

GEORGE ELIOT AND JOHN STUART MILL:

LIBERAL POSITIVISM AND THE HANDLING OF DETERMINISM

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the similarities in George Eliot and John Stuart Mill's handling of their deterministic convictions. Both George Eliot and Mill approached determinism according to a structure of needs which I have called liberal positivism. On the one hand, because George Eliot and Mill's commitment to a deterministic view of human life is very much a substitution for religious belief, their impulse is radically to question social order. On the other hand, they were working at a time when an expanding human science promoted the move towards positive inclusion. Herbert Spencer and G.H. Lewes also shared these liberal positivist needs, and George Eliot and Mill may be seen as representatives of a specific intellectual group. Liberal positivists dealt with the question of determinism by exploiting what may be termed the shape or dynamics of process, one punctuated by gaps. This process may be identified in the conceptual arrangement of ideas and in the organization of a narrative text. This emerges in various ways in the writings of J.S. Mill, George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, G.H. Lewes, and Auguste Comte.

Chapter I examines the biographical relations between George Eliot and John Stuart Mill, and other liberal positivists. It shows that, despite the little contact between George Eliot and Mill, they did coexist in a radical intellectual milieu in which there were a number of independent thinkers who may be seen as a liberal positivist 'group'. Chapter II firstly looks at G.H. Lewes' philosophical position as regards Mill, and proposes that, despite the differences, all liberal positivists dealt with causation and exploited the dynamics of process. I examine at length the structure of liberal positivist needs and their relationship to determinism. I also demonstrate why exploiting the dynamics of process enables determinism to be dealt with according to these needs. The dynamics of process and their effect on determinism are examined in the work of Comte, a popular writer amongst liberal positivists. Similarly, the dynamics of process and gap are shown in Spencer's work. A short reference to a twentieth century Marxist debate confirms the facility with which these dynamics may be used in questions of determinism and human agency.

Chapter III examines John Stuart Mill's A System of Logic as a particularly lucid expression of liberal positivist causal understanding. I argue that the dynamics of process are exploited by Mill to differentiate his theories from a priori philosophy. Mill's methods of scientific research are shown to use the dynamics of process and gap, and his emphasis on particular causal analysis suggests the possibility of the effects of narrative itself on determinism. Chapter IV uses many of the suggestions made in Chapter III to examine George Eliot's Middlemarch and the way in which narrative handles story according to liberal positivist needs. I stress that the sequential arrangement of discursive voices and the gap between them have a potent effect on the way in which determination of the fiction characters is seen.

I conclude, briefly, that the performative aspect of the exploitation of the dynamics of process and gap may explain the marked silence or indifference that exists between liberal positivists on the question of determinism.

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INTRODUCTION

It is the object of this thesis to examine the way in which George Eliot and John Stuart Mill dealt with the implications of their deterministic convictions. I wish to demonstrate that they share a comparable approach to determinism; and that this approach may also be identified in the works of a group of intellectuals I call liberal positivists - a term I shall shortly explain. The respective careers of John Stuart Mill and George Eliot may indeed seem very different. John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) is perhaps most famous for typifying the changes that the English democratic tradition underwent in the Victorian era. Brought up by his father James Mill according to strict utilitarian principles, John Stuart Mill is noted for 'softening' utilitarianism, the inadequacies of which he felt so keenly. He moved away from a crude theory of calculable human happiness and the doctrine of absolute laissez-faire, towards a belief in more positive legislation and reform, as well as some centralization of government, and towards an increasingly open attitude to socialism. He not only worked for popular education and the emancipation of women, but also championed trade union organization and the co-operative movement. Although noted for being an editor of the Westminster Review and for serving briefly in Parliament, he is most remembered for his written work as a social philosopher. George Eliot (1819-1880), born Mary Anne Evans, was the daughter of an estate manager in Warwickshire. She was fervidly evangelical until her early twenties, when just as fervidly she renounced her Christian faith. From this she entered an intellectually radical world. She began her literary career by translating David Strauss' Das Leben Jesu and Ludwig Feuerbach's Das Wesen des Christenthums, both very important humanistic interpretations of Christianity; and she wrote reviews as well as being assistant editor

for the Westminster Review. Only later did she begin writing novels, which are perhaps most famous for the secular morality she pleaded.

Despite these very different careers, and despite the fact that Mill was a radical reformer whilst George Eliot was a novelist whose fiction demonstrated an organic, slowly changing, society, both George Eliot and Mill made their intellectual mark by the constant pressure and call in their work to understand, assimilate, and contextualize human life in all its particularity and diversity. Mill's famous essays on Bentham and Coleridge, for example, sought to appreciate and assimilate opposites; his On Liberty called for diversity and a democracy without the 'tyranny of the majority'; and his System of Logic argued for the experiential basis of knowledge, and for an inductive logic which included the role of deduction. George Eliot's novels are marked by a persistent concern for a 'realism' that was faithful to ordinary, everyday life. The secular morality she extolled was based on the kind of sympathetic understanding that took particular experience, feeling, and imagination to achieve. She constantly stressed the interrelations within a community, and the organic relationship between the individual and the community, without which the individual was seen as unable to survive morally or intellectually. It is on the basis of these similar characteristics that Mill and George Eliot may appear as larger than life monuments of English liberalism. Notice these urgent and famous pleas that George Eliot and Mill made in 1859, and how close they come to an established twentieth-century liberal morality:

These fellow-mortals, every one, must be accepted as they are: you can neither straighten their noses, nor brighten their wit, nor rectify their dispositions; and it is these people - amongst whom your life is passed - that it is needful you should tolerate, pity, and love.¹

1. Adam Bede (London, 1859), Bk.2, ch.17.

The exclusive pretension made by a part of the truth to be the whole, must and ought to be protested against; and if a reactionary impulse should make the protestors unjust in their turn, this one-sidedness, like the other, may be lamented, but must be tolerated. If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity.¹

For George Eliot and Mill this inclusion of diversity rested on the ability to understand others, and even more specifically on the ability to explain. George Eliot wrote, also in 1859:

the only effect I ardently try to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures.²

The overt moral enterprise is of course distinctly Victorian, but the move to identify with others, by understanding other circumstances, times, cultures, and experiences, forms the justification and expectation of a wealth of twentieth-century liberal culture. The ability of the liberal to encompass the non-liberal individual, and the ability to explain individuals by citing material circumstances, without a radical subversion of that material order, is a potent part of the liberalism we know today. In looking at what Mill and George Eliot had in common, I think this twentieth-century application worth bearing in mind. I am not, however, suggesting that the following study describes the birth of liberalism. Furthermore, Adam Bede and On Liberty may be text books today, but in 1859 they were made as urgent pleas, and to suggest that what Mill and George Eliot were doing then, survives today intact, would be doing an injustice to the basis of radical questioning from which George Eliot and Mill were working.

1. On Liberty (London, 1859), ch.2.

2. The George Eliot Letters, edited by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (London, 1954-78), III, 110-11 (5 July 1859).

It is not common critical practice to make a direct link between George Eliot and John Stuart Mill, and certainly no claim can be made that either was consciously, or even unconsciously, influenced by the other. Moreover, as my first chapter demonstrates, there was scarcely any intellectual exchange between them. Indeed, living in a period of marked changes, George Eliot and Mill share with all the other famous voices of the period, like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold, the move to re-appraise values and their sources; and above all a persistent concern for the question of individual morality. Consequently, many criss-crossing comparisons and contrasts may be made between the work of Mill and George Eliot, and that of Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Mrs Gaskell etc. However, I would argue that George Eliot and John Stuart Mill may be allied to one another, and differentiated from others, in profound and interesting ways. Mill and George Eliot's distinction may be seen (without suggesting others failed to pursue the implications of their ideas) in the way that their stress on assimilation is marked and structured by a persistent following up, working out, and abiding by the rules of their convictions, as much as by their emotional responses to the age. In Carlyle or Dickens, for example, there is that raw, emotive testimony to their age coming from an outraged critique of a mechanized and divided society, and certainly their 'solutions' remain within the terms of their objection, but to which there cannot be attributed the sustained and studied balancing and persistence that both George Eliot and Mill pursued.

If, in 1859, George Eliot and Mill were pleading for an understanding of others, it was because they both held the currently radical belief that human life was subject to laws; they believed that understanding was possible because of an ability to explain and provide material reasons or causes for what was observed in human life. In short, both

George Eliot and Mill worked with a deterministic conviction, the conviction that human life, as well as nature, was subject to physical causes and effects. Moreover, if George Eliot and Mill may be felt to be pursuing the implications, and abiding by the rules, of their convictions, it was because, during this period, the notion of determinism was not just one belief among others, but a very basic commitment. A very important part of this commitment was the deliberate rejection of religious belief upon which it was based, and which Mill and Eliot share. Certainly their personal histories are different, George Eliot being devoutly religious until she renounced her faith, whilst Mill had been virtually brought up a non-believer as a part of his father's political and philosophical radicalism. Moreover, whilst George Eliot wrote and thought a great deal about the human value of religion, Mill tended to treat it as a political enemy. Nevertheless, Mill and George Eliot's rejection of faith allies them more closely than is often seen. For one thing, both took an essentially agnostic (a word coined by Huxley) attitude to religion, in that both made a commitment to the limitations of what could and could not be known, and to the disciplined grounds of proof of truth. In this sense their non-belief took the form of a provision of a stabilizing set of rules. The stress both Mill and George Eliot put on particular experience, realism, and inductive reasoning formed not only a consciously pleaded enterprise, but also rules which they chose to obey. And, integral to the rules of experiential knowledge, was the notion that what human beings experienced was the laws of nature, most especially the laws of cause and effect.

The fact that, liberal as George Eliot and Mill may seem today, this commitment to non-belief and a deterministic conviction makes them decidedly radical for their times, pushes them close together in the more general intellectual spectrum. Certainly both were well-read and

respected at the time; and neither pandered to current fears that, without the religious sanction of morals, society would disintegrate and anarchic revolution ensue. However, both were in their basic commitments intellectually radical; a situation well illustrated in the problem there was over both their burials. When George Eliot died, John Cross sought to have her buried at Westminster Abbey, but the general consensus of her friends' opinion was that, however respected she was, because she was a recognised unbeliever, such a burial was not fitting. In fact she was buried in the unconsecrated section of Highgate Cemetery. When Mill had attended Grote's funeral at the Abbey, Alexander Bain reports him as saying "In no very long time, I shall be laid in the ground with a very different ceremonial". When he died in France, Bain notes,

It so happened, however, that a prayer was delivered at his own internment, by the protestant pastor at Avignon, who thereby got himself into trouble, from Mill's known scepticism, and had to write an exculpation in the local newspaper. Mill had made a friend of this pastor, a very intelligent and liberal-minded man.¹

By the time Mill and Eliot had died, it was as though people could almost, but importantly could not quite forget that they were unbelievers. Both Mill and Eliot were regarded in some way as radicals, and both had worked, thought, and written as such. Non-belief did not have to take the deterministic emphasis it did in Mill and George Eliot's works, Carlyle being the notable contrast. His energy, inspiration, and metaphors were far more German influenced and, notably, also, he was offered a burial at Westminster Abbey. However, and for whatever reasons, for George Eliot and Mill a deterministic view of human life was integral to their non-belief.

Thus, the comparison between George Eliot and Mill's notions of

1. John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections (London, 1882), p.133.

determinism is, I believe, a pertinent one and involves looking at the foundations of the way in which they worked. The emphasis in this thesis is upon the way in which George Eliot and Mill dealt with or handled determinism according to needs or impulses they had in common: for there were some aspects of determinism that they wished to exploit, and some implications which they wished to avoid, or which were unavailable to them. The needs or impulses which Mill and George Eliot shared, and the way they dealt accordingly with determinism, I shall be describing as liberal positivism. As I shall be arguing at length in the main body of this thesis, 'liberal' describes the radical questioning of social order involved in examining, from a non-believing point of view, the physical causes and effects of human life. On the other hand, 'positive' describes a constructive notion of science. As regards this latter notion, it must be borne in mind the extent to which Mill and George Eliot were working at a time when the science of human life was expanding, opening up vast time scales, revealing inter-relations, and suggesting far-reaching comparisons. In terms of the way Mill and George Eliot worked with determinism, it is important to see them as a part of a science that was not so much attacking religion as offering a productive and constructive alternative, extending the notion of physical causes and effects far and wide. It is the object of this thesis to ascertain what these needs, both liberal and positivist, were, and to demonstrate how, according to these needs, Mill and George Eliot applied, worked with, and worked out their deterministic convictions.

I include in this description 'liberal positivist', Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and George Henry Lewes (1817-78), on the basis that they shared the same needs or impulses as Mill and George Eliot. And I shall be demonstrating that they too dealt with determinism in a comparable way. Both Spencer and Lewes were deeply concerned with the limits of the

knowable, with perception, and with the notion of scientific proof. In Spencer's works on psychology, biology, and sociology, to which he gave a general heading of A System of Synthetic Philosophy, and in Lewes' whole, rather eclectic career, there is a vast range which suggests the same persistent pursuit of conviction that may be felt in Mill and George Eliot's work. Moreover, causation is integral to their theories, indeed it might be said that, given the range of their interests, it is causation which maintains the coherence and stability of their approach. It is by including Spencer and Lewes in this study, that some idea may be gained of a group of intellectuals, all working in a similar way. Importantly, as my first chapter establishes, Lewes and Spencer, whose names are normally associated with George Eliot's, also knew Mill and regarded him as an ally. However, I also hope to stress, that this group was not so much one of friends exchanging ideas, as of intellectuals with common needs who were drawn together in the same world. By examining Spencer's and Lewes' work, the affinity in deterministic understanding I propose between Mill and George Eliot, may be seen as more than a passing similarity, and may be suggested as integral to a certain position in the intellectual spectrum of the period, and in intellectual history.

I shall also be looking in this thesis at the work of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who indeed coined the word 'positivism', although I deliberately use the word more generally and with a small 'p'. Generally, if there is any critical link made between Mill and George Eliot, it is through Comte's Positivism. Mill and George Eliot were both famous English admirers of Comte, and Comte's influence on them has been much discussed. In turn, Comte's influence in England through Mill and George Eliot has been well studied. However Comte's popularity was brief, and there was a difference between those who adhered to the very

specific Religion of Humanity which Comte constructed, and those, like Mill, G.H. Lewes, and George Eliot, who were drawn to Comte's view of science and human life. The positivist impulse I shall be describing, as well as the whole notion that the hope for human life and society lay in the knowledge and use of scientific laws, was something that George Eliot, Mill, and Lewes found and enjoyed in Comte, rather than took from him. For at least the terms of this thesis, the question of Comte's influence is not a useful one. I do look at Comte's Cours de philosophie positive, which was the most popular of his works amongst people like Mill and Eliot, in the light of the structure of needs Mill and Eliot share. But I do not suggest Comte himself wholly shared these needs. Comte's work could be said to have been imported into Britain and appropriated rather than received. The object within this thesis is to study Comte's work as an appealing way of working that dealt with the question of determinism in a way appreciated by Mill and George Eliot.

I propose, therefore, in this thesis that a group, liberal positivism, may be identified, of which George Eliot and Mill may be considered major representatives. It is a group based not on common or mutual influences or backgrounds, but on an affinity of needs and way of working. I wish to see this liberal positivist group as an emergent group, a term I take from Raymond Williams and which contrasts with what he calls dominant and residual.¹ This term emergent helps stress the idea of new needs, and the constructive aspect of liberal positivist work; and it helps remove any idea of a simple counter-reaction to eighteenth-century rationalism, or to the general atmosphere of the times. The term also reflects the suggestion, briefly made in this introduction, that what was radical work at the time, was to become a

1. See Marxism and Literature (Oxford, 1977).

dominant, liberal ideology.

The second emphasis I wish to make as regards this liberal positivist group, is on a group of intellectuals co-existing and working alongside one another. This emphasis, I believe, allows us to see the similarities rather than the differences between these intellectuals: it allows us to see them engaged in similar activities despite the diversity in specific subject matter and discourse. I wish to focus upon a form of intellectual activity that may be seen to be repeated in the work or texts, as I prefer to stress, of each liberal positivist. In this emphasis, I am deliberately ignoring intellectual exchanges and influences. Activity is, I believe, the appropriate way of describing the similarity on which this group may be founded, for, I propose, dealing with determinism involves working in a particular way, rather than proposing a specific argument. The best way to see this common activity is to view it as the taking of opportunities within what Foucault calls 'a field of strategic possibilities': the field being common, the various activities working within it are bound to show similarities.¹ In this sense Foucault's 'rules of formation' describe something of what I intend to map out in this thesis, although my emphasis is not on differences, systems of dispersion, or a wholly subject-less activity.

Foucault's formation, however, is a 'discursive formation', and my study does not emphasise discourse. This brings me to the nature of the way in which, I argue, determinism is dealt with in order to answer liberal positivist needs. The activity I am proposing is based on a way of working and thinking which is best described as a shape: the shape of process or sequence. Notice how Lewes introduced his

1. The Archaeology of Knowledge, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London, 1972), p.37.

Biographical History of Philosophy:

Philosophy has been ever in movement, but the movement has been circular; and this fact is thrown into stronger relief by contrast with the linear progress of Science.¹

This line Lewes refers to is like the leitmotif of liberal positivism. It is a shape in which liberal positivists thought, into which their thoughts naturally fell, and a shape that they thought of; a shape they saw in their world, and a shape they structured their own work by. In this sense the shape is to be found both at conscious and unconscious levels of their work. And in this thesis I shall have recourse both to particular words liberal positivists used, and to the way we may interpret the arrangement of their ideas. Here I call process a shape, as in the sense that a line is a shape; but because process has, importantly for its effect on determinism, a temporal dimension, I shall prefer to call process a dynamic. I must add that, in this thesis, I do not wish to suggest that the analysis of discourse is unimportant. Instead I believe my thesis offers a suggestion as to how different discursive levels may be arranged; and this is something I discuss in my last chapter, on Middlemarch.

As Lewes' words suggest, linear progress or process was the way he defined himself against the past and expressed what he was doing that was new. For example, in Mill's System of Logic, it will be seen how Mill used and thought in terms of process, so as to define himself against the a priori school of philosophy and against a more traditional science of geometry and divine design. More importantly, the dynamics of process, both as a conscious concept, and as an unconscious way of thinking, enabled liberal positivists to deal with determinism according to their structure of needs. I shall be explaining this at length in

1. Second edition (London, 1857), Introduction, p.xi.

terms of both what process feels like, and of its philosophical reference to current conceptions of basic causation. It will be according to the many levels at which process may be found that I shall suggest determinism is handled in a way satisfying and gratifying to liberal positivists: in metaphors they used; in references they made to universal change; in their ability to treat one idea, feeling, or discourse at a time; in the constant reference process has to the way in which causation was felt to happen; and lastly in the effect of what it feels like to proceed through a narrative.

My own thesis proceeds step by step, working towards my final argument that the process of narrative itself may have a profound effect on what determinism feels like. Chapter I studies some biographical relations between George Eliot and J.S. Mill in order to gain, by way of illustration and suggestion, a perspective on the relationship between Mill and Eliot as liberal positivists and the general feature of relationships within liberal positivism. The study shows Mill and Eliot as radicals working alongside one another, and more closely allied than is often seen; it shows, on the other hand, marked areas of silence, or uneasy confrontation. I also make some opening suggestions as to the nature of the activity they have in common: that it is a way of working rather than an argument that may be shared. Chapter II takes this a step further, firstly by examining the question of whether G.H. Lewes actually retreated from the philosophical position he shared in his younger days with Mill. And I suggest that he did not, but rather started to answer, in his own way, liberal positivist needs and the question of determinism. It is then, having gained a view of these intellectuals working alongside one another, that I discuss at length how they needed to deal with determinism, and why the emphasis on process enabled them to do this. I illustrate these suggestions in some detail

in Comte's work. In turning to Spencer, however, I introduce an aspect of the dynamics of process which may not be seen in Comte's work: the presence of gaps or breaks in a process. Finally, in this second chapter, a brief comparison with a twentieth-century Marxist debate is made. Although the comparison is not absolutely essential for my argument, it does put the deterministic understanding of liberal positivism into perspective, and demonstrate in a different way how effective notions of process can be in suggesting human agency in determinism. In this way the first half of my thesis paints some kind of picture of the liberal positivist group, and demonstrates how affinities in the handling of determinism may be seen.

The second half of the thesis examines, at length, process and its effects on determinism in Mill's A System of Logic and George Eliot's Middlemarch. I have chosen these two texts out of the range of Mill and George Eliot's work, because both works display the most sustained and studied, as well as balanced, pursuit of deterministic convictions. Mill's Logic was his first major work, that earned him fame. But it is also, as I argue in Chapter III, a work marked by his own need to work out his ideas. Whilst his social philosophy is often more polemical and specific - On the Subjection of Women and On Liberty for example - the Logic, as a treatise about reasoning and methods of research, works out the basis on which, indeed, he felt his political philosophy rested. As his main object is to formulate a method for ascertaining causal laws, Mill's Logic shows in usefully abstract terms a causal understanding that, to a large extent, the other liberal positivists shared. Moreover, Mill's abstract methods are centred around the particular investigator with particular interests, and around a form of causal analysis rather than laboratory experiment. This feature enables me to suggest the notion of a narrative of causal

analysis, and the effect of narrative process on determinism. In this way Mill's Logic acts as something of a stepping stone to the narrative of Middlemarch and the effect the process of reading has on how determined we view the fictional characters. Of George Eliot's novels, Middlemarch has the most overt reference to scientific method. Perhaps because of its multiplot and accentuated web-like structure, the exploration of interrelations and complex deterministic structure is taken further. All the diverse interests confronted in the other novels - historic imagination, memory, radical politics, loss of faith and community - seem to me to be drawn together and balanced in Middlemarch. In a way the novel is less exposed than the others to uncertainties and instability, just as Mill's Logic is one of the most assured and confident of his works. Both works show perhaps Mill's and George Eliot's most controlled dealing with determinism. In looking at Middlemarch in terms of the suggestions made in the examination of Mill's Logic, most especially of the idea of a process whose rhythm is structured by gaps, I come to an emphasis on the idea of the performative aspect of process. This is an idea only implied in the earlier study: that a part of the way in which determinism was dealt with was not just the concepts of process within the text, but also the actual process of reading the text. This final idea, in turn, explains many of the biographical relations which my thesis begins by examining.

Chapter I

George Eliot and John Stuart Mill:

Some Biographical Relations

1. 'Peculiar religious and philosophical views'

In this chapter, I shall be looking at the distinctly biographical links between George Eliot and John Stuart Mill. Although such a study is interesting in itself, it also serves to gain a perspective on the intellectual group I have called liberal positivism, in which Mill and George Eliot were major figures. In looking at biographical links, we may get a sense of this group as an emerging intellectual formation, rather than a central or dominant one, and we may make some opening suggestions as to certain qualities of what I wish to view as an intellectual activity dealing with new needs. What the following biographical study reflects is that George Eliot's deliberate renunciation of her Christian faith, and her arrival at John Chapman's house in the early 1850s, more or less decided the intellectual milieu she was to inhabit, and, moreover, decided that her world was to converge with Mill's. Although an examination of the well-charted intellectual influences on George Eliot, and of Mill and Eliot's obvious mutual interest in Auguste Comte and Positivism, would easily demonstrate the liberal environment they shared, I do not think such a study would do justice to the depth and givenness of their affinities. These affinities, which I shall assume in this chapter, and the intellectual consequences of which I leave to the next chapter, are based on non-belief, with its subsequent, almost inevitable, intellectual radicalism, and on the new needs arising at this point in philosophical and scientific history. I want to get away from the whole question of influences, and for this reason I

deliberately leave aside even the biographical connections between Mill and Eliot that may be identified through Comte's Positivism (when I do look at Comte, it will be more in terms of what drew Mill and Eliot to Comte's work, and answered the needs they shared). In this chapter, I shall, instead, be looking at some rather tenuous links between Eliot and Mill which fall into four different areas: at some mutual acquaintances; at what Mill thought of the Westminster Review's new editorship in which George Eliot played a part; at the few mentions Eliot made of Mill; at Lewes, Eliot's partner, as a young disciple of Mill. Lastly, by way of making a suggestion for the following chapter, a brief glance is taken at Mill's attitude to literature. Tenuous as these links are - indeed to make them is something like scrabbling at the peripheries of busy intellectual worlds - by observing them a shift of perspective is made from the noise of intellectual disputes and exchange, of influences and assimilations, of specific, and very long reading lists, to silences and their uneasy breaking. The links reveal the silence of reticence and indifference, of disappointment and pre-occupation. Yet we may also see how much George Eliot and Mill coexisted in a radical milieu, their personal and intellectual worlds overlapping, so that the silence has some significance.

We have only to consider how Eliot and Mill were both friends of Herbert Spencer in order to get away from the question of intellectual influences, most especially of Comte's Positivism. Spencer, who represents an independent thrust of liberal positivism, and whose work I shall also be looking at in the next chapter, was adamantly not a Comtist. He met George Eliot at John Chapman's house in 1851 and, by the following year, they were so close that they were rumoured to be engaged. She pressed him to read Comte, and, notably, lent him a copy of Mill's Logic. Whilst Eliot was working on the Westminster Review,

Spencer was at this time the sub-editor of the Economist, and just completing Social Statics (1851), a supposedly anti-utilitarian plea for laissez-faire. By the summer of 1854, Eliot had resigned from the review and left for Europe with Lewes. Despite minor squabbles, Spencer was to remain not only the intellectual companion but also the intimate friend of the couple until their deaths.¹

This friendship being well-charted, perhaps greater mention needs to be made of Spencer's friendship with Mill, if only to re-balance the records. Spencer's article 'The Universal Postulate', which formed a crucial basis of the rest of his work, had been published in 1853.² It was largely provoked by Mill's Logic, and, whilst still upholding experience as the basis of knowledge, it maintained that the criterion for the belief of experience was the inability to believe otherwise. This was to be a bone of contention between Mill and Spencer for many years: an exchange continuing through their respective works and new editions of those works. But Mill's first reply to Spencer in 1856 (in the fourth edition of the Logic, a copy of which he sent to Spencer) provoked their meeting in 1857 and the beginning of a lifelong friendship. Although Mill and Spencer took their intellectual differences seriously, both took a considerable liberal delight in being able to attack one another in print whilst being good friends, on the same philosophical side. Certainly no apostle of Mill's, Spencer still made it publicly clear in Principles of Psychology: 'I regret having to contend against the doctrine of one whose agreement I should value more than any other thinker!'. In turn, Mill actually quoted Spencer on the 'superficial

1. For a detailed account, see Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (Oxford, 1968).

2. Westminster Review, 4 n.s. (1853), 513-50.

rather than substantial' controversy.¹ For Spencer the personal friendship was also an intellectual one:

I wish some one would compare him as a typical utilitarian with Carlyle as a typical anti-utilitarian. As measured, alike by his domestic relations and his public activities, the utilitarian would have much the best of the comparison; and his conduct as husband and citizen would constitute a sarcastic comment on his competitor's denunciations of his ethical creed.²

In the same way, Mill considered Spencer 'on the whole an ally'. As regards their differences, Mill felt Spencer 'out-Whewelled Whewell' and derived a great deal from his other opponent, Sir William Hamilton; but Mill's feelings were really, 'he is so good that he ought to be better'.³ Mill still considered Spencer's work on psychology, which like Bain's went so much further than Mill's, as a part of the same intellectual battle. As he said of Bain and Spencer:

each in his own way, have succeeded in affiliating the conscious operations of mind to the primary unconscious organic actions of the nerves, thus filling up the most serious lacuna and removing the chief difficulty in the association psychology.
(LL, p.935: 3 April 1864)

Although not intimate, Spencer and Mill were good friends to the extent of Spencer's being a dinner guest at Mill's home, where, amongst others, he met Bain and his wife, Lord and Lady Amberley, and the Grotes. He also asked Mill on holiday. Their relationship of co-workers went as far as Spencer's asking Mill for practical help: for example, Mill

1. Principles of Psychology, second edition, 2 vols (London, 1872), II, 406n-407n. A System of Logic, eighth edition (1872), reprinted in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, edited by F.E.L. Priestley and others (Toronto, 1963-), VII-VIII (1973), Bk.II, ch.7, p.273.

2. An Autobiography, 2 vols (London, 1904), II, 248-49.

3. Later Letters of John Stuart Mill: 1849-1873, edited by Francis E. Mineka and Dwight Lindley, Collected Works, XIV-XVII (1972), p.901 (22 November 1863), and p.927 (18 March 1864). All further references to these volumes will be abbreviated to LL and will give page number.

took a share in the Reader on Spencer's request. Moreover, when the serial publication of Spencer's Principles of Biology was stopped due to lack of subscribers, Mill made an unsolicited offer to guarantee any publisher's loss. Although Spencer did not need to take up the offer, which Mill presented as 'a simple proposal of co-operation for an important public purpose', he considered it an example of Mill's overwhelming generosity: 'It may be doubted whether there was ever before made a kindred proposal by one author to another: another, too, with whom he was not in complete agreement.'¹ In turn, even though Spencer felt his written work to be of most value in changing the world, he attended election meetings of Mill's supporters when Mill ran for Parliament in 1865. He also sat on the Jamaica Committee headed by Mill, a committee, Spencer noted, 'remarkable for containing all the leading evolutionists - Darwin, Huxley, Wallace', as well, it might be added, George Eliot's friends Mr P.A. Taylor and Frederic Harrison.²

Spencer never made any link in his Autobiography between Mill and Eliot, either by comparison or by contrast. There is at most a sense of their independent co-existence in his life, of intellectuals working alongside one another. This is, however, something of an insider's assumption of Spencer's; and it is not only twentieth century appraisals which treat them as liberal figureheads, but also contemporary, outside estimations of liberalism. From this more external point of view, Mill and Eliot were seen as closely connected, so much so that some curious links were made between them. This happened, for example, in the biography given of George Eliot in the various editions of The Men of the Time. Eliot had repeatedly refused to furnish any biographical

1. LL, p.1146 (4 February 1866); Spencer, Autobiography, II, 136.

2. Autobiography, II, 143. The committee was formed against the governor of Jamaica, E.J. Eyre, who, during an uprising in 1865, had proclaimed martial law.

details - as Lewes explained elsewhere, 'she steadily declines in any way assisting in attempts of which she cannot approve'.¹ One of the subsequent mistakes was made in 1875, when she was already a well-established literary figure. After relating that she became 'one of the staff of the Westminster Review', the biography continues:

Here by her intimacy with Mr. John Stuart Mill and others, she became confirmed in their peculiar religious and philosophical views.²

An 'intimacy' in 'peculiar' views is certainly an outsider's view of intellectual radicalism, and the desire to make affinities into identifiable and recognisable influences is significant of Mill and Eliot's position in Victorian society.

There was no intimacy between George Eliot and John Stuart Mill: it is almost certain that they never spoke to one another, that their knowledge of one another came primarily from articles and books. Probably with this mistake of The Men of the Time in mind, Eliot wrote to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, to whose requests for biographical details she had been a little kinder:

I never - to answer one of your questions quite directly - I never had any personal acquaintance with J.S. Mill - never saw him, to my knowledge, except in the House of Commons; and though I have studied his books, especially his Logic and Political Economy, with much benefit, I have no consciousness of their having made any marked epoch in my life. (Letters, VI, 153: 13 August 1875)

Her adamant denial is very sincere, but it reflects a noticeable indifference to a man who was, after all, quite a figure for some of her friends and acquaintances (including Lewes), and with whom she was to share the position of liberal figurehead. In turn, there is no single

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1. The Letters of George Eliot, edited by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (London, 1954-78), III, 429 (22 June 1861). All further references to this edition will be abbreviated to Letters, and will give volume and page number.
 2. The Men of the Time, ninth edition (London, 1875), reprinted in Letters, VI, 68, n3.

reference to George Eliot in the published letters of Mill.

However, even those who were not 'outsiders', and who knew well enough that Mill and Eliot were not even acquainted, still tended to parallel their names. Noticeably, these people, who bore a more informed witness to this curious coexistence, were a slightly younger generation of intellectuals, who shared and grew up to these 'peculiar religious and philosophical views'; and they especially did so in retrospect, in memoirs and autobiographies, as they tried to do justice to the eminent personalities of their youth. For these inheritors of a liberal milieu, Mill and Eliot held a common attraction. Edith Simcox, for example, made a comment in her 'Autobiography of a Shirt Maker', suggesting that, although her passionate admiration for George Eliot was for someone she personally knew and loved, Mill occupied a comparable place in her intellectual esteem. She remembers that, although she never wished to marry, she did have,

towards two rather different heroes - Garibaldi that is and John Stuart Mill - perhaps the same sort of tendre as that professed by Charlotte Bronte for the Duke of Wellington and I can imagine myself to have been predisposed to fall femininely in love if I had met in the flesh with any man who would have excited my admiration in that way.¹

There are, I suggest, real affinities between what Mill and Eliot's work meant for Victorians, whether they were hostile to the two, or saw them as sources of inspiration.

Like Edith Simcox, John Morley was one of the younger generation for whom both Mill and Eliot were inspiring, and his evaluations of them are invaluable because he is very clear as to what he felt the two had in common. In effect, he traces in both the history of a liberal understanding he cherished. What epitomized the kind of liberal sympathy,

1. Quoted by K.A. Mackenzie, Edith Simcox and George Eliot (Oxford, 1961), p.7,

without blind adherence, for which Morley respected George Eliot, was her appreciation of both Comte and Wordsworth. Morley explains that she found in Comte a systematization of her ideas, and that she liked his historical analyses; on the other hand, Wordsworth 'was dear to her' because he expressed the love she felt for human nature, not only in the present, but across all time. Quickly Morley sees an affinity with Mill:

Underneath this growth and diversity of opinion we see George Eliot's oneness of character, just, for that matter, as we see it in Mill's long and grave march from the uncompromising denials instilled into him by his father, then through Wordsworthian mysticism and Coleridgean conservatism, down to the pale belief and dim starlight faith of his post-humous volume.¹

This positive growth of pity and sympathy, a liberal tolerance extending across history as well as across social divisions, was the heart of what inspired Morley. George Eliot, he explains, threw off her fervid evangelicalism, and 'embraced with equal zeal the rather harsh and crude negations which were then associated with the Westminster Review' (p.118). However, sympathy for the historical life of man,

which was the fruit of her culture, had by the time she was thirty become the new seed of a positive faith and a semi-conservative creed. (p.118)

In a way, what Morley values in Mill and Eliot can be very aptly called liberal positivism: those early radical politics were to Morley 'uncompromising denials' and 'harsh and crude negations', whilst, epitomized in Mill and Eliot's common love for Wordsworth, was the kind of historical understanding which not so much tempered the radical as made it positive. The transformation of the kind of critical analyses

1. Critical Miscellanies, 3 vols (London, 1886), III, 121. Unless stated otherwise, all quotations of Morley are from the articles, 'The Death of Mr. Mill', 'Mr. Mill's Autobiography', 'The Life of George Eliot', reprinted in this volume (pp.37-51, pp.53-92, pp. 93-132), and references give page number only.

associated with utilitarianism into positive explanation and understanding was, I believe, one of the most crucial aspects of Mill's and Eliot's work, and a characteristic of liberal positivism.

Morley did, however, see Eliot's work, far more than Mill's, as simply an embodiment and articulation of this positive liberalism: she was a symbol of her times and an epitome of a struggle with disbelief. Remarking that Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge were first published together in the same year as Adam Bede, Morley writes:

I can vividly remember how the 'Coleridge' first awoke in many of us, who were then youths at Oxford, that sense of truth having many mansions, and that desire and power of sympathy with the past. (p.131)

However, to Morley, George Eliot expressed this rather than promoted it:

This sentiment and conviction never took richer or more mature form than in the best work of George Eliot, and her stories lighted up with a fervid glow the truths that minds of another type had just brought to the surface. It was this that made her a great moral force at that epoch, especially for all who were capable by intellectual training of standing at her point of view. (p.131)

Morley in effect suggests that George Eliot preached to the converted. In contrast, in these appraisals, we get the sense of the teacher-role Mill played for Morley; Mill had appealed 'to our love of finding and embracing truth for ourselves' (p.47). To some extent, this contrast was based on a personal criticism. Morley disliked intensely the way George Eliot cut herself off from critics and their criticism, the exclusivity which rendered her over-anxious and over-self-conscious. According to him, she did not live amidst the life and people she wrote of, but rather, in a kind of 'moral and intellectual hothouse' (p.109). In contrast, Morley had been actively and practically involved with Mill.

However, Morley's judgment of Mill and Eliot according to the same values, and his greater estimation of Mill according to these values,

suggest the extent to which it was not simply a positive generosity of understanding he was drawn to, but a basic political radicalism. It was Mill's encouragement, his hope for the future of mankind, coupled with an understanding of prejudices 'like physical predispositions, with which you have to make your account' (p.43), which for Morley made Mill 'one of the greater among the servants of humanity' (p.37). In contrast, Morley does not find Eliot so inspiring. He finds her work filled with the science of her time: in showing the feelings and lives of her characters 'as evolving themselves from long series of antecedent causes', she creates 'a stream of evolution, heredity, survival, and fixed inexorable law' (p.127). It is this stern adherence to science, Morley says, which finally obstructs her professed aim of arousing men to desire the social right. Weakening the desire for any possible improvement is:

the sense of the iron limitations that are set to improvement in present and future by inexorable forces of the past. (p.127)

She lacks the kind of energy and inspiration found in George Sand and Mazzini. She had no sympathy with politics. On the other hand, Morley wrote in his obituary that Mill had done much to impress 'that physical law works independently of moral law' (p.37). For Morley, the social purpose that Mill was so conscious of, even in his Logic and Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, was as important as the ability to appreciate a many-sided truth. He expected George Eliot to be as positive politically as Mill, and he was therefore to some extent disappointed. It was not simply a case of Morley's artificially comparing and contrasting the two: Morley instinctively, both in the Critical Miscellanies and in his Recollections, refers to one when describing the other. He had radical expectations of them both.¹

1. Recollections, 2 vols (London, 1917).

Certainly, Morley's own act of appreciating Mill and Eliot reflects what he values in them: the breadth that encompasses diversity. He appreciates them in relation to their own times. By evaluating them both, he lives up to the liberal ideals he had inherited from them. By recognising both the philosopher and the artist, as well as both the need to criticise and to pity, he does something akin to what Mill did in defending Wordsworth to his father. Progress, to Morley, was possible only by encompassing those who had themselves encompassed and cherished diversity, but it was still radical progress he sought. To some extent, for Morley, the conservatism of George Eliot's novels was the result of 'an artistic moral nature', whilst Mill 'being free from the exaltations that make the artist, kept a truer balance' (pp.130-31). His relationship with Mill and Eliot, both intellectually and personally, is epitomized in his claim that it was through Eliot and Lewes, both 'in a more or less informal way, adherents of Comtist doctrines', that he met a group of Comte's disciples from Oxford, but it was by an 'anti-sectarian' instinct developed in him by Mill that he was prevented from becoming an adherent of 'this new church'.¹

Morley had first come to George Eliot's notice as the writer of 'George Eliot's Novels', one of the few reviews that she liked. It has been suggested that she liked it so much that she was introduced to Morley.² Morley became a friend and a visitor at the Priory, and he thought the Thursday gatherings there the 'high perfection of social intercourse'. One biographer notes that Morley prized his friendship with Eliot as second only to his friendship with Mill.³ The only letter

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1. Recollections, I, 68-69. For an account of Morley and Positivism, see D.A. Hamer, John Morley: Liberal Intellectual in Politics (Oxford, 1968).
 2. Macmillan's Magazine, 14 (August, 1866), 272-79. See F.W. Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, 2 vols (London, 1927), II, 178n.
 3. Recollections, I, 371. See Hirst, I, 55.

of Eliot's which Morley claimed to possess, is one frequently quoted to throw light upon George Eliot's attitude to the women's movement; and it was noticeably occasioned by the amendment to Gladstone's Reform Bill, which Mill had moved in 1867, changing the wording from 'man' to 'person' in order to give the vote to women. There were articles supporting it in the Fortnightly Review Morley was editing. In her letter, Eliot tries to clarify her views, saying she is in agreement with Morley, and 'would certainly not oppose any plan' to give equal educational advantages and freedom of development to the sexes. She believes that, in zoological evolution, women have had the worst share with the result that, in their moral evolution, they have developed love and sympathy. She believes that, although there is an increased difference in function, this should not detract from the need 'to lighten the pressure of hard non-moral outward conditions'. Here, in fact, we see the political reticence for which Morley was to judge her unfavourably compared to Mill.¹

Morley's editorship of the Fortnightly Review provides an illustration of the interweaving of lives, by which we may see the extent to which Mill and Eliot's social environments overlapped, despite their never having met. In late 1866, shortly after Morley had first met Eliot and Lewes, he had taken over the editorship from Lewes. As Anthony Trollope suggested in a letter to Lewes, Morley was expected to maintain the same views on politics and literature; and Eliot wrote of this 'very accomplished man', 'I hope he will be able to keep up the Review in the same spirit'.² He in fact edited the Fortnightly from 1867 to 1882. Morley did not much like Lewes, although he saw in him 'that wonder of

1. Letters, VII, 402 (14 May 1867).

2. Letters, IV, 315 (22 November 1866).

versatile talents'.¹ However, Lewes frequently referred writers to him, and mentions several times in his journal that he had dined with Morley. It was probably through this everyday world of journalism that Morley was kept in contact with the Leweses and that his friendship with Eliot was furthered. But, interestingly, Mill also helped and advised him with his editing.

In November 1865, probably a little under a year before he met Eliot, Morley received his first letter from Mill. Mill had read an article of his in the Saturday Review and wanted to know the author. It was from this opening that they struck up a friendship, and in 1867 Mill wrote Morley a letter of introduction to Emerson, describing the young man as 'one of our best and most rising periodical writers on serious subjects - moral, social, and philosophical, still more than political'.² Mill had written a comparable letter to Emerson for Lord Amberley, who was also visiting America. Mill held for both young men the position of fatherly teacher, happy to use his influence in the trust that they would not only learn much but would spread that knowledge. Morley became a welcome visitor to Mill's home in Blackheath, and they talked and corresponded both about articles and about the politics of the day. Mill's exertions for one whose ideas he trusted can be seen in the fact that, when Morley was ill in late 1870, Mill offered to edit the Fortnightly Review for a while, on Morley's behalf; he dismissed any question of inconvenience to himself. He believed in the powerful influence of political articles in such periodicals, and frequently advised Morley as to the best line of action to take at specific moments. Thus, when Morley asked Mill for a reference for a professorship of

1. Recollections, I, 85.

2. LL, p.1327 (6 November 1867).

political economy at University College, Mill, having already recommended someone else, wrote:

I am very desirous that the F. shd continue, & increase rather than diminish in importance & I think you exercise a wider influence through it than you could do through the Professorship. My daughter & I shall hold ourselves ready to assist either pecuniarily or by writing or in both ways whenever you decide to recommence the fortnightly publication. (LL, p.1892: 11 May 1872)

As Mill told Cairnes, Morley's giving up the Fortnightly Review 'would be a great evil'.¹

In fact, for Morley, Mill was an unparalleled mentor. Morley told his sister of what was in fact to be the last time he saw Mill:

I wish you had been here, to see the wisest and best of men. He is the one living person for whom I have an absolutely unalloyed veneration and attachment - and of whose kindness to me I am most proud.²

But the admiration he felt for George Eliot was based on similar values, and he was one of several people through whom Eliot's path indirectly met Mill's.

It is possible to trace a similar history of crossed paths in Mill and Eliot's friendships with Lord and Lady Amberley. Like Morley, they were primarily Mill's friends, working closely with him, but dealing with Lewes in the world of reviews and journals, and thus being introduced to George Eliot herself. Kate Amberley befriended George Eliot, and she and her husband regularly visited the Priory. Chronologically, their friendship with both Mill and Eliot corresponds closely to Morley's.

Amberley first met Mill at George Grote's in 1864, and three months later he called on him in Avignon where Mill spent much of his time.

1. LL, p.1895 (15 May 1872).

2. Hirst, I, 237 (6 April 1873).

Like the Leweses in 1861, he was struck by Mill's epitaph for his wife on her grave in Avignon - 'very touching', as Lewes and Eliot had commented.¹ In February 1865, the Amberleys, Mill, and Helen Taylor (Mill's step daughter), all stayed at the Grotes' and the friendship flourished. Kate Amberley had already read and delighted in Mill's Liberty, and Amberley was embarking upon a career in radical politics, so the meeting was a moment of great excitement for the young couple. Kate was fascinated by the talk of the days of the first Reform Bill; she was delighted at Mill's praise of one of Amberley's election speeches for Leeds, and at Mill's belief that Amberley was a good candidate for Westminster. Sharply criticised as the Amberleys were for their radical politics, it seems that Mill gave them courage and inspiration, and he continued to do so until his death. Like Morley, they found his liberal attitude to opposing sides a source of hope: 'he said the great thing was to consider one's opponents as one's allies; as people climbing the hill on the other side'.² Kate summed up her feelings when she wrote: 'It has been a very great pleasure meeting him, so edifying & made one feel so hopeful & strong of the use one could be in the world' (I, 374). As for Mill, a few days before this meeting, he had written to Thomas Hare:

Lord Amberley's speech is the only one of promise. He has brains, and is in earnest, and as he is sure of influence, good is likely to come of him. (LL, p.991: 4 February 1865)

Like Morley, Amberley represented to Mill the promising youth of the next generation.

At the same time as Amberley was running for Leeds, Mill was running for Westminster. Amberley did not get in, but Mill did, much to

1. Letters, III, 407 (21 April 1861).

2. The Amberley Papers: The Letters and Diaries of Lord and Lady Amberley, edited by Bertrand and Patricia Russell, 2 vols (London, 1937), I, 373. All quotations of Kate Amberley are from these volumes, and references give volume and page number.

everyone's surprise because of his dogmatic refusal to participate in an electioneering campaign. Meanwhile, Mill had put Amberley in contact with John Chapman, the editor of the Westminster Review for which Amberley wished to write. Their correspondence and conversation was one essentially of politics and of mutual support in their efforts. In 1866, Amberley finally got into the House of Commons as liberal MP for Nottingham, and presumably they saw much of each other for the next two years.

Meanwhile, in late summer of 1865, Amberley had been brought into contact with Lewes, in the latter's capacity as editor of the Fortnightly Review for which Amberley wrote 'Liberals, Conservatives and the Church'.¹ Thereafter Lewes several times requested contributions from him. We may see by the following dates, the interweaving of lives on a day to day basis. On 13 April 1866, Kate went to the House of Commons where she heard, amongst others', Mill's speech; she noted in her journal the very next day that Amberley visited Lewes, presumably on journalistic business, and was struck by how ugly he was and by his talk of George Eliot. On 17 June, they dined at Mill's. Kate wrote:

The talk was on Comte, G. Evans and her new book 'Felix Holt', on Nottingham, on H. Spencer's theory of the sun coming to an end and losing all its force. After dinner I talked to H. Spencer and we agreed marvellously about our hours, society etc. and I liked him very much. (I, 513)

Here, in a nutshell, is the world of intellectual radicalism; indeed, even more specifically, of liberal positivism.

It was the next year before Kate herself met Lewes, when he called in on the Amberleys one April evening in 1867. Kate, just as her husband had done, thought him ugly and remarked, 'Lewes talked to me about his wife!' (II, 27). On 5 May, they were introduced to George

1. 2 (1865), 161-68.

Eliot herself, at Congreve's lecture on Positivism at Sussex Hall (it might well have been Mill who had instigated the Amberleys' interest in Comte). Kate's only comment in her journal was upon Eliot's ugliness. In fact Kate had wanted them to lunch back at her home, but because it was 'against rules', that is against Eliot's social reticence, it was arranged for the Amberleys to go to the Priory on the Sunday. Two days later, Lewes dined with them and thought Kate 'charming', although he liked her sister, Lady Airlie, better because she talked about George Eliot to him. He even wrote the next day to apologize - 'but if any one will mention my Madonna to me; why "their blood be on their own head!"'.¹ In fact Lady Airlie took Lewes up socially, and her name reappears in his journal as a part of his social life which Eliot did not share.

On 20 May that year, Kate went to hear the Reform debate at the Commons, in which Mill proposed the amendment that would extend the franchise to women, and which Eliot discusses in her letter to Morley. The Sunday after the debate, the Amberleys went to the Priory, and Kate noted that, 'repulsively ugly' as George Eliot's face was, 'when she smiles it lights up amazingly and she looks both good and loving and gentle' (II, 38). Four days after the visit to the Priory, Kate went to hear the debate in the Commons again, this time 'on Mill's amendment about Mr. Hare's plan' (II, 39). It was later that year that Mill gave both Amberley and Morley letters of introduction for their respective visits to America. Thus, for a period, their lives very much crossed Mill's and Eliot's at about the same time as Morley's did.

In 1868, both Amberley and Mill lost their seats in Parliament.²

1. Letters, IV, 361 (5-7 May 1867). Amberley Papers, II, 28.

2. In his desire to see working class members of Parliament, Mill had contributed £10 to Charles Bradlaugh who was standing for Nottingham: Bradlaugh was a much-disliked atheist, and the contribution helped Mill lose his seat to W.H. Smith.

Mill tried to console Amberley who had been defeated in the South Devon Election, largely because of his advocacy of population control. He had been misquoted and much maligned, and the bitter experience put a stop to the Amberleys' life of practical politics. However, they subsequently - with Helen Taylor and Mill - became actively involved with the women's movement; and in May 1869 Mill's Subjection of Women was published.

As for George Eliot, she was certainly kept in touch with the campaign during these years, not only by Kate, but also by several of her close female friends. She wrote to Barbara Bodichon, on 2 July 1869, about The Subjection of Women:

I have read Mill's Book, and think the second chapter excellent; the 3d and 4th not so strong and well argued as they ought to have been coming from him. (Letters, VIII, 458: 2 July 1869)

No doubt she mentions this partly to please her friend, but she continued to observe the call for women's rights with both expectations and fears.

The first public meeting in support of female franchise had been held in April 1868 in Manchester, and the first London one was held in July 1869, at the Architectural Society, Conduit Street. Mill spoke at both meetings, and, amongst others, Hare, P.A. Taylor, and Morley spoke at the London meeting. It was these activities of Mill's which brought him into contact with Mr and Mrs Peter Alfred Taylor, particular friends of George Eliot.¹ Eliot had first met Mrs Peter Alfred Taylor at Chapmans' house in the Strand, and they had become loyal friends. Eliot's letters to Mrs Taylor are of note because they contain some of her clearest statements on the equality of the sexes and on what she, herself, felt unable to do. It would seem that Mrs Taylor could draw

1. P.A. Taylor was a radical politician, representing Leicester from 1862-84, and Mill had been in correspondence with him when Taylor was treasurer of the Jamaica Committee. Taylor was a friend of Mazzini and chairman for the Society of Friends of Italy. On separate occasions, he approached Eliot and Mill for their help in Mazzini's cause.

out of her, if not reluctant statements, at least statements that she would not naturally make. Thus it is that the rare comments Eliot makes on Mill, especially on his political activities, are made in reply to Mrs Taylor. It was through people like Mrs P.A. Taylor that Eliot was now brought into contact with the world of politics. Mrs P.A. Taylor had direct contact with Mill and Helen Taylor, who were involved with practical arrangements for these public meetings on women's suffrage. All were busily participating: a meeting in March 1870, for example, was chaired by Mrs P.A. Taylor, with both Helen Taylor and Lord Amberley speaking.

Meanwhile, Kate Amberley had been writing her lecture 'Claims of Women', with much encouragement from Helen Taylor.¹ Certainly Kate was in contact with Eliot all this time, for she and her husband visited the Leweses on Sunday 17 May 1870, just eight days before Kate gave her lecture. The lecture was delivered at Stroud under the auspices of the Mechanics Institute. The press were noisily abusive about it, but her friends were supportive, including Eliot who wrote to her:

Now that I have read it at length I find little of which I cannot say that I both agree and keenly sympathize with it. I am glad to see your energetic protest in the beginning against that common position - 'I see nothing amiss in the world: I am very comfortable in it.' (Letters, VIII, 477: 2 June 1870)

The letter has the kind of reticence with which Eliot usually spoke about practical plans for women's emancipation. Her, 'I find little which I cannot say that I...agree...with', is like the phrase in her letter to Morley, 'I would certainly not oppose any plan'. She cannot object but she cannot participate. As far as any political action was concerned, she remained reticent.

Mill's attitude of course was the complete opposite. The clue to

1. Published in the Fortnightly Review 9.n.s. (1871), 95-110.

what he thought of Kate's participation in the movement may be found in a passage, later deleted, in the draft of a letter to Morley. Mill not only thought the lecture good but that,

her name & position are of great use to the cause as may be seen from the attacks which are continually made on her for her support of it. We should therefore take all advantage we can of that support & and it will give me very great pleasure if you will print it in the next number. (LL, 1774, footnote 3: November 1870)

It is an honestly tactical move, independent of his liking of Kate and her work: Kate was not only radical and ardent, she was also of considerable social position. It is perhaps the very tone which Eliot would most fiercely condemn, and from which she held back with steely resistance.

The Amberleys' friendships with both Mill and Eliot were at their most active in these years. The Amberleys remained close to Mill and Helen, and, in 1872, asked them to be godparents to Bertrand Russell, their youngest child. When Mill died in 1873, the Amberleys received letters of condolences at their loss, and Kate wrote, 'we are both very miserable at the loss to us of the warmest & truest friend we have known' (II, 541). Kate herself died a year later of diptheria, and Lewes wrote to Mrs George James Howard, another of Kate's sisters with whom Eliot and he were friendly:

We are much pained at the sudden death of Lady Amberley which came upon us all the more startlingly because she looked so very robust when we saw her a few weeks before. (Letters, IX, 131: 27 July 1874)

Obviously the Amberleys had not lost contact with the Leweses, although they were closer to their fellow activists Mill and Helen Taylor.

These interweaving friendships in the mid-to-late sixties must be seen in the context of the lives of Mill and George Eliot. This was in fact the last decade of Mill's life; his Logic and Political Economy having been published in the forties, he had been eminent for a long time.

After a relatively quiet period in the fifties, the sixties saw a resurgence of activity for Mill. Many of his writings at the time - On Liberty (1859), Considerations on Representative Government (1861), Utilitarianism (1863), Auguste Comte and Positivism (1865), The Subjection of Women (1869) - form the mature work, for which he was remembered as a liberal and no rigid utilitarian. More sociable than ever, he was also for the first time free from his post at India House, and able to run for Parliament. Getting into Parliament in 1865, Mill became a public political figure just as the air was becoming thick with the question of reform. In the same year, George Eliot was writing Felix Holt, the Radical, the nearest she ever came to a political statement. Whatever her reluctance, the question was as compelling for herself as it was for others. Felix Holt is very much a positivist answer to radical politics, and it may have been just as much her concern for all the reform debate, as her friendship with the Congreves, which instigated her closest association with organised Positivism from 1865 on into the seventies. However socially reticent, and however reluctant she was to speak out at length, even in her letters, she must in some way have exuded her concern. More important, in order to see these connections with Mill in their context, is the fact that, although George Eliot had only been writing novels for seven years, by 1865 the quick success of Scenes of Clerical Life (1858), Adam Bede (1859), The Mill on the Floss (1860), Silas Marner (1861), and Romola (1863), had established her as a famous novelist. Furthermore, Lewes, in 1865, after a period spent mostly in scientific studies, had become editor of the newly founded and essentially liberal Fortnightly Review. With this resurgence of activity, and Eliot and Mill more public figures than they had ever been, some links were inevitable.

What is interesting is that people like Morley and the Amberleys,

actively concerned with both reform and then, after the Reform Bill of 1867, with the more specific question of female emancipation, should be drawn to both Mill and Eliot. With Mill like something of an elder mentor, it seemed perfectly compatible with their activities, indeed a part of them, to enter Eliot's world. Fascinated by her, she at the very least symbolized something to them. In this, George Eliot probably stood for more than she cared for. A strong intellectual woman, successful, non-believing, associated with Positivism, some of her long-standing friends ardent feminists, living amidst liberal intellectuals, and unmarried to Lewes, George Eliot's place was decided for her in the radical world. Whatever conservatism she felt, and it ran deep in her, it could never be a Tory reactionism. One further point must be added, to be further emphasised as this chapter progresses: Mill and Eliot, so evidently coexisting, could have become acquainted, if they had had the slightest inclination.

The only person who sought to explain the lack of contact between Mill and Eliot was the American journalist, C.E. Norton. His meeting of the two occurred in the same years, the sixties, when Morley and the Amberleys were actively involved with Mill and Eliot. In his letters, Norton gives some of the most detailed physical accounts of both Mill and Eliot, their homes and their respective manner of talking, and his preference seems to have been for Mill. In 1873, Norton wrote in his journal that he inadvertently broke the news of Mill's death to Carlyle, upon which Carlyle eulogized Mill, and blamed Harriet Mill for her influence over her husband. Carlyle, however, maintained that, until they were married, 'their relations were entirely innocent'. This, Norton, notes in parenthesis, accords with Mill's principles. Moreover:

It agrees with this that I heard, I forget from whom, in the course of the past winter, that Mill had refused to become acquainted with Mrs. Lewes, had spoken in terms of the strongest reprobation

of her course, and had expressed himself very warmly as to the wrong committed by her in its effect on society, and its influence on women exposed to temptation to violate the conventional relations between man and woman.¹

The story seems a highly unlikely one, and perhaps indicates Norton's views rather than Mill's. It is a curious conjecture on someone's part, but it reflects the parallel position that the two held in the liberal intellectual milieu of mid-nineteenth century England. It was Norton, more of an observer than most, who bothered to offer an explanation for their never having met.

Inevitably, the list of people who entered the lives of both Mill and Eliot is vast. There were older and earlier contacts, some of them brief. Take, for example, the link through Unitarian circles. The Unitarian minister, W.J. Fox, was editor of the Monthly Repository for which Mill wrote some articles, and Fox in turn contributed to the Westminster Review. It was through Fox that Mill met his future wife, Harriet Taylor, and her husband. Fox became Mill's confidant in the thirties, when his involvement with Harriet was problematic, and Mill in turn supported Fox, when his affair with Eliza Flower became known publicly. Relations cooled when Harriet Taylor and Mill settled for a compromise in their affair, Fox disapproving of any kind of compromise. Later, when the London Review was proposed, Mill considered Fox as a possible editor, although Mill himself finally accepted the editorship. In 1837, Leigh Hunt had become editor of the Monthly Repository, and, at about the same time, became a contributor to Mill's Westminster. Lewes, Hunt's friend, wrote two articles for the Repository, and gave a series of lectures at Fox's chapel in 1837. In 1843, George Eliot was one of the guests at Charles Hennell and Rufa Brabant's marriage at the Finsbury

1. Letters of Charles Eliot Norton, edited by Sara Norton and M.A. DeWolfe Howe, 2 vols (London, 1913), I, 498.

Chapel, with Fox himself officiating. Eight years later, it was Fox who wrote the opening article for the first number of the Westminster Review under Chapman and George Eliot.

We may see the interweaving of lives even more, if we note that Harriet Martineau was present at Fox's dinner party at which Mill met Harriet Taylor. Harriet Martineau was fond of revealing the details of this first encounter, and Mill and Harriet Taylor disliked her intensely. She was to become more of a friend to George Eliot but relations were similarly spoilt by her reaction to Eliot's liaison with Lewes: as Ruby Redinger suggests, Harriet Martineau felt betrayed by womanhood; and she responded in much the same way to the breaches of convention committed by W.J. Fox and Eliza Flower, and by Robert and Elizabeth Browning, as she did to the Mills' and Lewes' relationships.¹ George Eliot, just like Harriet Taylor, was indignant at the gossip and rumours she spread about her private life.

There is not room to list and elaborate upon all such connections between Mill and Eliot. Many of them, like those above, are tenuous and have to be made across a span of several years when the mutual friend had little to do with either Mill or Eliot. But they do illustrate the smallness of an essentially radical or liberal intellectual world, and the ease with which Mill and Eliot could have met one another. But, more important than the simple inhabitation of the same world, is the implication, in Mill's and Eliot's respective relationships with Morley and the Amberleys, that once they both stood for something, they were seen by others to stand for similar things.

1. George Eliot: The Emergent Self (London, 1976), pp.271-72.

2. 'An unnecessary air of conservatism': George Eliot, John Stuart Mill, and the Westminster Review

By far the closest George Eliot ever came to having any direct contact with Mill was when she helped John Chapman edit the Westminster Review from 1851 to 1853. Whether Mill ever came to know that in writing to Chapman at that time, he was also writing to George Eliot, or that Eliot had a considerable hand in what Chapman wrote to Mill, we cannot tell and is perhaps beside the point. George Eliot knew it, and perhaps some of her attitude towards Mill was formed then. More importantly, this was how her full-time journalistic career began, editing a review very closely associated with Mill's name. Living at Chapman's house, George Eliot, still Mary Anne Evans, the 'translator of Strauss', came in contact with some of the vanguard of mid-nineteenth century intelligentsia, and amongst these people she made some of her closest friends. The indirect brush that George Eliot had with Mill over the prospectus of the Review may tell us something about her relationship with radical politics, and it probably told George Eliot herself. In working for the Westminster, Eliot was forced into the kind of encounter with Mill she did not expect.

The Westminster Review George Eliot helped edit was the review that, in 1824, had been set up specifically as an organ of radicalism by Jeremy Bentham, and its history, up until Chapman's purchase of it in 1851, had been of a political instrument rather than of a financial enterprise. It had rarely ever supported itself financially, but was maintained by proprietors interested in it primarily as an instrument of social change. Thus it seemed to change hands only according to when its proprietors could no longer maintain the financial burden of its losses, and each transference of proprietorship aimed at maintaining the Westminster Review's specific role. Mill, with his father, had been closely involved

with the review from its inception, but, growing dissatisfied with it as an adequate radical organ, they had for a while dissociated themselves from it; in 1835, with Roebuck and Buller, and the financial backing of Sir William Molesworth, they had set up the London Review in direct competition. Like his father, J.S. Mill was unable to be nominal editor because of his job at India House, but he was acting editor. In 1836, Molesworth bought the Westminster and the reviews merged into the London and Westminster Review. Then in 1837, Molesworth, in disagreement with the path the review was taking, gave up the proprietorship to J.S. Mill who ran it for three years as both proprietor and editor. Mill sold it in 1840, and William Edward Hickson owned and edited the review alone, until he sold it to Chapman in 1851. It was perhaps natural that Chapman and Eliot should send Mill, amongst others, a draft of the prospectus, but Mill was critical and hostile, and a brief glance at what the review meant to him, and how he ran it, may suggest reasons for this.

The general feeling of the philosophical radicals who had set up the London Review was that they had no real organ to express their views. The Westminster, which was then under T.P. Thompson, was so strictly Benthamite, it was detrimentally superficial. Furthermore, the Reform Bill of 1832 had brought hopes that a single liberal party could be gathered together, and the new review was an attempt to instigate a re-alignment in Parliament. However, where James Mill and others simply wished to see a review like the old Westminster in its early days, Mill wanted a great deal more than this. It was many years since Mill had found himself disillusioned with pure Benthamite utilitarianism, and he saw his opportunity to promote a new understanding of utilitarianism. Writing to Carlyle, significantly his new friend and who had proposed some articles for the review, Mill explained that the London Review was to be more weighty than other radical utilitarian periodicals, and

uncompromised by mediocrity or by 'subservience to any popular delusion'. He explained that hitherto the 'radical intellect' had been unfairly represented:

Tait and the Westminster give an altogether exaggerated notion of its poverty and bareness. The 'philosophical radicals' are narrow enough, it is true, though few of them are so narrow as Col. Thompson, the presiding spirit of the Westminster Review. But many of them are far from being empty; and they are generally much offended by the emptiness of the radical publications.¹

It is hard to ascertain exactly what in Mill's eyes had been so ill-represented. He only half feels affinity with the dissatisfied 'philosophical radicals' he talks of, for they themselves are narrow. What he really seeks is a journal that not so much represents particular thinkers, as one that brings them together and acts as a catalyst for a new movement, bringing into action something hitherto obstructed by not wholly undeserved accusations of sectarianism. Mill wanted philosophical radicalism to be something a great deal more than it was.

