example of the voice's method by using a great number of characters "on stage" at once. The characters have assembled at Mrs. Maple's house and are planning an amateur theatrical performance of *The Provok'd Husband*. The chapter opens with a description of Juliet's activities. Next, as dramatic incident is developed, a note arrives from Miss Arbe, declining to act in the play, throwing the party into

disarray: "The whole party was much offended" (83). This narration gives us a tone for the individual reactions to this circumstance which follow. Juliet is first recruited to teach French dance steps to the company, then she is asked to perform Miss Arbe's role in the play. As she becomes incorporated into the activity, the narrator recounts how different characters react. Harleigh "perceived her excellence" (84). Mrs. Maple "was aggravated into rage[,] by the unexpected proposition of admitting the stranger into the sett" (86). Miss Arbe's and Elinor's mental states are reflected in the narrator's discursive commentary upon Miss Arbe's note: "any further practice for herself would be a work of supererogation" (83), and Elinor's speech: "Elinor, however, listened only to herself: Miss Arbe must be mortified; Mrs. Maple must be thwarted; and Miss Sycamore must be omitted. . . " (90). Juliet's own state of mind is summarized from time to time, such as "The stranger now saw no alternative between obsequiously submitting, or immediately relinquishing her asylum" (90). In no instance here does the narrator linger on the thoughts of any one character, and memory of the past forms no part of the consciousnesses that the narrator describes. As much as possible, the narrator describes present scenes.

The contents of the chapter, too, mimic the entire book in that a situation arises in which others give the unwilling Juliet a role to play. In the chapter Juliet is literally "given a role." Also, in this chapter, Juliet assumes the name of Ellis. In a society, as part of any tableau, the Wanderer's ambiguity of identity cannot be tolerated. She must be assigned someone else to be; therefore, Mrs. Maple makes up a story to tell her friends about Ellis. The narrator, in treating the production of a play as a dramatic situation in which all consciousnesses are important, stresses the intersubjective nature of the relations between various individual characters, and how the presence or absence of one person (Juliet's presence in the plot of *The Wanderer*, Miss Arbe's

absence from the play) disrupts the smooth workings of the whole system. We can relate this to the Terror from which Juliet flees, as well as to the situation she encounters in England. In each case, classification of individuals into categorical identifications is desired by those in control. True individuality is not considered desirable. History, in *The Wanderer*, seems absent--marginalized out of the drawing rooms of Mrs. Maple and her ilk. Daugherty claims, "Time in The Wanderer seems to have no bearing whatsoever on the progression of the plot or on character development" (184). In actuality, history in the novel is repressed. The scenes of Restoration drama--the one acted by the characters and the exchanges between characters in the novel which mimic this form--are tableaux of recognizable types of characters and activities. Nothing has to be genuine or unique because the world of Restoration drama rests upon the shared definition of social codes. The text of *The Wanderer* goes on to show that such shared definitions are conventions that sometimes fail, and that history and individual people are being smothered by these classificatory definitions.

Later, when Juliet wanders through England and no other characters are present, the narrator focuses more upon Juliet's consciousness, and the technique may more resemble the traditional limited omniscient view. During Juliet's wandering, other characters come and go too quickly for the narrator to take much time for them. Also, however, perhaps the narrator only narrates a self-conscious consciousness. In observing the hard work of the lower classes, the narrator reports Juliet's reaction: "She had here time and opportunity to see the fallacy, alike in authors and the world, of judging solely by theory" (700). Juliet has time and opportunity, as well as an outsider's perspective, but the farmer himself has no time to enjoy pastoral surroundings, or be self-conscious of his socio-economic status. When Juliet returns

to her own class-context, in the inn-scene (Chapter 78), the consciousnesses of other characters resume their places in the narrator's interest.

The narrator splices together the various characters' thoughts much as was done in Chapter 10. Juliet is terrified: "Juliet was no longer sensible of bodily weakness; nor scarcely of bodily existence. She seemed to herself a mere composition of terror" (725). The reason for this is not given. Rushing into a chamber at the sound of a French voice, Juliet encounters Harleigh, who "was struck with something in her general form that urged him to rise, and offer his assistance" (726). Notice that while the viewpoint shifts, present state of mind is all the narrator ever mentions. The absence of the consciousness of the past in the narrator's presentation of the story has been seen mostly as formal ineptitude on Burney's part. The only time, though, that the past is referred to, it occurs verbally in Gabriella's recounting of Juliet's personal history to Sir Jaspar. History is something to which the narrative voice appears to have no access.

The narrator, then, is omniscient in his/her ability to know each character's present state of mind, but this omniscience is limited to the present. An historical or retrospective view may be only obtained through narrative and assembled in the reader's mind. The narrator tries to resolve all into tableaux, establishing everything in the present, in direct opposition to the reader's desire to assemble an historical narrative.

The narrator is a person whose authority is limited by an inadequate imagination--and all imaginations, as I have just pointed out, can only guess what it is to be other. That absolute power itself is an illusion, a subversion of the truth of history that Burney was trying to write. The narrator's limited omniscience makes its authority not entirely to be trusted. This is necessary to the reader's development of an

individual feeling of sympathy, rather than to force the reader to rely upon a vicarious feeling, lived through the narrator. Our annoyance with the narrator is important to the feeling of alienation we, the readers, begin to have from Juliet and her story.

Furthermore, if Burney's approach to history relies upon the premise that language is somewhat unstable and incapable of transmitting the whole of experience, then it is advantageous to create a flawed narrative voice, for to aspire to perfect communication of objective reality would be doubly false. More suspicious readers, at the end of Chapter 78, may feel that the shift has been designed to keep Juliet's history a secret a bit longer--but our knowledge is not reduced very much by the shift, unless one insists that Juliet's thoughts in this instance ought to be more interesting than those of Harleigh. Other possible reasons for the shift include that the narrative voice 1) cannot imagine what a stunned and fainting female might be thinking; 2) is more interested in what Harleigh is thinking, because the voice mimics male self-centeredness and the possibility of the Hazlitt-reader finding female difficulties invariably less consequential than male difficulties; 3) relies upon Juliet for information, and she did not say or; 4) is toying with us, flaunting the power it has of telling the story, and knowingly conceals what it knows Juliet is thinking out of sheer perversity. The critics discussed earlier seem to incline towards the last of these reasons, but they are also prejudiced against a narrator behaving this way. The fact that the story of Juliet's history is narrated by Gabriella makes sense because Gabriella can give the most sympathetic account, and Juliet herself speaking her history would be taboo, not only because she fears for the Bishop, but also because modesty dictates that proper heroines have as little history as possible. Also, in the book's system, telling her history would imprison Juliet in the stereotypes of others. Likewise, Sir Jaspar is the perfect auditor, because telling him the story will not

diminish Juliet in his eyes, nor does he, unlike the other characters, desire to know the history entirely for the purpose of classifying and thus erasing her identity. Sir Jaspar, whose imagined world of sylphs and fairies is definitely and obviously a distortion of reality, merely seeks the story of his favorite sylph. The narrative voice could be a character like Sir Jaspar, who has a basically ready and sympathetic imagination that falters in the area of gender.

The narrative voice is most unreliable at the beginning and end of the novel, and its idiosyncratic nature is more easily discerned in its style, as opposed to the content of its speech. At the beginning, the description in the first few paragraphs entices us to think the novel will be one about the Reign of Terror in France. Suddenly, aboard the boat, we are surprised by melodramatic exchanges such as those found in Restoration plays. In the last paragraph of the book, the narrator, apparently feeling the burden of giving us a moral, says that through her virtues, Juliet has managed to overcome her "female difficulties" and triumph. The reader has noticed, however, that the reign of terror we have encountered is in the drawing rooms of England, and that Juliet's virtues had very little to do with her eventual "triumph." Actually, coincidence, the promissory note, and Juliet's true identity as a Granville, not any inherent virtues, are all that allow Juliet to overcome the economic and social difficulties that have plagued her as uncategorizable; her identification allows her story to end, a closure the narrator never questions.

Because of the odd narrator, and the reader's incomplete knowledge of Juliet, the reader's sympathy with her is always limited. The reader does not stand in as privileged a spot in identification with the heroine as might be normally expected. Our limited sympathies mirror those of the characters in the novel who also do not know Juliet's personal history. We see Juliet with many different backdrops, but nowhere

does she quite belong. The characters who especially desire to know her history need it to complete their own interpretations of the world, for which they need stable and unmoving figures, which the identity of the Wanderer keeps Juliet from becoming. Juliet's constant displacement makes her into a rather threatening "Other," which, surprisingly, gives her some degree of subjectivity which she loses when her identity is known. Juliet's first words in Chapter 1, "I fear nothing now--" are deeply ironic, for a plethora of questions about her identity follow, and questions about her identity are what she most fears. Historically, it makes sense to fear death more than discovery, but in the world of the Wanderer, discovery is a kind of death. The obsession for knowing Juliet's secret prevails throughout the book. Mrs. Maple's intrusive questions are typical: "How came you to learn English? Have you lived in any English family? If you have, I should be glad to know their names" (17). Juliet responds, as she does much of the time, with embarrassed silence. The novel shows a woman who "belongs to herself" as a social impossibility in the available frameworks of society. To question Juliet ourselves, as readers, ranges us with her enemies.

2) Juliet, The Wanderer

Similarly, Juliet's various employments (music teacher, seamstress, shop proprietor, paid companion) were no doubt as alien to most of her contemporary readers as they are to us.³ The mundane struggle for survival is another way of breaking the reader's usual search for the heroine of romance and her fortunes. By the end of Volume IV, Juliet's main occupation is fugitive. Juliet's wanderings, prompted by people possessing the keys to her identity and starting to hunt her down, takes her

³Julia Epstein's chapter develops much more fully the parallels between Juliet's lack of name and money in correlation with class-analysis. For this reason, I have given less emphasis to marginalization by class than to marginalization by gender.

to the cottages of various lower-class characters along the road to Salisbury and in the New Forest, areas which Burney had visited in 1791. During the New Forest chapters, the reader starts to feel more identification with Juliet, especially since only the reader gets to experience Juliet's entire flight across the countryside. History, too, seems more present than in the stuffy rooms of the gentry, for some of Juliet's hosts in the New Forest are poaching the Kings's lands, and smuggling because of their economic hardships. France, thus, covertly is a force in English life, providing goods for smuggling, and causing subjects to rebel so far as killing the King's deer. All is not quite as settled as the upper-class characters to whom we have been introduced might wish. The stasis so evident in the upper-class mentality (a mentality that rejects Juliet because her wandering makes her threatening to this stasis) appears as what it is--self-interested attempts to freeze history with the Mrs. Iretons of the world at the top. The English are complicitously implicated in the decline of British culture that could result in revolutionary collapse, for the rich buy the smuggled goods while criticizing the French. Juliet, too, is in league with the system that will crush her--she cannot ignore the social codes that forbid her to exist, or condemn her for namelessness. The reader, too, begins to feel implicated because all his/her attempts to read the text normally are frustrated. The reader becomes an active part of the problem, rather than a passive observer.

When Juliet finally leaves the New Forest, we discover that her dark secret is her marriage to the French commissary who determines whether her guardian, the Bishop, is to live or die. Asserting herself in opposition to this marriage, by running off, is Juliet's major act as a self-defining subject; in spite of the fact that a wife is considered a kind of object, Juliet's using of herself to preserve the Bishop at least puts her in charge of the situation of her self. Juliet's desire to save the Bishop makes

her try to rewrite history (her place with regard to the Bishop and her husband), to re-negotiate with the makers of [male] history about her worth. The agents of this power are all men, and eventually Juliet allows herself to be circumscribed by their definitions--but only after the Commissary is dead and the Bishop is free, and she no longer needs to commodify herself in order to whet the Commissary's appetite for £wealth. At this point, she can stop being a self-defining subject because it is no longer in her interests to be independent. Juliet assents to the socially constructed definitions of others eventually because she wants to be part of society, but she will not join this society at the cost of the Bishop.

The Wanderer's ending, while apparently happy, rings false. It is non-history. Or rather, perhaps it is all too normal history--the history of all extraordinary women. When Juliet is prepared to return to France and sign over her £ 6,000 to secure the Bishop's release, all her male "protectors" arrive at the inn with schemes of their own to save her--the happy accident of the Bishop's arrival makes it seem as though the patriarchy has conspired to subsume Juliet's now-known role and identify and re-classify her as "theirs." Juliet is no longer the multi-identified Wanderer, but is reduced to taking a role in conventional gentrified and narrative structures. As readers we ought to be satisfied, but perversely, we are not. All that wandering, all those volumes to be tidily disposed of accidentally in the last few pages? Juliet is really a colony of the patriarchy after all? Such a response indicates the reader has been changed by the victimization encountered in the text to have different expectations of it, and that sympathy with marginalization has resulted in a dissatisfaction with the history of the marginalized ending in their erasure.

3) Time Becomes Form

A noticeable device in the book, related to the spatial idea of freedom and suffocation, is a quickening movement between the overcrowded, noisy indoor scene, and the quiet outdoor scene. Some critics find that *The Wanderer* inadequately demonstrates the passage of time, but if we see space as time, and time passing not so much absolutely (such as dates in a constitutional history) as relatively for the individual, we realize that for the reader, the times of Juliet's embarrassment, chagrin and distress, especially in the scenes that remind us of an unwitty Restoration drama, seem interminable. The times of flight, such as in the New Forest section, pass very quickly. There are fewer conversations and more movement when Juliet is alone, in volumes 4 and 5. The book seems to take on characteristics of the picaresque. Since Juliet is not a real adventuress, though, her journey mimics the form, but not the content. Peter Hughes' argument suggests that Sir Walter Scott invented the method of a frozen tableau, rather than a sequential narrative for the most historical moments in his books (Hughes 80). In *The Wanderer*, it seems that Juliet is living a narrative, but that everyone else is trying to create tableaux, in which all may be significantly and comfortingly frozen. Hughes suggests that these tableaux are reductive to history, since they deprive it of its sequential nature, which allows history a time-dimension, thus making it history.

Chapter 38 is told primarily from Juliet's point-of-view. She is very nervous about performing music in public, a situation she has found herself forced into by the shame of unpaid debts and the equal shame of accepting Harleigh's financial assistance. Her nervousness seems to arise not from fear of inability, but chagrin at having to assume the unladylike role of professional musician. The tableau begins to crystallize

out of Juliet's entrapment in this concert performance. She enters the hall in a zombie-like state, focusing upon one audience-member of threatening aspect. Suddenly, Juliet divines the truth, that this is Elinor, disguised, come to commit suicide. Instead of taking decisive action, Juliet faints, attracting the attention of the entire audience. Elinor competes for attention by plunging a dagger into herself. Harleigh, in the midst of this tableau,

Almost petrified with horror, he could with difficulty support either her [Elinor] or himself; yet, his presence of mind was sooner useful than that of any of the company; the ladies of which were hiding their faces, or running away; and the men, though all eagerly crowding the spot of the tremendous event, approaching rather as spectators of some public exhibition than as actors in a scene of humanity. (359-60)

Elinor has created a tableau, assisted by the sense-loss of Juliet and the "almost petrified" condition of Harleigh. Even in the stasis of this picture, the male Harleigh can add something to the forward motion of the narrative by calling for a surgeon, whereas the female characters are in various states of senselessness or absence. The parallel conditions of Juliet and Elinor reflect the pressures of extremism upon them: Juliet, facing several actions she does not wish to take, loses consciousness; Elinor, facing the negation to which Harleigh's lack of love destines her, tries to avoid the erasure that women must endure by committing suicide. Elinor tries to draw the attention of the audience, and then silence her own painful self-consciousness.

The situations of Elinor and Juliet parallel those of the oppressed lower classes of France and England, whose existences are mere background or nuisance to the more socially privileged. Juliet's faint literalizes the lack of self-consciousness developed

by the lower-class English people in the novel, stuck amidst conflicting economic demands and taking refuge in insensitivity.

Elinor's less passive approach to marginalization is a symbolic representation of the French Revolution--a demand, upon the part of the disenfranchised, to be noticed and to be reckoned with. Ultimately, this demand, as is the willfully achieved insensibility of Juliet and the lower-classes in England, proves suicidal. Do peasants really desire "liberté, égalité, and fraternité," or to be wealthy and powerful, like their oppressors? Does Elinor really want to be accorded individual rights, or merely to be loved as an object by Harleigh? Certainly, Elinor's feelings are in conflict throughout the book, and extinguishing the "unhappy consciousness" may appear the best way out.⁴

The tableau created in this chapter also resembles that of a tragic play, in which dead characters litter the stage at the end. This tableau, though, is temporary, just as all the tragic episodes in Hegel's *Philosophy of History* have a place in the larger whole. History, as the progressing forward to higher levels of consciousness (accepting Hegel's theory), requires narrative motion. Tableaux stop this motion and suspend history. Because *The Wanderer* is not a heroic tragedy, Juliet and Elinor may be temporarily unconscious, but not dead. They revive to take the next steps towards the more comprehensive approach to history.

The incidents in Chapter 38 are echoed in Chapters 41 and 61. Narrative becomes tableau through slowing life to a standstill by invoking the image of death. The two chapters take place in the same cemetery. In Chapter 41, Juliet has been reunited with her French friend, Gabriella. In the chapter, the two speak in French, distracting the reader from what they are saying to how (by having to slow down and translate), or

⁴Kristina Straub's book discusses "the ideological double-bind of women's place within the patriarchal family" (189). She also considers the narrative as "blocked-romance" (183).

to losing all grasp of content and retreating to a more general perspective on the scene of two women conversing. Removing their conversation eliminates the element of time and creates the tableau. In this picture, the pile of stones which Gabriella has piled over her dead child's grave attracts the most attention. If we briefly apply Margaret Homans' idea that women "bear the word" (literally providing regeneration to humanity), but do not speak the word (which all takes place in patriarchal discourse), then the death of her child is the death of Gabriella's hopes of ever "living in" history. The stones, uninscribed, testify to Gabriella's desire to contribute to history's narrative, but her lack of language merely creates a tableau .

In Chapter 61, Juliet returns to the cemetery to look at the grave, though Gabriella is gone. As usually happens when Juliet is alone for long, Harleigh arrives in pursuit of her. As also frequently occurs, Elinor interrupts their interview. Elinor flits through the graveyard, dressed in a shroud. Juliet and Harleigh follow Elinor into the church, where she throws herself across a coffin-shaped stone, bearing the following inscription: "This Stone is destined by herself to be the last kind covering of all that remains of ELINOR JODDREL: Who, Sick of Life, of Love , and of Despair, Dies to moulder, and be forgotten" (579). Brandishing a pistol, Elinor tries again to commit suicide. The stone tablet emphasizes Elinor's own attempt to "write herself" into history, leaving a brief linguistic account of her own story, rather than behaving as Homans suggests is the norm for women, silently bearing. Elinor's use of language implies, though, that she accepts the conventional definition of woman defined in terms of man--without Harleigh, she cannot see her life as worth living. For both Juliet and Elinor self-consciousness brings pain, and only the end of self, the end of consciousness, or a change in the world can end the estrangement. Juliet, however, does not seek to become a permanent part of history, as Elinor does.

Our final picture of Juliet in the novel is not even really a picture; as a "Female Robinson Crusoe" (873), she is defined in terms of something else. Throughout the book she has been undefinable in conventional terms, so this seems odd to the reader. Having regained name and family, Juliet no longer needs a self. Her last incarnation in the book truly occurs in a domestic tableau of the happy Harleigh household. This last reference to the recognizable Juliet occurs *before* our last glimpse of Elinor.

Responding to the marriage of Juliet and Harleigh, the narrator says of Elinor:

Despair, with its grimmest horror, grasped her heart at this self-detection; [that she had not ceased to hope for Harleigh] but pride supported her spirit; and Time, the healer of woe, though the destroyer of life, moderated her passions, in annihilating her expectations; and, when her better qualities found opportunity for exertion, her eccentricities, though always what were most conspicuous in her character, ceased to absorb her whole being. (872-3)

This passage finds Elinor grimly accepting that the object of her affection will never acknowledge her, thus being erased by her belief in the definition-by-opposition epistemology. Time annihilates Elinor's expectations: she will be excluded from narrative and tableau. Immediately after Elinor observes that she had tried to go off "the beaten road" only to discover "all others are pathless" (873), or wanderers, the narrator blithely shifts to the happy resolution of Juliet's "Difficulties," ending the story with the words, "ever alive to hope" (873). The tension between Juliet's fulfilled hopes and Elinor's annihilated ones glances starkly off these final pages. Elinor's inflexibility of thinking destines her to tragedy, but the Wanderer, who submits to the equally or more inflexible thinking of society and happily assents to her erasure, is awarded the happy ending--but an end it is.

When in scenes with other characters, it seems that Juliet frequently gets used as an audience for these tableaux, or other characters try to write her into these tableaux, since her lack of identity gives her potential to fill any role for which there is a need. In fact, Juliet's own dramatic skills are unusually good, as demonstrated by her participation in the amateur theatrical discussed in Chapter 10, above. One reason for Juliet's success would appear to be her blank identity, which can as easily be filled with the character of the heroine as that of the villain/adventurer (as her fellow characters tend to regard her). Juliet really does not have to act: her "dramatic skill" gives the appearance of reality because Juliet reflects real feeling, whereas Elinor comes off as melodramatic because all her feelings are artificial--they are exaggerated "artistically" to draw attention to herself. Juliet is "artless," in that she desires no attention, but she naturally attracts it. Elinor always wants Juliet to be a spectator to her passionate and melodramatic attempts to induce Harleigh to transfer his affection from Juliet to herself.

Elinor needs Juliet because not only does she want to manipulate the emotions of Juliet and Harleigh (and herself?) in a rather dramaturgical fashion, but also she needs a sympathetic audience. Juliet alone is qualified to be this sympathetic audience, because she has no traditional identity and because the power of sympathy is more evident in her character's dual identity. Mrs. Ireton's incessant efforts to draw attention to Juliet and embarrass her may be construed as a similar need to construct a self in opposition to something "Other." In spite of the social position which defines both women, and the revolutionary otherness that Elinor adopts in an attempt at self-definition, they both seem to be in a state of denial about their actual powerlessness and unimportance. The implicit commitment both women have to maintaining the status quo comes from a fear of their own marginal existences. The attempt to create tableaux

in which they are the subjects reflects the desire of Elinor and Mrs. Ireton to freeze time and deny the erasure and objectification to which history is destining them.

Male characters, such as Harleigh, Mr. Ireton, and Sir Jaspar, also seek out Juliet for private interviews. Rather than make her an audience or a foil, though, their attempts emphasize making her into an object.⁵ Harleigh keeps trying to possess Juliet's secret, which she keeps stubbornly to herself. Perhaps it is significant, however, that once he knows her secret, Harleigh's possession of Juliet herself quickly follows. Once again the idea that the secret history has more power than the official history comes to light. Not knowing her history, Harleigh is powerless to assume control and rewrite it for Juliet. Harleigh has much more control over Elinor because he understands her revolutionary fervor as the opposite of his own rationalist leanings. In order to cool Elinor's ardor, Harleigh frequently points out the irreconcilable differences between his own beliefs and hers. When Harleigh begins to use logic to defend religion, however, and sees Elinor quickly swayed (by the rhetoric, rather than the content of his speech?) the reader begins to recognize Elinor and Harleigh as two versions of the same thing--extremist sentimental philosophers. Harleigh can no better defend Christianity with reason than Elinor can defend revolutionary ideals with her independent fortune. Elinor and Harleigh differ chiefly in that history is less apt to ignore Harleigh; his political and economic power are undisputed (his usual pleas to Juliet consist of asking her to accept his money or his assistance in reuniting with her "friends"): no one accuses him of hysterical instability.

If Harleigh's romantic attachment to Juliet makes his objectification of her less clear, let us turn to Mr. Ireton and Sir Jaspar. Mr. Ireton commits the Harleigh-type

⁵See Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*: "Self-consciousness . . . is only by being acknowledged or 'recognized'" (229).

maneuver, only with less gentility--he locks Juliet in a room in order to speak to her, to avow his attraction to her. In public, he does his best to cause her trouble and chagrin, much as his mother does. Mr. Ireton is less secure in the "system" because he does not have an independent income. Experiencing a kind of marginalization similar to that felt by his mother and Elinor, he denies the power of history over him by exerting what power he has over those weaker than himself. The fact that Mr. Ireton's power over Juliet can only be effected by a physically locked door (and she still manages to escape) emphasizes his own basic lack of power. To create a proper tableau, Mr. Ireton requires the presence of other people--he cannot make Juliet into an object without spectators.

Sir Jaspar, because he lives in a self-constructed, "Rape of the Lock" world of sylphs and fairies, has, ironically more power over Juliet than Harleigh or Mr. Ireton. The system Sir Jaspar translates Juliet into as object is one that she and the reader are less apt to interpret as the threatening status quo of the patriarchy, though there is a basic misogyny in much of Pope's work. One of the most interesting sequences of the book occurs after Sir Jaspar whisks Juliet away from the inn where her French husband is arrested and deported. While Sir Jaspar's personal aesthetic is noticeably of the Pope era and his attitude towards Juliet that of art lover towards *objet d'art*, he takes her to the Romantic setting of Stonehenge, almost as if he is trying to remake himself into a kind of Romantic adventure hero. Before Stonehenge, though, Sir Jaspar takes Juliet to Wilton, the Earl of Pembroke's estate, which was a kind of museum at the time. Sir Jaspar, himself a rather Baroque relic, raves over a Salvator Rosa painting, emphasizing his projection of self onto the subject beheld (a common aesthetic in the text):

And that variety of vivifying objects; that rich, yet so elegant scenery, of airy gaiety, and ideal felicity, is palpably a representation of fairy land itself! Is it thither my dear little friends will, some day, convey me? And shall I be metamorphosed into one of those youthful swains, that are twining their garlands with such bewitching grace? And shall I myself elect the fair one, around who I shall entwine mine? (761)

We might read Sir Jaspar's orchestration of the scene at Stonehenge as his own attempt to metamorphose himself--to forestall history with fantasy, to rewrite history and himself. The tableaux everyone is trying to create are static and deadened history, but in them the self has the illusion of preservation which narrative history violates and erases. Just as Juliet has a moment of symbolic erasure at Milton Abbey Heath, she briefly has a moment of symbolic subjectivity at Stonehenge.⁶ The primal bleakness contrasts sharply to the carefully protected artifacts at Wilton. Salisbury Plain is open and unadorned. At Wilton, Juliet's response to the painting is interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Ireton. At Stonehenge, though, the narrator records Juliet's reaction:

The beauties of Wilton seemed appendages of luxury, as well as refinement; and appeared to require not only sentiment, but happiness for their complete enjoyment: while the nearly savage, however wonderful work of antiquity, in which she was now rambling; placed in this abandoned spot, far from the intercourse, or even view of mankind, with no prospect but of heath and sky; blunted, for a moment, her sensibility, by removing her wide from all the objects with which it was in contact. . . . (766)

⁶Doody sees Stonehenge as a Romantic landscape (361-8).

For these rare moments, Juliet is not an object in someone else's landscape-- unless it be of Stonehenge itself, a mighty structure which remains although its history and purpose are lost. Thus, though Juliet seems to see the possibility for a kind of Romantic freedom and escape by allowing herself to dissolve into nature, she is trapped, not only by her physical being (which is sought to be contained, defined, and classified), but metaphorically (the structure of Stonehenge represents the obsolescence yet durability of many of the structures in the text), and dramatically by the return of Sir Jaspar, once more seeking to aestheticize his relationship with Juliet by staging it artistically. The futility of such a retreat is further challenged by the sudden arrival of the totally boorish and un-sublime Mr. Riley. Just after his arrival at Stonehenge to appropriate Sir Jaspar's picnic lunch, Riley speaks of what he calls Juliet's "transformations":

Neither juggler nor conjuror is a match for her. She can make herself as ugly as a witch, and as handsome as an angel. She'll answer what one only murmurs in a whisper; and she won't hear a word when one is bawling as loud as a speaking-trumpet. Now she turns herself into a vagrant, not worth a sixpence; and now, into a fine player and singer that ravishes all ears, and might make, if it suited her fancy, a thousand pounds at her benefit: and now, again, as you see, you can't tell whether she's a house-maid or a country girl! (771)

Juliet's success in transforming her identity may be contrasted here with that of Sir Jaspar, who even in the right setting cannot become a hero who has adventures. Ironically, everything that Riley says about the Wanderer is true, but the sum of these identities cannot define her. Like Stonehenge, Juliet is mysterious. We are to interpret Riley's compliments as backhanded here, because Juliet's power in the text

has all been derived from her unknown history. As people begin to know who she is, and where she is, some of this power ebbs away: she can be isolated into the tableaux of others, and her life loses its narrative. In her journal, Burney describes her own impressions of Stonehenge to her sister:

Here I was prodigiously disappointed, at first, by the little shape, or intelligence, of the huge masses of stone so unaccountably piled at the summit of Salisbury Plain. However, we alighted, & the longer I surveyed & considered them, the more augmented my Wonder, & diminished my disappointment. There is enough remnant to prove the form had been circular, & the pile a Temple;--but I shall enter into no disquisitions of what is nearly proved undisquisitionable--even though I spent *half an hour* in examining the premises! (*Journals I*: 21-22)

In finding Stonehenge "undisquisitionable," a state which is "nearly proved," Burney points out the unknowability and unprovability of certain historical processes; the idea that we really have answers is just an illusion. The passage about Juliet, above, mirrors this indefinability. Riley may be entering into a disquisition, but the result is that he is forced to articulate Juliet's lack of definition, and thus the inability of others to satisfactorily freeze her into the tableaux created by their own minds.

Burney's journals mention her trip to Stonehenge, but not Dryden's poem "To My Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton." Dryden lauds the process of scientific discovery, which in his time was changing the known parameters of his world. Dr. Charleton's research into the origins of Stonehenge rewrote the monument not as a temple, but "A throne, where kings, our earthly gods were crown'd;/Where by their wond'ring subjects they were seen. . . ." Sir Jaspar makes some references to the Druids, but the association of Stonehenge with coronation would probably have been known to him, if

if not to Juliet. Does he take her to Stonehenge to make her his Faerie Queen? If Burney knew Dryden's poem, her lack of reference to the kings seems to marginalize them. The absolute discoveries and knowledge promoted by empiricism and reason appear to be breaking down. Burney's presentation of Stonehenge, unlike that of Dryden, emphasizes its mystery, rather than its majesty--or perhaps one should say the majestic inhumanness of its mystery. Perhaps Burney uses Stonehenge to show how its meaning and purpose, like that of the Wanderer, has been appropriated by a particular powerful group of history-makers, and is thus defined in their image.

Another powerful example of Burney's translation of time into form occurs in the exchange between Elinor and Harleigh on Milton Abbey Heath (regarding atheism) demonstrating how ill-prepared the characters are to re-envision the world as other than oppositions that destroy one another--male/female, Christian/Atheist, Anti-Revolutionary/Revolutionary, wandering/static. At this point in the story, we see Juliet moving towards erasure in her desire to satisfy the dictates of society, we see Elinor trying to emblazon herself upon the historic memory as a tragic suicide-heroine, and we see Harleigh proposing that Elinor surrender herself to religion, while Juliet surrender herself to him. Harleigh, it appears, has nothing to lose by this endorsement of sacrifice. In fact, in the chapter before, Harleigh has attempted to convince Juliet that her marriage, since it had not taken place in church, is meaningless. Both Elinor and Harleigh are almost comically predatory in their pursuit of desired love objects (Harleigh himself, and Juliet, respectively). Harleigh comes for the avowed reason of returning Juliet's workbag, containing her money. Elinor comes to ask for a rational explanation of Christianity, particularly the evil of suicide, from Harleigh, the book's representative for the Burkean reason of the eighteenth century. What is Elinor really there for? It seems that she wants to capitulate,

publicly, to Harleigh's principles in order that he will notice her. Elinor is asking to be reabsorbed into the Age of Reason, ironically through its least reasonable element--faith. Here on *Milton* (italics mine) Abbey Heath, Harleigh "justifies the ways of God" to Elinor. Harleigh eventually gains Elinor's enthusiasm for religion because faith will give her life a stability that belief in constant change and struggle do not. The "religion" of revolutionary ardor eventually proves non-utilitarian to Elinor.

The reader, here, is also oddly marginalized, spectator to a debate in the outdoor, "Romantic" frame that is oddly reminiscent of the melodramas we have seen enacted in the crowded drawing rooms earlier in the work. While debating their questions of philosophic import, Harleigh and Elinor have no time to notice their surroundings or the sublimity of the Romantic landscape, even though the sublimity of Romanticism seems to be Elinor's desired outlook, while the sublimity of Christianity is that which Harleigh would like her to take note of. Throughout the novel, though, Elinor fails to be a true Romantic because she is a *figure*, rather than a *self*; Elinor must be in control of her surroundings, to stage the proper scene for her to look Romantic to others. As we have seen, Juliet, to maintain her freedom from the tableau, must keep moving in order that others not be able to see her as a figure, but as the Wanderer, one whose scene cannot be fixed by others. Elinor requires others to define her: in this scene, Harleigh kindly supplies her with the most obvious answer to fixing her identity--returning to a "normal" ideology and no longer being a renegade woman. His advice to Juliet is similar, but his own desires recommend the unorthodoxy of denying her marriage to the Commissary. To the reader, Harleigh's message may come as a relief, since by calling for a return to familiarity, he seems to also signal a more traditional role for the reader. The oddness of the scene, however, comes from the fact that for perhaps the first time in the whole work, the reader can whole-heartedly sympathize

with Juliet. The polemics of Harleigh and Elinor exclude Juliet and the reader; having not experienced the Wanderer's journey into marginality as we have, Elinor and Harleigh may only switch sides in their debate. The historical milieu they represent is not prepared to give up its epistemology of definition by antonyms. Milton Abbey Heath violates this kind of definition by the fusion of the historic, religious and established with the open and romantic heath itself, reflecting Juliet's, and the reader's, escape from the world of Harleigh and Elinor.

4) Hybrid Genre

This interplay of Romantic and Baroque landscapes, of drama and picaresque, reminds us that ways of interpreting change over literary history, as well as within the text of *The Wanderer*. Constantly the reader is set for a stereotypical response to a landscape or a scene, only to have that response jarred and undercut--for example, the Gothic-heroic flight of Juliet in Chapter 1, followed by Mrs. Maple's stream of snobbish and socially-centered questions. In Volume V, the narrator discusses the human community's desire for order, using a space metaphor:

The final purpose for which man is ordained to move in this nether sphere, will for ever remain disputable, while the doubts to which it gives rise can be answered only by fellow-doubters: but that the basis of his social comfort is mathematical accuracy for proof: it is an axiom that comes home, straight forward and intuitively, to our "business and bosoms;"--there, with life, to lodge. (711)

This desire for reliability is apparently ingrained, but the book proves over and over that a sense of order or a final purpose to life is constructed, much as a work of art is. The comfort or confidence prompted in the reader by certain familiar devices and

structures is violated repeatedly to show that they are unnatural orders. Even the ending of the book, with its unexpected happy accidents, is merely writing out the traditional romance-plot--making a tableau of the Harleigh household, once and for all, in a world that wants to ignore the ravages of time and solidify everything into tableaux.

In a way, using the dual French/English identity for the heroine would seem to be similar to the passive "wavering" Scott hero, who embodies a conflict in loyalties germane to a particular historic time. Whereas, however, the Wanderer is aware of her own identity, and thus her position in the historical process, Scott's heroes usually are not. For example, Darsie Latimore, in *Redgauntlet*, does not even know his uncle is his uncle, or that his relatives had been supporters of the rebellion--everyone knows Darsie's identity before he does. His wanderings at the beginning of the novel seem to indicate a restless desire to have a historical destiny, but he is not a particularly serious-minded person, ignoring the possible consequences of his curiosity-seeking along the border. Jeanie Deans, also, is unaware of her historical role, or her symbolic function--her journey to London is motivated solely by her personal concern for her sister. Edward Waverley toys with rebellion against the crown, yet suffers no permanent consequences. The Wanderer, by contrast, is totally aware of her situation and the result the revelation of her identity will bring.

