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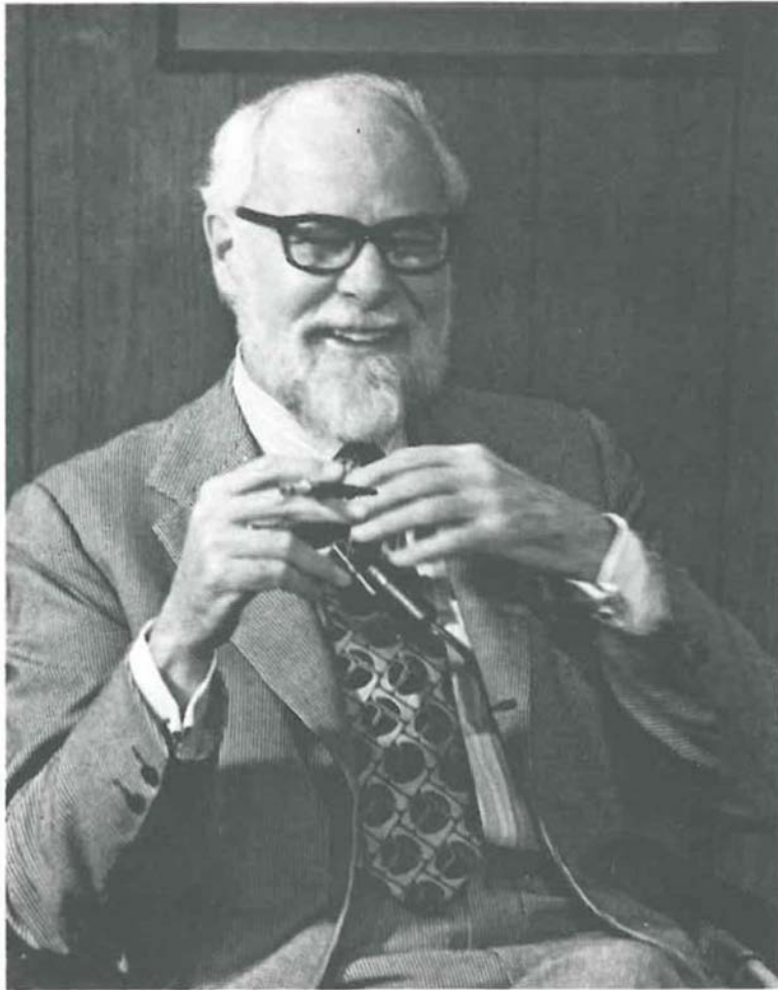
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ROMANTICISM AND BEHAVIOR

by

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In discussing Romanticism it is still wise, I think, to begin by making as clear as I can what I propose to talk about. The word "Romanticism," as Lovejoy long ago pointed out, more than most terms used in cultural history, is particularly subject to polysemy. It is no longer very necessary to worry about the antithesis, once so common, between Romanticism and Classicism. Some people still worry about that, and it is still not uncommon to see the two terms thus juxtaposed. But on the whole it is now reasonably clear to most scholars and historians that when one uses Romanticism in an historical sense, it is quite unnecessary to bring in classicism. This is not to say that late 18th-century Neo-Classicism can be pushed out of the picture when one is discussing the beginnings of Romanticism. Among literary historians, at least on this side of the Atlantic, and I think generally on the continent, Romanticism is thought of as a more or less clearly identifiable widespread cultural re-direction that begins to become observable in the course of the 1790's, though not in the sense of a self-conscious movement, such as Futurism, for example. Among art historians, however, and social and political historians and musicologists, the term continues to include historical phenomena which most literary historians no longer think of as Romantic. Social and political historians apparently continue to think of late 18th-century sentimentalism, utopianism, libertarianism, and anarchism as Romantic phenomena, but to the literary historians—I think this is now generally the case—such attitudes are quite typically Enlightenment and can be traced to Enlightenment assumptions, against which Romanticism was a reaction, or, to put it more carefully, to the failure of which Romanticism was a response. Many art historians look at the matter much as do these historians, a way that to literary historians is very old-fashioned. Art historians still tend to decide the issue on fairly simple iconographic grounds. Since there are storm pictures in the last couple of decades of the 18th century, and since they continued to be common well into the 19th century, they judge both periods to be Romantic. But there are storms and storms; the significant matter is not the subject but the way it is handled and the rest of the iconographic data to be found in the picture. Architectural historians have traditionally identified Romanticism with the revival of the Gothic; thus they trace Romanticism in architecture half-way back or more into the 18th century. But there is a great deal of difference between building a folly or villa or fake ruin in the Gothic style and building Gothic cathedrals and railway stations. The one is private, an amusement; the other is public, central to social life. Literary historians no longer think of Gothicism or Medievalism as a defining attribute of Romanticism, the Gothic novel itself being judged as Enlightenment not Romantic. Their position is reasonably close to that of historians of philosophy, and that

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branch of philosophical history known as the history of ideas has, of course, been of great importance in the development of the literary notion of Romanticism. But musicologists, who for reasons I cannot fathom seem to think that cultural re-directions in music occur thirty years after they occur in the other fields of art and also thought, tend to put the beginning of Romanticism about 1830. To the literary historian this is very odd. To be sure, he can grasp the early Beethoven as a typically late Enlightenment or late Neo-Classic composer, but he also sees the kind of profound change overcoming Beethoven's music in the first decade of the century as the same kind of change as that which literature shows and also painting, for to him Ingres and Delacroix are equally Romantic. Indeed, Mozart's intense interest in Baroque music in the last couple of years of his life, particularly in Bach, suggests to one with the literary sense of Romanticism that had he lived he would have moved in the direction that Beethoven took, would have become a Romantic composer, so common in all the arts is the revival of Baroque in the early 19th century.

In the present paper I shall be using the point of view developed in the last quarter of a century by literary historians, namely, that if one examines the production of a certain few European writers—and this term includes England as well—who were born in the years around 1770 one can discern a common pattern of cultural re-direction; that that re-direction was repeated and continued by more and more writers born in subsequent years; and that cultural changes since then have been, in spite of a great many changes and varieties, a continuation of that innovative culture which began to emerge in the 1790's and by 1800 is clearly identifiable. In this assertion that high-level emergent culture is still Romantic I am in disagreement with a good many of my colleagues, who prefer to see Romanticism ending in the course of the 1820's. For my part I feel that the identification of certain early Romantic cultural patterns makes it impossible not to see that these same patterns still obtain, and that the problems of the early Romantics can be explained in a language which is equally appropriate today. Before identifying that pattern, however, and before relating it to a more general explanation of human behavior, it will be necessary to bring forth certain assumptions and make them as clear as I can.