At first the London Review was, as James Mill wished, like the old Westminster, and indeed Mill's quest would have been impossible if his father had not died in 1836. From then on the review became for Mill something of a personal crusade, not simply to write freely what he thought, but,

to open the Review widely to all writers who were in sympathy with Progress as I understood it, even though I should lose by it the support of my former associates.²

Carlyle and Sterling were two of the notable additions. For Mill, therefore, what was in one way a simple tactic deployed to effect a

1. The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill: 1812-1848, edited by Francis E. Mineka, Collected Works, XII-XIII (1963), p.216 (2 March 1834). All further references to these volumes will be abbreviated to EL and will give page number.

2. Autobiography (London, 1873), p.206.

re-alignment in Parliament, was also a philosophical conviction. Tactics were at one with his belief in method. He believed that to rally together different radicals in an immediate and material way could bring about a movement greater and more progressive than anything they were considering independently because, in short, he believed in a many-sided truth. His essays on Bentham and Coleridge epitomised everything the London and Westminster had meant to him.

Mill was thus not afraid of tactics. Sometimes the position of anti-sectarianism was difficult for Mill, but there was an urgency and philosophical aim to which compromise could not be a real threat. Mill, for example, having gone to great pains to avoid creating a coterie, was furious with Albany Fonblanque's label of Westminster contributors as 'philosophical radicals'. Mill, desperately trying to dissociate himself from the radicalism of Roebuck and Grote, and yet trying to draw radicals together, was put in a difficult position by Fonblanque's further attacks: as he explained to Fonblanque, his hands were tied for he did not wish to decry other radicals at that particular moment when he was so desperately trying to rally a radical party.¹ But importantly, tied as Mill's hands were, it could not really be said that his conscience was tied. To quote an example of how easy Mill's practical approach could be, he wrote to Blanco White, agreeing with him that something must be done by the review against 'prevailing tendencies of English Religion'. But Mill took a distinctly tactical approach:

It is only necessary to avoid directly expressing any opinion on points of faith or rather of dogma; that the review in attacking sectarianism may not get the character with the stupid part of the public, of being itself connected with any sect. (EL, pp. 301-02: 9 April 1836)

'The stupid part of the public' was Mill's private expression, but he

1. See EL, pp.369-77.

took that stupidity seriously. It is important to understand that, although Mill's tactics of anti-sectarianism were at one with his philosophical and political convictions, they did not constitute a conservative deference. That word 'stupid' echoes all the anger of positive radicalism.

The most crucial policy with which the London began was that of all articles being signed. Mill installed this policy with the express aim of introducing his own radicalism to the old doctrines, and thus it began as a personal and practical move, by which Mill sought to disentangle his own work from his father's. As he wrote to Carlyle, there would be no editorial 'we', the editor asking only 'a general tendency not in contradiction to the objects of the publication'.¹ Noticeably this is only a rough statement of a policy: it remained rough in the sense that Mill was more concerned with the case in hand. What this 'general tendency' was may be ambiguous, but Mill felt it keenly. At best he called it 'democratic, but with none of the exclusiveness and narrowness of the Westminster Review'. Importantly, what Mill elsewhere called an aim 'to soften the harder & sterner features of (its) radicalism and utilitarianism', and of the eighteenth-century, was felt most by him as a thrust forwards.² Interestingly, this policy, begun out of personal expedience, was to become a policy associated with liberal tendencies. Lewes, who in the early forties, and very much Mill's disciple, wrote a long article on the evils of anonymity, brought the approach to his editorial policy for the Fortnightly Review, from which it was to become very much established liberal practice.³

1. EL, p.202 (22 December 1833).

2. EL, p.248 (26 February 1835), and p.312 (23 November 1836).

3. 'Errors and Abuses of English Criticism', Westminster Review, 38 (1842) 466-86.

Importantly, because Mill's anti-sectarianism could not be dissociated from a radical thrust, he could move just as tactically in the other direction. The policy of signed articles did limit the individual's power and render the individual answerable, but Mill was not afraid to act according to his convictions on 'a general tendency', and the result was far from a free-for-all in his review. Thus, Harriet Martineau's article on Queen Victoria, which the nominal editor, John Robertson, felt obliged to print, was deplored so much by Mill that he could not bring himself to allow its inclusion. Its being signed made no difference, he said, and for there to be an editorial abnegating any responsibility would be ridiculous and wholly undesirable. He wrote:

I think this paper altogether contrary to the character which we are trying to give the Review, namely, a character of dignity, and besides of practicalness. (EL, p.352: 28 September 1837)

In a comparable way, Mill had wanted to write himself a proposed article on Bailey's The Rationale of Political Representation (1835), rather than letting James Martineau do it, simply because it would involve directly the political principles of the Review. It is curious that, years later, Eliot was to be perplexed by the problem of including Martineau and Mill in the same issue: she was abiding religiously by the principles of the prospectus she had helped to write. Mill, committed rather to a way of working than stipulated principles, probably would have had no such problem.

A radical aim was thus crucial to Mill's opening up of the Westminster. When Mill, so enamoured of de Tocqueville's De La démocratie en Amérique (1835) and his exposure of the pitfalls of democracy, asked de Tocqueville to help him determine what the London Review should be, and later gladly published his articles, it was for the sake of the ideals behind democracy, not to check it. The anti-

sectarian approach, the broadening and softening of utilitarianism, which did not simply come from the desire to avoid being off-putting, is perhaps best understood as the method of an inductivist. In the late thirties, when Mill was so openly excited by his writing of his Logic, he explained that one of the review's principles was to let abstract speculations grow out of particulars. Nothing could be a clearer or more practical application of his theories of what he thought induction really was. It seemed that the review would, if Mill could bring it off, correspond precisely to the very mechanics of human knowledge and reasoning. In this same letter, which so reflects Mill's current concern with induction, he wrote that the review planned 'always, if possible, to address a pre-existing curiosity', to try and appeal to the interest of large bodies, and to make a rallying point for the radical party.¹ There is a sense that, to Mill, people are right to be roused only on points of topical concern, to be dealing with immediate and particular problems. Where they would be wrong would be in never moving beyond their own sectarianism. This idea of inductive method, not of tactics, but of solid experiential basis still impelled by a radical aim, shows, I shall argue, the crucial bone of contention that Mill had with the prospectus Eliot helped write. This was a positive, not a negative or conservative, organicist approach. One further point must be added in remembering what Eliot did for the Westminster, and that was that Mill was perhaps more enamoured of the general idea of a fertile literary section, than he was able and earnest enough to effect it. Although he got many new contributors, if one searches for a specific literary policy, the only one which emerges is Mill's more general desire to dispel English ignorance of France and America. However much Mill desired 'to erect a Normal School of Literature', or to make the review 'an organ of

1. EL, p.364 (21 December 1837).

real literary & social criticism', his desire was swamped by his more political concerns.¹

When Mill finally gave up the review, he gave a complete set of the periodicals, marked with his own notes, to Barclay Fox, remarking that he would publish those articles of his own which he thought were of more permanent value. He added dismissively, and somewhat disheartened, 'the remainder is mostly politics'. His only achievements, he writes, were in defending Lord Durham, in increasing the success of Carlyle's French Revolution, and in showing Guizo to be 'a great thinker & writer'.²

This was written no doubt in a mood of despondency and, when writing his Autobiography, Mill perhaps made a better appraisal of the London and Westminster Review's achievements:

After the last hope of the formation of a Radical party had disappeared it was time for me to stop the heavy expenditure of time and money which the Review cost me. It had to some extent answered my personal purpose as a vehicle for my opinions. It had enabled me to express in print much of my altered mode of thought, and to separate myself in a marked manner from the narrower Benthamism of my early writings. (p.218)

At the time, the political purpose had been a part of the general thrust of his policy - concrete, immediate, and particular concerns drawn together by an inductivist approach. It was no mere coincidence that Mill was writing his Logic at the same time. In 1837, when Mill was grappling with the third book, 'Of Induction', politics were dull, hopes of parliamentary re-alignment lost, and Mill wrote:

for the first time these ten years I have no wish to be in Parliament.... For an object of importance I should not mind sacrificing my own pleasures and comforts...but I certainly would not do it in order to

1. EL, p.210 (17 January 1834), and p.314 (29 November 1836). See also, Rosemary T. VanArsdel, 'The Westminster Review: With Special Reference to Literary Attitudes' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1961); 'Notes on Westminster Review Research', Victorian Periodicals Newsletter, No. 1 (January 1968), 20-23.

2. EL, pp.426-27 (16 April 1840).

exchange the speculative pursuits which I like, and in which I can do great things, for the position of a Radical member of this coming Parliament. (EL, pp.345-46: 6 August 1837)

His whole approach had not simply been practical: the liberalism he had pressed for was as much a part of a belief in how men could know, as a belief in how progress could be effected, and at this point he was able to resort to the theory when the practical had become impracticable. However, as the political hopes became blacker, and feeling miserable at the thought of having simply to support the Whigs, Mill felt that, 'if there is to be no radical party there need be no Westminster Review, for there is no position for it to take, distinguishing it from the Edinburgh'. The review, its policy and thrust, could not continue without its practical purpose. Mill, having just read and thought glorious the manuscript of Chartism, told Carlyle that he would like it for 'the last dying speech of a Radical Review'.¹ That Mill could only think of a piece of powerful and emotional prose, an expression or cry from the heart, suggests only too well the extent to which the forum of debate had lost its meaning; and in fact he turned to the 'speculative pursuits' he liked so much, bringing out the Logic in 1843 and the Principles of Political Economy in 1848.

Whatever he thought of the possibilities of a radical review, Mill was careful to hand it over to one whom he thought would continue it as such. He himself contributed only occasionally to Hickson's review, now re-called the Westminster. Looking back, Mill thought of Hickson that, 'it is highly creditable to him that he was able to maintain, in some tolerable degree, the character of the Review as an organ of radicalism and progress'.² After ten years the review had worn Hickson

1. EL, p.397 (6 April 1839); p.414 (December 1839).

2. Autobiography, p.220.

out. He did consider one plan of selling it to Lewes and Thornton Hunt. In April 1851, he asked Mill to be editor, but Mill felt he could best put forward his ideas in books, and within a week Hickson had agreed to sell it to Chapman: notice the brief coincidence of Lewes, Mill, and Eliot's involvement. Mill was indignant on Hickson's behalf that Chapman was not to take it over at once but expected Hickson to carry on editing it for the next six months. Willing to help Hickson out, Mill resented the useless time and trouble it would cost them both. As for his attitude to Chapman himself: 'I am not sure nor do I think it likely, that I should be disposed to work for Chapman'.¹ Perhaps he had heard of Chapman's bad reputation as a business man, and could not rid himself of the fear that the review would become too much of a business concern. Mill thought little of his arrangement with Hickson and it was hardly a good start for Mill's relations with Chapman's Westminster Review.

Chapman, meanwhile, ever-optimistic and brash in his dealings with people, did not waste much time in setting about the business. On 21 May 1851, he writes quite happily in his diary: 'Wrote to J.S. Mill, to ask him to accord me an interview, - I feel that my ideas are now assuming a definite shape in regard to the principles and arrangements of the Westminster.'² Mill, however, although willing to offer his opinions, would only correspond with Chapman and did not meet him until nearly a year later, in April 1852. With Mill's loyalties to Hickson, whom he helped a great deal in the last six months of his editorship, Chapman's was a tactless move, and he was even more tactless to start immediate work on the prospectus. He began on 28 May, whilst staying

1. LL, p.65 (6 May 1851).

2. 'Chapman's Diary for 1851', in Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot and John Chapman, with Chapman's Diaries, second edition (Yale, 1969), pp.123-220 (p.168).

in Coventry with George Eliot's friends, the Brays, and handed the prospectus over to Eliot to finish. On 4 June, copies were sent not only to Mill, but also to Newman, Hickson, Froude, Martineau, Greg, Molesworth, Thornton Hunt, Lombe, Mackay, and Dr. Hodgson. Hickson was annoyed, Martineau's reply according to Chapman was 'half sneering', and Mill's criticisms, which we shall look at shortly, were a radical outcry against conservatism. Chapman thought Mill's letter 'half-sarcastic'.¹

Quickly Eliot realised Chapman's lack of diplomacy: she wrote on 12 June:

I am chiefly concerned that you should have appeared to overlook Hickson's interest or have failed in etiquette towards him. If you had asked him for an introduction to J.S. Mill, it was clearly wrong to introduce yourself by letter. I did not suspect the real state of the case. (Letters, VIII, 24)

To be honest and open was, she said, the only way to proceed, not only for honour's sake - 'which I hope is your first consideration' - but also because a difference with Hickson could be 'the most fatal thing to your proprietorship'. He should not communicate with Mill apart from Hickson. Eliot adds, 'I heartily wish the Prospectus had been longer delayed and thought over before it was sent to any of the don[or]s'. She helped correct Chapman's reply to Mill, revealing a greater judiciousness as to turn of phrase. She suggested that Chapman's aim should be expressed as, '"to make the Review the organ of the ablest and most liberal thinkers of the time"'. She seems most to have desired to maintain Chapman's dignity:

for 'gratefully received,' which sounds too much like a craving for alms, read 'duly valued'....I should like the 4th Paragraph better if it began thus - 'In the sketch submitted to you there is perhaps an unnecessary air of conservatism'. (Letters, I, 352: 15 June 1851)

1. Chapman, p.176.

Eliot directly acknowledged Mill's criticisms, but it was clear she did not regret the content of the prospectus. Chapman may have been undiplomatic in his approach, and they were certainly discovering how established loyalties were concerning the review, but she wished to maintain her and Chapman's integrity.

Mill's reply may have been courteous, but he refused any involvement. He would, he wrote, tell them what he thought of a subsequent prospectus, but he would give no positive suggestions because only they knew what they intended. Mill's sense of division from these newcomers emerges even more strikingly in the next paragraph of the letter:

The reason you give for what you very truly call the air of conservatism in the Prospectus, is intelligible; but does not seem to me to render advisable the use of expressions giving the idea that the West^r no longer wishes to be considered as professing extreme opinions. The review was founded by people who held what were then thought extreme opinions, & it is only needed as an organ of opinions as much in advance of the present state of the public mind as those were in advance of its then state. Anything less is but child's play after the events of the last three years in Europe & besides, every intermediate position is fully occupied by other periodicals. (LL, p.72: 20 June 1851)

The prospectus was duly re-written, and it would seem, by comparing Mill's early criticisms with the final form, that adjustments rather than any radical concessions were made. Mill liked it better, although he said he would have preferred it to have been simpler: 'The Prospectus still seems to me to rely on sound rather than on sense; the only distinct statement of opinion being on the mere newspaper topics of the day.' As usual he waited for the Westminster to prove itself - 'the first number will shew what meaning the writers attach to the word Progress, & how far the review will be an organ of it'.¹ He remained distrustful and had yet to be convinced. As he had warned Chapman in

1. LL, p.79 (17 October, 1851).

his first criticism of the prospectus:

I think it right to say that if your wish to consult me respecting the Westminster Review arises from any belief that I am likely to be a contributor to it, I can hold out no prospect that the expectation will be realized. My willingness to contribute even occasionally to the West^r under any new management would entirely depend on the opinion I form of it after seeing it in operation. (LL, p.69: 9 June 1851)

Mill perhaps felt used in the worst possible way. The new management seemed to him to have little respect for what the review had been, and to show little depth of understanding of what it had fought for. Mill was suspicious of Chapman; Eliot's involvement was kept quiet so that Mill had nothing further to go upon than John Chapman's name.¹

Mill remained hostile and unhelpful. Chapman was to have to fight hard to gain his respect. In these early days, Mill was far from encouraging, especially over the proposed translation of Comte by Harriet Martineau, which probably did not endear him to Eliot who was shortly to become her friend. Harriet Martineau, in turn, did not spare Chapman her gossip on Mill's marriage. Certainly Mill had gained something of a reputation in Eliot's eyes. In October 1851, she told Cara Bray, 'Meanwhile the terrible "Mill" might John Stuart has ground F. Newman to powder in the Westm[inster]!' She asked for Bray to send her Mill's Logic:

which I don't suppose he wants at present. I shall be glad to have it by me for reference. I am training myself to say adieu to all delights, I care for nothing but doing my work and doing it well.
(Letters, I, 363: 3 October 1851)

Mill was a part of her work-load, someone to appease. He continued to be a part of that work-load, a writer whose works she was forced to consult. In November 1852, she notes having to use his Political Economy in order to read up on taxation.

1. Mill did wonder whether a 'lady friend' mentioned by Chapman was Harriet Martineau or Mrs Gaskell. Mineka and Lindley suggest this was George Eliot (LL, p.177, n6).

In January 1852, Chapman and Eliot's first number of the Westminster Review came out, opening with the dreaded prospectus. By April, Mill's attitude had been softened. Eliot, in telling the Brays her Westminster news, remarked, 'Grote is very friendly, and has propitiated J.S. Mill, who will write for us, when we want him'.¹ As usual, however, Chapman did not handle the matter very well, and had arranged for James Martineau and Mill to write in the same number. Eliot reprimanded him:

Pray, how came you to tell him that J.S. Mill was going to write? I have told you all along that he would flatly contradict Martineau and that there was nothing for it but to announce contradiction on our title-page. (Letters, II, 47: 24-25 July 1852)

Eliot was finding her work difficult, especially as far as editorial policy was concerned. The innovation of an Independent Section, which included contributions claimed to be not against the general spirit of the review but differing only on particular ideas and measures, created a problem in that it implied complete editorial endorsement of the rest of the review. Hence the difficulty of including both Mill and Martineau. Eliot, seeing the difference between her own ideas and Martineau's in her belief that 'the thought which is to mould the Future has for its root a belief in necessity', would have liked contributors of his creed put in the "'dangerous ward", alias, the Independent Section". Her feelings are best summed up thus:

The only third course is the present one, that of Editorial compromise. Martineau writes much that we can agree with and admire. Newman ditto, J.S. Mill still more, Froude a little less and so on. These men can write more openly in the Westminster than anywhere else. They are amongst the world's vanguard, though not all in the foremost line; it is good for the world, therefore, that they could have every facility for speaking out. Ergo, since each can't have a periodical to himself, it is good that there should be one which is common to them - id est, the Westminster. The grand

1. Letters, II, 21 (27 April 1852).

mistake with respect to this plan is the paragraph in the Prospectus which announces the Independent Section and which thus makes the editors responsible for every thing outside that railing - Ah me! how wise we all are après coup. (Letters, II, 49; 24-25 July 1852)

In this she leans towards, of all people, Mill. Actually, when Mill's article on 'Whewell's Moral Philosophy' came out in the October issue (without Martineau's), Eliot was, as she was to be several times later, disappointed in him: 'those who know the article on Whewell to be Mill's generally think it good, but I confess that to me it is unsatisfactory'.¹ It was indeed a rather crude and ridiculing attack on Whewell and defence of Bentham. Although she was evidently not swayed by his reputation, and had found him a difficult person to deal with, Eliot at this point clearly felt an intellectual affinity with Mill. Interestingly, the above letter on editorial policy suggests that this affinity was on the question of necessity, and her belief,

that a nobler presentation of humanity has yet to be given in resignation to individual nothingness, than could ever be shewn of a being who believes in the phantasmagoria of hope unsustained by reason. (p.49)

Eliot had, indeed, sufficient expectations of Mill to be disappointed in him.

Eliot's problems with editorial policy stemmed both from Chapman's lack of diplomacy and from the prospectus - at this point she was ready to say that Chapman needed a new editor and a new prospectus. The prospectus, perhaps because Chapman and Eliot were relative newcomers, had had to appeal to many different writers, including old Westminster contributors, so the result was a guarded set of equivocations. Evidently Eliot felt the result to be some kind of compromise, the compromise of a principle that had something to do with 'necessity' and the 'future', and was contrary to Martineau's ideas. I do not think,

1. Westminster Review, 2 n.s. (1852), 349-85; Letters, II, 61 (12 October 1852).

however, that Eliot's ideas were so divorced from those of the prospectus, for her to be able to claim an intellectual objection to it. The problem really was of there being a prospectus at all, a prospectus that had tried to articulate a complete and integrated philosophical basis for editorial policy. Certainly, Mill's tactics and his convictions were at one with one another, and he admitted diversity because he believed in diversity, whilst he also shaped and steered the review because he believed in a distinct aim or ideal. But he was, unlike George Eliot, not bound by a concise statement of principle. Of course, he was in a far easier position than Eliot, who said regretfully 'if I were its proprietor and could afford to make it what I liked...':¹ Mill had been just this, and he had been in the more enviable position of trying to change utilitarianism, not win customers. But the fracas over the prospectus suggests something about liberal positivism itself, that it was a way of working rather than a concise theoretical principle. In fact, George Eliot succeeded in her work for the Westminster Review because she did move tactically, more often than not in response to Chapman's mistakes, and because she did have deeply felt values; and she raised the literary section to heights it had never reached before. But the prospectus itself, as a public statement of what Chapman and Eliot were going to do, was a disaster.

Mill's 'severe animadversions' of the first draft of the prospectus could still be applied to the prospectus in its final published form.² It is, as he said, 'more sound than sense'. The prospectus opens by saying: 'The newly-appointed Editors will endeavour to confirm and extend the influence of the Review as an instrument for the development

1. Letters, II, 47 (24-25 July 1852).

2. Chapman, p.176; 'Prospectus of the Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, under the direction of new editors', Westminster Review, 1 n.s. (1852), iii-vi.

and guidance of earnest thought on Politics, Social Philosophy, Religion, and General Literature.' This would certainly be a vague promise for Mill, for whom earnestness went without saying. The references to 'the recognition of the Law of Progress', the 'advocacy of organic changes', and reform 'directed... by an advancing ideal', do sound like a catalogue of catch phrases, and one can understand Mill's wait-and-see response. Against this brandishing of vague words of progressive ideals, the modifications and equivocations are so accentuated as to sound like a fearing conservatism. Perhaps Mill found the prospectus so offensive, not because it was simply conservative, but because he sensed timidity. However, Mill's objections tell us as much about himself as about the writers of the prospectus.

The qualifications and limitations put upon progress emerge, whether the authors intended it or not, as the central point. The prospectus stresses that, 'it will not be forgotten that the institutions of man, no less than the products of nature, are strong and durable in proportion as they are the results of gradual development'. Permanent reforms are those which, 'while embodying the wisdom of the time, yet sustain such a relation to the moral and intellectual condition of the people, as to ensure their support'. Evidently a similar such statement had been made in the first prospectus, because Mill flatly opposes it:

I think that changes effected rapidly & by force are often the only ones which in given circumstances would be permanent. (LL, p.68: 9 June 1851)

This seems to be very much Mill's violent response to the prospectus itself, for he was certainly opposed to violent change. He believed rather in sizeable and radical changes, often effected by a series of stages. Mill was really salvaging a radical ideal from a kind of intolerable balancing act of fearful equivocation. As for the belief that changes would only occur in correspondence to the intellect of the

masses, he again was surprisingly adamant. According to such a doctrine,

there would neither have been the Reformation, the Commonwealth, nor the Revolution of 1688, & the stupidity & habitual indifference of the mass of mankind would bear down by its dead weight all the efforts of the more intelligent & active-minded few.
(LL, p.68: 9 June 1851)

A staunch believer in the powers of education, he finally came to believe that education came before political change, but it would seem here that he did not wish to wait for education to spring from nothing. The few could educate and bring about changes for the many. He was not about to play a waiting game. It is hard, however, knowing the full history of Mill's beliefs, to find a specific objection and difference. After all, it had obviously not occurred to the editors that the proposals would instigate such a heady and violent opposition. Yet it is not wholly fair to say that Mill's instinctive opposition to the prospectus came from an unreasonable inability to see his own modifying spirit set up into principles.

For one thing, there was an important difference between the organicist approach which was a kind of submission to things as they are and which led to the kind of conservatism that treated present conditions as sacrosanct, and the organicism which treated the present as the material to be moulded into the future. Mill had objected to an expression '"how far our efforts after a more perfect social state must be restrained"', saying that the only worthy work was in seeing how far these efforts could be promoted and the obstacles overcome.¹ The final version was probably little better in his eyes, the prospectus speaking of a social philosophy trying to ascertain how much 'the popular efforts after a more perfect social state are countenanced by the teachings of politico-economical science'. The difference between the direction of

1. LL, p.69 (9 June 1851).

'restraint' and 'countenanced' which was backwards, and the direction forwards towards a radical ideal, was a very real difference for Mill. The softening modifications he was famous for - the softening of Bentham with Coleridge, democracy with centralization - were made in order to make his ideals viable possibilities. The difference between a negative organicism and a positive organicism was the difference between concrete qualifications erected into primary abstract principles, as happened in the prospectus, and the qualifications that were integral to method, means, or analysis, but had a radical ideal.

The prospectus did however claim that, although the editors could not indicate the course they would pursue, 'their political tendencies may be inferred from their intention that the Review shall support the following Reforms...' There ensued a list of what Mill undoubtedly meant by 'the mere newspaper topics of the day'. These included: 'progressive Extension of the Suffrage, in proportion as the people become fitted for using it, with a view to its ultimate universality'; the adjustment of central and local government to give scope to popular energies but allowing 'effective execution of measures dictated by the highest intelligence of the nation'; free trade; judicial and educational reform. Again, they were not measures Mill would oppose, neither would he oppose care and moderation in their execution, but to Mill, presented thus, they were only newspaper topics: they were related neither to one another, nor to the general principles the prospectus used elsewhere. In many ways, what the prospectus lacked was a sense, not that there was social progress or what it called 'an advancing ideal', but that there was a moral imperative. The principles were stated in such a way as to aim simply at not putting people off.

The only clarity is in reference to religion, and Mill ignored this. His non-belief was not a problem to him, although he refused to expose

it fully in his writings in order not to damage his political cause. The prospectus again wished not to offend 'the cherished associations of pure and elevated minds', but also sought the 'truth'. The Feuerbachian approach is clear - 'religion has its foundations in man's nature and will only discard an old form to assume and vitalize one more expressive of its essence'. We can of course see clearly Eliot's hand in the approach to religion, and in the deference to moral nature and 'the poetic and emotional elements, out of which proceed our noblest aspirations and the essential beauty of life'. Yet Mill did not bother to pass comment. Even here, where Eliot's prose stands out, it seemed merely a part of all the other equivocations that the prospectus offered.

Whatever her regrets over the prospectus, there was a heart-felt belief of Eliot's in it: that very word 'cherish' is a hint of the passionate conviction which Eliot was to uphold and articulate in her novels. The objectional approach being by no means eliminated in the final prospectus, Eliot was not, even in her early journalistic days, to be won over by Mill. But the prospectus was disastrous because Eliot's most deeply felt commitments did not bear being stated in a few pages of blunt editorial principles, and so Mill was hostile to a statement with which he might have been expected to sympathize. Without reading too much into this prospectus, I would suggest that the problem was with the abstraction into a space of four printed pages of a way of working. Mill may have been a radical politician, whilst Eliot was not, but, I argue, what they shared was a liberal positivism whose thrust was one of explanation, analysis, and appreciation, and which could not be presented as a project. The tone of the prospectus belied what Chapman and Eliot were to achieve in the Westminster which, especially in the fifties, became a rich and exciting arena of advanced thought. The prospectus' 'unnecessary air of conservatism' meant that not only did Mill recoil in

disgust, but Eliot did herself a grave injustice. What was powerful in the kind of liberalism which both promoted was not articulable in policy.

By the 1860s, it would appear that the Westminster Review commanded more respect from Mill than in its early days under Chapman. It had perhaps proved itself. On several occasions he offered his articles gratuitously. He corresponded a great deal with Chapman in 1863 on his proposed articles on Comte. Mill asked for a great deal of freedom and he seems to have got it. The two articles were finally published in April and July 1865, and they form perhaps some of the most valuable criticisms on Comte. The articles were much answered - by Lewes, by Littré, by Bridges, for example. For Mill the Westminster had its uses. After Chapman had faced financial disaster in 1860, he sold his publishing business, and managed to keep the Westminster largely by paying hardly anything for articles and attracting writers by printing extreme opinions that they could not get published anywhere else. Then, when Chapman got into further financial trouble in 1866, Mill wrote to him saying:

Knowing how little support there is for a Review of advanced opinions, I have always thought it eminently honourable to you that you should have been able to carry it on for so many years, and to make it as good as it has been through all that time. (LL, p.1218-19: 2 December 1866)

By sheer perseverance Chapman had proved himself in Mill's eyes. It was then that Mill tried very hard to help Chapman by suggesting and writing to people, whom he thought could offer financial help. Finally, he offered to give Chapman a mortgage on the Westminster without interest, which enabled Chapman to raise £600. The deed was made up in January 1867. Later that same year, he offered Chapman £100 on personal security. Still dubious as to Chapman's business acumen, he felt however the value of the Westminster and respected Chapman for maintaining it.

3. George Eliot's reading of Mill

On leaving the Westminster Review, George Eliot had no more direct dealings with Mill, and, by the time that Mill was trying to help Chapman in the sixties, she had very little to do with the review. In November 1853, having already left 142 Strand and found other lodgings, she had told Chapman that she was giving up her editorial work for the review. She had also already begun her translation of Feuerbach and, in July 1854, she and Lewes left together for Germany. She continued, for a while, to write articles for the Westminster, but was soon too busy writing as a novelist. In 1858, relations cooled between her and Chapman, because Chapman, not respecting her privacy over her identity as George Eliot, had asked Herbert Spencer point blank for the truth. Moreover, her liaison with Lewes had, at least until she was famous, its limiting effects on her social life.

On the whole, George Eliot does not mention Mill much, either in her letters or in her articles. When she does, her references to Mill are quick, generally provoked by someone else, rather than by her own specific desire to discuss him. As suggested in her correspondence over the Westminster, Mill formed a part of George Eliot's work-load, and she used his works very much as reference books. But this also implies the extent to which George Eliot in some way relied upon him. She relied, for example, on 'the syllogism as explained by Mill', to correct Herbert Spencer's universal postulate.¹ Also during this period, shortly after she had left the Westminster, George Eliot mentions Mill in her review 'The Future of German Philosophy'. In discussing Otto Friedrich Gruppe's latest philosophical book on the reformation of logic, Eliot considers Gruppe to have mapped out 'the road which John Mill...

51. Letters, II, 145 (9 March 1854).

has actually wrought out and made available'.¹ That road is the reform of scientific method, by the theory that abstractions only ever come from the concrete; a reform which had enabled science to attain greater achievements than ever before. Gruppe almost wholly rejects the syllogism but:

He seems to us not to have rightly apprehended Mill's analysis of the syllogism and the function he assigns to it, since he makes it an objection to that writer's views that he gives an important place to deduction in his method. Deduction, as Mill shows, is not properly opposed to induction but to experiment, and is a means of registering and using the results of induction, indispensable to any great progress in science. But these are questions which this is not the place to discuss. (Pinney, pp.152-53)

In this, Eliot counts upon Mill's analysis of logic, which she obviously knows well. His theories are given. Without suggesting that George Eliot looked up to Mill, or considered him un-open to criticism, he does appear to be an unspoken cornerstone and bastion of her science. In a more light-hearted vein, she makes a brief reference to Mill in 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists'. One of these silly novelists,

informs us that 'Works of imagination are avowedly read by men of science, wisdom, and piety'; from which we suppose the reader is to gather the cheering inference that Dr. Daubeny, Mr. Mill, or Mr. Maurice, may openly indulge himself with the perusal of 'Adonijah', without being obliged to secrete it among the sofa cushions, or read it by snatches under the dinner table.²

Mill was sobriety itself.

Behind George Eliot's few references to Mill, is a thorough knowledge of his work. It is perhaps not surprising that, prolific reader and radical intellectual as she was, George Eliot read most of

1. Leader, 7 (1855), 723-24, reprinted in Essays of George Eliot, edited by Thomas Pinney (London, 1963), pp.148-53 (p.150).

2. Westminster Review, 66 (1856), 442-61, reprinted in Pinney, pp.300-24 (p.322).

Mill's writings, both in journals and in his books. She and Lewes owned copies of most of Mill's major works.¹ In William Baker's list of their scientific books donated by Lewes' son, Charles Lee Lewes, to Dr. Williams's Library, there are the following editions of Mill's works: Auguste Comte and Positivism (1865); An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, and of the Principal Philosophical Questions Discussed in his Writings, 3rd edition (1867); A System of Logic (1870); Autobiography (1873); Three Essays on Religion (1874). According to an inventory made in the early 1900s, of the remaining books in their library, they possessed copies of: On Liberty (1859); Principles of Political Economy, 2 vols (1848); A System of Logic, 2 vols (1843). The works on Mill which they possessed were: Alfred Henry Killick, The Students' Handbook, Synoptical and Explanatory of Mr. J.S. Mill's System of Logic (1870); J.H. Bridges, The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine. A Reply to Strictures on Comte's Later Writings Addressed to John S. Mill (1866); a bound copy of Emile Littré, 'La Philosophie Positive: M. Auguste Comte et M.J. Stuart Mill', Revue des Deux Mondes, LXIV (1866) 829-66; George Jacob Holyoake, John Stuart Mill as some of the working classes know him (1873). Mill's Comte, Killick's book, the appendices of Bridges' book, and Littré's article, all contain Lewes' marginalia. Moreover, Baker suggests that some of the marginalia in the Littré article were made by George Eliot; if so, they are the only ones made by her on Mill. However, I find it difficult to see how Baker distinguishes George Eliot's pencil lines from Lewes'. Still, Mill was evidently well and carefully read by both Lewes and George Eliot; and to George Eliot, Mill was a great deal more than Lewes' past mentor.

1. My sources have been: William Baker, The George Eliot - George Henry Lewes Library: An Annotated Catalogue of Their Books at Dr. Williams's Library, London (New York, 1977); The Libraries of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, English Literary Studies Monograph Series no. 24 (University of Victoria, 1981).

She seems, moreover, to have continued to read and re-read Mill right into the seventies, when, if Baker is correct, she read not just Mill's posthumous works, but also 'portions' of the Political Economy.¹

In a curious way, the few references George Eliot makes to Mill, and the manner in which they are made, reflect her lack of need to discuss him, the assumption of his established position in philosophy. Her references are often practical. Her first mention of him, for example, was in 1849 with reference to the copy of the Logic she had lent to John Sibree Jr.² Afterwards, Mill's name crops up repeatedly over the Westminster Review, and, as we have noted, Mill was someone of whom she had expectations, despite all her personal difficulties with him. Thus many references are to be found, throughout her letters, to articles written in reply to Mill: she remarks both where weaknesses of Mill's had been pointed out, and where writers had ultimately failed to put him down. Mill was evidently somebody she thought philosophical writers had to contend with, somebody she thought hard to answer. But notably George Eliot herself chose neither to apply directly his terms, nor to contend with Mill: she neither defends nor attacks him. Un-enamoured and un-inspired by him as she may have been, she assumed and even relied upon him. The main period, after the days with the Westminster Review, when George Eliot seems most to have been reading and remarking on Mill, was during the sixties when, as we have seen, her social life overlapped with Mill's; and this was when Mill - as well as reform and female enfranchisement - was a topic of discussion. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that it was whilst writing Felix Holt (March 1865 to May 1866) that George Eliot was re-reading, Mill's works.

1. Some George Eliot Notebooks: An Edition of the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library's George Eliot Holograph Notebooks, MSS707-11, edited by William Baker (Salzburg, 1976-85), III: 711 (1980), p.18.

2. Letters, I, 310 (20 September 1849).

Even when Mill was as yet only running for Parliament, he was a topic of conversation. For he had deliberately neither participated in, nor financed with his own money, his election campaign. At the time it seemed doubtful if he would get in. On 10 July 1865, when George Eliot was re-reading the Political Economy, she wrote to Mrs P.A. Taylor:

I agree with you in your feeling about Mill. Some of his works have been frequently my companions of late, and I have been going through many actions de grâce towards him. I am not anxious that he should be in Parliament: thinkers can do more outside than inside the House. But it would have been a fine precedent, and would have made an epoch, for such a man to have been asked for and elected solely on the ground of his mental eminence. As it is, I suppose it is pretty certain that he will not be elected. (Letters, IV, 196)

Notably, when Mill did get in, Lewes was to put a similar significance on the fact. Like Eliot, Lewes was less interested in what Mill should effect as a member of Parliament; indeed, quite rightly, neither of them thought he could effect much. Eliot's whole approach, of course, directly reflects the politics of Felix Holt, in which the education and morality of the working class are given precedence over enfranchisement. On 15 November 1865, Eliot notes in her journal that she has been reading Mill's Liberty. The next day she was writing Mr Lyons' story to be inserted into the narrative of Felix Holt. On 31 January 1866, she was reading Considerations on Representative Government, and told Frederic Harrison this anecdote:

I must tell you, for your amusement, that in a copy of Mill's 'Representation' which I have down here from the London Library, some reader has thought it worth-while to put as an annotation - 'Beesly and F. Harrison refuted.' I fail to see the *à propos*. It is affixed to a passage about the lasting influence occasionally produced by the work of one powerful monarch e.g. Charlemagne. (Letters, IV, 232)

Two months later, in March 1866, her journal remarks 'I am reading Mill's Logic again' (Letters, IV, 233). Her reading of Mill was extensive but, after Felix Holt was published in June, there is no further mention of

Mill for over a year. It is difficult to tell whether her reading of Mill formed a part of her research for the novel, because three of the works mentioned, Political Economy, Liberty, and Representative Government, had also just come out in popular editions. Mill had deliberately published these editions with no profit to himself, in order to render them more accessible. Perhaps Eliot was also interested in what works Mill felt should be made readily available to the ordinary populace.

In May 1867, Mill proposed his amendment to Gladstone's Reform Bill extending the franchise to women. It was defeated, but his supporters were pleased by the number who had voted for it (73 to 196). Again, Mill became a topic of conversation. On 30 May 1867, Eliot wrote a letter of sympathy and agreement to Mrs P.A. Taylor:

On the whole I am inclined to hope for much good from the serious presentation of women's claims before Parliament. I thought Mill's speech sober and judicious from his point of view - Karslake's an abomination. (Letters, IV, 316)

Karslake had opposed Mill. Eliot's views on women's rights, her caution and her wish not to participate, explain her qualification, 'from his point of view'. We might conjecture that in many ways she was on Mill's side, but her sympathy was rather theoretical: it seems that she found him so uninspiring that she was never lured into doing more than acknowledge his presence. Certainly, Felix Holt tells more clearly than any other novel of her antipathy to politics as the only means of progress, and she might well have judged Mill to be on the wrong track, at least in political action. But he was also a philosopher of science and method, and perhaps because he was almost a pre-existent part of her intellectual life, she observed his political activities with interest. Despite these misguided activities, she continued to have expectations of him, as her comment on the Subjection of Women, already quoted, implies: 'I

have read Mill's Book, and think the second chapter excellent; the 3d and 4th not so strong and well argued as they ought to have been coming from him'.¹ She was also, during this period, reading Utilitarianism. Her silence, in the sense that we only know she read these works, not specifically what she thought of them, is marked.

When George Eliot did show a positive concern for Mill, it was after he had died. As might be expected, the one book of Mill's which she requested to read was his Three Essays on Religion, published posthumously in 1874. She wrote to Sara Hennell:

We have not yet read Mill's book which everybody is talking about, preferring to wait so as not to be tempted into joining in the too hasty judgments which are being passed. I don't know whether you are interested in his opinions. (Letters, VI, 93: 20 November 1874)

Her interest was evidently quiet, even a little uncertain, but sincere; and this reference to 'too hasty judgments' reflects the general sense of her reticence to make any sort of final judgment. Moreover, it would seem that, after his death, her more positive concern came rather from a certain defence of his reputation. If Mill had been an assumed figure to George Eliot, the time had perhaps come for this assumption to be protected, and Mill's significance guarded.

The other posthumous book of Mill's, his Autobiography, is mentioned four times in her letters: its publication was evidently more of an event to her than that of his other works. As with her other remarks on Mill, she is conscious that he was a topic of conversation, that not only she but others were reading and responding to him. She seems aware also, as she was when she mentioned his article on Whewell, that Mill had many admirers. On first reading the book in November 1873, she admired the account of Mill's early education and the presentation of James Mill,

1. Letters, VII, 457 (2 July 1869).

but she felt uncomfortable about the passages on Mill's marriage: 'there are some pages in the latter half that one would have liked to be different'.¹ The eulogistic tone in which Mill speaks of his wife was certainly embarrassing to some; and many of Mill's friends had always felt that his adoration of Harriet Mill was a great weakness, especially because he allowed her to influence much of his work. However, the tone of Eliot's comment is typical of those of hers on Mill: negative, judicious, and without explanation. She is reticent on Mill, aware of his power within his own sphere, 'from his point of view', and yet evidently observing his influence rather than whole-heartedly warming to him. By the December, Eliot felt easier about the passages on his wife. It is his influence and dignity which concern her; for the first time she is actually defending him as a powerful and respected figure:

Everyone talks of Mill's autobiography, and I think the effect of the book is good which is what I feared would not be the case when we read it at Blackbrook. I feared then that the exaggerated expressions in which he conveys his feeling about his wife would neutralize all the good that might have come from the beautiful fact of his devotion to her. Not one person to whom I have spoken on the subject has had anything but delight to express about the book. Here and there in the newspapers only I have seen something to verify my fears. (Letters, V, 467: December 1873)

From these sundry comments in George Eliot's letters, we may understand something of the position Mill held in her mind: that Mill's presence was an assumption, and that George Eliot had nothing to argue about with Mill. The indifference of her comments on him is perhaps the most significant, because that indifference speaks of a lack of any desire for confrontation. Although he dealt with logic, political economy, and politics, not subjects she cared for or felt were the most compelling questions of human life, Mill was for Eliot, within any

1. Letters, V, 458 (11 November 1873).

intellectual or ethical conflicts, an assumed part of her position: not someone who had established her position for her, but someone who lay established within it. On the other hand, she seems to have found Mill rather unimpressive, and very personal reasons may be conjectured for this: her experience of him over the prospectus, his cool relations with Lewes, to be seen shortly, and Mill's rather blind and dismissive attitude to contemporary English novels. Although Mill's work must have been cold and dry in George Eliot's eyes, he was not to her the utilitarian enemy Dickens decried in Hard Times (1854), so that, whatever silence George Eliot maintains and for whatever personal reasons, it is important to understand that that silence is only possible because there is no intellectual bone of contention. We may go further than this and suggest that, if Mill's work 'made no epoch' in Eliot's life, despite the fact that it was clear to others that they worked in the same world, it was because they had similar needs which they were both answering separately and for themselves in their own work.

4. Sitting at the feet of Mill: G.H. Lewes as a young journalist

Perhaps the best way of proceeding, given the scant comment George Eliot made on Mill, is to look at various aspects of G.H. Lewes' relationship to Mill. In this relationship we may conjecture both personal and intellectual reasons for the silences between Mill, and Lewes and Eliot, and we may make some suggestion as to the nature of their work in relation to one another. Whilst George Eliot, in the midst of writing Felix Holt in the mid-sixties, was commenting more than usual on Mill, Lewes was editing the Fortnightly Review (May 1865 - December 1866), and he passed some similar comments on Mill. In his Public Affairs section, which took a generally liberal stance, and before the general election was predicting a net gain for the liberals, Lewes's attitude, so reminiscent

of Eliot's prospectus, was that Parliament would be as liberal as the state of opinion was liberal. In this light Mill's election was considered in terms of what it signified rather than of what Mill himself would do:

The return of Mr. John Stuart Mill for Westminster, although due in some degree undoubtedly to the steady discipline of the Westminster Liberals, may also be referred to the growth of a desire to raise the character of the metropolitan constituencies by the selection of distinguished men, to put in a protest on behalf of purity of election, and to display a marked determination not to submit to the dictation of the religious bigots. (I (1865) 758)

Interestingly this whole approach of encouraging the sign of the times, of support for what is happening in the sense of glad recognition, was precisely the attitude Spencer had taken to reform in Social Statics.

In his 'Varia' and 'Causeries' sections, Lewes tends to use Mill's name in pleading for philosophy and science; again Mill was used as a kind of symbol. Whether gladly recognising the rise of philosophy, or criticising the lack of journalistic recognition of philosophy, Mill's name is used repeatedly. Interestingly, Lewes cites Mill and Bain's arguments as proof that there is a difference between necessitarianism and Fatalism. Lewes also refers to the popular notion of Mill as "'dreary and cheerless"', in an argument that this was a necessary aspect of the search for the truth, and no reason to reject materialism. At another point Lewes used,

one of those sudden epigrams which are as sparks of burning thought, condensing into a focus rays from a remote principle, and give singular value to Mr. Mill's otherwise cold and quiet style.¹

Mill seemed to be for Lewes, as he was for Eliot, an uninspiring but necessary foregone conclusion to his own work. It was an ambivalent attitude: Mill was influential, important, and serious, yet he was also

1. 'Causeries', Fortnightly Review, 3 (1865-66), 770; 4 (1866), 249.

inaccessible, unexciting, and only relevant as a representative. If Lewes pleaded for people to recognise Mill and gauged progress according to how far Mill was appreciated, there was also the sense that he himself had got well beyond the need to do so.

It was something of this attitude to Mill that Lewes took in his two articles 'Auguste Comte' and 'Comte and Mill'.¹ One may feel in these articles, underneath Lewes' need to position himself clearly as regards Comte, a need also to position himself as regards Mill. On the one hand, there is some intellectual pride at work in his treatment of Mill as a co-worker, whilst, on the other, there is a need to claim a better appreciation of Comte. Yet, as shall be seen in the next chapter, his objections to Comte are very similar to Mill's. In fact Lewes very much uses Mill's name:

I think more might have been said for Comte than Mr. Mill has said, and that a higher idea might be given of what Comte achieved, and of what the Philosophy implies, than appears in his volume, but the very moderation of the tone ought to make his eulogies carry greater force with the public.
('Auguste Comte', p.410)

As he said, he hoped Mill's critique would dispel the ridicule of Comte, because of the deep respect 'with which so eminent a thinker regards the Philosophy', and 'the impartial calmness with which he can praise and blame' (p.410). Without doubting Lewes' sincere attitude to Comte, in his attitude to Mill there is still something of a personal tug of war involved: the need to recognise Mill and yet also the need to be more than Mill. I do not think this is a division of intellectual loyalties, but I leave this to the next chapter. There is some personal animosity involved, as the history of Lewes' friendship with Mill suggests. This history is also interesting in revealing the form that temperamental clashes took, a form that reflects the nature of their intellectual

1. Fortnightly Review, 3 (1865-66), 385-410; 6 (1866), 385-406.

activities.

In later years, Lewes gave little indication of his early friendship with Mill. Only Alexander Bain, who had been a friend if not follower of Mill's at about the same time as Lewes, remarked on it. Bain, during a stay in London in 1842, would walk with Mill from India House to Mill's family home: 'I also spent occasional evenings at the house, where I met other friends of his - G.H. Lewes being a frequent visitor'. There is very little information given about this friendship but Bain does remark that, although Mill was the first medium of making Comte and his doctrine familiar to the public:

he was soon followed by George Henry Lewes who was beginning his literary career, as a writer in reviews, about the year 1841. I met Lewes frequently when I was first in London in 1842. He sat at the feet of Mill, read the Logic with avidity, and took up Comte with equal avidity. These two works, I believe, gave him his start in philosophy; for, although he had studied in Germany for some time, I am not aware that he was much impressed by German Philosophy. In an article, in the British and Foreign Review, in 1843, on the Modern Philosophy of France, he led up to Comte, and gave some account of him.¹

Although Bain here underestimates the importance of German philosophy to Lewes, which acted as something of a constant and lasting accompaniment to his work, this 'start in philosophy' with Mill and Comte was decisive. As his article on 'Comte and Mill' suggests, Lewes was later to view Mill as something of a necessary stepping stone, but doubtless Lewes' young enthusiasm for Mill provided a distinctly 'English' foothold, amidst all his knowledge of German and French philosophy and literature.

Lewes' friendship with Mill does not seem to have lasted long, at most seven years from 1840-1847. Most of the surviving letters from Mill to Lewes were written between 1840 and 1842, and are encouraging

1. John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections, (London, 1882), p.65; p.76n.

criticisms of drafts of Lewes' articles. As well as the fact that Bain met Lewes at Mill's family home, snippets at the close of Mill's letters indicate the existence of friendly social relations between Mill, and G.H. and Agnes Lewes: the friendship was certainly more than a passing correspondence. It seems to have begun sometime in 1840, shortly after Lewes had returned from Germany, and it is likely that they met through Lewes' friend Leigh Hunt (see p.37 above). In 1840, Lewes was 23 and only just about to begin a full-time literary career. Mill was 36; somewhat disillusioned with immediate political hopes, he had just given up the Westminster Review in the March, and was devoting all his spare time to re-writing his Logic. Putting his faith in the long-term effects of writing, Mill's cultivation of Lewes was in keeping with his general mood at the time.

That Mill was hopeful of Lewes is clear, not only from the lengths to which he went in reading his articles, but also from the many introductions he gave him. Whether Mill had any hand in Lewes' writing for the Westminster Review is unknown, although it is certainly a possibility, but he did write to John Mitchell Kemble, the editor of The British and Foreign Review, recommending 'a young friend of mine, by name of Lewes':

He is rather a good writer, has ideas (even in the Coleridgian sense) & much reading, & altogether I think he is a contributor worth having. (EL, pp. 475-76: 7 May 1841)

By 1844, Lewes had written twelve articles for the Westminster, and eight for the British and Foreign Review, so that he was in effect working under Mill's auspices. In addition, at the end of 1842, Mill seemed to be reading an early draft of the preface of Lewes' Biographical History of Philosophy, for he writes, 'I think your preface excellent & likely to be of extremely great use' and it was probably to discuss its publication that Mill wrote to the publisher J.W. Parker, in May 1844,

introducing 'my friend Mr. G.H. Lewes'.¹ The most important letters of introduction were those with which Mill equipped Lewes, for his visit to Paris in 1842. He wrote not only to Victor Cousin and de Tocqueville, but also to Comte. Mill certainly had high hopes of Lewes: he told Cousin that Lewes was one of some exceptional young men, capable and promising, and he wrote to Comte that, although Lewes had no 'éducation positive', he showed intelligence in admiring Comte.² Mill did feel Lewes 'presumptuous in undertaking anything for which he feels the slightest vocation', but he also defended him as a young man, ready to respond to criticism and try things beyond him. He wrote to Lewes himself of 'the trenchant manner which makes people call you by various uncomplimentary names indicative of self-conceit', in the full belief that Lewes was worthier than this.³ Eventually Mill was to feel that Lewes was the 'coxcomb' he seemed. The reason, I believe, was a personal one, and it might well have had something to do with Comte.

Mill had begun his correspondence with Comte in 1841, excited by the Cours de philosophie positive which was still coming out volume by volume, and Lewes quickly shared that enthusiasm. Although Comte, on meeting Lewes, thought him 'un loyal et intéressant jeune homme', his attention was solely for Mill.⁴ Mill's Logic came out in March 1843 full of praise for Comte, but, by the summer of 1843, Mill and Comte were beginning to make their intellectual differences clear, especially over the position of women. In the very same letter where Mill began to

1. EL, p.559 (7 December 1842); p.627 (10 May 1844).

2. EL, p.517 (27 April 1842); p.527 (9 June 1842).

3. EL, p.499 (18 February 1842); p.558 (November 1842).

4. Correspondance générale et confessions, edited by Paolo E. de Berrêdo Carneiro and Pierre Arnaud, 4 vols (Paris, 1972-81), II, 49 (29 May 1842). All future references will be abbreviated to Correspondance and give volume and page number.

dispute with 'mon frère aîné, pour ne rien dire de plus, en philosophie', he told Comte of 'mon jeune ami Lewes, qui se range de plus en plus à notre doctrine commune'.¹ Mill seemed to think them all allies, and was confident of Lewes' influence. In turn, in a footnote to an article full of praise for Comte, Lewes had paid his respects to Mill:

This 'System of Logic' appears to us to be at once the most profound, the most complete and the most masterly in its exposition of any work on the subject, and is invaluable to every cultivator of philosophy.²

It was an estimate never to be retracted. Instead Lewes was to play down the importance of the academic discipline of logic.

This, however, was only a brief high point in their relations. For the next two and a half years, Mill, whilst writing his Political Economy for which Comte was to condemn him as still a metaphysical thinker, tried to argue his points with Comte but found him intractable. It is impossible to tell the nature of Mill's relationship with Lewes during this period, for there are no remaining letters from Mill to him until 1847. After the letter to Comte in July 1843, Mill only mentions Lewes twice: once in the letter to Parker in 1844 where he called him 'my friend', and then in June 1845, when he tells Comte that either he, Bain, or Lewes will translate any articles Comte should write for English periodicals. By 1844, it would seem that Mill's help for Lewes was ceasing. A large portion of Lewes' articles published between 1845 and 1846 were noticeably for the Foreign Quarterly Review; they were far less about history and philosophy, with which Mill had helped him, and far more about drama and literature - out of Mill's field. Whether there was already any disappointment on either side or not, the letters

1. EL, p.591 (13 July 1843).

2. 'The Modern Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy of France', British and Foreign Review, 15 (1843), 353-406 (p.402n).

between Comte and Lewes, during the period 1846-1848, suggest that the disintegration of Lewes and Mill's relationship was precipitated by Mill's break with Comte.

Mill's ostensible break with Comte came when, in 1846, Mill was unable to renew the subsidy he had collected for him the previous year. Comte was angry and Mill had to explain the extent to which he and the other contributors were not devotees of Comte. A few months later Lewes visited Comte (April 1846), and their correspondence began just as Mill was receding into silence. Lewes' Biographical History of Philosophy (1845-46), pleading Comte's positivism as it did, delighted Comte, and he quickly took Lewes up, pressing him in effect to be and do what he felt Mill should have been and done. Eventually Comte's references to 'notre éminent ami Mill' became sarcastic and bitter. In turn, Lewes' letters were enthusiastic and respectful, so that by January 1847, when Comte asked Lewes to find out discreetly what position Mill held towards him since he had not heard from him for six months, Lewes was ready to give his allegiance to Comte. In fact Comte was tempting Lewes with the position of prime English positivist and an ascendancy over Mill:

Vous êtes ainsi devenu, l'homme d'Angleterre dont l'adhésion au positivisme est à la fois la plus complète et la plus explicite, sans excepter notre éminent ami, qui d'ailleurs aura toujours, à mes yeux, le mérite de sa noble initiative.¹

Tempted thus, and doubtless because Mill really was disillusioned with Comte, Lewes, despite all his tact, fed Comte's suspicions. In February he replied:

I have delayed answering your last letter till I could tell you something definite respecting John Mill. The result of my conversations with him has been to make me think your suspicions are correct, though I cannot speak positively. Unwilling of course to let him suppose I had any object in

1. Correspondance, IV, 100 (28 January 1847).

bringing the conversation forward, I was unable to put any direct question, consequently received no specific answer. From what I gathered I should suspect that the correspondence has no longer the interest for him which it formerly had; that certain differences of opinion - certain deficiencies of sympathy on some points - have made him less punctual in his answers than hereto fore, but I do not fancy he intends to give up the correspondence altogether.¹

Then, in March, Lewes repeated his news, although he added tactfully:

His interest in your philosophical career, and in my intended popularization of some of the sociological views in your 'Cours' seems unabated.²

Despite this, Comte felt the permission for a diatribe against Mill, condemning him as still at the metaphysical stage of philosophy and only at the threshold of positivism. Although Lewes was never to be so damning of Mill, he was in many ways, as already suggested, to view himself as one step beyond Mill.

Whether Mill had any inkling or not of what had passed between Lewes and Comte, it would seem reasonable to infer that it, at the very least, dampened his relations with Lewes. His last letter to Lewes is dated May 1847 and is a brief note about Lewes' novel Ranthorpe (1847), hardly the kind of work in Mill's line. Nevertheless, Mill tries to show some good will: he tells Lewes he will have nothing to say that he would like to hear until he has re-read the novel, but, 'I like the book on the whole decidedly better than I expected from your own account of it'.³

In a postscript he mentions praise he had read of the Biographical History of Philosophy. Despite the politeness, the hopes and respect on both sides were evidently over. In March 1848, Lewes wrote to Comte:

Of John Mill, I have seen nothing: all his old friends seem dropping off one by one. Have you heard from him?

1. Correspondance, IV, 240 (20 February 1847).

2. Correspondance, IV, 244 (26 March 1847).

3. LL, p.2003.

Comte replied:

Entre nous, il s'est servi de moi pour décorer sa Logique, comme Cousin se servit de Hegel pour se rajeunir en 1828. ¹

It was an accusation that Comte was later to make of Lewes himself, their relationship dissolving in a remarkably similar way to Comte and Mill's: in arguments over subsidies. Despite the fact that Lewes came to hold the same position as Mill did towards Comte, there was in a way no turning back. Lewes and Mill's refusal to recognise one another intellectually must have been tinged with personal bitterness. The result was Lewes' curious ambivalence towards Mill that we have already seen. Mill showed a comparable attitude when thirty years later he explained a reference he had made to Lewes' Aristotle:

I did not think it likely that any book by Lewes would be profound either in philosophy or scholarship; but it seemed to me on the whole a meritorious work. (LL, p.1913: 5 October 1872)

The break between Mill and Lewes is perhaps one more reason why George Eliot never met Mill. Looking at the break in another way, it is interesting that, despite the bitter relations between Mill, Lewes, and Comte, whole-hearted public denunciation of one another was impossible. When there was denunciation (Mill's of Comte, Lewes' objection to the strength of Mill's criticisms of Comte, Mill's objection to Lewes' test of truth), it was just as much made in the defence of a cause; and more personal complaints were in terms of who was the more progressive. The uniting sense of something like a philosophical crusade, full of newness and urgency, must not be overlooked when viewing these intellectual relations. But the break between Mill and Lewes may also suggest more than a personal squabble. It may be seen as a particularly bitter result of the fact that Mill could not long be

1. Correspondance, IV, 251 (2 March 1848); IV, 150 (12 April 1848).

of help to Lewes. At the height of his discipleship, Lewes' articles bore Mill's stamp, but once he pursued his own interests, literary and scientific, there was no way that his work could fit piecemeal into Mill's conception of things, just as Mill's could not be allotted an unambiguous role in his. This, I argue, is an accentuated attribute of liberal positivism - even with the considerably better relations between Mill and Spencer, there is a sense that each had to do the whole job for himself.

The comments Mill made on Lewes' early articles provide a useful indication of what was happening when Lewes had to move out from under his tutelage. These articles were the energetic outpourings of a young journalist certain in one way of his philosophical and political radicalism, but in the process of finding a way of working with this. Of the five articles Mill remarked on, three - on Spinoza, Goethe, and Shelley - show the essential approach which Lewes was to take in his Biographical History of Philosophy, a work which at the very least provided the background for his more memorable work as editor, literary critic, and scientific theorist.¹ At first, with the Shelley article, Mill did not like Lewes' all-round approach:

I think you should have begun by determining whether you were writing for those who required a vindication of Shelley or for those who wanted a criticism of his poems or for those who wanted a biographic Carlylian analysis of him as a man. (EL, p.449: late 1840)

Mill wanted a 'predominant purpose' and an assumed radicalism:

but we, I should think...should take for granted, boldly, all those premisses respecting freedom of thought & the morality of acting on one's own credo, which to any one who admits them, carry Shelley's vindication with them. (EL, p.449)

1. 'Spinoza's Life and Works', Westminster Review, 39 (1843), 372-407; 'Character and Works of Göthe', British and Foreign Review, 14 (1843), 78-135; 'Shelley', Westminster Review, 35 (1841), 303-44.

But Lewes stuck to his approach, refusing to take up Mill's alternatives of political assumption or didactic argument: instead he put all, vindication, criticism, and analysis, into his narrative. In the Goethe article, which Mill liked ('your highest flight, as yet'), the explanatory impetus of the life-times-work approach succeeds in projects close to Mill's heart: it forwards a belief in progress and practical action, whilst appropriating and assimilating what was valuable elsewhere.¹

Although Lewes briefly echoes Mill's famous approach to Bentham and Coleridge by comparing Goethe with Fichte, it is rather by explanation, in terms of Goethe's personality and response to his times, that Lewes is able to confront critically Goethe's 'lack of logical moral system' and yet show that it produced a valuable idea of aesthetic self-culture. This kind of analytic explanation, which achieves positive inclusion with radical impulse, is in fact a marked characteristic of liberal positivism.

Lewes' inability to let a radical position be an assumption outside of his single text, and his need for it to be a part of explanation, mark, I shall argue in my next chapter, a liberal positivist impulse. But we may also see in an article of Lewes' on Hegel, and in Mill's comments, that Lewes' move away from Mill was as much for the sake of his radical instincts, as it was because of personal disillusion.²

Lewes, it may be implied, wanted his radicalism to be a part of literature and writing. Of course there is a simple difference in Lewes and Mill's lives that necessitated this move of Lewes: whilst Mill had a large and varied sphere of activity, including not only journalistic work, but also work as philosopher and political activist,

1. EL, p.557 (November 1842).

2. 'Philosophy of Art: Hegel's Aesthetics', British and Foreign Review, 13 (1842), 1-49. See LL, pp.463-64, pp.466-67, pp.470-71.

so that he could be at different times polemical, appreciative, and theoretical, Lewes at this time was only writing articles and was far more of a literary critic than Mill. However, I also believe that Lewes was pursuing in his own way the kind of liberal positivist explanation which accentuates writing and narrative, and which was encouraged by the positivism - the 'softened' utilitarianism - Mill promoted. In fact Mill's express literary theory sought to contain the role of literature, whilst we may see Lewes, in his Hegel article, searching for a literary theory that gave literature a more vital and predominant role in society, history, and progress.

Lewes' article falls into two areas, the first bearing the stamp of Mill's aesthetics put forward nearly ten years before in the Monthly Repository. The second uses the exposition of Hegel to proceed beyond Mill. The article centres around the same question as Mill posed: what is poetry? Lewes easily duplicated Mill's idea that poetry did not imitate external reality, but aroused feeling, that it had a natural definition, and that verse was its essence. Two points are worth making: Mill and Lewes had evidently discussed how natural it was to express feeling in verse, but, where Mill had simply stated this in his article, Lewes explains that metre, not being invented, was evolved: already evolution was Lewes' instinctive way of explaining what was 'natural'. The other point is that Lewes' early days under Mill did not mean that he took from philosophical empiricism a simple idea of literary realism. Precisely the opposite: Mill's idea of literature was of pure feeling.

It is on how far this last idea was taken, that Lewes adamantly differed from Mill. The meeting point between what he took from Mill and what he took from Hegel is telling: Lewes would not accept Mill's stipulation that poetry was feeling for feeling's sake, the overheard rather than the heard. Mill's letters reveal how much they discussed

the point, a fact that suggests how crucial it was for Lewes to maintain his difference. Instead, Lewes turned to Hegel for an 'abstract' definition of poetry: 'the beautiful phasis of a religious Idea' (p.9). On his part, Mill tried to include this definition: he suggests in a letter that poetry was verse, the definition of feeling for feeling's sake being 'within this large circle a small inner circle', and then, to accommodate Lewes' definition of the religious nature of poetry, he posited 'an inmost circle within my inner circle'.¹ But this was Mill using definitions in order to contain poetry, whilst Lewes wanted something different. He wanted to get beyond art as a private internal cultivation of the sensibilities, and to have instead an idea of art as a part of history. When Lewes quoted Mill on feeling for feeling's sake, in the finished article, he said this described the motive of art rather than its result. How, he asked later, poetry being different at different periods, can it really be feeling for feeling's sake? Human passion was the only eternal truth, and 'this is the evergreen of poetry', but the 'religious' ideas, which poets gave utterance to, were the 'truths of periods' (p.18).