Darsie or Jeanie, their identities established, become part of society's order. Both books probe the individual's discovery of a place in history; to the reader this shows that there is a correlation between the past and the present by which one can see a pattern into which we ourselves may fit. In Scott, the past is always exciting and alluring, but not as good as the present. In his novels, Scott can write of Scotland's romantic past, and celebrate its death as a kind of progress. Isn't this the way the

patriarchy always treats the history of the other? Scott can appropriate the history, show its intricacy--but its relevance always must be that the past's disorder contrasts with the idyllic present. Like Juliet, Scott cannot escape complicity with the powers that be, so he erases his "Other" (rebel) self.

We can easily see that these differences in the presentation of characters in history is intended to result in different roles for the reader, and thus differences in how the reader is supposed to approach history. If we try to apply Joseph Turner's Hegelian categories to the historical novels I have just mentioned, it seems to me that Scott writes much more in the Reflective mode than Burney does. In other words, Scott invites comparisons of the past to the present in order that the reader notices progress. Burney, by putting the reader in the position eventually of sympathizing with the main character, but also in the position of her unsympathetic victimizers, who remain shut out of her private history much as the reader does, creates unease, conflict, and identity crisis for the reader. Instead of seeing the conflicts of a particular epoch reflected in a character's life in history, the reader of Burney sees the conflicts more actively challenged, but the connection to history remains always fuzzy, for the simple reason that the heroine is not supposed to be part of history at all. Experience taints. In *The Wanderer*, Burney seeks to frustrate her readers' expectations because readers need to experience the life of the "other" to see history in a more complete way.

What, then, are the implications of Burney's idea of history? Burney seems to be showing that progress is needed, but that neither revolution or conservatism will deliver a desirable progress. Burney does not define progress in *The Wanderer* as either an expansion of freedom or an expansion of order, because everything really remains the same. The only progress has to come from the individual's expanding

awareness, so that more is included in the comprehension of history. This belief allows a new role for the novel and for the reader of the novel. While previously a form of sympathy with individual characters might have been part of an author's intent, or political or moral aims might have been expressed, Burney frustrates the easy identification with her heroine as well as an easy subscription to existing attitudes towards history.

I posit that this horror of extreme solutions informs the view of history that Burney gives us in *The Wanderer*; of all the people in the book, the heroine is the only one who is disqualified from joining either side because of her of the dual allegiances of blood and experience. While the necessity of loyalty to both groups oppresses her, Juliet is unable to overlook her ties, which ironically place her in a more complicitous relationship to the way these ties collapse her identity into a very small space. The only way that she can expand this space is through denying (overtly) all the identities which are given to her. Unfortunately, it is only one obligation (to the Bishop) which can make Juliet ignore her obligation to her husband. Once an identity is publicly accepted (Lady Juliet Granville, future wife of Harleigh), Juliet no longer has a right to assert any opinion counter to those of her alliances. Therefore, even if Juliet is not a revolutionist like her late French husband, or a Burkean rationalist like Harleigh, her opinions no longer matter. Her ability to stand outside the controversy is limited, because it puts her outside of society, and thus outside an ability to survive. Finally, in *The Wanderer*, the character with the widest experience and in the best position to mediate a fair solution (as symbolized by her plan to return to her French husband at the end of the book) is the one who cannot speak and be acknowledged, the one who appears compromised by history.

Seeing the ways in which the reader must become alienated from the text and thus experience marginalization first-hand, can we say whether or not this technique truly leads the reader to philosophize about the process of history-making? Judging from the contemporary critical reception of her work, as well as more recent criticism, Burney seems to have failed in her attempt to elicit a response from readers moving beyond their disgust arising from the methods she uses to wrench them out of the comfortable norms of novel-reading. In essence, Burney was writing about history and the voice of the previously unheard in a way for which her audience was not prepared. The approach towards the historical was evidently a timely one, since Scott achieved tremendous success with it in the very same year in which *The Wanderer* appeared. Scott, however, does not demand so much of his readers; he allows them to retain a comforting distance from the text, and feel a certain superiority towards the past beyond which the present has happily progressed. By requiring that her readers see both history and their own reading in an entirely new light, Burney is seen to have violated the author's pact with the reader to delight and instruct, for if delight be dependent on subject matter, or the pleasure the reader takes in fulfilling a familiar role or limning a familiar pattern in the text, Burney frustrates these sources of pleasure at every turn. Every opportunity is taken to pluck the reader out of a complacent and uninvolved attitude, and I believe it is just this zeal that ultimately undermines Burney's effect, even though the experience is absolutely necessary in understanding the point Burney wants to make about the process of history. Burney deconstructs the reader's expectations and forces participation in a narrative of history from the position of a marginalized person. Unfortunately, very few readers have taken their own changed roles gracefully. Burney's contemporaries could weep with sympathy over the plights of Evelina, Cecelia, or Camilla, but relentless pressure

in *The Wanderer* to desert existing conventions and historical explanations proved too disturbing to the philosophical biases of the audience. *The Wanderer* displays Romanticism as a mirror image of the older conservatism. The newness is not newness at all.

When Burney shows us Elinor and Harleigh arguing the question of atheism out on the moors, we see a historic problem played out in terms of religion: which idea shall be erased? In their opposing views on the issue of the existence of God, Elinor and Harleigh represent the mutually exclusive dichotomies which abound in the book--knowledge/uncertainty, decorum/freedom, conservatism/revolution, self/God, art/life, history as it happens/history as it is told--they are basically unable to conceive of states in between these extremes, or in defining in any new ways. Blake says "Without contraries is no progression" ("The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" Plate 3), but clearly Burney shows that in a historical sense, they result only in stagnation or capitulation to one or the other extreme. These historical categories result in the erasure of what does not fit. How can society progress when even Christian principles are re-interpreted in such a way that "Other" is not a reflection of self, but an aberration to be shunned? The focus in *The Wanderer* upon how the marginalized person experiences history serves to show the huge humanly-created systems by which most people are being systematically erased and by which they are erasing history. Revolutionary for its time, Burney's historical view of her age is only now coming to be appreciated.

CHAPTER 3

SHIRLEY: AESTHETICALLY MASTERING THE PAST

Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* resembles the works of her contemporaries more than anything else she ever wrote, particularly in her use of a third-person narrator, ostensibly the all-knowing omniscient Victorian narrator. Since the book is, in some ways, about having an identity, perhaps the third-person approach seems awkward; however, *Shirley* is not a *bildungsroman*. *Shirley* is a philosophical historical novel about the necessity of having a self in order to become active in history. The fact that this identity-quest takes place in several characters at the same time has led to unfavorable comparisons of *Shirley* to Brontë's first-person narratives, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. Both Brontë's and Burney's critics (contemporary and modern) seem to feel more comfortable with the female authors' individual and limited first-person narratives, and not with attempts to draw a fuller world and critique a whole social system. The changes which comprise the process of history, though, need not be shown through public events. Brontë blends public events with private life in order to show the parallel but separate spheres from which women and men encounter history; the book's structure makes the reader aware of this. In *Shirley*, the act of understanding history is related to the act of reading because the act of reading, by readers in and readers of the text, allows a Romantic transcendence of isolated self, but also allows the self to have a comprehensible other in terms of which to be defined. Therefore, the reader of *Shirley* must rebel against the role assigned to him or her by the narrator and strive, like the main characters (especially Caroline) to probe the means by which one becomes an active agent in history, and not, like Mary Cave, a marble cipher in it.

This concept will be explored through an examination of the reader's reading of *Shirley* and a study of *Shirley*'s characters' reading, demonstrating how all readers must struggle for this sense of Romantic subjectivity, which allows self-definition in terms of clearly identified "others." Without asserting themselves as subjects in the world of masculine discourse and patriarchal structures, women will remain defined by others and outside of power. Only by identifying with and appropriating the male Romantic authors' ideal of self-consciousness can women be acknowledged by men as potential subjects in history. To remain wholly in the female sphere (which I define here as an actual area, not merely a socially constructed sphere to which women are relegated by patriarchy) is not to be free.

In her book on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Judith Shklar, in discussing Hegel's idea of ethics, comments "A common memory and an undisturbed love are . . . a bridge between the individual and humanity, between two laws, two obligations, and two sexes" (78). Brontë tries to construct such a bridge in *Shirley*. In Chapter 2, I discussed the senselessness of self-consciousness in achieving freedom if the context does not recognize some people as subjects. Brontë demonstrates that self-consciousness, and the articulation of self-consciousness through Romanticism, help the individual take steps towards remaking the world. This concept develops in the plot motif about women, and also in the sub-plot about workers. Caroline, the main female character, bridges the two plots because she has what Hegel calls "unhappy consciousness," or a feeling of "misfortune and the poverty of its own action" (*PM* 264). Like the workers, Caroline realizes her situation is bad, but unlike them, she cannot find a way to protest because her identity and role in society are supposed to be blank silence. Shirley, like the workers, has defined a role for herself through action; her money and position, though, ally her with the more powerful men in the book. Both women together re-

create what Hegel calls the "Master and Bondsman": to Hegel, both were more mental states than social conditions (*PM* 234). Resolving the "master-bondsman" impasse failed in the French Revolution, as we have seen in *The Wanderer*, and seems to be failing in the Luddite Riot context of *Shirley*. The "rights of man" are in conflict with self-interest of masters, and therefore the masters see no reason to foster the "rights of man." *Shirley* seeks to overcome the impasse.

Beyond self-consciousness, Hegel speaks of a shared cultural ethos or "spirit." Brontë's book points out that the spirit of culture has fragmented into male and female, master and worker. Hegel says, explaining how self-consciousness functions in this shared spirit:

The spirit of this world is spiritual essence permeated by a self-consciousness which knows itself to be directly present as a self-existent particular, and knows that essence as an objective actuality over against itself. But the existence of this world, as also the actuality of self-consciousness, depends on the process that self-consciousness divests itself of its personality, by so doing creates its world, and treats it as something alien and external, of which it must now take possession. But the renunciation of its self-existence is itself the production of the actuality, and in doing so, therefore, self-consciousness *ipso facto* makes itself master of this world. (*PM* 514)

What Hegel describes here sounds like the Romantic notion of self. Making themselves part of the spirit of their culture's history through articulation of self-consciousness, the quest for female subjectivity forms a major part of *Shirley*.

Shirley is set in 1811-12 Yorkshire during the Luddite riots. In the Luddite riots, workers protested the mechanization of factories--a trend which had prompted

much unemployment. This external historical event touches most men in the story-- Robert Moore owns a mill, which is losing money due to the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic conflicts (specifically, the Orders of Council which restricted trade in wartime); most of the men in the book are conservatives who support his efforts to prosecute the disgruntled ex-workers of his mill who vandalize his property. Moore's allies include Mr. Helstone, the rector; other businessmen; curates; and Joe Scott, an assistant. Mr. Yorke, while aristocratic, is a proponent of radical causes and favors the liberal cause of the protesters, but he maintains a friendship with Moore. Of the novel's men, only Louis Moore, Robert's brother, tutor in a wealthy family, remains outside this political alliance.

The female plot revolves around the fact that in 1812 women have virtually no public role to perform. In Volume I, Caroline Helstone, the vicar's niece, dreams of marrying Robert Moore, but his need for cash causes him to reject her as a marriage prospect. Except for Shirley, who appears only in the last chapter of the volume, all the women introduced in Volume I are domestic paragons, husband-hunters, children, old maids, or dead; in a sense, these manifestations of women are all fragments of Caroline, for her society offers her nothing else to be. Shirley, by contrast, has wealth, position, and beauty, which allow her to find more satisfying things to do than Caroline. Shirley also has strength because she possesses a sense of self-worth and female value (independent of men) through the Romantic sense of subjectivity. If we see Romantic subjectivity as a sense of self in relation to Nature that creates a sense of completion and belonging for the individual (like Wordsworth in *The Prelude*), then the individual needs Nature, rather than opposing genders, to define self. Shirley draws Caroline into this more active as well as imaginative life, but at the same time, she befriends Robert Moore, who proposes marriage to her. Caroline resigns herself

to what she conjectures is an impending marriage between the two, but she grows despondent, and by the beginning of the third volume, ill.

In Volume III, the two spheres intrude upon each other more often. Caroline recovers from a near-fatal illness, discovering that Shirley's governess, Mrs. Pryor, really is her mother, and Shirley foils her uncle's plan to marry her off to a long string of rich, eligible gentlemen. Meanwhile, Robert Moore has gone off to the city, apparently embroiled in business and legal matters, but actually avoiding Shirley, who has rejected his suit. Robert's brother, Louis, tutors Shirley's young cousin and comes with him to Yorkshire. Louis loves Shirley, but she treats him coolly, until his repeated challenges for her to acknowledge him and her own feelings have the desired effect, and she defies her uncle in order to marry Louis.

Robert Moore returns from the city and is shot by a deranged former employee. Humbled by Shirley's rejection and his physical weakness, Robert has new appreciation for Caroline, who conspires with Martin Yorke to visit the incarcerated patient at the Yorke home. The narrator closes the story with reports of the two marriages and the subsequent lives of major characters, ending with an eyewitness account of how the place has changed since 1812.

In investigating the importance of reading history in *Shirley*, we will first study in more detail the reader's process of negotiating the structure of the text, taking into account the readings of other critics, as well as Brontë's possible intentions towards the reader as built into the narrative. Secondly, we will probe the characters' own reading and attempt to determine what role it plays in the development of a historical and personal identity. To this end, our discussion will be divided into several sub-categories: 1) Critics Reading *Shirley*, 2) Brontë Cues the Reader, 3) Readers

Encountering *Shirley's* Structure, 4) Robert and Caroline Reading *Coriolanus*, 5) Caroline Reading Towards Subjectivity, and 6) Shirley Writing a Woman's History.

1) Critics Reading *Shirley*

My approach differs from most existing readings because I neither see Charlotte Brontë as fostering a primarily conservative view of history, nor do I find the narrator proposing two notions of history in conflict with one another. Charlotte Brontë approaches the question that stymies *The Wanderer*: how can women become part of recorded history without frightening the powers-that-be into their own ultra-suppression? In Burney's novel we saw how the mere presence of an ill-defined, nameless woman trying to assert an identity causes others to use her in order to feel superior or powerful--desires that are reinforced by maintaining a social *status quo* in which the unmarried, friendless woman is at the powerless foot. Just as Burney's careful non-articulation of radicalism has caused her to be categorized as a conservative, Charlotte Brontë's apparent endorsement of the power-structure by allowing Robert Moore to keep his mill has a definite Burkean fear of the mob at its core. By changing his mill into a kind of utopian beacon to oppressed workers, Robert seems to be assimilating the mob in order to preclude its power. There is a certain ambiguity here which has disturbed readers of the book: is Robert just trying to save an already fallen world, or is this a true model for the changing face of history?

Shirley has frequently been accused of disunity; George Henry Lewes wrote, in an 1850 review, "in *Shirley*, all unity, in consequence of defective art, is wanting. There is no passionate link; nor is there any artistic fusion, or intergrowth, by which one part evolves from another" (qtd. in Kestner 126). Jacob Korg refutes this charge in a 1957 article; however, the chief question is whether the story of oppressed workers

has anything to do with the story of oppressed women: frequently, Brontë's solutions are seen as historically inconsistent because the situations of women and workers imperfectly parallel one another.¹

Terry Eagleton gives an ideological reading of the story, asserting it uses Luddism to give the reader a message about the future of Chartism, and thus boosts conservative values. Eagleton is correct in identifying the auditor as the 1849 audience; however, the reflective view of history he imposes upon the story seems rather reductive to many of its elements, such as the whole exploration of women's identity and roles in society. Eagleton identifies Brontë's ideology as primarily conservative, as do many feminist criticisms; others see Brontë attempting radicalisms which she undercuts (a notable example being Shirley's sacrifice of her independence by marrying Louis Moore). All these problems may be explained if we see Brontë as forcing the reader to recognize that while there is a world of female history, in realistic and practical terms women have no more power residing in this separate sphere than they do acquiescing to male power. What Brontë offers in her conclusion, then, is a kind of prophecy as to how women may refashion their complicity with male history. Because this complicity is seen as inevitable, many feminist critics seem to feel betrayed by the novel, just as Charlotte Brontë's good friend Mary Taylor did. "You are a coward and a traitor," writes Taylor from New Zealand after reading "extracts" of *Shirley*. The letter continues,

A woman who works is by that alone better than one who does not and a woman who does not happen to be rich and who *still* earns no money and

¹The structure and balance of the novel is central to discussions by Eagleton, Gezari, Korg, Passel, and Nestor, though Gezari and Eagleton are most interested in this parallel between workers and women.

does not wish to do so, is guilty of greater fault--almost a crime--a dereliction of duty which leads rapidly . . . to all manner of degradation. It is very wrong of you to *plead* for toleration for workers on the ground of their being in peculiar circumstances and few in number or singular in disposition. (qtd. in Gezari 104)

Taylor apparently does not want a realistic tale about effecting historical change; she wants a piece of socialist "realism," depicting an ideal or visionary position. Taylor also sees the identity of worker superior to, or more important than, that of woman: worker, to her, ought to mean human. Eagleton and Gezari both suggest that Brontë's idea of history is conservative, or essentially regressive because (presumably) equality is an impossible dream and the best course, then, is to maintain the differences that exist between classes and gender. Therefore, the ending of *Shirley*, like that of *The Wanderer*, can be read as ironic--there is no such thing as progress for women in history, just as there is no progress for workers in history.

Shirley's radicalism lies not in its connection of women to workers, but in its vision of all people as sharing fundamental similarity, rather than difference. Anyone may engage in finding these similarities--a process in which lies the key to developing the humanity that connects the separate spheres of the novel and explains the reason for Shirley's androgyny. The work is not essentially feminist in outlook, but humanist. By articulating the separate narratives of male and female history, the novel makes us become aware of difference, but also of the importance of sameness. Without a sense of egotism, women will not be empowered by the discovery of any similarities with men. Romanticism allows this sense, but Bock and others have reacted ambivalently because of the "destroyer-preserved" aspect of progressive Romanticism itself. The union of the separate spheres of male and female history will,

to some degree, damage the identity of each, but in the process create something new--something, in the Christian imagery of the book, apocalyptic, synthetic, and necessary. The union of Genius and Nature in Shirley's essay, "La Première Femme Savante?" is analogous to this: there is such a thing as female history, but its isolation permits it no effect upon the predominance of patriarchal history. This would appear to be separate and different from the class issue, which we will return to later.

Janet Gezari's recent book, *Charlotte Brontë and Defensive Conduct: The Author and the Body at Risk*, includes a chapter on *Shirley*. In this chapter, Gezari notes that the parallel between women and workers is not perfect (91-2). The hunger of workers for survival differs from the hunger of women for meaningful lives because workers protest and women remain silent; Gezari sees the silence valorized by Brontë (95, 102, 117). Gezari shows that women's silence allows them to return to an infantile state, and thus preserve the ways things are by reducing reasons for conflict. Gezari is in a way correct (93) when she suggests that the novel's history (for women and workers) is moving backward, but it is not moving to a primeval pre-history as she claims: it returns to the Romantic Age and gives women a way to write themselves into that narrative of literary history before they all become the Victorian heroine that Caroline Helstone is in Volume I. Shirley is a female Romantic, and thus provides a historical alternative to the Victorian model, Caroline. When Mr. Yorke taunts Shirley for what he thinks is her passion for Robert Moore, the description of her response on Yorke seems significant:

She checked herself--words seemed crowding to her tongue, but she would not give them utterance; but her look spoke much at the moment: what--Yorke tried to read, but could not--the language was there--visible, but untranslatable--a poem--a fervid lyric in an unknown

tongue. It was not a plain story, however--no simple gush of feeling--no ordinary love-confession--that was obvious; it was something other, deeper, more intricate than he guessed at: he felt his revenge had not struck home. . . . (II, 10, 371)

In this passage, we have a situation which at first appears to be reminiscent of *The Wanderer*--a male character attempts to write a female character into an appropriate plot, thus exerting control over her. Shirley responds, as did Juliet, as Caroline often does, with silence. This particular silence, however, Yorke realizes is a signifier. Yorke knows Shirley could respond to his attack in kind, but her unwillingness to challenge Yorke using his own norms, employing the patriarchal language (just before this, they have a discussion about how to define "noble" blood) refers to a gap of understanding between them, rather than acceptance of his plot-writing. The rupture in male-generated and female-generated plots becomes evident in the linguistic tangle to which Yorke's thoughts are reduced in his attempts to probe the mysteries of Shirley. Yorke has been forced to see and acknowledge that there is a female narrative, a female language, that would be wasted upon him, and over which he has no control. We will discuss Shirley's use of language further in section 6.

2) Brontë Cues the Reader

Putting the reader into Yorke's position is one of *Shirley*'s main functions, and explains much of the narrator's attitude. The text of *Shirley* does not victimize the reader exactly as the text of *The Wanderer* does, but the narrator challenges readers frequently to be unconventional--in short, to think in an unusually philosophical vein. In the case of *Shirley*, Carol Bock articulates an aspect of the book's narration which I have already noted and discussed in Burney:

. . . critics have been loath to play the part they believe this text has given them. They have resisted joining the audience that they feel they are being asked to join, for to do so would be to think of themselves as the narrator apparently does: as highly conventional, somewhat obtuse, and very likely to make inaccurate assumptions about the characters, events, and significance of the story. (Bock 109)

Negative criticism tends to assume that Brontë fails to image her audience properly, and thus takes offensive tones towards it. Bock's book, which discusses the storytelling aspects of Brontë's narration, leads one to see the narrator of *Shirley*, like the narrators of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, as addressing a very specific audience. The audience is of non-Yorkshire people, people of the World, rather like Shirley's uncle, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Simpson is notable because he has little appreciation for Shirley and no shred of Romantic sensibility. The Simpson relatives regard Shirley

as quiet poultry might look upon an egret, an ibis, or any other strange fowl. What made her sing so? *They* never sang so. Was it *proper* to sing with such expression, with such originality--so unlike a schoolgirl? Decidedly not: it was strange; it was unusual. What was *strange* must be *wrong* ; what was *unusual* must be *improper*. (III, 8, 545)

In the Symptons we can see the prototype for the staid Victorian reading public, a public Brontë seems intent upon dislodging from complacency. Making otherness comprehensible, desirable, and familiar appears to be Brontë's goal for her imagined audience. Brontë's favorite narrator in her juvenilia is a gossiping male whose voice and style have been compared to the contentious rhetoric exercised by the famous contributors to *Blackwood's Magazine* (Bock 16). To foster an egotistical, contentious

attitude in her readers, Brontë may well have felt that a robust and argumentative style was most effective. Conversely, complacency is the hallmark of Mary Cave--the character readers should not wish to resemble.

Like *The Wanderer*, *Shirley* allows us to see the extent to which women do not participate in the larger, external process of history, but it does so by showing us contrasting male and female spheres. The contrast between these two worlds has been frequently noted in criticism, but the extent of the split and its structural importance seems to have been underexplored in the novel. Brontë sets up a parallel between the two worlds, identifying characteristics of the feminine world as well as its separation from and marginalization by the masculine world. Brontë structures the book so that the reader will see first the familiar masculine world in Volume I, the feminine world in Volume II, and the fusion or integration of these two worlds in Volume III. In Volume I, women are marginalized. In Volume II they are important in their own world, but have limited effect upon the external, male world of politics, business and law. Volume III suggests that the key for women to join the history-making process is to possess Romantic subjectivity in their own behalf, rather than accepting the roles assigned by men in Volume I (servant, doll, old maid) or existing in a state of complete separation in Volume II (pseudo-man, pseudo-nun, daughter of Eve).

As Burney does in *The Wanderer*, Brontë blends genres, but instead of drama and picaresque played off against a budding Romantic sensibility, we find Brontë's narrator using a rather Austenesque satiric tone towards her characters: the narrator calls the story about to be told (*Shirley*) as "unromantic as a Monday morning," "cool" and "solid" (I, 1, 1). All of this serves to solidify the plot into a kind of tableau, above which the narrator operates in the superiority of knowing the story and the audience, neither of which the audience can know completely. The struggle against stereotyping

that the reader of *Shirley* must undergo forces a readerly Romantic revolution of asserting self against narratorial/patriarchal circumscribing of the reader's role. Thus, the reader is faced with the same problem of stereotyping and self-definition that Caroline Helstone is.

The fact that the plot seems to radiate from Caroline Helstone's character (Eagleton calls her the "'fault' through which feelings . . . burst into spontaneous exposure" (57)) makes the reader wonder, early on, why the title of the book is *Shirley*.

Cynthia Linder quotes a letter from Brontë to her publishers at Cornhill in which the presumed title of the work, *Hollow's Mill*, is to be changed, Cornhill critics having disliked it and Brontë apparently also having felt dissatisfied with it. Brontë allowed Cornhill to decide between *Fieldhead* and *Shirley*, saying "*Shirley*, I fancy, has turned out the most prominent and peculiar character of the work" (qtd. in Linder 72).

Linder thinks Brontë maintained her theme throughout these three titles. *Fieldhead* is Shirley's estate, and gives an altogether more patrician feeling to the title than *Hollow's Mill*. If we view the three titles more metaphorically, the emptiness of the Philistinism driving the business of Robert Moore lies behind the words "Hollow's Mill," as does a juxtaposition of landscape and human invention. The critic Robert Keefe sees the primary characteristics of the world in *Shirley* as bleak, lonely, and empty (Keefe 132). This fundamental negativity is what the words "Hollow's Mill" bring to mind; the novel's negativity, however, is not that pronounced, since most of the negative emotion swirls around Caroline. "Fieldhead" suggests not just Shirley's estate, but her role as landowner/landlord and possessor of a Romantic landscape (head of the fields that she is described as overseeing), which puts some of the important themes in a more positive light. *Shirley*, though, is the title Brontë was leaning towards in her letter, and evidently Cornhill agreed. Prior to *Shirley*'s publication in

1849, Shirley was used exclusively as a surname--the choice echoes the vaguely androgynous pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell (Oxford *Shirley* 662). Stuart claims that Sir Anthony Shirley (1565?-1635?) Elizabethan courtier and adventurer, inspired the name (Stuart 16). Sir Anthony Shirley was also an author; he wrote *Travels into Persia* (1613); Stuart suggests that Shirley's swashbuckling reputation (he voyaged to America in 1596) prompted the choice of the name (Stuart 16). Shirley's status as an *author/adventurer* is perhaps more telling.² We will discuss Shirley Keeldar's role as historical writer later.

Shirley's playful assumption of a male identity (Shirley Keeldar, Esq., Captain Keeldar) has been seen both as "asserting her equality with men" (Duthie 170) and "pitifully comic" (Keefe 140); Williams finds Shirley's assumption of male duties (being given Helstone's pistols to protect Caroline from the mob which might attack the rectory) as less effectual than the barking of the rectory dog (Williams 74). Looking at how the men in the novel treat Shirley, we find that to Robert and Mr. Helstone, Shirley becomes an honorary man. Being acknowledged by men is a limited victory for Shirley because the men in the novel, except for Mr. Sympson, do not expect her to conform to the social stereotype for women. Their treatment of Shirley, though, is a way of humoring what they see as a natural desire to be like themselves. To them, she is still "other," but in acknowledging that she might cherish the hope of developing

²In addition to Sir Anthony, Henry, James, William, John and Thomas Shirley were also authors. The dramatist James Shirley, though, was by far the best-known, and in addition to dramas, he wrote *The True Impartial History of the Kingdom of Ireland* (1693). Someone might see if the Brontës could have had access to this last work, perhaps in the Ponden Hall library, said to have a fine collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature (Gérin, *Branwell Brontë* 44). I think the Brontës might have been interested in histories of Ireland (in light of Patrick Brontë's background) and it is suggestive to me that the name "Shirley" might not only be inspired by a writer, but by a *historical* writer.

similarities with themselves, they allow the strict boundary between the male and female spheres to become blurred.

Keefe, seemingly influenced by the knowledge that Emily Brontë was a model for Shirley, sees Shirley as an artist/genius (137); our reports about Shirley's behavior, though, draw attention to her indolence (in contrast to Caroline's restless time-filling activities), her dreaminess, and her self-sufficiency--she has an intense inner-life that others only rarely glimpse. Shirley is not "learned," according to Caroline; in Shirley's own essay, Woman is "Nature" and Man is "Genius." Shirley is a visionary and a Romantic; her role in the book is to re-envision/re-write history. Without Shirley, female history cannot be identified because the other women in the novel live so much in the shadow of what men have made them think they are. Judith Williams, who sees Shirley as an androgynous character, asks "Do any of the androgynous men, or women, have real power or independence?" (Williams 72). If power means power in the patriarchal stream of history, and independence means independence from it, then the answer is no. Shirley's sense of self, and her recognition of the similarities she can share with the male world give her an identity within that world, rather than the identity it thrusts upon her. The goal of Brontë's idea about history is not for women to be "separate but equal," but to enlarge the whole scope of history's operation. To this end, we will look at how the structure of the novel forces integration of the male and female spheres.

3) Readers Encountering *Shirley's* Structure

As a novel, *Shirley* follows the three-volume format so popular in Victorian England. The first four chapters deal exclusively with men, mills, and the attacks upon machinery in the Luddite backdrop of the story. Though Caroline is introduced in

Chapter V, we see her in the home of Robert Moore as a yearning but rather uncomfortable visitor to what represents to her the world of men and business. This world, we have already learned from Robert and the curates, is one in which women like Moore's sister Hortense are tolerated for domestic reasons, but it is a world primarily misogynistic.

Shirley is introduced for the first time in the last chapter of Volume I. She does not figure in the male-dominated Volume I because she is not to be dominated. The split between the male and female worlds becomes evident in Volume I, Chapter 1, "Levitical," about the curates, whose social gatherings are marked not by their discussions of religion, or religious duties, but eating, drinking, and arguments over "minute points of ecclesiastical discipline" (I, 1, 9). They are viewed from the disgusted stance of Mr. Malone's long-suffering landlady. Mr. Helstone arrives to call help in the defense of Robert Moore's mill. The curates and the vicar, representatives of the establishment, discuss the dangers of Mike Hartley, "Antinomian weaver":

"When he is very drunk, his mind is always running on regicide. Mike is not unacquainted with history, and it is rich to hear him going over the list of tyrants of whom, as he says, 'the revenger of blood has obtained satisfaction.' The fellow exults strangely in the murder of crowned heads, or on any head for political reasons." (I, 1, 15)

Here we find some fear, but also much contempt for the Antinomian-rebel who is "not unacquainted with history." Antinomianism and Romanticism are not unrelated: both depend upon inspiration, rather than reason. Mike Hartley can know history and how it has treated the worker and rebel against the continuation of this trend, for which he can envision a model in the French Revolution.

Shirley and Caroline commence Volume II, by contrast, with a walk upon the moor, recognizing the Nunnwood forest as the ancient site of a nunnery, now overgrown with trees. The Nunnwood dell comes to represent the feminine in this novel as the Hollow, with its mill, represents the masculine world of business. Shirley and Caroline, hungry for what women are barred from, rather than possessing the physical hunger of the curates, speak of this world, and the men in it with interest, envying their occupations. Shirley and Caroline differ from the curates chiefly in that the curates pass their time frivolously out of choice; Shirley and Caroline have to make up occupations for themselves. Unlike the history of the "enemy" that Mike Hartley articulates, the history of Nunnwood's nuns lies in ruins, the history of Mary Cave (Caroline's deceased aunt, seen by Gezari as the novel's emblem) buried with it.

The denial of women's humanity and the exclusion of women from history-making is set up in Volume I in "Old Maids" and in Volume II with "Mrs. Pryor." Caroline, when we meet her in Chapter V, seems dazzled by both her cousin, and the idea that his business is important; she longs to "help" in the counting house, or have some more practical way of spending her time than studying intricate darning or tedious French essays. Robert, though, has already expressed the opinion that women see life too narrowly. The Old Maids and Mrs. Pryor fill marginal positions in the world of men. All three women give Caroline the message that filling such roles in life is difficult and requires much self-effacement, though the "old maids" take the attitude that serving others lends one Christian nobility, whereas Mrs. Pryor suggests the life of a governess to be too dehumanizing for Caroline to consider. Mrs. Pryor, in contrast to the old maids, does not find self-effacement ennobling.

In light of the fact that she turns out to be Caroline's mother, we ought to consider Mrs. Pryor's role in the whole text, a role which is generally much-maligned. Mrs.

Pryor's assumed name brings to mind the nuns of Nunnwood, as does her eccentric and outdated attire. Alternatively, "Pryor" homonymously suggests the adverb "prior," pointing to Mrs. Pryor as an embodiment of prior female history, much as Mary Cave is; in contrast to the silent and dead Mary Cave, Mrs. Pryor has created a tenable position for herself in the world. Gezari's theory that the main motif in *Shirley* has women coping by reverting to childhood and modeling their relationships upon the mother-daughter bond seems unfair to the character of Mrs. Pryor. In the strictest literal sense, Mrs. Pryor has been a very poor mother by putting her own survival as an individual ahead of her bond with the infant Caroline. Symbolically, Mrs. Pryor has abandoned Caroline to the control of the male sphere (Rev. Helstone) in order to struggle for her own identity--a responsibility to self which comes before even the responsibility she has to a child. By returning to Caroline and giving her the female-centered world (represented by herself in an actual, physical reunion), Mrs. Pryor keeps Caroline alive. Mrs. Pryor, with her knowledge of natural history and her preference for women, embodies Shirley's concept of Mother Earth, and by putting herself first embodies Romantic egotism. Ultimately, however, Mrs. Pryor and the Old Maids, because they live in a world from which men are excluded and about which (as we see in Shirley's exchange with Mr. Yorke) they cannot speak, can have no real impact upon the patriarchal world, though they may affect one another. Caroline and Shirley, in their growing roles in both worlds, provide a model for the future.

"Two Lives" is an important chapter, and a somewhat ambiguously titled one, since it discusses three lives--Robert's, Shirley's, and Caroline's. We are told about Robert's public activities, which contrast with those of Shirley: we find her sewing indolently, reading attentively, and overseeing her farm. The narrative of Shirley's days is given in present tense, underlining its unhistoricity. Caroline's days sound

very similar to Shirley's but where the narrator implies that Shirley's imagination helps her create fresh perspectives all the time, Caroline is quite aware of her activities as killing time so as to avoid thinking about the apparent hopelessness of her life. Caroline's eventual escape to marriage, though, is seen as a fairy-tale answer--with Robert, she gladly subjugates herself and "works" as domestic slave for him. "Two Lives" apparently contrasts the world of women and the world of men; however, it also contrasts the woman of imagination (Shirley) with the woman who requires something outside herself in order to feel worthwhile. The fact that Caroline stands up to Mrs. Yorke immediately after this, but then falls ill in Volume III, suggests she has not learned the lessons of Romantic subjectivity.

