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Dissenting Textualism: The Claims of Psychological Method in the Long Romantic Period

WHEN FRANK KERMODE PUBLISHED *THE GENESIS OF SECRECY: ON THE Interpretation of Narrative* in 1979, he presented his analysis of the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as an exercise in Biblical hermeneutics. At the same time, he was at pains to describe his interpretation of Biblical as unmotivated by personal faith in the religion that the texts represented.[1] He took the Gospels seriously, as worthy of interpretative attention, and, simultaneously, depicted them as literature, as texts that might profitably be read with what Coleridge called that "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."[2]

In the course of his attentive reading, Kermode developed an account of intercalated episodes in Mark and weighed the relative claims of historicity (as reference to actuality) and of story as such (as making minimal referential claims in its attention to its internal connections). At the same time, however, he eventually reencountered the very problem that he had seemed to sidestep in announcing his own detachment from the beliefs that the Gospel texts had been designed to register. The Biblical text as he saw it continually presented a tension between latent and manifest meaning, in which the apostles (sometimes) appeared to understand what Christ really meant while other auditors interpreted them in variously obtuse, malign, or disastrous ways. In singling out various passages that revolve around the difference between having and lacking ears to hear, Kermode developed an important Biblical theme and, simultaneously, transferred the problematic

1. Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1979).

2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XIV.

to the interpretation of texts that, in seeming to have no claims on our be-
lief about the state of things in the actual world, had sometimes appeared to
offer a way of muting the question of the relation between a reader's per-
sonal belief and his ability to understand particular texts. Literature, in the
line of thought that Coleridge had made available to Kermode and many
others, was a domain in which shared beliefs were unnecessary for interpre-
tative authority—by contrast with the religious canon considered as a body
of religious scripture.

Yet Kermode was at the same time haunted by the possibility that pro-
fessional hermeneutics in a literary vein was itself merely belief in another
guise—that the profession of the literary interpreter (what Kermode desig-
nated by the word "institution") was at bottom as doctrine-ridden as reli-
gious discussion. And he ultimately took comfort in an existential commit-
ment to interpretation as a decision to accept the world: "The desires of
interpreters are good because without them the world and the text are tac-
itly declared to be impossible; perhaps they are, but we must live as if the
case were otherwise" (126). He presented an array of different types of
interpreters—from those who "wish to discover what [a text] originally
means" (126) to those who "seek to liberate texts from all historical con-
straint by a process of 'deconstruction'" (126) and those who forego "the
banal pleasures of continuity with the original sense for the sake of a joy
more acute, if more dismaying, a *jouissance* that goes beyond the pleasure
principle and arises from a quasi-sexual experience of loss and perversity"
(126). In producing these descriptions of various ways of conducting liter-
ary interpretation, Kermode was able to develop something like critical
conviction by default. He generated a backhandedly positive hermeneutic
program by laying out an array of possible kinds of interpretation that he
translated into their elements so that their unsatisfactoriness would be
readily apparent. Interpretative commitment, even with its full measure of
disappointment, looked to be, on the face of it, preferable to critical doc-
trines that could be resolved into such terms as those that Kermode had
plausibly supplied for them.

The problems of literary hermeneutics thus appeared, in Kermode's ac-
count, to replay the problems of religious hermeneutics of two and three
centuries earlier, in that it seemed as if dispute had set in at the most basic
level of individual words and their definitions. The process of describing a
critical position in terms of its key component parts looked as though it was
already prejudicial. Or, as Isabel Rivers observes in approaching the matter
from the other side in her work on British Dissent and Methodism, the
conviction that particular views were presented tendentiously could be
seen as "widespread confidence that apparent conflict [could] be resolved if

only language [were] employed as it should be."[3] The twentieth century deployed terms of art like formalism, structuralism, historicism, and post-structuralism. The very terms functioned as debating points *in nuce*—just as had occurred with terms like Pelagianism and antinomianism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (to restrict my purview to the particular cases that might be generally relevant to the topics of this essay). Indeed, the difficulty—then as more recently—was that there was no readily available account of "language employed as it should be." For the institutions that Kermode acknowledged as important contributors to our interpretative practices were as disabling to some as they were enabling to others. The names were not merely paraphrasable positions; they also contained implicit arguments. What Bentham called dyslogistic names (by contrast with eulogistic names) seemed both to set and to settle various debates— and to leave them and their critics and exponents essentially unchanged.[4]

The doubt that Kermode admirably entertained was that even when he engaged a new body of materials he was essentially encountering a version of the literature he already knew and the traditions through which he had come to know it. Rather than affirming the novelty of his own position by discerning the formulaic and routine in other people's practice, he sought for a way to explain what it meant to discover something new in literary texts—not merely to offer a revisionary account that would challenge other people's views, but to revise what oneself thought simply through reading and interpretation. Kermode had worried the problem of the interpretative outsider in *The Genesis of Secrecy,* and had come to think that his training as a literary scholar had not afforded him the distance that he had hoped to gain by analyzing religious texts from without. For even as he separated himself from the line of cultural and historical transmission that might be said to underwrite the texts, he wondered about the cultural and historical features of his own formation.

Alain Badiou's more recent work on Paul's letters to the Romans is similarly the effort of someone who declares himself outside the orbit of religion and who chooses his example largely for that reason.[5] Badiou's development of his notion of the event in reading Paul's letters, however, adopts the stance of the outsider more confidently because his approach is ultimately indifferent to the problem of cultural transmission. Indeed, the out-

3. Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England 1660–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 5.

4. Jeremy Bentham, *A Table of the Springs of Action* in *Deontology Together with A Table of the Springs of Action and The Article on Utilitarianism,* ed. Amnon Goldworth (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 12.

5. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003).

sider, lacking the institutional and cultural knowledge of what he needs to know, can fully engage the ways in which a canonized text once represented a challenge to its readers. Confronting the readings of the Church Fathers and Nietzsche alike, Badiou aims to separate the text from the very interpretative traditions that had seemed to be the royal road to knowing it.

