

SOME RECENT DEFINITIONS OF GERMAN
ROMANTICISM, OR THE CASE
AGAINST DIALECTICS

by Robert L. Kahn

When the time came for me to be seriously thinking about writing this paper—and you can see from the title and description that I gave myself plenty of leeway—I was caught in a dilemma. In the beginning my plan had been simple enough: I wanted to present a report on the latest developments in the scholarship of German Romanticism. As it turned out, I had believed very rashly and naively that I could carry on where Julius Petersen's eclectic and tolerant book *Die Wesensbestimmung der deutschen Romantik* (Leipzig, 1926), Josef Körner's fragmentary and unsystematic reviews in the *Marginalien* (Frankfurt a. M., 1950), and Franz Schultz's questioning, though irresolute, paper "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Romantikforschung"¹ had left off. As a matter of fact, I wrote such an article, culminating in what I then considered to be a novel definition of German Romanticism. But the more I thought about the problem, the less I liked what I had done. It slowly dawned on me that I had been proceeding on a false course of inquiry, and eventually I was forced to reconsider several long-cherished views and to get rid of certain basic assumptions which I had come to recognize as illusory and prejudicial.

It became increasingly obvious to me that as a conscientious literary historian I could not discuss new contributions to Romantic scholarship *in vacuo*, but that I was under an obligation to relate the spirit of these pronouncements to our own times, as much as to relate their substance to the period in question. From this it followed that I had to arrive at my own

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definition and judgment of the historical process, and eventually I was compelled to review the very foundations on which that branch of our discipline called "Literaturgeschichte" rests which, as we all know, owes its origin and most of its methods and goals to the Romantic era. I, therefore, beg your indulgence for presenting my conclusions in a rather "ego-centric" manner, for devoting most of my time to the consideration of certain fundamental issues which are theoretical and speculative by the very nature of the subject, and for treating these problems rather broadly.

It seems to me that we have reached a crucial point in our investigation and treatment of all historical literature, not only of the Romantic period. On the one hand, we are the heirs of Positivism, which has furnished us with splendid editions of the works of our authors, with minute and detailed information about their lives, with almost all available facts about both. The mass of material handed on by this group of scholars is overwhelming, as all of us can testify. Who of us today would dare write a study of Tieck, as Rudolf Haym did almost one hundred years ago in his *Die romantische Schule* (1870), based on only two available editions of letters? The true Positivist, as I have tried to describe him elsewhere in the person of Professor Körner,² was in the main content to collect data, hopefully leaving the interpretation to others. Fritz Jonas' proud, though perhaps somewhat ironical, motto to the *Erläuterungen der Jugendgedichte Schillers* (Berlin, 1900), "Wenn die Könige bau'n, haben die Kärner zu thun" (p. [5]), is the motto of this school. Our great "historisch-kritische" editions, from Minde-Pouet-Steig-Schmidt's *Kleist* to Sauer's *Grillparzer*, the *Sophien-Ausgabe* of Goethe and the Suphan edition of Herder, the "Briefe" published by Leitzmann, Jonas, and Geiger, and Biedermann's "Gespräche" are due to its indefatigable efforts.

We are the heirs of this movement, as we are of "Geistesgeschichte," which first rose to attack Positivism whose methods borrowed from the natural sciences it deplored. The "Geistesgeschichtler" believed in grasping the essence of literature via its philosophical, social, political and religious content and circumstances. They stressed the cultural view, the totality of intellectual history, focusing their attention chiefly on the author, not the work of art. Poetry to them meant most often simply "philosophical ideas in dilution."³ Their favorite concepts were "Weltanschauung," "Zeitgeist," and "Einfluß," and they delighted in positing various intellectual typologies and polarities, reducing thought and emotion to basic parallels and analogies. Like Positivism, "Geistesgeschichte" laid claim to being a science, albeit of history, and Wilhelm Dilthey in his study of Novalis (written 1865) in *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (1905) could still speak of "die Wissenschaft," "Verfahren," and "strenge Erkenntnis" in one breath.

We have lost this certainty and conviction of the nineteenth century and our approach is largely experimental, tending towards the appreciation

of the individual and subjective aspects of the work of art and its author. I must plead guilty for having in the past considered myself a staunch member of the "geistesgeschichtliche Bewegung," which in retrospect can in part be explained by the fact that the period which I studied and tried to interpret has its roots in philosophy and thought. As Haym stated in his "Einleitung,"

Immer haben seit dem Beginn unsrer großen Literaturepoche in Deutschland Dichtung und Philosophie zusammen gearbeitet und lebhaft ineinandergegriffen. Niemals jedoch haben sie sich dergestalt durchdrungen wie in den Bestrebungen der Gründer der Romantischen Schule. Je flacher die Wurzeln sind, welche die Dichtung dieser Zeit im Boden des Lebens, die Philosophie im Boden des Realen hatte, um so mehr verschlingen diese beiden ihre Wurzeln ineinander und suchen eine aus der anderen Nahrung zu ziehen. In dieser äußersten Geistigkeit, in dem Ineinanderfließen des Phantasie- und Gedankenlebens besteht geradezu, wenn es doch einmal unter eine Formel gebracht werden soll, das Wesen der Romantik . . . (*Die romantische Schule* [3rd ed; Berlin, 1914], pp. 7-8).

I will have occasion later to discuss several modern works on Romanticism which are indebted to the spirit of "Geistesgeschichte." It can perhaps be said with some justification that Goethe is the patron of Positivism under the formula "Leben und Werk sind eins," and Schiller the father of "Geistesgeschichte" under the rule "Geist und Kunst sind verbunden."

Two recent schools of interpretation, very closely related to each other, have made a serious attempt at replacing "Geistesgeschichte" in the last thirty years or so. I am referring to "Literaturwissenschaft" and its Anglo-American equivalent, the "New Criticism." Perhaps it is too early and therefore not quite fair to draw conclusions, but it seems that the first-named movement has as yet not lived up to its promise which, in more recent years, has been to subject "Schöne Literatur" and "Poetik" to close and single-minded scrutiny.⁴ The leading spokesmen of the group, Emil Staiger and the late Wolfgang Kayser, have written brilliantly executed expository pieces, treating general as well as specific poetic and philosophical themes, comparing and analyzing individual poems, and drawing "essential characterizations" of poets, just as Friedrich Schlegel did. But they have shied away from any sustained historical investigation of more than one author—Staiger's *Goethe*⁵ is a case in point—and I am inclined to think that simply on the basis of their program we cannot expect much from "Literaturwissenschaft" in the area of extended literary history, particularly in the field of Romanticism. I greatly fear that, if the "Literaturwissenschaftler" were ever to investigate the authors of the so-called "Frühromantik," they would simply cast them out, as has been done by the "Geistesgeschichtler" Benz and Ruprecht, and probably for similar reasons: Jena's obvious intellectuality and, excepting Novalis and young Brentano, its lack of artistic creativity.

New Criticism, as we all know, has almost run its course. It was overly concerned with the work alone, with problems of structure and "pure" poetics; yet the practice of the New Critics has been shown not to be as pure as they had assumed. Theirs was an ideal which did not take into account the human weakness of the interpreter, his memory of extrinsic facts, and the consideration that, whether we like it or not, life and art, reality and illusion, or fact and fiction are intimately related. Author and work may not be one, but the one is impossible without the other and our knowledge and understanding of the latter is impoverished if we deal with it only in a vacuum — provided, of course, that we still intend to hold fast to the foremost of our humanistic ideals, the claim towards universality. As far as our period is concerned, the New Critics could do little with it or for it, remaining hostile to what they considered the Romantics' wild, humorless, and unsophisticated strains.⁶ T. S. Eliot, whose early negative attitude to Goethe is well-known until he delivered the "Hamburg Lecture," could say blatantly, "there may be a good deal to be said for Romanticism in life, there is no place for it in letters."⁷ The New Critics were in the main content with ready-made negative "metaphysical" definitions in viewing Romanticism.