While, like the Wanderer, Shirley, Caroline and other women have little to do as subjects in a male, public history of political events, women's absence from such events seems to be Brontë's point, most clearly illustrated by the silent presence of Shirley and Caroline during the attack of the rioters upon Robert Moore's mill. Men recognize the humanity of other men (Robert and William Farren), but this does not necessarily engage their sympathies, as we see when the mill is attacked. No one tells Shirley or Caroline of the possibility of this occurrence, but they figure it out. "A Summer Night" shows the role of women in "male" history--they are spectators, their participation blocked. Shirley realizes Caroline's announced presence, if Robert sees her hysteria, will simply serve to undermine their attempts at heroism and re-enforce the male justifications for their exclusion. Women know men consciously exclude them from history, but men do not know they know it. This instance in Volume II shows women resentful of the attempt to freeze them into the living death as objects of patriarchal history-making (they are fortunes, connections, names, but not people). Gezari rightly sees Mary Cave Helstone, deceased "living marble" wife of the

rector as an emblem of the fate for the passive heroine. No one has any idea how Mary Cave felt about anything. She was the object of a contest between Mr. Helstone and Mr. Yorke--her story is legend, but like the Wanderer, the vacuum of her own story allows others to impose their own ideas of that story upon her. Gezari goes on to suggest that emulation of Mary Cave is an ideal in the novel because Caroline's silence and Shirley's silence are eventually rewarded by "earning" them marriages and a chance to leave the female-centered world. This seems a misreading: the very fact that we have the stories of Caroline and Shirley narrated to us makes them part of narrative and not the inscrutable marble tableau of Mary Cave.

Since only the discovery that Mrs. Pryor is really Caroline's mother revivifies her, several critics, such as Gezari (94) and Keefe (142) see this plot motif as regressive, historically and psychologically--an intrusion of romance into the world of realism. Illness is seen as a retreat not just from participation in history, but from life itself. Since Caroline's wasting illness is solidifying her into the marble-like Mary Cave state, we must ask ourselves whether this is an act of will on Caroline's part or not. Modern psychologists might suggest Caroline's illness to be clinical depression, but the relation of her physical symptoms to her emotional state seems to have been read as willfully induced. Surely readings of Charlotte Brontë's own mortal illness tend to imply that she chose death (Keefe 147). Gezari claims that the revelation of Mrs. Pryor's identity allows Caroline to return to childhood, and that thus her silence is rewarded (106). Caroline's decline is precipitated by Robert Moore's rejection of her. Metaphorically, patriarchal history is killing Caroline, erasing her identity and holding her to a standard of silence that has already erased the life of Mary Cave. Because Caroline tacitly subscribes to this conception of who she should be, she requires a model of female history to give her a new sense of identity.

Ironically, though Caroline is blamed for willing herself to illness, she is not given credit for willing herself to recovery.

The progress Shirley has made in giving Caroline a sense of self is negated by Caroline's misapprehension of Shirley's relationship with Robert Moore. When she defies Mrs. Yorke, Caroline asserts an identity, but this identity leaves her with no real role. Similarly, Moore's mill workers can defy him, but they have no jobs, no way of earning a living. Mrs. Pryor, like Mary Cave and Caroline, has allowed the patriarchal world to tell her who she is, but unlike Mary or Caroline, she has not allowed it to freeze her into death. While acquiescing to most of society's (history's) dictates, Mrs. Pryor is eccentric; she is an individual who, like Shirley, has some sense of identity beyond what the patriarchy allows. Mrs. Pryor, rather than acting as a mere substitute for Moore (and a regression to mother-infant, instead of romantic, love), is Caroline's lifeline to the female-centered world--a place where the gaze of men is not necessary for one's existence. Mrs. Pryor can have respect for the patriarchal order because it controls the course of history and the external circumstances of her life. However, she does not have to allow it to endow her completely with her identity, as Caroline does. In Volume I, Caroline worries about becoming an "old maid," but it seems not to occur to her that the very term is a definition applied by others to what were called later in the Victorian period "redundant women." Mrs. Pryor is not an old maid, but she has chosen to remain single after the collapse of her marriage has left her disillusioned with men. The odd garments worn by Mrs. Pryor and Hortense Moore, which Caroline keeps trying to get them to alter, mark them as incomplete conformists to the conventions of the world, which in *Shirley* is associated with men. Mrs. Pryor has no desire to disrupt the world of men, but it does not have much to do with her self-concept.

Caroline's recovery takes place during the chapter "The West Wind Blows," which refers to the weather of late summer. The west wind, of course, in Shelley's poem, is the agent of inspiration, change and power, "destroyer and preserver." Keefe suggests that landscape and nature are refuges in *Shirley* only to women; men are isolated from, and exercise dominion over nature, rather than becoming part of it (Keefe 139). The west wind, when Caroline becomes re-introduced to the female sphere, preserves her life and destroys the self-lacerating aspects of her character, the heritage of not fitting neatly into the tableau created for her in the male-generated history of people such as Mrs. Yorke or Mr. Helstone.

For several chapters in the middle of Volume III, Caroline drops out of the action and the focus is on Shirley. Once Caroline avoids death, she no longer needs to be connected to the female sphere through Shirley; the presence of her mother makes her clearly a part of it herself. The attention given Shirley reveals a struggle about giving up the contained world of female vision which is entirely hers, in favor of joining the narrative of history by a marriage. Shirley rejects several suitors, but she has evident ambivalence towards Louis Moore, the only person able to dominate her. While Shirley expresses attraction towards this domination (II, 1, 219), realistically she knows that the ideal union described in her French essay suffers in having to be carried out by imperfect human beings. Shirley must translate her visions into real-world practice, unlike Caroline, who begins with no vision at all *but* the real world.

All four main characters in *Shirley* lose power and control through illness: for some, such as Shirley and Robert, illness emphasizes their imperfect self-sufficiency. For Louis and Caroline, illness reveals not so much their dependence on others, but the value they have for others. Louis first exerts domination over Shirley when she suffers a wasting illness with no apparent cause. He persuades Shirley to confide the

story to him: she thinks she has been bitten by a mad dog. The exact meaning of this episode has excited much debate. Phoebe, the dog, is a part of nature with which Shirley is much in tune--her dog, Tartar, figures prominently in several scenes, and Louis even claims an affinity to him. Phoebe is not truly mad, just crazed from mistreatment by her owner, Sam Wynne, unsuccessful suitor to Shirley's hand. Shirley's own assertion of personal desires, such as her desire not to marry Mr. Wynne, has driven her uncle to exclaim: "Were there insanity in the family; I should believe you mad. Your eccentricity and conceit touch the verge of frenzy" (III, 4, 472). Shirley fears becoming a literal stereotype of a woman--accused of hysteria and madness (organic conditions), and actually driven to snap back, Phoebe-like, unable to distinguish friend or foe. Phoebe's bite denotes the dangers of total difference (eccentricity?) sliding into the realm of maddened alienation, which is a negative version of Romanticism.

Shirley herself plays out this danger by keeping the incident to herself, and becoming slightly maddened in morbid alienation. Once she speaks to Louis Moore, her spirits return to normal. Phoebe's maddened state has a male analog in Michael Hartley's crazed assassination attempt on Robert, the difference being that Michael is still sane enough to know who is an enemy to his class, whereas Phoebe sees everyone as the enemy. The Phoebe chapter shows how total immersion in the female world cannot protect it from male abuse.

Similarly, Robert Moore, while affecting to despise the female world, is as easily struck down by Mike Hartley's bullet as Shirley is bitten by Phoebe. Uncharacteristically passive due to his wound, Robert must experience powerlessness directly, at the hands of Mrs. Yorke and his liquor-drinking nurse. Robert's enforced stillness allows Caroline to become uncharacteristically active in her pursuit of him.

Therefore, Gezari's assertion that Caroline's happy ending arises because of her silence and self-suppression is wrong; her eventual triumph occurs because she finally asserts herself and makes her feelings known. In plotting with the Yorkes' fifteen year-old son, Martin, to see the ailing Moore, Caroline assumes a subject role in a narrative. Martin, whose desire is to write Caroline into a fairy-tale tableau of his own making, demonstrates the adolescent egotism of this male-generated form of allowing women to appear in their histories as objects. While we see Martin's point-of-view, and he thinks that he is dictating a role to Caroline, the reader also sees clearly that Caroline is using him. When Caroline can take an active role in composing her own history, Mary Cave's spell, privileging silent stasis, breaks.

Most critics see the double-marriage ending of *Shirley* as a surrender to convention, or as an unwillingness on Brontë's part to follow through on the realism she had taken up in the first chapter--the double-marriage ending is a romance-device, the neat comedic ending we might find in Elizabethan drama. Additionally, the marriages seemingly undermine the feminist and radical Romantic themes of the book. Gezari says:

The marriages of Caroline and Shirley to Robert and Louis Moore confirm a view of history according to which time in its forward movement is not redemptive, and history is best-imagined as the grotesque transubstantiation of bread into stone. Lacking all confidence in the possibility of human progress toward solutions to human problems like those of its women and its workers, *Shirley* is committed to the restoration of an earlier state of things. By making the tutor and the mill-owner into lovers who are avatars of a nourishing mother,

Brontë infantilizes her characters. At the same time, she seeks to legitimate their demands by naturalizing them. (Gezari 123)

Gezari is led to this estimation of *Shirley* by her reading of the famous passage about society's different expectations for women:

A lover masculine so disappointed can speak and urge explanation; a lover feminine can say nothing: if she did the result would be shame and anguish, inward remorse for self-treachery. Nature would brand such demonstrations as a rebellion against her instincts, and would vindictively repay it afterwards by the thunderbolt of self-contempt smiting suddenly in secret. Take the matter as you find it: ask no questions; utter no remonstrances: it is your best wisdom. You expected bread, you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyred: do not doubt that your mental stomach--if you have such a thing--is strong as an ostrich's--the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly on the gift; let it sting through your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson of how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test . . . you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. (I, 7, 105)

The Biblical reference this is built on, Luke 11: 11-12, emphasizes the responsiveness of God to his children's demands--"Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11: 9). The

sections referring to the bread, stone, egg and scorpion ask rhetorically whether a father would honor a request for bread with a stone, or that of an egg with a scorpion. The problem for women, and apparently workers, is that they are not allowed to ask, seek, or knock. Those in power are "bad parents" who would feed their children the unpalatable stones and scorpions. The relegation of the powerless to the status of unfed children who ought to endure their plight uncomplainingly until the "good master" figures of Robert and Louis Moore arrive to rescue them evidently leads Gezari to her reading.

Gezari's interpretation presupposes that this point of view--silent suffering--is the one the novel endorses. Her dissatisfaction also comes from the assigning of gender to this silent suffering. The Biblical passage suggests, though, that Brontë sees history as requiring transfiguration to progress; Luke 11: 13 says "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" In the world of *Shirley*, people are having trouble feeding their children. If we continue to read from Luke 11, we may obtain a fuller idea of Brontë's concept of history. Verse 17 says "Every kingdom divided against itself falleth." If the alienation and lack of sympathy between people persists, the whole will collapse; certainly this is a fear in *Coriolanus*'s political milieu (discussed below), as well as during Chartist and Luddite agitations. Verses 29-31 say:

This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall be no sign given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the

utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. (King James Version)

There is a rather cryptic connection here between the story of Jonah and that of the Queen of Sheba, chronicled in 1 Kings 10: 1-10 and 2 Chronicles 9: 1-12. Jonah was a prophet who tried to evade God's charge to prophesy to the Ninevites of their imminent destruction; his silence caused catastrophes to befall him until he relented. Nineveh listened to Jonah and fasted, and God spared them, making Jonah angry. The story of Jonah is about speaking out, and about reconciliation. The Queen of Sheba goes to Solomon "to prove him with hard questions"; but she finds "she communed with him all that was in her heart" (2 Chronicles 9: 1). The Queen, hearing of Solomon's wisdom, comes to test him, but finds he listens and responds appropriately to all she says; this too, is a fable about speaking out and the possibility of reconciliation through communication. Therefore, Christ seems to be saying that the population of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba asked, listened, and believed in God, and that, therefore, they are in a position to condemn the present generation, which is evil and darkened and not listening to the greater arbiter of reconciliation, himself.

Jonah and the Queen of Sheba give us two models for how we are to understand the challenges of female history to male history. Both Jonah and the Queen are outsiders who come to challenge the prevailing culture. Jonah does not want the opportunity to speak; he fears the responsibility. Like Caroline, he fears exposure of difference will cause his own annihilation. The Queen of Sheba, by contrast, comes to challenge the wisdom of Solomon, and leaves his court very impressed. Like Shirley, the Queen is a visitor from the South who is not afraid to attack the ideologies of her neighbors (for Shirley--Donne, Yorke, Robert Moore--Louis?)

Feminist critics like Gezari tend to dislike *Shirley* because the reconciliation of the male and female spheres is symbolized by the marriages of Shirley and Louis, Caroline and Robert. Like the prophet Jonah, some extreme proponents of the female sphere want to see the cruel and alienating male sphere punished; however, "every kingdom divided against itself falleth." This prophecy applies just as much to the male sphere of *Shirley* as to the female sphere. The face of history itself, therefore, must be radically transfigured, men and women, the powerful and the powerless seeing themselves in one another, rather than struggling for that power. If Jonah keeps running in silence, or the Queen stays in her distant country (an evocation of the feminine sphere?) no progress, no increase in understanding, occurs.

4) Robert and Caroline Reading *Coriolanus*

There is an interesting correlation here to *Coriolanus*, the reading of which figures in a scene between Caroline and Robert in Volume I. The interaction the two have over interpreting the play shows Caroline's inability to have an effect on the masculine sphere early in the novel. Caroline tries to convince Robert, as Volumnia tries to convince her son, Coriolanus, that the people ought to be conciliated, that not adjusting his language to forestall their misunderstanding is self-destructive. Caroline especially tries to make Robert see similarity where he is inclined to see difference. Caroline, in her handling of Martin, follows her own advice, though Robert has ignored her. Coriolanus' failure to follow his mother's advice leads to his banishment and collaboration with Rome's enemies under Aufidius. Robert Moore, who perceives Shirley as an utterly different creature (not just different as a woman, but different from other women as well), is "banished" metaphorically; physically he leaves the novel to pursue and prosecute the men responsible for the attack on his mill. Moore,

like Coriolanus, is a collaborator--seemingly with the "establishment." As economically struggling individual, Robert has some aura of the Romantic about him. Leagued with the Tory Helstone and others who believe in the maintenance, rather than the improvement, of the world, Robert becomes an uninteresting Philistine to the reader. The attempted assassination of Moore, then, corresponds to the more tragic death of Coriolanus, who is killed by the enraged Aufidius because of the reconciliation he effects between the Volscies and Rome. *Shirley*'s crazed Michael Hartley is not so much a representative of the workers, then, as he is of the Romantic ideals Robert Moore has made into egotistical opportunisms. The fact that Hartley is not prosecuted, and that Moore bears him no ill will, shows that Moore identifies with Hartley, to some degree.

Robert's reconciliation with Caroline comes partly due to self-abnegation over his treatment of Shirley, but is additionally aided by the fact that Caroline gives him words to describe the feeling of disempowerment; he feels similarity to her instead of difference. Likewise, the women of Rome bring about Coriolanus' reconciliation with his native country. That this results in Coriolanus' eventual assassination would seem to suggest that female intervention in history is destructive, reconciliation perhaps less than desirable. Such an interpretation, however, views the death of Coriolanus as the tragedy of the individual. The interests of a utilitarian "greatest good for the greatest number" is represented by the women of Rome, who insist upon the submergence of personal enmities in a concern for the future history of Coriolanus' reputation and the populace on both sides. Such an appeal can succeed, however, not by appealing to utilitarian concerns, but personal ones--by an appeal to feelings from which Coriolanus wants to shield himself, rather than an appeal to his reason.

Robert Moore tries to be a utilitarian, to see only difference between himself and those who surround him (he sees his workers as recalcitrant machines and wives as alliances for financial improvement), and to see his own feelings as superfluous to practical concerns. Caroline and Shirley re-introduce him to the idea of Romantic subjectivity, and we begin to see how women and men read Romanticism differently. For men in the contentious world of patriarchal history, the further development of an already-permissible ego can result in the illusion that a sense of community with others is unimportant. For women, the discovery that an ego exists liberates and allows for a sense of similarity with men, from whom they have been sharply differentiated culturally.

Coriolanus shows the complicity women have in creating this differentiation: Volumnia boasts of her willingness for her son to go to the wars, stifling her fear that he will be killed. Only when her son has turned upon Rome, the people, and his own family does she realize what she has created. Volumnia asserts that the peace between Rome and the Volscies is the only noble course Coriolanus can take. If we view the realm of male history as one of contention and struggle, a peace is a distinctly feminine solution. The charges by Eagleton and Gezari that Shirley insufficiently shows struggle suggest that they find the reconciliations created by Brontë unfair or unconvincing. The "peace" agreed to by Shirley and Caroline in their marriages leaves them not very powerful. The struggles between the workers and Robert Moore fade out as a cause of conflict once his business prospers and he decides to practice a more *noblesse oblige* attitude. Williams calls Robert's plans for a recreation of the Hollow into "a sort of America," beckoning to the disadvantaged, an overly simplistic return of Robert's heroic status (Williams 78). Louis and Robert, in their marriages, like Coriolanus in his authoring the peace, gain power and a dominion. Achieving this "kingship" through

the female medium of reconciliation creates vulnerability for Robert, Louis, and Coriolanus, but also, conciliation appeases the "enemy," and creates a greater possible power-base. If both women and men may participate in this larger "peaceful" enterprise, both have gained. Gezari calls the social solution to the social problems of *Shirley* "social maternalism" (Gezari 92). She seems to find the philosophy mirroring the paternalistic, which it does, but with important differences. Seeing similarities between oneself and others, between their aspirations and those of the self, allows egotism to be a sort of collective endeavor. This manifestation of Romanticism as a collective dream oddly resembles the Victorian collective ideology of progress and jingoistic imperialism, but Romanticism depends upon sympathy and the Victorian progress myth upon unthinking practicality.

Coriolanus shows how Robert and Caroline read differently; because the event takes place in Volume I, Robert's way prevails. The rest of the novel strengthens the role of Caroline's reading, which only can be accepted when Robert-the-reader has changed. Gezari parallels the scene just discussed, in which Caroline also recites Chénier's "Le Jeune Captive" to a scene in "The First Bluestocking" (III, 4). In that chapter, Louis asks Shirley to recite a French assignment she had learned as a punishment years before--"Le Cheval Dompté." Gezari uses Margaret Homans' argument from *Bearing the Word* to show that the women are being asked to be transmitters of the men's language (French), rather than creators of the "Word" (Gezari 119). Gezari, seeing the scenes as parallel but the novel as regressive, rather than progressive, has not gone far enough. Yes, Caroline's attempt to teach Robert "her" language with *Coriolanus* fails, but Shirley claims to have forgotten the essays Louis forced her to memorize, whereas Louis faithfully recites Shirley's own "La Première Femme

Savante?". It would appear that by the end of the book, matriarchal history can be seen and acknowledged by the patriarchal sphere.

5) Caroline Reading Towards Subjectivity

Other than her reading of *Coriolanus*, we see occasions where Caroline reads apparently to identify with a victim, and others where she is inspired to self-assertion. In her most marble moments of II, 11, "Two Lives," Caroline sits "still as a garden statue," reading, and finding "tasteless" the books formerly belonging to Mary Cave Helstone. One of these less-than-engaging books is called *Letters of Mrs. Rowe*, which Oxford editor Herbert Rosengarten identifies as *Friendship in Death: in twenty letters from the Dead to the Living* (1728) (Oxford Shirley 670). Who constitutes the dead and who the living in the context of Caroline's reading here appears somewhat questionable. Mary Cave Helstone is a dangerously acceptable norm to the male world, and Caroline at this point appears to be fast becoming her.

Unconsciously, Caroline subscribes to the myths which structure the Victorian heroine's role and identity. Caroline's silence and passivity begin to ease in the presence of Shirley through parts of Volume II. In Chapter 12, "An Evening Out," Caroline overtly challenges Mrs. Yorke, paralleling Shirley's silent refutation of Mr. Yorke in Chapter 10. Whether Caroline's discussion of the Radcliffe novel, *The Italian* with Rose Yorke just before this is the inspiration remains unclear, but Mrs. Yorke does jibingly call Caroline a "novel-heroine" (II, 12, 402). Because Mrs. Yorke is a woman, Caroline need not maintain the enigmatic but disturbingly meaning silence that Shirley does with Mr. Yorke. Mrs. Yorke, in an effort to feel a superior understanding, attacks Caroline as lacking common-sense and practicality--for, in short, being sentimental. Mrs. Yorke, a housewife and thus a socially marginalized person, finds

someone weaker (so she thinks) to subject to her own definitions and objectification. Mrs. Yorke is asserting the patriarchal right of creating a stereotype, of putting Caroline in a frozen-frame tableau of her own making, thus allowing herself a sense of control. Significantly, perhaps, Mrs. Yorke is the woman Hiram Yorke got to marry instead of Mary Cave, and may be considered a kind of opposite.

Mary Cave has been erased by her extreme passivity, and, like Caroline, may be subjected to the re-writing of her story, but she cannot be accused of actively buying into the creation and perpetuation of patriarchal history, as Mrs. Yorke can. However, neither can Mary Cave deny anything. Caroline, though, can and does challenge Mrs. Yorke's view, which is that she is aware of her marginalization as a woman and considers it hopeless; therefore, the only empowerment possible is to show others how their failure to conform to the realities of this second-class status makes them not so good as she. Caroline apparently senses that she must fight back or remain defined by Mrs. Yorke, so she refutes the charges, one by one.

If we return briefly to Radcliffe's *The Italian*, we see Rose, in comparing life in Italy to life in England, suggests that Caroline's own life is "a long, slow death . . . in Briarfield Rectory" (399). Caroline's life contrasts with that of "the wanderer" that Rose describes because, of course, Caroline's actions are very restricted. Caroline says "I fear a wanderer's life, for me at least, would end like that tale you are reading,--in disappointment, vanity, and vexation of spirit" (400). It would seem that Caroline here identifies with the book's villain, Schedoni, or that she imperfectly remembers the plot. *The Italian* chronicles the journey of Ellena and Vivaldi through a labyrinth of political intrigue and family secrets. In some ways, it is about a woman finding a place in history. This woman also rediscovers her mother at the end of the book, and is married to the hero. Therefore, in chiding Rose for her fantasy, perhaps

Caroline feels a bit stung, since her prospects of becoming a heroine, rather than a villain, at this point look bleak to her. Rose's next words win the debate: "Better to try all things and find all empty, than to leave your life a blank. To do this is to commit the sin of him who buried his talent in a napkin--despicable sluggard!" (400). Rose goes on to win an argument with her mother about women and "talents." Mrs. Yorke makes her attack upon Caroline in the wake of her own daughter's uncompromising logic. Rose has the self-concept Caroline needs.

Though Caroline stands up for herself, she still lacks the impetus to act, and the recognition of a self, since she continually identifies with the victimized, vilified or marginalized characters, as we see in her preference for poems like "Le Jeune Captive" and "The Castaway." In Volume III, Chapter 1, "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" we find Caroline wasting away. William Cowper wrote a poem of this title, though the reference to Psalm 23 or *Pilgrim's Progress* would seem far more obvious. That Caroline's strongest identification seems to be with Cowper's "The Castaway" seems significant because of his proto-Romanticism. Cowper is an appropriate model for Caroline because in "The Castaway" he expresses the alienation Caroline is not permitted to articulate, but he is not a particularly active Romantic individualist. In fact, Cowper is an "angel in the house," but he's also male, sympathizes with the oppressed ("Pity for Poor Africans," "The Negro's Complaint"), criticizes society for its desertion of domestic virtues (*The Task*), and subscribes to the dissenting religion of which Matthewson Helstone is the antithesis (reflected in various hymns of Cowper's composition). In identifying with Cowper, Caroline lodges a submerged protest against her own silencing. We have seen Caroline identify with the drowning victim of "The Castaway," and Shirley associates Caroline with the "stricken deer"

image which Cecil has made famous as a metaphor for Cowper's own identity.³ This image from the *The Task* oddly compounds a hunting metaphor: "I was a stricken deer, that left the herd/Long since: with many an arrow deep-infixt/My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew/To seek a tranquil death in distant shades . . ." and a Biblical set of allusions that suggest the deer of Psalm 42 "As pants the hart for cooling streams/When heated in the chase/So longs my soul for thee O Lord/And thy refreshing grace"(Hymn setting of the Psalm, Tate & Brady) and the spear in Christ's side on the cross. As in "The Castaway" the individual's earthly sufferings are horrible, but also somehow heroic, even as one embodies the ebbing away of all hope--the feeling of forsaken feeling of the speaker in "The Castaway," who feels an ultimate isolation from God and man, mirroring the isolation felt by the Christ who cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 16: 34). The saving of the "stricken deer" by Christ in a later passage of *The Task* is more than the autobiographical episode that Vincent Newey suggests--not only does the set of circumstances explain Cowper's own mental sufferings and make them necessary, but they also ally the poet's sufferings with those of Christ himself.

For Caroline, this whole line of thinking justifies her sufferings and misery. Like Cowper's, though, her sufferings and perception of isolation serve to alienate her further from the social interactions that might help her define some other identity. Shirley jokingly says to Caroline, "Wonderfully self-supported you look, you solitude-seeking, wounded deer. Are you afraid Shirley will worry you, if she discovers that you are hurt and that you bleed?" (II, 3, 261). Instead of casting herself in the role of Christ, Shirley puts herself in the place of the hunters, tracking

³Cecil wrote a biography of Cowper called *The Stricken Deer*.

down the "wounded deer." Like the model of maternal history, the Christ-model is a closed system and eradicates the necessity for participation in a contentious world. While Caroline may see herself as victimized and marginalized like Christ, however, a fuller conception of this association would bridge the patriarchal and matriarchal worlds: since Christ actually took actions, the measure of Caroline's achievement of egotism is, then, to become the healer of wounded deer, rather than the deer itself. When she eventually goes to see the wounded Robert Moore, we can perceive that the change has occurred.

Lacking the vision of Shirley, is Caroline's association with Cowper valuable in her quest to have an ego? Upon the surface, apparently not; we find Caroline seeing herself as victim--prisoner, potential old maid, drowning soul. Cowper is important, though, because in his work the victim is clearly one step in the process of becoming Christ-like. Like other aspects of *Shirley*, religion has the bifurcated potential to help expand or limit the individual. The Whitsuntide events featured in Volume II show the women and children walking behind the vicar, processing to the site of the school feast and facing off against a mob of dissenter/Luddites. The women, following their contentious leader, Mr. Helstone, prevail, but such scenes provide fuel for Gezari's and Mary Taylor's position, that the women have allied themselves with the powerful and are in conflict with the working class, with whom they ought to feel identification. A conversation between Shirley, Caroline, William Farren, and Joe Scott follows. In this conversation, the women challenge the men on women's roles in politics, history and religion (it is doubly ironic that the chapter title refers to the "low persons" introduced, all of whom function in the chapter as literary critics/readers; the low status of women is paralleled here to the low status of the working class). William Farren presents the cause of the disenfranchised workers, and tries to point out the

complicity of Shirley and Caroline with Moore. Caroline responds, "If folks *do* hate him, it is to their disgrace, not his" (II, 7, 325). This is certainly the self-effacing love of Christianity. We should perhaps note Caroline's bias, though. When Joe Scott tries to tell Caroline "women is to take their husbands' opinion, both in politics and religion" (II, 7, 329), she and Shirley both object, with a kind of revolutionary Romantic ardor. Caroline suggests the literal need not be true: Paul's words may be mistranslated, and were, at any rate, directed to other women at another time (II, 7, 329). For once, Caroline subscribes to the idea of a changing world, rather than to one of stasis.

Caroline becomes forceful when she sees men and women as similar, rather than different: if men can also be victims, then women may also be strong. The patriarchal religion has impressed itself on Caroline, though, so we see her siding with Moore against her own personal convictions as a Christian (such as we see in the "Coriolanus" chapter.) If self-denial is the quintessential Christian attribute, then women are the best Christians. Women's natural allies, the dissenters or the Luddites, other marginalized persons, do not gracefully accept the nobility of self-abnegation. Therefore, women help support the religious structure that devalues their contributions. Shirley's image of an admirable mother-Eve claims for women the same historic status as men derive from Genesis; however, the religion everyone is taught fosters the position that Joe Scott quotes from I Timothy: "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man; but to be in silence. For Adam was the first formed, then Eve" (II, 7, 329). Ironically, we have men proclaiming the importance of a narrative history, rather than a tableau, here--Adam first, then Eve. By asserting that the narrative is eternal--women must always be second, a kind of tableau has been created, a tableau

echoing the silence and stasis of women in many of Volume I's scenes, as well as in history.

6) Shirley Writing a Woman's History

Their admiration for Cowper's "The Castaway" links Shirley to Caroline, yet whereas Caroline likes the poem's content, Shirley makes more of the poem from a literary perspective--she seems objective about it in a way Caroline cannot be. This difference is important because we have seen Caroline almost *living in* the poems she memorizes, identifying so strongly with the captive or the drowning speaker that she would appear to stop being herself. When she and Robert discuss "Le Jeune Captive," she says "When I meet with *real* poetry, I cannot rest till I have learned it by heart, and so made it partly mine" (I, 6, 95). Caroline memorizes the words in order to voice the emotions that she dare not give voice to on her own; she appropriates for the purpose of circumventing the unladylike need to have a voice. Recalling Shirley's singing that her Sympson relatives find so disturbing (III, 8, 544-5), we notice she manages to have her own style, to be heard as a distinctive voice, even when singing a song written by the amateurish Sir Philip Nunnely. Even though we have few examples of Shirley-the-artist, clearly she has secondary imagination, while Caroline does not. Shirley sees an inherent value in women that Caroline must learn. Romantic subjectivity requires an objectivity towards all that is not self (like Cowper's poem); since Caroline is an ego-vacuum, all sorts of other ideas creep in where that ego ought to be. The difference between the two women allows Shirley to be a critic, a "legislator of mankind," whereas Caroline finds herself continually legislated by others.

Shirley's most obvious critical posture comes when she criticizes Milton's depiction of Eve (II, 7, 319-21). Shirley charges Milton with misogyny--failing to

know or understand women, he assumed them all to be like his cook. To counter Milton's women, Shirley refers to her own interpretation of classical mythology, by which she considers all the Titans children of Eve, because Gaea and Eve both embody the female sphere (320). Shirley refuses the conventional reading that sees Eve as inferior to Adam. In Shirley's imagination, Eve is associated with Nature, which all through the book has been connected to the feminine sphere. Shirley's most important lesson, though, is that of "La première femme savante?" Contrary to Gezari's belief, Shirley is the teacher of Louis, here, and not the other way around. Generally, readers seem to have found Louis unworthy of the magnificent Shirley. Why is it better that Shirley marry Louis than remain an independent woman? Williams points out that in the final chapter, when the marriages are announced, we learn that "Cave" is a family name of Shirley's, and thus she may be related to the mysterious, inscrutable Mary Cave--or as Williams suggests, "the marble angel onto which male fantasy is projected" (Williams 76). As has been suggested, while women should not pattern their *lives* upon the *dead and changeless* Mary Cave, the inscrutability of her *life* suggests hidden possibilities that possibly mirror Shirley's defiant and independent thinking. By having interest in a woman's *life* and *thought*, rather than in ideal/dead women, Louis Moore proves his worth, memorizing Shirley's French essay, "La Première Femme Savante?" which is her articulation of female history. Because Shirley sets this history in "the dawn of time," Gezari sees it as reinforcing the main theme of the novel: "*Shirley* is committed to the restoration of an earlier state of things" (Gezari 123). It may appear that Brontë has deserted the idea of "liberal equality" for women that has been expressed through Caroline throughout the book, and substituted for it a kind of "essentialism" with Shirley. By including both Shirley and

Caroline in the story, however, perhaps Brontë takes both positions: in spite of fundamental differences, women and men should still be considered equal.

Shirley's mystic side is the feminine quality to which the male sphere remains deaf, yet is a quality which individualizes and makes her different from Caroline as well. Also, the mystic private world allows her to construct the individual self as male Romantics might, while the self she constructs is strictly her own. In creating the Eva-story, Shirley incorporates all women into the possibility of writing a self into the history of the human race. As a "legislator" she takes the poet's position of speaking for others while speaking for herself. Louis actually sees value in this history, and in Shirley's oddities. Like Mary Cave, Shirley remains silent about herself; mostly we see her through the puzzled eyes of the other characters--she runs the risk of having her history written for her. Shirley, however, has made this impossible by authoring a history of her own. Since "La Première Femme Savante?" is a French exercise, though, Louis Moore is the only reader of it.

The Genesis-time of the story's setting brings to mind Shirley's disgust with Milton's rendering of Eve in II, 7. The landscape described, "A forest valley, with rocky sides and brown profundity of shade, formed by tree crowding on tree descends deep before me" (III, 4, 486) echoes that of Nunnwood dell, a landscape associated specifically in *Shirley* with women (site of a ruined nunnery) (Cosslett 123 and Gezari 117). The child who is parentless and "fed sometimes, but often forgotten" reminds us of Caroline, whose father would go off, forgetting to feed her; seeing a similar figure in Shirley's story we can see the younger Shirley as the same kind of vulnerable, undervalued orphan that Caroline is. Also, this would appear to connect the passage to various hunger motifs throughout the book. The heroine of the essay,

though, relies on the beneficent wilderness to survive. Eva's isolation and subjectivity seem total:

Of all things herself seemed to herself the centre,--a small forgotten atom of life, a spark of soul, emitted inadvertent from the great creative source, and now burning unmarked to waste in the heart of a black hollow. She asked, was she thus to burn out and perish, her living doing no good, never seen, never heeded,-- a star in an else starless firmament,--which nor shepherd, nor wanderer, nor sage, nor priest, tracked as a guide, or read as a prophecy? (III, 4, 487)

The kind of subjectivity depicted here would apparently be positive, since the girl, Eva, can see herself as a center, but the isolation she notes and feels dissatisfied with echoes that of Caroline in Volume I: "Is there not a terrible hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given away to others, for want of something of your own to bestow on it? I suspect there is. Does virtue lie in abnegation of the self? I do not believe it" (I, 10, 174). Both speak of the dissatisfactions of a life lived alone; however, whereas Caroline cannot see herself as a subject, so she sees her only possibility of acting in society as the selfless charity Miss Mann practices, she does not see that a marriage could similarly give her away to others. Shirley's Eva sees herself as a subject in an empty universe, which is her ineffectuality if she remains in the isolated female sphere; Caroline does not even recognize such a sphere in Volume I-- she sees old maids as disenfranchised satellites of the unquestionably powerful male world.

Eva's subjectivity, her sense of central self, costs her participation in another realm. Shirley's participation in "works" and business in Volume II seem designed to give her this sense of purpose that Caroline completely lacks. Caroline finds the

activities of Miss Mann and Miss Ainley empty because she sees their activities as self-effacing, and her self has already been much-effaced. Becoming a subject in the masculine sphere is what *Shirley* is all about, and to gain this, the comforting isolation of the feminine sphere must be relinquished. We have seen, in Shirley's conversation with Mr. Yorke, how silence may speak; suddenly we find it speaking to Shirley's heroine: "she heard as if Silence spoke. There was no language, no word, only a tone" (III, 4, 488). Silence can be women's speech, and Eve-Night representative of the female world, but these become distorted when defined in terms of the male sphere. The chief Goddess of Shirley's story introduces Eva to her bridegroom, "Dayspring from on high," "Genius," in a reversal of the Adam-Eve story of *Paradise Lost* and Genesis.

The Biblical language of spiritual possession persists in this passage. The Seraph, Genius, is seen as antithetical to the "Father of Lies," fighting to preserve Humanity, represented by Eva, through Time, and bringing her to Immortality. If Shirley's tale seems to fall into a patriarchal vein once the Bridegroom is introduced, it is because the masculine principle she here presents is not "men," but divine--Christ. "Eva" stands not just for women, but "daughter of man," all humanity. Shirley's story recreates Biblical history (in this case, that of the New Testament), as female-centered, just as her redefining of Milton's Eve claims the Old Testament.