The aim for interpretative certainty—seeing truly and seeing fresh—has been perennial, as has the Kermodean anxiety that one is most predictable in all that one takes for originality. While the neo-pragmatist response might be to stop worrying and learn to love the conventionality of the conventions that enfold us, what is compelling about Kermode's dissatisfaction and Badiou's claim on behalf of subjectivity is that they enable us to see textual practices from the more distant past with fresh eyes. Indeed, Kermode's institutionalism chimes with the German Higher Criticism and its discovery of diachrony in the Biblical texts themselves, and with the concern for transmission, whether smooth or irregular, that Foucault denoted in his interest in genealogies. Badiou's perspective, not least in its repudiation of the national and religious identities that stress historical transmission (however accurate or mythifying) helps us to see an eighteenth-century view that more nearly approaches Foucault's account of the archeological. My aim is to describe the ways in which some British Dissenters—John Locke, Philip Doddridge, and Joseph Priestley—developed distinctive techniques, which we might think of as literary methods—in handling religious texts. Further, I hope to explain how they thought of themselves as situating religious texts within a picture of human psychology. Their positions may not count as a fulfillment of Foucault's ambition to chart the "general space of knowledge" and "systems of simultaneity,"[6] but I argue that they were distinctive in establishing an argument on behalf of an essentially archeological perspective—namely, that one does not need to conjure up an image of an individual author or witness to feel that one understands a particular text. (In this sense, the archeological perspective suggests how both questions and answers about a previously unavailable historical past might emerge.) Neither as historically oriented as the philological tradition of the Higher Criticism of the Bible nor as subjective as the Pietist-Methodist direct identification of the believer with the characters and events of the Biblical texts, these figures unfolded an account of psychology that suggests the importance of their work on Biblical interpretation for something like systematic psychology—as opposed to individual psychology, which might be understood as nothing but vagaries. Less to be understood as humanists than as practitioners of the "human sci-

6. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973) xxiii.

ences" as Michel Foucault identified them in his preface to *The Order of Things,* they developed accounts of texts and humans that were mutually reinforcing, and made of both what Foucault rightly identified as "the strange figure of knowledge called man" (xxiv). While all of them expressed identifiable differences of opinion from the religious Establishment, specific doctrinal issues are not the principal issue I shall address. For even as the German Higher Criticism was announcing that the Biblical text had a history to it, they were analyzing the texts with a view to the features that made them legible even to those who were not privy to that history.

All three of the figures whom I shall later discuss shared with other Dissenters basic differences from the Establishment about the proper understanding of the religious canon. They first distinguished themselves from Catholicism along strongly text-marked lines, and read the Bible themselves, in the practice whose doctrinal face is that of the "priesthood of all believers" articulated in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. They valued the Bible for its existence in written form, and congratulated themselves on being the beneficiaries of scripture. From their vantage, Roman Catholicism, with its reliance on the oral transmission of religious doctrine through the agency of appointed religious representatives—priests, bishops, cardinals, pope—made religion opaque in entrusting it to intermediaries. Dissenters saw Catholicism as urging people to take religion by report, and thus to see it in the mode of obedience rather than informed assent. Yet they also separated themselves from Anglicanism, which they saw as having insufficiently distinguished itself from Catholicism in accepting a Bible that included a substantial overlay of church tradition—the three Creeds (Nicene, Apostolic, and Athanasian), the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer of 1662.[7]

It would be easy enough to describe these Dissenters as valuing Scripture simply in the mode of editors pruning a text, and running a red pencil through the portions that seemed undemonstrated in an effort to get at the points of doctrine that seemed to them true. Yet the interest of their discussions and presentations of text derives from an important feature of writing and writtenness—its availability for reworking. Words, sentences, and paragraphs can be tipped in or excised, and variants can be lined up in written texts as they cannot in oral transmission. And, as I shall later suggest, debates about how best to understand texts may be excited in part by

7. The Nicene Creed affirms that Christ is "of the same substance" as the Father and stresses "the reality of the Holy Spirit"; the Apostolic and Athanasian Creeds assert Christ's divinity and the centrality of the Trinity to salvation. I here draw on the useful account provided in Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006) 45, n. 3.

passages that seem to be resurrected when particular interpreters would most like to see them permanently deleted.

To those familiar with the Higher Criticism of the Bible and the scholarly work on it, my claims on behalf of this small sample of British Dissenters may seem merely like a footnote, a way of qualifying Hans Frei's influential thesis that Britain never developed any robust critical analysis of the Bible during the period in which the Higher Criticism was flourishing in Germany, and E. S. Shaffer's sense that Coleridge and Eliot had drawn substantially on the Germans because Biblical scholarship of comparable seriousness was lacking in England.[8] I offer a summary of what I take to be the main line of thought of the German Higher Criticism, then, on the way to suggesting why a different but comparably significant line of Biblical analysis in Britain has largely escaped the notice of serious commentators, and to outlining the approach and effects of that British line.

The German Higher Criticism has rightly been characterized as a culturalist approach. In tracing elements of the Bible to various different epochs and to mythic sources that were outside the pale of orthodox Judaism or Christianity, it did not draw lines of distinction between Biblical truths and cultural fictions. If the Bible contained elements that had developed outside of the religious traditions that it was taken to represent, those elements might not compromise the authority of the Bible so much as intensify it. That is, the Higher Criticism's attention to narrative syncretism—its assimilation of elements stamped with the style of various different historical epochs—suggested that the reality to which the various names of the particular stories referred was the same. This aspect of the Higher Criticism was, at its core, evangelism by textual means: it treated contributions from various eras as distinguishable but as having a fundamentally unvarying message. Indeed, it could be said to treat even those who would never have known themselves to be Jews or Christians as already faithful—if only to a reality that they could not have named. The recognition of similarities between religious narratives and literary narratives (unshaped by Judeo-Christian witnessing) substantially altered the typological patterns that had focused on the various Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Narrative typologizing in the Higher Criticism, that is, identified a host of Biblical authors, and made them at least as central as the figures whom they described. The Higher Criticism saw the differences among various

parts of the Biblical text and discerned the traces of the different life worlds of the different authors: the expressions of shepherds, the language of farmers.