We have, it seems to me, reached a rather hazardous and painful period in the history of "Literaturgeschichte," which I take to be the basic, central, and unifying study in our discipline excluding, of course, linguistics and "non-literary" philology. This unhappy situation is compounded by the fact that we are not alone in facing a crisis, but that all around us, wherever we look, be it at any of the other branches of learning, even at our sister discipline, philology, at the contemporary arts, the natural sciences, or at politics and society, we find the same aimlessness and sense of loss of direction that we are experiencing. No historian of German literature can miss the point that with materialism and rationalism rampant, with Existentialism or, shall we say, scepticism flourishing, we are reliving vicariously the late eighteenth century.

The question, where literary history is going, whether it ought to renounce its claim toward the comprehension of the totality and order of literary phenomena, toward a rational, methodical, and critical evaluation of poetry in the context of prior and later developments on the basis of style, form, and symbol and in connection with the entire intellectual tradition, with the life and surroundings of the poet, his times, his friends; or whether literary history should subscribe to no principles at all and leave everything to inspiration and chance, concentrating instead on subjective and atomistic portrayal, turning out poetry on poetry, speculating on myths and archetypes—these are problems that are very much with us. I have no pat solution, although I have faith in an ideal of "Literaturgeschichte" where we will no longer claim baldly that literature

is just philosophical knowledge translated into imagery and verse, but where we will hold that poetry also expresses an intellectual attitude to life, as Rudolf Unger suggested more than once.⁸ This would certainly encompass also the history of poetics, of structure, of genres and of the entire intellectual background of the period under discussion. My ideal literary history, however, will pay little attention to the lives of the poets or to the socio-political situation of their times, unless absolutely necessary for an understanding of their work which must become the center of attention, the "Ausgangspunkt" for our study. If this is eclecticism, I frankly confess to it, as also to my debt of gratitude to "Literaturwissenschaft" and New Criticism. Major movements such as these do not disappear without casting a long shadow into the uncharted future.⁹

As historians of literature we must be constantly aware of two fundamental truths: first, art is basically irrational, and second, our discipline cannot afford but be rational. So while our logic may never exhaust or even discover the essence of poetry, we must continue the tradition of the Grand Illusion, as do all men who live dedicated to a noble cause. Indeed, the true appreciation of literature is subjective and individualistic—and the giants who preceded us, such as Dilthey and Scherer, fully realized this—for "ars longa, vita brevis est"; but let us take heart from Haym's proud though pessimistic statement, "Stückwerk ist und bleibt eben jede historische Darstellung."¹⁰

Speaking specifically, the kind of literary history of our period which I visualize will have to get rid of certain basic premises mentioned at the beginning of this paper. They are two in number and, in my opinion, their widespread acceptance has had disastrous consequences in the treatment of the Romantic movement. Because they are closely related and generally appear together they may be treated as one: the principle of polarity, i.e. thesis and antithesis, and the principle of higher union of these, i.e. synthesis.

When we look at the chaos of fact and fiction before us, which we name "life," and view it conscious of the passing of time and in relation to ourselves and others of the human race on earth (and soon perhaps in outer space), which we designate as "history," we have already imposed a certain pattern on the former, which we call "law" or "principle of history." This principle may be largely of a religious nature, it may be based on philosophical speculation, or on the observation of natural facts. The Orient's "law of history" was symbolized by the snake holding its tail in its fangs—eternal repetition. Heraclitus apparently saw it in the river's swiftly flowing waters—eternal change. Darwin perceived it in Nature's bitter warfare—natural selection from accidental variations. Most Western historians ever since Kant, the Romantics, and Hegel have applied one absolute principle to the historical process: the law of dialectics, a trans-

cidental-idealistic construct. Hofmannsthal restated Hegel's famous formulation of Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis, when he said poetically, "Jede Entwicklung bewegt sich in der Schraubenlinie, lässt nichts völlig hinter sich, kehrt in höhern Gewinde zum gleichen Punkt zurück."¹¹ We are all familiar with Comte's three stages of progress and with Spengler's pessimistic as well as Toynbee's more recent optimistic use of this principle.

It must be realized, however, that this so-called "law of dialectics" is purely normative and regulative, derived from a particular philosophical view prevalent and widely accepted at one time in our past. It is not sacrosanct as such. One can certainly conceive the idea that at another time in our history a different historical theory could be evolved more in keeping with the aspirations and views of that age. We only have to think of Herder's organic law seen under the metaphor of a tree, or of the Church's otherworldly scheme symbolized by the Cross.

It is my belief that we have arrived at a time when we must discard the dialectic law. While I am experiencing difficulties in finding good rational reasons in support of this belief, although I tried several minutes ago to draw a picture of the spiritual unrest of our age, and while I am equally hard put to suggest a balanced principle to take its place, I am fairly confident that I can prove to you in the case of recent Romantic scholarship why this superimposed law which has become the basic assumption of German literary history (not to mention Marxism) is totally wrong. The dialectic principle is the red thread that can be traced, now appearing, now disappearing, in all of the works on German Romanticism in the last one hundred fifty years.

Sydney Hook, in his *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy* (New York, 1940), has already stated the logical argument against the dialectic system. Jacques Barzun, in his *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage* (1941),¹² apparently misunderstood Professor Hook's intention, which was not at all to set up seven dialectic features, but to disprove them. Dean Barzun believes that there is a "sound core of the idea," employing rather impressionistic language to make his point. But not being a logician, I shall have to advance a different argument. I will stake my case 1) on the present appalling confusion of terminology and thought concerning the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, 2) on the many retractions of previous definitions proposed by the most eminent scholars in the field of Romanticism, 3) on the erroneous use of the principle of polarity, and 4) on the unwarranted value judgments concerning the periodization of that literature. Points three and four go to the heart of the dialectic system. This discussion, while still hoping to continue the task of examining significant contributions to German Romantic scholarship since Schultz's paper of 1950, will in the main restrict itself to a brief appraisal of four distinctive views exemplified by the work of

Arthur O. Lovejoy, René Wellek, Hermann A. Korff, and Erich Ruprecht. The issues may at times overlap, as is only to be expected.

In looking at the scholarship of German Romanticism, we are faced with utter and unbelievable chaos. As early as 1830 Goethe, referring to the concept of classical and romantic poetry (which he claimed he and Schiller had invented whereas it was Hurd and Warton), stated engagingly to Eckermann that it "jetzt über die ganze Welt geht und so viel Streit und Spaltungen verursacht" (March 21). No other period in our literature is in a similar state of confused and confusing analyses, and most scholars shy away from general discussions, preferring to concentrate their energies on severely limited enquiries. There are literally thousands of definitions of Romanticism and, I am sure, each one of us has his pet theory which, I warrant, is unique. Ernest Bernbaum, in his *Guide Through the Romantic Movement* (1930),¹³ has given us a sketchy list of the many contradictory definitions of the term "Romanticism" (from Goethe and Heine to Brunetière and Saintsbury) and of its suggested founders (from Homer, Christ and Plato to Rousseau and Kant, not even bothering to include Wackenroder, Friedrich Schlegel or Novalis). We only have to look at the multiplicity of definitions made use of in the published reports of the last Tübingen symposium of 1948¹⁴ or in the Prentice-Hall paper-back edition of essays of 1962¹⁵ to realize the terrible predicament in which the serious student of the period finds himself.