It is very clear that Lewes was not simply assimilating Mill and Hegel, but rather was turning to Hegel at precisely the point where Mill's theories had failed to fulfil his needs. What was German was metaphysical to Mill, although in writing to Lewes he suppressed this aversion and said:

I think it will give entirely false ideas to English readers, & is only true in any degree if we, more Germanico, call every idea a religious idea which either grows out of or leads to, feelings of infinity & mysteriousness. (EL, p.466: 1 March 1841)

Lewes in fact used the expression 'more Germanico' to clarify his use of 'religious'. But, more interestingly, he re-used Mill's phrase 'feelings

1. EL, p.466 (1 March 1841).

of infinity & mysteriousness', and added that a religious idea could also be a formula of a truth leading 'to new forms in our social relations' (pp.19-20). This addition was what was at stake for Lewes: art as historical, and, moreover, art as a temporal moral force which 'makes you in love' (p.26) with an idea that was an object of a crusade, or for a great social end.

Lewes' relinquishment of Mill's 'feeling for feeling's sake' suggests his desire to see art's fundamental role as an expression and inspirational force in society, history, and progress. I would suggest, moreover, that this desire was aroused by his radicalism, by the political instinct and need of a literary critic and writer. His need to feel art's possible radicalism and social purpose impelled him into a German philosophy, that Mill in fact regarded as a metaphysical opponent. It is a point that has some bearing on my later argument that Lewes did not go over to the 'other side'. At the end of this article, Lewes suggests that the variation of aesthetic feeling in different epochs of poetry would be worthy of study, and that it would be necessary to get rid of personal predilections in order to understand the feelings of other ages. Suspension of self to feel others' feeling, and, above all, an art that was not feeling for feeling's sake but addressed its audience or readers, were aesthetic aims that were, of course, to come to prominence in George Eliot's novels.

Lewes' divergence from Mill seems, therefore, to have been made in order to fulfil the needs he shared with him; the need to do justice to and be appreciative of other times and other values, some of them non-progressive, and the need for radical progress and political change. This impulse of Lewes' provides some suggestion as to the significance of the various relations and non-relations between George Eliot and Mill, that have been noticed in this chapter. In one way this chapter has

been negative, demonstrating how little contact there was between George Eliot and Mill. Nevertheless, we have seen that Eliot and Mill were held in common; and the relations between them, which we have observed, begin to illustrate (rather than explain) the nature of what they have in common. These suggested affinities may also help to explain, maybe not why there was silence, but at least why it was so easily maintained. On the one hand, Mill and Eliot clearly co-existed in a common intellectual milieu, and they were both radical symbols for their times. Furthermore, they were both valued for what may aptly be called liberal positivism: the move for positive inclusion and understanding on a radical, as opposed to conservative, basis. On the other hand, despite these affinities, there is no exchange between Mill and Eliot, rather, silence or indifference and assumption: there is a marked lack of either confrontation or endorsement, of either rejection or appropriation of one another. When there is any mutual recognition among this group of intellectuals, it is uneasy: either a gesture towards the other as a sign of the times, or a criticism in terms of a lack of progressiveness. Whilst we may conjecture personal reasons and temperaments for Mill and George Eliot's silence towards one another, we may also suggest that it reflects, or is an exaggerated form of, the intellectual activity they share. For, the brush over the prospectus implies that what Mill and Eliot share - the foundations of inclusiveness, assimilation, and just understanding, with a radical impulse - is inarticulable as a project (articulated it sounded like conservatism); that it required lengthy working out, practice rather than preaching. Liberal positivism as such would seem to be a way of working: what Mill and Eliot shared was not something readily exchanged. It may be seen, in Lewes' relationship to Mill, how he actually had to move away from Mill in order to do this. Lewes' case also suggests qualities of liberal positivism that I hope

will become clearer as this thesis progresses: the qualities of self-sufficiency and of the accentuated importance of writing itself. In the last section of this chapter, I want to turn briefly to Mill's aesthetic theory; this theory not only suggests that Mill was not interested in novels, adding one more reason why he passed no comment on George Eliot, but also that Mill equated his own work with that of the novel. This, in turn, not only illustrates once more the liberal positivist stress on narrative, but also suggests, by way of introduction to my next chapter, that a sequential quality was an intrinsic part of what was valued in narrative.

5. Mill's aesthetics: poetry versus prose

It might be said, with justification, that the silence between Mill and George Eliot was also a result of Mill's dismissal of novels: Mill was primarily a lover of poetry, and what he says about poetry is particularly pertinent to the way in which I intend to look at Mill and Eliot's works.¹ However, Mill's lack of real interest in English novels was also the result of a contemporary critique. He was never perhaps to lose his feeling, in 'Civilization' (1836), that 'literature becomes more and more a mere reflection of the current sentiments, and has almost entirely abandoned its mission as an enlightener and improver of them' (p.187). People read too much, too quickly, to care for anything but novelty:

1. In this section, unless stated otherwise, I refer to Mill's 'Civilization', Westminster Review, 25 (1836), 1-28; 'Writings of Alfred de Vigny' and 'Bentham', Westminster Review, 29 (1838), 1-44 and 427-506; 'What is Poetry' and 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', Monthly Repository, 7 (1833), 60-70 and 714-24; all reprinted in Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical, 4 vols (London, 1859-75), I, 160-205; 287-329 and 330-92; 63-94. All references will be to this volume and will give page number only.

There are now in this country, we may say, but two modes left in which an individual mind can hope to produce much direct effect upon the minds and destinies of his countrymen generally; as a member of parliament, or an editor of a London newspaper. (p.187)

Notably, Mill was to do both these. But it is also interesting that he chooses to compare the effect of politics and journalism with that of literature: it reflects the way he viewed poetry as distinguished from fictional prose, as well as fictional from non-fictional prose. Where he did take an interest in the novel, it was in French literature, and this was as much an overspill of his interest in continental political theories as anything else. But French literature was also different in his reckoning:

that close relation between an author's politics and his poetry, which with us is only seen in the great poetic figures of their age, a Shelley, a Byron, or a Wordsworth, is broadly conspicuous in France (for example), through the whole range of her literature. (p.290)

Although this meant Mill took a greater interest in French novels, there lay beneath this, in Mill's mind, a more basic distinction between poetry and the novel. For example, in explaining that de Vigny's stories showed the soldier and poet in relation to their society, Mill commented:

In relation to society chiefly; for that is the prominent feature in all the speculations of the French mind: thence it is that their poetry is so much shallower than ours, and their works of fiction so much deeper; that, of the metaphysics of every mode of feeling and thinking, so little is to be learnt from them and of its social influence so much. (p.308)

Ultimately, for Mill, society and politics were important to fiction, but not for poetry. Far from this being at the expense of poetry, it was at the expense of fiction which at the bottom of his mind was clubbed together with non-fictional prose, whilst poetry was very special: 'In prose, anything may be said which is worth saying at all; in verse, only

what is worth saying better than prose can say it' (p.325). Although, for example, in his article on de Vigny, Mill was to compare the sensibilities of a Conservative with those of a Radical poet, and to look at de Vigny in light of the before and after of the 1830 revolution, on the whole he tended to treat poetry as the result of such acute sensibility that it was somehow inaccessible to the rest of the world.

This attitude of Mill's and his love of poetry, particularly of Wordsworth's, came primarily from his famous 'mental crisis', often considered the epitome of reactions to Benthamite utilitarianism. Although he was to defend Bentham's famous 'quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry' (p.389), Mill was always to feel that Benthamites had failed in their theories to give any value to the cultivation of feelings in questions of human happiness. It was precisely for this that Mill valued poetry. In Wordsworth he had found,

a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure; which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind.¹

It was upon this experience, as personal as it was symptomatic of a certain point in history, that Mill's appreciation and theory of literature were based. Mill did not get away from this experience, although he did think poetry could offer something other than 'the perennial sources of happiness', which he had found in Wordsworth: as he said, 'poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did'. His first reading of Wordsworth was in autumn 1828 - 'an important event in my life' - and in 1833 he published two articles in the Monthly Repository, which show the perspective on literature he was to maintain.²

1. Autobiography, p.148.

2. Autobiography, p.148; p.146.

In general, Mill regards the poet as feeling deeply and justly things which the world has not yet learnt to feel so that it is really only posterity that will be appreciative, and in these articles, he puts the poet on the pedestal of pure expressivity. Mill made a distinction between the poetic and the non-poetic which he felt to come from a natural distinction between the sensibilities and the understanding, between inner observation and external observation, inward man and outward things: 'The poetry is not in the object itself, nor in the scientific truth itself, but in the state of mind in which the one and the other may be contemplated' (p.69). Because 'the truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly' (p.67), the poet who describes a lion may misrepresent the lion - and 'the poetry be all the better' (p.69) - but it must represent the feeling truly. He explained:

Great poets are often proverbially ignorant of life. What they know has come by observation of themselves: they have found within them one highly delicate and sensitive specimen of human nature, on which the laws of emotion are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study. (p.67)

He also made the distinction, which Lewes denied, between poetry and eloquence, between the heard and the overheard, between the soliloquy and the address, the solitude of meditation and 'intercourse with the world' (p.72). In this way, Mill not only expressed his personal experience of poetry, but, as a utilitarian whose analyses aimed at undermining associations of feeling breeding prejudice, he sought to manage the precious sensibilities so as to prevent their encroachment upon rational truths.

This isolation of the poetic implies that, in Mill's mind, its converse, the non-poetic, included all prose, both fictional and non-fictional. Moreover, this was based on another distinction, very pertinent to my thesis, the distinction between the synchronous and the

successive. This may be seen in Mill's description of the poetic nature, and in his claim that poetry's natural form is verse. Mill did try hard to impress that the constitutional difference of a poetic nature was only a difference of degree, and that with culture people who were not natural poets could write poetry; he also tried to maintain that any true writing of feeling was poetry - 'What is poetry but the thoughts and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself?' (p.79). But he also demanded (according to his associationist psychology) a strict difference between the synchronous association of feelings and the successive relation of thought. Poets are so constituted that 'emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together' (p.80); the connections are made by some dominant feeling, and poetry is 'little else than a pouring forth of the thoughts and images that pass across the mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it' (p.87). This was what Shelley's poetry did, whilst Wordsworth's poetry was defined by his thoughts, coloured and impressed by feeling. The distinction between what was poetry and what was not, was applied by Mill to painting and music as well as literature; but in literature, although Mill said prose could have its poetry, poetry was really in his mind the province of verse. As he said in the de Vigny article, thought or feeling required verse:

In order that it may dart into the soul with the speed of a lightning-flash, the ideas or images that are to convey it require to be pressed closer together than is compatible with the rigid grammatical construction of the prose sentence. (p.323)

Feeling takes hold of the whole being, seeking a language to express itself, and 'ever since man has been man, all deep and sustained feeling has tended to express itself in rhythmical language; and the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm' (p.326). The result was that the distinction Mill most felt was between the synchronous

and the successive, between being stirred by a state of feeling and being affected by a series of outward circumstances: 'two distinct, and... mutually exclusive, characters of mind' (p.65). Interestingly, Mill claimed that, 'as long as education consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions' (p.94), it could stifle the poet. Nevertheless he did say a poet could also be a philosopher, passion being the motive for truth, and that the poet could 'alternate(s)' with the philosopher: 'two processes verifying and connecting each other' (p.93). Notice the alternation: for Mill there was still a sense that the two precluded one another, and it reflects his distinction between the characters of the poet and the novelist which 'have no natural connection' (p.65).

The corollary of Mill's arguments on poetry was that, at the same time, he was very derogatory of narrative. Narrative depicted events and incidents, and love of a story was childish: it showed a state of unculture, where feeling is underdeveloped and there is a simple 'hunting for excitement from without' (p.67). Thus, 'the most idle and frivolous persons take a natural delight in fictitious narrative: the excitement it affords is of the kind which comes from without' (p.67). He also explained:

In a mind entirely uncultivated, which is also without any strong feelings, objects whether of sense or of intellect arrange themselves in the mere casual order in which they have been seen, heard, or otherwise perceived. Persons of this sort may be said to think chronologically. If they remember a fact, it is by reason of a fortuitous coincidence with some trifling incident or circumstance which took place at the very time. If they have a story to tell, or testimony to deliver in a witness-box, their narrative must follow the exact order in which the events took place: dodge them, and the thread of association is broken; they cannot go on. Their associations, to use the language of philosophers, are chiefly of the successive, not the synchronous kind, and whether successive or synchronous, are mostly casual. (pp.81-82).

I would suggest that Mill is not just judging fictional narrative by its contrast with poetry, but also by its contrast with non-fictional prose. At least in the back of his mind, the converse of Mill's definition of poetry not only grouped all kinds of narrative together, but expected all narrative, indiscriminate of kind, to be true to the external, giving 'a true picture of life' (p.67), and having a greater reference to society and politics. It would seem that he had his doubts as to whether this was possible in fiction: 'fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth' (p.67; my emphasis). Fiction let in feeling where it was dangerous to truth, and its successions were made by casual association. Non-fictional prose, on the other hand, was narrative more easily disciplined by the external truth. Thus, Mill could not escape the notion that the external world was better depicted in non-fictional narratives, in which it might be said he included his own work. These are the two most important points I wish to make, because, I believe, they are indicative of the way both Mill and George Eliot worked: that Mill, consciously or unconsciously, associated his own work with narrative in general, and that succession and external truth were the defining qualities or standards for narrative.

According to Mill's mutually exclusive definitions of poetry and fiction, those who love stories are not lovers of poetry, and thus he made poetry exclusive not only according to who could write it, but also according to who could appreciate it. Poetry was appreciated by 'those to whom it recalls what they have felt, or whose imagination it stirs up to conceive what they could feel, or what they might have been able to feel, had their outward circumstances been different' (p.67). This, of course, depicts most aptly the way George Eliot wrote her novels, but to Mill it was confined to the synchronous associations and above all to the wholly internal. In his rigid distinction between internal and

external truths - which were united for Eliot in the subject and object of feeling knowledge - Mill also seems in awe of poetry, as though it were so deep and sensitive as to be beyond any one but the poet himself. Although Mill evidently felt that with culture and development people could appreciate poetry, he defined poetry so strictly that what he felt to be supreme poetry, he felt to be inaccessible to most people, including himself. Wordsworth, the poet who meant the most to him, was not the supreme poet but:

he has exercised, and continues to exercise, a powerful, and mostly a highly beneficial influence over the formation and growth of not a few of the most cultivated and vigorous of the youthful minds of our time, over whose heads poetry of the opposite description would have flown, for want of an original organization, physical or mental, in sympathy with it. (p.84)

In his Autobiography, Mill included Carlyle's prose in this inaccessible poetry: Carlyle's was the kind of poetic prose, so hazy and impassioned, that Mill felt he had to see the truths in another medium before he could recognise them in Carlyle; and even then, 'not as philosophy to instruct, but as poetry to animate' (p.175). In effect, he felt the desperate need of an interpreter:

I did not, however, deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could only when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove, but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out. I knew that I could not see round him, and could never be certain that I saw over him; and I never presumed to judge him with any definiteness, until he was interpreted to me by one greatly the superior of us both - who was more a poet than he, and more a thinker than I - whose own mind and nature included his, and infinitely more. (Autobiography, p.176)

His own need of a mediator, here his wife, meant that, in many ways, Mill felt the ineffectuality of literature, or perhaps even its misuse by

misunderstanding. Mill could never really find a proper place for literature in society, save perhaps in a utopian society of the cultivated: poetry was too exclusive, whilst the novel would seem to be too poor a substitute for his own work.

Despite all this, Mill did recognise that feeling in prose was necessary for its accessibility, and, when he acknowledges this, we find notions very relevant to the novelistic practice of George Eliot. In his article on Bentham, Mill wrote:

Did Bentham really suppose that it is in poetry only that propositions cannot be exactly true, cannot contain in themselves all the limitations and qualifications with which they require to be taken when applied to practice? (p.390)

Bentham himself:

could not bear, for the sake of clearness and the reader's ease, to say as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. (p.391)

George Eliot was to feel only too keenly the 'limitations and qualifications' of each feeling sentence she wrote and, as I intend to show in my final chapter, it is precisely her persistent need to qualify, and yet for each of the sides of the complexity of life to be felt, strongly, that structures her prose. Mill had explained:

Bentham's charge is true to the fullest extent; all writing which undertakes to make men feel truths as well as see them, does take up one point at a time, does seek to impress that, to drive that home, to make it sink into and colour the whole mind of the reader or hearer. It is justified in doing so, if the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion. (p.390)

Feeling 'one point at a time' is exactly how George Eliot works. George Eliot was, of course, more emphatic that this was the only way to know, that, indeed, the external and internal were inseparable, and her narrative sought, as Mill's did, to be the narrative of truth. For neither Mill nor George Eliot, could the complexities of the truth they

wished to reveal be so condensed into poetry. Understanding demanded successive narration. For Eliot, as for Mill, the work to be done in the world was in narrative. Where Mill saw the synchrony of feeling as poetry, and the diachrony of understanding as non-fictional prose, Eliot fused the two in the novel. Mill was perhaps already too sure of what the novel was to pay any attention.

Mill's aesthetics, and their implications, introduce two important aspects of liberal positivist work: that narration is a meaningful form, not just an instrument of communication, and that the crucial part of this form is its successive or sequential nature. Indeed, the reasons for the importance of narrative cannot be seen until it is explained why succession, or, as I shall prefer to call it, process, is so meaningful to liberal positivists. It is the object of my next chapter to explain and demonstrate this emphasis on process.

Chapter II

Determinism and the Dynamics of Process

1. Diverging modes of a common activity

The lack of academic confrontation between Mill and Eliot, striking because it was unproblematic and unquestioned at the time, is a symptomatic result of the work of this emergent group. Leaving aside the personal reasons why Mill and Eliot never met, it would seem that the established Mill was simply busy writing on social and political philosophy, whilst George Eliot, emerging as a literary figure, was busy writing novels: whatever their affinities and divergences, they were severally pre-occupied. There seems to me to be a great deal of truth in this: the various writings coming from their common milieu may be seen as activities, each dealing with a material world from a common philosophical basis, but diverging in modes. However, I wish to take this a step further and see in a firm but very general common philosophical ground, and common philosophical problems, what may be called a political impulse. And by the end of this thesis I hope to have demonstrated the importance of narration itself to this impulse. In this chapter I wish to consider what this philosophical and political impulse is; and I shall be demonstrating this by looking at the ideas of determinism and process in the work of Comte and Spencer, two thinkers playing major roles in the common intellectual milieu of Mill and Eliot.

I have used the term 'liberal' to characterize a group of thinkers whose emphasis on empirical knowledge and natural science was inextricably a part of the liberation from religious doctrine that came with positive non-belief. This 'liberation' loosely describes a very basic and firm

political instinct. Certainly, within this community, standard and overt politics diverged, from Mill's specific radicalism to Eliot's general organic conservatism. Moreover it is possible to read a history of philosophical and political reaction leading from Mill to Lewes and Eliot, a philosophical development that led away from party politics to scientific interest. Although such a development is internal and not ultimately a retreat from liberal assumptions, the philosophical history, partaking of rapid developments in contemporary science, may briefly be described as a reaction to Benthamite utilitarianism with Mill as an intermediate point along the line. Mill's own dissatisfaction with his intellectual upbringing was a typical response, still on non-religious and scientific grounds, that Benthamite utilitarianism dealt inadequately with human feeling and fell wildly short of comprehending human history. Benthamite utilitarianism may have taken a scientific approach to human life, but it was a science of politics and morals alone. Moreover, the pleasure principle remained a political spearhead, giving a rational explanation of human motivation in order to press a rational re-organization of society, so that rational explanation was primarily of rational motivation. Mill, in welcoming Comte's work, was furthering a positivist science emphasising man more as a part of nature, seeing man as a material, natural object rationally explicable but by no means rationally motivated. Man as subject to scientific laws was not studied apart or in isolation, and so the unification and systematization of the sciences, typified in Comte's imported work, assume a different perspective from Benthamite utilitarianism. To some extent Mill only went so far, clearing space, leaving logical room for a physiologically based psychology and for an organic and evolutionary view of man and society. Where he enriched and softened utilitarianism by incorporating this perspective, he also remained the empiricist of associationist

psychology and a fighter for specific radical reform. Lewes, Spencer, and Eliot may be said to have gone one step further into a far more comprehensive philosophy and science encompassing man as a natural object; seemingly far more open politically to the possibilities of conservatism; and far more welcoming philosophically to German metaphysics.

Although this historical perspective on the relationship between Mill and Eliot is perfectly warrantable, it depends too much on considering Mill as only an empiricist and softener of utilitarianism, and on considering George Eliot as wholly free to move away. It looks too much like a casting-off of political interest for the sake of science, or a kind of unconscious reactionary movement. In the move towards positive inclusion Mill is a great deal more than a moderator, whilst the more organic approach of Eliot remains within a structure of liberal needs. The desire for direct political action may be lost in an overwhelming interest in a physical science that included human life, but there remains a basic and undeniable political impulse structuring a way of working. The liberation of non-belief not only to explore scientific truth but also from the God-givenness of things, and so viewing human society not as a part of God's order but necessarily changeable, remains a deep and central need, and a crucial and uniting factor of this intellectual community. This liberal impulse, combined with the positivisation marking non-belief at this historical juncture, gains, I shall shortly argue, a manifestation in a confrontation of determinism or causation and a particular way of dealing with that confrontation.

By way of introduction, and to put the reading of reactions into perspective, it is worth considering Lewes' philosophical position. Certainly, when literary critics cite Lewes' Problems of Life and Mind to provide what is a valuable insight into Eliot's science, narrative

method, and realism, the emerging emphases on the subjective conditions of knowledge, and on scientific investigation involving intuition, hypotheses, and ideal construction may suggest that Lewes and Eliot were in relation to Mill philosophically and politically reactionary: for some of these emphases read very much like the very metaphysics Mill persistently and vehemently attacked.¹ It would however be a damagingly simple view of opposites to see Lewes as having wandered off into the twilight of de-politicized metaphysics. The deep affinities in need and structure of intellectual activity defy a simple move to the 'other side'. I have already suggested that Lewes' early divergence from Mill was made for the sake of impulses he shared with Mill; and a brief glance at the direction Lewes' work took in the 1860s, when Lewes was establishing his own foothold in science, in 'the investigation of the physiological mechanism of Feeling and Thought', will clarify what happened in his philosophical relationship with Mill.²

Lewes' work during this period does begin to echo the vocabulary and perspective of William Whewell who was Mill's prime contemporary target with regard to the whole question of innate truths; and Michael York Mason suggests that it was during this period that Lewes' 'early strident empiricism is modified', and his thought takes 'a general Whewellian colouring',³ Mill himself certainly felt Lewes had done this, but Mill, in hearing Whewellian expressions, heard an over-familiar battle cry. Lewes' test of a truth by the inconceivability of its

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1. See, for example, George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 35 (1980), 1-28; Michael York Mason, 'Middlemarch and Science: Problems of Life and Mind', Review of English Studies, 22 N.S. (1971), 151-69. For a study of Eliot's own ideas in relation to Lewes', see K.K. Collins, 'G.H. Lewes Revised: George Eliot and the Moral Sense', Victorian Studies, 21 (1977-78), 463-92.
 2. Problems of Life and Mind, 4 vols (London, 1874-79), Preface, p.vi.
 3. 'Middlemarch and Science: Problems of Life and Mind', p.159 and p.166.

opposite, like Spencer's, sounded like the a priori argument that necessary truths were supplied by the mind, and Mill, in the first of his two articles on Comte, took the opportunity to attack not only Spencer, with whom the long-running controversy had been amiable, but also Lewes.¹ Mill paid his dues to both: Spencer being 'one of the most vigorous as well as boldest thinkers that English speculation has yet produced, full of the true scientific spirit', and Lewes, 'an able expounder of positive philosophy'. But, said Mill, if such thinkers as these could claim acquired necessities of thought as evidence of real necessities, 'we must admit that the metaphysical mode of thought still rules the higher philosophy' (p.301).

Lewes and Spencer, however, conceived of no such retrogression on their part, and there is a certain lack of communication involved. For example, Lewes' and Mill's respective re-appraisals of Comte during this period show them expressing the same position in very different ways.² Comte's Système de politique positive (1851-54), revealing the details of his social utopia based on the Religion of Humanity, had thrown admirers of positivism into confusion, especially Lewes and Mill who had done so much to forward his work in England.³ It was not the Religion of Humanity, but the prescriptive politics and religiosity, derived largely

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1. 'The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte' and 'Later Speculations of Auguste Comte', Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, 27 n.s. (April, 1865), 339-405, and 28 n.s. (July, 1865), 1-42, reprinted in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, edited by F.E.L. Priestley and others (Toronto, 1963-), X (1969), 261-368.
 2. Comte had died in 1857. Mill's articles were largely prompted by Emile Littré's Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive (Paris, 1863). Lewes' articles were: 'Auguste Comte' and 'Comte and Mill', Fortnightly Review, 3 (1865-66), 385-410 and 6 (1866), 385-406.
 3. For a history of the subsequent schisms and wranglings that arose even amongst the most faithful of Comte's disciples in France and England, see W.M. Simon, European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: an Essay in Intellectual History (Ithaca, 1963); Leszek Kolakowski, The Alienation of Reason: A History of Positivist Thought, translated by Norbert Guterman (New York, 1968).

from medieval Catholicism, which were shockingly unpalatable. The social doctrine, presented by Comte as the grand result of the strict and empirical system of science of his Cours de philosophie positive (1830-42), seemed to them to be no such result; for Lewes and Mill especially, it was a question of not only registering their dissent but of rescuing the basic ideas of the Cours they so admired. In essence they both reacted as liberals and empiricists, feeling that Comte had assumed something of the role of pontiff in his social doctrine, and that he had made stipulations without anything like the necessary premises. But they expressed this with different emphases and different vocabulary. Mill's approach was essentially that of the liberal politician, seeing in Comte's social theories a piece of personal despotism, and he was quick to challenge his specifications, revealing the deplorable suppression of the individual and stifling of intellectual pursuit. Lewes, on the other hand, argued in terms of scientific method. In his first article, Lewes simply said the Système was an hypothesis lacking verification; but in his second article, specifically on Comte and Mill, Lewes uses more emphatically his own vocabulary of subject and object.

The use of different vocabulary and emphases promotes the curiously ambiguous position Mill and Lewes had towards one another of being on the same side, but of feeling the other's work to be in some uncomfortable way insufficient. In his article Lewes did not defend himself personally from Mill's attacks, and, although he is obviously anxious to ally himself with Mill as regards positive philosophy in general, he defends himself by denigrating the sufficiency of Mill's work and instating his own expression of what Comte had failed to do. Mill had made a brief point that Comte, despite his emphasis on verification, had failed to formulate any test of proof, and he suggested that this was because Comte, in

rejecting the term cause, had no vocabulary by which to distinguish between simple succession and causal succession. This was the nub of Mill's own theories on scientific research and proof, his method based on the belief that natural laws were causal laws. Lewes picks up on Mill's point and, although acknowledging Mill as 'the author of incomparably the best work on Logic' (p.394), belittles Mill's emphasis on logic itself: the only test of proof is in verification from experience, and logic gives no test more valid than this; it only codifies the rules. Comte, in giving the methods of research in each science and the serial arrangement of the sciences, did not need to formulate a test. Lewes' own objection is still to Comte's neglect of verification, but he calls this a failure to effect the necessary union of the subjective and objective methods. Comte had rectified the objective method by referring all speculation to sociology and human needs, and by admitting hypothesis as an instrument of research, but, in neglecting verification, he had failed to rectify the subjective method: whether the point of departure is man or the external world, conceptions should be subordinated to facts, and hypotheses ultimately verified. Thus, to Lewes, the requirements of some form of a liberal and empiricist structure were vital. Even the way he managed to be less critical than Mill of Comte abided by this structure: he accepted a suggestion, presumed to come from George Eliot, that the Polity be seen 'as an utopia, presenting hypotheses rather than doctrines, suggestions for future inquirers rather than dogmas for adepts'.¹ The dispute with Mill is thus far from a confrontation; but Lewes' replacement of Mill's emphasis by his own subject-object terminology begins to blockade any fruitful dialogue with Mill, and in Problems of Life and

1. 'Auguste Comte', p.404.

Mind Lewes was only to pick Mill up on niggling points.¹

The disputes become hazy and unsatisfactory precisely because Lewes' different emphases and vocabulary are being used to work with and answer the same structure of needs as Mill, and because Lewes and Mill were doing a great deal more than defending an empiricist structure. . Lewes' terms of subjective and objective form a part of his theory of the evolution of the subjective conditions of knowledge, which in turn was the basis of Lewes' test of a truth by the inconceivableness of its opposite that he pressed as the whole warrant for experience. In its 'real' form - reduction to sensation - the test is in a way so obvious that Mill was blind to it. Lewes' is a materialist understanding of subject and object, and Mill failed to see that Lewes' test was an expression depicting the inevitable physical response of an organism to its medium. The test was most contentious for Mill in its ideal form of a reduction to a necessary thought; but Mill was responding only with the horror of a traditional empiricist, whilst his own philosophical work was as much concerned with the concept of causation, as with empirical verifiability. And this was what Lewes was doing: he posited his test

1. Of George Eliot's and Lewes' books, in the Dr Williams's Library, most of those which concern, or are by Mill, and which are marked by marginalia seem to have been used by Lewes during this period, probably for his article on Comte and Mill. These were: Mill's Auguste Comte and Positivism (London, 1865); J.H. Bridges, The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine: a Reply to Strictures on Comte's Later Writings Addressed to John S. Mill (London, 1866); Emile Littré, 'La Philosophie Positive: M. Auguste Comte et M.J. Stuart Mill', Revue des Deux Mondes, 64 (1866), 829-66. Lewes' interest seems to have been especially in points pertinent to notions of subject and object. On Mill's article, Lewes marks what Mill found valuable in Comte's religion as well accusations of Comte's authoritarianism, especially where Mill says the religion is too like Calvinism. Where Mill criticises Lewes personally, Lewes makes a note arguing his own point again. Elsewhere Lewes questions Mill on psychology. Where Mill claimed the laws of association are the truths of psychology which connect it with the other sciences, Lewes writes in the margin: 'They are not fundamental constitutive laws. They leave the elements untouched: Sensation, Perception, Inference are all irrespective of association?'

on the basis that the repeated action of objects on the subject had determined a sophisticated organic structure able rapidly to organise sensory experience in terms of time, space, cause etc. Lewes understood necessity very differently from the a priori school: he understood it as the physical objective truth of which the subject was a part. Far from being 'a defence of a priori thought along evolutionary lines',¹ Lewes' theory is an active and positive construction, not made for the sake of the a priori necessities of the innate school, but positing and dealing with a causative process. Lewes and Mill may not have shared a complete structure of discourse, but they did share an inherent emphasis on causative process.

In this theory of a causative process Lewes had found his own foothold. When Lewes, in the third edition of the Biographical History of Philosophy, defended his test against Mill's attacks, reminding Mill that he, Mill, and Spencer agreed that experience is the ground of knowledge, this, I suggest, was far from a case of what Mason identifies in Lewes' writing at the time, 'an attempt to reconcile intellectual and emotional loyalties' (p.161). Lewes exudes a confidence as regards both Mill and the a priori school. This may be seen especially in the changes Lewes made between the second and third editions of his Biographical History to the chapter on Kant; this altered chapter was to form an important part of Problems of Life and Mind and is of particular note because Whewell, Mill's opponent, was distinctly Kantian.² I dispute Mason's suggestion that, between the second and third editions, Lewes simply

1. Mason, p.161.

2. The Biographical History of Philosophy, from its Origin in Greece Down to the Present Day, second edition (London, 1857); The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte, third edition, 2 vols (London, 1867). William Whewell did, however, object to being bracketed with Kant. For his reply to Lewes, see On the Philosophy of Discovery, Chapters Historical and Critical (London, 1860), pp.334-45.

moved from Mill's 'objective' method to Whewell's 'subjective' method. Firstly, Lewes' empiricism in the second edition was a traditional empiricism, so much so that in the Kant chapter he remained within the terms of Kant versus Hume. His exposition of Kant was straightforward and he very much narrated Kant's categories of synthetic/analytic, and a priori/a posteriori judgments. Tending to rely on interjections like 'Again we find science reposing on the laws of the mind!' (p.540), Lewes only asserted his own empiricist belief. When he did make his criticisms in the last section, he used basic arguments to claim that there are no ideas independent of experience: he cites as examples of experiential knowledge not necessities of thought, the truth that two parallel lines can never meet, and a belief in causation. He uses the argument that the child learns by experience, and that children and uncultured people do not readily assent to a belief in universal causation. These may be basic empiricist arguments also used by Mill, but they do not form the causative stress which made Mill's Logic so distinctive.

In the third edition, Lewes, now having his own theory, does not withhold his criticisms to the end. He demolishes Kant's distinctions with a forceful notion of an empiricist objective truth: analytic judgments are ones where the synthesis has become assumed from a 'slow integration of experiences' (II.450); all truths are necessary, only knowledge is contingent; general judgments are but a prolongation of particular ones in the absence of contradictory experience. Although not in expressly Millite terms and apparently not directly borrowed from Mill, these arguments, more than simple empirical verifiability, echo the crucial faith in the external world stabilizing Mill's arguments on causation. Far from residues of an affinity with Mill, these arguments of Lewes' were to become vital to Problems of Life and Mind, and they stabilized his own theory of the evolution of the subjective conditions

of knowledge. This latter theory in turn enables Lewes to make a far more pertinent criticism of Kant's psychology than he had in the second edition. Where in the second edition Lewes had dismissed the problem of the separability of the subjective and objective elements in knowledge, in the third Lewes argues, against Kant, that they are inseparable because it is the conditions of knowledge, not knowledge itself, which are subjective.

My second point which argues that Lewes did not and could not move to Whewell's subjective method, is that Lewes assumed a kind of Whewellian (or Kantian) vocabulary with a radically different understanding to its original. Lewes evidently feels a warm affinity with Kant's perspective, and a static view of Lewes' conception of the relations between subject and object in knowledge certainly looks like Kant's model, a priori knowledge simply replaced by a priori conditions of knowledge. However, not only are subject and object material to Lewes, but this replacement means that Lewes' model can never be wholly static: perception is the event of responding to the external. Unlike in a priori theories, in Lewes' view of the subject-object relationship, time and causation cannot be suppressed. As he said in the Prolegomena, in foreseeing history,

I annihilate history. I transcend the conditions of Time, and the necessities of Causality, and conceive as simultaneously completed, that which in Nature must be successive and graduated. (p.lxxxviii)

Far from causal process being an addition to Lewes' model, it is its inherent structure, and naturally developed into a theory that by repeated experience a structure was evolved which reacted to stimuli in certain ways.

The child learning by experience is translated into the species learning by experience; the progress of knowledge during the lifetimes of the individual and civilization is simply thrown by Lewes into the biological realm of genetic inheritance. Not only is Lewes giving a

firm physiological basis to Millite arguments, but he works with and exploits the same dynamics of process. The dynamics of process, bound up in a theory of causation and knowledge, distinguish Mill's theory from Whewell's. Moreover, I shall be arguing in my next chapter that sometimes even Mill is so close to Whewell that these dynamics are his only distinction. So also they distinguish Lewes' theory from Whewell's. Without pre-empting my next chapter it is to be noted that experience for Whewell is something of an opportune moment for uncovering pre-existent ideas.¹ The radical difference between this and the notion of production, causation, and change is the difference between religious belief and non-belief at this historical juncture. When Lewes stopped discussing causation simply as an example of an object of knowledge, and instead posited a theory to which causation and process were integral, he was moving from a simple empiricist faith to fulfilling certain needs which arose for non-belief at this historical juncture. Lewes' argument is not made for a priori knowledge, but for participation in causation. I am going to argue that theories which exploit the dynamics of process render human knowledge and participation relevant to causation, and that this combination is a distinctive feature of liberal positivism. Although Mill himself had argued that sensory experience was determined not only by the action of objects but also by the laws of our organization, he accentuated participation in causation most in a different area from Lewes: in the determination of moral character, and in the relationship of individual to society. Thus this kind of affinity in causal concern and accentuated process brooks a divergence in vocabularies, discourse,

1. There is, I believe, an important difference in dynamics between Whewell and Lewes' notions of hypotheses. Where Whewell's claims particulars, Lewes' fills in the gaps, enabling the mind to travel and form links in order to reproduce external order: movement is integral even here to Lewes' conception, and notably Mill also stressed the journeys of mind (see my next chapter).

and modes, and intellectual exchange can converge and diverge; we may see why, between Mill and Lewes, both dealing with a causal world in separate, self-sustaining, but comparable ways, there was little to be said.

2. Political instincts and the handling of determinism

Whilst examining the more personal relationship between Mill and Eliot in the last chapter, I suggested that the combination of the radical impulse inevitable in non-belief with the emerging impulse for positive inclusion, was not articulable in a set of principles but was a way of working, not a stipulated project but a form of activity. Here Lewes' work implies that the nature of this activity lay in theories combining a stress on knowledge, causation, and process, and that this activity allowed different emphases and vocabulary. Having suggested that there is a political instinct characterising this particular intellectual community, it must now be examined why a bringing together of knowledge, causation, and process is an expression of this instinct.

My most important point here, and one I have tried to indicate in the use of the label 'liberal', is that the assertion of non-belief at this time was inevitably political in its implications, although certainly not necessarily specifically political in motivation. To try and fix a political standpoint of liberal positivists would be unsatisfactory, and would simply leave us with the answer 'liberal'. Moreover it would, in terms of motivation, be too simple to see the pressure for change as a vested bourgeois interest, as it would be far too simple to see the other side of this desire, the gradualism of reform, as a fearful conciliation, a middle class economic self-defence. Political instinct is a better description, a political instinct that produced a structure of needs requiring to be worked out. Although this instinct is political

in the most general sense of the term, it runs deep, so that to say somewhat loosely that it is an open-endedness to political change, a potential radicalism, is not to belie something of a heart-felt need. Although the 'Address to Working Men by Felix Holt' was one of the clearest statements of George Eliot's organic conservatism, a checking of an overnight upheaval of society without the slow growth of morality, knowledge, and culture, it is just as important that somewhere amidst all his provisos Felix says, 'I am a Radical; and, what is more, I am not a Radical with a title, or a French cook, or even an entrance into fine society. I expect changes, and I desire them'.¹ It is precisely this expectation and desire for change which forms the liberal impulse by which neither Lewes nor Eliot can be considered as simply reactionary in relation to Mill. Expectation and desire were paramount compared to any active proposition for specific changes. Pleas for laissez-faire, enfranchisement, or simply to let things change naturally are not motivations so much as various conclusions of the impulse for change. On the other hand Felix Holt appealed to his 'working class' to pursue knowledge and morality, and this was by no means simply because George Eliot was fearful of anarchic democracy, but more positively because positive knowledge and its moral force is seen as a liberator and equalizer of men. If there is hope and fear, it is hope in positivist knowledge and fear of its demolition.

The very general reformist standpoint, the impulse both for change and for its gradualism, is better translated into the impulse for rational explanation and the problematics involved. Positive knowledge was felt to be a liberator of men because it was without bias or dogma. The desire to see things as they are, and their laws, was also the desire

1. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 103 (1868) 1-11, reprinted in Felix Holt the Radical (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp.607-27 (p.620).

for knowledge to be unmotivated, the desire for knowledge at some point to be a simple acceptance of the truth. At this point rational explanation is not a part of the material world which is its object. Indeed a certain sense of superfluity and helplessness served to signify that an 'objective' rational explanation, a 'true' explanation, had been achieved. This was partly in response to Benthamite utilitarianism, but also because, where utilitarianism had been inadequate on the non-rational and on human history, the inclusion of these in a unified natural science actually reduced the spearhead of political argument. The notion that human life and history were rationally explicable but by no means rationally motivated as they occurred, brought in the question of the value of rational explanation. And this created a tension. For, the impulse is still radical, and so there still remained the need, although it could not be fulfilled as it was in utilitarianism, for rational explanation to mean something, for the rationalist scientist to be positioned in the world he explained. The great desire for 'objective' empirical knowledge and the question of its value, are especially the problem of the use and meaning of man seeing clearly his determinate relationships; and this is one of the most basic and traditional conflicts of determinism, a problem of man as a subject of physical laws which is at its crudest the problem of Free will and Fatalism. The division between man the rational scientist and observer, and man the natural object, the organism under the microscope, was both provocatively exciting, and powerfully perplexing; and it is the division between man the non-participant, helplessly watching, and man the participant, inadvertently displaying natural laws.

The political impulse of liberal positivism, and the field of opportunities and limitations so installed, can be seen the clearer if it is stressed that the positive assertion of non-belief is not only the

substitution of natural laws for God's laws but is, most especially at this moment, the assertion of faith in physical causation. It is to be noted here, although the reasons why lie beyond the scope of my discussion, that Comte, whom I have repeatedly mentioned, did not, as his rejection of 'cause' reflects, put such a stress on causation.¹ For liberal positivists, however, the eviction of a divine will from the knowable universe, the 'glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped dominion',² was almost automatically an assertion of faith in causal laws: to deny that nature's objects were the production of a divine will, and to assert a system of relative knowledge, was to see production in terms of the internal relationships of nature with physical causation as the binding mechanism. The instant instatement of physical causation, at the very moment of proclaimed non-belief, immediately provided a structure henceforth very hard to forsake. George Eliot wrote in those early days of emancipation that she believed,

that the thought which is to mould the Future has for its root a belief in necessity, that a nobler presentation of humanity has yet to be given in resignation to individual nothingness, than could ever be shewn of a being who believes in the phantasmagoria of hope unsustained by reason.³

Spencer, looking back at the growth of his disbelief, actually attributed it to a belief in causation:

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1. Notably, Comte was a tutor in mathematics, whilst Mill, for example, stressed causal relations at the expense of the spatial relations of mathematics (see my next chapter). For the specifically causal stress of liberal positivists, we may suggest such contributory factors as a tradition of British empiricism and political economy, combined with the recent emphasis on time in geological and biological evolution, as well as the applied science of industry.
 2. The Letters of George Eliot, edited by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (London, 1954-78), I, 125 (28 January 1842). Hereafter these volumes will be abbreviated to Letters, and will give volume and page number.
 3. Letters, II, 49 (24-25 July 1852).

It seems as though I knew by intuition the necessity of equivalence between cause and effect - perceived, without teaching, the impossibility of an effect without a cause appropriate to it, and the certainty that an effect, relevant in kind and in quantity to a cause, must in every case be produced. The acquisition of scientific knowledge, especially physical, had co-operated with the natural tendency thus shown; and had practically excluded the ordinary idea of the supernatural. A breach in the course of causation had come to be, if not an impossible thought, yet a thought never entertained. Necessarily, therefore, the current creed became more and more alien to the set of convictions gradually formed in me, and slowly dropped away unawares.¹

The delight at replacing God's laws with nature's laws, divine will with causation, was a complex one. The inexorable laws of nature and nature's all-encompassing regularity were happily embraced in the belief that they rendered nature accessible to human knowledge. Men did not have to depend on God's half-told secrets, on haphazard vision and blindness, to answer the question why. If there was resignation, there was also the prerogative to know; if knowledge was relative, it could also be systematized, unified, and finally embraced.² Yet unity alone, as the dissatisfaction with Comte's obsessive systemsatizing testifies to, was not everything. And here causal laws were crucial: the assertion of non-belief was the rejection of an omnipotent God who could countenance such human suffering and injustice. It was also a refutation of an organised religion breeding a morality based on ritual observation, sheer doctrine, and the degrading motivation of a fear of Hell. To instate causation was to see the physical causes of suffering, and to

1. An Autobiography, 2 vols (London, 1904), I, 152-53.

2. See Diana Postlethwaite, Making It Whole: A Victorian Circle and the Shape of Their World (Ohio, 1984). She looks at the same group of writers in terms of their need to synthesize opposites, especially the rational and the emotional. Although my thesis differs greatly in emphasis, it does take the same view of a group whose relationships are based on 'neither a cozy biographical circle of intimate friends nor a united band of sectarian disciples' (p.xi).

uphold a moral standard of the effect of human behaviour on others and society, in which a visible motivation was at one with the standard itself. Such an instatement was not merely a delightful way of refocussing on the world, it was also a way of considering that human life really could be changed. The desire to understand suffering was also the desire to remove it, as the desire to see morality as a question of physical effect was the desire to promote a better morality. Even Comte did not only preach rational resignation, he also proclaimed: 'From Science comes Prevision: from Prevision comes Action'.¹ If there was a massive interconnection of causal relations, there was the possibility of deliberate manipulation. If physical effects could be seen, secular morality was a possibility.

Here the tension between rational explanation and its value is at its most manifest. The desire for change relied upon the same causal understanding as that of utilitarianism, a forward-looking causation in which man may be a cause. However, utilitarianism had largely confined man to the role of cause by virtue of what was to liberal positivists its very omissions and inadequacies as a philosophy. Positivist science, by simply filling up those omissions, by emphasizing the unity of science, the history of man and nature, and the physical basis of life and mind rather than man the rationalist, had to confront man as an effect in a far more radical way than utilitarian arguments on education and associationist psychology: man, the individual and his society, was exposed even more to physiological, socio-economic, and historical determinations. Here, in fact, liberal positivism had a closer confrontation with the possibility of socialist conclusions, and we may see how liberal positivism was a structure formed by several defining

1. The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, 2 vols (London, 1853), I, 20.

limitations. For these determinations certainly explained human suffering and immorality, and were a prelude to the argument that it was not God-given to suffer, and that there was not a God-elected good. But these explanations come close to the demonstration of the environmental determination of human character by which, for example, Robert Owen argued a radical substitution of co-operation for capitalism. And there may have been diverging political conclusions in this arena of thought but the one implication of causal argument against which it may be defined is of radical co-operative socialism. As Marx said, Owen was one who assumed 'a fundamental flaw in the civilized world';¹ and the distinguishing difference is that the liberal positivists did not. For all the expectation and desire for change, liberal positivism was still a movement whose inclusive and sympathetic understanding was a part of a positive delight in knowledge; it was a liberation of science from metaphysics, and to turn around and reject all that the laws of nature had produced was precisely what liberal positivists had sought to avoid in moving away from utilitarianism. Owen certainly forwarded an utopian ideal to come with peaceful change, not revolution, and this because he believed in the power of recognising the truth in example, hence New Lamark and New Harmony.² However, to attack religion, marriage, and property as he did was contrary to the structure of liberal positivist impulse. Indeed, whether liberal positivists can be said to have refused or to have been unable to make such a materialist critique, the point is that they did not; and this was a primary structure. It is perhaps beside the point to ask why.

1. The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique, translated by R. Dixon (Moscow, 1956), p.113.

2. These were his model mills, and his model colony. For one of the most interesting of recent studies, see Barbara Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1983).

Mill, in fact, in his later years, went furthest towards socialism. For he and Harriet Mill: 'our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists'.¹ But his doubting of laissez-faire and private property had been gradual, and in effect he transformed any socialist materialist critique into a visionary ideal of epistemology. As he said of the Saint-Simonians, 'I felt that the proclamation of such an ideal of human society could not but tend to give a beneficial direction to the efforts of others to bring society, as at present constituted, nearer to some ideal standard'.² The Saint-Simonians, Owen, and Fourier 'have entitled themselves to the grateful remembrance of future generations'.³ With socialism thus as a part of knowing, thinking, and learning about human society, Mill's politics in fact reveal the tension between political change for education and education for political change. Nothing could better epitomise the distinction in causal understanding between Owen's socialism and liberal positivism, than that Owen's activity was of practical social experiment whilst liberal positivists' activity was of writing.

The substitution of causal laws for God's laws having an implicit political thrust, liberal positivism is structured by lying in tension between two political causal interpretations. On the one side Benthamite utilitarianism where man is almost solely cause, and on the other Owenite Socialism where man is as yet only effect: liberal positivism needed to see man as both effect and cause. The problem of Free Will and Fatalism, suggested earlier, is therefore really a political concern here. So

1. Autobiography (London, 1873), p.231.

2. Autobiography, p.167.

3. Autobiography, p.168.

that, in turn, if we are to consider the political impulse of liberal positivism, it can but be in terms of moral choice and its availability. It was such an urgent question that for Mill it was a personal problem, and his important chapter on 'Liberty and Necessity' in his Logic was, he claimed, based on the train of thought by which he extricated himself from the depressing implication that he 'was scientifically proved to be the helpless slave of antecedent circumstances'.¹ Importantly, his arguments that necessity did not preclude control were not only directed at the doctrine of Fatalism but also specifically against Owen: he was in effect arguing for the possibility of political action but against radical socialist transformation. Mill argued that men participate in the formation of their characters and to 'the Owenite' who says that not only character but the will to alter character is determined, Mill replies that the will to alter is determined by individual experience: a bad character will experience bad effects. It was important that 'if we have the desire, we should know that the work is not so irrevocably done as to be incapable of being altered'.² Although this is a philosophical argument about individual morality, Mill writes of what 'we' feel, of 'our character', and he writes in the present tense: his argument applies to the present reader, and is not that men always have been and always are free and morally responsible.

This ambiguity is typical of the moral concerns of liberal causal understanding and reflects the flexibility needed by liberal positivism in questions of individual responsibility. On the one hand rational causal explanation of past human history and, from this middleclass point of view, contemporary working class life, confronted man as effect and

1. Autobiography, pp.168-69.

2. A System of Logic in Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, edited by F.E.L. Priestely and others (Toronto, 1963-), VII-VIII (1973), Bk.6, ch.1, p.841.

diffused the relevance of individual responsibility. The impulse to forgive and pity those oppressed by circumstance and ignorance was compelling. On the other hand just as pressing was the need to identify in some way an immediately relevant individual morality.¹ An inheritance from Christianity, this latter was also an argument against Christianity as well as against radical socialism: to claim a secular morality by no means utopian, but living, available, and cultivatable, denied the need either for Christian religion or for a radical change of the determinant factors. Mill said that at the time of his depression he felt 'that it would be a blessing if the doctrine of necessity could be believed by all quoad the characters of others, and disbelieved in regard to their own'.² Such an internalised division expresses only too well the double-edged move to forgive and to judge, to accept and to act. It is akin to the rational scientist who explains without 'bias' the universe and yet needs must find in it a place for his act of explanation.

Liberal positivists, I therefore propose, are defined by the need to confront determinism, and more specifically to deal with causation in such a way as to allow some form of individual participation and choice. Of course this is an age-old philosophical debate that continues today. However, none of the liberal positivists saw this philosophical problem and its solution as their paramount concern. Nor, despite determinism and moral responsibility being a shared concern, can a common theoretical basis be found. Indeed the emotional flexibility liberal positivists demanded - to be able at one moment to judge society and at

1. This was something of Daniel Deronda's perplexity: 'His imagination had so wrought itself to the habit of seeing things as they probably appeared to others, that a strong partisanship, unless it were against an immediate oppression, had become an insincerity for him', paralysing 'that indignation against wrong and that selectness of fellowship which are the conditions of moral force'. Daniel Deronda (London, 1876), Bk.4, ch.32.

2. Autobiography, p.169.

another the individual - was not to be met in a philosophical argument applicable to all individuals. What mattered was what it felt like to explain, understand, and appreciate causally, and how this was received. Even when Mill did seek to deal specifically with the philosophical problem, his concern was to remove certain feelings, especially the feeling of 'irresistibleness', and his Autobiography reveals the extent to which he personally dealt with it emotionally and let the 'philosophical' solution grow therefrom:

I pondered painfully on the subject, till gradually I saw light through it. I perceived, that the word Necessity, as a name for the doctrine of Cause and Effect applied to human action. carried with it a misleading association; and that this association was the operative force in the depressing and paralysing influence which I had experienced. (p.169)

Mill's own most powerful way of removing this 'association' was not the chapter on 'Liberty and Necessity', however worthy an attempt at philosophical theory. Within the System of Logic, he handles the problem most powerfully by positing a particular way of seeing causal relations, whilst his whole corpus of work was powerful for its range from polemic to appreciation.

The way of working which liberal positivists shared came from a way of handling causal understanding so as to elicit certain qualities. We may in hindsight refer these qualities to philosophical theory, but they were by no means produced in this way. Thus liberal positivists do have a common view of progressive evolution which obviously imbues causal explanations with possibilities of human control, but it is more a result of liberal production, in which the detailed analyses are as powerful, if not more so, than such a common overview. The level at which determinism is dealt with, and political impulse satisfied, is in the bringing out of certain feelings, in what may be described as shapes, mouldings, or dimensions and dynamics. I have suggested, with reference to Lewes,

that this has something to do with a theory that combined causation, knowledge, and process. In the gratifying simultaneous sensitivity to these elements, the structuring quality of process or sequence is a shape or dynamic having a powerful effect on what determinism feels like. Some suggestions may be made as to the form of its effect, although a close look at Comte and Spencer will eventually make this clearer.

Process had more than a general reference to production and change. Deeply embedded in the liberal positivist structure of relative knowledge is an understanding of causation as a sequential relationship between particular phenomena. In this understanding, any synchronism - mutual dependences and coexistences - can never really be isolated or divorced from time, but becomes rather a part of the complexity of nature, a reference to the context influencing and influenced by what was ultimately a particular temporal event. A sensitivity to process may therefore have reference to the sequential relationship of specific phenomena that constituted the basic causal relationship, the essence of what really happened in nature. Moreover, individualized, a causal event held out the possibility of human action and control, of causing an effect by choice. Thus, in George Eliot's conception of secular morality, it was not just laws but time that was vital:

The divine yea and nay, the seal of prohibition and of sanction, are effectually impressed on human deeds and aspirations, not by means of Greek and Hebrew, but by that inexorable law of consequences, whose evidence is confirmed instead of weakened as the ages advance.¹

Notice the learning over time. Process also has reference to experiential knowledge: men proceed to learn about the world, and, whether genetically

1. 'Mackay's Progress of the Intellect', Westminster Review, 54 (January 1851), 353-68, reprinted in Essays of George Eliot, edited by Thomas Pinney (London, 1963), pp.27-45 (p.31; my emphasis). She writes very specifically that the 'undeviating law in the material and moral world' is 'invariability of sequence'.

or within the individual life-span, knowledge and general understanding is built up over time. From Comte's three stages of knowledge, to Spencer's theory of consciousness as a change in physical state on which reasoning is based, from Mill's child learning by experience that fire burns, to George Eliot's characters who learn from their subsequent actions the nature of their illusions and egoism, human knowledge is inseparable from the sequence of time.

Time being so important to choice and control of action, and to effective knowledge, what threatens these is the feeling of no-time, or of a temporal dimension irrelevant to the individual causal event and act of knowledge. To think of oneself, as Mill did, as 'the helpless slave of antecedent circumstances', is to look behind and see the before from which one was absent but at which one's actions were determined. The individual's circumstances and actions are divorced from him, his knowledge of them has no part to play; process seems but a manifestation of something already fixed, and rigid necessity sweeps by or through him: time is so different that to the individual it is no-time. Moreover, just as threatening for positivism as possible teleology, was the expression of the regularities of nature in general laws. Laws as general expressions of the empirical particular were flat and given; they lacked direction, had no reference to specific time or place, and were meaningless to individual choice, action, and knowledge. Just as a certain helplessness signified the eviction of bias, so the generalised statement of laws, bald and timeless, signified the physical world embraced in its entirety.

To find time somewhere, to draw out process that had relevance to the causal event and to knowledge, was to re-instate the threatened qualities of individualism. If in theory the individual could not be instated, as was possible in Benthamite Utilitarianism, the feelings

that were relevant to the individual could be. Particularized, the basic causal relation has a direction moving from the cause to the effect, from chosen cause to inevitable effect; and it is the sequence of time which, by going through one thing at a time, can fulfil the liberal positivist need to see particulars as both effects and causes, allowing an emotional flexibility, and bringing out, without contradiction, the sense of choice and no-choice. Moreover, if the laws summarizing necessity are flat and general, a sense of process would seem to refer to a tangible occurrence. Process has relevance to experience: it re-lives the choice and no choice, the possibility and the surrender, as well as the act of knowing. To elicit process, I shall argue, effectively appropriates the causal mechanism for the human perceiver of necessity.

3. Comte: the dynamics of process

The brief heyday that Comte's positivism enjoyed in England, especially amongst this particular area of English intelligensia, is of considerable significance: Comte's Cours de philosophie positive won him many admirers, whilst his Système de politique positive with all its organized religiosity managed to lose them.¹ Moreover, it is possible to view the appealing aspect of his Cours in terms of the effect process as a shape has on what determinism feels like; although in such a view we are looking at how the Cours was received by this English intellectual group, rather than at Comte's own intentions.² Comte's Cours, attractively

1. See especially T.R. Wright, The Religion of Humanity: the Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain (Cambridge, 1986); Martha S. Vogeler, 'George Eliot and the Positivists', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 35 (1980), 406-31.

2. However, Mill, Lewes, and Eliot gave some of the most powerful publicity to Comte's Positivism, perhaps even more than those who adhered more literally to the Religion of Humanity. John Morley wrote to Frederic Harrison, 'Tush, my dear Harrison. There is not a Positivist among you. There are only two in England - Mill and George Eliot', printed in F.W. Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, 2 vols (London, 1927), I, 178.

unifying and systematizing science without recourse to God or metaphysics, was fired by his belief that this was the final breakthrough in scientific knowledge which would lead to universal assent. In this he articulated a widespread dream of the non-believing professionals and intelligentsia of English society: the dream that true science would lead to social harmony, complete moral uprightness, and human well-being in general. The key to universal assent lay in an ability to explain - to explain somewhat ambitiously man and his world. Vast, comprehensive, seemingly without omission, Comte's system was by its very nature self-explanatory. The process of explanation - and I intend to argue it specifically in terms of process - was overwhelmingly powerful.

By virtue of the paramount importance Comte gave to all-encompassing systemization, he treats nature as a given body or set of laws: Comte's object of explanation taken as a whole displays a basic synchronism. The only emphatically diachronic part of this is social evolution, and this, as shall be seen, is where the process of explanation is integrated into its object. Of paramount interest to Comte was the search for general laws and simplicity:

an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts, the number of which continually diminishes with the progress of science. (I, 2)¹

The resulting synchronous quality has a great deal to do with Comte's notable rejection of the term 'cause' and his emphasis of the term 'law'. In his insistence on avoiding a metaphysical interpretation and on evicting teleology, Comte evicts any sense of direction:

In the final, the positive state, the mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and

1. All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau, 2 vols (London, 1853), and give volume and page number.

the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws, - that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. (I, 2)

Thus, although Comte includes relations of succession, his greater stress is on timeless, general laws. However, although positive philosophy is based on 'all phenomena as subjected to invariable natural Laws' (I, 5), Comte expounds it by taking 'a brief general view of the progressive course of the human mind, regarded as a whole' (I, 1), and this is where we find a strong sense of process. The law of this development is that every leading human conception necessarily passes successively through the theological, metaphysical, and positive stages. The notion which this law brings out is that of the material world, the objects of knowledge, as a whole into which man has to break and find a route of access for knowledge. Observation or perception is impossible without some kind of provisional theory:

If it is true that every theory must be based upon observed facts, it is equally true that facts cannot be observed without guidance of some theory. (I, 3)

Theological theories of personal causes or gods eventually pass through an intermediate metaphysical stage in which the explanatory causes are de-personalised. By the final positive stage, theory no longer seeks unverifiable causes but is reduced to the identification of laws both observable and verifiable. This three-stage model, which shapes and is shaped by the whole of Comte's system of the sciences, describes man's progressively appropriate methodology and, in the replacement of teleology by simple laws, describes the gradual confinement of theory to the material itself. In this, the given whole or set of invariable laws remains an object undisturbed by man's fumbling after an accurate knowledge of it. The result is a contrast between the basic synchronism of a set of universal laws, and man's understanding which has the property of change, movement, and direction.

However, although positivist method subordinates man to the external world and to a set of invariable laws, such subordination is shaped by Comte's impelling humanist purpose and direction:

the most marked characteristic of the positive school is that it founds the study of Man on the prior knowledge of the external world. (I, 357; my emphasis)

Diffusing the potential brutality of general laws stated as fact, is Comte's emphatic awareness that their statement and explanation is a human process answering a human need and craving:

the most terrible sensation we are capable of, is that which we experience when any phenomenon seems to arise in violation of the familiar laws of nature. (I, 20)

For Comte, this emotional need gave a nobler purpose to explanation than the simple pursuit of the kind of prevision which could issue in action. Indeed, prevision and action are finally limited, if not doubtful, in Comte's model. What gives the feeling of human power over the determinate is that Comte does not simply describe on the one hand objective knowledge, and on the other the way men arrive at it: he fuses the two into a remarkable synthesis. The three stages of men's knowledge being a natural law itself is incorporated into his model of the sciences but, because the third stage is the recognition of laws, finally appropriates the model: man has his position in the classified sciences, whilst also producing the sciences himself. The notable omission of the psychology of internal observation reflects this: for Comte, man's intellect cannot observe itself, which would be like 'separating it from causes and effects' (I, 11); it can either observe the 'statical' man as biological object, or the 'dynamic', its products, the sciences.

However, the laws which Comte so urgently upheld do risk taking on a commanding life of their own, seeming to mean a great deal more than the relations of particular phenomena that they describe. Interestingly,

Lewes tried to rectify this risk claiming that, if Comte's term 'Laws of Nature' is used, 'Law is the delicate abstract Entity superadded to the phenomena', for 'you give a generalised statement of the facts, and out of it you make an entity - a something ab extra'.¹ Deploring the idea of God-given laws (this is 'sterile and irreligious: it makes God necessary as a postulate, and there leaves him!' - p.54) and the kind of 'Prescient Laws' which know the end they are working for, Lewes rejects the whole term 'Laws of Nature' and suggests 'Methods of Nature' as a substitute. Methods are 'the paths along which the activities of Nature travelled to results (phenomena)' (p.55). If we place ourselves at 'the most abstract point of view' where 'Forces' are 'about to leap into results' (p.56), we see that these Forces must act along certain paths. For, 'to the observed actions we superadd nothing not given in the actions themselves, by declaring such and such to be the Methods of Nature' (p.56). Taking the results as something given, Lewes conceives of going back to some abstract point, not necessarily in time, in order to imagine how those results were arrived at. The end 'results' may create a sense of direction, but the process of arriving at them feels more like a property of the act of explanation than of the 'Forces' or 'Methods' themselves (Lewes invested these with something of an imaginary quality). This ambiguous appropriation of process, rescuing Comte from creating laws as added facts, in fact maintained the power of Comte's own argument. Like Comte, Lewes assumed the givenness of the object of explanation, here called 'results', and assigned the power of movement to the act of explanation. But, also like Comte, Lewes relied on the fact that this movement, although belonging to the process of explanation in that it can only be released by it, depends upon the given phenomena.

1. Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences: being an Exposition of the Principles of the Cours de Philosophie Positive of Auguste Comte (London, 1853), p.52.

The process of explanation which structures the whole Cours was the process of going through of Comte's classification of the sciences. On the one hand, the directional aspect of explanation is distinctly human, and is associated with the progress of accurate knowledge and humanistic purpose, and Comte's text very much works up to the final science of man. On the other hand, Comte's classification of the sciences is meant to accord with the 'real' relations of the natural laws of phenomena, and the human perception of them does not in theory distort them. Comte is a relentless classifier. With each point he wishes to make, he identifies a set of divisions in order to gain clarity. Within the sphere of human life he classifies conceptions into the theological, metaphysical, and positive; activities into industrial, aesthetic, and scientific; and the functions of society into order and progress. Where and how such different sets of categories overlap is not made clear: the constant division and categorization can be hypnotic. It is a pleasing method, easily satisfying because the division, more according to degree than to kind, upholds a sense of a complete model or a whole. Whether every set of divisions makes the same whole is another matter. It is enough that the idea of a whole suggests a working, self-sufficient mechanism whilst its division allows human knowledge a penetrating understanding of it. It is especially so with his classification of the sciences: the arrangement of the sciences according to their dependence upon one another, and therefore according to degree, forms a hierarchical whole, exclusive and self-sufficient. What is more,

it follows that the mutual dependence of the sciences, - a dependence resulting from that of the corresponding phenomena, - must determine the arrangement of the system of human knowledge.