This is to say that the Higher Criticism interpolated stadial history into Biblical texts themselves, and pointed to the differences in style, vocabulary, and historical reference among various portions of the text as evidence of the unity of the basic belief structure that it represented. Scholarly textual work on the Scriptures thus did not simply reconcile the Old Testament with the New. Its interest in producing a genealogical account of the sequence of composition of the religious texts prepared the way for the historical study of the language and literature of particular societies—what Pascale Casanova has described as the Herderian revolution of literary study that ultimately discovers a claim for nationalism by identifying a literary tradition (and that the teaching of various national literatures continues in describing them in terms of chronological unfolding).[9] On the one hand, the Higher Criticism was expansionist; it recruited alien tales as if they could only testify on behalf of the Judeo-Christian faith. On the other, its emphasis on historical succession—arranging texts in order of their composition and possible influence on one another—narrowed the scope of the genealogy every time it emphasized particular lines of connection.

The Higher Criticism has sometimes been seen as a direct assault on typological readings of the Bible, because it ratcheted down the claim that the Bible might be seen as a prophetic book, whose accuracy about the past was a warrant for its accuracy about the future. In abandoning the notion that one eternal and unchanging god had dictated the various books of the Bible to a series of scribes with an emphasis on multiple authorship for the Biblical texts, it did abandon the notion of a unified historical narrative that might function as a map to orient the faithful and help them locate their own moment in an overarching and unfolding narrative. It did not see all the actors that the Biblical narratives described and quoted as essentially one figure who was achieved and completed more at some times than at others. Rather, once the Higher Criticism replaced the single Biblical narrative of traditional orthodoxy with multiply authored narratives, it eliminated the typological unity of Biblical protagonists from Moses to Christ and substituted for it the typological unity—or interchangeability—of a succession of authors who reported the truths of their beliefs in the language of their own eras.

As Frei observes, Herder thus portrayed Biblical authors as completely human; they, unlike prophets, were possessed only by their own eras and described the operations of the supernatural as if they were merely report-

9. Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. Debevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999) 75–81.

ing occurrences in the manner of simple historians. Yet, as a substantial body of critical scholarship attests, this genealogy of the human tended to anoint poets with the aura of prophecy. E. S. Shaffer, in a painstaking and erudite discussion in *"Kubla Khan" and* The Fall of Jerusalem notes how thoroughly Coleridge adopted the "premises of the New Biblical criticism"—namely, "that criticism could not shirk bringing the Biblical accounts under the rational scrutiny of the new natural philosophy" and "that the Bible is to be approached like any other literary text" (62).[10] Establishing a text that laid claim to accuracy, consulting historical sources, "questioning the traditional ascriptions of authorship and date, scrutinizing the formation of the canon, and comparing the Scriptures coolly with the sacred and secular writings of other nations," she writes, were key procedures of the new critical approach (62). Further, she details the stages of thought by which Coleridge arrived at the ambition of producing a vision of a new mythology. While there was ostensibly a loss for religion in having to abandon its claims to divine inspiration, the Romantic poet as Coleridge conceived him might plausibly exercise a role similar to that of the Hebrew prophets. In understanding the origins of language and culture in religion, and in conceiving this to be a universal law of culture, the poet might effect a change even more important than that produced by the Christianity that had been called into question in its details. To see the Bible as literature, as Bishop Lowth had done in his *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,* might imply a loss for the view that the Bible was the exclusive bearer of an eternal and suprahuman truth. Yet it also prepared the way for seeing an enormous expansion of the "purely human and historical content and value" of the Bible (20). Indeed, that "purely human and historical content and value" took on the aura of divinity in the account that Coleridge gave of the place of the poetic imagination.

Imagination, human though it might be, awarded a role at least priestly to the poet. As Shaffer observes: "Coleridge's great aim and accomplishment in criticism as in poetry was to refine and authenticate a form of the supernatural" (63). And such a view of Romantic imagination has figured prominently in our accounts of the period. M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism,* for example, instances Joseph Priestley as a convert away from what Abrams describes as an older conception of human history under the banner of religion.[11] He describes Priestley as having tried to coordinate his

10. Ian Balfour has, more recently, addressed the genealogical development through which prophecy came to be ascribed to poets, and further develops the picture that Abrams and Shaffer present in noting Coleridge's resistances to Herder's account of the humanity of the authorship of the Bible. See his *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002) 106–7.

11. M. H. Abrams, *National Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971).

immediate history with the Biblical account and to see the signs of immi-
nent apocalypse in the morning news, and then quotes Priestley as having
ceased to credit political and religious millenarianism. While Priestley had
once seen the pope as fulfilling the particular role of anti-Christ in a provi-
dentially arranged historical design, he began to doubt that religious proph-
ecy and political revolution could be coordinated with one another. In
Abrams's view Priestley's faith in his millenarian reading failed because
contemporary events left it begging, and he lost confidence in his earlier
religio-political narrative. Abrams thus recruits Priestley to illustrate his
chief point about British Romanticism—that "for Wordsworth and his
contemporaries, too, the millennium didn't come" (334). And this view is
crucial for anchoring his major claim that a secular poetry came to perform
the role that religion once had. As Abrams puts it, "faith in an apocalypse
by revelation had been replaced by faith in an apocalypse by revolution,
and this now gave way to faith in an apocalypse by imagination or cogni-
tion" (334).

Yet Coleridge's position, for all its importance, was not representative of
British thinking, if we are to trust Hans Frei and his comprehensive study
The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. Frei observes that "*England and Germany
were the two countries in which discussion of the biblical narratives was most intense
in the eighteenth century*" (142, Frei's emphasis), and he goes on to note that
their paths diverged substantially. Highlighting his remarks for emphasis, he
writes:

> *In England, where a serious body of realistic narrative literature and a certain
> amount of criticism of that realistic literature was building up, there arose no
> corresponding cumulative tradition of criticism of the biblical writings, and that
> included no narrative interpretation of them. In Germany, on the other hand,
> where a body of critical analysis as well a general hermeneutics of the biblical
> writings built up rapidly in the latter half of the eighteenth century, there was
> no simultaneous development of realistic prose narrative and its critical ap-
> praisal.* (142)

As Frei develops this thesis, he affirms that the "new tradition of a *literary*
realism was never applied to the technical task of biblical interpretation"
and "the question of the factuality of biblical reports . . . prevented any se-
rious attention to narrative shape in its own right" (150). The frontier be-
tween history and realistic fiction, he concludes, "[became] impenetrable"
when "prime interest [was] concentrated on the fact issue" (150).