The title of the essay, however, remains problematic. Certainly the Volume III, 4, chapter-title, "The First Blue-stockings" creates entirely different connotations from "La Première Femme Savante?" Also, in what way is Eva a "femme savante"? Did Brontë mean the title to have a question mark, or is that a question mark intended for Louis' interrogative statement, the only time the essay's title is given? Eva appears to be quite the opposite of a femme savante--a creature of instinct, rather than one of

learning. It appears that Shirley has redefined the very term "femme savante": it almost might mean female philosopher, but the learning and philosophy of Eva have entirely different bases from what we might now classify as such. Whatever learning and philosophy Eva has, Shirley's fable makes it quite clear that these qualities are absolutely vital to the world at large.⁴

If the question mark in the title was intended, it may clarify the gap of understanding between what Shirley means by "femme savante" and what a literal reader would expect from such a term. If the first woman was a scholar-philosopher of some learning and philosophy before such were defined by men, then does not every woman have the same potential? Shirley remarks, once the essay has been recited by Louis, "I never could correct that composition. . . . Your censor-pencil scored it with condemnatory lines, whose significance I could not fathom" (III, 4, 490). She seems demurely to suggest that the essay has errors in the French, but she also asserts her failure to read the "censor-pencil" which in scoring "condemnatory lines" seems to have challenged the content, rather than the French, or perhaps Shirley's appropriation and personalization of French (Louis' language) and the patriarchal history of the Bible. Shirley's essay asserts the right to form her own language, story, and history out of whatever she has been given, and Louis Moore honors that by memorizing the essay (presumably complete with erroneous French). Shirley's Romantic individualism is dependent upon her ability to re-write selectively what has been given to her--as Louis speaks, Shirley draws "leaves, fragments of pillars, broken crosses, on the margin of the book," in essence disfiguring the masculine world

⁴The Oxford *Shirley* mentions the Molière play of this name, but it hardly seems relevant in Brontë's context. The play is a comedy about the pretentious erudition of both men and women who want others to see them as learned.

(it is Louis' book). The leaves imply female nature swallowing up pillars (representing masculine public history?) and crosses (patriarchal religion?) in a reverse of the fate of the Hollow at the end of the book, in which the landscape is disfigured by new mills and cottages. Also, the Nunnwood dell comes to mind: there, nature is reclaiming the female world of the Abbey--a solipsistic devouring of the feminine by the feminine, reflecting the dark hollow of oblivion that Eva fears.

In the introduction to the book *Romanticism and Feminism*, Anne K. Mellor asserts that "six male poets have been heralded because they endorsed a concept of self as a power that gains control and gives significance to nature, troped in their writings as female" (Mellor 8). I believe that Charlotte Brontë attempts to claim and reshape this item of literary history to allow women a sense of self without the hegemonic notion of power so common to the patriarchal history we have discussed. Significantly, the works of Brontë's juvenilia, upon which she collaborated closely with her brother Branwell, are influenced strongly by Romantic authors, particularly Scott and Byron, but Charlotte Brontë usually leaves the "public history"--wars, politics, lawsuits--to Branwell Brontë's pen, and concerns herself with the private lives of her characters (Alexander 149). In the juvenilia, Brontë never uses a female narrator, and yet her first-person posturings give a very strong impression that the author has a self-conscious authority (Bock 16). Since *Shirley*'s text seems so concerned with female silence, does it then follow that women can only gain power, self, and voice while masquerading as men? Brontë's other books belie such a notion. We must correct Mellor's notion of Romanticism slightly (I agree with her estimation of the cause of canonization for the "six male poets," but it does not explain the power Brontë herself discovers in it). From the women's perspective in *Shirley*, nature does not have to be triumphed over to obtain a sense of self; this notion comes specifically from male

characters. Robert Moore ravages the natural beauties of the countryside in his progressive scheme for mill-expansion and worker-housing: "I will pour the waters of Pactolus through the valley of Briarfield" (III, 14, 644). Robert Moore has eighteenth-century sensibilities; he thinks the man-made must be better than the impractical wildness of nature. King Midas washed off his scorned gold in the waters of Pactolus, but in this reading the role of the gold dust is rather that of sludge. While it may say something good about Robert's new interest in his fellow-humans, there is something sordid in this philanthropic Philistinism: it is hegemonic; it does take over the female landscape, "enclosing Nunnely Common" (III, 14, 644).

Louis Moore, proposing his possible emigration to America, says: ". . . glorious as Nature is, and deeply as I worship her with the solid powers of a solid heart, I would rather behold her through the soft human eyes of a loved and lovely wife, than through the wild orbs of the highest goddess of Olympus" (III, 13, 615). Worshipping nature, Louis imagines colonizing the eyes of a Wife--colonizing the wife's vision of nature? Certainly his own language about Shirley suggests so: "I saw she [Shirley] had felt insurrection, and was waking to empire. . . ." (III, 13, 614). The very trope Mellor is talking about comes out in Louis' speech about liberty:

I have such a thirst for freedom--such a deep thirst to know her and
call her mine--such a day-desire and night-longing to win her and
possess her, I will not refuse to cross the Atlantic for her sake: her
will I follow deep into virgin woods. . . . I am certain Liberty will await
me, sitting under a pine. . . . (III, 13, 614)

Louis is trying to make Shirley jealous of freedom/liberty--associated with the American landscape, and troped as female; ironically, Shirley is literally an embodiment of the freedom/liberty Louis wants to possess. His trick works--by the

end of the novel he possesses both liberty (which equals Shirley) and liberty (which equals being master of Fieldhead). On the other hand, this trope suggests that Shirley is a stable being that can be "possessed" by Louis once he marries her, but as an epitome of freedom, she cannot be so constricted.

Nature does not necessarily have to be triumphed over to provide an individual with a sense of self--consider Shelley's "Mont Blanc," for instance. In "Mont Blanc," nature is obviously present in the form of the mountain, but is the mountain the source of imagination--does the content of the mind come from the springs within the mountain or from the ice melting off it? The poem makes sources ambiguous in perhaps a beneficial way. Male history takes the sources of its power for granted. The novel questions the validity of these sources--the Old Testament, the New Testament, "natural law," the English economy, Romanticism. In writing a new version of history that does not necessarily start with men, Shirley challenges the "sacred springs." In the novel, women associate themselves with nature; in Shirley's case, nature is the source of the feminine. The mystery of nature suggests that it may not be questioned in quite the same way as those sources Shirley has challenged. It also suggests that the identification/ domination of the feminine that is associated with male Romantics may be an attempt to reduce/assimilate that which threatens their power. If women can identify themselves with a female sphere that is part of nature, they do not need the hegemonic self-equals-power concept. A sense of self through Romantic egotism allows women to define themselves in terms of nature and in similarity to men; lacking the sense that their oppression is good, right, or natural, women need not aspire to hegemony to feel power arising from a sense of self. Women are similar to men in their ability to find egotism or a sense of self-consciousness by defining the natural world in terms of self. Women differ in that culture has denied them the right to speak

of this self, but this deprivation has also allowed women to avoid the cultural norm that says having a self means having to dominate.

How does all of this affect the implied reader and that reader's interpretation of history? The reader is constantly challenged by the narrator, who is convinced this reader wants romance, not reality, pleasure, rather than painful self-query. Because of the emphasis, in *Shirley*, upon the female/private sphere, the reader must eventually come to be more interested in Shirley and Caroline than the historical events swirling about them. As in *The Wanderer*, marriage seems a conventional romance-plot device by which women's participation (or lack thereof) is stopped. At the beginning of *Shirley*, though, Brontë has told us this is a realistic tale; generally, critics find she has failed to follow-through on this grim promise. Marriage is *not* merely a romance ending; the reality of women historically is that they frequently marry: does this ending mean that their historical/social/human identities must be extinguished? *Shirley* demonstrates that women with a sense of self and the world-context they cope with are at a disadvantage, but not an insurmountable one. The enemy to women taking part in the world of men are the ideals and definitions of what a woman should be, and the subsequent feeling of otherness, alienation, and powerlessness faced because of a failure to embody these ideals.

In Scott, an individual tends to reflect historical conflicts as internal oppositions. In *Waverley*, the hero's ambivalence ends with his adoption by a dominant group. Order is restored by annihilation of the challenging "other" (Highlanders). Generally in English history, this is thought of as progress. In the case of women or workers in *Shirley*, annihilation of the other is unproductive (Mary Cave), but so is isolation in the female sphere, protecting its foreignness from the eyes of possible hegemonists like Louis and Robert Moore. Women and workers, like Scott's Highlanders, have

insufficient resources to annihilate the patriarchal world; unlike the Highlanders, it may not be in their best interest to overthrow it. A more satirical analog to the world of *Shirley* is that of Gaskell's *Cranford*, where women get along quite nicely without men. Without the businessmen of Drumble, the nearest industrial town, though, Cranford could not exist. While women and workers in *Shirley* do not have to fear annihilation like the populace of a colonized nation, they do need to fear slavery. Charlotte Brontë, then, wants us to see the incorporation of women into the "works" and history-making endeavors of the male sphere as a positive change, as progress. The fact that people know, later, who Shirley and Caroline are--that they have not become legends--means that history has not eaten them alive. *Shirley* is Brontë's most realistic account of how women may become co-authors of history.

CHAPTER 4

THE THRONELESS QUEEN: SYLVIA'S LOVERS AND THE SYNTHESIS OF INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AIMS

In all of her work, Elizabeth Gaskell, like most Victorian women authors, is rarely seen as grappling with ideas. Her early novels, such as *Mary Barton* (1848), uncovered the "social problem" of the lives of industrial workers, appealing to the readers' moral sense. The social problem novel sought to generate an informed sympathy for those who are different, and perhaps motivate action that would change the lives of such disadvantaged people. Such a moral position could vindicate a woman's right to speak, in violation of the Victorian norm of women's silence. Christine Krueger, writing in 1992, identifies Gaskell as a "preaching" figure, an "evangelist of reconciliation" (159), but sees *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) as her transition to a more defiant attitude. Joseph Kestner sees *Sylvia's Lovers* as a high point for the "female social novel" (194), interpreting the historical novel as considering contemporary social problems, despite its past setting--in other words, a "reflective" historical novel. Angus Easson, by contrast, suggests the tragic dimension of *Sylvia's Lovers'* approach to history sets the book apart not only from Gaskell's other works, but from other historical novels (177). The first critical group over-emphasizes Gaskell's didacticism and the omnipresence of social problem as her theme; the second, those who see the novel as "tragic," such as Easson, Andrew Sanders and Felicia Bonaparte, over-emphasize the formal differences of *Sylvia's Lovers* from Gaskell's earlier novels. I contend that, formally, *Sylvia's Lovers* is not so very different from Gaskell's other works; however, the approach to the reader used by Gaskell in creating a historical

novel differs markedly from the sermonic approach which I agree characterizes her early works.

Christine Krueger's approach to Gaskell as evangelist is interesting and her ideas form a point of departure for my own. In her book *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse*, Krueger concerns herself with how women speak in a world where women are expected to be silent. One role women were allowed to perform by Gaskell's time was "evangelist of reconciliation," which is the appellation applied by Krueger to Gaskell in the chapter-title, though Krueger says Gaskell rejects this role, "speaking on behalf of women as a class which had been wronged" (159). In *Sylvia's Lovers*, Krueger argues, Gaskell treats "an apocalyptic period in British history" for the purpose of re-writing the evangelist of reconciliation's message into feminist apocalypse (228). Krueger claims the evangelist's message inevitably concludes with the call to repent before the end of the world; such a message, she argues, "demands women's reconciliation to their subordination as a prerequisite for human salvation" (228). Krueger sees Gaskell as opposing this interpretation of history because for a woman to preach meant "consenting to this patriarchal representation of human events" (228-9). Instead, Krueger says, Gaskell substitutes "a history without reconciliation, an apocalypse without marriage [of Christ and the church]" (229). Krueger's conception of "apocalypse" here appears to be utter destruction and rage, as opposed to the reconciliation and repentance model of evangelists. If Gaskell has stopped preaching, it is because she has decided to appeal to readers' minds, in a philosophical sense, rather than to their emotions.

The difference between philosophizing and preaching is that promoting thought, rather than emotion (pathos, indignation, horror, shock) upon the part of the

reader/auditor is the primary goal. Additionally, the preacher usually has a set program of action, whereas the philosopher may open a series of questions, the answers to which must be argued through, or left to the resolution of the listener. It seems to me that Gaskell arrives at a point similar to that of Hegel, and a point we have already noted with regard to Burney and Brontë: existing systems are too radically exclusive; therefore, the imagination of some kind of inclusive synthesis must be encouraged. The synthesis, however, cannot be imposed upon people from the outside by a preacher, as a religious precept is: it must be chosen as a mindset by an individual desirous of change. By presenting us with Monkshaven--a world that desires change only if it does not result in inclusive syntheses, but rather contentious splinterings, Gaskell is able to depict a history of which the reader at once feels himself/herself a product. At the same time, the reader has a role in choosing how this history is to be interpreted and understood for the future. While few Victorians were familiar with Hegel's work until after Gaskell's death, and I have no evidence at all that she knew anything about him, most Victorians were aware of some German philosophy through Carlyle. Gaskell reaches a conclusion that bears interesting similarities to Hegel's. Striving for some kind of inclusive synthesis as Hegel did was a distinctly idealist aim in the midst of a very mechanistic and practical time. Gaskell, in *Sylvia's Lovers*, concerns herself with encouraging readers to reimagine institutional structures and mindsets that create a subject/object alienation in order to reach the ultimately desired end of history, the apocalyptic Heaven-on-Earth, or barrierless society, which we may see as having a parallel with Hegel's idea of a synthesized realm of Absolute Spirit. Both Gaskell and Hegel create syntheses out of merging the material with the ideal. In both, the desired end is a mental-emotional, rather than a physical, apocalypse.

If we accept Hegel's view that complete freedom must be gained through a reconciliation of nature/material/objective and history/ideal/subjective by the use of consciousness, then we may see Gaskell's project in *Sylvia's Lovers* as assisting humanity in recognizing its own participation in the continuance of alienation that impedes history's process of synthesis. *Sylvia's Lovers* is the story of how peoples' lives, ambitions and desires are tainted by the institutions around them into a yearning for stability and stasis, rather than the combination of growth and loss that is history's synthesis. Hegel's *Phenomenology* suggests that there are three important moments on the way to this state. These three states appear successively as 1) consciousness of individuals, such as the self-consciousness and discovery of reason discussed in the two previous chapters, 2) spirit (of society), and 3) religion/philosophy; these stages create political, and hence historical, development (*PM* 134-45). *Sylvia's Lovers'* characters, having a primary allegiance to the social norms that construct their identities, rather than self-consciousness, represent a historical milieu in the throes of disunity and alienation; this society pursues progress towards economic and social freedoms, but as the ideas of "liberté, égalité, and fraternité" sound quietly in the background, the idea that anything valuable can be preserved to reconcile History and Nature (Hegel's terms), slips away. In *Sylvia's Lovers*, people are not free--personal desire and the laws of the state oppose one another. Utopian ideals that outline a human "heaven on earth," such as those of the French Revolution initially appealed to Hegel (Gillespie 183-4), but since they resulted in the very un-ideal terror, Hegel seems to have felt compelled to create his own more perfectly ideal analysis of history in the rational presentation he makes in the *Philosophy of History* lectures. Gaskell, also, seems fascinated by the vision of failing utopianism, and we may see *Sylvia's Lovers*, like Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, as an attempt to analyze the past and its conflicts,

and suggest the necessary syntheses that can effect complete unity and community of the human race.

Sylvia's Lovers relates how in the late 1790's a vivacious farm-girl, Sylvia, attracts both her shop-keeping cousin Philip Hepburn and the bold whaler Charley Kinraid as suitors. From the start, Sylvia prefers the more extroverted Charley, and eventually becomes engaged to him, much to the chagrin of her cousin, who exhibits an obsession with her that is supported by Sylvia's mother. Because of his promotion to a partner in his business, Philip convinces himself that Sylvia will favor his suit. When Philip witnesses Kinraid's illegal impressment into the British navy, he is charged by Kinraid to tell Sylvia, but, convinced that Charley is a n'er-do-well and that with Charley presumed dead he stands a chance of success with Sylvia, Philip says nothing. The rest of the town, when Charley fails to report to his whaling vessel, assume he has fallen in the sea and drowned. Sylvia's father, having barely avoided impressment himself in the 1770's, becomes inflamed when the press-gangs ring the fire bell to lure able-bodied men into their clutches. Mr. Robson leads a riot against the gang, which results in a charge of treason and his eventual execution. Sylvia, pressured financially and burdened with her mother's increasing feeble-mindedness, reluctantly agrees to marry Philip.

The marriage of Sylvia and Philip is strained from the outset by his lie and her indifference to his obsessive feelings. Mrs. Robson dies, and suddenly, Charley returns to Monkshaven, having distinguished himself in the service, and Philip's deceit is exposed. Charley blames Sylvia for faithlessness, and she, in turn, blames Philip, whom she swears she will never treat like a husband again. Charley leaves, marrying someone else, we later discover. Philip runs away in shame, renaming himself Stephen Freeman and enlisting in the Marines. Sylvia plans her finances with Philip's

former employer, who suggests that Alice Rose and her daughter, Hester, come live with Sylvia and her baby. Hester Rose, a co-worker of Philip's, has always loved him, but he remains oblivious to this throughout the book. Hester and Sylvia have become friends earlier, when Philip had asked Hester to help Sylvia and her mother attend Mr. Robson's trial. Alice Rose, a narrow Calvinistic Christian, teaches Sylvia to read, an objective never accomplished by Philip. Meanwhile, Philip saves Charley's life during the Siege of Acre, but since Philip has become known as Stephen, Charley is unable to express his gratitude once he has recovered. Ultimately, Charley sends his wife to visit Sylvia and tell her of Philip's heroics. Sylvia is amazed that the formerly pacifist Philip has become a Marine.

Philip returns from the war after having become disfigured in an explosion. For awhile he is a "Bedesman of St. Sepulchre," a post for the poor and disabled. He is inspired by a fable about Guy of Warwick, however, to return to Monkshaven in his new identity and live where he can watch Sylvia and his daughter from afar, hoping for the happy fable ending of Sir Guy, who is forgiven by his wife and lives happily. While Sylvia has several contacts with the unrecognized Philip (on one occasion, she encourages his landlady to turn him off because no one knows who he is; on another, Sylvia's daughter gives Philip a cake with a coin inside because Sylvia feels sorry for him), it is Hester who discovers Philip's presence in Monkshaven. Before she can tell Sylvia what she hopes will be welcome news, Sylvia receives word that her daughter has been saved from drowning by the unknown man, who proves to be Philip. The two are reconciled as Philip lies on his deathbed, and Hester arrives, tragically, after he is dead.

Once the main tale has been told, the narrator draws back to a contemporary setting and tells us various versions of the just-narrated story. A legend valorizes Philip and

vilifies Sylvia as the wife who "lived in hard-hearted plenty nearby"(502). A Monkshaven resident reportedly has told a recent visitor that Sylvia is long-dead, her daughter gone to live, married, in the New World, and that Hester Rose is by far the best-remembered character in the story, because Hester has built an almshouse and inscribed it, "in Memory of P.H." None of these versions is as comprehensive as the one the reader has just completed.

Within the parameters of the novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, the past loses its stable identity as mysterious and unremembered or completely knowable/rationally comprehensible based upon one source. Instead, Gaskell creates a time-continuum for us--the ancient past of the Monkshaven monastery, the 1790's time of the story's action, the lifetimes of Hester and Sylvia after the story ends, and "now," when Monkshaven has become a resort. What has begun as a historic "tableau" in chapter 1 is fully seen by the reader as a narrative by the final chapter. If we parallel the process of idol-making in *Sylvia's Lovers* to the tableau-creating tendency of many historical depictions discussed in Chapter 2 (when a picture of "absolute truth" is desired, rather than a messy, inapproximate and possibly illogical narrative of events), we find that in idol-worship, the worshipped individual's personality is what is discounted and ignored; in tableau-making, it is the relativity and insolidity of time itself. Therefore, both acts take living, moving reality, and try to translate that reality into something concrete, reliable and memorable. Gaskell encourages the relinquishment of this mentality by doing it in her narrative itself, giving us an exemplum in the throneless queen, and by critiquing the idol-creating process, in Monkshaven, of institutions and individuals. Therefore, the discussion will begin with the throneless queen as organizing trope 1) The Throneless Queen and Her Setting, then move to events within Sylvia and Philip's stories in 2) Idolizing Individual Aims,

connect these tendencies to society in 3) Idolizing Institutional Aims, and finally we will recontextualize the story in terms of Gaskell's own times in 4) Abdicating the Throne of Subjectivity.

1) The Throneless Queen and Her Setting

Chapter 1 of *Sylvia's Lovers* begins with a description of Monkshaven, the location of the action. Other than its geography, we first learn about Monkshaven that it is "not unknown in the history of England, and traditions of its having been the landing-place of a throneless queen were current in the town" (1). While this reference is frequently mentioned in support of the well-documented idea that Monkshaven is modeled upon the actual Yorkshire town of Whitby, Gaskell's purpose in choosing these particular traits of the town upon which to focus the reader's attention has not.¹ The narrator goes on to describe the ruined castle and monastery on the sea-cliffs, the town and its people, the surrounding country, the trade, and finally the effects of the American Revolution. The mention of later military conflicts leads to a discussion of the press-gang, setting up Chapter 2, in which the returning whalers become targets of the press-gang.

Most major sources of conflict and interest in the novel are in place by the end of this chapter. The first chapter refers to all the institutions (government, military, marriage) that Krueger sees as the focus of Gaskell's critique of patriarchy. The historical structuring of the chapter draws attention to the time-frame in which these institutions have developed. Perhaps because of the parallels between Whitby and Gaskell's Monkshaven, the mention of the "throneless queen" has been treated as a

¹For cross-references about Gaskell's use of Whitby as model for Monkshaven, see Sharps, 377.

minor historical fact, or "a touch of romance" (Easson 166), rather than as an important thematic element.

In a reader-response analysis, we must treat Gaskell's choice of setting as a conscious and important one. Whitby was the site of a 7th Century abbey (also mentioned on page 1), run by Hild, discoverer of Caedmon, the first recorded English poet. Whitby was also the location of the Synod of Whitby in 664. The Synod of Whitby designated the Roman calendar for Easter and other religious holidays as official, as opposed to the Celtic calculations (Williams, Smyth & Kirby 118). The discrepancy had caused confusion in the court of Queen Eanfled and King Oswy, since she followed the Roman, he the Celtic, method (Williams, Smyth & Kirby 118). While the Synod of Whitby may not sound very important today, it did decide a question that allowed one of the many courts during the Anglo-Saxon period to achieve a united front on religious matters. Later, Queen Eanfled of Northumbria came and took refuge in the abbey, serving as co-abbess with her daughter, Aeffled, who eventually was the head abbess.

Like *Shirley's* Nunnwood, Whitby's abbey is a picturesque ruin, indicative of the failing fortunes of a female-centered world. In *Sylvia's Lovers*, though, we know that *Monkshaven* derives its name from a religious community, and that the town has a ruined *monastery*, indicating some failure of the male world, but also the collapse of religious community generally. Whitby's abbey apparently had quarters for both monks and nuns (Sawyer 237). When Hild established the Whitby religious community, Bede reports that it sought "justice, devotion, and chastity, but above all things to continue in peace and charity. After the example of the primitive church, no one was rich, no one was in need, for they had all things in common and none had any private property" (Venerable Bede, trans. & quoted in Sawyer 238). The community thus described seems very far from the developing mercantilism of late eighteenth-

century Monkshaven, and the Christian ideals followed remote from French Revolutionary ideas of individualism that Monkshaven seemingly wants and does not want at the same time. The various religious attitudes depicted in the book--Sylvia's uninformed Anglicanism, Alice Rose's confident Quaker/Calvinism, and William Coulson's committed Quakerism--show no signs of becoming reconciled to one another, as the Synod of Whitby healed the rift between two sets of religious traditions.²

A major theme of *Sylvia's Lovers* is idol-making: the subject creates a stable object of worship in terms of which to define a stable self. We can see such a process perpetuated by humans in order to stake out permanent space and forestall time. Therefore, when Gaskell begins to describe Monkshaven and its location by the sea as a site where a "throneless queen" took refuge, she presents the ideal version of an alternative towards which the novel and all history may attempt to move. The "throneless queen" represents the unfixed place, the Subject with no need for subjects, the individual whose name is oxymoron and whose role epitomizes the synthesis of opposites that ironically do not annihilate identity, but ultimately change it. Obviously, the abbey to which the queen retreated is not identical with an apocalyptic "new heaven and new earth," nor is the separation of genders in the religious retreat entirely ideal. However, the throneless queen is someone who has retreated from or crossed the boundaries and definitions of empire to devote herself to the spiritual, while remaining a queen. A queen, in some ways an idol on a pedestal, (the novel is written during the reign of Victoria, recall), held up by adoring subjects as a representative of a collective national identity, has rather questionable subjectivity in her own right, since her role appears to be of greater importance than her own

²For discussions of the Gaskells and Unitarianism, see Lansbury, Wheeler, Webb, and Kirby. For other religions in *Sylvia's Lovers*, see Sanders, "Varieties of Religious Experience in *Sylvia's Lovers*."

personal sense of identity (see Yeats' *The Player Queen*, for example). Thus, a queen becomes a representative for all women who lack movement and self-definition in society. A "throneless queen," however, is quite different. If at first such a designation might indicate lack of power, and thus pitiability, we must consider the negation from a non-traditional perspective, as we have done with the Wanderer's namelessness and Mary Cave's voicelessness. The Wanderer, having no name, is cipher in society, but is also not fixed or defined by a name or connections; she is thus more free as the Wanderer than as Lady Juliet Granville. Only as Lady Juliet Granville can the heroine be accepted by society, but at the same time her historical participation ends. Mary Cave, having a life closed to investigation, simply continues the role she played in life--a tragic or pathetic figure in other people's narratives. While others write their own stories where Mary Cave's ought to be, her own *real* story remains beyond the access of others to change. The throneless queen parallels the Wanderer in her movement, and thus freedom, and Mary Cave in inability to tell her own story, and thus complete isolation in the past.

The "throneless queen" of *Sylvia's Lovers* is both nameless and voiceless; while speculations identify her as possibly Mary, Queen of Scots, and Eanfled, widow of King Oswy of Northumbria, my reading depends more upon the latter (Sanders, Oxford *Sylvia's Lovers* note 516), though the ambiguity created by the vagueness of the queen's identity contributes to my idea as well. The Medieval root to *Sylvia's Lovers* is central to comprehending Gaskell's philosophizing about history in the work because it is the past which is "present" to Sylvia and her neighbors. Eanfled, the throneless queen, is an important part of the history of Whitby, the actual model for Monkshaven. While we cannot precisely know Gaskell's knowledge of early British history, books of rather sophisticated historiography, such as Sharon Turner's *History of the Anglo-*

Saxons, were available in 1839, when Gaskell had just finished her education.³ Also, Gaskell had traveled to Whitby as a tourist and probably would have been well aware of local landmarks and their importance to residents. The throneless queen stands for all the women in the book--Sylvia, Bell, Hester--who stand outside the legitimized, "official" parameters of history. The throneless queen is defined semantically by a lack or loss, but her continuing appellation as queen would seem to evaporate the importance of such a lack. In fact, since Eanfled is later known not only as a queen, but a saint, it seems that the lack of definite place and duty allows her to accumulate identity (Williams, Smythe, Kirby 118). The freedom from institutionalization and stasis would appear to be the trope that the "throneless queen" image could provide to the actual women in the novel. Since Sylvia more accurately mirrors this trope, I see her, as opposed to Hester, providing a heroic and progressive historical position in the book. Since the throneless queen forms part of the historical backdrop of Monkshaven that its ill- and well-educated inhabitants both seem oblivious to, there is an additional message from Gaskell to her reader-philosophers about exactly which historical narratives are remembered, which distorted, and which erased. While the "official" history of Monkshaven makes much of Hester because she ultimately founds an almshouse and inscribes Philip's initials upon it upon it, her actions, while worthy, attempt to stop history, thus increasing alienation. Gaskell, like Hegel, advocates revolutionary syntheses or reconciliations.

Throughout *Sylvia's Lovers*, Gaskell contrasts the stability and familiarity of Monkshaven to the changing sea-scapes that Sylvia finds so refreshing. The sea's role is somewhat ambiguous, though, for while it is changeable, it is also a constant that has

³Apparently, Gaskell was aware of the Vikings, and even identified with them: "The blood of the Vikings still lingers in my veins" (Sharps 390, note 80, quoting from Chadwick's *Mrs. Gaskell: Haunts, Homes, and Stories*, London, 1914).

changed less than the "rising bathing place," as Monkshaven is described by the narrator at the end of the book (502), for "The waves come lapping up with the same ceaseless, ever-recurrent sound as that which Philip listened to in the pauses between life and death" (502). Sylvia's fascination with the sea of course bears some resemblance to the sea as tragic witness to humanity's foibles in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." Felicia Bonaparte has suggested that the sea, for Sylvia, is a demonic force representing freedom not permitted in the formal codes of Monkshaven (195); Sylvia's desire for Charley Kinraid is motivated by his occupation as whaler on the even more remote and free "Greenland seas" (Schor 162). If we review the history of coastal Monkshaven/Whitby, however, we find the Greenland seas are where the adventurous Vikings established their colonies, just as the original founders of Monkshaven/Whitby arrived upon an unknown coast of Britain. When Sylvia's daughter eventually emigrates to part of this "New World," Bonaparte sees it as a utopian end that cannot take place within the pages of *Sylvia's Lovers*, but Bonaparte's words "land of the free," suggest that women's demonic desire for freedom is finally fulfilled (Bonaparte 208). These interpretations rely upon a belief that what Sylvia desires is the freedom of men, the freedom of the sea, the freedom to explore. If we think of the desire as not just "liberty," but also "equality" and "fraternity" (or perhaps more properly, sorority/fraternity), the image of Monkshaven's ruined abbey again appears before our eyes. The sea, then, represents the changes and influx of new people and ideas by which stasis is avoided, and in the face of which time cannot be forced to stand still.

If we parallel Sylvia's love for the sea with that of early Anglo-Saxons, it would seem her fascination might reflect a longing for a more active participation in the forces of history, a situation which we have clearly seen in *Shirley*. Unlike Caroline

and Shirley, though, Sylvia never expresses any desire to be involved in the pursuits of men because these pursuits are part of the relatively "important" male sphere. Rather, Sylvia's interest in the stories of Charley Kinraid, like her long walks by the ocean, depict an impetus for equality with men in determining her own movements, whether through her imagination, or through going where she wishes.

2) Idolizing Individual Aims

Philip's Idol, one of the early titles of *Sylvia's Lovers*, points to Gaskell's most central theme in the book. Bonaparte even sees the role of protagonist shifting to Philip (202) after Sylvia has married Philip and thus accomplished what Bonaparte sees as a metaphoric suicide--casting off the desires women are not supposed to have. The main problem causing personal tragedy and distress in the novel is Philip's obsessive desire for Sylvia, who resists, in an effort to both have what she wants (to marry Charley), and remain outside Philip's restrictive sense of what she should be and how she should act. Throughout the novel, there are many of these instances in which Sylvia fails to meet the ideal which Philip has in his mind, and he exerts all his efforts to change her. One of these instances occurs in Chapter 3, when Philip suggests Sylvia purchase a more prudent-looking grey fabric for a cloak, rather than the scarlet she prefers. In Chapter 10, "The Refractory Pupil," Philip tries to teach Sylvia to read, but she grows impatient, claiming to see no value in the pursuit. Perhaps Sylvia rebels against her subordinate position as pupil. In Chapter 29, "Wedding Raiment," Philip tries to outfit Sylvia in a piece of cloth he has selected, and tries (perhaps feeling guilty about his own deceit) to shame her into feeling a more forgiving spirit towards the man responsible for her father's arrest. The house into which Sylvia moves when she marries Philip, with servants she feels uncomfortable

around, symbolizes the sacrosanct but stifling position into which Philip's love puts Sylvia.

Philip apparently needs Sylvia for defining himself because society dictates the rising entrepreneur should have the right sort of wife, and Sylvia happens to possess many qualities (vivacity, beauty, willfulness) that Philip lacks. Yet, Philip's attempts to re-make Sylvia into a reflection of his own values seems to indicate an uneasiness with the actual traits that attract him to her and an attempt to create a closed and stable system of "worship" for himself. As long as his idol does not change, time does not change anything and Philip's identity and value-system are safe. Philip, in his need to control Sylvia as object of his own self-definition, is most interested in determining both her movements and her imagination for her--thus his outburst when Sylvia confesses to having a dream about Kinraid, or when Sylvia is out walking rather than preparing his tea. Every time Sylvia does something unexpected, she threatens Philip's control over her. Philip's lack of control threatens his ability to keep his idol a firmly determined image, graven in *his own likeness*, even though his love for Sylvia, rather than Hester, reveals his own difficulty upholding this value-system. Sylvia represents what Philip ought not want; therefore, he desires to change her to defend his faith.

Hester, also, is an idol-maker, determinedly seeing Philip in *her own likeness*. This is most evident in Hester's unwillingness to accept Sylvia's rejection of Philip as having viable cause (432). While Hester's actions in Chapter 44, "First Words," trying to bring Sylvia and Philip back together through tracking down his pawned watch, seem selfless and heroic, her actions may also be seen as parallel to Philip's betrayal of Charley. Hester, believing in Philip's untainted goodness, is acting to bring Philip back ostensibly for Sylvia, who has shown no sign of desiring his return. In

fact, it is Hester Rose herself who desires his return. Instead of thinking how Sylvia might respond to Philip's return, Hester wonders how she herself will act, and then, "she sought her usual refuge in some text, some promise of Scripture, which should strengthen her faith" (489). Her recourse to sacred texts as distraction seems to indicate a vague feeling of guilt in so desiring Philip's return. As we have noted, Hester uses her money to build an almshouse, engraving Philip's initials on it and dedicating it to him.

In *Sylvia's Lovers*, ironically, it is Philip, the idol-maker, who becomes memorialized in a historical narrative that simplifies and exonerates him for some of his better character traits and in Hester Rose's almshouse for disabled veterans, which bears his initials. Of course, Philip's initials would survive on the building long after other narratives die out. What is intended for the audiences of these narratives? The story that circulates about Philip and Sylvia has no names in it, but Philip is the underdog, the sympathetic character. Why would Monkshaven want to find Philip so good, and to vilify Sylvia at his expense? Possibly, in popular estimation, Sylvia would have been a bad wife without cause since she had not been publicly engaged to Kinraid, and she had not told people how Philip had offended her. Thus, the story could be a lesson about ungrateful wives or demonic women. A less misogynistic interpretation has people identify with Philip because he was poor, needy, and sacrificed his life for his drowning child--thus, he would mirror the situation of the majority of gossips, with the addition of committing acts of heroism they would like to think of themselves as performing. Sylvia, by contrast, even before Philip left her, had become one of the wealthiest women in town, set apart by her position and Philip's higher social status. Hester's way of translating Philip into a symbol is almost a private word from her to the reader, since we know from our omniscient narrator of

her love for Philip, even though Monkshaven and he remain unaware of it. For Hester, Philip embodies all that is good and true. Hester does know Sylvia has been greatly wronged, but she never questions Philip's lack of culpability. It seems unlikely that were Hester to know the truth, her opinion of him would change. Philip, in Hester's mind, is just as divergent from the narrator's Philip as is the Sylvia of Philip's obsession with the Sylvia the narrator describes.