Admittedly the concept of "Romanticism" and the adjective "Romantic" from which it developed are loaded terms.¹⁶ These words have been emptied of a precise meaning because of their peculiar origin, history, and application. When Novalis says that "die Kunst, auf eine angenehme Art zu befremden, einen Gegenstand fremd zu machen und doch bekannt und anziehend" is "romantische Poesie," or when he advances his famous definition, "Romantisieren ist nichts als eine qualitative Potenzierung . . . indem ich dem Gemeinen einen hohen Sinn, dem Gewöhnlichen ein geheimnisvolles Ansehen, dem Bekannten die Würde des Unbekannten, dem Endlichen einen unendlichen Sinn gebe, so romantisiere ich es"—not to speak of Friedrich Schlegel's "116. Athenäumsfragment"—we may consider these statements as expressing a) a program for a new literature or a new literary movement, b) definitions of a type of literature, universally accepted and written either in the past, present, or future, in opposition to "classical" poetry, c) psycho-aesthetic observations embracing all of poetry, or d) remarks developed from close scrutiny of one genre, the epic. You can see the problem that arises when a history is written simply on the basis of such—we must in all honesty agree with hostile critics of the movement—nebulous statements. One cannot really be surprised, looking at it from this "linguistic" approach, that all the "Frühromantiker" sooner or later gave up the use of the term "romantisch," which they themselves had

so freely used in the *Athenäum*, and, if we really insist on carrying this view to a ludicrous extreme, denied ever having belonged to the new school. But my argument is not with the Romantics, whom I cherish, but with their historians, be they friend or foe.

It is my contention that most scholars using the term "romantisch" fall into the error of not distinguishing clearly between theories, definitions, and views that go under that label and the new movement itself. Confusion spreads where confusion has existed to start with, unless one proceeds by differentiating clearly between a definitely established, chronologically demonstrable movement called "Romantic" and the many meanings which the adjective not derived from this *one* and *only* allowable source carries.

My anti-dialectic argument is that the present confusion is aided and abetted by the indiscriminate use of the word "Romantic" based primarily on an unhistorical, in fact, on a "metaphysical" definition derived from the antithetical predilection and, if you will, universal leanings of past historians, Friedrich Schiller and Schlegel included. Romanticism is hardly at fault, as Irving Babbitt argued so stubbornly; rather is the chaos due to scholars such as he who, blindly accepting "Romantic" idiosyncracies, have posited two types of personalities and of literatures, and have thus stirred up the witches' brew which has become our daily poison.

This sad situation has caused many historians of Romanticism agonizing moments of despair and has given rise to serious doubts as to the wisdom of employing the concepts "Romanticism" and "Romantic" further. It is not surprising to discover that "Geistesgeschichtler," in particular, have from time to time advocated that we drop the terms entirely. Dilthey was first when he, still somewhat facetiously I believe, suggested "daß man sich seiner [i.e., der Romantik] entledigt" because of the "Mißbrauch" with the movement's name.¹⁷ He was echoed by Schultz who requested seriously that the concepts be avoided, if at all possible, or at least that their use be limited severely.¹⁸

The same plea was made in this country by the late Professor Lovejoy of the History of Ideas movement in a now famous address before the Modern Language Association in 1923 entitled "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms."¹⁹ In the paper he presented four explicit alternatives to correct the dangerous confusion of terminology which he called "the scandal of literary history and criticism." The first is Dilthey's earlier suggestion, "that we should all cease talking about Romanticism"; the second is Schultz's idea expressed succinctly to the effect that scholars and critics be prevailed upon to "restrict their use of the term to a single and reasonably well-defined sense." Both these proposals are discarded as soon as stated for being impracticable. The third alternative requires the application of Lovejoy's method, the tracing of the unit-idea "Romantic" from its inception onward. The fourth is the result of this technique: that we use

the concept "Romanticism" in the plural, not only as applied to European literature as a whole, but even in the case of the literature of one country.

It must be stated that Lovejoy undertook to prove only that Joseph Warton's poem "The Enthusiast" of 1740, F. Schlegel's conception of "romantische Poesie" of 1796, and the personality of Chateaubriand before 1799 and after, have almost nothing in common, though usually all three phenomena are called "Romantic." He did not demonstrate, as he claimed, his "recognition of a *prima facie* plurality of Romanticisms, of possibly quite distinct thought-complexes, a number of which may appear in one country" ("On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," pp. 234-235), although I would agree with him to a certain extent, as I shall show later. Lovejoy certainly went too far when he summed up, "any attempt at a general appraisal even of a single chronologically determinate Romanticism—still more of 'Romanticism' as a whole—is a fatuity" (p. 252). The error which Lovejoy commits is obvious: his argument rests on popular misconceptions about the word "Romantic." When he then traces the development of this term and applies it to a poem, a set of theories, and a person, all of them labelled "Romantic," he naturally finds that the concept makes no sense. He has failed to convince us because he started out at the wrong end. As I mentioned before, one must begin with a proper historical definition of the movement "Romanticism" and then proceed towards explaining the adjective. I should like to add that Julius Petersen reached almost the same conclusions as Lovejoy on the basis of some highly questionable metaphysical (Hegelian) deductions. He "asserted that it is impossible to reduce the spirit of romanticism to a pure formula, because that does violence to one of its principal characteristics (namely eternal becoming)."²⁰

Professor Lovejoy's last two proposals occasioned a spirited response by René Wellek twenty-five years later when the paper appeared in book form. I am referring to Professor Wellek's well-known essay "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History" in Volume I of *Comparative Literature*.²¹ In it he superbly defends the continued use of the period term "Romanticism" and makes a cogent case for the view that there is a unified European Romantic movement. Time does not permit going into detail, though no Germanist, to my knowledge, has ever replied to Wellek's sweeping statements on German Romanticism. They were occasioned by Lovejoy's extreme stand on no unity whatsoever which forced the respondent into a similarly extreme position and to overstate the case for Comparative Literature.

Wellek discovers the unity of Romanticism in "the same conceptions of poetry and of the workings and nature of poetic imagination, the same conception of nature and its relation to man, and basically the same poetic style, with a use of imagery, symbolism, and myth which is clearly distinct

from that of the eighteenth-century neoclassicism" (p. 147). He makes German literature his test case and finds that there is a unity and coherence based on the abovementioned criteria "between the date of Klopstock's *Messiah* (1748) and the death of Goethe." He cannot accept the view "that romanticism is the creation of the Schlegels, Tieck, Novalis, and Wackenroder." To him these eighty-four years represent a movement which "in European terms, would have to be called 'romantic'" (p. 147). In discussing Goethe, Wellek claims him for Romanticism chiefly because his "greatest works are the subjective lyrics, *Faust*, the very influential *Meister*, and, of course, *Werther*" (p. 148). The new view of this period, according to Wellek, "is a revival of Neoplatonism, a pantheism (whatever its concessions to orthodoxy), a monism which arrived at identification of God and the world, soul and body, subject and object" (p. 150). The enthusiasm for Greece shown by Schiller, Humboldt, Goethe, Hölderlin, and the early Friedrich Schlegel are proof to him of what he calls "romantic Hellenism," provided the "view that a large part of Hellenism is romantic is justified" (pp. 148 ff.).

Let me state first that I have a great deal of sympathy for Professor Wellek's argument in favor of a unified European Romantic movement. We are all familiar with George Santayana's treatment of Goethe's *Faust* as exemplifying the Romantic spirit.²² Fritz Strich remarked, "die klassische Dichtung Goethes und Schillers . . . wurde vom Ausland ganz als Romantik empfunden . . .," and if one talks "von der weltliterarischen Wirkung der deutschen Dichtung . . . , kann man zwischen Klassik und Romantik keinen Unterschied machen."²³ We must keep this in mind. On the other hand, we cannot entirely accept Eudo C. Mason's implied thesis that there is hardly any worthwhile English Romantic movement if compared to the achievement of German Romanticism, and that German Romanticism is a poor thing anyway compared to the achievement of Goethe and Schiller.²⁴ Professor Mason relies almost entirely on Crabb Robinson's eye-witness reports which demonstrate indeed that the English poets learned little from their German contemporaries and *vice versa*.