Frei's interesting conjecture postulates a writing system in which a
reader's ability to move between imaginary worlds and actual ones is fully
satisfied—on one side or the other of the line between the Bible and litera-
ture, but not both. The ability in England to accept fictional facts in Eng-
land occurs at a cost for the analysis of Biblical narrative, and the capacity in

Germany to see Biblical narrative as part of mythic truth diminishes the possibilities for realistic fiction.[12]

The appeal of Frei's account is that it points to an important aspect of both the justification of literary realism and of religion in England—the recognition of the force of example for individual action. And it thus rehearses a series of explanations of history and history-like fiction that appear throughout the eighteenth century—that their power lies not so much in their being actual as in their being imaginably actualizable for their readers. (From a very early point in the history of English prose fiction, writers like Clara Reeve will explain the novel's superiority to romance in just this way. "The novel gives a familiar relation to such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves" while Romance "describes what never happened nor is likely to happen."[13] It is an account that has underwritten much of the influential work on psychological realism in the novel, such as Ian Watt's shrewd remarks about the novel's deployment of ordinary names rather than personifications.)

Now Frei's attempt to see the appreciation for realistic fiction as analogous to the appreciation for the truthfulness of myth and to see each in competition with the other suggests why people would see the two effectively joined in the Coleridgean account of the cultural unity of religion and literature. This was the view that John Stuart Mill influentially codified in praising Coleridge and "the Germano-Coleridgean school" of Biblical studies for having replaced "*bibliolatry*" and "slavery to the letter" with the notion, as Raymond Williams puts it, that "every form of polity, every condition of society, whatever else it had done, had formed its type of national character."[14] The culturalist claim was that, whatever else writers were doing, they were writing as persons who were members of a society who could not help being affected by their existence as members of that society. Being able to read both Biblical texts, on the one hand, and poems and novels, on the other, thus came to seem like one continuous activity. In that continuum, to object to the words of a text was to fail to register the inevitability of a writer's being as much caught up in her time as the speaker of a poem or the characters of a novel were seen to be.

The particular achievement of culturalism, then, was to have created the

12. Both Shaffer and Ian Balfour follow Frei in seeing the German critical tradition as more robust than the British one, but their readings of Coleridge and Eliot bring out a line of thought similar to that of the German tradition.

13. Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries and Manners* (Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785) 1: 111. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale.

14. John Stuart Mill, *Mill on Bentham and Coleridge,* ed. F. R. Leavis (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950) 138; Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia UP, 1983) 60.

conditions for accepting various Biblical testimonies as true because cultural, because they had once felt true to their utterers, and for claiming we could understand them by understanding our forebears. It created as well the possibility of accepting realistic fictions as true because they imagined cultures that seemed to impinge on their characters and their speakers. There were, however, two very different ways of understanding the relation between religious writing and realistic fiction. The first, which is familiar to us in the Germano-Coleridgean school, treats the activity of recognizing the symbolic itself as a transcendental capacity that embraces various particular symbols that have been used in specific cultures. The culturalist view has less to say about the historical scheme laid out in the Bible than about the history of the generation and transmission of the Bible and other cultural texts. Reading in this account is inevitably metaphoric and symbolic (in that various different formulations are treated as effectively equivalent to one another, even as their differences of time and place make them only imperfectly translatable into one another).

The German Higher Criticism thus represented the advent of a modern philological tradition, in that it identified the historical strands of Biblical texts and made their various successive formulations themselves the centerpiece of attention. While the texts might not always look as though they provided evidence of the existence of Noah's ark and its exact location, the texts themselves acquired a history. By thickening the textual genealogy, the Higher Criticism tended to displace the role of the individual believer from the center of attention. Indeed, one can understand German Pietism and British Methodism as an approach that sought to avoid just the sort of textual thickening that the Higher Criticism provided. In the place of an excessive consciousness of the history of the texts themselves and an insistence on applying the elements of the Biblical story directly to the experience of the believer, pious evangelical readers of the Bible, as Frei observes, practiced a very direct form of readerly identification. Biblical events became part of their own developmental progress in which "the atoning death of Jesus is indeed real in its own right and both necessary and efficacious for the redemption of the sinner" (153). Jesus is, on this account, real but also a "figure or type of the Christian's journey" (153). Thus, although it was important to figures like John Wesley and George Whitefield of the evangelical revival that Jesus's ministry and death actually occurred, the "crucial evidence by which they become religiously certain is not external but internal to the soul" (153).

Yet another approach—that of the British Dissenters—is less familiar.[15]

15. In presenting Locke, Doddridge, and Priestley as central examples here, I am not making claims about all Dissenters but rather articulating tendencies that I take to capture the

This second approach was not perspicuous to Frei as an available possibility for British writers in the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, so he tended to see the English version of Biblical criticism as a simple reaching after fact, a demand that the Biblical text be unseated when it could not be corroborated by independent evidence (a view that chimes with Matthew Arnold's later characterization of Dissenting textualism as literalism and dogma). This latter strand of thought, which I shall trace through some key moments in the work of John Locke, Philip Doddridge, and Joseph Priestley, seems to me as important as it is neglected.

But even as I want to suggest the significance of this line of Biblical criticism—and specifically its importance in advancing the claims for the vernacular that are so powerfully registered in Romanticism—I want to acknowledge that Frei had good reason to think it did not exist.[16] Textual work on the Bible in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was cast under a shadow because of the peculiar role that the King James Version of the Bible played in religious discussion and practice. By the time that a Revised Version of the Bible was published in the years between 1881 and 1885, the culturalist equation of Biblical writing and literature had become so firmly established that the displacement of the King James, or Authorized Version, seemed a loss for literature and for the very notion of a cultural inheritance. Its longevity and politically enforced preeminence had effectively cast all other versions of the English Bible into the shadows. Ecumenical efforts to produce a new translation had been stalled; and the translations and commentaries of Dissenters remained peripheral. It is no wonder, then, that even so careful a scholar as Frei treats John Locke as if he were primarily interested in fact-checking.