(I, 19)

What happens is that:

All observable phenomena may be included within a very few natural categories, so arranged as that the study of each category may be grounded on the principal laws of the preceding, and serve as the basis of the next ensuing. This order is determined by the degree of simplicity, or, what comes to the same thing, of generality of their phenomena. Hence results their successive dependence, and the greater or lesser facility for being studied. (I, 25)

Thus, to Comte, it is the phenomena and their laws which determine the progress of science in human history, in that the simpler the science, the more rapidly it reaches the positive stage, and man builds up the accuracy of his knowledge in a specific order. Not only does the natural classification determine the history of human speculation but it also determines the ideal order in which each individual ought to study. However, in the actual Comtean order of the sciences (mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, social physics), the sciences, thus perceived in their true hierarchy, present to the perceiver a whole system which, by its nature as a complete system, is static. In short, it is to know and understand what are, in fact, co-existing phenomena that the human intellect, both individually and collectively, must go through a specific sequence. Importantly, it is the human intellect which, presented with a static and self-sufficient system of given dependences or determinations, creates for itself a dynamic effect. To follow a line of dependence and make a process out of a system is a powerful form of opening up and appropriating what is deemed determinate. Moreover, not only did Comte show that the individual order of education re-enacts the speculative history of mankind, but this is what the text of the Cours does: taken as a whole the text contains the sum of co-existent laws, but it progresses through the sciences step by step. As a text of individual education, the Cours offers this powerful process to the individual. One further point suggests why, by introducing a sense of process, human knowledge seems to gain power or involvement in

what are determinate relationships. When Comte indicated his educational programme, he remarked that the 'historical method' of learning science took too long, and what he called the 'dogmatic method' should take precedence whilst learning the history of science: the sequence of learning ideally occurs with an end in sight. Thus the dynamic effect of human learning or apprehension has a specific direction; and it might be said that Comte's theory makes human knowledge simulate the role of cause in relation to an effect, an effect that is no less than the object of knowledge. Of course this is an inversion of what is for Comte the true order of determination, the phenomena determining how they can be known, but it would seem, if but for a moment in Comte's structure, that they depend upon the act of learning. Although this inversion is a matter of qualities alone, Comte works so that the human act of explanation with its directional quality seems to gain power and choice over its object. Comte's sequential approach to the sciences was a dynamic of process which by the end of his text was to appropriate determinism for his readers.

It is when Comte comes to biology, the penultimate science of his hierarchy, that the implications of explanation as process, and the qualities of power and choice begin to gain full command. It is where human life emerges as an object of knowledge, where the subject, the human perceiver, meets itself as object, that the dynamics of exposition becomes a real process. The hierarchy of the sciences, and, within biology, the hierarchy of organic life present a system in which man as the most complex phenomena is most dependent on the rest. Comte visualized the progressive complexity of sciences along the scale he created as coming from the additional natural laws or factors each science brought into play. In this way, organic life, as well as being dependent, for example, on the laws of chemistry (in nutrition, secretion

etc.), also introduces its own laws, the laws of life: the harmony between the organism and its medium. In this sense organic life is more lawed than chemical compounds, in that it has to obey a greater number of laws; but all sciences are equally lawed in the sense that none are more subject to chance than others. As a formal concept, the additions made to a hierarchy may not change what lies at the base, but they do change the balance of what the whole looks like. This is a facet of Comte's use of the metaphor of the hierarchy and his sequential approach to it. And what man, as the crowning and last addition, adds to the system revolutionizes the meaning of the rest, as well as, within the sequence of the sciences and of Comte's text, appropriating what has gone before.

Within organic life, man is but the most complex organism, having the most diverse functions. Animal life is itself only an advancement on vegetative life in that it is adapted to procure materials for life by reaction on the external. The whole of organic life, from man to vegetation, is understood in a materialist and determinist way:

Placed in a given system of exterior circumstances, a definite organism must always act in a necessarily determinate manner; and, inversely, the same action could not be precisely produced by really distinct organisms. We may then conclude interchangeably, the act from the subject, or the agent from the act.
(I, 364)

This indeed is 'rational prevision' (I, 20). However, as well as stressing the search for the basic laws of life, Comte also emphasised the hierarchical arrangement of organisms according to complexity, and that 'the place of any organism in the scale must be known before its aggregate phenomena can be effectually studied' (I, 396). To Comte, greater complexity meant not only a greater number of factors upon which an organism was dependent, but also greater possible modification of both the organism and the influence of circumstances. Thus, in contextualising an organism in the hierarchy, that is, in ascending the

scale, the more complex an organism, the more there is a sense of gaining power, despite the organism's calculable determinate behaviour. For man this was especially so, and Comte considered man as the standard for all animal study, used as the type by which to make comparisons travelling down the hierarchy, and then back up again.

This is one asset of conceiving a scale of organic life according to degree. The other, more important, asset is the 'natural' explanation of the distinguishing features of the higher animals, most particularly of man. The graduated scale of organic life, in which animal life is but an advancement on vegetative life, allowed Comte to see the gradual reduction of the subordination of animal function to vegetative function until, by this slow re-balancing, the subordination is finally inverted:

The higher animals, and Man especially, are the only ones in which this relation is totally subverted, - the vegetative life being destined to support the animal, which is erected into the chief end and preponderant character of organic existence. But in Man himself, this admirable inversion of the usual order becomes comprehensible only by the aid of a remarkable development of intelligence and sociality, which tends more and more to transform the species artificially into a single individual, immense and eternal, endowed with a constantly progressive action upon external nature. This is the only just view to take of this subordination of the vegetative to the animal life, as the ideal type towards which civilized humanity incessantly tends, though it can never be fully realized. (I, 363)

Comte does not pinpoint the particular organism - or moment - in which this inversion occurs with the result that it seems a natural occurrence in a graduated scale. However, this inversion is seen to create an artificial transformation.

To explain in gradualist terms the increasing importance of intelligence, power, sympathy, and ultimately morality, is to institute by a re-balancing a reversal of direction: Comte's text has been working towards man, but, when it reaches man, intelligence and morality, added slowly, can turn around and look back, appropriating what has gone before.

Such a 'natural' explanation of the 'artificial', permits most satisfactorily the resistance to determinism, the rising above animal instinct and amorality. Notice the terms of new purpose which are brought into being: 'the vegetative life being destined to support the animal, which is erected into the chief and preponderant character of organic existence' (my emphasis). The effect of this teleology is a temporal confusion and transformation. What began, even within the quoted passage, as a description of organic life as it is, a diagrammatic classification, and a static analysis, emerges as a description of the way man is evolving, a dynamic analysis of man's moral progress. The effect is even more powerful precisely because Comte did not believe in radical natural evolution. It is important that movement and change are created out of a static view of organic life as it is, and can thus actually work upon the static and determinate. The ascending of the hierarchy, which began as the mental time of a mere process of explanation imposed upon a static model, becomes or forges a sequence that seems to leap into real time and concrete existence. Moreover, in Comte's expression, time, purpose, and process are eventually reserved for intelligence and morality. Originally as mere instruments for procuring materials and for self defence, intelligence and morality as ends in themselves 'would either destroy the organism or themselves perish' (I, 445). To transform such means to ends can, said Comte, only 'safely be considered as possible' (I, 445), if the selfish instincts are transferred to the species and transformed into unselfish instincts on behalf of others. Notice how this is expressed in the previous quotation: the development of intelligence and morality 'tends more and more to transform the species artificially into a single individual, immense and eternal' (my emphasis). This emphasis on the stasis of the selfish instincts only pushes further the sense that individual intelligence and morality, and so action and

choice, possess direction, time, and purpose.

It is at the moments in this section on biology when Comte makes such comments as 'and this, it seems to me, is the noblest scientific notion that we can form of humanity' (I, 445), that he incorporates his own work into the physical world he is describing. The thrust of his text being intellectual and moral, the moment at which explanatory process becomes real process, the moment at which the growing preponderance of intelligence and morality is seen as a physical evolution, also happens to be the moment at which supreme self-consciousness is born: for Comte's text is presented as the crucial step in that evolution. However, in the penultimate science of biology such a thrust is subordinated to the emphasis on the general law of animal life serving the vegetative, and on men as but a part of the organic world. Comte's work was perhaps most valued for this emphasis as well as for the preponderance he gave to human feeling, the affective faculties, over the intellectual. The non-evolutionary view of the species, and a rather static phrenology in which only gentle modification was possible, were by no means agreed upon by his admirers.¹ However, such a view contributed to the attractive dynamics of Comte's argument: it pushed to great lengths the stasis of a physical world that could be swept up by the process of explanation and then, by the dynamics of re-balance and re-direction, be pressed into the real process of human intellectual and moral evolution. To those liberal positivists who did believe in radical evolution and shared nothing like such a static phrenology, the dynamics of meaningful process had to be worked in a different way. But the dynamics elicit the same shape and feel as Comte's, most especially in the self-consciousness and self-confirmation of the text itself.

1. For the difficulties Comte's Positivists had with evolution and Darwin, see Kolakowski, pp.61-63, and Simon, p.25 and p.61.

Nobody perhaps could have done this more arrogantly than Comte, as his later Systeme was to show. Just as that self-confirmation began in the penultimate science of biology just prior to its fulfillment in the social sciences, so too Comte's own work was positioned at the penultimate stage of human history, on the threshold of a final, moral, intellectual, and social ideal. Yet this was precisely the appealing power of his work. As far as a determinist outlook was concerned, the penultimate stage of a progressive evolution was the most supremely powerful position to take, especially if the work of recognition was deemed a crucial contribution to the final move. Although Comte produced a view of invariable laws rather than a causal analysis, in effect he gives his own work the role of the last cause about to bring about the last effect. For, having narrated the laws of the physical world in their hierarchy, Comte turns to the final science to be hauled up to a positive state, that of sociology. Not only does that sociology narrate the history of the intellectual and moral development only suggested by the biological hierarchy, but the positivist approach of the whole text is transformed from a passive recognition of the invariable laws to which man is subject into the final step made to an ideal morality and society. This was perhaps the most exhilarating way in which to confront the determinate. The belief that a comprehensive empirical knowledge would effect a change in men's lives in part rested for non-believing intellectuals on the belief that man would subsequently know how to alter his state, but it also relied unconsciously on the wish that, somehow, the mere knowing would effect a miraculous change, to which all would assent in moral responsibility. It is precisely this latter kind of view that Comte effected so well. Not only did the process of explanation give the sense of power over its determinate object, but the final touch came when sociology swept explanation up into the ultimate factor of the human ideal.

When Comte came to his social science, not only did his narration of human history draw up all that had gone before in his text and show the classified sciences positioned at the present historical moment, but he showed all - history and the sciences - to be converging in his own text. Although 'science requires, before all things, the reality of any views independently of their desirableness' (I, 463), Comte's science of history would have meant a great deal less to his admirers, if it had not been shaped by the presence of an ideal positive polity. It was just as important for Comte to claim that his ideal polity,

will impart a homogeneous and rational character to the desultory politics of our day, and it will by the same act connect this co-ordinated present with the whole past, so as to establish a general harmony in the entire system of social ideas, by exhibiting the fundamental uniformity of the collective life of humanity; for this conception cannot, by its nature, be applied to the actual social state till it has undergone the test of explaining, from the same point of view, the continuous series of the chief former transformations of society. (II, 42-43)

The positive polity is, in this, a continuation of natural laws. To Comte, assent was inevitable: 'the ascendancy of a positive social doctrine is secured by its perfect logical coherence in its entire application' (II, 42). Truth was logical and logical coherence formed 'a general fulcrum in all minds' (II, 43). For Comte the point was indisputable - as he said elsewhere 'society has never renounced the laws of human reason' (II, 25) and 'there is in fact no intellectual alternative' to a belief in a determinate order (II, 85). But science, or rational coherence, was not only 'a general fulcrum' in terms of persuasion, it was actually the fulcrum of change. The rational explanation of human history without didactic criticism, and the recognition of its inevitability were ultimately for Comte a revolutionary act.

If Comte's history had seemed to be only a political argument, it

would not have had such an appeal. Both Mill and Eliot liked his history; it seemed to permit a profound comprehension of past ages, Indeed, he seemed sufficiently free of dogma to do justice to history and to be unconcerned with blaming it. The prime example of this is Comte's analysis of the 'critical' period, which formed the transitory period between the theological state and the positive state, and in which the 'revolutionary school', with its dogma of equality, necessarily destroyed the theological system of thought and politics. Motivated by the belief in the absolute right of freedom, this destruction of the old classification allowed men to make new discoveries, and the political re-arrangements taught new, although sometimes unwanted, lessons. Comte's analysis was powerful because he could happily say that the belief in the sacrosanct right of the people to sovereignty, freedom, and equality was ultimately 'wrong', but also that it was valuable and necessary. He permitted his readers seemingly to swallow history whole, without the moral compromise of relativism. Moreover, although Comte's 'abstract' history, using the history of western civilization largely 'without names' (II, 183), charted an inevitable progress through the theological and metaphysical stages to its latent positive stage, it imposed neither a rigid lineality, nor a series of wholly self-sufficient systems; instead Comte brought out the various elements, social, political, religious, intellectual, and moral. He showed the logic of their relations to immediate need, to their past, and to one another, and so their subsequent strengths and weaknesses. His history tended to show how one area of progress led to the rise of a system but the limitations upon which the progress depended led to the system's spontaneous decline. In this way, for example, the very intellectual progress and morals which Catholicism bred led to its decline: the subsequent 'critical doctrine' was not a cause but an effect of its decay. Thus Comte brought out the transience

of a system, whilst appreciating in positivist terms the progress humanity made by it: the insight into the past was a form of gratitude and dismissal.

This form of appreciation, and the necessity or logic given to internal and temporal relations, depended on Comte's ultimate emphasis on intellectual and moral progress. The science of history was the history of science itself. The 'preponderant evolution' for Comte was that of the human mind:

If the statical analysis of our social organism shows it resting at length upon a certain system of fundamental opinions, the gradual changes of that system must affect the successive modifications of the life of humanity. (II, 156)

Yet, although intellectual condition is the preponderant evolution to which all the developments right down to the 'lowest' (II.157) material development are related, Comte did not use it as an internal cause. He used it more as a vital thread by which to follow and assimilate history. Comte has no all-encompassing model of causation by which intellectual growth necessitates material changes or material changes necessitate intellectual growth. Political systems, military action etc. do not participate as simple causes or effects in intellectual growth. Nor does Comte rely on seeing society as a mere reflection of intellectual and moral condition. In his history of reciprocal influences, Comte gives precedence neither to particular causes nor to a kind of Hegelian expressivity, but rather to the encouragements and obstacles in the way of an inevitable intellectual and moral growth. His understanding of internal relations relied particularly on the idea that different sciences reached the positive stage at different rates. The inevitableness of human history was, to Comte, the inevitableness of progressive human knowledge, and his happy appreciation came from the assurance that any attempt to preserve transitional beliefs could only delay, not prevent,

true progress. Judging history from this position, Comte imparts to his history an appealing coherence and meaning, both diachronic and synchronic. Moreover, by still reserving the ultimate and meaningful process for human explanation, the social process is in keeping with and continues the process of going through the classified sciences.

In this way, Comte's history is in fact disciplined by a teleology, being 'a continuous development, with a steady tendency towards a determinate end' (II, 46). Considering how much the history is of a kind of collective intelligence inevitably progressing to a positive knowledge that is real, accurate, and no longer dependent on erroneous theories, if there is one cause of historical change it is not the passing intellectual stages but the final ideal, fully known empirical truth. The assumption remains, as seen earlier, that there was a given body of truth which man has to discover. From this we may understand how, although men could learn how to 'palliate and abridge the crises' (II, 95) that necessary change gave rise to, Comte preached a resignation to the inevitable, 'the rational development of a wise resignation to incurable political evils' (II, 45). The laws of historical change are seen in these terms:

These fundamental laws become the more irresistible, and therefore the more appreciable, in proportion to the advancement of the civilization upon which they operate, because the social movement becomes more distinct and certain with every conquest over accidental influences. (II, 86-87)

If civilization 'tends to subordinate our propensities to our reason, more and more, without giving us any cause to apprehend a reversal of the order at any future time' (II, 130), Comte's history would seem to be of a growing resignation to a given body of truth. However, social progress was also to Comte the human development of those faculties by which man was distinguished - at least by degree - from animals. In this, as we have noted, Comte transformed the explanatory process of a

hierarchy into a real process of development; a point that may be marked by the fact that in the biology, as yet only on the threshold of this transformation, Comte made a point of rejecting Lamarck's evolution and upholding the stability of the species (I, 413-16), but in the sociology, where it had become a real process of change, he accepted 'within narrow limits' the modification of faculties by use and dis-use (II, 88-89). But Comte's teleology and the transformation of explanatory into real process are still stabilized by the essential immutability of the species. For Comte, there was an invariable and eternal nature of man, only modifiable within limitations; as he claimed in his argument against Lamarck, neither organism nor medium produced one another, it was a question only of equilibrium between the two. Man was naturally sociable, benevolent, and intellectual, and his progress was simply the development of what was already there. In this way it may be said of Comte's history, both physiological and social, that it is something of the history of man's self-discovery. In the light of this, within the given body of empirical truth, Comte effectively saw social as well as physiological changes in man as ones only of degree or balance. Quite simply 'our social organism is, then, what it ought to be, except as to degree' (II.130). These dynamics of stable adjustment meant that, although the process of explanation did enter a real process of change, it did not enter an endless change to which it might become subject. Moreover, the motor and power of process being reserved for human explanation, the moment of resignation and self-discovery is the moment of turning around, and overcoming and appropriating all that had gone before, both historically and within Comte's text. Explanation having a stabilized physical effect, the human perceiver comes to cause him or herself. In keeping with this powerful self-discovery, and despite the detailed history, when Comte comes to the final social change for which

his text was the vital step, it is hard to appreciate the social changes he believed in as anything but variations in degree. His political stipulations accorded with a natural state of affairs which in the positive state simply becomes self-conscious. He worked far more for a revolution in feeling.

Thus, when Comte came to describe his positive state in the Systeme, it may have come as some surprise to his followers, but the roots for it were most definitely there in the Cours. Already in the Cours, Comte saw as natural a class system based on increasingly specialized labour and with a governing body:

This elementary subordination discloses its own law; which is, that the various operations in which individuals are engaged fall naturally under the direction of those which are next above them in generality. (II, 146)

A governing power was a natural necessity becoming even more necessary as it was recognised. In the Cours, Comte pointed to the division of governing power into spiritual and temporal powers as one of the valuable lessons which medieval Catholicism taught. In the Systeme he institutionalized the division by which the spiritual governors check the self-interest of the temporal governors and infuse morality into political government. Economic power remains in the hands of the experts, the capitalists, but they will distribute wealth morally, just as the labourer will have handed that 'capital' over in the form of a gift, because they will remember their true role, as all others will, of serving humanity. The family unit remains but teaches its members 'the duty and pleasure of living for others': the men hold the temporal power whilst the women, who idealize love and feeling, are the worshipped spiritual power. Families do not develop self-interest because some are ruling and some dependent; the protection and veneration of feudalism, in fact, maintaining their co-operation and sympathy. What is this but an

institutionalized revolution in feeling? Comte conceived divided interest to be an illusion that once broken would bring about co-operation. The positive state simply comes to fruition when men feel what they know, that they live and work for society and humanity:

When the Feeling and the thoughts are brought into harmonious relations with such a position, human existence at once develops its true nature 'To live for others!' ¹

The only real material change Comte conceived of was a vague increase in wealth which, freeing men from desperate self-interest, permits the development of their benevolent feelings. He also saw a fairer distribution of wealth but saw this more as the moral behaviour of the capitalists than anything else. None of Comte's early English admirers could have wholly rejected Comte's revolution of feeling but in stipulating his ideal society Comte made a commitment they could not share.

Comte did visualize a period of proletariat rule that would demonstrate to the, at present, corrupt capitalists the spirit of humanity, simply because, with 'their personal experience of the miseries of life', the working class have a sense of solidarity, and of the real and useful.² The power, returned to the capitalists, would subsequently be handled morally. Comte thus had a sense of what material circumstances did to a person, but he worked on the basis that such determinism could be arrested and revolutionized by a new perception of the existing relations which brought it about, a reappraisal of divisions as interdependences. Material relations serve only to demonstrate morality to men - 'demonstration being now the only possible basis of permanent belief' - and then cease to be effective.³ But Comte pushed to great lengths

1. System of Positive Polity, translated by J.H. Bridges and others, 4 vols (London, 1875-77), II, 243.

2. Polity, I, 105.

3. Polity, I, 91.

this idea of demonstration, drawing up arrangements and rituals endless and absurd in detail in order to maintain this feeling of living for others. Comte seemed to have had an innate distrust of humanity, even in an ideal state, and many of his political and religious stipulations served only to ensure that the revolution in feeling was maintained. In which case he seemed to deny what he had promised his readers in the Cours: his stipulations were a manifest despotism and he resorted largely to Catholicism for their form.

The utopia Comte imagined horrified his admirers because it institutionalized what, in their eyes, should have been spontaneous. It concretized in oppressive symbols and rituals what should have remained a property of the rational explanation of life. To them the unique moment of understanding life, at a penultimate stage in history at which knowledge seemed to have both truth and power, was far more exhilarating than the concretized image of an ideal society finally ordered and organized properly. To try and make fixed and manifest an ideal, denied the power and hope of open-ended possibilities. However, Comte's Cours demonstrates the idea that, if an act of explanation involving movement or process is brought to the determinate phenomena of the world, the fatalism of determinism could be diffused and the mere act of coming to understand could be invested with great power. The act of discovery, in assenting to the determinations it finds, seems to control them, to re-determine phenomena for itself. In this, the determination of man himself ceases to be an oppression.

4. Spencer: the dynamics of process and gap

The general sense of human morality and knowledge as progressive, and of being on the penultimate stage of that progress - a common mid-nineteenth century non-believing overview of humanity - was the conclusion

of a certain way of working. Comte, viewing the object of scientific knowledge as a given body of invariable laws and the species as immutable, pushed to extremes the dynamics by which process is associated with human knowledge and human causing of the last, moral and perfect effect. However, Comte's work was imported by an English intelligensia whose empiricism was developing into materialist theories of evolution (theories that may be called pre-Darwinian) the most notable of which was Herbert Spencer's. As an evolutionist, Spencer foregrounded the causal processes of the physical world. Compared to Comte's process of human ideas, Spencer's process was unflinchingly material, and time primarily of physical events. Spencer saw clearly his difference to Comte; he went to great lengths to register his dissent and deny any intellectual debt to Comte.¹ As he explained to Lewes:

What is Comte's professed aim? To give a coherent account of the progress of human conceptions. What is my aim? To give a coherent account of the progress of the external world.²

Spencer's adamant conviction that differentiates him from Comte was that 'ideas do not govern and overthrow the world', and, more precisely, that:

the popular character and the social state, determine what ideas shall be current; instead of the current ideas determining the social state and the character.³

The determinism Spencer was dealing with was primarily involved with the idea of man as physical effect. Both Comte and Spencer may have been noticeable for their emphases on the relationship between organism and medium, and for the organicism of their sociologies, but there was a

1. For the extent to which Spencer's work was actually influenced by his efforts to extricate himself from Comte, see Sydney Eisen, 'Herbert Spencer and the Spectre of Comte', Journal of British Studies, 7, (1967), 48-67.

2. Letter to Lewes, 21 March 1864, reprinted in An Autobiography, II, 485-90.

3. The Classification of the Sciences: to which are added Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte (London, 1864), pp.37-38.

crucial difference. Comte insisted on a balanced relationship between organism and medium:

it does not follow that either of them produces the other. The question is simply of an equilibrium between two heterogeneous and independent powers.¹

In contrast, the relationship for Spencer was primarily of physical causation, reaction, and production, and, indeed, heterogeneity and equilibrium were evicted by Spencer to an as yet impalpable, abstract futurity.

Spencer shares with Comte the same agnostic structure of relative knowledge, and the same need for the relevance of human knowledge and choice. For both process is a crucial dynamic. As I suggested earlier, process which handles determinism in the way needed by liberal positivism, was process that had relevance to the qualities of individualism, to human knowledge, and to the sequence of human causing of effect: a process that does not in its qualities sweep by or through the individual. This we have seen in Comte's theories, and we may see comparable needs met in Spencer's. But in Spencer's theories, being concerned with an evolutionary process of physical cause and effect (unlike Comte's), the dynamics of process are necessarily used in a different way. Indeed, to describe a sweeping process such as Comte's would, if applied to a physical process, result in individual life seeming the victim of a teleology or the enactor of a superior directive. But I do not think this happens in Spencer's theory of evolution, although it does have a very general format and is a teleology structured by ideals of intelligence, morality, and the perfect social state. The reason for this is that Spencer brings out not only process, but a process whose mechanism may be described as of difference or gap: a dynamic which is an essential part of the dynamics of process used by liberal positivism to handle determinism. Here, in moving to a dynamic not used by Comte, we come

1. Positive Philosophy, I, 415.

to what is distinctive of liberal positivism and marks a difference to Comte's Positivism. It is a result of the difference between looking at human life as subject to given natural laws, and looking at human life developing by cause and effect. For both perspectives process is crucial, but to the latter the presence of gaps is also crucial.

Spencer's theory of evolution could be said to be a writing out of the history and science so desperately needed by utilitarianism, for his structuring ideals are distinctly utilitarian. It may be suggested that a part of the utilitarian ethics and politics, which I shall argue he naturalized, was a kind of gap. It is a gap marking what was found inadequate or problematic in Benthamite utilitarianism, and which formed the basis of the complaints Spencer made in his early work Social Statics.¹ It was from this book, with its cry against utilitarians "You can tell us nothing new; you merely give words to our want" (SS, p.2), that the main body of his work was developed. Spencer's objection, typical of the reaction against utilitarianism, was to the presumption of being able to calculate happiness rationally, and to the philosophy which,

thinks that man's intellect is competent, first, to observe accurately the facts exhibited by associated human nature; to form just estimates of general and individual character, of the effects of religions, customs, superstitions, prejudices, of the mental tendencies of the age, of the probabilities of future events, &c.; &c.; and then, grasping at once the multiplied phenomena of this ever-agitated, ever-changing sea of life, to derive from them that knowledge of their governing principles which shall enable him to say whether such and such measures will conduce to 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. (SS, p.12)

As remarked before, utilitarianism may be described, in causal terms, as the confinement of man to cause, to the simple one-direction of voluntary

1. Social Statics: or, the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified and the First of Them Developed (London, 1851). All further references will be abbreviated to SS and will give page number.

causation. But the political thrust was also endorsed by a causal analysis of the unsatisfactory past and present, so that utilitarianism exhibited a gaping lacuna. This gap was between the 'is' and the 'ought' of the happiness principle, between the description of how men pursue pleasure and avoid pain, and the extolling of the only possible way of achieving a balance of happiness amongst men. This gap between the rationale of a moral judgment of the past and present, and the rationale of a moral imperative for the future, is ultimately the gap between man as an effect and man as a cause; between man as unconscious subject of the desire for pleasure, and man as the voluntary, rational agent calculating the greatest happiness for the greatest number; between the unrecognised acquisition of a morality out of selfish instincts, and the fully-articulated moral code. Finally, utilitarianism, although showing that men have always sought pleasure, also sought to undermine and destroy the past by exposing man's role as effect: analysis, 'this dissolving force' as Mill called it, was to 'weaken' and 'undermine' prejudice and mere feeling, so that man as cause, the man of 'prudence and clear-sightedness', could come into being.¹ Spencer turned from rational calculation to rational explanation, transforming the 'dissolving force' of analysis into a re-constructive force. As for the lacuna between man as effect and man as cause, he changed what was a gaping philosophical omission, into an inherent mechanism of a process.

It was important for Spencer, as for all liberal positivists, that, in,

contemplating social structures and actions from the evolution point of view, we may preserve that calmness which is needful for scientific interpretation of them, without losing our powers of feeling moral reprobation or approbation.²

1. Mill, Autobiography, pp.137-38.

2. Principles of Sociology, 3 vols (London, 1876-96), II, 242. All further references will be abbreviated to P. of S. and will give volume and page number.

Calm moral judgment, unlike the destructive analyses and political didacticism of utilitarianism, is a result of seeing a general evolution towards an ideal: within this evolution each causal event is not simply a stage, unwittingly producing an ideal, but also has an immediacy and relevance of particular need that defies subordination to an epoch-like determinism; importantly, causal process is something in which the effect participated. This was a result of the dynamic of gap, and may briefly be identified in Spencer's psychology, a theory largely shared by Lewes, and the dynamics of which I have suggested are comparable to those used by Mill. Psychological functioning as the organism's response to its medium (consciousness coming where there is a change of state), stresses not only time but causal process in which the organism takes on the relationship of effect to a cause, the environment. Although Mill used similar dynamics, he used them in a different area, and in psychology Mill had not really got beyond only seeing man as effect in the erroneous associations set up in the human mind, whilst correct knowledge was assumed possible by a disciplined arrangement of sensory experience; Mill did not offer an explanation for the source for such capacity of arrangement. Spencer and Lewes were really more sanguine, despite their stress on the need for men to verify their ideas: the capacity to arrange and order sensory experience was itself an effect of causal process, and, moreover, the result corresponded correctly to the external world. They did not see a gap between the erroneous associations and objective knowledge, but a gap between the simplicity of an organism's experience and structure, and the complexity of the external world. Here we may begin to see how the lacuna between effect and cause is rendered a mechanism of process. Progressively an organism adjusts internally to an external world that can never be fully known, each adjustment being in a sense a demand made by the medium on the

organism: the gap lies between what the organism is and what it could be. Every adjustment may be a particular response to a particular change in the environment, but there is ever-present a standard of comprehensive objective knowledge towards which each adjustment works. Every causal incident does not display some arbitrary necessity but the same meaningful direction.

Just like Comte, Spencer showed that all the things which mattered to men especially - their will, intelligence, sympathy, and morality - naturally arose from more complex organic functioning. Only for Spencer this was a result of causal process. Voluntary actions were causal adjustments involving complexity and consciousness. All levels of intelligence were composed the same but greater intelligence was simply a greater accuracy, number, and complexity of inner correspondences to the external. Complex experience, especially that of social aggregation, gave rise to the development of general ideas (the recognition of uniformities and foresight), and sentiment (a fusion of recollected feeling). From egoistic and ego-altruistic sentiments, developed sympathy and altruism. Thus morality, too, was simply an effect, ultimately, of environment on the organism. Moreover, just as psychological adjustment had its universal standard of the fully known external world, so morality had its universal standard, simply because, to Spencer, there was ultimately only one way in which men could be happy:

While, as we have seen, the ego-altruistic sentiments adjust themselves to the various modes of conduct required by social circumstances in each place and age, the altruistic sentiments adjust themselves to the modes of conduct that are permanently beneficial, because conforming to the conditions needful for the highest welfare of individuals in the associated state.¹

1. The Principles of Psychology, second edition, 2 vols (London, 1872), II, 618.

In this way, Spencer's description of a causative process in the relationship of organism to medium is stabilized by an inevitable ideal: the ideal of comprehensive and accurate knowledge, and of the feelings best for human happiness, inevitably present at each adjustment.

An approach to dynamics is particularly pertinent as regards Spencer's work because Spencer maintains successively through his biology, psychology, and sociology the general theory of First Principles (London, 1862), and relies on a constant comparison of forms. Thus, by way of example, we may examine in more detail how these dynamics work by looking at Spencer's social evolution. This evolution, like all the others Spencer described, was from homogeneity to heterogeneity. Differentiation and integration come in the growth of increasingly complex, definite, and interdependent social functions. The growth of political institutions from chieftain to a complex system of government involving in itself many interdependent functions, the growth of industry, and the growth of a distributing system, all display progressive heterogeneity, and are all compared to the growth of a natural organism. As societies develop, the process of change would seem in one way to be in-built: Spencer's vocabulary is of tendency to, liability to, furthering, diminishing, declining, reducing, increasing, leading to, and developing into. This in-built change is emphasised by an implicit standard by which Spencer will speak of favourable circumstances in contrast to obstruction or prevention. In this Spencer's evolution is inevitable. It does not however emerge as a programmed process, but rather as a result of causal events that are both immediately important and logical in themselves, and have a part to play in over-all evolution.

Notice, first, Spencer's use of specific examples and their relationship to his abstract theory. Although his general description is in many ways meant to be a means for classifying societies, he does not in

effect classify whole societies along a sliding scale, nor relate an overall idea of what a particular society was originally, and what it will develop into. Instead he uses his general typology to intercept exemplary societies and show a specific situation. His examples display one determining factor, one aspect of social arrangement, one change, or one relationship, and he often lists several examples of the one point.

At the most his example will demonstrate an immediate process:

The class-division thus initiated by war, afterwards maintains and strengthens itself in sundry ways. Very soon there begins the custom of purchase. The Chinooks, besides slaves who have been captured, have slaves who were bought as children from their neighbours; and, as we saw when dealing with the domestic relations, the selling of their children into slavery is by no means uncommon with savages. (P. of S., II, 292)

Frequently his example is not even of a process in itself:

Where food is scarce, diffusion great, and co-operation consequently hindered, there is no established chieftainship. The Fuegians, the Cayaguas or Wood-Indians of South America, the Jungle-Veddahs of Ceylon, the Bushmen of South Africa, are instances. They do not form unions for defence, and have no recognised authorities: personal predominance of a temporary kind, such as tends to arise in every group, being the only approach to it. (P. of S., I, 541)

This phraseology of 'where...there is...' is typical of Spencer's introduction to examples. It is on this introduction, on the threshold between general evolutionary process and a specific example of a relationship, that the time of causative process exists: time in the example is at the most of a tendency, and more often than not of a synchronous relationship, whilst time in the general theory is descriptive and not of a general cause and its effect. In this way specific examples emerge neither as unwitting enactors of a universal process, nor as purely arbitrary particular necessities. The specific is concrete and immediate as well as logical and meaningful. Spencer often uses with ease examples

still in quotation from their source, and there is also a general sense of all examples being on the same level: even variations are not curious exceptions to a general rule. If geography means there is no political organization, this factor is as concrete as those against which it is contrasted. What we get instead is a sense of relationships which make sense. Spencer's examples are not simply endorsing material nor on the other hand is there any sense of a theory drawn inductively from them. They are instead the flesh of an abstract description of process, the very material of evolution.

The way these examples of specific determinate relationships with their own logic are understood also to be ones that can and do change, and so have a relationship to overall process, depends on the general mechanism of change Spencer uses. For, although Spencer persistently uses a vocabulary of in-built process, he presents process as a result of causation, and here the dynamics of gap is crucial. In the description of the early stages of social evolution, factors of change are external and it is possible to identify some general causes of adjustment: the advantages for survival and reproduction cause initial social aggregation; the joining of aggregates causes social growth; hostility with other societies necessitates some kind of regulation and so, if permanent, the growth of a regulating system; differences in availability of raw materials give rise to the earliest forms of industrial specialization in the sustaining system. The factor which Spencer gives some predominance to is of war, which in fact epitomizes the most common aspect of Spencer's causal process, the aspect of difference. For it is not possible to identify in Spencer's theory one overwhelming cause or factor of evolution, but the instigation of change constantly takes the form of difference: differences in terrain, differences between the sexes, differences between neighbouring societies,

differences between the conquering and the enslaved. Whether, as in early stages, the difference comes from new demands made by the environment on a whole society, or, later, is between elements within the one society, it is difference that requires adaptation. In this need for balance, in the sense of demands made upon a society or on a part of society, change is neither simply spontaneous, nor a change overriding or sweeping past current need: it is an immediate concern of the specific society, and a change it participates in. Here, in the mechanism of difference, is the lacuna spoken of earlier between effect and cause. This sense of gap, not as an omission, but as a crucial part of the rhythm of process, is in fact a common aspect of the causal analyses and narratives of liberal positivism. In Spencer's work it is made into a mechanism which renders the determination of social structure a participating activity of the society, in the sense that the society rises to the occasion. It also refers to an ideal, so that particular responses to particular situations are still steps made towards an ideal social form: for demands made upon a society in a sense light up its inadequacy and show up what it as yet does not possess.

War, for example, the most brutal expression of this mechanism of difference, could be said to highlight what a society lacks. For Spencer argues that an early primitive industrial society, however peaceful and co-operative like a developed industrial society, could not develop political organisation by compounding alone: it took the demands made upon a society by war. Here we may notice an ambiguity of Spencer's transformation of natural selection to survival of the fittest. In competition between societies what seems to matter most is not that the best society survived (in fact the crucial result was that the conquered society was incorporated giving rise to further social distinctions and functions) but that societies were forced to develop. Here it must be

seen that dissolution of the weaker is the last resort, and that really it is the pressure for all to become fit. The causal mechanism of difference thus brought in the sense of participation and of a relevant ideal.

Spencer's sociology, however, was noted for his clear functional analyses, showing not only how a society met its external needs but also the interdependence of its internal functions. It would be impossible to conceive how a society, especially in the later stages of evolution where reciprocal influences are so marked, continued inevitably to evolve, if Spencer did not describe a process of progressive differentiation and effectively show external determining factors become multiplying internal ones. This progressive differentiation was based on the cosmology in First Principles and the whole notion of the 'Persistence of Force', a fact which in itself suggests the extent to which even Spencer's structural analyses were based on or disciplined by mechanical causation. Evolution, as opposed to dissolution, was the over-all loss of motion and the concentration of matter, a move from diffused and unstable homogeneity to coherent, stable heterogeneity. An important part of the theory was that of the multiplication of effects, an effect being more complex than its cause:

an incident force is transformed by the conflict into a number of forces that differ in their amounts, or directions, or kinds; or in all these respects. And of this group of variously-modified forces, each ultimately undergoes a like transformation. (First Principles, p.390)

The multiplication of effects increases in geometric progression as the heterogeneity becomes greater. Note how this progressive multiplication of effects in itself changes the face of relentless causation. In a constant division and re-division, individual occurrences are sufficient in themselves, not merely the pathways for something else, and each node-like moment has a scale relevant to what preceded it and what follows it.

It also explains how one cause or difference produces more differences, which give rise to further adjustment and change. Importantly, in the sociology, Spencer treats the relationship between functions within a society as differences. Spencer's description of functions suggests, however slightly, a temporal direction in their relations. For example, he will write that:

The stability of the compound headship, made greater by efficient leadership in war and by establishment of hereditary succession, is further increased when there cooperates the additional factor - supposed supernatural origin or supernatural sanction. (P. of S., II, 354; my emphasis)

Spencer gives a logic to a synchronism that is also diachronic - a mechanical causation inherent in the structurally determinate - because he treats the functions and elements of a society in the same way as medium and organism, as differences. He will speak of elements 'both as causes and as consequences', of how, 'whilst furthering, it is furthered by', and of 'how each group is at each stage determined partly by its own antecedents and partly by the past and present actions of the rest upon it' (P. of S., I, 461-62). Stability comes not from simple coexistence but is actively achieved, what Spencer described as a 'moving equilibrium'. In effect, it is the continual adjustment of elements in some small, but crucial way out of sync with one another which achieves the working whole, but which also, according to the multiplication of effects, creates further differences and adjustments.

This multiplication of effects and progressive differentiation only went so far; and we may see more clearly in Spencer's ideal, and the determinate end of evolution, how the dynamic of difference expresses not only what a society should be immediately but also what it should be ultimately, and also how it gives participation in causation. The important distinction Spencer made between the social organism and the natural organism was that the 'units' of the social organism were free

and discrete. This 'does not prevent sub-division of functions and mutual dependence of parts, yet it does prevent that differentiation by which one part becomes an organ of feeling and thought, while other parts become insensitive' (P. of S., I, 478). By emphasising that 'all units possess the capacities for happiness and misery' and that they could not be further differentiated without preventing 'the due discharge of their functions', Spencer renders scientific a political and moral imperative:

the welfare of the aggregate, considered apart from that of its units, is not an end to be sought.
The society exists for the benefit of its members;
not its members for the benefit of the society.
(P. of S., I, 479)

In his sociology Spencer effectively demonstrated his political ideal by his comparison between the military and industrial societies. He characterized the military society as coercive, centralized, served by individuals rather than serving them, rigid, and conservative. In contrast, the developed industrial society was plastic and adaptable because individuals lived in voluntary, interdependent, and co-operative competition, served by a society that exercised only negative controls, and competing by efficiency for functions rather than inheriting them. The society in which individual liberty is best protected is 'that which must survive, since it is that of which the members will most prosper' (P. of S., II, 728). What Spencer valued was movement and adaptability of individuals, and, considering how differentiation cannot go beyond the individuals, Spencer's ideal of individuals voluntarily competing, participating, and developing, may be described as the society in which difference was a relationship between individuals. And this re-iterates my point that difference as a causal mechanism was a releasing mechanism stressing participation and rising to the occasion. If difference is the relationship between effect and cause, we may see that Spencer's

ideal was where each individual is the cause of his or her own life, volition allowing individual morality.

We may take these dynamics further. Spencer's ideal was of heterogeneity, interdependence, and stability as a relationship amongst individual units: the perfect equilibrium where the individual desired no more than he or she could be allowed and so where there were no social restraints but those which the individual voluntarily respected. Evolution as a process of achieving perfect equilibrium means that each stage of adjustment for balance, although necessitating further adjustments, still works for equilibrium immediately as well as ultimately. The political ideal of individuals in perfect, free, and balanced existence, is thus a dynamic ever-present, and perfectly pertinent. The ideal being one where each individual was cause of his or her own life, Spencer's sociology, like Comte's philosophy, charts a process in such a way that determinism is appropriated as a property and powerful instrument for men, not the law to which they are subject. One further point must be made that suggests a role for Spencer's texts comparable to that of Comte's. In contrast to the industrial society, in the military society:

wholly foreign to the habit of mind as is the thought of impersonal causation, the course of social evolution is unperceived. (P. of S., II, 690)

Spencer himself feared the retrogression of his society into the military and he believed his own writing was of more value in arresting this than practical action.¹ He worked, like Comte, at a position in social evolution where recognition of evolution was deemed crucial. His work had a position within the theory.

This position of Spencer's own writing in his theory may be quiet in

1. On Spencer's practical efforts, and his conclusion that his 'function was to think rather than to act', see his autobiography, II, 329-30 and 375-78.

his sociology, but it had a manifest beginning in Social Statics. Moreover, a brief return to Spencer's Social Statics, in which his later work may be seen to be germinating, may show that process and the mechanism of difference are no mere accidents but began in answer to a central need. That a book titled Social Statics should contain a developing theory of evolution alone implies that the process of causation came in answer to certain concerns. In looking at Social Statics the basic needs characterizing liberal positivism emerge: the need to replace destructive analysis by an accepting rational explanation and the need for a liberal political ideal, the need to confront man as effect as well as cause, and the need to forgive as well as judge. Social Statics makes a striking demonstration of politics being translated into science.¹

Social Statics is far more of a passionate polemic than Spencer's subsequent work. On the one hand it is a fervid argument against the utilitarian belief that democracy, legislative reforms, and education can alone effect the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and so an argument against the possibility of artificially causing something. Here began Spencer's organic approach: 'society is a growth, and not a manufacture - a thing that makes itself, and not a thing that can be artificially made' (SS, p.338). On the other hand it is still a plea for a laissez-faire, but on the grounds of natural causation, not political imperative. Although Spencer still presses encouragingly for democracy and legislative reform, and takes the almost identical view of these as means of protecting individual rights and freedom, the different

1. For Spencer's relationship to utilitarianism, see J.W. Burrow, Evolution and Society: a Study in Victorian Social Theory (Cambridge, 1966). Burrow argues that Spencer's belief in causation and laissez-faire were 'the bedrock of his thinking...it was his belief in natural causation that led him to embrace the theory of evolution, not vice versa' (pp.205-06).

reasons he gave were very important. Crucially he naturalizes utilitarian directives, transforming calculation into explanation, and he does this by bringing in the moral status of men: the more immoral men were, the more they needed government, and the less fair and effective legislation. So Spencer only advocated reform because men had reached the moral stage of recognising individual rights. This being an encouraging sign, Spencer in turn encourages 'timid reformers', in the face of 'the moral infidelity of the expediency school', that 'they need not fear to exhibit whatever sympathy with democratic principles they possess' (SS, p.248). Reform could not cause morality:

This, however, is no reason for not advocating its adoption. For, what was said in the last chapter respecting an equitable form of government, may be here said respecting an equitable system of law; that the power quietly to establish it is the measure of its practicability. (SS, p.264)

Spencer's emphasis on moral condition is far from a form of blame, and he is not simply reversing the determining role of government and reform. Rather it is a way of channelling political invective into a form of rational explanation. He loathed slavery, despotism etc. and he allowed himself a form of invective, whilst still explaining the necessity of what he loathed, by citing the moral barbarity of men. Thus, his work is full of cries like:

We still trench upon each other's claims - still pursue happiness at each other's expense. Our savage selfishness is seen in commerce, in legislation, in social arrangements, in amusements. The shopkeeper imposes on his lady customer; his lady customer beats down the shopkeeper. Classes quarrel about their respective 'interests', and corruption is defended by those who profit from it. The spirit of caste morally tortures its victims with as much coolness as the Indian tortures his enemy. (SS, p.199)

Far from a dismissive judgment, Spencer cites morality as a condition rather than a choice: the impulse is to understand and encompass such violation. He is confronting past and present:

It is not in pursuance of any calmly-reasoned conclusions respecting nature's intention that men conquer and enslave their fellows - it is not that they smother their kindly feelings to subserve civilization. (SS, p.417)

Spencer's more scientific expression that a society was an organism reflecting the nature of its units, emphasised the necessity of the fact. By the end of his text Spencer is explaining 'morality, is essentially one with physical truth - is, in fact a species of transcendental physiology' (SS, p.436). Moral condition, used as a means of confrontation, was quickly to turn into organic condition.

Because moral condition is a way of facing what men and their societies have been rather than identifying a determining cause, Spencer easily slips into a complete reversal of the relationship of moral status to social form, and just as passionately talks of the determination of the individual by social circumstances: to his middle class readers, who denounced the immorality of the working class, he wrote vehemently:

It is easy for you, O respectable citizen, seated in your easy chair, with your feet on the fender, to hold forth on the misconduct of the people; - very easy for you to censure their extravagant and vicious habits; - very easy for you to be a pattern of frugality, of rectitude, of sobriety. (SS, p.227)

Imagine, what it is like to be poor and then one can understand the behaviour of the working class, for:

We cannot understand another's character except by abandoning our own identity, and realizing to ourselves his frame of mind, his want of knowledge, his hardships, temptations, and discouragements. (SS, p.228-9)

Notice, however, the absolutism of his confrontation:

There is, in principle, no difference whatever between the blow of a policeman's baton and the thrust of a soldier's bayonet. Both are infractions of the law of equal freedom in the persons of those injured. (SS, p.269)

This mutually determining relationship between moral status and social form clearly foreshadows Spencer's accentuation of reciprocal influences and his structural analyses. Spencer also begins in Social Statics to explain men's morality by citing their different circumstances over the ages, and so a theory of evolution develops. Spencer's work, both this text and his life-long work, begins with a confrontation very different from utilitarian 'dissolving' analysis. Even the last part of Social Statics titled 'General Considerations', where he formulates clearly a theory of evolution, progressive individuation, and interdependence, begins with the crucial impulse: 'the course of civilization could not possibly have been other than it has been' (SS, p.409). In this way, starting by facing up to things, Spencer does not seem to be searching for one reason or compelling cause of human life. Hence, as we have found in the sociology, there is no one factor of change, but the releasing mechanism of difference.

This gap came from the transformation of a utilitarian view into a more positive confrontation, and the naturalization of utilitarian ethics and politics. Spencer re-articulated utilitarian 'happiness' as 'morality' and, in his understanding of morality as a condition rather than a choice, it was an important way of getting rid of the notion of rational calculation. Morality or happiness was the 'due exercise of all the faculties' (SS, p.76), and men 'must have liberty to do all that his faculties naturally impel him to do' (SS, p.77). Spencer's argument that men do have a moral instinct, that men have always sought to exercise their faculties, is equivalent to the utilitarian notion of the constant motivation for happiness. He has in short a notion of fundamental man and he uses a natural theism and teleology:

Now if God wills man's happiness, and man's happiness can be obtained only by the exercise of his faculties, then God wills that man should

exercise his faculties; that is, it is man's duty to exercise his faculties. (SS, p.76)

This was a way of embedding man's function into the constitution of things, not so much God's constitution, as physical constitution, the way men live and breathe, not the way they calculate. It gave utilitarianism an impelling absolutism and materialism. With this move and Spencer's more positive confrontation of past and present, he evicted his ideal to a form of abstract and unknown futurity. Spencer claimed he was only showing the circumstances of morality and happiness. As he said of the limitations on men not to hurt others and limitations upon how a man may be so limited:

as both these supplementary limitations involve the term happiness, and as happiness is for the present capable only of a generic and not a scientific definition...they do not admit of scientific development. Though abstractedly correct limitations, and limitations which the ideal man will strictly observe, they cannot be reduced to concrete forms until the ideal man exists. (SS, p.84)

Instead, Spencer used a spatial terminology to visualize the fundamental man fulfilled in the ideal man and to visualize an unprescribed and unspecified organic functioning; and this implies the extent to which shapes, dimensions, and finally the dynamics of process and difference, were crucial to what Spencer was doing:

If, then, we find that the one thing needful to produce ultimate subordination to these secondary limits of right conduct is, that we should have the opportunity of freely coming in contact with them - should be allowed freely to expand our natures in all directions until the available space has been filled, and the true bounds have made themselves felt - if a development of these secondary limits into practical codes of duty can only thus be accomplished, then does the supreme authority of our first law - the liberty of each limited alone by the like liberty of all - become still more manifest, seeing that that right to exercise the faculties which it asserts, must precede the unfolding of this supplementary morality...and we further find that conformity to it, ensures ultimate conformity to others. (SS, p.87)

It is a spatial terminology that demands a process of arrival and 'civilization no longer appears to be a regular unfolding after a specific plan; but seems rather a development of man's latent capabilities under the action of favourable circumstances' (SS, p.415). The ideal man was the man perfectly adapted to his circumstances of social aggregation, and so needing no forced restraint. Interestingly adaptation begins not as a notion of process, but as an expression of an ideal that could not be prescribed, and we may see how the problematic lacuna of utilitarianism between what has been and what should be, naturally developed into a mechanism of difference. The gap in utilitarianism becomes a difference between adaptation and non-adaptation, and so it easily became for Spencer a mechanism of a process of adaptation.

This future ideal, expressed in abstract spatial terms, was a crucial stabilizer of the main polemic for laissez-faire. The plea for allowing natural causation free play was a plea for the freedom to know and become. The intellect cannot calculate happiness 'yet will experience enable the constitution itself to do this' (SS, p.86). Natural causation, allowing man to be effected, is posited as a form of freedom: 'Nothing but bringing him face to face with stern necessity, and letting him feel how unbending, how unpitying, are her laws, can improve the man of ill-governed desires' (SS, p.353). Only then will morality be 'natural, spontaneous, instinctive' (SS, p.352). Spencer's text however is in a particular position: presumably natural causation has always had free play, but now it is necessary to recognise it. His argument for laissez-faire has a dual impetus: government intervention will both fail, and make men adapt to the wrong circumstances. This reflects this unique moment of self-consciousness. Social Statics was extolling the reader to 'give full utterance to his innermost conviction' for 'he, with all his capacities, and desires, and beliefs, is not an accident,

but a product of the time', and 'he must remember that whilst he is the child of the past, he is the parent of the future' (SS, p.474). Here in fact is the need for an evolutionary theory. If Spencer was to have a political argument, it could only be by going through the process of developing human society and morality in order to feel what had to be and its relevant ideal. The dynamics of process and difference were thus natural answers or fulfilments. Process was a natural result of confronting and explaining men as they had been, effected rather than choosing. Difference was a natural result of having an ideal that could not be suspended in critical appraisal but provided stability.

We may see how Spencer's narrative of evolution acts as a way of appropriating the physically determinate: accepting past and present depravity - moral and political - but also making it morally relevant and prescriptive for his present readers. Spencer laid aside a simple passionate polemic and wrote out a history of evolution where men could not only see that they and their societies were inevitable results of inevitable physical laws, but that each change, scientifically logical at the time, had every reference to human capacity and need in its ideal state.

5. A Marxist debate

Both Comte and Spencer's work thus demonstrate the handling of determinism by the eliciting of a process that had reference to an experiential understanding of human knowledge, and to the basic causal relation in which the individual has power to cause an effect. In order to put into clearer perspective, by contrast and comparison, the causal understanding, and the powerful effect of the dynamics of process in liberal positivism (again I omit Comte himself in this category), I want to end this chapter by making a brief reference to Marxist theory

of determinism, and particularly to certain areas of twentieth century Marxist debate. This reference is also important in stressing that, academic as the question of causation and human life may seem in examining Victorian philosophies of human life, it is a question as urgent and compelling today as it was then.

Althusser, in formulating his own theory of determinism, suggests two categories of causality that may be identified prior to Marxist theory, that of expressive or Hegelian effectivity and that of mechanical or Cartesian effectivity.¹ Both these categories may at some time be applied to the causal understanding of liberal positivism, but both inadequately. On the one hand, liberal positivism is too close to an empiricist tradition, and too much involved with a biological materialism for the expressive category, and, if anything, leans towards the mechanical. But, on the other hand, organic relations, functions, and structures are stressed too much for the mechanical category to be appropriate. The transitive or linear quality of this latter category is only applicable in the sense that causality was to liberal positivists an event, with direction and temporality; this is not to say that they were committed to a billiard-ball type of motion, only that causation was something of a temporal occurrence. Perhaps most important to understand this and the subsequent effect of process on determinism, is to realise the sheer faith of liberal positivists that causation was ultimately an unambiguous relationship, and that determinism, the fixing of human actions, was but one manifestation of this basic relationship. Firstly, the structure of relative knowledge and the unity of the sciences provide an underlying sense of the unity of scale of what happened in the physical world, not in the sense that there were not

1. See Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, Reading Capital, translated by Ben Brewster (London, NLB, 1970), pp.186-89.

microscopic and world wide causal relations, but that one type of causal relation did not override another: it could only limit or counteract another. Secondly, the agnostic and empiricist structure in which nature's laws, the laws of phenomena, were simply 'invariable relations of succession and resemblance',¹ put stress on the relations of succession as the causal laws. Hence determinism in all its forms was an event.

One way of seeing this, rather than using Althusser's categories, is to make the very simple contrast between liberal positivism and the Marxist theory that, despite reciprocal influences, the mode of production ultimately determines social relations, and political, legal, philosophical, and religious forms. Leaving aside the important inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, there is a simple difference between this scale of determinism and the fact that the many and vast general laws with which liberal positivism dealt, the great sense of nature's regularities and more than accidental analogies, the reduction of multiplicities to notions of force and indestructible matter, were disciplined by the grave and crucial sense that these laws did not override particular eventuation, but described it. The idea of the economic as a determining factor of human ideology was by no means inaccessible to liberal positivists. In this, Engels' criticisms of the 'old materialism' that it does not ask 'what are the driving forces of these driving forces' (the motives of men), or of classical political economy that it 'is predominantly occupied only with the directly intended social effects of human actions connected with production and exchange', are inapplicable: liberal positivism went further in both directions, looking not only at the circumstances which determined men's motives but also at those circumstances both as a product of

1. Positive Philosophy, I, 2.

nature and of men, and looking forward to 'remote effects'.¹ But the remoter causes and effects were treated as of the same magnitude. To point out the economic situation as a determining factor was, within liberal positivism, to point out only one factor, with all the implications of possible alternatives and counteractions. It might be said that the structural analyses of liberal positivism answered an inability to decide between determining factors.

The other aspect of this unity of scale was the consistent nature of the causal relation; something that Marxist theory does not depend upon. Engels' Dialectics of Nature, if completed, would have provided a very useful contrast with positivism, precisely because it was, like liberal positivism, taking an overview of man as a part of nature, and because Engels was seeking to stress dialectics in nature as well as in human history. Hailing the way science was progressing, and putting great faith in the empirical evidence of science, the Dialectics of Nature contains many passages very close to the spirit of liberal positivism. Notice for example how Engels stresses that,

not only do we find that a particular motion is followed by another, we find also that we can evoke a particular motion by setting up the conditions in which it takes place in nature, indeed that we can even produce motions which do not occur at all in nature (industry), at least not in this way, and that we can give these motions a predetermined direction and extent. (pp.304-05)

Mill argued just such a test of causation. Perhaps most telling of the difference in notions of determinism was Engels' insistence that labour and the mastery of nature made a radical distinction between men and other animals. Engels was thus to stress that Darwin's evolution is not 'proved as eternal natural laws of society' (p.404), and that,

1. Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy, edited by C.P. Dutt (London, printed U.S.S.R., 1934), p.59; Dialectics of Nature, translated by Clemens Dutt (Moscow, 1954), p.245.

although 'Darwin did not know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind' (p.49), he did not recognise the part played by labour. Human production 'makes impossible any unqualified transference of the laws of life in animal societies to human ones' (p.405). In contrast, although it cannot really be said of liberal positivists, as Engels does of 'the naturalistic conception of history', that they forget 'that man also reacts on nature, changing it and creating new conditions of existence for himself' (p.306), they did treat man's activities as a flattened part of nature, as happening in the context of nature; and they made the translation from nature to man very easily - most importantly - as regards the basic causal relation. Thus Spencer's model of evolution was duplicated in biological evolution and social evolution.¹

Because of this unity of scale and easy translation, the stress on the temporal direction of the basic causal relation meant that in liberal positivism there is a deep underlying sense of all deterministic relations, from the laboratory to human lives, as relations that took place and had a direction moving from cause to effect. Liberal positivists did have a sense of the effect of the whole on the parts, and did not, as Althusser suggests, have to make 'extraordinary distortions' to do so. But structures and synchronism were a part of the complexity of nature, the coexistence of phenomena, the counteraction, limitation, and contexts of a determinism that was in essence an event. This is very important for the determination of the individual. Interestingly, Engels was accused of both Fatalism and Free Will, and above all of taking a bourgeois view of the individual and society, when he expressed in terms

1. For a particularly enlightening discussion of the difference between the asymmetry of particular causal events, and the reciprocal relation of the dialectic relation in 'types' of causal events, see David-Hillel Ruben, Marxism and Materialism: a Study in Marxist Theory of Knowledge, second edition (Sussex, 1979), pp.118-27.

of the individual that 'we make our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions'. He continued:

the final result always arises from conflicts between many individual wills, of which each again has been made what it is by a host of particular conditions of life. Thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant - the historical event. This again may itself be viewed as the product of a power which, taken as a whole, works unconsciously and without volition. For what each individual wills is obstructed by everyone else, and what emerges is something that no one willed.¹

If this does not express Marxist determinism adequately, it is because in fact it uses a language pertaining to the same scale of determination as it was understood to occur by positivists. Liberal positivists, in asking in materialist terms what determined men's actions and thoughts, maintained individual and motive, however conditioned and ignorant of self, as the very arena in which determinism occurred, and that it somehow took place as an event. Only in this way can we understand the powerful effect of the dynamics of process on determinism within a liberal positivist structure: process had reference to determinism or causality as it happened, especially in individual human life. It enacted, as I suggested earlier, the choice and no-choice of causation.

This brief contrast cannot really be taken further without going into the nature of the Marxist dialectic. Marx and Engels did not completely define determination as a relationship, and there have been many arguments over the problem of a crude model of an economic base determining a superstructure of political, legal, philosophical, and religious ideology, and the problem of reciprocal influences. As Engels argued, the production and reproduction of life was the ultimately

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Correspondence: 1846-1895 with commentary and notes, translated and edited by Dona Torr (London, 1943), p.476 (Engels to J. Bloch, 21 September 1890).

determining element in history and he stressed:

More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase.¹

There is one area of the subsequent debates which I wish to note. When Althusser develops the notion of reciprocal influences, determination is wholly divorced from process, and his is very much an abstract theory of structuralist determination. And there are two arguments made partly in answer to it that I wish to examine: E.P. Thompson's 'Poverty of Theory' which is a passionate polemic against Althusser's structuralism, and Sebastiano Timpanaro's On Materialism which identifies Althusser as a part of a current trend in Marxism disdaining the empirical and the concrete.² What is interesting is that the dynamics of process and intrusion, at a level other than broad epochal history, are used by E.P. Thompson and Timpanaro in particular arguments for human agency and for the re-instatement of areas felt to be ignored by determinist theory. Leaving aside the reasons for these arguments - their respective interests in history and science, as well as the problem of the historical justification of Stalinism - their analyses show a steering between a rigidly programmed history and structuralism, still pertinent to nineteenth century liberal positivism. The analogy between these arguments about the concrete process of historical materialism, and the liberal positivist feel for sequence or process, must not be taken too far, but it is suggestive of the facility of the dynamics of process for questions of human agency and the individual.

Interestingly, Althusser, against whom they argued, deplored French

1. Letter to J. Bloch, 21 September 1890 (p.475).

2. The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays (London, 1978), pp.1-210; On Materialism, translated by Lawrence Garner (London: Verso, 1980).

philosophy's 'relentless hostility to the only mind worthy of interest that it produced, Auguste Comte'.¹ We may see in Althusser's structural emphasis a rough analogy in dynamics with Comte's stress on the synchronic object of knowledge. Briefly, Althusser's argument is that the relationship of base to superstructure is no mere inversion of the Hegelian dialectic, and that the superstructure is no mere manifestation of the base. Instead, Althusser conceives of the superstructure as the conditions of existence of the structure. He conceives of a complex whole to which all its elements, whether dominant or subordinate, are necessary for its existence. In the terms of Marx's dialectic, says Althusser, there is not one principal contradiction from which the secondary ones can be separated: instead they are the conditions of its existence. Each level is 'relatively autonomous' and has a different temporality, but reflects its conditions of existence within the complex whole; this reflection Althusser calls 'overdetermination':

the 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, and even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates. (For Marx, p.101)

The economic does, ultimately, determine the non-economic, that is in 'the last instance', but 'from the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the "last instance" never comes' (p.113). Instead there is an assymetry in relations, with one structure being dominant, and the economic determines which element is dominant. However

determination in the last instance by the economy is exercised according to the phases of the process,

1. For Marx, translated by Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1979), p.25.

not accidentally, not for external or contingent reasons, but essentially, for internal reasons, by permutations, displacements and condensations. (For Marx, p.213)

These are mainly Althusser's terms, the key ones being 'over-determination' and 'structure-in-dominance', and, in very simple terms, his is an effort to get away from both mechanical and expressive effectivity: to internalise determination, anything viewed as external being the kind of empiricist understanding he deplores, but on the other hand to avoid seeing the non-economic as a mere reflection or expression of the economic.

E.P. Thompson considers the result a structuralism, and, noticeably, he rejects this because it gets rid not only of process but also of human agency. Althusser's categories 'economy', 'politics', and 'ideology' are, Thompson claims, categories of stasis, and 'movement can only take place within the closed field of the system or structure' (Poverty of Theory, p.83). Althusser has failed to see 'the difference between rule-governed structuration of historical eventuation (within which men and women remain as subjects of their own history) and structuralism' (p.153). The structure in the hands of Althusser, becomes God or Fate. It denies,

history as process, as open-ended and indeterminate eventuation - but not for that reason devoid of rational logic or determining pressures. (pp.83-84)

In effect Thompson sees a theory that has lost all sense of the role of concrete reality. He attacks Althusser's epistemology, which maintains that concrete reality can only ever be known in thought and that science is an application of theory to ideological facts, whilst the real-concrete survives independently.¹ For Thompson this is a self-confirming circle, and Althusser remains locked in a mere 'description of certain

1. Notice Althusser's affinity with Comte in this.

procedures of academic life' (p.8).