I

The first of these has to do with history itself. What are we doing when we compose an historical discourse? Can it be said that we are writing about events? Historians certainly act as if they think so, and frequently they say so. But if we take the trouble to watch what they are actually doing, to observe their behavior, it is apparent that they are doing nothing of the sort. They are writing about documents and artifacts, and only if this is grasped can it be seen that historiography has in any sense a scientific character. A great deal has been written about order in history, but such efforts always remain unresolved, and for a very simple reason. The regularity and the causal relationships said to be found in history are not a feature of history itself but of historical discourses. The regularity and the causality are attributes of the verbal behavior of historians, not of historical events, which are obviously inaccessible. Though it

seems reasonable enough to say that there has been what we call history, at least reasonable enough to justify historical effort, nevertheless historical events cannot be observed. All that can be observed is documents and artifacts.

This puts the historian in an awkward position and seems to deprive him of all claim to a scientific justification for his enterprise. But the picture, though gloomy enough, is not so gloomy as that. There are sufficient similarities between the behavior of the historian and the behavior of the physical scientist to give the historian at least some respectability, assuming, of course, that the activity of the physical scientist is the best model for the acquisition of what we call knowledge. I believe this to be the case, for the behavior of the physical scientist, in its pattern and its results, is the behavior of all men in their dealings with the observable and non-verbal world. The behavior of an Indian propelling his canoe through the rapids is not fundamentally different from that of the atomic physicist in his laboratory. To be sure, the behavior of the physicist is an enormous elaboration of that basic behavior of a man dealing with the world, and the most striking difference is verbal, the immensely complex verbal responses or explanations of what he has observed. But even that is but an elaboration of the simple sentence, "If you do so-and-so, such-and-such will be the consequence—probably." And such simple sentences are the verbal foundation of both canoeing and atomics. They are at what, a little carelessly, I call the empirical frontier of language.

Like the scientist, the historian is also engaged in the construction of elaborate verbal explanations. In this they are alike, but what is the historian's verbal frontier? Does he, indeed, have any? From one point of view, yes, he does. In the "If . . . then . . ." sentence above, the inclusion of "probably" is of the greatest possible importance. Only that can be explained which exhibits regularity and recurrence. The totally random is beyond explanation. Hence, for example, it is scientific doctrine that an experiment must be repeatable before anything can be done with it. Redundancy of information is the condition of scientific behavior. I myself think there is something a little dubious about this doctrine and this notion of scientific condition, but at least it does seem to be the case that any behavior can be stabilized only by repetition of that activity, and that the condition of that stabilization is redundancy of information, or, more precisely, comprehensible instructions for response. In short, though I believe it to be the case that the foundation of scientific behavior is the repeatability of experiment and observation, I would put the emphasis not on the repetition of either but on the repetition of the scientist's behavior. He accepts the reliability of an observation because he can repeat his response to the observed when he *judges* that he has encountered another instance of it. This is why innumerable repetitions of what are judged to be the same observations or the same experiments never produce absolute certainty. Hence, it is always wise to include "probably" in "If . . . then . . ." sentences, for "probability" introduces statistics, and statistics is a behavioral strategy for extracting regularity from the random. When the carpenter says to his apprentice, "You have to be careful in sawing this kind of wood, because knots can turn up at any point, and most unexpectedly," he is saying that the

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occurrence of knots is not random but only approximately predictable. In the same way my own guess is that the Rhine experiments in ESP reveal the limitations of contemporary statistics, a possibility that seems to me to have been insufficiently explored. For that reason we are not yet in a position to say that there is such a phenomenon as extra-sensory perception, though there very well may be. I merely wish to emphasize that statistics is, after all, something that human beings do; it does not necessarily reveal the laws of the universe.

Regularity or the occurrence of the non-random, then is the basis for the enterprise of scientific behavior, of which the construction of explanation is a part. In what sense can it be said that the historian is also engaged in non-random behavior and thus is engaged in scientific behavior? The patterned recurrence to be found in his explanatory constructs means nothing, because that is the characteristic of all explanatory constructs, including those of the wildest occultism. The question is, what kind of "If . . . then . . ." sentence can lead him beyond the empirical frontier of his explanations? It is only there that any recurrence and regularity, any non-randomness, of scientific significance is to be found. If we pay attention to what the historian responds to, the answer is easy enough. The non-randomness which is the occasion for the recurrence in the historian of similarity of response is the distribution on the face of the earth of documents and artifacts. Documents pertaining to English history are more probably to be found in England than in Tibet, and the probability is increased if the documents antedate the English penetration of Tibet. Or, "If you go to such-and-such a place, then you will find instances of such-and-such categories of documents and artifacts, probably." If history had never been written, this possibility of statistical control would make it possible to write it.

Does the physicist do anything more? There is at least an apparent difference. The physicist, it is affirmed, can, after he has located phenomena which he judges to be recurrent, perform experiments which verify his explanations. The historian, after all, is limited by the interpretation of the content, or meaning, of his documents and artifacts. He is involved in the hermeneutic problem. How can an interpretation be verified, except by other documents and artifacts, which, however, also are subject to exactly the same kind of hermeneutic limitation? The historian is confined to the interpretation of verbal and non-verbal man-made semiotic configurations. This, it seems, is not the limitation of the physicist. But is this actually the case? What does the physicist do? What is his behavior? Briefly, his observation, like all observation, such being the nature of perception, is selective; further, his judgement of recurrence depends upon categorization, and categorization is a human activity. He judges that two phenomenal configurations are sufficiently similar to be placed, for his purposes, in the same category. His behavior is thus conventionalized, and he too is engaged in hermeneutics, for his activity is based upon interpretation of what he has observed. His act of experimental verification is, moreover, just as bound up with interpretation as the historian's verification of interpretation by turning to other documents and artifacts. From this point of view, then, the historian is on as sound a footing as the physical scientist. Neither can arrive at certainty.