Recent work on English Bible translation, however, may help us to understand the culturalist solution rather differently. As Neil W. Hitchin observes in an important article, "the long tenure of the King James . . . Version . . . has caused historians to overlook the existence of the scores of translations which were attempted between 1611 and 1881–5."[17] While believers on all sides defended the importance of translation in making the

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most important implications of their textual practices. Debates within Dissent were frequently as intense as they were between Dissent and Anglicanism, but I speak of Dissent as I speak of the novel, as a heuristic unity that enables us to chart important elements without pretending to capture the full diversity of either religious or literary practice.

16. See John Guillory, "Literary Capital: Gray's 'Elegy,' Anna Laetitia Barbauld, and the Vernacular Canon" in John Brewer and Susan Staves, eds., *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (New York: Routledge, 1996) 389–410. Guillory's essay brings out the importance of the Dissenting academies in promulgating the vernacular—rather than Latin—in education.

17. Neil W. Hitchen, "The Politics of English Bible Translation in Georgian Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 9 (1999): 67–92.

scriptures available to those who were not learned in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, Dissenters were alert to the fact that the King James Version had been devised and executed by a group of scholars (forty-seven in number) who were all members of the Church of England. In fact, as Hitchin reports, the king had convened the Hampton Court conference of 1604 in the thought that the translation would displace the Geneva Bible and offer a text more directly coordinated with the Episcopal structure of the Church of England (69). And, lest anyone imagine that the British government and its religion were autonomous, we should remember that the King James Version was specifically reestablished as the text to be used for public worship after the Restoration. To point the moral of this tale: the directive that the King James Version be consulted in public worship applied to Anglican and Dissenting congregations alike. Quoting the Bible in any public worship service in Britain was quoting the King James Version.

Dissenting Protestants who could not make their peace with the Established Church thus found themselves face to face with a text that seemed to them both absolutely fundamental to their religious practice and absolutely flawed. Even when they made allowances for differences of time, place, and circumstance between the implied author or authors of the Biblical text and themselves as readers, they found themselves objecting to substantial portions of the text because they saw certain passages as relatively recent doctrinal interpolations into the Biblical text—what Joseph Priestley called the "corruptions of Christianity." (Stefan Collini goes so far as to observe that some Dissenters feared "eternal damnation" would follow on their reading the King James Version.[18] It is easy to see how such a view would put a premium on "private" or family worship, which would have allowed worshippers to bypass the King James Version altogether. As Anna Laetitia Barbauld's debate with Gilbert Wakefield about private worship attests, Dissenters were in the position of choosing between their disinfected Biblical text and participation in a community that extended beyond the family.[19])

It was an article of faith in Dissenting Protestantism that the Bible needed to be available to the laity, and that it thus needed to be Englished for the English. But the Dissenters found themselves confronted with what felt like a sad irony: the English Bible, in the authorized form in which it was commonly distributed, read, and quoted, had issued from the hands of translators who were, as Anglicans, insufficiently detached from Catholi-

18. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings,* ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) xix.

19. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *Remarks on Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's Enquiry into the Expediency and Propriety of Public or Social Worship* (London: J. Johnson, 1792). Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale.

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cism. The Bible available to the Dissenting laity was, then, a Bible that had inadequately shrugged off its early associations with Catholicism and had added new layers of textual corruption. Thus, in the eyes of the Dissenters, Catholicism, the branch of Christianity that "denied to the laity the use of the bible,"[20] had installed itself in the early versions of the text; Anglicanism had been at best tolerant of such additions and at worst eager to imitate the Catholic example of excessive elaboration of doctrines that Dissenters found suspect (such as the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds that required belief in the Trinity). Dissenters embraced the Bible and the Bible alone, and abjured church tradition as it had been laid down by "the Patristic Fathers, the three Creeds (Nicene, Apostolic, and Athanasian), the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer (1662)."[21]

Joseph Priestley frequently spoke of papists and papistry with a vehemence that sounds like pure intolerance to our ears, but it is important to see exactly how his views related to the culturalist and historicist perspectives that underwrote the Higher Criticism as it came to be practiced. No one, he thought, could rightly be blamed for transmitting their accounts in the language of the beliefs that they could not fail to have, as persons living in the societies in which they had lived. Yet as Priestley developed his views of the Bible, he, like various other Dissenters before him, was continually involved in reading the Biblical text so as to sort it from itself. He composed works like *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists* (1776), *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782), and *A Prospectus for the Unitarian Bible* (1788) in an ongoing effort to determine which parts of the Biblical text (and, thus, which portions of Christian orthodoxy) ought to be preserved and which jettisoned as part of a logical approach to a text. Even though Priestley's translation of the Bible went up in flames in the government-instigated Birmingham Riots that prompted his flight to the United States, we can develop from his various other writings a strong impression of what that translation might have said.[22] For Priestley adopted what we might think of as a two-level approach to the Bible, and distinguished the necessary from the contingent.[23] While he did not repudiate miracles as events in the historical past (and thus imagined that the breadth and depth of testimony to them gave them standing), he vehemently objected to the

20. S. Johnson to W. Drummond, 13 Aug. 1766, Letter 184, *Letters of Samuel Johnson, LLD*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1892). Quoted in Hitchin 92.

21. Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature* 17. See also Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment* 5–24.

22. Shaffer 24, 231. See also Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005) 246.

23. Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated* (London: J. Johnson, 1777) 19–24. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale.

idea that miracles could be incorporated into religious practice as Catholic ritual claimed to do in depicting the actual and present transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in communion. He was not disposed to argue that miracles had never taken place, and regarded them as contingent historical occurrences—that is, without the logical necessity of their continuing to occur. For him, the notion of the unity of the deity was, by contrast, necessary. Anyone who took the force of the injunction that the Hebrew people should have no other gods before them could see that Christ and the Holy Spirit could not have been eternally in existence as God (the Father) was.