The way that Thompson repudiates this 'idealism' is by a constant insistence upon the 'medium of time' (p.7) and upon Marxist historical materialism as process at all levels. The raw materials of knowledge are not discreet mental events but evidence moving in time, often impinging on social consciousness and giving rise to experience. Thompson upholds experience as 'valid and effective' (p.7) within determined limits:

Experience arises spontaneously within social being, but it does not arise without thought; it arises because men and women (and not only philosophers) are rational, and they think about what is happening to themselves and their world. (p.8)

Social being determines social consciousness because changes that take place in social being give rise to experience: experience in turn is 'determining' (p.8), by exerting new pressures, proposing new questions, and providing material. In this way Thompson very much associates process with experience and agency, and, moreover, to do so he stresses that determination is felt as a pressure: the object of knowledge may not be active but its properties determine appropriate procedures of thought and its product. The dialogue between consciousness and being exists because consciousness has to handle these pressures:

Thought and being inhabit a single space, which is ourselves...we experience our own palpable reality. So that the problems which the 'raw materials' present to thought often consist exactly in their active, indicative, intrusive qualities. (p.18)

What is of note in these arguments is this intrusive quality and the sense of determination as happening: these are dynamics of process not so dissimilar to those of liberal positivism. Moreover, Thompson is using them specifically to re-vindicate human agency both from Althusser's circular, self-sustaining structural determinism and from the determinism of a programmed history.

It is interesting to note alongside Thompson's 'intrusiveness' or 'determining pressures', Timpanaro's argument for the passive element in experience. Timpanaro is arguing forcefully that, until Marxism includes physical and biological conditions as more than a prehistoric antecedent to human history, it is not proper materialism. Seeing many idealist tendencies as a result of this inadequacy of Marxist theory, both in Marxist reduction of science to ideology and in hasty conciliations with science without dividing the scientific from the ideological, Timpanaro advocates a rejection of the usual antithesis between history and science. Again, what is of note is the dynamics, comparable in points to Thompson's, by which Timpanaro not only argues that biological factors are ever-present, to the extent that communism can never overcome the biological frailty of men, but also puts into different perspective economic determination. For what was noticed about the change of scale of determinism coming from man's labour relationship with nature, is kept in check by Timpanaro's stress that there is a passive element in experience.

He uses the example of sickness as the kind of everyday knowledge which presents itself undesired. It is an example of 'an external occurrence that blocks and interferes with other practical and knowing experiences which the subject intended to undertake' (p.60). Experience, therefore, cannot be reduced to ideology; philosophy and art come not only from social relations but also from man's relation to nature. The value of a materialism which takes into account the persistence of biological data in social man is that it prevents the autonomy of the superstructure and any subsequent idealism. It refuses knowledge's complete domination of reality: knowledge alone cannot change the world, nor can it offer a complete 'consolation'. At stake for Timpanaro in this stress on passive experience is the individual 'as a psycho-

physiological reality', something he felt Marxism had to include and that Althusser, amongst others, had been wrong in rejecting.

Timpanaro's passive element has some affinity with Thompson's intrusion. To both Thompson and Timpanaro it is the experience of concrete reality, most especially by the individual, as something often unwanted which is crucial to the understanding of human participation, not only within a particular social structure, but also, subsequently, in the historical process itself. For both it is a way of showing that knowledge is not ideology without 'raw materials', and so contrasts with the kind of synchronic structure Althusser posits. Yet this is by no means a simple move from the synchronic to the diachronic; indeed process alone could just as easily bring in relentless laws of evolution and teleology. As Thompson says,

It is manifest that, when we say that history is not only process but process with intelligible regularities and forms, the mind finds it difficult to resist the conclusion that history must therefore be programmed in some way. (p.88)

In this we must see how the intrusive quality stressed not only process but determination as it was happening, the moment of process. Thompson suggests that the word 'law' be replaced by the phrase 'the logic of process' whereby the regularities of customs etc. and of social formations are analysed,

not as law necessities nor as fortuitous coincidences but as shaping and directive pressures, indicative articulations of human practices. (p.86)

This substitution is remarkably similar to Lewes' replacement of Comte's 'law' by 'method'. Both Thompson and Lewes identified a similar kind of problem: as Thompson says, the 'logic of process' is 'a metaphor which may include the idea of causal relations while excluding its determinist, predictive connotations'.¹ Just as individuals 'handle'

1. 'An Open Letter to Leszek Kolakowski' in The Poverty of Theory, pp. 303-402 (p.331).

their experience of determinate productive situations, so human beings in general 'handle' their history with a logic, the 'logic of process'.

It is something of this question of the logic of process that concerns Thompson and Timpanaro when they both seek to rescue Engels from accusations of Fatalism and Free-will. Both Thompson and Timpanaro consider Engels to have made a valuable development of historical materialism which is being cast aside in the traditional accusations against Engels of 'contamination of Marxism with vulgar materialism, Darwinism, and "fatalism"' (Timpanaro, p.76). And in Timpanaro's argument we may see that there is an analogy not only between his passivity and Thompson's intrusiveness, but also in the stress on the moment of handling. Engels' stress on the gap between the individual wills and their result shows, Timpanaro claims, that Engels did not resort to 'Free Will'. He fully knew that men's wills are determined by the socio-economic situation. The result of these individual wills is not produced by some miraculous harmony, and the very gap, of which Engels spoke, between men's plans and the results shows only too well that men are still in a natural stage and have yet to leap into freedom. What an individual desires, the ends he seeks, is determined by his preceding history, and the source of means is determined by its relationship to the end. Nevertheless, neither is this 'Fatalism' for, Timpanaro says:

The capacity to make plans and to order means in relation to ends is still within man's powers, as a consequence of an intellectual development engendered essentially by labour. (p.104)

Because of this, causal necessity does not endorse historical justificationism: there is a choice of solution to a problem. Freedom, as Engels shows, lies in the knowledge of natural laws and the possibility of systematically making them work for particular ends, although complete

freedom can only come with communism. What is of note in Timpanaro's arguments, is that, like Thompson's, this ability to order means, whilst ends are determined, reduces the question of human agency in determinism to a moment of handling, to the level of moments of process, the moment of dealing with determination that is pertinent not only to historical process but also to the individual.

It is worth noting as a way of drawing a close, Raymond Williams' re-definition of determination, which, although unlike Thompson and Timpanaro's is not concerned with intrusion and the individual, but rather with human 'intention', still brings out the dynamics of process. Williams' more specific concern in this re-definition is to see cultural activities as 'real practices', 'many and variable productive practices, with specific conditions and intentions'.¹ His main point is that 'in practice determination is never only the setting of limits; it is also the exertion of pressures' (p.87). These positive determinations have complex relations with determination experienced as limits. Williams writes:

'Society' is then never only the 'dead husk' which limits social and individual fulfilment. It is always also a constitutive process with very powerful pressures which are both expressed in political, economic, and cultural formations and, to take the full weight of 'constitutive', are internalized and become 'individual wills'. Determination of this whole kind - a complex and interrelated process of limits and pressures - is in the whole social process itself and nowhere else. (p.87)

Williams' emphasis is upon the 'constitutive' nature of society and its determinations, which is not so unlike Althusser's emphasis; however, it is upon the constitutive process, not the 'conditions of existence'. The concept of determining pressures brings out both the internal, un-objectified nature of determination and the emphasis upon 'an active and

1. Marxism and Literature (Oxford, 1977), p.94.

conscious as well as, by default, a passive and objectified historical experience' (p.88), a concept, that is, of process.

Without reading too much into these examples, it is interesting to note the way the dynamics of process are used. Without suggesting any real convergence between nineteenth-century liberal positivism and the twentieth century, essentially Marxist, concerns of Thompson and Timpanaro, their notions of intrusiveness and the way they focus upon determination as it 'happens' show the facility of the dynamics of process, pressure, and intrusion to questions of human agency, 'concrete reality', and the individual.

This chapter has served to demonstrate the underlying affinity of needs marking, and indeed forming, the emergent intellectual group of which Mill and Eliot were a part. These common needs, I have argued, arise from the fact that to explain deterministically within this historical context was invariably politically radical in the most general sense; but that just as pressing was the need to appropriate causation as an already powerful instrument for individual men and women. It was especially this last feeling that the dynamics of process could effect. Comte's attractive way of working, for which it might be said his work was so appealing, demonstrates these dynamics and their part in the self-confirmation of the text; whilst Spencer's work shows that, unlike Comte's, the effect of process in liberal positivism also depended on the dynamic of gap. In this last section I have suggested that the effect of process came from not only the reference to experiential knowledge but from the easy translation of the basic sequential causal relation to all questions of determinism. Finally, by way of analogy with a Marxist debate, I have suggested that these dynamics were particularly open to the question of human agency in determinism. In

liberal positivism, however, any argument for human agency either in a barbaric past or in an utopian future is secondary compared to the sensation of process in explanation, evolution, and narration. Reader and writer are offered a gift of release within the confines of a text. If Marx was to say in reference to Feuerbach, 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it',¹ it may be said of liberal positivists that they worked as though the two were one. They offered to change the world by explaining it, by telling its story. They could follow the influences that made an individual what he or she was, and it was important to them that they did so. But it was also important to them that the telling was enough. Hence we find texts that confirm their own role in the great sense of human knowledge about to bud and flourish, poised at the penultimate stage of human history; and this not because there was some decision that writing was political action, but as much because the dynamics of process and the need for a certain effect were exploited.

1. 'Theses on Feuerbach' in The German Ideology, translated by S. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, 1964), pp.645-47 (p.647).

Chapter III

'A System of Logic'

1. Writing a System of Logic

Today John Stuart Mill is most especially remembered for his short works On Liberty (1859), Utilitarianism (1863), The Subjection of Women (1869), and 'Bentham' and 'Coleridge' (1838 and 1840): at least these are more widely available in paperback editions. Mill himself felt that On Liberty, today the most famous, was 'likely to survive longer than anything else that I have written' but he added, in parenthesis, 'with the possible exception of the "Logic"'.¹ Indeed, Mill's A System of Logic (1843), followed by Principles of Political Economy (1848), had made his name and earned him the serious attention of a wide reading public.² Today the Logic, as a text, is relegated to the annals of the history of scientific and logical method, but the obituaries when Mill died suggest the extent to which the Logic was considered to have been the prime source of his wide intellectual influence and to be his lasting contribution. For Bain, after the Logic and Political Economy, 'his work, as a great originator, in my opinion, was done'.³ Mill himself had remembered:

In that same holiday I completed the first draft of my Logic, and had, for the first time, the feeling that I had now actually accomplished something - that one certain portion of my life's

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1. Autobiography (London, 1873), p.253.
 2. A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive, 2 vols (London, 1843). References are to the University of Toronto edition of Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, edited by F.E.L. Priestley and others (Toronto, 1963-), VII-VIII (1973), and give either page number or book, chapter, and page numbers.
 3. John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections (London, 1882), p.91.

work was done.¹

The tendency in the obituaries of Mill was to see in the Logic a unique combination of opposite schools of logic. As The Economist put it, 'no one comes near Mr Mill in the art... of piecing together' and the Logic and Political Economy,

are orderly, systematic works, in which the beginning has reference to the end, and almost every part has some relation, often a very close relation, to most other parts.²

The obituarists felt keenly his influence from this systematic and clear reconciliation of opposites. The Economist, for example, said 'half the minds of the younger generation of Englishmen have been greatly coloured by it'. For some this really was original speculation: H. Sidgwick was emphatic that Mill's 'insight and comprehensive scientific culture' managed 'to revolutionize the study of logic in England'.³ In the general estimation that, if Mill had done anything new, it was in the theory of method, his more critical and polemical works, the Hamilton for example, took a second place: Mill being most admired for his clarity and conscientious reading.⁴ As regards his political articles and his term in Parliament, the tribute was simply to Mill's enthusiasm, sincerity, and inspiration.

At the time of writing, Mill too had felt his capacity lay in logic:

the only thing that I believe I am really fit for, is the investigation of abstract truth, & the more abstract the better. If there is any science which I am capable of promoting, I think it is the science

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1. Later Letters of John Stuart Mill: 1849-1873, edited by Francis E. Mineka and Dwight Lindley, Collected Works, XIV-XVII (1972), 718 (1860). Hereafter these volumes will be abbreviated to LL.
 2. 'The Late Mr Mill', Economist, 31 (1873), 588-89.
 3. 'John Stuart Mill', Academy, 15 May 1873, p.193.
 4. An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy and of the Principal Philosophical Questions Discussed in his Writings (London, 1865).

of science itself, the science of investigation -
of method.¹

If he had any aim, he said, it was 'to forward that alliance among the most advanced intellects & characters of the age' (p.79). In his systemization and reconciliation, Mill was being deliberately uncontentious, but even in confining himself to the logic of experience he could not, as he said, avoid some open conflict with the a priori school. And Mill expected opposition. He was deliberately brash in writing to Comte, feeling that the Logic would encourage the move from the metaphysical to the positive stage: 'ce sera le premier coup un peu rude que l'école ontologique aura reçu en angleterre, au moins de nos jours, et que tôt ou tard ce coup lui sera mortel'.² Ultimately Mill's aim was polemical and contentious, but his thrust was of inclusion and extension, and he probably believed most that the long-term effect of his work was to be an undermining and winning over of opposition.

Even this, I do not think, really explains what Mill's Logic did do which means it was so esteemed at the time and yet today is not regarded as a milestone. If it had simply been a polemic or a reconciling system, it would not have been so powerfully recognised. Yet it is forgotten today because it did not constitute a revolution in perception, for which nothing could compare in nineteenth-century England to Darwin's work. What Mill's Logic did do, and the reason I am looking at it, was to articulate and express an already emergent structure of understanding; Mill did this by working out and following up in a dry, but conscientious way an understanding of the relationship between human learning and the natural world. The work has an air of abstraction, orderliness, and

1. Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill: 1812-1848, edited by Francis E. Mineka, Collected Works, XII-XIII (1963), 78-79 (20-22 October 1831). Hereafter these volumes will be abbreviated to EL.

2. EL, p.530 (11 July 1842).

reasonableness that secures firmly its function not as a lightning new vision, but as a feeling-out and stabilising of perspective. George Grote, a great enthusiast of Mill's Logic, wrote:

For ourselves, we still recollect the mist which was cleared from our minds when we first read the 'System of Logic,' very soon after it was first published.¹

Until Mill's Logic, Baconian induction and the formal logic of ratiocination had been, for Grote and others, 'two streams' which 'flowed altogether apart in our minds, like two parallel lines never joining nor approaching' (p.6). Perhaps Grote expressed the power of the inclusiveness better when he explained that Mill dealt with scholastic logicians so as to invest 'their dead though precise formalism with a real life and application to the actual process of finding and proving truth' (p.6). It is doubtful whether any one used the Logic as a blueprint for investigation, or whether anyone found the text lively. The life of the work lies in the thrust and perspective it makes clear, and so, I shall argue, in the shapes and dimensions Mill elicited. A crucial part of that life, I believe, comes from a perspective that handles determinism. It is not an overall work of classification and, although we may feel clearly the points at which science mystified Mill, it is neither fragmentary nor rigidly comprehensive: instead it provides a focus and perspective.

The work took more time than any other of Mill's - thirteen years of snatched spare time. It was worked on and revised thoroughly, and had eight editions in his life time. The work had begun simply - 'I have put down upon paper a great many of my ideas on logic, & shall in time bring forth a treatise'² - but as Mill's letters show he became

1. 'John Stuart Mill on the Philosophy of Sir Wm. Hamilton', Westminster Review, 29 n.s. (January 1866), 1-39 (p.6).

2. EL, p.79 (20-22 October 1831).

increasingly and passionately engrossed by the writing of the Logic, especially in the late thirties. In 1837 he wrote to John Robertson, 'I am so immersed in Logic and am getting on so triumphantly with it that I loathe the idea of leaving off to write articles', and, even more strikingly, 'for the first time these ten years I have no wish to be in Parliament'.¹ It had become an urgent working out: 'I do it in order to deliver myself of various things which I have in my head on the subject'.² Two years later he claimed,

I have at all events made things much clearer to myself than they were before - & that is something, even if I am destined to be my own disciple.³

Mill's Autobiography charts very clearly the way the Logic was written over the years as a kind of working out.⁴ It did not begin from nothing: empiricism and the idea of a world working by cause and effect were its founding convictions, the faith providing its discipline and need. In confronting what perplexed him, Mill shaped and formed these convictions, and I mean shaped not only in formal argument, but even more so in the dimensions and dynamics by which he worked. It was more than a simple response to the destruction he saw in utilitarian analysis and to the despair he himself felt at the doctrine of necessity. The problems were also more specific: Macaulay's attack on James Mill's political deductions had suggested to Mill real inadequacies in his father's methods; formal logicians had failed to make him understand how the syllogism worked; he believed induction to be the search for the causes of effects but its mode needed working out. Mill's perplexity can be seen in that, even after he had worked out some of

1. EL, p.345 (6 August 1837).

2. EL, p.340 (30 June 1837).

3. EL, p.406 (28 September 1839).

4. See, also, John M. Robson's textual introduction to the Logic in Collected Works, VII, xxi-xlvi.

these problems, he got stuck on induction, and there was a five year gap in his work. What made him resume work, and helped him with his difficulties, was typical of Mill. William Whewell's History of the Inductive Sciences, published in 1837, provided him with both comprehensive scientific material and an opponent. A similar effect resulted when Whewell published his Philosophy of Inductive Sciences in 1840, just as Mill was re-writing the Logic.¹ Mill had teased out the problem of Macaulay's induction and his father's deduction, he had taken hold of a suggestion of Dugwald Stewart's on mathematical axioms, explored it, and gained a theory of ratiocination, and he now springboarded off Whewell. In yet another form of response, Mill, ever grateful that he had worked out his theory of induction before Comte made such an impact on him, openly selected and adopted Comte's Inverse Deductive Method in the social sciences, and relied considerably on Comte's static-dynamic distinction. This way of working, with Mill's varying forms of response to others, was not simply of a man reconciling opposites, however much, as the Economist put it, 'he never gave heedless pain to any writer, and never distorted any one's meaning' (p.589). Mill was shaping and bringing into relief the dimensions and dynamics of liberal positivism. They come from old unshakable conviction and new need. The handling of determinism was very much a part of this, and it may be said that the value put upon the Logic by liberal intellectuals was that of a clear expression of the perspective and motions by which others too dealt with the situation. In performing a systematic reconciliation, Mill re-shapes the feel of reasoning, he re-locates what is meaningful and lawed in nature, and he relates the two in a way which not only

1. History of the Inductive Sciences, from the Earliest to the Present Times, 3 vols (London, 1837). The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, Founded upon their History, 2 vols (London, 1840).

deals with the fear of determinism, but also happens, as I shall explain at the end of this chapter, to lend itself to narrative method.

Mill's Logic is also a text, like other liberal positivist texts, which is tightly bound by its self-confirmation or self-justification. Although this does not take quite the same form as, for example, Spencer's description of evolution which includes the contemporary role of the description itself, Mill's application of method in order to present a thesis on method fulfils the same need for change by re-perception. Just as Mill's tactical editing of the Westminster Review had to be at one with the foundations of his philosophy of method, so even more so in the Logic Mill used the dimensions and dynamics of his subject matter to position his text in relation to other texts, and even to his notions of human life itself.

Mill secures this dimension from the very beginning. More than a systemizing reconciliation, Mill stressed the treatment of a common area:

Logic is common ground on which the partisans of Hartley and of Reid, of Locke and of Kant, may meet and join hands. Particular and detached opinions of all these thinkers will no doubt occasionally be controverted, since all of them were logicians as well as metaphysicians; but the field on which their principal battles have been fought, lies beyond the boundaries of our science. (Bk.1, Introduction, p.14)

The 'boundaries of our science' and the occasional controversy are crucial, in fact, to Mill's project. They acted not as unspoken but as defining markers deliberately and repeatedly recognised before their dismissal. Of course, by looking at what everyone shared, Mill expected an undermining effect upon his opponents so that his occasional controversy signalled the point at which their theories fell down. Neither was he dishonest about this; rather than reconciliation, he claimed to be engaged in an act of re-construction. He expressed his relationship to pre-existent theories in the same way as he expressed the relationship

of the investigator to the web of nature:

To cement together the detached fragments of a subject, never yet treated as a whole; to harmonize the true portions of discordant theories, by supplying the links of thought necessary to connect them, and by disentangling them from the errors with which they are always more or less interwoven; must necessarily require a considerable amount of original speculation. (Bk.1, Preface, p.cxi)

As shall be seen, the web provided for Mill, as for many others, a stabilising form for material reality and the possibilities of understanding it. Here, in the preface, the idea is very simply and persuasively neat: his was to be a logical treatment of logic and because his method was logical it would carry its own proof. What is interesting is the easy translation of the web formation: Mill had found a way of thinking that answered his needs at several levels.

Whilst Mill gave to the complexities of specificity the shape of a web, he forefronted reasoning as a process. He was by no means unusual in calling it a 'process', but he did more than this: he felt out keenly the dynamics of process as sequence, and, as shall be seen, relied on them in more ways than one. There are two points about process which I shall explain later, but which may also be seen in Mill's positioning of his text's whole project: process expressed generality within an empiricist understanding, and it expressed logic as a test. Firstly, the 'common ground' Mill approached was the process of reasoning common not only to Hartley, Reid, Locke and Kant, but to all men: 'Every one has daily, hourly, and momentary need of ascertaining facts which he has not directly observed' (Bk.1, Intro., p.9). Against the specificity of particular observation and of the 'daily, hourly and momentary' needs men answered in inferring, the form of process expressed the general form of reasoning. It expressed that, whatever their requirements, all men in the common instinctive activity of reasoning entered the same process,

gave the same performance. Reasoning was to Mill the great equaliser of men and women, and their liberator. Liberal positivists may have differed on the location of these qualities in reasoning, but their gut-like need for an abstract equality and freedom took the same form as Mill's, the form of process. Mill had great faith in reasoning; reasoning was to him something of an abstract god in whose eyes men were equal:

If there were but one rational being in the universe, that being might be a perfect logician; and the science and art of logic would be the same for that one person as for the whole human race. (Bk.1, Intro., p.6)

Secondly, reasoning as a process meant that logic was its intervening test and that the 'authority of logic' to which 'nearly the whole, not only of science, but of human conduct, is amenable' (Bk.1, Intro., p.9) was not God-given, but supplied by the instinctive activity of reasoning. Reasoning was like bodily motions for the performance of which we do not need to know anatomy, but for the correction of malfunction we do. Here Mill was sanguinely absolute - assured that there was a 'difference between a correct and an incorrect performance of those processes' (Bk.1, Intro., p.13). Process was crucial to Mill's impulse that in reasoning about reasoning, he was intervening, acting as arbitrator and impartial judge, and that the rules he obeyed lay in the process itself: the art of logic based on the science, medicine on anatomy. He confined and disciplined logic to the most abstract and general point. Most of our knowledge comes from inference:

Logic, however, is not the same thing with knowledge, though the field of logic is coextensive with the field of knowledge. Logic is the common judge and arbiter of all particular investigations. It does not undertake to find evidence, but to determine whether it has been found. Logic neither observes, nor invents, nor discovers; but judges. (Bk.1, Intro., p.10)

Neither observing, inventing, nor discovering, logic is in Mill's hands an inert tool, an instrument of impartiality, and yet god-like in judging all men alike. The non-creativity, the intervening role of logic, emerges in Mill's treatment of it as an intermediate point: all inferences pass through the court of appeal of logic.

To stress this process, Mill deliberately and overtly relegated what was not logic to a kind of beginning. Within his theory, the beginnings were the particular experience, direct intuition, and premises without which inference could not take place. As regards his own text, Mill's constant dismissal of metaphysical debates - debates as to what truths are intuitive, as to the distinction between mind and matter, as to what substance is - is not a dismissal of the problematic nature of these questions, but a relegation of these disputed areas to beginnings. In deliberately acknowledging these questions Mill provided himself with inferential processes he could intervene: the dimensions and dynamics by which he could claim impartial arbitration. Just as the necessary perceptions, observations, and intuitions are 'antecedent data', 'original premises', and 'primitive data' (Bk.1, Intro., pp.6-9), Mill's own antecedents, originals, and primitives were the metaphysics, the occasional controversy, the 'I shall not here inquire whether it be true that', and the 'whatever opinion we hold' without which Mill's text would have been meaningless.

Inference being a performance, Mill's whole text is a performance, a performance not only of arbitration but also of freedom. Logic pointed out relations which must exist between data and conclusions, and,

every particular branch of science, as well as every individual in the guidance of his conduct, is bound to conform to those relations, under the penalty of making false inferences - of drawing conclusions which are not grounded in the realities of things. (Bk.1, Intro., pp.10-11)

This 'penalty' was the great liberator of men from their own bias, prejudice, and motivation: they were exposed to logic. Later, in his introduction to fallacies (Bk.5), Mill used logic as intermediary and intermediate in process to express prejudice and motivation as instigators or beginnings. Again Mill concentrates his own work on the middle point:

The sources of erroneous opinions are twofold, moral and intellectual. Of these, the moral do not fall within the compass of this work.
(Bk.5, ch.1, p.737)

Although 'moral causes' - 'Indifference to the attainment of truth, and Bias' - were Mill's targets, it was important to the well-being of his commitment that prejudice was marked but not discussed:

But the moral causes of opinions, though with most persons the most powerful of all, are but remote causes: they do not act directly, but by means of the intellectual causes. (Bk.5, ch.1, p.737)

Whatever men sought to know and do, whatever they desired to believe (they had to have, just like Mill, motivation to infer), they had to abuse logic if what they wished was not in accordance with reality:

But though the opinions of the generality of mankind, when not dependent on mere habit and inculcation, have their root much more in the inclinations than in the intellect, it is a necessary condition to the triumph of the moral bias that it should first pervert the understanding. Every erroneous inference, though originating in moral causes, involves the intellectual operation of admitting insufficient evidence as sufficient; and whoever was on his guard against all kinds of inconclusive evidence which can be mistaken for conclusive, would be in no danger of being led into error even by the strongest bias. (Bk.5, ch.1, pp.738-39)

Logical process meant men did not have to remain victims of their bias.

All the hope Mill put in reason was expressed in the sentence:

If the sophistry of the intellect could be rendered impossible, that of the feelings, having no instrument to work with, would be powerless.
(Bk.5, ch.1, p.739).

Logic was a means that could indeed become ends. Although it would be meaningless without its instrumental role, logic could also be desired in itself. Mill had claimed at the beginning of the Logic:

And I can conscientiously affirm, that no one proposition laid down in this work has been adopted for the sake of establishing, or with any reference to its fitness for being employed in establishing, preconceived opinions in any department of knowledge or of inquiry on which the speculative world is still undecided.
(Bk.1, Intro., pp.14-15).

Mill did have preconceived opinions and he knew it, but he prided himself on being open to counter argument. His joy in writing the Logic was a joy in getting beyond the polemics of journalism; the Logic serves as an event, a performance in which impartiality was a freedom from self. Mill began with an assumed empirical faith, but he believed that he was subjecting himself, as well as others, to the same court of appeal. We may suggest, therefore, the extent to which Mill's own text was an event, a performed process, an act of freeing both himself and others.

2. Mill's journey and Whewell's stair

The shape of process given to reasoning expressed a great deal more than its instrument-like role in human life: it also distinguished Mill's understanding of reasoning from that of the formal textbooks of logic and the whole a priori school. The radical difference is implied in the contrast between Mill's basic sense that reasoning provided a freedom from self's prejudices and motives, and the a priori notion of looking inwards to innate knowledge with reasoning as deduction therefrom. The a priori inclusion of ethical, not just mathematic innate truths epitomised everything Mill fought against. Mill's process served to dislodge or undermine the basis of his opponents' theories and to re-shape what he did take from them. Mill deepened the sense of sequence

and at points, where the arguments reached unbreachable assertion, this radically different form was his only distinction.

Although Mill worked by dislodging and re-shaping his opponents' theories prior to constructing his own theory of inductive reasoning, this would have been impossible if he had not established from the start that inference was a process of arriving at truths not known by direct intuition. His two major points, that indeed formed his argument against the a priori school, were that reasoning was based solely on experience of particulars, and that reasoning was a way of eliciting distinct new truths - 'we set out from known truths, to arrive at others really distinct from them' (Bk.2, ch.1, p.162). The whole basis of Mill's logic was that inference was from particulars to particulars, and from known truths to unknown truths. According to this, Mill early on secures that induction - reasoning from particulars to the more general - is real inference. The general conclusion reached in induction has proceeded beyond the premises to unknown particulars:

A principle ascertained by experience, is more than a mere summing up of what has been specifically observed in the individual cases which have been examined; it is a generalization grounded on those cases, and expressive of our belief, that what we there found true is true in an indefinite number of cases which we have not examined, and are never likely to examine... In every induction we proceed from truths which we knew, to truths which we did not know; from facts certified by observation, to facts which we have not observed, and even to facts not capable of being now observed; future facts, for example; but which we do not hesitate to believe on the sole evidence of the induction itself. (Bk.2, ch.1, p.163)

Generalization as a belief about unknown particulars is a very specific tenet of Mill's, and process - 'we proceed from truths which we knew, to truths we did not know' - is its most basic and distinguishing form. The form is crucial to the way in which Mill dealt with deduction or reasoning from generals to particulars.

Deduction was the province of the textbooks of formal logic, and the way Mill dealt with formal logic formed the major part of his attack on the whole a priori school. Established formal logic, the prime example of which Mill used being Archbishop Whately's Elements of Logic, dealt only with the logic of consistency in that it was confined to deductive reasoning in the form of the syllogism.¹ It was obvious that this formal discipline of eliciting 'no New Truth' and revealing what is 'wrapt up' in assertions was, according to Mill's tenets, not inference at all.² Alone, the syllogism displayed a circularity: the syllogism, consisting of two premises (one a general proposition) followed by a conclusion, was claimed to be founded on the maxim dictum de omni et nullo: that whatever can be affirmed or denied of a class may be affirmed or denied of everything included in the class. Firstly, Mill argued that the maxim, unless we believe in universal substances, was really only a definition of class, whilst a proposition is really about facts, about objects and their attributes identified by marks, so that the more correct maxim would be: 'whatever has any mark, has that which it is a mark of' (Bk.2, ch.2, p.181). Secondly, he argues that this alone is no inference: the conclusion being firmly presupposed in the premises. Importantly, Mill was not contending with the detailed rules of the syllogism such as Whately gave: whilst other critics tended to deem the syllogism useless, Mill did not abandon deduction so much as break into the apparent circularity of the syllogism.

Firstly, Mill chose to re-understand the syllogism as an interpretation of a general proposition to see whether it applied to a particular case. Mill likened this activity to the work of the judge

1. Elements of Logic, Comprising the Substance of the Article in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana: with additions, &c., ninth edition (London, 1848).

2. Whately, p.239.

who interprets the law:

When the premises are given by authority, the function of Reasoning is to ascertain the testimony of a witness, or the will of a legislator, by interpreting the signs in which the one has intimated his assertion and the other his command. In like manner, when the premises are derived from observation, the function of Reasoning is to ascertain what we (or our predecessors) formerly thought might be inferred from the observed facts, and to do this by interpreting a memorandum of ours, or of theirs. (Bk.2, ch.3, p.194)

Unless 'the book was written, like the Koran, with a quill from the wing of the angel Gabriel' (p.186), the legislation is purely human, and we are interpreting 'our own previous belief', 'our former intention' (p.195). The analogy shows up the authoritative nature of the premises and so brings out Mill's point that, if the conclusion of such an interpretation is believed, it is not because of the syllogistic process alone but because the authority is already believed in. The radical effect of this analogy was that, whilst seemingly allowing the a priori school their innate truths, Mill down graded their innate truths to experience, and reduced their premises to a matter of personal belief or intention. Calling intention 'former' and 'previous', Mill in effect used sequence to press a priori theorists to justify their beginnings, not their conclusions:

Secondly, Mill chose to use as his example of the syllogism a general proposition obviously observable and not of God's authority. Emphasising empirical inference, and so sequential process, he was able to dig into the syllogism of formal logic. He uses as his example of a syllogism:

All men are mortal,
The Duke of Wellington is a man,
therefore
The Duke of Wellington is mortal. (Bk.2, ch.3, p.185)

To conclude that the Duke of Wellington is mortal when he is still alive is obviously an inference, but it is not an inference from 'All men are

mortal' because he is included in this: it is merely interpreted to see whether it applies to him. The inference lies in the general proposition itself: from particular experience it was inferred that in like cases mortality would occur. The general proposition recorded this inference; we do not believe that the Duke of Wellington is mortal simply in order to avoid inconsistency with a principle, but because of the particular experience on which the inference is based. Mill did not simply say that the inference came before the syllogism and so leave the a priori understanding of the syllogism intact. The syllogism was only re-translated intact as interpretation if the internal relationship between its general premise and conclusion was looked at in isolation. Turning to the syllogism's whole relationship to inference, Mill brought out a process that travelled on to include the conclusion of the syllogism. This process involved a radical re-shaping, permitting him to appropriate the rules of the syllogism for a new understanding of it.

Mill was in fact appropriating the rules of the syllogism as a sophisticated expression of a very basic mental activity. A general proposition was a verbalisation of an activity that need not be verbalised. Mill gives many examples of the way inference is made from particulars to particulars without the use of a general proposition, and they are examples of an instinctive performance. For him all the following are cases of inference: the dog and the child who both being burnt by fire, fear fire in the future; the village matron who diagnoses a child's illness simply because it was 'the similar case of her Lucy'; the savage who knows how to throw his spear successfully; the military man who, with 'little theoretical instruction', knows how to arrange his troupes (Bk.2, ch.3, pp.188-89). The inclusion of the animal and the savage was particularly contentious, but for Mill it was important to understand that inference was an instinctive activity of mind, neither based on, nor

proved by its verbal form: 'not one iota is added to the proof by interpolating a general proposition' (Bk.2, ch.3, p.187). However, equally important was the fact that this instinctive performance could always be expressed in the form of a general proposition:

If, from observation and experiment, we can conclude to one new case, so may we to an indefinite number. If that which has held true in our past experience will therefore hold in time to come, it will hold not merely in some individual case, but in all cases of some given description. (Bk.2, ch.3, p.196)

There was but one type of basic inference and no generalization leapt on to some different plane of high and mighty principles. The sequential form expressed a great deal for Mill: moving from known particulars to unknown particulars it offered to generalization this mid-way point, this no-man's-land position which kept the progress of inference on the level of experience - generalization is 'but an aggregate of particular truths' (p.186) - but expressed its crucial move beyond specific particular experience so that a general proposition was always possible but never necessary.

Mill spoke of inference as a kind of journey:

I am unable to see why we should be forbidden to take the shortest cut from these sufficient premises to the conclusion, and constrained to travel the 'high priori road' by the arbitrary fiat of logicians. I cannot perceive why it should be impossible to journey from one place to another unless we 'march up a hill, and then march down again'. It may be the safest road, and there may be a resting-place at the top of the hill, affording a commanding view of the surrounding country; but for the mere purpose of arriving at our journey's end, our taking that road is perfectly optional; it is a question of time, trouble, and danger. (Bk.2, ch.3, p.187)

Mill argued that 'the syllogistic form is an indispensable collateral security for the correctness of the generalization itself' (p.196).

Pressing the usefulness of the syllogism in helping to check the

sufficiency of generalizations, Mill maintains the sense of direction with which he had imbued inference:

it is always possible, and generally advantageous, to divert our argument into the circuitous channel of an induction from those known cases to a general proposition, and a subsequent application of that general proposition to the unknown case. (Bk.2, ch.3, p.197; my emphasis)

Because a general proposition was always possible, an inference could always be thrown into the syllogistic form in which the whole inference takes the form of an induction followed by a deduction. It was a useful way of looking at arguments, but, according to the metaphor of the journey, whichever route was taken, the high road or the low road, it was the same move onwards, arriving at the same destination.

Mill's metaphor of induction followed by deduction as the taking of the high road in a basic inferential journey, was a radical re-understanding of the relationship between induction and deduction as it was perceived by formal logicians such as Whately and the general a priori school of thought. In arguing that general propositions are based on experience and deduction based on induction, Mill was not simply contradicting the tenet of deductive reasoning and coming down on the side of inductive reasoning. Nor was he simply reconciling the two. The radically different feel he gave to inference by treating it as process allowed him to re-understand by re-shaping, and it was the most powerful and constructive aspect of his polemic. This is perhaps less evident in contrasting Mill's ideas with Whately's. Whately was one of those who had confined reasoning to deduction and denied that induction was reasoning. Deduction was reasoning from necessary truths which were 'propositions relating to our notions, and modes of thought', a priori, and innate.¹ The conclusions deduced were recognised and reasoning was

1. Whately, p.245.

a form of argument or instruction. In contrast induction was informative investigation: it dealt with contingent truths, with 'matters of fact, respecting the nature of things (which may be perfectly new to us)', which were collected together to discover new truths.¹ The qualities of reasoning become clear in a point Whately made that an inductive conclusion could be a reasoned conclusion if the person is 'in possession of the data' and knows his subject well: he discovers no new truth and is in fact arguing deductively with the major premise taken for granted and suppressed.² He uncovers the implication of what he already knows. Although it might seem that Mill was simply offering a counter argument that inference did discover something new, he is also denying the oppositional relationship between induction and deduction upon which Whately relies.

This oppositional relationship is best seen in the work of Mill's other opponent, Whewell. Whewell's distinctively Kantian a priori philosophy dealt in depth with induction and with the idea of the possession and recognition of truth only touched upon by Whately. For Whewell, like Whately, mathematical sciences, or the 'Pure' sciences, were 'unfolded out of ideas alone'³ but the distinction between necessary and contingent truths was only one form of what he called the Fundamental Antithesis, the subjective and objective elements in knowledge. Moreover, although these elements were distinct, they were inseparable, every act of knowledge involving both: every sensation involved an idea, every idea had to be occasioned by sensation. Thus the inductive sciences, although requiring specific experience (particular observation and experiment) and discovering contingent truths whose opposite was conceivable, also

1. Whately, p.245.

2. Whately, p.251.

3. Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, I, 79.

involved an ideal element. Each science depended on several Fundamental Ideas supplied by the mind, and it progressed as ideas were uncovered and clarified so as to include particular facts. Thus, to Whewell necessary truths were progressive: with cultivation and experience more such truths could be uncovered, but they and their necessity were provided by the mind.

From this idea of provision or source comes the idea of a given fund of a priori knowledge and the sense in Whewell's philosophy of re-possession. Notice the language in which Whewell describes the uncovering of a new conception:

It is a thought which, once breathed forth, permeates all men's minds. All fancy they nearly or quite knew it before. It oft was thought, or almost thought, though never till now expressed. Men accept it and retain it, and know it cannot be taken from them, and look upon it as their own. They will not and cannot part with it, even though they may deem it trivial and obvious. It is a secret, which once uttered, cannot be recalled, even though it be despised by those to whom it is imparted.¹

For Whewell, the a priori source had a distinctly religious basis:

All that this lamp - the intellect of man cultivated by science, - does, by the light which it gives, is this - that it dispels a darkness which is dark for man alone, and discloses to him some things in some measure as all things lie in clear and perfect light before the eye of God.²

Induction for Whewell, like Mill, was more than a mere summarising of particulars. But unlike Mill, it involved 'a new conception, a principle of connexion and unity, supplied by the mind, and superinduced upon the particulars',³ and was distinct from Mill's instinctive activity which Whewell called merely practical skill. A conception was a special

1. Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, II, 218.

2. On the Philosophy of Discovery, Chapters Historical and Critical (London, 1860), p.350.

3. Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, II, 242.

modification of 'Ideas' exemplified in particular facts, and Whewell visualised a table of ascending generalizations, each including those below it. A conception's truth lay in its being the exact expression, and ultimately the only possible expression of those particulars included. The logic of induction lay in this tabular arrangement so as to see the truth of the inductions. The table is like a geneological tree, ascended by induction and descended by deduction.

Thus, although Mill shared the view of science tending to simplicity and converging to unity, Whewell's idea of induction as possession, as a kind of 'book-keeping' with the 'treasury of science' accumulating wealth, is radically different.¹ Where Mill's inference was a journey getting somewhere that could be expressed by an induction followed by deduction, for Whewell 'Induction moves upwards and Deduction downwards on the same stair'; 'Deduction descends steadily and methodically, step by step: Induction mounts by a leap which is out of the reach of method'; 'though contrary in their motions, the two are the operation of the same mind travelling over the same ground'.² This kind of induction was therefore something of an extension of the territory of deduction, experience something of an occasion to find within ourselves the conceptions that would include and express our experience. Mill, too, aimed at the progress of sciences into deduction, of getting at the basic principles whereby results could be deduced and explained. But to him, as a science became increasingly deductive, it did not get less inductive: the sole basis of deduction and our belief in the conclusions reached, being the inductions which made it possible. Mill's process-like journey contrasts sharply with Whewell's inductive table, and the contrast is between the dynamic and the static.

1. Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, II, 246 and 247.

2. Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, II, 257.

In the light of Whewell's claim that there has to be sensation for an idea, Mill's refutation of the a priori necessity of the mathematical sciences was simple: the axioms of mathematics are experiential truths that we constantly witness, and there is no need to ascribe to them an a priori source. They may appear abstract and their opposites may seem inconceivable, but this is only because they are very generalized and are constantly experienced. Mathematical propositions are always of real things, not of ideas or names, and only on this basis do we believe their deductive conclusions. What Mill upheld, and felt to be denied by the a priori argument, was the

power, which is the foundation of all the control we can exercise over the operations of our minds; the power, when a perception is present to our senses, or a conception to our intellects, of attending to a part only of that perception or conception, instead of the whole. (Bk.2, ch.5, p.225)

What is interesting is the way Mill expresses the concentration upon one aspect, the generalization and the hypotheses used. For, in relation to the experience of real objects, these activities are presented as occupying an intermediate point between the experience which is their basis and the real objects to which the conclusions deduced refer. In this way Mill explains how the definitions of geometry are hypothetical: they refer to real objects but neglect irregularities. We never experience a perfect circle, but we make generalizations as regards a perfect circle which are true of all circles but not exactly true of any one. So:

our liberty extends only to slightly exaggerating some of those [properties] which it has, (by assuming it to be completely what it really is very nearly,) and suppressing others, under the indispensable obligation of restoring them whenever, and in as far as, their presence or absence would make any material difference in the truth of our conclusions. (Bk.2, ch.5, p.228; my emphasis)

In a similar fashion, Mill expresses the very generalised nature of the symbols of algebra:

The ideas which, on the particular occasion, they happen to represent, are banished from the mind during every intermediate part of the process, between the beginning, when the premises are translated from things into signs, and the end, when the conclusion is translated back from signs to things. (Bk.2, ch.6, p.254)

Thus, Mill stresses in terms of sequence that, although numbers may refer to anything, and algebraic symbols to any number, they always refer to something. In this case there is only one hypothesis, that $1=1$, and the basis is still sensationalist experience: the different sensations that different numbers give us.

This intermediate point in the act of inference, characterised in mathematical inductions as a moment of concentration upon one aspect of experience and as using a certain degree of disciplined hypothesis, is indeed the moment of vast generalization. Not only does the position of intermediate point in a sequence keep generalization and hypothesis on the level of experience, but it also depicts their empirical verifiability (generalization referring to nothing more than unknown particulars). Where Whewell's induction merely ascends, and where its tabular arrangement enabling deductions back down 'the same stair' to particulars is its sole proof, Mill's inference as a journey taking us to knowable but as yet unknown particulars, claims an actual test: it either gets us there or not. The difference, again, is perhaps more one of form than of anything else, for doubtless Whewell would not claim that we know all particulars. But for Mill it is absolutely vital that we do not know them, inference meaning nothing if we did. The need for this unknown, for the sense of breaking new ground, was essential. The difference between Whewell's table and Mill's journey suggests the extent to which the quality of event or performance Mill gave to inference was an important distinguishing

feature of non-religious, as opposed to religious, understanding. Certainly all the implications of freedom from self, amenability to judgment, experiential knowledge, and particular need are made coherent by this quality. But the difference between ascending and descending the same stair, and making a journey or going through a process is at points the only feature distinguishing Mill from Whewell, and permitting Mill to emphasise all that was at stake for him.

Mill's debate with Whewell over Kepler's law of the elliptical path of the planets shows up one point where Mill's dynamics are his only, but unbreachable distinction. Mill's attack on Whewell also reveals the deep distinction for him between the stasis of description and the process of inference. Kepler's discovery was used repeatedly by Whewell as an example of induction, induction for Whewell being the 'colligation of facts', and the fervour of Mill's attack was motivated largely by his wish to deny an untestable subjective element in knowledge. For Whewell, Kepler's many hypothetical guesses until he hit upon the conception of the ellipse were exemplary of the way science had progressed in history and how it should continue to progress: Kepler's combination of inventive fancy in making hypotheses, and love of truth in rejecting those not fitting the facts, demonstrated best the Fundamental Antithesis involved in knowledge. Kepler, in binding together the facts of the observed positions of a planet by superimposing the conception of an ellipsis, had made a typical induction.¹

Firstly, Mill, deploring the idea of superimposition in induction, argued that 'Kepler did not put what he had conceived into the facts, but saw it in them' (Bk.3, ch.2, p.295). But Mill had to make a distinction that in this example was not easy. Because the path of a planet could

1. For a vivid depiction of Kepler's scientific imagination, see John Banville's novel Kepler (London, 1981).

not be seen all at once, but only by its successive positions, Mill had to make some guarded concessions. Kepler certainly had to have a conception of ellipse in his mind, but it was a conception from other experience, and 'the ellipse was in the facts before Kepler recognised it' (p.295), claimed Mill. Secondly, Mill argued that Kepler only found a conception which was a description fitting the observed positions of the planet, something we could see if we were not limited by our organs and our positions. The only inferences involved were that the planets continued to move in the same paths and that the position of the planet between observed points coincided with the intermediate points of the curve. And these inferences 'had been drawn long before he [Kepler] was born' (p.293). To Mill's constant re-iteration that the ellipse is in the facts, Whewell said: 'But to this I reply, that its being really in the facts, does not help us at all towards knowledge, if we cannot see it there'.¹ In fact Mill and Whewell's argument rested on the unresolvable difference that Mill, despite his concessions, believed ellipticity to be a sensible property and Whewell did not.² However, the idea of superimposing mattered less to Mill if it was called description, than if it was called induction. Horrified at the conjunction of the two words, Mill's actual argument becomes muddled as he tries to say both that Kepler's law is not a superimposition, and that it is not an induction. Mill's perhaps more pertinent point about Kepler and inference was only made somewhat rapidly, and only towards the end of his argument:

Kepler did not extend an observed truth to other cases than those in which it had been observed: he did not widen the subject of the proposition

1. Philosophy of Discovery, p.259.

2. See Harold T. Walsh, 'Whewell and Mill on Induction', Philosophy of Science, 29 (1962), 279-84.

which expressed the observed facts. The alteration he made was in the predicate. Instead of saying, the successive places of Mars are so and so, he summed them up in the statement, that the successive places of Mars are points in an ellipse. (Bk.3, ch.2, p.303)

To sum up facts together under one conception, was to Mill only description because it lacked for him any test of truth: descriptions neither prove nor can their proof be tested. Whewell made a point which Mill regarded as a grave concession:

at different stages of the progress of science the facts had been successfully connected by means of very different conceptions, while yet the later conceptions have not contradicted, but included, so far as they were true, the earlier: thus the ancient Greek representation of the motions of the planets by means of epicycles and eccentrics, was to a certain degree of accuracy true, and is not negatived, though superseded, by the modern representation of the planets as describing ellipses round the sun.¹

Mill rejected this by saying that induction, in contrast to description, explained or predicted: contradictory explanations or predictions cannot all be true. Induction is proof and inductive logic is the test of proof. As has been seen, this verifiability relied on induction being more than a collection of facts, but without an added subjective element, and the distinction from Whewell is not easy without the sequential form. In this form, Mill effectively substitutes for Whewell's a priori conception, the kind of no-man's land or mid-way point during a leap of mind; subjective superimposition becomes the objective undergoing of a process.

In contrast to the process of inference, Mill's idea of description would seem to be of something static. Whilst induction as a process got us somewhere else, and the unknown particulars at the end of the journey, if and when known, could verify that journey, description did not. The

1. Philosophy of Discovery, p.250.

distinction served Mill to define his idea of inference against others'. However, the difference between static description and sequential inference was more than a simple difference between mental operations: it touches upon the real relations and objects that those mental operations dealt with. Whewell astutely noted this tendency:

The only meaning which I can discover in this attempted distinction of Description and Induction is, that when particular facts are bound together by their relations in space, Mr. Mill calls the discovery of the connexion Description, but when they are connected by other general relations, as time, cause and the like, Mr. Mill terms the discovery of the connexion Induction.¹

I wish to show that Whewell, in this comment, was right.

3. A world that works by causation alone

Whewell's comment is perhaps a little unfair, in that it implies that Mill was wholly unconscious of this tendency of his. A brief glance at Mill's theory of naming and propositions shows that the distinction between spatial relations described and causal relations inferred, is firmly fixed in his phenomenalism. It is going to be my argument in this section that, for Mill, causation is defined by inference, and inference by causation, and that this mutual definition is the meeting of two sequences, mental sequence and the real sequence of nature. The distinction between stasis and process runs deeper in Mill's work than in the more obvious facet of arguing a posteriori knowledge as opposed to a priori knowledge: it also lies in the relationship of human understanding to nature. Ultimately Mill's phenomenalism was based on a radical empiricism, experience constituting only sensations or states of consciousness. An object was the unknowable cause attributed to an assemblage of sensations, and an attribute of that object was simply one

1. Philosophy of Discovery, p.248.

of those sensations. In fact, although this sensationalism emerges very clearly in Mill's exposition of naming, he lets 'common usage' of names level out this distinction between directly known sensations and the inferred external world, and so allows experience to be the less radical observation of particulars.¹

Leaving aside the question of the external world, what provides a valuable insight into what Mill considered could be simply described, is his treatment of the attributes of relations. In general a relation is a fact entered into by two different objects and that fact is itself a state of consciousness. The interesting 'peculiar relations' to be noted are the relations of succession, simultaneity, and likeness and unlikeness which are not grounded on states of consciousness, but are states of consciousness themselves: 'resemblance is nothing but our feeling of resemblance; succession is nothing but our feeling of succession' (Bk.1, ch.3, p.74). If we have two sensations, they are either successive or simultaneous 'by the nature of our faculties' (p.69), there is no third sensation; so too with resemblance, whether we call it a third sensation or not, resemblance or dissimilarity 'are parts of our nature' (p.70). These peculiar types of relation are important in that, being non-reducible sensations, Mill is able to allow them to be simply described or affirmed without an act of inference. Although Mill largely confines this question to one section of his chapter on things denoted by names, and does not specifically use the argument elsewhere, it is a vital and basic tenet of his. For example, in a footnote dispute with Herbert Spencer over the propriety of speaking in general language of several objects having the same attribute, Mill relied on resemblance as a non-reducible state of consciousness.² Mill argued that to name several

1. For a useful argument on the nature of Mill's empiricism, see R.F. McRae's introduction to the Logic in Collected Works, VII, xxi-
xlvi.

2. Bk.2, ch.2, pp.178-80.

similar sensations one attribute was not to assert that an attribute is a 'real thing, possessed of objective existence'. Certainly, 'the things compared are many, but the something common to all of them must be conceived as one', for what we are naming is not the many sensations but their singular similarity or resemblance.

It was upon the ability to distinguish attributes of objects, and to perceive similarities, coexistences, and differences, that Mill believed a workable and meaningful general language to be based. To be able to form general names according to similar sets of attributes of objects, was to provide a flexible general language, not bound by rigid classifications, but allowing propositions to be made, not about ideas or names, but about things. The most important division of names that Mill made was between connotative and non-connotative names: a non-connotative name signified a subject or attribute only, whilst a connotative name denoted a subject and implied an attribute. Connotation, the marking of one thing along with another, was a way of naming providing not arbitrary marks or classifications, but real information. Concrete general names, perhaps the most valuable in Mill's catalogue, were all connotative and were names applied to an indefinite number of things 'because they possess, and to signify that they possess, certain attributes' (Bk.1, ch.2, p.31). The making of propositions was a further development of the identification of attributes, not using attributes to form names but to perceive 'the order existing among phenomena' (Bk.1, ch.5, p.93). A proposition was essentially an assertion 'that some given subject does or does not possess some attribute; or that some attribute is or is not...conjoined with some other attribute' (Bk.2, ch.1, p.158). Real propositions were always assertions of existence, order in place, order in time, causation, or resemblance. Of these categories of Mill's, it is to be remarked that, except those of existence and causation, they are assertions,

whether in fact inferences or not, which are based on those 'peculiar relations' that were sensations in themselves.

In this way, Mill allowed a large scope for the description of experience without inference save as to the external world. By making it possible to describe sensations in terms of resemblances, successions, and coexistences without inference, he lays the basis from which the perception of spatial relations may be described rather than inferred. In turn this is the philosophical basis on which Mill relied in his ultimate inability, and unwillingness, to separate the notion of inference from the notion of causation: effectively he whittled down inference to a causal referent. If we consider Mill's definition of causation, we may see that the causal relation is strictly defined by inference. The dependence of inference on causation shall be seen later, but here, because causation is also a temporal relation of succession, we may begin to see how the two time scales meet.

To Mill, as far as our senses are concerned, the phenomenon A followed by B is identical to A causing B. In both cases A is simply succeeded by B, but the difference between saying that A is followed by B and saying that A causes B, is the difference between describing a succession of sensations and saying that whenever A occurs it is succeeded by B. The causal relation is a relation of invariable succession. The cause A is the invariable antecedent, the effect B the invariable consequent. Moreover, in asserting that A causes B, we are not simply saying that A has invariably been followed by B, but that it invariably will be followed by B. A is the unconditional invariable antecedent of B. We may in fact only have experienced A once, but, if we believe that it caused the consequent B, we believe that should A occur again it will be followed by B. Thus, although day has invariably followed night in our experience, we do not assert that night causes day because,

we do not believe that night will be followed by day under all imaginable circumstances, but only that it will be so provided the sun rises above the horizon. If the sun ceased to rise, which, for aught we know, may be perfectly compatible with the general laws of matter, night would be, or might be, eternal. (Bk.3, ch.5, pp.338-39)

The unconditionalness of the invariability is what defines causation:

This is what writers mean when they say that the notion of cause involves the idea of necessity. If there be any meaning which confessedly belongs to the term necessity, it is unconditionalness. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.339)

To say not only that something always has been so, but also that it always will be so, is in fact to be able to extend experience of particulars to particulars not experienced, that is, to make an inference. Thus, to assert that A causes B, is to distinguish it from A followed by B by claiming the ability to infer to all other like cases as yet unknown. This, alone, is necessity.¹

The unconditionalness of causation is, in Mill's hands, defined by a kind of future, the future in which A will always be followed by B. But Mill was very careful about this sense of future: our whole generalizing propensity, Mill stresses, is not based simply on, "our intuitive conviction that the future will resemble the past" (Bk.3, ch.3, pp.306-07).

He argues:

Time, in its modifications of past, present, and future, has no concern either with the belief itself, or with the grounds of it. We believe that fire will burn to-morrow, because it burned to-day and yesterday; but we believe, on precisely the same grounds, that it burned before we were born, and that it burns this very day in Cochin-China. It is not from the past to the future, as past and future, that we infer, but from the known to the unknown; from facts observed to facts unobserved; from what we have perceived, or been directly conscious of, to what has not come within our experience. In this last predicament is the

1. For one of the clearest philosophical arguments on the nature of the causal relation, see J.L. Mackie, The Cement of the Universe: A Study of Causation (Oxford, 1974).

whole region of the future; but also the vastly greater portion of the present and of the past.
(Bk.3, ch.3, p.307)

However, the hitherto unexperienced and unknown do feel in Mill's theories like a kind of future, not only because the future of conventional time is wholly un-experienced, but also because there is this strong sense of the mental operation of inference as a sequential operation with its own time scale. In fact we may feel, in Mill's work, that the two time scales of mental time and conventional time are neither synonymous nor wholly independent of one another.

Mill relied considerably on this kind of mental future, this future of human experience rather than conventional time: it was by referring to this future that Mill sought to rid the actual occurrence of causal succession of some mysterious force of necessity. This, Mill found, was not easy, for,

there are few to whom mere constancy of succession appears a sufficiently stringent bond of union for so peculiar a relation as that of cause and effect. Even if the reason repudiates, the imagination retains, the feeling of some more intimate connexion, of some peculiar tie, or mysterious constraint exercised by the antecedent over the consequent.
(Bk.6, ch.2, pp.837-38)

One problem, Mill argued, was that men's experience of their volitions followed by a physical effect leads them to believe they have a priori knowledge of the power to cause effects, that volition is an Efficient Cause: 'from this the transition is easy to the further doctrine, that Volition is the sole Efficient Cause of all phenomena' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.354), and so to the belief that all that is not humanly willed, is willed by a divinity. Mill's argument is that men only learn of causal succession by repeated experience of it:

The volition, a state of our mind, is the antecedent; the motion of our limbs in conformity to the volition, is the consequent. This sequence I conceive to be not a subject of direct

consciousness, in the sense intended by the theory. The antecedent, indeed, and the consequent, are subjects of consciousness. But the connexion between them is a subject of experience. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.355)

Thus it is only the mental time scheme - inferring from past experience to the future of the unknown - which defines the causal relation itself. Furthermore, a corollary of reading an efficient cause of volition into causal relations was the desire to deny that human will itself is determined; to maintain, that is, a doctrine of Free Will. Mill's answer to this, again, is in terms of the 'futureness' of human knowledge:

Correctly conceived, the doctrine called Philosophical Necessity is simply this: ... if we knew the person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event. (Bk.6, ch.2, pp.836-37)

The 'necessity' of our present conduct is simply defined as the 'future' of someone else's knowledge. Between our circumstances and our conduct there is no tie but of uniform succession which renders our conduct available to prediction.

The other problem with understanding the causal relation was with the word 'necessity', and Mill came to reject the use of the term in relation to cause and effect, replacing it with 'unconditionalness'. Necessity, he argued, implied 'irresistibleness' (p.839) and led to either a fatalistic belief, or its counter response, a belief in Free Will. This came from also speaking of logical necessity and the idea of irresistible a priori necessary truths. Both notions of necessity were wrong to Mill. As he later wrote, he maintained in the Logic,

that there does not exist in nature any other necessity than the necessity of logical sequence, in other words the certainty that a conclusion is true if the premises are true.¹

1. LL, p.1890 (6 May 1872).

In fact Mill treated causes in much the same way as logical premises: neither are irresistibly necessary. He argued, especially as regards human life, that we can change or alter the causes themselves. Mill did maintain the alliance between causation and inference. He continued in the above letter:

you are probably, however, right in thinking that the notion of physical necessity is partly indebted for the particular shape it assumes in our minds to an assimilation of it with logical necessity.
(p.1890)

What Mill did was change the 'shape' of logical inference: he evicted the necessity of both causation and inference to 'future' experience. It was this future, the knowable unknown, that bore the weight of certainty, not the causal connection or logical premise. Inference as a sequence was thus crucial to Mill, not only in arguing against his opponents about mental operations, but also in defining human experience of external reality. The fact that this sequence not only met, but dealt with real temporal succession was to have a powerful effect.

If there is one great, uncompromising act of faith in Mill's Logic, it is in this invariable and unconditional succession of causation. He believed unflinchingly that 'the truth that every fact which has a beginning has a cause, is coextensive with human experience' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.325) and he erected his own methods of induction upon this belief. When he says simply that the notion of cause is 'the root of the whole theory of Induction' (p.326), he belies the radical change of perspective on the uniformities of nature which he was effecting. It is obvious that to explain or to predict a phenomenon is to refer to its cause and so to a law of production, but it only becomes clear as Mill gives undivided precedence to these laws of production, that these are to him the only meaningful uniformities of nature. Mill never argues this; he simply attacks the a priori philosophers for whom the epitome of

uniformity or law and human reasoning was the mathematical sciences, and then produces his own emphasis. The change in shape he gave to inference coincides with a change in shape he sees in nature: a change from spatial symmetries to uniform successions. To refer to modes of production means, in Mill's mind, a powerful non-acceptance of the God-giveness of things; there runs deep in Mill's way of thinking the feeling that to erect spatial relations and coexistences to the status of the prime laws of nature, was to advocate only acceptance. Hence we may add acceptance to Mill's distinct association of stasis with spatial relations and description, and non-acceptance to the association of process with temporal succession and inference.

Perhaps it is worth remembering the kind of battles Mill fought elsewhere. Bias, prejudice, and the mere acceptance of the God-giveness of things were to Mill like stubborn positions taken by men who refused, or found it difficult to look at the reason why things had come about. Mill attacked bias, by using an associationist psychology to show how fixed ideas are ideas coexistent in the mind, wrongly accepted as a kind of law. So too, the acceptance of truths as self-evident, the idea of belief as relying upon the inconceivability of its opposite, depended on the stasis of acceptance, whilst there should be non-acceptance by reference to something else. Simply, the notion of laws as laws of coexistences, and so to be accepted, left us with the inability and lack of desire to change human life and its society. For Mill nothing could be more repugnant:

I am an enemy to no religions but those which appear to me to be injurious either to the reasoning powers or the moral sentiments. Among such I am obliged to reckon all those which, while holding that the world was made by a perfectly Good Being, declare that Being to be omnipotent; for such persons are obliged to maintain that evil is good.¹

1. LL, p.754 (16 December 1861).

Leaving aside Mill's passionate political and moral reasons for a belief in change, the contrast between acceptance, associated as it is with stasis and coexistences, and non-acceptance, associated with sequence and production, may be seen in his model of the way in which nature may be understood to work, the model of the web. This was Mill's other vital shape, and it was important for him as an empiricist to express in it not only the regularities and possible explanation, but also, very clearly, the limits of explanation. For, with a definite cut-off point to human knowledge, divinity could be left a subject of imagination and unverifiable hypothesis alone, and the need for a divine hand in the human pursuit of knowledge could be excluded. What is interesting is that these limits and their emphatic acceptance are marked by what is non-sequential and coexistent in the web.

For Mill, the web was a compelling image which expressed the fact that 'the course of nature, in truth, is not only uniform, it is also infinitely various' (Bk.3, ch.3, p.311). Nature is only regular because each of the various phenomena has a regular course:

From these separate threads of connexion between parts of the great whole which we term nature, a general tissue of connexion unavoidably weaves itself, by which the whole is held together.
(Bk.3, ch.4, p.315)

The uniformity that gives rise to complexity in nature, thus, relies on a basic plurality of laws of nature:

It is, however, something to have advanced so far, as to see that the study of nature is the study of laws, not a law; of uniformities, in the plural number: that the different natural phenomena have their separate rules or modes of taking place, which, though much intermixed and entangled with one another, may, to a certain extent, be studied apart: that (to resume our former metaphor) the regularity which exists in nature is a web composed of distinct threads, and only to be understood by tracing each of the threads separately; for which purpose it is often necessary to unravel some portion of the web, and exhibit the fibres apart. The rules

of experimental inquiry are the contrivances for unravelling the web. (Bk.3, ch.4, p.318)

Mill's idea of understanding nature as the unravelling of a web, and his methods of induction by elimination, rely implicitly on the ability to distinguish 'threads', and so on a basic plurality of 'threads'. If Mill's web were to be completely un-ravelled, there would remain a collection of 'distinct threads' whose relationship to one another, compared to their respective intrinsic diachronous natures, is synchronous. Whilst unravelling is a kind of non-acceptance by referring back, the synchronous relationship may be expressed as a coexistence to be accepted.