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Nevertheless, there is a difference, one that increases greatly the degree of uncertainty as we move from the physical sciences to historiography. It is not that the scientist is involved with the present and the historian with the past, for the historian is not involved with the past. He is engaged in hermeneutic response to documents and artifacts. His chronological ordering of those documents and artifacts is itself a construct and filled with uncertainty, even though chronology is the closest the historian can ever come to certainty. Chronology is the pre-condition of all his activities. Furthermore, the making of artifacts is itself under verbal control. Directly or indirectly the historian is responding to verbal behavior, and moreover to verbal behavior abstracted from the situation in which it came into existence. The very survival of documents and artifacts evinces a randomness which is impenetrable, and this is a kind of randomness with which the physical scientist is not faced. Among scientists only the evolutionary theorist is exposed to the same impenetrable randomness in the survival of his observables that is the condition of the historian. For other scientists the selection of the observables is susceptible to innovation, but for the historian that selection has already taken place, and there is nothing he can do about it. This necessarily increases his uncertainty over that of the scientist.

But even this is not the gravest distinction between the two. The scientist can modify his explanations by negative feedback. Not verification but falsification is what keeps the scientist going. The occasion of that falsification is the manipulation of the non-verbal. Such manipulation results in re-categorization, re-interpretation, and innovative explanation. The historian, on the other hand, confined to the verbal or that which is controlled by the verbal, has no such recourse. His re-interpretation of his observables does not arise from negative feedback but from modification of his explanation. Thus historiography proceeds by the discovery of new documents, by a hermeneutic which makes judgments of incoherence, and by developing new explanatory modes. But above all it proceeds by a hermeneutic assertion of the recurrence of statements or groups of statements sufficiently similar to each other to justify categorizing them as modes of the same statement, that is, by subsuming these documentary statements under a statement which, controlled by his explanation, he has generated. Thus the difference between the physical scientist and the historian is that the latter spends most of his efforts in verbal behavior, while the former is constantly engaged in a behavioral interaction with the non-artifactual world, an interaction, moreover, which unlike that of the historian involves a modification of his own manipulative behavior. Hence the scientist is constantly engaged in an activity like that of crossing the street in heavy traffic, while the historian rarely if ever has the occasion to modify his physical behavior. Thus the instrumental or directional character of scientific theory is fairly obvious, but the corresponding verbal constructs of the historian are far more easily hypothesized, and the normative and fictive character of those constructs far more easily ignored.

The traditional straightforward historian is principally engaged in the construction of a narrative made up of event statements. As we have seen, his first problem is chronological; and this is certainly the basis of the cultural

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historian as well, but the latter asserts that he is engaged in constructing a narrative of mental events, or ideas, or the manifestation of those ideas in works of art and similar artifacts, such as, for example, instances of historical discourse. But mental events, even if there are such things, are not accessible, even at the present, let alone in the past. What he means by mental events are in fact statements found in documents and exemplified in non-verbal artifacts, though to be sure he often has a difficult problem in finding a statement to go with, or explain, an artifactual exemplification, a statement, moreover, which must be close enough chronologically to justify the assertion that the statement and the exemplification properly go together. For my immediate purposes I shall restrict myself to statements found in documents.

The cultural historian proceeds, then, by observing the recurrence of certain key terms and statements of an abstract or high explanatory character, and also by categorizing differing terms and statements as exemplifications of various explanatory terms and statements. The latter behavior increases the frequency of the recurrence that depends upon and thus facilitates enormously his activity. However, there is a difficulty here, and it is the difficulty found in the usual practice of the history of ideas. The recurrence of a term or statement, or the recurrence of his own explanatory terms which subsume somewhat different terms and statements, does not necessarily mean that the historian is justified in his procedure. The recurrence of even identical terms or statements is a consequence of the historian's act of categorial judgement, an act which is carried out by verbal behavior. How does he know that the individual who made a particular utterance—a statement or a term—would make the same judgement of categorial subsumption that the historian makes? The fact is that the historian can be reasonably sure that individual in question would not have made the same subsumptional judgement, and the explanation of why he would not is indeed the subject of cultural history. However, the fact that at different times different explanations are given of the same recurrent explanatory terms does not necessarily mean that the differing regressive explanations are necessarily dissimilar, though they might be. The question is whether or not such differing explanations belong to the same family of explanations. To be sure, this involves further and more regressive explanatory subsumption, and so on in what promises to be an infinite explanatory regress. The problem, then, is to stop that regress at what, following this line of reasoning, might be called the family level. Thus, if the family is epistemological the question is whether or not the statement or term in question properly is subsumed by an epistemological statement and if this statement can appropriately be subsumed by one of the various styles of epistemological theories available to the historian.

Even so, however, the family question is more complex than that, for such a solution makes available only those epistemological theories available in the historian's own cultural situation, but his problem is to determine whether or not, for example, the statements and terms in question are properly subsumed under an epistemological theory no longer available. My assumption is rather that a more adequate circumscription of a family of explanations is best determined by the recurrence not of single statements or individual terms but rather

by the recurrence of families of terms and statements. Yet at this point the metaphor of families begins to lose its value, because the relationship of the terms is by no means immediately apparent. "Family" must be used in a very loose sense so that the observation of the recurrence of such terms or statements must be prior to the effort to show the family relationship. On the other hand, the attempt to establish a family relationship has a dialectical relationship to the observation of the recurrence. Moreover, as I shall attempt subsequently to show in the notion of Romanticism, one can assume quarrels within the family, or even familial adoption, the effort to yoke together terms and statements which in the course of time are revealed to be incompatible. This last notion is particularly useful, for the dynamics of explanation emerges from the judgement of an incoherence and the effort to re-structure the explanation so that the incoherent factor is either made coherent or is eliminated. An example may be found in the very history of the effort to define or circumscribe the notion of Romanticism, that is, by the coherent subsumption of various terms and statements under a single term, "Romanticism," or under a set of familial terms and statements themselves subsumed by the term "Romanticism." The term I have in mind is "nature." For a long time an approving attitude towards the natural world was held to be a mark of Romanticism. There was much talk about the Romantic "return to nature." Thus it came about that any pre-19th-century approving attitude toward nature was judged to be Romantic. Even a great scholar, Marjorie Nicholson, was misled into thinking that since Anglo-Saxon poets indicate that there is a positive value in an approving attitude toward nature, Romanticism is peculiarly English. Gradually, however, it was judged that the 18th-century attitude to nature was somehow different from the 19th; thus the term "pre-romanticism" came into use. The next step was to decide, as I believe most students have now decided, that there is a striking difference between the 18th-century-Enlightenment attitude and 19th-century-Romantic attitude, although as the continued popularity of *The Seasons* indicates, the Enlightenment attitude certainly persisted, and indeed continues to persist at the present time, side by side with the very different Romantic attitude. To use the present terminology, it was concluded that the two uses of "nature" belong to quite different families of terms or statements. With this instrument of analysis it is possible to observe in Wordsworth the effort to disentangle the two ways of responding to nature and of responding to the word "nature" itself, a shift from judging that nature and the word are univalent to judging them as ambivalent. Considering the richness of European explanatory culture by the end of the 18th century and the semantic shifts the terms and statements central to the culture underwent in the course of the 19th century, it is not surprising that the writings of people we call Romantics show considerable internal incoherence, nor that historians of Romanticism are perplexed and get strikingly different results when they attempt to construct a coherent explanation of Romanticism.