What purpose do these diverse historical remembrances of Philip serve? In the first situation, the people of Monkshaven do not want to blame themselves for Philip's tragic circumstances, to ask themselves whether they would have treated Philip any better than Sylvia had, if, like her, they had not recognized him. Since his self-sacrificial death makes Philip a rather Christ-like figure, Monkshaven residents do not want to see what they really did--ignore the seeming Christ-representative in their midst. Monkshaven projects its guilt, rather, onto the seemingly wealthy and thus morally suspect Sylvia. Ironically, of course, Philip's sacrifice is and is not Christ-like at the same time. While he does heroically sacrifice himself to save Bella, his greater trial occurs when he saves Kinraid during the Siege of Acre. Philip seems bent upon saving Charley in order to impress Sylvia, rather than for Kinraid's own sake. Therefore, it seems as if Philip really does not change until the very end of the book, since his every action up to the saving of Bella seems still motivated by his obsession with Sylvia. Hester's purpose, in memorializing Philip, is similarly self-serving; however, Hester does not write Philip's initials on the building just to rewrite history, but to keep his name alive in association with something good that she was inspired to do presumably because of him. Is Philip intrinsically better than Sylvia, or more deserving of memorial than she? Apparently Hester thinks so. In turn, due to her good works, Hester Rose is remembered in Monkshaven as the

constructor of this almshouse. The way history is remembered, recorded, or transmitted in each case is affected by the need to idolize, and the need for idols seems to arise from a desire for a stable center of value in a world of relativity, instability and change.

Philip only relinquishes his idolatrous attitude towards Sylvia on his deathbed, when the sea (agent of change in the novel) sounds in the background. Victorian deathbed scenes generally are accused of sentimental mawkishness, designed to appeal to a weepy but superficially involved audience. Therefore, it is hard for the modern reader to accept Philip's death as the end of a historical novel of rather complex themes. Gaskell does play to sentimentalists, but the scene is skillfully done, because our sympathy to the dying character is natural, but by no means assured. Krueger even suggests that in a feminist-apocalypse, history has deemed Philip a liability to Sylvia, and removes him: I do not find this convincing, because Sylvia's life after Philip dies does not noticeably improve (Krueger 230). If we compare the conclusion of this novel to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, however, Philip's deathbed scene, like Dimmesdale's final public confession, would seem to have more private than public importance. Philip's death redeems him to himself--Sylvia is with him again, caring as he had always hoped she would, and he is dying for a good deed that expiates his crime against Sylvia, or so he thinks, and so Sylvia even seems to say. In Dimmesdale's case, his public identity is barely affected by his impassioned confession. In Philip's, his heroic death probably improves him in public memory, though such is not his goal. In both cases, death is a triumphant moment when both men join God. The women, however, are left to cope with historical reality. If we apply Bonaparte's idea of how Gaskell depicts gender roles, "men do, women are," to *Sylvia's Lovers*, we see men can work to redeem themselves, can achieve their own salvation through "works," but

women are either good or they are not good. Women's inability to act seems to show they cannot "save" themselves: their fates appear predetermined. Monkshaven women seem particularly static because their story ends (for the reader) with Philip's death. The death of Philip makes him look much better to the sentimental reader, as Sylvia seems awed by his saintly attitude. Philip claims to have learned his lesson against treating Sylvia as an idol, but has he? In the twenty-first chapter of *Revelation*, many harsh things are said about the punishing of idolaters. I agree with Krueger that the apocalyptic view of history is important to Gaskell as a Christian, but I also think that the apocalypse suggested by Gaskell may not be as "feminist" as Krueger thinks. Simply because the women survive while Philip dies does not indicate they have triumphed (Stoneman supports this). Neither need we support Stoneman's claim, though, that because Philip dies and transcends that Gaskell has rewarded him and betrayed her female characters (158). There is arguably no "apocalypse" at the end of *Sylvia's Lovers*, since the main change that occurs is Philip's death. The references to *Revelation* in the final chapter indicate, rather, that this apocalypse is being deferred as much as possible by the imperfections of human life. Gaskell's idea of apocalypse is a universal (not feminist) transformation of human society into a Christ-centered community, emphasizing human agency in effecting this change, rather than the watching and waiting of Alice Rose. Institutions, gender roles, and personal idols get in the way of the individual, and thus societal, transformation. While Philip is the example of individual transformation as a precursor to a "new Heaven and New Earth," he is one person in a fallen society. Krueger correctly blames institutions for standing in the way of women's achieving any kind of "best self," but she fails to see the same institutions (government, the military, and marriage) disrupt men's relationship with God just as much (Krueger 229).

Another way, in addition to his untimely death, in which Philip is feminized at the end of the novel is the disfigurement he undergoes following the Siege of Acre. In Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861), the fallen-woman mother who has deserted her children to take a lover is unrecognizable after a railway accident and returns to her family as the governess, under the nose of her husband and his new wife. Like Wood's fallen woman, Philip desires to return to his home and observe his loved ones secretly. Wood seemingly puts more responsibility upon women than men for the unhappy state of affairs, and as is typical in the Victorian novel, the tainted heroine must not be redeemed on earth. God may forgive her, a saintly husband may forgive her, but society cannot. Philip is given a feminine position by this plot convention, but Gaskell changes the story by awarding Philip forgiveness. Sylvia is certainly less saint-like in the deathbed scene than Philip is, though it should be emphasized that she *does* forgive Philip. Feminist critics might fault Gaskell here for making Philip take the "fallen-woman" role, since society is less likely (as testified to by the historical memory of Monkshaven's residents) to blame him than it would have a female character like Ruth, in Gaskell's earlier novel. The situation bears some resemblance to that of Dimmesdale and Hester after the main action of *The Scarlet Letter* is finished: Dimmesdale, "disfigured" in heart (as Sylvia is in the last book of *Sylvia's Lovers* because of her unforgiving attitude towards Philip) as Hester Prynne is "disfigured" by the scarlet "A" that she wears, both learn much from their sins. Most of the townspeople, however, never appreciate the disfiguring effects of sin upon their minister, just as Monkshaven remains oblivious to Philip's lie to Sylvia. Hester Prynne and Sylvia, by contrast, are externally labeled: eventually Hester's Puritan community forgets what they had assigned the "A" for, but since Sylvia's label of "hard-hearted" wife is applied as a result of Philip's perceived saintliness, the label

persists beyond any other memory about Sylvia herself. The cultural memory of Monkshaven does seem unfair to Sylvia, but it also reflects what Gaskell is saying about how we ourselves disfigure the face of history in order to make it a firmly etched idol in our own image. By putting Philip into the role of "fallen-woman," Gaskell finds a repentant character that Victorian readers would be less likely to castigate, as well as demonstrating that men, as well as women, can abdicate the position of subject.

Patsy Stoneman expresses irritation at this "transcendent" ending of the story (156). Stoneman sees Gaskell as about to endorse a "female ethic" of community, but she finds the death of Philip Gaskell's retreat from this position. Stoneman's dissatisfaction with the symbolism at the end of the story is understandable--women and the "real" world are reduced in importance beside the "divine" transfiguration of Philip and his union or reunion with the "mother" God. And yet, why should transcendence not be the property of everyone? If we accept the idea that Philip's idol-worship reflects a definite *lack* of transcendent God in his world, then this final scene is ambiguous. Stoneman's gendering of God's love as feminine is also misleading, since Philip's thoughts wander back and forth between what he has heard of God (always referred to as "Him,") and his mother, the best example of love comparable to God's he has encountered in his life. If Philip sees God's love as like a woman's love that will somehow make him whole again, then Stoneman's idea that this is an example of men colonizing the other and incorporating it into a Romantic self would appear plausible. On the other hand, the love of Philip's mother for him seems to have been very different from his own obsessive love for Sylvia, and it is his mother who influences Philip's concept of God. In fact, this transcendent and forgiving God would appear to be the God Philip has lacked all along, a God displaced by the patriarchal Old Testament notion of the wrathful God.

Are women, though, being denied transcendence, and if so, why? We do not see Sylvia, Hester, or Bella dying, and yet in Victorian novels pure heroines and untarnished children were the most likely to enact deathbed scenes. The "good" characters in sentimental novels would die to create the greatest sense of pathos in the reader, and yet, children and pure heroines--Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Paul in *Dombey and Son*, Beth in *Little Women*--would be the least tragic, because their purity would make them "suited" for Heaven. Gaskell only once killed a heroine in a major novel, Ruth in *Ruth*, for which modern readers have much criticized her because Ruth, the fallen woman, can be seen as having to die to redeem herself--which is exactly the way Philip's death may be read. Philip seems to exhibit elements of both heroism and self-indulgence--since he saves Bella, resulting in his mortal injuries; he has sacrificed himself for another, but his heroism in saving Charley had been motivated by what Sylvia would want. At the same time, his deathbed repentance and reconciliation with Sylvia are more to regain the reader's sympathy and Sylvia's forgiveness for Philip, which Gaskell will not permit him to die without. If the reader and Sylvia were allowed to continue to find Philip too "irreconcilable" with their own morals, Gaskell would not be promoting the kind of Christian thought that she wished.

Philip's tragedy is not his death, but that his whole life he is unable to live comfortably in society. Competing economically in order to possess his "idol" Sylvia, his whole life has been formed out of alienations--conforming to society's definition of uprightness and success, and standing apart from its temptations, which come from associating with other people. Even alone, though, one can commit the sin of idolatry. When Sylvia casts him off, Philip's life becomes that of every Victorian in the era of "loss of faith." Philip loses his idol, but he eventually finds a new faith when Bella gives him the cake with the coin in it. Bella's act of charity exhibits reverence for God

and Christian principles through action, rather than stasis. Philip, though, is still conservative in his struggle with time, because he keeps the coin as a memento, rather than spending it: it is only when he spends his life that he "saves" it--the essential Christian paradox.

After Philip's death, our narrator quotes a verse from the twenty-first (penultimate) chapter of Revelation: "And so it will be until 'there shall be no more sea' " (502). This appears to refer to the sea--that it will remain unchanged until the end of time, or until the apocalyptic vision that forms the bulk of Revelation occurs. Even our stability is a qualified stability, for the real "end" of history is this end discussed in Revelation. The very mention of apocalypse at the end of a historical novel seems unusually suggestive. The real question here remains--what is an apocalyptic view of history for? The passage from Revelation occurs after a few sentences describing how the appearance of Monkshaven has changed, except for the sea. The reference is immediately followed by the words, "But the memory of man fades away" (502). The "memory of man" is being contrasted to the sea, and with the scene of Philip's death which we have just witnessed. In giving us the time-continuum mentioned earlier, Gaskell manages to show the lives of individuals as easily forgotten and seemingly irrelevant to those who come after, or all too easily translated into a tableau-like, one-dimensional myth or legend. The apocalyptic moment of revelation re-illuminates the importance of all these lives, and the idea of a retrospective backward look. From the individual's perspective in the historical continuum, though, Gaskell is looking backward to tell us to look forward; the purpose of living is not to stop time, but to take advantage of its transforming power (Morgan *ST* 115). In Chapter 44, Hester goes to the watchmaker with her *broken watch*, where she sees Philip's *pawned watch*. Watches and frozen sense of time forgotten, she begins to ask

questions about the pawner of the watch, which she recognizes as Philip's, to which Darley, the repairman, replies: "'a could ha' wished as you'd niver seen t'watch. It's poor, thankless work thinking too much on one o' God's creatures" (488). Hester's desire to repair her broken watch indicates her conservative attitude regarding the progress towards this apocalyptic moment. Philip pawns his watch because time is no longer valuable to him--he no longer needs to save, or conserve it. Philip's watch bears his father's initials, a memento of the past and a miniature monument to it, but worthless when food is the greater necessity.

Sylvia's alliance with the sea, Philip's death from the sea, and Bella's emigration across the sea, ally them eventually with the endless (until the apocalypse) process of time and the restless movement of the sea towards a relentlessly approaching future. The "memory of man" does indeed pass away, unless something physical survives, such as Hester's monument to Philip to serve as a trace to the past, but the monument exists as an attempt to waylay time's progress, to create stasis.

The last chapter's title, "Saved and Lost," most obviously refers to the saving of Bella and the subsequent loss of Philip. Earlier, though, Gaskell has echoed *In Memoriam*, with Chapter 20's title, "Loved and Lost." Chapter 20 concerns speculation about the fate of Charley Kinraid, who has been "loved and lost" by Sylvia. In Tennyson's poem, the loss of the idolized Hallam is being lamented: similarly, Sylvia is so changed by the loss of Charley that Philip's own idol is in danger of vanishing. In "Saved and Lost," Philip's peace of mind is saved. Sylvia saves her soul by forgiving Philip. Hester's idolization of Philip is preserved; Philip's soul is saved by giving up Sylvia as idol and focusing upon God. "Saved and Lost" also gives the impression of the inevitable series of progresses and setbacks suggested by Hegel as characterizing historical progress.

By implication, then, does Sylvia "save" her life only to lose it? What Gaskell's book encourages is the throwing away of ego, abdication of self, in order to achieve the Christian world. Sylvia survives, but in a way, as Bonaparte describes, all Gaskell's women characters "lose" their lives in marriage--killing ego is an essential requirement of being an adult woman in Victorian society. The problem with society is that women are killing ego not to be better Christians, or even because they want to be better people, but because their society and its idolized institutions, such as marriage, insist upon it. It is one thing to choose to become a better person: it is quite another to have no choice.

3) Idolized Institutions

Christine Krueger suggests that Gaskell places responsibility for women's position in society "squarely on men and their institutions--government, the military, marriage" (229). Krueger claims the intent of *Sylvia's Lovers* is "to inspire feminist prophecy, a history without reconciliations, an apocalypse without marriage" (229). The "reconciliations" to which Krueger refers are those compromises to which patriarchal religion expects women to conform--being meliorists, rather than defiant voices of criticism. If the "last day" is truly approaching, Krueger argues, there is no need (according to the patriarchy) for any existing systems to change. Krueger suggests that Gaskell seeks an apocalypse to shatter the control which patriarchal institutions have over women's lives (230). Felicia Bonaparte suggests, by contrast, that once Sylvia succumbs to her fate, Gaskell transfers her sympathies to Philip, thus inhibiting a strongly feminist reading (Bonaparte 201).⁴ Krueger sees Gaskell as

⁴Easson sees Sylvia as defiant to history to the end (177). Eagleton sees Gaskell as non-apocalyptic, saying that her narrator endorses an "official," law-abiding interpretation of the events described (disputed by Stoneman), but that her novel questions (unconsciously, apparently) the "official" (patriarchal-normative) (Eagleton 26-7).

struggling with the patriarchy's willingness for her to speak, which insists that she be a reformer (in Krueger's definition, a reformer is a patriarchally-endorsed woman, who may speak as long as she does not suggest radical separatism of women), not a radical--men insist women be an "angel in the house," providing moral guidance (Krueger 229). Stoneman finds Gaskell recommending a solution to the patriarchal "revenge ethic," to be found in "an alternate female ethic based upon the value of human life" (156). The polemical debate about Gaskell's philosophic position ought to be familiar to us now, in the wake of similar conflicts over Burney and Brontë. Krueger correctly identifies the institutions of society as entrapments for Sylvia; however, it is important to realize that these same institutions, with the additions of business, and possibly reading itself, not only entrap Sylvia, but also ruin Philip's life. For this reason, it is impossible for me to accept Krueger's conclusion; Stoneman seems to have the right idea, but ultimately, she finds Gaskell's novel disappointing because the "female ethic" vanishes and is replaced by Philip's tragic death scene. Gaskell has posed a problem without suggesting that a rebalancing of gender power relations will do any good (in contrast to Brontë): women are, to some degree, complicit in the continuance of the social institutions mentioned by Krueger. Therefore, the institutions perhaps are being criticized for another reason--they have become the false idols of Monkshaven society, and have distracted everyone from the real pursuit of humanity--focusing upon God and eternity. The irony is, of course, that the institutions of society, designed to procure order and stability for the increased smooth operation of human existence, do too good a job, and encourage worship of the institution (or in an Enlightenment manner, order itself), rather than of any transcendent deity.

How marriage is an idolized institution should be readily seen from the problems Philip and Sylvia have with theirs; the set of societal norms surrounding marriage are most obvious in the marriage of Molly Corney, which, based upon position and finances, rather than love, turns out to be a reasonably good business arrangement. The only alternative to marriage for women presented in the novel is Hester Rose's employment. The institution of marriage is represented most vividly in the text by the physical object--"wedding raiment," the title of Chapter XXIX. "Wedding Raiment" refers rather ambiguously to both the dove-colored cloth which Philip wants to see Sylvia wear at their wedding, and the mourning clothes in which Sylvia actually appears for the ceremony. By not accepting the traditional attire, Sylvia is trying to subvert some of the institution's norms, as well as Philip's own worship, which clothes her in a gown of his choosing, symbolizing the way he tries to fit Sylvia into the confines of his ideal all through the novel. Sylvia's only defense against Philip's control of her is reference to another societal norm--mourning etiquette, for another man, her father. Christine Krueger suggests that the apocalypse hinted at in *Sylvia's Lovers'* final pages is one without marriage. Certainly, Biblical depictions of heaven indicate there will be no more marriage there, but the twenty-first chapter of Revelation speaks of the ideal marriage between Christ and Jerusalem, bride of the Lamb. This marriage mirrors that of nuns to Christ in Catholicism. If Gaskell is suggesting a future ideal, based upon awareness of the past, as I have hypothesized, then surely the final event mentioned--Bella's marriage and emigration to America--is a significant and hopeful sign of union and movement (as opposed to the stasis seen as a goal by Philip and others in the book). Additionally, the removal of Bella to America has a mirror-like parallel to the arrival of the "throneless queen" upon the shores of Monkshaven (1), as though history is once again a dynamic process, in which women's

freedom is important. Though we have no proof that Bella, as a woman, is more free in America, we do know that the Abolition movement in Gaskell's own time had prompted a new push for the parallel rights of women in the United States.

The institution of the military only affects women in *Sylvia's Lovers* when their husbands leave to join it, or involuntarily get impressed. In Chapter 1 of *Sylvia's Lovers*, where so many other themes are introduced, Gaskell shows the initial Monkshaven attitude towards the military:

There was just another motive in the minds of some provident parents of many daughters. The captains and lieutenants employed on this service were mostly agreeable bachelors, brought up to a genteel profession, at least they were very pleasant visitors . . . who knew what might come of it? (9)

From this passage, we can clearly see that Monkshaven residents do not start out with antipathy towards the military, but rather see it in terms of the marriage market. In a reversal of the usual rich, eligible young lady (such as Elinor, Juliet, or Shirley) on display to contract an alliance for the sake of family, monetary, or as with Marie Antoinette, diplomatic reasons, we have Monkshaven parents eyeing the eligible bachelors as potential keys to good connections. Just as men cannot conceive of women's assigned role within the institution of marriage, women have no opportunity to imagine men's roles in the institution of the military, which serves as a sign for all the occupations men can pursue while women do not--such as whaling. In the military, though, men stand in the same relation to the state as women do to them in marriage: they put their bodies at the disposal of others. In a way, it sounds like a barbaric human sacrifice. Eventually, the institution of the military falls out of favor with Monkshaven's residents because the press-gangs have removed the element of

choice in serving one's country. Monkshaven reacts more violently to the abridgment of male liberty, as is evidenced by their riot against the press-gang, than to the abridgment of female liberty.

Though Krueger sees the government as the third institution criticized in the novel, I believe business is the more important institution in the context of *Sylvia's Lovers*. While Hester initially seems at a disadvantage to Philip and William in the shop, business allows both women and men to compete for success. Though we may see "business" in Monkshaven as primarily controlled by the patriarchal Foster brothers, it is important to remember that Mrs. Robson controls much family finance through her marketing of farm goods, and that Hester is eventually awarded a share in the Foster business. Also, the Foster brothers provide a dowry for Philip and Sylvia's daughter, Bella. Therefore, business and economics allow women a wider sphere in which they may have more of a chance to compete with men. Yet, business can also be a false idol and a corrupting goal, as we see in Molly Corney's choice of husband based upon his finances. The throneless queen model would suggest that abdication of these possible privileges would be most advantageous to all, but it would appear to be impossible to disconnect oneself totally from money. In the abbey, though, we recall that all was held in common: there would have been no competition for individual wealth.

Two other throneless queens inhabit the "historical space" of *Sylvia's Lovers*: Cymbeline's daughter, Imogen, and Marie Antoinette. These two women, one a character in a play where the idolized institutions appear ready to cause a catastrophe that is averted, the other a tragic figure from history, illustrate the dangers of idolized institutions. Gaskell quotes from two songs out of the play, *Cymbeline*: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" is misquoted in Chapter 6, "The Sailor's Funeral," and "Hark, hark!

the lark" is quoted in Chapter 34, "The Reckless Recruit." Not only does *Cymbeline* take place in Britain's ancient history, but a major theme in the play is the disharmony that King Cymbeline creates in his kingdom by banishing his daughter's actual husband in an attempt to force her to marry his son-in-law by a second marriage, the despicable Cloten. The king's sons have been stolen away by his former friend, since banished, Belarius. Also, the king enters into a rebellion against Rome by not paying his required tribute. As in *Sylvia's Lovers*, man's attempt to achieve power and control over history through marriage, the military, and government results in broken families, "honor" through violence, and order through repression. The song "Hark, hark! the lark," is ironic in the context of *Cymbeline* as a light romantic ditty sung in the midst of weighty state problems. The song serves as a device Cloten tries in wooing Imogen. The song addresses a female auditor, who is requested to "arise" with the lark and the marigolds that obviously stand as parallels to her. Ironically, Cloten's boorish speech surrounding these lines clearly shows his attitude towards wooing a lady as a matter of form only. To him, Imogen is no more than a marigold or a lark, except she feels inconvenient contempt for him. Sylvia's two lovers are not such polar opposites as Imogen's husband and Cloten, but the external, institutional pressures upon the two are obviously similar. When he chooses what he intends to be her wedding raiment, Philip equates the greyish colored cloth he selects with a dove-like image of Sylvia, in contrast with what we know are her avowed preferences for bright colors (the red cloak, early in the novel), and black only once her father has been executed. The dove image links Philip's perception of Sylvia to Cloten's larks and marigolds, though Cloten is playing the game of courtly language, and is in no danger of actually worshipping Imogen.

Ironically, Gaskell makes this reference to *Cymbeline* in the chapter when Philip runs away from Monkshaven to become a "Reckless recruit." Philip ignores the larks and other natural wonders of the present in his desire now not to stop time, but to stop participating in life altogether. Like Posthumous Leonatus in *Cymbeline*, Philip wants to throw his life away in battle because he has wronged his wife. At the end of *Cymbeline*, Posthumous Leonatus also is forgiven and King Cymbeline, though he has defeated his Roman enemies, decides to pay his tribute to Ceasar anyway, and achieve peace. *Cymbeline* is a romance, while *Sylvia's Lovers* is a tragedy. The parallel between the two is not perfect, but it is possible that Gaskell's references indicate this play and its themes were on her mind when she composed *Sylvia's Lovers*. Cymbeline, at the end of the play, calls for sacrifices to be made to the gods. Cymbeline's wife, the only person in the play who valued power above all else, and Clotel, her son, end up dead, whereas those willing to "lose" their lives for principles are saved. The last chapter in *Sylvia's Lovers*, is entitled "Saved and Lost," in which Philip saves Bella and dies, but since Philip's life as idolater has ended, he can be "saved" in a more important, spiritual way.

The spiritual deadness encouraged by idolatry also is the context for Gaskell's other reference to *Cymbeline*. The song "Fear no more" is sung by Imogen's two brothers over the body of the disguised Imogen herself, when they think she is dead. The song emphasizes how all "come to dust," no matter what they were in life, particularly that "lovers" and "golden lads and girls" come to the same end. In Gaskell's novel, the phrase appears in the chapter about the funeral of a young sailor who has died trying to evade the press-gang upon his return from Greenland, but oddly, the actors in the sentence who "fear no more the heat o' the sun, or the coming winter's rages" are not young people, but older people enjoying the autumn weather and living in the present,

"weaning themselves away from the earth, which probably many may never see dressed in her summer glory again" (63). The minister's sermon on the text, "In the midst of life we are in death" seemingly goes along with the passage from *Cymbeline*, but the narrator tells us the minister, like everyone else in Monkshaven, is aware of the false idol without feeling free to denounce it: "But again the discord between the laws of man and the laws of Christ stood before him; and he gave up the attempt to do more than he was doing, as beyond his power" (Gaskell 67).

It would appear that not only is the minister's flock touched by death in life, but that perhaps it is spiritually dead already. When we compare the minister's dilemma to the death and life motif in *Cymbeline*, however, we find the perceived death of Imogen unleashes some of the hidden or "dead" impulses in her brothers to behave like the princes they are. Similarly, Monkshaven residents are receptive to Daniel Robson's call for rebellion when the press-gang again tries to take advantage of their community. Is Gaskell, then, calling for a revolution? Critics seem divided about this, since Daniel is convicted of treason and executed--the kind of sentence due Imogen's brothers for killing Clotel. In *Cymbeline*, mercy prevails because the killers of Clotel, are indeed, the king's lost sons. The English state in *Sylvia's Lovers*, like the bad parent-image in *Shirley*, will not forgive or claim its children as its own. Cymbeline says to Imogen after the revelation of his sons' identities: "O Imogen,/Thou hast lost by this a kingdom," emphasizing the "throneless" aspect of her position, to which Imogen answers, "No, my lord;/I have got two worlds by 't" (*Cymbeline* V, v, 372-4). Imogen's "two worlds" are not immediately identifiable; in fact, the statement, like the "throneless queen" of *Sylvia's Lovers*, is charged with ambiguity. Perhaps Imogen means the worlds of her two brothers, perhaps heaven and earth, perhaps present and future, or perhaps all this and more. In any event, the lost throne

Imogen values not at all by comparison to what she has gained in the recovery of her brothers, husband, father's affection, and life.

Because of the post-French Revolutionary setting, another throneless queen who is a tragic, rather than triumphant, shadow in the text is Marie Antoinette. Confined by the same institutions which restrict the women in *Sylvia's Lovers*, Marie Antionette is notorious in history not only for losing a throne, but her head. Gaskell probably would have been familiar with Edmund Burke's attack on Richard Price's pro-Revolutionary pamphlet, in which a major reason to suspect revolutionaries is their shameful treatment of Marie Antoinette.⁵ Burke is particularly upset because the revolutionaries treat Marie Antoinette as a non-human figure, rather than a lady. Burke apparently does not realize that being a lady, is, in the face of institutional pressures, rather similar to being a non-human figure. In Burke's account, he recalls meeting Marie Antoinette, who struck him as "decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in--glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and splendor and joy" (Burke 342). Burke's language is idol-creating, but this same person-as-object is what made the revolutionaries not see Marie Antoinette as a human like themselves, but as a representative or symbol of her class. As married to a king, and figurehead of government, Marie Antoinette symbolizes women's complicity with the institutions which give them existence (roles to play), but also create their tragedies (these roles are dictated by others). The reason for the French Revolution's collapse may be considered a very narrow application of the ideals it espoused--Marie Antoinette chose her role as little as French peasants did theirs, but they can extend no

⁵Rance finds parallels between Paine's *Rights of Man*, Burke's *Reflections* and the political rhetoric in *Sylvia's Lovers*, though he does not connect the texts specifically to Gaskell (137-154), a task I also have been unable to perform. The catalogue of Gaskell books sold, described by Wheeler in *Notes and Queries*, is simply not detailed enough.

sympathy to her because she has been identified as "other," and as a symbol of monarchy, a threat to the "égalité" of the revolutionaries.

4) Abdicating the Throne of Subjectivity

The fact that the novel begins with an epigram from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and ends with Philip's death and a quote from Revelation, followed by various versions of historical events, would seem to underscore my point about idolatry and forestalling time's progress. The stanza of *In Memoriam* from which Gaskell quotes is section LVI, "O for thy voice to soothe and bless!/What hope of answer, or redress?/Behind the veil, behind the veil." The missing first line of the stanza, "O life as futile, then, as frail!" contains some words of negative connotation that Gaskell deliberately chooses not to echo. In Tennyson's poem, this stanza occurs prior to the half-way mark of the 131 sections, and is known for its consideration of the scientific challenges to faith that Tennyson remarks upon in 55-56 (Hill's notes to Norton *Tennyson's Poetry* 147). Gaskell's selection of this poem for the headnote is as important as her choice of Whitby for the setting, for while Whitby encapsulates the idea of religious community, harmony, and fostering of artistic endeavors in England's past, *In Memoriam* was certainly the document of Gaskell's own times that struggles most explicitly with the conflict over where history, progress or the world might be going without Christianity. On one level, Tennyson in *In Memoriam* is like Philip, idolizing a human being. Since Tennyson, like Sylvia and Hester, is the survivor, he also is in their position. The complete title of Tennyson's poem, "In Memoriam A. H. H." brings to mind the words Hester has inscribed upon her almshouse: "This building is erected in memory of P.H." Like the almshouse, we may see the whole of *In Memoriam* as a monument to an idolized man.

In the poem, Hallam becomes, for the poet, instead of a reason for questioning God, reason, and the universe, a kind of intermediary connecting the poet to God, or the type of Christ that Philip would appear to be at the end of Gaskell's novel. Additionally, Tennyson speaks for his entire generation, whose faith has become shaken by new scientific theories in geology, biology and astronomy. Section 56 questions how God's ("mother" Nature's) creation can be good when historical evidence shows that prehistoric creatures annihilated one another in their struggles to survive; Hill's notes suggest that Tennyson answers this perplexing query in section 118, where he says that he hopes man can work to purge his more animalistic elements. Philip and Hallam, unlike Christ, cannot promise eternal life or the bestowing of grace, but ultimately Tennyson finds the best incentive for belief in the desire for a reunion in the afterlife with his friend, a desire which we might also attribute to Sylvia and Hester. Philip and Hallam have an advantage (to their mortal admirers) over Christ in that they have been real living persons, part of the individual's own "history," and need not be imagined in the abstract. They repeat Christ's incarnation by allowing their friends to experience the connection to the eternal directly. The danger of this, though, is idolatry.

In the stanza which Gaskell uses as a headnote, Hill sees the voice which the poet longs to hear "soothe and bless," as that of Hallam, but the referent is by no means unambiguous, and could be said to mean God. Still, this voice is "behind the veil," blurring its ability to communicate directly with man, or untangle the sheaf of mysteries which the natural sciences have presented. Just before this, though, in section 54, Tennyson has presented an idea similar to Hegel's theory of history: "O yet we trust that somehow good/Will be the final goal of ill,/ To pangs of nature, sins of will/Defects of doubt and taints of blood;/That nothing walks with aimless feet;/That

no one life shall be destroy'd,/Or cast as rubbish to the void,/When God has made the pile complete. . ."(Tennyson section 54, 147). The confidence here is quickly undermined when the poet compares himself to a crying child at the end of the section, but the idealist impulse in what Tennyson has to say is important, for what *In Memoriam* eventually becomes for the poet is a way of reconstructing a grounds for faith out of grappling with the phenomena for and against it. Phenomena, however, is not all there is to faith, or to history. The *Philosophy of History*, for Hegel, is a way of constructing a reasonable direction for the universe out of what has already happened. As Gillespie points out, the traditional Christian concept of the historical emphasized the Scriptural relation to an interpretation of events, rather than the events themselves (7). Both Hegel and Tennyson realize this idea is inadequate to account for scientific inquiries which contradict Biblical traditions, and that a typological approach cannot necessarily account for all events.

Gaskell uses several techniques to present ideas about history and change without resorting to complete allegory. The coda to the final chapter, pressing the entire narrated story into the background and foregrounding how interpretations of facts have changed (Lansbury 181), lends a fundamental ambiguity to determining exactly what Gaskell's "lesson" for her own day would be, if we were to see *Sylvia's Lovers* as a primarily "reflective" historical novel. Seeing the novel in a more philosophical vein, it becomes evident that even when history has happened, we cannot scientifically say "what it is" unless we have an all-encompassing realm like Hegel's "absolute Spirit." Lansbury sees the difference in the stories told in the coda section as demonstrating the difference between the historian's and the novelist's communication of fact versus fact fused with imagination (Lansbury 181). Lansbury's distinction is inadequate because while we may be inclined to see Gaskell as the authoritative explicator of events, she

has undercut this authority by letting these other "competing" interpretations get to the reader. Therefore, effect upon the reader/listener becomes an essential facet of how history is told and remembered, as does the intentionality of that person who narrates the history. It would then follow that Gaskell is making a statement about the ultimately relative and unreliable nature of historical and fictional narratives.

Hilary Schor has recently addressed Gaskell's historical novel as a depiction of the female desire to evade the traditional marriage-plot and achieve subjectivity, to which end Gaskell parallels "the desires of men and women and the forces of revolution" (Schor 154). Schor suggests that Gaskell presents the possibility that if women could speak their own desire, history would be radically revised, beyond the limits of the historical-novel form (Schor 179-81). Schor points out that Sylvia can only be a subject through submission (171), which, we infer, because men can be subjects in their own right at any time, is unfair to women and needs to be changed. Implicit in Schor's argument is that what needs to be changed is women should speak and claim for themselves a radical status as subjects: Elinor Joddrel, in *The Wanderer*, has already shown us how this could backfire, since it merely intensifies her alienation. Brontë's depiction, in *Shirley*, of how women can use male tactics, such as Romantic egotism, to speak to men in a language they would comprehend, has often resulted in criticism that Brontë promotes meliorism to the status quo. Gaskell's solution is even more radical than Schor suggests, for I believe Gaskell proposes the change is not that women should make the radical claim to subjectivity, but that everyone should abdicate this claim, and become, like the throneless queen, defined by negation/freedom, rather than by a concept which seems to require an opposite or a stable object in terms of which to exist. The mention of the abbey, at the beginning of *Sylvia's Lovers*, and the Revelation-reference at the end (Gaskell's phrase, "and there shall be no more sea" is

preceded in the Bible by the words, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" Revelation 21: 1) both center on an idea of community centering on God (who in Revelation is on the throne, verse 5). To see the structure of the novel as reflecting a definite movement from a throneless queen landing upon a "new world" and establishing a religious community to the relinquishing of idols and Bella's location in another new world appears to establish an "evolving apocalypse." The hermetic nature of this structure might be seen as circular, or unprogressive--but these worlds are new. Therefore, man's delight in false idols has unpiously slowed the process of history, but not stopped it altogether.

Rather than seeing the prophecy of doom that Krueger sees for the patriarchal order in the conclusion to *Sylvia's Lovers*, we must see the prophecy as universal. Naturally, patriarchal stasis will keep women where they are--marginalized in the social order. Gaskell forces the reader to see, though, who is in ascendancy matters less than the stasis of the inequity itself. There is no guarantee that a "feminist apocalypse" would put history on the move, and not be merely an exchange of power like the French Revolution.

Hegel's suggestion that the "end of history" has arrived apparently conflicts with this notion because this "end" itself seems static. When Hegel says that all we need to do is look back and make sense of what has gone before, he would appear to be saying two different things. He implies, first, that we are indeed at the last stage of history: everything important has happened, and we have merely the task of finding the logical connections that have led us to today, which he does himself in *The Philosophy of History*. This suggests nothing has essentially changed in history since 1830, which we are well aware seems silly. A second implication of Hegel's main idea is similar, except the today from which we move backward to understand history keeps changing,

and thus the logic may change as well. The basic idea that history is a rational and synthetic process remains constant, but the "end" is an optimistic Einsteinian one, rather than the more solid one that others have sought. Hence, Hegel sees the understanding of history as a synthetic process taking place in the mind, rather than in time or in space. If we apply the concept to Gaskell, the differing remembrances she gives of the story she has just narrated do *not* lead us to total relativism, but to an investigation into the motives of the history-makers, and from what vantage point they are trying to achieve a sense of solidity. It seems to me this quest for solidity is the same problem which has plagued Hegel's own philosophy of history, for he appears to show, in *The Philosophy of History*, how history makes sense, giving us concrete examples and making us believe that he has tried too hard to perfect his system so that everything will form a neat, solid whole. The beauty of Hegel's system is that it allows rationality to be recreated all the time. It encompasses because it does not seek to exclude but incorporate. I see Gaskell as having a similarly ideal vision for society, which led her to write first social problem novels, later the idyllic and utopian (almost) *Cranford*, and eventually very complex novels about society and human motivation, such as *Sylvia's Lovers*.