At one level, this web is a model of human understanding of nature rather than of nature itself. For, Mill was adamant that the uniformities depicted in the web are expressions, not agencies: the derivative laws which can be resolved into other laws are not caused by more general laws, but result 'spontaneously' from them. As for the ultimate laws, the laws of nature which could not be resolved into others but from which all others are deducible: 'the expression, Laws of Nature, means nothing but the uniformities which exist among natural phenomena (or, in other words, the results of induction), when reduced to their simplest expression' (Bk.3, ch.4, p.318). These laws of nature, or ultimate laws, formed the basic plurality to be accepted, the final coexistence the unravelling of expressions left us with. Several chapters later, Mill suggests what this ultimate plurality is, and he deals with the limits of explanation that have to be accepted by expressing them as a beginning and end, the beginning and end of all inference and explanation -
sensationalist experience:

It is therefore useful to remark, that the ultimate Laws of Nature cannot possibly be less numerous than the distinguishable sensations or other feelings of

our nature; - those, I mean, which are distinguishable from one another in quality, and not merely in quantity or degree. For example; since there is a phenomenon sui generis, called colour, which our consciousness testifies to be not a particular degree of some other phenomenon, as heat or odour or motion, but intrinsically unlike all others, it follows that there are ultimate laws of colour; that though the facts of colour may admit of explanation, they never can be explained from laws of heat or odour alone, or of motion alone, but that however far the explanation may be carried, there will always remain in it a law of colour. (Bk.3, ch.14, p.485)

For Mill, the discovery of the ultimate laws of nature does not find out hidden secrets but simply enables us to infer all knowable particulars. Thus what is accepted is the beginning of inference, and what is accepted is a coexistence, the inexplicable coexistence of our distinguishable sensations.

It is clear, elsewhere in the Logic, that Mill also thinks of nature itself in all its specificity as a web, and this suggestion that the ultimate laws are the laws of sensation throws some light on Mill's flexible use of the web. Although laws are only human expressions, they refer to human sensationalist experience. They are not properties, powers, or forces, and they could not take the form of an unravellable web, if nature itself, with its objects and events, were not also a web. There would not be derivative laws if there were not real coexisting phenomena. Thus Mill's image of the web is a metaphor managing to combine an expression of the way in which the human mind may understand that nature is wholly lawed, and of the way in which physical facts coexist in nature and give rise to a complex effect; that is, a theoretical diagram of the relationships of regularities and also a description of 'real' events of causation. Consequently, the image is neither wholly diachronous nor wholly synchronous, so that it would seem that nature is both a web at any given point in time at which we choose to observe it, and that it progresses as a web, its movement in

time being a process of weaving. The image expresses, thus, both the sequence (and the limits) of deducing laws from more general laws, that is, the sequence of a kind of mental time, and the sequence of the basic causal relation occurring as it does in real or conventional time. The two webs, if we may somewhat artificially separate them, are not duplicates, but the web of human explanation functions as something of an opening up of the web of nature.

As regards the web of nature itself, as distinct from that of human understanding alone, Mill allots the basic facts of the universe to a similar position to that of ultimate laws. These facts Mill called Permanent or Primeval Causes, because they have continued to exist 'ever since the human race has been in existence, and for an indefinite and probably enormous length of time previous' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.345). He lists as examples, 'the sun, the earth, and planets, with their various constituents, air, water, and other distinguishable substances, whether simple or compound, of which nature is made up' (p.345). No account can be given of their origin, nor any uniformity or law for their distribution, yet all phenomena are traceable to them, so that 'the whole of the phenomena of nature were therefore the necessary, or in other words, the unconditional, consequences of some former collocation of the Permanent Causes' (p.346). As the interchangeability of the names Permanent and Primeval implies, these causes are ever-present beginnings in Mill's conception, not just the beginning of the history of the universe, but the beginning of each moment of the universe. Their unaccountability is in effect their inaccessibility to further sequential analysis, and we are left with their inexplicable distribution and coexistence: 'The coexistence, therefore, of Primeval Causes, ranks, to us, among merely casual concurrences' (pp.345-46). Most derivative laws were dependent on some coexistence of these Permanent causes, and

hence this un-lawed coexistence played a vital role in the form the complexities of nature took. Yet, by denying such a coexistence the status of a law and relegating it to a form of beginning, Mill was able to intercept the uniformities of a sequence, to survey 'a beautiful regularity in the effect' of a kaleidoscope, not the 'casual arrangement of coloured bits of glass' (Bk.3, ch.16, p.518).

Mill's association of inference primarily, and I would suggest exclusively, with causation relies on his explanation of how men come to learn of nature's uniformities. Mill does not go into the actual reason why men, and some animals, instinctively infer, but he does explain in terms of the history of experience - both the history of a man from infancy to adulthood and the history of civilisation from savagery to scientific method - how men, whose experience is sensationalist and without any innate conceptions, learnt of the uniformities of nature by an accumulated experience of them. It was on the basis of many early inductions by simple enumeration - a 'loose and uncertain mode of induction' with all its successes and failures - that method was subsequently formulated and nature interrogated more scientifically. But Mill's conception of men's early fumbings, and progressive elaboration and qualification, is stabilised by his complete faith that nature is uniform and that it is a complex web of causal uniformities. As he says, all inductions put in syllogistic form have a major premise, even before it is known, that nature is uniform: without this his journey-like inferences, his leaps of mind, would seem like unreasonable shots in the dark. Moreover, men learnt of the inferable uniform successions, or causation, because they are indeed inferable or causal. Mill's own major premise was his law of universal causation, a law coextensive with human experience and so at the point where 'the distinction between empirical laws and laws of nature vanishes' (Bk.3, ch.21, p.569). Upon

this universal law Mill formulated his methods of induction. It is important to realise that Mill worked by a sense that the law of universal causation was only a recent certainty as to how nature has always worked:

We have been able to perceive that in the stage which mankind have now reached, the generalization which gives the Law of Universal Causation has grown into a stronger and better induction, one deserving of greater reliance, than any of the subordinate generalizations. We may even, I think, go a step further than this, and regard the certainty of that great induction as not merely comparative, but, for all practical purposes, complete. (Bk.3, ch.21, p.573).

Mill's sense of the recency of this perception of universal causation is crucial: it meant he felt he was not adding a new voice to an age-old debate on human reasoning. His theory was based on a relatively new discovery about the external, not internal world. Men were discovering why they had been able to make inferences. In a way this served Mill to shake off inferences of non-causal relations that had been made over the ages. They were valid inferences because nature displayed regularities of coexistence, but these were the results of laws of production. The shift from spatial to causal uniformities, the revelation of what men had unwittingly depended upon, was emotionally at least the revolution of acceptance into non-acceptance. If the law of universal causation was an act of great faith on his part it was also the replacement of another faith.

Clearly then, Mill worked according to the belief that not only was causation defined by inference but inference by causation. The two basic coexistences of a plural number of ultimate laws, and of the collocation of Permanent Causes, he denied the status of law; although consistent in the world, they were non-uniform and inexplicable, and Mill evicted them to a form of beginning. However, there were two areas of spatial relations or coexistences - the mathematical sciences and the

regular coexistences between properties of Kinds - which could not play so clear-cut a part in Mill's causal web of nature. And it was at the expense of the ultimate association of these areas with inference that Mill foregrounded causal inference.

Mill dealt with the mathematical sciences early on and primarily as a polemic against a priorists. Here he went to great lengths to argue their experiential and inductive basis. We have seen, moreover, how Mill used the sequential format to stress the mid-way point of generalization and hypothesis. Yet he never, in the general scheme of his work, upheld these inductions as exemplary. When he introduced his own more constructive work on causation, he introduced the law of universal causation as being something of an equal to mathematical laws, both being certain and universal laws arrived at by simple enumeration. But he also said, 'from laws of space and number alone, nothing can be deduced but laws of space and number' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.324); Mill effectively swallowed up the mathematical by his emphasis on the causative. By the end of the book on Induction, in a chapter significantly called 'Of the Remaining Laws of Nature' (ch.24), Mill's argument is simply as to the usefulness of mathematical laws for causal inquiry and deduction. So what of mathematical inductions? Two points may be made suggesting that at the bottom of Mill's mind they are associated with description.

Firstly, if we recall Mill's claim that the attributes of quantity, coexistence, and resemblance were all in some unanalysable way states of consciousness themselves, mathematical premises are surely based on these and so describable without inference. As Mill says clearly of geometric truths, 'a perception of their truth in any individual case whatever, requires only the simple act of looking at the objects in a proper position' (Bk.3, ch.24, p.609). Now this is distinct from causal relations:

No mere contemplation of gunpowder would ever teach us that a spark would make it explode, nor, consequently, would the contemplation of the idea of gunpowder do so: but the mere contemplation of a straight line shows that it cannot inclose a space: accordingly the contemplation of the idea of it will show the same. (Bk.3, ch.24, p.607)

The second point is that the induction by which these truths, so immediately seen, are recognised as universal, was to Mill induction by simple enumeration: inference based 'on the fact that they have been perpetually perceived to be true, and never once found to be false' (Bk.3, ch.24, p.609). It may be questioned how adequately this meant Mill dealt with the perception of mathematical truths. Spencer and Lewes' psychologies have far more sophisticated arguments on mathematics, whilst Mill was too sure of his a priori enemies to get beyond an inductive polemic. However, although it was important to Mill to claim that simple enumeration was a valid form of induction, it feels in his treatment very much like description and summary. Simple enumeration is sharply distinct from Mill's eliminative methods of inferring causation: these latter methods are incisive, theoretically needing only one instance for certain inference. In contrast simple enumeration depends on the frequency of experience. The more Mill stresses that the validity of this method remains only within the limits of our experience of the truth in question, the closer it comes in his hands to the summary of all particulars observed, and so to description and belief.

Interestingly, and in keeping with Mill's refusal to allow non-causal uniformities the same kind of meaning as causal laws, Mill claimed that what he called the uniformities of coexistence between ultimate properties of kind, could only be inferred by simple enumeration. Mill's whole discussion of these 'peculiar sort of laws of nature' (Bk.3, ch.22, p.581) is hazy. As his Autobiography suggests, the whole notion of kinds was not an easy one for him:

In working out the logical theory of those laws of nature which are not laws of Causation, nor corollaries from such laws, I was led to recognize Kinds as realities in nature, and not mere distinctions for convenience; a light which I had not obtained when the First Book was written, and which made it necessary for me to modify and enlarge several chapters of that Book. (p.221)

It would seem that, as elsewhere, Mill's stumbling block was over chemical properties, for the properties of simple chemical substances were the only ones he named as certain ultimate properties. Although asserting that there were invariable uniformities between ultimate properties, Mill claimed that, because we do not know which properties are ultimate and which dependent on other causes, these uniform coexistences must be treated as empirical laws only, and so only as strong as the extent to which they have been observed. Although Mill had felt he had to recognise Kinds, the whole notion emerges as uncertain, his belief that there were such invariable uniformities tenuous, compared to universal causation:

In an inquiry whether some kind (as crow) universally possesses a certain property (as blackness), there is no room for any assumption analogous to this. We have no previous certainty that the property must have something which constantly coexists with it; must have an invariable coexistent, in the same manner as an event must have an invariable antecedent. When we feel pain, we must be in some circumstances under which if exactly repeated we should always feel pain. But when we are conscious of blackness, it does not follow that there is something else present of which blackness is a constant accompaniment. (Bk.3, ch.22, p.582)

Spatial uniformities fade into description or uncertainty because Mill erected the laws of production into a paramount position at their expense: nothing could compare to the powerful incisive inference dependent on causation. Thus, the two sequences, the process of inference and the sequence of causation, were to Mill mutually defining, although not

synonymous. It remains to be seen, in the next section, the effect of their meeting.

4. Causal analysis

The dynamics of process, it may be seen, facilitated the expression of the values which were at stake for Mill in his 'science of science': freedom from the need for innate truths, freedom from a mathematical view of the universe only to be accepted, the possibility of men's freedom from their own bias and motivation, and freedom to know the laws of nature without having to accept the god-givenness of things. These dynamics are comparable to those already seen in Comte and Spencer's work; but, because Mill uses them with specific reference to mental operations and causation, we may see more clearly the emotive effect on determinism of going through a process. And we may see something of the causal understanding of liberal positivism. Moreover, Mill's particular area of study allows some reference to philosophical theory. My emphasis has hitherto been on the dynamics of process and the freedom at stake for Mill in relation to a priori philosophy, and I have only suggested the possible effects of the meeting of mental sequence with causal sequence on the unwanted implications of determinism. To see this effect in its full exploitation, we must turn to what I believe is the paramount emphasis of Mill's Logic: causal analysis. Only in Mill's notion of causal analysis may we see how mental process and causal process are combined to elicit a powerful sense of freedom for both the investigator and the objects of investigation. In order to understand what Mill's causal analysis does and finds, I shall first consider what unravelling the web of nature involves for Mill, and then I shall examine Mill's methods of induction and deduction. Mill's causal analysis in

fact reveals, more specifically than 'invariable unconditional succession', Mill's perception of the causal relation, and consequently suggests the philosophical referent of the dynamics not only of process but also of gap - a dynamic that is to be found in Mill's work as well as Spencer's.

Mill's notion of the web of nature to be unravelled, was of a web of many conditions or influences coexisting and producing complex effects. Moreover, those conditions or influences were of varying permanency or duration, some ever-present, such as a Permanent Cause, and some a short-lived event, so that the basic unconditional sequences by which nature worked did not only lie in the immediately recognisable temporal successions. Mill looks closely at the event of a man eating a particular dish and dying, to reveal that 'it is seldom, if ever, between a consequent and a single antecedent, that this invariable sequence subsists' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.327). Although 'people would be apt to say that eating of that dish was the cause of his death' (p.327), the eating is only one of several conditions. It is the combination of these conditions which is the necessary cause of his death:

The real Cause, is the whole of these antecedents; and we have, philosophically speaking, no right to give the name of cause to one of them, exclusively of the others. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.328)

Mill is highly critical of the everyday habit of ignoring the participation in causal relations of the antecedent states, or permanent facts, which 'have preceded the effect by an indefinite length of duration' (p.328). At the expense of philosophical or scientific precision, 'people' tend to identify a cause as the event immediately preceding the effect, that is the event 'the fulfilment of which completes the tale, and brings about the effect without further delay' (p.328).

In pressing his point that this is scientific inexactitude, Mill is quite damning of what he calls common discourse. He points out 'the

capricious manner in which we select from among the conditions that which we choose to denominate the cause' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.329), and points out how the chosen cause is often the condition 'whose share in the matter is superficially the most conspicuous, or whose requisiteness to the production of the effect we happen to be insisting on at the moment' (p.330). This vulgar abuse is habitual and results in,

the different logical fictions which are resorted to, even by men of science, to avoid the necessity of giving the name of cause to anything which had existed for an indeterminate length of time before the effect. Thus, rather than say that the earth causes the fall of bodies, they ascribe it to a force exerted by the earth, or an attraction by the earth, abstractions which they can represent to themselves as exhausted by each effort, and therefore constituting at each successive instant a fresh fact, simultaneous with, or only immediately preceding, the effect. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.331)

Mill's criticisms may centre about the inaccuracy of the human choice which selects the most obvious succession, when what is really happening in nature is a complex participation of multifarious conditions in causation, but it is questionable whether it is possible for human discourse to be wholly correct scientifically. Mill's examples of the conditions wrongly ignored by selecting the eating of the dish as the cause of the man's death are rather lame - 'a particular bodily constitution, a particular state of present health, and perhaps even a certain state of the atmosphere' (p.328). Moreover, to R.H. Hutton's objection that the man's bodily organs were a necessary condition but no one calls them a cause, Mill replies in a footnote:

I admit the fact; but I believe the reason to be, that the occasion could never arise for so speaking of it; for when in the inaccuracy of common discourse we are led to speak of some one condition of a phenomenon as its cause, the condition so spoken of is always one which it is at least possible that the hearer may require to be informed of. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.332)¹

1. See R.H. Hutton, 'Mill and Whewell on the Logic of Induction', Prospective Review, 6 (1850), 77-111.

Similarly, when he analyses the conditions of the phenomenon of a stone thrown into water falling to the bottom, he writes,

In the first place there must be a stone, and water, and the stone must be thrown into the water; but these suppositions forming part of the enunciation of the phenomenon itself, to include them also among the conditions would be a vicious tautology. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.329)

The correct identification of cause would be of the stone's exceeding in specific gravity that of the water in which it was immersed. In this Mill, too, is making choices of what 'the hearer may require to be informed of'. If scientific propriety involves no such choices it should extend endlessly, including not only the negative conditions which Mill says are best summed up as the absence of counteracting causes, but a great deal, if not all, of the history of nature.

I do not think Mill would deny this. But to him there were choices that could prise open the complexities of nature in order to understand its mechanisms, and choices, like those of common discourse, which could only bind us to rigid and untrue distinctions. The common discourse which grasped only events immediately preceding an effect as its cause, was really an overly crude understanding of the successive nature of causation. To Mill succession was the basic relation of cause and effect. But instead of vulgarly and blindly concentrating on successive events and excluding other more static conditions, human analysis should to some extent read succession into the mass of phenomena, drawing in and stressing the participation of static conditions in events. It was a form of analysis which tends to break things open and free them from rigid boundaries and roles. This opening up, by reading in sequence, may seem to be an analytic device, but it does not go against real temporal relations. Mill largely dismisses the problem of whether a cause can be simultaneous with its effect: whether a cause has to precede its

effect, even by an imperceptible interval, 'is of no consequence for our present purpose' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.344). Mill's emphasis is upon the concept:

Whether the effect coincides in point of time with, or immediately follows, the hindmost of its conditions, is immaterial. At all events it does not precede it. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.344)

The point is that the effect does not begin until its cause.

The reading-in of sequence went even further than this in insisting on participation in determinism. Mill argued against another commonly made distinction, that between agent and patient, or that between what acts and what is acted upon. Although both agent and patient are conditions of the phenomenon, to be distinguished thus, means that the name cause is reserved for the agent because,

the object said to be acted upon, and which is considered as the scene in which the effect takes place, is commonly included in the phrase by which the effect is spoken of, so that if it were also reckoned as a part of the cause, the seeming incongruity would arise of its being supposed to cause itself. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.335)

The circularity of saying something caused itself was something Mill wished to avoid, yet he also wished to emphasise that the object participates in the causal relation. The distinction agent/patient was really a verbal one, said Mill, that if pressed as a real distinction led to 'a sort of logical fiction' (p.335) of calling phenomena merely states of an object; a patient being the object whose states are caused by the agent.

Mill's answer is effectively to release the terms cause and effect into a useful fluidity:

Even those attributes of an object which might seem with greatest propriety to be called states of the object itself, its sensible qualities, its colour, hardness, shape, and the like, are in reality...phenomena of causation, in which the

substance is distinctly the agent, or producing cause, the patient being our own organs, and those of other sentient beings. What we call states of objects, are always sequences into which the objects enter, generally as antecedents or causes; and things are never more active than in the production of those phenomena in which they are said to be acted upon. (Bk.3, ch.5, pp.335-36)

And so Mill comes to our sensations and his underlying phenomenalism. But even here, we do not merely accept our sensations. Mill goes on in this idea of joining in or participating in causal sequence:

In the case of a sensation produced in our organs, the laws of our organization, and even those of our minds, are as directly operative in determining the effect produced, as the laws of the outward object. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.336)

What happens next Mill does not say. This last example comes close, as Lewes' does, to a materialist version of Whewell. As with Lewes, so with Mill, the difference from Whewell lies in the participation in a sequence.

For Mill it was less important what words were used, although verbal manoeuvres offered a crucial aid, than that analysis should break open and release the apparent circularities and stases, to reveal the sequences in which all participate:

All the positive conditions of a phenomenon are alike agents, alike active; and in any expression of the cause which professes to be complete, none of them can with reason be excluded, except such as have already been implied in the words used for describing the effect; nor by including even these would there be incurred any but a merely verbal impropriety. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.336)

Ultimately this idea of Mill's is crucial for the freedom of man; man who participates as cause and effect. Notice the underlying power and protest:

Patients are always agents; in a great proportion, indeed, of all natural phenomena, they are so to such a degree as to react

forcibly on the causes which acted upon them: and even when this is not the case, they contribute, in the same manner as any of the other conditions, to the production of the effect of which they are vulgarly treated as the mere theatre. (Bk.3, ch.5, p.336)

The analytic prising open of phenomena and the reading-in of sequence can be said to seek out the direction of causation, the one directional move from cause to effect. Simple as this may seem, the way Mill's methods of induction and their varying degrees of certainty bring out this directional aspect, and the whole focus of his analytic interest have important implications for freedom. For Mill, nature may 'at a first glance, present(s) at every instant a chaos followed by another chaos' (Bk.3, ch.7, p.379), but, given that every consequent phenomenon has a cause, that chaos may be decomposed simply by making the correct links between consequents and antecedents. By eliminating other antecedents and consequents, one antecedent and one consequent may be isolated so as to see that they can be related only to one another, that, in short, they are cause and effect.¹ Mill's Method of Difference was the one of his four methods in which the process of elimination was complete. In it, two instances are compared which resemble one another exactly, except that in one instance the phenomenon whose cause is being sought is present, whilst in the other it is absent. Eliminating all the antecedents which are present in both instances, the antecedent which is present when the phenomenon occurs, and is absent when it does not, must be the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause of the phenomenon. Here induction is most clearly from particulars to particulars, for in theory we need only observe the succession once and yet we are able to generalize that it will always be so. And Mill's inference is essentially one of simple amplification to all time. Even if the effect can be

1. J.L. Mackie explores Mill's inductive methods at great length. See the appendix to The Cement of the Universe, pp.297-321.

produced in several ways, that is has a 'plurality of causes', we may be certain that in this instance the antecedent isolated is the cause, and so, whenever the antecedent occurs, the consequent will follow. This last point is important. The Method of Difference does not provide the certainty that whenever a particular effect occurs, it will have been produced by a particular cause: it provides only the certainty of the particular instance. That certainty is expressed in the fact that we can infer that whenever A occurs, B will follow. But I would suggest that Mill's prime interest is that the correct cause has been located.

To Mill, it is

by the Method of Difference alone that we can ever, in the way of direct experience, arrive with certainty at causes. (Bk.3, ch.8, p.394)

His other methods were ones resorted to only when experimentation and the control and isolation of conditions were impossible. The uncertainty of these methods is defined by Mill's interest in a particular occurrence of an effect and what brought it about. The Method of Agreement compared several instances in which a phenomenon occurs to see if there is one condition also occurring in all the instances. The problem was in being certain that this is the only condition in which all the instances agree. An invariable succession may have been found but whether it is causation or not can only be ascertained if the effect can actually be produced by its assumed cause, or if it can be observed that the effect is produced by no other change in the circumstances but the introduction of the antecedent: 'and this, if we can do it, is an application of the Method of Difference' (Bk.3, ch.8, p.394). The Method of Agreement, in assuming that in all the instances the cause of the effect is the same, also disregards the plurality of causes. The greater the number of instances, the less likely there is a case of plurality of causes, but the resort to sheer numbers cannot compare to the Method of Difference: 'A single

instance eliminating some antecedent which existed in all the other cases, is of more value than the greatest multitude of instances which are reckoned by number alone' (Bk.3, ch.10, p.437). Of the two remaining methods, the Method of Residues was a modification of the Method of Difference. Antecedents and consequents were eliminated, simply by subducting causal relations already known by previous inductions and seeing what antecedent and consequent remained. The Method of Concomitant Variations was used to reveal the laws of Permanent Causes, which, being ever present, could not be excluded or isolated but could be modified. If a modification in the antecedent is followed by a modification in a consequent, whilst all else remains the same, they must be related through some fact of causation. Only if we can actually produce the modification ourselves, or be absolutely certain that in observing the modifications in nature, all the other circumstances are the same, can we be certain that they are cause and effect rather than both effects of the same cause.

Two points are of note: the constant stress made by Mill that, unless a phenomenon can actually be produced by introducing the antecedent, there is no certainty that the relation is causal, brings out one of the most important aspects of Mill's understanding of causation. As has been seen, the sequence of causation was less of real time, than of the basic idea that until the cause occurs, its effect does not take place; only when we have brought about the cause, do we bring about the effect. The 'only when' or 'until' is an option: the cause, as a cause, is indeterminate whilst the effect, as an effect, is determinate. Secondly, the possibility of a plurality of causes is treated by Mill as a hindrance. He is most interested in ensuring that in a particular instance we locate the correct cause, not in being able to enumerate the several ways in which an effect may be produced. Indeed, he only allots a brief

paragraph to this last question. The inference Mill is seeking to make is that in all like causes a certain effect will follow, not that in all like effects, a certain cause would have preceded it. The certainty Mill sought in his methods was of one direction alone, from cause to effect. Moreover, cause being indeterminate, Mill, in seeking to locate the cause, can be said to be concerned not so much with finding out a law that we must accept, as with finding out a point of optionality; not of finding out that something has to be, but that it did not have to be until something 'happened'. And of course, Mill's interest in why things happen was ultimately motivated by the desire for human beings to have moral and physical control over their lives.

At this point I would like to go well beyond any argument Mill himself would have made, in order to elaborate on and stress the kind of understanding and its dynamics implied in Mill's emphases. In Mill's refutation of the agent-patient distinction, he argued the participation of an object in its own role as effect. He also refuted the circularity of saying something causes itself. He could be said to have read more sequence into events than the simple sequence of cause to effect; he read in the sequence from a fact's role as an effect, to its own role as a cause. There may be a chain of causation, A causes B which causes C. B may be determinate in that it is an effect of A, but as the cause of C, it is indeterminate: moving from B's role as effect, to its role as cause (and only in a circular understanding would we move in the other direction from its role as cause to effect), there is this optional point. This option, moreover, is a kind of gap functioning in much the same way as Spencer's. To illustrate this: a man earns little money, consequently he is miserable, and consequently he drinks. We may look at this from a distance as a broad sequence: a man earns little, so he drinks. Or we may look at it statically, as a kind of circle or structure: where a man

is earning little money he drinks; the two conditions are coexistent and the situation is determinate or locked. Both views show a relentless necessity as far as the man is concerned - only his earning little money is indeterminate. However, analyse it into more sequences - in keeping with Mill's emphasis - and there is an optional point. Midway is the man's misery; it is both the effect of his poor earnings and the cause of his drinking. Certainly, to see these roles as one, as a self-producing fact, there is no option. But to move in sequence from misery as an effect, and so determinate, to misery as a cause, so indeterminate, reveals a gap or lacuna: there is no causal relation between the two roles, save that they are taken by the same fact. It is not until the man is miserable that he drinks, and in that option is participation; the participation of the man in his misery.

Mill would have argued this differently: his main argument about causation in human behaviour and character was that there was never only one condition at work: there is always 'room' (Bk.6, ch.2, p.839) for another influence; causes are controllable; and there is always the possibility of prevention or intervention. He was of course relying on the multifarious nature of the web. But he is also relying on time and optionality: time in order to intervene between cause and effect (as in his example of administering an antidote to prevent death from poison) and the optionality of recent causes: despite the long causal history which produced such causes, their own indeterminacy allows for their control. Mill used as his example of an uncontrollable necessity, in contrast to the multiplicity of conditions determining human behaviour, dying of want as an effect of being unable to obtain food. We could, however, reduce Mill's example to an absurdity and say that between not being able to get food and dying, there is the point of not eating sufficient food, in which there is an option between its being the effect

of unavailable food and the cause of death. But this is more a play with words. And I by no means wish to suggest that Mill was being hypocritically inconsistent. Indeed I wish to make the point that Mill's argument on human behaviour was consistent with his understanding of causation in general, with its sequences and options. And that this depended on more than the obvious fertile multiplicity of nature's web. This way of working in sequences, with structuring gaps, has powerful implications of freedom in causation, most especially human freedom.

Mill's theory of complex causation - the 'Composition of Causes' and his deductive method for unravelling nature's web - maintains the same interest in the certainty from cause to effect which his inductive methods suggest, and considerably furthers the analytic interest in a particular event: an interest in how and why something happened, rather than in ascertaining a general law with widespread application. The Composition of Causes was the theoretical basis of most of Mill's arguments over causation in human behaviour, society, and history. It was based on the resolution of mechanical forces. Mill did expound what he called the Chemical Method by which several causes combined to produce an effect. This latter kind of combination was ascertained by experimental induction because 'the separate effects cease entirely, and are succeeded by phenomena altogether different, and governed by different laws' (Bk.3, ch.10, p.440). But Mill's examples of Chemical combination - the combination of simple chemical substances and the combination of elements to produce life - suggest a certain pigeon-holing of the most difficult areas of science. Certainly, he argued that the Composition of Causes was the more general mode; and it was a mode claiming a clear understanding of what happened in complex causation. In the Composition of Causes, each of the several causes fulfils its own law and the complex effect is the exact sum of what would have been each of the separate

effects. In order to say that each law is fulfilled and yet avoid contradiction,

all laws of causation, in consequence of their liability to be counteracted, require to be stated in words affirmative of tendencies only, and not of actual results. (Bk.3, ch.10, p.445)

Where causes combine mechanically the law of the complex effect is ascertained by deduction. The laws of the causes when separate are ascertained by induction; their combined effect is deduced by 'a process of calculation, in the wider sense of the term' (Bk.3, ch.11, p.458). The result is then verified by direct observation. For Mill, this deductive method was axiomatic:

To it we owe all the theories by which vast and complicated phenomena are embraced under a few simple laws, which, considered as the laws of those great phenomena, could never have been detected by their direct study. (Bk.3, ch.11, p.462)

For Mill, then, the complexity of nature, full of many conditions, means that very rarely do its simple laws work alone or unconditionally: yet to understand how the complex effects are brought about, we have to recognise how those laws do work unconditionally. In understanding the law of a complex effect, we go back to an indeterminate point made up of several conditions, several indeterminate points. Until those several conditions coexist in a certain proportion, the effect will not occur. Change those conditions, by adding or subtracting one, or altering their proportions, and the effect will be different. The first, inductive, step in the deductive method presses this point even more because, in order to calculate the effect of the combined conditions, we have to know what would have happened unconditionally as regards each cause; the 'would haves' of scientific imagination. We have an even greater sense of choice than when we go back to one cause and its indeterminacy. Thus, although the complex effect is the unconditional consequent, and is just

as 'necessary' as a simple effect is of its cause, it is brought about by many laws whose unconditionalness was actually subject to conditions. Our lives are made up of many things that did not eventually happen. Tell us that our experience of complex effects is necessary, and we have to accept it, but go back and explain how the effect came about and we find many conditions or hypotheses ('the words hypothetical and conditional may be, as indeed they generally are, used synonymously' - Bk.1, ch.4, p.83) and we find alternatives, or 'otherwise's'.

Here, we may identify the meeting of sequences I have been suggesting in this chapter. On the one hand Mill's deductive method has something of the motions of re-enactment. We may begin with a known complex effect but, having some idea of its causes, we go back and go through the process of working out how these causes combined to produce an effect. Then we check the result: we have followed the direction of the event, the real sequence of nature. On the other hand, this kind of re-enactment considerably enriches the event as it would appear at first sight. It has located a point of multiple indeterminacy, and it has revealed the 'might haves' of unconditional results. Moreover, this involves the mental process of inductive inference: the several inductions needed to calculate the result, and the final induction that defines the whole event as causal. Thus, where these two processes meet - the complex real process of nature and the mental processes needed to understand it causally - we are finding a form of freedom for the objects involved, especially if they are human; and, entering a truth-finding process, we, the investigators, are freed from ourselves, our prejudices, and motives.

Contrast this with what happens when analysis does not take place or is incomplete. Mill spent a great deal of time stressing that empirical laws - uniformities which had been suggested or recognised but whose derivation was unknown - were uncertain because the conditions and

coexistences upon which they depended were unknown. The possibility, especially, of a uniformity depending on a collocation of Permanent Causes renders its scope uncertain. Mill effectively treated all coexistences, particularly those playing an important role in human lives, as he did the collocation of Permanent Causes: as un-lawed beginnings and as indeterminate. In empirical laws we are ignorant of the indeterminate coexistence which, until it exists, the law does not hold. Coexistence as the indeterminate point, with the alternatives so implied, was a powerful notion. As Mill said:

The ultimate laws of causation might be the same as at present, and yet the derivative laws completely different, if the causes coexisted in different proportions, or with any difference in those of their relations by which the effects are influenced. (Bk.3, ch.16, p.518)

The collocation of Permanent Causes may be unalterable, but the many other coexistences which play a part in human life are alterable; we cannot seek alternative laws of production, but we can seek alternative coexistences. This was the basis of Mill's argument that we cannot change effects in our lives, but we can change the causes. He could not have argued this if cause were not to him indeterminate.

Chance was the result of a similar ignorance. It is only in the ignorance of their respective causes that we see the coincidence of two unrelated phenomena as a coincidence of chance:

An event occurring by chance, may be better described as a coincidence from which we have no ground to infer an uniformity: the occurrence of a phenomenon in certain circumstances, without our having reason on that account to infer that it will happen again in those circumstances. This, however, when looked closely into, implies that the enumeration of the circumstances is not complete. Whatever the fact be, since it has occurred once, we may be sure that if all the same circumstances were repeated, it would occur again; and not only if all, but there is some particular portion of those circumstances, on which the phenomenon is invariably consequent. With most

of them, however, it is not connected in any permanent manner: its conjunction with those is said to be the effect of chance, to be merely casual. Facts casually conjoined are separately the effects of causes, and therefore of laws; but of different causes, and causes not connected by any law. (Bk.3, ch.17, p.526)

Mill argues that to be certain that an empirical law is a law and not a coincidence of unrelated phenomena, 'chance' has to be calculated, and the coincidence shown to occur more frequently than could be accounted for by chance. It is only out of ignorance of the laws of derivation that 'chance' has to be calculated. Moreover, within further limitations, we have to ask:

Of what extent of deviation from that average [of coincidence from chance] is the occurrence credible, from chance alone, in some number of instances smaller than that required for striking a fair average? (Bk.3, ch.17, p.533)

This relies on probabilities and, again Mill argues, probability depends on what we know, frequency in past experience counting less than the extent of our knowledge of causes. In this stress on the ignorance of causes, Mill is also, it can be said, stressing the ignorance of indeterminacy, of what needed to happen before an effect occurs. Of course a cause is an effect of something else, but we have seen the kind of lacuna which exists between the role of effect and the role of cause. Finally, it may be said of Mill that to him ignorance of causes was also ignorance of choice and freedom. To surrender wholly to the 'chance' or 'luck' of a situation, was, just like the surrender to 'irresistibility', an act of ignorance.

This then was Mill's basic causal understanding and perspective. Only a brief mention need be made of the specific methods for social studies which Mill proposed and the essential tenet of which was the Composition of Causes. Mill maintained in his social science the perspective and interest of his basic inductive and deductive methods:

the new methods he expounded were necessitated by the complexity of data rather than anything else. Indeed, if anything, Mill's causal understanding was based on the needs and problems he had to resolve as a social scientist. Mill insists throughout his social science that no human being is subject to exactly the same circumstances as another, and that no society is the duplicate of another. His arguments are structured by the fact that the most relevant knowledge the investigator takes away is a confirmation of social tendencies and of the method used. Mill's interest remained an analytic one.

The last book of the Logic (Bk.6) in which these methods are expounded and which is notably titled 'On the Logic of the Moral Sciences', begins with Mill's important chapter 'Of Liberty and Necessity'. Most of the arguments I have already noted: the necessity of human actions as their predictability; the participation of the individual in the formation of character; the multiplicity of influences subject to control and counter-action. Notice, however, this argument and its insistence on the empiricist scale of the particular, means rather than ends, and individual experience:

We cannot, indeed, directly will to be different from what we are. But neither did those who are supposed to have formed our characters, directly will that we should be what we are. Their will had no direct power except over their own actions. They made us what they did make us, by willing, not the end, but the requisite means; and we, when our habits are not too inveterate, can, by similarly willing the requisite means, make ourselves different. If they could place us under the influence of certain circumstances, we, in like manner, can place ourselves under the influence of other circumstances. We are exactly as capable of making our own character, if we will, as others are of making it for us. (Bk.6, ch.2, p.840)

The 'if we will' is 'itself the feeling of moral freedom which we are conscious of' and that wish is formed for us 'not, in general, by our organization, nor wholly by our education, but by our experience;

experience of the painful consequences of the character we previously had' (pp.840-41). Mill's subsequent theory of general social science maintains this scale which is relevant to the sequences in an individual's life and which emphasises particular situations and complex influences. Crucial to this maintenance was Mill's notion of the science of 'Ethology'.

The science of Ethology promoted the central pivot of Mill's ideas: the mental character of individual men. Character, although determined by circumstances, and in turn determining actions and society, and so as varied as circumstances were varied, was only determined according to the laws of mind. The principles of 'the formation of character' by circumstances formed the science of Ethology and were the derivative laws of the laws of mind, the laws of mind being those by which states of mind cause states of mind. Dismissing the investigation of the physical basis of states of mind other than sensation as uncertain, and as no where near as advanced as associationist psychology, Mill effectively kept mental processes intact and their principles universal. They were further preserved by the fact that,

men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance, with different properties.... Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man. In social phenomena the Composition of Causes is the universal law.
(Bk.6, ch.7, p.879)

With individual thought processes maintained like the central motor of human life, Mill maintained the directional nature of mechanical causation even in notions of society as an organic whole, and the participation of individuals in the way they were influenced. Interestingly, the science of Ethology which Mill proposed was something he had every intention of researching and never did. I think the notion was more important to Mill than the discovery of any such laws. In the way

I have interpreted Mill's work, *Ethology* signposts the gap between man effected and man causing; the moment essential for a sense of participation and other alternatives. Indeed, Mill called the principles of ethology 'the axiomata media...of the science of mind' (Bk.6, ch.5, p.870), and they served as a link between the sciences of the individual and of society: society was simply the result of a more complex Composition of Causes.

What is to be noted about the Composition of Causes in Mill's social science is that it defines his position against others; and it defines that position as a liberal positivist one. Firstly, the Composition of Causes defines his position against that of his father's utilitarianism. Macaulay's attack on his father had troubled Mill because he had felt it was not wholly unwarranted.¹ However, as he recorded in his Autobiography, it was when he 'grappled' with induction and saw the clear distinction between the chemical and mechanical combination of causes that he was able to cast light on the dispute: 'my new position in respect to my old political creed, now became perfectly definite'.² Both his father and Macaulay, he claimed, ignored the Composition of Causes. Macaulay's method of Baconian induction had treated society like a chemical substance which was a 'gross misconception' (Bk.6, ch.7, p.886), because each society, subject to so many conflicting influences, was different. As for his father's method, Mill claimed that, although it was deductive, it was based on geometric deduction which was inapplicable to causation and the Composition of Causes because it took one comprehensive premise and deduced all therefrom. Even in looking at men en masse, the Benthamite

1. For a useful anthology and criticism of this debate, see Utilitarian Logic and Politics: James Mill's 'Essay on Government', Macaulay's Critique and the Ensuing Debate, edited and introduced by Jack Lively and John Rees (Oxford, 1978).

2. See Autobiography, pp.159-61.

premise of self-interest was subject to conflicting influences. Mill argued that to make allowances, as Benthamites did in practice, for other influences was not sufficient; method should be based on the conflict of causes. Mill's method of making allowances or qualifications reflects that most important liberal positivist impulse for inclusion.

This kind of inclusiveness, however, is distinct from that of Comte's Positivism, and the Composition of Causes distinguishes Mill's sociology from that of Comte's, bringing out the liberal impulse of liberal positivism. Firstly, Mill argued against Comte that the study of separate social facts by the method of direct deduction was still valuable. This in fact formed Mill's defence and contextualisation of political economy. On the one hand political economy never operated independently of other social facts: it influenced and was influenced by them; its study could only give tendencies; and its conclusions could only be verified indirectly by showing that the theory used enables us to explain other known results. In this way we do not arrive at 'the laws of society in general, but the means of determining the phenomena of any given society from the particular elements or data of that society' (Bk.6, ch.9, p.900). On the other hand, the study was valuable because independent social facts such as political economy do depend 'immediately and in the first resort, on different kinds of causes' (p.900). The value Mill put upon direct deduction epitomises a deeper rift between Mill and Comte, than perhaps Mill ever recognised. For one thing, it was intrinsically involved with the ability and imperative need to effect changes by altering the causes:

The aim of practical politics is to surround any given society with the greatest possible number of circumstances of which the tendencies are beneficial, and to remove or counteract, as far as practicable, those of which the tendencies are injurious. (Bk.6, ch.9, p.898)

In contrast, Comte's ideal social change ranged between the two extremes of change by 'rational resignation' and the brutal oppressive mechanisms he advocated for its maintenance.

Although Mill's defence of deliberate political change by altering the causes, and his whole structure of the Composition of Causes, were not necessarily shared by other liberal positivists, the basis of what he took from Comte, and what he did not, demonstrates the roots of the distinction between Comte's Positivism and liberal positivism. What Mill liked in Comte was his treatment of the past changes of society as a whole and the notion that the key to these successive changes of society was 'the speculative faculties of mankind':

Polytheism, Judaism, Christianity, Protestantism, the critical philosophy of modern Europe, and its positive science - each of these has been a primary agent in making society what it was at each successive period, while society was but secondarily instrumental in making them, each of them (so far as causes can be assigned for its existence) being mainly an emanation not from the practical life of the period, but from the previous state of belief and thought. (Bk.6, ch.10, p.927)

Mill, enthusiastically assimilating Comte's three-stage model of this change, found in Comte the coherence and promise of the progress of the intellect in history, and the important exhilaration of the process of human explanation. Mill, however, preserved his structure of the Composition of Causes. Where Mill recognises the 'consensus' of a society, the reciprocal influences that make society function as a whole, he is perceiving the sum total of a detailed mechanical causation. In this the 'speculative faculties' have a role subtly different from Comte's: for Comte they provided the ultimate rationale of an inevitable social evolution, for Mill they were a key determining factor in a causal process. Mill is confronting determinism as a physical sequence,

with not only the positive desire for inclusion but also the liberal impulse, ultimately not needed by Comte, that society could and should change in a radically material way. He is also including an individualism overridden by Comte's stress on the Religion of Humanity. Symptomatic of this liberal distinction, Mill differed widely from Comte on social statics: the subordination of women, for example, was seen by Comte as something of an eternal natural fact, whilst Mill saw it as an accident that could and should change. To ascertain the law of progressive change, Mill did adopt Comte's Inverse Deductive Method by which generalizations from history are verified by deductions from the laws of human nature. However, what stabilises Mill's model is not Comte's inherent static nature of men but the pivotal principles of Ethology, principles of the way men participate in and respond to the influence of circumstance upon them, and, as I have suggested, a kind of gap:

The circumstances in which mankind are placed, operating according to their own laws and to the laws of human nature, form the characters of the human beings; but the human beings, in their turn, mould and shape the circumstances for themselves and for those who come after them. From this reciprocal action there must necessarily result either a cycle or a progress. (Bk.6, ch.10, p.913)

Mill thus preserved his causal analysis: the powerful act of knowledge which prised open nature's web to reveal sequence, participation, and alternatives. Causal analysis was Mill's way of using the dynamics which met liberal positivist needs, and thus it has an important affinity with, for example, Spencer's more general and descriptive evolutionary theory.

4. Causal narrative

In this last section I wish to demonstrate the easy translation of Mill's causal understanding into a narrative method for fiction. Because

the causal understanding which Mill worked out and promoted in his Logic was structured by causal analysis rather than by the desire to erect massive and imposing generalities, it readily lends itself to narrative. Although the powerful effect of such analysis on what determinism feels like comes from the use of the same dynamics as those seen in Spencer and Comte, it is the analytic perspective Mill articulated so clearly in the Logic which suggests the accessibility of these dynamics to a narrative method of fiction. Nature's web, so recurrent an image in Victorian science and so central a structure of Mill's Logic, immediately suggests the detailed complexities of human lives and situations a contemporary novel would have dealt with. This is even more so perhaps in Mill's case because Mill was no laboratory scientist: the web structure and the methods he proposed were ultimately directed not only at a social science but also at the philosophy of individual necessity. For a novel working within the same deterministic discipline and dealing with individual lives, many suggestions may be made. Although some of the suggestions I shall make as to the way Mill's causal analysis may be translated into a narrative method shall, in the next chapter, be demonstrated in George Eliot's Middlemarch, I shall also be exploring other dimensions and shapes in order to indicate the wealth of possibilities belied by the dry, ordered air of the Logic. I by no means wish to suggest that any writer, least of George Eliot whose fiction I am bearing in mind, directly or indirectly applied Mill's methods of logic. Nor can it ever be said that Mill made any suggestion in logical terms as to narrative. As noted in Chapter I, Mill had little time for narrative fiction precisely because he responded to it as though it were too close to the non-fictional treatise to be anything other than less true; and, in formal aesthetics, Mill confined art to the utterance of feeling for feeling's sake.

The two basic dynamics which I intend to identify in Middlemarch are of process and gap. Narrative itself being a process, it not only embodies sequence, but facilitates the kind of persistent foregrounding Mill gave to it. Mill, however, was foregrounding two processes and it was the powerful meeting of the mental process of inference with the sequences of nature which dealt with determinism. Here I wish to stress that the translation of Mill's causal analysis into a narrative method is not to a method of a detail-mirroring kind of literary realism. Indeed, it is important to get beyond associating nineteenth century British empiricism with a rigid realism opposed somehow to German idealism. As I have explained in regard to Lewes, such polemics and their uneasy fusion is by no means the most valid way of considering the situation. The dynamics, shape, and impulse of Mill's understanding of a determinate world, do not work against the notions of the ideal, the fictions, hypotheses, and imaginations of science, by which Lewes and Eliot's works have been paralleled. Certainly, Mill articulated very strict stipulations as to the use of hypotheses, but he was in effect wilfully seeking to contain what his own framework offered for exploitation. As soon as we consider that to Mill causation itself could not be seen or directly felt, but can only be inferred, and that causation was what understanding the world was all about, the leaps of mind, drawing in memory and past experience, are not only included but essential. Those leaps of mind involved the passing through of a kind of no-man's land of vast generalization; they are often, I have argued, very close to Whewellian hypotheses save as to their crucial sequential arrangement and causal referent, and are only stabilized by Mill's absolute faith in the web-like causal uniformities of the external world. The novelistic practice we may conjecture from Mill's understanding is far from a simple mirroring of causal sequence.

For one thing, the kind of analysis Mill worked out promoted more than the simple identification of a cause and its effect. As suggested with reference to Mill's example of the man eating a dish and dying, understanding causation meant to Mill a kind of prising open of the obvious. Analysis and comprehension of what really happened involves, in Mill's hands, a reading-in of sequence or process where it is not immediately evident. For narrative which has to treat things sequentially anyway such a reading-in is almost inevitable, and the possibilities of exploiting it readily available. However, Mill's dynamics by no means coincided with the simple feel of narrative flow. Mill also stressed that every phenomenon participates in causation, and, as we have seen, the result of combining this stress with the reading-in of sequence from indeterminate to determinate, was a kind of gap: the gap between something as a determinate effect and something as an indeterminate cause. Mill's gap or lacuna, unlike Spencer's causal mechanism of difference, is more an attribute of analysis than the object of analysis, and so is all the more easily translated into the dynamics of narrative. However, in the dynamics of gaps and breaks it is not a question of what narrative lends itself to but of what is implied for narrative given this structure. And what is implied is not a process that simply flows, a gentle, natural inevitability, smoothly relentless, but a process or sequence formed by gaps and breaks, a series, I suggest, of node-like steps. We may see the possibility of a narrative form already in Mill's own prose. For Mill, the individual's character 'is formed by his circumstances (including among these his particular organization); but his own desire to mould it in a particular way, is one of those circumstances' (Bk.6, ch.2, p.840); more generally, over history, circumstances 'form the character of the human beings; but the human beings, in their turn, mould and shape the circumstances for

themselves and for those who come after them' (Bk.6, ch.10, p.913). Mill's 'but his own desire', 'but the human beings, in their turn' by which he presses participation in determination, is on the threshold between his theoretic argument that 'things are never more active than in the production of those phenomena in which they are said to be acted upon' (Bk.3, ch.5, p.336) and a narrative of 'but'-like qualifications. Mill explained that 'what we call states of objects, are always sequences into which the objects enter' (pp.335-36; my emphasis); we may say that the 'but's above mark the gap or break necessary to conceive of this notion of entrance. In turn the moment of entrance marks all the possibilities of choice and moral responsibility, more powerful than any sense of a radiating, all-inclusive human will. It is a crucial part of what happens to determinism in Middlemarch. Without pre-empting my arguments in the next chapter, I would like to suggest here, in order to show the affinity with Mill's causal understanding, that, although narrative or discourse fills the gap of silence, there may be gaps between discourses: a single voice may be made up of many voices coming one after another in sequence; and in between voices, in the very sense of one ending and another entering, there may be an all-important semantic lacuna. Just as gap is a crucial part of the dynamics of process by which Mill handles determinism, it is, I shall argue, a form of narrative gap which is crucial to the moral responsibility and choice of the characters of Middlemarch.

We may pursue in more detail the shapes of Mill's objective, methods, and understanding. The shapes Mill produced and worked by, not only dynamical shapes but dimensional ones of foreground and background, are a result of Mill's focus of interest. It is Mill's focus of interest, the proportions of his perspective, which suggests a paralleling with a narrative method of fiction, and is the basis of the enthusiastic

reception of the Logic. Mill's specific causal analysis, we have seen, focussed on an effect assumed to have happened and for which the question is, what amidst all the multifarious factors combined to bring it about and how. In this Mill's methods were geared around the immediate and urgent concerns of a particular investigator with a given interest in a piece of web, and, within that, in a few strands, defined and focussed upon: the investigator not only knows the effect but has some idea of its causes which he seeks to confirm. Mill's Logic may have been dry and organised, centred about the calm investigator of laws and aiming at clarity and certainty, but this framing of the question provides a powerful sense of proportion for individual particular experience and investigation. The Logic is moulded on the belief that 'to ascertain the state of the whole universe at any particular moment is impossible, but would also be useless' (Bk.3, ch.7, p.380), as well as the belief that the situations in human life are unique. Mill's Logic offered neither a massive box-like classification of life, nor the kind of science, Engels spoke of, where necessity was 'degraded to the production of what is merely accidental'; the 'trifling' science that aims at calculating why 'a particular pea-pod contains five peas and not four or six'.¹ Certainly Mill's empiricism ran the risk of the latter, but in theory alone, for his Logic was aimed at the investigator with a particular interest and need. To the novelist concerned with only a few individual lives and the influences on the events of those lives, Mill's framework and the shape of his understanding were by no means hostile.

This framing of interest produced and was held together by a kind of two-way movement: the forward thrust of inference and re-enactment, and the unravelling motions demanded by the complexity of nature. In

1. Dialectics of Nature, translated by Clemens Dutt (Moscow, 1954), pp.290-91.

the unravelling motion the whole question of origins could arise but Mill's focus effectively contained it. His constant stress on the minutiae of causation, on the necessity of comprehending its details, not its broad sweep, arrests the terrifying search for origins. Mill's Composition of Causes neatly frames the question into one of a set of coexistent antecedents or causes whose proportions and coexistence are indeterminate. On this framing, his whole argument on the individual's ability to change his or herself, and his political argument on submitting a society to 'beneficial' influences, rely. Mill's analysis, geared around locating what could be altered, counteracted, or re-balanced, was disciplined by a full-stop to how far back analysis went; a full-stop that by no means feels like an evasion because the question was then to re-construct what happened, to see and feel how it was that it happened, how those causes combined to produce the effect.

Mill's re-constructive interest must also be stressed in the light of Mill's framed and proportioned interest. These re-enacting motions of causal analysis are very important, not only because they have much bearing on narrative method but also because re-construction marks liberal positivism from the political analyses of utilitarianism: it is reconstruction which renders judgment also acceptance and forgiveness. But re-construction is not simply simulation. If nature was a web to Mill, it was also an apparent chaos:

The order of nature, as perceived at a first glance, presents at every instant a chaos followed by another chaos. We must decompose each chaos into single facts. (Bk.3, ch.7, p.379)

To the investigator with a specific interest, with an unravelling analysis helping to decompose that chaos, and with some idea of causes, Mill offered a kind of re-construction which went through something, feeling the certainty of causal links. Mill's sense of proportion, however

drily expounded, was latent with the emotive experience of the investigator, the emotive experience of transforming particular experience from groups and successions of sensations into distinct relations, guessed relations into certain causal links. In deduction especially there was not simply the satisfaction of being right, but the sense of going through cause and effect, re-living a sequence of phenomena 'at first sight' chaotic but which in re-construction become real relations; the sense of finding some meaning or significance. Importantly this was not simply simulation because it depended absolutely on areas or links that were not the prime object of interest. Mill's most basic inductive Method of Difference used contrast to display causal relations: to see for certain the relations, we need to see the non-relations. Mill's implied narrative needs variation and paralleling to find meaning; indeed, comparison and contrast are very important to Middlemarch, although it is not a question I shall pursue.

Because Mill's thrust was not of exhaustive comprehension but appealed to the urgency of specific concern, even his deductive methods had proportion relying on a wealth of an otherness: the mystery, disjuncture; and unknown relations of background phenomena which threw the prime concern into relief. In a way his methods provided dimension: the dimension of a picture with a background. His exposition of chance and probability, for example, showed that they depended on ignorance: everything was related to something, the inevitable cause and effect of phenomena. But, in focussing on one area, in taking only one part of nature's web, there lie within our sphere of interest coexistences and events seemingly coincidental and unrelated because they are thrown up by influences outside of our view. For the investigator, and so for the novelist whose discipline is this kind of determinism, the implication is that the defining boundaries of interest are the area where 'chance'

or the unrelated coexistences occur. This area of peripheral luck, of the phenomena that do not matter in themselves to the investigator, of the partially irrelevant, is essential to the dimensions of interest, the urgency of perception and understanding. Without the recognition of disconnection the real relations could not be seen.

We may conjecture other defining areas as suitable for the novelist as for the investigator. Take, for example, Mill's insistence that we cannot understand complex nature and its conditions without knowing simple unconditional laws:

In order to judge how he will act under the variety of desires and aversions which are concurrently operating on him, we must know how he would act under the exclusive influence of each one in particular. (Bk.6, ch.9, p.902)

This was the hypothetical unconditional, and we may conjecture it in terms of novelistic dimension. We may see it as the artificial, the simple, or the caricature which is necessary for any comprehension of the more complex or more natural relations we deem reality. The dimension Mill uses, when interpreted into the possibilities of the novel, allow for, and depend upon, something different from the subtleties and complexities, the temporizing ordinariness of full-blown realism. Mill's analysis and re-construction of what really happened need not only areas of comparison and contrast, and the boundaries of 'chance', but an hypothesis of ideal sequences. Whether manifested in artificial and unlikely one-dimensional secondary plots, in the caricature of social and moral types, or in references to an ideal world of saints and monsters, myths and tradition, Mill's narrative of one strand of the 'real' woven world needed fictions which are artificial because they never happen, but believable because they are logical on their own plane of unconditional law. The shape of Mill's investigative framework was rich with the suggestion of novelistic dimension.

In this the unconditional plays a part in the dimensions of reconstruction; but it also plays a crucial part in the dynamics of reconstruction as a process, and here the role of the investigator in re-constructing or re-enacting what happened emerges. It is a role that may be equated with that of the narrator and reader in novelistic practice. The hypothesis of ideal sequence may come in a call upon the reader, or in an intervention by the narrator to conjecture. If causation cannot be experienced but only inferred, it may be said that it is impossible to narrate causation in the full knowledge that it is causation without the ostensible presence of narrator and reader. Even Mill's Method of Difference demands of the investigator an active comparison and contrast as well as observation, but the deductive method demands more obvious 'work'. The hypotheses necessary for calculation and verification imply, without suggesting a narrative does 'sums', the role of narrator and reader's conjectures. The narrative which invites conjecture, suggests the hypothetical as valid, and accommodates the reader's inferences as to the future, in short the narrative that brings into consciousness the future not as definitive but as a layer of likelihoods and possibilities, is one fulfilling the motions demanded by Mill. One of the ways in which determinism is handled in Middlemarch, I shall argue, is by allusions to the future to which the characters are allowed some form of reply. Similarly, the effect in Mill's deductive method of hypothesising unconditional laws is to elicit freedom for the objects of investigation, and for the investigator, during a process of discovery.

In a similar fashion, Mill's implicit reliance on knowledge itself as a cumulative affair stresses the value of the details, the moments of process rather than its end result. Mill stressed the basis of knowledge as the repetition of experience, and emphasised the value of loose, instinctive inductions. Moreover, just as he insisted that chance and

probability were not illusions so much as a facet of ignorance or limited perspective, he also insisted that inference could be valid even though in our ignorance we inferred untrue or inaccurate laws. These inferences were crucial to the accumulation of knowledge, their value being in their existence for subsequent corrections or added conditions; they were empirical laws which provided the material to discover universal laws. Thus we find a process of suggestion and guesses, of loose generalization and hasty expectation: steps made for elaboration, correction, and qualification, further explanation and contextualization. Translate this into the motions of guesses and suggestions giving rise to disappointment and surprise, further complication and conflict, and the texture of a narrative is implied.

The journey of inference from the known to the unknown bears some comparison with a novel's journey whose story is unknown until it is told. A novel is in this sense an act of dispelling ignorance and it was going through that process, rather than the end result which counted. For Mill freedom is not to be found in the conclusion but in the process of discovery: freedom for the observer or reader is in the inferences that have to be made during causal analysis, and freedom for the objects, in the options of modification, counteraction, and indeterminism found before the final result is calculated. This kind of elicited freedom, and the fact that life was too particular for an exact duplication of conditions, dispel the value of one massive and comprehensively exact inference that, in like circumstances, the whole would occur again. But inferences were made during analysis, and analysis is still a process or journey of freedom from self, for which Mill valued reasoning and its common arbitrator, 'logic'. Mill may have been notorious for his rigid faith in reason, but the passage of mind he depicted from the known to the unknown, and the idea that motivation, bias, and illusion could never

make such a journey save by a self-defeating perversion and dishonesty, form a basic faith of liberalism. The sense of freedom for self and others may become a part of a narratorial rhythm of investigation, explanation, and depiction. We may get close here to seeing that the performance was invaluable: that a process of narration could have the same effect as Mill's causal analysis. And we may see an affinity between Mill's writing of his Logic and Eliot's writing of Middlemarch.

The process ended for Mill in verification. In terms of the dynamics of narrative, Mill's framework lent itself to the idea that narrative was not endless. But his focus of interest on the urgency of the investigator to understand did not provide the sense that there was any final result of nature: time and sequence went on. It provided an end only to the urgency of the investigator to understand. The final moment is less that it had to happen than that we have understood why it happened. The investigator's future lay in that, having once understood correctly, he would know how to go about understanding another particular situation: his method was verified. In some way a vital key had been turned. Moreover, Mill's great shared belief with Comte was that the 'speculative faculties' were the key to the history of human life: 'the succession of the facts would by this alone be presented in a kind of spontaneous order, far more nearly approaching to the real order of their filiation than could be obtained by any other merely empirical process' (Bk.6, ch.10, p.925). Mill's narrative was of human perception, knowledge, and understanding. If the narrative related perception and confirmed its own mode of perception as its final point, then it is a question of the narrative's confirming its own radical relationship to its subject matter: it not only has the dynamics that rework determinism but confirms its own meaning to that determinism. Mill's causal analysis suggests, in short, a narrative structured by the

value of narration itself. This, I propose, is one of the most important aspects of Middlemarch.

To conclude: the sequential structure was Mill's persistent way of working and thinking. In the dynamics of process Mill expressed reasoning as a basic activity which, although dealing with particulars, was common to all men, was empirically verifiable, and so was every person's possible freedom from self. The dynamics of process also characterised the causal uniformities which Mill believed structured the external world. Both uses of sequence defined Mill against the philosophy he sought to refute, ultimately on political grounds: the philosophy of innate, given ideas lying in store; of a mathematical world; and of all the implications of stasis. Moreover, the dynamics of process, and here also of gap, served Mill to deal with his stress on a physically determined world: to avoid or contain the unwanted possibilities of determinism. Lastly, in causal analysis, we have seen emphasised the performative quality of these dynamics and their amenability to a narrative performance.

Chapter IV

'Middlemarch'

1. 'Middlemarch': Narrative and Story

The easy translation of the dynamics and dimensions of Mill's causal analysis into a possible narrative method demonstrates the affinity between liberal positivist handling of determinism and the act of narration. Considering how this handling involves eliciting process, sequence, and direction, it is possible to emphasise these preceding texts as activities or performances, and this is an emphasis which seems to me to be invaluable. Although I have mainly been looking at the articulated concepts of these texts - at social, philosophical, and scientific arguments - I think the underlying dynamics of process I have demonstrated, sufficiently suggest how crucial the event of reading and writing is in itself to the handling of determinism. For not only is the liberal positivist text constructing conceptions which utilize process, but it is a process itself. The text, within the duration of the reading and writing of it, is a temporal activity: analyses and classifications all taking the time and so direction of performance. The text becomes an event or experience whose direction - and breaks - has an effect inexpressible in the terminology of the text but very much at one with it. It is this powerful union of articulated process with process realised in performance which handles determinism. Moreover, it is this realisation in performance, as much as the text's argued self-justification, which makes for the quality of self-sufficiency I have suggested. I think that it is in this light that the silence between Eliot and Mill may be understood.

Considering this performance aspect, this common discursive activity

in which a treatise on logic may labour in the same way as a novel, it is easy to turn to the narrative fiction of George Eliot's Middlemarch.¹ Although I shall give even greater stress to the aspect of temporal performance, this is an emphasis rather than an indication of any divergence from the preceding texts. In looking at Middlemarch I shall not be looking at George Eliot's philosophy but at a narrative dealing with determinism. The irretrievability of deterministic understanding from the narrative is not an exceptional property of it as fiction, but demonstrates what I argue Middlemarch shares with other liberal positivist texts.² Middlemarch is as much a piece of didactic science as these texts. Indeed I have chosen Middlemarch out of George Eliot's novels because it is manifestly the most rigorous scientifically and deterministically. The novel's science and atheism were recognised when it was first published, and often the novel was either judged unfavourably compared to Eliot's earlier works or simply liked despite its science

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1. Middlemarch: A Study in Provincial Life (London, 1871-72). References are to the Norton Critical Edition (New York, 1977), and give chapter number and page number.
 2. See George Levine, 'Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot', PMLA, 77 (1962), 268-79. This important exposition of George Eliot's philosophy of determinism is invaluable for maintaining her consistency as regards determinism, and for demonstrating the clearest affinity between her and Mill. I do not believe that I am going against Levine in arguing that finally her dealing with determinism is irretrievable from narrative. Although I too am describing how Eliot maintains moral responsibility, I prefer not to say that Eliot was dealing with the possibilities of a philosophical paradox, but rather that she was dealing with what I have described as the dual political impulse to judge and blame, most especially with an impulse to criticise society and determining circumstances. The irretrievableness of Eliot's ideas on determinism is stressed by Jill Lazar Matus, 'Accommodating the Actual: Determinism and Modes of Writing in the Novels of George Eliot' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1981); see DAI 42: 4459-60A. Using Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy, she makes a stylistic analysis of the novels in the light of Eliot's determinism.

and absent God.¹ Today critical work and research reveal the extent to which such science is no mere application of received ideas but an inherent understanding.² The rigorous determinism of Middlemarch is no mere realist discipline but is essential to its 'teaching'.³ As a scientific treatise, with metaphysics and sheer inexplicability evicted from its premises, Middlemarch's didactic purpose lies in its exemplary method of analysis, an analysis that proceeds by a strict deterministic understanding but is shown to be impossible without feeling and imagination.⁴ It teaches how to understand. Like the other texts also, Middlemarch includes its self-justification: for the story it tells shows the moral value of feeling and imaginative knowledge in individual lives. Considering therefore the affinities with the other texts, it is not surprising that causation is handled in a remarkably similar way;

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1. See R.H. Hutton's unsigned review from Spectator; the unsigned review from Saturday Review; A.V. Dicey's unsigned review from Nation: all reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, edited by David Carroll (London, 1971), pp.286-314; pp.314-20; pp.339-52. See also Rev. W. Lucas Collins' review from Blackwood's Magazine, reprinted in George Eliot and her Readers: A Selection of Contemporary Reviews, edited by John Holmstrom and Laurence David Lerner (London, 1966), pp.91-93. For an examination of these reviews and others, see W.J. Harvey, 'Criticism of the Novel: Contemporary Reception', in Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel, edited by Barbara Hardy (London, 1967), pp.125-47.
 2. For classic studies, see George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 35 (1980), 1-28; Bernard Paris, Experiments in Life: George Eliot's Quest for Values (London, 1965); J. Hillis Miller, 'Optic and Semiotic in Middlemarch', in The Worlds of Victorian Fiction, edited by Jerome H. Buckley (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp.124-45; Robert A. Greenberg, 'Plexuses and Ganglia; Scientific Allusion in Middlemarch', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 30 (1975), 33-52.
 3. The emphasis on didacticism is made powerfully by William Myers, The Teaching of George Eliot (Leicester, 1984). One point he makes is that George Eliot's didacticism relies upon the assumption that she and her reader are free (see his conclusion). This assumption is crucial to much of the effect of narration analysed in this chapter.
 4. George Levine, 'George Eliot's Hypothesis of Reality', demonstrates the role of hypothesis and imagination in George Eliot's science.

and the performance of narrative I am looking at is as relevant to it as a scientific treatise as to it as a fictional narrative.