From these considerations I propose several further assumptions from which to proceed. First is that the perception or judgement of an incoherence in what has been held to be a coherent explanation is the result of some traumatic event,

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such as Kant's reading of Hume or the development of the French Revolution, in the judgement of at least a few of its contemporaries, into an increasingly brutalized military dictatorship. Or, to take a case from my own experience, I was so traumatized by what seemed to me the hopeless incoherence of Romantic theory in the 1920's and 1930's that I have been unable to free myself of the problem. A second assumption is the nation of cultural stratification. Thus, at the present time a small minority of individuals in the European culture area construct explanations of some phenomena in what I judge to be the Romantic tradition. A far greater number construct explanations in the Enlightenment tradition. The youthful rebels of the 1960's made observations and explanations in the tradition of the late Enlightenment; almost all regressive justifications of their judgements, as well as their observations, can be found in Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, but virtually nothing in the conclusions of Senancour's *Obermann*. Bible-belt Baptists, however, explain in a style which long antedates the Enlightenment. In any given document, moreover, various strata may appear side by side, or even in the same sentence. This is the explanation for cultural incoherence and lies behind the dynamics of the efforts to resolve that incoherence.

A third assumption is that of cultural transcendence, the recognition of an innovative style of explanation. No member of a family is necessarily innovative; rather, the family as a family, or pattern, or syndrome, is innovative. Here the cultural historian runs into further difficulties, for a cultural innovation of several hundred years ago may appear to be platitudinous, since he is much later in the same cultural tradition and since by his time so many of the incoherences have been eliminated. Further, with this instrument of analysis the problem of periodization can be greatly simplified. A fourth assumption is that of cultural convergence, which depends upon the observation that various individuals may arrive at a similar or virtually identical cultural transcendence without any knowledge of each other, without cultural contamination or influence or dependency.

Finally, for me none of this can be convincing unless it can be explained and justified by an explanatory system which has nothing to do with cultural history, that is, by a theory of human behavior which, though itself necessarily a part of cultural history, is not derived from cultural history, even though it may be demonstrated that it derives from the explanatory style the emergence of which and the character of which it purports to explain. I can scarcely here present a full theory of behavior, a theory which I am currently engaged in writing, but something of it will emerge in what follows. At any rate, though its ultimate explanatory regress I myself judge to be in the Romantic tradition, nevertheless it is derived not from that, at least not directly, but at best indirectly from an observation of human behavior controlled by certain explanatory sentences which I see as having been led to by what I call Romanticism but which are, nevertheless, very different from the Romantic beginnings.

II

I suggested above that possible alternatives to the notion of family are pattern

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and syndrome, and the last is particularly appealing, because of its Freudian associations, Freud himself being very directly in the Romantic tradition; the syndrome of his own explanations is a pseudo-psychologization of much of Romantic German Idealism. However, this Freudian association does not make it appealing to me, for I find Freudian theory as intellectually unacceptable as I find contemporary academic professional behaviorism. Further, the notion of syndrome, like that of pattern, is excessively static, and both terms seem to imply an immanent or inherent coherence, a coherence far from the notion of family. For a family is always changing; a family is still a family even if some members of it are absent or have not yet appeared; and, as I suggested above, a family can include by adoption or illegitimacy members which are subsequently discovered to be alien to it, just as a family can reject various of its members, delegitimize them, as it were, or disinherit them, assert that they do not belong and never have. Now the Romantic family, the terms which to me can subsume with considerable success most of the term- and statement-members of the family to be found in those writers and artists we call Romantic, is made up of the following not necessarily coherent terms, though most of them are: explanatory collapse, alienation, isolation, the antithesis of role and self, cultural transcendence, redemption, anti-redemption, and epistemological tension. To these terms I shall attempt to give a behavioral explanation.

Explanatory collapse was the traumatic experience to which over and over again Romanticism has been the emergent response, not merely around 1800 but ever since. Cultural stratification can explain how this can have been so, for an individual can move from a more historically regressive stratum of explanation to a more recent emergent stratum at any time after the newer stratum has become culturally available. Assuming that Romanticism was a break with a collapsing explanatory system, it is obvious that in the beginning the collapse affected only a tiny number of individuals in the European cultural area. By 1800 there were only a couple of dozen that we can be reasonably sure of, if that many, though judging by bits of evidence here and there, there were many more who left no record, who were neither artists nor philosophers nor theologians. The number of individuals who have had that experience has grown steadily since, a growth aided by the inroads of Romanticism into the general culture. Thus the collapse in the course of time has come to be precipitated in two ways, one, like the collapse of the first Romantics, autonomously, and one from exposure to Romantic documents and non-verbal works of art, that is, from exposure to Romantic propaganda, my position being that all art is ideologically controlled and might as well be called ideological propaganda.

Explanatory collapse is by no means an uncommon experience. Psychiatrists encounter it quite often. It can be the collapse of a fairly simple explanatory mode, one that affects only a small but crucial area of the individual's behavior and leaves other areas intact. Thus the quite common sudden appearance of sexual adventurism in an individual's life, or of heavy drinking, or the sudden and emergent pursuit of a hobby like target-shooting, or hunting, or building model railways, is often preceded by an unanticipated and explained or, to the individual concerned, unjustified defeat in the social hierarchy in which he earns

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his living, a dismissal from his job, or a failure to be promoted, or the transfer to a position of lesser status with his economic institution. Such an experience can be traumatic, even though on Sundays and when asked by poll-takers the individual continues to be a believing Methodist. His explanatory grasp of his economic life is not perceived or judged to be in any way connected with his social trauma. If such a connection is seen, the explanatory collapse may well involve and bring down his Christian beliefs.