Like Hegel, Christian philosophers would say that there is an ideal realm, and that there are absolutes, and that everything makes sense in retrospect (in fact, the idea of typology stems from this). To perfectly parallel Hegel and Gaskell, one would have to conclude that Gaskell found that she had arrived at the end point from which history could be interpreted, but that otherwise it cannot be comprehended. In some ways such a view is borne out, because the story's characters are unaware of the context in which they live--except for the world-historical context of Christianity. For example, when trying to explain to Sylvia where the Siege of Acre takes place, Mrs. Kinraid refers to

St. Paul, and explains the battle in the purely personal terms of her husband and his role. Even Kinraid, who is wounded in the Siege, is not sure why the city has been ordered taken by the British government. Similarly, the Greeks, Romans and Chinese of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* could not have known their place in what eventually was to be Hegel's system, but they also lack, unlike Mrs. Gaskell's characters, any way of making themselves connected, significant, or rationally linked to one another.

Does Mrs. Gaskell have any particular message to women, then, and is her position as "woman writer" at all important to this work? My answer to the first question is "maybe not," since while showing great sensitivity and insight into women's historical plight, I would not say Gaskell conceives of a primarily female readership, because she demonstrates that too many people have surrendered their lives to false idols, or even *other people's* false idols, in the form of social institutions, that go unquestioned. Her position as a woman writer, here, though, seems quite important. Patsy Stoneman complains that "*Sylvia's Lovers* . . . loses its dialectical impetus and comes to a transcendental standstill" (156). Stoneman apparently means that Gaskell has been illustrating how the male codes of Sylvia's world (Stoneman calls them the "law of the market" and the "law of the jungle," represented by Philip and Mr. Robson (156)), do not include the possibilities of female ethics--life and nurture, as opposed to competition. When Philip dies, he is restored to a "mother-like God" (Stoneman 158). Stoneman finds this ending to displace the value of real women, instead using the Romantic nature-trope I discussed in Chapter 3 to make the perceived landscape into an other that includes the self--a closed system defined by, in Stoneman's view, the male Romantics to the exclusion and debasement of women (157). In short, Stoneman is disappointed by "transcendence" as an ideal, as opposed to the continuing tension of a dialectic. Hegel, though, includes both dialectical and transcendental elements in his

system. Why should an idealist resolution be inherently "less" a solution than a "materialist" one? Agnes Heller suggests that the modern temper is not comfortable with the "ideal" of Hegel because modern people are relativists (Heller 189). Desiring a "materialist" or pragmatic explanation is one way of denying relativism; one criticism of Hegel is that his philosophy cannot counter relativism (Gillespie 120). Timeless essence, "Absolute Spirit," and noumena may seem better than corruptible, finite, material phenomena--but without both, there is no Christ. "Without both" is the essence of Hegel. Idol-making is the process of making those evidences "of things not seen," into material, visible objects. Ultimately, this fails because the objects of our own creation cannot forestall time any better than we can. Even Hegel's *Philosophy of History* can only temporarily freeze the phenomena of history for the purpose of discussing it. Hegel says, at the close of his introduction: "Yet the length of Time is something entirely relative, and the element of Spirit is Eternity. Duration, properly speaking, cannot be said to belong to it" (110).

Hegel's philosophy is considered to have religious undertones that create its idealism into a norm, but I fail to see why an optimistic and inclusive norm such as Hegel's Absolute Spirit would be a "worse" ideal than "continuing revolution" or "dictatorship of the proletariat": all are prophetic, rather than descriptive. Inasmuch as a philosophy of history involves coming to consciousness about how historical processes work, and thus how we may make sense of the past, it would seem that while the idea that all history makes sense would lead us to assume that we all may employ subjectivity freely in making this series of connections and thus practice total relativism, we are also faced with the supposition that no matter what paradoxes occur, no matter how irreconcilable everything appears, these differences will eventually have a purpose.

I would say that the possibility of this connection, through Christianity, is Mrs. Gaskell's point. For the reader of *Sylvia's Lovers*, Gaskell has made possible a historical consciousness that characters in the story do not possess. The reader is powerless against the tragic circumstances of Philip's, Charley's, Sylvia's and Hester's lives. While the resolution of *Sylvia's Lovers* may seem to present a nihilistic vision of the future, I would argue that this vision applies to those whose consciousness of time and history results in their attempts to deny its power on their lives. Emil Fackenheim suggests that Hegel's philosophy is characterized by closure and a contradictory "radical openness": history is definitely moving forward and consciousness is moving towards this wholistic synthesis of Absolute Spirit. The openness comes from the indefinite and infinite nature of what contributes to this "end." A materialist philosophy desires a definite end: idol-worship is a way of forming a closed system with no possibility for uncertainty. *Sylvia's Lovers* gives us many examples of how the drive for certainty is tragedy. This tragedy need not be the reader's tragedy, however. In *Sylvia's Lovers*, we see the ultimate tragedy of materialist philosophies--they multiply false gods that increase humankind's alienation from God and one another, and as they attempt to freeze, solidify, and forestall time, they stand in the way of the divine "end of history." The apocalypse which is coming does not necessarily occur in a definite place, but is a state of heart that happens in the individual moving through time, rather than in a time and place distant and alienated from individual human lives on earth.

CHAPTER 5

ROMOLA : THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY

George Eliot's *Romola* has been little appreciated either as a novel or as a historical novel.¹ While recent scholarship shows more appreciation for Eliot's use of history in her fiction, and David Carroll's recent hermeneutic study abuts the reader-response discussion we are about to embark upon here, nearly every criticism available reiterates several wrong-headed ideas about *Romola*, which I believe damage our perception of what Eliot herself thought was her best novel.² The first of these mistaken apprehensions is that Renaissance Florence, for Eliot, is less important in and of itself than it is as a society similar to that of Victorian England.³ Such a belief stems from a general idea of how topical Victorians are in writing about their own society, and an idea that Eliot's novels are always didactic in some way. Therefore, one has to assume the details about Renaissance Florence exist for some purpose other than background (notice that no such interpretation of Gaskell's setting in *Sylvia's Lovers* is generally advanced). Nicholas Rance even says that Eliot shows history for the purpose of demonstrating its irrelevance to her contemporaries (Rance 103). The occasional intrusions of the narrative voice drawing parallels or explanations related to the 1860's time of composition is usually cited as a reason for such conclusions. My

¹ See Fisher, Leavis, Robinson. Those who deny *Romola* as a legitimate historical novel include Shaw, Barrett, and Rance.

² Eliot said, in a January 30, 1877 letter to her publisher, John Blackwood, concerning a new edition of *Romola*: ". . . there is no book of mine about which I more thoroughly feel that I could swear by every sentence as having been written with my best blood, such as it is, and with the most ardent care for veracity of which my nature is capable" (*Letters* VI: 335-6).

³ See Shaw, Fisher, Robinson, Bonaparte, Carroll. Newton says the novel "parallels with the sense of crisis in her own society" (15). Leslie Stephen sees Tito and Romola as incongruently "masquerading" in the Renaissance (136).

argument suggests that the voice draws these parallels apparently to help an 1860's reader better comprehend a distant time, not to force a particular interpretation of history on the reader (though the voice occasionally betrays a judgmental attitude towards Tito and his moral choices). In truth, the narrative voice in *Romola* is far less intrusive and instructive than in Eliot's other novels (Booth *Greatness Engendered* 179).

The second ill-advised premise I encounter over and over is that *Romola*, like Eliot's other novels, is supposed to be a "realistic" novel, but that episodes such as coincidences with Baldassarre and the "Drifting Away" chapter destroy any illusions of verisimilitude that Eliot has painstakingly tried to create through the accretion of detail. The simplest answer to such a discussion is that *Romola* is not, nor was it ever intended to be, a realistic novel. Eliot herself conceived the work as an "historical romance," and considered it a major and risky departure from her earlier work.⁴

The third misapprehension about *Romola* comes from those critics who basically agree with me that *Romola* is not realistic. Some, though, see the work as a thesis novel that may be reduced to a formula, such as mythic allegory, Positivist allegory, unconsciously played out psychodrama, feminist manifesto or conservative manifesto.⁵ Most of these readings are extremely interesting, and of convincing validity. In fact, probably all the readings I find reductive really are well-supported by the text, but I object to reducing *Romola*'s content to this degree.

⁴Cottom and Paris emphasize Eliot's realism. Robinson, Levine, and Welsh particularly notice the non-realistic elements of *Romola*. One article, by Witemeyer, does acknowledge the book as historical romance in an attempt to note Eliot's debt to Bulwer-Lytton.

⁵Allegory based upon allusion--Bonaparte and Weisenfarth. Ashton, Bullen, Paxton, and Shuttleworth see the work as Positivist allegory. Sadoff, Leavis, Carpenter and Welsh see elements of Evans' own private psychodrama played out in the work. De Jong, Booth's article, and Paxton's works see *Romola* as a feminist text, whereas Homans and Shuttleworth take a more qualified view. Benson has written a fine article using a Jungian approach.

The finest of the above-mentioned works, Felicia Bonaparte's *The Triptych and the Cross*, makes a case for the novel's complexity of interrelated mythic and epic themes, which I readily assent can be found; however, Bonaparte's idea makes the novel into a complex net of allegories and related tropes that ignores other aspects of the work. Furthermore, Harry E. Shaw has characterized the weakness of Bonaparte's reading of the novel as "a kind of Hegelian identity field run wild, without dialectic, contradiction or levels of mediation to give it credibility" (107). My interpretation will make these dialectics and contradictions clear, connecting *Romola* to the Hegelian theory of history.⁶ No approach I listed considers the story and its relationship to readers in its intended form of historical romance, though David Carroll's hermeneutic approach considers *Romola* as reader/interpreter. This chapter will consider *Romola* as a historical romance, in addition to discussing Eliot's use of the historical romance as a vehicle for the philosophical historical novel, and whether or not this approach was or is successful with Eliot's readers. *Romola* depicts a moment in time that only appears static (this perceived stasis is a major complaint of critics like Shaw), because it is really about an on-going process in history, by which self-consciousness and consciousness of history become a consciousness of self-in-history. Due to this synthetic approach, Eliot's novel frequently seems to give less foreground to epochal events and "world historical individuals" (Hegel's term) than readers have come to expect from historical novels. The prominence of *Romola* herself bothers critics like Shaw, who are inclined to see history, not individual characters, as the real protagonist of the historical novel. Eliot's attempt to show the intersection of the public and private worlds necessitates the creation of an individual character who can

⁶Marian Evans discussed Hegel with his translator, Sibree, in 1848 (Dodd 121). Sara M. Putzell-Korab's book discusses Hegel's *Phenomenology* and Eliot's characters, but devotes very few pages to a discussion of *Romola*.

come to know, understand and become a philosopher about the times in which she lives. Andrew Sanders has a more appropriate attitude towards the novel than Shaw when he compares it to a "great Victorian public building" (196); the novel is exceedingly well-constructed, but it is hard to see that this structure does not necessarily imply stasis.

Valerie Dodd, in the outstanding book *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, mentions Eliot's long friendship with Sibree, translator of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (121). Doubtless, then, though Eliot endorses Feuerbach strongly, she was well aware of Hegel's dialectic. Dodd also argues that Eliot became tired of philosophy as a way of changing the world and turned to art instead (315). Bernard J. Paris sees Eliot as influenced by the empirical, anti-Idealist conceptions of Feuerbach, and those who see Eliot as strongly Positivist assert she did not see history as progressive at all (Paris 79ff, Sanders 174). If *Romola* fosters Positivist ideals connected to a historical context, then I believe it endorses a synthetic view, connected with time, that might be seen as ideal--this is the Comtean view. Paris' use of Feuerbach to explain Eliot as applying empiricism to her plots as experiments depends upon stages of subjectivity and objectivity that I see, ultimately, as synthetic in a more Hegelian sense. To Paris, subjectivity and objectivity are stages in a progression, objectivity being the more "advanced" state. To Hegel and Eliot, subjectivity and objectivity are both relatively unadvanced states; one does not so much progress from one to the other as integrate the two perspectives into each other. Subjectivity or objectivity alone allows no comprehensive vision.

I see *Romola* as a work of dialectics. A brief table, below, indicates the forces in tension with one another and how they are synthesized. The intrinsic level of the book

is how the characters experience the history in the work. The extrinsic level is how the reader of the book experiences this history.

Intrinsic	Subjective	Romance	Romola	Ideal
Extrinsic	Objective	Historical	Reader	Material
Whole	Absolute	Historical Romance	Reader of <i>Romola</i>	Spirit

It should be obvious that the vertical relationships are syntheses; the horizontal correlations are not perfect, but they will comprise an organizing principle to this chapter. Any interpretation that does not take into account both levels of the book--Romola's experience in the text and the reader's experience of the text--misses the fundamental synthesis that is the main point of struggling towards an understanding of history. The stolid perspectives of subjectivity and objectivity must be tempered by one another; the ideal and the material must synthesize into Hegel's Absolute Spirit. Following a plot summary, my discussion will be divided into the following sections--

- 1) Eliot & Hegel--The Spirit of Florence and the Absolute Spirit; 2) *Romola* as Historical Romance; 3) The Reader and *Romola*--Becoming a Philosopher; 4) Reconciling Material and Ideal--Achieving the Spirit of the Age.

Romola opens with a "Proem," in which a 1492 "Spirit of Florence" is shown the Florence of the 1860's, and is warned by the narrative voice that things have changed greatly since 1492, and only a few universals remain the same--the concerns of the Spirit, politics and cultural affairs, are derided by the narrator as nonessentials. In the first chapter of the 1492 narrative, the positions are reversed. Instead of a 1492 Spirit displaced by the changes wrought by history, the reader him/herself is the

stranger in 1492 Florence, which is introduced through the eyes of the young Greek shipwrecked traveler, Tito Melema. For the first 26 chapters of the 73-chapter narrative Tito remains the focus of the reader's attention. Tito goes to a barbershop to become apprised of local affairs and the possibility of earning a living through his facility with Greek and Latin. Receiving some hints about employment prospects, Tito is able to meet both important politicians (Lorenzo de Medici has just died, leaving a power vacuum) and the misanthropic blind scholar, Bardo, who has been pursuing his scholarly activities with only the help of his eighteen year-old daughter, Romola. Bardo finds Romola's help unsatisfactory, perhaps because she is female and his speech reflects some degree of misogyny, or perhaps because he had always hoped his son Dino would be a partner in his studies, and Dino has deserted his family for a life as an ascetic monk. Tito find himself useful to both politicians and Bardo. Tito's proximity to politicians gives him power, while his proximity to and patience with Bardo endears him to Romola, whom he grows to love. To the isolated Romola, Tito appears to be an ideal husband, so the two are betrothed. Meanwhile, Tito has chosen not to spend the profit from selling his gems in an attempt to search for his foster-father, Baldassarre. Tito convinces himself that Baldassarre could not have survived the shipwreck, and that a search would prove futile. The promise of his new life in Florence causes Tito to ignore a message from Baldassarre, delivered through Romola's brother, who then conveniently dies. Baldassarre reports he has been sold into slavery. The brother, Dino, dies only after telling Romola of his vision that her marriage will prove a disaster. Tito also faces another moral entanglement when the contadina Tessa, whom he has befriended, believes he has actually married her in a carnival ceremony. Too soft-hearted to disappoint her, Tito finds himself living a double life with two wives.

When Tito becomes more thoroughly attuned to Florentine politics, Romola becomes the center of narrative focus. Though certain chapters see events from Tessa's, Tito's, or Baldassarre's viewpoints, the majority of the book's remaining chapters focus upon Romola, who, we discover, is not very happy in her marriage. Her husband neglects her to dabble in politics, and her father has died, his grand scholarly schemes unfulfilled. Tito announces he has sold Bardo's library, and Romola becomes convinced that he cannot be trusted. She decides to leave Florence and go to join the famous female scholar Cassandra Fidele in Venice (Chapter 36, "Ariadne Discrowns Herself" 327). Romola disguises herself as a nun, but on the road she is apprehended by the famous historical personage in the book, Savonarola. He sees she is not a nun and tells her it is her duty to return to Florence and serve in her roles of wife and Florentine. In the same span of time, Baldassarre has appeared in Florence as an escaped prisoner. Seeing Tito in the street, Baldassarre goes to him and the flustered Tito responds to the queries about their relationship with a denial, calling Baldassarre a "madman." Ironically, Baldassarre's mind does seem to be shattered: he cannot remember the historical researches which had comprised his life's work; he cannot even remember how to read. Except for a brief recovery of his memory, Baldassarre, for the rest of the book, is obsessed with avenging himself upon the ungrateful Tito, though he has great difficulty even thinking of a rational plan. Coincidentally, Baldassarre meets both Tessa and Romola, eventually realizing they are both Tito's wives, which he reveals to Romola, hoping for an ally in revenge.

After her return to Florence, Romola has become involved in charitable pursuits, nursing and distributing food. In these activities she meets both Tessa and Baldassarre without realizing who they are. Romola's more active life in Florence allows us a clearer picture of Savonarola and his political power. Savonarola exerts his religious

influence by receiving direct visions from God; politically he endorses a split from the impure influences of Rome and a new, populist and republican order under the leadership of an inspired church. Other political factions propose a resurrection of the Medicean idea of rule by nobles allowing only limited freedom for Florence (Bernardo del Nero is in this group), and Dolfo Spiní's Arrabiati party, that would bargain away Florence's independence for concessions like foreign support (Wiesenfarth 148-9). These political machinations are complex and hard to recall in the story, especially because Tito works for all the factions. Romola supports Savonarola until it turns out her godfather, Bernardo del Nero, associated with the Medicean movement, has been denounced in the visions of Camilla de Rucellai. Going to Savonarola to plead for his intervention on Bernardo's behalf for the right to appeal that Savonarola himself had fought for, Romola discovers that Savonarola declines to honor her request--on the surface because he is above politics, but on a less forgivable level, because Bernardo del Nero, though not especially guilty, is on an opposing side. Disillusioned after Bernardo's execution, Romola leaves Florence again, this time in a small boat in which she drifts out to sea, hoping for death. Romola's boat runs ashore in a rural area, where she finds a family of Jews dead of the plague, but for a baby. Romola takes this baby to a village, where she finds the fearful villagers (including the priest), cowering in isolation indoors, fearful of contracting or spreading the disease. Romola's Madonna-like sudden appearance in the village shocks the priest into acting under her direction and coming to the aid of the ill and dying.

Meanwhile, Tito's elaborate triple-agency has come to an end. To save himself, he has given information to his captors and in the process turned many against him. He has planned to take Tessa and their two children to Rome and start anew. Before this plan is entirely carried out, one of Tito's most despised associates, Dolfo Spiní, who

holds a grudge against his former confederate, incites a mob to attack the home of Tito, who just happens to be on his way there when they encounter him. The mob, discovering his identity, chases him to a bridge, from which Tito leaps in an effort to save himself. Tito falls into the Arno and begins swimming, but he grows exhausted and semiconscious. When he washes ashore, barely alive, Baldassarre just happens to be there. Baldassarre has been slowly starving, but he musters up enough strength to strangle Tito before dying himself. Meanwhile, Savonarola's power has been challenged, another order of monks suggesting he be subjected to a "trial by fire" to demonstrate God's selection of him. Political situations cause the trial by fire not to occur, but this angers the Florentine mob, desirous of a spectacle. Savonarola is arrested and under torture admits his visions were false. He has also repudiated this confession, creating confusion amongst his followers. In the end, Savonarola sees himself as a failure and his impending death meaningless. Romola returns to Florence and rescues Tessa, who has been waiting for Tito to reappear. In the last chapter of the book, Romola witnesses Savonarola's execution. In the "Epilogue" we see how Romola, Tessa, Romola's cousin, and the children have become a family. It is the anniversary-eve of Savonarola's martyrdom, and while Tessa and her daughter prepare the household altar, Romola tries to tell Tito and Tessa's son, Lillo, what of great value she learned from Savonarola.

1) Eliot & Hegel--The Spirit of Florence and the Absolute Spirit

In her "Proem" to *Romola*, Eliot introduces us by flight with the "angel of dawn" to the time and space of her novel *and* to the time and space of nineteenth-century Florence. This compounding of space and time can occur because from the distant and immortal prospect of the angel, the scenes appear perpetually reenacted--such

changes as we might remark upon make little impression upon an immortal. The narrator claims that nineteenth-century Florence resembles the 1492-Florence of Columbus very closely. Into this virtually unchanged landscape is suddenly injected the "Spirit of Florence," a citizen who had died in 1492, before Columbus' voyage, before the narrative of *Romola's* main action even begins.

The "Spirit of Florence" is described in detail--what kind of life he lived, how he participated in Florence's life as a "public-spirited" man, and relished his politics, pursuit of classical learning and acquiring relics of the past (vases, manuscripts), in addition to his participation in the Catholic beliefs of the times. The catalogue of the Spirit's interests is a microcosm of all the areas that the author studied to provide background details for the work. Transported to another century, the Spirit is curious about how the politics, religious controversies and scholarly debates of his beloved Florence have turned out. From the distant prospect, the Spirit can see the architecture of the city has changed, but he finds it hard to envision that the fundamental "spirit" of the citizens can have changed very much. Mirroring the state of the historical novel reader, who knows so much more of his own time than the one he is about to enter, the situation seems a deliberate warning from Eliot to the reader on not reading one's own time back on the history of another time--to avoid reading reflectively, and instead engage in reading philosophically.

Like the voracious reader, the "Spirit of Florence" is eager to pursue his own fantasy of picking up where he left off, not taking into account the nearly 400 intervening years. On the brink of descending to the town, the "Spirit" is stayed by the voice of the narrator intoning, "Go not down, good Spirit!" (9). The narrator counsels the Spirit that too much has changed--only a few universals, such as the children, the

sunlight, the church rituals and the idealistic men who "yearn for the reign of peace and righteousness" remain the same.

The Spirit of Florence is the subjective spirit, much concerned with materials and ideals assumed to be timeless and universal, but the Spirit's obsolescence out of his own context is emphasized by the martyrdom of Savonarola, the death of Lorenzo di Medici, and the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus. The subjective "Spirit" has not achieved objective consciousness of the changes that history has wrought on the Florence with which he identified, and the narrator suggests this is an experience to be avoided. From such a statement, it would appear that Eliot is warning us of trying to feel comfortable in other times, and it seems strange that the historical novel-reader seems to be a target for the statement. The position of the Spirit of Florence, though, can perhaps help us refine the idea of danger Eliot seems to have in mind. Eliot's readers do stand in the same position with regard to the text as the Spirit of Florence does to the nineteenth-century Florence: we stand before something we think we recognize and we expect to comprehend. George Eliot's narrators, as Daniel Cottom astutely suggests, frequently seem to be warning us of the complexities of things we think we already understand (Cottom 72). While Cottom seems to find this pose liberal intellectual posturing to create an area of mystique that the reader cannot adequately comprehend without the narrator's help, it also seems possible that there is much truth in this particular warning to the Spirit of Florence, for while the reader can laugh, knowing how shocked the Spirit would be by steamboats, railways, and revolutionaries, the Spirit's obscurity and unimportance out of his own time reflects our own. We cannot just hop into new contexts like the time-traveling Spirit of Florence. We must educate ourselves throughout history. To exercise an objective spirit towards history at all, we cannot limit the scope of the investigation too

severely. By emphasizing the contrast between fifteenth-century and nineteenth-century Florence, Eliot is humbling us to face the task of studying Renaissance Florence before we laugh too hard at the Spirit of Florence. We are as ignorant of the fifteenth century as the Spirit is of the nineteenth.

Though the narrator's statements in the "Proem" indicate that the political details and contexts of 1492 Florence will be irrelevant beside the universal constant themes and types of human nature, only a narrator with a monopoly on the infinite would try to reconcile the Spirit of Florence to his lack of importance in nineteenth-century Florence this way. It seems the Eliot is actually satirizing the naive nineteenth-century novel-reader's impulse that somehow the universal, that of the past which is somehow connected to the present, is more important than the political and cultural aspects of life that the Spirit cherishes. Generally, critics treat this narrative voice seriously, but to do so is a mistake, for the voice's attitude towards the particular as opposed to the universal undercuts all of Eliot's effort towards reconstructing the past in the text of *Romola*.

If we see *Romola* as discovering the perfection of Positivism (humanism as opposed to theism, material rather than spiritual goals) after her earlier errors, then it is difficult to see why she wishes to keep the non-humanist past alive. If this ending is supposed to represent the comic unfolding of history as ultimately progressive, then the past is important, but the idealist end has not yet arrived, and more tragedies (Lillo's?) may be waiting in the wings. Such a reading explains the irresolution of the end. This reading raises the question "was Eliot an idealist or not?" Paris argues that she sought a scientific and empirical realism. Cottom, though, points out how much the supposed pursuit of "realism" from an "empirical" perspective may be hiding about George Eliot's own subjective and ideological "romance" of liberal intellectual

objectivity for her own works (78-9). Feuerbach, whom Eliot translated, rejected Hegel's ideas of an "absolute" realm. Next, we must ask whether Eliot saw Hegel as the kind of idealist that Feuerbach rejected, or not? Just because Eliot accepted Feuerbach's ideas does not necessarily mean she understood Hegel as Feuerbach understood Hegel; she agreed with Feuerbach's anthropological critique of Christianity, but she was philosopher enough to judge Hegel for herself. Feuerbach differentiated himself from Hegel because like many of his generation, he found Hegel's "Absolute Spirit" too utterly disconnected from real human life, an abstraction (Lukács *YH* 559). If we take the view of Hegel scholar Emil Fackenheim, this would appear to be a misreading on Feuerbach's part: "Hegelian dialectic--the dialectic of both Reality and philosophical thought--is inseparable from content" (27).

According to Hayden White, one of Hegel's purposes in the *Philosophy of History* is to "justify the transition from *the comprehension of the Tragic nature of every specific civilization to the Comic apprehension of the unfolding drama of the whole of history*" (White 117). If we understand *Romola* as putting together the fragments of various traces of history and finding, one by one, the Classical sense, the hedonistic sense, the Christian sense and the utilitarian sense all lacking and all tragic, then the ending, when *Romola* tries to keep all the fragments alive, appears a tragic revivification of flawed materials.

In Hegel's system, all materials are important because they contribute to a totality. In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel divides up his discussion of "objective spirit," the phase in which one begins to see things not just in relation to oneself, into three sections. These three sections reflect what Hegel found to be three central stages of human history: 1) objective spirit--the ethical order--the societies of antiquity and their collapse, 2) spirit in self-estrangement--the rise of civil society, ideologic

Enlightenment, world crisis of the French Revolution, and 3) morality--solution based upon poetry and philosophy (Lukács *YH* 486-8). While Hegel traces important moments in history up to 1830, the same movement towards achieving an objective consciousness towards history can be found in *Romola*. The collapse of antique civilizations is reflected in several ways--in Bardo's disconnection from society, in Baldassarre's inability to recall the culture he has revered, in Tito (if we see him as a Bacchus-figure), the fertility God who is not regenerated and is not hedonistically happy in his "cult." The various examples of "self-estrangement" appear in the familial conflicts, in the religious conflict between Romola and Savonarola and between Savonarola and the orthodox church, in the political factionalism, in the Renaissance debate between Classical and Christian, ancient and modern. The political ferment in Florence clearly shows a tension between the people and those who govern them, as the idea of innate nobility fades. Also, Italy's independence movement of the mid-nineteenth century might be seen as a French Revolutionary echo, of which Romola's Florence is the precursor. In the third stage, "spirit certain in itself," we might designate Romola as exemplum, but it is important to see her as a philosopher, or some kind of agent, rather than the icon most allegorical interpretations insist upon.

For the reader, seeing Romola no longer as "real woman" is analogous to Lukács' critique of progress towards idealist synthesis in Hegel's philosophy. Lukács suggests Hegel's section on "absolute Spirit" is no longer about "real history" after discussing "configurations of consciousness" in the subjective spirit section and "real history discovering itself in the 'objective spirit'" (Lukács *YH* 507). Hegel, in his section on "Absolute Spirit" synthesizes the two earlier perspectives so that "the great epic of world history is narrated as continuous process" (Lukács *YH* 507). Lukács, who tends to be influenced by later dialectical materialists such as Marx, seems often to find

Hegel's final, idealist synthesis is a pipe dream of pure theory, deferring often to Marx or Lenin to explain what material aspects of economics and history Hegel has ignored. The significance of Hegel's method, though, is that it draws on the ideas of both pure theory and pure practice as insufficient, that Hegel sees a place for both the real and the ideal in the creation of an "absolute" perspective. This concern for both the real and ideal should be readily associated with Eliot's works, since her frequently-used technique of realism often carries messages about ideal moral choices.

Two currents coexist in Hegel's work which definitely may be related to *Romola*. Lukács identifies these two currents in Hegel as "patterns of historical sequence" and "subjective, phenomenological movement of consciousness towards absolute knowing, passing through art and religion" (YH 509-510). Both these elements are important to *Romola* as a historical work, intrinsically and extrinsically. The patterns of history in the work exist both as present conflicts to the characters and as a reconstruction of the past to the reader. The phenomenological movement of *Romola* from a subjective to an absolute view does take her from being an object or art-like icon to others through her own active faith, and eventually to a philosophic state. Similarly, the reader must move from subjective concern with "what the story means to me," to appreciation of the story as art, to looking at the themes of religion and morality in their historical context and finally to become a philosophical reader. Lukács explains the end of such a Hegelian synthesis, which I believe we may use as a way to see Eliot's *Romola*: "So the recapitulation of the history of mankind is at the same time man's conscious struggle to achieve his highest development, to attain an adequate understanding of the world in the science of philosophy" (YH 510). In the text of *Romola*, we see *Romola* herself move towards "knowing" as we ourselves do the same thing. The danger of an inadequately

developed sense of objectivity appears in the overriding inclination of the characters to pursue their own private sense of romance in the story.

Subjectivity does have its importance, however, and we should not rush to spout the usual rhetoric of Eliot's anti-egotism. In an interesting parallel to Eliot's "angel of the dawn," Hegel begins the section of "Classification of Historic Data" in *The Philosophy of History* with a short fable about a man and the sun (103), which was discussed earlier, in Chapter 1. When a blind man sees the sun for the first time, Hegel relates, he forgets himself in awe of this new and brilliant thing. When the sun is fully up, the light of the sun reveals other objects and instead of quiet sun worship, the man notices and studies his relationship to this sun. Finally,

by close of day man has erected a building constructed from his own inner Sun; and when in the evening he contemplates this, he esteems it more highly than the original Sun. For now he stands in a conscious relation to his spirit, and therefore a free relation. If we hold this image fast in mind, we shall find it symbolizing the course of History, the Great Day's Work of Spirit. (Hegel 103)

Romola first worships her father, then Tito, then Savonarola; as she finds their flaws, she begins to notice herself and refine her own sense of morality. By the "Epilogue," she has created her own world, in which she has control of her former "suns" and is in "free" association with them. Such a rendering of the book's conclusion may imply that I am arguing for a Hegelian, rather than a Positivist, tableau, but Hegelian dialectics cannot really ever be a tableau because the tensions that create new syntheses continually displace one another. If Romola has become a philosopher by the end of the book, then her actions are far more significant than her embodiment of ideology: in

fact, the embodiment of ideology seems to have rather dangerous precedents in Tito and Savonarola.

Let us return to the Spirit of Florence in the "Proem." The Spirit makes the mistake of seeing a material relationship between himself and Florence, himself and history: he is not aware that the sun may heighten and set, and change the context for him. Similarly, the "night student," mentioned in the "Proem" as a constant recipient of the "angel of dawn's" rays, is in pursuit of the perpetual and absolute quest for "that hidden knowledge which would break through the barriers of man's brief life, and show its dark path that seemed to bend no whither, to be an arc in an immeasurable circle of light and glory" (3). The night-student's idealist search for absolute knowledge contrasts with the search for personal touchstones that the Spirit of Florence seeks. The student's search causes him to seek this truth in "the stars" or "his own soul" (3). The night-student, though, most likely sleeps through the blazing daylight in order to follow the stars (many and remote, as opposed to the sun), all night long. No growing discernment of relationship between self and sun, or between self and the everyday "real" world can develop under such circumstances.

The "angel of dawn," the sun itself, would appear to have the most comprehensive knowledge of "Spirit in Time," but the "angel of dawn" is prone to see the "other" of Florence only superficially--the "angel of dawn" seems unaware of change. Only the narrator of the "Proem" seems to have arrived at an adequate appreciation of "the sun" and her "construct of the sun" to be considered free. The Spirit of Florence should not go down to Florence because the Spirit is not the Absolute Spirit, and is unprepared for the direct encounter with a new "Sun." Eliot puts the reader in the position of being able to move from subjective to objective spirit to absolute spirit regarding the history of Florence. The reason for doing this is two-fold. On one level, the reader

must come to appreciate both the material and idealistic aspects of history and their conflicting demands upon moral choice and interpretations of historical events (the personal romance, the public policy). Secondly, the reader must come to see the importance of having a philosophy of history, rather than a "historical" or private, romance.

Eliot's review of Mackay's historical work on the religion of the Greeks and Hebrews in "The Progress of the Intellect" (1851; reprinted in Pinney) reflects some of the ideas about the study of history that her novels later underscore. In the essay, Eliot presents the Comtean critique of works such as Mackay's as impractical: "better to reason justly on some point of immediate concern than to know the fallacies of the ancient sophists" (28). In spite of critics' tendency to associate Eliot strongly with Comte, she goes on to temper this view, saying, "Our civilization, and, yet more, our religion, are an anomalous blending of lifeless barbarisms, which have descended to us like so many petrifications from distant ages, with living ideas, the offspring of a true process of development" (28). While Eliot thinks that resurrecting the whole past would not be utilitarian, she also seems to find Mackay's investigations valuable, for she says that in a "philosophic culture" there should be some value placed upon knowing the past, as long as it does not become an obsession: "for succeeding ages to dream of retaining the spirit along with the forms of the past is as futile as the embalming of the dead body in the hope that it may one day be resumed by the living soul" (29). Many ideas of importance appear in this article. For one thing, Eliot argues, the past is with us always, whether we acknowledge it or not, living on both in forms, the meaning of which have been forgotten, and in the ideas that have resulted from the thinking of the past. Thus, to ignore the past is to ignore and cease to be interested in the fragments of it which survive, and cancels our ability to learn from

it, or to convince ourselves that ours is a "philosophic culture." The danger of investigations such as Mackay's is that the pursuit of the past may become a romance for its own sake: we cannot recreate the past, nor can we totally conserve it. It necessarily must pass away, but we would be less than scientific if we refused even to investigate the parts of it which remain.

An idea of Mackay's that Eliot mentions is inspiration "being co-extensive with the history of human development . . . perpetually unfolding itself to our widened experience and investigation"(30). The way of discussing the idea, of reconciling "spirit" and science, seems quite Hegelian. In arguing the importance of Mackay's investigation, Eliot suggests that widening knowledge "becomes visible to us in proportion to the power and range of our instruments" (31). As her diction implies, some of these instruments may be the scientific ones so commonly being invented during the industrial age; "visibility" implies, though, that one of those "instruments" must be one's own better and better-trained eye, developing methods of discernment heretofore unknown. Investigation of "humanistic" topics such as history of religion, then, may be scientifically pursued for purposes less tangible than those of the engineer or the architect, but purposes no less important to society.