Apart from this, Wellek's case does not stand up too well even if we could accept his definitions of Romanticism, which we cannot do in good conscience. We simply know too much about the individual style, views, and lives of the poets concerned to be able to agree with his sweeping generalizations. He oversimplifies the case, and where Lovejoy failed to see the forest because of the trees, Wellek fails to see the trees because of the forest. We face here a typical case of high-level abstractions which have become meaningless in the sense that, if we generalize far enough, we shall reach a point where all views are the same. As it is, we can pick out any statement made by Wellek and show that it does not apply to all the poets mentioned. Take, for instance, the idea of pantheism: this might

be found in the early Goethe and, as Wellek calls him, in "an extremely irrationalistic preromantic" Herder (p. 148), both of whom are not systematic philosophers by any means, but is it displayed in the writings of Schiller, particularly after he had fallen under the spell of Kant, for whom the additional issue of "monism" never presented a problem because of the fundamental dualistic orientation of "Vernunftphilosophie"? Professor Wellek argues against nominalism, but he himself, as in the case of Herder, makes plentiful use of it. We can agree, however, with part of his "Hellenistic" argument: Winckelmann, in our view too, no longer represents pure Neo-Classicism. His view of Greece is certainly that of a new era, though I could not in good conscience call it "Romantic." Friedrich Schlegel's discovery of chthonian elementary forces in Greek mythology are a far cry from the statuesque serenity so urgently desired by the restless spirits of Winckelmann, Goethe, and Schiller.

However, there is no need for us to proceed with a detailed criticism of Professor Wellek's argument. Morse Peckham has come to the aid of Lovejoy, in an article entitled "Toward a Theory of Romanticism,"²⁵ by trying to reconcile the views of the later Lovejoy with those of his critic. He revises Wellek's definition of Romanticism as being contained in Lovejoy's short formula of 1941: "organicism, dynamism, and diversitarianism."²⁶ As I have stated before, we must reject oversimplifications of this sort, for this brief slogan would embrace the entire modern history of ideas starting with Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, and Jakob Böhme, but saying very little about *literature*. Professor Peckham proceeds to argue the case for a European Romanticism. I, too, hold to the idea of a European Romantic movement, but I severely restrict the use of the term "Romanticism" to one particular group of writers, namely those authors who called themselves or who allowed themselves to be called Romantics. It is an historically evolved term for a "school" of writers who were conscious of their opposition to previous or contemporary literary associations, styles, and manners, exemplified in Germany, for instance, by the circles in Jena, Heidelberg, Berlin, and Tübingen.²⁷ I see no other way to bring order out of chaos.

Let me now return to my main argument against dialectics. Almost all of the scholars here mentioned have changed their views and definitions at a later stage of their careers. Dilthey, as we have seen, did not take seriously his own suggestion to discard the concept of Romanticism. Schultz in his later publications, particularly his *Klassik und Romantik der Deutschen*,²⁸ employs the two terms on almost every page with the most confusing de- and connotations. Lovejoy, as was stated before, changed his deeply pessimistic views on the plurality of Romanticisms in favor of a unified philosophical movement. He realized, we may assume, that he could not operate with a definition derived from the many meanings of the

adjective. Wellek, for all practical purposes, retreated too from his earlier unified position. In the first volume of his monumental *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, he describes Goethe as keeping "his hold on the essentials of classicism."²⁹ Schiller is seen as the critic who "sums up and salvages the heritage of the 18th century and yet is the wellspring of romantic criticism."³⁰ Although it may be argued that theory may differ from practice, this is not Wellek's argument, and we are under no obligation to make allowances here for this unlikely hypothesis. The new "villain" for Lovejoy, as Peckham pointed out (though this is not his term and intent; cf. "Theory of Romanticism" in *Romanticism*, pp. 214 ff.), is "static mechanism," for Wellek it is "Neo-Classicism." In other words, Romanticism is the antithesis to these two abstractions which allegedly contain the essence of the preceding period. We are face to face with dialectics and with confusing recantations inherent in the system and fostered by it. It is interesting to note that Peckham also revised his opinion on some particulars in a later essay: Romanticism seems to have become Enlightenment, as Professor Wellek remarks.³¹

The next two points are closely related. The principle of polarity, the "heart" of the system, was developed in the era of Idealism and Romanticism. Schiller's essay "Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung" (1795-96) is, I think, the first profound attempt to contrast two types of poets and their works anthropologically, although the vague beginnings of such a literary contradistinction can be traced back to various late eighteenth-century English and German Storm and Stress critics. Friedrich Schlegel's "Studium-Aufsatz," which precedes Schiller's formulation by one year, is another such an antithetical contribution which contrasts "classical" with "modern" or "characteristic" literatures and authors. "Geistesgeschichte," in particular, fastened on this convenient method of classification, developing certain metaphysical-ontological typologies of poets and entire literatures. This highly questionable method of grouping together works and authors, and particulars and universals, led Dilthey to establish his three types of *Weltanschauung* as exemplified by thinkers and poets, Herman Nohl to apply these to the arts of painting and music, and Oskar Walzel to fit these to authors of nineteenth-century German literature.

These constructs have played havoc with a sane, immanently developed, and historically sound and specific view of art and literature. The epoch which produced these verbal condensations should properly be called Neo-Scholasticism and its fallacious argument is best illustrated by Fritz Strich's *Deutsche Klassik und Romantik*. Strich's normative "Grundbegriffe," derived from Wölfflin's categories, are too well-known to require discussion here. Walther Linden, in his otherwise objectionable article "Umwertung der Romantik,"³² rightly pointed out that Strich contrasts the views of the later Goethe and Schiller with those of the early Romantics, or, in other

words, twenty-five years of "Classicism" with two or three years of "Romanticism." In addition, Strich carefully selected his evidence to favor his antithetical argument.

The greatest work on Romanticism after Haym is H. A. Korff's monumental four-volume history *Geist der Goethezeit: Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der Klassisch-Romantischen Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923 ff.). Much has been said in praise of it; both Petersen and Körner regarded the volumes which they reviewed as the last word on our period. I agree with these opinions in many ways, but I wish to demonstrate that the work's over-all view, based as it is on the dialectic principle, does injustice to the poets and the literature concerned. To be brief: a praiseworthy "geistesgeschichtliche" attempt is made (following a suggestion of Scherer's), to see the entire era as one, as is indicated by the title of the history, but this attempt is not really successful. In actual practice Korff uses the Hegelian antinomy by introducing Dilthey's concept of changing generations. The spirit of the age of Goethe develops through three generations: the first one is the Storm and Stress-Classical group, which is seen as oriented towards humanism; the second one is the "Frühromantik," which is engaged in the "Romantisierung" or poetization of this humanism; and the third one is the "Hochromantik," which takes for granted what its immediate predecessors had discovered: Religion and the Christian Middle Ages. The first two volumes are largely philosophical treatises on the thought of Storm and Stress and of "Classicism," referring from time to time to irrationalism (i.e., Storm and Stress), to rationalism (i.e., Classicism), and to the synthesis of these two (i.e., Romanticism). The two last volumes are splendid analytical studies of individual authors, shying away, on the whole (as do the first two volumes), from the customary dichotomies of "classical" and "romantic." But the whole work is based on the principle of Hegelian synthetic advances in three or four stages. A valiant attempt is made to find a niche for Jean Paul, Kleist, Hölderlin, and E. Th. A. Hoffmann who, in other histories, because of the usual straight-jacket method of the dichotomy, were conveniently forgotten. We must suspect that the last two volumes are superior because the literary works themselves are discussed, reference to high-level abstractions are absent, and the dialectic law is rarely invoked by name. That, however, explains also why these last volumes do not fit into the scheme that Korff had originally planned. They stand by themselves, the authors of the later period seem no longer enmeshed in some compulsory super-imposed heavily drawn graph.