A similar trauma can be the collapse of erotic life, and by eroticism I mean not sexual behavior but that peculiar cognition of a woman, a man, or an old shoe which invests that object with the power to elicit from the individual a total resolution of tensions, a paradisaical state of being. Now explanation itself is a resolution of judgemental incoherence, and the tension that judgemental incoherence elicits. I do not mean that explanation and eroticization of experience are identical, but that they are similar in their tension-resolving capacity. Explanation resolves incoherence, but eroticization eliminates it. Certainly, however, if one wishes to use such a word as "cognitive," a word I do not particularly care for, both are cognitive modes. Eroticism is thus remarkably similar to religious experience, and indeed whether we call eroticism a mode of religious apprehension, or religious apprehension a mode of eroticism, makes, so far as I am concerned, little difference. It is merely a question of which mode one prefers to use to explain the other. In any case both erotic and religious conversion, by avoiding or circumventing explanatory incoherence, are invariably described as granting to the converted an extraordinary sense of the value of their own existence, while, of course, the object of the apprehension is said to be the cause of that experience of value, and the converted describe themselves, that is, their experience of their own value, as dependent upon the object. Explanation works much the same way; the resolution of verbal incoherence, whether by what is claimed to be a logical process, or by a leap of faith, not that there is much difference, is so often described in language appropriate to religious or erotic conversion that it seems reasonable to describe it also as a mode of conversion. And like conversion, the result is the sense of the explainer's value and the ascription of value to the world, though more accurately it is an ascription of value to the hypostatized explanatory language, accompanied by the same dependence upon that language. Thus Tennyson could describe himself as having abandoned belief in all theological utterances except for the proposition that the soul is immortal. Without that, he said, he could not continue to live. In the same way in popular songs the whining lover sings to a music of whines that without his beloved life is impossible. Furthermore, the more metaphysical the explanation, the more removed it is from the observable world by successive explanatory regressions, the greater the dependence upon it, for the more remote it is, the greater the number of sentences it is capable of subsuming, and the greater number of lower-level explanations it is capable of organizing. Men will die for faith, explanations, and love, including that eroticization of self known as honor. It is curious how interchangeable is the language of each of these modes of conversion; the lover feels himself redeemed by his love, the insulted man redeems his honor in a duel; a metaphysic is seen

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as capable of redeeming the world, though actually it can only redeem verbal behavior, and faith redeems the soul. A verbal statement of any kind of conversion, then, I shall call the redemptive mode, or more simply the redemptive, while a rejection of the validity of any kind of conversion I shall call the anti-redemption.

From this point of view explanatory collapse can be understood as a mode of de-conversion, the effect of which is quite the contrary to explanatory conversion, for it is the judgement of incoherence in an explanation once seen as coherent, and the consequent loss of the power of explanations to resolve tensions and therefore the loss of value both to the verbal construct and to the de-converted himself. Religious and erotic de-conversion, however, tends to have consequences strikingly different from those of explanatory de-conversion. In the redemptive state of the former the attention and the interest are directed to states of being, internal conditions, and this attention and interest are concomitants of the circumvention of explanatory incoherence. But in the explanatory de-conversion the effect is to turn the interest of the de-converted outside of the state of being, and beyond language to the non-verbal world. The explanation for this is that language, like all culture, is, when considered from a behavioral point of view, directions for performance. The language of religion and eroticism, circumventing as they do explanatory incoherence, are directions for manipulating states of being, that is, for manipulating what is inside the skin, to produce a tension-free or paradisaical internal weather. The language of explanation, however, arises initially from the judgement of incoherence in the world outside of the skin or in the world inside the skin when what is inside the skin is judged to be neither quantitatively nor qualitatively different from what lies outside of it. Explanatory language consists of directions for dealing with the world. The collapse of explanation, therefore, tends to lead to an explanation-free exploration of the non-verbal. Thus the man who has lost his job turns to sexual adventurism, Wordsworth turns to an examination of the dimensions of ponds, and the scientist whose theory has failed him turns to the random manipulation of his instruments. Erotic and religious de-conversion, to be distinguished from the collapse of an explanation couched in the terms of theological rhetoric, leads to a quasi-psychotic inability to act, while explanatory de-conversion leads to naively empirical exploration of some segment or category of the non-verbal, which can be either natural or man-made. The initial effect of Wordsworth's explanatory collapse or de-conversion was a lengthy concentration upon mathematics, something he judged to be metaphysically neutral, a non-verbal set of signs free from verbal explanation.

The explanatory collapse to which Romanticism was a response was the collapse of an epistemology, though, to be sure, it was not always presented in that mode. Rather, since epistemological rhetoric is the explanatory mode most regressive from the non-verbal and non-artifactual, it can be used to subsume other manifestations, and of course virtually all of the principal Romantic figures were directly interested in epistemology. At the end of the 18th century two epistemological modes were culturally available, idealism and empiricism, though of course these were available in a great variety of epistemological

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rhetorics. Using an old-fashioned terminology, the idealistic position, the older one, the explanatory stratum first laid down, was that the categories of the subject can exhaust the attributes of the object, while the more recent one, which had gradually been emerging for several centuries, was that the categories of the object can exhaust the attributes of the subject. Preferring as I do a behavioral rhetoric, I would put the epistemological problem thus: What happens between the input of sensory data and the output of semiotic behavior, or the production of non-verbal and verbal signs? Is semiosis isomorphic with the sensory data to which it is a response? or is it not? And if it is not, how can we know whether it is or not? Or is this the wrong question? And if so, what is the right one? We do seem to be able to cross a heavily-trafficked street in the middle of a block, but then on the other hand we sometimes get run over. We can be reasonably certain, to be sure, that perception itself, of any kind, selects, simplifies, organizes and constructs, but then on the other hand we can be equally certain that that activity is modified by perceptual experience itself. The question is, then, can the disparity or tension between sensory input and semiosis be resolved by an explanation, or not?

In these terms the older epistemology, the Platonistic-Christian tradition, asserts that the disparity can be resolved by an explanation which ascribes ultimate validity to semiosis, or the subject, while the newer empirical-Enlightenment tradition asserts that it can be resolved by an explanation which ascribes ultimate validity to the sensory input, or the object. In the course of the 18th century, most strikingly in Hume, skepticism re-emerged, a more powerful skepticism than the ancient variety, for the issues had become much clearer. It amounted to an explanatory demonstration that empiricism, the judgement that the object determines the subject, is, after all, a judgement of the subject. It is we who say that the world determines us, not, after all, the world that says so. This was devastating, not in itself, but because the newer epistemology had emerged in response to a judgement of incoherence in the old. The new skepticism thus asserted that the newer epistemology, far from being an antithesis or correction of the old, was merely another form of it, just as the collapse of the values of the French Revolution led to the perception that Revolutionary Utopianism, the illusion of Absolute Freedom, as Hegel called it, was no more than a secularization of the Christian Heaven. This meant that the failure of the French Revolution, its degeneration into a brutal and militaristic dictatorship, was not merely a political failure but an epistemological failure. It was a failure of the ultimate explanatory modes of European culture. Nor was skepticism a possibility, though a good many Romantics tried it, for, as Kant and others came to realize, skepticism is itself a judgement of the subject, and in the way of skepticism lay, as once again Kant and others realized, the already impressive accomplishments of the physical sciences, or natural philosophy. Of the vast array of efforts to get out of this dilemma, to restructure one's relation to the world, in response to this trauma of explanatory collapse, made crucial though not initiated by the failure of the French Revolution, it is impossible to speak here. It would involve, indeed, a history of 19th and 20th-century explanatory culture and its exemplification in art and science. Nevertheless, the

thrust of these efforts can, I believe, be subsumed in small compass. But first it is necessary to speak of the consequences and the great significance of that trauma of explanatory collapse.