2) *Romola* as Historical Romance

If we ponder briefly the Victorian fascination with the Middle Ages and the Classical past, we see a longing for that unified and well-constructed cultural agreement (or perception thereof) on the importance of certain people and events in building identity (Ruskin's study of the Gothic, Arnold's reverence for the classics, Tennyson's King Arthur). I see *Romola* as an acknowledgment that such a time of unified agreement has passed; Philistinism will not necessarily be forestalled. Daniel Cottom, who sees Eliot

as a liberal intellectual and all her novels embodying this discourse, suggests that liberal intellectual discourse represents itself as possessing infinite potential to explain everything (21). Cottom, thus, would see Hegel and Eliot as presenting similarly false views--elitists who under a guise of comprehensive synthesis actually set up a system that seeks to control and exclude the non-intellectual. Cottom rarely uses *Romola* as an example of his theory, however. In Cottom's view, the realistic novelistic discourse of the liberal intellectual must define itself in opposition to a rejected romance genre. This binary nature of novel and romance has become a commonplace in critical theory, but recent work on the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott discerns the growing distance and opposition between the two as a way of recovering respectability for the novel, since romance came to be construed as disconnected from reality and prone to fancy and subjectivism, whereas the novel was supposedly grounded in reality and common life. In order to defend their monopoly on reality, however, the realistic novelists had to divest themselves of any possible charge of subjectivity--thus the objective and distant omniscient narrator of Victorian novels. In Cottom's thesis then, the realistic novel itself becomes a kind of romance for the author, in which the authorial voice can take on a totally unrealistic and impossible task of speaking for the consciousness of an entire society, and instructing the reader how to view and understand "the individual" (Cottom 68). Eventually, it is the philosophy of liberal intellectualism itself which potentially creates a myth of idealized objectivity upon the part of the author, and for the educable, the readers. Cottom never considers *Romola* very much: is it realistic? Does it foster liberal intellectual values? Is the philosophy of history one of progress through education, as Cottom suggests is generally true with Eliot? (Cottom 25). To

show *Romola* as historical romance may not only revise our impressions of it, but of Eliot's entire corpus.

Anyone who has read several other novels by George Eliot will quickly realize that *Romola* is a very different kind of work. What is most real about the book are the historical details of Renaissance Florence and the reader's experience of them. The storyline of Tito and Romola is romance alongside the historical plot of Savonarola and Florence's politics. In this regard, Eliot is following the general technique of Scott. Eliot seldom praises other English novelists, but she always revered Scott (Spittles 55). *Romola* can be seen as her greatest tribute to her predecessor in the nineteenth century novel. Since we have been discussing the problem of definition for historical novels in this entire work, the additional generic problem presented by the doubly hybrid historical romance/historical novel should explain many of the contradictory readings of *Romola*. Definitions of romance are numerous; the most helpful I have found is a characterization of romance based upon the shared characteristics of many works, from classical times onward generally recognized as romance, in John Dean's book *Restless Wanderers: Shakespeare and the Pattern of Romance*. While the tendency of Eliot-critics has been to try to see *Romola* as a realistic historical novel, Alexander Welsh and Mary Wilson Carpenter come the closest to seeing its romance elements in their emphasis upon the dream-like and what they suppose are psychoanalytic elements of which Eliot herself is unaware.⁷ Alison Booth points out some affinity between Romola and a fairy-tale heroine (*GE* 187, "SF" 116), but indicating that she might be such a figure is a rather pejorative comment upon Romola as an individual character. The complaint that Romola seems less and less a person and more and more an idealistic figure towards the end of the book has been a rather

⁷See Robinson, Carpenter, Homans, Booth's article.

constant criticism.⁸ Booth's emphasis upon Romola's voice, however, in the "Epilogue" is important ("SF" 127-8). As a voice, Romola can become part of historical narrative, and not just a figure in a tableau, permanently stuck in Renaissance Florence. Throughout the story, Romola's speech with others has been determined by the position in which they cast her--in Bardo's house, her static position is emphasized by the cold marble furniture of the library. Dino sees Romola as a figure in his vision; Tito tries to have Romola painted to his specifications in the role of Ariadne. Savonarola continually reminds Romola of her subordinate role as daughter of the church and wife of Tito. The poor of Florence call Romola "Madonna," and the people of the plague-stricken village see her as such until she speaks with an "authoritative voice."

Eliot evidently knew *The Winter's Tale*, a romance by Shakespeare, well, because she has the characters in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), Chapter 6, act out the memorable scene of the statue of Imogen coming to life. In Shakespeare, this scene brings a touch of the surreal to the conclusion of the play. Romola's position in her story may be construed as that of a "statue" that miraculously comes to life and finds a voice. Alison Booth sees the "Epilogue" of the novel, in which Romola truly does seem statue-like in her stillness and abstraction, as an emblem for surviving the "downfall of false patriarchs" ("SF" 128), and that Romola is thus a Victorian prototype of ideal woman. Booth stresses that in the absence of all the men of the novel, who have dominated Florentine history, Romola "has the last word" ("SF" 128). That Romola is free to speak, finally, not only reinforces the idea of her importance as a woman, but also reinforces the point that even in the rather dead tableau of the epilogue, Romola, who has been frequently forced into the position of "statue" by society, is really alive.

⁸See Levine. Carpenter, Sanders, Booth.

If *Romola* is an almost stereotypical Victorian heroine in her passivity, the "realism" of Victorian novels perhaps never extended to their female characters--perhaps they have always contained an unrecognized romance-element. Dean discusses how theorists over time have conceived of and defined the romance: 1) as storytelling or creative imagination, 2) subconscious or dream-like imaginings, 3) love and adventure, 4) a quest-motif story, 5) syncretic genre, 6) epic scope, 7) corrupted history, 8) comedic wish-fulfillment, 9) myth-legend, 10) fairy tale, 11) pejorative dismissal (Dean 90-115). There are critiques of *Romola* focusing upon most of these aspects of the book without admitting the novel may be of the romance form.⁹ Only characterizations #1, #3, and #5 have been left out of today's critical commentary. Within the world of *Romola*, storytelling and the creative imagination exist in the forms of prophetic visions and the invented messages by which Tito decoys his enemies (and his friends). Therefore, the creative imagination (and the vision of the author herself?) seems like a rather frightening and anarchic force: it can create a fiction and proclaim it truth. Witnessing Savonarola unable to discredit the "visions" of Camilla Rucellai (Chapter 52, "A Prophetess"), and Tito's lies to Tessa, Romola, and all of Florence, and finally Savonarola's confusing "confession," the reader must conclude that creative imagination without any judgment, or barriers, makes reality into competing romances that eventually cancel one another out. Keeping the distance

⁹Dream-like imaginings are mentioned in Sadoff, Welsh, and Carpenter. Bonaparte, in her depiction of *Romola* as epic poem, discusses the quest and epic tendencies in the book. Any thesis-oriented approach to *Romola* will insist upon its corruption of history, but Shaw is most sweeping in his denunciation of the work's use of history. Carpenter discusses the motif of wish-fulfillment. Weisenfarth addresses the work as myth and legend. Booth and Levine both notice the fairy-tale elements of *Romola*. Leavis pejoratively dismisses *Romola* as an inferior work.

between romance and reality is the role of the reader--the creator of the fiction can tell us anything; the power of judging is the responsibility of the reader.

"Love and adventure" do not play their traditional romance role in *Romola*, since the heroine is distinctly limited in her ability to experience either. Still, "love and adventure" are present in Tito's portion of the plot in the earlier part of the narrative. Unlike a Radcliffe romance, *Romola*, in keeping Romola from pursuing love or adventure, maintains Romola as a Victorian heroine in a passive state, her romance desires (except for the ability to repress them) displaced onto other characters (Welsh 170). Romola does experience love and adventure, however. While love is short-lived for Romola, her adventure as a heroine only begins when her limited faith in the power of love fails. Her ultimate adventure is how she recovers that faith. Because of Romola's marginal position in Florence's politics, her adventure, unlike that of Tito, or one of Scott's heroes, cannot impinge directly on world-historical events. While we may see Romola's adventure as a bildungsroman (DeJong 16), a philosophical quest (Newton 15), or an epic simile for all of human history (Bonaparte 23), the question of the place of history in the romance with respect to her remains a problem.

In order to understand Eliot's appropriation of the romance form, we need to define it. First of all, since Scott is the English novelist Eliot most revered, it is likely that Eliot conceived *Romola* as a project utilizing some of his techniques.¹⁰ It is continually suggested that Eliot selected Renaissance Florence as a setting in order to work out some philosophical ideas bearing on her own Victorian England in a similarly volatile time period. It seems likelier, though, that Eliot was drawn to the period in order to examine particular philosophies of history (and have the reader examine them

¹⁰See Witemeyer.

as well), rather than posing the arid moral tale of Romola's self-invention of Positivism by process of eliminating other philosophies, or by a synthesis of other philosophies.

Eliot uses the synthetic qualities of the romance to project a potentially optimistic course for history, even though for individual characters the varieties of experience synthesized results in apparent stasis or tragedy. Eliot can also use the Romance-form to accumulate patriarchally-created history and its elements--in *Romola*, intrigue, death, politics, objectification of women as icons rather than humans, silencing women--and put them all in the "feminine" form of romance, making them subordinate in some ways to a woman's (Romola's) personal and private history (biography) within the larger masculine and traditional important "history" of Florence. Instead of being relegated to a role, Romola can be a focal point and subject of the reader's interest in Renaissance Florence.

Bonaparte sees Romola as the character who lives all of human history as part of her epic, and thus universal, role. Dean's book starts defining the romance with the epic work, the *Odyssey*, and works its way to Shakespeare's romance plays, identifying 13 characteristics of the romance genre: 1) marvel, risk, adventure, 2) generational differences, 3) pageantry, 4) claim to historical relevance, 5) wandering journey towards 'home,' 6) pious main character, 7) idealized male-female relationships, 8) protagonist's mental agility, 9) balance of blessing and sorrow, 10) directing influence of a supernatural power, 11) distinct mark by which the hero/heroine is identified, 12) shipwreck or other catastrophe of apparent loss, 13) magical wonders (Dean 3-4). *Romola* possesses all these elements, except the idealized male-female relations: in this respect, Eliot continues her realism, but also points out that the prevalent attitudes of the time towards male-female relationships encourage the

fairy-tale romance concept in women, while the reality is that marriages occur due to the desires of male family members for alliances or finance. Because real communication between men and women is limited by the society's stereotyped view of their respective roles, Tito and Romola's marriage could not have possibly fulfilled Romola's wishes unless Tito had broken entirely with Florentine convention. As he becomes more assimilated into the fabric of Florentine society, Tito ceases to behave as a romance hero. Romola, who continues to be outside the mainstream of the society, knows her dream has failed but continues to have "romantic" ideals--thus her attempt to go to Venice and shift for herself, the desire that Savonarola finds egotistical. If indeed the novel is a Positivist manifesto (see Bullen, Shuttleworth, Paxton), some humans must take on the task of "directing influence," and this figure appears to be Romola. The Positivist readings aside, the people of Florence certainly believe in supernatural powers--Savonarola's visions and the power of Madonna dell'Imprunetta, and their patron, St. John the Baptist. Romola's own resurrected optimism, when she decides that Savonarola cannot be entirely robbed of significance in her life, despite his death, is portrayed by Carroll as a miracle (200).

The miraculous "identifying marks" that so identify the hero do not seem to apply to Romola. Mary Wilson Carpenter builds a fascinating interpretation upon Romola's initial appearance in the novel as a "woman clothed with the sun," because of the golden hair which in Carpenter's mind associates Romola with the so-described female character in the Book of Revelation (Carpenter 107-110). More obviously, Romola's hair is halo-like ("golden crown" in the "Epilogue"), while her identity blurs with that of the Madonna frequently in the text, in which the poor of Florence designate her "Madonna Romola" (Chapter 42, "Romola in Her Place," and Chapter 43, "The Unseen Madonna.") The "golden crown," though, can be queenly as well as saintly, which is

more evident in Romola's other appellations, "Ariadne" (Tito's conception of her, which she abdicates in Chapter 36, "Ariadne Discrowns Herself,") and Antigone, the royal daughter of Oedipus, in the guise of which Piero di Cosimo paints her, and whose battle with Creon she emulates with Savonarola (Bonaparte 203). This ambiguity of role, though, would not seem in keeping with the clear identifying mark of the heroine, unless this ambiguity itself is her identifying characteristic. In Chapter 2, we talked about how Juliet's lack of identity became an identifying mark itself. In Chapter 3, women's real identifying marks, such as those of Mary Cave, risk being lost and forgotten in other people's stories. In Chapter 4, Sylvia's relatives fear an identifying mark such as a red cloak--it would be preferable not to jar with socially imposed roles. Romola, too, tries to conform to the imposed roles, and she seems to conform to these roles more comfortably than a character like Sylvia does, for a time being so committed to a mode of existence, who like Caroline in her close identification with the speakers of "The Castaway" and "Le Jeune Captive," becomes someone else--the Madonna, Antigone, Ariadne. Romola becomes other people's wish-fulfillment. Ultimately, though, she always rebels. As Bonaparte suggests, Romola takes two trips through "the center of indifference" (Bonaparte 204). Both times, Romola is prompted by a renewed sense of egotism to stop being what other people want. While most critics agree that Eliot does not condone egotism, the book shows its necessity; the purpose of an individual's life is not to live for other people to the point that ego vanishes, for Tito, while he is selfish, is also all things to all people, rejecting marks of a definite identity such as his father, the ring, and his own name when he tells Tessa to call him "Naldo."

Romola's identifying mark, therefore, could be her ability to absorb these other identities and still eventually be herself--to be queen, saint, martyr and regular

woman all at once. Such a cluster might be more possible in the world of romance, where *The Winter's Tale's* Perdita can be both shepherdess and princess, but she remains unaware of her noble birth till the denouement. In a more complex way, Romola can have all these identities, but she is not aware (historically) in the early chapters that she will become a follower of Savonarola, nor that she will stop following him, or what identity she will have in the future. The lack of stasis in such a position is in sharp contrast to the questions of Lillo in the "Epilogue" about what he will "be" in the future--for men there seems to be an initial choice that women are not permitted, but the unfortunate result for all is that everyone becomes one thing, rather than metamorphosing through a series of enlightening stages.

A comparison of Eliot's technique to Scott's here seems appropriate. In Scott's novels, the emerging characteristic of the historical romance is its status as a syncretic genre. In a story such as *Redgauntlet*, the diverse building blocks--epistolary, picaresque, bildungsroman, Gothic, folk tale and ballad genres--can all be easily separated and discerned. In *Romola*, Felicia Bonaparte clearly identifies for us a web of classical allusions, and other critics have suggested the other types of allegory, such as Positivist. Eliot also draws on the history of Florence, the biography of Savonarola, and the sensation novel in her depiction of the Tito-Baldassarre plot. Eliot does not allow these genres to stay as discontiguous as Scott does. Perhaps Eliot has succeeded too well in hiding the lines in the genre-mix, since she is most apt to be blamed for the unintegrated state of genres not expected in realistic novels than Scott is for his more obvious digressions. The difference in critical attitude may be related to the gender/genre split that Ina Ferris describes in the literary history of historical novel criticism (Chapter 7). Scott's technique of broad scene painting and exhaustive digression can be seen as comic relief in a Shakespearean tradition, or more seriously,

as the redeeming educative value readers expected to locate in his works. Eliot, writing later when an aesthetic of unity is more highly regarded than in the 1820's, may be seen as attempting to practice Scott's virtues as historical romance writer, as well as preserving the "illusion of reality" and detachment more expected of Victorian novelists.

Scott's *Waverley* bears some important resemblances to *Romola*. Both *Waverley* and *Romola* are acted upon by various outside forces and witness the death of the most influential voice (MacIvor and Savonarola). Edward *Waverley* differs from *Romola* in that he finds himself easily swayed into competing idealisms that employ a similar code of honor, justice and benign regard for their supporters because he follows personalities rather than ideologies. His unanalytical mind is easily swayed to sympathy by style, rather than content. *Waverley* is an example of how an ordinary citizen can be buffeted and tossed by history's vicissitudes; by making *Waverley* an uncritical character, Scott can introduce us "objectively" to both sides of the conflict. *Romola*, rather than being an unwitting pawn to larger forces, is a character through whom the reader can see a growing historical and critical knowledge. *Romola* cannot control the forces around her, but she can choose how to respond to them once she becomes aware of their existence. Since a central chapter in *Romola*'s story is entitled "Romola's Waking" (Chapter 68), her growing awareness would seem to be an important theme in Eliot's mind. *Waverley*'s awareness never seems to develop; his circumstances merely change.

According to Wolfgang Iser, Sir Walter Scott's presentation of history in the historical romance, *Waverley*, breaks new ground in showing human conduct and events as gaining "verisimilitude by history," rather than by using norms, as his eighteenth century predecessors used (87). Therefore, Iser goes on to argue, Scott's

concept of reality "no longer serves to illustrate moral norms but, instead, is taken as an end in itself. It can only be successfully disclosed through the 'wandering viewpoint' of the reader" (Iser 87).

This is a key concept in not reading *Romola*'s history too reductively. Eliot particularly disliked being called a didactic writer (Graver 10). The "reality" of the history of Renaissance Florence is conveyed, unlike Scott's *Waverley*-technique, through the device of three major characters--Tito, Romola, and Savonarola. Eliot uses Renaissance Florence, as Scott uses the 1745 rebellion, to show moral ambiguity and the coexistence of conflicting norms. Instead of having a single character reflect the "wavering" values, Eliot has each character face the changing historical situation. Tito is most like *Waverley* in his chameleon-like "adoption" of new "values" to suit his new "audience" of conspirators in Florentine society, but Tito does have his own values that guide him--values that claim none of these factions deserves real allegiance, so Tito may exploit them all to his best advantage. Tito is almost a demonic parody of *Waverley*, for while Scott's hero believes everyone and is quickly swayed in the heat of the moment by the personal appeal (the result of which are his wildly oscillating loyalties), Tito is believed by everyone and possesses conflicting allegiances completely by design. Tito "is safe" up to a point in Florence's shifts because his position of trust from all groups puts him into the same position as *Waverley*--he can be claimed by all. In "The Mask of the Furies," Chapter 66, Tito's position has also allowed him to be rejected by all.

Savonarola, like extremist Jacobites, is unflinchingly committed to ideas that he will not revise in the face of historical change. Of course, Eliot makes us see the subtle connection between total commitment and egotism. Like Fergus MacIvor, Savonarola cannot get around the possibility that if his cause is not as sacred as he thinks, and if

the ends justify the means, he may be doing his own will in order to maintain himself in the position to which he has become accustomed, rather than supporting the holy cause he claims to pursue.

In contrast to Savonarola or Tito, Romola, in her continuously revised but non-leaderly role in Florence, shows adaptability with less corruption from power. Is her survival, though, due primarily to her voicelessness? No character in *Waverley* truly corresponds to Romola. From Scott's novel, one gets the impression that historical events, from the perspective of most who participate in them, just happen, for ill-comprehended reasons. Gaskell presents the Siege of Acre in much the same way. Iser theorizes that Scott allows the reader to gain a more comprehensive view through the assembling of pieces of the past from various "eyewitnesses" (Iser 90). In *Romola*, it is Romola herself who is the main eyewitness; unlike Tito or *Waverley*, she is not an outsider. It would follow that the reader's ability to assemble fragments into coherent history would occur through Romola. Eliot's attitude towards the historical moment, though, seems quite different from that of Scott. To Scott, all past history of Scotland is important and is not only of novel interest to *Waverley*, but has a bearing upon the rebellion of 1745, as well as upon the 1814 reader. If we read Eliot in the epic sense, we find her interested in all of human history, but the details of this history seem fuzzy and half-forgotten by Florentines and Eliot's contemporaries alike. While Scott assembled research for most of his novels, he also had drawn on local oral history for *Waverley* and other Scotch novels. Eliot, as we know from her "Quarry" for *Romola*, had to get material about the distant time primarily from books. This history that Eliot finds exists even in the setting she describes--in the "Proem" and throughout the text in traces such as the hidden icon of Madonna dell'Imprunetta, who may actually be the offspring of a pagan fertility goddess--but such history survives as an image, like

that of the Madonna, shrouded in mystery and legend, but hidden from sight or scientific study. Bardo's library and studies of ancient inscriptions both seek to classify scientifically and analyze the past, but Bardo's library (and, symbolically, the comprehensive knowledge it had contained) is sold and scattered, while Baldassarre's memory is shattered by his traumatic slavery and rejection.

Willing eyewitnesses to history appear to be lacking, in sharp contrast to Scott's balladeers, backcountry Highlanders and knowledgeable old-timers. What little pieces of history an eyewitness may claim, even the repetition of a legend, is raw material from which the reader may recreate the context. In *Romola*, instead of testifying to their experiences in the world, people are testifying to their visions of the future. Instead of preserving the fragments from which the past may be known, these fragments are called vanities and collected and burned--from volumes of pagan poems to headdresses and jewelry. In a parallel to the story of Tito, who tries to break all his ties to the past and begin again in Florence, the city of Florence, in its attempt at self-purification, is cutting its ties to the past with disastrous results. In the typological approach to the Bible used by Savonarola, the past is only important insofar as it predicts the future. When Piero di Cosimo bitterly charges Romola for indifference to the burning of poets' works she has already read, we see the artist as unwilling to part with any fragments, no matter how pernicious, that contribute to a comprehensive (and Cottom would suggest "liberal intellectual") picture of the past. Romola, at this point, only actively steps in to retrieve the aggrieved Tessa's necklace; she does not condemn the conflagration of culture or the past. Later, in the "Epilogue," when we see Romola preserving the memory of Savonarola, as well as one of the poets whom he might have condemned, we know that she will not suffer any more fragments of the past to be lost--even the story of Tito will be meaningful.

The village to which Romola "drifts away," then, may be seen not as an intrusion of romance, but as a more primitive Italy, where less has been forgotten (like Scott's highlands). Romola's presence in the village is not a retreat to "Nature," either: the dead Jews whom Romola discovers had probably fled the Spanish Inquisition and pirates, all traces of the real Renaissance Mediterranean world. Unlike Savonarola in Florence, Romola comes to heal rather than purify--the result is constructive, rather than destructive. In his rationale for the execution of Bernardo del Nero, Savonarola suggests that, with the goal of a sacred and purifying mission in mind, the sacrifice of many people would not be too great. Human life is rather a stumbling block for the recreation of heaven on earth. To Romola, conserving human life, at all costs, is more important. In preserving these lives and their experiences, she is making eyewitnesses to history, and preserving more fragments of the past than her father or Baldassarre ever could.

If collecting the fragments is the closest we may come to seeing history, then the reader/investigator's role as interpreter is enhanced. Iser says "In *Waverley*, Scott has set history free from its chains of fact; he uses the imagination of his hero to communicate the live reality behind the facts" (96). *Waverley* is a living dialectic--as a "reality" in the phenomenal world, he experiences being both a supporter of the Hanoverian rule and the Jacobites; as a filter for "philosophical thought," he moves from the philosophy disconnected from reality--the romance, to a philosophy that incorporates his experiences and the stories of history told to him by others. Ultimately, *Waverley* cannot explain history to himself very well once reality has challenged his romance-views, but he has come to be part of real life, rather than dweller in a dream world, and on some levels this experience is that of the defeated

Jacobins themselves, whose desire to restore their king seems a peculiarly romantic notion in the post-French Revolutionary age.

Having successfully applied Dean's lists of romance characteristics to *Romola*, and pointed out the similarities her worked shares with Scott's, we should bravely designate the work as Eliot did herself, as historical romance. Now we must ask ourselves whether the role of the reader in such a book is similar or different from that of the reader of "philosophical historical novels," or if, indeed, *Romola* may be seen as a philosophical historical novel at all.

3) *Romola* and the Reader--Becoming a Philosopher

Since most moments in *Romola* are endowed with more than one level of interpretive significance, the problems with most readings of the book are the over-reading of certain passages to throw others into sharp relief. This tendency does highlight the relative freedom of the reader's role in *Romola* (as opposed to other works by Eliot directed to a broader audience) and the importance the reader plays in rendering the book's history and philosophy intelligible. I do not think Eliot wrote a secret key of "Positivism" or allegorical allusions which unlock the mysteries of *Romola* only to a "liberal intellectual" or well-educated reader, nor do I think the "secret key" is that there is no such secret key, or that Eliot was living out her own wish-fulfillment in the book, making it irrelevant to anyone else. The reader of *Romola* is encouraged by every means possible to become an independent philosopher of history, using Renaissance Florence as a synthetic starting point for modern history (meaning the reader's own time, not necessarily Victorian England, references to which are few and general). Whether *Romola* is to be taken as a saint-like exemplum or not remains a reader's interpretive right. David Carroll argues that all Eliot's

characters "eventually reach the impasse, the oscillation, or vertigo in which meaning and verisimilitude end" (314). I might concur that George Eliot's suggestion to the reader is that historical interpretation is difficult and not necessarily scientific, but certainly she would not see meaning or the act of interpretation as the dead end that Carroll suggests. Many people in *Romola* interpret history (Bardo, Bernardo, Baldassarre, Savonarola, Tito, Romola), and what the novel shows us is that (as Carroll himself suggests), interpretation is a tricky thing, often terribly distorted by our own unconscious desires. Eventually, Romola uses her life-experience to frame a moral history lesson for Lillo. Romola keeps the memory of Savonarola alive, and like him, the other arbiters of history have been settled into roles in her moral universe in which they can be useful to her. Whether or not this is a worthwhile method of historical interpretation in a larger sense is left to the reader. As we have discussed earlier, the role of the historical novel-reader, to Eliot, seems akin to the Spirit of Florence in the "Proem"--dislocated from a once-familiar world. The theme of dislocation persists through the first 26 chapters in the book, in which Tito Melema is the principle center of consciousness.

K.M. Newton has astutely pointed out that *Romola* sets up the character of Tito to fail, yet his life is based on many assumptions of the modern Positivist to which Eliot herself was attracted (13). One of these Positivist ideas would have been that history was not necessarily "going forward." While this negative viewpoint might be a "tragedy" of history, from a human perspective, it is not a "helpful" belief, whereas the "romance" (Christine Krueger's term--"Speaking Like A Woman" 138) of apocalyptic vision-history is. Hegel's method allows an idealistic synthesis to be formed, and to absorb even tragedy--hence we might even call the form of *The Philosophy of History* itself a romance narrative in its own right. It should be readily

apparent by now that the theories about Eliot's philosophy of history identify it with two utterly opposing views--the fundamental lack of belief in history as progressive or perhaps even meaningful at all, and the liberal intellectual view of history that Cottom articulates in order to criticize, which has a definite ideology of history as progressive and of liberal intellectuals as identifiers and purveyors of history's truths. Perhaps the confusion arises from Eliot's synthetic position.

Eliot's position, while synthetic, does not go so far as to endorse Tito's total relativism; in a way, Tito seems a parody of Positivism. While Tito on the surface appears to reflect the classicism behind "liberal intellectualism," Tito has no agenda of inflicting his values on others to retain a sense of superiority. Ultimately, Tito is a cynic who fails to understand any set of values other than self-gratifying ones: he lives in fear of someone inflicting an incomprehensible set of values upon him. These traits are evidenced in his assigning of self-interest to Savonarola and his discomfort with Florence's churches (Chapter 64 "The Prophet in His Cell," and Chapter 3 "The Barber Shop"). The pursuit of his "personal romance" of abandoning the past and defeating the attempts of others to use him is the complete opposite of the "continuity and solidarity" that Eliot found inevitably necessary in her writing, "Historic Guidance." Total comprehension, total objectivity, total subjectivity and total control all are fictions in the world of *Romola*, and the calculating Tito as our window on Florence is how Eliot introduces the vanity of such aims. Tito relies upon certainty and facts to plan his schemes; he relies upon the perceptions of others being less careful and studied than his own. Tito depends upon the essential sincerity of other people: his downfall comes from the machinations of Cei, whose values mirror Tito's own. Tito is horrified by the material existence of "hideous smoked Madonnas; fleshless saints in mosaic . . . skin-clad skeletons hanging on crosses . . . women and monks with heads

aside in perpetual lamentation" (Chapter 3, 31). It might seem that Tito merely dislikes the impression of pain caused by these figures, for he soon after makes a case for "the wise philosophy of Epicurus" (33). Tito sees the Christian mysteries as barbarism: possibly the true horror inspired by the artworks in the church is not their overwhelmingly conveyed impression that life is suffering, but for Tito, who understands no Christian context for them, suffering without meaning or purpose. The most interesting image in Tito's catalogue of horror is that of the "hideous smoked Madonnas," since they ought not inspire the same sense of suffering that the other images do. The smoke refers to the lingering smoke of incense inside well-attended churches. Why does Tito hate this so?

It would seem that the lack of absolutes in *Romola* would endorse Tito's relativism and put Eliot in opposition to ideas such as Hegel's Absolute Spirit. Romola's later equation with the Madonna, and Tessa's identification with the Madonna make Tito's reaction even more problematic. The smoke wafting through the air of a church's interior is something tenuously connecting the material with the immaterial. The Madonna, merely a statue, is endowed with powers Tito will not acknowledge. Just as Romola is repelled by the seeming irrationality of Dino's visions, Tito feels repelled by the mysterious power of Christianity. Both Tito and Romola try to dismiss the existence of "things not seen," and yet Eliot never allows us to completely discredit the spiritual, as opposed to the material. The possibility of the spiritual exists; therefore, it must be taken into account. Acknowledging only the material world allows one to evade what cannot be explained rationally, and is therefore a flawed perspective.

When the narrator shifts to Romola as the center of consciousness in Chapter 27, one reason may be that Tito's perspective has been sufficiently illuminated. Also, the narrator may wish the reader to remain estranged and objective, and Tito's success has

made him too much a part of the mainstream. Our attention shifts to Romola because she, not Tito, is disenfranchised. As I have pointed out in section 2, Romola's "romance" is the opposite of Tito's in that while Tito pursues egotistical desires, Romola pursues the romance of ego-suppression. The reader ought not see the "moral" of *Romola* as ego-suppression. Bernard Paris takes something of the same view in his description of Eliot's "third stage of moral development," which Paris sees as a result of passing through subjective and objective stages (which would seem rather Hegelian):

. . . the individual's painful sense of the world's independent, alien existence is moderated by his connection, through the web of relation, with the rest of existence, and his awareness of other human beings as subjective objects. . . .

The movement from subjectivity to objectivity, from living in and for self to living in and for others, with its concomitant growth in vision and sympathy through experience and suffering, is the basic configuration of moral and psychological experience in George Eliot's novels. (Paris 147)

Paris sees achieving objectivity as the goal for Eliot's characters. This third stage need not emphasize living for others as much as Paris thinks, because, as we have discussed, Romola lives for others her whole life: only when she starts to live for herself do we see her resolve any conflicts.

The reader may at first see Tito's and Romola's experiences as parallel. The differences between the two are not merely moral. Tito, as a man, has far more choice in how he will participate in history and direct his future than Romola does. Romola slowly concludes that she must take an active role herself, not just listening to others,

and not just running away. The reader, similarly, is allowed an increasingly active role in the course of the novel. The narrator explains Tito's way of thinking in much detail (Chapter 9, "A Man's Ransom"), and Romola's thought-process is made much of earlier in the novel (Chapter 15, "The Dying Message"; Chapter 32, "A Revelation"; Chapter 36, "Ariadne Discrowns Herself"). Towards the end of the book, though, we are told more of what Romola said or did, not how we are supposed to understand it. After her return to Florence under Savonarola's influence, it seems Romola's ego is so suppressed the narrator has nothing to talk about; the anguished musings of the earlier chapters disappear, only to return in Chapter 61, "Drifting Away." The flashes of Romola's personality evident between Chapters 42 and 60 occur as defiant speeches, or her attempt to embody sainthood through her actions. In Chapter 44, "The Visible Madonna," we can read:

Fra Girolamo's voice had waked in her mind a reason for living, apart from personal enjoyment and personal affection; but it was a reason that seemed to need feeding with greater forces than she possessed within herself and her submissive use of all the offices of the Church was simply a watching and waiting if by any means fresh strength might come. The pressing problem for Romola just then was not to settle questions of controversy, but to keep alive that flame of unselfish emotion by which a life of sadness might still be a life of active love. (389)

Here we can clearly see that the inhuman qualities assigned to Romola by readers (Carpenter 105-6) stem from Romola's own desire to abandon self.

While Tito clearly wishes to forget the past, Eliot does not wholly endorse Romola's completely conservative attitude towards history. Interpretation of history's

remnants is up to *Romola*, or the reader, which I believe supports the concept of *Romola* as philosophical historical novel. Proving the case for the earlier novels as philosophical historical novels is simpler than for *Romola*. George Eliot, though, was seen as a moral arbiter, a sage-like figure who led readers into imaginative sympathy. To leave her reader without a definite moral "lesson" would seem to be uncharacteristic of Eliot, and actually, *Romola* is something of an anomaly amongst her works. Except in examining Tito's and Savonarola's motives, Eliot's narrator in *Romola* is far less intrusive and moralistic than usual, far less ironic and detached than the narrative voice in *Middlemarch* (Graver 278, 286-8). This aspect of the work alone makes *Romola* resemble more the works of other women writers I have discussed here, writing historical novels. The reader has more responsibility in *Romola* than Eliot generally permits.

How does seeing the book as "romance" affect the reader's attitude towards history in *Romola*? For one thing, when the reader abandons the overwhelming emphasis upon realism, the history starts to look more relevant to the plot. The history is *not* merely exhaustive background erudition. As Bonaparte suggests, it develops a whole allegorical level to the plot. In every sense, though, once we see the various characters in pursuit of their own private romances we begin to see how historical forces and movements prosper and fall--the King of France is for Savonarola an intervention from above, endorsing his visions. For the Florentines as a group, the legendary beliefs about their "unseen Madonna" can be given credit for the end of a blockade. The future of Florence after the death of Lorenzo di Medici becomes an open field for the pursuit of other people's dreams.

This raises the question of whether the romance form used in *Romola* simply circles around to idealistic wish-fulfillment--*Romola* is freed by the deaths of various

individuals who had impeded the progress of her own desires, so that in a properly heroic way, she can show us that denying self may lead to miraculous results, such as getting what one wants anyway. If we read the book in this utterly romantic way, we have a patriarchal norm being romanticized and apparently endorsed by Eliot.

Daniel Cottom sees Eliot herself as pursuing a romance, that of liberal intellectual discourse as social reality (72-3). In Cottom's view, Eliot carries out such a project by making individuals the focus of her fiction, and then characterizing these individuals in such a way that they become universal figures. Cottom suggests that Eliot, while giving the semblance of scientific and microscopic examination of the individual, makes free use of stereotypes in setting the reader's impression (73). Cottom's premises depend upon a distance between the realistic novel and Eliot's technique (which he implies is essentially pseudo-realistic). The romance, though, does employ types. *Romola* would appear to be a disproving case to many of Cottom's positions because it does not seem to aspire to the kind of realism he describes.