I shall return to Priestley shortly, but for the moment I should like to set his example alongside some others and to examine the cases of two earlier Biblical textualists—John Locke, first publishing his *Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, by Consulting St. Paul Himself* in 1703, and Philip Doddridge, whose *Family Expositor: or, a Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament; with Critical Notes; and a Practical Improvement of each Section* appeared in six volumes between 1739 and 1756.[24]

Locke's approach strikingly repudiates cultural accretion, and he takes strong issue with what might look like an indifferent matter. He entertains doubts about the King James Version that extend all the way to the lay-out of words on the page. In his *Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles,* he acknowledges the importance of the fact that the Scriptures are scriptures, that they are written and are thus available for reconsideration. However, he complains that the division of Paul's epistles into chapters and verses leaves them "so chop'd and minc'd, . . . so broken and divided, that not only the Common People take the Verses usually for distinct aphorisms, but even Men of more advanc'd Knowledge in reading them, lose very much of the strength and force of the Coherence, and the Light that depends on it" (vii).

Locke sees the divisions as having fostered two related developments. First, the texts enjoy great currency in their morcellated state and, indeed, because of their morcellation. "St. Paul's *Epistles,* as they stand translated in our English Bibles, are now by long and constant Use become a part of the English Language, and common Phraseology, especially in Matters of Religion" (xi). The circulation of snippets of the text does not, however, bespeak the diffusion of a genuinely religious view into daily life. Rather, Locke sees people continually interpreting Paul's words in a fashion very much at odds with anything that he, Locke, finds comprehensible. One

24. John Locke, *An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles* (London, 1707). Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale. Philip Doddridge, *The Family Expositor: or, A Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament* (London, 1739). Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale.

should read the entire text—indeed, should read it at one sitting—in order to capture Paul's meaning. He maintains, further, that a reading of the entire text is the only antidote to people's tendency to "bring the Sacred Scripture to their Opinions, to bend it to them, to make it as they can a Cover and Guard of them" (x).

In observing that people always quote the Bible in the mode of agreement, as if it endorsed the doctrines they themselves advance, Locke is of course pointing to a danger in culturalist practice—that historical difference might collapse into contemporary culture and that readers cease to imagine a sacred author who might disagree with their positions. He thereby accuses them of a failure of critical and cultural distance that might enable them to see that Paul and they might not always be mutually confirming. In quoting Paul regularly, then, people are not so much following Paul as recruiting him to support their own views: "This every one uses familiarly, and thinks he understands, but it must be observed, that if he has a distinct meaning when he uses those Words and Phrases, and know himself what he intends by them, it is always according to the Sense of his own System, and the Articles or Interpretations of the society he is engaged in" (xi).

Here the most arresting feature of Locke's discussion is that he does not simply describe the interpretative snares that entangle readers who encounter texts from the past. Instead, he chooses to mount an argument about such interpretative problems by criticizing something as apparently incidental as the division of the texts into chapters and verses. One could almost imagine someone replying that the textual divisions are merely placeholders, that they bookmark the text and should not be seen as any more or less damaging or offensive than any other textual indexing, mapping, or searching device. One could almost imagine someone venturing to suggest that it might be a good thing for people of contending views to be in a position to consult the same texts simultaneously and to get on the same page with one another. Yet Locke describes the textual divisions as serving the purpose of antagonism rather than conversation. Learned commentary has created sectarian and factional accounts of the Pauline epistles, and the division of the texts into quotable units has allowed the adherents of particular doctrines to retrofit the text into conveniently sized "artillery" for their own well-stocked "Magazines." The ability to quote chapter and verse has, in other words, not only allowed individuals to read Paul without a proper understanding of his historical distance from them. It has also generated a new and toxic cultural product. The textual divisions make it possible to conduct early eighteenth century debates in a kind of shorthand, which leads the debates into exponential growth on their established tracks. Locke's insight is that the Biblical divisions tune in recent debates in

much the same way as a Google search might link certain words with the names and words of American controversialists like Sean Hannity and Keith Olbermann.

Locke's description, then, calls attention to the ways in which a text (in its parts) can be at odds with that same text (in its entirety). Moreover, he goes on to suggest that his proposal to read the epistles with "perfect neglect of the Divisions into Chapters and Verses" (xv) will be seen as "a dangerous Change in the publishing those holy Books" (viii) because it will look like a call for disarmament by factions more committed to their battle than to its ostensible cause. In challenging the textual divisions, Locke thus put himself on the wrong side of Established and Dissenting clergy alike. In an era in which the most frequently practiced literary genre was that of the sermon, Locke's removal of the textual divisions insistently, even militantly refuses to enlist on the side of even Dissenting ministers, since the standard way of developing a sermon for both Established and Dissenting clergy was to cite a Biblical passage and then expand upon it.

Locke treats the arrangement of the epistles, then, as a late development, an incursion into the text as it had been written; and he repudiates the morcellated text whose parts are famous for being famous, so as to call into question the notion that all accretions are equally to be seen as legitimate parts of the text. In the face of potential objections that the numerical divisions make it easier for readers to enlist aid in comprehending difficult passages, he presents an ingenious but compelling argument. Moderns, he says, do not really need the help they think they do, because the epistles must have been at least as difficult for Paul's contemporaries as they are for modern readers. "The Subject treated of in these Epistles is so wholly new, and the Doctrines contained in them so perfectly remote from the Notions that Mankind were acquainted with, that most of the important Terms in it have quite another Signification from what they have in other Discourses: So that putting all together, we may truly say, that the New Testament is a Book written in a Language peculiar to it self" (v). The Pauline epistles are obscure to moderns because they are written in Greek, "a Language dead many Ages since." Yet the Greek language, in Locke's account, was always scarcely a distinct and orderly language; the Greeks hybridized their language liberally and molded it to a character so erratic that it was, from the outset, hard to comprehend. Greek was the "Language of a very witty volatile People," who practiced a kind of cultural imperialism in applying "the Terms of their common Tongue with great Liberty and Variety" (iv). And, having maintained that Paul's epistles were difficult even for their contemporary readers, Locke observes that the moderns have invented their own additional route to difficulty by chopping up the text: "I saw plainly . . .

that if any one now should write me a Letter, as long as St. Paul's to the Romans, concerning such a Matter as that is, in a Stile as Foreign, and Expressions as dubious as his seem to be, if I should divide it into fifteen or sixteen Chapters, and read of them one to day, and another to morrow, &c. it was ten to one I should never come to a full and clear Comprehension of it" (xiv).