Romantic literature is filled with wanderers. They are alienated from their society and they are isolated from contact with their fellow human beings. How can this be explained? The first important factor is what the wanderers are actually engaged in doing. Their wandering is search behavior, and this is indicated by what is judged to be a successful outcome, the consummation of the search, the arrival at a new integration, an innovative mode of redemption, though the nature of that redemption is currently the central problem of the theory of Romanticism, and to it I must return. This search character of their wandering is particularly salient in *Alastor*, for in that work there is no consummation, no goal is reached. To use what I have already presented, this wandering is the common response of explanatory collapse, and indeed sexual adventurism, as in *Don Juan*, and in Byron's and Shelley's own lives, and in the lives of a great many continental Romantics, was commonplace enough in Romanticism, just as it is today in the lives of middle-class suburbanites who lose their jobs or suffer hierarchical humiliation, or who, having achieved the goals of their youth, are without goals. The values by which they live are no longer effective, but for the greater Romantics those values were the values of epistemological rhetoric, which explained and justified and validated all other values. Only a wandering search over the face of the earth, all of Europe, or much of Asia and America—only this search could adequately symbolize the devastation of the trauma they had experienced. Indeed, when you start counting up, it is instructive to observe how many of them were exiles from the lands of their own origin.

The explanation for this searching is that for individuals who are accustomed to having their goals determined for them by a highly regressive explanatory rhetoric, ontological and epistemological, an explanatory collapse leaves them with no resources for goal-setting and decision-making, leaves them without verbal directions for behavioral performance. Although I can scarcely justify my next step here, it is my position that the principal output of human energy goes into the limitation of the range of behavior. A goal, an interest, a purpose in life, a hobby, a faith, a drug, a scholarly problem, falling in love, are all strategies for limiting the range of behavior, for placing in within as narrow limits as possible the activity of decision-making, that is, freedom. Further, the more regressive the explanatory collapse, the more extensive the range of the search behavior. The ordinary sexual wanderer has the range of his wandering limited by the value-belief that sexual prowess is the perfect symbolization of aggressive adequacy, but for the Romantic for whom explanatory collapse involved the inability to control his behavior by any of the ultimately regressive European values, the search behavior approached and sometimes arrived at a randomization of behavior, symbolized by the enormous geographical area covered by so many of the Romantic literary wanderers. The consequence is large-scale alienation. The humiliated suburbanite is scarcely able to alienate himself from his income-producing institution, but he can, with a little effort,

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alienate himself from his marriage. But the large-scale alien is alienated from all values, that is, all behavior-limiting, decision-making cultural directions, at least those that are dependent upon high-level explanatory regression. But often enough, as the Romantic documents show, even eating and sleeping are seriously disturbed.

This leads to a complex of Romantic motives, a sub-family, to carry out the metaphor I have been using, of Romantic factors: alienation, cultural vandalism, and selfhood, or the distinction between self and role. I have been talking about the Romantic "self" for a great many years, but I have always wondered what it is that I have been talking about. If language, as I believe, is instructions for performance, and one of the performances it instructs us to do is to look for something, what does the word "self" instruct us to look for? Many years ago I judged that there was a connection between the negative or wandering stage of Romantic emergence and the self, but what that connection was I could not grasp. Now I believe it to be the case that what we look for when we judge "self" to be instructions for observation is negational behavior, and this also explains the phenomena of alienation and cultural vandalism.

I do not use "vandalism" idly. This stage of Romanticism may be examined today in apparently pointless vandalism by young men and women who have been well brought up in middle-class homes. Such vandalism, including occasionally murder, is by no means pointless. If all behavior is adaptational, it is an attempt to control the environment for what is judged to be the benefit of the individual. Thus all acts are aggressive. Even perception, since it is selective and structuring, is an act of aggression, while what we call submission is concealed aggression or seduction. If you cannot control another human being directly you can trap him, you can disarm him by submission. It is the standard and universal strategy at all but the top level in any hierarchy, even in the constantly shifting hierarchy of marriage. The consequence of this aggressiveness is that the most explosive condition for the individual is the feeling of helplessness, the feeling that he has no aggressive control over his environmental situation. Of the strategies open to him, psychotic collapse into inactivity, suicide, or symbolic aggression, all may be found in the history of Romanticism. Symbolic vandalism is no less real for being symbolic. I call it symbolic because the vandalism is performed under circumstances from which the possibilities of retaliation by others is absent. Empty houses are splendid targets for adolescent vandalism. What vandalism produces in the individual is a powerful sense of selfhood, of being a man, and his own man; it is that sense of sudden glory which Hobbes called the result of the aggressive act of laughter. The "I" is opposed to "they," and not the "I" but the "they" are the victims.

Now the typical adolescent vandal, whether he is caught or not, ordinarily grows up to be a respectable citizen, not at all alienated. With the Romantics it was different, for they were not vandalizing empty houses but rather the behavior-validating and -instructing rhetorical modes of European high culture, and the Romantics were cultural vandals, without exception. The explanatory collapse they had experienced was, after all, confined to them as, initially, individuals isolated from each other, but of course that explanation continued

all around them, and indeed continues in the bulk of the population to this day. That cultural vandalism, that all-encompassing negation of available high-level explanations and validations, is the behavior subsumed by the term "self" as distinguished from "role." When Julien Sorel shoots Madame de Renal, Stendahl gives us one of the most powerful exemplifications of Romantic cultural vandalism. With this act Julien at last established his selfhood. The values and behavior of the "others" are judged to be those of individuals who have no self-consciousness, who have experienced explanatory collapse because of their mindless inability to grasp the incoherence of their culture. They are not autonomous individuals, but players of social roles. Autonomy, therefore, is to be established by attacking those values and behaviors, by negation of their explanatory and validatory sufficiency, that is, by alienation and cultural vandalism, the strategies by which selfhood is experienced. This tension between self and role, this continuous alienation and vandalism, is of course utterly anti-erotic, and in this stage of Romantic emergence, which I long ago called Negative Romanticism, the Romantic hero is most often presented as incapable of love, incapable of resolving those tensions. Thus Julien Sorel's shooting of Madame de Renal is an anti-erotic act, as well as an anti-religious act, taking place in a church. Further, his subsequent symbolic isolation in prison leads to the next member of the Romantic family.