My fourth task is to show how value-judgments derived from Hegelian dialectics are worthless and even dangerous in the periodization of literature. The label "Deutsche Bewegung," given by some scholars to Romanticism in Germany, is an obnoxious and historically questionable name. It could only arise at a time when a nationally oriented "Geistesgeschichte"

fastened on the political aspects of the Romantic era. Scholars like Nohl and Richard Benz coined the term, Schultz took it over, and the last one to make much of it is Erich Ruprecht in his *Der Aufbruch der romantischen Bewegung* (München, 1948). Because he disagrees violently with Korff's opinion that the Romantic movement is greatly indebted to Weimar, Ruprecht, like Benz in *Die deutsche Romantik* (Leipzig, 1937), proposes to give up the "Frühromantik" in order to save the "Hochromantik." To him only Wackenroder and the later Romantics are the true representatives of Romanticism. By way of Nietzsche he associates them with Hamann and Herder. He makes much of Wackenroder's "Unmittelbarkeit eines beseeligenden Erfahrens" and pits this against the early Romantics' "Erkenntnis" (*Der Aufbruch der romantischen Bewegung*, p. 431). There is also, Ruprecht insists, a difference between the *striving for* the Middle Ages, *for* a religious experience, and that immediate and spontaneous emotion which the genuine Romantic, the "Hochromantiker," experiences and lives (p. 37). Late Romanticism is equated with the dionysian spirit, as if Schiller, Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, Creuzer and Görres had no knowledge of that realm!

A vague "Volkstum" represents to Ruprecht the original discovery of Romanticism (p. 20), a concept, by the way, which has been disavowed by leading historians since Ranke.³³ Heidelberg is identified with "Müssen," Jena with "Wollen"; the latter, therefore, must be bypassed and sacrificed (p. 40). Statements such as "Heidelbergs Reichtum beruht in der einfachen, aber unmittelbaren Erfahrung des Wirkend-Wirklichen" (p. 49) and "Der Idealist jeder Form," referring to Jena, "steht immer vor dem Abgrund des Selbstuntergangs, den er meidet, wenn er ihn auch mit seiner Begriffsspekulation beständig überfliegt" (pp. 40-41), show clearly where Ruprecht stands: one can even imagine the crashing chords of Wagnerian music in the background. Whereas Ricarda Huch had shown Jena to be the "Blütezeit" and Heidelberg the "Verfall," here we witness the opposite. The whole nonsensical argument rests on the fallacious assumption that one Romantic group alone represents the true spirit of the entire movement and that one school is superior to the other. This is the result of our heritage, the dialectic law which demands that we give value judgments since the thesis and antithesis merge in a higher synthesis, on and on, until we are face to face with the Absolute. This idealistic technique of climbing Jacob's ladder, Hegel's historical process, has almost ruined our view of Romanticism.

This sad situation in our scholarship is compounded by indiscriminate borrowing and admixing from often incidental and widely separate contributions to the field for fear of leaving anything unsaid. Schultz's history is a splendid example for this *olla podrida*, where side by side we find references to the "Deutsche Bewegung" (though even he calls one of

Benz's books "verworren," *Klassik und Romantik*, I, 263), to the hackneyed polarities, the racial-biological theories of Nadler, anything that can in any way be identified as deserving the label "Romantic." Yet he failed in carrying his study forward to the 'twenties and 'thirties of the last century! Plagiarizing is not uncommon, and one encounters Haym in Schultz, Strich in Korff, Benz in Ruprecht, etc. German Romantic scholarship is, indeed, in a sorry plight.

My conclusion must be short. The absolute chaos that we are witnessing today in the scholarship of German Romanticism is intimately connected with the supreme rule of the dialectic principle. It is time that we get rid of it, for it oversimplifies and falsifies our history. The term "Romanticism" is an eminently suitable period term and should only be used as such; the same applies to the adjective "Romantic." Although I find myself in sympathy with Professor Welck's suggestion that we call the entire German period from 1748 to 1832 "romantic," it is an unmanageable proposal leading to further normative chaos. I am afraid that we Germanists must cling to the terms as spanning the period from about 1795 to about 1832. These two concepts, according to my definition, can only be applied to the new literary "schools" and their authors, flourishing in these approximate periods, be they situated in Germany, France, or England. There can be no doubt that Winckelmann, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller held many views in common with the Schlegels, Hugo, and Coleridge, for instance, and that their work even gave rise to many of the practices and views of these later and sometimes contemporary authors. But they are not to be called "romantic," since they themselves objected to, or would have protested against, that label.³⁴

Here I see that, after all, I must offer you my own definition of Romanticism which, I realize only too well, is still heavily indebted to "Geistesgeschichte." I would not fasten on historical themes and religious motifs, as Korff did, for that kind of definition would not include outsiders, like Kleist, Hölderlin, and Hoffmann; and Storm and Stress also treated the Christian Middle Ages. The question that we must ask is not, what did the older poets and the new poets have in common, but what is the new view that the latter held and how is it demonstrated in their language? To me the answer is obvious. They maintained that Nature and the Human Spirit are divorced, that these two realms can be joined only through a determined creative act of the individual (or, in older times, of a group of individuals). This act can be aesthetic, religious, philosophical, even erotic. This view, because of the poets' histories, emphasizes worldly experience in the beginning; later it tends to stress otherworldly aspects. Novalis' veil before the goddess at Sais, as well as Tieck's and Hoffmann's demonic Nature, Kleist's marionettes and Hölderlin's suicide of Empedokles, are symptomatic of this dualistic *Weltanschauung*. To my mind,

Tübingen gave up this position, fleeing into an idyllic past where the danger is largely resolved through an illusory and assumed naivete. The middle Schiller is closest to the Romantic view, though he came from the stern treatment of pathetic ideas and advanced to that of fatalistic history. The Romantics, on the whole, dealt with lyrical situations before a back-drop of playful though sincere metaphysics and religion. Theirs is the last attempt in our literature to explain the world as a conscious creative act: a "rational" method directed towards an "idealist-aesthetic-mystic" union.

My qualified definition of Romanticism thus takes full cognizance of the fact that the Romantics themselves believed in the dialectic dualism and its progression. Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, Novalis, Arnim, young Brentano and Eichendorff, and Hölderlin had faith in the ultimate synthesis of the polarity and felt themselves to be part of the divine cosmic scheme of dialectic rhythm. They popularized this view, and literary history was at fault for adopting it.

As I have attempted to show, the fallacy of literary history has been its blind acceptance of the Romantic dialectic vision as a metaphysical truth and as a basis for valid and accurate historical description. But literary history cannot be a spiral progression because many more than three dimensions are involved and because both the directions and the dimensions change as history goes on. The historians we have discussed tried to make literature and/or culture a matter of only three, at times of only two dimensions. That is the reason why ultimately I am not satisfied with my own "over-generalizing" definition of Romanticism, although, I am inclined to believe, it is accurate enough on the basis of the philosophical leanings of the authors involved. The view which I advocate is not "unitarian," it is, if a label must be found, "multiplicitarian." At issue is the age-old controversy between historians and logicians, between relativists and absolutists. Obviously, I side with the former. I would, indeed, have felt far less exposed if I could simply have offered definitions of Weimar, Jena, Heidelberg, Berlin, and Tübingen.

One more word about the principle which I visualize in history. I do not advocate a return to Herder's view (which is failing us also because of his inadequate treatment of modern times in the *Ideen*), for I do not share his basic optimism. The view of life and history which I suggest is largely pessimistic. To my mind, knowledge is never final, never absolute, though reality is both. I do perceive "Sprünge und Risse," I see parallels and reversions, sudden skips and schisms. Life, history, and literature have no convenient order and arrangement, they do not move in binomial contrasts and dualistic opposition. And may I remind you of the fact that during the height of our Golden Age in German letters, popular authors, such as August Lafontaine and August von Kotzebue, ruled supreme. Should they not be taken into account in our literary history, even if only to show how

much time and energy the Romantics devoted to them in their mutual "Tintenkrieg"? Can we indeed legislate a general spirit of a period on the basis of a minority sampling, superior though it is?