As a scientific treatise, Middlemarch's analysis of 'ordinary' life works by the sense of a given reality, the assumption of an object of analysis. When the novel has been read we may identify some delimitation of a controlled experiment, both temporally and geographically.¹ It abides by un-named boundaries, the story it has to tell occurring between September 1829 and May 1832 and taking place within the environs of Middlemarch (Rome being a notable and unique exception). We may also perhaps identify four main characters: Dorothea, Lydgate, Bulstrode, and Fred. However, although the novel is structured by a deep sense of an object of investigation and of other story material brought in to understand this, the object of understanding and explanation, especially at the time of reading, is not easily delimited and defined. Although from the moment the narrative opens addressing the reader 'who... cares much to know the history of man, and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time' (Prelude, p.xiii), there is an assumed object, as the novel proceeds it is felt by an urgency of purpose rather than identified. Indeed reconstruction - 'unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven' - is complex, moving both backwards and forwards: the explanation of events goes hand in hand with their narration, events are discovered as they are explained.² Part of this impetus of explaining a given object relies on a realist assumption that the extraordinary - a story of the kind of heroes and heroines, and violent events which we might expect to have heard of in real life - is not about to happen: the object being to understand why. We might stretch a point and say that, in looking at the determining

1. See Gillian Beer, Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction (London, 1983), pp.158-67.

2. Ch.15, p.96.

events of the characters' lives, the object of explanation is the lives depicted in the finale. We have to look back to the events of 1829-1832 in order to understand why Dorothea was happily married to Will, why Lydgate was so unhappy with his beautiful wife and wealthy practice, why Fred was content as a tenant of Stone Court with his wife Mary.¹

In fact the explanatory impetus is so strong that it blurs the immediate objective. The narrative delves back to explain a present situation so thoroughly that the next event on the temporal agenda is brought about almost before the 'present' has been completed. Explanation itself seems to propel not only the narrative but the story itself. When the narrator sets herself tasks like 'what was Mr Casaubon's bias his acts will give us a clue to' (ch.42, p.293), it is not so clear whether we wish to know his bias in order to understand his acts, or his acts to understand his bias: the two come thick upon one another in the explanatory re-enactment. At other moments the narrator alludes to 'future' story so that the 'present' story, although immediate in one way, has some explanatory function beyond itself. The direction of narrative impetus, a simultaneous explanation and discovery, imposes a process, a process saturated with latent meaning; it is this process, I wish to argue, which handles causation. The blurring of identifiable objective but not of impetus upholds the narrative as one of re-enactment or reconstruction. The narrator knows the story she is in the process of telling, yet the narrative does not have an overall structure of a search for an explanation of a given mystery, nor does it cast a wholly ironical glance at events past. Both elements are there but neither holds sway. Events are reconstructed with such imperative as though the answer to some unnameable problem lay in their telling.

1. See Michael York Mason, 'Middlemarch and History', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1971), 417-31. He examines the novel as a look back in history made in order to explain the 1860s, the 1830s being viewed as both a cause and an analogy.

On the one hand Middlemarch is structured by a deep and urgent sense of an object of knowledge: a reality outside its text that is disciplined by an acceptance of determinism without God, metaphysics, or manipulated chance. On the other hand the novel, explicitly and implicitly, offers a strong idea of the importance of narration itself. Indeed there is a central belief that some meaning and truth can only be found in narration. It is a novel which accentuates the dual existence of narrative and story. Here I abide by Gérard Genette's definitions which are particularly appropriate to the structure Middlemarch presents: 'story' is 'the signified or narrative content', and 'narrative' is 'the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself'.¹ Middlemarch presents the narrative as having a close contact with and unlocking of its determinate story. Sequence is crucial to this. Sequence is a property not only of the causal relation so basic to empiricist understanding of determinism, but it is also the necessary property of narration: narrative can only express and communicate linearly. Hence causal understanding may be exposed to the effects of narration.

Narrative, being sequential, may easily duplicate or mirror a simple causal relation, but it always carries the property of causal understanding.² As each word, phrase, or sentence seems to cause the next, so narrative carries latent within it the possibility of mirroring causation even when relations are in 'theory' not understood as causal. In this, where its direction is not the same as the causation or even non-causation signified, it may re-structure relations. This is especially so in Middlemarch, where narration and its sequence are more than a technical mechanism

1. Narrative Discourse, translated by Jane E. Levin (Oxford, 1980), p.27.

2. See Roland Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', in Image-Music-Text: Roland Barthes, edited and translated by Stephen Heath (London, 1977).

accepted as a part of the convention of reading: where narrative cannot simply mime or perform causal direction, where for example it treats at length simultaneity, the effect is neither unfortunate nor an imposition, but is a meaningful re-structuring. The stories of Middlemarch are complex, rich with a multiplicity of facts and perspectives, and one of the crucial effects of narration on determinism I shall argue is the effect on stasis or simultaneity; on the complexity of a given moment.¹ The narrative explores, with heightened sequentiality, the many sides of one moment in time, the many causes that determine the future. We might conjecture in causal terms a result whereby each of several coexistent causes feels like the effect of the cause preceding it in narration, and the cause of the one succeeding it.² This is perhaps too technical but it does suggest a more general sense of causal time disturbed and re-directed. In a similar way, where the narrative relates an event and then goes back to uncover its cause, we may say cause feels like effect, and effect like cause. However, I think it more accurate to say that the re-structuring effects simply feel like they have a relevance to causation, akin to Mill's reading-in of sequence for causal understanding. Being so relevant to causation, narrative may feel as though it participates, as though it re-finds the heart of the matter, allowing us to feel closely the causal mechanism, indeed re-appropriating it for author, reader, and character. Narrative sequence allows us to feel indeterminacy and determinacy by turns and not necessarily where we expect it. The main process or sequence in Middlemarch which handles the story, and deals

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1. This chapter looks a great deal at temporal ordering, but in a different way from, for example, W.J. Harvey, The Art of George Eliot (London, 1961). Here he considers George Eliot's use of time as producing a spatial reading.
 2. For a provocative reading of effect become cause in Daniel Deronda, see Cynthia Chase, 'The Decomposition of the Elephants: Double-Reading Daniel Deronda', PMLA, 93 (1978), 215-27.

with determinism, I shall be arguing, is a local process, occurring sentence by sentence. However, before this is examined, I want to look at two other levels of narrative - the overall chronology, and the chronological terms used in Dorothea's story - in order to demonstrate that sequence is a property accentuated by the narrative, and that it is felt to be a part of dealing with story. Later, in the third section, I shall, by looking at the references to Lydgate's future story and to Dorothea as sexually oppressed, examine the important local process of narration. Finally, in the fourth section, I shall use Bulstrode's story to demonstrate the overall effect on determinism.

2. Two Processes of Handling Story: Overall Narratorial Time and Dorothea's Private Time.

The first area which I wish to look at in order to demonstrate a narratorial handling of story by process, is the more general chronology of the novel and the relationship of narrative time to story time.¹ The story of individual lives beginning in parallel and then converging, inevitably involves some sequential re-ordering of simultaneous events. We do not however have a sense of a narrative merely trying to meet the demands of its story, nor on the other hand do we have a sense of wilful narratorial re-arrangement of story time. Instead there is a sense, which may be seen in examining the changing relationship of narrative to story, of a narrative progressively participating in events; helping,

1. See Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse. Although most of his detailed and exact terminology greatly exceeds the needs of my thesis, I have found this the most useful guide for the analysis of temporal ordering. According to his definitions of narrative and story I speak of 'narrative time' and 'story time'; I assume that the text is read at an even pace and in order, and I use the dates, seasons, and hours signified. Although this assumes that there is no 'sabotage' of temporal reference, and although in fact, as Genette says, 'the narrative text, like every other text, has no other temporality than what it borrows, metonymically, from its own reading' (p.34), the distinction is perfectly apt for Middlemarch.

without impertinence, to bring them about. Several factors contribute to the transformation of this relationship: the ratio of narrative time to story time; the way in which the narrative specifies story time; the way it manoeuvres changes in story lines by links temporal or otherwise; the frequency of story line changes. All these contribute to the way the narrative flow feels. Diverse story lines particularly effect this. There is a strong sense of story lines because the narrative is carefully character focalized. By this I mean, not the very limiting focalization from within the character looking outwards so to speak, but focalization upon a character, including not only what a character sees and hears but all that is relevant to him or her, things that might well be beyond his or her knowledge.¹ Within Middlemarch, character focalization is disciplined, a chapter rarely containing more than two and this more often than not where an event concerns two major characters. The frequency of focalization changes is a crucial element in the narrative's changing rhythm.

The first third of the novel sets up two distinct story lines: that of Dorothea and that of Fred and Lydgate (in the early part of the novel Fred's tends to lead into Lydgate's forming one story line). The narrative, establishing an interest in young hopes and illusions, gives considerable time to each story line before moving to the other, and, because the stories are occurring simultaneously, story time is repeated at considerable length. The result is that by the end of twenty seven chapters - one third of the novel length - the narrative has only covered four months of the two year, eight month story span.

The first ten chapters narrate in simple chronology the two months, October and November 1829, of Dorothea's courtship and engagement. In

1. I have adopted the word 'focalization' from Gérard Genette and, although I use it more loosely, his clear classifications are invaluable; see the chapter on 'Mood' in Narrative Discourse.

a manner that becomes typical of the narrative's treatment of a piece of focalization, it begins with careful specification as to days and then dissolves into unspecified but internally chronological relation of events; days dissolve into weeks. Dorothea's story established, the narrative moves to Lydgate and Fred: a manoeuvre accomplished by allowing Dorothea to recede into a public figure at a dinner party at which Lydgate is present. Turning to Lydgate, the narrative moves back over story time to tell how Lydgate met Rosamond. With one opening comment, 'one morning of the October in which we have lately seen Mr Casaubon visiting the Grange' (ch.11, p.66), we know that the story time covered by Dorothea's story is to be retold, but, like her story time, the internal specifications develop a general sense of their own chronology: days again dissolve into weeks, and require and receive no cross reference to the other story, so that by the end of these eight chapters (essentially four on Fred and four on Lydgate) we have no idea whether we have been brought up to the time of the November dinner party from which the narrative back-tracked. As yet overall story time matters very little.

The next four chapters on Dorothea in Rome provide no more information as to how far the Fred-Lydgate story has progressed. Instead they open on 'one fine morning' (ch.19, p.130) in Rome with a grandiose sense of history which shall become typical of the narrative's handling of its silence over all relations, temporal included, to the preceding chapter, and which heightens the move in upon unspecified particularity. What is noticeable about the narration of the last few days of Dorothea's honeymoon in Rome, is how temporal specifications emphasise and confirm the gaining of a deep understanding of Dorothea's private drama. Where the opening chapter tells of Will and Naumann's sighting of her on some unspecified day, the next chapter opens two hours later with Dorothea

sobbing alone. It is in trying to explain this that the narrative tells us that Dorothea has been married six weeks and in Rome for five, and that it goes over the kind of time she has been having. We learn that this is a relating of past time when we get to, 'but this morning for the first time she had been troublesome to Mr Casaubon' (ch.20, p.138). During the ensuing argument it is revealed that they have not been able to get back to Lowick for Christmas: the story has reached some point in December or early January. When the argument has been described and it is said that 'it was when Mr Casaubon was quitting her that Naumann had first seen her' (ch.20, p.141), the acknowledgement of having reached the point at which the narrative began comes as something of a relieving confirmation. It acts like an affirmation that an understanding of Dorothea's 'present' position has been achieved, and legitimises the narration of the ensuing events of the next two chapters which are happily in order.

When the narrative returns to Fred's story in chapter 23, as with the resumption of Dorothea's story, it recaps story time relative to its opening moment: it enters Fred's story and goes back in order to move forwards. As the story of Fred's illness turns into the story of Lydgate and Rosamond's romance, we only know that time is in order; we have no idea what month it is. Nor do we have any idea of its relationship to Dorothea's story until the end of this section when Lydgate is called out to Lowick. The two stories have given only a general sense, by the opening of Lydgate's meeting with Rosamond and by this call, of being parallel: we as yet withhold the desire to know how or whether these stories relate and we take the narrative on trust.

But this call to Lowick in chapter 27 comes like a marker of the boundary of one story line, the reminder of a world beyond the self; it heralds a change in the reconstructive interest, where unspecified

paralleling is transformed into the interweaving of stories without their as yet radically affecting one another. The narrative speeds up in its relation to story time. This does not mean that there are any less scenes or pieces of daily action than before, but that the narrative over several chapters covers more months of its story time. Thus chapters 28 to 44, seventeen in all, cover a period of nine or ten months from January 1830 to early autumn. The blocks of focalized interest are shorter, ranging between one to three chapters in length, so that story lines do indeed interweave. The story lines are in effect parallel for this ten month period, but their crucial events are interspersed so that the narrative can now maintain the chronology of its story time. What must be noticed is how the narrative links its changing focalizations and how it acknowledges story time.

After telling that Lydgate was called to Lowick, the narrative turns in chapter 28 to Dorothea and Casaubon's return to Lowick 'in the middle of January' (p.188). It is not until the next chapter, 'one morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick' (ch.29, p.192), that Lydgate is called to Casaubon. It is now that we may place the two stories in relation to overall story time, and it forms a kind of knot from which the narrative can enter a chronology without reference to date and in which the various story lines trip off one another sequentially. The links between them show temporal order but not specifiable time: Dorothea talks to Lydgate and Lydgate 'that evening spoke to Miss Vincy of Mrs Casaubon' (ch.31, p.202); Mr Vincy accepts Rosamond and Lydgate's subsequent engagement because Featherstone is dying. The mention of this leads to the watching relatives at Stone Court and then to Featherstone's death. Dorothea watches the funeral and learns that Will has returned: here, where two stories meet and there is another welcome temporal placing - 'on a morning of May that Peter Featherstone was buried' (ch.34, p.221),

there is another knot permitting flight into unspecified time. By the summer of 1830, seasonal reference is crucial to narratorial flow. Chapter 37 opens with a specific historical reference without telling us the date - 'now that George the Fourth was dead, Parliament dissolved, Wellington and Peel generally depreciated' (p.246).¹ In fact George IV died on 26 June 1830 but we are only given a seasonal reference later on in this chapter - 'while the summer had gradually advanced over the western fields' (p.256). Still, the chronology comes from the links between events: the proposal for Garth to manage Tipton and Freshitt leads to the day the Garths receive the news. In turn mention is made by Caleb of Rigg's sale of Stone Court to Bulstrode and this provides the lead to the scene between Rigg and Raffles. Only well on into each of these chapters is season referred to - the 'bright August lights' (ch.40, p.278) at the Garths, 'the last shocks of corn' (ch.41, p.287) at Stone Court. Similarly, when Casaubon consults Lydgate shortly after the latter's return from his honeymoon, and Dorothea sees Will and Rosamond together, we know we have progressed in story time but how far is only indicated by the falling of the leaves and the material Dorothea 'wore in those days of mild autumn' (ch.43, p.298).

Because the focalization changes frequently, the seasonal references provide a confirmation of the simple progress of overall story rather than of individual story lines; of the narrative's whole object rather than of its diverse interests. The narrative is making one story out of many. The stories only brush past one another, the links by which they lead on to one another being made out of seemingly peripheral circumstances. The narrative does not suggest that these links have an as yet unknown momentous significance nor that they are clever narratorial

1. For a succinct and clear study of George Eliot's historical references, see Jerome Beaty, 'History by Indirection: The Era of Reform in Middlemarch', Victorian Studies, 1 (1957), 173-79.

devices. They are presented as simply there. The overall story time references act as a gauge as to the progress of the narrative, and this confirms rather than instigates the naturalness with which story lines unfold from one another.

In chapter 44 the narrative leaves Dorothea discussing the New Hospital with Lydgate in autumn 1830 and two chapters later returns to her in March 1831. Here is the first of two leaps made by the narrative in relation to its story time. In this first, the six month gap is dealt with by the narrative in such a way that it feels a matter of weeks. It is manoeuvred by two chapters in which our sense of time is briefly disturbed. In the first, picking up on the topic of the New Hospital, another parallel story, the story of Lydgate's reputation, is told. Entering a world of gossip and professional bickering, telling untold events with a sequence of their own, the whole of story time is re-told. Only towards the end is any temporal linking made to the story as we know it. Then, as the familiar part of Lydgate's story re-emerges we have an ominous sense of his future: in effect we by-pass the present situation. In the second of these chapters, the iterative treatment of Will deals with the gap. The chapter opens with another disturbing change of temporal scale:

While Lydgate, safely married and with the Hospital under his command, felt himself struggling for Medical Reform against Middlemarch, Middlemarch was becoming more and more conscious of the national struggle for another kind of Reform.

By the time that Lord John Russell's measure was being debated in the House of Commons, there was a new political animation in Middlemarch, and a new definition of parties which might show a decided change of balance if a new election came. (ch.46, p.317)

Again, we are not told that Russell's bill was introduced on 1 March 1831: the sense of broad history allows the narrative to reposition itself further on in story time and only then are we told that it is

March. Thus Will's feelings and the figure he cuts are treated generally, letting in, imperceptibly, seasonal change: he had picked up 'a troop of droll children' whom 'he had led out on gypsy excursions to Halsell wood at nutting-time, and since the cold weather had set in he had taken them on a clear day to gather sticks for a bonfire' (ch. 46, p.320). The narrative slides easily into 'one evening in March' (p.321) when Will's conversation with Lydgate determines him to try and get a glimpse of Dorothea. And so the narrative resettles in a new year.

It is important that the gap is made known, that the reader accepts a kind of incubation period for another crop of events even more inter-related than that of 1830. This knowledge breaks the rhythm of the narrative but the handling of it makes it very gentle: we reawaken in the March almost imperceptibly so that new events feel like direct consequences of those of the past year. What the reader knows and what the reader feels combine to impress both the directness of causation and the solidity of effects in which there is no going back: thus Lydgate's debts are a direct result of his marriage but are so accumulated that he cannot undo them. Casaubon's will is a direct result of his jealousy as Dorothea espoused Will's cause, but we see also that it is not a momentary response but a deep state of mind.

Resettled in the new year, action erupts: on the Saturday Will talks to Lydgate, on the Sunday he goes to Lowick church, and on the Monday Casaubon dies. The six month period between the March Sunday and the end of August 1831 is told in sixteen chapters, a comparable but slightly slower pace than the previous year. However there is a noticeable decrease in the length of blocks of interest, which vary between one to two chapters in length. Even the four chapters concerning Casaubon's death fluctuate in focalization. In a noticeable echo of the past year's events, a death and its effects precede a dissolution of

Parliament which in turn allows the narrative to use the political atmosphere in order to move onwards in events. This year's dissolution occurred in April 1831 but, as before, the date is slipped in later: this time when Brooke makes his disastrous speech on 'a fine May morning' (ch.51, p.348).

The summer of 1831 also echoes that of 1830 in that its events of different story lines interrelate so that one naturally leads to another and so on. Farebrother gets the Lowick living which Bulstrode does not like but finds a greater 'chastisement' in the emergence of Raffles. Dorothea employs Caleb which leads to the Railway incident and employment for Fred. His parents' disappointment at this brings up the question of Lydgate's debts and Rosamond's lost baby. Lydgate, once Rosamond has recovered, tries to broach the subject of money. Rosamond's intimacy with Will leads her to tell him of Casaubon's will, and Will then learns of his family history from Raffles who in turn pesters Bulstrode and so on. As before the narrative arranges and roughly abides by the chronological sequence of events.

The most important difference to the summer before - a difference that is highlighted by the similarities - is the way the narrative uses temporal references. Where they were underlying seasonal references confirming only overall story time, they are now temporal specifications coming as authorial introductions to events and relating them very clearly to previous events. The previous events related to are not always of the preceding chapter but often occurred several chapters before. Thus chapter 52 opens, 'On that June evening when Mr Farebrother knew that he was to have the Lowick living' (p.353), and tells of the conversations he had with Fred and then with Mary 'hardly a week later' (p.354). Five chapters later, the incident of the Railway workers at Frick is placed by referring back to this chapter - 'One morning, not

long after that interview between Mr Farebrother and Mary Garth' (ch.56, p.383). The intervening chapters have been seemingly chronological and there is no need to consider this incident at Frick as a re-capping of story time: the incident has naturally unfolded from the preceding chapter in which Dorothea mentioned her dealings with Caleb, and here Caleb is seen working for her. Temporal reference, instead of confirming narratorial progress, refers back and highlights the interweaving of stories. Moreover, temporal references and links are not slipped in but stated authoritatively. Even the simple placements are made firmly, not by quick reference but so that it seems important that we know Dorothea returned to Lowick at the end of June or that the auction took place at the end of August. These references are important for neither the internal chronology, nor the logic of the stories. The narrator could let the story unfold but would seem to desire to articulate links, to find and mark them, a kind of narratorial work where work seems as yet undemanded by the story. The two chapters where 'work' does seem necessary are those on Lydgate and Bulstrode, in which there is backtracking and remembering. But these come late, and are precursors of the coming winter events where stories dramatically converge and affect one another. Perhaps the most important effect of the narratorial inter-relating of stories before events actually converge is that this final convergence will not obtrude into the narrative, but seem a part of it, something that narrative has helped bring about.

In the second of the two temporal leaps, but this time with no covering chapters, the narrative leaves Will's parting from Dorothea at the end of August 1831 and opens immediately at the Christmas. The thirteen chapters from 62 to 75, which move from Christmas 1831 to the immediate aftermath of the meeting in April, show another slight decrease in the general pace of the narrative. But the main difference is in

focalization and narrative-story temporal relations. Instead of short blocks of different focalizations maintaining an overall chronology, there are two long blocks: five chapters on Lydgate and four primarily on Bulstrode. Then there are four chapters each treating a different view of the aftermath of the meeting.

Both Lydgate's and Bulstrode's stories involve pronounced back-tracking, lasting over chapters rather than paragraphs, and they overlap one another. Chapter 62 opens with an outward view of Lydgate at Christmas and then at the New Year. The next chapter explains Lydgate's silent moodiness, as usual, by going back over past events. On arriving at the present, subsequent events easily unfold in the next three chapters and bring us to the March when Lydgate hesitates and eventually approaches Bulstrode for a loan. In turn, Bulstrode's reply demands some explanation and again the narrative goes back to Christmas taking a whole chapter to return to the present. The effect of such back-tracking, apart from the piercing of a private drama, is that, by relating events in the past tense rather than the pluperfect, there is a sense of unlocking a present story and of blurring the simple inevitability moving from past to present to future. Then there is a very real convergence of lives: the lengthy narration of the last three days of Raffles' life includes Lydgates' private thoughts, the meeting at which Bulstrode is disgraced incriminates Lydgate, and Dorothea, appearing for the first time since August, leaps to Lydgate's defence. After this, time matters very little: in the aftermath of the meeting, four different views of events are related in turn and the difficult temporal relations have effectively been broken.

Thus when it is Dorothea's turn to command the narrative at length, time is straightforward and slow: nine chapters tell of a period of seven days. After her conversation with Lydgate, Dorothea goes the

next day to Rosamond. This day is narrated in four chapters which approximately follow the chronology of that day, from Dorothea's glimpse of Will in the morning to her anguished night. The next three chapters tell of Dorothea's return to Rosamond the next morning, Will's visit to Lydgate in the evening, and later his reunion with Dorothea two days later. Two days after this, amidst the news of the Lords' throwing out of the Reform Bill, Mr Brooke breaks the news of Dorothea's marriage. The last two chapters of the novel complete Fred and Bulstrode's stories as they effect one another and the tying together of the stories is complete. With only one temporal reference - that Mrs Bulstrode's face 'two months before had been bright and blooming' (ch.85, p.568) - the loss of temporal concern coincides with the ending of the novel.

The overall changes in narratorial handling of its story time indicate a powerful process of explanation and discovery. From an early acceptance of parallel stories, the narrative begins, as though needing to make this one narrative, to let stories trip off one another, with the quiet confirmation of seasonal chronology keeping diverging interests to one narrative flow. Then, as though this were not enough, as though needing to form the several stories into one piece of knowledge, the narrative uses story time to make links seemingly unneeded by the stories themselves, but needed by narrator and reader. The complex temporal linking overlays the simple underlying seasonal chronology with intricate cross references full of potential simultaneity and back-tracking. When the stories do meet fully and seem to demand narratorial work to deal with this, it is as though the narrative has grasped parallel stories and helped bring about their convergence. The narrative has handled story by making itself a necessity to story. Unlocking the story, it makes the story happen. Here it must be noted that the use of time is closely related to the psychology of the

characters. Thus the considerable back-tracking involved just prior to the April meeting is as much to do with Lydgate's blindness to his accumulating mistakes until the results are upon him, and with the important role of memory in Bulstrode's life, as it is to do with complicated interrelating of lives. Dorothea in contrast, only once instigates major retrospection, when she is in Rome and is first disillusioned. From there onwards however she is sensitive and responsive so that the narrative does not have to unlock things for her. Fred, although his story has less stature, is not so unlike Dorothea in that he is instinctive and responsive, and his story is very simply told. The fine coherence of the overall chronological relationships with the psychology of the main characters, reflects the important sense that the narratorial handling of story is not an imposition on the story, but a powerful necessity to the story.

Process and sequence which handle story may also be seen at a more obviously conscious level than that of overall chronological relationships. For the narrative uses temporal relations actively and deliberately to describe the private emotional life and thought processes of individuals, most especially of Dorothea. Dorothea, the positive example of secular morality, dramatises the positive values and ideal by which the narrative works. Indeed Dorothea, with her distinct individual motivation, needs, and limited knowledge, has to work a great deal harder than her omniscient narrator to come to the morally valuable sympathetic understanding of others which the novel promotes. In Dorothea's private thought processes, we may see the kind of process deemed to be of moral value, and moral responsibility. Indeed it might be said that Dorothea, like the narrator, handles her story by such process, for it profoundly affects her actual life. The Prelude, indicating that she will be a

'foundress of nothing', her 'sobs after an unattained goodness... dispersed among hindrances' (p.xiv), directs the reader not to her actions but to her thoughts and feelings. Limited in action and factual knowledge, Dorothea's is an emotional history; the two and a half years told as a series of crises, clusters of days and critical moments with which she has to reckon. After her marriage, the moments of her life are defined by her sense of dislocation from her environment, a silence in which her rare efforts to speak are spurned by Casaubon or imbued with a hopelessness with Will. Mostly she watches or hears - Featherstone's funeral, Celia's baby, rumours about Will, Will and Rosamond twice alighted upon. What happens in such silence does determine - importantly without Dorothea's intending it - her material life. As she later begins to act and speak, giving the living to Farebrother and employing Garth, talking to Mr Brooke, defending Lydgate, approaching Rosamond, and ultimately marrying Will, we may share the Finale's conclusion that 'her finely-touched spirit had still its fine issues' (p.578).

Dorothea's story begins with her wilful marriage to Casaubon. It is an act of ignorance and is made under the pressure of circumstances, but it is an act done because she is conscious of precisely this:

the union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path. (ch.3, p.17)

In her difficult frustrating world, she inserts the word 'voluntary' and thereby permits herself to think, feel, and respond. Her choice as a young woman of an old dry scholar is seen as unnatural. Will is shocked by this, '"You are too young - it is an anachronism for you to have such thoughts"'. For Will it is perverted:

'You talk as if you had never known any youth.
It is monstrous.... And now you will go and be
shut up in that stone prison at Lowick: you will
be buried alive.' (ch.22, p.153)

Dorothea's answer is simple, '"But Lowick is my chosen home."' (p.154)

Perversion and anachronism are Dorothea's choice and it is her only possible choice in her world. This miserable, mistaken marriage can still be interpreted as a divorce from unthinking participation in the ways of the world that will give her moral freedom, for Dorothea refuses to abide by the usual temporal expectations and so makes the first step by a power of mind to make another time for herself.

Temporal terms are used even more emphatically to describe Dorothea's experience of painful disillusion on her honeymoon. Broken, fragmentary, unintelligible, Rome is 'the city of visible history, where the past of a whole hemisphere seems moving in funeral procession', 'the oppressive masquerade of ages', 'ruins...set in the midst of a sordid present', a 'vast wreck of ambitious ideals...mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness' (ch.20, p.134). Dorothea cannot understand or appreciate Rome because she cannot trace 'out the suppressed transitions which unite all contrasts' (ch.20, p.134). She cannot see meaning because she cannot see sequence: Rome is all time crammed into one.

What Dorothea does do, faced with this timelessness, is respond to it deeply and with feeling, the kind of keen feeling that is the basis of the novel's moral structure. Her responsiveness begins a kind of life for her:

Forms both pale and glowing took possession of her young sense, and fixed themselves in her memory even when she was not thinking of them, preparing strange associations which remained through her after-years. (ch.20, p.134).

The depth of her feeling and experience is described in terms of sequence; the sequence of an internal life. Casaubon's moment of angry

defensiveness may never be mentioned again by either of them:

But Dorothea remembered it to the last with the vividness with which we all remember epochs in our experience when some dear expectation dies, or some new motive is born. (ch.21, p.146)

At a loss in her environment and silent, the making of future memories is like the forging of a private sequence. For the narrator also such keen feeling has no words to specify it save this remembering, and temporal terms serve to describe the common experiences of men and women. Lydgate too has such a moment:

For years after Lydgate remembered the impression produced in him by this involuntary appeal - this cry from soul to soul, without other consciousness than their moving with kindred natures in the same embroiled medium, the same troublous fitfully-illuminated life. But what could he say now except that he should see Mr Casaubon again to-morrow? (ch.30, p.200)

For neither Dorothea nor Lydgate, is this a mere glance to their futures: the making of memories is a current activity. They are themselves determining what they will remember, and simply by being sensitive now, they reach far more surely into the future by their minds than by their actions.

It is not just silence which defines this entirely internal process of feeling and thinking of which the making of memories in Rome is the start; it is also the sense of helplessness, the inability to do anything or to see what can be done in the future. Back at Lowick the motionless snowy landscape and the boudoir which surrounds Dorothea, and within which she can only walk, highlight her very mobile thoughts:

Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight.

In the first minutes when Dorothea looked out she felt nothing but the dreary oppression; then came a keen remembrance, and turning away from the

window she walked round the room. The ideas and hopes which were living in her mind when she first saw this room nearly three months before were present now only as memories: she judged them as we judge transient and departed things. All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her. Each remembered thing in the room was disenchanted, was deadened as an unlit transparency, till her wandering gaze came to the group of miniatures, and there at last she saw something which had gathered new breath and meaning... (ch.28, pp.189-190)

Her deathly environment and the normal time scheme, the three months ago and these 'first minutes' in the middle of January, form no mere back-cloth to her feelings but the very material upon which her mind works, gaining a power over it by encompassing it. From the present oppressive lifelessness, she moves back to her past hopes and then to their present status as memories, judged and departed. Then she manages to move forwards in her mind to find 'new breath and meaning' in the picture of a woman dead long before her hopes ever began. This is the sequence whereby Dorothea does what she will do again and again, whereby, oppressed and frustrated as she is, she begins to think of others' unhappiness. Mentally she breaks the boundaries of her situation, she perverts the sequence of her life, going backwards in time in order to move forwards in her emotions. This powerful re-working of the conventional sequence is not depicted as in itself artificial. It may be difficult but it has a naturalness. It seems instinctive, a process that recognises and brings relief: 'then came a keen remembrance...till her wandering gaze came to the group...and there at last she saw...'.

This however is a self-contained sequence of mental events. It determines Dorothea to hurry out of the room to see if she can help her husband - only to be confronted, in Celia and her uncle, with her public role as a married woman. The sequence is neither rejoined in later

private moments nor does it run parallel to external events, but it is repeated within mere moments of the story; the strength gained in repetition forms her progress during the novel.

By the summer her boudoir reflects this progress:

Nothing had been outwardly altered there; but while the summer had gradually advanced over the western fields beyond the avenue of elms, the bare room had gathered within it those memories of an inward life which fill the air as with a cloud of good or bad angels, the invisible yet active forms of our spiritual triumphs or our spiritual falls. (ch.37, p.256)

The association of conventional time with geography here highlights the contrast made by the narrative between the chronologies of Dorothea's outward and inner lives, her circumstances and her feelings. In a way the geographical or spatial has no sequence in itself, only in the order in which it may be perceived. So the seasons can be seen according to the geographical placing of the sun and here have meaning to Dorothea only in the progressive accumulation of her repeated struggles. In those struggles she finds more meaning than she could do in mere geography. As Dorothea says of her faith in the power of good,

'Please not to call it by any name,' said Dorothea, putting out her hands entreatingly. 'You will say it is Persian, or something else geographical. It is my life. I have found it out, and cannot part with it.' (ch.39, p.271)

Clinging to her possession of an inner sequence in which she can indeed move, she is in fact saved and able to live within her environment for,

her blindness to whatever did not lie in her own pure purpose carried her safely by the side of precipices where vision would have been perilous with fear. (ch.37, p.257)

She does move across the landscape of her environment, and in conventional time, but she is 'carried', carried by what occurs on another time scheme which she forges for herself.

The main precipice past which Dorothea is carried is the extent of

her husband's sexual jealousy of Will. She comes very near to the possibility of seeing it, but is carried past it by her concerted efforts not to judge him. Always on the brink of anger or resentment, her repeated struggles not to judge him constitute a moral choice - 'In such a crisis as this, some women begin to hate' (ch.42, p.295). For a moment she does judge him, and feels herself forced to:

If he had drawn her towards him, she would never have surveyed him - never have said, 'Is he worth living for?' but would have felt him simply a part of her own life. (ch.42, p.295)

But the moment is not irretrievable: when Dorothea first returned to Lowick she judged her memories 'as we judge transient and departed things' (ch.28, p.190), whilst when they were alive and close to her she could not judge them. In the schema of mental time, judged things are things past, and this is what Dorothea will not let Casaubon be to her. She imagines what Casaubon must feel in a mental act which reverses conventional time:

Dorothea's pity turned from her own future to her husband's past - nay, to his present hard struggle with a lot which had grown out of that past. (ch.48, p.332)

As a chosen act, it has a pre-determined end - 'the resolved submission did come' (ch.42, p.295), but it is a powerful and difficult functioning of mind, the perverted sequence both a submission and an act of moral freedom.

Her struggles do reap their rewards: the delay caused by her last struggle means Casaubon is dead before she has to make her promise, and her learning of the will finally frees her from him. The reward of mental freedom is presented in the terms of a spontaneous process, a re-arrangement of her time scheme without her asking. The process is involuntary and guiltless:

She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. (ch.50, pp.339-340)

It seems right and fitting that it takes the forced change in her memories to free her judgment which 'instead of being controlled by dutious devotion, was made active...' (p.342). The image of organic change here echoes a whole social philosophy and evolutionism in which changed knowledge, the civilisation of man and his understanding of his determined state, effects the last miraculous leap into a kind of natural freedom. What Dorothea could have done had she known of the will before Casaubon's death lies beyond the schema of the novel. Dorothea's persistent divorce from the geography and conventional time of her life finally permits her innocent and free participation in the conventional world.

The same process of forging another time scheme, which finally and spontaneously effects 'external' life, happens in Dorothea's relationship with Will. Whatever is thought of Dorothea's marriage to Will in terms of reward, 'no life would have been possible to Dorothea which was not filled with emotion' (Finale, p.576), so that Will, in giving her this, gives her some form of fulfilment. Dorothea and Will's relationship is like a private world, permitted because they believe that there will be no future to it and no physical outcome, and shaped by an increasing submission to circumstances. Their sudden and spontaneous marriage comes like another guiltless leap into physical freedom.

Whereas Dorothea avoided judging Casaubon as she would a memory, her relationship with Will is based on memory. Right from the start in Rome when Will doubts whether he shall have the opportunity to help her,

Dorothea's response is, "It will come; and I shall remember how well you wish me" (ch.22, p.156). Then, the next time she speaks to him properly, she says,

'It seems strange to me how many things I said to you.'

'I remember them all,' said Will. (ch.37, p.250)

Remembering - promising to remember and confessing never to have forgotten - becomes a way of attributing an unnameable value and significance to their exchanges. It is a way of speaking whilst submitting to the circumstances which keep them apart.

Each interview is a kind of parting more final than the last:

'I shall never hear from you. And you will forget all about me.'

'No,' said Dorothea, 'I shall never forget you. I have never forgotten anyone whom I once knew. My life has never been crowded, and seems not likely to be so. And I have a great deal of space for memory at Lowick, haven't I?' She smiled. (ch.54, p.375)

The narrative makes it clear that the finality is their idea and not necessarily what will happen, which, coupled with their own persistent misunderstanding of one another, and even Dorothea's exaggeration of 'a past solace' (ch.37, p.250), highlights the other worldliness of their feelings. It is by temporal terms that they express their worldly position without having to refer to it: as Will says when he has discovered Casaubon's will,

'I was in ignorance then of things which I know now - things which have altered my feelings about the future. When I saw you before, I was dreaming that I might come back some day. I don't think I ever shall - now.' (ch.62, p.436)

It is by temporal terms that they express love without saying the word.

At first when Will says that he has "seen heaven in a trance",

Dorothea has conflicting memories by which she may interpret him:

the memory of the little they had lived through together turned pale and shrank before the memory which suggested how much fuller might have been the intercourse between Will and some one else. (ch.62, p.437)

Her doubts are only cleared by Will's affirmation of what his memory shall be:

'I have never done you injustice. Please remember me,' said Dorothea, repressing a rising sob.

'Why should you say that?' said Will, with irritation. 'As if I were not in danger of forgetting everything else.' (ch.62, p.438)

The unrestrained love now permitted is seen in terms of a changed past, deliberately without future conjecture. But notice how the expression of their idea of the future by temporal terms exposes that future to possible change:

what a world of reasons crowded upon her against any movement of her thought towards a future that might reverse the decision of this day! (ch.62, p.439)

Temporal terms may express the depth of feeling but they also have the mobility of possible re-arrangement, and, moreover, re-arrangement in the physical world: there is a possibility of the two times meeting, of a conceivable, but miraculous leap of mental time into real time. Thus Dorothea and Will's denial of marriage brings about, without hypocrisy, marriage; the simple moral lesson that the physical world of power, circumstances, and prohibitions, can only be effected morally by getting beyond it, is expressed as a feasible truth.

Dorothea's one act, her visit to Rosamond, which pushes her into participating in the world and marrying Will, is made in total resignation to her own circumstances, and because of her very alive mental life making her imaginative and sensitive as to Lydgate's marriage. When Dorothea hurries to Rosamond, filled 'with the many thoughts, both of the past and the probable future' (ch.77, p.532), she is living to the full the emotional life she has built for herself, and the sight of Will with Rosamond, 'the terrible illumination of a certainty' (ch.77, p.534), breaks into her private world. Indeed it breaks up the sequences in

her mind: for the narration of the night in which she is forced to own her love not on the plane of treasured memories, but as a young physical woman, is thick with the visual images of a kind of timeless immediacy. The images of what has been destroyed are the images of Dorothea as a natural controller of time, the nurturer of a seed, the mother and her child, the 'woman's pride of reigning' (ch.80, p.542). Now she is the mother of a child torn in two; she is a woman crying like a child. But the control of time she has lost is the control that perverts time, the hope 'that along some pathway they should meet with unchanged recognition and take up the backward years as a yesterday' (ch.80, p.542). Her life is at one with the passing of the night, she is at one with the time of the world that has always been there: 'In that hour she repeated what the merciful eyes of solitude have looked on for ages in the spiritual struggles of man' (ch.80, p.542). She has not however lost what experience has given her - 'it asserted itself as acquired knowledge asserts itself and will not let us see as we saw in the day of our ignorance' (ch.80, p.544). Returning to Rosamond this time 'a part of that involuntary, palpitating life' (ch.80, p.544), it only takes a word from Rosamond to precipitate a reconciliation with Will. They glimpse 'the terror of a hopeless love' (ch.83, p.559) and deny such a vision of the future by marrying.

Temporal terms are thus very much a part of the private life of morally determining activity. And moral freedom takes the form of sequence in a way akin to the forms we have seen in Mill's Logic. I do not think however that ubiquitous moral freedom is an easy affirmation of the narrative. Dorothea is a dramatisation of it rather than an argument for its equal availability. I have used Dorothea's story simply to show that moral freedom is actually conceived of in terms of sequence, that the kind of narrative process handling story, seen in

chronological relations, takes a conscious form. To see how the narrative elicits moral responsibility or choice in determinism, a process at a different level than temporal terminology must be seen.

3. Local Process: Allegiance to the Unknown Particular

Although the overall relations of chronology, and the temporal terms used in Dorothea's story, suggest the depth of the feel for process and its association with determination and moral responsibility, the process which handles determinism the more compellingly and consistently is to be identified at a local level of narration, at the level of sentence and phrase. In this section I want to demonstrate, gradually, what this process is. In order to gain an initial leverage on this process and its relevance to determinism, I think it useful to consider the allusions made early on in Lydgate's story to his future failure. The foreshadowing of the future - as well as open prediction - is a useful key for my argument because it directly involves a most frightening aspect of determinism, where the denial of choice appears not only as a moral and theoretical problem but emotionally repugnant. One way of expressing determinism was to claim that, if all the causes or conditions of a man's life including his character were known, then his actions and life could be foretold.¹ Mill stressed that foreknowledge is only knowledge of events not their instigator, and often the sheer impossibility of the comprehensive knowledge necessary to predict was reassuring. However, the latter consolation is not so easy for Middlemarch because its very purpose is to use its privilege as fiction to show the minute detail of motives and circumstances determining 'ordinary' individuals

1. For examples of the extremes to which this could be taken, see Ian Hacking, 'Nineteenth Century Cracks in the Concept of Determinism', Journal of the History of Ideas, 44 (1983), 455-75.

and normally unavailable to their neighbours. To exclude allusion to the future would be something of a repression. In Lydgate's story, foreshadowing seems especially natural because he is so brash in his intentions that it is far from impertinent for the narrator to question their fulfilment. Moreover, those intentions are so specific that there is no question, as there is with Dorothea's, as to their subsequent loss: Lydgate himself sets the future assessment of his life as a failure. Lydgate's early story, therefore, provides some of the most pronounced moments in which the narrative deals directly with the concept of necessity.¹

Almost as soon as Lydgate enters the novel, he is exposed to questions as to his future, and this on precisely the point which is to prove his downfall: his taste in women. Lydgate's preference for Rosamond over Dorothea seems a natural enough topic for an introductory device, and his confidence an easy invitation to narratorial irony, an irony whose province includes the future. It is by witty knowingness that the narrator, imperceptibly, sets the interest in Lydgate's future, and secures the most pertinent points. She does not however secure her tone: something of an experiment with narratorial knowingness comes to unsettle the irony of knowing more. When the narrator displays a deliberate control over her knowledge the result is an ironic politeness and gesture of deference:

But Lydgate was less ripe, and might possibly have experience before him which would modify his opinion as to the most excellent things in woman. (ch.10, p.63)

The word 'experience' is to become a touchstone to Lydgate's relationship to the future, but the patronage of such ostentatious narratorial control

1. The future, I would argue, is very much dealt with in Lydgate's story, in sharp contrast to the experiments with the future of George Eliot's 'The Lifted Veil' (1859) and Daniel Deronda (1876).

is to become intolerable. Another more specific allusion to the future, coming simply by putting Lydgate's subjective attitude into context, lets in the very pertinent point that Lydgate's confident self-reliance really depends on other people, but again the narrator marks with light-hearted knowingness the gap between her position and Lydgate's:

But Rosamond Vincy seemed to have the true melodic charm; and when a man has seen the woman whom he would have chosen if he had intended to marry speedily, his remaining a bachelor will usually depend on her resolution rather than on his. Lydgate believed that he should not marry for several years. (ch.11, p,64)

Shortly the narrative will turn to Rosamond, and going back in time will give a definite indication of her resolution. This, however, comes lost amidst much action, deduction having led quite beyond itself; more importantly, there has been a passage that has broken up sustained irony.

Lydgate's subjective belief and intention are clearly precarious but there comes a remarkable, flash-like view of the implications of the narrative's tone:

Certainly nothing at present could seem much less important to Lydgate than the turn of Miss Brooke's mind, or to Miss Brooke than the qualities of the woman who had attracted this young surgeon. But any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a calculated irony on the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look at our unIntroduced neighbour. Destiny stands by sarcastic with our dramatis personae folded in her hand. (ch.11, p.64)

The suggestion here that Dorothea and Lydgate's lives will converge is less important than the depiction of what it feels like to know more than the characters themselves. Dorothea and Lydgate's respective stories will develop sufficiently in their own right to leave this suggestion behind and when they do converge there will be nothing ironical about it. Far more striking here is the final inability to maintain ironic distance: in the attempt to define rigidly narratorial

position in relation to present story, the immobility of definition is not easy. Narratorial position includes two simultaneous positions: that of close observation and vast vision. Moreover temporal dimension - present and future story - is flung into a spatial arrangement, the stasis of both arrested time and of all time in one. Multiple position and time are disciplined by silence, and seeing is made pervasive - we watch, we see, the character stares. But the narration of this sensation of silent horror cannot quite contain movement. Notice how the narrative has to move the reader's position in order to describe in feeling terms irony's duality of seeing and not-seeing: invited to be 'any one watching' the reader then emerges as one of those persons watched. Moreover what is seen feels stealthy, prepared, calculated, indifferent, all of which, even indifference, bring in active verbs necessary to conceive of passivity. The passivity of watching becomes a deliberate 'standing by' and the ironic becomes a far more biting 'sarcastic'; the subject can only be Destiny, a personification finally condensing the hypothesis of omniscient vision. In the face of this then the characters are 'our dramatis personae': an act of claiming and allegiance that breaks the impossibly static image. It is like a recoil in horror from the idea of such frozen stasis. The narrative in effect articulates and pressurizes the reader to share a positive desire for movement.

The mobility and allegiance called for here are the narratorial qualities the narrator feels most at home with. These opening moments if anything prove that future allusion is irrepressible, and the distance of irony unsustainable. Thus, chapter 15, the first where attention is fully devoted to Lydgate, secures much of the future story neither by a horrible face of destiny, nor by cloaked clues, but simply by talking about Lydgate, with the easy movements of a narrator who is trying to

make 'the new settler Lydgate better known to any one interested in him' (ch.15, p.96). The 'present' Lydgate is a man already in the precarious position of being involved with a woman despite his resolution not to marry, and facing 'petty obstacles or seductions' (ch.13, p.84) despite a contemptuous confidence; but this present position is really a moment where all Lydgate's past and intentions meet the possibilities of the future. Hence the introductory chapter.

There are three foreshadowings of the future which I shall be looking at and considering how they arise in the narrative: the suggestion that Lydgate will be beset by money problems; the suggestion that Lydgate's story is a story of lost ideals; and lastly the suggestion that his determining fault is his snobbery. The first suggestion is made by emphasising what Lydgate thought would not happen to him:

He was but seven-and-twenty, an age at which many men are not quite common - at which they are hopeful of achievement, resolute in avoidance, thinking that Mammon shall never put a bit in their mouths and get astride their backs. (ch.15, p.97)

The narrator does not suddenly let this out in passing, nor does she impose it with the knowingness seen earlier. She arrives at it as a kind of answer. She has been toying with the word 'common'. The Middlemarchers have the general impression that Lydgate was 'not altogether a common country doctor' (p.96). The narrator, finding no answer to this in their attitude to doctors, goes on: 'Still, I repeat, there was a general impression that Lydgate was something rather more uncommon than any general practitioner in Middlemarch' (p.97). Then the narrator finds a more appropriate way of saying this, of including the lack of being 'not altogether...common' with the push forwards of being 'more uncommon', that is that he is 'not quite common' or he shortly will be: 'And this was true. He was but seven-and-twenty, an age at which many men are not quite common...' As an answer to a problem of what Lydgate

is, the suggestion as to the future is given significance, but it is no part of a deliberate project to reveal what will happen. Even the ironic generalisation of uncommonness, is put to use, rather than allowed to control. The comment gains a further nameless significance, as happens repeatedly in this chapter to glances to the future, by ending a paragraph, and the new paragraph beginning afresh, here with the story of Lydgate's boyhood. Re-openings come like a change of tone, or necessary shift to elaborate or explain, and form in some indefinable way a reply.

It is by one such answering shift of tone that the narrative pursues a train of ideas which suggest the story of lost ideals. From a paragraph ending 'From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion' (p.98), the narrative breaks off from Lydgate's past story, picks out 'intellectual passion', and considers it. This paragraph is in turn answered by the following: 'Lydgate did not mean to be one of those failures' (p.99). Diversionary and thus contained as the passage is, the narrative within it is very mobile and mobile in a particular way that integrates tragic possibility into Lydgate's present story. This may be seen especially in this first half of the paragraph:

We are not afraid of telling over and over again how a man comes to fall in love with a woman and be wedded to her, or else be fatally parted from her. Is it due to excess of poetry or of stupidity that we are never weary of describing what King James called a woman's 'makdom and her fairnesse,' never weary of listening to the twanging of the old Troubadour strings, and are comparatively uninterested in that other kind of 'makdom and fairnesse' which must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires? In the story of this passion, too, the development varies: sometimes it is the glorious marriage, sometimes frustration and final parting. And not seldom the catastrophe is bound up with the other passion, sung by the Troubadours. For in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them much in the same way as the tie

of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and alter the world a little. (ch.15, pp.98-99)

The narrative here gives a feeling of ponderous, restless thinking: as though the narrator had something on her mind, and were troubled by what it means to tell Lydgate's story. Like the image of Mammon, 'the multitude of middle-aged men' comes like an answer, arrived at neither by the flow of pointed argument, nor by leading up to a known purpose; instead each narratorial move in itself is pronounced. The preceding 'intellectual passion' has suggested a comparison which aptly expresses the imperative to tell an untold story. But notice how the narrator is not bound by her analogy: as she sets up the suggested comparison it lets in other ideas. In the first sentence, because we do not read 'either be wedded...or', but 'and be wedded...or else' (my emphasis), the alternative of fatally parting is a surprising afterthought, the idea that there may be two endings obtruding in the main idea of re-balancing a cultural heritage. Consequently, although the comparison continues, the narrator has by the third sentence picked up on the idea and introduced it into the comparison - 'In the story of this passion, too, the development varies'. The 'too' shows that the comparison is uneasily stretched, breeding more ideas than it can contain, and in the next sentence, 'And not seldom the catastrophe is bound up with the other passion, sung by the Troubadours', the parallelism of the comparison is broken: the story of sexual passion is grafted on to, 'bound up with', the story of intellectual passion. But the narrator accentuates her moves: this last sentence does not flow easily, its opening 'And not seldom' marking each word as it comes. The 'development' has become 'the catastrophe' suggesting a move on as regards the story itself whilst the phrase for love, 'the other passion, sung by the Troubadours', is a deliberate reference back, stressing the distance covered.

Thus, the narrator accentuates her moves as being from what has been said, and not towards anything. The 'something else' on the narrator's mind has not been manipulative of what she is saying, but has simply given a kind of narratorial freedom to pick up ideas, to divert her emphases, and to break her literary devices. The 'middle-aged men' is developed in the same way. The 'For' may lead us to expect a simple explanation of how love and intellect are 'bound up', but no such logical flow comes: what seems to be referred to is the sentence before last, the narrator selecting out of the alternative endings 'frustration and final parting'. The emphasis is changed. In retrospect catastrophe comes to mean not any final event but an unhappy one. The stories talked about are even more past: having moved from 'development' to 'catastrophe', the narrator now moves to look at the men for whom the 'catastrophe' is over. The picture of disillusion is simply come across by the same narratorial picking up and selection, the same piece of associative thinking unbound by logical argument or rhetorical purpose. There is a sense of arrival only because the focus, hitherto on stories and narratives, lights for the first time on 'real' men. The narrative which has got there has been of a narrator who has made a virtue of thinking, responding, and moving rather than of her rhetoric or knowingness.

The second half of the paragraph, now that 'real' men have been reached, emphasises a more meaningful work than re-balancing a cultural heritage. Indeed it tells us what re-construction does:

The story of their coming to be shapen after the average and fit to be packed by the gross, is hardly ever told even in their consciousness; for perhaps their ardour in generous unpaid toil cooled as imperceptibly as the ardour of other youthful loves, till one day their earlier self walked like a ghost in its old home and made the new furniture ghastly. Nothing in the world more subtle than the process of their gradual change! In the beginning they inhaled

it unknowingly: you and I may have sent some of our breath towards infecting them, when we uttered our conforming falsities or drew our silly conclusions: or perhaps it came with the vibrations from a woman's glance. (ch.15, p.99)

The horror of the glimpse of failed ideals comes from the shock of the past and present seen together, or, if this is Lydgate, the present and future jammed together, the ghost and the new furniture. It is ghastly because it lacks narrative, because the story is untold 'even in their consciousness', because the present and past lie contained without explanation within these men; the emphasis is on possession - 'their coming', 'their consciousness', 'their earlier self', 'its old home'. So at the moment the narrative begins to recognise a story to be told, it offers to unlock this terrifying ownership, to break the silence, to perceive what 'cooled...imperceptibly'. And we see the possibility of metamorphosing that failure, of taking away the horror, of changing the meaning of their lives by telling. When the past story remains untold, these men seem only passive, shaped after the average, packed by the gross; but to recognise the story seems like the first step taken to re-activate that passivity. Tragedy exists when all is told, not in the telling. Indeed, the rigid boundaries and dimensions of narrative and story, fiction and 'real' life, are broken. They fluctuate in a way that is a part of the narrative mobility. One minute we feel what it means to tell a story, the next what it means for 'you and I' to be in a story. Even in the story responsibilities are narratorial; for uttering conforming falsities and drawing silly conclusions are exactly the narratorial sins the narrator of Middlemarch seeks to avoid. Narrative is in the story as well of it. In this mobility of fluctuating boundaries, by which 'you and I' exit as quickly as we entered, the piercing effect, the sense of a story coming alive in 'the vibrations from a woman's glance', may be a return to story but it is

also a part of the ability to move. So, 'Lydgate did not mean to be one of those failures' may be a return to his present story, and may show a strict division between himself and the narrative, but because the narrator has used mobility, not knowingness, it also forms Lydgate's reply to the narrative. We feel he could also explore such possibilities. The subsequent paragraph ends, 'He cared not only for "cases", but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth' (p.99): Lydgate fits himself clearly into the possibility of tragedy just suggested. The effect is ominous, but we also feel the future to be a part of explorable possibilities, the whole narration a property of mobility of mind and so accessible even to Lydgate.

The third passage which bears remark is one precluding an easy moving rhetorical plea for Lydgate's having specific faults, and so the arrival at the remarkably specific and finally accurate reference to what makes Lydgate's success doubtful - 'that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture, or women' (p.103). But the passage precluding this fixing of Lydgate's fault already in existence is an argument - similar to Mill's on foreknowledge and determinism - that all is not fixed. What legitimises the change in emphasis, and, I suggest, the mobility of narration seen elsewhere, is an imperative concern for the present and the immediate:

He was at a starting-point which makes many a man's career a fine subject for betting, if there were any gentlemen given to that amusement who could appreciate the complicated probabilities of an arduous purpose, with all the possible thwartings and furtherings of circumstance, all the niceties of inward balance, by which a man swims and makes his point or else is carried headlong. The risk would remain, even with close knowledge of Lydgate's character; for character too is a process and an unfolding. The man was still in the making, as much as the Middlemarch doctor and immortal discoverer, and

there were both virtues and faults capable of shrinking or expanding. The faults will not, I hope, be a reason for the withdrawal of your interest in him. (ch.15, p.102)

The suggested conflict between the indifference and superficiality of seeking a straight calculation of the future, and the sympathy and deep understanding necessary for that calculation, itself suggests two things: that in seeking a calculation, we may well lose the desire for such prediction in the empathy needed, and that the narrator who is trying to 'appreciate' the complexities of 'arduous purpose' would indeed be able to make such a calculation. We may read other minor paradoxes: in saying that we cannot predict Lydgate's future, the narrator actually suggests a future - failure; this may be an argument for freedom, but ironically it is an argument for the freedom to fail. Future is irrepressible but the assertions which pull in several directions are held together by an attempt to grasp the present in its limitations and precariousness, the activity of the moment, the present as determining rather than determined.

Although the kind of narrative in which such suggestions are located bears further examination in terms of its accentuated process and its effect on determinism, it is clear that the narratorial agility in emphasis, tone, perspective, and boundaries makes for a sense of accessibility. That the future is a part of securing the present, specific and immediate, and the pronounced sense that the narrator is thinking, feeling, and responding rather than being bound by argument, narratorial distance, rhetoric, and knowingness, promote the notion of mobility of mind: something that Lydgate could and should do. As Lydgate's story begins narratorial conjecture ceases, but the much loved Farebrother takes over, warning Lydgate of the very risks the narrator exposed. Farebrother's warnings are on the grounds of sympathy,

experience, and common humanity, the very same disciplining grounds of the mobile narrative. Consequently there really is an argument for Lydgate's having access to the narration of his story and so to the kind of knowledge of determinism that may change it. Lydgate's refusal to heed Farebrother's warnings, and his resentment of Farebrother's inference from self to others, dramatises the refusal of such proffered access.

Even Farebrother's warnings recede into a painful silence as Lydgate's troubles become evident. Like the narrator, he becomes a witness to the story, intervention quietened in the face of immediate and irretrievable events. Considering all that has been talked about beforehand, the narration of Lydgate's story in its intricacy of immediate thought, feeling, and dialogue comes like a recognisable manifestation of the introduction. We await the real story, the tangible, like the determining moments of Lydgate's life. We are in the curious position of knowing that this is going to be a story of lost ideals, of being anxious to identify how and why Lydgate will fail, and yet of also being nervous as to the outcome, of hoping that what we suspect will happen will be averted by Lydgate himself. We may come to blame Lydgate for making our hypotheses real.

As the story proceeds, the retrospective treatment of Lydgate's experiences only furthers the sense that what is determined should have been seen as determining, and so averted. Notably, as Lydgate learns about himself, he does so by hypothesis: 'But then came the question whether he should have acted in precisely the same way if he had not taken the money?' (ch.73, p.510). But then hypothesis becomes even more unavailable:

Perhaps if he had been strong enough to persist in his determination to be the more because she was less, that evening might have

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Perhaps if he had been strong enough to persist in his determination to be the more because she was less, that evening might have

had a better issue....But poor Lydgate had a throbbing pain within him, and his energy had fallen short of its task. (ch.75, pp.523-524)

Ultimately Lydgate's hypothesis and future become those of another, of Will who sees in Lydgate his future self 'led with dull consent into insipid misdoing and shabby achievement' (ch.79, p.540). Will, unlike Lydgate, is able by making the hypothesis to avert it.

We have seen, therefore, that allusions to the future are located in a narrative that is mobile and restless, that is able to pick up and drop suggestions, set up analogies and break them. This kind of narrative effects how we receive foreknowledge; it makes foreknowledge toe a fine, but crucially ambiguous line between Fate and the absolute stipulation that Lydgate could and should have done otherwise. However, this kind of narrative movement handles determinism in a far more persuasive and persistent way than by simply letting in the future: it has a very powerful sequence, the nature of which bears closer examination. As Lydgate's case suggests, the sequence is greatly heightened in a process of exploring a given situation - process imposed on stasis - and especially comes when the narrative is introducing or beginning (a story, episode, event etc.). It is however more than an introductory device: it is a setting up of impetus. As Farebrother's warnings suggest, subsequent narrative puts to use the heightened work which began it. Something of the nature of this sequence may be seen therefore in asking what such introductions are working for.¹

The most famous introduction in Middlemarch - and rightly so because it is so at one with the narratorial purpose - is where the narrator

1. See Edward E. Said, Beginnings: Intention and Method (New York, 1985). He shows beginning as intention, and argues that, as the whole field and intention cannot be supplied in advance, a text begins with 'a large supposition' (p.59).

presses her task as one of 'unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven' (ch.15, p.96): this happens to be the introduction to the whole introductory chapter on Lydgate's past. The introduction does more than establish a perspective: it establishes a narratorial impetus which issues in the restless talkative narrative we have seen. Contrasting herself with Fielding, who 'glories in his copious remarks and digressions' and seems to 'chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English', the narrator presses the urgency of her task, the demands made upon her by her story, and a lack of narratorial ease:

We belated historians must not linger after his example; and if we did so, it is probable that our chat would be thin and eager, as if delivered from a camp-stool in a parrot-house. I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.
(ch.15, p.96)

The urgency of the narrator's task comes not simply from her allegiance to the particular, to the complexity of the tangible and real, but from her allegiance to a particularity not yet known. Especially here, by stressing the demands made upon her by something else, she brings into consciousness an as yet unachieved understanding of particularity, the sense of a something justice has not yet been done to, an object of knowledge not yet known. Mill's journey of inference also relied on such a sense of unknown particulars. We may go further and say that, like Mill, George Eliot's narrator will travel to, will go through a process to get there. One further suggestion comes in this passage: chat being 'thin and eager' compared to Fielding's 'lusty ease', narratorial remarks - digressions and generalisations as well as many other narratorial prerogatives - will have a special sense of inadequacy which is a crucial part of the narratorial impetus.

This slightly self-demeaning beginning, in which the narrative is actually self-important in claiming a very relevant and pressing task, is the narrative's way of setting up its impetus. Momentum is re-instigated many times, in small as well as grand moments. Chapters, for example, open with the pressure of the more that is to be known. Frequently chapters begin with a negative - 'No gossip about Mr Casaubon's will had yet reached Ladislaw.'(ch.51, p.344) - which delimit a character and motivate narrator and reader to discover what the character did know or feel. Often, as has been seen, the narrative alights upon characters in situations which necessitate a move back in time to explain how they came about. At other times, a sudden sense of broad history displayed by the narrative allows it to home in upon a particular character. Even the simple mode of beginning in the imperfect tense - 'Five days after the death of Raffles, Mr Bambridge was standing at his leisure' (ch.71, p.494) - stresses the particularity of the event then related in the perfect tense. There are openings made by fitting generalising metaphors but they are ways of characterising groups of people flattened compared to the character upon whom the chapter is focalized: the animals entering the Ark, for example, prelude Featherstone's will as it concerns Fred. Elsewhere, generalisation or analogy is used where it does not fit entirely; where mention of Bunyan's 'picture of the persecuting passions' (ch.85, p.567) preludes Bulstrode's final misery, it is to say that being guilty he is more pitiable than Bunyan's Faithful. Even the famous 'parable' of the scratched pier-glass has a second edge to it which casts some irony on our ability to generalise. For the narrator suggests that we only use such parables to see 'the egoism of any person now absent' (ch.27, p.182). What follows these introductions is never only a proof of them but a move to carry out the task they set. Even a simple shift of focus as regards one event sets

the task of finding out the more that is to be known about the event.