The usual pattern of the modern humiliated individual who turns to sexual adventurism and to the cultural vandalism of his marriage is, once he has re-established the sense of selfhood by means of aggressive sexuality, to return to his marriage and his family or to begin a new one. That is, he returns, like the adolescent vandal, to the socially validated behavioral patterns of his culture, to his role. But the Romantic had dismantled European explanatory culture. Once his selfhood had been established by alienation and vandalism, it was impossible for him to redeem himself by returning to the culture; even if, like Coleridge, he returned to Christianity, it was a new Christianity that he invented himself. The truly Romantic alien could only innovate a new mode of escaping the tension of negation, autonomy, and vandalism, a tension increased by the continuous searching for a strategy to limit behavior and control decision-making. His goal thus became necessarily a culturally transcendent redemption, which was given various names, the infinite, the blue flower, and so on. Thus it became necessary to sustain and if possible to increase his wandering and searching behavior. The solution for this problem lay in isolation. Here again I must make a step which I cannot explain here but can give only the behavioral principle itself. Culturally transmitted behavior is the overwhelming mass of human behavior, but any behavior pattern, such is the character of the brain, spreads into a delta-like pattern of deviation unless it is not only transmitted but continuously maintained by the repetition of cultural instructions. This process I call semiotic redundancy, the socio-cultural mechanism which sustains limitations on the range of behavior and thus channels it through time. It is not sufficient to learn a behavioral pattern; we must be told constantly to repeat it and how to repeat it. Further, the degree to which redundancy is effective depends upon the rate of interaction of the individual with other individuals.

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The higher the interaction rate, the better behavior is limited and channelled, and the lower the interaction rate, the greater the randomization of behavior, the effect of the delta-like spread into deviancy. However, the greater the randomization of behavior the greater the statistical probability for the innovation of a new and fruitful mode or pattern of behavior. The scientist whose theory fails him randomizes his behavior until he strikes on something which he judges to be capable of fruitful development, and the higher the cultural level, the more frequent are social spaces for the randomization of behavior. Thus an extremely important member of the Romantic family is isolation, the steady reduction of the individual's interaction rate, the lowering of his rate of exposure to redundant cultural instructions, and the statistical increase of the probability of an innovative response to even familiar utterances and artifacts. Thus the re-interpretation of age-old utterances and artifactual signs is a constant in the Romantic tradition, a factor indeed that makes the enterprise of the cultural historian of Romanticism so perplexing and the objects of his study filled with ambiguities. Hence social isolation is extraordinarily common in Romantic documents, both imaginary and biographical. Furthermore, so long as the alienated and culturally vandalizing autonomous individual maintains a high interaction rate, his condition continues to be one of behavioral limitation. What he encounters in his wanderings consists of negative redundancy. Hence as the Romantic seeks to resolve the tension of alienation, he turns to nature, not because of the presence of nature but because of the absence of man, and Romantic documents become increasingly full of instructions to reject familiar responses to stimulus configurations and to continue rejecting them until a fresh response occurs. The point is that a fresh, or completely deviant response, may possibly be exploited to produce a culturally transcendent mode of redemption from the tension of alienation and vandalism.

Before proceeding to the final members of the Romantic family it is worth pausing to emphasize the historical importance of what I have called Romanticism's negative phase. The pre-conditions of adaptationally and culturally fruitful innovation are explanatory collapse, alienation, autonomy, vandalism, low rate of interaction, and randomization of behavior. The cultural establishment of this discovery and its cultural preservation through literary and other documentary redundancy, as was artifactual redundancy, was possibly the most important innovation for which Romanticism was responsible. Its importance lies in the fact that any society, any large-scale complex of inter-related behavioral patterns maintained by redundancy and high interaction, is adaptationally inadequate to the degree its energy is chiefly expended on limiting the range of behavior to validated modes and patterns of behavior. This is the price of its survival. Nevertheless its survival also depends upon adaptationally appropriate innovative modifications of such patterns, that is, upon cultural transcendence. Until Romanticism only the socially stabilizing mode of survival had been socio-culturally organized and established in explanation and experientially. Romanticism, as the consequence of a uniquely severe explanatory trauma, discovered the second principle of social survival, which has always been in existence of course, but before Romanticism had not been socio-

culturally organized and established. This is one of the two reasons I have for judging that we still live in the Romantic period, or rather, that a small but highly important segment of explanatory culture and its exemplification in art is Romantic and has not been transcended, though it has appeared in innumerable forms and an enormous variety of metamorphoses. The second reason for this judgment is the character of the redemptive modes the Romantic tradition has innovated, and above all the internal incoherence of those modes which has given the Romantic tradition its extraordinary dynamism, its high rate of cultural change.

For the Romantic, then, whose explanatory collapse was severe and traumatic, there was no return. Radical explanatory innovation was the only possibility, and even though he might reject explanation and turn to an experiential or non-verbal mode of fusion of subject and object, a mode that following the model of Kant became known as the aesthetic mode of apprehension, still even that was explained and justified in language, in verbal behavior. As I have suggested, non-verbal redemptive response is not significantly different from verbal. Both are modes of reducing or eliminating the tension between subject and object, between sensory input and semiotic response. Further, this kind of aesthetic response can be culturally maintained either by language or by observation and imitation of behavioral paradigms, as in Oriental religious institutions and traditions. For Romanticism, however, lacking such institutions, the establishment and propagation of this aesthetic ideology depended upon verbal redundancy. Though it was not a response to verbal explanation, nevertheless it was a response to verbal explanation as instructions for a particular mode of behavior. Hence throughout the history of Romanticism to the present there has been considerable confusion and difficulty, since it is exceedingly difficult, except for a few temperaments, to experience such a response with the help of only verbal directions and to be certain one has indeed had the experience the language has directed one to have. Further, once the ineffable and indescribable experience has been attained, the temptation to explain it and justify it verbally is so powerful it becomes or is judged to be a necessity, since it was a negation of non-Romantic explanatory traditions, still omnipresent in the culture. As a response to an explanatory collapse, it required an explanatory justification. Otherwise it could not negate those non-Romantic traditions. Thus it is reasonable to put the principal emphasis on emergent or innovative Romantic explanations, the explanatory cultural transcendence of Romanticism.