Literary analysis has long identified *pericopae,* units that can be cut out of the larger texts in which they appear, and Roland Barthes revives an ancient practice when he designates *lexias* in reading *Sarrasine.* Textual divisions or cut-outs have their uses. Locke's claim, however, is not that the text should never be seen in its parts. Rather, he is arguing that, in referring to debates rather than to specific portions of the text, the numbered segments of the epistles effectively wrest the text from the reader's hands. Yet whereas Locke was urging his readers to read so as to burn through the divisive textual formatting, the Dissenting project was never to try to achieve simply a pure and original form of the Biblical text.

Philip Doddridge, for instance, in the first volume of his *Family Expositor* presented his work as an antidote to the "animosities" "which (unnatural as they are,) have so long inflamed us" (1:i).[25] His text was a synthetic harmony, in which Doddridge gathered together various elements from each of the Gospels to produce one continuous account. He aimed to produce a Biblical text that could be read easily and with what he termed "Impartiality and Seriousness" (i) and he thus offered a retranslation done "from the original with all the care I could" (ii). Doddridge's text, which both Maggie Tulliver and George Eliot encountered in their youths, celebrates the very fact of the writtenness of the Gospel, describing it as a blessing that "Facts of so great Importance, as these now to be laid before us, were not left to the Uncertainty of Verbal Tradition" (3). In an attempt to show the scriptural nature of the scriptures as an occasion for the pooling of similar testimony, he produces a text that reconciles the various different gospel authors as if they spoke no more differently from one another than the characters in a realist novel. (John thus appears as an early and realistic voice in the text, even though most parallel harmonies produce a great deal of white space for John when they present the portions of the various different gospels that overlap.) Furthermore, Doddridge sets up his own text so as to print two English versions in parallel. He produces the text of the King James Version, which he, like other Dissenters, refers to as "the common text" in a careful attempt to achieve a stance neither too dissident nor too accepting. He then offers his own new translation, which he blends with a paraphrase to produce a legible text that would not require his read-

25. See Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment* 164–204.

ers to move back and forth between text and annotation. With this policy of ease of use, Doddridge announces his practice of distinguishing typographically between the words of his translation proper and the paraphrase. The paraphrase appears in italics, so that it is "impossible to read without the text" (ii) and it is always possible to check the paraphrase against the words of Doddridge's new translation with which it is interfused and against the King James or common text.

Even while Doddridge's notes impart information about debates among the learned, he aims to make the gospels companionable—that is, both familiar enough in their language for readers to find them approachable and also psychologically acute. The New Testament, he says, everywhere displays the "most consummate knowledge of human nature" (vi) and enables us to think of Christ as a friend. It "teaches us to conceive of Christ, not as a generous Benefactor only, who having performed some Actions of heroic Virtue and Benevolence, is now retired from all intercourse with our World . . . but that he is to be considered as an ever-living and ever-present Friend, with whom we are to maintain a daily Commerce. . ." (v–vi). In furtherance of his brand of psychological realism, Doddridge deals in proper names, rather than symbolic ones. Carrying over into his text Luke's apostrophe to Theophilus (1:4)—"I'm writing to you, Theophilus"—he creates an occasion for explaining that Theophilus was an actual person and not a symbolic figure. He insists on the exclusiveness and singularity of the proper name here not because he has specific information about an historical personage but rather because he accepts an essentially psychological account of the text: "That Theophilus is the Name of a particular Person, eminent in the Church in those early Days, and not, (as Salvian thought it,) a general Title applicable to every Christian as a Lover of God, Dr. Whitby, after many others, hath abundantly proved" (3). The name gives outward expression to the personal psychology of a believer. Theophilus "was . . . worthy the Name he bore, which signifies, a true Lover of God" (3), but he should not be seen as having begun his career as an abstract personification.

We can identify three things that Doddridge is particularly effective in providing his readers: first, a version of the Gospels for familiar and familial use (as a supplement to the King James Version required for public worship); second, an understanding of Bible reading as an exercise in understanding the Gospels as part of an occasion for editorial debate (with the equivalent of study questions); and third, a presentation of the text as an address to readers as individuals bound by a common psychology. Virtually any reader can read the Gospels with understanding, because the ground of the relationship is neither doctrinal nor historical but psychological. The gospel authors and the reader may not share time or place or circumstance,

but any reader who sees "the consummate knowledge of human nature" that the Gospels display can translate its words into contemporary understanding.

Doddridge thus overcomes both the animosities of scriptural debate and the embarrassment of contradictions among the gospels and between the gospels and extrabiblical historical or scientific accounts. He does so, moreover, by treating psychology as the reader's best justification for an actively corrective reading of the text, in which every reading must be in its essence a reading that assumes a continuity in human psychology that makes even the writings of the remote past available. The earlier claim that a prophet could understand the present because future outcomes were visible to him has been reversed, and the present has become the vantage from which the texts of the past can be understood. The narrative orientation that Biblical prophecy had once directed toward an apocalyptic ending gives way to an emphasis on humans and human motivations, a picture of the human mind that makes the Biblical message universalizable.

Perhaps no one better demonstrates the progress of this claim to translate the Bible for humans so much as Joseph Priestley, who first developed a perspective on the unity of the Bible that treated the text logically. Arguing from the necessary coherence of the views expressed in the Bible in its entirety, Priestley insisted that the notion "thou shalt have no other gods before you" of the Old Testament necessarily cast doubt on the divinity of Christ, and he as a result became a Unitarian and an Arian (someone who believes that Christ had not always been in existence but had been created by God the Father and was thus inferior to God the Father). Thus, Priestley cast out a host of orthodox views and embraced views that had been seen as heretical, because he thought that the logical consistency of the text rendered certain orthodox views untenable. Reading the Biblical text as a whole, he saw its internal unity as evidence that he should abandon the Presbyterianism in which he had been reared and flag various orthodox views as "corruptions of Christianity."