Apparently Victorians were not as keen in reading about the history of other people in whom they could not immediately identify themselves (Spittles 178). If we extend the contention that Eliot was writing to her contemporaries about contemporary problems using Renaissance Florence as a vehicle for these "revelations," then Eliot's work cannot be relevant to us now. The generally unfavorable attitude towards *Romola* from its publication to the present could perhaps be explained as poor writing on Eliot's part to her contemporary audience and irrelevance to us now, but that would not explain the few favorable but important interpretations of the work.¹¹

¹¹ Robert Browning called *Romola*: "the noblest and most heroic prose-poem" (*Letters* IV: 96). The *Saturday Review* said: "No reader of *Romola* will lay it down without admiration and few without regret" (rpt. in Haight, *A Centenary*, 21). The *Westminster Review* mentions the work's lack of popularity, but calls *Romola* "its author's greatest work" (Haight 344). Henry James, in an 1866 article, says it is "the most important of George

David Carroll's suggestion that Eliot focuses upon a hermeneutic problem in *Romola* would explain some of the book's lack of appeal, since his interpretation makes the book very concerned with ideas that the reader might not necessarily find related to the plot or of much interest. Still, his impression that this theme is closely linked to the nineteenth century, and in fact comments upon Eliot's society, seems false (Carroll 181). Rather than following Carroll's model of *Romola* as listener who finally is elevated to become an interpreter herself, and thus a model to the reader, Eliot creates an atmosphere in which the reader must absorb the plethora of historical detail, the various plot lines and levels of allegory and try to decide what it all means. Nearly all the critics I have mentioned have pointed to closed circles of interpretation for "meaning," since those interpretations provide an answer to the typically asked question of the book, "What does this historical moment and *Romola's* participation in it mean?" By a closed hermeneutic circle, I mean that we can use a system of interpretation that can absorb stray details successfully; we can see history as having a definite movement and direction so that its progress may be projected by the reader. If, on the contrary, we apply some version of Hegelian dialectics, and Fackenheim's view of them as encompassing closure and radical openness at the same time, we can see Florence as a society suspended in tension between its closed sense of tradition and its progressive sense of change. It may then be an oversimplification to see *Romola* as manifesting a synthetic, free, and therefore progressive view. It may be equally a simplification to see *Romola* as enclosed, limited and tainted by the patriarchal values she has encountered, thus reflecting a regressive view. The complication of this mirrors the complication of clearly identifying objects as associated with only one perspective in Hegelian dialectics.

Eliot's works" (Haight 52). Hutton's review, in the *Spectator*, was also favorable. (Holmstrum 56-64).

Hayden White conceives of Hegel's philosophy of history as reflecting the pattern of classical Greek tragedy--*pathos* (feeling), to *agon* (conflict), to *sparagmos* (tearing apart the subject), followed by *anagnorsis* (denouement/resolution) (White 126). The tragedy in *Romola* is Tito's plot, significantly associated with him as a Greek Bacchic figure, so each step can be clearly seen in an allegory for the collapse of classical culture. This tragic motif, though, in Hegel, is contained within the parameters of a larger history that White would identify as comic in a Christian sense--liberation and reconciliation with God (White 127). The tragic sense of history can be amended by pulling back and studying the larger picture, which in *Romola* contains Romola and Savonarola. Savonarola, like Tito, is a tragic figure who is "torn apart" physically, psychologically, and spiritually by the larger world. Romola, too, may be seen as a tragic figure on an individual level, but unlike Tito and Savonarola, her lack of impact upon the wider historical stage spares her the backlash of the mob. Therefore, is the end of *Romola* the same as the end of Hegel's philosophy of history? Is there a redemptive and all-absorbing "end" of history in *Romola*? The answer has to be both yes and no. For Romola herself, perhaps the ideal end of liberation and reconciliation has been reached--she seems peaceful at the book's close. Lillo, however, represents the uncertainty of the future, which the reader of *Romola*, living in the Christian era between two dispensations, cannot help but notice. The next question is whether this conclusion points out the flaws of Hegel's idealism or the fragility of Romola's, or if we take the deconstructive posture that we cannot know, and that is the point? It seems that what Eliot has managed to do is resolve the plot while preserving the epistemological tensions of the theme. Like Scott, Eliot is bound to historical facts. Since Eliot has created a character who can survive the historical conflicts of fifteenth-century Florence, Romola is free to follow the romance ideal of

perpetual return in her conclusion, but if the perpetual return is to Bardo, Savonarola and herself, one can only wonder if this return will be progress or not--or whether the return will be to the romance itself--Lillo pursuing the pleasure he desires. The romance, itself, then, may be a closed hermeneutic circle that obviates progress. Such an interpretation is the one Cottom applies to Eliot's whole corpus. If, however, Eliot's ending is the open/closed circle of Hegel, then the system is created to be all-encompassing ("God's kingdom is something wider," as Romola says to Savonarola in Chapter 59, "Pleading," 499), but "closed" and finished at the same time. In reaching an ideal "end" to history constructed from her own position in it, Romola can mirror the position of the philosopher in Hegel's system.

When Romola goes to the outskirts of "God's kingdom" in "Drifting Away" (Chapter 61), she is following an egotistical desire to be free of Tito, Savonarola, and the demands of Florence, where "her place" has been to relieve the sufferings of others, rather than her own. Romola does not flee Florence to live for self, though. She wants to die because living for others has grown so intolerable. This same impulse has led Tito to deny Baldassarre and Dino to deny Bardo earlier in the book; Welsh (180) finds the similarity a sinister one. When Romola is recalled to activity by the baby's cry, she acts instinctively. When Romola nurses the plague-stricken villagers back to health, she is both participating in material history of the village, and also *living for herself* with others. Romola is not a member of the village, as she is a member of Florentine society, yet she builds a tie to the new place through identification with individual people rather than with her own role as ego-suppressing Florentine "Madonna." Typically, the "Epilogue" of the novel is interpreted as Romola's eventual triumph over ego and ascent to sainthood. It appears, though, that the closing chapters and epilogue testify to Romola's abandonment of the romance of crushing her ego

entirely and instead focus upon a philosophical reconciliation between the historical/material and the romantic/idealist. In this reconciliation, Romola comes out of her crisis at peace because she has finally abandoned the masculinely-imposed ideal of the ego-less woman, and has accepted that she may choose her own role and way of coping with the material/historical context. We are not told what Romola has been doing between the final chapter and the "Epilogue," but hers has been an "eager life" (525). When we find her chiding Lillo for his egotistical future plans, is she chiding the egotistic desire, or the romance of assuming that the realization of his plans will make him happy? I assume the latter. When Romola suggests Lillo might be a scholar, like her father, Lillo thinks she is recommending a difficult and lonely profession (anti-egotistical, hermetic). Homans has suggested that the idea indicates Romola's assent to the patriarchal discourse (Lillo has been reading Petrarch in the scene). Having seen Bardo's scholarship in the novel as both inhuman (Dino's view), and egotistic, why is Romola recommending it to Lillo, especially when Tito is the book's stunning example of how scholarship may achieve precisely the egotistic desires Lillo has mentioned? Even though Bardo is the example she uses, the benefit Romola seems to be speaking of is her own--her own synthetic moral attitude arising from the romance of egotism in competition with the romance of selflessness.

If we compare the conclusion of *Romola* to that of *Sylvia's Lovers*, it is surprising to discover people have not faulted Eliot for denying Romola the martyr's death that Gaskell is faulted for giving Philip. Perhaps this is because many readers see Romola as rather dead in the "Epilogue" anyway, her peace purchased at the price of the reader's interest, since transcendent beings seem so little like the rest of us. Various critics have suggested that Romola's victory is over the patriarchy, history, or ego. The romance ending, unlike the comedy or tragedy, ends upon a less concordant tone.

Romance is the mode of *Romola's* "Epilogue," and this is the key to its multivalent interpretations, its elements of White's tragic and comic modes. The happiness of regaining what has been lost (in *Romola's* case, family ties and faith in her fellow humans) and facing a future without disunity is what makes a romance-ending happy. The past, though, tends to color the attitude towards the future on the part of the reader, even if the characters seem unaware. For example, in Hawthorne's romance, "Young Goodman Brown," the protagonist triumphs over the devil's temptations in his crisis of faith. The collapse of faith in his fellow-humans, though, makes Young Goodman Brown into an old misanthrope, permanently changed by the crisis, and, to the reader, a pathetic and lonely figure. Essentially, Eliot creates an artificial tableau at the end of *Romola* to provide romance-type closure to the book. Even the happy domestic scene of the "Epilogue" does not present untempered bliss for the reader. The voices of Lillo and *Romola* reiterate the same conflict between the pursuit of private romance and the adoption of a larger vision that has just resulted in the historical intrigues of Florence that we have just finished reading. *Romola's* plot seems resolved, but Lillo's is yet to come. The impression of history the reader is left with, then, may be cyclical, progressive, or static, depending upon how the scene is interpreted. The irresolution of this is perhaps more "real" than the more conventional denouements we have seen in Burney, Brontë, and Gaskell (marriage, marriage, death).

More systematically, *Romola* becomes a philosopher of history in her story. While I have been arguing for the reading of *Romola* as a romance, I see it as a romance in the Walter Scott tradition--historical reality is still very important. *Romola*, like *Waverley*, begins the story little-versed in the outside world, and she has the added burden of being inheritor to her father's assumptions, drawn from classical authors. She approaches the contradictions she discovers in this larger world more critically

and decisively than does Waverley. Still, Savonarola sways her from the decision to leave Tito and Florence. Those who argue for *Romola* as Positivist icon could accept her as embodying a "real" dialectic as well as representing the dialectic synthesis of pagan and Christian elements into the Positivist.

If Waverley and *Romola* are so similar, why does *Romola* come across as so much more decisive than Waverley? Iser claims "the communication of historical reality through the imagination leads almost to a loss of identity in Waverley, for he must be open to all situations but must identify with none" (97). In *Romola*, historical reality is not all filtered through *Romola*'s experience and she does not serve as the reader's main link to historical circumstances. The narrator gives us much historical information. For the first 26 chapters, most idiosyncrasies of Florence are introduced to the reader through the character of Tito, who I said earlier resembled Waverley. Tito, like the reader, is a stranger to Florence; like Waverley, he loses his soul being "open to all situations" while steeling his heart to "identify with none." In Waverley this trait is linked to his Romantic nature; in Tito it is far more sinister. Tito demonstrates the dangers of total relativism. *Romola*, like the reader, possesses an increasingly developed knowledge of the historical situation. More than Waverley, *Romola* becomes a philosopher of history, capable of taking disparate parts and making them into something.

Romola's journey to awareness seems to have caused some readings of *Romola* as *bildungsroman*. This would appear to be an overstated case. *Romola* may be inexperienced at the beginning of the novel, but she is not unformed. She has opinions, but no one to talk to and no license to speak. Unlike Edward Waverley, who is controlled by a romance-attitude towards life, but who has no desire to be a subject or central character in this romance (except, perhaps, in wooing Flora MacIvor), *Romola*

has been fed on stoic attitudes which deny her the right to complain. She finds the mystical visions of Dino suspicious, is offended by his unfilial attitude towards their father, and is aware her father's life is tedious. Romola's main romantic ideal is that the beautiful and the good are synonymous. This supposition quickly falters when Tito proves deceitful. She readily accepts that duty is more important than pleasing herself. Unlike the bildungsroman-heroine Maggie Tulliver, Romola is already self-subdued. Romola only rebels twice--once against Tito, and once against Savonarola. She never rebels against the Stoic philosophy, and she only rebels against Tito and Savonarola when they demonstrate that duty, to them, may not come before self.

Romola's passivity suggests to some critics, such as Booth, that she is a fairy-tale heroine (Booth *GE* 187). Levine suggests that Romola exists in a romance-world, while the other characters in the novel move more in the historical actuality of Florence. For most of the book, I would agree, but like many other commentators, I find "Pleading" (Chapter 59) especially important. Levine ingeniously suggests that realism and romance here clash (Savonarola the historical figure, Romola the romance heroine), but I would suggest that here is one of the instances where Savonarola shows how materialism (a political result) can become entangled in his romance-belief in the future of religious-Florence. The result of the fusion of these beliefs under the auspices of individuals being less important than the general weal of God's kingdom reveals the debasement of Savonarola's ideals. Romola is seeking a material result (allowing Bernardo's appeal) in order to support two ideals--her faith in the Fathers (Bernardo and Savonarola, even though they are on opposing sides) as both good and just. Her faith in the individual (Bernardo) remains unshaken, while her faith in the institutionalized ideal (church and state) collapses due to the apparent effect these concerns have had on Savonarola's relation to the individual human (though he had

previously fought for the right to appeal that is now sought for Bernardo). Eliot seems to be indicating that to be grounded in "reality," moral, historical, and philosophical conclusions must begin with the study of others, rather than with oneself and one's own possibly warped dreams.

Eliot shows us that anti-egotism itself is an impossible romance. The Christian ideal of "dying to self" would appear to see a final realization in *Romola*, and we might assume that this is the Positivist moral--translating the best of Christianity into humanist prophecy. *Romola* makes apparent, though, that complete anti-egotism is as useless a pursuit as self-gratification. Here, it may appear that I am claiming the ideal of sympathy as the touchstone for *Romola*. As Eliot herself asserted, "imaginative sympathy" is what the artist might best help the reader achieve (Paris 124-5). We only can achieve this sympathy through an understanding of our own feelings and projecting them onto the "other." Something of this sort is most apparent in Tessa's conception of the Virgin Mary's love and sympathy for Tessa, who, like the Virgin, is a young mother. Tessa's tendency to see the Virgin as like herself may appear egotistical, but it seems that this is characteristic of the incorporation of the "best self," as Feuerbach would have seen it, into the deified figure. This process of objectifying an ideal and separating it from the self is derided by Feuerbach, but the process itself would appear to be a good one in *Romola*, for it allows contact between both the ideal and the real (or material) and thus is what keeps life from becoming a historical romance. Tessa is more thoroughly and systematically isolated from the real historical existence of Florence by Tito's demands that she have no friends or confidants. When Tessa encounters the collectors for the pyramid of vanities on the street, she is frightened because she is unfamiliar with the religious movement of which they are a part, and because they find her cherished necklace to be a "vain" item.

Tessa is forbidden to have anything but a materialistic and egotistical existence except for her children, but she manages to gain a sense of connection to the spiritual and "imaginative sympathy" (though for a saint, rather than a human) through them. This is in contrast to Felicia Bonaparte's view, since she finds Tessa "not acceptable as a moral model" (223). While living with an abusive stepfather earlier in the book, Tessa had spent much time with the goats and mules, which before she is a mother are like surrogate children to her. Significantly, also, they are helpless beasts, valuable for what they do and subject (possibly) to the same kind of mindless abuse that Tessa is. Eliot shows us, through Tessa, that one need not be as intellectual as Romola to achieve imaginative sympathy. Most of Eliot's novels contain a moral that even the Tessas of the world should find truth in.

Romola, however, is also directed towards the smaller, more intellectual audience that Eliot had envisioned as narrower than her typical readership: "I myself have never expected--I might rather say *intended*--that the book should be as 'popular' in the same sense as the others" (*Letters* 4: 49). This audience includes the more adventuresome, philosophical historical novel-reader. *Romola* is for these people. While acting as the romance-heroine Levine describes, *Romola* has more opportunity to know and understand the "real" world than Tessa does. In most instances, this reality enters *Romola*'s life in the form of Tito, though Savonarola plays a role in connecting her to the larger historical context as well. While stressing *Romola*'s responsibility to Florence, Savonarola sees women's responsibilities as lying outside politics. *Romola* seems to concur in this until her godfather and Savonarola are on opposing sides. Savonarola suggests that *Romola*'s responsibility to her community is to deal with it directly; this puts her more into the position of the incarnated Christ than Savonarola himself, whose Christlike identification can only begin when he is out

of favor and about to be committed to a trial by fire or tortured into a confession of heresy.

4) Reconciling Material and Ideal--Achieving the Spirit of the Age

Romola is, in a way, a martyr who gets to survive. Romola's near-martyrdom is emphasized in her identification, in Piero di Cosimo's mind, with Antigone. Antigone is a major trope in *Romola*. Piero di Cosimo paints Romola as the helpful Antigone with the blind Oedipus (Bardo, Romola's blind father), in a scene from *Oedipus at Colonus*. Eventually, Piero dubs Romola "Madonna Antigone" (Chapter 49, "The Pyramid of the Vanities" 426), emphasizing her fused role in the Christian and Greek (Classic) worlds. Significantly, the mythological role into which Romola is cast by both Bardo and Tito is a Greek one, whereas the visions of Dino, Savonarola and the common people put Romola into a Christian context. Only Savonarola emphasizes Romola's real context as a Florentine, and his vision she eventually rejects as a parochial one in an incident where she assumes the defiant-Antigone role. Another intersection between Hegel and Eliot is their appreciation for *Antigone*.

In his discussion of philosophical history in the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel details the nature of Spirit, how Spirit realizes Idea and finally what "the material in which reason is wrought out" is (38). Hegel asserts that personality, desire, and subjectivity are one side of this; the other side is rationality, will, and the state: individual freedom can only be realized within the collective freedom of the State. Thereafter, Hegel quotes *Antigone*: "The divine commands are not of yesterday, nor of today; no, they have an infinite existence, and no one could say whence they came" (qtd. in Hegel 38-9). Hegel goes on to suggest that these laws--laws that Eliot, in her article on Mackay calls "undeviating laws" (31), are "essentially Rational" (Hegel

39). According to Hegel, the "Law is the objectivity of Spirit; volatile, in its true form" (39). In Hegel's rationale, man submitting to laws is free because he chooses to obey--out of duty to a more universal principle than subjective desire. It then becomes somewhat cryptic why Hegel chose the quotation from *Antigone*, a play in which the title character disobeys the laws set forth by the new representative of the state, her uncle, Creon. The laws appealed to in the quotation from the play are the laws of the gods, which stand outside laws made by Creon as the absolute standards to be followed.

Eliot refers to *Antigone* in her essay, "The *Antigone* and its Moral." Eliot paraphrases Sophocles, saying, "The proclamation of Creon is not so authoritative as the unwritten law of the Gods, which is neither of to-day nor of yesterday, but lives eternally, and none knows its beginning" (263). Hegel appears to de-contextualize the quotation, suggesting that the importance is that the commands are divine--emanating out of absolute Spirit, and that the right kind of state puts these demands, rather than the subjective wishes of some ruler, upon individuals. Eliot seems more struck by the contradiction between Antigone and Creon both standing for legitimate positions (264). Eliot points out that the conflict between Creon and Antigone is not merely the rights of individuals versus the rights of the state to control its citizens, but essentially between tradition and reform. Romola's identification with Antigone makes Savonarola Creon. Savonarola's desire to transform his age, however, stresses that he is the "reformer." Eliot generalizes about reform in her essay, saying that those who would fight the evils of the world also "place themselves in opposition to 'good'" (264). It would appear we are talking about Creon's peril at this point, but a later sentence suggests the roles have become reversed in Eliot's mind. The essay reads: "Like Antigone, he [a reformer] may fall a victim to the struggle, and yet he can never earn

the name of blameless martyr any more than the society--the Creon he has defied, can be branded as a hypocritical tyrant" (265).

Hence, the role of reformer has been transferred from Creon, the new ruler, to Antigone (whose reliance on traditional religious laws seem to ally her with conservative values), the individual who defies the state. Welsh has pointed out Romola's essential drive to conserve all ties to the past (180). Romola's ties to the past are strangling her, though, and her escapade with the open boat reveals a death-wish as strong as Antigone's defiance of Creon's decree. Romola's retreat from Florence is a return to her journey--interrupted earlier by Savonarola's "arresting voice"--away from Tito and the ties of tradition, society, and the past. Not until Romola defies the police-like authority of Savonarola (though his authority seems to spring from the same source as Antigone's--the divine) can Romola be free. When Romola is free to break or create ties herself, rather than out of obligation, she has reached the point Hegel identifies as freedom (the Modern end towards which the world is thought to be going). Perhaps Antigone's explanation of her actions as divine law and an obligation to her brother are excuses: her real motivation is to be free, to choose her actions without having to take other factors into account. Since Antigone's quest ends in her death, we may see her subjective romance-quest for freedom as a pyrrhic victory. Had Romola's boat drifted into the open sea and allowed her to perish, her ending would have been the same. All along, Romola has failed to reconcile her own desires with will of others--in fact, totally fulfilling the expectations of others and erasing her own will has been Romola's personal romance. When her boat returns Romola to human society, she does not lose her will and identity in what other people want. Able at last to limit her freedom within the "undeviating law," Romola reconciles the subjective romance and objective reality.

In "More Leaves from a Notebook," Thomas Pinney has published some jottings of Eliot on the concepts of "continuity" and "solidarity" in relation to "Historic Guidance." Eliot's discussion begins with the observation that continuity is inevitable--some fragments of history will remain, so we ought to have an historic consciousness about what we have to give to the future (371). "Solidarity" would seem to mean the interrelatedness of mankind : "it is really hard to be selfish and affect no one" (371-2). Both of these observations, though prompted by Comtean thought, would appear to address how objective spirit impinges on our lives. In the passage, Eliot meditates upon the good effects of egotism, since it encourages a sense of solidarity with one's contemporaries, for selfish reasons if nothing else. Eliot seems to consider continuity, or getting people to realize their possible effects upon future generations, harder to promote. A "widening of sensibility through the love of children" is remarked upon as a way of putting the individual into a position of regarding his/her role in and effect upon history (372). In *Romola*, we see this operating in the character of Tessa.

Eliot seems to be refuting some of Comte's theories here. Comte's "Religion of Humanity" was organized rather like the Catholic church, so that a priesthood of philosophers would be above the lay class. Eliot makes a case, in pages 374-5, for teachers rather than priests, because while the new priests, as philosophers, may be "superior to the old," dividing the priest from everyone else is likely to abridge their desire to help their fellow men become similarly philosophic in their own right. If we see *Romola* as the new kind of priest, who is not part of a separate and elite social class with a monopoly on "special" knowledge, we see that she has no reason to confine her philosophic understanding to herself, as she tries to help Lillo. *Romola*, like George Eliot herself, is able to reside in a realm of continuity and solidarity, elements both lacking in Tito's and Savonarola's world-views. In her notes on "Historic Guidance,"

Eliot says that perhaps one day the priesthood will make itself obsolete, as more and more become part of the "philosophic class" (376).

Essentially, Eliot seems to envision a liberal intellectual revolution, in which eventually, all will become philosophers. When one is part of the Academy, it is difficult to remain unenthusiastic about such a vision. Daniel Cottom points out, though, that such a conclusion relies upon the premise that a world of philosophers is a desirable end, and that until then, liberal intellectuals (like Eliot) make themselves into our high priests (11). Cottom may be right, but if the goal is to "make of all philosophers," rather than "make of all disciples," I believe the experience of reading *Romola* encourages the former.

Romola is the wave of the future--she becomes a kind of private-life Savonarola because she becomes a philosopher, after being Ariadne, Madonna, Antigone, and saint-like figure. Lillo calls Romola, "Mamma Romola." Allison Booth has pointed out she is not his mother, but has presumed Tessa's role, or taken the father's (of a family) (Tito's) place ("SF" 125). Seemingly, Romola has assumed another position that is what others need her to be "in her place," rather than a true identity. The appellation "Mamma," though, is crucially important, for as advisor to the young Lillo, Romola is acting the priestly role of "Father Giralamo" [Savonarola]. As priests give up the life of the flesh (Dino is the extreme of this), to pursue the spiritual life, so Romola similarly gives up being "placed" in the tableaux of others. In her achievement of spiritual life, Romola discovers, more than her male teachers, that living in the suffering and material world is central to translating the individual's mental and emotional energy into good. We find Romola here reflecting not so much the Comtean principles--"to think," "to love," "to act,"--as the Hegelian synthesis of both subjectivity and objectivity in order to find a sense of "Absolute Spirit." Ultimately,

this sense of subjective and objective as necessary is linked to the sense of historical romance itself. Living too much in either the historical (material) or the romantic (ideal) destroys the possibility of philosophy--one sees only what's there, or what one wants to see. Too much materialism maligns imagination; too much romanticism maligns the truth. As Savonarola and Tito's cases show, trying to achieve an ideal through material means debases the ideal. The pursuit of material of and for itself, as in Bardo's and Baldassarre's researches, fails when Bardo goes blind and Baldassarre loses his mind--the importance of the material was that they should be interpreters of it. Ultimately, the fragments of history cannot speak for themselves. Neither can remolding the material (Savonarola's visions, sermons and non-intervention over Bernardo del Nero; Tito's triptych, lies about his father and lies to the factions) in accordance with what one desires to be true lead precisely to the desired end. The twin pursuits of historical accuracy and story in the historical novel or romance forms reflect this same tension--the aim of historical accuracy will never be perfectly achieved (material meant to serve a romance-quest), nor will the story every abstract itself entirely from the world of the actual (ideal illusions of reality or phantasms of imagination). Any material goal (even realism, Cottom suggests) implies some sort of muted idealism, some romance.

CHAPTER 6

HEARING THE MUSE IN THE MIND

Many problems of discussing the historical novel stem from thinking of it solely as a "form." If a historical novel is a solid and clearly identifiable form, then it is easy to include or banish various novels that include history in any way that violates what is recognized as the "form." A large faction of influential theorists over a long period of time (Manzoni, Lukács, Fleishman) have concluded that the historical novel was born and reached an apex with Scott. The laments over the demise of the historical novel have gone on since Scott's death. Part of the reason for this would seem to be that no one before or since has written exactly like Scott, or even been able to give a fair imitation of his achievement. The supposition, though, that Scott was the first and best historical novelist, seems to have effectively blinded everyone to the presence and function of history in other novels, as well as helped create a definition of historical fiction which excludes those works less like Scott's--a criterion that allows exclusion of nearly all works.

It is commonplace to insist that the Victorians were inferior to Scott in their approach to history in the historical novel. The form was seen as in decline and wending its way to extinction. Such a genealogy for the historical novel mirrors the "tragic" reading of history identified by Hayden White as Hegel's (116): the history of the historical novel, like Hegel's history of the world, is a story of rise, dissolution, and death. The preceding chapters of this study have attempted to show that the history of the historical novel and the definition of the historical novel may have to be revised in light of actual novels that consider history before and after Scott, and in light of how

authors tried to affect readers by the use of history in their works. It should be evident that the model of the historical novel's hybrid tension resulting in warring principles causing its eventual implosion is based upon an overly-restrictive definition of the form and its purpose.

Reading a historical novel does not foster entirely material or subjective goals, though criticism has tended to view the purpose of the historical novel as presenting historic facts, or in providing a wholly different and escapist world. We do not read historical novels merely to grasp facts, as one might read a chart or graph. Neither do we read a historical novel to live completely in an imaginary state, as one might expect from reading a comic book or a fairy tale. Both elements, the material and the fictive, co-exist in the historical novel. The reality of history and the ideal realms of the fictive do not cancel one another out as Manzoni claims in *On the Historical Novel*. Instead, historical novels synthesize fact and fiction more firmly than any other literary form. This synthesis results in what Hegel would designate a "spiritual" truth. As has been suggested in the preceding chapters, in presenting history as an object of consciousness, and necessarily the reader as the one who discovers self-consciousness in relation to this object, the historical novel in any form replicates the beginning of Hegel's dialectical project of synthesizing the real and the ideal. In the philosophical historical novel, the reader moves beyond these initial stages to the discovery of Reason (making sense of the facts), Spirit (making sense of the non-fact--the feeling), and Religion (making sense of the consciousness of the first two through philosophical habit of mind), which allow the "Absolute Knowledge" discussed at the end of the *Phenomenology*. The philosopher-reader practices reason in ordering and thinking about the historical circumstances of the novel, which results in a clear consciousness of distinction between self and object. "Objective Spirit" concerns those

universal "truths" that apparently stand of themselves, apart from our subjective structuring of things through reason. Religion and Absolute Knowledge are the property of the philosopher-reader who has come to the end of an exploration of history--Spirit in Time--and his or her own relation to it (*Phenomenology* 808).

Hegel concludes the *Phenomenology* with this passage:

Both together [History and Phenomenology, or Science] or History (intellectually) comprehended (*begriffe*), form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit, the reality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it were lifeless, solitary, and alone. (808)

Hegel here obliquely suggests that like our perception of Christ's death on Golgotha, we must perceive phenomena and the moment in time that make them real in our own minds. Only the human mind can piece together the evidence and make it truth. Hegel, in this closing statement which is juxtaposed with a quotation from Schiller, forces the reader to assemble the confusion into coherence. Throughout the *Phenomenology* the reader must assume the responsibility for creating the synthesis. This ultimately free and powerful position, which depends mainly upon the philosophic state of mind, is the position of the reader who has read through the various syntheses in the book. Similarly, this freedom to construct a historical meaning comes to the reader of the philosophical historical novel.

From all of these versions of the philosophical reading of history, we can see that these women writers valued the readers' independent bent of mind, and used the historical novel form as a way of fostering it. Also, the historical novel form allowed women authors to address politically and socially sensitive questions without appearing to direct the reader overtly to any radical conclusions that might threaten the authors'

careers. For us, the readers from a time past their own, the historical novelists have the most to say about taking a philosophic stance towards the history in their novels, of their times, and of our own times. The historical novels of women authors not only help us take this philosophical stance, they also present women characters as subjects in history. It would seem that perhaps in order to present the female subject as a valid hero in history, the women authors *must* have the reader revise his/her concept of history, thus causing women authors to re-create the relationship between author and reader.

In the future, more attention ought be paid to reader-response theory of the nineteenth-century novel, not just in the re-creation of the actual readers through historical investigations of material such as libraries and contemporary letters and reviews, but also to the strategies used by authors to construct the ideal reader, or to attack the implied reader. Our twentieth century perspectives have focused too much upon the materialist approach to literature, whereas idealism not only influenced the thinking of the nineteenth century more profoundly, but influenced the writing of its literature in ways we overlook if we try to apply back upon the nineteenth century the biases of our own times.

In Chapter 2, I discussed the idea of tableau versus narrative history. The narrative convention of each novel we have examined is to end with a tableau that symbolically settles the tensions of the story. The Wanderer ends her travels fixed in her new husband's household, playing hostess to the friends made in her travels (and excluding those who have wronged her, a group which the reader may feel part of as the curtain closes). The tension of the female subject's lack of role can only be resolved by fixing her in one; the historical tensions to which the Wanderer is connected, those of all marginalized people, remain unresolved. The narrative's alienation of the reader,

though, does encourage a state of self-consciousness of one's place in social structures and history. Such a self-consciousness is a necessary first step in seeing history as a movement, rather than a thing, and achieving any philosophic perspective on history at all.

In *The Wanderer*, the reader finds him/herself persecuted throughout the text, deprived of comforting confidence in epistemological polarities and chased away from conventional reading techniques. While this may not seem key to developing the reader-as-philosopher, it does put the reader into a new state of consciousness about the effects of history upon the "Other" and about the reader's role. The formal, novelistic conclusions to the historical conflicts in the book may not be so easily accepted by the transformed reader.

In Brontë's *Shirley*, the reader's experience of difference between the male and female spheres and their relative roles in the "national" historical movements of industrialization and war is exploited to help define a reasonable potential for synthesis based upon similarities. While the resolution by which this synthesis is effected may seem idealistic or prophetic, the reader is wary of being overly-conventional, this tendency having been attacked constantly by the narrator. The narrator does not expect the readers to be the philosophical historical novel-readers desired, but the readers are taught to grow into this role by paralleling Caroline's quest for self-consciousness.

Shirley and Caroline end their story in the tableau of Robert's mills and Louis' role as wise justice. While satellites of the male sphere, the women are at least recalled as part of the tableau. The tension between masters and workers, men and women, is resolved not through recognizing rights, but by acknowledging similarity and hence assuming a personal responsibility for alleviating oppression. This solution moves

beyond the simple recognition of self-consciousness found in *The Wanderer* because after achieving self-consciousness (and this includes those in power, a situation *The Wanderer* does not completely address), the women characters must find a reasonable solution to solve the contradictions they have discovered about their roles. This mirrors the development of the Mind in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

In Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*, the reader as co-philosopher is given sets of facts and versions of history to interpret. The narrative voice apparently suggests that total subjectivity of interpretation will result in deified material and that the reader must be prodded to achieve the objective stance of the philosophic reader in possession of facts, rather than legends. As in Hegel, objectivity can only be achieved through a loss or reduction of subjectivity. The tableau at the end of *Sylvia's Lovers* is unusual because everyone is dead; unlike the resolutions of *The Wanderer* and *Shirley*, *Sylvia's Lovers'* is tragic, rather than comic. What remains of the characters' lives are legend and monument. The vacuity of the tableau emphasizes the results of idol-making object-worship. Self-consciousness and reason put to bad use end in a false religion that oppresses, rather than liberates, the individual. Only the reader stands outside this and has the potential to view what has happened objectively.

In Eliot's *Romola*, the reader must be philosophical in order to determine how history makes sense, while avoiding the trap of subjectivism. The final tableau of *Romola* has already been extensively discussed in Chapter 5. The tableau appears to resolve, yet fails to resolve completely. It seems that Romola may have achieved great peace and wisdom, but Lillo seems unaffected by her instruction. Lillo can only become like Romola through experiences of his own. We may see Romola as a philosopher, but we cannot, and Lillo cannot, become philosophers through moral instruction alone. Similarly, Savonarola could tell Romola her duties, but these were not necessarily

hers until she felt them. Romola "learned" to love Savonarola, she says at the very end--this learning is a product of mind and experience with the material world. Such a lesson cannot be learned through study or experience alone, but only as a function of the two across time.

There is perhaps a progression in the degree of sophistication expected from the reader of the philosophical historical novel as the nineteenth century passes. According to Hegel, the history of consciousness culminates in the ability to synthesize real and ideal in the mind. Hegel sees the important developments in consciousness as self-consciousness, reason, awareness of culture or society (its shared values) and awareness of belief, or the religious/philosophical state of mind. In the earlier novels, we see an overwhelming emphasis upon the achievement of self-consciousness in history, especially for the female subject. In both Burney's and Brontë's works, mere self-consciousness proves insufficient in achieving a lasting participation in history. Burney's book ends with the surrender of self-defining subjectivity for the heroine. Brontë's female characters achieve both self-consciousness and understanding of the "other" world of patriarchy, eventually trading some of their autonomy for acknowledgment by it--a reasonable and practical, if not completely feminist conclusion. Gaskell and Eliot both focus upon the conflict between cultural values and religious values. In Gaskell's novel, though, the characters have difficulty achieving the philosophic state of mind because of false cultural ideals and the strain of maintaining a stable self in the face of time's changes. Eliot, by contrast, depicts a character who actually succeeds in achieving self-consciousness, reason, cultural consciousness, and finally independent thought. Both conclusions seem somewhat extreme--the tragedy of *Sylvia's Lovers* appears to yield little help to the characters, and Romola's placidity seems inexplicable, since we get no view of how she lives

between Savonarola's execution and the final tableau. In both, the meaning of the closure is left to the reader's mind.

Closure is the idealistic convention of novel-writing. Even the closure of Hegel's philosophy seems idealistic because it seems like an "end" that does not reflect the time-passage in "real" life. Unrealistic tableaux at the ends of novels ought not surprise us because narrative allows closure that mental action and "real" life do not. Therefore, the importance of the concluding tableaux is not their "reflective" or resolving function--what they teach us about history or the authors' visions of it--but how the philosophical reader can see in such a tableau the fusion of real and ideal, or the unresolved tensions, and may from these find the opportunity to draw his/her own conclusions about history.

Authors of philosophical historical novels lead the reader to what Hegel found the greatest freedom--the freedom of mind in philosophy. Reading a philosophical historical novel is the "Golgotha" to which the historical novel reader is led to witness the epoch-making event that makes Spirit cross Time in the consciousness of a reader, and live.

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VITA

Susan H. Wood was born in Columbus, Ohio on December 20, 1963. She attended the Buckeye Valley Local Schools in Delaware County, Ohio, graduating from Buckeye Valley High School in May 1982. A student at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, from September 1982 to June 1986, she received a Bachelor's degree in Asian Studies. From August 1986 to August 1988, she was enrolled in the Joint Program in Chinese and Comparative Literature at Washington University in St. Louis. She was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Comparative Literature from that institution in 1988. After studying Chinese at Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan, she matriculated at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in August 1989. In 1994 she was granted the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's, Department of English.

Dr. Wood is currently employed by the Department of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, as a lecturer.