The law operating in history is not without, it must be derived from within. Like Heraclitus, I would call it motion, though my symbol for it is the Sea: ceaseless activity, forward, sideways, and backward, very rarely upward. Any historian who makes his own tastes and views the only common denominator for the study of literature commits a crime against the works in question. The law must be left to the literature itself. There is no handsome goal awaiting us yonder, no heavenly promise of infinite perfection and final "reality." Any order that the literature possesses, particularly in the area of categories and periods, must be derived from it, from the views, techniques, and groupings of the authors and their works. Literary scholarship cannot afford to be blindly dogmatic if it is to survive as a respected discipline.

APPENDIX

A Postscript to Josef Körner

After I had published the article "In Memoriam: Josef Körner (†May 1950)," *Modern Language Review*, LVIII (1963), 38-59, I received several communications which, I believe, should be made public in the interest of historical veracity and as a further tribute to this great scholar of Romanticism.

In a letter dated April 8, 1963, Professor Wolfgang Paulsen of the University of Connecticut, a close friend of Professor Körner during the last years of his life, kindly pointed out to me that I could have stated the urgent need for a revision of the *Bibliographisches Handbuch des deutschen Schrifttums* (3rd ed., Bern, 1949) in my introductory remarks. He felt that the publisher ought to have been prodded to keep this book up-to-date. In my reply I expressed the opinion that the need was perhaps not this great in view of the Eppelsheimer-Köttelwesch volumes and the annual *PMLA* bibliography which bridge the gap from 1948 to the present.

Dr. Paulsen stated that, if he had known that I was writing on Körner, he would have been delighted to make available to me the numerous Körner letters in his possession. He writes: "You might find in there actually more references to projects he had for his old age, and it would amuse you perhaps to see that they were quite different from what you culled from his books. I believe that Körner was just as given to making plans and devising projects as his hero, Friedrich Schlegel."

The second communication came from the widow of Professor Körner, Mrs. Jarmila Körnerová-Rumlová of Prague. On the basis of her letter (dated May 4, 1963) I wish to modify the statement in which I remarked boldly, "‘Der große Fund’ at Coppet during the summer of 1929 could not have occurred if Körner had not painstakingly looked and worked for it" ("In Memoriam," *MLR*, p. 40). Mrs. Körnerová writes:

Ihre Frage, warum sich mein Mann gerade zu dem Frühromantikstoff hingezogen fühlte, habe ich ihm auch gestellt, und er sprach einigemal selbst davon. Er bezeichnete die Vertrautheit mit dem Stoff als eine Folge von Schicksalszufällen. Seine Doktorarbeit war der Anfang, der Coppeter Fund der Gipfel, beides zufällig, denn in die Schweiz reiste er als Stipendist, um sich im Französischen zu vervollkommen. Dazwischen liegt das ganze Werk, von dem er sagte, daß er dazu hingezogen wurde. Freilich mußte eine Wahlverwandschaft dem Zufall helfen, wie Sie selbst erkannt haben. Daß ihn das jüdische Element in der Frühromantik gelockt hätte, hat er niemals erwähnt. Es mag im Unterbewußtsein liegen, denn erst in den Jahren der Persekution trat es stark in den Vordergrund seines Lebens.

I wish to modify my original remarks by saying that even in the life of a scholar that which is accidental can easily turn out to be providential, but that it took a detective like Körner to make the most of this discovery.

Similarly, I stated (on p. 41) that Mrs. Körner sold her husband's collection of autographs to make the appearance of the third volume possible. Mrs. Körner writes that this was not the case: "Die verkaufte aber mein Mann selbst, als wir ohne jedes Einkommen irgendwelche Mittel brauchten. Die Briefe waren sämtlich bearbeitet, ev. publiziert." She also states that she had planned to use the royalties derived from a revised edition of the *Handbuch* for a photo-mechanical reprint of the first two volumes of the *Krisenjahre*. Her search for a bibliographer to undertake the task of revising the former failed. "Es ist schade, weil das Kommentarwerk mit seinen Erläuterungen zu den zum Teil eingestampften und fast nicht mehr vorhandenen ersten zwei Briefbänden in der Luft hängt. Ein Privatverleger kann solche Kosten kaum tragen. Und wo eine Institution finden? Die Verantwortung liegt auf meinem Gewissen."

The third communication and my reply to it will follow in full. I consider the discussion most relevant to an understanding of Professor Körner, his motivations, his time and life, and to an understanding of our discipline and the men who in the 'twenties and 'thirties were its spokesmen. Scholarship is not an abstract thriving in a vacuum, it has its roots in the realities of historical existence.

Professor René Wellek of Yale University wrote on April 1, 1963:

I was very pleased to discover your most useful and thorough article on my old friend Josef Körner in the recent number of the *Modern Language Review*, January 1963. I think you judged him and his work very well and give an

excellent account of his three volumes *Krisenjahre der Frühromantik*.

Still, I should like to add something to your comments from my own personal knowledge, which may help to explain Körner's possibly excessive preoccupation with proving himself an exact traditional scholar. Mr. Körner was as you know a Jew who tried to enter the academic profession by becoming a *Privatdozent* at the German University at Prague in 1924. At that time Professor August Sauer was the dominating man. He was, I believe, not particularly anti-Semitic. Just the other way around, he favored Georg Stefansky, whom he loved like a son. But he knew that under the circumstance of the time he could not possibly have two Jewish *Privatdozenten*. He therefore rejected Körner's "Habilitationsschrift" *Klassiker und Romantiker* (Berlin, 1924). Körner forced him to publish his report in *Euphorion*, XXVI (1925), pp. 142-150, where you can still read this astonishing piece of piddling destructive criticism. Körner answered Sauer's incredible attack very effectively in *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift*, 1926, pp. 304-308, in an "Abwehr" dated April, 1925. Körner's friends in Germany were so indignant that they got together a whole roster of distinguished professors who signed a protest against Sauer's procedure which expressly accused him of injustice and lack of scholarly objectivity, alluding to the fact that Sauer's review had very serious practical consequences for Körner. This "Erklärung" was signed by F. Brüggemann, E. Castle, C. Enders, P. Kluckhohn, H. A. Korff, A. Leitzmann, P. Merker, Leo Spitzer, C. Vietor, O. Walzel and G. Witkowski, and can be found in *Literaturblatt für Germanische und Romanische Philologie*, 46 (1925), p. 407. In spite of these protests, nothing could be done even by the Czech Ministry of Education, which was very reluctant to interfere with the affairs of the German University.

Sauer died in September, 1926, and his successor Herbert Cysarz began lecturing at Prague in October, 1928. Körner renewed his application, and Cysarz did not at that time dare to reject it. But at the colloquium the committee consisting of Cysarz, Hauffen and Gierach managed to fail Professor Körner by asking him the most fantastically pedantic and out-of-the-way questions. I remember clearly to have heard from Professor Körner himself that he was asked the number of copies and their location of the chapbook *Till Eulenspiegel*, the details of the biography of Philipp von Zesen and the plots of obscure historical novels by Wilhelm Raabe. This rejection, however, created such a stir that the Ministry forced the German University to reopen the question and Körner was finally admitted as a *Privatdozent* in Autumn, 1930. He obviously had not the slightest chance of promotion. I believe these circumstances are very important in accounting for the concentration of Professor Körner's work on editing and for the bitterness of some of his polemics. I believe he had other ambitions, as you can see from his book on Schnitzler and his very fine articles on the theory of tragedy and on the use of the term "motif."