Yet we can ultimately see Priestley interrogating the Biblical texts for something other than doctrinal positions as he reads and translates and consults the commentaries of others. For he becomes so engaged with the psychology of writers and readers that his *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists* converts questions about what the gospels say into questions about the psychology of belief and of testimony about it. We can, he says, trust all more firmly in the accounts of the gospels because of their disagreement than we could if they everywhere shared the same story; as in modern police stories and actual detective work, an extraordinarily high level of agreement is taken to indicate an effort at contrivance or reliance on one common source. Moreover, Priestley is content to override the ac-

counts of the gospels altogether when he arrives at strong claims about the numbers of miracles that Christ performed and about the length of his ministry. The historical claim that the gospels present is that Christ preached for three years, performing numerous miracles in the process. Yet these reports cannot, Priestley thinks, be accurate. The story must be corrupt virtually at its source, the product of accepting various different accounts of the same incident as if they were all distinct miracle. Christ's ministry must have lasted, he says, one year rather than three. He makes such assertions not on the basis of historical records but by consulting political psychology: "If, now, our Lord had passed three or four years in this manner, and the twelve apostles had also been teaching and working miracles in six different places for the space of a year or more, in that small country . . . such a number of miracles would have been performed, as we cannot but think, must have exceeded every proper purpose of them. Either there could have been no unbelievers left in Judea: or, if the tendency of the miracles had been to exasperate, such a resentment would have been raised in the minds of the Jewish rulers, as . . . could not but have terminated in his death long before."[26] Understanding the Biblical text for Priestley involves understanding even the historical evidence itself in terms of the political psychology of an entire field of persons—detractors and skeptics as well as adherents.

Priestley's variety of Biblical criticism thus offers a version of the death of the author, as the Biblical text first ceases to be the direct product of divine inspiration and then comes to seem a collective product that is edited by every reader. It is assembled piece-meal out of "detached parts" (73) and shaped by pressure from audiences simultaneously hostile, indifferent, and believing. Such dispersed authorship—an authorship that can rightly be said to include even its opponents in its very structure—could and did, of course, present problems of its own. It risked creating an account of history so psychologized that it would cease to function as history and would instead yield an unending present. The prophetic approach to the scriptural text had oriented history and given it access to a progressive narrative; the Priestleyan description pushed the scriptural text in the direction of psychological prediction, of the kind that Bakhtin associates with the novel.

Priestley thus followed out a line of thought that involved foregrounding the Biblical address to the audience. Locke had argued that only the whole text of an epistle could instruct a reader in its idiolect, and Doddridge had suggested that the personages in the Bible are, all of them, concrete and particular and not abstract personifications. Priestley joined them in imag-

26. Priestley, *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists* (London [?], 1776 [?]) 48–49. Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale.

ining that the universality of the Christian message lay in its unremitting address to the imaginably actual persons who were its readers. He, like Locke and Doddridge, continually tried to envision what it would be like to encounter the Gospel narratives or Pauline epistles if one did not already believe them. He read them not so much with the conviction that he could recapture the belief world of Herder's shepherd as with the question: What must it have been like for Mark to have believed what he reported in his Gospel? How must he have heard someone who appeared to be a man speaking to him as a man?

Ultimately, the Dissenting reading of the Biblical text—at least for Locke, Doddridge, and Priestley—directly linked up with a depiction of literature as illustrating a psychological grammar. In one direction, it had recognizable affinities with the realist novel. In another, with a new view of poetry. Wordsworth's question "What is a poet?" in his 1802 additions to the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* was one he famously answered by saying that "he is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind. . . ."[27] Such language must have gone a long way to provoking Coleridge's observation that Wordsworth was scarcely a Christian, because it claimed psychological acuity for the poet in much the same way that Doddridge or Priestley or Jefferson did for Christ.

Indeed, the movement into the psychological that I have been tracing in Dissenting texts developed in religious and secular texts alike. In such things as Wordsworth's classification of his poems according to different principal emotions (the affections, sentiment and reflection, fancy, imagination) and different stages of life (childhood, old age) and Jeremy Bentham's *Table of the Springs of Action* (1817) we can see the attempt to construct a picture of human psychology that would operate systematically (and would be revelatory about individuals only to the extent that it treated them as examples of larger, more systematic movements). Bentham's aim to lay out a legal system that he explicitly cast as a scripture involves the claim that it could be a guide to action, a kind of grammar that features the importance of our perceptions of physical objects and fictitious entities rather than physical objects themselves.

The culturalist view had imagined that a symbolic view—an insistence on fusing the formulations of different eras into one—would enable readers to orient themselves in relation to Biblical texts as an embrace of the entire

27. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 1: 138.

process of cultural transmission. The apocalyptic account had imagined that following out the full course of the Biblical narrative would enable readers to anticipate finally seeing "face to face." Yet in the constant recourse to a psychological grammar—in Locke's reading of Paul's epistles as in Bentham's heuristic account of the legal system—we can see a link between these materials and the novelistic realism that was flourishing in England. That realism was not merely—or even principally—reporting on fictional happenings as if they were actual. It also developed a literary technique that could be deployed so effortlessly and inconspicuously as to seem like reality itself—namely, the construction known as free indirect style or free indirect discourse, with its depiction of the consciousness of a third person as if it were as close—or closer—to the narrator and the reader as first-person experience (so that a character who might be described by a thoroughly external narrative as "having looked at" was instead described as "having seen").[28] In large, as a general grammar that isolated the regularities of combination and substitution that enabled one person and another to have equivalent relations to the language, free indirect discourse continually established a relation between an individual and a larger field. In small, in the form of the novelistic grammar of free indirect style, as a particular insistence on aspect that treats another person's experience as though it were as available as one's own, it represented an assault on the very notion of a sustainable distinction between reader and author or character. The grammaticalization of the psychology of readers and actors in the regime of the realist novel, the poetry of common life, and law conceived as generally available scripture made aspect no longer merely personal. Rather, it eliminated the problems that had attended theatricality by sidestepping the very question of facingness.

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28. See Dorrit Cohn's account of what she calls the narrated monologue, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978) 99–126, and Ann Banfield's discussion of free indirect style in *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1983) 64–70.

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