In Blake's remark that he must create his own system or be subject to another man's and in his mythological poems it is apparent that innovative explanation maintains the sense of selfhood, a perpetuation necessary for cultural transcendence and to perpetuate in the face of what it negates in the culture, which is almost everything of an explanatory character. Yet Blake's effort is a very primitive example of such transcendence, for his elaborate mythology was little more than the exemplification of a neo-Platonic and Hermetic redemptive explanation, regressive to the 16th century. It was a mythologically concealed return to an already existent and available mode of verbal redemption. Consequently the tendency in the study of Romanticism in the past few decades to

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take Blake as a model Romantic has been responsible for a serious distortion of Romanticism and for an emphasis upon the Romantic innovation of redemptive explanations. One group of Romantics, right up to the present, has responded to explanatory collapse by generating innovative explanations. But another group and another tradition has done something quite different. The two traditions, the incoherence between which has been the source of the extraordinary innovative dynamism of the Romantic tradition, can be presented in the form of two questions: one, "Redemptive explanations having failed, what new redemptive explanation can I create?", the other, "Redemptive explanation having failed, how can I create an anti-redemptive explanation, an anti-explanatory explanation?" One, "What new explanation will suffice?" The other, "Why do men create explanations?"

The first question and the answers to it were controlled by the overwhelming powerful European and indeed human tradition, emerging at least since the beginning of the Neolithic and probably before, that the human goal is properly redemption and that its highest verbal goal is properly a redemptive explanation, in short, Paradise. This resulted in what is often called the apocalyptic Romantic tradition, and the identification of Romanticism with the search for the apocalyptic, a search which is after all quite easily satisfied, has given us only one part and that the more historically regressive part of Romanticism. After all, the overwhelming part of human culture is aimed at the reduction of tension, and in particular the reduction, such is the nature of language and the rest of semiotic behavior, of epistemological and ontological tension, its reduction and ideally its elimination. Thus it is not surprising that redemptive or apocalyptic Romanticism should have occurred, nor is it any more surprising that scholars, subject to the enormous cultural innovations and disturbances of the 20th century, should respond by an interest in it. The scholarly and critical interest in apocalyptic Romanticism, especially during the socio-cultural disturbances of the 1960's, is itself a redemptive response, a repetition, since the dominating high culture of the United States is almost pure Enlightenment, of what the apocalyptic Romantics themselves underwent. But this also explains the intense interest the mythological modes of Romantic apocalypticism. In early human history, so far as we can understand it at all, on the basis of pitifully few records, themselves involving dreadful hermeneutic problems, mythology was most likely the first stage of an explanatory regress from the observable. I think Comte was probably right in that. However, modern mythology, aware that it is mythology, is an effort to resolve the inadequacy of abstract explanation by masking it in exemplary language. This accounts I think for the notes of hysteria and sentimentality so often found in the writing of those scholars who insist that the heart of Romanticism is a mythology of apocalyptic redemption. For the real issue of the explanatory collapse at the end of the 18th century of Platonic-Christian idealism, of Baconian-Enlightenment empiricism, and of skepticism itself, is that explanation itself collapsed. Hence, the question, Why do men create explanations?

The first great answer was Hegel's, although Senancour anticipated much of what was to come, as did the Schiller in his last period. To Hegel the category

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of Being is empty. An explanation of Being is not derived from Being but is the Geist's, that is, culture's response to Being. The validity of that response must rest upon the Absolute, but when at the end of the *Phenomenology* the Absolute is achieved, it turns out to be as empty a category as Being. The only thing to do is to go back to Being and start all over again, though this time with the Spirit's conscious awareness of what it is doing. Men create explanations because explanation is the condition of their existence, but even so it is only an instrument for sustaining that existence. An explanation is to be found only in the acceptance of the impossibility of redemption. There is no resolution of the tension of subject and object, for the tension between sensory stimulus and semiotic response. A splendid modern example of this position is to be found in Wallace Stevens' "The Well Dressed Man with a Beard." After a marvelous evocation of tension resolution, of Paradise, of affirmation following upon negation, he suddenly breaks off and writes, "It can never be satisfied, the mind, never." An explanation is a supreme fiction. When we weary of the imagination, we turn to the *necessary* angel, reality.

I would not deny that apocalyptic Romanticism, redemptive Romanticism, explanatory Romanticism, was indeed Romanticism, but rather I would assert that it was the historically regressive mode of Romanticism, responding to explanatory collapse by innovating culturally transcendent explanations. And I would also assert that compared with anti-redemptive, anti-explanatory Romanticism it was relatively superficial, for in contrast this subtler Romanticism recognized that the explanatory collapse which was the cultural trauma that precipitated Romanticism was the collapse of explanation itself. It was the fundamental incoherence of these two modes of Romantic response to cultural trauma that has been responsible for the astonishing culturally innovative dynamism of high explanatory culture and its artistic exemplification for the past 180 years. For nearly two centuries various modes of redemption have been innovated, most of which still remain with us, social redemption, as with the various forms of socialism as well as Marxism, erotic redemption, scientific redemption, redemption by means of art, redemption by means of sex, the most widespread mode today, since it has the greatest potential for popular appeal and even sacred texts, the monthly issues of *Playboy*, redemption through Oriental mysticism, redemption by means of drugs, even redemption by means of radical re-interpretations of the rhetoric of Christian theology, as with Coleridge and how many others. However, avant-garde artists today are busily engaged in a self-conscious destruction of art, but art can scarcely be destroyed, since it is an adaptational strategy. Rather, what they are engaged in destroying is what remains the most potent redemptive mode for the redemptively inclined members of high culture, the redemptive notion of art. Art having been used as a fortress from which to negate the adequacy of the traditional and the 19th- and 20th-century innovative modes of redemption, that fortress can itself be destroyed. As this happens, I think we will see in the scholarship of Romanticism a turning away from the still fashionable limitation of Romanticism to its relatively superficial apocalyptic or redemptive mode, and a turning towards its more penetrating tradition, the anti-explanatory, the anti-redemptive, the refusal to accept any consolation for the irresolvable tension of human existence.