It is a custom in Germany to sweep such things under the rug. But such an explanation seems to me necessary in view of the fact that Herbert Cysarz had the astonishing effrontery to publish a malicious, patronizing and patently false portrait of Professor Körner in *Grenzfall der Wissenschaft: Herbert Cysarz* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), pp. 99-101. There he not only denigrated the man and scholar, but refers to the flunking of Körner in the Colloquium with obvious satisfaction: "Körner nun brachte es zuweg, im Habilitationskolloquium—durchzufallen," as if Cysarz and his friends had not devised the whole result beforehand. Cysarz says with obvious glee that Körner never achieved a chair, even though he must know that his failure had nothing to do with

Körner's qualifications, but was entirely due to the rise of Hitler and the violent Nazism of Cysarz and Gierach. I believe that the case of Professor Körner is too important a skeleton in the cupboard to be left in the dark. Your fine article was the occasion which prompted me to this account of Körner's difficulties.

In my reply of April 5, 1963 I wrote:

Regarding the circumstances surrounding Professor Körner's "Habilitation" in Prague, I had heard only vague rumors by younger colleagues and friends in Germany last year while composing the review which Dr. Stopp had requested. I had, of course, previously read August Sauer's querulous critique of Körner's book in *Euphorion* (ostensibly taking issue with Leitzmann's remark, "Körner's ausgezeichnete Schrift," in GRM [*Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift*], XII [1924], 312). But I found no one who could elaborate. For this reason, too, I stressed the later years of Professor Körner's career in what turned into a character study and article.

Your revealing letter makes available biographical information which in part helps to explain Körner's later obsession with facts and his growing aggressiveness. It also sheds light on a sad page in the history of our discipline. The story of Körner's "Habilitation" is the perfect and sorry example, how the accommodation of standards from beyond the pale taints and destroys all and everything of value within. Neither the "realist" (Sauer), nor the "victim" (Körner) were spared.

An additional indication of Sauer's partisanship can be found in *Euphorion*, XXV (1925), 302-303 and 713, where he champions in strong terms Stefansky's *Das Wesen der deutschen Romantik* (Stuttgart, 1923) in a "Verwahrung" and "Feststellung," respectively, against a critical review of H. A. Korff (*Literaturblatt f. germ. u. rom. Phil.*, 1924, Nos. 1-3). Körner himself belittled the work (in an aside in an article of 1926 which shall be mentioned below) as follows: "Was sonst Abschluß und Ernte eines reichen Forscherlebens war, stellt man heut gleich an den Beginn der wissenschaftlichen Laufbahn, zwanzigjährige Jünglinge deuten und erschließen uns schon in ihren Doktorarbeiten die 'Probleme und Lebensformen von Hamann bis Hegel' [the subtitle of Cysarz' first book] oder 'das Wesen der deutschen Romantik'" (p. 455).

As for the Cysarz-Körner controversy, the development of personal antagonism between the two men may very well have been caused by Körner himself in an article of 1926 entitled "Barocke Barockforschung," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXXIII, 455-464, which is directed throughout against Cysarz, particularly his *Deutsche Barockdichtung. Renaissance-Barock-Rokoko* (Leipzig, 1924). Perhaps two lengthy quotations may suffice for the tone and tenor of the review which apparently set the stage for the sequel of which your letter speaks:

1.)

Ihm [Cysarz] eignen alle glänzenden Gaben—und so ziemlich die meisten Unarten, die seine in Wissenschaften und Kunst schöpferischen Altersgenossen auszeichnet und kennzeichnet. Gleich mit dem Erstlingsbuch "Erfahrung und Idee" (Wien 1921), das ihm den Doktorhut verschaffte, hat er sich in die vorderste Reihe der "Geistshistoriker" eingestellt und solches Aufsehen erregt, daß ihm nicht nur ein ehrenvoller Literaturpreis zufiel, sondern er auch ungeachtet seiner Jugend als ernster Kandidat bei der Besetzung eines bedeutenden Lehrstuhls in Betracht kommen konnte. In der Tat vermittelt jenes Buch keine geringe Vorstellung von der Denkkraft, Sprachgewalt, Gelehrsamkeit und profunden Bildung seines Verfassers. Dennoch hat man nach beendeter Lektüre das Gefühl, als hätten wieder einmal kreisende Berge ein armseliges Mäuslein geboren. Es wird ein ungeheures

Thema gesetzt, aber es wird im geringsten nicht gelöst, es wird bestenfalls umschrieben. Etwas wie eine Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Idealismus schwebte dem Verfasser vor; was er zustandegebracht hat, sind doch nur einzelne, mehr oder minder gelungene, mehr oder minder originelle Skizzen zu einer kritischen Geschichte der deutschen Ästhetik im Zeitalter des Idealismus. Was aber Geduld und Nerven des Lesers auf die härteste Probe stellt, ist des Buches eigenwillige, übertrieben barocke Sprache, die eher danach angetan ist, den Gedanken zu verbergen oder doch zu verdunkeln, als ihn zu offenbaren. Man sah den Most sich absurd gebärden und war begierig, was das später für einen Wein geben würde (p. 456).

2.) Ich habe über den Verfasser ein strenges Gericht gehalten. Ein zu strenges vielleicht. Nicht aus Freude am Neinsagen, sondern im Gegenteil, weil ich ihn und sein Gemächte für so bedeutend halte, daß ich die strengsten Maßstäbe nicht sowohl anwenden zu dürfen, als anwenden zu müssen meinte. Wer von sich selber aussagt, daß er "Höchstes und Schwerstes" anstrebe (Vorwort), will gewiß nicht wie ein beliebiger "Fachgenosse" mit Herablassung auf die Schulter geklopft sein; wer über Wölfflins Barockforschung urteilt, sie erscheine überragend "mehr dank der Niedrigkeit der einschlägigen Arbeit seiner Zeitgenossen als dank absoluter Höhe des eignen Wuchses"; wer W. Scherer "amüsische Verfassung" und geringe Sachkenntnis schilt und ihm vorwirft, er hätte "willkürlich und kurzsichtig ein perfides Zerrbild der Barockzeit zusammengeklittert" (S. 20),—der fordert die unerbittlichste Kritik heraus.

Aber trotz aller Einwände, Bedenken und Zweifel, die hier zu äußern waren, bleibt Cysarz' Schrift eine imponierende Erscheinung . . . Und rein als Arbeitsleistung betrachtet, ringt das Buch einem den größten Respekt ab. . . Er muß im Blitzzugstempo gearbeitet haben, und das ist gewiß nicht die beste Art, Wissenschaft zu treiben. Die will bedachtsame Ruhe, gemächlichen Schritt . . . (p. 464).

There is little doubt that Körner's concern for thorough and careful scholarship was the primary reason for this extremely critical, though, in my opinion, not vicious, review of Cysarz. These two scholars were miles apart in their philosophy and approach to literature, they belonged to different generations and *milieu*. Your letter points out the second phase of the apparently life-long debate on supposedly scholarly matters between these two members of the illustrious republic of letters (cf. Körner's judgment on "expressionistische Geistesgeschichte" in his *Handbuch*, p. 21², quoted in my article, p. 39). According to your letter, one of them, certainly, seems to have overstepped the bounds of good taste and decency, when he was given the opportunity for a "rejoinder."³⁵

There are, I am sure, additional psychological and perhaps political explanations for the conduct of the men involved, but the whole affair is ugly and casts a long and gloomy shadow on the genuine aspirations of our profession even today. If scholars of great stature could behave this way in the twenties, what hope was there for the thirties? The harvest has been reaped a thousandfold, the air been poisoned for many years to come. If I may repeat what I said in my article (now omitting the parentheses and stressing the predicate adjectives) "Scholarship, too, is not as pure and simple as a fairy-tale . . ." (p. 41).

I believe, your account of these events should be made public in the interest of historical completeness.