The key to the process of achieving understanding knowledge of the particular lies in the sense of narratorial inadequacy suggested in the Fielding passage. As seen in the chapter on Lydgate's past, aiming at knowing the particular is far from a dogged meticulousness as to detail. Particularity cannot wholly speak for itself: narrative and its prerogatives to make analogies, generalise, metaphorise, digress, predict, and interpret, are needed. The narrative, mobile and restless in the use of these prerogatives, is not presented as a free-ranging spirit: its moves are disciplined and legitimised by the allegiance to the unknown. Moving on, however, is not a denial of authority or an undermining of what has just been said. Sometimes, certainly, the narrator will suggest that the prerogatives she has just used are not quite fitting, or are inexact or demanding of exception. But often they are perfectly apt, powerfully enlightening, and memorable. Instead, the narrative moves on to try out different words, a different perspective, a different metaphor, or simply, and crucially, to hear a character's own thoughts.¹ Moving on is simply a refusal to accept what has just been said as the final word. Precisely because, in the Lydgate chapter, our allegiance is to 'the new settler Lydgate' (ch.15, p.96), to the present Lydgate, the foreshadowed future is not accepted as the final word: although not suspected as misleading, it is denied an all-inclusive, overriding status.

Contrast this non-acceptance of a final word, with the unusual acceptance the narrator demands of the Rigg-Raffles plot. The narrator

1. Although my argument is a very different one and is about writing as much as about reading, these motions have some affinity to those of the reader's activity described by Roland Barthes, S/Z, translated by Richard Miller (New York, 1974). For Barthes, 'To read is to struggle to name'; it is 'to retreat from name to name' (pp. 92-3).

demands an accepting and easy comprehension of the plot by displaying no narratorial difficulty, by impressing the adequacy of general interpretation, and its finality. The satirisation of the 'diligent narrator' who may not be able to think of historical parallels 'though he may have a philosophical confidence that if known they would be illustrative', and of the snobbish reader who would find relief if 'whatever has been or is to be narrated by me about low people, may be ennobled by being considered a parable' (ch.35, p.234), is a witty riposte against the hypothetical narrator and reader beneath contempt: narratorial difficulties and the squeamish reader are other people's problems. For the narrator, and so for her assumed reader, there is no interpretive difficulty; the plot is to be interpreted as one of 'bad habits and ugly consequences', and of 'low' people (p.234): it is to be accepted thus and no more need be said. Similarly, to interpret the plot links as a result of chance or coincidence, is not only apt but sufficient. Raffles is exactly like the scholar who chances upon a stone and 'through whose labours it may at last fix the date of invasions and unlock religions' (ch.41, p.284). The extremity of her analogy only goes to bring out the bare bluntness of coincidence. The narrator does not go on with 'but Raffles was poor...' or whatever: there is no problem with the analogy. Instead she draws the arresting but unprovocative conclusion that,

To Uriel watching the progress of planetary history from the Sun, the one result would be just as much of a coincidence as the other. (ch.41, p.284)

Uriel's view does no injustice to any body or anything, and may at this point be taken here as final.

To return to the narratorial process instigated and disciplined by allegiance to the unknown. The narrative is not simply a process of accumulation, not simply a gathering up of the many ways of looking at

things until we have a fully-rounded sense of a particular character. Nor, I suggest, does the narrative work, at the level of reading, by a complete sense of a hierarchy of perspectives or discourses, in which one is reigning and all encompassing.¹ The handling of determinism, I am arguing, comes from the powerful effect of going through each in turn, and the performative effect of this relies on the relationship between these kind of steps, on the moment between what has just been said and what is about to be said. This moment is a kind of semantic gap.

Take, for example, the opening explanation of Casaubon's call to Lydgate to ask about the real state of his health. It involves knowing something of what he is not, of what he lacks that would be his moral salvation from the miserable isolation which ultimately propells him in his subsequent action. Notice however the effect of its not being the final word, of the impulse for narrative to go on:

the idea of calling forth a show of compassion by frankly admitting an alarm or a sorrow was necessarily intolerable to him. Every proud mind knows something of this experience, and perhaps it is only to be overcome by a sense of fellowship deep enough to make all efforts at isolation seem mean and petty instead of exalting.

But Mr Casaubon was now brooding over something through which the question of his health and life haunted his silence with a more harassing importunity even than through the autumnal unripeness of his authorship. (ch.42, p.288)

The notion of Casaubon's lacking 'a sense of deep fellowship' is something of a moral overview: these emotional morals the narrator tends to preach come from another discursive level. It is questionable what would make him feel a fellowship when he feels precisely the opposite. Yet I would argue that, because of a kind of semantic gap between this

1. See M.M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Texas, 1981). I have found this to be one of the most illuminating studies of discursive relations, and of the novel in general.

comment and 'But Mr Casaubon was brooding', the moral overview and the description of particular feeling following it are given equal status, neither more valid than the other. How can we relate Casaubon's brooding to the moral overview? At this level, the level of reading, his brooding is something else, something important in itself. No ostensible logical relationship between the two perspectives is offered by the syntax. Instead the logic of the move 'But Mr Casaubon' is the logic of an allegiance in feeling to Casaubon, and this brings out the break made in the need to go on.¹ Although we gain a feeling knowledge that Casaubon's brooding comes from his lack of fellow-feeling, at the moment of reading the break gives an illogicality and does not invite us to apply one perspective to another to see which includes which.² It is this local illogicality, I suggest, which at the very least disturbs the possibility of making a hierarchy of the multiplicity of perspectives structuring the whole novel. Break at this moment defies applicability. Here, in fact, is accentuated the kind of illogicality we have seen in the narration of Lydgate's story where literary devices are broken, ideas lost, emphases re-directed, and subsidiary words or ideas picked out.

The effect that this local gap has on what determinism feels like, may be quiet but it is pervasive. I shall be looking at this at much

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1. Barbara Hardy's work in particular brings out the kind of flow of feeling in George Eliot's narratives. See Forms of Feeling in Victorian Fiction (London, 1985); 'The Surface of the Novel, Chapter 30', in Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel, edited by Barbara Hardy (London, 1967), pp.148-71; 'Middlemarch and the Passions', in This Particular Web: Essays on 'Middlemarch', edited by Ian Adam (Toronto, 1975), pp.3-21.
 2. The reader I assume in this chapter is radically different to the reader described by Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore, 1974). The reader I refer to does not criticise, judge, and fill gaps liberally, but is the reader whom the narrator deliberately and consistently assumes to carry with her. It is by this assumed presence that the narrator legitimises her moves. The fact that the reader of Middlemarch may not be so carried along explains the frequent complaint of preachy didacticism.

greater length in the next section, but it is already implied here. Since the moral overview is of equal status to Casaubon's 'brooding over something', it has no definitive position as a view over and above him: Casaubon is not positively excluded from access to it. Indeed at that break, 'But Mr Casaubon', it might be said that there is a deliberate turning away, and, although it is the narrator who turns her back on the alternative, she does so on behalf of Casaubon. We may see the effect better perhaps if we consider how the break gives a kind of voiced quality to the narrative. The moral overview is the voice in which the narrator appeals to common humanity and the 'But Mr Casaubon' is a breaking in of another voice. The moral overview has a present insufficiency in that it is only one voice, and it is given no power over the particular in that both are voices and both are equally heard. A voice heard also carries with it the sense of accessibility, and so this curious sense that Casaubon is not wholly denied the possibility of seeing his loneliness as 'mean and petty instead of exalting'. Hearing also suggests the right to reply, and Casaubon's brooding is a kind of reply. There are in fact moments in the narrative where the right to reply is displayed with exaggeration and the voice of authority is clearly interrupted and responded to by the voice of a character; this shall be seen in Bulstrode's story.

It is possible to view this kind of introductory narrative, impelled by an allegiance to the unknown particular and constantly moving in perspective and tone, as a sequence of voices. The constant sense of needed sympathy mobilises an ever-ready response, a response, I suggest, to the saying or hearing of something; this response, and the breaks allowing it, give a voiced quality. Response to voicing is, I think, an apt description of the emotional knowledge that is the basis of both the moral knowledge and the science the whole novel puts forward. It

is by the local effects of voice and break, I shall argue, that all kinds of accessibilities and possibilities for the individual character are felt; so that however determined the individual seems, whether by circumstance or by simple innate personality, their moral responsibility is somehow elicited. Here I must re-iterate two obvious points which, in the light of the voiced quality I am suggesting, ally this kind of narrative with what has been seen in others, most especially Mill. The series of voices, the steps in emotional knowledge, exaggerate the sequence of narrative. Just as Mill's idea of causal analysis promotes the reading-in of sequence where it is not obvious, so the narrative in these introductory moves treats sequentially the dimensions of a given situation. The layers of a situation, the multiple perspectives, and the circularity of individual predicament are all explored by sequence. The other point is the all-important break or gap between voices.¹ Mill's analyses provide a gap between something as effect and something as cause which expresses participation in causation or determinism. In this narrative too the dynamics of gap, although not specifically between effect and cause, provide a kind of freedom: accessibility, the right to reply and to respond, imply moral choice.²

The character's right to reply to a distinct narratorial voice is an extreme moment of this effect and elsewhere voice has a more quiet effect. Before going on to examine at length accessibility and general moral responsibility, I want to demonstrate, by looking at the voice

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1. For a comparable identification of breaks in The Mill on the Floss, but as an argument that there are discontinuities in the relationship between narrator and fiction, see Graham Martin, 'The Mill on the Floss and The Unreliable Narrator', in George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment, edited by Anne Smith (London, 1980), pp.36-54.
 2. Roland Barthes shows that, in structural analysis, the nuclei of a sequence are moments of risk and possible freedom of meaning. See 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives', pp.102-4.

given to what amounts to the sexual oppression of Dorothea, the simple effect of something being voiced. For, although heard voices may gather and reverberate in the narrative, working underground so to speak, they are also heard immediately. There is an instant and local response, and the voice and its implications may be dealt with emotionally and immediately. So, I argue, by a logic of feeling response, we forgo a final application of deterministic laws. Sexual oppression in Dorothea's story does gain moments of direct articulation in the narrative, and in a novel largely confined to a middleclass subject matter these are the moments where the question of social determinism - one of the most obvious threatening aspects of determinism - surfaces. What may be found is that, just as it is impossible to summarise in philosophical discourse the relationship of moral responsibility to determinism, so too the depth of the critique of sexual oppression is irretrievable from narration: it cannot be retrieved into anything like a pamphleteering for social change. Although in my approach elicited moral responsibility elsewhere plays a crucial part in this, these selected voices alone are suggestive.

These voices rarely come unasked for, nor are they imposed by the narrator. Rather they are voices lent by the narrator either to herself or to her characters.¹ Thus the questioning irony that the narrator casts on the social expectation of sexual roles, comes by lending men a further voice to their more direct thoughts on Dorothea's unusual ardency:

a man would naturally think twice before he risked himself in such fellowship. Women were expected to have weak opinions, but the great safeguard of society and of domestic life was, that opinions were not acted on. (ch.1, p.3)

1. See Derek Oldfield, 'The Language of the Novel. The Character of Dorothea', in Middlemarch: Critical Approaches in the Novel, edited by Barbara Hardy (London, 1967), pp.63-86. He also discusses voices and argues that George Eliot hears her characters.

Sir James however, is not frightened by marriage to Dorothea:

Why not? A man's mind - what there is of it - has always the advantage of being masculine, - as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm, - and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality. Sir James might not have originated this estimate; but a kind Providence furnishes the limpest personality with a little gum or starch in the form of tradition. (ch.2, p.12)

Here is presented the distinct voicing of hitherto only half-said prejudices. The narrator lends to the men's very masculine phrases further words, scornfully allowing them to reveal their logic: and so masculine expectation, as soon as it is articulated, shows up independent of any general critique the blind pomposity and presumption involved. The voice, self-revelatory and heard immediately, needs no further reference to the society that supports it. The facetious reference to tradition may allude with underplayed horror to general oppression and a whole chorus of such voices, but here it is Sir James' excuse, a denial of responsibility where there is responsibility.

Responsibility for the repetition of social mores, is precisely what Casaubon shirks in relying on marriage as a social contract which will bring him instant happiness. Casaubon's more alarming and pitiful egoism does not mean that he obscures, any more than Sir James, a glimpse of society: instead the glimpse gained of marriage as a social institution is more astounding than ever. Indeed without this voiced quality, the thesis that Casaubon should look beyond the inadequacies of social expectation would be destroyed by such an appalling view. The narrator lends Casaubon this voice:

He had done nothing exceptional in marrying - nothing but what society sanctions, and considers an occasion for wreaths and bouquets...he had reflected that in taking a wife, a man of good position should expect and carefully choose a blooming young lady - the younger the better, because more educable and submissive - of a rank equal to his own, of religious principles, virtuous disposition, and good understanding. (ch.29, p.192)

This voicing of a distinctly masculine attitude is appalling, but it is appalling because it can actually be said, and because what is said is an expression of Casaubon's attitude to Dorothea. The narrator pushes to extremes this lent voice and bitter scorn:

Providence, in its kindness, had supplied him with the wife he needed....Whether Providence had taken equal care of Miss Brooke in presenting her with Mr Casaubon was an idea which could hardly occur to him. Society never made the preposterous demand that a man should think as much about his own qualifications for making a charming girl happy as he thinks of hers for making himself happy. (ch.29, pp.192-93)

By lending Casaubon words to reply to the simple question as to Dorothea's happiness, the narrator allows Casaubon to damn himself. As with Sir James, the voice provides its own critique, here in the clear-cut egoism and selfishness. It is a voice instantly heard, and instantly recognised. If only Casaubon could hear what he asks the narrator to say for him! The ironic distance, I suggest, is not between what Casaubon would say and what the narrator says - the narrator is lending words where they are difficult - but between Casaubon who does not pursue speaking and listening and the narrator who does. Society certainly fares badly in what is heard but it is Casaubon who is held responsible (Providence signifying as usual the relinquishing of responsibility): we await to see what Casaubon will or will not do in these circumstances; we do not wait to see what society will do to Dorothea and Casaubon. The attitude being voiced, we hold him responsible for that voice.

As I suggested earlier, the quality of voice defies the clear application of one perspective to another, and so it also defies a persistent and clear-cut relationship between the individual and society. The notion here that Casaubon should have looked on marriage as something more than an 'outward requirement' (p.194) does suggest, but it only suggests, a liberal perspective and strategy whereby individual and

society are distinct, either in opposition or as the outer and inner, and whereby social determinism only goes so far.¹ There is seen just as easily a positivist view of Dorothea's oppression in which it is not individual freedom she needs but social interdependence:

Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman's oppressive liberty. (ch.28, p.189)

In fact the clearest summary of the narrative's approach to social determinism is one that defies any measurement of individual and society, subject and object:

'1st Gent. Our deeds are fetters that we forge ourselves.

2d Gent. Ay, truly: but I think it is the world That brings the iron.' (epigraph to ch.IV, p.22)

Just as for the individual, society, with all its oppressions and limitations, is not the context but the material to be forged, so it might be said that for the voice of the narrative 'society' is what is appropriated for articulation in different ways, felt and responded to. Responsibility for voice is far from the most important question: just as important is narratorial response to this 'iron' the world brings.

Society, for example, comes for direct criticism as regards female education when responsibility of voice is not the question; and yet the act of articulation on behalf of Dorothea still deals with the bitterness so as to contain it. The narrator begins with Dorothea's own frustrated questions which make her think marriage to Casaubon will answer her needs:

What could she do, what ought she to do? - she, hardly more than a budding woman, but yet with an active conscience and great mental need, not to

1. For a study of George Eliot's desire to evade the extreme deterministic implications of organicism, and the subsequent internal tensions of her novels, see Sally Shuttleworth, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning (Cambridge, 1984). I have found the kind of link she makes between science and narrative method invaluable.

be satisfied by a girlish instruction comparable to the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse. (ch.3, p.17)

By the time 'budding woman' is spoken of, the narrator has taken up Dorothea's feeling and lent her own words to Dorothea. So the biting criticism of her girl's education is made on behalf of Dorothea. The joining of narratorial voice with Dorothea's means that we take the criticism neither as Dorothea's wholly subjective viewpoint in which perhaps she may be wrong, nor as a narratorial knowingness to which Dorothea is blind. It does lead to an anger not indulged by Dorothea, her ardent nature seen,

struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither. (p.17)

But this is still on behalf of her and leads to her 'soul-hunger', 'youthful passion', and sheer strength of motivation. Similarly, the label, 'that toybox history of the world adapted to young ladies which made the chief part of her education', is a comment passed through to the fact that,

it would be a great mistake to suppose that Dorothea would have cared about any share in Mr Casaubon's learning as mere accomplishment. (ch.10, p.58)

This in turn leads to her 'sympathetic motive' and Saint Theresa-like conscience. The voice of anger is a way of gaining a feeling knowledge of Dorothea, but it also deals immediately with this kind of determination of Dorothea's life, a form of relief in articulation that allows it to be superseded. Whatever supersedes, whether an illusioned voice of Dorothea's or qualification and elaboration, is its equal in the rhetoric of voices. The voice of anger, emotive but momentary, is left behind, directing us not to the society so criticised but to the woman who is experiencing it.

For this reason the narrative can include one of the most vicious lashes at the inequality expected in marriage which has nothing to do with what Dorothea is feeling. For when we read, 'A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards' (ch.9, p.48), it comes as a burst of scathing comment, words that are distinctly voiced. In context the comment forms an outcry against the kind of depersonalised and institutionalised ritual of custom and social expectation:

Mr Casaubon's behaviour about settlements was highly satisfactory to Mr Brooke, and the preliminaries of marriage rolled smoothly along, shortening the weeks of courtship. The betrothed bride must see her future home, and dictate any changes that she would like to have made there. (ch.9, p.48)

But the very next sentence after the bitter outcry comes as a gentler reply to this reply: 'And certainly, the mistakes that we male and female mortals make when we have our own way might fairly raise some wonder that we are so fond of it' (p.48). It changes the tone and focus of the bitter expression of a power struggle from the woman's viewpoint to a more formal and calmer moralising, where men and women are male and female mortals, equals in moral status, where dictating has become having our own way, and where appetite has become fondness. It is a change that does not contradict the bitter remark but undermines the inclusive value of its terms, shows it up as one voice: the release given is as important as it is transitional. Even here, where Dorothea's feelings have yet to be divulged, the fleeting bitterness that she will only know later is on behalf of her. It is a natural response to seeing the kind of marriage she is about to make, and is the relief of anger voiced and got beyond in the freedom to respond and then to reply to that response. Again it is superseded by the specific, by the 'grey but dry November morning' (p.48), by Lowick Manor, melancholily

empty, and by Dorothea and Celia's different visions of marriage. Whatever the relevance to what happens to Dorothea, the transience of the lash throws no irony upon the subsequent scene. The scene by no means illustrates it.

To select explicit references to sexual oppression is far from suggesting anything about sexual roles in Middlemarch, it is only to suggest something of a strategy. But it is a strategy of containment rather than of retreat.¹ It is a strategy whereby the questions of the Prelude and the Finale, the questioning that 'the social lot of women might be treated with scientific certitude' (Prelude, p.xiv), are maintained: 'the indefiniteness remains' (p.xiv). Middlemarch is a powerful testimony to female experience because it is a narrative very much experienced and a crucial part of this, I think, is the experience of saying things. What is said is irretrievable from the saying of it. This is not to imply that the question of social sexual roles was not a bare and exposed question for George Eliot. The first edition of the Finale laid distinct blame for the collisions in Dorothea's life on a society which,

smiled...on modes of education which make a woman's knowledge another name for motley ignorance - on rules of conduct which are in flat contradiction with its own loudly-asserted beliefs. (Middlemarch (1872), Finale)

Writing and reading, however, are different from analysis. It certainly was for the reviewer R.H. Hutton, who could find no such analysis:

The attempt of the 'prelude' and the final chapter to represent the book as an elaborate contribution to the 'Women's' question, seems

1. I take this term 'strategy of containment' from Frederic Jameson because, as he indicates, it removes the idea of ideology as false consciousness. See Frederic Jameson, The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (London, 1981). Much of his demonstration of the way critical techniques may be used whilst overcoming their limitations I have found invaluable in this chapter.

to us a mistake, meting out unjust measure to the entirely untrammelled imaginative power which the book displays.¹

For him George Eliot's Middlemarch was 'in many respects her freest and greatest work', her 'creative power...yoked to no specific doctrine'. Middlemarch is yoked to many things, but it is not yoked to their being taken outside the text, to become a 'contribution to the "Women's" question' or 'specific doctrine'. Perhaps this provoked George Eliot's omission of this sentence laying so distinct a blame for Dorothea's lot: not because this was not what the narrative could yield, but to maintain the novel as narrative.² Now the Finale leaves a kind of negative and asexual open-endedness: it refers to 'the imperfect social state' and that 'there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside '. Any retrieval is left to the reader's responsibility.

'Voicing' thus serves to describe the nature of the narratorial process impelled by the need to achieve an understanding of the particular. This process, as a quest for understanding, may be described as introductory but it occurs repeatedly on different scales and on different levels. Instead of one specific threshold between unachieved and achieved understanding, there is a layered-like rhythm including the grand introductory chapter, and the introductory sentence interrupting a scene of dialogue; subsequently an introductory move at

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1. Review of Middlemarch, from Spectator, reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, pp.305-14 (p.307).
 2. For an interesting explanation of this change, and an argument that it is not a retreat from the woman 'question', see Susan Meikle, 'Fruit and Seed: The Finale to Middlemarch', in George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment, edited by Anne Smith (London, 1980), pp.181-95. See also Gillian Beer, George Eliot (Brighton, 1986), chapter 6.

one level may be part of achieved understanding at another.¹ Achievement comes at the point at which the narrative seems to have earned the right to relate the present action of the story, and the sequence of narratorial process is at one with the events of the story. It is not that words per se are adequate where they once were inadequate, but that allegiance has turned into comprehending sympathy. Story action naturally unfolds from introductory explanation and has a logic and inevitability indebted to it: if there is choice and responsibility it is to be found in the introduction. However, as suggested with Lydgate, we also arrive at the action with a sense of arriving at a tangible manifestation: we await action as we await a confirmation, with the sense that the characters may as yet do otherwise than expected. Although action seems already chosen, the characters still get a second chance.

But action comes when we understand only too well the pressure of circumstances on characters: their common human limitations, their particular temperament and motivations, and the boundaries of their knowledge. No longer seeking new words, no longer seeking to generalise, interpret, or offer alternatives, the narrative accepts a helplessness over events. We pity. But pity is a suspension of self or motivelessness, and, as suggested, liberal positivism is marked by the impulse that motivelessness is moral freedom and so the right to judge. Pity marks differences as well as likenesses; where we are motiveless, the character is motivated, free where the character is bound to self. Pity for all its understanding is judgment; to do justice to the

1. In a certain way my distinction between introductory moves and scene bear some resemblance to the 'exposition' and 'fictive present' used by Meir Sternberg, Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction (Baltimore, 1978). However it is a distinction I take from, rather than apply to Middlemarch.

particular is also to judge it. And this in itself argues that the pitied are also the morally responsible.

4. The Process of Discovering Bulstrode

Hitherto, a narrative process of a sequence of voices, propelled by an allegiance to the particular, has only really been seen as the context for selected references to the 'future' story and to the oppressive social determinism of the individual. These references are only moments at which the most brutal aspects of determinism surface, whilst by far the most important aspect of the handling of determinism is that of a general sense of individual responsibility. In order to see how individual responsibility is brought out as viable and accessible, the narrative process of voice and reply, and sequence, needs to be seen not as a context but in its full exploitation. I turn, therefore, to consider at length one story and its narration, the story of Bulstrode. As with the other characters, Bulstrode's opportunity to know what he is and his opportunity to be otherwise are to be felt at the local level of the text, in the detailed relations of the several narrative voices, in the moment by moment narrative reliving and explanation of his thoughts and actions. More powerful than any universal diagram of individual morality, is the effect of the minutiae of narratorial moves and sequence. Even according to a general schema of varying interest in different characters, where Bulstrode can be said to be an exploration of the darker side of human morality, where, in the general emotional wealth of loving Dorothea, lamenting Lydgate, and being affectionately amused by Fred, Bulstrode is disliked and condemned, the pressure is always to attend to the intricacies of time. Just as for the younger characters, we await the determining events of their lives, urgency

concentrating on feeling out how and why what happens, in the small moments of its happening, so it also is with Bulstrode, although for different reasons. Indeed, it is in the intricacy of detail that characters are treated as moral equals.

Bulstrode's first wrongs were committed long before these Middlemarch events and he is deeply embedded in a life and way of thinking built up over a long career, built up not only by a combination of money and religion but also by fortifying himself against possible self-knowledge. In this he is a determinate individual for present story, and on one level moral understanding of him is simple: it is sufficient to state his secret misdeeds to indict him morally, and his story is a psychological study, an examining of the functioning of mind whereby ego manipulates intelligence and religious belief. At another level however, it is important that Bulstrode has not had his place irretrievably allotted according to religious good and evil or according to a rigid determinism. Bulstrode's story enters late into the narrative, although he has been a persistent presence, and the shift to focus on him is a shift to confirm what has been suspected of and felt about him. He has borne much implied moral wrong and narratorial dislike, his interpretations being the very antithesis of narratorial ideals, but judgment has yet been suspended. For this reason his individual morality is still an urgent and problematic question for the narrative; the seeking of confirmation of his moral position requires feeling now his moral responsibility, like Mill's deductive method in which indeterminacy and hypothesis need to be known in order to understand. There has been a novelistic economy in which he has been used as a kind of moral yardstick for others. For Lydgate, especially, Bulstrode has been presented as a moral problem, the dangerous ground of the difficult ties the young reformer makes with the community. There comes a time when this must

be borne witness to, the details of moral choice felt out, not simply stated. Attention is focussed on the present, and so on narratorial process.

In this light, the events of Bulstrode's present story serve as a dramatisation, a powerful narratorial discovery at the moment at which he has to re-fortify his stronghold of delusion. In terms of a moral schema of individual morality this may be problematic, because there is no internal inevitability for such a jeopardising of Bulstrode's moral blindness; and his world is very much intruded upon by an external force, the chance appearance of Rigg and Raffles. In a narrative where connections have been woven into an immediate web, in which individuals, in trying to achieve their ideals, make ties to people and the community, quickly coming into consciousness of self and others, the instigating element of Bulstrode's story is unique and has the potential of lying in tension with the rest.¹ Bulstrode's story is dependent on the simple disclosure of facts, on the sheer existence of Raffles and his ties to Bulstrode, on a social caricature of Raffles, and on a series of sharply defined coincidental plot links: the echo of a Dickensian universe, where the irrevocable roots of the past are exposed. Apart from the narratorial gratification, even vengeance, involved, and more importantly the dramatisation of the falsity of Bulstrode's egoistic interpretations, the plot does not intrude on the narrative (although it does on Bulstrode) because it is a mechanism of shifting

1. In this thesis I have preferred to stress Mill's use of the web metaphor because George Eliot's use of it has already been well discussed. See Gillian Beer, Darwin's Plots (London, 1985), pp. 167-80; Terry Eagleton, Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory (London, 1976), pp.110-25; Jan Gordon, 'Origins, Middlemarch, Endings: George Eliot's Crisis of the Antecedent', in George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment, edited by Anne Smith (London, 1980), pp.124-51. Jan Gordon's article also provides a valuable understanding of Bulstrode and the Rigg and Raffles' plot, and the part of the novel in which they feature.

focus of interest.¹ It permits a contextualisation of Bulstrode and provides the relief needed to see him. As implied in Mill's Logic, the peripheral coincidence and the artificially simple serve in analysis as a definition of focus of interest, and are essential to the understanding of the complex.

At the entrance of Bulstrode's story, it takes only seven paragraphs to set up Bulstrode as he is prior to Raffles' breaking in upon him. We already have a clear sense of Bulstrode, his ego and his sincere but manipulated doctrine, and the mystery of the torn letter was posed twelve chapters - one year of story time - earlier. The narrative begins simply by slicing into his thoughts and their religious phraseology. What is new is the direct reception of his private voice, a re-living of his vocabulary pushed to the extremes of its absurdity, and the direct, unequivocal statement of what Bulstrode is in terms of 'theory' and 'ego':

it was as genuinely his mode of explaining events as any theory of yours may be, if you happen to disagree with him. For the egoism which enters into our theories does not affect their sincerity; rather, the more our egoism is satisfied, the more robust is our belief. (ch.53, p.361)

The beginning of the story is a simple release of voices.

However, in the last of these seven paragraphs, the narrative, depicting and establishing Bulstrode's contentment, shadows in what he is now what is about to happen in the next paragraph, and sequence is crucial to the meaning of this:

Mr Bulstrode was conscious of being in a good spiritual frame and more than usually serene, under the influence of his innocent recreation. He was doctrinally convinced that there was a total absence

1. Peter K. Garrett also refers to this 'secularised nemesis' in his argument that in Middlemarch, 'a mode of interpretation which appears on one level as egocentric illusion reappears on another as a part of the novel's argument', The Victorian Multiplot Novel: Studies in Dialogical Form (New Haven, 1980), p.161. He also draws attention to the changes in level and perspective as enacting the process of interpretation.

of merit in himself; but that doctrinal conviction may be held without pain when the sense of demerit does not take a distinct shape in memory and revive the tingling of shame or the pang of remorse. (ch.53, p.361)

The build-up of feeling vocabulary, from the rigid formality of 'total absence of merit' to 'without pain' and then the life of 'revive the tingling...the pang', overrides the discipline of stating that this is what he lacked, and the implication is that Bulstrode did not lack such memory but repressed it. Notice, however, how the narrative arrives at this. The word 'but' marking a change of voice, also marks the more that needs to be known. It is a way of moving typical of this narrative. Although the narrator in fact goes to the absence underlying the easy doctrinal words of Bulstrode, the 'but' links the surface to its deeper roots in a sequential relationship of further complication, a relationship in which further knowledge is possible by extrapolation - here by extrapolating into the defining negatives by which demerit may be felt without pain. However the narrator further explains (two sentences later): 'The memory has as many moods as the temper, and shifts its scenery like a diorama.' Having said that Bulstrode's mood depends on his memory, the narrator now brings the relationship between mood and memory into one of interdependence. In the kind of mental physiology mapped out here, we may perceive Bulstrode locked in himself, somewhere in the past self-determined, so now self-sufficient and self-suppressed. For Dorothea memory is feeling judgment, and compared to her mental sequences, Bulstrode lives in a circle. If there is no reason within himself to remember, there is no moral judgment now available to him. But circular as the diagram of interdependences is, our knowledge of it is progressive. Progressive knowledge made in steps creates no barrier between narratorial knowledge and the character's knowledge. So there is no reason why the steps onwards to discover what is lacking could not

also be made by Bulstrode if he chose to use his mind. As the idea of memory like a diorama with its moods, returns us to the happy Bulstrode in a particular evening, we may feel the return as a deliberate, not simply instinctive, denial by Bulstrode of all the possibilities revealed in the intervening extrapolation. Furthermore, when disturbance does come in the very next passage, it comes like a confirming manifestation rather than an outstanding revelation. The two scenes with Raffles in which immediate attack and defence are foregrounded come like re-enactments: we witness directly Raffles' taunting familiarity and Bulstrode's cold replies, his 'deathly hue' (p.362), and his expedient thoughts of how to deal with him.

Just as Bulstrode's contentment was defined by the possibility of disturbance, Bulstrode's shaken world is defined by his past, not the dark past about which Raffles lets out broken mysterious facts, but the past of five minutes before when,

sin seemed to be a question of doctrine and inward penitence, humiliation an exercise of the closet, the bearing of his deeds a matter of private vision adjusted solely by spiritual relations and conceptions of the divine purposes.
(ch.53, p.362)

Again, this other side of what Bulstrode is holds the possibility of self-knowledge, and the sequential discovery of it implies accessibility and points of moral choice. Instinctively Bulstrode resorts to his ever-available structure of religious interpretation, but the narrator in order to do justice to his feelings lends him a voice. This voice is an echo of that above and so is not at odds with Bulstrode's own voice; but, deeper and sharper, it brings him near self-judgment:

It was an hour of anguish for him very different from the hours in which his struggle had been securely private, and which had ended with a sense that his secret misdeeds were pardoned and his services accepted. (ch.53, p.364)

Where the first sentence spoke in the more formal religious terms of 'sin' and 'bearing of his deeds', here it is of 'secret misdeeds'. Before 'inward penitence' and 'private vision' seemed a right to privacy whilst now we see it as a defence 'securely private'. The religious jargon of 'penitence' and 'humiliation' has become a real 'struggle'; 'spiritual relations and conceptions of the divine purpose' have become the more personal pardon and 'services accepted'. If narratorial judgment of Bulstrode comes close to his own, it has also gone beyond him, and a voice distinctly Bulstrode's breaks in, replying defensively to the very mention in narration of 'misdeeds':

Those misdeeds even when committed - had they not been half sanctified by the singleness of his desire to devote himself and all he possessed to the furtherance of the divine scheme? (ch.53, p.364)

The paragraph dissolves into a flourish of Bulstrode's indignant rhetorical questions on his misunderstood divine purpose. There are two processes to be noticed: the picking up and development of an earlier passage which leads Bulstrode to self-reckoning, and the more local process of voices.

This process of voices, developing one and then suddenly breaking into another, comes to form a rhythm of coming close to Bulstrode and then revealing distance; a rhythm, in fact, of moral choices. Thus the next paragraph repeats, at a different level, the moves of the preceding. Bulstrode's rhetorical questions having re-opened the distance between narratorial knowledge and his own, external judgment is invited and so the new paragraph opens with a blunt definition of his rhetoric:

In his closest meditations the life-long habit of Mr Bulstrode's mind clad his most egoistic terrors in doctrinal references to superhuman ends. But even while we are talking and meditating about the earth's orbit and the solar system, what we feel and adjust our movements to is the stable earth and the changing day. (ch.53, p.364)

From the neat summary of the first sentence, the 'But even...' marks the necessary move onwards: the feeling then described is still his egoistical terrors and so is not an 'exception' or a 'moreover' to this whole summary, only to the last 'doctrinal references to superhuman ends'. Narrative has to go on even after succinct statements, just as life has to go on even after damning judgment. How it goes on is decisive.

The smallness of these moments of choice, and their repetition, which constitutes the rhythm of the narrator's relationship to Bulstrode, renders amenability to moral judgment uncontentious and incontestable: the constant feeling of amenability rather than a specific location of it. With transient moments that are repeated, there is also the process of a deepening understanding of Bulstrode, where the freshness of our discovery of Bulstrode's lifelong habit blurs the distinction between the progress of events and of knowledge. This is especially so in the next chapter (chapter 61) devoted to Bulstrode where he remembers his past. If the present Bulstrode makes any decisive choice it would seem to be somewhere during this evening. His evasion of self-reckoning, however, is timeless, for not only are moments of responsibility small and repeated, but what begins as a remembering, in which we feel Bulstrode may see himself, emerges as an explanation for Bulstrode's blind continuation of his belief in divine purpose in his action towards Will. As Bulstrode remembers, the narrative both re-lives his past and re-lives his remembering, and there is an ambiguity as to the extent to which they overlap. As we begin to feel keenly the power of Bulstrode's selection of a limited knowledge, we cannot be sure whether this selection is occurring now in present story-time or whether it occurred a long while back. The timeless moments of choice mean we cannot be sure Bulstrode ever could have broken a lifelong habit but we still feel his

present moral responsibility. Consequently, by the end of this remembering we are able to judge, irredeemably, Bulstrode and his religion, and the unfolding of his subsequent actions will come simply and easily.

Importantly this chapter (61) on memory begins with a sense of the possibilities of remembering, and these possibilities are distinctly narratorial. Bulstrode's habitual doctrinal struggles may not be new, but the facts of his past life existing in a jumble of unrelated references positively invite narration. Moreover, the brief excursion into Mrs Bulstrode's thoughts and the Bulstrodes' shared silence, heavy with the latent possibility of words, preludes remembering with the potential of narration: the implied salvation of narration to be revealed clearly when Bulstrode's story is over. The other possibility the narrator lets slip in and grow is the offer of life in moral judgment.

This last offer, presented like many others as an easy progression from Bulstrode's immediate feeling and vocabulary, and coming before we witness Bulstrode's denial, will only serve to deepen the sense of his responsibility. Bulstrode's feelings are very simple, and there is a quick suggestion that a part of the choice he makes in remembering is of Raffles' death:

he felt a cold certainty at his heart that Raffles
- unless providence sent death to hinder him -
would come back to Middlemarch before long. And
that certainty was a terror. (ch.61, p.425)

The narrator proceeds to fix 'terror' by beginning again, calm compared to Bulstrode's panic, able to find words where he can only utter terror:

It was not that he was in danger of legal punishment or of beggary; he was in danger only of seeing disclosed to the judgment of his neighbours and the mournful perception of his wife certain facts of his past life which would render him an object of scorn and an opprobrium of the religion with which he had diligently

associated himself. The terror of being judged sharpens the memory; it sends an inevitable glare over that long-unvisited past which has been habitually recalled only in general phrases. Even without memory, the life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay; but intense memory forces a man to own his blameworthy past. With memory set smarting like a reopened wound, a man's past is not simply a dead history, an outworn preparation of the present; it is not a repented error shaken loose from the life; it is a still quivering part of himself, bringing shudders and bitter flavours and the tinglings of a merited shame. (ch.61, p.425)

Initially describing in a formal way the reason for Bulstrode's fear - 'in danger only of seeing disclosed' - the narrator in fact creates a need for an explanation, so that 'terror of being judged sharpens the memory' comes to what is happening to Bulstrode without impertinence, and with a facility for words which his predicament - 'terror' - is in need of. Like a necessary law of life, it aptly fits Bulstrode's situation. Remember however, the earlier, equally apt, causal relation between memory and mood: firstly pain dependent on memory, then mood like memory. Here, therefore, terror determining memory is an inversion, a result, it would seem, only possible by the intrusion of an external force, namely Raffles. The circle of the relationship is complete and if we care to look at it in analytic terms, the absence of an internal inevitability for Bulstrode's correctly remembering is clear.

Analysis, however, is beside the point; there lie eight chapters between the first two references and the third, and the inversion is more a shift bearing witness to a living relationship. As the passage continues, it emerges less a case of the move from incorrect memory to correct memory and the problem of the instigation of change, so much as a move from life without memory to life with memory; at 'even without memory' the narrator has once again re-started, this time with the vocabulary of organic biology, and proceeded by accumulation, a process

of breathing life into the organism, making 'the life' into 'a man'. The process begun is an implied effort to arrive at what is happening to Bulstrode, but this time it would also seem to go beyond him. The syntax itself brings out a process of acquisition: 'Even without memory...but intense memory forces...' and again 'With memory...a man's past is not...it is a still quivering...' No reason is given why some life is with memory and some without; instead these alternatives become but stages in a process moving from simple 'life' to life with acute sensation. The process is one way.¹

In addition to this process simply effected by the narrative's syntax, there can be identified the idea of the sequence of perception that intense memory instigates comparable to Dorothea's struggles. Where the 'life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay', there is a kind of stasis, the geography of 'a zone' encompassing whatever change there is in growth and decay which anyway, stated thus, balance one another. Nothing could be more stated and unequivocal than 'the life', and the interdependences, whether they are perceived or not, simply exist. Cause and effect seem to be one. In contrast 'intense memory' seems to set up a kind of sequence, for it 'forces a man to own his blameworthy past'. The sequence is a perceptual one; a man owning his past is a man recognising what is there anyway, and presumably the 'zone of dependence in growth and decay' remains. However, the sequence seems to offer a far more powerful life than the simple existence of a semi-conscious organism. Spoken of as 'tinglings' and 'quivering', the possibility of movement and freedom, as sensation awakens, is implicit. It may be painful but it is the sequence of moral perception, where 'blameworthy' becomes 'a merited shame'. Here,

1. On the irreversibility of natural process, see Karen B. Mann, 'George Eliot's Language of Nature: Production and Consumption', ELH, 48 (1981), 190-216.

held before Bulstrode, is possible life in moral judgment.

When the narrator turns specifically to Bulstrode in the next paragraph, it is as though, in this powerful sense of self-conscious life, she has in fact gone beyond Bulstrode himself. For Bulstrode's memories still keep a hold on him, rather than he on them, and the image is not of corporeal life but refers back to the 'inevitable glare over that long-unvisited past' with which the passage on living memory began:

the scenes of his earlier life coming between him and everything else, as obstinately as when we look through the window from a lighted room, the objects we turn our backs on are still before us, instead of the grass and the trees. The successive events inward and outward were there in one view: though each might be dwelt on in turn, the rest still kept their hold in the consciousness. (ch.61, p.425)

We thus go back to Bulstrode but we go back, as the successive events are about to be narrated, with hope. Actually Bulstrode will emerge still a semi-conscious animal, and he will be seen to have 'dwelt on' the events until he has broken them up; but the beginning possibilities and choices narration reveals, come before we realise this.

With these precluded possibilities the intense passivity with which Bulstrode's remembering begins - 'Once more he saw himself... Again he heard himself... Again he felt himself...' (p.425) - has all the hopeful promise of Bulstrode's confrontation with his past. The longing regret might suggest repentance:

That was the happiest time of his life; that was the spot he would have chosen now to awake in and find the rest a dream. (ch.61, p.425)

Such hope is in fact a property of discovering sequentially the firm structure of Bulstrode's thinking which, like the circle of memory and mood, ultimately fixes the determinate individual. For it becomes clearer that such passivity is the basis of a doctrine of divine instrumentality, and such longing regret the kind which would only repeat

memory, not confront it; but understanding this is progressive and this early hope of Bulstrode is an illusion not to be broken by him but to be replied to by him. Furthermore, there is as yet an ambiguity as to whose voice this is, so that the choices revealed by the syntax, and which begin to reveal the structured thinking, may be judged without judging the present Bulstrode himself. Notice these 'buts' marking the difference between surrender alone and deliberate surrender, something of the gap between Mill's effect and cause:

The people among whom Brother Bulstrode was distinguished were very few, but they were very near to him, and stirred his satisfaction the more; his power stretched through a narrow space, but he felt its effect the more intensely. (ch.61, pp.425-26)

The narrative is tightly bound by the egoistic passivity that is its story, the marking out of passivity mounting - 'Then came the moment... That was the setting-in... By and by came a decided external leading...' (p.426) - until any thinking narrator or subject is obliterated: 'The offer was accepted.' Then comes the first mention of this association with crime, and the single narratorial voice breaks into several voices, Bulstrode needing more narration than he would perhaps like:

The business was a pawnbroker's, of the most magnificent sort both in extent and profits; and on a short acquaintance with it Bulstrode became aware that one source of magnificent profit was the easy reception of any goods offered, without strict inquiry as to where they came from. But there was a branch house at the west end, and no pettiness or dinginess to give suggestions of shame. (ch.61, p.426)

For the first time the simple name 'Bulstrode' is used, and for the first time this is a reply to narrative rather than a control of it. At the semicolon, 'and on a short acquaintance with it Bulstrode became aware', the 'and' marks and states a simple acquirement of knowledge of what the business is. Then at the 'But' Bulstrode replies. So often the narrator uses 'but' to move onwards in the need for further specification

and elaboration. Here the 'but' is Bulstrode's and the move onwards of his thoughts is a move backwards, a recoiling from what he knows about the business back to its outward appearance. We witness the making of a choice, but as yet it would seem to be only a past choice.

This early narrative, of which it may easily be assumed that the present Bulstrode is a distant judge, is crucial to our expectations now of a reply, and as the next paragraph opens with the present Bulstrode - 'He remembered his first moments of shrinking' (p.426) - self-reckoning seems close. The next few paragraphs, in which the narrator resumes her fluctuating relationship with Bulstrode, are decisive. It is only from this moment of exposure, this expectation of reply, that we come to understand firstly what Bulstrode is morally, and then how this is so. Voice again, is crucial for this progressive understanding. At first when Bulstrode remembers 'his first moments of shrinking', his past arguments are very much heard and easily judged, but then we find we are also judging the present Bulstrode for we realise Bulstrode is saying them now - 'the young Bulstrode had said then, as the older Bulstrode was saying now' (p.426). With the distance widened between reader and Bulstrode, the motions of past and present choice are then repeated with a more incisive and critical vocabulary, his arguments simply called 'metaphors and precedents', his temptation more clearly one of riches - 'the vision of a fortune' - and the paragraph ending painfully on the conflict and real effort needed to manipulate theory:

And it was true that Bulstrode found himself carrying on two distinct lives; his religious activity could not be incompatible with his business as soon as he had argued himself into not feeling it incompatible. (ch.61, p.426)

Again Bulstrode is exposed, the ambiguity of who says 'And it was true' offering the phrase, and all its judgmental perspective, to Bulstrode

himself. This time, however, we see Bulstrode's repetition of religious argument more decisively, for the incisive voice allows us to understand Bulstrode for the first time in terms of a morality other than his own:

Mentally surrounded with that past again,
Bulstrode had the same pleas - indeed, the years
had been perpetually spinning them into intricate
thickness, like masses of spider-web, padding the
moral sensibility. (ch.61, p.426)

Only now do we see how difficult it is for Bulstrode to break free from himself and his lifelong habit, and to see his way of thinking for what it is. Bulstrode does reply, even to this succinct judgment of him - 'And yet - if he could be back in that far-off spot with his youthful poverty - why, then he would choose to be a missionary' (p.426). The possibility is doubtful and now we see how his remembering which merely repeats his past could not be one of self-reckoning. But the realisation of the circle in which Bulstrode lives comes too late in the narrative to retract the earlier exposed moments of moral perception and choice.

It takes another step, another sequence of a coming close to judgment followed by Bulstrode's repetitious reply, to arrive at an understanding of the means by which Bulstrode's morality is padded. The step made is also a resumption of a past story - 'But the train of causes in which he had locked himself went on' (p.426) - in the ceaseless need to continue. Again and again, the narrator uses this 'but' like a lacuna of breath to speak once more: the break from circular regret or from damning judgment, from both wilfulness and utter surrender, from it might be said Free Will and the damagingly determinate. The 'but' syntax is an integral part of this narratorial process of repeated choice and progressive understanding. This last sequence, however, also comes nearer to the point at which Bulstrode's constant amenability to moral perception will finish. The point at which Bulstrode's lie to Mrs Dunkirk is told, is also the point at which we understand what he has been doing:

That was the bare fact which Bulstrode was now forced to see in the rigid outline with which acts present themselves to onlookers. But for himself at that distant time, and even now in burning memory, the fact was broken into little sequences, each justified as it came by reasonings which seemed to prove it righteous. (ch.61, p.427)

This is how he coped with inner conflict and padded his moral sensibility: Bulstrode has destroyed his narrative. He has stuck to his story, not followed his narrative. The narrative has in effect described a locked situation, but step by step the narrative has also unlocked it so that there is the sense that, if Bulstrode had followed the narrative, his story would have been different. He is responsible now for the habit he began long ago and is still responsible for his determinate self. The next thirty years of his life are easily told, not in a narrative of 'buts' but in a story of 'ands':

He had mental exercises, called himself nought, laid hold on redemption, and went on in his course of instrumentality. And after five years....and was become provincially, solidly important....And now, when this respectability had lasted undisturbed... (ch.61, pp.427-28; my emphasis)

There is only one small 'but' amidst this, like a small, last chance - 'He did gradually withdraw his capital, but he did not make the sacrifices requisite to put an end to the business' (p.427).

As Bulstrode's remembering ends, it emerges as an explanation for his next move: his offering of money to Will, as an act of restitution to God. Only now, when we understand Bulstrode and when Bulstrode is about to act out the perverted doctrine he has bred, do we judge Bulstrode and his religion. There is an overall narratorial process which seems to coincide with the story, rather than arise from demands made by the story. It is fitting rather than inevitable that, at this point in the story, the narrative process of reaching understanding and of repeatedly offering choice, is over and we come to judge. We cannot say that Bulstrode is now lost to moral discernment - the moments of

choice revealed were timeless in reference to the story - but Bulstrode is lost to the narrative. The hitherto withholding of judgment of his religion, and of a direct narratorial indication of the positive ethics Bulstrode lacked and needed, is of crucial effect. The simple mention, at the beginning of Bulstrode's memory, of his poor roots as an orphan at a charity school, his young entrance into a Calvinistic church, and the association of dissent with business, imply a rationale of cause and effect for his career, a social determinism. This and the innate strength of Bulstrode's egoism, of which he might also be said to be a victim, makes for a powerful story, not of a free-ranging spirit, but of a man deeply a part of his world. But these elements of his life have been ascertained during a process also of uncovering moral responsibility, and it is only now, after a view of such responsibility has been attained, that some kind of judgment is made not simply of individual consciousness, but of a doctrinal framework of which Bulstrode might be said to be a victim. For Bulstrode's religion is not only a personal one, it is also a general Calvinism, shared by others.

Despite the late arrival of this perspective, and the sense that Bulstrode's choice cannot be retracted, the judgment is also disciplined by a careful, albeit at moments uneasy, liberalism, and it is legitimised by an appeal to common humanity:

The spiritual kind of rescue was a genuine need with him. There may be coarse hypocrites, who consciously affect beliefs and emotions for the sake of gulling the world, but Bulstrode was not one of them. He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs. If this be hypocrisy, it is a process which shows itself occasionally in us all, to whatever confession we belong, and whether we believe in the future perfection of our race or in the nearest date fixed for the end of the world; whether we regard the earth as a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves, or have a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind. (ch.61, p.428)

In spite of the liberalism of equal treatment, there is a tacit weight given to the last 'passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind'. The other beliefs are presented as perceptual ones, a subjective way of seeing things - 'we believe...we regard'. They are, moreover, beliefs in a purpose, with a timescale and direction - 'the future perfection', 'date fixed for the end', 'a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant'. In contrast, 'a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind' is not an interpretation of a universal purpose, it has no direction and is moreover not a perception but a belief possessed. As a 'passionate' belief it has deep emotional roots rather than manipulable theory. As for the 'putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves', not only is this clearly the most repugnant of these beliefs and close to the definition of hypocrisy, but as we listen to Bulstrode's voice in the next paragraph, it is easily, but silently, implied that this is his religion.

The liberal discipline is not therefore easy, the narrator is near blaming a religion itself - a perspective in which moral choice is problematic - and she is near displaying a distaste for evangelicism. In the following we may hear an over-defensiveness, although it is a part of her most crucial and heart-felt point:

This implicit reasoning is essentially no more peculiar to evangelical belief than the use of wide phrases for narrow motives is peculiar to Englishmen. There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men.

But a man who believes in something else than his own greed, has necessarily a conscience or standard to which he more or less adapts himself. (ch.61, p.428)

The narrator assumes the existence of diverse general beliefs and a simple 'morality' that she and her reader wish to see maintainable and accessible to all; and she upholds the instinctive mechanism of a

'deep-seated habit', a habit without motive, of feeling rather than thought alone, immediate and dealing with particulars and real every day life - everything that a general belief, even in the solidarity of mankind, is not. It is another way of saying what Mill meant when he spoke of means become ends. And at the heart of this liberal struggle to encompass the diverse doctrines already in existence, it emphasises the protection induction, rather than deduction, offers. Just as happened in talking about Casaubon (see pp.301-03 above), this fundamental idea, the premiss of the whole narrative, is alighted upon, not imposed, articulated only momentarily in the process of narration, not pitted against Bulstrode's beliefs. There is no arena in which the precious idea may be disputed and it is further embedded as a mere moment in narration by the opening of the new paragraph. As with the Casaubon example, the 'But' signifies a return to the case in hand. Bulstrode is not an 'exception' or a 'moreover' to those whose morality has been eaten out; the 'but' defies any logic whereby a formula may be applied to Bulstrode. Bulstrode in all his tangible and particular detail super-sedes and commands our view.

Finally, we come to this judgment:

His belief in these moments of dread was, that if he spontaneously did something right, God would save him from the consequences of wrongdoing. For religion can only change when the emotions which fill it are changed; and the religion of personal fear remains nearly at the level of the savage. (ch.61, p.429)

Bulstrode is finally defined and understood by his inability to change. As a savage, he emerges in his full-scale unapproachable reality. Each 'but'-like move of the narrative has moved about this reality: by the lengthy process of narrating what Bulstrode simply is, opportunities for him to be something else have been seen. But now, reaching what he is, we see in one fell swoop the self-determined, savage organism of

Bulstrode. The process of telling Bulstrode's internal mechanism is over, the sense of choice is lost, and Bulstrode is simply there. The following scene with Will, as regards Bulstrode, is something of an observed scene, where Bulstrode is exposed not to the narrative but to Will. Just as later Will burns and bites into Rosamond's consciousness, here he pierces Bulstrode's thickened skin, and narrator and reader watch.

With Bulstrode seen to be irredeemably 'at the level of the savage', his fluctuating relationship with his narrative, the rhythm of closeness and distance, of exposure and then withdrawal, is over. The relationship is now secure, and the resumption of Bulstrode's story seven chapters later (chapter 68) is easy, events simply unfolding. As noted as regards Lydgate, direct depiction of story serves as a manifestation and materialisation, suggestions made tangible. When understanding had yet to be achieved, there was a fluctuating indeterminacy, but now in a crucial way the story is determinate. That is not to say that we know exactly what will happen: the story is one of suspense, excitement, and immediacy, but its happening displays a recognisable logic. There is in one sense a battle, but it has a predetermined end; Bulstrode's struggles are real but his actions have a coherence and uniformity. Where the 'buts' previously marked breaks and the illogical relationship between discursive levels or voices - the 'buts' of reply, intervention, retraction, or development - they are now the 'buts' of opposites. Bulstrode's moral dilemma gains a simplicity in opposites, the 'but' ranging alternatives before him. He needs no narration or explanation for this; his own words show the break of choice,

What was the removal of this wretched creature?
He was impenitent - but were not public criminals
impenitent? - yet the law decided on their fate.
Should Providence in this case award death, there
was no sin in contemplating death as the desirable

issue - if he kept his hands from hastening it - if he scrupulously did what was prescribed. Even here there might be a mistake: human prescriptions were fallible things: Lydgate had said that treatment had hastened death, - why not his own method of treatment? But of course intention was everything in the question of right and wrong. (ch.70, p.486)

One of the most compelling aspects of Middlemarch is that moral decisions are shown to be made long before they wear the aspect of moral decision, and are the decisions of habitual ways of thinking and feeling. In this light such moral clarity is gained late, if not too late.¹ For all the excitement of Bulstrode's moral battle, we are watching an animal at work, determined by habit.

The sense of watching, and the pre-determination of Bulstrode's struggles, come from the security and constancy of the relationship between narratorial voice and Bulstrode. There are still many 'buts' marking this relationship, only now they are also of a kind of opposition, between what Bulstrode tries to do and what the narrator sees in his animal-like functioning. Where the narrator said earlier 'the religion of personal fear remains nearly at the level of the savage' (ch.61, p.429), there was an allusion to difference in human lives: Bulstrode the savage, and the reader taking something of the position of developed, civilised humanity. Now the imagery is not of the stages in human history, but of simple organic functioning. Here, in organic functioning, we are wholly at one with Bulstrode, and yet simultaneously, and constantly, distanced from him: we share that organic functioning, but unlike Bulstrode we also perceive it. This was the difference between the life 'bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay' and the man who owns his blameworthy past, the stasis of simple living,

1. This point is also made by George Levine, 'Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot', PMLA, 77 (1962), 268-79 (p.276).

and the sequence of perception. Bulstrode is an observed animal, working instinctively, and inevitably:

He did not measure the quantity of diseased motive which had made him wish for Lydgate's goodwill, but the quantity was none the less actively there, like an irritating agent in his blood. A man vows, and yet will not cast away the means of breaking his vow. Is it that he distinctly means to break it? Not at all; but the desires which tend to break it are at work in him dimly, and make their way into his imagination, and relax his muscles in the very moments when he is telling himself over again the reasons for his vow. (ch.70, pp.488-89)

There are many appeals to our common humanity, to judge in effect Bulstrode as we would ourselves. The result is pity and damning horror, the constant distance of the witness. Each piece of reasoning in which Bulstrode argues that he is safe, each desire that Lydgate should say Raffles is dying, constitutes the direct re-enactment of a man trying to save his own skin. The inevitable outcome is watched.

Bulstrode is more than simply an animal under the microscope, he is also an animal observed in his environment. His story includes those of Will, Lydgate, and Caleb; stories whose inclusion does not disturb the narration of Bulstrode's, only Bulstrode himself. We watch Bulstrode in relation to his community: although the nemesis is gratifying, the outbreak of gossip and the final meeting where Bulstrode is stripped down to his pure ego are seen from a kind of moral distance. Bulstrode himself established his relationship with the community which finally rejects him and this rejection is neither condoned nor condemned. Interestingly, when the narrator has effectively washed her hands of Bulstrode, and the only person who has compassion for him is Lydgate, the determining conditions of his life are now drawn up as the very opposite of excuses. He was,

a man whose intensest being lay in such mastery and predominance as the conditions of his life had shaped for him. (ch.71, p.503)

The narrative only retrieves pity, sympathy, and even hope for Bulstrode in the last scenes with his wife. His silence, in his terror of her full judgment, the judgment of murder, shows both what he is and what he could be. This hope that persists even after the momentary narratorial washing of hands is the hope of narration:

Some time, perhaps - when he was dying - he would tell her all: in the deep shadow of that time, when she held his hand in the gathering darkness, she might listen without recoiling from his touch. Perhaps: but concealment had been the habit of his life, and the impulse to confession had no power against the dread of a deeper humiliation. (ch.85, p.568)

It is the hope that Bulstrode will narrate his story, as the narrator of Middlemarch has done, a narration in which he is held responsible not so much for what he is and where he comes from, but for his refusal to perceive this: the telling of a determinate story that undoes that determinism and breaks free from it.

We see thus in Bulstrode's story how the progressive narration of it, where the feeling response of narrator and reader is ever-present, handles the story itself. Bulstrode's reduction to an egoistic animal is as much a result of the progressive knowledge and judgment of him during narration, as it is of the events themselves. Progressive or sequential narration gives Bulstrode choices, choices intensified by the narrator and reader's immediate responses, and once those choices are made, determinism is grasped easily, easily because moral values and individual responsibility have been integrated into it. It takes a masterful story-teller to weld together the progress of the story itself and the progress of our understanding of its elements. This, it seems to me, is the achievement and appeal of George Eliot's Middlemarch. I must add, however, that I believe a great deal more happens in Middlemarch than a process of handling determinism. Nevertheless, this process is an essential structure of the novel, forming

limitations and offering opportunities to be exploited. The three levels of process examined in this chapter - general chronological relationships, articulated temporal terms, and local process - demonstrate a keen sense of handling story and 'life'; and this, I argue, is how determinism is dealt with. The dynamics of process and gap involved in this handling of determinism reflect a way of thinking and working which George Eliot shared with Mill and other liberal positivists; and which was a characteristic result of non-belief at a particular historical and philosophical juncture.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has in effect argued that there is a basic similarity between proceeding step by step in order to understand the fictional character of Bulstrode, and proceeding step by step through Comte's classification of the sciences in order to understand the physical world as a working whole. So also there is a similarity between the kind of semantic gaps between voices in the narrative of Middlemarch, and the kind of gap-like causal mechanism Spencer proposes in his evolutionary theory. The similarity lies in the shapes or dynamics used and the effect that is at stake in their use. In Bulstrode's story, we feel the strength of determinism, the logic and coherence of his inevitable actions, and yet also his individual choice and responsibility. In Comte's sciences, we feel the iron necessity of laws and men's surrender to them, and yet, in coming to human science, we feel the direction human life is taking and the power of knowing all that has gone before. In the gap between discourses in Middlemarch, we may feel the ability of the fictional character to hear and reply, and so the moment of individual moral choice; and in Spencer's causal mechanism, evolution may be inevitable, but the moments of its happening are the moments in which the individual and society rise to the occasion, fulfilling moral potential by voluntary adjustment. In these works, I have argued, determinism has been dealt with by the dynamics of process and gap; and the effect has been to confront the inevitability of laws, whilst feeling the power of knowing them, and the availability of some moral choice for individual men and women.

Mill's A System of Logic has perhaps provided the philosophical reference which explains this effect of the dynamics of process and gap. For the Logic demonstrates how causation may be, and indeed was,

understood as a sequence, with one direction moving from indeterminate cause to determinate effect. The Logic also shows how the dynamic of gap comes from a reading-in of sequence, and is crucial for the optionality of causes. But the study of Middlemarch has taken the effect of these dynamics further, by demonstrating the way determinism is handled in a kind of performance or event; how the dynamics of process and gap may not only be interpreted in the way ideas are conceptually arranged, but, having by their very nature a temporal property, may be exploited as a part of reading a text. We experience process and its gaps in time; we experience the sensation of going through one thing at a time, and of feeling a moment of break and entrance. Time referred to in the text has a relationship with the time taken to read it, as the temporal reading has reference to the ideas posited by the text.

Thus, across the range of subject matter and discourse of liberal positivist works - from Spencer's vast evolutionary theories, to George Eliot's novel depicting the details of provincial life - we may find repeated a performance or experience exploiting the dynamics of process. Perhaps, in stressing the performance aspect of handling determinism, we may see in a clearer light the biographical relations with which this study began. Those biographical relations showed a curious lack of confrontation, or at the most uneasy exchange: they showed indifference, assumption, or silence. When there was exchange, it was rarely on the question of causation or determinism; and between George Eliot and Mill for whom determinism provides the most fundamental grounds of comparison, the silence is particularly marked. It might be said that this silent working alongside of one another, reflects the fact that, as far as determinism was concerned, each person was handling determinism for his or her self, in such a way that it was like a performance or event. It

is an experience repeated by each: the experience of explaining, in a particular way, causes and effects in human life, and an experience too much at one with the sensation of proceeding through a text to be exchanged with others. Instead, the similarity of these separate performances comes from the fact that these people were working from a similar understanding and with a similar structure of needs.

It is perhaps unfair to say that liberal positivists wished to solve a philosophical paradox. Instead they needed a structure that allowed some flexibility as to how determinism was seen: whereby at relevant moments they might lament the pressure of circumstances on men and women and criticise the society in which they lived; and at other moments they might judge the individual himself. George Eliot, Mill, Spencer, and Lewes were writing at a time and position when they needed to be liberal and positive. They were writing at a time when God's order was social order; and their non-belief and deterministic convictions questioned the present social order in a way that looked not longingly to the past for an answer but to the future. They posed the question whether men should be equal only in God's eyes, and questioned whether men were as yet morally free; questions that suggested that the causes of human life needed changing. Whatever their varying answers, all shared this questioning, a questioning that did not however put revolution of human life over a reform of it. Moreover, they were also writing at a time when the science of human life and the determinism of physical cause and effect stretched far and wide, from the minutiae of man as an organism stimulated by colour and sound to man as evolved over the vast history of the universe; from the determining of the individual by his social circumstances to the determining of the evolution of a social structure. Science was assimilating, taking in areas of human life, and showed man as a living, breathing, and growing organism. So that

whilst liberal positivists still put the question to social order, and did not see science as divine design, they were also at the point where their impulse was to enjoy laws and the areas of life made available to understanding and explanation. The dynamics of process and gap were their way of achieving this enjoyment whilst still questioning what had been and what was.

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