NOTES

1. In his *Klassik und Romantik der Deutschen* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart, 1952), II, 429-439.

After concluding this paper I came across René Wellek's recent study "Romanticism Re-examined" in his volume of collected essays *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven and London, 1963), pp. 199-221. In it he discusses briefly the opinions of some German scholars on Romanticism, most of whom had been dealt with by the abovementioned reviewers. He cites Adolf Grimme's and Romano Guardini's "preconscious" theory, against which, since it had been treated previously by Schultz, I felt no need to argue. As stated in footnotes 9 and 27, I see little to be gained from psychological definitions. Regarding Mr. Mason's bias, Wellek and I seem to agree. But our difference of view is demonstrated when he refers to Max Deutschbein (whose *Das Wesen des Romantischen* [Coethen, 1921] was also reviewed by Petersen; Körner discussed it in his *Romantiker und Klassiker: Die Brüder Schlegel in ihren Beziehungen zu Schiller und Goethe* [Berlin, 1924], p. 6) in the following words: "Still, this neglected little book stressed one central and valid concept: the reconciling, synthetic imagination as the common denominator of romanticism" (p. 203). As my remarks will show, I consider these terms nearly meaningless, for the poetry of almost all ages could be thus described. Quite rightly Professor Wellek points out, "There is, of course, plenty of research and interpretation in Germany of individual romantic writers, but on the whole a strange silence has settled around the question of the nature or essence of romanticism" (p. 209). I hope that my paper will serve to explain the reasons for this strange silence.

2. "In Memoriam: Josef Körner († 9 May 1950)," *Modern Language Review*, LVIII (1963), 38-59. For a sequel to this article please see the Appendix.
3. The phrase is taken out of context from René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1948), p. 109.
4. Wolfgang Kayser, *Das Sprachliche Kunstwerk: Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft* (1st ed.; Bern, 1948), p. 24.
5. Emil Staiger, *Goethe*, 3 vols. (Zürich und Freiburg im Breisgau, 1952 ff.).
6. Cf. Richard H. Fogle, "Romantic Bards and Metaphysical Reviewers," *Journal of English Literary History*, XII (1945), 221-250, reprinted partially in R. F. Gleckner and G. E. Enscoe, eds., *Romanticism: Points of View* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962), pp. 151-167.
7. T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1920), pp. 31-32, quoted by Fogle in Gleckner and Enscoe, *Romanticism*, p. 153.
8. Rudolf Unger, *Aufsätze zur Prinzipienlehre der Literaturgeschichte*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1929).
9. I have, I must admit, little patience with the practitioners of Jungian psychology regarding the collective unconscious; I hold that the form and content of the unconscious is still indebted to outer reality.
10. *Die romantische Schule*, p. iv.
11. Quoted by Franz Schultz, *Klassik und Romantik der Deutschen*, I. 36.
12. (Rev. 2nd ed.; Garden City, N.Y., 1958), p. 166, fn. 13. Professor Hook has more recently presented a shortened formulation of the fallacies of Hegel's logic in D. C. Travis, ed., *A Hegel Symposium* (Austin, 1962), pp. 39-62.
13. (2nd ed.; New York, 1949), reprinted in Gleckner and Enscoe, *Romanticism*, pp. 88 ff.

14. Theodor Steinbüchel, ed., *Romantik: Ein Zyklus von Tübinger Vorlesungen* (Tübingen und Stuttgart, 1948).
15. *Romanticism: Points of View* (see fn. 6 above).
16. Even Ernst Robert Curtius succeeded in tracing an early antecedent of the genre label "Romance" back to the days of Caracalla in 212 A.D. (*Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* [1948; 2nd ed.; Bern, 1961], pp. 40 ff.).
17. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (11th ed.; Leipzig und Berlin, 1939), p. 269.
18. "'Romantik' und 'romantisch' als literaturhistorische Terminologien und Begriffsbildungen," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, II (1924), 364 ff.
19. Published in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XXXIX (1924), 229-253; reprinted in A. O. Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore, 1948), pp. 228-253. The *PMLA* article is reprinted in part in Gleckner and Enscoe, *Romanticism*, pp. 45-57.
20. Quoted from John C. Blankennagel, "German Romanticism" in "Romanticism: A Symposium," *PMLA*, LV (1940), 3; the reference is to *Die Wesensbestimmung*, pp. 101 and 107.
21. René Wellek, "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," *Comparative Literature*, I (1949), Nos. 1 and 2; reprinted in part in Gleckner and Enscoe, *Romanticism*, pp. 192-211; and republished in Wellek's *Concepts of Criticism*, pp. 128-198. In his article, "Romanticism Re-examined," Wellek again makes a strong plea for the unified European Romantic movement (*Concepts of Criticism*, p. 220).
22. George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1910).
23. Fritz Strich, *Deutsche Klassik und Romantik oder Vollendung und Unendlichkeit: Ein Vergleich* (1922; 4th ed. [Bern, 1949]), p. 349.
24. Eudo C. Mason, *Deutsche und Englische Romantik: Eine Gegenüberstellung* [Kleine Vandenhoeck-Reihe 85/85a] (Göttingen, 1959).
25. Morse Peckham, "Toward A Theory of Romanticism," *PMLA*, LXVI (1951), 5-23; reprinted in part in Gleckner and Enscoe, *Romanticism*, pp. 212-227. It should be mentioned too that Goethe is not simply the author of the subjective lyrics, *Faust*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Werther*, but also of works like the *Römische Elegien*, *Alexis und Dora*, *Hermann und Dorothea*, and *Die natürliche Tochter*, to mention only a few. Wellek himself, in his most recent paper, "German and English Romanticism: A Confrontation," *Studies in Romanticism*, IV (1964), writes: "The German romantics felt much more strongly [than the English] that they had to break with the Hellenic classicism of Goethe" (p. 56).
26. Peckham, "Theory of Romanticism," in *Romanticism*, p. 214; the reference is to Lovejoy's article, "The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, II, 237-278.
27. How this opposition originated, whether consciously or by chance, by sudden anger, by envy, or by deep-rooted conviction, these all too-human psychological motivations are of little importance for the authentic results achieved, as is the principle of changing generations; for motivations explain very little in art.
28. Franz Schultz, *Klassik und Romantik der Deutschen* (1940; 2nd ed. [Stuttgart, 1952]).
29. René Wellek, *The Later Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1955), p. 212.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 255. The emphasis in the discussion of Schiller's theories is on the first part of that statement, the latter part comes in via an historical discussion. The subtitle of Wellek's second volume is *The Romantic Age*, and the first three chapters are devoted to the critical writings of Friedrich Schlegel, his brother August Wilhelm, and other early Romantics in Germany.
31. Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. Reconsiderations," *Studies in Romanticism*, I (1962), mentioned also in *Romanticism*, fn. p. 212. For a critical discussion of Peckham's views see Wellek's rejoinder in his *Concepts of Criticism*, pp. 199 ff.
32. Walther Linden, "Umwertung der Romantik," *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde* (now *Der Deutschunterricht*), XLVII (1933), p. 77.
33. Cf. R. Stadelmann, "Die Romantik und die Geschichte," in Steinbüchel, *Romantik*, pp. 153 ff.
34. Professor Wellek, in his article on "The Concept of 'Romanticism,'" makes a strong case in support of the period terms regardless of the date of their origin or acceptance (*Comparative Literature*, pp. 16 ff.) and I follow him that far; but when he uses this evidence in support of even more far-reaching application, I must stop short for the reasons indicated above.
35. Ironically enough, Körner's review of Cysarz' book is critical of the fact "daß seine dem 17. Jahrhundert sich zuwendenden Bemühungen nicht etwa in eine monographische Behandlung des Zesen (wovon das Ganze ausgegangen zu sein scheint) ausliefen" ("Barocke Barockforschung," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXXXIII [1926], p. 457).